

The IRPF Connection

FEBRUARY/MARCH, 2012

AREA-Uganda, A Shining Example of Association Growth



Leadership of AREA-Uganda at the East African Real Estate Investment Conference in November 2011

The Association of Real Estate Agents of Uganda (AREA-Uganda) has proven to be a model of success, demonstrating wide-span potential for professional real estate associations. An umbrella organization founded in 2008, AREA-Uganda's mandate is to professionalize the real estate sector in Uganda as well as to create awareness of its benefits as an engine for economic growth. AREA-Uganda joined the IRPF family of real property associations three years ago, and has been receiving technical assistance to become the voice of property and land market issues in Uganda since. The association now has 147 members.

AREA-Uganda now offers a wealth of member benefits and value-added services include training, lobbying and advocacy, networking opportunities, a Multiple Listing Service (MLS), and partnerships with academic institutions.

The Association has become the lobby arm of real estate on behalf of its members including lobbying on tax issues in parliament, good regulatory environment with the Ministry of Housing Lands and Urban development and making presentations on housing forums representing the real estate industry.
The Association is represented on many of the committees in the ministry concerning housing policy issues.

Through AREA-Uganda's lobbying and advocacy efforts including through the World Bank, the Private Sector Foundation of Uganda (PSFU) and the Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development, a draft issues paper was produced and shared with all stakeholders. Furthermore, the Estate Policy instrumental in supporting the bill on Real Estate Agency Law is under formulation and AREA-Uganda is part of this committee moving it forward. The association has also provided advice to the Parliament on a proposed added tax to residential properties; stating that the law was unfriendly for the supply of housing, and as a result this law has been placed on hold.

The association has been a great proponent of the concepts of property data aggregation and exclusive listings leading to market transparency and accountability. AREA-Uganda is on the committee to move forward a Property Index Survey which is being conducted by the Central Bank and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics and will result in a property price index in the country, and they have established an MLS which is featured on their website.

Partnerships with foundations and academic institutions is also a key achievement of AREA-Uganda which is now on the board of the PSFU, an umbrella private sector organization representing the real estate industry. In an effort to promote the profession through academic institutions, AREA-Uganda committed to working with students and has supported the formation of Makerere University Business School Real Estate Students Association (MURESA) which works closely with AREA-Uganda to link the students with the business community through Internships and jobs.

The Association is also in the progress of forming a Women's Committee with the goals of promoting training on women's land issues, including a future land certification program, and offering leadership roles for women interested in becoming a voice in the industry and supporting women's entrance to the real estate industry. The association and IRPF are in the process of submitting a proposal to the PSFU for a program on women's land rights. IRPF is extremely pleased with AREA-Uganda's many achievements over the last three years. Further information on the association can be found at www.areauganda.org.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE THE POWER OF REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATIONS THROUGH SELF-REGULATION. AREA-UGANDA HAS BECOME THE VOICE OF THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY IN UGANDA INTERFACING WITH POLICY MAKERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY TO PROMOTE BEST PRACTICES AMONG REAL ESTATE PRACTITIONERS. IN 2012, AREA-UGANDA IS LOOKING FORWARD TO PROMOTE WOMEN LAND RIGHTS BY CREATING A WOMEN'S COMMITTEE AND ALSO ENGAGING INTO CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACTIVITIES."

-VINCENT AGABA,
CEO OF AREA-UGANDA



IRPF

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE