

## **“The eLVCD course notes are like a bible to me” – collaborative online learning helping WV programming staff achieve greater impact within the communities we serve**



### **Learning with PALS (Project model Accredited Learning & Support)**

When Juliet joined the World Vision Uganda office in November last year she was told her role was to help farmers in the Nakasongola district increase their incomes so they could better care for their children – a daunting task, particularly for someone new to the organisation!

She was to do this using the WVI-approved economic development project model known as Local Value Chain Development (LVCD) which collectively mobilises producers and improves their access to markets – but where to start and what support is available?

Traditionally at World Vision, Juliet would have travelled to the nearby major town to attend a training event such as a one-week workshop to learn about the entire LVCD project model, its philosophy and phases. Upon returning to her district Juliet would be expected to start applying this knowledge immediately for the benefit of the communities she works with.

We can all agree that World Vision’s development work is highly complex. One approach that may have worked beautifully in one context may fail spectacularly in another. There are few solutions that are simply right or wrong. Each programme has an element of ongoing discovery, reflection, innovation and learning that cannot be explicitly planned beforehand, despite how many times a particular approach may have been implemented beforehand. We are constantly learning on the job! The way in which we train and support the WV programming staff working in these contexts must acknowledge and reflect this complexity and the ongoing learning process they undertake.

The eLVCD University course was developed as part of the PALS (Project model Accredited Learning & Support) approach. It is an online learning community made up of peers and experienced mentors who can learn from and support each other throughout the implementation of their individual programmes. Unlike traditional training, participants take part in the course alongside their normal role over a period of 10 months.

Juliet and the other 44 participants from 25 LVCD projects across EARO and SARO access the eLVCD course on an ongoing basis via the WV eCampus. Their contributions and rich ongoing learnings are therefore captured in a central location for the benefit of current and future WV programming staff. Participants are able to log onto the course from laptops or smartphones and make their contributions as it suits their individual schedules, while also benefitting from being part of an engaged learning community.

Juliet and her peers will be the first group of certified eLVCD graduates and be recognised for their practical knowledge and their programming experience.

The eLVCD University course was also recently awarded the following by the **LearnX foundation** across Asia Pacific for learning excellence and encouraging participatory peer-to-peer learning:



The philosophy of the PALS approach is to develop and support expertise within World Vision’s implementing offices. For that reason it has an embedded self-funding model that raises income for the implementing offices from participating programme budgets for sustainability.

Please speak with [Mark Harwood](#) from the Social Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (SEED) Unit in World Vision Australia, if you would like to learn more or register in the next course commencing Quarter 1, FY15.

What’s exciting is that the PALS approach, using the WV eCampus, is a learning framework that can be applied across all WV programming sectors to develop and support our staff working alongside the communities we serve and therefore increase programming impact. A second course is currently under development for programming staff using the Business Facilitation project model, which assists small business owners to increase their incomes. Stay tuned!



**“The LVCD notes are like a bible to me. The facilitators tried to give as many challenging scenarios as possible and this has been helpful for me especially in times of difficult situations.”**

**“Through the training, I have been able to acquire and utilize the knowledge and skills acquired to help train farmers in my community about how they can work together in groups to produce and sell products.” Juliet, eLVCD Participant, WV Uganda.**