

OXFAM IN UGANDA

NEWSLETTER



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OXFAM

GAC DONOR VISITS UGANDA, LAUDS LOCAL PARTNER ENGAGEMENT IN THE PROJECT



Oxfam in Uganda was honoured to host Philip William Decas from Global Affairs Canada - the donor of the Stand-up for Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights project (Stand-Up) in Mayuge District in Eastern Uganda.

Philip lauded Oxfam and its partners for increasing awareness of the SRHR services in the communities through spearheading the localisation agenda, highlighting synergies between the implementing partners, and integrating the project objectives with the district programmes.

The Community Development Officer at Bukatulube sub-county, Mayuge district, stressed that the project team employed a participatory approach of selecting community structures to ensure ownership and sustainability of the project, with different stakeholders and peer educators from the district, sub-county, villages, and schools, which has increased the uptake of SRHR, specifically family planning services.

To further increase the sustainability of the project activities in the communities that Oxfam works with, Philip highlighted the need to integrate livelihood projects through exploring partnerships with the private sector.

He also recommended innovative approaches such as using games to attract youths to understand SRHR issues at the outreaches instead of having them as stand-alone components.

Wilson Senyonyi, the Gender and Protection Coordinator, noted that Oxfam partnered with *Femme Forte* through peer educators and trained students on how to make reusable pads as a way of responding to the highly demanded service – menstrual hygiene management (MHM) amongst the target participants.

Jane Ocaya, the Women's Rights Advisor at Oxfam, recommended that to ensure inclusion, development partners need to be intentional in disability inclusion, such as identifying peer educators with disabilities that interact with their peers, crate ramps, wheelchairs, and adjustable beds to ensure they are friendly in accessing the services.

During this field mission, the team interacted with district leaders, peer educators trained by the project partners in Bukatube Health Centre (HC) 3, Bunya Secondary School and also attended a community outreach that showcased different SRHR services, which attracted 180 participants.

Stand-Up is a 6.5 years (2021-2028) project, aiming to increase the enjoyment of SRHR for the most marginalized and vulnerable right holders, particularly adolescent girls, and young women (AGYW) aged 10-29 years, including those with intersecting vulnerabilities. The project addresses key gender inequalities and human rights issues, particularly: harmful social norms, traditional practices and taboos regarding gender and sexuality; lack of adequate information on or access to comprehensive SRHR services; lack of meaningful decision-making power by young women and girls regarding their health and sexuality.



Philip William Decas at Bunya Secondary School



MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND STAKEHOLDERS PLEDGE TO SUPPORT THE STRENGTHENING THE WOMEN LAND RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN UGANDA



In Uganda, women's land ownership remains low compared to men, attributed to the deeply entrenched socio-economic, structural, and cultural barriers related to access, ownership, and control of land.

The government has made efforts to progress policy and legal frameworks and provide an environment for departmental institutions such as UWOPA and UPLMF to improve gender-responsive land governance with laws and policies that do not discriminate against women. However, the implementation gap is still glaring as disparities still exist between law and practice. A good number of women still do not know their land rights.

For instance, only about 16 per cent of Ugandan women own land in their own right (Rugadya 2010), despite their significant role, especially in the agricultural sector.

Oxfam's partner Women's Land Rights Movement convened a National Consultative Meeting with key stakeholders, such as Members of Parliament, who pledged to support strengthening the Women Land Rights Movement (WLRM).

The meeting aimed at enhancing the MPs and other members to understand women's rights for inclusive, sustainable development, and creating a platform for knowledge sharing on challenges and opportunities related to land rights in Uganda.

The meeting attracted representatives from Uganda Parliamentarians Land Management Forum (UPLMF), Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), and other CSOs such as Uganda Women's Network and LANDnet Uganda.

Hon. Sarah Opendi, the Tororo District Woman Member of Parliament, noted that for the Women's Land Rights Movement in Uganda to take shape, emphasis should be on sensitisation, and increasing the participation of grassroots women in discussions on property rights.

Additionally, Hon Hanifah Nabukeera, Mukono Woman MP, noted that "we need to go on the ground, people in the villages still think that land is communal, women think they cannot own land, they have fear. They think owning land is a masculine venture. We need to sensitize them to have confidence,".

Oxfam's Land Rights Coordinator, Jimmy Ochom, called upon stakeholders to acknowledge the interrelation between climate change and land rights, and the need to build the capacity of women to strengthen the land rights movement.

"It is quite clear the global south which, consists of the majority of the developing countries, is paying the price: We see an increase in the global rush for land for agriculture to sustain the emitters. The need to shift industrialization to Africa to suit their economic needs. Increased land grabs in the name of foreign investments into developing countries. People in climate-risk areas are selling them off cheaply to those who can easily rejuvenate them expensively to utilize them," Jimmy noted.



Oxfam is committed to promoting gender justice, including addressing all the drivers of land inequality, such as the unjust land systems that keep locking women out of development.

OVERTURNING THE 81 YEAR OLD MARKET ACT – LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER LAUNCHES THE NEW MARKET ACT, 2023



Minister of Local Government – Hon Raphael Magezi, recently launched the New Market Act 2023, signed into law by the President of Uganda in May 2023. Hon. Magezi further unveiled the roadmap to affect its implementation to address the concerns of market vendors.

Until June 2023, Uganda has been using the 1942 Market Act.

“The objective of the Act is to reform the existing laws governing the establishment and regulation of markets in Uganda, as well as to establish a framework for the management of both public and private markets,” Raphael Magezi noted.

Women constitute a larger percentage in the markets, so markets must become convenient for them. The new Market Act will address the systemic discrimination that impedes women from unlocking their economic potential.

Hon Magezi said that the Act will protect the market vendors, adding that there is a need to fundraise resources to develop the policy guidelines to ensure full operationalization and translate the Act into the different local languages.

“Majority of the people in markets are women, and it is now mandatory for each market to have a day-care centre. Digital revenue collection is the best solution for accounting for market tax collections,” said Hon. Magezi.

He also shared the roadmap that will facilitate the implementation of the Markets Act, 2023, which will include appointing the committee to prepare the regulations, dissemination and sensitization, and piloting the applicability of the law to capture the gaps to fit the regulations in all the markets.

Other activities under the roadmap include detailed legal and business research, drafting the regulation consultations, agreeing on strategic actions on revenue management and collection, continued monitoring, human resource structure at both local and government levels and finally implementing the Act.

Hon. Margaret Rwabushaija – the mover of the Markets Bill, also appreciated the key stakeholders that supported her in the review process of the Markets Act, 1942 and influencing its repeal.

The Act was launched during the breakfast meeting organized by Oxfam’s partner Institute of Social Transformation (IST) that convened stakeholders from government, ministries, agencies and CSOs.

The meeting is intended to mobilize key stakeholders in supporting the implementation of the Act and create a platform for appreciation of the contributions made by the various stakeholders in the preparation of the Act.

Dr Thelma Awori, the Board Chairperson of IST, also revealed that the Markets Act 2023 has been designed to foster an environment answering to the current needs of market development, management and administration that has evolved over time.

She also recognised that the Act puts emphasis on the establishment and management of markets by local governments, private persons, individuals, and companies & associations.

Download the Market Act, 2023 [here](#)



Stakeholders pose for a group photo after the launch of the Market Act, 2023

For three days, more than 6000 delegates from the feminist community across the world convened in Kigali – Rwanda, for the *Women Deliver* Conference, under the theme 'Spaces, Solidarity, and Solutions'.

The conference attracted thousands of decision-makers, including 20,000 online delegates, from diverse fields, such as civil society, government, the private sector, and international agencies, alongside women's rights organizations and movements of girls, women, and underrepresented populations to identify solutions, bolster accountability, and drive change.

In his opening remarks, the President of Rwanda, H.E Paul Kagame, noted that to achieve gender equality, "commitments which are not followed by action cannot fulfil our promise to build a more just and prosperous future for the following generations."

Wilson Senyonyi, Oxfam in Uganda's Gender, and Protection Coordinator attended the conference. He shares the key takeaways and commitments from the conference and other side events.



"I interacted with different actors on their actions to achieve gender equality in different aspects. The delegates made a number of commitments; what remains is how these will be implemented

Some of the commitments were:

- Making sure that there is inclusion of people with disabilities in sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR). Most projects in SRHR do not incorporate aspects of people with disabilities (PWDs). For example, most people do not have sign language, indicating that PWDs are left out, yet they are among the categories of the most vulnerable population.
- To support and integrate the aspects of climate change in our implementation. When there are climate catastrophes, people are displaced, which means there will be a reduction in access to services. Women and girls

are affected most in terms of going to school, accessing basic hygiene and having land to cultivate. This increases their vulnerability.

- Supporting the education of the girl child. we also committed not to look at only the girl child's education but also follow up on what happens when they leave school. Whereas we have more female students in many higher institutions of learning, we need to know where these girls end up because the majority are not absorbed in managerial positions.
- Countries should allocate enough resources for providing services. Many people are putting more resources into raising awareness but not service provision, which is very key.

Additionally, our partners (Uganda Women's Network, CEHURD, and Reproductive Health Uganda) organised a joint side event to discuss their contributions to the gender equality movement and forge pathways of addressing issues contributing to gender inequality and impediments to reproductive health rights.

- One of the issues that arose is that most organisations are not targeting women and girls who stay in villages, yet they are the majority and vulnerable. If women in the villages are left out, there is no way we can achieve gender equality.
- Challenges around litigating SRHR in Uganda. We still have challenges in terms of the law. For example, we don't have a law that defines abortion. For example, if someone has a health complication and is recommended abortion by medical personnel, there is no law in Uganda to support such litigation.
- Issues of funding – many donors are putting resources on other aspects, not on litigation. There are limited donors who are willing to facilitate the litigation fees to follow the cases up to a successful conclusion.

To address the issues around reproductive health holistically, Wilson says we must reach out to all stakeholders, such as religious leaders, traditional leaders, academia, and political wing, to ensure that these issues are not handled as a single organisation.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND LEARNING EVENT



The journey to empower Local Humanitarian Actors (LHAs) to take leadership in decision-making processes and interventions aimed at providing responsive, effective, and quality humanitarian action has been on for quite a long time. Part of Oxfam's journey to the localisation Agenda has been focussing on empowering the LNHAs to strengthen their capacity and their role in preparation and response to disasters. Oxfam has worked with several actors to support the creation of LNHAs networks and platforms. Among these is the Western Uganda Humanitarian Platform (WUHP), formed in 2021 to provide humanitarian leadership in Western Uganda and prepare and respond to disasters in a more coordinated and synergised manner.

Since January 2022, Oxfam in Uganda partnered with World Voices Uganda and Western Uganda Humanitarian Platform to respond to emergencies and disasters for the people displaced by floods and mudslides in western Uganda.

This is part of Oxfam's deliberate efforts of working with local actors to strengthen their mechanisms for local grant management and humanitarian response decision-making, using Emergency Response Fund grants through localisation.

In Kasese and Bundibugyo, the fund was used to respond to the effect of floods from the Copper Belt, which left thousands of people homeless and displaced, while in Kikuube, the fund supported the internally displaced persons (IDPs) to cope with the different challenges that they go through because of displacement.

Most of the affected people were supported with jerricans, basins, washing soaps and food, among others.

As the project implementation comes to an end, Oxfam in Uganda, with support from Oxfam America, organized an ERF learning journey in Uganda to learn how the local people have been participating, defining solutions & making decisions to address the problems using the emergency response funds in Kikuube, Kasese, Bundibugyo and Kabarole Districts.

The delegation comprised teams from Oxfam in Puerto Rico, Kenya, Bangladesh, and America.

STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT AT OXFAM IN UGANDA – OXFAM'S WEEK TRAINING IN JINJA

Line managers play an essential role in the organisation, including motivating others to be their best in serving the organisation's purpose and values. Oxfam, therefore, invests in learning and growing managers to lead others effectively.

Oxfam conducted an intensive five-day managing people at Oxfam (MPO) training for all managers in Jinja, providing them with skills, tools, and confidence to be better managers.

Using models such as the MBTI, teams were taken through understanding their work preference, management and learning styles. The training also covered areas such as self-awareness, developing individual capabilities, Strengthening the team dynamic, creating a positive work environment, managing performance, giving and receiving clear feedback and skills in effective coaching and mentorship. For some, this was a refresher and completely new training for others.

At the end of the training, managers made individual and collective commitments towards practising the learning with their teams. To foster accountability, each manager was paired with an accountability partner to track progress.





On the 7th of July, Land Rights actors including Oxfam in Uganda, Women's Land Rights Movement and LandNet Uganda, organized a webinar to dissect the court ruling in the case of the late Lady Justice Mary Stella Arach-Amoko, putting emphasis on its implications on women's rights, the legal complexities involved in balancing cultural traditions and gender equality in Uganda.

Composed of legal and women's rights activists, the panellists examined the disparities between culture and the law and the impact of cultural norms in the case of Annette Yossa and others versus Ambassador Idule Amoko.

After the death of Hon. Justice Stella in June 2023, a dispute on finding her place of final rest arose between the late judge's paternal family, the children, and her husband, Ambassador Idule.

The children and family members of the departed Lady Justice Stella stressed that her dying declaration was that she wished to be buried in Nebbi, on her paternal burial ground, which was contrary to her husband's wish to have his late wife buried at his home in Adjumani.

Ambassador Idule's contention was that this was a cross-cultural marriage between Madi and Alur with Madi believing that a married woman is buried at the husband's home.

The high court ruling in the case ordered that the late Justice Stella should be buried in Nebbi district as per her children's wishes and in doing so, delivered a verdict that Ms Frances Birungi Odong, UCObAC Executive Director, described as a big win for women because it presents an opportunity for women to know that they have the right to make a wish, or challenging the status quo, and have their wishes respected.

Oxfam's Land rights Coordinator, Jimmy Ochom, noted, "Courts of law have a great influence on impacting how laws shall be drafted by parliament and implemented in the country. With this concern, civil society organizations, stakeholders, and academia need to be vigilant to challenge any decisions that do not observe equality between men and women."

The panellists revealed a clash between culture and law, where women's rights are still challenged by social norms and practices. They highlighted that the ruling was a big win for women since it will empower them to make decisions challenging social norms and traditions that deprive them of their rights.

"Social norms transformations need to be integrated into our programming as well as sharing knowledge on human rights in communities, gender equality so that there is more appreciation of women and girls as equal human beings," said Frances Birungi the Executive Director of Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children (UCOBAC).

Rebecca Apio the Executive Director of Land Justice Network, noted that the case brought in areas of the 1995 constitution with respect to women's rights, adding that both men and women have the right to practice their culture.

"The biggest challenge is several laws go silent on protection of women's rights. This, however, doesn't mean that women lose a right to their culture because of marriage, she added.

Mr. Opio Oketch, the legal advisor of Alur Kingdom, mentioned that all people have cultural and traditional burial grounds that are sacred.

"It is very important that people are buried where they wish to be buried," he said while also calling for harmonization of culture and the law.

"There is a need to reduce the contradiction between culture and written law because it is common that all the time there is always a clash between law and culture" he added.

The webinar attracted over 50 participants, including representatives of the government, academia, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and traditional leaders.

Oxfam works with LandNet, UCObAC and other partners to address economic inequalities by advancing the rights of women to access land in a country where women own only 7% of the land.

"Courts of law have a great influence on impacting how laws shall be drafted by parliament and implemented in the country. With this concern, civil society organizations, stakeholders, and academia need to be vigilant to challenge any decisions that do not observe equality between men and women," – Jimmy Ochom

John Long is one of the refugees championing peace under the Oxfam and partner peace-building project. The project supports South Sudanese-led Organisations and Ugandan Community Based Organisations in refugee hosting areas to build peaceful coexistence with refugees and the host communities.

One of the challenges in the refugee settlements is struggle for resources which usually result into clashes between the refugees and members of the host communities.

YETA carries out trainings for the communities in aspects of women rights, gender equality, how to cooperate within families and homes, peace building – understanding conflict, and engaging in mediation or dispute resolution relating to incidents of violence among others.

Through the YETA trainings, Long is now a bridge of peace building. “I am now able to help in mediation to resolve different conflicts in my community and can ably settle issues.”

“I had a case to handle in my neighborhood, at a home that had a lot of gender based violence (GBV) issues and I realized it was due to drug abuse so with the little knowledge I got out of this project’s training, I intervened and helped them resolve their issues permanently and to date the home is peaceful,” he added.

He continues to help advocate for the equal treatment of women and is now a male champion and leads a group of other men who are committed to the cause of ending gender inequality.

“I am one of the men struggling to see women and men being able to share issues and see how best we can change the community’s cultural beliefs about women since I live in a community that still believes that women shouldn’t hold key leadership positions.”

John has also set his sight on encouraging more men to fight against inequality. Key to this will be coming up with strategies to handle conflicts in the homes of his community members, encouraging men to attend antenatal services with their women and,

more importantly, supporting women to stand for key leadership positions like those of the Refugee Welfare Councils (RWCs).

“For most of my life, I had no respect for women. I did not believe or feel that a woman could make a good decision, or take up any leadership position. All I knew was that a woman’s role is just to do housework, be a companion for the man and raise children,” Long says.

With Long’s shift in attitude towards his wife would come an appreciation and newly found trust for his wife, and he would start recognizing the effort she put in for the well-being of their family.

“I had even to show her my mobile money PINs and food ratio cards, which I had previously kept hidden from her. As a result, many other good things started happening between us for the good of the family,” he added.

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JOHN NOTED

For John, the respect for his wife would also reflect on how he relates with other women and he has continued to encourage other them to take up leadership positions and make decisions.

OXFAM CONDUCTS A CIRCULAR ECONOMY TRAINING



In support of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) to ensure sustainable growth of their businesses, Oxfam in Uganda, in partnership with Circle Economy and Open Capital, organised a circular economy workshop.

The training ran for five days between the 24th- 28 July and was facilitated by Ilekttra Kouloumpi, a strategist with the Netherlands-based organisation, Circle Economy. It attracted over 40 people from different SMEs across sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism. Circular Economy is an approach to living within the means of the planet while still providing for the global population.

As an alternative to the more common linear economy which involves extracting materials, turning them into products that are consumed and then disposed off, the Circular Economy is rooted in the principles of sustainability, resource efficiency, and waste reduction and involves continuous reuse, recycling of resources while allowing to retain their value and importance.

The merits of the Circular Economy are seen in the maximisation of resources which allows consumers to utilise resources for as long as possible.

Through discussions and instructional videos, participants were taken through the different aspects of the circular economy in an exhaustive session that looked into circular business models, design, value chains, strategies, and

elevator pitches, among other key areas.

Peter Oumo, a participant who serves as an Initiatives Coordinator at Tukole Uganda which brings together blue-collar labour and service seekers described the training as an eye-opening session that will help change the way business is done at his workplace.

“We now have to consider ways to collaborate in order to redefine our businesses and adapt the circular economy model.” He said.

Ilekttra, in emphasising the relevance of the workshop, stressed that it provided an opportunity for its participants to stake their claim to the new approach as equal participants in the creation of sustainable businesses.

“It is important for them to learn from each other, dive into this new model and feel proud as designers of their own circular economy-themed businesses that can stand the test of time.” She said.

The Circular Economy training was part of Oxfam in Uganda’s Impact SME Development Programme, implemented countrywide for the last five years with funding from the Argidius Foundation and Oxfam Novib Ovo Fund.

- Daily Monitor: How EU projects spur development in refugee hosting district: [How EU projects spur development in refugee hosting communities | Monitor](#)

Documentation

- The race to protect food now and in the future - [The race to protect food now and in the future – How farmer field schools are nurturing a generation of young farmers. | Oxfam in Uganda](#)
- Youth Engagement and Empowerment Project (YEEP) Report 2022-2023: With funding from the European Union, the YEEP was implemented by Oxfam in partnership with International Foundation for Recovery and Development (IFRAD) and African Youth Development Link (AYDL). Here is a snapshot of the project impact and reach: [Youth Engagement and Empowerment Project \(YEEP\) Report 2022-2023 | Oxfam in Uganda](#)
 - 1,518 total people were reached of which 71% were female and 29% male
 - 83% of the youth were reported an increase in income
 - 1290 Youth Accessed the markets and finance
 - 5 Advocacy platforms were established
- Strengthening resilience through enhanced local disaster risk management capacity' came to an end at the end of July: The project reached 415,329 people (207,648 in host communities in Kyegegwa and Isingiro districts and 207,681 refugees in Kyaka II and Nakivale refugee settlements. Read more below:
 - ❖ Booklet: [Strengthening resilience through enhanced local disaster risk management capacity | Oxfam in Uganda](#)
 - ❖ Video: [4 Years of Strengthening Resilience in the Refugee Hosting Districts \(Isingiro & Kyegegwa\) - YouTube](#)
 - ❖ How EU projects spur development in refugee hosting district: [How EU projects spur development in refugee hosting communities | Monitor](#)
- Building Resilience in Crisis through Education (BRiCE) - [Building Resilience in Crisis through Education \(BRiCE\) | Oxfam in Uganda](#)
- UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Contract Transparency in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative - [UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Contract Transparency in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative | Oxfam in Uganda](#)
- Uganda Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (UGEITI) Report (FY 2019-20) - [Uganda Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative \(UGEITI\) Report \(FY 2019-20\) | Oxfam in Uganda](#)
- Uganda Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (UGEITI) Report (FY 2020-21) - [Uganda Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative \(UGEITI\) Report \(FY 2020-21\) | Oxfam in Uganda](#)



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