

# OXFAM IN UGANDA



**MARCH 2024**

**NEWSLETTER**



## CELEBRATING WOMEN'S DAY AT OXFAM'S COUNTRY OFFICE



This year's annual International Women's Day was celebrated under theme *"Invest in women: Accelerate progress."*

Investing in women does not necessarily mean giving money to women, to Jane Ocaya-Irama, the Women Rights Advisor at Oxfam asserts that "if you provide avenues to support women, educate them, provide health care, you are supporting women on individual level in that way, you are supporting progress,".

At Oxfam in Uganda, we celebrated Women's Day in a unique style – we hosted a team from Institute for Social Transformation (IST), led by the Executive Director, Moureen Wagubi and market women representatives from the Nakawa and Kalerwe Markets and a member of Urban farmers group located in Luzira, Kampala to share their experiences.

They highly appreciated the contributions of Oxfam's work in recognizing the needs and challenges of the market women.

Wagubi appreciated Oxfam for funding the first ever one-year project that paved a way for working with market women, bring out the new market act that addressed a number of issues that emanated from the survey.

"The Market Act emanated from the survey we conducted from the first project we did with OXFAM. We found out that women were many in the markets,

but they were not in the leadership, we embarked on transformational leadership to ensure that women are involved in market leadership," Moureen noted.

Some of issues that have since been addressed include the introduction of Market Act, 2023 and involvement of women in management and leadership of the markets and introduction of Baby care centres in markets and trainings on gender-based violence which has empowered them to stand against Gender based violence.

"We're able to work with our children in markets. With trainings on gender based violence and formation of cooperatives, we've gained better access to finance. We have been empowered to take a stand against male abuses in the Market," Nanyonjo Goretti – The chairperson of Kalerwe Bivamuntuyo Women's SACCO noted.

Catherine Nanzige – Chairperson, Nakawa Market Food Processors Cooperative added that "nursing mothers can't afford to pay maids to take care of children. It disturbs when you are breastfeeding and serving customers. The mothers now take their children to day care centre and continue with their work,".

Francis Shanty Odokorach, our Oxfam in Uganda's Country Director challenged the staff to have a personal reflection on what they will do to address gender gap in their respective places.

## GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN – REMEMBERING JOSEPH MARY KASUMBA

On Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> March Mary Kasumba passed March at his home in Kasumba aka KasJoe, as than just a coworker; he cherished member of

Joseph Mary traversed staff, partners, and the

He was deeply humanitarian work. His ensuring that our effective, impactful, donor requirements was improved the lives of on his life and the Oxfam staff remember the legacy he leaves



**Joseph Mary Kasumba**

HUMANITARIAN MEAL COORDINATOR

*Oxfam in Uganda is saddened by the passing away of Joseph Mary, our Humanitarian MEAL Coordinator. Joseph Mary approached each day of work with simplicity and a smile that lit up our office and was dedicated to ensuring that our humanitarian programs were effective and impactful! He passed away on Tuesday 19th March and was laid to rest on Thursday 21st March 2024.*

*May his soul rest in peace!*

2024, our MEAL Coordinator Joseph on and was laid to rest on 21<sup>st</sup> Mubende District. Joseph Mary many at Oxfam called him was more was a friend, a confidant, and a our Oxfam family.

all our field locations, working with communities we serve.

passionate about MEAL in dedication and commitment to humanitarian programs were and aligned with our values and commendable. His efforts countless individuals. As we reflect impact he had on each of us, the lessons KasJoe taught us and behind.

"Kasumba was more than just a colleague; his passing deeply affected everyone in the office.

He had a unique connection with each of us. I had a personal joke with him. Whenever I asked him anything, he would first joke, saying, 'Don't stress me,' and likewise, when he asked me anything, I would first say the same. We will always miss him,"

**Charles Opiyo – Resilient Livelihoods Manager**

"I had the privilege of working with Kasumba since 2016 before he joined Oxfam.

When I left Yumbe and joined Oxfam, I encouraged him to apply to join Oxfam.

Witnessing his promotion to a Coordinator brought me immense joy as I trusted in his technical capabilities,"

**Brenda Natenza – MEAL Officer**

"Kasumba had a remarkable warmth that extended to everyone, even those he didn't directly work with. Kasumba was known for his dedication, always going the extra mile to keep everyone informed, even during challenging times when things didn't go as planned. His commitment to communication and support was truly admirable."

**Sophie Nampewo – Finance for Development Coordinator**

"I was glad to witness the Oxfam family we often speak of – it's truly something special. The support we extended to each other during those difficult times and the strength we exhibited, regardless of the challenges, was truly remarkable."

**Edward Beukman – Transformative Education Policy & Programme Lead at Oxfam in Africa**

Joseph Mary approached each day with simplicity and a smile that lit up our office, perhaps as a reminder that we don't always have to look too serious, even when we are doing serious work! He had an innate ability to connect and work well with others at various levels. One of his most admirable qualities was his flexibility and willingness to adapt to the fast-changing humanitarian contexts. Whether carrying on an evaluation, writing a situation report, or providing input into a proposal, Joseph Mary approached his responsibilities with humility and an infectious enthusiasm that motivated us all. He was a great team player and very approachable,"

**Francis Shanty Odokorach – Country Director**



## WASH FACILITIES MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OFUA VI PRIMARY SCHOOL, SIMON SAID NARRATES



In August 2023, Oxfam approached us and introduced 'The Education in Emergence' project. The team sensitised us on water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), health education, and the targets of the project.

After sensitization, the team conducted WASH assessments and established that the school lacked WASH facilities, including latrines and clean water. Oxfam committed to extending a water facility and constructing a girl's latrine.

Oxfam has constructed one tap stand with two outlets for the school. This has not only improved the performance of the pupils but has also kept the girls in school because we have access to water for

cleaning the latrines and classrooms, but also girls have enough water to use for menstrual hygiene, which is one of the major reasons for drop-out of girls. We have also maintained the high enrolment of pupils because they have been encouraged to stay in school. [Read more](#)

## INAUGURAL MEETING WITH THE STAND-UP PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE



***The members of the advisory committee meeting stand-up project partners at Oxfam Offices in Kampala***

Oxfam in Uganda and the partners implementing the Stand-Up Project convened their inaugural engagement with the technical advisory committee.

The committee is composed of diverse experts including Dr. Jesca Nsungwa Sabiiti from the Ministry of Health, Prof. Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo from Makerere University and Olga Daphynne Namukuza from SHRH Alliance.

Francis Shanty Odokorach, Oxfam in Uganda's Country Director appreciated the committee members for their immense voluntary time and contribution.

The advisory committee offers advice to the implementing partners on the technical underpinnings of the project, assists with resolving strategic-level issues and risks for successful project implementation. They also track the project's alignment with the country context and SRHR needs.

Jane Ocaya-Irama, Women Rights Advisor at Oxfam, added that the project is in its third year of implementation and embraces adaptive management. The committee members have been very engaged right from the beginning.

“Based on the learnings from the national to the district launch, Dr Sabiti advised on the need to adjust the target age group since some girls and boys start puberty at 10 years—the team has since adjusted the age category to 10-29 years from the initial category of 15-29 years,” Jane added.

The Stand-Up project is implemented by Oxfam, [Center for Health, Human Rights and Development \(CEHURD\)](#), [Femme Forte Uganda](#) in Eastern Uganda and West Nile.

Francis also appreciated the partners, adding that ‘we cannot achieve equality if we do not talk about inclusiveness of the most marginalized hence this project seeks to reach out to people living in the settlements and in the Islands,’

The team shared the project targets and some of the outcomes of the three-year implementation to enable the advisory committee to provide appropriate support.

One of the key outcomes from the discussions was the crucial role of male engagement in addressing some of the underlying issues of sexual and reproductive health since the majority are decision-makers.

“How are we involving men in the project given that men are still the main decision makers in most of the targeted areas? These can facilitate or become barriers to accessing SRHR services,” Dr. Sabiti noted.

“Men deter women from sexual reproductive and health rights (SRHR) uptake as they are not passive but decision-makers in the community,” Olga added.

Some of the other outcomes included appreciating the use of artificial intelligence and finding out how it can be integrated in the project implementation, working closely with the cultural leaders to change the gender and social norms that affect women and girls and picking lessons from the previous projects implemented by other organisations - mainly on issues of family planning, and male engagement.





## NATIONAL SEED SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP ON FARMER SEED VARIETIES



**Charles Opiyo, Oxfam's Resilient Livelihoods Manager giving remarks during the workshop. Photo/ESAFF Uganda**

On March 14, 2024, [Eastern and Southern African Small-Scale Farmers Forum- ESAFF Uganda](#) in partnership with Oxfam in Uganda, [PELUM Uganda](#) and National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) - [Plant Genetic Resources Centre \(PGRC\)](#) hosted different stakeholders in the seed sector in Kampala, Uganda to discuss the development of a regulatory system for the recognition of farmer seed varieties in Uganda.

Farmer seed varieties are often genetically diverse and adapted to local conditions, which makes them of crucial importance for farmers who have little access to agricultural inputs and are increasingly confronted with erratic weather patterns.

"We small-scale farmers are the custodians of the majority of seed varieties and biodiversity, yet we feel like we are the least appreciated. There are people who come into communities telling us that our seed is inferior, we refuse to accept that," Mr. Baliraine Hakim from ESAFF noted.

The workshop brought together various stakeholders in the seed sector, including Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), civil society organisations (CSOs), small-scale farmers, journalists, and others, who shared their perspectives on farmer variety registration (FVR), and pledged their support for the cause.

During the workshop, key findings from three communities involved in the pre-testing of Schedule X were presented. Schedule X is a set of guidelines introduced by NARO to support the registration of farmer seed varieties in local communities.

The findings highlighted the fact that farmers have spent decades nurturing the varieties, but lack proper documentation, making it difficult to prove advancements made thereby making it almost impossible to register farmers' varieties.

"Farmer variety registration is still in its early stages, with today marking the first step. As stakeholders, we must collaborate and bring together the facts and resources in order to develop a standard guideline for farmer variety registration," Dr. Asio Teddy Mary from MAAIF noted.

The participants developed recommendations and action plan for farmer variety regulation and management, which included raising awareness about FVR benchmarking with countries that have successfully registered farmer varieties, amending Schedule X, and strengthening partnerships.

The adequately informative workshop also generated recommendations for the need to continue the conversations first to fast-track recognition of farmers, and later procedures and laws to support registration of farmer varieties and strengthen the collaborations amongst the numerous seed sector stakeholders in order to develop an alternative registration framework for farmers.

## OXFAM IN UGANDA IN NEW YORK FOR CSW68 SIDE EVENT



Oxfam in Uganda joined the rest of the world for the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, organised by UN Women (CSW68) from 11<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.

At CSW68, governments, civil society organizations, experts and activists from across the world came together to agree on actions and investments that can end women's poverty and advance gender equality.

Oxfam in Uganda in collaboration with other organisations had two hybrid side events – one on how community based models advance maternal health rights and gender equality to the last mile communities, co-hosted with One to One Child Africa along with CEHURD.

The second side event, co-hosted with The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, focused on gender transformative approaches as tools for development.

They discussed how [Gender Action Learning System Methodology \(GALS\)](#) – a community-led methodology developed by Oxfam for livelihoods improvement and gender justice, can be integrated in government and multilateral programmes to transform gender relations at household and community level.

Wilson Senyonyi, the Gender and Protection Coordinator at Oxfam in Uganda who was a panelist in one of the side events, and also attended several meetings shares his experiences and learnings from the event.

"I was able to meet different stakeholders to discuss issues around sexual and reproductive health and rights, from our own context particular in Uganda under the [STAND-UP project](#) but also getting to hear from others.

We hosted a side event with our co-host members from [One to One Child Africa](#) – an NGO in South Africa that work with vulnerable children, young people and families and discussed how community based models advance maternal health rights and gender equality to the last mile communities.

This platform gave us an opportunity to share the real issues affecting reproductive health and rights in our context, for example the girls failing to have access to menstrual hygiene kits which is leading to dropping out of schools, the fishing community are also not able to let their children continue with education and unfortunately, in some of the settings, they don't have a secondary school.

Additionally, we learnt from others especially about the little budget put on health sector including Uganda, where we have less than 6% dedicated to the health sector yet the least should be atleast 15%. This continues to affect reproductive health and rights.

We also had meetings with the Ugandan delegation and agreed on several action points including producing a joint concept note on funding menstrual hygiene management. We agreed to have follow-up discussions to see these actions to conclusions.

## SIDA VISITS SEEDS GROW PROJECT



This month, Oxfam hosted a delegation from [The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency \(SIDA\)](#), the donors of the Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security (SD=HS) /Seeds Grow project in Eastern Uganda.

They toured project sites and engaged with the project participants involved in the seed sector.

In January 2019, with funding from [SIDA](#), Oxfam in Uganda in partnership with Participatory Ecological Land Use Management- PELUM Uganda and Eastern and Southern African Small-Scale Farmers Forum- ESAFF Uganda started a new phase of the SD=HS project.

The project aims at investing in agriculture sector especially in the genetic resources to contribute to elimination of hunger, malnutrition, poverty, and promote sustainable use of natural resources, fight climate change and its effects among others to further strengthen their work on farmers rights to seeds.

This engagement provided them with valuable and first hand insights regarding the project's implementation and accomplishments. They visited a community seed bank and engaged with members of two farmer field schools, who shared their project experiences.

The program is implemented in nine districts in the greater northern region in districts of Amuria, Amuru, Gulu, Omoro, Kitgum, Nebbi, Soroti, Serere, and Zombo

under Teso, Northern and West Nile Farming systems.

Based on the insights gathered from discussions with donors, Oxfam, partners, and project participants during the visit, several recommendations emerged to guide future actions and initiatives for the project.

- Foster deeper collaboration with research and learning institutions to enhance the policy advocacy work related to seed systems.
- Establish partnerships with academic and research organizations to conduct studies, gather data, and generate evidence-based insights on seed management and agricultural practices.
- Offer capacity-building initiatives that empower farmers with the skills and knowledge required to effectively manage their agricultural enterprises
- Identify, categorize diverse organizations engaged in land-related activities, establishing strategic connections and partnerships with them to integrate their expertise and resources into the objectives and initiatives of the Cultivating Change project.



## RIGHTS IN CRISIS WORKSHOP BRINGS TOGETHER OXFAM AND PARTNERS



The Double Tree Hotel in Nairobi was the converging point as over 30 participants drawn from Oxfam staff and partners across the federation gathered for the Rights in Crisis (RIC) workshop.

The Rights in Crisis is a global campaign championed by Oxfam and partners in recognition of the fact that human rights need to be observed even working in crisis situations.

The 3-day workshop that ran from the 5th-7th March was organized by Oxfam in Africa with the purpose of ensuring that there's a common vision and understanding of the Rights in Crisis Campaign among all RIC teams in Africa and to identify connections and synergies among different countries, share good practices, and learn from each other and transfer knowledge.

Oxfam in Uganda was represented by Geoffrey Owino, the Local Humanitarian Leadership (LHL) Coordinator, Wilson Senyonyi the Gender and Protection Coordinator and Lydia Ayikoru, the Refugee ESP Coordinator who were involved in various discussions that were organized under the key facets of Advocacy and Protection.

The conversation on advocacy delved into issues around civic space, conflict sensitivity and women in leadership.

Participants took a deep dive into the civic space

with case studies from the different countries like Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso and Uganda among others where Oxfam has done research on the different restrictions that limit the involvement of citizens in the civic space.

Under Women leadership questions were asked on the obstacles (both religious and sociocultural) that block women from taking up leadership roles and how to navigate them to ensure that women obtain power and influence and change mentalities and power structures.

To ensure that programs are conflict sensitive, participants had discussions on the necessity to understand the different conflict contexts and sought to use the discussion to try to maximize our positive by recognizing that humanitarian organizations and actors can cause damage if they're not conflict sensitive.

Among the key takeaways from the workshop was the general consensus that the RIC approach needs to be adopted during programming in all thematic areas like Humanitarian, Governance and Accountability; Resilient Livelihood and Gender Justice, the need for Oxfam in Africa and affiliate countries to develop a Right in Crisis Strategic Framework and to also integrate Local Humanitarian Leadership as part of the Right in Crisis.

## HEADS OF CONSORTIUM CONDUCT MONITORING VISIT OF ECHO PROJECT

The heads of consortium of different organisations implementing the '[Strengthening Community-led and locally owned Disaster Preparedness Actions](#)' project recently carried out a monitoring visit of selected project implementing areas.

The team comprised of representatives from Oxfam in Uganda, headed by the Country Director – Mr. Francis Shanty Odokorach, and other Organisational heads like Mr. Robert Kwesiga, the Uganda Red Cross Society Secretary General, Ms. Michelle Ryan, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Country Representative, and Fr Patrick Masuti, the Caritas Uganda Deputy Director.

The visit gave the consortium leadership an opportunity to track the progress of the project's implementation and interact with stakeholders who are part of the project. Some areas they visited included the established community radios, the warehouse along with the warehouse committee within the Mbale district, the river gauges, and community radios, among others. They met and interacted with different community members who shared their experiences and the impact of the project. Meeting community members of Sirobo and Nangwe in Bushika Sub-county in Bududa District,

the community shared their experiences, lessons learned, and gaps following the activation of the Anticipatory Action (AA) in November 2023 and Early Warning and Early Action.

They noted that most of the community members were conducting preparedness activities, as a result of the project, including digging contours, planting trees, opening trenches and sensitizations during the implementation of AAs.

They added that despite receiving much rain in September, October, and November October (SOND) season last year, some of the project interventions helped them to minimize the impact.

They also met district leadership for different districts including Bududa, Mbale and Sironko and the members of the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC).

With funding from the European Union Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), Oxfam in Uganda in consortium with the Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services, and Caritas Tororo are implementing a disaster preparedness project to improve on the early warning and response capacities of the disaster-prone Mt Elgon region districts of Mbale, Bududa, Namisindwa, Butalejja, and Sironko.



### READ MORE STORIES ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

- ▶ River gauges providing early warnings on floods to communities in the Mt Elgon Region [HERE](#)
- ▶ How community radios extend early warning messages [HERE](#)
- ▶ Leveraging on community structures to strengthen disaster preparedness and response [HERE](#)







## OXFAM IN THE NEWS

- ❖ The Independent - Cracks in the new gilded age: <https://t.ly/6Ugrt>
- ❖ Daily Monitor - Nebbi locals tipped on land rights: <https://t.ly/Nm6UB>
- ❖ The Observer - Rich corporations 'grabbing' water from poorer countries: <https://t.ly/3YReF>
- ❖ The fight to empower the woman by Hon Sarah Opendi: <https://t.ly/pSBz0>
- ❖ Empowering women to influence decisions at different levels: <https://t.ly/n5b0z>



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