

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-LED ACTIONS ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE



IVAN NACKARA/OXFAM

MT. ELGON REGION



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA





CONTEXT

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In Uganda, the humanitarian context is characterized by conflicts (internal and external), food insecurity, natural disasters, and epidemic outbreaks caused by internal and external factors.

Internally, climate change is increasingly making weather patterns harder to predict, drying out some regions while others are soaked. This has led to drought, food insecurity, and calamities such as floods and landslides. Externally, the instability in neighbouring countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and South Sudan has caused the movement of refugees into the country, putting a strain on already fragile communities and resources.

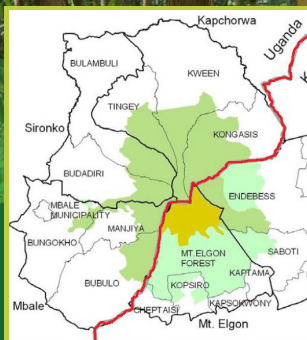
In crises, women who carry the burden of providing domestic labour and household survival are often the most affected. Oxfam works with partners to empower vulnerable women, youth and men with skills and knowledge so that they can mitigate and cope with shocks and enjoy their rights to a life with dignity. In cases of disaster, Oxfam works together with partners to provide lifesaving assistance that meets the needs of those affected. Oxfam focuses on emergency interventions and resilient livelihoods for crisis-affected communities, contingency planning with stakeholders, local humanitarian leadership, peace, protection, national and regional policy influence, and timely humanitarian support delivery.

LOCALLY LED RESPONSE

During crises and disasters, local communities are not only victims but are the first respondents, yet, most community members are not well equipped or trained to respond to or identify such emergencies. The Mt Elgon region is one of the regions in Uganda that is prone to disasters such as hailstorms, epidemics, floods, landslides, and mudslides that affect lives, crops, water sources, and livestock negatively impacting people's lives and livelihoods.

INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO RESPOND TO DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN THE MT. ELGON

Oxfam in Uganda, in consortium with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Caritas Tororo, and Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) are implementing the ***'Strengthening Community-led and locally owned Disaster Preparedness Actions Project'*** in Mt. Elgon region with funding from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). The project aims to reach 141,256 people (71,251 females & 70,005 males) by building effective linkages between early warning and early action and supporting gender-sensitive district contingency planning in the targeted districts.



FRED WAKUBE (42) IS CHAIRPERSON LC1 OF MAROBO VILLAGE, BULUCHEKE SUB-COUNTY BUDUDA DISTRICT. HE HAS PLANTED TREES TO MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF THE HEAVY RAINS. HE ALSO PLANTS POTATOES ON THE CONTOURS TO CONTROL SOIL EROSION AS WELL AS HOLD THE WATER.

The project is implemented in five districts of Bududa, Butaleja, Mbale, Namisindwa, and Sironko

5



The project aims to build the capacity of local actors to prepare and respond to multiple hazards, improve institutional linkages, coordination and advocacy for disaster preparedness financing.

ENHANCING VULNERABILITY AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES



39,748

people have participated in interventions that enhance their capacity to face shocks and stresses.

MBALE -9,246
SIRONKO -7,718



BUDUDA -6,357
NAMISINDWA -8,500
BUTALEJA -7,927



10

Sub Counties

Participated in Enhanced Vulnerability Capacity Assessment.



100

Villages

were selected for Anticipatory Action (AA).

Strengthen

100

Village Disaster Management Committees (DMCs).

Oxfam in Uganda and partners have conducted activities and trainings that help people identify their vulnerability to disasters and mitigation measures. Approximately 39,748 (9,246-Mbale; 7,718—Sironko, 6,357—Bududa, 8,500—Namisindwa and 7,927—Butaleja) people have participated in interventions that enhance their capacity to face shocks and stresses.

The project enhanced Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (EVCA) in 10 sub-counties and 100 villages were selected for Anticipatory Action (AA). During the EVCA, the capacities of 100 Village Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) were strengthened.

The project also developed 100 community action plans that are being implemented to prepare the communities for any floods and landslides. Over 80,000 community members benefited from the interventions.



Alex Mutali is a member of Nambiti Disaster Committee. Using this mega phone, he moves around the communities in case of disasters issuing warnings to people especially those in risky communities to re-emphasise the message shared on community radios

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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY EARLY WARNING INFORMATION

50



Red Cross Action Teams.

14



Graduated river-gauges were installed.

102



Mobile phones deployed.

259,200

Community members reached.



210



Mega phones installed

20



Community Radios installed across districts.

Through this activity, the project has built the capacity of Disaster Management Committees (DMCS), Subcounty DMCS, Red Cross Action Teams (RCATS), and CRS volunteers in early warning data collection, analysis, and reporting. The project has deployed 50 Red Cross Action Teams (RCATS) across the 5 targeted districts to disseminate targeted early warning information at the village level, reaching a population of over 259,200 community members.

The project has procured and installed 14 graduated river-level gauges with the Ministry of Water and Environment. In addition to the river-level gauges, the project has also installed 20 community radios in strategic hotspot locations and procured and distributed 102 mobile phones and 210 megaphones to community volunteers who support communities at risk of flooding and landslides. This has increased community preparedness and readiness to respond to disasters.

CREATING AWARENESS



57,500

Tree seedlings were planted in Mbale and Namisindwa districts.

Through the celebration of International days such as World Environment Day, the project has raised gender-inclusive public awareness campaigns on disaster preparedness and response through radio talk shows, spot messages, and community tree planting activities. During the celebration of World Environment Day on 5th June 2023, the project planted 57,500 tree seedlings in Mbale, Sironko and Namisindwa districts along the riverbanks and community open spaces as part of sensitizations on the conservation of the environment to mitigate further disasters in the region.

ESTABLISHING REGIONAL CONTINGENCY STOCK WAREHOUSE

A contingency stock warehouse has been established at URCS Office in Mbale City to ensure timely and coordinated response. A warehouse management committee of 10 members was formed which underwent a training and orientation of their roles and responsibilities.

This, among other roles, has developed the standard operating procedures of the Warehouse and pre-conditions for releasing stock. The warehouse stores Non-Food



INSIDE THE CONTINGENCY STOCK WAREHOUSE AT THE URCS OFFICE IN MBALE CITY

Items (NFIs) such as menstrual hygiene kits, buckets, jerrycans and blankets to distribute to communities affected by disasters. The warehouse stores Non-Food Items (NFIs) such as menstrual hygiene kits, buckets, jerrycans, wheelbarrows and blankets to distribute to communities affected by disasters.

STRENGTHENING DISTRICT DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

5



Supported five districts of Bududa, Mbale, Sironko, Namisindwa and Butaleja to develop gender-sensitive district contingency plans.

25



Trained 25 technical district officials from Bududa, Mbale, Sironko, Namisindwa and Butaleja districts on disaster risk reduction (DRR) budgeting.

3



3 districts are already using the Contingency Plans to activate early actions to heed to the recent El Nino warnings.

The project has supported 5 districts of Bududa, Mbale and Butaleja, Sironko, Namisindwa to develop gender-sensitive district contingency plans and hazard maps with Forecast based Financing/anticipatory action and protection issues incorporated. The Contingency Plans developed with technical and policy guidance from the Office of Prime Minister (OPM) will help the districts prepare and respond to disasters in the country. Through the support of the Consortium partners, the 3 districts have already used the Contingency Plans to activate early actions to heed to the recent El Nino warnings released by the Uganda National Meteorological Authority.

Additionally, the project has advocated for the allocation of disaster funds (for both response and anticipatory action) to facilitate the operationalization of the District Contingency Plans.

Oxfam has trained 25 technical district officials from the districts of Bududa, Mbale, Sironko, Namisindwa and Butaleja and 6 partner representatives of URCS, CRS, Caritas in disaster risk reduction (DRR) budgeting. This aims to enhance the capacity of the district technical team to budget for DRR funds in the district development plans.



"When the community members are sitting and planning for disaster issues in their respective areas and come up with action plans, they forward them to the subcounty, which are some of the issues and plans we discuss in the District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs) because we don't have our own issues as DDMCs. The sub-county chiefs and the community development officers are always invited to make presentations during the DDMC meetings. During these meetings, we capture the actions that have come from the subcounty level, from the villages up to the district"

Mr. Patrick Kibet, Senior Probation Officer – Secretary to DDMC – Bududa District Local Government.



OXFAM

RESPONDING TO DISASTER EMERGENCIES

Resident District Commissioner of Bulambuli District, Mr Stanley Bayole verifying cash distribution for the landslides victims in Bulambuli District in June 2023.



Responded to
1,351
Households
HH'S



With
6,755
PERSONS



3,641
FEMALE



3,363
MALE

Provided with NFIs and cash assistance in Namisindwa, Bulambuli, Butaleja and Sironko districts.

Under the project, a crisis modifier was activated to respond to the victims of landslides and floods in Bulambuli and Butaleja District and conducted responses in Bulambuli, Sironko and Namisindwa through NFI to victims of floods and hailstorms. The landslides, hailstorms and floods hit 4 districts affecting over 23,508 people in the region destroying livelihoods, shelters, WASH facilities, schools, health facilities and infrastructure among others.

Oxfam and consortium partners responded to 1,351 HHs with 6,755 individuals (3,641F and 3,363M) with cash for shelter, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), Food and NFIs. The cash and NFI response approach is one of the strategies adopted by the project to respond to disasters in the Mt Elgon region, including districts that were not directly involved in the project. This response empowers the affected communities to address their most urgent needs in a dignified way during the disaster.



I received UGX 180,000 from Oxfam and I used it to address the urgent need at home. We constructed a pit toilet, soap and menstrual hygiene kits for my daughters. I also bought food since our source of food was submerged.

Nandudu Jane from Buluganya sub county, Bulambuli District.



My land which was affected by landslides in Buzemulile village had coffee plantation, bananas and trees. All these were destroyed and we didn't harvest anything and up to day, the area was covered. When I received the money, I didn't have food for my family, I used part of the money to buy food, WASH items such as soap, jerrycans. I also bought a pig that will be helpful for paying for fees. I am village health team member(VHT). When Oxfam came, they gave us WASH kits which included gum boots, reflectors, gum boots, umbrellas, rain jackets, and incentives and We move within communities to sensitise people in areas of malaria prevention, keeping the rivers clean and in the distribution of mosquito nets

Muyamba Rogers - Buluganya sub county, Bulambuli District.



Nagudi Elizabeth and Peter Natoli are presenters at Lusa Community Radio in Lusa, Masaba subcounty, Sironko District

They share with communities early warning information and messages, they issue alerts to communities to vacate in case of disasters. The radio was established through a partnership between Oxfam and Uganda Red cross Society with funding with ECHO



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Read more about the Impact of this project here:

<https://uganda.oxfam.org/latest/stories/leveraging-community-structures-and-indigenous-knowledge-strengthen-disaster>

<https://uganda.oxfam.org/latest/stories/river-gauges-providing-early-warnings-floods-communities-mt-elgon-region>

<https://uganda.oxfam.org/latest/stories/meet-henry-delivering-early-warning-messages-early-action-and-nurturing-passion>

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