

OXFAM IN UGANDA



NEWSLETTER
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Oxfam in Uganda was honoured to attend a meeting organised by the Charter for Change and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

The meeting brought together different partners implementing the localisation agenda including Care International, Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Danish Refugee Council and other local and national partners to ensure that they were walking the talk on implementing the signed agreements like the Grand Bargain which are meant to decentralize humanitarian work and support local and national humanitarian actors.

The meeting that was themed *"Situating the Localisation from Rhetoric to Practicalities"* was held at Fairway Hotel, Kampala on the 11th October.

Localisation means empowering local responders in affected countries to lead and deliver humanitarian aid. It aims at strengthening the capacity and resources of local organisations to respond to crises and promote long-term sustainability.

Speaking at the meeting, Naomi Ayot, the chairperson of the Charter for Change Working group cited the gains made by the partners in putting local and national actors at the forefront of humanitarian work.

"Four years ago, a local actor like myself would not call up any Country Director, but today I can ably do that. We can openly consult any of their senior staff at any time as well, it is what we call transformative agenda" she added.

Oxfam in Uganda's Country Director - Francis Shanty Odokorach spoke about the need to integrate local authorities in implementing the localisation agenda.

"Local government is one key actor in the localisation agenda and as such there is a need to tailor training that supports capacity building of local government staff for a full understanding of the concept and implementation of localization"

-FRANCIS SHANTY ODOKORACH



Mr Odokorach speaking at the meeting

Mr Odokorach also advocated for the need to help local actors take their rightful places in localisation.

"A lot of resources will still not be accessible in a responsible manner until the local and national actors can occupy spaces and determine what resources are needed and when," he said.

At the meeting, the Charter for Change Working Group partners presented the following asks to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and CRRF.

- Government to continue providing support in providing space/avenues for transformative localisation agenda to be advocated for.
- Utilise your powers respectively to advance a coordinated transformative localisation agenda and avoid scatter gun approach
- Accountability by signatories, and allies to Charter for Change and Grand Bargain at the country level in terms of performance against commitments
- Utilise the already existing localisation platforms to advance the transformative localisation agenda.



Participants of the climate education meeting pose for a group photo

Oxfam in Uganda recently participated in a 3-day co-creation learning event on climate education and student activism in Accra, Ghana.

The event which was organised by Oxfam Denmark, Action Aid, Plan International, and the All-Africa Students Union brought together participants from different countries including Oxfam Education leads from Mali, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Denmark.

The workshop was aimed at strengthening the capacity and approaches of participating organizations that strategically and programmatically address climate justice through deliberate climate education and activism.

Oxfam in Uganda was represented by Philip Taremwa, the Education Project Coordinator who together with different student movements and youth groups from countries like Ghana, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and the Gambia participated in a series of roundtable discussions and dialogue as the different stakeholders sought to develop solutions to enhance climate activism.

Taremwa stressed the importance of the workshop citing the need to bring together everyone in the fight for climate change action.

"The climate crisis affects the young generation too, so it is important not to leave anyone behind the workshop allowed us to listen to young people air out their concerns and enable us collectively respond to the climate crisis," he remarked.

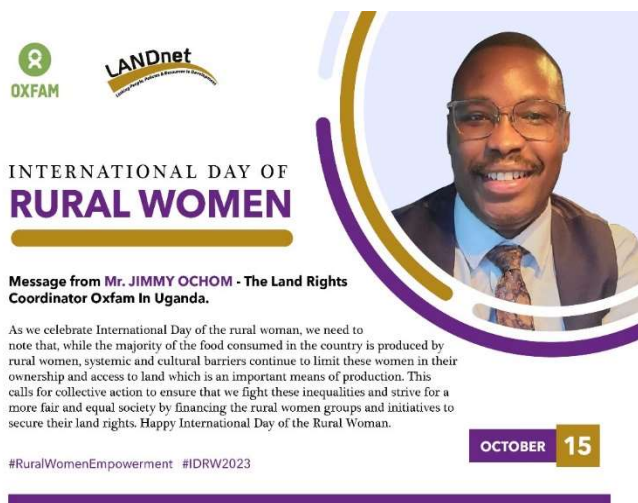
Among the key issues that came up were reflections on physical and digital activism for climate justice (strategies, tools, methods, activities, risks, and challenges), representation and influence of students and young people for student activism and ways to support students and young people for climate justice (empowerment, capacities, and resources)

The workshop was conducted as a part of the Climate Education and Student Activism for Climate Justice project, which seeks to strengthen the capacities and approaches of youth organisations engaged in climate activism.

As the stakeholders consummated the gathering, the student union made recommendations for key stakeholders to act upon.

Recommendations:

- African leaders, INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organisations), local NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations), youth groups, CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) and student groups to push for a review of climate justice financial mechanisms where developed countries must commit to providing financial resources to assist African countries in implementing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change.
- A conscious effort to support youth-led green projects and access to funding for women and farmers to engage in agribusiness and climate education.
- Government to enact intentional climate-conscious policies and legislations and put in place practical implementation and enforcement mechanisms
- Civil society should lead the mission of climate education and awareness creation with policy and legislative backing from the government for coordinated collective action
- Governments should incorporate climate change action and environmental lessons into their various education curricula at basic and senior schools.



Oxfam Uganda joined the rest of the world in celebrating the International Day for Rural Women (IDRW).

Observed annually on 15th October, the IDRW was established by the UN in 2007, to recognise “the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security, and eradicating rural poverty.

This year’s theme was “*Financing for Rural Women’s Empowerment*” and in line with it, Oxfam in Uganda facilitated an online webinar discussion along with its partners Stand for Her Land Campaign, Food Rights Alliance, (FRA) and Women Land Rights Movement (WLRM).

In her opening remarks, Jane Frances Birungi highlighted and recognised the role played by rural women, marred with the existing social and societal norms that limit rural women including access to financial resources, exclusion from the digital space, health services and burden of care work that limit their participation.

“We know that because of our social and gender norms, women are tied up in care work which is not counted, recognised or paid and so it becomes a burden because it doesn’t empower them, and this limits their development and of their communities,” she said.

Oxfam in Uganda Women’s Rights advisor Jane Ocaya-Irama commended rural women for the role they play in supporting the economy of the country.

“Rural women play an important role in the local economies, provision of subsistence agriculture, small businesses, micro and small enterprises and

various initiatives including taking up leadership and contributing to decision making the community level,” she said.

Dr Doreen Kobusingye spoke to the importance of women in the economy citing statistics that spoke to the importance of agriculture and how rural women were the main providers of the food consumed in the country

“We all know that agriculture is the backbone of our economy and these women are playing a vital role, over 77% of the labour force in the agricultural sector is provided by women” she said also mentioning that even though women are the dominant force in agriculture, they only own 38% of the total land in the country linking land ownership to empowerment.

Dr Kobusingye also cited the lack of land rights as a limitation that disempowers women who are not able to access credit and loans but also do not always have a choice over what is grown which limits their contribution forcing them into growing less profitable crops.

“We all know that most women access land through their male relations, that means they do not enjoy exclusive rights to make decisions that are not dependent on what a man wants you to do”

Additionally, Maxensia Nakibuuka also cited a lack of access to arable land, the technology, land, markets and financial resources as limitations that continue to affect women.

“Women are producing food, but because there’s no proper value addition, they find themselves stuck with their produce or selling their food cheaply because the surplus they produce can’t be consumed,” she said – calling upon women farmers to be organised in cooperatives and other groups for profitable marketing.

“There’s a need to have SACCOs for women farmers where they can be organised and network put their produce together and market it together,” she said.

Mr. Iddi Mubarak Mayanja who represented Ms. Angella Nakafeero, the Commissioner of Women Affairs, at the

MGLSD recognised the need to categorise rural women to plan better for them and empower them to make them more robust and easily able to deal with any economic challenges.

“We need to look at how we can increase women enterprises and put them in groups so that they’re not cheated by middlemen,” he said, emphasising the need to help rural women advance to the use of mechanization, and other modern methods of farming.

Ms. Rita Namuddu highlighted the opportunities

available for rural women to access financing for their projects such as financial literacy training.

“We have created products tailor-made for women to allow them to have value chains to support them in their business,” she said.

The deliberation succeeded in raising key issues that affect women as key stakeholders and decision-makers were able to interact with the public who shared insights and suggestions on how to improve the conditions of rural women including creating more ways to access credit.

OXFAM’S STAFF AND PARTNERS COMPLETE DIGITAL INFLUENCING AND RIGHTS TRAINING

Digital rights training refers to education and awareness programs designed to inform individuals about their rights and responsibilities.

Oxfam in Uganda recently organised a three days digital rights training for staff and partners at Royal Suites, Bugolobi to equip staff and partners with the skills, knowledge, and tools to apply in their daily work as they integrate and advocate for digital rights.

Dorah Ntunga, the Media and Communications Coordinator noted that the training also sought to improve the digital strategies, skills and reach of working and those of our partners.

The 3-day training was attended by more than twenty partner staff and Oxfam in Uganda staff that were picked from the four thematic areas including Humanitarian preparedness, Gender Justice and Women’s rights, Resilient Livelihood and Governance and Accountability. Speaking at the opening of the training, Oxfam Country Director Francis Shanty Odokorach highlighted Oxfam’s commitment to enhancing knowledge for Oxfam staff and partners regarding digital influencing and rights.

He commended the participants for attending the training, emphasising the importance of training and learning how to navigate the digital spaces.

A team of in-house expert facilitators ranging from Dorah Ntunga, Philip Kabuye and Hood Lubowa combined with industry experts like Esther Kalenzi, the founder of Charity Organisation, **40 Days Over 40 Smiles**, Neil Blazevic, a digital safety and security

trainer from **InterNews**, Eldrine Wanyama, the Legal Officer at The **Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPEA)** and Agnes Tumuheire, a digital skills trainer to deliver an engaging training.

One by one, the trainers delved into topics like digital rights, digital influencing, civic space, digital safety, digital tools, digital rights, the civic space, shifting civil society space, and digital influencing and more importantly the RiADA (Rights in a Digital Age) policy compendium, among others.

Key takeaways were on the importance and power of social media, which was highlighted in the story of 4040, a charity organisation that was born and nurtured through social media and the understanding of the digital space in which Oxfam in Uganda staff and partners operate.



Dorah Ntunga conducts a session on digital influencing



The International Program Director of Oxfam Denmark Niels Hjordtal, accompanied by the Oxfam in Uganda Country Director, Francis Shanty Odokorach recently visited the three refugee hosting settlements of Imvepi, Rhino Camp and Bidi Bidi in West Nile.

With funding from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) through Oxfam Denmark Oxfam in Uganda is implementing a project aiming at promoting economic justice and inclusive democracies; education for active citizenship, inclusive peacebuilding, humanitarian action and resilience which runs from 2022 to 2025.

During the visit, Hjordtal and the team interacted with district leaders and project participants including farmer groups cultivating cassava, and tomatoes and assessed how

Oxfam in Uganda is implementing the 'One Programme Approach (OPA).

OPA is hinged on three thematic goals which aim to promote women's rights, good governance and accountability, resilient livelihoods, as well as enhance preparedness, reduce vulnerability to disaster and ensure an effective response to humanitarian crises.

The visit offered an opportunity for Mr. Hjordtal to interact with project implementing teams and stakeholders in the West Nile district of Yumbe where Oxfam and local partners are implementing projects across both the refugee and host communities.

He appreciated this approach and the community's efforts towards building their resilience and urged them to venture into value addition for some of the harvested crops such as cassava

to tap into the market to combat poverty.

This project is being implemented in partnership with four Refugee Led Organizations, one National Community Based Organization and four NGOs to achieve a peaceful, gender and climate-just society that upholds all human rights through the promotion of peaceful co-existence, delivery of livelihood and food security, education, climate change, and economic and social justice interventions in South-west (EACOP district) and West Nile districts of Yumbe, Madi Okollo, and Terego.

The team also visited other projects, met with the climate justice club and the students trained on green skills and the instructors at Lodonga Vocational Training Institute, the WASH activities in schools (Health club and Water connection) at Yelulu Primary School.

Oxfam in Uganda and partners recently organised a training for first responders to sensitise them on the common and technical standards in emergency Water, Sanitation and Health (WASH) response and the application of humanitarian principles into practice.

The training which was titled “*Training of the Local First Responders in Emergency WASH*” delved into introductory and participatory planning for local first responders as part of anticipatory actions to mitigate disasters.



First responders attend the training in Mbale

It was intended for not only Oxfam in Uganda staff but also district local government officials Uganda Redcross Society (UCRS), and District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) members from the targeted four districts to build the capacity of the early disaster responders on cash assistance programs, share experiences and generate practical action points regarding cash transfer modality while responding to disasters.

Through the course of the two days, the training attracted 50 participants and covered topics on cash transfer, health awareness for flood-affected people, risk analysis and management, humanitarian standards and among others monitoring of indicators to improve the quality of life of the people affected by disasters.

The training was a part of the “Strengthening Community-led Actions on Disaster Preparedness and Response” project being implemented by Oxfam in Uganda, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Caritas Tororo and the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) in the five districts of Bududa, Butaleja, Mbale, Namisindwa, and Sironko.

The project is meant to strengthen community-led and locally owned disaster preparedness actions building on ongoing government efforts, existing local structures, and previous experiences of other actors in the country and is meant to reach at least 141,256 beneficiaries who are affected by the highest occurrence of droughts, landslides, and floods in the Mount Elgon region in Eastern Uganda.

Jimmy Asiku the Oxfam in Uganda Disaster Risk Management Coordinator emphasised that the training was necessary to allow first responders and the DDMC to prepare early for the risk of disaster.

“We wanted to prepare our first responders to make sure they can respond with the capacity to provide cash transfer and wash needs in vulnerable communities.” He said.

The Mt Elgon sub-region that encompasses districts like Bududa, Mbale City, Bulambuli, Butaleja, and Namisindwa among others is prone to weather-related natural disasters like floods and landslides that often destroy property and loss of lives.

Interventions in Disaster Preparedness

Following the El Nino forecast that was released by the Uganda National Meteorological Authority for September to December predicting the likelihood of above-normal rainfall in several parts of the country, Oxfam in Uganda and its partners while working with the DDMCs have been preparing the communities in the Mt Elgon sub-region for any eventualities of disasters.

Accordingly, the partners have embarked on anticipatory actions to back up the cash transfer training and mitigate the effects of any disasters and prepare communities including opening up drainage channels, digging contour lines, restoring river embankments using sandbags, disseminating early warning information to make sure the communities that live in areas prone to disasters in the Mt Elgon sub-region are safe.

NORAD FOOD SECURITY PROJECT CONDUCTS TRAINING ON GALS' METHODOLOGY

Between the 9th-13th of October Oxfam in Uganda completed the first phase of the Gender Action and Learning (GALS) methodology training in Arua.

Gender Action Learning System (GALS) is a structured community-led empowerment methodology aimed at creating self-led economic, social, and political transformation starting at the community level.

The 5-day training targeted staff and partners that are going to be involved in the implementation of the Combating Food Security Among Vulnerable Individuals and Households in Terego and Zombo project that is being implemented in the West Nile region of Uganda.

The training sought to strengthen the capacities of partners and their community facilitators in promoting gender justice within the project using the GALS methodology and equip partners and Oxfam staff with practical skills in the application of the GALS methodology in different programme areas.

GALS methodology was developed under Oxfam Novib's WEMAN (Women's Empowerment, Mainstream and Networking) programme with Linda Mayoux and local partners and piloted with Kabarole Research and Resource Center, Western Uganda in 2002. At present Oxfam is using GALS in eight countries in Africa (Burundi, DRC, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and Uganda) and five countries in Asia (Indonesia, Laos, Pakistan, Cambodia, and Vietnam).

Using the power of symbols and principles of inclusion, GALS uses a set of tools that enable individuals and households to plan their lives and identify and negotiate their needs and interests for gender-equitable livelihoods. It enables them to change the gender and power relations that would otherwise constrain them from achieving their visions.

The methodology works with women and men to develop their visions for change, appreciate their strengths, and achievements and work collectively to address gender inequalities within the family and community. It is aimed at creating sustainable change and self-reliance as participating households take ownership of their development pathways and involve all household members in a vision road journey. GALS was developed through gender adaptation of the general Participatory Action Learning System (PALS).



Jackson Muhindo speaking at the GALS Methodology training

John Bosco Okaya, a GALS champion and facilitator from CEFORD and Peace Chandini, the Oxfam in Uganda Gender and Women Rights Coordinator facilitated the training and throughout the five days unpacked concepts like Gender and Sex, Gender Equality and Equity, Gender analysis, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender roles and responsibilities, Gender stereotypes.

The first phase of the training saw over 20 participants made up of staff and project implementing partners from the Agency for Community Empowerment (AFCE), Youth Social Advocacy Team (Y-SAT) and International Foundation for Recovery and Development (IFRAD) benefit from hands-on practical training that led them to Wadelai Empowerment Learning Center, a cooperative society in Pakwach district where GALS champions took them through a set of GALS tools

According to Jackson Muhindo, the Oxfam in Uganda, Resilience & Climate Justice Coordinator, the training was necessary to involve families in the project implementation to ensure that it reaches out the whole family unit.

"We wanted to ensure that both women and men benefit from the project but more importantly to transform their livelihood as families," he said.

Combating food security among vulnerable individuals and households in Terego and Zombo is a one-year pilot project that will support 17000 individuals from refugees and refugee hosting communities of Terego and other food-stressed communities in Zombo districts of West Nile.

INAUGURAL INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR CARE AND SUPPORT CELEBRATED BY CSO'S IN KAMPALA



In July 2023, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution establishing the International Day for Care and Support on 29 October. The day is used as a platform to recognize and raise awareness about the crucial role of care and support in our societies and to also recognise the unequal burden of unpaid care and household work on women and girls.

This day builds upon the legacy of trade unions, who have been involved in the observance of the date for the last four years.

Oxfam and partners have been involved in the advocacy for the recognition and reward of unpaid care work through its Women's Economic Empowerment and Care (WE-Care) flagship programme that began in 2013 to address unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) as a key factor in achieving gender equality and economic development. We work in four countries in Southern and Eastern Africa, with regional Pan-Africa and global components.

On the 30th of October, Oxfam in Uganda joined Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) and Civil Society Organisation (CSO) stakeholders, the government, academia, the private sector and civil society in commemorating the inaugural International Day of Care and Support at a colourful event held at the Golden Tulip Hotel, Kampala

Speaking at the event, Jane Ocaya-Irama, the Oxfam in Uganda Women's Rights advisor lauded the combined effort of all civil society stakeholders in the success of the event and the importance of care work in sustaining societies.

"Care work, as a social good is something that benefits the largest number of people in the largest possible way," she remarked.

She also noted that empowering women economically will go a long way in contributing to sustainable gender equality and economic development.



Jane Ocaya-Irama speaking at the launch of the day for Care and Support

With the celebrations came the call for more work to be done in advancing the recognition of care work as emphasised by Ms. Sheilla Ariho, the Women in Development Officer, at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development asked for continued agitation for policy changes to recognise and support care workers.

"As we mark this milestone, let us use this chance to advocate for policy reforms matched by adequate investment in public care services, infrastructure and social protection measures to create long-term solutions" she said.

According to a baseline report from Makerere University School of Women and Gender Studies, Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC), and Care International Uganda, the findings show that women dedicate up to 30 hours per week to unpaid care work.

The recognition of the International Day of Care and Support is important and will be a reminder to all stakeholders to make, renew or enhance their commitment and take action to promote the rights of caregivers, care workers and those receiving care and support.

WHAT THE WOMEN REFUGEES WANT TO BE DISCUSSED AT GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

With support from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Oxfam in Uganda recently organised a successful consultation meeting on pledges for the upcoming Global Refugee Forum (GRF) with women refugee leaders.

The meeting was held at Oxfam in Uganda country offices in Muyenga with leaders and representatives of women refugee-led organisations and brought together both urban refugees and those from across the country living in settlements such as Kyaka II, Arua and Kyegegwa.

The discourse was moderated by Geoffrey Owino the Local and Humanitarian Leadership & Policy Influencing Coordinator who steered the discussion that was also attended by Hannah Cooper, the Oxfam International Policy and Research Coordinator-Forced Displacement.

Phiona Niyijena, a refugee leader spoke about the need for the global community to support refugees towards achieving self-reliance, especially with the food ration cuts.



Niyijena Speaking at the consultation meeting

Niyijena also spoke about the importance of supporting refugee-led organisations to empower them to effectively support refugees.

"We may know our problems, but we lack the capacity and technical knowledge to effectively carry out our work which would require capacity building," she said.

Her sentiments were also re-echoed by Siham Ahmed Roraye, the Executive Director of the Women Refugee Leaders Network who emphasised the need to have refugee representation at the GRF.

"We need a refugee seat at the Refugee Forum, we can no longer have representatives, we have to be heard." She said.

Among other key issues raised at the gathering by the different refugee women leaders were access to justice for refugees, representation on national and regional levels, access to medical care and job opportunities.

Edward Mwebaze, the Oxfam in Uganda Head of Program credited the key stakeholders involved in the organisation of the convening.

"I want to appreciate all teams involved in the organisation of this important meaning from the women refugee leaders to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the UNHCR," he said.

Mwebaze also recognised the occasion as a momentous one that sets the precedent for future engagements with women-led refugee organisations.

"We didn't in the past have this focus but increasingly we shall have more opportunities like these to work more closely with women refugee leaders,"

He also encouraged the leaders to leverage the GRF as an opportunity to access more advocacy platforms.

Oxfam has since 2018 supported refugee-led organisations through its partnerships with the Refugee Led Organisations Network of Uganda (RELON Uganda) and the Program manager expressed the organisation's continued commitment to supporting refugee-led organisations and encouraged the participants to further the conversation beyond the GRF.

"The GRF should not be the end to your actions (advocacy), but it should be a means for you to access other platforms."

USING CLEAN ENERGY TO REDUCE WOMEN'S WORKLOAD

Albert Maniragalula is a 35-year-old Burundian National who migrated to Uganda in 2016 after his parents and most of his relatives were killed.

"After losing my parents, I knew I wasn't going to survive either so I ran away together with my family of eleven members." He says.

Albert and his family met several hurdles in the bush and had to walk long distances before crossing the border.

Upon their arrival in Uganda, they settled in Nakivale Refugee Settlement where they started their new life. Albert began doing casual jobs in the settlement to sustain his family, he later picked an interest in moulding energy-saving stoves after observing that fuel was a big challenge among the refugees.

"I realized that women and girls were spending a lot of time walking long distances to find firewood but would sometimes return with nothing to use to cook their food. I decided to start moulding stoves which I sell to these women at a small fee so that they can save firewood."

-Albert Maniragalula

Albert showcased his stoves during an exhibition in Nakivale refugee Settlement. He was identified by UNHCR staff who also interested him in making and using briquettes in the energy-saving stoves.



While making briquettes, he also ventured into producing biogas locally using polythene bags, buckets, and human faecal waste. However, this new venture was quite challenging for Albert. It is at this level that he was identified by Oxfam during a pilot of the Biogas System facility.

Albert underwent training in fixing pipelines for the facility. After training, he took up the role of digging pitholes for the production of the biogas which helped to supplement his income.

Albert learned to fix the biogas pipelines and he was provided with a water tank and other equipment that enabled him to produce biogas safely and increase its production for both cooking and lighting his house.

Albert's family uses biogas for both cooking and lighting. The biogas serves as a cleaner, easier, and faster source of energy.

He is also contracted to fix and repair pipelines for biogas systems around the refugee settlement.

The waste matter from the production of biogas is used as manure for Albert's vegetable garden. From his savings, he was able to buy a cow and also paid school fees for all his dependents.

Maniragalula is one of the people who were trained by a team from OXFAM and Joint Effort to Save Energy (JESE) under The **Strengthening Resilience Through Enhanced Local Disaster Risk Management Capacities** project.

The project was implemented between 2020-2023 which was implemented by Oxfam in Uganda and partners to ensure stability and address the effects of migration and displaced persons in Uganda with major emphasis on the Southwestern Uganda districts of Isingiro and Kyegegwa.

Through its intervention, Maniragalula was able to not only instal his own biogas equipment, effectively ending the use of firewood but also scale out his knowledge by becoming a trainer of biogas technicians and the 35-year-old has successfully trained two people in biogas installation.

Other key gains made by the project were peacebuilding, sustainable management of natural resources, and environmental protection among others.

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