

# OXFAM IN UGANDA



APRIL – MAY NEWSLETTER



## OXFAM CONDUCTS CAPACITY BUILDING IN COMMUNICATIONS, HR, DIGITAL RIGHTS, AND SAFEGUARDING

The Oxfam in Uganda team, including Communications, Human Resources, Digital Rights, and Safeguarding conducted training

sessions for the staff and partners from DANIDA SP and Conrad N. Hilton



Foundation funded projects in West Nile. The team covered a range of crucial topics including, documentation and storytelling, getting informed consent, social media strategies, branding and visibility, photography, civic space, digital rights and internet governance, developing effective human resources policies, the guidelines for safeguarding and managing recruitment and performance management among others.



## CMT VISITS KARAMOJA AND MT ELGON REGION

In May, Oxfam in Uganda's Country Management Team (CMT) conducted a monitoring visit in the Mt Elgon and Karamoja subregions, assessing the impact from projects implemented by Oxfam and partners in Bulambuli, Mbale and Nakapiripirit districts.

In Mt Elgon region, the team visited Masugu Primary School in Bulambuli district, where Oxfam and partners have rebuilt WASH facilities that were destroyed by landslides and the district leadership of Mbale and Bulambuli. This effort is part of the "Strengthening community-led and locally-owned disaster preparedness actions" project activities, implemented in six districts in the Mt Elgon Region.



Alex Bayole, the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Bulambuli district, commended Oxfam for its work in the region and also made a rallying call to the community members embrace their new and think long-term about sustainable ways to develop in the resettlement camp.

The CMT team also met and interacted with the community members resettled at Bunambutye resettlement center in Bulambuli which was commissioned in 2019 to host persons affected by landslides.

In Nakapiripirit, Karamoja region, the team engaged with project participants and stakeholders involved in the implementation of RISE-Karamoja project and also visited Moruita and Kakomongole sub-counties to witness the impact of beekeeping and other livelihood activities.

This project follows the triple nexus programming approach, which creates synergies across humanitarian, development, and peace pillars.

In Kakomongole, the model couples implementing the GALS Methodology shared their experiences of how it has helped them to live in harmony by sharing responsibilities within the home

**"As a man, I believed my only role was to rear animals, but we were taught the importance of sharing responsibilities to ease the burden on one another. Nowadays, when I return from work and find my wife occupied with chores like washing, I can take up cooking without shame," says Paul.**

Francis commended the couples for taking the bold step that will allow them to benefit from the different development programs, citing the fact that united families were more receptive to development.

They also visited other components of the project, which include livelihood through climate-smart agriculture, the advocacy and the beekeeping component.

In Moruita, the team met with Puppeteers - a group of young men and women trained to perform as puppeteers to create awareness messages on subjects such as gender-based violence, immunisation, the effects of mining, environmental protection, and conservation.

The team also visited and interacted with farmers carrying out climate-smart agriculture.

Headed by the Country Director, Francis Shanty Odokorach, the CMT was comprised of Edward Mwebaze, the Head of Program; Jane Ocaya Irama, the Women's Rights Advisor; Anne Namakula, the Program Funding Manager; Doracs Mulelengi, the Business Support Manager; and Human Resource Business Manager.





## THE LAUNCH OF LANGO HUMANITARIAN PLATFORM



The Grand Bargain and Charter for Change agreement are some of the agreements assented to by Oxfam and other international humanitarian actors to support local and national actors, including responding to local emergencies in the humanitarian sector.

In a bid to further the localisation agenda, Oxfam in Uganda and Plan International facilitated the launch of the Lango Humanitarian Platform (LHP).

The launch, which was highlighted with a match in the streets of Lira City and a radio talk show, was organised by the Charter for Change Working Group Uganda and culminated with a launch meeting at the Margarita Hotel in Lira.

The LHP members, at the launch advocated for the adherence of international non-governmental Organisations to the signed agreements that call for equitable partnerships to ensure the sustainability of their humanitarian response, citing that local and

national actors understand the contexts of the environments they work in and thus should be involved in humanitarian response.

“Let the local actors be involved and sit at the decision-making table so that they can design solutions to challenges affecting their communities together with the donors,” explained Julian Joyce Acoko, the chairperson of the Charter 4 Change Working Group.

Edward Mwebaze, Head of Program who along with Geoffrey Owino, the Local Humanitarian Leadership Coordinator who represented the Oxfam described the launch as a step in the right direction, resulting from the work on localisation that has been done by the signatories of the localisation agenda frameworks.

The Lango sub-region, which is found in northern Uganda, faces several challenges, including poverty and natural disasters like floods in the Amolatar and Dokolo districts, which arose from rising water levels in the Kyoga and Kwanja lakes.

These disasters have in the past displaced thousands of people and destroyed property and at the heart of responding to these disasters have been the local and national actors in the sub-region.

It is believed that through the organisation within the LHP, local and national actors will be able to better respond to the crises and disasters that continue to plague the region, which was until recently a part of the Acholi Humanitarian Platform.

Oxfam and partners Refugee Led Organisations Network Uganda and World Voices Uganda, with funding from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, are implementing the Refugee and Local Humanitarian Leadership Advocacy project to further the localisation agenda.

## HOUSEHOLDS AFFECTED BY LANDSLIDES RECEIVE RELIEF ITEMS IN BULAMBULI, BUTALEJA AND SIRONKO

Oxfam in Uganda and partners implementing the ECHO-funded Strengthening Community-led Actions on Disaster Preparedness and Response project and different district disaster management teams in the Mt. Elgon region, rushed to the aid of households affected by disasters in the districts of Butaleja, Bulambuli, and Sironko.

In April 2024, floods swept through the Mt. Elgon region following a heavy downpour that caused floods and landslides, which led to the loss of life



and destruction of properties.

Following these disasters, Oxfam, partners, and the disaster management committees conducted rapid needs assessments, identified the persons to benefit from relief aid, and sensitised them on the kind of support they would get before providing support.

In Bulambuli district, where floods in the Bumufuni sub-county on April 3, 2024, ravaged the communities, destroying homes and gardens and affecting 362 households (1630 persons), the ECHO-project consortium of partners responded to the affected persons supporting about 100 households (500 persons) with non-food items (NFIs).

They included blankets, buckets, jerrycans, tarpaulins, laundry soap, a kitchen set, floor mats, insecticide mosquito nets, and toilet/pit-latrine slabs, among others.

While in Butaleja, where similar floods in the Himutu and Butaleja sub-counties affected 1,102 households (7,217 persons), the response supported 611 households, a representative of 3,055 persons, with cash assistance to help them recover from the crisis.

On April 16, 2024, the district of Sironko was hit by floods resulting from heavy rains that destroyed gardens, homes, submerged schools, and roads, cutting off the sub-counties of Butandinga, Buchabo, Butandinga town council, and Bugitimwa, affecting 477 households (2,385 persons).

The consortium came to the aid of 100 households, reflective of 500 persons with NFI items like tarpaulins, soap, water purifiers, blankets, buckets, toilet slabs, and sanitary towels, among others.

The Mt. Elgon region is prone to natural disasters, including floods and landslides, arising from the heavy rainfall received in the area.

For the last 2 years, the ECHO consortium, which is led by Oxfam in Uganda and also includes the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS), Caritas Tororo, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), has, in partnership with the district leadership, been responding to crises in the Mt. Elgon region.

Through the project, communities across the 5 implementing districts of Bududa, Namisindwa, Sironko, Butaleja, and Mbale have been trained on disaster preparedness and response practices such as anticipatory actions, commonly known as early actions, disaster risk reduction activities, and communication.

**NIFs included blankets, buckets, jerrycans, tarpaulins, laundry soap, a kitchen set, floor mats, insecticide mosquito nets, and toilet/pit-latrine slabs, among others.**

## CSOS IN EXTRACTIVES INDUSTRY ENGAGE TOTAL INVESTORS

Oxfam and civil society organisations working in the extractives industry recently had an engagement with Total Energies Investors to present their recommendations and key concerns about the total energy oil projects in Uganda.

Total Energies is heavily involved in the Ugandan extractives industry through the TILENGA and EACOP projects, which seek to develop oil and gas resources in the Lake Albert region, a task that requires not only that the Project Affected Persons (PAPs) rights be observed but also that consideration be taken to protect the biodiversity of the different locations where it is being implemented.

Oxfam in Uganda is part of a group of CSOs including Civic Response on Environment and Development (CRED), Global Rights Alert (GRA), Civil Society Coalition on Oil and Gas (CSCO), Resource Rights Africa (RRA), Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), Center for Budget and Tax Policy (CBTP), Wildlife Conservation Society (WSO), Citizens Concern Africa (CICOA), Natural Resources Governance Institute (NRGI), and Water Governance Institute (WGI) that carry out advocacy in the extractives industry

On the 26th of April, the CSOs, who work with communities that are being impacted by extractive activities in the implementation of their programs, met with a team of investors backing Total Energies and presented their concerns to the investors of the French energy company.

According to Sophie Nampewo Njuba, the Ag Governance and Accountability Manager, who represented the organisation at the meeting, the meeting offered Total Energies investors the opportunity to hear from civil society organisations on the projects Total is undertaking

in the oil and gas sector. In a joint statement read in the meeting that was held at the Oxfam Country office by Winnie Mugabirwe, the Executive Director, GRA, who represented the CSOs, the organisations commended the efforts being made by Total Energies to promote and protect human rights in the communities in which they work.

The CSOs, however, also expressed concern on a range of issues, including the conflicts arising from land use, biodiversity, the respect of human rights and project-affected persons, gender and grievance handling, and governance, among others, citing that more was still to be done.

Sophie Nampewo Njuba, the Ag Governance and Accountability Manager, described the meeting as key in having the challenges facing the project-affected persons addressed by the responsible stakeholders.

The meeting came against the backdrop of other engagements that the CSOs have had with key actors in the extractives industry, including a prior meeting with a team from Total Energies held earlier this year in February.



## LEAP II PROJECT LAUNCHED IN TEREGO, YUMBE, AND KYEGEGWA DISTRICTS

Oxfam in Uganda and partners Uganda Refugee Disaster Management Council (URDMC), SEE (Social, Economic, and Environmental) Impact, and key government stakeholders recently launched the second phase of the [Leadership Empowerment, Access, and Protection of Women and Girls \(LEAP II\) project](#) in the districts of Yumbe, Terego, and Kyegegwa.

LEAP II – funded to the tune of \$717,197.70 by the Norwegian Embassy through UN Women, is an extension of recently closed LEAP I project that was also funded by UN Women and implemented in the districts of Isingiro, Moroto, and Kaabong.

The project launch events brought together key stakeholders, including partners, district leadership, refugee leaders, and representatives from the UN refugee agency

The district leadership received the intervention with open arms and also offered helpful insight to the implementing team on how to improve the project.

Armitage Basakanika, the Rhino Camp settlement commandant in Terego, encouraged Oxfam and partners to work in tandem with the district, citing the fact that the local leadership was always in the best position to advise in the context of the district they work in.

Juliet Ayo Okwir, the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) of Kyegegwa district noted that while the project was meant to empower primarily women and girls, it is also important to involve men for the sustainability of the project.

**“While the burden of conflict rests heavily on women and girls, let us not leave out the boy child and the men,”** she said, adding that the Kyegegwa district leadership would create an enabling environment to allow the project to achieve its set target.

Charles Opiyo, Oxfam’s Resilient Livelihoods Manager appreciated stakeholders for their feedback and assured them that their advice and recommendations would be taken and added into the project planning

to make the interventions better suited to meet the needs of its project targets.

Oxfam in Uganda’s Country Director, Francis Shanty Odokorach called upon the communities of the implementing districts to fully embrace the project to ensure its success and sustainability.

The two-year project will also seek to empower crisis-affected populations, particularly women and youth, to have better access to food, income, and resilience to climate shocks while following the triple nexus approach to programming that will blend both humanitarian and development aspects to meet the needs of different participants.

The project will advance the well-being of refugees and host community women and girls affected by conflict, severe drought, and forced displacement by supporting them in carrying out climate-smart agriculture, planting trees in micro and small enterprises, designing early warnings, using clean energy, and providing gender action learning system training.





## REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITY FARMER GROUPS EMPOWERED WITH INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITY INPUTS

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Uganda currently hosts 1.6 million refugees, with the number of refugees increasingly growing due to conflicts and the dire humanitarian crisis in neighbouring South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The increase in population in the different settlements, including Rhino Camp, Bidibidi, and Omugo Base Camp, where Oxfam in Uganda and partners implement its activities, has exerted pressure on the natural resources of the country, including high demand for food and resources.

This hasn't been helped by the food ration reductions by the World Food Programme (WFP) due to resource constraints, which have exacerbated the food crisis in the refugee settlements.



In a bid to increase household income for the refugee communities, Oxfam in Uganda distributed agricultural inputs and income-generating and activity inputs to farmer groups in Imvepi and Omugo refugee settlements.

The inputs that were distributed under the Fred Foundation-funded project to support refugee farming communities in Imvepi, Rhino Camp,

and Bidibidi settlements were received by the various farmer group leaders on behalf of their teams and were broken down into agricultural inputs (seeds and farming tools), goats, and chickens to support the community income-generating activities of the project participants.

A total of 3 farmer groups, including Unity Farmers Group, Anabut Farmers Group, and Ocia Rice Farmers Group, in the refugee settlements of Rhino Camp and Imvepi, received an assortment of inputs, including goats, planting seeds including rice, eggplants, okra, and onions, and also Kuroiler chickens, to support their livelihoods.

According to Robert Rossy Okello, the Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods Coordinator, the inputs will help improve income security for refugee and host community members.

Through the 6-month project that was directly implemented by Oxfam, the intervention sought to provide at least 150 households with the necessary resources to protect and start rebuilding livelihood assets.

Oxfam in Uganda has in the past supported refugee and host community households with interventions like kitchen gardening, fuel-efficient stove making, cash for work, unconditional cash grants, and some income-generating activities like saloon operations, poultry, and soap making.

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## WATER POINTS INSTALLED IN SCHOOLS EASE LEARNING FOR PUPILS IN REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITIES

Since 2014, Oxfam has worked across refugee settlements in the greater North, South and Western regions of Uganda, implementing integrated Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programs with gender and protection (including peace-building activities) and livelihood programmes.

In Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in West Nile, Oxfam offered to provide WASH facilities to some of the selected schools such as Ofua 6, Yelulu and Tika.

Some of the WASH initiatives include distribution of the hygiene kits, construction of WASH facilities such as latrines, water taps, skills training in making reusable pads.

Additionally, water points have been installed in schools to ease the learning of the pupils. 15 water points have been constructed in five schools and three improved latrines while the host community and refugee settlement got three water points.

Some of these initiatives have reduced pupil absenteeism, dropping out of girls from schools among others.

"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 the drop-out of girls," Simon Said a teacher a teacher, Ofua VI Primary School.

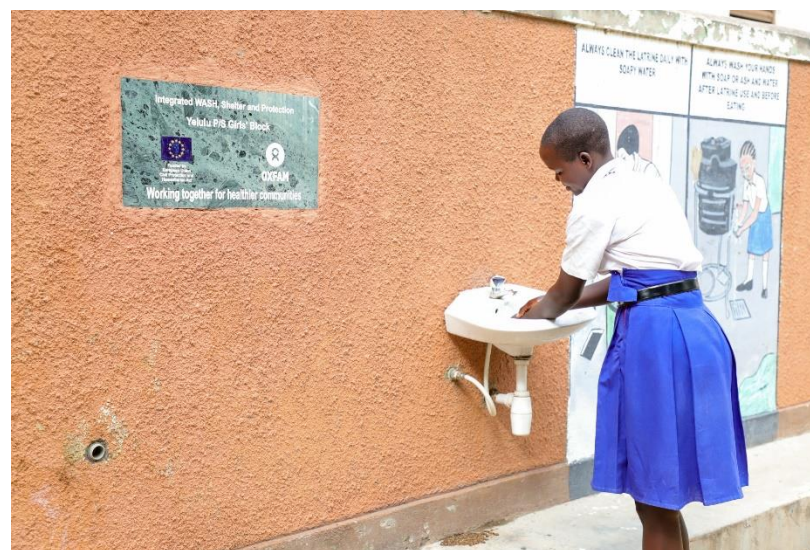
"Before, we had a serious water scarcity challenge. Our pupils had to move more than 500 meters away from the school to look for water at break and lunchtime. This had been troubling and challenging the school and it had birthed vices such as unnecessary absenteeism by pupils. Some of them would not return to school after these breaks," Simon added.

"Oxfam has also taught our pupils and teachers good hygiene and sanitation practices, which have been extended to the communities by our pupils, he said.

At Ofua 6 Community Primary School in Rhino Camp settlement, Oxfam also supported girls with hygiene kits comprising of soap, buckets, comb, reusable sanitary pads and towels and others. Both learners and teachers learnt making reusable pads and this has helped girls manage their menstrual cycles comfortably and stay in class.

"I also teach the girls menstrual health management and smartness. I now know how to make my own pads and sale some to make money," Ruth Tumalu, a P.6 Pupil at Ofua 6 Primary School.

Download the journal to learn from the testimonies → <https://lnkd.in/gwBGVCXG>



## MAY HIGHLIGHTS

### WHAT TRANSPIRED AT THE 'FIRST' NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON LAND GOVERNANCE AT PARLIAMENT

Oxfam, partners and other key land actors in May organised the first ever High level National Symposium on Land governance.

The symposium was held at the Parliament and was graced by the Rt Hon Thomas Tayebwa, under the theme; **"Securing land rights to support climate change adaptation and sustainable food systems"**.

This event was hinged on the land rights awareness activities and advocacy that Oxfam and other key actors have been advocating for over the time.

Tayebwa noted that the intersection of land governance, climate change and sustainable food systems, remains a pressing challenge that requires urgent attention and collective action especially for smallholder farmers and marginalized groups including women.

In his speech delivered by Milton Muwuma the MP for Kigulu South, Tayebwa said "in the face of these challenges, securing land rights emerges as a fundamental pillar of climate change adaptation and sustainable food systems. Land rights provide the foundation upon which resilient communities can build their livelihoods, protect their natural resources, and adapt to changing climatic conditions,".

In his remarks, Oxfam in Uganda's Country Director Francis Shanty Odokorach called for

the need to protect the rights of the end land users.

He noted that government programmes most times prioritize large scale producers or commercial farmers at the expense of the



land end users especially the small holder farmers who are dependents on land as a means of livelihood.

"About 70% of the households in Uganda are engaged in land-based subsistence families and majority of whom are women. Yet, we are seeing that these national policies are prioritizing economic growth through privatization and consolidation of land for peak infrastructural or agricultural projects," he noted.

Such policies and incentives instead are increasing gender injustice, rural poverty, biodiversity loss, and rising social conflicts, that need to be addressed.

"I hope that through the conversation and discussion today, that some of the voices of the women and of the people who have been unfairly affected by these policies will be heard," he added

Francis also asked policy makers continue paying attention to addressing historical injustices for land rights and recognize local and traditional tenure systems in the policy commitments.

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The event was attended by high level government actors including different members of Parliament – who immensely contributed to the discussions regarding land rights.

Christine Kaaya Nakimwero, the Chairperson of the Uganda Parliamentarians Land Management Forum added that the lack of land courts and limited financing to the Land Fund have contributed to land disputes.



## A VISIT TO LODONGA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE IN YUMBE DISTRICT

It is about nine hours of travel by road to reach Lodonga Polytechnic Institute in Yumbe District from Kampala.

The institute was established in 1980 to train and skill students in vocational studies to help them create their own jobs.



The institute offers both formal and informal courses which are studied for three years and three months respectively.

Formal courses include plumbing, carpentry, fashion and design, mechanics, motor vehicle mechanics and repair among others while the informal courses include hair dressing, vehicle repair and maintenance.

In 2022, Oxfam in Uganda conducted a needs assessment to ascertain the qualification of the teachers in the vocational training institutes (VTIs) in West Nile and Lodonga was one of them.

The needs assessment was conducted to find out whether the teachers in the VTIs are qualified or trained teachers.

The assessment indicated that majority of them are not qualified teachers. Out of 5 teachers, 1 in 5 is not qualified to be a teacher in these institutes. Most of the teachers were trained in their specific professionals such as engineering, mechanics, not necessarily as teachers.

Most of these courses are offered by technical instructors who graduated in their technical fields and not as teachers, therefore there is always a missing link on the quality of content that is given to the students, according to Samson Andebo, the Institute's Principal.

Oxfam and the partners introduced the Teacher Learning Circles in 2023 – a methodology that would help those teachers, also referred as instructors who are not qualified teachers to use the right pedagogy/teaching method.

A year later, Oxfam's Communications team visited the institute to learn how the teachers have copied up the TLCs and how this is impacting the institute and the teachers share their sentiments about the significance of the TLCs on the professional conduct and student performance.

*We have instructors and teachers who are trained as civil engineers, they have the technical knowledge in engineering, the TLCs have equipped them with skills of how to transfer that knowledge to the students - **Samson Andebo - Principal***

*As a person coming from engineering and IT, I have realised that when you are a teacher, in society, there is an element that is emulated from teachers. Therefore, you are a role model to the community, and this helps to move with a positive character and principles - **Hilary Amayo, Teacher of IT***

*We all studied in different years, colleges with different formats. Through teacher learning circle interactions, we identify the format that is simplified and the team take the simplest format that eases learning for the students - **Matwa Bernard, Plumbing Instructor***

*We had a methodology where the teacher dominates the class with no participation of the students. But through the Teacher learning circles, that approach is no longer applicable, we now have learner based learning where we give students a room to ask questions from the teachers - **Vincent Titia, Teacher of Mechanics***

The Teacher Learning Circles (TLCs) peer to peer coaching approach is designed to encourage teachers to form TLCs after receiving the Teacher Education and Professional Development (TEPD) training pack with regular scheduled meeting.

## VISITING STAND-UP PROJECT IMPLEMENTING AREAS – WHAT'S HAPPENING IN STAND-UP PROJECT

The Stand-Up team recently visited different sites and project participants where the project is currently implemented in West Nile and Eastern region.

The team engaged leaders, health officers and peer educators to learn about their progress in the project.

During these series of meetings, the team gathered valuable feedback about the ongoing project activities.

While meeting with staff of Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), they indicated that a number of activities such as training of health staff, outreaches among others to the refugees and host communities have been conducted – through working within 20 health facilities.

Arua Municipality Mayor, Khemis Zayyid, lauded Oxfam for complementing government efforts where there is limited funding and emphasised the importance of accountability and regular reporting.

The Community Development Officer in Arua Central Division called for frequent field visits and better communication from project staff to keep stakeholders informed and engaged.

At the Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in West Nile, the Assistant settlement Commandant raised concerns about early sexual activity and child marriage, exacerbated by the ongoing South Sudanese elections that is driving an influx of new

arrivals. The peer educators also highlighted the need for a playground for youth center activities.

In Imvepi Refugee Settlement, the team met nine peer educators who discussed the effectiveness of the training and sharing of the SRHR work amongst their peers and communities.

Education officials in Nebbi district recommended extending SRHR education to cover older students and involving external stakeholders such as parents to reinforce the seriousness of the issues. They also stressed the importance of parental engagement and addressing barriers like child labour, early child marriages, drug abuse, and high school dropout rates among girls.

Peer educators in Nebbi noted that myths about SRHR limit the uptake of SRHR services. They also reported high drug abuse among youths.

At the Rose of Sharon Medical Centre, a private medical facility supported by RHU under the stand up project to provide SRHR services to the community in Nebbi district. The staff reported high family planning uptake but faced challenges with stockouts and costs for treating side effects. They called for more engagement with youth and better-equipped spaces for their activities to reduce on these services.

In Mayuge District, the CAO highlighted issues like drug abuse, gambling, and child labor as

significant barriers to SRHR services. He called for a holistic approach involving education, health, and psychosocial services to address these challenges comprehensively.

The team also met and interacted with peer educators at Lolwe Sub County. They highlighted their success in mobilizing peers for family planning, conducting gender-based violence (GBV) sessions, mapping pregnant mothers for health referrals, and raising immunization awareness. These efforts have significantly increased the number of peers accessing family planning and built up self-esteem among their peers to demand their rights.

The peer educators, trained by Oxfam, Femme Forte and CEHURD, play a crucial role in sensitizing the communities on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

The initiatives have significantly increased the number of peers utilizing family planning services and have empowered individuals to demand their rights, thereby boosting their self-esteem.

The Stand Up Project is a 6.5 years (2021-2028), funded by Global Affairs aims to increase the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for the most marginalized and vulnerable right holders, particularly adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) aged 10-29 years in Uganda and Mozambique.



## TRADE MINISTRY'S PERMANENT SECRETARY GERALDINE SSALI LAUDS OXFAM'S ISME STRATEGY

Hon Geraldine Ssali, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade commended Oxfam's efforts in developing a strategy that addresses the challenges faced by Impact-driven Small and Medium sizes enterprises (iSMEs) in Uganda.

Her comments were made at the launch of Oxfam's Isme strategy developed working with , Capital Solutions – a consulting firm and social enterprise working with social entrepreneurs in low-income communities, Oxfam developed an iSME strategy that is ambitious towards SMEs programme development.

**"Uganda's practice for sustainable development is anchored on the private sector, which constitutes the majority of livelihoods. However, iSMEs face challenges that need to be addressed collaboratively, and we call for support from investors to come and support the iSMEs," Ssali said.**

The iSME strategy is a comprehensive framework that aims to support small business incubation, growth, development, strengthening, and thriving.

Ssali also called for collaborative support from various sectors to address the challenges faced by iSMEs.



Charles Opiyo, the Resilient Livelihoods Manager noted that the majority of SMEs collapse under a year. However, the framework will help guide and improve players in several businesses.

**"The financial inclusion is very key in the strategy and also things around challenges that the SMEs face in terms of taxation. These are very key because it's one of the things that is affecting the sustainability of SMEs,"** he re-echoed.

The strategy focuses on four key areas: agriculture, energy, mobility and logistics, and waste management, which are crucial for creating a greener, fairer, and more inclusive society.

Dr. Joyce N. Tamale, the Co-Founder and CEO of Capital Solutions, highlighted the challenges faced by iSMEs, such as limited financial literacy, high interest rates, stringent collateral requirements, insufficient funds, and high tax rates.

"The iSME framework strategy is essential for achieving Oxfam's goals, to promote inclusive economic growth, reducing poverty and advancing social justice in Uganda," - Dr. Joyce Tamale from Capital Solutions.

The dissemination meeting served as a crucial platform for stakeholders to connect, share insights, and chart the way forward for Uganda's thriving iSME landscape. As Oxfam continues to disseminate the strategy and seek partnerships, the future looks promising for these impact-driven enterprises to become the driving force behind Uganda's sustainable development.



The meeting, which was attended by representatives from over ten impact-driven SMEs, women entrepreneurs, NGO representatives, partners, and investors, provided a platform for stakeholders to delve into the intricacies of the iSME strategy and its potential impact.

## VOICE PROJECT CLOSES AFTER EIGHT SUCCESSFUL YEARS

On 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024, Oxfam and all the partners that have been implementing VOICE project celebrated its eight years of impact and successful implementation in Uganda at the closure event.

Within the 8 years, the VOICE project delivered over 60 grants to rights holder-led grantees, made new ground in research conducted by the rights holders and importantly empowered rights holders who are now engaged and demanding improved and quality services. "The VOICE program in Uganda stands as a testament to the power of empowerment, inclusion and advocacy. Its successes reflect not only the strength of the problem itself but also of the potential for positive change when communities are given the tools and support to raise their voices," HE Deputy Ambassador – The Dutch Embassy in Uganda.

The project funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been working with marginalised individuals, including people with disabilities, women facing exploitation, abuse and/or violence; vulnerable youth and elderly, indigenous people and ethnic minorities.



For the last eight years, the VOICE project has empowered rightsholders to be their own voices by expressing their views and demanding their

rights for responsive and inclusive societies through training, civic engagement, improved access to social services, in particular health and education, improved access to (productive) resources (finance, land and water) and employment.

The event was colored with dances, testimonies of impactful transformation of the project participants as well as the market place where the grantees showcased different products and services that have been produced as a result of VOICE project partnership.



Our Country Director - Francis Shanty Odokorach recognised the impactful work that was done by the team and partners in civic engagement, human rights promotion, and skilling for empowering the marginalised groups.

Francis also added that "we need responsible leaders who will engage with the people and that will have people in their hearts and that they will be available to be held accountable and that they can also hold others accountable," in civic engagement.

The event was honourably attended by the representatives from Dutch Embassy in Kampala – headed by HE Deputy Ambassador, Oxfam's Country Management Team (CMT), Moses Isooba, the ED of Uganda National NGO Forum, the rights holders, partners and grantees across the country.



## LAUNCHING OF THE 'COMMUNITY VOICES FOR SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE FINANCE PROJECT



Oxfam and partners recently held the inception meeting of 'Community Voices for Sustainable and Equitable Finance Project', financed by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency ([Sida](#)) through [Fair Finance International](#).

The 4-year (2024-27) project aims to reduce poverty and uphold human rights, gender equality, and a better environment for ordinary citizens through changes in the financial sector in both developing and developed countries.

Through working with civil society organisation coalition, the project actors will evaluate and monitor policies and practices of financial institutions in providing financing and funding that recognizes and respects social and environmental wellbeing of identified participants.

"It is essential to recognize that the decisions of investors impact the economy, both positively for growth and development, but sometimes negatively on the livelihoods of millions in our economy," Francis Shanty Odokorach, the Country Director noted.

While many projects especially from the multinational corporations drive economic growth and poverty eradication, Francis noted that it is important to pay attention to the other factors that widen the inequality gap.

"When we look at sustainable development, Oxfam is very keen on addressing inequalities for all processes. Sometimes, some of the projects widen the gap because it is benefiting very few people that sometimes are not the people that we're targeting," Francis noted.

The project aim will contribute to economic, gender and climate justice by amplifying community voices for sustainable, equitable and well-regulated financial institutions and companies.

Sophie Nampewo, the Finance Coordinator at Oxfam noted that the project scope will be implemented countrywide, and will be characterised with holding dialogues with financial actors beyond the local banks and financial institutions, with evidence and information from communities in Uganda.



## ROOTED IN DIVERSITY (RID) PROJECT OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED BY AGRICULTURE MINISTER

The Minister of state for Agriculture, Fred Bwino Kyakulaga, has launched a new project dubbed Rooted in Diversity 'Partnership for Food Security and Livelihoods' (RID) by Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Uganda.



Speaking at the Launch of the five-year project in Entebbe on Friday, Bwino said the project will promote organic agriculture, benefiting 30,000 households across the country.

The minister added that Agrobiodiversity is the best way to promote food and nutrition security in this era of unpredictable weather that has affected agricultural production and productivity. He said that there's need for a law to enforce organic farming policies, citing environmental degradation and droughts due to reckless chemical use.

On his part, Sunday Bob George, the focal person for agro-ecology at the Ministry of Agriculture, said there's an increasing demand for food, but also safe foods.



"So when we come up with these innovations, programs and technologies aimed at promoting for the safety, we are being mindful of the health conditions of the nation of the people of Uganda. We want to food to feed our growing population with enough food, but food that is safe because when you look at food security, one of the components of this project is to embrace it.." he said.

He noted that the project will help farmers to increase production and productivity, addressing issues of food availability.

"As government, our role is to support them. Create an enabling policy environment," he said. Francis Nsanga from PELUM said, "The five years are going to see us achieve four outcomes, food utilization, accessibility, sustainability and availability. We want to increase and improve livelihoods of farmers and communities," he said.

By Muhamadi Byemboijana through [Soft Power News](#)



## REGIONAL ENGAGEMENTS ON 'RECENTERING THE CIVIC INTERNET THROUGH PARTNER ENGAGEMENT'

Representatives from ten countries including Uganda, Senegal, Tunisia, Kenya, Somalia, OPT, Cambodia, Vietnam, El Salvador and Bolivia convened in Nairobi, Kenya to review global level and country level implementation for RECIPE project.

The countries are implementing the "Recentering the Civic Internet through Partner Engagement" (ReCIPE) Project funded by the European Union (EU), through Oxfam Ireland.



In Uganda, the project will be implemented by Oxfam and the Center for Constitutional Governance (CCG) for three years to create a value-based digital ecosystem that is safe for both civil society and rights defenders.

The RECIPE project will cultivate with a rights respecting digital ecosystem that is valued based, human centric and safe for civil society actors and human rights defenders.

Organised by Oxfam Ireland, Oxfam in Uganda, partners and representatives from the EU reviewed the implementation plan, results framework and the overview of the Digital rights work that is being done at the partner level, and compliance among others.

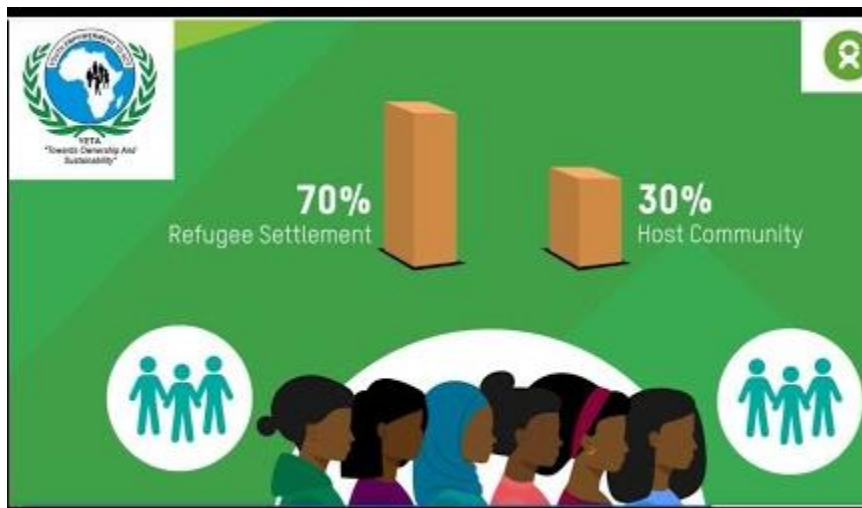
Hood Lubowa, the Project Assistant for ReCIPE project at Oxfam in Uganda shares some of the key outcomes the convening including:

- The review of the digital rights work and country-specific implementation plans.
- Reporting guidelines
- Development and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation plan using Oxfam's CAMSA approach
- Guidance on the usage of EU branding rules
- Discussions on EU compliance and grants management, including financial responsibilities, reporting, and documentation requirements.



## SUCCESSFUL PEACEBUILDING EFFORTS IN IVEMPI REFUGEE SETTLEMENT

An animated video that shows how peace building efforts that involve women have promoted peaceful coexistence between the refugees and host communities. WATCH 📺 <https://youtu.be/ludnavoHmgk>



### OXFAM IN THE PRESS

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- **Refugee camp stakeholders push for mindset change and water access projects:** [https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/news/refugee-camp-stakeholders-push-for-mindset-ch-NV\\_186077](https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/news/refugee-camp-stakeholders-push-for-mindset-ch-NV_186077)

- **LANGO LAUNCHES HUMANITARIAN PLATFORM:** [https://youtu.be/Csf\\_Mk6qrzk](https://youtu.be/Csf_Mk6qrzk)
- **Lango launches platform to localize humanitarian aid system:** <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/lango-launches-platform-to-localize-humanitarian-aid-system-4598474>
- **Oxfam, iSMEs partner to create positive change across sectors:** <https://chimpreports.com/oxfam-ismes-partner-to-create-positive-change-across-sectors/>
- **Oxfam Commits Shs 81.4bn to SME:** <https://oxfam.box.com/s/2a6mawj7n656crq9ffyx1lq2js89cgo>
- **MPs urged to ensure new taxes do not affect businesses:** <https://www.kfm.co.ug/news/mps-urged-to-ensure-new-taxes-do-not-affect-businesses.html>
- **MPs: Secure land tenures for communities to fight climate change:** <https://www.independent.co.ug/mps-secure-land-tenures-for-communities-to-fight-climate-change/>
- **Uganda scores average on oil and minerals contract openness:** <https://www.independent.co.ug/uganda-scores-average-on-oil-and-minerals-contract-openness/>
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- **The cost of protecting intellectual property:** <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/business/prosper/the-cost-of-protecting-intellectual-property-4643348#story>
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