

OXFAM IN UGANDA

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023



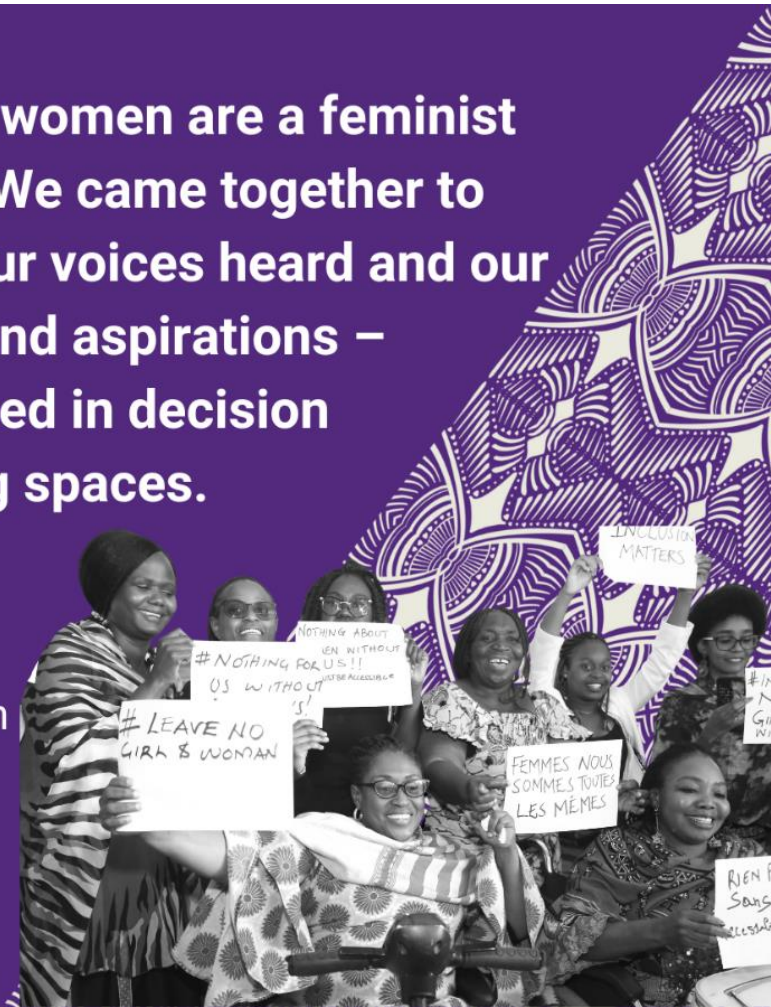
USING FEMINIST POWER TO ACHIEVE A MORE EQUAL FUTURE



African women are a feminist power! We came together to make our voices heard and our needs and aspirations – prioritized in decision-making spaces.

FEMNET
Pan-African
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network

#FeministPower



“The feminist movement in Uganda is one of the most diverse and progressive in Africa and has made tremendous strides in the advocacy for gender equality and women empowerment.”

Angella Asimwe, a feminist and CEO at Voice Consults Limited

Governments around the world are putting women and girls in danger of unprecedented new levels of poverty, peril, overwork and premature death as a result of austerity policies. Feminist movements have long been pushing back. On 7th March 2023, Oxfam launched a global digital campaign dubbed, #FeministPower, joining feminist organizations worldwide to call for an end to austerity and more investment in public services. This call was also made during the 67th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67), which was aimed at promoting women’s rights, documenting the reality of women’s lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

At the CSW67 Conference, Oxfam hosted a side event on embracing digitalization in gender based violence case management and social economic transformation. The session was moderated by Ms. Jane Ocaya- Irama, the Women’s Rights Advisor at Oxfam in Uganda while panelists included Ms. Rita Aciro, the Executive Director at Uganda Women’s Network, Dr. Angella Nakafeero, the Commissioner for Gender and Women Affairs at the Ministry of Gender,

Labour, and Social Development, as well as Dr. Dorothy Okello, the Dean at the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology at Makerere University.

Speaking at the side event, Ms. Aciro emphasized the need to establish innovative ways to ensure the redistribution and reduction of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work.

Women, girls, activists, and feminist movements have over years come together to stand for their rights, transform institutions and social norms, and build a more equal future. Angella Asimwe, a feminist and CEO at Voice Consults Limited said that “the feminist movement in Uganda is one of the most diverse and progressive in Africa and has made tremendous strides in the advocacy for gender equality and women empowerment.”

Sandra Aceng, the Executive Director at WOUNET also added that “Uganda’s feminist movement has promoted conscious awareness of gender inequalities through raising awareness, changing mindsets, and availing capacity building opportunities for young women and girls.”

REFLECTING ON PEOPLE'S ROLES IN HASTENING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



Mr. Philip Kabuye (standing), the Policy Advisor - Digital Rights and Space at Oxfam in Uganda delivering a key note address during the staff reflection on International Women's Day 2023. [Oxfam | 2023]

The World Economic Forum reports that in Sub-Saharan Africa, only 25% of women have access to internet connectivity. On 29th March 2023, Oxfam in Uganda staff held a reflection meeting to discuss how connecting more women to the digital economy is critical to driving economic growth and innovation on the continent.

The reflection meeting was organized in commemoration of the 2023 International Women's Day under the theme, "DigitAll: Innovation for a Gender Equal Future." It also aimed at creating an understanding of the roles played by individuals, communities, organizations, and other actors in hastening efforts towards women's empowerment as a means to gender equality.

Speaking at the reflection meeting, Ms. Jane Ocaya- Irama, the Women's Rights Advisor at Oxfam in Uganda said that only 15% of women in least developing countries have access to the internet. To harness the power of technology therefore, she said that "there is a need to recognize that the digital divide is among countries as well."

Ms. Ocaya- Irama added that in Uganda, 5% of women as opposed to 8% of men use the internet as indicated in a 2021 report by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

She noted that there is a need to invest in skills building and training and to ensure that people, especially women and girls, are able to use advanced technology. She also highlighted the cons of technology which include increased gender based violence manifesting in cyber bullying, cyber stalking and harassment.

While delivering a key note speech, Mr. Philip Kabuye, the Policy Advisor - Digital Rights and Space at Oxfam also added that the challenges faced by digital space users in Uganda and beyond include curtailing people's rights of enjoying digital space through the application of limiting laws such as the 2022 Computer Misuse Act.

Mr. Kabuye also emphasized that access to technology and digital literacy are essential components in bridging the digital divide which hinders women's full participation in the economy, education, and society as a whole. To achieve digital inclusion, Mr. Kabuye called for increased investment in initiatives that equip women with necessary skills and training to use technology effectively. "This will increase their economic prospects and enable them to participate more in political and social decision making processes," Mr. Kabuye added.

Oxfam project uplifts youth, women

ARUA

By Robert Adiga

A six-year project aimed at building economic resilience and fighting gender-based violence among youth and women in West Nile has been hailed for creating a significant impact among the beneficiaries.

Stakeholders said the youth and women have been empowered with entrepreneurial skills and fight gender-based violence through the project. The remarks were made during a project closeout meeting in Arua city.

Oxfam has implemented a six-year 2.8m-euro project in Uganda with funding from Irish Aid focusing women and youth economic empowerment and gender equality.

The project was implemented in eight districts from the three regions of West Nile, Acholi and Karamoja.

BENEFICIARIES TRANSFORMATION

Moses Abedican, a resident of Abindu division in Nebbi district, said he joined the group as a male champion in 2017 and has embarked on training his male counterparts to embrace change and support their spouses as well as live in harmony at home.

"After joining the group, I realised we need to wake up and support women by ending gender-based violence and changing the negative traditional mindset. As a male change agent, I have been moving from home to home, talking to the male household heads not to neglect women's rights, but rather to support them in their endeavours. Many have changed and are now working hand-in-hand with their wives to cause change economically in their homes and this has yielded into peaceful stay at families," Abedican said.

Oliver Kitu, 35, a female councillor of Abindu division, said as a young and first-time councillor, she was trained in public speaking and leadership by Uganda Women's Network.

"As a young woman who has just joined politics, I was not conversant with my roles and could not express myself well. However, the female councillors, through this project, were trained in leadership skills. Right now, I can deliberate well in the council sessions. The 14 female councillors have also formed the district women's caucus where we sensitise communities and other women on how to run their family affairs. Together with men, we'll attain economic empowerment," she said.

Kitu added that as female councillors, after the training, they formed a savings group which is growing fast.

Patrick Omony, the programme manager of the Agency for Community Empowerment, a community-based organisation in Nebbi, said through the project they mobilised over 1,200 smallholder coffee farmers from Nebbi and Zombo to address the issues of inequality.

"We looked at ways to increase

PHOTOS BY ROBERT ADIGA



Oxfam country director Shanty (centre) with the district leaders, beneficiaries and partners in Arua



Beneficiaries displaying their products made with the knowledge from the project

After joining the group, I realised we need to support women by ending gender-based violence and changing our mindset.

coffee production since most of the farmers had less than an acre of land. We trained them on good agronomy practices which have helped them increase productivity and also emphasised the training on land rights to ensure that women also have rights to own land and work together with their male counterparts. The leaders testified that the move helped mitigate the rampant cases of gender-based violence in the area," Omony said.

OXFAM SATISFIED WITH INTERVENTION

Francis Odokorach Shanty, the country director of Oxfam Uganda, said the moment called for celebration following the success of the project.

"Some of the groups are now exporting coffee from West Nile. Issues on gender have seen women take part in leadership and we hope that the impact of the project lives on through the communities cascading the programmes into long-term

developmental plans," Odokorach said.

He said the project had achieved all the objectives. He, however, said the project meant to last for five years has ended up taking six years due to the impact of COVID-19. He urged the district officials to replicate the achievements.

LEADERS PLEDGE SUSTAINABILITY

Robert Omoto Steen, the Pakwach district LC5 chairperson, said the interventions have helped in tackling the problem of gender-based violence, contributed to economic empowerment among women and youth as well as led introduction of climate-smart agriculture in the district.

"The programme impacted the community and families. The onus is now on us to cascade it at the district level so that nobody is left behind. We also realised that involvement of men and women in leadership has created

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project was implemented in Pakwach, Nebbi, Zombo, Arua, Gulu, Lamwo, Kotido and Kaabong districts.

The project was implemented by six partners namely; IFRAD, TONADO, AFCE and UWONET under component one (women and youth economic empowerment) and UWONET, PACEGO, NAKERE, WORUDET and NAWOU under component two (gender-based violence prevention in communities and women leadership).

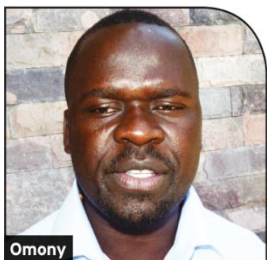
The overall objective is to provide a platform for partners to showcase innovations, share best practices and celebrate achievements realised under the Irish Aid Project, over the past six years of PGII implementation.

awareness in terms of empowering women into leadership positions," he said.

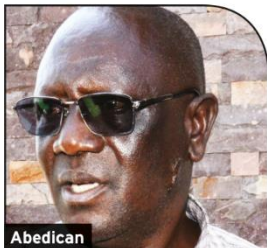
Omoto added that the element of climate-smart agriculture should continue in the various parts of the region given their harsh climate.



Shanty



Omony



Abedican



Kitu



Omoto

"Districts should re-strategise to ensure that the projects are sustained given the fact that they are time-bound. I pledge to mobilise the leadership of the region to embrace and support such programmes that aim at transforming the lives of the people of West Nile," he added.

I AM AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS



Ongiera Charles (L) and his wife, Ayila Florence (R) at their home in Jukal West Village, Padoch parish, Panyango sub-county in Packwach district. [Oxfam | 2023]

There is evident happiness and joy between 45 year old Ongiera Charles and his wife, Ayila Florence (40). Charles is a change agent and a male champion in Jukal West Village, Padoch parish, Panyango sub-county in Packwach district. He is also a retired captain from the armed forces. The couple, with their five children, however experienced gender based violence before achieving the smiles on their faces.

“We had so many misunderstandings in our home; so many. In fact, my husband used to neglect our children’s welfare and go for alcohol instead. Our children were not going to school. It was a difficult time. I was literally struggling to feed the family. My husband used to sneak into the kitchen and steal the food I had struggled to get on my own. One day it became too much and we had a fight. I got a stone and hit his eye.” Florence reveals.

The couple, which got married in 2005, started attending various sensitization meetings at the sub-county organized by Pacego. The meetings focused on ending gender based violence in homes. Charles now uses his story to inspire couples to adopt peace and love in their homes and it seems to be reaping results.

“I am an example that has inspired many people in this village,” he says. The couple makes joint decisions and whenever they have any misunderstandings, they sit together and resolve them. Their children go to school and the family is developing together. “I thank Oxfam and PACEGO Women Initiative for Development for bringing light in my house hold. I am a happy man,” Charles concludes.

Charles and Florence were participants in the recently closed Irish Aid Program Grant 2 (PG2) project, a 6-year project which focused on Women and Youth Economic Empowerment and Gender Equality.

The project impacted the lives of over 17,490 people in Packwach, Nebbi, Zombo, Arua, Gulu, Lamwo, Kotido, and Kaabong districts and was delivered by Oxfam working with six national partners, namely: National Association of Women Organizations in Uganda (NAWOU), Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET), Uganda Youth Network (UYONET), International Foundation for Recovery and Development (IFRAD), Agency for Community Empowerment (AFCE), and The Uganda National Apiculture Development Organization (TUNADO).

EARNING FROM WATER PIPELINE EXTENSIONS



Mr. Iradukunda Jamali Vianney (R) participating in trench excavation for water pipeline extension in Mukondo B village, Mukondo zone in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement. [Oxfam | 2023]

Mr. Jamali Vianney Iradukunda is a 26 years old and a Rwandan refugee living in Mukondo B village, Mukondo zone in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement. "I fled my home town, Karere in Rwanda due massive killings that claimed the lives of my parents in 2010. I came to Uganda with a care taker who died a few days after reaching Kyaka II refugee settlement," Mr. Iradukunda narrates.

"Life was so hard for me as I would struggle to find something to eat and meet other needs. I would move long distances to the host community to look for work to earn a living. I would work in people's gardens for little money to help me meet my basic needs. However, sometimes, I would not be paid," says Mr. Iradukunda.

In 2022, when Mr. Iradukunda heard about Oxfam's work of digging trenches for water pipes and back filling them for cash, his hope for increased income was raised.

"Through a community engagement called by Oxfam before starting water pipeline extension in Mukondo B village, I was delighted to know that there were opportunities for me and my colleagues to earn some money through trench excavation and supporting plumbers in pipe jointing for cash," says Mr. Iradukunda.

"I participated in trench excavation and pipe jointing for water pipeline extension where I earned UGX 180,000 after excavating 80 meters at a rate of UGX 1,500 per meter and supporting in pipe jointing for 6 days earning UGX 10,000 per day. I was so excited when I received the money and used part of it to complete my house which I had failed to complete due to lack of construction materials. With a completed house, I can now start a family and support my children to study up to university level and live a life brighter than mine. I am so grateful to Oxfam for the opportunity to work with them and for supporting our community with water," he adds.

Mr. Iradukunda explains that before water was extended to Mukondo B village, people would have to walk long distances to fetch safe water. To avoid the long distances, many opted to fetch water from nearby water sources like swamps which do not have safe water.

Mr. Iradukunda is one of the refugees that have benefited from a pipeline extension in Mukondo zone with funding from UNHCR. The intervention has reduced the long distances and time spent in queues to get safe water, and ultimately increased access to safe and clean water for refugees.

REVISITING TAX EXPENDITURES FOR DOMESTIC REVENUE MOBILIZATION EFFORTS IN UGANDA



Ms. Izabela Karpowicz, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Resident Representative in Uganda speaking during a dialogue on revisiting tax expenditures for domestic revenue mobilization efforts in Uganda. [Oxfam | 2023]

In partnership with the Center for Budget and Tax Policy (CBTP) Africa, Oxfam convened a dialogue on revisiting tax expenditures for domestic revenue mobilization efforts in Uganda.

The dialogue took place on 30th March 2023. Its objectives included; to track the benefits that Uganda derives from each individual tax expenditure beneficiary, and to validate a report on the current Tax Expenditure Management Framework in Uganda in comparison to the international best practices and possible policy recommendations for the improvement of the Tax Expenditure management framework.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Edward Mwebaze, Head of Programmes at Oxfam in Uganda said that Oxfam hopes that the discussions would enrich strategic ways in which Uganda can best manage its tax expenditures with the aim of reducing revenue leakages in the country for development.

He also added that "Oxfam advocates for fair and just economic policies which enable everyone to pay a fair share of their taxes, where expenditure priorities in the National Budget are aligned to the aspirations of Ugandans, and that

there is proper use and accountability of public funds."

The report on the current Tax Expenditure Management Framework in Uganda revealed that gaps in Uganda's tax exemption processes include ambiguity in the law on some tax exemptions, lack of transparency for exemptions granted by the Executive, and the absence of a monitoring and evaluation framework for granted tax exemptions among others.

The report also highlights recommendations for best practice on tax expenditure management by the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These include periodic compiling of an inventory of tax expenditures and reporting on their nature, legal basis, expected and actual effects, as well as past and likely future fiscal costs.

Speaking at the dialogue, Ms. Izabela Karpowicz, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Resident Representative in Uganda said that "there is a need for a clear and transparent tax expenditure framework that links the strategy with growth objectives as outlined in the NDPIII."

ONE IN FIVE PERSONS DON'T HAVE ENOUGH WATER IN DROUGHT-STRICKEN EAST AFRICA

One in five – 33.5 million people in East Africa don't have access to safe drinking water.



OXFAM

One in five people in drought-stricken East Africa – a total of 33.5 million people across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia – don't have enough safe drinking water. Failed rain is predicted to persist for a sixth consecutive season by May, making this the longest drought on record.

"The hungriest people in the region are also the thirstiest. People have depleted their last penny as they lost their crops and animals. They now have to pay vendors who continuously hike water prices", said Ms. Fati N'Zi-Hassane, Oxfam in Africa Director.

The over two years drought has already killed more than 13 million livestock, dried up thousands of hectares of crops and driven 1.75 million people from their homes in search of water and food.

In Somalia's Bay region, where 76,000 people are already facing a famine like conditions, water prices have more than doubled. Families are being forced to make hard choices like selling off what little essential possessions they have left or moving in search of water.

"Hundreds of thousands of people are now relying on emergency water trucking, or unprotected wells which are unsafe and contaminated. Without clean water, people are at risk of contracting easily preventable diseases, such as acute watery diarrhoea and cholera," added Ms. N'Zi-Hassane.

26-year-old Khadra Omar, a resident from Mogadishu said: "people are now risking their lives consuming dirty water as a result of the drought."

"The past droughts were not this bad, we were able to get water but in this one, it has been impossible to get water, everything has dried up and the water that is available is very expensive for us to afford, people are now dying because of thirst" added Khadra.

While famine has so far been averted in countries like Somalia, mostly due to an increase in humanitarian response – only 20 percent of the UN \$7 billion appeal for Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia has been funded to date, which will derail efforts to help millions of people on the brink.

"The world should not turn its back on East Africa. Without an urgent and major increase in aid, many more people will die of hunger and thirst."

"The worsening hunger crisis in East Africa is a harsh reminder that we also need long-term solutions beyond immediate humanitarian relief, to help people cope with the recurrent shocks. National governments must lead that change by investing in social protection, water infrastructure and supporting food producers," added Ms. N'Zi-Hassane.

OXFAM IN THE NEWS

Date	Media House	Story Title	Story Link
15/03/23	Daily Monitor Online	Commercial pressure is a key force for land reforms	https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/oped/commentary/commercial-pressure-is-a-key-force-for-land-reforms-4159232
15/03/23	Daily Monitor Print	Commercial pressure is a key force for land reforms	https://oxfam.box.com/s/tqr7lme2kju55quejmstu11hg4uwnln9
23/03/23	Civic Space TV	Oxfam Partners in Uganda Empowering women & girls in Uganda to adopt to technology #IWD2023	https://youtu.be/0ZlBqkwheus
March 2023	Pass it on: The journal of children's music network	Music That Heals: An Interview With Stephen Wandu Bimo	https://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/an-interview-with-stephen-wandu-bimo



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