

OXFAM IN UGANDA



SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

ONE-ON-ONE WITH FRANCIS SHANTY ODOKORACH ON THE CMT LEARNINGS FROM THE FIELD

Field visits are crucial for senior management, particularly in organizations like Oxfam, as they provide first-hand experience and understanding of the challenges and successes on the ground. These visits foster more informed decision-making and build stronger connections with staff, local partners and stakeholders, ensuring that strategies remain relevant to the realities of the communities being served. Francis Shanty Odokorach, Country Director for Oxfam in Uganda, shares his reflections following the recent Country Management Team's (CMT) project monitoring visit to the Stand-Up for Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) project.

AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANCIS SHANTY ODOKORACH

Why is it important for the CMT to visit project areas?

It's an important management and leadership practice. Recently, several new colleagues joined the country management team, and it's important that people who work for us understand where we have the most impact and the work dynamics. For example, when we're talking about welfare, the Human Resources Business Partner needs to have a fair understanding of what it takes to drive from Arua to Imvepi and back.



The CMT attend a community dialogue at Vurra Sub County in Arua in West Nile under the STAND-UP project. Oxfam works with CEHURD through peer educators to sensitise communities on sexual reproductive and health rights

What are your cross-learning from the visits CMT has made to Mt. Elgon, Karamoja, and West Nile?

Across the regions, there are some similarities, but there are also unique contexts. We try to understand this to inform our decision-making. The learning is that one shoe does not fit all. In Karamoja, the focus is on getting children out of mines and into schools among other important objectives. While this is very contextualized for Karamoja, low school attendance affects other areas too.

This recent visit to the SRHR project just demonstrated that there is a big disaster happening in the communities, especially related to teenage pregnancy. However, our SRHR project is already showing a positive impact, like the primary school we visited, no student has dropped out due to pregnancy since the project began. This is a big departure from the 'norm' that was already there.



Francis addressing the pupils of Masugu Primary School, Bulambuli District. The school was affected by landslides in 2023. Oxfam responded with building WASH facilities - including a water tap and latrines. Photo Credit: Ivan Rackara

What has struck you from all these regions?

One thing that I really appreciate is Oxfam's choice of the partners. If you get it right in the selection of partners, you're likely to have a good impact on projects, and likewise, if the partners selected do not align with the values, ambitions, passion etc the projects will likely face severe challenges.

In the broader humanitarian spaces, we have been talking about the shrinking humanitarian funding and how it is affecting the refugee response. However, visiting Imvepi and actually seeing the impact of three out of seven health centers within the refugees settlement closed due to funding makes the call and advocacy for increased funding even more urgent. If the situation does not change, we are likely to see continued dropping in the indicators in other sectors like WASH and education.

How have these CMT visits impacted you personally?

Spending time to meet with colleagues in the field, partners, and project participants has been re-energizing. It was good to hear and see that the work we do has a real impact on the communities we work with. That's a big motivator for us. Spending more time with CMT colleagues has been valuable for team cohesion. Our West Nile-focused meeting brought fresh perspectives/flavor. [READ HIS FULL INTERVIEW](#)



The CMT at Mbale local Government offices in May 2024 during their visit in Mt Elgon. Through the ECHO-funded project, Oxfam and partners are working with Mt Elgon district leadership to respond to the disasters in the region. Oxfam and partners are supporting districts to establish district contingency plans

DIGITAL RIGHTS TEAM AT THE EAST AFRICA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM



Oxfam in Uganda hosted a panel discussion, featuring the youth leaders in digital tech including: Yasmin Ahmed, Beatrice Kayaga from Internet Society- Uganda Chapter, Sedrick Otolo, an innovator and Denise Ayebare, a Law student at Makerere University. Photo credit: Bwette - Internet Society-Uganda

In September, Oxfam in Uganda participated in the 11th East African Internet Governance Forum (EAIGF), which was hosted in Uganda. This forum brought together legislators, policymakers, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and youth-led organisations.

Organised by the East African Community (EAC) in partnership with the Internet Society - Uganda Chapter, the 11th edition of the EAIGF was organised to create an inclusive, multilateral, multi-stakeholder, and multilingual discussion platform.

The forum addresses crucial issues that enhance Internet development and governance in East Africa, and this year's theme was "Building our Multistakeholder Digital Future for East Africa."

While speaking at the Forum, Amos Mpungu, the Principal IT officer at the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, noted that this year's theme was hinged on the collaborative spirit and forward-thinking approach that will shape East Africa's digital landscape.

"Our digital future must be built on the foundation of multi-stakeholder collaboration - a synergy of government, private sector, civil society, academia, and individual citizens. We have a collective responsibility to give direction to these technologies to maximise benefits and curtail unintended consequences and malicious use." He mentioned.

He explained that the EAC has made significant strides towards advancing digital transformation, which is powered by increased internet accessibility by expanding high-speed network technologies like 4G, 5G, and fiber optic cables.

In Uganda, the Ministry of Information Communication Technology is working with various stakeholders to ensure a collaborative approach to advancing Uganda's digital landscape.

During the breakaway sessions, Oxfam in Uganda hosted a panel on "Digital Hustle - How East Africa's Youth Are Innovating, Disrupting, and Thriving in the Tech Era."

Moderated by Hood Lubowa, the Oxfam RECIPE project lead, the panel featured youth leaders in digital tech including: Yasmin Ahmed, a lawyer and Director of Programs at Femtech Law Initiative, Beatrice Kayaga, a project coordinator at Internet Society- Uganda Chapter, innovator Sedrick Otolo and Denise Ayebare, a Law student at Makerere University.

The conversation revolved around digital literacy, inclusion, protection of digital rights, and navigating digital safety.

The EAIGF is part of the global United Nations Internet Governance Forum (IGF) that provides an environment to continue dialogue on public policy issues around with the goal of ensuring the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet.

THE ANNUAL GRAND BARGAIN SUMMIT



Francis Shanty, speaking during a panel discussion at Grand Bargain Summit. Oxfam in Uganda is a signatory of the Charter for Change-Uganda. Oxfam works with local/national humanitarian actors including the refugee led organizations to push forward the localization agenda with focus to strengthen the local humanitarian leadership on emergency and advocacy

Actors in the humanitarian space in Uganda, including local and International non-governmental Organisations, political leaders, government officials, Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs), institutional donors, and other stakeholders, convened in Kampala for the Annual Grand Bargain Meeting in Uganda.

The meeting fostered discussions on ways of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action and addressing the humanitarian funding gap.

Speaking at the launch, Hon. Lillian Aber, the Minister of State for Disaster Preparedness, Relief and Refugees mentioned that Uganda has made significant strides in creating sustainable humanitarian response, particularly localization. "Localization is real, and it is what is achievable and effective," she said.

Hon. Aber further emphasized the need to secure sustainable solutions for refugees, with a focus on voluntary repatriation and transition management, adding that Uganda remains committed to sustainable humanitarian response.

"We have full government support to ensure that localization is realized. We have to look at resilience building in the communities hosting refugees in terms of livelihoods, health, and education," said Aber.

Presenting the Local Actors Statement, Julian Joyce Acoko, the Chairperson of [Charter for Change - Uganda](#), noted that the localization approach has been proven to be the most effective and gives the most immediate solutions. She also added that localization is sustainable because it leverages local knowledge and resources.

"Local actors are cost-effective and efficient, with valid knowledge of the local context. They understand the reality more than any other person. If the capacity of local actors is developed, they can continue to support the communities better," she said.

She also noted that in terms of the localization Agenda, Uganda has registered some successes through; local actors taking leadership roles, strengthened financial support for the local organizations, increased direct funding, creation of localized coordination mechanisms like the National Reference Group and Charter for Change.

Speaking at the same event, Francis Shanty Odokorach, the Country Director of Oxfam in Uganda, also noted that "mutual respect and shared vision are critical elements for the success of partnerships in localisation. "When defining localization, we need to shift the narrative away from capacity, transparency, and accountabilities," he added.

One of the core principles of the Grand Bargain is the emphasis on localization ensuring that local actors including national NGO's, community-based organizations, and representatives of affected communities, play a central role in the humanitarian responses.

The Grand Bargain is a commitment by humanitarian organizations and donors to increase engagement and investment in local actors during humanitarian responses. It recognizes the essential role that local organizations play in responding to crises. It was initiated at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 and is a multi-stakeholder agreement involving various governments, international humanitarian organizations, and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) including Oxfam.

LEAP 2 JOINT MONITORING AND DONOR VISIT IN TEREGO AND YUMBE DISTRICTS



Alionzi Farmers Group in Drimveni, Omugo sub county, Terego district in their established three acres of planted cassava

With funding from the Government of Norway through UN Women, Oxfam and partners are implementing the second phase of the [Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection \(LEAP II\) project](#) in the refugee-hosting districts of Yumbe, Terego, and Kyegegwa.

As part of its regular project monitoring, the team organized a monitoring mission to track progress made, analyze and address potential risks, challenges and opportunities faced by partners in implementation of the Project.

❖ **In Yumbe - The team visited four farmer group and 2 business groups)**

❖ **In Terego – They visited nine groups (six farmer groups, three business and VSLA)**

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As part of its regular project monitoring, the team organized a monitoring mission to track progress made, analyze and address potential risks, challenges and opportunities faced by partners in implementation of the Project. The team further engaged and interacted with six groups (4 Farmer group and 2 business groups) in Yumbe district and nice groups (six

farmer groups and three business and VSLA) in Terego district.

The visit gave the team a better understanding of the accomplishments of the implemented activities and challenges faced by the respective partners both in Terego and Yumbe.

LEAP 2 project is implemented by a consortium of partners, including Oxfam, Uganda Refugees Disaster Management Council (URDMC), and SEE (Social, Economic, and Environmental) Impact in Yumbe, Terego and Kyegegwa districts. The project focuses on advancing the well-being of refugee and host community women and girls affected by conflict, severe drought, and forced displacement.



One of the established climate smart garden

ON THE WEBSITE



GENDER-RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP AND BUDGETING IS TRANSFORMING KARITA SUB-COUNTY

In the rugged terrain of Amudat District, the community of Karita Sub-County is witnessing a remarkable transformation, thanks to the gender-responsive leadership and budgeting trainings conducted by the National Association of Women of Uganda (NAWOU). Local leaders, who once viewed women as just homemakers, are now embracing a new mindset that celebrates the power of gender equality and shared responsibilities. [Read more](#)



INVESTING IN LOCAL EXPERTISE TO MANAGE WATER SYSTEMS IN UGANDA REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS

"I was always worried about the major technicalities, learning how to pump water and fix minor issues was good, but what if something bigger went wrong? The system supplies water to 10 out of 14 villages in Zone 1. If it failed, many people would be without water," Shakir Shamadu Shady, water system pump notes. [Read more](#)



IMPROVING EDUCATION THROUGH TEACHER LEARNING CIRCLES AT LODONGA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Teacher Learning Circles (TLCs) are small, collaborative groups created at learning institutions where teachers meet regularly to reflect on their teaching practices, share experiences, and support each other's growth. The aim is to improve student learning outcomes. [Read more](#)



YOUTH-FRIENDLY CORNERS: BRIDGING THE GAP IN ACCESS TO SRHR SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In Bukatube sub-county, Mayuge District, a youth-friendly corner opened in 2023 at a local health facility is facilitating increased access to sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) services for Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW). [Read more](#)

INTERESTED IN WOMEN'S
ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT
AND CARE INFORMATION?

CONTACT OUR HELP DESK

Toll Free No. **0800 200 551**
Email : UGA.WEECareHelpDesk@oxfam.org



WEE AND CARE POLICY INFORMATION HELP DESK

In August, Oxfam and partner, under the IDRC-funded Strengthening Capacity For Effective WEE And Care Solutions In Uganda launched the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) and care information help desk. This help desk serves as a point of contact for policymakers and interested parties who need information on care policy and women's economic empowerment.

The Information Help Desk can be reached by either:

- Calling the Toll-Free Number **0800 200 551**
- Sending an email at UGA.WEECareHelpDesk@oxfam.org

ROOTED IN DIVERSITY PROJECT LAUNCHED IN KALAKI DISTRICT



PELUM Uganda in collaboration with ESAFF Uganda and Oxfam with funding from Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs are implementing the "Rooted in Diversity (RiD); Partnerships for Food Security and Livelihoods," project.

In September, the five-year - RiD project was launched in Kalaki district in Eastern Uganda, one of the district where the RiD is implemented. The project is implemented in three other districts including Serere, Amuru and Iganga.

Launched from the Kalaki district headquarters, the event was attended by district leaders and farmer representatives from different sub-counties where the project is implemented.



Kalaki's district Resident District Commissioner (RDC) Chris Mike Okirya in his remarks committed to support the successful implementation of the project in the district.

He reiterated his call for the RiD project to promote local seeds, improve and refine the seed drying local technologies and improve the local market systems in the region.

Farmer representatives also applauded Oxfam for the GALs methodology that was introduced to the farmers in the past projects that have sustainability enabled decisions making both at group and household level.



Launching of RiD project in Kalaki District

The local government leadership called for the capacity building and active engagement of the district extension workers throughout the period implementation period.

The project will build and enhance functional networks of exchange and opportunities for joint learning among a wide range of actors like farmers, CSOs, and researchers. These networks will bring together diverse cultural backgrounds, context and knowledge on seed and food system issues, to improve food and nutrition security.

The project is intended to enhance local knowledge, skills, and capacities of small-scale food producers to improve food production and consumption in highly variable and poorly predictable agroecologist. RiD is implemented in Uganda, Niger, and Malawi.



PELUM and Oxfam meeting with Addie, an Agroecology farmer group located at Adie, Kadie Parish, Otuboi subcounty, Kalaki County.

STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES FOR IMPROVED ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION ON SRHR



[Guttmatter Institute](#) in September conducted a two-day Advocacy and Communications training for partners implementing the Stand-Up for Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SHRH) project in Eastern and West Nile Uganda.

The Stand-up for SRHR project is implemented by Oxfam, CEHURD and Femme Forte Uganda, Reproductive Health Uganda and Makerere University School of Public Health. The workshop focused on enhancing skills of the participants in using evidence to inform effective communications and advocacy.

Using the research findings on 'Barriers to accessing SRHR information and services among Ugandan youth', conducted and presented by Makerere University School of Public Health, the participants were taken into ways of communicating evidence for impact, key message development, visual presentation of information for digital and non-digital platforms.

The capacity strengthening empowered stand-up implementing partners with skills to effectively influence SHRH policy and practice using research and evidence.



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