



OXFAM

News, views and insights from the
Horn East and Central Africa (HECA)
region and beyond



April 2021

**HECA
VOICE**

INFLUENCING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 & BEYOND



Welcome to HECA Voice, our monthly HECA newsletter containing the latest news, updates and insights from Oxfam in the Horn East and Central Africa (HECA) region – Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The newsletter provides a snapshot of the latest developments on work around our HECA vision programmatic priorities and how the issues therein have been highlighted further as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. On [tackling inequality](#), we continue to address issues around civic engagement and space, promoting fair fiscal management and addressing gender-based socio-economic disparities.

On [transforming conflicts and crises](#) we continue to address the underlying causes of crisis in the region. The intersectionality of multiple crisis; COVID-19, climate change re-emphasize the need for broad based social protection systems that address the needs of vulnerable communities in urban areas and displaced persons including refugees.

The COVID-19 pandemic is triggering re-configurations of power on many fronts. Our commitment to localisation

as part of the Charter for Change, coupled with the new context has moved HECA countries to be more intentional and pay greater attention to [transformative partnerships with local and national actors](#).

This month we bring you the following news, views and insights from HECA:

- The Tigray conflict 6 months on since the conflict erupted.
- Improving social protection and resilience in DRC during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Rewriting the girl story: Female engineers inspire young refugee girls in Kyaka 11, Uganda.
- Phasing out of water trucking in Kyaka 11, Uganda
- Alice Ozia's honey business story.
- Eastern Somaliland's gender and protection briefing note.

Your readership and feedback is appreciated. Please feel free to reach us on martin.namasaka@oxfam.org.

LATEST UPDATES FROM THE HECA REGION

Country	Update
Burundi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peace, hope return in Bujumbura six years after violence Floods from rising Lake Tanganyika affect 8000 families UN Burundi office to close May 31
DRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latest deadly Ebola virus outbreak in DR Congo declared over DRC to return 1.3M COVAX vaccine doses before expiry DRC declares 'state of siege' in violence-hit eastern provinces
Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender analysis key findings: Women's exploitation & gender-based violence across Ethiopia's Tigray crisis Ethiopia's war in Tigray is 'but the tip of the iceberg when it comes to conflicts ravaging the country Cruel' trafficker accused of torturing refugees found guilty in Ethiopia Ethiopia's human rights chief: 'It's not an easy ride for us. We get a lot of heat '
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenya's decision to stagger closure of camps favours refugees' welfare Kenya has its first female chief justice: why this matters Over 160,000 Kenyans sign online petition saying previous loans to East African country lost in corruption
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding Uganda's civil society Uganda's debt burden 'Tell Us if He's Dead': Abductions and Torture Rattle Uganda
Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Sudanese generals in Rwanda for post-conflict peacebuilding course Rwanda marks 27 years since genocide Rwanda tops region, takes bulk of \$142m IMF debt relief
Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudan appoints former rebel leader as Darfur governor UN report warns South Sudan at risk of return to 'large-scale conflict' The road ahead: Sudan and anti-corruption Another gendered killing within one month in Sudan
Somalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somali lawmakers vote for country to hold indirect elections Somalia commits to enhancing press freedom Somalia is facing another food crisis: here's why — and what can be done to stop the cycle How a protracted political battle led to the extension of the Somalia president's term
South Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN condemns attacks against aid workers in South Sudan It is time to fix South Sudan's broken healthcare system Inside Story: How we broke the story of alleged COVID-19 corruption in South Sudan
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tanzania installs oxygen production plants to serve COVID-19 patients Tanzania has a female president. Does it have a feminist president? Hundreds fleeing Palma attacks reach Tanzania border, appeal for aid

CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19 IN HECA

RWANDA

Cases: 25,253
Deaths: 337

SUDAN

Cases: 33,944
Deaths: 2,349

SOUTH SUDAN

Cases: 10,583
Deaths: 115

ETHIOPIA

Cases: 258,384
Deaths: 3,726

UGANDA

Cases: 40,934
Deaths: 335

SOMALIA

Cases: 13,915
Deaths: 713

DRC

Cases: 29,965
Deaths: 768

KENYA

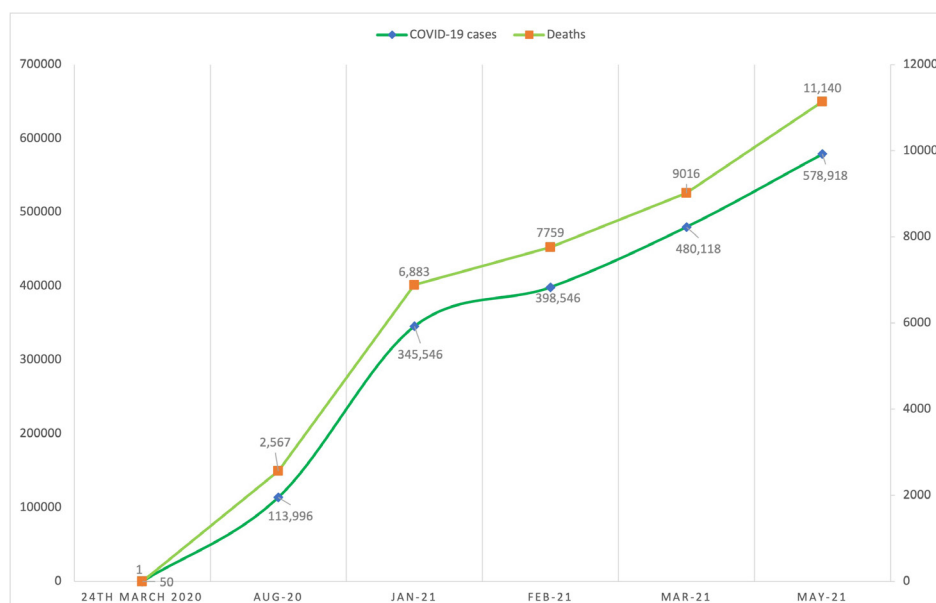
Cases: 160,422
Deaths: 2,763

BURUNDI

Cases: 4,038
Deaths: 6

TANZANIA

Cases: 509
Deaths: 21



2020-2021 COVID-19 cases and deaths in HECA. Updated on 3rd May 2021.
Source: <https://africacdc.org/covid-19/>

OVER 5 MILLION PEOPLE FACE EXTREME HUNGER AS THE TIGRAY CONFLICT SURGES PAST SIX MONTHS



Fantu Gezay, a 51-year old single mother of six from Raya Azebo district in Southern Tigray. Fantu lost her house and belongings due to the conflict that broke out in the area in November 2020 in Northern Ethiopia. Before the conflict, she used to rent her plot of lands to other farmers for a living, but now the insecurity and the delay in rains have disrupted her livelihood. Fantu has received food assistance from Oxfam and has moved to a nearby town, while she is unable to rebuild her house. Photo by Serawit Atnafu/Oxfam.

Planting season comes to a halt as thousands of farmers lost tools, seeds and livestock

Six months since the conflict erupted in Tigray, thousands of farmers have nothing to plant ahead of the rainy season as the crisis compounded by climate-fuelled locust devastated their tools and livestock and pushed over 5 million people to extreme levels of hunger, warns Oxfam.

Gezahegn Kebede Gebrehana, Oxfam's Country Director in Ethiopia said:

"Farming should be beginning now ahead of the long rainy season in June, but it has come to a total halt due to conflict and the absence of rain. Many farmers have no seeds to plant, and their oxen and tools were looted or destroyed in the conflict. Trade and market exchanges have stagnated as people fear a resurgence of fighting."

More than 25% of the total production of Tigray was already destroyed in the last harvest, mostly by locust swarms. Most families have already depleted their food

stocks. If this agricultural season is missed, the next harvest opportunity will not come for an additional 18 months.

Fantu Gezay, a farmer and a single mother of six living in Raya Azebo Woreda, Tigray told Oxfam: "The conflict erupted when farmers were about to harvest the produce left from the locust invasion. Whatever remained from the locust was destroyed by the war, and we couldn't harvest the Teff and Maize crops."



Nearly 1.7 million people have been forced to flee their homes in Tigray; thousands of families are crammed in small rooms in schools or churches. Women and girls face an additional risk in such conditions. Shelters have no partitions and lack gender segregation which puts them at risk of sexual and gender-based violence.

Freweyni Gebregzabher, from the Raya Azebo Woreda Agriculture Office, said: “My uncle was harvesting his sorghum crop a day before the war broke out. The next morning as the fighting intensified, he was shot dead while hiding in a church, and all his property was destroyed.”

Oxfam together with our local partners - the Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in the Amhara region (ORDA), and the Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (DICAC) - have already reached 40,000 people in Tigray and north Amhara region with food, sanitation, and hygiene kits, as well as protection programmes. Oxfam urgently needs USD 10.78 million to support 225,000 people in Tigray and Amhara region by November, and help provide food, water, and sanitation

facilities, as well as urgently needed hygiene and sleeping material.

Oxfam calls upon the international community to support the humanitarian response in Ethiopia to help quickly mobilize resources and save lives. To date, despite rising humanitarian needs, only 58% of the total USD 1.3 billion Humanitarian Response Plan for the country, has been funded.

Parvin Ngala, Oxfam’s Acting Regional Director in Horn East and Central Africa (HECA) said: “We are urging parties to the conflict to agree to an immediate cessation of hostilities and find a peaceful resolution to this crisis. This will allow humanitarian agencies to reach people in need, for them to restart their lives. An end to the human rights violations and the fighting can enable farmers to plough their fields and plant their crops in the coming months that will prevent millions from starving.”



Freweyni Gebregzabher is the Early Warning Team Leader in the district’s Agriculture Office in Raya Azebo, South Tigray, Ethiopia. Freweyni told Oxfam that although her town was spared from fighting, relatives living in the outskirts and rural areas were killed and their property damaged. Photo by Serawit Atnafu/Oxfam.

IMPROVING SOCIAL PROTECTION AND RESILIENCE IN DRC DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Some of the beneficiaries of the seeds and farming tools at work. Photo Oxfam/2021.

[South-Kivu] : In order to mitigate the consequences of the food and economic insecurity triggered by the coronavirus and thus contribute to sustainable resilience, since 24 August 2020, Oxfam has been implementing a project entitled “Improving Social Protection and Resilience during the Covid-19” in the territories of Kalehe and Kabare.

This project was funded by BMZ as part of the strengthening of livelihoods, food security and local markets in South Kivu, DRC. Three thousand three hundred (3,300) households benefited from

agricultural inputs (seeds and farming tools), and a sum of \$264,000 for the protection of these seeds, and 1,000 households received 2,000 goats to ensure the restoration of family livestock. The project also supported 1,250 of the most vulnerable households with a start-up fund for income-generating activities (amounting to \$225,000), accompanied by training in basic accounting, responsible savings, management of livestock and market gardening, and good governance.

Below: A group of women receiving goats. Photo Oxfam/2021



Oxfam's longest pipeline in DR Congo

Over a three-year period in the same province, Oxfam began construction of a 96-kilometre-long gravity-fed water supply system, which draws from a river source in the Mitumba mountains. Once completed, the pipeline will provide clean water to 18,230 internally displaced people and 81,831 host communities in four main towns in the surrounding area: Fizi, Sebele, Katanga and Malinde.

These areas are also affected by cholera outbreaks that have resulted in the unnecessary deaths of mostly women and children. Five water platforms are being built to contain a water tank 6.5 metres in diameter, with an average height of 1.5 to 2 metres and a capacity of 70,000 litres. This is by far the largest project ever undertaken by Oxfam and, as far as we know, by any other international NGO, not to mention the fact that it is located in one of the most remote areas of the DRC.

The project, which is 85% complete, will ensure safe and adequate water for long-suffering communities and help reduce/eradicate the incidence of cholera and other waterborne diseases in remote areas. It will also help reduce water supply problems and related health risks in Fizi town and the targeted towns of Malinde, Sebele and Katanga. The burden on women and girls who currently walk long distances to fetch water from the valleys will be reduced, allowing women more time to attend to household chores and girls more time to attend school.

Women are the main caregivers in every household. The installation of this system will have several immediate benefits. Firstly, a shorter distance to the water source means more time to attend to other urgent needs at home and on the farm, and also frees up children to go to school. It is hoped that clean water will also help to eradicate cholera, which is endemic in the area.

Beneficiary statements

Mapendo

Mother of eight (8) children, the majority of whom are at school age, Mapendo is a resident of Buhanga in South Kivu, she was at the point of despair when Oxfam gave her non-refundable cash to start an income generating activity (IGA). She admits that these children have always been very diligent in school, but without a

bonus, nothing works, they are constantly sent away and she can't take it anymore, she is at the point of giving up when Oxfam comes to intervene in her village.

The schooling of my Children is saved, MAPENDO RUVURA ROSE, beneficiary of the cash transfer to create an income generating activity (IGA)



Mapendo Rose, cash transfer beneficiaries. Photo taken in Kabare territory/Oxfam 2021.

Feeding and educating eight children with only a small field is not easy at all," she says.

Mapendo should wait until harvest time to fulfil its parental duties.

The harvest is not every day, once it arrives, part of it should be used as seed, part of it consumed at home and part of it sold to provide for other needs, but it was very insufficient," she continues.

Once in the area, Oxfam identified vulnerable households, mostly those headed by women, and Mapendo was not left out.

After this identification stage, the women were trained on how to manage an income-generating activity (IGA), and finally, it was time for the cash distribution.

This money I have just received is enough for me to start a small business, I have always been passionate about selling loincloths called zilipendwa, that's what I'm going to do," explains Mapendo joyfully.

This will be an opportunity for me to save my children's schooling because I was at the point of leaving everything.

Runiga Daniel



Runiga Daniel is 76 years old, since he was born, his only job is farming, however, lately his biggest struggle is famine.

In the past, we farmers were a big part of the community, because our job is to feed many families, without us, life stops," he says, with a smile. In recent years, everything has changed, the harvests are no longer good. On the one hand, due to climatic disturbances, on the other hand, due to the non-respect of the cultivation seasons.

Our fields are becoming less and less fertile because we start planting a little bit of everything, when we think that the season is good, we take advantage of it, in the long run, the field becomes unproductive," confides Daniel.

On arriving in the area, Oxfam saw fit to start with training in good agricultural practices, followed by the distribution of agricultural inputs for community fields and home gardens. This is a real sigh of relief for Daniel.

Finally, I can restart my field activities, RUNIGA DANIEL, beneficiary of seeds and agricultural tools

At my age, I am still very strong and I can spend the whole day farming because I was very well fed, this is what I also wish for new generations, it is a relief for me that Oxfam is there with practical solutions, this will change our daily life, we will eat in a healthy way and we will put out of us the famine that was taking place, there was an increased lack of seeds, but from now on, this concern belongs to the past.

REWRITING THE GIRL STORY: FEMALE ENGINEER INSPIRES YOUNG REFUGEE GIRLS IN KYAKA II



Margret Kobusinge standing next to a water abstraction pipe at Sweswe Dam, Kyaka II Refugee Settlement. Photo by John Candia.

Margret Kobusinge is no ordinary humanitarian worker, she is a public health engineer supporting hundreds of displaced refugees with safe and clean water and adequate sanitation facilities in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement. She has been one of the many female engineering interns Oxfam has recruited in the last two years in its highly valuable internship program.

Like many Oxfam humanitarian workers, Margret is passionate about delivering adequate quantities of safe water to many refugees. Oxfam is doing this by upgrading and improving piped water systems, repair and rehabilitating broken hand pumps, and constructing sustainable sanitation facilities in the Kyaka II refugee settlement. Oxfam has reached more than 120,000 people with safe and clean water, thereby reducing the distances girls and women have to walk for water and create safe and sustainable excreta management.

“Waking up every morning thinking of that young girl walking a kilometre for water is what motivates me.”

In the past three years, over 422,989 people have fled fighting and conflict in the DRC into Uganda, with many settling in Kyaka II.

“I used to hear of refugees, but I had never imagined how difficult life would be for refugee girls, I often see many girls who cannot complete their education and get married at a very tender age because they don’t have role models to inspire them.”

Margret and her fellow engineers conduct assessments, design water systems, carry daily supervision of contractors and pump operators and guide the pump mechanics, her day to day work includes generator fuel processing and approval, troubleshooting broken pipelines, repairing tap stands, writing site reports and regularly attend coordination meetings as well as engage communities in sustainable operation and maintenance of the water systems, and supervision of pump operators and casual laborers.

“When I joined Oxfam as an intern in 2020, I did not think I would manage the demanding task of providing water and sanitation support to refugees. However, when I was trained and mentored on how to repair tap stands, I became excited, and I wanted to learn more.” explains Margret, “I am helping change the lives of many people through my work.”

Margret explains that whenever she is out in the field working, many young girls keenly look at her, and she feels she is inspiring young girls to keep in school. Margret believes every girl can become like her and more if given an opportunity. She hopes to inspire many women to take up roles in the community as hand pump mechanics, slab production masons and pump operators.

Oxfam hopes to continue churning out many female humanitarian engineers, identifying them at the university, grooming them into skilled practitioners and translating their theoretical knowledge into practical, real-life engineering experience.

Margret has been absorbed as Oxfam Engineering staff.

OXFAM FEMALE ENGINEERING INTERNS IMPROVE WATER AND SANITATION CONDITIONS OF REFUGEES IN KYAKA II REFUGEE SETTLEMENT



Graduate Interns posing for a picture at a water treatment plant; Photo by John Candia.

Oxfam Graduate Internship Programme offers outstanding Engineering students in Uganda the opportunity to acquire practical skills in the provision of safe water and promotion of sanitation options and hygiene, exposure to community work and leadership development in humanitarian work.

Oxfam believes in having a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Graduate engineering interns support grassroots communities to build resilience through sustainable interventions that include support in pumping and supply of safe and clean water, repair and rehabilitation of handpumps, fixing broken water infrastructure, designing inclusive sanitation facilities and promotion of good hygiene practices.

Oxfam believes that in times of heightened inequality and school dropout rates for girls, the internships can generate knowledge, advocacy and inspiration for young girls to become whatever they can ever become.

This program is funded by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD).

John Bosco Candia, the Public Health Engineering Team Leader, says that few Women are engaged in the fields of engineering simply because of gender stereotypes, as such Oxfam slowly started rewriting that narrative by creating this program. "The engineering team in Kyaka II refugee settlement consists of even number of men and women, the balance is helping narrow the gender disparity at workplace and influencing change in the communities where we work".

He adds that the female engineering interns are equally intelligent and very active in delivering water and sanitation support in the fast-moving humanitarian sector. He explains that the role this internship program has played in influencing young girls to remain at school cannot be ignored.

Narrowing the gender gap

Anecdotal evidence about the perception of engineering as a physical, male-dominated occupation is evident, society views engineering as dirty, laborious and undermines the dignity of women, but that perception is slowly changing, "Upto now when people see me fixing a pipe or replacing a broken tap or borehole handpump they think I am going to fail, because they think it's a man's work, but when I finish the work they appreciate me" says Joyce Amuron, Public Health Engineering intern with Oxfam in Kyaka II.

Oxfam is attempting to define the space for women in engineering, women are over represented in jobs that are perceived as of low value, since 2020, the internship program has seen 15 female engineering graduates skilled and groomed into competent WASH professionals.

Joyce Amuron replacing a broken tap at tapstand in Itambabiniga, Kyaka II; Photo by John Candia





Mariam Namwebya adjusting a valve in T70 tank at Sweswe Water Treatment Plant, Kyaka II. Photo by John Candia.

Empowering young girls

Oxfam is passionate about advocacy and influencing with an emphasis on transforming unequal gender and power relations. Oxfam aims to challenge oppression and contribute to gender equality. Grace Asimwe the Gender and Protection Officer with Oxfam says, “I know having many female graduate engineers join the graduate training program will inspire many refugee girls to stay in schools and also aspire to become engineers one day.”

Mariam Namwebya one of the interns working in Kyaka II thinks, parents and stakeholders have a role to play in ensuring that the community mindset on young girls attaining education to becoming what they aspire for is reinforced “If a mother or father sees me working in the field connecting a water pipe and extending water to specific locations within the community, I feel they are inspired to tell their daughters that they too can become what I have become if they continue with their studies” she says.

Oxfam has trained 15 graduate interns recruited from different universities and institutions across the country. Two of them have been absorbed into the Oxfam workforce, with many progressively acquiring industrial skills to demonstrate leadership in WASH programs.

“When I joined Oxfam as an intern in 2020, I did not think I would manage the demanding task of providing water and sanitation support to refugees, but when I was trained and mentored on how to repair tap stands, I became excited, and I wanted to learn more,” says Margret Kobusinge.

She started out as a graduate intern but has now been employed with Oxfam as a Public Health Engineering Assistant. Glenna Nabagere, another of the Interns who has since progressed to a Public Health Engineering Assistant heaps praise on the progressive training program “This opportunity with Oxfam has changed my life and given me great leadership and technical skills, and I can work in any humanitarian organization anywhere in the world.”

By John Bosco Candia



PHASING OUT WATER TRUCKING IN KYAKA II SETTLEMENT DROP BY DROP



A child drinks water at a tapstand in Kakoni, Photo by John Candia

Kyaka II refugee settlement is home to over 124,000 refugees and host communities, seated on 81.5 square kilometres across nine zones. Every person currently uses at least 11.4 litres of clean and safe water daily though progressively increasing to achieve the required standards by upgrading and improving piped water systems plus repair and rehabilitating broken hand pump.

Since taking over as a UNHCR implementing partner in 2020, Oxfam has embarked on a progressive strategy to phase out water trucking by establishing and operationalizing sustainable water sources.

Originally employed by Oxfam in Bidibidi and Imvepi Refugee Settlement as an emergency intervention, Oxfam has always turned to water trucking to address short time water needs for newly arriving refugees.

This intervention has had significant bottlenecks, which include the high cost of hiring water tankers, difficulty to manage and monitor in addition to the water access imbalance. People who lived near central trucked plastic tanks receive more water and quicker than households that live far off since the water is dispensed on first come first serve basis. The repair and replacement of the old and damaged plastic tanks is also an unnecessary cost. Oxfam set out to substitute water trucking with more sustainable alternatives based on these challenges.

What is our approach?

In Kyaka II, at the start of 2020, water trucking made up 6% of all water produced and supplied, which has since

reduced to 0.2% (average of 3m³ daily).

This steady reduction has been accelerated by a number of interventions.

Operation and maintenance of 3 WSS

Daily Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of Sweswe, Buliti and Bujubuli Water Supply Systems forms a critical part of Oxfam sustainability approach where incentivized local community plumbers regularly rectify leakages on transmission and distribution lines. This has resulted in 34.6% of all safe and clean water in the settlement, consequently reducing queuing time at tap stand and improving access to safe and clean water for households. The total cost of running one of the piped water system ranges from the purchase of chemicals and consumables, incentives for pump operators and guards, and fuel and is averagely UGX. 842,200 per day.

Upgrade and extension of piped water systems

An additional 15km has been added at health outposts, food distribution points, and schools to the existing water supply network to improve water supply reliability and enable easier access to less than 500m walking distance.

Repair and rehabilitation of handpumps (boreholes)

Oxfam empowered community-based handpump mechanics to maintain a regular repair regime for broken handpumps, collectively 52 functional handpumps contribute an average of 614,000 litres daily, with our monitoring system that involves roving public health personnel checking out all the handpumps daily, additional 14 handpumps are under repair and rehabilitation to which will boost production by an additional 165,000 litres daily. Annually Oxfam spends UGX 250,000 to repair and rehabilitate handpumps.



Water ATMs

Oxfam piloted automated water dispensers innovation in Kyaka II as part of a broader sectoral initiative to provide durable and equitable water services to refugee and host communities, implemented as a market-driven approach, a total of 10 water ATMs were installed in Kyaka II, these ATMs use prepaid smart tokens as users access this water at their convenience thereby improving reliability and spur operational sustainability of the source.

Coordination

Oxfam with UNHCR, OPM and DLG are at the forefront of coordinating settlement WASH interventions with bi-weekly meetings, resulting in gap identification and harmonization. This has resulted in solarisation of Buliti System with PWJ installing 152, 270 Watts solar panels, which is expected to contribute additional 240m³ daily to Kyaka II and improve the average per capita to 12.88 l/p/d.

Exit strategy

In Kyaka II, by the end of 2019, water trucking stood at 6%, from January 2020, that reduced to 4.5%, which reduced further to 3.91% at the end of the first quarter, then 1.92% at the end of 2020. Currently, only 0.2% of the water produced (1,414.6m³) in Kyaka II is supplied through water trucking.

Oxfam exit strategy focuses on repair and rehabilitation of nonfunctional handpumps, supporting O&M of existing piped water systems, extension of existing pipelines and upgrade to high yielding shallow wells. They also revamp rainwater harvesting in schools and health facilities, solarizing sweswe water system, and leveraging on existing community's coping mechanisms and innovative water dispensing ATMs.



A pump attendant filling a water tanker with water from Sweswe Water Treatment Plant in Kyaka II Settlement, Photo by John Candia.

A JOURNEY WHERE EVERY STEP MATTERED

Alice Ozia is a 72-year-old honey processor from Arua District. Ms Ozia is the chairperson of Arua Market Women Honey Traders Association (AMWHTA), a beneficiary of a project implemented by Oxfam and The Uganda National Apiculture Development Association (TUNADO) with funding from Irish Aid.

She started the honey business in 2015 after she retired from teaching and her first business of selling second-hand clothes had failed. Ms Ozia's desire to start a business was motivated by the fact that she had children to pay for school fees.



Alice Ozia in their former honey store.

In early 2015, Ms Ozia started selling honey in Arua Market and noticed that the demand was overwhelming. So, she rallied four other women to start a women-owned honey traders association. These women began packing honey bought from different beekeepers, but they still faced a challenge of limited supply and could not meet the demand.

The Bee Better Project, which started in 2017, opened great opportunities for these women because they were the target beneficiaries. The project supported them to mobilize beekeepers who started supplying honey, which they bulked and marketed as a group. By 2020 AMWHTA had 15 members in its leadership, out of which 12 are female, and three are male. There are also over 46 beekeeper groups that supply honey to the hub.

As a result of bulking and joint marketing, the group's weekly sales increased from 45kg of honey to 486kg. This change in volumes motivated them to invest more in their business. In 2018, the group transformed

its small collection centre into a trading hub which not only does collection but also the processing of honey and other bee products. Using their profits and support from TUNADO through training in establishing quality supply systems, the association constructed a standard honey collection and processing facility. They did this with technical guidance from the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS). This was followed by an application for certification to use the UNBS quality mark, which was granted in March 2020 after a series of monitoring visits by the national standards body.

With this quality mark, the association can supply its Wati Natural Honey products to all outlets and shops, including supermarkets across the country. This will enable them to expand their market and improve their income levels. Their vision is to export their products.

When Ms Ozia was asked about how she felt, she said this with a smile: "I am not only proud that I managed to pay school fees for my children, but even more that what started small has finally grown to a recognized woman-led trading hub."



Alice in the improved collection centre.

By Charity Chelangat

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EASTERN SOMALILAND GENDER & PROTECTION BRIEFING NOTE



Produced by Oxfam in Somaliland/Somalia

2020 was one of the hardest years for Somalia in decades and the crisis impacts women, girls, men and boys differently. COVID-19, conflict and recurring locust invasions, flooding and poor and erratic rainfall distribution, heavily impacted on the economy and livelihoods of people resulting in gendered outcomes and complex protection issues. This briefing note outlines gender and protection issues identified through 50 key

informant interviews, over 170 household interviews and over 70 focus group discussions in crisis-affected communities in Sool, Sanaag and Togdheer, but likely have broader applicability across other regions, due to cultural similarities and comparable crises impacts.

[Download briefing note here.](#)



Photo by Pablo Tasco, Dustin Barter and Petterik Wiggers

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Photo by Serawit Atnafu/Oxfam



OXFAM IN HECA

Partnering with local communities, national organizations and regional institutions to drive transformative change in lived experiences.

<https://heca.oxfam.org>

Photo by Serawit Atnafu/Oxfam

For more information about Oxfam HECA's activities and latest updates follow us on:



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