

MAKING CARE COUNT

STORIES OF CHANGE



OXFAM



WE CARE STORIES OF CHANGE

2022



ABOUT OXFAM

Oxfam is a global movement for change that empowers people to create a secure future, just and free from poverty and injustice. We believe all lives are equal. No one should be discriminated against or live-in poverty. We want a world in which everyone can safely speak truth to power, claim their human rights, and build a better future for themselves.

We recognize that we cannot achieve this on our own but as a collective power. We, therefore, work in partnership with local and grass-root organisations, civil society, individuals, volunteers, the private sector, and the Government.

In Uganda, Oxfam started in the 1960's and continues with a Vision of a Uganda free of inequality and Injustice: A society where people, particularly women and young people, claim and exercise their rights and responsibilities and influence decisions that affect their lives.

Our work is guided by the Country Strategic Framework (CSF) (2021-2030), organised around four themes: Governance and Accountability, Resilient Livelihoods, Humanitarian preparedness and response and Gender Justice and Women's Rights. To contribute to change that lasts, we mobilize to transform the systems, policies and practices that significantly impact people's lives.



WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND CARE (WE CARE) PROGRAMME

Across the Globe, Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) sustains communities and economies. It provides essential care for children, the sick, elderly and people with disabilities. Without unpaid care, the global economy would grind to a halt. Unpaid care work has been recognized as a women rights, economic and equality issue in the Global Agenda 2030 under Social Development Goal 5 which, under target 5.4, exclusively calls upon countries to:

“Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.”

Unpaid care and domestic work falls disproportionately on women and girls, limiting their opportunities to participate in decent paid employment, education, leisure and political life. Heavy and unequal UCDW traps women and girls in the cycle of poverty and stops them from being part of solutions.

Since 2013, Oxfam, together with a number of partners have been working in over 25 countries to deliver the Women's Economic Empowerment (WE CARE) Programme. The WE CARE Programme works towards a just and inclusive society by recognizing, reducing and redistributing Unpaid Care and Domestic Work.

We envision a world where women and girls have more choices at every stage of their lives. So we work to ensure that their carers' and voices are heard in decision making about policies and budgets at all levels. In Uganda, the WE CARE program has been implemented since 2014 working with UWONET and other national level partners. A 2018 study on care work in Uganda revealed that women spend 8 hours daily on domestic and unpaid care work compared to men who spend only four hours. Carried out in the districts of Kaabong, Kabale and Kampala, the report titled “Gender roles and the care economy in Uganda households” indicated that women are socialised to accept the unpaid care workload from childhood at the expense of their health, happiness and economic prospects. This research report was carried out by Oxfam, UWONET together with Makerere University School of Women and Gender Studies and Economic Policy Research Centre.

The 2018 report presents an analysis of the links between social norms, the division of work for males and females, as well as time patterns in daily care work taking into consideration the rural/urban divide. It found that at childhood, girls spend 4.8 hours a day on unpaid care and domestic work while boys spend 3.8 hours. The care workload reduces for boys as they get older while for girls, it increases.


Oxfam and partners, women are at the centre of our work. We are cognisant that you cannot speak about development, ending inequality, if you do not address the specific issues affecting women and girls.

SHARING CARE WORK STRENGTHENS FAMILY BONDS

Sharing and equal distribution of care work draws family members closer and creates a happier home.

“There is an even distribution of housework with my family, and this has made work easy. I am more present in my family’s activities, and welfare. It has also made planning and decision making easy. I have realized that the workload on my wife has reduced and now there is friendship and good bonding among the family members.” **Obalim Alex**

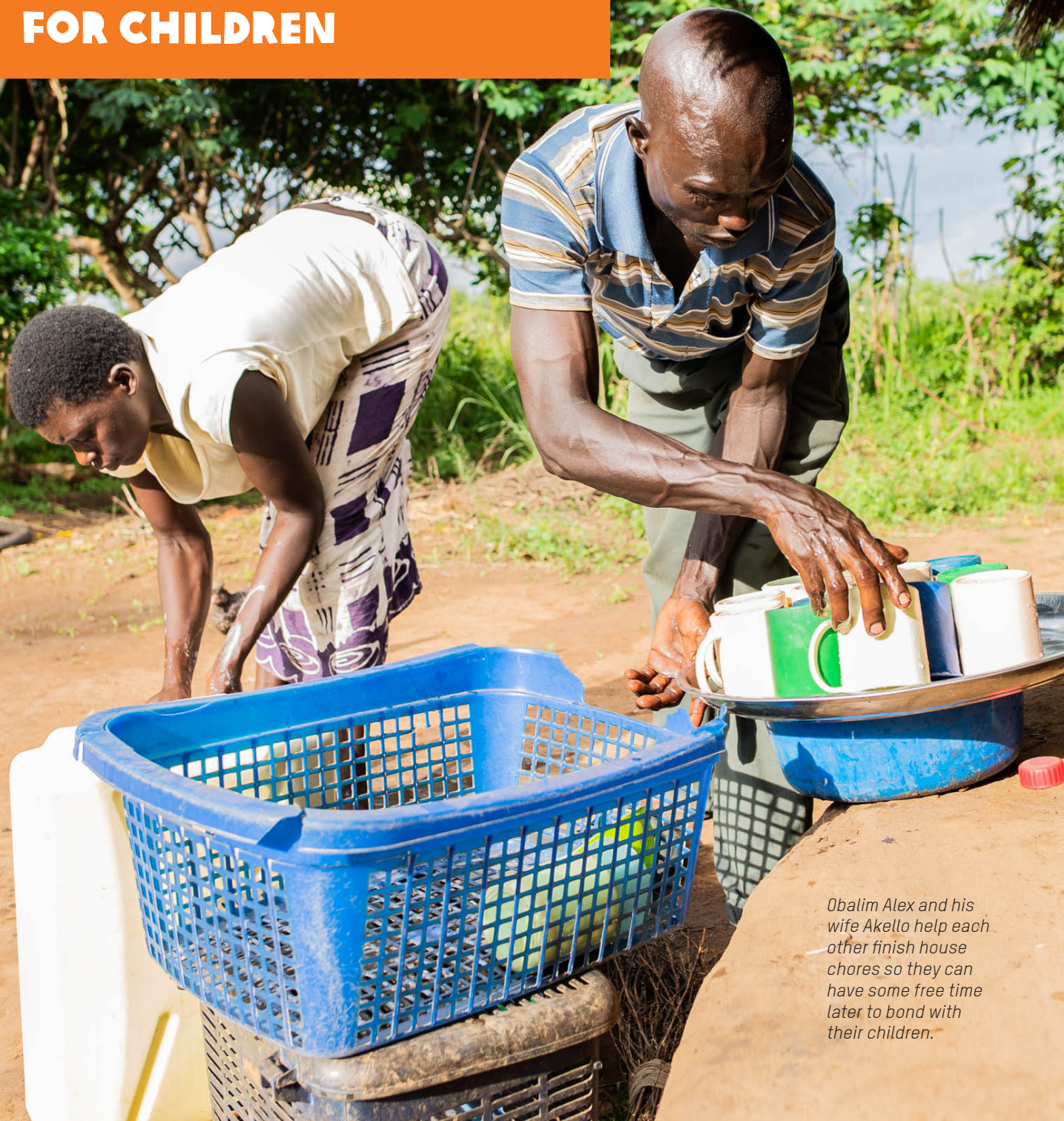
Obalim Alex taking goats for grazing

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a yellow t-shirt and a patterned skirt, is smiling and herding a group of goats in a lush green field. She is holding a long wooden stick. The background is filled with tall green grass and trees.

"Because my husband is helping out on some of the domestic work activities at home and the easy access to water, I have more time to do the things i love to do. I am now able to go to the market on time and sell my food harvest and also check on my children's academic performance in school"

Akello Concy

SHARING CARE WORK, SETS A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR CHILDREN



Obalim Alex and his wife Akello help each other finish house chores so they can have some free time later to bond with their children.

Children learn more from what they see than what they hear. When they see their parents working together at home, they too learn and grow up knowing that care work is genderless. They learn the purpose of being supportive in their homes and in their communities.

*“Boys should Learn what girls do and vice versa”- **Obalim Alex***



A woman with short dark hair, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a long purple and white patterned dress, is bent over a public water tap. She is holding a large yellow plastic jerrycan under the running water. The tap is mounted on a weathered stone wall. In the background, another person is partially visible, and there is lush green vegetation. The ground is wet and muddy.

**HAVING WATER SOURCES NEARBY
REDUCES THE TIME WOMEN
SPEND FETCHING WATER**

When water sources are nearer, the time spent fetching water is reduced. This frees up more time to participate in other activities. Men too are more motivated to participate in fetching water since the water sources are nearby.



Qbalim Alex and his wife Akello Concy routinely fetch water from a nearby water spring.

"The nearby water source helps us very much because I can fetch water quickly and hurry home to help my wife and our new born baby." - Latim Ronald



"Having the water source closer helps reduce the burden of walking longer distances to fetch water. We use less time fetching water and have more time to do other activities like connecting with our fellow women." - Aryemo Harriet.



WHEN THE BURDEN OF CARE WORK IS REDUCED, WOMEN AND MEN FIND TIME TO COME TOGETHER AND SHARE LEARNING



Rubanga Mamiyo Women's Association after a saving group meeting

Sharing care work contributes to reduction of gender- based violence in households.

The majority of the carers in Uganda are women who spend the greatest part of their time caring for their loved ones, including extended family members. In doing so, they sacrifice their health, deplete their limited household assets, and in other instances face violence from their spouses for failure to carry out care duties. According to an Oxfam/ UWONET 2018 report on gender roles and care economy in Uganda, an average of 32.1% female home caregivers in Uganda report to have suffered illness, injury, depression, physical and or mental harm from their caregiving roles.

In families where there has been shared care work, women and men report improved communication and reduced incidences of gender- based violence.

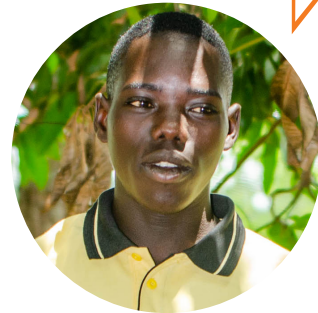


Rubanga Mamiyo Women's Association singing.

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“When model families come together to share their experiences of how they share care work, it spreads the message even further in the communities” – Atube Ronald, Member Rubanga Mamiyo Womens Association.

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“To me fighting was not a problem. I used to fight and quarrel a lot with my wife. One day she invited me to join the group and participate in some of the We Care activities. That training changed my life.. We now split housework and different responsibilities in the home. This has made me appreciate my wife even more.” – Walter Ojara, Member Rubanga Mamiyo Womens Association.

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WHEN THE BURDEN OF CARE WORK IS REDUCED, WOMEN HAVE MORE TIME TO CONCENTRATE ON OTHER ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR FAMILY INCOME.



Akello Concy and other women selling vegetable in the market



"If women can get out of the domestic sphere and go into the public sphere and make money, it will help the family."

Rita Aciro (Executive Director UWONET)



SHARING CARE WORK ENSURES THAT WORK DOES NOT COME TO A STANDSTILL IN CASE ONE PARTNER IS NOT PRESENT

“When my wife got an accident and injured her hip, I took care of her until she healed. Doing domestic work alone wasn’t hard for me since I was already participating in housework before her accident” – Obalim Alex .



HAPPY WIFE, HAPPY LIFE

Sharing care work creates a stress-free and happy wife. Once the burden of handling every single care work is lifted off the woman, she has room to enjoy life with her husband and children.

"I feel loved, I don't have to force sleep. I sleep very well at night knowing that my man is always there to support me" - Akello Concy .



"After My husband and I participated in the We-Care program, he said that he was afraid of being tainted as a "bad" husband. One day, he woke up prepared water and took it to the bathroom for me to bathe. That was the beginning of a happy life for us. These days life is so nice. I am enjoying my life as a wife". Vicky Akwero, Member of Rubanga Mamiyo Women's Association group.

INFLUENCING BUDGETS AND POLICIES FOR CARE INVESTMENT

"We've engaged with the Ministry of trade, Ministry of Water and Environment and Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development to see how we can get women out of the domestic sphere into the public sphere to do activities that are economically engaging and beneficial to them. We even put in place a working Committee of how we can influence care work in all the government MDAs to ensure that they reduce the domestic work burden for women." -Rita Aciro (Executive Director UWONET)





"A lot has been done with this We Care project in the community. The most concrete one is the creation of water sources. The water sources are nearer to the community and more convenient to people take for example pregnant women who can't move long distances to look for water. So the creation of these water sources has made access to water easier than it was before the introduction of this We Care project." **Obwoya William (Gulu District Local Government)**

"In the finance committee we have been able to pass a budget to establish the parish development committees in the 32 parishes. We are going to allocate funds to women groups so that they can use those rotational funds to work for gain. This would reduce the time spent on unpaid care as they take advantage of these funds and put them to good use for a win-win situation." **Ogwetta Andrew (Care Coalition, Gulu)**



CALL TO ACTION

"To reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women and girls, it is critical to invest in public goods. These include access to clean water, access to healthcare services for the public since the majority who use health care are women and access to quality education to bridge that gap." Francis Shanty Odokorach (Oxfam in Uganda, Country Director)





OXFAM

📍 PLOT 3459, TANK HILL ROAD, MUYENGA

✉ P.O. BOX 6228, KAMPALA, UGANDA

🌐 <https://uganda.oxfam.org>

