



# MY VOICE

TOWARDS WOMEN AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT  
FOR GENDER EQUALITY



OXFAM



BACKGROUND

Oxfam recognizes the challenges of gender inequality faced by communities especially women and youth. These are mostly a result of the patriarchal societies that continue to discriminate and exclude women and youth from meaningfully participating in political, and socio-economic aspects of life.

This, in turn, has contributed to the uneven distribution of power creating a huge gap between women and men. Achieving gender equality requires economically empowered women who can take up leadership roles and stand for marginalized groups to challenge injustices in their communities such as gender based violence. This requires a conducive legal and policy framework for all.

Working with partners, we are enhancing the capacity of women and youth to take up leadership positions and influence decisions that affect their lives. We are also strengthening their skills for increased production and incomes as well as empowering them with the knowledge to address gender based violence.

THE IRISH AID PROGRAMME 2 GRANT

This is a 5-year Irish Aid-funded programme implemented in five countries in Africa; Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. The overall goal of the programme is to ensure resilient, inclusive, and sustainable livelihoods.

In Uganda, the programme is implemented under two specific objectives: increased women/ youth economic empowerment and greater gender equality in seven districts of Arua, Nebbi, Pakwach, Gulu, Lamwo, Kotido and Kaabong. This is in partnership with six organisations including UWONET, CEDOVIP, TUNADO, AFCE, IFRAD, and UYONET along with their sub partners.

As a result of this collective effort, the programme has reached over 5,000 people directly and over 3 million indirectly.



LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFCE	Agency For Community Empowerment
AWARE	Action for women and Awakening in Rural Environment
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CEDOVIP	Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention
GALS	Gender Action Learning Systems
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IFRAD	International Foundation for Recovery and Development
KTB	Kenya Top Bar Hives
MEMPROW	Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women
NAROWA	Nakere Rural Women Activists
SWAP	Saving With A Purpose
TUNADO	The Uganda National Apiculture Development Organization
UNBS	Uganda National Bureau of Standards
UYONET	Uganda Youth Network
UWONET	Uganda Women’s Network
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Associations
WORUDET	Women and Rural Development Network
YGB	Youth Go Budget







## WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



This component of the programme focuses on coffee and honey value chains. Activities include training on good agronomic practices, post-harvest handling, processing, value addition, and marketing.

The Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) methodology is integrated and focuses on joint decision making and participation between men and women both at household and community levels. Activities such as Saving with A Purpose (SWAP), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), governance and leadership trainings are carried out to maximize impact.

This component is implemented in partnership with Agency for Community Empowerment (AFCE) and The Uganda National Apiculture Development Organization (TUNADO).





## GOOD QUALITY COFFEE ATTRACTS A MATCHING PRICE

Before the project, I owned only half an acre of land on which I grew coffee. I did not take good care of it so the harvest was always low. When I received the training on good coffee management, I began to pay attention to my coffee. The results were evident. On the same plot of land, my harvest tripled and the coffee was of high quality, fetching me a good price. I have managed to save money from the previous coffee harvests and bought an additional acre of land on which I have planted coffee too. **PIKWOW FELLY, FEMALE COFFEE FARMER, NEBBI DISTRICT.**

**Pikwo and her coffee growing group produce specialty coffee with a cap score of at least 87 which fetches a premium price in the global market.**



## SAVING WITH A PURPOSE (SWAP)

Smallholder coffee and apiculture farmers (both men & women) have been trained to practice SWAP at the group level. SWAP is a form of savings where individuals save towards a given goal or item in a specific period. Groups conduct weekly meetings to deposit their money in the savings box. As a result of this approach, women have been able to acquire assets such as cows, goats, and others have constructed improved houses. The results of the SWAP methodology is evidence that when men and women are financially empowered, they can work together to improve their lives and create change in their communities.



## LIVING TO SEE THE CHANGE

Since childhood, I had never seen a woman own land in our village. Women were also not allowed to grow coffee since that was considered a job for men only. With sensitization and training from this project, I have seen changes in both my life and in the community. I own a piece of land where I grow coffee. I was very glad when we were taught to save with a purpose. It doesn't matter how expensive something is, I now can plan on how long I will need to save to acquire it. Through saving with a purpose, I have helped pay fees for my grandchildren, and also bought goats and pigs. As the treasurer of Ajere Micro-station in Zombo District, I need a phone to help me communicate with other group members and my children who are far away. I have been saving up for it and today, after saving enough, I am going to buy myself a new phone. **ISABELLA NYIRUMBE, COFFEE FARMER, ZOMBO DISTRICT.**



## COFFEE POST HARVEST HANDLING

Due to post harvest handling techniques acquired through training of farmer groups, farmers have been able to increase the quality and quantity of coffee produced and received better prices for their produce. For example, coffee farmers have adopted the micro station approach where they do central processing from sorting, pulping, to drying, and finally to storing and marketing.





### BETTER PRICES FOR OUR COFFEE

Although we have been growing coffee for a long time, we used to get poor quality, low volumes, and prices. This was because of poor coffee management. Since acquiring skills in coffee processing, my group members and I at Culamuk micro washing station have been able to improve and now receive better prices for our coffee compared to the past. For example, in 2019, we sold our dried coffee at Ugx 6,000 per kilogram compared to Ugx 3,000 in 2017.

**CANFUA WINFRED, NEBBI DISTRICT.**



### GETTING A SEAT AT THE TABLE

In the past, owning land and growing coffee was only considered for men. We have seen the changes that happen when we as women are empowered. Through growing coffee, I can provide for my family. My husband now sees me as valuable since I can bring money to the table which we plan for together. We received training on growing coffee and saving. From my saving group of Ajere micro washing station, I have been able to save with a purpose. I save for my children's school fees in advance so that when it is time to pay, I just go and pick the money from my group. Through the savings, I have been able to buy goats, chicken and a pig. **JAMONO FRANCES, COFFEE FARMER, ZOMBO DISTRICT.**







## WE ARE PROUD OF OUR NEW SKILLS

We the women beekeepers of Jimos cell in Kotido are proud of our new skills. We now weave our traditional beehives using local materials and this has saved us a lot of money that we would use to buy Kenya Top Bar (KTB) hives and yet getting the same quantities of honey. A traditional beehive can cost Ugx 25,000, while KTB costs Ugx 100,000 and above. Besides that, we now no longer have to depend on men to make hives for us, we have expanded our apiary as a group and we intend to make many more hives moving forward.





## AT A GLANCE

1518 smallholder farmers produced 37,800 Kilograms of honey in the period November/ December, 2019.

Each kilogram was sold at an average UGX 8,400 of fetching a total of UGX 317,520,000.

## ADDING VALUE TO OUR HONEY

The majority of smallholder beekeepers in various districts do not have certification to process honey for bigger markets due to their inability to meet quality standards set by UNBS.

The programme has supported beekeeper groups to bulk honey as well as link them to processors who offer better prices and meet quality standards.

These processors are TUNADO member organizations who are committed to supporting the small holder beekeepers to grow.







## YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

This component of the programme focuses on supporting youth with business and entrepreneurship skills while integrating influencing and advocacy skills. Youth both in and out of school have been supported to start or grow their businesses and join Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs).

To ensure that youth participate in budget development processes, they were trained on how to use the Youth Go Budget App, a mobile application that collects youth budget priorities to inform district budgeting.

As a result, the youth have realized a stable increase in their income as well as their participation in decision making processes at community, sub county, and district levels.

This component is implemented in partnership with IFRAD, and UYONET in the districts of Gulu and Arua.







### OUR JOURNEY FROM DUST TO GLORY

In 2017, my friends and I started the Dust to Glory Savings Group. Here, we started saving our money weekly and we were able to start a shop to display our hand-made crafts under our group name. Out of these savings, I got money to boost my own shop where I sell agricultural produce, clothes, baskets, and other household items. In 2019, I was able to construct and roof my house. I hope to complete it in 2020 using my savings and earnings from the shop. Because of these achievements, I am now respected in my community. I could not have done this without the training.

**BADARU LILIAN, SHOPKEEPER, ARUA DISTRICT.**







#### A BETTER FUTURE FOR MY SON

From a struggling teenage mother to an entrepreneur, Jennifer operates a hairdressing salon in Oluko sub county, Arua District. She was supported with starting capital by IFRAD to start her salon and has since increased her stock and income. Being a mother of one, Jennifer is excited about using the proceeds from her business to provide a better future for her child.





**AHMED MAGEZI**, a beekeeper, is part of the Arua Super Youth Group in Madi village. He is fully dressed in protective gear to go honey harvesting. Magezi and the youth group were trained by IFRAD in apiculture, market linkages, savings, business development, entrepreneurship, and value addition.



From the training on Value Addition, Magezi now packages his honey from the farm to attract a better price. He has used his savings to diversify into a brick making business.





## YOUTH VOICE IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

For their needs and interests to be catered for, youth need to be involved in decision making processes at all levels. To ensure that they can engage, the youth were equipped with leadership and advocacy skills.

For youth to effectively engage in budget processes, a Youth Go Budget App was introduced to collect youth budget priorities which are presented to the district budget committees for inclusion.

**LEFT :** Ayikoru Monday (Female), a member of West Nile Youth Empowerment Center collects Adomati Martin's views and opinions through the Youth Go Budget Mobile App. -Arua district, Youth leaders visit fellow youth in their communities to collect their concerns and opinions on the different sector budgets.

**NATIONAL YOUTH MANIFESTO HEALTH DEMANDS**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please tick or circle the correct answer.

**1.0 Section One: Social Demographic Data.**

**1.1 Gender**

- a) Female
- b) Male

**1.2 Age category**

- c) Below 18 years
- d) 18-29 years
- e) 30 to 35 years

**1.3 What is your highest level of education?**

- a) Primary
- b) O' level
- c) A' level
- d) Tertiary
- e) University

**1.4 Your location**

- a) Region
- b) District
- c) Sub county

**2.0 Section Two: Health Care**

**Demand Five:** Invest 5% allocation for the establishment of health facilities at all levels.

**2.1 In your sub county, how many functional youth centers are there?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**2.2 If yes, in your sub county, how many health facilities are there?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**2.3 Reason?**

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..... functionality of the youth services of







## GENDER EQUALITY

The gender equality objective of this programme aims at reducing gender-based violence and increasing women leadership in communities.

Through this component, the programme has built the capacity of women in leadership. As a result, women leaders are actively engaged in influencing decisions especially at the district level.

The programme has also strengthened the capacity of GBV referral pathway actors which include police, health workers, local councils, cultural and religious leaders to understand their mandate in addressing gender-based violence.

Communities have been sensitized on the causes and negative effects of GBV and as a result more people are utilizing the services and reporting cases from the community.



### GLIMMERS OF HOPE

It was unfortunate growing up as a girl in my time. We would be handed out for marriage as soon as we turned 15 years because our parents wanted cows from dowry. We had no say over such matters. Today as I reflect on my life, I am happy to see how things have changed. We are not yet there especially on ending Gender-Based Violence (GBV), but at least great progress has been made. Although negative aspects of my culture robbed me of my innocence, my childhood, and my right to decide my future, I am glad that a girl that is born now, has a greater chance to choose her destiny.

**ALUM LUDIA, HEROES OF CHANGE, AWARE UGANDA.**





### MORE THAN A NURSE

Before the training, I used to miss many cases of GBV. I would treat the symptoms but I would not probe well enough to identify the obvious GBV issues presented by the survivor. Worse still, we would judge the young teenage mothers who would come to the hospital seeking medical attention not knowing that they were victims of sexual assault.

Even though some GBV cases were being worked on at the hospital, the documentation was very poor and we could not follow up cases. We would only care about the medical side of things. After the training, all this changed. I now understand my role in combating GBV. I always refer my patients to other referral actors such as Police and follow up these cases too. I thank MEMPROW for training us, as I now see myself as an important actor in the fight against GBV.

**ADERO TEDDY, NURSE, NEBBI GENERAL HOSPITAL.**







## **WAYS OF HOPE**

As the Senior Nursing Officer at Kaabong Hospital, I had received the right training about GBV from the Ministry of Health but my greatest challenge was the overwhelming influence of our culture. Some norms in our culture were the fuel that exacerbated GBV and I felt helpless about it. These included girl abduction for marriage, no land ownership for women, inheritance of a woman after the loss of a spouse and marital rape. All these were protected by our culture. I did not have the confidence and skills to influence behavioral change in our community. However, a lot has now changed as a result of the various community dialogues facilitated by AWARE Uganda and CEDOVIP to end GBV. I am now influencing change around GBV. Most importantly, our cultural leaders are now helping us to spread the message of zero tolerance to GBV.

**AJILONG MARGARET, SENIOR NURSING OFFICER, KAABONG HOSPITAL**



## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY IN ADDRESSING GBV**

The community always thought that the role of the Police is to make arrests because that is majorly what we did. With the training I got from MEMPROW through CEDOVIP, we learnt that community engagement plays an important role in preventing crime. The community is no longer afraid to reach out to us because, we now listen to them. We have seen an increase in reporting of GBV related cases -**WANICAN BAIFA, NEBBI POLICE STATION**





## FIGHTING CHILD MARRIAGE

In the Karamojong culture, a girl child is considered a source of wealth so some parents do not take girls to school. It is a common practice to abduct a girl child for marriage. After the abductions, the parents usually sit and agree on the dowry to be paid. It is only after these negotiations have failed that one party will come to report these matters to Police. Through the training I received, I always hold community dialogues to warn about the consequences of child marriage for the perpetrators. The number of reported cases from the community about child marriages and abductions have also increased. We are now rescuing many young girls from such situations more than ever before.

**LOKONA ERIC DONALD, THE COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER**

## MAKING LEMONADE FROM LIFE'S LEMONS

When I was 16 years, my relatives forced me to marry because they wanted cows from dowry. After 3 years in marriage, we had four children including twins. Suddenly, my husband became violent and controlled all the proceeds from farming. We lacked all the basic necessities which forced me start begging on the streets.

When my husband passed away, his relatives chased me from our home. They told me to leave with my children since they did not see any reason for me to stay. When I approached AWARE Uganda, I received counseling and training as a peer educator.

Now, as one of the change agents, I move with the team to sensitize the people of Karamoja on the dangers of Gender Based Violence. With what I experienced in my life, my wish is that other girls and women can have a better life free from violence.

**ACHILLA TEREZA, PEER EDUCATOR, AWARE UGANDA**







### LC V. CHAIRPERSON, PAKWACH DISTRICT.

In our society, most leadership roles are dominated by men while women are kept in the private sphere engaging in care work which is less valued by society. When it comes to education, women are usually excluded.

We have been able to change this mentality by showcasing that women are as able to lead as their male counterparts. Now majority of our district leadership are women.

**OMITO R. STEEN**

Trainings on leadership, governance, gender laws, and policies have paved way for women leaders to create caucuses where they discuss women issues which are later presented as a unified voice in the council.



### INSPIRING OTHER WOMEN TO LEAD

Through our caucus, we have been able to occupy leadership positions at the district and are now able to handle gender issues such as GBV and women land rights. This was not the case before where most of us used to spend our time in farms with a perception that leadership is for highly educated people with a university degree.

The turning point was when UWONET trained us on leadership and governance, gender laws, caucusing, advocacy, and influencing.

**WOMEN COUNCILLORS, KOTIDO DISTRICT.**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge our partners UWONET, CEDOVIP, IFRAD, TUNADO, UYONET, AFCE and their sub partners AWARE Uganda, NAROWA, MEMPROW PACHEGO women's club and WORUDET for implementing this programme. We deeply appreciate the community groups we have engaged with. Through them, we have seen and learnt what it means when people have power and space to take charge of their transformation. They embraced and owned the program creating bigger changes in a short time than we had imagined.

We further acknowledge the support of the various District leadership that were involved in the selection of participants, supported the formal registration of some of the groups and participated in the delivery and progress monitoring of the programme.

Oxfam staff and leadership both at country level and at Oxfam Ireland played a great role in ensuring that the program was smoothly implemented, monitored as well as documented.

We believe that this multi stakeholder approach is what has enabled the milestones we have so far seen through the lives and experiences of the various participants. With more years ahead, we cannot wait to see the great transformation in the lives of the various women, youth and their communities.

All this would not have been possible without the great support from Irish Aid. Together we continue the fight against inequality!

**Harriet Mbabazi**  
Interim Head of Programs  
Oxfam Uganda



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