

# OXFAM IN UGANDA NEWSLETTER

## NOVEMBER 2021



## OXFAM ADVOCATES FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES AT COP26 IN GLASGOW



*Ms. Gabriela Bucher (in pink jacket) the Executive Director of Oxfam International posing for a group photo with the Oxfam delegation in Glasgow at COP 26*

“Even at today’s 1.1°C of warming, we are all witnessing more frequent and devastating climate impacts around the world. And the world’s poorest countries are footing the Bill for a climate crisis they did little to cause.”

The world temperatures have been rising due to high levels of emissions into the atmosphere, causing hotter and drier seasons in Africa and severe fatal disasters in western countries. The climate crisis has not spared anyone but has mostly affected smallholder farmers and developing countries whose food security is dependent on the climate. According to the Hunger Hotspots report

(FAO & WFP, 2021), more than 3 million people are at risk of food insecurity, and 570,000 will reach an emergency.

Oxfam took a stand during COP26 in Glasgow to call upon world leaders to listen to the voices of developing countries and take action to reduce methane emissions and, compensate those that have suffered loss and damage due to climate crisis ensuring that the situation is mitigated and reversed.

Margaret Masudio, a smallholder farmer from Uganda who travelled to the COP26 with Oxfam to participate, said, “In Uganda, they have been giving support to communities that have been affected, but it is insufficient.

So, at this COP, my hope is that all the nations that are here are going to join hands to ensure that loss and damages are financed." She further added, "We are very worried, particularly for our children. How do we survive? If right now, the hardship we are facing is at this level, how about the future? Farmers are paying the price for climate change, without knowing why they are paying the price."

The Oxfam in Uganda Resilience and Climate Change Coordinator, Jackson Muhindo, who also travelled to Glasgow for COP26, said, "Our teams brought deep expertise, analysis and convening power not only to the

negotiating floor but also to dialogues on nature-based solutions, loss and damage, agriculture methane reduction, adaptation financing and article 6 of the Paris agreement. It was inspiring to witness the full breadth of Oxfam campaign, media and advocacy at work."

Oxfam was represented at COP by Margaret Masudio, a smallholder farmer, youth activists, Indigenous leaders, and Oxfam staff from Peru, Malawi and Uganda offices. In her remarks, Ms. Tracy Carty, the head of the Oxfam delegation, said, "This is the final countdown. Negotiators should come back to the table armed with commitments that are equal to the challenge that millions of people around the world are facing every day."

*"Even at today's 1.1°C of warming, we are all witnessing more frequent and devastating climate impacts around the world. And the world's poorest countries are footing the Bill for a climate crisis they did little to cause."*

## CSOs HIGHLIGHT THE WORRYING STATUS OF LAND RIGHTS IN UGANDA



The guest of honour, Minister of state, lands, Mr. Samuel Mayanja (Yellow tie) poses for a photo with MPs and CSO members

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including FIAN UG, Action Aid, and NEPTIL, have revealed that Uganda is performing poorly in upholding land rights. This was during a high-level parliamentary seminar on the status of Land tenure Reforms in Uganda organized by Oxfam on Friday 12th Nov. 2021.

Mr. Edward Mwebaze, the acting country director of Oxfam in Uganda, opened the seminar. He told Members of Parliament that they were at the helm of drafting, reviewing and revising land laws. "Our interest in land comes from the fact that land is more than a productive resource for agriculture, the backbone of Uganda's economy, it is a form of wealth, it's an identity, life, tradition, and culture." He further commented.

Responding to a question about how Civil society organizations perceive the status of land rights in the country, Ms. Esther Kiseembo, the program coordinator of Action Aid Uganda, said with the poor record-keeping on who really owns land, low funding by the government on policies in line with land rights, limited engagement between government and CSOs among others, the

status of land rights in the country is far from getting better.

On his part, the Executive Director NETPIL, Mr. Arthur Nsereko blamed the worrying status of Land rights in the country on the government's failure to at times listen to calls by CSOs and NGOs on how best to improve Land rights in Uganda. Nsereko says the CSOs possess a lot of research reports about various topics, but the different stakeholders and decision-makers have not utilized the work of such groups hence leaving a huge gap on how best to solve the land question in the country.

Meanwhile, FIAN Uganda's Ms. Rehema Bavuma noted that as a country, we are doing poorly in accordance with land rights because the huge portion of the vulnerable population like women, children, and elderly have at many times been unfairly evicted from land yet it is their only source of livelihood. "As MPs, we need to leave this seminar with a legislative agenda to help us debate from research and facts, there is a deliberate delay in addressing land cases. This must be addressed." Hon. Kabahenda Flavia said.

The meeting suggested solutions such as a land fund to compensate eviction victims and amendment of the current land Act. It sparked debates among the MPs who also welcomed the involvement of CSOs in taking the lead in addressing the challenges posed by land reforms and promoting land rights.

Stakeholders, including the Members of Parliament on the Environment and natural resources committee, legal

experts on land, CSOs, officials from the Lands Ministry and the state Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development Sam Mayanja, the chief guest attended the seminar. "Amendments on the Land Act are urgent because of the rampant land evictions and it's on the agenda for this parliament," said Hon. Sam Mayanja.

## CSOs ASK PARLIAMENT FOR A NATIONAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT BILL



*Aroma fetching water from a tap that brings in water from the motorized water system built by OPM through Oxfam with support and funding from KFW|2021*

Currently, Uganda does not have a national law governing disaster risk reduction and management. Provisions in different sector laws govern all disaster risk reduction and management operations. The process of developing the legal framework began in 2019 with the formulation of the Bill.

Parliament needs to expedite the process of tabling the National Disaster Preparedness and Management Bill such that the responsible ministries, departments and agencies have a legal mandate on disaster preparedness, response, and management.

As such, CSBAG, in partnership with its partners of Dan Church Aid, Uganda Red Cross Society and CEFORD with support from ECHO organized the 1<sup>st</sup> of a series of engagements to share insights on the status of the National Disaster Preparedness and Management Bill in a bid to inform advocacy efforts in expediting its passing and operationalization

Oxfam engaged in the meeting sharing its vast experience on disaster risk reduction management both in the development and humanitarian work.

## THE EACOP BILL 2021 PROPOSES COSTLY INCENTIVES THAT WOULD ERODE BENEFITS FROM THE PETROLEUM SECTOR-SAYS CSOs



*CSOs holding a press briefing on the implications of the amendment of the PFM Bill | Photo credit: CSBAG-Uganda*

In April 2021, the governments of Uganda and Tanzania, and the Joint Venture Partners signed off the Tariff and Transportation Agreement, and the shareholding agreement for the East African Crude oil Pipeline (EACOP). Upon this background, the East African Crude Oil Pipeline Bill, 2021, a legal framework needs to be put in place. The Bill will facilitate the implementation of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline Project in Uganda, the implementation of Uganda's obligations under the intergovernmental agreement and the host government agreement, and any related matters to the EACOP Project.

The government of Uganda cabinet passed the EACOP Bill 2021 and is now before parliament for consideration. Following a call for comments from the general public by the Parliamentary Committee on Environment and Natural Resource Committee, Civil Society Organizations including Oxfam, extensively reviewed the EACOP Bill 2021.

The Civil society position paper developed recognized the provisions of the Bill that are commendable and

progressive, and highlighted areas that require due attention by parliament before passing the Bill into Law. The select committee of CSO representatives appeared before parliament on 2nd November 2021 and presented the critical concerns on the Bill from the CSO perspective.

Whereas the Bill has some positive notes, concerns regarding land rights, human rights, and other environmental and social aspects need to be addressed before it is passed into law. Some of the key concerns include: tariff for transportation through EACOP, undermining of all domestic tax laws, lengthy and unfavorable tax exemptions, seeking extended liability, treaty shopping prospects, silence on social and environmental considerations.

On 9<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2021, a CSO press statement on the implications of the PFM Amendment was released, revealing that the EACOP bill 2021 in its current form needs more expert analysis and relative studies to give Ugandans more expert knowledge on whether they are getting a good deal for their resource or not. This would inform the policymakers to improve their negotiation and perhaps secure benefits for the citizens.

*“The EACOP bill 2021 should be able to support domestic resource mobilization efforts despite the need to incentivize the investment into the EACOP project,” said Francis Odokorach, Oxfam in Uganda country director.*

## OXFAM LINKS WITH PARTNER TO IMPROVE ITS HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE WORK



*IJR Facilitators pose for a group photo with the participants during the co-creation workshop on Mental Health, psychosocial support and peacebuilding*

Mental health problems are driven by many factors, including environmental factors, drug abuse and now the COVID-19 pandemic. Mental health issues account for about 3.14% of the total disease burden in Uganda, with shooting numbers of depression in 2020/2021 among adults even affecting children due to coronavirus and long closure of schools, respectively.

Oxfam in Uganda, in conjunction with the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) conducted a three-day workshop. This was held to deepen understanding of how organizations currently working in the field of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and/or peacebuilding (PB) in northern Uganda could work closely together to enhance their program outcomes.

Participants actively engaged in relating their work and the lived realities of the communities they serve to the co-creation methodology. In addition, much effort was made by peacebuilders, MHPSS practitioners, community leaders and the OPM to ensure that the resources and needs of the community were prioritized.

The notion of 'building on what is' was centered, and participants identified existing resources such as local leadership structures, clan meetings that aim to solve conflict and the role of churches and religion as key. Participants highlighted the importance of intra-community support which was important in providing psychosocial support during funerals and conflict.



During the workshop, the participants showed a high level of commitment and demonstrated mutual respect and an eagerness to work towards an integrated approach. They identified how the proposed approach enhances collaboration between the two fields and facilitates durable peace. Learning, networking and relationship building between practitioners from both fields further took place. The needs of participants for tailored training were identified on MHPSS linked to peacebuilding.

The workshop was attended by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), TPO Uganda, Health Rights International, UNHCR, Lutheran World Federation, Refugee Law Project, Madi Okollo District Local Government -Health, community leaders, representatives from South Sudanese refugee communities, and Oxfam in Uganda.

*“There can be no peace without peace of mind”*

## OXFAM IN UGANDA FACILITATES PARTNER'S FORUM



*The country director of Oxfam in Uganda, Francis Odokorach making opening remarks during the Partners' Forum at Royal Suites Bugolobi*

Oxfam in Uganda facilitated a partners' forum to discuss, reflect, and strengthen their partnership with the different organizations they have partnered with. The Bi-annual partners forum meeting targeted partners of Oxfam in Uganda to reflect on the partnership issues raised and captured in the previous year. It delved into assessing the health of relationship between Oxfam and its partners. The reflection focused on both outcomes, including milestones achieved, as well as processes, enabling and constraining factors.

The forum enabled the partners to voice their challenges as they sought to rectify them with support from Oxfam. They also appreciated the availability of the space and time to showcase their achievements and their impact on the communities they are working for. They committed to

continue working to ensure that the needs of the target communities are prioritized and that work goes on despite the COVID 19 situation in the country.

In addition, partners discussed improving and strengthening their partnership with Oxfam in Uganda.

During the forum, the Oxfam in Uganda country Director, Odokorach Shanty Francis, said "Oxfam has reaffirmed its commitment and how we will work and respond to our commitments. We shall not walk alone, we shall do it with our partners with great focus on the commitments to adopt different ways of working. I invite everyone to walk the journey and embrace this partnerships."

The partners appreciated the platform these forums continue to give them.

## IRISH AID PROGRAM REVIEW MEETING WITH PARTNERS



*Representatives of partner organizations pose for a group photo during the Program review meeting with Oxfam Staff*

Irish AID grantees at National and sub-national levels met and shared learning, innovation, and strategic alignment, including the recently undertaken project evaluation feedback. Partners gave an update on implementation progress and Financial spend. The meeting brought together participants from IFRAD, UWONET, UYONET, TUNADO, PACEGO Women's Club, NAROWA, WORUDET, NAWOU with OXFAM being the host.

In her remarks, Ms. Jane Ocaya appreciated the partners for conducting their activities despite the challenges that COVID 19 brought against the set milestones. She emphasized the need to work towards recovery from the pandemic through economic empowerment and fighting against increased gender-based violence in their communities.

The two-day workshop brought to light the progress of the different activities done by the implementing

partners in the various regions that include Karamoja, southwest, central, and northern Uganda. Among other factors that enabled project progress amidst the context were the partners' synergies with other stakeholders, cooperation with the government, capacity building, and generally support from Oxfam.

On the other hand, they indicated that late disbursement of funds equally caused delays in implementation. Oxfam committed to doing better in this area and requested that partners comply and report timely to avoid such delays.

The partners committed to documenting and sharing stories of change, sharing their annual reports and their 2020 audited books of accounts, and submitting their draft proposals for 2022-PG3.

## EUROPEAN UNION PROMOTES FISCAL POLICIES RESPONSIVE TO WOMEN AND GIRLS

### EUROPEAN UNION IN THE WORLD



The Fiscal Justice for Women and Girls in Africa project is funded by the European Union and implemented by Oxfam in Uganda with its partners FEMNET and SEATINI – Uganda.

The project aims to contribute to more transparent and accountable revenue generation and spending policies by transforming fiscal systems to better respond to the needs of citizens, especially for women and girls in Uganda. This is being done by strengthening the ability of CSOs, WROs and citizens in Uganda to hold decision-makers to account, formulate and implement fiscal policies responsive to women and girls at all levels.

Oxfam in Uganda, in collaboration with FEMNET and SEATINI – Uganda organized a week-long monitoring & evaluation visit to take stock of the Fiscal Justice for Women and Girls in Africa (FJWG) project in Kumi, Soroti, and Gulu districts.

This was to find out the successes, challenges, opportunities, and lessons learnt while assessing what has worked, not worked and what needs to be fine-tuned to re-invigorate the project implementation strategy.

During the visit, the Oxfam in Uganda team held strategic dialogues with the different district representatives, convened meetings with community members, groups, and reviewed the overall project performance.

As a result, a needs assessment was done. The capacity requirements were taken into consideration, including but not limited to capacity building, advocacy, training, support in implementing methodologies, among others.

In addition, a key lesson learnt was that as the project continues, Oxfam in Uganda ought to use and identify the networks within the partner organization that are available to grow the synergies.

This will bring many actors on board, which will facilitate the achievement of the project outcomes. These include both the National and subnational organizations.

## FROM RELYING ON FOOD RATIONS TO GROWING ACRES



*Robert John checking on his tomato plants in his garden at Imvepi Refugee Settlement*

Robert John is a 29-year-old South Sudanese Refugee currently settled in Imvepi Refugee Settlement in Terego district, West Nile Sub-region of Uganda. Married with four children, Robert also lives with 12 other dependents, including his mother, sisters, and brothers. They fled their home in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, in 2017 when war broke out.

In the settlements, Robert and his household of 16 members were mainly surviving on food assistance given by WFP. Even though the food assistance was inadequate to sustain his household for the intended period, they would still sell part of it to raise some little money to meet other pressing needs. The situation was worsened with a 40% reduction in food ratio by WFP.

The turnaround for Robert was in February 2021 when Oxfam advertised an opportunity to offer Vocational skills training to participants from zone one of Imvepi Refugee settlement. Robert applied for an opportunity to get trained in Agriculture.

He went through successfully and was taken to Lodonga Polytechnic institute for three months' training in horticulture. Upon completing the training, he received a set of start-up kits comprising a Knapsack sprayer, Tomato and Onion seeds, a hoe, gumboots, and pesticides. On return to the settlement, through his friend from the host community whom he had met at the institute, he built rapport with other members of the host community and was able to get land totaling two acres to use temporarily for farming.

Robert is currently growing  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of tomatoes,  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of Eggplants, an acre of maize,  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of cabbages, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of Sesame. He anticipates earning a good amount of money that will enable him to construct and establish a retail business that will greatly help his community. He also expects to scale up the farming with more specialization on the high-value crops for improved income. Robert is no longer worried about the food insecurity of his household and appreciates Oxfam so much for the support.

## OXFAM PARTNERS TRAINED IN SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES IN WESTNILE



*Wilson Ssenyonyi, Gender and Protection Coordinator at Oxfam in Uganda making his presentation on safeguarding.*

Oxfam is committed to preventing all forms of Sexual Harassment Exploitation and Abuse.

A one day training on safeguarding for all Refugee Led and national led Organizations in West Nile was conducted to train partner staff on key concepts on safeguarding, provide knowledge on reporting channels and guide them in the creation of action plans on safeguarding.

During the training, participants revealed that they had no safeguarding policies in their organizations. They also need more trainings to build their capacities in handling cases involving sexual abuse which are still rampant in their organizations.

In response to those concerns, Oxfam recommended solutions such as use of different approaches including positive cultural practices, conducting a needs assessment to enable tailored capacity building trainings to take place and carrying out safeguarding monitoring visits to partners.

From the training, participants indicated that they had understood key concepts used in safeguarding, their knowledge on reporting channels was enhanced.

The partners were able to develop their action plans while still in the training.

## In News

- MPs Push for law reforms to address land challenges, promote land rights for vulnerable communities, 13<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2021: <https://chimpreports.com/mps-push-for-law-reforms-to-address-land-challenges-promote-land-rights-for-vulnerable-communities/>
- Mayanja: Land Bill is back, 17<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2021: <https://www.observer.ug/news/headlines/71874-mayanja-land-bill-is-back>
- We need to amend land acquisition law says minister Sam Mayanja, 19<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2021: <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/we-need-to-amend-land-acquisition-law-says-minister-sam-mayanja-3629522>
- From Relying on Food Rations to Growing Acres of Food: <https://uganda.oxfam.org/latest/stories/relying-food-rations-growing-acres-food>
- CSOs ask the Environment and Natural Resources Parliamentary Committee to push for pro-people land laws that support the tenure security of all Ugandans: <https://uganda.oxfam.org/latest/press-release/csos-ask-environment-and-natural-resources-parliamentary-committee-push-pro>
- MPs, Civil Society query Clause in the Oil Bill, New Vision 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2021: [MPs, civil society query clauses in Oil Bill - New Vision Official](#)

Cover photo: *Oxfam Staff participating in a group work session during the Partner's Forum and Program Review meeting/November/2021/Photo credit: Dorah Ntunga.*



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