

EMPOWER@SCALE TEAM TRACKS PROJECT PROGRESS

On 10 February 2021, Oxfam in Uganda convened a review meeting with Gender Action Learning System (GALS) champions and Empower@Scale project implementing partners (CEFORD and PELUM). The main purpose was to discuss mechanisms of scaling up the GALS methodology from thousands to millions in Uganda.

[Empower@Scale](#) is a four-year multi-country project funded by IFAD. It is implemented in 3 countries with the ultimate objective of augmenting the use of Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology in households by establishing a network of self-sustaining Empowerment Learning Centers (ELCs). The ELCs and regional hubs provide the technical expertise and training required to support IFAD's executing partner and other donor-funded value chain programs.

The key focus of discussion in the meeting was reviewing of the annual work plan and budget for project year 3 against its set targets and strategize for the 4th quarter. The team discussed challenges faced in the implementation and drew youth business ideas and work plans for the upcoming project year.

The main challenge presented was the COVID-19 pandemic which interrupted project implementation and halted many activities in various locations. However, the team managed to sail through amid this obstacle and had some activities executed through online spaces. The team committed itself to be more proactive in attracting new GALS methodology clients through peer to peer engagements, events and the media.

The meeting was closed with the official handover of the Business Game by the [International Labor Organization](#) (ILO) to a CEFORD representative to support ELCs in developing business ideas.



Oxfam in Uganda's Empower@Scale team, partners and GALS Champions at Esella Country Hotel in Kampala

DEFYING GENDER STEREOTYPES THROUGH PLUMBING

My name is Inzikuru Halima, I am 25 years old, and I work with Oxfam as a plumber at Pawor pumping station in Madi Okollo district.

I found out that Oxfam needs plumbers to work on the water system set-up in Pawor. Because I love plumbing, I applied and was taken on. Some of the work I do includes filling the water tank and maintaining the pump by fixing leakages and loose spindles.

I have always been passionate about plumbing, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work at the pump station.

Some people are mesmerized by a woman working with machines and pipes but I always tell them that it is something I enjoy doing.

I am also currently a finalist at Arua Technical Institute, studying plumbing and wiring. Unfortunately, schools were closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic which interrupted my studies. I am waiting for a safe reopening so that I can complete my certificate. I hope to further my studies at the university and get a degree in Engineering.

This job has given me hands-on experience in my field of study and equipped me with new skills that I believe are going to be of great importance in my career.

Some of the new things I have learnt include the connection of pump distribution lines to individual households and fixing leakages on my own.

I have also been able to earn an income, part of which I used to begin kitchen gardening. I have planted cassava and sesame ,which I will soon be harvesting.

I am grateful to Oxfam for this opportunity because some of the money I get from selling my harvest will cater to my tuition and I will use the rest for necessities.

With Oxfam IBIS, Oxfam Hong Kong and Oxfam Belgium, we have been able to enroll youths-from the refugee settlements and host communities in vocational skills' trainings, brick laying and concrete practice , tailoring, hair dressing, motor repairs, carpentry among others.



Halima at Pawor water supply station in Madi Okollo District.

OVER 270 MICRO BUSINESSES ESTABLISHED UNDER YEEP

The Youth Empowerment and Engagement Project (YEOP) first annual review meeting was held on 17th and 18th February 2021. This meeting brought together project staff from Oxfam and partner organizations, International Foundation for Recovery and Development (IFRAD) and African Youth Development Link (AYDL) to reflect on 2020/2021 project performance.

YEOP is a three-year project (2020- 2022) funded by the European Union and implemented by Oxfam in partnership with IFRAD and AYDL. It is a 500,000 Euro project implemented in the districts of Oyam, Gulu, Arua and Nebbi targeting 2000 youth in and out of school. The overall goal of the project is to improve youth livelihoods and participation in governance and development processes in Uganda. This is by increasing employability and income of youth through agribusiness, entrepreneurship, vocational skilling, and business development. The project also aims at increasing youth participation in decision making processes and reduce youth vulnerability to sexual exploitation and Gender Based Violence.

During the meeting, the team presented the milestones and challenges faced during the 1st year of project implementation interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, delaying the project kickoff in 2020. However, the project managed to reach 728 youth through entrepreneurship and business skills trainings, Village Savings and Loan Associations- VSLAs and youth



Youth Empowerment and Engagement Project team pose for a photo at Fairway hotel

parliaments among others. As a result, a total of 278 micro-businesses were established in the districts of Gulu, Oyam, Nebbi and Arua, meeting YEOP's 1st year's implementation target. The team also chewed over the work plan and budget for project 2021/2022.

The baseline consultant then presented his findings to implementing organizations which were discussed and critiqued to improve the final version of the YEOP baseline report. The data collected was used to update the log frame, an ongoing activity that will be reviewed and finalized in March 2021.

REAPING BIG FROM KITCHEN GARDENING

Jonas Kaberuka 62, fled the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2018 together with his wife Gerolina, six children, and a grandchild to seek refuge in Uganda due to the conflict in his country.

After witnessing various horrifying acts that the army men conducted, he moved from the North Kivu province leaving everything behind. "I used to be a businessman. I travelled to Kampala often to carry out my transactions, that is where I picked up the Luganda language" he said "Carrying money or any material items was risky because the army men conducted thorough checks at various road blocks" he added.

Jonas and his family trekked for three weeks until they reached the Nyakabande Refugee Transit Camp in Uganda. During this period, they slept in open churches and bushes and survived on the small food portions, which they earned from manual labour or at the mercy of the local communities. Jonas says that some of his relatives fled the DRC too and are now living within the Kyaka II Refugee Settlement and those who remained behind occasionally communicate with him by phone.

In 2019, Jonas and his wife joined a community SACCO whose main objective is to support its members with loans from time to time. From this SACCO, Jonas was loaned 600,000 Ugandan shillings to start a business dealing in the sale of kitenge/Ankara which picked up but was later affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

In the same year, Jonas decided to venture into agriculture as a source of food for his family. He received Oxfam support in form of seedlings, garden tools and cash which enabled him to grow cabbages, tomatoes, lettuce, green pepper and onions. From the harvest, Jonas can get food of nutritional value for his family.

In addition, he is able to get approximately 300,000 Ugandan shillings from the sale of tomatoes and 60,000 Ugandan shillings from the sale of onions. With this income, he has been able to pay back part of the loan from the SACCO and bought poles to set up a kitchen. Jonas also purchased chicken that have reproduced and hopes to sell some of them off for an additional income.

Jonas and his wife now spend most of their time in the garden and only spend their free time meeting in community support groups. He looks forward to establishing himself permanently in Uganda and having a bigger garden that can yield more produce for his family's sustainability.



Jonas watering his Lettuce near his house in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement



Jonas and his wife at a community support group's meeting point in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement

OXFAM IN UGANDA STAFF LAUNCH INTO 3 DAY WRITING

TRAINING WORKSHOP

Empowered, excited and amazed are the words the participants used to describe the 3-day effective writing and communication workshop.

From 22 to 25 February, fifteen Oxfam in Uganda staff participated in a 3-day hands-on training workshop. The workshop aimed at enhancing staff capacities in effective writing, public communication, and digital media.

Facilitated by [African Center for Media Excellence-ACME](#), the team was equipped with the best practices of effective writing like reading and editing as well as the techniques and styles. They were tasked with writing Opinion-pieces, and [articles](#) for publication. As part of public communication, the team covered public speaking principles, media interviews, and dialogues. A simulation exercise with on-camera interviews and public speeches was conducted. The teams embraced and openly critiqued each other's work for learning purposes. Charles Opiyo, Oxfam in Uganda's Seed Right Coordinator, said, "I have learnt that public speaking requires adequate preparation and practice. Once I work on that, I will be a better public speaker."

According to John Bosco Imokola, one of the facilitators, no one is born a public speaker, but rather, it is mastered as art through practice. Therefore, staff were encouraged to put into practice the public speaking skills they acquired to their everyday interactions.

The training sessions ended with audio-visual communication focussing on content creation and development. The team used KineMaster, ApowerMirror, Lexis Audio Editor, and Open Camera applications to record and edit Audio-visual content. The purpose of this session was to enhance the team's ability in developing creative and compelling content that engages audiences like podcasts. "It is good to know that we can produce quality videos and audios without using sophisticated equipment" said Charity Chelangat, Oxfam in Uganda's YEEP Project Coordinator.

With the rapid changes in the world today, and the increasing writer competition to attract the same audiences using both traditional and digital media, there is a need to go beyond shaping our influencing strategies to package content appropriately for meaningful and participatory engagements.

This includes the ability to extract relevant information from large chunks of data. Dorah Ntunga, Oxfam in Uganda's Media and Communications Coordinator said, "This training is a building block to the past training, a series that we hope to continue to carry on in strengthening the capacity of all teams in effective communication. We trust that after these sessions we can be champions and share the knowledge acquired with the rest of the team."

In his closing remarks, Bernard Tabire ACME's Director of Programmes appreciated Oxfam for strengthening staff capacities as this gives the organisation an edge in producing knowledge and using it for influencing. He said that the Oxfam team was one of the most enthusiastic trainees he has ever worked with and encouraged us to keep writing and make use of the skills we had acquired.



Oxfam team attending a writing training session in Jinja



Charles Opiyo, Oxfam in Uganda's Seed Right Coordinator participating in an on-camera interview conducted by Emily Niringiye, Oxfam in Uganda's Emergency Communications Officer

OXFAM IN THE NEWS

- [NGOS CONDEMN BANK CASH WITHDRAW TAX, CALL ON M7 GOV'T TO REVISE GENEROUS TAX HOLIDAYS 4 INVESTORS – mulengeranews.com](#): Mulengera News, 14 February 2021
- [Will the Mining and Mineral Bill, 2019 address transparency and accountability gaps of the mining sub-sector in Uganda? | Oxfam in Uganda](#): Oxfam in Uganda website, 08 February 2021
- CSOs task Government over Mining sector [\(8\) Magara Siragi Luyima \(@smagara4\) / Twitter](#): 22 February 2021



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