



EU funded project restores forest cover, delivers improved livelihoods for refugees and host communities.

Resilience in Action:

As part of the Ugandan Refugee Response, the European Union, in partnership with Uganda Biodiversity Trust Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society, Nature Uganda and Ecological Christian Organisation, is since December 2020 actively contributing to ecosystem restoration and environmental protection in the refugee hosting districts.

The four-year project, known as "Restoring and Conserving degraded fragile ecosystems for improved Community Livelihoods", supports income-generating enterprises that prioritize resilience building, environmental, and forest protection. This initiative is restoring vegetation cover and building resilience to environmental degradation, while promoting sustainable livelihood solutions for both refugees and host communities of West Nile and the Mid-Albertine Rift regions of Uganda.

This EU-funded project is in line with the 2017 New York Declaration, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and specifically, to the Golu's Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan (WESRRP) for the period 2020/21-2025/26, designed to provide a comprehensive planning for both refugees and host communities within the context of Water and Environment Sector. The framework aims to ensure that there is improved utilization of water and environment resources for peaceful co-existence of refugees and host communities through restoration, conservation and protection of the environment and natural resources in Uganda.

Acidri explained: "We were trained to make **mandaazi** and chapatti using separate and a mix of wheat and cassava flour. Since we also harvest seeds of shea nut, we were also trained in making quality lotions from the shea nut oil. In making **mandaazi**, we mix two kilograms of wheat and two kilograms of cassava flour to produce quality tasty products."

Atomu, together with fellow members, can now sell **mandaazi** and chapatti in Lukemene Trading Centre and to schools during the school going term. Previously, they used to sell only dried cassava at Shs 500 per kilo. They are glad that today, they are able to sell a kilo of ground cassava at Shs 2000 from the same kilo after processing and make a profit of Shs 1500! "In a day, we can grind at least 200kgs, but it can go up to 400 or 500 kgs," said Acidri.



Photo by Edward Ayebazibwe: Mr. Emmanuel Cadrho of Amanacoosi group in Osa village, Maraju parish, Uriama sub-county (next to Omugo refugee settlement) (a) responding to the interview on how the group is benefiting from the cassava delivered equipment; (b) is a woman demonstrating how the chipping machine works and (c) shows the sorghum and cassava flour processed from the UBF-supplied machine.

Examples of how the project has enriched people's lives.

Value addition to cassava processing

Nestled in Inya Village, Rogale Parish in Yumbe District is Khadija Atoma, who is happy and hopeful that she can now take her seven children to school and the clinic for treatment. She is part of the 17-member Bahati Mixed Farmers Group that has gained immensely from a Uganda Biodiversity Fund intervention to improve their income generation and farming skills. "We used to walk a long distance, of about two miles, to Lukemene Trading Centre to grind our cassava. But we now have our own machine," she said.

Her fellow member, Bob Acidri, the general secretary for their group, said that they received training in value addition to cassava and even received a cassava processing unit composed of a cassava chiper and a grinding machine, which they use to conveniently

Emmanuel Cadrho from Uriama sub county, on behalf of a 30-member (19 are women) Amanacoosi group, is another beneficiary of the project efforts. They too received a set of cassava equipment and were trained on how to make different products from cassava. Both host community members and refugees from Omugo refugee settlement process their cassava from here, and according to Cadrho, women used to travel over 10 kms to grind their cassava and would pay between Shs 150-200 to process a kilo of cassava. "The women are now very happy that they now have a machine close to them and can save time to do other household chores." The refugees from Sudan had never made any bread from cassava and are very excited about the equipment that process cassava into flour," Cadrho said, adding, "Women are also happy because the cost of processing a kilo has come down to Shs 100 for cassava and shs 150 for sorghum". A total of 5,221 kilos of Cassava and Sorghum has been processed at this machine between 20th April and 18th May 2024 with a total gross earning of Shs 642,100 and a net profit of Shs 321,100 for the group. "The group had never accumulated this kind of income in one month since its creation in 2010", says Emmanuel.

Adoption of Green Innovations by refugee to sustain agriculture production.

Besides nationals, even refugees have got a reason to smile because of the efforts of Uganda Biodiversity Fund. In Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, Joseph Mahlish highlighted a number of interventions including rotational cropping, use of early maturing

- ✦ Installed seventeen (17) pieces of equipment to process and package honey, cassava, Shea nut, and Dessert date (Balanitae aegyptiaca) for 17 farmers groups.
- ✦ Employed 450 women and youths from the refugee hosting communities in the woodlot and woodland establishment.
- ✦ Built capacity for over 4000 community members in nature-based enterprise selection and development.
- ✦ Supplied indigenous tree species planting materials to 700 farmers to plant in the 1,425 Ha of degraded woodlands.
- ✦ Distributed 900 bee hives to further promote the conservation of woodlands.
- ✦ Trained 22 grassroot civil society groups and over 30 technical staff in SLM/CSA/AF practice, enterprise selection and business planning, post-harvest handling, and value addition.
- ✦ Supported NFA with 21 Android phones bearing the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART).
- ✦ Trained 53 NFA staff in how to capture forest patrol data.



Photo by Edward Ayebazibwe, the UBF staff, Khadija Atoma of the Bahati demonstrating to the EU case study team how the UBF supplied chipping machine chips cassava to make chips

seeds, making manure and bio char. "We are 30 members comprised of 17 women and 13 men in our group. We received training in climate smart agriculture and land management practices, and we are now able to make trenches in our gardens to capture water so that we can have more moisture in our gardens for a longer time. We also harvest rainwater in a 1500 litre tank for irrigation that was given by the project," he said. Mahlish said his group members are happy because they can grow and have food, especially beans that they used to grow only in the period of April to June. He said they have hope that the agronomic practices they learnt will aid them to attain food security.

"Our group is called Nyugu United Youth Group and we also have a saving scheme, where members meet and save from as little as Shs 1000 to Shs 5000. We can borrow from our savings at a 10% interest rate. So, if a member borrowed Shs 10000, he or she would return Shs 11000," he said. He further said, "We are going to use our savings to buy more inputs for next season and deepen our knowledge in application of what we learnt and scale up."

UBF which is implementing the project with Nature Uganda, Wildlife Conservation Society, and Ecological Christian Organizations in the districts of Yumbe, Terego, Kikube, Kamwenge, and Kyegewa has supplied a total 18 machines to 18 groups processing cassava, honey and shea nut. These are comprised of one shea nut machine in located in Yumbe district, 7 cassava processing units in Terego and Yumbe districts and 10 honey processing units for all the project districts. The delivered equipment is part of the building resilience for communities to actively participate in restoration and conservation of degraded ecosystems but also adopt practices to sustain agricultural productivity in degraded farming landscapes.



Joseph Mahlish explained to the EU case study team how the Nyugu United Youth Group has benefited from the UBF-established sustainable land management and climate-smart agriculture demonstrations and the practical training received during the establishment. Below is a garden of early maturing beans that the group is excited about having seen the productivity for the beans planted out of season.

"This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its content is the sole responsibility of the Uganda Biodiversity Trust Fund"

CONTACT: Uganda Biodiversity Fund Plot 425, Zimwe Road, Kisugu, P.O. Box 26156, Kampala. **Telephone:** +256 393216445
Email: info@ugandabiodiversityfund.org; <https://www.facebook.com/ugandabiodiversityfund.org>; **Website:** www.ugandabiodiversityfund.org