

# Unveiling Grassroots Women-Led Resilience Community Development



**HUAIROU COMMISSION**  
*Women, Homes & Community*



**Sida**

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION AGENCY

Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC) is working with organized grassroots women groups in Bugiri district to mitigate the impact of climate change and promote community resilience using the Community Resilience Fund (CRF) from Huairou Commission.

The CRF is channeled to grassroots women's groups to demonstrate how small investments into women's resilience and land initiatives can lead to effective solutions that can be scaled up nationally and regionally. The fund is also meant to leverage opportunities for grassroots women to position themselves in partnerships and collaboration with local organizations and government authorities to gain leadership or advocacy roles. In these positions, women are better placed to influence local budgets and funding, emergency response teams and public services.



*Agents of climate change and community resilience attending a learning exchange visit at Mukono Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute*



## Impact of Climate Change

The unreliable and unpredictable weather patterns across the world have affected all diversely. Developing countries, Uganda not exceptional, have been severely hit by climate change leaving millions of families vulnerable and challenged in numerous ways. The agricultural activities that are dependent on environment stability for water supply and soil fertility among other needs have been most affected by the change. Small holder farmers especially in rural areas like Bugiri find themselves in a dire situation due to their low resilience capacity to deal with climate change effects. They have limited knowledge and financial capacity to support adaptation.

Livelihoods have been negatively affected due to increasing food insecurity and poverty. This has come about as a result of drought; the long dry spells have challenged sustainability of agricultural activities particularly crop growing and livestock farming. The low yields and poor quality products are barely sufficient for subsistence consumption.

# Grassroots Women's Efforts to Ease the Climate Change Burden Using CRF

**U**COBAC piloted the CRF with 3 grassroots women-led groups in Bugiri district in the year 2017. The groups each with 30 members are organized in two sub-counties namely; Buluguyi and Iwemba. The groups are called Agalya Awamu, Umoja na Nguvu and Galibooleka respectively. The 90 members in total have been engaged in a series of activities geared towards Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and promoting Community Resilience.

Activities implemented include; i) trainings on climate change, DRR and resilience practices, food security, women's land rights and livelihoods; ii) collective risk mapping, analysis, risk prioritization and resilience building practice iii) training in monitoring, evaluation, advocacy and local to local methodologies iv) training in loan management, savings skills, market analysis, good farm management and value addition v) supporting agri-business and crop diversification vi) peer exchange visit vii) grassroots resilience academy viii) mapping institutional actors and holding local to local dialogues ix) developing joint work plans and formalizing agreements with local government x) certifying grassroots women as resilient development experts/change agents and xi) increasing women's political participation, etc.

# **Facts and achievements of CRF implemented by UCOBAC**

- CRF pilot phase was implemented in 2 communities i.e. Iwemba and Buluguyi sub-counties.
- 90 community members including 75 women and 15 men are now change agents and trainees of trainers on climate change and DRR in their respective communities. They are leading action strategies and practices on resilience building.
- 24 women hold leadership positions in the village, parish, sub-county and district level.
- 5 formal agreements have been signed between the grassroots women groups and the local government through application of the the local to local methodology and advocacy skills.
- Adoption of modern agricultural practices for sustainable livelihoods. These include; fruit tree growing to supplement diet, improve rainfall patterns, etc; animal rearing such as goats; crop diversification and adoption other environmental friendly practices such as building and use of local energy saving stoves, drainage de-clogging and dissemination of information on environment protection.
- 3 Village Savings and Loans Associations created to boost incomes.
- 2 peer learning exchange visits at Mukono Zonal Agricultural Development Institute (MUZARDI) and Jaguzi Isand.
- In the 2nd year of implementation (in the year 2018), CRF has been extended to a new community in Bugiri district called Nsango. The women's group is called Galikwooleka and it is composed of 30 members.

## **Elizabeth is no longer devastated by drought**

*“In my community drought is the order of the day. Our crops were failing because of many reasons but water was the main problem, we have lost livestock because of the excessive heat. I welcomed CRF with open hands because we, the grassroots farmers have been supported to plan and prepare for disasters adequately, to grow drought resistant crops using modern agricultural methods – my yields are improving. With CRF I have been able to grow some fruit trees and vegetables. I have hope that as we continue to share this knowledge and putting it to practice, there will be change in the way we handle the disasters such as drought and floods when they strike. My family at least now is able to have enough food even when the hard times hit because of the safety net that CRF has helped us create.”*



**Elizabeth is a member of Umoja ni Nguvu women’s group and is a woman councilor in her constituency.**

## **35 year old Margaret building a permanent house using savings from CRF activities**

*"I have been consistently saving in our group at every meeting. Each share is Uganda Shillings 2,000/= (\$ 0.52). The more you save, the higher your chances of borrowing large amounts. Initially I borrowed UGx shs 200,000/= (\$ 51.8) which I used to buy some household items, I repaid this with a small interest and have been borrowing over time until I got a small loan of about UGx Shs 2,000,000/= (\$ 517.5) which I am going to use to buy iron sheets, wood and nails to complete my house. I was part of the team that formed Agali Awamu women's group because I realized that collectively, we can achieve a lot more than when am alone and I can easily access credit at an affordable rate."*



*Margaret 's current home*



*The new home under construction*



**Margaret is a the Chairperson of Agali Awamu women's group.**

## CRF activities



*Beneficiaries sharing out cassava stems*



*Some of the beneficiaries of banana suckers*



*Using a fuel saving stove made after training*





*Some of the beneficiaries of cassava stems*



*Peer exchange visit at MUZARDI*



*Training on market planning and enterprise selection*

*UCOBAC is a national non-government, non-partisan organization dedicated to promoting rights of women and children in Uganda using community based initiatives. With support from Huairou Commission and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, UCOBAC implements the CRF through one of its program areas; Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience. Through this program, UCOBAC supports communities to strengthen their capacity to prepare and plan for disasters adequately to promote resilience.*

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