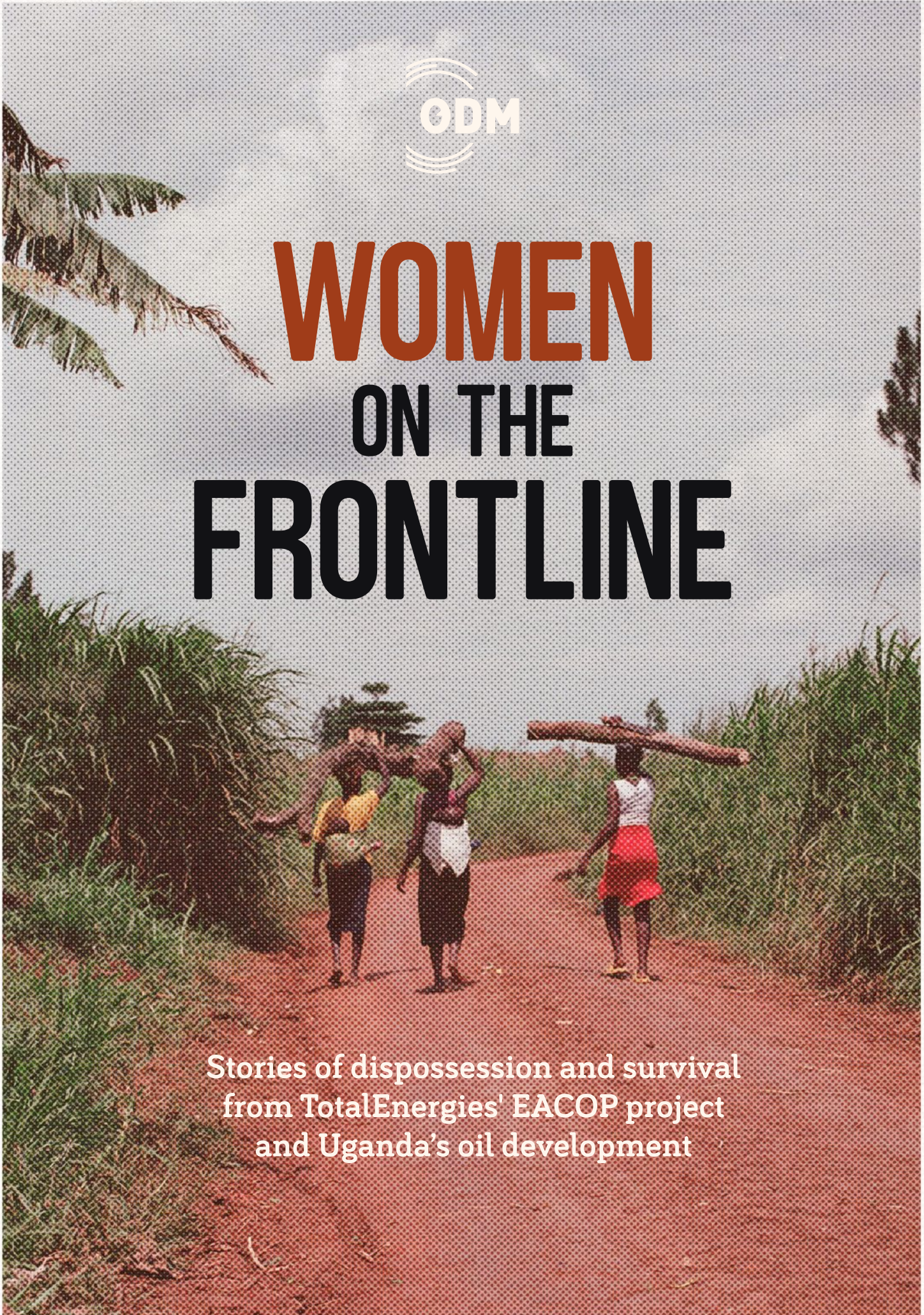




WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINE

Stories of dispossession and survival
from TotalEnergies' EACOP project
and Uganda's oil development



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: GENDERED IMPACTS OF OIL DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA

This report presents the findings of a two-month-long investigation into the living conditions of women who have been displaced due to the oil development in Western and Southern Uganda. The oil development includes the construction of the world's longest heated crude oil pipeline (EACOP), carried out by an alliance between oil giants TotalEnergies (acting as project leader through its UK subsidiary TotalEnergies Ltd) and the Chinese National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) in collaboration with the Ugandan and Tanzanian governments. Apart from the pipeline, oil development also comprises two oil processing facilities (Kingfisher and Tilenga CPFs), two other pipelines, over 400 oil drilling sites, the Kabaale oil refinery, the construction of an airport, and various other oil infrastructures.

The construction of the EACOP **alone** has displaced approximately 118,000 people from their homes.¹ The project-affected locals have described the conditions of displacement as being both unfair and violent.² Although the “petro-state alliance”, which comprises TotalEnergies, CNOOC, and the Ugandan government, claims to have compensated most households through cash or in-kind compensation, there has been little research on the livelihoods of displaced Ugandans post-compensation – and even less research on the specific impacts of oil development on women. EACOP and other oil development infrastructures are being developed in a context of pre-existing gender dynamics. In Uganda, high levels of gender-based violence exist, including exclusion from legal ownership of land. The petro-state alliance claims to have incorporated “women's empowerment” objectives into their development by paying particular attention to women-specific issues during the consultation process, and offering women-specific training. This report aims to bring women's testimonies to the forefront regarding these issues.

The petro-state alliance claims that the oil development will benefit women and contribute to “closing the gender gap” in displaced communities. In practice, however, the women interviewed reported that they had not benefited from the oil development. The compensation strategy essentialised husband-wife dynamics into a question of access to monetary compensation, and thus failed to properly compensate women (I). The gender strategy is patronising because it obscures the fact that oil development itself is reinforcing gender inequalities by preventing women from sustaining livelihoods, and fulfilling gendered expectations. Although oil companies have committed to a “Gender Equality and Social Inclusion policy” all women interviewed reported that the project has left them worse off (II). TotalEnergies describes women as “vulnerable groups” in need of empowerment, yet fails to recognise its own agency in significantly harming women's livelihoods. The oil projects' strategy is also flawed because it does not account for gender inequalities beyond the household setting: in practice, the relationships with the new project workforces (road workers, truck drivers etc.) have led to fear and multiple assaults, restricting women's movements (III). Lastly, women who voice their concerns are shut down, despite clear requests for improved relocation conditions (IV). The report thus centres women's experiences as survivors of an extractive project.



OIL DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA: KEY FACTS

A CLIMATE BOMB...

Oil exploitation in Uganda is at risk of turning into a climate bomb: 34 million tons of CO₂ will be released in the atmosphere each year (this is more than the combined emissions of Tanzania and Uganda).³

6.5 billion barrels of crude oil were discovered below the shores of Lake Albert in Hoima district since 2006, 1.4 billion of which can be commercially exploited.⁴

EACOP's legacy:

- **1440 kilometres of pipeline:** the distance between Paris and Rome;
- **118 000 people displaced;**⁵

→ 2000 km² of national parks, forests and wetlands disrupted.⁶

...THAT IS HIGHLY CONTESTED

- 2 lawsuits filed against TotalEnergies since 2019 by Project Affected Persons (PAPs), Ugandan and French NGOs;
- Petition delivered by Students Against EACOP, Ugandan climate activists, in addition to peaceful protests in Kampala;
- Activist mobilisation in Uganda and internationally. Protests in front of different TotalEnergies headquarters in Paris, London, and elsewhere.

A FAILED COMPENSATION SCHEME FOR WOMEN

Along the pipeline's route, displaced communities have contested the undervalued prices they were offered by EACOP in exchange for giving away their homes, and farmland.

In Uganda, women are not entitled to the same land rights as men. Although Ugandan law prohibits gender discrimination in land ownership, in many cases land is acquired and inherited according to customary traditions which favour male ownership. Women can inherit land from relatives, receive land as a gift, or buy land themselves, yet are considered mere users of their husbands' land in customary marriages. The situation leads to complex and varied situations as women can both own several plots of land, and be considered "users" of their husbands' land.

Compensation for displacements was awarded on the basis of land rights, and of the value of the farmlands, gardens, and houses that would be acquired to make way for oil development. Total E&P Uganda and CNOOC Uganda Ltd promised that women with no formal legal rights would be included in the compensation scheme, and have their informal rights to land recognised.⁷ Women were identified as "potential vulnerable groups". TotalEnergies claims that it is "advocating for gender equality in the broader community", and prohibits "discrimination based on gender and gender identity".

In practice, according to the testimonies we have collected, this approach to compensation has failed to deliver fair outcomes.

WOMEN DID NOT BENEFIT FROM THE COMPENSATION THEY WERE ENTITLED TO

The compensation was promised either through a single lump sum payment, or through a "land-for-land" exchange. Women have expressed complaints about both options.

CASH COMPENSATION. Faced with a multi-layered and complex land ownership context, EACOP boiled down the compensation process to a single "silver bullet" solution: opening joint bank accounts, so that both husband and wife would be able to access the compensation money. "Spousal consent was used to ensure that women participated in decisions regarding compensation options."⁸ In practice, however, access to compensation did not necessarily materialise. **All the women claimed they had little to no knowledge of how and when the compensation money was spent and/or if it was spent.** Grace* testifies:

*"I know the money is in the house but I have never seen it."*⁹

Mary also testifies that the bank office was too far from her home, and that only her husband could access it by motorbike. Concerns around compensation reaching women was already highlighted as a potential risk by Oxfam's analysis of the EACOP's compensation process.¹⁰ Women feel that the cash compensation resulted in a significant loss of decision-making over the household's funds, in comparison with pre-compensation times. They believe that this situation could have been avoided had they been integrated in the compensation process in a more significant way than being asked for their signature on a bank paper. Indeed, one woman said:

*"Husbands are now encouraged to get married just to have a women's signature and get the cash compensation."*¹¹

The language used by the project - "EACOP has assisted the Project Affected Persons (PAPs) to open bank accounts with their spouses"¹² - is also reductive of women's role as household fund managers, and sometimes owners of several plots of land outside of their marriage. A 2022 report by Just Finance even mentioned that single women, or unmarried women, still hadn't received any compensation.¹³ This suggests that

*All names have been modified.



the recognition of women's informal rights to land by oil companies was superficial at best.



In response to our questions, TotalEnergies claimed that “the majority of women engaged found the joint disclosure exercise held with their spouses to be useful” which

fails to integrate the context that women were in any case not given an alternative option for the delivery of a monetary compensation. Moreover, TotalEnergies has not provided any fact to prove this statement. Lastly, EACOP’s compensation success is measured by the percentage of compensation agreements signed by both wives and husbands, which is insufficient to monitor the longer term impacts of joint bank accounts on marriage dynamics.

IN-KIND COMPENSATION. In the cases where women were offered new homes, they fell short of expectations. Although Principle 5 of EACOP’s relocation strategy mentions that resettlement would be undertaken in a “culturally appropriate manner”,¹⁴ women said that the new relocation areas were inadapted to their cultural needs. For instance, the new homes lacked a space for women to cook outside. Stoves were put inside the house and ended up smoking the entire living areas. TotalEnergies distributed grants to an environmental consultancy (Ecotrust) to distribute “improved cooking stoves.” TotalEnergies is asking women to change their

daily cooking methods.¹⁵ instead of respecting local cultures. This intervention caters to western-oriented development agendas, favoring electric stoves. However, it does not take in account what women actually need.

Similarly, one woman mentioned:

“In our culture, children are not supposed to live in the same house as their parents as they grow older, yet everyone was relocated to one house here.”
(Kyakaboga resettlement camp).



In response to our questions, TotalEnergies claims to have had the new houses and farmlands approved beforehand, but this directly contradicts all the testimonies from displaced women, who were given little, if not missing, information as to the new relocation areas (location, soil quality, farmland area, accessibility etc.).

WOMEN WERE UNABLE TO VOICE THEIR CONCERNS

How can TotalEnergies ensure that women receive fair and meaningful compensation if they were not given the opportunity to voice their concerns before being displaced? While the EACOP claims to have led specific meetings for women, it has not provided any information about the number of women who attended. Rose says:

"We did not have a chance to attend meetings because husbands did not want to. And there was no room for asking what happened during those meetings."¹⁶

Lack of participation can only result in women's exclusion from the compensation process right from the beginning. During an interview a woman admitted:

"I didn't even know that we could choose between monetary or in-kind compensation"

as she learnt through our discussion about the compensation options. According to other respondents in an Oxfam report, consultations were often conducted early in the morning, at a time when most women were farming and unable to attend.¹⁷ This suggests that wives were restricted from active involvement in decision-making pertaining to their own relocation.



According to TotalEnergies' response, the risk of women being unable to attend these meetings had been identified by the Human Rights Impact Assessment. But the company denies any responsibility in women being unable to attend to the meetings, and greatly underestimates the number of affected people.

"LIVELIHOOD PACKAGES" AS A "PINKWASHING" STRATEGY

In the context of compensation having not reached women, any incremental efforts aimed at improving the lives of women were largely seen as insufficient by displaced women.

The testimonies from women on the ground leave no room for doubt: oil companies have shown a clear lack of commitment to gender equality. In the context of complex land rights, where women are at a disadvantage compared to men, TotalEnergies left women significantly disempowered compared to their situation before oil development. They either did not receive monetary compensation or were left with inadequate and even worse housing. Shockingly, women testify that they now have less control over collective funds, reinforcing inequalities within the household.

"They gave us livelihood packages to train us in growing greens, but there is nowhere to sell this."¹⁸

One woman testified that she was unable to obtain training and equipment because she is not her husband's main wife. The women surveyed welcomed livelihood packages as potentially beneficial to start their own businesses, yet judged them as incomplete and unadapted to their needs. This did not prevent oil companies from "pinkwashing" their sustainability reports with images of women operating sewing machines.



In its response to our questions, TotalEnergies claims to measure the success of these training programs by counting the number of women who attended (only 214 women out of the 118 000 displaced PAPs) – instead of ensuring that women are actually benefitting from this training to improve their economic condition.



CONCLUSION

The testimonies from women on the ground leave no room for doubt: oil companies have shown a clear lack of commitment to gender equality. In the context of complex land rights, where women are at a disadvantage compared to men, TotalEnergies left women significantly disempowered compared to their situation before oil development. They either did not receive monetary compensation or were left with inadequate and even worse housing. Shockingly, women testify that they now have less control over collective funds, reinforcing inequalities within the household.

Some women were offered "upskilling" and "livelihood packages" by oil companies and the government. This included courses on growing vegetables, training to start a business, and the distribution of sewing machines. Yet as some women testified:

“Out of this oil program, me as a woman, I gained nothing out of the compensation.”¹⁹



In response to our questions, TotalEnergies repeatedly argued that “spouse consent” was provided during the whole compensation process. Yet “spousal consent” does not mean Free, Prior and Informed consent, nor does it put in perspective the fact that many households were not given a choice but to leave their homes and farmlands. What does consent mean if there are no alternative options?

OIL DEVELOPMENT'S IMPACTS ON WOMEN'S ROLES AND LIVELIHOODS

Oil development in Uganda is being conducted under the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which states that: *“Gender issues in extractive industries cannot be adequately addressed unless rights and equity concerns are identified and tackled. The dislocation process could, and often does, exacerbate existing gender disparities and inequalities. In many societies, women do not enjoy land and property rights, have lower levels of education than men do, work in the informal sector, experience restricted mobility, and carry responsibilities for meeting basic needs such as water, fuel, and fodder.”*²⁰

This perspective overlooks how the EACOP and other oil development activities might undermine women's needs. Such a perspective precludes any consideration of how the EACOP and other oil development activities might undermine women's needs.²¹

Displaced women encounter daily challenges. They are dealing with unsuitable relocation areas and restricted or polluted access to essential resources. They are urging oil companies and the government to create a more suitable environment that considers their need to continue farming and caring for their families.

In the Ugandan villages surveyed, daily tasks are gender-divided. Women are involved in **social reproduction**²² through different activities, including but not limited to:²³

- Farming land/ harvesting to feed the household;
- Collecting firewood and water;
- Cooking everyday;
- Caring for children and grandchildren and paying for their school fees;
- Caring for elders;

- Selling surplus crops on markets;
- Managing household funds.

While husbands' gender roles²⁴ typically revolve around the following:

- Starting businesses;
- Grazing animals;
- Farming in gardens;
- Managing household funds.

The relocation process has affected women's ability to fulfil their gender roles.

FARMING AND PROVIDING FOOD FOR THE FAMILY

In rural villages, land is what provides food for families. Some cash crops are harvested to be sold for extra profit, while food crops are harvested by women for subsistence.

Delayed compensation of farmland

Oil companies and the government were blamed for causing delays in the relocation process, resulting in hardship for women as they could no longer provide food for their relatives.²⁵ According to Beatrice, the leader of the Kwataniza Women Farmers Group, and other sources, compensation was sometimes delayed for up to five years, leaving households unable to cultivate their land before the official relocation date.²⁶ This practice goes against Uganda's own land acquisition legislation and its constitution (article 26). Women, being the primary providers of food for their households, had to find ways to maintain their livelihoods, often going into debt to rent land for growing food.

“The survival of women and their families after the cut-off date was so complicated. They were renting some land to grow food, offering casual labour to get food. On several occasions they were just surviving narrowly on a few meals.”

(Beatrice on women who were had been prohibited from farming their land without having received compensation)

Despite promises to compensate for the delays, some women report that they still do not have access to farmland today.

Longer and dangerous distances to farmlands:

When women were relocated, they report having to walk much longer distances to their farmland than before. Women complained that they could not choose the area where they were relocated.²⁷ This has had consequences on their ability to continue farming. Margaret said:

“My new land is now located 20 km away from my house. I sometimes take the boda²⁸ to go there but most times I just walk. My feet and legs get painful from all this walking. Sometimes my crops are stolen while I'm away.”²⁹

Another woman stated that her new farmland was practically unusable because of the neighbouring oil development that was polluting soils.

“Soil waste is being dumped on our land, so our crops no longer grow.”³⁰

She thinks the sand comes from the construction of road infrastructure. This suggests that oil companies have not taken in consideration women's concerns around the distance between farmland and homes, and echoes Friends of the Earth's findings.³¹

Less fertile farmlands, poorer family diets

Additionally, some women have testified that their new farmland was of lower quality than the ones from which



they were displaced, and that they could not grow the same produce.

Fausta said:

“My children would eat from our mango trees. I would sell the paw paws when the right season came and get a lot of money out of it. Now there is nowhere I can grow those trees again.”³²

Mangoes and other fruits used to enrich the family diet, yet are now a rare treat for some families. From that perspective, oil development has had a direct impact on the health of family members.

Another woman said:

"I used to grow local fruits to heal my family, but I cannot find them where I have been relocated. I would have to go all the way to Hoima now to find them."

FIREWOOD AND WATER COLLECTION

As forests and woodlands are lost to oil development, displaced women report they have struggled to collect vital resources such as firewood and water. Although firewood is the primary source of fuel for cooking for many women, it has been disregarded in the relocation policies of oil companies.

"Since we've been relocated, we have to walk 8 kilometres to get to the new firewood collection point," explains Farida. "Before all this, we could collect a lot of wood directly from our gardens."

The EACOP's social inclusion policy mentions "prohibiting child labor" (EACOP Human Rights Policy, 2022). However, according to testimonies, the displacement of families further away from water and firewood collection points has forced women to ask for their children's help in these daily tasks, instead of going to school.

SCHOOLING CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN

During the land acquisition processes, two schools in Kabaale schools (Nyahaira Primary School and Kyapaloni) were acquired from communities. Children were taken out of school, and it took more than five years to transfer the children from these schools to another, because, according to Beatrice, of a lack of oversight from the oil companies. Women suffer directly from this, as they explained:

"When the children grow up, they will blame us for not sending them to school."³³

CONCLUSION

The crucial roles of women as caregivers, harvesters, and providers of food have been significantly diminished by oil development and relocation to ill-suited areas. Women's essential needs for food, plants, water, and firewood have been ignored in the relocation process. The unpaid care work of women has not been adequately recognized in the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) process, resulting in unaddressed and uncompensated harm caused by oil development.

OIL DEVELOPMENT CREATES A NEW VIOLENT SPACE FOR WOMEN

Oil development has imposed new precarious conditions for women, as they now struggle to meet gendered expectations - fetching firewood and water, feeding and healing relatives. The situation has escalated tensions and conflicts within the household. As Beatrice explains, "gender-based violence increased because husbands would come home to no food on the table."³⁴ Other women shared that:

*"The fighting begins when husbands come home to no food on the table and children crying."*³⁵

In December 2022, the EACOP partnered with the Ministry of Gender for a 16-day campaign to raise awareness about gender-based violence and demonstrate its commitment to "gender equality." This marketing campaign hides the fact that the EACOP contributes to increasing gender-based violence in the first place. Women report that they feel more exposed to potential assaults and harassment since the arrival of a new male workforce in their communities.

The benefit of anonymity

The development of oil in Uganda has led to the construction of infrastructure such as roads, airports, and military installations, that require a new workforce. During discussions, women strongly voiced their frustration with the presence of new male workers, such as road workers, oil workers, welders, other infrastructure workers, and military representatives. They found it difficult to differentiate between these workers, which they described as an unidentifiable group of male foreigners restricting their movements. In the Kyakaboga resettlement camp, a woman was murdered while collecting firewood. The identity of the murderer remains unknown to this day, and this tragic incident has created a sense of fear among women who now have to

venture further away to access resources (as seen in II).³⁶ Another woman mentioned she no longer felt comfortable moving around her home at night.³⁷ This impunity not only raises concerns about oil development's weak governance but also reinforces women's perceptions of being confronted to a faceless and unaccountable company. Kyakaboga women and men also recalled their fear upon seeing aeroplanes, government vehicles, and armed people, at the onset of oil development, with no formal warning. Additionally, Total informed the IFHR (International Federation for Human Rights) that a memorandum of understanding would be signed with the Ugandan authorities for the deployment of a specialised oil and gas police force.³⁸ Considering the history of abuse by the Ugandan police forces and the confidentiality of the memorandum, this new agreement will likely result in more violence towards women. Women are especially vulnerable in this regard.



When inquired on their mitigation plans in case of harassment, TotalEnergies replied that security (Government Security Forces, Private Security Companies, Uganda Wildlife Rangers, Oil and Gas police officers, district police officers and military forces) had been trained to answer to these issues. But how can we expect from the workers that have harassed women to also protect them?

Oil companies' lack of response to harassment in the workplace:

Although EACOP committed to following “stringent policies in terms of employment standards for contractors and suppliers”³⁹ women on the ground say they have been harrassed by Total’s subcontractors. Afiya, who used to work as a plumber in a resettlement area, says that:

“Supervisors are causing problems to the female workers. I eventually lost my job because I refused to be in a relationship with my supervisor. There is a communication gap between TotalEnergies and their subcontractors, whereby TotalEnergies does not listen to our complaints regarding subcontractors. Women that decide to speak up about this end up suffering from more assaults from subcontractors.”⁴⁰

She also reported having issues with the “Community Liaison Officers” (CLOs), or oil companies’ appointed community representatives, who further intimidated her when she decided to speak up upon those injustices. After she decided to speak up about this issue, she lost her job.

“Whatever they (oil companies) think they are implementing, the subcontractors are not following. They do their own thing.”



When asked about their processes on potential sexual harrassments in the workplace, TotalEnergies answered that victims of sexual violence should report to the “Community Concerns and Grievance mechanism”, which is the general contact support with no training whatsoever to deal with survivors of sexual violence and trauma. TotalEnergies denies Afiya’s testimony that women have suffered from sexual violence by their subcontractors.

Diseases:

In some villages where Ssubi National Group, a local NGO, had succeeded in bringing down HIV numbers in the region, rates are rising again.⁴¹ According to a resident of Kabaale, the HIV rate in her community is

now up to 89%. TotalEnergies is responsible for jeopardizing women's health and safety, because it has contributed to restricting access to healthcare facilities.

“FALLING IN LOVE” WITH AN OIL RECRUIT, AND SURVIVING SEXUAL ASSAULTS

A few years ago, Namazzi met the head of a neighboring road construction site for oil development. This European worker had been called in by his company to monitor the site. She says that she fell in love with him, hoping that they would both move to his native Turkey. However, she says she was raped by him just four months postpartum of their first child together. The worker then returned to Turkey without leaving her any contact details. Namazzi survived the assault, but now faces disapproval from her community. Her restaurant has lost all its customers because of rumors about her relationship with a foreign oil worker. Consequently, she can no longer afford to send enough food to her children, who are studying at a boarding school in Hoima, the region's capital. Nor can she travel to see them because she cannot afford to.⁴² According to Beatrice, Namazzi is not the only one to have suffered abusive relationships with road workers, suggesting that this is a wider issue. Oil developments have led to significant violence that has affected women's bodies and social status, but there is no support system in place.

CONCLUSION

Although oil development’s IFC standard number 4 outlines a commitment to “community health, safety and security”, it seems that oil development has effectively re-arranged space at the expense of women’s movements. For women, wives, and girls interviewed, the recruits of oil development appear as a frightening mobile force of potential assaults, which then materialises in harrassment and abusive relationships. Oil development takes a toll on the health and dignity of women, and undermines their social relations and ability to stand united in front of a “faceless” company, as assaults can lead to shame and exclusion from the community. Oil companies are responsible for creating these new inequalities between women and men.

POCKETS OF RESISTANCE DESPITE SYSTEMATIC INTIMIDATION

Women are individually and collectively mobilising to voice their concerns, and asking for improved relocation standards. Whether they organise through NGOs, or communicate with NGOs, Dorothy, Annet, Beatrice, and other women defenders are reporting that their advocacy and outspokenness is causing fear among oil development representatives in their community.

“People from the CPF (Central Processing Facility) see us as enemies. They brand us as anti-development people”;

said Dorothy as she recalls speaking up about unfair compensation for her land, and taking the matter to the Petroleum Authority of Uganda. Women also petition local leaders for improved service delivery like health, water, sanitation and agriculture services. In many cases, women report having taken on a leading role in communicating with appointed oil representatives about unfair compensation and relocation environments.

Despite the limited democratic space, women have created NGOs to organise collectively and defend themselves. For instance, the Kwataniza Women Farmers Group was forced to change strategy when the government stepped up the repression against activists — it was no longer possible for the NGO to directly criticise oil development. *“Laws have been amended to squeeze us”* (such as through the Public Order Management Act). Beatrice, head of the Kwataniza farmers group, attempts to speak up and promote women’s concerns. Other NGOs such as Global Rights Alert, the National Associations of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE), and the African Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) are attentive to women-specific issues.

WOMEN HAVE CLEAR DEMANDS FOR OIL COMPANIES:

- Fair compensation: to account for the differential access of land ownership between husband and wife, women are asking for fair compensation that reflects their commitment to the land on which they spend their day harvesting and farming;
- Support for children’s schooling, and the children of single-parent families/ families in difficulty;
- Support for entrepreneurship, such as supporting small-scale women enterprises around trade, piggery, goat rearing, poultry, apiary which can boost food security and household incomes;
- Having a direct access to firewood;
- Supporting skilling to the women and the youth and provide jobs to the Project Affected Women and increasing job slots for women;
- Improving the livelihood packages to be of long-term help.

Overall, women are simply asking oil companies to respect their own commitments to a fair compensation with a gender-specific lens.⁴³



CONCLUSION

This report provides initial insights into the gender-specific impacts of oil development in Uganda. Testimonies reveal that oil exploitation in Uganda disproportionately affects women, depriving them of their land and the opportunity to live healthy and dignified lives. This issue is particularly concerning in a context where women already experience significant discrimination in terms of property rights. The presence of oil companies only serves to worsen these challenges. Despite oil companies' commitments, women have reported a lack of attention to their needs since the project began. They believe TotalEnergies, CNOOC, and the Ugandan government have neglected their informal land rights, relocation needs, and disregarded their inputs in the consultation processes.

TotalEnergies is championing "gender equality" in an apparent assertion of corporate sustainability. The company's claim to protect and enable women's rights is used to justify its intervention in Uganda as leader of the EACOP project. This narrative is leveraged to frame EACOP as a moral, ethical, and progressive project, in order to continue banking with investors and insurers. However, EACOP's version of "gender equality" corresponds to a Western, white conception of "women's development". The company has to meet international standards of responsibility that have been defined by Western project sponsors (IFC, EITI, etc), yet are unadapted to the local context. Women are offered new houses and farmlands that are completely unsuited to their

social, economic, and cultural needs. This has also been true of the monetary compensation. The deployment of joint bank accounts as a "silver bullet" solution exposes women to more constraints than benefits, since their role is reduced to "spouses" instead of the financial and emotional support that they provide for their relatives.

Oil companies also demonstrate a shallow commitment to gender equality by consistently ignoring women's demands for a fair compensation. Gender equality becomes a box-ticking exercise, with no substance and concrete positive impact on the women who have been displaced. These companies also benefit from an intimate alliance with the Ugandan government, validating EACOP's gender measures through public marketing campaigns.

In this unfavourable environment, and despite the risks of intimidation, or worse, sexual assaults, women continue to organise collectively, and stand their ground. They are active in critiquing EACOP's legacy, and asking for better relocation conditions.

In light of women's testimonies, as well as the different petitions and legal action taken by local communities, activists, and researchers, oil development cannot be considered beneficial for the relocated communities. TotalEnergies, CNOOC, and the Ugandan government must provide decent relocation conditions to women, or should expect more resistance.

METHODOLOGY

A Primary data: The research was carried out in collaboration with TASHA, a local NGO fighting to give a voice to community members to ask for the protection, respect and reparation for victims of human rights violations in Uganda. Since 2021, TASHA has been working to help affected communities understand their rights and access legal action in relocation contexts, produce research and studies on oil development in Uganda, raise community awareness of environmental and customer issues, organise the defence of Ugandan activists facing threats and intimidation, and conceptualise a future with greener solutions for Ugandan industries and people.

Places (districts): 10 villages in the districts of Buliisa, Hoima (town and district), Masindi, Kikuube (western region of Uganda, where the oilfields are located) & Rakai, Kyotera (central region of Uganda - in the south, no oilfields, only EACOP's pipeline).

Scope: This research focuses on oil development as a whole. This includes EACOP, Tilenga (CPF at Buliisa and 400 oil wells), and Kingfisher (4 oil wells), the Kabaale refinery and airport, the pipeline used to transfer refined oil to Wakiso, near Kampala, as well as new road infrastructure and the extraction of water and sand from Lake Albert.

Testimonies were obtained from individual interviews or semi-structured groups of 3, 4 or 5 women. Testimonies from 30 women, aged between 30 and 70. Various socio-economic statuses - between 0 and 9 children, married, widowed, etc. Different religions and languages (Alu, Nyoro, only some speak English and Luganda). The testimonies were translated by an interpreter (Atuhura Maxwell, Rodgers Ntumwa, and Beatrice Rukanyanga). The interviews were conducted using an open-ended model in which the participants were invited to talk about their current situation. All of them quickly mentioned oil development. A ten-question questionnaire on the subject of land expropriation was drawn up. Contacts were kept afterwards to exchange 6 months after the initial fieldwork to understand how the situation had evolved for the women

B Secondary data/academic and journalistic literature:

We sent a series of questions to TotalEnergies on 11 April 2024, and only received a response on 27 May. Our responses are integrated into this report, but we did not receive them in time to include them in the French version of this report.

Hill et. al (2021) on the analysis of the EACOP gender impact assessment;

EACOP's Oxfam gender analysis;

The Human Rights Watch survey;

Friends of the Earth France surveys (The Road to Disaster 2022 and A Nightmare Named Total 2020).

Commentary: The findings of this report on the social and gendered impacts of oil exploitation and their evolution over time are specific to the sites studied, although similar conclusions could be drawn elsewhere. There is a need for more extensive research concerning the gendered impacts of oil development, and to understand how these impacts evolve over time. Further research is also needed to bring in the voices of other groups in the community (elderly, disabled, children, etc.). This survey considers the gender perspective from a binary and heteronormative (male-female) interpretation, but could be extended by a broader analysis of other gendered relations (particularly in light of the latest homophobic law passed by the Ugandan government).

NOTES

- 1 According to [Friends of the Earth France](#).
- 2 Friends of the Earth France, "[EACOP, la voie du désastre](#)", October 2022.
- 3 RFI, "[Total's contested oil projects in Africa: The case of Uganda and Tanzania](#)", February 2023.
- 4 "[Eacop : le projet climaticide de TotalÉnergies en 6 chiffres](#)", *Reporterre*.
- 5 [Un cauchemar nommé Total](#), Friends of the Earth France.
- 6 [EACOP impacted wetlands in Uganda](#), Afiego, p.4.
- 7 [Land Acquisition and Resettlement Framework](#), Principle 9, p.10.
- 8 [Land Acquisition and Resettlement Framework](#), p.26.
- 9 Testimony from a resident of Kituntu, on the 30th of May 2023.
- 10 [Gender Analysis of East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline](#), p.7, Oxfam.
- 11 Testimony from a resident of Kituntu, on the 30th of May 2023.
- 12 See [Land Acquisition](#), EACOP.
- 13 [Risk of poverty after land acquisitions for Uganda's mega oil pipeline](#), Just Finance.
- 14 [Land Acquisition and Resettlement Framework](#), p.10.
- 15 [Uganda Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Report 2019-2020](#), p.216.
- 16 Testimony from a resident of Kyakaboga resettlement camp, on the 7th June 2023.
- 17 [Empty promises down the line](#), Oxfam, p.45.
- 18 Testimony from a resident of Buliisa, on the 8th of June 2023.
- 19 Testimony from a resident of Buliisa, on the 8th of June 2023.
- 20 [Uganda Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Report 2019-2020](#), p.122.
- 21 [Gender Analysis of East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline](#), p.18, Oxfam.
- 22 Social reproduction: activities that enable and support the reproduction of production activities and the perpetuation of gender. Social reproduction includes the care and socialisation of children, and care of the elderly or infirm, the organisation of sexuality, biological reproduction, and how food, clothing and shelter are made available. (from Barbara Laslett, 1989). These are the activities that enable a good functioning of the Ugandan societies.
- 23 According to Beatrice (head of Kwataniza Women Farmers Group), Oxfam,
- 24 Gender roles are culturally and socially determined set of behaviours and patterns expected from individuals according to their assignment at birth to a sexual category.
- 25 [EACOP, la voie du désastre](#), Friends of the Earth France.
- 26 [Un cauchemar nommé Total](#), Friends of the Earth France and Survie.
- 27 [Un cauchemar nommé Total](#), Friends of the Earth France and Survie.
- 28 Name for a motorbike
- 29 Testimony from a resident of Kabaale, on the 9th of June 2023.
- 30 Testimony from a resident of Kabaale, on the 9th of June 2023.
- 31 [EACOP, la voie du désastre](#), Friends of the Earth France, p.26.
- 32 Testimonies from Kyakaboga Resettlement Camp and Buliisa, on 7th and 8th June 2023.
- 33 Testimony from Kyakaboga Resettlement Camp, on 7th June 2023.
- 34 Testimony from Beatrice Rukanyanga, leader of Kwataniza Women Farmers Group, on the 7th June 2023.
- 35 Testimony from a resident of Kabaale LOC, Kabaale Sub County, on the 9th June 2023.
- 36 Testimonies from 5 residents of Kyakaboga resettlement camp, on the 7th June 2023.
- 37 Testimony from a resident of Kabaale LOC, Kabaale Sub County, on the 9th June 2023.
- 38 [Nouveaux gisements,même histoire ?](#), FIDH, p.36.
- 39 See [EACOP website](#).
- 40 Testimony first collected on the 8th June 2023 in Buliisa, with follow-up conversations by text message on the 19th March 2024.
- 41 Testimony from 31st May 2024 in Lwanda by 4 women.
- 42 Testimony from a resident of Buseruka subcounty, on the 9th June 2024.
- 43 [Land Acquisition and Resettlement Framework](#), p.11.

WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINE

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