



STRATEGIC RESPONSE ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (STREC)



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

1 | ABOUT US

US Strategic Response on Environmental Conservation (STREC) is a youth led community-based not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources in Uganda. We started in 2018 as University environment group to protect Bugoma Central Forest Reserve from destruction for sugarcane plantation.

In 2020, we registered with the National NGO Bureau as not for profit organization.

STREC monitors government actions, conducts research, provides educational materials, develops science-based strategies, organizes affected communities, rallies other civil society organizations and international organizations to common causes, and engages government officials at all levels to ensure that natural resources are utilised in a way that leads to equitable development, environmental conservation and respect for human rights.



Our Vision:

A society that promotes equitable utilization and sustainable governance of natural resources for socio-economic development.



Our Mission:

To promote the sustainable management of the natural resources in Uganda and the Great Lakes Region.

2 | OUR PROGRAMS

2.1 Human Rights and Gender Program:

The exploitation of natural resources, particularly oil and gas, in Uganda and the Great Lakes Region presents significant challenges to human rights and gender equality. Communities living in resource-rich regions often face land grabbing, forced evictions, environmental degradation, and loss of livelihoods. These violations disproportionately affect marginalized groups, especially women, who are key custodians of natural resources but remain underrepresented in decision-making processes.

Our Human Rights and Gender Program seeks to address these challenges by advocating for the equitable and sustainable management of natural resources while safeguarding the rights of affected communities. We work to ensure Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for resource-hosting communities, strengthen grievance redress

mechanisms, and promote transparency and accountability in natural resource governance.

A core focus of our program is empowering women and other vulnerable groups. We support initiatives that enhance women's participation in resource governance, provide access to alternative livelihoods, and address the gendered impacts of environmental degradation. Additionally, we combat gender-based violence exacerbated by resource exploitation and raise awareness about the importance of gender equality in conservation and development.

Through this program, we aim to create a rights-based and gender-responsive approach to natural resource management that prioritizes environmental sustainability, social justice, and community well-being.

2.2 CLIMATE JUSTICE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAM

Our Climate Justice and Renewable Energy Program focuses on addressing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities while promoting a just transition to sustainable energy systems. In Uganda, climate change has intensified droughts, floods, and food insecurity, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups, including women, youth, and indigenous communities.

This program advocates for equitable policies and actions that prioritize the needs of those most affected by climate change. We work to empower communities to adapt to climate impacts through

capacity building, sustainable agriculture, and conservation initiatives.

At the same time, we promote the adoption of renewable energy solutions such as solar and wind power to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and mitigate environmental degradation. By supporting community-led renewable energy projects, we aim to enhance energy access, reduce poverty, and foster resilience.

Our program champions climate justice by ensuring inclusive participation and prioritizing fairness in climate and energy transitions.

2.3 ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

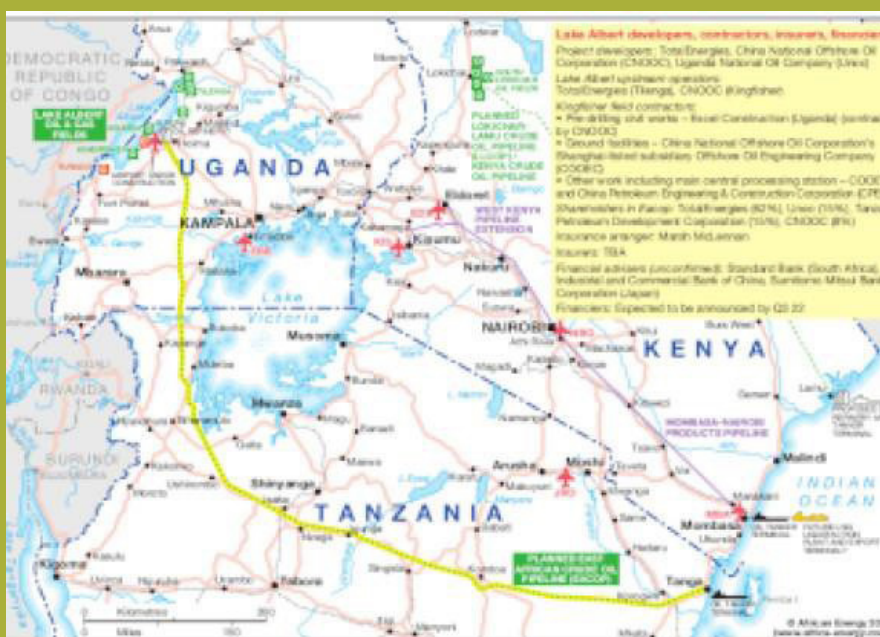
The Ecosystem Restoration and Management Program aims to protect, restore, and sustainably manage Uganda's diverse ecosystems, which are critical for supporting livelihoods, biodiversity, and climate resilience. Rapid deforestation, wetland encroachment, and pollution, exacerbated by activities such as agriculture, infrastructure development, and oil exploration have led to significant ecosystem degradation, threatening both the environment and the communities that depend on it.

Our program focuses on restoring degraded ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, and rivers

through reforestation, community-led conservation initiatives, and sustainable land-use practices. We work closely with local communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders to ensure the equitable sharing of benefits from ecosystem services.

We also prioritize capacity building by equipping communities with knowledge and tools for sustainable natural resource management. By promoting ecosystem restoration, we aim to enhance biodiversity, combat climate change, and ensure the long-term sustainability of livelihoods and natural resources.

Map of East Africa showing districts of operation



3 | Table of Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
CBM	Community Baesd Monitors
CPF	Central Processing Facility
COP	Confernece of Parties
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EACOP	East African Crude Oil Pipeline
ECA	Export Credit Agencies
ECT	Energy Charter Treaty
EAC	East Africa Community
EXIM	Export –Import Bank of China
EHRDs	Environmental and Human Rights Defenders
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)
IUCN	Internation Union for Conservation of Nature
LARRP	Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MEMD	Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development
MWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGOs	Non–Government Organisations
PREEEP	Promotion of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Programme
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
UWOPA	Uganda Women Parliamentary Association
STREC	Strategic Response on Environmental Conservation
SINOSURE	China Export & Credit Insurance Corporation

4

2024 KEY MILESTONES IN FIGURES

6, 252

Number of people directly reached with information on human and environmental rights.

221

Community members trained on different aspects of human and community resource rights

201

Local leaders trained in natural resources and human rights

104

Cases reported by community-based monitors in the 12 districts of STREC's operation

77

Community-based monitors (CBMs) document and track the impacts of ECA on community livelihoods and environment

3

Research publications

32

CSOs network working to decarbonize ECAs

13

Cases resolved by Community Based Monitors and their leaders.

04

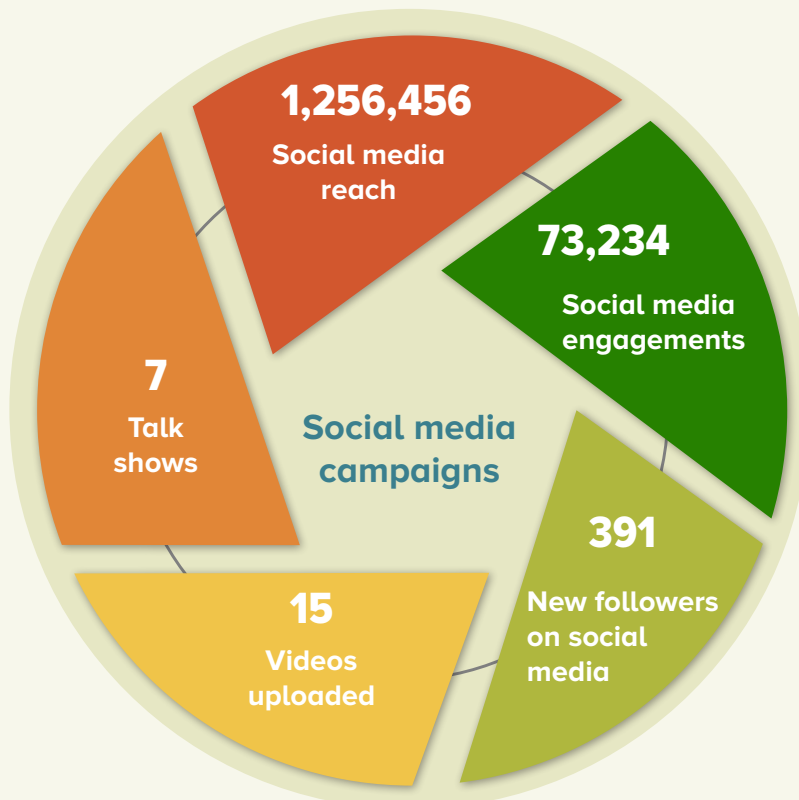
Influenced policy and law's enactment and enforcement

02

continued withdrawal of ECAs and reinsurers from supporting oil activities in Uganda

57

Newspaper articles published



5 | Section one

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear esteemed members and associates,
Welcome to STREC's 2024 Annual Report. This report highlights the work accomplished by the secretariat in 2024, the milestones achieved, challenges

encountered, and key priorities for 2025. I extend my gratitude to you, our valued stakeholders and donors, for supporting STREC throughout this remarkable year. What achievements is the secretariat most proud of in 2024?

What achievements is the secretariat most proud of in 2024?

STREC undertook numerous commendable efforts in 2024, and while I cannot list them all here, I will highlight a few key accomplishments. Despite significant challenges, STREC and its partners successfully mobilized and sensitized communities from over 40 villages affected by the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project. The organization facilitated peaceful demonstrations targeting banks and insurance institutions supporting EACOP, engaged in strategic litigation, and conducted extensive stakeholder mobilization. These efforts yielded critical gains, which are detailed in this report.

STREC also empowered 87 communities affected by land acquisition for EACOP and other oil projects to defend their land, livelihoods, cultural heritage, and environmental rights. This was achieved amidst a repressive civic environment characterized by surveillance, threats, arrests, and intimidation. The secretariat is particularly proud of how STREC courageously stood by these communities and equipped them to advocate for their rights.

In addition, STREC organized media and youth community journalist trainings, supported community advocacy, and engaged in international campaigns

all in the face of government pressure to halt its work. These efforts mobilized public pressure to safeguard community rights. The secretariat commends STREC's dedication to sustainable development and the protection of civic space.

STREC also made strides in policy advocacy, working to influence critical laws, promote an inclusive and just energy transition, and protect civic space. The secretariat is optimistic that the gains made in 2024 will be built upon in 2025 to create a more equitable and sustainable Uganda.

As we move forward, the secretariat remains committed to providing strategic direction and oversight to ensure STREC delivers on its mandate.



Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cirrus Kabaale,
Chief Executive Officer

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning Department

At the core of our values is the commitment to fostering STREC as a learning organization. We continuously strive to embed processes and procedures that promote organizational learning while enhancing our effectiveness in addressing human and resource rights issues in Uganda's extractive sector. In 2024, STREC solidified this commitment by establishing an independent Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) department. This department is tasked with tracking progress toward results and generating insights to guide our development programs.

I am proud to be part of this department, which plays a vital role in ensuring STREC's accountability to our beneficiaries, donors, and other stakeholders through

evidence-based results. Our team is dedicated to maintaining regular engagement with stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries, to gather feedback and reflect on our work.

Furthermore, we remain focused on implementing activities aimed at generating and sharing information on the state of Uganda's extractive sector, prioritizing the concerns and interests of affected communities. We believe this information will be invaluable not only to STREC but also to our partners, as we collectively work toward improving governance in the sector for the benefit of the people.

Eric Obratum,

Monitoring and Evaluation Programs Officer

Finance & Administration Department

The year 2024 started out on a great note for the Finance and Administration department. As we come to the end of the financial year, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to getting us where we are. STREC staff reshuffle saw the department grow from team of 4 to 6. This meant that work was more evenly distributed and the department more focused and effective. In the year, STREC received its highest income ever. This meant that there were more disbursements and accountabilities to do.

With the bigger team, efficiency, and compliance to the STREC internal policies remained the team's

top priority. The department supported the program team and the organisation as a whole to comply with statutory obligations, donor and organisational policies, and guidelines.

As 2025 starts, we are optimistic! With the growth in STREC's thematic areas, the Finance department is ready to support programs with fundraising compliance with the law, and value for money will be our top priorities.

Ruth Kyarisiima,

Finance and Administration Manager

Programs Department

2024 was a very busy year for the department. The department restructured and strengthened the community based monitoring model that is comprised of a network of community based monitors. As such, the department has seen an improvement in tracking and documentation of human rights trends associated with the extractives sector.

In 2024, the department built and strengthened relationships and partnership with national and grass root networks such as the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Gender, Labour and Social Development, local governments among others. As a department charged with direct activity implementation, we have witnessed some changes in

the communities that STREC serves. The unit mainly focused on organising communities especially women and young people to establish new and effectively utilise the existing platforms in order to defend and protect their human and resource rights. However, the shrinking civic space, secrecy that shrouds the extractives sector continued to be the major challenges to our work. In 2025, the department will mainly focus on Human Rights and Gender program in order to contribute towards enhancing promotion of community livelihoods and environment in the oil hosting communities.

Dennis Kumbuga,

Head of Programs and Research Coordinator

6 | Section Two

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Human Rights and Gender Program

The program focuses to addressing challenges by advocating for the equitable and sustainable management of natural resources while safeguarding the rights of affected communities. We work to ensure Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for resource-hosting communities, strengthen grievance redress mechanisms, and promote transparency and accountability in natural resource governance.

A core focus of our program is empowering women and other vulnerable groups. We support initiatives that enhance women's participation in resource governance, provide access to alternative livelihoods, and address the gendered impacts of environmental degradation. Additionally, we combat gender-based violence exacerbated by resource exploitation and raise awareness about the importance of gender equality in conservation and development.

Through this program, we aim to create a rights-based and gender-responsive approach to natural resource management that prioritizes environmental sustainability, social justice, and community well-being.

Raising Awareness on International and Regional Legal Systems for Environmental Protection: In

June, STREC organized a stakeholder workshop to enhance awareness of the role of international and regional legal systems in protecting environmental rights. During the workshop, participants gained valuable insights into the significance of these laws in safeguarding human and environmental rights.

Empowered by this knowledge, the participants recommended that the government adhere to international and regional legal frameworks, emphasizing that oil and gas developments in Uganda violate environmental and human rights.

They highlighted breaches of key agreements, including the East African Community (EAC) Treaty, the Protocol for Sustainable Development of the Lake Victoria Basin, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Participants acknowledged the importance of robust international laws in preventing individual countries from bypassing national legal frameworks to attract investors. Following the workshop, 350 policy briefs summarizing regional oil governance laws were disseminated to local leaders to promote informed decision-making and accountability.



Addressing Gender Disparities in Energy Needs and Storytelling

Through its work with communities, STREC recognized that women are disproportionately affected by energy needs violations compared to men. In response, this year, we collaborated with both men and women to challenge and transform patriarchal attitudes that continue to oppress women in oil-affected regions.

To amplify this effort, STREC's communications department ensured that stories shared on social media, in our newsletter, and through mainstream media reflected the unique challenges faced by

women. Before reporting these stories, we engaged journalists in discussions about the importance of adopting a gender-sensitive perspective. This approach led to the production of more gender-aware stories, including some pitched or written by STREC as opinion pieces.

The overarching goal of these efforts is to ensure that women, like all citizens, benefit from Uganda's oil discoveries and policies rather than suffer further marginalization. By fostering inclusivity, we aim to promote gender equity in the oil sector.



Enhanced Collaboration with Regional and International Partners:

During the reporting period, STREC strengthened its engagement with regional coalitions, including Stop EACOP, the Inclusive Green Economy Network, Don't Gas Africa, and Power Shift Africa. STREC actively participated in nine (9) strategy and network-building meetings, which played a crucial role in exchanging information on the local community impacts of the EACOP route and the Kingfisher project.

These collaborations also provided a platform for strategic discussions aimed at amplifying our advocacy efforts at the international level.

Moreover, these partnerships facilitated knowledge sharing and the formulation of strategies to counter

oil and gas operations in Uganda while promoting a just transition away from fossil fuels. In addition to fostering dialogue and strategy development, these alliances enabled STREC to engage in coordinated regional advocacy initiatives targeting institutions such as the East African Community and the African Union.

Notably, these coalitions have sparked growing interest in expanding our advocacy efforts towards China. This shift is driven by the increasing role of China in regional oil and gas projects and the relatively limited involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs) in addressing these emerging challenges.

Empowering EACOP and other oil-affected communities to protect their land amidst compulsory land acquisition for oil and gas project: Between January and August 2024, STREC trained over 87 communities living in oil-affected areas along the East African Crude Oil

Pipeline (EACOP) route and in the Albertine Graben to safeguard their land amidst compulsory land acquisition for oil and gas projects. The training focused on equipping these communities with the knowledge and tools necessary to defend their land rights and mitigate the threats posed by oil development.

Awareness campaigns were conducted to educate the communities on the environmental, social, and climate-related impacts of oil exploitation, emphasizing the long-term risks to their livelihoods and ecosystems.

These efforts resulted in empowered communities taking bold actions to protect their rights and the environment. Notably, they submitted a petition to TotalEnergies, the lead company behind the EACOP project, urging the protection of their land and climate. Their advocacy highlighted the shared responsibility of safeguarding both local communities and the global climate.



Enhanced Collaboration with Regional and International Partners:

Gender Training and Women Empowerment: In September 2024, STREC, in collaboration with its partners, organized a comprehensive gender training program for the communities we support in the Greater Masaka region. This training was designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to integrate gender sensitivity into their daily activities, fostering inclusivity and equality within their work and communities.

In addition to the gender training, STREC partnered with local government leaders from Kyotera, Rakai, and Lwengo districts to implement targeted capacity-building initiatives aimed at empowering women and youth. These programs focused on

providing practical skills to help participants improve their livelihoods. Women and youth were trained to become clean energy entrepreneurs, enabling them to contribute to the adoption of sustainable energy solutions in their

communities. They were also equipped with advanced beekeeping practices, providing them with an opportunity to engage in income-generating activities while promoting environmental conservation.

Through these initiatives, STREC remains committed to promoting gender equity and empowering marginalized groups to build resilient and sustainable livelihoods.



Engaging Youth in Promoting a Human Rights Approach to Development:

In collaboration with the Department of Development Studies at Makerere University, STREC organized a seminar in April to explore the critical role of youth in fostering a human rights-based approach to development. The event brought together youth leaders, academicians, and inspirational speakers who motivated young participants to work diligently to meet the needs of their families, communities, and the country as a whole.

The seminar provided a platform to equip the youth with essential knowledge and skills to advocate for accountability in the management and utilization of oil resources. Participants were empowered to demand transparency and ensure that oil revenues are used to improve the livelihoods of Ugandans. By fostering this sense of responsibility and engagement, the seminar aimed to prepare youth to take an active role in promoting sustainable development and safeguarding the rights of their communities.



Climate Justice and Renewable Energy Program

The program focuses on addressing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities while promoting a just transition to sustainable energy systems. In Uganda, climate change has intensified droughts, floods, and food insecurity, disproportionately affecting

marginalized groups, including women, youth, and indigenous communities.

This program advocates for equitable policies and actions that prioritize the needs of those most affected by climate change. We work to empower

communities to adapt to climate impacts through capacity building, sustainable agriculture, and conservation initiatives.

At the same time, we promote the adoption of renewable energy solutions such as solar and wind power to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and mitigate environmental degradation. By supporting community-led renewable energy projects, we aim to enhance energy access, reduce poverty, and foster resilience.

Our program champions climate justice by ensuring inclusive participation and prioritizing fairness in climate and energy transitions.

Empowering Youth to Lead Advocacy Targeting Financial Institutions: In 2024, STREC, in collaboration with its partners, undertook significant advocacy efforts to discourage financial and insurance institutions from supporting the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project. Recognizing the critical role of youth in driving change, STREC implemented targeted initiatives aimed at empowering young people to lead these advocacy campaigns.

The program focused on equipping youth with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to effectively engage financial institutions and raise awareness about the environmental, social, and economic risks associated with the EACOP project.

Through workshops, training sessions, and mentorship programs, the youth were educated on the impacts of fossil fuel investments and the importance of promoting sustainable and responsible financing practices.

As part of these efforts, young advocates engaged with key stakeholders, including financial and insurance institutions, urging them to reconsider their involvement in the project. They utilized petitions, media campaigns, and direct dialogues to amplify their message and advocate for the transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy solutions.

This initiative underscored STREC's commitment to fostering youth leadership in environmental advocacy and advancing the fight for climate justice. It highlighted the power of collective action in driving meaningful change for future generations.



Financial advocacy to stop fossil fuel investments: Further, to ensure that financial institutions play their role in promoting climate action, STREC mobilised 42 CSOs and the EACOP-affected people's network to write to China Export & Credit Insurance Corporation (SINOSURE) and Export-Import Bank of China (EXIM Bank) between April and December 2024 to protest the bank's attempts to greenwash the EACOP project.

This action was in response to Uganda's Minister of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD)

announcing ongoing negotiations with Chinese financial institutions to fund the EACOP project. STREC mobilised the aforementioned parties to react to the Minister's statement and stop the greenwashing attempts. Relatedly, STREC documented and disseminated the human rights violations experienced by oil project-affected people in Uganda to various stakeholders including financial institutions in 2024. It was hoped that such evidence would be used by financial institutions to stop investments in harmful projects.

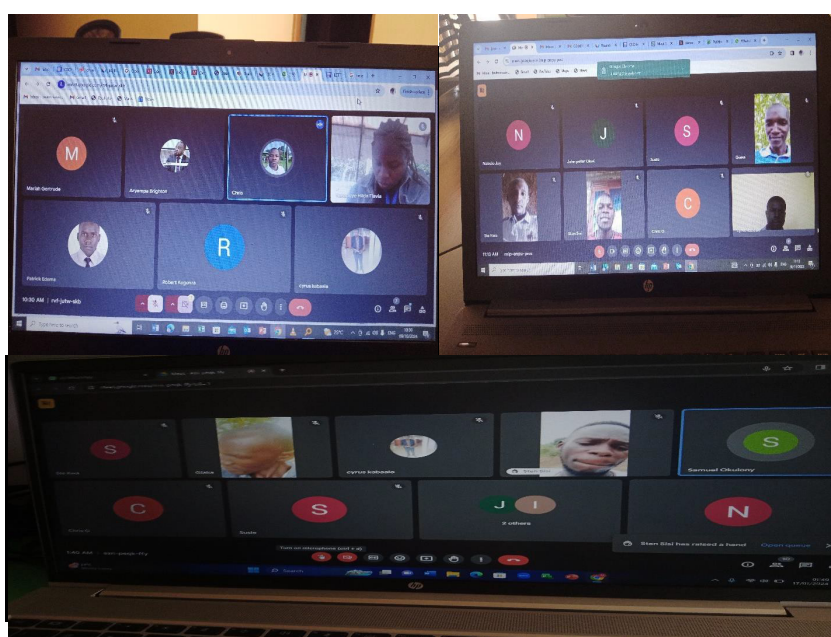
Organized webinar on discouraging financial institutions from supporting EACOP project:

Between February and December 2024, STREC organized multiple webinars aimed at discouraging financial and insurance institutions from funding the EACOP project. The primary focus for 2024 was on Chinese institutions, including SINOSURE, CHINA-RE, and the EXIM Bank of China.

During these sessions, participants discussed the adverse impacts of the EACOP project and its associated developments on host communities, with a particular emphasis on the challenges faced

by women. STREC also highlighted sustainable green economic alternatives, advocating for a just energy transition in Uganda as a viable solution to environmental and climate concerns.

As a key outcome of the webinars, STREC and its partners submitted petitions to SINOSURE, CHINA-RE, and the EXIM Bank of China, urging them to withdraw support for EACOP and instead invest in renewable energy initiatives that align with global climate commitments and sustainable development goals.



Raising Awareness on the Need for Off-Grid Solar Energy: In May 2024, STREC organized a community radio talk show (kimeeza) to mobilize public support for off-grid solar energy, particularly in the Albertine Graben region of Western Uganda. The talk show served as a platform to educate communities about the benefits of off-grid solar energy and other clean energy alternatives.

STREC, together with its partners, encouraged communities to embrace renewable energy solutions and urged them to advocate for clean energy adoption by engaging their local leaders. The talk show reached audiences across six districts, impacting millions of people.

As a result of these efforts, 2024 witnessed a significant rise in women and youth taking the lead as champions for off-grid solar energy. By

empowering communities and promoting renewable energy, STREC continues to contribute to sustainable development and the transition to cleaner energy sources in Uganda, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and mitigating environmental challenges.

Advocating for Increased Women's Participation in the Clean Energy Sector: Women's participation in Uganda's clean energy sector remains low, with data showing that only 16% of the nearly 50,000 workers in the distributed renewable energy sector are women. This disparity is largely attributed to challenges such as limited skills, the burden of household responsibilities, and societal attitudes that perceive women as less capable in technical fields.

To address these barriers, STREC supported women and youth to engage in advocacy aimed at increasing women's involvement in renewable energy

jobs. Through media campaigns, these advocates called on policymakers to implement measures that tackle the obstacles limiting women's participation in the sector. By amplifying their voices and fostering public dialogue, STREC continues to promote gender

equity in the renewable energy sector. These efforts aim to empower women, enhance their economic opportunities, and contribute to the broader transition to clean, inclusive, and sustainable energy solutions in Uganda.

Ecosystem Restoration and Management Program

The program aims to protect, restore, and sustainably manage Uganda's diverse ecosystems, which are critical for supporting livelihoods, biodiversity, and climate resilience.

Rapid deforestation, wetland encroachment, and pollution, exacerbated by activities such as agriculture, infrastructure development, and oil exploration have led to significant ecosystem degradation, threatening both the environment and the communities that depend on it.

Our program focuses on restoring degraded ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, and rivers through reforestation, community-led conservation initiatives, and sustainable land-use practices. We work closely with local communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders to ensure the equitable sharing of benefits from ecosystem services.

We also prioritize capacity building by equipping communities with knowledge and tools for sustainable natural resource management. By promoting ecosystem restoration, we aim to enhance biodiversity, combat climate change, and ensure the long-term sustainability of livelihoods and natural resources.

Supporting Community Afforestation Efforts: In 2024, STREC actively supported forest host communities in Hoima and Kikuube districts in their afforestation initiatives. Building on efforts from previous years, STREC worked to raise awareness among these communities about the critical role forests play in enhancing socio-economic well-being and environmental sustainability.

During sensitization sessions, community members expressed a strong interest in planting indigenous tree species to restore forest cover and improve biodiversity. Responding to this interest, STREC facilitated the procurement and distribution of indigenous tree seedlings. In October 2024, over 12,200 seedlings were supplied, and the communities enthusiastically undertook tree planting activities in their respective areas.

These efforts highlight STREC's commitment to empowering communities to take ownership of environmental conservation and climate resilience. By supporting afforestation initiatives, STREC continues to contribute to sustainable livelihoods, the preservation of biodiversity, and the mitigation of climate change impacts in Uganda's forested regions.



Mobilized and Engaged Stakeholders to Defend Bugoma Forest: In 2024, STREC and its partners intensified efforts to protect Bugoma Forest from encroachment and destruction. A multi-faceted approach, including stakeholder engagement, community mobilization, and media campaigns, was employed to rally support for the forest's preservation.

To strengthen advocacy, STREC collaborated with partners to engage key stakeholders, including local communities, women, youth, media representatives, academics, and officials from the Bunyoro Kingdom. Meetings were organized with Bugoma Forest host

communities to raise awareness about the threats posed by deforestation, particularly from sugarcane plantations, and to discuss sustainable alternatives.

Through continuous mobilization and advocacy, STREC aimed to amplify community voices, strengthen resistance against destructive projects, and push for policies that prioritize conservation.

These efforts have been instrumental in fostering collective action to defend Bugoma Forest, ensuring its ecological and socio-economic benefits are preserved for future generations.



Protecting the Eco-Sensitive Greater Virunga from Oil Threats through Community Empowerment: The Greater Virunga landscape, a globally significant eco-sensitive ecosystem spanning the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Ugandan districts such as Kasese, Rukungiri, Rubirizi, and Hoima, faces mounting threats from oil exploration and development. In response, STREC has worked to empower communities in Hoima and Kasese to safeguard this vital landscape.

In May 2024, STREC strengthened these efforts by conducting a multi-stakeholder training that brought together over 70 participants, including

youth, district political leaders, cultural and religious leaders, local government officials (such as environment officers), fisherfolk, farmers, and other community members from Kasese, Kanungu, Rubirizi, and Rukungiri districts.

This training aimed to build the capacity of stakeholders to advocate for and implement measures to protect the Greater Virunga landscape.

By fostering collaboration and equipping communities with the necessary knowledge and tools, STREC continues to play a pivotal role in preserving this critical ecosystem for future generations.



Supporting Food Security and Economic Opportunities through Fruit Tree Distribution: In 2024, STREC expanded its efforts to promote food security and economic empowerment by distributing fruit trees to households in Hoima, particularly in communities affected by the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project.

A total of 840 fruit tree seedlings were provided to EACOP-affected individuals, including those who had most of their land acquired for the project but retained small portions outside the designated areas.

This initiative aimed to support these communities in utilizing their remaining land productively while awaiting compensation. By growing fruit trees, beneficiaries can secure a source of food and generate income by tapping into the growing demand for fruits in the oil region.

The fruit trees, distributed under the Ecosystems Restoration and Management program, not only contribute to the livelihoods of affected households but also play a vital role in conserving the environment and fostering sustainable land use practices in the region.



Building Community Capacity for Alternative Livelihoods near Murchison Falls National Park: In 2024, STREC organized capacity-building trainings for communities living near Murchison Falls National Park, focusing on alternative livelihood options to promote sustainable land use and conservation. These sessions aimed to equip community members with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt practices that benefit both their livelihoods and the environment.

The training covered topics such as sustainable land use options, the benefits of conservation, and the connections between environmental stewardship and community well-being. Participants were encouraged to embrace alternative livelihoods that reduce pressure on the park's resources while enhancing their economic resilience.

A total of 473 households participated in the program, gaining practical insights and tools to diversify their income sources while contributing to the preservation of this critical ecosystem. By fostering a stronger link between conservation and community livelihoods, STREC continues to support sustainable development and environmental protection in areas bordering Murchison Falls National Park.

Demonstration Farms Driving Conservation and Livelihoods in Buliisa, Masindi, and Hoima: Eight demonstration farms, established in collaboration with community champions, are now thriving across Buliisa, Masindi, and Hoima districts.

These farms serve as regional learning centers, providing practical knowledge on sustainable farming and conservation practices to local communities.

In addition to their educational role, the farms have become tourist visitation sites, attracting visitors who support community efforts to scale up their initiatives. The tourist visits have created a new source of income for the communities, enhancing their economic well-being while fostering stronger conservation efforts.

The demonstration farms have significantly improved conservation awareness and practices within the region and increased STREC's visibility as a driving force behind sustainable development.

By combining education, income generation, and environmental stewardship, these farms exemplify the potential of community-driven conservation models to create lasting positive change.



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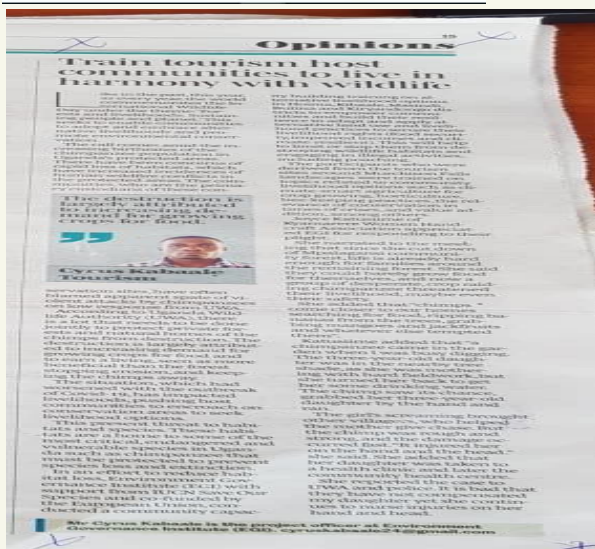
a stronger link between conservation and community livelihoods, STREC continues to support sustainable development and environmental protection in areas bordering Murchison Falls National Park.

Our Media Campaigns

Working with the media to disseminate information and raise awareness on resource rights

Information plays a key role in enabling community members, leaders and private investors make informed decisions. As such, in 2024 STREC utilized print, electronic and online media platforms to share key information on human and community resource rights in the extractives sector. In order to provide media platforms for community members to articulate their

interests and concerns to duty bearers and private investors, STREC conducted community based radio debates (kimeera0 in 16 districts in Uganda. Through different media platforms, an estimated 3,460,000 people were reached with information on human and community resource rights in the extractives sector over the last year.



https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1500674/change-climate-patterns-energy- ministry-address-deforestation

Petition to CNOOC to address the grievances faced by the Kingfisher project host communities in Kikuube district.

[https://strecug.org/reports/Petition%20to%20CNOOC%20to%20address%20the%20grievances%20faced%20by%20the%20kingfisher%20project%20host%20communities%20in%20Kikuube_%20district%20\(1\).pdf](https://strecug.org/reports/Petition%20to%20CNOOC%20to%20address%20the%20grievances%20faced%20by%20the%20kingfisher%20project%20host%20communities%20in%20Kikuube_%20district%20(1).pdf)

letter calling on China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering (CPP) not to support the EACOP project.

[https://strecug.org/reports/CSO%20letter%20calling%20on%20China%20Petroleum%20Pipeline%20Engineering%20\(CPP\)%20not%20to%20support%20the%20EACOP%20project.pdf](https://strecug.org/reports/CSO%20letter%20calling%20on%20China%20Petroleum%20Pipeline%20Engineering%20(CPP)%20not%20to%20support%20the%20EACOP%20project.pdf)

Uganda and Tanzanian CSOs protest letter over Standard/Stanbic Banks participation in EACOP project.

[https://strecug.org/reports/Protest_letter_to_Standard_Bank_over_EACOP- August_05,_2024%20\(1\).pdf](https://strecug.org/reports/Protest_letter_to_Standard_Bank_over_EACOP- August_05,_2024%20(1).pdf)

Communique calling on SINOSURE and CHINA RE not to insure EACOP project

<https://strecug.org/reports/Communique-calling-SINOSURE-and-CHINA-Re-not-to-insure-EACOP-project-2.pdf>

The Net Zero Mirage: Is It Just Business as Usual at the Africa Climate Change Summit?

<https://strecug.org/reports/The%20Net%20Zero%20Mirage%20Is%20It%20Just%20Business%20as%20Usual%20at%20the%20Africa%20Climate%20Change%20Summit.pdf>

Unveiling the Gendered Realities: The Disproportionate Impacts Of Climate change on Women

<https://strecug.org/reports/Unveiling%20the%20Gendered%20Realities%20The%20Disproportionate%20Impacts%20of%20Climate%20change%20on%20Women%20.pdf>

Institutional Building and Strengthening

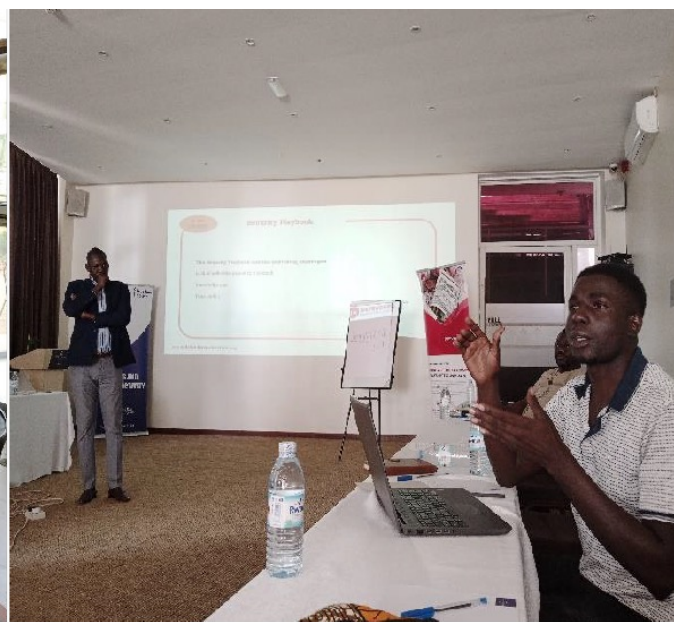
Between April and October 2024, STREC and its partners undertook various initiatives to enhance institutional capacity and resilience. These efforts included physical and digital security training, project monitoring, and gender mainstreaming, among other key areas. Through these programs, STREC staff and partner organizations gained critical knowledge and skills to integrate gender considerations into their activities, ensuring inclusivity and equitable participation in advocacy efforts.

The security trainings equipped community leaders with practical strategies to navigate the increasingly restrictive civic space, enabling them to continue their work safely and effectively. Additionally, project

monitoring sessions enhanced the ability of STREC and its partners to assess and improve the impact of their initiatives, fostering transparency and accountability.

These capacity-building activities not only strengthened internal organizational structures but also empowered grassroots advocates to remain engaged in the fight for environmental justice and human rights.

By reinforcing institutional resilience, STREC and its partners have positioned themselves to sustain long-term advocacy efforts and respond more effectively to emerging challenges in Uganda's civic space.



Section three

CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

Despite the notable accomplishments of the year, we encountered a series of challenges that provided valuable lessons for our journey. These challenges underscore the ongoing complexities inherent in our mission:

- 1. SINOSURE and EXIM Bank of China Express Interest in Financing the EACOP Oil Project:** A significant challenge emerged when both the Chinese Exim Bank and SINOSURE expressed interest in financing the EACOP project. Major European financial institutions had withdrawn their support for the project, a victory achieved through global and national backing. However, this progress may be undermined by the interest shown by these Chinese financial institutions.
- 2. Persisting Interest of Export Credit Agencies in Fossil Fuel Projects:** The continued interest of Export Credit Agencies in investing in fossil fuel projects presented an ongoing hurdle in our efforts to steer funding towards more sustainable and climate-conscious endeavors.
- 3. Delayed Compensation for EACOP-Affected Communities:** Despite the passing year, the communities affected by the EACOP project were yet to receive compensation for their lands. This highlighted the intricate challenges associated with land acquisition and the protection of community rights.
- 4. Limited Community Awareness of Environmental Impacts:** A significant challenge was observed in terms of limited community awareness concerning the potential environmental and climate change impacts of projects like EACOP. This underscored the importance of effective communication and engagement to foster informed decision-making.
- 5. Lack of Awareness of New Laws:** Although critical legislation like the 2022 Mining and Minerals Act were enacted, citizens remained largely uninformed about the content of these laws. This revealed the necessity for robust sensitization efforts to facilitate the meaningful enforcement of legal frameworks.
- 6. Ecologically Sensitive Oil Block Licensing:** The Ministry of Energy's intent to license the Ngaji oil block within the ecologically fragile Queen Elizabeth National Park and Lake Edward posed significant environmental, climate, and livelihood challenges, demanding immediate attention and resolution.
- 7. Low Off-Grid Clean Energy Access and High Electricity Prices:** A persistent challenge was observed in the limited progress of off-grid clean energy access, alongside the prevalence of high electricity prices. Addressing these issues emerged as a crucial imperative in our pursuits.
- 8. In addition, the civic space in Uganda continued to be repressed in 2024** with human and environmental activists continuing to be arrested. This undermined advocacy aimed at protecting community rights as well as promoting environmental conservation and climate action.

KEY PRIORITIES IN 2025

In view of the challenges highlighted above, STREC's key priorities for 2025 include:

