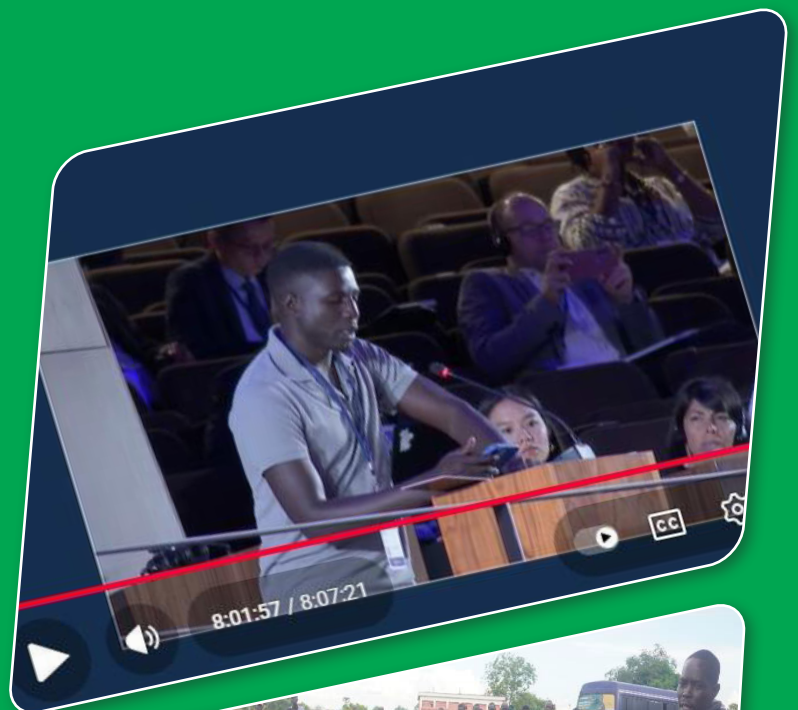




# STRATEGIC RESPONSE ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (STREC)

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025







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# Table of Acronyms



| Acronym         | Meaning                                                          |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CBM</b>      | Community Based Monitor                                          |
| <b>CPF</b>      | Central Processing Facility                                      |
| <b>COP</b>      | Conference of Parties                                            |
| <b>CSOs</b>     | Civil Society Organisations                                      |
| <b>DRC</b>      | Democratic Republic of Congo                                     |
| <b>EACOP</b>    | East African Crude Oil Pipeline                                  |
| <b>ECA</b>      | Export Credit Agencies                                           |
| <b>ECT</b>      | Energy Charter Treaty                                            |
| <b>EAC</b>      | East Africa Community                                            |
| <b>EXIM</b>     | Export Import Bank of China                                      |
| <b>EHRDs</b>    | Environmental and Human Rights Defenders                         |
| <b>EPIC</b>     | Free, Prior, and Informed Consent                                |
| <b>IUCN</b>     | International Union for Conservation of Nature                   |
| <b>LARRP</b>    | Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy         |
| <b>MEAL</b>     | Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and learning              |
| <b>MEMD</b>     | Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development                       |
| <b>MWE</b>      | Ministry of Water and Environment                                |
| <b>NDC</b>      | Nationally Determined Contributions                              |
| <b>NGOs</b>     | Non-Government Organisations                                     |
| <b>PREEP</b>    | Promotion of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Programme    |
| <b>UWA</b>      | Uganda Wildlife Authority                                        |
| <b>UWOPA</b>    | Uganda Women Parliamentary Association                           |
| <b>UNESCO</b>   | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| <b>STREC</b>    | Strategic Response on Environmental Conservation                 |
| <b>SINOSURE</b> | China Export & Credit Insurance Corporation                      |
| <b>OUV</b>      | Outstanding Universal Value                                      |

# 1.0 ABOUT 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.

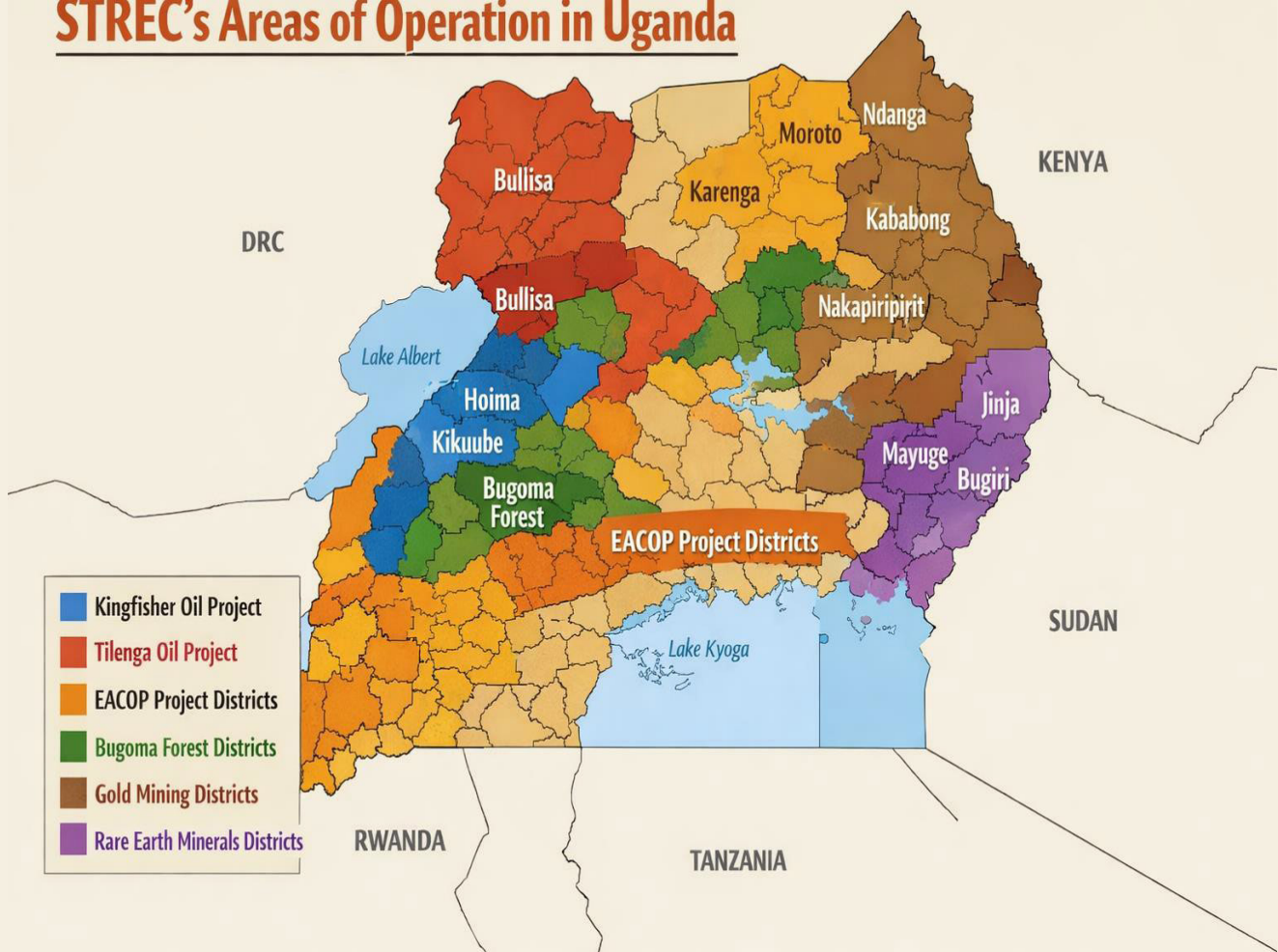
Our program focuses on restoring degraded ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, and rivers

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.

### 3.0 Map of Uganda showing districts of operations

#### STREC's Areas of Operation in Uganda



## 4.0 Figures of key milestones reached in 2025



**5200**

People directly reached with information on human and Environmental rights.



**350**

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



**150**

local leaders trained in natural resources and human rights



**64**

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

**101**

Community based monitors (CMBs) document and track the impacts of fossil fuelson community livelihoods and environment



**2**

Documentaries

**1**

Research publications



**36**

CSOs network working to stop financing of fossil fuels



**17**

Cases resolved by community Based Monitors and their local leaders **06** Influenced policy and law's enactment and enforcement



**71**

Newspaper articles published **1,326,033** Social media reach



**87,325**

Social Media engagements

**441**

New followers on social media



**21**

Videos uploaded



**3**

Talk shows



# Section one

## 5.1 Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Esteemed Members, Partners, and Supporters,

I am pleased to present STREC's 2025 Annual Report, reflecting on a year defined by resilience, community leadership, and renewed commitment to environmental justice and a just energy transition in Uganda.

Throughout 2025, STREC stood firmly with oil-affected communities as the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) moved into active implementation.

We strengthened grassroots organizing across Hoima, Buliisa, Kikuube, and the Greater Masaka region sensitizing communities on Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) compliance, land rights, and environmental protection, while supporting local watchdog groups to monitor project impacts and demand accountability.

Recognizing the power of youth, STREC invested heavily in building a vibrant youth climate movement. Through trainings in Kampala and engagements at Kyambogo University, young people gained skills in advocacy, digital organizing, and green entrepreneurship. Youth leaders took bold action, engaging financial institutions and amplifying calls to stop financing harmful fossil fuel projects.

We also deepened our work on community resilience and conservation. In Buliisa, we convened

dialogues on human-wildlife conflict and supported community-led solutions. In Kikuube, we mobilized forest-edge communities to protect Bugoma Forest. Across Buliisa and Hoima, we distributed over 25,000 tree and fruit seedlings to women headed households promoting climate resilience, food security, and sustainable livelihoods.

In solidarity with women defenders, STREC marked International Women's Day by honoring grassroots women leaders protecting land, water, and livelihoods in oil host communities. We further strengthened community voices through exchange learning visits among project-affected households and amplified African civil society concerns at UNESCO regarding threats to critical ecosystems such as the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

Despite operating in a shrinking civic space, STREC remained steadfast in defending civic freedoms and promoting people-centered energy solutions. As we look ahead to 2026, our focus remains on strengthening community power, advancing financial accountability, expanding renewable energy advocacy, and protecting our ecosystems.

We are deeply grateful for your continued solidarity.

***Cirrus Kabaale,***  
***Chief Executive Officer***

## 5.2 Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (MEAL) Department

In 2025, the MEAL Department played a central role in strengthening STREC's impact, accountability, and learning culture across all program areas. The department supported the design and implementation of results-based monitoring systems to track progress in community mobilization, advocacy, and environmental protection efforts, particularly in oil-affected regions. Through routine field visits, community feedback sessions, and partner check-ins, MEAL ensured that interventions remained responsive to the evolving needs of communities in Hoima, Buliisa, Kikuube, and Greater Masaka.

A key achievement this year was strengthening STREC's community accountability mechanisms. We supported the establishment of community feedback channels, including grievance tracking tools and participatory reflection meetings, enabling communities to share experiences related to land acquisition, delayed compensation, and

environmental impacts from projects such as EACOP. This information informed advocacy strategies, evidence-based reporting, and policy engagement at national and international levels.

The department also led internal learning processes, documenting lessons from campaigns targeting fossil fuel financiers, community sensitization initiatives, and youth engagement efforts. These learnings are now shaping adaptive strategies for future programming. Despite operating in a challenging civic environment with restricted access to some project areas, the MEAL Department remained committed to ensuring transparency, data integrity, and continuous organizational learning.

***Eric Obratum,***  
***Monitoring and Evaluation Programs Officer***

## 5.3 Finance & Administration Department

The Finance and Administration Department ensured effective stewardship of STREC's financial, human, and operational resources throughout 2025. The department maintained strong financial management systems that supported program implementation while ensuring compliance with donor requirements, statutory obligations, and internal accountability standards. Regular financial monitoring, budgeting reviews, and audits were conducted to ensure prudent and transparent use of resources.

In 2025, the department supported the expansion of STREC's field operations in the Albertine region and Greater Masaka by strengthening administrative systems, logistics coordination, and staff welfare mechanisms. This included facilitating safe field movements, supporting emergency relocation for staff and community defenders at risk, and improving communication systems to enable timely coordination across program sites.

Human resource management remained a priority, with efforts focused on staff wellbeing, security awareness, and capacity strengthening in areas such as safeguarding, financial compliance, and organizational policies. Despite a constrained funding environment and rising operational risks linked to a shrinking civic space, the department ensured institutional stability and continuity of operations.

Moving forward, the Finance and Administration Department will continue to strengthen internal systems, diversify resource mobilization support, and ensure that STREC remains a resilient, accountable, and well-governed institution capable of delivering on its mission.

***Ruth Kyarisiima,***  
***Finance and Administration Manager***

## 5.4 Programs Department

In 2025, STREC's Programs Department led the implementation of community-centered initiatives advancing environmental justice, human rights, and a just energy transition in Uganda. The department coordinated grassroots mobilization and advocacy efforts across oil-affected districts, supporting over 40 communities to understand their rights, organize collectively, and engage duty bearers and project developers on issues of land acquisition, compensation, and environmental protection.

A major focus of the department's work was challenging financing for fossil fuel projects, including the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). Through national, regional, and global advocacy, STREC worked with partners to engage banks, insurers, and export credit agencies, exposing the environmental and human rights risks associated with continued investment in fossil fuel infrastructure.

The Programs Department also advanced community resilience and conservation initiatives. This included supporting reforestation activities, community dialogues on human-wildlife conflict in Buliisa, and protection of critical ecosystems such as Bugoma Forest. Youth and women remained central to our programming, with targeted trainings, leadership development, and advocacy platforms strengthening their participation in climate justice movements.

Despite increased restrictions on civic space, arrests of activists, and intimidation of communities, the Programs Department remained committed to amplifying community voices and building a strong, informed, and connected movement for environmental and social justice.

***Dennis Kumbuga,  
Head of Programs and Research Coordinator***

## Section two

### 6.1 ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

#### 6.2 Key Achievements under 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.

#### 6.3 Organized training for youth activists to strengthen their advocacy:

Following the announcement of the partial financing of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project, a deeply troubling development for climate justice in Africa, STREC organized a timely and strategic training to strengthen the advocacy skills of youth activists. The training aimed to empower young leaders with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to actively speak out and mobilize against financial institutions backing the controversial pipeline.

Held in Kampala in March 2025, the training brought together youth activists from oil-affected regions, urban centers, and university networks. These young

leaders are among the most passionate and vocal in the fight for climate justice, and STREC recognized the urgent need to support them in sharpening their advocacy strategies particularly in light of the recent commitments by financial institutions to back EACOP. Banks such as Afreximbank, Standard Bank of South Africa, KCB Bank Uganda, Stanbic Bank Uganda, and the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD) have recently made headlines for endorsing or facilitating financing for the pipeline, despite its well-documented environmental and social harms.

During the training, participants were taken through the impacts of EACOP ranging from biodiversity loss and displacement of communities, to the worsening climate crisis it threatens to accelerate. With peak production of oil from EACOP expected to emit over 34 million metric tonnes of carbon annually, youth were equipped with scientific data, campaign messaging, and storytelling skills to amplify their voices in opposition.

The training also focused on nonviolent protest methods, digital organizing, and strategies for engaging both national and international stakeholders. Youth learned how to write petitions, organize peaceful demonstrations, prepare policy briefs, and leverage social media campaigns to challenge the narrative being pushed by project supporters. Special sessions were dedicated to understanding the role of banks in financing fossil fuel infrastructure and how young people can hold them accountable through peaceful but strategic activism.

Importantly, the training created a platform for youth to connect, collaborate, and form a united front. Many participants shared how the space helped them feel less isolated in their climate work, offering emotional and strategic solidarity. It was a space to reflect, recharge, and reimagine what an inclusive and just energy transition could look like.

By organizing this training, STREC reaffirmed its commitment to building a strong, youth-led climate justice movement that resists destructive development models and pushes for a clean, inclusive, and community-centered energy future. The participants left the training energized and equipped, pledging to take action in their communities and beyond.

The fight against EACOP and the banks supporting it is far from over. But with a new generation of skilled, informed, and passionate youth activists taking the lead, the future of climate justice in Uganda and across the region looks increasingly hopeful.



*In March 2025, Mr. Cirrus Kabaale, CEO of STREC, led youth activist training in Kampala, boosting resistance to EACOP financing and advancing climate justice across Africa.*

## 6.4 Empowered Youth to Lead Advocacy Targeting Financial Institutions:

In January 2025, 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.



*STREC empowered youth to lead bold advocacy efforts urging banks and insurers to drop EACOP and support sustainable, climate-friendly financing alternatives.*

## 6.5 Organized a Community Dialogue in Buliisa District to Tackle Rising Human-Wildlife Conflicts:

In January 2025, STREC organized a vital community meeting in Buliisa district to address the growing challenge of human-wildlife conflicts. The meeting brought together local leaders, farmers, youth, women representatives, and civil society actors to discuss the root causes, impacts, and possible community driven solutions to the escalating tensions between residents and wildlife.

Buliisa, located near Murchison Falls National Park and the Bugungu Wildlife Reserve, is experiencing increasing incidents of crop destruction, livestock attacks, and occasional injuries caused by wild animals, particularly elephants, baboons, and buffaloes. These incidents have not only caused fear and frustration among the community but have also worsened poverty and food insecurity for families whose livelihoods depend heavily on farming and small-scale agriculture.

During the meeting, community members shared personal experiences and raised concerns about the lack of effective response from authorities. Many lamented delayed compensation processes and limited protective measures such as fencing or deterrents.

Women, who are often more vulnerable to these encounters while collecting water or firewood, shared

how their safety has been compromised and how this has affected their daily routines and responsibilities. STREC facilitated a discussion on the ecological importance of wildlife and how sustainable coexistence can be achieved through dialogue, awareness, and community-led conservation. Participants called for more proactive strategies, including the introduction of community scouts, improved surveillance systems, buffer zones, and sustainable livelihood alternatives that reduce dependency on activities that bring people into conflict with wildlife.

The meeting also introduced the idea of wildlife-friendly farming practices, agroforestry, and conservation agriculture as long-term strategies to mitigate human-wildlife conflict while improving food production and income generation. Youth were encouraged to participate in conservation efforts and to use their creativity to promote coexistence, such as through environmental clubs, awareness campaigns, and innovation challenges.

By the end of the session, community members agreed to form a local task force to follow up on the issues raised and coordinate with relevant authorities. The meeting ended with a renewed sense of collective responsibility and determination to find peaceful and sustainable solutions to human-wildlife conflicts in Buliisa District.



*STREC convened a crucial community meeting in Buliisa District to tackle the rising human-wildlife conflicts near Murchison Falls National Park. The gathering empowered local voices, farmers, women, youth, and leaders to seek sustainable, community-led solutions for peaceful coexistence with wildlife.*

## 6.6 Honored Women Defending Oil-Affected Communities on International Women's Day:

In celebration of International Women's Day 2025, STREC took time to recognize and honor the courageous and resilient women who stand at the forefront of defending the rights and dignity of oil-affected communities in Uganda. Across districts like Hoima, Buliisa, and Kikuube, women have been disproportionately impacted by the ongoing oil and gas developments, yet they continue to rise as vocal leaders, organizers, caregivers, and protectors of both their communities and the environment.

This year's celebration was more than just a day of recognition. It was a powerful platform to amplify women's voices, celebrate their struggles and achievements, and call for more equitable and inclusive energy and environmental governance. The day brought together women leaders from oil host communities, grassroots organizers, environmental defenders, and allies to share their stories, raise awareness, and strengthen solidarity.

Many women shared deeply personal testimonies of how oil activities have disrupted their families and livelihoods, stories of land grabbing, forced displacement, loss of farmland, and threats to clean water. In spite of these challenges, these women continue to organize community meetings, participate in advocacy campaigns, and speak out against the injustices tied to the extractive industry. Their leadership is not only crucial for community resilience but is also essential for advancing a just and sustainable future.

As part of the celebration, STREC organized a roundtable discussion on "Women's Leadership in the Just Energy Transition," highlighting the need for clean energy solutions that respond to women's realities and priorities.

Women called on the Ugandan government and international actors to prioritize access to affordable and renewable energy for households in oil-affected areas, noting that lack of clean cooking alternatives and electricity continues to place a heavy burden on women and girls.

Participants also emphasized the importance of investing in alternative livelihoods, especially those led by women, such as climate-smart agriculture, beekeeping, and eco-tourism. These initiatives not only contribute to environmental protection but also support economic independence and resilience for women-headed households.

The event also included creative expressions of poetry, dance, and storytelling through which women shared their experiences, hopes, and aspirations for their communities. These performances highlighted the power of culture in sustaining resistance and nurturing healing in the face of environmental and social injustices.

On this day, STREC reaffirmed its commitment to supporting women-led movements, advocating for policy reforms that protect land and environmental rights, and ensuring that women have an equal seat at the table in decision-making processes affecting their lives.

International Women's Day 2025 served as a reminder that true progress in climate justice and community empowerment cannot be achieved without recognizing and supporting the central role of women. As we honor their contributions, we are also called to action to listen, to stand in solidarity, and to build systems that value people and the planet above profit.



*Honoring resilience: On International Women's Day 2025, STREC celebrated women like Ms. Patience Atukunda leading the fight for justice in oil affected communities.*

## 6.7 Sensitized EACOP Affected Communities to Promote ESIA Compliance in Greater Masaka Region:

Between April and June 2025, STREC intensified its grassroots outreach efforts in the **Greater Masaka region** specifically targeting communities affected by the proposed East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) to raise awareness and promote compliance with the **Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)** guidelines. The initiative was driven by the urgent need to empower communities with knowledge about their environmental rights and to ensure that project developers are held accountable for the

impacts of oil infrastructure on people and nature. The East African Crude Oil Pipeline, stretching from Hoima in Uganda to the Tanga port in Tanzania, passes through several districts in the Greater Masaka region, including **Kyotera, Lwengo, Mubende, Rakai, and Sembabule**. These communities face increasing risks of land displacement, loss of biodiversity, water contamination, and social disruption as construction advances. Many residents remain unaware of their rights under Uganda's environmental laws and the requirements of the ESIA certificate issued to the EACOP consortium.

To address this gap, STREC organized a series of **community sensitization dialogues**, focus group discussions, and one-on-one engagements with local leaders, youth, farmers, and women's groups. The central message of the campaign was to **equip communities with practical knowledge** on how to monitor and demand compliance with the environmental safeguards outlined in the EACOP ESIA certificate.

During the sessions, community members were taken through key provisions of Uganda's National Environment Act, the rights of project-affected persons (PAPs), and the obligations of the project developers under the ESIA. The facilitators used simplified tools such as posters, visual illustrations, and local language translations to make the technical content more accessible.

One of the most powerful parts of the sessions involved community reflections and testimonies. Many residents shared their frustrations over how EACOP contractors had entered their lands without prior and informed consent, and how compensation processes had been marred by delays, intimidation, and lack of transparency. Women, in particular, expressed fears about the destruction of family gardens and water sources, which are vital to their daily survival.

"These people came and marked our land, but they never told us what they were doing. They just said it's for government work. Now we see pipes, and we don't know if we will have to leave our homes," said **Nalongo Mary**, a resident of Kakuuto sub-county in Kyotera district.

Another key outcome of the sensitization campaign was the **formation of local ESIA watchdog groups**. These community-based groups are made up of youth leaders, farmers, teachers, and church members who volunteered to monitor activities along the pipeline route and report any violations of environmental standards.

STREC committed to supporting these groups through regular training, provision of reporting tools, and connections with environmental lawyers and journalists who can help escalate their findings.

In partnership with local civil society networks in the Masaka region, STREC also engaged local council

leaders. These engagements aimed to remind public officials of their duty to oversee oil activities in their jurisdictions and respond promptly to community complaints. The sessions highlighted the importance of **independent monitoring** and **community participation** in ensuring environmental compliance.

Through this campaign, STREC emphasized that the **Environmental and Social Impact Assessment certificate is not just a formality**, but a legal tool that communities can use to hold oil developers accountable. The ESIA outlines mitigation measures for issues like pollution, land acquisition, biodiversity loss, and social impacts.

If these measures are not implemented, affected people have the right to report violations to the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), seek legal redress, or organize peaceful actions to demand compliance.

The sensitization activities also included **radio talk shows** aired on local FM stations, where STREC staff and community representatives discussed the EACOP project, environmental risks, and citizen rights. These broadcasts helped reach a wider audience, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas.

As STREC continues to work in the Greater Masaka region, the organization remains committed to ensuring that **environmental justice and community rights are not sacrificed for fossil fuel profits**. Promoting ESIA compliance is just one part of a broader movement for transparency, accountability, and a **just energy transition**.

STREC thanks all its partners and allies who made this campaign possible, including grassroots CBOs, local media, and human rights defenders. The next phase will focus on **training community paralegals**, developing a **community monitoring toolkit**, and preparing **environmental incident reports** to be submitted to regulatory bodies and international watchdogs.

Through collective action, informed communities, and sustained advocacy, we can ensure that oil-affected communities are **not left in the dark**, and that environmental laws serve the people they were designed to protect.



*STREC sensitise Greater Masaka communities on ESIA compliance to safeguard land, water, and rights amid EACOP construction threats.*

## 6.8 Raised Awareness on Oil Risks and Engaged Small Scale Farmers in Hoima District:

In April 2025, STREC organized a targeted community meeting with small-scale farmers in **Kabaale Sub-county, Hoima District**, to raise awareness about the environmental and livelihood risks posed by ongoing and planned oil developments in the region. The meeting aimed to equip farmers especially those whose land and water sources are directly threatened with critical knowledge on how fossil fuel activities impact agriculture, biodiversity, and long-term food security.

The engagement brought together over **40 participants**, including local farmers, community elders, women leaders, and youth representatives from the villages of Ngemwa, Nyakasinini, and Kigaaga B. These areas lie within or near the **Oil refinery, EACOP project and feeder pipeline route**, putting them at risk of displacement, pollution, and restricted land access.

During the session, STREC facilitators used interactive presentations, storytelling, and participatory discussions to explain the potential risks of oil projects to smallholder agriculture. Key concerns raised included **land grabbing, reduced access to grazing areas, pollution of water bodies**, and the long-term

degradation of soils due to construction and pipeline leakage risks.

“We are being told to give up our land for oil, but no one is telling us what will happen to our farming,” said **Mr. Mujuni**, a maize farmer from Nyakasinini. “They promised jobs, but the land is our real employment.”

Women farmers, in particular, expressed deep concern over how oil activities are already beginning to affect their daily lives. Some reported reduced access to water due to pipeline related excavation works and others raised fears about health effects caused by increased dust and air pollution in their communities.

STREC also took time to **demystify the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)** processes associated with oil projects. Many farmers were unaware that they had a legal right to be consulted during the ESIA process or that they could challenge projects that failed to adequately address community concerns. The facilitators explained how ESIA non-compliance can lead to irreversible harm and encouraged farmers to **monitor and report violations**, particularly where contractors are clearing land without proper community consent.

The meeting featured a practical session on **mapping at-risk areas**, where participants identified key community assets such as wells, sacred sites, and farming fields that are under threat from oil-related infrastructure. This information will feed into STREC's advocacy work as it continues to support oil-affected communities to demand environmental accountability and land rights protection.

To build momentum, the farmers formed a **local watchdog group** that will document oil-related impacts, engage with local leaders, and coordinate with STREC on further community trainings and legal awareness sessions.

This meeting was part of STREC's broader effort to **bridge the information gap** between oil host communities and the government-corporate actors behind the fossil fuel developments. Empowering farmers with information and organizing tools is crucial not only for defending land and food systems but also for **amplifying grassroots voices in national climate and energy policy debates**.

STREC remains committed to walking alongside small-scale farmers as they defend their livelihoods and fight for a more just and sustainable future.



*STREC convened small-scale farmers in Hoima to raise awareness on oil's threats to land, agriculture, and water, empowering communities to defend their livelihoods.*

## 6.9 Raised Africa's Voice at UNESCO on Threats to World Heritage Sites from Oil Projects:

Between 6 and 16 July 2025, STREC proudly represented African civil society organizations during the 47th Session of the World Heritage Committee at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France. Mr. Cirrus Kabaale delivered a statement on behalf of CSOs across Africa, raising urgent concerns about fossil fuel projects threatening some of the continent's most treasured World Heritage sites.

One of the critical cases highlighted was the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) in Tanzania, a UNESCO World Heritage site globally recognized for its unique biodiversity, rich cultural heritage, and fragile ecosystems.

While the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) does not physically cross the NCA, both the pipeline and

the NCA lie within the Internal Drainage Basin (IDB), a rare closed watershed system where water does not flow to the sea.

The IDB is highly sensitive because water from rainfall, surface flow, and groundwater circulates within the basin, linking multiple ecosystems. For instance, Lake Eyasi part of the IDB is crossed by about 235 km of the pipeline, with the closest distance to the lake being roughly 100 km. Any pollution in Lake Eyasi could travel through interconnected hydrological systems, eventually impacting Ngorongoro. Studies show that most of Ngorongoro's water originates as rainfall outside the crater before traveling into the basin, reinforcing the need for watershed-scale management. This means that an oil spill or leak from EACOP could contaminate Lake Eyasi, potentially concentrating pollutants that would harm Ngorongoro's wildlife, ecosystems, and communities.

This issue is not just ecological, it is deeply social. Indigenous peoples and local communities rely on the IDB's fragile water systems for survival in an already dry and drought prone region. Disruptions caused by oil spills, accidents, or leakages could destroy water sources, livelihoods, and cultural heritage. Communities around Ngorongoro and Lake Eyasi have repeatedly expressed fears that the pipeline could undermine their way of life, leaving them more vulnerable to poverty and climate shocks.

STREC pointed out that the EACOP Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for Tanzania acknowledges that the pipeline crosses the IDB and will impact both surface and groundwater. However,

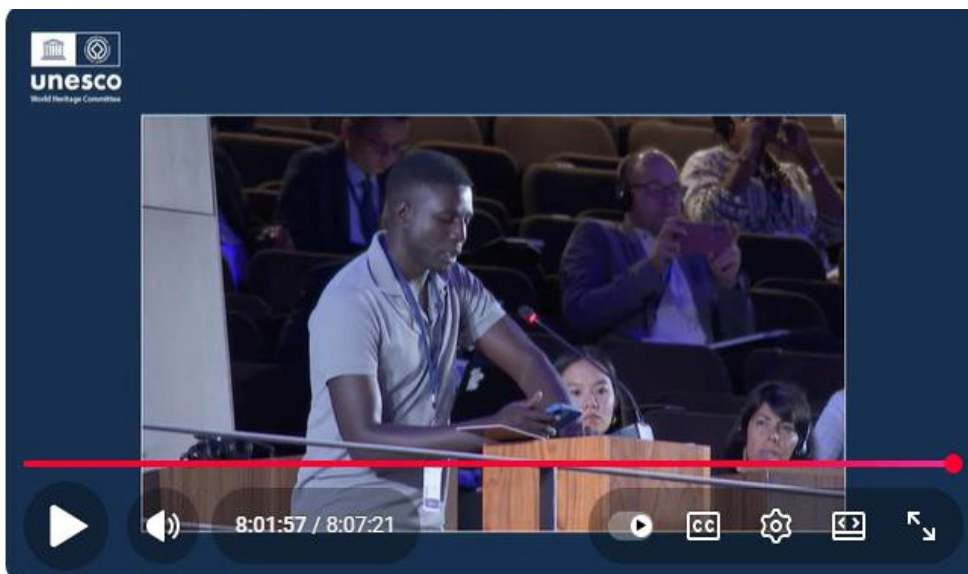
the report falls short of analyzing the full system wide risks. Instead, it offers only generic statements about oil spills and accidents without addressing their implications on ecosystem integrity, biodiversity conservation, and water security across the basin.

In light of this, our statement delivered three critical messages to the Tanzanian government and the World Heritage Committee:

1. **Conduct a basin-wide assessment** of the pipeline's impacts on the IDB watershed, with a focus on hydrological connections, biodiversity, and human livelihoods.
2. **Strengthen accountability of EACOP developers** by requiring comprehensive spill- prevention and response mechanisms that reflect basin-wide vulnerabilities.
3. **Safeguard Ngorongoro's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)** by prioritizing environmental and cultural protection over extractive development.

The intervention at UNESCO amplified the voices of frontline communities who depend on these ecosystems for survival. It also reminded global leaders that protecting World Heritage sites requires looking beyond physical boundaries and adopting a holistic approach to ecosystem management.

As STREC, we remain committed to exposing the hidden threats of fossil fuel projects and to ensuring that Africa's cultural and ecological treasures are preserved for future generations.



*Mr. Cirrus Kabaale delivering a presentation at the 47th Session of the World Heritage Committee, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France.*

## 6.10 Facilitated Exchange Learning Visit Between Kingfisher Oil Project Affected People and Oil Refinery Affected Communities:

On September 26, 2025, STREC facilitated an exchange learning visit between communities affected by the Kingfisher oil project in Buhuuka Parish, Kikuube District, and refinery-affected families resettled in Kyakaboga Village, Hoima District. The visit was hosted at the Kyakaboga Community Hall.

The purpose of this exchange was to create a platform for mutual learning, solidarity, and empowerment. Both communities face displacement, disrupted livelihoods, and environmental damage as a result of Uganda's oil developments, yet each has distinct experiences that offer valuable lessons for the other.

For Kingfisher host communities, this visit provided an opportunity to hear firsthand from refinery-affected

families who were displaced from Kabaale Parish to Kyakaboga. These families shared challenges related to inadequate compensation, broken promises of livelihood restoration, and ongoing struggles to access essential services. By listening to these experiences, Kingfisher-affected persons can better anticipate and prepare for the impacts they are currently facing, including threats of forced evictions, restricted fishing access, and loss of ancestral lands.

Meanwhile, refinery-affected families benefited from sharing their stories, resilience strategies, and advocacy lessons with Kingfisher communities. This peer-to-peer exchange strengthened collective voices and built solidarity among oil-affected communities across Uganda.



*Kingfisher oil project-affected community members during an exchange learning visit with refinery-affected families in Kyakaboga Village*

Ultimately, the visit aimed to foster resilience, inform advocacy strategies, and empower both communities to protect their rights, livelihoods, and environment while holding duty bearers accountable.

## 7.0 Key Achievements under 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.

### 7.1 Youth, Climate Action, and Green Jobs: Insights from Kyambogo University Public Lecture:

In a bold step to bridge climate awareness and economic opportunity, STREC held a dynamic public lecture at Kyambogo University in March 2025 under the theme **“Climate Change and the Environment: Can Students Tap into Green Jobs?”** The event brought together over 100 students, university faculty, environmental activists, and green entrepreneurs to explore the urgent realities of climate change and the immense potential for youth to drive solutions through green innovation and sustainability focused careers.

The lecture opened with a deep dive into the science and impacts of climate change, particularly in Africa where countries like Uganda are experiencing disproportionate effects. The speaker emphasized how rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation are not just environmental issues but pressing social and economic challenges. Uganda’s vulnerability, combined with its youthful population, presents both a crisis and an opportunity that must be seized through education, awareness, and action.

A major highlight of the event was the panel discussion on green jobs. Experts from environmental NGOs, clean energy companies, and sustainable agriculture sectors shared powerful insights into what constitutes a green job and how students can position themselves to enter this growing field. Careers in renewable energy, environmental education, waste management, eco-tourism, sustainable farming, and conservation were discussed as key avenues for meaningful work that aligns with both climate goals and economic resilience.

The panelists urged students to embrace innovation, entrepreneurship, and skills development. They emphasized that green jobs aren’t just about planting trees or working for NGOs, they are about finding sustainable solutions in every sector, from architecture and engineering to IT and finance. Green jobs, they noted, are not just good for the planet, they are the future of employment.

During the Q&A session, students asked thoughtful questions on how to access internships, how to

start small-scale green enterprises, and how to hold institutions accountable for climate commitments. There was a strong desire among attendees to not only learn but to act to become environmental leaders in their communities and changemakers in their chosen professions.

The event concluded with a call to action: for students to be bold in pursuing environmental advocacy and to explore green job opportunities as both a moral and professional pathway.

STREC pledged ongoing support through mentorship, training, and collaboration with universities to ensure the next generation is equipped to lead Uganda toward a just and sustainable future.

The public lecture at Kyambogo University was more than an academic dialogue. It was a powerful platform for youth empowerment, climate education, and the shaping of a green economy.



*STREC's public lecture at Kyambogo University empowered youth to tackle climate change and unlock green job opportunities through innovation, education and sustainable career pathways.*

## 1.2 Celebrated World Environment Day 2025; Communities Take the Lead for Climate Justice:

On **June 5, 2025**, STREC joined millions of people around the world in celebrating **World Environment Day**, under the global theme “*Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience*.” In Uganda, where communities continue to face the impacts of environmental degradation fueled by extractive industries like oil and gas, this day was not only a celebration but a renewed call to action.

STREC organized a vibrant and engaging community event in **Buliisa District**, one of the areas most impacted by the Kingfisher oil project. The event brought together **local leaders, elders, youth, women's groups, smallholder farmers, schoolchildren, and environmental defenders** to raise awareness about the urgent need to protect ecosystems and resist harmful oil developments.

The day started with a **community tree planting exercise**, where participants planted over **300 indigenous trees** along the banks of River Waki and in degraded areas within Kakindo Sub- county. The trees planted symbolized the communities' commitment to restoring biodiversity, strengthening climate resilience, and resisting environmental destruction caused by the oil industry.

Community members shared testimonies about how their environment has changed over the years shrinking forest cover, unreliable rainfall patterns, and reduced agricultural productivity. These stories highlighted how fossil fuel developments are exacerbating the climate crisis in Uganda, especially in rural areas where livelihoods depend heavily on the land and water. Local women spoke powerfully about the challenges they face due to environmental degradation. "We no longer find firewood easily. Our gardens are no longer fertile, and the rivers are drying. If oil continues, we don't know what will be left for our children," shared **Mama Florence**, a farmer from Kigoya village.

In the afternoon, STREC hosted a **mobile photo exhibition** showcasing real-life images of oil's impacts in Buliisa, Hoima, and Kikuube. The exhibition drew emotional responses and served as a visual advocacy tool, helping participants understand the scale of the challenge and the need for urgent action.

The day closed with a public reading of a **community statement** calling on the Ugandan government to halt the expansion of oil activities in protected and community lands and instead invest in **clean energy solutions, climate-smart agriculture, and land restoration programs**.

Through this celebration, STREC reaffirmed its commitment to grassroots environmental justice and the empowerment of frontline communities.

World Environment Day 2025 reminded us that **land is life**, and protecting it is a shared responsibility one that starts with listening to communities, respecting nature, and demanding accountability from those who threaten our shared future.



*STREC marked World Environment Day 2025 in Buliisa by planting trees and demanding action against oil-driven environmental degradation.*

## 8.0 Key Achievements under 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.

### 8.1 Distributed tree and fruit seedlings to support women headed families:

In March 2025, STREC took a significant step toward supporting climate action, environmental conservation, and community resilience by distributing over 25,000 tree and fruit seedlings to women-headed families in the tourism host communities of Buliisa and Hoima districts. This initiative is not only a testament to STREC's ongoing commitment to sustainable development but also a powerful demonstration of how environmental action can be inclusive, community-driven, and responsive to the needs of those most impacted by climate change.

The distribution of seedlings was preceded by a series of community trainings designed to equip beneficiaries with practical knowledge and tools to understand and respond to climate change. Participants, largely women from households around Murchison Falls National Park and Bugungu Wildlife Reserve, were introduced to key concepts such as the drivers and effects of climate change, the importance of biodiversity, the role of forests in sustaining ecosystems, and how individual and collective action can make a difference in climate resilience.

STREC's training sessions also focused on alternative livelihoods and sustainable land management. With growing pressure on natural resources due to population growth, oil development, and deforestation, many rural households especially

women-headed families are left vulnerable to food insecurity, poverty, and environmental degradation. Through these trainings, women learned about agroforestry, climate-smart agriculture, beekeeping, and eco-tourism as viable alternatives to environmentally harmful practices like charcoal burning or illegal logging.

By providing fruit tree seedlings such as mangoes, oranges, jackfruit, and guavas, alongside native tree species like mahogany, musizi, and tamarind, STREC ensured that the support was both economically and ecologically meaningful. Fruit trees not only provide nutritious food and a potential source of income but also play a crucial role in reforesting degraded areas, improving soil health, sequestering carbon, and providing shade and habitat for local wildlife.

Women-headed families were prioritized in this initiative because they often face structural barriers in accessing land, finances, and climate adaptation resources. These women are also more likely to rely on natural resources for survival and are often at the frontline of managing household food security and health. Supporting them with seedlings and training strengthens household resilience, enhances food sovereignty, and amplifies women's role as custodians of the environment.

The decision to focus on tourism host communities was deliberate. These areas are not only ecologically significant but are also directly impacted by the changing climate and unsustainable development practices especially those related to oil extraction and infrastructure development. By investing in tree planting and climate education, STREC is building a foundation for sustainable tourism where communities can thrive alongside healthy ecosystems.

The impact of this initiative will be felt not only in the coming planting seasons but for decades ahead. As the trees grow, they will help to restore degraded landscapes, stabilize riverbanks, and moderate microclimates. They will also serve as living evidence of what locally-led, gender sensitive climate action looks like in practice. By supporting local women with tangible resources and the knowledge to use them effectively, STREC is contributing to a more equitable and resilient future. In addition to the seedlings and training, STREC provided participants with basic tools and guidance on planting and tree maintenance.

Field teams continue to follow up with the beneficiaries to ensure survival rates are high and provide ongoing technical support. Community members were also encouraged to form local conservation groups to

collectively monitor tree growth, share lessons, and mobilize additional support from local governments and partners.

This initiative aligns with Uganda's broader climate adaptation and reforestation goals and directly contributes to the restoration of biodiversity hotspots around protected areas. It also reinforces STREC's long-standing advocacy for integrating environmental justice with social equity particularly in oil-affected and marginalized communities.

As climate change continues to present complex challenges for communities across Uganda and the Greater Lakes Region, initiatives like this offer hope. They show that even small actions when rooted in local knowledge and led by communities, can have far-reaching impacts. The women who planted these seedlings are not just recipients of aid; they are leaders of a growing movement to restore Uganda's natural heritage and secure a better future for their families.

The seedlings in Buliisa and Hoima will grow into fruit-bearing trees, shade-providing canopies, and vital carbon sinks. But more than that, they represent a shift in how communities approach climate resilience not as a burden, but as a shared responsibility and an opportunity for empowerment.



*STREC empowered women-headed families in Buliisa and Hoima districts with 25,000 tree seedlings, advancing inclusive climate action, food security, and ecosystem restoration.*

## 8.2 Organised a community meeting on community-led conservation and sustainability of Bugoma forest:

In February 2025, STREC organized a vital community meeting in Kikuube district, bringing together forest-edge communities, local leaders, environmental activists, and other stakeholders to discuss community-led conservation and the long-term sustainability

of Bugoma Forest. The meeting was convened in response to growing concerns over deforestation, illegal land grabbing, and the rising pressure from industrial agriculture and infrastructure developments threatening the integrity of one of Uganda's most

critical biodiversity hotspots. Bugoma Forest, located in western Uganda, is home to hundreds of plant and animal species, including endangered chimpanzees and rare birds. It plays a key role in climate regulation, water protection, and cultural preservation for the surrounding communities. However, over the past years, the forest has come under increasing threat from large-scale land conversion, logging, and oil-related developments. Recognizing the urgent need for local engagement, STREC sought to create a space where communities could reflect, strategize, and recommit to sustainable, community-led conservation approaches.

The meeting focused on empowering local residents with knowledge and practical tools to take an active role in protecting Bugoma. Key topics included the importance of indigenous knowledge in forest conservation, the role of forest resources in local livelihoods, and legal frameworks protecting natural forests in Uganda. Participants discussed how unsustainable land use practices and weak enforcement of environmental laws had contributed to the gradual degradation of Bugoma Forest.

To support sustainable alternatives, the meeting also introduced community members to conservation-friendly livelihood options such as beekeeping, eco-tourism, and agroforestry. These practices not only reduce pressure on the forest but also help generate

income for families, especially for youth and women. Testimonials from community members already practicing these alternatives helped inspire others to consider shifting from destructive to sustainable practices.

Local leaders expressed strong support for the initiative and called on all stakeholders to stand united against those encroaching on the forest. They emphasized the importance of empowering community forest monitors and creating more awareness, especially among young people, about the value of the forest and their role in safeguarding it.

The meeting concluded with a joint community declaration to increase vigilance against forest encroachment, report illegal activities, and engage in collective reforestation efforts. STREC committed to follow-up engagements, provision of seedlings, and continuous training in sustainable livelihood practices.

This community meeting marked a significant step forward in placing Bugoma's conservation in the hands of those who live closest to it. By centering community voices and promoting locally-driven solutions, the meeting laid the groundwork for a long-term, sustainable future for Bugoma Forest where conservation is not just a project, but a shared way of life.



*STREC united Kikuube communities to defend Bugoma Forest, championing conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and local leadership in the fight against deforestation*

# Section Three

## 9.1 INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY, COLLABORATIONS AND MEDIA VISSIBILITY

### 9.2 Our Media Campaigns

In 2025, the media space in Uganda kept shrinking as they feared to report directly on the impacts of oil and gas activities in Uganda. STREC worked with national and international journalists to do investigative stories on the impacts of oil and gas projects on host communities, impacts on biodiversity and tourism, and potentials of just energy transition. Despite the fact that these stories were pivotal in creating campaign momentum, there is still observed retaliations from oil companies. It is noteworthy that

some of the stories were adapted at the local media level and have continued to enhance advocacy against the financing of EACOP and oil activities in Uganda. This has encouraged some media outlets to report on the effects of the fossil fuel project and thus the need for an urgent transition to clean energy. To date, over 33 stories about negative oil impacts in the community have been published in the media, with over 150 tweets about the same stories.

### Host Communities Speak Out for Environmental Justice on World Environment Day 2025

by NTEZA MICHAEL | REPORTER — 05/06/2025 in News Reading Time: 2 mins read

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In commemoration of World Environment Day 2025, the Strategic response on Environmental Conservation (STREC) joined host communities in Hoima, Buliisa and Kikuube Districts to demand environmental justice and raise concerns about the growing threats posted by the EACOP, Tilenga, and Kingfisher oil projects.



*STREC took part in a conference convened by Oilwatch Africa in Kampala*

## POTENTIAL ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS OF THE EAST AFRICAN CRUDE OIL PIPELINE (EACOP) ON THE NGORONGORO CONSERVATION AREA

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), a UNESCO World Heritage site, is internationally recognized for its exceptional biodiversity, cultural heritage, and ecological significance. While the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) does not directly cross the NCA, both the pipeline route and NCA fall within Tanzania's Internal Drainage Basin (IDB) – a closed watershed where all water remains within the basin rather than flowing to the sea. This hydrological connection means that

### HYDROLOGICAL LINKAGES

- Shared Watershed**  
Both EACOP's route and the NCA lie within the IDB.
- Lake Eyasi Basin**  
The pipeline crosses approximately 235 km within the Lake Eyasi Drainage Basin, with the closest point to the lake being about 100 m.
- Water Flow Into NCA**  
Scientific assessments show that most of the Ngorongoro waters originate as rainfall outside the crater and flow into the basin via surface and groundwater.
- Spill Risk**  
An oil spill or leak into Lake Eyasi could concentrate contaminants that eventually reach ecosystems within the NCA.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- EACOP ESIA Limitations**  
The Tanzania Environmental and Social Impact Assessment acknowledges the pipeline's location within the IDB.

### ECOSYSTEM AND COMMUNITY VULNERABILITIES

- Biodiversity**  
The NCA is home to globally significant wildlife, including endangered species.
- Dry Climate Sensitivity**  
Water sources are limited, making contamination risks particularly severe.
- Community Livelihoods**  
Indigenous pastoralist and farming communities depend on clean water for survival.
- Cultural Heritage**  
Pollution could disrupt traditional land-use systems that have persisted for centuries.

### GAPS IN CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

- EACOP ESIA Limitations**  
The Tanzania environmental and Social Impact Assessment acknowledges the pipeline's location within the IDB.



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# EACOP Poses a Silent Threat to Ngorongoro, We Need a Full Environmental Assessment Now

by **UG STANDARD EDITOR** | **UG STANDARD EDITORIAL** — 15/07/2025 in **OpED** Reading Time: 2 mins read

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By *Cirrus Kabale*

This week as the world leaders and conservation experts are meeting in Paris, France for the 47th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, taking place from 6th to 16th July 2025. One of the key discussions focused on the progress of the strategy for World Heritage in Africa. During this session, concerns were raised about the potential impact of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) on protected natural areas particularly the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) in Tanzania.

**magamba**

**PIPELINE PROFITS & PAIN**  
Total's Legacy of Exploitation in Africa

**Dear Total**  
We Demand Dignity, Not Destitution

**X SPACES**

This X Spaces aims to bring together African voices and global allies to hold TotalEnergies accountable. As a counter-narrative to the AGM, this space will expose the company's greenwashing, human rights abuses, and the unjust economic burden their fossil fuel projects place on African nations.

**Date:** 22 May, 2025  
**Time:** 5.00 PM EAT / 3PM WAT  
4.00 PM SAST / 4.00 PM CEST  
**Platform:** X

**Key Speakers**

|                                                                                                |                                                                                          |                                                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|               |         |  |  |  |
| <b>Moderator</b><br>Ferdinand Omondi<br>Communications and Story Manager,<br>Greenpeace Africa | <b>Cyrus Kabaale</b><br>Director,<br>Strategic Response on Environmental<br>Conservation | <b>Dean Bhebe</b><br>Campaigns Lead,<br>Don't Gas Africa                          | <b>Antoine Bouhey</b><br>Campaign Coordinator,<br>Reclaim Finance                 | <b>John Beard, Jr.</b><br>Founder,<br>Port Arthur Community<br>Action Network     |

#DearTotal • We Demand Dignity, Not Destitution.

### 1.3 Some of the key advocacy materials

- Petition to Stanbic Bank Uganda to withdraw its financial support for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)  
<https://strecug.org/reports/Petition%20to%20Stanbic%20Bank%20Uganda%20to%20withdraw%20its%20financial%20support%20for%20the%20EACOP%20project.pdf>
- Financing of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline Potentially Violating the Green Finance Guidelines  
<https://strecug.org/reports/Petition%20to%20National%20Financial%20Regulatory%20Administration%20to%20stop%20support%20of%20financing%20the%20EACOP%20project.pdf>
- From Local Struggles to the Global Stage: Amplifying Community Voices Against Fossil Fuels and Building Collective Action for Climate Justice  
<https://strecug.org/reports/STREC-Quarterly-Newsletter-Issue-03-July-September-2025.pdf>
- Rooted Resistance: Building People Power for Climate and Environmental Justice  
<https://strecug.org/reports/STREC%20Newsletter%20Issue%2002%20April%20to%20June%202025%20pages.pdf>
- Guardians of the Land: Uplifting Communities, Defending Forests, and Resisting Fossil Fuels.  
<https://strecug.org/reports/STREC-Quarterly-Newsletter-2025.pdf>
- Host Communities Speak Out for Environmental Justice on World Environment Day 2025  
[https://strecug.org/reports/Press%20release%20Host%20Communities%20Speak%20Out%20for%20Environmental%20Justice%20on%20World%20Environment%20Day%202025%20\(1\).pdf](https://strecug.org/reports/Press%20release%20Host%20Communities%20Speak%20Out%20for%20Environmental%20Justice%20on%20World%20Environment%20Day%202025%20(1).pdf)
- Fact Sheet on Potential Ecosystem Impacts of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) on the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA)  
[https://strecug.org/reports/Fact%20Sheet%20on%20Potential%20Ecosystem%20Impacts%20of%20the%20East%20African%20Crude%20Oil%20Pipeline%20\(EACOP\)%20on%20the%20Ngorongoro%20Conservation%20Area%20\(NCA\).pdf](https://strecug.org/reports/Fact%20Sheet%20on%20Potential%20Ecosystem%20Impacts%20of%20the%20East%20African%20Crude%20Oil%20Pipeline%20(EACOP)%20on%20the%20Ngorongoro%20Conservation%20Area%20(NCA).pdf)
- STREC initiates exchange visits among Uganda's oil PAPs to promote human rights  
<https://kazi-njemanews.com/strec-initiates-exchange-visits-among-ugandas-oil-paps-to-promote-human-rights/>
- Host communities speak out for environmental justice on world environment day 2025  
<https://www.ugstandard.com/host-communities-speak-out-for-environmental-justice-on-world-environment-day-2025/>
- STREC message on World Environment Day 2025  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32o8Xi-L85yc&feature=youtu.be>

## 10. Networks and collaborations

For several years now, STREC and our partners from Uganda and other countries have been involved in efforts to promote sustainable management of shared natural resources. We aspire towards contributing to a modern energy systems that is not only environmentally friendly and will not worsen climate change, but one that takes care of the needs of vulnerable people including women, elderly, youth and children.

In 2025, STREC participated in a landmark conference organized by Oilwatch Africa in Kampala, Uganda, under the theme *"From Exploitation to Restoration."* The conference brought together climate justice advocates, environmental rights defenders, civil society leaders, and grassroots community representatives from across the continent to

discuss one of Africa's most pressing challenges: the intersection of fossil fuel exploitation, debt crises, and climate injustice.

The conference fostered solidarity and collective strategy-building. Activists agreed on the need for cross-border collaboration to challenge harmful fossil fuel investments, advocate for just energy transitions, and push for accountability from both African governments and global financial institutions.

The lessons and networks built during this gathering will strengthen ongoing campaigns in Uganda and beyond, ensuring that the fight for climate justice, debt cancellation, and sustainable livelihoods continues with renewed energy.



## 10.1 Institutional Building and Strengthening

Between March and October 2025, STREC with support of our 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 four

## 11.1 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:

**Total Energies investors to finance the EACOP Project:** Equity financing of the EACOP Project: Equity financing for the EACOP project remains a critical concerns, with project sponsors and partner companies continuing to provide capital despite growing environmental, human rights and climate risks. This sustained equity commitment enables project implementation, highlighting the need for intensified shareholder advocacy, corporate accountability and stronger pressure on companies to divest from fossil fuel expansion.

**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.

**Partial Finance of the EACOP project:** Despite major withdrawals by several international banks

and insurers, segments of the EACOP project continue to secure partial financing from alternative sources including African banks. This fragmented funding sustains project momentum, undermines global climate commitments and reinforces the need for continued financial advocacy and accountability.

**Limited Community Awareness of Environmental Impacts:** A major challenge remained the low level of community awareness regarding the environmental and climate risks associated with projects such as EACOP. In 2025, the start of pipeline construction and the undertaking of Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) exposed communities for the first time, to the project's direct environmental impacts. This experience highlighted the urgent need for sustained communication, community sensitization and inclusive engagement to support informed decision making and safeguard livelihoods.

**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 30 prevalence of high electricity prices. Addressing these issues emerged as a crucial imperative in our pursuits.

**In addition, the civic space in Uganda continued to be repressed in 2025** with human and environmental activists continuing to be detained in prisons. This undermined advocacy aimed at protecting community rights as well as promoting environmental conservation and climate action.

## 12.0 Key priorities in 2026

In view of the challenges highlighted above, STREC's key priorities for 2026 include:

- Create awareness on the Environmental impacts of EACOP project;
- Develop a strategic approach to discourage oil companies' investors and finance institutions in China and Europe from supporting the EACOP project.
- Continue, engaging courts and other stakeholders to enable fast, fair and effective access to justice for the oil project affected communities and forest host communities to enhance environmental conservation efforts;
- Support local government leaders and oil project affected communities especially the district political, technical leaders, women and youth to monitor the compliance of ESIA reports for the Tilenga, Kingfisher, and EACOP oil projects.
- Support cross-border movements to pressure governments and oil companies to stop the expansion of fossil fuels in Great Lakes Region;
- Support youth and women groups to promote a just clean energy transition as opposed to fossil fuels;
- Finally, work with our partners to create an enabling civic space in Uganda.







