

A Monthly from the East African Sustainability Watch Network and INFORSE East Africa

JEEP and UCSD Launch Climate Action Project in West Nile Region



Energy hub at Nyaravuru-Angal Town Council. (Photo: D. Nkwanga)

Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP) and Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development in partnership with the Nordic Folkecentre for Renewable Energy (NFRE) supported by CISU Denmark have since July 2023 started implementing a Project titled: *Climate Action for Sustainable Livelihoods (CAISL)* in Nebbi district in West Nile region, North Western Uganda.

CAISL project seeks to make Nebbi district a JEEP Model district in climate mitigation measures and built-up community resilience, accessibility to environmentally friendly solutions and advocacy skills. The intervention will have special focus on youth and women participation

Several project activities, including a radio talk show, community energy hubs, community drives, informal interactions with project beneficiaries, and project team planning meetings have been held.

On 15 September 2023, as part of the CAISL Project, Nebbi district celebrated World Youth Day. Creative Living against Poverty, a youth group partner with JEEP planted 30 palm trees around Angal Secondary School together with teachers, and the Green Club (an environmental club in the school). As part of this event, students were trained in making the household energy saving stove.

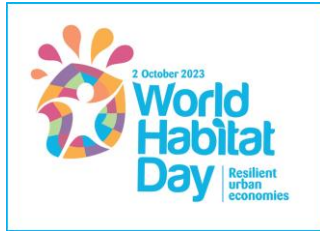
Also, JEEP has joined other actors in the area to plant fruit and other trees during this rainy season. These trees have been planted along streets to prevent erosion and reduce siltation of drainage channels. In the hilly areas of Erussi, Ndhew, Atego and Jupangira sub county, individual farmers have received fruit trees and other types of trees for erosion, flood control and to act as wind breaks.

Mr. Ayila Abongo LC 3 Erussi Sub County and member of Upper Nile Water Sub Catchment Management committee noted that the tree planting drive is part of the Ministry of Water and Environment's Campaign of increasing tree cover in this sub catchment. "In this campaign, Nebbi district received 3,000 assorted seedlings including Banyan, Mahogany, fruit trees and *Afzelia*. These will be planted to counter erosion and floods and to act as wind breaks in hilly areas of Erussi, Ndhew, Atego and Jupangira Sub County, noted Mr. Ayila.

In Angal Nyaravur community market, it is surprising to find that the price of firewood is comparable to that of Kampala (Capital City). Mr Nkwanga David from UCSD discerns that, 'Charcoal prices are equally high, which is an indicator of scarcity and high energy poverty, which calls for urgent attention to the household cooking situation'.

CAISL Project is an extension of the East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy & Climate Action (EASE&CA) that involved SusWatch Kenya, UCSD and JEEP in Uganda, TaTEDO in Tanzania, INFORSE-East Africa c/o TaTEDO, INFORSE, and NFRE. The EASE CA Project sought to increase access to sustainable energy and other climate solutions to local communities in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania with both women's and men's full and effective participation and leadership for improved livelihoods and reduction of poverty.

World Habitat Day 2023: ‘Reducing Risk and Building Resilience to Disasters in Africa’s Urban Areas Requires Tackling the Developmental Issues That Underlie it’



World Habitat Day is held on the first Monday of October and launches Urban October.

On 2 October 2023, the Global Observance of World Habitat Day, under the theme "*Resilient urban economies. Cities as drivers of growth and recovery*", will look at how cities can position their economies to benefit residents.

Resilient Futures a US-based non-profit organization that creates and guides the implementation of trauma-informed, equity-centered programming with healing at the forefront, defines resilience as the capacity to grow & thrive, with strength and tenacity in the *face of trauma and oppression* for both individuals and communities.

As such, resilient cities are those that have the ability to absorb, recover and prepare for future shocks (economic, environmental, social & institutional). Resilient cities promote sustainable development, well-being and inclusive growth. Africa is one of the most rapidly urbanizing continents (one out of five of the fastest-growing cities globally are in Africa), and its urban transition is a key global game-changer: the way African cities develop will determine whether or not we achieve global climate mitigation targets, Sustainable Development Goals, biodiversity, poverty and inequality targets, and resource sustainability.

In March 2023, during the validation of the Africa Urban Resilience Programme in Dar es salaam, the Director of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE) at the African Union Commission - Mr Harsen Nyambe Nyambe stressed that, “African cities are increasingly becoming vulnerable because of the changing climate, extreme weather events, which are further exacerbated by demographic explosion, and governance impediments.

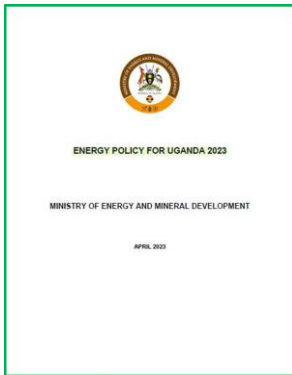
However, Action Aid’s Report: *Strengthening urban resilience in African cities - Understanding and addressing urban risk (2016)* shows that disaster risks in African towns and cities are strongly linked to under-development. Insecure livelihoods; a lack of basic infrastructure and services such as water and waste management; poor urban and land planning; inadequate oversight of urban planning, land-use and building standards; as well as low accountability for the provision of infrastructure and basic services all increase poor people’s exposure to hazards, and vulnerability to their effects.

Consequently, Action Aid’s Report warns that, ‘reducing risk and building resilience to disasters in urban areas requires tackling the developmental issues that underlie it. This requires improving infrastructure and services, and strengthening livelihoods, all of which are critical in reducing exposure to hazards and enhancing people’s ability to cope with and recover from disasters’.

‘It is essential to facilitate and support efforts by governments to reduce risk, while at the same time holding them to account through transparent, responsive and proactive governance structures. It is equally important to involve the private sector, as business and industry often contribute to risk on the continent’, the Report concluded.

Follow the **Global Observance of World Habitat Day, 2 October 2023:**
<https://urbanoctober.unhabitat.org/whd>

Uganda Launches New Energy Policy to Increase on-Grid Connectivity Access from 19% to 60% by 2027



On September 13, 2023, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development officially launched an ambitious Energy Policy for Uganda with a vision: *Achieve Universal Access to Sustainable, Affordable and Quality Energy Services for All Ugandans by 2040*. With a time span of 17 years, the Policy seeks among others, to increase on-grid connectivity access from 19% to 60% by the year 2027



Hon. Denis Hamson Obua launching the Energy Policy 2023. (Source: informerug.com)

According to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, ‘this launch marks the beginning of an exciting journey towards enhanced electricity generation, improved access to modern energy sources, promoting energy-efficient practices, sustainable biomass utilization & exploring emerging energy resources’.

Speaking at the launch of the policy on September 13, 2023 at Sheraton Hotel in Kampala, the Prime Minister who was represented by Hon. Hamson Obua, the Government Chief Whip underscored the critical role energy plays in shaping the environment and Uganda’s economy. “Energy is the lifeblood of any nation, and this launch is being held at a critical time when nations are dealing with ensuring their energy security for socio-economic development, he noted.

Ms. Pauline Irene Batebe - the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development said noted that, ‘As the government pursues its macro-economic policy on economic growth and employment, the energy sector is still faced with several challenges which the Energy Policy, 2023 has been developed to address. This includes promoting sustainable utilization of biomass’.

Biomass (firewood, shrubs, grasses, forest wastes and agro-industrial residues) is the most essential energy source for most Ugandan populations, accounting for over 90 % of the primary energy consumed for cooking and heating using inefficient methods, such as traditional cook stoves. This has resulted in rapid forest depletion for firewood and charcoal, among others.

The National Environment Management Authority reported in 2020 that ‘Uganda suffers a degradation loss of USD 2.3 billion, of which 25% is wood fuels and that 2.6% of Uganda’s forests are cut down annually for firewood, charcoal, agriculture and to make way for population growth. If this trend persists, Uganda will lose all its forest cover in less than 25 years’.

Development of this Energy Policy for Uganda (2023) was a collaborative effort with support from GIZ, involving government ministries, departments, and agencies, district local governments, private sector entities, academia, and civil society organizations including the Renewable Energy CSOs Network and INFORSE members in Uganda.

The Energy Policy aligns with Government’s commitment to regional and international obligations related to energy transition towards a zero-carbon economy. It encompasses strategies for new energy trends, including clean energy mini-grids (solar PV), industrial parks, smart grids, e-mobility, and energy-efficient and smart appliances.