

Global
CORRIDOR



“I was evicted and left homeless”

Exploring social and environmental
(in)justice along the East African Crude
Oil Pipeline Project

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University of
Sheffield



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DEFENDERS
FOUNDATION**

Report Info: This report is the outcome of extensive research and collaboration. It would not have been possible without the dedication and contributions of numerous individuals and organisations who committed their time, expertise, and resources to its completion. The report has been led by Haki Defenders Foundation (HDF) who focus on human rights, governance, and democracy in Uganda and the Great Lakes region. It has been developed in collaboration with the GlobalCORRIDOR project, based at the Urban Institute, University of Sheffield funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research (grant agreement ID: 947779)

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This report is dedicated to all those who continue to fight for social and environmental justice in Uganda and beyond. May it serve as a tool for accountability, awareness, and meaningful reform.

Disclaimer: The perspectives and experiences of participants presented in this report offer a compelling account of the challenges faced by those affected. However, it was not possible to independently verify every incident referenced. The information provided is based on the testimonies and observations of the participants, and while considerable efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, certain details may not have been independently substantiated.

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1. Introduction

“They undervalued my land of one acre, at 3 million UGX [around \$800]. I was evicted and left homeless. I acquired a very small plot that could not accommodate my big family and leave space for cultivation.”

NM, Kitegwa A Village, Hoima District



The East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), spanning 1,443 kilometres, is the product of a \$5 billion joint venture between the governments of Uganda and Tanzania, implemented by the French-owned oil company Total Energies and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). This large-scale infrastructure project has been developed on the promise it will drive significant economic transformation in the region. However, EACOP raises serious concerns around social and environmental (in)justice, threatening adverse impacts on the communities along its route (Mukasa & Tumushabe, 2023). Traversing ecologically sensitive and populated areas, EACOP has already led to displacement, environmental degradation, and socioeconomic disruption. Responding to these growing controversies, this report assesses the impact of the planning and construction of EACOP on selected communities in western Uganda, in doing so, it contributes to regional and global debates on the impact of the large-scale infrastructure and extractive projects unfolding across the planet.

Our report draws on detailed research undertaken in Uganda to assess a broad range of issues, including the displacement process, local environmental degradation, ongoing livelihood loss, and ever-present struggles to secure fair compensation and justice. Through direct engagement with households and other stakeholders, we set out the varied ways in which large-scale infrastructure development like EACOP can disrupt local lives.

While previous studies have explored some of these issues, our motivation for producing this report – written during the pipeline’s final stages of construction in 2024/early 2025 – is twofold: (1) to update the understanding of these processes to reflect the current realities for households, including those relocated away from the pipeline, and (2) to deepen the existing knowledge through on-the-ground assessment of activities, with our research team having worked closely with communities and stakeholders in the region. This report also includes a series of recommendations for promoting social and environmental justice that emerged during the research process, considering the fact that the pipeline is in its final stages of construction the research was led by Haki Defenders Foundation (HDF), a Ugandan non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting human rights, good governance, and democracy in Uganda and the Great Lakes region. The organisation was founded on the principles of equality, justice, and dignity. HDF collaborated with the European Research Council-funded Global CORRIDOR project, based at the Urban Institute, University of Sheffield, which is investigating the rapid proliferation of large-scale infrastructure projects and their impact on populations.

Together, HDF and the GlobalCORRIDOR project developed a research design to examine the social and environmental (in)justice issues – including human rights concerns – arising from the EACOP project. Fieldwork was conducted throughout 2024, during which time researchers engaged with 176 individuals in communities affected by the pipeline. This included the gathering of testimonies from those whose land had been

compulsorily acquired for the Total Energies Tilenga and EACOP projects. By grounding the study in first-hand accounts and on-the-ground observations, we hope to provide an updated and nuanced perspective on the multifaceted impacts of EACOP on local populations.

1.1 Context of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline

The discovery of significant oil reserves in Uganda in 2006 set the stage for the EACOP project. The project was designed to capitalise on these oil resources, boosting Uganda's and Tanzania's economies through job creation, infrastructure development, and increased foreign investment. EACOP is a key part of the "Central Corridor initiative", a transnational, multi-modal infrastructure network intended to integrate East Africa through investments in rail, road, manufacturing, energy production, distribution, and other technologies, connecting the hinterlands to coastal Tanzania. Promoted as a \$5 billion venture, the pipeline is described by stakeholders as a massive opportunity for Uganda to generate economic benefits by enhancing its infrastructure, improving its logistics, facilitating knowledge transfer, and potentially improving the livelihoods of communities along its route. However, despite these promised benefits, the implementation of EACOP has been fraught with numerous challenges, especially for the project-affected people, or "PAPs".

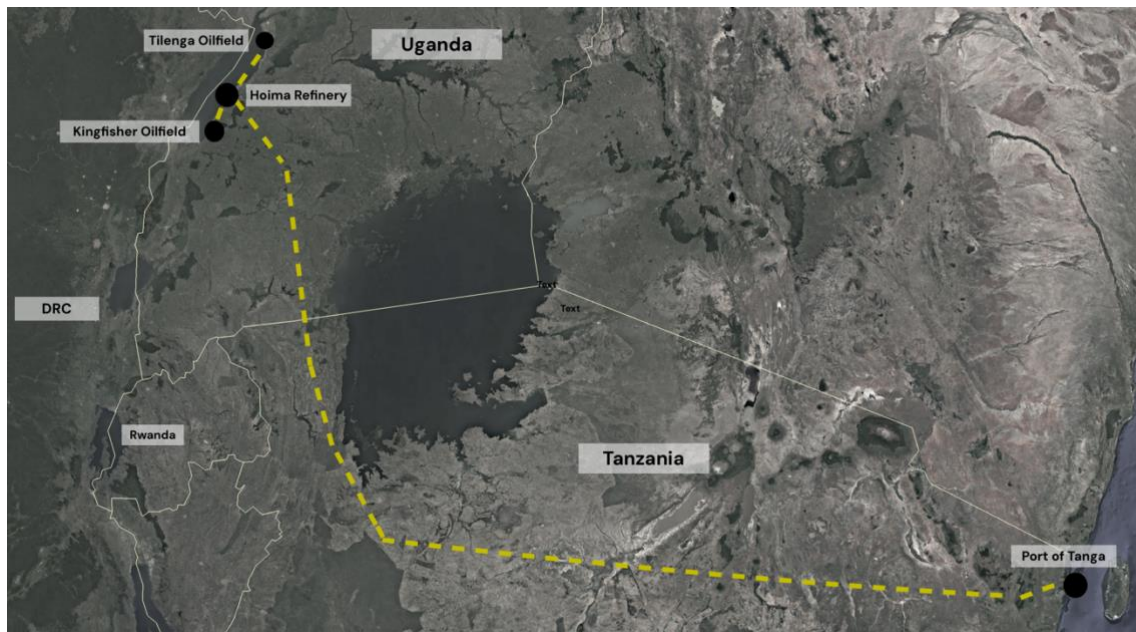


Figure 1. Map of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline

Promoters of EACOP suggest that the project marks a turning point in the nation's economic landscape, with the potential to transform Uganda's economy through new revenue streams and growth opportunities (Uganda National Oil Company, 2010). Extending from Uganda's Albertine Graben oil fields to Tanzania's port of Tanga,

EACOP is expected to become the world's longest heated pipeline, facilitating the export of crude oil to international markets (CNOOC, 2021).

Despite its promised economic benefits – including job creation, infrastructure development, and increased foreign investment – the EACOP project has sparked considerable concern over its potential social, environmental, and human rights impacts (Mukasa & Tumushabe, 2022). The pipeline traverses ecologically sensitive regions, populated areas, and communities that depend heavily on land and natural resources for their livelihoods. Previous reports have cited negative outcomes including land acquisition and displacement, livelihood loss, environmental degradation, and threats to indigenous cultures, raising fundamental questions about the need to balance economic advancement with human rights protection (Uganda Human Rights Commission, 2023).

Numerous human rights organisations, civil society groups, and local communities have voiced concerns regarding the transparency, consultation processes, and compensation mechanisms related to EACOP (Greenpeace, 2022). Challenges in these areas are also exacerbated by broader systemic challenges in Uganda, such as weak legal frameworks, limited access to justice, and the marginalisation of vulnerable populations (Kato & Amulen, 2020). As EACOP progresses and these concerns grow, the need for a comprehensive understanding of the social (in)justice implications of large-scale infrastructure projects become ever more evident (International Federation for Human Rights, 2021).

This is the context for this critical examination of social (in)justice concerns associated with the EACOP project in Uganda. By situating these issues within Uganda's broader socioeconomic and legal landscape, this report will contribute to ongoing discussions on responsible, inclusive development. The report focuses on EACOP's specific impacts in order to contribute to knowledge and dialogue concerning the intersection of economic and social (in)justice and large-scale development in East Africa and beyond.

This report explores the complex intersections between the human-rights and social-justice concerns associated with EACOP and examines the project's wide-ranging impacts on local communities, environmental sustainability, and socioeconomic dynamics. By engaging various stakeholders – including affected communities, government officials, NGOs, and industry representatives – this research is able to highlight the disparities, challenges, and opportunities arising from the pipeline's development. Through rigorous qualitative analysis, the research offers insights and recommendations to support equitable development, uphold human rights standards, and foster social justice in the context of large-scale infrastructure projects.

Although preliminary studies have evaluated EACOP's potential impacts on natural and human environments, the proposed mitigation measures have not adequately protected those affected (International Federation for Human Rights, 2021). Consequently, the

implementation of EACOP has presented a range of social (in)justice challenges that demand urgent attention, as highlighted in recent reports, media accounts, and advocacy publications (Uganda Human Rights Commission, 2023).

1.2 Raising Concerns

Although promoted as a critical development initiative intended to drive economic growth, EACOP has been associated with significant problems, including land-acquisition disputes, forced displacement, and the inadequate compensation of affected communities (Human Rights Watch, 2022; Total Energies, 2023). Many displaced individuals are from rural and indigenous backgrounds and rely heavily on their land and natural resources for their livelihoods. The absence of robust legal protections leaves these populations vulnerable to marginalisation and injustice, exacerbating existing socioeconomic inequalities (Amnesty International, 2023; Kakuru & Mwesige, 2021).

Inadequate consultation with affected populations has further intensified these challenges. Evidence of forced land-expropriation indicates a lack of genuine engagement in decision-making processes, ultimately infringing on communities' rights to participation and fair treatment. Environmental degradation associated with EACOP is another concern, threatening the local ecosystems essential to both community livelihoods and global biodiversity and raising critical questions about the sustainability of fossil fuel-driven development and its broader implications for climate change (Mugisha & Nsubuga, 2022).

Additionally, international dimensions – such as the implications for climate change – are at the forefront of the concerns surrounding EACOP. As a fossil-fuel pipeline, EACOP has drawn criticism from global environmental organisations for its contribution to carbon emissions. While the governments of Uganda and Tanzania argue that the project is vital for economic development and energy security, local and international advocates emphasise the need for a shift towards more sustainable energy sources, pointing to the long-term environmental costs of such an investment.

While the displacement caused by EACOP is well documented, previous research has largely addressed the immediate impacts of land acquisition and compensation processes (International Federation for Human Rights, 2022). There has yet to be a fully developed account of the lived realities and day-to-day difficulties of those who have been relocated. These difficulties include a lack of access to basic services, inadequate living conditions, and broader social and economic disruptions resulting from the project. A critical gap remains in understanding of the long-term socioeconomic impacts on displaced communities. Displaced populations face deteriorating living conditions, disrupted livelihoods, and limited access to essential services, yet minimal attention has

been given to their lived experiences and ongoing struggles (Amnesty International, 2023; Mugisha & Nsubuga, 2022).

By critically examining the experiences, perspectives, and voices of various stakeholders – including affected communities, government officials, NGOs, and industry representatives – this report provides a comprehensive analysis of the EACOP project's multifaceted impacts. Through rigorous qualitative inquiry, we have generated insights and recommendations that we hope will foster equitable development, uphold human rights standards, and promote social justice in the context of large-scale infrastructure projects in Uganda and beyond.

The report addresses the identified gaps by examining the broader social (in)justice and environmental implications of the EACOP project. Through our on-the-ground research, we have taken a comprehensive view of how large-scale infrastructure projects like EACOP affect local communities by preventing equitable and sustainable development practices and hindering Uganda's goals in relation to national frameworks, such as Vision 2040, and international objectives, such as the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) – specifically SDGs 10 and 16, which emphasise reducing inequality and promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions.

1.3 Research Approach

The research was conducted over a period of seven months in 2024, during which time data collection, analysis, and reporting took place. The geographical focus of the study was regions in Uganda directly affected by the EACOP project, particularly along the pipeline route. This included communities in the Albertine region, where oil-extraction activities are taking place, as well as other regions in which displacement and environmental impacts are being felt. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact, the research prioritised areas that have seen significant social, economic, and environmental disruption.

The report draws on 176 interviews to generate a detailed and evidenced analysis. We spoke to two groups. First, we interviewed 100 project-affected persons (PAPs) from various locations impacted by EACOP, including Kihooko Village; Ruhunga Parish; Buhimba Subcounty; Kikuube District; Kitegua; Kabale Subcounty; Kyakaboga resettlement camp, home to over 200 PAPs; Kingfisher Project Area; Kyalenga Camp; the oil refinery in Kabale Subcounty; and areas surrounding the Tilenga Oil Project. In the second stage, we interviewed 76 key stakeholders involved in diverse ways with EACOP. This included individuals directly involved in the project, such as government officials, project developers, security personnel guarding the Talenga Oil Project in Buliisa and the oil refinery company in Kabale; civil society representatives; lawyers

representing some of the PAPs; and climate, environmental and social-justice activists. A detailed overview of our research approach is presented in **Appendix 1**.

Our findings are organised around four central themes that emerged through the research: “land displacement and resettlement” focuses on how the process has affected access to land, livelihoods, and cultural practices (Chapter 2); “environmental impact” concerns the consequences for local ecosystems and resources (Chapter 3); “social and economic inequality” explores disparities in compensation and treatment (Chapter 4); and “governance and accountability” investigates issues related to transparency, legal recourse, and the overall implementation of the project (Chapter 5). This structured approach enables a comprehensive assessment of the current realities of those impacted by EACOP and guides the formulation of policy recommendations for addressing these pressing concerns.

2. Land Displacement and Resettlement



The construction of the EACOP pipeline required extensive land-acquisition, leading to the displacement and resettlement of numerous local communities and the disruption of their livelihoods and cultural practices. It has impacted approximately 13,000 people in Tanzania and Uganda, where land was acquired through compulsory acquisition. Some 2,740 acres of land were sought for the project in Uganda, impacting 3,648 project-affected households (PAHs). Most of these households opted for cash compensation, while 191 chose resettlement dwellings (AFIEGO, 2022). This displacement was necessary to establish a continuous “right of way” (RoW) for the pipeline. This RoW stretches 1,443 kilometres through Uganda and Tanzania to accommodate construction, maintenance, and operational activities, impacting farmlands, forests, wetlands, and other critical community lands.

2.1 The Need for Land Acquisition

The pipeline’s vast length and associated infrastructure – including pumping stations, access roads, and storage facilities – required the acquisition of large swathes of land. This land was not only for the pipeline itself but also for “safety zones” around it, within which no construction or agriculture can occur. The areas identified for land acquisition often included plots that were vital to the livelihoods of local communities, who relied on them for agriculture, grazing, and access to water resources.

2.1.1 Legal Tools Used for Land Acquisition

In Uganda, the land-acquisition process for the EACOP project was governed by several national laws, including the Constitution of Uganda; the Land Act, Cap. 227; and the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 226. These laws empower the government to compulsorily acquire private and communal land for projects deemed to be in the public interest, including infrastructure and development initiatives. However, such acquisition must involve fair and adequate compensation, transparency, and efforts to minimise adverse effects on affected individuals. The legal tools for Uganda are as follows:

The Constitution of Uganda (1995): The Constitution is the supreme law of Uganda and sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens, including property rights. Article 26 guarantees the right to own property and states that no person shall be compulsorily deprived of their property except where the acquisition is necessary for public use or in the interest of defence, public safety, public order, public morality, or public health. It mandates that prompt and fair compensation must be paid before the government can acquire the property.

The Land Act, Cap. 236: This Act provides the legal framework for land ownership and tenure systems in Uganda, including freehold, leasehold, *Mailo*, and customary tenure. It outlines the processes for land acquisition, compensation, and the rights of occupants. Section 77(2) mandates a disturbance allowance of 30% if notice to vacate is given in

less than six months, ensuring affected individuals receive compensation for the inconvenience caused by compulsory acquisition.

The Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 235: This law outlines the process for compulsory land-acquisition by the government. It requires the government to provide fair compensation to the affected landowners before acquiring the land. In cases involving absentee or unknown landowners, the Act allows for payments to be made through the High Court or into escrow accounts held by the Bank of Uganda, ensuring that compensation rights are preserved even when landowners are not immediately identifiable.

In line with international standards, the EACOP project included a resettlement action plan (RAP) in accordance with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) performance standards and the Equator Principles. These international frameworks emphasise the following:

- Fair and prompt compensation at full replacement cost
- Livelihood restoration to improve or restore the living standards of those affected
- Community engagement and participation throughout the resettlement process
- Minimisation of involuntary resettlement wherever feasible

The RAP established procedures for identifying and compensating affected individuals, intended to ensure that their livelihoods were either restored or improved post-resettlement. These procedures were as follows:

IFC Performance Standard 5 (IFC PS5): This standard focuses on land acquisition and involuntary resettlement, requiring that compensation be based on the principle of full replacement cost to ensure that affected individuals can restore or improve their livelihoods post-resettlement.

IFC Performance Standard 8 (IFC PS8): This standard addresses the relocation of cultural heritage resources, including graves and shrines. It requires that relocation be conducted respectfully and provides appropriate support to the affected communities.

The Equator Principles: These are voluntary guidelines followed by financial institutions to manage environmental and social risks in projects. They require that projects such as EACOP comply with IFC performance standards to ensure that environmental and social impacts, including land acquisition and resettlement, are managed responsibly.

With these legal tools and frameworks, EACOP was expected to uphold both national and international laws and best practices for managing land acquisition and resettlement.

2.2 Context of Displacement: Insights from the Resettlement Action Plan

Despite the application of these legal frameworks and guidelines, significant concerns have been raised about the implementation of land acquisition and resettlement. The RAP, designed to manage both physical and economic displacement, set out policies and procedures to address the needs of the affected communities. It outlined key elements such as the following:

- *Eligibility Criteria:* Defining who would qualify for compensation and support based on their ownership, occupation, or use of land within the RoW.
- *Compensation Rates:* Establishing rates for lost assets, including structures, crops, and trees, based on market values.
- *Resettlement Assistance:* Detailing levels of assistance for physically displaced households, including the construction of new housing and access to basic services.
- *Livelihood-Restoration Measures:* Proposing strategies to help displaced persons restore or improve their livelihoods.
- *Community Engagement:* Highlighting the need for continuous consultation and involvement of the affected communities and government authorities throughout the resettlement process.

However, many PAPs have reported experiences that contrasted sharply with the RAP's intentions. For example, while the plan emphasised community consultation, some affected individuals felt inadequately informed or pressured into accepting terms that they did not fully understand. The discrepancy between the RAP's guidelines and the realities faced by the displaced people underlines the core challenges of land acquisition and resettlement in large-scale infrastructure projects.

2.3 The Resettlement Process: A Closer Look at Kyakaboga

“In areas like the Kyakaboga resettlement, which hosts over 200 Project-Affected Persons (PAPs) and their families, the land-acquisition process has led to the establishment of a government-constructed resettlement camp. The government provided small, structured houses on plots of approximately 20 by 20 metres for those whose land was taken. Despite these efforts, numerous issues emerged during and after the resettlement process...”

An anonymous informant



Kyakaboga oil refinery resettlement camp in Buseruka Sub County in Hoima district

Kyakaboga is a settlement in the Buseruka Subcounty of the Hoima District in Western Uganda. It is close to the EACOP's initial site, the Kabaale Industrial Park. It is located in an area with pleasantly rolling topography, with elevations ranging from 1,100 to 1,300 metres above sea level. The region includes areas of natural vegetation, grasslands, and agriculture. The settlement is close to a number of waterways, such as the Kafu River, which flows through Hoima District. These bodies of water are essential to the community's water supply and local agriculture. Kyakaboga's location along the project route meant that land acquisition was necessary. As a result, some residents have been moved to settlements, causing displacement, and concerns regarding inappropriate compensation have been raised.

2.3.1 Challenges to Livelihoods in Kyakaboga

"Joe" (a pseudonym), a farmer from Kyakaboga, used to rely on his small piece of fertile land to grow enough crops to feed his family of six and earn a modest income.¹ However, the EACOP resettlement process has drastically altered his life. Now relocated to a resettlement camp, Joe finds himself with limited access to arable land, making it impossible to sustain the agricultural livelihood that once supported his family. His three children – aged 8, 10, and 13 years old – are now struggling to attend school. The nearest educational facility is located several kilometres from the resettlement site; and without

¹ Most names used in this report are pseudonyms to protect the privacy and identity of individuals interviewed during the research.

reliable transportation or financial means to cover their daily commutes, their education has been severely disrupted. Joe's wife, Mary, laments, "We wanted a better future for our children, but now it feels like we're failing. How can they learn when just getting to school is a problem?"

Access to other essential resources has also become a daily challenge. The nearest food market is far away, making it difficult for Joe and his family to purchase fresh and affordable supplies. Mary now spends hours walking to the market and back, time that could have been spent on other household or income-generating activities. Similarly, the lack of nearby hospitals has left the family vulnerable, with Joe recounting a harrowing experience when his youngest child fell ill and they struggled to find timely medical care. The absence of a place of worship in the resettlement area has further compounded the family's difficulties. For Joe and Mary, faith has always been a source of strength, especially in times of adversity. "We feel lost", Mary explained. "We've been uprooted not just from our land but from the community and spiritual life that gave us hope."

This narrative highlights the profound injustices faced by families like Joe's in the aftermath of resettlement. Stripped of their livelihoods, deprived of access to basic services, and disconnected from vital social and spiritual networks, these families are left to navigate a reality in which their rights to education, health, and religious freedom are systematically undermined. These challenges underscore the urgent need for more inclusive and sustainable resettlement practices that prioritise the well-being and dignity of affected communities.

2.4 Housing Allocation

The housing-allocation issues experienced during the resettlement process for the EACOP project reveal significant elements of unfairness and injustice. The decision to allocate uniform housing units, regardless of household size, inherently disregards the variation in the needs of families. Larger households face overcrowding, compromising privacy, dignity, and the ability to maintain a functional home environment. This approach fails to respect the principle of equity, which requires accommodation to be tailored to the specific circumstances of the residents.

For example, larger families with multiple children are forced to share small spaces, which can lead to health issues, stress, and an erosion of familial harmony. Inadequate housing can disrupt daily life, reducing children's ability to study, parents' capacity to manage household tasks, and the overall quality of life.



Image: a 90-year-old man who was displaced from his 7-acre ancestral land with a plantation and graveyard and resettled in Ruhunga Subcounty, Hoima District, on a small plot with a single-bedroom house for his large family.

The case of a 90-year-old man relocated to an isolated area exemplifies this disregard for the variation between individuals. Elderly people, especially those living alone, require proximity to essential services, community support, and healthcare facilities. Forcing such individuals into isolation demonstrates a lack of consideration for their basic human needs and social well-being, further exacerbating their vulnerability.

Furthermore, this allocation system fails to meet internationally recognised standards, such as those outlined in the IFC performance standards and the Equator Principles, which emphasise the need for resettlement activities to restore or enhance the living conditions and livelihoods of affected people. Instead, the current approach results in social and economic dislocation, leaving many worse off than before.

This approach represents a broader systemic failure to prioritise the dignity and agency of the affected communities. By not engaging in meaningful consultation and failing to consider the individual and familial contexts, the resettlement process alienates those it is supposed to protect, fostering resentment and eroding trust.

In summary, the uniform housing-allocation process and examples of poorly planned relocations highlight the pressing need for more equitable, inclusive, and humane resettlement practices. Policies must be tailored to the diverse needs of affected individuals and communities, ensuring that no one is left behind or disproportionately burdened by the consequences of development projects.

2.5 Land Acquisition and Compensation

The Land Buyers: The land for the pipeline was primarily acquired by Total Energies, in partnership with the government of Uganda. The process involved negotiations between the government and local landowners, including small-scale farmers and rural communities.

The Acquisition Process: Initially, landowners were approached by representatives of the project, who conducted assessments of their land's value based on location, size, and fertility. While the land was purchased through what was framed as a "compensation process", many landowners felt pressured into accepting terms that they did not fully understand, often due to language barriers and lack of access to legal advice. For instance, KM, a farmer from Kitegwa B Village, shared his experience:

They didn't explain things to us in our local dialect, Lunyoro, during the negotiation process. Many of us are illiterate and could not understand the documents they asked us to sign. Later, we were shocked to find out that our land had been taken without fair compensation.

Agreements and Compensation: Compensation was determined according to market values set by the government of Uganda. However, the valuation methods and compensation amounts were met with criticism. Many affected individuals argued that their land had been undervalued and that the compensation they had received was insufficient to purchase new land of equal size or fertility. This resulted in some households acquiring smaller plots that could not support both their residence and cultivation activities. Furthermore, delays in compensation left many families living in precarious conditions.

Resettlement Process: The resettlement process for families affected by the EACOP project, particularly those who could not secure alternative land, has been fraught with challenges. Many of these families were relocated to resettlement camps such as Kyakaboga, where the government provided standardised housing units. However, these units often failed to meet the specific needs of the families in terms of size and facilities, leading to overcrowded and inadequate living conditions.

For instance, a typical resettlement house consists of one bedroom and a small sitting room, regardless of the size of the household. This one-size-fits-all approach has proven particularly difficult for larger families. Take the example of Sarah and Peter, who have six children, ranging in age from 2 to 14 years old. The small house leaves no room for privacy or comfort, with the parents and children crammed into the space. "At night, we have to lay mattresses on the floor for the children because there's no other option", Sarah explains. "There's no space for us to even store our belongings properly."

In addition, the resettlement sites lack basic infrastructure that is crucial for day-to-day life. Access to water is a significant problem, with families often relying on communal boreholes that are far from the housing units and insufficient to meet the needs of the entire community. Peter shares, “We have to wake up early to fetch water, and sometimes the borehole runs dry before everyone can get their share. It’s exhausting and time-consuming”.

Healthcare services are virtually non-existent in the resettlement area. Families must travel long distances to reach the nearest clinic or hospital, a daunting task for those without reliable transportation. This has left residents vulnerable in emergencies, with delayed access to medical attention. Educational institutions are similarly out of reach, with schools located several kilometres away. Children such as Sarah and Peter’s eldest daughter, Grace, who is 10 years old, must walk over an hour to attend classes. The journey is exhausting and unsafe, particularly for young children.

Markets for purchasing food and other essentials are also located far from the camp, adding to the daily struggles of resettled families. Sarah explained that she has to spend an entire day travelling to and from the nearest market, leaving her with little time to care for her children or address household needs. The absence of social and community facilities – including places of worship and recreational spaces – further isolates residents from their traditional way of life and support systems. These gaps reflect a failure to consider the social and cultural dimensions of resettlement, leaving families not only physically displaced but also emotionally and spiritually uprooted.

In summary, the resettlement process has compounded the hardships faced by families, replacing one set of challenges with another. The inadequacy of the housing, coupled with a lack of essential infrastructure, has severely affected the quality of life for residents in Kyakaboga and other resettlement areas. These shortcomings underscore the pressing need for resettlement policies and practices that prioritise the dignity, well-being, and specific needs of affected families.

2.6 The Compensation Process: Assessment Criteria and Outcomes

According to Chapter 7 of the [EACOP RAP](#),² the compensation process included assessment criteria specifically aimed at evaluating the losses incurred by PAPs. These were as follows:

² Source: <https://www.eacop.com/publication/eacop-uganda-rap-chapter-7-eligibility-compensation-and-compensation-framework/>

Identification and Valuation of Assets: The compensation process involved a detailed survey of all perennial crops, economic trees, and structures on the affected land. The assessment considered factors such as the maturity and condition of crops and classified structures as permanent, semi-permanent, or temporary, based on construction details.

Compensation Rates: The valuation of crops and economic trees was based on district-approved compensation rates. If district rates were unavailable for certain crops or trees, neighbouring district rates were adopted in consultation with the chief government valuer (CGV). For structures, the replacement cost approach was used for permanent buildings, while semi-permanent and temporary structures were valued using district rates. Depreciation was not considered, which may have affected whether the compensation provided was sufficient or fair.

2.7 Outcomes of the Compensation Process

Monetary Compensation: Most PAPs were offered cash compensation based on the assessed value of their land, crops, and structures. However, many found the monetary compensation inadequate to secure new land or rebuild their livelihoods, leading to financial insecurity. For example, the testimonies from PAPs indicated that fertile agricultural land was often undervalued. In some cases, landowners were compensated at an average rate of UGX 3 million (approximately \$800) per acre, a value significantly below the market price for comparable land. Similarly, compensation for residential structures was calculated based on government rates that did not account for regional variations or the actual cost of rebuilding. One displaced individual, NM from Kitegwa A Village, shared his experience:

My one-acre plot, where I grew food for my family, was valued at only UGX 3 million. This was far too little to buy land elsewhere, let alone build a house or continue farming.

This discrepancy in valuation not only created economic hardship, it also limited the ability of many PAPs to secure alternative land or housing that could accommodate their families and sustain their livelihoods.

In-Kind Compensation: Where feasible, PAPs were offered land-based compensation, particularly when their livelihoods depended on land use. However, due to complexities in land-tenure systems and limited availability of suitable land, in-kind compensation was often not a viable option, leaving PAPs reliant on cash payments. Uganda's land-tenure system is notably intricate, encompassing four main types of tenure: customary, freehold, *Mailo*, and leasehold. Customary tenure, which is predominant in rural areas, often involves communal ownership or undocumented claims, making it challenging to

identify and transfer suitable land for resettlement. Additionally, disputes over ownership and boundaries further complicated efforts to provide land-based compensation.

For example:

- I. Peter from Kikuube District had a large house and three acres of land and had been cultivating crops such as cassava and bananas for over three decades. The land had been in his family for 50 years under customary tenure. However, the compensation provided was only UGX 10 million (approximately \$2,700) in cash, which was insufficient to purchase comparable land or rebuild a house of similar size. Peter shared,

The money they gave me could not buy even half the land I had. My family had to move to a smaller plot far from the community we've known all our lives.

- II. Grace from Kitegwa B Village was offered land-based compensation for her two-acre farm, but the allocated land was far from her original village and lacked fertile soil. Grace found the new plot unsuitable for cultivating cassava, maize, and beans, her primary sources of income. She explained,

They gave me a piece of land, but it's rocky and barren. How am I supposed to grow food or earn a living there?

- III. Samuel, a resident of Hoima District, was promised land to replace the two acres he lost to the pipeline. However, due to ongoing disputes over land boundaries between clans in the proposed relocation area, he received cash compensation instead. The UGX 5 million (approximately \$1,350) he received was far below what would be needed to buy suitable replacement land, leaving him landless.

These examples illustrate how the combination of Uganda's complex land-tenure system and insufficient planning of the resettlement process left many PAPs unable to regain their standards of living. The lack of suitable land forced many to accept cash compensation that failed to meet their long-term needs or restore their livelihoods.

Support for Vulnerable Households: The RAP outlined support measures for vulnerable households, such as those headed by women, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities. These included livelihood-restoration programmes and financial-management training. However, the implementation of this support was inconsistent, with many vulnerable households reporting that they did not receive the promised assistance. For instance:

- Margaret, a 65-year-old widow from Kyakaboga, explained that she had been promised financial-management training to help her utilise the cash compensation effectively. However, the training never materialised. She shared,

They told us we would be trained on how to manage the money, but after we had received the payment, they left us on our own. I used the money to buy food and medicines, and now I have nothing left.

- Joseph, a 70-year-old visually impaired farmer from Kitegwa A Village, was told that he would be provided with livelihood restoration support, such as tools and seeds to continue farming on his new land. However, no such support was given. He lamented,

They gave me a small piece of land and said they would provide me with seeds and a hoe. I have waited for years, but no one has come back to help me. How can I farm without tools or seeds?

- Sarah, a single mother of four from Kikuube District who relied on subsistence farming for survival, expressed her disappointment:

They promised us training on alternative livelihoods, but nothing happened. Without my farmland, I can't grow food for my children. Now I have to depend on casual labour, which is not enough to sustain us.

2.8 Shortcomings of the Project's Resettlement Process

The EACOP resettlement process has raised significant concerns for the affected communities, particularly around issues of compensation, access to land, and community integration. Despite the procedures outlined in the RAP, the experiences of PAPs reveal numerous shortcomings in the implementation.

2.8.1 Displacement and Resettlement Camps

Most PAPs who lost their land were relocated to designated spaces, such as the Kyakaboga resettlement camp. These camps have been criticised for their harsh living conditions. Security in these camps is often tight, with residents closely monitored, which restricts their freedom to receive visitors and limits their right to privacy. This level of surveillance and control has further marginalised PAPs, negatively impacting their mental health and well-being. The camps are also typically isolated, limiting access to essential social networks and community support, making it difficult for residents to integrate into their new surroundings.

2.9 Loss of Land

Many PAPs experienced significant losses when their land was acquired by the government for the pipeline project. Several individuals received no compensation at all, while others were given amounts insufficient to replace their land or restore their previous livelihoods. This has led to feelings of injustice and economic insecurity, as many PAPs depend on land for their homes and agricultural activities.

2.9.1 Unfair Compensation

The compensation process was expected to follow a comprehensive framework that would ensure fairness, but the outcomes often fell short. PAPs reported that the compensation they received did not reflect the true value of their lost assets. For example, individuals who owned large parcels of fertile land were often compensated at rates that did not match the economic and cultural significance of their land.

The perceived lack of fairness and inadequacy of the compensation, combined with the difficult conditions in the resettlement camps, highlight the need for more equitable practices to address the impacts of these large-scale infrastructure projects.

For instance, NM a resident of Kitegwa A Village in Hoima District, had this to say:

“My 2 acres were taken away from me, and I received only 6 million Uganda shillings [approximately \$1,600]. I complained, but no help was extended to me. However, I am among the plaintiffs who filed a suit in the High Court of Uganda over the small payment”.

This attempt to seek legal redress through the courts was unsuccessful, highlighting the difficulties many PAPs face in contesting compensation outcomes. The failure was largely attributed to procedural delays and challenges in proving the undervaluation of his land. The High Court cited insufficient documentation to substantiate his claim that the compensation offered did not align with market rates or his land’s actual value. Moreover, many PAPs like NM lacked access to legal counsel skilled in handling land-compensation cases, leaving them at a disadvantage against the well-resourced legal teams representing the project developers. Additionally, systemic challenges for Uganda’s judiciary – including case backlogs and resource constraints – contributed to prolonged proceedings. NM explained, “I kept attending court hearings for two years, but nothing moved forward. I ran out of money to travel and pay for documents, so I had to stop pursuing the case”.

This example highlights not only the challenges of contesting compensation outcomes but also the broader barriers to justice faced by vulnerable communities, including a lack of legal aid, high litigation costs, and systemic inefficiencies. Similarly, Evasy aged 57, reported, “I was not compensated after my 3 acres of land were taken”. This lack of

compensation has left individuals like Evasy without the means to rebuild their livelihoods.

The compensation process has been marred by discrimination, particularly against those with lower education levels or less influence. While some individuals with better socioeconomic standing received relatively fair compensation, the majority reported being coerced or intimidated into accepting inadequate amounts. In many instances, those who sought to challenge the compensation terms were threatened with legal consequences or arrest, effectively silencing dissent.

For example:

- Gloria, a 45-year-old mother of five from Hoima District, explained that she had felt pressured to accept compensation far below the market value of her land:

When I asked why the compensation was so little, they told me I could not question the government. I wanted to refuse to sign the papers, but they said I would lose everything if I didn't agree. I was scared for my children, so I signed.

- David, a farmer in Kyakaboga, shared his frustration about the intimidation tactics that had been used:

I told them I needed more time to consult my family and a lawyer, but they said if I delayed, they would take the land anyway and give me nothing. I felt like I had no choice.

- Mary, a widow from Kikuube District, described how her illiteracy had been exploited during the compensation process:

They gave me papers in English, which I don't understand, and told me to sign. When I asked for someone to explain, they said it was just a formality. Later, I found out I had signed away my land for almost nothing.

- Sam, a community leader in Buliisa District, highlighted how those who had attempted to resist had been silenced:

I tried to organise meetings to help people understand their rights, but the police came to my house and warned me to stop. They said I was inciting violence and that I could be arrested.

- Sarah described the discrimination she and her family had faced:

The EACOP Company's subcontractors refused to give us livelihood-restoration items, even though they had committed to providing all affected people with this assistance, particularly the vulnerable – like the elderly.

Such actions directly contradicted the promises made in the RAP to support all displaced households, particularly the most vulnerable. For Sarah, this meant struggling to rebuild her life without the tools or resources needed to cultivate her new land or establish a stable income. The lack of support exacerbated her financial hardship and left her feeling abandoned by the very systems that were meant to protect her and her family. Gladys shared a similar experience:

In September 2023, the EACOP people brought me a compensation agreement to sign, consenting to give our land to the company. I did not want to sign because the compensation was so little, but I was fearful because others were signing. I had also been intimidated. I was told that I could not contest with the government as they would win any case filed against them.

This exemplifies the pressure and intimidation that many PAPs faced during the compensation process, leaving them with little choice but to accept unfavourable terms.

2.9.2 Forced Compliance and Economic Hardship

For many PAPs, the compensation received was far below what was needed to acquire new land or restore their previous standard of living. Jovia, a resident of Kitegwa B Village and a mother of seven, explained,

I had 1 acre of land that I used for cultivation and residence. I was compensated only 3 million Uganda shillings, which did not enable me to acquire another piece of land of similar size. I opted to purchase a smaller piece that could only accommodate a one-bedroom house, leaving me with no land to cultivate. Most of us were forced to accept compensation not equivalent to the value of our properties.

For Jovia, this meant a drastic reduction in her family's living standards. The smaller plot could not meet her household's farming needs, pushing her family into food insecurity and financial hardship. The sense of loss extended beyond material possessions, eroding her hope for stability and her children's future. Others, like KM, reported even more dire outcomes:

"They undervalued my 1 acre of land at 3 million Uganda shillings. I was evicted and left homeless. I acquired a very small plot that could not accommodate my residence and provide space for cultivation".

For KM, the inadequate compensation forced him into homelessness, severing his connection to a sustainable livelihood. The inability to cultivate crops on his new plot left him dependent on irregular labour and struggling to provide for his family. His situation underscores how poorly executed resettlement efforts can deepen vulnerabilities, rather than alleviate them.

The stories of Jovia and KM illustrate how the inadequate compensation left many PAPs in precarious situations, unable to maintain their livelihoods or secure basic living conditions.

2.9.3 Loss of Livelihood

The EACOP project has significantly impacted the livelihoods of PAPs, many of whom relied on their land for food production and income. When their land was acquired for the pipeline, PAPs lost access to their farmland, leading to food scarcity and economic insecurity. The affected land was crucial for cultivating crops such as maize, beans, bananas, and other staples. Without it, many PAPs were deprived of their primary source of food and income, placing them in a vulnerable position.

2.9.4 Denial of Promised Support

To alleviate this loss of agricultural land, the government and EACOP-related companies committed to providing food support to the displaced families. According to the [EACOP website](#), the company provided transitional support to PAPs to help restore their livelihoods to pre-project levels. However, many PAPs reported that these promises were not fully realised. While EACOP claims that food support was provided, the affected communities have expressed that this aid was either insufficient for their needs or failed to reach them entirely. Jane, a 36-year-old mother from Kijumba Village, shared her struggles:

“Food scarcity worries me... How to feed my children? I fear having more children, as I am too poor now. It all started in 2018 when people from EACOP came to my village, Kijumba, and told me that my land was going to be used for a government project called the EACOP. Life has never been the same since. Please help us get fair compensation or get our land back. We are suffering.”

2.9.5 Other Impacts on Livelihood

The livelihoods of PAPs were not solely tied to food production, as their land provided economic stability and supported various income-generating activities. Thus, the loss of land affected different aspects of their livelihoods.

Farming was the cornerstone of many households' sustenance and income. The crops grown on their land were used both for consumption and sale at local markets, providing funds for essentials, including education and healthcare. With the loss of their farmland, families faced food scarcity and income loss, resulting in increased poverty and a decline in living standards.

We saw the disastrous effects of losing farmland when we spoke to John, a farmer from Kikuube District. Before the displacement, John cultivated maize and beans, which not only fed his family of six but also brought in additional income at the local market. After being relocated, John was left with no land to farm. He shared,

Now, I can only afford to buy half the amount of food we used to grow. My children often go to bed hungry, and I don't know how I'll manage school fees.

In addition to farming crops, some PAPs relied on their land for grazing livestock. The displacement forced them to either sell their livestock at a loss or find alternative grazing areas, which were often costly. This further reduced their income and food sources, deepening their economic vulnerability. Sarah from Hoima District, who previously raised goats and chickens on her land, had to sell her livestock at low prices because the new settlement lacked grazing space. She explained,

The goats were my savings. Whenever I needed money for emergencies, I could sell one. Now I have nothing to fall back on when problems arise.

Many households engaged in small-scale agro-processing activities, such as using their crops to make banana wine or maize flour. The loss of land meant that they no longer had access to the raw materials needed for these activities, further depleting their income. Grace, a resident of Kyakaboga, used to make and sell banana wine to support her family. After losing her farmland, she no longer had access to the bananas required for production. Grace recounted,

Without the bananas, I lost my business. Now, I depend on casual labour, which is not consistent and doesn't pay enough to cover my family's needs.

While some PAPs received monetary compensation, this was generally insufficient to purchase new land of equivalent quality and size. This left many without the means to secure alternative land for cultivation. Jovia explained,

I was compensated only 3 million Uganda shillings, which did not enable me to acquire another piece of land of similar size. I opted to purchase a smaller piece of land that could only accommodate a one-bedroom house, leaving me with no land to cultivate.

2.9.6 Long-Term Economic Impacts

Transitioning from a self-sufficient agricultural lifestyle to a dependence on cash has been difficult for many PAPs. Those who once grew their food now rely on purchasing it, often using the limited funds they were given as compensation. This sudden shift in their economic status has led to increased poverty and food insecurity and a loss of economic independence. Mike from Kikuube District described how losing his land had upended his family's way of life:

We used to grow all the food we needed. Now I have to buy everything from the market. The money they gave us as compensation ran out quickly, and now I don't know how we'll survive.

Families like Mike's have been left vulnerable to rising food prices and uncertain economic conditions, threatening their long-term stability.

Access roads are vital for communities, providing essential connections to schools, healthcare facilities, markets, and other critical infrastructure. These roads are particularly important in rural areas where alternative routes may be non-existent, and their absence can severely limit mobility, economic activities, and access to basic services. In the case of the EACOP project, responsibility for constructing and maintaining access roads falls on the project implementers and their subcontractors, with oversight from the government. These roads were meant to ensure that affected communities could continue their daily activities without disruption, even after land acquisition for the pipeline.

Grace, a 42-year-old woman from Kitegwa B Village, Hoima, with a family of six children, shared her experience.

We had a plot near the road, and the government acquired it. However, they didn't consider leaving an access road to my home or access to the school.

For Grace and her six children, this oversight has made their daily life far more difficult. The children must take longer – often unsafe – paths to reach their school, while Grace faces challenges accessing basic services such as healthcare and markets. The absence of access roads has effectively cut off families like hers from the resources they need to sustain their livelihoods and maintain a decent standard of living.

2.9.7 Delayed Payments

A further concern reported by many PAPs was a delay in receiving compensation payments. Compensation was to be disbursed within six months of land acquisition – primarily in monetary form, but in-kind compensation (such as replacement land or housing) was also an option for those who preferred it. Payments were made via bank transfers for individuals with accounts; mobile money for those without formal banking access; and cash payments for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and individuals with disabilities. Compensation was paid directly to PAPs, including landowners, tenants, and other individuals identified during the valuation process as having a legitimate claim to the land or affected property. In cases of shared land ownership, payments were made proportionally to all claimants. Vulnerable groups were promised additional support to ensure they could access and utilise the compensation effectively.

The payments were made by the EACOP project developers, primarily Total Energies and its subcontractors, under the oversight of the Ugandan government. Funds were allocated as part of the RAP, and the process was supposed to adhere to both national legal requirements and international standards such as the IFC performance standards.

Although the RAP outlined that compensation would be provided within six months of land acquisition, several PAPs experienced significant delays that extended well beyond this timeframe.

These delays added to the financial and emotional strain faced by PAPs, many of whom relied on the compensation to secure alternative land, rebuild their homes, or start new income-generating activities. Without timely payments, families were left in a state of uncertainty and economic hardship, struggling to make ends meet during the transition period. For example, some PAPs who lost agricultural land had hoped to use the compensation to invest in new land for farming. However, the delay meant they were left without the resources to do so, leading to food insecurity and increased poverty. John, a farmer from Kikuube District, waited over a year to receive his compensation after losing two acres of farmland. He explained,

By the time I got the money, the price of land had gone up, and I could only afford a small plot. I used to grow enough maize to feed my family and sell the surplus, but now I don't even have enough space to plant food for us to eat.

Mary, a widow from Kitegwa B Village, faced similar challenges when her payment was delayed by 18 months. She shared,

We were told the money would come quickly, but it didn't. I had to borrow from neighbours to buy food, and now I am in debt. When the payment finally came, it was too late to buy good land near the market. My family is struggling every day.

For households like John's and Mary's, the delays compounded existing financial difficulties and disrupted the efforts to rebuild. Many PAPs used the delayed payments to pay off debts accrued during the waiting period, leaving little to reinvest in land or other livelihood options. The delayed payments not only reflect the failure of the RAP to meet its commitments but also highlight the ongoing challenges faced by PAPs seeking to restore their livelihoods and achieve economic stability.

3. Environmental Impact



Image: Photo of stagnant water in a trench left by construction activities in Hoima District creating health risks for nearby communities.

This shorter section focuses on local environmental impacts, rather than broader climate change concerns, which have also been raised by international NGOs and covered extensively by both local and global media.

EACOP-related construction projects have upset ecosystems, impacting both plants and animals. Natural habitat disruption can change ecological balances and result in a decline in biodiversity. There are also worries about contamination from building runoff or unintentional oil spills, as Kyakaboga is close to waterways such as the Kafu River. Such occurrences could degrade the quality of the water, which would affect aquatic life and human health. Because oil extraction and transportation generate greenhouse gas emissions, the EACOP initiative has wider ramifications for climate change. The end-use combustion of transported oil adds to global carbon emissions, even though the pipeline is merely a conduit. To address these issues, the project's Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) suggests a number of mitigation techniques – namely, strategies to reduce ecological disruption, including actions for habitat restoration, reforestation, and soil conservation; measures to stop water contamination, including emergency response plans for spill situations and controlled construction methods close to water bodies; and dedication to equitable compensation procedures, livelihood restoration initiatives, and ongoing communication with impacted communities to resolve complaints and guarantee long-term resettlement results. Most of these techniques have not been implemented and the expected outcomes remain undelivered.

The construction and operation of the EACOP pipeline posed significant risks to fragile ecosystems, biodiversity, and local water sources, which in turn threatened the livelihoods of communities dependent on agriculture, fishing, and other natural resources. For instance, during construction in 2024, residents near Nyamasoga Stream in Kikuube District reported water contamination caused by chemical runoff from pipeline-related activities. This contamination altered the stream's colour and smell, resulting in a significant decline in fish populations, as observed by local fishermen. Peter, a resident and fisherman, stated,

We noticed fish dying in large numbers after the water turned murky and began to smell strange. This stream was our main source of income, and now it's nearly useless.

In early 2023, during preparatory works near Hoima District, oil spills from storage tanks impacted surrounding farmlands and water sources. Community members reported crop failures and loss of livestock due to exposure to contaminated soil and water. One affected farmer shared,

The spill killed my cassava crop, and my cows fell sick after drinking from the nearby stream. It's been devastating for my family.

Similarly, large trenches left unattended after construction in the Buliisa District became breeding grounds for mosquitoes, leading to increased cases of malaria among residents. These trenches also disrupted natural drainage patterns, causing frequent flooding during the rainy season and washing away arable topsoil critical for farming.

Communities experienced environmental degradation in various forms. One example is the large trench left unattended after the excavation work to obtain marram and concrete for road construction, notably along the newly built road connecting Hoima town to Buliisa. This trench has turned into a large, stagnant, and foul-smelling drain that poses serious health risks to both the residents and their livestock. The open trench has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other pests, leading to increased incidences of disease within the community. The presence of dangerous animals in the area has also resulted in fatal encounters, further endangering residents.

Additionally, some of the most affected individuals lost their livelihoods due to the project's impact on the environment. For instance, agricultural activities suffered because of soil erosion following the removal of trees during the pipeline construction. The accumulation of soil in some areas has disrupted natural drainage patterns, leading to flooding during the rainy season.

Mary, a farmer from Kikuube District, reported,

The floods have destroyed our crops every rainy season since the project began. I had planted maize and beans, but I harvested nothing because the waterlogging killed everything. We've been left with no food for the family and nothing to sell.

One affected individual, Jeff from Kitegwa B Village, aged 36 and a father of seven, shared his experience:

The pipeline is near me. They put a lot of soil, and during the rainy season, we suffer a lot with floods. Our toilets were damaged, and the trees were cut down, which exposes us further to soil erosion. I feel my right to a clean and healthy environment is being violated.

Moreover, the blasting of stones during excavation led to structural damage to nearby homes, including damaged rooftops. Dust generated by construction activities caused respiratory illnesses among the local population.

Joan, another resident, recounted,

The effects of stone blasts during the excavation led to deaths, and the rooftops of houses were damaged. The dust caused diseases.

In addition to these cases, James from Buliisa District, a father of five, described how the pipeline's construction disrupted water access in his area:

The nearby stream was polluted with chemicals, and the water turned murky. We couldn't use it for drinking or irrigation. It's been very hard to find alternative water sources, especially during the dry season.

These environmental impacts jeopardise the ecological balance and directly affect the health, safety, and economic stability of local communities. Further research and documentation of these environmental consequences would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the situation and highlight the need for mitigation and remediation efforts.

4. Democratic Rights



4.1 Violation of the Right to Legal Representation

PAPs have reported violations of their right to legal representation. Despite their mandate to offer legal aid and pro bono services to vulnerable groups, many government entities were unwilling to engage with those affected by the project. Because most PAPs could not afford the costs of hiring private lawyers, they were left without legal recourse, resulting in forced evictions from their land. Legal representation is crucial in such cases due to the complex nature of land disputes, which often require expertise in interpreting laws, gathering evidence, and navigating procedural requirements. For PAPs, especially those unfamiliar with legal systems or unable to afford private lawyers, the barriers to seeking justice were insurmountable. Long court cases, high legal fees, and the need for specialised knowledge of land laws and compensation frameworks further disadvantaged these individuals.

4.1.1 Example: NM Case

NM, a resident of Kitegwa A Village, Hoima District, attempted to seek legal redress after receiving inadequate compensation for his two acres of land, which were valued at just UGX 6 million (approximately \$1,600). He filed a case in the High Court of Uganda, challenging the compensation as insufficient and alleging procedural irregularities during the valuation process. However, the case stalled due to several factors:

- Court delays: The case remained unresolved for over two years due to a backlog of cases.
- Resource constraints: NM struggled to afford transportation to court hearings and other legal expenses.
- Lack of legal aid: Without consistent legal counsel, he found it challenging to argue against the well-funded legal teams representing the government and project developers.

NM eventually abandoned his case, stating,

I kept attending court hearings for two years, but nothing moved forward. I ran out of money to travel and pay for documents, so I had to stop pursuing the case.

4.1.2 Example: Evan's Struggle

Another example is Evans, who reported that three acres of his land were taken without compensation. Despite filing complaints with local authorities and attempting to engage with the legal system, he was unable to afford legal fees or secure pro bono representation, so his case never reached court. His family now lives in precarious conditions, unable to rebuild their livelihoods.

Additionally, civil society organisations providing legal representation and seeking to create awareness and advocate for the rights of PAPs have faced intimidation, arbitrary arrests, and detention. This inhumane treatment further eroded the communities' trust in

the legal system and their ability to seek justice. The Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO), a Ugandan CSO that has been vocal in opposing EACOP, has faced repeated harassment. In October 2021, AFIEGO's offices in Kampala were raided by authorities, and several staff members, including its CEO, were arrested. They were accused of operating without a licence, although many observers believe the action was politically motivated. A staff member recounted,

We were interrogated for hours and told to stop misleading the public. They wanted us to stop our advocacy work and focus on "positive engagement" with the government.

In Hoima District, a local environmental activist, James was detained after organising a community meeting to discuss the impacts of land acquisition. Police officers interrupted the meeting, arrested James, and accused him of inciting violence. He later shared,

I was held for three days without access to my lawyer. They told me to stop organising and warned me that I would face worse consequences if I continued.

His arrest sent a chilling message to other activists and community leaders, discouraging them from engaging in advocacy.

The suppression of CSOs and activists has profound consequences:

- When organisations that advocate for fairness and justice are silenced, communities lose faith in the system and feel abandoned.
- Intimidation tactics discourage others from speaking out, leaving PAPs without strong voices to represent their concerns.
- Without CSOs to monitor and challenge injustices, there is less accountability for project implementers and government authorities.

4.2 Infringement on Freedom of Association

The activities surrounding EACOP have significantly impacted the constitutional right to freedom of association in Uganda. Article 29(1)(e) of the 1995 Uganda Constitution guarantees every person the freedom to assemble, associate, and express their opinions. However, EACOP-related activities have systematically violated these rights in various forms.

4.2.1 Right to Peaceful Assembly

One of the key rights affected by EACOP-related activities is the right to peaceful assembly, which is a fundamental form of association. The Constitution guarantees Ugandans the ability to come together and express their concerns about public matters, including large infrastructure projects such as EACOP. However, there have been

numerous reports of citizens being denied permits to hold peaceful protests against the project, especially in oil-affected regions. Security forces have also violently dispersed peaceful assemblies, often citing reasons of “public order” or “national security” to suppress these protests.

While much international media coverage has focused on protests in Kampala by climate change activists bringing attention to the EACOP project, the local democratic space has also been dramatically curtailed. Protests in Kampala, often led by young climate advocates, have highlighted the global environmental risks posed by the pipeline. These protests have drawn significant attention but have also faced harsh repression. Demonstrators have been detained, accused of inciting violence, and met with excessive force from security forces. For instance, in 2023, a high-profile protest led by youth activists in Kampala was disrupted by police. Activists were arrested, their materials confiscated, and tear gas was used to disperse the crowd. Many of those detained reported being held without formal charges for days, highlighting the systemic suppression of dissent. Vanessa, a prominent climate activist, described how such suppression undermines not only their right to peaceful assembly but also the broader environmental movement:

We are simply asking for a cleaner future and justice for the people who are directly impacted, yet we are treated as though we are criminals.

4.3 Suppression of Local Dissent

While these Kampala protests received significant media attention, the democratic space for local communities directly affected by EACOP has also been severely restricted. Protests in rural areas often focus on immediate, localised issues such as inadequate compensation, forced evictions, and environmental degradation, yet they have been met with equal, if not greater, resistance from authorities, often without the spotlight of national or international attention.

4.3.1 Protests in Kitegwa B Village, Hoima District

In early 2024, residents of Kitegwa B Village organised a peaceful march to demand fair compensation and immediate action on delayed payments. Women, elderly residents, and children participated, hoping to deliver their petition to the district office. However, police intervened before the march could begin, arresting key organisers under the pretext of “incitement to violence”. Mary, a widow and participant, shared,

We just wanted to speak up for our rights. Instead, they came with trucks and took away our leaders. Now we fear even talking about these issues openly.

4.3.2 Kikuube District Farmer Demonstrations

In Kikuube, farmers whose farmlands were rendered unusable due to soil erosion from pipeline construction attempted to organise a sit-in near the construction site. Security forces arrived and dispersed the gathering with tear gas, resulting in injuries and the arrest of community leaders. Peter, a farmer, described the incident:

They treat us like enemies when all we want is justice. We lost our land and our livelihoods, and now we're losing our voices too.

4.3.3 Suppression of Meetings in Kyakaboga Resettlement Camp

Residents of the Kyakaboga resettlement camp attempted to convene a meeting to discuss inadequate housing and poor living conditions in the camp. Local authorities called the police, who disbanded the meeting, warning participants that further gatherings would lead to arrests. Joseph, a camp resident, explained,

We weren't even allowed to gather in our own community to talk about our problems. They told us to apply for a permit, but when we did, it was denied.

The right to peaceful assembly is enshrined in Uganda's Constitution, yet these examples highlight systematic violations, especially for rural communities. Unlike the high-profile climate protests in Kampala, these local demonstrations receive little media or legal support, leaving affected communities more vulnerable to intimidation and suppression.

4.3.4 Right to Criticise the Project and Express Dissent

In addition to the right to assemble, the freedom to express opinions, particularly criticism of EACOP, has been severely restricted. Article 29(1)(a) of Uganda's Constitution protects the right to express one's views without interference. However, activists, journalists, and community leaders who have spoken out against the environmental and social consequences of EACOP have faced intimidation, harassment, and arrest. Many environmental defenders and human rights activists who voiced opposition to the pipeline were targeted. Organisations such as AFIEGO, which actively opposed the pipeline by raising awareness of its environmental impact, have been harassed, with their offices raided and their members detained. The repression of dissenting voices not only violates the right to freedom of expression but also creates a culture of fear in which people are hesitant to criticise EACOP for fear of retaliation.

4.3.5 Criminalisation of Activism and Legal Harassment

As well as restricting assembly and free speech, EACOP activities have led to the imprisonment and harassment of individuals who are vocal critics of the project. Human-rights defenders (HRDs) and community leaders who organise against EACOP have reported arbitrary arrests, detention without trial, and physical intimidation. Activists are

often charged with vague offences such as “inciting violence”, “causing public disorder”, or “sabotaging development”, even when their actions are peaceful and lawful.

In 2023, five youth activists, including prominent environmental advocate Esther, were arrested during a peaceful march in Kampala calling for greater environmental protections and accountability for EACOP’s social impacts. The group was accused of “causing public disorder” and detained for three days without access to legal representation.

Esther later recounted,

We were simply holding placards, chanting for a better future, but the police treated us like criminals. I spent three days in a cold, overcrowded cell, wondering if I would ever see my family again.

In Kyakaboga resettlement camp, community leader Samuel was arrested in early 2024 after attempting to organise a meeting with residents to discuss the poor living conditions in the camp. Police stormed the meeting and detained Kanyike, charging him with “incitement to violence”. He was held for over a week before being released on bail, and his charges remain pending. Samuel described his ordeal:

They didn’t want us to speak out. The arrest was meant to silence not just me, but the entire community. Now people are too scared to even gather and share their grievances.

The offices of the AFIEGO, an NGO actively opposing EACOP, were raided twice in 2023. Staff members, including Executive Director, were detained for hours, accused of “operating illegally”, despite the organisation having the necessary permits. John stated,

The harassment is relentless. They aim to break our spirit and stop us from educating communities about their rights. But we won’t be silenced.

In late 2023, environmental activist Grace and two colleagues were arrested while documenting the environmental degradation caused by EACOP construction in Buliisa District. They were accused of “trespassing on private property” and detained for several days before being released without charges. Grace recounted,

All we were doing was taking photos and speaking to locals about their experiences. The authorities treated us like criminals just for doing our job.

These instances of criminalisation and harassment have fostered a climate of fear among activists and communities. Many have reported being too afraid to speak out or participate in advocacy efforts, fearing reprisals from security forces or legal authorities. This silencing of dissent undermines the democratic principles enshrined in Uganda’s Constitution and leaves affected populations without a voice in decisions that profoundly impact their lives.

As Dickens noted, “The EACOP project isn’t just an environmental disaster – it’s a human rights crisis. Silencing those who speak out only deepens the injustices faced by local communities”.

4.4 Targeting of Civil Society Organisations

Civil society organisations (CSOs) working on environmental protection and human rights advocacy related to EACOP have faced extensive government interference. Offices of NGOs that are critical of the pipeline have been raided, their staff members intimidated, and their operations suspended. The state has accused these organisations of “sabotaging development” or “misleading the public” to justify shutting down their operations. These actions undermine the ability of civil society to operate freely and engage communities in discourse about the project.

For instance, the offices of the AFIEGO were raided in October 2021. Staff members were detained, with the government alleging that the organisation was operating without proper registration – a claim strongly refuted by AFIEGO, which has been a vocal critic of the environmental and social risks posed by EACOP. During the raid, computers, documents, and personal belongings of staff were confiscated, hampering the organisation’s ongoing efforts to raise awareness about the pipeline’s impacts. Similarly, Friends of the Earth Uganda faced significant challenges in their advocacy efforts. In late 2022, their offices were closed under allegations of spreading “anti-development propaganda”. Staff members reported threats and surveillance, further hindering their ability to carry out community engagement and advocacy activities. One staff member, speaking anonymously for fear of reprisal, shared,

We are constantly monitored. Even when we attempt to hold workshops or community consultations, there is always a fear that security forces will disrupt our activities or arrest us.

In addition to these high-profile incidents, smaller community-based organisations have also faced harassment. For example, in Hoima District, an organisation working to educate displaced farmers about their legal rights was shut down abruptly in mid-2023. Members were accused of inciting resistance against the project, although their activities focused on providing legal aid and information.

These incidents highlight the systematic targeting of CSOs working to uphold human rights and environmental justice in the context of EACOP. The timeline of these actions illustrates the intensifying pressure on civil society:

- October 2021: AFIEGO’s offices raided, with several staff detained.

- March 2022: Friends of the Earth Uganda faces office closures and staff intimidation.
- July 2022: A Kampala-based advocacy group reports a raid during a press briefing.
- Mid-2023: Local NGOs in Hoima and Kikuube districts face shutdowns and harassment.

These targeted actions not only disrupt the operations of civil society but also erode public trust in the democratic processes intended to protect the rights of affected communities. The activities surrounding EACOP have resulted in widespread infringements on the right to freedom of association in Uganda. The constitutional guarantees under Article 29, which include the rights to peaceful assembly, free expression, and association, have been systematically violated through the suppression of protests, harassment of activists, and legal targeting of civil society organisations. These infringements not only undermine democracy but also prevent affected communities from voicing their concerns and holding the government accountable for the social and environmental impacts of EACOP.

The evidence of people being imprisoned or harassed for opposing EACOP is a stark reminder of how far-reaching these violations are. Environmental defenders and community leaders must be protected, and their constitutional rights must be upheld to ensure that development projects do not come at the expense of fundamental freedoms.

4.5 Restriction on Community Interactions

In many cases, PAPs are not allowed to freely interact with visitors, particularly those from human rights organisations and other non-governmental agencies. This restriction further isolates affected communities and prevents them from accessing support and information that could help them advocate for their rights.

During field visits, researchers and human rights advocates faced numerous challenges when attempting to engage with affected communities. Permission to visit some villages was either outright denied or delayed through bureaucratic hurdles imposed by local authorities and security personnel. On multiple occasions, visitors were required to provide prior notification to local leaders, often resulting in restricted access or refusals.

For example, in Kikuube District, researchers attempting to meet PAPs were required to seek permission from the local Resident District Commissioner (RDC), who insisted on being present during the interviews. One local community member shared anonymously,

We are not allowed to talk freely to outsiders. They tell us not to say anything bad about the pipeline or else we will face consequences. Even when visitors come, we are too scared to speak the truth.

In Hoima District, a legal aid organisation reported being barred from conducting a workshop on compensation rights. The organisers were accused of “inciting unrest” among PAPs, and the event was abruptly shut down by local police. A community leader, who requested anonymity, recounted,

They [the authorities] told us we can't meet with anyone unless they approve it. We are not free to express our problems. How can we fight for our rights when we are not allowed to speak?

These restrictions have far-reaching consequences for PAPs:

- i. Many PAPs are left uninformed about their rights under national and international frameworks. For instance, they often lack knowledge about their entitlement to fair compensation, resettlement support, and legal remedies.
- ii. By isolating communities from human rights organisations, these restrictions undermine efforts to hold project implementers accountable and to address grievances effectively.

These restrictions constitute a serious violation of the following human rights:

- Freedom of Expression and Association
- Right to Access Information
- Right to Participate in Decisions Affecting Their Lives

These restrictions are not just logistical hurdles but a deliberate attempt to silence affected communities, obstruct justice, and suppress dissent. Such actions perpetuate the cycle of marginalisation and highlight the urgent need for systemic reforms to protect the rights and dignity of PAPs.

5. Governance and Accountability



The EACOP project has arguably been marred by concerns over governance and accountability. Weak regulatory frameworks, corruption, and lack of transparency in decision-making processes have undermined efforts to uphold human rights standards and ensure accountability in project implementation. This has further marginalised affected communities and hindered their ability to voice concerns and seek redress for grievances.

5.1 Concerns in Government-Led Land Acquisition

Government acquisition of land has often raised concerns regarding transparency, fairness, and adequate compensation for affected individuals. Article 26 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda safeguards the right to property, stipulating that every person has the right to own property individually or in association with others. Its further mandates that no person shall be compulsorily deprived of property except under a law that provides for prompt payment of fair and adequate compensation before possession or acquisition of the property.

This constitutional provision is reinforced by the Land Acquisition Act³, which outlines procedures for compulsory land acquisition by the government to ensure landowners receive fair compensation and that due process is followed. However, cases have emerged where affected individuals report discrepancies in compensation and a lack of clarity in the acquisition process.⁴

For example, Robert of Kitegwa A LC1 village in Hoima, a 72-year-old man with 12 children, stated that the government had taken all 15 acres of his land but compensated him for only 7 acres. His land was essential for his livelihood, as he cultivated coffee, sweet potatoes, cassava, and sugarcane. Similarly, Alice, aged 47, recounted that she was asked to sign a document under the pretext of registering her interest, only to later discover that the document relinquished all her claims to the land. Such experiences highlight concerns about transparency, consultation, and the adequacy of compensation in the land acquisition process.

To enhance trust and fairness in compulsory land acquisition, it is essential that all affected persons are fully informed of their rights, compensation processes are conducted transparently, and legal safeguards are rigorously upheld.

³ Land Acquisition Act, Cap 226, s 2.

⁴The Monitor, 'EACOP Land Compensation Leaves Families in Poverty' (*The Daily Monitor*, 15 March 2024) <https://www.monitor.co.ug> accessed 9 January 2025.

5.2 Delayed Court Proceedings

The prolonged timelines in the judicial system have led to significant setbacks for individuals seeking legal remedies. These delays have created barriers for PAPs attempting to contest inadequate compensation or resolve land-acquisition disputes. The judicial delays stem from systemic inefficiencies, such as understaffed courts, a backlog of cases, and limited resources allocated to expedite proceedings. For PAPs, this can mean years of waiting for justice, during which time they may experience financial hardship, psychological stress, and a loss of confidence in the legal system. NM sought redress through the legal system by filing a representative suit at Hoima Court. However, the case has been subjected to lengthy delays, becoming a financial burden due to the constant travel required for court hearings. This delay violated his right to a speedy and fair hearing, as enshrined in Article 28 of the Ugandan Constitution. Thus, this slow judicial process further limits PAPs' access to justice.

5.3 Conflict and Insecurity

The EACOP traverses' regions already characterised by social tensions, land disputes, and historical grievances, further exacerbating the risk of conflict and human rights violations. Displacement and inadequate compensation have created new sources of tension among communities, intensifying the challenges of security and stability. The failure to address these underlying grievances and mitigate risks jeopardises not only the project's long-term viability but also the livelihoods and safety of the affected populations. NM shared that the government had undervalued their land without providing a satisfactory explanation or involving the community in compensation-rate negotiations. After being forcibly relocated, NM received another piece of land 20 kilometres from their residence. This makes it challenging to secure the crops, which are often stolen due to the absence of a nearby community to provide security. He explained,

"I have another piece of land that the government swapped, and they gave me another piece of land – the one I use for cultivation – which is too far from my home. I have to travel over 20 kilometres to access the land and my crops are often stolen because nobody is around to offer security to the plantation and I lack the transport to easily gain access to the land."

Forcibly relocated individuals such as NM face significant challenges securing their crops and land in areas far from their established communities. The lack of a nearby community to provide informal security leaves plantations vulnerable to theft and destruction.

Long distances between the new land and their residence introduce logistical challenges for PAPs. Many lack adequate means of transport, further limiting their ability to maintain and cultivate the land effectively. This has significantly disrupted people's livelihoods. A

resident of Kitegwa B Village explained, “It costs me almost half of what I make from selling my crops to hire a *boda boda* to access my new plot. I am left with little to take care of my family”.

Relocated individuals find themselves isolated from their previous social and support networks, which were critical in times of need. The absence of a supportive community not only affects security but also emotional well-being. Many of the areas along the pipeline’s route are already plagued by unresolved land disputes. Relocating people to contested areas has reignited such disputes or introduced new conflicts between groups, adding to the instability. A community leader from Buliisa noted,

“Some of the relocated families have been settled in areas where land boundaries are disputed. This has caused fights between the newcomers and those who already lived there”

6. Conclusion

The EACOP project, while legally compliant, has sparked numerous concerns about environmental protection, social (in)justice, and human rights. Despite its promised economic benefits, the project poses serious challenges: It is threatening biodiversity, has displaced local communities, has inadequately compensated affected individuals, and is limiting access to essential resources. Moreover, reports indicate instances of the suppression of dissent, disproportionately impacting marginalised communities and restricting their ability to advocate for fair treatment.

6.1 Land Displacement and Resettlement

The implementation of the EACOP project has led to the removal of communities along the pipeline route. Many affected individuals have reported inadequate compensation and a lack of proper consultation during the land-acquisition process. This has raised significant concerns regarding the violation of their land rights and the potential for long-term socioeconomic disruption, along with a range of issues including negative experiences of displacement and resettlement, loss of land, unfair compensation, forced compliance and economic hardship, loss of (and threats to) livelihoods, denial of promised support, as well long-term economic impacts and delayed payments. Vulnerable groups, including women, children, and indigenous communities, have been disproportionately affected by the EACOP project. These groups often lack the resources and legal support to assert their rights, leading to further marginalisation and exclusion from decision-making processes.

6.2 Local Environmental Impact

The EACOP project poses significant local environmental risks, including the potential for oil spills, water contamination, and damage to ecologically sensitive areas. These environmental concerns threaten the livelihoods of communities that depend on natural resources and have not been adequately addressed by the project implementers.

6.3 Democratic Rights

Uganda's legal and institutional frameworks for protecting human rights and ensuring social justice in large-scale infrastructure projects are insufficient. The gaps in these frameworks have contributed to the lack of accountability and transparency in the EACOP project, exacerbating concerns around the democratic rights of Ugandan individuals and organisations – including fears of violation of the right to legal representation, infringement on freedom of association, suppression of local dissent, targeting of CSOs, and restrictions of community interactions.

6.4 Governance and Accountability

The EACOP project reflects broader tensions between the pursuit of economic development and the protection of human rights. While the project promises economic benefits for Uganda, these potential gains have come at the expense of the rights and well-being of local communities and have brought to the fore issues of problematic acquisition of the land by the government, delayed court proceedings, and new forms of conflict and insecurity.

Given that the project is now nearing completion, it is highly unlikely that its progress could be halted. However, the situation demands a more rigorous, inclusive, and rights-based approach to mitigate ongoing risks and support the local populations affected by the EACOP. A comprehensive plan addressing social and environmental (in)justice concerns must be established to ensure that the project's continuation aligns with human rights standards and best practices. This requires a coordinated effort among the implementers, the government, and other stakeholders to rectify existing injustices, protect vulnerable communities, and preserve the local environment. In **Appendix 2**, we set out recommendations designed to guide actions that prioritise human rights, environmental conservation, and community welfare. By implementing these suggestions, project stakeholders can begin to mitigate some of the worst impacts of EACOP in the surrounding region and for the local populations.

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8. Appendix 1: Research Approach

The research underpinning this report was designed to provide valuable insights into social and environmental (in)justice implications of the EACOP project in Uganda, with a particular focus on emerging and ongoing human rights in the later stages of the construction of the pipeline. The research was designed with three key aims:

To examine the social and environmental (in)justice issues arising from the implementation of the EACOP project.

To pay particular attention to the human rights implications of the EACOP project for affected communities in Uganda, including during the resettlement process and afterwards.

To explore the responses and coping mechanisms of individuals and communities impacted by the project.

To achieve this goal, we employed a *mixed-methods approach*, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of the EACOP project's impacts. This approach included the following:

- *Review of Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs)*: We examined the ESIAs related to EACOP to evaluate both the anticipated and actual impacts on the environment and communities, scrutinizing how the project's execution aligned with its proposed safeguards and mitigation measures.
- *Review of Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs)*: The research examined the ESIAs related to the EACOP project to evaluate the anticipated and actual impacts on both the environment and local communities. The review focused on how the project execution aligned with the proposed safeguards and mitigation measures, assessing the effectiveness of these protections in practice.
- *Interviews with Affected Communities*: We conducted in-depth interviews with individuals and families in areas along the pipeline route. These interviews gathered personal insights on the effects of land acquisition, displacement, and compensation processes, as well as changes in their livelihoods due to the EACOP project. The goal was to document their experiences and challenges related to environmental and social economic justice issues.
- *Key Informant Interviews*: Key informant interviews were conducted with critical stakeholders, including government officials, project developers, civil society representatives, and project-affected persons (PAPs), using a key informant interview guide as an instrument. These interviews provided a deeper

understanding of the policy decisions, project implementation processes, and the challenges faced in ensuring fair and equitable development. Informants were selected based on their involvement in the EACOP project or advocacy efforts around it.

- *Analysis of Legal Frameworks:* We reviewed national and international legal frameworks governing land acquisition, environmental protection, and human rights. This helped assess how effectively these laws and policies safeguard the rights of affected populations and the environment. Frameworks such as Uganda's Land Act and Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations were examined, along with relevant international standards, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (United Nations, 1966).
- *Review of Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs):* The research examined ESIs related to the EACOP project to evaluate the anticipated and actual impacts on both the environment and local communities. This review focused on how the project execution aligned with the proposed safeguards and mitigation measures, assessing the effectiveness of these protections in practice.

8.1 Data Analysis Methods

Qualitative Data Analysis: Data from 176 interviews were analysed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns, themes, and concerns related to social justice, environmental and human rights impacts. The interview transcripts were then coded to extract insights about the lived experiences of affected populations.

8.1.1 Triangulation

To enhance the validity and reliability of the study, a triangulation method was employed. By drawing data from multiple sources – namely, interviews, legal frameworks, and ESIA reviews – the study ensured a more comprehensive understanding of the EACOP project's impacts (Denzin, 2012). Triangulation will allow cross-verification of findings, ensuring that the conclusions drawn are evidence-based and reflect multiple perspectives.

Ethical Considerations: The research adhered to ethical research standards, ensuring that informed consent was obtained from all participants. The anonymity and confidentiality of respondents was maintained to protect their identities, especially when dealing with sensitive issues such as compensation and displacement. However, a few interviewees did authorise the use of their actual identities and contact details for future reference and follow up. Ethical approval was sought from relevant bodies before the publication of this report.

8.1.2 Limitations of the Study

Several challenges were encountered during the field survey and impacted the study's findings. The busy schedules of key informants – including local leaders, oil and gas company staff, and district officials – posed significant challenges for data collection. Despite multiple attempts to arrange interviews, many potential informants remained unavailable, delaying the research process. This limitation was partially overcome by obtaining contact details from office attendants and scheduling interviews through phone calls. However, these challenges made it difficult for the researcher to complete the work within the initially planned timeframe.

9. Appendix 2: Context-Specific Recommendations for the State, Implementers, and Oil Companies

9.1 For the State

The Ugandan and Tanzanian governments are key stakeholders in the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project, as both are facilitating the pipeline's development and both stand to gain economically from its operation. These governments have the authority to establish regulations, enforce laws, and ensure that the project aligns with national interests and international standards. As custodians of their respective citizens' rights and welfare, the governments have a responsibility to protect the interests of the communities affected by the project.

The state's role is crucial in setting the legal and policy framework for the project's implementation, including land acquisition, compensation, and environmental safeguards. However, weak regulatory frameworks, lack of transparency, and delayed court proceedings have raised concerns about the state's effectiveness in upholding human rights and social justice. To fulfil their responsibilities and ensure that the EACOP project does not result in undue harm to communities or the environment, the state must adopt a proactive approach, strengthening governance, enhancing community participation, and enforcing accountability. The following recommendations provide guidance on how the state can address these issues and promote a more equitable and just development process

1. Strengthen Legal and Institutional Frameworks	
Recommendation	Context-Specific Example
The Ugandan government should urgently revise and strengthen its legal and institutional frameworks to ensure they adequately protect the rights of communities affected by the EACOP project. This includes updating land-acquisition laws to ensure fair compensation, enhancing environmental	The lack of proper consultation and inadequate compensation reported by communities in the Hoima District underscores the need for stronger legal protections. By revising land laws to include mandatory community consultations and fair compensation guidelines, the government

<p>protection regulations, and establishing robust mechanisms for accountability and transparency. The state should also align national laws more closely with international standards, such as the Equator Principles and IFC performance standards, to ensure comprehensive protection of human rights and social justice.</p>	<p>can prevent future conflicts and ensure that affected individuals' rights are upheld.</p>
<p>2. Empower Vulnerable Groups</p>	
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>Context-Specific Example</p>
<p>The government should prioritise the inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and indigenous communities, in decision-making processes related to the EACOP project. This can be achieved by creating legal provisions that mandate their representation in consultations and by providing legal and financial support to these groups to help them assert their rights.</p>	<p>Indigenous communities along the pipeline route, who rely heavily on natural resources, have been disproportionately impacted. The government should establish dedicated legal aid programmes and representation to ensure their voices are heard and their rights are protected.</p>
<p>3. Environmental Safeguards Enforcement</p>	
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>Context-Specific Example</p>
<p>The Ugandan government should enforce stricter environmental regulations to mitigate the risks posed by the EACOP project, particularly in sensitive areas. Regular environmental audits and independent monitoring should be mandated to ensure compliance with environmental protection standards.</p>	<p>Given the risks of oil spills and deforestation, the government should establish a monitoring body that includes environmental NGOs and local communities to oversee the project's environmental impact and ensure that necessary precautions are taken to protect biodiversity.</p>

9.2 For the Implementers

The implementers of the EACOP project primarily consist of the project developers, including TotalEnergies, China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), and their local partners. These entities are responsible for various aspects of the pipeline's construction, operation, and maintenance. Their decisions and actions have a direct impact on the communities along the pipeline's route, the environment, and the overall success of the project.

It is crucial for the implementers to adopt a socially responsible and community-focused approach, ensuring that the negative consequences of the project are mitigated, and the benefits are distributed equitably. The following recommendations are designed to guide the implementers in adopting best practices that can help address the concerns of project-affected persons (PAPs) and minimise adverse environmental and social impacts.

1. Enhance Community Engagement and Consultation	
Recommendation	Context-Specific Example
Project implementers should adopt a more inclusive and participatory approach by engaging with affected communities at every stage of the EACOP project. This includes conducting thorough consultations, incorporating feedback from local populations, and collaborating with human rights defenders (HRDs) to ensure that the voices of the affected are heard and addressed.	In areas such as Kikuube District, where communities have faced displacement, implementers should conduct targeted consultations to address specific concerns, such as access to water and grazing land. Collaborative efforts with HRDs could have ensured more equitable outcomes and mitigated community resistance.
2. Implement Fair Compensation and Livelihood-Restoration Programmes	
Recommendation	Context-Specific Example
Implementers should ensure that compensation for displaced communities is fair, timely, and sufficient to cover not only the loss of land but also the long-term impacts on livelihoods. Additionally, livelihood-restoration programmes should be established to support affected individuals in rebuilding their economic lives.	In cases where households were undervalued or payments delayed, implementers should reassess compensation packages and work with local NGOs to develop programmes that offer alternative livelihoods, such as agricultural training or small business support, to displaced families.

3. Strengthen Environmental Management Practices

Recommendation	Context-Specific Example
Implementers should enhance their environmental management practices by conducting comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) and implementing robust spill prevention and response plans. Regular monitoring and transparent reporting of environmental impacts should be standard practice.	In environmentally sensitive areas, implementers should deploy advanced technology for spill detection and response and establish rapid-response teams that include local environmental groups to swiftly address potential ecological damage.

9.3 For the Oil Companies

1. Adopt Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programmes

Recommendation	Context-Specific Example
Oil companies involved in the EACOP project should adopt comprehensive CSR programmes that prioritise the welfare of affected communities. These programmes should include investments in local infrastructure, education, and healthcare, as well as initiatives aimed at environmental conservation.	Oil companies could establish community funds in regions such as Buliisa District, where the project has led to significant displacement. These funds could support the construction of schools, clinics, and clean water systems, directly benefiting the displaced communities.

2. Promote Transparency and Accountability

Recommendation	Context-Specific Example
Oil companies should promote greater transparency by regularly publishing detailed reports on their activities, including environmental assessments, community consultations, and compensation processes. These reports should be accessible to the public and subject to independent audits.	In response to concerns over land-acquisition processes, oil companies should publish detailed compensation reports for areas such as Kabaale, detailing how compensation amounts were determined and distributed, and ensuring that the process was fair and transparent.

3. Collaborate with HRDs	
Recommendation	Context-Specific Example
Oil companies should actively collaborate with HRDs and civil society organisations to ensure that human rights are respected throughout the project. This collaboration should involve regular consultations, joint monitoring efforts, and the development of grievance mechanisms that allow communities to safely report violations.	In areas where HRDs have faced intimidation, oil companies should work with these defenders to establish safe channels for reporting human rights concerns, ensuring that their advocacy is protected and any allegations of abuse are swiftly addressed.

“I was evicted and left homeless”

Exploring social and environmental (in)justice along the
East African Crude Oil Pipeline Project



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