AFIEGO'S 2022 IN REVIEW: WHAT WE DID, LEARNED AND ACHIEVED

Some of AFIEGO's 2022 engagements with communities, government officials, cross-border CSOs, the private sector and other stakeholders

In this newsletter:

- AFIEGO in 2022: An account of what we did, learned and achieved
- Our 2022 work: 12 months, 5 milestones
- Lobbying in 2022
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- Upcoming events
Dear reader, thank you for reading AFIEGO’s newsletters throughout 2022. We continuously received feedback from you during the year and we appreciate you for it. Through this January 2023 newsletter, AFIEGO seeks to share with you what we did, learned and achieved in 2022.

We also look ahead and share what AFIEGO intends to do for the protection of community rights, the environment and our shared climate this year (2023).

What were some of our key 2022 interventions and achievements? They include:

1. **Influencing or lobbying for the enactment of over five policies and laws** including the 2022 Electricity (Amendment) Bill, a Solar Energy Policy and Consumer Protection law. Others include advocating for a review of the 2020 National Environment (Environmental and Social Assessment) Regulations as well as advocating for completion, debate and enactment of the Land Acquisition Bill. Our policy influencing work was aimed at promoting environmental conservation, clean energy access and protection of community rights. We discuss the achievements registered from this work in the Word from CEO in this newsletter.

2. **Continuing the campaign to save Bugoma forest from oil, land grabbing and sugarcane growing challenges:** In 2022, AFIEGO continued to work with local communities and our Save Bugoma Forest Campaign (SBFC) partners to engage key duty bearers to protect Bugoma forest from oil, land grabbing and sugarcane challenges. Our years-long work was rewarded when we saw increased participation of forest-host communities in key processes such as the Bugoma forest boundary opening. The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) also issued an order through which the authority asked Hoima Sugar Ltd (HSL), which is destroying the forest for sugarcane growing, to restore over 4,854.7 hectares/18.73 sq. miles of Bugoma forest. This newsletter discusses how we contributed to these gains.

3. **Protecting oil-affected communities’ rights:** Through meetings, radio talkshows, monthly radio messages, TV talkshows and others, we empowered over 2.2 million people in over seven oil-affected districts to defend their land, environment, civic space and other rights amidst oil and gas exploitation activities in Uganda. Over 300 households in districts such as Kyotera had their compensation increased after we supported them to engage in advocacy. You will read more about this and other milestones in our Word from CEO in this newsletter.

4. **Mobilsing civil society organisations (CSOs) to protect cross-border resources amidst oil risks:** One of the key achievements registered by AFIEGO in 2022 includes mobilising cross-border CSOs to work together to resist the risks posed by oil and gas exploitation in the Albertine Graben. By the end of 2022, we were working with over 50 civil society groups from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to protect our shared cross-border resources from oil risks.

5. **Prosecuting nine court courses:** Furthermore, we prosecuted nine court cases in Uganda, at the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) and in France. The cases were aimed at protecting the Tilenga and oil refinery-affected people’s rights. The cases were also aimed at protecting Bugoma forest and other protected areas amidst the Tilenga, Kingfisher and East African Crude Oil
Pipeline (EACOP) oil projects in Uganda. In effect, we valiantly defended the rights of an estimated 283.7 million people in East Africa through seeking to protect the natural resources that they rely on for their livelihoods. These resources are endangered by the Tilenga, Kingfisher and EACOP oil projects.

6. Strengthening the promotion of green economic alternatives: Working with our Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa (IGEN-EA) partners, we strengthened the promotion of green economic alternatives through conducting and disseminating research, engaging in advocacy, inducting 14 new members from Uganda and Tanzania into the network and others.

7. In 2022, AFIEGO also won the prestigious Right Livelihood Award which is given to individuals who have demonstrated courage.

AFIEGO staff were also recognised by Apolitical and the US Ambassador to Uganda. You will read more about these awards, and what they mean to us, in our Word from CEO.

Despite the above achievements, a number of challenges still exist. These include lack of platforms through which oil-affected people can speak with one voice and take charge of lobby and advocacy matters affecting them.

This contributes to continued abuse of the people’s rights while undermining their capacity to protect the oil-affected resources on which they depend.

Another challenge includes the fact that the Bugoma forest boundary opening report is yet to be shared with the public. Opening of the forest boundaries commenced in 2021 after pressure from the SBFC and AFIEGO. The processes continued in 2022. It also remains to be seen whether NEMA’s restoration order to HSL will be effectively implemented.

Furthermore, court processes are slow, undermining access to justice. We however remain determined to prosecute the court cases that we were prosecuting in 2022. Uganda also stands to be left behind in the just energy transition as the country invests in oil and gas while clean energy access remains low. We intend to address this and other challenges such as a constrained civic space that are discussed in our Word from CEO.

For those looking for a few minutes catch-up on our key achievements of 2022, we summarise the key milestones we registered in 2022 in the section, 12 months, 5 milestones in 2022!

In our pictorial, we share pictorial highlights that show our key activities in 2022.

In our lobbying section, we bring you some of the over 60 lobby and advocacy products that we and our partners produced in 2022.

In the media section, we bring you some of the over 100 media articles that were published from our work.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter and we wish you a happy and successful 2023.

Editorial team:
Diana Nabiruma
Patrick Edema
Balach Bakundane
AFIEGO attained various milestones in 2022. In the graphic below, we share five key milestones.

Through meetings, radio and TV messages among others, we empowered over 2.2 million people in the EACOP- and other oil-affected districts to defend their land, environment and other rights. The communities thereafter conducted advocacy to defend their land rights, civic space and livelihoods.

Following years of advocacy by the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign (SBFC) under AFIEGO’s stewardship, in September 2022, NEMA ordered Holma Sugar Ltd to restore over 4,854.7 hectares/18.73 sq. miles of Bugoma forest.

AFIEGO prosecuted 9 court cases in Uganda, the East African Court of Justice and France for the benefit of biodiversity and millions of East Africans. The cases also served to raise public awareness of the risks posed by Uganda’s oil projects.

Further, AFIEGO worked with IGEN-EA to strengthen the network’s capacity to promote green economic activities. The network inducted 14 new members from Uganda and Tanzania, conducted and disseminated research as well as influenced national budgeting processes among others in 2022.

AFIEGO won the Right Livelihood Award (RLA) and was recognized by Apolitical as well as the US ambassador in Uganda for our work in resisting climate-wrecking projects in 2022.
Dear reader, you have probably heard the African saying that goes, "The one who asks questions does not lose his way". The quote is simple but deeply meaningful. Its purpose is to encourage humanity to maintain curiosity, self-examine and reflect for continuous learning.

At AFIEGO, we engage in self-reflection exercises, especially at the end or beginning of each calendar year. What challenges is Uganda faced with? How can we contribute to addressing the challenges?

This article is a culmination of a reflection exercise that we undertook at the end of 2022. The reflection continued in 2023. What goals did we set in 2022? Did we achieve them? What are our priorities for 2023?

On AFIEGO’s behalf, I answer the above questions.

KEY 2022 ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS
(a) Successfully influencing the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2022: In 2022, AFIEGO worked with communities and leaders to advocate for the enactment of national policies and laws for the common good. To this end, we campaigned for the enactment of the Electricity Amendment Bill, 2022. AFIEGO started advocating for amendment of the 1999 Electricity Act in 2019.

An Electricity (Amendment) Bill was approved by cabinet in 2020. During that year and in 2021, AFIEGO campaigned for its tabling before parliament for debate and enactment. When the Electricity Amendment Bill, 2022 was tabled before parliament in 2022, AFIEGO mobilised 15 other civil society and community groups.

We submitted a memorandum of proposals on gaps and weaknesses in the bill to parliament in March 2022. In April 2022, Parliament passed the bill into law. The bill was signed by the president in June 2022. The law will support efforts to increase renewable energy access in Uganda. However, gaps in the law still exist.

(b) Campaigning for enactment of a Solar Energy Policy, other laws: AFIEGO also engaged in advocacy for the enactment or improvement of other key policies and laws.

In March and August 2022 for instance, we campaigned for parliament, the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) and others to complete the consumer protection law to improve the quality of solar energy products on the market. Further, between March and November 2022, we supported women and youth clean energy champions to campaign for the Ministry of Energy to put in place a Solar Energy Policy to streamline the solar sector and increase off-grid solar energy access.

Furthermore, in May 2022, we engaged the Minister of Water and Environment (MWE) to review the National Environment (Environmental and Social Assessment) regulations of 2020 to strengthen public participation in environmental governance processes. However, by the end of 2022, the policies were yet to be put in place. The aforementioned regulations were also yet to be put in place. This will inform our work in 2023.

(c) NEMA orders for restoration of Bugoma forest: Since 2016 when the Ministry of Lands gave away 8,000 hectares of Bugoma forest to Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom (BKK) and Hoima Sugar Ltd (HSL) for sugarcane growing, AFIEGO and our Save Bugoma Forest Campaign (SBFC) partners have campaigned against destruction of the forest.

We filed court challenges in 2020 and an appeal in 2021. The court appeal is yet to be determined. We also mobilised massive public pressure to protect the forest. Further, in January
2021, we alerted the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) that HSL was violating key conditions in its Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) certificate of approval. The certificate was issued by NEMA to HSL in August 2020. Through the certificate, NEMA authorised HSL’s sugarcane growing activities in Bugoma forest.

In January 2021, we and our SBFC partners demanded that NEMA cancels HSL’s certificate of approval as the company had violated key conditions in the ESIA certificate. HSL planted sugarcane in areas that NEMA had ordered to be used for other purposes. We were therefore happy to see NEMA stopping part of HSL’s destruction of Bugoma forest in September 2022. The authority order HSL to restore over 4,854.7 hectares/18.73 sq. miles of Bugoma forest. We will monitor the implementation of this order in 2023.

(d) Campaigning for completion of opening of Bugoma forest boundaries: In 2022, AFIEGO also worked with our SBFC partners to engage the Ministry of Lands and the National Forestry Authority (NFA) to complete the Bugoma forest boundary opening exercise. This was aimed at protecting the forest from land grabbing challenges.

The ministry and NFA, which commenced the exercise in November 2021, abandoned it in December 2021. In January 2022 therefore, AFIEGO organised strategic meetings with the SBFC local taskforce members and other stakeholders in Kikuube district. We discussed the stalled Bugoma forest boundary opening. AFIEGO thereafter worked with the communities and our SBFC partners to write to the Ministry of Lands and NFA to demand for resumption of the boundary opening exercise with community and citizen participation.

In March 2022, before resuming the boundary re-opening, NFA and the Ministry of Lands engaged the SBFC local taskforce and communities in Kikuube district. This was commendable and was contributed to by our advocacy. The boundary opening however did not take place in March 2022. It resumed in August 2022. However, whether the exercise was completed remained unknown by the end of 2022. The report from the boundary opening exercise was also not availed to the public in 2022.

(e) Sensitising over 2.2 million people to protect the EACOP- and other oil-affected people’s rights: The year 2022 was characterised by a number of challenges related to the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) as well as the upstream Tilenga and Kingfisher oil projects. Among others, the land, livelihood and cultural rights of people whose land is being acquired for the EACOP project in ten districts in Uganda were being abused. So were the rights of the Tilenga oil project-affected people.

Throughout 2022 therefore, AFIEGO organised meetings, radio talkshows and disseminated radio messages to sensitise over 2.2 million people in the EACOP- and other oil-affected districts to protect their land, livelihood, and environment rights. AFIEGO also supported the directly affected people to petition the Ugandan government and oil companies, publish newspaper articles, participate in media interviews and others to create pressure for the protection of the people’s rights.

The people’s stories were published by the national and international media with over 62 stories that reached over 4 million people being published. The pressure that the people created resulted in gains. For instance, the Ugandan government agreed to increase the compensation of over 300 EACOP-affected families in Kyotera district. TotalEnergies also committed to compensate families that were affected by floods from the Tilenga Industrial Area in Buliisa district. We also remain hopeful that the pressure created will result in the
protection of biodiversity from the EACOP, Tilenga and Kingfisher oil project threats.

(f) Strengthening cross-border co-operation for protection of key ecosystems:
In 2022, AFIEGO continued to strengthen co-operation between Ugandan, Kenyan, Tanzanian and Congolese civil society organisations (CSOs) to support cross-border advocacy for the protection of key ecosystems amidst the EACOP, Tilenga and Kingfisher oil projects. AFIEGO and our partners organised exchange learnings, supported the dissemination of films, IEC and other community sensitisation messages, undertook joint media engagements and engaged in joint advocacy targeted at East African governments as well as financial institutions for the promotion of clean energy. By the end of 2022, the number of cross-border CSOs that were working together for the protection of cross-border ecosystems amidst oil risks was over 50. This coalition needs to be strengthened.

(g) Prosecuting nine court cases:
In 2022, AFIEGO prosecuted nine cases in Ugandan, East African and French courts. For instance, together with our partners, we prosecuted a court case through which we are seeking cancellation of the Tilenga oil project’s Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) certificate of approval. We, alongside youth groups, filed the court case in Uganda’s high court in 2019. Court continued to hear the case in 2022. In addition, we supported nine Tilenga-affected families to engage the Deputy Chief Justice (DCJ) in 2022. The people requested the DCJ to fix, for hearing, a court appeal that the people filed with AFIEGO’s support. The people filed the appeal in 2021. This was after high court ruled against them in a case in which the people were being compelled to accept low compensation offered by the Tilenga project developers. Court was yet to fix the appeal for hearing by the end of 2022.

We also supported the oil refinery-affected people to participate in the hearing of their court case against the Ugandan government. With AFIEGO’s support, the people sued the Ugandan government in 2014 to stop government from paying them low, delayed and unfair compensation. Hearing of the case was still ongoing in 2022. Hearings were held in January and November 2022. The people’s case is aimed at protecting citizens’ right to prompt, fair and adequate compensation.

Further, together with our East African partners, we prosecuted the court case that we filed for a temporary injunction against the EACOP project. We filed the court case at the East African Court of Justice in 2020. We prosecuted other court cases in Uganda and France.

(h) Strengthening the promotion of green economic activities:
AFIEGO also worked with our Inclusive Green Economy Network-East Africa (IGEN-EA) partners to promote green economic alternatives in 2022. The network conducted research to identify investment opportunities in the green economic sectors and undertook advocacy for enhancement of national budgetary allocations to the green economic sectors.

Further, the network organised media engagements to sensitise over 1.4 million people on Uganda’s green economic alternatives. The network also trained women to promote green economic alternatives and inducted 14 new members, who joined IGEN-EA. The network is now composed of over 36 Ugandan and Tanzanian civil society as well as private sector players that are promoting green economic alternatives.
(i) In 2022, AFIEGO also engaged in national and international meetings to advocate for the promotion of clean energy, a just energy transition, improved civic space in Uganda and others.

(iv) The Bugoma forest boundary opening report was also yet to be shared with the public by the end of 2022, making the forest vulnerable to oil, land grabbing and sugarcane challenges.

(v) Further, community and cross-border co-operation for the protection of ecosensitive resources needed to be strengthened in 2022.

(vi) In addition, the judiciary was still weak in as far as making decisions on community land rights and environmental cases. The case fixing and hearing processes remained slow.

(vii) Shifting of adequate financing to clean energy and other green economic alternatives was also still a challenge by the end of 2022.

(viii) Furthermore, electricity remains unaffordable, limiting the alternative clean energy sources that citizens have.

(ix) Finally, the operational space for CSOs continued to decline. This challenge must be addressed in 2023.

AFIEGO will work towards addressing the above challenges in 2023.

Happy New Year!

Dickens Kamugisha,
CEO, AFIEGO
AFIEGO AND PARTNERS SUPPORT FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES TO DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS

In 2022, AFIEGO mobilised Bugoma forest host communities and the SBFC local taskforce to sustain pressure on the Ministry of Lands, NFA and other stakeholders to resume the Bugoma forest boundary opening exercise, which stalled in December 2021 (top photo).

The communities worked with AFIEGO and our SBFC partners to write to the Ministry of Lands and NFA in January 2022. We demanded for resumption of opening of the Bugoma forest boundaries.

The boundary opening exercise resumed in March 2022 with a stakeholder engagement in which the SBFC local taskforce participated (middle photo). The boundary opening exercise stalled again, after which it resumed in August 2022. The report from the boundary opening was yet to be shared with the public by the end of 2022 however.

Additionally, AFIEGO supported the Budongo forest host communities (bottom photo) to engage NFA to address their outstanding grievances following a boundary opening exercise for Budongo forest. The exercise took place in 2019. The people were seeking a report from the boundary opening exercise. By the end of 2022 however, NFA was yet to avail the report to the people.

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS ENGAGE THE EU TO DISCUSS FORESTS CONSERVATION

In addition, in 2022, AFIEGO and our partners continued to engage the European Union (EU) in Uganda to promote forest conservation. For instance, we participated in a meeting with an EU delegation from Brussels in May 2022 (top photo).

During the meeting, we discussed our efforts aimed at conserving Bugoma and other forests and the challenges that we face. The discussion was aimed at informing the EU’s five-year strategy for Uganda.

In the same vein, in March 2022, AFIEGO and our partners engaged French government officials to discuss the negative impacts of the Tilenga and EACOP oil projects in Uganda (bottom photo). The discussions were aimed at promoting climate action, environmental conservation and protection of community rights amidst the project.
AFIEGO AND PARTNERS HIGHLIGHT IMPACT OF OIL PROJECTS ON FORESTS AND COMMUNITIES AT CLIMATE CHANGE AND CBD COPS

In 2022, AFIEGO produced communications materials such as documentaries to highlight the impact of Uganda’s oil activities on people and forests.

AFIEGO used these materials to sensitise stakeholders within and outside Uganda. For instance, in December 2022, AFIEGO worked with our partners to sensitise international CSOs using the materials. This was at the COP on the Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal-Canada (bottom photo).

AFIEGO also participated in the climate change COP in Egypt in November 2022. We advocated for climate action (top photo).

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS IN ENGAGEMENTS TO PROMOTE OIL-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES’ HUMAN RIGHTS

Throughout 2022, AFIEGO empowered the EACOP- and other oil-affected communities to defend their environment and land rights.

AFIEGO organised community meetings, film screenings, radio talkshows and disseminated monthly energy news updates, IEC materials and others to empower the communities in Uganda.

The empowered communities were able to engage government and oil companies to address some of the land and human rights abuses.
AFIEGO AND PARTNERS TRAIN WOMEN BEEKEEPERS IN HOIMA DISTRICT

In August 2022, AFIEGO and our IGEN-EA partners trained women beekeepers in Hoima district (top photo).

The training followed research that identified opportunities and challenges in promoting beekeeping in the Albertine Graben. The research was conducted by IGEN-EA and a report was produced by the network in June 2022.

AFIEGO and our IGEN-EA partners also held a radio talkshow in August 2022 to sensitize communities to promote beekeeping as a green economic activity.

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS PROSECUTE EACOP, TILENGA AND OIL REFINERY COURT CASES

In 2022, AFIEGO and our partners prosecuted nine court cases in Ugandan, East African and the French courts. The cases are aimed at protecting community land rights, their livelihoods, the environment and our climate.

In the top photo are AFIEGO staff, our partners and lawyers among others during hearing of a court case for a temporary injunction of the EACOP project. The case was filed at the East African Court of Justice. The hearing took place in November 2022.

In the middle photo are AFIEGO staff, the oil refinery-affected people and our lawyers at the Masindi High Court for hearing of a court case that AFIEGO supported the oil refinery-affected people to file against the Ugandan government. The hearing took place in November 2022.

AFIEGO also worked with nine Tilenga oil project-affected people to engage the judiciary to fix, for hearing, a court appeal that the people filed with AFIEGO’s support in 2021.
AFIEGO AND IGEN-EA STRENGTHEN PROMOTION OF GREEN ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVES

In 2022, AFIEGO worked with our partners to strengthen the promotion of green economic alternatives. The network conducted and disseminated research on key green economic opportunities in Uganda’s Albertine Graben.

The network also trained communities in green economic alternatives.

Further, the network engaged in national and international advocacy to campaign for increased funding to Uganda’s green economic activities.

IGEN-EA also inducted 14 new members into the network, bringing the network’s members to 36. This strengthened the network’s research, advocacy, campaigning and other capacities.

AFIEGO STRENGTHENS CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AMIDST OIL RISKS

In 2022, AFIEGO and our partners from the DRC, Kenya and other African countries organised meetings, exchange learnings and film screenings among others to strengthen cross-border collaboration for the promotion of environmental conservation amidst oil risks in the Albertine Graben, which is shared with Uganda and the DRC.

AFIEGO also disseminated IEC materials, media messages and others.

By the end of 2022, over 50 CSOs in Uganda and the DRC were working together for the promotion of environmental conservation amidst oil risks in the Albertine Graben.
Lobbying in 2022

AFIEGO and our partners produced over 70 lobby and advocacy materials including briefing papers, communications, memoranda, advocacy letters, press statements, petitions and others in 2022. Some of these, which led to the successes discussed in this newsletter, are captured below.
In the media in 2022

In 2022, AFIEGO staff and our partners produced over 100 articles that were published by Uganda’s major newspapers. Our press statements and media interviews also resulted in the production of over 103 media stories that were published in Uganda, DRC, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, France, the UK, and other countries.
Upcoming events

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<td>February 9, 2023</td>
<td>Hoima: Court case hearing for the oil refinery-affected community</td>
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<td>Bunyoro: Collection of community signatures for petitions to the Ministry of Lands</td>
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<td>Kampala: Engagement with the Chief Justice over delayed hearing of the Tilenga oil project-affected people’s case in the Court of Appeal</td>
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<td>February 20, 2023</td>
<td>Kampala: Community petitions to the Ministry of Lands demanding for the public release of the report of the Bugoma forest boundary opening</td>
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<td>February 23, 2023</td>
<td>Kikuube: Engagements with Bugoma forest host communities on the restoration of Bugoma forest in line with NEMA’s directive</td>
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<td>February 24-27, 2023</td>
<td>Greater Masaka and Bunyoro: Land rights legal clinic for EACOP-affected communities</td>
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<td>February 28, 2023</td>
<td>Kampala: Engagement with NEMA to discuss the progress of restoration of Bugoma forest</td>
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About Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO)

AFIEGO is a non-profit company limited by guarantee that was incorporated under Uganda’s Companies Act. AFIEGO undertakes public policy research and advocacy to influence energy policies to benefit the poor and vulnerable. Based in Kampala-Uganda, the non-profit company was born out of the need to contribute to efforts to turn Africa’s clean energy potential into reality and to ensure that the common man and woman benefits from this energy boom. Through lobbying, research and community education, AFIEGO works with communities and leaders to ensure that clean energy resources are utilised in a way that promotes equitable development, environmental conservation and respect for human rights.

Our Vision
A society that equitably uses clean energy resources for socio-economic development

Our Mission
To promote energy policies that benefit poor and vulnerable communities