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CREATING LASTING VALUE OR LASTING POVERTY?

Communities struggle as EACOP implements inadequate livelihood restoration programme

A new research report published by Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) today has shown that a sizeable percentage of communities whose land was compulsorily acquired for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project in Uganda consider the Livelihood Restoration Programme (LRP) that is being implemented for the project inadequate.

This puts the restoration of the 3,648 households with over 24,744 individuals that were displaced for the project in Uganda at risk of not being restored to their pre-displacement socio-economic positions, or even better ones, as aspired to by the EACOP Company¹.

The LRP is being implemented by the EACOP Company through various sub-contractors. Implementation of the programme commenced in 2022.

The research also shows that nearly 40% of EACOP project-affected persons (PAPs) have a negative attitude to the project. The people assert that the pipeline is located too near their homes and therefore presents safety challenges to them.

The people also observe that the pipeline could affect their agricultural livelihoods through negatively affecting soil biodiversity, soil fertility and micro weather conditions.

BACKGROUND

The aforementioned research was conducted by a consultant contracted by AFIEGO between June 2025 and February 2026. The study assessed the attitudes that EACOP PAPs have towards the pipeline.

¹ The EACOP Company is owned by TotalEnergies (62% shares), CNOOC (8% shares) as well as the Ugandan and Tanzanian governments (15% shares each).

Prior to the research, various EACOP PAPs raised concerns with AFIEGO, noting that the EACOP was set to be constructed too close to their homes, presenting safety concerns. As a result, some PAPs expressed opposition to the project. To create empirical evidence on the percentage of PAPs that have a negative attitude to the pipeline, the research was conducted.

AFIEGO hopes that the research will inform decision-making by the EACOP project proponents, who should avoid constructing the pipeline close to the homes of the nearly 40% PAPs that have a negative attitude to the pipeline.

The study also assessed compliance by the EACOP Company and its sub-contractors to the LRP commitments. These are contained in the EACOP project's Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) for Uganda.

The livelihood restoration programme is key to preventing impacts such as increased poverty, food insecurity, gender-based violence and others that are often seen if governments or corporations fail to restore the livelihoods of the people that they displace.

METHODOLOGY

Data was collected from EACOP PAPs between September and October 2025. Questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with 246 EACOP PAPs during the aforementioned period. The PAPs were drawn from seven of the ten EACOP-affected districts in Uganda. The districts that were covered include Hoima, Kikuube, and Kakumiro. Others include Sembabule, Lwengo, Rakai and Kyotera.

KEY FINDINGS

Physically and economically displaced persons in Uganda were entitled to receiving livelihood restoration in the form of a core agricultural improvement programme, a food security programme, and financial literacy as well as money management training.

Further, the PAPs were entitled to enterprise development and vocational training as well as transitional food assistance for six months to one year, or more.

The research found that the above livelihood restoration programmes were implemented, but major gaps could undermine the restoration of PAPs to their pre-displacement socio-economic levels. These gaps could also undermine compliance to IFC Performance Standard 5. More can be seen below.

AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The implementation of this programme included the distribution of agricultural inputs such as seeds, seedlings, livestock and fertilisers to the PAPs, majority of whom are farmers. One hundred and thirty (130) of the PAPs that participated in the study noted that they received items such as coffee seedlings, banana suckers, bean seeds, maize seeds and fertilisers among others under this programme.

However, they observed that the programme was undermined by the distribution of poor quality seeds or seedlings, and delays in distribution of inputs. Seeds and seedlings were distributed during the dry weather, or after the rainy season had commenced. This affected the PAPs' ability to grow the crops that they had been given.

One research participant from Kyotera district observed as follows during an October 2025 FGD, “We were given very young coffee seedlings in May and October 2024. They were also poor quality with some having no roots. I received 70 coffee seedlings, but when I planted, only 20 grew. I watered those coffee seedlings, but they did not grow. They were poor quality!”

May is at the tail end of the long rains in Uganda, which start in March. In addition, the short rains begin in August in Uganda. To enhance their yields, farmers plant new crops at the beginning of each rainy season in March and August.

Further, one of the most enduring complaints against the programme was that of an unfulfilled promise of providing livestock to the affected people. While the PAPs were informed during sensitisation meetings that all those with a preference for livestock would receive it, only some PAPs received livestock during the implementation phase.

FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME

Of the PAPs that participated in the study, 116 observed that they were beneficiaries of this programme, with vegetable demonstration gardens being set up in their villages to enhance food security and nutrition.

While the above may be true, the PAPs expressed dissatisfaction with the programme, observing that real food security would have been promoted if predominantly grown crops such as coffee and bananas were grown in the demonstration gardens.

Moreover, the affected people observed that the EACOP Company cannot promote food security after paying the PAPs delayed, inadequate and unfair compensation following their displacement.

A male PAP who participated in an FGD that took place in Kyotera district in October 2025 observed as follows, “You cannot say that you want to restore

the livelihoods of people you paid inadequate compensation to. Some of us failed to replace the land we lost to the EACOP. This means we have less land to grow crops. What purpose does a demonstration garden serve if I have less land on which to grow crops?”

FINANCIAL LITERACY AND MONEY MANAGEMENT TRAINING

This programme was aimed at enhancing the PAPs’ capacity to manage and not misuse their compensation. Of the PAPs that participated in the study, 115 indicated that they were beneficiaries of the programme.

Of the beneficiaries, 77% said that the financial literacy trainings were inadequate, while 23% said that they were adequate. Those that considered the trainings inadequate observed that a commercial bank with vested interests undertook the training. The bank was more interested in getting the PAPs to open bank accounts than enhancing their money management practices. The training was also conducted over one day, which could not aid learning.

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

This programme entailed the training of PAPs or members of their households in catering, baking, soap making, hairdressing and others. One hundred and thirteen (113) of the PAPs that participated in this study observed that they were beneficiaries of this programme.

However, 78% considered the programme to have been inadequately implemented while 22% said that it was adequately implemented.

The major gaps that PAPs identified as regards this programme include: short training periods, absentee trainers, lack of impartation of practical skills, and limited capital, such as two packets of braids, being given to trainees. The above marred the impartation of skills to the PAPs or members of their households while limiting their capacity to engage in business.

A youthful male PAP from Hoima district that participated in an FGD in September 2025 explained, “I was trained in catering beginning in August 2024 for four months. I received the training from St. Peter’s Vocational and Training School in Mubende. I did not understand what I was taught. We were not learning most of the time.”

He added, “We also did not do practicals most of the time. I cooked only once during the training. I cooked at Joyce Hotel in Mubende. When we would complain that we were not learning, we were told, ‘Do not bring your big heads [stubbornness] here. We will take you back to Hoima if you complain’.”

TRANSITIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE

In recognition of the fact that the PAPs could suffer from food stress following their displacement, the EACOP project developers committed to implement a

transitional food assistance programme through which they would give food rations to the PAPs.

Of the PAPs that participated in the study, 75% indicated that they received food assistance while 25% said that they did not receive any.

However, 65% of the PAPs that participated in the study observed that the food assistance was inadequate while 35% said that it was.

Those who considered the programme inadequate observed that insufficient food rations were distributed. They also noted that there was discrimination in the food distribution, with some PAPs receiving food while some of those that were critical of the EACOP project did not receive any. Other challenges were also seen.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research recommends that the EACOP Company fills the gaps in the LRP. These gaps are identified in the research report. Government should supervise the above processes while also ensuring local government and civil society oversight.

The research also recommends that government and the EACOP project developers engage the affected people and avoid constructing the pipeline against the aspirations of nearly 40% of the PAPs.

Mr. Dickens Kamugisha, AFIEGO's CEO, emphasizes, "Government says that Uganda is developing the oil sector to create lasting value for everyone. However, what this research shows is that that value is not being created for the people that were displaced for the project. They lost their land, were under-compensated and now an inadequate livelihood restoration programme is being implemented.

Instead of creating lasting value for the PAPs, government and the EACOP Company could create lasting poverty for the people. This must be remedied by implementing the recommendations made by the research."

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Read the full report by clicking [here](#).

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