



# Unburying their dead, destroying their gardens

**The EACOP**  
and Uganda's Women



April 2026



# INTRODUCTION

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Across Uganda's Albertine Graben and in various districts in Uganda, large-scale oil and gas projects such as the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) are being implemented.

While these projects are often presented as engines of national development by the Ugandan government and the oil companies operating in Uganda, communities report that the projects have negative impacts, which are deeply felt at household level, especially by women.

Women in oil host communities play central roles as farmers, caregivers, food providers, and custodians of community wellbeing. Their daily lives revolve around gardens, water sources, and social networks that help families survive.

However, oil infrastructure developments have disrupted these systems, creating immense challenges for women, especially the elderly, mothers, young girls and others.

To mark International Women's Day 2026, Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) has published this storybook with accounts of women affected by the construction activities for the EACOP.

The women's stories are emotive, and they remind us that extractive development models that take away the little that communities, including women, have to profit already-rich corporations have no business in a humane world.

AFIEGO invites you to read the women's stories and to join them in their struggles for justice.



# ABOUT THE EACOP

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The EACOP is a 1,443km pipeline that is expected to transport crude oil from the Lake Albert area in Western Uganda to the port of Tanga in Tanzania.

Development/construction of the pipeline is currently ongoing and as at April 2026, the EACOP was in various stages of development.

The pipeline is crossing ten districts in Uganda including Hoima, Kikuube, Kyankwanzi, and Kakumiro.

Others include Mubende, Gomba, Sembabule, Lwengo, Rakai and Kyotera.

In some districts, some of the following construction activities had been undertaken by April 2026: clearance and grading of the 30-metre EACOP right of way (RoW), laying of the pipeline, welding of the pipeline and burying it.

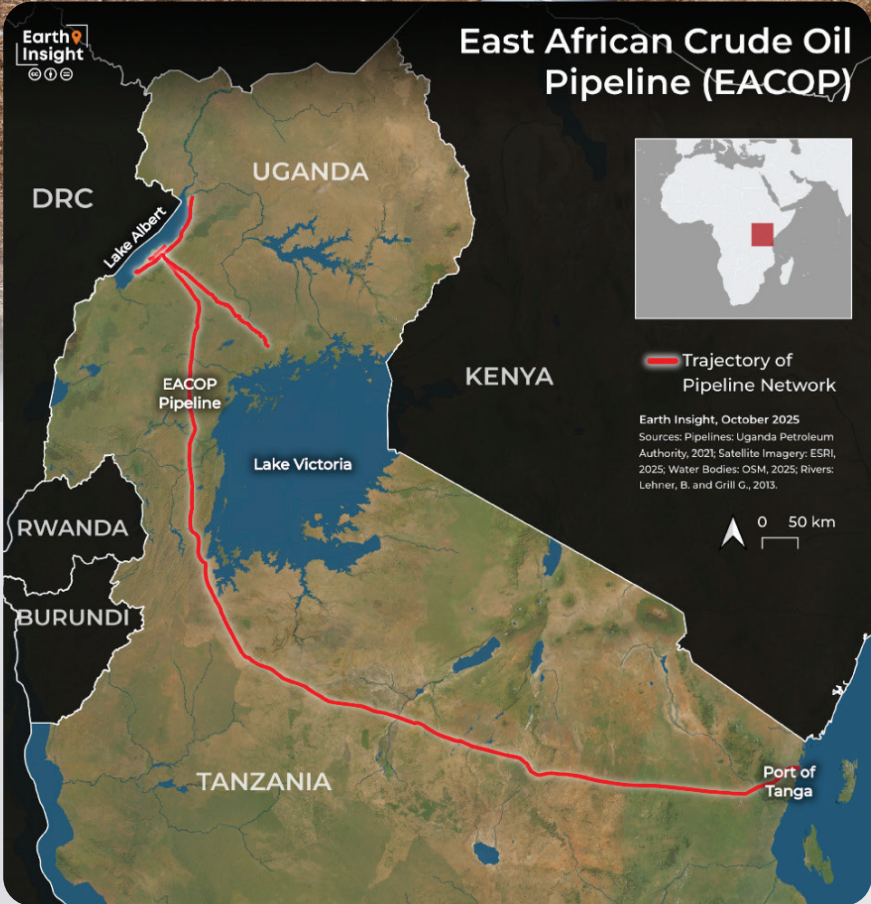
In other districts, only clearing and grading of the RoW as well as laying of the pipes had been undertaken.

In those districts, the pipeline will have to be welded together and buried.

Other infrastructure such as pump stations among others are also being developed as part of the EACOP project.

Communities say that the EACOP's construction activities are wreaking havoc, especially amongst women, the elderly and children.

This storybook relays the stories of women who have suffered negative impacts because of the EACOP construction activities.



A map of the EACOP



**Teddy Nakintu,  
Over 90 Years**

**EACOP wants to  
unbury my dead**

I am the only one left of my house.

And, if the EACOP Company keeps up with the way they are treating me, I may not be long for this world.

With me gone, the house of Yoana Kintu will be no more. This pains me.

But, before I share my story, I need to explain something. I belong to Buganda Kingdom, an ancient and powerful Ugandan cultural institution of which I am proud.

The Baganda have an interesting family structure, with all Baganda belonging to a clan.

The smallest unit of a clan into which a person from Buganda is born is the nuclear family. This is called one's house.

I was born into the house of Yoana Kintu of Kanabulemu village in Rakai district. Rakai is on the shores of Lake Victoria, the big, beautiful and bountiful lake that has helped generations in my family to make a living. The district is also located near Tanzania.

My father was married to my mother, Maria Nakanwagi. They had five children, and to make a living, they grew *empande* [*Bambara groundnuts*], beans, maize, and groundnuts. They also grew a lot of bananas because that was our staple food.

They raised us with love, but unfortunately, my father passed away when I was young.

He was a responsible man, and he left a will. In it, he said that his children had to be raised by his parents, my grandparents, including Maria Alikiliza and Yozefu Mwanje.

In those days, women did not have any means of their own, and it would have been difficult for my mother to raise five children, or even one child, on her own. She left us when our father died.

My grandparents moved my brothers, sisters and I to Kyebe village, near Sango Bay, in Rakai district after my parents' death.

My grandparents ensured that I attained some level of education. I attended Nazareti Primary School in Rakai. I must admit, I did not learn how to write while at the school. However, I learnt to read.

Later in life, my four brothers and sisters died, and I was left all alone. This perhaps set the tone for my life. A tone where in each generation, only one member of my family would survive.

Life must be lived however, and when I matured, I got married to my husband, John Bbale. We lived in Minziro village in Rakai district. The village is near Kasesero landing site but instead of being fishers, my husband and I chose to be farmers.

Our fortunes grew, and we had many cows as well as goats. We felt that we needed more land to rear our animals, leading us to relocate from Rakai to Lwengo district in southern Uganda.

We came to this village, Nanywa A in Lwengo, on July 3, 1968. The place had vast vast lands. We could engage in agriculture, and raise a family. I had many children, but all of them, except my son Ibrahim Katoogo, died.

Like me, Katoogo is the only one left of his house. Katoogo does not belong to my house, as children in Buganda belong to the houses of their fathers. We have a very strong bond, and are a loving family, but the fact remains that we are alone. We are the only ones of our respective houses.

Life has given me many pleasures, and also many sorrows. Despite the death of my husband and children, I continued to live.

In March 2018, officials who identified themselves as working on behalf of Total came with the chairman of our village, Mr. Abdu Segawa. They told me that my land was needed for the EACOP project. About 25% of my land was taken for the project.

I was advised to let my son be registered as the project-affected person considering my advanced age. It was argued that he would best be placed to follow up the compensation processes.

I agreed and in 2023, I received compensation for my land. The compensation was given to my son, who used a lot of it to treat me. You see, since I saw how these EACOP people intended to treat me as a prisoner, I became sick.

They came here to my home and put a mark stone there! They put another one there! The mark stones indicated the areas where their pipeline would pass.

I felt surrounded and I asked myself, what does Museveni want from me? [*H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni is Uganda's president. Many Uganda's attribute government decisions to develop any projects to him.*]

Why should I be surrounded by a pipeline? I lived in so much fear of the accidents, noise

and dust pollution that could arise because of the EACOP that I developed high blood pressure.

My fears came to life when in January 2026, rains came. At first, the rains were gentle: pitter patter, pitter patter. In February and March 2026 however, their volumes increased, and in early March, a flood of water entered my house, which I share with several grandchildren.

The floods also affected our family graveyard, threatening to sweep my dead children's remains away. It is as if EACOP wants even the dead to leave me! The floods resulted from the EACOP construction activities affecting the natural flow of water near my home.

I am tired of the EACOP and to the EACOP project developers, I say: I want justice! EACOP should stop harming me. They need to relocate me away from their pipeline so that I can live my last years in peace.



Water damage at  
Nakintu's home



Affected graves at  
Nakintu's home



Nakintu's house; the white barrier in front of the house was erected by the EACOP project sub-contractors to stop water damage to Nakintu's home. Nakintu says that the barrier is inadequate.



**Immaculate Ahimbisibwe,  
54 years, Hoima district**  
**EACOP introduced violence  
and terror in my life!**

I don't like EACOP! If I see their cars moving in this village, I turn away in anger. I don't want to see those people!

I am victim of domestic violence because of them. I also worked so hard to buy my farmland, and they came and destroyed it.

I have been told to introduce myself properly before I tell my story with EACOP however, so bear with me.

My name is Immaculate Ahimbisibwe, and I am 54 years old. I live in Kijumba village in Hoima district with my husband, Narisesiyo Turyatamba, and our family.

I did not always live in Kijumba village. I lived in many places but the one where I lived before here was Mbarara district in western Uganda.

There, I engaged in petty business. I mostly sold banana leaves, and when I made some money, my husband and I bought farmland in Kijumba.

We settled down and resorted to farming.

The Kijumba of those days was interesting. The soils were very fertile. We did not have good roads, but our gardens produced enough food and income. Even without proper transport, we lived well because the land provided everything we needed.

Today, things are different. Yes, big tarmac roads have been constructed because of oil activities, but we now have very little produce to transport to the markets. Our harvests have also reduced. Some of our land was taken for the EACOP, and the climate has also changed. In truth, life feels harder now than when we had poor roads.

I am a mother of seven children and everything I do is for them. Before the pipeline construction activities started in my village, I grew coffee, avocado, cassava, yams, and matooke [green bananas].

These crops helped me to take care of my children. I paid school fees, provided food, and even started small projects like piggery.

I loved my garden. One morning in September 2025, I went to my garden as I always did. But when I arrived, I found a lot of mud covering all my crops.

I was so shocked and I made an alarm. I called out to my neighbours, come, come, terror has befallen me. I could not believe what I was seeing.

The mud that washed into my garden and covered my crops was from the EACOP construction activities. When the people constructing the EACOP cleared the EACOP Right of Way, they heaped the soils from the excavation activities by the side of the pipeline.

In some places, they heaped the excavated soils in people's gardens and homes and did not compensate them. Can you believe those people?!

Anyways, after the terror that I witnessed in the garden, I returned home and told my husband. He also rushed to the garden.

When he saw the destruction, he was deeply upset. Later, oil company officials came and admitted that the damage was caused by the pipeline construction.

They promised compensation and sent a valuer. But when the valuation was done, the amount given was Shs. 300,000 [USD 81.7] for all my crops.

I refused to sign the compensation form because the amount was too small compared to the value of the crops and the harvest I used to get every year.

But the pressure was too much. They convinced my husband to sign and asked him to persuade me.

I still refused to sign. One night, he came home and we had a big fight.

I eventually signed the compensation form just to restore peace at home.

The compensation was sent to my husband's phone, and I never received any money from him.

Since then, life has become harder. My food stocks have reduced, and sometimes I must borrow money or food to feed my children.

My children comfort me in my sorrows. When I feel weak or discouraged, they remind me that God has better plans for us. Their support gives me strength.

If decision makers were here today, I would tell them one simple thing: when projects are implemented, they must not disturb the peace of communities. And, if people are affected, they should receive fair and timely compensation so they can rebuild their lives.



**Lahairu Lunkuse,  
32 years, Kyotera district**

**“They destroyed my  
garden and left me  
with nothing but fear”**

*In August 2024, the government of Uganda sued 80 people with interest in 41 parcels of land. The land is located in Lwengo, Rakai and Kyotera districts in southern Uganda.*

*The land was being compulsorily acquired for the EACOP. Some of the 80 people that were sued had rejected the low compensation that was being offered for their land.*

*Government wanted court to compel the affected people to take the low compensation that they had rejected. Government also sought eviction and demolition orders against the people.*

*Lahairu Lunkuse’s husband was one of the people that were sued. In October 2024 and August 2025, the High Court in Masaka issued eviction and demolition orders affecting the property through which Lunkuse was making a living..*

*Through this story, she shares how the demolition of her property affected her.*

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*The truth must be heard. Oil was supposed to bring development. But for me, it only brought suffering.*

*My name is Lahairu Lunkuse. I am a mother of ten. Four are my biological children, while the rest are my love children. They are my husband’s children, and what is my husband’s is mine too.*

Our family land, which measures about half an acre and is located in Kyotera district, was forcefully acquired for the EACOP. When I say forcefully, I mean it.

Before that project came, my life was simple and joyful. My husband, Ismail Bwowe, and I worked hard to provide for our family.

He used to work as a mechanic in Kampala, but when meetings for EACOP-affected households began in 2019, he would leave work often to attend them. One day, he returned to the city only to find his workplace demolished. That was the end of his job.

We left Kampala, settled in Kyotera and focused on farming. Our garden became our life. On that half acre, we grew cassava, matooke [green bananas], yams, and coffee. I had 43 cassava plants, 60 matooke plants, 70 yam plants, and 80 coffee trees, all mature and ready to sustain us.

From that land, we fed our children, paid school fees, and met our daily needs. We were not rich, but we had stable income. We were happy.

Then one day in September 2025, everything was taken from us.

I remember it clearly. Heavy machines and armed men entered our village. They were accompanied by oil company officials. At first, I did not know what was happening. Then they surrounded our garden.

We could not even step into it. In the presence of our local leaders and community members, they began to destroy everything.

They told people that the land had already been acquired for the EACOP and paid for, that it no longer belonged to us. This was a lie, as we have not received any compensation for our land. They ordered the community to take whatever food they could and warned that anyone who resisted would be arrested.

My husband and I were terrified. We ran and hid as our only source of survival was destroyed.

After they finished, they gathered the community and issued more threats, saying anyone who opposed them would face the same fate as my family. Then they left, without touching any other gardens in the area.

Four days later, I gathered the courage to return. I wanted to see what was left, maybe collect some food for my children. But when I reached the garden, I was chased away by oil company workers who were still there. I was denied even the right to feed my family.

That moment broke me. I thought of my children. How would they eat? How would they go to school? My husband had gone into hiding after being threatened with arrest. He switched off his phone and disappeared for safety.

I was left alone with ten children and no source of income.

The trauma was overwhelming. Life has never been the same.

Today, I work in other people's gardens just to feed my children and try to send them to school. My husband now struggles to survive, sometimes riding a rented boda-boda [motorcycle taxi] to earn something small. The life we built together has collapsed.

If I meet another woman going through what I have faced, I would tell her to stay strong, stand with her family, and to seek support. Unity is important. We must speak with one voice.

As for me, I am no longer afraid to speak. What was done to me was done in the open. I will continue to tell my story, no matter what.





**Fausta Kyomukama,  
90 years, Hoima district**

**Bountiful gifts from EACOP?  
No, no, no! I have only received  
stress and disease from  
that project!**

Krrrrr, went the sound of that machine!

I touched my ears, the way children do when they want to block out unwanted noises.

But, the noise was too loud. Krrrrrr, it went.

The EACOP, that pipeline which I am told will transport crude oil from Uganda to Tanga-Tanzania, was being welded together.

The noise went on and on, Krrrrr! Krrrrr! I collapsed, and I was rushed to a health centre by my family!

This was in December 2025.

That experience made me reflect on my life, and the huge damages that I have borne because of the EACOP.

Just so you know, today, I live in Kijumba village in Hoima district in western Uganda. I have lived here for more than 30 years. Around me are my daughters, grandchildren, relatives, and good neighbors who care about me.

When I was born however –I was born 90 years ago-, I lived in Kibale district, which is also in western Uganda.

There, life was different. We had plenty of food and could eat fruits and enjoy other gifts of nature. Life was enjoyable because we depended on the land and it never disappointed us.

I also enjoyed my life when I moved to Kijumba village, the second village that will be crossed by the EACOP after it begins its journey in Nyamasonga village in Hoima district. I was a farmer, and I enjoyed growing crops. Even in my old age, farming has remained my favorite activity. Digging small gardens keeps me active and gives me joy.

In addition to the gardening, before the EACOP project came to my village, I used to sit with my neighbors, talk, and enjoy the quiet life of the village.

The young ones in the village liked to talk to me. They would ask, **'Kaaka** [grandmother], long long ago, did you used to go to the garden every day? Were your parents so strict like ours? How about going to the club to dance? Did you used to go?'

I told the young ones many stories, and this kept me strong and happy.

When the EACOP construction activities started in my village in October 2025 however, I somehow became isolated. The first thing I noticed was the dust. Big cars and equipment came to the village, and they whipped up storms of dust.

The young ones may not remember this, but in those days, before the rains started came strong winds. The winds would whip up dust and it would dance in a ring and go up and up and up. It was magical to see those rings of dust.

However, the dust raised by the EACOP construction activities was anything but magical! It was too much, that women could not wash and hang clothes outside to dry, lest they got dirty. For the elderly like me, we had to hide from the dust, which isolated us.

Then there was the noise! I have talked about how it made me collapse, but the isolation it caused was also something else.

That noise could make you ran mad so one had to ran to the house and try to hide from it.

Worst of all is the fact that my land was taken for the finished petroleum products pipeline. That pipeline and the EACOP are near each other in my village, and in some cases, some families lost land to both pipelines.

When my land was taken, only a small portion was left. I used to keep myself busy by digging and growing food in that small part of the land that was left. My favorite food is Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, matooke, and cassava with beans as well as vegetables. I would grow some of these foods.

When the EACOP construction activities started, the workers of the company that are constructing the pipeline threw stones in that garden! I cannot grow food there anymore.

When I think of the EACOP and finished petroleum products pipeline, I feel stressed. I think of all the big beautiful promises of compensation that were made, but were not fulfilled!

I also worry about the future: will we suffer more impacts because of the EACOP? I get more diseases when I worry, so I need to stop thinking about this project. [Kyamukama is hypertensive.]

Before I go however, I have a message for the EACOP Company and government: if big projects are going to take place near communities like ours, they must treat elderly women with care.

They should consider relocating us to safer places and providing basic needs for our survival. Development should not take away the peace of old people who only wish to live their final years with dignity.





**Lydia Namaala,  
38 years, Ssembabule  
District**

**Empty promises  
and broken dreams is  
the EACOP's legacy  
in my life**

I have big aspirations for my children! I have four of them, and they are aged 8 to 17 years.

They are in school, and it is no mean feat to keep them there. I am a single mother, and I do many jobs, but mostly farming, to keep my children in school. Some study in Kampala, the big capital city and while others study in Sembabule, the district from which I come.

Growing up, I wanted to be a doctor. I did not realise my dreams, because my parents passed away while I was in secondary school. I dropped out in Senior 2, and quickly got married.

I however hope that my children will be spared the troubles that I faced and will live out some of my dreams. Perhaps one of them, or two, could become doctors.

When the EACOP came to my village of Kaboosa in Mitima sub-county, Sembabule district, I thought that I had been given a sure pathway to a wonderful future for my children.

NewPlan Ltd, which was working on behalf of the EACOP Company, came to our village in 2017, if I recall well. They engaged our village chairman first, and informed him that our land was going to be taken for the EACOP.

The chairman called us and said ‘Quick, you need to attend a meeting with these people [NewPlan]. They are going to take your land for a big project.’

At the meeting which was held in our village, NewPlan made exciting promises. They informed us that they were going to give us a lot of money. They would say, ‘We are going to give you Shs. 14 million [USD 3,768] for your land’, and we would smile, thinking that our futures were secured. About 37 by 137 feet of my land was acquired for the pipeline.

We, the community members whose land was going to be taken, were excited. On my part, I made plans to buy replacement land and build a home for my children and I. You know I am like every parent, each and everything I do has to be in the best interests of my children. I wanted them to have a place they could call home.

I and other community members started to fill that something was wrong when the compensation due to us was disclosed. The money that we were supposed to be given was so little! We complained, but no one listened to us.

Eventually, I received only Shs. 2.4 million [USD 646] for my land that was taken for the EACOP. The money also came in after many years of waiting! When I saw the money, I thought, All those years! And this is all they gave me!

I used to grow coffee on my land as well as some food crops like beans, maize and others. In addition to raising my children, I also live with my brother’s children. The land that was taken used to provide us with food, and some income.

We don’t have it now, and all we are left with are broken promises as well as unresolved grievances.

I hope that the EACOP Company will do us justice. Where possible, they should make monthly payments for our land. They took it for very little money, and they need to do right by paying us more. They should also acquire the orphan land that they promised to acquire.

*[After the EACOP Company took land from some affected people, some small portions of land were left for some affected households. These portions cannot support agriculture. They are called orphan land.]*



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