

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NORWAY

By Benon Ojiambo

Since 1814, Norway has been celebrating its Constitution Day on May 17. The day marks the anniversary for when the Norwegian Constitution was signed in 1814, ending more than four centuries of Danish rule.

In 1814 Denmark was on the losing side in Napoleon's wars, and Norway was supposed to be handed over to Sweden as spoils of war.

Norway refused to accept this, and the drafting and signing of the Constitution was a huge step towards sovereignty.

Norway was, however, forced to accept a personal union under a common monarch and common foreign policy, and remained in a union with Sweden until 1905 when it gained full independence.

Norwegians have since the 19th century celebrated their constitution with shows of national pride that include children's parades, the display of traditional dresses and the serving of traditional dishes.

It is considered a celebration of spring and renewal as the approaching Scandinavian summer brings blooming flowers, the return of migratory birds and warmer temperatures.

CHILDREN'S PARADE

The biggest May 17 parade takes place in the Oslo city centre, and includes up to 30 000 pupils from over 130 schools, accompanied by brass bands, marching through the city centre and past the Royal Palace, where they are greeted by



Norwegians celebrate their independence with shows of national pride that include parades, traditional attire, and traditional foods

PHOTO BY ASGEIR HELGESTAD

the Royal Family. Tens of thousands of people watch the big parade, cheering the children as they walk past waving flags, singing songs and shouting "Hooray".

Only children are allowed to join the parade which symbolises hope for the future and reflects the role younger generations have in preserving Norwegian values of democracy, equality and inclusiveness.

The brass bands play all kinds of music, but they will all play the national anthem, the "Ja, vi elsker dette landet" which is cherished by adults and children alike.

THE FOOD

It is common to start the national day celebrations with a festive potluck breakfast with friends before proceeding to watch the parade later.

Popular breakfast items include scrambled eggs, smoked salmon, cured meat, cheese and freshly baked bread.

During the day, hot dogs, ice cream and soda are the most popular. It is said that on this day the kids are allowed to eat as much ice cream as they can.

Other foods commonly served during the day include rømmegrøt, a sour cream porridge which is sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar and

accompanied by butter and cured meat. Additionally, salted and dried leg of lamb called fenelår and open-faced sandwiches called smorbrod are also prevalent.

The most traditional choice for dessert is bløtkake, a layer cake filled with whipped cream and fruit and decorated with vanilla icing, strawberries, and blueberries to reflect the colours of the flag.

NATIONAL COSTUMES

On May 17, Norwegians put on their best clothes, wearing dresses and suits and red, white and blue ribbons, the colours of the flag.

Traditional costumes called "bunads" are also worn to show national pride and local belonging.

The bunad is characterised by double-shuttle woven wool skirts or dresses for women. This is accompanied by jackets with scarves, while colourful accessories like purses and shoes complete the outfit.

For men, the bunad generally is made of a colourful heavily embroidered three-piece suit.

The designs and colours of these formal outfits vary by region, reflecting the country's artisanry with embroidery and other decorative elements, and are often passed down from one generation to another.

Wearing a bunad is considered a way of showcasing Norwegians' heritage and cultural identity, and the country's beloved tradition that has been passed down generations.



PHOTO BY FREDRIK AHLSEN

Girls enjoying some ice cream to celebrate the day



CLIFF KIBUUKA - UGANDAN ARTIST

May 17 in Norway is a magnificent display of national pride, culture and freedom. As a proud Ugandan living in Norway, I have always caught myself happily carried away by the infectious energy, dedication, happiness and, above all, clear inclusiveness brought about by this day. Gratulerer med dagen, Norge!



LAKERI ERTZGAARD UGANDAN-NORWEGIAN ATHLETE

Qualifying for the Olympics this month was a happy moment for me and my team. Knowing I have friends and family both in Uganda and Norway cheering for me makes me proud and motivated and was for sure important when running in the world championship. Now, I look forward to celebrating May 17 back home in Norway.



IDUN EMILIA BERGUM - LIVING IN UGANDA

I really love May 17 and all the fun we have that day I especially like the games, all the ice cream we are allowed to eat and also to dress up in our colourful bunad (national costume). I find it so nice and special that our national day is also a day when we children are celebrated.



TIRIL HANSGAARD

I usually celebrate May 17 by inviting my friends over for a big breakfast with champagne, and most importantly for me: Pavlova cake. We usually go to the city to see the procession and maybe march with our university, if we feel like it.



THE NORWAY-UGANDA FRIENDSHIP WILL LIVE ON

PHOTO BY ALFRED OCHO

Anne Kristin Hermansen is a career diplomat who has been the Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda since August last year. While this is her first posting as ambassador, she has held various positions at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in Norwegian Missions abroad. This is her second posting to Uganda, having served at the Embassy in Kampala as a Deputy Head of Mission between 2003 and 2006. *New Vision* sat down with her to talk about Norway's long-standing relationship with Uganda, the work of the Embassy and the Norwegian national day celebrations.



Anne Kristin Hermansen has been the Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda since August last year

You are quite new as Ambassador in Uganda, but you have lived here before. How was it to come back after so many years?

Returning to Uganda was a dream come true for me. I have many fond memories from my previous stay. Wonderful people, amazing nature. A lot has changed, the population has almost doubled, and Kampala is much bigger than when I left. The friendliness and hospitality of the people are the same.

This is not least reflected in Uganda's generous refugee policy. Uganda stands out as a stable country in a not so stable region, and the way you accommodate so many refugees from South Sudan, DRC and other countries in the region is commendable.

Today Norway marks its constitution day. How will you commemorate 17 May in Uganda this year?

May 17 is celebrated throughout Norway with children's parades, flags and speeches. In Oslo thousands of children march up the main street - to the palace, where they are greeted by the Norwegian King and his family.

The day is also celebrated in Norwegian communities abroad. In the spirit of Nordic friendship and like-mindedness, we have had one joint celebration the last couple of years.

FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY, EQUALITY AND PEACE ARE NOT OBTAINED ONCE AND FOR ALL. IT NEEDS TO BE PROTECTED AND PUSHED FOR RELENTLESSLY AND CONTINUOUSLY. THE TALK OF A GAP BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE REST IS NOT CONSTRUCTIVE

This year is a special one. Since the embassy is closing, we wanted to have our exclusive celebration, not only to commemorate the signing of the constitution, but also to mark 60 years of friendship and cooperation with Uganda.

How do you think the closure will affect the relationship between Norway and Uganda? The ties between Uganda and Norway are strong. After more than 60 years of cooperation, I believe our footprint will continue to be visible also after the embassy is closed.

Uganda is one of the countries where we can see concrete results of Norwegian cooperation.

From energy and development of the petroleum sector to our

investments in education and research, Norway has been a strong partner in Uganda since the 1960s.

Norway's long support to Uganda's energy sector has created a basis for Uganda to take advantage of the support provided by other actors. As an example, I would like to mention the World Bank Electricity Access Scale-Up Project, that was launched a few months ago.

I am also proud that the government chose Norway as an adviser when Uganda decided to exploit its resources in Albertine Graben. The Oil for Development Programme has been a great success for good governance in the petroleum sector.

Uganda is the largest partner for the Norwegian Programme for Capacity

Development in Higher Education and Research for Development.

Countless students and academics, in Uganda and Norway, have benefited from cooperation and exchange programmes in education and research.

Many Norwegian civil society organisations are engaged in activities to improve livelihoods, not least in refugee settlements. Norway has been able in its funding to bridge the gap between humanitarian and long-term development assistance.

During the insurgency in Northern Uganda, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) played a critical role in providing assistance to the internally displaced people. I have been told that a street in Gulu is named after the Norwegian



Royal Norwegian Embassy team

Jan Egeland, the then UN Under-secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, currently the head of NRC.

Not an easy footprint to notice, but nevertheless extremely important, is the role the Norwegian embassy played during the Ebola outbreak in 2022. I would like to commend the Government of Uganda and the Ministry of Health for their hard work to contain the outbreak in record time and for working in a coordinated manner with the international community.

The Norwegian Development Financing Institution, Norfund, is actively looking to increase its investment portfolio in Uganda. Norwegian companies are already

here, but there is great potential for more.

The cooperation between Ugandan and Norwegian partners over so many years has been mutually beneficial, and I am sure that we will continue to work together and to learn from each other.

The friends of Uganda in Norway are many. I am confident that you will continue to see Norway in Uganda, also in the future.

What is your message to Norwegians and Ugandans on the occasion of the Constitution Day?

The last years have demonstrated that development is not a linear process. It is no straight line upward. I would have liked to see greater income equality upon my return to Uganda after twenty years. All nations need to promote the basic principle of equal opportunities for all, regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic background, religion or gender.

I would have liked to see more transparency in the utilisation of public resources, greater focus on equitable growth and no conflicts or wars on the continent, building on the principle of peaceful coexistence and on joint interests.

At the same time, I see inequality and undemocratic forces on the rise in my own part of the world. A bloody war in Europe, started by a country which we share borders with. Norway feels its security is threatened for the first time since the cold war.

Freedom, democracy, equality and peace are not obtained once and for all. It needs to be protected and pushed for relentlessly and continuously.

The talk of a gap between the West and the Rest is not constructive. All of us, Ugandans or Norwegians, who want a better world, need to join forces. Focus on what is in our common interest, not on the differences. Solidarity is not something that only needs to be demonstrated from north to south, or west to east.

Solidarity must be exercised at the domestic level. You and I, we share the responsibility to improve our societies and to share our resources in a just manner. The responsibility to ensure that no one is left behind. This, I think, is in the spirit of May 17.

By Benon Ojiambo

From electricity generation, high voltage transmission lines, rural electrification to policy and regulation support, Norway's footprints spread wide across the entire electricity value chain.

Norway's support to Uganda's energy sector dates back to the mid-1990s when the sector was grappling to serve consumer needs. Back then, there was unreliable and unstable electricity supply, deteriorating infrastructure, high distribution losses, low revenue collection rates, low connection rates with only 5% of the population having access to electricity, and low investments into the sector.

Ruth Nankabirwa, energy and mineral development minister, describes the energy cooperation between Uganda and Norway as a mutually beneficial one that has touched hundreds of thousands of people in Uganda. "I express gratitude to the government of Norway. They have made an indelible mark and touched the souls of needy refugees in Uganda."

Kabagambe Kaliisa, the former permanent secretary at the energy ministry says a team of Ugandan officials visited Norway in 1996 to undertake discussions on possible cooperation between the two countries.

"...and in 1997, we signed an agreement of cooperation between the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development and the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE) purposely to review Uganda's energy sector," he said.

He explained that it was this memorandum that kick-started the process of electricity reforms that culminated into the passing of the Electricity Act 1999 (as amended), unbundling the former Uganda Electricity Board (UEB) and creating three successor companies.

These included Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited (UEGCL), Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCL), Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL) and the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) as an independent regulator for the energy sector.

NORWAY'S LASTING FOOTPRINT ON UGANDA'S ENERGY SECTOR

THE ENERGY COOPERATION BETWEEN UGANDA AND NORWAY HAS TOUCHED HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE IN UGANDA



Ambassador Anne Kristin Hermansen with Ruth Nankabirwa, Minister of Energy and Mineral Development

Hoima 220kV transmission line was financed with a grant from Norway.

ERA chief executive officer, Eng Zirira Waako, explains that her agency and the NVE in 2000 entered an institutional cooperation in which the latter provided support for organisational setup and regulation through legal and regulatory instruments, new tariff structures, licensing of rural networks, monitoring and compliance enforcement.

"By 2004, ERA had substantially developed 15-20 staff with relevant skills and training, who were performing their duties especially licensing and tariff determination. ERA had also already established a tariff structure by the end of 2001 with support from NVE," Waako said.

ELECTRICITY GENERATION

Since 2013, an important programme supporting Independent Power Producers (IPPs) funded by Norway is the Global Energy Transfer Feed-in Tariff (GET FIT) programme which provides subsidies in order to attract foreign investors to the sector.

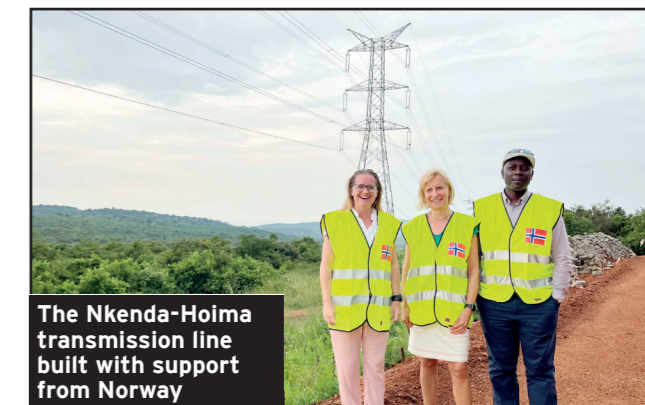
The \$100m programme was co-funded by different donor partners including the Norwegian government that contributed at least \$17m of the budget. Geoffrey Bakkabulindi, the GET FIT secretariat manager in Uganda describes the programme as a game changer for Uganda's energy sector through attraction of private capital of over \$450m into Uganda's

electricity generation segment. "It provided subsidies to various projects developed under the framework to make them financially sustainable while keeping the consumer electricity price affordable," he said.

Bakkabulindi explained that this was done by topping up the feed-in tariffs at which the Government licensed these projects. For instance, the government's feed-in tariff for solar PV projects was initially 11 US cents per kilowatt-hour. Through a competitive reverse auction process, GET FIT topped this up to 16 US cents, making these pioneering solar projects financially viable.

LAST MILE CONNECTIONS

Through the various projects, Nankabirwa says the Government has added over 1,433 kilometres of medium voltage power



The Nkenda-Hoima transmission line built with support from Norway

lines to the national grid with support from the government of Norway.

These projects, she explained, have facilitated over 23,559 free electricity connections for consumers in various districts like Kyenjojo, Mityana, Rukungiri, Kabale, Ntugamo, Kanungu, Kyegegwa, Rakai, Lyantonde, Kabale, Kisoro, Adjumani, Moyo, Amuru, Otuke, Gulu, Abim, Sembabule, Yumbe and Koboko.

In addition, Nankabirwa says they are currently implementing free electricity connections in the refugee hosting districts of Arua, Maracha, Madi Okollo, Nebbi, Packwach, Terego, Zombo, Yumbe and Koboko targeting 4,355 consumers.

The projects have also seen extension of the grid to different refugee settlements including Bidibidi in Yumbe, Lobore in Koboko and Pagirinya in Adjumani district.

ENERGY TRANSITION PLAN

In 2022, the Government

of Uganda, with support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, engaged the International Energy Agency (IEA) to develop a reliable fact-based energy overview of Uganda, as a basis for the coming integrated energy resource masterplan. Nankabirwa explained that through this support, her ministry produced the in-depth review report that offered a comprehensive assessment of the country's current energy landscape and a roadmap for achieving Uganda's energy goals.

The report was the basis for the development of the Ugandan Energy Transition Plan that was launched at COP 28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates last year. The plan seeks to chart a path towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy, utilising the vast renewable energy resources in the country, embracing innovative technologies, new solutions, and aligning Uganda's strategies with international agreements, including the Paris Agreement.



The Ugandan energy team in Norway on a training exchange visit (Picture: courtesy of the Norwegian Embassy)



CELEBRATING THE COOPERATION BETWEEN UEGCL AND NORWAY

By Benon Ojiambo

The cooperation between the Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited (UEGCL) and the Government of Norway dates back to 2017 when initial discussions between the two parties blossomed into a successful journey of collaboration. As a background, Norway is the largest hydropower producer in Europe and the sixth largest in the world with a total installed electricity capacity of 32,500 megawatts. Ninety seven percent of this capacity is from hydropower plants while the remaining 3% is generated from thermal and wind.

As a developing country, Uganda needs to harness her energy resources for economic growth and could learn a lot from countries like Norway through partnerships and collaborations.

UEGCL's mandate is to establish, acquire, maintain and operate electricity generation facilities, promote research and development in the electricity generation sector while running the company on sound business principles.

Uganda currently has an installed capacity of about 2000 MW, of which UEGCL accounts for about 1,213 MW (60%). The Government's Energy Policy (2023) targets 52,400 MW by 2040 which is a tall order, not only for the responsible agencies, key among which is UEGCL. Therefore, collaboration and partnerships with the Norwegian Government were timely, given the convergence of policy aspirations in regard to the energy sector.

INITIAL NORWEGIAN GRANT SUPPORT 2017-2019
The first grant from Norway to UEGCL came in 2017, and under this, UEGCL and the International Centre for Hydropower (ICH) of Norway entered into a memorandum of understanding to build UEGCL's competence to be able to fulfil its institutional mandate in both the technical and non-technical



UEGCL CEO, Eng Harrison Mutikanga (standing third left), Elin Ostebo Johansen (standing third right), the then Norwegian ambassador to Uganda and other officials during the ambassador's visit to the 600MW Karuma hydropower project in 2022. Norway supported UEGCL's efforts in building capacity in preparation for operation and maintenance of both Isimba and Karuma plants

KEY AMONG THE ACHIEVEMENTS WERE INCREASED PROFICIENCY IN OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE, COUPLED WITH ENHANCED SKILLING OF THE STAFF COMPLEMENT AND ACQUIRING OF SKILLS THROUGH EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES

aspects essential for the operation and maintenance of her power stations, project development and supervision.

This grant entailed activities like capacity building, studies for piloting the solar-hydro hybrid project, technical support for operating and maintaining Isimba and Karuma power plants.

SOLAR-HYDRO HYBRID PILOT STUDIES AT NYAGAK
UEGCL obtained a grant totalling to about sh1.28b to conduct studies for the pilot solar-hydro hybrid using Nyagak III as a case study. This assignment was



Zenia Chrysotomiditis (second left), the then Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Norway and UEGCL's CEO, Eng Harrison Mutikanga (second right) sign the memorandum of understanding as David Isingoma (right), UEGCL chief strategy and business development officer and another official look on at the embassy in Kampala in 2019

executed by Giertsen (WG) and Malthe Winje (MWIP) and was completed successfully. The findings indicated that it is economically and technically viable to hybridise solar and hydro to fully harness the potential and also augment the impacts of climate change.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT
The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs further approved a grant totalling to NOK7.4m (about sh2.57b) towards the operation and maintenance technical support for Isimba and Karuma plants. UEGCL with the support of ICH and Norconsult completed this assignment

in June 2019 and part of the grant was also used towards developing financial models for Isimba and Karuma.

HYDROPOWER OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE EXCELLENCE (HOME) PROGRAMME 2020-2024
The highlight of the Norwegian support to UEGCL is the five-year grant received in 2019 with the aim of supporting UEGCL's 2018-2023 strategic plan implementation. The signing of the agreement took place at the Norwegian Embassy in Uganda with UEGCL represented by Dr Eng Harrison E. Mutikanga, the Chief Executive

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

This was implemented by the International Centre for Hydropower (ICH) of Norway at a total cost of 4,500,000 Norwegian Kroner (about sh1.56b). In the period of its execution, a total of 100 UEGCL staff, including the board directors benefited from this programme. This programme also entailed benchmarking to Norwegian power plants, training in financial modelling and power purchase agreement structuring and negotiations, renewable energies and environment training, risk management, dam safety, safety health and environment, project management, and twinning partnerships with the electricity utility in Laos.

Officer while the Norwegian Government was represented by Her Excellency Elin Ostebo Johansen, the then Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda. The Grant was aimed at specifically supporting UEGCL's strategic objectives of improved knowledge, skills and abilities, and improved asset management.

The overall objective of the programme was to establish UEGCL as a professional operator of its hydropower plants through establishment of systems, procedures, technical support and provision of a wide range of capacity building activities for key staff.

The HOME programme was aimed at setting UEGCL on course towards operation and maintenance excellence of the new Isimba (183MW) and the soon to be commissioned Karuma (600MW) hydropower plants through provision of a wide range of capacity building activities for staff.

Key among the support areas are equipping the hydropower resource centre at Karuma, and operational and maintenance technical support. The grant totalling NOK84m (about \$8.5m) spans a five-year period from 2020 to 2024.

The grant involved operation and maintenance technical support focused on establishing professional operation and maintenance systems and procedures at the hydropower plants, and significantly strengthened the competence level of key UEGCL staff involved in operation and maintenance of the hydro-power plants.

In fact, it is through this support that UEGCL was able to discover the

deteriorated concrete of the Isimba hydropower plant spillway.

The Computerised Maintenance Management System (CMMS) was also part of the grant, and is a solution that helps to streamline maintenance processes, management and planning, helping organisations ensure consistent performance and increased efficiency. Currently, the installed CMMS - IBM Maximo support all Isimba maintenance activities.

The establishment of the training centre was equally an output of the grant with indicators on both the establishment of the centre and its utilisation. The HOME grant also enabled training courses for UEGCL staff, which were intended to build capacity and complement the mentoring efforts under the initial grant. Over 200 UEGCL staff have benefited from these training courses.

UEGCL is grateful for the insurmountable support it has received from the Norwegian government since 2017. The various activities planned for implementation were undertaken, and these immensely contributed to UEGCL's strategy execution.

Key among the achievements were increased proficiency in operations and maintenance, coupled with enhanced skilling of the staff complement and acquiring of skills through exchange programmes and tapping into the experience of the visiting short term experts. We look forward to continued bilateral cooperation with the Norwegian government as we continue generating for generations.



HOW NORWAY HELPED SHAPE UGANDA'S OIL AND GAS SECTOR

By Benon Ojiambo

Today, Norway boasts of arguably the world's most organised and well-developed oil and gas industry with the country's sovereign wealth fund in which all oil proceeds are deposited valued at about \$1.5 trillion. This translates to roughly \$270,000 per Norwegian citizen.

It is this model that Uganda sought to learn from in the sustainable exploitation of its oil resources. At the bottom of this model is the initial focus on capacity building, developing a stable legal framework and building institutions that will be relied on during the exploitation. Uganda confirmed commercial oil deposits in 2006 at Mputa 1 well in Kaiso-Tonya area, Hoima district.

Kabagambe Kaliisa, the former long-serving Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development says this discovery came with emergence of several issues, top of which included putting in place the requisite legal and institutional framework to support the development of the oil and gas sector.

"The legal framework we had been operating on largely focused on exploration. And yet, we were going into commercialisation of the oil resources," Kaliisa told *New Vision* in an interview.

Irene Batebe, the Permanent Secretary at the energy ministry, describes Uganda's cooperation with Norway as 'a very long win-win partnership' dating back to the 1980s. "If you have to look at the entire oil and gas sector of Uganda, its foundation was largely laid with support from Norway. When we discovered some oil seepages in the Albertine Graben, we had to build our capacity as a country to be able to do exploration work and pave way for the development of the industry.

Right away when our Government contacted the government of Norway in the 1980s, they supported us through a project where we were looking at



President Museveni presents awards of recognition to the technical team led by Kabagambe (third left) after the discovery of oil in Uganda in 2006



Irene Batebe, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development

strengthening the state of petroleum administration of the upstream sector in Uganda," Batebe said in an interview. This support culminated into the creation and formulation of the National Oil and Gas Policy 2008, the basis upon which the sector is currently structured, providing for establishment of different institutions to handle different tasks like regulation, policy and taking care of the business interests. These include the Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU) to regulate the sector, the Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC) to handle Government's business interests, while the ministry retained the role of policy formulation and licensing.

Batebe further explained that the Norwegian government was instrumental in helping Uganda build its institutional and human capital capacity through



Ernest Rubondo, ED, Petroleum Authority of Uganda on a supervisory visit to Tilenga project drilling activities

Uganda mirrored Norway's sovereign fund and put in place the petroleum fund where all the proceeds from our petroleum sector go to for purposes of supporting the next generations," she stated.

SECOND PROGRAMME

After the implementation of the first programme between 2005 and 2009, the Norwegian and Ugandan governments embarked on a new programme dubbed, Strengthening the Management of Oil and Gas Sector, a three-phased programme totalling to Norwegian Kroner 307 million (about sh111.77b) over a 15-year period.

This programme aimed at contributing to the achievement of the goals of the National Oil and Gas Policy 2008 which is 'to use the country's oil and gas resources to contribute to early achievement of poverty eradication and creating lasting value to society'. "Uganda's oil and gas sector follows best regulatory practices, and this has been benchmarked from oil producers from across the globe, including Norway, which provided a firm foundation for the milestones that have been achieved to date," says Ernest Rubondo, the Executive Director of the Petroleum Authority of Uganda.

This was to be achieved through putting in place institutional arrangements and capacities to ensure well-coordinated and result-oriented oil resource management, revenue management, environmental management and health, safety & environmental

management in the sector. "The support from Norway has also been instrumental in setting up state of the art infrastructure and systems for petroleum data management.

Data is an asset that is not only used by the Authority to perform its regulatory function, but is also used for investment promotion, taxation, evaluation of recoverable resources costs together with national planning among other things," Rubondo added. Dr Akankwasah Barirega, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) executive director alludes to the invaluable contribution of the Norwegian Government to the good standing of the Oil and Gas sector in Uganda's development frame.

Through the Norwegian support, the National Environment Act (NEA) Cap 153 was amended to incorporate the petroleum aspects as well as other emerging environmental challenges. Several Regulations under the NEA have also been developed in addition to the Petroleum Waste Regulations under the Upstream and Midstream Acts. NEMA's oil and gas manager, Isaac Ntujju, underscores the contribution of the Norwegian support towards capacity building in areas such as oil spill prevention, preparedness and response; environmental sensitivity mapping, environmental auditing, and compliance monitoring. "This is in addition to enhancing institutional collaboration among environmental regulatory institutions and the civil society," Ntujju says.

KEY OUTCOMES

Arising from the benchmarks and capacity we had built, we were able to negotiate in our production sharing agreements and get high recoverable rates for our Petroleum, something we wouldn't have done if we didn't have the capacity to negotiate. "It's very easy to negotiate and produce results that are not maximised and the companies come, do their drilling, and they leave immediately they earn their return on investment. For our case, we negotiated strongly and we require today that oil companies apply enhanced oil recovery methods that apply measures beyond the natural pressures of a production like steam or chemicals to polymers to drive the production so that you produce more crude oil," she said. This, Batebe adds, led to the determination of the confirmed 6.5 billion barrels of oil, of which 1.4 billion barrels is recoverable and this means increased revenue for the government as compared to when we would not have gone for the maximum production possible. Batebe explains that the Norwegians supported Uganda to conduct the feasibility study for the refinery to underpin the commercialisation plan and value addition in the country. "This will enable us to achieve our security of supply."

different training, many of which were done in Norway.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Norway through the Oil for Development programme has since 2009 helped Uganda build a robust oil and gas sector. This has been done through four different components including

- **The Petroleum Resources Management Component**, that involved capacity building of government institutions on management of the petroleum resource itself,
- **The Revenue Management Component**, that included putting in place frameworks for regulation and management of revenues accrued from petroleum.
- **The Environment**

Management Component, focused on putting in place a robust legal framework for environmental management in addition to enhancing capacity of environmental regulatory institutions to support sustainable exploitation of the resource, and,

● **The Safety Management Component**, focused on ensuring safety of workers during petroleum operations. Through these components, Batebe reasons that Uganda learnt the best practices from Norway and that these became the basis and strength during Uganda's negotiations with the oil companies. "On revenue management, for instance,

NORHED'S SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

By Jacky Achan

From building university infrastructure, to training PhD and Masters scholars, across universities in Uganda, Norway has ensured that its funding positively impacts on the higher education sector in Uganda.

Through the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED), Norway has worked with universities in Uganda including Makerere University, Makerere University Business School (MUBS), Kyambogo University and Uganda Christian University to improve livelihoods through research, with Makerere at the forefront of this partnership.



The Forestry building at Makerere University was built with support from Norway

THE IMPACT

- Over 400 staff at Makerere University trained with Norwegian support
- Fifteen buildings constructed at Makerere University Campus
- Uganda biggest beneficiary of Norway's research grants with over 21 programmes out of the 60 available globally

Makerere University. They expanded beyond natural resources and brought in gender, introducing the department of gender mainstreaming, to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and journalism. At least 15 buildings have been constructed at Makerere University campus, including the School of Gender and Women's

Studies. The Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation Building (or Forestry building) at the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences was equally constructed with funding from Norway, as well as the new block at the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT), soon to be renamed Norway building. In addition, the ICT

building at the College of Computing and Information Sciences (CoCIS), which is one of the largest computing and ICT training, information science, research and consultancy colleges in Africa, was also built with funding from Norway. Throughout the years, Norway has supported Makerere University in areas of infrastructure development, capacity building and technical assistance.

NORHED I, which started in 2013, has had tremendous achievement. "Collaboration was expanded beyond Makerere to include other partner universities like Uganda Christian University (UCU), Kyambogo University, Gulu University, Uganda Martyrs University and Makerere University Business School (MUBS) all came on board until 2020," Mukadasi says. NORHED I was a success and therefore the partnership continued. "Now we have NORHED II, it started running in 2021 and will end in 2026," reveals Mukadasi who is also a Professor of Forestry Resource Economics.

Out of 60 projects worldwide, 21 are in Uganda. Norway is spending up to NOK1.2b (over sh448b) under NORHED II. Along the way, there have been smaller programmes, for example, the Norwegian Partnership Programme for Global Academic Cooperation (NORPART). "It has supported us, many of our researchers have benefited

from it," Mukadasi states. There was also the Norad's Programme for Master Studies (NOMA) that was moving alongside.

"We have had fruitful, beneficial cooperation with Norway, to the extent that if we are to quantify our staff who have benefited through Norwegian training, we cannot have the exact number. However, we have about 1,300 staff, and of those, more than 400 have been trained with Norwegian support," reveals Mukadasi.

THE COLLABORATIONS

Out of the 19 programmes currently running under NORHED II, Makerere University and the University of Bergen are collaborating on six. "It's the biggest partnership with a Norwegian institution," says Dr Ronald Semyalo who is coordinating collaboration programmes between the two universities.

Other partner universities include the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), the University of Agder, the University of Oslo and the University of Tromsø - The Arctic University of Norway.

Makerere university holds a special place in the University of Bergen and the partnership has been running since 1988, under the Norwegian Universities' Committee for Development Oriented Research and Education (NUFU).

SESBILL IMPROVES CLASS ATTENDANCE IN KARAMOJA

By Vision Reporter

According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), about one in 10 children in Uganda did not report back to school after the COVID-19 pandemic. To recover learning loss, the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kampala released NOK63 million (sh22b) to Save the Children Uganda and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to implement the Strengthening Education Systems for Bridging Learning Loss (SESBILL) programme for over three years. The programme that

was launched in June 2021 will end on May 31. The beneficiaries include teenage mothers, learners who have dropped out for over a year and found it hard to enrol in a formal school system, and children in child-headed households. "We targeted learners slightly above the age of primary education. This is an accelerated education programme that runs concurrently with the formal school system," Francis Odwong, the project manager, says.

HOW IT WORKS

Under SESBILL, P1-P3 drop-outs are enrolled in the accelerated education programme, and when ready, are signed up in P6 or P7 in formal schools.

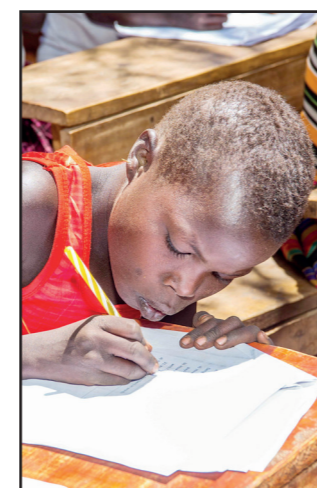
Their studies are fast-tracked so they can sit for their Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) and transition to post-primary education.

THE IMPACT

- There has been a substantial increase in the enrolment and retention of learners. One school reported that it had 250 students at project's start and now has over 1114 students.
- One of the project schools reported that they had no girls before the project started, and now have more than 50% attending school.
- The SESBILL programme allowed older children to attend school with their younger siblings. This enticed many of them to attend school, resulting in increased retention.
- Learners who enrolled in the accelerated learning programme in 2021 have transitioned to the mainstream primary education system. The programme links them to technical training institutions with scholarships. Most P6 and P7 learners have transitioned, a majority of whom are going to sit PLE this year, while others will do so next year.

SCHOOL FEEDING'S KEY ROLE Over the years, prevalent hunger in Karamoja has become a barrier to education, according to reports. By prioritising

feeding in schools, the programme enabled children to attend school without having to fight hunger pangs. Money for



A child in class in Karamoja

meals was sent to five community schools, implementing the accelerated education programme. "Through the same process, we supported school farming activities," he says. According to him, the initiative has boosted school attendance in Karamoja.

OTHER SUPPORT

According to Odwong, SESBILL also provided cash for academic support. "Instead of buying books, uniforms, and other scholastic materials, we would transfer this money to learners through their parents, who would use it to help their children.

PROGRAMMES SUPPORTED



Yvette Nyiramushiga is a refugee engaged in solar-powered vegetable farming since 2022. Through Norway's support to World Food Programme, refugees are being assisted to rely less on food rations by supporting sustainable livelihood alternatives



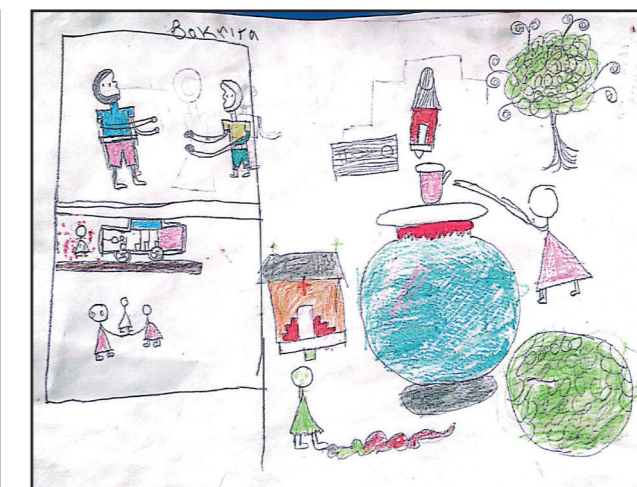
Medical staff at the emergency ward for Ebola patients at Mubende Hospital in September 2022. With Norwegian funding, the WHO equipped health workers, ensured their safety and equipped other staff with the required gadgets for data collection and monitoring



Refugee fish farmers in Bidibidi settlement. Since 2016, the Norwegian Embassy has funded Caritas to respond to the nutritional needs of refugees in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement and Yumbe host district. Up to 30,000 refugees and host community members have benefited



Refugee women in Zone I Bidibidi refugee settlement, Yumbe District attending a vocational skills course under the UN Women Leadership Empowerment Access and Protection (LEAP) project



Through YGlobal, Stromme Foundation and ADRA, Norway has supported the provision of art therapy to children affected by conflict in Kiryandongo



Samuel Elvis Ojela, a member of the Ocorimongin Together Savings Group in a cassava garden. To strengthen food and income security among smallholder farmers in Katakwi and Kaberamaido districts, Norway, in collaboration with The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), are facilitating access to quality and disease-tolerant seeds



Bujagali Hydroelectric Power Station partly owned by Scatec (a Norwegian company) with investment from Norway's development financing agency, Norfund



Male role models in Mayuge district discussing how to engage their communities to fight gender-based violence. Norway supports UNFPA, Marie Stopes and Care to provide SRHR information and services to the youth and young mothers in Kamuli and Mayuge districts



A refugee farmer engaged in solar-powered irrigation vegetable farming. Through Norway's support to World Food Programme, she no longer needs to depend on emergency food assistance



DINA SPECIAL CHILDREN UGANDA

PROVIDING HOPE AND A FUTURE FOR THE WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN

UNWANTED AND LEFT TO A LIFE WHERE MOST WISH YOU WOULD DISAPPEAR, IS AN INDESCRIBABLY PAINFUL EXPERIENCE. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS IS THE REALITY FOR MANY CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN UGANDA

Dina Special Children Uganda was started in 2020 and aims to provide security, care, and protection to children born with disabilities in Uganda in collaboration with local authorities. Over the past two years, the foundation has built a village in Mpigi for children with disabilities. Phase one of the village was completed in January, and the first children moved in.

In Uganda, between 11% and 16% of children are born with disabilities. For them, the world can be a dangerous place.

"It's heartbreaking to see the cruelty and suffering children with disabilities experience in Uganda, especially when they are born with a body and mind that makes them so vulnerable," says Rune Edvardsen, the founder of Dina Special Children Uganda.

"Children born with disabilities are found everywhere here, yet they are treated as if they were



Rune Edvardsen with children in the Pearl of Africa Village in Mpigi, Uganda

invisible. They are often hidden away because of shame and superstition. We often find them in narrow alleys, in slums crowded with small shacks. There, they live in circumstances so awful that it's hard to

put into words," he says. Recently, Dina Special Children Uganda found a little girl abandoned by her mother and then later by her father. The stepmother, who was sick herself, was left to care for the child.

The little girl was covered in bruises - a clear sign of abuse. She was thin and ill due to poor nutrition. Fortunately, she was found and rescued. She was one of the first children to move into the village in Mpigi.



Vera, who is almost blind, used to take care of her granddaughter Grace and her brother, who also has special needs. Grace now lives in the special needs village where she attends school

Now, two months later, she is smiling and laughing. Clean and dressed in fresh clothes, her bruises have healed, and she is no longer the fragile, skinny girl rescued from the slums.

The village in Mpigi provides a support system for children with disabilities in Uganda. Since January, over 50 children have been rescued. New children arrive in the village every week. Here, they receive a safe place to live, care, medical treatment, rehabilitation, education, and a community that supports their special needs.

Dina Special Children Uganda encourages parents to join their children and live together as a family. This approach helps create a safe and supportive environment where children can develop and live happy and dignified lives. The village in Mpigi is an inspiring example of how a community can come together to create positive change.

SPICE DIANA FIGHTS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

By Jacky Achan

Having grown up in the slums of Nakulabye, a suburb in Kampala, musician Spice Diana defied the odds to become a successful performing and visual artist who no longer lives in abject poverty. That said, she never erased that past, but held onto it to support others. Leaning on her difficult childhood, Spice, whose real name is Diana Namukwaya Hajara, has remained sympathetic and supportive towards children living a deprived life. Through her music, she aims to inspire teenagers to pursue success in life.



Spice Diana helps children with special needs

For example, she uses her Keep in School with Talent programme that she started as a teenage musician to encourage

youth to stay in school. She would use her minimal resources, to reward children pursuing both education and music, and

later upgraded that reward to a small bursary. Her music has taken her to remote areas of Uganda where she has encountered more vulnerable people. That exposure strongly re-awakened her past in which she grew up with a single mother and four siblings, doing odd jobs to survive.

Spice set up Kwaya Foundation through which she helps single mothers, the elderly, widows, the underprivileged and children with special needs. "I felt I had to look out for neglected and disabled children; those seen as a curse," she says. By and by, this noble cause exposed her to a collaboration with Norwegian founded-Dina Foundation Uganda, located in Mpigi district,

whose mission is to give children with disabilities a safe and happy childhood. "We organised sensitisation events to teach communities how to treat stigma, and best manage children with special needs," Spice reveals of their work. The singer met Anne Kristin Hermansen, the ambassador of Norway to Uganda through Dina Foundation, and has worked with her to support special needs children in Uganda. "Because I use my platform to speak for these children, Good Samaritans love them by extending support, not just to Dina Foundation, but other children's homes."

IMPACT

"Norway has provided housing, clothing, food

and education to these children. They started from a small home and are now a whole community in Mpigi," Spice says. In January this year, she was appointed as the ambassador of Dina Foundation Uganda, a role she voluntarily performs. "We identify these children in communities and teach mothers how to care for them. The Norwegians have good policies for vulnerable communities in Uganda. Even though the embassy closed, I know we shall continue working together through our platforms and Ambassador Hermansen will come back to visit the children," she says.



HOW NORWAY AIDED UGANDA'S RESPONSE TO COVID, EBOLA

By Benon Ojambo

When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2020, it was a time for swift response, and for Uganda, this response was facilitated by several partners. One of the key partners that helped Uganda with the COVID-19 and later Ebola epidemic storms was the government of Norway through its embassy in Kampala.

The support was channelled through the World Health Organisation's (WHO) country office in Uganda. Dr Elizabeth Mgamb, the WHO Uganda Emergency Preparedness and Response Team Lead, describes the relationship as cordial. "This has culminated in us receiving additional support from Norway through the Norwegian embassy in Kampala.

THE SUPPORT

Mgamb says the financial support from the embassy was channelled towards responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through different areas, like emergency response for both COVID-19 and Ebola, something that ensured low mortalities and mobility cases, protecting the populace.

Key among the initiatives taken to protect the populations was the roll-out of vaccination programmes, though few doses were initially available and vaccination was mostly done in health facilities.

As the doses became available, it was the inadequate availability of resources that stood in the way of the vaccine rollout. Uganda relied on several of its partners, including Norway, to provide the financing needed to support the acceleration of the COVID-19 vaccination as a way of preventing and reducing mortality.

"With the funding from Norway, we set up about 730 vaccination sites across the country, equipped health workers, ensured their safety, and equipped other staff with the required gadgets for data collection and monitoring. We identified districts

with low coverage of COVID-19 vaccines, but with high cases, and supported about 20 districts to deploy the COVID-19 vaccines," Mgamb said.

And as a result of this support, about 26.4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered by October 2022, leading to a reduction in severe cases.

EBOLA

After the declaration of the Sudan Ebola virus in Uganda in September 2022, initially in Mubende and later in eight other districts, WHO supported the Ministry of Health in coordinating the national response and other implementing partners to rapidly interrupt transmission, contributing to the reduction in morbidity and mortality related to the outbreak.

At least six WHO technical experts were deployed at the national and sub-national levels that contributed to the overall timely containment of the outbreak, enhanced laboratory expertise, external relations, resource mobilisation, coordination of the partners in the response, as well as support for recovery efforts.

"Initially, there were delays in the turnaround time for receiving results after samples had been sent.

The turnaround time of more than 24 hours was high, yet there was a need to ensure that we were receiving results in time, possibly in less than 24 hours," Mgamb said. The

health ministry together with WHO declared the end of the Ebola outbreak on January 11, 2023, after 42 days with no new cases and robust surveillance.

SRHR PARTNERSHIP

In 2022, the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Uganda signed an agreement to increase the utilisation of integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services for adolescents and youth in the eastern districts of Kamuli and Mayuge.

The project, dubbed, *My Body, My Life, My World*, aims at empowering young girls and women to decide over their own bodies and to ensure universal access to comprehensive adolescent and youth-friendly SRHR information and services.

The project primarily targets in and out-of-school young people aged 10-24 years and the people and structures that directly or indirectly influence the lives of the targeted young people, including parents, carers, community health volunteers, political, religious, cultural, and community leaders, health care providers, teachers, district sectoral leads, and policymakers.

"Norway is committed to supporting Uganda to achieve its goals of reducing child marriage and teenage pregnancies through access to SRHR services," H.E. Elin Østebro Johansen, the Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda,



Uganda responded to the Ebola outbreak using lessons learned from COVID-19

said in 2022.

WORK WITH GENDER MINISTRY

Angella Nakafeero, the commissioner for gender and women affairs at the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, hailed

Uganda's cooperation with the embassy of Norway's support for Uganda's fight against gender-based violence.

"We have over time established strong development cooperation with the Government of

Norway. I wish to convey our most sincere gratitude for the collaboration on different programmes geared towards gender equality and women's empowerment," Nakafeero said.

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GEFD SPURED GENDER EQUALITY

The joint programme on gender-based violence that was supported through the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), support for the female genital mutilation abandonment campaign through the Joint Global Trust Fund, and support for the Women Peace and Security Agenda were exceptional. Angella Nakafeero, the commissioner for gender and women affairs at the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development says the second phase of the Women Peace and Security Programme that was launched in May 2023, as well as the Gender Equality for Development (GEfD) Programme are being launched. "The overall aim of the GEfD Programme is to facilitate government-to-government cooperation, peer-to-peer learning, and dialogue on gender equality and women's empowerment. The programme has offered a great opportunity for institutions to learn and share experiences on the delivery of gender equality," she said.



CREATING HUMANITARIAN

By Benon Ojiambo

As a non-English-speaking refugee in Uganda, Shauriyao had a rough time finding a job due to language limitations, despite having the right to seek employment in the country.

"Because I couldn't speak English, an early childhood development centre rejected my first application for a job. This derailed me. There are schools for children and a few for adults, but they teach people who have not set foot in class. It is not that I cannot read or write; I can do that in Swahili and Lingala, but I am now in an English-speaking country and couldn't secure a job because I needed to speak English," Shauriyao says.

She is one of the 2,811 refugee and host community women who acquired literacy and numeracy skills through the English for Adults programme by the end of



The Norwegian Embassy's relationship with NRC has been in terms of practical financial support for the projects they are implementing in Uganda

last year.

UN Women carried out the programme with funding from the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala through the Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection (LEAP) initiative, which focused on ensuring that women and girls affected by crises lead,

participate in, and benefit from economic recovery, relief, and response efforts. "When the UN Women's partner, Refugee Law Project, began English for adult classes in my community, I enrolled right away. My skills in speaking and writing English have enabled me to secure a



The Norwegian Embassy's support for refugee organisations in Uganda came at a critical point when the country received an influx of South Sudanese refugees

contract with Children on the Edge Africa as a caretaker at one of their centres in the Kyaka II Refugee Settlement in Kyegegwa.

I am overjoyed because this opportunity would not have happened if I did not enrol in EFA," Shauriyao said.

CARITAS

On its part, Caritas Norway has worked in partnership with Caritas Uganda since 1986, and this cooperation has enjoyed financial support from the embassy. Sunniva Håberg, the Regional Representative at Caritas Uganda, says the Norwegian Embassy's

support in 2016 came at a critical point when Uganda received an influx of South Sudanese refugees. "It allowed Caritas Norway and Caritas Uganda to quickly respond to the needs in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement and Yumbe as a host district. The continued funding from the embassy



IMPACT



Norway supports UNFPA, Marie Stopes and Care to provide SRHR information and services to the youth and young mothers in Kamuli and Mayuge districts

ensured we could keep the support going to assist a larger target group," Håberg told the *New Vision*. With the embassy's support for Caritas, Håberg says they have now reached a total of 21,100 households in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement and Yumbe host district, supporting the participants in increasing food production, dietary diversification, skill building, and learning tools for becoming more resilient to climate change.

NRC'S SESBILL TOUCHES 93,000 Laura Marshall, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) Uganda country director, described her organisation's relationship with the embassy as an "extremely collaborative partnership," both in terms of practical financial support for the projects they are implementing in Uganda.

One of the projects is the Strengthening Education Systems, Bridging Learning Loss (SESBILL) project, which aims at helping schools and children respond to the schools' shut-down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "We were targeting children who had become refugees and had not managed to enter the school system in Uganda.

We were also targeting Ugandan children who might not have had access to school, especially at the primary level. We work with school management committees to help them identify schools.

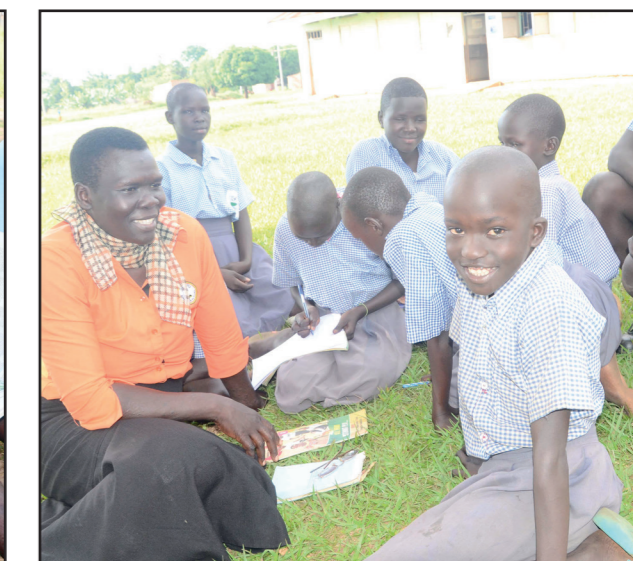
We assist them in identifying their primary needs, identifying the obstacles preventing children from accessing education, and providing them with significant flexibility in addressing these challenges, according to Marshall.

The SESBILL programme benefited up to 93,226 children, of whom 47,552 were boys, 45,674 were girls, and 3863 were children with disabilities. Additionally, up to 477 teachers, 224 of whom were female, received training in technical and pedagogical skills through the programme.

"The installation of energy-saving stoves enabled schools to save 70% of their budget. Before installation, SESBILL project schools used to buy 10 trips of firewood in one year, compared to only 3 trips of firewood after installation. One trip of firewood costs \$500,000. One trip of firewood costs 500,000 transport inclusive," Marshall said.



Primary Seven candidates of Odek Primary School revising using newspapers in Omoro district



Catherine Akot Nono, uses Toto Magazine to show Primary Three pupils in Nwoya how to draw pictures

OVER 200 SCHOOLS BENEFIT FROM VISION'S NIE PULL-OUT

By Jacky Achan

For over a decade now, Vision Group, through Save the Children International, has received funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) to support the weekly Newspapers in Education (NiE) pull-out. The pull-out aims to provide children with information about their rights and issues that affect them, as well as the opportunity to share their opinions and ideas.

"We are talking of a partnership spanning over a decade now since 2013," John Eremu, the editor of *New Vision*, says.

He states that the NiE project is an exciting innovation that encourages the use of newspapers to deliver the education curriculum in innovative ways in classrooms across the country to stimulate discussion among learners and promote literacy.

Over 200 schools have now benefited. "Initially, we operated in schools in Uganda's central part, particularly the cattle corridor schools in districts that include Nakaseke, Nakasongola, and Luweero," Eremu says. But the intervention in the central region ended.

Under the current partnership, Vision Group's NiE programme, through NORAD funding, is supporting 154 schools in Karamoja and Acholi subregions.

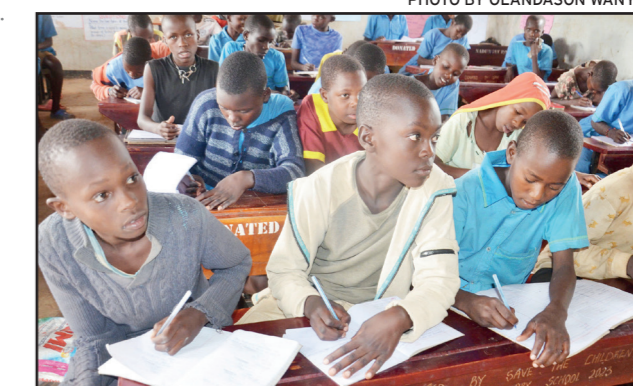


PHOTO BY OLANDASON WANYAMA

A P7 class at Nadunget PS doing a class time exercise

THE OPPORTUNITIES

According to Eremu, through NiE, children have a platform to participate in policy debates because, in most cases, they lack access to decision-makers. "We encourage the children to write about significant issues that affect them in the news through the *New Vision* NiE pull-out, and we also empower them concerning their rights through the platform. We empower them to also advocate for their rights; we ask them to share their opinions on some issues that affect or impact them. For example, we have an international calendar on children's issues, and we engage them from time to time," he says.

The 104 communities where the schools are located have also felt the impact, and they now understand more about child rights, child responsibility, and how to create a safer environment for the students both at school and at home.

"We discovered that parents are becoming more involved in their children's education because of these newspapers." The schools now act as some kind of community library, and parents and those interested in adult education (learning) also come and read the newspapers," Eremu disclosed.

Research conducted by the Save the Children Monitoring and Evaluation Department, which periodically surveys and evaluates the impact of the NiE projects, consistently demonstrates their positive outcomes.

For example, in terms of awareness about child rights, the benefiting communities are way above those who do not benefit from this project.

Additionally, children transitioning from community schools that implement NiE end up performing better in terms of learning outcomes. "First of all, they settle

well, faster, and are more confident," Eremu says.

According to him, their literacy level is even higher than that of the formal schools that do not have this NiE project.

Additionally, research has shown that schools receiving NiE actually outperform those not receiving it when it comes to learning outcomes at the end of the primary school cycle, or the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE).

"The NiE impact has been huge in terms of transforming learning outcomes, raising awareness of children's rights, and providing support for education," he states.

Eremu also says there is a lot of interest in the NiE project, with schools asking to be considered, particularly the formal schools, as well as other communities. The impact extends beyond the project areas.

He believes Norway will continue to support the NiE project. This project provides support to the most vulnerable members of our society, particularly those in rural areas.

"I don't think the closure of the Norway embassy here should affect this support. They can still do it with or without the embassy. However, if they decide to stop funding the programme, then that will be unfortunate because it will affect thousands of children who are benefiting from it," Eremu says.



Stromme Foundation Uganda congratulates Norway upon the National Day Celebrations



Learners enjoying a lesson. SFU provides access to inclusive quality education



Members of a Community Managed Savings Group during one of their meetings



Youth making briquettes out of organic waste, an initiative of SFU to promote green jobs and skills.

Stromme Foundation Uganda is pleased to join the Government of Uganda and the rest of the world to congratulate the people of Norway on their National Day.

Stromme Foundation Uganda recognizes and celebrates our collaboration that has over the last 30 years enabled us to reach millions of people in our mission of eradicating poverty amongst the vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities of Uganda. Your support for this remarkable cause is invaluable.

Special appreciation goes to the people and governments of Norway for the financial and technical support of our work. We remain committed to working with you in our mission to eradicate poverty through Inclusive Quality Education and Income and Job Creation interventions.

Wishing you a joyous National Day celebration. Stromme Foundation Uganda



NORFUND'S \$178M INVESTMENTS CREATES JOBS FOR UGANDANS

By Benon Ojiambo

Norfund's investments over a 20-year period have created at least 5,000 direct jobs and tens of thousands of indirect ones.

Norfund is the Norwegian government-owned and funded investment fund for developing countries, owned and funded by the Norwegian government.

The Fund invests to create jobs, improve lives, and support the transition to net zero. By investing for impact on commercial terms through a local presence, it seeks solutions designed for the countries in which it invests.

It primarily focuses its investments in areas like renewable energy, financial inclusion, scalable enterprises, and green infrastructure.

Norfund has invested more than \$3b in more

than 1,100 companies, creating approximately 513,000 jobs in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The fund's investment portfolio in Uganda dates back to 2004, when it made investments in DFCU Limited, one of the largest financial institutions in the nation.

Since then, Norfund has a considerable investment portfolio amounting to about \$178.5 million in over 100 companies from different sectors like energy, finance, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), scalable investments, green infrastructure, forestry, aquaculture, and logistics.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

The \$47 million investment in the 250-megawatt Bujagali hydropower plant, one of Uganda's first private investments in Uganda's electricity

supply industry following the 1990s reforms, remains Norfund's biggest investment in the country.

Bujagali, currently the largest electricity generation plant in Uganda, increased Uganda's installed capacity by 44% and nearly doubled Uganda's effective peak generation capacity at commissioning.

At the time of commissioning, Uganda was experiencing an energy crisis characterised by frequent load shedding that averaged 12 hours a day and substantial government spending averaging \$9.5 each month on subsidising thermal power to cover for generation shortfalls.

"Bujagali addressed a serious power shortage, and since then, a number of plants of different technologies have been commissioned to provide the country with the



PHOTO BY BENON OJIAMBO

Bujagali hydropower plant is one of the major investments Norfund made in Uganda

power supply stability it currently enjoys," Eng Ziria Waako, the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) Chief Executive Officer, told the *New Vision* as Bujagali marked its 10-year commissioning anniversary in 2022.

Recently, Norfund transferred Bujagali to Klinchenberg, an investment vehicle in which it holds a 50.1% controlling stake. Norfund has since invested in various renewable energy projects,

including Rwimi, Mpanga, Nyamwamba I, and Nyamwamba II hydropower facilities, generating a total of 291 megawatts of electricity by the end of 2022.

FORESTRY

Norfund's major investment in Uganda is a capital injection into Green Resources, which is East Africa's largest forest development and wood processing company.

The company manages approximately 38,000 hectares of plantation forest in Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Locally, Norfund invested up to \$33.5m in Green Resources, acquiring a 51% stake in the company.

Other investments are in aquaculture, logistics, financial services, and banking, all of which cumulatively impact about 130 firms and create over 5,000 direct jobs and tens of thousands of jobs.

KYAMBOGO



UNIVERSITY

Kyambogo University's partnership with the Norwegian Government

Kyambogo University appreciates the Norwegian government for its partnership, support, and collaboration, which has significantly impacted the university's research and internationalisation of education. This is through various projects and programs coordinated with Oslo Met University, Norway. The projects include:

- 1) The Noma Master of Vocational Pedagogy (MVP) project (2008-2013)
- 2) The KyU NORHED MVP project 2013-2020
- 3) The FK exchange project (2013-2019)

The FK exchange project is a shining example of Kyambogo University's commitment to international cooperation. This project facilitated staff mobility for over 30 university teaching and non-teaching staff in partner countries, fostering a deeper understanding of our respective educational systems and significantly enhancing the capacity of the Kyambogo University International Relations Office.

As a testament to our commitment to internationalisation, Kyambogo University has hosted over 150 Norwegian students for internships, summer school, semester exchange, and other short courses across various faculties, collaborative schools, and institutions. This vibrant exchange of knowledge and culture has enriched our academic community and fostered lasting friendships, demonstrating the profound impact of international student exchange on our campus.



Student teachers from Oslo Met University to Kyambogo University for a semester exchange

The main goals for the collaboration were to:

1. Our primary goal for this collaboration was to build capacity for International Cooperation and strengthen relations between Kyambogo University and Oslo met University (HIAK then). We are proud to share that we have successfully supported the establishment of an international office to handle internationalisation at Kyambogo University, a significant step towards our shared vision.
2. Connect Education to the world of work in some selected vocational fields.
3. Focus on vocational-oriented learning methods and environmentally friendly solutions to develop the world of work, make education more relevant, and make students more employable.

The NORHED MVP Project (2008-2020) and KYU NORHED MVP project 2013-2020

The collaboration involved Kyambogo University's Faculty of Vocational Studies in Uganda and Arkershus University College's Department of Vocational Teacher Education, now Oslo Metropolitan University. The main objective of this collaboration was to improve the prospects for sustainable livelihoods for youth and adults by bridging the gap between vocational education and training (VET) and the labour market. Key activities included enhancing the capacity of TVET human resources, improving research for TVET through the MVP Programs, strengthening Kyambogo University's capacity to offer TVET programs, integrating emerging technologies and innovation in TVET, and establishing more robust connections between the world of work and TVET training institutions.



Oslo met University team, NORHED-MVP project coordinators, and facilitators pose for a photo with the Vice Chancellor of Kyambogo University.

In 2008, the Faculty of Vocational Studies at Kyambogo University developed the Masters in Vocational Pedagogy Programme and Post Graduate Diploma in Vocational Pedagogy Programs. They were accredited by NCHE in 2009. The first cohort of 14 students graduated in 2011, and since then, over 120 students, some privately sponsored and others sponsored by Norway through the NOMA MVP Project (2008-2013) and NORHED MVP Project (2013-2020), have graduated. These programs have significantly impacted TVET in public and private training institutions, contributing to the broader goal.

At Kyambogo University, over 50 staff members have received research training and supervision skills, with over ten acquiring a Master's Degree. Additionally, the Norwegian Government has supported three staff members at the PhD level. These individuals continue to serve as teaching staff in various TVET programs at Kyambogo University. The research work on TVET/Vocational Pedagogy has been featured in UNESCO-UNEVOC publications, including ongoing activities after the NORHED MVP Project. As a result, Kyambogo University has re-accredited UNEVOC Membership and centre roles, elevating its status about TVET and development.