

Voices of Resilience: Intergenerational Stories for Healing, Unity and Collective Action in Oil-Host Communities.



Group photo of the Elders and women and young grassroots organizers, activists and Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs); women and youth in the Albertine region.

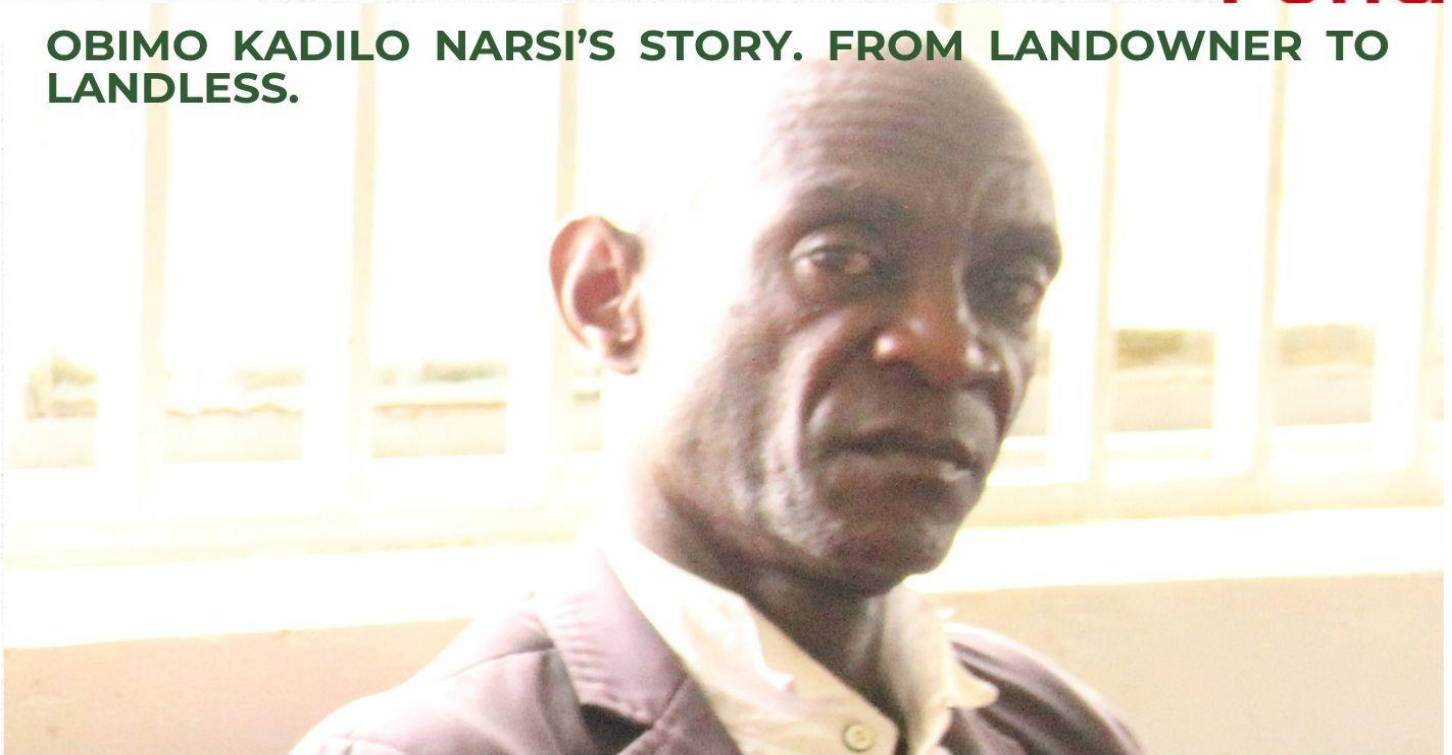
Executive summary.

This documentation captures powerful intergenerational stories shared during the storytelling and cultural healing event held on 2nd May 2026 at Kyakaboga Resettlement Community Hall in Hoima District, Uganda. The event brought together 35 oil refinery land acquisition project-affected persons (PAPs), community elders, women, youth, Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs), activists, and grassroots organizers who continue to experience the social, economic, cultural, and emotional impacts of oil and gas development in the Albertine region. The storytelling sessions created **a safe community space** for affected persons to openly share lived experiences of land loss, livelihood destruction, displacement, family breakdown, cultural erosion, threats, intimidation, and growing economic hardship linked to climate change impacts and the ongoing oil and gas development projects. Through personal testimonies, participants reflected on resilience, healing, unity, collective memory, and the urgent need for communities to organize together in defense of their land, environmental, cultural, and human rights. This storytelling was shared under a theme **“promoting joy and well-being of PAPs, EHRDs and community organizers in the oil-host communities.”**

The event also revived important cultural practices; participants agreed to coordinate themselves and mobilize more (about 150) oil projects affected persons by the oil feeder pipelines; Tilenga, Kingfisher and even the main East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) to join with the Refinery Land Acquisition PAPs for a communal food sharing and traditional drinks such as “Kwete”; food and local drinks will be served in traditional pots and calabashes, symbolizing cultural love, togetherness, solidarity, and collective resilience once practiced by their ancestors during difficult moments. This documentation preserves community voices, memories, and collective aspirations for justice, dignity, healing, and a sustainable future for oil-host communities. The **“food event”** will be for an opportunity for communal collective planning for strengthening resilience and solidarity for justice.



OBIMO KADILO NARSI'S STORY. FROM LANDOWNER TO LANDLESS.



“I once believed oil development would improve our lives.”

The real oil and gas development project started on me. I earlier thought it was development, and I was among the majority that opted for cash compensation from the Oil Refinery Land Acquisition Project. The project took my 44 acres of land, promising 200,000,000 UGX in 2013, and I received this compensation after 3 years, in 2015. In 2013, when we were promised compensation, we were denied access to our land. That meant three years of no livelihood. Feeding became hard due to no development, and we all depended on loans at 100% interest from local business owners as we waited for cash compensation. I had 26 children and 3 women. By the time the money came into my account in 2015, we had eaten a lot of it. I could not recover my full land size (the 44 acres), and today I only have one acre at Nyakasinina. As oil refinery project-affected persons, we joined our efforts to seek legal support for redress of our issues, but the government and the court have continued to neglect us. **“It is as if the government does not listen to people, and God should be wondering why the government is treating His people negatively like this.”**

“My experience with the oil project is the reason I am poor today.”

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MILLIUS NAMAHUNGE'S STORY. FARMING UNDER CONSTANT LOSS.



“I have land—but I cannot benefit from it.”

The Oil Refinery Land Acquisition Project took my land from Kabaale and relocated it to Kyakaboga, leaving my house in Kabaale. I am now burdened with traveling long distances (about 70 km) to farm and accommodate myself. I also face challenges of thieves stealing my crops. When I harvest, I am forced to sell immediately because I have no capacity to rent storage or transport produce back to Kabaale. I therefore sell at very low prices. As if this was not enough harm, the Tilenga Project also passed near my gardens. Water runoff from their corridor during heavy rains has buried my beans and young maize. These projects have made me very vulnerable, especially with unpredictable rainfall and prolonged droughts. I hope that one day I will construct a house on my farmland at Kyakaboga and finally settle.

“These projects have made me more vulnerable. I only hope to one day build a home near my land and live with dignity again.”

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OMIRAMBE MOSES' STORY. DENIED LAND, RISING TO DEFEND RIGHTS.



“When our family land was taken for the refinery, injustice began at home.”

When our family land was marked for the oil refinery project, my elder brothers sat and decided who would take portions and who would not. My widowed mother and my only sisters were denied land. Personally, as the second last born and then very young in Primary Six at Kyapaloni, I could not say anything. Our family land was hereditary, left for all of us. My late father was a wealthy man in the village, and we had a big piece of land. But today, all my brothers who got portions of land have sold about 90% of it. My only brother who opted for physical relocation and got his land back has also sold over 70% of his portion. The remaining land is very small and cannot sustain all of us. **I grew up with anger, seeing my sister denied her right simply because she is a woman.** I grew up and still hating my brothers who denied my sister land on the grounds that she would get married and that women do not own land. After learning that we were denied our rights, especially mine and my mother's and my sister's right to own land, I will continue to speak for land rights for everyone.

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MZEE YAKOBO'S STORY: AN ELDER LEFT TO SURVIVE ALONE AT KYAKABOGA RESETTLEMENT CAMP.



As an elder resettled at Kyakaboga, my farmland is next to the settlement houses. Most families keep goats, but their land is far from the settlement, so the goats feed on our farms. I cannot grow fruits safely. In my former land at Kigaaga/Kyapaloni, I had many fruit trees that supported me. I sold mangoes, jackfruit, oranges, and others at Kyapaloni market, which made my life easy. All my sons opted for cash compensation, and none of them live with me. I now live only with my elderly wife and my very young grandchildren. We cannot help ourselves, and we cannot control goats in our gardens. Even the banana planted by one of my sons who still cares about us was eaten by goats. How will I survive? He broke into tears, and this was very emotional in the room.

“I used to sell mangoes, jackfruit, and oranges. Now, nothing grows.” “How will I survive?”

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KILIMATHINA LEMPACU'S STORY: FROM LANDOWNER TO LANDLESS.



“I once had land. Today, I rent to survive.”

I opted for cash compensation when the refinery project came. I had 2 acres from my father. When I received the money, I could not buy back the same size of land. Today, I have no land because life became hard, and I sold the little I had managed to buy. Now I rent land to cultivate food. Women and youth are the most affected. Worse still, I live near the refinery land, but we cannot even access or benefit from the developments happening there. My relatives scattered after receiving compensation. I can take a year or more without seeing or talking to any of them, as if I was born alone. I do not even have a phone to contact them. The money I received is gone. Those who opted for land-for-land are better off. We are suffering because we depended on loans while waiting for compensation.

“Those who chose land-for-land are better. I am left struggling.” and “It feels like I was born alone.”



WAKU SADAM'S STORY: FORGOTTEN DEAD, DISPLACEMENT AND LOST EDUCATION.



“Our dead relatives remain buried on land now occupied by the Kabalega International Airport. When will they be relocated?”

I used to stay at Kyapaloni, but now I live in a resettlement camp where I am the Local Council One Chairperson. The government has forgotten about our dead ones. We believe they are with us. Personally, my dead relatives are still at Kyapaloni, where the Kabalega International Airport is now at completion level. **When will my dead relatives be relocated?** We were promised relocation within 8 months, and we were stopped from accessing our land, but it took us 6 years before being relocated. Our young children stopped schooling because the two nearby government primary schools were closed since they were also in the land that was taken for the oil refinery project. These young adults who suffered school dropout have lost their future. **They have no opportunity to even work as cleaners** within the ongoing oil and gas development projects. Even the government, through the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, has not adequately empowered these young people to do anything useful. They only took them for 2.5 months of training. **Who will employ someone with only 2.5 months of skills training when many others have gone for at least 6 months or more?** This was a blindfolding and box-ticking project of the government, not helpful for young people.

“We were promised relocation within 8 months. It took 6 years.”

“Who will employ someone trained for only 2.5 months?”

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GIPATHO DIGNITY. GRACE'S STORY. SURVIVAL, RISK AND



“In my old home, we had forests and firewood. Here, I became a ‘thief’.”

For me, I became a “thief” because of relocation to Kyakaboga Resettlement Village. In Bukona B, where we used to stay, we had nearby forests, our gardens had trees, and we were free to fetch firewood in our neighborhoods. In 2018, when we were relocated to Kyakaboga, we had some shrubs on our land, but after three years and now we are suffering. We walk very long distances to steal firewood from private forests. I was once arrested and feared being beaten. I apologized and was forgiven but was strongly warned never to be found there again. As a woman, when I see my children crying from hunger and I have raw food in the house, I cannot afford to buy charcoal daily to cook. I am forced to look for firewood, even at the risk of being beaten or arrested.

“I was caught once. I was forgiven, but warned never to return.” and “When my children are crying and I have food but no firewood, what should I do?”

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TUGUME REACHEL'S STORY: A GENERATION AT RISK.



“I lost years of my life to early marriage.”

I was a victim of early marriage. Today, I am a student, and I am also paying school fees for the children I had at a young age. I was lured into early marriage because of money from refinery compensation. Even today, many young girls continue to suffer because they believe those working with oil companies or subcontractors have money. I reflect on the time I lost, the stress it caused me, and how the marriage failed. I also feel sorry for those who have suffered diseases because of their partners' infidelity after receiving compensation. We have every reason to speak the truth and share our lived realities to protect our people and the planet.

“Many girls still believe oil money brings opportunity—but it has brought suffering.”

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PENINA RUHINDI'S STORY: A COMMUNITY LEADER WHO WITNESSES THE SOCIAL BREAKDOWN.



“I saw everything change.”

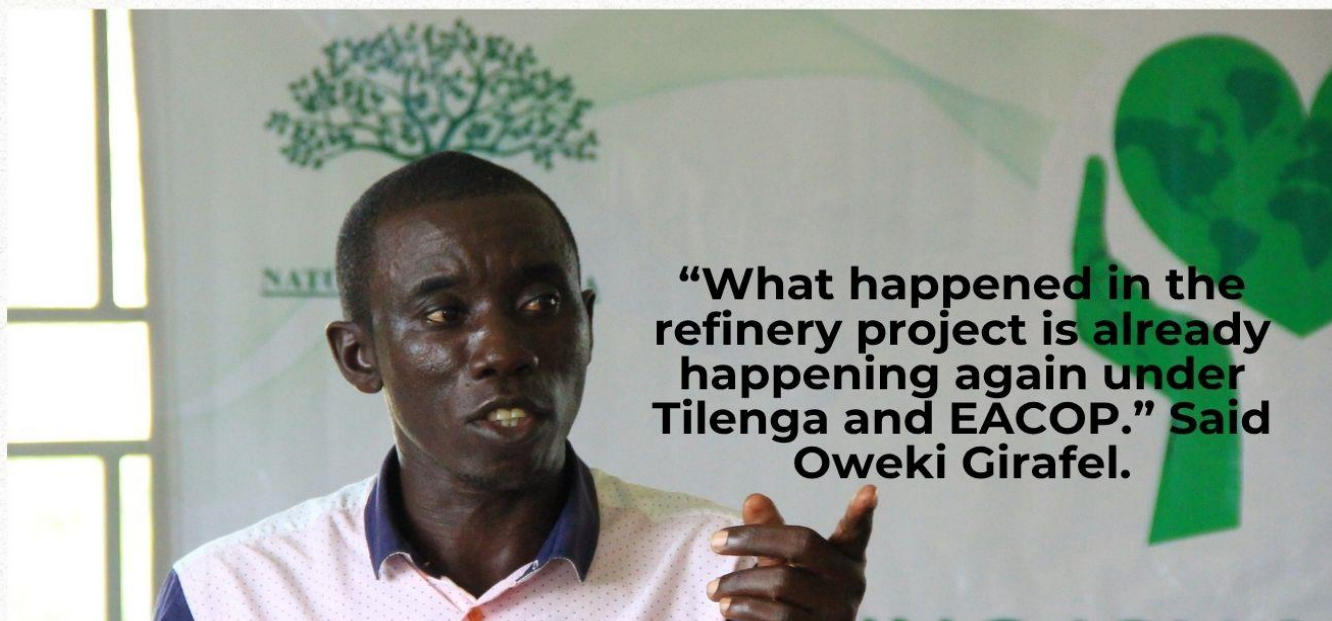
In 2012 to 2013, when the Oil Refinery Land Acquisition Project came, I was the Kabaale Parish Woman Councillor from Kigaaga. I witnessed everything that happened in the 13 villages that were taken up by this very first mega oil and gas project in my neighborhood. Men left their old wives and started marrying young ladies. Even young girls started strategizing, and this brought “**prostitution**” and **broke families**. Prices of goods tripled, and militarization of the area started. Since then, whoever speaks against any oil project is now seen as an enemy of the government, becomes anti-development, and is targeted due to the increased militarization of all the oil and gas projects today. They have brought us suffering, not development.

“Anyone who questions these projects is labeled anti-development, ant-development and becomes a target.”

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Why are youth and women organizing against injustices caused by climate change impacts and oil and gas development projects?



“What happened in the refinery project is already happening again under Tilenga and EACOP.” Said Oweki Girafel.



“We speak out or we lose everything.” he called.

“When a ‘development’ project destroys local forests where women fetch firewood and communal water sources such as wells, springs, or swamps, who suffers most? If we follow the sweet-talking of profit-oriented developers, we lose. If we speak out about injustices, we expose them, hold stakeholders accountable, and demand transparency and respect for our rights and the environment. We will continue to speak out.” said Abedilembe.



“All ‘development’ comes when claiming land. Youth and women are often not considered in decision-making on land compensation. Yet they are the majority working in agriculture that depends on land. As grassroots young people, anything related to land will always make me speak out. It is like telling me to sit on a charcoal stove with fire and remain silent.” said Clinton

Youth and women are seriously organizing for social, climate, and ecological justice because their lived realities show that so-called “development” has instead brought land loss, inequality, and deep social harm that affects them most directly. As Clinton explains, **“All ‘development’ comes when claiming land. Youth and women are often not considered in decision-making on land compensation... anything related to land will continue to make me speak out.”** Many stories confirm this exclusion; women denied land rights, youth losing education and livelihoods, and families breaking apart. These experiences are not abstract; they are daily struggles that demand collective action. As Abedilembe adds, **“If we speak out the injustices... we shall expose them, hold the stakeholders accountable and demand transparency.”** Organizing, therefore, becomes both resistance and survival.

At the same time, organizing well-being sessions such as healing circles, storytelling, and listening spaces is essential because these communities carry deep emotional, social, and psychological wounds. The pain is visible in voices like Mzee Yakobo asking, **“How will I survive?”** and in women like Gipatho Grace who says **she is forced to risk arrest just to cook for her children.** These are not only economic issues, they are human and emotional crises. Storytelling and healing spaces allow people to process grief, rebuild trust, and restore dignity. They transform silence into voice, isolation into solidarity, and pain into collective strength, ensuring that advocacy is not only powerful, but also grounded in care, resilience, and long-term community well-being.