

CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON THE NEXUS BETWEEN EXTRACTIVES, LARGE-SCALE INVESTMENTS, AND LAND RIGHTS IN UGANDA FROM 23RD OCTOBER 2025 TO 24TH OCTOBER 2025 AT FAIRWAY HOTEL KAMPALA.



Activity information

Activity Title	Capacity Building Workshop on the Nexus Between Extractives, Large-Scale Investments, and Land Rights in Uganda
Project/ Programme	Fair Green and Global Project
Goal/Purpose of the activity	To enhance the capacity of stakeholders to understand, analyze, and act on the intersections between extractives, large-scale investments, and land rights in Uganda.
Intended outcomes of the activity	Expected Outcomes i. Improved understanding of land rights in the context of extractives and large-scale investments. ii. Strengthened skills for advocacy, negotiation, and conflict resolution. iii. Enhanced collaboration and dialogue between stakeholders. iv. Activity Report

Activity report preparation

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<i>Date of report</i>	24 th October 2025

Activity content.

<i>Introduction</i>
ActionAid Uganda, in collaboration with the National Land Coalition (NLC), organized a capacity-building training focused on the nexus between large-scale investments, extractives, and land rights. The initiative was informed by the growing concerns arising from Uganda's increasing engagement in extractive industries such as oil, gas, and mining, as well as large-scale land-based investments (LSLBIs) in agriculture and infrastructure. It was noted that while these sectors hold potential for national development and economic growth, they also present significant risks to land rights, particularly for communities living on customary land or without formal land titles. Reports indicated that inadequate consultation, compensation, and consent during land acquisition processes have led to conflicts, displacement, and social unrest in affected areas. The training was therefore designed to strengthen the capacity of NLC members and partners by enhancing their understanding of land rights, legal frameworks, and governance mechanisms related to extractive and investment projects. Through knowledge exchange, dialogue, and skills development, the workshop aimed to equip participants with tools to engage meaningfully in decision-making processes and advocate for the protection of community land rights amidst increasing commercial pressures.
<i>Specific objectives</i>
1. It improved knowledge of legal and policy frameworks governing land, extractives, and investments in Uganda. 2. It built skills in land rights advocacy, negotiation, and community engagement. 3. It fostered dialogue and collaboration among communities, civil society, local governments, and private sector actors.
<i>Key Achievements (outputs). Both narrative and data.</i>

The two-day training convened 29 participants, comprising 11 men and 18 women.

Attendees represented various Civil Society Organizations within the National Land Coalition, including AAIU, Oxfam, Witness Radio, Netpil, UCCA, LEMU, COPACSO, ESAFF, ILC, NLC Ug, Landnet, ULOA, ESAPN, TIU, FRA, AWAL, UCOBAC, and the Youth Plus Policy Network.

The following achievements were attained in line with the specific objectives of the training.

- 1. It improved knowledge of legal and policy frameworks governing land, extractives, and investments in Uganda.**

Public Interest Litigation tool

Participants received training on the use of the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) tool, illustrated through a case study of the Kaweri Coffee-401 case in Maduda, Mubende District.

The comprehensive training program covered a range of key topics and subtopics, including the following:

- Application of advocacy tools
- Managing beneficiary expectations
- Preparing victims for compensation
- Lessons learned and challenges encountered throughout the case process, along with strategies used to address them.

The trainer highlighted the main strategies and lessons drawn from the Kaweri case as follows;

- a) Beneficiaries should be the face of the advocacy.** It was noted that the beneficiaries played a central role as the primary advocacy agents and public representatives of the case. They took responsibility for maintaining proper documentation of evidence, participating directly in court proceedings, and fostering a strong sense of teamwork throughout the process.
- b) Capacity building is a crucial element.** The beneficiaries received training from Solidarity Uganda on employing non-violent actions to advocate for their rights.
- c) Beneficiaries should be encouraged to make independent decisions.** A legal analysis involving various stakeholders was conducted, providing them with training

and guidance on the legal options and potential outcomes to enable informed decision-making.

d) Managing Beneficiary Expectations

During the Kaweri case, it was observed that beneficiaries anticipated full financial support from AAIU, FIAN, and NETPIL, with some expecting to receive payments from both AAIU and FIAN. To address this, it was agreed that all financial assistance would be coordinated through NETPIL, with AAIU and FIAN channeling their support via NETPIL. Additionally, through ongoing dialogues, beneficiaries were encouraged to take responsibility for certain requirements; such as covering costs for letters of administration and opening personal bank accounts etc., to promote ownership and sustainability.

e) Balancing interests of all beneficiaries.

During the Kaweri case, maintaining unity among the 401 affected families proved essential. Differences arose when some families opted to accept the government's compensation offer while others chose to reject it. This situation required careful guidance and respect for each group's decision, ensuring that the diverse interests of all beneficiaries were fairly considered and supported.

f) Effective communication management.

It is essential to manage communication channels carefully. The way information is presented greatly influences understanding, and therefore messages must be clearly structured to ensure that all stakeholders comprehend the intended meaning without misinterpretation or confusion.

g) Leveraging seasons.

One of the approaches employed was to capitalize on the 2026 political and election season as an opportunity to advocate for timely government compensation to the beneficiaries.

h) Payment preparation

Beneficiaries were adequately prepared to receive their payments, ensuring that transactions were successful and not hindered by missing requirements. This preparation involved obtaining national IDs, opening functional bank accounts, securing TIN and supplier numbers, and acquiring LC letters. NETPIL provided additional support in meeting some of these requirements, particularly for beneficiaries who were illiterate or lacked the computer skills needed to complete online registrations, such as for supplier numbers.

i) Cultivating relationships and staying connected with key decision-makers.

Establish rapport with, and maintain visibility among, the relevant stakeholders in the Kaweri case, particularly the government officials responsible for compensating the affected individuals.

The Kaweri case process faced several challenges as follows;

Systematic challenges. One major challenge was transporting people from Mubende to Kampala for various procedures, such as court appearances and verification processes. Some individuals were too ill to travel, and the process also incurred significant costs.

Financial constraints. There was need to cover travel and registration costs, as most of the Project Affected Persons are economically disadvantaged.

Record keeping Errors. Such as names being incorrectly written in local dialects or using abbreviations, caused delays in the process.

2. It built skills in land rights advocacy, negotiation, and community engagement.

To achieve this objective. the participants were trained on **Rapid Response mechanisms (RRMs) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs).**

A. RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISMS (RRMs)

Rapid Response Mechanisms (RRMs) are tools aimed at preventing, de-escalating, or resolving conflicts before they cause harm. They proactively identify potential investment-related land disputes and promote early interventions through guidance and preventive measures.

Participants were trained on using the Rapid Response Mechanism tool to help resolve community–investor conflicts arising from land-based investments, using case studies from Acholi, Karamoja, Lango and Teso sub-regions.

The Preventive Legal Empowerment action-research project which was funded by the International Development Research Centre project, was implemented from February 2022 to August 2025 in Acholi, Karamoja, Lango and Teso sub-regions. It concentrated on implementing preventive measures for managing Community-Investor conflicts.

The comprehensive training program on RRMs addressed several key topics and subtopics, including:

- An introduction to Rapid Response Mechanisms (RRMs)
- Approaches and strategies for implementing RRMs

- Contexts in which RRM are most effective
- Steps for establishing RRM
- Effective management of community and staff safety risks
- Assessing and deciding whether to take on a case
- Collaboratively designing conflict resolution strategies with affected communities
- Utilizing collected data to inform policy advocacy

The trainer outlined key strategies for preventive responses to community–investor conflicts, which included:

- **Hotspot mapping** to identify areas at risk of potential conflict.
- **Hotline rapid response**, where toll-free numbers were shared for community members to report anticipated violations. However, this approach was less effective—after six months, fewer than twelve calls were received due to limited trust and fears that call recipients might be spies.
- **Participatory compliance monitoring**, enabling community members to actively engage in and take ownership of solutions.
- **Collaboration with civil servants and regional leaders** to strengthen response efforts.
- **Capacity building for Project Affected Persons (PAPs)** to enhance their ability to manage and respond to conflict situations.

B. INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs).

These are organizations that provide financial support and professional advice for economic and social development projects, usually across countries. Their main goals are to reduce poverty, promote sustainable development, and support large-scale infrastructure or social programs.

Examples of IFIs include:

- World Bank Group (including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development – IBRD, the International Development Association – IDA, International Finance Corporation- IFC and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency- MIGA)
- International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- European Investment Bank (EIB)

The comprehensive training program on IFIs addressed several key topics and subtopics, including:

- An introduction to IFIs
- Common violations

- Independent Accountability mechanisms
 - ✓ Filing a complaint
 - ✓ Safeguard Policies
 - ✓ Why IAMs
 - ✓ Challenges of IAMs

During the training, the trainer further highlighted the following points:

- Maintain proper records, including emails, meeting minutes, and phone call logs.
- Compile a list of safeguard policy violations, noting that only breaches within the safeguards are addressed.
- Include supporting evidence such as photos, maps, and other relevant documentation.
- Strengthen the capacity of Project-Affected Persons (PAPs) to empower them to advocate for themselves and make their own informed decisions

CASE STUDIES IN IFI ADVOCACY: KAWALA AND KIRYADONGO

The participants were trained by **Joan of Witness Radio** on the practical use of **IFI accountability mechanisms** for advocacy. This training included in-depth examination of the **World Bank Inspection Panel** (illustrated by the **Kawala drainage case**) and the **IFC Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO)** (highlighted by the **Kiryadongo sugar case**). For the CAO, the session specifically covered its two key approaches: **Dispute Resolution** and **Compliance**.

The following challenges were registered as a result of using the IFI strategy.

- Security threats. Both CSOs and the community faced security threats, with warnings to stop their advocacy activities or risk imprisonment. Some staff from Witness Radio were detained for several days.
- Timelines: The processes are lengthy and may take several years before any significant progress is achieved.
- Limited publicly available information on some private companies makes corporate research more challenging.
- A subtle power imbalance exists, with differences in influence, resources, and decision-making authority between CSOs and the relevant stakeholders.

EXPERIENCE SHARING BY NAMUGANZA ESTHER, ONE OF THE PROJECT AFFECTED PERSONS BY THE AGILIS- KIRYADONGO SUGAR PROJECT.

Esther Namuganza appreciated Witness radio, AAIU, Action Alliance and other CSOs that have supported them throughout the advocacy.

Esther noted the following experiences and lessons learnt

- She noted that capacity building and training on different topics like Human rights, Security and money making projects was essential and empowered them to advocate for their rights with confidence.
- Esther strongly cautioned CSOs against involving themselves and then abandoning project-affected people. She explained that if an organization cannot firmly commit **until the resolution**, they should not get involved at all. This is due to the extreme dangers involved; including the **risk of death**; as well as the high levels of **corruption** and the complexity introduced by government involvement. She cited instances where many CSOs backed out, were **bribed** to share secrets, or broke their promises, leaving only five committed organizations. This widespread betrayal fueled a loss of trust that resulted in violence by the community against CSOs.
- CSOs must prioritize community ownership by involving them in all decision-making and obtaining their explicit consent to serve as advisors.
- **Maintain Professional Conduct:** CSOs should demonstrate passion for their mission, remain adaptive, and consistently show kindness, even when faced with challenging community attitudes.

Esther noted the following challenges faced

- **Unfair compensation.** PAPs received unfairly low compensation, in some cases as little as 30,000/-.
- **Physical harm.** Many people became sick or injured due to beatings, imprisonment, and chemical spraying on the plantations; Esther's eyes were specifically damaged by the spraying.
- **Domestic conflict.** The unfair compensation led to a personal tragedy for Esther, who separated from her husband after he unilaterally accepted and received the payment for their jointly-owned land without her consent.
- **Mediation Difficulties:** Efforts to mediate were complicated by external interference, as Witness Radio was denied participation, and by internal conflicts among the PAPs themselves, who were divided between those who accepted compensation and left, and those who remained.

3. It fostered dialogue and collaboration among communities, civil society, local governments, and private sector actors.

The training convened various land stakeholders, members of the National Land Coalition, including Oxfam, Witness Radio, Netpil, UCCA, LEMU, COPACSO, ESAFF, ILC, NLC Uganda, Landnet, ULOA, ESAPN, TIU, FRA, AWAL, UCOBAC, and the Youth Plus Policy Network. This gathering is expected to foster greater collaboration on future projects, moving away from working in isolation and enhancing the overall impact on communities.

Follow up actions (to track intended outcomes).

Follow-up meetings or check-ins with the various CSOs to discuss challenges, successes, and lessons learnt from applying the strategies.

Challenges

The civil society organizations (CSOs) who applied that shared their experiences from applying the strategies highlighted the following challenges:

- Security threats. Both CSOs and the community faced security threats, with warnings to stop their advocacy activities or risk imprisonment. Some staff from Witness Radio were detained for several days.
- Timelines: The processes are lengthy and may take several years before any significant progress is achieved.
- Limited publicly available information on some private companies makes corporate research more challenging.
- A subtle power imbalance exists, with differences in influence, resources, and decision-making authority between CSOs and the relevant stakeholders.
- Personal challenges, such as trauma, can arise for CSO staff who are closely engaged with the projects and PAPs, as they experience the emotional impact of the difficulties faced by the communities.

Key lessons learnt

- The training is expected to foster greater collaboration from CSOs on future projects, moving away from working in isolation and enhancing the overall impact on communities.
- Interaction with PAPs and civil society organizations (CSOs) who applied the trained strategies allowed for the sharing of real-life experiences, providing practical insights that can be applied in similar contexts.
- Collaboration with PAPs – Building the capacity of Project-Affected Persons ensures their meaningful participation and strengthens community advocacy.

Recommendations

Recommendations from lessons learnt from the community processes

- The government should clearly define and mark public land boundaries to prevent squatting.
- Maintain proper records, including emails, meeting minutes, and phone call logs.
- Compile a list of safeguard policy violations, noting that only breaches within the safeguards are addressed.
- Include supporting evidence such as photos, maps, and other relevant documentation.
- Strengthen the capacity of Project-Affected Persons (PAPs).
- Provide financial management training for beneficiaries to minimize mismanagement of compensation funds.
- Refrain from accepting monetary gifts from the community, even if offered in appreciation.
- Exercise patience, resilience, and consistent follow-ups, as some cases may take up to twenty years to resolve.
- Maintain thorough evidence and clear documentation for all processes.
- Engage journalists, such as those from the BBC, when necessary, but avoid being the public face of the investigation; allow the community to represent themselves.
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Conclusion

The training was successful in equipping participants with practical strategies and insights. Moving forward, applying these strategies consistently, fostering stronger CSO collaboration, and supporting PAPs will be key to advancing advocacy and increasing community impact.

Activity Action photos.



Dr. Doreen training on RRM's



Mr. Dominic Adeeda from UCCA training on IFIs.



Esther Namuganza, one of the PAPs affected by the Agilis-Kiryadongo project



Ms. Joan from Witness radio sharing experiences and lessons learnt from implementing the IFI tool



Participants during the group discussions sharing their key lessons and takeaways from the sessions



Ms. Veronica Kange from Netpil training on the Public Interest Litigation tool



The training participants