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EAST AFRICAN
CRUDE OIL PIPELINE
HOST COMMUNITIES

NEWSLETTER

Women's Journeys beyond Oil Extraction.



International Women's Day Special Edition

In this month's inaugural newsletter, we portray the journey of reclaiming heritage, hope and broken dignity in the shadows of oil extraction at the hearts of project affected women. Imagine a landscape where the rhythmic whispers of ancestral lands are suddenly drowned out by the thunderous roar of oil threats. This is not just a story of oil industrial invasion, but a profound narrative of resistance, resilience, survival, and transformation experienced by the women of the Albertine region. We bring to you a live narrative, the women tell their tale, of how the oil curse has turned into their once beautiful landscape into a reflection of loss and hopelessness from their deprived families.

Our Land, Our Lives: A Story of Women's Resistance

A Voice from the Frontlines

My name is Proscovia Atwooki. I am a mother of six from the Albertine region where oil and gas activities are taking place and the head of my family since oil was discovered in my community. Men in suits and driving very strong cars came to our communities speaking English, with papers and a lot of promises. They said oil would bring a lot of good things in to our communities like good schools, hospitals, jobs for our children, improved livelihoods, good houses, clean water, electricity, healthy services, promoting clean energy access, promoting environmental conservation among others. Unfortunately we later discovered that the actions of these companies were completely contrary to what they were preaching, and also green washing oil host communities .

Just like myself and many other women in my community, our husbands abandoned us in our homes after receiving the small, delayed, unfair and inadequate compensation for our land and properties which was only source of our livelihoods.

“They took our lands, but they couldn't take our spirit,” I tell the younger women who gather at our demonstration farm. *“Our traditional knowledge isn't just for survival. It's our strongest weapon against these oil giants”*

Before the oil companies came, my grandmother taught me how to read the soil, how to know when to plant, and which seeds would grow best in what season and in what part of farm land. Our land wasn't just dirt, it was our history, our food, our future. Then one day, everything changed in the name of oil profits.

The oil and gas activities tore through our communities like a storm. They did more than just redraw maps and petitions. They attacked the very heart of our existence as women. All the farming wisdom passed down through generations, our community bonds, our cultural practices, all of it was scattered to the winds.

What happened to us wasn't just business. It was the deliberate destruction of women's lives. The lands that had fed our families for as long as anyone could remember were cut up into pieces, sold without our real consent- totally ignored and left out of the decision making processes and turned from living ecosystems into industrial wastelands. We women weren't just pushed off our land. We were pushed to the edges of our own lives, totally pushed to the wall.

But that's not where our story ends. We knew the most powerful resistance and resilience would come from women themselves. Through our movement of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline host communities (EACOP HC), we turned our shared pain into shared power. We built our healing, resistance and resilience on three strong foundations;



1. Growing our own power

We did this by investing our knowledge gained from EACOP HC's community engagements, experience sharing, trainings, community awareness, and telling our story that helped us to develop our own demonstration farm which would be our base of collectiveness, togetherness and social cohesion as oil project affected women. Using our farm, we came up with our PERMALAB project which isn't just a place to grow food. It's our battlefield of healing, resistance and resilience. We women run these farms to keep our traditional farming knowledge alive, adapt to the changing climate, show everyone we aren't helpless and create new ways to feed our families and restore our livelihoods that was distorted by the oil and gas activities taking place in our communities.

2. Defending and promoting our both human and land rights

Knowledge is protection. In our community paralegal workshops as organized and coordinated by EACOP HC, we don't just learn information, we arm ourselves with understanding. These workshops have changed silent, scared women into confident climate justice and human rights advocates, individual problems into a movement we all share and ignored voices into powerful testimonies that must be heard.



3. Healing Together

When we gather in our healing circles and community hubs, something powerful happens. These are our sacred spaces where we acknowledge the trauma we've experienced, we validate each other's struggles and we birth our strategies of resistance and resilience against this oil giant that is destroying our homes, very thirsty for profits on expense of our cultural dignity, community livelihoods, human rights and our mother nature.



The Price of Speaking Up

Standing up hasn't been easy. When we dare to challenge the oil companies, we face attacks from all sides. Women in our communities have stood up, led marches, organized non-violent actions, participated in meetings, and voiced our concerns to the government and oil companies. We've clearly explained how much we've suffered from oil and gas activities in our homeland and made our demands on the need for a greener economy and a just clean energy transition as opposed to fossil fuels.

With no steady income, left out of decisions that affect our lives, facing more violence in our homes, watching our families break apart, seeing our children drop out of school and our daughters get pregnant too young, we fight on. We fight for our human rights, our land rights, and climate justice.

And what do we continue getting for our courage? Intimidation, illegal arrest and harassments to stop us from doing our work as grassroots Women environmental and human rights defenders (WEHRDs), Deliberate economic hardship, Social shame among others. How much more clearly can we show the oil curse? Haven't we women at the grassroots suffered enough?



Our Promise to Each Other

As oil project host communities, we promise to keep fighting to restore our dignity by carefully documenting the ongoing violations of human and environmental rights, providing paralegal support to the affected women, strengthening our community networks, holding community engagement meetings to raise awareness on how to protect and defend our rights and mother nature from oil and gas threats.



This International Women's Day, we invite you to amplify our stories, stand with us in our community-led resistance, and recognize women as the ultimate guardians of land and life. Together, we restore. Together, we resist. Together, we reclaim. Our struggle continues, but our hope never dies.

Get Involved

Your participation is crucial! Join our efforts to promote sustainable development, advocate for climate justice, and safeguard community rights. Whether it's attending a workshop, sharing your story, or joining a local initiative, your voice matters and the change we fight for begins with us.

About us.

EAST AFRICAN CRUDE OIL PIPELINE HOST COMMUNITIES (EACOP HC): is an association of EACOP affected communities based in the Albertine region of Uganda, EACOPHC is dedicated to promoting sustainable environmental use, human rights and land rights of vulnerable communities.

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