

# AFRICAN BIODIGESTER COMPONENT PROJECT UGANDA

NEWSLETTER **QUARTER ONE, 2024**



## SEE – Clean Cooking

### **Piloting Biodigester Technology as a Sustainable Energy, Agricultural Solution in Refugee Camps**

Uganda is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, providing shelter to over 1.6 million individuals located across 14 settlements, according to a 2024 report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Within these settlements, refugees encounter several challenges, among them: the lack of access to clean, renewable energy for cooking, and increasing food insecurity.

The reliance on traditional cooking methods, such as charcoal and firewood, for which refugees need to move distances of 4-10 kilometers remains prevalent, with 97% reported by UNHCR in 2021. This places additional strain on the already marginalized communities.

*Continued on Page 3*



## Foreword



**Esther Nyanzi**  
ABC-Uganda Project Manager

### Welcome to the Quarter 1, 2024 edition of the African Biodigester Component Newsletter

As we embark on another fruitful quarter of the new year, we are excited to share the latest developments and insights shaping the biodigester industry. With each passing quarter, we witness remarkable advancements and growing momentum towards a sustainable biodigester market in Uganda, a fundamental objective of the African Biodigester Component Project.

In this edition, we share highlights from key project events and initiatives driving positive change in our sector. In honour of International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8, the publication also highlights the importance of gender mainstreaming in the biodigester sector through the lens of a female-led business. Despite a murky start characterised by changes in the macro environment such as the quarantine/ban on animal movement and trade due to the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease among livestock in various parts of the country, challenges in the tea industry affecting operations of factories, we are committed to supporting farmers to embrace and adopt biodigester technology for an improved livelihood.

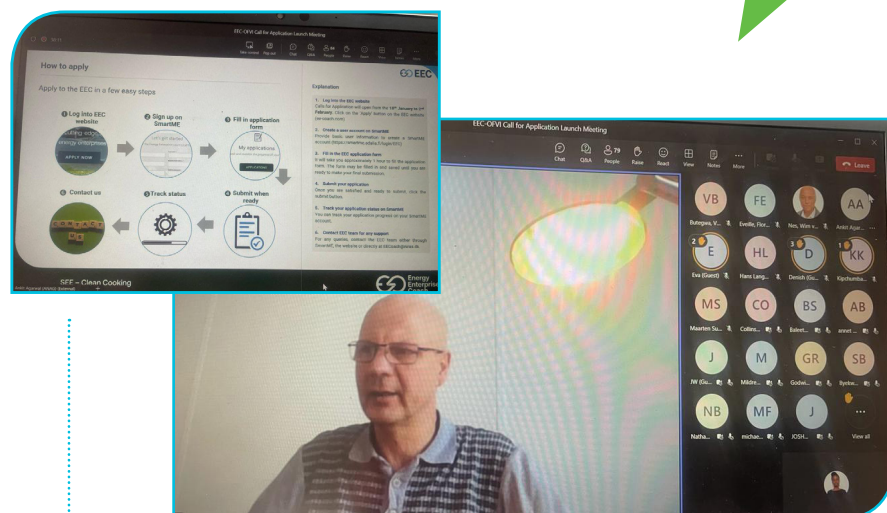
Join us on this journey as we embark on another year of innovation, collaboration, and progress towards a cleaner, greener future with biodigesters.

Happy reading!

## Project Updates

### ABC Launches Second Application Window for Farmer, SME Training

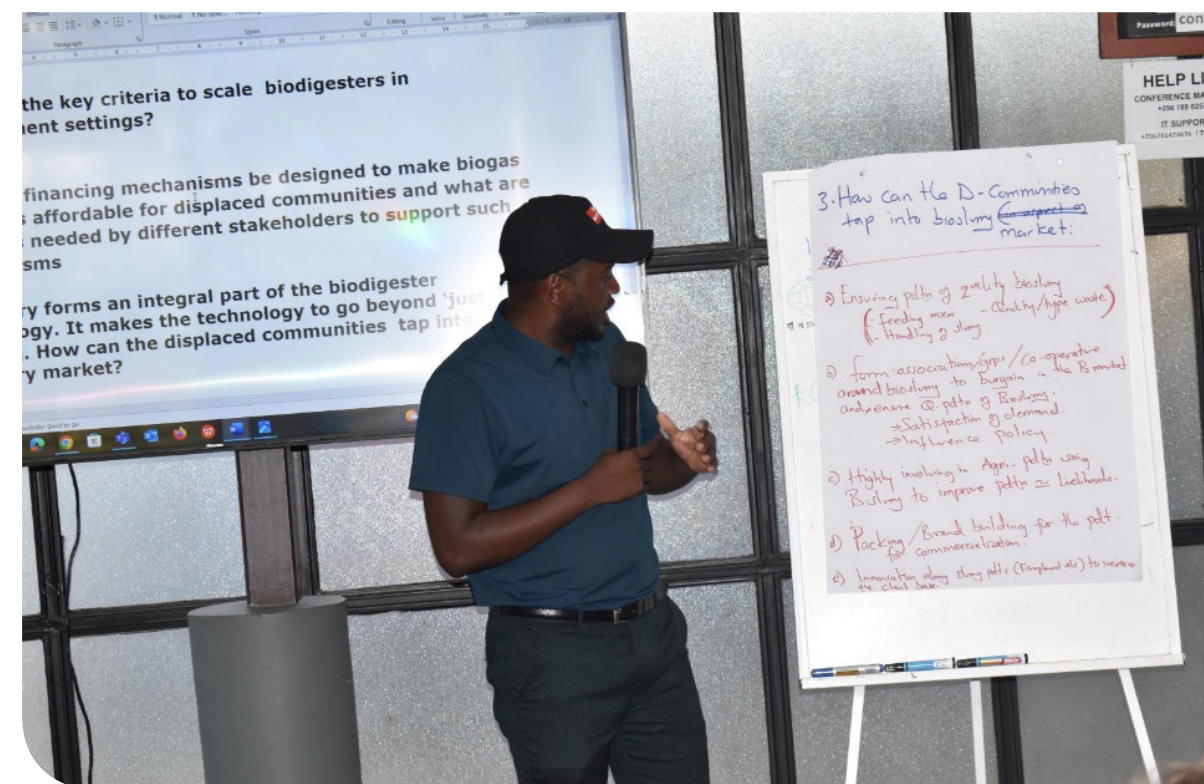
In a joint activity held virtually on January 18, 2024, the business development implementer, Energy Enterprise Coach (EEC) and the Organic Fertiliser Valorisation Implementer (OFVI) in the African Biodigester Component project in Uganda launched a call, offering training services for farmers and agri-business enterprises in the biodigester market. The African Biodigester Component is a project implemented across five countries in sub-Saharan Africa under the SEE-Clean Cooking program to commercialise the biodigester market value chain.



**The virtual meeting held on January 18<sup>th</sup> inviting companies to apply for the training in business development and bio slurry organic fertiliser usage in agriculture.**

Aligned with the overarching objectives of the project, the EEC-OFVI call aimed at providing business development and technical training to business enterprises in the biogas and bio-slurry organic fertiliser value chain with a shared vision – to nurture and propel SMEs towards prosperity and sustainability.

You can read the event details [here](#) or watch the proceedings using this [link](#).



**Biodigester stakeholders discuss the potential approaches for scaling the technology within displaced communities**

### Continued from page 1

In 2023, Care Uganda in partnership with the African Biodigester Component (ABC) project, facilitated by the national implementer, Biogas Solutions Uganda Limited (BSUL), launched a pioneering initiative to introduce biodigesters as a sustainable solution to the energy and agricultural needs of refugees. This initiative was piloted in the Kyangwali refugee settlement within the Kibuye district, home to 135,207 refugees.

Through this collaboration, 66 biodigesters, predominantly 4m<sup>3</sup> in size, were constructed, enabling a shift away from reliance on charcoal and firewood by 95% of the community members. It also facilitated a shift from traditional gender roles, with men actively participating in cooking duties alongside their spouses.

In addition, the utilization of bio-slurry, a byproduct of the biodigester, presented a multifaceted solution, serving as both a waste management mechanism and an organic fertiliser. Its application in latrines effectively neutralizes odours, improving sanitation conditions within the settlement. The fertilizer was also used to improve agricultural yields, bolstering food security initiatives through the cultivation of gardens and economic development through the provision of animal feeds for poultry farming.

### The role of demonstration sites in scaling biodigester adoption

The integral role of demonstration sites in catalysing the adoption of biodigesters cannot be overstated. By establishing three biodigesters within the settlement, including one prefabricated and two fixed dome models, BSUL provided tangible evidence of waste-to-energy conversion, sparking interest and confidence among refugees. This initial success paved the way for the construction of an additional 48 biodigesters, including an institutional unit for a school.

Exposure training sessions on bio-slurry application and biodigester operation and maintenance conducted during a field visit to Mityana ensured the sustainability of the technology and contributed to the addition of 15 biodigesters in the camp.

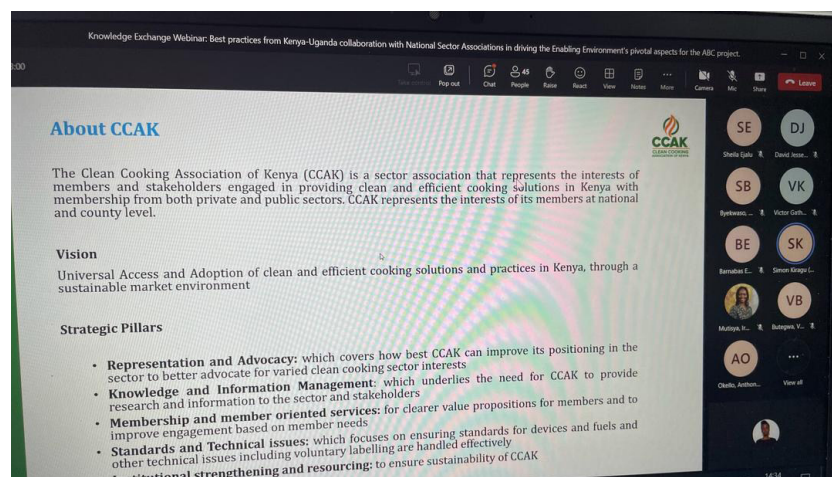
Building on the success witnessed in Kyangwali, Care Uganda convened a workshop in March 2024, gathering key stakeholders from across the biodigester market in Uganda, including the ABC Project consortium. The workshop aimed at facilitating discussions on viable approaches for scaling the technology in refugee settlements. During the workshop, it became evident that policy support, innovative funding mechanisms, and partnerships with governmental and developmental organizations are essential for scaling biodigester technology in refugee camps.



# Knowledge Exchange: Kenya, Uganda Projects Foster Biodigester Growth in East Africa

The African Biodigester Component (ABC) Enabling Environment implementers for Uganda and Kenya organized a knowledge exchange webinar on March 26, 2024, that convened participants from government, associations, private sector etc. from both countries. It aimed to share experiences and insights from collaborative partnerships with sector associations, including [Kenya Biogas Stakeholders Forum \(BIO-NET\)](#), [Clean Cooking Alliance of Kenya \(CCAK\)](#), and [Uganda National Alliance on Clean Cooking \(UNACC\)](#). The respective presenters highlighted best practices, successes, and innovative approaches in uniting biodigester groups, lobbying and policy advocacy efforts for clean cooking policies, and capacity-building initiatives. Discussions emphasized the pivotal role of sector associations in advocacy with government entities, while also addressing challenges such as

*Discussions emphasized the pivotal role of sector associations in advocacy with government entities, while also addressing challenges such as effective resource mobilization and sustainability mechanisms.*



A screenshot of the knowledge exchange webinar held by ABC-Uganda and ABC-Kenya held on March 26, 2024.



Kenya and Uganda ABC team members interacting during the Knowledge Exchange Event held in May 2023 in Kampala.

effective resource mobilization and sustainability mechanisms.

The webinar provided participants with a deeper understanding of collaborative frameworks and networking opportunities. Action pathways included a follow-up webinar later in 2024 to discuss sustainability mechanisms for sector associations. In addition, the collaboration showcased the ongoing commitment of GIZ-Uganda and SNV-Kenya and their respective ABC government and civil society partners, to foster cross-border collaboration and knowledge exchange for the advancement of the biodigester and clean cooking enabling environment initiatives in the region.

## Radio Blitz: ABC Initiative Sparks Biodigester Buzz in Western Uganda

In March, the ABC Project embarked on an extensive outreach campaign, on one of the most prominent radio stations across Uganda's western region to bolster awareness efforts for three contracted biodigester companies. The initiative aimed to disseminate and amplify knowledge about biodigester technology among the communities of Western Uganda, particularly within the renowned cattle corridor.

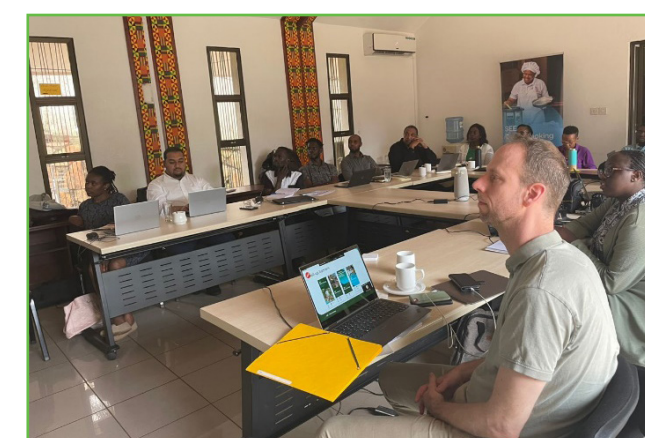
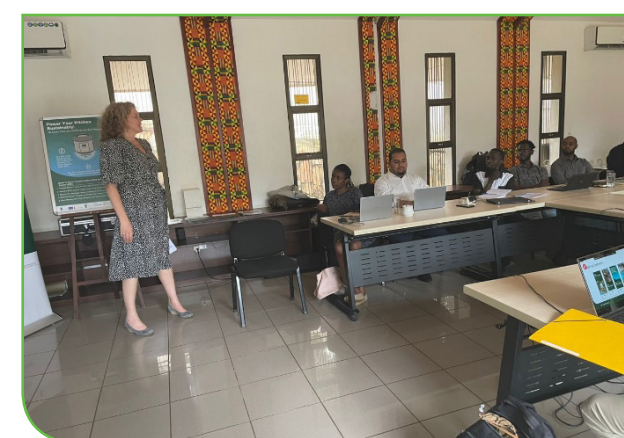


## ABC Program Management Team Visits Uganda

As the quarter drew to a close, ABC-Uganda welcomed a team from the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO). The primary focus of the visit was partner engagement across the various project intervention areas. Of keen interest was the development of an effective financing mechanism to drive progress for both end-users and the private sector. Led by Friends Consult, the Project's access to finance implementer, ABC is actively developing a credit product aimed at boosting demand through affordable end-user financing, alongside a support fund to fortify the supply chain within the private sector.

This initiative is slated for completion in the second quarter of the year. Additionally, the visit included communication training sessions designed to

harmonize project communication guidelines. The African Biodigester Component operates within the framework of the Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Clean Cooking (SEE-CC) program, comprising two integral components, including the High Tier Cooking Component (HTCC).



Heidi Marchal, Communications Advisor, Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) trains the SEE-Clean Cooking Programme team on the communication guidelines in March 2024.



## Establishing Market for Bio-Slurry Organic Fertilizer

Three agro-input dealers in the Busunju-Mityana district have expressed willingness to integrate bio-slurry enriched compost (BEC) into their product offerings upon approval for trading from the line Ministry. The commitment follows a supplier engagement meeting organized by the ABC project, aimed at establishing a robust distribution network for the organic fertilizer. Currently, a total of 14 agro-input dealers have indicated keen interest in trading the organic fertilizer, contingent upon meeting the quality standards mandated by the government.

Bio slurry organic fertiliser is a by-product generated from a biodigester after the anaerobic digestion of waste produces biogas energy. Under the ABC Project, bio slurry organic fertiliser valorisation is prioritised as a key intervention envisaged to present a lucrative business case for end-users. Bio slurry organic fertiliser has a multitude of benefits including improving agricultural yields, serving as an insect repellent

and animal feeds. The ABC Project is developing a market for the commercialization of bio slurry organic fertilizer. As part of this endeavour, the project last year collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries to initiate a bio-slurry certification process. This undertaking involved conducting efficacy studies to assess the effects of varying rates of bio-slurry Enriched Compost (BEC) on long-five maize variety crops, thus laying the groundwork for its widespread adoption and utilization.

The ongoing efficacy studies span four agroecological zones across the country: Kabanyoro, Serere, Arua, and Ngetta. The studies aim to assess nutrient composition, crop yields, disease and pest resistance, and climate resilience resulting from BEC application, utilizing three different sample sizes: 150 grams, 188 grams, and 112 grams.

The efficacy studies will be carried out for at least 2-3 seasons in 3-4 locations. The gathered data will then undergo thorough analysis before publication, making it accessible to a wider audience.

The certification of BEC as an organic fertiliser is pivotal to the ABC project's goal of valorising/enriching the value of bio-slurry to enhance agricultural productivity and improve farmer livelihoods.



*A farmer in Eastern Uganda extracts bio slurry from a bio-slurry collection pit to apply on his plantation.*

## Government Commends ABC Uganda's Capacity Building Initiatives at Inaugural National Biogas Stakeholders Workshop

Government representatives from Uganda's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) have lauded the strides made by the African Biodigester Component (ABC) Uganda in fortifying the private sector's capacity, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the biogas sub-sector.

The recognition came during the inaugural annual National Biogas Stakeholders Workshop (NBSW) convened on 7th March 2024 at Silver Springs Hotel, Bugolobi, Kampala. The gathering convened a cross-section of stakeholders, including private sector entities, academia, financial institutions, thematic implementers from ABC, and government officials among others.

The primary objective of the workshop was to update stakeholders on the progress of ABC's implementation in Uganda. It served as a platform for sharing experiences, addressing challenges, and fostering collaborative discussions to chart a course towards achieving sustainable market development in the biogas sector.

Mr. Peter Dhamuzungu, representing Mr. Alex Lwakuba, the Commissioner of Crop Production at MAAIF,

commended ABC's interventions, highlighting their alignment with the pillars of storage and marketing under the Ministry's Agro-Industrialization Programme. He emphasized the significance of these interventions in advancing the goals of both the Third National Development Plan (NDP III) and the forthcoming NDP IV.

Mr. Dhamuzungu further underscored the value of bio-slurry, a by-product of biogas production, as a potent resource for enhancing agricultural productivity.

"The by-products associated with biogas, especially bio-slurry, are of high interest to the ministry, as they present a key opportunity to increase agricultural production. Bio-slurry is considered a readily available and valuable product. Once farmers are trained on its production, Uganda can harness a cost-effective source of fertiliser to stimulate and enhance agricultural production."

Funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), the ABC project is one of the components of the broader SEE-Clean Cooking Programme. Its multifaceted approach encompasses demand-side, supply-side,



*Panelists at the Uganda National Biogas Stakeholders workshop on 7th March 2024*



*Group photograph of participants at the Uganda National Biogas Stakeholders Workshop on 7th March 2024*



and enabling environment interventions aimed at fostering a commercially sustainable biogas sector.

Esther Nyanzi, the ABC Project Manager, highlighted the project's achievements since its inception. Notable milestones include providing business development support to 21 biodigester enterprises through capacity-building training and coaching. The project also facilitated training for 502 promoters in marketing, resulting in both direct and indirect job creation.

In addition, collaboration with prefabricated companies to enhance quality assurance and marketing strategies has significantly boosted technology adoption, evidenced by its increase in sales market share to 57 percent.

Under the Enabling Environment pillar, GIZ and MEMD are driving the development of fixed dome biodigester guidelines and providing technical assistance for the National Organic Agriculture Bill.

To expedite the adoption of biodigester technologies, Mr. John Tumuhimbise, Senior Energy Officer, Renewable Energy Dept, representing the Commissioner, Renewable Energy Dept, MEMD, stressed the importance of innovation in developing new ideas, approaches, and strategies.

The stakeholders during the workshop conclusively identified key focus areas for 2024 and 2025, which emphasized market development and strengthening the enabling environment.



**Representative from EBO SACCO presenting during the Uganda National Biogas Stakeholders Workshop on 7th March 2024.**



**John Tumuhimbise, Senior Energy Officer, Renewable Energy Dept, delivers a keynote speech on behalf of the Commissioner of Renewable Energy Department, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development during the National Biogas Stakeholders Workshop on 7th March 2024.**

## Blog

### Why Exhibitions/ Expos are Important for Uganda's Biodigester Market Expansion

Agriculture is the pillar of Uganda's economy, employing about 70% of the country's population. It's therefore no surprise that the demand for collective spaces fostering agricultural knowledge transfer and exhibitions is on the rise. These forums which unite individuals with shared objectives are fundamental to the African Biodigester Component's awareness initiatives in Uganda. In this blog, we discuss the importance of leveraging exhibitions and farmer expos in biodigester awareness-raising efforts in Uganda.

**Convergence of people with shared interests.** Biodigester technologies often face scepticism, requiring firsthand experience for validation of their functionality and efficiency. Exhibitions and farmer expos, such as the Harvest Money Expo organised by the Vision Group, provide a direct platform for engaging diverse stakeholders. Through extensive promotional efforts by the media conglomerate together with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN), Harvest Money draws a cross-section of stakeholders in the agricultural value chain such as smallholder farmers across Uganda and overseas, agro-input dealers, facilitating discussions and exchanges on cutting-edge agricultural practices and technologies. In this year's Harvest Money Expo which took place on February 23-26, the ABC Project took the opportunity to raise awareness of the benefits of biodigester technologies to dairy farmers hosted by Vision Group as well as various stakeholders under the Netherlands Village Masterclass organised by EKN.

**Practical Demonstrations.** The efficacy of biodigester awareness hinges significantly



**The African Biodigester Component Project raises awareness of the benefits of biodigester technology during the 2024 edition of the Harvest Money Expo organised by the Vision Group and Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at Kololo in February.**



on practical demonstrations. Leveraging audio-visual aids, the ABC Project showcases biodigester systems in action, featuring farmer testimonials that underscore the potential impact on farm productivity and sustainability. Witnessing firsthand the functionality and efficiency of biodigesters dilutes scepticism, encouraging a receptive attitude toward the technology.

#### Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building.

Farmer expos are epicentres for knowledge exchange and capacity enhancement within the agricultural community. Participation in exhibitions empowers biodigester experts, manufacturers, and suppliers to share insights and best practices, thereby nurturing a culture of continuous learning and innovation.

**Market Expansion and Networking.** Exhibitions offer a platform for networking, enabling stakeholders to forge strategic alliances, explore

lucrative business prospects, and establish robust distribution networks. Through the ABC Project, the private sector is given the opportunity to showcase their technologies and articulate their corporate vision during these exhibitions. Such opportunities are vital in bolstering the confidence of emerging SMEs within the market landscape. The ABC Project in Q1 also participated in Kisooboka Agricultural Expo in Mityana district and Nambirizi Farm exhibition in Kyotera district.

By spotlighting biodigester products and services at agricultural expos, the private sector stimulates demand for the technology. This underscores a key outcome for the ABC Project in Uganda which is to propel biodigester market development. It is therefore very important for exhibition/expo organisers to carve out a niche and stick to it because exhibitors target a particular audience for various reasons.

## INTERVIEW

### Manoeuvring Gender Bias in Uganda's Biodigester Market: Perspective of a Female-Led Business

Meet Grace Namirembe, the Director of Devine Renewable Energy Company Limited (DRECO), a pioneering female-led business in Uganda's biodigester sector. Supported by the African Biodigester Component project in Uganda, Grace exemplifies resilience as she shatters barriers in a predominantly male-dominated industry. This quarter, in commemoration of International Women's Day celebrated in March, we profile Grace's journey and her role in ensuring women have a healthier and more fulfilling life.

#### Could you please describe your role or profession within the biodigester sector?

I currently serve as a director leading a team of skilled masons at Devine Renewable Energy Company Limited (DRECO). We focus on the construction of fixed-dome technologies and the installation of prefabricated biodigester systems throughout Uganda. However, the company is located in Central Uganda. At DRECO, we also supply biogas appliances such as water heaters, brooders, imported and locally fabricated stoves and desulphurisers in the sector.



A team from the ABC project met with Grace Namirembe at her office premises in 2022 to undertake due diligence on the company's operations before signing it under the project.

#### How long have you been in the sector and what inspires you?

I joined the biodigester sector in 2018 and I am inspired mainly by my profound passion for renewable energy particularly clean cooking technology.

#### What are some of your achievements in this sector?

As a woman excelling in a traditionally male-dominated sector, I've achieved significant milestones over the years. My work in different parts of the country has exposed me to different cultures, communities and people while collaborating with international dealer companies has enriched my business expertise. I have also extensively benefitted from capacity-building initiatives facilitated by organizations such as SNV Uganda through Biogas Solutions Uganda Limited which have equipped me with money-making skills to scale and enrich my business. Through DRECO, I earn a reliable income that has provided financial stability for myself and my family thus improving the quality of our lives.

I have also undertaken research together with academia which has deepened my understanding

of biogas technologies and identified areas for improvement to drive widespread adoption of this technology. Through my work, I have had the opportunity to impact the lives of fellow women by providing access to a clean cooking energy resource that reduces their workload and ensures that they live healthier lives. Witnessing the joy of satisfied biogas users fuels my commitment to continue making a positive impact in this field.

#### How has the ABC project supported/contributed to the growth of your business?

The ABC Project has played an integral role in enriching our company's capabilities, particularly in marketing and sales through various capacity-building initiatives. The project has also supported our awareness-raising endeavours by organising and supporting the company through training and recruitment of promoters for increased biodigester promotion. Additionally, receiving the Results-Based Financing (RBF) incentive has been important in advancing our marketing efforts and ensuring timely payment of wages for our technicians and field officers. I remain hopeful for continued opportunities of this nature to further propel our company's growth and impact.





### What are some of the challenges you face as a woman operating in this sector?

While there are some challenges in the sector, of significance to me as a woman operating in this predominantly male-dominated industry is the development of an inferiority complex. It is intimidating to find oneself outnumbered by men, often being the only woman among a group of 10 to 20 men. Nevertheless, I must acknowledge that the men I encounter in the biodigester enterprises have generally been accepting and supportive.

However, when interacting with end-users, there is a prevailing belief that men are more competent in constructing and installing biodigesters and persistent scepticism of a woman's proficiency in this domain. This tends to emerge during marketing and promotional events, where farmers express doubts about a woman's ability to operate in the sector.

### How do you address these challenges as a business?

Perseverance. I persevere and when given the chance, I showcase my ability to execute quality work. This usually addresses the customer's gender bias.

### How do you envision the future of the biodigester sector, particularly in terms of opportunities and inclusivity for women like yourself and others in the field?

I would like to see a biodigester sector with more women and youth across the value chain. I believe it's crucial to implement incentives specifically aimed at involving more women in this field. Creating targeted opportunities for women's participation within the sector is essential for fostering inclusivity and diversity.

I advocate for a biodigester sector that welcomes both youth and women, because of their innovativeness and eagerness to explore new ideas. In my experience, they bring fresh perspectives and enthusiasm to the table.

From a market standpoint, I hope to witness increased female engagement with biodigester technology, with more women adopting the technology. This not only empowers women economically but also promotes sustainable and cleaner energy solutions for communities.

### What aspirations are you working towards in the future?

I envisage DRECO growing from its current status as an SME to becoming a mid-sized and leading biodigester company in Uganda. My goal is for DRECO to establish strategic partnerships with international brands, facilitating further growth and expansion. On a personal note, I aspire to serve as a beacon of knowledge and skills transfer, particularly for women in the sector. By fostering an environment of mentorship and empowerment, we can amplify opportunities for women's participation and advancement within the biodigester industry.

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Sistema.bio Uganda's scaling journey

Sistema.bio Uganda has finally received its long overdue but well-deserved anniversary gift: a brand-new office in the heart of Kampala! This milestone marks a significant moment in our journey to expand access to clean energy solutions across the country.

In line with this scaling initiative, Sistema.bio Uganda has adopted the successful 'agent model' from Kenya to drive sales. Teaming up with our esteemed partners—Ecosafe, DRECO, JEEP, and Enercom in Central Uganda; Bold, Adriani, and Resi in Western Uganda; and Sefa in Eastern Uganda—we aim to deploy 60 agents across the regions.



Photo by Sistema.bio

Through comprehensive training sessions, we've equipped these agents with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively promote our solutions.

As part of our commitment to knowledge sharing and continuous improvement, our partners from Uganda recently embarked on a week-long visit to our Nairobi office. During this visit, they gained insights into our best practices and success stories from Kenya. Among these partners are Bold, Ecosafe, and Sefa, who have played pivotal roles in Sistema.bio's journey in Uganda over the past year. This collaborative endeavour underscores our dedication to scaling impact and promoting sustainable agricultural practices across the region.

## Harness Kampala's human waste for biogas, fertiliser – experts

© Feb 04, 2024

Dr Peter Byabenda policy engagement specialist at the Environment for Development Initiative Makerere University Centre (EfD-Mak Centre) said many towns, cities and counties are embarking on harvesting human wastes and wastes on a large scale and getting carbon payments.

Experts have called for the use of abundant organic waste matter and human waste in Kampala City to produce biogas which is clean energy, organic fertilisers and fight climate change. Visit this [link](#) for more on this story.



## Government outlines foot and mouth disease fighting plans as MPs call for compensation



The Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Frank Tumwebaze, has revealed that the government is in the process of procuring vaccines to vaccinate cattle against the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) that has ravaged the cattle corridor in the country.

At least 36 Districts mostly known for cattle keeping have been placed under quarantine, stopping the movement of cattle and selling of beef because of the escalating spread of the FMD. The letter instituting the quarantine was issued by Maj Gen David Kyomukama, Permanent Secretary of MAAIF.

The Districts under the ongoing quarantine are Budaka, Bukedea, Bukomansimbi, Bunyangabu, Butaleja, Fortportal City, Gomba, Ibanda, Isingiro, Kabarole, Kassanda and Kayunga. Others are; Kazo, Kiboga, Kibuku, Kiruhura, Kumi, Kyankwanzi, Kyegegwa, Kyotera, Luuka, Lwengo, Lyantonde, Mbarara, Mbarara City, Mityana, Mpigi, Mubende, Nakaseke, Nakasongola, Naminsindwa, Ngora, Ntungamo, Rakai, Rwampara and Sembabule.

Meanwhile, veterinary experts from the Ministry are carrying out surveillance in several other Districts in western, eastern, central and northern regions. Find details [here](#)

## IN THE NEXT EDITION

### ABC Set for Project's Second Annual Knowledge Exchange Conference in Kenya



Building on the success of last year's inaugural African Biodigester Component Knowledge Exchange event in Kampala, Uganda, where biodigester stakeholders from the global south gathered and government representatives from five sub-Saharan African countries signed a political

communique committing to strengthen the biodigester markets, the project will once again host the annual event this year. Scheduled for June 2024, the ABC annual Knowledge Exchange event will take place in Kenya, organized by GIZ-Kenya, the project's lead implementer in the East African Country. This event aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, lessons, insights, and networking opportunities among participants in the biodigester markets across the global south. Follow this [link](#) to watch the proceedings of last year's event.

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