

# Success of International Development Cooperation in regions shaped by conflict, political instability, or restricted academic freedom: Reflections on Uganda

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 Austrian Development Cooperation

## About Me:

Ms. Caroline PAPARU  
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Research:

Negotiating inclusion: an intersectional  
feminist approach to natural resource  
governance in refugee-host  
communities, Uganda.



# Overview

- **Context**

Africa, East Africa, Uganda

Conflict, climate change, displacement & refugees

- **AMUTI Project**

Description

Methodology

- **Addressing Questions**

Project flexibility & Maintain impact;

Equitable partnership;

Navigating ethical and practical tensions;

Strengthen resilience and adaptability

- **Conclusion**



Siripi Zone, Rhino Camp R/S © Palm Corps 2025



# Context: Uganda



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# Development Cooperation in Uganda

## Coordination through

1. Local Development Partners' Group (LDPG),
2. National Partnership Forum (NPF)

## Key Participants

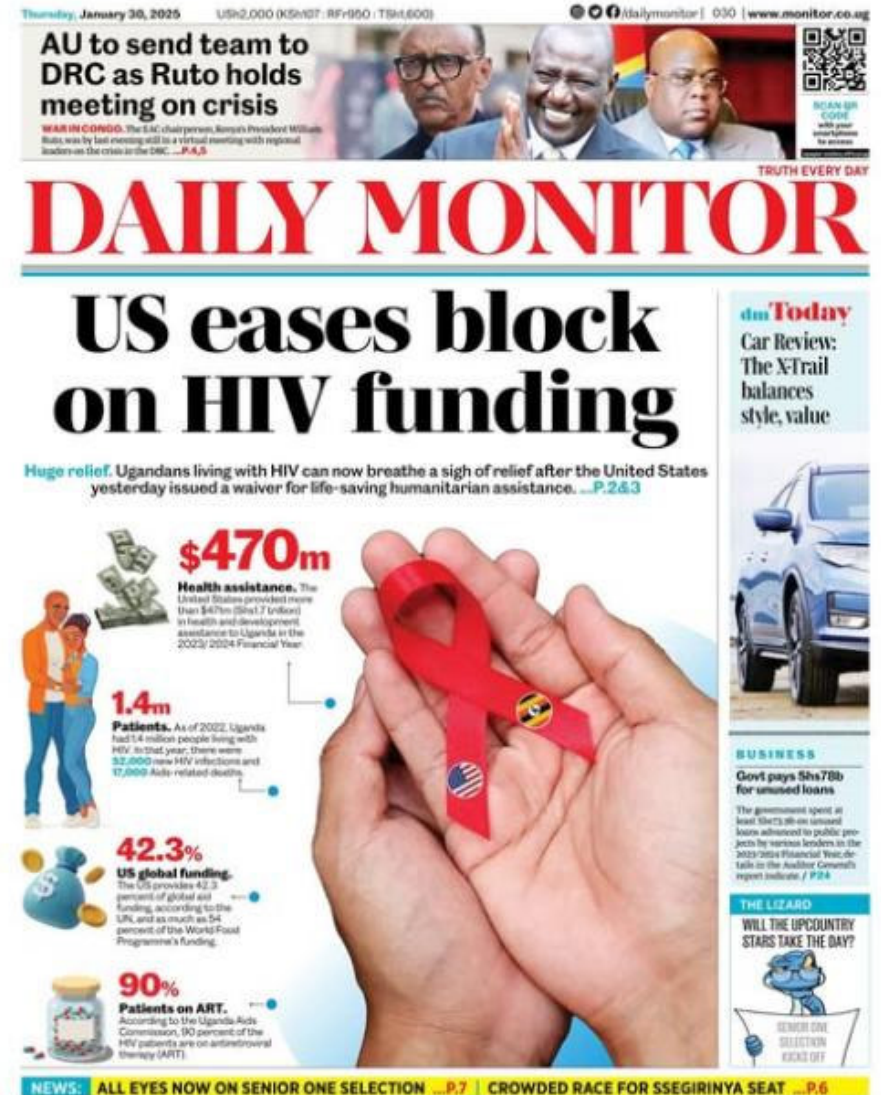
- Government Host: OPM; PM (Chair)
- Co- Chair (LDPG) Ambassador of a partner country
- Multilateral Agencies (UN; World Bank)
- Bilateral Partners (EU, UK Aid)
- Civil Society (Oxfam and other NGOs)
- Private Sector (Private Sector Foundation Uganda)



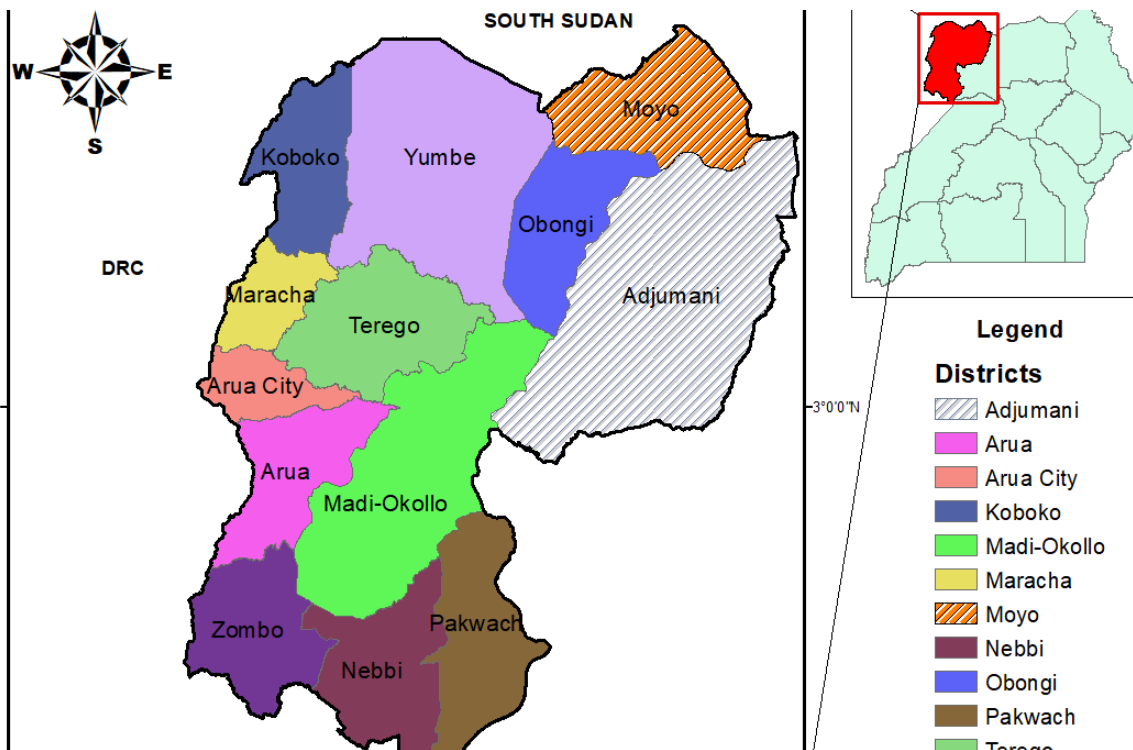
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Cont...

- Government working with partners – NDP
- Misalignment of interests
- Shrinking civic space
- Funding freeze and funding rejection
- Projects are relational in nature
- Sudden shifts and tensions destabilize foundations for sustainability



## AMUTI project – focus on West Nile region



- ADC Country strategy 2019-2025 for Uganda
- Participatory preparatory project (2023)
- Social and ecological realities in West Nile
- Conflict due to pressure on Natural resources
- Increasing decline in humanitarian assistance
- **Urgent need to transition towards equitable and sustainable utilization and development of natural resources.**
- Building capacity of local institutions & Communities



# Strengthening Transformative Capacity Of Higher education Institutions For Equitable & Resilient Governance Of Natural Resources In Refugee-host Community Setting In West Nile, Uganda



**Prep-funding: 2022; Project: 2023-2027**

**PI:** Muni University, Uganda

**Partners:** IDR/BOKU University Vienna; PALM Corps, Uganda

4 PhDs (2 BOKU University, 2 MUNI University)

## AMUTI (Lugbara): “Working together”

- Gender – transformative approaches
- Intersectional lens
- Innovative co –learning format



Co-developing project proposal, April 2022 © Top: Probst; bottom: Lemke



# AMUTI project consortium



## Muni University



- Only Public University located in West Nile region
- Vision: To be a model University for transformation and development
- Strong support from management to transition to a community engaged university

## PALM Corps



- Indigenous NGO operating in West Nile
- Agriculture & Livelihood, basic education, nutrition and public health
- Envisions: a world where the poorest and most vulnerable communities live a dignified, healthy, peaceful and productive life”.

## BOKU



- Public University located in Vienna
- Focus on sustainable natural resource management
- Expertise in transdisciplinary and participatory approaches, transformative learning, gender equality , natural resource governance

# AMUTI Project Thematic Focus

## Exploring more equitable ways of governance and management of natural resources

### Curriculum Development & Capacity Building

- Innovative MSc curriculum on food systems and natural resource governance

### Student Learning Opportunities

- Offering experiential learning for PhD, MSc and BSc students
- Providing internships and field stays
- Hosting collaborative Summer Schools with Palm Corps

### Gender-Transformative & Intersectional Approaches

- Promoting gender equality in natural resource governance, with recognition of intersecting inequalities besides gender (age, status, ethnicity, education,...)
- 2 PhD students

### Energy Access & Renewable Energy for Sustainability

- Facilitating energy access for marginalized groups
- Advocating for sustainable use of renewable energy sources
- 1 PhD student

### Sustainable Soil & Water Management

- Soil and water management in refugee-host community settings
- 1 PhD student



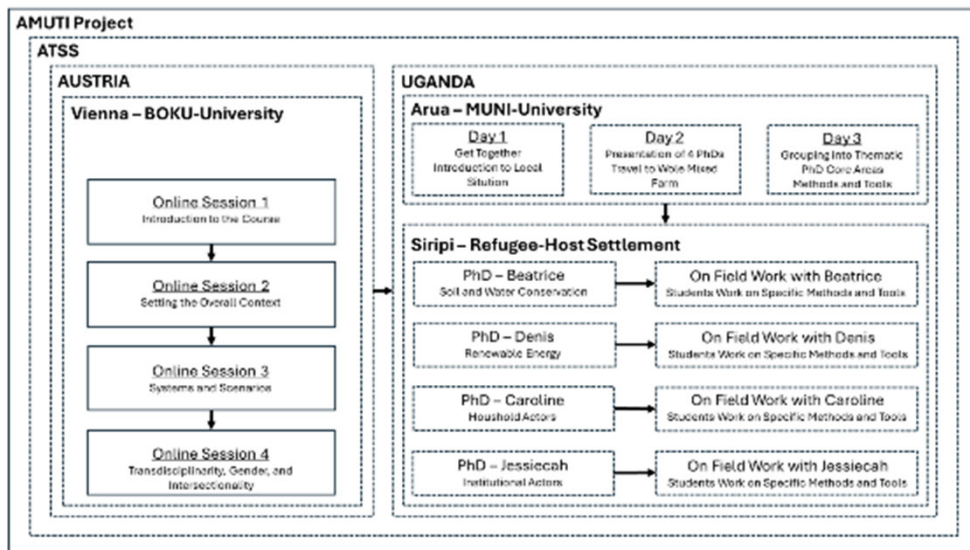
# Methodology

Transdisciplinary and participatory



AMUTI 2023-2025





## Summer School Programm



ATSS July 2025

# ADDRESSING QUESTIONS

- Project flexibility;
- Equitable partnership;
- Navigating ethical and practical tensions;
- Strengthen resilience and adaptability



Sustaining Women's Leadership





# Projects stay flexible & Maintain impact

- Ownership: Beneficiary to Stewardship
- Feedback mechanisms - community feedback response mechanism
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation



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# Equitable partnership

- Inclusive
  - Sharing decision making power
  - Language and knowledge barriers
- Co-creation: to share decision making power
- Accountability



Visiting youth engagements Simbili © Paparu & Kristöfel 2025

# Navigate ethical and practical tensions

- Transparent Engagement
  - Inviting local leaders to witness processes
  - Periodic reporting of progress at Sub county office
  - Balancing power between stakeholders – recognize importance of all
- In cooperating the local government structures from Parish level in activities
- Male engagement
- Data management



# Strengthen resilience and adaptability

- Co-creation
- Use intersectional lens
- Gender transformative focus
- Community based participatory approaches
- Dismantling power issues- macro to micro levels





SELF  
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*Awadifo - Thank you - Dankeschön ☺*



Community dialogue , Siripi Innovation Centre, 27.8.2025 © Palm Corp

## Appreciation.



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Cooperation

### The AMUTI Team:

Muni University: Prof. Clement Okia (Project lead), Dr. Philip Omwene, Dr. Bona Mandera, Sandra Langi, Beatrice Sadina (PhD cand.), Denis Gobo (PhD cand.)

BOKU University: Dr. Lorenz Probst, Dr. Milena Klimek (Project Co-leads, BOKU University), Caroline Paparu (PhD cand.) , Jessiecah Apili Alunyu (PhD cand.) Johanna Nora Kristöfel, Sebastian Fiebiger, Viktoria Gessl (Msc. cand.)

Palm Corp: Dr. Thomas Abbey, Lee Madrwa, Ivan Matenga, Safi Ali (Siripi Innovation Center manager)



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