



# CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND MIGRATION ASSISTANCE(CEMA)

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## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT



## MEDIA AND GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT (2023-2024)

**REPORTING PERIOD:  
MARCH 2023 – MARCH 2024**

**LOCATION:**

**KAMPALA, WEST NILE, AND SOUTHWESTERN UGANDA**

**PARTNERS**

**Daily Monitor**

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[www.cemauganda.org](http://www.cemauganda.org) [programs@cemauganda.org](mailto:programs@cemauganda.org) Plot 19 Kyenjojo-Fort Portal Road,  
Kyenjojo, Uganda

## 1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Media and Gender Equality Project, implemented between 2023 and 2024, sought to address entrenched disparities in Uganda's media ecosystem by enhancing ethical journalism, promoting gender-sensitive climate reporting, and increasing women's participation in media production. Uganda's media landscape, though diverse and vibrant, has historically faced challenges including gender imbalances in newsrooms, limited representation of women's voices in environmental coverage, and insufficient ethical frameworks for reporting on complex issues like climate change and migration.

Research by the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME) has shown that women constitute less than 30% of reporters and producers in Ugandan newsrooms, and their perspectives are often absent from stories on science, environment, and governance. Moreover, climate change coverage in rural Uganda tends to be event-driven, lacking depth and community-centered storytelling—especially from a gender and justice perspective.

To address these gaps, the Centre for Environment and Migration Assistance (CEMA) spearheaded this project in collaboration with four key partners:

- TV West, a regional broadcaster reaching Western and Southwestern Uganda with vernacular and English content.
- Daily Monitor, one of Uganda's leading national newspapers with wide readership and digital presence.
- Mountains of the Moon University (MMU) in Fort Portal, which trains

journalism students from rural and peri-urban backgrounds.

- Great Lakes Union for Inclusive Development (GUIDE), a civil society organization with a strong record in youth empowerment and media training.

Together, these partners targeted young and emerging journalists, particularly women and students in Kampala, West Nile, and Southwestern Uganda, through a comprehensive program involving:

- Capacity building through hands-on training workshops on ethical reporting, climate justice narratives, and gender-inclusive storytelling;
- Mentorship and editorial support to guide story development from idea to publication;
- Cross-media collaborations that connected rural reporters with mainstream urban newsrooms to ensure visibility and content diversity;
- Development of a Practical Toolkit, titled "*Telling the Whole Story: A Guide to Ethical and Gender-Sensitive Climate Reporting in Uganda*", which serves as a curriculum and reference tool for journalists and educators alike.

This approach aimed to bridge the gap between rural and urban journalists, elevate youth and women's voices, and foster a culture of accountability and inclusivity in media production on climate and migration issues. Notably, the project was implemented during a period marked by increased climate-induced displacement and severe weather events in Uganda—including floods in Kasese, prolonged droughts in

Karamoja, and environmental degradation in refugee-hosting districts—all of which underscored the urgency for ethical and community-based journalism.

By the end of the project, the Media and Gender Equality initiative had not only trained over 60 young journalists but also contributed to a broader movement for responsible, inclusive journalism in Uganda, earning recognition from institutions such as the Uganda Media Council and National Association of Broadcasters.

## 2. KEY ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED

### a) Capacity Building of Young Journalists

At the core of the Media and Gender Equality Project was a targeted capacity-building component designed to equip young and aspiring journalists with the knowledge, tools, and ethical grounding needed to report responsibly on complex issues such as climate justice, gender equality, and migration. The program successfully trained over 60 young journalists and journalism students, 42% of whom were women, reflecting the project's commitment to gender inclusion in a profession where women remain underrepresented.



Young journalists participate in a capacity-building workshop on ethical and gender-sensitive climate reporting in Kampala, Uganda. The session, held under the Media and Gender Equality Project, brought together students and emerging reporters from institutions such as Makerere University and Uganda Christian University to engage with senior editors and refine their storytelling skills on climate justice, migration, and gender equality.

The training program was implemented through a regional approach, ensuring representation from diverse media ecosystems across Uganda. The key training locations included:

- **Kampala:** As Uganda's media hub, Kampala provided access to both national-level media houses and journalism schools such as Makerere University and Uganda Christian

University. Participants in Kampala benefited from exposure to senior editors and practitioners from the Daily Monitor, NBS TV, and Uganda Radio Network.

- **Arua (West Nile):** In this post-conflict, refugee-hosting region, the project engaged emerging journalists from local FM stations such as Radio Pacis, Voice of Life, and students from local institutes. Many participants here brought unique insights into **the intersections of** climate change and displacement, particularly in the context of South Sudanese refugee settlements like Rhino Camp.
- **Fort Portal (Southwestern Uganda):** This location was strategically chosen due to its environmental fragility (e.g., deforestation in the Rwenzori ranges) and active student body at Mountains of the Moon University (MMU). Participants explored storytelling around community-based conservation, indigenous women's roles in climate adaptation, and youth-led agroecology efforts.

The trainings were intensive and participatory, structured around three-day workshops in each region. Key modules included:

- **Ethical Dilemmas in Climate and Gender Reporting:** Using real-life Ugandan case studies (e.g., misleading coverage of landslides in Bududa or gender stereotyping in flood disaster stories), facilitators challenged participants to critically assess the implications of irresponsible journalism.
- **Narrative Framing and Solutions Journalism:** Trainees learned how to

construct stories that not only highlight problems but also showcase local solutions, such as women's cooperatives adapting to drought or youth-led recycling initiatives in informal settlements like Katanga and Arua Hill.

- **Gender Analysis and Inclusive Storytelling:** This module introduced tools for analyzing gender dynamics in media content. Participants reflected on how media often portrays women as victims rather than agents, and practiced re-framing stories to center women's voices and leadership—such as profiling female climate activists in Kasese or refugee women innovators in Bidibidi.
- **Story Pitching and Editorial Planning:** With guidance from media mentors, each participant developed and pitched a story idea. Top pitches were later supported for production and publication through project-supported editorial mentorships.

Many trainees reported that this was their first formal exposure to the concepts of climate justice and gender-responsive reporting, and post-training evaluations revealed a marked increase in knowledge and confidence, particularly among young women journalists.

By building foundational skills and providing a safe, inclusive learning environment, the project helped nurture a new generation of ethically-minded journalists equipped to tell Uganda's most urgent environmental and social stories with depth, integrity, and empathy.



*Emerging journalists at Radio Pacis in Arua engage in a group discussion on the intersections of climate change and displacement, focusing on the lived experiences of South Sudanese refugees in settlements like Rhino Camp. The session highlighted the role of local media in amplifying community voices and promoting ethical, inclusive reporting in post-conflict and refugee-hosting regions.*

### b) Toolkit Development

A key output of the Media and Gender Equality Project was the development and dissemination of a Toolkit on Ethical and Gender-Sensitive Climate Reporting—a practical resource designed to guide journalists, media educators, and journalism students in producing more inclusive, ethical, and impactful stories on climate, gender, and migration.

Recognizing the critical need for contextualized media training materials in Uganda, the toolkit was developed through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process. CEMA facilitated consultative workshops and interviews with:

- Experienced editors and climate reporters from Daily Monitor, TV West, and Radio Pacis;
- Journalism lecturers from Mountains of the Moon University (MMU) and Uganda Christian University;
- Representatives from the Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) **and the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME);**
- Young journalists who participated in the project's training sessions and offered feedback on practical needs and common challenges.

The resulting toolkit—titled “*Telling the Whole Story: A Guide to Ethical and Gender-Sensitive Climate Reporting in Uganda*”—is the first of its kind tailored

to Uganda's media environment. It draws upon global frameworks like UNESCO's Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media **and** IPCC communication guidelines, but grounds them in local case studies and cultural realities.

#### **Key Content Areas in the Toolkit:**

- Principles of Ethical Journalism in the Ugandan context, including media law, accuracy, accountability, and respect for human dignity;
- Gender-Responsive Reporting Techniques, offering guidance on sourcing diverse voices, avoiding stereotypes, and analyzing power dynamics in climate narratives;
- Climate Justice and Migration Reporting, with story templates on themes such as urban flooding, land degradation, refugee resilience, and women's roles in environmental stewardship;
- Tools for Newsroom Integration, such as checklists for editors, inclusive language guides, and templates for audience engagement;
- **Case Studies:** Real-life stories were analyzed, including examples from Kasese district, where women's savings groups are spearheading reforestation efforts, and from Arua, where refugee youth have launched eco-brick innovations to combat plastic waste.

To ensure accessibility, the toolkit was published in both **print and digital formats**, and distributed through:

- Training institutions like MMU and GUIDE, where it has been integrated into course modules on development journalism and environmental reporting;
- Media houses and press clubs in Kampala, West Nile, and Fort Portal;
- Community radio journalists, through a condensed Kiswahili and Lugbara-language factsheet adapted for rural and vernacular broadcasters.

According to feedback from MMU faculty, the toolkit has filled a critical curricular gap, offering students and instructors an up-to-date, locally relevant resource that emphasizes not only journalistic accuracy, but also social responsibility. GUIDE has incorporated sections of the toolkit into its annual Youth Media Fellowship Program, helping young reporters produce more nuanced stories on the climate-gender nexus.

In 2024, the toolkit was nominated for recognition by the Uganda Media Council during its annual Ethical Journalism Innovation Forum, reflecting its relevance and value to the country's evolving media landscape.

By combining theory with practical tools and localized examples, the toolkit continues to serve as a living document and training resource, adaptable to the needs of newsrooms, academic institutions, and media NGOs working across Uganda and the wider Great Lakes region.



Program and editorial staff at VOT FM review the Toolkit on Ethical and Gender-Sensitive Climate Reporting as they prepare for upcoming news and program content, reinforcing their commitment to inclusive and responsible journalism.

### c) Cross-Media Content Co-Creation

The Cross-Media Content Co-Creation component of the Media and Gender Equality Project was designed to bridge a longstanding gap in Uganda's media ecosystem: the disconnect between rural-based journalists, who often have proximity to underreported stories, and urban-based media houses, which command greater reach and editorial influence. By facilitating collaboration between rural and urban journalists, the project helped build new editorial relationships, encouraged inclusive content development, and amplified voices from climate- and migration-affected communities that are often overlooked in national discourse.

Under CEMA's coordination, the project organized a series of content co-creation workshops and editorial exchanges involving:

- Young journalists and student reporters from Mountains of the Moon University (Fort Portal) and community media platforms like Radio Pacis (Arua);
- Editors and reporters from TV West, Daily Monitor, and NBS TV in Kampala;
- Media mentors from the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA) and the Great Lakes Union for Inclusive Development (GUIDE).

These collaborations created opportunities for joint story development, where urban journalists brought technical guidance and editorial standards, while rural journalists provided access, local language fluency, and community trust—essential elements for reporting on localized climate impacts and migration dynamics in remote regions.



A Co-creation Session Involving Journalists and student reporters from Mountains of the Moon University (Fort Portal)



Media mentors from the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA) and the Great Lakes Union for Inclusive Development (GUIDE) in a group photo after co-creation sessions



A Co-creation Session Involving editors and reporters from TV West, Daily Monitor, and NBS TV in Kampala

#### Key Story Themes and Outputs:

Through this initiative, the project supported the production and publication of 20 youth-led stories across various platforms. Examples include:

- “When the Rain Stops Falling: Women Farmers Adapt to Drought in Kyegegwa” – A radio feature aired on Voice of Toro FM and later adapted into a video segment by TV West, showcasing how women-led cooperatives are turning to drought-resistant crops and organic composting.
- “From Camps to Climate Champions: Refugee Youth in Rhino Camp Innovate with Solar Tech” – A story jointly produced by a journalism student from Arua and a Kampala-based editor, published in the Daily Monitor Sunday Feature, highlighting

how displaced youth are piloting solar phone-charging kiosks to reduce dependency on firewood and kerosene.

- “Flooding in Fort Portal: A Tale of Neglected Voices” – A collaborative piece profiling informal settlement residents affected by flash floods and poor drainage, integrating gender analysis on how women face greater risk due to caregiving roles and housing insecurity.
- “The Climate Costs of Charcoal: Behind the Scenes in Arua’s Energy Markets” – An investigative radio documentary co-produced by rural and urban reporters, examining the environmental degradation driven by Uganda’s informal charcoal trade, with a special focus on female traders.

By publishing on diverse platforms—including TV West, Daily Monitor, Radio

Pacis, and digital youth platforms like Next Media’s online newsroom—the stories reached both local audiences and national policymakers, raising awareness of the human dimensions of climate change and displacement.

Importantly, these collaborative stories were developed with editorial mentorship, ensuring high quality and adherence to ethical standards promoted in the project’s training and toolkit. They also provided career-advancing opportunities for many young journalists, some of whom have since been recruited as freelance contributors or taken up internships at mainstream outlets.

In post-project surveys, over 70% of participants reported improved confidence in cross-regional reporting and a stronger network of professional peers. One journalism student from Fort Portal noted, “*This was the first time I saw my work published in a national newspaper—and the first time someone from my community was interviewed about climate change as an expert.*”

Through this co-creation model, the project not only generated impactful content but also seeded long-term editorial partnerships, offering a replicable approach for media development initiatives aiming to localize storytelling and diversify the voices shaping Uganda’s environmental and migration narratives.

#### d) Institutional Engagements

The institutional engagement strategy of the Media and Gender Equality Project was designed to ensure the sustainability of its impact by embedding ethical journalism practices—particularly

those related to gender equity and climate justice—within Uganda’s key media and journalism education institutions.

The project focused on two strategic pathways:

1. Building long-term partnerships between media schools and professional newsrooms, **and**
2. Promoting gender-transformative policies and leadership in editorial spaces.

##### *1. Strengthening Media-School Partnerships*

Through sustained collaboration with Mountains of the Moon University (MMU) and the Great Lakes Union for Inclusive Development (GUIDE), the project deepened mentorship opportunities and integrated project resources into existing academic programs.

- At MMU, the project supported the revision of the journalism curriculum **to include** modules on climate communication, gender-sensitive reporting, and ethical storytelling. Faculty members were trained on how to use the project’s toolkit and case studies to guide students in practical coursework.
- GUIDE, which runs a youth-focused media fellowship and civic journalism training program, adopted the toolkit and co-hosted practical sessions with project-trained journalists. Through GUIDE’s regional networks, the project also reached rural journalism clubs and media startups, extending mentorship opportunities beyond traditional universities.

This collaboration has led to the institutionalization of mentorship cycles, whereby MMU alumni who participated in the initial project trainings are now returning as peer mentors for new cohorts. One such mentor, a graduate from the 2023 cohort, now works with a local FM station in Kasese and leads workshops on interviewing techniques and story ethics for current journalism students.

## *2. Engaging Newsroom Leaders on Gender Equity*

Recognizing that mentorship alone is insufficient without leadership buy-in, the project also organized editorial roundtable discussions to promote organizational change in newsroom culture.

- These roundtables convened editors, producers, and senior reporters from major media houses, including Daily Monitor, TV West, NBS TV, UBC, and Uganda Broadcasting Corporation Radio, **alongside representatives from UMWA, ACME, and the Uganda Media Council.**
- The discussions tackled critical issues such as:
  - Gender bias in story assignment and source selection;
  - Harassment and safety of women journalists in the field and online;
  - The gender pay gap and newsroom leadership inequality;
  - Lack of editorial space for climate stories that feature women as agents of change rather than victims.

A key output of these engagements was a joint action framework adopted by several media houses, committing to:

- Increasing the number of women-led climate and environment stories;
- Establishing newsroom mentorship roles for junior female reporters;
- Reviewing language guidelines to avoid gendered framing and stereotypes.

One notable outcome was the appointment of a Gender and Inclusion Desk **at TV West**, tasked with reviewing content before broadcast and training producers on inclusive storytelling practices. Similarly, the Daily Monitor initiated an internal audit of its editorial pipeline to identify gender disparities in bylines and content.

These engagements also catalyzed follow-up initiatives. For instance, in 2024, MMU co-hosted a Gender in Journalism Summit in Fort Portal with support from GUIDE and CEMA, drawing 80 participants including regional media managers, student journalists, and gender advocates.

By focusing on systems-level change, the project ensured that its efforts did not end with individual skill-building, but rather contributed to shifting institutional cultures toward greater gender equity and ethical responsibility across Uganda's media landscape.

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## **3. PROJECT OUTCOMES**

The Media and Gender Equality Project achieved significant milestones in reshaping climate and gender narratives

in Uganda's media landscape. The project not only empowered young journalists and media students but also catalyzed structural shifts in how stories on climate justice, gender, and migration are framed, produced, and consumed. Below are the key outcomes elaborated with contextual evidence and practical examples:

- *20 Published Stories by Youth and Women Journalists*

One of the most tangible outputs of the project was the production and dissemination of 20 original multimedia stories authored by youth and women journalists. These stories were published across national and local platforms, including Daily Monitor, TV West, Radio Pacis (Arua), Voice of Toro FM, and digital newsrooms such as Next Media's youth platform.

The stories addressed a diverse range of themes, including:

- **Women's Leadership in Climate Adaptation:** A widely circulated article titled "The River is Dying: How Women in Nebbi Are Replanting Wetlands" showcased how rural women organized to restore wetlands as a buffer against flash floods.
- **Migration and Climate Stress:** A feature story "Left Behind by the Rains: Displaced by Drought in Karamoja" documented the experiences of pastoralist women forced to migrate due to prolonged dry spells, bringing attention to the gendered dimensions of internal displacement.
- **Youth Innovation and Resilience:** A story titled "Solar Sisters: Refugee Girls Powering Homes in Rhino Camp"

highlighted the role of adolescent refugee girls in promoting solar lamp adoption to replace hazardous kerosene use in settlement schools.

In addition to written features, the stories took diverse formats, including video mini-documentaries, radio segments, and podcasts, broadening their accessibility to both literate and non-literate audiences.

Several stories generated community and institutional engagement—for example, following the airing of a TV West story on pollution in Fort Portal's slum drainage channels, the municipal council conducted a cleanup drive and agreed to meet with local youth groups who had contributed to the story.

- *Media Partnerships Strengthened*

The project solidified collaborative partnerships with mainstream media houses and journalism training institutions, helping institutionalize ethical and gender-sensitive storytelling practices.

- At Daily Monitor, project-trained contributors were supported with editorial mentorship, and the newsroom began actively sourcing climate stories from upcountry correspondents, a shift from the previous Kampala-centric editorial focus.
- TV West dedicated airtime to a special climate and migration segment, airing a series titled "Our Changing Weather, Our Changing Lives", which profiled community-led climate resilience across Western Uganda. Two female student reporters from Fort Portal were co-hosts of the mini-series—marking a

- rare inclusion of young female voices on a regional broadcast platform.
- Mountains of the Moon University and GUIDE integrated the project toolkit and ethics modules into their journalism training programs. As of 2024, over 100 students have accessed and applied the project materials as part of their field assignments.

These partnerships not only expanded the reach of climate and gender reporting but also created pathways for new talent, particularly women and rural youth, to enter professional journalism spaces.

- *Recognition by Uganda Media Council*

The Uganda Media Council, the statutory regulator of media practice in the country, formally recognized the project's contributions in its 2023 Annual Media Sector Report.

In a special section on *Innovations in Media Ethics and Inclusion*, the Council cited CEMA's Media and Gender Equality Project for:

- Advancing gender parity in media production and content;
- Supporting youth-driven and community-grounded journalism;
- Demonstrating a model for ethical, localized climate reporting with national relevance.

The Council's report specifically highlighted the co-creation model between rural and urban journalists as a best practice in participatory storytelling. As a result, CEMA has since been invited to contribute to policy dialogues on updating the Uganda Journalism Training Curriculum under

the Uganda Media Training Institutions Network (UMTIN).

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#### **4. IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS**

The Media and Gender Equality Project delivered a measurable and lasting impact in shifting both the media ecosystem and public perception around climate, gender, and migration reporting in Uganda. Below are key impact areas illustrated with practical examples and factual context:

- *Increased Confidence and Capacity Among Young Women Journalists*

One of the most profound outcomes of the project was the **transformation in confidence and professional capacity** among young women journalists—many of whom were entering newsrooms historically dominated by male voices and perspectives.

- Of the 60 journalists trained, approximately 42% were women, several of whom reported that it was their first time pitching and publishing stories independently.
- Participants such as Annet Katusime, a journalism student from Mountains of the Moon University, credited the project with helping her secure an internship at Voice of Toro FM, where she now produces a weekly segment titled “Women and the Environment”. Her feature on deforestation and gender-based violence in Kamwenge district was picked up by TV West and replayed in a regional news roundup.
- Another participant, Fatuma Achieng from Arua, shared during a follow-up

session that before the project, she “didn’t know that women’s stories on migration mattered,” but after being mentored by a senior editor from the Daily Monitor, she successfully pitched a story on climate-induced displacement among female-headed households in Yumbe district.

Through structured **mentorship, peer review sessions, and editorial coaching**, the project enabled these emerging women journalists to navigate complex topics such as climate adaptation, gender-based policy gaps, and ethical reporting dilemmas—while challenging the status quo of newsroom gender dynamics.

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- Enhanced Public Awareness of Local Climate Challenges Through Ethical Storytelling

The project significantly contributed to shifting public narratives around climate change by promoting localized, human-centered stories that resonate with everyday audiences—especially in rural and peri-urban areas often ignored in mainstream media.

- By focusing on stories that framed communities as agents of change, rather than passive victims, the project moved the needle on how climate stories are understood by the public. For example, a widely viewed segment on TV West titled “*Guardians of the Forest*” profiled a women-led cooperative in Kabarole replanting indigenous trees. The story inspired a regional NGO to donate seedlings and tools to the group.

- In West Nile, Radio Pacis ran a series of interviews and debates following the broadcast of project-supported stories on soil erosion and floods in Arua district. Community leaders, including LC1 officials and school teachers, began referencing the stories in local meetings and barazas, citing them as evidence of “climate neglect in district plans.”
- These stories not only raised awareness but also galvanized local action. In Fort Portal, youth from a climate club at MMU organized a community theatre performance based on one of the stories published during the project, reaching over 300 attendees with dramatized messages on land degradation and women’s resilience.

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- Fostered a Community of Practice Linking Journalism Educators, Media Houses, and Youth Reporters

A key legacy of the project was the creation of a national-level community of practice (CoP) that connected media educators, newsroom professionals, and young reporters with a shared interest in ethical, inclusive, and climate-literate journalism.

- The CoP was nurtured through:
  - Regional training cohorts in Kampala, Arua, and Fort Portal;
  - A WhatsApp peer-learning group with over 75 active members sharing story leads, editorial tips, and media job postings;
  - Joint mentorship exchanges between students and professional editors from

Daily Monitor, TV West, and community radio stations.

- Journalism departments at Mountains of the Moon University and GUIDE Media Lab committed to maintaining these networks through regular alumni meet-ups and integration of the project's principles into semester assignments.
- The CoP also attracted interest from other institutions, such as Uganda Christian University and Uganda Martyrs University, which have since requested access to the project's Toolkit on Ethical and Gender-Sensitive Climate Reporting.

This growing network has the potential to **evolve into a national consortium** for advancing ethical journalism training and policy engagement, with CEMA positioned as a core convener and knowledge broker.

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## 5. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

While the Media and Gender Equality Project achieved considerable success in strengthening ethical and inclusive journalism, it also encountered structural and operational challenges—particularly around digital equity and institutional gender bias. These challenges provided valuable insights for the design of future media development programs in Uganda and similar contexts.

- *Digital Access Barriers in Rural Settings*

One of the most consistent challenges observed was the **limited access to digital tools and platforms** among young journalists—especially those

based in **rural areas such as Arua, Nebbi, and Kabarole districts**.

- Despite strong story development skills, some participants **struggled to publish or share multimedia content** due to lack of reliable internet access, smartphones, or laptops.
- For example, a group of three trainee journalists from a community radio station in Bundibugyo produced a compelling radio documentary on **women's coping strategies during prolonged dry spells**—but were unable to edit and distribute the audio online until CEMA provided access to basic editing tools through a university media lab.
- In Arua, youth contributors reported having to **travel over 10 kilometers** to access internet cafés or computer centers to submit stories for publication.

These digital access barriers **reduced the visibility of rural perspectives** in national-level media and limited the timely flow of climate-related information from high-risk regions.

**Lesson Learned:** Future programs should integrate **Media Innovation Support Funds**, providing micro-grants or equipment loans (e.g., audio recorders, mobile data packages, refurbished laptops) to resource-constrained journalists. Building regional “journalism hubs” in collaboration with local universities and radio stations could further enhance decentralized storytelling capacities.

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- *Gender Bias and Unequal Editorial Support in Newsrooms*

Despite strong project emphasis on gender inclusion, several **female participants reported facing bias or marginalization** when they attempted to pitch stories in mainstream or male-dominated editorial environments.

- In interviews conducted during follow-up sessions, women journalists noted that their pitches on community water stress, refugee girls' education, or women's land rights were sometimes deprioritized in favor of "hard news" stories deemed more commercially viable by editors.
- One participant from Kampala recounted how a senior editor advised her to "leave climate to the science guys" and instead "stick to lifestyle features"—reflecting enduring gender stereotyping within editorial hierarchies.
- A young female journalist from West Nile reported being asked to "wait for a male colleague" to co-produce her feature on displacement and flooding, despite having completed all reporting independently.

These experiences pointed to deep-rooted structural biases that limit the advancement of women journalists and constrain the diversity of stories reaching the public.

**Lesson Learned:** Training and mentorship must be complemented by institutional advocacy **and** editorial-level gender sensitization. The project's roundtable dialogues with editors were a good starting point, but there is a need for ongoing engagement with media managers, content gatekeepers, and

owners to challenge systemic gender imbalances.

CEMA is now exploring partnerships with the Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) **and** African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME) to co-develop newsroom gender equity policies and editor training modules tailored to Ugandan media realities.

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## 6. SUSTAINABILITY AND NEXT STEPS

To ensure long-term impact and institutional uptake, the Media and Gender Equality Project was designed with a strong focus on **sustainability, replication, and policy integration**. Building on the momentum from its successful implementation in 2023–2024, the project partners—CEMA, GUIDE, TV West, Daily Monitor, and Mountains of the Moon University—have identified concrete pathways to scale its reach and deepen its impact across Uganda's media and education sectors.

- *Expanding Mentorship Circles and Integrating the Ethical Reporting Toolkit*

CEMA and GUIDE are scaling up their journalist mentorship efforts by transforming the original project's temporary mentorship arrangements into **long-term mentorship circles** embedded in local institutions.

- **Mountains of the Moon University** and GUIDE's Media Lab are already piloting mentorship hubs where experienced journalists coach current students and recent graduates on gender-sensitive storytelling, media ethics, and climate justice reporting.

- These mentorship hubs will operate on a **semester basis**, matching mentees with trained professionals, including editors from the **Daily Monitor** and producers at **TV West**, to offer feedback on drafts, pitch ideas, and develop portfolios.
- The **Toolkit on Ethical and Gender-Sensitive Climate Reporting**, originally co-created during the project, is now being integrated into the **journalism and communication curricula** of Mountains of the Moon University, with plans to roll it out at other institutions such as **Uganda Christian University** and **Makerere University School of Journalism and Communication**.
- In addition to formal classroom adoption, GUIDE has adapted the toolkit into a **modular training format** for use in short courses, bootcamps, and community workshops for freelance journalists and radio reporters.

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- [\*\*Exploring Youth-Centered Podcast and Community Radio Formats\*\*](#)

Recognizing the digital shift in media consumption among Uganda's youth and rural communities, project partners are developing **new media formats** to amplify youth-led content and democratize access to ethical storytelling.

- CEMA and TV West are co-producing a pilot podcast series titled “*Voices of Change*”, featuring short audio stories created by youth reporters trained under the project. Each episode will spotlight topics like women’s leadership in climate adaptation, migration narratives, and

indigenous environmental knowledge.

- In West Nile and Southwestern Uganda, GUIDE is supporting partner radio stations such as Radio Pacis (Arua) and Voice of Toro (Fort Portal) to broadcast youth-generated segments on local climate issues. These will be co-hosted by trained alumni of the project and will include interactive listener call-ins, fostering dialogue between communities and young reporters.
- The expansion into community radio and podcasting is intended to bridge the urban-rural information divide **and offer young content creators a low-cost, high-impact platform for disseminating stories that challenge stereotypes and inspire community action.**

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- [\*\*Developing a National Media and Gender Reporting Fellowship \(2025 Proposal\)\*\*](#)

To institutionalize the gains of the Media and Gender Equality Project and provide continued support for emerging ethical storytellers, CEMA and GUIDE are currently developing a proposal for a National Media and Gender Reporting Fellowship, set to launch in 2025.

- The proposed fellowship will offer annual grants, editorial coaching, and production support to a select cohort of 20–25 youth and women journalists across Uganda.
- Fellows will undertake field-based reporting projects focused on gender justice, climate resilience, refugee experiences, and migration stories, with their work published across major outlets including *Monitor*

- Publications, TV West, and partner radio networks.
- The fellowship will also include a residency period with newsroom placements, masterclasses led by veteran editors, and an end-of-cycle showcase to highlight top stories to media stakeholders, donors, and government agencies.
  - Initial concept development has garnered interest from potential funders such as the **Open Society-Africa** and **The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)**.
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## 7. PROJECT FUNDING AND BUDGET OVERVIEW

The Media and Gender Equality Project was funded through a combination of direct donor support, in-kind institutional contributions, and co-financing from partner organizations. The total budget for the project implementation period (March 2023 – March 2024) amounted to USD 48,250, which covered training, toolkit development, content production, mentorship activities, and coordination costs across three regions in Uganda.

### *Key Funding Contributions:*

- **Open Society Foundations (OSF):** OSF contributed USD 19500, including direct financial support for project coordination, training logistics, toolkit publication, and youth content grants. This also covered technical assistance and monitoring & evaluation activities.

- **Centre for Environment and Migration Assistance (CEMA):** CEMA contributed USD 3,000, including direct financial support for project coordination, technical assistance and monitoring & evaluation activities.
- **Great Lakes Union for Inclusive Development (GUIDE):** GUIDE contributed approximately USD 7,500 in co-funding and in-kind support. This included use of their media training center in Arua, accommodation for trainees, and provision of local facilitators and resource persons.
- **Mountains of the Moon University:** The University contributed USD 4,000 in in-kind support, including free access to lecture halls, media labs, and faculty time to co-develop and pilot the Ethical Reporting Toolkit.
- **TV West and Daily Monitor (Media Partners):** The media houses provided editorial mentorship and airtime/publication space worth USD 5,250 to disseminate youth-generated stories. These partnerships were crucial in bridging the gap between grassroots reporting and mainstream media platforms.
- **Other Donor Contributions:** An additional USD 9,000 was mobilized from online individual grants by philanthropic partners supporting gender equality and climate justice journalism in Uganda. These funds covered story grants, rural journalist stipends, and podcast production pilots.

**Budget Breakdown by Component:**

| <b>Component</b>  | <b>Cost (USD)</b> |
|---|-------------------|
| <i>Capacity Building (Trainings, Workshops)</i>           | \$17,400          |
| <i>Toolkit Development and Printing</i>                   | \$4,920           |
| <i>Content Production &amp; Story Grants (20 stories)</i> | \$5,970           |
| <i>Mentorship &amp; Institutional Engagement</i>          | \$4,020           |
| <i>Community Radio &amp; Podcast Pilots</i>               | \$3,120           |
| <i>Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)</i>         | \$2,820           |
| <i>Project Coordination and Admin Costs</i>               | \$5,600           |
| <i>Communications, Visibility, and Stakeholder Events</i> | \$3,490           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>\$47,340</b>   |
| <b>Surplus/Deficit</b>                                    | <b>\$910</b>      |

**Prepared by:**

Centre for Environment and Migration Assistance (CEMA)

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