

A photograph of five women walking on a dirt path, each carrying a large water container on their head or hands. The image is overlaid with a teal color filter. In the top right corner, there is a grey L-shaped graphic element.

First ever Gold Standard certified “gender responsive” project

The Lango Safe Water Project, developed by CO2balance, is the first ever project to apply our gender responsive requirements, empowering women and girls + delivering climate action.

Why gender equality and women's empowerment are so important?

Empowering women and girls is one of the [most effective ways to fight climate change](#). And closing gender gaps will also accelerate progress towards many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Poverty, education, health, jobs and livelihoods, food security, environmental and energy sustainability will not be solved without addressing gender inequality.

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The Lango Safe Water Project

This project is based in northern Uganda and rehabilitates boreholes to provide clean water access to the local communities.

In Lango, access to safe water is a major challenge; boreholes often fall into disrepair due to a lack of funding or training in their maintenance. Forcing communities to use unsafe water sources such as streams, which have to be boiled to make safe. To boil the water, communities collect and burn firewood, which places greater pressure on dwindling forests and produces CO2 emissions. It also creates a burden for women and children, who typically spend hours every day collecting firewood and water. And even so, boiling water does not always guarantee that it is safe to drink, so waterborne diseases continue to afflict the community.

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In this project, boreholes are rehabilitated by skilled technicians, and water quality testing is conducted to ensure that the water is safe to drink. Local communities are encouraged to form Water Resource Committees (WRCs) which are responsible for ensuring the ongoing maintenance of the borehole in the community and surrounding areas. The project also provides WASH training sessions to support communities in hygiene and sanitation techniques.

To date, the boreholes rehabilitated through the project have brought clean water to over 40,000 people throughout Lango. Almost 100% of people use the rehabilitated boreholes for the majority of their water

needs. For borehole users, there is no longer a need to boil water to make it safe, thereby eliminating CO2 emissions. Users also benefit from reduced exposure to waterborne disease and women and children save hours every day, enabling them to invest their time in other more productive activities.

First-ever project to be certified “gender responsive”

The Lango Safe Water Project is the first ever to apply the full [Gold Standard Gender Equality Requirements \(section 3.0\)](#). As part of the ‘additional’ certification process to verify the gender impacts, CO2balance conducted a comprehensive gender analysis to establish a gender baseline. This involved a gender baseline survey as well as supplementary gender-focused local stakeholder meetings.



Through these activities, three key themes related to gender were identified:

1. **Time poverty** - the amount of time women and girls spend collecting water greatly diminishes their ability to engage in income-generation or education, increasing their economic dependence and decreasing time for rest and leisure.
2. **Individual and community empowerment** - including meaningful participation and leadership, stronger social networks and agency that enables women more of a say in decision-making on key issues affecting the community.

3. **Exposure to gender-based violence in water collection** – it emerged that women suffer GBV whilst travelling long distances to collect water and may also face domestic violence at home as a result of delays in other household chores caused by the length of time it takes to collect water.

This project promotes:

1. The principle of **shared domestic responsibilities** to instil the idea that time women save on water collection should be spent on empowerment-focused activities, not simply redirected to other unpaid domestic tasks.
2. **Gender-parity** in the Water Resource Committees and group dynamics training to ensure the viewpoints of all members are heard equally.
3. Awareness raising of the **harms of gender-based violence**, promoting open dialogue within the communities to ensure that it is understood and dispelled from the level of community leaders.



PROJECT IMPACTS + BENEFITS

- **2 hours a day** saved on water collection - this time saved is spent on other unpaid domestic tasks and income-generation, leisure, religious activities and empowerment focused activities within the community.

- A male and female member of each WRC were present at the gender equality awareness raising meetings. These **206** members then shared the information gathered back to the local communities.
- The ratio of male and female members in the project Water Resource Committees is approaching parity with **46% female to 54% male**.
- **NO** of women reported incidents of domestic violence related to water collection since the project started, compared to 35% prior to the project.
- Borehole users have reported an **85% reduction** in incidents of bullying, intimidation and assault during water collection since the borehole was rehabilitated.
- **85%** of respondents reported a positive impact thanks to this project
- More than **40,000** individuals have gained access to safe water – reducing exposure to waterborne illness
- Approximately **100,000** tonnes of CO2 emissions reduced per year



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