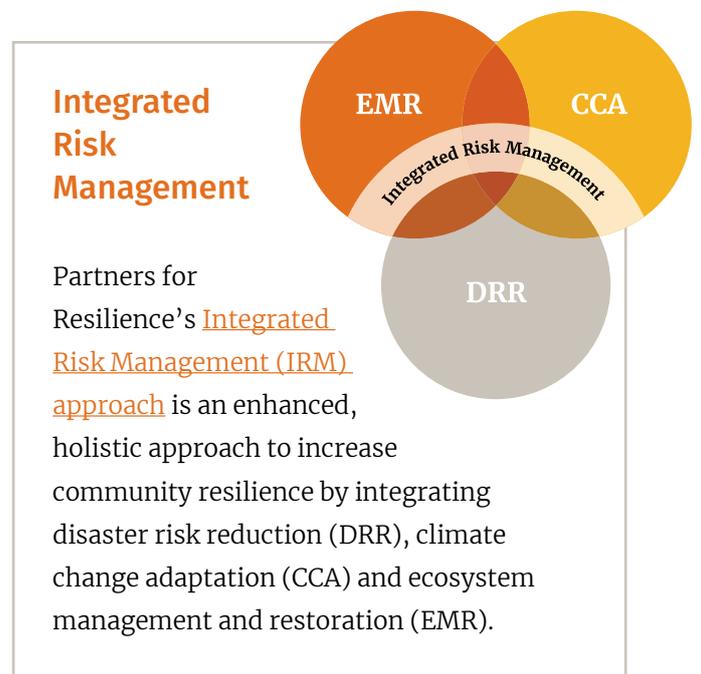


# Partners for Resilience in Uganda

For ten years, CARE has worked to increase the resilience of the population in Otuke district by diversifying their livelihoods and making sure decision-makers hear the voices and needs of the most vulnerable.

- 2011–2015**  
 CARE focused on reducing community vulnerability to disaster risk, by creating Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Committees, forming Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), introducing climate-resilient agriculture practices and disseminating weather forecasts.
- 2016–2020**  
 Besides supporting resilience practices, CARE and partner Facilitation for Peace and Development (FAPAD) equipped Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and communities with skills to advocate for Integrated Risk Management (IRM) at different government levels, using Partners for Resilience (PFR) generated evidence, with a special focus on improving the position of women.



## CARE’s Partners for Resilience (PFR) programme in Uganda



**142,775** community members covered with DRR, CCA and EMR plans



**251** staff from government entities and institutions trained in IRM



**6,549** people improved their livelihoods by implementing climate change adaptation actions



**4** policies, guidelines and laws influenced to adopt IRM, increasing the resilience of communities



**>1000** flood tolerant shelters created



**3** Participatory Community Wetlands Management Plans developed



**22** CSOs with strengthened capacity to lobby and advocate for IRM

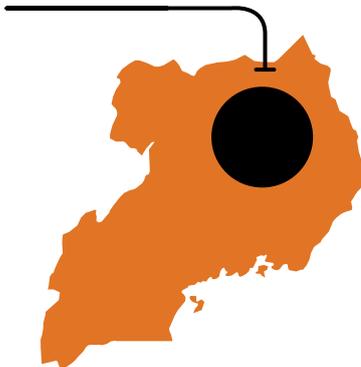


**250** Village Savings and Loans Associations established

## Context

Uganda is one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change. Otuke district, where CARE has been active throughout the programme, is prone to various threats including dry spells and environmental degradation. The district is highly dependent on rain-fed agriculture, and such hazards reduce the amount of agricultural land, shorten growing seasons, hamper crop production, undermine (ground) water resources and alter the occurrence and distribution of pests. This threatens the livelihoods of people who often rely on unsustainable practices to survive. Opportunities to share these issues with decision-makers are scarce due to limitations in the freedom of expression, assembly and association. In this context, a consortium of CARE, Cordaid, The Netherlands Red Cross, Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre and Wetlands International implemented the [Partners for Resilience \(PFR\)](#) programme for ten years, funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This publication outlines CARE's main achievements.

Otuke district



### CARE's gender focus

CARE used the [Climate Vulnerability Capacity Analysis \(CVCA\)](#) tool to conduct gender analysis at the start of the PFR programme. Key staff and partners, including the local government in Otuke, took part in [CARE's Gender Equity and Diversity training](#). This led to specific attention to women's participation and perspectives and helped shape activities, including income generating activities. Gender was also integrated in lobby and advocacy activities, for example towards Uganda's Climate Change Bill, and the Uganda climate-smart agriculture programme.

## Main achievements

### Disaster Risk Reduction and Ecosystem Management

Communities in Otuke increased their resilience through risk assessments and by developing (nature-based) mitigation measures to cope with droughts, heat waves and floods.

- Communities applied CARE's [Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis \(CVCA\)](#) methodology to analyse their vulnerability and their capacity to reduce disaster risk, mostly caused by environmental degradation and climate change ([see CVCA report here](#)).
- Communities established Disaster Risk Management (DRM) committees to design DRR plans on: 1) physical infrastructure such as flood diversion canals and more than 1000 flood tolerant shelters; 2) nature-based measures like pasture development and farm tree plantations; and 3) ecosystem-friendly livelihoods such as [beekeeping](#). This enabled 600 women and men to identify risks and develop concrete actions.
- CARE supported communities to develop 3 [Participatory Community Wetlands Management Plans](#), promoting sustainable use of wetland resources and reducing conflicts. This is a significant achievement as wetlands serve as buffer to protect vulnerable communities during floods and ensure a constant supply of water.



## Climate Change Adaptation

CARE took an integrated approach to community resilience by introducing climate smart agriculture (CSA), use of weather forecast information and financial schemes such as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) - improving the [livelihoods](#) of 6,549 people.

- CARE trained farmers on climate-resilient practices, income-generating activities and the use of weather forecast information. 65 model farmers increased their income and enabled the spread of information about CSA to 280 peers. The approach was adopted in government programmes through the Third Northern Uganda Social Action Fund Project for Uganda.
- CARE enabled access to weather forecast information for early warning and early response systems, based on [indigenous and scientific knowledge](#). CARE also facilitated the dissemination of quarterly weather forecasts through radio, dialogues and print materials, increasing the use of weather forecast information by media houses, farmers and local governments.
- To deal with crop failure due to delayed or extreme rainfall, CARE and FAPAD trained communities on the VSLA methodology, so money saved within the VSLAs could act as insurance to farmers. 250 new VSLA groups were created, of which 3 became Cooperative Organisations gaining access to government loans.

## Strengthening capacity of civil society and government

PfR Uganda and 22 CSOs strengthened their lobby and advocacy capacities through training on outcome reporting, formulating key messages on IRM, and practical methodologies for upholding gender principles in climate management actions. They in turn trained 251 staff from government entities.

- In Otuke, FAPAD [strengthened IRM lobby and advocacy capacities](#) of the multi-stakeholder platform (comprised of local government, media, CBOs and CSOs), VSLA groups, wetland management committees, Parish and Disaster management committees, model farmers and traditional leaders.
- CARE and PfR partners strengthened capacities of stakeholders in the National Climate Change policy, including Members of Parliament, CSOs, district authorities, and [media](#) representatives.
- CARE and partners strengthened IRM capacities of the Wetland Management Department in the Ministry of Water and Environment, which revived the development of a national wetlands policy and bill.
- CARE and FAPAD supported the Otuke District government to develop a revenue enhancement plan, training sub-counties and revenue committees, generating 380,952 Euros (6 billion Shilling). The District Local Government adopted disaster risk screening of development projects as a result of this.

## From local practices to national policy

### Kelle Agnes's story of resilience

Kelle was just a child when her family had to flee from their home in the Otuke district of Uganda to an Internally Displaced People's camp. When she returned to their village, the landscape —once bushy with huge trees, grass and vegetation— had changed. The community resorted to negative coping activities, like charcoal and bush burning, to sustain themselves. CARE trained the community on the importance of preserving the swamps and planting trees, and created an income-generating opportunity through beekeeping. Kelle is now a courageous and strong-willed 40-year-old farmer who grows rice and cassava. She earns additional income from beekeeping and has been elected to the local council.

But the threat of climate change requires concerted effort and national will. In consultations about the National Climate Change Bill in Uganda, CARE and PFR shared the experience of Kelle and her community in dealing with droughts. PFR lobbied for the bill to include gender as a priority area and to provide for the sustainable use of forests and wetlands. For Kelle and her community, resilience means having their voices heard at national and global levels.

### Influencing laws and policies

Lobby and advocacy activities resulted in inclusion of IRM principles in guidelines, policies and laws at various levels of government.

- Parliamentarians included 80% of the recommendations on [IRM gaps](#) in the [National Climate Change Bill](#). This included 1) mainstreaming gender as a policy priority area; 2) providing for sustainable use of forests and wetlands; 3) enhancing coordination among ministries to mainstream climate change. In addition, a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Climate Change was established.
- The National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management (2021–2025) integrates gender and IRM principles and recognises the need to decentralise funds to District Local Governments. Otuke district integrated IRM in the 2021–2025 District Development Plan, including the functionality of the Disaster Management Committee and formulation of a contingency plan.
- The National Wetlands Policy is now IRM sensitive and recognises the need to have a separate Wetlands Law aside from the National Environment Act. The impact was felt in the [Te Abala Wetland](#), as it led to community ownership and functional wetlands management.
- The Climate Change Department of the Ministry of Water and Environment used CARE and EMLI's report on [international Climate Adaptation Finance to Uganda](#) to prepare the third National Communication to UNFCCC, and this report fed discussions with the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development on how to better monitor climate finance.
- The Standard National Climate Change Indicators developed by CARE with the Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance (ACCRA) are used to develop sector specific monitoring tools.

## Sustainability of the programme

CARE partners Facilitation for Peace and Development (FAPAD) and Environmental Management for Livelihood Improvement (EMLI) played a critical role in the programme. In the complementary [Upscaling Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction programme](#), CARE and FAPAD will scale PfR achievements to neighbouring districts Agago and Alebtong. Importantly, the community structures formed and trained in Otuke supported the continuation of activities during the COVID-19 lockdown and took a central role in providing extension services to peers.

## Lessons learnt

- Appreciating and building on indigenous knowledge was critical to enhance a conducive environment for local governance. It allowed PfR to transform traditional laws into formal policies and laws, especially in ecosystem management.
- Enhancing communities' livelihoods by providing alternative sources of income paved the way for interventions related to Natural Resources Conservation and Management. Sustainable livelihoods like CSA or beekeeping decreased environmental degradation and increased food security.
- Working with communities and authorities was efficient to integrate IRM in policies. Raising awareness on DRM allowed communities to relate the policy frameworks to their lives and livelihoods. Strengthening government officials' IRM capacities made them more open to CSOs and recognising community needs and vulnerabilities.
- Rapidly shifting political interests both benefitted and slowed down the programme. Harsh weather conditions in 2018 increased the political will to enact the Climate Change Bill, whilst several crises (locust plague, COVID-19, and flooding) slowed the National Disaster Preparedness and Management Bill, as political attention shifted to response.
- The global focus of PfR was relevant for linking local needs to global commitments, particularly in the report on adaptation finance, which analysed local Ugandan evidence for advocacy at international fora.

## Key publications & tools

- [A Policy Brief for Reducing Climate Risks and Vulnerability for the Women, Girls and Smallholder Farmers among Pastoralist Communities.](#)
- [Climate Resilient Agro-Ecosystems Model](#) – enables communities to select farm and off-farm practices to build resilience, increase production and contribute to climate change mitigation.
- [Climate Adaptation Finance Study Report – Uganda](#) – assessing if multilateral and bilateral donors' reporting of adaptation finance is reliable, if these activities are gender sensitive and targeting the poorest and most climate vulnerable.
- [A Landscape Approach for Disaster Risk Reduction in 7 Steps](#) – a practical, cross-sectoral approach to connect all stakeholders for integrated risk management, starting with those at risk.
- [Integrated Risk Management Advocacy Training Manual](#) – concrete guidance for training and workshop sessions on IRM and advocacy.

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**PARTNERS FOR RESILIENCE**  
Working together on disasters, climate, ecosystems