



**(PLED)**

# **PROTECTION OF LAND AND ENVIRONMENT DEFENDERS IN UGANDA**



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The PLED project seeks to capacitate the LED including FoZ, with the knowledge to mainstream security and protection in their work and establish and empower a Land Environment Defenders Task Force (LEDTAF) pool with expertise in responding to emergency security and strategic needs on land issues in real-time.

# Introduction

## The Idea



### ***Creative Solutions to Data & Cybersecurity issues affecting Land & Environment Defenders in Uganda***

The security threats in a rapidly changing working environment for LEDs in Uganda, has compelled a number of actors to quit activism, exit the country, join the perpetrators in the face of injustice and uncertainty. This has been exacerbated by the growing demand for land and other natural resources by politically connected nationals and foreign investors, in the absence of an exhaustive land and environment governance policies. Additionally, this has fueled arbitrary eviction, conflicts and bred a climate of violence against LEDs accelerated by duty bearers and the private sector players.

Partners like FoZ, Witness Radio, NAVODA, BIRUDO, NAPE, and the like, have registered several security incidents including one death (for the case of FOZ) in a bid to protect land and environmental rights. LEDs in the Albertine regions have registered direct attacks, from government authorities, political actors and including the president<sup>1</sup> who branded activities of NGOs within the Albertine as “enemies of National Development, and called upon the local authorities in those jurisdictions to bring NGOs to order.

Despite such hostilities, the availability, accessibility and affordability of a sustainable and effective protection program for LEDs is still far from reach both in the Capitals and out of the capitals in Uganda. Albeit the availability of several initiatives by different protection service providers, many members of the LEDs from within and out of the capital city have on different forums referred to the available protection system as ineffective, unsustainable, inaccessible, Elitist centered and not grass root based.

Cognizant of the fact that collective protection corresponds directly to informally constituted grassroots organizations and communities that organize themselves for the defense of their right to land and Environment, DPI wishes to respond to the current attacks against land rights defenders around the country by contributing to a pragmatic approach that aims at broadening and deepening the PLED in Uganda.



## Main Project Activities & Achievements in past Related projects

This project will target about 20 LEDs from across the country and 10 of which shall be members of the Friends of Zoka particularly those who often interact with the community to carry out activities aligned to the movement. This capacity building will be divided into two trainings: in data collection, analysis and presentation/visualization where LEDs will be introduced to a number of tools to aid them to do their work better including among others Kobo, Toolbox, Canva, Tableau, Pikto Chart; then training in data publicity for advocacy and maintaining the online presence of the movement (i.e. social media management & website management) i.e. using and maintaining an online presence using Facebook, Twitter, Google podcasts, website (based on Open-Source WordPress CMS).

The LED protection fund shall complement the existing rapid response mechanism for HRDs. This shall also be implemented by a team of experts from DPI and those trained members of LEDTAF-security focal persons. The unit shall also collaborate with local partners (focusing on HRDs security as a program area) in Uganda, for example, Defenders, Frontline Defenders, Civil Rights Defenders, among others.

LEDs shall be able to make a Request for Service (R4S) at any time through a ticketing system – which shall be resolved as soon as possible.



Revived, trained, mentored FoZ, including supporting it in the development of a strategic plan on environmental protection



Built the capacity of over 25 LEDs and activists in risk assessment and security management. These LEDs organizations have been able to develop security plans now under implementation.



Established and Coordinated a LEDTAF to extend joint emergence response services to the LGBTI community members in Uganda.



Conducted and published a research on the legislative drafting in Uganda that resulted into a HRDs Protection Bill 2020.



Organized Open dialogues and conflict resolution centered meetings between the Financial Intelligence Authority and the HRDs in Uganda.



Organized several convening for LEDs in Uganda and in East Africa.



# Activity Objectives

Leveraging on the previous achievement and on the trust, DPI hold with the LEDs, the proposed PLED project aims to stimulate a robust capacity enhancement in line with mainstreaming security, build and generate knowledge on the resilience of LED while responding to LED's security needs in a timely and comprehensive manner.



Empower LED movement with relevant skills and tools to counter their security incidences regularly.



Capture quality evidence that allows analysis to lead to the formulation of better answers from their stakeholders.



Use the data stored electronically for references and record-keeping that they can use for advocacy, evidence and fundraising.



To offer real-time security assistance to LEDs and to facilitate the use of genuine software tools among LEDs in Uganda



To document and share LED security incidences to can be used for future references and trend analysis.



Promote a joint- global LED security response mechanism to challenges faced by LEDss through online platforms initiated by DPI.



To create awareness of the digital security threats and highlight the vulnerability level to the LEDs, the development partners, and those they work for and with.



The CEOs of LEDs organizations and donors to support their respective organizations shift to better security management practices to interest.



To launch emergency support services that are available and accessible to all LEDs in Uganda and strengthen synergies and joint initiatives for a common purpose .



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