

# TILENGA PROJECT DRIVING SOCIAL PROGRESS IN HOST COMMUNITIES

By Moses Kigongo

**A**t 80 years old, Topista Uwicha still walks to her farm in Karatum village, Buliisa district, inspecting cassava, maize and ground-nuts with the confidence of someone who has rediscovered control over her livelihood. Her harvest fills her compound and her plans stretch into the next planting season. For Uwicha, farming is no longer a struggle for survival, but a source of dignity, income and purpose.

Uwicha is one of thousands of residents in Uganda's Albertine region whose lives are being reshaped through social programmes linked to the Tilenga Project, operated by TotalEnergies EP Uganda. Her story provides a glimpse into how large-scale energy development is being paired with community-focused investments aimed at enhancing livelihoods and fostering long-term resilience.

Before joining the Community Agriculture Initiative, Uwicha relied on traditional farming methods that produced low yields. Crops were planted without spacing, cassava took too long to mature and ground-nuts brought little return.



Tilenga Academy trainees after training in France, Malaysia and Oman

Training under the programme introduced her to improved agronomic practices, including proper spacing for groundnuts, better cassava cutting placement and systematic maize planting. The change was immediate.

Her first harvest under the new methods produced nine basins of ground-nuts. She sold two, paid school expenses for her grandchildren, and saved seed for the next season. With added skills in financial literacy

and group management, Uwicha now supports a household of 12 through crop sales and small livestock.

"At my age, people think I should just sit, but farming gives me purpose," she says. "You do not stop eating, so why stop farming?"

Uwicha's experience reflects the wider impact of TotalEnergies EP Uganda's social investment strategy in the Albertine region. For more than a decade, the company

has implemented programmes focused on restoring and improving livelihoods, empowering youth and women, preserving cultural heritage and strengthening community engagement.

At the launch of the 2025 Social Report, TotalEnergies EP Uganda general manager, Philippe Grouex, re-affirmed the company's commitment to ensuring that energy development advances alongside social progress and

environmental protection. The report highlights a strong emphasis on skills development.

In 2024, TotalEnergies marked 100 years of global operations by awarding 100 scholarships to Ugandan youth for a two-and-a-half-year midwifery and nursing programme at Hoima School of Nursing and Lacor Hospital School of Nursing in Gulu. The one-time initiative aligns with the company's youth education and inclusion pillar.

On the Tilenga Project itself, more than 12,000 Ugandans are currently employed. In October 2025, the first cohort of 100 Tilenga Academy trainees completed international training in France, Malaysia and Oman, preparing them for specialised roles in operations, maintenance, instrumentation and inspection. A second cohort of 100 trainees is undergoing similar training ahead of the project's production phase.

The Social Report also documents key project milestones, including the drilling of the 100th well and major advances at the central processing facility, bringing the project closer to first oil.

Alongside technical progress, significant social commitments

have been delivered. These include completion of land acquisition, compensation and resettlement, handover of replacement houses and land titles to all 235 project-affected persons whose primary residences were impacted and distribution of business toolkits to 978 vocational trainees from affected households. A third year of livelihood restoration programmes has provided agricultural inputs, training and market access to support household resilience.

Launched in March 2024, the Community Agriculture Initiative operates across Pakwach, Buliisa, Hoima, Kikuube and Nwoya districts, targeting 10,000 households in 80 villages. Farmers are organised into groups and trained in governance, financial management and cooperative farming. Through implementing partner Community Integrated Development Initiatives, 80 acres of demonstration gardens have been established in schools and community spaces to promote best practices and support food security.

By June 2025, more than 5,000 households had benefited from inputs, training, post-harvest handling skills and improved market access.

For farmers like Topista Uwicha, these interventions mean more than higher yields. They represent renewed independence and the confidence to plan for the future. Collectively, such stories reflect TotalEnergies EP Uganda's broader ambition to ensure that the Tilenga Project delivers shared and lasting value to the communities that host it.