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8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



CELEBRATING YOUTH DAY 2024: EMPOWERING UGANDA'S DIGITAL GENERATION

By Monicah Aturinda, UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)

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A youth taking a selfie with her colleagues at the Fundoo booth during the 'Skills for the Future' event at Sharing Hall, Nsambya, Kampala ©UNICEF Uganda

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is rewriting the rules of the workforce, with digital skills now essential for 55% of jobs. Yet, without targeted support, many youth especially girls stand to miss out on this transformation. The high cost of mobile data in Uganda and concerns about digital safety further push young women to the margins, with only 19% having access to the internet.

As we gathered in Soroti District to celebrate International Youth Day on 12 August 2024, the energy and potential of Uganda's youth were profound. This year's global theme, "From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development," resonated deeply with our national focus on "Skills Development for the Enhancement of Youth Opportunities." These themes underline the transformative power of digital skills, not just as a pathway to employment but as a catalyst for national progress.





(Right to left) President Yoweri Museveni; UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, Ms. Susan Namondo; Director, UN Regional Service Centre Entebbe, Mr. Paulin Djomo; and UNAFRI Deputy Director-General, Mr. Andrew Munanura, during the national commemoration of International Youth Day in Soroti District on 12 August 2024 ©UN Uganda



UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, Ms. Susan Namondo delivering her speech during the national commemoration of International Youth Day in Soroti District on 12 August 2024 ©UN Uganda

At the event, Ms. Susan Namondo, UN Resident Coordinator, highlighted the significant progress made in youth empowerment, especially through the Government’s social action funds. These funds have enabled many youth to start entrepreneurial ventures. However, she emphasized the need for these initiatives to reach more youth, particularly in rural areas where nearly 50% of the youth are not engaged in education, employment, or training.

In a country where 33.6 million out of 45.9 million people are under 30, the stakes are high. According to the latest Labour Force Survey, 41 % of youth aged 18-30 are not engaged in education, employment, or training, with young women particularly affected.

Mr. Jacob Eyeru, Chairperson of the National Youth Council, stressed the importance of the government investing in free formal and vocational education to ensure that every youth in Uganda gains valuable skills. “To unlock the potential of every young Ugandan, we need more skilling hubs,” he added.

The event, held at Asuret Core Primary Teachers College in Soroti, brought together various dignitaries, including President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, government officials, diplomats, and most importantly, the youth of Uganda.

In his address, President Museveni called on the youth to prioritize self-care by steering clear of risky behaviors like excessive alcohol consumption and engaging in sports to stay fit and focused.

The theme “Skills Development for the Enhancement of Youth Opportunities” echoed throughout the event, reminding everyone of the urgency to equip young people with the skills they need to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

Ms. Namondo reaffirmed the UN’s unwavering commitment to youth skills development, employment, and peacebuilding in Uganda through the Uganda UN Joint Adolescents and Youth Programme (UNJAYP). “We urge the government to continue strengthening a supportive environment, bridging the digital divide, and nurturing a culture of peace and dialogue,” she said.

Yet, amidst these calls to action, it’s clear that Uganda’s youth are not waiting

on the sidelines. Born into a digital world, they are already harnessing technology to forge a more inclusive and prosperous future.

At the UN exhibition stall, there were inspiring examples of youth-driven innovation. Ms. Hellen Munyasa, supported by the UNDP’s Youth4Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship Facility, is transforming plastics into high-quality sewing threads with her company, Helton Traders. Similarly, Mr. Godfrey Sengonzi, a young entrepreneur from Wakiso District, is producing tiles from waste plastic through his company, SeGo Industries Limited.

In addition, UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports, has developed and pre-tested a life skills toolkit and introduced FunDoo, an interactive chat-based forum that equips young people with 21st-century skills. Together with ILO, they have also launched the integrated Upshift programme, which has empowered 12,500 marginalized youth, particularly refugees, to explore social entrepreneurship. UNESCO, collaborating with the Ministry of Education and Sports, is enhancing the quality of education through the revised National Teacher Policy and supporting youth empowerment in the creative arts through the Ikon Fellowship programme.

This celebration in Soroti was more than just an event—it was a vibrant reminder that young people are not merely beneficiaries of development but active architects of the future. Their voices, ideas, and innovations are the driving force behind the transformation of communities across Uganda. 🌍

GOVERNMENT-UN JOINT COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH IN UGANDA

By Vincent Ogal, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)



The Assistant Commissioner for Youth and Children's Affairs at the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, Mr. Mondo Kyateka (standing) addresses districts stakeholders during the opening of the 2-day orientation on the Uganda UNJAYP at Namayingo District Council Hall. ©UNESCO Uganda

A two-day orientation workshop for district officials in Namayingo aimed at improving the lives of adolescents and youth in Uganda attracted over 40 stakeholders.

In a significant move to enhance the lives of adolescents and youth, the Government of Uganda, in collaboration with 13 United Nations Agencies, has launched the rollout of the Uganda United Nations Joint Adolescent and Youth Programme (UNJAYP). This initiative aims to address youth-related actions within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the national frameworks which have a direct impact on their socio-economic wellbeing of young people. The programme was officially launched by H.E. the President of Uganda during the commemoration of International Youth Day 2023 in Kabale District.

The orientation for district officials commenced on 3rd July 2024, at the Namayingo District Council Hall. This event served as a platform to introduce the Uganda UNJAYP and establish a coordination structure for implementation at the district. The programme's core objective is to create an enabling environment for adolescents and young people (aged 10 to 30 years) to realize their full potential while driving progress in key strategic priorities for the country and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The District LC 5 Chairperson, Mr. Ronald Sanya, praised the collaborative approach of the development partners, noting that it would greatly reduce duplication of interventions. He highlighted,

"I thank the UN for this initiative. There has been significant duplication of actions by different consortiums here in Namayingo district, with little effort put into tracking implementation progress. In some instances, the situation on the ground worsened despite the various initiatives." He expressed gratitude for the selection of Namayingo, and pledged support of the district towards the realization of the programme goals.

Mr. Mondo Kyateka, Commissioner for Adolescent and Youth Affairs at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD), emphasized the programme's vision of addressing gaps in interventions for adolescents and youth. He noted, "73.2 percent of Ugandans are below 30, leading to high dependency rates but also presenting significant potential for investment."

Ms. Teddy Chimulwa Nabwire, the UNESCO Education for Health and Wellbeing Programme Officer reiterated the UN's commitment to responding to the plight of Uganda's adolescents and youth. She cautioned stakeholders against over-optimism about the district's selection to pilot the initiative, noting they were based on alarming indicators. "Being selected to pilot the UNAYJP reflects troubling trends and should not be a cause for celebration. The UN's focus is to diligently work to improve conditions and transform young lives in these districts," she stressed.

The National Youth Council Chairperson, Mr. Jacob Eyeru, emphasized the need to streamline implementation to engage the young people because they are the key beneficiary and stakeholder relevant to the programme success. He challenged the youth to lead healthier and more purposeful lives.



The National Youth Council Chairperson Jacob Eyeru (standing left) emphasized the need to involve the youth and adolescent at the implementation stage of the programme ©UNESCO Uganda



The workshop included several engaging and informative sessions, including presentations on district performance concerning general health indicators, particularly the sexual reproductive health and rights situation among adolescents and youth. A key observation from these presentations was that only 11 percent of adolescents and youth access sexual reproductive health services, with teenage pregnancies and gender-based violence (GBV) cases standing at 27 percent (Higher than the national average of 24)

Field Visits and Future Actions

On the second day of the event, the UNJAYP Team embarked on a joint monitoring visit to Buhemba Sub-County, located 21 km south of Namayingo District. This visit focused on youth-led projects and youth-targeted health interventions at Shanyonja Health Center II, aiming to highlight the remarkable journeys of child mothers and young GBV champions who have overcome significant challenges to uplift their lives.

Moving forward, the district leadership is expected to complete district-level action plans targeting adolescents and youth actions, form working groups, map stakeholder and institutions to build a robust framework that fosters the well-being and development of its young population.



The UNJAYP Team visited youth led groups in Buhemba Sub-county and Shanyonja Health Center II ©UNESCO Uganda

“Being selected to pilot the UNJAYP reflects troubling trends and should not be a cause for celebration. The UN's focus is to diligently work to improve conditions and transform young lives in these districts,” Ms. Teddy Chimulwa Nabwire, UNESCO’s National Programme Officer Education for Health and Wellbeing. 🌍

EMPOWERING YOUTH TO BUILD SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

A partnership between WFP and the Mastercard Foundation is creating employment and boosting incomes for young people.

By Moses Oguti, World Food Programme (WFP)



Ramathan at work in his garden ©WFP Uganda



Ramathan, 28, used to be a tobacco farmer, as his father was before him. Today however, tobacco is not as profitable as it used to be due to high production costs.

When you subtract the expenses from what you earn, it means you're working for nothing," he says, walking through part of his new farming interest — a tomato garden.

A father of five, Ramathan's farm is in the rolling fields of Cheku Village in Koboko District, northwest Uganda.

In June 2023, Ramathan participated in the transformational Youth Skilling for Horticulture training project, conducted by the nonprofit organization, Associazione Centro Aiuti Volontari at the Government of Uganda's Jabara Agricultural and Vocational Institute.

Supported by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Mastercard Foundation, the training allowed Ramathan to learn essential skills, including nursery bed management, pest control, watering techniques, post-harvest handling, marketing, and financial literacy.

On completion of the training, he received the necessary tools to begin his horticulture business — 50 grams of watermelon seed, a spray pump, and gumboots.

The profits from his first crop of watermelons enabled Ramathan to diversify further into agriculture. He now invests in goats, a new variety of tomato seeds known for higher yields and has even ventured into beekeeping and passion fruit cultivation.

"It's much easier growing tomatoes and passion fruit," he says.

Ramathan is also a community advisor — sharing knowledge and helping his neighbours to replicate his success. In the future, he dreams of building an iron-roofed house and ensuring his children get an education."

In 2022, WFP and the Mastercard Foundation embarked on a five-year programme to strengthen food systems to promote increased value chain employment opportunities for young people in eight countries across Africa. The collaboration aims to strengthen local agri-food systems and make them more efficient, sustainable, and inclusive for young people, in particular young women. 🌍

UGANDAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS RESOLVE TO 'PREACH' SAFETY IN LABOUR MIGRATION

By Richard M Kavuma, International Organization for Migration (IOM)



IOM Uganda Chief of Mission Sanusi Tejan Savage (seated, 2nd from Left) with religious leaders and a Government official after the workshop closing ceremony. To his right is Sheikh Ali Waiswa. To his right is Metropolitan Jeronymos Muzeeyi and IRCU board member Florence Nassanga Musoke. Standing on the extreme right is Mr Hillary Talemwa from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development ©IOM Uganda

At the end of a series of workshops on labour migration, Ugandan religious leaders have pledged more concerted efforts to sensitize youth on safe approaches when seeking work abroad.

In their resolutions, read out by the Deputy Grand Mufti, Sheikh Ali Waiswa, the religious leaders also promised to do more towards reintegrating returning migrant workers in their communities.

The awareness raising workshops were organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) over three days in Entebbe. They attracted nearly 100 bishops, sheikhs, priests, pastors and other clerics of various religious denominations and communities from across the country. This initiative was part of IOM projects funded by the USA Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) and the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

Opening the series on 23 July, IOM Uganda Chief of Mission Sanusi Tejan Savage said despite various campaigns warning about unregistered and dubious recruiters and human traffickers, many youths continued to fall in harm's way.

And on the closing day, he further explained the logic of partnering with the religious leaders: "During our [internal] discussions, we said: 'We have in our society Bishops, Sheikhs/Sheikha's, Alhajis and Hajjats, Reverends, Priests, Imams, etc. These people – combined – speak to millions and millions of Ugandans every week. Why don't we partner with them to spread the crucial information to their faithful?'"

Sheikh Waiswa, presenting the religious leaders' resolutions 4 and 5, said:

"[We resolve] To scale out and cascade this IOM supported capacity building initiative on Safe Labour migration and ethical recruitment at the sub-national level so that other religious leaders are skilled and empowered.

"[We] Call upon all religious leaders to provide safe spaces, particularly at places of worship

to serve as centers of information on the right pathways towards safe migration for young people intending to migrate."

During the workshops, various religious leaders were especially pleased to hear from Mr. Hillary Talemwa, the Head of External Employment at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. He explained the efforts that the government was making to improve the safety of workers, including through signing bilateral labour agreements, holding recruitment companies accountable, and intervening where migrant workers are stranded abroad. He gave an example of well-educated Ugandans who were recently trafficked to Myanmar, 23 of whom were returned home in May, with support of IOM.

Participant after participant agreed that it was important for religious leaders to share correct information with believers. One pastor told of a church member who had come to him to pray for her to get a visa to go to the Middle East.

"Recently, the lady called me from there and thanked me for the prayers. But she added that: 'Pastor, I need you to pray for me more because things here are very hard', the pastor narrated. "Now, I know that when people come for prayers for visas, I will need to first ask some questions."

The workshop series was closed by Metropolitan Jeronymos Muzeeyi, Orthodox Archbishop & Co-Chair of the IRCU Council of Presidents. He said religious leaders had a duty to protect the vulnerable in an age of exploitation, poverty, violence and war.

"By enhancing our capacity in these times, around labor migration and ethical recruitment, it's in our view a worthy investment as we will now be in a better position to play a very critical role of creating awareness in our communities, providing psychosocial support to the returning migrants in addition to facilitating re-integration at community level and enhancing policy influence for better migration laws and regulations," Archbishop Muzeeyi said. 🌍



MOBILE SOLAR POWER BRINGING DIGITAL LEARNING TO REFUGEES IN REMOTE SETTLEMENT LOCATIONS

By James Male Kyewalabye, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



Children during a digital literacy class in Imvepi Refugee Settlement ©UNHCR Uganda

Uganda has long embraced the settlement approach for hosting refugees and is currently home to 1.7 million refugees and asylum seekers.

In the West Nile region alone, 797,500 refugees live in settlements, where humanitarian assistance, such as food and cash transfers, has been a lifeline.

However, there is a growing need to shift focus from aid dependency to long-term solutions. That's where Uganda's settlement model, supported by the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), comes in.

With the rise of the digital age, UNHCR, alongside UNICEF and ILO, launched the "Connected Learning, Digital Skilling, and Microwork Sustainable Solutions" project under the PROSPECTS partnership. The goal is to boost the livelihoods of young refugees and local communities by providing them with digital skills and opportunities for decent jobs in Uganda's growing digital economy.

However, there's a big challenge: power. Many parts of the refugee settlements in West Nile are remote and lack electricity, making it difficult for some young people, especially those out of school, to participate in the digital training programmes. Schools with access to solar power are in a better position to benefit from this project, but many young refugees are still left behind.

Enter John Paul Ojok, an Assistant Project Officer with UNHCR, who has come up with an innovative solution to this challenge. Ojok developed a mobile solar power box capable of powering 20 tablets, 10 laptops, and a projector at the same time.

This portable unit, made up of a solar panel, a gel battery, an inverter, and a charge controller, is now enabling digital learning in areas without electricity, ensuring that more young refugees can benefit from the programme.

The mobile solar power box has already been tested and used successfully in various learning sessions. Beyond the current project, it's also being utilized by



John Paul Ojok attending to the solar power box ©UNHCR Uganda



John Paul Ojok preparing to start a digital literacy session ©UNHCR Uganda

other UNHCR teams for activities like resettlement interviews, where staff would typically rely on generators.

Ojok believes the mobile solar power unit will make a big difference.

"It will support not only the beneficiaries of the project but the entire refugee population in Uganda, especially in areas without access to electricity. It's a cheaper and cleaner alternative," he says.

This innovation is also a step toward reducing UNHCR's carbon footprint, as it cuts down on the use of fuel-powered generators in refugee settlements. With this mobile solution, UNHCR can now extend its reach, offering digital training to even the most remote parts of the settlements while contributing to a greener environment.

The mobile solar power box has already been tested in Rhino Camp and Imvepi Refugee Settlements and promises to be a game-changer for digital learning and beyond. 🌍



DIGITAL PLATFORM TO TRANSFORM AGRI-FOOD MANAGEMENT IN UGANDA LAUNCHED BY FAO AND MAAIF

By Violet Namata, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)



Dr. Antonio Querido, FAO Representative in Uganda, officially hands over the district digital assets to Ms. Edith Aliguma Adyeri, LC5 Chairperson of Kiryandongo District ©FAO Uganda

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries (MAAIF), launched a digital platform designed to enhance the Agri-food Sector Management Information System.

This platform is set to transform how data is monitored, agricultural products are traced, and nutrition is improved across the Kabale, Kiryandongo, and Nakasongola districts.

The Digital Information and Surveillance Observatory System was launched in Kabale, Kiryandongo and Nakasongola districts. The initiative is part of FAO's broader effort to strengthen Uganda's food systems, improve food security, and boost the livelihoods of smallholder farmers through innovative, inclusive, and sustainable solutions.

The newly introduced digital platform will enable the three districts to track, monitor, and analyze data within their agri-food systems. The platform streamlines the traceability of agricultural products, ensuring quality assurance and boosting trade competitiveness. It also supports better decision-making by providing real-time surveillance data that will be critical in managing key aspects of the food value chain—from input distribution to post-harvest management.

Speaking during the launch, FAO Representative in Uganda, Dr. Antonio Querido, underscored the transformative potential of this initiative. "This platform is not just a technological upgrade, it's a fundamental shift in how we approach agricultural management. I call upon all stakeholders to join us on this digitization journey. By enhancing data collection and analysis, we're laying the groundwork for a more efficient, evidence-based agricultural system that can meet Uganda's growing food security needs."

During the launch, FAO also handed over essential digital assets, including computers, smartphones, tablets, and WiFi routers, to district leadership. The districts' officials received training on the management and upkeep of this new digital infrastructure, ensuring they are well-equipped to harness its full potential.



Ms. Edith Aliguma Adyeri, LC5 Chairperson of Kiryandongo District launches the Digital platform to transform Agri-food management in Uganda, as Dr. Antonio Querido, FAO Representative in Uganda looks on ©FAO Uganda

"This new digital platform is a significant milestone for our districts," remarked Alex Bambona, Assistant Commissioner for Food and Nutrition Security at MAAIF. "It will help Kabale, Kiryandongo, and Nakasongola gather critical data, address local challenges, and make informed decisions that leverage resources and drive positive change."



We're thrilled with this digital platform. It will help us plan better, identify market gaps & promote community health & productivity. It will aid in marketing our maize & attract buyers, ensuring food security & prosperity," said Edith Aliguma Adyeri, LC5 Chairperson Kiryandongo

About the Project

The digital platform is part of FAO's efforts under the project "Improving Food and Nutrition Security, Income, and Livelihoods of Subsistence Farmers and Smallholders through the Development of Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Food Systems in Nakasongola, Luweero, Nakaseke, Kiryandongo, and Kabale districts." This initiative aims to improve the incomes, food security, and resilience of smallholders, including women and youth, engaged in the production, processing, and marketing of agricultural products. The project also focuses on enhancing data-driven and evidence-based governance of agrifood systems, supporting inclusive and gender-sensitive service delivery and development at the district level. 🌍



MIDWIFE GRACE LAKOT: HEALING HANDS AND HEART FOR SURVIVORS

By Prisca Uwera Kalenzi, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



Midwives interact with the delegation from Embassy of Sweden in Uganda and government during field visit to the UN Joint Programme on Gender-Based Violence ©UNFPA Uganda

Grace Lakot stands proudly with 17 years of experience serving her community delivering babies in various places in Uganda.

Now she is also championing medical responses for some of the society's most vulnerable girls and women who survive sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) at Patiko Health Centre III. Amidst the joys of ushering new life into the world, she is also a trailblazer in providing essential care and support to survivors of SGBV.

In a candid interview, Grace shares the profound impact of her work and her resolve and commitment to empowering survivors through empathy, care and advocacy.

We ask Joy what her work is like and the highs and the lows of her day-to-day work.

"For me, the best moment is witnessing the miracle of birth," Grace begins, her voice filled with warmth and passion. "To hold a newborn in my hands is a sacred experience, second only to the divine act of creation itself."

The mentally invigorating picture that Grace paints of childbirth is quickly replaced with sadness as we touch on SGBV, a scourge that engulfs her community with masked perils. Amidst the joyous occasions of birth, Grace confronts the harsh realities of SGBV, particularly its devastating effects on vulnerable populations, such as adolescents. "Many of these young girls have been preyed upon by older men, leading to unwanted pregnancies and social stigma," she explains. "When they arrive at my facility, it is my duty to restore their sense of worth and provide them with the care and support they deserve."

Following a series of capacity building through the Swedish government funded UN Joint Programme on GBV, Grace implemented initiatives to create a safe and empowering environment for young girls to receive specialized care and counseling. "We established separate support groups to address their specific concerns and build their confidence," she elaborates. "Our goal is to empower them to reclaim their autonomy and resilience in the face of adversity."

Grace's compassion extends to all survivors of SGBV, regardless of age or

circumstance. "The saddest cases are those of young girls who have been brutally assaulted while simply running errands," she reflects somberly. "When they come to us for care, our first priority is to provide immediate medical treatment and emotional support."

In her role within the UN Joint Programme on GBV, Grace plays a pivotal role in the referral pathway, ensuring survivors receive comprehensive care and access to legal processes. "We provide the first response, document their cases and facilitate their transition to the appropriate legal channels," she emphasizes. "Our mission is to ensure that survivors are heard, respected and supported every step of the way."

Above all, Grace's message to survivors is one of unwavering support and solidarity. "I want survivors to know that they have done nothing wrong," she asserts firmly. "The shame and guilt belong to their aggressors and the communities that perpetuate silence and complicity."

As Grace continues her tireless efforts to combat SGBV, her compassion and dedication serve as a source of hope for survivors, guiding them toward healing, justice and empowerment. In her hands, the legacy of empathy and resilience thrives, inspiring a community united in its commitment to ending violence and promoting dignity for all.

Through funding from the government of Sweden in Uganda, over 450 survivors of GBV accessed justice through special sessions. The health care component is especially critical in obtaining evidence for use in courts of law in the fight to attain justice for all survivors. The Embassy of Sweden in Uganda is one of the main supporters of midwifery in Uganda, and the intersection between safe birth and safety for girls and women, delivered by midwives, is a sight to behold! 🌍



Grace Lakot, a midwife at Patiko Health Centre III ©UNFPA Uganda

UNDP, EU EMPOWER WOMEN WITH MULTIPLE SKILLS

By Joel Akena, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Ms. Ritah Asiimwe, a gender-based violence (GBV) survivor, is a mother of two and a beneficiary of the joint European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN) Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls.

She works in Lake Katwe salt mine and through the project, she has had the opportunity to sit for her Senior Four final examinations.

She acquired a Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) that would enable her to pursue her nursing career, a dream she has had since childhood.



“Since childhood, I have wanted to be a nurse. So, I decided to take myself back to school using the 300,000 UGX fund that I injected into my mining business. I diverted all the profits from the business to pay my school fees of 470,000 UGX. I got to know about the funds from a friend, which we applied for and together with other women, we were successful,” she said.

Through the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is improving the livelihoods of women just like Asiimwe in Kasese, Tororo, Amudat and Kitgum districts, through enhancing vocational skills. The women, majorly those who work in the mining sector, have been trained in enterprise management, marketing and value addition, alternative skills training, financial literacy, and GBV reporting mechanisms.

A majority of other women have also been trained in hair dressing, tailoring, basket making and have also received business start-up kits. Further, groups received Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hand tools to facilitate safe and efficient mining operations. This was intended to empower women financially and boost their economic viability, while reducing incidences of domestic violence. In addition, financial support through a revolving fund was provided to the different women groups.



Ms. Ritah Asiimwe, beneficiary of the UN-EU Spotlight Initiative in Kasese District ©UNDP Uganda



Ms. Ritah Asiimwe at her salt mine business ©UNDP Uganda

Asiimwe describes that through the project, she buys crude salt and rock salt cheaply at the site, which she then sells to neighbouring communities using public transportation. The amounts of salt she sells depends on the availability of buses traveling, with more buses travelling she can reach a greater customer base and generate more profits. Currently her profits range between 50,000 UGX (\$13.58 USD) and 70,000 UGX (\$19.02 USD) per day, which money she uses to pay her school fees in small instalments.

Just like anyone else with dreams and personal ambition, Asiimwe has a dream of becoming a nurse one day. Through the skills trainings she has received from the project, she hopes to make use of her gained marketing skills backed up by a good savings culture to sell and save more so she can afford to pay for her studies at nursing school as well.

Strengthening livelihoods for women and GBV survivors in mining areas is a strategy to enable prevention and realize social norm change on GBV prevalence and response. The joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative launched in 2020, was designed and piloted in four districts of Kasese, Tororo, Amudat and Kitgum that host mining activities as it was observed that women in the mining sector experience limited or no service delivery regarding GBV prevention. The hope is that through small-scale livelihood support mechanisms, many women and GBV survivors will have the opportunity to live fairly and strive to be economically independent. 🌍

WOMEN LIVING WITH DISABILITIES AT THE FOREFRONT OF PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN UGANDA

By Samuel Wamutu, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)



Juliet Mbambu, the director of Bwera United Women with Disabilities Association ©UN Women

Juliet Mbambu is a force to be reckoned with. With walking crutches to support her movement, Juliet is leading a charge against violence and inequality in her community.

As the Executive Director of Bwera United Women with Disabilities Association (BUDWA), a community-based organisation operating in Kasese District, Juliet has transformed from a woman in need to a beacon of hope for countless others.

"Before I got training from UN Women through its partner Coalition for Action on 1325 (CoACT), my engagement with women with disabilities was limited to providing them with material support," Juliet admits. "I didn't know that there is more that can be done."

That changed in 2021 when she participated in a training on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The experience was a turning point. "I realized that I can offer much to women with disabilities," she says.

Since then, Juliet and BUDWA have been instrumental in mediating over 137 conflicts, from domestic violence to land disputes. "Women, especially women with disabilities, are the ones most affected by conflicts," she explains. "They don't have money to go and report the cases, so they suffer in silence. Having women peace mediators in the community enables these women to report and have the cases mediated at the community level."

With funding from the Government of Norway, UN Women is implementing a Women, Peace and Security project that, among others, aims at enhancing women's participation in peacebuilding, mediation, conflict prevention and preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE). The project is aligned to and contributes to Uganda's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Juliet's commitment to PCVE was deepened by her participation in another training in 2023. She underscores the impact of insurgency on persons with disabilities, stating, "When there is insurgency, people with disabilities are often left behind. In the face of an attack, a woman with physical disability may not be able to run for safety," Juliet says. Adding "Insurgencies can also maim more people. If many of us become disabled, who will help another?"

Kasese district where Juliet lives is one of the conflict prone districts in Uganda and has experienced several rebel attacks. The most recent June 2023 attack by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) on Lhubirha Secondary School, which claimed 42 lives including 37 students, was a harrowing ordeal for the community. But it also highlighted the resilience and capabilities of BUDWA. Drawing on skills from their mediation and mental health psychosocial support (MHPSS) training, BUDWA provided essential counseling to 50 affected families. "We reached out to parents who had lost their children, offering counseling and support," Juliet recalls. "Many were isolated and struggling with trauma. Through our counselling and follow-up sessions, we helped them reconnect with their community and begin the healing process."

Through their work, BUDWA is not only healing wounds but also preventing future violence. By training women leaders and engaging with community members, they are creating a safer and more inclusive society. "When people see women with disabilities actively contributing to peacebuilding, it challenges old stereotypes," Juliet explains. "It shows that even with a disability, we can achieve great things and make a significant impact."



The most rewarding aspect of Juliet's work is witnessing the tangible change in the lives of women in her community. "One of the most fulfilling parts of my job is seeing women who once felt vulnerable now empowered and engaged," she says. "Mediation has helped many families reconcile, and seeing these women flourish is incredibly gratifying."

As BUDWA continues to grow and evolve, Juliet's dream is to build a self-sustaining organization that can continue to serve the community long into the future. "My dream is to see BUDWA thrive independently, ensuring that we can continue to serve our community in the long term," Juliet states.



UNICEF CALLS FOR INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING TO ENSURE REFUGEE CHILDREN HAVE SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

By Raymond Batte, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)



Ican South Sudan from Bidibidi Refugee Settlement performing during the World Refugee Day at Rhino Camp refugee settlement in Terego District on 20 June 2024
©UNICEF Uganda

The World Refugee Day (WRD) was celebrated with a call from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for significant increase in international responsibility-sharing to ensure refugee children have sustainable access to basic services including education, health, nutrition, protection, water, and sanitation.

According to Munir Safiieldin (Ph.D.), the UNICEF Representative in Uganda, it will require long-term commitment among all parties to support the integration of refugees in the national service delivery systems, as well as a well-resourced strategy to promote the resilience and self-reliance of the refugee population, particularly the adolescent, youth, and women.

The National Commemoration of World Refugee Day 2024 was held at the Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in Terego District, 486 kilometres from Uganda's capital, Kampala.

WRD is an international day designated by the United Nations to honour refugees around the globe. It falls each year on 20 June and shines a light on the rights, needs and dreams of those forced to flee.

A joint statement by UNICEF and the United National High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) states that no one chooses to abandon their homes and lives. Seeking refuge is not a choice but the only option for many to survive, find peace, and keep their dreams alive.

The UNICEF Representative in Uganda adds that peace remains scarce worldwide and lasting solutions are still obscure for too many. "However, we must continue to seek solutions and recognize the progress that has been made. Right now, refugees need our solidarity more than ever," Safiieldin further explained.

Uganda hosts the largest number of refugees in Africa. Figures by UNHCR place the number of refugees in Uganda at 1,680,000. The majority come from South Sudan, Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Somalia, and over 15 other countries.

In the past year and a half, more than 300,000 people have crossed into Uganda seeking safety, with 33,000 recently arriving from Sudan. There are over 114 million refugees globally who have been forcibly displaced, driven by war, violence, and climate-related challenges.

UNICEF estimates that there are 850,900 refugee children, and 419,561 are girls in Uganda. At the end of 2023, 47 million children lived in forced displacement and as UNICEF observes, despite the growing numbers, solutions have been out of reach for far too many displaced children.

Obstacles include a lack of responsibility sharing between countries, reliance on short-term, humanitarian assistance and limited sustainable financing for inclusion, and dehumanizing narratives about refugees and migrants.



Presentation by Dynamic Adungu group at the World Refugee Day commemoration. The group resides in the Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in Terego District, 20 June 2024
©UNICEF Uganda

Led by UNHCR, WRD focuses on solidarity with and solutions for refugees. Against the backdrop of UNICEF's commitment to a longstanding partnership with UNHCR, laid out in a Strategic Collaboration Framework, UNICEF is joining UNHCR's call for a world where refugees are welcomed.

UNICEF's core message on WRD was that solutions are urgently needed for refugee and displaced children to ensure that they can enjoy the same rights and opportunities as other children.

Those solutions entail resolving what prevents refugee and displaced children from being able to rebuild their lives in inclusive, safe, and stable communities. This means meaningfully addressing the risks, discrimination and inequalities related to their displacement status so that refugee and displaced children can fully realize their rights.

It also means shifting from short-term humanitarian assistance to a development-focused approach that strengthens and resources inclusive national systems to provide the support refugee and displaced children- and their host communities-need to grow up healthy and happy, can fall back on social protection services, and can access learning to earn opportunities to fulfil their potential, UNICEF's vision is a world where all refugee and displaced children can realize their rights and reach their full potential - wherever they are.

UNICEF has an important role to play in advocating for the rights of refugee and displaced children and supporting governments to ensure they are provided with a continuum of protection and care wherever they are.

One of the ways through which UNICEF supports refugee learners, is by running childhood education and Accelerated Education Programmes and by integrating Teaching at the Right Level into the formal education system.

The guest of honour at the World Refugee Day, the Minister of State for Disaster Preparedness, Relief and Refugees, Lillian Aber, thanked the donors, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and other partners for supporting government programmes in the face of shrinking resources but increasing number of refugees.

She also appreciated the host communities for their peaceful co-existence in solidarity with refugees.

UNICEF calls on governments to provide solutions for refugee children and youth by expanding legal and accessible pathways for children and families to seek refuge, with a focus on family reunification, and increased options for humanitarian, work and study visas, temporary protection, and refugee resettlement, among other suggestions.

Uganda's open-door policy towards refugees has been recognized globally as a best practice. This policy allows refugees to live, work, and access public services like national citizens.

The joint statement by UNICEF and UNHCR notes that this is the true solidarity with refugees that we celebrate today. Providing sanctuary and protection to refugees is an expression of our shared humanity.

"Uganda has made a strong statement that beyond feeling safe and welcomed, refugees need opportunities to thrive. They need a chance to learn and progress, to earn a living, and to feel a sense of belonging," said Minister of Disaster Preparedness, Relief and Refugees, Honourable Hilary Onek in his remarks read on his behalf by Hon. Lillian Aber.

He added, "Countries with more means should host refugees without being restrictive. This would embody the true spirit of a world that welcomes refugees."

The statement also highlights that Uganda and other safe havens for refugees need the solidarity of the international community in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and adding that they cannot do this alone and require support and resources.

As such Public and private donors must step up and take action. "We have a collective duty to help refugees access opportunities to become active members of their host communities through quality education, healthcare, community engagement, and employment. This is the best way to demonstrate our solidarity, as being a refugee is not their identity but a temporary condition. Long-term solutions, including building lasting peace in their countries of origin, are crucial," said Matthew Crentsil, the UNHCR Country Representative in Uganda.

In 2024, UNHCR and partners appealed for \$858 million to support over 1.67 million refugees and 2.7 million host community members. As we celebrate World Refugee Day today, only 13% of the required funds have been received, leaving the refugee population, predominantly women and children, vulnerable as services and food assistance have had to be cut. 🌍



UNODC AND PARTNERS COMMEMORATE NELSON MANDELA DAY AND LAUNCH COMMUNITY SERVICE COUNSELING GUIDE TO ENHANCE HUMAN RIGHTS AND REHABILITATION IN UGANDA.

By Angella Tusiime, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)



Uganda Prisons Service Officers, Justice Defenders staff and paralegals pose for a group photo holding some of the posters with key messages of the Nelson Mandela rules at Murchison Bay prison ©UNODC Uganda

To contribute to strengthening the rule of law and promote a criminal justice system that emphasizes crime prevention and the safeguarding of human rights, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in partnership with Justice Defenders and the Uganda Prisons Service (UPS), hosted an event on July 18, 2024, in honor of Nelson Mandela Day.

This initiative aimed to enhance the capabilities of legal aid providers while underscoring the significance of human rights protection and a just criminal justice system. The observance of Nelson Mandela Day took place in all prisons within the Kampala Extra Region, with the event dedicated to advancing human rights, social justice, and the rehabilitation of prisoners, in alignment with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, commonly referred to as the Nelson Mandela Rules. The gathering saw participation from 5,100 prisoners and 21 prison staff.

Mr. Herbert Kaheeru, the Superintendent of Prisons and Officer-in-Charge of Murchison Bay Prison, recounted the remarkable story of Nelson Mandela's 27 years of incarceration and his pivotal role in South Africa's journey towards democracy. He urged the prisoners to find motivation in Mandela's experiences, face their own difficulties, and pursue success while upholding discipline and hope.



A Representative of the Officer in Charge of Upper Prison giving opening remarks at the Celebration of the Nelson Mandela Day at Upper Prison, Luzira ©UNODC Uganda

Mr. Paul Murangira, the Business and Operations Manager at Justice Defenders, underscored the importance of legal rights and support for inmates, asserting that "Everyone deserves a second chance." He stressed the continuous initiatives aimed at facilitating rehabilitation through legal aid and educational opportunities. Inmates were educated on the fundamental principles of the Nelson Mandela Rules as implemented by UPS, recognizing the significance of humane treatment and the rehabilitation process.

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WITH AN EYE TO THE FUTURE, THIS COMMUNITY IS PRIORITISING THE CLIMATE RESILIENCE OF ITS CHILDREN

By Decimon Anywar, Climate Change Specialist, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)



The Akago crossing, before and after the climate-proofed investment prioritised by the community ©UNCDF Uganda



In Uganda, UNCDF's Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL) standard financing mechanism uses performance-based climate resilience grants to boost local-level access to finance to invest in resilience building. But it's the community themselves that identify the actions to be taken through a series of consultations and planning meetings. In Nwoya District – a region where many families rely on subsistence farming - the community's children are the focal point for most of the activities that have been planned.

From improved cookstoves, and tree-planting to roadworks, communities in Nwoya District, northern Uganda, are taking a long hard look at how climate change is impacting their lives and identifying solutions that will bring the most benefits for the largest number of people. Perhaps not surprisingly, the local school children are the focus and primary beneficiary of many of their efforts.

Lucy Akello Okot is a mother of four and a teacher at a local secondary school in Nwoya District. She's had a front-row seat on some of the recent changes made with a Performance-Based Climate Resilience Grant received from the UN Capital Development Fund that was used to introduce improved cooking stoves in the school.

"Students have learned about the technology which the school hopes they will appreciate in their homes," said Ms. Okot, explaining that children have learned about the negative environ-

mental impacts of tree-cutting for cooking fuel and the negative effects of breathing wood smoke at close quarters with the hope that they take these lessons to their families and trigger many families in the community to reassess the fuel they use to cook the family meals.



The project should be expanded in the other schools. Using large amounts of firewood for cooking leads to massive tree cutting and degrading [of the] environment," Ms Okot added.

The improved cookstoves are just one of a series of actions being taken in Nwoya District, where the local government is implementing the UNCDF's LoCAL – a mechanism for channelling finance to local governments for locally-led adaptation to climate change.

In Uganda, funding from the European Union, Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden, as well as the NDC Partnership, has enabled four districts to begin work on 12 resilience-building investments working through the Uganda ministries of local government, finance and planning, and economic development.

LoCAL uses performance-based climate resilience grants to boost local-level access to finance to invest in resilience building. But it's the community themselves that identify the actions to be taken through a series of consultations and planning meetings. In Nwoya District – a region where many families rely on subsistence farming - the community's children are the focal point for most of the activities that have been planned.

As well as the improved cookstoves, the community also elected to undertake a programme of tree planting around some of the

school buildings. The trees, when mature, will help to protect the school buildings from high winds that have damaged some of the children’s classrooms in recent storms as well as provide much-needed shade for the pupils and fruits from that tree that will be used in the school feeding programme.

Ogonyi and Akago River crossing, a local road and culvert in Anaka Sub-county, has also been improved to make it more resilient to flooding, which besets the region on an increasingly regular basis. The improved road will make it easier for children to walk to school and easier for them and their families to access other social services, such as hospitals.

“Too much rain during raining season affects children going to school,” said Jacky Abalo, a mother of four and a local community leader. “Also, health services [are affected] - especially expectant women going to the hospital, and lack of market access for farmers.”

Some local parents have also seen their incomes boosted by taking short-term work opportunities as construction workers on

the climate resilience-building projects. Ronald Ochen is 24 and has one child, aged two. Over three months he earned about US\$ 250 from working as a day labourer on the Ogonyi and Akago River crossing.

“I worked as a casual labourer at the culverts construction site of Ogonyi and Akago in Anaka Sub-county,” said Mr Ochen. “The project has provided me with finances that helped me hire a farming garden and tractor and open it for crop farming.” Mr Ochen plans to plant beans and has bought two goats, adding: “The little incomes, if used well, can help meet needs.” 🌍

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UNODC and Partners Commemorate Nelson Mandela Day



A peer educator is photographed alongside an essential message about the Nelson Mandela Rules during a mass awareness session held in one of the prison facilities ©UNODC Uganda

Additionally, UNODC in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, has developed a comprehensive community service counseling guide aimed at strengthening the framework for counseling offenders, victims, and their families. The final draft of this guide, completed during a workshop held from June 24 to 27, 2024, focuses on preventing recidivism and promoting effective rehabilitation and reintegration.

This comprehensive counseling guide is a vital tool for enhancing community-based rehabilitation efforts, ensuring that support is tailored to the specific needs of offenders, victims, and their families. It reflects UNODC’s commitment to criminal justice reform by incorporating non-custodial measures and gender-responsive interventions, aligning local practices with international standards to create a more humane and rehabilitative justice system.

In the long term, these initiatives are expected to elevate the standards of legal support and rehabilitation programs across Uganda, contributing to a reduction in crime rates and the protection of human rights within communities. The guide will support offenders in reintegrating into society, with an emphasis on addressing criminogenic needs and victim concerns. The draft will undergo further review to ensure it aligns with international standards and Uganda’s correctional policies, ultimately leading to a final, structured document that will foster positive, long-term changes in Uganda’s criminal justice system. 🌍



CO-CREATING SOLUTIONS & INNOVATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY: THE CAHIV PLUS MODEL IN HOIMA CITY AND DISTRICT

By Caroline Magambo, The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS)



Participants at one of the training sessions on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights ©UNAIDS Uganda

Hoima district in western Uganda has experienced significant socio-economic changes due to oil exploration and the recent enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023.

The influx of people due to the oil and gas industry has created new income opportunities but has also intensified human rights violations and health risks. Data from 2023 shows that Hoima City has an HIV prevalence rate of 6.9%, and the district averages 4.2%, both exceeding the national average of 5.2%. This increase is linked to rapid population growth, misinformation about HIV prevention and care and the limited health services.

A recent baseline mapping exercise conducted by Alliance of Women Advocating for Change (AWAC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health revealed significant barriers to HIV prevention and care. Many hotspots, where key populations work, have managers who prevent health workers and peers from providing essential services. This restriction also confines young women in these hotspots from accessing healthcare services, impeding efforts to achieve the 95:95:95 targets for HIV treatment and prevention.

To address these issues, AWAC is leading a transformative initiative “Co-Create Solutions and Innovations – Hoima” aimed at improving the health, safety and rights of key populations in the district. Funded by UNAIDS with support from the Netherlands Embassy, the project focuses on enhancing the resilience and empowerment of Female Sex Workers (FSWs), transgender individuals, men who have sex with men (MSM), and male sex workers through a comprehensive approach that integrates healthcare and community engagement. It addresses HIV/AIDS at the grassroots level by leveraging local knowledge and strengthening community networks.

Using the Community Actors for HIV Plus (CAHIV Plus) model which integrates HIV services with other essential health services, including sexual and reproductive health, cervical cancer screening, mental health support, economic empowerment, and general healthcare, AWAC has been able to address such issues. It emphasizes community involvement in managing and preventing HIV, creating an environment conducive to effective prevention and care.

A key component of the initiative’s sustainability is the establishment



The RDC of Hoima District giving remarks and committing to support those who make and formalise their groups to tap into government economic empowerment programs during the inception meeting ©UNAIDS Uganda

of four Community Health and Livelihoods Enhancement Groups (CHLEGs) under the CAHIV Plus model. These are (i) Ghetto Youth City CHLEG, (ii) Blessed Hands CHLEG, (iii) Buswekera CHLEG, and (iv) Hoima city CHLEG. The groups have elected leadership to ensure effective operation and reflect the community’s collective effort and commitment to sustaining CAHIV Plus efforts.

AWAC has also been able to engage the district leadership. The Resident District Commissioner (RDC) Hoima district offered to support key population organised groups especially those in sex work by linking them to government economic and livelihood programs, such as the Parish Development Model. Mr. Pius Wakabi Rujumba, Member of Parliament for Bagahya County pledged support through his technical institute, to provide skilling bursaries for young women in sex work to enhance their economic and health well-being. He also committed to organizing a radio talk show for AWAC to raise public awareness about HIV/AIDS and other health issues.

These engagements underscore the importance of involving policymakers in shaping local and national health policies and empowering marginalized populations. To formalize support, Hoima city and district have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with AWAC, committing to support the initiative’s efforts 🌍

FIGHTING ANTHRAX THROUGH MINDSET CHANGE ON HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

By Anthony Bugembe, World Health Organization (WHO)



A suspected Anthrax case in Kyotera ©WHO Uganda

In October and November 2023, Kyotera District, in southern Uganda, reported a 'strange' illness in different communities. Those who contracted the "illness" presented with blisters, fever, rashes, headache, muscle pain and swelling of limbs.

In total, 75 people contracted the disease (17 confirmed, 07 probable, 51 suspected) and 13 lost their lives. The community, out of fear, hired a prominent leader of traditional healers in the region to help get rid of the misfortune, at a fee of 2.5 million shillings (about USD 640).

"The traditional healer attributed the misfortune to witchcraft by the family of one of our deceased community leaders. The community was incensed and insisted that his widow leaves the village. The widow contacted police, which in turn involved health authorities," said Steve Kiggundu, the LC1 Chairperson of Kyemayembe Village.

On 29 November 2023, with WHO's technical support in the investigation and sample collection processes, health authorities in Kyotera District confirmed an outbreak of anthrax, a disease that is common in domestic animals, including cows, sheep, and goats. The government swiftly imposed restrictions on the movement of animals and consumption of animal products in the district.

The locals were hesitant to believe that anthrax was a medical condition. This mistrust greatly affected effectiveness and uptake of the initial interventions by health authorities.

Following concerted efforts by the Ministry of Health with technical support from WHO, the locals started embracing positive health-seeking behaviour. The technical support covered anthropological interventions which included social behavioural insights study whose findings helped the response understand and demystify the beliefs and practices where over 70% of the affected households were seeking health services from shrines. WHO also supported targeted risk communication engagements with key influencers, affected families, key stakeholders and communities in the hotspots. This contributed to a turnaround in health seeking behavior from the shrines to health facilities by over 80% of the cases.

"We sensitized the communities, involving key influencers like community



Health personnel preparing to take samples from a goat carcass ©WHO Uganda

leaders, police, and traditional healers to change the community’s mindset. We wanted them to appreciate that in as much as there are conditions that they might be able to handle, anthrax is not one of them. They agreed to carry along information, education, and communication materials and display them at their places of work,” said Kintu E. Max, the Kyotera District Health Educator.

“Most people in our village don’t believe that someone can fall sick or die because of natural occurrences. Most of the misfortune is usually attributed to witchcraft. We were losing our colleagues and we wanted answers from our leaders on what was killing the people,” narrated Geoffrey Ssenkima, an anthrax survivor in Kyemayembe.

To boost the targeted engagements and promote health seeking from health facilities further, WHO mobilized and worked with survivors. Testimonies and sight of these

survivors facilitated the community to appreciate anthrax as a preventable and treatable disease, but not witchcraft. Initially, there were false claims that whenever an infected person sought treatment at a health facility, they would pass on. However, after seeing survivors who were treated in health facilities, the locals started looking out for the signs and symptoms of anthrax, reporting suspected cases, and seeking treatment from health facilities.

“I was one of those who initially strongly resisted treatment in health facilities. However, after recovering, I decided to share the good news with the rest of the community,” said Ssenkima.

WHO also supported the efforts of the Government of Uganda and partners in building community structures, coordinating the response (response plan development, partner coordination and guiding district task force meetings), surveillance (field investigations, active case search, alert management) and laboratory systems (sample collection and management). Support was also extended to case management and infection prevention & control (capacity building of health workers).

“Outbreaks start and end in the community. Therefore, community participation is key to addressing public health emergencies. There is need for sustained investments in community interventions to ensure ownership and support in preventing, detecting, and responding to disease outbreaks,” said Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, WHO Representative to Uganda. 🌍

