



UNITED NATIONS  
UGANDA



# UN UGANDA BULLETIN

17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



## PRIME MINISTER LAUNCHES NEW UGANDA UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FRAMEWORK 2026 - 2030

By Jessica Murphy, United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)



Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja (right) launching the Uganda UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2025-2030 on 22 October 2025. On the left is UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Leonard Zulu. ©UN Uganda

**On 22 October 2025, Government of Uganda and the United Nations signed the Uganda United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2026–2030, marking a renewed commitment to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to achieve the objectives the country's Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV).**

The Prime Minister Right Honourable Robinah Nabbanja signed and launched the Cooperation Framework on behalf of President Yoweri Museveni; while the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Leonard Zulu signed on behalf of the United Nations.

The launch event, held at Kololo Ceremonial Grounds in Kampala was attended by cabinet ministers, ambassador's accredited to Uganda, heads of development corporation, and representatives from the civil society, private sector, youth and students.

In the speech delivered by the Prime Minister on behalf of the President, he underscored Uganda's vision of transitioning "from a peasant economy to a modern, prosperous nation." He highlighted Uganda's refugee response as a global model. "Uganda is not a poor country — our wealth lies in our people, our land, and our opportunities," he said. "The future is bright, and with focus and discipline, we can do much with less."

## OVERVIEW

- Govt., UN and Partners Review Cooperation Framework
- IOM Boosts Border Security
- Midwives act against postpartum bleeding
- HIV/AIDS - Jimbo's Journey of Hope
- Mental Health support for Ebola survivors
- From Refugee to Entrepreneur
- Youth Innovation Transforms Kikuube
- Supporting refugees thrive
- Transforming Lives of Elderly Refugees
- Enhancing Communication for Refugees
- Nurturing Youth Design Innovations
- Leaving No Girl Behind in Education
- Empowering Girls with Digital Skills
- Celebrating UN@80



DECADE  
OF  
ACTION





Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja and UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Leonard Zulu with cabinet ministers, ambassadors and members of the UN Country Team after the signing and launch of the Uganda UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2025-2030 on 22 October 2025 ©UN Uganda

In his opening remarks, the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Leonard Zulu, described the Cooperation Framework as “a promise of a brighter future for every Ugandan.” He noted that the country has met the criteria to graduate to lower-middle-income status, while underscoring the need to address inequality, and development gaps that still persist. “Our story will be one of resilience, ambition, and ubuntu (I am because we are). Together, we can make that spirit real in every community and every life we touch.”

Building on the spirit of collaboration, H.E. Maria Hakansson, the Ambassador of Sweden, speaking on behalf of development partners, commended the inclusive and participatory approach used in crafting the Framework. She praised its focus on “people, prosperity, and the planet” and its alignment with NDP IV and Uganda’s Tenfold Growth Strategy. She emphasized that the Cooperation Framework reflects Uganda’s ambition for “inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development,” while reminding all stakeholders that success will depend on translating commitments into measurable results that “leave no one behind.”

Representing the Minister of Finance, Commissioner Stephen Kasangaki reaffirmed the Government’s commitment to working with the UN on humanitarian response, SDG implementation, and improved public services. He cited Uganda’s ambition to grow its economy from USD 50 billion to USD 500 billion by 2040, supported by the ATMS (Agro-industrialization, Tourism, Minerals, and Science, Technology and Innovation).

Echoing the Prime Minister’s optimism for Uganda’s future, Ms. Aminah Nassali, President of the Youth Coalition for SDGs, delivered a passionate call for trust, partnership, and investment in youth-led solutions. “When youth are trusted partners, real change happens; No nation can develop if its young citizens are excluded from decision-making,” she said. “We must move from inclusion to influence. Transformation begins with trust.” Nassali urged partners to invest directly in youth-led enterprises and innovations, and to ensure that every school and community teaches the skills of the future—including digital literacy, creativity, and green entrepreneurship.

From Civil Society, Dr. Moses Isooba, Executive Director of the Uganda National NGO Forum, emphasized the importance of inclusive partnerships among government, civil society, private sector, and development partners. He called for institutionalized accountability mechanisms through quarterly dialogues and transparent financing reports, and urged deeper collaboration in renewable energy, green enterprise, and civic engagement.



Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja (left) and UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Leonard Zulu (right) exchange copies of the Agreement after signing the Uganda UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2025-2030 on 22 October 2025 ©UN Uganda

The occasion was also used to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the United Nations marked by the cutting of a commemorative cake to celebrate 80 years of hope, action, and impact by the United Nations.

The ceremony featured colorful cultural performances by the Crane Performers and poetry by Emmanuel Obore, Adeke Martha, and students from Kyambogo College, symbolizing Uganda’s diversity, creativity, and promise for the future.

The new Cooperation Framework is built around three transformative pillars:

- Transformative and Inclusive Human Development,
- Sustainable Ecosystems and Climate-Smart Development, and
- Integrated, Inclusive, and Rights-Based Governance.

Together, these pillars provide a roadmap for inclusive growth, resilience, and opportunity for all Ugandans. As the UN Resident Coordinator noted, “Together, we can turn the promise of the Cooperation Framework into real transformation for people, prosperity, and the planet.” 🌍



## GOVERNMENT, UN AND PARTNERS HOLD ANNUAL REVIEW OF UN COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

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



Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja and UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Leonard Zulu Co-chairing the Joint Steering Committee Annual Review Meeting of the implementation of the Uganda UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 on 15 October 2025 ©UN Uganda

**In 2024, the United Nations in Uganda, together with the Government and development partners, achieved major milestones in improving lives across the country.**

Over 9.7 million children benefited from health interventions, 20,000 vulnerable households received cash transfers that strengthened social protection and economic inclusion, and 127,000 adolescents acquired 21st-century skills to prepare for the evolving job market.

These and more results were highlighted during the fifth Joint Steering Committee (JSC) meeting of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021–2025, held on 15 October 2025 at Four Points by Sheraton, Kampala. The meeting was co-chaired by the Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, Prime Minister of Uganda, and Mr. Leonard Zulu, UN Resident Coordinator, and brought together government institutions, development partners, and UN agencies.

“The results captured in the 2024 Annual Results Report illustrate how our collaboration has translated into real impact — from expanding access to essential services to advancing data quality, resilience, and sustainable growth,” said Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, emphasizing accountable partnerships that drive inclusive growth and digital transformation.

Mr. Leonard Zulu reaffirmed the UN’s commitment, noting: “Together, we prepared the 2024 Results Report, convened policy dialogues, and developed a new Cooperation Framework to guide our next phase.”



Participants at the Joint Steering Committee Annual Review Meeting of the implementation of the Uganda UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 on 15 October 2025 ©UN Uganda

Over the past five years, the Government – United Nations partnership has deepened human development gains, strengthened governance systems, and supported communities to address climate vulnerabilities achievements that underscore the power of working together.

As Uganda and the UN prepare to implement the 2026–2030 Cooperation Framework, both sides pledged to strengthen collaboration in human development, climate action, and good governance ensuring no one is left behind on Uganda’s path to sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Joint Steering Committee is the forum that oversees the United Nations and Government Cooperation Framework design, implementation and accountability. It brings together Government ministries, departments and agencies, development partners, and the United Nations. 🌍

## US-FUNDED IOM PROJECT DONATES EQUIPMENT WORTH \$246,000 TO BOOST UGANDA'S BORDER SECURITY

By Joyce Nakato, UN Migration/International Organization for Migration (IOM)



US Ambassador William W. Popp (left) hands over the mobile kits of Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) to Maj. Gen. Kahinda Otafiire, Uganda's Minister of Internal Affairs (right), Kampala on 4 September 2025. ©National Citizenship and Immigration Control (NCIC)

**The International Organization for Migration (IOM), through funding from the United States government, has formally handed over US\$246,226 (874 million UGX) worth of vehicles and equipment to the Government of Uganda to strengthen border security and migration management. The formal handover took place at the headquarters of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Kampala.**

The donation includes three double-cabin pick-up trucks, five mobile kits of Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) – the border management information system (BMIS) operated in land and maritime borders – and three containerized immigration field offices.

The equipment was procured under the project titled “Countering Transnational Threats on Lake Victoria by Enhancing Border Security Capacities and Coordination Between Authorities in Kenya, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania.” The project has been implemented by IOM in partnership with border agencies in the three East African countries since September 2022. In Uganda, the vehicles and equipment will be directed to project sites in Port Bell, Jinja, and Kasensero in Kyotera District.

During his remarks, U.S. Ambassador William W. Popp said, “this initiative reflects the shared interest of the United States, Governments of Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania alongside International Organization of Migration (IOM) to address the challenges posed by transborder migration and transnational organized crime.”

Maj. Gen. Kahinda Otafiire, Uganda's Minister of Internal Affairs, said the donation would be instrumental in enhancing the operational efficiency of immigration control officers at the nation's borders.

“It's the immigration officers doing their work efficiently at the borders that will not only ensure human dignity and cross border transactions but also ensure that we are secure,” he stated.

IOM Uganda Chief of Mission, Sanusi Tejan Savage, emphasized the importance of well-equipped, functional border posts and timely information-sharing mechanisms.

“Border security and migration management are top priorities for IOM. Strengthening coordination and border control,” he said.

Uganda continues to face complex migration dynamics — striving to keep its borders both open and secure amid growing population movement, political instability in the region, and other challenges. These pressures strain border management efforts and expose the country to threats such as trafficking in persons, smuggling, illegal fishing, and many forms of transnational organized crime.

The donation is expected to enhance government's ability, rapid response capacity, detection of irregular entries and activities that pose such threats to Uganda, the East African region, and global community.

Maj. Gen. Apollo Kasiita-Gowa, Uganda's Chief of National Citizenship and Immigration Control (NCIC), highlighted the impact of NCIC's continued collaboration with IOM and the U.S. government.

“This package really addresses some of the key pillars of our work: It enhances our agility and automation – being able to move quickly, armed with border management technology – but it also complements ongoing efforts to improve the working environment of our officers,” said Maj. Gen. Kasiita-Gowa. “Together, we are creating a safer environment for Ugandans and the region.”

This latest contribution builds on longstanding, joint work. IOM, in collaboration with the U.S. government and other donors, has in recent years supported Uganda's border management efforts through the installation of MIDAS at eight border posts, the provision of boats, vehicles, and ICT equipment, as well as the construction of the Immigration Training Academy in Nakasongola District. 🌍





## MIDWIVES IN UGANDA RAMP UP ACTION AGAINST POSTPARTUM BLEEDING, A LEADING CAUSE OF MATERNAL DEATH

By Josephine Zhane Omunyidde, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



A woman holds her newborn at Kawempe National Referral Hospital, where health workers have been trained to prevent and manage postpartum bleeding. ©UNFPA Uganda



Health workers surround a colleague during a simulation of postpartum bleeding, part of a training session on state-of-the-art tools and methods to save women from the leading cause of maternal death. ©UNFPA Uganda

**In the relentless, high-pressure maternity ward of Kawempe National Referral Hospital, Uganda's busiest public birthing centre, a quiet revolution is underway. Amid the beeping of machinery and cries of newborns, there is the well-orchestrated choreography of doctors, nurses and midwives saving mothers' lives during postpartum haemorrhage.**

Postpartum haemorrhage, or severe bleeding after childbirth, is the leading cause of maternal death globally – yet it is often completely preventable, and when it occurs, it is treatable. UNFPA is working with health systems and partners to ensure health workers have the right supplies and skills to prevent this complication from turning fatal.

Midwife Brenda Nakanwagi has seen firsthand how the right tools and training work. She has used them herself at the Kawempe Hospital, which records over 20,000 deliveries annually.

Just recently, she was guiding 28-year-old Jalia Namusisi through labour. But shortly after delivering a healthy daughter, Ms. Namusisi began to bleed.

Midwife Nakanwagi saw it right away – the blood loss was captured on a calibrated drape, used by hospital staff to measure bleeding and diagnose postpartum haemorrhage.

"There is no time to think at that moment; every second is blood lost," said Nakanwagi.

The ward team was activated, swiftly initiating well-practiced actions – massaging the uterus, administering oxytocic drugs to stimulate uterine contractions, using tranexamic acid to reduce bleeding and providing intravenous fluids.

Within minutes, the bleeding was controlled, and Ms. Namusisi's vitals were stabilized. "I felt the panic of the staff, but Brenda's voice was calm," the new mother recalled, holding her baby girl. "She kept telling me what they were doing. They saved my life by being ready for the worst."

### Ready for action

Kawempe Hospital is at the centre of a national effort to equip midwives, nurses and doctors with the skills to confront the most urgent birth-related emergencies.



Midwives learn up-to-date tools and methods for detecting and treating postpartum haemorrhage at a UNFPA-supported training in Kampala. ©UNFPA Uganda

“The training we conduct with support from UNFPA transforms dedicated individuals into a cohesive, life-saving unit,” said Annette Kanyunyuzi, president of the National Midwives Association of Uganda (NMAU). “Midwives are the heart of maternal health, and by drilling them on protocols, we are replacing hesitation with automatic, synchronized action. This is the most powerful weapon against PPH (postpartum haemorrhage) mortality.” And training efforts are only set to get better.

On 5 October 2025, the first-ever globally observed Postpartum Haemorrhage Day, UNFPA, the World Health Organization and other partners released “Bleeding after birth,” a training course for skilled birth attendants like doctors and midwives. The course was launched to support the implementation of new global guidelines for diagnosing and treating postpartum haemorrhage.

These materials will benefit the hundreds of thousands of health workers that UNFPA trains each year globally. Just last year, for example, UNFPA-supported training reached over 226,000 midwives.


## All hands on deck to end postpartum bleeding

But training is not enough. New supplies are also needed.

Tranexamic acid and heat-stable carbetocin, for example, are medications that can prevent and treat haemorrhage but are not yet widely used in Africa. The drugs’ cost is a barrier to many health systems, even as they offer significant advantages. Carbetocin, for instance, does not require a cold chain – the system of consistent refrigeration through production and delivery – making it especially useful in remote and rural areas with limited infrastructure and inconsistent electricity.

Other measures are also essential to ensuring that affordable and quality-assured supplies reach health workers, including sustainable financing, updated national essential medicines lists and protocols, regulatory harmonization and regular national procurement, alongside well coordinated introduction plans for new products.

Fortunately, partnerships between and among health workers, national health authorities, and international organizations like UNFPA are already moving the needle.

The health workers’ training that took place at Kawempe Hospital, for instance, is part of joint efforts between the UNFPA, the Ministry of Health, NMAU and the European Union. 



## JIMBO SHANURAH'S JOURNEY OF HOPE AND ADVOCACY

*By Caroline Magambo, The Joint United Nations HIV/AIDS Programme (UNAIDS)*



Jimbo Shanurah leading a dialogue with students on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) ©UNAIDS Uganda

**At just 20 years old, Jimbo Shanurah stands as a beacon of courage and leadership in her community in Uganda. Living with HIV, she has transformed personal pain into powerful advocacy, serving as Miss Y+ 2024/25, a Girls Act Leader, National SRHR Girl Champion, and Chairperson of the National Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) Forum.**

But behind the honors is a story of struggle. Jimbo's journey has been marked by stigma, isolation, and moments of deep despair including a suicide attempt during her school years.

"There were times the whispers felt louder than my own voice," she recalls. Yet, through treatment, peer support, and the unwavering love of her family, Jimbo found strength. "Treatment gave me hope. It wasn't just medicine. It was a second chance at life."

In the Eastern and Southern Africa region, young people face the highest burden of HIV. The recently released UNAIDS Global AIDS update shows that despite overall progress in the region, adolescent girls and young women aged 15–24 years accounted for 28% of new HIV infections and were three times as likely to acquire HIV than their male counterparts. Funding cuts, including reductions in support from the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), have disrupted essential programmes in some countries.

Jimbo's crowning by the Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV (UNYPA) as Miss Y+ - an annual beauty pageant where young people living with HIV are selected to serve as champion and advocates for the community - was more than a title. It was a platform to speak for thousands of young women whose voices often go unheard. However, the impact of the funding cuts has cast a shadow over her dreams. The scholarship that once supported pageant winners like her was withdrawn, leaving Jimbo torn between her leadership role and the harsh reality of pursuing education without resources.



Jimbo Shanurah, the Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV (UNYPA) as Miss Y+ Central ©UNAIDS Uganda

These cuts have had far-reaching consequences. Safe spaces for girls to learn, share, and access life-saving services have vanished. Drop-in centers once filled with condoms, PrEP, and PEP now stand empty.

Yet Jimbo refuses to be silenced. She leads community dialogues, trains peers in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and engages policymakers with one clear message, that young women living with HIV need action.

"We are not giving up," she says. "We are showing that community-led solutions work. But we cannot do it alone." 🌍

## PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT TO UGANDA'S EBOLA SURVIVORS

By Anthony Bugembe, World Health Organization (WHO)



Aisha meeting Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu, WHO Africa Regional Director a.i during the End of Ebola outbreak declaration ©WHO Uganda

**Twenty-nine-year-old Aisha Nangobi is a midwife, a mother of two and a recent widow who has faced more adversity than most her age. Her husband, the first confirmed case in the recent Ebola virus disease outbreak in Uganda earlier in 2025, fell ill suddenly and died within ten days.**

When I was told that there was an outbreak and that my husband had died of Ebola, it was really terrible to me," says Nangobi. "Firstly, I lost my husband and secondly, he died of Ebola. Those two things were hard for me to handle."

Nangobi was the first contact to be admitted to the Ebola treatment centre. "Finding out you have Ebola, you are psychologically, physically, mentally gone... everything," she says. Scared and confused, Aisha had to confront the situation on her own. When her 18-month-old son also tested positive, her strength and resolve were pushed to the limit. "But I had to care for him while I was still weak and sick myself," she says.

Then came the calls from the emergency response teams led by the Ministry of Health. Dr Chris Olesen, an anthropologist at WHO's Uganda country office reassured Nangobi and told her about the survivors from the previous Ebola outbreak in 2022. "I didn't believe him. I thought he was just trying to console me. But slowly, I began to cooperate," recalls Nangobi. "I am really appreciative because I never thought that I would stand here again."

Nangobi is one of 10 survivors of this most recent outbreak who are part of Uganda's National Ebola Survivor's Programme, a Ministry of Health initiative supported by Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation – Uganda and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The programme offers medical care, mental health support and psychosocial services to Ebola survivors.

"In every outbreak, behind the statistics are real people – frightened, grieving and often stigmatized," says Ayub Maswaswa, a mental health and psychosocial support professional and member of Uganda's national Emergency Medical Team.

Maswaswa, along with another 178 first responders trained by WHO and Ministry of Health, has been in the frontline of Uganda's response to major disease outbreaks including Ebola, mpox and COVID-19.

His work encompasses a wide range of psychosocial interventions. He has delivered psychological first aid, which provides immediate emotional support to people who have experienced a traumatic event or emergency. He has also conducted family therapy and facilitated group counselling sessions in some of the most affected regions of Uganda.





Ayub helping resettle Aisha upon return from the Ebola Treatment Unit © Uganda MHPSS Field Response Team

His efforts have helped survivors reintegrate into their communities and he has also supported first responders who often face burnout and trauma. “My role is to help them find strength again,” says Maswaswa.

These efforts are part of Uganda's Ebola virus disease recovery plan, which focuses on long-term survivor support, including counselling, health check-ups and reintegration into communities to address social and economic challenges that survivors face.

“Some of the concerns we have right now as Ebola survivors is that some of our people lost jobs, those who are working part time in private and private-not-for-profit health facilities,” says Dr. Ezra Mupakasa, an Ebola survivor and medical doctor at Saidina Abubakar hospital, just outside Kampala. “We need to create ways for people to make ends meet.”

The plan also aims to strengthen national capacity, enhance disease surveillance and ensure sustained prevention and control measures to prevent future outbreaks and manage the health and psychosocial impact on communities.

WHO has supported the Government of Uganda to strengthen its mental health and psychosocial support for health emergency response. This includes training health workers in the management of Ebola survivors, equipping them with the necessary skills to address both medical and psychosocial needs.

WHO has also contributed to the review and improvement of standard operating procedures such as the livelihood assessment tool, which are essential for the effective implementation of survivor support programmes. In addition, WHO helped establish survivor clinics at three regional referral hospitals and one national referral hospital, ensuring continued access to specialized care for survivors close to their communities.



Aisha Nangobi, a midwife and Ebola survivor ©WHO Uganda

To support the reintegration of Ebola survivors into their communities, WHO assisted with the preparation of discharge activities, including the procurement of admission and discharge packages, transportation back to communities and follow-up reviews within communities to monitor reintegration and address any emerging psychosocial challenges.

“Surviving Ebola is much more than just being discharged from a treatment centre,” says Dr. Kasonde Mwinga, WHO Representative in Uganda. “Survivors also need economic, psychosocial and mental health support as they navigate their new normal. WHO is proud to support these critical efforts as Uganda recovers from the Ebola outbreak.”

Slowly, a few friends who initially fled have returned and are helping Nangobi rebuild, providing accommodation, food and emotional support. She says she still breaks down, but she is determined to stay strong for her two children. “I am grateful for the health workers who supported us in the treatment area, with counselling, and are helping us to resettle in our communities and gain our new lives,” she says. 🌈





## FROM REFUGEE TO COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEUR: Alexander's Journey of Hope through i-UPSHIFT in Nakivale

*By Mibaraka Bishendwa Kamana of New Life Horizon Initiative (NELHIN),  
implementing partner of the International Labour Organization (ILO)*



Alexander (second from left) with group members displaying their liquid manure © NELHIN



Alexander carrying water as an income generating activity ©NELHIN

**Alexander Nsengimana, a 24-year-old refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, lives in Kyeibale, Isingiro District. Life in Nakivale Refugee Settlement had always been difficult. Alexander and his grandmother relied mainly on monthly food rations from WFP to meet their basic needs. His grandmother also tried to make ends meet through small scale farming and informal domestic work, often receiving payment in kind. The unstable income made it impossible to support Alexander's education, forcing him to drop out of school. Together they turned to farming, but survival remained uncertain.**

In 2025, a neighbour told Alexander about the i-UPSHIFT programme, part of the ILO PROSPECTS partnership funded by the Government of the Netherlands. Implemented in Uganda by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with UNICEF, UNHCR, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank, PROSPECTS aims to improve education, employment, and protection for refugees and host communities. i-UPSHIFT, which stands for integrated UPSHIFT, is one of ILO PROSPECTS' flagship youth initiatives that combines social innovation, entrepreneurship, and life skills training. It empowers young people to identify challenges in their communities and design sustainable business solutions that improve livelihoods.

Encouraged by success stories from earlier participants, Alexander joined a sensitization meeting organized by New Life Horizon Initiative (NELHIN), one of the local implementing partners of i-UPSHIFT in Nakivale. Together with

four peers, he applied, was interviewed, and selected for the five-day boot camp. This opportunity marked a turning point in his life.

During the training, participants learned to identify local problems and turn them into business opportunities using available resources. Alexander gained practical skills in entrepreneurship, innovation, and problem-solving. One pressing issue they identified was the lack of access to clean water. Determined to address it, Alexander began saving small amounts of money until he could afford a bicycle. He now uses it to transport and sell water across the settlement, a service that provides both income and relief to households.

Alongside his peers in the Young Heroes group, Alexander also tackled low crop yields caused by infertile soil. They started producing and selling liquid manure to farmers, improving soil health and boosting agricultural productivity. This initiative has become a vital source of income and support for the local farming community.

This transformation began in Kyeibale, Rushasha Sub-county, in March 2025, during the i-UPSHIFT training implemented by NELHIN with support from ILO PROSPECTS Uganda. The programme's inclusive approach, welcoming all youth regardless of background, education, or status, gave Alexander and his peers the confidence and tools to take charge of their future. Through mentorship, business guidance, and seed funding, they were able to turn their ideas into action.

*Continued on page 11*



## From Refugee to Community Entrepreneur: Alexander's Journey of Hope through i-UPSHIFT in Nakivale

*Continued from page 10*

Today, Alexander earns enough to support his grandmother and contribute to the household. His water-selling venture and the group's manure business continue to grow, helping him transition from dependency to stability. Beyond personal gain, these projects have strengthened community resilience, encouraged self-reliance, and inspired other young people to think creatively about solving local challenges.

What makes i-UPSHIFT unique is its ability to transform mindsets before transforming livelihoods. It teaches youth to view problems as opportunities and provides the tools, mentorship, and confidence to act.

Alexander's story is a reflection of this approach. Once a youth dependent on aid, he is now a community entrepreneur whose work directly supports local farmers and improves food security. Feedback from a farmers' association that regularly buys their liquid manure confirms increased crop yields, a clear sign of impact.

Through the ILO PROSPECTS Uganda programme, Alexander gained the skills, mindset, and motivation to recognize opportunities in his surroundings. With determination and support, he turned limited resources into thriving ventures that now sustain his family and uplift his community. His journey from hardship to hope demonstrates how inclusive youth empowerment can create lasting change. 🌍

## YOUTH INNOVATION TRANSFORMS KIKUUBE DISTRICT

*By Bernard Atuhaire, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)*



Innovation in action! UNICEF Uganda Education Specialist Jane Afayocan inspects innovative products from i-UPSHIFT participants in Kikuube District. Funded by the Canadian National Committee, i-UPSHIFT equips adolescents with key entrepreneurial tools. Mothers Machine Kyomuhimbo, Aye ale Maureen, and Kaakya Christine are using this training to build a sustainable business producing detergents and mosquito propellants to support their young families. ©UNICEF Uganda

**"The problem we saw in our community was poor feeding and the long time it takes to cook beans. So, we decided to roast and grind them into powder. Now, porridge or a meal can be ready in minutes – and mothers save on charcoal." – Keith Muhumuza, Chairperson, Unique Development i-UPSHIFT Club.**

In a hall at Kikuube District headquarters, a long wooden table displayed the innovations of young entrepreneurs: packets of powdered beans, briquettes, yoghurt bottles, herbal poultry remedies, and mosquito-repellent gels. Each product represented a solution to real community challenges.

Kikuube, a major refugee-hosting district established in 2018, faces immense pressure on social services. With over 150,000 refugees, mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and adolescent pregnancy rates of 28 per cent, the district's youth confront multiple social and economic challenges. Iceland's support to UNICEF in Uganda has been instrumental, funding programmes that provide cash transfers to teen mothers while strengthening integrated services such as early childhood development and social protection in Kikuube and Kyegegwa districts.



A team from the Iceland Government (Kampala and Iceland) meet with a group of I-UPSHIFT participants in Kikuube District. In Kikuube, the I-UPSHIFT programme was funded by the Canadian National Committee to equip adolescents with life skills and entrepreneurial tools, helping them build sustainable, youth-led businesses, from soap making and briquettes to poultry medicine and value-added products such as bean flour. ©UNICEF Uganda

During a recent joint visit by Icelandic officials—including Palina B. Matthíasdóttir, Director Bilateral Development Cooperation, Hildigunnur Engilbertsdóttir, Head of Mission, and Sveinn H. Gudmarsson, Head of Cooperation—the delegation reviewed progress and engaged directly with beneficiaries, district leadership, and youth innovators.

The Iceland Head of Mission interacted with I-UPSHIFT innovators, noting that investing in vulnerable children and young people strengthens entire communities. She highlighted how supporting initiatives like I-UPSHIFT demonstrates that practical, sustainable solutions emerge when youth are empowered. "I like the idea of solving problems in your community," she said, finding the innovations truly inspiring.

Keith Muhumuza's team displayed roasted, ground beans that cut cooking time, improve nutrition, and save on charcoal costs. Abraham Jakisa showcased briquettes made from bean husks and maize cobs, reducing deforestation and easing women's burden of fetching firewood while protecting girls from assault risks during forest journeys.

Charity Tukamutunga presented herbal poultry remedies derived from local plants, keeping their 95 birds healthy despite limited veterinary access. Rodney Tumuhimbise displayed bottled yoghurt, turning low-priced milk into marketable products. Mackline Kyomuhimbo showcased liquid soaps and mosquito-repellent gels made from natural ingredients, already in high demand locally.

## Nurturing Change Through I-UPSHIFT

I-UPSHIFT, UNICEF's flagship youth empowerment programme funded by UNICEF Canada, targets out-of-school youth aged 16–24. Initially planned for 800 participants, it has reached 2,000 youths, with 400 completing the full cycle.

“

Jane Afoyocan, Education Specialist at UNICEF Fort Portal, explains: "I-UPSHIFT is about social entrepreneurship—empowering young people to identify challenges and design solutions that solve problems and generate income."

The programme potentially links with Iceland-funded cash transfers for teen mothers, creating pathways where innovation meets opportunity. As UNICEF Uganda's Chief of Communication Yves Willemont reflected: "You are solving real challenges in your community. We feel inspired."

The message was clear: with the right support, young people are not just beneficiaries—they are innovators, entrepreneurs, and change makers shaping their communities' future. 🌍





## SMALL PLOTS, BIG IMPACT:

### How FAO is supporting refugees in Uganda to thrive

By Violet Namata, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



Almahi Abdalla harvests eggplants and onions from his garden in Bweyale Town Council, Kiryandongo District. With support from FAO under the Emergency Support to Enhance Food, Nutrition and Energy Security Project among Vulnerable Newly Arrived Refugees, he has adopted the Optimised Land Use Model (OLUM) to grow vegetables and crops on a small piece of land, improving his family's nutrition and income. © FAO Uganda

**Forty-Seven-year-old Almahi Abdalla from Bweyale Town Council, Kiryandongo District, Cluster B, is a Sudanese refugee and father of six. In 2023, he fled the conflict in Sudan and sought safety in Uganda. When he arrived, he and his family had nothing to rely on, but the food rations provided to refugees.**

Back home, Almahi worked as a water engineer and geologist. In Uganda, he quickly embraced a new path to support his family. Through the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), he was introduced to the Optimised Land Use Model (OLUM), an agricultural approach that helps refugee households maximize food production on small plots of land.

With a 15 by 50-foot piece of land, Almahi now grows tomatoes, cabbages, eggplants, onions, chili, groundnuts, and maize.

“

“This model has enabled me to plant vegetables throughout the year, which has improved my family's income and nutrition. I earn between UGX 7,000 (US\$ 1.97) and UGX 10,000 (US\$ 2.81) per day from selling vegetables,” he said.

The income covers his children's school fees and allows him to buy household essentials such as soap, cooking oil, salt, and sugar. With his earnings, Almahi has also installed a simple solar lighting system in his home.





Almahi Abdalla harvests eggplants and onions from his garden in Bweyale Town Council, Kiryandongo District. With support from FAO under the Emergency Support to Enhance Food, Nutrition and Energy Security Project among Vulnerable Newly Arrived Refugees, he has adopted the Optimised Land Use Model (OLUM) to grow vegetables and crops on a small piece of land, improving his family's nutrition and income. © FAO Uganda

Beyond food and income, Almahi values the environmental benefits of OLUM. "The model has water retention trenches that help conserve water and prevent soil erosion. It allows me to make the most of my small piece of land," he explained.

Determined to share the knowledge, Almahi has trained more than 30 community members on OLUM techniques, including nursery bed preparation, organic manure use, and water conservation practices.

Like Almahi, 27-year-old Reem Aljely Bakhit, also a refugee from Sudan and a mother of four, is benefiting from the model. When she and her husband first arrived, they survived on monthly rations of five kilograms of rice and one kilogram of beans – barely enough to sustain the family.

"FAO supported us with seeds through electronic-vouchers system that we use to access quality seed ahead of a new planting season. We now grow vegetables like sukuma, onions, and beans. This has improved our household food and nutrition, and made us stable and happy," Reem shared.

As a breastfeeding mother, she explains that eating fresh vegetables has boosted her health and supported her child's growth. From sales, she and her husband earn a daily income between UGX 5,000 (US\$ 1.41) and UGX 7,000 (US\$ 1.97), which they use to buy other basic household needs.

## About the Project

FAO, in partnership with the Government of Uganda through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), is implementing the Emergency Support to Enhance Food, Nutrition and Energy Security Project for newly arrived refugees. One of the project's goals is to increase production capacity and availability of nutritious food for 2,500 refugee households.

So far, the project has distributed around 13 metric tonnes of assorted quality vegetable and staple crop seeds, 2,827 hand hoes, and 1,440 watering cans through the electronic- voucher assistance. Demonstration OLUM sites have been established with 80 OLUM groups and 1,200 replicated gardens.

OLUM is particularly effective in refugee settlements, where families are allocated small plots, often with poor soil and facing changing weather conditions. By combining access to quality agricultural input from local agro-input dealer shops, crop diversification, access to extension service support, water retention trenches, organic soil management, the model allows for continuous food production throughout the year, improving both nutrition and income for refugee families. 🌍





## RESTORING DIGNITY: How Cash Support is Transforming Lives of Elderly Refugees in Uganda

By Moses Oguti, World Food Programme (WFP)



Mary spread her maize to dry in her home. Mary uses SCTER cash support to buy essential needs. © WFP/Daisy Masembe



Abraham poses for a photo at his home. This cash assistance allows him to buy nutritious food, helping him stay healthy and strong. © WFP/Daisy Masembe

**At 90 years old, Mary has witnessed profound loss. She fled Malakal, South Sudan, in 2016 after her husband was shot and killed. Four of her five children were scattered by the conflict, and she does not know where they are today.**

Yet when Mary speaks about the World Food Programme, her voice softens with gratitude. "To me, WFP is like my mother, my husband, and my children—it is everything I have now."

Mary is among 521 elderly refugees in Uganda receiving monthly income support through the Social Cash Transfer for Elderly Refugees (SCTER) programme. Launched in August 2024 by the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, in partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister, WFP, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, this pioneering initiative is the first of its kind to extend national social protection to refugees aged 80 years and above.

Funded by the Government of Ireland, SCTER provides 25,000 Ugandan shillings monthly—disbursed quarterly at 75,000 shillings—to elderly refugees in Bidibidi Settlement (Yumbe District) and Lobule Settlement (Koboko District). The programme aims to uphold dignity, improve nutrition, and strengthen the caregiving role of older refugees, thereby freeing women and girls to participate more fully in the labour force.

For 82-year-old Abraham, who lives with his wife of 42 years and two grandchildren orphaned by the conflict, the money has transformed daily life. "This money has changed my life," he says. "Each time I collect it, I feel happy because I can buy nutritious food. I make sure I eat well—porridge in the morning, tomatoes, eggs, meat, and vegetables."

The impact extends beyond individual well-being. Eighty-three-year-old Rita used her first payment to buy a mattress, a hen, salt, soap, and cassava flour. Recent payments have covered hospital bills—40,000 shillings for treatment. "At my age, I need to eat every day," Rita explains. "If I don't eat, my body trembles. This cash support is my only lifeline."

Ismail, 84, who lives with 13 family members, uses his quarterly 75,000 shillings to buy food and support medical treatment for his bedridden wife. "Even though the money is small, it makes a big difference," he says. "Without it, life would be much harder. I am grateful for this support because it gives me dignity and helps me care for my family."

The programme represents a milestone in Uganda's commitment to inclusive social protection. "Social protection for older persons means empowerment, ageing with dignity, access to health, nutrition, better shelter, and more," said Dr Aggrey David Kibenge, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, during its launch in September 2025.

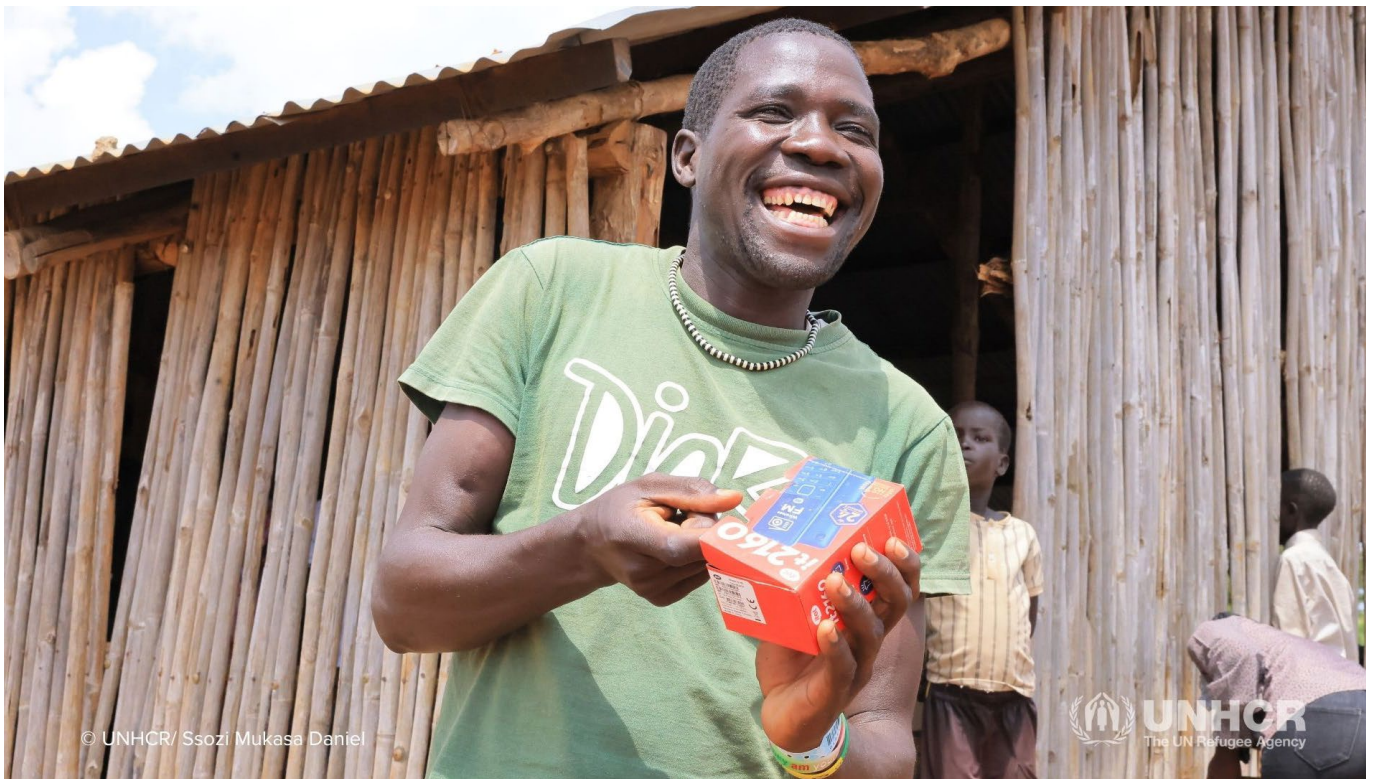
During the event, Hon. Gidudu Mafwabi Dominic, Minister of State for Elderly Affairs, emphasised the programme's broader significance: "Today, we witness an important milestone in national Social Protection programming as services are extended to refugees through the Social Cash Transfer for Elderly Refugees programme. If well implemented, SCTER will generate evidence for extending social protection to other refugee settlements, further cementing Uganda's open-door policy for refugees."

Since its inception, SCTER has reached 521 elderly refugees, 63 percent of whom are women. Payment days have become opportunities for integrated service delivery—combining nutrition and health outreach, financial literacy training, and backyard gardening promotion.

"This programme is more than just a cash transfer initiative; it is a transformative step toward building resilience, promoting dignity, and ensuring the meaningful inclusion of refugees in national programmes," says Marcus Prior, Deputy Country Director of WFP. "Together, we can build a future where every individual, regardless of age or circumstance, can live with dignity, security, and hope." 🌍

## UNHCR ENHANCES COMMUNICATION AND CASH ASSISTANCE FOR NEW ARRIVALS

*By Daniel Ssozi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*



© UNHCR/ Ssozi Mukasa Daniel

Peter Lodua a 32-year-old refugee from South Sudan with the phone he received from UNHCR ©UNHCR/Ssozi Mukasa Daniel

**At the Lokung Collection Point in Uganda's Lamwo District, UNHCR is helping newly arrived refugees from South Sudan take a vital first step toward rebuilding their lives by providing them with mobile phones that enable access to essential services and communication.**

This effort is part of UNHCR's start-up support to new arrivals to help cover basic immediate needs through cash transfers via MTN Mobile Money. Each phone distributed not only enables access to the life-saving cash assistance but also promotes financial inclusion from the outset of their stay in Uganda and enhances communication opportunities for the refugees.

With many forced to flee South Sudan due to conflict, persecution, and climate-related challenges, access to a phone has become a vital tool for rebuilding lives and kickstarting a brighter future in Uganda.

Peter Lodua a 32-year-old refugee from South Sudan from Ikwot County, spoke about what receiving the phone meant to him: "This phone will help me in many ways, especially with communication. Whenever I want to connect with my friends and family, I can call them," he said.

Since November 2023, UNHCR shifted most in-kind support to cash-based assistance, giving refugees greater control over their daily needs and choices, as they can now decide how to use the money they receive. Refugees can prioritize what matters most and use the assistance to buy food, set up shelters, or meet other urgent needs.

Mobile money is the preferred way for refugees to receive assistance because it is secure, fast, and widely accessible across the settlements. At the Lokung Transit Centre, refugees receive phones, while MTN agents provide free SIM cards and open mobile money accounts using family attestations. This enables recipients to access their cash assistance immediately as they are relocated to their plots in the settlement.

Having a phone helps refugees keep their mobile lines active, reducing the risk of SIM deactivation after 30 days of inactivity. It also promotes financial inclusion by encouraging continued use of mobile money and offers a secure, reliable channel for humanitarian actors to deliver cash assistance.

Access to phones also ensures that refugees stay connected with their friends and families, while enabling a two-way communication and feedback between refugees and UNHCR.

Jatuporn Lee Cheewasrirungruang, UNHCR Team Leader in Lamwo says, "the distribution of phones not only allows refugees to access mobile money, but it's a lifeline. It allows them to reconnect with their loved ones, access information, and begin a new chapter in their lives."

A phone is more than just a device; it's a bridge that restores lost connections, enables financial independence, and inspires hope for a brighter future. 🌍



## EU-UN SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE NURTURING YOUTH DESIGN INNOVATIONS

By Mercy Melody Kayodi, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



A photo showcasing some of the Youth beneficiaries under the UNDP/Smart Girls Uganda Partnership ©UNDP Uganda

**Uganda, with one of the youngest and fastest-growing populations globally, presents a unique opportunity to harness the potential of its young people, as key drivers of sustainable development. Individuals aged 18 to 30 make up 22.7% of the population, and their empowerment is critical to achieving the country's socio-economic transformation.**

Young people, especially women and girls, are highly innovative and entrepreneurial, and they represent a valuable resource that must be nurtured through targeted investments and inclusive policies.

Despite their potential, young women face significant challenges. UN Women estimates that 1 in 3 women globally experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. Additionally, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports that 80% of those displaced by climate-related shocks are women and youth, who face increased risks of violence and marginalization during displacement. These vulnerabilities underscore the urgent need for integrated approaches that protect and empower young women.

To this end, the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) are implementing the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, a global, multi-year programme aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women

and girls (VAWG). Through the initiative, UNDP, in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, district local governments, and 12 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, is equipping urban and rural young women, with market ready skills such as motor vehicle mechanics, building and construction, solar system repair, electrical engineering, plumbing, fashion and design to enhance employability and improve livelihood outcomes. This initiative is currently being implemented in the districts of Kasese, Amudat, Arua, Terego, Kitgum, Kyegegwa, Tororo, Kampala, Gulu, Yumbe, Omoro, and Otuke.

There is registered progress, together with Smart Girls Uganda, UNDP is creating a future where young women and girls are empowered to thrive through skilling, and innovation. The partnership aims to empower, uplift and inspire the girl child's economic independence and positive social change as per the country office's Gender for Development Strategy.

"As a girl, I've always loved cars, and that passion led me to join the automotive mechanics' course. At first, many people judged me and said I couldn't do it, that I was too weak to lift an engine. But that didn't stop me. I've grown and gained valuable skills in automotive mechanics, and I hope to further become an engineer who inspires other girls to dream big and act," said Naiga Swabra, a beneficiary of UNDP/ Smart Girls Uganda.

On her part, Anita Akiriza, who proudly refers to herself as Engineer Anita, pursued a course in electrical engineering. Alongside a group of peers, she developed prototypes designed to address everyday challenges faced by households and professionals in the electrical engineering sector. These innovations reflect the ingenuity and problem-solving capacity of young women in technical fields, demonstrating the transformative impact of inclusive skills development. Below are some of her innovations, which showcase how youth-led solutions can contribute to community resilience and sustainable development.

## 1. Water level detector

This solar powered innovation embedded with an alarm, is designed to notify families, when their storage tanks are nearing full capacity, this innovation addresses the question of water wastage and also allows attendants to uninterruptedly focus on other chores as they only await the alarms ring.

## 2. Solar powered Phase detector

The safety of electrical engineers at work is often at risk due to their constant interaction with live electrical systems. The phase detectors commonly used by students have posed safety concerns, occasionally leading to electric shocks caused by device malfunctions. In response to this challenge, they developed an improved phase detector designed to safely and reliably detect current flow between electrical connections.

## 3. Smart Torch

Due to frequent load shedding across many parts of the country, electricity blackouts have become common, posing safety risks for individuals caught outside their homes at night. In response to this challenge, Anita and her peers developed a solar-powered torch equipped with a phone charging feature. This innovation not only provides reliable lighting during power outages but also ensures continued access to mobile communication by enabling phone charging.

Among other innovations developed, are smart bags made from repurposed waste packaging materials, such as sacks, and designed with vibrant African print fabric. These bags are equipped with reusable sanitary towels and a solar-powered torch, specifically tailored to support girls in underserved and less electrified communities.

## Call to Action

UNDP continues to position youth at the heart of Uganda's sustainable development journey by creating transformative livelihood opportunities and empowering young people, especially women and girls, to embrace their roles as the next generation of leaders, champions, changemakers, and influencers. Achieving sustainable development and economic empowerment for youth requires a whole-of-society approach. With youth at the forefront, collaboration among local communities, all levels of government, the private sector, civil society organizations, development partners, and academic and training institutions is essential. These stakeholders must work together with urgency, creativity, and unwavering commitment to translate local solutions into tangible progress. By fostering inclusive partnerships, Uganda can unlock the full potential of its youth and accelerate the path toward equitable and sustainable development. 🌍

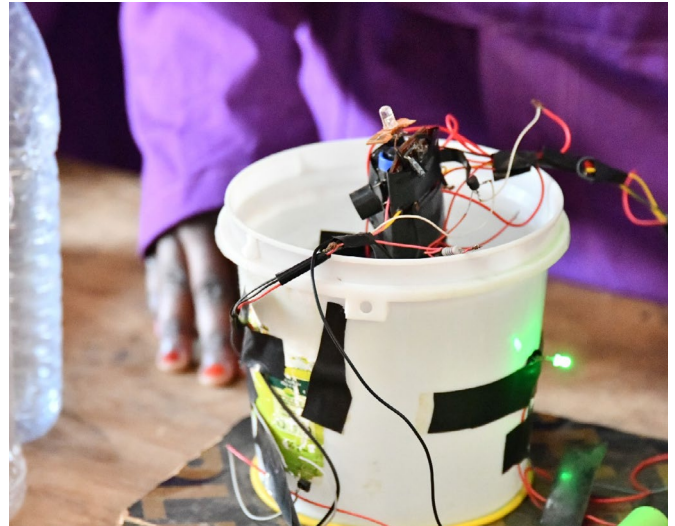


Photo showing the water level detector lighting green as an indicator of full tank. ©UNDP Uganda



Photo of a phase detector prototype. ©UNDP Uganda



Anita Akiriza, extreme left, and her peers showcasing a solar powered smart torch with a phone charging provision. ©UNDP Uganda



## LEAVING NO GIRL BEHIND: Investing in Education for Adolescent Empowerment - Catalyzing Progress Against AIDS, Teenage Pregnancy, GBV, and Poverty

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



The Education Plus Initiative symposium was attended by stakeholders including Development Partners, Government officials, Students, UN Agencies, Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations among others. ©UNESCO/Vincent Ogal

**Uganda's government joined forces with five United Nations agencies UNESCO, UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA, and UNAIDS to host the Education Plus Initiative Symposium, a high-level advocacy event aimed at transforming the lives of adolescent girls and young women, and boys as allies through education, health, and empowerment. The event was held on 30 October 2024 at Serena Hotel, Kampala.**

The symposium brought together over 60 participants, including ambassadors, government officials, civil society leaders, private sector representatives, and youth advocates. Anchored in the theme "Investing in Education for Adolescent Empowerment: Catalyzing Progress Against AIDS, Teenage Pregnancy, GBV, and Poverty," the event served as a platform to address the intersecting crises and barriers facing Uganda's young women.

Louise Haxthausen, the Director of UNESCO's Regional Office for Eastern Africa, while delivering her remarks at the Education Plus Initiative Symposium, underscored the transformative power of education in national development, noting that, "Education is far more than a social good - it is one of the smartest and most strategic investments our country can make," she affirmed. "Every dollar invested in girls' education yields up to seventeen dollars in social and economic returns. This is not goodwill - it is smart economics."

The chief guest at the event, Dr. Aggrey Kibenge, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, acknowledged the strategic alignment of the Education Plus Initiative with Uganda's broader development goals. "The Education Plus Initiative aligns perfectly with Uganda's national development priorities and our vision for a skilled, healthy, and empowered population," he stated. "By investing in adolescent girls and boys as allies, we are investing in our nation's social and economic resilience. The evidence is clear, when girls stay in school, entire communities and economies grow stronger."

Dr. Joseph Muvawala, the Executive Director of the National Planning Authority, delivering the keynote address, emphasized the economic and social imperative of investing in girls' education as a cornerstone for national transformation. "The investment in 16 years of competence-based schooling is one of the most cost-effective interventions to addressing issues such as teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, and poverty," he stated. "Girls who complete these years of schooling tend to delay pregnancy until around age 25, compared to their peers who drop out early and face lifelong cycles of vulnerability."

The Chairperson of the Education Plus Initiative, Mr. Charles Draecabo, delivered a rallying call to action during his address at the symposium. He affirmed that, "today's symposium is more than a meeting, it is a rallying point for transformative change," he underscored.



The Permanent Secretary Ministry of Gender (left), and a student participant (right). ©UNESCO/Vincent Ogal

“We must advocate for the completion of secondary education as a strategic pathway to empower adolescents and reduce the devastating impact of HIV, teenage pregnancies, gender-based violence, and poverty. This moment demands that we forge new alliances, mobilize resources, and make tangible commitments to ensure that no girl and boys are left behind.”

The UNAIDS Director Equality and Rights for All Suki Beavers noted that, “The strength of this initiative (EPI) lies in partnership. When governments, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), development partners and private sector unite, we unlock the full potential of young people to thrive, lead, and transform their communities.”

### Uganda's Girls at a Crossroads

Uganda's adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) face overwhelming challenges. In 2024 alone, 78% of all new HIV infections occurred among AGYW aged 15–24, amounting to 11,000 new cases, or 210 infections every week. Teenage pregnancy remains rampant, with a total of 366,606 adolescent girls aged 10–19 years having ever had a child or currently pregnant, according to the final report of the National Population and Housing Census 2024 by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS).

Despite these challenges, the Government of Uganda has instituted several safeguards and progressive policies to ensure continuity in education for adolescent girls. Notably, Circular No. 20 of 2021 reaffirmed the right of pregnant girls and adolescent mothers to remain in school and complete their education. The Ministry of Education and Sports has also strengthened guidance and counselling services, integrated life skills and health education into the curriculum, and expanded second-chance and alternative learning programmes for vulnerable learners. Additionally,



UNESCO Regional Director for Eastern Africa, Louise Haxthausen. ©UNESCO/Vincent Ogal

the rollout of Universal Secondary Education (USE) reflects the country's commitment to inclusive education. These interventions, while impactful, require sustained investment and community support to fully realize their potential.

The Education Plus Symposium concluded with renewed commitments from stakeholders including government ministries, development partners, civil society, and the private sector to sustain investments in the future of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). The private sector specifically pledged to expand mentorship programmes, and school-to-work transition initiatives that empower girls beyond the classroom. Other recommendations included strengthening existing initiatives including second-chance education pathways and scaling up of life skills and sexuality education in schools. 🌍



## EMPOWERING GIRLS WITH DIGITAL SKILLS: UN WOMEN EXPANDS AGCCI ICT HUBS TO EASTERN AND WESTERN UGANDA

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



Left-Right: Dr. Hajati Safina Musene, Commissioner for BTET, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ms. Adekemi Ndieli, UN Women Uganda Deputy Country Representative cutting the ribbon to officially launch the AGCCI ICT Eastern Region Hub at Wanyange Secondary School in Jinja City. ©UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu

**To empower more girls with digital literacy and technology skills, UN Women Uganda, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, with support from the German Development Cooperation (GIZ), officially inaugurated two new African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI) ICT Hubs — at Wanyange Girls’ Secondary School in Jinja (Eastern Uganda) on 23 October and Kyebambe Girls’ Secondary School in Fort Portal (Western Uganda) on 30 October 2025.**

The new hubs, each equipped with 60 desktop computers, mark an important step toward expanding access to digital education for girls and ensuring they are not left behind in the rapidly evolving world of technology. The initiative equips young women with essential skills in coding, robotics, animation, web design, and



Bonitah Shakillah, a beneficiary student of the AGCCI programme phase 3. ©UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu

digital safety — preparing them for future careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

At the launch in Wanyange, the Commissioner for Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTET) at the Ministry of Education and Sports, Hajat Safina Musene, commended the partnership for investing in the potential of young women.



Middle: Hajat Safina Musene, Ms. Adekemi Ndieli, and Deborah Basekanakyo in a group photo with stakeholders and students of Wanyange Girls' Secondary School, Jinja during the inauguration of the Eastern Region ICT Hub ©UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu

“

“This programme is breaking barriers for girls and demonstrating that technology is not just for boys. It's for every young person with the creativity and curiosity to innovate. As government, we are honoured to partner with UN Women on this important transformative initiative,” she said.

In Fort Portal, students at Kyebambe Girls' Secondary School expressed excitement as they explored the new computers and learning software. The hub will serve as a learning center for girls from surrounding schools and communities in the Rwenzori mid-western region.

“Before this, I had never used a computer. During the boot camp, my life changed positively as I became more interested in the IT field. I'm now more confident in coding, designing websites, and even dream of building one to support my father's retail business,” said Bonitah Shakillah, a senior five student and AGCCI III coding camp Alumna from Fort Portal Secondary School, during the inauguration.

The African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI), spearheaded by UN Women in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), aims to train and inspire adolescent girls across Africa to pursue ICT careers. In Uganda, the programme contributes to national goals under the Digital Transformation Roadmap and aligns with UN Women's efforts to close the gender digital divide.

Speaking during the Kyebambe event on behalf of Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Uganda Country Representative, Ms. Adekemi Ndieli, the Deputy Country Representative, highlighted the importance of equipping girls with skills for the future.



Women Uganda Deputy Country Representative inspecting the facility together with officials from the different ministries at Kyebambe Girls' Secondary School in Fort Portal City, Rwenzori Region. ©UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu

“

“Digital skills are today's gateway to opportunity. By expanding AGCCI hubs to more regions, we are ensuring that girls from rural and urban areas alike have equal chances to participate in and lead Uganda's digital future,” Ndieli said.

The two inaugurations bring to four the total number of AGCCI ICT Hubs so far established in Uganda, joining efforts by existing hubs in Lira (Lango Region) and Moroto (Karamoja Region) during AGCCI II project implementation in 2024, where participants received laptops at the end of their boot camps in 2023 and 2024, respectively. Through these centers, thousands of girls are gaining the confidence, creativity, and technical know-how to innovate and lead.

Since 2018, AGCCI has reached over 2,000 girls across Africa, with Uganda proudly participating since Phase II. Under Phase II and Phase III, the programme has already reached 244 young women including secondary school, vocational and university training students, marking significant progress in scale and sustainability. 🌍





# CELEBRATING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS THROUGH GAMES

By Michael Wangusa, United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)

As part of activities to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations, members of staff of the UN in Uganda and partners participated in the UN Games, which were organised by the UN Resident Coordinators Office (RCO) together with the UN Wellness Group and captains of the teams of UN agencies.

The games were organised to strengthen relationships and collaboration among UN staff and partners and to foster unity, build teamwork spirit, boost wellness and promote UN values of diversity, inclusion, solidarity, and collective action.

The games played over three weeks included zumba for warm football, volleyball, netball, dodgeball, and more. Games for all ages and abilities.

The games held at Kampala Quality Primary School on three Saturdays during the month of October involved 16 UN agencies and partners competed in the games.

UN Entebbe and UNHCR emerged overall joint winners of the UN Games. WHO were the football champions. IOM were the netball champions. UN Entebbe were volley champions. UNHCR were fun game champions. 🌍



UN Entebbe celebrate Volley Championship



Football: IOM vs UN Entebbe



Netball: RCO vs UNHCR



UNICEF in Volleyball Action



Dodgeball: UNHCR vs FAO



Ball on Spoon race



Tug of War – WHO Team



UN Entebbe celebrating victory



UNDP celebrates scoring in netball



UNITED NATIONS  
UGANDA



For more information, please contact:  
**MICHAEL WANGUSA** | michael.wangusa@un.org  
**MONICAH ATURINDA** | monicah.aturinda@undp.org  
UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)

uganda.un.org | UNUganda | UNinUganda