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WOMEN DIPLOMATS PLANT TREES AT NAKINDIBA CENTRAL FOREST RESERVE IN KAKIRI, WAKISO DISTRICT TO COMMEMORATE THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

By Ismael Tamale, Co-Founder, My Tree Initiative, Youth Coalition for SDGs



UN Resident Coordinator, H.E. Rosa Malango planting a tree along with Women Diplomats in commemoration of International Women's Day at Nakindiba Forest Reserve on 23 April 2021

On Friday 23rd April, at Mount of Olives College School - Wakiso, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in-charge of International Affairs, Hon. Amb. Henry Okello Oryem, as the Guest of Honour, presided over a tree planting exercise to restore Nakindiba Central Forest Reserve, a 302 hectares had been 30% of it's degraded by the public; with members of the Diplomatic community, organized by the Women staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in partnership with My Tree Initiative (MTI), National Forestry Authority (NFA), and female staff of office of the Dean of Diplomatic Corps.

The participants in the tree planting exercise included the UN Resident Coordinator, H.E. Rosa Malango; the Dean of Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Eritrea, H.E. Mohammed Suleiman Ahmed; the Ambassador of Ethiopia, H.E. Alemtsehay Meseret; the Ambassador of Iceland, H.E. Thordis Sigurdardottir; Deputy Country Representatives of UNWOMEN and UNDP; the Principal Mount of Olives College School; the Resident District Commissioner of Wakiso District, Ms. Justine Mbabazil; the Director of Natural Forest Management at National Forestry Authority, Mr. Tom Rukundo; and the Director My Tree Initiative, Mr. Ashraf Enjer.

OVERVIEW

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UNHCR'S GRANDI CALLS FOR RENEWED HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT TO ADVANCE UGANDA'S COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE

By Rocco Nuri, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)



UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi meets with Golden Star women's group in Bidibidi refugee settlement. Refugees sell soap, masks and other items at local markets alongside Ugandan traders. ©UNHCR/Esther Mbabazi

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi concluded a visit to Uganda from 8-11 March, reaffirming the utmost commitment of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, to supporting a comprehensive refugee response in the East African country.

Joined by a high-level government delegation led by Minister of State for Local Government Jennifer Namuyangu, the High Commissioner paid a visit to Yumbe town and Bidibidi settlement, 250 square kilometres of low and rolling hills home to over 235,000 refugees from South Sudan.

During a four-hour tour of Africa's largest refugee settlement and surrounding areas, the dignitaries appreciated projects benefitting refugees and the host community and supported by humanitarian and development partners working side by side, with the ultimate goal of ensuring full government ownership and management – which requires a more predictable and equitable international responsibility-sharing for refugees, in the spirit the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

“What I witnessed in Yumbe is extraordinary,” said Grandi adding that Uganda has shown strong leadership in moving the GCR forward. “Bidibidi realizes the vision for shared responsibility and a comprehensive response to refugee crises and gives me fresh confidence that the Global Compact on Refugees can be successfully operationalized worldwide.”

Zone 3 hosts the largest solar powered water system across the entire refugee response, serving more than 18,000 refugees and Ugandans. Completed in 2019 with funding from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Germany through the German Development Bank (KfW) and the United Kingdom, the system will be soon handed over to the Northern Umbrella Authority for Water and Sanitation, under the Ministry of Water and Environment, following capacity-building by the German International Cooperation (GIZ) and the World Bank.

In the district's main town is Yumbe Primary School. This facility was constructed in 2019 under the Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP), a government's flagship initiative, supported by the international community through the World Bank, to improve access to basic social services in areas that host refugees. The presence of refugees is the key criterion to invest DRDIP resources for local development.

“Uganda is proud to lead a positive narrative on refugees and to demonstrate not only our humanity, but that together refugees and host communities can thrive,” said Minister Namuyangu adding that the economic and social benefits for the host communities are undeniable. However, continued the Minister, “a more cohesive and sustained international response is needed to ease pressure on local communities and to strengthen further the capacity of local service delivery as the refugee population continues to grow.”

At a women’s centre, Grandi met with 39-year-old Margaret Kuyunge, a refugee from South Sudan who represents her community at the national Refugee Engagement Forum – a platform established in 2018 to ensure the views and concerns of refugees inform strategic discussions and decision-making.

“In my new role, I feel the voice of my community can be heard where it really matters. We are not just people with needs...we have provided our skills, dreams and contributions to our communities.”

“

In addressing the media in Bidibidi, Grandi’s message was univocal, urging all stakeholders “to remain engaged at the highest level to ensure the success of the Uganda comprehensive refugee response.” According to Grandi, “collective efforts are needed to address the humanitarian-development nexus and accelerate the transition to sustainable local government services.” The Uganda refugee model, continued Grandi, “remains a refugee model of global importance.”

Uganda hosts more than 1.45 million refugees, with the vast majority living in rural settlements. Since the launch of the CRRF in 2017, the government has included refugees in the national development plans and endorsed sector plans to improve delivery of social services in refugee-hosting districts, namely Education, Health, Water and Environment, and Jobs and Livelihood. 🌍



South Sudanese refugee Agnes Batio, 32, meets UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi at Bidibidi refugee settlement. Agnes is a mother of two who started working in construction in December 2020 and is now team leader at the construction site @UNHCR

Women diplomats plant trees at Nakindiba Central Forest Reserve in Kakiri, Wakiso District to commemorate the International Women’s Day

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The event was part of the activities organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to mark this year’s International Women’s Day (IWD) under the theme; “Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world”. This exercise was part of the fulfillment of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the 50th Session of the UN General Assembly to recognize that Women have an important role to play in the Development of Sustainable and Ecological approaches to Natural Resource Management.

Nakindiba Central Forest Reserve which is 302 hectares has had 30% of it’s degraded by the public.

Speaking at the event, Minister Oryem stated that the celebrations to mark the Women’s Day continue to highlight the milestone of women in social, cultural, economic and political platforms. “It is a commitment to advance the objectives of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity. Let us try and sustain our Environment. What is happening is dangerous. It does not cost anything to plant trees, let us try not to spoil what God has given us but rather try and protect it,” he said.

The UN Resident Coordinator H.E. Rosa Malango, called for an annual tree planting event and pledged UN commitment to a Climate Smart model world. “Today makes so much sense that we will plant trees in the pearl of Africa to celebrate the International Women’s Day. It is our humble request that this should become an annual event as Uganda recovers 24% coverage of its forests. The UN remains committed to supporting green industrialization, climate smart model villages, towns and cities and promoting values of “Obuntu Bulamu”; (Good citizenship), through the “Bulunji bwansi”; (Community volunteerism), so that we can protect our environment and nature in our Communities,” she said.

The Director Natural Forest Management at the National Forestry Authority (NFA), Tom Rukundo said that for the last year statistics, 24% of Uganda’s forest cover had been recovered. “Government through NFA has a program that aims to distribute free indigenous seedlings to communities to increase everyone’s Involvement in Environmental Conservation. 99% of the Communities adjacent to all Central Forest Reserves, their livelihoods depend entirely on forests. This puts too much pressure on these forest resources,” he said. 🌍



LEVERAGING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR ENHANCED LOCAL REVENUE COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN UGANDA

By Joan Alupo, UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)



Chief Administrative Officer Omoro District receives equipment from Mr. Jim Asaba Ahebwa at the launch of the Integrated Revenue Administration System (IRAS) at UNCDF offices in Kampala

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) with financial support from the European Union, handed over IT equipment worth €163,000 to 18 districts in Northern Uganda, to support the automation of local revenue administration through the Integrated Revenue Administration System (IRAS).

This is part of the €1.72 million overall support of the Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU) to enhance own source revenue collection and management.

During the event, it was announced IRAS, a web and mobile based revenue management system, developed in partnership with the World Bank for Government of Uganda, would initially be rolled out to five districts of Amolatar, Kole, Omoro, Yumbe and Zombo over the next two months. The district officers will be trained to use the system in the most optimal way to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. It will then be gradually introduced to the remaining districts.

Each district revenue department received five computers and two printers, for capturing and storing data to aid the installation of the system. Additionally, UNCDF is in the process of installing solar power in over 70 subcounties and town councils to ensure stable supply of electricity to run the system.

The IRAS system captures all local revenue sources as described in the Local Government Act and it facilitates registration, assessment, payment, billing, taxpayer feedback mechanism, enforcement and reporting.

Local governments have long struggled to generate local revenue. Low staffing levels, inadequate resources and the manual process of collections- cash being paid to individuals, are some of the challenges increasing revenue leakages. In 2020, the 18 DINU districts mobilised only 1.3% to finance their annual budgets. This performance was further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions that ensued directly affecting local government fiscal space.

“IRAS is part of the puzzle to help local governments expand their fiscal space in particular increase own source revenue through a more effective and efficient administration so they can tap into alternative financing to support their development goals.” Dmitry Pozhidaev, UNCDF Head of Office

IRAS also features a feedback platform for sensitizing taxpayers. Taxpayers can also share feedback with the local governments. The two way feedback platform will promote accountability and transparency.

“Technology has great potential to enhance transparency and accountability to improve revenue performance and ultimately local service delivery” remarked Caroline Adriaensen, Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegation to Uganda.

While handing over the equipment, the representative of the Minister of Local Government urged the district officials to be responsible for the assets as well as invest in their individual capacity development to ensure tangible progress for the local governments. 🌍



IOM AND GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN SUPPORT TRAINING OF IMMIGRATION OFFICERS ON MARITIME BORDER SECURITY

By Innocent Vuga, International Organization for Migration (IOM) – The UN Migration Agency



Trainees show off their maritime skills at the end of Phase 1 training

The international Organization for Migration (IOM) and her partners recently completed a four-week training of 11 immigration officers in maritime operational skills.

Funded by the Government of Japan, the training was organized by IOM’s Immigration and Border Management (IBM) unit, together with the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC). Expert instructors from the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) facilitated the training at Jinja Club. The trainees came from Entebbe, Ntoroko, Elegu, Sebagoro, Butyaba and Moroto border stations.

This was the first in a series of trainings on maritime border security, under IOM’s project titled: “Reduce Transnational Security Threats While Increasing Border Security and Regular Migration in Uganda.” The project is supporting the Government to improve the legal framework and procedures for regular migration, while addressing irregular migration through enhanced maritime patrol capacities over Lake Albert.

Immigration officers are being upskilled in leadership, swimming, water navigation and survival tactics, maritime operations and investigations, plus use of weapons to instill confidence and readiness (skill at Arms). All trainees excelled with an average performance of 80 per cent.

Speaking at the closure of the training, the head of the IBM unit at IOM, Mr Olivier Baguma Balagizi, announced more support to DCIC, with funding from the Government of Japan. IOM would soon hand over a six-passenger engine boat with an inbuilt very high frequency (VHF) radio. This boat will be used for open water training in the second phase, but also help in Lake patrolling

and rescue operations. Balagizi thanked the Government of Japan for their continued support towards strengthening border management, and Government of Uganda, particularly the DCIC and UPDF, for their collaboration.

Similarly, Mr Emmanuel Okanya, who represented the Director of DCIC, thanked IOM for organizing a training that has “improved skills and attitude” of immigration officers.

Over the years, IOM, the Government of Japan, and other development partners, have been supporting the Government to address diverse immigration and border management challenges. This contributes to the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10.7 that calls for facilitation of safe, orderly and responsible migration and mobility of people. It is also in line with objective 11 of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), on management of borders in an integrated, secure, and coordinated manner. 🌐



The maritime border security training included both practical and theory lessons ©IOM



PARTNER COORDINATION CONTRIBUTES TO BETTER COVID-19 VACCINATION COVERAGE IN KASESE DISTRICT

By Edmond Mwebembezi, World Health Organization (WHO)



WHO training coordinators at sub-county level in Kasese District in prevention of COVID-19

As the COVID-19 vaccination gains momentum in various districts of Uganda, financial, material, human, and logistical resources are becoming increasingly scarce due to the prolonged nature of the pandemic.

However, innovative health workers have continued implementing mitigating measures to ensure the COVID-19 vaccination exercise succeeds in the low-resourced environment.

Aware of the implementing partners operating in the district under various sectors, district authorities supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) field team-initiated coordination meetings that have helped to address the resource shortfall and duplication challenges affecting the vaccination exercise. In addition to being an appropriate forum for division of responsibilities, these meetings have enabled authorities in Kasese district to collectively identify key challenges affecting COVID-19 vaccination and devise means to tackle them.

However, these coordination meetings are not entirely new in Kasese District, they were instrumental during the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo which spilled into Uganda. Besides, Kasese district has

WHO field team presence dating back to EVD time, with a wealth of experience in partner coordination gleaned from various emergency operations.

“Coordination of partners is not difficult in this district because of the 4Ws matrix that we developed and used during the Ebola epidemic. This matrix that shows us Who, What, Where, and When has strengthened the current system in addition to the district using a community-led approach structure,” said the District Health Officer, Dr. Yusuf Baseka.

“Therefore, subsequent meetings have been about tangible contributions, allocation of activities for implementation, and avoidance of duplication to ensure wide and effective vaccination coverage. All able and willing partner organizations were assigned responsibilities which they have undertaken successfully,” he further notes.

Some of the outstanding contributions from the partner coordination meeting include 500 litres of fuel from the International Rescue Committee (IRC), vehicles to transport the vaccination teams to the sites from MSF and WHO, and printing of the consent forms. Baylor has promised to support the district with airtime for four radio talk shows and has printed 3000 copies of Information, Education, Communication (IEC) materials for distribution.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The Rwenzori Centre for Research and Advocacy supported the district with 200,000 shillings towards the purchase of internet data bundles that facilitated data capture into the District Health Information System.

As of 15th April 2021, 3621 health workers, teachers, people above 18 years with underlying health conditions had been vaccinated. This has been due to the unwavering support and contribution of the well-coordinated implementing partners based in the district.

In addition, Kasese District authorities have not only been exemplary in coordinating implementing partners but have also led the vaccination exercise by example. At the launch of the vaccination in the district, the Resident District Commissioner, the District Health Officer, the District Surveillance Focal person, and WHO field team officers for Rwenzori Region were among the officials who took the vaccine in full view of the public and the media which promoted vaccine uptake.

The Kasese District Health Team's initial vaccination coordination planning meeting with WHO recognized that the MOH officially designated five static vaccination sites which were selected due to budget limitations could not have served the communities adequately given the vastness and population distribution of the district. Therefore, a resolution was made to relocate the 5 static sites once the eligible population in the vicinity was exhausted. To date, 10 additional vaccination sites have been adopted as temporary static sites. This was made possible by the contributions from the

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) International, International Red Cross (IRC) and WHO (through partner coordination meetings) towards transportation of the vaccination teams.

Aside from vaccination, duplication of activities and hence wastage of resources in other health programmes have also been addressed through the partners' coordination meeting. Very often, partner organizations oversubscribe in one area of work such as disease surveillance, Infection Prevention, and Control or family planning thereby neglecting other deserving areas of work. In Kasese, the coordination meetings ensure this does not happen and services are equitably distributed within the communities.

However, despite the excellent support and apparent success in Kasese district, challenges still abound. For instance, transport, and lack of Internet data bundles, have hampered the vaccination exercise to a greater extent. But health workers still devise means to soldier on and ensure that the lifesaving COVID-19 vaccine and other health services reach the most vulnerable and those who need it most.

Supported through funding from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the WHO field team in the Rwenzori sub-region is extending the Kasese partner coordination experience to other districts starting with Bunyangabu and Kabarole districts. For now, given its technical capacity, knowledge, mandate, clout, and comparative advantage, WHO is better positioned to assist the Ministry of Health and the district health team to play this role. 🌍



Partner coordination meeting led by the District Health Officer with support from the World Health Organization in Kasese District ©WHO



VACCINATING AGAINST COVID-19 IN UGANDA'S HARD TO REACH HIGHLANDS

By Catherine Ntabadde, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)



Everina Ndimutuna being vaccinated against COVID-19 Butanda Health Centre

To access Butanda Health Centre III in Kabale District in western Uganda, one must traverse several Kigezi hills, covering 50kms.

On 27 April 2021, a team from the Ministry of Health and UNICEF visited the health centre to assess the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines. By 11:00 a.m., over 40 elderly men and women were seated at the facility patiently waiting to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The In-Charge Butanda Health Centre Geoffrey Nkurunziza was sensitizing them about the vaccination process and required consent.

All the people who came to be vaccinated had a document to identify them – a national identity card or voter's card and they were wearing masks, labelled GoU (Government of Uganda).



"We started vaccination two weeks and started off with health workers, the elderly and security people. The turn up is good and we have so far vaccinated about 100 people. By the end of today (27 April 2021), we will have vaccinated 500 people. Most of the people came wearing masks and they washed their hands without being reminded," Nkurunziza explained.

The Ministry of Health on 10 March 2021 rolled out a countrywide vaccination exercise, following receipt of 864,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine from the COVAX facility which comprises of GAVI, WHO, CEPI and UNICEF. Uganda also received a donation of 100,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine from the Government of India.

At Butanda, Winnie Ntegyereze mentioned that she is suffering from another illness and inquired whether she can go ahead to be vaccinated.

Everina Ndimutuna notes that her son who lives in Kampala encouraged her to get the vaccine. "I have been provided with adequate information about this vaccine and my son told me it is important that I take it. That is why I am here," Ndimutuna says with a smile.

An interesting and relevant question was asked by Suruma Laban who wanted to know whether someone vaccinated can continue drinking alcohol. Suruma was reassured that there is no concrete evidence regarding alcohol and COVID-19 vaccination. He was however advised to always ensure that he drinks limited alcohol as too much of its consumption could turn into a health risk.

The Local Council III Chairman of Ndora West Butanda Sub County, Besigye John Kabengye, hailed government for providing its citizens with the much-needed vaccines, noting that people in hard to reach areas line Butanda have benefited.

He explains that even though there has been some on-going misinformation, his electorates have been sensitized by the government and the response to the uptake is good. Kabale District authorities and political leaders have been engaging religious leaders of different faiths and village health teams to educate the community about the importance of vaccination against COVID-19.

Kabale District Sub District In-Charge Edward Arineitwe Bwengye who lead the mission to visit Butanda Health Centre noted that the health workers are committed to serve the population in all related health services.



Kabale District's Health Sub District In-Charge Edward Arineitwe with representatives from the Ministry of Health sail on Lake Bunyonyi to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to Bwama Island ©UNICEF/UN0458367/Ntabadde



ENSURING SAFE BIRTHS AMID A DISASTER: COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER USES MOTORCYCLE AMBULANCE TO SAVE LIVES OF MOTHERS

By Jimmy Dombo, UN Population Fund (UNFPA)



A pregnant woman onboard a motorcycle ambulance, ready to be transported to the Health Center III. Photo courtesy of Davis Mukimba

Meet Davis Mukimba, a Community Volunteer with UNFPA/ACORD who also doubles as a Motorcycle Ambulance rider at Bukigai Health Centre III in Buduuda district, on the slopes of Mount Elgon in Eastern Uganda.

Recently, the district suffered devastating landslides that led to loss of lives, destroyed homes and displaced people.

The mudslides washed away roads and bridges making it difficult for people to access medical services. The mountainous terrain made it particularly difficult for pregnant women.

Davis visits the affected communities to sensitize them about observing COVID-19 standard operating procedures - washing hands, keeping a social distance, and wearing a mask. Additionally, he facilitates the formation and mentoring of women and youth groups, mobilizes community members to participate in Health Camps, and conducts community dialogue meetings to discuss sexual reproductive health (SRH) and prevention of gender-based violence (GBV). Davis also conducts mapping of pregnant women in the community, and ensures to make referrals for antenatal care.

Buduuda District Local Government owns the Motorcycle Ambulance. For lack of funds to sustain a full-time paid rider, Davis volunteers his services free-of-charge



As a Motorcycle Ambulance rider, I am called by community members at any time, sometimes in the middle of the night to pick up pregnant women who are in labor. It is very difficult navigating the mountainous terrains with a woman experiencing labor pains," said Davis.

On average, Davis said that he refers up to 15 mothers a month, both inward referrals (from the community to the Health Centre III), and onward referrals from the Health Centre III to Buduuda Hospital.

Davis fondly talks about some of the most memorable experiences in his community service, ensuring that women deliver safely.

"One time, at about 8:00 p.m. I had just sat down after a long day of work to enjoy a meal that was prepared by my wife when I received a call to go and pick up a pregnant mother with complications from Bukigai Health Center III to Buduuda Hospital," Davis narrates. "Along the way the light of the motorcycle gave way. I improvised with a torch as the light all the way to the hospital - a distance of 7KM where she received assistance to deliver safely."

In a humanitarian crisis like that of Buduuda, families, and communities break down, making young women and girls most vulnerable. Women and adolescent girls face threats as a result of challenges in accessing health and other services that they usually need.

As health centers and other key infrastructure may be destroyed, overcrowded, or inaccessible, pregnant women, in particular, fear for their health and that of their unborn babies and wonder if they will deliver safely, as health centers and other key infrastructure may be destroyed, overcrowded, or inaccessible.

In 2020, floods and landslides affected 44,992 people in the districts of Bundibugyo in Western Uganda, Sironko, and Buduuda in Eastern Uganda, causing displacement of over 18,000 individuals.

UNFPA supports the work of community volunteers like Davis to ensure that pregnant women give birth safely, with the support of a professional health worker.

In 2020, with funding from the UNFPA Emergency Fund, a total of 6,321 pregnant mothers in the three affected districts were mapped and referred to health facilities for antenatal services, of which 3,173 gave birth with the support of a professional health worker. 🌍



YOUTH TIPPED ON OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

By Agatha Ayebazibwe, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

More than 1400 youth have shown interest in the Youth Champions in Agriculture Initiative 2021 awards. Following the launching of the second round of the Youth Inspiring Youth in Agriculture Initiative (YIYA) in October 2020, a total of 270 youth agripreneurs have been identified from 135 districts across the country. The exercise aims to identify and recognise youth agripreneurs as role models that can inspire other youth to join the sector through knowledge-sharing, capacity building and mentorship. Across the country, the exercise has attracted more than 1400 applications, which have been screened and profiled in a collaborative exercise with the Young Farmers Champions Network and the Uganda National Young Farmers Federation.

This initiative is part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) efforts to make the agricultural sector more attractive and safe for young people. About 270 youth agripreneurs have been selected, of which 90 are young women will be awarded at district and regional levels while the best top 20 young women and 20 young men will be awarded as National Youth Champions, at the end of the ongoing phased exercise.

Speaking at the YIYA2021 Judges' meeting convened to harmonise the criteria for selection of the final youth champions of the 2021 edition, the FAO Country Representative Dr Antonio Querido revealed that FAO will continue to prioritize specific interventions for enhancing youth engagement in agribusiness and creating decent youth employment in the agricultural sector. To this end, FAO is working to address some of these challenges and risks that inhibit young women and men from joining and gaining from agriculture, a sector that employs the largest number of people in the country.

"We know that many capable and productive youth in Uganda tend to shun agriculture due to the risks involved, intensive nature and low profitability. We are committed to working with relevant line ministries to address these bottlenecks and create a conducive environment under which agribusinesses can thrive," said Dr Querido.

Through FAO's Integrated Country Approach (ICA- Project) for boosting decent jobs for youth in the agri-food system, financially supported by Sweden, FAO supported the development of the Uganda National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agriculture (NSYEA). The NSYEA was officially launched in 2017 whose purpose is to guide all state and non-state actors in Uganda to engage and create decent employment for youth in the sector.



Jonathan Tamale, one of the 2017 Youth Champions in Agriculture harvesting coffee at his farm in Kayunga District

Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world: in 2017, 75.2 per cent of the 37.7 million population were below 30 years of age (UNHS, 2016/17).

State Minister for Agriculture, Honourable Aggrey Bagiire commended the YIYA initiative, urging the Government and development partners to establish a sustainability mechanism for this model to benefit more young people across the country. "This model has proved to be successful, and now we would like to scale up the youth champions to become a national wide mentorship programme. We need to establish funding mechanisms through the government, through which FAO and other stakeholders can support such tested models to engage more youth in gainful agricultural activities," said Hon Bagiire.

One of the 2017 YIYA Champions Mr Gerald Katabazi used the opportunity to appreciate FAO and MAAIF for the platform and trainings that have enabled him and other youth to transform their businesses in just three years.

"Before I was selected as a champion, I operated a small kiosk in the bus park downtown Kampala. Following the numerous trainings on growing our ventures into profitable agribusinesses, today I operate a medium-sized shop on the affluent parts of the city, besides opening two regional coffee hubs in Mbale and Kasese Cities," says Katabazi.

He encourages more youth to embrace the model and learn from other young people who are running successful agribusinesses.



“I wanted to do agriculture as a business and after graduating from University, I didn’t look for a job. I went back home and started growing coffee with a few friends. When I was selected to attend the trainings, I wasn’t sure how impactful the session would be. However, the 10 days I spent at the institute would become the best decision for my career. We trained on mind-set change, developing bankable business plans, financial literacy among other agronomic sessions,” says Jonathan Tamale, another Youth Champion from the first cohort.

Jonathan further testifies that “I have got partners and access to resources I never thought I would ever have. In three years,

we have transformed from an association of 40 coffee farmers to Kayunga Nile Coffee Farmers’ Cooperative with 750 members, 320 of whom are young people.”

According to Edward Tanyima, the ICA project Coordinator, the training package was developed in collaboration with the National Farmers Leadership Centre. A total of 135 best youth champions (65 females and 70 males) will be trained. The training focuses on mind set change, decent work, productive employment, agribusiness, business planning and management, and preparation of action plans. The training includes both theoretical and practical lessons. The practical sessions include practical poultry rearing and management, piggery, dairy and crop production sessions for different crops. Additionally, practical record-keeping sessions based on the farm records and occupational safety and health.

The President of the Uganda National Farmers’ Association (UNFFE), Dr Dick Kamuganga, who is also heading the team of 10 judges for the YIYA 2021 Initiative says that the model, if well implemented, will be the fastest route to reverse the stigma around agriculture among the younger people, with potential to create 4 million jobs every year.🌱



John Paul Akwapo (R) together with his brothers and Prof Elepu Gabriel from Makerere University (L) during a recent verification mission for enterprises of the selected youth under the YIYA phase 2, in Soroti District.



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP HOLD MENTORSHIP SESSION WITH YOUTH IN COMMEMORATION OF WOMEN'S MONTH

By Gloria Nalugwa, AIESEC, Youth Coalition for SDGs



The Youth Coalition for SDGs commemorated the women's month with a session of women in leadership mentoring youth that was held at UN Resident Coordinator H.E. Rosa Malango's residence on 23rd April 2021.

With focus on Women in Leadership, business and science, there were two sessions. An interactive session between the mentors and the youth in the morning and a session aired live on NBS television in the afternoon

The mentors for the morning session included Engineer Nana Kaggwa representing women in science; Manuela Mulondo, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, The Cradle; Dr. Barbara Ofwono, Chair of Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association Limited (UWEAL) representing women in business; and Hon. Victoria Sekitoleko, former Minister for Agriculture representing women in leadership. All the mentors had experience across the three fields.

The mentors for the afternoon session were Ms. Jackie Asiimwe, Chief Executive Officer Civsource; Ms. Shane Muganga, Treasurer Uganda Law Society; Engineer Irene Sewankambo, Executive Director, Uganda Communication Commission (UCC). The session was also graced by Ms. Adekemi Ndieli, Deputy Country Representative UN Women, Ms. Shelia Ngatia, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative; and Dr. Albert Byamugisha, Head of the SDG Secretariat. Other people in attendance included staff from UN Women, UN Resident Coordinator Office, UNDP and SDG Secretariat. There were 40 youth mentees (23 female and 17 male) that physically attended while other youth mentees joined online.

The event began at 9:00 am in the form of a panel discussion on the various areas with mentors giving insights from their experiences as well as advise on what steps, attitudes and lifestyles the youth could take in order to be successful in their various sectors. There was also a question-and-answer session which gave the youth opportunity to seek clarification and obtain further understanding. This panel discussion ended at 1:00 pm.

Thereafter the afternoon session aired live on NBS television was moderated by news anchor Ms. Mildred Tuhaise, who is also a mentor of the Youth Coalition for SDGs. The focus of the session on women in leadership, business and science. During the two hour session the mentor shared insights from their career journeys including the challenges they faced and how they overcame them. The youth and mentors there afterwards had an opportunity to interact one-on-one and establish close connection to pursue various opportunities. The event was closed at 5:30pm.

The youth found the event very impactful and made statements like, "when our mentors talked of self-censorship by women, I was touched. I realized I was one of the victims in that I tend to hold back and do not apply for jobs when I don't meet all the requirements, but I changed that day." Another youth stated, "being a woman is not a limitation to anything I can do best in this world."

The Youth Coalition for SDGs aims to hold such impactful events regularly to bridge various gaps and inspire young people to do better for themselves. 🌍



SOUTH SUDAN REFUGEE WOMEN RISING ABOVE GENDER BASED VIOLENCE, TRAUMA – COURTESY OF EU SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

By Collins Adubango, UN Area Coordinator's Office, West Nile



Ms Josephine Kujan, with her goat that she bought to replace the business

When Ms Josephine Kujan, 30, fled from her home in Kaya two in South Sudan, she did not have hope of recovering from trauma of the war.

Kujan faced trauma from both war and the gender violence at home where her husband could allegedly beat and cause bodily injuries. She nearly quit the relationship from the violent actions of the husband. This caused more trauma to her and the six children.

But as she settled at Ariaze A village in Siripi Zone in Rhino Camp settlement in Terego district, she was lucky to be picked for psycho-social support. This brought hope.

“Before, life was very difficult because of trauma. And to add on that, my husband was violent especially when he returned from drinking alcohol and chewing mairungi. Sometimes he could beat me and sustain injuries,” she narrated.

According to Kujan, alcohol consumption and chewing of mairungi led to the husband being violent. Coupled with poverty and unemployment, the husband depended on her income.

Intervention benefit

Kujan received one basin of nutritious silver fish and one basin of Onions from DRC (UNHCR Implementing Partner). This made her to start up a business in order to fight poverty and the dwindling food ratio. This, she said, helped her in paying school fees, buying uniforms and scholastic materials for her children, and having dietary feeding.

“Apart from start-up capital, DRC supported my husband with counselling services. He no longer beats me. At least we have peace at home,” she added.

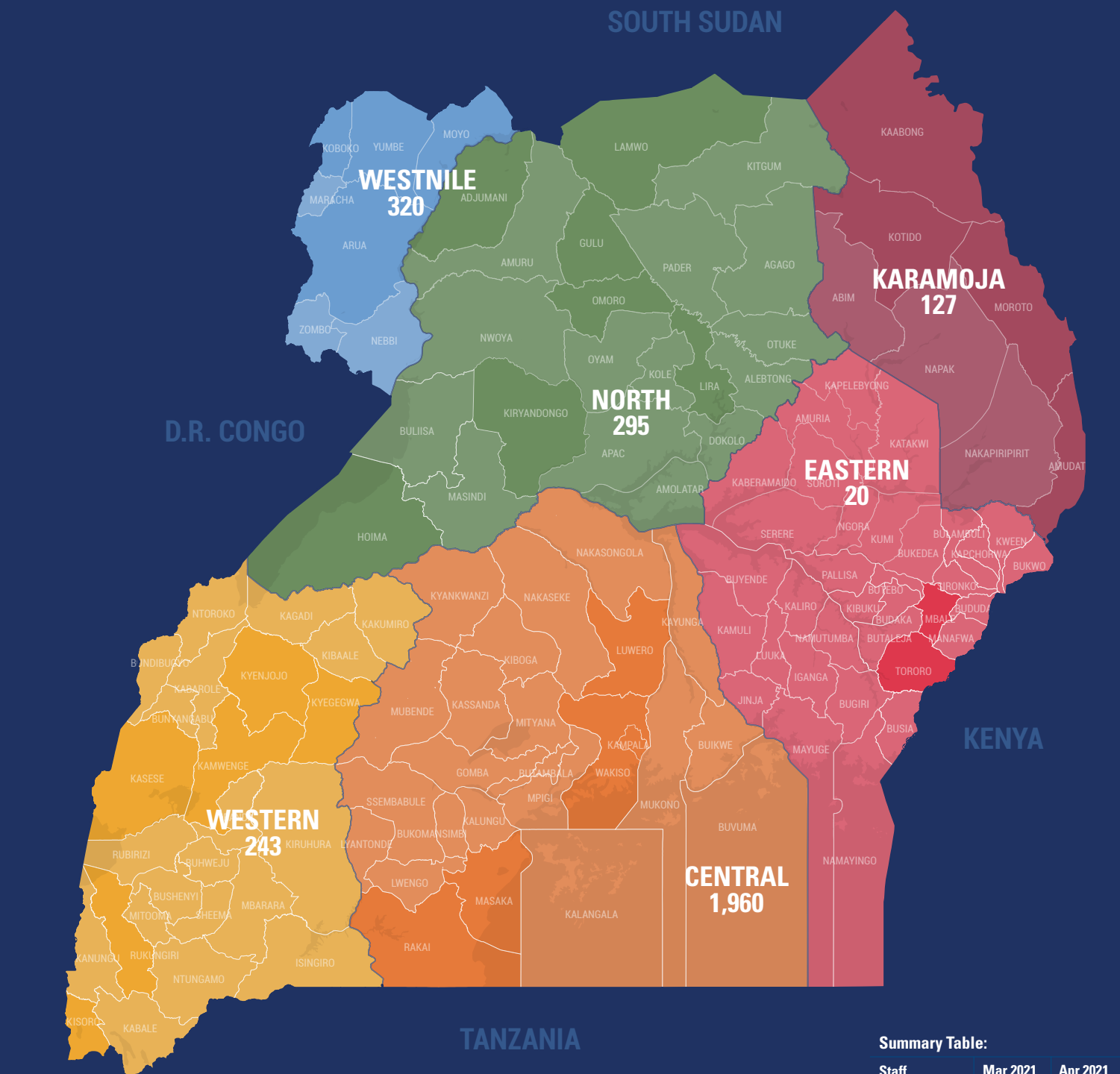
Due to long distance to access the market located in Amangra and the villagers failing to pay the credits, Kujan decided to shift the business to goat. She bought a goat which she hopes would multiply and sell them to continue earning income. Being a Tailor, Kujan hopes that she would receive more support from DRC or any UNCHR implementing agent with a Sewing Machine so that she can support her family economically. 🌈



Women supported enterprises by UN and partners in Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement

UN PRESENCE IN UGANDA

APRIL 2021



Summary Table:

Staff	Mar 2021	Apr 2021
International	601	598
National	2387	2369
Total	2988	2965

RWANDA



UNITED NATIONS
UGANDA



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