



UNITED NATIONS
UGANDA



UN UGANDA BULLETIN

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



NEW UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR COMMENCES TOUR OF DUTY

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

OVERVIEW

- The Government of Korea partners with WHO to support Maternal Health and Child Health Delivery in Busoga Sub-region, Eastern Uganda
- Access to Health Care by Urban Refugees
- Towards achieving a fistula-free generation one stitch at a time
- Commemoration of International Day against Drug Abuse and illicit trafficking by UNODC and partners
- Government, UNDP launch new National Industrial Policy to spur growth
- FAO's solar-powered irrigation systems to help farmers cope with climate change in Uganda
- COVID -19: ILO launches recovery grants for refugees, host community-owned businesses
- Kasese school welcomes back child mothers after delivery during COVID-19 school closures
- UN Women and partners in Uganda provide access to justice for survivors of VAWG through the Spotlight Programme
- Making Digital Work in Uganda - Applying a Market Systems Development Approach to Build Inclusive Digital Economies



The new UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, H.E. Susan Ngongi Namondo during presentation of her credentials to H.E. President Yoweri Museveni at State House, Entebbe

The new UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, Ms. Susan Ngongi Namondo, commenced her tour of duty on 24th June 2021. On 27th July she presented her credentials to President Yoweri Museveni at State House, Entebbe.

Ms. Ngongi Namondo has over 25 years of experience in development work, including 19 years leading development professionals in the areas of policy formulation and programme planning across four different United Nations agencies at the national, regional and headquarters levels. Within the Organization, she most recently served as the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Eritrea, after occupying other senior positions with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), including Representative to Ghana and Comoros, and Deputy Representative to Liberia. She also served the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Prior to joining the United Nations, Ms. Ngongi Namondo worked with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), an international scientific organization, and global non-profits including Caritas Internationalis and Catholic Relief Services.

She holds bachelor's degrees in political science and in animal science from the University of Maryland, USA as well as master's degrees in public administration from Columbia University, USA and in animal health from the University of Reading, UK. 🌍





THE GOVERNMENT OF KOREA PARTNERS WITH WHO TO SUPPORT MATERNAL HEALTH AND CHILD HEALTH DELIVERY IN BUSOGA SUB-REGION, EASTERN UGANDA

By Edmond Mwebembezi, World Health Organization (WHO)



Dr. Charles Olaro, Director of Clinical Services at the Ministry of Health receives the donated ambulances from H.E. Ha Byung-Kyoo, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Uganda, as WHO Representative, Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, witnesses

Busoga sub-region in eastern Uganda comprising 11 districts with a population of 3,918,500 people, is ranked third poorest in the country by the Uganda Bureau of statistics. Agriculture is the main economic activity and recent poor harvests, occasioned by poor climatic conditions and an invasion by armyworm worsened food insecurity negatively impacting the nutrition, health, and growth especially among children and pregnant women.

Although Uganda has registered tremendous progress in the health sector, maternal and child health continues to pose formidable challenges for the entire country. But in Busoga sub-region, the situation is even worse compared to national averages. For instance, the average national infant mortality is 43 deaths per 1000 live births birth, while in the Busoga region it is 53 deaths out of 1000 live births. Regarding maternal health, figures indicate that while 336 mothers out of 100,000 live births die annually due to childbirth complications, for Busoga sub-region, the figure is 448 mothers.

The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in partnership with the Government of Uganda and WHO are supporting the implementation of a US \$10 million project to increase delivery of reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health services as well as improve health systems in five poorly performing districts of Busoga sub-region. The "Health System Strengthening for Improving RMNCAH Service Delivery Project will be implemented in 5 districts: Bugiri, Buyende, Iganga, Kamuli and Mayuge districts. In addition to US\$ 1 million to supplement the project, WHO is charged with technical support in the implementation of the project, support supervisor, procurement of supplies and logistics, and training of health and district staff.

It is anticipated that by December 2024, this project will have benefited 560,809 pregnant women, 499,852 newborn babies, 349,327 in school adolescent boys and girls aged 10 – 19 years, and 687 teachers from both primary and secondary schools in those districts. In addition, 159 health workers and 1,480,200 people especially out of school adolescents aged 10 to 19 years, parents, religious and cultural leaders in Busoga region will also benefit from the project.

To kick-start the implementation, WHO procured and presented seven state-of-the-art ambulances with funding from KOICA. These ambulances were presented to the Ministry of Health and to the beneficiary districts at a colourful ceremony held at the Ministry headquarters on the 19th of May 2021.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

“The Government of the Republic of Korea is committed to supporting the strengthening of the health system in Uganda. We hope that the ambulances handed over to Busoga sub-region today will contribute towards improving the accessibility and utilization of maternal and child health services as well as realizing the vision of the Emergency Medical Services strategic plan,” said His Excellency Ha Byung-Kyoo, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea in Uganda, while handing over the ambulances.

Fully aware of health challenges faced by communities in this sub-region, Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, the WHO Representative in Uganda appreciated the timely support from KOICA noting that, “bringing together the representatives of frontline health workers that are facing the challenges of ensuring access for their clients in terms of poor transportation, actual space, infrastructure, numbers of health workers, availability of relevant medicines, governance and leadership issues as well as professional ethical challenges is indeed a worthy cause.” He hoped that through this

program, “we shall be able to support Busoga to build systems that will improve the quality of care resulting into better health outcomes of the targeted communities.”

Dr. Charles Olaro, Director of Clinical Services at the Ministry of Health, thanked the Government of South Korea for providing the funding that made the project possible and WHO for providing administrative and technical support

“

It is my sincere hope that by the end of the project implementation sustainable improvements in the health indicators of the targeted population in the Busoga region will be realized,” he concluded. 🌍

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE BY URBAN REFUGEES

By Wendy Kasujja, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)



Yakobo Kahesi, a medical operations manager with Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), a partner organisation of UNHCR, during community outreach with Agnes, a 50-year-old Burundian refugee who suffered from severe chronic back pain © UNHCR/Yonna Tukundane

Lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic mean that many people around the world are left without access to essential health services. With support from the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, the UN Refugee Agency, in collaboration with partners like Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), works to help refugees access the care they need.

PROVIDING HEALTH SOLUTIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC

When Uganda imposed a lockdown in March 2020 to contain the spread of COVID- 19, Yakobo Kahesi had to double his community outreach efforts to help sick refugees access health care services in Kampala. The Ugandan capital is home to over 90,000 refugees.

“As a front-line health worker, I made a choice to be out in the community and save lives,” says Kahesi. “But I didn’t stop worrying about the unknown.”

With a background in public health and more than 10 years of experience in working with refugees, Kahesi is serving as a medical operations manager with Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), a partner organization of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

With support from UNHCR and the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, AHA was able to help refugees in Kampala access primary health care, tertiary level care, sexual and reproductive health care, HIV/AIDS treatment, and community health services. Their work became even more critical during the lockdown, as patients faced additional challenges to access hospitals and much-needed lifesaving care.

During the lockdown, AHA provided patients with shuttle services between their homes and hospitals and covered the bills of refugees requiring emergency treatment in private health facilities. Kahesi recalls a time when he organized a hospital referral for Agnes, a 50-year-old Burundian who suffered from severe chronic back pain.

“She had reached a point where walking or sitting was no longer possible,” says Kahesi, adding that she could not afford to go to regular checkups as she had lost her job due to COVID-19 restrictions. “I am so happy we could help get to the hospital before it was too late.”

Through UNHCR, the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund also helped AHA invest in awareness-raising activities, sensitizing refugees about COVID-19 risks and safety measures. AHA was able to increase the number of Village Health Team (VHT) volunteers to 230 and reach out to refugees in the worst affected urban areas of Kampala. These community-based health workers have played a vital role during the pandemic, sharing lifesaving messages with the communities, reporting positive cases and conducting contact tracing.

Uganda hosts nearly 1.5 million refugees, mostly from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burundi. Some 94% of the refugees live in settlements in northern and southwestern Uganda, while the remaining 6% reside in Kampala. Uganda registered 52,957 COVID-19 cases as of June 5, 2021, including 503 refugees.

The Ministry of Health launched the vaccination campaign in mid-March 2021, aimed at immunizing 49% of the population, including refugees. To date, 706,726 people have received the first dose of vaccine, including 3,905 refugees, 2,036 health workers, 1,940 teachers, and 880 humanitarian workers involved in the refugee response.

MORE SUPPORT NEEDED FOR VACCINATIONS

Now, more than ever, it is crucial for high-income countries to step up and share doses through the COVAX facility and fully fund the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator to ensure that vulnerable populations can get vaccinated as soon as possible.



“I can’t hide that there have been many difficult days,” says Kahesi. “However, my day would always be made when I’d hear of the people we helped get to the hospital, like a mother holding her newborn baby in her arms. Her gratitude at the support we provided makes it all worthwhile.”



South Sudanese refugee Betty Maneno has her temperature checked before entering Bangatuti Health Centre in Bidibidi refugee settlement ©UNHCR/Esther Ruth Mbabazi



TOWARDS ACHIEVING A FISTULA-FREE GENERATION ONE STITCH AT A TIME

By Evelyn Matsamura Kiapi, UN Population Fund (UNFPA)



Fistula survivors pose for a photo with surgeons outside the recovery ward at Kitovu Mission hospital, Masaka @ UNFPA/Evelyn Matsamura Kiapi

Masaka City: Thirty-three-year-old Night Kabagambe from Kyenjojo district is an obstetric fistula survivor. She said she spent six years with the condition following the birth of twins who passed away at birth.

Obstetric fistula is a hole between the birth canal and bladder and/or rectum, caused by prolonged, obstructed labour without access to timely, high quality medical treatment.

“I lived with the condition but my life was very miserable. I did not know what was happening to me,” said the business woman who sells second-hand clothes in the market for a living.

Giving her testimony during the national celebrations to end obstetric fistula in Masaka City on May 27, Night remembers how isolated she had become. Because she leaked urine, Night could not interact with neighbours and when at church she had to sit distantly alone so as to not be stigmatized.

“One day I heard a radio announcement about free fistula repair camps at Kagadi Hospital. They described the condition and then I knew that was the same problem I had,” she said.

With support of her husband, Night went for the free repair camp and was treated successfully.

“Today I am not leaking and I can do my daily chores and work comfortably. I am grateful to my husband for the support. We went through this together,” she says.

Since then, Night says she has benefited from an integration programme that has provided her with business skills for economic empowerment.

“

I have learnt how to save money and I feel empowered. We have also been trained as a counselor to support other survivors seek treatment and care and how to identify the signs and how to prevent it.”

FREE REPAIR CAMPS

Night’s story is one of many women who have benefited from free fistula repair camps supported by UNFPA and other sexual and reproductive health partners in Uganda. Since the campaign to end obstetric fistula began in 2003, with support from UNFPA, over 15,000 cases have been repaired in Uganda.

The theme for this year’s day to end obstetric fistula, “Women’s Rights are Human Rights, End Fistula Now!” put a rights perspective to the response in an effort to end the devastating condition.

The commemoration events included a five-day fistula surgical camp that was organized at Kitovu Missionary Hospital where 30 women benefited from the service. Among them was 24-year-old Saida, a resident of Nyendo, Masaka who said she got the fistula when she was delivering her first baby at the age of 19.

“I am very happy but also thankful for the treatment I have received. When I get better I want to return to school and become a business woman,” she said. 🌈



COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING BY UNODC AND PARTNERS

By Diva Mukisa, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Rogers Mutaawe, Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL)



L-R Ms. Sharon Nyambe, Head of Office UNODC Uganda; and Mr. Tinka Zarugaba Commissioner of Police, Anti-Narcotics Department, during the NTV talk show

The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as 'World Drug Day', is celebrated annually on 26 June. The theme of World Drug Day in 2021 was "Share Facts on Drugs, Save Lives."

The day is commemorated worldwide to create awareness and emphasize the hazards of drug addiction and illegal trafficking. This year United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Uganda partnered with the Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) and the Ministry of Education and Sports to commemorate the day with financial support from UNDP under the ongoing Youth and Crime Prevention project.

In commemoration of the day, an online Stakeholder engagement was held on 25th June 2021. The meeting was organised in form of an online webinar in which over 50 people participated. The participants were drawn from Government institutions, civil society and community-based organisations and the UN. The panelists included, Ms. Sharon Nyambe, Head of Office, UNODC, Uganda; Mr. Rogers Kasirye, Executive Director, UYDEL; Mr. Tinka Zarugaba, Commissioner of Police, Anti-Narcotics Department; and Dr Byamah. B. Mutamba, Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, Head Alcohol and Drug Unit, Butabika National Mental Hospital.

Key issues arising from the meeting included the need to have a sustainable solutions for the youth in order to divert them away from drug use; the need to fight misinformation and boost research on illegal drug use; the importance of raising awareness on the dangers of drug use; drug use results into health problems, both mental and physical; the use of illegal drugs among young people is steadily going up. For example, 4 out of 10 young people admit to having used illegal substances and the use of both preventive and treatment measures are necessary to address the drug abuse problem.

The second activity was in the form of media engagements held on 26th June 2021. These included a live radio talk shows on KFM, through which Dr Byamah. B. Mutamba, Senior Consultant

Psychiatrist, Head Alcohol and Drug Unit, Butabika National Mental Hospital and Mr. Tinka Zarugaba, Commissioner of Police and Anti-Narcotics Department discussed issues about drug abuse prevention and treatment and also regulation at national level.

The panellists on the CBS FM radio talk show were Mr. Rogers Kasirye, Executive Director, UYDEL; Mr. Rogers Mutaawe, Senior Programmes Manager, UYDEL; and Ms. Alice Kabakwenuzi, Senior Nursing Officer, in charge Alcohol and Drug Unit, Butabika National Mental Hospital, who participated in the radio by phone and discussed issues about drug abuse prevention, referral to services and treatment options.

The live talk show on NTV was organised under the topic "The importance of awareness of the facts on Drugs (and their dangers), and of evidence-based prevention, treatment and care". The panellists were Ms. Sharon Nyambe, Head of Office, UNODC Uganda; Mr. Rogers Kasirye, Executive Director UYDEL; and Mr. Tinka Zarugaba, Commissioner of Police, Anti-Narcotics Department, who attended online.

The key issues discussed included the increased potency and use of cannabis overtime. Drug abuse is on the increase especially among the young people and stakeholders need to conduct some interventions to address the problem. People look at drug abuse as a moral issue and not as a health issue hence seeking services very late from the recognised health specialists. There are some new plants on the market that enlist the same effects as conventional drugs, for example Kayongo, which is grown in Busia. The use of smokeless tobacco such as kuber and shisa is a gateway to use of hard drugs. There are no early interventions for drug use problems and the lack of community component of care makes recovery difficult.

The activities outlined above increased stakeholder engagements through use of technology, given the current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthened partnerships with stakeholders such as government institutions, media and civil society organisations to create awareness about drug abuse prevention, care, recovery and treatment. 🌐



GOVERNMENT, UNDP LAUNCH NEW NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL POLICY TO SPUR GROWTH

By Eyllaf Gubara, UN Development Programme (UNDP)



Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda (centre); Minister for Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, Hon. Amelia Kyambadde (second from right); and UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Elsie Attafuah, (extreme right) during the launch of the National Industrial Policy (NIP) 2020.

The Government of Uganda has launched a new National Industrial Policy designed to spur industrial development and economic transformation. The formulation of the new policy and launch were all supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The National Industrial Policy (NIP) 2020 is a review of the 2008 policy and places more emphasis on Agro-Industries, Extractive Industries and Knowledge-based Industries to provide a framework for Uganda's industrialisation, employment, and wealth creation. It aims to double the manufacturing value added as a percentage of GDP from 8.3% in 2018/19 to 16% in 2029/30 and increase industry sector contribution to GDP from 27.1% in 2018/19 to 31.7% in the next ten years.

The policy also seeks to address trade imbalance through enhancement of import substitution, lower costs of industrial finance, improved integration with agriculture and mineral exploitation among other domestic natural resources.

Additionally, the policy seeks to promote resource efficient and environmentally sustainable industrialization in the country, increase and sustain the supply of quality raw material for value addition, develop and strengthen skilled human resource, boosting productivity and efficiency in the sector. Through the policy, youth and industrial workers will acquire requisite skills, while efficiency of industrial operations is envisaged to increase through improvements in technology in the industry.

The May 4th, 2021 launch was presided over by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, Rt. Hon. Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda and the Minister of Trade and Industries Hon. Amelia Kyambadde and graced by the UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Elsie Attafuah and the Turkish Ambassador to Uganda, H.E Fikret Kerem Alp as well as industrialists and policy makers.

The new policy is aligned to and contributes to the attainment of development aspirations enshrined in the Uganda Vision 2040 and the third National Development Plan (NDP III) whose overriding theme of NDP III is, "Sustainable Industrialisation for Inclusive Growth, Employment and Sustainable Wealth Creation."

The policy also contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals especially SDG 9 which calls for the building of resilient infrastructure, promotion of inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and the fostering of innovation.

UNDP's new Country Programme Document (2021-2025) has Digitalization, Innovation and Smart Cities (DISC) Programme 2021-2025 will also contribute to the goals in the Third National Development Plan (NDP III), with a focus on strengthening the national innovation and start-up ecosystem and accelerating digital transformation. 🌐



FAO'S SOLAR-POWERED IRRIGATION SYSTEMS TO HELP FARMERS COPE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE IN UGANDA

By Agatha Ayebazibwe, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)



A member of Mabuyenzyo Farmers Group in Bukulula Sub-county, Kalungu district tends to the group passion fruit garden. The group also benefited from solar-powered irrigation system under the EU funded GCCA project © FAO Uganda

The Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Hon Vincent Ssempijja and Dr. Antonio Querido – the FAO Country Representative in Uganda, jointly launched the solar-powered irrigation systems, alongside beneficiary farmers.

The system is, according to Dr. Querido, part of FAO and the Government of Uganda's efforts to build capacities of communities and farmers to cope with climate change and strengthen the resilience of rural populations and agricultural production systems through the provision of water for irrigation, particularly in districts vulnerable to drought and climate variability.

In Bugomola A solar-powered irrigation project will provide water for the four-acre garden owned Lwabenge Integrated Farmer Field School but with pump capacity able to irrigate up to 10 acres of land.

"Agriculture in the cattle corridor region of Uganda is rain-fed and highly dependent on local weather conditions. This means that farming activities have to be put on hold during the dry season. With the new sprinkles system, we are certain that farmers will have access to water for dry season agricultural activities," Dr. Querido said, noting that the system will not only increase agricultural production and returns to small scale farmers, but will also improve their livelihoods.

The area has been prone to water shortage, especially during drought spells, affecting both domestic and commercial agricultural activities.

Josephine Namagga Muwanga, a member of the beneficiary group said that tomato growing is their most income-generating crop yet it needs a constant supply of water. "To benefit from tomatoes growing, timely irrigation is vital – even missing one day could severely affect the crop quality and yield. We have been depending on expensive diesel generators to pump water from the river to our garden for irrigation. Most times we were discouraged by the costs associated with hiring, transporting and repairing these generators. Now we are very happy and grateful to FAO for giving us a facility that will enable us to have a constant water supply on our farm," she says.

Josephine and her colleagues are looking forward to seeing improved production and productivity on their farm in the subsequent seasons. "The way it has been constructed allows enough water to flow in our garden. We believe that we will get more from our crops. We hope the government can help us address market challenges because when we harvest a lot, the market is not responsive. We end up selling our produce at very low prices, more often making losses," says Josephine.


Minister Ssempijja commended FAO for 'changing lives of my people,' adding that the four solar irrigation systems in Kalungu will serve as a demonstration of modern agricultural practices to small scale farmers. He said that access to irrigation will provide farmers with a more reliable income since one farm can produce several yields a year. "Many will be ready in three months, which means farmers can gather three or four harvests in a year," he said.

FAO's Agricultural Water Management Specialist, Mr. Denis Besigye says that solar says that the solar system is a great fit with irrigation. "On days when plants need the most water, very dry and sunny days, the solar supported system generates the most water out of the pump."

He advised farmers' groups to take advantage of the available opportunity of solar irrigation systems in their areas to change their lives as well as vigorously guarding the facilities against vandalism and theft.

The solar irrigation systems in Kalungu are some of such other similar projects under construction in 13 other districts in the cattle corridor.

Providing water for production is a component of FAO's broader climate change response in Uganda in 33 districts across the country including; Gomba, Kalungu, Kiboga, Luwero, Lyantonde, Mubende, Nakaseke, Nakasongola and Sembabule in the cattle corridor, Adjumani, Arua, Koboko, Maracha, Moyo, Nebbi, Yumbe and Zombo in West Nile; and Abim, Amudat, Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Napak in Karamoja; and Amolator, Amuria, Buyende, Kaberamaido, Kamuli, Katakwi and Kayunga in Eastern Uganda

All these are areas witnessing varied effects of the changing climate, including long dry spells, flash floods, erratic rainfall and emergence of new plant pests and animal diseases, among others. The interventions are made possible with financial support from the European Union, the Government of Sweden and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). 



COVID -19: ILO LAUNCHES RECOVERY GRANTS FOR REFUGEES, HOST COMMUNITY- OWNED BUSINESSES

By Grace Rwomushana, International Labour Organization (ILO)



Rhino Camp Assistant Commandant, Jonathan Matata (L), ILO's Grace Rwomushana (3rd L) and UNCHR's Edna Jurungo hand over a dummy cheque to Faiza Ayiba at Yoro Base Camp, Rhino Camp on May 5, 2021

In a bid to reduce the spread of COVID-19 virus, the Government of Uganda restricted movements and suspended non-essential economic activities in the country in March 2020.

While these measures were and are still important to save lives and protect the health system, they have had a negative impact on businesses due to production and supply chain disruptions, and drastic drops in demand for goods and services.

Salons were among the non-essential economic activities and Phillip Amure's salon in Ofua Zone, Rhino Camp in Terego district closed down in March 2020. Amure is a refugee from South Sudan and he had started the business in 2018 to supplement the support from he receives from the UN.

However, the sudden closure of his salon in March 2020 closed his income stream and drained his capital. "I closed the saloon for over four months and during this time, I used the little capital I had to look after my family," Amure, a 34-year-old father of three explains. "By the time I opened the salon, some of the creams we use in the salon had expired," he adds.

Unlike Amure, Scovia Zako's drug shop in the same area remained open when the country was under lockdown because it provides essential services. However, the transport restrictions made it hard for her to access drugs from Arua City to restock the drug shop. In addition, the prices of drugs shot up because of disruptions in supply chains.



"The prices of drugs went up and yet I could not increase prices because my clients would not afford," Zako, a Ugandan nurse explains.

Amure and Zako's anecdotes were confirmed by a rapid assessment conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Impact Initiatives in September 2020, to find out how the pandemic had affected labour markets, jobs and livelihoods in refugee and host community areas. Some of the people interviewed, both at the household and enterprises level, were in Rhino Camp and its surrounding areas as well as in Nakivale Refugee Settlement and its surrounding areas.

According to the findings, the lockdown affected businesses both at operational and revenue levels. For example, respondents emphasized the challenges brought about by transportation limitations, inability to hold in-person work, unstable prices of supplies and food items, and the cost of implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to limit the spread of the virus.

To contribute to business resuscitation of the affected businesses, the ILO, through its PROSPECTS Programme, has launched a small business grant scheme, targeting 200 enterprises owned by refugees and host community members in Rhino Camp, West Nile and Nakivale in Isingiro District in Western Uganda. Each of the beneficiary business has received a cash grant of US\$ 200.

The small business grants are being used to cover losses incurred during the duration of the lockdown, meet any short-term cash flow needs of the business in order to keep them business operational, invest in marketing of products or purchase of the relevant Personal Protective Equipment to enable the enterprise to comply with government's SOPs on Covid -19 control. Additionally, the beneficiary entrepreneurs will receive business management training to enable them identify new ways of working to sustain businesses and jobs.

The grants have been extended through a partnership with the Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (FSME) Uganda, a member-based organisation with nearly 2,000 members in these districts, 67% of whom have reported severe distress because of the Covid-19 restrictions.

The funding by ILO is made possible by a Partnership for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities, known as (PROSPECTS). This is a multi-year programme, funded by the Government of the Netherlands, that brings together five agencies; namely (IFC, ILO, UNICEF, UNHCR and World Bank) to devise collaborative and innovative approaches for inclusive job creation and education in contexts characterized by forced displacement. 🌍



Scovia Zako displays some of the products she has bought with the grant to increase stock in the drug shop

MAKING DIGITAL WORK IN UGANDA - APPLYING A MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO BUILD INCLUSIVE DIGITAL ECONOMIES

By Rachael Kentenyngi, UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)

In line with its strategy 'leaving no one behind in the digital era', UNCDF, with the support of Sweden, aims by 2024 to empower at least one million Ugandans in rural communities to use services that leverage innovation and technology to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The strategy, focused on "building inclusive digital economies", aims to harness the power of digital tools in building sustainable livelihoods for underserved communities.

In the first year of implementing this strategy (2019), UNCDF asked the key stakeholders how digital interventions could help address some of the most challenging market dysfunctions in the agriculture, digital, education and health sectors.

To get more insight into this, UNCDF carried out an inception study to understand selected market systems of the target sectors, and to identify how to appropriately address underlying market constraints using digital interventions that lead to improved efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. This new report shares insights from this study. 🌍





KASESE SCHOOL WELCOMES BACK CHILD MOTHERS AFTER DELIVERY DURING COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSURES

By Joachim Buwembo, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)



Teenage mothers Mariam Muhindo (extreme right) and Juliet Nyabosi (2nd from right) are supported by their friends Ruth Lhukogho (1st left) and Gloria Kabugho (2nd left). They all are students at Rwenzori Senior Secondary School, Kilembe. Nyabosi and Muhindo were able to go back to school after giving birth as a result of the Spotlight Initiative programme interventions © UNICEF/UN0467983/Kabuye

Mariam Muhindo is a bubbly teenager who radiates cheer. But a year ago during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown (March 2020) when she was just turning seventeen, the cheer disappeared when she discovered she was pregnant. She was in Senior Three, at home under the indefinite lockdown.

"I followed the silly myth girls used to push that if you remain a virgin you cannot give birth, and my boyfriend said a sweet cannot be eaten with a wrapper on, so he did not use a condom when he was 'rescuing' me from virginity," Mariam says as she laughs at herself now.

But it was not funny last June, 2020 when she discovered she was pregnant, and her first reaction was to hide at her sister's home. But as Ugandan folklore has it, pregnancy only grows forward and not backward, and Mariam had to tell her parents. Her mother was upset but her father was so mad he abandoned the family altogether! With the family completely broken because of her error, Mariam pulled herself together and told her mum she wanted to go back to school. Her teachers of Mt Rwenzori Girls, inspired by the Spotlight Initiative, were already reaching out to the girls who got pregnant during the lockdown.

The Spotlight Initiative is a partnership between the European Union and United Nations established to eliminate all forms of violence against women and children, particularly girls. It is funded by the European Union and implemented in seven districts of

Uganda, Kasese being one of them under the overall supervision of the Government of Uganda.

On 2 March 2021, Mariam gave birth to a baby boy, Graham Sajabi. She cared for the baby exclusively for one month. Finally, Mariam went to the school and was pleasantly surprised when she was welcomed and told that even the previous school fees debt was written off. Early April 2021, Mariam resumed school, but not as in the boarding section. Rwenzori Girls' is 28 kilometres from her home in Kasese. So, she takes a boda boda (motorcycle) in the morning and again in the evening, for which her mother pays 120,000 Uganda shillings (US\$34) per month.

She says that her baby's father, a young man called Isaac Sajabi claims he wants to marry her but Mariam says they can only resume the relationship after she finishes school and if her wish comes true, enrolls and qualifies as a midwife.

She is now more closely bonded with her friends at school with whom they discuss their future career plans. Her best friend, 16-year-old Ruth Lhukogho, is always by her side when they are not in class. Equally cheeky, Ruth says she first heard of Mariam's pregnancy through rumours and when they finally met after lockdown, she insisted on being told "the whole story," especially details of pushing the baby, which fortunately was a normal delivery.

The same pleasant and sisterly reception at school also awaited Juliet Nyabosi who was also in Senior Three when she conceived at the age of 18 last year (2020). Like Mariam, the discovery was a shock, but hers was accompanied with the immediate denial and desertion by her boyfriend, one Godwin Bwambale.

Her parents were expectedly mad at her and only her mother managed to prevail over her father who wanted to throw her out of the home. On 28th December 2020, she gave birth to a baby girl whom she named Gloria Asinga (Thanksgiving), after her best friend and classmate, Gloria Kabugho.

Juliet too, was warmly received back in school, and she too is no longer a boarder. Her school fees balances was also forgiven. She

is even luckier than Mariam in that her home is not very far from Mt Rwenzori Girls' and takes only one breastfeeding break and returns to class.

Like Mariam, Juliet also wants to be a midwife. Both Mariam and Juliet received counselling from Senior Woman Teacher Naomi Bambu. The school Director of Studies, Eric Bwambale, also keenly monitors the progress of the two girls and another three who were also readmitted after becoming pregnant during the lockdown. He says in all, of the 65 Senior Three girls who went home after the COVID-19 school closures, 54 came back unaffected and of the 11 who got pregnant, five have so far returned to school. The school is still reaching out to the remaining six to also come back and resume studies. 🌈

UN WOMEN AND PARTNERS IN UGANDA PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR SURVIVORS OF VAWG THROUGH THE SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME

By Pauline Nabwire (NAWOU Project Officer) and Eva Sibanda (UN Women)

Victoria* (15) was raped at her home in Merikit Sub County, along with her 16-year-old sister. Victoria* and her sister were staying with their aunt in Merikit Sub County and were raped when they were left at home alone. The perpetrator came to know this fact and broke into the home.

The National Association of Women's Organizations in Uganda (NAWOU) is supported by the Spotlight Initiative and Juliet Amongin, part of NAWOU's Community Based Action Team (COMBAT), heard of this case when Victoria* and her sister came to report. Juliet is well known within the community, where she carries out sensitizations at schools. The girls attend Merikit Primary School, one of the schools that Juliet engages. Victoria* and her sister knew that Juliet was the person to come to in situations like this. Thanks to Spotlight, Juliet was trained by NAWOU as a counselor.

"The girls I speak to are 13 years old and onwards. I teach the girls about GBV and tell them about where they should not be touched. And I tell them that men should not push their hands on their private parts," notes Juliet Amongin, NAWOU Community Facilitator in Tororo District.

Once their cases were reported to the police, the girls were examined medically, and the mandatory Police Form 3 (PF3) was filled and NAWOU assisted in referring the file to the central police station in Tororo and onwards to the SGBV Crime Desk. Their files were unfortunately corrupted, and they were asked to resubmit and redo their examinations (after four days), an unfortunate incident that could have led to re-traumatization. Juliet counseled the girls throughout the process to ensure they felt heard and safe. NAWOU collaborated with Justice Centres Uganda (another Spotlight-supported Implementing Partner) to facilitate the medical examination process. Their aunt could not afford the costs of the process, but thanks to Spotlight support to the partners, Victoria* and her sister were able to access the medical care and afford the legal fees.

Following the examinations, the perpetrator was arrested and charged with defilement on two counts. This is a high court matter and the suspect is in custody at Morokatipe Prison in Tororo for six months waiting for the high court judge. The crime of defilement is defined as having or attempting sexual intercourse with a girl under 18 years of age and carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. 🌈



Juliet Amongin, NAWOU Community Facilitator in Tororo District
©UN Women/EVA Sibanda

THE SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE HOLDS ITS FIRST JOINT COORDINATION AND MONITORING FIELD VISIT

By Davinah Nabirye, UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)



Caption: The Spotlight Initiative team interacting with District Local Government officials and Tooro cultural leaders in Kyegegwa, with the EU Delegation Head of Programmes, Governance, sitting in the center.

The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, whose goal is to eliminate violence against women and girls (VAW/G), including sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices in Uganda, held its first Joint Coordination and Monitoring Field Visit (JCMFV) from 12th – 30th April and 18th-19th May.

Led by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) and the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the exercise took place in the seven implementing districts; Arua/Terego, Kitgum, Amudat, Tororo, Kasese, Kyegegwa and Kampala. It aimed to assess the impact of the Spotlight Initiative programme, the extent of gender-based violence (GBV) integration into local level coordination systems and to obtain inputs from district based stakeholders on challenges, gaps, opportunities and priorities for Phase II (July 2021 to December 2022).

Participant included the; EU delegation, recipient UN organisations (RUNOs), namely UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP and UNHCR; U area coordinating teams, the Civil Society National Reference Group, CSO implementing partners, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), District Local Governments, and cultural institutions.

Although necessitated by the Covid – 19 restrictions in the number of passengers in a single vehicle, the resultant long convoy of the JCMFV team vehicles winding its way into the most remote sub- counties to meet programme beneficiaries, re- energised stakeholders, and was a public show of the Government of Uganda, UN and EU commitment to delivering as one, and reaching the furthest first, while leaving no one behind.

Courtesy meetings with the offices of the Chief Administrative Officer were held except in Kampala which was represented by Office of the Mayor. These were followed by technical meetings with District Local Government teams attended by RUNOs and

implementing partners to take stock of successes, challenges and prioritize interventions for Phase II. Over 200 beneficiaries were engaged through focus group discussions which focused on obtaining feedback on their experiences under Phase 1 and recommendations for Phase 2. Meetings were also held with the local traditional leaders from Lugbara Kari, Ker Kal Kwaro, Karamoja Elders Association, Tieng Adhola, Obusinga Bwa'Rwenzururu, Obukama Bwa'Tooro and Buganda Kingdom who are drivers of behaviours change.

The reports from districts and cultural institutions highlighted the promulgation of pronouncements, ordinances and by laws against GBV. The training provided to district officials on planning and integration of GBV activities in plans and budgets resulted in some districts making the first steps in providing budget allocations for GBV prevention activities. The presentations by the District Local Governments (DLGs) reflected a strong grasp of GBV data capturing. They were motivated by the visits and committed to intensify their coordination role among the local implementing partners. The district GBV data reflected consistency in the increased access to and uptake of survival services. The vibrancy of the local women's groups and networks demonstrated the successes of the women's movement building, with the vigilance of the Karamajong women in Amudat demonstrated through the social policing of cross border movements between Uganda and Kenya for FGM purposes. They supported their colleagues with disabilities to attain political leadership positions, a feat echoed in Tororo district.

Speaking about the field visit, Nicholas Gonze from the EU Delegation said, "This has been an eye-opening exercise that has brought all stakeholders together to evaluate performance of the Spotlight Initiative. Similar activities should be conducted periodically to inform the programme."

Lessons from Phase I of the Spotlight Initiative have informed the priorities in the development of the Phase II workplan and budget.

Continued on page 15



REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITY RESILIENCE EXHIBITION EVENT (RHREE) A GAME CHANGER IN LIVELIHOOD OF THE REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITY

By Collins Adubango, UN Area Coordination (UNAC) Office, West Nile



Mr. Martin Orochi, the Resident City Commissioner of Arua City visiting the Refugee and Host Community Resilience Exhibition Event (RHREE)

Refugee and Host community Resilience Exhibition Event (RHREE), the first of its kind in the region, was conducted from 26th to 27th May 2021 in Ocea playground – Rhino Refugee settlement in Terego district, West Nile.

The occasion was graced by the Resident City Commissioner (RCC) of Arua City Mr. Orochi Martine in the company of UN Area Coordination (UNAC) Team lead by Marie Louise Kabre Barreto (UN Area Coordinator/Area security Coordinator West Nile) who also doubles as UNHCR Head of Sub Office-Arua. The main aim of this Exhibition was to promote resilience and self-reliance of the refugee and host community. More specifically demonstrating and creating awareness of home grown, resilience community led solutions and technologies, Market Linkages and enhancing relationships and networks between private sector; government; local business MSMEs, farmers, development partners and civil society organisations.

The event that was organised by UNHCR in partnership with WFP, OPM and other livelihood, health, and environmental partners, created open markets for refugees and host community and their home-grown technology to the public given that a lot of capacity has been built by the humanitarian development nexus. It also gave opportunity for partners to interact with each other and a range of beneficiaries.

Further follow-up of the event indicates that the community (refugees and Host) feel energized by the event as explained by below: -

The exhibition was an excellent eye opener for our beneficiaries. It has given us hope of available market for our product as marketing was their main issue. It energized people producing rice and sweet potatoes. As of now, the level of participation in production activities has improved greatly as they tend to refer to the events at the exhibitions most of the time. Says Onyai Vicky Emmanuel a Production and Market Assistant with Danish ChurchAid (UNHCR Implementing Partner).

The exhibition which was in line with pillar 3 of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) attracted participation of refugees as far as Bidi-Bidi in Yumbe District, Lobule settlement in Koboko district as well as refugees from Imvepi and Omugo and Rhino Camp settlement in Terego district and host communities.

As of 31st March 2021, Uganda's population of refugees and asylum seekers was 1,470,858 and Rhino Refugee Settlement alone stands at 123,371 whereas host community stands at 23,804 (NPHC 2014) this creates a market base for products from the populace among the refugees and host communities. 🌍

UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL DAYS FOR JOINT COMMEMORATION BY UN UGANDA IN 2021

	INTERNATIONAL DAY	LEAD UN AGENCY	PARTICIPATING UN AGENCIES	PARTICIPATING PARTNERS
12 AUG	International Youth Day	UNFPA	UNDP	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
15 SEPT	International Day of Democracy	UNDP	OHCHR	Parliament of Uganda
21 SEPT	International Day of Peace	UNDP	UNWOMEN	Office of the Prime Minister
29 SEPT	World Tourism Day	UNDP		Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Uganda Tourism Board

UN & SDGS AWARENESS MONTH 2021

	INTERNATIONAL DAY	LEAD UN AGENCY	PARTICIPATING UN AGENCIES	PARTICIPATING PARTNERS
05 OCT	World Teachers' Day	UNESCO	UNICEF	Ministry of Education and Sports
05 OCT	World Habitat Day	UNHABITAT	UNCDF UNDP	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
10 OCT	World Mental Health Day	WHO		Ministry of Health
11 OCT	International Day of the Girl Child	UNICEF	UN WOMEN UNFPA	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
13 OCT	International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction	UNDP		Office of the Prime Minister
15 OCT	International Day of Rural Women	UN WOMEN	FAO UNFPA	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
16 OCT	World Food Day	FAO	WFP	Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries
17 OCT	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty	UNDP	FAO	National Planning Authority
24 OCT	United Nations Day	RCO	All agencies	Office of the Prime Minister SDG Secretariat Ministry of Foreign Affairs
31 OCT	World Cities Day	UNHABITAT		Ministry of Lands, Housing & Urban Development

5 GENDER EQUALITY

UN WOMEN AND PARTNERS IN UGANDA PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR SURVIVORS OF VAWG THROUGH THE SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME

Continued from page 13

Victoria* dropped out of school during the process due to stigma from fellow classmates. Juliet counselled her about the value of education until she returned to school. The day that Victoria* returned to school, Juliet held her hand and spoke to the classmates and teachers: "I said it has happened to her, we have to accept her, it wasn't her wanting. And I told the others in case they fall victim, come to me and we will help you."

“

I am 15, I have sat for Primary 7 and I'm soon joining high school. I like reading books, I want to continue learning and to be a nurse" says Victoria*, thanking people who helped her access justice.

The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030. The Spotlight Initiative regional programme in Africa provides a regional response to addressing sexual gender-based violence, harmful practices and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

"Through Spotlight and our work as UN Women, the stigma that survivors face is slowly fading away and people are speaking out and reaching out for help when they experience violence," shares Evelyn Letiyo, UN Women Programme Specialist on Ending Violence against Women and Girls in Uganda. 🌍

**Names have been changed to ensure the safety of the survivor and guarantee confidentiality.*



UNITED NATIONS
UGANDA



For more information, please contact:
MICHAEL WANGUSA | michael.wangusa@un.org | +256 (0) 771 005 988
MONICAH ATURINDA | monicah.aturinda@one.un.org | +256 (0) 772 147 505
UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)

uganda.un.org | UNUganda | UNinUganda