



# UN UGANDA BULLETIN

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



## UN DAY COMMEMORATED - STAKEHOLDERS PLEDGE TO TAKE ACTION TOWARDS ACCELERATION OF THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SDGS IN UGANDA

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

## OVERVIEW

- Economically Empowering HIV Positive Women with Disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Addressing teenage pregnancy during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Hungary provides mobile infrastructure to manage highly infectious diseases
- Burundian refugees head home but face reintegration challenges
- UNIDO holds Uganda's first digital curriculum development workshop for road construction equipment operator trainers
- UNESCO hands over equipment to TVET Institutions
- Junior journalists championing fight against negative social norms
- UN Country Team holds Retreat – agrees on Flagship Areas
- Leaders pledge climate action support as Uganda hosts 2021 Africa Climate Week
- Creating jobs for refugee and host communities using infrastructure projects



Rt. Hon. Rukia Nakadema, Third Deputy Prime Minister and Minister (fifth from left); Rt. Hon. Justine Kasule Lumumba, Minister of General Duties and Focal Point Minister for SDGs (fourth from left); Hon. Henry Oryem Okello, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (sixth from left); UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Susan Ngongi Namondo (centre); and some members of the UN Country Team and Diplomatic Community during the UN Day Commemoration on 29th October 2021 © UN Uganda

The United Nations was founded on 24th October 1945 and Uganda became a Member State of the United Nations on 25th October 1962. The mission and work of the United Nations are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter.

The United Nations family and friends in Uganda commemorated the 76th anniversary of the United Nations on 29th October 2021 under the theme 'Achieving the SDGs Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic'. The hybrid event, which was attended by representatives from Government of Uganda, Diplomatic community, Non-government Organisations, Civil Society Organisation, Private Sector, Youth and the UN Uganda family was held at Sheraton Kampala Hotel with about 100 guests attending physically and the rest joining online including UN staff in the field in Moroto, Mbarara, Gulu, Arua and Entebbe. The event received nationwide media coverage.

This year's commemoration was used to raise awareness about the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and their complementarity to achieving Uganda's national priorities enshrined in the third National Development Plan (NDP III) and Vision 2040.

While welcoming guests to the event, Mr. Paulin Djomo, Director a.i UN Regional Service Centre Entebbe (RSCE), recognised the significant role of the SDGs in guiding all stakeholders in development. He called on everyone to reflect on how we can remain on course to achieve sustainable development amidst the pandemic.





UN Day panel members: Dr. Munir Safieldin, UNICEF Representative; Mr. Edwin Muhumuza, President for Youth Coalition for SDGs; and by H.E. Ms. Lulama Mary Theresa Xingwana, High Commissioner of South Africa © UN Uganda

‘The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to the most serious social and economic upheaval since the United Nations was created 76 years ago. The Coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated more than ever the importance of achieving all the 17 SDGs,’ said Mr. Djomo.

‘Today’s commemoration is a reminder to us that we must overcome today’s global challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic in particular. As the UN system we will remain steadfast in our support to the Government of Uganda in accelerating vaccination of the population against COVID-19 so that life can return to normal as soon as possible,’ said Ms. Susan Ngongi Namondo, UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda. Adding that the UN system in Uganda will continue to support risk communication to address vaccine hesitancy and called on all stakeholders to prioritize this matter.

In his remarks, Hon. Henry Oryem Okello, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs reiterated UN’s contribution to the social and economic development for all Ugandans regardless of age, gender, and nationality. He called on youth to use peaceful way of dealing with issues so that Uganda continues to be a prosperous country.

In her remarks, Rt. Hon. Justine Kasule Lumumba, Minister of General Duties and Focal Point Minister for SDGs said that achieving the SDGs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic creates the need to celebrate in a special way the Ugandan woman who has provided food to the nation during the hard times before even the scientist came in with the vaccines. She added that Uganda launched a new national SDG Roadmap that takes into consideration the new realities such as COVID-19 and other emergencies to be able to serve Ugandans better in the current times.

“ I thank the United Nations in Uganda for the important contribution that they continue to make in the different areas of Uganda’s economic development,’ said Rt. Hon. Rukia Nakadema, Third Deputy Prime Minister and Minister without Portfolio on behalf of the Prime Minister. Adding that solidarity and a corruption free system is the only way forward in achieving the SDGs. “For every act of corruption, there is a child, a girl, a person with disability who lags behind in economic prosperity,” she said.

As part of the commemoration event, a panel discussion was held comprising of representatives from different spheres including; UN represented by Dr. Munir Safieldin, UNICEF Representative; Diplomatic Community represented by H.E. Ms. Lulama Mary Theresa Xingwana, High Commissioner of South Africa; Private Sector represented by Mr. Tony Otoa, Chief Executive at Stanbic Business Incubator Ltd; Civil Society Organisation represented by Ms. Rita Aciro, Executive Director, Uganda Women’s Network; Academia represented by Prof. Mwambutsya Ndebese, formerly of the Department of Development Studies, Makerere University; and Youth represented by Mr. Edwin Muhumuza, President for Youth Coalition for SDGs. The key emerging issues requiring concerted action by all stakeholders were addressing vaccine hesitancy, accelerating vaccine uptake, to lead to full re-opening of society especially schools and addressing the pandemic of teenage pregnancy. 🌍



## PUTTING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AT THE CENTRE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE CASE OF HIV POSITIVE WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN UGANDA

By Caroline Magambo, UNAIDS



The Minister of State for Disability Affairs, Hon. Hellen Grace Asamo, together with UNAIDS OIC, Jotham Mubanginzi, officiating at the handover ceremony of economic empowerment equipment to group members © UNAIDS

**Globally, women with disabilities experience significant challenges in accessing health care. They face stigma and discrimination in families and communities, they lack transport to health care facilities and are faced with poor attitudes by health workers when they try to access care and these situations impede their access to health care.**

The COVID-19 pandemic and its related socioeconomic consequences magnify the obstacles and inequalities faced by women and girls with disabilities. Since the COVID-19 outbreak in Uganda, many health facilities are grappling with high numbers of HIV positive clients with high viral load and failure to keep appointments for health care. This could be because of socioeconomic shocks due to COVID-19 which has grossly impacted on lives of the vulnerable people living with HIV with limited access to treatment and basic services such as food. As a result of such economic hardships, sexual and gender-based violence has been witnessed in various households in Uganda and this could be worse for HIV positive women with disabilities who depend on family members for support.

Having realized the challenges that HIV positive women and young women with disabilities were going through in accessing food and health care during the lockdown phase of the COVID-19 outbreak in Uganda, Positive Women with Disability Uganda (POWODU) with funding from UNAIDS procured and distributed items to cater for some of the basic needs for the disabled people living with HIV in Kampala and Wakiso districts to ensure their improved and sustainable socioeconomic status and health.

The women were trained in income generating activities and provided with starter kits for their income generating activities.

This has since improved their livelihoods as they are able to make a living and contribute to their household incomes and also keep their appointments for health care hence improved health not only for the women with disabilities, but also the entire household.



The COVID-19 pandemic has led to clients who have been lost to follow-up because they are homeless or reside in informal settlements. Many of them experience stigma and discrimination, as well as lack of access to information and services on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The lockdown caused more challenges, such as lack of food and a significant disruption to the usual activities that give them some income, such as begging,” says Ms Betty Kwagala Executive Director, POWODU.

POWODU was formed out of The AIDS Support Organisation (TASO) to pay special attention to people with disabilities living with HIV in order to reduce AIDS- and TB-related deaths, stigma and discrimination and to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights. Persistent discrimination against and exclusion of people with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities, increases their vulnerability, including their risk of HIV infection. They also experience barriers to accessing HIV services and are left behind in HIV policy-planning, programme development, service delivery and data collection. 🌍

## ADDRESSING TEENAGE PREGNANCY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By Martha Songa, UN Population Fund (UNFPA)

**The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all aspects of life in Uganda, resulting in school closures and disruptions in access to health and social services. But no group has felt the effects of the pandemic more than adolescent girls!**

When the country went into lock down in 2020, fifteen year-old Sara\* from Lacekor village, Adilang subcounty, Agago District, Northern Uganda, stopped going to school as schools across the country shut down. By the time the year ended, Sara had moved in with a young man called Lokech, who used to accost her on her way to school. 'He used to disturb me,' she says referring to the fact that he would make advances towards her. Sara is currently seven months pregnant.

Sara has been receiving antenatal care at Adilang Health Centre. When the time comes, she will deliver at this facility, thanks to a UNFPA project that ensures that pregnant girls are mapped, given a voucher and referred to a health facility for maternity care. Supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands, the project is implemented in 14 districts in West Nile and Northern Uganda.



'A Village Health Team member came home. She wrote my name down and told me to go to the health centre. The midwives have been caring for me and I feel happy to have someone to provide me with information and help me with my pregnancy,' Sara says.

With support from the Danish Embassy, UNFPA has trained health workers to provide sexual and reproductive health information and services to adolescents in the West Nile and Northern regions.

'We cannot do business as usual, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a crisis within a crisis for adolescent girls, the country has recorded an increase in the number of girls who have become pregnant during COVID-19 lockdowns,' says Dr. Edson Muhwezi, Assistant Representative, UNFPA Uganda.

Analysis of data on first Antenatal Care visits from District Health Information System (DHIS-2) shows that there was a 17 percent spike in teenage pregnancies between March 2020 and June 2021. A total of 354,736 teenage pregnancies were registered in 2020, and 196,499 in the first six months of 2021.

According to UNICEF estimates, Ugandan school children have gone more than 300 days out of school since March 2020. As a result, adolescent girls have been deprived of the social protection that school offers and have been exposed to sexual violence, exploitation and abuse, child marriages, and teenage pregnancies.



Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic girls are mobilised to join Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents clubs where sexual reproductive health and rights are discussed © BRAC Uganda

In response, UNFPA has supported Ministry of Education and partners, to train teachers to deliver sexuality education sessions to young people while out of school. The initiative is implemented in West Nile, Acholi, Karamoja regions and in South Western Uganda, supported by the Netherlands Embassy and the EU spotlight Initiative.

In the first six months of 2021, UNFPA and partners have reached 35,337 adolescents with family planning, maternal health and HIV prevention services. In addition, 10,150 adolescent girls and young women aged 10-24 years accessed sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention services through Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA) clubs.

But more still needs to be done. At the ICPD25 summit in Nairobi in 2019, Uganda made a commitment to eliminate obstacles that stand in the way of girls' empowerment. UNICEF and UNFPA are supporting the government to deliver on this commitment. "Together, we are mobilizing stakeholders including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and the Ministry of Education and Sports to launch a multi-stakeholder campaign to end teenage pregnancy," said Ms. Suzanne Mandong, acting Representative, UNFPA Uganda. In addition, UNFPA and UNICEF are working with the Ministry of Education to deliver policy guidance (the Revised Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in School Settings) to provide a framework to support the safe re-entry of girls into school after pregnancy. 🌍

\*Name changed for privacy and protection

## HUNGARY PROVIDES MOBILE INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENABLE THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WHO TO MANAGE CRITICALLY ILL PATIENTS WITH HIGHLY INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN UGANDA

By Elise Tcheutchuoa and Edmond Mwebembezi, World Health Organization (WHO)



WHO Representative in Uganda Dr Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam (blue jacket) upon signing an agreement of cooperation with Dr János Terényi, Head of Office, Office of the Embassy of Hungary based in Nairobi at Soroti Hospital on 26th October 2021 © WHO Uganda



Mobile medical equipment container established at Soroti Regional Referral Hospital © WHO Uganda

The Government of Hungary in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) has provided a mobile, rapidly deployable container structure, fully equipped with the appropriate medical equipment to support rapid and effective clinical management of severe and critically ill patients with highly infectious diseases in Uganda.

Within the framework of a development project worth over 140 000 euros, Hungary provided a rapidly deployable mobile unit, which contains electrocardiogram (ECG) machines, spirometers, blood glucose meters, air filters, thermometers, hospital beds, an office desk, chairs, storage cabinets, air conditioners, six “Contimed” (CN20) foldable containers and blood pressure machines. The current deployment aims to provide emergency care for critical patients with COVID-19 and other potentially infectious diseases in the country.



Uganda, like other countries around the world, is facing an unprecedented crisis that has taken a toll on people’s health and livelihood. This equipment that we have received today will boost our efforts to provide timely and effective care to patients who are in critical condition,” said Honourable Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, Minister of Health of Uganda.

The Hungarian Ambassador accredited to Uganda, His Excellency Mr. Zsolt Mészáros affirmed the Government of Hungary’s commitment to supporting Uganda in the fight against infectious diseases.

“The use of mobile rapid deployment units has proven to be a very practical solution when public health events that require the urgent deployment of resources occur.” He further said that after installation, experts will train local staff in the use of the mobile unit.

The WHO Representative in Uganda, Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, said, “these mobile rapid deployment units will provide space for immediate critical care of patients with highly infectious diseases such as Cholera, Ebola and COVID-19 under strict control measures and can be deployed to any part of the country at short notice when required.”

Dr. Tegegn explained that because of the portability of the containers, the mobile units can be deployed away from the main health facilities, so as not to interfere with the provision of existing essential services. The units can also provide additional space when existing bed space is over-saturated, serve as field laboratories or temperature-controlled storage units for essential medicines and vaccines.

Between May and July 2021, the country experienced a sharp increase in the number of cases, reaching the peak of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Soroti region continues to experience an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases and doubles as a hotspot for the transmission of the disease.

Therefore, Soroti Regional Referral Hospital will be the first beneficiaries of this highly effective infrastructure. When the targets in Soroti are reached, the facility will either be moved to another hotspot or stored for future use.

“We must always be on guard and take effective measures to avoid the resurgence of COVID-19 cases,” concluded Dr. Tegegn. 🌍



# UGANDA CELEBRATES THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION 2021 IN KAMPALA

By Sandra Kanagwa Nyangoma, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



Front row - Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Jacob Olanya together with the Ambassador of Sweden in Uganda Ms Maria Hakansson and the Minister of State for ICT and National Guidance Hon. Joyce Nabbosa Ssebugwawo, and (Left-Right) the Executive Director Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC), Mr. Gilbert Sendugwa and the staff of DGF Ms Nicole Bjerler and Mr. Dominic Perera, and OHCHR Country Representative Mr. Robert Kotchani at the commemoration of International Day for Universal Access to Information 2021 at Serena Hotel, Kampala ©OHCHR

Access to Information is important because it plays a vital role in informing the population about public affairs and monitoring the actions of Government at all levels so they can meaningfully participate in their communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has given Access to Information renewed importance because of the ‘misinformation pandemic.’

OHCHR in partnership with Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC), the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, the African Union and UNESCO, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, and Twaweza East Africa, hosted a regional dialogue to commemorate the International Day for Universal Access to Information themed: **“Right to Know: Building Back Better with Access to Information”**. Over 200 participants representing Inter-Governmental organizations, Government, Private Sector, Civil Society Organisations, the Media, and the UN congregated both online and in person.

The Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulanyah, while officiating the regional dialogue at Kampala Serena hotel, on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 called for a review of the Access to Information Act 2005 concerning the common person who does not have modern technology that facilitates access to vital information. The Rt. Hon. Speaker implored different stakeholders to use access to information to better the livelihoods of people within communities.

“The overall purpose of access to information is how it transforms lives of ordinary people and I challenge Civil Society to research how the Access to Information Act has benefited rural communities, who make up the majority of the population,” The Speaker said.

He further noted that every citizen has a right to seek information from the government, requesting the participants to refocus the discussion on access to information to how it supports transformational programs in less developed communities.

This Act is intended to promote an efficient, effective, transparent and accountable Government; it gives effect to Article 41 of the constitution by providing the right to access to information held by organs of the state, to promote transparency and accountability in all organs of the state by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information; and, empower the public to effectively scrutinize and participate in government decisions that affect them.

The OHCHR Country Representative Mr. Robert Kotchani called upon the relevant stakeholders to actively and jointly mobilise for the development and implementation of an action plan to drive the realization of the UPR recommendations especially, on the Right to Information so that the public can participate in the acceleration of socio-and economic transformation and attainment of Uganda’s Vision 2040.

“Access to information empowers citizens to address issues such as corruption and inefficiency in the delivery of services. It is important because it plays a vital role in informing the population about public affairs and monitoring the actions of government at all levels so they can meaningfully participate in their communities,” he concluded.

He further highlighted the need to reiterate the commitment to make access to information a privilege to ensure we attain Sustainable Development Goals especially Goal 16 which aims to achieve peace, justice, and strong institutions. 🌍

## BURUNDIAN REFUGEES HEAD HOME BUT FACE REINTEGRATION CHALLENGES

By Yonna Tukundane in Uganda and Bernard Ntwari in Burundi, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)



© UNHCR/Yonna Tukundane

Safia and her children spent the night before their return at Kabazana Reception Center, Nakivale refugee settlement in Uganda ©UNHCR

### Over 60,000 refugees have returned this year from across the region as tensions ease in Burundi, although more aid is urgently needed to help them pick up their lives and start over.

Safia Nduwimana fled violence in Burundi two years ago. It has been three weeks since she returned home, and she has mixed feelings of joy and anxiety.

"I came back home for my children's sake. They had been homesick and out of school due to Covid-19," says the 39-year-old widow, who must now find the means to support her nine children.

Since the start of the year, about 2,300 Burundians in Uganda have approached UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, to request assistance to return home amid improving security.

Safia was among a first group of 265 Burundians who voluntarily returned home at the start of October. So far this year, 597 Burundian refugees in Uganda have returned home.

The repatriation is supported by UNHCR in Uganda, Tanzania (through which refugees from Uganda transit) and Burundi, together with the governments of the three countries, and several humanitarian agencies.

Safia was pregnant at the time she fled political violence in her country. She reached Uganda's Nakivale refugee settlement, where she received medical attention and safely delivered her child.

In 2020, Uganda was among the top five countries in the world hosting the largest number of refugees. As of this September, UNHCR estimated over 1.5 million refugees and asylum seekers were in the country, with three per cent from Burundi.

“

While we are not promoting return to Burundi, we are glad to assist refugees to go back home," said Joel Boutroue, UNHCR's Representative in Uganda. "Our role is to ensure that returns are voluntary, free and informed and that the process is safe and dignified," he added.

Boutroue said those refugees who opt to stay in Uganda continue to have international protection and benefit from assistance and services provided by the government, UNHCR and partners.

Most returnees face the unknown back home. Many sold their properties before fleeing, while others return to find them occupied or uninhabitable. By last August, UNHCR estimated that 37 per cent of returnees could not access their previous houses when they first returned.

On reaching Burundi, a former neighbour welcomed Safia and her family. A previous returnee, he helped her to find a house to rent, as she had sold the family home and farm to cover medical expenses before she left.



## UNIDO CONCLUDES UGANDA'S FIRST DIGITAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION

### EQUIPMENT OPERATOR TRAINERS

By United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)



The Minister of State for Higher Education, Hon. Dr. John Chrysestom Musingo as well as DIT, MoES, MoWT and UNIDO stakeholders officially launched the ATP on 30 September 2021 at the headquarters of DIT in Kampala © UNIDO

To address the industrial skills gap in Uganda, the Government of Japan, the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT) and UNIDO, with technical support from Japanese partner Komatsu Ltd., are building the first dedicated training centre for road construction equipment operators in Uganda, METRAC (Mechanical Engineering Training and Advisory Centre – Luwero).

In recent years, the Government has procured road construction and maintenance equipment such as motor graders, wheel loaders, excavators, bulldozers and backhoes and distributed them to District Local Governments across the country. METRAC will allow to match this investment in road machinery with an equivalent investment in human resources: within the next two years, the training centre will train over 500 Ugandan road equipment trainers, operators and youth seeking employment.

From 2 to 6 August, the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) as the responsible authority under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), and UNIDO conducted the first fully digital curriculum development workshop in the history of Uganda. The 5-day workshop with industry experts was held to develop a new curriculum / Assessment and Training Package (ATP) for road construction equipment operator trainers at level 4 of the Uganda Vocational Qualification Framework (UVQF). The ATP was successfully developed and approved by MoES, and will serve as a curriculum outline and assessment basis for the training of 50 MoWT trainers undertaken by METRAC. In addition, the curriculum will serve as the basis for any future training of road construction equipment operator trainers in Uganda.

The Minister of State for Higher Education, Hon. Dr. John Chrysestom Musingo; the Ag. Director of DIT, Mr. Patrick Byakatonda; and the UNIDO Project Coordinator, Mr. Stefan Windberger, as well as MoES and MoWT stakeholders officially launched the ATP on 30 September at the headquarters of DIT in Kampala.

In order to prepare for the upcoming training, the UNIDO Country Representative Mr. Bruno Otto Tokwiny had already handed over one WorksiteVR Simulator for the Komatsu wheel loader and two WorksiteVR Simulators for the Komatsu hydraulic excavator to MoWT representatives on 11 August. These simulators were donated to METRAC by Komatsu Ltd. and will support the training of wheel loader and excavator trainers and operators working for MoWT across Uganda. 🌍

## BURUNDIAN REFUGEES HEAD HOME BUT FACE REINTEGRATION CHALLENGES

Her immediate plans are to get her children back in school and find work to provide enough food for them as recent food rations cuts for refugees in Uganda had been difficult for the family. However, she remains optimistic that the assistance she has received as part of a modest return package will help her to start over.

“With the support I received, I will buy a small piece of land and use whatever is left to start a small business,” she smiles.

In line with Burundi’s national refugee reintegration plan, UNHCR and UNDP have offered to support the Government of Burundi to build three integrated rural villages in provinces receiving many returnees. These villages will help returnees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and other vulnerable people to better reintegrate.

“People can access basic services including health and education and more opportunities to become self-reliant,” said Abdul Karim Ghoul, UNHCR Representative in Burundi. “It also promotes peaceful coexistence among the communities.”

He stressed that more support is needed from donors and development agencies, referring to the Burundi 2021 Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan (JRRRP), which was launched last February, and is currently funded at just 10 per cent.

“We are doing our best to help returnees better integrate in their community, but this requires huge contributions and support,” added Ghoul.

Since the beginning of the voluntary repatriation exercise in 2017, over 180,000 Burundians have returned home from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Nearly 270,000 Burundian refugees remain in exile, generously hosted by Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, DRC, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa and Zambia. 🌍

## UNESCO HANDS OVER EQUIPMENT TO TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TRAINING (TVET) INSTITUTIONS

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

**Technical Vocational Educational Training (TVET) Institutions in Uganda have been urged to effectively integrate ICT in to the student’s learning environment and make its best use as a pedagogical tool since it is a new way of ‘working smarter and better’ as a result of the global advancement of technology. These remarks were echoed by the Director of Education Standards (DES) in Uganda, Dr. Kedrace Turyagyenda while officiating at the hybrid ceremony (online and physical) organized to handover ICT equipment to ten TVET institutions on 29 September 2021 at Imperial Royale Hotel Kampala.**

Dr. Kedrace who was representing the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) thanked UNESCO for the continued commitment of working with the MoES. She also thanked the Republic of Korea for the support and contribution rendered towards the successful realization of the project and for the collaboration that gave birth to the Better Education Africa’s Rise (BEAR II) project. She pledged the commitment of the government through MoES for continued collaboration in search of a lasting solution for better education in the country.

The equipment which included Laptops, Projectors, Smart Interactive Boards among others were handed out to beneficiary institutions under the BEAR II project, a joint initiative of UNESCO and the Republic of Korea targeting agricultural sector with focus on enhancing the relevancy, quality and improving perception of Agro-processing and post-harvest management training. This intervention is in response to the interruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on education system in Uganda.

In his remarks, UNESCO Regional Director, Prof. Hubert Gijzen in a statement read by Dr. Saidou Jallow expressed his satisfaction at witnessing a flourishing collaboration in Uganda between BEAR and TVET Authority, together with other government and private partners whose focus is on environmental technologies and on solar photovoltaic. He added, “with education halted at TVET institutions due to COVID-19, BEAR II facilitated the procurement of ICT equipment for 10 TVET institutions in Uganda.” He further noted that this set of equipment will allow for continuity of learning in the TVET Sector but emphasized the need to add ICT skills development as part of the BEAR programme because of the rapidly growing demand for these skillsets.

Prof. Hubert noted that TVET often still stands at the bottom of education spectrum which is often presented as an option for those who do not have the opportunity to go to university. He added that, this has contributed to the poor image and negative perception of TVET. “But times are changing, since the start of the COVID pandemic, when we suddenly depended so much on



Dr. Kedrace Turyagyenda, Director of Education Standards (DES) representing the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) (centre) and Mr. Joseph Kikomeko of UNESCO (left) at the handover ceremony ©UNESCO



Dr. Kedrace Turyagyenda of Ministry of Education and Sports (far left) and Mr. Joseph Kikomeko of UNESCO (second from left) with some of the beneficiary institution representatives ©UNESCO

connectivity, the ICT technician has become the most important person in many offices; the push towards green transformation will generate new attractive jobs and new businesses requiring special technical skills,” he stated.

The ten (10) TVET institutions who received the ICT equipment include Ntinda Vocational and Training Institute (VTI) Nakawa VTI, RUCID Organic College, Lwetanga Farm Institute, Sesse Farm Institute, Busitema University, Kaberamaido Technical Institute, Bobbi polytechnic and Bukalasa Agriculture College. They benefited from 21 laptops, 04 smart Interactive Board, 21 Projectors and 21 external storage devices to support management and teaching in their respective institutons, Instructor Training Colleges, and the relevant departments within MoES.

The Better Education for Africa’s Rise II (BEAR II) is a joint initiative of UNESCO and the Republic of Korea, which is being implemented in five Eastern African countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania and Uganda, in improving the relevance, quality and perception of their TVET systems. 🌍

## JUNIOR JOURNALISTS CHAMPIONING THE FIGHT AGAINST NEGATIVE SOCIAL NORMS

By Proscovia Nakibuuka Mbonye, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Forced marriages. Kidnapping of girls. Courtship rape. School dropouts.

The list of negative social norms in Lolelia Sub County in Kaabong District is a long one. Not only are these norms considered acceptable, but with the closure of schools due to the coronavirus disease, this list is growing, and becoming a way of life.



The prevalence of these negative practices drastically increased when the COVID-19 pandemic struck," Patrick Oyugi the Programme Officer from Straight Talk Foundation notes, further indicating that the vulnerability of children and young people has gotten even worse as they no longer go to school.

In February 2021, a 15-year-old young girl committed suicide after escaping from a forced and arranged marriage which carried with it a bride price of eight cows. This was the turning point for the community.

Straight Talk Foundation with UNICEF support and funding from Irish Aid, introduced a new approach to ensure that communities were equipped with information highlighting the dangers of all negative social norms. Community dialogues were organized and conducted by young people known as junior journalists. The journalists who are aged between 15 and 21 years had to be natives of the communities to appreciate and understand the challenges and contribute to possible solutions. They were then trained and prepared for the task ahead.

At Lolelia Parish, two young girls, 21-year-old Ikedu Esther Aremo and Miriam Akol, engage the community during a dialogue session at Nachakunet Primary School. The members, who comprise of local leaders, parents, elders, meet twice a month to speak to the negative social norms, and



Straight Talk Foundation (STF)'s Junior Journalists (standing), during a community dialogue addressing negative social norms affecting children at Nabilatuk Town Council grounds. The journalists also conduct door-to-door educative talks with community members as including early childhood marriages, young boys looking after animals than going to school, animals being the only source of livelihood to the community in the area rather than business or agriculture among others. The intervention is part of Irish Aid funded interventions implemented by Straight Talk Foundation (SFT) with UNICEF support. © UNICEF Uganda

preventive measures. These members are then assigned to traverse communities, sharing critical information and highlighting the dangers of the social norms on the wellbeing of children. They target large gatherings, community meetings and marketplaces in addition to door-to-door sensitization drives and purpose to reach all parents and caregivers in their parishes and neighbouring villages.

"They are out foot soldiers against negative norms," the Straight Talk Programme Officer explains.

The dialogues that begun in June have begun to register change. With the vigilance of the committee members, incidences of courtship rape and early marriages have reduced.

The members also highlight the enhanced community awareness of reporting pathways for violence and abuse of children. The very same platforms were used to report the parents and parties of the forced marriage that claimed the 15 years old girl's life.

The junior journalists are confident that in a few years to come, their community will be a safe place for children to grow and thrive.

"We have empowered the community with facts and become role models for children and young people who have managed to thrive against the negative social norms because our parents and caregivers no longer support them," Ikedu, one of the journalists shares.

The junior journalists with support from Straight Talk Foundation, continue to monitor progress as well as identify any emerging challenges affecting children before they escalate.

In Nabilatuk District, the enthusiastic junior journalists and the committee hold a meeting to take stock of their achievements as identify gaps that remain.

"We need more people to join the movement if we are to save all our children," the LC Chairperson emphasizes, as all members agree to intensify efforts and commit to working together for the communal safety of all children. 🌈



## GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA RELEASES INCLUSIVE DIGITAL ECONOMY SCORECARD (IDES) REPORT, 2021

By Rachael Kentenyangi, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)



Hon. Kabbyanga Godfrey Baluku, Minister of State for National Guidance and Dr. Aminah Zawedde, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of ICT & National Guidance, and members of the Uganda Digital Transformation Programme Working Group launch the IDES Uganda Report on 23 September 2021 at Sheraton Hotel Kampala © UNCDF

**The Ministry of Information Technology and National Guidance, in collaboration with the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), recently released the Inclusive Digital Economy Scorecard (IDES) 2021 report for Uganda. According to the report, 45 per cent of Ugandans are digitally excluded.**

IDES is a policy tool that facilitates governments to set their digital transformation priorities. The tool identifies the key market constraints hindering the development of an inclusive digital economy and helps to set the right priorities with public and private stakeholders to foster a digital economy that leaves no one behind.

The IDES 2021 report provides an overview of the development and inclusiveness of the digital economy of Uganda based on data collected up to the end of May 2021. The data was collected with the participation of various Government of Uganda Ministries, Agencies and Departments. The inclusiveness of Uganda's digital economy which is assessed based on four dimensions of the digital economy, namely, policy and regulation, infrastructure, innovation, and skills.

The report calls for urgent intervention in addressing both basic and digital skills, policy initiatives that ensure ownership and the capacity to use appropriate ICT, and a systemic approach that ensures a strong innovation ecosystem is developed.



Hon. Kabbyanga Godfrey Baluku, Minister of State for National Guidance and Dr. Aminah Zawedde, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of ICT & National Guidance launch the IDES Uganda Report on 23 September 2021 at Sheraton Kampala Hotel © UNCDF

The IDES was developed in consultation with a reference group comprised of partners from the European Commission, GSMA, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNDP and UNCDF. It was improved based on the feedback and recommendations of various countries including Burkina Faso, Nepal, Solomon Islands and Uganda. 🌍



## UN COUNTRY TEAM HOLDS RETREAT – AGREES ON FLAGSHIP AREAS OF FOCUS

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



UN Country Team members at their retreat at the Regional Service Centre Entebbe (RSCE) on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 © RCSE

### **The UN Country Team (UNCT), comprised of UN Heads of Agencies in Uganda, held their annual retreat on 30<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October at UN Regional Service Centre Entebbe (RSCE).**

The hybrid event was attended by all the 29 entities implementing the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025. The retreat reviewed the first year of implementation of the Cooperation Framework taking into consideration the challenges and changed context as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The overall objective of the retreat was to reach consensus on the areas of joint action to be implemented in concluding 2021 and 2022 as well as key steps in moving them forward, with a view to accelerating the SDGs implementation in the country through the UNSDCF as well as furthering the UNCT's commitment to the UN Development System Reform and other key guidance from the UN Secretary-General to the country level.

In her opening remarks, UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Susan Ngongi Namondo observed that the capacities of the team were massive and the caliber of the leaders was huge and therefore the assignment was to create synergies in the team to enhance the overall effectiveness of the UN System in Uganda.

At the of the retreat four flagship areas of focus were agreed as follows:

1. Data and Statistic to accelerate attainment of the SDGs
2. Gender/Gender Based Violence with a focus on the Spotlight Initiative
3. Youth – with focus of coordination and capacity building
4. Coordination of Emergency Response

The retreat also agreed on steps to improve UN support to the COVID-19 response in the country, coherence of UNCT Communications, Gender Parity, and the Efficiency Agenda on operations and in particular Common Back Office. 🌍



## LEADERS PLEDGE CLIMATE ACTION SUPPORT AS UGANDA HOSTS 2021 AFRICA CLIMATE WEEK

By Joel Akena, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



A drying stream in Moroto, North Eastern Uganda© UNDP

**In Global leaders at the 2021 Africa Climate Week have pledged their increased support to climate action initiatives to mitigate the environmental crisis that the world and Africa faces. The leaders also underscored the urgency of dealing with the environmental emergency and called for a whole of society approach to the problem.**

Hosted by the Government of Uganda in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other UN and multilateral agencies, this year's Africa Climate Week was held virtually between 26 -29 September 2021 in advance to this year's United Nations 26<sup>th</sup> Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26).

### About the 2021 Africa Climate Week

The 2021 Africa Climate Week was hosted by the Government of Uganda and organised in collaboration with UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank Group. Regional partners such as the African Union, the Africa Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) also supported.

The 2021 Africa Climate Week sought to provide information on the UN's Race to Zero and Race to Resilience campaigns, while ensuring that regional voices are heard in the multilateral climate processes.

The three key areas of focus at ACW 2021 were:

- Integrating ambitious action in key economic sectors into national planning.
- Adapting to climate risks and building resilience.
- Seizing transformational opportunities to put the region on a low-emission and highly resilient development pathway.

During the weeklong deliberations, UNDP led deliberations on integrated approaches for climate-resilient development, while the World Bank led discussions on national actions and economy-wide approaches, and the United Nations Environment Programme led deliberations on seizing transformation opportunities.

### Fighting climate change requires global solidarity

Stakeholders showcased climate action milestones and shared progress ahead of COP26 on the submission of stronger national climate plans – Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) – under the Paris Agreement. Complemented by the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), NDCs include commitments to build resilience to the inevitable impacts of climate change including severe frequent floods, storms, fires and droughts.

Hon. Beatrice Anywar, Uganda's Minister of State for Environment, said winning the war against climate change requires global solidarity. "Climate Change effects have taken the globe by storm. This has been evident with the existing floods and drought that we

have been witnessing. We are here to share what has worked for us but also learn from other countries because this is a war we can't fight alone as a developing country. Together with partners we are critically looking at how we can build capacity toward climate change mitigation and adaptation," she said.

Citing Uganda's designation of its own national decade of ecosystem restoration and revising its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement, Anywar reiterated the Government of Uganda commitment to work with partners toward climate action.

UNDP Resident Representative Ms. Elsie Attafua underscored the vulnerability of Uganda and many other developing nations to the climate change impacts.



While Uganda's contribution to climate change is negligible accounting for only 0.099 percent of global emissions, it is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts given its low coping capacity. Climate change effects such as frequent and prolonged dry spells as well as erratic and poorly distributed rainfall amplify the level of vulnerability experienced by many of Ugandans (68 percent) that are dependent on rainfed agriculture as their source of livelihood," she said.

**Commitments to save people and planet**

UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa commended Uganda for hosting the ACW 2021 and for its leadership on climate change. Uganda is the first African country to develop a National NDC Partnership Plan to implement their NDC through collaboration with more than 15 partners.

During the ACW deliberations, leaders pledged more commitment towards climate action, including Al Hamdou Dorsouma, Acting



Hon. Beatrice Anywar, Minister of State for Environment ©UNDP

Director of the Climate Change and Green Growth Department at the African Development Bank, who pledged the Bank's commitment to "Deploy its resources to save people and planet and generate wealth for our continent."

Mr. Hafez Ghanem, Vice President for Eastern and Southern Africa at the World Bank Group revealed that "Over the next 5 years, 35 percent of World Bank Group financing will directly contribute to climate action. These plans support national action and economy-wide approaches to align planning and policy with action to achieve a sustainable, low-carbon and resilient future"

Other speakers emphasized the climate emergency that Africa has to deal with Dr. Vera Songwe, the UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) observing that "No issue is more fundamental for African countries than climate resilience. How we address it will define sustainable development"

**About the Regional Climate Weeks**

The ACW is part of Regional Climate Weeks organized annually in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Middle East and North Africa as platforms for government and non-Party stakeholders to address climate issues under one umbrella and unity of purpose. They seek to bring together diverse stakeholders from the public and private sectors to address complex climate change challenges. 🌍



Women carrying firewood in the semi-arid area of Kotido District ©UNDP



## CREATING JOBS FOR REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITIES USING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

By Phillo Aryatwijuka, International Labour Organization (ILO)

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching effects on Uganda's economy, including in sectors like tourism, education, and transport among others. This has resulted into negative impacts on employment with induced loss of jobs and livelihood.

The refugee and host communities have not been spared by the COVID19 pandemic. Considering that Uganda hosts 1.5 million refugees, there is need for direct responses to strengthen government and partner organisations capacity to support these vulnerable communities. This big refugee population could be utilised to impact local economic development.

Government of Uganda is focused on promoting resilience, social cohesion and sustainable development among refugee and host communities through the recently launched "Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Refugee Plan" (JLIRP). The JLIRP will focus on improving economic opportunities strengthening market systems; increasing household income, food and nutrition security and agricultural output for in-country and export markets; increasing productive coping strategies; increasing access to vocational and technical education; and improving social protection key to socio-economic inclusion of refugees and host communities in refugee hosting districts.

ILO, through the PROSPECTS Partnership is supporting government to operationalise the JLIRP through actions aimed at promoting decent work, strengthening markets, skilling and Employment Intensive Investment approaches in the refugee and host communities. The recent ground-breaking for the construction of a multipurpose community center in Rhino Camp is a perfect example. The official ground-breaking ceremony for this multipurpose community centre in Terego was led by Her Excellency Karin Boven, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands to Uganda. The Ambassador's message at the ground-breaking ceremony echoed the vision of the JLIRP with strong emphasis on use of local resources and gender inclusiveness in the construction works, shifting the paradigm from humanitarian aid to development cooperation.



**"The community centres will support in building resilience, improving social cohesion and ensuring sustainable development of refugee and host communities. I am pleased that the Netherlands government is able to contribute beyond humanitarian response and towards development of the community," said Ms Karin Boven.**

Under a partnership between ILO and UNHCR, with funding from the Netherlands, 6 community centres will be constructed. ILO will construct three of these multipurpose community centres using labour intensive methods and Local resource utilisation



The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands to Uganda, Her Excellency Karin Boven, laying a brick to officially launch the construction of the multipurpose community center in Rhino refugee settlement in Terego District © ILO



The Chief Technical Advisor, ILO Uganda Mr. Stephen Opio presenting the architectural drawings of the multipurpose community center during the official launch of the construction in Rhino refugee settlement in Terego © ILO

approaches. This approach is expected to provide short-term direct employment opportunities, skills transfer as well as stimulate the local markets across refugee and host settlements of Rhino, Imvepi and Nakivale. Similarly, UNHCR will adopt the same approach and construct three other multipurpose community centres. These community centres will provide safe spaces for refugees and host communities to receive Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Services as well as other socio-economic services including ICT training and sports for recreation.

Speaking at the same ground-breaking ceremony, Stephen Opio, ILO Chief Technical Advisor, stated that "considering that economic distress is one of the factors that contributes and mental health challenges, ILO work with local partners to facilitate access to entrepreneurship and livelihoods for refugees and host communities who have received MHPSS clinical treatment before they are re-integrated into the communities." 🌍

## **IOM TRAINS MPS ON LABOUR MIGRATION AND ETHICAL RECRUITMENT** *By Innocent Vuga, International Organization for Migration (IOM)*



Nakaseke Central MP Allan Mayanja during a session at Golf Course Hotel in Kampala ©IOM



MP Flavia Kabahenda Rwabuhoro speaks during a session at Golf Course Hotel in Kampala ©IOM

**The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has trained 201 Ugandan Members of Parliament on labour migration and ethical recruitment. The project seeks to sensitize stakeholders on promoting safe, orderly and regular labour migration pathways and subsequently reduce the risk of exploitation facing migrant workers in the hotel industry and its supply chain and establish ethical recruitment.**

Participating MPs came from committees on Gender, Labour and Social Development; Public Service and Local Government; Foreign Affairs; Human Rights; as well as the Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA)

“Legislators have a big role to play in promoting safe, orderly and regular labour migration pathways for our migrant workers,” said IOM Uganda Programme Manager for Labour Migration and Human Development, Ms. Odette Bolly. “Because at the end of the day, these migrant workers come from the same MPs’ constituencies. Labour migration itself is not new; but we need to make sure that recruitment of migrant workers is done ethically.”

Several MPs reported that many youths in their constituencies were asking for help to go migrate overseas for work. However,

the rights of migrant workers remain a concern.

“What are the rights of these migrant workers we send abroad? Do they have rights are they are just bundled about as if they are slaves?” said MP Flavia Kabahenda Rwabuhoro, Chairperson, Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development. “We have fragmented laws and policies about migration because we do not have a comprehensive national migration policy, we have ended up abetting forms of migration that probably include human trafficking.”

During a series of workshops in September, MPs from different committees were severally introduced to the International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS). This IOM tool covers hiring and human resource best practices on international standards of recruitment and assessing recruiters’ practices, among other areas. This was aimed at helping the legislators to champion issues to do with safe labour migration pathways and protection of workers.

The training was part of the global project ‘Promoting ethical recruitment in the hotel and tourism industry’, funded by the United States’ Bureau of Populations, Refugees and Migration (PRM). It was jointly implemented by IOM and the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, in close coordination with the Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment, the International Labour Organization’s Fair Recruitment Initiative.

The Uganda Association of External Recruitment Agencies (UAERA) estimates that more than 160,000 Ugandans are working in Gulf Cooperation Countries. According to the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, a total of 8,830 Ugandans left the country in June 2021 in search of jobs. However, such workers remain vulnerable to extortion and exploitation both during the recruitment process and in the destination countries. 🌐



## FAO CONTINUES TO BUILD A CRITICAL TEAM OF EPIDEMIOLOGY EXPERTS FOR UGANDA

By Agatha Ayebazibwe and Yanira Santana, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)



A team of veterinarians and paravets during the training in surveillance, disease outbreak investigation, risk communication and reporting in Luwero © FAO

### ISAVET trains the second cohort of veterinary and laboratory experts to better respond to emerging infectious diseases and transboundary animal diseases under a One Health approach

A team of veterinarians and paravets completed a one month of training in surveillance, disease outbreak investigation, risk communication and reporting, in FAO's continued efforts to boost the capacity of the animal health workforce in Uganda, through the In-service Applied Veterinary Epidemiology Training (ISAVET) programme in Luwero on 29th October 2021.

The 21 team of in-service veterinary professionals were drawn from nineteen districts across the country including; Adjumani, Amudat, Kasese, Kagadi, Kampala, Kiruhura, Kole, Kyenjojo, Luwero, Lyantonde, Moroto, Nakasongola, Namutumba, Kamuli, Napak, Ngora, Ntungamo, Pallisa and Rubirizi. These will continue to undergo field attachment and mentor-mentee assisted training for another three months. This is the second cohort of trainees, following the first cohort and pilot cohort that was hosted in Uganda in 2018.

Following the thirty-day intense training, a joint farmer-trainee-trainer feedback workshop on livestock value chains was held in a semi-personal mode with the panel and trainees in the meeting room and some veterinary officers and public in a virtual mode (zoom), organized by the FAO Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Disease Control (ECTAD).

The availability of field veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals in quantity and quality is essential in the field. This is even more important to establish close links with the local community at the front line in preparation or responding to events or epidemics. They are an essential link in effective surveillance, performing field surveys, and emergency response. In this regard, ISAVET provides "service training" to strengthen, through a multi-sectoral approach, the prevention, detection, early warning, rapid response, reporting and response to animal diseases including transboundary, endemic, emerging and re-emerging diseases. ISAVET trainees receive four weeks of classroom and tutorial instruction, followed by three months of field activities under the supervision of mentors at their workplace. ISAVET training is supported by FAO with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

## ISAVET shows substantial results from common livestock diseases investigations.

Several research topics related to the epidemiology of animal diseases were addressed by the ISAVET trainees (nine veterinary officers (public posts), two private veterinary officers (private sector), three animal husbandry officers, five assistant veterinary officers, one wildlife researcher and one veterinary laboratory technologist). Trainees will carry out diverse epidemiological research projects on priority zoonotic diseases (such as brucellosis, Rift Valley fever (RVF) and rabies) or transboundary animal diseases (such as peste des petits ruminants (PPR) and foot-and-mouth disease) and other animal health conditions like food safety and hygiene, antimicrobial usage and antimicrobial resistance. The closure workshop involved group presentations on week-long research carried out on cattle, poultry, pigs, goats and sheep in Luwero District, as well as providing feedback to the farmers whose animals were used for study purposes.

Speaking at the closure of part 1 of II training series, the Country's Chief Veterinary Officer in the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr Anna Rose Ademun commended FAO for the continued support to the Livestock Industry in Uganda, which she said is helping to strengthen the capacity of veterinary professionals through continuous training, especially the ones targeting emerging diseases.

"I am happy to note the improvements in the training, right from the pilot cohort. Today, we have included farmers, to provide them with feedback on what we found in their animals, as well as advising them on the best ways to care for their animals. This training is helping us to break the barriers between vets and the people who need veterinary services at the grass-root level," she said.

"As Government, we appreciate FAO and commit our support. We hope that FAO gets more funding to ensure that all of our vets undergo this ISAVET training."

FAO Representative in Uganda, Dr Antonio Querido, represented by Dr Willington Bessongojong, declared that "We are aware that Uganda is a hot spot for many diseases that affect both animals and humans (zoonotic diseases) hence the need to align efforts to control epidemics at source before they expand or cross from animals to human beings".

Ms Maureen Tushabirane, a Veterinary Officer in Kagadi District says that the training has been an amazing experience that has helped her open her mind to the real work of a field veterinary professional.

“

I have learnt how to do active participatory disease surveillance, disease investigation, data entry and analysis, and reporting. I have not been taking reporting seriously, sometimes we would do verbal reports but after this course, I feel competent enough to change things. I now know how important reporting is and I hope to change many things when I go back to Kagadi," says Maureen.

## ISAVET works on the sustainability of livestock systems

With the support of FAO, through ECTAD, the ISAVET initiative addresses the need for capacity building and sustainability for the future of the region. Through ISAVET, the capacity of countries to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and overcome critical threats to human and animal health from emerging infectious diseases and transboundary animal diseases will be improved, taking into account the interface between humans, animal and environmental health.

In Uganda, FAO is implementing the Frontline ISAVET together with the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and partners to address zoonosis, emerging infectious diseases such as Ebola and COVID-19 and transboundary animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease or brucellosis. For sustainable implementation and growth of the ISAVET programme, FAO involves government ministries in decisions, ensures the programme is housed within each Ministry of Agriculture and/or Livestock, and advocates for ownership at country and regional levels.

This second cohort of ISAVET trainees follows the successful first edition of the programme, in which 20 district veterinary officers from 17 districts were selected to build the capacity of in-service field-level (frontline) veterinarians, creating a critical team of skilled frontline workers and experts who can conduct effective surveillance and outbreak response. 🌍



A trainee during the training in surveillance, disease outbreak investigation, risk communication and reporting in Luwero © FAO

## A RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS

By Melissa Kyeyune, World Food Programme (WFP)

**For two refugees, Korean rice from the Republic of Korea is more than a change from the maize they usually receive. It stirs memories of recipes and culture passed down for generations**

When the United Nations World Food Programme gave out food in September, thousands of women from Bidibidi, a settlement in North Western Uganda with 239,000 refugees, showed up to receive their monthly ration. This time, the ration was not just the maize they were used to – it included rice that the Republic of Korea gave to support the WFP refugee response.

Two women, Gaba Akandi and Gladys Yesko, were among the thousands of women. Although they do not know each other, they have a heart-breaking connection. Both women are trying to rebuild their lives in Uganda, a country that hosts 1.5 million refugees, after escaping conflict in South Sudan. Both arrived in Uganda in 2016, a time when the influx of refugees into the country was at its peak.

“When the fighting began, I just ran away with my three children,” Akandi says. “They were fighting a war. People were dying. There was nothing to eat. I was very scared. I thought I would die.”

The then 20-year-old mother found herself homeless and stateless overnight. As she fled, Akandi lost track of her parents and her husband, all of whom she has never seen since. In the night, she dreams about them. In the day, she wonders whether they are dead or alive.

While Akandi was fleeing for her life without the people she loved, nineteen-year-old Yesko, her mother and four sisters also had to hit the road. It was the 28th October 2016, a day Yesko will never forget. Unlike Akandi, Yesko and her family all made it to Uganda. Yesko still lives with her mother and sisters, and their family has now grown to include two daughters Yesko had while in Uganda.

“I am very lucky to have my family with me. The journey here was so uncertain. Anything could have happened,” Yesko says.

The September ration made the families of Yesko and Akandi particularly happy.



My children and I love rice but it is very expensive,” Yesko says. “I hear the Korean people are the reason we are now able to eat rice. I do not have much land to farm, and I am thankful when people give me something. And very thankful when they give me something special – like this rice.”

After Akandi received her rice, she lifted it to her head carefully – like one would something sacred.



Gladys Yesko, South Sudanese refugee in living in Bidi Bidi settlement, poses with a female friend. Both had just received their bi-monthly food ration from WFP, consisting of rice, beans, oil and salt © WFP



Gladys Yesko, her mother and sisters eat the rice distributed by WFP, and donated by the People's Republic of Korea. They cooked it together as a family © WFP

“I do not remember when we last ate rice. My children are so excited,” her voice is calm, in defiance of the restless children waiting for her at home.

When they get home, Yesko and Akandi use the same recipe, passed down from their grandmothers to mothers when they were still in South Sudan, to prepare the rice. They add water as per the package instructions. Then they add salt and sugar.

“When I prepare rice the way we used to in South Sudan, I feel happy. Rice gives me memories and joy,” Yesko says. And Akandi agrees. 🌾



## IF GIRLS ARE NOT ECONOMICALLY EMPOWERED, THEY CANNOT MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN PEACE PROCESS

By Allen Ankunda, UN Women



Ms. Afisa Agua reciting a poem during the Launch of Yumbe Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security ©CoACT

**Afisa Agua is a 27-year-old graduate of Information Technology from Makerere University. In 2020, Afisa was trained by UN Women’s implementing partner Coalition for Action (CoACT) as a Young Woman Peace Ambassador. With financial support of Royal Norwegian Embassy in Uganda, UN Women is partnering with CoACT to implement a project ‘Amplifying Women’s Agency for Peacebuilding’. Through this project 13 Young Women Peace Ambassadors have been trained and they are in turn reaching out to other young people in their communities.**

Born and raised from the rural village of Odropi in the refugee hosting district of Yumbe, Afisa is one of the few girls in her village that managed to get an education. A single mother of a four-year-old son, Afisa, has emerged as Young Woman Peace Ambassador in her district mobilising young girls to speak up against abuse.

“In my district, Yumbe, girls face a lot of challenges but the worst is Sexual Gender-Based Violence and early marriages. In my village for instance, girls are married off at a young age, denying them an opportunity to complete their studies. The lack of an education disempowers them, and they cannot stand up for their rights.

You cannot have peace when you are faced with such challenges. A peaceful society is where women are put first and involved

in peace processes. Women are the majority participants in community engagements yet they are left behind in decision making. When conflict erupts, women suffer the most but they are never involved in conflict resolution processes. Women’s views should be put into consideration when resolving conflicts.

Economic empowerment is a key step in enabling women to address conflicts that affect them. In 2020, I was identified by the Yumbe district gender officer to participate in a UN Women supported training that was organised by Coalition for Action (CoACT). I am now mobilising young girls and holding weekly “Girl Talk” sessions with them every Friday afternoon for just one hour. I started off with 5 girls and in the next meetings they kept coming with their friends. We are now 17 girls. The “Girl Talk” discussions centre on issues that the young girls face on a daily basis – challenges with menstrual hygiene and lack of access to resources to buy sanitary towels are common. From these discussions I identify opportunities for skills development and empowerment. This has involved training the girls to make sanitary pads, liquid soap and starting a savings group. If the girls are not economically empowered, they cannot voice their issues, they cannot avoid factors that predispose them to conflicts especially SGBV.

Empowering the girls to earn a decent living reduces their vulnerability and increases their involvement and participation in the implementation of Women Peace and Security agenda. To attain this empowerment, in addition to our “Girl Talk” conversations, we are now engaged in saving and every week when we meet, we are able to save on average UGX 70,000 (USD 20). Our plan is to accumulate this money and register as a SACCO. 🌍



# UN DAY COMMEMORATION IN SOUTH WESTERN UGANDA

By Madrine Amuge, UN Area Coordination (UNAC) Office, South Western Uganda

The United Nations in the Southwest Uganda celebrated the 76th anniversary of the United Nations on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021 from 9:00am – 12:00am at the Mbarara UNICEF sub office together with the UN Family in Kampala. The team participated in the hybrid /virtual engagements and dialogues on achieving the SDGs amidst Covid 19 pandemic and a blood donation drive supported by the blood bank in Mbarara. Due to covid 19 pandemic the commemoration had limited physical presence with representatives from UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, UNDSS, WFP, development partners and Mbarara District Local Government. 🌍



(Left to right) Head of WFP Sub-office Emily Doe; Mbarara RDC Lt. Col. James Mwesigye; and Ag. UNAC focal person Richard Ecodu (UNICEF) cut the UN Day cake © UN Uganda



Mbarara RDC Lt. Col. James Mwesigye gives his remarks on the UN Day © UN Uganda



Mbarara DCDO Mr. Byaruhanga Arthur participates in the blood donation drive © UN Uganda



UN Staff participate in a blood donation drive during the UN Day celebration © UN Uganda



## UN DAY COMMEMORATION IN KARAMOJA SUB-REGION

By Sophie Giovan Akera, UN Area Coordination (UNAC) Office, Karamoja Sub-region

Karamoja sub-region UN staff on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021 joined Matany Hospital as a way to give back to community as the region celebrates 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UN and conducted a health camp in Apetolim Sub-county in Napak District. With support from the District Local government, the community was mobilized for the health camp and the following activities were conducted.

- Screening and vaccination of 251 members the community for COVID-19
- Antenatal care services for 50 pregnant women
- Vaccination of 60 children with different antigen including Diphtheria Pertussis Tetanus, Pneumococcal Vaccination, Injectable Polio Vaccine and Bacilli Calmette Guerine
- 410 children dewormed and given vitamin A supplementation
- Vaccination of 218 girls and pregnant women with Tetanus Toxoid vaccine
- Vaccination of 85 girls with Huma Papilloma Vaccine
- HIV and AIDS testing for 40 people
- Total of 278 people treated for different conditions

### KEY OUTPUTS

**251** participants were tested and vaccinated for COVID-19



Supported the health team with PPEs like **600 face masks and sanitizers**

**278** participants were reached with general medical services



**50** mothers were reached with **Antenatal care services** during the health camp.



On the right Dr John Nsubunga Health Director of Matany Hospital briefing the team before setting off to the field for the health camp.



Dr Nsubunga offering general medical health services at Apetolim health camp.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS/FINDINGS

- In Apetolim the COVID 19 vaccination was tagged to the SAGE activities, this made several elderly community members to turn up in high number for the Covid 19 vaccination compared to the young population.
- Apetolim is hard to reach community, the health made the team reach some mothers with Antenatal Care services by bringing services closure to them compared to moving a long distance to access the services 🌍



Health workers offering COVID-19 vaccination at the Health Camp



On the right UN staff and the health worker at the medicine dispensing point



Trying to create privacy as we offer Antenatal health services at the health camp

# UN DAY



UN Day Guests



UN Day Drums



UN Day Youth



UN Day Cutting the Cake



Blood Donation Drive in Mbarara



COVID-19 Vaccination Drive in Napak District ©UN Uganda



**UNITED NATIONS  
UGANDA**



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