

UGANDA
Country Office

UN Women Uganda Q1 Newsletter 2024

This quarterly newsletter profiles UN Women Uganda activities and highlights voices of beneficiaries. The Q1 Newsletter covers the period of January to March 2024.
Enjoy the read!



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MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE



Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, Country Representative Uganda

Dear partners,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the first issue of our newsletter in 2024! This quarterly newsletter captures some of our efforts to sustain gender-responsive initiatives.

As UN Women we continue to enhance efforts for Women Economic Empowerment collaboratively with other stakeholders. The first Source of the Nile Women in Agribusiness Summit and Expo held in January focused on fostering partnerships that would elevate the status of women farmers and entrepreneurs is just one of its kind as it brought together high-level government

delegates from Ministries and other sector offices, development partners, UN Agencies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Financial Institutions, and other stakeholders working on women's economic empowerment.

At the national level, one of our primary strategies involves forging collaborative partnerships with relevant stakeholders. We are actively engaging with various private sector entities such as Stanbic Bank Uganda and MTN Uganda to underscore the profound impact of investing in women, not only on individual lives but also on communities and economies at large.

This issue of our newsletter showcases inspiring success stories from our field locations, highlighting the tangible impact of our interventions in collaboration with our valued partners. These stories encompass various programs, including the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW), Women, Peace, Security, and Humanitarian Action, as well as Governance under the Leaving No One Behind initiative, notably the Giving a Second Chance in Education program.

In February, we had the privilege of hosting Her Excellency, Anne Kristin Hermansen, the Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda, in Yumbe District. During her visit, Ambassador Hermansen witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of the Leadership, Empowerment, Access & Protection (LEAP) program, supported by UN Women and implemented by our esteemed partners.

This program has been instrumental in empowering refugee women and girls in the region, underscoring our unwavering commitment to promoting gender equality and empowerment.

In March 2024, as part of our commemoration of International Women's Month, the UN Women Uganda Country Office orchestrated a remarkable event at Boma grounds in Katakwi district, northern Uganda. With President Yoweri Museveni as the esteemed chief guest, the occasion served as a platform to showcase the outstanding initiatives of young women and girls across Uganda.

Once again, we extend a warm welcome to you and encourage you to delve into the enriching content of this newsletter.

Happy reading!

Warm regards,

Dr. Paulina Chiwangu.



Empowering Uganda: International Women's Day Rings in a Call for Economic Prosperity to Address Women's Challenges in Uganda

On Friday March 8, 2024, all paths converged upon Boma Grounds, Katakwi District, eastern Uganda, where President Yoweri Museveni stood as the distinguished guest of honor at the annual International Women's Day celebrations. The event was attended by several government ministers, religious and cultural leaders as well as envoys and UN agency representatives some of whom resounded the need to reduce the gap on gender inequality in the country.



President Yoweri Museveni (in a hat) with some of the medalists at the International Women's Day event in Katakwi district. In green is Sandra Nakayenze who was among the UN Women supported Agri-business entrepreneurs. Photo credit: Courtesy photo

Amidst the spirited atmosphere, this year's event embraced the resonating theme: "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress," echoing the national call to action, "Accelerating Gender Equality Through Women's Economic Empowerment." The themes emphasized the need to drive financial resources, policy support, and commitments towards achieving gender equality and are aligned with the priority theme of the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68), to be held in New York from 11 to 22 March 2024: 'Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.

His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni was guided on a tour of women group exhibitors some of whom are supported by UN Women in agri-business. In his speech, the President emphasized the need for Ugandan citizens to work towards achieving wealth for all in order to deal with the challenges affecting women.

"Whereas we are moving well, we need to increase the speed if we are to enable an equal distribution of wealth for all. Once we achieve that, we shall not be having challenges facing women. We shall not be selling our girls in form of bride price," President Yoweri Museveni said.



Susan Namondo, UN Uganda Resident Coordinator, in a purple dress(second right) giving her speech as UN Women Uganda's Country Representative, Dr. Paulina Chiwangu (extreme right) as other UN agency representatives look on. Photo credit: UN Women / Samuel Wamuttu

Susan Namondo, the UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, who represented the UN in Uganda at the event, praised the government for its strong legal framework supporting the empowerment of women and girls. She emphasized that this commitment is geared towards fostering inclusive and equitable growth.

She mentioned that this has included the adoption of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Amendment Act (2021); the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) Amendment Act (2022); the Succession Amendment Act (2022); the Market Act (2023); and the Employment Amendment Bill (2023) – now pending the President's ascension.

“Such legislative strides advance women's rights in the realm of work, from enhancing women's participation in public procurements to fortifying social protection measures and championing women's leadership in the work place,” she said.

Betty Amongi, the minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, said that the government strategy and approach on women has always been that of tackling the root causes of women's disempowerment; focusing on gender-transformative strategies and approaches.

“Some of our interventions seek to influence formal institutions, laws, policies and practices and to support and promote women's rights to economic, social and political empowerment as well as the strengthening of institutional capacity and accountability,” Hon. Betty Amongi said.

Amongi also mentioned that women's empowerment requires a comprehensive package of interventions that are context specific, combining enabling policies and specific and carefully targeted programs working at all levels.

She mentioned that some of the successes have been around working in partnership with some banks to establish specific women in business programs. Amongi said this is aimed at improving women's access to finance and financial services and products that address their needs ■



Empowering Women in Agribusiness: UN Women Uganda Organises First Women Agribusiness Summit



Gender Minister, Hon. Betty Amongi (centred) admires some locally produced wine from Mimo Wines Company based in Mukono district as UN Women Country Representative Dr. Paulina Chiwangu and State Minister of Fisheries Hellen Adoa (left) together with other officials look on. Photo: UN Women/Martin Ninsiima

Uganda boasts a considerable agricultural workforce, with approximately 3.9 million women contributing to the sector across 7 million agricultural households. However, a significant gender disparity exists, as many of these women are primarily engaged in on-farm production activities, with limited involvement in crucial agribusiness facets such as processing, warehousing, distribution, packaging, branding, and marketing. The resulting cost of this gender gap in agribusiness activities is staggering, estimated at US\$67-100 million per year. This disparity averages around 20–30 percent of GDP across Sub-Saharan African countries.

Recognizing the urgent need to bridge this gap, UN Women Uganda took a proactive stance by organizing the Source of the Nile Women in Agribusiness Summit and Expo on January 15th to 16th, 2024. This transformative event aimed to foster partnerships that would elevate the status of women farmers and entrepreneurs. As a part of the 19th Non-Aligned Movement, the summit provided a unique platform for over sixty women entrepreneurs to showcase their diverse products across various agribusiness value chains.

Distinguished guests, including high-level policymakers such as Hon. Betty Amongi, the Minister of Gender Labour and Social Development, and Hellen Adoa, the Minister of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries, attended the summit. The collaboration between these ministries, UN Women, and the National Organizing Committee (NOC) underscored the significance of addressing gender disparities in agribusiness.



WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



Dr. Maxime (Right) listening to one of the fruit exhibitors at the event in Sheraton Hotel-Kigo, Kampala. Photo: UN Women/Martin Ninsiima

During the event's opening, Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Uganda Country Representative, emphasized that this was an opportunity for women in agribusiness to pitch their enterprises to key investors. However, she also underscored the importance of tackling the obstacles that hinder women's substantive participation in the sector.

The expo provided a unique space for women in agribusiness to engage in investment pitches with private sector investors, local companies, and policymakers. Discussions centered on tackling challenges such as accessing affordable credit, adapting to severe weather conditions, reducing reliance on sunlight for post-harvest protection, countering exploitation by middlemen, and addressing the time and labor burdens associated with manual land cultivation. The focus extended to empowering women to tap into domestic, regional, and international markets.

Dr. Maxime Houinato, UN Women Regional Director for ESARO, emphasized the transformative potential of the event, stressing the need to document and share success stories to inspire women across Africa. Minister Betty Amongi emphasized the importance of supporting women's transition from informal to formal sectors by addressing the challenges they face.

Minister Hellen Adoa, responsible for fisheries, highlighted the critical role of women in agriculture and encouraged the adoption of ICT to enhance the sale of agricultural products, further emphasizing the need for innovation and inclusivity in the sector.

In support of this mission, UN Women Country Office has compiled a comprehensive catalogue of Women in Business, serving as a valuable tool for networking and connecting women with potential investors, markets, and business partners.

The summit, set to become an annual event, aims to foster collaboration among women in agribusiness, investors, and government stakeholders. This strategic gathering seeks to ideate and implement solutions to the myriad challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the sector ■



UN Women joins Stanbic Bank to Commemorate the Second Anniversary of “Stanbic For Her” programme

On March 19th , 2024, the vibrant Kampala witnessed a jubilant celebration as UN Women Uganda stood shoulder to shoulder with its esteemed partner, Stanbic Bank Uganda, to mark the second anniversary of the empowering “Stanbic For Her” initiative. This initiative, dedicated to equipping women entrepreneurs with vital business management skills and unlocking lucrative market opportunities, has been a beacon of hope and progress for women across Uganda.



Ann Juuko the CEO Stanbic Uganda speaking to women entrepreneurs at the Stanbic For Her second anniversary celebrations. Photo Credit: Courtesy Photo

In a collaborative spirit, UN Women and Stanbic Bank, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) they have entered into, demonstrate a mutual dedication to advancing the economic empowerment of women across Uganda. This partnership aims to break down barriers and create opportunities for women to flourish, not just endure, in the ever-changing landscape of business.

As the event unfolded, Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Uganda Country Representative, took to the podium as the keynote speaker. With heartfelt admiration, she lauded Stanbic for achieving this significant milestone, recognizing its profound impact on women empowerment not only in Uganda but across the African continent.

"Listening to the inspiring testimonies of women in business, it's evident that the “Stanbic For Her” program has truly empowered our local entrepreneurs to realize their full potential," Dr. Chiwangu remarked passionately. "These women are not just business owners; they are the driving force behind our nation's economic growth and development.

However, amidst the celebration, Dr. Chiwangu also shed light on the persistent challenges that women continue to face. She said there was need to acknowledge the gender disparities that still linger. Despite our progress, she noted, barriers in access to education, employment, finance, and decision-making positions persist, hindering our collective advancement.

Reaffirming this commitment to gender equality, Dr. Chiwangu said there was a need to recognize that nearly 60% of women in developing countries are employed in the informal sector. This she said underscores the urgent need for more economic empowerment initiatives like “Stanbic For Her”, which she acknowledged was bridging the gaps and empowering women to thrive in Uganda.

Echoing this sentiment, Stanbic Bank CEO Ms., Anne Juuko reiterated Stanbic Bank's unwavering dedication to fostering partnerships and synergies that uplift Ugandan women.

"We are committed to creating more platforms like this. These will not only impact but transform the lives of women across Uganda," she said.

As the festivities drew to a close, the resonance of empowerment echoed through the conference room, a testament to the enduring collaboration between UN Women and Stanbic Bank, and a beacon of hope for the countless women entrepreneurs charting their paths to success in Uganda's vibrant business landscape ■



Empowering Tomorrow: MTN Uganda, UN Women, and Five Leading Private Sector Allies Unveil Revolutionary Business Capacity Skilling Accelerator for Women Entrepreneurs in Uganda



UN Women Uganda Country Representative, Dr. Pauline Chiwangu, joins other partners in a group photo during the launch of the AWE programme at the MTN headquarters.

Photo Credit: Courtesy Photo

In a significant stride towards gender equality and economic empowerment, MTN Uganda recently unveiled its collaboration with UN Women and 5 other strategic private sector players in Uganda in the Advancing Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) program. This initiative aims to propel women-led businesses forward, marking a pivotal moment in Uganda's entrepreneurial landscape, by enlisting women to benefit from the procurement and supply chains of the collaborating entities.

MTN Uganda's commitment to fostering inclusivity and creating opportunities for women entrepreneurs is evident in its partnership with UN Women. With the enlistment of 118 women entrepreneurs as service providers under the AWE program, MTN Uganda has allocated UGX 15 billion (USD 4 Million) for women-owned businesses to access in contracts. This substantial investment underscores MTN's dedication to empowering women in business across the nation. Additionally, UN Women and all other collaborating private sector players in the AWE program have embarked on a journey to enlist the selected women as their suppliers.

Launched in October 2023, the AWE program signifies a strategic move by MTN Uganda to uplift women in business through various avenues. The program is meticulously designed to not only expand the female MTN supplier base but also to enhance the capacity of women-owned businesses through skills development, mentorship, and coaching programs. Through a rigorous selection process, MTN, UN Women and collaborating partners has identified and partnered with talented women entrepreneurs from diverse sectors, including IT, network, commercial, professional, and facility-related services.

Ms., Sylvia Mulinge, Chief Executive Officer of MTN Uganda, expressed her enthusiasm for the selected women entrepreneurs, highlighting their exceptional skills, passion, and determination. She emphasized that by empowering women economically, MTN is not only investing in their businesses but also in the future of Uganda. Mulinge believes that such empowerment creates a ripple effect that benefits families, communities, and the nation's prosperity at large.



WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The AWE program has garnered support from various stakeholders, including DFCU Bank, PSFU, NSSF Hi Innovators, ATC, UN Women, The Innovation Village, and MTN MoMo. During the launch ceremony, representatives from these organizations reiterated their commitment to ensuring the success of the AWE program and empowering women entrepreneurs in Uganda.

Dorothy Kabagambe Semanda, CEO of ATC Uganda, affirmed ATC's dedication to working alongside MTN Uganda in the success of the AWE program. ATC has pledged to provide training for women in running successful construction companies, focusing on practical skills essential in the sector.

Kate K Kiiza, Executive Director of DFCU Bank, highlighted DFCU's support for the AWE program through tailored financing and capacity-building initiatives. With subsidized interest rates and relaxed collateral requirements, DFCU aims to help women thrive in today's competitive business environment.



Dr. Paulina Chiwangu giving her speech during the MTN AWE project launch in Kampala. Photo Credit: Courtesy Photo.

Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Country Representative Uganda, emphasized the importance of women's collective action in eliminating all forms of violence and ensuring peace and security for business prosperity.

“We are here to launch a programme that will help us on inclusiveness and equity. Gender responsive procurement is a vehicle for women’s economic empowerment. It is not only the right thing to do from a social justice perspective but also a smart business strategy,” Dr. Chiwangu said.

Dr. Aisha Kasolo, Project Director of PSFU, commended MTN's decision to consider women for traditionally male-dominated spheres, which reflects positively on Uganda's progress towards gender equality.

Richard Zulu, the NSSF Hi-Innovator Lead, applauded corporate initiatives like MTN's commitment to ring-fencing part of their budget for women entrepreneurs, signaling a promising future for the nation.

Richard Yego, CEO of MTN MoMo, encouraged women to venture into the Mobile Money business, advocating for digitized financial transactions through MTN MoMo.

This partnership between UN Women, MTN Uganda and 6 other leading collaborating companies in the AWE program marks a significant step towards advancing women entrepreneurs and fostering gender equality in Uganda's business landscape. With the collective efforts of various stakeholders, this initiative holds the promise of creating a more inclusive and prosperous future for women in business across the nation ■



UN Women Uganda and Partners Unveil US\$41.9 Million Joint Programme for Data and Statistics, Paving the Way for Transformative Impact on Sustainable Development Goals

Heads and Representatives of different UN Agencies take a group photo with the 1st Deputy Prime Minister together with other government officials during the launch of the Joint Programme for Data and Statistics in Kampala. Photo Credit: Courtesy of UNDP Uganda



On January 30, 2024, UN Women Uganda, in collaboration with the Ugandan government and 12 United Nations entities, officially introduced the Joint Programme for Data and Statistics (JPDS) in Uganda, a US\$41,898,295 initiative anchored on strategic national and international frameworks. The initiative serves as a strategic instrument to create catalytic change in improving the data quality, relevance and use of SDG data and statistics in Uganda consistent with international human rights and gender equality norms and principals.

Aligned to Uganda’s third National Development Plan (NDP III) 2020/2021 - 2024/2025, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025 and the Third Plan for National Statistical Development (PNSD III) 2020/21-2024/25, the JPDS initiative marks a significant step towards the full integration of gender equality perspectives in production of SDG data providing critical evidence to address gender equality and empower women issues in Uganda.

The launch drew participants from various sectors and was used to also disseminate the findings of the status review of SDG-related data and statistics in Uganda conducted in 2022 with technical and financial support from UNWOMEN, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNRCO and Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

During the launch, the Executive Director of UBOS, Dr. Chris Mukiza, explained the origin of the JPDS, and underlined the persistent gaps in Uganda's data ecosystem. These include limited baseline information for SDG indicators, inadequate data series production from administrative sources, and limited technical skills to generate new SDG indicators. Notwithstanding the challenges in harnessing data from non-traditional sources such as Citizen Generated Data (CGD) due to inadequate financial and human resources. In the quest to meet the deadline of the 2030 Agenda of the SDGs technical experts underscored the critical role of building partnership in data development to track and accelerate the delivery of SDGs in the remaining years.

The First Deputy Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga also re-emphasized the critical juncture at which Uganda finds itself, requiring quality disaggregated data for continuous planning, reflection on progress, and strategic decision-making for sustainable social and economic development across all sectors.

Hon. Amos Lugolobi, State Minister of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, expressed confidence in the JPDS, foreseeing its potential to revolutionize Uganda's National Statistical System among others by integrating administrative and citizen-generated data into official statistics.



Partners listening to speeches from some of the invited dignitaries at the event held at the Sheraton Kampala hotel. Middle is Grace Bulenzi the UN Women Programme Specialist - Gender Statistics. Photo Credit: UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu

UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, Susan Namondo, celebrated the launch as a groundbreaking approach, emphasizing the need to consolidate efforts for a more effective impact. Twelve UN agencies, including UNDP, UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UNCDF, ILO, FAO, UNEP, UNAIDS, IOM, and UNGP, collaborated with UBOS on this transformative initiative.



UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, Susan Namondo, while giving her speech at the launch of the Joint Programme for Data and Statistics in Kampala. Courtesy Photo

UN Women will leverage the convening role to support in strengthening the capacity of government and non-government actors in the integration of gender equality perspectives in the data production processes and systems within the framework of the JPDS. UN Women will prioritize investment in the critical areas of administrative data, gender surveys and Citizen Generated Data while addressing the inadequate financial and human resources among others to increase availability of gender data and statistics for and decision making.

The event concluded with strong commitments from partners to support the joint programme for data and statistics in Uganda, marking a significant milestone in the country's data transformation journey.

“This JPDS needs us to collaborate among ourselves so as to enhance the National Statistical System’s development and increase the Bureau’s effectiveness,” said Dr. Albert Byamugisha, Chairperson of the Board of UBOS ■



Norwegian ambassador visits LEAP program beneficiaries in Yumbe district



Ambassador Hermansen, being briefed about the second chance education component of the LEAP program at the Ebenezer Global Hub in Yumbe district. Photo: UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu

On February 14, 2024, UN Women Uganda, in collaboration with the implementing partners of the UN Women's Leadership, Empowerment Access & Protection (LEAP) program, welcomed the Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda, Anne Kristin Hermansen, to Yumbe District. The purpose of her visit was to witness firsthand the positive impact of the project on refugee women and girls in the region.

During her visit, Ambassador Hermansen engaged with beneficiaries of the Second Chance Education initiative, a component of the LEAP program. These individuals have acquired diverse life skills in areas such as tailoring and garment construction, catering and hotel management, as well as motorcycle repairs and driving.

Furthermore, Hermansen had the opportunity to hear from participants in the English for Adults (EFA) and Leadership Programme. This initiative focuses on equipping individuals with English language proficiency, covering listening, speaking, reading, writing, and numeracy, following the "Speak Your Rights" curriculum.

A highlight of the visit included a meeting with the UNITY Savings and Farmers' Group, along with the Community Activists and Leaders from the Bidibidi camp within the refugee community. This interaction provided valuable insights into the direct impact of the LEAP program on the lives of those it serves.

The LEAP program, implemented by the Refugee Law Project, Oxfam Uganda, and Uganda Network on Law Ethics and HIV/AIDS (UGANET), is supported by UN Women with funding from the Embassy of Norway in Uganda. The project, titled "Strengthening Women's Leadership, Empowerment, and Resilience in Adjumani, Yumbe, Terego, and Kyegegwa," aims to ensure that women and girls affected by crises in both refugee and host communities actively lead, participate in, and benefit from humanitarian response and recovery efforts.

As part of the project, the Refugee Law Project has enrolled 72 learners in different learning centers (Ebenezer Global Hub, Glory beauty salon, and God with us tailoring center) comprising of 27 women for tailoring and garment construction, 8 for catering and hotel management, 13 for salon and hairdressing, 22 for motorcycle repairs and driving. The skilling program was based on a needs assessment survey. Ambassador Hermansen expressed her appreciation for the ongoing work and encouraged the project stakeholders to further enhance the opportunities available.



"I appreciate your work and encourage you to further strengthen the opportunities around you. This project is still in infancy, and I will be glad to come back sometime to see further progress." This endorsement reflects the importance of sustained efforts to empower and uplift refugee women and girls in their pursuit of education and skill development within the LEAP program," she said.

Since 2022, the LEAP program has benefitted 23,493 refugees through access to UN women supported humanitarian services. 17, 718 refugees from DRC received mental health and psychosocial support services as well as 128 gender skills strengthened.

The project has also enabled a 75% increase in access to protection services and improved the Gender Age Marker (GAM) score of the overall refugee response with the Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (URRP) 2022 – 2025, scoring a GAM 3 compared to GAM 1 in 2020. 7 Women-Led Organizations were also supported to effectively deliver, monitor and implement humanitarian response Interventions.

Furthermore, 128 Humanitarian actors had strengthened capacity and skills in Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA), 500 Refugee Women and girls were supported to access skills development and education through Second Chance Education, 1399 refugees increased literacy and numeracy skills through English for Adults (EFA) program, 1,864 refugee and host community women engaged in 57 Village Savings and Lending Associations, 1,075 persons were trained and supported to engage in Climate Smart Agriculture



Ambassador Hermansen poses for a photo with some of the participants of the English for Adults (EFA) leadership program together with UN Women staff and partners in Yumbe district. Photo : UN Women/ Samuel Wamuttu



One of the participants of the tailoring class under the LEAP project in Yumbe district making school uniform. Photo Credit: UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu



UN Women partners with the Embassy of United Arab Emirates to distribute food to Sudanese Refugees in Kiryandongo District.

On 30th March, UN Women in partnership with the UAE Embassy in Uganda extended support to Sudanese women refugees residing in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, marking the holy month of Ramadan. A total of 15,000 food bags were distributed, symbolizing solidarity and compassion towards those in need. This initiative underscores the commitment of both organizations to alleviate the hardships faced by vulnerable populations, fostering a sense of community and hope during this sacred time.

Speaking during the launch of the food distribution campaign in Kiryandongo District, Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, the UN Women Uganda Country Representative appreciated the UAE for their kind gesture to vulnerable refugee fasting women during this holy month of Ramadhan.

“ I want to appreciate the UAE for this kind gesture to the women. These food items of over 20,000 packages including, rice, posho, wheat, sugar, and others, will go a long way in supporting different households in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement,” she noted.

Chiwangu however reiterated the need for partners to collectively address the root cause of the refugee influx in the country if there is to be a sustainable way of supporting communities develop wherever they are.

“Uganda is the recipient of most refugees in Africa but we must find a way of ensuring that people dont leave their homes if we are to eliminate displacements and enable people thrive within their localities,” she said.



H.E. Abdalla Hassan AlShamsi, Left in white), Dr. Paulina Chiwangu (Middle) participate in distributing the food items to the Sudanese refugee women in Kiryandongo District.

Photo Credit: Courtesy Photo

The distribution was led by H.E. Abdalla Hassan AlShamsi, UAE Ambassador to Uganda, who had earlier in the month formalised a joint cooperation initiative with UN Women country office.

Since January 2024, cumulatively, around 27,770 individuals including 11,700 from Sudan, 5,511 from Eritrea, 4,262 from the DRC, 4,196 from South Sudan, and 2,302 from other nationalities have arrived in the country.

According to UNHCR in Uganda, there is a total of almost 22,878 Sudanese refugees representing 1,5% of the total refugees hosted in Uganda (1.5 million). 2024 has seen an unprecedented influx of Sudanese refugees, marking the largest wave of new arrivals to date. Within the first three months of 2024 alone, a staggering 11,700 individuals sought refuge in Uganda, effectively doubling the total number of Sudanese refugees in the country to 23,000 ■

STORIES FROM THE FIELD



Caption: Part of the members of Unity Savings and Farmers Group in Yumbe district during their weekly meeting discussing finances. The group supported under UN Women's LEAP program as funded by the Embassy of Norway boasts of 30 members (27 Women & 3 Men) who save weekly to invest businesses such as the growing of crops such as soybean. Photo Credit: UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu

Breaking Ground: Betty Lucker's Journey to Justice in Kitgum District, Uganda.



Lucker peeling cassava to prepare a lunch meal for her family. Photo Credit: UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu

It is a Tuesday afternoon as the sun beats down relentlessly, casting its fiery gaze upon the earth below. In a nearby garden, 47-year-old Betty Lucker diligently works, her weathered hands delving into the earth as she uproots cassava tubers. Despite the evident delay in her meal preparations, she remains focused, determined to provide nourishment for herself and her family.

In the tranquil village of Oryang, nestled within the Kitgum district, a remote locale 481 kilometers to the north of Uganda's bustling capital city, Kampala, she finally begins to find solace. Here, she seeks refuge from the torment inflicted upon her by her late husband's relatives.

"They prevented me from cultivating on my husband's land after he passed away. I had no means to feed my four children," she recounts, the anguish of her past hardships evident in her eyes as she reflects on the challenges she faced over the years.

Amidst the relentless barrage of insults and ongoing abuse that endangered her very existence, Lucker finally reached her breaking point and made the difficult decision to relocate to her ancestral home, the place of her birth - Oryang village.

Little did she know that leaving her husband's home in neighboring Palabek-Kal Sub County, situated in Lamwo district, would not free her from oppression, as her own clan imposed similar constraints upon her.

"I had come to settle on the land of my late father, but my uncle frustrated me. He informed me that I have no entitlement to any portion of the land, and that he had already divided the land among his younger children," she recounted with a heavy heart.

Like in many parts of Uganda, the prevalence of violence against women and girls including challenges related to land ownership rights, remains distressingly high.

Today Lucker is glad that she received help from the Legal Aid project office in Kitgum, who wrote a letter and summoned her relatives who had illegally settled on her ancestral land.

"At first, they were very arrogant, but they were later advised to divide the land and I was allocated 2 pieces measuring about 2 acres in total. I constructed in one while the other piece is cultivation," Lucker explained.



Lucker (2nd right) together part of her 3 children that stay with her on the reclaimed piece of land that was for her late father. Photo Credit: UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu

I'm glad to report that ever since we had meetings, they ceased disturbing me plus my children over this land.

"I'm very grateful to Legal Aid and UN Women for rescuing me. I had lost hope because I didn't expect to be barred from accessing even our ancestral land from my own family members," she added.

Lucker is among the many women that are being supported through UN Women's Spotlight initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices in Uganda through a European Union (EU) Funding ■

From Despair to Dedication: Yuma John's Journey as a Community Activist in Bidibidi, Uganda



John with his wife Hellen at Bidibidi refugee resettlement camp in Yumbe district. Photo Credit: Samuel Wamuttu

Yuma John, a 30-year-old South Sudanese refugee, has transformed into a dedicated Community Activist in Bidibidi refugee resettlement in Yumbe district, Northwestern Uganda.

In 2016, as war engulfed Yei County in South Sudan, Yuma witnessed the tragic death of his closest neighbor at the hands of armed soldiers. Fleeing for their lives, Yuma together with his mother, wife and siblings sought refuge in Uganda and were resettled in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement in Yumbe district.

As the eldest of five siblings, Yuma had inherited his late father's retail cloth and utensils business, which had been their means of sustenance. The outbreak of war halted his business activities including plans to relocate the business to the safer South Sudanese capital of Juba.

"I initially had not planned to stay in Uganda because I wanted to continue with the business in Juba, which was relatively safer. Unfortunately, I lost the money during my first days in Bidibidi camp. This was a setback for my livelihoods as I struggled to make ends meet," he reflects.

Yuma found himself in dire circumstances, grappling with the absence of income and enduring days without food. The resulting despair led him into depression and triggered violent behavior towards his family, a pattern that persisted even after he got his first child.

"Whenever the child would cry, I would throw my wife out of the house, even in the middle of the night, and she would only return when the child is quiet," Yuma confesses.

The turning point in Yuma's life came in 2022 when UN Women, in collaboration with Uganda Network on Law Ethics and HIV/AIDS (UGANET), a local organization introduced the SASA approach in his community of Zone 1, Bidibidi refugee settlement. SASA, an acronym for Start, Awareness, Support, and Action, is an evidence-based community mobilization approach aimed at preventing violence against women and girls. Developed with a blend of theory, practice, and optimism, SASA encourages communities to collectively create safe, violence-free environments for women. Through the generous contribution of the Government of Norway, UN Women working with UGANET is implementing the SASA approach in four refugee hosting districts in Adjumani, Yumbe, Terego and Kyegegwa targeting refugees and members of the host community.

In 2022, Yuma was identified among the youth in his community and participated in trainings on the SASA approach. From the training, Yuma embraced the SASA approach, gained insights into family values and learned how to be a supportive man within the family. Reflecting on the transformation, Yuma shares, **"I am particularly glad to have been sensitised about the use of power as a man. Before I attended the training, I did not realize I was mistreating my wife. Since I was sensitized, I apologized to my wife, and we have lived harmoniously ever since."**

Hellen Konga, Yuma's wife, attests to the positive change, expressing gratitude to UGANET and UN Women for the impactful training. She acknowledges Yuma's newfound responsibility, noting his increased support in household chores like washing clothes and fetching water from the borehole.

Now a SASA community activist, Yuma channels his experiences to support fellow community members in addressing issues of violence, particularly among women and girls. His story stands as a testament to the transformative power of education and community empowerment, creating a ripple effect that fosters positive change and inclusivity ■

Empowering young people in Uganda through Second Chance Education: Gloria's Story

Gloria during the interview. Photo Credit: UN Women/ Samuel Wamuttu



Gloria Loumo, 27, dropped out of senior five class in Kangole Girls Secondary School in Ngoleriet Sub-County, Napak district when she got pregnant in 2018. Loumo was impregnated by a fellow student of a neighboring school. He denied responsibility of the pregnancy. Back home, her mother and brother sent her packing.

"I was only saved by my other brother who only offered me shelter. I had to find what to eat on my own. I stayed with him until I was operated upon where I delivered a healthy baby girl I now call," Luomo recalls.

Speaking at a regional youth summit convened by the office of the First Lady, Janet Museveni, Loumo shared her cautionary tale with fervor, urging her peers to learn from her mistakes. "One mistake in life can alter your path irreversibly," she emphasized, her words resonating with the hundreds of students in attendance. "Focus on your studies and avoid relationships that derail your future."

The youth summit held at the Moroto Primary Teachers' (PTC) play grounds is an annual regional life skills event that brings together young people who are sensitized on critical issues affecting their development. The 2-day event also saw partners such as the Uganda Aids Commission sharing data on HIV/AIDS situation in the Karamoja sub-region, the risk for young people and the key messages and action points to combat further spread of HIV.

Her testimony wasn't just a message of warning; it was also a testament to the power of second chances. Through the UN Women supported Second Chance Education program, implemented by partners, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Uganda Chapter, funded through the Unified Budgets, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF), the UNAIDS' instrument to maximise coherence, coordination and impact of UN's response to AIDS, Loumo found a lifeline. She seized the opportunity to return to school, pursuing her education with unwavering determination.

"Learning about the program was a ray of hope in my darkest hour," Loumo reflected, a sense of gratitude evident in her words. "It wasn't easy juggling school and childcare, but I was determined to succeed," Loumo said.

Since 2019, the programme has been able to support over 200 young women and girls through education and vocational skills training.

Luomo says she learnt about the programme while engaging in a small business of selling vegetables in the market to support herself and the baby.

When I heard about the advert from FAWE over the radio, I rushed to the subcounty to fill the forms. I was later called for the interviews where I excelled. I was taken back to Kangole Girls Secondary School to start afresh where I passed my Advanced Level Education with 11 points," she said.



(Left) Loumo speaking to hundreds of students at Moroto PTC as her fellow beneficiary of the Second Chance Education Programme, Angella Maruk looks on. Photo Credit: UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu

Yet, despite her achievements, challenges persist. The dream of furthering her education, of becoming a teacher, remains elusive due to a lack of funding. For Loumo and others like her, the journey towards empowerment is ongoing.

Hellen Namuya, the Project Volunteer for FAWE Uganda Chapter, acknowledged the limitations of their current funding structure. "While we have provided support for secondary education, the path beyond remains uncertain," she conceded. "But we remain committed to empowering young women like Gloria to pursue their dreams."

Despite the set-back, Loumo is grateful for the opportunity by UN Women and FAWE for giving her a chance to complete her studies .

“I feel proud that I’m an empowered woman who can make personal decisions to change my life for the better. I’m currently engaged in selling some produce at a commission in markets around Karamoja as I plan for my next move,” she said with a smile ■



(Left) Loumo with her now 5-year-old daughter Vanesa who is now attending lower primary education. Photo Credit: UN Women/ Samuel Wamuttu

PICTORIAL



Dr. Paulina Chiwangu receives a gift from Stanbic Bank Uganda's CEO, Ms Anne Juuko during celebrations marking the 2nd anniversary of Stanbic For Her program for Ugandan women.



Head of office of the Austrian Embassy (In green jacket), Dr. Katja Yvonne Kerschbaumer together with her delegation take a group photo with staff of UN Women Uganda after a meeting to reflect on past partnerships and a discussion on future projects to accelerate access to justice for GBV survivors in Uganda.



Dr. Paulina Chiwangu together with Martin Orem, UN Women's Programme Specialist as they prepared to kick start food distribution in Kiryandongo with the UAE team.



(Left -Right) Moroto Municipality MP, Hon Adome Francis Lorika, Agnes Kisembo, UN Women's Programme Specialist, Gloria Loumo, 2nd Chance beneficiary, Rev. Dr. Samuel Luboga, Angella Maruk, another 2nd chance education beneficiary, Dr. Vincent Byaruhanga and an official from the First Lady's office during the closure of the Youth Summit in Moroto.



Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda, Anne Kristin Hermansen (Middle in black dress) in a group photos with members of Unity Savings and Farmers Group found in Bidi Bidi Refugee settlement camp in Yumbe district.



Part of the refugee women in Bidi Bidi resettlement camp in Yumbe district sharing some of their stories with Anne Kristin Hermansen the Norwegian ambassador who had visited them to witness firsthand some of the successes of the LEAP program supported by UN Women.

PICTORIAL



From middle, Anne Juuko, CEO Stanbic Uganda, Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, together with representatives of women organisations and some women Entrepreneurs who have benefited from the “Stanbic For Her” programme.



(Middle) Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, (in white), H.E. Abdalla Hassan AlShamsi, UAE Ambassador to Uganda, together with his delegation and some UN Women staff take a group photo at the end of distributing food items to women in Kiryandongo district.



Caption: Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) training of WFP IPs by UN Women Arua field staff members. This happened on 30th January 2024.

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS ON



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UN Women Uganda @unwomenuganda · Jan 9

.@unwomenuganda Country Representative emphasizes the need to address the barriers that women in Agribusiness face. The side event 19th Non Aligned Movement will provide an opportunity for women to showcase their products to investors. @unwomenafrica @UNinUganda @Mglsd_UG

UN Women Uganda @unwomenuganda · Jan 15

We need to transform women's participation in Agribusiness value chain and ensure that they access markets for their products. We must build the capacity to meet the expectations of the marketplace. Remarks by @unwomenafrica Regional Director @MHouinato . @Mglsd_UG @UWEAL_Ug

You reposted

Ruth Kitamirike @KitamirikeRuth · Mar 1

I'm thrilled to announce that part of my leadership journey has been highlighted in the recent UN Women Newsletter on women's political participation and leadership.

I deeply appreciate @unwomenuganda's commitment to nurturing the leadership potential of young Ugandan women.

You and 2 others

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UN Women Uganda @unwomenuganda · Mar 7

1 day to #InternationalWomensDay

Quote from @Dr_KatjaK, Head of @ADCinUganda:

"Collaborative efforts b/n gov'ts, dev't partners, & NGOs can enhance resources & foster sustainable progress, ultimately leading to a more inclusive & equal society". @Mglsd_UG #InvestInWomen

3 10 29 1.2K

UN Women Uganda @unwomenuganda · Mar 8

We are commemorating #IWD2024 in #Katakwi district.

Earlier President @KagutaMuseveni as chief guest visited some of the women in agro-business who are adding value to their products as supported by @UNWomenUganda.

In attendance were ministers & dignitaries. @Mglsd_UG #IWD24

Sweden in Uganda @SwedeninUG · Mar 8

Thank you, @unwomenuganda!

We are committed to make a change in Uganda by investing in women.

When more women participate in labour markets, economies grow and innovation increases.

#InternationalWomensDay2024 is a clarion call to accelerate women's economic empowerment

UN Women Uganda @unwomenuganda · Mar 8

Happy International Women's Day!

As we celebrate this day under the theme: Invest in women: Accelerate progress, we thank our partners @ADCinUganda @SwedeninUG @NorwayUganda @JapanEmb_Uganda @EUinUG @Mglsd_UG for their...

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UN Women Uganda @unwomenuganda · Mar 19

"Nearly 60% of women in developing countries are employed in the informal sector.

We need to do more to help women especially in **be** economically empowered & @stanbicug is doing it," Dr.@PaulinaUNWomen, giving her remarks at the Stanbic for her 2nd anniversary.
#StanbicForHer

2 8 28 787

NBS Television @nbstv

VIDEO: @PaulinaUNWomen joins women in celebration of the #NAMS SummitUg2024 Women in Agribusiness Expo and Investment Summit.

@mildredtuhaise

#NBSUpdates #AgriWomenUG

UN Women Uganda @unwomenuganda · Mar 6

2 days to #InternationalWomensDay

Quote from H.E. Amb. Anne Kristin Hermansen, Head of Embassy @NorwayUganda

"Norway remains a strong supporter of gender equality and women's empowerment in Uganda & globally"

#IWD24 #InvestInWomen #WomensMonth #GenderEquality @Mgisd_UG

H.E. Ambassador, Anne Kristin Hermansen
Head of the Embassy of Norway in Uganda

International Women's Day

3 8 521

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NBS Television @nbstv · Jan 15

.@PaulinaUNWomen: I want to express my gratitude to H.E. @KagutaMuseveni. He is our patron. I also want to express my gratitude to the Ministry of Gender, @MAAIFUganda and all government institutions that have been working with us to organize this wonderful summit.

#AgriWomenUG

2 8 27 4.4K

UN Women Uganda @unwomenuganda · Mar 7

1 day to #InternationalWomensDay

Quote from State Minister of Gender & Culture @Mgisd_UG Hon. Peace Mutuuzo.

"It is crucial for women to boldly enter traditionally male-dominated spheres in the professional realm"

#InvestInWomen #WomensMonth #IWD2024 #GenderEquality

Hon. Peace Mutuuzo
Minister of Gender & Culture
Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Dev't

International Women's Day

1 3 14 596

UN Women Uganda @unwomenuganda · Mar 4

As we gear up to the #IWD24, we need to reflect more on the empowerment of women as a key to building a sustainable future.

We are working towards a world that ensures that all women & girls thrive to benefit their families. #WomensWeek @Uganetlaw @NorwayUganda @AustrianDev

Babweteera Rhonah, Head of Gender Equality and Violence Against Women Prevention - UGANET

International Women's Day

UGANET

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Featured Story Links on UN Women Africa Website between March and January 2024

- 1. Empowering Women in Agribusiness: UN Women Uganda Leads Transformative Summit to Bridge Gender Disparities and Unlock Opportunities .**
 - <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2024/02/bridging-gender-disparities-to-unlock-opportunities>
- 2. UN Women Uganda and Partners Unveil US\$41.9 Million Joint Programme for Data and Statistics, Paving the Way for Transformative Impact on Sustainable Development Goals.**
 - <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2024/02/paving-the-way-for-transformative-impact-on-sdgs>
- 3. In the words of Peluce Tuhaise: Training on peacebuilding and conflict prevention positioned me as Women Peace Mediator**
 - <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/in-the-words-of/2024/02/in-the-words-of-peluce-tuhaise-training-on-peacebuilding-and-conflict-prevention-positioned-me-as-women-peace-mediator>
- 4. Norwegian ambassador visits LEAP program beneficiaries in Yumbe district**
 - <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2024/02/norwegian-ambassador-visits-leap-program-beneficiaries-in-yumbe-district>
- 5. International Women's Day Rings in a Call for Economic Prosperity to Address Women's Challenges in Uganda**
 - <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2024/03/international-womens-day-rings-in-a-call-for-economic-prosperity-to-address-womens-challenges-in-uganda>
- 6. Empowering Futures: Mary Awate's journey to establish her own motorcycle repairs garage.**
 - <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2024/03/empowering-futures-mary-awates-journey-to-establish-her-own-motorcycle-repairs-garage>
- 7. From Despair to Dedication: Yuma John's Journey as a Community Activist in Bidibidi, Uganda**
 - <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2024/03/from-despair-to-dedication-yuma-johns-journey-as-a-community-activist-in-bidibidi-uganda>
- 8 . Asumpta Aputu's journey to leadership: Learning to write my name paved my journey to be a community leader**
 - <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2024/03/asumpta-aputus-journey-to-leadership-learning-to-write-my-name-paved-my-journey-to-be-a-community-leader>



UN Women Uganda Country Office
Plot 2 Saddler Way, Naguru
Off Lugogo Bypass
P.O. Box 7184 Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +256 417 201000
@unwomenuganda



Norwegian Embassy
Kampala



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