



# IMPACTED

TOWARDS WOMEN AND  
YOUTH EMPOWERMENT  
FOR GENDER EQUALITY



**Irish Aid**

Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



**OXFAM**







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# INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a compilation of impact stories of the work Oxfam and its partners have implemented with funding from Irish Aid under the PG2 project.

Oxfam is a global movement for change that empowers people to create a secure future, just and free from poverty. We believe that everyone has a right to safety, security, a livelihood and a say in decisions that affect them.

Our Vision is to see Uganda free of inequality and Injustice: A society where people, particularly women and young people, claim and exercise their rights and responsibilities and influence decisions that affect their lives. Our work is guided by the Country Strategic Framework (CSF) (2021-2030), organized around four themes: Governance and Accountability, Resilient Livelihoods, Humanitarian preparedness and response and Gender Justice and Women's Rights. All the themes work towards influencing policy and practice, youth and women empowerment, inclusive participation in decision-making at various levels, and capacity strengthening of national and local actors.

As a way of working, we take a one-program approach where we ensure that our interventions save people's lives in crises, build their resilience and sustainable livelihoods, protect their rights and promote social cohesion and peaceful co-existence.


The Irish Aid program grant 2 (PG2) is one such project. The 6-year project (2017-2022) focused on two core areas i.e. Women and Youth Economic Empowerment (W/YEE) and Gender Equality (GE). The project was implemented in 8 districts in 3 regions. These include Packwach, Nebbi, Zombo, Arua, Gulu, Lamwo, Kotido and Kaabong.


Implementation of these key areas was delivered by Oxfam working with six national partners, namely: National Association of Women Organizations in Uganda (NAWOU) and Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), who were responsible for increasing gender equality and stimulating local activism towards prevention of Gender Based Violence and enhancing women's participation in leadership. Uganda Youth Network (UYONET) and International Foundation for Recovery and Development (IFRAD) who were responsible for increasing Youth Economic Empowerment. Agency for Community Empowerment (AFCE) and The Uganda National Apiculture Development Organization (TUNADO) who were responsible for increasing Women's Economic Empowerment.



## TOTAL **INDIRECT** REACH


 **17,490** PEOPLE


 **60%**  
FEMALE

 **40%**  
MALE

## TOTAL **DIRECT** REACH

 **5,512** PEOPLE

 **45%**  
FEMALE


 **55%**  
MALE




### COFFEE VALUE CHAIN

TOTAL REACH

**1,506**

 **804**  
FEMALE

 **702**  
MALE



## HONEY VALUE CHAIN

TOTALREACH

**2,260**



**907**

FEMALE



**1,353**

MALE



## ENTREPRENUERSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

TOTALREACH

**240**



**213**

FEMALE



**27**

MALE



## YOUTH ADVOCACY

TOTALREACH

**584**



**303**

FEMALE



**281**

MALE



## KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS TOWARDS VAWG

TOTALREACH

**152**



**62**

FEMALE



**90**

MALE



## INFORMATION ON KEY DRIVERS OF VAWG

TOTALREACH

**456**



**186**

FEMALE



**270**

MALE



## INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP

TOTALREACH

**314**



**135**

FEMALE



**179**

MALE

## PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITY REACHED



**155** PEOPLE



**63**

PERSONS WITH  
VISUAL IMPAIRMENT



**55**

PERSONS WITH  
PHYSICAL DISABILITY



**37**

DEAF PERSONS









## **PROMOTING THE COFFEE VALUE CHAIN**

Coffee is not only bringing income in the homes of people in Zombo district but also peace, harmony, and love. This is attributed to the interventions Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through Action for Community Empowerment (AFCE). The coffee value chain has transformed to be more holistic and inclusive. What was previously a predominantly male-driven activity is now involving women. Women are more empowered, contributing greatly in the value chain.



## THE MICRO STATION

*Pamitu micro station in Zombo District*

These were created at the inception of the project to act as on ground structural support for coffee farmers. There are 8 micro stations spread across Zombo and Nebbi. These contain more than 300 coffee farmers. These are categorized as youths, females, and males to support all age groups involved in coffee farming.

A micro station typically offers a wide range of services. They offer trainings to farmers on climate-smart agricultural practices like de-suckering, mulching, pruning and digging trenches, to mention a few. They are also trained in modern coffee practices to ensure that quality is maintained. Farmers are also trained in the gender action learning system methodology, which uses the principle of inclusion to address gender disparities. They are further trained in the visioning tool, which enables them to make goals as a couple that ensure a sustainable future for them. Members are also trained in financial literacy and put into savings groups that they think will help them. This has boosted household incomes and brought so much development among the farmers.



*Members of a VSLA being sensitized on the importance of saving by ACFE staff*



## SAVINGS SCHEME

There are seven savings groups in each micro station. These have more than 30 members each. These have received financial literacy training as well as knowledge on the importance of saving their incomes and diversifying it so that they come out of poverty. However, there are categories of savings groups.

There is the Village and savings loan association (VSLA) type where members save and borrow money while saving with a purpose (SWAP) requires members to save towards acquiring a particular asset. These have been

effective in improving the lives of many farmers. The members in the saving groups are also encouraged to diversify their sources of income from the savings they make. They also share ideas and plan accordingly on how they will spend their money. This has seen most members have started small-scale businesses like selling vegetables, silverfish, restaurants, and planting trees. This has in the long run ensured sustainability and improvement in their standards of living.

## SPECIALTY COFFEE

This is a new innovation that is being promoted throughout all micro-stations. This ensures that the coffee meets international quality standards. For specialty coffee to be made, the quality table and coffee drying structure are key to achieving this high-quality coffee.

At the quality table, the harvested coffee is hand sorted. Unripe, damaged, sick, insect damaged and over-ripe cherries are removed. After this, the coffee is weighed and then poured into a basin, the ones which sink will be taken to the pulping machine. After pulping, the coffee is fermented for 2 nights and on the 3rd day it is washed until only clean water is left. The coffee will then be put in a coffee drying structure spending seven days on each level until it dries to a moisture content of 11. It is then packed in sacks and taken to the bulking center awaiting it's transportation to Zombo coffee factory.

For natural coffee (Kiboko) after hand sorting, it is taken to the basin and not the pulp. It is then dried under the sun but not on the ground and then taken to the bulking center. Every micro station has a bulking center where farmers are encouraged to bulk coffee so it is sold at a good price to avoid middlemen who sometimes cheat them.

*Women hand sorting at the quality table*







*Inside the Zombo  
Coffee factory*

## ZOMBO COFFEE PARTNERS

This is an association of farmers in Zombo which pre-finances the micro stations. This association also owns the Zombo Coffee factory which processes the coffee that has been bulked at the micro station.

Whenever farmers bulk their coffee, they get paid immediately or get a receipt if they don't want the money at that moment. Zombo coffee partners usually picks up the coffee from the micro station to their factory. They also pay coffee farmers very well and set a good high price for their coffee. It is important to note that before the factory in Zombo

started, coffee would be transported from west Nile to Mbale in eastern Uganda for processing. This would take a long time as well as high costs. All that changed when the Zombo coffee factory opened. Zombo coffee partners provides a market for coffee as well as adds value to it.

Coffee from this factory has been exported to the Netherlands, Roast Factory in Netherlands, Havana Coffee in New Zealand, Omwani Coffee in the United Kingdom, Olam Specialty, South Korea and Kuwait.



## OUR COFFEE, OUR HAPPY HOME

*"I used to be cheated by middlemen in the past but now I am able to sell my coffee at a good price because of this project. I am able to save with a purpose and as a result, I acquired 3 goats and a pig. As a woman, I contribute to the running of my home."* **Pacorach Molly, 32 years, Panyango Village, Asina Parish, Athoma sub-county, Zombo District.**



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*"I want to appreciate the training given by this project. People have got a lot of money especially from bulking coffee at this Pamitu micro station and the savings group has helped many acquire assets. The level of violence has significantly reduced. For two years now, I haven't received a case of gender-based violence. Before the project came, we used to register about 6 serious cases of gender-based violence related to coffee but the training reduced this. As an individual, I have been able to acquire knowledge from trainings. I want to acquire my own land and plant coffee."* **Ongeyowun Batista, 41 years, LC 1 Chairman Panyango Village, Athoma sub-county, Zombo district.**

*"Before the project, I used to market my coffee on credit and buyers would delay to pay or run away with my money but these days there is ready market for coffee at a good price. Back then, we used to sell our cherries at 700/= a kilo but ever since the project came on the ground, we started producing specialty coffee, our cherries are now at 2000/= a kilo. I have been able to educate my children through saving with a purpose. My coffee yields have improved greatly because of the training I got on de suckering and creating contours which enables cherries have enough nutrients."* **Alifua Joyce, 45, Pamitu Parish, Zombo district.**

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*"I am grateful for the training from this project. The knowledge I got from the training has helped me bulk coffee, I have been able to diversify my sources of income by planting short-term growing crops. Being part of the saving group has made me set a set a target to construct a house..."* **Vuladina Ongiera, 67, Zombo**

*"This project took away all my problems. With this project in place, we are able to bulk coffee and sell at good prices. Marketing coffee in the past was very difficult. I was cheated several times by middlemen who would disappear with my money. I used not to get my money at the time I needed it. I also benefited a lot from the trainings. I learnt about climate smart practices like contours and pruning. For us in the past we used to think that pruning would reduce the branches and affect coffee yields. From my saving with a purpose, I acquired 8 birds"* **Oyanga Teresa, 80 years, Pamitu Parish, Zombo district**



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*"As a youth, I have planted so far 100 coffee trees which are mine. With the training I received in good agronomic practices in coffee like manure application, timely weeding and pruning, my yields have improved greatly. The training on saving with a purpose has helped me save money that I used to buy a goat and hire half an acre of land on which I planted coffee. Oryekwun Justine, 24, Simu Village, Pamitu Parish, Zombo District.*

*"This project was a turning point for everything in my family. I am finally involved in the entire coffee value chain. Last year from the savings group we got 300,000/= and hired land to expand our coffee production. I have benefited a lot from the idea sharing in our savings group which is developmental. God willing, we shall construct a permanent house soon. "* **Immaculate Orwunya 49, Zombo**



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*"This project has brought peace in my home. Previously, there was mistrust between me and my husband. He would not involve me in the marketing process of coffee but now I am aware of the amount of the money made from coffee sales. The saving group has also enabled us to buy 3 goats and this year we intend to start construction of a house."* **Aduabango Joyce, 45, Zombo**





## I USED TO STEAL MY COFFEE

When you walk into Mr. and Mrs. Ngabiroch's compound, you will be met by a wall plated house soon to be complete. However, what is more peculiar is a chart hang by nails plastered in front of the building. On it bears their three year vision road journey that this couple is trekking till they realize their set goals and aspirations. This couple in Pamitu Parish, Siimu Village has adopted the visioning tool as a basis for their development and it is indeed paying off from the fruits they can see.

For a moment, it may seem surreal but from the chemistry and body language this couple exhibits, you can surely tell that everything is going on well. One may wonder what the secret to this could be. *"When this project came; I started going for the trainings and I used to inform my husband who also later got interested and joined me."* 34-year-old Mrs. Ngabiroch says. Mr. Ngabiroch on the other hand says that the training in the gender action and learning system which encourages couples to work together and make joint decisions was a game changer in his life. *"Before, I wouldn't involve my wife in my plans, and life was hard because we weren't moving anywhere. We had no goal at*

*all and no co-operation at all. When I got the training, I began working with her, and the speed at which we are developing is that of lightning,"* Mr. Ngabiroch speaks as he and his wife smile.

This couple is undoubtedly setting the trend in the community. The training they acquired in smart agriculture by Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through Action for community empowerment has connected them to government programs and agencies.

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*"Our coffee garden is among the few selected as a model for good coffee agronomic practices by Uganda coffee development authority and the ministry of agriculture, animal industry and fisheries."*

The couple celebrating 16 years in marriage has encountered major transformations in the coffee value chain. *"Before, I would participate in the production of coffee, but I was never allowed to market, and this caused a lot of problems in our home."* Mrs. Ngabiroch says. Her 49 year old husband also feels bad about cutting her out of the coffee value chain *"It was unfair because*



*she would dig and harvest and I would be the only one to market. This meant that no one held me accountable, giving me leeway to spend the money carelessly."*

When Mrs. Ngabiroch saw this, she decided to devise means of how to benefit from her sweat *"I used not to have access to the money so I started stealing my own coffee and that brought more problems in my home because the trust in me vanished. I was sometimes even caught."* The couple bursts into laughter because that is all a memory.

Currently, Mrs. Ngabiroch says that there is trust in the home and she no longer steals ever since she got involved in the entire value chain. *"There is transparency and joint planning. Whether I or he goes to market the coffee, we shall come back and account to one another. There is peace in our home and a lot of good things have come out of that."*

The couple says that the vision road journey has been a big part of their lives because it reminds them daily on the different activities they should do in order to reach their goal like saving with a purpose. *"It has given us a big vision for our family."* Mr. Ngabiroch says.

The couple talks through their vision road journey chart and the symbols there in. It has the permanent house they are building now and more houses they intend to construct to replace the remaining grass thatched houses in their compound. It further shows the plan to educate their six children until university. The other plan is to buy a vehicle to facilitate their movement. In addition, they intend to diversify their incomes by planting banana's on a large scale. *"We now have two acres but we plan on expanding to four acres such that we can accommodate both crops."* Mrs. Ngabiroch proudly speaks as her husband nods in agreement.

It is safe to say that Mr. and Mrs. Ngabiroch have experienced immense impact as a result of the work Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through action for community empowerment is doing in Zombo district. The couple promises to invite the team for the housewarming soon when the house is complete. *"I want to thank Oxfam and its partners for the good work they have done. I just wish the project to continue because it has helped us a lot"* Mr. Ngabiroch adds.





## THE SUPER MUM

In 2007, Confua Winnifred became a single mother of two children at 25 years. 17 years later at 42 years she has managed to survive the hardships of single motherhood quite well. One might call this a beating the odds story but this could be an *"If life gives you lemons, then make a lemonade."* kind of story. Now at 42, she painfully recalls the hard life she passed through after her husband left her. *"I struggled a lot with my two children. I sometimes survived on a meal a day and at times I didn't eat at all just to ensure that my children had food on the table."* She remembers.

In a bid to overcome her precarious situation, the resident of Kubi village, Pacaka Parish, Erussi sub-county in Nebbi district started coffee farming. Unfortunately, she had very few coffee trees that weren't sustainable coupled with a lack of knowledge of good

agronomic practices. In addition, she was plagued by middlemen who complicated and stressed the marketing process for her coffee and she was literally drowning in losses. This kept on for a while until 2015 when she heard of the Oxfam project and joined it.

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*"The project opened my eyes and changed my life in ways I must explain. We were trained on saving money to do developmental things. We were also taught good coffee agronomic practices like pruning and contouring. We were also taught and encouraged to bulk our coffee. If we were to get good money from our coffee. We learnt how to make good quality coffee, we call it specialty coffee which commands a premium price on the market."* She explains.



Winnifred started putting what she had learnt into practice and began bulking as well as saving with a purpose. This propelled her life to greater heights. *"I realized that the savings group would help me educate my children in good schools and luckily I sent my children to a good school in town."*

She further says that she was trained on diversification of income and laying strategies for resilience. She was trained on how to make kitchen gardens where they can grow vegetables and make an income and feed themselves as they wait for money from coffee. She began growing vegetables in her home which she would sell and also use for home consumption. This is a practice she does even during the dry season. *"I plant near the river my vegetables during the dry season because I want to constantly have vegetables."*

In 2016, after undergoing the gender action learning system training, she was empowered to take a bold step of moving from a grass thatched house to a permanent one. Her vision was too big for some of her community members as it raised eyebrows because it seemed too impossible for a single mother but guess what? *"I had a plan for my house, and I started the construction immediately. I saved with a purpose and bought a pig which farrowed 7 piglets. I sold all the piglets after 2 months at UGX 70,000/= each and got 490,000/= (approx. 132USD) which I used to lay bricks. I then bulked coffee and soon, I had completed my house! I had a clear vision for it and nothing was going to stop me."* She proudly says as she moves around her completed house.

With her house complete, her eyes are set on acquiring a "moving house" (Car) to ease her movements because she

feels that she can achieve anything, and she has a vision. When asked about her children, Winnifred says that her two children have finished senior four and progressing to the next level. *"My children have seen the development I have got from this project and appreciate it a lot. They are so committed to my coffee fields to the extent that they are involved. I have trained them on what to do. They are able to pick coffee in the garden and can also deliver the coffee at the bulking center. They are also helpful at the micro-station when it comes to sorting."* Her children are very proud of her because she has single handedly on her own raised them and they owe what they have to her. *"I am their mother and father."*

By now, you probably think you know everything about Confua Winnifred but not at all of it. *"It was a norm in this community that women can't take up leadership roles until the micro station opened. I was elected the secretary. I have delivered effectively to the amazement of many people who thought women weren't able. This position has also given me a platform and recognition. I am getting many opportunities as a result of this leadership."* Confua reveals. This is true because even her chairman and members of the micro station attest to her leadership skills as being excellent. The chairman Mr. Komakech Kennedy says *"The micro station has given women a voice to be leaders. My secretary is very effective and transparent. I have no issue with her work because she is very good."*

Winnifred is grateful for the project and doesn't want it to end. In her own words, she describes the project as a fishnet where you can catch the fish you want.



## AN EYE OPENER

Meet the Komakech family of coffee farmers based in Kubi village, Pacaka parish in Nebbi district. The couple has been married for 28 years and been blessed with seven children. The secret to their long-lasting marriage is partly due to the prevailing peace in the home brought about by the gender action and learning system methodology (GALS). *"Before the project, we weren't coordinating together in the entire value chain of all crops but since the gender action learning system training, we are now able to work and plan together and a lot of good things are happening in our family."* Mrs. Komakech stresses that. This couple has clearly undergone several training components of the program and there is a lot going on in their lives as you will see. Mr. Komakech is the chairman of the Culamuk micro station. He is also a nursery bed expert who is the go-to when you need a nursery bed of some crops like coffee and trees. The 48-year-old is quick to add that before the project came, men were dominating the coffee value chain and theft of coffee was rampant because women couldn't market the coffee.

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*"Misunderstandings were always in homes and there was a lot of anxiety. However, the project trained us on recognizing that women are an important part of the entire coffee value chain. This helped many of us restore order in our homes. I now plan jointly with my wife, and she now markets the coffee."*

This mindset has been critical in propelling the household income of the couple because they have been able to educate all their children as well as have a decent home. Before this project, Mr. Komakech says that a lot was going wrong *"We used to produce coffee at farm wash level in our various homes and the quality wasn't uniform or good. We used bad coffee methods like drying on the ground."*

The couple were then trained by the project to make specialty coffee which has improved and maintained the quality of coffee. *"We were also trained on good agronomic practices like weeding, pruning, mulching and many others which we have used on all crops not only coffee because*



*those practices have kept our crop yields higher than those days when we were making mistakes” Mr. Komakech adds.*

Earlier times before the inception of the project, marketing was like squeezing water out of a stone. Coffee buyers and middlemen were taking their coffee on credit and took ages to pay them if they were lucky to be paid. This was very frustrating for them. The project was able to cover that loophole with the creation of the micro station and the training. *“We were taught about bulking coffee and its importance, this changed everything for the better and we began bulking coffee, and we were getting paid whenever we wanted the money because the money is always there at the micro station and the coffee is sold at a good price.”* 42 year old Mrs. Komakech speaks proudly.

The project was an eye opener; it is through bulking coffee and saving with a purpose that they were able to litter their compound with permanent houses. The red iron sheets are so visible even at the micro station. It is a marvel to look at because it is a statement of what a couple working together can achieve.

The progress in their home is sustainable because the project also trained them on diversifying their incomes. They now have a nursery bed of trees that they hope to make timber or poles out of when they mature in a few years’ time.

Mr. Komakech as the chairman of Calamuk coffee micro station speaks briefly about the achievements the 150 farmers at the micro stations have made. *“At the start of the project in 2015, we managed to bulk and sale 1500kgs of coffee. As of 2022, we have been able to bulk and sale 12,500 kgs. We hope to bulk up to 20,000 kgs in 2023 because more people are interested in joining the micro station.”* The numbers clearly don’t lie. This is transformation that couldn’t be achieved if Irish Aid hadn’t funded Oxfam. The uptake of the training and the practicability of the lessons is changing people’s lives for the better.

Women in this parish have also been uplifted in terms of leadership because Mr. Komakech says that most of the leadership positions at the micro-station are held by women.

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*“The secretary and the quality manager are all women and they have done an excellent job. They have proven the doubters wrong. Women are also as able as we men in leadership.”*

*“We are 150 farmers at the micro station, and I want the numbers to increase to over 500 because our community has to develop.”* They are grateful to Irish Aid through Oxfam for bringing light and hope into their lives because they can now achieve their goals and live a happy good life.





## PEACE AND PROSPERITY AT HOME

Imagine, a few years back, she used to save money for only Christmas. This meant that after a year long's savings, all the money would go into food and clothes and that was it.

Nyamungu Lewija is a 67-year-old coffee farmer in Pamitu Parish, Siimu village. She is a trail blazer who is admired and respected by most people because her story is inspiring. The P1 drop out who has 6 children has been able to construct a permanent house, has two solar panels, many goats and poultry. This may be a great accomplishment, but she has more *"I have started saving for cattle. We have also bought two acres of land to expand on our coffee and diversify our crops to increase our household income. I also want to construct another permanent house"* The vision road journey she is undertaking as a result of the training in the visioning tool is working.

*"All that wouldn't have been possible if Oxfam and AFCE had not come"* Lewija affirms. She is married and her husband is a businessman in Nebbi town. The couple has six children and marriage life was rocky before the project came. *"My husband used to drink a lot and most of the money from coffee sales would go into alcoholism and nothing developmental. The trainings in gender action learning system and visioning tool have really helped him stop drinking. Those days we used not to plan together and my participation in the coffee value chain was also a problem. We weren't making any developments. This project changed him, and we are now one. We do everything together. This project has brought peace and prosperity in my home"* Lewija's husband is now working with his wife to ensure that further development happens in their lives.







Furthermore, she notes that before the project came, they used to sell coffee poorly and they didn't benefit much because buyers would offer them very low prices. The project was able to solve that problem. Her family has been able to sell good quality coffee at a good price and they doesn't regret anything because the benefits from the project are tangible.

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*"Through saving with a purpose and coffee sales; my husband and I have constructed a permanent house in 5 years after the project started. We have also been able to educate our children."*

Lewija is the treasurer of *Can-odwoka-ryek saving with a purpose group*. She says the saving has empowered women economically and many other women have been forced to join them because the fruits are tangible. *"We started 30 people but now we are 45. I have been able to serve diligently, and I encourage other women to also be like me."* Lewija is grateful to Oxfam through Irish Aid PG2 for bringing development and change in her life.









# **ADDRESSING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

## **NO MORE ROOM FOR VIOLENCE**

The fight to end GBV is a collective effort as we will see in stories coming out of Nebbi and Pakwach district. The significant strides taken by Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through UWONET with Pacego Women initiative for development are seen through the various testimonies of change where women equally as men have taken a stand against GBV.



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*“The male champions have been influential in my life. Whenever I used to drink alcohol, I would beat up my wife and mistreat her. At that time, I didn’t think that my wife was important because I saw her as a burden, and I wasn’t supporting her. When the male champions heard of my story, they met me, and sat me down several times. They advised me to change which I did. I abandoned my old lifestyle and I look better now because those days I was thin and looking bad. I value my wife more and I view her as an equal to me”* **Okumu Steven 25, fisher man, Packwach District**

*“Before this project, I used to fight my wife and I used to cause chaos in the home because I was a drunkard but with the sensitizations from PACEGO, I was able to change my mindset and right now; I have a peaceful home; I acknowledge that a woman deserves the same respect as a man and I stopped beating my wife. Whenever we have a misunderstanding, we sit together with love and iron out any issues we experience. That has worked for us a lot.”* **Jabanja Denis Okecha, 35, Padoch Village, Packwach district.**



*“I have been a single mother because I ran away from my marriage. My husband used to beat me and ended up stealing my assets. I wish I had the knowledge I have acquired from Pacego back then, I would have arrested that man. The good thing is that I am encouraging my children and grandchildren not to allow violence of any nature in their homes. I believe that couples have equal voices in the marriage”* **Niiwu Salima, 58 years, farmer, Packwach District**

*“From the sensitization Pacego carries out, I have been able to understand that women have rights and voices. I am more empowered and independent. If any man tries to violate my rights I have a right to take him to the police or authorities at least to get help”* **Kweton Stella, 22, Tailor, Packwach District**







*"You see me humble and quiet now but those days I was short tempered and quick to anger. I was also taking alcohol at that time and there was no peace in the family. I used to argue and fight with my wife. When I received the teaching from Pacego on ending violence in the home, I gradually changed. I don't regret changing because I am enjoying the benefits. There is love and peace in my family now"* **Rwothomio Daniel, 26, Fisherman, Packwach district**

*"I want to thank this project because before I used to beat my wife and drink a lot of alcohol. One day, I saw my friends going for the Pacego sensitization campaigns and I also went and I liked the teachings against domestic violence. I learnt how to manage disputes in the home where by I sit with my wife and we talk about it. That whole experience changed my mind because I also quit alcohol and got born again. I no longer have violence in my home and that is why I urge people not to beat their wives because it leads to death."* **Thango Bosco, 24, farmer, Packwach District**



*"The teachings of Pacego changed my life and led me to become a male champion. Before this, I was stubborn and I caused a lot of trouble in my home. Right now, I am an inspiration in this community and I preach against violence wherever I am. Whenever cases of gender based violence arise, I am always there to follow them up to the conclusion."* **Onega Felix, 60, Male Champion, Packwach District**

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*"Women have a voice these days. Those days it was a crime to sit on chairs or speak. Nowadays; with the help of this project, women can report whenever they face violence and they are even active in community meetings. We speak out against any bad things. I am a community facilitator and I move around sensitizing other women to realize that they are empowered with rights"* **Namita Dinah, 53 years, Community Facilitator, Packwach district**






We have Male action groups, community action groups, male champions, SASA activists who support us in the community where we can't reach in time."

## THE DISTRICT EFFORTS TO COMBAT GBV

According to Peter Okiria the community development officer of Nebbi district, several interventions have been implemented with the help of development partners like Oxfam in Uganda with funding from Irish Aid which has reduced on the number of GBV cases. *"We have carried out community dialogues with the help of local leaders. We sensitized people on where they can get help in case they become victims of gender based violence. These referral pathways are key in ending GBV"* He says. It has also been observed that local leaders have been instrumental in the fight against GBV because they are not afraid to speak against GBV and people listen to them.

Furthermore, legal clinics have been conducted in communities such that people are aware of the law and their rights. He also notes that the creation of groups in the community is being effective in ending gender based violence *"We have Male action groups, community action groups, male champions, SASA activists who support us in the community where we can't reach in time."* These groups were key during the COVID-19 lockdown because movement was restricted and they were the only pathway to get messages or solve GBV issues on the round where authorities couldn't reach.






In addition, the Alur Kingdom and its Paramount chiefs in each sub-county have used their institution to fight GBV. The Kingdom organized sports galas, music and drama events which are geared towards creating awareness against GBV. The Kingdom also made pronouncements on some cultural practices that would encourage GBV for example the days and number of people involved in dowry payment celebrations were reduced because girls were being defiled and teenage pregnancies were high after these celebrations.

However, the fight against GBV isn't over according to Jawianbe Frederick Okwera, the probation and social welfare officer Nebbi district. He says that economic violence is more prevalent lately followed by sexual violence. He also notes that reports at the police and his office are not reflective of what's on the ground. *"This happens especially to young girls who may get pregnant but the parents won't report and some opt to negotiate with the perpetrator and some even don't want to be identified so cases die out like that."* Luckily, local leaders from LC1 to LC5 are now investing time in ending GBV. He hopes that with more assistance from development partners, GBV will go away at some point.



A woman with a white headband and a black dress with a white pattern stands in front of a long, single-story building with a corrugated metal roof and several windows. The building appears to be a shelter. The ground is dry and grassy. A large, stylized circular graphic with orange and yellow segments is overlaid on the left side of the image.

“We want to also teach them some skills when they come here besides rehabilitation such that they are more self-reliant but the financing gap exists and affects our activities.” She says.

## THE GBV SURVIVOR’S SHELTER

Nebbi district is one of the few districts that have a shelter where GBV survivors can get counselling, access to justice, mediation and temporary relief as investigations into their matter happens. The Shelter which was started by Action Aid international was handed over to the district for further management. However, Madit Kwo Grace, the shelter manager says that the shelter struggles from financing because they have to take adequate care of the survivors.



## THE ROLE OF POLICE IN ENDING GBV

The OC of the police child and family protection unit in Nebbi, ASP Wanican Baifa says that Alcoholism and drugs are key factors that have kept GBV prevalent. *"GBV is death and that is why as Police we are determined and won't stop fighting against it until it is gone. It affects development and causes a lot of pain especially to children"* She also adds that Police has created a relationship with the community which fosters reporting of cases and getting justice for the GBV victims. Police has also been a key ally in various initiatives to end GBV.

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*"Police has also been part of the GBV community dialogues, radio talk shows, we also sit and mediate in some GBV cases." She reveals.*

The media like Packwach FM have been key in ending GBV. They work hand in hand with the police *"The radios are helping because they give us time for talk shows and they also invite us to speak to people about GBV and people usually call and ask questions and we help them."* She adds.



## THE WORK OF PACEGO

Pacego women's initiative for development has been credited for taking the lead in ending GBV. They have carried out several sensitization campaigns and trainings in various communities against the vice. This has empowered many women and given them a voice. Before the project, GBV cases were hardly reported but now the organization receives over 200 cases annually through the community action groups they established.

The use of drama skits in disseminating their messages has been key in mindset change. *"People don't listen to us unless Pacego drama group performs first."* ASP Wanican Baifa confesses. One of the drama group members is Ngamita Joyce. She moves in several communities with Pacego performing dramas that condemn GBV. *"The dramas have created a lot of impact because they simplify hard things and people understand easily."* She adds.

*Pacego women initiative for development drama group performing a skit*





## I AM AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS

"We had so many misunderstandings in our home; so many. In fact, my husband used to neglect our children's welfare and go for alcohol instead. Our children weren't studying. It was a difficult time. I was literally struggling to feed them. He used to sneak in the kitchen and steal the food I had struggled on my own to get. One day it became too much and we had a fight. I got a stone and hit his eye." Florence reveals.





There is evident happiness and joy 45 year old Ongiera Charles and his wife, 40 year old Ayila Florence are experiencing in their marriage after choosing to have a violence free home. Charles is a change agent and a male champion in Jukal West Village, Padoch parish, Panyango sub-county in Packwach district. He is also a retired captain from the armed forces. However, this couple with five children has been through thick and thin to achieve the smiles on their faces.

*"I was a drunkard and I used to fight my wife all time. Whenever I would get salary, I would drink all of it. When my wife would ask for money, slaps would be the reply. I regret that life and I am glad I left it. These days I keep the money and there is peace in the home"* Charles Confesses.

*"We had so many misunderstandings in our home; so many. In fact, my husband used to neglect our children's welfare and go for alcohol instead. Our children weren't studying. It was a difficult time. I was literally struggling to feed them. He used to sneak in the kitchen and steal the food I had struggled on my own to get. One day it became too much and we had a fight. I got a stone and hit his eye."* Florence reveals.

Charles carries with him a reminder of that day; a visible scar under his left eye. The incident raised a lot of uncertainty. The male champion in the area intervened in the matter and cooled the situation down. *"Pacego male champions taught us how to behave in a home and to avoid violence. My*

*husband had intended to divorce me but he didn't and even when we came back together, he didn't retaliate."* Florence explains.

The couple which got married in 2005 started attending various sensitization campaigns at the sub-county organized by Pacego on ending gender based violence in the home. *"We reached a change point where we had to become born again Christians to strengthen each other."* Charles adds.

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*"I value my wife more than anything because she takes good care of me and the children and there is a certain peace in the home that I can't describe. When I get salary, I bring it to the table and we plan together. My wife plants cassava which she sells and makes us money."* Charles explains.

Charles is a change agent and male champion who traverses his community preaching against violence in the home. He uses his own story to inspire couples to adopt peace and love in their homes and it seems to be reaping results. *"I am an example that has inspired many people in this village"* He says.

Charles and Florence make joint decisions and whenever they have any misunderstanding, they sit together and resolve them. Their children go to school and the family is developing together. *"I want to thank Oxfam and Pacego for bringing light in my house hold and I am a happy man."* Charles concludes.





## MY AWAKENING

At 26 years, Moses Mungutie is down to his fourth marriage. His 24 year old wife Kwiocwinyu Clare has borne the brunt of his ugly side and come out with him a changed man. Moses' previous wives ran away because he was a very violent drunkard who used to not only mistreat them but harm them as well.

Moses is a change agent and fisher man in Padoch Village, Padoch parish, Panyango Sub County. He attributes his violent behavior to poor upbringing *"I married young and I didn't know anything about it. No one ever told me what to do."* This prompted him to be violent and neglect his wife and two

children. *"I used to do many bad things. I used to go to the disco 3-4 times a week and I had very many ladies. I didn't care about my health and I wasn't helping at home."* He adds. Moses who used to leave his wife with all the work is now involved at home. *"I now work with her in the garden and at home. That is what a real man is supposed to do."*

Moses' family attributes his woes to bad peer groups while in school. *"He was very clever in class at Panyango SSS but groups led him to move to Packwach SSS. In S3 he ate (diverted) school fees and that was the end for him."* His brother Edmund recalls. Moses became a fisher



man after dropping out of school *"I made a lot of money and resorted to alcohol and women and I did nothing developmental."* Moses confesses.

The unbecoming behavior of Moses almost made Clare his fourth wife leave. This prompted the intervention of his family who involved Male champions and Pacego women's initiative. These structures were key in mindset change for Moses *"I was sensitized by the male champions. Pacego also trained me several times on issues of ending gender based violence and how to be a better husband to my wife. It is through this teaching that I began to realize my mistakes. The good thing I knew what I had to do. I abandoned my old ways immediately because I was on the wrong path going nowhere but doom."* Moses reveals.

He began to make changes in his life. *"I quit alcohol and the bad peer groups. I became a born again Christian. The money I got from fishing, I began to bring it home and I began respecting my wife and I have never beaten or shouted at her."* He confirms. Some of the benefits he is enjoying are that he is developing better at home because he has a good relationship with his wife.

The Pacego gender trainings Moses had undergone encouraged couples to develop together and not rely on one source of income. Moses decided to take his wife Clare for tailoring training. *"After her training, I bought for her a sewing machine. She does tailoring work from home not because I wanted but because there is a need for her services in the village."*

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*"I now have a voice in this home when I speak. Moses listens to me. When we have any misunderstanding, we work it out together."* Clare assertively says.

Moses values his wife and respects her. He hopes his story can inspire other youths like him to also change and be good to their wives. *"If I had known what I know now, my life would be far better but it's a lesson and I hope other people also change and be good to their wives."*

Moses appreciates the work Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through UWONET and implemented by Pacego for the work they have done in his life. *"I will forever appreciate the work they have done because they have restored so much of my life and my future is bright because I am focused on educating my children and taking good care of my wife."*





## INFLUENCING CHANGE

The fight against gender based violence has been more emboldened by figures and faces that are not shy but ready to advocate for an end to this violation of women's rights. One of the key influencers in Nebbi district is Berochan Moses. The 60-year-old is a Male Champion and district male councilor for Abhindu division, Nyacara ward, Nebbi district.

Moses has been at the forefront of fighting gender based violence for the last 13 years. *"Beating a woman to pulp was normal and many women were suffering. However, in 2010, ACFODE came in. We needed to empower women and not subject them to GBV."* The project operated in 4 sub-counties but later left after a few years.





In 2015, Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through UWONET came in at a time when there were high gender based violence cases reported in two sub counties i.e. Panyango and Nyaravur. *"When Oxfam and UWONET came in, it offered us great relief because we began a series of community dialogues and we sensitized masses on ending this abuse of women. The main goal was to make them understand that gender based violence infringes on their rights and that of children which in the process affects development both at home and the community"* Moses explains.

Through the community dialogues, it was observed that women began speaking up for themselves and advocating for their rights.

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*"We trained women on the referral pathways and cases of gender based violence went down by 50% because women knew where to go in case they needed help" Moses is proud of the achievement they made.*

Some of the structures that have been pivotal in achieving this are the sub-county community development officers and male action groups who are on the ground soldiers. Part of Moses' role as a male champion is to mediate whenever a gender based violence conflict arises even without invitation because mediation is key. *"Mediation helps both parties understand the importance of being violence free and respecting each other. Mediation helps us understand the root cause of the problem, the actors involved and how best to overcome the situation."* This has been key in mindset change for many men.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic lock down affected his work. *"GBV cases*

*increased because men were unproductive and demanding for services they weren't contributing to. A man who used to eat once a day wanted three meals a day and that brought issues. Men were also stealing women's money for alcohol consumption. Sexual violence was also high!"* The lockdown also meant that Moses couldn't easily get to the scene of the conflict because movement was restricted. *"Male action groups and sub-county CDO's came in to support though it wasn't also easy for them."* He notes

The other hindrance that affects GBV cases that Moses speaks of is the fact that most women fear taking up a case against a family member because they fear that the society will implicate them as a person who has brought big problems to the family or community. He also highlights that of recent, economic violence seems to be more prevalent and he has started talking about it. *"Some men don't think that women should make their own money and that has affected also girl child education in the process. But I usually use my wife as a reference because she makes her money but I have never demanded for her salary."*

Moses is married to 54-year-old Akethi Beatrice who is a nursing assistant at Nebbi general hospital. His wife runs a side business of frying pan cakes. The couple is celebrating 30 years in marriage. *"Whenever we get any misunderstandings we sit and discuss, that's how we have managed to be married. I won't say there haven't been challenges but my husband is very understanding."* Beatrice confesses.

Moses is one of the beneficiaries of having an empowered wife in a violence free home. The couple has several investments and their development is on steady progress. *"The land we have now, the initial payment*



was by her. We left a government house and came into our own built house. We built and planned together. We put our resources together and life is better.” Moses says. The couple has gone on to build more houses for renting as well as acquired land for gardening. “I feel economically empowered because I own my money and I don’t over burden my husband when my relatives need some assistance.” Beatrice adds.

Moses believes that education is key in ending gender based violence. He also says leaders need to step up and speak one language.” *We can play politics but we should put GBV somewhere in our speeches because sometimes we influence change.”* He is grateful for the traditional leaders like the paramount chiefs who have been pivotal in speaking against GBV “Whenever we have community dialogues or any sensitization campaigns, they are usually there and add their voice. The media like Radio Packwach has also helped spread the message against GBV.” He says.

In his community, Moses is a role model. “He is brave and not ashamed to speak against GBV. He spreads the messages everywhere.

He is one of those leaders who will be at a funeral and speak about gender based violence.” Jawianbe Frederick Okwera, Probation and social welfare officer, Nebbi district confirms. “Moses has helped me as a man realize the need to have a peaceful home, I admire him a lot with the way he does his things. I am encouraged to also advocate against GBV.” Okumu Ongula Vice chairman of Akesi village attests to Moses inspiration to the community.

Moses says that some people look at him weirdly as a lead advocate against GBV but he is not fazed by them.

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*“I will not stop talking against GBV and I don’t care what people think. Beating women is not normal and we can’t accept this vice in our communities” He affirms. Moses is a beacon of hope for many women and girls and his actions are bringing about change. “I want to thank Oxfam, Pacego women’s initiative, UWONET for giving women a voice. GBV isn’t over and we need more support” He concludes.*











# **PROMOTING THE HONEY VALUE CHAIN**

Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid have been working with the Uganda National Apiculture Development Organization (TUNADO) to scale up the entire honey value chain. The project which has been implemented in Gulu has seen over 700 participants receive trainings in bee keeping and information related to bee keeping. They have also been trained on hive making, sighting and hive management. Furthermore, value addition has also been at the fore front of this project with the availability of processing machinery and bulking centers. This has ensured quality of honey products as well as kept many of them employed. The availability of a training center in the area has given many people and opportunity to get involved in bee keeping.

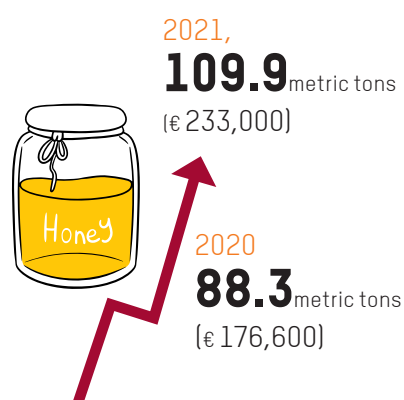
## ACHIEVEMENTS

The Unique aspect about the PG 2 honey value chain was the Inclusion of persons with disability. As of 2021, 63 persons with visual impairment in Gulu, 55 persons with physical disability and 37 Deaf persons across the project implementation areas were supported to start up projects and trained in different aspects of the honey value chain. This was a result of TUNADO's Disability Inclusion strategy that aims at interesting marginalized sections of society to join and benefit from beekeeping. While PWDs have always participated, 2021 saw many of them picking interest.

Through the continued provision of extension services by the apiary masters that had been recruited by TUNADO in all the districts, there was an increase in the production of honey. For example, in 2021, farmers produced a total of 109.9 metric tons of processed honey which earned the beekeepers 233,000 Euros compared to 88.3 metric tons in 2020 worth Euro 176,600.

TUNADO also helped the bee farmers get trainings by various entities that matter. For example, several project participants attended a training by Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) on gender and business. This helped to promote awareness on gender and its relationship to entrepreneurship and betterment of community among the participants. TUNADO also supported bee product processors and packers to participate in a meeting organized by the Uganda Small Scale Industries Association (USSIA). This was to impart skills on market access and identification for small and medium enterprises.

In 2021, TUNADO organized Three (3) regional multi stakeholder platforms in the districts of operation. To ensure that the SOPs were observed, the regional convening were preferred to the usual national multi stakeholders' platforms. This enabled the participation





of a cross section of stakeholders including local government representatives and in-depth discussions on how to improve the sector. From these meetings, regional work plans were developed to guide the implementation of activities in the different regions going forward.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, TUNADO addressed the challenge of limited movements to conduct beekeeping trainings by developing (3) step-by-step video tutorials- a replication of the beekeeping training materials on different aspects of the value chain, these were Uploaded on different media platforms like You tube. The beekeepers have shared feedback that the materials was very beneficial.

TUNADO also conducted Monthly (12) Regional talk shows; this gave guidance on how people would benefit from the sector and address any concerns. TUNADO also went ahead and developed Quarterly (4) Api news letters that were circulated both on and offline to different stakeholders. The Api-newsletter had prices of bee products during the quarter and stories of change from all over the country and other technical content concerning apiculture. As a result, 15,460 people received the stories through the online platforms, and hard copy distribution.

TUNADU plans on having a permanent bee keeping training center and extension services such that more and more people get involved in bee keeping and thus reduce unemployment.



63

PERSONS WITH  
VISUAL IMPAIRMENT



37

DEAF PERSONS



55

PERSONS WITH  
PHYSICAL DISABILITY





## BREAKING BARRIERS

Bees are part of the biodiversity on which we all depend for our survival. From pollinating plants to producing honey, bee bi products such as bee wax, and propolis, the importance of bees is as significant as its sting. With this in mind, many people would not dare reach a beehive but not 32-year-old Francis Okello Oloya from Amuru district. Visually impaired, Francis takes pride in his bee keeping experience

Francis wasn't born blind but he is one of the casualties of the LRA war that took place in northern Uganda. *"At the height of the insurgency of the LRA, aged 12, I was involved in a bomb blast which rendered me totally blind."* He says. This didn't stop him from pursuing his studies. He went to Gulu primary school blind annex where he finished his primary 7, and Gulu high school for Ordinary and advanced level. In 2010, he joined Makerere University to pursue a bachelor's degree in community psychology graduating in 2014.

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*"I searched for a job but failed at every turn. I wouldn't be hired because I was blind. People even told me to go to NGOs that deal with people with disabilities to hire me which depressed me a lot because I had a good transcript and I had the ability to work like any other person" Francis affirms.*

It is during this time of frustration due to unemployment that he learnt of an opportunity that even a blind man could participate in bee keeping. He started bee keeping with support and training from HIVE Uganda. It is here that he started with four local palm bee hives that he laid at his apiary. *"It was a very good start because I got training to be to become a master bee trainer which would help me train other blind people to participate in bee keeping."* He adds





After HIVE Uganda left, Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through the Uganda national apiculture development organization (TUNADO) came in and supported him greatly. "I was able to participate in the development of the manual for beekeeping for the blind in Acholi and participated in the audio translation to Acholi. I was also trained in

good climate practices like planting trees to conserve our environment. It is for those reasons that my apiary is in between trees." He says. Francis also says that he was also trained in using a safer smoker to harvest honey. *"Those days we used to go with fire and sticks to harvest honey which would sometimes cause bush fires. Right now we*





*use a smoker which uses dried cow dung which is environment friendly and safer. We also use cow dung to attract bees to colonize a hive sometimes."*

Francis was also taught on how to ensure quality after honey has been harvested such that there is value for money. He now uses air tight buckets to store his honey until it is ready for sale to the processors. *"I was given free buckets after the training and I thank Oxfam for that".* You must be wondering how a blind person is able to manage bee keeping; a day with Francis tells you how he manages it.

A person of visual impairment needs a guide who will support them to see where there are pests in the hive. This person also helps in the process of harvesting. *"If I am using a smoker, then my guide can help me open the hive and harvest the honey. Even when I am cleaning the hive, I work with my guide to ensure that it's cleaned well inside. Even when it comes to baiting the hive, my guide can help sprinkle the bee wax inside to also attract the bees."* He adds.

What if there was no guide? Well, the white cane comes in to guide Francis in case he is on his own. He uses it to check the location, land marks and tree stamps which most times alert him that he is at the apiary. The other aspect to help people with visual impairment is the innovation that TUNADO has been able to implement when they get to their apiary. *"There is a navigation string and we use this string so that we don't lose the path to a bee hive. This string has nods that will help you identify that this part is next to the bee hive such that you*

*prepare to approach the bee hive. The first hive will be identified by a single nod, then the second hive will have two nods until the end. Furthermore, the bee hives are arranged in a semi-circle line such that you navigate easily."* Francis explains as he walks around his apiary.

Francis is a model bee farmer to people with disabilities *"I have 12 visually impaired persons in Paboo who come to my apiary to learn and this has boosted our confidence because we are self-employed."* It is through bee keeping that Francis has improved on his way of living as well as opened doors for him.

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*"I am a busy man, very knowledgeable in bee keeping especially with people with disabilities because I offer advisory services."* He adds.

The 4 hives he started with are now 21 and he intends to add more this year.

Bee keeping has given Francis a vision and a big goal for his community. He is the director and proprietor of Chance nursery school located in his home compound. *"The bee keeping project gave me an idea to start this school because I know in the near future, this apiary will be used as a learning center such that children not only know academics but are able to learn about agriculture at an early age. I want them to integrate farming with bee keeping. I also want them to learn how to conserve the environment."* Francis explains. The school is the only early childhood development centre in Palwong Parish since the nearest school is 2km away.





He uses some of the proceeds from the honey sale to buy scholastic materials for the children to ease their studying as well as other school needs.

Away from bees, Francis has someone who also calls him "Honey." He has been married for 8 years with 3 children. *"It takes a lot of courage to propose to a normal person because they may think it's a misfortune; why of all people would a blind man come to me? Some families would not even accept their daughters to marry me but she chose me."* He married his wife because amidst his blindness she treated him with respect on their first meeting. *"Some women wouldn't be kind but she was."*

Francis Okello Oloya is breaking barriers and proving many wrong. He is more capable than many able bodied people. He has changed the perception that visually impaired people can't make it in life. Bees may be dangerous but they can as well change a life. He thanks Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through TUNADO for the work they have done. *"I have self-worth and other people like me feel that way because our lives are better. It is for that reason that many more people with disabilities are joining bee keeping because they see me and they get inspired. The good thing is that the training centre is there. Keep up with the good work."*

## I NEVER LOOKED BACK

The Honey value chain isn't complete without the processors. After the bee keeper harvests the honey from the apiary, that honey comes to people such as Onaka Robert who process it into various products. The 33-year-old resident of Palaro village, Patwol parish, Gulu district is the proprietor of Fort Patiko Honey.

His journey to become a processor hasn't been all that rosy as he explains, *"I am a plumber and a farmer. I started bee keeping in 2012 under Tukwo. I started with 50 hives. However, I didn't have any training so my honey was poor quality because I would harvest today and sell the next day. I was missing other products. Eventually, I left bee keeping because it wasn't yielding much."*

However, Robert's woes came to an end when he heard of TUNADO training bee farmers in 2017. He joined the program and everything changed. *"I was trained adequately on bee keeping and processing good quality honey. I didn't look back after that. I used the knowledge I got to start my processing journey. Fort Patiko also produces products like Propolis, smearing oil, wax, to mention but a few."*

The process of making good quality honey is so elaborate that there is no room for error as he explains. *"When processing honey, we first mingle it then filter it from stage one to stage three before going into the settling tank. This ensures that the honey is good quality and ready for supply."*

Robert's wife Sharon Onaka assists in processing other products like propolis, smearing oil and wax. She also coordinates the marketing and distribution of the

products they process. However, the constant supply of honey affects their business most of the times because sometimes they have to buy honey from as far as Kotido district to maintain a constant supply of honey throughout the year. In addition, the couple lacks certification of their products by Uganda national bureau of standards which has limited them from supplying countrywide. *"With the UNBS stamp we shall be able to expand and grow. For now we are supplying supermarkets using bar codes."* She says

The couple has been able to construct a house and educate their children as a result of processing honey and they hope to achieve more from it.

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*"The training from TUNADO has really changed our life in ways I didn't expect. I am grateful for the training because it is helping us a lot. I don't have money problems any longer. My children are studying well and my family is generally happy" Robert reiterates.*





## HOPE AFTER COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic affected so many people when lockdowns were announced. People lost jobs and the standards of living declined.

Manuela Letasi a mother of one was not spared. She is one of the people who lost her job as result of the COVID-19 lockdown. *"I was a school secretary and when schools were closed I became unemployed and life became hard because I didn't have money and yet I had a child to take care of."* The 25 year old resident of Layibi recalls.

After the lockdown, recovery was on the agenda of everyone. It is during this time that Letasi came across a training by TUNADO with funding from Oxfam and she joined it *"Oxfam introduced me to honey processing and that's how I picked interest. They taught me how to make honey, Wax and jelly."* She says. Manuela is the proprietor of Aruu falls Honey, jelly, Propolis and wax. She is one of the few women processing honey in Gulu district. Her honey is sold at all GASCO supermarkets in Gulu and the MTN service centre Pece. *"As a woman, I feel good. I am useful in the home and my husband is supportive of my business."* She proudly says.

*"I don't regret leaving my secretary job. I am now self-employed, I am not stressed, I have money and I have enough time for my family."* Manuel is quick to explore the benefits she is getting as a result of taking up bee processing. She also says that from the honey processing, she has been able to buy land with her husband and they have planted trees.



Manuela says that business has been fine. She sells 1 kg of honey at 20,000, 500ml at 10,000, Propolis at 5000/= only. However, she faces problems like lack of enough money to buy honey in big quantities from farmers, the other issue is the quality of honey is sometimes wanting. *"Some farmers supply watery honey and that affects our customers."*

Manuela hopes to register her business in future as well as find a permanent shop where she can sell her honey. For now, she is an inspiration breaking barriers that women can't participate in the honey value chain. *"Women involvement in bee keeping is less because of the fear for bees so the best we can do is be part of the processing. I usually encourage women to also join this business though some say it needs a lot of money."* She adds.

Manuela feels empowered and economically able because her income stream is secured.

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*"Honey processing has opened doors for me that I can't even explain. I hope this project continues such that more women enroll for the trainings."*







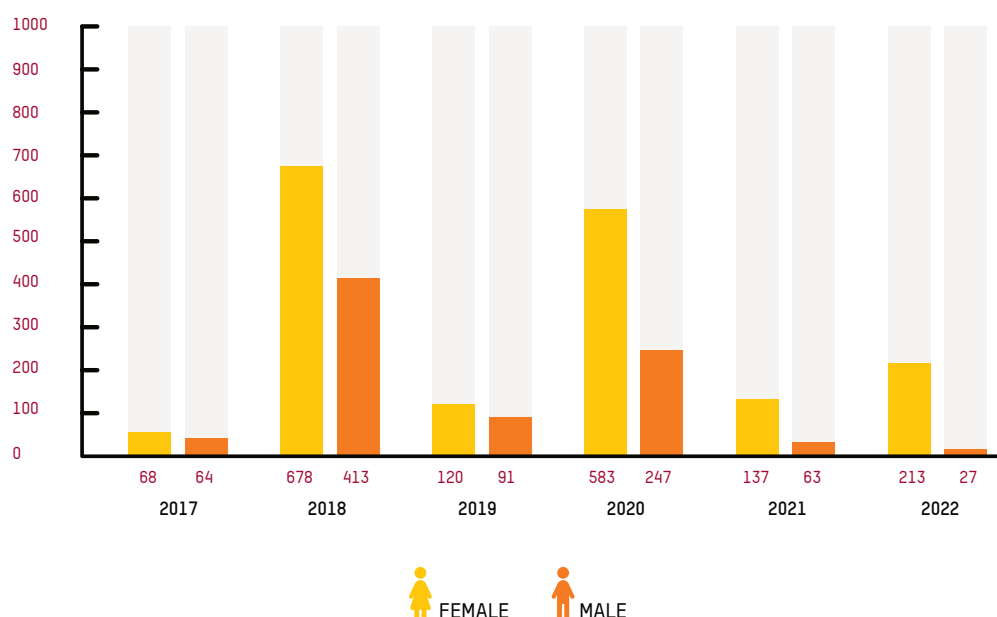


# **YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Youths are economically empowered and self-reliant with skills gained through the one stop skilling center established by Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through International Foundation for Recovery and Development (IFRAD)

**There are milestones made towards addressing youth unemployment in Gulu district.** Youths are economically empowered and self-reliant with skills gained through the one stop skilling center established by Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through International Foundation for Recovery and Development (IFRAD).

**Statistics of youths who have been skilled from the inception of the project.**



## THE SKILLING CENTER

At the inception of the project, a skilling center was constructed in Coo-pe village in Bungatira sub-county. Youths are trained in a variety of activities that help their wellbeing. Youth undergo mindset change as well a wide range of entrepreneurship skills training. *"We use interactive teaching as we train the youths. We have trained them in ICT, record keeping, sexual reproductive health rights with a focus on family planning, liquid soap making and VSLA"* Ronnie Omara, the IFRAD Gulu district coordinator explains.



Youths are also trained in confectionery making like cakes, Sim-Sim candy, daddies, peanut butter to mention but a few. *"We have also trained girls on making reusable pads, we have also taught them on climate smart agriculture which encourages backyard farming and some youths are now climate smart trainers in the community."* He adds. There are over 1,000 youths that are benefiting from this project. These own businesses and are putting the knowledge gained into tangible results.

Some of the project participants making confectionary i.e. Sim-sim candy



Some of the project participants making reusable sanitary pads



Some of the project participants being trained in ICT



## A FULFILLED FUTURE

*"Before the project I was doing nothing at home. This idleness did not go well with my husband. There was no peace with my husband. However, all that changed when I came to this skilling centre and got trained on how to start and market a business. After the training, I started a pan cake business in the market and it is faring well because of its location. There is peace in the home now. I have learnt to save money and I have used some of my savings to buy a goat. I am now able to take care of my 2 children. This project has lifted my confidence. I can confidently speak in public. Those days, I wouldn't even speak yet I had issues to talk about"* **Lamaro Dorothy Priscilla, 24, farmer, Gulu**

*"I want to thank Oxfam and IFRAD for the support because things are not as hard as before. I was almost dropping out of school due to school fees problem when this project came. I was trained on making liquid soap and this has helped reduce on the financial burden of school fees that my parents had. I now make liquid soap and sell which has kept me in school."* **Lubangakene Bismark, 20, student, Lukome SSS, Gulu**



*"During lockdown, I was trained how to make liquid soap and since then we have been making and selling. The price of soap has been high. We have used this as an opportunity to sell our soap at a lower price i.e 1000/= a liter. This has created demand for our product. Through this, I have saved some money to buy scholastic materials when we resume school. The money has also made me manage my menstrual hygiene which was a problem because it used to affect my school attendance and other things. My plan is to make liquid soap in big quantities like a factory."* **Lamwaka Prossy, 18, Student, Gulu**

*"Life was hard as a peasant farmer without work. The little food I harvested was what I would end up selling to raise some money and it was still not enough. When I joined the skilling center, I was trained on making Sim-sim and how to market it. It is what I do now to earn a living because I do it daily and I move around markets and trading centres selling it. Through this business I have saved money and bought ducks. I am also helping my husband at home in terms of home purchases. My husband is now more supportive of my business."* **Amarorwot Kevine, 24, Gulu**







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*“I have learnt how to make reusable pads, sim-sim and ground nuts. Currently, I am focused on reusable sanitary pads. I am waiting for some key materials for the pads such that they are on sale. I believe my pads will keep girls in this community in school because there is need for them since some girls drop out of school due to lack of sanitary pads*

**Akot Janut, 22, Gulu**

*“I remember during the lockdown, this training centre helped us so much when we were not in school because they trained us on skills which helped me take care of my parents who were home by then. I learnt how to make liquid soap, marketing and branding. Even now, during holidays I make liquid soap pay my school fees and any requirements I may need. This relieves my parents”*

**Lamunu Robinah Joan, 19, student, Gulu**



*“I was idle and had nothing to do except loitering and wasting time with bad peer groups until I joined this project. I got trained on liquid soap making and that has changed my life. It has kept me busy and productive. I am no longer spending time with bad groups and I am more focused. In addition, the money from liquid soap is what I use for pocket money and I don’t stress my parents anymore because at least I have a skill that can make me some money.”*

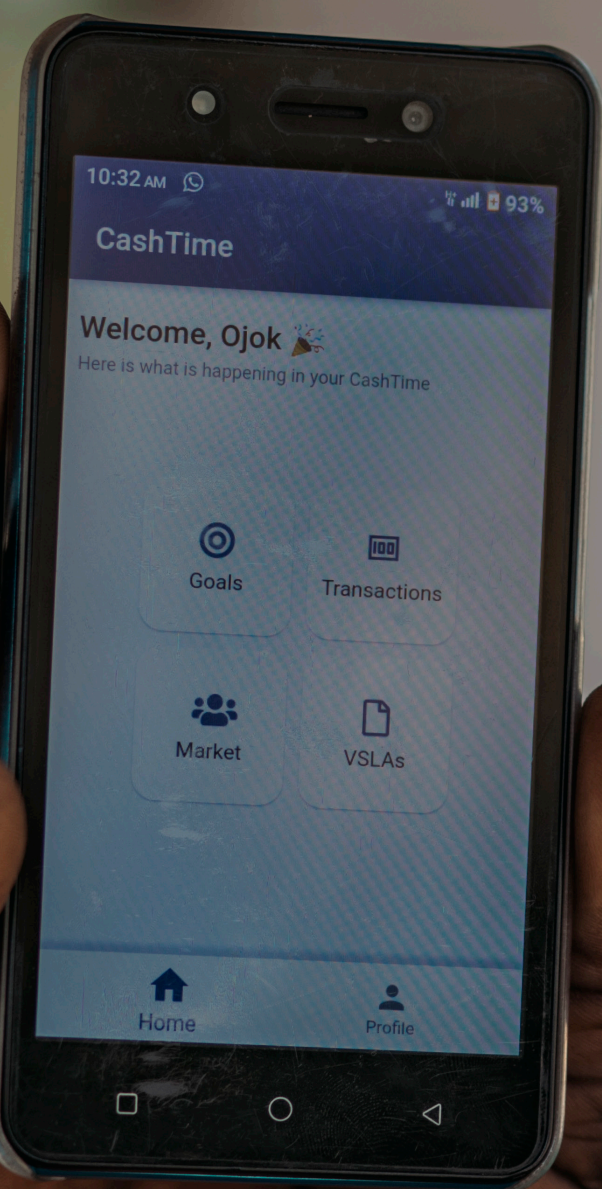
**Rubangakene Tony, 19, student, Gulu**

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*“I was taught entrepreneurship skills like setting goals, record keeping, marketing and many others. I was also trained on how to make reusable sanitary pads and right now am a tailor who makes them; a pack is 30,000/=.”*

**Priscilla Oyella, 24, tailor, Gulu**





## TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

There are 8 VSLA groups at the training center with 30 members each. These have adopted the use of technology to ease the management of each VSLA. The Cash Time App has made savings easy and convenient for every youth with a smart phone.

The App contains features like; Goal setting: where a youth can set a savings target. The other feature is the Marketing app: This helps youths market the products they have anywhere in the country; the transactions feature shows how much one has saved while the VSLA feature also monitors the membership and total monies saved.

A cross section of youths say that the Cash time app is great because it has eased transactions as well as monitoring and transparency because the App automatically updates totals and any transactions which can't be manipulated. This has enabled trust and belief that youth's savings are safe.



## YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The youth parliament is an initiative that brings youths face to face with various influential local leaders in their area for example LC5, RDC, LC3, MPs among others. The youth parliament is a platform where youths air out their grievances and make demands for better services. This creates accountability as well as unity among them. The youth parliament has been key in linking youths to local leaders who have lobbied for them to access youth funds at sub-county and district level. Many youth groups at the center have benefited from the Emyooga and youth livelihood fund as a result of the youth parliament where they meet key leaders who lobby for them and they get the funds because they are a more organized group.

*"We prioritize the youths here because they have skills and need money to further their knowledge and that's why we support them a lot. Currently, 2 youth groups from the training center are at the final stage of receiving the Parish development model funds. This is good because we are developing our*

*community. We have also realized that this project has brought so much change in the community. Youths are no longer idle and jobless like before. I thank Oxfam, IFRAD and other partners for this initiative."* Ojara Lotada, LC 3 Bungatira sub-county affirms during a youth parliamentary sitting.

The youth parliament has also been a vehicle used to advocate on many social issues like ending GBV, Sexual and reproductive health rights and many more other issues. There is hope that this will go a long way in empowering the youth and securing a brighter future for them because their voice is heard and action is taken.







## NO MAN CAN LIE TO ME NOW

In 2021, a surge in COVID-19 cases prompted the government to announce a second lockdown. This meant that students like Juliet Lanyero would return home after spending a short period of time at school. Juliet speaks eloquently with confidence as she narrates how the training center was a turning point in her life.

“Remember that we had come from the first lockdown where we didn’t study for a whole year and now we were in another so early. It disorganized my mind.” She adds. The 20 year old now; was in S3 by then and was contemplating marriage because she had someone who was ready to marry her.



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*"I was stuck between marriage and waiting for school to resume. The pressure was mounting. At the same time IFRAD made a call for youths to come for training."*

Juliet, a youth in Bungatira sub-county, Gulu district was reluctant about the whole idea of equipping youths with skills but she decided to come because her friends were attending. She got hooked by what she found at the centre and started attending all the sessions. It got to a point where all she had to do is wake up and show up at the training center even before it opened. *"I met new good people and the trainings were very helpful and developmental. It is at this time that I had a change of heart and mind because it is then that I realized that there were no benefits in getting married because the reasons I wanted to get married were also due to the fact that I didn't believe that I could be rich on my own but this project helped me realize my potential."*

Juliet didn't turn back. She abandoned the whole marriage idea as well as the man who was disturbing her. She focused her time on making liquid soap that she had been trained in. To top it all, the training center also helped her find her voice because at school, she couldn't stand and speak up as a girl. *"At the training center,*

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*I was encouraged to speak up and now I can stand among my peers and speak without any fear of anything. Those days at school I wouldn't contribute in class and I used to have low self-esteem."*

She further adds that the training in book keeping helped her with the commerce subject at school.

The Senior 4 candidate who sat her UNEB exams in 2022 is elated to say that she encourages many other girls to join the centre because *"It is developmental and boosts on our way of life because it makes your mind focused and makes you proud to be a girl!"* She continues to talk of the need for girls to value themselves and work hard to be independent because that's how the project has made her feel about herself.

Meanwhile, Juliet has made a considerable amount of money of her liquid soap making skills and she uses the money to buy any requirements she needs. She plans on diversifying her liquid soap business by starting poultry from the savings she is making.

Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through IFRAD have strengthened Juliet Lanyero and secured her future because she says *"Many men have tried to lie to me with money but now I believe in myself that I can also be rich and I am focused on my future and that won't change anytime soon."*



## IT WAS A NIGHTMARE

The story of Peace Akello, a 26-year-old single mother of two resonates with that of many female youths who have been through what she has experienced. She is a jolly and vibrant young lady who is gradually getting up on her feet after a dreadful past.



A year back, Peace decided to leave her husband after persevering intense abuse throughout her marriage. *"I couldn't keep up with every bad thing he did so I left and came to my parent's home. It's now a year and I am trying to cope with a new life here."* Her eyes are teary as she tries to hold back emotions of the pain she feels. She says that her husband not only abused her but went ahead to destroy her career. *"I was a tailor. I was sponsored by a lady to study for a year and after that she bought me a machine and textiles to use."* The senior 4 drop out from Sacred Heart SSS had hoped that the tailoring skill she had acquired would help her earn a living but jealousy and small misunderstandings in her marriage didn't let that happen. *"One day, my husband out of rage ended up destroying the electric sewing machine that the lady had brought for me from abroad, he also destroyed the textiles, It was a night mare!"*

Peace came back to her father's home in Bungatira with her 2 children. She was stranded and desperate because she had two children to take care of and no idea of how to help her situation.

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*"At that moment I was in a bad mental and emotional state. It was so hard and many bad thoughts were in my mind. It is during this period that I heard of IFRAD and the youth skilling centre."*

She was able to access the centre and on that day, she found a training on life skills. *"I was pleased with what they were talking about because they were addressing young mothers, drop outs like me adopting some of the skills to survive. I then asked to join the program and I was allowed to join"* Before Peace could enroll fully, she opened up about

her troubles and underwent counselling and guidance to help her overcome the trauma and torture she had undergone.

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*"I can't thank this project enough because the counselling really helped me and I always tell people about this".*

She affirms. She also attributes the counselling as key to helping her rise above her situation and stand tall.

Akello was trained for 6 months in making bags and reusable sanitary pads which she makes and sells to make a living. Her hope has been restored in life because she is able to take care of her two children on her own and she is making an income. She is also empowered to be on her own *"My husband has tried to ask me to take him back that he still loves me but I have refused because I endured a lot of bad things he did that I can't even say here."*

Peace has moved on with her life and is trying to piece it together with the constant help of the youth skilling centre. She now saves with the VSLA and some of her savings go towards the welfare of her children. She has been able to feed them, clothe them and she also has a daughter in boarding school that she is caring for with ease. She has further benefited from the capital grants some members have accessed and she wants to be economically self-reliant as she navigates her life.

She is grateful to Oxfam for the new lease of life she is enjoying and hopes the youth skilling centre continues saving other single young mothers like her.





## I WAS GIVEN A CHANCE

Moses Kinyera is lucky to be among the project participants of the youth skilling project. The impact of the project has elevated him into the role of a community influencer. *"We are 7 people from different villages who were elected as community influencers. Our role is to sensitize youths on issues affecting them like sexual harassment, school dropouts, teenage pregnancies and any other. We also intervene in such matters in case they happen such that a lasting solution is got."* The 26 year old explains. Moses moves around his community spreading mindset change and being a good role model to others.

Before all this, Moses was too shy that he couldn't speak to anyone when he had any pressing issue and he couldn't even stand before a crowd but with the activities at the skilling center, all that changed.

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*"I was given a chance to speak at a youth parliament and I was able to air out my view and people clapped. That really motivated me to be confident and I started expressing myself freely in public."*

Moses has received several trainings in liquid soap making, sim-sim making, computer to mention but a few. He however stresses the training in smart agriculture as well as backyard farming which has helped him. He has a small garden of tomatoes he keeps at his home for both commercial and home use. Furthermore, he used smart agriculture practices in his garden when he planted soya beans and he has so far harvested

200 Kilograms of Soya beans. *'My harvest is at the bulking centre waiting to be advertised and sold off at a very good price'* He adds. The bulking center was established to help youths market their produce at a good price. *"Before vendors would buy from us cheaply and cheat us but now, we put our produce together and we are helped in marketing which fetches us a good price"* Moses affirms. He believes this will increase the household incomes of the participants and encourage agriculture because the marketing aspect will have been catered for by the bulking centre.

Moses sees the project with a vision that not everyone sees *"After the training we started a VSLA to save up money, we were 30 youths. However, some youths thought the group was formed to make money and when it didn't come, 4 of them dropped out and they regret it."* He adds that the VSLA has been an integral part of his life because he can borrow whenever he has an emergency and pay back.

Mr. Kinyera is very certain of his future plans and he is no longer scared like before about the unemployment crisis among the youths lately. *"To me, unemployment is no longer an issue. If I don't get a job after studies, I am not scared because I will be earning from my skills and I will be able to live a good life."* He also attributes the value of friendships and networking he has made at the training centre to be of help going forward. Moses Kinyera's goal for now is opening up a shop in Bungatira and doing business.





## MONEY IS EVERYWHERE

There is a saying that success is not final, failure is not fatal but it is the courage to continue that counts. This resilience is what defines the character of Akello Patricia. The 24 year old single mother of one owns a stall in Bungatira central market and a second never passes by without customers bombarding her stall. A look through the market clearly shows that her stall is the most organized, filled with all necessary household items. She is very humble and always smiling with her customers. This is a true testament of the training she acquired on how to do business from the youth skilling center.

### Briefly tell us about journey to this point?

In 2009 while in P7, I became pregnant and the man responsible ran away for fear of being arrested. I was able to carry the baby until birth. After giving birth, I went back to school. I studied but I left school before completing and started farming. However, the farming didn't last long due to the hectic nature of the work and my health condition wouldn't allow it. At that point, I wasn't making any income and each business I tied would collapse. This went on until 2021 lockdown when I learnt of the call IFRAD had made for the youth skilling program, I joined it and my life changed forever.

### How did the youth skilling program change your life?

I learnt a lot like how to run a business, making a business plan, market research, record keeping, customer care, saving and I was really inspired and motivated to start a business though I didn't have start-up capital. The training taught us to be problem solvers and since I had acquired skills and knowledge, I wanted them to be implemented. I talked to my mother about

my plans and asked for a loan which she gave me. I started selling on the floor my vegetables before graduating into what you see now. A full grown kiosk.

### What benefits have you got from this business?

I can now feed my family and take care of my child. I pay their fees. Business is good and I am no longer stressed. I feel empowered and proud of myself because everyone values me. Before the training, people didn't see me but I am now inspiring them and most of those who hated me, now want to be my friends. I have also laid bricks for my house which I am constructing soon. All this is because of the training I got.

### Any future plans?

I am now saving money with the VSLA to buy a kiosk of my own and expand this business because my vision is to be a powerful business woman." I want to put my businesses anywhere because I have the business knowledge and money is everywhere so I am ready.









# **WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP**

Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through UWONET in partnership with Women and Rural development network (WORUDET) has for the last five years been implementing the Women in leadership project in Lamwo district. The project has yielded several transformations in addition to drawing lessons for further interventions. As a result of the capacity building, information sharing and networking opportunities, local activism among women groups was enhanced.



## SHIFTING PARADIGMS

"As a woman leader, I have been given a space for championing women issues and advocating for change. Ever since I joined leadership in 2021 for the first time; my husband is contented with my leadership and he encourages me to change the community and appreciates my work. Women are key in changing the minds of people and areas with women leaders develop faster. I want to thank WORUDET for training us to pass motions and ordinances and be better leaders" Hon. Aunu Joyce councilor 5 for Padibe West/ Aceba sub-county, Lamwo District

"Through my leadership as a woman, I have been at the fore front of promoting the girl child education because there is a lot of stigma limiting girl education due to culture. I was a victim of that but I am very pleased to say that the community has changed because many girls are now going to school. I also have a program where I train teenage mothers and orphans tailing skills to help empower them. This I believe will have a lasting impact on the community" Achayo Alice, Councilor 5 for Padibe East Katum sub-county, Lamwo District



"When a woman is a leader, it easy for them to solve women problems. I am a single woman and I face challenges from men who don't want their wives to associate with me because I can stand on my own without any fear because I have a voice. I have benefited from WORUDET because they have trained and empowered me. I have been able to sensitize my community with the knowledge they have given me on issues like land rights, preventing GBV and many others" Anek Jennifer, Women councilor Padibe Town council, Lamwo District





"As a man; my experience with women leaders in my community has been good. They are better than men. They create balance and also listen. They are not corrupt and that is why I support them whenever I get the chance. They create peace because they easily solve issues like violence in the home." Oroma Emmanuel, 25, Lamwo District

"When women are leaders, they create balance in decision making. They also have a motherly spirit and approach to everything they do which men don't possess. I have benefited more from women leaders because they come on the ground and they listen to our problems even as a man" Lubangakene Geoffrey, Lamwo District



"As a widow, women leaders have helped connect me to government programs as well as any well-wishers who support vulnerable people like us. This has helped me raise my children and at least relieve me of the pressure of being a single mother" Alal Pascal Ocitti, Kitgum

"Women leaders have promoted girl child education. Most of our girls drop out of school because they are not enlightened enough. They always see more men in power yet they can also be like them if they believe in themselves. Women leaders have brought us more opportunities than men because they understand us better." Arach Concy Pido, Kitgum



## ACHIEVEMENTS

### **INFLUENCED BEHAVIORAL CHANGE AND PRACTICES AROUND WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**

The women leaders have been able to influence behavioral change and practices around women's land rights and Gender Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response in their respective locations. In addition, self-esteem, confidence and coordination among political women leaders was revitalized. Currently, the women caucus of Lamwo is pushing for the GBV ordinance which will soon be passed.

### **INFLUENCED DECISIONS ON POLICY AND BUDGETS**

Furthermore, WORUDET was able to implement peer learning and exchange visits for Lamwo district women caucus with women caucus of Kitgum District, the activity helped to sustain the strength of the Women Caucuses to successfully influence decisions on policy and budgets for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment. The peer learning and exchange visits have fostered cooperation and dialogue among women councilors, members of the caucus for gender responsive agenda, representation and oversight where the women caucus in Lamwo district reported that they moved three motions in the council. They moved the motion on family planning and costed the implementation plan to reduce the unmet need of contraceptives for women and girls. This will encourage the involvement of partners in decisions making on whether and when to have children in order to avoid unintended pregnancy among women and girls. With the capacity gained during peer

learning in Kitgum District, women councilors of Lamwo District this year were able to move the motion on the construction of changing rooms for girls in all the primary schools in Lamwo District. This will contribute to encouraging girls' retention in school and attaining quality education for a better future.

### **INFLUENCED FOR SCHOOL OUTREACHES**

In addition, as a result of holding review meeting with women caucus, women are participating in the identification and establishment of women's rights agenda and raise women's voices to end violence against women. Women caucuses in Lamwo understand and care about the challenges their fellow women experience in their communities, and this makes it easier for them to highlight and resolve these issues amicably. For them to talk to the girls in schools, they suggested that there should be facilitation for school outreaches. With this, they will be able to talk to girls on issues affecting them and how to overcome them.



## PROVIDED REFERRALS, COUNSELING AND ADVICE TO GBV SURVIVORS

The women caucuses reported during the review meeting that they are providing counseling and advice to GBV survivors. They do this hand in hand with the women in the community. The women are able to resolve the gender issues as per the severity of the issue, they listen and advice as well as contact the responsible offices (e.g. police, health centers, and district offices) for necessary action. Honorable member's/ women caucuses showed their ability to continue with sensitization program in different sub-county in the district on the awareness of roles and responsibilities of the women councilors at the community level which would increase accountability and the quality of services to be provided to the community in Lamwo district.

During the fourth District GBV steering committee meeting, the District gender officer/Probation and welfare officer Lamwo District reported his willingness to support and initiate ordinance on teenage pregnancy with support, resources and knowledge from technical expertise, teachers and parents, district councillors and partners.

Through coordination, WORUDET also noted from the Child and Family Protection Unit at police that the District steering committee members are being supported by UNICEF in photocopying police forms that helps to support GBV survivors and easing the GBV referral systems in the district. They also secured a safety room for counselling female survivors compared to the previous time as a result of the efforts from the stakeholders' discussing challenges and finding solutions.



*Honorable Councilors attending the emergency council meeting on the passing of FP-CIP Resolution in Lamwo district to reduce on the unmet needs for accessing Family planning services.*

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WOMAN LEADER

Honorable Oyella Joyce is trailblazing as far as women in leadership in her community is concerned. The 38-year-old, single mother of two is the female councilor of Palabek Gem and Abera sub-counties Lamwo district. She is also the Lamwo district chairperson of the women's caucus.

### Briefly tell us about your life's journey?

I was born in 1986 but my story begun in 1999 when I got married to my late husband with whom I had two children. Unfortunately, in 2001 he was among the 11 people who were killed on the roadside by the LRA rebels. It was very difficult because I was literally doing everything with him. Things became difficult and went back to my parents' home. Luckily, they sent me back to school. I started in S2 until S4. After S4, I went for a certificate in social work and social administration. In 2009, I began counselling. In 2011,

I became a counsellor at Straight talk foundation. I worked there for 2 years then I left and began my own business of tailoring and knitting.

### How did you join politics?

My political journey begun in 2015 by an inspiration from my mentor Madam Sarah, the former speaker of Lamwo district. She encouraged me to also stand. She had served as speaker for 10 years and she had seen my potential to be a leader. In 2016 I contested and I didn't go through due to the fights in the primaries. I waited for 2021. As I waited, I got a job with centenary bank Kitgum branch as a sales and linkage officer. I was always in the community and talking to people. In 2020, I resigned from the bank and contested again. This time people voted for me overwhelmingly because they had analyzed that I was the right candidate.







### **What were you up to during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

First of all, the lockdown led to high numbers of teenage pregnancies and school drop outs. I took it upon myself with my counselling background to start community dialogues. I sensitized young girls to focus and wait for school because education is the future. I encouraged them to report to me and even to the police. The cases at least reduced.

I also started a skilling program for teenage mothers and school drop outs. Until to date, I train them on knitting and tailoring. The only challenge is that after training them, some of them don't have machines so I hire some of them and even help others find jobs. I advocate for girl child education because it is an issue in the community and one of the reasons why girls get married at an early age. Girls need to be empowered to also be as strong and competitive as the boys.

### **What are some of the benefits of having women leaders?**

There are so many. In fact if women are in any position from local to central government; they usually make the right decisions because they have the community at heart and right now, my community is happy with me because I sit down with them and understand what affects them and try to help them as much as I can.

### **As a woman leader, what challenges have you faced?**

According to the constitution, women have the right to stand for any leadership position. The women manifesto has 5 components i.e. Education, women have land rights and property, women have a right to health, women have a right to work, and women have a right to stand for any position. However, when a woman contests for positions like LC3 or LC5 with men, they are brought down and even insulted in public.

How has Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through WORDUDET impacted on your leadership as a woman?

First and foremost, I want to thank them so much because they have empowered us a lot as women leaders. They have really done us well and I am proud of their work. They should really continue with this work. Before we became leaders, we didn't know the laws, responsibilities as leaders, we didn't know how to move motions but with their trainings at the sub-country, we are now knowledgeable and better leaders than most men. I am now a more confident leader who is empowered to speak about any issue affecting my people. I now attend any meetings and speak my mind because I believe I also have a voice.

### **Are there any policies or ordinances women have spearheaded?**

Of course! In the one and a half years we have been in office, as the women caucus we have passed motions and resolutions like the family planning and cost implementation plan which encourages families to give birth to

children they can take adequate care of and also encourages the uptake of contraceptives to boost the health of women and mothers as well as reduce on the family burden. The other resolution we passed was to ensure that hospital beds at health centers and hospitals have adjustable beds for mothers with disabilities who come to give birth. This is being implemented as I speak. The other resolution we passed is that all schools must construct changing rooms for girls to encourage menstrual hygiene. We are now in the process of coming up with a gender based violence ordinance which we shall pass soon.

### **What are your future plans?**

Right now, I have given all my life to serving my people and I want to continue doing that at even bigger levels. I want to become Woman MP of Lamwo district such that I lobby and bring more services to my people here. I am soon going back to school to acquire the necessary qualifications and then I come back.



## HONORABLE JOYCE OYELLA'S WORK FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF OTHER WOMEN LEADERS

Honorable Anek Jennifer, woman councilor Padibe Town council says "Honorable Joyce's work is exemplary because she coordinates all female councilors well and there is no information gap when you are working with her. I also love her confidence while speaking in council or public places, she is a good orator".

Honorable Achayo Alice, women councilor 5 Padibe East, Katum sub-county said "Honorable Joyce inspired me to take leadership. I am illiterate and no one expected a person like me to take up leadership but she strengthened me and

I am now a leader. She also inspired me to start a tailoring program for teenage girls and school drops in my sub-county. My self-esteem was low but I am now confident enough to face and talk to anyone."

Honorable Aunu Joyce, women councilor 5 Padibe West, Aceba sub-county says

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*"She has mentored me in having the ability to solve problems and speak in public. I am now also able to encourage women to join leadership."*







## DISABILITY IS NOT INABILITY

Honorable Milly Aciro is a resident of Padibe town council representing women living with disability in the district council of Lamwo had this to say. *"I have a total prosthesis on one leg and my vision is limited too."* The 38year old mother of 3 has seen it all and beaten the odds to be who she is now. *"At one point I wanted to drop out of school due to my disability but my father was a teacher and he used to encourage me to study. He used to tell me that I am mentally capable as anyone else at school and that I would succeed in life and raise a family."* She narrates.

She listened to her father and completed senior 4 after which she got married. Her dream to be a woman leader began to be shaped in 2018 "

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*I was invited by Women and Rural Development Network (WORUDET) for a two days training organized by Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) on women's rights and leadership, advocacy and lobbying, good Governance and economic empowerment. After the training, I told myself that my door has already been opened with the knowledge I have attained for two days."* She confirms.

She attended more trainings which strengthened her and prepared her to contest for elections in 2020 *"I went to electoral commission and picked nomination forms for my current position, after nomination, I started campaigning against my opponent, but with the confidence and*



*skills I gained from UWONET with support from WORUDET, I was elected as a representative of women living with disability.” She adds.*

Honorable Milly says that life changed for her after elections *“I am engaged in so many meetings and trainings here I share women’s issues and find solutions to them. I am also*

*also collaborated with other district women leaders and formed a group where she extends her economic financing knowledge and now they are in savings groups which are helping them economically.*

*On a personal level, she says she was empowered to start a small shop and shifted*



*transferring my knowledge and skills to other women. I am externally grateful for WORUDET and UWONET for having engaged me for all this time in the programme of promoting gender equality and Women’s leadership, in terms of my self-confidence but also for my husband. I therefore think that every woman should convince her husband that joining leadership position does not infringe on their rights but on the contrary paves way for better welfare and the prosperity of the family and community at large.”*

She has continued to attend trainings and meetings organized by WORUDET and UWONET on self-confidence and awareness, knowing women’s rights as a person with disability and also as a woman. She has

*from a grass thatched house to an iron sheet house. She says that her husband has been supportive of her role as woman leader and he is always advising her.*

Honorable Milly is grateful for the support Oxfam through UWONET with partnership from WORUDET have done in her life. *“This project has transformed my life that is why I want it to continue. I am now encouraging all rural women to have confidence in themselves because they are able to work and they can do it better. Women in Lamwo District have rights but a lot also depends on how they exercise and respect those rights. You must respect your rights as well as respect other people’s rights including respect for your spouse.”* She concludes.







## MEN STANDING WITH WOMEN

Meet one of the men supporting women leaders in the Lamwo district women's caucus. These men are referred to as Role models. Okema Wilfred is a role model as well as the councilor 5 for Padibe town council. The 39 year old former police officer is among the 6 men who were selected to be on the women's caucus based on their exemplary behavior in regards to women issues. *"Role models act as guides and support any resolutions that women councilors come up with."* Wilfred explains. "Here are about 17 female councilors against 23 men. It is for that reason that role models come in to support motions brought by women."

Wilfred believes that women leaders are more effective and trustworthy compared to men. He believes that empowering women to lead develops the nation.

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*"Women need to be supported because they are the mothers of this nation and I don't entertain men in leadership who undermine them".*

After serving the Uganda police for 13 years, Wilfred quit and joined elective politics in 2021. Unfortunately, during his campaigns he was spreading a lot of myths and misconceptions about family planning. *"I was against family planning during my campaigns and I condemned it a lot. I didn't believe in it. It was really bad of me"* He says.

However, everything changed when he became a leader and got training on family planning from WORUDET. *"I was ignorant about the benefits of family planning. When all my myths and misconceptions were alleviated, I became a champion and supported the family planning and cost implementation*

*motion when it came to council"* Wilfred confirms. *"The resolution successfully passed and is now being implemented. He has also adopted family planning since he wants to be an example of change in his community. "I want to walk the talk such that everyone in the community sees the importance of family planning."* He adds.

Wilfred is thankful for the work Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through WORUDET have done in the community. They have sensitized us men with knowledge as well as empowered women leaders. *"Before, women couldn't stand and talk in council sittings but nowadays after the trainings, women leaders can stand on the floor and debate even better than men. They are so bold and I like that"*

He is now encouraging his wife to also step up in leadership. His wife Ngwech Filder, 29 year old is a treasurer of the youth league of the NRM party at the district and he wants her to also contest in 2026 for elective politics.



## SHE CHANGED MY LIFE

They say that you are always one good decision away from a totally different life. 23 year old Stella Lawino had a vision to contest for women chairperson of Yap E West village, Okili parish, Lamwo district in the 2021 general elections. With empowerment from trainings held by WORUDET in Aceba sub-county, she was one of the female youths who picked up the nominations forms from the electoral commission. Stella believes that as a woman, she can make a great leader in her community *"I am inspired to be a leader because women now days can lead better than men, for example our female councilors like Honourable Awunu Joyce and Nancy Achora. Women are great leaders because these days women in leadership*

*have built schools, given scholarships and are educating many children."*

Unfortunately, Stella's husband, Patrick Kilama couldn't let her wish become a reality. The 26 year old is now a change agent with the help of WORUDET and he regrets his actions *"Back then I was a good drunkard who also used to take marijuana. This made me violent and angry all time. I took the electoral commission nomination forms she had got and I tore them and I warned her not to dare try involving herself in leadership."*

Stella couldn't out reason with a drunk, violent and over authoritative man. She dropped out of the race. Patrick's bad



behavior stems right from when he finished his O'level and joined bad peer groups which introduced him to alcohol and marijuana. This would set him on a course of self-destruction *"I didn't go back to school after S4 because alcohol was my life. I even got a wife. Unfortunately, she ran away because I was beating her every day, not caring for her yet I was demanding. I was basically a nuisance."* He admits. Patrick received several visits from concerned people who wanted him to change but he remained adamant.

When Patrick met his second wife Stella, he continued his routine *"I used to wake up, look for alcohol, drink, smoke marijuana, come back home and beat my wife. This would cause uproar in the village because the beating wasn't justified."* Patrick confesses. However, when he tore Stella's nomination, it was more of a turning point in his life. *"I couldn't put up with it and I reported to WORUDET and other women leaders."* Stella reveals.

WORUDET intervened and began to counsel Patrick to change. The couple attended several trainings on ending gender based violence as well as the importance of women in leadership. In addition, religious leaders and women leaders like LC1 Yep E village M/s Aloko Polyna visited the home constantly with messages for Patrick to change. *"It was a tug of war to change. I started listening to everyone who came to my home. I used to think about it and it began to make sense. The messages were developmental and I started changing on some of my bad habits."*

Patrick quit the bad peer groups that influenced his excessive alcohol and marijuana consumption. *"Whenever my friends came to take me for alcohol, I would tell them am sick or the doctors told me to*

*take a break from alcohol."* He also stopped beating his wife and apologized to her. *"I was wrong to tear the form. I feel bad each time I think about it. I promise to go with Stella to pick the next nomination form and I will support her massively. I will campaign for her and I know she will win."* Patrick confidently speaks.

Patrick acknowledges that it is a right for women to contest for elective positions because they are just as able as men. He now advocates for women to take up leadership from as low as the VSLA level. *"I think we need to raise a generation of men who respect women and let them to pursue their goals. Women are able as men whether in leadership or in other aspects of life my wife Stella has been a crucial part of my change and I appreciate her for that."*

The change WORUDET brought in Patrick's life transcended beyond just his life and family. *"I am now more productive than before when I hated digging. I am now farming and I have harvested my crops. I save money with the village VSLA where I am the vice chairman."* He attests to the changes he has experienced. He further continues to say that through saving he has been able to buy some goats which has improved his financial situation like never before.

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*"I want to thank Oxfam through WORUDET for changing my life. I am now respected in the community. People use me as an example to help change other people who were like me."*

He says. Patrick Kilama and Stella Lawino are a happy couple whose life and marriage has been transformed for the better due to funding from Irish Aid, through Oxfam and implemented by WORUDET.



## A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON ISSUES

Oxfam with funding from Irish Aid through Uganda women's network (UWONET) has for the last 6 years been working at a national level with Uganda Women Parliamentarian Association (UWOPA) with a focus on creating an enabling policy environment towards gender equality and empowerment. This has seen a number of policies in respect to women's rights and gender equality passed as a result. Honorable Flavia Rwabuhoro Kabahenda, woman MP Kyegegwa district is a member of UWOPA and the Chairperson Parliament committee of gender, labor and social development speaks to us on the work UWOPA has done so far.

### **What strides has UWOPA taken in regard to the fight against GBV?**

UWOPA became active in the 8th parliament. Thanks to honorables like Dorah Byamukama and Winnie Matsiko. These spear headed the domestic violence act which was passed into law in 2010. However, after a recent police crime report which showed GBV cases at a high rate we decided to move around the country and we realized that there was need to revise the law. GBV has become dynamic and it has changed faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic so the law had a few loopholes which needed to be covered. We reviewed and scrutinized the law and came up with a report. The report was tabled on



the floor and the recommendations were adopted. We expect the ministry of gender, labor and social development to come up with actions to end GBV. We also noticed that in South East Uganda men were battered more than women and thus the need to address the loopholes in the act such that GBV is addressed more equitably to secure the peace of each gender.

### **Briefly comment on the current women in leadership situation in the country.**

In Uganda, women in leadership became more pronounced after 1995 constitution provided for affirmative action after the Beijing platform for action. Women began to come on decision making tables. It has worked for us especially in education and leadership because women are in positions of power. However, there is need to review and take in to account the achievements it has had. This will help us redesign it if possible because women in leadership are going to remain in the same spaces for long which will most likely close out other women who will be graduating into such positions for example you wouldn't be an MP on affirmative action for 5 terms, 2-3 terms are enough such that you give room for other women to come in. For now, it has brought many more women on to decision making tables. However, we need to work on the quality because the numbers are there but women participation is still lacking. There is need for orientation and induction of women leaders because our backgrounds don't give us these spaces at house hold level and so there is some timidity at times. We need a lot of trainings and capacity building such that quantities turn into quality such that when women stand on podiums, or floors, or microphones they are quality debaters

talking about issues and not lamentations. We need to support each other but we also need men involved. We shouldn't look at them as adversaries but rather as colleagues we can work with to improve on our situations.

### **How has government handled the issue of youth economic empowerment?**

I like to call them young people and not youths. There are policy frameworks and provisions to ensure that young people are empowered economically and able to speak up. It is for that reason that we have a National council for youths, youth structures that go till village level. Affirmative action has also been given to youth representatives up to parliament level. Government has so many good programs targeting the youth and I commend that. The only issue with these programs is that sometimes the project implementation action plan isn't clear for youths to benefit for example the youth capital venture fund. Young people didn't benefit from it because it required a lot of documentation to present which became a barrier. When the Parish development model announced that 30% was going to young people, I was happy however, it became SACCOs to benefit. You wonder, how many young people have the capacity to join a SACCO because it has its own requirements that they may not meet due to their economic capacity and this means a selected few will benefit from it. There is need to change this because young people will remain behind and not benefit much. The programs should be more inclusive without barriers for them to benefit. We can start with mindset change for the start. We are now looking at regulating labor export which seems to be a solution to high

unemployment. Unfortunately, many youths are misled and never prepared for what they find outside there and this has caused a lot of problems. Many youths are being trapped in labor export and we need to regulate this better. All in all, we need to improve on youth economic empowerment interventions.

**What policies has UWOPA been able to work on and how successful have they been?**

So many. Since the 8th parliament when it became active, we have passed a number of laws like the domestic violence act, the land act to accommodate women, The FGM act of 2010 as well. UWOPA spearheaded the move of having 40% of chairpersons of committees in parliament to be women because it was at 20% yet women were better and more effective leaders.

Since the 9th parliament we spearheaded the succession act which was assented into law in 2022. Currently we are working on the sexual offences bill since the 9th parliament; we are also working on an employments amendment bill to ensure that domestic workers are gazetted as employees who require an appointment letter, streamlined salary and social security. We are also working on the marriage bill which is being spearheaded by the UWOPA chairperson, Honorable Sarah Opendi. She is also working on a bill against alcohol consumption. It should be noted that it is parliament's mandate to review and do post legislative scrutiny on each act such that it helps people. UWOPA has been critical in ensuring that women and girls are protected at all costs.

**Any future plans of UWOPA you would like to share?**

We are fast tracking bills that deal with marriage, sexual offences and wages. We also want to have breast feeding corners in workplaces to improve efficiency. Sometimes giving long maternity leave renders women jobless. We want to ensure that women are productive and can easily access their babies anytime. Furthermore, we are turning our focus on teenage mothers and teenage pregnancies because it is a big issue that we need to have a way forward otherwise the fate of many girls is at stake and yet we have a duty to ensure they are well taken care of.

**Any comment on how development partners have helped government with its work?**

I want to thank them for complimenting government. However, there is need for synergy with government to avoid duplicating of government programs. I also think that development partners need a holistic approach in their programming. For example, if you are skilling youths, tool them such that they graduate into the work force. They need to ensure that people benefit more than just skilling them. The other issue is that when they are withdrawing or when a project is over, they should work with the government such that it embraces some of the structures left behind. Apart from that, they have been good and very helpful. I am grateful, and I appreciate. They should keep coming and supporting initiatives geared towards the well-being of women and girls. We welcome them.





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