

AFOD UGANDA NEWSLETTER

FIRST EDITION
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EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, TRANSFORMING LIVES

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the First Edition of AFOD Uganda Bi-Annual Newsletter!

We're excited to share some of the incredible work that happened across our various programs in the past six months. This wouldn't have been possible without the unwavering support of our dedicated donors, partners, and staff. As we share these highlights, we reaffirm our commitment to empowering vulnerable communities through our integrated programs. Be inspired as you open page by page into this amazing edition.

Warm regards,

Advocacy and Communications Department.

FINDING HOPE THROUGH IPTG

Creating safe spaces for women and men to share experiences, build supportive relationships, and heal from depression.

BEYOND IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Mothers gaining valuable livelihood skills through the Care Group Volunteer approach.

OFF-GRID SUSTAINABLE CLEAN ENERGYPROJECT

The project aims to contribute to improved Maternal Child Health and Nutrition outcomes.

INTEGRATED HEALTH: FINDING HOPE THROUGH IPT-G:



AFOD Uganda in partnership with **StrongMinds Uganda** launched a 3rd phase of the **Interpersonal Therapy Group (IPT-G)** program in Adjumani treating depression among refugee and host community women and men. This innovative approach targets 70% women and 30% men and goes beyond the treatment of depression, into creating safe spaces for women and men to share experiences, build supportive relationships, and heal from depression.

Key activities include; Train community volunteers on IPT-G, Conduct community mobilization and sensitization about depression and administer pre-assessment (PHQ-4) and pre-group (PHQ-9) forms to the community members to screen and confirm for depression and 196 groups of 10-12 members have been formed and treated for depression using IPT-G 6 weeks therapy sessions. IPTG fosters a **sense of community belonging**, helping women and men cope with the burden of displacement, food insecurity, and gender-based violence (GBV) – all of which can contribute to depression.

Recognizing the link between mental health and well-being, we are now **integrating IPT-G with livelihood activities**. These same groups are participating in **kitchen gardening and backyard farming** projects. This empowers the groups to **reduce food insecurity** – a major stressor – and build self-sufficiency in the communities.

During our project implementation in Adjumani, we learned that many women were experiencing underlying factors contributing to depression relapse, including food insecurity. This often led to domestic abuse. In response, we have decided to integrate mental health support into our other programs, aiming for a holistic healing approach. This will empower beneficiaries to recover and participate in economic activities that provide sustainable livelihoods.

Dr. Geoffrey Wandira, Head of Programs

SCALING IMPACT: INTEGRATING IPT-G GROUP THERAPY INTO LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS



Training Project staff on MH integration in Palorinya

Building on the success of the integrated IPT-G program in Adjumani, we are now expanding this innovative mental health approach to reach even more communities.



In Moyo/Obongi, IPT-G will be integrated with both general food and cash assistance programs. This holistic approach not only helps to alleviate food insecurity, a major contributor to depression but also addresses mental health needs.



Kiryandongo will see IPT-G seamlessly integrated with nutrition program. This combined effort empowers participants by addressing both the physical and mental well-being of mothers, creating sustainability toward holistic health.

To ensure effective delivery across these new locations, we prioritized capacity building for staff and health workers. This is to equip them with the necessary skills to lead engaging group sessions and provide the highest quality integrated services.

PARITICIPATING IN ADVOCACY: MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

On April 29th–30th, 2024, AFOD Uganda actively participated in the Mental Health Summit organized by **StrongMinds Uganda** and **USAID**. This gathering brought together diverse stakeholders from the Ministry of Health, the Office of the Prime Minister, and other organizations dedicated to mental health under the theme Integrating Mental Health across All Sectors.

The summit featured impactful presentations from mental health implementers, showcasing success stories that highlighted the power of effective interventions. However, discussions also highlighted on the need for increased awareness and financial investment to better support vulnerable communities.

AFOD Uganda strongly advocates for the integration of mental health services into all emergency responses and interventions. We firmly believe that access to mental health and psychosocial support is crucial for the overall health and well-being of the beneficiaries we serve.



NUTRITION, FOOD SECURITY, AND LIVELIHOOD

MOTHERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Our Kiryandongo nutrition project is making a significant impact! Through ongoing Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) education activities, mothers are empowered to address moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) in children aged 6–59 months, pregnant and lactating women, and other vulnerable individuals. In addition, the targeted supplementary feeding program provides essential nutrients to support recovery for the identified malnourished. With this approach, Sunday Hakim a 3 year old boy was saved from severe malnutrition.

From Malnutrition to Strength:



Sunday before enrollment on treatment



Sunday cheerful after enrollment on treatment

At one month and 3 weeks, Sunday Christopher was born preterm at 36 weeks with a birth weight of 2.4 kg and thus admitted to the pediatric ward of Kiryandongo General Hospital with convulsions and inability to breastfeed. His mother Kawala, a 17-year-old first-time mother shared,

“Sunday breastfed for only 3 weeks and suddenly stopped. After many attempts to re-initiate breastfeeding in vain and after a worrying decrease in his weight, I started giving him diluted cow’s milk for about 3 weeks but the child’s condition worsened with the development of diarrhea which led to our admission

to Kiryandongo Hospital for two weeks. Once enrolled in the AFOD nutrition program to receive nutritious supplementary food, my skills and competence in caring for my ‘high risk’ infant child were built through infant and young child feeding counseling sessions.

Today, I am full of joy that the program contributed to the quick recovery and improved weight gain of my son now at 4.8 kg”.

AFOD is continuously following up with the mother to ensure livelihood synergy is established for the family.

Additionally, our impact on improving nutrition among the refugee communities in Kiryandongo was documented in a news bulletin, highlighting our intervention and the support needed to curb malnutrition in the refugee community.

Click here to watch: <https://youtu.be/HtF7VArhS1o?feature=shared>

BEYOND IMMEDIATE NEEDS



Winners CGVs learning liquid soap making



A beneficiary setup backyard garden in Panyadoli

In addition to nutrition education, we have also focused on sustainable solutions where mothers through the Care Group Volunteer approach have gained valuable livelihood skills for income-generation through learning to make liquid soaps, and establishing kitchen and backyard gardens. This continues to empower them with sustainable access to nutritious food for their families and financial independence.

CARE GROUP HERO: NANDUTU SCOVIA

We shine a spotlight on Nandutu Scovia, a dedicated care group volunteer in her community attached to Panyadoli HC IV in Kiryandongo district. Scovia provides invaluable support to mothers and children, ensuring they receive essential information on nutrition, health, and hygiene. Scovia share;

"We gained a lot of knowledge which we have been able to share with other people in the community especially mothers. Crucial to the nutrition knowledge is the ability to identify and refer malnourished cases to the nearby hospitals and following up to ensure the mother and children receive support."

"One thing am proud of is the ability to reduce cases of gender-based violence that come from lack of food in homes. Mothers have gained knowledge from us on setting up kitchen and backyard gardens that ensure food security especially during rainy seasons. Most homes now have hand washing tip taps, and there is unity because of the care groups we have formed in the communities. I am grateful that I am impacting my community."



Scovia inspecting the kitchen garden established as a demonstration garden in her community

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS, SHARING KNOWLEDGE:



A recent donor visit by USAID officials to our nutrition program location in Kiryandongo health facilities allowed us to showcase the incredible work happening on the ground and foster valuable accountability and partnerships.

Additionally, we organized a joint project monitoring with the district health team and partners to showcase project progress as well as share lessons learned and areas of improvement. It was highlighted that our interventions are crucial to the refugee community and entire district in curbing malnutrition and our approach of care group volunteers ensures timely and cost effective service delivery as the volunteers are community members and easily accessible for support and inquiry.

SHARPENING FOCUS AT THE 3RD NATIONAL NUTRITION FORUM 2024



AFOD Uganda actively participated in the 5-day 3rd National Nutrition Forum, an event held under the theme "Unlocking Nutrition's Potential: Accelerating Multi-sectoral Actions and Strategic Investments for Enhanced Nutrition Security" organized by the Office of the Prime Minister from 13th–17th May 2024 at Mestil Hotel.

This forum provided a valuable platform for learning and collaboration, fostering continuous improvement within our nutrition programs.

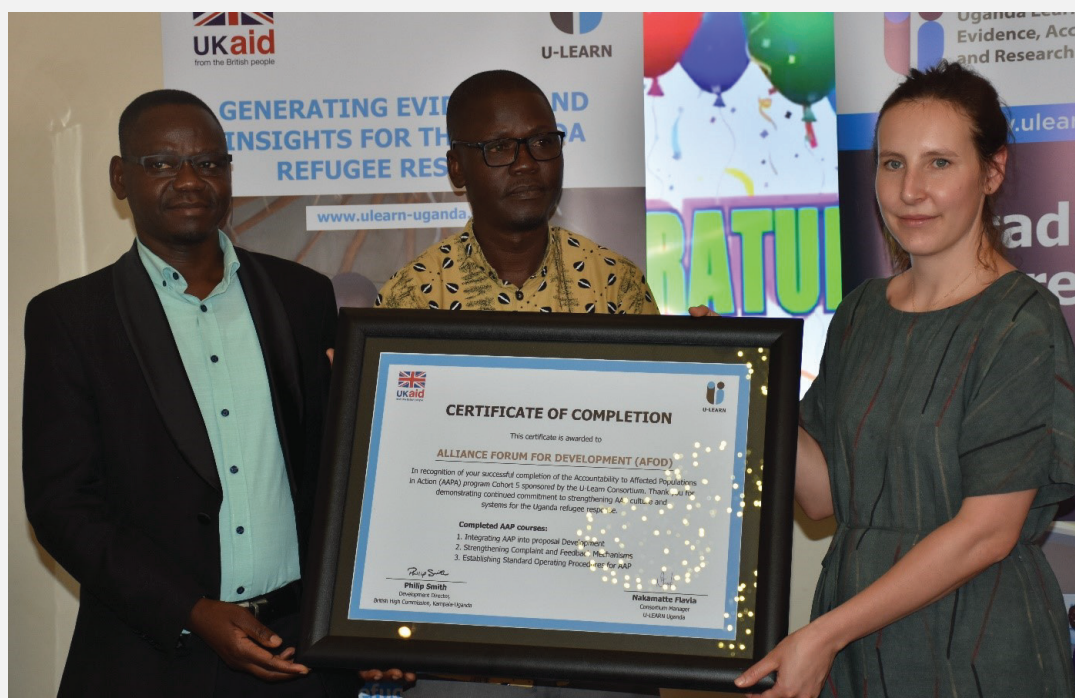
Here's what we gained from the experience:

- **Enhanced Programs:** The forum's focus on multi-sectorial action reaffirmed our commitment to integrated interventions. We will continue to explore innovative ways to combine nutrition interventions with initiatives in health and livelihood development for long-term impact.
- **Fresh Insights:** Engaging with experts and fellow organizations on the latest advancements in nutrition interventions ensured we stay at the forefront of effective practices.
- **Collaboration Connections:** Building valuable connections with other stakeholders in the field opened doors to potential partnerships.



Hon. Robinah Nabbanja the Prime Minister graced the forum as the chief guest

ORGANIZATION CAPACITY BUILDING: INVESTING IN LEADERSHIP:



Mr. Primo Vunni ARIZI and Mr. Geoffrey receiving a certificate of completion from the Ulearn representative

AFOD Uganda management team presiding over the AAP Cohort 5th Graduation at the Golden Tulip Hotel on 14th March 2024 where 12 staff from the different offices of; Kampala, Kiryandongo, Adjumani and Moyo/O bongi underwent a six months training opportunity with U-Learn from October 2023–March 2024 on; Integrating AAP into project proposals, Strengthening Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms and establishing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for AAP. The team graduated from the (Accountability to Affected Populations in Action (AAPA) program, earning their certifications as ULearn Uganda champions, 2024. The training is aimed at strengthening AAP culture and systems for the Uganda refugee response.



AFOD Uganda participated in a 3-day training on SRHR (Sexual Reproductive Health Rights) Advocacy and Strategies organized by SRHR Alliance at Nican Resort Wankulukuku from 12th-15th March 2024. This training fostered knowledge exchange on planning and conducting Advocacy initiatives and strengthened the work of civil society organizations (CSOs) across the region.

The training provided valuable insights into various aspects of advocacy, including organizational development, human rights-based approaches, advocacy strategies, stakeholder engagement, and understanding key advocacy concepts.

AFOD appreciates the efforts of donor and partner organizations like World Food Program, StrongMinds Uganda, ACF, and SRHR Alliance for continued support in areas of capacity building and knowledge sharing.

CELEBRATING THE POWER HOUSE: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



On International Women's Day, AFOD Uganda joined the global community in celebrating Women's Day under the #inspireinclusion campaign. We acknowledge the importance of prioritizing investments in women and their inclusion in all development decisions as a cornerstone of progressive development.

Our Executive Director, Mr. Arizi Primo Vunni, delivered a powerful message to the women of the organization, recognizing their crucial role in both AFOD and their communities.

Dear Courageous Woman

As we mark International Women's Day today, I want to take a moment to personally express my sincere appreciation and admiration for all of you, the incredible women who make up our team.

Your contributions to AFOD Uganda's growth and development are invaluable. Your dedication, talent, and unique perspectives have been instrumental in the successful implementation of our projects and overall progress. You consistently demonstrate strength, resilience, and a passion for your work that inspires all of us.

I am deeply grateful for the support you offer each other and the broader team. You foster a collaborative and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and encouraged to thrive.

On this International Women's Day, I celebrate your achievements, both big and small. Your hard work and dedication are truly appreciated.

As AFOD Uganda, we recommit ourselves to fostering an environment where everyone feels empowered, valued, and respected. I am proud to stand alongside every one of you as we work towards empowering communities.

Keep Soaring,

Primo Vunni ARIZI
Executive Director

PROJECT UPDATES

OFF-GRID SUSTAINABLE CLEAN ENERGY PROJECT



We're excited to announce the signing off of the Renewable Energy project with key stakeholders including Health Unit Management Committees, USADF, UDET and AFOD field teams. Procurement of OffGridBox Systems is underway, paving the way for a more sustainable quality of health services and livelihood for the communities.

The project aims to contribute to improved Maternal Child Health and Nutrition outcomes through health facility solar electrification, provision of clean and safe water, and economic empowerment of the communities of Adjumani, Moyo, Obongi, and Koboko districts.

Renewable Energy for MCHN project fits in AFOD's Integrated Community Led Model (iCLEM).

- **Sustainable Energy:** Provision of renewable energy will give access to clean and reliable energy. This will greatly contribute to improved WASH and women led backyard gardening, ultimately contributing to improved nutrition and livelihood.
- **Improved Health:** Through solar electrification to maintain the cold chain 24/7 and provide health facility lighting, leading to better Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) outcomes.
- **Economic Empowerment:** The project incorporates strategies for empowering communities economically, creating a lasting impact.

4 Health centre IIIs shall be supported

- **Adjumani District:** Pagirinya Health Centre III, estimated target population 15,000
- **Moyo District:** Dufile Health Centre III –estimated target population 4,000
- **Obongi District:** Aliba Health Centre III –estimated target population 8,000
- **Koboko District:** Pijoke Health Centre III– estimated target population 5,000

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Hillary conducting a community training on nutrition

ASIIMWE HIRALAY: NUTRITION OFFICER

We are excited to recognize the outstanding contributions of our Nutrition Officer, Asimwe Hillary, in Kiryandongo. His dedication to improving community health and well-being is an inspiration.

Hillary has been instrumental in improving community health through various initiatives such as mentoring community health workers, conducting health education, and supporting livelihood programs.

We are incredibly proud of Hillary's achievements and his dedication to making a positive difference in the lives of the community.