



WELCOME TO OUR

Monthly Newsletter



APRIL 2026

We are pleased to welcome you to the March 2026 edition of the AWYAD Times monthly newsletter. In this issue, we share key highlights from recent activities and events, offering a snapshot of our progress and the experiences from our work within communities.

This publication reflects our commitment to gathering, analyzing, and sharing information that supports learning, accountability, and impact. We extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to making this newsletter possible.

We invite you to enjoy this edition and encourage your continued involvement. Your articles, insights, and feedback remain vital as we work together to uplift our communities.

Regards,
AWYAD Communication Team



In this newsletter you will find:

Key achievements and impact across Uganda from empowering refugee activists to combat GBV in Kampala, to supporting teenage mothers back to school, and strengthening child protection and livelihoods in vulnerable communities.



Back to Class: 91 Teenage Mothers Rejoin School in West Nile

Pakwach/Nebbi/Maracha - 91 teenage mothers have returned to school in Pakwach, Nebbi and Maracha districts following intensified school and community follow-ups aimed at reducing dropout among vulnerable learners.

The return was registered in April 2026 under **the PROTECT Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Project**, implemented by African Women and Youth Action for Development (AWYAD) with support from World Vision Uganda and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Through trained senior women and men teachers, guidance counsellors and school patrons, the project monitored attendance in **76 government-aided schools**, tracked dropouts and engaged parents and local leaders to bring learners back.

568 boys and girls who had dropped out due to poverty, disability and social challenges were also reintegrated.

The initiative combined go-back-to-school campaigns, community drives and radio engagements, while over **4,500 learners** received age-appropriate sexuality education and life skills to help prevent teenage pregnancy and school dropout.

However, project implementers noted that childcare gaps, stigma and lack of scholastic materials remain key barriers for teenage mothers staying in school, calling for sustained support to protect girls' education.

EMPOWERING REFUGEE ACTIVISTS TO FIGHT GBV IN KAMPALA

Kampala — **Thanks to support from UNHCR** under the **Urban Protection and GBV Response Project**, efforts to prevent GBV among refugee and host communities in Kampala were strengthened in April.

AWYAD trained **20 community activists** from refugee and host communities under **the SASA Together approach** to identify GBV risks, support survivors and link them to medical, legal and psychosocial services.

The activists, drawn from Congolese, South Sudanese, Somali, Sudanese, Burundian, Rwandese and Ugandan communities, will serve as frontline responders in urban refugee areas.

268 refugees and host community members in Makindye, Kawempe, Rubaga and Mukono were reached through sensitisation on positive masculinities, parenting, life skills and sexual and reproductive health rights.

13 new GBV cases were managed bringing the total to **36 cases**, with survivors receiving psychosocial support and **44 referrals** made for medical care, legal aid, cash support and mental health services.

To reduce economic vulnerability linked to abuse, **50 out-of-school girls and young women** trained in tailoring and hairdressing were supported to form savings groups ahead of start-up assistance.





STRENGTHENING THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD LABOUR IN BUSOGA REGION

Mayuge — Efforts to eliminate child labour along agricultural value chains in the Busoga sub-region intensified in April as 30 child labour survivors returned to school and received psychosocial support in Mayuge District.

The intervention is under the EU-funded “Accelerating Actions to Eliminate Child Labour Practices” project, implemented by LWF, AWYAD and other partners in Busoga region.

413 community members were reached through dissemination of the child labour by-law, while 32 district stakeholders were oriented on the child protection referral pathway. A child-led radio talk show on gender equality was also conducted.

To reduce household vulnerability, 15 farmer groups received start-up kits in piggery and poultry, while 9 youth groups were supported with vocational kits in tailoring, welding and metal fabrication, motorcycle mechanics and hairdressing. In addition, 149 stakeholders were engaged in dialogues on male involvement in childcare and positive parenting.

Progress was observed during a joint EU, AWYAD and LWF field monitoring visit, which included schools, vulnerable households, youth and farmer groups. At Mbaale Primary School, partners reported the rescue of 29 learners from child labour, improved attendance and active child-led advocacy.

District officials commended the project’s role in strengthening by-law enforcement, referral pathways and coordination, though challenges of delayed stakeholder payments and limited household follow-ups were noted, with April activities rolled into May.

Learning and Child Protection Enhanced in Refugee Settlements

Kyaka II/Oruchinga — With support from the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MoFA)** through the **INSPIRE Project**, implemented in partnership with **War Child Alliance**, **AWYAD** strengthened education and child-protection services in Kyaka II and Oruchinga refugee settlements in April.

AWYAD provided psychosocial support to **1,080 children** through the **Team Up programme**, improving wellbeing and school participation, while **812 learners** accessed **digital literacy and numeracy** through the **Can't Wait to Learn approach**.

The organisation also supported **10 teachers** through the **CORE programme**, focusing on emotional resilience, self-care and positive classroom environments.

Under child protection, **92 vulnerable children** were identified, **45 children** received **case management and cash support**, **15 home visits** were conducted, and referrals were made for medical, legal and protection services.

AWYAD further conducted **child-protection awareness activities**, reaching **1,130 children** and **807 adults**, while strengthening community child-protection structures to improve reporting and response.

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AWYAD's work shows that targeted education and child-protection support can quickly improve safety and learning for refugee children.





STRENGTHENING PROTECTION FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN ACROSS REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS

With support from UNHCR and partners, GBV prevention and child protection efforts were strengthened across Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Nyakabande.

Partners including NRC, Police, TPO, and health agencies provided survivor support through counselling, medical care, and legal referrals—49 cases were handled in Nakivale and 33 in Nyakabande.

Community awareness reached over 800 people in Nakivale, 483 in Nyakabande, and others in Oruchinga, focusing on GBV prevention and positive family relationships. Men and boys were engaged through dialogues on positive masculinity.

Women and girls accessed skills training and savings groups (tailoring, salon services, VSLA) to reduce economic vulnerability.

AWYAD and partners supported vulnerable children through case identification, foster care placement, psychosocial support, and referrals for essential services.

Despite progress, resource gaps remain, and more support is needed to sustain protection services.



Strengthening Protection for Women and Children Across Settlements and Transit Centres in south and mid - west

With support from UNHCR and humanitarian partners, GBV prevention and child protection services were strengthened across Bubukwanga, Kyaka, Kyangwali, Rwamwanja, and Sebagoro in April.

Survivor support remained a priority, with cases managed across all locations and survivors receiving counselling, medical care, psychosocial support, and referrals.

Community awareness reached hundreds of refugees through sessions on GBV prevention, referral pathways, and available services. Men and boys were also engaged through dialogues promoting positive masculinity and shared responsibility in preventing violence.

Women and girls accessed psychosocial support and empowerment activities through safe spaces and group sessions, helping to reduce vulnerability and build resilience.

Child protection interventions supported vulnerable children through identification, case management, family tracing, and referrals for essential services, ensuring their safety and wellbeing.

At transit level, Sebagoro maintained safe reception for new arrivals, ensuring timely screening and referrals despite limited time for interventions.



These achievements were made possible through collaboration with partners including NRC, OPM, Police, TPO, MTI, CARITAS, Plan International, and community structures, whose continued support remains critical.

Despite progress, gaps in resources, including limited supplies, staffing, and infrastructure, continue to affect service delivery, highlighting the need for sustained support.



A Child Finds Safety and Stability After Separation

Nakivale – When “Brian” (not his real name) arrived at the settlement, he was alone, frightened and unsure where his family was.

Separated during displacement, the young boy had no caregiver and struggled to meet even basic needs.

His situation changed when he was identified by AWYAD case workers and enrolled into child protection case management.

He received psychological support and was placed under foster care, where a caregiver provided him with shelter, food and a safe environment.

“At first, he could not speak much,” said one case worker. “But over time, he started interacting and feeling secure.”

Through continued follow-up, Brian was also linked to services including education support and family tracing efforts.

Today, he is living in a stable home within the settlement and has started adjusting to daily life.

“He now plays with other children and attends activities regularly,” the case worker added.

His case highlights how timely intervention and coordinated support can restore dignity and safety for vulnerable children.

For Brian, the fear of being alone has slowly been replaced with a sense of belonging—and the hope of finding his family again.



“From the Garden to the Classroom”: Child Labour Survivor Returns to School

Mayuge – Every morning, “James” (not his real name) would wake up before sunrise—not to prepare for school, but to head to the fields.

For years, his childhood was defined by hard labor instead of books. While other children carried school bags, he carried tools, spending long hours working to support his family.

“I thought that was my life,” he says. “Work, not school.”

But everything changed when he was reached through AWYAD’s child protection programme targeting children involved in labour.

Identified as a vulnerable child, James was enrolled in a psychosocial support (PSS) retreat, where he joined other children with similar experiences.

At first, he struggled to open up.

“He was quiet and kept to himself,” one facilitator recalls. “But slowly, he began to talk, to smile, and to feel like a child again.”

Through counselling, group activities and support, James started to rebuild his confidence—and began to imagine a different future.

After the programme, he made a decision he had once thought impossible.

He went back to school.

Today, James sits in a classroom with other learners, holding books instead of tools. Though he is still catching up, he is determined to continue.

“I want to learn,” he says. “I want a better life.”

His story is one of many in Mayuge, where children rescued from labour are being supported to return to school and reclaim their childhood.

For James, the fields are no longer his future.

Now, he has a new path—one filled with hope.



“I THOUGHT MY EDUCATION WAS OVER”— TEENAGE MOTHER RETURNS TO SCHOOL AGAINST ALL ODDS

Maracha - When “Lillian” (not her real name) held her baby for the first time, she believed it also marked the end of her education.

At just a young age, she dropped out of school, overwhelmed by motherhood, stigma and the belief that there was no way back to the classroom.

“I thought school was finished for me,” she recalls.

Days turned into months as she remained at home, watching her peers continue with their studies while she struggled to rebuild her life.

But a turning point came when community outreach teams working with AWYAD identified her during a follow-up visit.

Through counselling, encouragement and support from community leaders, Lillian was urged to reconsider her future.

“They told me I still had a chance,” she says.

Slowly, she regained confidence and made a decision that would change her life—she returned to school.

Today, Lillian is back in class, balancing motherhood and education with determination.

Though the journey is not easy, she is focused on building a better future for herself and her child.

“I want to study and give my child a good life,” she says.

Her story is part of a wider shift in Maracha, where teenage mothers are being supported to rejoin school despite social and economic barriers.

For Lillian, what once felt like the end has become a second chance, and a powerful reminder that it is never too late to start again.

Success story

SHE FLED WAR, THEN FOUND STRENGTH: HOW ONE REFUGEE WOMAN RECLAIMED HER LIFE

When Grace (not her real name) crossed into Uganda from the Democratic Republic of Congo, she carried more than just a small bundle of belongings—she carried fear, loss and the scars of abuse.

Arriving in Kyangwali settlement, life quickly became a daily struggle. With no income and children to care for, she depended on others for survival. Nights were the hardest, filled with anxiety and uncertainty about what tomorrow would bring.

"I didn't know how I would survive," she recalls. "Everything was gone." Her turning point came after she joined an AWYAD-supported women's group at the Nyamiganda Women and Girls Safe Space.

There, Grace received counselling and began learning skills such as weaving and hairdressing alongside other women rebuilding their lives.

"At first, I was quiet and afraid," she says. "But slowly, I started to feel strong again."

With time, she began earning a small income. It started with a few items sold, but soon grew into something more stable.

Today, Grace can buy food, support her children and contribute to household needs, something she once thought impossible.

More importantly, she has regained her confidence.

"I can now make decisions for my family," she says with a smile. "I am no longer afraid."

Her story reflects a growing change in the settlement, where women are moving from dependence to independence through skills training and community support.

For Grace, the journey is not over—but for the first time in a long while, she has hope.

"I know my life can be better," she says. "And now, I am working towards it."



SUCCESS STORY

FROM FEAR TO HOPE: A YOUNG SURVIVOR FINDS PROTECTION AND A FUTURE

When “Aisha” (not her real name) reported her case of abuse earlier this year, she feared her situation would only get worse.

Living in Kyaka II settlement, Aisha had been struggling in silence after experiencing denial of basic resources at home. Without financial support and with limited control over household decisions, daily life became increasingly difficult.

But everything changed when she was identified and supported through AWYAD’s case management services.

Through a referral, Aisha accessed cash assistance and shelter support, helping her meet urgent needs such as food and basic household items.

“At that time, I had nothing,” she recalls. “Even small things were very difficult.”

With the support, Aisha was able to stabilise her situation and regain a sense of control over her life.

She also received psychosocial support, which helped her cope with stress and rebuild confidence. Over time, she began participating in community sessions that educate women on their rights and encourage them to speak up.

Today, Aisha is more confident and actively involved in her community. She is also exploring small ways to earn income and support herself independently.

“I have learned that I deserve a better life,” she says. “Now I know where to go when I need help.”

Her story is one of many showing how timely interventions, especially when combined with economic and psychosocial support, can help survivors move from vulnerability to stability.

For Aisha, the journey is still ongoing, but the fear that once defined her life has been replaced by hope.



I Refused to Give Up”—Boy with Disability Returns to School

Maracha — For years, “Samuel” (not his real name) stayed home, watching other children walk to school while he remained behind.

Living with a disability, Samuel faced challenges that made attending school difficult. Eventually, he dropped out, and like many in similar situations, his education slowly faded into a distant dream.

“I thought I would never go back,” he says.

But his story changed when teachers and AWYAD staff followed up on children who had left school.

During a home visit, Samuel’s case was identified, and discussions were held with his caregivers about the importance of education and inclusion.

“They told me I also deserve to learn,” he recalls.

With support and encouragement, Samuel made the decision to return—and his family agreed.

Today, he is back in school, adjusting to classroom life and interacting with other learners. Though challenges remain, he is determined to continue.

“I want to study like other children,” he says.

His journey reflects a growing push to ensure that no child is left behind, especially those facing barriers such as disability.

For Samuel, going back to school is more than just learning—it is reclaiming a future he once thought was impossible.

Ends



Partnership Engagement



On April 30, AWYAD participated in the SheCounts Women's Finance Fair under the theme "From Income to Influence: Building Wealth, Building Power," reaffirming its commitment to women's economic empowerment.

As a women-led organisation, AWYAD joined Centenary Bank, UNFPA, other partners and women entrepreneurs to advance financial independence as a pathway to safety, voice and the prevention of gender-based violence.

On April 29, African Women and Youth Action for Development (AWYAD), as a local NGO, was honoured to join key partners and stakeholders at the launch of the QuAMPlus Digital Platform, a milestone in promoting transparency, partnership and trust in Uganda's development sector.

AWYAD commends CARE Uganda for spearheading the initiative and joined partners including UNHCR Uganda in advancing accountability and collaboration across development programming.



On April 14, African Women and Youth Action for Development (AWYAD) trained staff in the use of fire-fighting equipment to strengthen workplace safety.

The training reflects AWYAD's commitment to providing a safe, supportive work environment for staff as they serve communities.



THANK YOU



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