FROM VULNERABILITY TO OPPORTUNITY

Advancing Protection, Education and Economic Empowerment for Uganda's Most Vulnerable Communities

June Newsletter

Welcome to the June 2026 edition of AWYAD Times.

In this issue, we share highlights, success stories, and key achievements from our work in empowering women and youth, protecting children, strengthening livelihoods, and supporting refugee communities across Uganda. Together, these stories showcase the impact of collective action and the resilience of the communities we serve.

Thank you to our partners, supporters, staff, and community members for being part of this journey. We hope you enjoy this edition and welcome your continued feedback, ideas, and contributions.

Happy Reading!

AWYAD Communications Team





Hope Beyond Hardship: How Education, Protection and Play Are Transforming Young Lives

CWTL Tablets Keep Refugee Learner Coming Back to School

Kibwera, Oruchinga
When Moses' mother transferred him from Kibwera Primary School to a private school hoping for better education, the young learner made an unexpected choice. He secretly continued attending his former school because of the Can't Wait to Learn (CWTL) digital learning programme.
The truth emerged when his mother discovered he had never reported to the new school but had excelled in exams at Kibwera.
"I cannot go to a school where they don't have CWTL and tablets," Moses reportedly told his mother.
School leaders say the programme has greatly improved attendance and learner motivation.

Cash Support Restores Hope for Foster Parent Struggling to Keep Children in School in Oruchinga Refugee Settlement

For a foster parent struggling to provide for children under her care, cash assistance from AWYAD came as a lifeline.

"We thank AWYAD for always standing with us foster parents. Your encouragement gives us strength to continue supporting these children," she said.

The support enabled vulnerable children to return to school and access scholastic materials. Another caregiver, Salome Dushime, said the assistance helped her clear school fees and buy essentials for her children.
Community leaders say the intervention has reduced school dropout and restored hope among struggling families.





Play Sessions Build Confidence Among Refugee Learners in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement

Children participating in the Team Up programme are showing improved confidence, friendships and conflict-resolution skills.
Through games and group activities, learners say they have learned how to manage anger, communicate respectfully and solve disagreements peacefully.
The Head Teacher of Rwamurunga Primary School says the programme has improved attendance, resilience and classroom behaviour.
"The Team Up sessions have improved the well-being of learners and helped them relate better with others," he said.
Parents have also reported better behaviour and increased respect at home. [MOFA-INSPI...report (2) | Word]
Provide your feedback on BizChat

In communities grappling with poverty, displacement and uncertainty, these stories are a reminder that sometimes a tablet, a game, or a small cash grant can make the difference between a child giving up and a child thriving.

INSPIRE Project (Improving the Prospects of Conflict-Affected Children and Youth in Refugee Hosting Districts in Uganda)

AWYAD
African Women and Youth Action for Development

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

WAR child
ALLIANCE

Farmers, Women and Youth Transforming Lives Through Coffee



Women Farmers Are Building Their Own Coffee Businesses

For years, many rural women dreamed of earning a stable income from coffee farming but lacked the resources to invest. Today, that story is changing.

Across several communities, women belonging to Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) are turning their savings into opportunity. Instead of waiting for outside support, members from 11 savings groups pooled their hard-earned savings to purchase nursery materials and establish their own coffee nurseries.

What started as small weekly savings is now growing into a sustainable source of income. With guidance from AWYAD, the women are learning how to manage nurseries, raise healthy seedlings and run their enterprises more effectively.

The achievement represents more than coffee production—it is a story of confidence, ownership and women taking charge of their economic future.

Farmers Find Hope Through PM+ Support Sessions

Like many farming communities, participants in the AGILE Project face daily pressures ranging from financial uncertainty to family responsibilities and unpredictable agricultural seasons.

For many, these challenges had become overwhelming.

Through the PM+ psychosocial support programme, however, hundreds of farmers are discovering new ways to cope. 310 participants completed all five sessions, learning practical skills in stress management, problem-solving and building positive support networks.

The impact has been remarkable. Most participants reported improved stress management, while many described stronger relationships, renewed hope and greater confidence in facing life's challenges.

Behind the statistics are real stories of individuals who no longer feel alone in their struggles and are finding the motivation to pursue their goals once again. For many participants, the programme has become a pathway not only to emotional wellbeing but also to a more productive future.





Weekly Farmer Meetings Are Transforming Coffee Communities

Every week, groups of farmers gather under trees, in community centres and on demonstration farms with a common purpose—to learn how to grow better coffee.

During June, these gatherings reached 528 farmers, including 328 women, through 21 agronomy meetings organized under the AGILE Project. Farmers shared experiences, learned improved nursery establishment techniques and received practical advice from extension workers.

For many participants, the meetings offer more than technical knowledge. They create a sense of community where farmers can ask questions, exchange ideas and learn from one another's successes and mistakes.

As new skills spread from one farmer to another, the impact extends beyond individual households, helping entire communities improve coffee production and strengthen their livelihoods. The weekly meetings are proving that sometimes the most powerful change begins with people coming together to learn.

AGILE PROJECT
Agriculture Growth and Innovation for Livelihood Enhancement in Kyegegwa District.

Breaking the Chains of Child Labour: Children, Families and Communities Driving Change in Busoga

National Child Labour Day Commemoration in Mayuge District

The World Day Against Child Labour commemoration in Mayuge District provided a powerful platform for children, government leaders, civil society organizations, and development partners to renew their commitment to ending child labour. The event highlighted the importance of protecting children from exploitation and ensuring that every child has access to education and a safe childhood.

A moving moment during the celebration was when a child labour survivor shared his personal story of being rescued from child labour and supported to return to school. As a symbol of progress in the fight against child labour, he proudly presented a copy of the Imanyiro Child Labour By-law to the Guest of Honour, Rt. Hon. Lukia Isanga Nakadama, Third Deputy Prime Minister of Uganda.

The event also enabled AWYAD to showcase key achievements under its child labour eradication programme, including supporting the development of the Imanyiro Child Labour By-law, strengthening the Child Protection Referral Pathway, promoting child rights through school clubs and community sensitization, and empowering vulnerable youth and households through vocational skills training, enterprise development, and savings groups.

Through these interventions, AWYAD continues to address the root causes of child labour while strengthening community systems that protect children and create opportunities for a brighter future.



Farmers Find Hope Through PM+ Support Sessions

Youth Enterprises Offer New Hope for Formerly Vulnerable Young People

MAYUGE: Youth groups supported under AWYAD's child labour project are beginning to reap the benefits of vocational skills training and entrepreneurship.

Young people engaged in hairdressing, tailoring, welding, and motorcycle mechanics have established businesses, generated income, and accumulated collective savings of nearly Shs500,000.

Three graduates have secured employment with their trainers and now earn an average of Shs100,000 monthly. Project leaders say the growing culture of saving and business management is helping reduce economic vulnerabilities that often expose young people to child labour.





Radio Talk Show Raises Awareness on Child Protection

MAYUGE: A community radio talk show hosted by police child protection officers and AWYAD staff has increased public awareness about child rights and labour laws.

The programme educated listeners on Uganda's legal framework for child protection and highlighted the role of police in responding to child labour cases. Community members were encouraged to report violations and support investigations to protect children from abuse and exploitation.

Project officials say public awareness remains a critical tool in preventing child labour practices in vulnerable communities.

Government Takes Over Support for Farmer Groups Ahead of Project Closure

MAYUGE: Local government officials have begun assuming oversight of farmer groups supported under the child labour elimination project as preparations for project closure gain momentum.

Community Development Officers and parish leaders have been linked to beneficiary groups to ensure continuous monitoring and technical support after the project ends.

Beneficiaries welcomed the transition, saying stronger collaboration with government structures will help sustain their enterprises and livelihoods in the long term.

AGILE PROJECT
Agriculture Growth and Innovation for Livelihood Enhancement in Kyegegwa District.

Funded by the European Union

AWYAD African Women and Youth Action for Development

THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION Member of the actalliance

Empowering Women and Girls, Transforming Communities in GKMA

Hygiene Kits Give Vulnerable Girls a Chance to Stay in School

For many adolescent girls in Kampala's refugee and host communities, a lack of sanitary materials means missing school and falling behind in class. This month, however, 75 vulnerable girls received a lifeline through hygiene kits distributed by the African Women and Youth Action for Development (AWYAD).

The kits, which included sanitary pads, soap, buckets and other hygiene essentials, were distributed at Kitebi Primary School, Wakaliga and Luwafu. The support aims to improve menstrual hygiene, promote school retention and protect girls from exploitation and health risks.

Teachers welcomed the initiative, noting that some girls miss several days of school every month during menstruation. AWYAD is now exploring sustainable solutions, including training girls to make reusable sanitary pads to ensure long-term menstrual health support.



> *One beneficiary expressed her gratitude, saying, "I used to miss school whenever I got my period because I lacked sanitary pads. Now I feel confident and can attend class without fear."*

Somali Leaders Back Efforts to End FGM

Somali community leaders have pledged to join efforts to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) following awareness sessions on gender-based violence and sexual reproductive health. The leaders acknowledged the harmful effects of the practice and committed to working with partners to protect women and girls from violence and abuse.

Women Turn to Support Groups for Healing

KAMPALA: More than 80 women from refugee and host communities have benefited from psychosocial support sessions organised by AWYAD and partners. The women shared experiences of single parenting, financial hardship and domestic violence while receiving guidance on coping mechanisms and mental wellbeing. Participants said the sessions provided a safe space to share challenges and seek support. [June Urban...t 2026 (3) | Word]

Market Drama Brings GBV Awareness to Hundreds

Drama performances reached about 250 market vendors, traders and boda boda riders in Nakulabye, Ndejje and Busabala with GBV and SRHR messages.

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

AWYAD African Women and Youth Action for Development

Stories of resilience, protection and new beginnings from Southwestern Uganda's refugee settlements

New Homes, New Hope for Refugee Children

NAKIVALE/MATANDA — Twenty-one vulnerable refugee children have begun a new chapter in their lives after receiving protection support in western Uganda. Fourteen unaccompanied children were placed in foster families in Nakivale as family tracing efforts continue, while seven at-risk children from Matanda were relocated to refugee settlements for continued care and support. The interventions are helping children rebuild their lives in safe and nurturing environments.

31 Refugee Children Relocated to Safer Settlements

NYAKABANDE — Thirty-one vulnerable refugee children, including unaccompanied and separated minors, were relocated from Nyakabande Transit Centre to settlements in Nakivale, Kyaka and Rwamwanja during June. Supported with psychosocial care and protection services, the children now have an opportunity to grow up in safer surroundings while receiving continued assistance.

Refugee Women Rebuild Lives Through Skills Training

NAKIVALE — Hundreds of refugee women and girls are rebuilding their lives through vocational skills training in tailoring, hairdressing and basket weaving. Participants say the initiative is helping them gain confidence, strengthen their independence and create opportunities to support their families.





Refugee Children Take Centre Stage at African Child Day

ORUCHINGA — More than 150 refugee and host community children took part in Day of the African Child activities in Oruchinga Settlement, where they voiced concerns about access to clean water, sanitation, education and protection services. Through debates, health talks and awareness sessions, the children highlighted the challenges affecting their well-being while calling for safer and healthier communities.

Refugees Call for Greater Inclusion on World Refugee Day

ORUCHINGA — Refugees, community leaders and humanitarian partners marked World Refugee Day by celebrating the resilience of displaced families while calling for greater access to education, livelihoods and protection services. Participants urged stakeholders to strengthen support for refugee self-reliance and create opportunities that enable refugees to rebuild their lives with dignity

"Back in Congo, I would sleep fearing that anytime I could be killed or raped. Here in Uganda, I sleep in my tent without fear." — A refugee woman participating in psychosocial support activities in Nakivale.

COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION PROJECTG

AWYAD African Women and Youth Action for Development

NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Empowering Survivors, Protecting Children: The Quiet Revolution in Mid-western Uganda's Refugee Settlements

Child Survivor Receives Support After Delayed Reporting of Defilement in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement

A teenage girl is carrying a second-trimester pregnancy after a defilement case was reported months after the assault, highlighting challenges of delayed reporting among refugee communities. Protection workers say fear, stigma and limited information often prevent survivors from seeking help in time. The case has prompted renewed efforts to strengthen sexual and reproductive health education and GBV awareness in schools and communities

Support Reaches Child-Headed Household After Three Years of Struggle in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement

Six boys abandoned by their mother nearly three years ago are receiving protection support after authorities identified their child-headed household as highly vulnerable. The eldest sibling has been caring for his younger brothers despite severe hardship. Humanitarian workers have provided psychosocial support and linked the family to additional assistance as partners work to improve their wellbeing and protection.





Community Efforts Target Rising Number of Street-Connected Children in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement

Child protection agencies are working with community leaders to support children who have turned to street life due to hunger, poverty and domestic violence. During dialogue sessions, affected children shared their experiences, helping stakeholders identify solutions. Ongoing interventions focus on family reintegration, community awareness and strengthening household support systems.

Protection Partners Seek Alternative Care for Four Foster Girls in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement

Four refugee girls are being supported to access alternative care arrangements after their foster mother faced financial difficulties and could no longer look after them. Child protection teams have provided psychosocial support and continue to monitor the girls while exploring sustainable care options. The case underscores the importance of strengthening support systems for foster families.

Refugee Men Embrace Shared Parenting and Positive Masculinity in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement

Community dialogues on gender-based violence are encouraging more men to share parenting and household responsibilities. During male engagement sessions, participants discussed peaceful conflict resolution, childcare and supporting their spouses. Protection actors say such initiatives are helping reduce violence and promote healthier family relationships.



Across Rwamwanja, Kyangwali and Kyaka refugee settlements, protection interventions are helping vulnerable children find safety, empowering survivors of violence, engaging men as agents of change and giving families renewed hope for the future.

COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION PROJECT

AWYAD African Women and Youth Action for Development

NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Teenage Mothers, Child Brides Return to Classrooms Across West Nile

CULTURAL LEADERS HELP RETURN 13-YEAR-OLD GIRL TO SCHOOL

A 13-year-old girl from Tetiko Village was on the verge of early marriage after being withdrawn from school.

Following PROTECT SRHR training on child rights, SRHR and the dangers of child marriage, cultural leaders intervened and persuaded her family to cancel the marriage and allow her to return to school.

Today, the girl is back in Primary Six at Tetiko Primary School and dreams of becoming a teacher.

"I thought my dream had died, but now I am back in school and working towards my future," she says. The case demonstrates how engaging community gatekeepers can help protect girls' education and prevent child marriage.



PROJECT HELPS 84 TEENAGE MOTHERS RETURN TO CLASSROOMS

WEST NILE — Through home visits, community dialogues, radio campaigns and peer mentorship, the PROTECT SRHR Project successfully supported the reintegration of 84 teenage mothers into school across Pakwach, Nebbi and Maracha districts during June.

The initiative engaged model girls, parents, teachers and community leaders to encourage young mothers to resume their education and overcome stigma.

One beneficiary from Nebbi said:"I thought my future had ended. Now I know I still have one." The success demonstrates how coordinated community support can help vulnerable girls return to school and pursue their dreams.



TEENAGE MOTHER EXCELS AFTER RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Through PROTECT SRHR's school reintegration efforts, a teenage mother in Primary Seven resumed her education after giving birth and recently ranked among the top ten learners in her class.

The project supported teachers with psychosocial support skills and established breastfeeding spaces to help young mothers remain in school.

With support from her family and teachers, she continues to balance motherhood and education.

"It is a miracle that I can attend class and continue learning while caring for my baby," she says. Her success highlights the importance of providing adolescent mothers with a second chance to complete their education.

> *"As communities increasingly champion education over early marriage and stigma, the PROTECT SRHR Project continues to demonstrate that investing in girls' education is investing in stronger families, resilient communities and a brighter future for West Nile*

PROTECT SRHR education-nexus PROJECT

Protection Strengthened for New Refugee Arrivals Under ECHO VITAL Project

Newly arrived refugees in Uganda are receiving stronger protection support under the EU Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid (EU-ECHO)-funded Vulnerable Individuals Through Assistance and Linkages (VITAL) Project, a consortium led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and implemented together with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) and African Women and Youth Action for Development

As the project entered its second month, AWYAD recruited and conducted a week-long orientation for protection staff at its Kampala head office before deploying multidisciplinary teams to Rhino, Palabek, Kiryandongo, Kyangwali, Nakivale and Nyakabande Transit Centre. The teams were trained in child protection, gender-based violence (GBV) case management, safeguarding, referral pathways and data management to strengthen frontline protection services.
The organisation also joined consortium partners in Gulu for an ECHO VITAL Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) workshop that harmonised technical standards, reporting systems and accountability mechanisms across the project. AWYAD further strengthened coordination with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), UNHCR and other protection actors to improve referrals and service delivery.

Despite Ebola-related disruptions to refugee arrivals, AWYAD maintained protection services across all operational areas. During the month, the organisation supported 48 protection and GBV cases, eight unaccompanied and separated children, 44 newly arrived refugees through awareness sessions, and 86 refugee households comprising 176 individuals through relocation support. Protection services also continued at Nyakabande Transit Centre alongside Ebola preparedness and risk communication efforts.

The progress highlights growing efforts to ensure refugees arriving in Uganda have access to timely, coordinated and survivor-centred protection services. AWYAD credited the European Union through ECHO for supporting the initiative and helping partners respond to the protection needs of vulnerable refugees and host communities.



AWYAD newly recruited and deployed protection staff during a week-long induction and orientation at its Kampala head office,



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At AWYAD, we believe that every refugee deserves safety, dignity and hope, regardless of the circumstances that forced them to flee their home. Through the EU-ECHO-funded Vulnerable Individuals Through Assistance and Linkages (VITAL) Project, we are committed to ensuring that newly arrived refugees, especially women, children and other vulnerable groups, receive timely protection, care and support as they begin rebuilding their lives in Uganda. By strengthening child protection and GBV response services, building the capacity of frontline workers and working closely with humanitarian partners, AWYAD is helping create safer and more resilient communities where no one is left behind.

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Partnerships That Matter, Advocacy That Drives Change, Achievements That Inspire



A message from one of AWYAD's stakeholders to our Executive Director, Mr. Wamono Steven Bwayo. On Heroes' Day "Dear Steven, Happy Heroes' Day! Today, I want to celebrate and thank you for being a blessing to so many people. Your kindness, humility, generosity, and genuine desire to make people's lives better are qualities that inspire everyone who has the privilege of working with you. Thank you for believing in people and for leading with both heart and purpose. May God richly bless you and reward all the good you do for others. ''



AWYAD signed an MoU with Caritas Heart2Heart Impact, marking the start of a strategic partnership to empower women, youth, and communities across Uganda.



Kampala: AWYAD and World Vision Uganda have renewed their commitment to strengthening sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programming in West Nile following a monitoring and support visit under the #PROTECTSRHR programme. During a strategic engagement at the AWYAD Head Office, both teams reviewed programme progress, discussed key challenges and best practices, and agreed on actionable measures to enhance implementation and community impact for women and youth.



AWYAD joined government and development partners in a dialogue on advancing the Marrakech Framework on Child Labour in Uganda ahead of the 6th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour scheduled for 2026. The meeting focused on strengthening coordinated efforts to protect children and accelerate the fight against child labour across the country.



AWYAD joined partners and stakeholders in a high-level dialogue on "Engaging Men and Boys as Champions to End Childhood Sexual Abuse," hosted by Transcend Africa in partnership with Brave Movement Uganda. Participants called for stronger engagement of men and boys in child protection efforts, emphasizing their role in challenging harmful social norms, preventing sexual violence against children, and supporting survivors through coordinated community action.



Kampala: AWYAD participated in the Central Region Advocacy Training on Ending Child Marriages in Uganda, organized by Girls Not Brides Uganda and partners to strengthen the advocacy skills of community frontline workers. The training equipped participants with practical tools to advance community-driven efforts to prevent child marriage, protect girls' rights, and promote lasting social change.



Mayuge District: Children's voices took centre stage during the Children's Conference 2026, held ahead of the World Day Against Child Labour, as young advocates called for stronger action to end child labour and protect every child's right to education. Under the theme, "Red Card to Child Labour – Fair Play for Children, Decent Work for Adults," participants urged leaders, parents, and communities to join efforts in creating a future where children learn, play, and thrive free from exploitation.



Kampala: Action Against Hunger Uganda conducted a Partner Capacity Assessment at AWYAD headquarters as part of the onboarding process for the Resilient Solutions for Improved Livelihoods, Health, Water Access, and Food Security (RESILIA) Project. The assessment marked a key step in strengthening local systems and partnerships to support effective project implementation and advance the localization agenda.

Supported by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), the RESILIA project will deliver Cash-for-Work initiatives in environmental and natural resource management while promoting economic empowerment for youth, women, and persons with disabilities through vocational skills development, financial literacy, and strengthened access to savings, credit, and formal financial services in Nakivale and Kyangwali refugee settlements.

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

COFTU

NOTU

International Labour Organization

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unicef

CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE 2026

RED CARD TO CHILD LABOUR: FAIR PLAY FOR CHILDREN, DECENT WORK FOR ADULTS

Save the Children

Somero Development Initiative

AWYAD African Women and Youth Action for Development

ANPPCAN African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect

NRDO Nascent Research & Development Organisation Uganda









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