This edition of the UN Uganda Bulletin Vol 30 showcases different initiatives of the UN family and its partners in the lead up to the UN Month of October.

UN family in Uganda benefits from a comprehensive wellness programme with activities ranging from medical outreaches, work-life balance learning sessions, zumba and aerobics sessions, and the youth hangout all aimed at promoting conducive work environment, and to kick-start the UN Month of October.

Uganda is prepared to implement a ring vaccination strategy to fight Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in case of an outbreak. The strategy helps to protect people most likely to be infected with the virus such as health workers, family members of EVD patients, neighbours and friends.

117 schools in Uganda benefit from menstrual hygiene management programme supported by UNICEF and the Irish Aid.

WFP, UNICEF and the Government introduce a new mechanism to help more children survive and thrive in Uganda’s poorest region.

FAO and Sweden 5–year project to support women in Karamoja and West Nile address climate change challenges and improve household income.

UNIDO upgrades Kiaga Wine Processing Facility to meet international standards.

EU- IOM (the UN Migration Agency) launch Beera Clear campaign to prevent violent extremism in Kampala.
UN Family in Uganda Benefits from a comprehensive Wellness Programme

By Gleh Appleton, UN Cares

United Nations staff and their families in Uganda benefited from a two-week well-being and wellness programme organised by UN Cares and Wellness Group under the theme “Work-Life-balance”.

The programme which included medical outreaches to different regions, work-life balance learning sessions, zumba and aerobics sessions and youth hangout. The activities were aimed at promoting better work environment for UN personnel and their families to kick-start the UN Month of October whose theme is “Good Health and Wellbeing”.

(L-R) Children of UN Staff participating in the fun activities at the Youth Hangout at Hotel Africana in Kampala and on the right, Mr. Ali Abdi addressing UN Staff at the work life balance session at Entebbe Base (RCO photos)

Speaking at the Learning Session in Entebbe, Mr. Abdi Ali, the Acting UN Resident Coordinator and Chief of Mission for the International Organization for Migration urged UN staff to take each day as a wellness day. “Every day should be a wellness and wellbeing day for you,” he said.

He underscored that stress was a silent killer which must be avoided at all costs. “Everyone whether young or old should endeavour to find activities that help them relieve stress
because it is real and if not addressed can cause harm,” he said.

UN Cares in Uganda promotes issues of wellbeing through fitness, access to quality care (in collaboration with the UN Clinic) and raises awareness and keeps the UN work place environment free from stigma around HIV/AIDS.

“I am glad I attended the learning session in Entebbe today. I have been struggling with work life- balance for a long time but after this session, I have been reminded that I must prioritize because some things are more urgent than others. I need to create time for my family,” said Susan Kavuma a UN staff member in Kampala.

The Chair of the UN Cares and Wellness Group, Dr. Bayo Fatunmbi reiterated the group’s belief that Peace at Work + Peace at Home = Peace of Mind.

Globally the UN’s work place programme on HIV/AIDS is designed to reduce the impact of HIV at the workplace by supporting “universal access” to a comprehensive range of benefits for all personnel and their families, known as the UN Cares 10 Minimum Standards.

SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
UGANDA READY TO FIGHT EBOLA IN CASE OF AN OUTBREAK
By Benjamin Sensasi, WHO

As the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) preparedness activities intensify in Uganda, the Ministry of Health (MoH) with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) is making arrangements to vaccinate frontline health workers and high-risk populations should need arise.

In the event of a case of EVD in the country, a strategy known as ring vaccination will be implemented. Under this strategy, health workers will define several layers of contacts, contact of contacts and vaccinate them. These are people most likely to be infected with the virus and they usually include health workers, family members of EVD patients, their neighbours and friends.

The ring vaccination strategy was used to eradicate smallpox in the 1970s, it helped contain the EVD outbreak in West Africa and is currently being used to control the disease in Eastern Democratic Republic Congo (DRC).
“EVD is a highly contagious and deadly disease with the Ebola Zaire strain being the most virulent. Health workers often lose their lives during Ebola outbreaks. Therefore, the rollout of this life-saving vaccine will go a long way in averting health worker mortality due to exposure to the deadly disease,” said Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, Minister of Health.

In Uganda’s preparation, spaces for the cold chain to store the vaccine have already been identified. The freezers, the transportation crates, storage boxes, pallets, and vaccines carriers have arrived in the country and have been installed. A total of 3,000 doses of the rVSV-ZEBOV Ebola vaccine will be imported and administered in an estimated period of six months using the compassionate approach. This vaccine is highly protective and has demonstrated efficacy against Ebolavirus-Zaire that is currently affecting parts of DRC in North Kivu and Ituri Provinces.

The Ebola cold chain is very delicate, sensitive and keeps the vaccine in negative cold chain freezers. Such freezers, are designed to ensure high integrity of the vaccine at temperatures of minus 80 degree Celsius. Therefore, there must be a constant power supply, standby generators, clean, spacious and well-ventilated storage that can also be used to conduct training sessions.

“Ebola is a very aggressive and deadly disease. The opportunity that vaccinating frontline health workers and ring vaccination provides to contain the disease as soon as it is confirmed is one that must never be missed. That’s why we are making all these costly but necessary preparations,” said Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldermariam, the WHO Representative in
Uganda.

The MoH with support from WHO and other partners continue to implement preparedness activities in 22 high-risk districts bordering DRC. The activities include coordinating the preparations, surveillance, contact tracing, laboratory capacity, infection prevention, and control. Other activities include: clinical management of patients including psycho-social care, risk communication and community engagement, safe and dignified burials and cross-border surveillance.

As of 16th September 2018, a total of 142 cases of EVD had been reported to WHO in the DRC. Of these, 111 are confirmed and 31 are probable. There were 97 deaths while an additional 7 suspects were under investigations. The epicentre of the current outbreak is close to the Uganda borders with frequent population movements which put the country at very high risk. To-date health workers in Uganda have responded to over 100 Ebola alerts that have been found to be negative for the Ebola virus. The country has no suspected or confirmed case of Ebola.

SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

NO MORE RAGS, LEAVES AND SITTING ON SAND DURING MENSTRUATION

By Proscovia Nakibuuka Mbonye, UNICEF

Maija Napeyok, 17 years and a Primary seven pupil from Loodoi Primary School, Napak District, remembers her first monthly period. “I was 14 years when I had my first period and I was surprised. I had gone to the borehole to fetch water and upon return, I realized my dress was soiled. My mother was the first to see the stain, so she requested me to go to the bathroom to check. Oh, indeed it was blood! She told me I had started my periods and that it was normal. She told me to bathe, gave me a pad and showed me how to use it.” Napeyok narrates. “However, I felt ashamed, because I remembered that some boys had been laughing at me at the borehole, but I didn’t know why.”

The laughing did not stop at home. One day at school, Napeyok soiled her dress during a lesson because she sometimes used rags as her parents couldn’t afford pads every month. “The boys laughed at me, they didn’t know anything about menstruation. They all run away, and the girls too felt ashamed,” she said. “I always feared standing up in class to answer questions.”
Napeyok is not the only girl in the school that faced challenges during her monthly menstrual periods. Her friend Joanita Abura, 17, also shares that she had to stay out of school for five days when her first period came. She neither had sanitary pads nor knickers. “I had nothing! I would bathe then wrap myself with a thick skirt and when I soiled, I would go back to bathe.”

Napeyok and her friends show off some of the reusable pads that they make photo UGDA/2018/Nakibuuka

Napeyok adds that girls in her village are not any better. When their periods appear, they are isolated from the rest of community members, told to sit on sand, while others use leaves, and no school. These and more are some of the experiences of these adolescent girls.

Luckily for Napeyok and Abura, their school is among the 117 schools that are benefiting from the Straight Talk Clubs that are sensitizing pupils both boys and girls and school leaders on menstrual hygiene management. The clubs have been founded with UNICEF support and funding from the Irish Aid.

In 2017, the school with support from UNICEF through Straight Talk Foundation, established clubs where pupils - both boys and girls are sensitized on menstrual hygiene management among many other issues. The pupils have been trained to make reusable pads that are provided to the girls especially the needy. Materials utilized to make the pads including cotton wool, cloth, polythene - are all provided with UNICEF support, courtesy of Irish Aid funding. “Ever since we learnt how to make pads, even our friends who used to miss lessons are now able to continue with their studies because the pads are available. There was a lot of absenteeism by school girls and the dropout rate was also high,” Napeyok says.
The boys too have been sensitized about menstruation and encouraged to support the girls during their periods and are involved in making the reusable pads. “They don’t laugh at us anymore when our clothes get soiled. Instead they provide their sweaters to us to cover our dresses and encourage us to keep extra clean.” In the clubs, they have been sensitised to support each other.

Through the clubs, the school has provided a ‘safe space’ complete with a changing and washing facility where the girls privately dress up and bathe during their periods. The space has extra reusable pads, soap, water, for use, as and when needed.

“The safe space is very good because we have to change our pads three times a day and each time, we have to wash the pads. Whenever one needs to use the room, the key is always available.”

The girls attest that ever since the clubs were started, they no longer worry about menstruation. They receive support from their school leaders and peers and all they need to worry about now is learning and excelling.

Longwok Catherine, the Senior female teacher, says the club activities around menstrual hygiene management have greatly supported the adolescent girls. She adds that the club members also reach out to girls out-of-school, sensitizing them about menstruation, provide them with reusable pads as well as teach them how to make the pads and many have returned to school in the last one year because of these efforts.

“Today, I am free. I can even play when I am menstruating. Before I would feel shy to play with my friends. I would just sit behind the classroom because I feared the rags would leak or even fall out. Our reusable pads cannot fall out because they have strings.”

NEW APPROACH TO ADDRESS MALNUTRITION IN UGANDA SHOWS PROMISE IN SAVING MORE CHILDREN’S LIVES

By Lydia Wamala, WFP

Faced with the persistent challenge of reducing child malnutrition in Uganda’s poorest region, the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF and the Ugandan Government came up with a new mechanism to help more children survive and thrive.

Susan Liko had to walk 40 kilometres through the northeastern Karamoja region of Uganda
earlier this year—from her home to a hospital—carrying her 26-month-old daughter, Alyat Nakiru, who was losing weight because of tuberculosis.

“I had neither money nor food for the journey,” Susan recalls. “All I had on me was a jug of water and a shawl covering my child. I was frustrated because she would not breastfeed.”

Susan’s husband was not at home when she left on the two-day journey. Alyat was treated at Matany Hospital for a month, meaning Susan had to stay with her, leaving her four other children of ages between 5 to 12 at their home in Loputuk parish.

Health workers said that Alyat was acutely malnourished and she should be enrolled in community-based supplementary feeding at home in Loputuk.

**Bringing food closer to malnourished children**

This Government programme is one of three ways in which WFP provides food to vulnerable people in Karamoja, a region historically known for severe droughts, chronic food shortages and high rates of all forms of malnutrition.

The other programmes include school meals and a mother-and-child health project to
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protect children against stunting and underweight.

WFP began supporting the localised programmes years ago, primarily to help reduce the distances that mothers in need of life-saving assistance for malnutrition must walk with their sick children to reach health centres.

WFP engages village health teams, screening children house-to-house and referring the moderately malnourished ones to the community-based programme, where mothers receive WFP’s specialized nutritious food.

Severely malnourished children are referred to Government health centres, where UNICEF manages their condition. WFP also works with non-governmental organizations and government health workers providing nutrition education and health services to combat malnutrition. More

SDG 3 – ZERO HUNGER

FAO, GOVT OF SWEDEN SIGN USD 9 MILLION PROJECT TO SUPPORT WOMEN FACING CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGES

By Agatha Ayebazibwe, FAO

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has signed an agreement with the Government of Sweden represented by the Embassy of Sweden in Uganda to implement a 5-year project to support women in Karamoja and West Nile address climate change challenges and to improve household income.

FAO Representative a.i. Ms. Priya Gujadhur with Swedish Ambassador, H.E. Per Lindgärde at the Swedish Embassy in Kampala

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The project, “Climate Resilient Livelihood Opportunities for Women Economic Empowerment (CRWEE) in Karamoja and West Nile Regions of Uganda,” funded by the Government of Sweden aims to strengthen inclusive, gender responsive and climate change resilience of rural women populations depending on agricultural production systems in Karamoja and West Nile Regions.

This project will work to empower disadvantaged women and youth including those in refugee camps, through enhanced capacity, addressing the root causes of gender inequalities at both household and community level and improved access of women to productive resources such as land, water and forests in 8 districts in West Nile (Arua, Adjumani, Zombo, Yumbe, Koboko, Nebbi, Maracha, and Moyo) and 4 in Karamoja sub region (Abim, Napak, Nakapiripirit, and Moroto).

Speaking at the signing ceremony held at the Swedish Embassy in Uganda, Ms. Priya Gujadhur, and the FAO Deputy Country Representative and Representative a.i. said that FAO will work with responsible stakeholders to ensure that it benefits the rural women who bear the most brunt of climate change impacts.

The Swedish Ambassador, H.E. Per Lindgärde reiterated that Sweden remains committed to supporting Uganda in addressing issues of women’s empowerment, particularly with access to productive resources including land, improving livelihoods of local communities through increased production and productivity and increased resilience of poor people including refugees and host communities. He also highlighted the partnership as a symbol of the trust the Government of Sweden has in FAO to deliver results.

SDG 9 – INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

UNIDO UPGRADES WINE PROCESSING FACILITY IN BUSHENYI DISTRICT SOUTH WESTERN UGANDA

By Judith Atim, UNIDO

“I started producing wine locally in 2007 using bananas as the main raw material. I was only producing four jerry cans - about 80 litres. In 2015, UNIDO identified me as one of the beneficiaries of the Banana Livelihoods Diversification Project and I am getting a lot of support,” Ms. Franciska Kamanzi, the Managing Director of Kiaga (U) Ltd, the producers of Gala Wine, shares her story.
From such humble beginnings, Ms. Kamanzi has seen steady growth in her wine enterprise, thanks to UNIDO support.

With funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNIDO is working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries as the implementing partner to support vulnerable communities in Western Uganda to better adapt to the effects of climate change by providing greater opportunities for income generation, poverty reduction and food security, through banana value addition activities.

The upgrade of Kiaga Wine Processing facility is aimed at ensuring that it meets international standards and to help Ms. Kamanzi and other smaller wine producers add value to their products.

The facility will be fitted with modern equipment and will also serve as an incubation hub for other wine processors.

In 2016, Ms. Kamanzi was one of the beneficiaries sponsored by UNIDO to undergo training in Thailand. She has also benefitted from several other local trainings aimed at equipping her with the knowledge and tools to be a better wine processor.

"I saw how the banana growing communities in Thailand are benefitting. We had several field visits; we went to the banana processors and saw the range of products they were making..."
from bananas including chips, crisps and banana toffees, which I am now doing here. Every day, I gain so much from the knowledge I got from UNIDO,” Ms. Kamanzi adds.

Once the facility is fully upgraded, Ms. Kamanzi expects her production capacity to grow exponentially. This means her demand for raw materials (bananas) will be higher than it has ever been. This is also good news to the vast majority of banana farmers in her community and the entire Bushenyi District where the facility is based.

A ready market supported by strong demand for bananas means that farmers will earn more money than they did previously.

By supporting processors like Ms. Kamanzi, UNIDO expects to address four critical issues which are value addition, employment creation, food security and increased income, thereby reducing poverty. This is one way of helping the Government of Uganda realize some of its development goals.

By Richard M Kavuma, IOM

The UN International Organization for Migration (IOM), launched a major messaging campaign focused on preventing violent extremism in Kampala, with officials urging young people to pursue their dreams with patience, determination and peace.

The “Beera Clear” messaging campaign is an initiative part of the Strengthening Social Cohesion and Stability in Slum Populations (SSCoS) project, which is funded by the European Union.

Speaking at the launch in Kampala, Ali Abdi, IOM Uganda Chief of Mission, explained why the project was putting emphasis on expanding opportunities for young people in the city’s informal settlements. He suggested that youth were more vulnerable to being radicalized if they were marginalized and desperate.

Thomas Tiedemann, the European Union Delegation’s Head of Governance and Human Rights, said that besides providing young men and women with skills and support to start their businesses, the project was empowering them to take charge of their futures. He added that radicalization and extremism happen in our midst, but we cannot recognize or detect them; hence, the campaign.
Funded at EUR 4.3 million over three and a half years, the SSCoS project started in August 2016 and aims to address the root causes of radicalization. It is implemented by IOM and its partners in the Kampala areas of Bwaise, Kisenyi, Kabalagala and Katwe. It combines socio-economic support to slum youth with logistical facilitation and capacity building of key state agencies such as the Police.

Assistant Inspector General of Police Asan Kasingye, who represented the state minister for internal affairs, urged young people to refrain from violence. But he pledged that the Police would strive to observe human rights of young people, while sensitizing them to stay away from violence. More

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