OVERVIEW

- The first edition of the UN Uganda Bulletin in 2019 brings you stories from key events and testimonies from our beneficiaries in the field.

- Government and the United Nations launch a 5-year joint programme on Gender Based Violence (GBV) and promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR).

- United Nations Under-Secretary-General on Policy, Ms. Ana Maria Menendez visited Uganda, 27th to 30th January 2019. She met with the Prime Minister, members of the diplomatic corps, representatives from civil society including youth and women organizations and, the UN Country Team.

- UN Country Team participate in the SDG Leadership Lab. The SDG Leadership lab is about helping UN Country Teams learn and apply cutting-edge techniques to promote adaptive mind-sets and better draw on the collective intelligence in the UN system.

- The Government of Uganda launches the Health Sector Refugee Response Plan 2019-2024 intended to address the needs of refugees and the host communities and ensure access to quality health services for both.

- World Health Organization Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus applauds Uganda for the Ebola preparedness response mounted, so far, in the high-risk districts of the country.

- Cultural norms push 14-year-old Faida into early marriage; several girls like Faida have been rescued from marriages and saved from many negative consequences.

- WFP cash giving hope to refugees in Lobule refugee settlement in Northwestern Uganda.
“NO WOMAN DESERVES TO LIVE IN FEAR OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE”

By Aidah Nanyonjo, UNWomen Uganda

“Violence against women is a shame. No woman deserves to live in constant fear of Gender Based Violence,” Ms. Rosa Malango, the UN Resident Coordinator said during the launch of the five-year joint programme on Gender Based Violence (GBV) and promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) in Uganda, on 30th January 2019 at Hotel Africana, Kampala.
The programme worth US $28 million (SEK 250 million) aims at combating Gender Based Violence and improving Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) of men, women, girls, boys in Uganda. The programme will be implemented by UNWomen and UNFPA in partnership with the Government of Uganda with funding from the Embassy of Sweden.

The programme will be implemented in 14 districts, including Abim, Amuria, Bundibugyo, Gulu, Kaabong, Kaberamaido, Kampala, Kiryandongo, Kotido, Moroto, Napak, Nakapiripirit, Pader and Yumbe. The selection focused on districts with high prevalence of GBV, high urban population, refugee hosting districts and UN intervention districts with minimal funding.

Ms. Malango said the joint programme on GBV will soon be reinforced by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative on ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

The Swedish Ambassador to Uganda, H.E Mr. Per Lindgarde revealed that ensuring gender equality remains a top priority for the Swedish Government. "We are ready to work with the Government and UN agencies to find innovative ways to end Gender Based Violence in Uganda," he said.

Mr. Lindgarde noted that GBV is one of the largest obstacles to development thus making it necessary to have joint efforts from all stakeholders to be able to end violence against women and girls by 2030.

"As we continue to engage in ending Gender Based Violence, I call upon every one of you to join us. Gender equality cannot be achieved without the men and boys. Real change will never happen unless everyone is involved," he said.

While launching the programme, the Minister of State for Gender and Culture, Hon. Peace Mutuuzo, said, “the programme is timely and relevant in building on the gains already achieved by the government in addressing the underlying social causes of GBV and gender inequalities.”

Ms. Mutuuzo said the focus should be put on changing the mindset of individuals towards the negative social and cultural norms that perpetrate violence against women and girls.

“Enforcement alone shall not work. We need to focus on changing the mindset. Once the mindset is changed, then we shall have won the battle against GBV,” Ms. Mutuuzo noted.

The event was attended by representatives from local governments, civil society organisations and UN agencies.
UN UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL VISITS IOM SLUMS PROJECTS IN KAMPALA

By Richard M Kavuma, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Senior Advisor on Policy Ms. Ana Maria Menendez on 28 January hailed IOM Uganda’s “grassroots approach” to build stable slum communities in the capital Kampala. Menendez spoke in the Kampala slum area of Bwaise, as she visited the Strengthening Social Cohesion and Stability in Slum Populations (SSCoS) project, which is funded by the European Union. This was part of her three-day visit to Uganda to better understand how the UN can support prevention of crises.

The SSCoS project is implemented by IOM Uganda and partners led by the Action for Fundamental Change and Development (AFFCAD). It aims at preventing radicalization and violent extremism through a mix of socioeconomic support to vulnerable youths, mass messaging campaigns, as well as engaging Government departments to improve service provision, including the Police on human rights-sensitive approaches.

Under-Secretary-General Menendez was accompanied by the UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, Ms. Rosa Malango. They inspected cookery, tailoring, electronics and beauty therapy items produced by project-supported youths. They also heard testimonies from some of the project beneficiaries that included a police officer; youths who got vocational skills and business start-up kits; as well as a vocational institute trainer.

Menendez told the dozens of slum youth present that they were essential to building better communities with peace, equality, justice necessary for the effective pursuit of Agenda 2030.
She encouraged them to recognize that they are assets for themselves, their families, communities and society.

“You will often hear that the youth are the future and indeed you are the future; but I also think you are the present,” she said. “And the fact that we are here talking to you, looking at your projects and hopefully listening to your voices and looking at how you are preparing for better communities... this is something that speaks to that present.”

The UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Rosa Malango urged them to dream, plan and take action, but also to take pride in the vocational skills acquired. The latter is particularly important in a country with a craving for white collar education despite acute shortage of white-collar jobs.

As part of her visit, Under-Secretary-General Menendez interacted with the Prime Minister, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, representatives from civil society organisations, youth, diplomats, Uganda Peace Mediators and Her Royal Highness the Queen of Buganda.

SDG 17 –PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

UN COUNTRY TEAM EQUIPPED WITH CUTTING-EDGE TECHNIQUES TO PROMOTE ADAPTIVE MIND-SETS and COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

By Monica Aturinda, UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO)

As part of efforts to translate the Sustainable Development Goals into reality in Uganda and to ensure a smooth implementation of the Reform of the UN Development System, the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator organised a three-day face-to-face SDG Leadership Lab training for the UN Country Team (UNCT) to equip them to be more responsive in the emerging and future challenges.

The Lab model is a partnership between Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the Presencing Institute and the UN Development Coordination Office that strengthens the leadership styles of the members of UNCT enabling them to amplify their unique voices, create safe spaces for new partnerships and provide platform for innovative solutions. It ensures that the UNCT is better equipped to address SDG challenges in the new changing environment through innovative leadership and future thinking. To ensure effectiveness the three levels of UN leadership were invited namely the UN Country Team, the Deputies and the Heads of UN Area Coordination Teams (at sub-national level).

While addressing the UNCT at the training, UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Rosa Malango said, “I signed up the UNCT for the SDG Leadership Lab because it creates a safe space for us to
exchange ideas on different key issues and to find solutions collectively.”

Ms. Malango said that this safe space will enable the UNCT to successfully implement the UN Reforms. They will be able to get out of their comfort zones and work differently to ensure that Uganda achieves its development agenda, leaving no one behind.

Uganda has been showcased globally as one of the pioneer countries that shaped the post-2015 development agenda, now known as the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

“For me, the SDG Lab is about finding a way of ensuring that the world moves from mere intention around the SDGs to action, we have been struggling to find a way to make the SDGs a reality, but I believe after this training, the UNCT will be champions of mind-set change and we will begin to see movement from mere intention to action,” said Martin Kalungu-Banda, Presencing Institute.

The Lab provides an opportunity for the UNCT to learn to apply cutting-edge techniques to promote adaptive mindsets and better draw on collective intelligence in the UN system.

Dr. Doreen Mulenga, UNICEF Representative, said that the SDG Lab is a great initiative because it provides a safe space for them to exchange ideas as UN leaders. “I believe leadership is enhanced when a collective approach is prioritised. Therefore, when we occupy such a space as leaders, we are able to challenge ourselves and quickly come up with solutions to issues that we otherwise wouldn’t have done as individuals,” said Dr. Mulenga
Mr. Maxime Houinato, UN Women Representative said that listening is an important skill that every leader must have, and it is one of the components the SDG lab is helping us to master. “When you learn to listen effectively as a leader, you are able to understand issues around you and those affecting your staff at a deeper level and come up with innovative and sustainable ways to resolve them,” said Mr. Houinato.

Ms. Miranda Tabifor, UNFPA Deputy Representative and member of the deputies leadership group said that the SDG Leadership training is one of the tools that will enable them to deliver on the New Generation United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the SDGs and the UN Reforms.

“On behalf of the UN Area Coordination team, I would like to say that this training has been timely because we will now go back to the field and be able to effectively communicate about the reforms and the SDGs to colleagues and partners,” said Emmanuel Bryma Momoh, United Nations Area Coordinator (Alternate) in Karamoja Region.

The SDG Lab is a multi-stakeholders initiative that contributes to the implementation of the SDGs by supporting actors in further leveraging expertise knowledge into policy, practice and action. It is a prototype that can be replicated in different countries. Uganda and Cambodia are pilot counties of this initiative.

SDG 3 –GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

UGANDA LAUNCHES HEALTH SECTOR INTEGRATED REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN (2019-2024)

By Edmond Mwebembezi, World Health Organization (WHO)

The Government of Uganda launched the Health Sector Refugee Response Plan 2019-2024 (HSIRRP 2019-2024) on 25th January 2019. This is a five-year plan that advocates for the provision of integrated services for both refugees and refugee-host communities in all the refugee-hosting districts.

The HSRIIP is intended to address the needs of refugees and the host communities and ensure access to quality health services for both through improvement of staffing of refugee-hosting districts to 95% of the public staffing norms. In addition, 50% of the public health centres at level II will be improved to health centres level III.
Likewise, adequate medicine and health supplies will be distributed to the respective districts using the national distribution channels. The capacity of facility-based health workers and community health extension workers will also be built to adequately meet the needs of the communities.

Uganda hosts over 1.19 million refugees and ranks third globally among the countries with the highest number of refugees.

The launch was presided over by the Prime Minister of Uganda, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda who revealed that Uganda’s borders are open for all those fleeing their homes or countries for various reasons.

He said, “Uganda led the way for innovative approaches with the development and launch of the education response plan for refugees and host communities, and the health sector has also done the same.”

The Minister of Health, Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng said that HSIRRP will ensure that refugees in Uganda have equal access to social services including health and education. She said, “the HSIRRP is modelled along the national health priorities, principles of strengthening health systems, integrated service provision and aid effectiveness.”
The UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, Ms. Rosa Malango said that the UN General Assembly recently committed to supporting refugee-hosting countries. She revealed that Uganda was the first country in the world to launch a health sector integrated refugee response plan and the UN’s support to the formulation process was a great milestone in cementing the relationship between the UN and Government. “Uganda, we congratulate you again for meeting your target and your leadership in these trying times,” she said.

WHO DIRECTOR - GENERAL APPLAUDS UGANDA’S EBOLA PREPAREDNESS RESPONSE

By Edmond Mwebembezi, World Health Organization (WHO)

The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO DG), Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has lauded Uganda for the Ebola preparedness response mounted, so far, in the high-risk districts of the country.

Dr. Tedros said that Uganda’s disease outbreak response system is recognized globally for its effectiveness. He commended the government for the support rendered during the ongoing vaccination exercise, saying, “the vaccination exercise will go a long way in saving the lives of frontline health workers and health care workers and we are really grateful for the government’s commitment and support.”

Prime Minister, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda with the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO DG), Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in Kampala

He made these remarks at a meeting held at the Office of the Prime Minister where he met key government dignitaries including; the Prime Minister, Right Honourable Dr. Ruhakana
Rugunda; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Sam Kutesa; Minister of State for Defence and Veteran Affairs, Hon. Bright Rwamirama; Ministry of Health Permanent Secretary, Dr. Diana Atwiine and other government officials.

He highlighted the appreciation by Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) of Uganda for the support in the ongoing outbreak response especially regarding capacity building in Infection Prevention and Control and cross-border screening and surveillance.

Dr. Tedros emphasized the need to amplify Primary Health Care (PHC) in Uganda in order to prevent diseases among the population. He added that health promotion and prevention of communicable and Non-communicable disease are key to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda appreciated WHO’s endless support to Uganda, saying, “whatever Uganda has managed to achieve in public health is because of the general leadership of WHO.”

He noted, with concern, the ongoing Ebola outbreak in DRC, and commended WHO and partners in the response for braving the harsh conditions to save lives. “Your hard-work and sacrifice do not go unnoticed,” he said.

Dr. Ruhakana also highlighted the importance of PHC to Uganda. “We have no choice but to support PHC. It is the key to tackling many of the afflictions we are getting,” he said. He committed the government to achieve UHC in Uganda.

**Feature stories**

**SDG 4 – QUALITY EDUCATION**

**CULTURAL NORM PUSHES 14-YEAR-OLD FAIDA INTO AN EARLY MARRIAGE**

By Proscovia Nakibuuka Mbonye and Nami Nakatani, UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

In Faida Harriet’s village, not many girls transition from primary to secondary level. Faida, aged 17, did not want to be counted among those that could not attain secondary education after completing her primary school education. Foreseeing the financial challenges that lay ahead when she joined secondary school, Faida opted to grow cassava for sale. She was optimistic that the money earned would be enough to cater for her
school fees and scholastic materials when the time came. She did not want any barriers towards her education.

Unfortunately, one fateful evening as Faida returned from the market, a 27-year-old man, and three others wrestled her, forcefully dragged her to the man’s home and locked her up. She was not aware that the man had planned this, but she knew the implications, marriage. With no one to rescue her that day, Faida spent the night at the man’s home.

Unfortunately, in Faida’s culture, when a girl spent a night in a man’s home, she was considered married. At only 14 years, Faida had been forced into a marriage. She worried about her future, thought about her dreams, while the man’s family jubilated upon receiving a new bride. Her future seemed bleak as she regretted why she had gone out to the market that day.

The marriage

Faida spent four days in the man’s home as her family negotiated her rescue but the impact of the incident is still evident in her eyes as she narrates her story. “Life was very difficult, by luck I would eat food once a day.” She lacked necessities like soap, was subjected to a lot of house work and insulted whenever she served food late, a very common occurrence in early marriages. “For all those days, I bathed with no soap and had one dress,” she shared.

“Today, when I hear the word marriage, I get scared and it brings back the bad memories of the four days I spent in the man’s home,” says Faida.

A lot of negotiations had to take place between the two families for Faida to be released. It was especially Faida’s mother who wished her to return home to continue her studies. Faida’s family would pay two goats, a cow and 70,000 Uganda shillings for her release as required by culture or risked being struck by a bad omen. Sadly, a family, whose daughter was robbed of her dignity was the one to pay for her release.
The rescue process was led by Pastor Henry Ayikoba, who is also a para social worker trained by World Vision with UNICEF support, yielded fruit when Faida was finally freed from the forced marriage. To support Faida’s healing, the Pastor visited her occasionally for counselling sessions, before encouraging her parents to take her back to school.

Philiam Adriko, Programme Manager for World Vision and Coordinator of the UNICEF-supported End Child Marriage campaign, funded by the Netherlands Government, affirms that incorporating para-social structures has ensured that communities take charge of protecting children and adolescents in their communities. The para-social workers have been trained and are now able to identify, prevent, respond and report all cases of violence against children in their communities, to the relevant authorities. Adriko also shares some cultural challenges they face. “Culture is very important to us, but it has also negative aspects, which lead children to suffer.” To address this, cultural and religious leaders have involved in the campaign and they speak to their communities and disseminate messages through their sermons and preaching and many have become our ambassadors.

**Faida returns to school**

When her primary school results were released, Faida had scored highly. With support from Pastor Ayikoba, Faida joined secondary school and she was promoted to senior three in 2019. She is performing well, loves science subjects like physics and biology and hopes to become a nurse one day to help sick people. She is happy to be back to school where she says she belongs, and she was welcomed warmly by peers at school despite her anxiety.

Faida is determined to stay and complete school. As such, she supports her father to farm especially during the holidays when she is back home. They grow cassava and beans for sale to raise school fees and other necessities. When they lack market, they trade their harvest for school fees at her school.

She advises both boys and girls to continue with their education and only think about marriage when they are old enough.
World Vision’s Adiko boasts of a successful campaign. Several girls like Faida have been rescued from marriages and saved from many negative consequences. The strengthening of community structures to support child protection initiatives has ensured timely reporting of violence against children cases which wasn’t the case many years ago when such cases were never reported and many including criminal cases settled within the families.

WFP CASH OPENS DOORS FOR MARIE, MANASSEH AND THEIR EIGHT CHILDREN

By Lydia Wamala, WFP Uganda

In the northwestern corner of Uganda in a refugee settlement called Lobule, Congolese refugee, Manasseh Budili, wakes up before dawn every day to tend to his farm.
On this mildly sunny September day, he plants sweet potatoes while his wife, who is expecting their ninth child, heads to the nearby river to wash the family’s clothes. He draws the vines from a heap tucked away outside his house built with compressed earth and a grass roof. Manasseh bought the vines with money his family receives monthly from the World Food Programme (WFP).

They have also managed to rent a piece of land, situated a few kilometres away, to plant more crops including cassava, peanuts, potatoes and rice. The family also keeps four goats, three chickens and three pairs of pigeons. Three of their goats, they say, were bought with the money from WFP.

“Money is the key to everything,” says Marie. “With what we receive from WFP, we are able to stock up on silver fish, beans, peanuts, cooking oil to take us through the month.” “The first thing we do with the money is buy food,” says Manasseh. “After which we may use the reminder to buy crop seeds, small animals once in a while, and medicines which may not available at the nearby (Government) health centre. Malaria is expensive to treat.”

With money, Marie adds, you don’t have to borrow food or other items from people. You buy your own. She explains how her family, which receives UGX 31,000 (US$ 8.40) per person per month, can even buy delicacies such as rice. More

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