

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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THE  
LUTHERAN  
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FEDERATION

World Service

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UGANDA  
PROGRAM

# Message from the Country Representative



Dear colleagues,

I am very happy that the vaccine is now finally available. I want to tell you that hesitation on getting vaccinated is natural; however, I caution you not to fall victim to fake news, non-scientific discrediting, and misinformation regarding vaccines.

The data and evidence is clear the vaccines provide increased protection towards this deadly virus.

I have taken it without any hesitation. It was free and not painful.

I encourage all staff to follow whenever you are ready. Currently, Uganda is vaccinating those 50 years and above, plus those considered at higher risk.

You can help stop the spread of COVID-19. I hope that all humanitarian workers will lead by example to protect themselves and their communities. You are also in privileged positions with access to information so please do share this knowledge.

There is no intention to put pressure on anyone; I want you to be safer. Yes, everything has risks but not taking the vaccine is riskier.

It is important not to forget, the number of COVID-19 continues to rise; it is now more than ever essential to keep taking protective measures.

Masks, distancing, sanitation at the office and after office hours are key as we continue working and delivering.

Our work responsibilities don't stop while we do our part to prevent the transmission. Stay Safe.

**Jesse Kamstra**

Country Representative  
LWF Uganda

# EDITOR'S NOTE



*Dear Reader,*

*We thank God who has kept you alive and productive amid the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*This is our first quarterly newsletter in 2021, and we bring you highlights of what happened between the end of last year to date.*

*You will read about*

*significant events within the LWF Country program, news and success stories from our interventions in Lamwo, Obongi, Adjumani, Kyangwali, Kamwenge, Kitgum, Pader and Kampala subprograms.*

*Thanks to the staff who don't tire of serving the people of concern and later on document our successes on the ground.*

*Continue to enjoy the newsletter and stay safe!*

*Jilian Namagembe*

Communications Officer  
LWF Uganda

## LWF Country Representative meets UNHCR High Commissioner



UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi (left) standing with Jesse Kamstra the LWF Country Representative

Jesse Kamstra, the LWF Uganda Country Representative, met Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, during the latter's return to Uganda between March 8-11, 2021 after three years.

LWF Uganda is one of the largest implementing partners of the UN Refugee Agency to protect the over 1.4 million immigrants majority who are from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo currently residing in the country.

During his visit, Grandi visited various refugee settlements where he reaffirmed the utmost commitment of UNHCR to supporting a comprehensive refugee response in Uganda.

While addressing the media, Grandi's message was urged all stakeholders to remain engaged at the highest level to en-

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Collective efforts are needed to address the humanitarian-development nexus and accelerate the transition to sustainable local government services

FILIPPO GRANDI

sure the success of the Uganda comprehensive refugee response.

"Collective efforts are needed to address the humanitarian-development nexus and accelerate the transition to sustainable local government services," Grandi told the journalists

Uganda, one of the world's poorest countries, remains the only refugee-hosting nation that has developed comprehensive plans for managing refugees.

Following the comprehensive refugee response framework in 2017, the government of Uganda has included refugees in the national development plans and endorsed sector plans to improve social services delivery in refugee-hosting districts, namely education, health, water and environment, jobs livelihoods among others.

## Save Bugoma Forest: LWF staff Run for Nature

As the world concentrated on dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, LWF staff, on October 25, 2020, joined other activists in a charity run to fundraise over \$25,300 to facilitate legal and advocacy campaigns to reclaim and stop the destruction of Bugoma Forest.

Bugoma Forest is a Central Forest Reserve in Uganda's western district of Kikuube.

With 411 square kilometres of the protected area, it is the largest remaining block of natural tropical forest along the Albertine Rift Valley alongside Lake Albert and one of the most important for biodiversity.

Bugoma is a chimpanzee sanctuary as it is home to about 500 chimpanzees and hosts other primates like the endemic Ugandan mangabey.

The bird list is of 221 species recorded, making it a birding sanctuary.

However, huge threats are challenging the forest's existence since 2016,



Map of Bugoma Forest found in Western Uganda. COURTESY PHOTO

including private investors who have claimed significant portions of the protected reserve and subsequently converted the forest into sugar cane plantation after having harvested the timber.

The 5th edition of the 5-kilometre and 10-kilometre run campaign dubbed Run for Nature under the theme "Sugar-free forests" was

organized by the Association for the Conservation of Bugoma Forest (ABCF) in Kikuube district, where the Bugoma forest is located, is one of the nine districts where the LWF Uganda program is currently implementing various environmental conservation interventions in Kyangwali refugee settlement (hosting over 30,000 refugees), and the host communities



Some of the staff who participated in the run display one of the banners on save Bugoma forest campaign

**Tenders**

**Work**  
0 tender published

**Supplies**  
0 tender published

**Services**  
0 tender published

**Work**  
1 tender published

**Supplies**  
0 tender published

**Construction of water and distribution pipeline in Kyangwali** **Tender notice: 4818**

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Notice Published Date	Last Date of Bid Submission	Tender Opening Date	Category
16 Mar, 2021 11:03 AM	17 Mar, 2021 11:03 AM	17 Mar, 2021 11:03 AM	Work

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## LWF Uganda adopts an electronic tendering system

BY LILIAN NAMAGEMBE  
Communications Officer

**L**WF Uganda has automated its tendering system where tender documents are submitted and accepted through electronic means, contrary to the paper-based system, requiring bidders to pick hard copies of documents and later submit them physically.

The electronic system rolled out in March 2021 aims to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the bidding process.

**How the electronic tendering system works**

- The system displays tenders and invitation for bids for works, services, and supplies on the dedicated LWF Uganda e-tender site at <https://etender.lutheran-worlduganda.org/>
- Interested bidders shall view, download, apply, and submit their bids electronically by uploading all the tender documents through the site
- The system also has a chat integration feature that allows one to submit their request for clarifications, and all the interested bidders will receive the feedback given.

### BENEFITS

With this system, larger markets/suppliers are made more accessible by displaying business opportunities on our e-tender site, thus increasing competition among bidders.

On the other hand, due to the reduced use of hard-copies, LWF will save on archival and storage costs, translating to environmental and financial benefits.

- The Data security and integrity features on the system allow for storing the e-tender bidding data in the Standard Query Language (SQL) server in sensitive encrypted forms that no one can access and view the bidding documents before the formal opening date.
- Once the bidder submits the bid, the system will provide a random-access key to each bidder, which they will have to physically present on the day of public tender opening for their bid to be accessed from the server/system.
- The good news is that even those who cannot attend the public bid/tender opening can share their access codes electronically to LWF through a secure integrated feature on the same date to have their bids accessed.
- The system also offers first and reliable communication and around the clock service with no human interventions.
- Finally, after the evaluation process, the system displays the winning

## LWF Uganda holds cultural gala to promote peace

BY PATRICK KYEYUNE  
KAFUUMA  
Psychosocial Officer

**L**WF Uganda, with funding from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), in March 2021 organised cultural gala activities where the different tribal/ethnic groups of refugees competed by showcasing the beauty of their traditional cultures through different presentations like folk songs and traditional dances, poems and food.

Conducted in Palabek, Palorinya, Kyangwali and Adjumani settlements under the Reconnecting Lives, vision and Empowerment (ReLiVE) project, the cultural galas aim to promote peaceful co-existence among host and refugee communities and to unite the diverse groups in the settlements.

The refugee community attended the event, implementing partners, local government, Office of the Prime Minister, and host community leaders.

“We thank LWF and PRM for organising this cultural gala which has brought refugees and hosts together. This has enhanced peaceful co-existence,” said Geoffrey Onyango, a Community Development Officer (CDO) in Palabek Settlement.

Uganda is home to over 1.4 million refugees, mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, living in the various refugee settlements and belonging to over 56 tribes, all

The cultural gala is also intended to reduce frustrations, stress, and psychological distresses that are common among refugees

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You can never separate peace from mental health. These two moves together and complement each other. Such activities have helped us to reflect on the good side of life and relieve our stresses

SOLOMON  
BAKA, THE  
ARCH DEACON  
OF KAJO KEJI  
DIOCESE OF  
THE EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH IN  
SOUTH SUDAN



Refugees showcasing the different traditional dances



Refugees showcasing the different food recipes

speaking different languages and other cultural practices. As such, there are tribal conflicts and tensions, some of which have led to the loss of lives and property destruction.

A case in point is the 2020 clashes involving two South Sudanese tribes, the Kuku and the Nuer, in the Palorinya settlement located in

Northern Uganda.

Through these competitions, members from different cultural groups actively participate in singing folk songs, drama, cooking traditional food, reciting poems, exhibiting traditional wears, and performing traditional dances to make their respective cultural groups win and impress the audience.

## Refugee tailors earn \$36,000 from selling masks to LWF



Left: One of the tailors in the Adjumani refugee settlement. Right: A group of tailors in the Adjumani Refugee Settlement sorting the finished masks

BY LILIAN NAMAGEMBE  
Communications Officer

**M**id-March, 2020, when COVID-19 was first reported in Uganda, the government moved fast to impose a countrywide lockdown and closure of majority businesses. The move was intended to minimise the spread of the viral disease.

Many small businesses such as salons, and markets operated by refugees to supplement the food portions distributed by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) were all closed.

Uganda, and the rest of the world, had adopted the use of face masks as a weapon to tame the spread of the very contagious disease. It was in short supply sadly! But it was a blessing to some.

In refugees' settlements, men and women were underutilised in the fight the war at hand while benefiting from it. That is the opportunity that LWF seized by contracting South Sudanese refugees and some nationals from the host communities to mass-produce home-made reusable face masks.

The local facemask production would solve two problems: solve the local demand, and therefore refugees have them for self-protection but also generate income. And it has paid off.

In the last six months, LWF has paid approxi-

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As adolescents with tailoring skills, the project has helped to keep us busy, and avoid risky behaviours like fornication

**18-year-old Kevin Apalo, a South Sudanese refugee living in Palabek settlement in Lamwo district stated.**

mately \$36,167.1 to the refugee tailors in Nyumanzi, Pagiriya, Ayilo, Mungula, and Palabek settlements in Northern Uganda who have been selling the face masks to the organisation.

Shattered lives as a result of the closure of businesses are now regaining their survival livelihoods, thanks to the LWF foresight.

“Thankfully, in the last six months, I have made more than Shs1million [about \$269]. I am so grateful that once again, I can afford the basic needs for the children and myself,” Yar Nual Gak, 30, one of the female refugee tailors supported by LWF says.

LWF also distributes the face masks to other refugee communities who can hardly afford to buy one despite local face masks costing less than a dollar on the local market.

The 401 tailors contracted to do the job comprise of students trained by LWF on tailoring skills, existing and operating tailors within the selected settlements and other interested nationals with sewing machines.

By the end of October, LWF had distributed a total of 268,785 face masks bought from the refugee tailors for \$0.135 to refugee communities.

# Women's Day 2021: LWF advocates for a more equal COVID-19 world



Participants at the Women's Day celebrations event in Lamwo district

**L**WLF marked International Women's Day with several activities jointly organized with refugees, local government and other partners in Palorinya, Palabek, Kyangwali and Adjumani settlements.

March 8 is a day celebrating women's achievements globally and raising awareness about the importance of gender equality.

Skits, road drives, Music, Dance and Drama activities organized around the Day's theme: Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a COVID-19 World to celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness about women's equality, lobby for accelerated gender parity during the COVID-19 period and beyond.

The theme celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

A report commissioned by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency in December last year, titled "Inter-Agency Rapid Gender Analysis – COVID-19, confirmed that refugees in Uganda

had been struck by the COVID-19 pandemic, with women and girls paying a heavier price.

The loss of income within the household has contributed to an increased incidence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and harmful coping mechanisms such as survival sex and sale of alcohol, according to the report findings.

53 per cent of girls and Forty-six per cent of women aged 18-24 years reported an additional unpaid work burden, such as cooking, housework, collecting firewood and fetching water.

It adds that 10 per cent of critical informants cited child marriage as one of the negative coping strategies families were forced to resort to making up for lost livelihoods.

Ms Salome Amuge, the LWF team leader in Lamwo recognized the leadership role of women among the refugee and host communities

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Many women have engaged in the fight against COVID 19 through awareness-raising and advocacy to promote their well-being and the entire community

Ms Salome Amuge, the LWF Team Leader for Lamwo district

"Many women have engaged in the fight against COVID-19 through awareness-raising and advocacy to promote their well-being and the entire community," Ms Amuge said at one of the celebrations in Lamwo districts.

Therefore, Ms Amuge promised that, together as a team, they remain steadfast in building the leadership capacity of women and girls during this period of COVID-19 and beyond.

"As we celebrate this year's International Women's Day, we must reflect on the role of women in fighting the pandemic and improving the living standards in our society," Ms Amuge added

LWF also distributed materials, including wristbands, headscarves and flyers carrying women empowerment and gender parity messages.

Local women were also given an opportunity to share their stories highlighting challenges and successes and the impact of the LWF interventions.



A young refugee paints a house during the retreat. Photo: LWF/ H. Lehto

## LWF conducts retreats for young refugees

**L**WF is running a pilot project focused on the mental health of teenager refugees in Uganda, offering them a way to process trauma and equipping them for the future.

Mabior\* holds up a drawing of a boy playing football and a man with a bottle. "I have drawn a photo of myself playing football because I love it so much.

"My father drinks a lot of alcohol and disturbs us at home. He fights us and causes us to run away," explained the 14-year-old.

Mabior is South Sudanese and has been living in a refugee settlement in Northern Uganda for years now. The drawing was made at a mental health retreat for teenagers, organized by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) country program in Uganda.

Ten groups of teenagers in Palorinya, Adjumani, Lamwo, and Kyangwali refugee settlements participated in the mental health retreat program, which combined recreational activities, therapeutic exercises, and life skills.

During the four days, the young refugees played emotional literacy games, participated in conflict resolution training,

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I always feel bad about my country not having peace, but I believe South Sudan will have peace one day. My family and I will leave Nyumanzi settlement and go back to our country

**Akor, a young refugee girl from South Sudan.**

relaxation exercises, and various sports and art activities. The retreat was part of a pilot program among LWF protection activities supported by the US Government through its Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM).

### Regain hope and a future

The teenagers in the refugee settlements in Northern Uganda have survived the second civil war in South Sudan but they paid a high price.

They experienced violence at a young age and had to witness atrocities. They lost loved ones, sometimes even their parents or close family members. All of them lost their homes and often treasured belongings.

Their difficulties continue with scarce resources, limited opportunities, and risks of exploitation in the refugee settlement. Many drop out of school or are married early to resolve financial difficulty in the family. Psychosocial officers have noted high rates of depression and even suicide attempts among young refugees.

Unaddressed emotions and trauma also lead to conflicts in the camps and settlements. Substance abuse, like in Mabior's family, is common.



Kevin Abwoyo attending to her vegetable garden found in Ram-Ram village , Yawya Parish in Lamwo district

## LWF nutrition program turning lives around in Lamwo district

**M**eeet Kevin Abwoyo, a 26-year old change maker in Ram-Ram village, Yawya parish, Lamwo District. Abwoyo is married with two children. She also looks after four other adopted ones.

But Abwoyo is not your usual village mother and childcare giver. She is a village ‘consultant’ on nutrition and proper childcare after undertaking childcare and parenthood training by Lutheran World Federation (LWF) that targeted 300 care and support community members in Lamwo.

LWF Care and Support groups are composed of parents, guardians and children under five. The groups are equipped to promote recommended child and infant care practices such as postnatal care and growth monitoring. Proper infant nutrition is essential for the wellbeing and growth of children. Care groups work closely with Village Health Team members (VHTs)

to support and promote recommended child care practices within their communities. This is what Abwoyo said about the LWF training and the lessons she learnt.

“Before the care group training, I did not know that I could use the small piece of land behind my home to make a vegetable garden. I used to grow my vegetable 2-3km away, and it was hard for me to access them, especially in the evening.

Also, I never used to share any experiences or lessons learned about breastfeeding with other people. Neither did I know that food and nutrition secure home is one of the goals for every household in Uganda.”

Our three days training covered: breastfeeding practices, identification and referral of malnourished children, back yard gardening, community outreach, infant and child feeding care, care group roles and responsibilities, among others

After the training, I returned home and prepared a small piece

of land in my backyard for otigo di (pumpkin) and pawpaws whose seedlings were provided by the project.

Together with other caregivers, I participated in another one-week theatre forum on breastfeeding organized by the DINU-LEWA project and have been able to reach out to other community members to share experiences and lessons on breastfeeding.

Subsequently, Kevin shares that their group will be meeting monthly and reach out to other community members regularly to support them in their individual needs.

She is also optimistic that her backyard garden will continue to supply her family with vegetables as a critical contributor to a balanced diet for her children and reduce the family expenditure on medical care.

## Palorinya refugee with disability minting money from farming



*Robina showing off her piggery located in Palorinya refugee settlement*

**BY SAMUEL OKELLO**

M&E Assistant

In 2020, Refugee leaders identified Robina Liong as a woman at risk and forwarded her details for the protection and livelihoods support under the Re-connecting Lives, vision and Empowerment (ReLiVE) project implemented by LWF Uganda.

Amid South Sudan's conflict, Liong had fled into the Palorinya Refugee Settlement in 2018, five years after losing her husband, the sole breadwinner.

"Life was very hard as I struggled to make ends meet given that my physical disability encumbered my ability to perform regular tasks that would otherwise enable me to earn a living and supplement on food rations," says the mother of three.

"The children and I could hardly have more than one meal a day," she adds.

With funding from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), LWF trained Liong in life skills, business management, financial literacy and provided a cash grant of Shs410,000 (\$210) to start an Income Generating Activity (IGA) of her choice.

This aimed to empower her to meet her household's basic needs and ensure a dignified protective environment.

With the grant, she bought ten kuroiler chicks (which can survive under the same conditions just like the indigenous ones but mature faster) at Shs 100,000 (about \$27.33) and a female piglet at 120,000 (about \$33) and used the rest of the money for feeds and drugs.

"I sold the chicken at Shs25,000 (about \$7) each and made a profit of Shs125,000 (about \$34) after three months," Liong reveals

After six months, the pig gave birth to 6 piglets which have also produced others that she sells at Shs80,000(about \$22), which has generated enough income at regular intervals to support her household needs.

On average, she can make over Shs50,000(about \$14) profit on any sale of her piglets.

By March 2021, when we filed this story, Robina had four mature pigs, five piglets, a cash order of 50 kuroiler chicks and the three goats she bought using her first sales.

"With the income, I get from farming, I renovated my shelter, and I can afford a balanced diet for my children" Liong approves of the project impact on her life. She says the project intervention retrieved her from the pangs of poverty.

"What PRM has done for women is making a positive impact in our lives, and we pray the project continues giving support to other women still suffering," she adds.

Life as a refugee is hard, but living as a refugee with a disability is harder. Too often, society excludes refugees with disabilities. Yet, they possess exceptional skills and, when provided with an opportunity to develop them, can significantly contribute to their communities and their own lives.

# Cash grant beneficiary expands her business to earn \$1200 monthly

BY SABIN AKWONGO  
Livelihood Officer

At only the age of 32, Night Koma a South Sudanese refugee living in Uganda’s Pagirinya settlement in Adjumani district has risen from destitute to self-reliant, courtesy of the Reconnecting Lives, vision and Empowerment (ReLiVE) project.

The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) -funded ReLiVE project implemented by the Lutheran World Federation provides vulnerable refugee and host community households with cash grants to set up income-generating activities as part of the livelihood empowerment support.

Having arrived in Uganda as a refugee in 2016, the government of Uganda allocated Koma and her husband a small piece of land where they constructed a small grass-thatched house alongside the temporary tent for accommodation and also received non-food items.

“This house condition was not to my satisfaction. Life was tough, and I could not see any better tomorrow anymore,” Koma says.

To supplement the food rations provided by World Food Program and meet other family basic needs, Koma started a mobile juice business with the Shs4000 (about\$1.09) she received from her husband.

For two years, she was hawking juice but could only partially meet the daily basic needs of the family until she joined the LWF supported Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA)

“I happened to join one of the LWF



*Koma standing in front of the restaurant she constructed after receiving the cash grant*

supported Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) group and started saving a weekly Shs5000 (\$1.37),” Koma says.

In return, Koma could borrow Shs 150,000 (about \$41) at 10% interest payable within two months that she managed to expand the business from mobile one to a small retail kiosk.

### Breakthrough

In 2020, Koma qualified and received the ReLiVE project’s cash assistance ofnShs1,000,000 (\$273.40) and started a restaurant business alongside juice selling.

“I later constructed another shelter alongside the smaller house which initially accommodated only six customers because thebusiness was expanding,” she boasts.

“My daily earnings have also increased from Shs80,000(about \$21.87) to Shs135,000 (about \$37). Life has improved, and I can ably meet my financial needs,” she adds.

With her monthly savings of up to Shs460,000(about \$125.76), Koma is confident that her business is still expanding and the sky is the limit.

## The secure market drives Arua farmers into commercial oilseed farming

After ten years of grappling with low prices and poor yield from tobacco, Joseph Odipio has found a haven in growing sunflowers, thanks to the Development Initiative for Northern Uganda- Livelihoods Enhancement in West Nile and Acholi subregions (DINU-LEWA) project.

Odipio is a resident in Arumva Village, Logiri Sub-county in the West Nile district of Arua, one of the districts where the project is implemented since 2020. With tobacco being his primary income source, the 49-year-old says he could hardly afford the family's basic needs.

"In March 2020, my village LCIII chairman informed me about the DINU-LEWA project providing oil seeds like sunflower, sesame and soybeans at a subsidised price," Odipio says.

Funded by the European Union in collaboration with the government of Uganda, the project is implemented by various partner organisations, including the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and DanChurchAid (DCA). Other partners are; Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau (UPMB) and Mukwano Group of Companies provides oil seeds to farmers.

"I was particularly encouraged by the ready market provided for the oilseeds from Sunflowers," Odipio states.

Mukwano Group of Companies, one of the implementing partners, guarantees market and favourable prices for the interested farmers' oilseeds after harvest, which the former uses as raw materials for the production of soap and oil, among other industrial products.

"I also realised that tobacco production was more labour intensive than oilseed crops, uses a lot of firewood for preservation, and has very high-in-

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My main aim of participating in the oilseed production, is to raise enough income, improve my household food and nutrition security, medical care and education.

JOSEPH ODIPIO, A FARMER IN ARUMVA VILLAGE-ARUA DISTRICT



Joseph Odipio (left) interacts in his sunflower field in Arumva Village-Arua district

terest loans from tobacco processing companies," Odipio notes.

"Tobacco also heavily depletes soil fertility and cannot be consumed at home," he adds. This, he says, always compromised his household food security.

With the assured market and stable prices for oilseed crops, the father of 9 is optimistic he will plan well and take care of his children with ease.

My main aim of participating in the oilseed production, he says, "is to raise enough income, improve my household food and nutrition security, medical care and education."

For a start, Odipio has grown two acres of sunflowers from the 2kgs of seeds he received from the project. Other benefits he has gained from the project soybean seeds (7.5kg), modern farming skills and capacity development.

For a start, Odipio has grown two acres of sunflowers from the 2kgs of seeds he received from the project. Other benefits he has gained from the project soybean seeds (7.5kg), modern farming skills and capacity development.

# PHOTO GALLERY



Children pump water from one of the boreholes constructed by LWF in Rwamwanja settlement



Some of the farmer group members trained by LWF in the Adjumani refugee settlement demonstrate how to make energy-saving stoves



LWF Advocacy Officer Jackie Akello makes a point during a training on the implementation of the Universal Periodic Review



LWF trains pupils how to make local reusable pads

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