



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

Department for  
World Service

## Uganda

“Uphold the rights of the poor and oppressed”

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## LWF celebrates World Refugee Day in Adjumani

**T**his year’s World Refugee Day theme, **“Get to know refugees and support them”**, reflects on the fact that refugees are ordinary people with stories, strengths and dreams, but who have been forced to live through extraordinary circumstances, through no fault of their own.

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The national celebrations were this year held in Adjumani, a refugee-hosting district in northern Uganda, close to the South Sudanese border. It consists of various refugee settlements including Dzaipi, Njumanzi and Ayilo, and is home to more than 100,000 South Sudanese refugees. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) were among the first to help the refugees when the latest influx started in December 2013, and continue to provide water, sanitation, livelihood and psychosocial support to this day.

While hundreds of guests enjoyed traditional dancing, marches and exhibitions new arrivals displaced by the ongoing conflict continued to arrive. They joined the ever growing population of people who cannot remain in their homes for fear of war, violence and starvation. Here are some of their stories.

## Born a Refugee

On the dawn of World refugee Day, a yet nameless baby was born. Akeer, the 20-year old mother, delivered her first-born in Nyumanzi Health Centre, which had been upgraded by LWF in May 2015 to serve the pregnant women with a maternity ward. Initially, the health centre LWF constructed had facilities only suitable consultations, but now it also caters for inpatients and people needing minor surgery. For the newborn girl, her home will be Block C in Nyumanzi Refugee Settlement. The tiny baby will never know her family home in Bor until peace has settled in South Sudan.

***“I am happy, I gave birth to my daughter on this day, when they celebrate the World Refugee Day”, said Akeer as she smiled through her exhaustion.***



***“I know it is World Refugee Day. I am looking forward to going back to my children, who are anxious to meet their new sister. They will all want to carry her around”***

she tells me when asked how she will spend the day.

***“We give them hope and safety, so that they would feel at home.”***

As the celebrations continued, the LWF protection team welcomed an extended family of 14 asylum seekers at the Elegu border point, which separates northern Uganda and South Sudan. The Nuer family had arrived from Juba after making an arduous journey from Bentiu in the north of South Sudan to Uganda. The family had travelled a distance of nearly 1300 kilometres to reach safety.

Most of the extended family were children under the age of eighteen. Mary, herself a mother of 5, had taken in 4 foster children who had lost their father as they made their journey to safety. As the 25-year old woman breastfed her 8 month old baby, the Office of the Prime Minister officials registered her and her family, before receiving soap from members of the LWF protection team. LWF colleagues then gave them an introduction on life in Uganda, including what they are entitled to as refugees.

Simon Drich, an LWF Protection Team Field worker, reassures the families of their newly found safety *“We work every day, during weekends and public holidays,”* he said. *“We are here to receive the refugees, and to orient them to their new home. The arrivals never argue. They listen to us, because they know that we are there to protect them”.*

***“We want to talk about our experiences, and also about our achievements.”***

Back in one of the other refugee settlements in Nyumanzi, Jacob Achiek proudly presents his shop named Zungu-Wut (The Cowboy), set up with financial support from LWF Uganda. The shop is thriving and Jacob is having to work hard to meet the demands of his customers. Jacob also passionately manages the local refugee football team, and when asked what he most enjoys about the World Refugee Day events, he enthusiastically

*Continues to page 2...*



*Jacob in his shop*

talks about the football matches, He's also a keen wrestler, which he explains is "a way for unity, for different sub-tribes to get to know each other. It is culturally really important rite for our tribe, the Dinka. The peace building efforts are so crucial. "

Achok Thuch, one of the refugee incentive workers for LWF in Adjumani, is excited about the dances that are enacted by various Dinka and Acholi tribes, honouring their heritage. But most of all, she likes the theme of the World Refugee Day this year, highlighting that 'refugees are people like anyone else, like you and me'.

“The event is a great opportunity to interact with the UN and the agencies, to let them know that their work is appreciated, and to tell them also about the challenges of refugee life. I want to hear, and tell stories. I have my own story, and I want to tell it. I want my ideas to be heard.”

## Other News

LWF Country Strategy 2015-2020 approved:  
[uganda.lutheranworld.org/resources](http://uganda.lutheranworld.org/resources)

PRM Refugees Regional  
Coordinator Joshua Fischel  
visits LWF work in Adjumani.

Church of Sweden commissioned  
Ms Rebecca Horn to conduct Community  
Based Psychosocial Support training for  
LWF Uganda staff.

See more at: <https://www.lutheranworld.org/blog/world-refugee-day-adjumanisettlement#sthash.reDscx8W.dpuf>

*Adjumani World Refugee Day celebrations in Ayilo*





# Assistance to Survivors of Sexual Violence

Most of the refugees hosted in the country are coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. ***“I would say ninety percent of my country women in this settlement have been raped,”*** Ruth says.

## Breaking the Silence

Ruth is a strong, tall woman with expressive eyes and hands that tell as much as her voice, but before she starts her story, the 48-year-old mother of five has sent her children from the room. Her voice drops, sometimes to an angry whisper for fear that neighbors might overhear. The teenagers do not know their mother has been raped, or about the dire consequence: When she came to the refugee reception center, Ruth opened up to an aid worker and was taken for a medical examination, where she was diagnosed with HIV. ***“In that instant, I lost all my energy. I could not stop crying. I could not even leave the room,”*** she recalls the fateful moment.

***“In the following two weeks, I lost twelve kilos.”*** Ruth takes a crooked nail from her fireplace and scratches two numbers into the clay floor: 86, 74 – the body weight recorded on her medical files. ***“The LWF worker advised me that HIV is not a death sentence. She said others might die earlier than me from other causes. She told me to accept myself, and offered help,”*** Ruth continues.

## Mental and Physical Well-Being

The silence surrounding rape and HIV is strong. The women in the community are afraid to open up to each other, even though they know there are other survivors among them. Ruth’s husband, who was killed in the conflict, never learned about what had happened to his wife. ***“If he’d known, he would have divorced me immediately,”*** she says, touching the wedding band she

*Continues to page 6...*

*Mary holding her baby (LWF/M.Renaux).*

## Giving Hope and Material Support to Traumatized Refugees

When she speaks, her voice is barely audible. Sixteen-year-old Mary (all names changed) did not choose to be a mother, but a week ago she gave birth to a baby boy, whom she named Emanuel, ***“God with us.”***

The baby, wrapped in a pink blanket, lies sleeping on a mat while Mary tells her story. She is from Juba, South Sudan. When fighting broke out in December 2013, she fled the conflict together with her family, but was separated from them. As she fled, she was attacked and raped. Later she found her grandmother and made it to a refugee camp, where she discovered she was pregnant.

## Psychosocial and Material Support

***“When I realized I was pregnant, I wanted to take a drug and get rid of the baby,”*** she says, ***“but my grandmother told me not to. She said she would help me take care of him.”*** At the refugee reception center, Mary was identified and enrolled into a medical and psychosocial support system.

Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) is one of the main intervention points for LWF in Uganda. The program carries out psychosocial support aiming at assisting survivors to attain a stable life and restore hope, dignity, mental and social well-being, as well as a sense of normalcy.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) program in Uganda built a hut and supports Mary and her grandmother with cash grants and psychosocial support. ***“The reason for my being here is not good, but here I have help,”*** Mary says, while carefully picking up the infant and trying to breastfeed. ***“My grandmother advises me on child care. I don’t even know how to properly hold a newborn.”***

# Borehole for Education

## Schools Profit from LWF Motorized Water System

**B**enjamin Makoor, head teacher of Nyumanzi Primary 1, is not the person who waits for things to happen.

In his hometown Bor, Jonglei, he used to work for the South Sudanese government. "I was training teachers, he said. That was also the first time he heard of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), who are running schools in Bor as part of their development work. **"These schools had a good reputation,"** he says. It was however not with a school, but a borehole, that the LWF ensured his employment and the education of South Sudanese children.

When fighting broke out in South Sudan, Makoor fled to Uganda. In Adjumani refugee camp, he again met many students from Jonglei, some even from his hometown. **"We have to do something,"** he told the parents. **"The children need an education."**

There was no Primary school in Nyumanzi settlement back then, just trees, grass and bush. **"That's enough for now,"** Makoor said, **"learning starts when there are students and teachers."** The tall man cleared an area with his Panga bush knife, and assembled students and teachers under two big trees. Flat stones in a semi-circle still indicate where the students used to sit. On a big branch, he hung a tire rim with a piece of string. To call his students together, he beat it with a spanner. The sound of the improvised school bells can be heard in the mountains three kilometers away.

Soon after, international agencies discovered the teacher's initiative and built a proper school building with black boards



*Benjamin, the head teacher of Nyumanzi 1 Primary school at the borehole built by LWF with PRM support next to the school (LWF/M.Renaux)*

and desks. Soon the school was overcrowded, with up to 160 students per class. In the dry season, however, Makoor still had trouble keeping them at school.

**"There was no water,"** Makoor says. The children were needed to fetch water from distant boreholes for their families and would wander off after a lesson or two to quench their thirst. "They had to walk to the distribution center half a kilometer from here," Makoor says. "There were few boreholes in this settlement, and women and children are always the most affected."

In February 2015 however, Nyumanzi Primary 1 was connected to a motorized borehole system set up by the LWF. The school received its own tap stand. Students only need to press a button to drink or wash their hands after using the latrines on the compound. **"Hygiene and at-**

**tendance has increased greatly,"** Makoor says.

The borehole has also made life easier for people in the settlement across the road. Instead of walking 500 meters, Amer-Jok only has to carry the water across the road, less than a hundred meters. While hauling water looks very elegant in pictures, the 20-liter-cans are extremely heavy. **"It's so much better now,"** the young woman says.

Even in the late afternoon, there is activity at the school. The borehole is a meeting point for the settlement, so instead of running away early, Makoor's students linger long hours after school.

*By LWF/C. Kastner.*

# If the Question is “So what?” What is the Answer?

The current trend is ‘results’. Now more than ever before, development and humanitarian programs are expected to deliver this ‘super baby’; *the results!* Are you involved in programming? The value of your ideas, advice and action produced is increasingly being gauged by whether it improves lives. Beat that!



Betty Lamunu facilitating an M&E mini training for LWF Adjumani staff.

There are 2 vital questions every project needs to answer: “What would constitute success in addressing this problem?” and “How will we know success when we achieve it”? Your answer could be as good as mine. Bottom line is, the correct answer will help everyone understand which projects are working, which are not, which can be scaled up, and which should be phased out.

Achieving results starts with a good design, including a well-crafted implementation strategy – don’t you agree? Many who have seen the benefits would agree. However, ensuring that knowledge learned along the way is put to use is equally important. This knowledge can be learned both through periodic detailed analyses, as well as through the everyday, incremental learning that comes with implementation.



Monitoring and Evaluation helps answer the ‘So what?’ questions: So what that LWF has drilled 160 boreholes in xx districts? *So what if 100 classrooms have been constructed by LWF in xx refugee settlements? So what that 400 farmer field school groups have been trained? So what if 15,000 people received awareness in environmental protection?*

The answers to these questions do not just come automatically. There has to be a systematic process and skills on how to effectively answer these daunting questions. Not as easy as you may think. Capacity building in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) has become one of the priorities of the development community in the nascent decades. The capacity of an individual, an organisation or society is not static. It changes over time, and is subject to both internal and external influences. Many of these changes are unplanned.



It is critical, amidst the tight schedules of program staff to make efforts to build staff capacity in M&E through practical and work-in-progress approach, interspersed with mentoring support. It does not matter from what angle the ad hoc capacity building sprouts, but the most important thing is to ensure that the M&E system

has a clearly established conceptual framework that shows how inputs are linked to outcomes and impacts.



As Morgan P., an M&E scholar notes, *“the real impetus for systemic change comes from within organisations. It can be assisted, but not replaced by outside interventions. An effective M&E system must acknowledge and understand this.”* M&E should be brought to bear at an early stage of project initiation/design, even if only focusing on some of the key issues. In all these, the experimentation, learning from mistakes, and requiring sustained efforts at strengthening institutional, organizational, and human capacity is paramount.

The LWF World Service rightly articulates that we seek “to be a high quality, effective and professional humanitarian and development agency” (The World Service Global Strategy 2013-2018, p. 29). There is valuable prize-tag here. You and I are required to run some race here, in harmony and together reach for the prize more like a football team. Here is where the analogy of “the winner takes it all” does not apply. It is rather, “together we can win the prize.” Focusing on the human capacity for M&E will improve the quality of programming and the answer to the ‘So what?’ question would be in the finger-tips of all program staffs.

*By Betty Lamunu Ochana  
Monitoring and Evaluation Manager  
LWF/DWS Uganda Program*

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## Assistance to Survivors of Sexual Violence

still wears. ***“To keep your family and the respect of the community, you have to remain silent.”*** The aid worker who assured her confidentiality was the first person Ruth felt comfortable talking to.

Like other survivors of SGBV, the LWF provided Ruth with building material for a hut, and a cash grant to open a small business. She sells cassava flour, tomatoes and silver fish, which she keeps in a green plastic bucket. When business does not go well, she and the two youngest children eat some of it themselves, additional to the food ration provided to all refugees in the camp.

Ruth is also receiving antiretroviral drugs. She takes them each day and goes for a medical check-up once a month. The biggest help however is the psychosocial support and counseling LWF has given her. ***“I was feeling like the poorest person on earth,”*** she says. ***“Now when I have a problem, I know I can tell LWF staff, and at the end of the day half of the problem is gone. You have changed my life – now I have hope”.***

*By LWF/C. Kastner*

## LWF Uganda commemorated the World Environment Day 2015 by launching the EU Energy Facility Project in Kitgum District.



Women are actively involved in the EU supported 'Teko-wa' project

LWF Uganda joined the rest of the world in the celebration of the 42nd World Environment Day with the press launch of the **Teko Wa Project on 5th June 2015**, in collaboration with the Kitgum District Local government and other partners.

### 'Teko Wa' –Our Strength

'Teko Wa' project, implemented by LWF Uganda and funded by **European Union** and **Church of Sweden**, promotes sustainable environment conservation strategies among rural communities.

The project will encourage the use of energy saving practices and technologies. The 48-month project (Nov 2014-Oct 2018) strives to "contribute to energy security in rural communities in Northern Uganda for social and economic development in an environmentally sustainable manner."

In view of the preservation of environment and energy sustainability, Teko Wa aims to achieve following outcomes:

- I) **Reforestation** and sustainable management of bio energy resources with tree planting
- II) Increased sustainable production and use of **energy-efficient cooking** technologies
- III) Increased access and use of **solar power** technology for households and schools

*"Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume With Care."*

The World Environment Day, focusing on the need to respect the earth's carrying capacity and to manage natural resources sustainably for the good of wellbeing globally, presented a perfect

backdrop for LWF's launch of the new initiative in energy saving. The joint event was geared to promote the need for environmental management in the LWF operation areas.

The event brought together participants from the local governments, media and communities of Pader, Agago, Lamwo and Kitgum districts. The message of this year's World Environment Day was reiterated by the District Forestry Officer of Kitgum, Martin Anywar;

*"The question is, what is your dream about the environment? All of the 7 billion people rely on this one planet for survival. The soil we use for production, the energy we depend on, the water that we consume, fresh air that we depend on. We must consume this planet sustainably. Scientists estimate that we currently consume 1.5 per year instead of 1.0 per year. This means, we are consuming today what we should consume in the future. What then will those generations to come consume?"*

School eco-clubs, sporting t-shirts with the message 'Protect Our Environment', highlighted the importance of investing in the future; the youth of today are the decision makers of tomorrow.

As they enthusiastically mobilized for the march assembly at the Bomah grounds, their role as the agents of environmental and social transformation became all the more evident.

With the media covering the event, the parade-marched through Kitgum town to the beat of the brass band leading the procession.

The spectators expressed their support along the pathways, women ululating and dancing as the stream of green t-shirts advocating for environmental protection snaked through the bustling market streets.



## Environment of Northern Uganda increasingly burdened

Kitgum and Pader districts are subjected to several environmental challenges despite being endowed with natural resources. The region is struggling with deforestation, resulting from widely practiced bush and charcoal burning. The loss of natural forests and woodlands is intensifying as a result of increasing demand for agricultural and grazing land, as well as for fuel wood and timber. Climate change and deforestation bring in their wake other tangible problems, such as flooding, loss of livelihoods, food insecurity and poverty.

## LWF projects are anchored to local partnerships and community participation

Upon reaching the event venue, the local government representatives extended their welcome to all guests, echoing the extensive local support for the Energy Facility Project. "I want to take this opportunity to thank the European Union, The Church of Sweden and LWF for giving the opportunity to the communities to contribute to sustainable management of our environment. I am proud to have participated in various consultations of this project right from its inception to its implementation", Mr. Anywar highlighted the local commitment.

All LWF Uganda projects are essentially grounded onto inclusive participation and local partnerships. For sustainability, the sense of ownership and building on the individual strengths at the local level are crucial for any project, instilling confidence in the learning process. Managing natural resources sustainably lies in the hands of the communities, who can be harnessed to become the main drivers of environmental conservation.

Having established roots in the region with similar projects since 2005, LWF will work with tens of thousands of rural households, school children, woodlot entrepreneurs, charcoal burners, artisans, nursery operators, local environment committees, prisons, as well as cultural and religious leaders to ensure that the activities are carried out and benefit the communities long after the phase-out of the project.

The Energy Facility project promotes the use of community structures such as Community Environment Resource Persons, responsible for facilitating the

construction of energy efficient stoves. Through the project, schools and households are equipped to establish woodlots and tree nurseries. Private Nursery Operators are supported in their production of tree seedlings for sale to the communities.

## Energy Talk –dialoguing at local level

The greetings from the LWF headquarters and presentation of the project by the sub-office representatives were followed by traditional dancing of the cultural group. The guests were invited to the exhibition stalls for the display of seedlings, solar lanterns and locally fabricated energy-saving stoves, as well as to the HIV testing and counseling tents. Judging by the 84 negative test results during the day, the HOPE Alive project, among other HIV awareness activities by LWF, has managed to curb the spread of the disease over the years.

The activities of the day culminated into a meeting with the press where the LWF sub-programme representatives talked about energy conservation in the region, deliberating with the local government in finding long lasting solutions to the environmental challenges, such as bush and charcoal burning, which despite the control measures set by authorities is still widely practiced by the local communities in need of fresh vegetation for their livestock.

Lack of awareness remains the main cause of environmentally detrimental practices. Therefore reduction in bush burning will be one of LWF's key advocacy issues in the region. Further engagements will be made with both the line ministries of Environment and Energy, as well as the local governments in the target districts.

In their feedback, the participants commended LWF for the work that has already benefited the local communities, as well as for the continuing commitment to environmental protection. As the District Forestry and Environment officers of Kitgum and Pader noted during the launch, this is the largest environmental project implemented in northern Uganda, with high level of interest and commitment expressed by the target communities.

## Transitioning from the Energy Facility Project to the Teko Wa project

The press launch not only served as an opportunity to advocate for regional energy security, but also to showcase the achievements so far; LWF has been supporting the rural communities in the northern Acholi sub-region since 2005 with livelihoods and energy projects, empowering thousands of women, farmers and people living with HIV/AIDS.

The first EU-funded Energy Facility project commenced in 2011 with an aim to increase the access to and use of energy saving Rocket Lorena and Fire Shielded Stoves among rural households. It also promoted tree planting practices and environmental awareness among 9,600 households and 1,920 school children in Kitgum, Pader and Lamwo districts. The project, now in its last year, has made progress as LWF Uganda has accumulated considerable experience in supporting communities in their work towards preserving the existing resources, and replenishing those that have been diminished.

Considering the wealth of knowledge and experience accumulated during the past decade, LWF Uganda sub-programs in Pader and Kitgum are perfectly positioned to continue contributing towards environmental sustainability and socio-economic development in Northern Uganda. It is against this background and the continued success of Energy Facility I that LWF was awarded another 4-year ACP-EU grant of 5million euros.

*By Lehto Heidi.*



*Martin, the Pader district forestry officer with orange seedlings he bought from the stall during the Teko wa Project Press Launch*

# LWF Increases access to adequate Shelter among South Sudanese Refugees

working towards increasing access to adequate shelter from 15% to 40% among the South Sudanese refugees.

These are found in five various settlements of Nyumanzi, Ayilo1, Baratuku, Boroli and Elema.

Despite the significant improvements in living conditions of south Sudanese refugees, many refugee households in Adjumani settlements lack adequate shelter to allow them live within acceptable living condition.

Among the lucky few households that have received support of hut construction is that of Pather Nyakele. The 30 year old South Sudanese refugee widow lives in Nyumanzi refugee settlement, in Adjumani District. She is a mother of six children, among whom two are female twins.

She comments, “My family was facing a problem of a leaking house with wet and cold nights especially when it rained at night. It was in October 2014, when a Lutheran World Federation (LWF) staff, together with an incentive worker-Mike KokNiop, came and assessed me, on whether I qualified for hut construction support.”

However, Pather’s dreams of acquiring a new house seemed far from real. “At first I thought it was not going to be possible, but my dream came true when LWF constructed for me a hut in December of 2014,” she voices.

Pather and her family no longer experiences wet and cold nights like they used to.

Now her only prayer is that LWF would also be able to support her neighbours who are still in need of better shelter”, said Pather.

According to the 2014 PSN assessment report, only 15% of refugee households in Adjumani settlements were living in adequate shelter. Since 2014, LWF with funding from the UNHCR and Act Appeal, has been and is still

Adjumani District through construction of houses and provision of shelter kits to persons with specific needs (PSNs) has improved coverage of refugee households living in adequate dwellings.

Before establishment of the Adjumani refugee Emergency response program in 2014, very few portion of the refugee community received full shelter package. Majority of them constructed very poor shelter with their own effort due to depleted resources.

Support for shelter construction and maintenance has remained critically important. Today, the Lutheran World Federation supports over 400 households with hut construction.

This year, LWF is targeting over 200 households of PSNs for hut construction support, through both direct construction and cash-for-work mechanism. The support will see more households living in better dwellings that restore their dignity.

However, according to the latest PSN assessment, there is more to be done to meet the high demand for adequate shelter in the refugee settlements, especially among households with persons with special needs.

*Contribution by Sam Mukasa and Pius Kikomoko.*



*Pather with her child seated outside their newly constructed hut.*

# Mobility appliances bring the disabled out and about



**W**e had to leave her behind the enemy lines when the violence came to our home”, the father explains quietly, barely audibly, looking at his feet to avoid eye-contact, when asked how the family of so many children managed to bring their disabled daughter to the safety of Uganda. The family was forced to make a painful decision, when the conflict consumed their home town; to rescue some, or none, of their children.

Against this background, it is surprising that after squeezing ourselves into the darkness of one of the cosy, if small, mud huts we find a girl with a dazzling smile. Alek Dual Deng looks years younger than she is, an impression apparently shared by the neighbouring primary school children, who frequently come to play with the 18-year old Alek. She shoos them away, clearly enjoying being at the centre of attention by the LWF visitors from Kampala.

We have come to visit Alek to see how she is doing, and how the mobility appliance and cash grant she received from PRM through LWF has helped her and her family. “The wheelchair has enabled us to transport Alek to the medical centre, where they have assessed her needs further. It also gets her out of the house, to get some fresh air.” Alek’s mother, Abuk, explains. The cash grant went towards sustenance, and medicine; “We need meat for balanced diet –I don’t like beans!” Alek scrunches her face in disgust and laughs.

The 18-year old girl is a true war survivor. When things became apart, the family left their home. They also left Ajak. In the frantic scramble for safety, those who cannot run, are most often left behind, or separated from the family members due to the chaos of fleeing masses. Immobile and helpless, Alek remained behind the enemy lines for 3 months. Like so many others with disabilities making it impossible to flee without assistance.

It is a sobering thought. But what the father and the field extension worker for LWF explain, makes you consider that even in a land of well-known taste for brutality in warfare, people still have faith in human decency; “there was hope that these civilians left behind -the disabled, the elderly, the ill- would not be targeted, as they pose no threat.” In Alek’s case, their faith in humanity was well-placed; the rebels, when taking over the town, spared the defenceless girl. They even gave her food to eat. These acts of kindness are not what the South Sudan conflict has become well-known for. In the wide-spread violence, also the vulnerable have been targeted –in February 2014 the troubled oil city of Malakal saw several of its defenceless patients killed to their hospital beds.

With the atrocity stories leaking out of especially the northern states in South Sudan lately, it seems rather miraculous Alek got to safety like she did, unharmed and healthy. Perhaps she got out before the war turned as ugly as it now has, with no mercy even on the most vulnerable of the civilians. Widespread killings, mass rapes, looting and burning entire villages have been the hallmark of both the government and rebel led campaigns to gain control in the worst affected counties in north and east. Jonglei state, where Alek’s family is from, is a combustible mix of armed political opposition, violent ethnic militias and collapsing political system, and a focal part of the tinder that led to the outbreak of the civil war in South Sudan in December 2013. “It really was a work of God not to have had Alek killed or taken. When the enemy was chased away, the neighbours

came to rescue her”, the father is convinced of divine intervention.

Jacqueline, LWF’s Project Officer for the BPRM-funded interventions, refines the explanation; “You know there is a belief that people who are born with disabilities can haunt you if you harm them. So it is wiser to leave them untouched, maybe even showing some kindness just in case.”

Now, in the safety of her tukul in Nyumanzi refugee settlement, Alek does not only need kindness, but tools to build her life with. “Alek would like to go to school. But there are no special schools for people like her here. Most days she lies in bed, because she cannot even support her head and she has a weak heart.

But the children come to visit her in the hut, and do their homework here as you can see from the piles of paper on the floor”, Alek’s mother sighs, with Alek interjecting; “A lot of the new refugees are illiterate.

We need to learn! And our stories are important, too.” While discussing Alek’s future prospects, the BPRM Coordinator Joshua Fischel mentions that disabled people like Alek are considered especially vulnerable in camp conditions, and therefore prioritized for resettlement to a third country. Perhaps, then, Alek will find her way to a school for people with special needs, in the future.

*By Lehto Heidi.*

## “The Rocket Lorena Stove (RLS) brought peace in my family

**T**eba Christine is 32 years of age and married to Emuron Peter. She is a mother of 8(4 boys and 4 girls), and stays with her family in Akicira village, Akisim parish Ngariam Sub County Katakwi District.

“Life was so difficult and I was about to divorce my husband, but thanks to LWF for having come to my village,” she narrates.

Smiling as the nice smell coming out of her boiling food Christine narrates how she joined Agro forestry project.

It has helped her save her marriage. “I used to frequent going to look for fire wood and my husband could beat me every time I delayed, thinking that I was sleeping around with other men,” she recalls.

With help from LWF and Bread for the World (BftW) funding, Christine received training in Rocket Lorena Stoves construction. Today, she peacefully lives with her family.

She no longer collects fire wood 3 times a week but only once. Christine thankfully admits that fire burns which used to frequent her home are no



more, as a result of three stone stoves.

She recounts, “The money I used to spend on treatment now helps me buy books and uniform for my children. The fighting with my husband has now turned into planning and discussions for my family future.”

Christine along with her family know how to use the stove and are actively planting and maintain trees received from LWF Agro forestry project.

“Long live LWF long live BftW,” she concludes.

*By Lehto Heidi.*



# Youth Skills Day in Rwamwanja

## Meet Positive **Kasereka**

**O**n the day of July 15th 2015, the world celebrated the Youth Skills Day for the first time, after the United Nations at its General Assembly in November 2014 declared it. The UN designated day acknowledges and generates greater awareness on the importance of technical, vocational education and training, as well as the development of other skills relevant to reducing unemployment and underemployment among the youth across the globe.

LWF Uganda aims to highlight youth skills development by drawing attention to the critical need for marketable skills especially in the refugee settlements for increased self-reliance and sustainability. On the Youth Skills Day, LWF participated in the global celebrations by supporting the broad spread of activities and initiatives by the youth in Rwamwanja; the inspiring, resilient and dynamic youth LWF works with in the refugee settlement and the host community were an integral part of making the day memorable at the Rwamwanja Youth Centre.

In its inaugural year, the LWF-supported youth groups introduced World Youth Skills Day to the public who had gathered in masses at the centre, through songs, dancing, modelling, drama and exhibitions by the artisans, and others from vocational skills training, as well as those who have built shelters for people with special needs with LWF's support.

LWF has been supporting nearly 53,000 people in Rwamwanja with livelihoods, sensitisation on good hygiene and sanitation practices, peaceful coexistence, gender based violence prevention and response, as well as use of energy efficient technologies. Subsequently, thousands of school children have access to safe water, hundreds of households have their own latrine, and the message of peaceful coexistence echoes throughout the settlements.

Youth (18-35 years) account for a large part of the population in Rwamwanja. Due to the lack of secondary schools, the majority of youths, nationals and refugees, remain idle, rendering them susceptible to alcohol consumption, drug abuse and violent behavior. LWF Uganda provides livelihoods assistance in order to contribute to the refugees' well-being by reducing idleness, especially among refugee youth. Equipping youth with vocational training, life skills, and promoting their active participation in productive livelihood activities builds towards self-reliance both in Uganda, and upon repatriation.

At present, there is no sign of peace in the DRC which leaves little hope for the refugees to return home in the near future.

Despite this bleak outlook, as time goes on, attention will turn to other crisis around the globe resulting in a dwindling funds allocated to refugee programs in Uganda. LWF's global strategy is to empower local people from the very beginning in its emergency operations in order to enhance and sustain local capacity. It is therefore important to link emergency with development by strengthening the capacity of community structures, by promoting sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance across all sectors of intervention.

LWF encourages youth groups to be part of the decision-making processes, and harnesses them with mutually supportive skills, linking life skills in terms of HIV-AIDS and gender based violence prevention, communication, mentoring, self-awareness, and trainings aiming for self-reliance in enterprises of their individual interest areas such as tailoring, knitting, beading, basket making, leather crafts and business skills with start-up kits.

The youth are trained and oriented on record keeping, customer care, basic entrepreneurship skills and life skills. Majority of the youth already had the basic skills to practice their choice of vocations but needed support in terms of materials.

Positive Kasereka is the focal person of Kahamba Youth Group, sharing his knowledge on leather processing and crafts with other youth, encouraging them to master the art of tanning, and creating handicrafts for the local market. Positive was coached into his vocation by his father, who was operating an artisan school. Together, the father and son had a thriving business in DRC before things turned violent. Making tailored cases for pistols and radio phones for the soldiers and having their names in the order lists exposed them to grave danger as the M23 rebels made advances in the area.

In 2013, the 24-year old Positive fled, losing his livelihoods, home and his father –running for safety, they lost contact. When he arrived to Uganda, he was encouraged by the LWF Livelihoods Project Officer to explore a way to generate income; “Robert asked me to tell him what my skills are, what I’m interested in doing, and then followed up to see how LWF could support me.” In November 2013, the project started and Positive’s youth group received drums, acid, calcium, sewing machines and other materials needed to tan, tie & dye and process leather products. The hard-working young man designs hats, belts, wallets and vests, and teaches the other youth to come up with their own designs.

The fact that he has a restricted clientele in the refugee settlement has not dispirited Positive; “Back in Congo I could get USD 15 for a belt, but here people don’t have money so I have to sell them for 6 USD. I make 300 000 Ush a month, which is not enough to purchase the protective gloves, needles and other materials. From our group of 10 half went back to agriculture, because the materials are so ex-



pensive and it’s hard to make profit. But I want to make good quality products, and people should buy these long-lasting belts instead of the Chinese imports, which last only 1 week, 1 month. It’s hard to compete with their prices, but I want people to realise my hand-made products are stronger and much better!”

Despite the innate humility with which Positive articulates, he is proud to be doing something he has passion for, and has made name with his good quality products, with people making orders all over Kamwenge district. In the future, he hopes to establish a shop near the basecamp, maybe expand his business with access to heavier machinery and chemicals for tanning; “I want to reach a level where I can also buy textiles for art & craft, and sell my products in wider market. Perhaps if I could go to an exposure visit to Kisoro, I would see how to expand and buy materials, to produce and sell more.”

Rwamwanja settlement is full of proactive and ambitious youth,

eager to establish themselves, as well to work towards a better future for their entire community. Among the thousands of young people are the aspiring artisans, tailors, mechanics, soap makers, bakers and entrepreneurs of the future –but they need support.

While supporting the youth to access artisan and other vocational institutes, LWF realized that they already had vocational skills, but lacked in business skills, like customer care, leadership, social entrepreneurship, business planning and marketing management. The following training was then designed to equip participants with knowledge and competencies required to undertake business initiatives, value driven leadership in managing business enterprises and to identify value chain opportunities available for cooperative entrepreneurs.

*By LWF Katakwi*

Thank you to all our Donor Partners, whose contributions make our important work possible.



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(Cover Photo)

A young South Sudanese refugee girl poses for a photo during a community sensitization meeting in Nyumanzi Settlement in Adjumani