



RICE WEST NILE

Striving for Self Reliance

NEWSLETTER

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HER VOICE. HER POWER. HER PLANET.

Women, youth, and PWDs take centre stage in shaping climate action across West Nile

From Terego to Obongi, inclusive participation in International Women's Day amplified voices that matter most. In Obongi, women went beyond celebration presenting a powerful position paper on climate action and influencing local dialogue on sustainability and resilience.

👉 [Full story on page 5](#)

INCLUSIVE CLIMATE ACTION:

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

1,800+ reached in Climate Justice | **94 champions** empowered | **317 linked** to green livelihoods

👉 [Full story on page 2](#)

COMMUNITIES TAKE THE LEAD IN THE FIGHT AGAINST MALARIA

Over **16,000 People** reached through integrated malaria interventions, **69 community dialogues** conducted and **68 follow-up** sessions engaging over **5,700 community members** in malaria prevention and health rights.

👉 [Full story on page 3](#)

YOUTH-LED ENTERPRISES DRIVING ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

33 innovations developed and **174 jobs created** across communities in Terego District.

👉 [Full story on page 4](#)

INSIDE STORIES OF CHANGE:

Inspiring Youth Enterprise and Innovation

Full Stories on Pages 5 & 6

INCLUSIVE CLIMATE ACTION: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

During the reporting period (January–March 2026), RICE West Nile continued to deliver strong, measurable progress in advancing environmental protection, strengthening climate resilience, and promoting inclusive governance across Madi Okollo and Obongi districts.



Community awareness is gaining momentum across the districts, with over **1,800 people reached** through engaging street talk shows, forums, and targeted campaigns on climate change and environmental protection. By delivering **50 street talk shows in local languages**, the initiative made vital information more accessible, bringing women, youth, and vulnerable groups into the conversation and inspiring communities to take action for a more sustainable future.



Empowering Local Climate Champions

94 Climate Action Champions were equipped with backpacks and reflector jackets to enhance their fieldwork and visibility and **9 signposts** were installed to promote environmental messages across target communities.

Promoting Green Livelihoods 🌱

Linked communities to **climate-smart income opportunities** such as poultry, horticulture, and sunflower farming. **317 community members** accessed information on alternative livelihoods. Partnerships with organizations like ICRAF and Palm Corps supported **tree planting and green enterprise development**.



Inclusive Participation & Advocacy

Supported **women, youth, and persons with disabilities** to actively engage in decision-making platforms. Representatives presented a **position paper during International Women's Day**, amplifying community voices on environmental rights.



ADVANCING TOWARD ZERO MALARIA DEATHS



Expanding Community Action Against Malaria

Integrated malaria interventions achieved a wide community reach, impacting **16,176 people** across the target areas. Through 69 community dialogues and **68 follow-up sessions**, over **5,700 community members** were actively engaged in malaria prevention and health rights. These platforms strengthened awareness, encouraged community participation, and empowered individuals to take action in protecting their health.

Health Workers Driving Improved Malaria Response

Efforts to strengthen data quality and health service delivery led to notable improvements across supported facilities. A total of **157 health workers** were trained in data cleaning and reporting accuracy, enhancing the use of **HMIS and DHIS2 systems** for more informed decision-making. In addition, **195 health workers across 73 health facilities** were mentored exceeding the target at **122%**, resulting in improved malaria diagnosis, treatment, and reporting systems, and overall better health facility performance.



Strengthening Frontline Health Systems

Frontline health systems were reinforced through targeted support to **5,779 Village Health Teams (VHTs)** via mentorship and coordination. A total of **270 mentorship visits** reached **3,391 VHTs**, enhancing their capacity to deliver quality, community-level malaria prevention, diagnosis, and care.



195 health workers across 73 health facilities were mentored exceeding the target at **122%**



EMPOWERING YOUTH INNOVATION FOR SELF-RELIANCE

RICE West Nile continues to transform the lives of refugee and host community youth through innovation, entrepreneurship, and skills development. During this reporting period, the program made significant progress in strengthening youth-led enterprises, expanding market access, and advancing financial inclusion across Imvepi Refugee Settlement and Terego District.

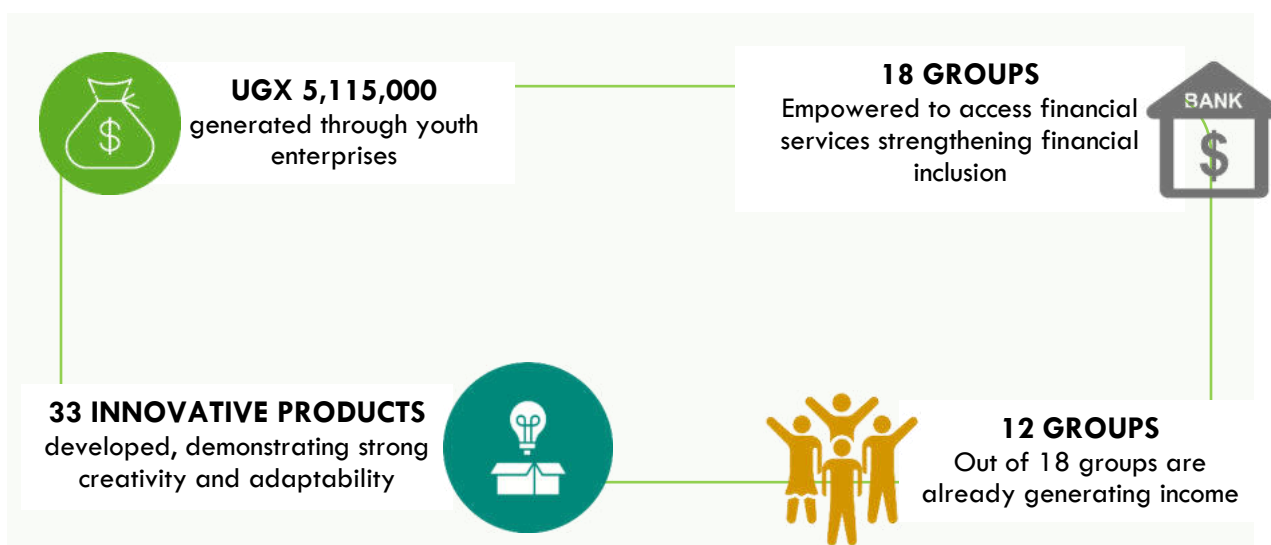
Increasing Income Growth, Financial Inclusion and Market Opportunities

Youth enterprises are gaining financial traction, generating a total of UGX 5,115,000 this quarter, with standout groups like Ama Ecora Vegetable Enterprise earning UGX 2 million from tomato sales and Drileba Youth Apiary generating over UGX 1.07 million from honey and cosmetics. All 18 groups opened formal bank accounts with Absa Arua, strengthening financial inclusion and accountability. In addition, performance-based grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000 were disbursed, while five groups accessed additional financial services beyond project support signalling growing financial independence. Market exposure also expanded, with 20 youth showcasing their innovations at regional expos, leading to new opportunities such as biogas installation contracts and hibiscus wine training facilitated by youth leaders, alongside strengthened partnerships with private sector actors, including agribusiness firms.



Empowering Youth through Social Innovation and Enterprise Growth

Youth-led innovation is translating into real economic opportunity, with 18 youth groups from refugee and host communities completing mentorship and transitioning into business incubation. Across sectors such as agriculture, fashion, energy, and health, the groups have developed 33 innovative products, demonstrating strong creativity and adaptability. Notably, 12 groups are already generating income, marking a promising shift from ideas to early-stage commercialization and sustainable livelihoods.



SUCCESS STORY: TRANSITION FROM CHARCOAL BURNING TO VEGETABLE PRODUCTION.



Mr. Ojoaza Livingstone (in black) of Toliova Village, Bandili Parish, Rhino Camp Subcounty in Madi Okollo district heading a family of six (06=5m,1f) used to only burn charcoal, the only way he could afford the basic needs of the family. However, this ecocide was labour intensive, expensive, harmful and depleting the soil of nutrients and microbiological diversity.

When he heard about dangers of charcoal burning during a community dialogue organized in the SEA WNK Project, he believed that transitioning to horticulture was worth a shot.

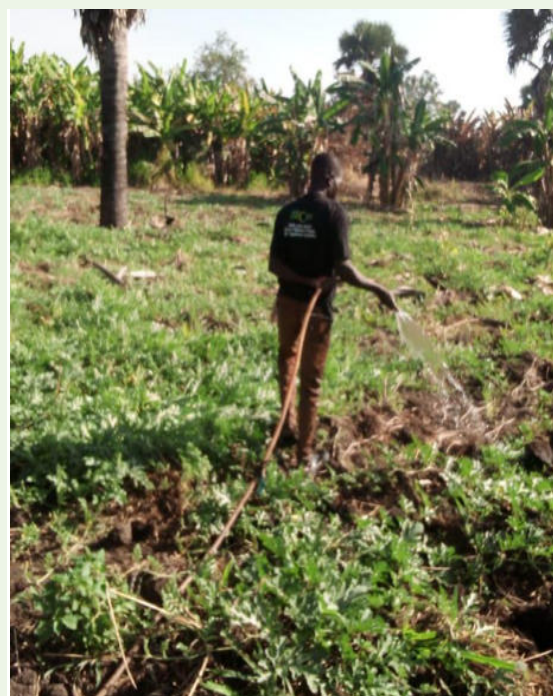
“Ojoaza who used to burn minimum of 15 bags of charcoal monthly, invested in solar powered irrigation with capacity of covering 2 acres per day at Ugx 1,528,000 from Sun culture company for vegetable production.

Now that I use sunlight to transmit water to my garden, I don't spend on fuel, I was able to plant 2 quarters of tomatoes in dry spell where I got Ugx 212,000 from the first fruits with hopes of earning over Ugx 2,000,000 to cater for my household basic needs” says Ojoaza.

“When I used to burn charcoal, I was exposed to significant health and safety dangers due to the emission of colorless, odorless carbon monoxide (CO) gas and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) during incomplete combustion,” says Ojoaza.

Solar powered irrigation not only reduced his costs but also increased his revenues thus reducing on the carbon emission in to the atmosphere.

Many thanks to Ojoaza and other fellow community members like him exploring alternative livelihood opportunities, horticulture farmers spent less time compared to charcoal burning, can integrate trees with crops and get higher yields. Promoting Income generating activities is reducing dependency on natural resources, changing our planet for the better.



STITCHING A NEW FUTURE: BETTY'S RISE FROM SURVIVAL TO SUCCESS

At just 25, Betty Diku Samuel Laki has transformed her life from hardship to hope. Once surviving on only UGX 20,000 a month after dropping out of school, the South Sudanese refugee found a turning point through the i-UPSHIFT program by RICE West Nile. With mentorship in tailoring and financial literacy, Betty gained both skills and confidence, saving diligently to invest UGX 200,000 in her own sewing machine. Today, she earns at least UGX 20,000 a day, supports her child's education and family needs, and the business is thriving. Betty is now determined to mentor other young people, turning her success into a ripple of opportunity across her community.



Figure 1 Betty at her business premises in Imvepi refugee settlement. Photo Credit: Tualu Emmanuella.



Figure 2 Drileba group members display their products. Photo Credit: Rolex Aleku

YOUTH ENTERPRISE IN ACTION: DRILEBA APIARY'S GROWING IMPACT

In Azapi Village, Terego District, the five members of Drileba Youth Apiary Group have turned adversity into opportunity. Once struggling with the rising cost of living, they are now award-winning entrepreneurs after benefiting from the RICE West Nile and ILO i-UPSHIFT program. With a \$5,000 grant and an additional UGX 250,000 raised from their own savings, they launched a line of affordable beeswax-based cosmetics, propolis, and candles to address widespread skin diseases in their community. Their innovation quickly gained demand, generating over UGX 1,077,500 in revenue this quarter alone. Beyond income, their products are improving community health, while the group now mentors other youth and plans to scale production, proving that with the right support, youth-led solutions can drive lasting change.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Lack of Certification and Compliance for Product that are made by the youths

Most products have not yet met national standards (e.g., certification requirements), restricting their ability to compete in formal and higher-value markets.

Support Product Certification & Standards Compliance

Facilitate access to certification bodies and provide technical support to help groups meet national quality standards.

Inconsistent Health Reporting and Data Quality Gaps Affecting Decision-Making

Inconsistent reporting rates and data quality gaps in HMIS 033b and VHT reporting systems affected the reliability, completeness, and timeliness of health data used for decision-making. These variations limited real-time tracking of program performance and delayed evidence-based responses at both facility and community levels.

Strengthened Data Quality Assurance and Continuous Mentorship Improved Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness

The project intensified routine data quality assurance through structured monthly data review meetings, on-site data cleaning exercises, and continuous mentorship of health workers and VHTs. In addition, supportive supervision was strengthened to reinforce correct reporting procedures, while peer learning sessions were introduced to harmonize reporting practices across facilities. These actions collectively improved data accuracy, reporting consistency, and the overall use of health information for timely decision-making.





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