



September, 2025

NEWSLETTER

Editor's note

In the month of September 2025, KRC-Uganda's leadership team including board members, the executive director, and heads of departments visited Rhino Camp to engage with beneficiaries of the STEPS Project and witness firsthand the impact of ongoing interventions. As part of the field engagement, the team visited Simbili zone, interacting with women at the Women and Girls Safe Space (WGSS), and observed the "Be There" psychosocial components of the STEPS project. These spaces are not only centers of healing and empowerment but also platforms for fostering resilience and hope among vulnerable groups. Beneficiaries shared heartfelt stories of transformation highlighting improved emotional well-being, economic empowerment, and renewed dignity. Their appreciation for the project's impact was evident and deeply moving.

This visit reaffirmed the organization's mission to deliver impactful and people-centered programs that are both sustainable and inclusive. Deepening community engagement, improve services, and strengthen partnerships ensuring that the STEPS Project continues to respond effectively to real needs on the ground.

Whilst the VIBRANT project training on agroecological practices introduced farmers to the core principles of agroecology, emphasizing the use of locally available resources, biodiversity, ecological balance, and farmer-led innovation. Practical sessions focused on techniques such as composting, crop diversification, natural pest control, soil and water conservation, and the integration of livestock and crops approaches that not only reduce external input costs but also improve long-term soil health and yields. By embracing these techniques farmers can improve crop yields, and contribute to a healthier environment.

In the heart of Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, the Kulea Watoto Project has made a significant impact on the lives of refugee clients, one of whom is Selemani Babele, a 47-year-old refugee from Congo who acquired valuable skills in mindset change, nutrition, financial literacy, and business management which enabled him to establish a successful salon business. With his newfound skills and confidence, Selemani is now able to provide for his family's needs, including food, clothing, and education. A testament to the power of empowering vulnerable households.

The project's timely support, providing animal vaccination and deworming services, has been met with heartfelt appreciation from the beneficiaries. This crucial assistance has enabled households to better care for the goats they received through the project, promoting sustainable livelihoods and food security. The initiative demonstrates the project's commitment to empowering refugees and enhancing their resilience.

Cash assistance has long been a lifeline for refugees, providing dignity and independence in the face of displacement. By giving individuals, the power to make their own choices, cash assistance enables them to meet their basic needs and navigate the complexities of life in refugee settlements. However, the reduction of cash assistance has had severe consequences for refugees, particularly in settlements where livelihood opportunities are scarce. Without this vital support, refugees are left struggling to survive with many facing increased vulnerability to poverty, hunger and exploitation.

Enjoy reading this edition.

Kato Umil Omal
Documentation & Communication Officer

KRC UGANDA BOARD MEMBERS AND THE DIRECTOR VISIT RHINO CAMP TO MEET BENEFICIARIES UNDER STEPS PROJECT

September, 2025



Executive Director KRC-UGANDA interacting with a group of families during the visit to Rhino camp

**BY: JACINTA MARIA K
EASE PROJECT OFFICER**

On 22nd September, 2025, KRC- UGANDA Rhino field office staff welcomed board members, the Director, and Heads of Departments, who met the settlement commandant/ Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) who praised KRC-UGANDA for the good work and shared a lot of insights into the dynamics of humanitarian work. The Monitoring team interacted with a group of women in Simbili at the Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS), Be There invention in Simbili among other activities, to interact with beneficiaries and witness the impact of ongoing programs in the community under STEPS project.

During the visit, the board members, the director and heads of departments met with families, youths, and community groups who are supported through livelihood, and psychosocial initiatives. Beneficiaries shared personal stories of growth, resilience, and the positive changes they have experienced, and their appreciation to the project.

During the community dialogue, the board members and the Director emphasized the importance of listening directly to the voices of the people served under the STEPS project in Simbili and Eden zones.

They also expressed their gratitude to the KRC-UGANDA staff and Rhino Camp community for their warm welcome and active participation and hard work. They highlighted the project's commitment to improving services, and strengthening partnerships with local leaders.

The visit ended with a renewed commitment from KRC-UGANDA to continue working closely with beneficiaries, ensuring that the STEPS project remains responsive to the real needs of the people it serves.

Together, we build STEPS towards hope, dignity, and a brighter future.

EMPOWERING FARMERS IN KYALUHUTHU THROUGH AGROECOLOGY: A SUCCESS STORY FROM THE VIBRANT PROJECT

September, 2025



Figure 1: Kayiwa senior agronomist training farmers on natural best ways of conserving their soil

Compiled by Atwihayo Messod
Production and Marketing

September 2025, the VIBRANT Project, in collaboration with BD Project, successfully trained farmers in Kyaluhuthu Village, Kyondo Subcounty, Kasese District on agroecology farming practices. The training equipped local farmers, including youth and women, with sustainable skills that improve productivity while protecting the environment.

The Intervention

During the training, farmers were introduced to the principles of agroecology, focusing on soil health, integrated farm planning, crop and animal diversity, recycling of natural resources, and the use of organic solutions for plant and animal health. Practical demonstrations enabled participants to see how these methods can be applied directly on their farms. Emphasis was placed on inclusive participation, ensuring that women and youth had equal voice and ownership in decision-making. The sessions also highlighted the importance of community cooperation, balanced diets, and resource recycling to reduce dependence on costly chemical pesticides.

The training laid a foundation for farmers in Kyaluhuthu to transform their farming systems and improve their livelihoods in ways that are both productive and sustainable. Key outcomes expected include:

- **Increased Harvests through Improved Soil Fertility** Farmers learned practical methods of enriching soils using compost, manure, and agroforestry practices. By applying organic matter and conserving water, soils retain nutrients and moisture for longer, leading to stronger plant growth. Healthy soils directly translate into higher yields, allowing households to produce more food for consumption and the market.
- **Reduced Costs through Organic and Locally Available Inputs** Instead of relying on costly synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, farmers are now able to make their own organic pesticides from herbs and prepare organic manure from animal waste and crop residues. These practices cut farming expenses while also reducing the risks of chemical residues in food and the environment.
- **Ecosystem Protection and Climate Resilience** Agroecology emphasizes planting trees, conserving water, and recycling waste streams. These practices help restore biodiversity, prevent soil erosion, and create micro-climates that cushion crops against drought and heat. By adopting such measures, farmers are not only producing more today but also securing the land's ability to sustain production in the future.
- **Strong Household Food Security and Nutrition** With diversified farming systems that include crops, trees, and livestock, families can access a wider range of nutritious foods. This reduces dependency on single crops and strengthens resilience to market or climate shocks. Improved diets also contribute to healthier households, especially for children and mothers.
- **Inclusive Participation of Women and Youth** By involving women and youth meaningfully in decision-making, the training is ensuring that knowledge and responsibility are shared across households. Women, who are often the primary food producers, now have tools to manage soil, crops, and animals sustainably. Youth are encouraged to view farming as a dignified and profitable career, rather than a last resort.

Voices from the Community

"Before this training, I thought more chemicals meant more harvests. Now I know I can increase my yields using compost and natural methods without destroying my soil,"

said Mary Kabugho, a farmer and mother of four. "What excites me most is that I can apply these practices immediately. With organic manure and soil conservation, I expect healthier crops and better harvests this season," shared John Bwambale, a young farmer in Kyaluhuthu. "We have learned that farming is not just about production but also about protecting our environment. This knowledge will help us leave the land better for our children," shared Grace Muhindo, one of the women leaders in the group.

In conclusion, the agroecology training in Kyaluhuthu demonstrates the power of collaboration between the VIBRANT and BD projects. By equipping farmers with practical, eco-friendly farming skills, the initiative is not only improving yields and incomes but also strengthening community resilience and protecting the ecosystem. This success serves as a model for scaling up sustainable agriculture across the Rwenzori region

September, 2025

Selemani's Journey to Self-sufficiency



Selemani cutting hair of customers at his saloon

By Kiah Caroline Owak
Agronomist

Selemani Babele, a 47-year-old man from Congo currently living in Sweswe dam II with his wife Chewusi Maloba and their six children. Selemani heard about the Kulea Watoto project through the Refugee Welfare Council one (RWC1) of Sweswe dam II. The project, whose initiative was aimed at improving early childhood development and transforming livelihoods of target households. The family faced numerous challenges due to lack of knowledge on different livelihood skills. However, after participating in the Kulea Watoto project, Selemani's life changed dramatically.

Through the project, Selemani learned valuable skills, from mindset change, nutrition, financial literacy, to business management. He was also trained in hair cutting skills at Sweswe, which enabled him to start his own business. With the skills and knowledge acquired, Selemani was able to establish a successful saloon for men, earning at least a daily income to support his household.

The Kulea Watoto projects' impact on Selemani's life has been profound. He is now able to provide for his family's needs, including food, clothing, and education. Selemani's story is a testimony to the project's effectiveness in empowering vulnerable households and promoting sustainable livelihoods.

September, 2025



Psychosocial training for youth in Rhino refugee camp

Compiled by Keneema Trashillah
EASE project officer.

Cash assistance has been one of the most effective humanitarian interventions in refugee settings, as it gives displaced persons the dignity of choice and the ability to meet their own basic needs. However, the reduction of cash assistance has had devastating consequences on the lives of refugees, in settlements where livelihoods and self-reliance opportunities are limited. These include;

1. Increased Food Insecurity

Cash assistance enables refugees to purchase sufficient and diverse food for their families. When support is reduced, many households resort to skipping meals, reducing portion sizes, or relying on cheaper but less nutritious food. This leads to malnutrition, especially among children, pregnant women, and the elderly, weakening their health and resilience.

2. Decline in Access to Education

For many refugee families, cash assistance is the main source of income for school fees, uniforms, and learning materials. With reduced cash support, children are withdrawn from school or attend irregularly because families cannot meet educational expenses. In the long run, affects the children's future which increases the cycle of dependency and poverty.

3. Health Challenges

Cash assistance also helps refugees cover medical costs, transport to health facilities, and essential hygiene items. Cuts in support mean that refugees delay or forego medical treatment, increasing the risk of preventable diseases spreading in already vulnerable communities. Women and girls, in particular, face challenges accessing reproductive health services.

4. Rise in Negative Coping Mechanisms

With reduced support, refugees may resort to harmful coping strategies such as child labor, early marriages, borrowing money at high interest, or selling off their limited assets. Such strategies further affect their resilience and expose them to exploitation, abuse, and long-term vulnerability.

5. Strain on Social Relations and Mental Health

The inability to provide for basic needs creates stress, frustration, and feelings of hopelessness among refugees. Tensions also increase within families and between refugee and host communities as competition for limited resources grows. This can lead to domestic violence, community conflicts, and mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression.

6. Dependence on Humanitarian Aid

Ironically, while cash assistance is intended to support self-reliance, cutting it abruptly leaves refugees with no safety net to build sustainable livelihoods. Instead, they become more dependent on irregular aid distributions and emergency support, which hinders long-term resilience and recovery.

In conclusion, the reduction and cut of cash assistance to refugees severely impacts their food security, education, health, and overall wellbeing. It pushes families into negative coping mechanisms, worsens their mental health, and increases tensions in host communities. Humanitarian actors, governments, and donors need to prioritize predictable and sustained cash support while also investing in livelihood opportunities that empower refugees to be self-reliant.

Mukondo C Clients Appreciate Support from Kulea Watoto Project

“Asante Kwa Kulea Watoto”

September, 2025



Figure 1: Veterinary officer vaccinating and deworming the clients' goats

Compiled by Ssali Julius
Veterinary officer

Clients in Mukondo C kyaka II Refugee settlement, have expressed heartfelt appreciation to the Kulea Watoto Project for the timely support received in the form of animal vaccination and drugs for deworming. The assistance was aimed at helping households raise and manage goats they had previously received under the same project.

During the activity of animal vaccination and deworming activity in Mukondo C, clients who had earlier received goats under the Kulea Watoto Project expressed their appreciation praising the initiative for its continued support. They emphasized that the vaccination and drugs came at the right time to help them manage challenges of Peste des Petits Ruminants disease and worm infestations thus ensuring better growth, health and productivity. Caregivers and Refugee Welfare Council (RWC) emphasized that this intervention has not only strengthened their capacity to sustain goat farming as a reliable source of income and food security but also demonstrates the project's commitment to improving livelihoods and building resilience within the community.

EMPOWERING FARMERS: AGRONOMY TRAINING TO BOOST VANILLA PRODUCTION IN WESTERN UGANDA

September, 2025



Extension worker training vanilla farmers on agronomy

Compiled by ASIIMWE TIMOTHY
Extension Officer- VIBRANT

Did you know that in the lush landscapes of Kasese, Bundibugyo, and Ntoroko, a revolution is underway? The Kabarole Research and Resource Center (KRC) Uganda's VIBRANT vanilla project is transforming the lives of small-scale farmers through comprehensive agronomy trainings. By equipping 1500 farmers with cutting-edge knowledge and skills, the project is unlocking the full potential of vanilla production in the region.

Unlocking Global Market Opportunities; Beyond production techniques, the trainings also cover critical aspects of export readiness and value chain development. Farmers gain insights in:

1. International quality standards and certification processes
2. Market trends and buyer requirements
3. Value addition and branding strategies to increase income

Hands-on Training for Sustainable Practices; The project's agronomy trainings are designed to promote sustainable agricultural practices, focusing on techniques that enhance soil health, optimize crop management, and reduce environmental degradation. Farmers learn how to:

1. Implement conservation agriculture methods to improve soil fertility and structure
2. Use integrated pest management strategies to minimize chemical use and protect beneficial bio diversity.
3. Prune and train vanilla vines for optimal growth and yield.

The impact of the VIBRANT project is evident in the improved livelihoods of farmers. With increased yields and better-quality vanilla, farmers are earning more income and investing in their families' education, health, and well-being. The project is also promoting social cohesion and community development, as farmers share knowledge and work together to achieve common goals.

A Brighter Future for Vanilla Farmers

As the VIBRANT project continues to empower farmers in Western Uganda, the future looks bright for this thriving industry. With focus on sustainable practices, market readiness, and community development, the project is poised to make a lasting impact on the region's agricultural landscape. Working with Community Process Facilitators (CPFS) supporting small-scale farmers and promoting inclusive growth, KRC Uganda is supporting to build a more prosperous and resilient future for generations to come.

OUR DEAR

Subscribers & Donors

Dear Subscribers and Esteemed Donors, As we reflect on the strides made and the challenges overcome, we extend our deepest gratitude to you— our invaluable supporters. Your unwavering commitment and generosity have been the cornerstone of our success in driving sustainable change and improving lives in the communities we serve. Thank you for being part of our journey. Together, we are transforming lives, strengthening communities, and building a brighter future for all.

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