JULY-SEPTEMBER 2024

NEWSLETTER

Issue 001

Welcome to our LABE newsletter!

We are thrilled to introduce the first edition of the Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) quarterly newsletter. Our goal is to foster a vibrant and well-informed community by sharing valuable insights and highlights into our activities and milestones as we scale-up Family Basic Education innovations to increase access and utilization of information particularly amongst women and children in local communities.

Over the past few months, we have implemented a number of impactful program activities in Northern Uganda and West Nile regions including community outreaches, a disability diagnostic camp and a ministerial field visit with representatives from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. We also commemorated the International Literacy Day on September 8th and celebrated Uganda's wins in promoting literacy practices.

We appreciate all our partners, donors, teams, and volunteers who make the work we do possible. Thank you for being a part of this journey!

Please lookout for our next newsletter.

Regards,
LABE Communications Team

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY 2024

We joined the rest of the world to commemorate the International Literacy Day (ILD) that was celebrated on 8th September. Uganda celebrated ILD by hosting a National Symposium at the office of the President. The symposium was hosted by the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development in line with the theme of promoting multilingual education and its role in fostering cultural dialogue, social cohesion, and peace.



LABE Executive Director interacts with delegates at the exhibition stall.

Notably, Charles Draecabo from UNESCO emphasised the benefits of learning in one's mother tongue, highlighting how multilingual education keeps children in school longer and supports mutual understanding. He pointed to UNESCO's ongoing efforts, such as promoting linguistic diversity in countries like Cameroon, to underscore the importance of these initiatives.

Bernard M. Mujuni, representing the ministry, reiterated the government's commitment to improving literacy rates, which currently leaves 24% of Uganda's population illiterate. Professor Willy Ngaka of Kyambogo University also emphasised the global and local literacy challenges, noting that while efforts like Universal Primary Education (UPE) and LABE's multilingual programs have made progress, much work remains to address Uganda's literacy gap.

The event featured an exhibition which LABE participated in and the awarding of winners from creative writing and spelling bee competitions, celebrating the collective efforts to promote literacy for socio-economic transformation.

MINISTERIAL VISIT TO WEST NILE AND NORTHERN UGANDA



MGLSD Commissioner (left) and other officials at Alibajiako HLC in Terego District.

Following the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing between LABE and the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD) in May, we had a joint team conducting field visits in Northern Uganda and West Nile. The teams were led by the MGLSD Commissioner, Everest Tumwesigye and LABE's Executive Director, Stellah Tumwebaze.

The team assessed literacy initiatives in the Koboko, Terego, and Obongi district focusing on home-based learning, caregiving, and livelihood literacy. The MGLSD team praised local efforts, particularly in Terego, where the District Education Officer turned his home into a Home Learning Centre (HLC) to support early childhood education.

Each LABE-supported HLC has a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) with an education fund to help parents improve their household welfare and support the HLC activities. LABE also provided financial support of UGX 800,000 to each HLC for income-generating activities. These VSLA(s) were highlighted as key to empowering women.

Additionally, Stellah also appeared on Arua One FM, where she advocated for integrating cultural knowledge into the curriculum, addressing calls for program expansion. Both LABE and the Ministry committed to strengthening Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Early Childhood Development (ECD).

We innovate and promote literacy practices.

WELCOME ABOARD!

We are thrilled to announce a significant addition to the Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) leadership team. Beatrice Guzu joins LABE's team of visionary leaders as a board member on the Programmes Subcommittee.

Guzu is a renowned disability rights activist in Uganda with more than twenty-five years of experience in leading various disability inclusion programmes and gender and disability mainstreaming for different organisations. She is very passionate about human rights, advocacy, organisational development, policy development and capacity building.



Beatrice Guzu (third right), welcomed by Dr Rosie Agoi, the Board Chair (second left) and Stella Tumwebaze, Executive Director (third left) alongside other members of the LABE Board of Directors.

SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN TEREGO

LABE successfully conducted a five-day disability diagnostic camp in Katrini sub-county, Terego District serving over **80** children with disabilities. The objective of the diagnostic camp was to offer free and comprehensive diagnostic services and increase awareness about disability services and provide support to parents of children with disability within the community. The camp was held in five Home Learning Centres (HLCs) and conducted by an experienced medical team, including Orthopaedic specialists and physiotherapists as well as social workers, community leaders and special needs education officers. Through diagnostic camps, LABE is able to scale-up its commitment to entrench inclusive Early Childhood Development (ECD) and education for rural preschoolers.



IMAGE Courtesy LABE

FLAIR PROJECT DISSEMINATION

We held a dissemination workshop for the Free-choice Learning Areas Integrated in Routine Home-Based ECD (FLAIR) project in Koboko. The workshop was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), district officials and LABE officers. The workshop was held to communicate project progress with the district and government stakeholders as well as provide a platform to review the project successes and address challenges and lessons learned. The FLAIR project has been implemented since September 2023 and aims at increasing access to and coverage of integrated home-based ECD services with well equipped free-choice learning areas that meet national standards and benefit the most disadvantaged children. The project currently serves about **40** HLCs in Koboko, Obongi and Terego.

TRAINING PARENT EDUCATORS AND YOUNG FACILITATORS (YFs)

As a key strategy to incorporate Social Emotional Learning in the daily routine used at Home Learning Centres (HLC) and enhance peaceful co-existance, we partnered with Sesame Workshop to hold training workshops for Parent Educators and caregivers in Yumbe and Obongi. This training, a third in the series, focussed on social development looking at problem solving and co-existence. A total of **40** Parent Educators and Caregivers were trained to reach children at HLCs and formal ECD centres in the refugee settlements and host communities.

Training YFs: During the holiday, we trained a total of **123** Young Facilitators in Koboko, Terego, Gulu and Nwoya with their teachers to continue supporting the child-to-child strand of our home-based ECD. These Young Facilitators who are primary school children interact playfully with their younger siblings in homes and HLC(s) to prepare them for home-school transition.This training equips them on how to continuously create new learning materials for the children and how to collect monitoring data.



IMAGE Courtesy LABE

TRANSFORMING LIVELIHOODS WITHIN REFUGEE SETTLEMENT COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE KULEA WATOTO PROJECT IN YUMBE

Kulea Watoto which is Swahili for 'nurturing children' is an initiative aimed at improving Early Childhood Development and transforming livelihoods of refugees and their host communities. The initiative, implemented by a consortium of **5** organisations that is; Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) International Rescue Committee (IRC), Kabarole Research Centre (KRC), Madrasa Early Childhood Programme (MECP) and AfriChild Centre is funded by Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. LABE in partnership with IRC are implementing Kulea Watoto activities in Yumbe district. During this period, LABE held community dialogues to raise awareness, encourage engagement and draw action plans for sustainability in relation to access to early learning opportunities and improved linkages to children's services within the communities. Parents were also engaged in continuous parenting sessions on responsive care giving and livelihoods training.



As a refugee, I had lost the hope of improving my family's livelihood until I received training through the Kulea Watoto project. The training I received on household visioning inspired me to put into practice the knowledge I acquired and live by example. With the transport refund I received from LABE, I went to Okubani market and bought 2 goats to support my family. These goats are all pregnant and I hope they will increase by the end of the year. I am hopeful my life and that of my family will benefit from this initiative."

CHARLES YOKUJO
REFUGEE FROM BIDIBIDI SETTLEMENT

Through Kulea Watoto and LABE initiatives I have gained knowledge and skills on responsive caregiving practices including nurturing child care practices, child safetyand protection, household vision planning and maternal care and hygiene. My vision is to prioritise my children's education to at least basic education at the lower secondary school level. I also hope to invest in small-scale enterprise catering services for the sustainability of my family's welfare.

HARRIET ROPANI
SINGLE MOTHER OF 4, REFUGEE FROM BIDIBIDI SETTLEMENT



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