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NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER - DECEMBER, 2024









Kudos 2024!

The past twelve months have been momentous for LABE. It has been a year of growth and resilience as we have made significant progress to promote literacy and adult basic education. Through every play activity and every child taught and adult learner empowered, we have highlighted the power of literacy in strengthening the families and communities that we are serving.

We have leveraged new and existing partnerships with communities, line ministries and development partners to collaboratively enhance the livelihoods of children and women within marginalised communities. We remain relentless in our pursuit to entrench lifelong learning right from the family and fostering community ownership and transformation to spur sustainable development.

While we reflect on all our achievements and the children, women and families we have impacted, our work is far from done but we are definitely moving in the right direction.
Through innovation in literacy, LABE has been implementing education pilot programmes which offer forward-looking solutions to local education and livelihoods challenges. The home learning centres for instance are key to entrenching learning for both children and adults where mother tongue, story telling and play are used as a mode of teaching and learning so community heritage is strengthened and people get more access to information.

Our goal is not only to promote literacy practices, but also to ensure the children and women in these local communities can understand, protect and demand their individual and wider rights.
As we crown the year, this issue will highlight some of the key initiatives we have implemented and spotlight some of the success stories from our beneficiaries.

Thank you for being an invaluable part of this journey and we look forward to more successes as we collaboratively drive change. May your 2025 be an exceptional year filled with hope, peace and joy!

SECOND CHANCES

How Young Facilitators in Nwoya Overcame Social and Economic Barriers to pursue their Dreams

The young facilitators from Alokolum Primary School in Nwoya's rural community represent hope and courage as they have braved significant social issues that had hindered them from a chance at completing their education.

Before LABE's field teams met the girls, some of them had dropped out of school owing to challenges beyond their control. For instance, twelve-year-old Franka had to stop going to school because her father saw no value in educating girls after her elder sister got pregnant in her first year of high school.

For Innocent, who represents most of the challenges faced by the majority of the girls, she had to drop out of school because her father could not afford to pay her school fees. This would cause her to miss out on sitting her final examinations to complete primary school.

As the young girls share their experiences, they can hardly hold back tears as they recount a time when they had lost hope of completing their education.

Fortunately LABE enlisted the girls as Young Facilitators, trained and empowered them to use the play-based child-to-child approach to support preschool children at the home learning centres and their young siblings at home.



> **Being a Young Facilitator has also helped me boost my confidence at home and in school as well as improved my academic skills. Before I joined the Young Facilitators Program, I could hardly read and write, however, my reading and writing have improved. Additionally, I also speak more at home, which wasn't the case before and my father often listens to what I have to say. This has built a better bond between me and my family and boosted my confidence. I don't just teach what I learn from training to the young children at the home learning centre, but I also**
>
> Aloyo Innocent - Young Facilitator, Nwoya

LABE went further to support the girls develop key skills to thrive in their studies and in their communities such as public speaking skills, writing and reading skills, as well as income generation. They were also supported with scholastic materials and provided with logistics to help them create play materials for the preschool children.

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Owing to LABE's support and partnership with the local schools and home learning centres, the girls have since returned back to school and their caregivers are more willing to support with school fees since the burden of buying other school material has been shared.

The girls are eager to always 'teach' the preschool children which they often do on the weekends and during the holidays. Through the regular interaction with the children, they have noticed their personal growth in public speaking and confidence.

They have not only received a second chance at education but they also have a renewed hope to pursue their individual career dreams and continue supporting the younger children at the home learning centres.

PADS OF HOPE

How LABE'S Young Facilitators are innovatively reducing irregular class attendance

The vibrant young facilitators at St. Luke Te-Olam Primary School are doing an exceptional job at 'teaching' preschool children at the home learning centres through play and storytelling.

However, they are going a step further to innovatively eliminate barriers that are hampering girls' regular school attendance.

The 8 young facilitators including two boys noticed a worrying trend of girls increasingly missing out of class because of their monthly menstrual cycle. Even those who came to class would eventually have to leave school when their skirts would get stained.

This situation caused many girls in their school to miss out on attending class during their cycle and eventually cause a decline in their performance.

Through a show of unity and collaboration, the young facilitators came together and decided to put the life skills they learnt during their holiday training sessions with LABE into good use.

With the support of their teachers, they started hand stitching reusable sanitary pads. The teachers would help them purchase all the materials they needed to get the job done.



However, there was still a challenge, they did not have enough material to ensure a consistent supply of pads, so they decided to come-up with an income generating project that would in turn support them in making more pads.

They decided to plant sweet potatoes in the school garden. Their plan was to grow the sweet potatoes, harvest them, then sell them to make enough money to buy more materials to make more pads.

Once they made the pads, they gave them to the school matron, who would then distribute them to the girls whenever they were experiencing their menstruation.

With no access to ordinary sanitary pads, due to their affordability, the reusable pads would prove to be the much needed solution to helping the school girls stay in class to enjoy their education and improve their performance.

The young facilitators intend to keep making these pads and also grow their garden to include beans and sorghum to generate income.

They have also planted trees around their school boundaries and hope to do more to support their school and enhance a sense of community responsibility.

BUILDING LABE'S CAPACITY TO DELIVER BETTER

The Senior Management Team Completed a Leadership Course, while ECD officers got a training in the Science of ECD



Six members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) recently completed a leadership training program with the Collective Rising Leadership Institute (CRLI).

As part of this leadership training the SMT attended the Feminist School: East Africa Education CSO Edition on feminist leadership facilitated by Gender at Work and United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI), Enneagram coaching sessions to improve teamwork and attended other fundamental leadership skills sessions including organisational system strengthening, and operational efficiency during face-to-face sessions in Nairobi.

The training also included targeted coaching and mentorship sessions to equip the team to drive organisational growth, reach and influence as a basic education catalyst across Africa.

After the sessions, the SMT worked together to develop a transformative action plan to enhance organisational effectiveness and support the overall success of LABE's mission and vision to promote literacy.

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The team received their Collective Rising Leadership Institute certificates during a celebration summit held in November 2024, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Nairobi.

Additionally, 4 of LABE's Early Childhood Development Program Officers of Koboko, Terego, Gulu and Nwoya attended a 6-day Science of Early Childhood Development (SECD) course organized by Aghakan Madrassa, at Ridar Hotel, Mukono.
The course covered brain development, coping and competence, ecology of childhood, communicating and learning and developmental health, all of which the Programme officers will use as they offer support supervision to Parent Educators.

The Program Officers also worked with their respective district ECD officials to draw up community sensitization action plans to disseminate the information.

CELEBRATING PROGRESS

LABE in Partnership with Sesame Workshop organized Community Events and Close Out Meetings in Yumbe and Obongi to Honour Achievements

LABE is working in partnership with Sesame Workshop to improve the quality of ECD sessions delivered at Home Learning Centres (HLCs) and Early Childhood Care and Education Centres (ECCE) in refugee settlements of Yumbe and Obongi districts. This is being done through piloting the Inclusion and Belonging for Displaced Learners project, that aims at strengthening children from migrant and host communities, their positive identities, sense of belonging and competencies for inclusion and peaceful coexistence.

Community events were organised to celebrate with families what they have experienced and learnt so far, while close out meetings were organised to appreciate the various project actors for their positive contribution towards the achievement of the project goals. The community events were attended by over 2900 children and their parents and the close out meetings were attended by over 100 Parent Educators, caregivers, center management committee members, local government leaders, OPM staff, RWC3, Center Coordinating Tutors, LABE Staff, Sesame Workshop representatives, and other development partners working in the settlement.

Community events activities included joint parent-children games, singing, cultural dances and discussions among others.
Parents and children explored and expressed their emotions, shared family histories and experienced the richness of different cultures within their community.



Similarly, the close out meetings activities were fun and play based. Team building games like untying the human knot were played and certificates were awarded to key implementors of the project.

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The events created a platform for participants to connect, appreciate diversity, and build relationships, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion. It was an opportunity to reflect on the program's achievements, recognize contributions, and celebrate the community's progress in fostering inclusion and unity.

A RALLYING CALL FOR INCLUSION

Glimpses of Hope for children with Disabilities

LABE joined the rest of the world to commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3rd December, a day that is significant to us as our work ensures children with disabilities have access to opportunities including early childhood education. With an estimated 5.8% of Ugandan children experiencing a disability, it has been crucial for LABE to incorporate initiatives that enhance access of children with disabilities to Home Learning Centres, in line with one of our core values of - **Inclusion.**

In light of this, LABE delivered over 20 assistive devices to families of children with disabilities in Terego and Koboko Districts in November.
The assistive devices are aimed at enabling the children to fully engage with their environment, embrace their unique capabilities and overcome barriers to their physical mobility, education and social interaction. LABE seeks to enhance inclusion and accessibility to services and education for children with disabilities in local communities like Terego so the children have equal opportunities to learn.

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The assistive devices were distributed through a community diagnostic camp where health experts helped the children fit and adjust to their new devices. These devices are aimed at enhancing their physical mobility and independence, encourage learning and foster social interaction and inclusion.
This diagnostic camp preceded other similar camps where the children had access to specialised health care, testing and physio therapy to identify their unique individual needs.

The parents of the children were also empowered with skills to help them further support their children and navigate the social injustices they often experience like discrimination.
Children with disabilities often encounter societal rejection and discrimination from these communities. They are also at a high risk of abuse and are not easily accepted into schools. Jamal for instance, comes from Koboko district and was diagnosed with Hydrocephalus. Due to mobility challenges associated with his condition, his parents found it challenging to carry him to school daily and therefore he had to stay at home.

LABE's inclusive approach is premised on the need to reach all learners by addressing forms of exclusion, marginalisation and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. Through this approach LABE has supported over 90 children with disabilities get assistive devices to enable them enjoy their childhood and education, supported over 300 children with disabilities access specialised healthcare services and used literacy as a tool to empower parents to sustainably support their children.

Overall, LABE hopes to safeguard their right to education and enhance inclusion at the family and community level.



On inclusion...
What matters is whether the environment and the community around me is able to appreciate the way I am and support me to use whatever I have to shine.

Prosper Muhumuza, Commissioner, Disability Affairs

Extracted from LABE's Unfolding Possibilities Podcast -
http://bit.ly/3PwZEQH

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"Ensuring Every Child, Everywhere, Has Access to Quality ECD!"

Discover LABE's Home-Based ECD Tool Kit - your essential guide to facilitating early childhood

- It is based on the official National ECD Learning Framework
- Has easy-to-understand ready-developed lesson plans
- Has sample teaching/learning materials
- Includes fun, play-based learning activities

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