

UGACO EYE

Uganda Country Office



NEWSLETTER
5th Edition

May – August **2025**

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Foreword

Welcome to the 5th edition of the UGACO EYE Newsletter, highlighting key moments from May to August 2025. While we are still grappling with funding challenges, the past quarter has brought some significant milestones that reaffirm Finn Church Aid Uganda's commitment to education, skills development and creating opportunities for the displaced and host communities.

From launching the Alternative Strategies for Promoting Integrated Response to Early Childhood Development (ASPIRE) Project in partnership with UNICEF to strengthen Early Childhood Education, to celebrating the creativity of TVET students through our first-ever fashion show, we continue to put youth at the heart of our work. Our engagement extended beyond Uganda, participating in global platforms in Helsinki and Turkey, while also contributing to high-level national dialogues on youth, skills and education.

We have strengthened partnerships with government, donors, and the private sector to expand pathways for refugees, promote recognition of prior learning, and connect youth to decent, dignified and fulfilling work opportunities.

We continue to seek funding to sustain and grow our programs, particularly in the humanitarian sector where the needs of displaced and vulnerable communities remain urgent. Additional support will enable us to expand access to education, skills development, and livelihood opportunities, ensuring that more children and youth can thrive, rebuild their lives, and reach their full potential.

As the humanitarian sector continues to face deepening resource gaps amid growing needs, FCA is focusing on empowering local actors by strengthening the capacity and role of organizations closest to the communities they serve. We will continue striving for a more efficient humanitarian response in all our work

As you read through this edition, we invite you to reflect on how collaboration, innovation, and community engagement are opening doors of opportunity across our project areas.



Wycliffe Nshaka
Country Director, FCA Uganda & Ethiopia



Our engagement extended beyond Uganda, participating in global platforms in Helsinki and Turkey, while also contributing to high-level national dialogues on youth, skills and education.

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Launch of new Early Childhood Education Project



The initiative focuses on creating safe and inclusive learning environments, training caregivers, and strengthening community engagement to support children's early development.

On 4th August 2025, Finn Church Aid, in partnership with UNICEF, launched the Alternative Strategies for Promoting Integrated Response to Early Childhood Development (ASPIRE) Project, aimed at improving access to quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) across Uganda. The initiative focuses on creating safe and inclusive learning environments, training caregivers, and strengthening community engagement to support children's early development. This project aligns with national efforts to ensure that all children, including those with disabilities and from marginalized communities, can thrive.

FCA meets Finnish President



On May 13, 2025, FCA Uganda and Kenya Country Directors, Mr. Wycliffe Nsheka and Mr. John Bonge, together with other FCA staff, had the honour of meeting H.E. Alexander Stubb, President of Finland, and First Lady H.E. Suzanne Innes-Stubb during their visit to Kenya. Hosted at a reception at the residence of H.E. Pirkka Tapiola, Ambassador of Finland to Kenya and Uganda, the meeting provided an opportunity for FCA staff to engage with the Finnish business community and explore development partnerships and private sector collaboration.



FCA Uganda joins Education in Emergencies conference

From May 20–21, 2025, FCA Uganda team led by the Country Director Mr. Wycliffe Nsheka, joined global education actors in Helsinki for the Education in Emergencies Conference, co-hosted by Finn Church Aid and the University of Helsinki.

The two-day event brought together practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to explore innovative approaches and share experiences on delivering quality education in crisis settings. FCA's participation reflects our continued commitment to improving learning outcomes for children and youth affected by conflict and displacement.



FCA Uganda hosts first-ever fashion show for TVET students

FCA Uganda held its first-ever fashion show showcasing the creative talents of students from its vocational training centres in Kyaka and Rwamwanja refugee settlements. The event celebrated unique designs crafted by students who completed six months of basic tailoring and hairdressing training under FCA's skills development programs.

Some of the materials and designs from the show were taken to Finland and featured at the magnificent Summer Fashion Show held at Hotel Lilla Roberts in Helsinki, alongside creations from leading Finnish designers.



Read More: <https://www.kirkonulkomaanapu.fi/en/ajankohtaista/artikkelit/the-hottest-fashion-look-of-summer-2025/>

High-level policy dialogue on youth skills

On July 15, 2025, FCA Uganda joined the Ministry of Education and Sports and partners for a High-Level Policy Dialogue marking World Youth Skills Day and the International Day of Education. Held under the theme “Artificial Intelligence and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation,” the event brought together government officials, ambassadors, and representatives from UNICEF, UNHCR, the EU, and training institutions.

FCA Uganda’s Deputy Country Director, Mr. Stephen Ssenkima, participated in a panel on enhancing the relevance, accessibility, and appeal of TVET for youth, highlighting the need for innovation, collaboration, and investment in skills development to prepare young people for a rapidly evolving job market.



FCA highlights livelihood programs in Turkey

FCA Uganda Deputy Country Director, Mr. Stephen Ssenkima, represented Finn Church Aid at the Global Sustainable Development Conference in Turkey. He delivered a keynote titled “Linking Learning to Earning,” highlighting FCA’s livelihood programs in Uganda and their role in empowering communities through skills development and sustainable income generation.



Advancing access to education through recognition of prior learning



FCA Uganda hosted a multi-stakeholder meeting to discuss the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) framework, which enables refugee learners who arrived in Uganda without academic documents to have their previous education formally recognised. The meeting brought together key partners including the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), UNHCR, and the Directorate of Education Standards to explore practical steps for rolling out the framework and improving inclusive access to education for all.

FCA hosts EU mission in Uganda



From 28th to 31st July 2025, FCA Uganda as lead of the ECHO TOGETHER consortium, hosted the European Union Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) mission to Uganda. Led by Morten R. Petersen, Technical Assistant at the European Commission – Directorate-General for ECHO, and accompanied by Lydia Namirimo and Eunice Maina, the delegation engaged with key stakeholders from OPM, UNHCR, and district officials in Obongi and Kiryandongo districts.

Discussions focused on the urgent need for additional classroom infrastructure, more qualified teachers, and integrating supported schools into government systems through coding and grant support. The delegation also visited schools where they inspected newly constructed and temporary learning spaces serving over 1,000 Accelerated Education Programme learners. The mission concluded at the Kiryandongo Reception Center and FCA Education Information Desk, which has profiled over 4,200 new arrivals and supported their enrolment in schools.

Celebrating World Refugee Day

On June 20, 2025, FCA joined the government of Uganda, UNHCR, and partners to celebrate World Refugee Day in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. Youth supported by FCA showcased their talents in digital innovation, creative arts, graphic design, tailoring, and handcrafts.



As part of our commitment to environmental conservation, we were joined by young climate advocate Talia Birungi Kandole, Little Hands Go Green Ambassador to plant 2,000 indigenous and fruit trees across local schools.

Youth Dialogue for Humanitarian Day



In commemoration of World Humanitarian Day, FCA Uganda, in partnership with BrighterMonday Uganda, a recruitment and talent solutions firm, held a Youth Dialogue in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.

Held under the theme “Bridging Opportunity Gaps: Displacement, Dignity, and Work in Uganda”, the event brought together over 700 youth alongside key partners from the humanitarian and employment sectors.

Discussions centered on the importance of connecting young people to meaningful opportunities so their potential can shine. Empowering youth to learn, grow, and thrive was emphasized as a

key pathway to building stronger futures.

The dialogue also highlighted FCA Uganda’s approach of directly involving youth in knowledge sharing and solution-building, ensuring that their voices and experiences guide actions and outcomes. At the dialogue, youth participants shared their challenges while also proposing solutions that foster dignity and inclusion.

FCA Uganda reaffirmed its commitment to empowering young people, especially those in displacement, by linking learning to earning and promoting inclusive access to dignified work opportunities.



The event brought together over 700 youth alongside key partners from the humanitarian and employment sectors.

Nakivale Youth Graduate



Forty-four students from Nakivale refugee settlement successfully graduated under the ITEMÉ preparatory program, implemented by FCA in partnership with Kepler Rwanda. The ITEMÉ program equips refugee and host community youth with essential skills to access higher education and improve their employment prospects.

Additionally, seven graduates from the program were awarded scholarships to join the 10X Program by Refractory Academy. This opportunity provided them with specialized training in digital skills, including software development and the digital economy, equipping them with new tools to enhance their employability and entrepreneurship prospects in today's technology-driven job market.



The ITEMÉ program equips refugee and host community youth with essential skills to access higher education and improve their employment prospects.

FCA connects refugee youth to creative apprenticeships



Through its private sector partnership, FCA Uganda supported 10 refugee youths to secure a three-month apprenticeship at Masterwood Investments, a leading Ugandan furniture company specializing in high-quality wooden products. The young creatives will gain hands-on experience in woodworking and design, building skills essential for success in Uganda's fast-growing creative economy.

This opportunity is part of the FCA Kampala Creators Hub, which equips youth with practical skills in digital and creative industries. Under the wood creatives stream, FCA provides foundational training in wood art before linking participants to private sector partners for real-world learning.



The young creatives will gain hands-on experience in woodworking and design, building skills essential for success in Uganda's fast-growing creative economy.

FCA Spark session unites refugee youth



In a bid to bring together refugees from different countries and foster a sense of unity, FCA held a “Friday Spark Session” on July 25, 2025, for participants at the FCA Kampala Creators Hub. The session focused on teamwork, intercultural dialogue, and community building among youth engaged in the Hub’s digital skills training.

Activities included idea-sharing and collaborative games to strengthen communication and cooperation. Participants also explored ways to combine their skills, from web development to content creation for joint projects. The session helped build peer networks and laid the foundation for future collaboration.

Regional learning visit with ACT Alliance



FCA Uganda, alongside other members of the ACT Alliance under the Regional Appeal CEA421, took part in a four-day joint monitoring and learning visit to Nakivale Refugee Settlement from July 21 to 24, 2025. The delegation, which included partners from Uganda, Tanzania, DRC, and Kenya, came together to strengthen cross-border collaboration and share best practices in refugee response.

The visit included engagements with refugees, host communities, local stakeholders, and humanitarian actors, focusing on psychosocial support, peacebuilding, gender-based violence prevention, education, and livelihoods. The mission reinforced a shared commitment to dignified and inclusive humanitarian programming across the region.

In July, under the Interventions for Disability in Early Childhood (IDEC) project supported by UNICEF, FCA distributed caregiver skills training manuals to health facilities in Kabarole and Kyegegwa districts. These manuals provide practical strategies to empower caregivers in supporting children with disabilities to reach key developmental milestones and transition smoothly into Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs, fostering inclusive, quality learning opportunities for all young children.

Read more about the IDEC Project: <https://www.finnchurchaid ug/articles/news/she-was-once-abandoned-but-now-she-is-full-of-life-how-children-with-disabilities-are-finding-their-potential-in-uganda/>

Strengthening Early Childhood support



**THE U.S. - KENYA
CREATIVE
ECONOMY**

FORUM 2025



Powering the Future of the Creative Economy



FCA participation in the U.S.- Kenya Creative Economy Forum

On June 5, 2025, FCA Uganda, represented by the Livelihoods Technical Lead Mr. Joseph Odumna, participated in the U.S.-Kenya Creative Economy Forum in Nairobi, engaging over 200 regional stakeholders, including creatives, investors, policymakers, and cultural institutions.

The forum, themed “Powering the Future of the Creative Economy,” highlighted opportunities across film, music, digital media, fashion, and animation, and emphasized public-private partnerships, IP literacy, and cross-border collaboration.

FCA’s participation provided valuable insights to strengthen our Digital and Creative Economies (DICE) programming, including expanding IP awareness, establishing sector-specific incubators at the FCA Kampala Creators’ Hub, developing investment readiness toolkits, and piloting regional co-production initiatives. The event also enabled FCA to explore collaborations with partners such as NBA Kenya, Invention Studios, MultiChoice Africa, and Mdundo.com, further advancing youth skilling, enterprise development, and creative sector growth across Uganda and the East Africa region.

Expanding access to pathways for refugees in West Nile



In August 2025, FCA’s Complementary Pathways team visited West Nile to expand access to third-country education and employment opportunities for qualified refugees. The team engaged communities in Imvepi, Rhino Camp, Adjumani, Lobule, Palabek, Bidibidi, and Obongi settlements, raising awareness on the criteria for scholarships and job placements, the importance of program integrity, and FCA’s Complaints Response Mechanisms for community feedback.

The visit highlighted the value of bridging programs like Kepler and DICE, which equip candidates with language skills, professionalism, and digital literacy — giving them a competitive edge in academic and employment arenas.

As FCA continues to open doors and break barriers, one message stands out: Empowerment begins when opportunity meets preparation.

FCA Supported Mityana women launch poultry incubator



In May 2025, the FCA supported Mityana Women Maize Farmer's Cooperative Society LTD, with support from the Contract Farming Project, officially launched the Nest Egg Poultry Incubator. This initiative aims to provide timely access to improved poultry breeds and to enhance production and productivity among women poultry farmers in Mityana.

Under the trade name "Nest Egg Chicks", the day-old chicks are rapidly gaining popularity among women poultry entrepreneurs, local communities, and the wider Mityana District. Feedback on the quality of Nest Egg chicks has been very positive.

The incubator has a capacity of 2,000 day-old chicks per month, with chicks produced weekly. To date, over 30 women have accessed nearly 1,000 chicks, generating UGX 3,000,000 in revenue.

Beyond supplying quality chicks, the incubator has improved service delivery by providing chicks directly to brooders' premises, and it has facilitated knowledge sharing on incubator operations, proper brooding practices, and general poultry management. These training and advisory services are offered at no cost to individual women and groups.

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