

2022

## QUARTER ONE NEWSLETTER



Dear Reader,

Windle International Uganda (WIU) is pleased to present to you this edition of the Quarterly Newsletter for the period January to March 2022.

At WIU, we continue to use all available resources to help refugees and host communities access quality education and training as well as amplifying their voices.

Here is snapshot of news and current project implementation activities from WIU during the first quarter.

WIU Communications team

# ANDREW EMMANUEL OMARA APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

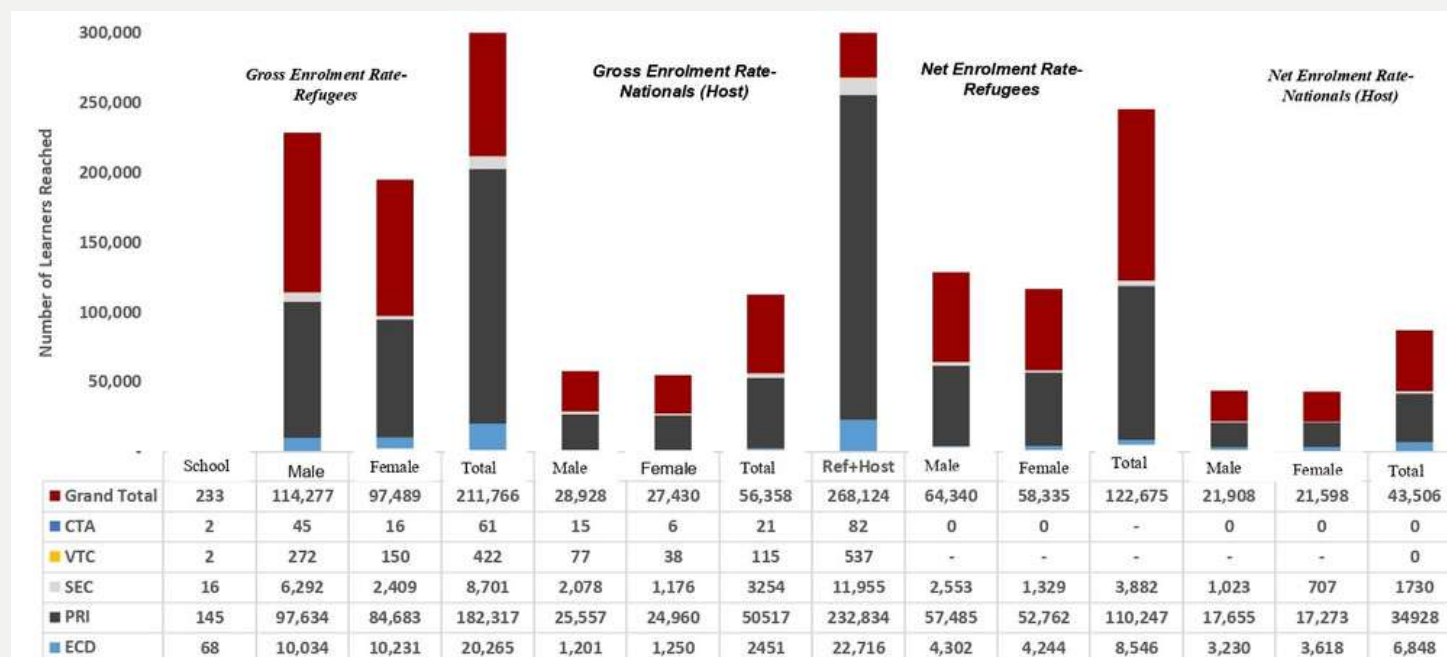


After an extensive recruitment process, the Board of Trustees of Windle International Uganda announced the appointment of Andrew Emmanuel Omara as its Executive Director on March 14, 2022. Until this appointment, Mr. Omara was the Acting Executive Director/Director of Programs at Windle International Uganda.

Upon appointment, Andrew noted, “Together with the team, we will work innovatively to better respond to the contemporary challenges and serve persons of concern better. In the words of Nelson Mandela “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”

# SCHOOLS REOPEN IN UGANDA

## Our Reach in Quarter One 2022



After nearly two years of closure, Uganda reopened schools on the 10th of January 2022, sending millions of students back to the classroom.

Windle International Uganda (WIU) provides access to education for 268,555 learners (22,716 are in early childhood learning centres, 232,834 are in Primary school 11,955 are in Secondary education, 537 in vocational training centres and 82 in Community Technology Access centres). WIU also provides scholarships for 431 learners in Ugandan universities.

While the reopening of schools is an opportunity to return to face-to-face education for many, there is concern from WIU and its partners that the learning lost during the 83 weeks of closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to high numbers of students dropping out of school completely.

Andrew Omara, WIU's Acting Executive Director, said: "We welcome the reopening of schools and the return to classroom-based learning for students from refugee and host communities alike. Children from these communities are already disadvantaged when it comes to education, having had their schooling disrupted by conflict and marginalisation. The COVID-19 pandemic was an additional blow."



“We are pleased to be continuing our work with the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Education and Sports, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other partners to ensure refugees and host communities can continue to access quality education and training across the country” he added.

With closure of all schools and other learning institutions, WIU adopted the small group learning initiative which adhered to COVID-19 SOPs to ensure continuity of learning in preparation for school reopening. Small group learning is a method of teaching whereby small groups of learners meet on a regular basis with their peers and teachers to engage in learning activities. To support this initiative, WIU procured and distributed home learning materials developed by Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and National Curriculum Development Center (NCDC) to ensure continuity of learning amidst the closure of schools.

The teachers in the supported schools in refugee settlements were trained on on effective methodologies of handling small groups, child protection and safe guarding, learner centred approaches and inclusive education.

Windle International Uganda will continue to work with partners to ensure the gains lost in refugee education due to the pandemic are recovered.



# MINISTER OF STATE FOR RELIEF, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND REFUGEES VISITS LONGAMERE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Following the reopening of schools on January 10, 2022 by the government after closure for a period of two years, the Minister of State for Relief, Disaster preparedness and Refugees, Hon. Esther Davinia Anyakun, visited Longamere Primary School to establish the progress of teaching and learning activities. This was part of her general visit to Refugee settlements in Arua Region (Rhino Camp – Omugo and Yoro Base Camps, and Imvepi Settlements).

On her visit, the Minister was joined by among others UNHCR Country Representative, UNHCR Head of Sub-Office Arua, Refugee Desk Officer (RDO), and UNHCR SOA Field Protection Unit. At the School, they were received by WIU Regional Programme Coordinator – Arua Region, Settlement Manager and the Head teacher.

## Key highlights of the Visit

- Imvepi Refugee Settlement Education Sector Fact Sheet prepared by WIU – Arua, was presented to the Minister and other visitors upon their arrival at the School. This detailed the general overview of the Education response interventions in the settlement led by Windle International Uganda, and other partners.
- The Minister and the UNHCR Country Representative visited Primary Six Class and interacted with the learners. Focus was on the number of girls present versus that of boys; male pupils were more than the girls. They recognized and applauded the continuity of teaching and learning activities in the class.
- The team also visited Primary Seven Class housed in a temporary Shelter. They were concerned about the worrying state of the classroom structure that needed to be urgently rehabilitated. The minister was informed of the fact that the school's Code needed reactivation to open the tributary of government aid.
- The Minister and the UNHCR Country Representative pledged to provide more support to the education sector.



## Key Observations

1. The need for construction of Permanent Classrooms was established by the visiting team
2. There were more male pupils compared to the female pupils in the school. Thus, the rationale for implementation of activities to boost the increase in enrolment and attendance rates of girls in school was emphasized
3. The School was to be supported with temporary Shelters to decongest the classrooms already in existence and improve on the learning
4. The construction of teachers' accommodation units had to be given priority as well.
5. UNHCR had allocated 400,000USD to cater for the construction of temporary Classrooms (Especially tents) in all the refugee schools across Uganda

## WIUSUPPORTED STUDENTS GRADUATE



Nkumba University held its graduation ceremony on 26th February 2022 with thousands earning respective awards from Diploma, Bachelors and Doctorates. The celebrations saw 38 (10F, 28M) students supported by Windle International Uganda under the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) scholarship program graduating in various disciplines.

Windle International Uganda implements the DAFI university scholarship Program in partnership with UNHCR with funding from the German government. The scholarship Program contributes towards UNHCR program impact area of ‘...empowering communities and achieving gender equality.’

The scholarship covers full tuition and related fees as well as allowances that caters for students’ wellbeing. It also involves academic counseling, mentoring and supporting students to transition to employment.

Windle International Uganda congratulates the graduands for having held their ground during the pandemic and still managed to graduate.

## WIU HOSTS SCIENCE AND INNOVATION FAIR TO PROMOTE CREATIVE THINKING



Pupils of Ematong Primary School defending their rubbish bin made out of water bottles

Windle International Uganda WIU organized a science and innovation fair in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement where six primary schools namely; Arnold, Bidong, Victoria, Panyadoli Hills, Ematong, and Canrom primary schools participated. The theme of the fair was “Environment Conservation” where all schools prepared and presented three different projects in line with the theme.

Ematong Primary School was the overall winner and was handed a trophy. The other two best project authors got WIU branded items. One learner was from Ematong primary school with her energy-saving stove and the other learner was from Bidong primary school with a similar project name.



The function was held at Kiryandongo Community Technology Access Centre (CTA) where all schools convened to present their projects before a select team of judges. The function was attended by 350 people mostly pupils. All participants and schools received certificates of participation. It was a joy to witness learners being able to present and put their imaginations into reality. The event's guest of honour was the District Education Officer, who appreciated the idea and thanked Windle International Uganda for conducting the first function of its kind in Kiryandongo District.



A pupil from Ematong explaining his innovation of an energy saving stove

The goal of this science fair was to create a lively learning environment by supporting and promoting extra co-curricular activities in schools by giving pupils room to think and create their own imaginations, improve communication skills and develop cognitive abilities, encourage interactions, social cohesion, and peaceful co-existence among the learners as well as develop the learners' talents.

## SKILLS FOR EMPLOYMENT



Windle International Uganda's Skills for Employment Project funded by the European Union Trust Fund carried out the DIT assessment for 910 out of 1,000 trainees. These were examined to confirm their readiness to access the labour market before they are placed for internship.

After the assessment, 940 trainees were placed in different business enterprises for a 2-month internship training. The training will enable youth to gain employable skills and competencies relevant to the labour market.



## DELIVERY OF LIFE SKILLS

Under the AGENCI project, WIU conducted supervision on the delivery of life skills to 2,100 girls and boys in 33 primary schools and 2 secondary schools in Moyo and Obongi districts.

The life skills are meant to increase their capacity to make decisions about their own lives and educational opportunities.



## WIU AND UNHCR DISTRIBUTE BICYCLES TO HELP STUDENTS GET TO SCHOOL EARLY



Movement to and from school is a challenge for many students in refugee settlements in Uganda. Many students walk distances of up to 10km to get to school on a daily basis causing them to be late and tired. Some begin walking to school as early as 5am in the morning, leading to poor performance, absenteeism and high dropout rates.

To improve access to school, Windle International Uganda (WIU) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with support from Vos distributed 102 bicycles to support secondary school students at Kiryandongo High School and Panyadoli Self Help Secondary School) who walk long distance daily to school and back home. The recipient of the bicycles included; 41 refugees (12M, 29 F) and 61 nationals (27M, 34F).

This is aimed at reducing protection risks faced by mainly female learners caused by long distance to and from school. The distribution of bicycles is also aimed at enabling learners reach school on time, improve school attendance and performance, while reducing dropouts due to early pregnancies.

While handing over the bicycles, the UNHCR Representative, Kiryandongo Field Office, Sarah Mirondo noted that in one of the assessments carried out, distance to school was highlighted as a huge challenge especially for the girl child. “The bicycles will help increase access to secondary education and reduce distance learners have to travel to school. This will reduce protection risks especially for the girl child,” she said.

### What receiving bicycles means to students?



Atim Marion Faith, a senior four student of Panyadoli Self Help Secondary School is among the beneficiaries. She says, “Since schools reopened, I have been facing a challenge of coming late to school and going back home late. But now that I have received the bicycle, I know things are going to change.”

“It has made our lives simpler. We shall make sure we report to school early and concentrate in our lessons in order to get better results and be responsible citizens.”

Ihata Magdalena, another beneficiary, said “I am so thankful to Vos, UNHCR, and WIU for the support they have given us in form of bicycles. This will help solve the long distance to school and will especially motivate us the girls to come to school early.”



Alaro Naume said, “I cannot express the joy I have because of the bicycle I received. It has eased my coming to school because I faced difficulties when going home at 6pm. I could reach at 7pm or 8pm. It has eased my life that I at least get some time to do my work when I get home.”

Of those who received bicycles, 62% were girls who are often exposed to violations when they have to walk long distances to school.



To watch a brief clip about this on our channel use the link below

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPhSNWsxEl0>

## BENEFICIARY STORY: READING HELPS HELLEN ESCAPE HER PAIN



A journey into Hellen Edward Gayo's thoughts would have been rough. Though still a teenager, she has experienced so much pain, more than even an adult can take. All of this can be traced to the war back in South Sudan which prodded large wounds in her heart.

First, they killed her sibling, then she was separated from her mother and must now live as a refugee in Uganda, hundreds of miles away from home. She desperately needed to escape that pain and had given up all hope until she discovered the school library stocked by Windle International Uganda with support from Book Aid International.

Yes, reading became Hellen's escape—a chance for her to dream again.

“My favourite book is the maggot moon,” Hellen, a student at Rhino Camp High School in Arua District, says. “It's about a boy called John, who was all alone, and he was separated from his family during a war.”

She sees herself in John, the young lonely orphan boy who did not know how to read and write and only learnt through a friend at school. She loves his resilience! “I like that he kept learning and getting more friends and when, he finally grew up, he started working for himself,” she narrates. “I connect with it because when I came, I did not know where my parents were and I always felt lonely.”

Besides resonating with the characters in the stories, reading has helped improve her diction, grammar, and communication skills. “I pronounce the words well, I know how to use them and exactly where to put them,” she boasts. “And in case I find a word that I cannot pronounce, I either come to the English teacher or the library attendant.”

She further explains that she can now dream of her profession with ease. “I would like to be a lawyer, if not a journalist!” she says. “Lawyers defend suffering people, and journalist make sure that the world knows what is happening to these people.”

She is constantly amazed by how fully stocked the library is and how much variety there is to choose. At first, she was wary of it and thought there might be many rules, but this couldn't have been further away from the truth.

“When you want a book, the library attendant gives you the opportunity to check; he just notes the title down, then gives you enough time to read and return it,” she tells of the flawless process. “When I started borrowing books in Senior One, I was not very active, but when more books were brought by Windle International Uganda, I frequented the library.”

Because of the library, Hellen maintains that she has gained more exposure and allowed herself to dream some more. “I now know there is a bigger world out there because of these books, I dream about it,” she speaks with an effortless command of the English language. “Thank you so much Windle International Uganda and Book Aid International!” she concludes with a smile on her face.



## TEACHER PROFILE: INSIDE THE MAKING OF A VERSATILE TEACHER



Tom Calvin Ocakacon understands that learners are a priority. Should they need help, he must find ways to ensure students at Rhino Camp High School know how to reach out. The learners adore him! He has earned their respect by being approachable. He, however, confesses that so much has gone into morphing him into the versatile teacher he is today; Windle International Uganda has played a role.

He is among the over three thousand teachers employed by the organisation today to especially know how to handle learners in refugee communities. “I teach Christian Religious Education and Geography,” he says. “I joined the school in 2016, after completing the course of becoming a teacher.” His first stint as a teacher was part-time at a school based in Gulu District.

When Windle International Uganda advertised teaching jobs in Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement, he quickly applied and was taken on as a full-time employee. “Here, my salary is paid by Windle International Uganda and on time,” he says. “Though the experience in Gulu was good, there is peace of mind in knowing you have a salary every end of month.”

Important to note is that in the Windle International Uganda-supported schools, teachers are encouraged to multitask. For example, Ocakacon says that he has been tasked with improving the school’s reading culture and managing the library. “Yes, I am the librarian!” he exclaims. “The head teacher and the committee appointed me to help in the library department so that our learners can get all the help they need.”

He notes that Windle International Uganda, with support from Book Aid, started by providing the school with shelves, office and reserve section books, usually used by teachers as a teacher’s guide. After that, they took him through training that weaved him into the magnificent librarian he is today. “In that training, we learnt a lot of things that could help people like me who are not professional librarians,” he explains.

“I learnt how to give access numbers for the books, how to encourage learners to read among many other things.”

His organisational skills have been sharpened with every new arrival of books into the library. “The books are very many and the shelf cannot accommodate all of them,” he says before explaining how he manoeuvres through it all. “What I have decided to do is to put a few copies up here for display for the learners to get access to and when I realise the demand is high, I keep increasing them.”

Indeed, the books are meticulously organised in his library, with each title visible for all to see. He says that he has identified a site where he places the books on demand to ease access daily. He adds that it wasn't always like that; before the training, the records were not proper, and the turn-up of learners seeking books was low.

“Now days, on average 40 books are borrowed every day,” he revels in his strides. “I see new and old students borrowing on a daily, and the numbers have grown since schools reopened.”

Despite being known for his teaching prowess by the learners, he is also the teacher advocating for book-reading. “Apart from the time when I am teaching, I always move around and when I find no lessons in the classes, I encourage them to visit the library,” he says. “We have a series of books that can help them not only to pass examinations, but boost their communication skills.”

Ocaacon also says that being around books has made him an all-around teacher. He emphasises that the entire experience has widened his knowledge and improved his confidence. “Now days I even find myself reading books related to sciences, yet in my Ordinary and Advanced level I did Arts,” he confesses. “For example, there is a book on general sciences called ‘How things work’, that I love to read; I am an arts teacher but I find myself learning more things in science now.”

## LATEST ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



A brief clip from Ms. Lamara Juliet, who graduated from Nkumba University with a first class Diploma in Primary Education. She shares her struggles studying as a refugee and what it means to graduate.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRIK6jFrT-w&t=1s>



# PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

WIU has a zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. Any form of sexual exploitation and abuse by our staff or related personnel constitute acts of gross misconduct and are grounds for termination. Be informed and report any SEA cases to **[wiu.integrity@windle.org](mailto:wiu.integrity@windle.org)** or call our toll free **0800-11-14-28**



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**Windle International Uganda**  
Plot 726 Off Mawanda Road, Nagawa Close, Kamwokya,  
P.O. Box 24230, Kampala, Uganda  
Tel: +256 (0)414 531142/8 | 0393 262951