



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT LEARNING BRIEF

Together we can attain intergenerational solidarity
- International Youth Day 2022

Introduction

Over the years Windle International Uganda (WIU) has been supporting the youth attain education through skills development and scholarships. At the centre of the agency's work is human development and responding to actual needs of the beneficiaries. To attain this, WIU's Institutional development and quality assurance department commissions researches/ studies to understand the beneficiaries' critical needs enabling evidence-based programming. Several studies have been conducted by the directorate's research wing sharing evidence of the lived experiences of refugees and host communities' youth. It is with this background, this learning brief shares key lessons from WIU's youth focused programming from three reports including;

1. Nakivale Labor Market Assessment report 2021

Key Message:

Vocational skills are a good match to address challenges of skills mismatch in communities like Nakivale. With a variety of service providers comes quick, good quality and affordable services. This report presents key skills needs to make profit in Nakivale and experiences of the Nakivale VTC beneficiaries.

2. Vocational skills students' tracer study report 2021

Key Message:

Sharing the processes of training and how the vocational skills have changed the odds for young refugees.

3. Refugee education and scholarships for higher education 2022 – Lessons from Windle International Uganda's Student Refugee Program needs assessment report.

Key Message: Sharing key lessons for implementing scholarship projects to benefit the young adults who benefit from them. A holistic learning of provision of quality education and empowerment through scholarships.

From the assessments we learn that Windle International Uganda finds young people as refugees or conflict affected persons as their first and only identification on arrival to Uganda. Through our strategic partnerships and youth centered programming their identification and status commonly diffuse to the six statuses presented in WIU's youth "transformative" web shown in figure 1 below: The youth we work "for" and "with" - Windle International Uganda's youth "transformative" web.



Figure 1. WIU's youth "transformation" web _2022; Source WIU youth development assessments.

The youth we work “with” and “for” - Windle International Uganda’s youth “transformation” web status defined

Refugee youth and host community:

This is a young person that has been forced to flee their country due to conflict and other factors to come settle into Uganda; Host community youth are those young people found in communities with in which the refugee youth settle.

Young professionals:

These are youth that use WIU's quality education provision programming to acquire formal education graduating in to professionals many of whom are currently working with Windle International Uganda and other humanitarian agencies across Uganda, Africa and beyond.

Academia:

These are similar to the "young professional category" where they attain education and they go on pursue tertiary institution teaching and research as a career. Majority of whose research work is now informing policy and creating change in Uganda and their countries of origin.

Transformative leaders/ changer makers:

These are youth that use WIU's projects to attain agency to start up initiatives to support their communities solve common challenges faced leveraging on the available resources.

Strategic partners:

These are youth that inform WIU's programming and project designs for change because we believe youth are self aware and potentious to solve challenges.

Entrepreneurs and Self starters:

These are youth that utilize WIU and partners skills development programme to acquire skills and venture in to different business/entrepreneurial activities. This transformation is common among the youth that were out of school at the time they fled their countries of origin. Actionable and effective approaches like Work Based Learning (WBL) are commonly applied.

Multi-talented and multi-faced:

These are youth that utilized WIU 's projects to lead a mixed livelihoods life. These are participating in more than 2 transformations and are on a journey to focus on just one or continue living unapologetically multi-talented. This kind is common in WIU's secondary school vocationalization.

WIU's Youth "transformation" web at a glance

Transformative leaders/change makers

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. 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.

Reference – WIU website news and stories section

With cognitive skills built, breeds innovations for change in communities.

Young Professionals

WIU has partnered with leading public and privately own accredited institutions of learning in Uganda to provide scholars the opportunity to get world class quality education and training. In 2021 despite COVID-19 restrictions, 16 (4 female, 12 male) graduated with first class degrees from various universities in Uganda. The stories are fulfilling like. -Ladu Victor a recent Windle International Uganda alumna and 1st Class Honors Graduate underpins the importance of the DAFI Programme. Victor was supported to undertake a Bachelor of Sustainable Agriculture and Extension at Ndejje University. "Getting the DAFI scholarship was a dream come true. I had yearned to complete university and help my family and community but I had no means to do so. It was a life changing opportunity for me," For WIU supported scholars, the experience at the University also presents new challenges and opportunities. "I was able to meet people from different backgrounds and countries. It helped change my attitude, perception, belief and values positively," Victor said.

Reference – WIU website news and stories section.

Strategic partners

My name is Mambo Toaha, a recent graduate of Bachelor of Procurement and Logistics Management from Nkumba University. I was awarded the Certificate of Merit by the Meritorious Completion of the course. I'm a South Sudanese Refugee from Bidi bidi Settlement in Yumbe District, currently working as a Resource Centre Assistant at Windle international Uganda Head Office. I'm planning to further my studies and do a Masters in Supply Chain Management with a dream of becoming an International UN worker in the Procurement department

Reference: WIU website news and stories section.

Entrepreneurs

For girls like Hellen Okuo, education is the only opportunity to escape the vicious circle of poverty in their community and contribute to economic development. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 which led to prolonged school close came with other risks such as limited access to study materials and exposure to child marriage. "I was glad when the Senior Woman Teacher (SWT) of my former school (Itula Secondary School) told me that a project called AGENCI was seeking for vulnerable out of school girls to enroll for apprenticeship vocational training. I was given a form to fill in. Thereafter, I was asked which vocational training course I was interested in enrolling for," She narrates with a smile.

"I opted for hair dressing and I was successful with the application process. I am currently studying applicable hair dressing styles which I believe can earn me some income," Hellen noted.

With the support of Windle International Uganda, "I am excited to be a beneficiary of the AGENCI project which has rejuvenated my life, hope and zeal through the practical income generating skills from which I will believe will enable me become economically independent."

Reference, WIU news and stories section.

Academia

"I am currently working with Welthungerhilfe in South Sudan as an Emergency Deputy Head of project. I am currently enrolled for a Master's degree in Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development at Ndejje University. I hope to complete my master's degree and proceed for a PhD. I want to be a university lecturer in South Sudan and other African countries," Tap John Puol, revealed.

Adding, "I am so happy because the scholarship changed my life and that of my family. I am now in position to sponsor my brothers and sisters in school and support other family members. This would not have been possible without UNHCR/DAFI/Windle International Uganda scholarship." The academics support structure that is extended to WIU scholars plays a pivotal role in their academic success. This type of support includes psychosocial services, mentorship, career guidance.

Reference: WIU website news and stories section

Multi-talented and multi-faced

When Juliet first arrived in Uganda in 2017, she did not ever imagine that she would be a business owner, let alone a university student. With some personal savings, Juliet started up her small-scale food business that is now their source of livelihood. She also hired a piece of land on which she has planted maize to boost her income. Whilst balancing business and her academic research and reading, Juliet attributes whatever she can do now to the DAFI scholarship whose main goal is to promote the self-reliance of Refugees. Through the scholarship award, she has attended different forms of training and workshops where she has learned a lot about entrepreneurship and what better time than this to put those skills to use. "I am very grateful for the opportunity given to me as it's now for all of us in the family, words alone can't express our joy for the golden chance. DAFI scholarship is like our parent since we lost our parents in the war." Lamara Juliet

Reference, WIU news and stories section.

Achievement presented from skills demand market assessments, tracer studies and empowerment scholarship projects of Windle International Uganda and partners.



To date WIU has supported approximately 3000 youth to acquire skills across Uganda, majority of whom are female. Given our equity approach 60/40. This supports refugee and host community youth creating intergenerational solidarity.

Our skilling projects are informed by labor market assessments that mainly focus on youth's preferences coupled with needs of the community. Some the skills we provide include hair dressing, mechanics, fashion and design, hospitality & hotel management, building & construction, carpentry and joinery among others. Cultivating a new breed of entrepreneurs and beating gender roles bias in Uganda and in the countries of origin.



2 in 6 young people in Uganda perceive vocational skills training is last resort when one fails academically or cannot enter into the job market. At WIU, skills development programmes have changed this mind set over time. Findings from our tracer studies show that when the youth put the skills, they acquired to use it usually creates financial independence. This increases income and resilience among the beneficiaries changing the narrative around skill development training being an option for failures. WIU studies show that at least 2 out of 5 skill development graduates are making a living off skills training or they have at least offered training to their immediate social networks and other community members.



Hands on skills development trainings and mainstream education that include ICT skills development are more feasible compared to those that do not incorporate ICT literacy skills. Youth that receive training with ICT inclusive are at more competitive advantage compared to those with out ICT skills. With these it is easy for them to get market outside the refugee settlements but also find opportunities for growth and development.



From our scholarship programs like the Student Refugee Program (SRP) we found that youth enjoy challenges. They are usually fascinated by scholarships that are tailored towards their individual growth. Scholarships that not provide an opportunity for education but also prepares them for the job market just like WIU's SRP project.

When designing youth empowerment projects, we work with the youth. At WIU we learn that empowerment comes intergeneration solidarity, human development and opportunities for change. Therefore, development of human centered models requires "ask and listen" to the youth and then take action with them involved. This is because the youth are self-aware and they can voice out their challenges and are not ashamed to share solutions to these challenges.



Key actionable recommendations from Windle International Uganda's learning over time.

Designing and implementing youth projects require not only community buy in but also buy in and ownership by the youth for the youth

Much as youth are independent, most of their discussions are informed by their lived experiences and social networks. Implying that youth projects are most feasible when social networks are involved.

Youth prefer a challenge to achievement compared to hand outs.

Projects should incorporate both individual and group growth for them to be effective. That is to say, when empowering an individual to resilience introduce the notion of collective growth.

Young women and youth with special needs require additional encouragement to participate and benefit in projects because they meet alot of obstacles to participate in projects.

Conclusion

Over the last 26 years, Windle International Uganda has served the youth through youth focused and youth led projects – the organization concludes that young people are not a homogenous group. Their differences and dynamics have been dictated by their surroundings. We believe that all young people across the globe are portentous, resilient, believe in change and tenacious that once offered the right guidance and support they thrive. This is because they are energetic, innovative, driven and always hungry for a change. Together we can create intergeneration solidarity by offering evidence-based support to the youth. All should strive to embrace evidence-based programming especially in youth serving projects.



CONTACT US

P.O. Box 24230, Kampala, Uganda

Physical Address:

Plot 726 Off Mawanda Road, Nagawa Close,
Kamwokya, Kampala, Uganda

Telephone: +256 393260951 | +256 414 531142/8

E-mail: wiu.info@windle.org

 www.windleuganda.org

 WindleUganda

 WindleUganda

 WindleUganda