



**27** YEARS OF LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE  
OF COMMUNITIES IN TORORO DISTRICT  
1995-2022

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>COUNTRY DIRECTOR'S REMARKS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EDUCATION AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND PRIMARY EDUCATION</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>MATERNAL, NEONANTAL, CHILD HEALTH AND ASRH</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>COMMUNITY BASED WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>GSO PARTNERSHIPS AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS</b>	<b>27</b>

# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organisation
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DHO</b>	District Health Officer
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development
<b>FOD</b>	Foundation for Open Development
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Government Organisation
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organisation
<b>RDTS</b>	Rapid Diagnostic Tests
<b>TASO</b>	The Aids Support Organisation
<b>UGX</b>	Uganda Shillings
<b>VHT</b>	Village Health Trainer
<b>WASH</b>	Water Sanitation and Hygiene

## COUNTRY DIRECTOR'S REMARKS



Plan International Uganda started operations in Tororo District in July 1995. At the time, Tororo was one of the most deprived districts in the country given that it was recovering from the effects of rebel activities and famine, which ravaged the area from the mid-1980s into the 1990s.

The organisation assumed a more development-oriented approach with a focus on strengthening capacity for community participation, social services provision, governance and policy influencing.

We have used evidence-based research and tools to influence key stakeholders and duty bearers to ensure that adequate laws and policies exist to protect and provide a safe environment for children. We have built the capacity of community structures such as the 38 Parish Development Associations, constructed and renovated schools to ensure quality education for children, and constructed water sources, among other achievements. Our programmes have left a lasting impact on the lives of 26,937 children and over 215,496 indirect beneficiaries over the past 27 years. We are privileged to have seen an entire generation, the transition of

communities to own their own development processes and children grow into adulthood with confidence and skills to realize their dreams.

However, we could not have done this alone. On that note, we recognise the strategic collaboration with our Donors, Partners and Stakeholders including, Government, CSOs, the Private Sector, communities and young people in bringing about lasting improvement in the lives of children in Tororo District.

As we phase out of Tororo District, we are satisfied that our programming has left life-changing impact and legacy in the District. We are not deserting Tororo however. Plan International Uganda is still connected to the district through established networks.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Iveta Ourvy', written over a white background.

**IVETA OURVY**

**COUNTRY DIRECTOR  
PLAN INTERNATIONAL UGANDA**



## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Plan International Uganda is an independent development and humanitarian not-for-profit organization that advances children's rights and equality for girls. We started operations in Tororo District in July 1995. At the time, Tororo was one of the most-deprived districts in the country given that it was recovering from the effects of rebel activities and famine, which ravaged the area from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s.

Since 1995, we have delivered multi-sectoral programmes in communities with lasting impact in the lives of thousands of children in the areas of Child Protection, Education, Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH), Economic Security, Health, Disaster Risk Management, Participation and Governance and Gender equality. Herein are the most significant stories of change resulting from our 27 years of working in Tororo district.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS











Supported District Local Government to deliver on their mandate in education, health and social security.

- Contributed to a vibrant Civil Society in the District, leveraging our convening and organising power.

Built capacity of community structures such as the 38 Parish Development Associations to work with children and communities in development processes. Disaster risk clubs were formed in 74 schools, trained and facilitated to conduct regular inter-school debates on climate change adaptation, 10,025,000 tree seedlings distributed, and training and installation of 180 model energy saving stoves in 38 communities.

- Strengthened accountability by building capacity of rights holders to hold primary and secondary duty bearers to account in an effort to ensure effective service delivery.
- Supported efforts aimed at tackling barriers to gender equality and social inclusion. For example, Tororo District developed a gender matrix to track and monitor empowerment and gender transformation.
- Influenced Local Government development agenda especially in regard to budgeting and respecting, protecting and fulfilling child rights.

## KEY INDICATORS OF PROGRESS ON INTERVENTIONS

INDICATOR/YEAR	2000	2016
 Poverty levels	58.8	24.5
 School enrollment	144, 257	161,771
 Pupil: Classroom ratio	124:1	73:1
 Pupil: Teacher ratio	59:1	60:1 (increased due to UPE)
 Safe water coverage	45.8%	76%
 Latrine coverage	43%	73%
 Maternal mortality rate	532 per 100,000	400 per 100,000
 No. of Govt health facilities	20	54
 HIV/AIDS prevalence	OVER 8%	5.1%
 Life expectancy	42 YEARS	54 YEARS

Source: **Uganda Bureau of Statistics**

- Directly impacted **26,937** Children (**16,546** girls and **10,391** boys) under **18** years in over **335** communities
- Over **215,496** indirect beneficiaries.
- Worked with over **532** partners in Tororo District (CBOs, local and national NGOs, CSOs, INGOs, Government Agencies and Corporate organisations).

# YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



## KISOKO YOUTH HUB: A MULTI-SKILLS TRAINING CENTRE FOR THE YOUTH

Like a sore thumb, youth unemployment crisis was standing out. As part of skills development, Plan International Uganda has set up youth hubs in Tororo district to address issues of unemployment. The Four youth Hubs are located in Kisoko, Mela, Kwapa and Molo training in various vocational skills.

### ABOUT THE HUB

“It is an innovation centre,” the hub’s Administrator, shoe maker and trainer Emmanuel Obbo, says. *“The youth come up with their ideas, we incubate them and give hands-on skills to support them to earn a living.”* The hub, which started in 2018, has courses such as tailoring, hairdressing, art and crafts, bead making, computer training, and modern agriculture. There are over 250 youth at the hub.

Young girls, some previously in forced marriages, and lots of them out of school have acquired and continued to develop skills at the hub. Martha Achieng is one of the beneficiaries. *“I was lost in a life with no income-earning skills, before joining the hub, today I am a proud hair dresser.”*

When Achieng first arrived at the hub in 2020, she did not have the slightest idea of how to plait hair. She had been forced to drop out of school by her parents, who preferred to educate boys rather than girls.

*“My parents told me to leave school for the sake of my younger siblings; that is when I joined this factory,” the 22-year-old narrates.*

Months into the training, she is already earning a modest living while still at the hub. She charges hair plaiting at UGX3,000, hot combing at UGX2,000, and retouch at UGX4,000, income that goes a long way in supporting her and her siblings.

Away from the salon clients, the hub has morphed into a one-stop shopping space for the village residents. Also, the beneficiaries grow tomatoes, egg plants and several other crops that take a short time to mature, which they sell and get some income to run the hub, according to Mr Obbo. They also have a bakery that makes cakes, pancakes and bread.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic-induced lockdown, Plan International Uganda supported the hub to continue with skills training for the youth. For example, the youth make sandals for sale to the community.



*“The girls that used to depend on older men and women for money, are now making their own money,”* says Mr Obbo. “This has, in turn, helped to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies and

forced marriages in the community.”

The benefits are so evident that other Smart-Up factory centres have since been set up in three different places - Mella, Kwapa and Molo.

## **KISOKO YOUTH HUB: EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH VOCATIONAL SKILLS**

### **THE STORY OF EVELYN APIO**

At Kisoko Youth hub, is group of youth engaged in variety of vocational skills including hairdressing, shoe making, crafts and designing and ICT among others. Similar activities take place at three other youth hubs at Mella, kwapa and Mollo in Tororo District. Majority of these youths are in the age group of 15-26 years and out of school.

Evelyn Apio, 16, is one of the beneficiaries of Youth Economic Empowerment Programme at Plan International Uganda. She had been married off a little girl because there was no money for tuition.

*“Later, my neighbour told me that a certain organization called Plan International Uganda was starting something at the sub-county headquarters. They were going to provide a host of skills training sessions for young people.*

I wanted to perfect my hairdressing skills and immediately enrolled in the course

for hairdressing. I have been doing this for seven months and I have learned to do hairstyles like pencil, twist, threes and relaxing hair.

When I am done with the course, my goal is to start a salon in my community in Kisoko sub-county. Plan International Uganda has also taught us about saving and I have already started doing so. It is two months to the end of the course; I believe that my dreams are only a whisker away. I see a difference already. I did not have any of the skills taught here but now I can plait hair and earn money.”

My goal is to perfect my skill to the level that attracts bridal entourages whose bills could spill into hundreds of dollars. Such income could mean so much to me. Having the salon business would help me pay bills, take care of the children and supplement on my husband’s income to support our young family.”



### “I LOOK LIKE A RICH WOMAN”

She was married off at an early age of 15, *“Life was hell, I would feel like a failure each time I heard my children cry for food.”* But in the thick of this pain, there was a rumour about an organisation called Plan International Uganda that could help people like her to cope with their challenges.

Today, the 28-year-old has a smile on her face. The groceries seller and Caterer from Corner Village, in Osukuru sub-county, owns a restaurant. *“This business you see here was started for me by Plan International Uganda,”* she says. *“They took me for a catering course in Iganga District. When I completed, they gave me capital to buy items to start a restaurant.”* She explains that the course explored every aspect of the food service business, including customer care.

But while there, Evelyne learnt more than just catering: *“The training was for three months and by the time it ended, I had learnt every skill available, including hairdressing.”*

Once she had a little income coming in, she was introduced to personal finance skills such as savings, loans and personal income management.

Together with friends and community members, they started a savings group that Plan International Uganda equally supported.

*“I kept saving and after one year I had UGX500,000,”* she narrates. That was the money she used to put up a grocery stall and a modest structure that now houses her restaurant. This saves her from the cost of rent. Her daily income has risen to UGX70,000, half of which she saves for future investment. *“I used to save the money on my mobile money account, I bought a cow and expanded my business,”* she narrates. *“I also help others; in fact, I employ two people that I pay on time.”*

Evelyne recalls the period prior to the intervention of Plan International Uganda and how dire her situation was. *“I was unable to fend for myself,”* not even to buy a dress. *I used to look terrible but now, I look good!* *“When I walk on the road, people look at me and say I look like a rich woman.”*



## THE OKIRORS REAP BIG FROM GROWING GREEN CHILLI

Alex Okiror is one of the model farmers who owns five acres of green chilli in Mella Village, Tororo District. He resorted to farming after hustling for a job for three years in vain in Kampala City.

On returning, Okirir found when Plan International Uganda had started supporting young people through the Youth Economic Empowerment Programme in his village to improve their livelihood through financial stability and to ensure food security through modern farming methods.

The organisation's support was in form of capacity building and training the community in making nursery beds, spraying pesticides, applying fertilizers, watering, transplanting and post-harvest handling.

*"I started with half an acre of red pepper and one acre of green pepper. I borrowed UGX1 million, which I used to pay for the labour costs and buying seeds. I earned UGX 6 million from the first harvest of red pepper and UGX 2 million from green pepper. I paid back the loan and used the balance to expand my garden.*

Together with other farmers, we learnt a lot from other model farmers through learning tours in other districts such as Kampala, Luwero, Masaka and Kiboga. We visited modern farms and warehouses. I applied the knowledge I got and improved my farm.

Pepper is harvested on weekly basis, which means weekly income. Today I am able to feed my family and pay school fees for my siblings. I am also studying to complete Senior Four. We are a happy family," says Okirir.



## SAVINGS GROUP REDEEMED MY ECONOMIC DREAMS – MARY ATHIENO, 26 YEARS

She had many dreams of earning a living but did not know how to save her little money. She wanted to become a salon owner, build a house and being self-employed. The only knowledge she needed was how to save to realise her dreams.

“I would spend every little coin I would earn and lived from hand to mouth,” recalls Athieno. When Plan International Uganda came, they taught us how to plant food and trees and how to save even the smallest amount of money. Since I started saving, I have bought cows and I built a house.

Mary is a member of Kashing Savings Association. The 30-member savings group is supported by Plan International Uganda.

*“First, the organisation advised us to cut down on unnecessary expenditures and to set personal goals,” she says. When Athieno said that she wanted a cow, the team at Plan International Uganda guided her on how to acquire it.*

“I would save UGX15,000 every week. It took me six months to buy my first cow. In one year, I bought two other cows. I now have four cows. I sell and drink milk. It’s the reason I look healthy,” Athieno boasts.

From her milk business, she saved more money and opened a salon that is also doing well. “The members in our savings group are doing well. Two of them bought cows, one bought a motorcycle; three of them are building houses. I see their children going to school and they look healthy too,” she adds.

## EDUCATION AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME



“Plan International Uganda educated me through primary and secondary school till I completed a teacher training course. The organisation used to provide me with tuition fees and scholastic materials. Anything I would request to support my education, this organisation would provide. I was like a daughter of a rich man.”

### “PLAN GAVE ME EDUCATION, I SURVIVED CHILD MARRIAGE”

When the rest of her classmates were writing in their exercise books, little Evelyn Apalat pretended to be scribbling down notes as well. She was always lacking exercise books and pens. Evelyn feared to ask her father to buy scholastic materials because his intention was to marry her off. Her elder sister had been married off in a similar manner. The girls in that home kept the start of menstruation a secret since the father associated this to maturity and readiness for marriage. To her father, marrying off Evelyn would revive him from poverty through dowry.

Born in Merikit sub-county in Tororo District, Apalat’s life changed for good in 1997. “In 1997, I was a Primary Five pupil at Merikit Primary School in Tororo District. At the time, Plan International was enrolling children from vulnerable families into the sponsorship programme. “I was lucky to be one of the

children they identified,” she says. Things changed completely from then, through primary and secondary school till when she became a teacher, Evelyn was able to support her other siblings to study. A mother of three, she is also able to support her children study in good schools. “I believe education is the best gift you can give a child,” she says.

“I would never have reached secondary school; maybe I would now be an illiterate married woman and living a miserable life.”

Today, Apalat is not only a teacher but also a businesswoman selling fruits in Tororo town central market. She believes that the best is yet to come. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree in Education at Busitema University and plans to enroll for a Master’s Degree when she completes next year.



## A SCHOLARSHIP TRANSFORMED MY LIFE - LEONARD, THE YOUTHFUL PLUMBER OF MALABA

In 2007, I completed Senior Four, but due to lack of school fees, I got stuck as there was no opportunity for me to continue with my education. I was out of school for a full year. I had lost hope.

Plan International was at the time recruiting orphans and vulnerable children into vocational training courses. Through this organisation, I got a scholarship and trained in plumbing at Benedictine Vocational Training and Production Centre in Tororo Town.

The scholarship came with training in interpersonal and business management skills. I studied for two years and graduated in 2011 with a certificate in plumbing. I started working. In 2015, I enrolled for a diploma course in plumbing, which I completed in 2017. Shortly afterwards, *I started my own company, Leo Technical Services Ltd, through which I provide services to different clients. For example, I was contracted by*



*the Plan International Uganda Field Office in Tororo to do plumbing for its projects.*

I have trained other youth in the community who work with me. Those that I cannot retain in the company, I recommend to other employers. I may not have achieved a lot in life as yet but I have something to show for my training. I built a house for my mother and I am currently building my own house.

*I have also been able to pay school fees for my siblings. One is now a trained tailor; another is a builder and the third joined Uganda Prison Services after completing his studies. All this was possible because Plan International Uganda gave me a chance in life by supporting my education at a vocational training college.”*

I advise young people to be focussed and pursue their dreams. I encourage others to join the youth hubs set up by Plan International in the respective sub counties for vocational training.



## VOCATIONAL TRAINING EARNS CHRISTINE A LIVING

“When my parents divorced, my father wanted to marry me off so he could get money. My father used to drink alcohol and he would meet men there who would tell him to marry me off and get cows. I ran off to a nearby factory in search of work. While there, I met a man who promised to pay for my school fees. I was in Primary six by then. He paid the fees for only two terms. Unfortunately, he made me pregnant and fled from the factory. I could not continue with work so I had to return home to my aging grand mother.

One day, a community volunteer visited my home and later introduced me to Plan

International for support. By then, I had delivered my baby. We were in a very bad condition. Plan International took me back to school and paid my school fees up to senior three and later paid for my vocational skills training in tailoring. On completion of the course, they gave me start-up capital.

While I was studying, the organisation would take care of my child’s basic needs.

I am now able to support myself, my family and I can look after my child. I can make at least UGX5,000 a day. With this we are able to buy food, soap, sugar, sanitary pads and to look after my child. I am also able to run my tailoring business using the savings I make. Life is much better.”



## “OUR EDUCATION SECTOR WAS TRANSFORMED”

I have been working in the education service in Tororo District since 1993 as a teacher, deputy teacher, head teacher and now District Inspector of Schools. I have witnessed the transformation in Education that Plan International Uganda has brought about in Tororo District. Before the organisation started operations in the district, there were lots of problems particularly in terms of infrastructure. The Universal Primary Education policy attracted many learners in schools but we lacked classrooms.

Plan International Uganda constructed classroom blocks, provided teaching and learning materials and sponsorship for children. Today we have more workshops in the villages established by young people who were trained. That has not only provided employment for the youth but restored hope also.

Plan International Uganda introduced the concept of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Tororo District. Today, most Government schools have ECD centres, which are helping our children to learn.

There were high rates girls school dropouts because of lack off facilities to help them during menstruation. Plan International Uganda trained pupils and teachers particularly the Senior women and Senior men in Hygiene Management, counselling and guidance. Girls too were trained in making reusable pads. Consequently, completion rates for girls improved.

We used to have only football clubs in schools but Plan International introduced health clubs that have music, dance and drama, which improved learning for the pupils. The school family initiatives made children begin to feel that schools were a home away from home. Parents were also trained in the value of taking both girls and boys to school. The stereotype that girls are a source of wealth has ceased.

The Child Protection Committees introduced and trained by the organisation are very instrumental in keeping girls in schools because they are able to follow up cases in the community.

Plan International Uganda may be phasing out its operations in the District, but we are remaining with the skills. They are not taking away the classroom blocks, water tanks or boreholes either. Their impact here is sustainable and we are very grateful for their contribution to this district.

**TABU DENIS FRANCIS**  
DISTRICT INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS



## QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

### “IT WAS THE FIRST ECD CENTRE IN OUR COMMUNITY”

“Parents in our community were reluctant to take their children to school; they would wait until the child is six years old. Plan International Uganda came and sensitized us about the importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD). They urged us to form parenting groups, and to construct an ECD centre.


We mobilized local construction materials such as bricks while the organisation provided the cement and roofing materials. They also trained and equipped us with skills in making indoor and outdoor playing materials for children, and introduced us to positive parenting practices. The change has been tremendous. When the centre was opened in 2019, it had 100 children. Today, we have 250 children.

At the centre, the children are provided with porridge, they acquire language skills and learn how to socialise. We ensure that our children are healthy. The parents contribute towards their meals. Each parent brings three kilogrammes of maize flour and half a kilogram of sugar per term.

We instituted a Management Committee that is responsible for the smooth-running of the centre. We continue to mobilize parents and to sensitize them on the importance of ECD. The community has committed to continue supporting the centre even after Plan International has wound up operations in the District.”

**REGINA AYOO,  
CARETAKER, GWARAGWARA ECD CENTRE**

*“Early learning was supported through 67 ECD centres established either through construction or renovation, training and placement of caregivers, provision of learning and instructional materials, dialogue with parents and guardians, which has improved learning outcomes for children”*



## MATERNAL, NEWBORN AND CHILD HEALTH AND ADOLESCENT SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

### “OUR POST TEST CLUB HAS INSPIRED US TO LIVE POSITIVELY”

Joyce Achipa and her colleagues at Kwapa Post Test Club owe their positive living to Plan International Uganda. They are persons who undertake HIV testing and regardless of the results, come together to share lived experiences and to support each other.

At the peak of HIV infections in Tororo district in the 1990s, Plan International Uganda, through its Health Programme interventions in the district, founded a post-test club for persons Living with HIV to address issues of stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. *“People laughed at us, denied us services and basically avoided being near us,” recalls Achipa. “One time at school during a parents’ meeting, some parents said I was a problem to the school because I was sickly and their children were missing learning. Because of my absentism, I had a restaurant and the community dissuaded people from eating at my restaurant. They would say, ‘don’t eat at her restaurant or else you will contract HIV.’”*

Plan International Uganda and other NGOs such as TASO working in the district intervened and sensitized the community about stigma and discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS. The community was mobilized into care groups

where positive living persons could share their experiences, and those who were negative would get critical information on prevention of contracting the virus. That’s how Kwapa Post Test Club was formed.

I eventually became the Chairperson of the Club. The members were trained in positive living, memory writing, will writing, and equipped with business and entrepreneurial skills. The club built a shelter with support from Plan International Uganda where members routinely converge.

*“We were trained by Plan International Uganda and with that knowledge, we went out to the community and sensitized others, and because of that, many lives were saved, and many joined the club.”*

Today, I can speak out in public without fear. Because of the business skills I got, I was able to build myself a house and rentals that generate income. My colleagues in the club are doing well too. Everything that we are is because of Plan International Uganda and TASO. Had it not been for these organisations we would be dead by now,” says Achipa.

TEST

CLUB



*“I follow up on immunization schedules, routine HIV counselling and testing, ensuring families are preventing Malaria and have kitchen gardens for healthy meals. Plan International Uganda’s Community-Led Total Sanitation programme has achieved 100% of its targets in the community.”*

## OMALLA, THE VILLAGE HEALTH TEAM MEMBER, ENSURES THAT HIS COMMUNITY IS HEALTHY

Omalla’s belief in community wellness remains undisputed. “I mobilize communities for proper sanitation and hygiene at household level; I encourage communities to see to it that they have hand washing facilities, latrines, bath shelters, as well as clean kitchens and sleeping areas,” says Daniel Omalla, a Village Health Team (VHT) member of Kisoko Sub County. Omalla also helps to refer patients to the health centres, especially expectant mothers and little children for better management.

“One time I rescued a pregnant woman who could barely walk and it was later discovered that was pregnant with twins. It was the weight of the babies that made it difficult for her to walk,” he recalls. “If I had not gone to that household, that mother, may be, would have had a challenge during labour. I guided her through the referral pathways and she was able to deliver from hospital successfully.”

Omalla’s intensive training with Plan International Uganda has made him a



**1675 VHTS  
TRAINED IN 335  
VILLAGES**

popular VHT for children’s health related issues in his community. “I do not treat; I simply make sure that they find help in time,” he explains. “I look at the child’s condition, and if he/she looks very ill, I refer them immediately to get health services because if I don’t, the child could easily die.

“Every household has a latrine, dustbins, drying racks, bath shelters and even now, if a person realizes that their latrine is getting full, they make sure they dig another,” Omalla explains. “I lead by example; I had a grass-thatched latrine but now I have a VIP latrine, a concept that I got through training.”

Omalla is sure everything would be fine even when the operations of Plan International Uganda phase out of the district; the communities are empowered enough to carry on with the good hygiene and health practices.



# COMMUNITY BASED WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

## NO MORE STEREOTYPES OF PERIODS AT ACHILLET PRIMARY SCHOOL.

For years Lovinsa Wankya has been a Senior Woman teacher at Achillet primary school her continuous engagement with the children on issues of menstrual hygiene management has made pupils appreciate that “periods are normal in a body development process. It all started when Lovinsa saw how dire the situation was for girls during their periods.

“The boys would laugh at girls during their periods and even draw spots of blood on the black board,” Lovinsa says. When Plan International Uganda visited her school and suggested that a club be started to influence behavioural change.

First, the school began by battling the stereotypes that informed the bullying of girls during their periods.

Instead of mocking the girls, she told the boys to encourage them to come to school even during their periods. “They apologized and now they are so actively involved that they actually assist any girl who accidentally soils her dress by looking for a *lesu* (shawl),” Wanya says.

### REUSABLE PADS KEEP GIRLS IN SCHOOL

To support the girls’ uninterrupted learning, Plan International Uganda introduced the making of reusable sanitary pads in Archilet Primary School. The boys too joined in. “Some do it even better than the girls, and do even remind me when it’s the day to make the pads (Wednesdays),” says Lovinsa. She adds that with this initiative, the school has experienced improved performance of girls and enrolment because they no longer miss classes during their periods.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF WASH PROGRAMME ACHIEVEMENTS

**76 BOREHOLES DRILLED**

**09 SPRING WELLS PROTECTED**

**13 WATER TANKS INSTALLED**

**01 SHALLOW WELL DUG**

## **LATRINE CONSTRUCTION**

Lovinsa says that originally, there were no proper facilities to cater for girls in menstruation but the organisation supported to construct proper latrines for both boys and girls, plus an incinerator. The private bathrooms and changing rooms have enabled the girls to maintain hygiene during their periods.

Before the new facilities were constructed, girls would share pit latrines with boys and teachers. This made many girls avoid school during their periods. Some girls never returned to school completely after suffering embarrassment coupled with the inconvenience of shared toilets.

“I would not go to the toilet because I feared that boys or teachers would see me in that state and then go back and talk about me,” says Kevin, one of the pupils, at the school.

**BOREHOLE IS THE MOST UTILISED SOURCE OF CLEAN WATER USED BY 83% OF THE POPULATION**

## **MHM EFFORTS SCALED UP TO OTHER SCHOOLS**

Teacher Wankya has gone on to recruit and train fellow teachers in nearby schools and the community in Menstrual Hygiene Management. Some parents are using this initiative to earn income by making and selling the reusable pads and educating their children.

## **PARENTS GET INVOLVED**

Plan International Uganda has also ensured that parents are involved in menstruation hygiene practices by actively making sanitary pads, and, unlike before, by talking to their children about menstruation. This has helped address many stereotypes surrounding periods



## “NOW I KNOW THAT MY DRESS IS ALWAYS DRY”

“My name is Kevin Awori, I am a member of a school club that was started by Teacher Lovisa Audrey. In the club, we hold so many conversations, but the priority is understanding body changes, influencing behavioural change and discouraging us from early marriages.

“Before the club started, many girls didn’t know anything about menstruation. My first periods were a nightmare. I stained my dress; I was frightened, no one had prepared me for that day. My classmates laughed; all of them - boys and girls. I wanted to abandon school, never to return.

“Quickly, I wrapped a sweater around my waist and ran to the bathroom with my friend, Susan right behind me. We called the Senior woman teacher, who told us about menstruation. We later shared the information with the school club.

*“I have been equipped with knowledge about menstruation and how to make reusable pads. Today, I am confident and comfortable in class because I know that when I get off my seat, my dress is okay. I have also taught my sister and friends how to make reusable pads at home.”*



## BOYS SUPPORT GIRLS DURING PERIODS

When he saw a blood-stained uniform of a certain girl at school, Atanas knew that he didn't want anything do with it, he was convinced that menstruation was a disease that attacks girls. After joining the MHM, he learnt that actually periods are normal.

While the young girls were being taught Menstrual Hygiene Management, boys like 13-year-old Atanas were reminded to be supportive.

"The club teaches us about menstruation and respecting girls in their periods," says Atanas. Since he is one of the champions of

no-bullying against menstruation initiative, he has taken on the role of ensuring that fellow boys understand this.

**"Girls are human beings and menstruation is not a disease. We can work together with them even when they are in their periods," he explains.**

Atanas says while he is at home, he continues talking to the boys and girls in the village about issues to do with body changes. "I am able to direct a girl in case she needs help. At school and home, I support in the cleaning of bathrooms to ensure proper hygiene." says Atanas.



## “WE NO LONGER WALK LONG DISTANCES FOR WATER”

Harriet Esakina, a community leader in Morukatipe Parish, Osukuru Sub County, says that her community has benefited a lot from the construction of a community borehole by Plan International Uganda.

“We used to walk long distances and still get very dirty water from the neighbouring village well. “This also used to cause domestic violence in families. You would go in the morning and return in the afternoon because you have been waiting for the owners of the well to fetch first, even if they are 100. My husband would get suspicious. “No, no; this time it can’t be only fetching water. Where have you been all this time?” says Harriet, adding that sometimes she would want to hide away from her husband.

Our girls too faced many risks walking long distances to fetch water. Some would be raped or get beaten up by unknown

people on the way. The dirty water, used to cause children skin rashes. Whenever we took them to the clinic, the health workers recommended that we buy skin ointments yet many of us did not have money. The children also used to have diarrhoea.

But from the time the borehole was constructed in the community, Harriet says they have been living together as a happy community. “Domestic violence has reduced tremendously. We have clean water for bathing, drinking and cooking. Our children are healthier.

Diarrhoea reduced and children no longer have skin diseases. Life is not hard at all now. I don’t know how to express it, but I am happy,” says Harriet with a wide grin.

**HARRIET ESAKINA**  
COMMUNITY LEADER, MORUKATIPE PARISH,  
OSUKURU SUB COUNTY

A young girl in a white school shirt and maroon skirt is smiling broadly as she fills a yellow plastic water container at a public water tap. The tap is made of metal and has a clear plastic pipe leading to the container. The background is a bright, slightly blurred outdoor setting.

**“OUR CHILDREN NO LONGER SKIP CLASSES OVER COLLECTING WATER”**

“School dropouts have drastically reduced as children do not have to walk long distances to get water. They instead go to school early. Also, they do not have to skip classes because of having to collect water over long distances. Girls used to be lured into sexual relationships, which caused child marriages and teenage pregnancies. That has reduced because we have a borehole in the community. Today, our children are learning well, thanks to the work done by Plan International Uganda.”

**GAJETAN EMOJONG**  
CHAIRMAN LC1, MORUKATIPE VILLAGE



## **A SCHOOL BOREHOLE IMPROVED GIRLS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

“We are very grateful for the borehole Plan International Uganda constructed at our school. It has simplified our work as a school. The girls are able to get water for cooking and bathing as the school has a boarding section. Water from the borehole has also made it easier for the girls to maintain proper hygiene during their menstruation periods. They can bathe, change their clothes and go back to class for their lessons. Access to clean water has reduced absenteeism among girls during their periods as well,” Fred Malimbe.

**FRED MALIMBE**  
**DEPUTY HEADTEACHER KISOKO GIRLS PRIMARY SCHOOL**



## “OUR SCHOOL STRUCTURES GOT A FACELIFT”

“As the School Management Committee, we oversee the proper running of the school including its finances. We monitor how the school is managed and advise accordingly. We also lobby for the school. Our school was in a sorry state. The buildings were dilapidated, and because it did not have changing rooms girls used to be absent during their periods or completely drop out of school. Plan International Uganda helped to refurbish the classroom blocks and build latrines, washrooms and changing rooms for the girls and the boys. Since then, the change has been phenomenal. Today,



the school looks really nice. Everybody appreciates what has been achieved. People from other communities admire our school.”

Plan International Uganda donated animals - both cows and goats - that provide milk for both the pupils and the teachers. The teachers teach well and are friendly. The environment is good for learning. As a community, we are happy”

**SAM**

**CHAIRPERSON, APOKOR PRIMARY SCHOOL - MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.**



## NO MORE QUEUEING AT THE TOILET

“My name is Betty, a Primary Six pupil at Apokor Primary School. Before Plan International Uganda built for us latrines, we used to wait in long ques to use the toilet. The two toilets were used by boys, girls and teachers. And because we could

not clean ourselves well during our periods, the boys would laugh at us. We felt bad. Today, we have washrooms where we can change pads. The school also supplies us with sanitary pads. We feel nice and are able to learn better.”

A portrait of Susan Alamai, a woman with short dreadlocks and glasses, wearing a plaid shirt. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

## STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Collaborating with government and civil society organisations on strengthening community and national child protections systems, particularly addressing harmful gender based and cultural norms as well as the protection of issues of marginalized groups.

### CHILD RECEPTION CENTRE SUPPORTS ABANDONED CHILDREN IN THE DISTRICT

I am the Senior Probation and Social Protection Officer for Tororo District, and I have been carrying out this role for close to 20 years. The mandate of my department is to take care of the wellbeing and social protection of children.

Before Plan International Uganda started operations in Tororo District, there were many cases of abuse and abandonment of children in the community. The organisation supported the construction of the district child protection facility to ensure privacy and protection of children's rights. This is important because the Government recommended closure of unregistered

homes so this facility accommodates abandoned children who would otherwise have nowhere to stay.

The organisation established community structures such as the children wellbeing committees, trained volunteers who respond to and prevent violation of children's rights. Plan supplied motorcycles that are used for community monitoring. They also supported the District to pass the first ordinances on child protection. This has helped to address child abuse in the District. The organisation's sponsorship programme also enrolled many children in schools.

**SUSAN ALAMAI**

## CSO PARTNERSHIPS AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS

09 Health centres constructed

18 Latrine stances in Health Centres



### A VOTE OF THANKS:

#### Conversation with Tororo DHO

*Dr. Connie Bwire is the current District Health Officer of Tororo District. She shares her experience in the Health sector.*

“Plan International Uganda has worked in this district for over 27 years,” she says. “And we have always said they would leave a great legacy in Tororo District.”

We are grateful for how the Village Health Trainers (VHTs) program supported by Plan International Uganda helped to reduce congestion at health centres by reaching out to people at the community level. “Plan trained them in the management of the three conditions of high prevalence among children in the district - Malaria, Diarrhoea and cough - and procured for us rapid diagnostic test equipment,” she narrates.

Bwire commends Plan International Uganda for its interventions targeting the youth, who are the majority in the district. “They supported us in the area of producing information, education and communication materials and promotional activities for positive behavioural change, and training. The adolescent health friendly programmes such as youth friendly corners and training of health workers were first introduced in the district by Plan International Uganda,” Bwire explains.

In addition, the organisation contributed towards improving maternal healthcare services in the district by providing ambulances to transport mothers in labour to health centres, and training Health management committees in the villages.

Bwire adds that Plan International Uganda has spearheaded other health promotional activities in the district such as health camps and out reaches that helped to inform positive behavioural change that enhanced the fight against malaria and HIV/AIDS.

“It was Plan International Uganda that initiated interventions in the areas of HIV prevention and care in Tororo, “In fact, one of our health centres became a model facility in the prevention of mother-to-child-transmission of HIV in Uganda,” says Bwire.

And just recently, Plan International Uganda intervened to deal with the panic that defined the outbreak of the COVID-19 in Uganda health workers in the district were wary about managing the deadly virus.

“Plan International Uganda supported us in the initial training of health workers; they trained medical teams in case management. They also supported us with personal protective equipment such as gloves and sanitizer” says Bwire.

**DR. CONNIE BWIRE**  
TORORO DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICER



## PLAN INTERNATIONAL UGANDA DEVELOPMENT MODELS SCALED UP

I am the Assistant Chief Administrative Officer for Tororo District, in charge of NGOs. I started working with the Tororo District Local Government in December 2002. I have good knowledge of what NGOs do in the district. At the time Plan International Uganda started operations in Tororo, poverty levels in the district were high, literacy levels were low and there were no proper hygiene facilities, which affected girls' school attendance especially during their periods

The uptake of family planning services was low and total fertility rate was high, at seven children per woman. HIV prevalence was high, health centres were few and not well equipped, and child rights abuse was high. While Government was trying to address the problems, the resource envelope was small. Plan International Uganda intervened by recruiting volunteers to enrol children into their sponsorship programme, constructed schools because children were studying under trees and procured furniture because children were sitting on the ground. Then they championed participatory learning and capacity building of school management committees and built capacity of community structures such as Community Development Committees and trained volunteers to handle child protection matters, which models have been scaled up by Government.

The organisation contributed to improving healthcare services such as antenatal and family planning services, building of health centres, HIV testing and prevention of mother to child transmission reduced from around 19% to 4%. They introduced community-led total sanitation approaches that triggered good sanitation and hygiene practices. Today, most schools have boreholes in addition water harvesting facilities.

Nutrition was another problem. Most children were stunted. Plan International Uganda intervened by training farmers in growing nutritious food, which improved household income and food security. This was followed with village saving and credit schemes where mothers would borrow money and start businesses.

Tororo is one of the largest districts in the country with a population of nearly 700,000, majority of whom are young people. Plan International Uganda constructed the only youth centre in the district.

**JACKSON OSUDO**

**ASSISTANT CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, TORORO DISTRICT**



## **“THE IMPACT WILL LAST FOR GENERATIONS”**

Plan International Uganda has trained people in human rights. Today, people know their rights. For instance, when one suffers domestic violence, they know where to report and follow up cases.

The organisation has supported the District in building classroom blocks and health centres, and the construction of staff houses for teachers and health workers. This

infrastructure will last for generations. As a district, we do not have enough revenue to run government programmes and provide social services.

Plan International Uganda also enrolled children into formal and vocational training after which they are given start-up tools such as sewing machines. They have also boosted household incomes by training people in good agricultural practices.

**OKEJI JOHN**  
**TORORO DISTRICT CHAIRPERSON**

## BUILT SYSTEMS TO OPERATE SUSTAINABLY

*During our operations in Tororo District, we partnered with Civil Society Organisations to accelerate development in the District. One such organisation is the Foundation for Open Development (FOD), a local Non-Government Organisation implementing the Niyetu Youth Social Empowerment Project II.*



The five-year project, funded by the Swedish Government, targets youth aged 10-24 years. FOD empowers young people through peer education on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights.

These Champions of Change then reach out to their communities and engage key stakeholders such as cultural leaders to cause social change on critical issues like negative cultural norms that lead to early marriages. Through the model parent approach, however, the project sensitizes parents to ensure that girls make informed decisions about when to get married and after completing school. The project uses drama to convey positive behavioural change messages.

A lot has been achieved through the partnership with FOD on Niyetu project. The youth have built capacity in life skills such as hairdressing, tailoring and making reusable sanitary pads, as well as shoe-making, among others. The project has distributed menstrual hygiene management kits to girls as a way of keeping them in school. There has been community empowerment on preventing gender based violence, focusing on sensitizing the youth and the general community on referral pathways.

There is also a noticeable change in livelihood of young people. The youth have formed groups and, in partnership with Equity Bank, have been trained in financial literacy. They have been provided with start-up capital for their businesses, which has improved their livelihoods tremendously.

Mr. Peter Ekiikina, Executive Director of Foundation for Open Development, says that the partnership with Plan International Uganda has given the organisation a good foundation to operate sustainably even when the organisation phases out operations in the district.

*“Working in partnership with Plan International Uganda has enabled us to gain knowledge and skills in grants and financial management among other areas. We are able to write grant-winning proposals. In addition, FOD has put up policies for sustainability and a strategic plan too.*”

Plan International Uganda has built FOD’s capacity to the extent that the organisation was able to acquire other partners. “Because of Plan International Uganda and the systems that we have put in place, we got into a partnership with GIZ to co-implement a governance project focusing on building community accountability mechanisms.

**PETER EKIIKINA**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FOUNDATION FOR OPEN DEVELOPMENT**



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