



CECI UGANDA
Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FOR CREATIVE INNOVATION - CECI UGANDA

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ACRONYMS

CECI:	Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation
ECD:	Early Childhood Development
RLO:	Refugee Led Organization
UGX:	Ugandan Shillings
PWDS:	Persons with Disabilities
AEP:	Accelerated Education Program
CEC:	Community Education Committees
CBO:	Community Based Organization
MHPSS:	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
YEC:	Youth Education Club
RWC:	Refugee Welfare Council
GBV:	Gender Based Violence
VSLA:	Village Saving and Loan Associations
GALS:	Gender Action Learning Systems
STEM:	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
M2M:	Mother-to-Mother
UCE:	Uganda Certificate of Education
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
UNEB:	Uganda National Examinations Board
CTEN:	Community Technology Empowerment Network

FOREWORD FROM OUR FOUNDER & BOARD CHAIR



Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

As I share CECI Uganda's 2024 Annual Report with you, I am both proud and deeply grateful for the remarkable gains we achieved together toward our shared vision of empowered, peaceful, and self-reliant communities. 2024 was marked by shortfalls in livelihood funding and cuts to food assistance that deepened food insecurity among refugee households and limited access to education and income opportunities, especially for youth and women. Our mission is therefore more urgent than ever, and your support more invaluable than ever.

Thanks to you, we continued to stand with youth, children, women and girls, and persons with disabilities as partners in their empowerment, education, and protection. Across Yumbe, Koboko, and Obongi, women acquired skills, accessed capital, started micro-enterprises, and stepped into decision-making spaces. Teenage mothers and youth continued their education through scholarships, accelerated education programs, and vocational skilling. Our early childhood development programs saw parents and caregivers collaborate more closely to improve learning outcomes at home and in classrooms. In addition, our environmental programs saw more people engaged in planting and conserving

trees, as well as raising awareness about their conservation in households and communities. Our efforts received three Best RLO/CBO awards from CTEN, supported by UNHCR, for quality service delivery in education, protection, food security, and environment. We also launched our 2025–2029 Strategic Plan, registered CECI Uganda as a regional NGO, and fully equipped our field offices in Yumbe and Obongi to improve service delivery and expand our reach.

The milestones we achieved this year were only possible because of you, our generous supporters, trusted partners, and committed staff, interns, volunteers, board members, and community champions. We hope you continue to trust and invest in Refugee-led Organizations like CECI Uganda so we can stay agile and responsive when it matters most. Your continued support empowers refugees and host communities to live in peace and become more resilient through access to education and clean energy, strengthened livelihoods and food security, and improved safety, wellbeing, and peaceful coexistence.

With gratitude,

Patrick Chandiga Justine Abure
Founder & Board Chair, CECI Uganda

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In 2024, we continued to innovate, pilot, and scale up local solutions that center communities and their needs, while empowering them to take on lead roles in preventing violent conflict and reducing poverty. We directly reached 11,056 people from refugee and host communities across Yumbe, Koboko, and Obongi. Our efforts expanded access to education, improved livelihoods, enhanced environmental conservation, and strengthened refugee leadership and peacebuilding.

Improving Livelihoods and Access to Education

We supported 235 out-of-school youth, including teenage mothers, in continuing their education. We mobilized 1,825 parents, caregivers, and guardians to enroll girls in school, raising the share of girls enrolled by 2.5% among 7,932 students. We also empowered 173 women and youth with employable non-formal skills and trades, with 90% now employed or self-employed.

Advancing Environmental Conservation

We engaged 720 people in Shea trees conservation, grew 5,000 Shea tree seedlings, and distributed 3,000 to 150 households. We provided tools to 200 environmental champions and trained 30 women in Shea-nut harvesting and production of Shea-butter soaps and cosmetics, which are now packaged and sold locally.

Enhancing Safety, Wellbeing, and Peace

We trained 151 local peacebuilders in gender-transformative leadership and peacebuilding, with 41 women elected to leadership positions. Our grants to them supported dialogues and awareness-raising initiatives that educated 6,201 people on GBV, conflict prevention, and women's participation.

In 2024, we implemented 9 projects with our partners, including OXFAM, UNHCR, War Child Canada, Welcome Sesame, Global Whole Being Fund, Mastercard Foundation, r0g Agency, Civ Fund, and the Children's Rights and Violence Prevention Fund. We invested UGX 1.02 billion in locally led solutions. Our organizational income grew significantly, increasing from UGX 723 million in 2023 to UGX 1.45 billion in 2024, reflecting our strengthened fundraising capacity and partner confidence.

With your sustained support, we can continue to expand access to education, improve food security, promote peace, conserve the environment, and enhance access to clean energy. We invite all who share our vision to support our efforts.

In Community,

Benson Khemis Soro Lako

Executive Director, CECI Uganda

OUR IMPACT AT GLANCE



11,056

people served,
including 5,601 women
and girls, 264 PWDs,
and 5,824 refugees.



235

teenage mothers and
out-of-school youth
enrolled in school on
full AEP scholarships.



5,000

shea tree seedlings
raised, with 3000
planted, and 2000 more
ready for planting.



1,825

parents, guardians, and
caregivers mobilized
to enroll girls in school
through 20 campaigns.



173

women and youth
trained in employable
non-formal skills and
trades.



6,921

people educated to lead
GBV awareness, conflict
prevention, shea trees
conservation, and
women participation.

COMMUNITY VOICES



NEEMA

"After I sat PLE in 2013, I should have finished S4 in 2017, but my parents couldn't afford the school fees, so I dropped out and married. In 2023, I enrolled in CECI's fully funded Accelerated Education Program (Level II) at Padrombu Secondary School to continue my studies. I have now sat UCE and secured a job with World Vision Uganda. I now encourage other young mothers and girls in my community to enroll and continue their education." Neema is an AEP graduate and refugee from DRC.

ANNET

"CECI's cash grant to our women's group gave me the capital I needed to buy a tailoring machine, allowing me to start sewing and selling clothes in my village. My shop now provides affordable services close to home, and the income is stable. I pay school fees for my two brothers' children, my sister's child, and my own. I feel proud that I can contribute to my family in this way." — Annet, member of United Women Group, Bidibidi Refugee Settlement.



GLORIA

"After CECI trained our Mother-to-Mother group, I used the skills learned to speak up against a forced marriage between two 14-year-olds in Primary Five in my village. I referred the matter to the school and local child-protection unit and together negotiated for the girl to return to her family. As a result, the children are now back in school, and both sets of parents received counseling. I continue to speak up in my community against early and forced marriage." — Gloria, Lobule Refugee Settlement

ANGAIKA

"Since the family workshops, I sit with my children every evening to use the Child Album and practice sheets. With my help, their writing and speaking have really improved. They now write short sentences and read them aloud, which brings me so much joy." — Angaika, mother of an ECD learner and family workshop participant from Lobule Refugee Settlement.



ABOUT CECI UGANDA

Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation (CECI Uganda) is a refugee-led, regional non-governmental organization founded in May 2017 to prevent violent conflicts and alleviate poverty, fostering peaceful coexistence and self-reliance in refugee and host communities.

CECI was founded by Patrick Chandiga Justine Abure, who was displaced from Yei, South Sudan, in 2016, due to war, making him the third generation in his family to experience forced migration. His lived experiences of educational deprivation, child labor, hate speech, ethnic discrimination, and violence have deeply shaped CECI's commitment to locally-led innovations in peacebuilding, education, livelihood, and environmental protection.

CECI empowers youth, women, and girls to prevent violent conflicts, build resilience, rebuild livelihoods, and actively participate in development. Guided by our core values of professionalism, teamwork, honesty, commitment, personal development, accountability, and transparency, CECI is committed to creating sustainable solutions that are driven by local needs and local communities.

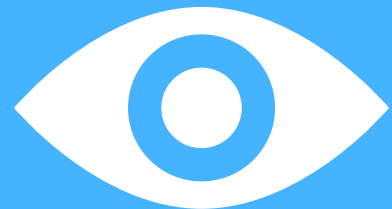
MISSION

To promote peace, self-reliance, and dignity through recreational activities, education, and other innovations, going beyond relief and development.



VISION

An Empowered, Peaceful and Self-reliant community.



PEACEBUILDING

CECI Uganda strengthens the capacity and role of youth and women in preventing and resolving conflict to promote peaceful resolution of disputes, reconcile communities, foster peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.



LIVELIHOOD

CECI Uganda builds skills that support development and peace, build resilience, and increase employability among youth and women in both refugee and host communities.



THEMATIC AREAS

EDUCATION

CECI Uganda improves access to formal and informal education for children, youth, women, and girls to promote positive development.



ENVIRONMENT

CECI Uganda promotes adoption of clean energy solutions and engages youth and women in community-led environmental conservation and climate action in refugee and host communities.







STRENGTHENING PATHWAYS TO DIGNIFIED WORK



40

youth & teenage mothers finished 3-month vocational training, all passed DIT assessments.



36

youth and teenage mothers now employed or self-employed out of 40.



40

graduates received complete start-up kits matched to their trades.



30

days apprenticeships completed across 12 centres by 40 trainees.

We trained 40 teenage mothers and vulnerable youth (16 male, 24 female) from refugee and host communities in Koboko in employable non-formal skills and trades. Over three months, they trained in tailoring and garment cutting, salon and hairdressing, motor vehicle and motorcycle mechanics, electrical installation, and catering at Koboko Technical Institute and Purenita Vocational and Skills Center. They also received career guidance and training in mindset change, business skills, financial literacy, and life skills, building the skills, knowledge, and confidence to start and manage their own businesses and improve livelihoods and household income. After all trainees passed their Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) assessments and completed an

additional one-month apprenticeship in their chosen trade across 12 pre-assessed apprenticeship centers, we provided each graduate with a complete start-up kit to support transition into self-employment and entrepreneurship. “After the training, I opened a small tailoring stall with my startup kit. Now I sew school uniforms and do repairs every week, and from this income I buy food, pay rent, and save for my two children’s school supplies,” said Ropani Sunday, a 19-year-old refugee and single mother. Post-training follow-up shows 36 out of 40 trained teenage mothers and youth are self-employed, earning income, supporting their families, and mentoring others in their communities.



MOBILIZING COMMUNITIES TO KEEP GIRLS IN SCHOOL



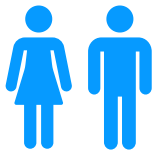
585

people engaged through 10 enrolment campaigns across 5 schools.



42.3%

total share of enrollment for girls rose to 42.3% from 39.8% in 2023.



48

key influencers trained to drive gender-responsive education.



28

FGDs with 264 stakeholders led 5 schools to adopt revenue plans.

Our 10 enrollment campaigns across 5 primary and secondary schools in Obongi and Yumbe directly engaged 585 community members, learners, teachers, parents, and local leaders, including 369 refugees, 251 women, and 22 PWDs. The campaigns raised awareness about girl child education and promoted parent and community support for education to increase enrolment, retention, and completion rates, especially among young female learners.

As part of these campaigns, we also identified and trained 40 (11 female, 28 male) key influencers, such as religious, cultural, opinion, civil, and political leaders, as champions of gender-responsive education in these districts. They are currently championing access to sanitary towels, stationery materials, career guidance and counseling, and sex education as key to keeping adolescent girls in school. We followed these campaigns with a consultative dialogue and 28 FGDs with 264 parents, learners, teachers, local leaders, key influencers, and members of school management, including

177 refugees, 130 women, and 20 PWDs. Participants identified barriers to school enrollment, retention, attendance, and completion that girls face. As a result, more parents, teachers, and local leaders are now raising awareness in their own communities against violence against women and girls (VAWG), child labour, cultural biases, and other barriers keeping girls out of school through radio talk shows and community dialogues.

Also, 5 schools developed actionable business plans for increasing revenue through farming, event management, and other income-generating activities, so as to hire more teachers, lower the high teacher-learner ratio (as high as 1:150 in many classes), and improve learning outcomes for girls and boys. As of December 2024, the total share of enrollment for girls rose to 42.3% from 39.8% in 2023 across Chinyi, Ewafa, and Rockland Primary Schools, and Highland and Yoyo Secondary Schools, improving the Girls-to-Boys Index from 0.66 to 0.73, within a total student population of 7,932.

FACILITATING WOMEN LEADING CHANGE



107

women trained and mentored, with 41 elected to leadership roles to serve for 2 years.



219

women from 10 villages sensitized on GBV, peace, and leadership through 8 awareness sessions.

We facilitated 10 women from 8 villages to participate in 6 Inter-Agency protection meetings in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement (Zone 3) and the host community of Kululu Sub-County. They raised urgent safety concerns, including harassment by male youth and attacks on market routes, that led to action, with 1 attempted rape case now in court. We also trained 47 new members of the Women and Girls' Forum on gender transformative leadership, human rights, and

peacebuilding, bringing the total membership to 107 (75 refugees and 15 nationals). Through training and mentorship, women gained confidence and leadership skills, with 41 elected to leadership roles in their communities, where they will serve for the next two years from 2024. Out of 114 women elected across Zone 3 into Refugee Welfare Councils I–III, 21 are our trainees and mentees from the Women and Girls' Fora, and 29 others were elected into Neighbourhood Watch.

Our funding for the fora's quarterly planning meetings enabled women to identify concerns and to design and lead 8 awareness sessions on GBV prevention, peaceful coexistence, and women's participation. The sessions sensitized 219 people (191 refugees, 142 women) from 10 villages, and improved case handling. As a result, 5 GBV cases were resolved at the community level, and 3 were referred to IRC. In addition, our focused mentorship session for 47 refugee and host women helped them articulate their voices and strategies for influencing local decisions. In turn, 46 of them received support from CECI to participate in

the 16 Days of Activism against GBV, International Women's Day, World Refugee Day, International Youth Day, and International Day of Peace, where they utilized drama and dialogue to promote women's rights and peace, reaching 3,600 people (2160 women and girls and 2000 refugees). "Because of the ongoing training, mentorship, and funding from CECI, we now have visible, confident, and collaborative women's networks that play an active role in local governance, protection, and peace," said Faiza Caesar, member of the Women and Girls' Forum.

“

**... we now have visible, confident,
and collaborative women's
networks that play an active role
in local governance, protection,
and peace.**

”



FUNDING WOMEN-LED PEACEBUILDING



DOCUMENTARY

Refugee-led women's groups leading inclusive, locally-driven peaceful co-existence solutions.
<https://youtu.be/DRvFwH1633I>

We sub-granted UGX 35,000,000 (UGX 7,000,000 per group) to 5 women-led VSLA groups and CBOs in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, selected from 63 applicants. Comprising 118 members (105 refugees and 13 nationals), these groups opened bank accounts with Centenary Bank, and their leaders received training in group dynamics, management, safe and responsible use of funds, and basic financial/narrative reporting. Their regular savings meetings also served as forums to discuss women's participation and as self-help mechanisms for women's economic development. With the grants, women organized 6 community sessions on proper waste management and prevention of GBV, child abuse, domestic violence, and teenage pregnancies, using drama and dialogue to inform 1,797 people, including 681 women and 1,357 refugees.



35M

Ugandan shillings sub-granted to 5 women-led VSLAs/CBOs selected from 63 applicants.



20

teenage mothers trained and seed-financed via VSLA loans to start micro-enterprises.



1,797

people informed on proper waste management and prevention of GBV, child abuse, and teenage pregnancy.

They trained 20 teenage mothers in liquid soap making, catering, tailoring, and general merchandise, and lent them start-up capital through VSLAs to launch small enterprises. Through this lending, the five groups have collectively saved over UGX 30,000,000 in 12 months. Many members, including teenage mothers, now report increased earnings and the ability to contribute to their households.

Selection was conducted via field verification and a feedback session with all applicants by a joint committee (OPM, Sub-County, Oxfam, CECI), resulting in awards to Women Rising (Village 2), Women on the Move (Village 9), Grace VSLA (Village 5), Women Movement (Village 13), and United Women and Girls (Village 12).

BUILDING SKILLS OF AEP LEARNERS IN SOAP-MAKING



83

learners from 2 secondary schools were trained in bar soap making, including 30 girls and 10 refugees.

“... students I spoke with felt prepared to make bar soaps for sale during holidays to raise pocket money and other scholastic items they need.”



We trained 83 learners, including 30 girls, 10 refugees, and 75 AEP learners from levels I-II, from Padrombo and Millennium secondary schools, in bar soap making, at the request of these schools. Under the supervision of an expert trainer, students learned to mix chemicals and other materials to produce bar soap and, by the end of the training, had made more than 7 bars ready for use.

“A lot of the students I spoke with felt prepared to make bar soaps for sale during holidays to raise pocket money and other scholastic items they need,” said Data Alfred, Trainer. Mugisha Wickliffe, an AEP teacher at Padrombu, added, “I feel this training has given these learners skills they can use to rely more on themselves and less on their parents, guardians, or spouses.”

This training was part of a STEM project identified by AEP learners and their teachers, members of two STEM clubs we formed in Koboko in 2023, with a total of 40 members.



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN CONSERVING SHEA NUT TREES



5000

shea seedlings raised, with 3000 planted, and 2000 more ready.



320

people mobilized to lead conservation of shea trees, with help of 10 education sessions.



400

people ran a 5/10 km marathon commemorating International Shea Day.



30

women trained in shea-nut harvesting and value addition, and 10 groups of 300 women formed, with 1 now a funded CBO.

With Save the Shea Nut Movement, we mobilized Yumbe communities to protect and regenerate shea trees while strengthening women's leadership and livelihoods. Through 10 community education sessions, dialogues, field visits, and live demos across Kei, Midigo, Wandu, and Kochi, we reached 320 people, including 300 women and girls, as well as local and cultural leaders, and formed 10 women groups, each made up of 30 members, to lead conservation in their villages. One group registered as a CBO and received a UGX 2,005,000 grant to grow a shea-products business, making shea-butter soaps and cosmetics that are now packaged and sold locally. And 30 members planted 3,000 shea seedlings in their gardens, and 2,000 more are ready in our nursery beds for planting in 2025. Also, 30 women were trained in proper harvesting, drying, storage, and value addition, where they produced shea-based soap, a low-cost, practical product they can make and sell. To build public commitment, we commemorated International Shea Day, a first in Yumbe, with a 5/10 km community marathon that drew 400 women, youth, children, and government officials, increasing awareness and community action to conserve shea trees.





Mustafa Gerima, our Save the Shea Nut project lead, was featured by the BBC. [Read](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjewge4lvv0o)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjewge4lvv0o>

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-LED CLIMATE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION



2000

shea tree seedlings raised and distributed to 150 households via 4 environmental groups.



76M

Ugandan shillings secured for communities to conserve and plant more shea-nut trees.

2,000 shea-nut seedlings raised in our tree seed nursery beds were distributed to 150 households of refugees and host communities for planting. Seedlings were distributed through our 4 environmental groups, each made up of 50 members, including 20 refugees and 10 host community members. These groups protected newly planted trees, and existing ones, by creating fire lines and marking greenery for protection, with the help of tools and protective gear, such as hoes, slashers, gumboots, and T-shirts, supplied by CECI. Their work led to 4 round-table discussions with 44 representatives of

peacebuilding and environmental-conservation partners, local government, OPM, and refugee and host communities. These discussions led to an agreement for free technical guidance and increased access to tree seedlings, and attracted 76 million Ugandan Shillings in funding for Save the Shea-Nut Movement to support these groups in conserving and planting more shea-nut trees in Midigo, Kei, and Kochi Sub-Counties in Yumbe district. In recognition of their exemplary role in championing environmental protection and energy-saving technologies, we rewarded 3 individuals and 2 environmental groups with cash awards, certificates, and T-shirts.

GETTING GIRLS BACK TO SCHOOL



235

learners enrolled in AEP Levels I–II, lifting total enrollment to 355.



1,240

mothers, youth, local leaders, and community members mobilized to enroll out-of-school girls in AEP.



“...more girls and other out-of-school youth are enrolling and completing.” – Wayi Draga Mulai, District Education Officer

We ran 10 enrollment campaigns across 11 villages in Koboko and facilitated 2 Mother-to-Mother sessions that mobilized communities to enroll out-of-school girls, especially teenage mothers, in our fully funded Accelerated Education Program (AEP). 90 mothers, youth, local leaders, and community members, including 11 PWDs, raised awareness about the program in households and communities, reaching 1,077 people, including 541 women, 340 refugees, and 164 PWDs, and mobilizing more young girls and mothers to enroll in AEP. As a result, 235 out-of-school youth, including teenage mothers, enrolled in AEP Levels I–II at Millennium Seed and Padrombo Secondary Schools in Koboko in 2024 (148 male, 87 female). This brings the cumulative learners to 355, up from 120 in 2023, with girls rising to 138 from 51. Out of 235 enrolled, 152 (93 male, 59 female), including 41 refugees, sat for UNEB. Building on this, 2 bi-annual coordination meetings engaged 73 local leaders, community members, and representatives of Community Education Committees (CECs),

School Management Committees (SMCs), and District Education Offices (DEOs) on increasing school enrolment, retention, and completion rates for young female learners in Koboko. SMCs, CECs, and local leaders were then re-oriented on their roles in mobilizing learners, sensitizing communities about AEP, providing parental support, monitoring the program, and offering scholastic and other support. “Primary school dropout in Koboko is 8.1%, far above the 1.7% national rate, and only 12% complete P7, and in secondary, S1–S4 completion is at 67% only, with fees as a major barrier,” said Wayi Dragamulai, District Education Officer. “I’m encouraged that CECI’s AEP is tackling this and even employing teachers. As we continue to intensify mobilization, involve husbands of teenage mothers, map learner housing for monitoring, and retain Level II graduates for A-level at AEP schools, more girls and other out-of-school youth are enrolling and completing.”

NURTURING SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN

18



caregivers from 6 ECD centres trained on identity, perspective, and social and emotional development.

364



children aged 5-6 learned emotional intelligence and social skills through 16 classroom sessions.

381



parents and guardians empowered to participate in their children's education through 6 family workshops.

273



parents and guardians report supporting their children with homework and collaborating more with caregivers.

We trained 18 caregivers, including 10 women, 2 refugees, and 1 PWD, from 6 ECD centers, on identity and perspective, and social and emotional development, so they nurture supportive learning environments for learners aged 5-6. Caregivers learned and enhanced their knowledge and skills in classroom management and the effective use of teaching materials, such as caregiver guides, learner exercise books, emotion posters, child albums, storybooks, videos, media equipment, self-regulation strategies, and problem-solving techniques for young learners. They also received training in lesson preparation, mental well-being, presentation skills, and strategies to strengthen family involvement in children's education. Caregivers then integrated these tools into daily routines and ran 16 classroom sessions and 6 family workshops with learners and parents in Koboko and Lobule, so children

build emotional intelligence, social skills, and confidence, and parents become actively involved in their children's education and social-emotional learning at home and in school. In total, we reached 364 children (190 boys, 174 girls) in top classes, including 143 refugees and 2 children with disabilities, and 381 parents and guardians, including 256 women, 167 refugees, and 39 PWDs, across the centers. Children now work in teams and share, name emotions, do breathing exercises, ask reflective questions, and settle conflicts more calmly, habits that caregivers reinforce every day. Also, 273 parents and guardians, including 173 women, 43 refugees, and 4 PWDs, now report supporting their children with homework, Child Album activities, and emotions at home. They are also building more collaborative relationships with caregivers through regular check-ins and follow-ups.



ENHANCING PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

381 parents and guardians, including 256 women, 167 refugees, and 39 PWDs, participated in our 6 family workshops across 6 ECD centers in Koboko Municipal and Lobule Refugee Settlement (St. Catherine, Apa Ward, Waju III, Lokujo, Kuku, and Nyarilo Pioneer). Aimed at enhancing parents' involvement in children's education, social-emotional learning, and problem-solving at home, the workshops helped parents see how their emotions, behaviours, and family conflicts affect children's emotional health at home and in school, and identify healthier ways to manage them. Parents received guidance on the Child Album and other learning materials, and learned to engage children

through storytelling, videos, games, role play, open discussions, and Q&As. They also identified common conflict triggers, practised self-regulation and creative, respectful problem-solving, and committed to using these strategies at home to better support their children's development and socio-emotional skills. "Every evening, I sit with my son and daughter to complete the album and their homework," said Umari Matusi, 39, Parent, Waju III. Like Umari, many parents reported feeling empowered to support their children with homework, talk through their feelings, and help them stay calm after the workshops.

PROMOTING WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL PRESERVATION IN DISPLACEMENT

“

"We're not just learning from the older women, we're also teaching them how to use digital tools to share our culture," said a young participant.

”



170

women leaders, youth, and community members engaged in 3 dialogues and a cultural event about cultural preservation in displacement.



15

refugee women leaders trained in digital and social media skills.

In Bidibidi Refugee Settlement (Zone 3), CECI and Ma Mara Sakit convened 3 cross-cultural dialogues with 30 women (24 refugees, 6 host). The first dialogue was with women leaders, the second with female youth, and the third with both groups together. Participants shared stories, cultural identities, and leadership experiences in preserving their language, foods, music, attire, dances, and arts. They emphasized mentoring the next generation to promote and preserve positive cultural practices and traditions in displacement settings and foster social cohesion with host communities. This led to an action plan to continue women-led culture circles and mentorship for girls, deepen joint cross-cultural learning and appreciation activities with host women, coordinate safe access to firewood and water, and pursue cooperative land-use arrangements. We also held a media training for 15 refugee women leaders, who used tools like

Canva, InShot, CapCut, and RenderForest to create engaging content, photos, videos, animations, and presentations about their cultural foods. They learned to tell their stories, share their culture, and build impactful online presence on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, positioning them as cultural ambassadors. We then conducted in-depth interviews with 4 older women on language, food, attire, arts, and culture, which informed a 23-minute documentary published on YouTube. Our public community launch/screening of the documentary in Juba drew 45 participants, and a follow-on radio talk show on Eye Radio reached 6,600 listeners, raising awareness on the importance of women's participation in cultural preservation and promotion. We wrapped up with a cultural event that brought together 140 people from refugee and host communities who showcased their traditional foods, dances, songs, and child-naming rituals.

Documentary: [Watch](#)

<https://tinyurl.com/spas7k3f>

Radio Talk Show: [Watch](#)

<https://tinyurl.com/2p7xz7yu>

News Story: [Read](#)

<https://tinyurl.com/2rbfh7xe>

STRENGTHENING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

“

When disputes start, leaders from both sides respond quickly, and people accept the decisions.

”

Our training on peacebuilding, conflict sensitivity, and gender transformative leadership for 151 members, including 102 refugees and 111 women, from 4 community actors (the alliance of cultural and religious leaders, the women and girls forum, male champions, and environmental protection committees), enabled them to establish a Forum theatre group. With funding from CECI, the group led awareness on peacebuilding, conflict sensitivity, GBV prevention, mental health and psychosocial support, and environmental protection. They organized 6 community awareness events, hosted 7 radio talk shows, and distributed 165 IEC materials on women's leadership and environmental protection, reaching 219 people (including 142 women and 191 refugees), resolving 5 GBV cases, and referring 3 to IRC and police.



151

people from 4 local structures trained to lead awareness on GBV, peace, and MHPSS.



219

people sensitized through radio talk shows, IEC materials, and community events.



\$4000

secured after 3 dialogues engaging 56 local partner representatives to address resource-related disputes.

They also held 3 dialogues on peacebuilding and conflict resolution, engaging 56 participants, including women, local leaders, landlords, and local partners, during which they addressed disputes over land and grass, water use, and drug abuse between refugees and host communities. Our support for the group's quarterly meetings with local leaders, OPM, police, and protection partners, attended by 41 people (including 31 women and 32 refugees), enabled joint planning for dialogue, conflict resolution, and land access negotiations, and attracted USD 4,000 in UNHCR co-financing to expand their work to more (how many) clusters. As an RWC I leader put it: "The quarterly meetings helped us plan together. When disputes start, leaders from both sides respond quickly, and people accept the decisions."

FACILITATING EXCHANGE LEARNING



44

peacebuilders facilitated to participate in 2 exchange learning visits.

44 peacebuilders, including 35 refugees, 9 nationals, and 34 women from Zone 3, Bidibidi, participated in our two exchange learning visits for peacebuilders, where they engaged with their counterparts in Imvepi and Bidibidi Zone 1, hosted by YETA and I CAN South Sudan, respectively. Participants shared best practices on increasing women's participation in decision-making and preventing and resolving conflicts.



34

women peacebuilders facilitated to participate in the exchange learning visits.

They learned how counterparts have adopted the GALS methodology, especially the gender balance tree tool, to challenge power imbalances and address household-level gender inequalities. As a result, peacebuilders across the two settlements are replicating best practices and working more closely to strengthen and sustain community peacebuilding in the long term.

OUR PARTNERS

We want to express our deepest gratitude to our incredible partners! Your unwavering support has been the driving force behind all the gains we made in 2024. Thank you for believing in our mission and making our work possible!



OXFAM

Since 2018, OXFAM has continued to invest in peacebuilding, livelihoods, and access to education for refugees and host communities at CECI.



Since 2022, War Child Canada has continued to support quality secondary education for refugee youth, supporting CECI's work in Koboko, Yumbe, and Obongi.



**mastercard
foundation**

Since 2022, Mastercard has continued to support quality secondary education for refugee youth, supporting CECI's work in Koboko, Yumbe, and Obongi.



Since 2021, CRVPF has continued to support CECI's work in COVID-19 response and recovery and skilling and opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship in Koboko.



Since 2023, the Global Whole Being Fund has continued to support CECI's vocational skills program for youth on the move and teenage mothers.



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

In 2024, UNHCR supported CECI's work addressing protection concerns in refugee and host communities.



Since 2023, Welcome Sesame has continued to invest to improve inclusion and belonging for displaced learners, supporting CECI's work in Koboko Municipality and Lobule Refugee Settlement.



In 2024, Civ Fund supported our work seeking to save endangered shea nut trees and skill rural women in shea nut harvesting across Midigo, Kei, and Kochi Sub-Counties in Yumbe district.



Since 2018, r0g Agency has continued to support peacebuilding, hate speech mitigation, and access to skills and knowledge for refugees and host communities, supporting CECI's work in Koboko and Yumbe.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our staff, board members, volunteers, interns, and all the incredible individuals who worked tirelessly to make 2024 a year of impact. Thank you!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. Patrick Chandiga Justine Abure - Founder & Chair
2. Benson Khemis Soro Lako - Secretary & Executive Director
3. Topista Pamela Oleru - Finance & Audit Committee Chair
4. Luete Emmanuel - Strategic Planning Committee Chair
5. Ayoo Irene Hellen - Member

STAFF TEAM

1. Benson Khemis Soro - Executive Director
2. Taban Rashid - Programs Manager
3. Atim Elizabeth - Finance & Admin Officer
4. Metaloro James - Field Officer
5. Brenda Joan - Project Officer -Obongi
6. Eunice Nabawesa - Procurement Assistant
7. Batali Moses - Project Officer -Yumbe
8. Taban Michael - Senior Security guard
9. Buruga Charles - Assistant Security guard
10. Alima Knight - Program Officer - BRIDGE
11. Onjima Peter - Project Accountant
12. Anthony Aligo - Field Officer
13. Mutto Ismail - Field Officer
14. Umba Peter - Program Officer - PBI
15. Nicholas Lupai - Program Officer
16. Driwaru Stella - Office Assistant
17. Munduru Oliver - HR Assistant
18. Sabo Mike - MEAL Officer
19. Atako Flavia - Program Officer-Education
20. Amazi Gladies - Gender & Inclusion Officer
21. Muki Emmanuel - Driver

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



2024 Audited
Financial Statements.

Scan the above QR
code or go to the
below link to view
the full statements.

2024 REVENUE (UGX)

Income	Total (UGX)
Opening Balance	316,628,915.00
Donations	1,090,279,683.00
Local Incomes	49,010,005.00
Total Revenue:	1,455,918,603.00

2024 EXPENSES (UGX)

Expense	Total (UGX)
BRIDGE Project	138,286,275.00
PBI Project	260,796,604.00
#ASKnet r0g Agency	57,699,648.00
Geared for Success (GFS) - OXFAM	120,418,398.00
Geared for Success (GFS) - WCC	8,755,400.00
Welcome Sesame	262,224,245.00
Skills for Development (S4D)	83,603,400.00
Save Shea Nut Movement (SHEA)	32,191,500.00
UNHCR	24,547,000.00
Management A/C	36,266,557.00
Total Expenditure	1,024,789,027.00

CECI UGANDA 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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November 3, 2025

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ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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