



Dear friends

Welcome to the second quarter edition of our newsletter! Over the past few months, Joy for Children Uganda has continued to make meaningful strides in protecting children's rights and empowering communities.

This quarter, we focused on building stronger systems, raising awareness, and giving children especially girls the confidence and support they need to be change agents in their schools and communities leading advocacy to violence against children.

In this newsletter, we share some of the key activities, stories, and impact from our work between April and June. Thank you for walking this journey with us as we work to build a brighter future for every child in Uganda.



Promoting child education rights



Teacher Training programs on Child Protection and Inclusion

Joy for Children Uganda conducted teacher training sessions across the 17 districts of Kikuube, Hoima, Kiryandongo, Kamwenge, Kitagwenda, and Kyegegwa, among other districts in the USEEP project area focusing on child protection, inclusion, and safe learning environments.

Educators were equipped with skills to identify and respond to violence against children, promote inclusive education, and support the goals of the Uganda Secondary Education Expansion Project (USEEP). The training also introduced teachers to the Washington Group Short Set Child Functioning Module Teacher Version, to enhance data collection on children with disabilities.

A training-of-trainers model was adopted to ensure sustainability, with participants developing action plans to feed into school development plans and cascade the knowledge to colleagues and learners.

The initiative will be followed by ongoing professional development in child protection, inclusive education, and environmental awareness, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports and other partners.

Distributing Information, Education and Communication Materials

Schools can become safe havens where every child thrives when equipped with the right tools, information, and support.

In partnership with Windle International Uganda, Joy for Children Uganda recently visited schools across Western Uganda under the Uganda Secondary Education Expansion Project (USEEP) to strengthen the fight against violence in schools.

During the visits, we equipped schools with Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials, including:

- Guidelines on Gender in Education
- Guidelines on Preventing Teenage Pregnancy in Schools
- Messages for Adolescents
- Referral Pathways and Referral Books
- "Say No to Violence" and "Violence Against Children in Schools" booklets

We distributed Smart TVs to support digital learning and awareness efforts. Schools also received sports equipment footballs, volleyballs, and nets to encourage co-curricular activities that foster teamwork and inclusion.

We met with student clubs where learners shared their ideas on how they can take an active role in making their schools safer and more welcoming for all.



Promoting a healthy living for all children

Training community health workers (CHWs) in HIV Care and Data Management

Joy for Children Uganda conducted a training for Community Health Workers (CHWs) in Kyenjojo District, focusing on strengthening their capacity in data collection, case identification, linkage to care, and referral of HIV-positive mothers and infants.

This training is part of our ongoing efforts to improve the quality of HIV prevention, care, and treatment services in Uganda where HIV remains a major public health challenge. Strengthening the skills of frontline health workers is essential to ensuring that no mother or child is left behind.

The session emphasized the critical roles and responsibilities of CHWs in:

- Accurate data collection
- Screening and identifying HIV-positive cases
- Linking clients to care and treatment services
- Ensuring proper referral of HIV-positive mothers and infants to health facilities

This training also targeted young people, adolescent peer support health workers, HIV focal persons, and partner organizations, reinforcing a collaborative approach to care.

By empowering HIV service providers, we aim to not only improve individual competencies but also strengthen the broader health system, reduce stigma, and ensure the sustainability of HIV programs across Uganda.

Bloom project beneficiaries mapping exercise



Joy for Children Uganda, with support from the Aidsfund carried out a Mapping Exercise for Key Beneficiaries and Stakeholders under the BLOOM Project in Kyenjojo District.

The Babies Living Optimally and Opportunely with Mothers' (BLOOM) Project supports young mothers and children living with HIV to access life-saving health care services and to prevent vertical (mother-to-child) transmission of HIV. This exercise brought together Community Health Workers (CHWs), religious leaders, LCs, health facility teams, and young mothers to reintroduce the project, mobilize local efforts to meet project goals and assess the situation on the ground.

The team also met with the District Health Officer (DHO) and visited health facilities in five sub-counties to strengthen coordination, especially around patient referral systems



Advocacy to end child marriage and teenage pregnancies

Girls Advocacy and Leadership training

Joy for Children Uganda conducted the second cohort of Girls' Advocacy and Leadership Training for student leaders, aimed at empowering girls with knowledge on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), life skills, self-confidence, and leadership. The training aimed at equipping participants to lead efforts to end child marriage in their schools and communities.

The session created a safe and supportive environment where girls gained the confidence to speak out, explored their leadership potential, and learned how to become effective advocates for change.

As a next step, Joy for Children Uganda is planning a third cohort of the Girls' Advocacy Camp, which will further build girls' skills in advocacy, leadership, and SRHR. Participants will go on to form a Girls' Agency, a collective of empowered young leaders working to end child marriage in their communities.

We recognized that girls' agency plays a critical role in this work. When girls are empowered to make informed decisions, assert their rights, and engage with their communities, they become key drivers of positive change.



Evidence based advocacy

Joy for Children-Uganda covered a documentary on the context, magnitude, impact, and promising interventions towards addressing child marriage in Uganda. The activity targeted the West Nile region in the districts of Arua and Maracha. JFCU engaged with survivors of child marriage, teenage mothers, district officials, health centers, and religious and cultural leaders to understand their perspectives on the issue and how it can be addressed. We also engaged the Ministry of Gender to track progress on the implementation of the renewed National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy.

We documented the promising interventions of grassroots organizations such as the Amani Initiative, Save the Maracha Girl, and the Women Initiative for Inclusive Development. These organizations are leading community-based initiatives, including skills training, support for girls' education, sensitization campaigns, collaboration with different stakeholders, and health camps on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), among others.

We also documented harmful cultural beliefs that continue to perpetuate these practices such as the concept of "aruba" a perceived curse or bad luck that families fear will befall them if cases of teenage pregnancy reported to legal authorities. We also identified existing policy gaps that will inform our advocacy for the enactment of the Marriage Bill 2024.

Child sponsorship program

Joy for Children Uganda (JFCU) supports children from vulnerable households to access education by providing school fees and essential scholastic materials. In addition, we conduct routine visits to these families to understand their daily challenges and offer guidance on improving their household income, enabling them to meet their children's other basic needs.

JFCU conducted a field visit to Kabarole District to follow up on the children who being sponsored in the 2025 academic year . The visit aimed to assess the children's academic progress, gather required documentation, and evaluate the overall impact of the support provided.



NETWORKING EVENTS

The 9th East Africa Philanthropy Conference

Our Executive Director, Mr. Ntenga Moses, attended the 9th East Africa Philanthropy Conference, a gathering that brought together leaders and changemakers to reimagine the future of giving in a rapidly changing global landscape.

This conference serves as a vital platform to reflect on how philanthropy can evolve to meet emerging challenges. The discussions focused on how philanthropic efforts can be more sustainable, community-driven, and responsive to the realities on the ground.

Workshop AidsFond Partners on Pediatrics & HIV

We attended the International Workshop on Pediatrics & HIV for AIDS Fond Partners in Kigali July 11-12, 2025. The event served as a platform for learning and sharing best practices in the fight against pediatric HIV, with a focus on shaping the future of HIV programming for children.

During the conference, participants worked on strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks and governance structures. Partners were encouraged to collaborate more closely with health facilities to enhance project implementation. The discussions also highlighted recent developments in the HIV funding landscape and the need for strategic partnerships moving forward.

NETWORKING EVENTS

National child labor day celebrations 2025

On 12th June 2025, Joy for Children Uganda joined partners to mark the World Day Against Child Labor at Golden Tulip Hotel, Kampala. The event was organized by the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development in partnership with the International Labor Organization (ILO) and other partners.

This year's theme, "End Child Labor: Speed Up Action," called on everyone to do more to stop child labor. The event gave stakeholders a chance to review progress, renew their commitment, and speak out strongly against child labor in Uganda.

Uganda showed its dedication by allocating UGX 2 billion to fight child labor, putting the National Action Plan into practice, and including child rights in national development plans. These actions show that Uganda is committed about ending child labor and protecting children's futures.

National Menstrual hygiene child day celebrations 2025

Joy for Children Uganda joined the Ministry of Education and Sports and partners to commemorate Menstrual Hygiene Day 2025 (MH Day) under the theme:

"Prioritizing Menstrual Health, Education & Family Support to End Teenage Pregnancy & Early Marriages."

This year's MH Day focused on breaking the silence around menstruation, ending stigma, and ensuring that every girl can manage her period with dignity and support at home, in school, and in the community. The event was officiated by Hon. Peter Ogwang, Minister for Sports, on behalf of the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mama Janet Museveni.

As part of our continued advocacy, Joy for Children Uganda also hosted a live X Space conversation, providing a digital platform for open and inclusive dialogue on menstrual health. The conversation focused on dispelling myths, challenging harmful norms, and encouraging community action.

Girls First Fund grantees convening 2025

Joy for Children Uganda participated in the Girls First Fund Grantees Annual Convening—a knowledge sharing, collaboration, and reflection event that brought together organizations from across Uganda, all united in the mission to end child marriage. The convening gave us an opportunity to get key updates from the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MGLSD) on the progress of implementing the National Strategy to End Child Marriage. We also joined in celebrating the graduation of grantees who successfully completed the six-month leadership training, aimed at transforming and strengthening organizational governance structures for sustainability, enabling grantees to continue championing change in the communities we work in.



CURRENT TRENDS

Increased budget allocation for Uganda's education sector

The government of Uganda reaffirmed its commitment to transforming the education sector through increased funding and strategic interventions outlined in the financial year 2025/26 National budget. The Ugandan government is increasing the education sector's budget for the 2025/26 financial year, allocating Shs5.04 trillion, a significant rise from the Shs4.2 trillion in the previous year. This increased funding will support various initiatives, including expanding access to free education, improving infrastructure, and enhancing teacher training.

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Promising interventions in HIV prevention in Uganda

Uganda is among several low and middle income countries poised to benefit from a HIV prevention drug, following a landmark deal between the Global Fund and Gilead Sciences to roll out Lenacapavir, a long-acting injectable that only needs to be taken twice a year.

Unlike daily pills such as PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis), Lenacapavir offers annual protection against HIV infection. Taken just once every six months, the drug could dramatically ease the challenges of adherence and access that continue to hinder Uganda's HIV prevention efforts

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Uganda's Constitutional Court Upholds Polygamy

In a recent landmark decision, Uganda's Constitutional Court ruled that polygamous marriage is constitutional, affirming the legality of customary and Islamic marriages involving more than one spouse. The Court emphasized that polygamy, when entered into voluntarily, does not violate rights to equality or dignity. While some cultural and religious groups welcomed the decision, women's rights advocates, including the Women's Probono Initiative, expressed concern about the ruling's implications for gender justice. The decision underscores the urgent need for stronger safeguards to protect women's rights within all forms of marriage.

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UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- X-Space on the Marriage Bill
- Consultation engagements with male MPs to support the enactment of Marriage and Sexual Offences Bills.
- Training Journalists on Gender-Responsive and Legal Reporting to strengthen media coverage of the marriage Bill and Sexual offences bill.
- Training Grievance redress committees (GRCs) on grievance redress mechanisms and code of conduct at school level under USEEP project
- HIV testing outreaches targeting adolescents aged 10 to 14 years in Kyenjojo District