



UGANDA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LINK (UYDEL)

ANNUAL REPORT

FINANCIAL YEAR 2025

Building Resilience, Skills, and Hope for Uganda's Youth



Editorial Team

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Supported by: Dr. Kasirye Rogers (Executive Director), Mr. Mutaawe Rogers (Senior Programme Manager), Ms. Anna Nabulya (Deputy Director), Desire Nakigwe (Social Worker), Ochen Linda (Social Worker).

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL), I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the Financial Year 2025.

This year's report reflects UYDEL's continued commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable children and young people through integrated, evidence-based, and youth-centred programming. In a context marked by persistent socio-economic challenges, urban poverty, and evolving protection risks, UYDEL remained steadfast in delivering interventions that promote protection, wellbeing, skills development, and positive youth engagement.

The Board takes pride in the organization's strong governance, accountability, and strategic alignment with the Strategic Plan 2023-2027. Notable achievements during the year include expanded reach to vulnerable populations, strengthened safeguarding systems, enhanced partnerships with government and development partners, and meaningful contributions to national and regional policy dialogue on youth crime prevention, substance abuse, and youth wellbeing.

I extend my sincere appreciation to our development partners, government institutions, communities, and all stakeholders whose collaboration made these achievements possible. I also commend the Executive Director, management team, staff, volunteers, and youth leaders for their dedication and professionalism.

As we look ahead, the Board remains committed to providing strategic oversight and support to ensure that UYDEL continues to grow as a trusted leader in youth development, protection, and empowerment.



Mr. Nathan Twinomugisha

Chairman, Board of Directors

Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL)

COMMUNICATION FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Financial Year 2025 was a year of resilience, learning, and impact for Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL). It is with great appreciation that I present this Annual Report, which captures the collective efforts of our staff, partners, communities, and young people.

Throughout the year, UYDEL implemented a diverse portfolio of programmes addressing protection, sexual and reproductive health, mental wellbeing, livelihoods, skills development, crime prevention, and youth leadership. Through these interventions, we reached over 38,000 individuals, providing both broad community outreach and intensive centre-based support for those facing the highest levels of vulnerability.

A key milestone in 2025 was UYDEL's strengthened role in evidence generation and policy engagement, including the publication of the National Youth Crime Report (2017-2024) and the launch of the National Youth Manual on the Prevention of Violent Extremism. These efforts reinforce our belief that sustainable change requires not only service delivery, but also strong data, partnerships, and advocacy.

I am deeply grateful to our donors and partners for their continued trust and support, and to our staff and volunteers for their unwavering commitment to safeguarding, inclusion, and youth participation. Most importantly, I acknowledge the courage, resilience, and leadership of the young people we serve, whose journeys continue to inspire our work.

As we move into 2026, UYDEL remains committed to scaling impact, strengthening institutional systems, and amplifying youth voices in line with our Strategic Plan and national development priorities.



Dr. Kasirye Rogers (PhD)

Executive Director

Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL)

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AU - African Union

AUC - African Union Commission

AYEP - Access to Youth Employment Project

B-RICH - Building Resilience and Improving Coping Skills

CADCA - Community-Based Advocacy-Focused Data-Driven Coalition-Building Association

CPCJ - Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

CSO - Civil Society Organization

EASY U25 - Enhancing Access to Age-Appropriate Sexual and Reproductive Health Services and Economic Opportunities for Youth Below 25 Years

GBV - Gender-Based Violence

GEG - Girls Empowerment and Social Protection Programme

INL - Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

JLOS - Justice, Law and Order Sector

KCCA - Kampala Capital City Authority

MEL - Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

PSEA - Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

SRHR - Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

UNVTF - United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons

UPC - Universal Prevention Curriculum

UYDEL - Uganda Youth Development Link

YCR - Youth Crime Report

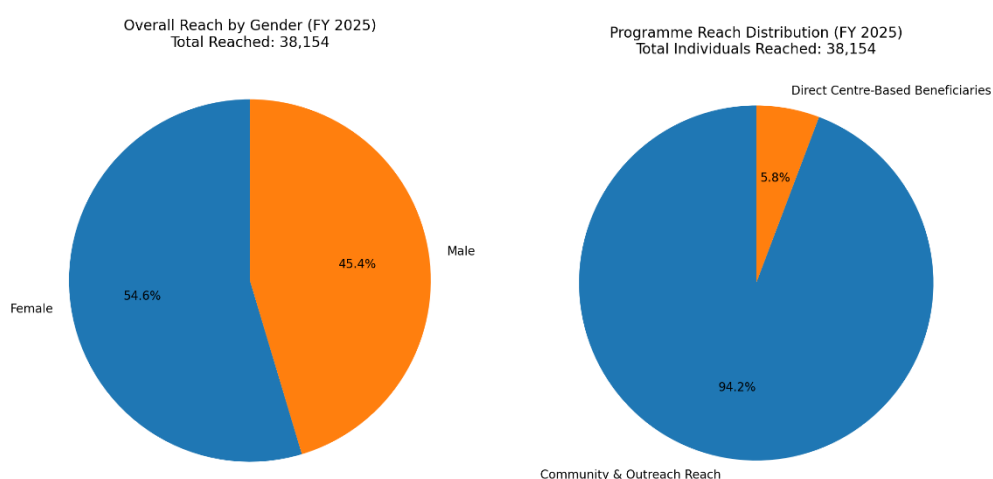
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) is a national non-governmental organization established in 1993 to promote the socio-economic transformation of disadvantaged children and young people aged 10-24 years. Guided by its Strategic Plan 2023-2027, UYDEL envisions a transformed society where children and young people live a good quality of life free from exploitation, abuse, and vulnerability.

During the Financial Year 2025, UYDEL implemented a diverse portfolio of protection, health, livelihoods, skills development, crime prevention, and advocacy interventions, reaching vulnerable adolescents and youth in urban informal settlements, peri-urban communities, and refugee-hosting districts across Uganda. Programming was delivered through youth-friendly centres, community outreaches, partnerships with government institutions, civil society actors, and development partners, and through evidence-based, youth-centred approaches that promote resilience, participation, and self-reliance.

Overall Reach and Impact

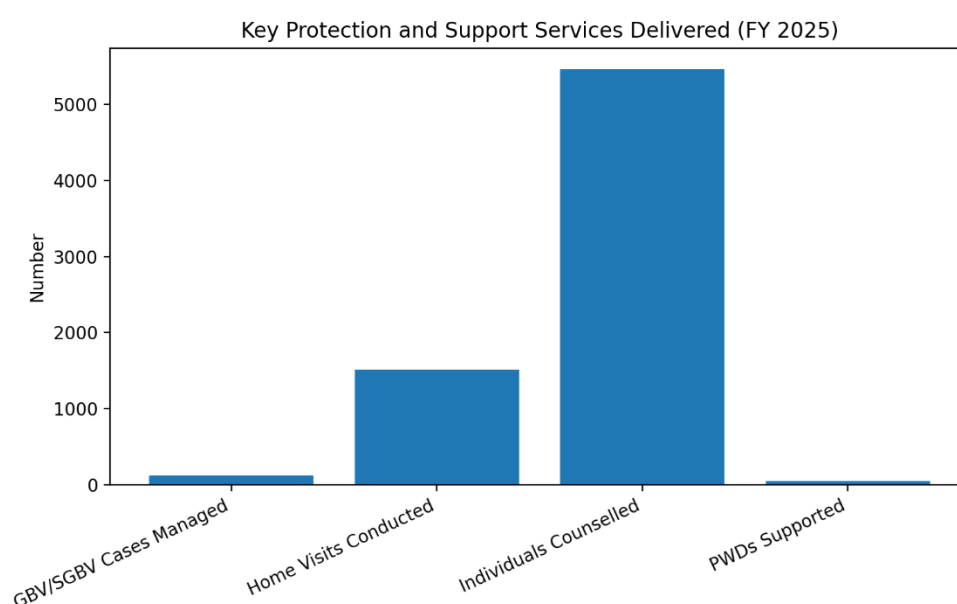
In 2025, UYDEL reached a total of 38,154 individuals (20,846 females and 17,308 males) through direct services, community-based interventions, and advocacy initiatives. Of these, 2,202 were direct centre-based beneficiaries, receiving structured support including counselling, mentorship, vocational skills training, education reintegration, sexual and reproductive health services, and safeguarding interventions. UYDEL supported 49 persons with disabilities, managed or referred 118 GBV/SGBV cases, conducted 1,511 home visits for safeguarding and reintegration, and provided 5,468 individuals with structured counselling services addressing mental health, substance abuse, and psychosocial wellbeing.



Protection, Crime Prevention, and Community Safety

Through the Strengthening Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CPCJ) Project, UYDEL made a significant contribution to national and community-level safety. The project reached 32,047 people through school-based engagements, community sensitization sessions, and media outreach on crime prevention and violent extremism. Key milestones included the development and launch of the National Youth Manual on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, publication of a Youth Crime Report, and the commissioning of 2,146 Youth Peace Ambassadors to promote peaceful coexistence and lawful behaviour.

Complementing this work, the CADCA-supported project strengthened multi-sector community coalitions in Matugga and Kalerwe to prevent substance abuse. Over 140 coalition members, including youth, law enforcement, educators, faith leaders, and health practitioners, were trained in coalition building, sustainability, and data-driven prevention approaches, while over 800 students were reached through school-based drug prevention outreaches. These initiatives strengthened grassroots leadership, coordination, and long-term community resilience.



Sexual and Reproductive Health, Mental Health, and Youth Wellbeing

UYDEL expanded access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services through facility linkages, community outreaches, peer-led education, and creative advocacy. SRHR interventions reached adolescents and youth in Makindye, Rubaga, and

Nakawa Divisions, providing HIV testing, counselling, family planning information, and referrals.

Mental health and psychosocial support remained a core pillar of UYDEL's work. Through Street-Smart, B-RICH, and Line-Up Live-Up interventions, hundreds of young people gained skills in emotional resilience, stress management, positive behaviour change, and decision-making. Sports, music, dance, and drama were effectively used as tools to promote mental wellbeing, reduce substance abuse, and foster inclusion and leadership among vulnerable youth.

Livelihoods, Skills Development, and Economic Empowerment

UYDEL strengthened pathways to self-reliance and decent work through integrated livelihoods and skills development programmes. Under the Access to Youth Employment Project, 334 slum youth (77% female) were enrolled in vocational skills training across UYDEL centres in Bwaise, Makindye, and Banda. Training areas included hairdressing, tailoring, bakery, electronics, plumbing, and ICT-related skills.

UYDEL further promoted financial inclusion through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), forming new groups and supporting existing ones, while strengthening an alumni network of 2,424 former beneficiaries to support follow-up, peer mentoring, and livelihood tracking.

Digital inclusion gained momentum in 2025, with 23 young women graduating in digital skills through partnerships with KCCA, Refactory (UNDP), and other initiatives. Beneficiaries acquired practical competencies in digital literacy, coding, web development, and employability skills, opening pathways to internships, employment, and digital entrepreneurship.

Empowering Girls and Adolescents

Through the Girls Empowerment and Social Protection (GEG) Programme, UYDEL supported 803 adolescent girls in Kampala with intensive mentorship, safeguarding, education reintegration, and skills development. As a result, 574 girls returned to formal education, 211 enrolled in vocational skills training, and all beneficiaries received PSEA awareness and psychosocial support. Targeted interventions addressed multiple vulnerabilities, including disability, teenage motherhood, and extreme poverty, while caregivers, local leaders, service

providers, and peer mentors were actively engaged to strengthen protective environments around girls.

Human Stories of Change

Across all programmes, UYDEL documented powerful Most Significant Change stories highlighting transformation among young people facing exploitation, abuse, homelessness, mental health challenges, and unemployment. These stories illustrate how integrated support; combining psychosocial care, skills training, mentorship, and community engagement, enabled young women and men to regain dignity, build livelihoods, and emerge as peer educators and community role models.

Looking Ahead

In 2025, UYDEL demonstrated the strength of a holistic, evidence-based, and youth-centred approach to addressing vulnerability among children and young people. As the organization looks ahead, it remains committed to scaling impactful interventions, deepening partnerships, strengthening safeguarding and accountability systems, and amplifying youth voices in line with its Strategic Plan 2023-2027, national development priorities, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Background of UYDEL

Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) is a national non-governmental organization founded in 1993 to respond to the growing vulnerabilities faced by children and young people in Uganda's urban and peri-urban communities. Over the past three decades, UYDEL has evolved into a leading youth-focused organization, delivering integrated protection, health, livelihoods, and empowerment programmes through youth-friendly centres, community outreach, and strategic partnerships.

Vision

A transformed society where children and young people live a good quality of life free from exploitation.

Mission

To enhance socio-economic transformation of disadvantaged young people through advocacy and skills development for self-reliance.

Core Values

- Integrity and accountability
- Youth participation and empowerment
- Equity, inclusion, and safeguarding
- Partnership and collaboration
- Innovation and learning

Target Population and Approach

UYDEL serves disadvantaged children and young people aged 10-24 years, including out-of-school youth, adolescent girls, survivors of violence and exploitation, young people affected by substance abuse, and those living in extreme poverty. UYDEL adopts a holistic, youth-centred approach that integrates psychosocial support, skills development, health services, safeguarding, and economic empowerment to address both immediate risks and long-term resilience.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

In the Financial Year 2025, UYDEL implemented programmes aligned to its Strategic Plan 2023-2027, focusing on addressing the root causes of vulnerability among children and young people while strengthening their resilience, skills, and opportunities for self-reliance. All interventions were designed to be youth-centred, evidence-based, and responsive to the evolving social, economic, and protection risks faced by young people in urban informal settlements, peri-urban communities, and refugee-hosting districts.

UYDEL's work in 2025 was organized around the following strategic focus areas, which provide the framework for programme implementation and reporting in this Annual Report.

1. Protection, Safeguarding, and Crime Prevention

UYDEL prioritized the protection of children and young people from violence, exploitation, abuse, and involvement in crime. Interventions focused on strengthening safeguarding systems, responding to GBV and SGBV cases, promoting positive behaviour change, and enhancing community-based crime prevention mechanisms.

Through partnerships with justice sector institutions, community leaders, schools, and civil society actors, UYDEL supported youth and communities to address drivers of crime, violent extremism, substance abuse, and unsafe environments. Safeguarding and PSEA were mainstreamed across all programmes, ensuring that young people accessed services in safe, accountable, and supportive spaces.

2. Sexual and Reproductive Health, Mental Health, and Wellbeing

Promoting the physical and mental wellbeing of young people remained a core priority in 2025. UYDEL expanded access to age-appropriate, youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services through health facility linkages, community outreaches, and peer-led education.

Mental health and psychosocial support interventions addressed stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and behavioural risks among vulnerable youth. Evidence-based approaches such as Street-Smart, B-RICH, and Line-Up Live-Up were used to strengthen emotional resilience, coping skills, and positive decision-making, contributing to improved wellbeing and reduced risk-taking behaviours.

3. Livelihoods, Skills Development, and Economic Empowerment/ Crime prevention (Crime, Narcotics Tracking and violent extremism)

UYDEL strengthened pathways to economic self-reliance for adolescents and youth through integrated livelihoods and skills development programmes. These interventions targeted out-of-school youth, adolescent girls, and unemployed young people in urban slums and marginalized communities.

Programming in 2025 included vocational skills training, digital skills development, financial literacy, savings and loan associations, and entrepreneurship support. By linking skills training with mentorship, psychosocial support, and follow-up, UYDEL ensured that beneficiaries were better positioned to transition into employment, self-employment, or further training.

4. Gender Equality and Adolescent Girls' Empowerment

Gender-responsive programming remained central to UYDEL's work, with a strong emphasis on addressing the multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities faced by adolescent girls and young women. Interventions focused on preventing sexual exploitation, early marriage, unintended pregnancy, and school dropout, while promoting education retention, skills development, and leadership.

Through dedicated safe spaces and targeted programmes, UYDEL supported adolescent girls to build confidence, life skills, and economic resilience, while engaging caregivers, community leaders, and service providers to strengthen protective environments around them.

5. Youth Leadership, Participation, and Advocacy

UYDEL recognizes young people as active agents of change rather than passive beneficiaries. In 2025, youth participation was promoted through peer education, leadership training, community mobilization, music, dance, drama, sports-based interventions, and advocacy platforms.

Young people were empowered to take on roles as peer educators, mentors, peace ambassadors, coalition members, and community advocates—contributing to programme design, implementation, and outreach. These efforts strengthened youth voice, ownership, and sustainability of interventions, while fostering positive role models within communities.

These strategic focus areas provide the foundation for understanding UYDEL's programme portfolio in 2025. The next section of this report presents detailed Programme & Project

Performance, outlining how each project contributed to these strategic priorities and the results achieved during the year.

PROGRAMME & PROJECT PERFORMANCE

In FY 2025, UYDEL implemented a diverse portfolio of programmes aligned to its Strategic Plan 2023-2027, addressing the interconnected challenges faced by vulnerable children and young people. Programme implementation focused on prevention, protection, wellbeing, skills development, and youth leadership, delivered through youth-friendly centres, community outreach, and strong multi-sector partnerships.

Projects are presented below under strategic focus areas, highlighting how each contributed to UYDEL's overall objectives and impact.

Protection, Safeguarding, and Crime Prevention

Strengthening Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CPCJ) Project

The Strengthening Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CPCJ) Project supported by the UNODC Kampala office and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands aimed to reduce youth vulnerability to crime, violence, and violent extremism while strengthening community-based prevention and justice-sector collaboration.

During 2025, the project reached 32,047 individuals through school-based engagements, community sensitization sessions, and media outreach on crime prevention, youth safety, and peaceful coexistence. Activities targeted adolescents, youth, educators, community leaders, and local authorities, with a strong emphasis on prevention, awareness, and positive behaviour change.

Key achievements included the development and launch of the National Youth Manual on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, which provides practical guidance for engaging young people in preventing radicalization. UYDEL also produced and disseminated a Youth Crime Report, strengthening evidence-based dialogue and informing national and community-level responses to youth crime. The Youth Crime Report (2017-2024) provides a national analysis of youth and juvenile crime trends in Uganda, revealing that young people are disproportionately involved in petty offences, drug-related crimes, and survival-driven urban crime, with males more frequently in conflict with the law but girls facing heightened risks of exploitation and criminalization linked to vulnerability. The findings show a strong correlation

between youth crime and poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, school dropout, mental health challenges, and weak family and community support systems, particularly in informal urban settlements. The report also highlights gaps between arrest and rehabilitation, underscoring the limited use of diversion, prevention, and reintegration mechanisms. Based on these insights, the report calls for a shift toward evidence-based prevention, youth-centred justice responses, livelihoods support, and community-level interventions to reduce youth involvement in crime and promote safer communities.

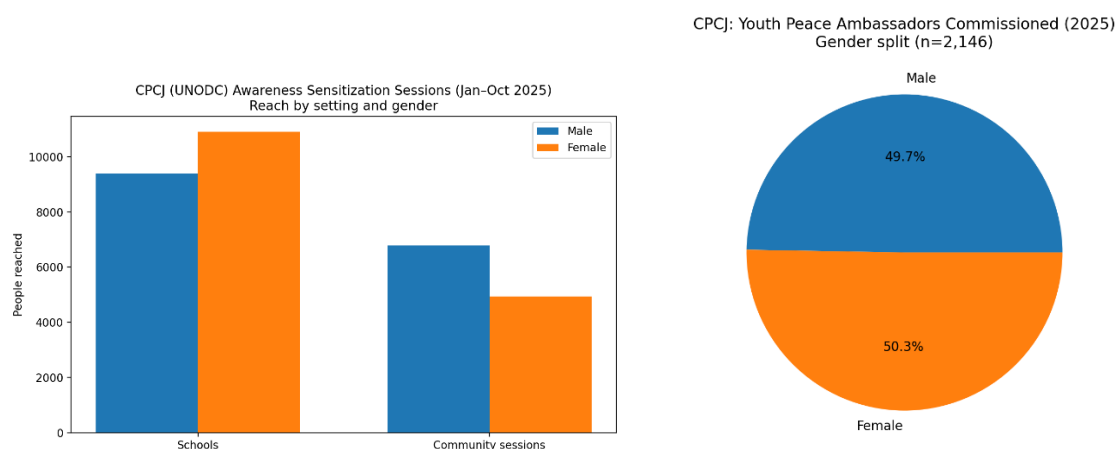


Above: Stakeholders during the launch of the Youth Juvenile Crime Report, 2025 in Kampala

In addition, 2,146 Youth Peace Ambassadors (gender balanced) were commissioned and equipped with skills in conflict resolution, civic responsibility, and community mobilization. These ambassadors continue to promote non-violent approaches and positive youth engagement within their communities.



UYDEL extends its sincere appreciation to Ms. Sharon Lesa Nyambe for her invaluable technical guidance, collaboration, and unwavering support throughout the implementation of the CPCJ Project. Her commitment and leadership significantly contributed to the project's success and strengthened collective efforts toward youth crime prevention and justice-sector reform. Through CPCJ, UYDEL strengthened partnerships with government institutions, security agencies, schools, civil society organizations, and media houses, reinforcing a coordinated and multi-sectoral approach to youth protection and crime prevention.



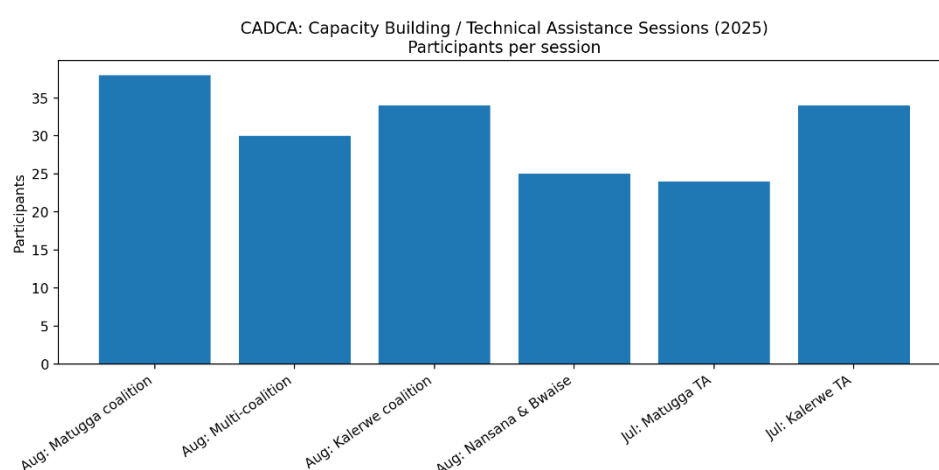
CADCA-Supported Community Coalition Project

In partnership with the Community-Based Advocacy-Focused Data-Driven Coalition-Building Association (CADCA), UYDEL supported more community coalitions (5) working to prevent substance abuse and promote safe, drug-free communities in Matugga and Kalerwe.

During the year, over 140 coalition members, including youth representatives, law enforcement officers, educators, religious leaders, health practitioners, and business owners, were trained in coalition development, community assessment, strategic planning, sustainability, and data-driven prevention approaches.

Coalitions conducted school and community outreach activities, reaching over 800 students with drug abuse prevention messages and life skills education. Media engagement further amplified prevention messages, contributing to increased community awareness and dialogue around substance abuse.

These interventions strengthened grassroots leadership, coordination, and community ownership of substance abuse prevention efforts, laying a foundation for sustainable impact beyond the project period.



Alcohol-Related Social Harm Activities Among Young People (2025)

In 2025, UYDEL implemented integrated interventions to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm among young people through screening, psychosocial support, prevention education, coalition engagement, workforce development, and policy advocacy.

1. Screening, Psychosocial Counselling, and Brief Interventions

UYDEL conducted routine screening using the WHO AUDIT tool across its 6 drop-in and rehabilitation centres, reaching over 3,000 young people. Those at risk received brief interventions, counselling, and referrals. Psychosocial support addressed trauma, peer pressure, unemployment, and mental health challenges, strengthening resilience and reducing harmful alcohol use.

2. Community Awareness and Prevention Education

UYDEL delivered prevention messages through 14 radio and 6 television talk shows, reaching national audiences. Alcohol prevention sessions were also conducted in 45 secondary schools and 4 universities, reaching over 80,000 students. These sessions

highlighted the links between alcohol use, GBV, crime, school dropout, and mental health harm.

3. Coalition Building and Community Engagement

UYDEL supported 6 active community coalitions with local leaders, civil society, law enforcement, and service providers. These coalitions strengthened prevention, referrals, and coordinated responses to alcohol-related harm among young people.

4. Policy Advocacy and National Engagement

UYDEL worked with partners such as UAPA to submit position papers to Parliament and promote stronger alcohol taxation and regulation. Media and public engagement strengthened national awareness and evidence-based alcohol control.

5. Workforce Development and Capacity Building

As an accredited training provider by ISSUP and the Colombo Plan, UYDEL trained over 300 professionals from universities, CSOs, and faith-based organisations in the Universal Prevention Curriculum, strengthening the national workforce to address substance abuse.

Survivor-Led Recovery and Empowerment for Trafficked Youth in Kampala (Slum Rise Project)

With support from the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons (UNVTF), UYDEL is implementing the Survivor-Led Recovery and Empowerment for Trafficked Youth in Kampala (Slum Rise Project), a survivor-centred initiative targeting 90 highly vulnerable adolescents (aged 13-17 years) in Kampala's informal settlements.

Although full implementation had not formally commenced by the end of 2025, significant foundational progress was achieved. UYDEL conducted structured mapping in Bwaise, Nateete, Makindye, and Rubaga, identifying trafficking hotspots, risk patterns, and referral pathways, while strengthening collaboration with local leaders, police (CFPU), community organizations, and youth volunteers.

During the preparatory phase, 13 adolescents were identified as victims of trafficking or at high risk and were immediately supported through referrals for medical care, psychosocial support, safety planning, education reintegration, and basic needs assistance, ensuring that no child identified was left without support. Project staff were fully deployed at the Masooli Rehabilitation Centre, positioning the programme for rapid rollout of trauma-informed rehabilitation, vocational support, legal empowerment, and survivor-led prevention activities.

Sexual and Reproductive Health, Mental Health, and Youth Wellbeing

UYDEL Annual Report Summary for TOPOWA Project

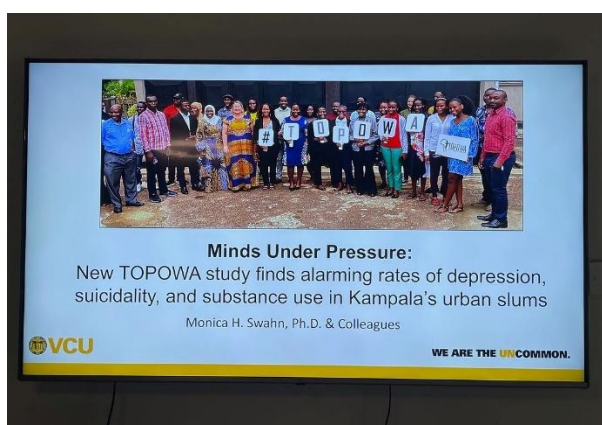
In 2025, the TOPOWA Project continued to make significant progress in documenting and responding to the mental health needs of young women living in Kampala's informal settlements. Our longitudinal cohort of 300 women aged 18–24 years across Banda, Bwaise, and Makindye remains actively engaged, with continued multi-wave data collection. Strong retention reflects the trust built through our partnership with UYDEL and sustained community engagement, including ongoing meetings with our Youth Advisory Board to guide interpretation and dissemination of findings.

A major milestone this year was the publication of our baseline cohort findings in *BMC Public Health* (Swahn et al., 2025), representing one of the most comprehensive mental health assessments ever conducted with young women in these communities. The results revealed alarmingly high levels of need: 74% of participants reported at least one mental health concern; depression was most common (58%), followed by suicidality (46%) and anxiety (35%). More than 45% experienced two or more conditions simultaneously (comorbidity), significantly elevating risk. Alcohol use (28%) and drug use (11%) were strongly associated with worse outcomes, particularly among those with multiple mental health conditions. These findings underscore layered and interconnected vulnerabilities shaped by structural disadvantage and prompted substantial national and international media coverage.

Another highlight in 2025 was the visit to Kampala by Kelly Murray, a doctoral student at Tulane University working with Dr. Swahn, who will use TOPOWA data for her dissertation. She toured the three study sites and was warmly welcomed by the UYDEL teams.

Our engagement with the Youth Advisory Board was especially meaningful this year. The young women provided powerful insight into lived experience and resilience, including the Luganda concept “okugumira embeera,” meaning perseverance through difficult circumstances.

Looking ahead, 2026 will focus on analyzing longitudinal data to determine whether participation in vocational training combined with psychosocial support is associated with improved mental health and quality of life among young women. These findings will help identify what works, for whom, and under what conditions, informing stronger, integrated interventions that UYDEL and partners can scale and sustain.



Enhancing Access to Age-Appropriate Sexual and Reproductive Health Services and Economic Opportunities for Youth Below 25 Years (EASY U25 Project)

The EASY U25 Project supported by Bread for the World is a 3-year integrated intervention designed to improve access to age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services, mental health support, life skills, and economic opportunities for vulnerable adolescents and youth below 25 years. The project's target is to reach and empower 3,000 disadvantaged young people in the slums of Kampala.





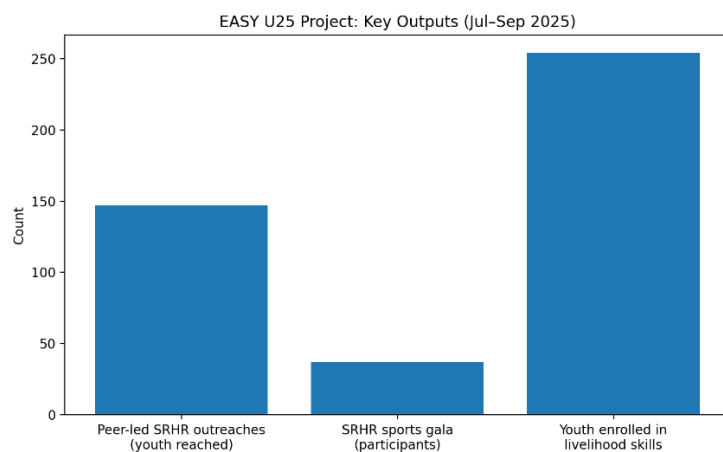
In 2025, EASY U25 was implemented across Makindye, Rubaga, and Nakawa Divisions, combining health services, psychosocial support, skills development, and youth leadership to address multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities.

Through partnerships with public health facilities and community-based outreach, adolescents and youth accessed HIV testing and counselling, family planning information, STI screening, condom distribution, and referral services. Peer-led approaches and hotspot outreaches reduced stigma, improved health-seeking behaviour, and strengthened trust between young people and service providers.

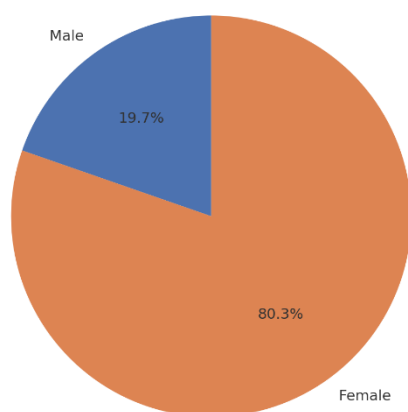
Mental health and psychosocial support were delivered through evidence-based interventions including Street-Smart, B-RICH, and Line-Up Live-Up. These approaches supported young people to address stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and risky behaviours while strengthening emotional resilience, decision-making, and positive behaviour change. Sports, music, dance, and drama were effectively used as tools for healing, inclusion, and youth engagement.

EASY U25 also strengthened economic resilience by linking participants to vocational skills training, financial literacy, and savings groups. Several beneficiaries transitioned from high-risk situations into skills training, small income-generating activities, and peer leadership roles.

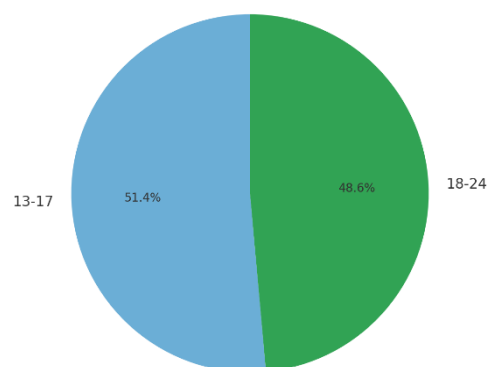
A key pillar of EASY U25 was youth leadership and peer education. Trained peer educators led SRHR outreaches, supported referrals to services, and acted as trusted sources of information within their communities, ensuring sustainability and youth ownership of interventions.

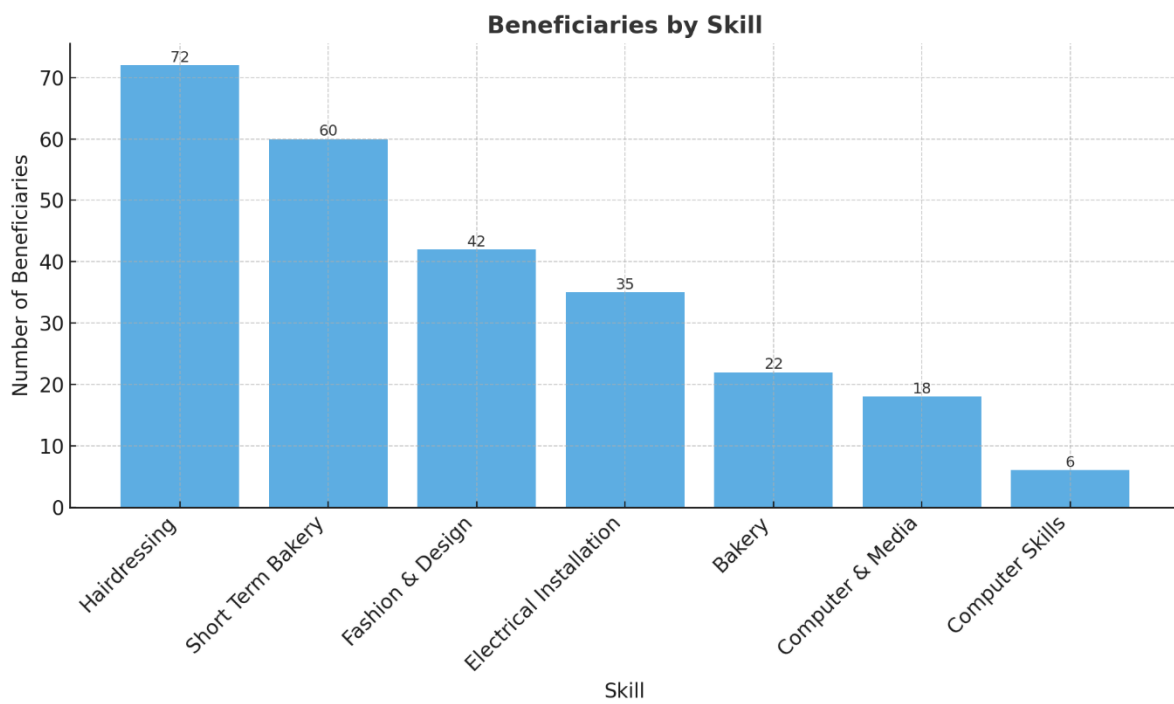
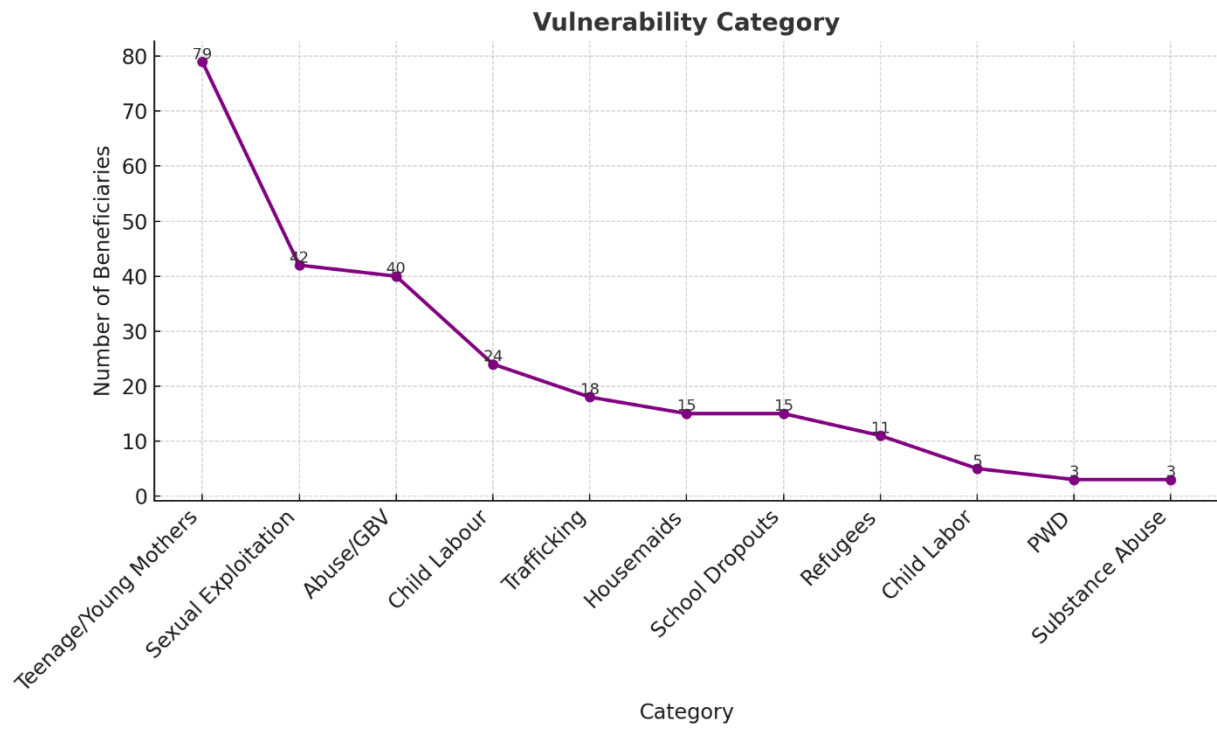


Overall Beneficiaries by Gender (All Divisions)



Age Category





Youth Empowerment Project III (YEP)

Sectors	Age 13-17		Age 18+		Total beneficiaries
	Boys	Girls	Male	Female	
Sustainable Livelihoods	27	83	61	204	375
SRHR			904	1480	2,384

Vulnerability	Female 13-17	Female 18-24	Male 13-17	Male 18-24	Total
Disability	0	3	0	0	3
Teenage mother	3	7	0	0	10
GBV survivor	8	19	1	0	28
Child labour	26	14	14	3	57
Substance use	13	19	6	21	59
Housemaid	6	15	0	0	21
HIV victim	2	3	1	1	7
Violent extremism	0	0	0	1	1
Street connected	0	0	1	0	1
Refugee	2	4	2	2	10
Trafficking	4	16	0	1	21
Sexual exploitation	19	85	2	4	110
Child marriage	0	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	83	204	27	61	375

The Urban Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) Phase III (2024-2027), funded by Icelandic Church Aid and implemented by UYDEL with the Lutheran World Federation, aims to reduce economic vulnerability and improve access to SRHR services for 1,500 slum youth aged 13–24 in Rubaga, Nakawa, and Makindye divisions.

Since inception, 750 youth (516 females, 234 males) have been trained in vocational skills and 3,546 youth (2,201 females) reached with SRHR services. During this period, 375 youth enrolled in skills training, while 439 youth (59%) were supported into internships and employment. Additionally, 197 youth in VSLA groups saved UGX 10,379,800, strengthening financial resilience.

Through health fairs, community outreaches, peer education, and referrals, 2,384 youth accessed SRHR services including HIV testing, STI screening, and counseling. Mental health sessions and life skills training also supported youth coping, resilience, and wellbeing.

Overall, the project has strengthened livelihoods, access to SRHR services, financial inclusion, and mental health support for vulnerable slum youth in Kampala.



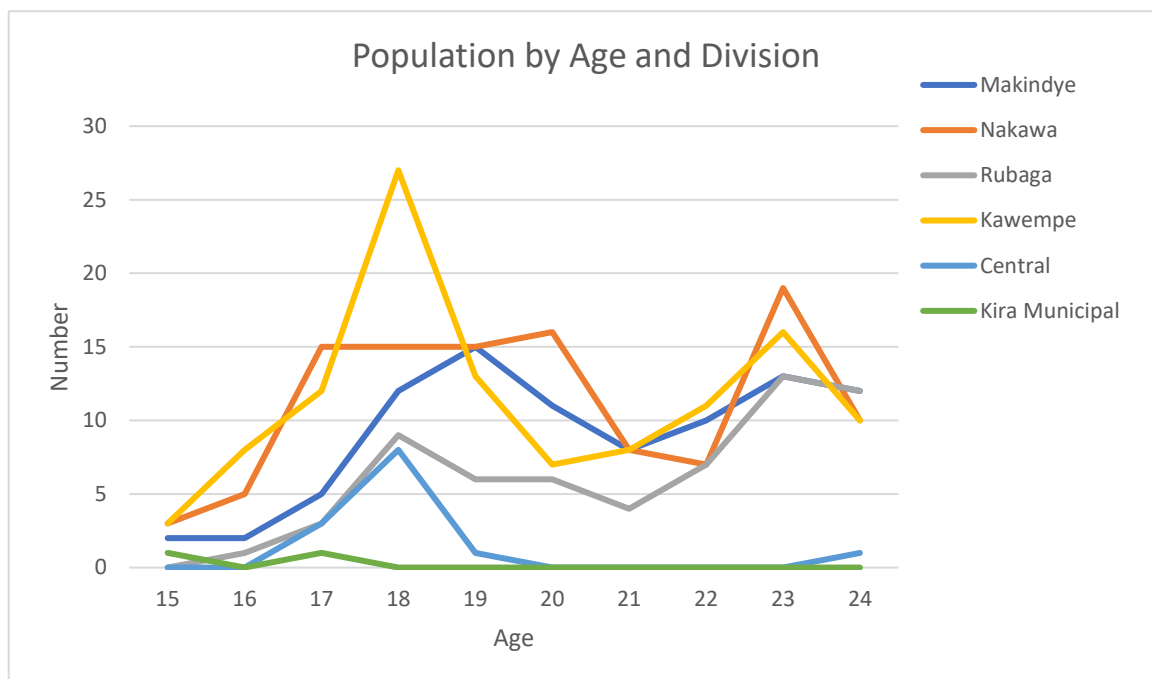
Maternal Health

Project Title: Building Climate-Resilient Communities for Safe Pregnancies in Adolescents / youth aged 15-24years (Empowered Youth, Safe Pregnancies)

1.2 Identification strategies of project beneficiaries

Kampala District						Wakiso district	Total
Age	Makindye	Nakawa	Rubaga	Kawempe	Central	Kira Municipal	
15	2	3	0	3	0	1	9
16	2	5	1	8	0	0	16
17	5	15	3	12	3	1	39
18	12	15	9	27	8	0	71
19	15	15	6	13	1	0	50
20	11	16	6	7	0	0	40

21	8	8	4	8	0	0	28
22	10	7	7	11	0	0	35
23	13	19	13	16	0	0	61
24	12	10	12	10	1	0	45
Total	90	113	61	115	13	2	394



Summary of beneficiaries reached per sector

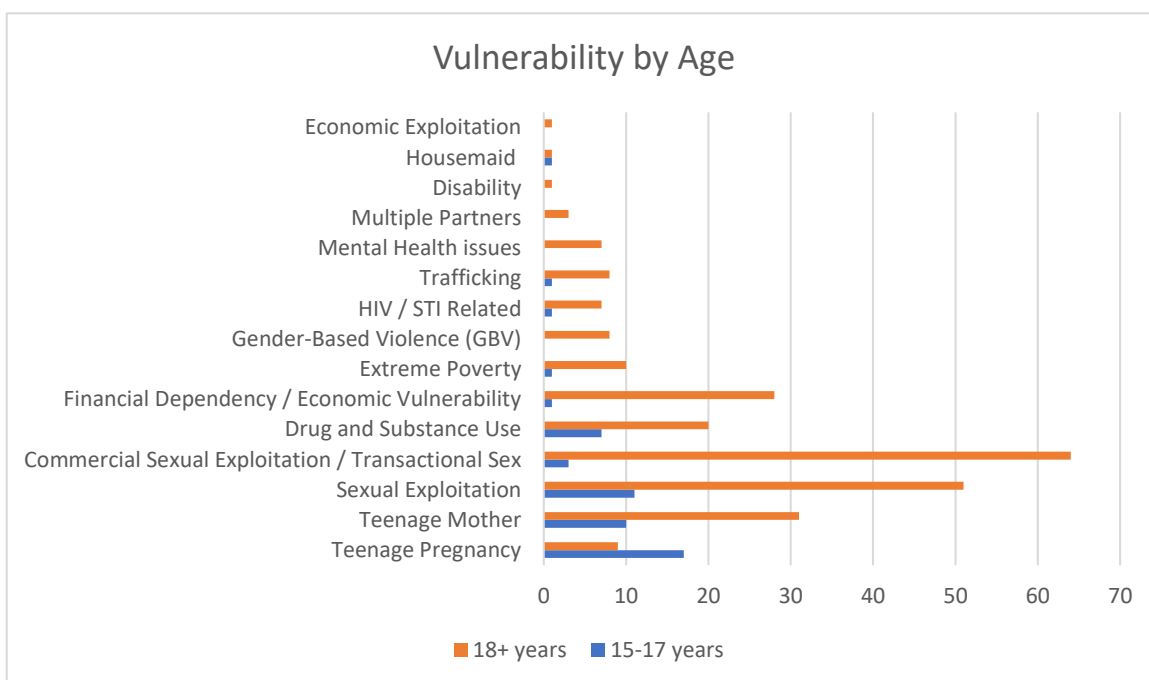
Sectors	Age 18 – 24 years	Age 0-17 years	Total beneficiaries	Comment
	Women	Girls		

Pregnant adolescents and young mothers	330	64	394	Majority were adult women, with a smaller number of adolescents, indicating more effort to strategize identification of more adolescent pregnant girls between 14-16 years across all divisions
Partners/spouses /boyfriends/ Fathers/ Brothers etc	59	01	60	Male caregivers were engaged to promote shared responsibility, positive relationships, and support for maternal and child wellbeing especially during the home visits done by social workers

Vulnerability Distribution by Age Group

Vulnerability Category	15–17 Years (n=51)	18+ Years (n=258)	Total
Teenage Pregnancy	17	9	26
Teenage Mother	10	31	41
Sexual Exploitation	11	51	62
Commercial Sexual Exploitation / Transactional Sex	3	64	67
Drug and Substance Use	7	20	27
Financial Dependency / Economic Vulnerability	1	28	29

Extreme Poverty	1	10	11
Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	0	8	8
HIV / STI Related	1	7	8
Trafficking	1	8	9
Mental Health (Suicidal thoughts/attempts, low esteem)	0	7	7
Multiple Partners	0	3	3
Disability	0	1	1
Housemaid / Domestic Labor	1	1	2
Economic Exploitation	0	1	1
TOTAL	51	258	309



Over the past year, the Uzazi Salama Program delivered integrated maternal health, protection, climate resilience, and economic empowerment services to 394 pregnant and at-risk adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in Kampala and Kira Municipality. The program addressed 309 documented vulnerabilities, including teenage pregnancy, poverty, sexual exploitation, and mental health challenges.

All 194 mothers who delivered survived, supported through antenatal care referrals, skilled birth attendance, and provision of Mama Kits, Baby Kits, food support, and mosquito nets. Economic empowerment activities such as vocational training, financial literacy, and life skills sessions strengthened resilience and livelihoods, while male engagement initiatives promoted responsible fatherhood.

Overall, the program improved maternal health outcomes, resilience, and socio-economic empowerment, while highlighting the need for continued support to address infant mortality and other persistent vulnerabilities.



Figure 1: The Project Coordinator together with the Project Health Coordinator at Komamboga Health Centre with the in charges after a meeting on how to upgrade the health facility.

Livelihoods, Skills Development, and Economic Empowerment

Access to Youth Employment Project

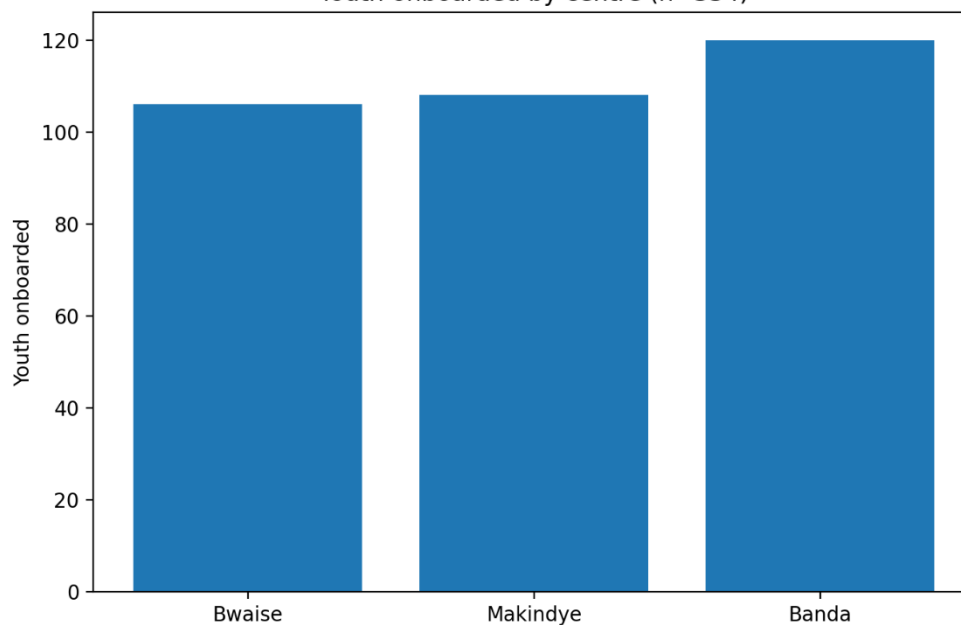
A three-year project supported by Philanthropique Next Foundation. During this year alone, the Access to Youth Employment Project, supported 334 slum youth (258 females and 76 males) to acquire market-relevant vocational skills across youth centres in Bwaise, Makindye, and Banda.

Beneficiaries were enrolled in short- and long-term training programmes in trades such as hairdressing, tailoring, bakery, electronics, plumbing, and ICT-related skills. Training emphasized hands-on practice, employability preparation, and mentorship to improve transitions into employment or self-employment.

To strengthen post-training sustainability, UYDEL promoted financial literacy and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), forming new groups and monitoring existing ones to encourage savings and access to small capital. In addition, an alumni database was expanded to 2,424 registered youth, enabling follow-up on employment outcomes, peer mentoring, and continued engagement.



Access to Youth Employment Project (2025)
Youth onboarded by centre (n=334)

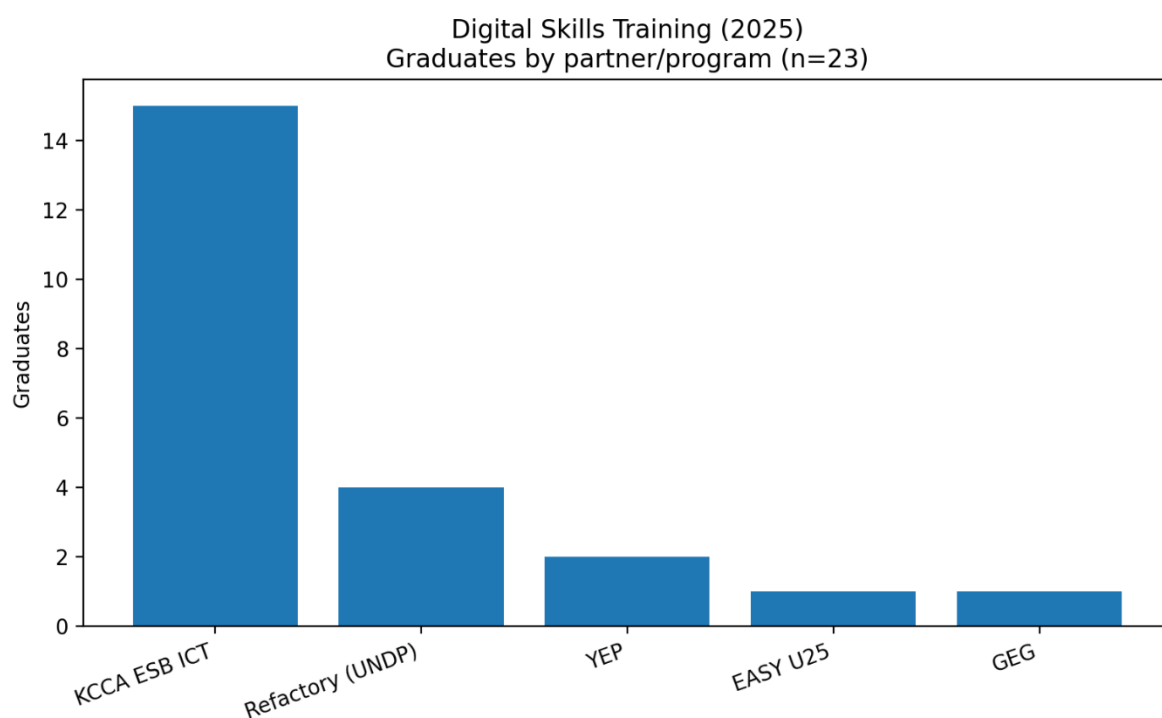


Digital Skills Training and Graduation Initiatives

Digital skilling empowers vulnerable youth with employability, income opportunities, digital access, resilience, and inclusion in a rapidly evolving digital economy. UYDEL advanced digital inclusion for vulnerable young women through targeted digital skills training implemented in partnership with KCCA, Refactory (UNDP), Youth Empowerment Program (YEP), EASY U25, and GEG.

In 2025, 23 young women successfully completed digital skills training, acquiring competencies in digital literacy, basic coding, web development, data handling, and employability skills. Graduates reported increased confidence, improved job readiness, and aspirations for careers in ICT, digital entrepreneurship, and related fields.

These initiatives expanded access to high-demand digital skills for young women traditionally excluded from technology pathways, contributing to gender equality and innovation in youth livelihoods.



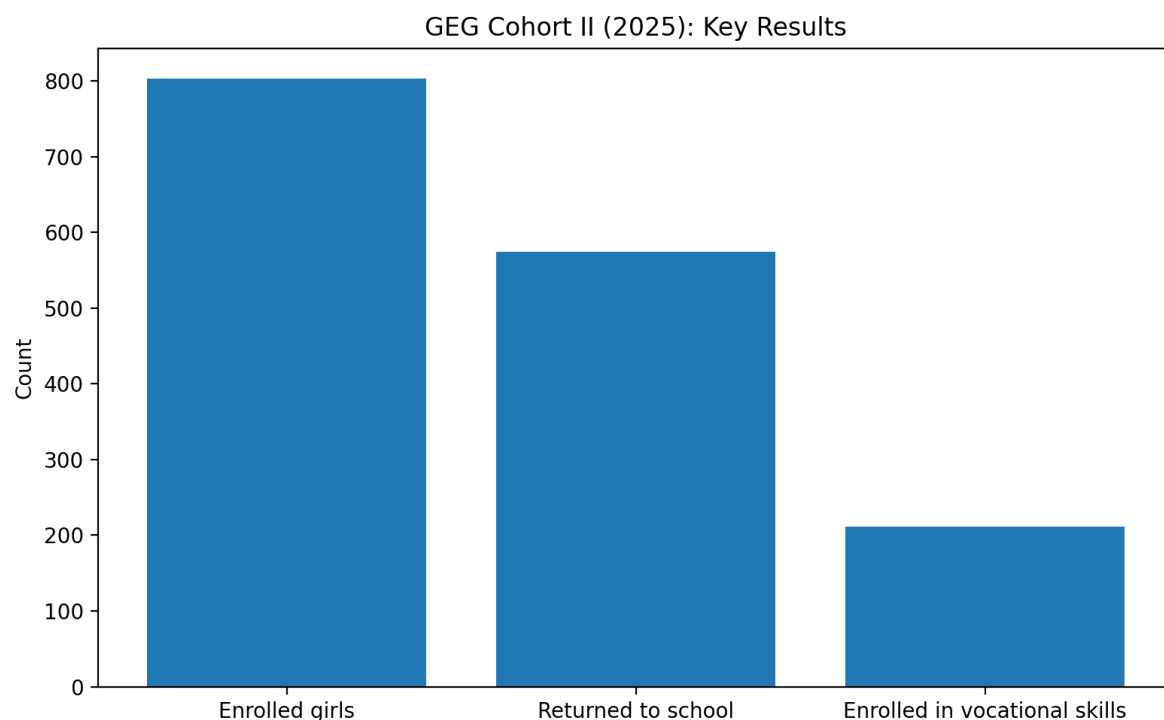
Gender Equality and Adolescent Girls' Empowerment

Girls Empowerment and Social Protection (GEG) Programme

This programme is supported by UNICEF and KCCA aiming at providing Social Protection. Through the Girls Empowering Girls Programme (GEG) Programme, UYDEL supported 803 adolescent girls across Kampala's divisions through a comprehensive package of mentorship, education support, vocational skills training, safeguarding, and psychosocial care.

Key achievements in 2025 included the reintegration of 574 girls into formal education, enrolment of 211 girls in vocational skills training, and delivery of intensive one-on-one and group mentorship sessions. All beneficiaries received PSEA awareness, while girls living with disabilities, teenage mothers, and those facing extreme vulnerability received targeted referrals and specialized support.

The programme also engaged caregivers, local leaders, service providers, and peer mentors to strengthen protective environments around girls, reinforcing community accountability and long-term impact.



Adolescent and Youth Empowerment Programme (AYEP)

UYDEL in partnership with UNICEF with funding from the Iceland government and PROSPECTS programme funded by Netherlands government is implementing integrated youth-focused interventions aimed at improving the wellbeing of vulnerable adolescent mothers, boys and girls through conditional cash transfers, mentorship and referral to health, protection, education, and socio-economic empowerment services including both refugees and host community members in Kikuube, Kyegegwa, Isingiro, Madi Okollo and Terego districts. The overall objective of the programme is to support inclusive and sustainable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and host communities by enhancing access to education, social protection, and employment opportunities. These interventions are implemented in close collaboration with district local governments and service providers to ensure coordination, accountability, and sustainability.

Adolescents/Youth receiving Peer Mentorship in Refugee settlement in West Nile and Ankole region

No. of adolescents girls and boys receiving mentorship sessions in Refugee Settlement	14-19 yrs		20-24yrs		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Nakivale Refugee Settlement- Isingiro District	70	163	63	154	133	317
Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in Madiokollo District	72	121	109	146	181	267
Imvepi Refugee Settlement- Terego District	9	70	45	178	54	248
Total	151	354	217	478	368	832

Adolescents/Youth receiving Peer Mentorship in Host communities in West Nile and Ankole region

No. of adolescents girls and boys receiving mentorship sessions in Refugee Settlement	14-19 yrs		20-24yrs		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Host Community - Isingiro District	77	60	77	42	154	102
Host Community - Madiokollo District	137	61	104	103	241	164
Host Community - Terego District	22	95	64	165	86	260
Total	236	216	245	310	481	526

Teenage Mothers receiving Peer Mentorship in Refugee settlement in Toro and Bunyoro region

No. of adolescents girls and boys receiving mentorship sessions in Refugee Settlement	14-19 yrs		20-24yrs		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Kikuube District- Kyagwali Refugee Settlement	0	144	0	143	0	287
Kyegegwa District- Kyaka II Refugee Settlement	0	67	0	169	0	236
Total	0	211	0	312	0	523

Teenage Mothers receiving Peer Mentorship in Host communities in Toro and Bunyoro region

No. of adolescents girls and boys receiving mentorship sessions in Refugee Settlement	14-19 yrs		20-24yrs		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Kikuube District- Host Community	0	54	0	181	0	235
Kyegegwa District -Host Community	0	93	0	150	0	243
Total	0	147	0	331	0	478

CASH TRANSFER DISBURSEMENTS

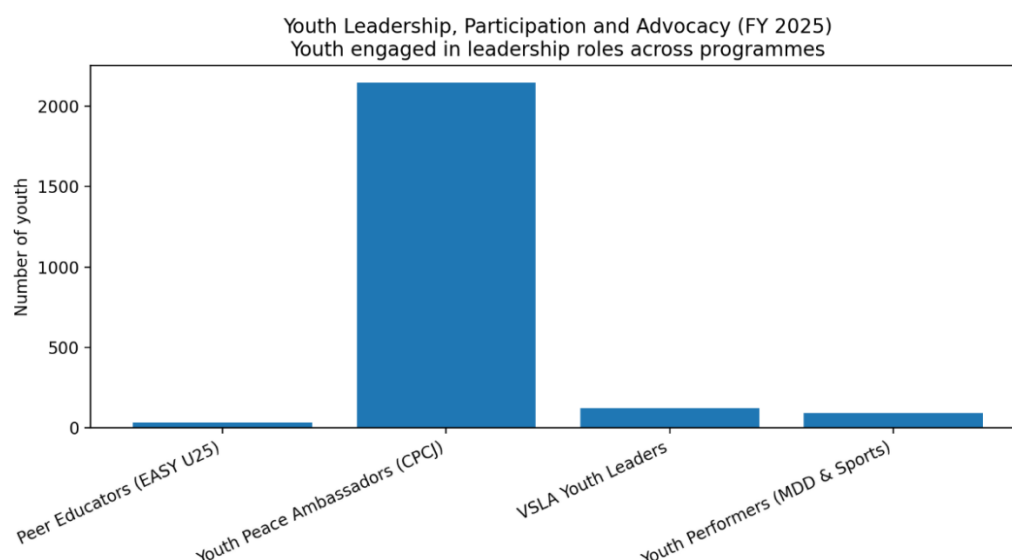
1. Cycle One (June-August 2025)			
District	Planned Target	Actual	Percentage
Kyegegwa	479	338	71%
Kikuube	522	400	77%
Total	1001	738	74%
2. Cycle Two (September -November 2025)			
Kyegegwa	479	398	83%
Kikuube	522	444	85%
Terego	617	568	92%
Madiokollo	844	578	68%
Insingiro	701	579	83%
Total	3,163	2,567	81%

Youth Leadership, Participation, and Advocacy

Youth-Led Initiatives and Community Engagement

Across all programmes in 2025, UYDEL intentionally promoted youth leadership and participation as drivers of sustainable change. Young people were supported to take on roles as peer educators, peace ambassadors, savings group leaders, performers, and community mobilizers.

Through youth-led outreach, music, dance and drama, sports-based life skills activities, and advocacy platforms, beneficiaries promoted SRHR awareness, mental wellbeing, crime prevention, and positive behaviour change. Many youth who entered programmes facing vulnerability later emerged as role models, referring peers to services, supporting community activities, and contributing to safer, more inclusive communities.



The programme results presented above demonstrate UYDEL's integrated and strategic approach to addressing youth vulnerability in 2025. The following section examines cross-cutting issues that were mainstreamed across all programmes to enhance quality, inclusion, accountability, and impact.

Alumni Engagement at UYDEL and Their Role in Community Support

UYDEL continues to strengthen its alumni network as a vital pillar of youth empowerment, mentorship, and community resilience. On 6 December 2025, UYDEL hosted a highly successful Alumni Day, bringing together over 2,000 former beneficiaries from different cohorts and program areas. Thanks to Prof Mary Jane Rotheram (UCLA, UNODC and Access project.

The Alumni Day served as a platform for former beneficiaries to reconnect, show solidarity, and offer mutual support, reflecting the enduring impact of UYDEL's interventions beyond programme exit. Alumni shared personal journeys of recovery, education, employment, entrepreneurship, and family life, demonstrating how life skills, vocational training, psychosocial support, and mentorship received at UYDEL continue to shape positive life outcomes.

Importantly, the event fostered peer learning and collective coping, where alumni openly discussed challenges such as unemployment, parenting, mental health, relapse risks, and social pressures. Through these discussions, alumni identified practical ways of supporting one another and extending help to vulnerable children and youth currently enrolled in UYDEL programmes.

Alumni also reaffirmed their role as community role models, mentors, peer educators, and advocates, helping to prevent substance abuse, crime, and exploitation among younger peers. Their lived experience positions them uniquely to guide at-risk youth through relatable, credible mentorship.

Overall, the Alumni Day reinforced UYDEL's commitment to long-term engagement, aftercare, and community ownership, demonstrating that alumni are not only beneficiaries but active partners in nurturing resilience, hope, and positive change for the next generation.

Research

Exploring the forms and determinants of youth sexual exploitation in Uganda: A pilot study

Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL), in partnership with École Nationale d'Administration Publique (ENAP) are partnering to conduct pilot research titled “*Exploring the forms and determinants of youth sexual exploitation in Uganda*” from 1st October 2025 to 1st October 2026 in Kampala.

Research goal and objectives

Goal

The overall aim of this pilot study is to understand better the forms and perceived causes of domestic youth sexual exploitation in Uganda and to pilot an approach for estimating the prevalence of youth sexual exploitation in preparation for a larger study documenting the causes and prevalence of domestic youth sexual exploitation and co-designing with communities approaches for prevention.

Objectives

1. To understand the experience of youth sexual exploitation through critical ethnographic conversations with survivors.
2. To explore the perceived causes and possibilities for prevention of youth sexual exploitation through key informant interviews and fuzzy cognitive mapping with survivors and other stakeholders in communities.
3. To pilot a questionnaire survey to collect quantitative data about perceptions, prevalence and factors associated with youth sexual exploitation in Uganda.

As part of this collaboration, Dr. Belaid Loubna travelled to Uganda and worked closely with UYDEL staff and other stakeholders in the design, training, data collection, capacity building, methodological and oversight analysis phases of the study from October 18-30, 2025.

To date the research project has undergone an ethics review involving human participants by the Research Ethics Committee of the Ecole nationale d'administration publiq. In addition, the pilot study has been approved by the Makerere University School of Social Sciences

Research and Ethics Committee. The study is now under review by the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNSCT) for final approval and granting permission to conduct the study in the targeted areas among the study participants.



CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Across all programmes implemented in FY 2025, UYDEL intentionally mainstreamed cross-cutting issues to ensure that interventions were inclusive, safe, accountable, participatory, and sustainable. These themes were not implemented as stand-alone activities, but were embedded throughout programme design, delivery, monitoring, and learning.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Gender equality and inclusion remained central to UYDEL's programming in 2025. The organization prioritized reaching girls and young women, who face disproportionate risks of sexual exploitation, early pregnancy, school dropout, and economic exclusion, while also engaging boys and young men to promote positive masculinities and shared responsibility.

Across projects, UYDEL:

- Ensured gender-responsive targeting, with females constituting the majority of beneficiaries in skills training, SRHR, and protection programmes
- Implemented girls-only safe spaces under the GEG Programme to provide tailored mentorship, psychosocial support, and life skills development

- Integrated disability inclusion, supporting young people with disabilities through targeted referrals, assistive support, and inclusive service delivery
- Addressed intersectional vulnerabilities, including teenage motherhood, displacement, substance abuse, and extreme poverty

Programming approaches were adapted to meet the needs of diverse groups, ensuring that no young person was left behind due to gender, disability, age, or socio-economic status.

Safeguarding and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

UYDEL maintained a strong commitment to safeguarding children and young people from harm across all its operations. In 2025, safeguarding and PSEA were systematically integrated across projects, including EASY U25, GEG, CPCJ, AYEP, and centre-based interventions.

Key safeguarding measures included:

- Provision of PSEA awareness sessions for beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, and peer educators
- Use of safe referral pathways for GBV, SGBV, child protection, and mental health cases
- Confidential case management, counselling, and follow-up through trained social workers
- Engagement of caregivers, community leaders, and service providers to strengthen protective environments

During the year, UYDEL managed and referred GBV and SGBV cases in line with national safeguarding standards, ensuring survivor-centred, confidential, and ethical responses. Safeguarding accountability mechanisms were reinforced to promote trust, safety, and dignity for all beneficiaries.

Youth Participation and Leadership

Youth participation is a defining feature of UYDEL's approach. In 2025, young people were actively engaged not only as beneficiaries, but as leaders, educators, mobilizers, and advocates within their communities.

Across programmes:

- Youth were trained and supported as peer educators under the EASY U25 Project
- Youth Peace Ambassadors under CPCJ promoted non-violence, civic responsibility, and community cohesion
- Beneficiaries assumed leadership roles in Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)
- Young people led and participated in music, dance, drama, sports, and outreach activities to promote SRHR awareness, mental wellbeing, and positive behaviour change

These opportunities strengthened confidence, communication skills, and a sense of ownership among young people, while reinforcing the sustainability and relevance of interventions.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Strategic partnerships were essential to UYDEL's impact in 2025. The organization worked closely with a wide range of stakeholders to enhance service delivery, scale impact, and strengthen systems.

Key partnerships included:

- Government institutions such as KCCA, Ministry of Health, justice and security agencies
- Public health facilities providing youth-friendly SRHR services
- Civil society organizations and community-based organizations supporting protection, livelihoods, and advocacy
- Development partners and donors supporting programme implementation and innovation

- Community leaders, caregivers, and faith-based institutions strengthening local ownership

Through collaboration, UYDEL enhanced referral systems, avoided duplication, leveraged complementary expertise, and ensured alignment with national development priorities and global commitments.

The integration of these cross-cutting issues strengthened programme quality, accountability, and sustainability across UYDEL's portfolio. The next section highlights how UYDEL monitored progress, generated evidence, and used learning to improve programme effectiveness.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) remained a critical pillar of UYDEL's programming in FY 2025, supporting accountability, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous improvement across all projects. UYDEL applied a results-oriented MEL framework to track progress against project objectives, assess outcomes, and generate learning to strengthen programme quality and impact.

Monitoring Systems and Tools

UYDEL implemented robust monitoring systems across its programmes, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to track outputs, outcomes, and beneficiary experiences.

Key monitoring tools and approaches included:

- Routine activity tracking tools, including attendance registers, service delivery logs, referral forms, and case management records
- Project-specific indicators and results frameworks, aligned to donor requirements and UYDEL's Strategic Plan 2023–2027
- Centre-based monitoring systems capturing data on counselling, skills training, education reintegration, safeguarding cases, and follow-up visits
- Community outreach monitoring tools documenting reach, referrals, and service uptake

- Peer educator reporting tools to track youth-led outreach and engagement

Data was disaggregated by sex, age, location, and vulnerability type where possible, enabling UYDEL to monitor inclusion, equity, and differential outcomes across population groups.

Evaluation and Use of Evidence

UYDEL prioritized evidence generation and use throughout 2025 to inform programme adaptation and advocacy. Evaluative processes were embedded within projects and supported learning at both programme and organizational levels.

Key evaluation and evidence-generation efforts included:

- Periodic project reviews and progress assessments, including quarterly and annual reporting
- Outcome-focused assessments to examine behaviour change, skills acquisition, and service uptake
- Documentation of Most Significant Change (MSC) stories, capturing qualitative evidence of transformation in the lives of young people
- Research and analytical outputs, such as the Youth Crime Report produced under the CPCJ Project, contributing to national dialogue and policy engagement

Findings from evaluations and assessments were shared with programme teams, partners, and donors to promote transparency and collective learning.

Learning and Adaptive Management

Learning was actively used to improve programme design and delivery in FY 2025. UYDEL applied a learning-by-doing approach, allowing teams to adapt interventions based on real-time data, beneficiary feedback, and contextual changes.

Key learning and adaptation practices included:

- Regular reflection meetings at centre and project levels to review progress, challenges, and lessons
- Adaptive targeting of outreach activities to focus on high-risk hotspots and underserved groups

- Refinement of psychosocial and life-skills interventions based on participant feedback and observed outcomes
- Strengthening referral pathways and partnerships in response to service access gaps
- Use of learning from pilot and quarterly activities (e.g. EASY U25 interventions) to inform scale-up and replication

Youth feedback played a central role in learning processes, ensuring that programmes remained relevant, responsive, and youth-centred.

Accountability and Reporting

UYDEL maintained strong accountability to beneficiaries, partners, and donors through transparent reporting and documentation. Project teams submitted timely narrative and statistical reports, supported by verifiable data and case studies. Financial and programmatic reporting were aligned to enable comparison between activities, outputs, and expenditure.

Internal controls and data verification processes were applied to ensure data quality, while donor-specific MEL requirements were adhered to across all funded projects.

Through strong MEL systems, UYDEL ensured that its interventions in 2025 were evidence-based, adaptive, and accountable. The next section reflects on the key challenges encountered during implementation and the lessons learned to inform future programming.

WEBINARS & CONFERENCES

Participation in the 34th session on Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in May 2025)

At the 34th Session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) held in Vienna from 19-23 May 2025, Dr. Rogers Kasirye actively participated on behalf of civil society, contributing to discussions on youth crime prevention, digital safety, and alternative development. He attended plenary meetings, civil society dialogues, and multiple side events, including Uganda's official session on criminal justice innovation.

Uganda played a significant role during the Commission, showcasing reforms in prosecution, diversion, forensic science, and access to justice. The Ugandan delegation—led by the Ambassador and the Director of Public Prosecutions, highlighted progress in combating

organized crime, cybercrime, and narcotics, and promoted sustainable livelihood alternatives such as coffee and cocoa farming.

Uganda benefited through strengthened partnerships with UNODC, new collaboration opportunities on forensic support, alternative development, and child protection, and enhanced visibility of its justice innovations. The session reinforced Uganda's commitment to evidence-based, youth-centred crime prevention.



Above: Dr. Kasirye Rogers attending the CPCJ in Vienna Austria

Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) was represented by Ms. Anna Nabulya, Deputy Director, and Ms. Barbara Nakijoba, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, at the Capacity-Building Workshop for United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons (UNVTF) Grantees, convened by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The workshop was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, and brought together implementing partners from across the region to strengthen technical capacity on international and regional frameworks addressing trafficking in persons, with a strong emphasis on victim-centred and survivor-informed approaches.

Key areas of focus included project planning and design, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, resource mobilization, and partnership-building within the African context. The forum provided a valuable platform for peer learning, experience sharing, and

collaboration among organizations working to improve protection, support, and access to justice for victims of trafficking.

UYDEL's participation reinforced the organization's commitment to applying global best practices to strengthen programming and advocacy for vulnerable children and young people. Lessons and insights gained from the workshop will inform the enhancement of UYDEL's anti-trafficking and protection interventions in the coming year.

UYDEL extends its appreciation to the UNODC Vienna Office, UNODC Regional Office for Southern Africa, and the UNVTF Secretariat for the excellent organization and support. Special thanks are also extended to the facilitators, including Billy Batware, Jeevan Kanakkassery, and Monica Belalcazar, as well as the wider UNODC and UNDP teams, for promoting meaningful engagement, learning, and collaboration.



African Union Training of Trainers (ToT) on Engaging Youth in Prevention

In June 2025, UYDEL represented by Ms. Barbara Nakijoba participated in the African Union Training of Trainers (ToT) on Engaging Youth in Prevention, held in Seychelles from 2-6 June 2025. The training, convened by the African Union Commission and facilitated by internationally accredited prevention specialists, brought together youth practitioners, policy actors, and prevention experts from across Africa to strengthen capacity for evidence-based youth substance-use prevention.

The intensive five-day programme focused on prevention science, youth development frameworks, advocacy and leadership, and implementation planning, using participatory and

experiential learning approaches. Key themes included understanding global substance-use trends, applying scientific principles to prevention programming, addressing environmental and socio-cultural risk factors, and strengthening youth leadership in prevention efforts.

Participants were equipped with practical skills in programme design, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and advocacy, and developed institution-specific implementation plans aligned with international prevention standards. The training strengthened UYDEL's institutional capacity to design and implement youth-centred, evidence-based prevention interventions, while enhancing credibility in engaging communities, partners, and donors.

Lessons from the training will inform UYDEL's substance-use prevention programming, advocacy initiatives, and capacity-building efforts in 2026 and beyond.



African Union Technical Experts Meeting on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2026-2030)

In November 2025, UYDEL participated in the African Union Technical Experts Meeting on the Development of the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2026-2030), held in Maputo, Mozambique, as part of Uganda's official delegation.

The meeting reviewed progress under the 2019–2025 framework and developed an evidence-based continental roadmap to address drugs and crime. Uganda made key technical contributions, particularly on cybercrime, youth protection, mental health, and inclusive prevention approaches, which were incorporated into the draft Plan of Action.

UYDEL's participation strengthened its role in regional policy dialogue and advocacy, ensuring that youth-centred and prevention-focused priorities are reflected in continental strategies.



Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC), Practitioners series Core Course Training in Maseru Lesotho

The Universal Prevention Curriculum for Substance Use for Practitioners (UPC-CORE) has been designed to provide knowledge, skills and competencies for prevention professionals to understand the key elements of evidence-based prevention (EBP) and the most effective prevention strategies currently available. This training was organised by The Colombo Plan Drug Advisory in liason with the Lesotho Ministry of Health. The training on UPC-Practitioner's Series core Course and School Track Courses 1-5 ran concurrently from 5th – 15th May, 2025. The Course was attended by 27 learners (9 males and 18 females) drawn from various professions such as healthcare workers, security forces, education sector and the civil society.

This training was facilitated by Mr. Mutaawe Rogers from UYDEL and Ms. Sibusisiwe Butale from Botswana.



Above: Mr. Mutaawe Rogers making his presentation during the training

Capacity Building in Evidence-Based Substance Use Prevention (UPC Environment Track) in Zambia-Lusaka

UYDEL strengthened its institutional capacity in evidence-based substance use prevention through participation and facilitation in the Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC)-Practitioners Series Core Course and Environment Track (Courses 41-44) held in Lusaka, Zambia (18–28 August 2025), delivered by The Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Programme. The training, facilitated by Dr. Rogers Kasirye and Dr. Richard Gakunju, equipped prevention practitioners from government and civil society with practical competencies in prevention science, planning and implementing environmental-based interventions, and applying monitoring and evaluation approaches to prevention programming. Learning progress was assessed through pre- and post-tests, with reported post-test results indicating improved performance (mean score 74%, highest 90%, lowest 57%) alongside strong participant feedback on course relevance and structure.



All Participants attending UPC Core, School truck and Environment Track

Summary from the Mid-Year Training Institute (MYTI) 2025, Held in NASHVILLE TENNESSEE, July 20-24 2025

The 24th Mid-Year Training Institute (MYTI) is one of two major events organized by Community Based Advocacy Focussed Data Driven Coalition Building Association (CADCA) every year and offers courses, workshops, and plenary sessions from basic through advanced levels of topics related to formation of anti-drug community coalitions. The MYTI was attended by 2,400 participants from 21 countries across the world. This annual gathering of community coalitions allows international participants ample opportunities to engage and interact with coalition leaders, exchange experiences, share best practices, and network in developing community coalitions in diverse countries and cultural settings. CADCA's mission is to develop and strengthen the capacity of community coalitions to create communities that are safe, healthy and drug free.

The 24th Mid-Year event took place at the Gaylord Opryland, located in Nashville, TN from July 20-24, 2025.

Coalition Development Training (CDT)

The goal of the Coalition Development Training Initiative is to increase the number of anti-drug community coalitions in more communities and countries around the world. Therefore, to achieve this objective CADCA trained individuals from communities to become coalition leaders.

TOT Participants were able to:

- Apply effective training techniques in delivering CADCA's Coalition Development Training (CDT)
- Deliver useful facilitation skills to promote learner engagement, skill building and training transfer
- Build a worldwide network of prevention professionals



Above: The cross section of participants from Uganda, Kenya and Senegal during the CDT training

Modules covered during the CDT

1. Form a Coalition
2. Community Assessment
3. Create a Logic Model
4. Build Coalition Capacity
5. Strategic planning
6. Implementation
7. Sustainability
- 8. Evaluation**



Above: The C.E.O of CADCA Ret. Major General Barrye Price and other participants during the CDT training

The UPC Environment Track 4 Training Course in Lusaka Zambia

The training covered the Track 4: Environment-Based Prevention Courses 45 – 47 as well as UPC Core Refresher course from 15-25 September 2025 in preparation for the upcoming UPC examination. The Track 4 curriculum is designed to provide evidence-based knowledge and principles of effective community-wide policies, regulations, and laws. The course emphasizes the role of environmental interventions (EIs) within substance use prevention frameworks and covers: Principles and types of EIs proven to be effective; Utilization of community resources, including existing environmental policies and Methods for collecting relevant community data to inform prevention strategies. The training was attended by 23 participants drawn from various sectors at Lusaka Legacy Resort.

This training was organised by Colombo Plan in collaboration with the Drug Enforcement Commission and Ministry of Health, Zambia. The training was funded by Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), U.S Department of State. This

training was facilitated by Mr. Mutaawe Rogers from UYDEL and Ms. Sibusisiwe Butale from Botswana.



Above: Mr. Mutaawe with participants pause for a group photo at the certification ceremony and during his presentation at the plenary session

The AFRI-Asia Summit on the Prevention of Drug Use 2025 held from 27th to 29th October 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya

The AFRI-Asia Summit on the Prevention of Drug Use 2025, held from 27-29 October 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya, brought together policymakers, government representatives, researchers, practitioners, youth leaders, and civil society actors from across Africa and Asia to examine how drug-related harms are framed, understood, and addressed across the Global South. The summit highlighted the disproportionate impact of alcohol and other psychoactive substances on young people, women, and vulnerable communities, particularly in regions characterized by rapid urbanization, inequality, and weak regulatory environments.

Participants emphasized the need to move beyond punitive approaches toward evidence-based, rights-centred prevention, treatment, and recovery strategies, with discussions focusing on the intersections between substance use, youth crime, gender-based violence, mental health, and economic exclusion. The forum underscored the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration, strong civil society engagement, youth empowerment, gender inclusion, and alignment with global frameworks such as WHO SAFER.

The summit also served as a platform for cross-continental collaboration and capacity building, showcasing innovative research and community-driven prevention models. Uganda was represented by delegates from Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL), led by Dr. Rogers

Kasirye, Executive Director, alongside Ms. Linda Ochen, Project Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, and Mr. Kinobi Moses, Youth Crime Prevention Officer. The UYDEL team shared practical experiences and youth-led, community-based interventions that have demonstrated success in reducing drug-related harms in urban informal settlements, contributing valuable insights to regional and global prevention efforts.



UYDEL's participation underscored its continued leadership and commitment to advancing evidence-based prevention approaches, youth empowerment, and community-based interventions that promote a drug-free generation. The Afri-Asia Summit provided an invaluable platform for learning, networking, and sharing practical experiences in drug use prevention and recovery.

Presentation at the Uganda Human Rights Commission

Due to the rising incidence of narcotics-related cases and associated crime, there is an urgent need to expand and strengthen alternatives to criminal activity. This concern was emphasized by Dr. Rogers Kasirye during the 28th UHRC Annual Report Consultative Meeting held at the UHRC offices at Plot 19 Lumumba Avenue, Rume Building, Commission Boardroom, 4th Floor. Dr. Kasirye highlighted the growing pressure drug-related cases place on the justice system and recommended the establishment of a dedicated drug court to reduce the judicial

burden and promote more effective responses to drug offences. He further called for the strict enforcement of the Psychotropic and Narcotic Drugs (Control) Act, 2024, with a particular focus on curbing trafficking, distribution networks, and emerging harmful substances. He also urged a review of judicial sentencing approaches for drug offenders, advocating a shift from punitive measures toward protection, treatment, and rehabilitation. Expanding treatment and rehabilitation services, especially youth-friendly and regionally accessible programs, was identified as a critical priority.

Additionally, Dr. Kasirye emphasized the importance of strengthening school- and community-based prevention efforts through awareness campaigns and early intervention programs targeting at-risk youth. He called for the development of a comprehensive national strategy that addresses the root causes of drug abuse, including poverty, unemployment, limited educational opportunities, mental health challenges, and inadequate psychosocial support. This approach would require coordinated action among key sectors, including social development, education, and internal affairs.

Further recommendations included increasing taxation on alcohol and allocating the proceeds toward research, prevention, and rehabilitation initiatives. He also advocated for the promotion of diversion programs and community-based rehabilitation, enhanced law enforcement capacity, and the establishment of a multisectoral, gender-sensitive prevention framework to ensure a holistic and sustainable response to the drug challenge. Due to the rising incidence of narcotics-related cases and crime, there is a pressing need to expand and strengthen alternatives to criminal activity. This was highlighted by Dr. Kasirye Rogers during the 28th UHRC annual report consultative meeting held at the uhrc offices on plot 19 Lumumba Avenue, Rume Building in the Commission Boardroom on 4th floor.



UYDEL Participated in UN and IGAD Strategic Consultations on Inclusive Development, Youth, and Peace (2026-2030)

UYDEL took part in a UN Women–facilitated strategic consultation on the United Nations Strategic Direction and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2026-2030, chaired by the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Mr. Ian King. The consultation brought together colleagues across the UN system to reflect on shared priorities for the next Cooperation Framework cycle and how to strengthen collective action in advancing gender equality, inclusion, and sustainable development. Discussions focused on six interconnected strategic priorities covering inclusive human development, climate resilience, rights-based governance, livelihoods and employment, peace and social cohesion, and partnerships and financing for the SDGs. A strong emphasis was placed on “Delivering as One,” Results-Based Management, accountability, and partnerships, aligning UN efforts with Uganda’s Vision 2040 and the 2030 Agenda.

In addition, UYDEL was represented at the National Consultations on the Review of the IGAD Strategy 2021-2025 and the formulation of the 2026-2030 Strategy, convened by IGAD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Kampala Serena Hotel. The consultations highlighted a

clear commitment to youth inclusion, women's participation, and peacebuilding across the IGAD region. UYDEL welcomed the opportunity for civil society to contribute to shaping regional priorities and strategies that directly impact communities.

Together, these engagements reaffirm UYDEL's commitment to contributing to transformative agendas that uplift young people, especially young women strengthen resilience, promote peace, and ensure that no one is left behind, translating policy commitments into meaningful action at community, national, and regional levels.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In FY 2025, UYDEL managed financial resources in line with its mission to improve the wellbeing and resilience of vulnerable children and young people, while upholding principles of accountability, transparency, and value for money. Financial management systems were applied to ensure that funds were utilized efficiently and in compliance with donor agreements, organizational policies, and applicable regulatory requirements.

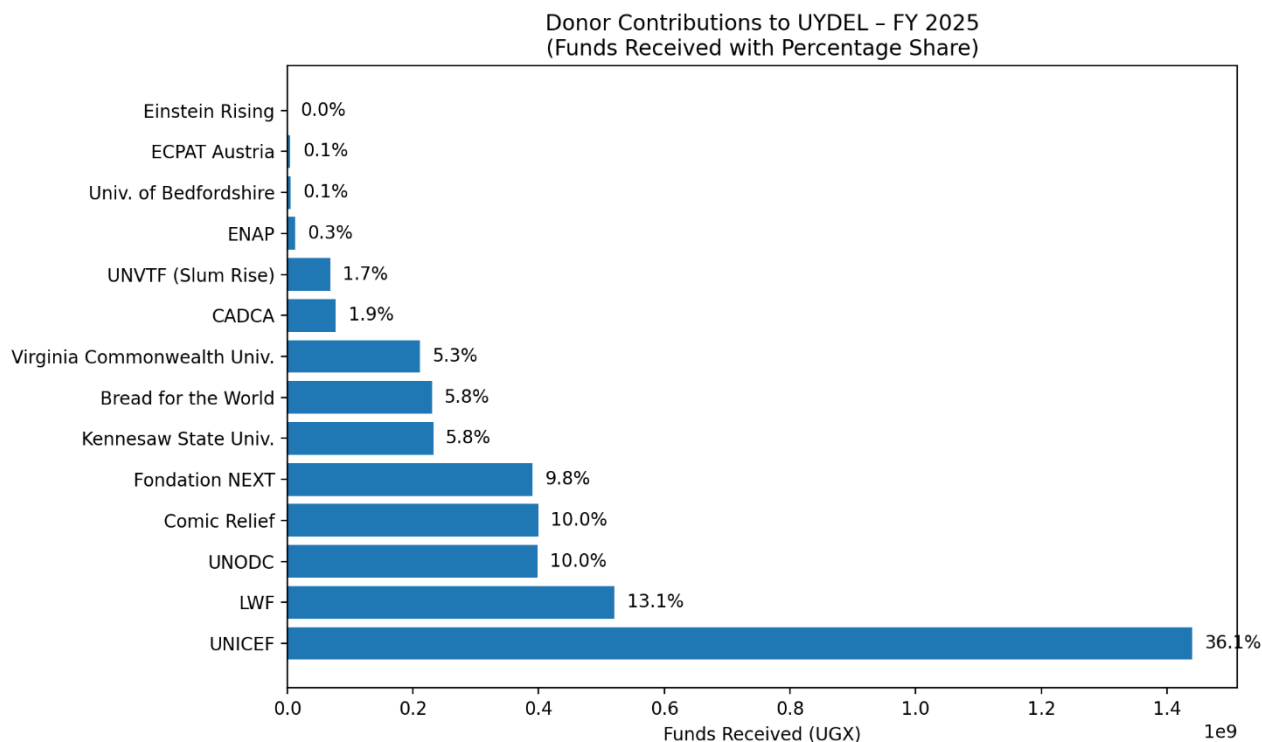
Overview of Income

UYDEL's programmes in 2025 were financed through a combination of donor funding, development partner contributions, and project-specific grants. These resources supported the implementation of protection, health, livelihoods, skills development, and advocacy interventions across multiple locations.

Funding was mobilized to support:

- Programme and project implementation
- Direct beneficiary support and service delivery
- Capacity building of staff, peer educators, and community structures
- Monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities
- Safeguarding, case management, and referral services

UYDEL continued to work closely with its donors and partners to align funding with strategic priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan 2023-2027.



Overview of Expenditure

Expenditure during FY 2025 was primarily directed toward programme implementation, ensuring that the majority of resources reached beneficiaries directly. Key expenditure areas included:

- Skills training materials, equipment, and facilitation costs
- SRHR services, community outreaches, and youth-friendly activities
- Psychosocial support, counselling, and safeguarding interventions
- Youth leadership, peer education, and advocacy initiatives
- Community mobilization, partnerships, and coordination
- Operational support necessary for effective programme delivery

Cost controls and internal approval processes were applied to ensure expenditures were reasonable, justified, and aligned with approved work plans and budgets.

Financial Accountability and Controls

UYDEL maintained strong financial accountability mechanisms throughout the year, including:

- Segregation of financial roles and responsibilities
- Regular internal financial reviews and reconciliations
- Compliance with donor financial reporting requirements
- Independent audits conducted in line with statutory and donor obligations

Financial and programmatic reporting were closely linked, enabling comparison between planned activities, outputs achieved, and resources utilized.

Donor and Funding Partners

UYDEL's work in FY 2025 was made possible through the support of a range of development partners and donors, who contributed to specific projects and thematic areas. These partnerships enabled UYDEL to respond to emerging needs, pilot innovative approaches, and scale effective interventions.

A detailed breakdown of donor contributions and audited financial statements are presented separately in the audited financial report, in line with reporting and disclosure requirements.

Sound financial stewardship enabled UYDEL to deliver impactful programmes for children and young people in 2025. The next section highlights the key partnerships and stakeholders that contributed to the organization's achievements during the year.

PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Partnerships remained central to UYDEL's ability to deliver effective, inclusive, and sustainable programmes in FY 2025. Through collaboration with government institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, communities, and young people themselves, UYDEL strengthened service delivery, expanded reach, and enhanced the quality and impact of its interventions.

Government and Public Sector Partners

UYDEL worked closely with national and local government institutions to align programmes with national priorities, strengthen referral systems, and promote sustainability.

Key areas of collaboration included:

- Local government authorities, particularly Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), to support youth-friendly centres, community outreach, and skills development initiatives
- Public health facilities and the Ministry of Health, to expand access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, HIV testing and counselling, and referrals
- Justice and security sector institutions, to support crime prevention, community safety, and youth engagement initiatives under the CPCJ Project

These partnerships enhanced coordination, avoided duplication, and ensured that interventions complemented public systems and policies.

Civil Society and Community-Based Organizations

UYDEL collaborated with a wide range of civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and networks to reach vulnerable populations, strengthen community ownership, and leverage local expertise.

Through these partnerships, UYDEL:

- Implemented community-based outreach and prevention activities
- Strengthened safeguarding, referral, and case management pathways
- Supported coalition-building and advocacy initiatives, including substance abuse prevention under the CADCA-supported project

Civil society partnerships enabled UYDEL to respond effectively to local contexts and build trust within communities.

Development Partners and Donors

UYDEL's programmes in 2025 were supported by development partners and donors who provided financial resources, technical support, and strategic guidance. These partnerships enabled UYDEL to pilot innovative approaches, scale effective interventions, and respond to emerging risks affecting children and young people.

Development partner collaboration also supported:

- Capacity building for staff and community structures

- Evidence generation, learning, and reporting
- Integration of cross-cutting priorities such as safeguarding, gender equality, and youth participation

UYDEL maintained transparent communication and accountability with its donors through regular reporting, reviews, and engagement.

Community Leaders, Caregivers, and Families

Communities played a critical role in the success of UYDEL's programmes. UYDEL actively engaged community leaders, caregivers, parents, and families to strengthen protective environments around children and young people.

Community engagement included:

- Sensitization on child protection, safeguarding, and positive parenting
- Caregiver involvement in education reintegration and skills training decisions
- Community participation in outreach, referral, and follow-up activities

This engagement fostered shared responsibility, improved acceptance of interventions, and supported long-term outcomes for beneficiaries.



Youth as Key Stakeholders

Young people themselves are central stakeholders in UYDEL’s work. In 2025, youth were actively engaged in programme design, implementation, outreach, and learning processes.

Through peer education, leadership roles, advocacy platforms, and feedback mechanisms, young people contributed to shaping interventions that reflect their realities and priorities. This approach strengthened relevance, accountability, and sustainability while reinforcing UYDEL’s commitment to youth empowerment.

The partnerships and stakeholder engagement described above were instrumental to UYDEL’s achievements in 2025. The final section outlines UYDEL’s priorities and strategic direction for 2026, building on the lessons and momentum of the year.

Universal Prevention Curriculum for Substance Use prevention practitioners (UPC) Training conducted by UYDEL (Colombo Plan accredited training provider)

Table showing total number trained

Training Venue	Nature of trainees	Numbers Reached (F and M)
Makerere University	University students from social work Department	37(8M, 29F)
Muteesa Royal University	University students from social work Department	24 (11M, 13F)
UYDEL Masooli Centre	Social workers, Psychologists, Peer mentors	43 (10M, 33F)
TOTAL		104(29M, 75F)

Journal article

I AM IMPORTANT: Reflections from Young People in Kenya and Uganda on the Value of Participation for Children Affected by Sexual Abuse and Exploitation.

<https://lnkd.in/dTVcNMUc>

LOOKING AHEAD-PRIORITIES FOR 2026

Building on the achievements, lessons, and partnerships of FY 2025, UYDEL enters 2026 with a renewed commitment to strengthening the resilience, protection, and socio-economic empowerment of vulnerable children and young people. Guided by the Strategic Plan 2023–2027, UYDEL’s priorities for 2026 focus on deepening impact, scaling effective interventions, and strengthening institutional systems to respond to evolving youth needs.

Strengthening Integrated Youth-Centred Programming

In 2026, UYDEL will continue to advance integrated programming approaches that combine psychosocial support, health services, skills development, and economic empowerment. Evidence from 2025 demonstrated that holistic interventions deliver more sustainable outcomes than stand-alone activities.

Priority actions include:

- Strengthening the integration of mental health and psychosocial support across all programmes
- Deepening linkages between SRHR services, life skills, and livelihoods under integrated models such as EASY U25
- Enhancing follow-up and post-training support for youth transitioning into employment or self-employment

Expanding Livelihoods, Skills, and Digital Inclusion

UYDEL will prioritize the expansion of market-relevant skills development, with increased emphasis on digital skills, employability, and entrepreneurship. Lessons from vocational and digital skills initiatives in 2025 will inform improved training models and stronger pathways to income generation.

Key priorities include:

- Expanding access to vocational and digital skills training for adolescent girls and young women
- Strengthening partnerships with private sector actors to support internships, apprenticeships, and job placement
- Scaling financial literacy and VSLA models to support youth-led enterprises

Enhancing Protection, Safeguarding, and Community Safety

UYDEL remains committed to protecting children and young people from violence, exploitation, and harm. In 2026, the organization will strengthen safeguarding systems and community-based prevention approaches.

Planned focus areas include:

- Enhancing safeguarding and PSEA systems, awareness, and accountability
- Strengthening community and youth-led crime prevention and substance abuse prevention initiatives
- Deepening collaboration with justice, security, and social service institutions

Promoting Youth Leadership, Participation, and Voice

UYDEL will continue to position young people as active agents of change. In 2026, youth leadership and participation will be further embedded across programmes and organizational processes.

Key actions include:

- Expanding peer education and youth leadership models
- Strengthening youth participation in programme design, monitoring, and advocacy
- Supporting youth-led initiatives that promote health, peace, inclusion, and positive social norms

Strengthening Evidence, Learning, and Institutional Capacity

To support sustainable growth and impact, UYDEL will invest in strengthening institutional systems and evidence generation.

Priorities include:

- Strengthening support of street connected youth who are homeless.
- Enhancing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems for improved outcome tracking
- Strengthening documentation of impact, learning, and best practices

- Building staff capacity and organizational systems to support quality programme delivery and accountability
- Mobilizing diversified resources to support programme sustainability and scale

UYDEL's priorities for 2026 reflect a commitment to continuous learning, partnership, and youth-centred impact. The final section of this report acknowledges the individuals and institutions whose support made UYDEL's work in FY 2025 possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) extends its sincere appreciation to all individuals, institutions, and partners whose support, commitment, and collaboration made the achievements of Financial Year 2025 possible.

UYDEL is deeply grateful to its development partners and donors for their financial and technical support, trust, and shared commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable children and young people. Their contributions enabled UYDEL to implement innovative, evidence-based, and youth-centred programmes across protection, health, livelihoods, skills development, and advocacy.

We acknowledge the valuable partnership and cooperation of government institutions, including national and local authorities, whose guidance and collaboration strengthened service delivery, policy alignment, and sustainability. UYDEL also appreciates the contributions of public health facilities, justice and security institutions, and other public sector actors who supported programme implementation and referral systems.

Our appreciation extends to civil society organizations, community-based organizations, and networks that worked alongside UYDEL to reach vulnerable populations, strengthen community systems, and promote shared accountability for child and youth wellbeing.

UYDEL recognizes the dedication and professionalism of its staff, volunteers, social workers, and peer educators, whose commitment and compassion were central to programme success. Their tireless efforts ensured that services were delivered with integrity, empathy, and respect for the dignity of every young person.

We are especially grateful to the communities, caregivers, parents, and families who embraced UYDEL's interventions, supported young people's participation, and helped create safer and more supportive environments.

Above all, UYDEL thanks the children and young people we serve. Their resilience, courage, and leadership continue to inspire our work and reaffirm our belief in the power of youth to drive positive change.

Together, these collective efforts have contributed to meaningful impact in FY 2025 and laid a strong foundation for continued collaboration and transformation in the years ahead.

Key Milestones/Achievements in 2025

- Publication of the National Youth Crime Report (2017-2024), providing Uganda's first consolidated evidence on juvenile and youth offending trends.
- Leadership in initiating dialogue toward a National Youth Crime Prevention Strategy, focusing on out-of-school and high-risk youth.
- Development and launch of the National Youth Manual on Prevention of Violent Extremism with UNODC.
- Commissioning of 2,146 Youth Peace Ambassadors nationwide to promote non-violence and community safety.
- Expansion of UZAZI Salama, supporting pregnant adolescents with SRHR, counselling, and livelihoods, achieving zero maternal deaths.
- Strengthening digital, vocational, and livelihoods pathways, including alumni networks exceeding 2,400 youth.
- Expansion of the social protection programming for teenage adolescents and out of school girls and boys in Kikuube, Kyegegwa, Terego, Isingiro and Madi Okollo districts.