

**ARIVU CHILD CENTERED COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
2017–2025**

Key Achievements and Lessons

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ABOUT US

African Evangelistic Enterprise – Uganda (AEE-U) is an evangelical Christian, interdenominational, non-Governmental, humanitarian organization that was established in Uganda in 1971 by the late Bishop Festo Kivengere.

AEE-U is an affiliate of African Enterprise International (AEI), an international evangelical and development agency operational in 14 African countries. The organization was incorporated in Uganda in 1984 as an Unlimited Liability company and is Registered as an NGO.

In our programs we work with the most vulnerable and marginalized members of the target communities such as children (both girls and boys), women, youth and persons with disability to make a long-lasting impact on their lives while promoting the protection of their rights especially, the rights of children.

With support from Help a Child, AEE-Uganda implemented the Child Centered Community Development Program in Arivu sub-county, Arua District, from 2017-2025. During the final two years, the program prepared stakeholders to address sustainability and ensure continuity of key initiatives.



Vision

Transformed lives in Christ through an empowered Church.



Mission

To evangelise the cities of Africa in word and deed in partnership with the Church.



Program Goal

Improve quality of life and opportunities for children and vulnerable groups in 1,500 households in Arivu sub-county by 2025.



Focus Areas

The program achieved results through four key areas.

1. Quality education
2. Community empowerment and participation
3. Sustainable household incomes
4. Community Ambassador Model (CAM)

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

Facilitate a good start for children aged 0-6 years, (Early Childhood Education, pre-primary/ Nursery).

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Build community socio-economic resilience specifically through the Self-Help Group (SHGs) approach.

Build capacity of SHGs to engage in networks & partnerships.

Build the capacity of households to engage in profitable business ventures.

Build the capacity of SHGs and Cluster Level Association (CLAs) members to engage in demanding services.

Undertake sustained Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) activities in communities and schools.

Link SHGs and CLAs to Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) in order to access micro credit and other financial services that will help them grow their businesses.

SUSTAINABLE INCOMES FOR HOUSEHOLDS

Support youth in formal and non-formal skills development for youngsters.

Support women and youth to engage in gainful employment through adaptation of technologies and practices.

Train farmers in improved farming skills, farm irrigation technology, post-harvest handling, and value addition.



Figure 2: Amaobira Self-Help Group

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Since its inception in 2017, the Arivu Child Centered Community Program has implemented a wide range of activities to advance child well-being, community empowerment, sustainable livelihoods, and improved education in Arivu sub-county. The following achievements reflect the program's progress and the collective efforts of local stakeholders, partners, and beneficiaries over the past eight years. These results demonstrate the extent and depth of impact realized during the program period from 2017 to 2025.



COMMUNITY MINDSET AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Significant shifts in community attitudes were observed throughout the program period. There was a marked increase in self-reliance, recognition of the value of education as evidenced by increased school enrolment. Furthermore, there has been reasonable gender roles, and a stronger

willingness among community members to collaborate on shared development initiatives, participation in local governance also increased. These changes in mindset contributed to greater sustainability and effectiveness of program interventions.



Figure 3 Community member joins World Servants to construct ECDs

QUALITY EDUCATION

Three Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDs) were constructed at Amazu, Anguru, and Cinya villages. Each center comprises of three classrooms, an office, a staffroom, and a store. All three centers were equipped with solar powered lighting and fenced to enhance safety of the children and property.

The construction of these centers was made possible through a collaborative partnership involving AEE-Uganda, communities, Help a Child, and World Servants. Community members mobilised local materials while World Servants played a key role in mobilizing financial resources, engaging volunteers, and providing technical support, which contributed significantly to the successful completion of the Early Childhood Development centers.

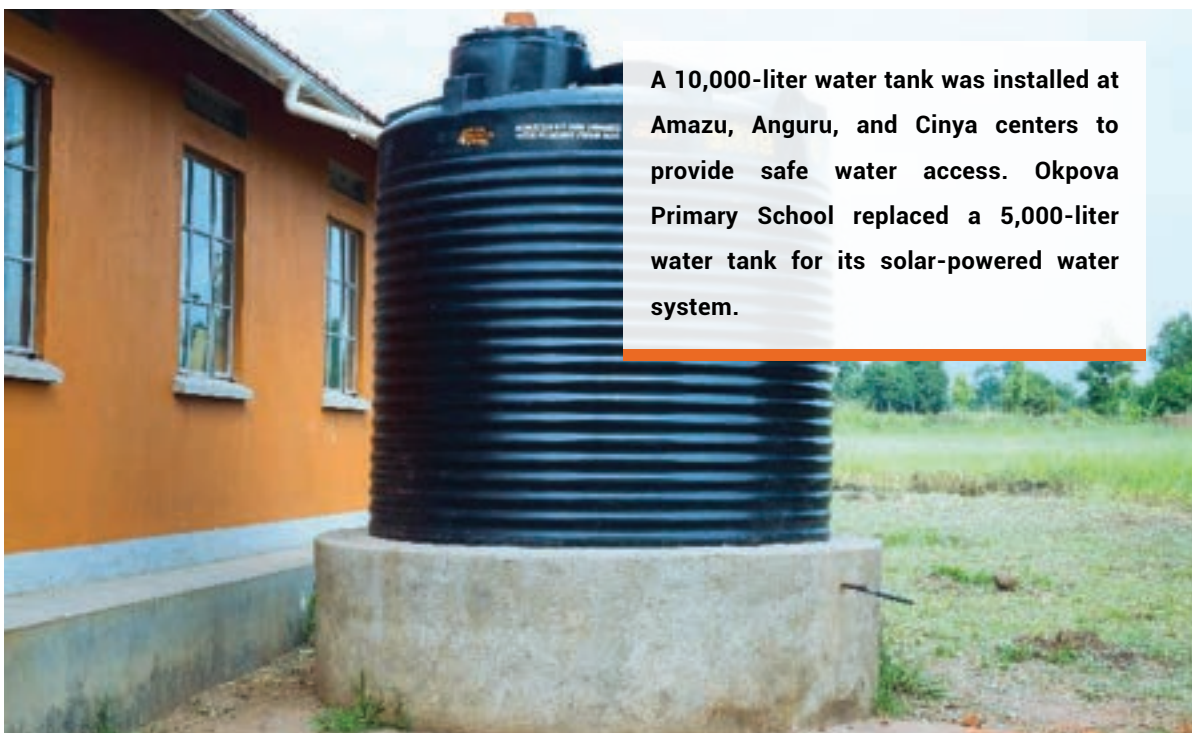
Amazu, Anguru, and Cinya centers also obtained Education Management Information System (EMIS) registration and are formally recognized by the Arua district education office.



Three ECDs we constructed in Arivu Sub- County



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A 10,000-liter water tank was installed at Amazu, Anguru, and Cinya centers to provide safe water access. Okpova Primary School replaced a 5,000-liter water tank for its solar-powered water system.

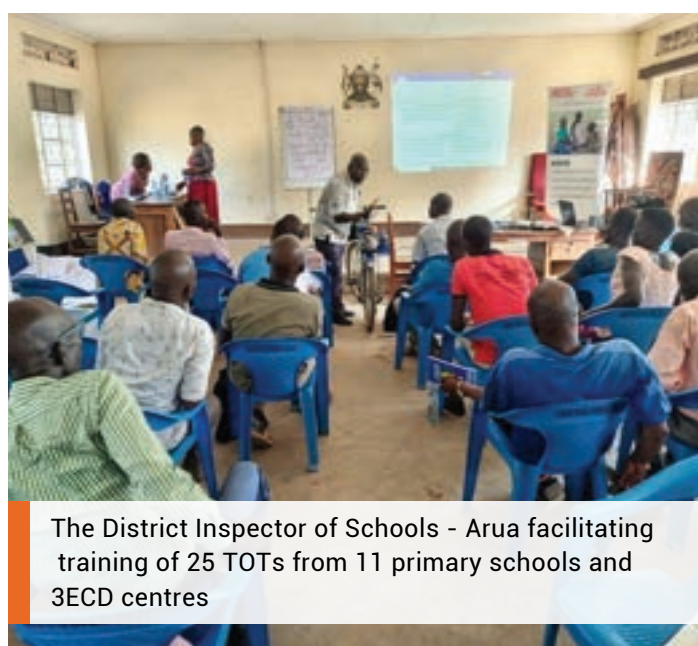
Five ECD centers—Amazu, Cinya, Anguru, Eceko, and Trust Nursery Pajuru—were supplied with 300 new textbooks and instructional guides for both teachers and learners, supporting improved literacy and numeracy.

A total of 600 desks were distributed to 10 primary schools, including Anava, Enzeva, Arivu, Okazara, Okpova, Oleni, Cinya, Pajuru, Eceko, and Bondo Army Primary. Supplying proper



Learners at Arivu primary school using desk supplied by AEE-U

desks addressed a fundamental need for a safe, comfortable, and effective learning environment. Desks provide children with stable and sanitary seating, support good posture and health, and enable full participation in classroom activities. Well-furnished classrooms have been shown to improve concentration, attendance, and academic performance. By providing desks, the program contributed significantly to student well-being and the quality of education in beneficiary schools.



The District Inspector of Schools - Arua facilitating training of 25 TOTs from 11 primary schools and 3 ECD centres

Centre Management Committees (CMCs), School Management Committees (SMCs), and Parents' Teachers' Associations (PTAs) from both primary schools and Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers received targeted training focused on their governance and operational roles. A total of 25 committee members from 11 primary schools and 3 ECD centers were trained as Trainers of Trainers (TOTs), enabling them to provide continuous capacity building and

mentorship to other committee members in their respective institutions.

30 literacy and numeracy teachers visited the National Teachers Training College, Unyama, to build skills for early childhood education.

95 parents/caregivers at Anguru received training sessions designed to enhance their understanding of the value of education for their children.

Figure 4 The District Inspector of Schools - Arua facilitating training of 25 TOTs from 11 primary schools and 3ECD centres



Eight schools were provided with play materials: Amazu ECD, Awika ECD, Anguru ECD, Trust Nursery, Anava Primary, Eceko Primary, Train Up A Child Nursery, and Anzuva Nursery.

Seven primary schools received ramps and “talking compound” messages to support inclusion: Okpova, Eceko, Oleni, Bondo Army, Pajuru, Okazara, and Enzeva.



Learners at Amazu ECD center

A total of 350 nursery chairs were distributed to Amazu, Cinya, and Awika ECD centers, and 35 hexagonal tables were supplied to Amazu and Anguru.

18 pre-primary teachers received professional training, contributing to the increase in the number of nursery schools in the sub-county from 3 to 12.



Eight inclusive VIP latrines were constructed at eight primary schools, reducing the pupil-to-latrine ratio from as high as 1:175 to approximately 1:80.

Arivu Primary School was equipped with specialized materials to support students with hearing and vision impairments. Ten trainers also received specialized training at Eruba School of the Blind and Deaf to support students with hearing and vision challenges.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Notable progress was made in leadership development across Arivu sub-county. Community members reported increased participation in local decision-making processes, the emergence of new leaders, and strengthened governance structures. These developments have fostered greater ownership and accountability within local institutions.

Project interventions also led to improvements in home and child safety. Families reported safer living environments, reduced incidents of domestic violence, and



enhanced child protection as a direct result of awareness sessions and support activities championed by the program.

Children Eceko primary participates in child wellbeing assessment

A total of 42 Self Help Groups (SHGs) were formed, comprising 741 members—269 men and 472 women. Of these, 374 were youth (157 men and 217 women), and 38 were persons with disabilities (16 men and 22 women). Four Cluster Level Associations (CLAs) were also established with 82 leaders, including 39 men and 43 women. The program supported the registration of SHGs and CLAs as community-based organizations (CBOs). All 82 CLA leaders received training in organization management, leadership, resource mobilization, child protection, and advocacy. Each CLA established sub-committees responsible for child protection, education, and domestic violence.



Community members come together to voice their opinions

All 42 SHGs received training in entrepreneurship and record keeping. Members conduct weekly savings activities to promote financial growth and resilience. Each of the four CLAs was provided with a tricycle to support group income-generating activities.

At least 12 SHGs opened bank accounts with Wendi, a mobile banking platform, to enhance financial inclusion and security. Youth groups participated in skills training including welding, metalwork, tailoring, mechanics, construction, bakery, and hairdressing.

A total of 250 youths participated in skills training programs covering welding, metalwork, tailoring, mechanics, construction, bakery, and hairdressing. Upon successful completion, those who passed received certificates from the Directorate of Industrial Training. The trained youths formed trade groups and were provided with start-up equipment, including 25 sewing machines, 30 mechanic toolboxes, welding and metalwork tools, and concrete-making equipment, to support their transition into gainful employment and entrepreneurship.



Students practicing at Ombavu welding group

A skilling center was established at Anava Primary School in collaboration with the Church of Uganda. 53 trainees are currently undertaking courses in tailoring, hairdressing, and mechanics.



A greenhouse, seedling chamber, and irrigation system were established at Amazu through a partnership with Holland Greentech

30 (15 male, 15 female) farmers, equally representing men and women, received training in horticulture at the Amazu greenhouse. These trained farmers currently manage ongoing training and activities at the site. Households reported marked improvements in food production and food security. Adoption of improved agricultural practices including the cultivation of diverse vegetables beyond cassava, better access to farming inputs, and increased food availability contributed to higher household incomes and more consistent nutrition.

Two model farmers from Amazu facilitated the training of 115 (53 male, 62 female) SHG farmers from Awika, Pajuru, and Eceko parishes in sustainable horticulture practices. These farmers now utilize greenhouse methods and have diversified crop production, contributing to improved food security and household income.

Several learning visits were facilitated to prepare and equip the CLA and SHG leaders for the transition of the program and the sustainability of achievements. The areas visited targeted places with similar transition programs, where leaders could learn lessons. Among the areas that were visited were:

1. Kisumu, Kenya, where 36 CLA/SHG leaders were facilitated
2. CBS Pewosa Gombe Learning and Incubation Centre in Butambala District. The program facilitated an exposure and learning visit for 30 (24 male and 6 female) youth from 8 groups. The participants were equipped with practical skills in vermicomposting (earthworm rearing) for organic waste management, insect farming (black soldier flies) for sustainable protein production, briquette making for alternative energy sources, nursery tree management for sustainable forestry and backyard gardening for food security but also, alternative sources for group incomes. Many of the group members who went on this tour are practising backyard gardening and getting a relatively good income to support their families.
3. Likewise, 35 (18m, 17f) SHG members were facilitated to undertake a learning visit to Busoga to learn more about group dynamics, particularly savings and investments.

SUSTAINABLE INCOME FOR HOUSEHOLDS



10 Members of Top men and Women in Eceko Parish processing and packaging honey.

total of 14 beekeeping groups consisting of 289 (137 male, 152 female) members received training in modern apiary practices. Each group was provided with 15-25 Kenya Top Bar (KTB) hives and complete honey harvesting gear.

More than four learning visits were organized for these groups to Wole Mixed Farm in Maracha district and Adraa Agricultural College in Madi Okollo district. The participants gained practical skills in honey processing, packaging, and the production of value-added products such as wax, shoe polish, and jelly.

Start-up packaging materials were also supplied to the beekeeping groups to support honey processing and marketing initiatives.

Eight agricultural groups were equipped with solar irrigation pumps to facilitate year-round farming and improve crop yields.

Support was extended to households through the provision of piggery, goat rearing, and poultry projects to diversify agricultural livelihoods.

Figure 9 10Members of Top men and Women in Eceko Parish processing and packaging honey.

A total of 3,000 assorted fruit tree seedlings (including avocados, mangoes, jackfruit, and oranges) were distributed to 11 primary schools and 3 Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers in Arivu sub-county. Environment club members at each school were tasked with caring for the seedlings to ensure their survival. The trees are intended to improve nutrition and provide future income opportunities for the beneficiaries.

COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR MODEL (CAM) CHILDREN

A total of 750 children under the Community Ambassador Model (CAM) were supported to remain in school through regular monitoring and the provision of scholastic materials.



Support was provided to seriously ill CAM children to facilitate access to necessary hospital treatment and medical care.

Furthermore, the program also facilitated a Community Ambassador Model Football and Netball Tournament (COMFoNeT) league. The league, which ran for a month, had

two teams: one for football and another for netball, from each of the CAM mutual groups in the four parishes of Awika, Omoo, Eceko, and Pajuru of Arivu sub-county, competing against each other. The Program procured 8 netballs and 8 footballs and distributed them to all 8 CAM mutual group-registered football and netball teams in the four parishes of Awika, Eceko, Omoo, and Pajuru. Four sets of football and four netball Jerseys were also procured for the Parish teams of Awika, Eceko, Omoo, and Pajuru that qualified for the quarterfinals.

First aid kits were provided and managed by qualified nurses. Goal post nets were provided to better manage confirming goal scoring. The availability of a public address system with cheery commentators made the matches enjoyable and attracted very large numbers of spectators.

Federation of Ugandan Football Association (FUFA)- trained referees and umpires were contracted to officiate the matches, using the standard rules and regulations of football



Figure 11: A boy excitedly sets the football goal post at Awika primary school while on the left, a team celebrates after scoring



Stories

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark skin and short hair, looking directly at the camera. The child is holding a bright green plastic cup to their mouth and drinking. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a similar setting, possibly a school or community center. The overall tone is warm and positive.

Enjoy these stories as you journey alongside the individuals and families whose lives have been touched by the Arivu Child Centered Community Program. Through their experiences you will see the real impact of the program's work. You will read about new opportunities, stronger communities, and brighter futures made possible by the dedication of local partners, supporters, and beneficiaries.



FARMING AS A MEANS TO THRIVE

Innocent, 38-year-old is a dedicated husband and father of four children. Once facing the uncertainties of subsistence farming, innocent's life took a transformative turn when he joined Amazu SHG group which is also practicing horticulture and embraced modern farming techniques. The SHG has 30 (15 male and 15 female) members.

AEE-U in partnership with Holland Green Tech (HGT) established a greenhouse at Amazu just neighboring the ECD center. Through the skills acquired out of the training facilitated by HGT staff, Innocent took an initiative to privately practice the learnings at his home. This initiative became the cornerstone of Innocent's agricultural education. He started practicing and implementing hands-on training and mentorship, he acquired from vital skills in greenhouse management, crop rotation, pest control, and sustainable horticulture practices. With newfound knowledge and confidence, Innocent ventured into growing tomatoes and onions, two types of crops which he realized well-suited to his region's climate and market demand. He applied precision farming techniques learned from the greenhouse training, including drip irrigation and organic fertilization, which significantly boosted his yields.

From just a quarter an acre of land, innocent ventured into growing tomatoes in the first season (March-July) of the year 2025. He realized a gross income of Ugandan Shillings 1, 376,500/= where his net earnings amounted to Ugandan Shillings 776,500/=. He used part of this income to open upland for Onions and also clear the school fees of his children. Innocent narrates that his dream is to concentrate on such short-term crops from which he can earn income within a short time. He still narrates that he cannot discard the long-term crops because they are good for food security and having food

available at home throughout the year. However, he plans to increase acreage for horticulture growing.

Today, Innocent is not only feeding his family with nutritious produce but also earning a stable income. His success has enabled him to pay school fees for his children, improve his home, and invest in expanding his farm. He has now bigger plans of opening more land for growing Onions and Tomatoes throughout the seasons in the year. "I never imagined I could achieve this much," Innocent shares with a smile. "Thanks to the training and support, I now see farming not just as a way to survive, but as a way to thrive.

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE IN WEST NILE

In West Nile, the partnership between AEE-Uganda, World Servants, and Help a Child has transformed early childhood education for hundreds of young learners and their families. Before the construction of the new Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs) in Amazu, Anguru, and Awika-Cinya, many children in these communities had no dedicated classrooms and often learned under trees or overcrowded spaces.

With support from World Servants, community members collaborated with volunteers and local leaders to construct modern ECD facilities. Each centre now has child-friendly classrooms, safe play areas, and improved access to clean water and sanitation. The results are evident in enrollment: Amazu ECD serves 154 learners, Awika-Cinya ECD has 172, and Anguru ECD has 93 children attending regularly.





Parents have observed clear benefits. Grace, whose daughter Maya attends Amazu ECD, shared, "My daughter is eager to go to school every morning. She feels safe, learns new things, and plays with her friends in a clean space."

Teachers report that improved facilities and new materials have enabled more effective lesson delivery. Attendance rates have increased, and parental involvement in children's education has grown across the three centers.

The construction of these ECDs demonstrates the practical outcomes of collaboration between AEE-Uganda, World Servants, and local stakeholders in West Nile. More children now access early learning opportunities in safe, supportive environments, contributing to better educational foundations for the community.

DIANA'S JOURNEY IN THE CAMFoNeT LEAGUE

On Saturday, 21st June, the grounds of Awika Primary School were filled with excitement as children from across Arivu sub-county gathered for the Community Ambassador Model Football and Netball Tournament (CAMFoNeT) League. Organized by African Evangelistic Enterprise, the tournament aimed to promote community sports and female empowerment, featuring football, netball, chess, and other activities. Teams from Omoo, Awika, Pajuru, and Eceko parishes in Arua district participated, drawing players, supporters, and local leaders.

Among the participants, Diana, a member of the Omoo Parish Mutual Group Netball Club, distinguished herself through her outstanding performance. Diana first developed an interest in netball at the age of 10 at her school. In May 2025, she joined her parish mutual group's netball club and quickly became known for her leadership and skill. During the CAMFoNeT tournament, Diana dominated the netball games, scoring 17 goals and leading her team to the finals. Her consistency, composure under pressure, and ability to inspire her teammates made her a key player throughout the competition. Diana's excellence did not go unnoticed. While receiving the winning team trophy, she remarked, "When talent doesn't work, hard work beats talent." Inspired by her



Figure 12: Diana in Green Jersey lifts the CAMFoNeT league Trophy for the Winner Netball Team

achievements, Diana now dreams of playing for Uganda's National Netball Team, representing both her village and her country, and one day traveling the world through sport.

Her performance in the CAMFoNeT League attracted the attention of the District Sports Officer and district leaders, who have pledged to support her ambitions. Diana's story is a testament to the opportunities created by the Community Ambassador Model, which organizes children in mutual groups, with football for boys and netball for girls. The CAMFoNeT League followed a structured format teams formed at the club level, registered their players and staff, and competed in a round-robin schedule at the parish level. The best players advanced to parish teams, culminating in parish-level champions matches. The Arivu CCCD Program procured jerseys for both football and netball teams from the four participating parishes, ensuring proper equipment and identity for all teams.

structured sports programs can empower young people, foster leadership, and open new pathways for personal growth and achievement within the Community Ambassador Model framework.



Figure 13: Peter extreme left holding a flipchart

A CONVERSATION WITH MR. ADALIKI PETER

The Support from AEE Has Helped Retain Eceko Primary School Children. After presenting training materials to the SMC and PTA Trainers of Trainers (TOTs), essential tools for ongoing committee development, we sat down with Mr. Adaliki Peter, headteacher of Eceko Primary School, to hear his story firsthand.

Q: Mr. Peter, can you tell us about your journey with AEE and how their support has changed your school community?

A: I have never witnessed support like what AEE has provided. Before they arrived, children in Primary One to Three sat on the bare floor. It was heartbreaking. Then, as part of the program's distribution of 600 desks to 10 schools in our sub-county, Eceko received enough desks for every child to sit comfortably. Even though our classrooms remain crowded, that simple change brought dignity and joy to our students. Attendance has improved and children are eager to come to class.

Previously the Arua District Health Department was about to close our school because we lacked proper latrines. Boys and girls were forced to share one unsafe, unhealthy facility. Through the program, five schools including ours received VIP latrines with two

blocks of six stances each, one for boys and another for girls. This has made our school a safer and healthier place. Girls in particular feel more comfortable and secure.

Our teachers also once struggled to support children with special needs. After AEE's training, they now have the knowledge and tools to help every learner thrive. We have seen a remarkable difference. Motivation has increased and our students' literacy and numeracy skills have improved.

Q: What would you say to the donors whose generosity makes AEE's work possible?

A: From the bottom of our hearts, thank you. Your kindness is changing lives here. Because of your support, children who once had little hope now dream of a brighter future. You are helping us build a generation of confident, capable learners. We are forever grateful.

JOSEPH'S JOURNEY

Joseph, age 40, is a dedicated farmer and innovator from Onzivu village in Eceko parish, Arivu Sub-County. Married with five children, he is an active member of the Aliodrozu Men's Self-Help Group, which brings together ten local farmers.

In 2019, local leaders recognised Joseph's commitment to agriculture and selected him to become an innovative farmer. Before this, Joseph had practised subsistence farming mostly on his own, often making decisions without involving his wife and children. He recalls, "For all the time I have been a farmer, I did not mind about my wife in my plans." He also relied on traditional methods, which limited his harvests and income. At that time, his monthly earnings ranged from 100,000 to 120,000 UGX, totalling an annual income of 800,000 to 900,000 UGX. Despite his dedication, Joseph struggled to provide the life he envisioned for his family.



After receiving training on the PIP approach, which emphasises empowerment, integration, and collaboration, as well as modern farming techniques, Joseph began involving his wife and children in family decision-making. Together, they created a map of their current situation and set a shared vision for the future. Each family member now has a role and responsibility in working towards their goals. Joseph says with pride, "My wife now works with me and we have better plans for the home."

With renewed teamwork, Joseph's family expanded their garden from half a quarter in 2019 to three-quarters of an acre in 2020. They started planting crops in rows and applied modern techniques learned during the training. Joseph chose beans and groundnuts for their main crops. When harvest time came, they were delighted to see their groundnut yield rise from three to five sacks, and their cassava harvest increase from eight to fourteen sacks. These results brought a sense of achievement and hope to the whole family.

The improved harvests allowed Joseph to raise his monthly income from 100,000 UGX to 183,000 UGX. His annual income nearly doubled, reaching 1,700,000 UGX. With these earnings, Joseph bought three local goats and six chickens, planning to sell them later to help fund his dream of building a new family home within five years.

Joseph has since acquired five acres of land in Onzivu village, Eceko parish. He now approaches farming with careful planning, drawing on the skills he learned from the innovative farmer trainings. He grows tomatoes, beans, cassava, rice, and bananas. Joseph also cares for livestock, including goats, cows, and chickens. Today, his flock has grown to 20 chickens, four cows, and seven goats.

Joseph's biggest dream is to build a new home for his family within five years. He has already started making bricks, with each family member helping in the process. Together, they share a sense of purpose and mission as they work toward their goal. Joseph shares, "I want to thank AEE for the knowledge I have acquired, which I believe will bring development to my family. I will do my best, together with my family, to build a better life and a hopeful future in our home."

FROM SCHOOL DROPOUT TO SENIOR WELDING SPECIALIST



At just 19, Adamati Jacob from Walaba Village, Ombavu Parish, is a twin, the third of seven children, and someone who has endured and overcome great hardship. In 2020, his dreams were put on hold when he had to leave school in Senior Two, as his family could not afford the fees a burden exacerbated by the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

After restrictions eased in 2021, AEE-U launched a vocational program for out-of-school youth in partnership with Arivu CCCD. Adamati joined the welding and metal fabrication apprenticeship at Ombavu Youth Welding Center in Arivu Trading Center

that year, earning a welding and metal fabrication certificate from Uganda's Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) in 2023.

During his training, Adamati excelled and was retained by his local artisan upon completing the program in 2023. His strong performance led to his selection as one of three trainees for advanced training at Hoima NVI, where he spent six months learning to train others.

Since returning, Adamati has taken great pride in helping train eight young people at the center, who are now working in Arivu subcounty. Additionally, he mostly works independently and finds fulfillment serving as the Secretary of the Ombavu Saving Group, where trainees save their earnings together.

As a result of his dedication and perseverance, Adamati now earns 30,000 Ugandan shillings each week a source of pride and relief. With this income, he is able to support his family, purchase clothing, pay his siblings' school fees, and cover their basic medical expenses, bringing comfort and hope to their lives. He has also fulfilled a dream by buying livestock, a symbol of his progress.

Adamati is determined to create a welding workshop of his own, where he can empower even more young people in his community to achieve a future shaped by skill, opportunity, and hope.



ABANDONED DREAMS REVIVED – DEBORAH DRATERU'S STORY



Figure 14: Debora practicing plaiting hair at NVI Hoima

"I thought my future was sealed when I dropped out of school in P5. I felt like I had never meant anything. But AEE staff saw something in me that I didn't - potential. They offered a Hair Dressing and Saloon training Centre at Bondo trading Centre, and I grasped it with both hands.

The three-month training was just the beginning. We formed a group of five and started a mobile hair plaiting and dressing service, traveling from home to home in our village.

Our hard work paid off, and we invested our savings in cosmetics and tools. 'We started small, but our dreams were big,' Debora recalls.

"Six months later, our trainer's new appointment in Kampala led to an unexpected opportunity - advanced training at Nile Vocational Institute Hoima. I never thought I could travel far from home for training like other girls whose families could afford it. But AEE and their sponsor HAC believed in me, and now I'm living my dream!

Here at NVI Hoima, I've received exceptional treatment and guidance from a dedicated instructor. She's taught me all the hair styles I wanted to master, and I'm eager to share my knowledge with girls like me who can't return to school. 'I want to share my knowledge to give hope to my sisters back at home, I say with determination.

I'm grateful to AEE and their sponsors for giving me hope and a new lease on life. I promise to pay it forward and inspire my sisters back home, proving that with determination and support, anything is possible.

ESTABLISHMENT OF LEARNING CENTRES BRINGS EDUCATION HOME DURING LOCKDOWN

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020, the resulting lockdowns and restrictions brought program activities to a near standstill. Planned child participation in schools was abruptly halted, and ongoing limitations on gatherings and public transport severely hampered our ability to reach children. Even as restrictions eased, the process of obtaining district travel and work permissions caused further delays. Most heartbreakingly, some school-age children never returned to school at all.



The establishment of 83 Learning Centres across all 56 Villages of Arivu sub-county in Arua District, where the Arivu CCCD program operates. This gave many school-age children the opportunity to continue learning during the lockdown. Though the Ugandan government had plans for radio learning. These plans did not take off successfully. When home learning centres were established, especially in villages during the 2020 lockdown, many children were able to join them. These learning centres also opened the eyes of some community members to mobilise to start Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in their villages, such as Egami, Esoko in Omoo, Obayiva, and Anguru in Pajuru parishes. More so, the home learning centre classes were offered at different times, allowing children in different classes to attend and support their parents with housework.

Amviko Grace, age 12, shares, "I could not join P3 in 2020 as I needed to care for my younger siblings while my mother went to the garden 5km away. When the Learning Centre was established in Rigbo Village, Pajuru parish, I was finally able to attend the P3 class for an hour each day and learn literacy and numeracy skills."

In a remarkable show of adaptability, deserted places of worship were transformed into vibrant learning spaces, providing shelter and a sense of normalcy for children when schools were closed.

Many ECD teachers found renewed purpose, actively engaging children in their respective Learning Centres and supporting their ongoing development.

Recorded lessons not only boosted children's listening skills but also enabled experienced teachers to mentor Learning Centre facilitators, spreading expertise in literacy and numeracy throughout the community.

Madam Patricia K Helles, one of the recording teachers, reflects, "I could not imagine that I would be teaching thousands of children in different locations at the same time. All I wanted was to share my knowledge with youngsters, and the STS project made that dream come true."

PASKULINA BUILDS A PERMANENT HOME THROUGH SELF-HELP GROUP SUPPORT

At 42 years old, Paskulina is a testament to the transformative power of women's Self Help Groups (SHGs). Before joining the Aliodrozu B Women's SHG in 2016, Paskulina relied on subsistence farming and a small alcohol brewing business. Despite her hard work, the profits were barely enough to cover basic household needs such as soap, salt, paraffin, food, medication, clothing for her children, and even her brother's school fees.

When AEE, through the Arivu Child Centered Community Development Programme, organized the women into SHGs, Paskulina eagerly joined. The group's weekly savings of just UGX 500 (€0.12) per member quickly grew. As soon as loans became available, Paskulina borrowed UGX 10,000 (€2.50) to buy cassava residues, earning a small profit. Encouraged, she took larger loans to buy fresh cassava directly from gardens, steadily increasing her business capital. Her entrepreneurial spirit led her to diversify, selling beans and silver fish in her village. With every transaction, she continued saving both with the group and from her profits, determined to build a better future for her family.

Beyond her cassava business, Paskulina accessed additional loans for agricultural activities, covering land preparation, seeds, and planting costs. Together with her husband, she planted two quarters of cassava and tobacco. The tobacco harvest brought in UGX 800,000 (€195.60), providing the critical funds needed to finally lay the foundation and raise the walls of a permanent house, a long-held dream that had previously stalled due to lack of resources.

When demand for loans increased among the group members, they decided to increase their savings amount from €0.12 to UGX 1000 (€0.24). This helped her to increase her loan portfolio from the initial UGX 100,000 (€24.5) to UGX 220,000 (€53.8)



By 2017, her growing businesses allowed Paskulina to invest in livestock. She bought two female goats, which soon produced kids, doubling her herd. When she sold two goats for UGX 210,000 (€51.30), she combined the proceeds with a loan of UGX 220,000 (€53.80) to purchase 15 iron sheets for roofing. By 2019, Paskulina and her family moved into their completed permanent house, leaving behind the annual struggle of repairing a leaking grass-thatched roof. She reflects, "I used to cut grass every year to change the roof of the house, which was hectic and tiresome, but now, I can hear the sound of the rain like other people do."

Thanks to the SHG, Paskulina and her husband not only built their home, but she also paid her brother's school fees and met various domestic, medical, and clothing needs for her children.

Looking ahead, Paskulina dreams of further improving her family's home by installing windows, plastering the walls, screeding the floors, and furnishing it. Together with her husband, she now manages an acre of bananas, a tomato garden, a eucalyptus plantation, and a profitable millet buying business in Arua town. Their hard work consistently yields profits, enabling them to provide for their children's education and secure their family's future. For Paskulina, these achievements are not just about income; they are about stability, food security, and the hope of a brighter tomorrow.

Paskulina and her husband express deep gratitude to AEE for organizing the SHG and are committed to supporting their group for years to come, ensuring that others can benefit just as they have.

APPRECIATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The achievements outlined in this report were made possible through strong partnerships and shared commitment from all stakeholders. The program extends sincere appreciation to the following partners and supporters for their significant contributions to the progress realized in Arivu sub-county.



Figure 15: Arivu staff from L-R, Emmanuel, Herbert, Comfort, Caleb, Samuel, Vrinka, William, Charles

SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

1. Help a Child Netherlands.
2. Help a Child Africa.
3. World Servants.

OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS/CSOS/INSTITUTIONS

1. Holland Greentech
2. Save the Children
3. PostBank Uganda (Wendi)
4. Upendo ni Baraka
5. National Union of Disabled Persons in Uganda (NUDIPU)

6. Sister AEE-Uganda supported programs in the West Nile region.
7. Transitioned the AEE-Uganda program in Busoga and Stromme Foundation (Pewosa) in Gombe district
8. National Teachers College Unyama - Gulu district
9. Religious leaders
10. Leadership of the Madi-West Nile Diocese and churches in Arua district
11. Other religious leaders in the sub-county
12. Arua district local government and leadership
13. Office of the Regional Police Commander (RPC) - West Nile, RDC, Chairperson LCV, CAO, DEO, DCDO, engineer, probation, planning production, health, water, environment, sports.
14. Arivu sub-county local government and leadership
15. Chairperson LC 3, sub-county chief, CDO, Production officer, Police, parish chiefs, and local council one and two offices
16. CBOs in the sub-county
17. The 4 Cluster Level Associations (CLA) of Awika, Eceko, Omoo, and Pajuru
18. The 42 Self Help Groups (SHG) under the above 4 CLAs
19. Community Stakeholders
20. Community Ambassador Model (CAM) children
21. Parents of the CAM children
22. Community CAM volunteers
23. CAM children's Mutual groups
24. Head teachers, Centre Management Committees (CMCs), Parents ' and Teachers' Associations (PTAs), School Management Committees (SMCs), and Teachers
25. All service providers
26. All service providers
27. Staff

