



Pathways to Prosperity

Unlocking potential, nurturing resilience among refugees and host communities



Security, Protection and Economic Empowerment in Uganda (SUPREME) project close-out magazine



Kingdom of the Netherlands







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List of Acronyms

BTVET	Business, Technical, and Vocational Education and Training
CDO	Community Development Officer
DIT	Directorate of Industrial Training
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EDG	Enterprise Development Grant
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands
EUTF	European Union Trust fund
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HH	Household
IB	Inclusive business
LC	Local Council
LOP	Life of Project
LP	Local Partner
NIMSA	Nile Institute of Management Studies Arua
OYE	Opportunities for Youth Employment
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PSE	Private Sector Enterprise
RICE-WN	Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment West Nile
RWC	Refugee Welfare Council
SDC	Savings and Development Cluster
SUPREME	Security, Protection and Economic Empowerment
UGX	Ugandan Shillings (currency)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
VA	Village Agent
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WVU	World Vision Uganda
WVUK	World Vision UK
YEE	Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship





PROJECT SUMMARY

Security, Protection and Economic Empowerment (SUPREME) project - Economic Empowerment Component.

Funded by European Union through EUTF (82%) and EKN (18%).

4 main consortium partners: World Vision International in Uganda (lead), SNV, ZOA and Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment West Nile (RICE WN), in addition to WV Austria.

Life of Project (LOP): July 2020-2024

Development Partners:

- Government of Uganda (GoU), specifically the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)
- UNHCR
- RWCs
- BTVET Institutions
- PSEs
- Districts and Lower Local Governments (LLGs) across the target districts.

[The OPM, districts and LLGs were instrumental in providing the operational framework for the host community while UNHCR, RWCs validated the refugees' operational framework].

A foundation for future successes



Phomolo Maphosa
Country Director, SNV Uganda

I am pleased to present the project close-out report for Uganda's Security, Protection and Economic Empowerment (SUPREME) project. This initiative, implemented by SNV in partnership with World Vision, ZOA, and Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment West Nile, significantly improved the lives of refugees and host communities in West Nile.

Launched in 2020, the SUPREME project tackled the critical challenge of limited economic opportunities in the region. By focusing on sustainable and inclusive market development, decent youth employment, and sustainable agriculture, the project supported refugees and host communities to achieve greater economic well-being.

This report highlights the project's achievements over its four-year implementation. Notably, over 2,034 youth received vocational skills training, with a significant portion securing employment or pursuing entrepreneurship. Additionally, the project facilitated linkages between private sector businesses and Savings and Development Clusters, allowing over 21,000 farmers to access quality inputs and markets for their agricultural products.

The report also delves into valuable lessons learned during the project's implementation. Recognising the importance of community-based training and the need for start-up capital for youth, the project adapted its approach to address these emerging issues.

At SNV in Uganda, 'Impact that Matters' is our mission's core. That's why I am delighted that the success stories shared within this report demonstrate the transformative impact of the SUPREME project. By equipping refugees and host communities with the skills and resources they need to thrive, the project fostered a more prosperous and inclusive future for West Nile.

I commend the dedication and hard work of the project team, partners, and especially our funders, the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) and co-funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands (EKN), who made these achievements possible. We look forward to building upon this success in the years to come.

Much done and more to do



Joseph Bwire
Project Manager, Supreme

I am very grateful to present this report of our accomplishments in growing youth employment and increasing market access to our farmers, both hosts and refugees, with youth skilling as a significant highlight.

The SUPREME project, funded by the European Union (EU) and EKN, worked with the Ugandan government and partners to address the challenge of unemployment, which stands at 9.2%, with youth unemployment at 13.3%, figures which do not fully capture the extent of underemployment and informal sector employment in the country.

The key contexts which informed the SUPREME project output areas were: lack of access to economic opportunities for refugees and host communities; increased pressure on limited natural resources; lack of value addition to agricultural produce and a severe shortage of business support services for non-agricultural livelihoods. These contexts informed the three output areas, namely:

- Financial inclusion and social cohesion among Savings and Development Clusters increased.
- Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains and non-agricultural enterprises developed
- Young women and men from Savings and Development Clusters (SDCs) linked to private sector employment.

In this report, you will find the remarkable impact of the project, which grew and adapted to the evolving needs of communities while looking ahead to sustainable solutions. Our journey began in 2020 with an ambitious goal to improve overall economic well-being for refugees and host communities in four districts in the West Nile region of Uganda - Moyo, Obongi, Terego and Madi Okolo. By the end of the project, we had surpassed the target, impacting over 21,500 SDC farmers; boosting 50 private sector businesses and skilling 2,034 youth, with 69.5% employed, among other successes. Over the past four years, SUPREME has been a catalyst for change, making substantial contributions to the achievement of strategic national and global objectives.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the EU and EKN as well as the implementing partners for their dedicated efforts to transform the lives of refugee and host communities in West Nile sub-region.

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges presented in this report, our commitment remains steadfast to thriving and inclusive business, youth employment, as well as Uganda's broader socio-economic development.

SUPREME: Hope and a hand up

Uprooting. Loss. Uncertainty. That is the traumatic experience of the refugee. Forced to flee their homes due to conflict or similar upheavals, refugees arrive in a new environment with nearly nothing to their name and face the uphill task of integrating in new communities and building themselves back up. More often than not, they are highly vulnerable to deprivation and its accompanying ills.

Uganda, as Africa's largest refugee-hosting country, is home to over 1.5 million refugees, with well over a half of these in the West Nile region, where SNV's Security, Protection and Economic Empowerment (SUPREME) project ran for the last four years (2020-2024) in the districts of Moyo, Obongi, Terego and Madi Okollo.

The project was rooted in the reality that if they receive the right support and opportunities, refugees can rebuild their lives and also contribute to the economic wellbeing of their host communities, which are already facing their own unique challenges.

Like everywhere else in the country, unemployment is a big concern in the West Nile region, leaving the youth vulnerable to social ills such as gambling and drug abuse and underlining the need for practical interventions that can effectively equip particularly young people to fend for themselves and also participate in building their local economies and, by extension, the national economy.

Some of the challenges that both refugees and hosts in West Nile face include: a challenging agricultural environment, limited access to farmland, low access to markets (for inputs and outputs), low levels of vocational and entrepreneurial skills and poor financial inclusion, especially low access to credit.

Enter SUPREME

The overall goal of the SUPREME programme, implemented by SNV as part of a consortium with World Vision, ZOA, and Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment (RICE) West Nile and funded by the European Union and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was to **improve the overall economic well-being for refugees and host communities by increasing their access to decent employment and economic opportunities.**

Tailoring class
at NIMSA





The partners

World Vision UK led a consortium that includes World Vision Uganda, World Vision Austria, ZOA, SNV, and RICE-WN. World Vision Uganda was World Vision UK's implementing partner in Uganda.

Overall, consortium members brought together their diverse expertise, best practices, learning and combined experience of development work in Uganda, supported by rigorous compliance monitoring and evaluation systems.

The Security, Protection and Economic Empowerment (SUPREME) programme was an umbrella of seven consortia funded by the European Union under the European Union Emergency Trust fund (EUTF).

The WVUK-led consortium delivered the Economic Empowerment component.

The intervention covered three of Uganda's refugee-hosting districts: Terego, Madi Okollo and Obongi, and a fourth one, Moyo, which during the design of the project was hosting refugees. However, since then, Obongi, which at the time was a county of Moyo (and hosting the refugees in Moyo District), has been upgraded to district status. Subsequently, no refugees are now registered in Moyo. The refugee population in the target districts is: Obongi - 121,228; Madi-Okollo and Terego-190,701. Refugees are expected to remain in Uganda for an extended period since South Sudan and DR Congo remain fragile.

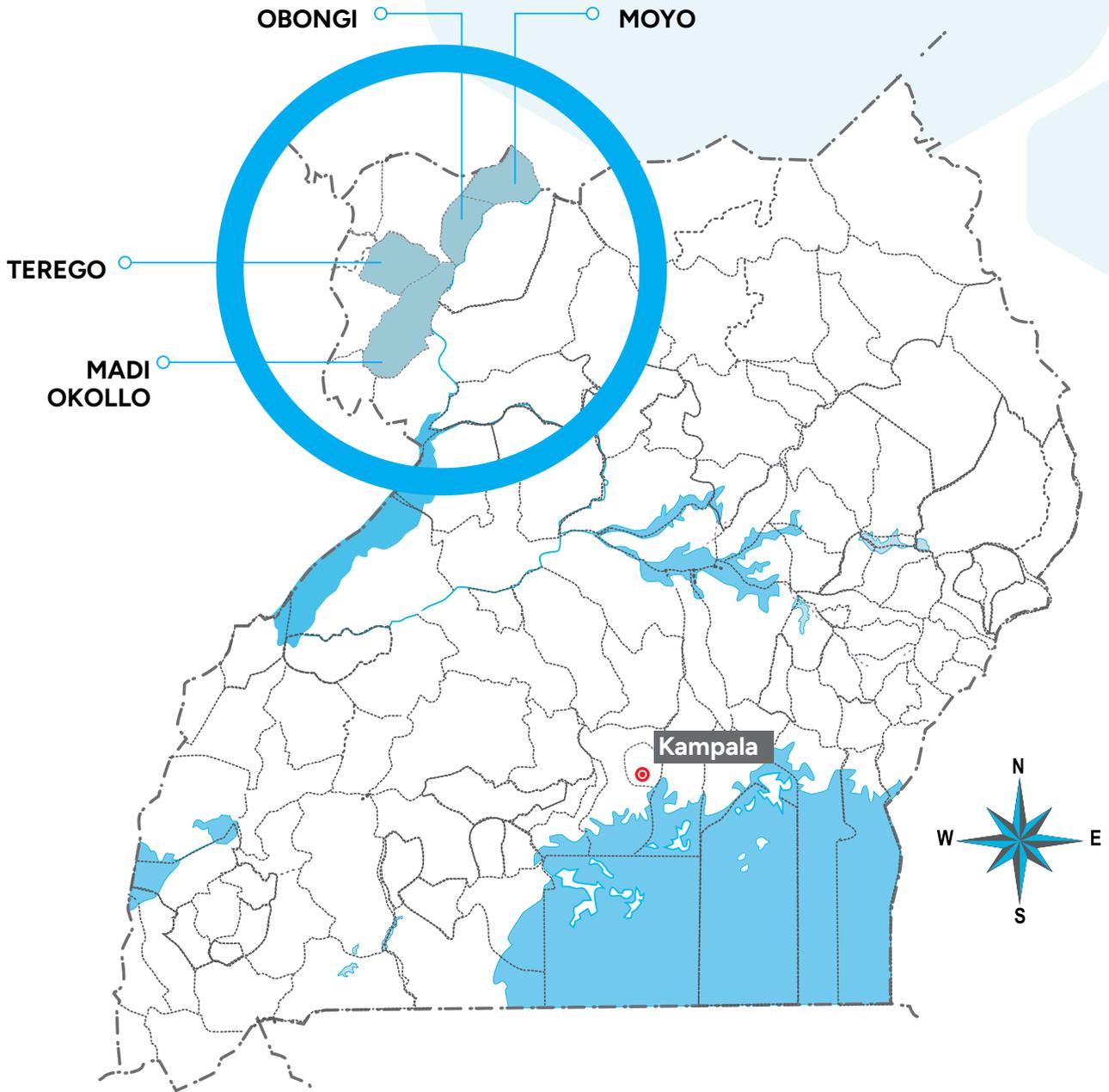
The project's goal was improved overall economic well-being for refugees and host communities in the four project districts.



The SUPREME project in Uganda made significant strides towards addressing youth unemployment and promoting economic opportunities. It showed that bringing together NGOs, government agencies, private sector players, and communities is key to tackling issues of poverty and unemployment, especially in areas affected by displacement.

Scope

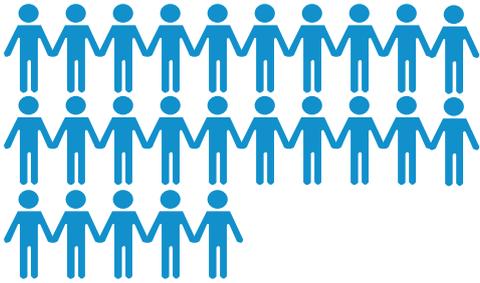
Project area



Goals, at a glance

25,000

Directly benefit 25,000 members of refugee and host communities from 1,000 Savings and Development Clusters (SDCs).

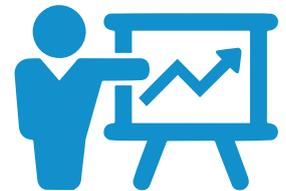


112,500

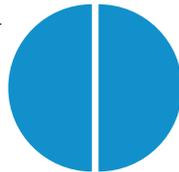
Indirectly impact the lives of 112,500 individual household members in the targeted refugee and host communities.

2,000

Engage 2,000 young men and women aged 18–30 years for skills training in various marketable trades and ensure at least half secured private-sector employment.

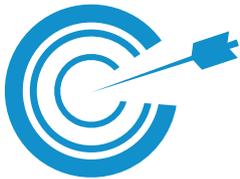


50%



Of young women and men that receive training accessing dignified and decent employment.

Overall safety and economic well-being for refugees and host communities



3

 output areas

Output 1: Financial inclusion and social cohesion among Savings and Development Clusters increased.

Output 2: Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains and non-agricultural enterprises developed

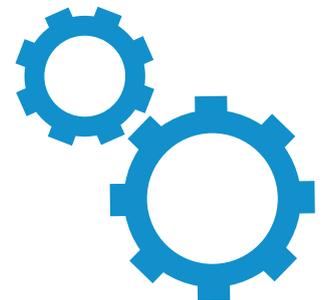
Output 3: Young women and men from SDC members linked to private sector employment

* SNV implemented Outputs 2 and 3



APPROACHES

- Catalysing private sector-led agricultural markets.
- Sustainable agriculture initiatives.
- Promoting opportunities for decent youth employment through skills development, job matching by internships, technical skills development, access to finance, mentoring, coaching and leadership development.
- Social and financial inclusion.



Harnessing the power of business

OUTPUT 2: Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains and Non-agricultural Enterprises

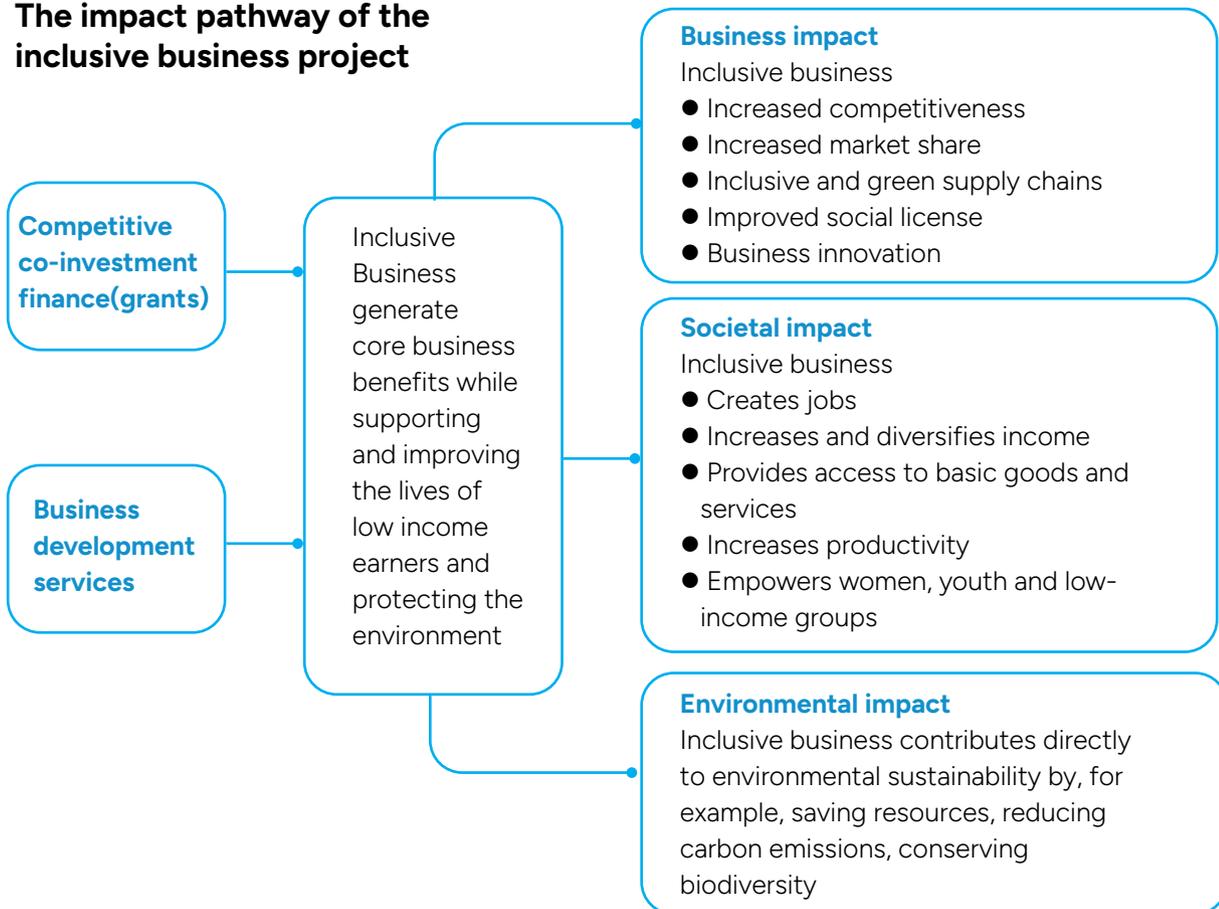
When agri-food systems are not efficient or sustainable, present and future livelihoods are adversely and severely affected. SUPREME was driven by SNV's commitment to building sustainable, equitable, and resilient systems through improving food security, promoting climate-sensitive use of natural resources and increasing social and economic inclusion through support for agricultural and non-agricultural value chains.

Key approach: Private Sector Inclusive Business (IB) Co-investment and Market Facilitation

SNV used an inclusive business model, a private sector business approach to benefit low-income communities.

The SUPREME project IB pathway created social economic impact for refugees and host communities by partnering with private sector business actors and providing them with business development services as well as co-investment financing for the implementation of the inclusive business projects.

The impact pathway of the inclusive business project





We facilitated critical linkages between agribusinesses like Omia Agribusiness Development Group and farmers.

The Challenge Fund

Output 2 of the SUPREME project was implemented through the award of Challenge Fund grants, a financial incentive geared at stimulating private sector involvement, including investment around SUPREME activities under Output 2. The fund was tagged to boosting agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises focusing on access to quality agricultural inputs, technology transfer through apps and demonstrations, value addition

and agro-processing. The funding was between €5,000 and €9,090 for qualifying partners. Grantees were expected to raise 50% co-funding for their proposed investments. A total of 50 private sector players were targeted with this incentive. The fund created a critical link between the market and the smallholder farmers.

Key successes in this area are highlighted below.

Indicators	Target	Results	Percentage realisation
No of Challenge Fund grantees on-boarded	50	50	100%
Amount disbursed (euros)	454,500	452,682	99.62%
Percentage of SDC farmers linked to access to quality agro-inputs	22,500	22,897	101%

IN NUMBERS.....

50

Private sector businesses were linked to over 1,000 SDCs to improve access to quality inputs and agriproduct markets.

22,897

A total of 22,897 (101%) individual farmers were linked to private sector businesses and benefited from knowledge transfers in Climate Smart Agriculture practices. Of these 68.5% were females and 29.9% males; 31.4% refugees and 67.2% host community.

84

Agro-input dealers linked to SDC farmers to access quality agro-inputs.



7

Five regional business-to-business (B2B) agriculture trade fairs to connect smallholder farmers with Challenge Fund grantees to facilitate access to agro-farm inputs and markets. Two other trade fairs were held in Kampala.

1,314

The B2B events attracted 1,314 SDC farmers (732 female, 582 male) and 32 stakeholders. Farmers were able to access inputs including seed, farm tools, agro-chemicals, livestock supplies, value addition services, market linkage for their farm products and free extension services.

47

Agro-input dealers exhibited and provided services to 164 farming expo participants.

'I can now pay school fees. I also train and employ others...'

Thomas Drani, Moyo District

I used to grow cassava and sweet potato, but after I received training from SNV in horticultural production I decided to go into tomato and cabbage production. I also grow a bit of green pepper.

I am one of the beneficiaries of an EDG grant from the European Union, under the Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment (RICE) - West Nile. I used it to buy a solar pump.

This support has changed my life; I am able to access good medical care and my nutrition has improved. I can now pay school fees and I also train and employ others.

We are renting this land but I have been able to buy about five acres where I will move my farming. I have also bought a plot of land in Moyo town where I intend to relocate my family. I plan to buy my own means of transport to take my tomatoes to the market.

As farmers, we receive great support from Apiviva Agrotechno Consult and Supplies Limited, the Challenge Fund grantee I work with. When we have any challenges on the farm, they come and show us what to do. They also supply us with high quality seeds, fungicides and pesticides, sometimes on credit.

The grantees also show us where to sell our products and advise on what cabbage and tomato varieties are profitable. As a result of the support, today, from one acre of tomatoes I am able to make about UGX18 million.



Meeting farmers where they are

In 2022, Agri-gate Company Ltd came on board the Supreme Project under the Challenge Fund programme. The youth-owned enterprise provided farmers with access to quality farm inputs, reliable extension services, and linkage to markets, including export opportunities, particularly in oil seed.

The company also provided individual farmers, farmer groups, and NGOs with training in improved seed use and climate-smart agriculture. To this end, the company established five demonstration gardens.

One of the innovations supported by the Challenge Fund was a mobile micro-saving application which allowed farmers to save for farm inputs in installments using scratch cards and a USSD code. Each farmer onboarded was able to access extension support messages and they could save from UGX500 to a maximum of UGX50,000 for inputs. Once payment was complete, the company delivered the order and offered on-site training. 'The farmers also receive additional real-time extension support services



Top, Bruhan displaying the scratch cards that farmers used to save. Above, at his workplace

on their mobile phones in their local languages,' said Rafusanjan Bruhan, the Agri-gate Managing Director.

The partnership was a win-win. 'The farmers are motivated by the high yields they observe in the demonstration gardens and those of their colleagues who are using the improved seeds. This has motivated many to start using the more expensive but better quality hybrid seeds,' said Bruhan.

The company, meanwhile, saw a growth in its operations and profitability. This fuelled dreams of even bigger. Agri-gate plans to expand into value addition. 'We are exploring the idea of building a maize processing plant,' Bruhan said.

Oiling the route to profit

Geoffman Enterprises (U) Limited is a processor of vegetable (sunflower and soybean) cooking oil and animal/poultry feeds.

When they heard about the Challenge Fund grant, they saw an opportunity to address several business challenges such as the lack of funds which was limiting their production capacity as well as the stiff and unfair competition from palm oil smuggled from the Democratic Republic of Congo which was being sold at way below their operating cost.

They also wanted to tackle the inadequate supply of vegetable cooking oil, which had led to the importation of cooking oil from Asia and other parts of Africa.

Through the Challenge Fund, Geoffman Enterprises was able to work with 560 farmers, providing them with extension services as well as quality seeds along with marketing services and advisory on value addition.

Geoffman Enterprises conducted sensitisation meetings and trained farmers in good agronomic practices in sunflower production. Farmers were also provided with seed on credit.

Through the Challenge Fund, the network of sunflower farmers grew to almost 1,000.

As a result, there was a significant upgrade in the farmers' wellbeing while Geoffman have also seen their enterprise expand.

'From the Challenge Fund, we have learnt that it is good to invest in these farmers, so we plan to invest in training lead farmers who will offer farmer-to-farmer services in the absence of our extension workers,' said Manasseh Acidri, the Geoffman Managing Director.

Spreading the sweetness of honey

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for propolis tincture shot up. This need led to the establishment of Donfel Apiculture Consult, said Michael Drari, the company's Managing Director.

The business has two types of clients – beekeepers who sell the honey to it, and individuals and organisations who buy the honey products.

Having worked as a district entomologist, Drari knew well the challenges beekeepers faced in developing beekeeping into a profitable business. They lacked access to tools and knowledge of good apiculture practices. Additionally, some of the honey they produced was of poor quality. 'We started advising our suppliers on how to improve the quality and quantity of their honey,' Drari explained.

When the opportunity arose, Donfel applied for and received a SNV SUPREME Challenge Fund which they invested in a motorcycle and honey processing equipment.

The company then started to provide extension services to beekeepers, in addition to linking them to equipment suppliers and markets. The plan is to grow their market reach to the whole of Uganda.



Donfel extension worker Drici Eusebio preparing to visit beekeepers in the field



Greater reach and improved productivity

'Before we got the Challenge Fund, I was working with 40 farmer groups through Ereu Community-based Organisation, which I had set up to help farmers grow vegetables. I was only working in Upper Madi Okollo due to limited capital and manpower,' says Stephen Aziko, Managing Director of Adam & Eve Agro Tech Consultancy.

When the company received the Challenge Fund grant they were able to bring on board more farmers from Lower Madi-Okollo, eventually growing their impact to 2,100 smallholder farmers.

Adam & Eve Agro Tech supported farmer groups to grow sunflower, sesame, and soybeans, using SUPREME-supported demonstration plots to train farmers in good agronomic practices that would improve crop yields. They provided these farmers with agro-inputs, including improved seed varieties, agro-chemicals, and market linkages.

Opening an outlet in Kamukamu trading centre, Madi-Okollo, Adam & Eve brought services much closer to farmers like Christopher Okello.



'We used to buy inputs from Arua, but now we have a grantee selling them in our trading centre. The easy access to inputs has increased my production. Some of the biggest support I have received from the grantee is technical advice.'

Christopher Okello, Farmer,
Madi-Okollo District

Challenges

Delivering the project was not without its hurdles. In outlining some of the challenges encountered lies an opportunity to better similar circumstances in future by devising strategies to mitigate risks, enhance performance, row and ensure the

- There were few private sector actors in the region and they were concentrated around urban centres, making private sector linkages with youth while at the training institutions a challenge, especially for the institutions in rural areas.
- **Delayed reporting and accountability by Challenge Fund grantees due to several factors delayed roll-out and completion of the granting process.**



Grantee Apiviva Agrotechno Consult and Supplies Ltd

Lessons learnt

- **The power of proximity:** Grantees within the region generally performed better than those outside the region. This can be attributed to their proximity to the beneficiaries and ease of access which made the interaction cost-effective.
- **Stakeholders make a difference:** Involvement of key stakeholders is very important in implementation. The key stakeholders included the Ministry of Education - the Directorate of Industrial Training, who were crucial for assessment and certification; the Office of the Prime Minister, local government and the UNHCR desk, all of whom were very relevant in conducting training institution capacity gap assessments and giving recommendations to improve the quality of training.
- **Make agriculture enticing:** The youth have little interest in agricultural occupations as opposed to service and manufacturing occupations. To interest them, there must be technology enhancement that makes agriculture occupations attractive.

Sustainability

- Improved access by farmers to quality farm inputs — seeds, chicks, tools, feeds, vaccines, pesticides and herbicides — through Challenge Fund grantees and their agents.
- Notably, the built technical capacity of village agents and other community facilitators will remain with them forever and continuously be extended to others.
- Leveraging proximity as grantees within the region generally performed better than those outside and demonstrated their potential as a strong sustainability plan for SDC farmers.

Training for tomorrow

OUTPUT 3: Young women and men (aged 18-30) from SDC member households are linked to private-sector employment.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the global youth unemployment rate is three times higher than the figure for adults, and youth are more likely to be unemployed, underemployed, and employed in part-time, seasonal, low-paying and/or precarious jobs than older adults. Youth unemployment can have lasting effects on lifetime employability and leads to a loss of human capital, social exclusion, and dislocation. The SUPREME project intended to confront this challenge in West Nile by addressing low vocational and entrepreneurship skill levels, particularly in the four districts of project implementation.

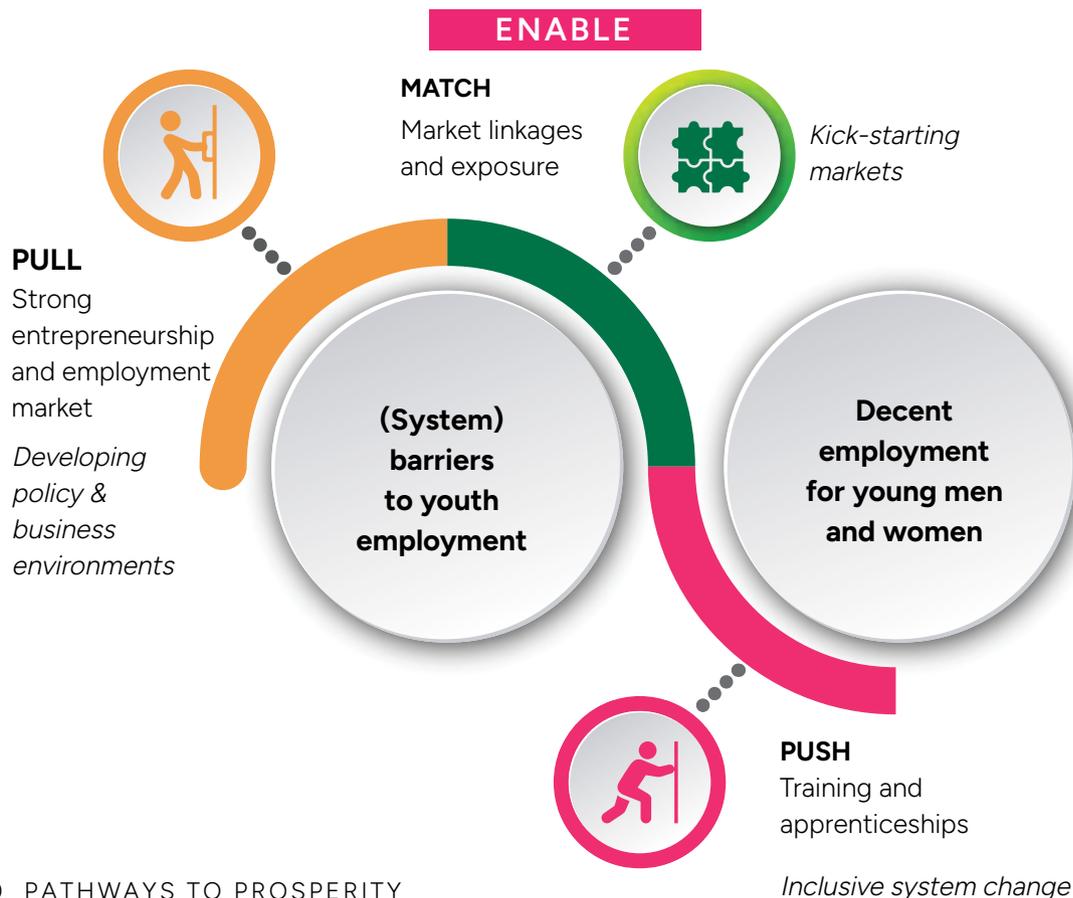
Focus area: Specifically, the project aimed to help 2,000 young men and women aged 18–30 years receive employable skills and get linked to private sector employment opportunities. To realise this, SNV used the Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship model.

Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (YEE) Strategy/Approach

SNV's Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (YEE) strategy/approach facilitated linkages

between the labour market (demand side) and skilled youth (supply side) to stimulate employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

The YEE strategy aimed to provide out-of-school, underprivileged, underemployed and unemployed young women and men with the tools, skills and networks that would enable them to identify enterprise development and employability opportunities in SNV's sectors of agri-food, energy, and water. The Push-Match-Pull-Enable components are illustrated below:



Our activities

To equip young people with skills

We empowered young people by equipping them with the skills to help them find or create employment. SNV identified beneficiary youths, sponsored their vocational skilling in partnership with five business, technical, vocational education and training institutions and collaborated with Ministry of Education and Sports – Department of Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) for their assessment and certifications and mentorship. Training was in areas such as hairdressing, motorcycle mechanics, welding, bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, bakery, poultry, solar technology, horticulture, apiary, liquid soap production and nursery production.

Youth unemployment can have lasting effects on lifetime employability and leads to a loss of human capita production...

Some of the youth were trained in solar installation



KEY RESULTS: IMPACT IN NUMBERS

101%

(2,034 youths) completed skills training at 6 institutions and community-based centres.



107%

of youths sat for Directorate of Industrial Training assessment and passed.

95.57%

of youths completed entrepreneurship



109%

of youths completed internship training with private sector entities.

268,945

Gross average monthly income in Uganda shillings, which is above the minimal wage of UGX135,000, taxable income of sh235,000 and above poverty level, sh218,310 (1.90 US dollars per day). Some, however, earn up to one million shillings a month.



69.5%

trained youths are employed out of the overall target of 50% - (Private Sector Employers = 92.3% and 7.75% self employed).

38.2%

of all youth who underwent training reported to have gotten employment in less than a month, 25% between 1 to 3 months after training and 6.5% immediately.

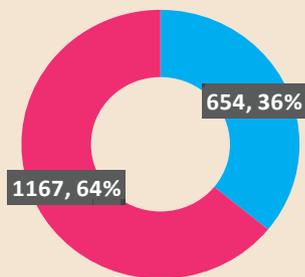
90.4%

said the training helped them to get employment.

58.2%

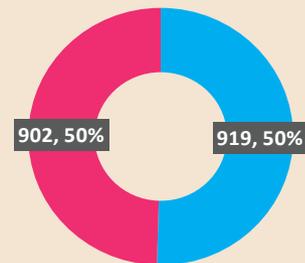
reported that it was easy to access employment after the training.

DIT assessment and certifications by nationality



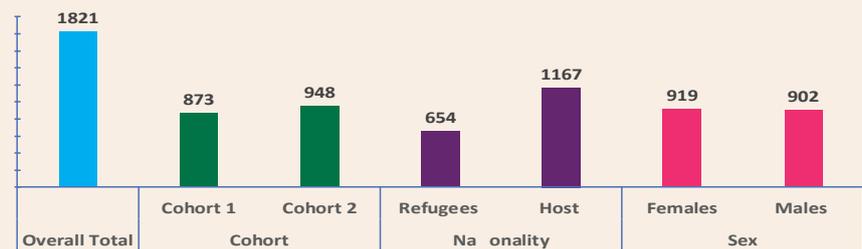
■ Refugees ■ Host

DIT assessment and certifications by sex

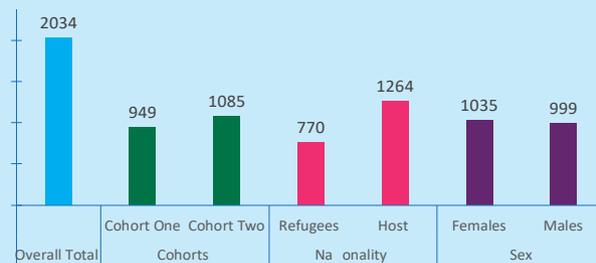


■ Refugees ■ Host

Number of youths who passed DIT assessment and obtained certificates



Skills training completion

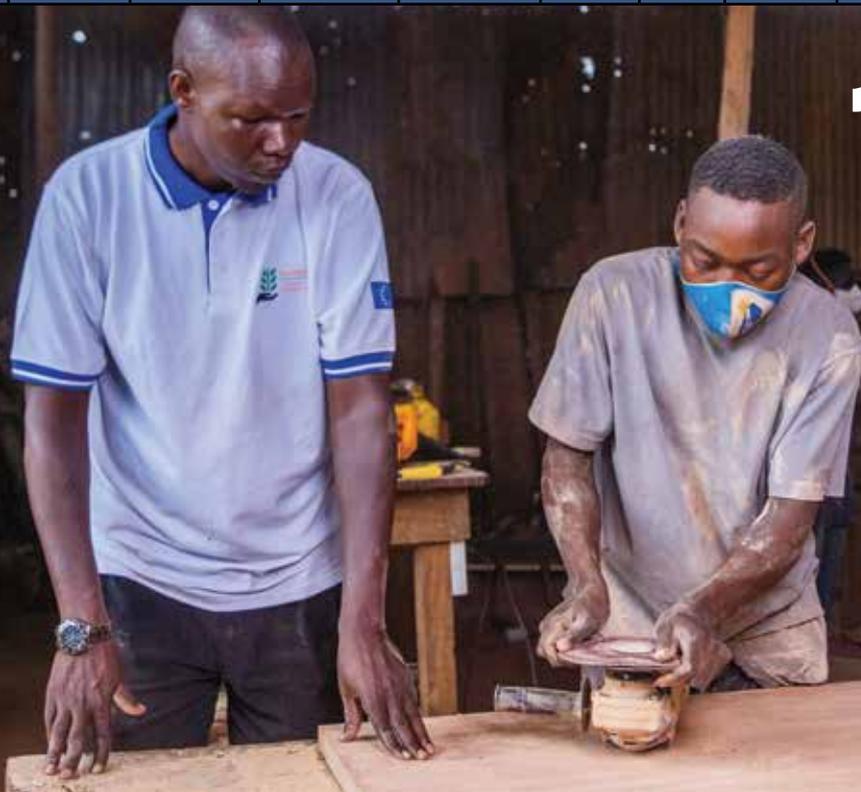


By nationality:
62% hosts
38% refugees

By sex:
51% females
49% males

SKILLS COMPLETION BY MARKETABLE TRADE

Marketable Trade	Overall Total (#)	Overall Total (%)	Cohorts		Refugee			Host		
			Cohort One	Cohort Two	Female	Male	Refugee Total	Female	Male	Host Total
Tailoring	634	31.2%	371	263	204	20	224	395	15	410
Hair Dressing	368	18.1%	131	237	113	38	151	175	42	217
Motorcycle Mechanics	324	15.9%	123	201	4	129	133	1	190	191
Welding	201	9.9%	105	96	1	80	81	3	117	120
Bricklaying	149	7.3%	45	104	5	48	53	0	96	96
Carpentry and Joinery	105	5.2%	51	54	0	15	15	0	90	90
Bakery	93	4.6%	45	48	35	17	52	39	2	41
Poultry	75	3.7%	49	26	3	20	23	34	18	52
Solar Technology	33	1.6%	0	33	4	11	15	0	18	18
Horticulture	29	1.4%	18	11	6	12	18	4	7	11
Apiary	11	0.5%	11	0	1	2	3	0	8	8
Liquid Soap Production	10	0.5%	0	10	0	1	1	7	2	9
Nursery Production	2	0.1%	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	1
Grand Total	2,034	100.0%	949	1,085	377	393	770	658	606	1264



105
Youths trained in
carpentry

Justine is a vocal advocate for youth empowerment, encouraging his peers to avoid idleness and substance abuse.

Justine Biali, 23, fled the conflict in South Sudan in 2016, making a new home in Uganda. When his father died, he had to abandon his educational aspirations to support his two siblings who were under the care of their uncle. He took on casual jobs, labouring on construction sites to provide for their basic needs.

Yearning for a change from the life at the Rhino Camp refugee settlement in the West Nile region, Justine joined the Yayongon Saving and Development Cluster (SDC), a group formed under the SUPREME project.

His move paid off when he was one of two people selected from the SDC for the



opportunity. He enrolled in a three-month bakery course at the Nile Institute of Management Science in Arua City, after which he interned at a local bakery.

Armed with his new skills, Justine returned to the camp and worked part-time for a chapati maker, alongside farming activities. As a savings group member, he received UGX500,000, which he used to start his own baking business, eventually earning enough to buy his own oven at UGX1.5 million. His business flourished, and he now earns a steady income.



Shamim is sewing her way into a bright tomorrow

When there was an opportunity for members of Alice Shamim's SDC group to receive vocational training, she did not hesitate to take her shot. Only four people in her Gimara Sub-county in Obongi District would be interviewed. Of those four, only two went through and she was one of them, joining a three-month-long training in tailoring. When the training was over, she did an internship and received a certificate.

As a result of the skills she received, she says, her life is on track. She is able to make an income which she uses to support her family, she says.



'SNV took me for training at Omugo Technical School for three months. I came back home for Christmas and then after a month they took me to the Nile Institute of Management Studies (NIMSA) in Arua. When I returned home I borrowed money from my savings group and opened my own hair salon. On a good day I make UGX100,000 to UGX150,000. I even have people working with me.'

Grace Halima,
Omugo 6, Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement

'If such an opportunity comes your way, take it and use it

My name is Jonathan Mondu Moses. I am 21 years old. I am a South Sudanese refugee in Palorinya Refugee Settlement. In 2023, I had the opportunity to join the SUPREME project and received training in welding.

After the training, I could support myself unlike in the past when I had to ask my parents for everything. Today, not only can I provide for myself, but I help my parents out financially too.

I was skilled at a workshop called J & J Metal Fabrication in Moyo, where I had a mentor called Peter Othieno. Today, most of what Peter can do, apart from the more advanced assignments, I can do too.

After we completed three months of training, we were assessed for and received DIT certification. We also did a one-month internship. Only five days after the training was completed, out of the 22 welding students, my mentor called me back to work with him.

In a busy month, I earn UGX500,000 and above. I save most of this money.

Training like the one we received does not require than one is literate. It is just about your creativity. So, my fellow youth, if such an opportunity comes your way take it and use it wisely; it might be the way out of your current situation.





'It is good for youths like us to learn this work... if you do not know this kind of work and you are staying in the village, you can become a thief. If youth learn this work they will not be led to do things which are caused by lack of jobs.'

Fred Ariku,
Carpenter, Arua City



'I saved the little money I was paid during my internship at Tam Bakery. When I had saved UGX800,000, I established my shop.'

Betty Senema, Baker, Refugee
Manibe Trading Centre, Arua City

Feathers of Fortune: The road to poultry entrepreneurship

Lagu Joseph Modi, 28, a father of three from Moyo District, used to rent a friend's boda boda to support his family. But the earnings — between UGX20,000 and UGX50,000 weekly — fell short of covering his family's needs and supporting his ageing parents and brother's family. 'I used to struggle to make ends meet,' Lagu reflects. 'I knew I had to find a better way to provide for my family.'

In 2023, his fortunes changed. During a savings group meeting, Lagu, a member of the Totonafai Saving Group, learned about the SNV Youth Skilling programme under the SUPREME project. Although plumbing was his initial interest, it was not among the available options. He decided to try out poultry.

Three months of rigorous training at Moyo Community Polytechnic followed. The programme covered both theoretical aspects, like poultry management, and practical hands-on experience. Lagu and his peers learned about chicken breeds, setting up poultry units, feeding, disease management, and treatment.'

'It was eye-opening,' Lagu recalls.



Post-training, Lagu embarked on a one-month internship, learning the intricacies of marketing poultry. Equipped with newfound knowledge and experience, Lagu sold one-month-old chickens, earning his first commission of UGX100,000 — double his previous earnings. 'I knew I was on the right path,' he remarks.

Lagu's journey didn't end there. He underwent Directorate of Industrial Training assessment and acquired certification. He excelled and was retained at Moyo Community Polytechnic as a trainer on the institute's poultry farm, earning UGX200,000 monthly. He has been saving and plans to establish his own poultry unit.



'After the training, I took a loan from the savings group and bought 100 chicken. I used to save UGX2,000 to UGX4,000 a week, but now with my poultry enterprise, I am able to save UGX10,000.'

Kizito Iranya, Poultry farmer
Obongi District

Challenges

- Cases of dropouts due to the migratory nature of youth refugees.
- The COVID-19 pandemic slowed implementation.
- Integrating the youth skills component with other project activities was a challenge. The project was designed so that the youth could access enterprise development/block grants to finance their initiatives, but the access to these grants was actually going to older members of the saving development groups and so, access to finance remained a challenge.

Lessons learnt

- **A more relatable path:** Entrepreneurship skills training gives more results if delivered by private sector enterprises that are already doing business, with concrete examples of success and failure.
- **Woo the private sector:** Private sector skilling seems to yield more quality training for work-based learners. A good link should be established between the private sector and BTVETs for quality training. In cases where there are no private sector actors, BTVETs should be encouraged to develop business wings. Meanwhile, the private sector should be incentivised to be involved in the skilling process.
- **The 'where' matters:** Youths who trained at community-based centres were exposed to real-life challenges and gained broader hands-on experiences in problem solving than did their counterparts at training institutions.
- **Equipping the equippers:** Re-tooling (training) of instructors and private skills providers on the delivery of work-based learning, is very important.
- **Strengthening the institutions:** There is a serious need to assist institutions to practically integrate business and entrepreneurship skills into technical and vocational education and build their capacity for income generation. Institutions should operate business units to supplement their incomes.
- **Scan the market:** Before any trainings, the opinion of stakeholders should be sought. This ensures a match between the labour needs and the skills requirement. Additionally, the private sector should be part of the skilling process, since they are the end users of the skills.
- **A resource worth tapping:** Field monitoring visits of youth who had enrolled and undergoing internship placement with private sector enterprises (PSEs) revealed that some of the graduates of skills training who were employed by the PSEs were offering mentorship sessions to trainees of Cohort 2. Such youths could be upskilled/re-skilled to become master craftsmen who in future would strengthen a community-based training approach.

Sustainability

Social sustainability:

Right from the onset, the selection of beneficiary youth involved local leaders and structures (CDOs and RWCs) from various SDCs. These SDCs will continue to nurture the youths and provide financial support to grow their businesses.

Institutional sustainability:

Over 194 PSEs transformed into local community skilling institutions offering skills development for various trades after their partnership with the SUPREME youth vocational skilling programme. The majority of the private sector partners increased their space of operation from a single room to multiple rooms; some doubled their equipment to enable effective service delivery to the trainees.

Financial sustainability:

The availability and adequacy of the funds generated by the youths and PSEs from their enterprises is the most important single factor to guarantee sustainability. There were encouraging success stories of PSEs and self-employed youths raising funds from their businesses in form of user and tuition fees to manage and grow their businesses.

DIT certification:

In a multiplier effect, skilled youth are now also training others leading to improved opportunities for employment, both formal and self.

The Project Team



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SUPREME
'Teamwork and effective planning has been a key driver for SUPREME impact results'.



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