

MAY 2024 NEWSLETTER

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Issue 04, 31 May, 2024



Top News

Field Visit: Peace Corps Uganda, USAID in a Learning Visit at FICH

PE&E: Six GRiC Uganda partners retooled on the manual

FICH at a Glance

Vision: We exist to see a thriving and self-reliant communities in Uganda

Mission: To transform Youth, Women and Families through education, training and opportunities in a thriving community

18,520 served: Women, children and families through Education, training and opportunities to thrive in the community.



ALIVE: 375 Adolescents assessed on Life Skills and Values in Oyam district

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FICH May Newsletter Explores Collaboration to Achieve Greater Impact

Welcome to the May edition of the FICH newsletter! We are excited to share the incredible progress and inspiring stories from our recent initiatives, highlighting the power of collaboration in achieving a greater impact.

Our partnership with Grassroots Nest for Innovation and Change (GRiC) has enabled us to enhance Parental Engagement and Empowerment (PEE) among our Uganda partners.

Additionally, our collaboration with Peace Corps Uganda and USAID has brought significant improvements in health and nutrition in Oyam District.

We also conducted an assessment of life skills and values among adolescents in Oyam District, as part of the Action for Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) initiative in collaboration with Uwezo Uganda and Luigi Guisani Foundation.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to our mission. We look forward to continuing this journey with you, achieving even greater impact!

Warm Regards

Emmy Zoomlamai Okello

Executive Director

02/08

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Action for Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALIVE) is a RELI Africa collaborative initiative that aims to ensure children in East Africa acquire life skills and values in order for them to thrive both during and beyond schooling.

Phase 1 of the initiative kicked off in August 2020 with a three-fold target. Phase 2 of ALIVE (April 2023 – December 2025) aims to further enhance education systems by focusing on pedagogy, curriculum, and assessments related to life skills and values.

Assessing Life Skills and Values Among Adolescents in Oyam District

Assessment of life skills and values among adolescents was recently conducted in Oyam District. The exercise involved 375 participants aged 13 to 17 from various sub-counties, focusing on four key areas: problem-solving, collaboration, self-awareness, and respect.

This initiative mirrors similar assessments carried out in Jinja and Kasese districts using a contextualized tool developed by the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) network under the Action for Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALIVE) Initiative.

In Uganda, the ALIVE initiative is coordinated by Uwezo Uganda and the Luigi Giussani Foundation, in partnership with FICH.

Lead investigator Faridah Nassereka expressed confidence that the new assessment tool will provide valuable

insights into how adolescents understand and utilize their skills, and how these skills can be nurtured. She mentioned that additional tools are being developed for broader use in assessing and developing generic skills among children.

These life skills, is crucial for workplace readiness, also play a significant role in the overall development of individuals within society.

NCDC Reacts

Christopher Muganga, a curriculum specialist at the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), highlighted that the NCDC had initially planned to conduct these assessments in schools as part of the new competency-based Lower Secondary Curriculum. He emphasized the importance of soft skills in education, noting that assessing these skills will help shape the future character and responsibility of learners.



GRIC Africa Youth Leadership Program Cohort V Launches

The highly anticipated Cohort V of the GRIC Africa Youth Leadership Program has officially launched, attracting hundreds of youth from across East Africa. After a rigorous selection process, 22 participants from Uganda, 25 from Tanzania, and 44 from Kenya were chosen, totaling 91 young leaders.

During the orientation, Samwel Mwai, the Program Coordinator at GRiC, emphasized the importance of full participation, requiring at least 80 percent attendance in both virtual and physical sessions over the six-month program. Each participant will be paired with a mentor, with in-person project proposal and development sessions enhancing the experience.

The program plays a critical role in career development, as highlighted by Patrick Ocen, GRiC Program Coordinator and Director of Programs at FICH. Some participants will volunteer with GRIC partner organizations, gaining valuable experience. Success stories like Sharon Achan and Denis Otim Oluma, who transitioned from fellows to full-time staff, underscore the program's impact.

Denis Opio Olabo, now president of the Alumni Association and employed at FICH, shared his journey from university to championing change in rural areas. The six fellows from Cohort V placed with GRIC Uganda Partners are committed to transforming their lives and careers through active participation in the program.



Peace Corps Uganda and USAID Visit Oyam District to Witness Collaboration Impact

A team from Peace Corps Uganda and USAID recently visited Oyam District to observe the positive effects of small grants administered through the Peace Corps Uganda office. Their visit highlighted several key initiatives aimed at improving health and nutrition among rural communities.

One major focus was the distribution of orange flesh sweet potato vines and iron-rich beans, both aimed at combating malnutrition. The team was impressed by the successful cultivation of NARO 1 and 6 beans in Akongagtar B Village, Angweta Parish, Iceme Sub-County. These beans, known for their early maturity and drought resistance, were thriving and community members expressed enthusiasm about the promising yields and their plans to continue planting them.

Additionally, the team reviewed the distribution of mosquito nets to nine health facilities and selected women's groups in Oyam District. These nets are crucial in protecting expectant mothers and young children, who are particularly vulnerable to malaria. Joel Kisubi, a malaria specialist from PMI-USAID, was pleased to see effective net usage in Ajalo Village, Iceme Sub-County. He noted that the community's reduced malaria cases have allowed families to allocate more resources to other needs.

Greg Ripke, a Peace Corps Volunteer at FICH, urged continued support for women's empowerment through practical skills training in areas such as baking, liquid soap making, and tailoring. He also encouraged communities to consume and replant the high-yield beans rather than selling them, emphasizing the quick two-month maturation period.



EmpowerED Future: Six GRiC Uganda partners retooled on the PEE manual

The Foundation of Inclusive Community Help (FICH), with support from Grassroots Nest for Innovation and Change (GRiC), successfully retooled teachers and program managers of GRiC-FICH Uganda partners at the Genade Comfort Hotel in Lira City. This training aims to equip schools, teachers, and program managers with the skills to effectively use the Parental Engagement and Empowerment (PEE) Manual to engage parents through meetings, home visits, and other initiatives.

The training included partners such as Arua Youth Development Initiative (AYDI), Community Focus International (CFI), Development Path for Community Transformation (DEPCOT), Growth Care Uganda (GCU), Saving Aids Foundation (SAF), and FICH.

Ricky Ojok, the PEE master trainer, highlighted that the PEE Manual has a proven impact on promoting parental engagement in their children's education. By making parents active stakeholders, each organization will develop plans to integrate this model, mobilizing and changing parental attitudes towards education.

Felix Ogwang, Senior Program Manager from SAF, shared insights from their earlier pilot of the PEE module. He noted increases in student enrollment and reduced absenteeism in their schools. Additionally, parental provision of scholastic materials has greatly improved. SAF is building linkages with school structures like PTAs and SMCs to sustain the program even after SAF's direct involvement ends. They also engage community leaders to spread the message and improve rural education outcomes.

Jolly Godfrey Odokonyero, who leads the education program at DEPCOT, reported positive responses from parents after the initial training. More parents are now visiting schools, and PTAs and SMCs have invited DEPCOT to support PEE initiatives, resulting in increased involvement from male parents in their children's education.

Ngole Polly Grace, a teacher at Barmindyang Primary School in Kole District, appreciated the training. She noted that previously, less than 30 percent of parents visited the school for reasons beyond paying fees and attending PTA meetings.

UPCOMING EVENT

POLICY DIALOGUE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND LEARNING BASED ON THE UWEZO 2021 LEARNING ASSESSMENT IN OYAM DISTRICT

In August 2021, Uwezo Uganda in partnership with selected district Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) conducted a national household-based learning assessment for children aged 4-16 years across 29 districts in the country.

To move the discussion of the findings to the district level, FICH in partnership with Uwezo Uganda will be holding district-level policy dialogues to share district-based findings for Oyam in comparison with other districts where household assessments were conducted and in comparison, with the national level performance in the assessment.



Empower Women Through Karacel Bakery & Training Center: Join Our Fundraising Efforts Today!

We invite you to join us in supporting the reopening and growth of the Karacel Bakery & Training Center in Northern Uganda. Our mission is clear: to empower women in the region by offering them meaningful employment opportunities, comprehensive skills training, and access to nutritious, high-protein bread made from soya flour.

The Karacel Bakery & Training Center is more than just a business—it's a beacon of hope and progress for women in the community. Owned and operated by women themselves, it not only addresses economic challenges but also fosters women and community development and empowerment.

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Thank you for considering our appeal. To donate, simply scan the QR code above or visit the link: <https://goto.gg/60071>. Together, we can empower women, foster community development, and create a brighter future for all.

07/08

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ICYMI: Peace Corps Uganda and USAID during field visit at Akongatar B. This visit underscored the success of food security initiatives and malaria prevention efforts in Oyam District.



PE&E: Patrick Ocen, GRIC Uganda Program Coordinator, emphasized the ongoing commitment to community empowerment.



PCU & USAID Visit: Greg Ripke checks iron rich beans at Akongatar B



Ryan from USAID inspects mosquito net usage in Ajalo village, Iceme S.CTY, Oyam District

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