



UGANDA COMMUNITY BASED ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN WELFARE (UCOBAC)

# Empowering & Transforming Communities

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2025



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# UCOBAC AT 35 Messages

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## **Florence Enyogu:** Former DAC Member, Bugiri

When we look back at where we came from in the 1990s, there was so much pain and suffering in our communities. Many people lived in extreme poverty, domestic violence was very high, and many marriages were broken. At the same time, many people were infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in Bugiri district and had no one to support them. Many people died.

It was through Madam Solome Mukisa that we initiated the establishment of UCOBAC in Bugiri. We mobilized community based organizations led by both men and women and we moved from village to village on foot, door to door identifying people affected by HIV/AIDS, child-headed families, and vulnerable women who had been left behind. The work was not easy but we remained committed to supporting those most in need.

As we celebrate 35 years of UCOBAC's impact, I am excited to say that there has been tremendous change in the community. Today, people are able to test for HIV and access treatment. Many people who were once infected and affected by HIV/AIDS are now living healthier and more dignified lives. Many have educated their children, started businesses, taken up leadership positions and gained skills in household and financial management



## **Jackline Buteme:** Teacher

UCOBAC supported my education from Primary Three through secondary school and college, where I graduated as a Grade Three teacher. Their support did not stop there. UCOBAC also helped me access the government payroll, enabling me to earn my own income. Today, I am able to support myself, help my family and assist my siblings who are still in school.



## **Joseph Wangoolo:** 2nd Programme Manager from 1994–2001

At the time, we were living in a country besieged by many challenges as a result of HIV/AIDS and children were suffering the most. The common response then was largely institutional where children were placed in orphanages and homes. However, we realized that in some cases, people were taking advantage of these vulnerable children.

As UCOBAC, we chose a different path by adopting community based strategies. Our focus was on skilling children and giving them hope for the future especially orphans who had lost their parents and relatives.

One of the most successful approaches was implemented in Rakai district through an apprenticeship model. We worked with local artisans such as carpenters and brick makers by mobilizing and sensitizing them on how to care for and support vulnerable children without causing them further trauma. I am proud to say that this approach

worked very well. Even donors at the time, who had mainly focused on orphanages and children's homes, became excited and inspired by the impact and support generated through our community based approach.

I can also proudly say that one of the concepts UCOBAC brought to the forefront was the Children's Parliament. This initiative was truly a child of UCOBAC. I remember Ugandan children even went to the United Nations General Assembly in New York to speak about issues affecting children.



**Agnes Kirabo: Food Rights Alliance-Executive Director**

I wish to congratulate UCOBAC on the remarkable journey they have made and the even greater journey ahead. It has always been tough transacting business in Uganda. If a brand like UCOBAC has maintained and sustained itself for 35 years, it is truly worth celebrating and we congratulate you on this milestone. Indeed, not even the sky shall be the limit.

The unique intervention by UCOBAC is supporting women to use resources at their disposal and then confront the challenges they are facing, the aspect of voice and agency. This approach is so unique and needed because women remain at the heart of agri food systems.



**Shafic Butanda: Principal Probation and Welfare officer: Ministry of Gender labour and Social Development**

I want to thank UCOBAC for being a good partner to the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development. UCOBAC has supported the ministry in protecting children and women's rights through community village meetings, training village based rights promoters and strengthening child protection and Local Council (LC) structures at the grassroots level. This is important work that ordinarily falls under the mandate of the Ministry and we appreciate UCOBAC for complementing government efforts in these areas.

UCOBAC is also among the organizations supporting the Ministry to ensure that children participate in matters that affect them. Through these efforts, the organization is contributing to the implementation of the National Child Policy and the Child Participation Strategy both of which emphasize meaningful child participation.



**Naome Kabanda- Retired Director Land Management at the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development**

I want to congratulate UCOBAC for the 35 years. UCOBAC's partnership with the ministry has been since 2008 and with them we have worked on a number of issues and activities to strengthen women's land rights and also secure them through a number of programs.

UCOBAC was very instrumental in customary land registration process in Uganda as it got a lot of youth volunteers to participate in the entire exercise. We have registered so many Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs) through their own funding with support from donors and our major focus then was to ensure women are part of the program not just in sensitisation and awareness but to also to ensure that their names went on these CCO's.

# Foreword

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This Annual Report presents a comprehensive account of UCOBAC's work, performance, and impact in 2025, a year that also marks 35 years of the organization's commitment to advancing the rights and wellbeing of women and children in Uganda. The report goes beyond a record of activities to provide a clear picture of the changes taking place in the communities we serve, the lessons we are learning, and the direction we are taking as an organization.

At its core, the report highlights progress across UCOBAC's key programme areas including child care and protection, women's land and property rights, Climate Justice and Resilient Livelihoods and Institutional Systems strengthening department that enables the functioning of programs/organization.

The report does not shy away from the realities of the operating environment. It outlines key challenges encountered during the year, including funding constraints, climate related shocks, and persistent social norms that limit progress, particularly for women and girls. By presenting these challenges alongside the achievements, the report offers a balanced and transparent view of UCOBAC's work.

Finally, the report sets the stage for the future. It outlines strategic priorities that will guide the organization in the coming years, including strengthening partnerships, scaling effective interventions, enhancing visibility and advocacy, and diversifying resource mobilization. These priorities are aligned with UCOBAC's new Strategic Plan (2025/2026–2030).

# Message from the Board Chairperson

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2025 marked a significant milestone in the journey of the Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC), 35 years of commitment to advancing the rights, dignity and wellbeing of women and children in Uganda.

Over the years, UCOBAC has evolved into a respected national organization championing rights based and community led development. This growth has been shaped by a consistent focus on grassroots engagement, strong partnerships and an unwavering belief in the power of communities to drive their own transformation.

The operating environment in 2025 remained complex. Reduced funding flows, shifting policy landscapes, and increasing climate-related shocks continued to affect both civil society organizations and the communities we serve. Despite these challenges, UCOBAC remained focused and adaptive in delivering results where they matter most, at the community level.

I therefore present to you this report which highlights not only what was achieved, but also how change is happening through strengthened local systems, empowered women and more resilient households.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Government of Uganda, development partners, civil society allies and local leaders. Most importantly, we recognize the women, children, and communities whose resilience continues to inspire our work.

As we look into the future, UCOBAC remains committed to deepening impact by empowering communities to lead their own transformation, advancing rights and building resilience hence contributing to a more just, equitable and prosperous Uganda.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grace'.

**Grace Angeline Chelimo**

Chairperson, Board of Directors.

# Message from the Executive Director



The year 2025 was a defining one for UCOBAC, marked by growth, measurable impact and a significant milestone as we celebrated 35 years of service to communities across Uganda.

During the year, UCOBAC delivered impactful interventions across its three core programme areas: Child Care and Protection, Women's Land and Property Rights, and Climate Change and Resilient Livelihoods. Through strong partnerships and community led approaches, we expanded access to education, health services, land rights and tenure security as well as economic and climate resilient livelihood opportunities. As a result, we reached **over 17,000 people**, directly supported **8,558 school children** and **over 7,000 women** in initiatives that strengthened their rights, economic empowerment, and social wellbeing.

Our interventions were implemented across Bugiri, Butaleja, Lamwo, Rubanda and the Kampala Metropolitan Area. Through the Child Development Project, we supported vulnerable children with access to education, nutrition, health services and protection. Under the Women's Land and Property Rights programme, we strengthened legal literacy, facilitated land registration, promoted shifts in social norms, and amplified grassroots women's voices in national policy processes. Our Climate Change and Resilient Livelihoods initiatives improved food security, promoted sustainable land use, and strengthened community resilience through climate-smart agriculture, vocational skills development, and alternative livelihood opportunities.

We also made key progress in strengthening our institutional capacity. In 2025, we updated governance reforms by updating our internal policies and operational frameworks.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Uganda, our donors and development partners, coalition members, Board, staff, and volunteers and the communities we serve for their continued trust and support.

As we move forward with the implementation of our new Strategic Plan (2025/26–2029/30), we remain committed to child protection, strengthening food systems and expanding access to economic opportunities, education, land rights, and climate resilient livelihoods for women and girls in Uganda.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Birungi Frances Odong'.

**Birungi Frances Odong**

Executive Director

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# Acronyms

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<b>UCOBAC</b>	Uganda Community Based Association for women and children welfare
<b>CCRL</b>	Climate Change and Resilient Livelihoods
<b>CDP</b>	Child Development Project
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government organization
<b>WLPR</b>	Women's Land and Property Rights
<b>OVC</b>	Orphans and Vulnerable children
<b>S4HL</b>	Stand for Her Land
<b>VSLA</b>	Village savings and Loan Association
<b>ADR</b>	Alternative Dispute Resolution
<b>ALC</b>	Area Land Committee
<b>CCO</b>	Certificate of Customary Ownership
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>GTA</b>	Gender Transformative Approaches
<b>MEAL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
<b>NDP (IV)</b>	Fourth National Development Plan
<b>ToT</b>	Trainers of Trainers
<b>SSD</b>	Safe Space Declaration
<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and Reproductive health and Rights.
<b>STDM</b>	Social Tenure Domain Model
<b>GOU</b>	Government of Uganda

# Executive Summary



During the reporting period, UCOBAC implemented a total of **13 projects** both ongoing and newly initiated across the districts of Lamwo, Bugiri, Butaleja, Rubanda, Namutumba, Kaliro, Jinja, Kabong, and the Kampala Metropolitan Area. In addition, one advocacy focused project on women’s land rights was implemented at the national level. By the close of the year, **five projects had been successfully completed**, marking important milestones in programme delivery and transition.

All interventions were delivered under three core programme areas: Child Care and Protection; Women’s Land and Property Rights; and Climate Justice and Resilient Livelihoods. This integrated programming approach enabled UCOBAC to respond holistically to the interconnected challenges facing women, children, and communities.

UCOBAC continues to be guided by its vision of empowered communities free from poverty and able to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms, and its mission to promote human rights and improve the welfare of women and children through community-based initiatives.

In 2025, UCOBAC finalized its new five-year Strategic Plan (2025/26–2029/30). The overarching goal of this strategy is to enhance the quality of life and resilience of

vulnerable women and children by strengthening their access to economic opportunities, education, health, land rights, and climate-resilient livelihoods. This strategic direction reflects UCOBAC's commitment to deepening impact while responding to evolving development challenges.

The sections that follow present a summary of UCOBAC's key progress and achievements for the year ending 31st December 2025, highlighting both results delivered and the foundations laid for future growth.

## Community Members reached across all project areas in 2025



2025 Total Reach

17,231



• **Social Inclusion:**

**732** Persons with Disabilities supported across all project sites

### RESULT AREA

### KEY MILESTONES

### IMPACT

#### Child Care and Protection



- **558 children** (281 girls and 277 boys) in three sub counties (Bulesa, Buluguyi and Kapyanga) of Bugiri district were supported with essential leaning materials including books, pens and pencils.
- **2,000 girls** were equipped with SRHR knowledge through 10 safe space engagements in school. This included **104 girls** who were given reusable pads
- A total of **3,900 units of nutritious meals** were provided to **8,703 school children** across the **10 sponsored schools**

This contributed to increased school enrollment and retention, regular school attendance for learners which has led to improved learning out comes like literacy, numeracy, communication and cognitive skills. Further still, a total of 152 girls were able to join secondary school in communities that previously had very few girls attaining secondary education.

## RESULT AREA

## KEY MILESTONES

## IMPACT

### Women's Land and Property Rights



- **51** awareness raising events were held during the year to empower women and communities with knowledge on existing Land rights, laws and protection mechanisms
- **4,879** community members (2,203F, 2,676M) were reached during land rights awareness raising events
- **3,554 land Parcels** on customary land were mapped in the Districts of Butaleja, Rubanda and Lamwo, occupied by an estimated total household members of 10,568 males, 6,141 females and 5,502 youths.
- **A total of 235 Land Tenancy Agreements (LTAs)** corresponding to 294 Acres of land were signed between Persons of Concern (POCs) and their landlords in the project areas of Palabek, refugee settlements.

These interventions will contribute to strengthening community and women's security of tenure and decision making on land.

Specifically, the benefiting women will be able to have increased access to land and other natural resources which will enable them to secure food for their families, increase their agricultural productivity and livelihoods and help drive local economies.

### Climate Justice and Resilient Livelihoods



- A total of **1,267 farmers** including 1019 females, 248 males, 493 Refugees, 474 Host communities and 460 (318 female, 142 Male) persons with disabilities across the different communities of Bugiri and Lamwo districts **received fruit tree seedlings** with the objective of improving their nutrition and incomes while at the same time contributing to environment protection.
- **12** VSLA community groups with 360 farmers (240 refugees, 120 host communities; 307 females, 53 males) were trained and equipped with financial literacy, business skills and enterprise development.
- **1,040 farmers** were trained on the use and benefits of energy saving stoves; (801 females, 239 males) whereas **680** farmers were provided with the energy cook stoves
- **140 youths** (70 refugees, 70 host communities; 98 females, 42 males) enrolled in skills training including tailoring, welding, mechanics, catering, ICT, building, and carpentry.

The interventions undertaken will contribute to strengthening community's resilience to impacts of climate change. Women participation in resilient livelihood activities will specifically contribute to enhancing food security, incomes and nutrition at family and community level, whereas youths' participation will ensure more employment for the young people together with sustainable mitigation and adaptation of climate change solutions.

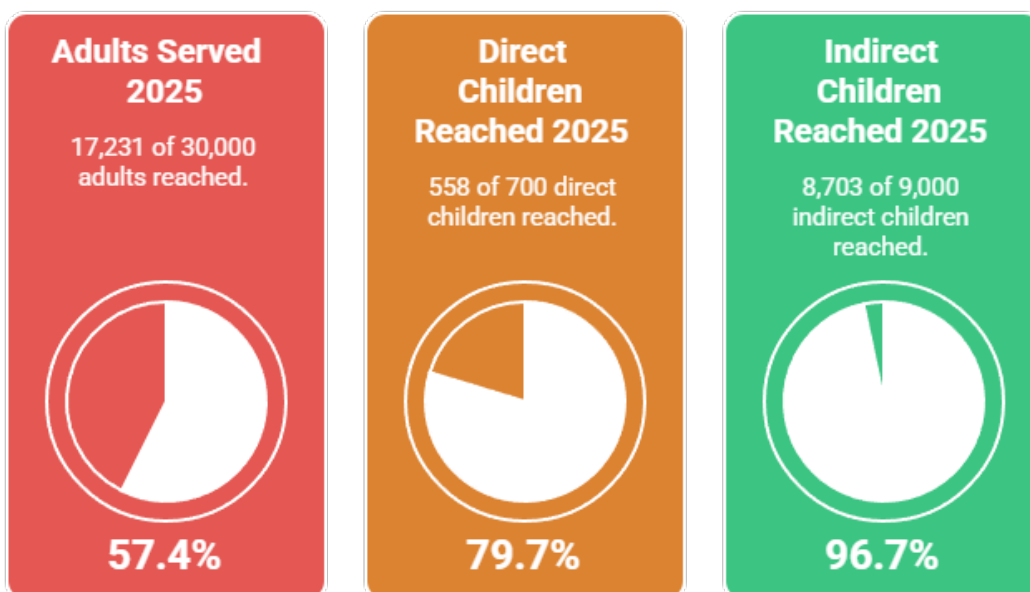
### Institutional systems strengthening



- **04 New policy documents** were developed and operationalized. These policy documents include: Code of Conduct., Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection Policy, Risk Management Policy and Board Governance Manual
- **Developed new MEAL policy**
- **Revamped the website to make it more interactive**

These policy documents together with those already in operation will further strengthen organizational operational efficiency, improve risk management, compliance and accountability together with improving planning and decision making. Decision.

## Progress on organisational Key Performance Indicators



13

Total number of running projects

Target Achieved, although 5 projects closed this year



### Challenges faced and addressing the challenges

The main challenges faced in the year included:

- Over dependency on donor support for most of UCOBAC operations,
- Climate changes that continue to severely impact the livelihoods of our target beneficiaries, hence disrupting our efforts to support them.
- Deep-rooted discriminatory and cultural norms around equality, equity and access to productive resources continue to hinder our efforts towards empowerment of the marginalized groups, besides exacerbating gender-based violence.



### Key strategies for 2026

- Increase resource mobilization efforts (internal and external)
- Effective utilization and management of organisational assets, donors, partners, human resources, funds, on-going projects and other resources
- Greater impact measurement and showcasing UCOBAC work and achievements
- Increase Information sharing, publicity and increase UCOBAC visibility
- Strengthen community led and sustainable efforts to addressing community challenges

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CHAPTER 1

# Introduction



## 1.1: BACKGROUND

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Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children's Welfare (UCOBAC) is a Ugandan, National, Non-Governmental Organization established in 1990 and officially registered in 1991, whose Core mandate is to 'Promote Human Rights and improve the welfare of Women and Children using community-based initiatives'.

Operating under the legal framework of the Non-Governmental Organizations Act of Uganda, UCOBAC functions as a National non-Governmental Organization committed to grassroots development, human rights and social justice.

For the year ended (2025), UCOBAC worked with an external consultant to develop a new and ambitious strategic plan (2025/2026 - 2029/2030) that will guide UCOBAC operations for the next five years. The New strategic plan was developed largely in the framework of the GOU's National Development plan (IV), Uganda Vision 2040 and global commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa Agenda 2063. Informed by an end-term evaluation of the outgoing plan, the new strategic plan emphasizes good governance, efficient resource use and accountability. It seeks to address contemporary challenges including climate change, health inequities and gender-based violence while reinforcing UCOBAC's role in Uganda's socio-economic transformation and its contribution to national and global development efforts.

During the process of developing a new strategic plan (2025-2029), four strategic program areas of focus were identified. These are: Child Care and Protection, Women's Land and Property Rights (WLPR), Climate Justice and Resilient Livelihoods (CJRL) and Institutional Systems Strengthening.

This report therefore presents UCOBAC's achievements for 2025 in the context of the above priority areas, the challenges faced and overcoming the challenges, lessons learnt and strategies for the 2026.

## 1.2: PROBLEMS BEING ADDRESSED

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The 2024 National Population and Housing Census conducted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics presents a compelling picture of Uganda's demographic reality one that reflects both a significant challenge and a critical opportunity for national development. Nearly half of Uganda's population is comprised of children below the age of 18, while women constitute approximately 51% of the total population. These demographic trends highlight an urgent reality: Uganda's social and economic transformation is closely tied to the wellbeing, empowerment, and inclusion of women and children. Achieving the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Uganda Vision 2040 therefore requires deliberate investment in the protection, participation, and advancement of these groups.

In response, UCOBAC implements programmes that promote and protect the rights and welfare of women and children across Uganda. These interventions address persistent and deeply rooted challenges that continue to limit their opportunities, dignity, and full participation in society. Key among these challenges are gender inequality and harmful social and cultural practices, including gender-based violence, child abuse, child marriage, and teenage pregnancy. These are further compounded by poverty and limited access to essential services and productive resources such as education, healthcare, land, and property ownership.

The situation is increasingly exacerbated by emerging and interconnected pressures, including conflict, displacement, climate change, and water scarcity, all of which disproportionately affect women and children. Without targeted and sustained interventions, these challenges continue to reinforce systemic barriers that undermine the enjoyment of human rights, weaken resilience, and hinder inclusive and sustainable development.

Working collaboratively with development partners, government institutions, and community stakeholders, UCOBAC remains committed to addressing both existing and emerging challenges through innovative, practical, and impactful interventions. These efforts aim to create an enabling environment for the survival, protection, growth, and development of children; strengthen women's land and property rights, security of tenure and decision making power and enhance community resilience and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

### 1.3: STRATEGIC DIRECTION (GOALS AND OBJECTIVES)

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UCOBAC long term strategic direction is derived from the organizational vision that envisages communities free from poverty and able to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

#### Vision

Empowered communities free from poverty and able to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

#### Mission

To Promote Human Rights and improve the welfare of Women and Children using community-based initiatives.

#### Goal

To enhance the quality of life of women and children through advancing their rights, transforming their lives and building resilience of communities.

#### Strategic Objectives

- (i) Promote full development, protection and wellbeing of children
- (ii) Strengthen Women's Security of Tenure and Decision Making on Land
- (iii) Strengthen community resilience to impacts of climate change
- (iv) Strengthen institutional capacity of UCOBAC to deliver on its mandate

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CHAPTER 2:

# Programs Overview And Achievements 2025



Under this reporting period, UCOBAC implemented thirteen projects that were organized under three program areas through which UCOBAC was able to extend critical services to the most vulnerable women and children, especially in the rural Districts of Uganda.

## 2.1 PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED – 2025

The table below presents a summary of the implemented projects, location and the development partner.

Program Areas	Projects	Funding Partner	District
Child Care and Protection	Child Development Project	Kinvia	Bugiri
	Stand for Her Land	BMZ – Landesa	National
Women's Land and Property Rights	Lamwo Initiative For Thriving Communities (LIFT)	ZOA	Lamwo
	Scaling up Community-based Land Registration and Land Use Planning on Customary Land in Uganda	GLTN – UN Habitat	Butaleja, Rubanda
	Scaling up Community Land Rights in Uganda	Cadasta Foundation	Namutumba and Kaliro
	International Land Coalition-RP4	ILC	Africa Sub-region
	Strengthening Womens Access and Decision making on Communal Land and Natural Resources	Wellspring	Karamoja Sub-Region
	Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance – ICLA	Norwegian Refugee Council	Kampala Metropolitan
	Economic Empowerment and Resilience of Refugees and host communities in Uganda (LEAD)	Woord en Daad	Lamwo
Climate Justice and Resilient Livelihoods.	Power of Voices – Fair For All (F4A)	Huirou Commission	Bugiri, Jinja and Kaabong
	Building up Inclusive and gender equitable Livelihoods and protection services in Palabek, Uganda	Light for the World	Lamwo
	Improving Food and income security, climate resilience and women empowerment for refugees and host communities in Palabek settlement	AWO International	Lamwo
	Empowering Smallholder Farmers for Inclusive and Resilient Seed Systems in Palabek Settlement	Kinvia – SLAIGHT Foundation	Lamwo

## 2.2 PROGRAM LEVEL ACHIEVEMENTS

This section focuses on detailed milestones achieved against program-based objectives as outlined in the strategic plan 2025/26-2029/30.



## PROGRAM AREA 1:

### CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: To promote full development and realization of rights of OVC.**

The GOU's National Child Policy (2020) aims at achieving; 'Improved realization and enjoyment of all children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation by all children in Uganda.

During this reporting period, UCOBAC implemented an integrated package of interventions in Bugiri District aimed at promoting the holistic development and realization of the rights of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs). These interventions were undertaken under the respective sectors of Education, Health and Nutrition, Economic empowerment and Child protection.

## SECTOR 1: EDUCATION

Interventions under this sector focused on child sponsorship, infrastructure development and capacity building.

### INTERVENTION 1.1: CHILD SPONSORSHIP

A total of **558** child ambassadors in Bugiri district (**281 girls, 277 boys**) received scholastic materials like books, pens and pencils and school meals to ensure they remained in school and actively engaged in learning. Additionally, **240 children (126 girls, 114 boys)** from Namagonjo primary school in Bulesa sub county and Budibya Primary School in kapyanga subcounty, Bugiri district were provided with school uniforms.

These interventions contributed to:



Notably, **152 girls transitioned to secondary school**, a major milestone in communities where girls' education has historically lagged behind.

### INTERVENTION 1.2: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

To create safer and more conducive learning environments, **two classroom blocks were renovated at Nambiya Primary School**. In addition, all 10 supported schools received signposts compliant to the Ministry of Education and Sports guidelines to strengthen school identity, visibility and alignment with national standards.

## SECTOR 2: HEALTH AND NUTRITION

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### INTERVENTION 2.1: SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (SRH) SERVICES

**104 girls** at Namagonjo primary school were provided with reusable sanitary pads, enabling them to manage menstruation with dignity. This intervention reduced absenteeism, improved hygiene, and boosted girls' confidence in school.

### INTERVENTION 2.2: HEALTH EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION

Through 10 safe spaces organised, 2,000 girls received comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) education. Equipped with accurate information and life skills, girls are now better able to:

- Prevent teenage pregnancy and child marriage
- Challenge harmful gender norms
- Seek timely healthcare
- Make informed decisions about their bodies

### INTERVENTION 2.3: FOOD SECURITY

Nutrition is fundamental to learning. UCOBAC provided **3,900 units of nutritious meals composed of nutritious porridge among others**, benefiting **8,703 children** across 10 schools. These meals significantly improved:

- Children's health and immunity
- School attendance and concentration
- Retention and completion rates

## SECTOR 3: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

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### INTERVENTION 3.1: INCOME SECURITY

Children's wellbeing is deeply linked to household stability. UCOBAC invested in strengthening caregivers' economic resilience. A total of **100 parents (62 women, 38 men)** from the villages of Budibya and Nakabalewere received seed capital to start small businesses such as vegetable vending, sugarcane trade and fish sales. This has led to increased household income which has enabled families to:

- Keep children in school
- Improve living conditions
- Invest in productive assets such as land and household items

### INTERVENTION 3.2: CAPACITY BUILDING

To sustain the gains above, **20 VSLA groups comprising 479 members (349 women, 130 men)** received refresher training in financial literacy, record keeping, and loan management. As a result, participants demonstrated improved financial discipline, savings culture, and investment decision-making.

In order to strengthen the business management capacity of the participants, 20 VSLA groups in Bulesa and Buluguyi sub counties comprising of **479 members** (349 Female and 130 Male) received refresher trainings in financial literacy, record keeping and loan management. As a result, participants have demonstrated improved financial discipline, savings culture and are now more careful, thoughtful and strategic with their money they save more, spend wisely and make well-informed investment decisions.



Ruth Nwagaba at her stall in Luwero Village, in Bulesa Subcounty

## STORIES OF CHANGE

### Child care and Protection – Economic empowerment of Child care takers. RUTH'S PATH TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Ruth Nwagaba, a 38-year-old resident of Luwero village in the Bugiri district, shared her journey of transformation from a subsistence farmer to a successful entrepreneur. She explained that as a married mother of two, she had previously lived a simple life in a grass-thatched house, struggling to afford school fees while only growing food for home consumption and selling small items like tomatoes and silverfish.

She noted that everything changed when a friend introduced her to UCOBAC, an organization that provided training in business management and farming. Ruth recalled joining a weekly savings group and receiving financial literacy training. She admitted she was initially skeptical when told they would receive funding, but she was overjoyed when 150,000 shillings was deposited into her account.

Ruth detailed how she invested that capital into a stall to sell onions, silverfish, and bananas. After receiving further training from UCOBAC on value addition, she discovered a passion for making mandazi. She purchased the necessary equipment and explained that she now earns a daily profit of 21,000 shillings. Furthermore, she mentioned that the agricultural training she received allowed her to transition into commercial farming and diversify into animal husbandry by purchasing goats and poultry.

One of the most significant milestones she shared was that she and her husband are currently constructing a permanent house using her increased income and timber from her own trees. While she acknowledged challenges such as customer debts and perishable goods going bad, she emphasized the importance of perseverance.

Ruth concluded by advising other women to stop relying solely on their husbands and to take charge of their own financial lives. She expressed deep gratitude to UCOBAC for empowering her to become a role model and an independent woman within her community!

## SECTOR 4: CHILD PROTECTION

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### INTERVENTION 4.1: ADVOCACY AND POLICY INFLUENCING

A documentary was produced and disseminated to highlight the impact of our child care and development work in Bugiri District. It showcased the “supportive environment” model implemented in the district, illustrating how creating safe and nurturing spaces at home, in schools and within communities enables children to thrive. The documentary further demonstrated how this model can be adapted and scaled to address the challenges faced by children across Uganda. <https://youtu.be/D3YgyneaHHo?si=2-HcR6WcdTeLyZxo>

Additionally, commemorations of the **Day of the African Child** provided a platform to elevate children’s voices and hold duty bearers accountable.

### INTERVENTION 4.2: AWARENESS RAISING

Children actively participated in **9 youth led radio talk shows**, reaching an estimated **480,400 listeners**. These platforms empowered young people to speak out on critical issues such as:

- Menstrual hygiene management
- Teenage pregnancy and child marriage
- Children’s rights and responsibilities
- Gender norms and peer pressure

This approach not only raised awareness but also positioned children as advocates for their own rights and wellbeing.

Behind these numbers are real stories of transformation children staying in school, girls reclaiming their confidence, and families rebuilding their livelihoods. Yet, the need remains immense.

With continued support, UCOBAC can expand these life changing interventions to reach even more vulnerable children, ensuring that no child is left behind.



## PROGRAM AREA 2:

### WOMEN'S LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

*STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: To strengthen women's security of tenure and decision making on land.*

Land remains one of the most critical assets for livelihoods and economic transformation in Uganda. For millions of women who form the backbone of the agricultural sector, land is not just a productive resource, but a pathway to food security, income, and dignity.

Yet, despite progressive legal frameworks such as the Constitution of Uganda (1995), the Land Act, and the National Land Policy, women continue to face systemic barriers to land ownership and control. Current estimates show that women own **no more than 26% of land** in Uganda. This persistent gap reflects deeply rooted social norms, unequal power relations, and limited participation of women in land governance processes.

Recognizing this, UCOBAC implemented targeted interventions in 2025 to challenge these barriers and expand women's access to land rights. By strengthening women's tenure security and voice in decision making, the program is contributing to more resilient households, improved agricultural productivity, and inclusive local economic growth.

### INTERVENTION 2.1: LEGAL LITERACY / AWARENESS RAISING ON LAND RIGHTS

A core pillar of UCOBAC's approach in 2025 focused on building legal awareness and shifting harmful social norms that continue to limit women's land rights. Through inclusive and community driven platforms, UCOBAC engaged men, women and young people including those in refugee-affected areas to question, unlearn and reshape long held beliefs that disadvantage women.

1. **10 community sensitization meetings** focused on women's land rights and gender responsive customary land registration using fit for purpose and inclusive approaches were conducted in Butalejja District. These sessions equipped community members with practical knowledge on; Uganda's legal and policy frameworks on land, Women's rights to access, use, and own land and Processes for acquiring Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs)
2. **04** community dialogues in Sironko district were held during **Land Awareness Week (LAW) 2025** reaching **200 participants (46 women, 154 men, and 4 persons with disabilities (PWDs))**. LAW is a national advocacy initiative convened by the **Ministry**

**of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development** in partnership with civil society organizations to raise awareness about **land governance, climate change laws, and tenure security**, while providing platforms for **dialogue and accountability between citizens and duty bearers**.

3. Expanded outreach in refugee hosting communities as part of UCOBAC's efforts to promote peaceful and equitable land use among refugees and host communities.
  - A total of **25 community sensitisation** meetings were conducted in Lamwo District where land pressures are heightened due to the refugee influx reaching **5000 participants both refugees and host community members**. The meetings held at parish and zone levels across three target sub counties addressed key land rights issues including customary land access and tenure security, women's land and property rights, the acquisition and importance of Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs), and the development of fair land tenancy agreements between Persons of Concern (PoCs) and host communities.
  - In the Kampala Metropolitan Area, we conducted targeted legal information sessions to address critical knowledge gaps on land, housing, and property rights among urban refugees. **These sessions reached a total of 468 participants (374 women and 94 men) with practical rights based information.**

#### 4. Media and Digital engagement

- Introduced the online Trivia Fridays to create awareness on women's land rights. The quizzes combined education with entertainment to enhance understanding of women's land ownership, control and inheritance. The campaign reached over **200,000 online users**, creating a vibrant digital platform for civic learning, reflection and dialogue on gender and land justice.
- Facilitate **12 radio talk shows** across Eastern, Central, Northern, and Western regions on topical issues and discussions around land rights
- To strengthen advocacy efforts, we organised a press conference with women's land rights actors ahead of International Women's Day. This engagement generated 11 media stories, significantly amplifying the visibility and reach of our work on women's land rights.
- **Recorded two podcasts** to document critical narratives on women's land rights in Uganda. The first explored culturally accepted norms and practices shaping women's access, use, control, and ownership of land within the Tooro Kingdom context. The second traced Uganda's long standing efforts to pass a harmonized Marriage Law, examining the intersections of culture, religion, human rights, politics, and highlighting their continued implications for women's rights.

## INTERVENTION 2.2: CAPACITY BUILDING FOR LAND ACTORS AND DUTY BEARERS

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Three capacity building trainings for district land boards, Area land committees, local council leaders and traditional leaders were conducted for local leaders in Butaleja and Lamwo districts.

A total of 65 local leaders were trained (22 Women, 43 Men) at both district and sub county levels. The training unpacked key land laws and policies, explored practical approaches to gender responsive land registration, strengthened participants' skills in mediating land disputes, and enhanced their ability to guide communities through the Certificate of Customary Ownership (CCO) process and integrate physical planning into land management.

## INTERVENTION 2.3: LAND DISPUTE MEDIATION

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In many communities, land disputes are not just legal issues they are deeply personal conflicts that affect livelihoods, relationships and dignity. For women, youth, and persons with disabilities, accessing formal courts can be costly, intimidating, and often out of reach. Recognizing this, UCOBAC invested in activities aimed at strengthening **community based dispute resolution systems** to bring justice closer to the people who need it most.

5. **Four community awareness meetings** on land conflicts and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) were held in Lamwo and Butalejja districts. These meetings reached **175 participants** including local council leaders, elders, cultural and religious leaders, refugee and zone representatives, and land committee members ( **57 women, 60 refugees, and 23 persons with disabilities**). With guidance from experts from the Ministry of Justice, participants explored mediation as a more accessible and effective alternative to litigation. Importantly, these sessions emphasized **gender-responsive land mediation** to ensure that women and other vulnerable groups are not just present but heard.
6. From these engagements, **7 community mediation committees (06 in Lamwo and 01 in Butalejja)** were formed laying the groundwork for sustainable, locally driven conflict resolution.

To strengthen their effectiveness, **capacity building trainings** for these committees in both districts were held reaching **76 members (21 women, 55 men)**, including 20 members from the host community and 22 persons of concern and 03 persons with disabilities. Through interactive learning ranging from group discussions to role-plays based on real cases participants gained practical skills to mediate disputes fairly and confidently. Trainings were conducted in both English and local languages to ensure full participation and understanding. The results have been tangible.

Of the **39 land conflict cases recorded, 22 were successfully resolved** by the mediation committees a 56.4% in conflict resolution.

## INTERVENTION 2.4: LAND RIGHTS REGISTRATION

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In 2025, UCOBAC with support from various partners implemented targeted land registration interventions across **Lamwo, Butalejja, and Rubanda districts**, with a deliberate focus on strengthening tenure security for women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and refugee-affected communities.

- **Central to this effort was the mapping and documentation of customary land.**

Using the Social Tenure Domain Model, UCOBAC in collaboration with development partners used this fit for purpose tool undertook the registration of the rights and interests of small-scale rural farmers on customary land in the Districts of Butalejja, Lamwo and Rubanda. This process began with the identification and training of community based mapping teams. Through a combination of theoretical and practical training led by GIS and land rights experts, participants gained skills in data collection, land parcel mapping, and the use of digital tools such as the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) for mapping, configuration of tablets for field use and skills to troubleshoot common technical issues in mapping among others.

Practical field exercises further strengthened their ability to support Area Land Committees in accurately mapping inspected land parcels. Continuous on-ground technical support from project teams and district staff ensured quality and sustainability throughout the process.

As a result;

- 3,554 land Parcels on customary land were mapped in the Districts of Butalejja, Rubanda and Lamwo, occupied by an estimated total household member of 10,568 males, 6,141 females and 5,502 youths.
- 3495 applications for CCOs were approved, bringing families one step closer to legally recognized land ownership.
- **Strengthening Land Access Through Formalized Tenancy Agreements for Refugee Communities.** During the reporting period, a total of **235 Land Tenancy Agreements (LTAs)** covering **294 acres of land** were formally signed across the three zones in Lamwo district.

**Impact:** With an average household size of 5–7 members, it is estimated that **1,175 individuals** directly benefited from tenancy agreements. These tenancy agreements will further strengthen land user rights for families contribute significantly to peaceful coexistence between host and refugee communities, while also encouraging greater investment in agriculture.

## INTERVENTION 2.5: SOCIAL NORMS TRANSFORMATION

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Across many communities, deeply entrenched patriarchal norms continue to limit women’s ability to own, use, inherit, and make decisions over land, reinforcing cycles of economic dependence, inequality, and vulnerability to gender-based violence. Addressing these social norms is therefore essential not only for securing women’s land rights, but also for advancing household resilience, poverty reduction, and inclusive economic growth.

During the reporting period, UCOBAC undertook several activities aimed at transforming these norms from within communities, fostering dialogue, reflection, and action toward more equitable land practices.

- **Training of gender trainers.** 11 grassroots were trained as Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) on Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA). The participants, drawn from Uganda’s four regions and representing community-based organizations, women’s groups, and NGOs, were equipped with skills to challenge discriminatory social norms, facilitate community dialogues on equitable land decision-making, and promote shared land ownership. They were also introduced to the “Securing Your Family’s Future (SYFF)” toolkit to support reflection and action toward more gender-equitable land rights.
- **Five community sessions on the transformation of harmful social and gender norms on women’s land rights** (WLRs) were held in Hoima, Bugiri, Busia, Gulu, and Napak, reaching 113 community members (65 women and 48 men), including 14 persons with disabilities (PWDs). Facilitated by grassroots women trained as gender trainers, the sessions brought together community members and local leaders in safe, inclusive spaces to reflect on deeply rooted beliefs and practices that limit women’s access to, ownership of, and control over land. Guided by structured learning modules from the Securing Your Family’s Future (SYFF) curriculum, the dialogues encouraged open discussion, collective reflection, and practical action toward more equitable land practices, enabling participants to challenge discriminatory norms and promote shared decision-making within households and communities.

## Story 1 : Social Norms Training Empowered Man to gift Land to Wife

Vincent Byakuhabya and his wife, residents of Bulyango in Kitoba Subcounty, Hoima District, had long relied on family land held under customary tenure for their livelihood. Although Vincent's wife contributed substantial labor to farming, she had no control over decisions regarding what to grow, how to use the income, or how land benefits were shared. This reflected the prevailing social norms in the community, where women's rights to land were largely unrecognized.

This situation began to change when Vincent attended a Social Norms Transformation Training for men, facilitated by Diana Byali, a gender trainer trained by UCOBAC using the SYFF curriculum. Initially resistant, Vincent expressed concerns that giving women land rights would make them "too big-headed." However, through the training, he reflected on how equitable decision-making could improve household productivity and long-term security. By the end of the session, Vincent recognized that true family stability requires that women have recognized rights to own, control, and benefit from land.

Motivated by this new understanding, Vincent took a bold step by demarcating a portion of the family land and giving it to his wife for her exclusive use and control. Although the land is not yet formally registered in her name, this action represents a significant shift in household decision-making and gender norms.



## INTERVENTION 2.6: LAND USE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

- Under this period, UCOBCA supported community members in Butalejja District to form and organize into community wetland management associations that are fully registered by the Department of Community-Based Services. Through these formations, they are now actively engaging their respective leaders to prioritize their planned activities for environmental conservation.
- 2,595 wetland users (1,061 females and 1534 males), including 672 adults, 569 children, 210 elderly persons, and 1,144 youths in Busabi subcounty, Butalejja district were mapped and advised on how to apply for a Wetland Use Permits.
- Three Community Based Wetland Management Plans (CWMPs) were developed for the Dumbu, Bulega, and Magoje wetland communities to strengthen local wetland management. The plans were collaboratively reviewed by district technical staff from the Natural Resources and Community-Based Services departments, sub-county

leaders, and wetland user executive committees. With technical facilitation from the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development's Physical Planner, the plans were validated and officially adopted by the Butaleja District Council during a meeting held at the RDC chambers.

## INTERVENTION 2.7: ADVOCACY AND POLICY INFLUENCING

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1. **Policy reviews consultations on the marriage bill.** During the year, UCOBAC engaged in policy advocacy on the Marriage Bill, 2024, focusing on its implications for women's land rights. UCOBAC alongside other 10 coalition members and grassroots women representatives appeared before the Parliament Joint Committee on Gender, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to present evidencebased recommendations on matrimonial property provisions to safeguard women's access to, control over and ownership of land.
2. **Grassroots Women Driving Change in National Land Policy.** UCOBAC facilitated a landmark consultation on the review of Uganda's National Land Policy, bringing together 31 grassroots women leaders from across all regions, including refugee and minority communities, to contribute their perspectives. The session was attended by officials from the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development and the policy review team.

Prior to the consultation, a Grassroots Academy equipped 29 women leaders with knowledge of the policy framework, enabling them to develop gender responsive recommendations. The process strengthened the inclusion of grassroots women's voices in national policy making and promoted more equitable land governance.

3. **Dialoguing for Strategic Change in Women's Land Rights and Inclusive Land Governance:** During the reporting period, UCOBAC facilitated a series of strategic dialogues aimed at advancing women's land rights, gender equality, and sustainable land governance by creating platforms for learning, policy influence, and community-driven action.

- **Exploring Women's Land Rights within Islamic Law**

A roundtable dialogue brought together 23 participants (16 men, 7 women), including Muslim scholars, legal experts, community leaders, and Muslim women leaders, to explore how Islamic principles can support gender-equitable land ownership. The discussion identified cultural and practical barriers and opportunities for aligning religious teachings with gender-responsive land governance.

- **Gender and Climate Change Engagement at COP30**

In partnership with Climate Action Network Uganda, UCOBAC co-facilitated a thematic working group meeting on gender and climate change, reaching 32 participants (21 women, 11 men), including grassroots women leaders. The engagement strengthened women's participation in global climate processes and contributed to the development of a joint position paper on gender-responsive climate action.

- **Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Sustainable Land Governance**

In Mbale District, UCOBAC co-facilitated a dialogue with 50 participants (20 women, 30 men), including government officials, traditional leaders, land committees, and grassroots women leaders. The discussions focused on scaling customary land registration, promoting joint land ownership, and strengthening gender-responsive land governance, leading to consensus on practical actions for more equitable land access and tenure security.

**Other dialogues or events where our land rights work had a representation..**



### PROGRAM AREA 3:

## CLIMATE JUSTICE AND RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS (CJRL)

During this reporting period, UCOBAC implemented five climate focused projects across the districts of Lamwo, Bugiri, and Butaleja all aimed at strengthening community resilience to climate change impacts. These interventions focused on key areas, including; Building community capacity to identify and manage climate risks, Raising awareness on climate change impacts and adaptation strategies; **Promoting climate action** at the local level, **strengthening resilient livelihoods** to buffer communities against climate shocks and **Advocacy and policy engagement** to influence decision-making for sustainable, climate-resilient development.

*STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: To strengthen community resilience to impacts of climate change*

### INTERVENTION 3.1: CAPACITY BUILDING

UCOBAC implemented capacity building interventions to strengthen the knowledge and skills of grassroots farmers and wetland users, enhancing productivity, market engagement and sustainable natural resource management.

1. **Trainings on Governance, Value Chains, and Market Access.** 300 grassroots women farmers in Bugiri District were trained on agricultural governance, value chain development and market analysis to strengthen their capacity to collectively market produce, identify profitable markets and negotiate better prices.

Following the training, 200 women farmers in Mutere Sub County pooled and sold their produce collectively. They registered improved earnings compared to individual sales. Additionally, the establishment of a bulking centre created opportunities for networking with private sector actors and participation in broader agricultural trade platforms, further enhancing women's economic empowerment and market access.

2. **Facilitation of Knowledge Transfer and Peer Learning Exchanges.** During the reporting period, UCOBAC facilitated peer learning exchange visits to strengthen local agricultural and environmental practices across target communities.
  - a. A total of 124 farmers from Bugiri and Lamwo districts participated in an exchange visit to the Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute in Ngetta, Lira District. The visit exposed participants to improved agricultural technologies, including ox driven mechanization, climate resilient farming practices and drought and pest tolerant crop varieties. Farmers also received technical guidance from experts on crop, dairy and fish production as well as practical solutions to challenges such as soil infertility. Following the exchange, farmers in Lamwo District adopted drought and pest tolerant crops resulting in increased yields, improved household incomes and enhanced overall agricultural productivity.
  - b. 48 wetland users from the Dumbu, Magoje and Bulega communities in Butaleja District participated in a peer to peer learning exchange facilitated by UCOBAC (19 women and 29 men). The participants visited Bukedea District to learn from ongoing community led wetland management and restoration initiatives. The exchange focused on wetland demarcation, conservation strategies and alternative livelihood options hence enabling participants to share experiences, reflect on challenges and adopt sustainable practices in their own communities.

## INTERVENTION 3.2: CLIMATE ACTION

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Through approaches such as farmer field schools, participants received hands on training in climate smart and good agronomic practices including mulching, crop rotation, use of quality seeds, timely planting and pest and disease management supporting improved livelihoods and greater resilience to climate change.

1. 1,267 farmers received fruit tree seedlings to promote improved nutrition and environmental conservation. Of these 1,019 were women, 248 men, 493 refugees, 474 host community members and 460 persons with disabilities (318 women and 142 men) in Bugiri and Lamwo districts. The initiative improved dietary diversity, increased household incomes and strengthened climate resilience while also enhancing soil health, water retention and crop productivity.
2. 1,040 farmers and VSLA members were trained on sustainable energy solutions. This group included 801 women, 239 men, 103 persons with disabilities, 572 refugees, and 468 host community members. The Training covered stove construction, safe and efficient usage, fuel saving techniques and maintenance practices.
3. 600 participants were given energy efficient stoves. The adoption of these stoves has reduced firewood consumption and household energy costs while minimizing environmental degradation. It has also contributed to climate mitigation by reducing deforestation and carbon emissions, thereby strengthening household resilience.



## Overall achievement

During the reporting period, UCOBAC supported the formal registration and certification of farmer groups across Lamwo and Bugiri districts, enhancing their legitimacy, access to resources and long term sustainability.

In **Lamwo District**, **6 out of 12 VSLA groups** supported by UCOBAC were successfully **registered and issued with district level certificates**. This formal recognition strengthened their **linkages with financial institutions**, improved their credibility, and positioned them for **expanded access to financial services, growth, and improved livelihoods**.

In **Bugiri District**, grassroots women farmers took a significant step forward by organizing into formal cooperative structures. A total of 2 farmer cooperatives and 5 Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) were established and registered. These structures are now enabling women who are often excluded due to systemic and social barriers to access financial services, invest in agricultural production, increase productivity, and improve household incomes.

### INTERVENTION 3.3: RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS

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Our resilient livelihoods interventions focus on strengthening the capacity of vulnerable communities particularly women, youth, refugees and host populations to withstand economic and environmental shocks while sustaining and improving their incomes. Through skills development, financial inclusion, and support for diversified income generating activities, these efforts promote self-reliance, enhance household welfare, and build long-term economic resilience.

- 1. Vocational Training and Skills Development for Adolescents and Youths.** 140 youths (98 females, 42 males) from refugee and host communities in Lamwo District were enrolled in vocational and artisan skills training to strengthen economic resilience and support sustainable livelihoods. As a result, participants gained practical skills, confidence and self-reliance to improve their incomes and actively contribute to the local economy.
- 2. Economic Empowerment through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs).**
  - **12 community groups** in Lamwo comprising of **360 farmers (240 refugees, 120 host community members; 307 females, 53 males)** were supported to start VSLA groups. Through targeted training on financial literacy, business skills, and enterprise development, participants gained access to safe savings and credit services, enabling them to improve household welfare, scale up economic activities, and enhance their social and economic resilience.
  - Groups were also supported to develop **group based income generating activities (IGAs)**. Out of the 360 farmers, **72 participants (52 females 20 males)** successfully drafted business plans and established ventures such as piggery, goat rearing, and sunflower farming.

## INTERVENTION 3.4: ADVOCACY AND POLICY INFLUENCING

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1. During the reporting period, UCOBAC strengthened grassroots advocacy by conducting **3 grassroots academies**, which catalyzed the formation of farmer coalitions and multi level networks. In Bugiri District, farmers developed a joint advocacy strategy and built alliances to influence government action on improving agricultural value chains. Through these platforms, farmers identified practical solutions to sector challenges, reviewed existing policies, and replicated best practices gained from the academies.
2. 600 grassroots women smallholder farmers were trained in decision making and leadership hence strengthening their voice and enabling engagement with key institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Trade and the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture.
3. 60 grassroots women and 3 civil society actors were engaged in a participatory research that resulted in the documentation of 4 position papers and policy recommendations that were presented to parliamentary committees and relevant policymakers.



## PROGRAM AREA 4:

### INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

#### *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Strengthen institutional capacity to deliver its mandate.*

During the reporting period, UCOBAC made significant strides in strengthening its internal systems, governance structures, and operational capacity to ensure effective, accountable, and sustainable delivery of its mandate. This cross-cutting effort enhanced the organization's ability to respond to community needs while maintaining high standards of transparency, compliance, and performance.

#### 4.1: SYSTEMS AND COMPLIANCE

A major milestone was the development and finalization of key organisational policies and strategic documents to reinforce governance and operational efficiency. Six core policies and manuals were successfully completed including;

- Constitution and Memorandum & Articles of Association (Memarts)
- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Board Governance Manual

In addition, **five critical policies and frameworks** reached advanced stages of review, including the MEAL Policy and Plan, Strategic Plan (2025–2030), Data Protection Policy, Human Resource Policy and Complaints Response Mechanism.

To further strengthen institutional systems, UCOBAC initiated the development of **six additional policies and strategies**, including the **Asset Management Policy, Communication Strategy, Advocacy Strategy, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy, Anti-Money Laundering Policy, and Fundraising Strategy** demonstrating a strong commitment to aligning with global best practices and long-term sustainability.

## Statutory Compliance

UCOBAC maintained full statutory compliance throughout the reporting period, successfully submitting annual returns to five key regulatory bodies: the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), National Social Security Fund (NSSF), Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), NGO Bureau, and the Data Protection Office (PDPO). This achievement reflects the organisation's strengthened institutional credibility and commitment to regulatory accountability.

## Organisational Governance and Coordination

Internal governance and coordination were sustained through regular Senior Management Meetings, staff meetings, Board meetings and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) — ensuring effective leadership oversight, strategic direction, and organisational cohesion. The Annual Staff Retreat provided a dedicated space for reflection, learning, and collective planning.

To support staff wellbeing and strengthen institutional culture, UCOBAC operationalised a Staff Welfare Fund, improving morale and internal support systems. Financial management was also strengthened through enhanced internal controls and improved financial reporting systems, increasing transparency and audit readiness. The organisation further expanded its partnerships and networks, creating new opportunities for programme growth and resource mobilisation.

## Looking Ahead

While significant progress was achieved, key priorities remain to fully consolidate these gains. In the coming period, UCOBAC will focus on conducting staff orientation and refresher training on organisational policies and operational frameworks; developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) across departments, formulating a resource mobilisation strategy and undertaking financial risk assessments. These steps will be critical in strengthening institutional resilience and positioning UCOBAC for greater impact and sustainability in the years ahead.

## 4.2: COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

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During the reporting period, UCOBAC made significant strides in strengthening its communication and advocacy capacity deepening its ability to influence policy, elevate community voices, and enhance institutional visibility at local, national, and regional levels.

A foundational achievement was the development of two key strategic documents: a draft Advocacy and Policy Influencing Strategy and a draft Communication Strategy. Together, these frameworks provide structured guidance for stakeholder engagement, consistent messaging, and strategic positioning laying the groundwork for more coordinated and impactful advocacy in the years ahead.

To support evidence-based advocacy and document programme impact, the department produced a range of communication materials during the year. These included three documentaries, three short project videos, and two podcast episodes all designed to capture community experiences and translate programme outcomes into compelling, accessible narratives. The organisational website was also redesigned and updated to strengthen UCOBAC's digital presence and improve public access to information, resources, and programme updates.

Social media remained a key platform for visibility and engagement, with the department maintaining a consistent and active presence throughout the year ensuring the continuous documentation and public communication of programme achievements.

A significant milestone during the reporting period was the commemoration of UCOBAC's 35th anniversary. 11 commemorative videos were produced to mark this occasion, celebrating the organisation's history, impact, and the communities at the heart of its work.

Knowledge sharing was further strengthened through the production and dissemination of two editions of The Mouthpiecenewsletter, reaching partners and stakeholders with updates on UCOBAC's programmes, advocacy milestones, and community stories.

Advocacy efforts were significantly advanced through the continued implementation of the Stand for Her Land (S4HL) campaign, which deepened dialogue on women's land and property rights and mobilised stakeholders around this critical issue.

A major highlight of the campaign was a rigorous analysis of the Marriage Bill, 2024. This analysis informed coalition advocacy and guided engagement with key decision makers. The process culminated in the development of a comprehensive policy brief and a formal presentation to Parliament, clearly articulating the coalition's position and recommendations. The policy analysis was subsequently designed, published, and widely disseminated to promote public awareness and strengthen the evidence base for ongoing advocacy.

### 4.3: MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL)

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During the reporting period, UCOBAC made strategic investments in strengthening its MEAL systems, recognising that robust monitoring and evaluation are essential for delivering measurable results, ensuring accountability, and embedding a culture of continuous learning across all programmes.

A landmark achievement was the completion of the Organisational MEAL Policy which now provides a unified framework guiding the design and implementation of MEAL systems across all programmes and projects.

This was complemented by the finalisation of a new five-year Strategic Plan (2025/26–2029/30) and a corresponding five-year MEAL framework developed in collaboration with a technical expert which together position UCOBAC to systematically track progress, measure long-term outcomes, and optimise resource utilisation.

At the programme level, project-specific MEAL plans and reporting templates were updated and operationalised, enabling teams to monitor milestones effectively and deliver quality, evidence-based reporting to donors and internal stakeholders.

#### **Routine monitoring, review meetings, data collection and data quality**

UCOBAC deepened its commitment to data quality and evidence-based programming through targeted field monitoring and structured review processes. The MEAL department conducted four field monitoring visits across Lamwo and Bugiri districts, providing hands-on technical support to field teams in data collection, processing, and results reporting. Three project progress review meetings were also facilitated in Lamwo, creating structured spaces for teams to assess performance, identify challenges, and co-create practical solutions — strengthening adaptive management and accountability across project implementation.

In a significant institutional milestone, UCOBAC conducted its first ever Data Quality Assessment (DQA) across Lamwo and Bugiri districts. This exercise systematically reviewed programme data against key standards of accuracy, completeness, consistency, and timeliness ensuring that all evidence generated is fit for decision-making and donor reporting.

#### **Digital Transformation of MEAL**

Looking ahead, UCOBAC has taken a bold step toward digitising its MEAL systems. A pilot initiative under the LEAD project introduced digital data management tools, streamlining the collection, analysis, and dissemination of programme data. This shift is already enabling real-time access to information, improving data accuracy, and strengthening the timeliness of decision-making laying the foundation for a more agile and data driven organisation.

In a significant step toward institutional excellence, UCOBAC also conducted its first ever Data Quality Assessment (DQA) across Lamwo and Bugiri districts. This exercise systematically reviewed programme data and reports against key standards of accuracy, completeness, consistency and timeliness ensuring that all evidence generated is for fit for decision making and donor reporting.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OUTPUTS – FINANCE DEPARTMENT 2025

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During the period, the Finance Department continued to strengthen financial stewardship, accountability, compliance and operational efficiency in support of the organisation's strategic objectives. The department focused on improving financial controls, enhancing reporting processes, ensuring compliance with donor and statutory requirements and providing timely financial support to programme implementation.

### 1. Key Accomplishments and Outputs

**Strengthened Financial Management and Controls.** Effective financial controls were implemented and maintained to enhance accuracy, accountability and transparency in financial transactions. Financial procedures, documentation workflows and accounting practices were enhanced to improve efficiency. There was reduced processing delays and improved reliability of financial information. This improved safeguarding of organisational resources and strengthened compliance with internal policies and procedures.

**Timely Financial Reporting.** Financial reports were prepared and submitted in a timely. These included management reports and donor financial reports, which enabled informed decision-making and strengthened accountability to stakeholders and donors.

**Budget Management and Monitoring.** The team supported annual budgeting processes and regularly monitored budget performance against approved plans. This improved resource allocation and enhanced cost control across the different programmes and projects.

**Donor Compliance and Financial Management.** There was adherence to donor financial requirements, including proper documentation and expenditure eligibility reviews. This enhanced donor confidence and reduced compliance risks.

**Tax and Statutory Compliance.** The organization ensured timely preparation and submission of statutory obligations, including tax filings and regulatory requirements. We maintained good standing with regulatory authorities and minimized compliance risks.

**Audit Co-ordination and Compliance.** External audit processes were successfully implemented including resolution of audit recommendations. During the year, the organisation also onboarded internal auditors for strengthened governance, transparency, and continuous improvement of financial systems.

**Financial Capacity Building.** The finance team continuously provided guidance and support to staff on financial procedures, budgeting, documentation requirements and compliance standards. This improved understanding and adherence to financial policies across the organisation.

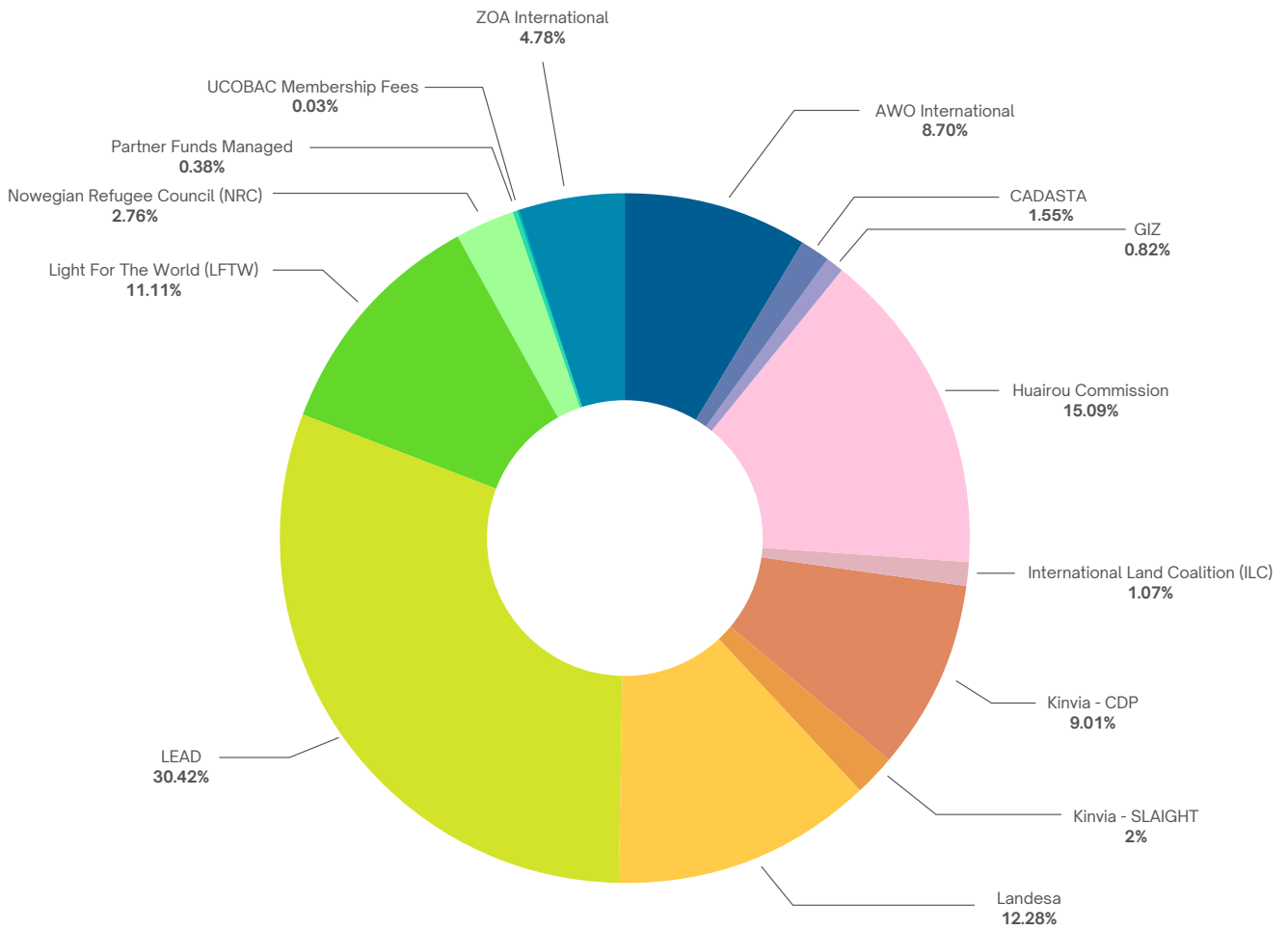
**Cash Flow Management.** There was strengthened cash flow forecasting and monitoring to ensure availability of funds for organisational operations and programme activities. This supported uninterrupted implementation of planned activities.

**Strengthened Procurement processes.** Procurement processes were strengthened through improved compliance, better documentation and enhanced internal controls; resulting in greater transparency, efficiency and value for money in procurement decisions.

## 2. Finance at a Glance

Income	2025 (Ushs)	2024 (Ushs)
Balance brought forward	1,030,847,793	617,506,462
Income Transfers for the year	3,009,616,065	4,550,116,532
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>4,040,463,858</b>	<b>5,167,622,994</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Staff Costs	1,222,072,432	1,035,174,591
Operational Costs	212,232,017	160,563,095
Consultant's Costs	330,363,387	430,002,369
Travel Expenses	263,524,781	356,814,093
Training/Study/Workshop/Meetings	799,472,581	1,095,783,902
Advocacy	222,359,226	90,579,800
Program Costs	455,087,040	277,129,570
Capital equipment Costs	517,451,809	690,727,755
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>4,022,563,274</b>	<b>4,136,775,176</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>17,900,584</b>	<b>1,030,847,818</b>

## Contribution from funding partners



FUNDING PARTNER	PERCENTAGE
AWO International	8.70%
CADASTA	1.55%
GIZ	0.82%
Huairou Commission	15.09%
International Land Coalition (ILC)	1.07%
KINVIA - CDP	9.01%
KINVIA - SLAIGHT	2.00%
Landesa	12.28%
LEAD	30.42%
Light for the World (LFTW)	11.11%
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	2.76%
Partner Funds Managed	0.38%
UCOBAC Membership fees	0.03%
ZOA International	4.78%

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CHAPTER THREE:

# Cross Cutting Issues



UCOBAC's three core program areas address key cross cutting socio-economic challenges affecting women and children, including cross-cutting issues ensuring inclusive, holistic and impactful interventions.

### **a) Intersectionality**

Recognizing that intersecting identities and social positions such as gender, age, disability, location (rural/urban), class/poverty status, religion marital status etc shape how individuals experience privileges, opportunities, discriminations and challenges in multiple, overlapping ways. UCOBAC program interventions take an intersectional approach that avoid "one size fits all" solutions. The program designs take a holistic understanding of people taking into consideration their social environment, recognizing that people's needs, challenges are shaped by multiple overlapping social identities and systems of inequality and understanding that people many need different types of support to achieve fair outcomes. UCOBAC will therefore promote Program interventions that provide more inclusive and equitable services for all.

### **b) Digitalization**

Digital technologies, tools, and systems are an integral part of UCOBAC's programming as a strategic catalyst for improved efficiency and effectiveness, enhanced accessibility and service delivery, data management as well as enhanced decision making, communication, responsiveness and accountability. By prioritizing inclusive, accessible, and safe digitalization, UCOBAC aims to bridge the digital divide through boosting the digital access and literacy in ways that empower people and deliver greater impact

### **c) Humanitarian action.**

UCOBAC adopts a Humanitarian – Development – Peace (HDP) nexus approach in its programming by integrating humanitarian principles, crisis awareness and response, preparedness, protection and resilience approaches across all its programs – All UCOBAC program include humanitarian dimensions in their design and are implemented for people and communities affected by crises or disasters resulting from conflict, natural disasters, disease outbreaks or climate related emergencies.

### **d) Grassroots women leadership**

UCOBAC envisions communities with balanced power relations and sustainable resilient communities. Recognizing that women are primary drivers of change possessing the most effective solutions for addressing their challenges and those of their families and communities, UCOBAC program areas place grassroot women at the center of decision making in the transformative change process of their communities. UCOBAC is committed to building the collective power of women within their communities as well as dismantling the restrictive norms and attitudes that traditionally hinder women's organizing and leadership.

### **e) Advocacy and Policy influencing:**

UCOBAC programs integrate strategic advocacy and policy influencing actions with an aim of reforming laws, policies, and institutional frameworks in ways that facilitate an enabling environment for inclusive and transformative development for all at all levels of society.

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CHAPTER 4:

# Challenges, Learnings and Recommendations



- In 2025, UCOBAC operated in a challenging environment marked by declining funding and shifting donor priorities. Critical areas such as education support, climate adaptation, and value addition faced resource constraints. In response, the organization strengthened resource mobilization efforts, promoted innovative solutions like school gardens, and aligned programming to emerging global priorities such as climate action.
- Institutionally, gaps in coordination, systems and documentation highlighted the need for stronger internal structures. UCOBAC responded by improving coordination mechanisms, developing standard operating procedures, strengthening compliance systems, and investing in digital knowledge management. These steps are building a more agile and accountable institution, ready to deliver at scale.



#### KEY LEARNINGS

From these experiences, important lessons have emerged.

- Communities especially women and children are not passive beneficiaries but rather active agents of change. When their voices are included, solutions are more relevant and sustainable.
- Investments such as school feeding have proven to directly improve attendance and learning outcomes
- For co-creation to be successful, governments and the private sector must see rural farmers especially women as entrepreneurs and innovators.

# Our Partners



REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



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## COALITIONS AND NETWORKS WE BELONG TO

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