



MAY 27th 2025

NEWSLETTER



JESE staff extend support to Katojo female prisoners.



Community Engagement:

The Heart of Successful Landscape Restoration



EDITORIAL

We are excited to share highlights of the May 2025 events. JESE envisions a community where nature and people flourish. Our strides are in Natural Resource Management, Livelihood Improvement, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and Skills development.

We want to use the space to thank you for staying with us on our journey. We cannot do it alone. In our May Newsletter, we bring you updates from various thematic areas of Protection and Equitable Use of freshwater resources- PURE program, Agricultural Enterprise, Restore Africa, and operations to keep you tuned to our activities.

These updates are a result of collaboration, partnerships with other partners and stakeholders at local, regional, national, and international levels.
Enjoy reading!

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JESE PARTICIPATES IN THE WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE REFLECTION SESSIONS.

The Water Resources Management and Climate Change Reflection sessions were a deeply insightful experience, especially in the context of the Mpanga Catchment, which spans Kabarole, Fort Portal, Kyenjojo, Kamwenge, Kitagwenda, and Ibanda districts. The sessions brought together a diverse group of local government technical stakeholders from five districts within the Mpanga catchment, creating a rich platform for knowledge sharing and joint reflection.

The national policy and regulatory frameworks regarding water resources and climate change, along with their practical implications at the local level, were explored, and the Mpanga Catchment Management Plan was discussed. Key topics such as climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience were unpacked, providing a solid understanding of how these concepts relate to everyday realities in the catchment.

Group discussions on local challenges and successes in water conservation, restoration, and compliance highlighted both achievements and persistent gaps. The contributions from partners like Water For People, Join for Water, Tooro Kingdom, and various faith-based organizations were recognized in their efforts to protect River Mpanga from upstream to downstream. The introduction to nature-based solutions was particularly compelling, offering sustainable ways to enhance the resilience of both people and ecosystems.

Overall, the sessions reaffirmed the importance of integrated efforts in safeguarding River Mpanga amidst a changing climate.

A group of six people, three men and three women, are standing behind a large pile of donated supplies. The supplies include boxes of White Star soap, Quetta tissues, and various hygiene products. A chalkboard in the background lists items and quantities. The group is standing in a room with a red carpet. The man on the far left is wearing a black t-shirt and jeans. The woman next to him is wearing a pink top and a patterned skirt. The woman in the center is wearing an orange dress. The man next to her is wearing a white polo shirt and blue trousers. The woman on the far right is wearing a green vest over a white shirt and a dark skirt. The man on the far right is wearing a white polo shirt and blue trousers. The supplies are piled on the floor, including boxes of White Star soap, Quetta tissues, and various hygiene products. The chalkboard in the background lists items and quantities.

The initiative stemmed from the Holy month of April 2025 during the Lenten season, which emphasizes fasting, Alms giving, and prayer. JESE staff, supported by management, known for their community outreach, donated essential items to the women's section of the facility, fostering a spirit of hope and solidarity.

“This is so good. We are forever grateful to you and your team for your generosity and consideration. Shared, Mr Niwahereza Amos (SP) OC Katojo main prison.

“Thank you for the giving heart. Am humbled. My appreciation to everyone who put their hand in this.” ***Remarked, Ms. Hellen Bawaya (POI), OC Katojo women’s prison.***

OVER 240 FARMERS RECEIVE INPUT.

JESE, with funding from HERE WE GROW-HWG, supported farmers with materials in preparation for the post-harvest handling. Over 175 coffee farmers in Busiriba Sub County, Kamwenge, and Kicheche in Kitagwenda districts received the materials.

A total of 715 Tarpaulins were distributed to the farmers, including 215 in Kitagwenda and 500 in Kamwenge, targeting beneficiaries. This is in a bid to promote post-harvest handling practices (PHP) of coffee to maintain its quality.



Farmers with their Tarpaulins during the distribution in Busiriba Sub County, Kamwenge district.

"We can't thank you enough, Patrick and the JESE, for the work you are doing; we only say bravo. Noted, Begumisa Francis, Farmer Innovator representative, narrates.

A STRIDE MADE TOWARDS FOOD SECURITY.

Skilling of farmers in the Agriculture Occupation:

JESE, in partnership with CARE, enrolled and trained 25 farmers for apprenticeship training. The apprentices were trained in Coffee bending and stumping; they were also trained in post-harvest handling for Cereals.

This follows an assessment conducted in May 2025 by the Uganda Vocational Training Assessment Board (UVTAB) for all 25 apprentices (20 females and 5 males).

About 25 farmers were skilled. 20 were for Coffee (Stumping and Bending while 5 were for Post Harvest Handling in cereals).

The trainees gained skills to make them earn a living by supporting other farmers to improve their agricultural activities. This was a field based and hands-on assessment in a bid to meet the mandate put in place by the Uganda Vocational Training Assessment Body (UVTAB).



Assessment Exercise by DIT to JESE farmers on coffee for both Kyenjojo and Rubirizi- SUF-FB-C, Starbucks project.

Speaking to Mr. Tumuramye Bosco, Project Officer-Starbucks, he shared that they empower farmers to get livelihood options under the FFBs-C Starbucks project.

“So, we believe that skilling a community-based trainer will as well improve on his/ her well-being but also help them reach out to other farmers for support. He noted.

FROM INDIVIDUAL VISION TO COLLECTIVE IMPACT: NYANKWANZI COOPERATIVE’S SUCCESS STORY IN UGANDA, SPARKED BY FARMERS LIKE NDYAYIHAHO JACK.

JESE, with Support from Care International, organized and conducted a Global Learning event-field visit in Uganda under the Care-funded projects, including She Feeds. This was inspired by the Nyankwanzi Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Limited in Kyenjojo District, and the remarkable story of Ndyayihaho Jack and his wife. Jack’s involvement in the She Feeds project implemented by Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE) and Care International in 2018 sparked a profound transformation.

In addition to cultivating 4.2 acres of robusta coffee and flourishing kitchen gardens, the training fostered household harmony and inspired the idea of collective action.

This led to the formation of the Nyankwanzi Cooperative in 2019, which grew from just 20 members to over 1,350 registered farmers (500 active) across 44 affiliate groups. Their ambitious vision is to capture 60% of the market share by 2030 as a leading agricultural enterprise.

According to an article shared by CARE, the progress is currently being supported by CARE and JESE through the implementation of the Farmer Field and Business School Approach, which has enhanced the group’s performance, particularly in adopting improved agronomic practices and fostering better relations at the household level.

Farmers like Jack now bring their coffee directly to the cooperative, bypassing middlemen to secure better prices. Nyankwanzi manages the bulking, drying, processing, and packaging of their premium Nyankwanzi Gold Coffee.

Importantly, CARE has partnered with the **National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU)** to obtain essential fair trade and global market certifications, supported by government **MAAIF** extension services. This collaboration is opening broader and more profitable markets for Nyankwanzi's farmers.

Nyankwanzi's journey demonstrates how empowering small-scale farmers combined with strong partnerships among local actors, the private sector, and government, can catalyze sustainable economic development and significantly improve livelihoods for small-scale producers.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: THE HEART OF SUCCESSFUL LANDSCAPE RESTORATION



Landscape restoration is not just about trees—it's about people. At the heart of every thriving ecosystem is a community that depends on it—and more importantly, cares for it.

Uganda's landscapes, especially in regions like the Albertine Rift, are under intense pressure from deforestation, climate change, and unsustainable farming practices. Restoration efforts here are not just urgent—they are essential for both climate resilience and livelihood security.

Through our work with local communities, we have learnt that technical solutions alone won't cut it. No matter how brilliant the intervention—be it agroforestry, soil conservation, or reforestation—it only works when local people are genuinely involved. Community engagement is not a checkbox. It's a long-term commitment to listen, learn, and co-create solutions with the very people who live on, rely on, and protect the land.

Why Community Engagement Matters.

- **Local Knowledge:** Communities possess invaluable knowledge about their environment, including traditional farming practices, local species, and ecosystem dynamics.
- **Ownership and Accountability:** When communities are involved in decision-making processes, they develop a sense of ownership and accountability for the restoration efforts.
- **Sustainability:** Community-led initiatives are more likely to be sustainable in the long term, as they are tailored to local needs and contexts.

Therefore, we have to start by meeting communities where they are—not just geographically, but in terms of knowledge, culture, and aspirations. That means spending time with the communities, understanding local priorities, identifying champions within the community who can lead change from within, and involving communities in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of restoration efforts, ensuring that their perspectives and insights inform our work. When farmers and households see the benefits of restoration—improved soil fertility, increased yields, better access to firewood, and protection against floods—they begin to take ownership. And ownership is what transforms a project from a short-term intervention into a sustainable movement.

As we scale up our restoration efforts, let's put people at the center. Technical expertise, financial resources, and institutional support all matter—but without community trust and engagement, none of them are effective. Ultimately, communities are not just beneficiaries of restoration; they are the drivers, protectors, and storytellers of a healthier, more resilient landscape.

Let's continue the conversation! I'd love to hear how others are integrating community voices into restoration and climate resilience efforts across Africa and beyond.

CSOS ARE EMPOWERED AS CATALYSTS FOR DEVELOPMENT.

The understanding that civil society organisations (CSOs) can act as catalysts for development is central to the work of the Strengthening Governance and Civil Society in Uganda Programme (GCSP). 20 CSOs from all regions in Uganda were invited to attend a Training of Trainers.

Over three days, these organisations, working in areas such as civic empowerment, governance, and accountability, were introduced to engaging, participatory teaching methods. By the end of the training, the participants were equipped with the skills to become effective trainers, capable of passing on valuable knowledge to other CSOs and strengthening civil society throughout Uganda.

This was followed by a 2-day training on technical communication. JESE was represented by the Communications and Advocacy Manager in two sessions, including writing electronic newsletters and writing for social media.

I would like to thank the GlZ team for conceiving the idea and finding it necessary to improve our skills. As advocates, we will use the skills acquired to mentor others and ensure that the knowledge does not end with us. Shared

THE NEED FOR REFLECTION MEETINGS.

Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE), AVSI Foundation, and Biogas Solutions Uganda Ltd (BSUL), with funding from Care International, are implementing the Biogas for Agriculture and Nutrition in Schools project (BANS), Kyangwali refugee settlement, in Kikuube district. A reflection meeting was held on 27th May 2025 at Jenga Youth Center, Kasonga ward, Kyangwali Sub County, Kikuube district.

BANS (Biogas for Agriculture and Nutrition in Schools) is a 02 years project implemented across 05 primary schools in Kyangwali refugee settlement. Out of the 17 primary schools within the settlement, 05 schools were selected for the pilot study, and these include: Karuhinda, Kentomi, Mombasa, Maratatu, and Ngurwe primary schools.

While interacting with Mr. Kahwa Eriah, the headteacher for Kentomi Primary School, he shared that the use of firewood leads to deforestation, and they are happy to have gas as an alternative for cooking meals for learners and teachers. **This will make strides in our efforts to mitigate climate change once the biodigester is established.**

“Bio digester has come to solve many challenges, such as Soil exhaustion, and with biodigester, it will be fertilized since it will be giving manure. We shall use gas instead of firewood, which costs 270,000/= per term and 810,000/= per year. He noted.

Mr. Abitekaniza Kiva Francis, the Chief Administrative Officer, Kikuube district, appreciated Care International and partners for the good project which covers the 03 aspects of Nutrition, Feeding and Farming (NFF). He also encouraged JESE and other implementers to have a proper sustainability plan so that when the project ends, people continue to use the biodigester well.

Speaking to the stakeholders during the meeting, Ms. Achiro Prosscovia, Field Associate from UN-HCR, emphasized the need for proper documentation of the project activities for future references and encouraged people in the community to welcome and embrace the project.

She further asked the JESE and implementing partners to ensure proper management of sanitary kits. She asked them not to dump the used sanitary kits in the biodigester and advocated for behavior change among the girls in the community.

While speaking to the stakeholders during the meeting, Mr. Muhangi African, Project Coordinator, Care International, shared that a school management committee of 06 members has been instituted, including 05 people from the community and 01 from the school (focal teacher). He emphasized that all community members will be involved in the project implementation to understand how the biodigester works and how to maintain it.



Figure 1 Mr. Nsekhanabo John, Chairperson Biodigester School Management Committee, Kentomi P/S, sharing his opinion during the reflection meeting at Jenga Youth Center, Kikuube district.

Speaking to the participants during the meeting, Mr. Mulinda Godfrey Rugumayo, the Head of WASH Department, assured the participants of the safety measures prior application of bio slurry into school gardens, and BSUL will take the lead.

” JESE shall fulfill its mandate in executing the project activities. The utilization of surplus slurry and gas will be effectively planned for in a bid to equally benefit the adjacent communities for sustainability purposes.”

He further shared that JESE has been implementing similar projects for the last 32 years. On behalf of the consortium, he promised that the project will invest in local capacity building by tapping into the expertise of residents during the construction, operation, and maintenance of bio digesters.



Figure 2. Mr. Abitekaniza Kiva Francis, the Chief Administrative Officer, Kikuube district, addresses the participants during the meeting at Cobrawus secondary school.



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