

**TRAINED.** Finn Church Aid has trained more than 1,200 youth in line with the government policy of interventions in the refugee settlement, which advocated for 70 per cent refugees and 30 per cent host community youth.

**SKILLING REFUGEES.** Finn Church Aid has been skilling both refugees and host community youth since 2015. The students study for four and half months and then one and half months in field training.

## Finn Church Aid equips refugees with vocational skills

**Skilled.** On March 28, more than 600 youth, both refugees and nationals graduated at Rwamwanja Vocational Skills Training Centre in Kamwenge District, with support from Finn Church Aid. **Daily Monitor's Fednand Tuhamé** writes.

More than 600 youth, both refugees and nationals have been awarded diplomas and certificates in different courses at Rwamwanja Vocational Skills Training Centre in Kamwenge District.

Under the funding of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, UNHCR, FCA passed out refugees mostly from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and other 291 nationals last week after attaining vocational skills in black smith welding, hairdressing and cosmetology, motorcycle and bicycle repair, tailoring and garment cutting, sandal making, Agriculture Vocational Education and Training and driving.

Forty six youth also successfully completed Diploma in Micro Entrepreneurship, instructed by entrepreneurship experts from the Omnia Education Partnership (OEP), Finland.

Finn Church Aid is a professional, non-political and neutral humanitarian and development organisation, whose work is based on international law and the code of conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations.

The country director of FCA Uganda Wycliffe Nsheka, said the organisation has been skilling both refugees and host community youth since 2015.

He said the organisation has trained more than 1,200 youth in line with the government policy of interventions in the refugee settlement, which advocated for 70 per cent refugees and 30 per cent host community youth.

"The training is in line with the Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTNET) strategy and Skilling Uganda programme.



**Skilled.** Tailoring students display their products during the graduation ceremony last week. PHOTOS BY FEDNAND TUHAME

What makes this programme exceptional is that refugees are able to obtain education while they are displaced, which helps them find employment already during the period of displacement," Mr Nsheka said.

In Uganda, FCA and OEP currently provide vocational diplomas in entrepreneurship, pedagogy and business management. The programme attracts both refugees as well as Ugandans.

While presiding over as the chief guest at the graduation ceremony, the minister of Information, Communication and Technology Frank Tumwebaze tasked the district leadership to resolve on expanding the college with more facilities from the government in order to serve the whole constituency by skilling both refugees and host community at a rate of 50/50 per cent.

"Mr Chairman advise the district council to pass a resolution to fund this institution such that it can be the vocational centre for Kibale East constituency, he said.

Mr Tumwebaze also launched a computer laboratory funded by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Through his ministry, the



**Good job.** Finn Church Aid country director for Uganda, Wycliffe Nsheka (2nd right), ICT minister Frank Tumwebaze (right), and other officials inspect some of the work done by the students.

minister pledged to donate 80 computers to the vocational skills training centre.

The project area manager FCA Caphas Mugabi, said the trainees are skilled for six months. He said the students study for four and half months and then one and half months in field training (practical). He, however, said they are challenged with long distances, which has led to the increased number of dropouts. This has forced the organisation to start community based training centres in the settlement camps to target those who trek long distances.

The assistant commandant of Rwamwanja Settlement Camp Mr John Bosco Kyarugonza, advised the trainees to use the acquired skills to transform their lives.

He said since the settlement camp was opened in 2012, it has managed to accommodate about 66,000 refugees and attributes it to the good re-

lationship between the nationals and asylum seekers.

Mr William Majwala, the principal of Rwamwanja Vocational Skills Training Centre, said they opened the training centre in 2015, to help skill both the refugees and the host community.

He said the first intake trained more than 120 youth, second intake more than 140 and the recent one had over 500 youth. Currently, they have about 250 trainees.

He said through skilling the youth, the training centre has transformed

the lives of both the host community and refugees as they have found something to do in order to earn income instead of begging.

Kamwenge District education officer, Mr Eric Tumwiringire, said FCA has addressed the vocational challenges in the district by bringing on board refugees and nationals who had never attended classes and those who didn't complete education.

### Beneficiaries

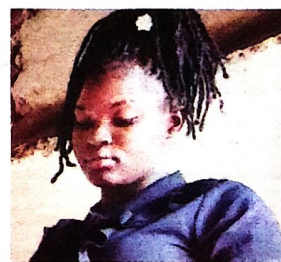
Jonaliz Kabugho, a refugee from DR Congo enrolled at the skills centre for blacksmith and welding in 2015, and currently, she is the only woman welder in the camp and is employing 12 nationals.

"I'm proud to be the only woman welder in the camp and employing men who are nationals. A refugee employing national? Am very proud being in Uganda," she said.

John Tuzobukama, 60, a Ugandan from Rubaare in Mtungamo District is employed by the centre as a security manager which has helped him to educate his children at university and secondary school.

Regina Meta, 18, fled to Uganda from Congo with her mother and sister in 2016, and is now studying in the Finnish entrepreneurship programme. With skills got from the programme, she has opened her own salon, which is now among the most popular in the refugee settlement.

### WHAT THEY SAY



"Hairstyling has always been my passion. Thanks to the programme, I have learnt a lot, especially about how to interact with clients,"

REGINA META, CONGOLESE REFUGEE

"The training is in line with the Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training strategy and Skilling Uganda programme. What makes this programme exceptional is that refugees are able to obtain education while displaced."

WYCLIFFE NSHEKA, FINN CHURCH AID COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR UGANDA

### VOCATIONAL SKILLS

**Beneficiaries.** Finn Church Aid has transformed the lives of both refugees and nationals through vocational skills.



**Beneficiaries.** Some of the graduands who have been supported by Finn Church Aid at the graduation ceremony.

This article has been sponsored by Finn Church Aid