



# UNESO

# ANNUAL

# REPORT

# 2025



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## MESSAGE | Board Chairperson.



**Ms. Batte Shamilah | UNESO, Board Chairperson**

It is my distinct honour to present this 2025 Annual Report on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Network of Key Population Service Organizations (UNESO). This report is more than a collection of activities; it is a testament to our collective resilience, strategic focus, and unwavering commitment to the rights and well-being of sex workers across Uganda.

The year 2025 was a defining one. It tested our movement in unprecedented ways. We navigated a complex global landscape marked by shrinking civic space, a coordinated anti-rights movement, and a challenging funding environment that threatened the sustainability of our work and that of our member organisations. The echoes of these challenges were felt locally, yet they did not deter us. Instead, they sharpened our resolve. The Board witnessed, with immense pride, how the UNESO secretariat, under the leadership of our National Coordinator, and our member organisations, turned these moments of collapse into opportunities for strategic regrouping and collective action.

A cornerstone of our work in 2025 was the development of the new six-year Strategic Plan (2025–2030). Through extensive consultative meetings with members, partners, and stakeholders, we collectively defined a roadmap that is not only ambitious but also grounded in the lived realities of our community. This plan will guide us in building a more resilient, well-coordinated, and impactful movement.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the Board of Directors for their dedicated stewardship and to the UNESO management and staff for their tireless efforts and selfless service. To our members, partners, and donors, thank you for your solidarity and trust. Your support is the fuel that powers our movement.

As we embark on the implementation of our Strategic Plan, I call upon all of us to remain united, courageous, and unwavering in our pursuit of dignity, justice, and human rights for every sex worker in Uganda. The path is not always easy, but together, we will continue to rise to the moment with clarity, courage, and care.

I hope that this annual report provides you with a snapshot of our efforts towards creating a more just and equitable society for all people.

Sincerely,

Batte Shamilah  
Board Chairperson



## MESSAGE | National Coordinator

**Ms. Namakula Nakato Daisy | UNESO, National Coordinator.**

UNESO acknowledges the role played by different individuals and organisations in supporting our work. The work that UNESO did in the year 2025 would not have been possible without the support of different stakeholders. Our members, partners, stakeholders, and allies, we remain indebted to you.

The Uganda sex worker movement has made significant strides in the fight for the realization of sex workers' rights. Throughout the year 2025, the sex worker movement has lived through a global inflection point, a moment that has been defined by both collapse and possibility. Long-standing systems that once upheld human rights and social progress are unravelling, including institutions meant to safeguard gender equality and body autonomy.

The sex worker movement, like other social movements, faced scattered setbacks, including confronting globally coordinated, well-resourced anti-rights movements. This erosion of rights is not accidental, but rather strategic. But so is the UNESO response. UNESO in coordination with the sex worker movement, continues to rise to meet the moment with clarity, courage and care. The sex worker movement is not passively waiting for change, but continues to organise and lead to realize the desired social change.

The year 2025 was a pivotal year that marked the beginning of the 2nd UNESO six-year strategic plan 2025 -2030, and also marked the 10th year of UNESO's existence since its inception in 2015. So, in this annual report, we share UNESO's work during the first year of the implementation of UNESO's 2nd strategic plan 2025-2030.

UNESO continued to operate as a going concern during 2025, while implementing interventions that contribute to the realization of its seven strategic objectives as per the newly developed six-year strategic plan 2025-2030. The UNESO strategic objectives are:

1. To strengthen the institutional capacity of UNESO for efficient and effective delivery of its mandate
2. To strengthen coordination and foster collaboration among members to drive growth and development of the sex work movement in Uganda.
3. To advance advocacy efforts and promote the rights, safety, and holistic well-being of members within the sex work movement.
4. To foster strategic partnerships with national and international stakeholders to advance UNESO's efforts in resource mobilization, advocacy, and capacity building.
5. To advance research and knowledge translation for evidence-based advocacy and programming that address the rights, health, and well-being of sex workers.

6. To strengthen resource mobilization and sub-granting for impactful programs supporting Uganda's sex worker movement. 7. To enhance the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the network leaders, empowering them to navigate the challenges of their roles and drive the growth of a resilient and thriving sex work movement.

**UNESO continued to operate under the seven core programmatic areas as mentioned above in the strategic plan, as follows;**

**Under the institutional capacity strengthening,** UNESO held regular quarterly (4) BOD meetings for enhanced governance, and 1 staff and BODs retreat. While at the secretariat, a total of seven staff served the network during the year in key positions of the National coordinator, Director of Programmes and Development, Director of Finance and Human Resources, Monitoring, learning and Evaluation manager (newly *brought on board*), Finance manager, Networking and advocacy manager, and security officer. And 12 monthly staff meetings to strengthen teamwork and improve staff performance. A 2nd UNESO six-year strategic plan was consultatively and transparently developed to shape and guide the UNESO's next six-year journey. Staff knowledge and capacity development- 3 UNESO staff graduated in the Financial Innovations and Resilience (FIRE) program, helping to navigate the current funding realities.

**Under Coordination and movement building,** the UNESO membership stood at 62 members from diverse communities. UNESO held six (6) Network update and coordination meetings for member organizations. And conducted two (2) capacity building workshops in key areas of gender and a transformative approach, and Mpox as a threat to community members. Conducted support supervisions to 7 member organisations to improve institutional capacity performance for member organisations.

**Under Advocacy and human rights promotion,** UNESO held 3 regional stakeholder meetings, reaching a total of 114 stakeholders. 4 radio talk shows were conducted on creating awareness on SRHR and GBV in commemoration of International Day to end violence against sex workers, reaching an audience of over thousands of listeners nationwide, and 1 Key press conference and 26 social media posts were made for visibility and advocacy.

**Under External relations & strategic partnerships,** UNESO was part of the 28 partner engagements at national, regional and international levels.

**Under Strategic information and research,** UNESO commissioned a baseline Assessment on the HIV & SRHR needs of adolescent girls & young Women. And produced and disseminated IEC and advocacy materials -493 t-shirts, 2 banners,50 posters,64 stickers.

**Resource mobilization & sub-granting**, 7 member organizations supported under the seed grant. And 10 funding proposals were developed and submitted to different potential donors. A new partnership with ASWA under a project to promote access to safe abortion services was brought on board, supported by amplified change.

**Under the well-being and wellness of members programme**, UNESO held quarterly (4) Executive Directors Forum meetings, with one of a one-of-a-kind, which was successfully held virtually.

However, the year 2025 has had both achievements and challenges.

- ❖ UNESO continued to serve the most challenging legal environment in Uganda, which continues to impede UNESO's ability to advocate effectively and limit health and social justice among sex workers in Uganda.
- ❖ The increased anti-rights movement has continued to enhance violence, exclusion, and lack of recognition, undermining advocacy efforts and the inclusivity of sex workers.
- ❖ The shrinking funding landscape poses significant challenges to the sustainability of UNESO and its membership due to heavy reliance on donor funding.
- ❖ The sudden Trump administration's cutting of the international aid budget affected many grassroots organisations, including UNESO and its membership, affecting the provision of lifesaving support and watering down the sex workers' efforts in the national HIV prevention response.
- ❖ UNESO's Failure to acquire the NGO certificate. Since 2022, UNESO has started the journey to get the NGO certificate; however, besides meeting all the requirements, including legal compliance, UNESO getting the NGO certificate has become a hard dream to achieve. *"Justice delayed is Justice denied"*.
- ❖ It's also unfortunate that, during the year, we lost one of the prominent sex worker leaders, Keko Maumuna, who was a founding member and the executive director of one of the UNESO member organisations found in Arua city- called Ama Ecora Initiative Arua, leaving a huge gap in sex work organizing.

We thank all staff, BOD and members for working so hard for UNESO to thrive. We are indebted to partners, stakeholders, friends and donors whose generosity, commitment and confidence made our work possible during the FY 2025.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACIHEWE	Action for Improved Health and Wealth.
BOD	Board of Directors
BYMI	Bundibugyo Young Mothers Initiative
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
COP	Community of Practice
CSSMUA	Coalition to stop Maternal mortality rate due to unsafe Abortion.
DECRIM	Decriminalization
FIRE	Financial Innovation & Resilience Program
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ICWEA	International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa
KCCA	Kampala City Center Authority
MOH	Ministry Of Health
NSP	National HIV Strategic Plan
OWEC	Organization for Women Empowerment Center
OVOF	Our Voice Our Future
PDM	Parish Development Module
PWUID	People Who Use and Inject Drugs
SHRH	Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TAI	Trans Advocacy Initiative
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNASO	Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organizations
UNESO	Uganda Network of Sex Worker-Led Organizations
WONETHA	Women Organizations Network for Human Rights Advocacy

## About UNESO

The Network of Key Population Service Organizations (UNESO) is an umbrella body for sex worker-led organizations across Uganda. It aims to unite these organizations to form a collective voice, enabling sex workers to advocate for their rights, access services, and create safe spaces to discuss and find solutions to the unending challenges that they face. UNESO exists to uphold and amplify the voices of sex workers while coordinating and connecting advocacy efforts nationwide.



### VISION

A Ugandan society where recognition of sex work and respect for human rights of sex workers in all their diversity prevails



### MISSION

To build a strong sex workers movement in Uganda through effective coordination, evidence-based advocacy and enhanced capacities of member organizations.

### Our strategic Objectives

1. Institutional capacity development

2. Coordination and movement building

3. Advocacy and human rights promotion

4. External relations and strategic partnerships




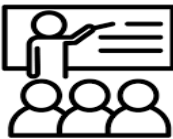




5. Strategic information and research

6. Resource mobilisation and sub-granting

7. Wellbeing and wellness of members

## UNESO's Snapshot of Impact in FY 2025.

In this period, UNESO continued to pursue its mission of advancing the human rights of sex workers with renewed purpose and a focus on achieving measurable results. The milestones attained under our strategic objectives reflect the joint efforts with partners, communities, and stakeholders committed to driving social justice in health.

<p><b>Institutional capacity development</b></p>  <p><b>BOARD MEETING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 Board Meetings were conducted quarterly and 1 retreat for UNESO staff and BOD.</li> </ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 12 staff monthly meetings were conducted throughout the Year.</li> <li>- 2nd New UNESO Strategic Plan 2025-2030 developed.</li> <li>- 3 of UNESO staff graduated in the Financial Innovations and Resilience (FIRE) programme, helping to navigate the current funding realities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Coordination and movement building</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conducted 6 Network update and coordination meetings for member organizations.</li> </ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conducted 2 trainings for member organizations on the Gender Transformative Approach</li> <li>- Training on Mpox and its effects on sex workers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Advocacy and human rights promotion</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 stakeholder meetings were conducted, reaching 114 stakeholders.</li> </ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 radio talk show appearances reaching an audience of over thousands of listeners nationwide.</li> <li>- 1 Key press conferences, 26 social media posts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>External relations &amp; strategic partnerships</b></p>  <p>28 partner engagements attended by UNESO staff.</p> <p><b>Strategic information and research</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One baseline assessment on the HIV &amp; SRHR needs of adolescent girls &amp; young Women.</li> <li>- 450 IEC material developed and printed</li> </ul>

### Resource mobilization & sub-granting



- 7 member organizations supported under the seed grant.

-10 funding proposals developed and submitted to different potential donors.

### Well-being and wellness of members



4 Executive Directors' forum for leaders reaching 48 Sex worker leaders.

## PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

**Strategic Objectives 1:** To strengthen the institutional capacity of UNESO for efficient and effective delivery of its mandate.

Over the years, UNESO has focused on establishing a robust, unified, and well-coordinated network to support sex workers in Uganda. This was achieved through strengthened governance systems, institutional visibility, strengthened human resources, and increased resource mobilization for sustainable programming.

### Board Meetings



UNESO maintained a robust governance structure throughout the year, enabling transparency, sustainability, accountability, and effective decision-making. During the year, the Board of Directors met four times, once a quarter, to further support the work of the network on matters to set strategic priorities, and make important decisions to drive the network's growth and success and ensure its sustainability.

### Staff Meetings.

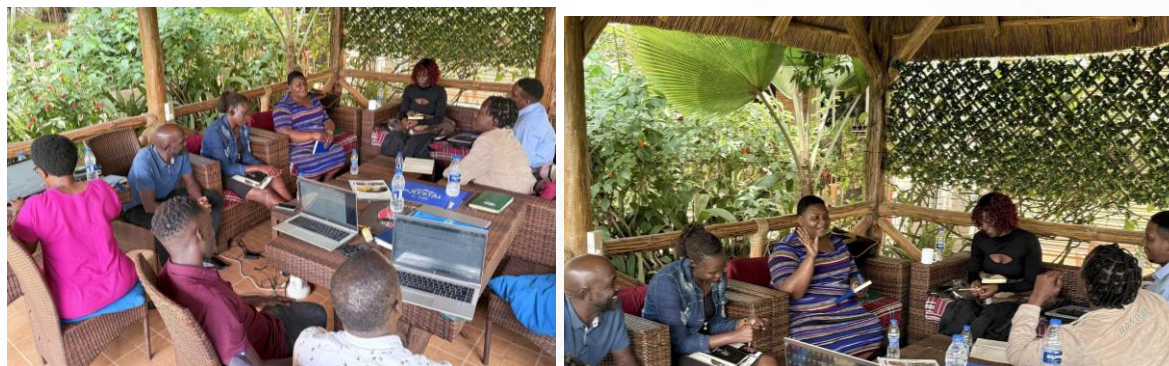
On a monthly basis, we held in-house staff meetings as a critical strategic and operational mechanism within the organization to allow realigning all staff with our work core mission, ensuring cross-departmental coordination, and maintaining transparent communication. The meetings fostered a culture of collaborative problem-solving, collective accountability, resource mobilization, and future planning for project implementation.



*One of the staff meetings*

## Staff and Board Retreat

UNESO held a productive and forward-thinking staff and Board retreat with the dedicated Board of Directors. The team came together to align on our strategic goals for the coming year, review our recent impact over the year, and discuss how we can best serve the movement. The collaboration and shared commitment in the room were truly inspiring.



*Retreat photos of the Board and Staff members*

## Strategic Plan Development Consultative Meetings

At the beginning of the year 2025, UNESO embarked on the process to renew its strategic plan to guide the network in the next six years. During the process, a series of consultative meetings were conducted with our member organizations, like-minded CSOs, and developmental partners to allow full participation in redefining UNESO's vision, mission, goals, and activities to properly serve the sex worker movement.

At the end of the consultative meetings, UNESO had a written six-year strategic Plan document running from 2025-2030 to set its direction and help UNESO thrive.



*Cover of the Strategic Plan*



*Some of the consultation meetings with members*

**Strategic objective 2:** To strengthen coordination and foster collaboration among members to drive growth and development of the sex work movement in Uganda.

With this objective, we implemented activities that aimed to build a cohesive, well-coordinated network that effectively advocates for the rights and well-being of sex workers in Uganda.

### Gender Transformation Approach Training

Under this objective, UNESO held two cohorts on the Gender Transformation Approach for leaders aimed to foster a platform for learning, sharing experiences, and developing strategies to address gender inequalities and ensure the inclusion of gender analysis in macro-economic policy formulation for effective gender justice in their communities of operation.



*Group photos of the two cohorts.*

### Support Supervision

During the last quarter, we conducted a series of support supervision visits to seed grant members implementing community-level advocacy initiatives. These visits were designed to enhance grantee performance in key operational areas, specifically finance, administration, and programming, while also strengthening trust, reinforcing loyalty, and ensuring all projects remain aligned with our shared mission.



*Give Ahand - Wakiso*



*TAI - Kampala*



*BYM -Bundibugye*

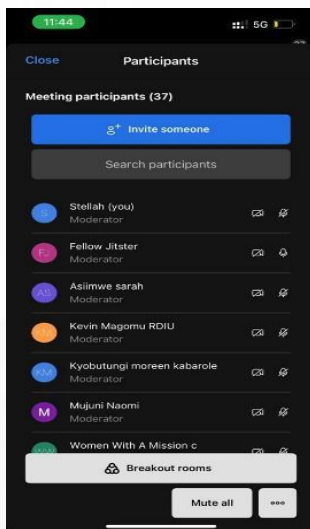


*OWEC - Isingiro*



*Outfits - Malaba*

## Bi-Annual Update Reflection Meetings



As a coordinating entity, it is of great value to monitor trending situations across the nation. Under this initiative, we held Virtual update and reflection meetings for Network Members to share among themselves trending situations across their regions.

The virtual meetings brought together Network leaders nationwide to share and interact among themselves key issues affecting their communities. Also, during the conversations, network members shared best practices on how they have been able to overcome some challenges for others to learn.

With this space, UNESO and sex worker-led organizations always get to identify key issues affecting the movement and make recommendations on how best to solve them.

## MPOX Awareness

At the beginning of the year 2025, the outbreak of Mpox highly affected sex workers and according to the Ministry of Health, sex workers were ranked highest in Mpox transmission. During this outbreak, UNESO held an awareness training on Mpox for Network Leaders to understand the nature of the disease and how to integrate MPOX service into their organizations' programming. We also participated in various national high-level meetings aimed at eradicating Mpox in the country.



*KCCA- Kawempe Stakeholders meeting*



*WONETHA TV show on Mpox awareness*



*Mpox KP TWG meeting at the MOH office*

### Meeting on the Impact of the Trump Stop Work Orders



UNESO held a virtual Meeting with Network members to have conversations on the impact of the Trump Stop Work Order on the sex worker movement. The meeting created a platform for leaders across the nation to share how the Trump Stop Work orders affected their organization and work. They also shared among themselves practical strategies they can use to reach and serve their community amidst the current funding cut situation.

**Strategic Objective 3: To advance advocacy efforts and promote the rights, safety, and holistic well-being of members within the sex work movement.**

Under this strategic area, we focused on strengthening community-led advocacy, promoting access to holistic, sex-worker-friendly health services, and advancing social and financial inclusion. Key advocacy efforts included training and mobilizing sex worker leaders to engage policymakers, creating platforms for sharing lived experiences, collaborating with law enforcement to protect rights, and documenting violations.

**Stakeholder Engagements**

***Commemoration of End Violence against sex workers.***

The year 2025 recorded an alarming escalation in violence, including killings/femicide. Sex worker organizations documented at least 38 sex workers killed in 2025, highlighting patterns of targeted violence and gaps in investigation and accountability. This reality formed a central basis for UNESO convening a National Stakeholder Dialogue on 17 December 2025, in commemoration of the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers.



***Panel discussion during the meeting***

The dialogue brought together a total 52 stakeholders, including sex worker leaders, partners, legal aid actors, police/law enforcement representatives, to reflect on drivers of violence and collectively define reforms and practical actions to reduce abuse and strengthen protection mechanisms.

***Dialogue meeting on Advancing SRHR for Vulnerable Women and Girls.***



***Group photo of Rwenzori Region Stakeholders***

The dialogue meetings aimed to create a vital platform for collaboration and collective reflection among key stakeholders, including health service providers, policy makers, local government officials, law enforcement representatives, and community-based organizations. Together, stakeholders discussed effective strategies to promote access to SRHR information and services for vulnerable women and girls and ensure their human rights are recognized and protected within the existing and legal frameworks.



*Group Photo of Southern Region Stakeholder Press conference*

During the Commemoration of the International day to end violence against sex workers, UNESO held a press conference with several media houses to read a statement calling for hate crimes committed against sex workers in Uganda.



*Ms. Natunkunda leading statement reading*

## Radio Media Campaigns

With support from the Red Umbrella and Commonwealth Foundation, UNESO conducted a series of regional Radio talk shows in honor of the 16days of Activism and in commemoration of the 17<sup>th</sup> Dec International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers under the theme “End Violence against women in their diversities”. The radio talk shows aimed at calling the community to eliminate all forms of violations impacting women in their different diversities.



*Kigeezi FM - Kabale*



*Rockcity Radio- Tororo*



*Voice of Gospel - Lira*



## Social media posts



DID YOU  
KNOW

### Gender Based Violence

Is any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will and rooted in a system of unequal power dynamics and societal norms between genders.



Gender-based violence can happen to anyone. However, in the face of the world, it disproportionately affects women and girls. Other diverse and marginalized communities face an even greater risk where gender inequality intersects with other forms of oppression. There is a need for governments to uphold their responsibility to prevent and respond to violence

by putting in place favorable laws & policies that *safeguard All peoples from GBV*.

Quick Facts "Only Rights Can Stop the Wrong" Protection NOT criminalization.



Criminalization drives marginalized communities further into danger, limits access to services, silences survivors, and retraumatizes them as well as those around them. Decriminalization makes communities safer and lowers the chances of exploitation.

Decrim is also associated with better coverage of health promotion programs for marginalized communities. Conviction of marginalized groups can lead to criminal records, which can limit access to support services, housing, and employment, along with their rights to migrate and take part in social and family engagements.

**Strategic objective 4:** To foster strategic partnerships with national and international stakeholders to advance UNESCO's efforts in resource mobilization, advocacy, and capacity building.

At UNESCO, Strategic partnerships are crucial for the Network to expand its reach, amplify its advocacy, and strengthen capacity-building initiatives. By forging alliances at national, regional, and international stakeholders, including state and non-state actors, UNESCO worked to secure funding, enhance visibility, foster innovation, and create a cohesive movement to champion the rights and welfare of sex workers in all their diversity.

### Community of Practice – COP

UNESCO is part of the PWUD Community of Practice consortium, which aims to strengthen PWUD organizing and advance inclusive Harm Reduction programming among the Key Population in Uganda. As the consortium's physical host, we hosted a two-day workshop for consortium key staff members on the contextualization of PWUD programming and harm reduction in Uganda.



We hosted the COP consortium end-of-evaluation meeting aimed at reviewing project outcomes, identifying lessons learned, and evaluating project effectiveness. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss successes and challenges, document best practices, and gather feedback from stakeholders.

UNESCO participated in a three-day residential workshop to develop the roadmap for the consortium. The meeting aimed to create a consortium roadmap that would provide clear direction and ensure all members work towards the same goal.



## Our Voices Our Futures (OVOF)

UNESO was part of the Our Voices Our Futures (OVOF) Global Partner Summit 2025. And was able to join over 100 activists, organisers, and advocates from structurally silenced womxn communities across the Global South to connect, strategize, and take collective action on pressing issues. Furthermore, the summit provided spaces for allies to exchange knowledge, strengthen movements, and strategies to advance advocacy for bodily autonomy, digital rights, and economic justice.



During the summit, UNESO presented an abstract on Mental Wellbeing of leaders, where we unpacked the importance of prioritizing the mental well-being of leaders as a tool to strengthen movements.



UNESO was part of the WONETHA breakfast meeting with the Uganda Police Management on issues of arbitrary arrests and human rights violations among Sex workers in Uganda. The meeting created a platform for Law enforcers and marginalized women to strategize on promoting and protecting human rights for all and improving access to

justice. During the meeting, Uganda police officers pledged to support and sensitize fellow officers on how to handle marginalized citizens like sex workers when accessing legal services.

## Review of the National HIV & AIDS Policy & the National HIV & AIDS Strategic Plan

UNESO participated in a series of consultative meetings organized by UNASO, ICWEA, and the Global Fund's Community Engagement Strategic Initiative (CESI) to review both the National HIV & AIDS Policy (2011) and the National HIV & AIDS Strategic Plan (2020/2021–2024/2025).



The meetings ensured that the revised frameworks are evidence-informed, inclusive, and responsive to the realities and needs of communities most affected by HIV.

UNESO was part of the CSOs that consolidate and validated the Communities' recommendations developed through Focus Group Discussions to accommodate the needs of sex workers living and affected by HIV/AIDs.



UNESO was present at the MOH - STI/High Risk Population Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting at Fairway Hotel, facilitated by Reproductive Health Uganda.

The meeting aimed at the MOH to share updates on programming for high-risk populations in Uganda.

During the meeting, MOH shared updates on the integration process and plans, and communities shared abductive strategies in servicing their members.

Integration of services at the facility level is guided by the Ministry of Health and ongoing adjustments with the tools as well.

UNESO was delighted to be part of the great hosting team of the Community Roots Symposium to reimagine, reorganize, and resource for last impact for Key Populations. The symposium was graced by Government officials, Global donors, community organizations, and implementing partners to engage in conversations on how to sustain the KP movement and reimagining organizing amidst the cut funding.



At the end of the engagement, the movement launched the National Funding Priorities (2025–2030) with a comprehensive framework co-created with you and sector leaders to guide investment in safety, community-led prevention, treatment, advocacy, and sustainability



As a member of CSMMUA, we managed to take part in the quarterly meetings of 2025 to reflect and celebrate the coalition's wins and share lessons.

Some of the key takeaways were the conversations around a sustainable path amidst the current funding shift and how to take advantage of existing policy windows, particularly the PAC and Self-

Care Guidelines, to widen access, improve care, and reduce preventable harm. The

meetings provided us an opportunity to reinforce our shared commitment to reproductive justice and access to safe, legal, and quality SRHR services.

UNESO was part of the All Amplify Change grantee meeting. The meeting aimed at having all amplify change grantees connect and build synergies for effective collaboration to navigate the changing funding landscape. During the engagement, grantees were able to examine the changing funding landscape and how to navigate challenges in promoting access to SRHR and mental health self-care for SRHR Advocates.



UNESO, in partnership with our Regional Network ASWA, is implementing a 5-year grant aimed at advancing the SRHR needs of Sex workers and monitoring the human rights violations impacting sex workers in East Africa.

We convened our network leaders for an inception meeting to kick-start the joint SRHR project. During the meeting, leaders identified key SRHR challenges and also identified different stakeholders to engage during the implementation period of the project for an improved referral strategy model for sex workers to access quality, stigma-free, comprehensive SRH services.

UNESO was part of a Two-Day Regional Convening on Ending violence against women and girls in Dar es Salaam, co-hosted by ICWEastAfrica, ICW-K, and DDWT.

The meeting brought together women's organizations in different diversities to build an inclusive coalition focused on ending violence against all women, including sex workers.





UNESO is present at the 2nd Uganda National Conference on Health, Human Rights, and Development #UCHD 2025 organized by cehurd and the Uganda Ministry of Health under a theme “Bridging Gaps Across Sectors to Achieve Equitable Health for All,” Over the three days, the conference had conversations on how various sectors can contribute to equitable, resilient, and people-centered health systems to move Uganda closer to achieving

Universal Health Coverage.

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UNESO was part of the 3-day training of CSOs on SRHR narrative change, organized by the Women Probono

During the training, we had critical discussions on topics around understanding how SRHR organizations can utilize the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights mechanisms to impact advocacy work on Rights, opposition monitoring, and effective strategies to mitigate opposition work, and how to engage men and boys in advancing SRHR.

The training aimed at equipping civil society actors with the skills, resilience, and strategic tools

needed to challenge harmful narratives around SRHR and to engage meaningfully with African human rights

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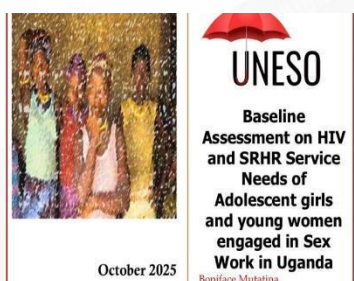


The National Coordinator UNESO joined fellow leaders in Geneva at the UN 59th session of Human Rights to deliver a statement to the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls. The statement had a key message demanding respect and full decriminalisation of sex workers' rights and safety

## Strategic Objective 5: Advance research and knowledge translation for evidence-based advocacy and programming.

At the core of our mandate lies the generation and use of strategic information and research. This commitment directly advances UNESO's fifth strategic objective by strengthening institutional knowledge management. Our purpose is to create a robust cycle of evidence that informs every fact of our work and our members. Furthermore, this research strengthens partnerships by equipping all stakeholders with credible evidence to support collaborative action, enhance resource mobilization, and drive advocacy campaigns that amplify the voices of sex workers.

### Baseline Assessment on HIV and SRHR service needs of Adolescent girls & young Women.



Uganda has made significant progress in addressing the SRHR and HIV/AIDS challenges, yet disparities persist, particularly among sex workers, including young people and adolescents engaged in sex work. Despite their heightened risk of HIV infection and systemic barriers to services, there remains a critical gap in data and targeted interventions to support them.

To address this, UNESO conducted a baseline assessment to better understand the unique SRHR and HIV/AIDS service needs of young people and adolescents engaged in sex work. The findings will inform evidence-based advocacy and targeted interventions aimed at enhancing access to services and promoting the rights of young people engaged in sex work. [Here is the Link.](#)

### Development of IEC Material

With support from CREA, UNESO received funds to aid its advocacy initiatives during the 16 days of activism. For years, the campaign has had international visibility to eliminate all forms of Gender-Based Violence towards women and girls. In commemoration of the Post 16 Days of Activism, UNESO developed and printed IEC material aimed to raise awareness about gender-based violence (GBV) and promote actions to prevent and respond to GBV among marginalized women.



## **Strategic objective 6: Strengthen resource mobilization and sub-granting for impactful programs supporting Uganda's sex worker movement.**

Under this objective, UNESCO aimed at enhancing the capacity of member organizations to lead the implementation of advocacy initiatives at the community level to ensure long-term sustainability and foster effective participation in promoting the rights of sex workers. To achieve this, we sub-granted seven member organizations that demonstrated remarkable efforts in advancing advocacy initiatives at the community level through stakeholder engagement, human rights awareness, and knowledge sharing among their beneficiaries. Below are some of the initiatives they have undertaken.

### **Organization for Women Empowerment Center.**

From Isigiro district, OWEC held a health facility interface meeting with health workers and peer educators. The goal was to improve collaboration between healthcare providers and refugee/migrant sex workers in Isigiro district, as well as to enhance access to friendly and quality service delivery. From this engagement, OWEC developed actionable referral structures, and health workers committed to supporting and addressing the health needs of sex workers.



*Interface meeting at Rwekubo Health Center IV*

### **Trans Advocacy Initiative**



TAI held a two-day Advocacy training of 16 members in greater Kampala and equipped them with knowledge and information regarding advocacy and movement building to effectively advocate for the needs and concerns of rights holders in greater Kampala.

The training also increased participants' understanding of Advocacy issues, identified key advocacy priorities, and learned how to engage stakeholders at different levels to advance the priorities

*One of the peers presenting during the training*

## Action for Improved Health and Wealth.

From Mbarara district, ACIHEWE trained 30 members on Human rights. This was aimed at empowering sex workers to understand their Rights, laws and policies, document and respond to the human rights violations they face in the community to respective offices and stakeholders.

The training furthermore empowered participants on how to approach different stakeholders on the issues that affect them in the community.



*Peer Leader sharing her thoughts*

## Platform for Vulnerable Youths and Adults



From Lira City, PVYA conducted community hotspot dialogues on human rights awareness among sex workers /AGYW. A total of 200 members were reached with information on human rights, laws and policies, and discussed their barriers to accessing human rights

services, referral pathway for legal aid.

Furthermore, during the meeting, PVYA integrated the aspect of Mpox awareness, where they shared with members the signs and symptoms of MPOX, referral pathway to facilities.

## Give a Hand Foundation

GaHF conducted a stakeholders dialogue meeting on the issues affecting the well-being of sex workers, such as health, legal, Social, and economic, among others, in Kachanga Bussi Island, Wakiso District.

Malaba Outfits Organization conducted our last activity,





which was a stakeholder meeting in Malaba on how they can strengthen their working relationship and improve access to service delivery.

**Strategic objective 7: Enhance the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the network leaders.**

Under these Strategic objectives, UNESO aimed to reduce stress and mental health challenges among sex worker leaders, improve their health behavior, and enhance their overall productivity and performance. It empowers them to navigate the challenges of their roles and drive the growth of a resilient and thriving sex work movement. Strong and empowered leadership for the sex work movement

**Executive Directors Forum**

Under our wellness thematic area, we conducted Executive Directors’ Forums, which is a dedicated space for leaders to recharge, connect, and enhance their leadership through prioritizing mental wellness.

The platforms focused on promoting mental, social, and physical well-being through group discussions, wellness sessions, and motivational leadership talks.

This contributed to a supportive network of resilient leaders driving the Uganda sex worker movement forward.



*Leaders during a group session*



*Leaders playing board games*

## Key Challenges Experienced

1. The increasingly challenging legal environment continues to impede UNESO's ability to advocate effectively and limit health and social justice among sex workers in Uganda.
2. The increased anti-rights movement has continued to enhance violence, exclusion, and lack of recognition, undermining advocacy efforts and the inclusivity of sex workers.
3. The shrinking funding landscape poses significant challenges to the sustainability of UNESO and its membership due to heavy reliance on donor funding.
4. The sudden Trump administration's cutting of the international aid budget affected many grassroots organisations, including UNESO and its membership, affecting the provision of lifesaving support and watering down the sex workers' efforts in the national HIV prevention response.
5. Failure to acquire the NGO certificate. Since 2022, UNESO started the journey to get the NGO certificate, however, besides meeting all the requirements including legal compliance, UNESO getting the NGO certificate is becoming a hard dream to achieve. *"Justice delayed is Justice denied"*.

## Key lessons Learnt

01. UNESO's improved monitoring and evaluation systems has served as a critical tool to ensure accountability, enhance learning, and guide adaptive management throughout the implementation year. It has helped to track progress, assess outcomes, and measure the impact of UNESO's programs and initiatives, aligning them with its overarching mission to drive sustainable development and address global challenges.
02. The successful implementation of programs for the year 2025 is attributed to the UNESO Board of Directors and staff who are committed and passionate about their work and mandate to effectively achieve UNESO 's goal, bringing its vision and mission to fruition.

## Work of Network Members Organizations

In 2025, UNESO strengthened and coordinated a national membership delivering community-led HIV, SRHR, human rights, and empowerment interventions across Uganda. Member organizations operated in Western, Central, Eastern, and Northern Uganda, representing female sex workers and diverse community groups. Through UNESO's coordination, advocacy leadership, and capacity strengthening, members sustained services reaching thousands of sex workers despite shrinking funding and policy challenges.

### Membership Reach and Service Delivery Impact - 2025

Key Indicator	Result
Sex workers reached through services & outreach	5,000+
Health facility & DIC referrals	150+
Sex workers sensitized on human rights	600+
Abuse and arrest cases followed up	10+
Participants in economic empowerment initiatives	80+
Districts actively covered	7+

**Note: These figures reflect the collective achievements of UNESO member organizations across multiple regions.**

Member organizations sustained outreach in hotspots, landing sites, urban centers, border towns, and rural communities.

### Key Impact Highlights

- Over 5,000 sex workers accessed HIV prevention, SRHR services, adherence support, and psychosocial care across outreach sites, dialogues, and peer engagements

- More than 150 sex workers were formally referred to health facilities and Drop-In Centres (DICs) for HIV testing, treatment, STI management, and family planning through strengthened peer-led referral systems
- Community-led monitoring initiatives implemented in multiple health facilities challenged discriminatory practices and improved service responsiveness for sex workers
- Over 600 sex workers were sensitized on human rights and security, with at least 10 abuse and arrest cases followed up, contributing to reduced violence and harassment in several communities
- More than 80 sex workers actively participated in economic empowerment initiatives, including vocational skills training, savings groups, VSLAs, and access to Parish Development Model (PDM) funds, strengthening household resilience

### **Key Activities Implemented by Members**

In 2025, UNESCO member organizations implemented a wide range of community-led interventions tailored to the diverse needs of sex workers across Uganda. These activities were informed directly by community priorities and local realities.

### **Health, SRHR and HIV Prevention**

- Conducted extensive community and hotspot outreaches in urban centers, border towns, landing sites, islands, and rural communities, distributing condoms, lubricants, and HIV prevention information
- Organized HIV awareness sessions and adherence meetings supporting prevention, care, and treatment literacy
- Provided group psychotherapy and psychosocial support sessions, particularly for female sex workers and adolescents
- Facilitated HIV testing services in collaboration with friendly health facilities
- Strengthened referrals to health facilities and Drop-In Centres (DICs) for HIV testing, ART services, STI treatment, and family planning
- Implemented community-led monitoring (CLM) of health facilities to challenge discrimination and improve service quality

### **Advocacy, Dialogues, and Human Rights**

- Conducted multiple community dialogues and sensitization meetings on sex worker rights, HIV prevention, SRHR, mental health, and security
- Held dialogues with district officials, police officers, health workers, and local government leaders to improve coordination and reduce rights violations
- Organized radio talk shows on human rights violations and access to services

- Participated in and led commemorations such as World AIDS Day and the 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Sex Workers
- Provided legal assistance and case follow-up through trained paralegals
- Conducted human rights documentation sensitization meetings for male sex workers in Mbarara, Mpigi, and Buikwe
- Produced an advocacy report on the impact of the Anti-Homosexuality Act (2023) and other punitive laws on male sex workers

### **Capacity Building and Trainings**

- Trained peer educators and peer leaders on HIV prevention, referral systems, advocacy, gender and social development, and legal frameworks
- Conducted feminist leadership trainings and mentorship sessions, strengthening grassroots organizing
- Built the capacity of staff and board members in fundraising, proposal writing, monitoring and evaluation, and service delivery

### **Economic Empowerment and Financial Inclusion**

- Supported the formation and strengthening of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and savings groups
- Conducted financial literacy trainings for sex workers
- Facilitated vocational skills training in hairdressing, tailoring, baking, and salon management
- Supported access to Parish Development Model (PDM) funds through group formation and stakeholder engagement

### **Challenges Encountered by Members**

- Severe funding shortages and donor cutbacks
- Short-term grants affecting sustainability
- High stigma, discrimination, and violence
- Staff burnout and unpaid volunteer reliance
- Weak institutional systems due to limited resources

### **Key Lessons Learned**

- Peer-led approaches remain the most effective for community trust and service uptake
- Integrated services addressing health, legal, psychosocial, and economic needs yield a stronger impact
- Flexible and diversified funding is critical for sustainability

- Strategic partnerships amplify advocacy and service delivery
- Economic empowerment increases participation and motivation

## **Case Studies: Impact in Action**

### **Case Study 1: Community-Led Monitoring Improving Health Access in Bundibugyo**

Bundibugyo Young Mothers and Adolescents Initiative (BYMI) implemented community-led monitoring in health facilities to address discriminatory practices. Through peer engagement and advocacy with district health leadership, access to essential health services improved for female sex workers. Economic empowerment through VSLAs strengthened participation, while peer psychosocial support reduced stigma and misinformation.

### **Case Study 2: Integrated Services Transforming Lives in Kasese**

Kasese Women's Health Support Initiative (KWHSI) strengthened peer referral systems, provided mental health group therapy to 40 sex workers, formed adolescent psychosocial groups, and built financial literacy among savings groups. Human rights awareness reduced police arrests and GBV cases, while partnerships improved HIV/SRHR service uptake.

### **Case Study 3: Reaching Hard-to-Reach Communities in Landing Sites and Islands**

JEEWAG Uganda conducted outreaches across six landing sites and island communities in Mukono, Buikwe, and Buvuma districts. Through distribution of health commodities, feminist leadership training, dockside dialogues, and facility-based engagements, sex workers accessed SRHR/HIV services and strengthened grassroots organizing despite funding challenges.

### **Case Study 4: Sustaining Community Trust in Northern Uganda Amid Funding Cuts**

Voice of Community Empowerment continued essential outreach and referral services in Gulu and Oyam districts despite having no core funding. Through volunteer peer commitment, the organisation maintained trust and service continuity while exploring income-generating strategies for sustainability.

### **Way Forward (2026 and Beyond)**

Building on the achievements and lessons of 2025, UNESO will focus on strengthening and scaling community-led interventions to ensure sustained impact for sex worker communities across Uganda. Key priorities include:

- Expanding joint resource mobilisation initiatives to secure diversified and flexible funding
- Strengthening the institutional capacity of member organisations, including governance, financial management, and M&E systems
- Scaling community-led monitoring and advocacy to further reduce stigma and discrimination in health services
- Deepening partnerships with government institutions, health facilities, and human rights actors
- Expanding economic empowerment and livelihood programs to enhance community resilience
- Increasing inclusion of hard-to-reach populations such as island communities, migrants, and refugees

**KIRANGWA KIWANUKA AND COMPANY**  
**Certified Public Accountants Firm No. AF 0118**

THE FIRM IS LICENSED AND REGULATED BY ICPAU

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**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS  
TO THE DIRECTORS OF NETWORK OF KEY POPULATION SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS LTD.**

We have audited the financial statements of **Network of Key Population service Organizations Ltd.**, as set out on pages 6 -16. These financial statements include the statement of financial position as at 31st December,2025 and the related statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and the cashflows for the year then ended and summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

**Opinion**

In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the organisation as at 31st December 2025 and the results of its operation and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.

**Auditors responsibility and basis of opinion**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments; the auditor considers internal controls relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting

estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our unqualified audit opinion.

**Management responsibility for the financial statements**

International Financial Reporting Standards (I.F.R.S). This responsibility includes the designing, implementing and maintaining of the internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether fraud or error.

**Report on Other Legal Requirements**

As required by the Accountants Act, 2013, we report to you basing on our audit that:

- i) All information and explanations which were necessary for the purposes of the audit were obtained;
- ii) in our opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the directors/management so far as appears from the examination of those books; and
- iii) The director's Balance Sheet and Income Statement are in agreement with the books of account.

  
Kirangwa Kiwanuka & Company  
Certified Public Accountants  
Kampala



Dated... 25/12 ...2026

**NETWORK OF KEY POPULATION SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS LTD.  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 2025**

	Notes	2025 Shs
<b>TANGIBLE NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property, Plant and Equipment	5	406,239,683
<b>Total Non Current Assets</b>		<b>406,239,683</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Advance Payments	7	12,434,450
Cash and Bank	8	236,028,075
		<b>248,462,525</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>654,702,208</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS EQUITY</b>		
<b>OWNERS' EQUITY</b>		
General Fund		651,952,207
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>651,952,207</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accruals	9	2,750,000
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>2,750,000</b>
<b>TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>		<b>654,702,207</b>

The notes set out on pages 10-16 form an integral part of these financial statements .

These Financial Statements were approved by the Board on 21/12/2025 2026 and were signed by:

  
.....  
**Batte Shamilah**  
Board Chairperson

  
.....  
**Kafuluma Henry Bruc**  
Treasurer

  
.....  
**Namakula Daisy Nakato**  
National Coordinator

<b>UNESO 2026 SUMMARISED ANNUAL BUDGET</b>		
<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Grant Revenue(Proposal writing)		500,856,000.00
Other Revenue		
Interes		2,300,000
IN-KIND revenue( monetary value)		10,000,000.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>513,156,000.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES/COSTS</b>		
<b>Program costs (Related to UNESO thematic areas)</b>		
1 Mapping of SRH service providers	45,000,000	
2 Tainings on sustainability and organisation resilience	37,790,000	
3 Health Insurance for UNESO staff	10,000,000	
4 Training for health workers to be able to offer stigma free services	49,714,000	
5 Train sex worker leaders and AGYW champions in PrEP choice literacy	43,526,000	
6 community sensitization sessions at hotspots and safe spaces	38,612,000	
7 Advocacy for improved accessibility and availability of HIV prevention options, including PrEP.	31,550,000	
8 Print MOH approved IEC Materials with Information concerning PrEP.	27,524,500	
9 Engagement with the National PrEP Implementation Committee (MoH)	28,600,000	
10 Engagement with District AIDS Committees and District Health Teams on PrEP	118,204,000	
11 Human rights stakeholder dialogue meetings service delivery	43,824,000	
12 Commemoration of international day to end violence against sex workers.	26,730,000.0	
13 Celebrating Annual world AIDS day.	21,590,000	
14 Establish a National AGYW HIV Prevention Coalition and its operationalisation and related activities	90,000,000	
15 Monitoring and Learning Costs	90,500,000	
<b>Sub total Program activities</b>		<b>703,164,500</b>
Institution capacity building (Eds froums,AGM board meetings and development of resource mobilisation strategy,Review of Advocacy strategy		76,575,000.00
Administration cost		62,808,000.00
Employment Costs		274,725,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>1,117,272,500</b>
<b>BUDGET DEFICT</b>		<b>(604,116,500.00)</b>

Summary Prepared by UNESO finance department