

Annual Report 2025/26

Empowering Minds & Nurturing Futures West Nile (EMNFW)

Nurturing Futures, Transforming Communities



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Where we work & Who We Serve

Empowering Minds & Nurturing Futures West Nile (EMNFW) is strategically headquartered in the West Nile region of Uganda—a unique geographic landscape characterized by its vibrant host communities and a profoundly significant refugee population. Our interventions primarily focus on the **Yumbe District** and surrounding areas, where the intersection of high demographic strain and limited structural resources creates an urgent demand for integrated social services.

Our multisectoral models are intentionally designed to reach three primary demographics:

- **Educational Institutions:** Partnering with primary and secondary schools to deliver vital health literacy, menstrual hygiene management (MHM), and psychosocial support systems.
- **Community Organized Groups:** Mobilizing grassroots youth collectives and women’s associations to build long-term economic resilience and self-reliance.
- **Marginalized Populations:** Intentionally targeting South Sudanese refugees and historically vulnerable host community members to foster social cohesion and inclusive growth.



Figure 1: A cross-section of a settlement community in Yumbe District, highlighting the rural, high-density environments where EMNFW delivers integrated health, WASH, and livelihood interventions.

Chairperson’s Foreword

A Year of Foundation, Alignment, and Grassroots Resilience

This past fiscal year has been a profound testament to what can be achieved when a community takes ownership of its own development. Operating in a challenging socioeconomic landscape with limited external funding, EMNFW has successfully mobilized youth, elders, and local government stakeholders to confront the

interconnected crises of sexual and reproductive health vulnerabilities, escalating mental health challenges, and economic instability.

A definitive milestone for our institution this year was our transition into a **formally registered Community-Based Organization (CBO)**, coupled with the launch of our official digital platform. These achievements are not merely administrative; they build the bedrock of transparency, structural integrity, and institutional accountability necessary to attract and sustain long-term international donor partnerships.

We are already witnessing a generational shift—young people who were once passive observers of their circumstances are now equipped to make informed, life-altering decisions. This structural empowerment remains the ultimate metric of our success.

— *Aniku David, Chairperson*

Executive Director's Statement

Nurturing Futures Through Measurable Direct Action

Our mission at EMNFW remains unshakeable: *to empower youth and nurture futures*. Throughout the 2025/26 fiscal year, our operational mandate shifted decisively from baseline advocacy into high-impact, direct community interventions. From delivering localized vocational training for refugee youth to setting up durable menstrual hygiene facilities for schoolgirls, we are actively tackling the systemic root causes of vulnerability across the West Nile region.

"While our current financial base is modest and supported entirely by local membership contributions, the radical dedication of our volunteer network has served as a force multiplier for our field impact."

As we step into the 2026/27 operational cycle, our focus is clear: we must scale these proven, community-vetted models. We invite global donors, technical agencies, and humanitarian partners to join us as we transition from localized success stories into a major driver of regional development.

- *PROGRAM DIRECTOR, EMNFW*

2024/25 Impact Dashboard (At a Glance)

Strategic Indicator	Annual Output Achievement	Target Population Reached
Health & Mental Wellness	1,200+ Students engaged via structured campaigns	10 Secondary & Primary Schools
WASH & Menstrual Hygiene	15 Schools equipped with MHM training and hygiene infrastructure	Adolescent Girls & School Administrations
Vocational Skill Acquisition	200 Youths & Women fully graduated in technical trades	Unemployed Youth & Refugee Households
Economic Empowerment	5 Functional VSLAs established with baseline seed capitalization	120+ Rural Households
Environmental Stewardship	1,000 Indigenously adapted trees planted and nurtured	Schools, Zone 2, and Community Spaces
Institutional Compliance	Full CBO Registration & Official Website Launch completed	Global Stakeholders & Partners

These achievements demonstrate that even with limited resources, community-driven initiatives can transform lives.

Strategic Framework & Core Pillars

Our interventions are guided directly by our organizational constitution, ensuring that all field operations feed into a holistic, human-rights-centered development paradigm:

- **Pillar 1: Health Awareness & WASH:** Expanding rural access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) education, alongside clean water and sanitation access.
- **Pillar 2: Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS):** Breaking down deeply entrenched cultural stigmas surrounding mental health by providing safe, peer-led counseling spaces.

- **Pillar 3: Livelihoods & Vocational Skills:** Combatting systemic poverty by equipping the local workforce with practical technical skills and entrepreneurship training.
- **Pillar 4: Inclusive Quality Education:** Boosting girl-child school retention rates, creating child-friendly learning environments, and facilitating functional adult literacy.
- **Pillar 5: Protection & Human Rights:** Mitigating Gender-Based Violence (GBV), promoting child protection, and advocating for marginalized populations.
- **Pillar 6: Environment & Climate Action:** Mitigating local climate impacts through tree planting, promoting energy-saving cookstoves, and designing innovative waste management systems.

6. Thematic Areas: Deep-Dive Achievements

A. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)



Figure 2: EMNFW field team conducting a focused group discussion with local youth, combining sexual and reproductive health education with practical training on the use of OraQuick HIV self-testing kits.

In the West Nile region, complex social factors often limit young people's access to life-saving health data. EMNFW addressed this gap by deploying peer-to-peer counseling networks across 10 academic institutions, creating judgment-free zones for comprehensive sexuality education.

- **Key Interventions:** Distributed targeted, culturally appropriate literature on contraception, consent, and HIV prevention. Partnered directly with **Igamara Health Centre III** to conduct integrated health outreaches, providing vital Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Tetanus Diphtheria (TD) immunizations to school-going adolescents.
- **Measurable Impact:** Achieved a documented increase in accurate health knowledge, a reduction in reproductive health misconceptions, and improved uptake of voluntary counseling and testing.



Figure 3: Collaborative community health outreach conducted in partnership with Igamara Health Centre III, ensuring school-going adolescents receive essential HPV and Tetanus Diphtheria (TD) immunizations.

B. Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Mental health challenges within refugee-hosting ecosystems are often compounded by historical trauma, displacement, and social isolation. EMNFW worked actively to move mental health from a taboo topic to a core component of community wellness.

- **Key Interventions:** Conducted extensive community-based peer counseling and diagnostic screening for out-of-school youths during holiday periods. To ensure sustainability, we formally trained **8 school-based counselors** in early stress identification, anxiety mitigation, and trauma-informed care.
- **Measurable Impact:** Created a safer environment for discussing mental health within schools, resulting in more self-referrals and a noticeable reduction in the isolation of vulnerable students.



Figure 4: Providing targeted peer counseling, psychosocial support, and voluntary HIV screening for out-of-school students during academic holiday periods.

C. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

The lack of adequate menstrual hygiene facilities and clean water remains a primary driver of school absenteeism among adolescent girls across Yumbe District.

- **Key Interventions:** Constructed and deployed durable handwashing facilities across 6 high-density schools. Simultaneously, our teams led targeted Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) workshops, breaking down social taboos and distributing practical hygiene guidance.
- **Measurable Impact:** Improved girl-child school retention rates, minimized health-related absenteeism during menstrual cycles, and elevated overall institutional sanitation standards.

D. Sustainable Livelihoods & Economic Inclusion

True community resilience relies on financial independence. Our economic empowerment portfolio links market-driven technical skills directly with localized microfinance structures.

- **Key Interventions:** Formally trained 200 youths and women in highly resilient vocational fields, including tailoring, advanced hairdressing, motorbike mechanics, and climate-smart agriculture. To secure these skills, we set up **5 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)**, providing critical group savings structures and initial micro-credit lines funded through collective membership contributions.
- **Measurable Impact:** Diversified household income streams, protected over 120 families from sudden financial shocks, and enabled refugee-led small businesses to grow.



Figure 5: A livelihood project beneficiary undergoing intensive hands-on tailoring and garment design training, aimed at establishing household financial self-reliance.

E. Education & Child Protection

Our educational programs focus on keeping children in school and ensuring learning environments are safe and supportive.

- **Key Interventions:** Led community sensitization campaigns focused on girl-child school retention across 12 primary and secondary schools. In tandem, we partnered with **Yoyo Health Centre III** to execute Child Health Days, administering essential deworming treatments and pediatric immunizations directly within school grounds. For the wider community, we launched functional adult literacy classes for 40 community members.
- **Measurable Impact:** Reduced school dropout rates among vulnerable demographics and improved foundational literacy and numeracy for 40 adults.



Figure 6: Driving child-health interventions within local schools in partnership with Yoyo Health Centre III to deliver mass deworming and routine pediatric immunizations.

F. Environment & Climate Action

Recognizing the rapid deforestation and environmental pressures in refugee-hosting landscapes, EMNFW integrated climate resilience into our core operations.

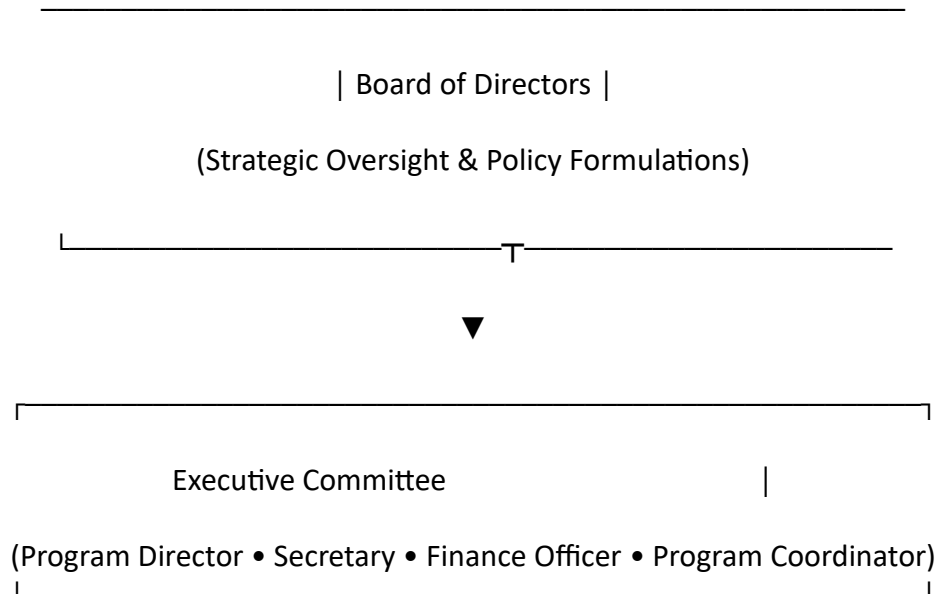
- **Key Interventions:** Successfully planted 1,000 multi-purpose trees across schools and open community spaces, utilizing localized nursery beds (such as our Zone 2 site). We also conducted community training on building energy-saving cookstoves and recycling organic waste.
- **Measurable Impact:** Expanded local green canopy cover, reduced community dependence on firewood, and taught youth practical skills in environmental stewardship.



Figure 7: An EMNFW volunteer managing a community nursery bed in Zone 2, a core component of our climate action initiative to plant 5,000 trees in the 2026/27 cycle.

7. Institutional Governance & Leadership

EMNFW functions under a clear, transparent governance framework designed to ensure maximum accountability, financial clarity, and programmatic alignment with national policies.



Core Institutional Values

- **Empowerment:** Giving community members the tools and training to lead their own development.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring equitable program access for all, regardless of gender, tribe, age, or refugee status.
- **Integrity:** Maintaining absolute transparency in our financial reporting, monitoring, and evaluation.
- **Sustainability:** Designing community-led projects that continue to thrive long after initial funding cycles.

8. Financial Review & Resource Utilization

Funding Philosophy

During the 2025/26 operational year, EMNFW chose a model of strict financial self-reliance. The backbone of our field operations relies entirely on local ownership via member contributions: a one-time registration fee of **UGX 30,000** and an annual subscription fee of **UGX 20,000** per member.

Resource Allocation Breakdown

To maximize field impact, our executive committee enforces a lean administrative budget, ensuring the vast majority of our resources directly benefit the community:

[2024/25 Resource Allocation]

- Direct Program Activities (Workshops, Campaigns, Outreaches): 40%
- Field Logistics & Rural Transport Coordination: 25%
- Institutional Infrastructure (Legal Registration, Website): 20%
- Core Administration, Oversight, and Reporting: 15%

This disciplined financial track record proves EMNFW's readiness to responsibly manage, scale, and report on larger institutional donor grants.

9. Looking Ahead: Strategic Priorities 2026/27

As we look toward the 2026/27 fiscal year, EMNFW intends to scale up our proven models to reach deeper into the West Nile region.



Figure 8: Scaling up impact: An EMNFW mental health and SRHR awareness campaign addressing a large student assembly at Highland Secondary School in Zone 2.

2025/26 SCALING TARGETS

Health Campaigns

25 Schools

(from 10)

Tree Planting

5,000 Trees

(from 1,000)

Vocational Youth

500 Persons

(from 200)

1. Flagship Initiative: Scaling MHPSS in Schools

- **School Clubs:** Launch peer-led mental health clubs across 25 target schools to provide reliable peer support and safe spaces.
- **Capacity Building:** Train 20 additional school counselors and educators in specialized psychological first aid and early identification of trauma.
- **Curriculum Integration:** Work with school administrations to include routine mental health education within everyday school activities.

2. Multi-Sectoral Scaling Targets

- **SRHR Access:** Expand our peer-to-peer comprehensive sexuality education into 20 additional secondary and primary schools.
- **Livelihoods Growth:** Train 500 youth and women in green technical trades and seed 10 new self-sustaining VSLA networks.
- **WASH Expansion:** Build upgraded, private menstrual hygiene facilities across 10 targeted schools and introduce community clean water access points.
- **Climate Action:** Grow 5,000 indigenously adapted trees through school-based environmental enterprises.

3. Critical Needs for Regional Transformation

To transition from a localized CBO to a leading regional partner, EMNFW is actively seeking partnerships in three key areas:

- **Mobility for Impact:** Securing dedicated field transport (motorcycles/vehicles) to reliably deliver health, WASH, and protection programs to remote, hard-to-reach communities.
- **Scalable Enterprise Partnerships:** Partnering with international donors to invest in our youth-led tree-based social enterprises and dedicated women's vocational centers.
- **Community Health Surveillance:** Leveraging our team's deep public health expertise to build community-based disease surveillance and health monitoring right into our existing outreach work.



Figure 9: Local leadership and community stakeholders convening during an EMNFW consultation meeting to align upcoming mental health and school health strategies in the zone.

Conclusion

EMNFW has proven that local commitment and grassroots action can create deep, meaningful change. With strategic donor investment, we can scale our tested models, reach more vulnerable youth and women, and build truly resilient host and refugee communities across the West Nile region.

Partner with us today to nurture a shared future.

Visit our new digital home to view our field galleries, check compliance documents, or connect with our program teams. www.emnfw.org and email: info@emnfw.org