



JULY 2025

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES RESILIENT ECOSYSTEM



Progress meeting in the "Strengthening Smallholder Farmers' Resilience to Climate Change (SFR2CC) project.



Tree Restoration and support.

JESE Program Officer supporting beneficiaries during the monitoring of the planted tree progress in Nyakacwmba.



EDITORIAL

We are excited to share highlights of the July 2025 events. JESE envisions a community where nature and people flourish. Our areas of focus are 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 June Newsletter, we bring you updates from various thematic areas of: Skills development, Agricultural Enterprise, Natural Resources management, 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.

ATHIENO Caroline
Communications and Advocacy Manager-JESE.

By: BUSIINGE AMOOTI, ATHIENO Caroline & ISINGOMA Edward.

The Power of Mass Media!

A promotional graphic for a radio talk show. The background is a dark green with a faint image of a city skyline. In the top left, there is a circular logo with the word 'jese' in a gold script font and the tagline 'Joint Effort To Save The Environment' below it. In the top right, there is a white box with a logo consisting of three horizontal bars (blue, green, orange) and the text 'Join For Water' in blue. The main title 'RADIO TALK SHOW' is in large, bold, white and yellow letters. Below the title, the details are listed: 'TIME: 6-7 PM', 'VENUE: 87.9FM, Voice of Kamwenge', and 'DATE: 25TH JUNE 2025'. On the right side, there is a detailed image of a professional silver microphone on a stand and a pair of large black headphones.

jese
Joint Effort To Save The Environment

Join For Water

**RADIO
TALK SHOW**

TIME: 6-7 PM
VENUE: 87.9FM, Voice of Kamwenge
DATE: 25TH JUNE 2025

PURE

PROTECTION AND EQUITABLE USE
OF FRESHWATER RESOURCES



@Jese.org



@JESE_UG

JESE uses radio talk to advocate for the Protection and Equitable Use of Freshwater resources. The talk show was used to promote the demarcation activities being conducted, address the continued burning of cycads in the Mpanga Gorge, discuss the World Environment Day celebrations, and advocate for the sustainable use of the facilities established under the PURE Program.



Top-down, guest speakers discussing the radio talk show at Voice of Kamwenge.

THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVES DAY DRAFT.



On July 5th, JESE women farmers from the Districts of Kyenjojo and Rubirizi participated in International Cooperative Day under the theme “Driving inclusive and sustainable solutions for a better future.”

The day was the 103rd day of cooperatives in International, and celebrations were in Boma Grounds, Fort Portal.

The purpose of the function was to recognise the effort of the Cooperative in socio-economic transformation.

A total of 13 females and 02 males turned from 6 groups. 3 in Rubirizi, 3 in Kyenjojo, Kyenjojo: Groups were: Ihamba women group, Ijankokori farmers group, Kipeepa Women of Hope. Rubirizi: Kemengo Caritas twetungure, Kyarutakoba 1 abamwe group, Kyejojo 1 Bakyara twetungure. Farmers to embrace aggregation, collaborations as we strive for SDG 17 on partnership among the development actors. Farmers were tasked to actively engage in value addition in order to have higher returns.

“NOW IS THE TIME TO TORCH OURSELVES”.



Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE) and partner, Mountains of the Moon University (MMU), Kabale University, Kigezi Women in Development (KWID), with funding from the Water for Development Partnership Programme, meet to review progress made in the “Strengthening Smallholder Farmers’ Resilience to Climate Change (SFR2CC) project.

The meeting brought all project implementing partners together to network, review progress made since the inception of the project, and plan for the 2026 activities.

So far, two major outputs have been realised;

Review and development of two inter-disciplinary Master's programmes (Integrated Water Resources Management and MSc of Environment and Natural Resources at Mountains of the Moon University and Kabale University.

This provided a platform for partners to share progress made, lessons learnt, and discuss how to collaboratively implement the pending activities...

Have we ever thought of the need to pause and reflect on what we are doing?

How many of us know it's important to network even while working in a consortium?

Well, the partners thought it necessary to pause, reflect, and remind ourselves of what we are doing to reach where we want to be.



JESE ATTENDED TOORO YOUTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

The Youth take the center stage to shape culture.

On 18 July 2025, the Tooro Kingdom Headquarters in Fort Portal City, Muchwa, welcomed a vibrant gathering of youth, leaders, and partners for the Tooro Youth Annual Conference. Themed **“We Speak, We Lead: Cultural Young Voices Driving Change for a Responsible and Youth-Centered Uganda,”** The conference was proudly organized by the Tooro Kingdom with robust support from partners.

Tooro Premier Calvin Armstrong Rwomiire announced ambitious plans to equip 5,000 youths being digitally trained annually. His priority is a 60/40 split between girls and boys, aiming to empower young women while ensuring balanced opportunities for all.

“I call upon every mutooro to actively engage in this noble cause that seeks to build a productive and self-reliant youth population,” Tooro Premier remarked.”

He further urged all people using kingdom land to go through the land board for their titles, and no one can be evicted from the land.

His Majesty King Dr. Oyo Nyimba Kabamba Iguru Rukidi IV, the Chief Guest, addressed the assembly, highlighting the kingdom's 25 years of contribution towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He underscored key areas such as industrial skills development, information technology, healthcare, and agriculture.

In an emotional message to the youth, King Oyo urged them to refrain from drug abuse and excessive alcohol consumption, warning about the dangers of HIV/AIDS, which continue to claim many young lives in Uganda. He called for responsible behavior to safeguard the future of the kingdom's youth.

Photos to be shared soon.

FINAL TOUCHES UNDERWAY FOR WASH FACILITIES.

Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE), with funding from Join for Water (JFW), is promoting WASH initiatives across schools in Kamwenge district. are nearing completion, as final preparations are underway for the handover of new WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities at Busabura Primary School in Kamwenge District.

In the latest phase of this initiative, the project team implementing the PURE programme under the Join for Water partnership, in close collaboration with JESE, continues to closely monitor ongoing construction works at the school. Recent engagements with the contractor have focused on starting the essential artwork and final finishing crucial tasks that will ensure the facilities are both functional and welcoming for pupils and staff alike. The contractor responsible for the final detailing is expected to complete work soon, signaling the approach of the project's completion. These finishing activities form part of a broader commitment to quality and sustainability, central to the PURE program's objectives of improving access to safe water and sanitation in educational institutions.

With the handover date drawing near, the efforts of JESE and Join for Water reiterate their dedication to empowering communities through improved WASH infrastructure. The anticipated completion and commissioning of the facilities at Busabura Primary School will mark a significant milestone, promising better health and enhanced learning environments for current and future generations of students at the school and the community at large. JESE Program Officer monitoring the construction and work going on at Busabura Primary School, Kamwenge.



JESE Program Officer monitoring the construction and work going on at Busabura Primary School, Kamwenge.

JESE EMPOWERS PUPILS IN NUTRITION

On 19 July 2025, JESE, with funding from IDP under the Kulya Kurungi project, held a successful debate championship aimed at improving nutrition awareness among pupils. The event took place at Mpanga Secondary School in Fort Portal Tourism City and was organized by the Rwenzori Debate Forum Championship in partnership with JESE and KRC Uganda.

Over 20 schools participated, including Buhinga, Kahinju, Nyakangongo, Njara, St. Peter's, and Kagote Primary Schools, among others. The debate focused on enhancing pupils' knowledge of nutrition and encouraging healthy habits for better health outcomes. Buhinga Primary School emerged as the winner, with the best performers being awarded trophies and recognition for their outstanding contributions.

Mrs. Kobugabe Consulate, JESE Program Officer, commended all participating schools for their enthusiasm and dedication. "I emphasize that JESE will continuously support initiatives like Kulya Kurungi that have significantly contributed to the improvement of pupils' health status in the region. Bravo JESE," she remarked, applauding the organization's commitment to nutrition education and pupil empowerment.

This event also highlighted the importance of nutrition in academic performance and reinforced JESE's role as a leading advocate in promoting health education among young





STRENGTHENING SCHOOL HYGIENE AND SANITATION.

JESE, through the WASH program, conducts refresher-training sessions in Bunoga, Rugarama, Nyakacwamba, and Nyakera Primary Schools located in Kamwenge and Kitagwenda districts. These sessions focus on enhancing the understanding of roles and responsibilities among WASH club members, equipping them with the knowledge and skills essential for promoting hygiene and sanitation within their schools.

By highlighting the capacity of club members, the training fosters a sense of ownership and accountability towards maintaining clean and healthy school environments. This initiative directly contributes to sustained improvements in hygiene standards and sanitation practices, creating safer and healthier spaces for learners. The ongoing activities underscore the critical role of continuous capacity building in ensuring the long-term success of school-based WASH interventions. Through active participation and strengthened leadership of club members, JESE-WASH is making significant strides in embedding positive hygiene behaviors that will benefit students, staff and community.



The JESE program officer with club members alongside the club patron after a sensitization session.

BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY FOR FRESHWATER MONITORING.

In a combined effort to enhance River health monitoring and foster sustainable management of freshwater ecosystems, Kyaniga Forest Foundation recently hosted a comprehensive three-day training workshop on macro-invertebrate kick net sampling.

The event involved participants from JESE, JFW, NRD, Mountains of the Moon University (MMU), and local government authorities.

Dr. Athanasius Ssekyanzi from Mountains of the Moon University facilitated the workshop that was meant to build local capacity in using aquatic macro-invertebrates as reliable bio-indicators for assessing the health of freshwater ecosystems. Throughout training, participants were introduced to the critical role macro-invertebrates play in River ecosystem health assessment, an approach that offers valuable insights into water quality and biodiversity status.

The workshop program encompassed practical sessions on the kick net sampling methodology, enabling participants to gain hands-on experience in effective specimen collection from riverine environments. On the same note, participants were equipped with essential identification skills to accurately classify various macro-invertebrate taxa, a fundamental step in bio-monitoring protocols. The training also introduced data analysis techniques, empowering participants to interpret findings and apply them in monitoring programs.

By the conclusion of the workshop, participants had acquired foundational knowledge and practical skills necessary for aquatic biomonitoring, positioning them to contribute meaningfully to ongoing river health assessment initiatives. This capacity building effort underscores the commitment of Kyaniga Forest Foundation and collaborating institutions to empower local stakeholders in safeguarding freshwater resources through scientifically informed practices.



TREE RESTORATION AND SUPPORT.

JESE is actively engaged in monitoring and providing technical support to tree farmers as part of its commitment to environmental restoration and conservation. Through the PURE Programme, the staff conduct routine field follow-ups, the program tracks the actual acreage under restoration, and closely verifies the performance of planted trees to ensure healthy growth and sustainability.

This hands-on approach allows JESE to identify challenges early, offer timely advice, and promote best practices among tree farmers. By combining technical guidance with accurate acreage tracking, JESE improves restoration outcomes and supports sustainable land management practices. These efforts contribute significantly to ecological balance, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation.

JESE continues to advocate for strong collaboration with local communities and stakeholders to maintain momentum in restoration initiatives and achieve long-term environmental benefits.





JESE Program Officer supporting beneficiaries during the monitoring of the planted tree progress in Nyakacwmba.

FROM DOUBT TO HOPE

Asiimwe Peace, a ten-year widow and proud member of the Kyatooma-Kigoma Coffee Farmers Group and Kigoma Coffee Farmers Group-VSLA, resides in Busiriba Sub-County, Kamwenge District. Her main source of income has long been a small-scale Robusta coffee garden. However, due to poor management and low coffee quality, her harvests were disappointing, threatening her ability to provide for her biological children and grandchildren.

In 2024, JESE introduced its resilience and income-enhancing activities, targeting smallholder Robusta coffee farmers through the Integrated Farm Plan (IFP) approach.

Initially, Asiimwe was doubtful, uncertain if JESE's initiatives could truly benefit her or improve her circumstances. Nevertheless, she decided to engage with the program, attending several coffee management training sessions designed to improve farming practices and coffee quality.

Through these sessions, Asiimwe learned not only how to enhance her coffee production but also the importance of savings, especially from coffee sales. Motivated by this new knowledge, she embraced the habit of saving, setting a clear goal that gave her hope to build a new house for her family,

"I could not believe that JESE can transform my life through coffee training sessions," Asiimwe shared.

Her first savings of 1,000,000 Ugandan shillings enabled her to purchase bricks. Following the second coffee harvest, she saved an additional 2,000,000 shillings, which she used to buy cement, sand, and pay for labor. Construction is underway, with the house nearing the roofing stage.

Asiimwe is immensely grateful for JESE's support and transformative coffee training, which have revitalized her livelihood and instilled confidence in her journey towards self-reliance. Her story stands as a testament to how focused agricultural interventions and financial empowerment can uplift smallholder farmers, offering new opportunities for growth and improved quality of life in rural communities.



Left, Asiimwe in front of her old house before attaining training on coffee management. Right, a snapshot of her coffee garden.

RESEARCH IS LIKE PREPARING A MEAL.

On 10th July 2025, Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE), in partnership with Mountains of the Moon University (MMU), with funding support from Join For Water, held a one-day workshop during which the Master's students presented the progress of their research under the theme "Common **Knowledge building for the protection and conservation of freshwater catchment**". This knowledge-building component is part of the Multi-Year Programme Five (MYP5) funded by Join for Water and the Belgian Government through DGD.



The four students (two females and two males) presented the progress made, and critiques were provided to each of them on how and where to improve.

The four research topics are;

- Assessment of surface water quality, quantity, and demand in the Mpanga catchment.
- The Relationship between Social Structures and Participation of Social Groups in the Mpanga Catchment Resource Management in the Rwenzori Region, Western Uganda.
- The Nature and Limitations of Conservation Interventions in the Mpanga Catchment Towards an Evidence Framework for Habitat Restoration in the Catchment.
- Analysis of the Economic Value of Water Resources in the Mpanga Catchment.

Speaking to the participants during the engagement, Dr. John Sekajugo, the Head of Department Environment and Natural Resources, who represented the Dean - Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at MMU, thanked the donor for investing in the project.

“Research is an important aspect in our field, yet very expensive to undertake.” He noted.

Addressing the team, Professor Moses Muhumuza from MMU and the lead Investigator shared that it is their wish as a research institution to work in partnership with the private sector to see how the University can contribute to the protection of our most loved water resources.

“It would not be nice to talk about water resources protection without discussing the need to protect River Mpanga.” He noted. Research is like preparing a meal. It requires time, and the activity we are doing today is part of the process we are taking in preparing our meal.” He continued.

He tasked the participants to provide constructive feedback to the students to improve their research packages.

Representing JESE in the meeting, Mr. BUSIINGE, the Head of the Natural Resources Department, appreciated the partnership JESE has with MMU, saying it is unique.

“It’s exciting that we have made steady progress in achieving this. We are happy to be here and listen to the progress made by the students.” He remarked.

A scientific paper will be produced out of the work of the students and published to inform both the current and subsequent programming. We look forward to the completion and dissemination of the results beyond the programme stakeholders.

To crown the meeting, Mr. Isaiah Ndungu, the Country Coordinator of Join For Water, thanked the team for the efforts and progress made in the activity.

- **What is your contribution to the protection and conservation of freshwater resources?**
- **Join us in our efforts to protect and conserve our freshwater resources not only in the Mpanga Catchment, but also in other regions. We are better as a team.**



The participants pose for a photo moment during the meeting and Fort View Hotel in Fort Portal.

JESE SPEARHEADS FARMER FIELD AND BUSINESS SCHOOL GLOBAL LEARNING EVENT.

Jese, with funding from CARE International, hosted a global learning visit that brought stakeholders from all over the world.

The four-day global FFBS learning event, held in Uganda, brought together 51 participants (including 21 women) from 18 CARE Country Offices engaged in SUFFBS. Three additional COs (NE Syria, Egypt, and Turkiye) were represented through the MENA regional focal point. The event also welcomed 12 external stakeholders from government ministries, academia, FAO, local NGOs, and the private sector.



The event was designed to create deep engagement through a variety of learning methods, including storytelling, panel discussions, poster presentations, and a marketplace format centered on the four FFBS scaling pathways.

These visits showcased how FFBS is driving improvements in productivity, value addition, market access, income, social norms, and household nutrition.

Influencing Policy and Public Investment. The event highlighted how FFBS is influencing national agendas:

- In Uganda, the government is considering FFBS as the core approach for implementing a \$350 million World Bank-funded agriculture program.
- In Ghana, FFBS has been integrated into the \$24.63 million IFAD-funded AFFORD program, reflecting growing institutional trust in the model.

Looking Ahead: Strategic Priorities Participants identified several forward-looking priorities:

- Establishing an FFBS Community of Practice to foster peer learning and innovation.
- Enhancing youth and male engagement to broaden impact.
- Embedding FFBS training in agricultural institutes and local government systems.
- Strengthening private sector partnerships and scaling certification and finance pathways.
- Ensuring the model stays effective and reliable as it grows.

JESE LAUNCHES UGROW PROGRAM IN KAMWENG DISTRICT.

Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE) today officially launched the UGROW Program at Igogora Hotel in Kamwenge District on July 30th, 2025. The initiative is funded by the Danida Green Business Partnerships (DGBP) through Forest of the World, and will be implemented over five years (2025–2030) across Kamwenge and Kyenjojo districts.

UGROW, which stands for Unleashing Green Responsible Opportunities in Western Uganda – Inclusive Vanilla and Cocoa Value Chains for Fair Growth, aims to strengthen sustainable agricultural value chains while promoting responsible business practices and improving livelihoods.

The launch event brought together key stakeholders from both districts to share the program's strategic direction and gather insights on how best to ensure effective and inclusive implementation.

UGROW builds upon the success of a previous 18-month pilot phase funded by the DGBP, which supported 750 farmers in Kyenjojo District, facilitated the formation of two cooperatives, and enabled participating farmers to obtain organic certification. As a result, farmers are now accessing premium markets for their vanilla and cocoa.

The full-scale UGROW Program will reach 3,000 households in the two districts, focusing on: Strengthening farmer cooperatives.

1. Expanding access to organic certification.
2. Market linkages with international buyers.
3. Supporting responsible business development.
4. Beyond economic outcomes, UGROW is designed to enhance ecosystem conservation, climate change resilience, and livelihood security for farming communities in Western Uganda.