

Joy in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Mr. Wani Alison is a 32-year-old South Sudanese refugee, a kuku by tribe from Bori village in kajokeji county. He came to Uganda in 2017 due to the South Sudan civil war that broke between the government and the rebels. Before the war while in South Sudan he used to trade in charcoal and farming as his source of income where him and his beautiful wife Harriet Agu used to feed and take care of their four (4) children 2 girls aged 10 and 3 years, then 2 boys aged 7 and 5 years old.



Photo showing Mr. Wani supporting his children after school.

Ever since Mr. Alison and his wife Harriet Agu sought refugeeing Uganda and settled in Palorinya refugee settlement Zone 3 west Idiwa 1 village about 150 kilometers from home, life has been a little different with hardships especially in farming because of the inadequate piece of land in the settlement where they were allocated 30 by 30 piece of land by OPM. The land is relatively small for farming to sustain the entire family compared to the large piece of land he had while in kajokeji.

In addition, life became a little more complicated during the COVID-19 pandemic where all schools and ECCE centers were not allowed to operate based on

MoH guidelines. The situation worried him so much and made him lose hope in his children's future since they had stayed home for one year and 3 months and they had forgotten how to read, write and even speak English.



Photo showing Mr. Alison with his children and the care.

He further explained how this motivated him to work harder in order to support his family especially his children's education and as a result his neighbors got concerned and consulted him on how he has been engaging the care givers to educate his children during the pandemic era and they also become interested and started demanding for the caregivers to start training their children as well.

However, he thanked RICE-West Nile for coming up with the ECCE program which has helped him and other fathers in his walk of life a lot through its interventions such as parenting groups and baba groups,

where they acquire knowledge and skills in getting involved and supporting their children’s education and social welfare. All the three children are attached to ‘our child ECCE center’. In April 2021, RICE West Nile launched a three-year project titled ‘Programme for Adolescents, Children’s Education and Social Empowerment’ in Zone III of Palorinya refugee settlement which has five thematic programs of Bonga, TVET, ECCE, CMSG and Psychosocial support with fundings from Stromme Foundation. During the baba sessions, the parents share best practices in supporting the children to do better, luckily for Mr. Wani he picked interest in further supporting his children while at home after the ECCE sessions. In a joyful voice he said ***“I did not study and I was scared that my children will also not study because all schools are stopped from operating so I had to hire a caregiver and pay her Ugshs. 5,000 for each of my 4 children per month for extra coaching after ECCE sessions and a lot changed within the one and half months where my children were able to read, write and speak English, they would get up in the morning and greet me in English saying ...Good morning, Baba which gave me so much hope and joy.”***

He added that he believes more of such interventions are yet to come therefore it would be his pleasure to see that more of his community members benefit because children are the future leaders of tomorrow. The baba sessions taught him to not only leave his children in the hands of the teachers, him as a parent also has a huge role to play in the upbringing and shaping of the children in education grounds.

As a role model parent, he encouraged the fathers and mothers of school-going children to think of positives in this era of lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic.

End of Story.