

Empowering Refugee Entrepreneurs

Personal Initiative Training
in Kyaka II Settlement



Training report · 29 September – 3 October 2025



INTRODUCTION

Building entrepreneurial resilience

The Personal Initiative Training (PIT), implemented under the PATHPRENEUR Project by the African Youth Action Network (AYAN), has continued to transform refugee livelihoods across Uganda. These sessions have been led by our Founder and Executive Director, facilitating for the African Youth Action Network.

The most recent training, conducted from 29th September to 3rd October 2025 at Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, showcased the power of mindset change in driving sustainable livelihood transformation.

Settlements reached

4

Days of training

5

Nakivale · Kyaka II · Rhino Camp · Kiryandongo

58

participants trained
in Kyaka II, in five days



The Personal Initiative model has been instrumental in building entrepreneurial mindsets and resilience among refugees and host community members.

Muganuzi Mushongole Adonis, Founder & Executive Director, YAREN Organisation

On facilitating PIT from Nakivale to Kyaka II, Rhino Camp, Kiryandongo and Kampala

COVER: Awarding the group winner of the bottle game.

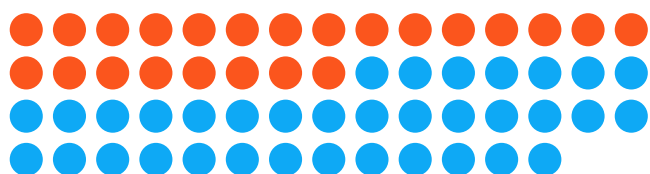
ABOVE: Participants during a Personal Initiative Training session in Kyaka II.

EMPOWERING REFUGEES:

Mindset change at the centre

The five-day training brought together 58 participants, 23 women and 35 men, from South Sudanese, Burundian, Rwandese and Congolese refugee communities, along with Ugandan hosts. These sessions, led under AYAN supervision, combined theory, practice and experience-sharing. Participants learned about self-starting behaviour, overcoming barriers and turning ideas into opportunities. Through interactive games, group work and personal reflection, they developed actionable business plans aimed at improving self-reliance and innovation.

Who took part



- 40% women (23)
- 60% men (35)

Communities represented

- 01 South Sudanese
- 02 Burundian
- 03 Rwandese
- 04 Congolese
- 05 Ugandan host community



ABOVE: Learning about goal setting and overcoming barriers: a bottle competition.

Self-starting
behaviour

Overcoming
barriers

Ideas into
opportunities

Actionable
business plans

A TRANSFORMATIVE Learning experience

The PIT approach focuses on psychological empowerment, helping participants think and act proactively rather than reactively.

Activities such as goal setting, financial planning and creative problem-solving inspired participants to take ownership of their business futures. The energy in the room was infectious, with participants sharing stories of how previous cohorts had already transformed their ventures.

One former trainee returned to share how he became a successful cabbage and greens supplier after applying PIT lessons, while another participant sold all her handmade soap during the training.



ABOVE RIGHT: Game session learning.

SUCCESS STORY

Mr. Benone: nine months after training, a story to tell



Mr. Benone presented the impact of the previous training in January 2025. After acquiring the knowledge, he put the skills into practice. Nine months later, he sold produce to other participants on the same day as his presentation.

46,000 UGX

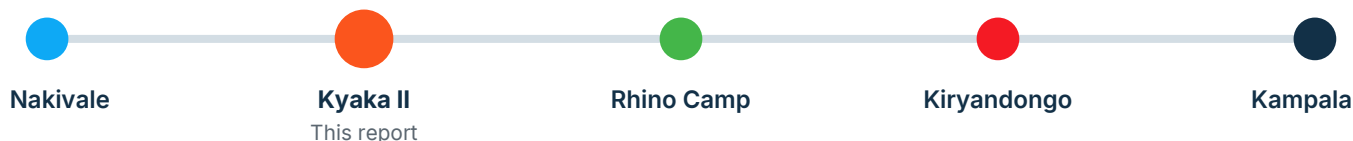
sold to fellow participants on the day

9 months

from training to a working business

ABOVE: Mr. Benone's success story, presented to the new cohort.

Where PIT has been delivered



VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Participants described the training as **transformative, practical and life-changing**. Many appreciated AYAN's inclusive approach and the facilitator's engaging methods. Others expressed a desire for more mentorship and longer training sessions to deepen their skills. The diverse group fostered cross-cultural collaboration and collective learning, and many said this training was unlike any they had attended before: engaging, inspiring and deeply practical.

Transformative

Practical

Life-changing

“ I discovered that in business, mistakes are the best lessons to learn from.

Training participant, Kyaka II

“ I learned to set goals and remain focused, even when plans change.

Training participant, Kyaka II



LEFT: Group presentation.



RIGHT: Participants working together in small groups.

CHALLENGES AND Recommendations

Participants requested that AYAN's donors trust this approach, which can transform the entire refugee community into one that is resilient and self-reliant. They asked that the training not remain with them alone, but be well-resourced to reach many other refugees.

- 1 Trust and fund the PIT approach
- 2 Resource it to reach many more refugees
- 3 Add mentorship and longer training sessions

CONCLUSION

The PIT training in Kyaka II and other settlements reaffirmed the potential of mindset-based entrepreneurship training in refugee contexts. Participants left empowered, equipped with practical tools, and motivated to lead their communities toward self-reliance. The PIT model stands as a symbol of hope, proving that with the right mindset, even the most vulnerable can become powerful agents of change.

By nurturing entrepreneurship, self-belief and collaboration, the Personal Initiative Training in Kyaka II has become a beacon of hope for many, paving the way for resilient and sustainable refugee livelihoods in Uganda.



BELOW: Group photo at the end of the training at AYAN Kyaka II, after the Commandant's remarks.



YAREN empowers refugees and vulnerable communities in Uganda through skills training, livelihoods, education, health and community-led programmes.

Since 2017, community action that began in Nakivale Refugee Settlement has grown into practical support across education, entrepreneurship, health, livelihoods and humanitarian response.

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