

TISS — Trauma-Informed Self-Reliance System

IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION

Voice for Humanity Uganda

 **Adjumani, Uganda**

Refugee-hosting community • First cohort findings

PURPOSE

Summarize early implementation signals when **psychological stabilization** is sequenced before **livelihood activation**.

Context — First Cohort Implementation

WHAT THIS BRIEF COVERS

This brief presents early insights from the first **TISS cohort** implemented in a refugee-hosting community in **Adjumani, Uganda**.

IMPLEMENTATION FOCUS

Understanding early outcome signals when **psychological stabilization** is intentionally sequenced before **livelihood activation**.

The intention is to strengthen the psychological foundations required for consistent economic activity in contexts where trauma and chronic stress can disrupt routine, decision-making, and participation.

PROGRAM SEQUENCE

The first cohort followed the intended progression:



STEP 1

Psychological stabilization

Emotional grounding and coping routines



STEP 2

Livelihood activation

Income activities supported by consistency

Cohort Overview

Snapshot of the first cohort implemented in a refugee-hosting community in Adjumani, Uganda.



10

WOMEN PARTICIPANTS

All participants completed the full program cycle.



12

WEEKS DURATION

Weekly structured group sessions across all phases.

100%

COMPLETION RATE

No dropouts were recorded during the program cycle.



High

ATTENDANCE (CONSISTENT)

Participation remained strong through the livelihood transition.

Program Delivery — What Was Implemented

Participants received a structured 12-week sequence combining stabilization and livelihood activation. The program was delivered as designed.



Weekly structured group sessions

Facilitated sessions supported shared learning, accountability, and practice between meetings.



Emotional stabilization practices

Grounding routines and coping skills to reduce distress and support emotional regulation.



Behavioral consistency tracking

Simple tracking and check-ins to reinforce routines, follow-through, and goal progress.



Livelihood activation support

Practical support to initiate or strengthen income activities, building on stabilized routines.

Emerging Outcomes — What Changed

Early qualitative signals observed by facilitators across participants during the first cohort.




FACILITATOR OBSERVATIONS

Reported changes were most visible in emotional regulation and follow-through on daily routines.

- ✓ **Improved emotional stability**
Participants appeared better able to regulate distress and stay engaged during sessions.
- ✓ **Increased consistency in daily routines**
Improved follow-through on planned activities and household routines.
- ✓ **Stronger engagement in income activities**
Greater readiness to start or sustain livelihoods once activation began.
- ✓ **Shift toward self-belief and future planning**
Increased confidence and goal-setting behavior reported during sessions.

INTERPRETATION

These findings are **early-stage** and **directional**—capturing observed changes during delivery rather than measured impact.

-  Next cohorts will help validate whether these patterns persist across participants and over time.
-  The sequence (stabilization → activation) appears to support participation and follow-through in livelihood activities.
-  Observations suggest both psychosocial and economic readiness can improve when delivered as a structured progression.

Livelihood Activation — All Participants Started Income Activities

Following stabilization, participants initiated income-generating activities across multiple sectors.

INCOME ACTIVITIES STARTED

Activities reflect local market opportunities and participant preferences.



Vegetable selling

Small-scale trading in local markets.



Poultry farming

Starter flocks and basic husbandry.



Bakery

Baked goods for household and sale.



Grocery business

Small retail of essential items.

ACTIVATION SIGNAL

All participants transitioned into active economic activity during the cohort.



Participation remained high through the livelihood transition.



Diversity of activities suggests flexible pathways are feasible.

Early Income Signal — Initial Income Generation

Participants began earning income during early stages of livelihood activation, with daily earnings commonly in the **\$2-\$3** range.




Asset Use & Engagement — Retention and Participation

Implementation monitoring indicated strong retention and productive use of assets during the livelihood transition.

ENGAGEMENT SIGNALS OBSERVED

Checklist summarizes early implementation observations related to retention, participation, and asset use.

-  **No reported cases of asset misuse**
No incidents were recorded during the cohort cycle.
-  **Assets retained and used productively**
Assets supported income activity start-up and continuity.
-  **High participation across all phases**
Engagement remained strong from stabilization through activation.
-  **No drop-offs during livelihood transition**
Participants stayed engaged as income activities began.

SIGNAL

Early indicators suggest **livelihood stability** during the first cohort's transition phase.

Protection of productive inputs

Assets remained in use for intended livelihood purposes.



Continuity of engagement

High participation supported follow-through into activation.

Evidence note:



Indicators reflect implementation monitoring and facilitator reports, not independent verification.

Participant Experience — Real Story

A participant reflection illustrating the link between counseling/stabilization and early livelihood outcomes.

“

“This program has really brought change in my life. I no longer dwell on my past because of the counseling sessions.”

“I now earn over **UGX 20,000** (about **\$5**) per day compared to before where I earned around **UGX 5,000** (about **\$1.2**).”

— **Arafa Hamad**

Participant, first TISS cohort (Adjumani, Uganda)

INCOME CHANGE (REPORTED)

↓ **UGX 5,000**
Before (≈ \$1.2/day)

↑ **UGX 20,000+**
After (≈ \$5/day)

Figures are participant-reported during implementation and provided as an illustrative example.

Key Learnings & Challenges

Early operational learning from the first cohort—paired with constraints observed during implementation.



WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

Implementation insights observed during the first cohort delivery.



Sequencing is operationally feasible

Stabilization followed by activation can be delivered as a coherent pathway.



Behavioral consistency supports livelihood engagement

Tracking routines helped sustain participation as livelihood activities began.



Participants respond strongly to structured progression

Clear steps and expectations supported follow-through across phases.



CHALLENGES

Constraints that limit scale and increase operational complexity.



High demand exceeds current capacity

More households seek support than current cohorts can accommodate.



Limited funding restricts cohort size

Resources cap the number of participants and assets supported.



Participant selection is difficult amid widespread need

High levels of vulnerability make prioritization challenging.

Limitations & Next Steps

This brief summarizes early implementation signals and outlines the pathway for stronger evidence and expanded delivery.



LIMITATIONS

Important context for interpreting these early findings.



Single cohort (early-stage insight)

Findings reflect the first implementation cycle in Adjumani.



Small sample size

10 participants; results are not generalization.



Short observation period

12-week cohort; longer-term outcomes not yet observed.



Directional (not impact-evaluated)

Signals are observational and implementation-based.



NEXT STEPS

Actions to strengthen evidence and expand program reach.



Implement additional cohorts

Scale delivery to reach more trauma-affected households.



Continue tracking outcomes over time

Strengthen monitoring for longer-term livelihood and wellbeing trends.



Refine delivery based on field learning

Iterate facilitation tools, sequencing supports, and monitoring practices.



Expand reach with funding support

Increase cohort size and resources to meet high community demand.