

EQUIPPED TO TRANSFORM LIVES

Stephen Okerayot was among the first to adopt World Vision’s low-cost well-drilling methods—and discovered that helping his community obtain clean water led to new business opportunities and a chance to mentor youth.

After more than two decades of civil war, the people of northern Uganda finally were able to return to their home villages after rebel forces retreated in 2008. In most cases, they returned to scenes of devastation—homes and schools destroyed, clean water scarce. People survived by drinking dirty water from sources shared with the local livestock.

As wells were drilled in some villages, people came to them from miles around to get safe drinking water. But the cost of borehole wells meant that it was too expensive to reach all communities in need, resulting in many people continuing to walk long distances to gather water.

When World Vision introduced a new low-cost method to manually drill wells, clean water was within the reach of many more families. Stephen Okerayot, a 36-year-old father of four, was one of the first to sign up for training on the new technology.

“I thank World Vision for training me and opening my eyes. I didn’t know I could drill water using local materials and save the health of people in my community,” said Stephen.

“*I can drill many water points using local materials at a low cost and so shortage of water is no longer a big challenge ... I want to thank World Vision for training me.*”



Stephen with the youth he mentors, including Godfrey (in the orange shirt).

Stephen put his new knowledge to good use, drilling 26 wells in 10 villages in 18 months. The new technology enables him to drill seven to eight wells using local materials for the same cost as one machine-drilled borehole. The demand for Stephen’s well-drilling skills became so great, he started his own company, Gotopwoyo Construction and Engineering.

In addition to supporting his own family, Stephen has become a coach and mentor to many local youth, who gain valuable work skills through employment in his enterprise.

Nineteen-year-old Godfrey said, “I come here to learn, but because we learn on the job, we gain expertise and also get paid. I use the money to buy food for home since my grandmother is elderly, and also to buy scholastic materials and clothes. ... Mr. Stephen is a very good example to us.”

—Stephen Okerayot
small business owner in the Koro-Bobi community