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# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



**Evelyn Nassuna**  
**Co-Founder and CEO**

Dear Friends,

Shared Action Africa, a nonprofit was founded in January 2014 in Uganda, and financial inclusion is central to our approach to address the economic empowerment of women, youth and rural farming communities. Caught in a cycle of poverty, they are invisible to the formal financial system and face extreme barriers to entry to access capital to invest in the farming seasons and create a profitable livelihood. Our solution lies within the existing wisdom of communities who for years have used Savings and Lending Groups (SLG) to redistribute cash to members for their needs. However, when my fellow co-founder and myself began working with the SLG, we found that these small groups of less than 40 people were only able to save for consumption, and never had enough cash for investing to create wealth and grow their businesses.

Our programs focus on leveraging the social capital of women and youth led savings groups through access to financial tools that establish their creditworthiness and expand their financial infrastructure. Intrinsic to this is our Shared Action Fund that provides matching grants and credit to the savings and lending groups to onward lend to members for their enterprises. It is through savings and lending groups, not predatory lenders, members can invest in land, farming inputs and agriculture including maize, coffee and beans and grow their incomes and afford to take their children to school as well.

A second key element of our model includes job creation and workforce development for young adults. Since October 2015 we have increased the financial capabilities of over 321 rural youth through training in financial literacy and entrepreneurship, and prepared 241 women and youth access belonging to 6 SLG to access credit through our Shared Action Fund.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Evelyn Nassuna'.

**Evelyn Nassuna**

# OUR VISION

We envision a world where everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential, while serving as a steward to create a more sustainable planet.

# OUR MISSION

Working together with Savings and Lending Groups, Shared Action Africa empowers rural women and youth by providing access to a network of financial solutions for economic empowerment that is socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable.

# OUR VALUES

## **Sustainability**

We contribute to a sustainable world through our work and the communities we serve by combining long-term economic value, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility.

## **Grassroots Entrepreneurship**

We believe in community led solutions that create jobs for women and youth and scale green business models that are ecological for the land and improve livelihoods for families and future generations to come.

## **Gender Equality**

We believe in equal opportunities for all humankind and by expanding economic opportunities for women and the youth, we build a more inclusive community and provide a platform for real change

## **Innovation**

We are committed to nurturing innovation and scaling up evidence based innovations for sustainable impact through strong local communities, organizations and effective and efficient programs

## **Cooperative Governance**

We believe in community led models of business ownership that empower members to be active participants in decision making that foster cooperation, accountability, shared resources and scale impact for the common good.

# PROGRAMS

## Financial Literacy Education



Through their respective Savings and Lending Groups (SLG), we prepare women and youth to become responsible managers of their personal financial finances. We also help them understand the formal financial system and develop their technical skills to be responsible users of new financial services to invest in agricultural business and trade.

In 2016, we improved the financial skills of 321 youth, and 404 women to manage their personal and household finances as well as use formal financial services responsibly to avoid the risk of indebtedness.

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



After receiving financial literacy training, the participants are trained and mentored to become ecological entrepreneurs and manage profitable agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises. During 2016, we trained 321 rural youth on how to select, plan and manage an enterprise.

As follow up to the training, they receive business mentoring and 66 of the trained youths were supported to develop business plans that were submitted to the Uganda Government's Youth Venture Fund for financing.

# YOUTH AGRO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Besides financial services, farmers need additional farm services including extension, plowing, harvesting, processing, transport, warehousing and marketing services to increase productivity, profitability and incomes. To address the high rate of unemployment amongst youth and lack of interest in farming, we are training youth to become innovative agro-entrepreneurs to develop their skills and opportunities for advancement by providing services to other actors in the value chain. Our young adult entrepreneurs are developing enterprises to meet the need of these specialized and demand driven services such as systematic pruning of coffee and distribution.

To equip the youth with the right tools, and transportation to do the job, they are supported to form youth savings groups and write and submit business proposals to access capital to cover startup costs of infrastructure and equipment to easily launch their businesses and create jobs.

Our team of young entrepreneurs are trained to become skilled agricultural workers that provide on farm technical services to complement the financial and business management skills training and mentorship they provide to the rural women and youth.

The young entrepreneurs are also trained and supported with seed capital from the Shared Action Fund to utilize business opportunities that exist along the agricultural value chain, and provide specialized and demand driven services such as systematic pruning of coffee and integrated pest management.

As part of the training, the women and youth are supported to a develop a business plan that is funded through the Shared Action Fund.



## AFFORDABLE AND APPROPRIATE FINANCIAL SERVICES



Through the Shared Action Fund, we plan to provide credit using mobile money technology to mature Savings and Lending Groups to onward lend to their individual members. In 2016, we partnered Ezee money, a technology based company that provides digital financial services. Together, we trained 154 women belonging to 6 SLG on how to access digital financial services from Shared Acton Fund when it is set up during the first farming season in 2017. Shared Action Africa leverages digital financial services to reduce the transaction costs for the members of the SLGs.

The Shared Action Fund using private capital will bridge the rural financing gap by providing two types of financing; 1) Matching Grant. The matching grant making facility was created by Shared Action Africa to incentive the savings groups to also save for investment as opposed to only saving for consumption and 2) Green Loans. The Credit facility was set up to provide affordable and tailored financial services and products that create value for the rural poor. Using the credit facility, the Shared Action Fund will provide climate related financing in 2017 by developing and distributing green loan products that address the impacts of climate change and come in two varieties. 1) Adaptation loans and 2) Mitigation Loans.

## SAVINGS AGGREGATION

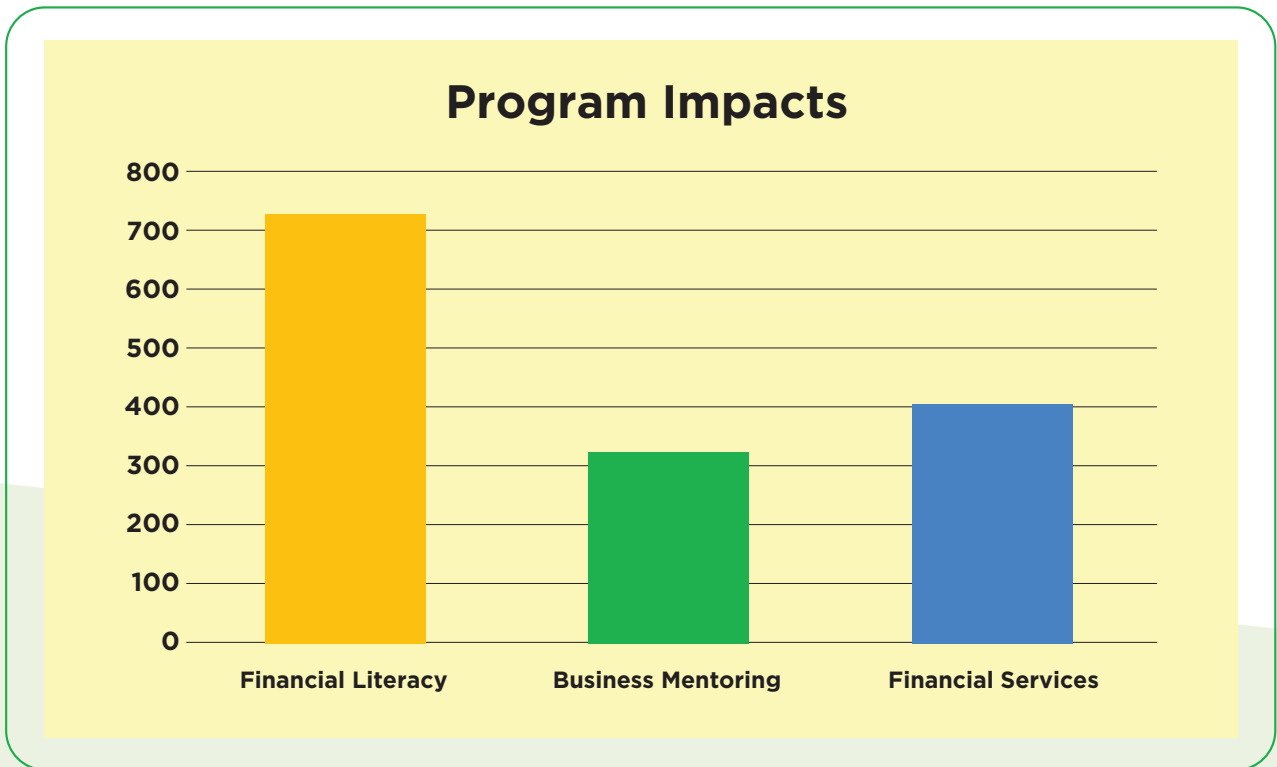


We strengthen the social capital nurtured in the savings groups by supporting them to form larger networks or savings and credit cooperatives by aggregating their resources to accumulate capital for impactful investments. This is achieved by supporting mature savings to form SLG networks and or savings and credit cooperatives and are helped to develop governance structures for transparency and accountability to members.

The new and bigger cooperatives or SLGs networks are also supported to develop sound business systems and business plans before they can qualify for matching grant from the Shared Action Fund that is invested in either an agricultural value addition equipment or in an income generating project that.

In 2016, we supported 241 women and youth affiliated with 11 SLG to start on the process of aggregating by supporting them develop their constitution, elect their leaders and engage in training on how to actively participate in member owned financial institutions.

# PROGRAM IMPACT



The chart (above) shows the impact of Shared Action Africa in 2016.

## Continuum of Services Offered to Participants



The illustration (above) shows the continuum of services provided to the participants



# IMPACT STORY

## Andrew and Jocelyn Oundo



Andrew Oundo, aged 26 years and his wife Jocelyn aged 24 years from Peta village in Tororo district in Uganda became participants in the organization's activities in January 2016. They joined to access training on savings and lending groups methodology, financial literacy education, and business development. In order to enroll in our programs, we encouraged them to identify other youths in the area with similar needs. Andrew and Jocelyn were successful in mobilizing 33 youths that were trained and supported to form a savings and lending group (SLG) that they named Peta Quarry SLG. The latter SLG meets every Sunday at 2pm to pool funds and lend out to each other. It is through the same group, that Shared Action Africa has provided training to the 33 youths in financial literacy education and how to select plan and manage an income generating activity. Shared Action Africa continues to provide business mentorship to the SLG members to develop simple and fundable business plans.

In their own words, Andrew and Jocelyn have the following to say about Shared Action Africa's programs;

*"Participating in the trainings offered by Shared Action Africa as a couple has strengthened our young marriage. Together we have learnt how to engage in financial planning including budgeting and development of a savings plan to achieve the needs of our family. We have also learnt how to manage our money as a family and how to make joint decisions on how we spend our joint earnings. We have also learnt how to keep records particularly in our SLG. We believe if we continue practicing the financial skills provided by Shared Action Africa in our lives, we will not struggle financially in future particularly when we start raising a family together. We also urge Shared Action Africa to continue supporting our Peta Quarry SLG to access credit so that we have a bigger internal fund from which we can all access credit in real time. During our meetings at 2pm every Sunday, we collect very little money that is not enough to cater for all the financial needs of members seeking to take out loans for various reasons. We pledge to be good customers because we now have the knowledge on how to manage loans and not default"*

# THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

## Why we choose Savings and Lending Groups

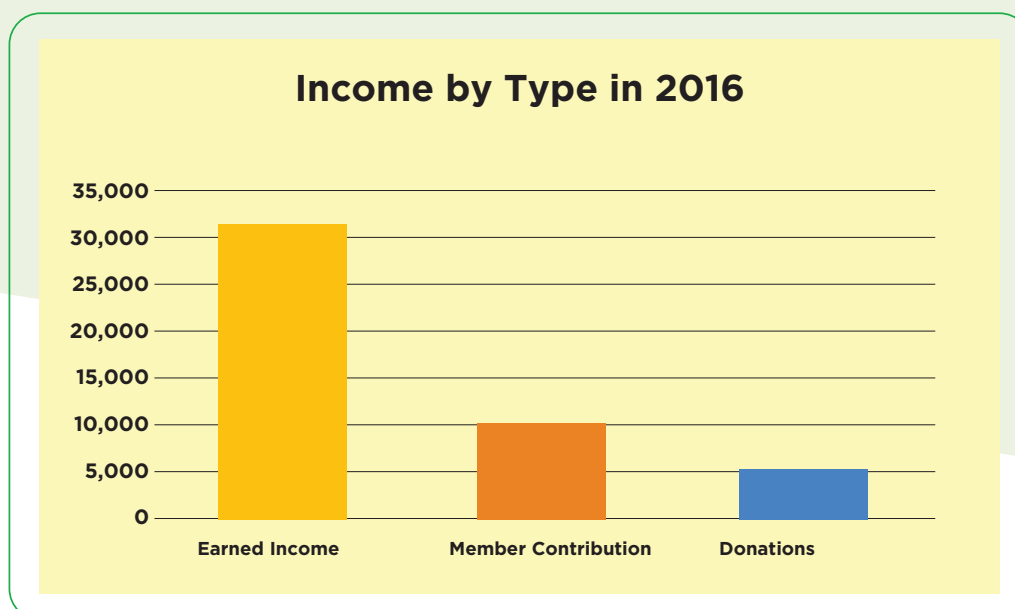
To address the exclusion from the formal financial services, Shared Action Africa links rural women and youth to financial services through their savings and lending groups. The rural poor particularly women, have built savings and lending groups as their own finance pool or small community banks to serve their families' basic financial needs. Typically, a group of 25-40 people is trained on how to save, purchase shares and eventually internally lend with one another. As they are small in size, each savings group saves and lends out micro amounts. Consequently, members of savings groups participate at the lowest level of the agricultural value chain.

While the savings and lending groups are accessible and bring the poor people to work, as they mature, they need a bank account to keep their money safe, and more funds to provide larger loans to their members. To bridge the financing gap for members of the savings groups, Shared Action Africa identifies mature groups and offers them financial literacy education and business mentoring before offering them small loans specially designed for savings and lending groups.

Shared Action Africa also offers matching grants to mature savings groups that are ready to invest in a group income generating activity or an agricultural equipment that benefits all members of the savings and lending group.

## Resources & Financial Management

The graph below provides a summary of Shared Action Africa's income statement for 2016. Being a young organization, we financed our programs mainly from earned income generated from professional services provided to other organizations. Our income in 2016 was invested in mobilizing Savings and Lending Groups to organize and receive training in financial literacy education, business mentoring before linking them to the financing arm, the Shared Action Fund. Private capital was used to set the Shared Action Fund to provide digital financial services to the rural women and youth.



The graph (above) shows the income by type in 2016 for Shared Action Africa

# LOOKING FORWARD

As we move forward into 2017, we will build on the successes and lessons learned in 2016 to broaden our outreach and expand financial services including savings, credit and insurance to 2000 rural women and youth in central and Eastern Uganda.

We also plan to launch our business incubation program with 50 young women entrepreneurs. As part of the business incubation program, Shared Action Africa will train and mentor the young women to launch businesses that will provide demand driven services to program participants in SLG formation and mentoring, financial literacy education, business mentoring, mobile money technology and linkage to the Shared Action Fund to access credit.

Similarly in 2017, we will partner with the Rotary Club of Kampala Naalya to launch a six months' economic development program targeting 100 young girls in the rural areas from the ages of 13-25 years that are recovering from obstetric fistula in Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Isingiro district. As part of our strategy to reintegrate these young women in society and help them launch their businesses, Shared Action Africa will support them with a startup kit that is aligned with the enterprise of their choice to be identified together as part of the training.

The Shared Action Fund capital will be bolstered to serve at least 100 Savings and lending groups to onward lend to at least 1000 individual farmers to invest in farming practices that protect the environment, education of children, solar energy, housing and clean water.

To further strength the operations of the Shared Action Fund, we will invest in a MIS system that interfaces with mobile money technology to reduce the transaction costs for our clients and thus make the loans affordable and reduce the risks inherent in cash based financial system.

## **Executive Leadership** **Our Executive Includes the following;**

Dr. Josephine Namayanja	-	Board Chairperson
Mr. Joseph Suuna	-	Vice Board Chairperson
Ms. Dorothy Mubiru	-	Board Secretary
Ms. Florence Makada	-	Board Member
Ms. Priscilla Nambajjwe	-	Co-founder and Finance Director
Ms. Evelyn Nassuna	-	Co-founder and CEO

# WE NEED YOUR HELP

## Every Penny Matters

Your donation will make a great impact in the lives of rural women and girls in Uganda.  
Please make a donation to support our work through our donations page;

**<https://support.oneworldchildrensfund.org/events/-/e89027>**

 **Shared Action Africa (Uganda)**

## Volunteer and Help Make a Difference

Not everyone can make a financial contribution, and we therefore appreciate your contribution through the various ways such as the following;

- Volunteer with the Youth Entrepreneurship and Workforce Development Program
- Volunteer with the Women Business Development and Mentoring Program

**Please visit our website [www.sharedact.org](http://www.sharedact.org) to learn more,  
or call us at +256 772 622671 or [info@sharedact.org](mailto:info@sharedact.org)**

### Thanks to our Donors and Partners

We are grateful to our donors and particularly our fiscal sponsor the One World Children's Fund based in San Francisco, California, USA.

We also appreciate our corporate partners for their business including Rift Valley Railways, Financial Sector Deepening Uganda, UGACOF, and Ezee Money.