



SHARED ACTION AFRICA  
Together We Achieve



ANNUAL  
**REPORT**  
2020

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## Message from the Chief Executive Officer

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic has been a defining moment for the organization during fiscal year 2020. While Uganda has to date registered fewer cases of COVID-19 compared to other countries in the west, the response by the Government of Uganda to combat its spread has had a devastating impact on the lives of the people we serve. Lockdowns and curfews that characterized most of 2020 have had a negative impact on the delivery of our programs causing untold suffering for some of the beneficiaries. For instance, the stay home order that restricted people's movement resulted in a surge in unplanned pregnancies. Likewise, food insecurity increased particularly among the refugee populations as food rations decreased amidst the pandemic. Similarly, the savings group members were unable to meet regularly as scheduled because they lacked the resources to comply with the government's standard operating procedures amidst the pandemic.

This report therefore is an account of Shared Action Africa's work during the period from June 2019 to July 2020, which is our financial year. It highlights our triumphs and challenges, while identifying opportunities for scaling up and deepening the community impact during the coming year.

We are grateful to our donors and partners that continued to support our work during the pandemic. Your support enabled us to keep our staff and volunteers safe and protected amidst the pandemic. During the ongoing public health crisis, and with the support of our partners, we helped 1130 refugees access sexual and reproductive health care. Likewise, 71 women accessed eco stoves and energy efficient cookstoves, provided hands on training in garment making to 73 young women and girls and organized 298 women in Savings Groups to increase their access to community based financial services.

We further extend our gratitude to our donors, partners in the field and our fiscal sponsor in the US for their support accorded to us throughout the year. Your assistance has enabled us to build the leadership capacity of rural women and girls that has enabled them to transform their lives, families, and communities, while protecting the planet.

**Evelyn Nassuna**  
Cofounder & Chief Executive Officer

# Introduction

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## Our Vision

We envision a world where women and girls can drive positive social change and lead their communities/countries in becoming active stewards of a more sustainable earth.

## Our Mission

Shared Action Africa is a nonprofit that supports women and girls to attain sustainable livelihoods, lead healthy lives, and be agents of climate justice in rural and refugee areas in Uganda

## Our Values

Our values articulate the enduring principles that guide our decisions and actions at every level of the organization

### Leadership

We believe in women's equal participation and leadership in decision-making processes at every level and in every sector to eliminate gender-based poverty.

### Entrepreneurship & Sustainability

We support women led solutions that create jobs and scale green business models that are ecological for land because studies have shown that when women have control over household assets, they invest it in their children, the future generations.

### 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.

# Our Approach

We use an integrated and innovative program delivery approach that leverages women led savings and lending groups and community-based organizations as a platform to create synergy and address the interconnected and complex community needs.

Besides creating a financial resources pool from which members internally lend money to each, the savings groups of about 20-30 people are used as platform to create an efficient and reliable community-based distribution system for financial services, sexual and reproductive care and advocates for climate justice.

To deepen the community impact, we integrate advocacy into our all our programs by empowering women and girls to become leaders, advocates, and champions of their rights.





# Our Programs

## Economic Empowerment

Our Economic Empowerment program empowers women and girls to access the tools and resources that support their overall wellbeing and economic productivity.

### 1. Financial Services for Refugee Women

Under our Rural Financial Services, we support rural and refugee women to form Savings Groups to access gender responsive capital to facilitate their participation in income generating activities to meet household basic needs. In addition, we strengthen the social capital nurtured in the Savings Groups by supporting them to form larger networks and or



Members of Tuzamurane VSLA during their weekly meeting



Members of Urunana savings group during their weekly meeting

savings and credit cooperatives by aggregating their resources to accumulate capital. Similarly, we leverage the Savings Groups to provide more programs to our project participants such as access to contraceptives, training on climate smart agriculture, personal financial management and business management, and access to energy efficient technologies including energy efficient cookstoves and briquettes.

During the year, we mobilized and trained 298 refugee women and girls to form 10 Savings Groups using the village savings and loan associations (VSLA) methodology. The training curriculum included topics on financial management emphasizing record keeping and governance focusing on leadership, participation of members, and accountability. The group members were trained on how to manage personal finances through financial planning, budgeting, savings, debt management and record keeping. On average, each group accumulated group savings of about UGX 2,000,000 (\$547.94) over a period of 5 months from which members were provided individual loans averaging UGX 50,000 (\$13.7) that were reinvested in productive activities and basic household needs.

While we experienced some success with our rural financial services program, the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily affected the activities of the Savings Groups as they could not meet regularly for a period of 4 months when the country was under lockdown to contain the spread of the virus. As a result, the members' participation in productive activities was halted thus affecting the overall wellbeing of the participating refugee women and their families. However, the Savings Groups resumed their activities at the end of the lockdown with the provision of facemasks, and hand sanitizer with the support of our partners.

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## Impact Story



**P**articipating in the weekly savings and lending activities of my Savings Group helped me to set up a small business that sells agricultural produce. On average, I earn a daily income of UGX 10,000 (\$2.78) from my business. From this income, I save UGX12,000 (\$3.33) per week with my Savings Group. As my savings grow, I plan to take second loan from my Savings Group to expand my business. Owning a business has given me economic security as I am able to provide for myself and young children. I am very grateful to the kind soul that introduced me to Shared Action Africa in 2019, when I arrived Nakivale Refugee Settlement in 2019. As a new refugee, I was in despair as the food rations provided by WFP were not enough to guarantee to food security for myself and young family. Through Shared Action Africa, I was able to get skills in tailoring, as well as join a Savings Group.



In addition to learning how to save as a group, we received training on how to start and manage a small business. Using the knowledge provided to me, I started a small vegetable vending business with a loan of UGX 350,000 (\$97.22) provided by my Savings Group. In 5 months, my capital had grown to UGX 577,000 (\$160.28). I am very grateful for support provided by the members of my group and training by Shared Action Africa. Their support has helped me resettle my family comfortably in the refugee settlement.

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## 2. Entrepreneurship & Vocational Training for Girls and Young Women

Under our Entrepreneurship & Vocational Education and Training program, we provide vocational and entrepreneurship training to young refugee women and girls. This is intended to facilitate self-employment and economic productivity to improve their standard of living. Specifically, the vocational education and training provides valuable hands-on experience in specific trades to women and girls not headed for secondary school as well as teenage mothers and school dropouts. Such trades include fashion design, shoe making, briquette production from green waste, soap/hand sanitizer production, and culinary skills.



Bijou Shala (right) receiving a certificate from Priscilla Nambajjwe after completion of training facilitated by Shared Action Africa.

Similarly, our entrepreneurship development program strengthens the business capabilities and self-help efforts of small-scale rural and refugee women entrepreneurs by providing information and advice on business startup and management combined with financial literacy education to manage personal finances and external debt.

During the year, 73 women and girls were equipped with skills in business identification and selection, marketing and customer care, record keeping, business planning and management. At the end of the training, certificates were issued to participants.



young refugee women during a tailoring training session

Furthermore, 56 young women and girls were supported to undertake a course in tailoring and fashion design aimed at equipping them with that will enable them set up tailoring businesses, and or find employment in the same industry. While 24 graduates of our vocational training program either started their own businesses or found employment as fashion designers and tailors, Shared Action Africa intends to support the formation of a garment making cooperative that will bring together a past graduates of the program. Formation of the cooperative will help past graduates of program to benefit from collective activities including access to bigger contracts and operating capital that will result in sustainable income generation.



Against the gains made, vocational training the program faced a setback when 12 sewing machines were stolen. To address this gap, Shared Action Africa will identify partners that will support its efforts of equipping the Skilling Center to enable it carry out its function.

## Impact Story

**P**amela is a 23-year-old refugee and a single mother of 2 from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that was resettled in Nakivale Refugee Settlement in 2018. Prior to enrolling in Shared Action Africa's vocational education and training program, she had source of livelihood and depended solely on relief from provided by WFP and other humanitarian organizations operating in the area. In order to improve her situation, she enrolled in our training on tailoring and business management and shares how the training has impacted her life.



Some of the products Pamela makes and sells to generate income to support herself and her two children

“

I decided to enroll in Shared Action Africa's tailoring and business skills training program to achieve my dream of establishing a fashion design and garment making business to generate income and support my children, as a single mother. Through my business, I hope to grow my customer base and increase my income from garment making. It is for the same reason I participated in Shared Action Africa's business training program so that I could get skills in how to plan and manage my business. Through the latter training I got knowledge how to keep

simple business records, customer care, business management and marketing. Using the knowledge earned through the various trainings provided by Shared Action Africa, I launched a small business selling handcrafts, which has helped me earn about \$25 in profits every month. To grow my business, I am planning on using my saving to get a loan of about \$150 from my Savings Group to purchase a sewing machine and set up a tailoring and garment making business that will help me generate income to support my family.

# Climate Justice

Our Climate Justice Program builds the resilience and adaptive capacities of rural and refugee women to respond to the adverse effects of climate change and restore degraded land.

## 1. Climate Smart Agriculture



A Refugee Woman Farmer harvesting an eggplant in Nyaruguru zone in Nakivale Refugee Settlement

Under our Climate Smart Agriculture program, we provide support rural and refugee women that enables them to access to resources to undertake agroforestry, a farming practice that integrates trees with crops for economic benefit and food security while saving forests from degradation and mitigating against climate change.

During 2020, 107 refugee women farmers were provided knowledge and skills to enhance their agriculture productivity. Through practical information in soil and water conservation, crop

spacing, pest management and control as well as timely and increased access to improved quality seeds, refugee farmers were able to set up gardens of maize, beans, and vegetables to provide food for their families. Some of the refugee women sold a surplus of their produce to earn income. However, production of food in the refugee settlement was a challenge as the refugee farmers were allocated small plots of land of about 40 by 80 feet to establish individual gardens. This limited their ability to produce enough food their family amidst reduced food rations by WFP resulting in food insecurity as well as reduced income for refugee households. As a result, the majority of refugee households were unable to access nutritious food foods, resulting in malnutrition particularly for the vulnerable populations such as young children, old people, and others with chronic illnesses such as HIV.

It is for this reason that Shared Action Africa launched an advocacy initiative during the year that targeted the Office of the Prime Minister and aimed to increase access to land by refugee women to increase food production and improve food security for refugee populations in Nakivale and Oruchinga Refugee Settlements.

## 2. Sustainable Energy

Our Sustainable Energy program aims to support rural and refugee women's access to clean energy and energy efficient cooking technologies intended to reduce their carbon footprint, dependence on biomass for cooking, while protecting them from indoor pollution. To achieve this object, we implemented two programs including the Ecostove Access Program for Women Entrepreneurs and the Access to Energy Efficient Technologies by Refugee Women.



## Ecostove Access Program for Women Entrepreneurs.

This program focuses on increasing access to commercial energy efficient cookstoves known as Ecostoves by women food vendors in both rural and urban markets in Uganda. During the year under review, 21 women commercial food vendors were provided in kind loans in partnership with the manufacturer, Eco Group. The loans were provided by Shared Action Africa's Loan Fund known as the Shared Action Fund. The in-kind loans

were paid off by the borrowers over a period of six months.

Adoption of the Ecostove by the women commercial food vendors has not only reduced the amount of biomass used for cooking, but it has also resulted in increase their profits through decreased energy costs. Reduction in the biomass used for cooking is as result of replacing charcoal and firewood with volcanic rocks that need minimal biomass to provide cooking energy. Similarly, the Ecostove is cleaner than the conventional stoves because the volcanic rocks are not only reusable, but also do not emit smoke. As a result, the women

commercial food vendors on average save 90% on energy costs compared to when they used the conventional stoves that use charcoal to provide cooking energy. In addition, the women commercial food vendors enjoyed additional benefits that are included in the Ecostoves, including a solar panel that supports phone charging and solar lighting. These extra features of the Ecostove are greatly appreciated particularly in the rural areas where most people are not connected to the national grid to access electricity.

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## Impact Story

**M**y name is Aida Magumba. I am a market food vendor. I have been in this business for over 13 years. Before I started using the ecostove, I was using a charcoal stove to cook food in my restaurant and in turn would spend UGX 200,000 (\$55.56) on fuel every month. When I started using the Ecostove however, my monthly fuel expenses reduced to UGX 48,000 (\$13.34) and this is the amount of money I use to buy the charcoal dust which I use to light the volcanic rocks. Using the Ecostove has helped me reduce on the fuel costs of my food vending business by over 70%. The reduction in fuel costs has in the long run helped me increase profits from food vending business because the cost of energy is one of my biggest expense that affects the profitability of my business.

I am very happy with the Ecostove because it does not emit any smoke when I light it or when I am cooking because it uses the volcanic rocks instead of charcoal or firewood. It is therefore



clear than the traditional sources of cooking energy. Cooking with the Ecostove is a delight because I not only spend less time cleaning up at the end of the cooking session, but I also get to enjoy other benefits include phone charging and lighting using solar. Similarly, I have reduced the time I spend cooking certain foods such as beans as they tend to cook faster when I use the Ecostove. On average I save at least an hour or two on my cooking activities, which in turn provides me more time to attend to other

chores in my restaurant. Since I started using the Ecostove in my restaurant, I save at least an hour half of the time I previously used to cook the meals. On this note, I will continue encouraging the members of my Savings Group to get one too because of the many advantages that accrue from using an Ecostove for cooking over the conventional stove that uses mainly biomass.



Monique with her baby preparing a meal using an energy efficient cookstove

## Access to Energy Efficient Technologies by Refugee Women.

During 2020, refugee women in Nakivale Refugee Settlement were provided energy efficient cookstoves as line with Shared Action Africa' strategy of building the resilience and adaptive capacities of rural and refugee women to climate change. Accordingly, 50 refugee women receive energy efficient cook stove saving groups aimed at helping them reduce cutting down the few trees remaining to provide cooking energy. Similarly, use of the energy efficient cookstoves would contribute to the reduction in the emission of carbon into the atmosphere through the burning of charcoal and firewood for cooking. The recipients of the ecostoves purchases the energy efficient cookstoves through their respective community based financial services organizations at 50% the market price. The Ecostove were subsidized by the organization to encourage the refugee women to adopt energy efficient cookstoves as one of the avenues of mitigating climate change.

## Impact Story

**2** 6-year-old Monique mother of two and a refugee from Rwanda was among the beneficiaries who testify that having a cookstove has reduced the amount of effort in terms of time, financial resources, and energy she puts into preparing meals. "Before purchasing the energy saving cook stove, I was using an ordinary stove which necessitated me to buy charcoal worth \$13.88 a month. With the cookstove however, I use fuel worth \$8.05 a month. I use the savings made on fuel costs to buy food at home and take care of my baby too."

*"I appreciate Shared Action Africa for bringing this program to Nakivale Refugee Settlement. Use of the energy efficient cookstoves not only reduces the cost of cooking fuel, but it also helps avoid looking for firewood, which has become very scarce in the area. This is mainly because there are many of us competing for the few remaining trees in the area. Most of the trees were cut down to provide timber for construction of our homes, and what remained is what we refugees compete for, in addition to competing with the natives that we found here"*



# Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Under our Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Program, we help women of reproductive age and adolescents to access comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services to save lives and enable rural and refugee women and adolescents participate equally in economic and social activity and invest better in their children and homes. During 2020, over 1,000 women of reproductive age received family planning and cervical cancer services through our integrated family planning services. This result from accomplished through two of our signature programs including **Community Family Planning Outreaches and through Community Based Organizations.**

## 1. Community Family Planning Outreach Camps

As part of our SRHR program, we provided family planning services and counselling as well as cervical cancer screening services to women of reproductive in Nakivale Refugee Settlement. These services are intended to save lives and prevent unplanned pregnancies thus enabling refugee women and adolescents participate equally in economic and social activities, thus improving the quality of their lives and their families. The family planning outreaches are conducted in partnership with the health facilities serving the refugee populations in Nakivale and Oruching Refugee Settlements. During the outreaches, a total of 1130 women were provided various family planning short-term and long-term methods.



Figure 1: A Health worker counselling refugees on family planning during a family planning Outreach

## 2. Provision of SRHR Services in Partnership with Savings and Lending Groups

To increase access to family planning and cervical cancer screening Services, we leverage, the Savings Groups and other community-based organizations that bring women and girls together to participate in social and economic development activities. Therefore, when the women and girls meet to engage in savings and loans activities and engage in vocational training activities, such as tailoring training, they are also provided counselling on family planning methods. At the same meeting, they are provided nonclinical based family planning methods, as well as referrals for clinical based family planning methods and cervical cancer screening. A total of 123 young women received counselling and family planning services during the savings and lending meetings as well as during tailoring skilling sessions.



Harriet, a midwife from Rwekubo Health Center IV providing health counselling on family planning and cervical cancer to young refugee women during a tailoring training and savings and lending session.

## Impact Story

**F**ezascola Kabana is a 28-year old young woman from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She is a mother of 4 living children as 2 passed on. Due to limited access to information on family planning services, she unable to properly space her first three (3) children in a way she would have wanted to. However, due to access to regular family planning counselling and access to contraceptives through the community based family planning distribution system provided by the project, she can plan future pregnancies, have better health as well as engage in productive activities that enable her to provide for her family

“Through the community family planning counselling and outreaches organized by Shared Action Africa, I got information on the different family planning methods. Accordingly, I started using Implanon and it has been 9 months since I started using this family planning

method. I am grateful for the family planning outreaches because they bring services closer to us women that need access to family planning services, as it reduced the distance and cost of travelling to the health facility to access the same. Besides, the family outreaches, we also receive information on family planning services as well as short-term methods such as Sayana Press through the Village Health Teams (VHTs). Access to contraceptives helps me to plan for my family, which in turn provides me time and freedom to focus on my small business that contributes to our household income. With our combined income with that of my husband, we are able to meet the basic needs of our family, and more importantly, I am not worried about having an unplanned pregnancy.”

**said Feza**





# Financial Report

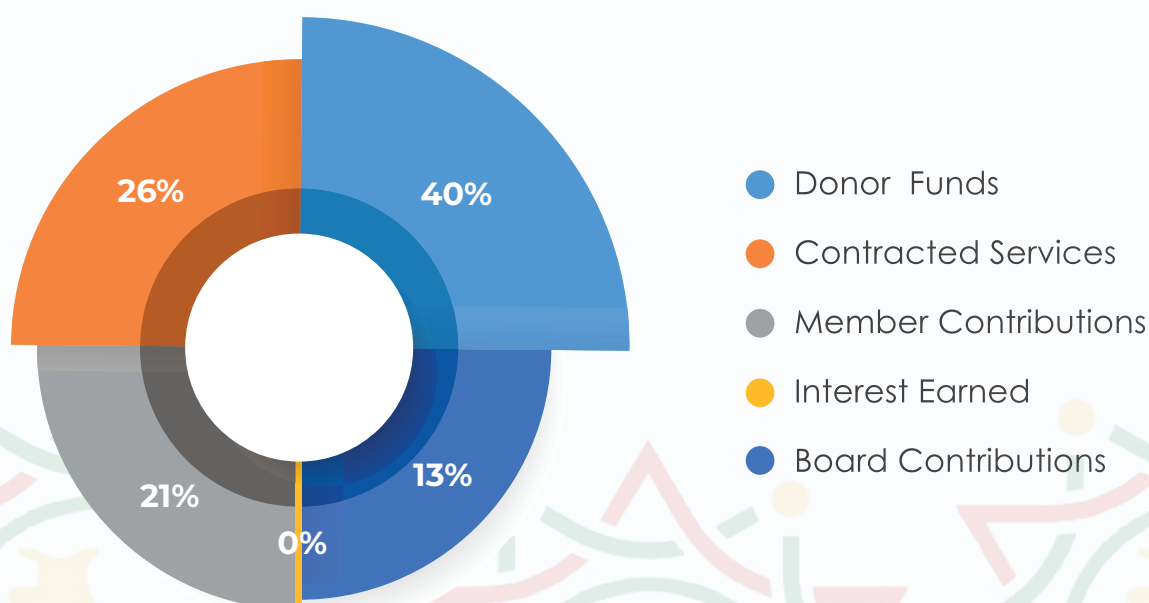
Our financial year for 2020 runs from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 to align with the Government of Uganda's financial year, which in turn enabled Shared Action Africa to file the mandated returns with the regulatory bodies to maintain its NGO status.

## 1. FY 2020 REVENUE

During 2020, the organization raised \$55,978, of which 40% was raised through Foundations, 26% from contracted services, 21% from Individual donors, 13% came from the board of directors and 0.3% was from earned interest.

Revenue	Amount (\$)
Donor Funds	22,339
Contracted Services	14,783
Individual donors	11,666
Interest earned	191
Board contribution	7,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,978</b>

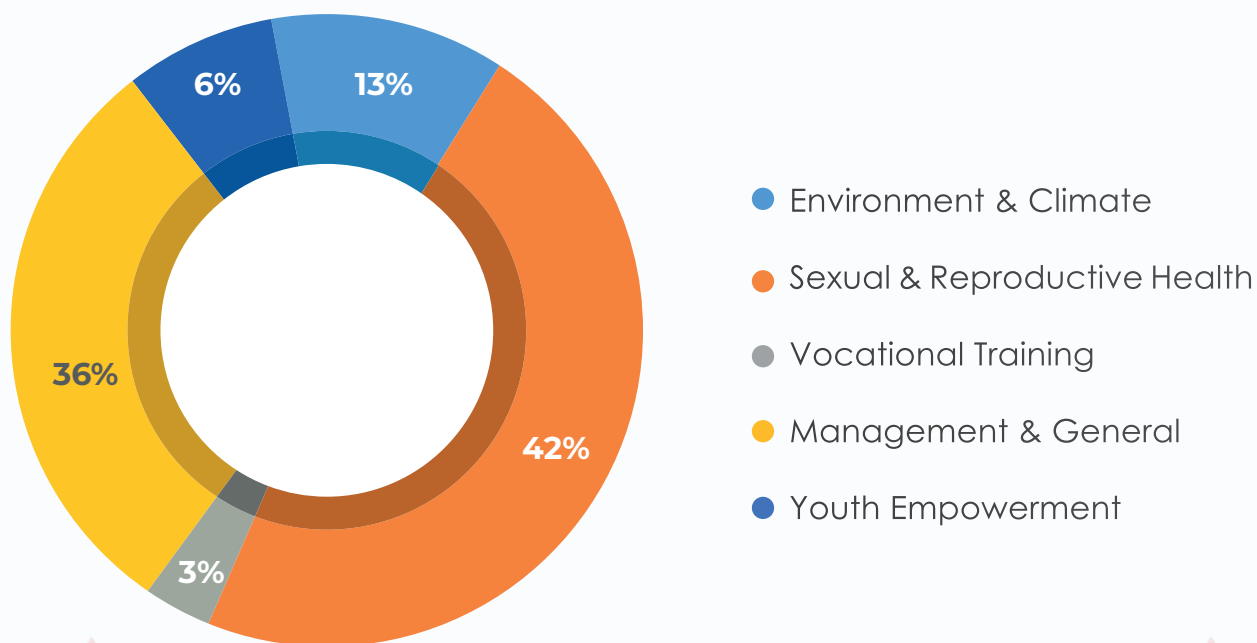
## SOURCES OF REVENUE



## 2. EXPENDITURE








Expenses	Amount (\$)
Climate Justice	6,103
Sexual & Reproductive Health	19,716
Vocational Training	1,611
Management & General	17,264
Youth Empowerment	2,794
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,488</b>

### EXPENDITURE IN 2020





# Plans for 2021

-  Advocate for increased allocation of land for refugee women farmers to increase agriculture production for improved food security, nutrition and income generation.
-  Grow the Shared Action Fund to increase access to capital for investment among refugee women and girl saving groups
-  Support the formation of a Refugee Women's Collective that will champion collective actions including community-based savings and lending activities, collective procurement of inputs, bulking and value addition by refugee women, and the establishment of collective energy efficient cooking and lighting technologies.
-  Establish a Climate Learning Center in Nakivale Refugee Settlement that will be used as a platform to provide skilling to refugee populations in the establishment of Climate Smart Agriculture Demonstration plots as well as serve a skilling Hub on Sustainable killing hubs for tailoring and arts and crafts, hairdressing and among others
-  Create a community-based SRHR distribution system using Village Health Teams (VHTs) that will support the health facilities to provide sexual and reproductive health services to adolescent girls and refugee women in Nakivale Refugee Settlement.
-  Strengthen the Refugee Women's Movement that will advocate and lobby on behalf of its members for services as well as change in practices and laws that affect their families' wellbeing.
-  Provide access to family planning and cervical cancer screening services to women of reproductive age in Nakivale and Oruchinga Refugee settlements



## Thank You

*We are grateful to our donors and our fiscal sponsor for their support that has enabled us to continue operating during 2020. It has been extremely difficult to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic that not only disrupted our programs, and the lives of the people that we serve, but also saw our income decrease substantially.*

*Thank you, Preston Werner Ventures, Global Green Grants, and One World Children's Fund. Special thanks go to our individual Donors including Grace Lubwama, Rachel Nantege Byalero, Kent Lewandowski, Dianah Kalibbala, Donald Edwards and Board of Directors that supported our mission during 2020.*

*Likewise, we thank all our partners in Uganda that supported our work in various ways and made our achievements possible this year. A special thank you goes out to our staff that accepted to take a pay cut as our income declined during the year as a result of a decrease in fundraising revenue.*





**SHARED ACTION AFRICA**  
Together We Achieve

## Our Partners



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