



**ROOTED
WISDOM**
A F R I C A

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



CONTENTS

Message from Leadership.....	3
Impact: By the Numbers	4
Mission and Purpose	5
How Our Programs Work	6
Life Skills Scholars Program	7
Collegiate Education Training Program	8
Women’s Enterprise Training Program	9
Farming Initiatives (FFS and MFP)	10
Meet Our Team	11
Traveling with a Purpose: Insight Trip	12
Celebrating Good News: Coffee Cooperative	13
Financials	14
Thank You	15



MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

"I'm proud to work with Rooted Wisdom because its programs are designed to uplift vulnerable households and help them grow from one level to another. This approach of equipping families to grow has enabled children from those families to have better education and health. Transparency and accountability are also values that have seen the organization excel. As board members, we oversee the operation of organization activities and are fully involved in every level of implementation."

- Kasule Denis, Board Secretary

"As rural farmers and families embrace enhanced farming techniques, the journey towards food and economic security becomes tangible. Witnessing this transformation firsthand fills me with immense pride. Our communities' progress, from supporting students through school to witnessing the emergence of professionals such as nurses, teachers, and electricians, is a testament to our shared dreams becoming reality. It's truly fulfilling to see our aspirations for improved farming methods and enhanced financial security come to fruition!"

- Vincent Basajja, Board Chairman

"It is important for me to share my "Why" because I believe that in business, clients don't buy what we do; they buy why we do it. I joined Rooted Wisdom Africa (formerly Into Your Hands Africa) because of some dear friends and their passion, but I quickly understood the incredible work RWA was doing in an underserved area of Uganda. I feel very strongly about women in enterprise. My company is 43% women and 57% men. I am committed to drawing out the best in people, and having a good mix of men and women creates more opportunities for everyone. RWA empowers women through education and teaching them business skills, and it's making a difference. You are making a difference."

- Dan McComb, US-Board Chair

"Rooted Wisdom Africa's partner communities inspire me. Witnessing the profound transformation that blossoms through skill-building and education fills me is a testament to the incredible power of equipping and empowering our local communities, and fostering leadership from the grassroots level upwards. Their journey ignites hope and fuels the belief that positive change is not only possible but inevitable."

- Kristy Hitchings, Executive Director

IMPACT: BY THE NUMBERS

732

Program
Participants

433

Students
Sponsored

156,260

Free Meals
Provided

95

Unique Income-
Generating Projects
Implemented

154

Farmers
Supported

50

Out of School
Youth Aided

4,246

Lives
Impacted

16

Board
Members

21

Volunteers

94,256

Bundles of
Vegetables and
Crops Grown

MISSION

Rooted Wisdom Africa, formerly Into Your Hands Africa, empowers youth and families in rural Uganda through education and enterprise development.

PURPOSE

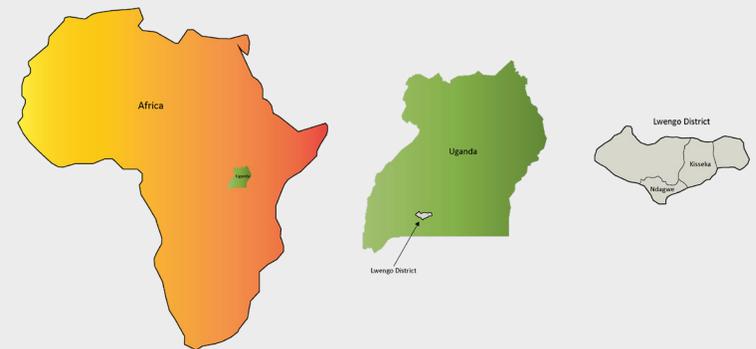
Rooted Wisdom Africa (RWA) is focused on building the capacity of communities in south-central Uganda for long-term, continued success. We begin by dialogue with the community, and our programs are then designed and adjusted to meet their stated needs. Our customized blueprint, which combines education and enterprise and is led from the inside out, is key to long-term sustainability.

our values

- Be accurate, honest, and transparent
- Create a collaboration of trust
- Help those most vulnerable

Area OF FOCUS

We currently operate in the community of Kikinene and the ten surrounding villages, located in the Kisseka sub-county of the Lwengo District of eastern Uganda.



our magic BLUEPRINT

Success and sustainability come from working with communities to develop and support local leaders. While many organizations depend on an influx of foreign workers and investment, we know that communities want to create value and improve their own circumstances—we help them start that journey.



Sustainability

We employ local leadership, long term investment, and bottom-up approaches.



Focused

We are passionate about work in rural Uganda and committed to making an impact there.



Community Centered

Our participants give back knowledge, time, and resources to their community.



Connected

Our programs are founded on the belief that education and enterprise are intertwined to create positive, lasting change.

HOW OUR PROGRAMS WORK

We evaluate success based on observable changes within the family and community units. Understanding that poverty is a complex issue, our model includes multiple services at various stages of development. As such, a family may have a student enrolled in our Life Skills program, another child in the Collegiate Education Training Program, a mother in the Women's Enterprise Training Program, and a father in our Farmer Field School Program.

While many organizations turn to technological solutions for addressing challenges in developing countries, we deliberately opt for cost-effective, low-tech approaches. Recognizing that community members living on less than 49 cents a day must be able to afford, replace, and access additional tools as needed, we prioritize solutions that are accessible and sustainable in the long run.



Life Skills Scholars Program

The Life Skills Program supports disadvantaged youth aged 12 to 22, focusing on girls (with a minimum target of 60% of scholarships allocated to female students). The program provides academic and material support, personal and professional development, and vocational training to improve employment opportunities and help graduates gain greater autonomy.



Program Reach in 2023:

433 Students and **156,260** free meals served

Program Impact:

- **97%** annual retention rate and a 100% life skills graduation rate
- **71%** of senior four graduates have plans to pursue further education
- **85%** of female students reported that the Life Skills program helped them avoid early marriage
- **90%** of female students reported that the Life Skills program enabled them to avoid unwanted pregnancies

“

I was always scared of everything,

lacking confidence in school because I was constantly chased out to collect school fees. At some point, I even missed important school events like the prefect (student) election. On top of that, I was frequently hungry here at school. However, since joining this program, Life Skills, my confidence and self-esteem have improved. Now, I stay at school for the entire term without missing a day. I aspire to become the school Head Girl. I am grateful to Rooted Wisdom Africa for supporting me.

- **Nassimbwa Josephine**

Life Skills Update: Josephine has become a Head Girl (student leader) at her school.

”

Collegiate Education Training Program

The Collegiate Education Training Program aims to overcome high unemployment rates and meet local needs through vocational college scholarships that provide hands-on, skilled education that allows youth to compete in the job market or become job creators themselves while remaining in the area and meeting vital local needs.

Program Reach in 2023:

24 college scholarships Awarded

Program Impact:

- 100% graduation rate
- 100% employment rate post-graduation



“

STUDYING NURSING HAS CHANGED THE WAY MY COMMUNITY LOOKS AT ME AND HOW MY FAMILY TAKES ME.

I can now make decisions at home because I'm highly educated, and I even make suggestions during family meetings. I'm being called Nusawo, meaning (Doctor) in my village; I'm just so happy about the man I'm becoming. This is my dream, and I'm happy to see it come true.

”

- Atwijukire Emmanuel,
Rakai School of Nursing Student

Woman's Enterprise Training Program

The Women's Enterprise Training Program helps disadvantaged, vulnerable Ugandan girls and women become self-sufficient by combining education with business opportunities. Program activities include classes on creating enterprises, exposure visits to successful businesses, vocational and technical training on starting a small family business, and seed funding to launch or scale a business.



Program Reach in 2023:

145 Women and Youth

Program Impact:

- **98%** of WETP graduates are employed
- **77%** have started a new business/expanded a current business
- **15%** have increased their ability to meet food requirements for their families
- **98%** have more financial independence!

Meet Hakin Prisca

Prisca is a remarkable woman and mother of seven who joined the Women's Enterprise Training Program in 2023. Applying the market analysis skills acquired in her business classes, Prisca strategically utilized the program's startup funds to invest in pig farming. As the pigs multiplied, her income grew. Prisca diversified her business using some of her initial proceeds from her pigs to acquire a young cow. As it grew older, the cow, in turn, became a source of additional income. Later, Prisca strategically decided to sell the cow for a higher profit and reinvest the income earned to start another business. This time around, Prisca started a small retail shop where she began earning daily income in addition to continuing her livestock-rearing business. Today, Prisca is a proud owner of multiple successful businesses. Her once sought-after dream of building her own home is coming to fruition, with a new home currently under construction!

Agricultural Farming Initiatives

The Demonstration Farm Program (DFP) is designed to improve economic security through agricultural production. The DFP aims to foster sustainable farming practices that are economically efficient, locally appropriate, and profitable. The program has two interconnected components: 1) a Farmer Field School and 2) a Master Farmer Program. To ensure active female engagement, 50% of Farmer Field School and 65% of Master Farmer Program spots are held for female participants (though they have thus far been composed of much higher percentages of women).



Program Reach:

154 Farmers

Program Impact:

- **94,256** bundles of vegetables and crops grown
- Resulting in a generated income of **\$44,277**

Meet Annet Nantume

Annet joined the Farmer Field School program in 2023 with the aim of learning sustainable farming practices and reducing expenses while maintaining crop quality. “However, the program exceeded my expectations. I not only learned about vegetable cultivation and sustainable practices but also received training on the business aspects of farming. As a result, I now have vegetable gardens at home, and I own a vegetable stall in Nakawanga Village.” Annet’s customers primarily consist of her neighbors and people passing by her business. From her stall, Annet earns a regular income, averaging \$22.86 per week. Additionally, she saves \$1.42 in a Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) group.

MEET THE TEAM

Rooted Wisdom Africa has six staff members, five of whom are located in Uganda and traditionally graduates of the organization's programs.

Kyalimpa Irene

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Esther Nakibira

BOOKKEEPER

Lulungi Emmanuel

PROGRAM OFFICER

Nalugongo Imelda

PROGRAM OFFICER

Gerald Mulema

PROGRAM OFFICER

Kristy Hitching

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I'M PROUD OF BEING PART OF THE TEAM THAT IS CREATING A POSITIVE IMPACT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

Seeing women in this community become financially, socially, and economically independent gives me the urge to continue supporting this work. Rooted Wisdom Africa adopts a community-led approach, which puts beneficiaries at the Frontline of tackling community needs, and this inspires me.

- Irene Kyalimpa,
Operations Manager



TRAVELING WITH PURPOSE

Uganda Insight Trips

Every year, Rooted Wisdom Africa takes a handful of supporters to see our work on the ground. In 2023, a total of eight travelers journeyed to Uganda in July and November. Six days were spent immersed in village life—participating in Life Skills classes at our secondary schools, learning vocational skills from the women in our women’s enterprise training program, visiting our vocational training schools and farmer field schools, and meeting some of our families at their homes. Five remaining days were spent in the wild, embarking on a gorilla trekking expedition and a safari at Queen Elizabeth National Park.



Program Participant Experience

“My wife, Julie, and I recently returned from an 11-day Ugandan mission trip with Rooted Wisdom Africa. What a rewarding experience! I think the thing that stands out the most for both of us was that from the moment we touched down at Entebbe International Airport in Uganda until the time we left 11 days later we only encountered people with smiles on their faces and who wanted to help us in any way they could. Truly delightful and heartwarming people. We visited our sponsor students at their schools, the new agriculture farm project, and several families at their homes, and the difference Rooted Wisdom is making in these people’s lives is very significant and rewarding.

We also visited Rooted Wisdom’s working offices and met the in-country staff, even attending a couple of the classes they taught for the locals while we were there. The staff is knowledgeable, friendly and very dedicated to helping their fellow Ugandans! The classes were “standing room only,” with others waiting in the wings to attend the next class. Clearly, Rooted Wisdom Africa is making a huge impact on these people’s lives. They are truly delightful people!”

- Jerry Fitzgerald, Insight Trip July 2023

CELEBRATING GOOD NEWS

In 2022, Rooted Wisdom Africa proudly launched our first co-ed enterprise training program centered around a sponsored coffee plantation initiative. Alongside cultivating coffee, they've delved into the realm of snack production, mastering the art of crafting chapattis and desserts. The fruits of their labor have been exceptional.

The coffee venture they embarked upon has flourished, resulting in an impressive annual harvest of 40,000 coffee plants. This remarkable success has translated into an income of \$20,000 in 2023, a testament to the dedication and innovation these participants have shown in their entrepreneurial journey.



FINANCIALS

Sources of Income: 2023

Mega Gifts (>\$5,001)

\$50,853 (21%)

Large Gifts (>\$1,001 & > \$5,000)

\$40,278 (17%)

Medium Gifts (>\$51 & <\$1,000)

\$36,411 (15%)

Small Gifts (<\$50)

\$8,452 (4%)

Grants

\$40,129 (17%)

Other

\$17,128 (7%)

In-Kind

\$44,868 (19%)

Total: \$238,119

Meet Namuyige Teddy

Teddy is a farmer, growing coffee and matooke, and a graduate of our Women's Enterprise Training Program. She also practices cattle rearing and agriculture, or beekeeping, which gives her enough income to feed her family. "I was interested in beekeeping because it's not too tiresome and the materials are affordable." While Teddy started with just ten beehives, she now has fifty, allowing her to harvest 20 liters (5 gallons) of honey each month.

The skills Teddy gained in the Women's Enterprise Training Program have helped her to make the most of her agricultural projects. Through lessons in marketing, entrepreneurship, recordkeeping, and more, she has what she needs to take her business to the next level. She hopes to eventually pack her honey in jars and transport it to Kampala or Tanzania for better pay.

Teddy has also started teaching her neighbors about beekeeping. "They're slowly picking it up, which makes me happy because, hopefully, this knowledge will financially change other people's lives." Her beekeeping project hasn't just funded household essentials—it also funded her daughter's education to become a doctor!

THANK YOU

We extend our gratitude for making 2023 a year of impactful achievements, and eagerly anticipate continuing this journey together in 2024 and beyond.