



ANNUAL 20 REPORT 23

Building Community Agency and Advancing Accountability



UNNGOF 2023 Annual report

Building Community Agency and Advancing Accountability.

THE CONTENTS

List of Acronyms 02

Board Chairperson's Message 04

Executive Director's Remarks 06

Introduction 07

*UNNGOF's Role as a Platform
for NGOs in Uganda* 09

Our Work 10

Programme Outcomes 10

Key Milestones for 2023 11

Stronger NGO Sector in Uganda 12

*Community Driven Development
in Practice* 22

*One CSO Voice
– Together, We Are Stronger* 26

Deepening Democracy in Uganda 28

*Fostering Collaboration with
Government Institutions* 32

Our Journey to the SDG Agenda 2030 35

Research, Learning, and Success Stories 38

Lessons Learned 40

Success Stories 41

Partnerships and Collaborations 46

Financial Highlights 49

ACRONYMS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

<i>AIIJ</i>	African Institution for Investigative Journalism
<i>CSOs</i>	Civil Society Organizations
<i>DNMCs</i>	District Non-Governmental Organizations Monitoring Committees
<i>EU</i>	European Union
<i>FOWODE</i>	Forum for Women in Democracy
<i>ICT</i>	Information and Communication Technology
<i>LCs</i>	Local Councils
<i>MOUs</i>	Memorandum of Understanding
<i>NDPIII</i>	National Development Plan III
<i>NGOs</i>	Non-Government Organizations
<i>PDMG</i>	Public Debt and other Financial Liabilities Management Framework
<i>RINGO</i>	Re-Imagining INGOs
<i>SDGs</i>	Sustainable Development Goals
<i>UHRC</i>	Uganda Human Rights Commission
<i>UNNGOF</i>	Uganda National NGO Forum
<i>VSLA</i>	Village Saving and Loans Association



Ms. Margaret Sekaggya

Chairperson, Board of Directors

MSekaggya

Message from the **Board Chairperson**



In 2023, UNNGOF continued to demonstrate its unwavering commitment to providing a sharing and reflection platform for NGOs, to influence governance and development processes in Uganda and enhance their operating environment.

Our collective efforts continue to bear fruit, fostering a robust and well-coordinated NGO sector, a testament to the power of collaboration and partnerships. Throughout the year, we witnessed the transformative impact of our initiatives in empowering communities, building citizen agency, and forging strategic partnerships. UNNGOF's influence on pro-people policies and responsive public institutions has grown, reflecting our commitment to shaping a more just and equitable society.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our members, partners, and stakeholders who contributed immensely to the year's successes. We

recognize the dedication and collaborative spirit of our diverse membership, whose active participation and engagement strengthened the NGO sector and propelled impactful community initiatives. Special appreciation is extended to the partners and collaborators who shared in our mission, providing invaluable support in navigating challenges and realizing shared goals. UNNGOF also acknowledges the resilience and commitment of its staff, whose unwavering dedication played a pivotal role in achieving key milestones.

As we look ahead, let us embrace the lessons learned, celebrate our successes, and renew our commitment to the values that define UNNGOF. Together, we can continue to be a force for good, empowering communities and shaping a brighter future for all.

Thank you for your steadfast support.



Dr. Moses Isooba
Executive Director



Executive Director's Remarks



It is with great pleasure that I unveil to you the UNNGOF 2023 Annual report, themed, Building Community Agency and Advancing Accountability. 2023 provided an opportunity to consolidate our strategic focus as summed in our 2021-2025 strategic plan. Milestones, gains, achievements, results, learnings, and opportunities presented in this annual compilation demonstrate our forward steps to realize our mandate.

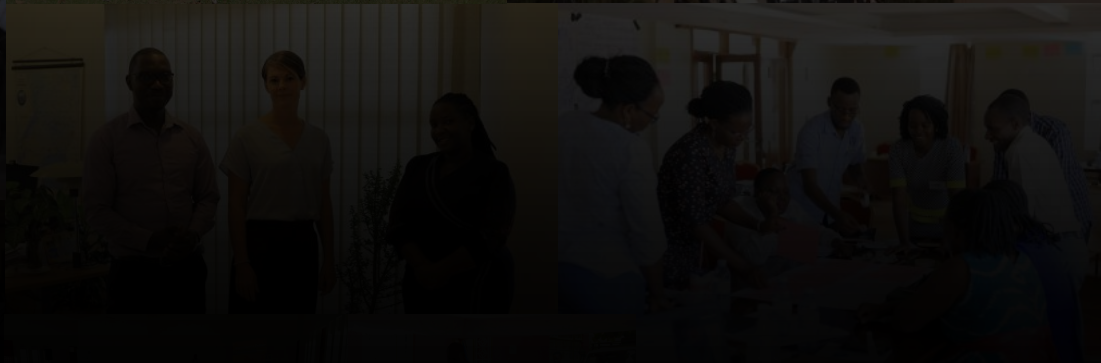
We continued to work towards a healthy, strong, and well-coordinated NGO sector through capacity building of NGOs, strengthened collaboration at sub national level, promoted community led development and initiatives, continued building NGO expertise and competencies, membership servicing and growth. These initiatives were all geared towards strengthening the internal health of the NGO sector, and its legitimacy in influencing governance and development processes.

Our efforts were also geared toward building an

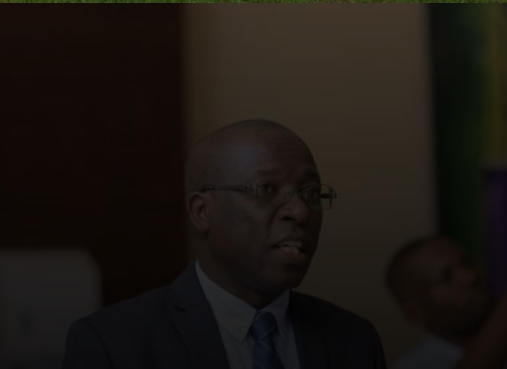
empowered, resilient, and proactive citizenry; we adopted effective Citizen engagement strategies thereby creating a robust citizen organizational and mobilization infrastructure which fostered the demand for constitutional and political reforms and improvement in service delivery through promoting social accountability where we reached 23,602 people (11,218 male, 12,384 female). We collaborated with various government bodies to promote transparency and accountability; in addition, we held conversations with NGO sector players intended to improve NGO operating environment and charting the way to broaden civic space in Uganda.

I extend heartfelt appreciation to our diverse membership for their active engagement, which has been instrumental in shaping our direction. Special thanks to our partners and collaborators for their steadfast support and shared commitment to our mission. I also commend our staff, who exhibited excellence and commitment in executing all our work.

Thank you for your commitment and partnership.



INTRODUCTION



The annual report of the Uganda National NGO Forum is a testament of commitment, action, and impact. It serves to account for the organization's activities over the past year, highlighting the strategic interventions, lessons learned, opportunities and the outcomes achieved.

This report is designed to provide transparency to stakeholders, including partners, donors, government bodies, and the communities served, showcasing the value and changes brought about by UNNGOF's work.

“
**Testament of
Commitment,
Action, & Impact.**

Providing a Sharing and
action Platform for
NGOs



The Third
Voluntary
National
Review

A High-Level CSO
Stakeholders'
Engagement

UNNGOF's Role as a Platform for NGOs in Uganda

The NGO sector in Uganda is a vibrant and essential component of the nation's socio-economic fabric. Comprising a diverse array of organizations, the sector has been instrumental in delivering services, fostering development, and advocating for social justice across the country.

Over the past year, the sector has faced a shifting donor funding landscape, regulatory challenges, shrinking civic space, citizen apathy and a heightened need for innovation in both program delivery and sustainability. Despite these hurdles, Ugandan NGOs have demonstrated remarkable adaptability and innovation.

UNNGOF acted as a convener, unifier, and facilitator, enabling NGOs to navigate regulatory environments, harness donor and local resources through promoting local philanthropy, and engage in critical policy dialogues, hence strengthening the sector's collective voice, enhancing capacity-building efforts, and fostering an environment conducive to civil society's growth and effectiveness.

Currently, UNNGOF has over 750 member organizations comprising of different constituencies that include District NGOs, Faith Based Organizations, National NGOs, National NGO Networks, Regional, International, Foreign and Continental organizations across Uganda. As a platform, UNNGOF is a convener of NGOs in Uganda and offers services to a diversity of autonomous NGOs in Uganda.

Our Work

Programme Outcomes

In 2023, UNNGOF pursued strategically to contribute to three main programmatic outcomes namely; a healthy, strong, and well-coordinated NGO sector, an empowered, resilient, and pro-active citizenry, and responsive public institutions where citizens are central. This approach has enabled UNNGOF to serve not only as a conduit for policy advocacy but also as a catalyst for democratic participation and governance oversight.



A Healthy, Strong, &
Well-coordinated NGO Sector



An Empowered, Resilient,
& Pro-active Citizenry



Responsive Public Institutions

2023 provided an opportunity for UNNGOF to demonstrate its relevance in the NGO sector as a membership and a platform organization for NGOs in Uganda. This report highlights key milestones, celebrations, lessons, opportunities, and research products that UNNGOF generated during the year.



Key Milestones for 2023

MILESTONES




Stronger NGO Sector in Uganda

Capacity building of NGOs

UNNGOF successfully conducted capacity building initiatives in the form of training, coaching, mentorship, and financial support. Refresher trainings for 50 community facilitators from 14 regions were conducted which enhanced their roles in community development. As a result, NGOs acquired skills in mobilizing local solutions for local problems and nurturing the concept of local philanthropy within communities.

According to NGO capacity assessment survey 2023, all the 12 NGOs assessed reported an improvement in their capacity. Overall, the average performance score of NGOs was 4 out of 5 representing 83% performance for all the measures of assessment. The measurement areas included Performance management, finance and administration, human resource management, Programme Monitoring & Evaluation (PM&E), administration and procurement, risk management, and organizational sustainability.

A large background image showing a group of men in a tropical setting with palm trees. One man in the center is holding a smartphone up to take a photo of a woman whose back is to the camera. Other men are looking on with interest.

UNNGOF recognized the power of narrative and held a documentation and story-telling training for NGOs to enhance their capacity to capture and share compelling stories of impact. Participants learned the art of storytelling, which is essential for demonstrating impact, increasing visibility, and attracting donors and partners. The significance of this training lies in its potential to amplify the voices of those served by NGOs, highlighting the human element of development work, and fostering emotional connections that drive engagement and support.

As a result, NGOs who participated in the training have exhibited improved documentation of stories as a means of communicating and enhancing visibility of their work within their constituencies through publications on websites, use of social media, and improved engagements with both local and national mainstream media outlets.





Enhanced Legal & Regulatory Frameworks

Compliance Clinics

NGO activities in Uganda are regulated by the government through laws and guidelines that are meant to provide an enabling environment for their operation. The #BeLegit campaign's compliance clinics in 2023 became increasingly popular, illustrating the sector's commitment to regulatory compliance by adhering to the legislative and administrative requirements set by the government.



***We are now aware of all
government regulatory
frameworks and our institutional
health has improved.***

Executive Director

Uganda Water & Sanitation NGOs Network.

The success of the #BeLegit campaign's compliance clinics underscores the importance of NGOs adhering to regulatory frameworks. This adherence has led to enhanced legitimacy and credibility among civil society actors, which is essential for maintaining their freedom to operate and public trust. As NGOs become more compliant, they are likely to face fewer legal challenges, allowing them to concentrate more on their core missions.



Photo Moment With the Vijana Corps Team after the Compliance Clinic

Membership Servicing.



In 2023, our membership grew significantly: 24 new members registered, compared to 14 in 2022, bringing our total to 750. New members include; DHISH Initiative, Restitute Team Uganda, Caritas Switzerland, Bridges to Prosperity, Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme, Science Teachers' Initiative, Cross Nile Empowerment Organization, Ntoroko Development Network and Centre for Victims of Torture, Bugisu NGO Forum, Help Disabled Children Excel, Keilah Community Childcare Uganda, Kibo Group, TDYAN YOVANU, Child Welfare and Adoption Society, Rangelands Development Services, Twahirah Islamic Charity Organization, and Tikvak Alive Uganda, Peace and Justice for Development, Partners for Community Transformation, WEHAT Foundation, DROHA Uganda, Lango Child and Community Development Federation, Sole Hope.

Beyond recruiting and orientating new members, some of our members engaged in various trainings that included Local Fundraising, Mobilizing Support and Documentation. These trainings were part of the #BeLegit campaign, which supported them in becoming compliant with the regulatory frameworks.

Participation in Regional & Global Engagements



UNNGOF participated in several global spaces representing the sector, including the **OECD Civil Society days in Paris**, where our Executive Director was a panelist. *The event; Building Trust and engaging Communities in Partner Countries: New Directions in Development Communications*, emphasized the importance of using language and lexicon for inclusive communication in humanitarianism and development.

Language forms the human foundation of belonging, thinking, and communicating, establishing the terms of relational engagement. Translation into indigenous languages becomes crucial in the development process due to the

dominance associated with aid and its language use. This dominance carries an inherent power dynamic that often shifts power to those who control the language and lexicon, leaving the burden of translation on the less powerful and often the local “partner” thereby reinforcing educational and class barriers.

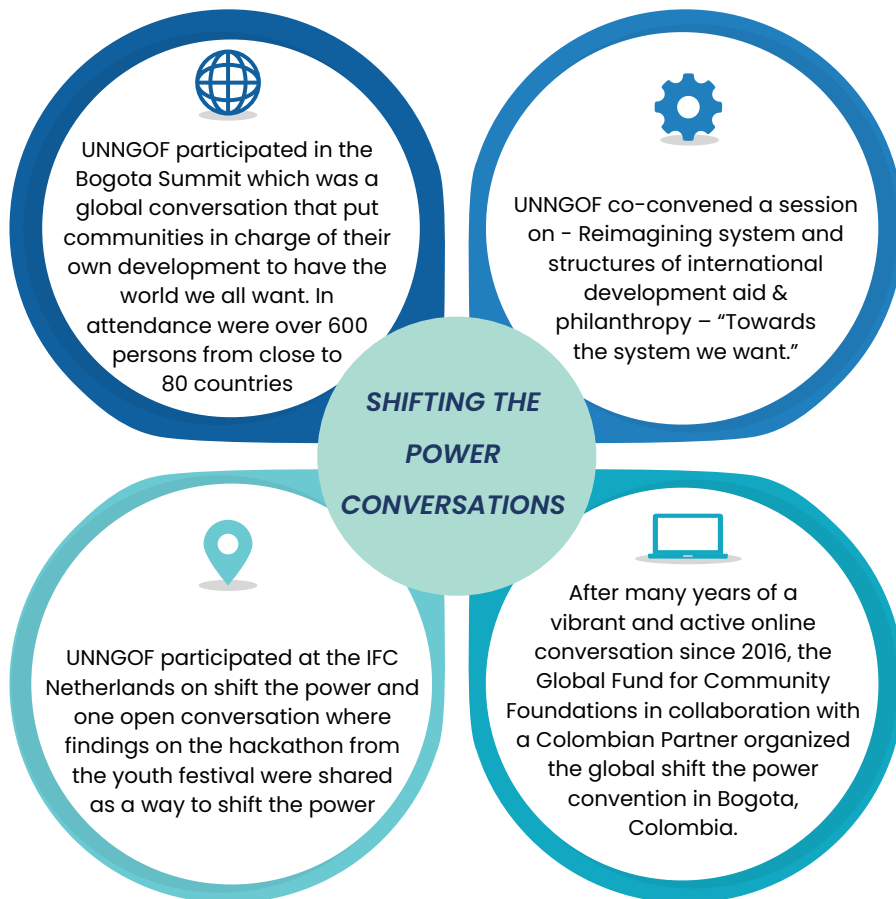
Without a significant change in language, any change in systems is likely to be superficial. This remains true, if communication from the less powerful and underprivileged groups continues to be constrained by a legalistic, bureaucratic and ‘soulless’ style, which reflects a linear logic and argumentation.



As a member of the **#ShiftThePower Movement**, UNNGOF has continued to challenge how International NGOs and the aid agencies influence development, often overlooking the communities that are meant to be the main actors.

2023 was an opportunity for UNNGOF to engage donors and other stakeholders globally and regionally in shifting the power as illustrated:

*Language Forms the
Human Foundation of
Belonging, Thinking, &
Communicating.*



UNNGOF participated in **the 8th East Africa Philanthropy Conference** held in Zanzibar – Tanzania under the theme - Systems Transformation: Catalysing Collective Action.

The 3-day conference (**#8thEAPC**) provided a platform for philanthropic actors to engage with actionable tools, adapt to ecosystem changes, and form collaborations in an evolving philanthropic landscape.

UNNGOF featured in a breakout session; **The Localization Debate** – From Discourse to Tangible Outcomes which focused on actionable strategies, sharing perspectives, and translating the discourse on the localization agenda into action.



In August 2023, UNNGOF also took part in the **Giving for Change annual reflection and learning meeting** in Kisumu City, Kenya.

This meeting convened global partners from 8 nations, marking two and a half years since the Giving for Change programme commenced. It allowed UNNGOF not only to present major milestones achieved under the Philanthropy for Development Programme but also to learn from other countries implementing the Giving for Change Programme.

Field visits to KCDF's partners provided valuable experiences and insights on making locally led development effective, highlighting the need for CSOs to play a facilitative role and supporting communities to initiate and drive their development, inspiring them to take ownership of their progress.



The East African Civil Society Summit

East African Civil Society Organisations' Forum

Strengthening Civil Society in the Integration Process

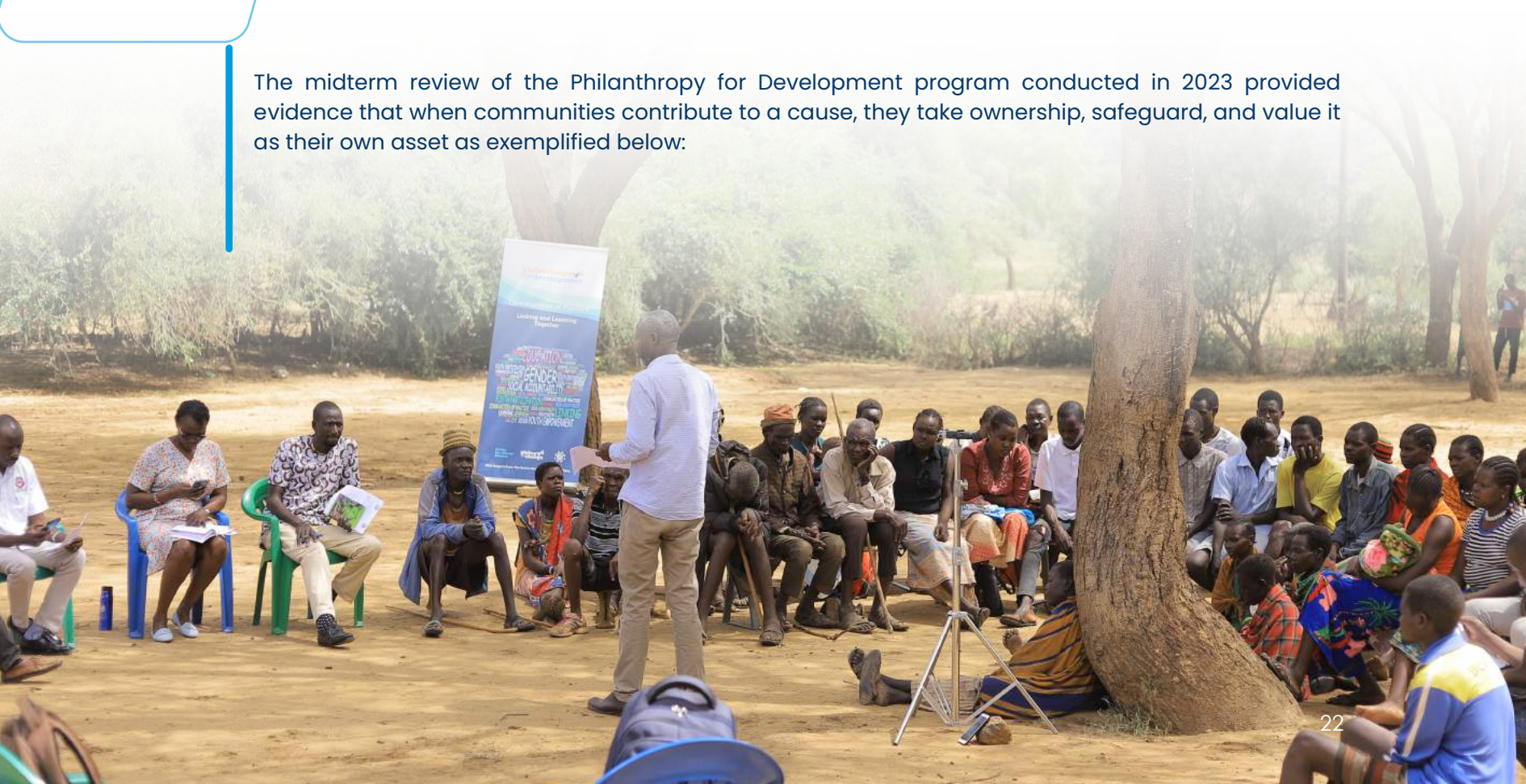
UNNGOF participated in the East Africa Civil Society Summit, held in May 2023, in Arusha – Tanzania convened under the theme: Harnessing EAC citizen's prosperity and AfCFTA integration process.

The summit aimed to renew the social contract between East Africa Country (EAC) Heads of State and the citizens of East Africa region through Civil Society engagement. During the summit, through various thematic panel discussions, CSOs, government officials from EAC secretariat, Parliamentarians and Ministries engaged in meaningful dialogue.

They shared insights on enabling civic space, economic outlook and sustainable development, governance, and democracy, EAC & AfCFTA Trade and Investment, Information Technology, Agriculture and Climate Change, Health, Gender and Youth.

Community Driven Development in Practice

The midterm review of the Philanthropy for Development program conducted in 2023 provided evidence that when communities contribute to a cause, they take ownership, safeguard, and value it as their own asset as exemplified below:



In Kabale, in Western Uganda, the KICK Corruption out of Uganda the partner coordinating the P4D program in that area mobilized communities to construct a feeder road.

This road connects the community church, primary school and households to the main Kabale Municipal Council Road. Hitherto, the road was often impassable during the rainy season. Community members mobilized themselves and placed over a culvert to strengthen it using their own time, effort and resources.

Now they own the feeder road as their 'asset' because of the contribution they made. This community can refer to this road 'as their asset'



Under the matched funding programme supported by Change the Game Academy/Wilde Ganzen Foundation, we witnessed community initiatives and capacity to support their implementation. Tapping from local resources available, UNNGOF contributed 50% towards the success of these initiatives. We are delighted to report their success:

01

We partnered with Kigezi Orphans and Vulnerable children living with HIV/AIDS to skill young Batwa women in Rubanga with tailoring skills and later equipped them with 20 sewing machines. This improved their livelihoods and their ability to train others;

02

We partnered with Kabarole NGO & CBOs association to equip Kakoyo secondary school ICT laboratory with 20 computers. The school has a population of 429 students who have access to ICT skills and facilities.

03

We partnered with Restitute team Uganda to strengthen the resilience of 200 older persons in Arua in social accountability and financial literacy thereby strengthening their resilience to financial shocks that affect older person.

04

More still, we partnered with Kitara Civil society network to construct a pit latrine for a Ruzaire primary school in Kagadi district for 610 pupils there by improving their sanitation.

These community led initiatives have inspired local partners to recognize the communities' potential in driving desired change. This approach has shifted community mindsets, celebrating local capacities in addressing local issues, inspiring them to take on more initiatives.



Youth participation in Community Philanthropy

As part of appreciating and amplifying the potential of youths in ensuring community philanthropy, UNNGOF in partnership with Open Space Center organized the 9th Annual Youth Festival 2023. The festival highlighted the power and significance of youth talents, voices, energies, and time in contributing to community philanthropy. Youth-led organizations received free legal health checks, and a joint learning session on the nexus of legal compliance and philanthropy was conducted. This inspired youth leaders prioritize legal compliance as a cornerstone for building a credible and legitimate sector that can mobilize communities towards local philanthropy.



One CSO Voice

Together, We are Stronger

CSO Leaders Strategic Meeting

During the year, UNNGOF convened NGO sector players to discuss interventions for improving the NGO Operating Environment and strategies for broadening civic space in Uganda. A strategic meeting of CSO Leaders convened by UNNGOF, brought together 20 (12 males and 8 females) leaders who acknowledged that despite existing platforms for engagement among NGOs, opportunities for collaboration and mutual learning remain scarce. They agreed that key interventions should include frequent sharing of information, exploring innovative financing models and establishment of learning forums to strengthen solidarity within the sector, ensuring financial sustainability and continuity.

Advocacy on Public Debt Management:

UNNGOF partnered with the Uganda Debt Network (UDN) to organize a joint stakeholder meeting with other CSOs who drafted proposals for adoption in the 6th Public Debt Management Framework (PDMF) by the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) to strengthen advocacy on effective public debt management in Uganda. The participating CSOs included the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER), Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI-Uganda), Environment Shield, Equality Mission Uganda (EMU), Transparency International – Uganda and Anti-Corruption Coalition (ACCU) and Transparency International Uganda (TIU)



We are pleased to report that out of 10 proposals submitted to MoFPED, 4 have been incorporated into the 6th PDMF (FY 2023/24- FY 2027/28). These include;

01

Government not to prioritize Euro bonds due to their stringent terms (Page 12- of the 6th PDMF, December 2023)

02

Adoption of the principles of addressing domestic arrears under the Strategy to Clear and Prevent Domestic Arrears (2021) into the PDMF (Page 21 of the 6th PDMF, December 2023).

03

The 6th PDMF adopted the management of climate financing to ensure adaptation and mitigation actions (Pages 3, 12 & 40 of the 6th PDMF, December 2023).

04

The MoFPED to periodically publish upcoming loans in a timely manner to enhance the principles of openness, transparency, and predictability (Pages 17 & 18 of the 6th PDMF, December,2023).

UNNGOF in collaboration with other CSOs will continue to advocate for the effective implementation of the new 6th PDMF to achieve improved public debt management.

Deepening Democracy in Uganda



Citizen engagement

During the year, UNNGOF focused on building a robust organizational and mobilization infrastructure to foster the demand for constitutional and political reforms and service delivery improvements by promoting social accountability.

Notably, UNNGOF, using the Topowa and fireplace conversation and community immersion, worked with civic mentors, and NGOs to constructively engage citizens and duty bearers at various levels on constitutional, legal, and political process. On social accountability for improved service delivery, UNNGOF reached 23,602 people (11,218 male, 12,384 female). The discussions provided a healing platform within the citizenry regarding past electoral issues such as violence, ballot stuffing, and exclusion from voter registers. Participants and community leaders acknowledged the value of collaborative efforts toward improved electoral processes and generated strategic proposals for dialogue with key government institutions like the Parliament of Uganda, the Electoral Commission, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Uganda Law Reform Commission, and the Office of the Attorney General on constitutional reforms.





Fortifying citizens' engagement through media

UNNGOF leveraged media as a key avenue for civic engagement, employing radio talk shows and forming strategic alliances with the African Institute for Investigative Journalism (AIJ) to influence public opinion through digital media on platforms like X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube.



Citizen participation in Constitutional & Electoral Reforms

Following the citizens' consultations, UNNGOF facilitated district and regional-level engagements to reach a consensus on constitutional and electoral reforms, with active contributions from local leaders and stakeholders including area Members of Parliament, District Councillors, Speakers, and LCV Chairpersons who made significant contributions to the deliberations. In Teso, local leaders endorsed and committed to the reforms by signing up to the commitment chart. These consultations also addressed issues such as corruption, vote manipulation, human rights abuses, roles of the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) and security forces during elections, with a commitment from duty bearers to promote transparency and accountability.

High Level National Stakeholder Dialogue on Constitutional Reforms

At national level, UNNGOF, in partnership with FOWODE convened a High-level National Stakeholders' Dialogue on Constitutional Reforms in which participants deliberated on their justification and relevance for adoption by Government. A diverse group of stakeholders including Members of Parliament, legal experts, representatives from Civil Society Organizations, the private sector, academia, and government representatives participated in the High-Level Dialogue organized under the theme "Organizing Credible Elections in a highly contested political environment,"

The hybrid event was attended by over 180 physical and 40 online participants while multitudes followed the conversation through various digital platforms including YouTube, X and Facebook. A Panel of Experts discussed the CSO Perspectives on key reforms to ensure citizen

sovereignty, and credible free and fair elections. Some of the key reforms discussed included: the withdraw of military from elections, use of a Human Rights-Based Approach and return to federalism to improve Uganda's political environment. Other key issues discussed included electoral violence, voter registration, electoral dispute resolution, political financing, and the monetization of politics. Recommendations from this dialogue included the need for civic education, greater public participation, and electoral reforms.



Fostering Collaboration with Government Institutions



To strengthen our relationships with government institutions UNNGOF together with other CSOs held meetings with the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC), and the Electoral Commission, reflected on the human rights situation and explored solutions to respect fundamental human rights and freedoms. Some of the key issues discussed included the reported cases of arbitrary arrests, torture, and enforced disappearances, the plight of Ugandan migrant workers in the Middle East, the National Civic Education Policy. Enforcement of decisions by the Human Rights Commission's Tribunal and Courts of Laws was also discussed.





Courtesy Visit to the Speaker's Office, Parliament of Uganda

UNNGOF led a delegation of selected civil society leaders to meet the Speaker of Parliament to discuss CSO contributions to legislative processes and consensus on reforms, utilizing the CSO network to facilitate interactions between MPs and stakeholders. The Speaker of Parliament described the meeting as an opportunity to renew the stakeholder engagements between Parliament and the civil society and expressed commitment to work as partners in advancing Parliament's role.

Improving NGO operating environment



UNNGOF together with other CSOs convened the quarterly dialogue meetings with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and 10 district-level District Non-Governmental Organizations monitoring committees (DNMCs) to discuss issues affecting NGO operations, demonstrating a commitment to fortifying the NGO sector, reaching out to 230 people (69 female, 161 male).

The discussions generated consensus on the issues affecting the operations and functionality of DNMCs at district level respectively. Strengthened NGO operations mean that citizens have more robust platforms through which to engage with other stakeholders in a bid to influence policy. Improved NGO operating environments lead to more responsive institutions as they adapt to civil society's feedback and collaboration.



Improved NGO operating environments lead to more responsive institutions

Our journey to the SDG Agenda 2030



To advance the SDG Agenda 2030, UNNGOF implemented the SDG Joint Initiative with the Office of the Prime Minister, achieving significant milestones and engaging citizens through regional and national SDG festivals, caravan drives, and stakeholders' forums.

The initiative not only heightened awareness but also fostered genuine citizen engagement, facilitating impactful dialogues and commitments from various stakeholders.

The people's SDG festival



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The initiative not only heightened awareness but also fostered genuine citizen engagement, facilitating impactful dialogues and commitments from various stakeholders.

The SDG Walks and Tree Planting



The events in the four regions were preceded with an SDG walk organised in the different towns and cities that hosted the regional events. The walk aimed at popularising the SDGs among the various citizens. The colourful walk took different kilometres in the different regions i.e. 7km around Mubende Town Council, 5km in Lira city, 4.5 km in Jinja city and 5 km in Mbarara City. Overall, the SDG walk brought together over 3000 walkers from the different walks of life including; District leaders, City leadership, Civil Society Organisations, Private Sector groups, trader's union, boda boda groups, primary pupils and secondary students, university and tertiary institutions, financial institutions such as SACCOs, Village saving groups, community groups among others.

The event was crowned by tree planting in all the four regions where 100 trees were planted per region in selected areas as guided by the city and district environment officers. The trees were planted along town roads, health centres, mayors' gardens and schools as identified in the different regions. This was a symbolic act emphasizing the central role of environmental conservation and contribution to climate action that seeks to address issues of climate change.

Citizen Parliaments



Citizen parliaments were convened in partnership with the city and district leadership and the CSO Regional partners in the four different regions. On average, each of the parliaments was attended by 500 participants with some regions such as Eastern and Western hosting up to 800 citizens each.

Stakeholders Forums



Regional Stakeholders Forums were convened in the four regions of Western, Eastern, Central and Northern Uganda. These brought together over 200 participants in each region and these included; leaders from hosting districts, CSOs, Private sector, District leaders including the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), LCV Chairperson and the District Planners from 16 districts within the regions, media, children and youth. The forums provided an opportunity for leaders to have reflections and technical discussions on issues affecting citizens especially those raised from the citizens parliaments. The leaders were also given an opportunity to raise issues affecting their districts that ultimately hinder the implementation of the SDGs at local level.



Research, Learning & Success Stories

UNNGOF contributed to policy mapping and building policy knowledge at a national level, especially during the Midterm review of NDP III, our staff participated in global conversations on shifting the power and philanthropy, contributing to shaping the discourse on locally led development. In addition, UNNGOF has undertaken research on various topics to inform decision makers.

Some of these research outputs include:



- The Parish Development Model (PDM) study titled “The PDM: Unravelling Opportunities and Confronting Challenges.” commissioned by UNNGOF since 2021 to investigate the model’s impact on local communities during the implementation phase. This research is focused on the Eastern and West Nile sub-regions, where the Government has allocated significant funds since 2021 to deliver development priorities through the PDM.
- UNNGOF developed three abridged versions of Service Delivery Standards on Health, Education, and Water and Sanitation (WASH) to help communities hold discussions on service delivery and demand transparency and improved services from duty bearers. These standards are designed as tools for community forum conversations and support scorecard sessions on service delivery standards.
- UNNGOF developed a comprehensive integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Management Information System (MIS) to enhance the collection, aggregation, summarizing, and reporting of program results in a structured and harmonized way.



Lessons Learned



Through our efforts to empower communities and promote sustainable development, we've learned:

- The importance of Collaboration and Partnership with government bodies, international donors, and local communities for amplifying impact and ensuring sustainability.
- Adaptability and Flexibility to changing circumstances are crucial for maintaining operations and meeting objectives amidst evolving government policies and donor priorities.
- Deep Community Engagement is essential for program sustainability, fostering ownership, and empowering community members.
- Embracing Innovation and Technology to enhance program delivery, monitoring, and evaluation, and learning the benefits and challenges of technology integration.
- Sustainability strategies are critical for ensuring that our programs and initiatives continue beyond specific projects or funding periods.
- Commitment to Inclusion and Diversity is necessary for promoting gender equality, engaging marginalized communities, and ensuring accessibility for all.

These lessons have prepared UNNGOF for greater effectiveness and impact in the future. They reinforce the importance of continuous learning, adaptability, and commitment to our core values and mission.

Success Stories

Title 1: Community-Led Development Thrives in West Nile Region

In the past, communities in the West Nile region relied heavily on the government to address their needs, including repairing essential infrastructure like boreholes, bridges, and access roads. This dependence often resulted in women having to travel long distances to fetch water, and school-going children faced the perilous risk of drowning in bridges during the rainy season. Access to markets and other essential services became a formidable challenge. However, a significant transformation has taken place in the West Nile region, thanks to the unwavering commitment of WECISNET (Community of practice in Education) and the collaboration of local leaders. Together, they initiated a movement to promote community giving, fostering a sense of ownership and self-reliance among the residents. To kickstart this endeavor, they organized engagement meetings, during which community members came together to identify and discuss pressing issues. It was during these discussions that the community members began to appreciate the concept of giving for the betterment of their collective future.

"We are so grateful to WECISNET for the sensitization, we did not know that we could lead our own development, now our eyes have opened and we are ready to take on many projects in the community" Michael, LC 1 chairperson, Ojupasi village, Vurra Sub county, Arua.

Giving within the community had been focused on individual occasions such as burials and wedding parties. Recognizing the need for extensive awareness, continuous sensitization meetings were conducted, both through physical gatherings and radio talk shows. The aim was to enlighten the residents about the potential for their collective efforts to bring about meaningful change.

"Giving happens in our society- African society in whatever form, Philanthropy for Development needs to be replicated in all that we do as WECISNET because its empowering."
Feni Twaib, Executive Director WECISNET.

Communities in the West Nile region have now put their newfound spirit into action and witnessed an array of improvements that they have initiated without relying solely on government support, not only aware of their roles but also capable of identifying issues affecting them and working together to find practical solutions through the power of giving.

Title 2: Community Philanthropy breathing life into Batwa Community

In the 1990s, the Batwa, a community that had long inhabited the equatorial forests were compelled by government to vacate their ancestral homes. This directive aimed to protect biodiversity and promote tourism, leading to the establishment of Mgahinga National Park, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, and Echuya Forest Reserve. The Batwa's historical presence was concentrated in South-Western Uganda in the districts of Bundibugyo, Kabale, Kisoro and Rukungiri.

The Batwa's traditional way of life centered around communalism, hunting, use of herbal medicine derived from the natural tree species. However, they were abruptly thrust into a new reality, one dominated by monetary transactions and the challenges of fitting into a capitalistic world. Adapting to this paradigm shift proved to be a formidable struggle for the Batwa.

In an effort to empower the Batwa and help them navigate these challenges, the community in Ikamiro parish, Muko Sub county – Rubanda district took a bold move to mobilise local resources to enhance their potential. Under the auspices of Kigezi Orphans & Vulnerable Children Living with HIV/AIDS (KADOLHA), the community has made a generous effort to support young women with skills in tailoring.

The campaign that started in June 2023 has been embraced by community leaders, business community of Karengyere and Rubanda District at large. While the goal is to secure 20 sewing machines, the initiative has already mobilized four, thanks to the generosity of the community. Noteworthy is the contribution of Evalyne Ainembabazi, a skilled woman in tailoring, who has volunteered her time to train Batwa women.

She shared, "The Batwa are my neighbors, they always visited me and admired how I was applying the sewing machine. I felt compelled to share my knowledge with them" says Evalyne Ainembabazi.

Another generous elder opted to share his bee keeping skill. "Ever since government evicted these Batwa, they got stranded, and they are our neighbors. Batwa used to eat honey while in the forests, this is why I decided to train them in commercial bee keeping so they can raise some

money by selling honey both locally and beyond" Mr. Haruna Mutabazi, a resident of Karengyere Trading Centre, Muko Sub County.

Mr. Samuel Ruyanje, the Chairperson LC II, Ikamiro Parish emphasized that the Batwa people co-existed with his grandparents therefore should be supported to live a dignified life. He noted "I decided to employ strictly the Batwa as part of my contribution towards job/wealth creation. I also usually meet with their leaders to have conversations on wealth creation".

The question to all of us, state and non-state actors is - how can we expect a community with limited land access/ownership and capital to live a dignified life? This prompts reflection on our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals principle of Leaving No One Behind.



Title 3: Citizens Spearhead Transformation of Neglected Road, Reclaim Civic Power

For half a decade, the community of Aloï Ongom Health Centre III in Alebtong District Lango sub region had suffered the agony of impassable roads, putting their health centre out of reach. Frustrated by inadequate advocacy for better services, local leaders had assumed decision-making on behalf of the citizens. Aloï Ongom Health Centre III serves as a vital lifeline for the entire Akura Sub County in Alebtong District.

Agnes Ocama, a determined mother, shared her harrowing experience of navigating the treacherous route with her ailing child. She recounted, "It was a terrible ordeal. My child was sick, and with limited funds, I attempted to transport the child on my bicycle to Aloï Ongom Health Centre III, a mere six kilometres away. Tragically, my child fell off the bicycle due to the road's deteriorated condition, worsening her condition."

Engagement through Ekyoto meetings empowered the community to voice their concerns about the deplorable road and its impact on accessing healthcare.

During these Local leaders, too, acknowledged their own failures in serving their constituents. Agnes, inspired by her experience during the Ekyoto meeting facilitated by Lango civil society network (LACSON), was empowered to speak out. She approached the LC I Chairperson and raised her concerns on the road's condition and the leaders' responsiveness to community needs.

"Thanks to the Ekyoto conveners, I felt so strong and committed to my actions." - Agnes Ocama

Ekyoto, an informal approach employed in the SCENE project funded by USAID, fostered meaningful and constructive community engagement. Following Agnes's initiative, the LC I Chairperson of Acela Village recognized the urgency of addressing the road issue. He rallied fellow LC I Chairpersons and coordinated with LC III, Councillors, and the district upgradeed the road to 6-Kilometer Acela-Aloï Ongom Road. This effort has vastly improved community access to essential health services and social amenities within the sub-county and Otweotoke Parish.



Title 4: Community Unites to Bring Clean Water: Nyabuswa's Inspiring Transformation

Nyabuswa, a community in Mugusu subcounty, Kabarole district, once faced the dire challenge of accessing clean water. Despite promises from local leaders, their situation remained unchanged as nearby water sources dried up, leaving the community in a distressing state without a reliable water supply.

In November 2022, a turning point arrived when KANCA orchestrated a series of community engagements involving key stakeholders such as the LCs, youth, women, councillors, and opinion leaders. During these crucial meetings, the community collectively identified critical service gaps in health, roads, and water accessibility. KANCA took this opportunity to enlighten the attendees about the shared responsibility between the government and citizens in ensuring essential services, fostering a deeper understanding of government priorities.

In a remarkable display of unity, resilience and empowerment the community advocated for the resources from the district authorities to address the water crisis in which didn't come through.

With the spirit of solidarity, they contributed both in kind and in cash to establish four spring wells and formed a dedicated committee to spearhead the mobilization.

As a result, two spring wells are already operational serving a bout 210 households. The burden of fetching water from distant rivers has significantly reduced, marking a significant improvement in the quality of life of the community members. Additionally, by end of 2023, two more spring wells were under construction hence promising a sustained and reliable source of clean water for the entire community.

We realized our collective strength is the key to our community's transformation. Together, we can achieve the impossible.”

This was a motivation as narrated by one community member.





Partnerships and Collaborations



UNNGOF, with 26 years of experience serving the sector, aspires to elevate its impact and sees partnering as core to its work. We actively seek collaboration and advocate for a broader impact through strong partnerships with NGOs/CSOs, academic institutions, local governments, corporate bodies, the private sector, MDAs, and, importantly, the citizens whom we serve.

We wish to extend our gratitude and appreciation to all our partners for their continued commitment, which enables us to fulfill our mission. This mission includes providing a platform for sharing and reflection for NGOs, influencing governance and development processes in Uganda, and enhancing the operating environment for these organizations.



Funded by the European Union

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

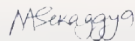
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION As at 31 December 2023

ASSETS	Note	Year Ended 2023	Year Ended 2022
Non-Current Assets			
Property and Equipment	2	553,012,497	718,280,411
Current Assets			
Receivables	3	189,116,224	209,002,438
Bank and Cash Balances	4	2,221,416,387	2,049,605,448
		<u>2,410,532,611</u>	<u>2,258,607,886</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>2,963,545,108</u>	<u>2,976,888,296</u>
RESERVES AND LIABILITIES			
Reserves			
Capital Reserve	5	553,012,496	718,280,411
Restricted Reserve	6	2,396,032,612	2,213,728,313
		<u>2,949,045,108</u>	<u>2,932,008,723</u>
Current Liabilities			
Creditors and Accruals	7	14,500,000	44,879,573
		<u>14,500,000</u>	<u>44,879,573</u>
TOTAL RESERVES AND LIABILITIES		<u>2,963,545,108</u>	<u>2,976,888,296</u>

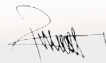
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

INCOME	Note	Year Ended 2023	Year Ended 2022
Balances Brought Forward	8	2,213,728,313	1,098,747,190
Restricted Grants	9	8,250,910,217	6,780,153,067
Membership	10	37,446,530	26,977,000
Other Income	11	75,107,018	14,207,463
TOTAL INCOME		<u><u>10,577,192,078</u></u>	<u><u>7,920,084,720</u></u>
EXPENDITURE			
Civil Society Strengthening	12	1,237,428,728	1,439,043,087
Policy, Governance & Civic Engagement	13	3,883,229,272	1,068,859,917
Results Mgt., Learning & Communication.	14	162,396,571	61,180,000
Finance and Administration	15	2,898,104,895	3,137,273,403
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u><u>8,181,159,466</u></u>	<u><u>5,706,356,407</u></u>
SURPLUS (UNSPENT BALANCE)		<u><u>2,396,032,612</u></u>	<u><u>2,213,728,313</u></u>

The Financial Statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 14th March, 2024 & signed on its behalf by:



Board Chairperson



Treasurer



Executive Director

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