



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

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

At Rooted Wisdom Africa, we believe lasting change begins within the communities themselves. Every day, we witness incredible resilience and determination among families living in rural south-central Uganda—where extreme poverty, isolation, and barriers to education are a daily reality. In a region where many survive on less than 49 cents per day, the strength and perseverance of the people we serve inspire everything we do.

In 2024, your support helped us expand our reach and deepen our impact. Together, we worked directly with almost **600 community members**, providing opportunities through education, entrepreneurship, and agricultural innovation.

Thanks to your generosity, this year we:

- Provided **71,000+ meals** to students through our Life Skills program
- Helped **300 businesses** launch or expand through entrepreneurship training
- Supported **295+ students** to attend secondary school and vocational college
- Grew **24,000+ bundles of fresh produce** through our farming initiatives

These numbers tell a powerful story: that sustainable transformation is possible when we invest in local leadership and build from the inside out.

As we look ahead, we are energized by what's to come—including the development of our new **Empowerment Center and Demonstration Farm**, partially made possible in part by the success of our first-ever **Piggy Plummet** fundraiser. We are also proud of the partnerships we strengthened through collaborative events like **Tackling Local Challenges in Africa**, where we united with fellow nonprofits to share knowledge and amplify community-driven solutions.

Thank you for standing with us. Your belief in the potential of every individual we serve is the foundation of all we accomplish together.

With gratitude and hope,

Kristy Hitchings

Executive Director, Rooted Wisdom Africa

MISSION

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

PURPOSE

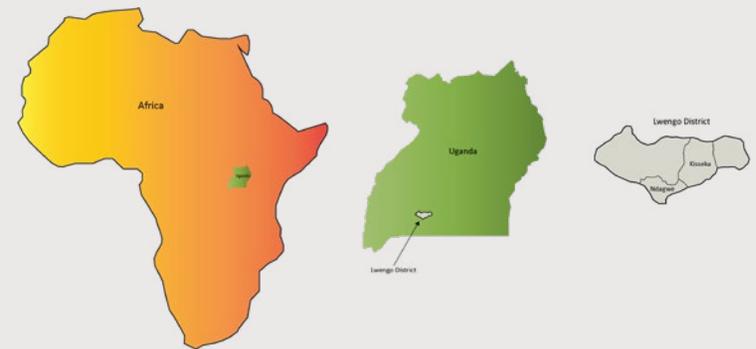
Rooted Wisdom Africa (RWA) is focused on building the capacity of communities in south-central Uganda for long-term, continued success. We begin by dialogue with the community, and our programs are then designed and adjusted to meet their stated needs. Our customized blueprint—combining education, enterprise,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

LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

The Life Skills Program empowers disadvantaged youth—especially girls aged 12–17—through a blend of education, personal development, and practical entrepreneurship training. By covering key topics like the value of education, goal setting, time management, and planning for the future, the program helps participants build both academic success and income-generating skills. With added support like free meals, school supplies, scholarships, and hands-on business training, youth are equipped to self-fund up to 50% of their future education and grow into confident, self-reliant adults.

360 Lives Improved: Clean Water for St. James

We are overjoyed to announce that St. James, our valued partner and a Life Skills Secondary School, has now gained access to clean water. This life-sustaining resource will improve the health and well-being of over 360 students and staff, create a more conducive learning environment, and support the school's pig project and future garden. Thank you to the **PB and K Family Foundation** for your support and commitment to making a difference!

Thanks to Our Sponsors: A Historic Milestone Achieved

In December, Rooted Wisdom Africa celebrated its largest graduating class yet, with over 220 secondary school students completing the Life Skills program. Thank you for helping make history.

PROGRAM SUCCESS THIS YEAR:

- 100% of sponsored students graduated last year.
- 39% ranked in the top 10% of their school.
- Sponsored students attended 78 more school days than their peers.
- 100% reported that the program helped them avoid early marriage.

“I see a lot of change in how my daughter thinks following her training in personal life skills. When I talk to her now, she is more knowledgeable about her life and what she can use her education for.”

- **Keeto Livingstone**

Beyond academics, students are building confidence, independence, and essential life skills. An incredible 92% report increased self-reliance, while 90% have set personal and academic goals.

COLLEGIATE EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAM

Rooted Wisdom Africa's Vocational College Scholarship Program provides educational opportunities for young people whose skills meet vital needs within their communities. Through scholarships, we empower students to pursue careers in teaching, nursing, veterinary care, carpentry, hairdressing, electrical work, and more.

Graduates are equipped to either compete successfully in the job market or become job creators themselves, fueling local economic growth and strengthening the fabric of village life.

“Vocational education is one of the best choices I have ever made in my life. Life has changed for the better, and my family is proud of my achievement. I hope to go back to school and enroll for a diploma in primary teaching.

I cannot overstate the value of education because it has made me proud and changed me and my family. I thank my parents for all their love and support, and I can never take RWA support for granted; it came in at the time when I needed it most.

RWA has nurtured me into a life of endless possibilities and I sincerely thank you.”

- Namutaawe Oliver

Former Vocational College graduate

**Program
success
THIS year:**

100% of sponsored students graduated last year.



WOMAN'S ENTERPRISE TRAINING PROGRAM

Empowers vulnerable Ugandan women to become self-sufficient by combining education, hands-on business training, and seed funding. Through classes, vocational skills, and exposure to successful enterprises, women gain the tools to launch small businesses and achieve financial independence.

PROGRAM SUCCESS THIS YEAR:

- 100% have started or expanded a business within one year of completing the program
- 88% have increased their income within one year of receiving their start-up grant earning +126% higher than the monthly community average.
- 43% state that they are better able to pay for school fees.
- 55% state that they can now support their family's food needs.



“Thank you for the business management lesson on goal setting. I’ve learned how important it is to set goals, as it gives purpose to both work and life.

At 60 years old, I’m grateful to be gaining the knowledge and independence needed to lift myself out of poverty. I’m excited to go home and set both my short-term and long-term goals.”

- **Nakibuule Paulina**

Women’s Enterprise Training Program

FARMER FIELD SCHOOL

Equips current and aspiring farmers with hands-on training in environmentally sustainable, low-cost agriculture. Through regular sessions at a demonstration garden, participants learn and apply new techniques, manage daily farm operations, and receive business training. At season's end, they sell produce grown on-site, share profits, and replicate their success at home—leading to increased yields and steady income.

“Being part of this program has greatly improved my farming skills. I recently protected my beans using a natural pest control method—ash and chili—and it worked perfectly. I’ve already shared the technique with my neighbors and my sister in another village.

I’m truly grateful to Rooted Wisdom Africa for this opportunity. The effective farming methods we’re learning are helping us grow enough food to feed our families. Thank you for thinking of us and empowering our communities.”

- Sseremba Joseph Mary



An 18 week transformation



Thanks to the support of our donors, here's what we've achieved this year:

71,000+ meals

provided through our
Life Skills program

300 BUSINESSES

launched or expanded through
entrepreneurship training

295+ STUDENTS

supported to attend secondary
school and vocational college

24,000+ BUNDLES

of fresh produce grown
through our farming projects

FROM PIGLETS TO PROSPERITY

"Everything I have—cows, goats, pigs, and this garden—is thanks to the Women's Enterprise and agricultural training. With start-up funds, I began pig keeping, which led to buying a cow and growing my ventures. I learned to make and sell animal manure, and this month alone earned over \$116 from manure and milk sales. My drive to be self-reliant kept me going. Now, I sell pigs and coffee seedlings, and despite setbacks like bad weather, I've stayed resilient using what I learned from Rooted Wisdom Africa." Berna is now a multi-business owner with two homes, earning 66% more than her peers. She's a role model in her community—hosting out-of-school youth to share her expertise in climbing beans."

- **Namukaya Berna, Enterprise Program Graduate**

FROM HUNGER TO HONOR ROLL

"I joined one of the best schools in Masaka for my senior high school, but it's all because I received support from Rooted Wisdom Africa. The support I received from the organization gave me peace of mind and allowed me to concentrate on my studies. I was no longer worried about being sent home for school fees or spending the whole day hungry at school.

I performed very well and reached the top of my class, earning another scholarship that has made me college-bound! My focus continues to be on chemistry, biology, entrepreneurship, and math since I want to become a doctor. I thank my sponsor for not giving up on me."

- **Nanziri Brenda, an 11th-grade former Life Skills student**



FROM UNCERTAINTY TO OPPORTUNITY

“My dream of joining the medical field came true—thanks to Rooted Wisdom Africa.

My name is Namwejje Nooryat from a poor family in Lwengo District. I always dreamed of becoming a nurse, but with my mother working as a peasant farmer, we couldn't afford tuition after Senior Four. My only option seemed to be working as a housemaid. Still, I took a leap of faith and applied to Rakai Community School of Nursing. By God's grace and my good performance, I was admitted.

Just when I had no way to pay, a scholarship opportunity through Rooted Wisdom Africa came—and I was one of the lucky few selected. For three years, they supported my tuition, and I graduated in 2024 as a nurse. Today, I'm employed in a private clinic, working as both a nurse and midwife. I now earn an income, support my basic needs, help my mother, and save for a diploma in nursing.”

- **Namwejje Nooryat, Enterprise Program Graduate**

FROM CRISIS TO COMMERCE

“Last year, I became pregnant and was asked to leave home. My partner and I, both unemployed, struggled just to eat. Then a community leader told me about Rooted Wisdom Africa's out-of-school program. I joined, took business lessons, and knew I wanted to become an entrepreneur.

I did casual work to save, and with a grant from RWA, I bought two pregnant pigs. They gave birth to 21 piglets—I sold 18 and earned over \$257. Now, I've started a weekend butchery and sell coffee too.

Thanks to RWA, we no longer go hungry. My goal is to buy land and grow my businesses.”

- **Tumuhiirwe Sharon, Enterprise Program Graduate**



From seamstress to school bag entrepreneur

Namukwaya Prossy began as a seamstress, repairing clothes in her village. But with startup funds and business lessons from Rooted Wisdom, she found the confidence to pursue what she loved most—creating school backpacks. “Almost all school-going children in this area carry one of my bags,” she says proudly. With profits, Prossy bought a new sewing machine and expanded her business. She still repairs clothes but now thrives as a school bag entrepreneur. “I love my business because it’s profitable.” In just one school term, she earned over \$800. Today, Prossy is earning over 3.5 times more than the average community member.

“I’ve dreamed of becoming an accountant since childhood, inspired by my uncle who worked at a bank. Unfortunately, my mother couldn’t afford my education, and I had to delay junior high for two years while working to save money. Even then, it wasn’t enough. Thanks to a sponsor through Rooted Wisdom Africa, I was able to complete school and graduate with a first grade. I’m now studying accounting and finance at Kyotera College of Business Studies on a church scholarship. I’m committed to excelling in my studies so I can secure a job and pursue a diploma in accounting and finance.”

- Najjumba Samara, Life Skills Program



From crisis to coffee queen

When her husband fell ill, Nampuuga Kizito became the sole provider for their family of seven. With startup funds and training from Rooted Wisdom, she entered the male-dominated coffee trade—and thrived. Kizito now pays school fees, buys supplies for her children, and reinvests profits to grow her business. Her income has increased by over **300%**, and she’s proud to inspire other women to follow in her footsteps.

- Nampuuga Kizito, Enterprise Program Graduate



SPECIAL EVENTS

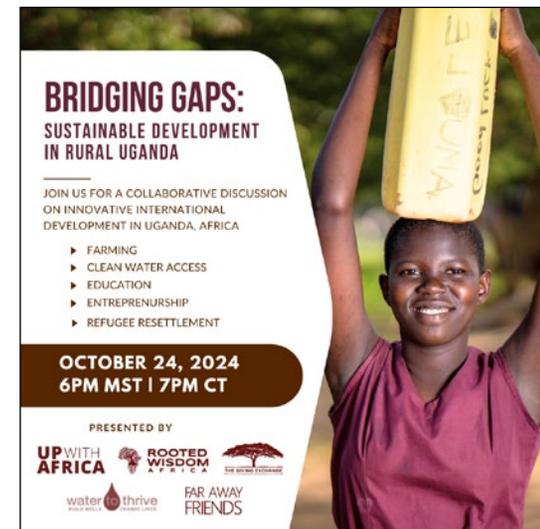
Piggy Plummet: Launching Hope, One Pig at a Time

This year, Rooted Wisdom Africa hosted its first-ever Piggy Plummet—a lighthearted fundraiser with a serious purpose. Supporters purchased nearly 800 plastic pigs, each tagged with a quirky personality and unique number. On January 31st, the pigs were lifted by a crane and "plummeted" to raise funds for our future Empowerment Center and Demonstration Farm. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our community, the event raised nearly \$20,000, helping lay the foundation for a center that will offer vocational training, community gathering space, and sustainable agriculture programs.



Bridging Gaps: Tackling Local Challenges in Africa

In collaboration with five partner nonprofits—The Giving Exchange, Far Away Friends, Water to Thrive, ROWAN, and Fola—Rooted Wisdom Africa hosted two live virtual events focused on Tackling Local Challenges in Africa. These events provided a platform to share firsthand experiences, foster collaboration, and inspire action toward more sustainable, locally-driven solutions in African communities. Through these partnerships, we continue to champion local leadership and amplify community voices.



MEET THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE MISSION

At Rooted Wisdom Africa, our work is driven by people—local leaders, educators, farmers, and changemakers—who believe deeply in the power of community-led transformation. Our dedicated staff and visionary board bring a wealth of experience, passion, and commitment to every aspect of our mission.

Together, they ensure that every program, partnership, and investment is rooted in trust, guided by local knowledge, and built for lasting impact. We're proud to introduce the team working tirelessly behind the scenes—and on the ground—to turn vision into reality.

Staff:

Irene Kyalimpa, Operations Manager
Imelda Nalugongo, Agricultural Officer
Lulungi Emmanuel, Agricultural Officer
Mulema Gerald, Agricultural Officer
Nakibira Esther, Bookkeeper
Kristy Hitchings, Executive Director

Ugandan Board:

Vincent Basajja, Board Chairperson
Denis Kasule, Board Secretary
Geraldine Majera, Member
Kajjubi Nurudini, Member
Nabakka Bena, Member

US Board:

Laura Andes, Board Chairperson
Liz Lotz, Board Secretary
Kelly Witte, Treasurer
Sunny Su, Treasurer
Daisy Hao, Member
Sarah Herzog, Member
Deon MacMillan, Member

Looking Ahead Together

As we reflect on a year of impact and growth, we know this is only the beginning. The seeds we've planted—through leadership, learning, and local action—are already taking root in powerful ways. To everyone who has walked alongside us: thank you. Your belief in community-driven change fuels every step forward.

Together, we are not just changing lives—we are transforming what's possible in rural Uganda and beyond.