

ACT Uganda/ACT US

2023 Annual Report



A Message from Our Board Chairs

Bahati Moses

ACT Uganda Board Chair

Agape Community Transformation (ACT) is the rare organization that supports needy and vulnerable children to release them from life's misfortunes of poverty and diseases. In this, ACT became the mother of motherless; father of fatherless; carer for the uncared; hope for the hopeless; comforter of the uncomforted; promise to the abandoned; counselor to the distressed; and goodness is its beatitude.

It operates in Muko Sub-County in particular and Rubanda District in general. It supports children in those families in strategic areas of health, education, agriculture, and life skills. All these are implemented among supported children and their caregivers to increase food security in homes and sustainable incomes.

We are extremely grateful to our dear partners from Michigan, USA, who have given generously to support the work of transforming Muko community and Rubanda District at large. No doubt ACT has created an indelible mark in the lives of the Muko community.

We continue to pray for the continued divine relationship between ACT Uganda and ACT US. May God continue to bless our friends and give them enough to support themselves and extra to support God's work.

Cover photos: Permagarden Training; The grey crowned crane, Uganda's National Bird

Dr. Lynn Pottenger

ACT US Board Chair

Looking back at 2023, what springs to mind first is the wonderful celebrations of ACT's 20th anniversary! We have been so blessed to arrive at this point—no one foresaw this moment back in 2003, and yet here we are. Celebration dinners were held in Midland and Traverse City, Michigan, and a marvelous, community-wide celebration took place in Muko, Uganda. These gatherings were a wonderful way to mark ACT's 20 years in service to the community of Muko Sub-County, and to work towards funding ACT's sustainable future. Of course, there were lots of amazing things happening throughout 2023 in Muko Sub-County and in the U.S., thanks to ACT's many volunteers, staff, and team members. For more details, be sure to check out the entire report.

2023 was also the first time we've had such significant turnover for the ACT US Board, with the stepping-down of Karen Viele, Dave Viele, and Diane Busch, all of whom were long-time ACT US Board members. Beth Martin, our long-time Handcraft Inventory Manager, also retired her position. We are so grateful for all the work these folks put into ACT's success and they will be sincerely missed. We are especially grateful for the continued efforts of Karen Viele for MUSIC, Dave Viele for Muko High School (MHS) oversight, and Diane Busch for Communications. As always, I thank all of you who have supported us in so many ways with your time, talent, and treasure. We are very grateful for that amazing support and so appreciate your continued confidence in ACT. Here's to the next twenty years!



A Bit About Us ...

ACT US Mission

We work in partnership with ACT Uganda as they pursue their goals for the community development of Muko Sub-County.

ACT US Vision

The ACT Uganda and ACT US partnership is one of support and solidarity, with the Ugandan partners leading the generation of ideas, development and evaluation of programs, and generation of resources.

History of ACT Uganda

ACT, formed in 2003, strives to improve the lives of the impoverished rural people in Muko Sub-County located in southwestern Uganda. ACT has grown from a small community-based organization working in Uganda to an international partnership which exists primarily on proceeds from handcraft sales, donations from caring individuals, and grants from our supporting churches and other organizations. ACT is organized as two registered non-governmental organizations (one in Uganda and one in Michigan), but operates with collaboration between the Boards of Directors in each nation, six paid staff in Uganda, and more than 250 volunteers in Uganda and the U.S. If you are interested in helping us make a difference by making a monetary donation, please know that your tax deductible gift will be used to create a bright and self-sustaining future for many lives. Visit our website (actuganda.org) to see how to donate and to learn more about ACT's mission and how you can become involved.

2023 Financial Report

The table below shows the expenses incurred supporting the operation of the many programs in Muko Sub-County, Uganda. Total 2023 expenses were \$98,118.

ACT US is a registered nonprofit in the U.S. and ACT Uganda is a registered NGO in Uganda. Visit our website (actuganda.org) to view publicly available financial forms regarding our operations. Additionally our rating on Candid, a well-known rating site for viability and excellence of nonprofits in the United States is PLATINUM.

PROGRAM EXPENSES	AMOUNT (\$)
Ugandan Support HONOR Scholarships	\$54,786
Ugandan Support Uniquely Uganda Handcrafts	\$1,435
Ugandan Support HEAL	\$4,180
Ugandan Support HANDS/Allen Foundation Grant	\$11,437
Ugandan Support Facilities	\$6,766
Ugandan Support Administration	\$11,651
Ugandan Support TEACH	\$1,000
U.S. Fundraising (Network for Good)	\$2,400
U.S. Operations	\$2,944
U.S. Travel Team	\$235
U.S. Administration	\$1,284
TOTAL 2023 Expenses	\$98,118

20th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

2023 marks 20 years since Generous and Richard Turinawe, along with Sue and John Waechter, started the adventure that you now know as ACT (Agape Community Transformation) Uganda. Twenty years later things have grown from working to obtain an ambulance back in 2003, to six active programs covering music, agriculture, education, employment, health care, and more. These programs are managed by six paid staff members in Uganda and supported by dozens of volunteers there and in Michigan. To celebrate this milestone, there were three successful fundraising events. Two dinners in Michigan (Midland and Traverse City) and one event Muko, Uganda.

In Michigan, these dinners were attended by over 150 people. The donations raised are being used by our FUNDS Task Force. At the dinners, attendees enjoyed an African-inspired dinner, heard from our Ugandan partners via video, and learned about the progress in each of the programs of ACT. They also had the opportunity to participate in a silent auction for some lovely gifts provided by local business and ACT Board Members.



20th Anniversary Dinner in Midland

At the celebration in Muko, there were at least 600 people and the ceremonies lasted about 2.5 hours with music and dancing and speeches. It was wonderful. ACT is very well-known and appreciated throughout the whole Rubanda District. John and Sue spent a week in Muko to celebrate this occasion with the Ugandan staff and the Muko Sub-County community. Generous and Sue were able to keep the Waechter's visit a complete



Sue Waechter and Generous Turinawe

surprise to the staff. They had no idea John and Sue were joining them until their van pulled up in front of the ACT Resource Center. It was so much fun to see their faces! After Guma, ACT's Senior Manager, recovered from his shock, the first thing he said to Sue was, "You didn't send me an agenda!", because all meetings with the staff start with a very detailed agenda. No agenda, Guma! Just here to be with you as you celebrate 20 glorious years of serving Muko! It felt like a bookend for John and Sue because the very first trip in 2006 was just the two of them meeting with Generous and Richard and now 20 years later...

FUNDS TASK FORCE: Financial Ugandan Needs for Development & Sustainability

We chartered the FUNDS Task Force in February, 2020 with the goal of proposing new models of sustainability for ACT Uganda (e.g., “social business”).

The Task Force is comprised of U.S. and Ugandan members. They have been studying potential ways to bring revenue to ACT outside of donations and grants. The focus in the last couple of years, was a hardware store. It opened in 2022 and has made a small profit every month of operation - a real success compared to most start-up social businesses. This group is continuing to look at potential new and viable businesses.



ACT Muko Hardware Store

Facilities

In 2023 all of the buildings on the ACT Resource Center (ARC) grounds were repaired and painted. Wiring was upgraded in the main building, and ceilings were installed in three rooms. The typical ceiling construction in Uganda is using concrete. Due to the excessive span in one room, that ceiling collapsed, fortunately with no injuries. A review of that failure and the other newly installed ceilings is underway, and repairs will be made in early 2024.

We reduced the number of motorcycles at the ARC from four to two and used the proceeds from the sale to repair the two remaining motorcycles. These provide the means for the staff to travel within Muko-Sub-County.



Turinawe-Waechter ACT Resource Center

At one of our 20-year celebrations, the ACT Resource Center was renamed the Turinawe-Waechter ACT Resource Center in honor of the two founders and Directors of ACT Uganda and ACT US, as well as celebrating ACT’s 20 years in existence.

Communications/Resource Development

The Communications and Resource Development Teams worked together closely to continue sharing our story and securing the needed funding to ensure ACT’s path forward. These teams are comprised of many dedicated volunteers, but are always open to new ideas and members. They played a significant role in the success of the 20th Anniversary Celebrations.

HANDS: Helping Agricultural New Development and Sustainability



This year the HANDS staff, working with community-based trainers, provided 390 people with perma-garden and nutrition training (*photo above*), bringing the total to 720 residents who have received this training. Trainees were given carrot and spinach seeds to incorporate into their gardens, with 70% of the trainees successfully tending them, and creating a ready source of healthy vegetables, even while dealing with water management issues due to extended dry spells and torrential downpours. HANDS also provided nutrition and iron-rich bean agronomy training for 70 people and provided trainees with 2 kg of iron-rich bean seeds to plant. After harvest, a portion of the seeds were returned to ACT, making it the first time that more seed was returned than was given out. Late in 2023, HANDS acquired capability for non-invasive hemoglobin testing which will help assess the prevalence of anemia in the region and identify candidates for nutrition and permagarden training. HANDS staff, along with Muko Sub-County youth, attended a Peace Corps “Youth Entrepreneurship Training” event. Multiple topics were addressed covering entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and more. Several U.S.-produced weeding tools, that could significantly reduce labor for farmers, were received in Muko in December. If these tools are viewed favorably, they could be made in Uganda. The HANDS programs were supported by a grant from the Allen Foundation, Midland, Michigan.

HEAL: Health is Elemental to All Life

HEAL works to reduce morbidity and mortality among the population in Muko Sub-County by addressing key health impact outcomes, improving health literacy, and reducing health disparities within its population. In 2023, HEAL education efforts reached higher numbers of people in the community than ever before. Health education in the form of theatrical dramas (*photo at right*) attracted large crowds and covered key topics like hygiene, alcoholism, and domestic violence. Although this approach was well-received it was expensive, and it was determined that their impact was not large enough to justify the high costs.



In the Fall 2023, a new initiative of a journal club discussion, led by Robin Stottlemeyer in Michigan, began meeting monthly over Zoom. In Journal Club, Muko High School students and teachers who are interested in science, join ACT staff and U.S. volunteers to discuss a research paper relevant to Ugandan public health. The club focuses on developing critical thinking skills related to science and health literacy, and operates at almost no cost, but has been instrumental in guiding current and future leaders of this rural community toward improved information-seeking behavior. It is so popular that students volunteered to walk many miles over holiday break so they could attend a session over ZOOM. As a result, we are optimistic about the future of HEAL as ACT works to develop new data-driven outreach and education initiatives.

MUSIC: Muko Uganda String Instruments for Children

In 2023, two of our High School MUSIC achievers led the classes at Muko High School while we looked for a new teacher for MUSIC. Norbert Aharizira and Brave Ainamani worked very hard via weekly Zoom meetings, from January to July, learning violin, viola, and cello, and leading the students. In July a search was conducted to find a teacher, and Ugandan staff recommended we rehire Howard Biryomuriwe, our first teacher. Howard returned on November 1st and was available to conduct the 20th Anniversary Celebration performances.



Violinists Hard at Work

Muko has over 90 violins and violas, 4 cellos, and some auxiliary instruments like guitar, piano, and accordions. Many African instruments were purchased and are also available for students' use. Two camps were held which provided the best intensive work for the students. Students attend camps during school breaks for about one week, staying at Muko High School and practicing and rehearsing together all day. Funds are continually needed for instrument repair, and replacement, camps, and supplies.

HONOR: Hope, Opportunity, Need, Ownership, Respect

Because of our generous donors, 197 students, who otherwise might not have received a quality education in 2023, had that chance. The goal of providing this opportunity was one of the original purposes of ACT Uganda and continues to be a high priority. We sincerely thank our donors, as well as those students who work hard to obtain and keep these scholarships.



HONOR Students at Murole Primary School

Unfortunately, we had to say Good-Bye to Karen Viele upon her retirement from leading this program for many, many years. Her contributions were invaluable and her leadership will be missed!

MAVERICK Leadership Scholarships

This Scholarship is provided to exceptional students who are interested in becoming leaders and in 2023, 2 students benefitted from it. We also learned in 2023 that one of our "graduated" Maverick Scholars was one of three Ugandan students who was awarded another highly competitive scholarship, offered by a separate organization, to study a Joint Master of Science in Limnology and Wetland Management that is jointly taught by three Universities in Austria, Netherlands and Kenya. This leadership and initiative is exactly what was dreamed of when this Maverick Scholarship was initiated.

TEACH: Targeting Educational Advancement of Children

Enrollment at Muko High School (MHS) increased to over 600 students. Given that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ACT and the Diocese of Kigezi ends in December 2024, the TEACH team was sunset at the end of 2023. Dave Viele, TEACH Team Leader in the U.S., will monitor MHS administration activities in 2024, but not be heavily involved. The majority of administration will be handled by MHS staff as they utilize the training they received on budgeting and financial record-keeping over the course of the MOU. With the current enrollment, MHS should have adequate resources to manage all aspects and plan for additional physical improvements.



The Science Lab Nearly Completed

The Science Lab construction is nearly completed and the building is in use, although not all the desired equipment is available yet. Tiling the entire interior is planned for early 2024.

Uniquely Ugandan Handcrafts

Uniquely Ugandan Handcrafts had an outstanding year of sales in 2023. Sales venues included many of our supporting churches and synods, as well as local art fairs, and family events. Additionally, special orders were fulfilled, and the ACT online store received several orders. These combined sales brought in over \$12,000, providing undesignated revenue to support new projects and cover administrative costs.



A Beautiful Placemat

ACT's dedicated handcraft sewists in Michigan and Uganda were hard at work, both at home, and in groups that gathered together throughout the year for "sew-ins". Many of the items sewn were based on a list of popular and much-needed items.

New impressive baskets were added to our inventory at the end of the year.

The Uniquely Ugandan handcrafters continue to create a quality product that is both beautiful and functional. We are looking forward to offering them for sale in future craft shows and in our online store. Visit our store at actuganda.org.



One of ACT's Many Talented Weavers



Number of Individuals and Groups Benefitting from ACT Programs and Activities in 2023

Capital Improvements for Muko High School and ACT Resource Center

Skilled Tradesmen **38**
Porters & General Laborers **61**
Local Retailers & Suppliers **46**

Scholarship Programs - Maverick and HONOR

HONOR Scholarship Recipients **197**
Maverick Scholarship Recipients **2**

MUSIC (*This program was on hold for a portion of the year*)

Community Music Learners **13**
Primary and Secondary Music Learners **10**

Uniquely Uganda Handcraft Artisan Beneficiaries (*This program was on hold for most of the year, apart from one order from the U.S.*)

Material Suppliers **3**
Sewists **4**
Beaders **3**
Weavers **2**

ACT HARDWARE STORE

Employees **4**
Customers Served **1200**

HEAL

Trained Health Promotion Workers **12**
Drama Actors and Actresses **11**
Community Members **701**
Transportation Services **29**
Food Vendors **21**
Journal Club students **18**

Muko High School

Students **600**
Staff Support **15**
Teachers. **29**
Head Teacher **1**

HANDS

Volunteers **9**
Farmers Trained in Permagarden and Nutrition Training **390**
Farmers Receiving Iron Rich Bean Seeds **70**
Successful Iron-Rich Bean Farmers Receiving Purdue Crop Storage Bags **100**
Local Suppliers and Workers Benefitting from HANDS Activities **49**
Training Sessions Attended by Farmers **423**

Facilities

Local Retailers Benefitting from ACT Purchase of Office Supplies **20**
Drivers for ACT Activities **9**

ACT Muko Staff

ACT Muko Staff Employed **8**



ACT Uganda Board Members - 2023

Moses Bahati, Board Chair
Friday Rwamahe, Secretary
Norman Tushabe, Treasurer
Victor Kyatuka
Patrick Abeneimwe
Charity Mahoro
Charity Allen
Generous Turinawe, ACT Uganda Director*

ACT Uganda Staff - 2023

Generous Turinawe, ACT Uganda Director
Alexander Gumoshabe, ACT Senior Manager, Facilities Manager
Judith Tukahirwa
Thomas Akankwasa
Pamella Musiimenta
Onesmas Arinda
Herbert Muhereza
Vianney Barusya

****non-voting member***

ACT US Board Members - 2023

Lynn Pottenger, Board Chair, HEAL Team Member, FUNDS Task Force Member
Dave Viele, Treasurer, TEACH Team Leader
Diane Busch, Secretary, Communications Team Leader
Bill Busch, Facilities Team Leader, FUNDS Task Force Member
Suzanne Greenberg, Resource Development Team
Dave Molzahn, HANDS Team Leader, FUNDS Task Force Member
Diana Stubig, Uniquely Uganda Team Leader and Sewing Coordinator
Karen Viele, HONOR Scholarship Team Leader, MUSIC Team Leader and TEACH Team Member
Lori Marsh, Resource Development Team
Dick Dolinski, TEACH Team and Communication Team Member
Sue Waechter, ACT US Director*

Advisor to ACT US Board - 2023

Sam Choo, Legal



ACT UGANDA CONTACT

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