



# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



# 2025

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Okere Community Development Project also known as Okere City was born from a deeply personal journey of healing, identity and purpose; and has grown into a bold community-led model for rural transformation in Northern Uganda. What began as a simple effort to restore an ancestral home has evolved into a shared vision: to create opportunity, dignity and prosperity within rural communities, so that people no longer need to leave their homes to thrive.

Over the reporting period, the project strengthened education, healthcare, livelihoods, environmental sustainability and youth and women empowerment. Guided by trust, inclusion and partnership, Okere City works hand in hand with community members to co-create solutions that respond to real and pressing local needs. The project has reached over 10,000 of rural residents in Otuke and surrounding districts and improved access to essential services, while at the same time supporting multiple pathways to economic independence.

This report presents an overview of the project's progress during the reporting period. It documents the strategies adopted, partnerships formed, results achieved and lessons learned, while offering a forward-looking perspective on Okere City's ambition to serve as an experimental model for sustainable, smart and Eco-friendly rural development in Africa by 2030.



# 2025 AT A GLANCE



**\$300K**

Invested in development projects



**10,000**

People served



**26**

New jobs created



**55**

Indirect jobs created



**03**

Small and Medium Scale Businesses (SMEs) launched



**28**

Metric tons of Shea Butter sold



**450**

Local and international tourists/visitors welcomed



**04**

International and local partnerships and collaborations



**6,000**

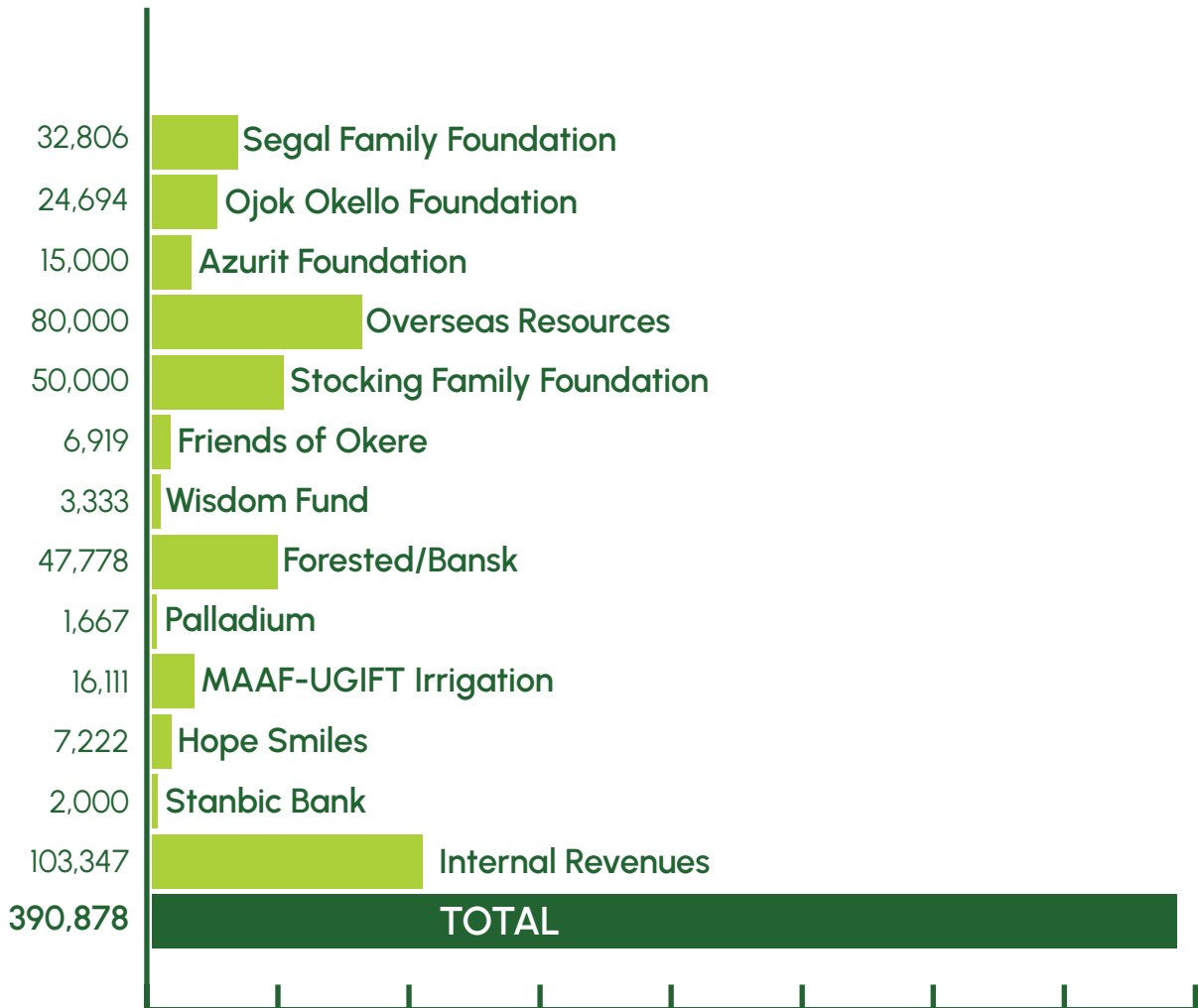
Customers Served



**10,000**

Trees planted

# OKERE CITY 2025 INVESTMENT OVERVIEW



 OKERE CITY 2025  
INVESTMENT OVERVIEW AMOUNT

# SUB-PURPOSE 1: CHAMPIONING LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED)

## SHEA BUTTER BUSINESS AND OKERE ORGANIC RICE PRODUCTION

Our Local Economic Development initiative is designed to enhance agricultural productivity, household incomes and economic resilience among local farmers. A notable component of the initiative is the promotion of shea nut value chains by facilitating purchase of shea nuts from local farmers, supporting processing activities and export of value-added shea products. This not only creates income opportunities for farmers but also strengthens the local economy and positions the community for participation in international markets. The initiative also supports access to quality seeds by providing seed loans to farmers alongside capacity-building training which are conducted on agronomic practices, crop management and enterprise development; equipping farmers with practical skills to improve yields and profitability. In addition, the initiative supports village savings and loan associations, enabling farmers to save, access credit and invest in their enterprises.

## 2025 ACHIEVEMENTS



- > Aggregated 50 MT of shea nuts, processed and packaged for export
- > Exported 30 MT of processed shea butter to the United States of America.
- > Facilitated the purchase of shea nuts from local farmers, supported processing and enabled export of value-added shea products, creating new income streams and strengthening local enterprise.



- > Distributed half a metric ton of maize to 100 farmers.
- > Distributed 1MT of rice seeds, expanding cultivation and improving food security.
- > Allocated tomato production plots at Okere demonstration farm to 10 farmer groups (100 farmers) for commercial farming.



- > Conducted two field trips to Baralegi Presidential Demonstration Farm to enhance farmers' on-farm practical knowledge of mixed farming using modern techniques.
- > Provided agronomic training on maize, rice and tomato production, improving farmers' knowledge of good agricultural practices, pest management and yield optimization.



# LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PHOTOS



## SUB-PURPOSE 2: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Education remains one of the most powerful tools for breaking cycles of poverty, expanding opportunity and enabling community transformation. Okere City, through Okere Community School is committed to nurturing a well-informed, skilled and empowered population through a holistic approach that blends formal, informal and experiential learning. Our vision is to ensure that every individual, irrespective of age or background, has access to meaningful learning pathways that contribute to personal growth and collective progress.

Beyond the classroom, we recognize the transformative power of informal learning. Through Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) programs, we provide adults with essential reading, writing and numeracy skills that directly improve their livelihoods, financial decision-making and participation in community development. These programs play a critical role in restoring dignity,

promoting self-reliance and empowering individuals who missed earlier opportunities for schooling.

We also believe that some of the most meaningful learning happens through direct experience. Our experiential learning initiatives create spaces for the rural community to explore new ideas, innovations and best practices. By facilitating exposure visits, exchange tours and field trips to different parts of the country, we enable community members to see what is possible, draw inspiration and return with new perspectives that enrich local development efforts.

Across these three dimensions of learning, Okere City continues to champion an inclusive, lifelong education ecosystem; one that equips our people not only to succeed today, but to shape a better tomorrow for the entire community.

### FORMAL LEARNING

Our work in formal education focuses on supporting Early Childhood Development (ECD) initiatives and enhancing learning outcomes across primary, secondary and tertiary levels. By strengthening foundational learning and ensuring continuity across the academic journey, we aim to prepare children and youth in Okere and beyond with the knowledge, confidence and competencies needed to thrive in an evolving world.

## Early Childhood Development and Primary Education

Okere Community School's nursery and primary school registered a smooth and well-coordinated academic year; beginning on 3rd February 2025 and concluding on 5th December 2025. The academic year was organized into three terms. Term one ran from 3rd February to 15th May 2025, term two from 26th May to 22nd August 2025 and term three from 15th September to 5th December 2025.

Throughout the year, the school focused on providing a safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment that promotes holistic child development.

### STAFFING AND ENROLMENT

The school employed a total of fifteen (15) teachers across nursery and primary sections, comprising 5 female teachers and 10 male teachers. In addition, 15 support staff were engaged across different departments. Enrolment trends during the year were as follows:

- > First Term: 122 nursery pupils and 245 primary pupils (Total: 367)
- > Second Term: 121 nursery pupils and 249 primary pupils (Total: 370)
- > Third Term: Enrollment increased steadily from 370 to 397 pupils.

Beginning of term, mid-term and end of term examinations were administered consistently across all three terms. All assessments were conducted as scheduled and met the required academic standards. While overall performance was satisfactory, a few learners faced challenges in academic performance due to fee-related constraints.

During the second and third terms, primary six and seven learners sat examinations from various recognized examination boards, including Sure Key, SIPRO and Prime. The school successfully procured and administered these examinations as required.



P.6 pupils doing mid-term examinations

### MOCK EXAMINATIONS

In August 2025, a total of 34 candidates sat for the Otuke District Mock Examinations and attained the following results.

- > Division One – 4 candidates
- > Division Two – 8 candidates
- > Division Three – 5 candidates
- > Division Four – 13 candidates
- > Division U – 7 candidates

Although mock examinations are generally challenging, the results were encouraging and motivated both learners and teachers to intensify preparation for the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE). Continuous assessment was carried out across all classes in accordance with the national curriculum.

## EVENTS AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The school conducted several co-curricular and developmental activities during the academic year, including:

- > Inter-class music, dance and drama, football and volleyball competitions involving both boys and girls, with teacher participation.
- > Agricultural activities where pupils acquired practical skills such as planting rice in rows, heaping potatoes, planting beans and growing groundnuts.
- > Visits by various stakeholders and Okere project leadership, including school inspections for licensing and registration.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

No serious health conditions were recorded during the year. Minor illnesses such as malaria, cough and stomach ache were reported occasionally. All cases were promptly and effectively managed by the school nurse hence ensuring the well-being of all learners.

## Tertiary Education Program

The tertiary education program in Okere City focuses on equipping youth with practical vocational skills that enhance employability, self-reliance and income generation. Tailoring remains a key skills area under this program.

### Program Reach and Progress

From January to December 2025, the program successfully graduated 30 students in tailoring.

### Impact

Through hands-on training, the tailoring program has strengthened learners' capacity to generate income, support their households and contribute to local economic development. Okere City aims to expand the program by increasing enrollment, improving training resources and strengthening linkages to markets and employment opportunities to ensure long-term sustainability for graduates.



P.5 pupils participate during an interclass music, dance and drama competition

## FORMAL EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENTS

### ECD

- > Fourth Top Class graduation ceremony held with 40 pupils; double the number of 2024.
- > Enrolment increased from 100 pupils in 2024 to 119 in 2025.
- > Timely & consistent supply of teaching, learning materials & other logistics (all programs).

### Primary

- > Installed a functional solar lighting system.
- > 34 pupils sat for P.L.E (the highest number ever).
- > Enrolment increased from 370 pupils to 397 (ECD & primary)

### Tertiary

- > Enrolled, trained and graduated 30 learners.
- > Improved livelihood of the trainees through connection to job opportunities
- > Improved water supply due to the installation of a 10,000 liter water tank solar water system (all programs)

## INFORMAL LEARNING

Our work in informal learning focuses on empowering adults and communities through functional learning and experiential opportunities. By providing practical skills, financial literacy and personal development training, we equip community members in Okere with the knowledge and confidence to improve their livelihoods and engage meaningfully in local development. In addition, we facilitate exposure visits and field trips to diverse regions across the country, enabling participants to gain firsthand experience, broaden their perspectives and apply new ideas within their own communities. Through these initiatives, we aim to nurture a culture of continuous learning, curiosity and innovation that extends beyond the classroom and directly impacts the daily lives of individuals and families.

### FUNCTIONAL ADULT LITERACY (FAL) PROGRAM

The Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) program in Okere City aims to improve basic literacy, numeracy and socio-economic empowerment among adult learners, with a strong focus on women. Between April and December 2024, the program expanded significantly in both reach and impact.

#### Membership Growth

- > Aminogwang FAL Group:
  - Started with 96 members (2 male, 94 female)
  - Grew to 120 members by December (7 male, 113 female)
- > Okere City FAL Group:
  - Started with 36 members (2 male, 34 female)
  - Expanded to 147 members by December (2 male, 145 female)

This growth reflects strong community trust, effective mobilization and increasing demand for adult literacy services, particularly among women.

#### Key Activities Implemented

1. Community mobilization and learner recruitment.
2. Sensitization and delivery of FAL classes.
3. Formation and strengthening of a VSLA.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

The Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) program in Okere City aims to improve basic literacy, numeracy and socio-economic empowerment among adult learners, with a strong focus on women. Between April and December 2024, the program expanded significantly in both reach and impact.

- > All members acquired program uniforms, with support from Okere City, fostering unity and visibility.
- > Learners demonstrated improved reading and writing skills, enhancing their confidence and participation in community activities.
- > Members actively saved and accessed loans through the VSLA, strengthening household economic resilience.
- > Gender-based violence (GBV) training contributed to a noticeable reduction in GBV cases within the community.
- > Savings accumulated through the VSLA were successfully shared among members, enabling investment in household and income-generating needs.

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE

In 2025, Okere City strengthened community education by integrating experiential learning into its broader education programming, complementing both formal and informal education initiatives. This hands-on approach positions rural communities as active learning spaces where practical experience, peer exchange and real-world exposure drive sustainable change.

A key milestone under this approach was achieved in November 2025 through farmer exposure visits implemented under the Shea Carbon Insetting Project. Okere City organized two field visits to the Baralegi Presidential Demonstration Farm in Otuke District, reaching 128 farmers and advancing its target of equipping 150 farmers with regenerative agriculture skills. The visits were facilitated by the Assistant Farm Manager and implemented in partnership with Forested, with support from Bansk Beauty

The first visit engaged 66 farmers from the Okere Shea Cooperative Society, the project's pioneer cohort, while the second involved 62 farmers from the Olarokwon Farmers Group, newly recruited to expand community participation. Together, these groups represent the full project target and

mark a significant achievement in scaling regenerative agriculture in Okere.

The experiential learning model addressed key challenges facing smallholder farmers, including declining soil fertility, climate variability and limited access to practical agricultural knowledge. Through hands-on demonstrations and interactive learning, farmers gained skills in regenerative and climate-smart agriculture, soil restoration, enterprise diversification and preparation for participation in emerging carbon markets. The Baralegi Presidential Demonstration Farm served as an open classroom, showcasing practical, locally relevant models that support climate resilience, improved livelihoods and environmental restoration.



Jasper Okaka, the Assistant farmer Manager takes the farmers through vegetable production



# EDUCATION IN PHOTOS



## SUB-PURPOSE 3: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

A healthy environment underpins a resilient community and a sustainable rural economy. Under sub-purpose three, Okere City is dedicated to restoring, protecting and managing natural resources, with a strong focus on indigenous tree species that sustain livelihoods and preserve the landscape. Our approach centers on community empowerment, conservation and effective local governance to ensure people and nature thrive together.

Tree planting is at the heart of this work, particularly promoting shea, neem and bamboo for their cultural, economic and ecological importance. Through community drives, schools and household participation, Okere City is rebuilding green cover and

advancing long-term ecological restoration.

To address the growing threat to indigenous trees especially shea, we prioritize community sensitization and awareness to promote responsible stewardship and sustainable land use. We also strengthen environmental governance by working with local councils and clan leaders to enforce community by-laws, alongside collaboration with law enforcement to protect vulnerable tree species.

Together, these efforts position Okere City as a leader in environmental stewardship, safeguarding natural resources and securing the wellbeing of current and future generations.

### SHEA CARBON INSET PROJECT

The Okere Shea Carbon Project is a flagship initiative that is serving as a cornerstone for climate mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable community development in the region. The project addresses critical environmental challenges while simultaneously enhancing local livelihoods. It integrates multiple complementary interventions, including the protection and regeneration of indigenous shea trees, establishment of agro-forestry systems, development of apiary business, production and use of organic fertilizers and pesticides, and introduction of modern yoke technologies for sustainable farm mechanization. These activities not only increase carbon sequestration and restore ecosystem functions but also improve soil fertility, enhance pollination, and strengthen household food security. Through participatory training and community engagement, the project builds local capacity in climate-smart practices, fosters environmental stewardship, and empowers smallholder farmers to actively contribute to both environmental sustainability and socio-economic resilience, positioning the community to benefit from future carbon credit opportunities.

# ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENTS



## Regeneration

- > Introduced modern yoke making to support sustainable traction and farm mechanization
- > Enhanced community awareness of trees, bees and organic farming as carbon, biodiversity and livelihood assets.

## Nursery Bed

Established a standard seedling raising nursery, producing:

- > Over 10,000 white teak seedlings
- > Distributed over 2,000 seedlings of mango, citrus, avocado, guava and calliandra.
- > Raised over 10,000 shea seedlings to be distributed at start of the planting season in 2026

## Apiculture

Established a community demonstration apiary farm of practical learning at Okere City

- > 74 beehives installed, 20 successfully colonized
- > Constructed beekeeping house and hive stands
- > Planted flowering plants (e.g, passion fruit) to enhance forage and pollination

## Capacity Building

- > Strengthened shea tree protection and regeneration through community sensitization and training.
- > Conducted training on best tree seedling planting and management practices, organic inputs making and application, yoke making and beekeeping

## Apiculture

- > Registered and organized 75 smallholder farmers for community-based climate action.
- > Distributed over 500 mixed fruit seedlings (mango, citrus and jackfruit) to farmers.

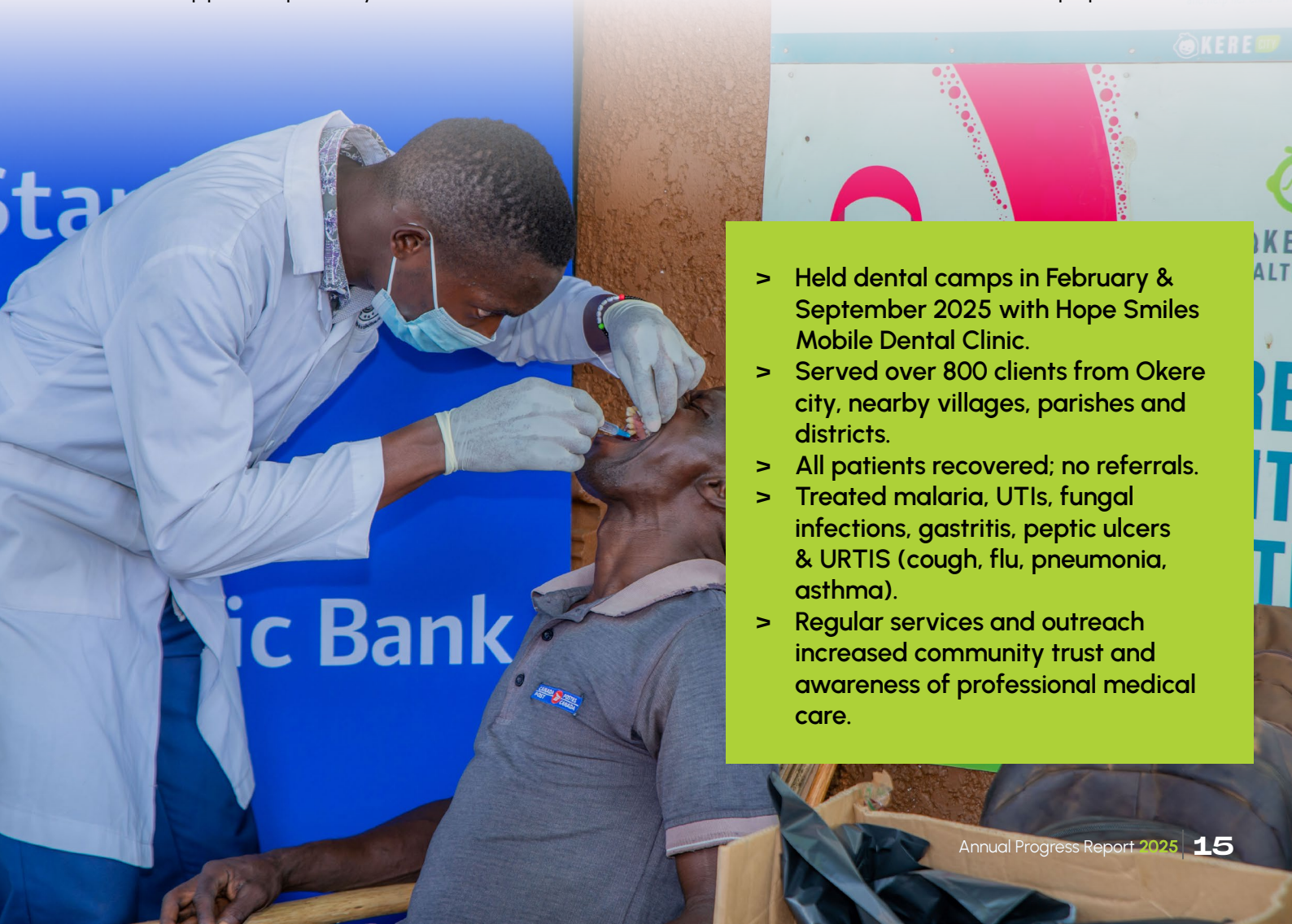
# SUB-PURPOSE 4: ENSURING PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY

## OKERE COMMUNITY MEDICAL CENTER

The year 2025 marked a significant period of growth and service delivery for Okere Community Medical Centre. Guided by our commitment to providing accessible, affordable and quality healthcare, the center worked diligently to respond to the medical needs of communities within Okere City and the neighboring villages and throughout the year, the Centre successfully managed a wide range of common illnesses, including malaria, urinary tract infections, gastrointestinal conditions, fungal infections, and upper respiratory tract infections such as

cough, flu, pneumonia, and asthma. Through timely diagnosis and appropriate treatment, all cases were effectively handled at the facility, with no referrals recorded - reflecting improved capacity and quality of care.

In addition to routine clinical services, Okere Community Medical Centre partnered with Hope Smiles Mobile Dental Clinic Uganda to conduct two major dental outreach camps in February and September 2025. These activities significantly expanded access to oral health services for under-served populations.



- > Held dental camps in February & September 2025 with Hope Smiles Mobile Dental Clinic.
- > Served over 800 clients from Okere city, nearby villages, parishes and districts.
- > All patients recovered; no referrals.
- > Treated malaria, UTIs, fungal infections, gastritis, peptic ulcers & URTIS (cough, flu, pneumonia, asthma).
- > Regular services and outreach increased community trust and awareness of professional medical care.

# **SUB-PURPOSE 5:** **SUPPORTING SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE**

Sports, arts and culture are central to community identity, social cohesion and personal development. Okere City remains committed to nurturing talent, promoting creativity and preserving cultural heritage through inclusive, community-driven initiatives that support children, youth and the wider community.

In 2025, Okere City strengthened sports development through the establishment and use of community training grounds, including a football pitch and volleyball court, complemented by coaching, youth training

and regular sports tournaments that promote teamwork, discipline and community unity. The organization advanced arts and cultural development by collaborating with local artists and cultural practitioners, supporting music, dance, drama and artistic residency programs that expand creative expression and cultural exchange.

Okere City also prioritized cultural preservation through festivals, performances and exposure activities that celebrate heritage, strengthen cultural identity and encourage intergenerational learning.

- > Organized five community cultural dance events and competitions, attended by approximately 5,000 community members.
- > Organized and participated in football competitions with local community teams.
- > Organized school inter-class music, dance, drama, and sports competitions.
- > Facilitated boxing training for community members to promote physical fitness, discipline and self-confidence.



# 2025 IMPACT STORIES IN THE NEWS

**Daily Monitor**

TRUTH EVERY DAY

Climate Finance Poised to Transform Northern Uganda's Shea Value Chain

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**Publicist**

Brands & Public Relations

Stanbic Bank Lights up Okere City School Girls with 220 Solar powered Bags.

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Okere Shea Coop Makes Historic Shea Butter Shipment to the USA

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Otuke Locals Champion Drive to Save Endangered Shea Trees

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**Stanbic Bank**

Our Blue Gift to Okere Community Development Project (Okere City)

# KEY REFLECTIONS AND LEARNINGS FROM 2025

Real change doesn't follow a straight line. Here's how our teams adapted, listened, and evolved with communities this year.

## INTEGRATED SERVICES CREATE STRONGER IMPACT

Combining education, health, livelihoods, water, and digital access in one ecosystem proved more effective than running isolated projects. The "rural city" model works best when services reinforce each other.



### KEY LESSONS

- > **Integration Multiplies Impact**  
When services are connected (education + health + livelihoods + water + digital access), each one strengthens the others. The overall outcome is greater than what any single program could achieve alone.
- > **People Experience Development Holistically**  
Communities do not live in "sectors". A student's performance depends on health, clean water, family income, and access to information. Planning projects around real life—not categories—leads to better results.
- > **Coordination Is more Valuable than Expansion**  
Improving links between existing services can be more effective and cost-efficient than launching many new standalone projects. Strong coordination, shared data, and joint planning increase sustainability and reduce duplication.

## WOMEN-CENTERED ECONOMIC PROGRAMS DRIVE COMMUNITY GROWTH

Investing in women through cooperatives, microloans, and skills training generated ripple effects in household income, food security, and children's education. Empowering women remains one of the highest-return strategies.



### KEY LESSONS

- > **Women's Economic Empowerment Benefits Entire Households.**  
Income earned by women was more likely to be reinvested in food, healthcare, and school needs, leading to visible improvements in family well-being rather than individual gain only.
- > **Cooperatives Strengthen Confidence and Collective Power.**  
Group structures improved bargaining power, peer learning, savings culture, and emotional support, which increased participation and resilience during economic shocks.

# TRUST TAKES TIME IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

At Okere City, we learned that trust is built slowly through consistent presence, honest communication, and delivering on small promises before large ones. Community members gain confidence when avoiding over-commitment, listening to local voices, and adapting programs based on feedback. At the same time, trust can be broken quickly by delays, unclear expectations, or decisions made without consultation. Sustainable progress therefore depends not only on projects and funding, but on nurturing long-term relationships, transparency in resource use, and visible accountability. In essence, social capital proved as critical as physical infrastructure—once strengthened it accelerates collaboration, but once weakened it takes significant time and humility to rebuild.

## KEY LESSONS

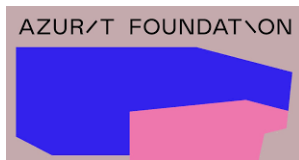
- > At Okere City, regular presence, honoring commitments, and clear communication proved more powerful than one-off big initiatives. Communities judge reliability over time, not by promises.
- > Involving community members in planning and decision-making reduced misunderstandings and resistance. When people feel heard and see their input reflected in action, ownership and cooperation increase.
- > Openness about finances, timelines, and challenges helped maintain confidence even during delays or setbacks. Trust is easier to sustain when expectations are realistic and information is shared early rather than after problems arise.





## OUR PARTNERS

In 2025, Okere City expanded its partnership base as part of its strategy to strengthen education delivery, climate-smart livelihoods, research and innovation and community resilience. During the year, the project established and formalized six key partnerships that provided financial, technical, policy, research and market support, enabling it to scale its impact across Okere and the wider Northern Uganda region.



### AZURIT FOUNDATION

In February, Okere City became an Azurit Foundation grantee, receiving support to improve teacher welfare & capacity, strengthen access to quality & affordable education for under-served children in Okere & neighboring areas



### OVERSEAS RESOURCES FOUNDATION LTD

Supported investment in technology and research and development aimed at producing high-quality nilotica shea butter. This collaboration strengthened production standards and innovation within Okere City's shea value chain.



### WISDOM AT WORK FUND

Supported the continuation of our Functional Adult Literacy programs for 300 women under the Aerokwan project

# SUCCESS STORY

## Growing Tomorrow: How Okere City's Carbon Credit Project is Transforming Lives and Landscapes

In Okere, Adwari Sub County in Otuke District, a simple seedling distribution has grown into a powerful community-led carbon credit project that is transforming both lives and landscapes. The Okere City Shea Carbon Credit Project combines tree planting with climate action, skills building and improved livelihoods, turning local farmers into active custodians of the environment.

For farmers like Lillian Arao, the project has added new purpose to a lifetime of farming. After receiving fruit tree seedlings in 2025, she integrated tree care into her daily routine, applying new skills gained through training and extension support. Though the trees are still young, she understands their long-term value for food, income and family well-being, and tree care has become a shared household responsibility.

Across the community, attitudes toward tree planting have shifted. What was once seen as costly or abstract is now understood as a practical way to restore land, improve livelihoods and remove carbon from the air. Farmers share experiences, challenges and pride in contributing to both local development and global climate action.

The project, implemented by Okere City in partnership with Forestry Uganda, has already distributed over 500 seedlings to 76 farmers, with continuous monitoring and technical support to ensure survival despite challenges such as pests. Looking ahead, Okere City's leadership envisions a future where carbon farming supports education, health, water access and women's livelihoods, and where tree planting becomes a lasting community culture.

Ultimately, the story of Okere is one of hope and resilience: as the trees grow, so does the promise of a greener, more prosperous and climate-resilient future for the people who care for them.

# SOCIAL MEDIA



**3,825+**  
FOLLOWERS



**1,600+**  
FOLLOWERS



**720+**  
FOLLOWERS



**516+**  
SUBSCRIBERS



**685+**  
FOLLOWERS



**7,000+**  
FOLLOWERS