



2023 ANNUAL Impact Report





We Continue To **Serve With Love**

The year 2023 marked another remarkable chapter for us. We ventured into innovative creative arts projects, notably the theatrical production of 'Echoes of Lawino.' Our community members took center stage at the Uganda National Theatre, presenting a captivating showcase of songs, dances, and rhymes in defense of Lawino, the fictional African woman immortalized in Okot pBitek's masterpiece, 'Song of Lawino.'

The impact of our social impact projects heightened, with the school, health, and tailoring centers collectively serving more than twice the number of community members compared to the previous year.

Meanwhile, our social business initiatives reported significant growth. The profits of Okere Shea Butter Coop doubled in 2023, surpassing the figures from 2022. Our local restaurant and grocery store experienced increased customer traffic, and we welcomed 300 more visitors to Okere compared to the previous year.

In August 2023, I embarked on a journey to Ithaca, New York, undertaking a prestigious Fulbright Humphrey Fellowship at Cornell University. In the United States, I seized the opportunity to share the inspiring narrative of Okere City with approximately 700 students and faculty from Dyson School and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Additionally, I engaged in face-to-face meetings with our American partners, an experience that transcended the limitations of virtual communication. Among the highlights was our collaborative effort to launch Okere Shea Butter on Amazon, aiming to boost sales and channel the proceeds directly into increasing dividends for our cooperators in Okere, thereby enhancing their household incomes.

I am particularly delighted that my first long-term absence in Okere didn't significantly affect our day-to-day operations. This has given me hope and inspiration to continue building a firm foundation for a more solid and sustainable organization. The on-the-ground staff are to be thanked for all the sacrifices. Let us continue to serve our local community with love.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our community members, partners, and Friends of Okere for contributing to the success of 2023.

Ojok Okello, *Founder and CEO*

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to create a resilient, thriving, and self-reliant rural future in Okere by investing in people and infrastructure, deepening relevant collaborations, and creating products and services to expand infinite opportunities and possibilities for the local community.

Since 2019 when we started, we have served 5,000 people, three-quarters of them women, and children with essential health, education, economic empowerment, and cultural promotion support services.





\$200K
Invested in 15 projects

5,000+
People served

75%
of projects registered
improved net profits

10
New jobs were created

85%
of key community clients
are women and children.

500+
Visited Us

02
New businesses started

FIGHTING HUNGER AND POVERTY IN OKERE



500+

farmers received
agroecology
extension support

700

children were fed

05%

Improvement in the
household
income of 200
members

IMPROVING HEALTH OUTCOMES IN OKERE



2,500

people were treated at
the health center.

01

Dental Health Camp was
held serving 250 people.

01

Borehole was drilled to
improve access to clean
water for 1,000 people.

PROMOTING CULTURE AND CREATIVE ARTS IN OKERE



12

Songs were produced as part of the Okeme Vol.1 Album.

3K

Local People engaged in cultural activities.

1

Theatrical production completed

600

Attended the theatrical production of Echoes of Lawino at the National Theatre in Kampala

IMPROVING EDUCATION OUTCOMES IN OKERE



50

Young women enrolled
in technical tailoring training

350

children attended Okere
Community School.

60%

More children enrolled
at the school compared
to 2022.

100

women attended
Adult Education

IMPROVING GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOMES IN OKERE



1:1

Ratio for girls to boys
enrolled at Okere
Community School

15

Gender awareness
workshops
training conducted

2:1

ratio for girls to boys who
completed primary
education

300

attended gender-related
workshops and
community events.



TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

2,000

shea trees were planted.

95%

Reduction in the
destruction of shea trees

05

Climate-related
workshops & community
events were organized.

INTRODUCING OUR SCHOOL HEADTEACHER

In the year 2023, Mr. Okello assumed the role of headteacher at our community school, concurrently serving as our assistant operations manager. Vincent holds a diploma in education from Kyambogo University and brings with him a wealth of experience in school headship and administration. His extensive background includes holding senior positions in school management in Kampala before joining our team.



I am delighted to join Okere City. It was a difficult beginning adjusting to life in the village since I had been working in Kampala. Working in the village has its share of difficulties, particularly since many parents here are not actively prioritizing their children's education, a vital component for their future success. Nevertheless, I find joy in our efforts to encourage rural parents, many of whom are illiterate, to recognize the value of education for their children. Positive changes are already underway, and I am optimistic that, with time, the parents in Okere will fully appreciate the significance of education. This transformation will become more evident as success stories emerge from our community school. Our inaugural class has recently completed their Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE), and I am confident that we will not only excel but continue to thrive in the near and distant future."

Okello Vincent, Headteacher, *Okere Community School*

OUR 2023 ONLINE NUMBERS



180

New YouTube Subscribers



150+

New Tiktok Followers



1K

Unique Website Visitors



500+

New X (Twitter) Followers.



1K+

Facebook & Instagram
Page Likes / Followers



20

Media Mentions
and Engagements



01

E-commerce platform
launched. (Amazon)



\$3K

Raised from [every.org](https://www.every.org),
our online
crowdfunding platform.

OUR WORK IN THE NEWS

Okere City: A Tale of a Ugandan Village Turned 'City' - Solutions Now Africa

This documentary features how our work is creating economic development opportunities in the countryside, thereby curbing the challenge of rural-urban migration in Africa.

[Watch here](#)



The Echoes of Lawino Reverberate in Uganda - The Theatre Times

Our theatrical production - Echoes of Lawino which is an adaption of Okot p'Bitek's Song of Lawino was published in [The Theatre Times](#).



Bamboo and Community in Uganda: Okere City - Bambu Batu

Bamboo forms a quintessential facet of our sustainable construction work.

[Read more in this article by Bambu Batu.](#)



OUR WORK IN THE NEWS

Rebuilding Okere through Community Education - Urban TV

This report by Uganda's Urban TV gives a snippet of our educational projects - from primary to adult education.

[Watch it on YouTube.](#)



I want the world to know": Climate change in Okere - CARE International

Care International documented how climate change continues to have a dangerous toll on livelihood in Okere, as well as its gender-related dimensions.

[Read the Report here.](#)



Okot p'Bitek's Song Reeched at the National Theatre - Daily Monitor

The Uganda Daily Monitor published a story about our production - Echoes of Lawino that was staged at the Uganda National Theatre. [Read the article here.](#)



OUR WORK IN THE NEWS

The Timeless Way of Building a Futuristic African Village

Our founder, Ojok Okello was invited to give a keynote address at Northwestern's African Studies Graduate Conference.

[Read more](#)



Unbankable Documentary: Trailer

Our Voluntary Saving and Lending Associations (VSLA) has been featured in the upcoming UNBANKABLE documentary.

[Watch the trailer.](#)



“The City of the Future is in the Countryside” - ETC Swedish Newspaper

Africa's cities are growing the fastest in the world. In the Ugandan countryside, a unique project is about to create the continent's first rural city, built on principles of sustainability and cohesion.

[Read More.](#)



OUR WORK IN THE NEWS

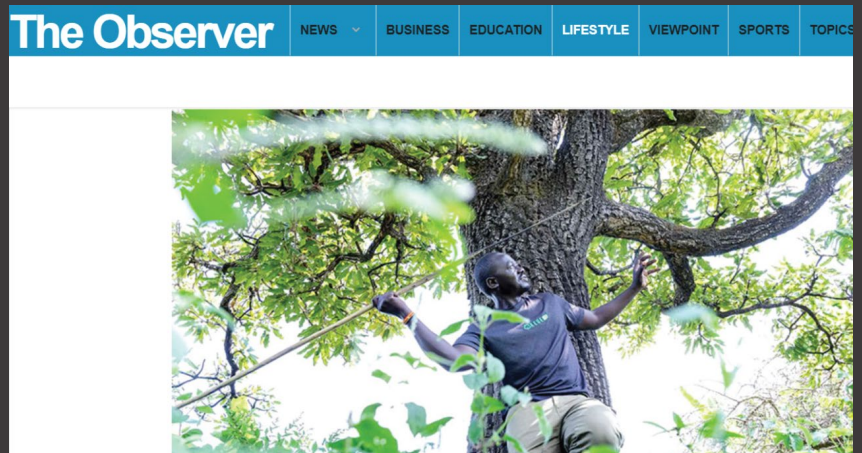
Humphrey Fellows offer global insights on development and the environment - Cornell University

As a Fulbright Humphrey Fellow at Cornell, our founder wrote reflections about the panel discussion session where he participated. [Read more](#)



Meet the inspirational trailblazers out to transform our economy - The Observer

Our founder, Ojok Okello was listed as among the people whose works are positively impacting society through inspiration, skilling, business, mentorship, activism, or even innovations in 2023. [Read the article here.](#)



Launch of Okere Health Centre with Stanbic Bank

With assistance from Stanbic Bank, we inaugurated a laboratory unit and implemented solar power installation at our health facility. [Watch the launch here.](#)



PRAISES FOR OUR WORK IN 2023

"You may need to visit Okere City one of these days and witness the wonder of the human spirit at work. Hurray! Okere City for helping your people in ways that continue to elude most common men".

Sam Stewart Mutabazi,
Urban Development Expert



In many ways, Okere City is not just a place. It is an experience of a transformational community that endeavors to implement the SDGs through their different initiatives. They are preserving culture; improving literacy rates both among the children and the elderly through the adult literacy program; promoting economic development through the Shea Butter business"

Diana Ondoga, *Corporate Investment Lead, Stanbic Bank, Uganda*



UPDATES FROM OKERE CITY



JAN 2023

Together with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Stanbic Bank Uganda, and Segal Family Foundation, we hosted the second edition of the Okere Summit for Sustainable Development under the theme: The Meaning of Sustainability (In Practice). [Read more.](#)



FEB 2023

We convened the inaugural Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) meeting for the year 2023 following the commencement of the school term. This association serves as a forum to unite key stakeholders, fostering collaborative decision-making and the implementation of activities for the Okere Community School.



MARCH 2023

We partnered with Enjuba to distribute 500 books and read stories to children at our community school.



APRIL 2023

We planted 500 shea trees, thanks to the rain which returned after a long dry spell

UPDATES FROM OKERE CITY



MAY 2023

Together with Football for Peace, We organized an Inter-Primary Schools Tournament in the Otuke district to celebrate the International Day of Sport, Development, and Peace.



MAY 2023

We collaborated with KQ Hub to organize a 2-week [artist residency](#) in Okere. A musician, a writer, a poet, and a playwright were the artists. [Read more.](#)



JUNE 2023

We produced [Echoes of Lawino](#), the first ever theatrical production adapted from Song of Lawino, Okot p'Bitek's classical book of African Literature. A total of 600 people attended the 3-day production.



JULY 2023

Together with Miss Lango, we held a 10-day boot camp for 10 girls selected from all the districts in the Lango sub-region who were competing in the Miss Lango Cultural Contest

UPDATES FROM OKERE CITY



AUG 2023

We partnered with [barefootlaw_org](https://barefootlaw.org) to organize a legal education workshop targeting local councilors in Okere. It's our way to support the grassroots leaders to promote effective local governance for improved service delivery.



SEPT 2023

We represented Otuke District in the Inter-Schools MDD regional contest and emerged as the 4th out of 12 schools. This was a significant feat as a first-time participant in the competitions. We were awarded as the most inspirational team.



OCT 2023

Our friends, Jacqueline Auma and Uchenna from the UK paid us a courtesy visit and donated books to the community school.

UPDATES FROM OKERE CITY



NOV 2023

We partnered with the Author Alier Foundation to organize the #InTheFootStepsOfOkotpBitek Poetry Prize. The Prize attracted participation from 20 secondary schools in Northern Uganda. [Watch more here.](#)



NOV 2023

20 children from our ECD graduated from nursery to primary school. [Read more and see the photo album here.](#)



NOV 2023

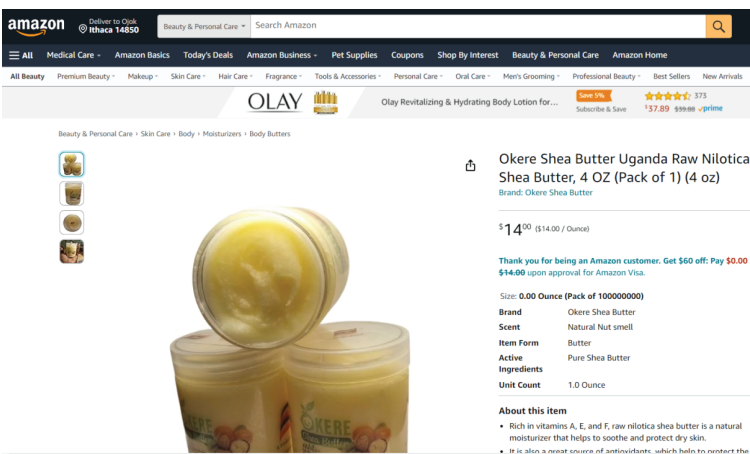
17 students, our first candidate class sat for their Primary Leaving Exams in Nov 2023. We are sure that they shall pass and get the required grades to continue to high school

UPDATES FROM OKERE CITY



DEC 2023

Ojok Okello, our founder and CEO had an insightful chat with Jackson Twesigye of Nyaka about Rural futurism and community development. [Watch/listen to it here.](#)



DEC 2023

We launched Okere Shea Butter on Amazon. Now, customers in America can order and have raw, organic, and pure nilotica shea butter from Okere delivered to their doorposts. [Make your order here.](#)

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024



We eagerly anticipate the opportunities that 2024 holds. While our founder remains in the US until mid-year, we plan to collaborate with business students from Cornell University to conduct a comprehensive market analysis for Okere Shea Butter in the US.

The primary aim of this study is to leverage e-commerce platforms effectively, thereby expanding sales opportunities for Okere Shea Butter there. As we aim to increase sales and enhance the profitability of Okere Shea Butter, our broader goal is to enhance the operations of the Okere Shea Cooperative Society, ultimately raising the household incomes of the women involved in the shea nut collection in Okere.

Simultaneously, we remain dedicated to the continual improvement of our community school, anticipating a significant enrollment increase to over 500 learners—double the figure from 2022 when we had 300 pupils.

In the year ahead, key infrastructural initiatives include the operationalization of the community museum, the establishment of a community gymnasium, and the development of an irrigation farm.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO OUR PARTNERS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have supported us, including the generous donors and partners listed below, for their contributions to our endeavors in the year 2023.

