



ANNUAL REPORT 2025



OUR MISSION

Inspiring Ugandans to engage in inclusive, philanthropic activities towards improving quality of learning for underprivileged children and communities.

WHO WE ARE

40 Days over 40 Smiles Foundation (4040) is a volunteer-based, non-profit organisation founded in 2012. We provide literacy and educational resources to children in underserved communities as a means of increasing enrolment, retention and improving access to quality education.

OUR PROGRAMME AREAS



CONTENTS

Team Lead's Message	i
Our operating context	1-2
Programme highlights	3-9
Fundraising and partnerships	10
Thank you	12





Team Lead's message

2025 was a year of remarkable growth, learning, and piloting new and bold ideas for 4040. As we reflect on the past year, we are inspired by the resilience, creativity, and curiosity of the children, volunteers, educators, and partners who make our work possible.

Our programmes continued to bridge educational gaps, strengthen life skills, and foster meaningful community engagement. Through interventions that combine literacy, ICT, creative expression, and practical skills, we sought to equip learners with tools for academic success and personal development. The integration of mentorship, career guidance, and safe spaces for self-expression has reinforced our belief that education must extend beyond textbooks to empower young people to navigate complex social and economic challenges.

In particular, the Angaza Outreach Programme and the Angaza Resource Centre reached over 470 children, strengthened teacher capacity, and provided platforms for learners to build confidence, leadership skills, and social agency. These achievements were made possible by the unwavering commitment of our volunteers, the expertise of partner professionals, and the generosity of supporters who trust in the potential of every child.

As we look forward to 2026, we are committed to scaling our reach beyond Makindye through the Mobile Library Project, expanding volunteer engagement, and fostering collaborative partnerships that respond directly to the challenges facing Uganda's primary education system.

Together, we are not only bridging gaps in learning but shaping futures.

On behalf of the 4040 Team, I am deeply grateful for your support in the past year and look forward to working with you in 2026.

Esther Kalenzi
Team Leader





Our operating context

Uganda's primary education environment in 2025

Uganda's primary education landscape in 2025 reflects a complex interplay of progress and persistent challenges that significantly influence how organisations like the 4040 operate. The country has maintained high enrolment levels under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme, ensuring that the majority of children attend school. Despite this achievement, learning outcomes remain uneven, with many children struggling to achieve foundational literacy and numeracy skills, especially in under-resourced schools. Overcrowded classrooms, limited access to textbooks, and inadequate teaching materials are widespread, creating environments where teachers face significant barriers in delivering high-quality, learner-centred education.

The Ministry of Education and Sports continues to implement the competence-based curriculum, which emphasises applied learning, life skills, and learner-centred pedagogy. While the curriculum seeks to equip children with practical skills, critical thinking abilities, and social-emotional competencies alongside academic knowledge, effective implementation is frequently constrained by insufficient teacher capacity and limited access to professional development opportunities.

“

Many early grade teachers lack the training to deliver phonics based reading instruction or integrate ICT tools and creative learning methods which affects literacy acquisition and practical skills.

Many early-grade teachers lack the training to deliver phonics-based reading instruction or integrate ICT tools and creative learning methods, which directly affects literacy acquisition and practical skills development.

Access to quality education also varies by geography and socio-economic context. Children in rural and peri-urban communities often contend with long travel distances to school, minimal home-based support for learning, and higher risks of absenteeism or early dropout. Gender-specific challenges persist, including barriers to menstrual health management, safety concerns, and cultural expectations that limit girls' full participation in school activities. Simultaneously, there is growing recognition at both community and national levels of the importance of life skills, creative learning, and mentorship in equipping young people to navigate challenges, pursue education effectively, and participate meaningfully in society.

These realities directly shaped the design and delivery of 4040 Foundation's programmes in 2025. The gaps in literacy and applied learning informed the focus of the Angaza Outreach Programme, which reached over 230 children across 20 sessions, combining literacy instruction with life skills, practical problem-solving, and creative expression.



Programme Milestones

The Angaza Outreach Programme

In 2025, the Angaza Outreach Programme delivered measurable improvements in children's literacy, life skills, confidence, and community engagement through a sustained partnership with Merowa and Quentin Junior Schools. The programme reached over 230 children through 20 sessions, strengthening foundational literacy while building essential life skills such as self-awareness, community agency, and resourcefulness. As a result, children demonstrated increased confidence in expressing themselves, improved participation in group learning, and a stronger sense of responsibility towards their communities.

Practical skills. Through six hands-on skills trainings in liquid soap making, paper bag production, creative writing, bookmaking, bracelet making, and public speaking, children developed practical problem-solving abilities and learned how to identify and use locally available resources to create useful products. These activities translated learning into action, enabling children to better understand how skills and creativity can be applied to address everyday and contemporary development challenges within their environments.



The Writing Competition. Opportunities for self-expression and reflection were enhanced through a structured writing competition, where children produced essays and poems on themes such as family and friendship, education, and the environment. 70 entries were received by 4040, and the outstanding 13 were selected and recognised at a prize awarding ceremony attended by over 150 guests, including learners, 4040 volunteers, local leaders, parents and teachers. The participation of schools in the competition validated children's voices and efforts, contributing to improved confidence, motivation, and creative expression.

Professional-led life skills sessions.

The integration of professional-led life skills sessions led to improved awareness and understanding of personal health, safety, and wellbeing. Sessions on mental health facilitated by Safe Places Uganda increased children's ability to name emotions, seek support, and challenge stigma. Menstrual health education delivered by Molly Nabwami contributed to improved knowledge, reduced myths, and more open conversations among learners. First aid sessions conducted by Red Cross Uganda equipped children with basic safety knowledge and practical response skills. Collectively, these sessions created safe spaces that enabled children to openly discuss fears and misconceptions, strengthening trust between learners and facilitators.

Career guidance. Career guidance activities resulted in broader career awareness and strengthened aspirations among participating children. Engagement with nine professionals from both formal and informal sectors exposed learners to diverse career pathways, including non-traditional options. For many children, this clarified future goals, while for others it expanded their understanding of the range of livelihoods available beyond conventional employment trajectories.



Learners paint a classroom during the Angaza Clean Up Day



Soap made by learners during Angaza Sessions

Angaza Volunteer cohesion. The department had a flourishing relationship amongst the volunteers and this helped planned operations move smoothly and kept moral high from the start to finish. The department accredited the moral to managements support of all proposed activities and ideas. Our volunteers felt valued when ideas suggested in planning meetings were implemented. This was a huge internal win.

Angaza Day 2025. The first-ever Angaza Day marked a significant programme milestone by consolidating learning outcomes and strengthening community participation. Over 400 participants, including children, parents, teachers, volunteers, and partners, attended the event. Children demonstrated increased confidence and communication skills by presenting poems, music, dance, drama, and reading activities to a large audience. The event also strengthened peer learning and social interaction across schools, while increasing parental and community awareness of the programme's value and impact.

- 230 Children
- 20 Sessions
- 6 Skills
- 4 Professionally led sessions

The Angaza Clean Up Day. Community engagement outcomes were strengthened through a school-based clean-up day that engaged over 150 children alongside approximately 15 partners and volunteers. This activity increased children's sense of ownership over their school environment and reinforced practical lessons on teamwork, leadership, and civic responsibility.

The Angaza Resource Centre

In 2025, the Angaza Resource Centre (ARC) strengthened access to quality learning and skills development for young people and educators through targeted programmes that responded directly to curriculum and community needs.

Holiday Programme for Teenagers. Three holiday programmes were delivered at the Centre, each reaching approximately 30 young people with integrated ICT, literacy, and life skills training. As a result, participating learners developed practical competencies that directly supported their school learning, particularly within Uganda's competence-based secondary school curriculum, which places strong emphasis on applied skills. In addition, young people received chess training that enhanced critical thinking, concentration, and strategic planning, and several participants went on to compete in community chess championships, an outcome made possible through a partnership with Cruciform Ministries International.

Drop Everything and Read Day (D.E.A.R. Day). Literacy promotion was further enhanced through Drop Everything and Read Day (D.E.A.R. Day), during which eight guest readers engaged 240 children.



Teenagers attend a session in the ARC library during the holiday programme

The week-long reading series brought together eager young learners from our partner schools and an exciting roster of guest readers including; Daphne Ampire Karama, a TV scriptwriter, actress and producer; Penninah Nabirye, 4040's Fundraising and Partnerships Lead;

Edith Baganda, an Actress and Entrepreneur; Daniel Omara, an accomplished comedian; Marijan Hussein, an Actor; Allan Manzi, a filmmaker; Kato Katende, a Writer, Filmmaker and storyteller; Rahma Kunihiro, a volunteer at the Centre and a team from Deloitte Uganda.

Together, the guest readers brought colourful stories to life from the ARC's extensive collection, featuring special 4040 publications. The interactive sessions expanded learner vocabularies, explored valuable life lessons, and even showcased their spelling skills in friendly competitions that had everyone cheering. D.E.A.R. Day reflected 4040's commitment to supporting access to quality education.

Relatedly, the Centre hosted Rhona Rwangyezi-Grimm, author of beautifully curated African children's books, at the Angaza Resource Centre as part of her Tales by Nyana book tour. Rhona has previously supported our work through book donations, and this time, she brought her stories to life in person. She read *Ruhondeeza the Sleepy Giant* to our young learners, capturing their imagination from beginning to end. She also gifted the ARC with additional titles from her collection.



Penninah Nabirye reads to pupils from Quentin Junior School during D.E.A.R. Week

Capacity building for educators and ARC Staff.

Teacher capacity building remained a core outcome area for ARC in 2025. The Foundation conducted two targeted trainings in phonics and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) for 30 teachers from Vallerian and Hope Shammah's Primary Schools. These trainings led to improved instructional practices, resulting in more structured, engaging, and effective reading sessions within partner schools. Teachers demonstrated increased confidence in phonics instruction and learner assessment, contributing to improved literacy support for early-grade learners.



Read for Life delivers a training to teachers from our partner schools

To strengthen institutional support systems, four ARC staff members participated in a three-week supervision and mentorship training in phonics held in Gulu and facilitated by Read for Life in May 2025. This investment enhanced the team's technical capacity to provide ongoing coaching and support to teachers. As a direct outcome, the ARC team conducted supervision and mentorship visits across all partner schools with 20 teachers, reinforcing best practices, addressing instructional gaps, and strengthening the quality of literacy delivery at the school level.

**30 teenagers and 220 children
30 and 4 staff teachers trained
8 guest readers for D.E.A.R Day**

Strengthening ARC partnerships. Partnership strengthening and resource mobilisation were key outcomes for the Centre during the year. The Foundation hosted a partner brunch that brought together over 35 individuals and organisations supporting ARC. The engagement created space to share programme updates, reflect on challenges, and collectively shape the future direction of the Centre, resulting in strengthened relationships and renewed partner commitment. These partnerships translated into tangible resource support, including a donation from the MTN Foundation under the Change Makers' Initiative of computers, a television, and a power storage device valued at UGX 20 million. Additional contributions included funds from Soma that enabled the procurement of 50 books, a box of books donated by Phidra Aturinda, and further book donations from Enjuba. Collectively, these resources expanded ARC's capacity to host more children, improved the learning environment, and significantly advanced progress towards the Foundation's mobile library vision.

In 2026, the ARC will broaden its reach by launching the Mobile Library Project, bringing books, computers, and mentorship directly to under-resourced schools. This initiative will target schools that face barriers in accessing the ARC due to distance or transportation challenges, ensuring more learners benefit from its educational resources



ARC partners at the partner brunch held at the Resource Centre in 2025

ANGAZA RESOURCE CENTRE (ARC)
was established by
OVER 40 SMILES FOUNDATION
in support of its donors, partners and friends
1st - JULY - 2023




Volunteer engagement remained a pillar of 4040's work in 2025. At the beginning of the year, the Foundation recruited 40 new volunteers across different departments while retaining experienced volunteers from previous cohorts. As a result, over 60 volunteers actively contributed to programme implementation throughout the year, increasing the Foundation's capacity to deliver activities consistently and at scale.

- 60+ volunteers engaged
- 6 trainings offered
- 1 4040 Connect

Capacity building was prioritised as a key outcome in 2025. Volunteers participated in targeted trainings in fundraising, communications, and monitoring and evaluation through the Nonprofit Builder programme supported by the Segal Family Foundation. Additional learning was gained through local fundraising training by the Change Academy and capacity strengthening on local philanthropy facilitated by the Global Fund for Community Foundations. The year also included a basic communications training led by Grace Kenganzi, which strengthened storytelling, documentation, and public engagement skills. Collectively, these investments resulted in improved efficiency, stronger coordination, and higher-quality volunteer contributions across programmes.

The Volunteer Programme

Volunteer learning was further enriched through the 4040 Connect, dubbed "Permission to Rewrite Your Story, which featured Fiona Kemigisha, a lawyer-turned-digital creative, who shared her inspiring journey of a bold career change. Now a podcast co-host and Creative Lead at Khama Digital, Fiona encouraged volunteers to embrace growth, courage, and creativity in their own paths. The event reached about 35 young people.



Fiona speaking to volunteers at the Connect

Additionally, six volunteers from our 2024 Communications Volunteers cohort have embarked on an exciting mentorship journey. Through our partnership with Agandy Studios, our volunteers received professional training in photography, videography, and graphic design - at no cost. The program equipped participants with hands-on experience and industry insights from Agandy Studios.

As a direct outcome of this structured support and skills development, several communication volunteers accessed career and employment opportunities with other organisations, including ATTA Breastmilk Community, Health Access Connect, the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda, YALI and Preterm Infants Parents Network Uganda. These transitions were supported through recommendations and job preparedness mentoring.

Volunteer engagement and sector collaboration were strengthened through a co-organised Volunteer Day at Makerere University in December, bringing together 50 stakeholders, including government, civil society, academia, media, and youth, in partnership with Restless Development. A key outcome was the development of a draft national volunteer policy to guide structured, ethical, and impactful volunteer management across the country.



**Strengthening fundraising
and partnerships**

The first-ever 4040 Prom

The #4040Prom, held at the Angaza Resource Centre, brought together supporters, partners, and volunteers to raise funds for 4040's Mobile Library Project. The event generated UGX 27,000,000, advancing efforts to deliver books and learning resources to under-resourced schools. Beyond fundraising, the prom demonstrated the power of community-led philanthropy in turning shared purpose into tangible educational impact.



Merchandise sales amounted 9,828,000, with profits supporting our operations

Thankful Thursday at Endiro

We 4040 partnered with Endiro Coffee, Nakasero, to host Thankful Thursday, a community-centred fundraising event that brought together friends, partners, and supporters in a spirit of gratitude and connection. The gathering provided a relaxed and engaging space for over 80 guests to interact through games, film screenings, and a treasure hunt, while supporting a shared cause.



Through Endiro's generous commitment of 10% of the day's sales, the event raised UGX 940,000 in support of the Angaza Mobile Library Project. These funds will contribute to the provision of books and learning resources for children in under-resourced schools.

Thankful Thursday reaffirmed the power of simple, locally driven initiatives to mobilise community support, demonstrating how everyday spaces and shared moments can be transformed into meaningful opportunities for resource mobilisation.

Grants and donations

We extend special appreciation to our grant and individual donors. The Global Fund for Community Foundations awarded the Foundation a USD 20,000 grant, while the MTN Foundation donated equipment worth Ugx 20 million, all significantly strengthening our ability to implement programmes and invest in organisational growth. In addition, individual contributors donated approximately UGX 6 million, reflecting continued trust in our vision and accountability.

- **\$45,000 Raised from grants and donations**
- **9, 828,000 from merchandise sales**
- **27,940,000 from events**

Learning, Collaboration, and Philanthropic Leadership

Throughout the year, 4040 strengthened its institutional capacity and sector engagement through intentional learning, collaboration, and leadership platforms that deepened skills, expanded networks, and reinforced our commitment to the communities we serve. Different members of the team engaged in leadership-building spaces such as the YALI Gala, where a sports-based experience fostered teamwork, coordination, and peer connection beyond competition, and the ForImpact Funding Workshop in Kampala, which sharpened our approach to strategic planning, authentic storytelling, and mission-centered partnerships.

Our participation in strategic capacity exchanges organised by the East Africa Philanthropy Network, alongside the Uganda Philanthropy Forum, Ashoka East Africa, and ICEA LION Asset Management, advanced conversations on social entrepreneurship and endowment-building to strengthen long-term sustainability.

At the philanthropic sector level, 4040 was represented at major regional and national convenings, including the Annual Philanthropy Symposium during Uganda's inaugural Philanthropy Week and the 9th East Africa Philanthropy Conference in Kigali, where reflections emphasised a shift from charity to co-creation, recognising that time, skills, lived experience, and trust in local communities are as critical as financial resources. We were further honoured to chair the civil society committee at a regional philanthropy convening, contributing insights grounded in locally supported work and reinforcing the need for collaborative, locally led approaches to sustainable development.

We also shared our work at a convening organised by the Global Fund for Community Foundations in Kigali, which was attended by stakeholders from across 23 countries in the world.

Collectively, these engagements sharpened our strategic direction, strengthened leadership, and reaffirmed our belief that lasting change is built through learning, collaboration, and generosity rooted in community.

THANK YOU

The Foundation extends its sincere gratitude to all our funders, partners, and supporters whose generosity and belief in our mission sustained our work throughout the year. Fundraising and partnerships were central to our ability to deliver programmes, grow organisational capacity, and expand our reach within communities.

Since our establishment in 2012, our work in Ugandan communities has been made possible by the commitment of our friends, supporters and partners. We sincerely thank our volunteers, programme partners, schools, individuals, companies, and community supporters across the country and beyond.

We extend special thanks to Agandy Studios, Merowa, Quentin, Vallerian and Hope Shammah's Schools, Mahiri Books, Endiro Coffee, Cruciform, Soma Book Club, DnJ Audio, Read for Life, MTN Foundation, Segal Family Foundation, Global Fund for Community Foundations, Done Athletics, The Deli, and Express Supermarket, among many others.

Your generosity, partnership, and belief in us continue to make our work possible. For this, we are deeply grateful.





BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE

40 Days Over 40 Smiles Foundation

info@40daysover40smiles.org | www.40daysover40smiles.org