




 OTEM COLLECTIVE

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



As we look back on the past year, I am filled with gratitude and pride in the efforts we have made together in pursuit of our mission of strengthening families and communities to care for vulnerable children. From the inception of Otem Collective, our focus has been unwavering—addressing the critical problem that 80% of children in orphanages have at least one living parent. Together, we have worked tirelessly to transform this reality, ensuring that children need not be separated from their families unnecessarily.

This annual report serves as a testament to the impact we have collectively made over the past year. Through your dedication and support, we have witnessed tangible outcomes that are bringing us closer to breaking the cycles of family separation and poverty for children in East Africa. Each page represents stories of change, resilience, and hope that your commitment has made possible.

In 2023, we made a strategic decision to shift our focus from working both locally in Florida and globally in Uganda to a more targeted global approach. This decision was rooted in our commitment to maximizing impact and utilizing resources efficiently. By concentrating our efforts globally, we aimed to create a more profound and lasting impact on vulnerable children and families. As part of this strategic shift, we hopped the border into Kenya, establishing a coaching relationship with Kwetu Home of Peace in Nairobi. Together, we are supporting their efforts to reunite street children with their families, contributing to the larger narrative of family preservation.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to each member of the Otem Collective family – those who have volunteered their time, generously contributed financially, and passionately advocated for change. Thank you for being problem solvers, for standing with us, and for championing the cause of vulnerable children and families.

As we look ahead to 2024, let's celebrate the progress we've made and renew our commitment to strengthening families. Together, we can continue to be champions for children and families, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive within the loving embrace of a family.

Here's to a future where family separation is a thing of the past, and every child can experience the love and belonging they deserve!

With gratitude and optimism,



Kristen Marks
Executive Director

Leadership



Kristen Marks
Executive Director



Jaimee Brown
Board Chair



Jacob Land
Board Treasurer



Megan Cowell
Board Secretary



Scott Marks
Board Member



Johnny Outing
Board Member



Harrison Porter
Board Member



Kimberly Reiff
Board Member



We believe all children deserve the opportunity to thrive in families

Our Mission

Otem Collective strengthens families and communities to care for vulnerable children.

Our Vision

To see a generation of children in East Africa raised in families, breaking the cycle of family separation and poverty.

What We Do

Strengthening Families

We work to holistically support and strengthen families through trainings and initiatives that help them care for their children.

Reuniting Families

Once children are in orphanages, we provide support and coaching to orphanages to get children back in families.

Orphanage Coaching

36

Children reunited with their families in 2023

3

Orphanages provided with individualized coaching in 2023

At the age of 12, Samuel* (name changed for child protection) found himself navigating the unforgiving streets of Nairobi, Kenya. After his parents separated, Samuel and his three siblings were left in the care of their alcoholic father. Eventually, the family was evicted from their home due to the inability to pay rent. While Samuel's siblings decided to live with their grandmother, he chose the harsh reality of street life, neglecting the importance of family bonds to give life on his own a go.

After six months on the streets, the team at Kwetu Home of Peace brought him to their center. However, the pull of the streets proved strong, leading him to run back after just two months. Undeterred, the team at Kwetu tracked him down and, after two months of persistence, successfully brought him back to the center. It marked the beginning of three transformative years for Samuel at Kwetu, where he not only found a safe place to live but also overcame his own struggles with drinking and completed his primary education.

Recognizing the importance of family ties, the Kwetu team began working to reconnect Samuel with his grandmother and family. And in November of 2023, Samuel was reunited with his grandmother!

As Sister Janerose, Kwetu's Director, reflects on Samuel's future, she emphasizes not only his individual progress but also the crucial importance of family. "What I see in his future is a very bright one. He now understands himself and confidently shares his aspirations for the future. He desires to be close to his family, acknowledging the challenges they face. Despite the obstacles, he yearns to be with them." Samuel's transformation from someone who once believed life was better on his own to someone who now wholeheartedly seeks the love and belonging of a family serves as a powerful testament to the redemptive power of familial bonds. We are so grateful to have supported and coached Kwetu through this reunification!



Training orphanage leaders on the attachment cycle during Faith to Action's Transition Connection event. This multi-day event brought together leaders from four international organizations looking to move towards family-based care. Kristen served as a coach and teacher for the February 2023 event.

Kole District Family Strengthening Initiative



In 2023, we analyzed the baseline assessment we conducted in late 2022 of four villages in Kole District, Northern Uganda and began the design process for a family strengthening initiative. In the coming weeks, we'll be starting Parent Support Groups in the villages, training parents and caregivers on things like basic parenting skills, nutrition, financial literacy, and sanitation and getting people into savings groups!

About Kole District

Kole District is an underserved district in Northern Uganda that still suffers from lingering effects of a 20 year rebel war and the Covid-19 pandemic. Kole District is divided into two areas: Kole North and Kole South. During the rebel war, the people in Kole North were displaced and forced to leave their homes; Kole South served as the host for those who were displaced. Issues of teenage pregnancy, theft, lack of clean water, no sustainable income, high school drop-out rates, and alcoholism are abundant throughout the district. The four villages that were part of the baseline assessment (Adaganii, Amiabil, Akoo, and Atek A) were chosen by the local government as the villages that are most in need.



Key findings from the Baseline Assessment

- **65%** of households have a monthly income of less than 50,000 UGX (less than \$14)
- **100%** of households faced at least one month of food shortage during the previous six months (70% faced 3 or more months of food shortage)
- **65-70%** of households in some villages have no children attending school regularly
- **79%** of households do not have soap for washing hands after using the bathroom

TBRI® Caregiver Trainings

24

TBRI® participants (Florida)

350

TBRI® participants (Uganda)

In 2023, alongside our partner Daniel Kaggwa of Alliance for Uganda Without Orphans, we began Trust-Based Relational Intervention® trainings in multiple districts of Uganda. We also fulfilled the requirements for a grant from Orlando Health, officially wrapping up our local work and allowing us to switch to a global focus.

What is Trust-Based Relational Intervention®?

Trust-Based Relational Intervention® is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBRI® is designed to help lead children who have experienced adversity, early harm, toxic stress, and/or trauma towards hope and healing.



TBRI® Caregiver Training in Mukono District, Uganda with Daniel Kaggwa.

"TBRI® is so needed in Uganda. Children in Uganda have been suffering. They go through a lot—because of wars, because of poverty, because of dysfunctional families. It's very important to have these trainings here to help lead people towards healing. I personally have been transformed through TBRI®; I have been healed. We have so many testimonies of children who were abandoned and rejected but have been able to come back and reunite with their own families, with their own caregivers. A senior leader shared that after a training, a local Sunday School Teacher who used to beat children totally changed his teaching and discipline methods. Children who used to be afraid of their teacher are now memorizing and understanding scriptures in a way they couldn't before."

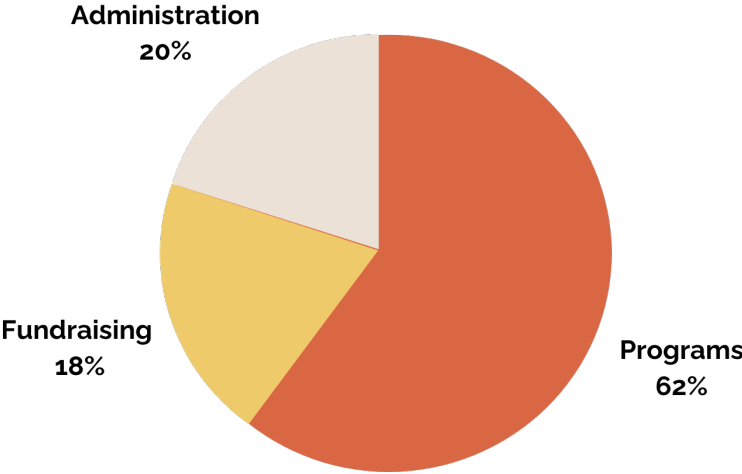
-Daniel Kaggwa, Alliance for a Uganda Without Orphans



2023 Operating Revenue: \$111,289.45

Similar to many nonprofits in 2023, we experienced a decline in revenue due to inflation and economic factors. As a result, we made budget adjustments and reduced expenses to maintain cost-effectiveness and maximize our 2023 income.

2023 Operating Expenses: \$120,817.50



In 2023, we launched The Spark—our new monthly giving program! This group of people shows their commitment to bringing lasting change and hope to vulnerable families through a monthly gift.



Thank you!

This work would not happen without you.
Thank you for helping to make this a world where
children grow up in families!