



Mwebaza Foundation
Annual Report

2022



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15 Years

We've grown and changed a lot over the past decade and a half. Still, one thing remains – our commitment to equitable education for all students and long-term financial sustainability for our partner communities.

The past few years have been eye-opening in many ways. We've engaged in deep processes of critical self-analysis to examine our mission, vision, and values as each pertains to equity and justice. We recognized that some of our work, language, and operating methods were perpetuating dependency and upholding unequal power dynamics.

So we decided to change.



COLLABORATION, NOT CHARITY

Shifting our entire nonprofit model has been both rewarding and challenging, eye-opening and confusing. In 2022, we continued to transition our model from one of charity to collaboration by investing in cooperatively-run social enterprises that financially benefit our partner schools in Uganda and the surrounding community.

Now, every school has various ways to collaborate with Mwebaza Foundation to raise funds, build basic-needs infrastructure, expand social enterprises, and more. This operating model transfers power, ownership, and leadership from Mwebaza Foundation to the communities with which we work. This power shift is imperative to cultivate our goal of long-term, sustainable impact in our partner communities.

Our Pillars

INSPIRING GLOBAL CITIZENS

Students grow knowledge and understanding through cross-cultural learning opportunities that foster a sense of self and a deepened worldview.

CO-CREATING CHANGE

With power and agency, people can continue to seek knowledge and develop the skills to understand and address the issues that communities are facing.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Through partnership networks, people engage in programs that build power and agency.



**SUPPORT WOMEN AND
GENDER EQUITY IN CIVIC
PARTICIPATION**

Our Model

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

We build relationships based on trust and respect by co-creating cross-cultural education activities and global studies curriculums. Students become change-makers advocating for and creating systems rooted in justice.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

We collaborate with Ugandan community members to develop cooperatively-run social enterprises. As businesses grow, participants and the school earn income, decreasing the reliance on tuition and the financial burden on families.

MEETING NEEDS TOGETHER

The financial freedom gained through profit-generating social enterprises allows both sides of the partnership to invest in school projects that meet basic needs.



A Happy Accident

What started as a pen pal exchange between two schools across the Atlantic has transformed into an international organization that works with thousands of students and adults each year. Founder Dale Peterson has dedicated the last 15 years to the Mwebaza Foundation and has transitioned from Chair to Board Member for his next chapter. It is with so much appreciation that we say “thank you” to Dale for the commitment and heart he has poured into this work.

Founder, Dale Peterson, takes on a new role.

On behalf of the Staff and Board of the Mwebaza Foundation, it is an honor to present to you our Annual Report for 2022. This has been another groundbreaking year for the Mwebaza Foundation, our 15th year in existence.

In 2022, we continued to focus on the development of social enterprises at our Ugandan partner schools, investing in small businesses, selected and developed by our Ugandan colleagues to further school and community prosperity and unity. Some of these enterprises are well underway, and others are still in the development phase, but we believe, in time, our partner schools will be able to use their businesses to meet needs and even reduce or eliminate student school fees.

This last year we also continued with the expansion and refinement of our cross-cultural education initiatives. Thousands of students in Colorado have had the opportunity to learn from our Ugandan friends and share their own lives and ideas as well. In addition to appreciating and celebrating cultural differences such as food, music, dance, and games, students on both sides of the Atlantic discussed issues such as water use, climate change, and social justice, listening to each other's perspectives and exploring solutions. We are convinced that a child who learns to value and respect a peer elsewhere in the world will more likely come to value and respect all people, including those right across the street.

2022 was also a year where new people stepped forward into leadership roles throughout our network of schools and individuals. We witnessed Ugandan teachers, parents, and community members say, "Kyekyo!" (Yes!) and instigate social enterprises, oversee programs, or address school or community concerns or needs. New ideas and new energy are needed for any effort to grow and continue.

Our Board of Directors understands this too, and this year, we thoughtfully and enthusiastically restructured ourselves with new leadership and a renewed commitment to our mission and partnerships. After 15 years as Chair of the Board, I am honored to introduce our new Chair, Kaylyn Thueson. Kaylyn has been a board member for many years and has graciously and enthusiastically stepped into this leadership role. I look forward to continuing to serve with Kaylyn, the other board members, and our competent and dedicated staff.

And speaking of our staff, this team of Uganda and Colorado professionals works tirelessly and touches the lives of so many. In this report, you'll learn more about our endowment, and how we use the interest to pay the salaries of those who do the hard work daily. Nothing we do could be accomplished without them. I unapologetically ask each of you to consider donating to our endowment as a way of investing in the future of the Mwebaza Foundation.

Thank you for your interest in and support of the Mwebaza Foundation! Join us in reflecting upon and celebrating 2022 as we excitedly look ahead to another year of working with you and our partner schools and communities.

—◆ WITH GRATITUDE, DALE PETERSON

Board Restructuring

To implement more equitable operations, our team participated in a two-day intensive workshop to restructure the leadership of our American Board of Directors. We redefined our roles and responsibilities to ensure the even distribution of power and proper succession planning. For example, we eliminated the “President” position and instead implemented a short-term Chair position that passes to a new Chair-Elect every 18 months.

Board members opted to operate as a hybrid working/governing Board. They fulfill governance responsibilities throughout the year at monthly Board meetings and working responsibilities by taking on committee leadership roles.

Volunteer-run committees support the staff by conducting outreach, leading fundraising initiatives, and offering guidance on educational programming.



Interested in joining a Board committee? Fill out this [short form!](#)

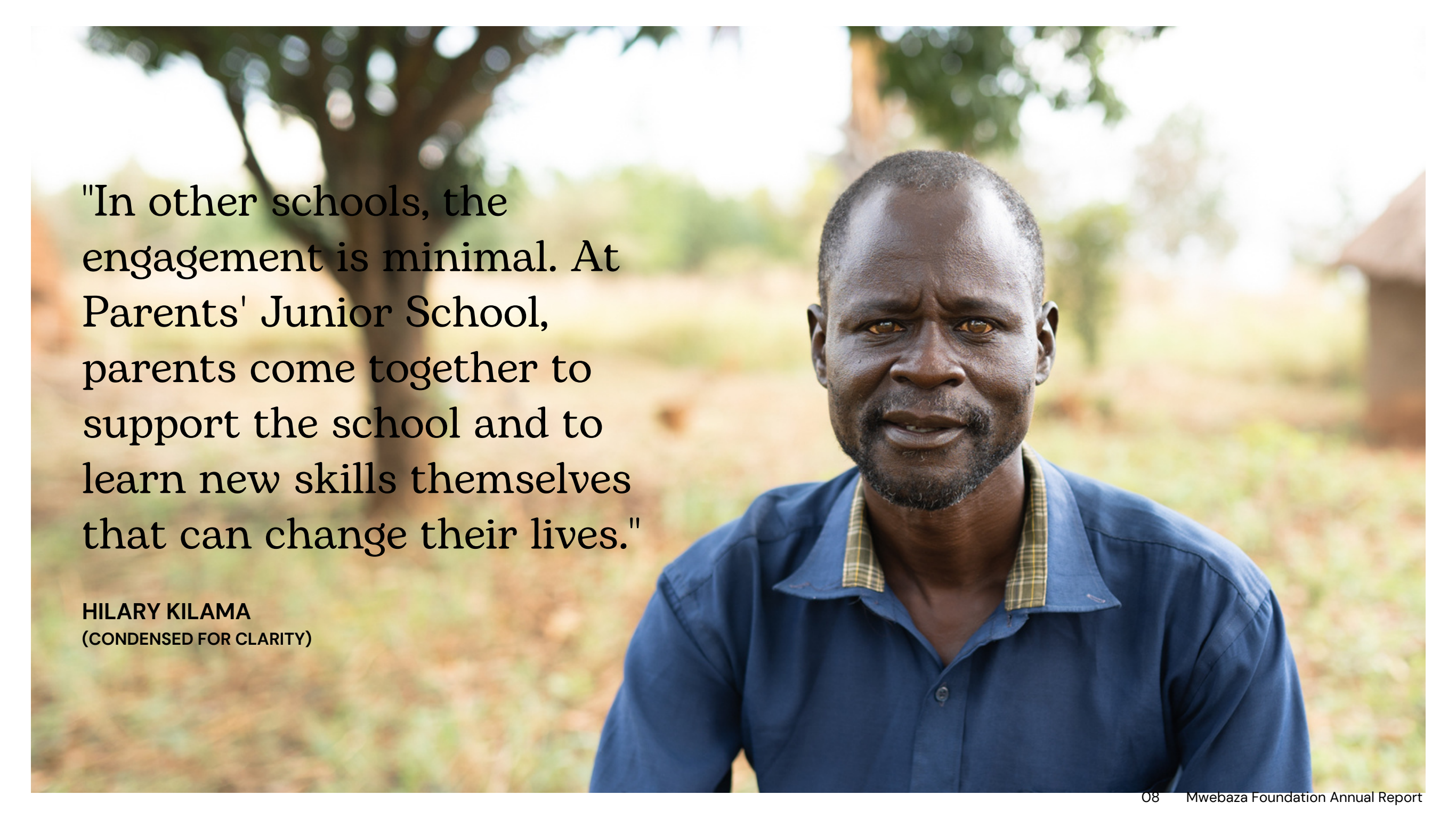
Sharing Power

Mwebaza Foundation does not own or operate Ugandan partner schools but rather works as an investing, guiding partner. While it has never been our goal or intention to manage the day-to-day operations of our Ugandan partner schools, we realize that we need to be involved in school management at the administrative level to ensure the success of our shared projects. We will continue to work together with Ugandan partner school staff and parents to best achieve equitable, safe, and consistent education for all.

This year, our Ugandan partners identified the need to establish new management structures so that each school could operate independently from one other, and have its own decision-making power. This initiative diversified the leadership team, spread power out amongst many, and built better systems for transparency and accountability. Each school now has a headmistress and director that are only responsible for their individual school's operations.

During our trips to Uganda in March and June, we were able to improve our connectivity by providing many of the schools' staff and community members with phones and computer access to better track our programs and projects. We are committed to the continued refinement of our operations in the U.S. and Uganda.





"In other schools, the engagement is minimal. At Parents' Junior School, parents come together to support the school and to learn new skills themselves that can change their lives."

HILARY KILAMA
(CONDENSED FOR CLARITY)

Parents' Junior School Rallies Together

Throughout the pandemic, a trusted point of contact at Parents' Junior School Charles Komakech, took advantage of the emergency and our inability to travel to Uganda for in-person follow-ups by embezzling funds sent by Mwebaza Foundation for community support. We had worked with Komakech since the inception of our partnership with Parents' Junior School in 2014 and were shocked to discover this fraud.

Evidence suggests that Komakech stole funds from Mwebaza's COVID emergency aid in 2020 and 2021, including money for teacher salaries and community food distribution. These funds did not include grant monies from public or private foundations. Komakech also withheld a portion of the VSLA micro-lending seed money from the program committee and stole two oxen from the community agriculture business farming sites.

Upon learning this information, the PJS community mobilized to file charges with the local police and removed Charles from all school and community leadership positions. During our visit in March 2022, Executive Director Devaki Douillard gave her statement to the investigator and the case was handed over to the courts for a trial date.

Since the discovery of this situation and our first announcement to our supporters regarding this fraud at the beginning of 2022, the school community continues to pursue justice to hold Komakech responsible. Mwebaza Board member, Sharon Kalenzi, has connected PJS community leadership with her brother – a retired Ugandan government official – to keep the momentum on this case going. The Mwebaza Foundation has committed a percentage of our rainy-day fund to hire legal representation for the community to ensure this case is actively pursued promptly.

We are confident the courts will rule in favor of the PJS community and all stolen assets and legal fees will be recouped.



School Engagement Continues to Grow!

Students Impacted Since
2008:

7,954

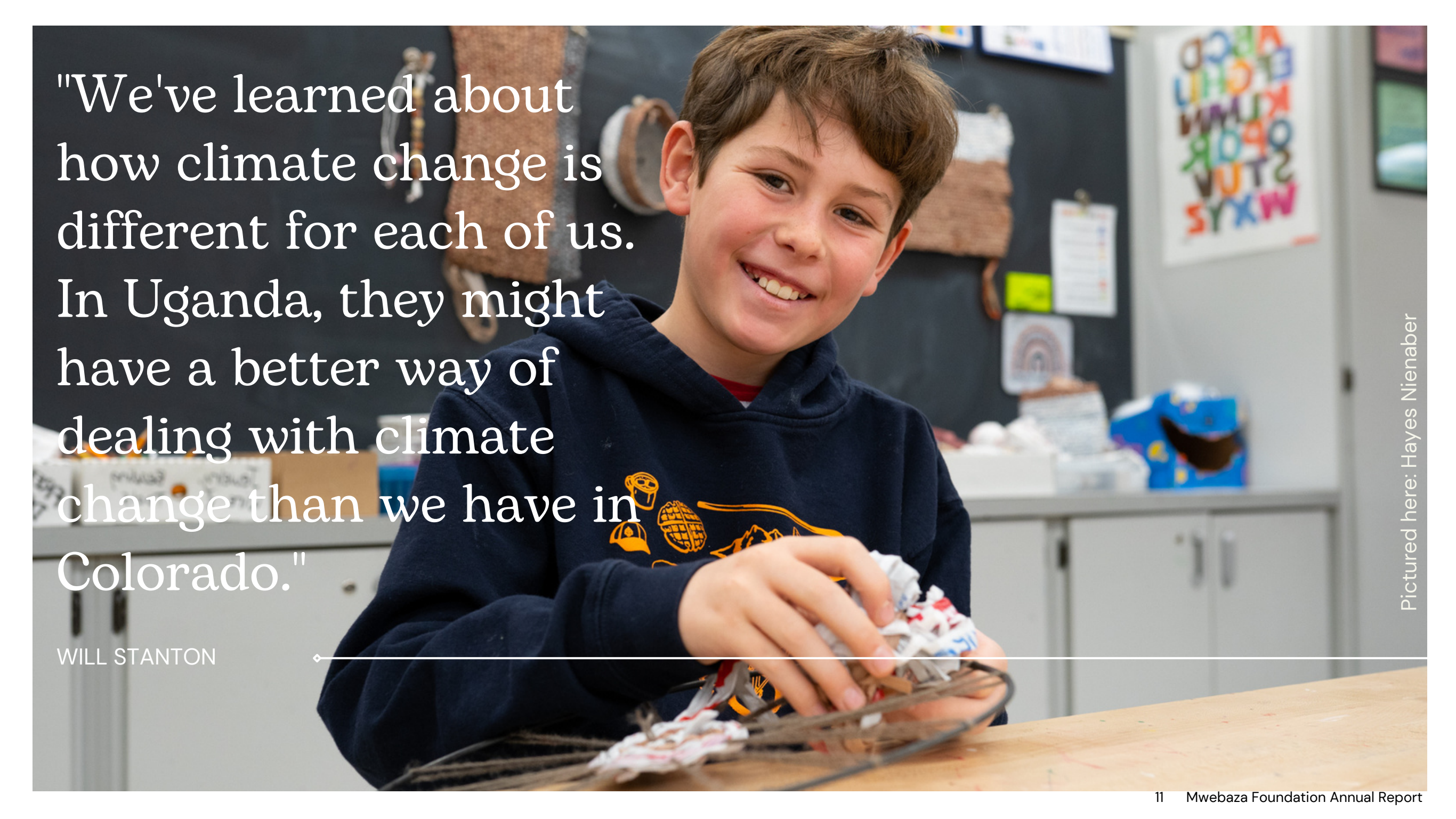
Teachers Engaged Yearly:

104

Students Enrolled in Monthly
Clubs:

318

-up from 244 last year



"We've learned about how climate change is different for each of us. In Uganda, they might have a better way of dealing with climate change than we have in Colorado."

WILL STANTON

Pictured here: Hayes Nienaber

Cultivating Change-Maker Mindsets

Our commitment to decolonizing work requires us to acknowledge and question how colonialism is upheld today. We recognize the need to establish a connection between self and identity to engage in decolonizing practices that foster a true sense of community and belonging.

Our Building Critical Consciousness curriculum fosters global mindsets. It creates opportunities for students to learn more about themselves, identify unjust systems, and build the agency it takes to change those systems in their communities and beyond. We've based this curriculum upon the Nahui Ollin – a pedagogical method rooted in Aztec Indigenous epistemology that centers on “reflection, understanding, action, and transformation”.

We structured this curriculum to be two-fold: one component centered on cross-cultural education exchanges and one centered on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Our lesson plans are scalable and replicable.





Trading Judgement for Curiosity

We currently work with teachers and district staff at five Colorado elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school across three school districts to teach our Building Critical Consciousness Curriculum through grade-appropriate activities that complement the Colorado Academic Standards. School-wide cross-cultural exchange activities, including live video chats, invite students to explore identity, community, values, global issues, and activism.

Historically, colonization sought political, economic, and social control over people and systematically erased culture and indigenous ways of knowing through a dehumanizing and oppressive process that has led to the loss of identity. With this understanding, we developed age-appropriate identity projects in which students learned about identity using culturally-relevant books like *Sulwe*, *Let's Talk About Race, Skin Again*, and *What if We Were All the Same*.

An intent behind our cross-cultural exchange activities in 2022 was to examine our internal and external identity traits through self-portraits. Students in Uganda also created family portraits and community collages to examine how their broader spheres of influence and networks of support have shaped their understanding of self. These projects will be shared with their Colorado peers in 2023 as part of our cross-cultural exchange program. Students are learning to trade judgment for understanding and curiosity while celebrating the multitude of similarities and differences that make up people in their communities and beyond.



In March 2022, students at Mwebaza Infant Primary School and Sunset Middle School participated in the World Denver Challenge to explore the theme of Life on Land (UN SDG #15), and collaborate on the project, "Feeding our Communities in Challenging Climates". Students at Eagle Crest, Niwot Elementary, and Mwebaza Annex completed a shared learning project focused on clean energy solutions by making their own solar ovens, inspired by Affordable and Clean Energy (UN SDG #7).

Learning Across the Ocean

Mwebaza Days allow students to share their cultures and learn about an entirely different group of people from half a world away. Cross-cultural learning expands students' views of the world and fosters global citizen mindsets in which students can critically think about solving problems that affect us all.



MWEBAZA DAY EXPANDS TO ALL SCHOOLS

For the first time, students at all of our Colorado and Uganda partner schools took part in Mwebaza Day celebrations in the spring of 2022. Students participated in video calls, shared dances and songs, and asked each other questions about daily life.

Colorado students toasted their sister school students with passion fruit juice – and loved it! Grades 3 – 5 completed their identity projects as part of our cross-cultural exchange program, while the younger grades wrote reflections on what they learned during Mwebaza Day.

Student Clubs

The student clubs at each of our elementary partner schools continue to grow. Between May and August 2022, our club enrollment at all Colorado partner schools doubled! We are forever grateful to the teachers, administration, and parent volunteers who help us host these monthly clubs.



LEARNING TO LEAD WITH KINDNESS

Reading books by Ugandan authors allowed Colorado students to learn about Uganda's culture, people, and history. They completed drawings to compare and contrast similarities and differences and participated in cooking activities to make a popular Ugandan street food called "rolex". Club students took on leadership roles during Mwebaza Day celebrations by conducting welcome introductions, land acknowledgments, closing remarks, and a question-and-answer forum. They also organize and promote school fundraisers throughout the year.

Welcome, Bennett Elementary School

We are excited to announce our newest school partner, Bennett Elementary in Fort Collins, Colorado. We hosted a school-wide presentation to introduce our foundation and share our mission and messaging. In partnership with Bennett's art teacher, Mandy Adams, we guided all grades through "Belonging" self-portrait projects. We worked with 5th-grade students during their "Sharing the Planet" unit to discuss water access, consumption, and conservation in Colorado and Uganda.





Our Impact

Invest in Equity

The Mwebaza Foundation endowment is an investment in the strategic future of our work. Our endowment covers our staff and operating costs in the US, letting us commit 100% of our fundraising efforts to our programs. Our endowment allows us to grow and develop programming in partnership with all of our schools, meeting their needs without the burden of operating costs.

Our endowment funds are under the management of an investment adviser who aligns with Mwebaza's ethos and practices of socially-conscious investing. Management of this fund is reviewed quarterly by Board Members. As the endowment gains donations and earns investment income, the longevity of our organization stretches out further before us.

We use the interest earned from the endowment to pay staff salaries. Without our staff, none of the work Mwebaza does would be possible. We ask others who believe in this work to consider a gift of any amount to support the staff's hard work and dedication.



Pictured here + above: Namarimbe Agnes

As the founder of St. Paul School in Nkokonjeru, Uganda, Madame Agnes has spent much of her adult life investing in this school, its students, and its teachers.

She's an entrepreneur who also cares for 16 children whose parents are unable to do so at this time. Agnes recently took out a loan from the VSLA to start a farming co-operative social enterprise. Agnes and the school staff have planted maize, which they will sell at harvest time to generate money for St. Paul School.

Income:

\$175,139

This amount reflects school and community fundraisers, individual donors, events, and grants (not including grants for staff salaries).

Expenses:

\$138,622

This amount reflects operating expenses, not including staff salaries, direct support to Ugandan schools, and monitoring/evaluation.

Endowment:

\$1,513,167

Interest Income: \$27,583

Growth: -1.3%, from 6/22 - 4/23

Staff Salaries:

\$139,518

This amount, pulled from the endowment, includes the partial salary of one full-time employee and three part-time consultants. It does not include private grants, which partially funded some of these positions.

Financials Breakdown



Social Enterprises



To avoid perpetuating dependency systems, we collaborate with our Ugandan partners to develop small, income-generating social enterprises. These businesses earn income for the school and build paths toward long-term financial independence. As the success of these enterprises grows, schools can reduce the cost of school tuition, with the ultimate goal of offering tuition-free education in Uganda.

In addition to generating income for our Ugandan partner schools, social enterprises generate camaraderie between school staff and local residents. These businesses are owned and operated by school staff and community members who contribute to each enterprise in various ways. This includes providing necessary materials, oversight, and daily care. Participants gain hands-on experience and cultivate entrepreneurial skills.



Because these social enterprises invite parents, teachers, administration, and area adults to participate, **the entire community can rise out of impoverished situations** - including the students who come to learn.



Village Savings and Loan - VSLA

Each school operates its own VSLA, a popular lending program for small community groups. Participants invest a certain amount of money at weekly meetings and are then able to borrow against the principal for small business initiatives.

As members repay loans, the principal amount generates interest that is distributed to members at the end of every year. As these programs continue to grow in membership and investment capital, the entire community benefits from diversification in the local economy.

The Future of Social Enterprises

This year, we are seeking out business partners whose missions align with ours to become investors in the social enterprise initiatives of our Ugandan partners. As a “profit partner”, businesses either make a one-time donation of start-up seed money for a social enterprise in the development stage or they make a percentage-based donation from the profits of a single item or service, every time it's sold.

These investments would better position Ugandan businesses to respond to unforeseen events and pivot to market changes. Each business also allocates a percentage of its profits to “school development” savings that will be used to invest in infrastructure projects like wells, teacher homes, school additions, sanitation systems, and solar power that meet the basic needs of their communities.

We’re broadening our fundraising efforts to establish long-term partnerships with businesses and corporations who want to distribute some of their profits to create equitable opportunities for Ugandans. By becoming a profit partner, U.S. businesses actively support the entrepreneurial goals of Ugandan communities that have experienced decades of oppression, violence, and strife at the hands of foreign governments (including our own). With diversified income streams for these social enterprises, community members will gain momentum and sooner be able to meet basic needs on their own accord, building systems for long-term sustainability.





Interested in joining a Board committee? Fill out this [short form!](#)

What's In Store for 2023?

This year, we continue to strengthen the processes and management of our current initiatives and invest in new social enterprises. Establishing financial sustainability at each school remains our shared priority.

To tackle diverse projects and give our Colorado community the chance to become more engaged with Mwebaza, we've established board-member-led committees. These committees focus on a variety of topics from marketing and outreach, to fundraising, event planning, and educational curriculum work. Committees meet monthly and welcome all members to contribute their specific knowledge and expertise to these focus areas.

If you are interested in joining one of our committees or sitting in on a meeting, please complete our contact form and we will reach out to you!



Game-Changing Grain Mill

At Parents Junior School, the community has created four agricultural zones on various donated plots of land to grow, harvest, and sell crops as one of their community social enterprises. 50% of the profit goes to the school, 30% is divided among the community, and 20% goes back to the land donors.

To complement this initiative, we've begun fundraising for a grain mill. Currently, members of the community walk miles to mill the grain they feed their families and sell at the market, while others who can't make the journey sell their grain unmilled at a lower rate. With a grain mill on the school property, PJS teachers and community members will all have access to a mill and spend less time traveling and less money paying milling fees in town.



Let's Harmonize

Have you ever noticed that nature seeks balance? Left unimpeded, it would find harmony within each ecosystem and restore itself to health. We believe human beings also desire symbiotic relationships with one another that are gentle, sustainable, and balanced.

As a nonprofit organization, we want to foster this balance and eventually work ourselves out of jobs. We work to bring about a just, balanced system built by humans for humans – free from greed, control, and fear. To reach this goal of obsolescence, we've shifted our entire method of operating. Instead of talking, we're listening. Instead of giving, we're investing. Instead of meeting basic needs for our partners, we're meeting basic needs with our partners. These changes create equality, balance, and harmony.

We are committed to doing this and, when we inevitably make mistakes, we are committed to creating a different, equitable, fair, and just way forward. We couldn't dream of our work to create a kinder, safer, more just world without the vision and dedication of our Ugandan and Coloradan partner communities. Thank you for walking with us on this journey.

Bring on the next 15 years.





Get in Touch

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