

# ACTION <sup>IN</sup>AFRICA

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT





# 2021

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## A year of resilience at Action in Africa

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Our work is made possible by our teams in Uganda and the USA, our Board of Directors, and our community of supporters around the globe.



# A Letter From Our Executive Director

## *Action in Africa friends and family -*



When I reflect back on 2021, I am awestruck. While grappling with the second year of the pandemic, our team in Uganda managed to uphold our core values of community, creativity, and respect. While they never cease to amaze me, last year they exceeded my already high expectations as they wholeheartedly embodied a new value – resilience. Despite coping with the personal challenges we all faced as the pandemic trudged on, they rallied and supported the vast needs expressed by the community with more dedication and grit than I could have imagined. I've said it before and it bears repeating, if our team can survive - and thrive - throughout a two-year long global pandemic they can accomplish anything!

It will come as no surprise that the pandemic and lockdown continued to disrupt our operations in a variety of ways, including the cancellation of our in-person programs for the second consecutive year. As a team, we felt a deep responsibility to support our community members through the mental and physical challenges that resulted from the pandemic. Through it all, our team was creative and resourceful in finding different ways to keep programs going virtually, providing emotional and social support, and shifting resources to focus on pandemic relief. As you'll see in this annual report, our programming deviated from "business as usual" and reflected our response to the shifting needs of the community. And now, as the pandemic comes back under control, we're looking forward to getting back to what we do best: providing education, empowerment, and opportunity for all.

Thanks for sticking with us through two years of a global pandemic. Here's to a brighter, healthier, more joy-filled 2022!

With gratitude,  
Sarah Elizabeth Nininger

*Sarah Elizabeth Nininger*



Established in 2014, the Community Center serves 300+ people a day and is the home of all our programs and services. The Center is located in Nakuwadde, 25 minutes outside of Kampala, Uganda's capital city.



# Our Purpose

At Action in Africa, we believe that sustainable impact starts with local leadership, which is why we are a community-led organization dedicated to fostering the economic and personal development of the women and children in Nakuwadde, Uganda, through greater access to education and life-changing resources. With your help to make it possible, we have established a thriving community center. By understanding the needs of the people in Nakuwadde, and delivering services based on those needs, we are working to empower the community and hope to make a positive, lasting impact in their lives.

# Our Approach

We know that with greater access to education, creative expression, and physical activity children are set up to thrive in all areas of life. Our multi-faceted approach allows us to reduce the barriers to education so that we raise healthier children and, ultimately, adults with greater economic prospects. This is the foundation of everything we do at Action In Africa. Whether it's through our education scholarship programs, adult education programs, afterschool programs, creative arts programs, or medical outreach services, we exist to empower the individuals of the Nakuwadde, Uganda community as they become the next generation of leaders in East Africa and beyond.



# What Makes Us Different

## Scholarships, Not Sponsorships

AIA has learned firsthand that the sponsorship method of supporting students can have unintended consequences, and we have vowed to do better. After initially employing a sponsorship model, we saw that this created a hierarchy in our partner schools and a sense of dependency and rivalry amongst students. In response to these issues, we have established a variety of scholarship funds to make educational opportunities accessible while allowing students to exercise their independence and autonomy. Additionally, our scholarship students are carefully selected through a process developed by our local team which not only considers academic accomplishments and financial need but other criteria such as the student's history of participation at The Center and their leadership in the community.

## Community-Driven Programming

AIA values dignity, collaboration, and a spirit of service in all of our programming. Unlike many traditional nonprofits, AIA doesn't assume or impose programs that the community doesn't want or need. We trust our community members to be the experts on which programs are the most impactful and know that development isn't one-size-fits-all. Our local Uganda team works collaboratively to design programs in response to community issues and requests. AIA also actively promotes the concept of participants "giving back" to their community and encourages everyone to think critically about how they can use their strengths to improve the quality of life amongst the residents of Nakuwadde.

## A Culture of Learning

At AIA we know we don't have all of the answers, which is why we listen more than we talk. We question our assumptions and are open to admitting when we are wrong. We realize that good intentions are not enough when it comes to serving a community, and we actively work to not replicate the bias and mistakes made so often by western philanthropy. We strive to be humble, curious, flexible, and responsive to criticism and feedback.



# ACTION IN AFRICA INITIATIVES

Because AIA's programming has evolved in response to feedback from the community, the variety of programs and services we offer are as numerous as they are diverse. Our programming can be organized into three major initiatives: Primary Partnership Program, Community Programs, and Scholarships. Under each of these major initiatives are services designed for our dynamic community and its varied needs.

## PRIMARY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Primary 4- Primary 7

Teacher Training

Curriculum Development

Porridge Program

PLE Exam Prep

## COMMUNITY CENTER PROGRAMS

At the Nakuwadde Community Center

Women To Women

After School Program

Community Library

Men To Men

Community Garden

Savings Program

Adult English Classes

Medical Outreach

Holiday (School Vacation) Program

Muganda

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Educational Support

Secondary Scholarships

University Scholarships

Professional Development Scholarships

Internships

Special Needs Program





## PRIMARY PARTNERSHIPS

The function of our Primary Partnership Program (PPP) is to complement - and in many cases supplement - the educational opportunities for primary-age children in Nakuwade. The PPP works directly with local primary schools, teachers, and parents to provide holistic, gender-inclusive educational programming that ensures children in the community have access to the resources they need to learn and grow. To achieve this goal we provide a nutrition intervention program, creative arts curricula to augment the traditional Ugandan teaching methods, teacher training in active learning techniques, and exam prep in order to set students up for success when taking Primary Leaving Examination (PLE), a prerequisite for gaining entry into Secondary School.



## COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Because Action in Africa believes in education for everyone, at all ages and for all needs, we provide education and training opportunities for the women, children, and men of Nakuwade beyond the walls of the traditional classroom. Our local community center hosts services that include everything from our Women To Women's group where women learn valuable life and vocational skills, to our robust After School Program where hundreds of kids gather to learn and play at The Center every day. AIA also offers Adult English and Computer Literacy classes and runs the community's only library. These programs exist to equip and inform the individuals in our community and create opportunities where they might not have existed.



## SCHOLARSHIPS

Action in Africa's Scholarship Program is a key initiative designed to provide educational funding for deserving students who may not otherwise be able to continue their studies. The Secondary Scholarship Program is currently awarded to 30 students annually - 56% of whom are girls. The University Scholarship Program awards 5 graduating secondary students with college tuition and a laptop to help with their studies. These students spend the year between high school graduation and university matriculation interning at The Center. Our scholarship program also helps Special Needs students who wouldn't otherwise have access to the appropriate opportunities and accommodations they need to thrive in and out of school.





# 2021 IN NUMBERS



**1,236**

People received Quarantine Kits containing beans, cooking oil, posho, soap, and masks

**26**

Teachers enrolled in virtual teacher training, participating in 72 online training sessions

**28**

Clients enrolled for counseling services with our Social Worker, Robinah Nandutu

**117**

Scholarships awarded to students enrolled in AIA's Secondary Scholarship Program

**593**

Primary students received weekly long-distance learning kits

**19**

Scholarships awarded to AIA students enrolled in institutions of higher education and universities in Uganda

**17,622**

Total number of long-distance learning packets distributed to students at AIA partner schools

**22**

AIA Staff members received the COVID-19 vaccination -*the entire AIA team in both Uganda and the USA*



# 2021 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

## TEACHER SUPPORT

AIA provided support to 26 furloughed teachers from our partner schools by offering weekly continuing education opportunities via whatsapp and zoom. Now that school is back in session they're ready to implement what they learned in their classrooms.

## DISTANCE LEARNING

While students from our partner primary schools were stuck at home for another school year, we distributed learning kits to 593 students. Each kit contained books, pens and pencils, art supplies, masks, and a jump rope to help keep the students active, engaged, and learning.

## COVID AWARENESS

Our team in Uganda continued to educate the community of Nakuwadde with the latest information related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Action in Africa was able to provide transportation for our staff and community members to clinics offering free COVID-19 vaccinations.

## COUNSELING SESSIONS

Due to the pandemic, we hired our first ever full-time Social Worker, Robinah Nandutu in 2020. In 2021 her schedule was busier than ever meeting with our students, parents, and community members to support them during this uncertain time.

## QUARANTINE KITS

Our team in Uganda continued to work alongside local government officials to identify families in need of quarantine kits. Together over 1,000 community members in Nakuwadde received essentials such as beans, cooking oil, posho, masks, soap, and more.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In order to keep our staff engaged and growing, AIA invested in the growth and success of our Uganda-based leadership team by offering access to online computer classes, participating in weekly journaling prompts, and reading the book Grit together.







# Mary Nakkide

In 2021 Action in Africa proudly celebrated the university graduation of Mary Nakidde, the very first student enrolled in our educational scholarship program.

We have had the privilege of having a front-row seat to Mary's growth over the years. After first joining as a primary student in 2008, she was later selected for our Secondary Scholarship Program. Upon completion of secondary school, she interned at Action in Africa, where she was responsible for overseeing the breakfast program at one of our partner primary schools. Based on her academic success and community service, Mary was selected to participate in AIA's University Scholarship program, where she enrolled at Ndejje University.

In December Mary graduated with a bachelor's degree in social work. Her success is a shining example of what can be achieved when hard work and opportunity meet, and why our programs are so vital to the community of Nakuwadde.

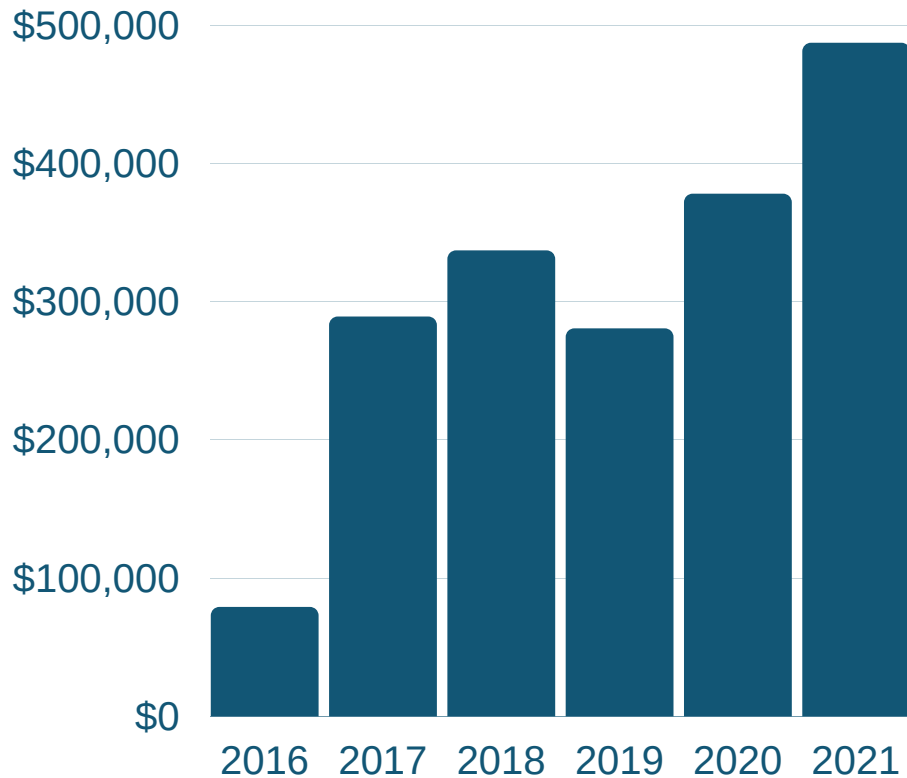
Congratulations, Mary! And thank you to all the donors who have supported our educational programs over the years!



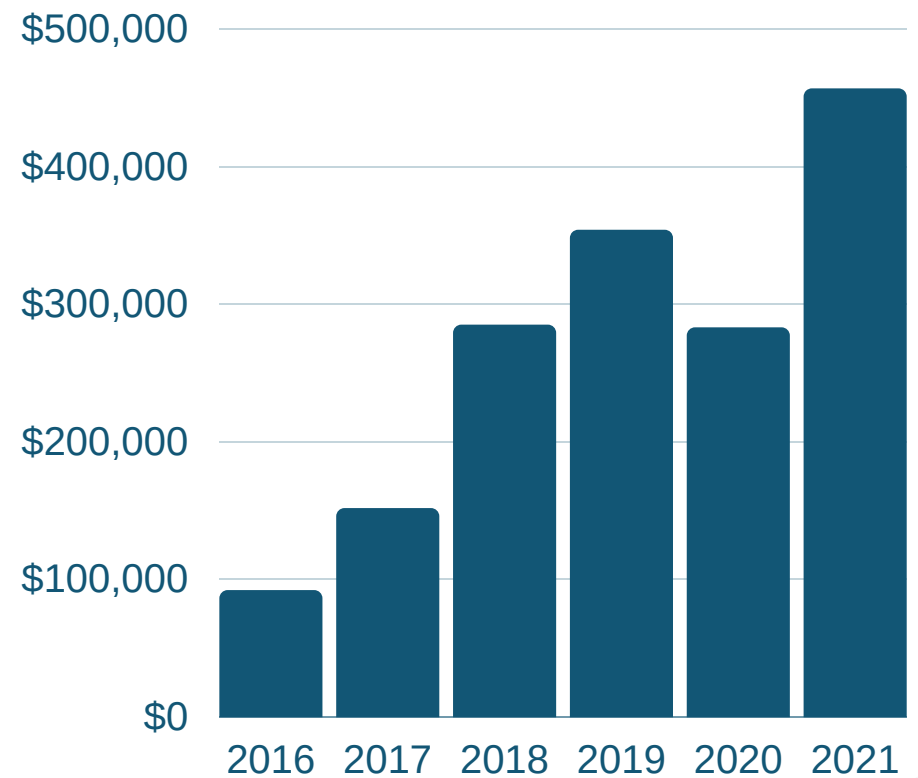
# FINANCIALS

In 2021, we invested **\$486,837** in support of the programs at our community center in Nakuwadde, Uganda. This **29% increase** from 2020 is directly related to our aggressive response to the coronavirus pandemic and its effect on The Center and our programs at large.

## TOTAL REVENUE 2016 - 2021



## PROGRAM EXPENDITURES 2016 - 2021





## **THE AIA TEAM**

***Aisha Nabbosa  
Alex Maple  
Angela Mwebaze  
Bernard Omino  
Brenda Nassanga  
Brianna Kustigian  
Colline Muyodi  
Eric Makuyi***

***Evelyn Nabakooza  
Harriet Babirye  
Isaac Ekuu  
Jenna Thompsen  
John Kimera  
Juliana Nakavuma  
Lawrence Byaruhanga  
Maria Nalweyiro***

***Patrick Oligo  
Rebecca Nakijjoba  
Rehema Nansereko  
Robinah Nandutu  
Rose Nakamanya  
Sarah Nininger***

**Without the tireless dedication of our team in Uganda—and here in states—nothing we accomplish would be possible. To the AIA team we extend our deepest thanks!**





## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

***Chris Cheo  
Annie DeBoer***

***Susan Marolt  
Elizabeth Schwartz***

***Rick Schwartz  
Elizabeth Slossberg***

***Kris Ufkes  
Derek Young***

***We extend the deepest gratitude to AIA's Board of Directors for their service, and generosity!***





# Let's Stay In Touch



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