

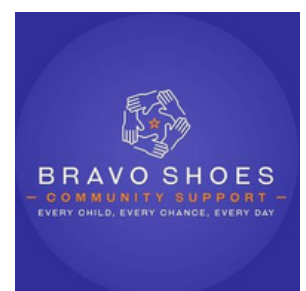
# ANNUAL REPORT

2023

**BRAVO SHOES**

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day



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# **BRAVO SHOES COMMUNITY SUPPORT ANNUAL REPORT 2023**



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# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends and Supporters,  
 Greetings!

I am delighted to present the Annual Report for Bravo Shoes Community Support (BSCS) for the year 2023. It is with great pride and gratitude that I reflect on the significant positive change we have brought into the lives of needy and destitute Ugandan children over the past year.

Since our inception in 2021 and formal registration in February 2022, BSCS has remained steadfast in its commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable children in Uganda. Spearheaded by our CEO, Mr. Brian Yesigye Bravo, and supported by dedicated staff and volunteers, our organization operates with a clear mission: to address the key challenges faced by children, namely lack of education and poverty within their families.



Nsamba Abbas Matovu  
 Board Chairman, BSCS

Collaboration lies at the heart of our approach. We work closely with the government and various stakeholders to empower communities and prioritize the needs of children, with a particular focus on preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families. Our belief in a comprehensive approach is evident in our focus on providing educational support and economic empowerment programs, ensuring that children have the resources they need to thrive.

Our organizational structure, comprised of the Board of Directors and the Management Team, ensures efficient decision-making and implementation of strategic plans and policies. Under the guidance of our Executive Director (ED), the Management Team serves as the Secretariat, working tirelessly to execute various programs and activities aimed at achieving our organizational goals.

At the core of our mission is the commitment to creating a secure and nurturing environment for every child, safeguarding their rights, and amplifying their voices. Through collaborative efforts with partners and governmental agencies, we strive to empower communities to prioritize children's well-being and address the complex issues of poverty and vulnerability in Uganda.

As we look to the future, we remain dedicated to our cause and inspired by the resilience of the children and families we serve. I extend my deepest gratitude to our donors, supporters, and partners for their unwavering commitment to our mission. Together, we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Ugandan children and build a brighter future for generations to come.

Sincerely,  
 Nsamba Abbas Matovu  
 Chairman,  
 Bravo Shoes Community Support (BSCS)

# **BRAVO SHOES COMMUNITY SUPPORT (BSCS): AN OVERVIEW**

Bravo Shoes Community Support (BSCS) is a non-profit organization founded in 2021 and formally registered in February 2022, with its headquarters located in Kampala, Uganda. Spearheaded by Mr. Brian Yesigye Bravo, CEO of Bravo Shoes Company, BSCS is committed to improving the lives of vulnerable children in Uganda by addressing the key challenges they face: lack of education and poverty within their families.

BSCS collaborates with the government and other stakeholders to empower communities and prioritize the needs of children, aiming to prevent unnecessary separation of children from their families. The organization believes in a comprehensive approach to tackling these issues, focusing on providing educational support and economic empowerment programs.

The organization operates through two bodies: the Board of Directors, responsible for formulating strategic plans and policies, and the Management Team, functioning as the Secretariat and supervised by the Executive Director (ED). Together, these bodies work to implement various programs and activities aimed at achieving the organization's goals.

At the core of BSCS's mission is a commitment to creating a secure and nurturing environment for every child, safeguarding their rights, and amplifying their voices. Through collaborative efforts with partners and governmental agencies, BSCS strives to empower communities to prioritize children's well-being and address the complex issues of poverty and vulnerability in Uganda.

# **BRAVO SHOES COMMUNITY SUPPORT (BSCS): COMPOSITION OF BOARD AND MANAGEMENT**

## Board of Directors

1. Nsamba Abbas Matovu - Chairperson
2. Bashirah Babala Papa - Secretary
3. Baguma Naphtal - Member
4. Bright Anthony Malele - Member
5. Dawn Adams - Member
6. Ndaaba Agnes - Member
7. Miriam Cherukut - Member
8. Regina Titi Seyire - Member
9. Yesigye Brian Bravo - Member

## Management Team

1. Yesigye Brian Bravo - Executive Director
2. Bashirah Babala Papa - Associate Legal Secretary
3. Kabajuma Doreen - Associate HR Manager
4. Nakitto Nina Denise - Associate Finance Manager
5. Tumwesigye Ronald - Associate ICT Manager
6. Martha Namukaaya Nakato - Associate Programs Manager
7. Masika Harriet - Associate Administrator
8. Aloysious Kasoma - Associate Communications Manager

# **BRAVO SHOES COMMUNITY SUPPORT: STRATEGIC PROGRAMS**



Bravo Shoes Community Support is dedicated to identifying and assisting the most marginalized and vulnerable families, aiming to uplift their socio-economic status through targeted interventions. The organization meticulously identifies the "poorest of the poor" and those in dire need, providing them with essential guidance and material support tailored to their specific needs. This assistance encompasses a range of resources and services aimed at addressing the multifaceted challenges these families face.

BSCS goes beyond initial interventions by maintaining ongoing engagement with these families and children. Through follow-up visits and regular monitoring, the organization tracks progress in their quality of life and overall socio-economic conditions. This sustained support ensures that the beneficiaries continue to receive the necessary assistance and guidance to facilitate long-term improvements in their circumstances.

To achieve these objectives effectively, BSCS has developed and implemented a series of specialized programs designed to address the unique needs of the communities it serves. These programs are carefully tailored to target key areas of concern, offering comprehensive support and resources to empower individuals and families to overcome socio-economic barriers and build a more sustainable future.

## **3.1 BSCS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN**

In Uganda, a significant number of children face early departure from school, depriving them of essential skills vital for societal integration. This educational shortfall often correlates with heightened risks of involvement in detrimental activities like drug

abuse and gang affiliation. Education emerges as the linchpin for disrupting the pervasive cycle of poverty, exerting a transformative influence across societal domains. It equips individuals with the acumen to make informed decisions concerning their progeny, livelihoods, and overall lifestyle. Education serves as a formidable instrument in advocating for children's rights, imparting awareness to both children and adults regarding the necessity of honoring and safeguarding these rights.

Education imparts citizens with the requisite knowledge, competencies, and self-assurance to chart a path toward a brighter future, fostering their active participation in nation-building endeavors. Nonetheless, myriad challenges impede access to education for vulnerable children, encompassing circumstances such as poverty, familial separation, substance abuse, exposure to sexual exploitation, child labor, societal neglect, and homelessness.

In response, the Bravo Shoes Community Support Organization, through its 'BSCS Educational Program for Children,' steadfastly endeavors to provide a conduit for quality education to underprivileged children in Uganda. This initiative meticulously identifies and supports disadvantaged children, guiding them through enrollment in educational institutions, nurturing their latent talents, and facilitating their career development. Emphasizing girl child education, BSCS underscores the profound impact of education on girls' awareness of their rights, their ability to safeguard their well-being, and their pivotal role as future mothers in ensuring their children's education. By prioritizing the empowerment of girls, BSCS endeavors to cultivate a generation of healthy, educated, and secure individuals, poised to navigate life's challenges with resilience and fortitude.

### 3.2 BSCS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

The BSCS Economic Empowerment Program for Needy Families addresses the profound challenges faced by parents, particularly single mothers, who grapple with the daunting task of supporting their families amidst educational or skill deficiencies. Often marginalized and stigmatized, these families encounter significant hurdles in accessing stable employment opportunities. Single-parent households, especially those led by mothers, are particularly susceptible to economic vulnerabilities.

Recognizing the critical need for intervention, BSCS extends a lifeline to these struggling parents through its Economic Empowerment Program. Tailored to meet the diverse needs of participants, the program offers comprehensive skills training aimed at equipping individuals with the tools and knowledge necessary to secure a sustainable livelihood. Whether through vocational training in sewing, horticulture, entrepreneurship, or animal husbandry, BSCS empowers parents to cultivate valuable skills essential for income generation.

By fostering economic self-sufficiency, the program not only alleviates immediate financial strain but also cultivates a pathway toward long-term stability for these families. Through acquiring essential skills and education, parents are empowered to generate a stable income, thereby meeting their family's basic needs and affording their children access to education. The program also instills a sense of confidence and self-reliance, enabling participants to navigate life's challenges with resilience and determination.



The BSCS Economic Empowerment Program serves as a catalyst for transformative change, uplifting families from the grips of poverty and empowering them to chart a course toward a brighter future. By nurturing economic resilience and self-reliance, the program not only transforms individual lives but also strengthens the fabric of communities, fostering a cycle of empowerment that reverberates across generations.

### 3.3 BSCS HEALTH & NUTRITION PROGRAM

In Uganda, health and nutrition pose significant challenges across various fronts. Malnutrition remains a pressing issue, notably affecting children under five years old and pregnant women. The prevalence of both undernutrition and overnutrition contributes to stunting, wasting, and underweight conditions among children, alongside a rising incidence of overweight and obesity among adults.

The country grapples with a heavy burden of infectious diseases like malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and diarrheal illnesses, substantially impacting morbidity and mortality rates, particularly among vulnerable demographics.

Maternal and child health indicators display suboptimal outcomes, driven by inadequate access to maternal healthcare services, resulting in elevated maternal mortality rates. Additionally, infant and child mortality rates persist at high levels, partly due to factors such as malnutrition, insufficient healthcare infrastructure, and limited access to clean water and sanitation.

Disparities in healthcare infrastructure persist between urban and rural areas, with remote regions lacking access to essential services, including skilled healthcare professionals, medications, and medical equipment.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are emerging as significant health challenges, driven by lifestyle changes, urbanization, and an aging population. However, healthcare systems are primarily focused on managing infectious diseases, posing hurdles in effectively addressing the growing burden of NCDs.

Uganda faces healthcare financing issues, with limited government expenditure necessitating reliance on out-of-pocket payments, hindering access to services, particularly for low-income and marginalized communities.

Moreover, inadequate availability and distribution of healthcare workers, especially in rural areas, impede service delivery and contribute to disparities in healthcare access.

In response, the BSCS Health & Nutrition Program aims to address these challenges by providing relevant information and educational activities for children, teachers, and parents. The program emphasizes the critical role of nutrition in preventing chronic diseases and promoting overall well-being, aiming to empower communities with knowledge for better health outcomes.

### 3.4 BSCS EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

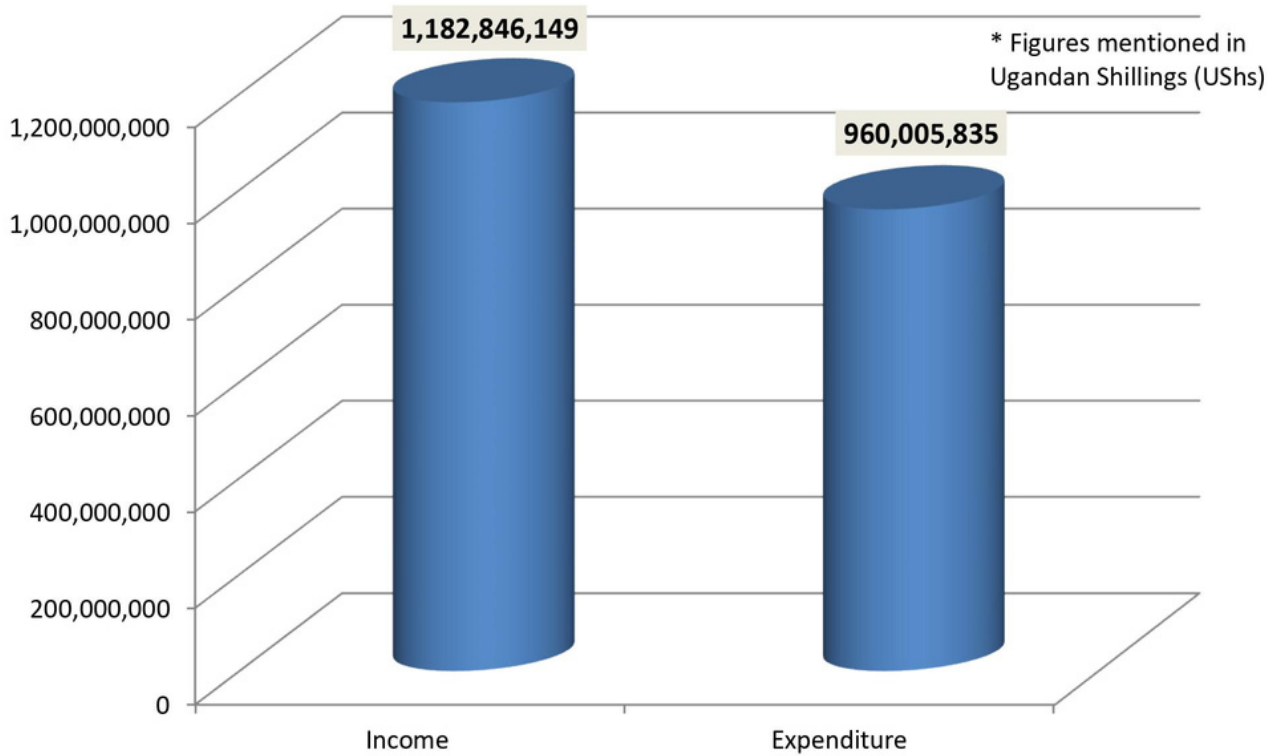
Under the umbrella of 'BSCS Extension Activities,' the organization engages in various events and initiatives as deemed necessary to achieve its objectives. These activities are often aligned with significant festivals or occasions that hold cultural, social, or historical importance in Uganda. Among these events are celebrations such as Christmas and New Year, which foster a sense of community and joyous festivities. Additionally, BSCS participates in commemorations like World Brother's Day, which promotes fraternity and solidarity among individuals worldwide.

Moreover, the organization acknowledges the significance of historical events such as Martyr's Day in Namugongo and Heroes Day, which honor the sacrifices and contributions of individuals who have shaped the nation's history. Participation in these commemorations not only pays tribute to the country's heritage but also reinforces the values of resilience, unity, and remembrance within the community.

Through its extension activities, BSCS endeavors to actively engage with the community during these significant occasions, fostering a sense of belonging, unity, and cultural preservation while advancing its overarching objectives of social welfare and community empowerment.

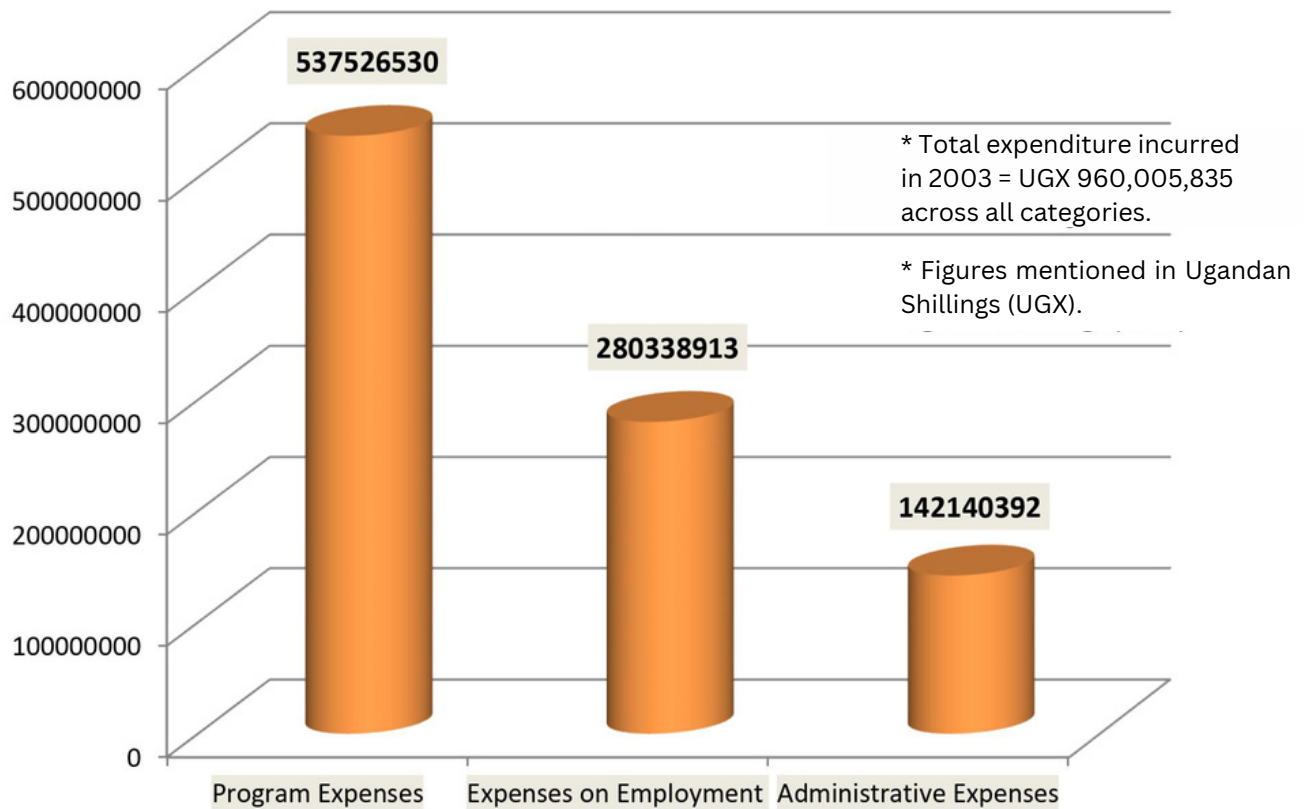
# BSCS FINANCIALS: RECEIPTS & EXPENDITURES 2023

**BSCS: Income & Expenditure - 2023**



In the fiscal year 2023, the financial records of the BSCS revealed a total income of UGX 1,182,846,149, with the bulk of these funds originating from contributions made by a diverse range of stakeholders through donations. Concurrently, the organization incurred a total expenditure of UGX 960,005,835 across all categories.

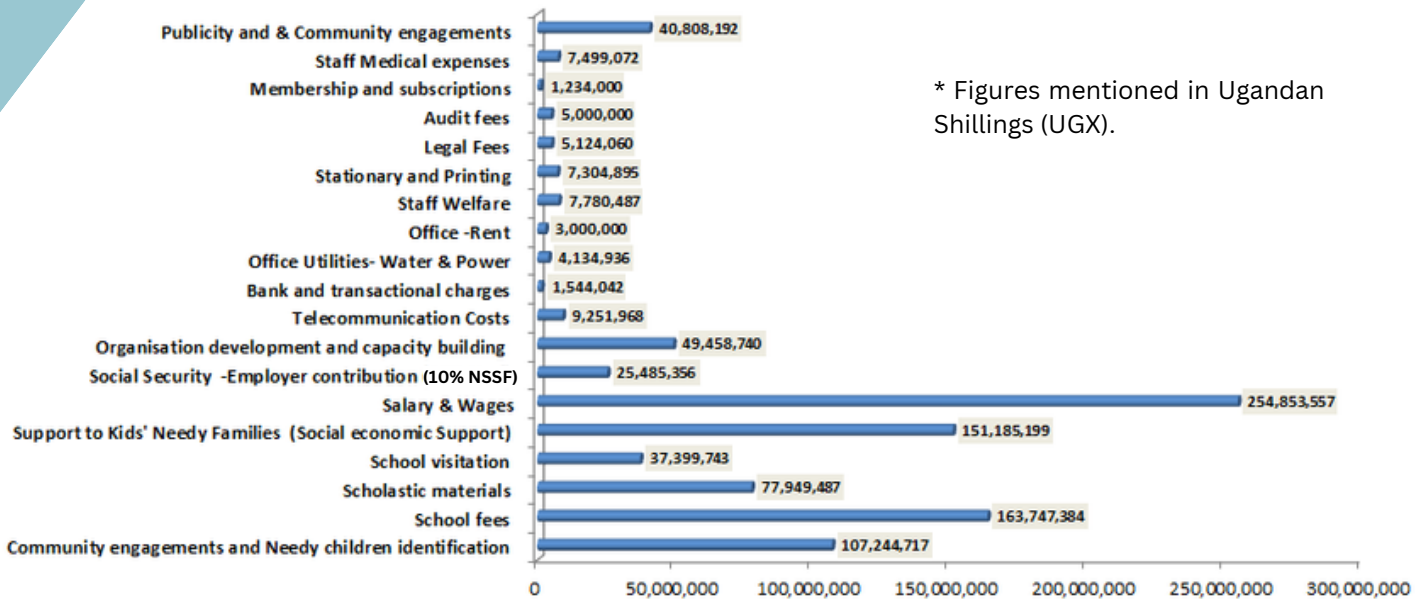
### BSCS: Breakup of Expenditure on Major Heads - 2023



A significant portion of this expenditure, amounting to UGX 5,375,265,330, was dedicated to financing the execution of numerous programs and activities aimed at fulfilling the mission and objectives of the BSCS, encompassing a wide spectrum of endeavors crucial to advancing the organization's mandate.

A considerable sum of UGX 2,803,389,130 was allocated towards compensating BSCS employees in the form of salaries and wages. This expenditure underscores the organization's commitment to supporting its workforce and ensuring fair remuneration for their contributions towards achieving organizational goals.

### BSCS: Detailed Breakup of Expenditure - 2023



\* Figures mentioned in Ugandan Shillings (UGX).

Additionally, administrative costs accounted for a significant portion of the total expenditure, totaling UGX 142,140,392. These costs likely encompassed various operational expenses essential for the day-to-day functioning of the organization, such as office rent, utilities, office supplies, communication expenses, and other administrative overheads necessary for sustaining organizational operations.

### POTENTIAL DONORS

A substantial portion of BSCS programs and activities are sustained through funds and donations provided by its parent business entity, Bravo Shoes Ltd., located in Kampala, Uganda. However, a significant portion of its financial resources is generated through contributions from diverse individuals and stakeholders. BSCS extends heartfelt appreciation to all individuals/stakeholders for their generous monetary and in-kind support, which plays a crucial role in facilitating numerous essential programs and activities. The organization takes pride in acknowledging and valuing all contributions, donations, and forms of assistance that contribute significantly to the attainment of its objectives. Below is a list of potential donors for the year 2023.

1. Dawn Adams, England, UK
2. Regina Seyire Titi, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA
3. Agnes Ndaaba, Kampala- Uganda
4. Home to Africa Tours & Travel Company

# IMPACT OF BSCS ACTIVITIES – 2023



1. The Bravo Shoes Community Support (BSCS) is a dedicated organization committed to making a tangible difference in the lives of vulnerable families throughout Uganda. Led by Brian Yesigye Bravo, the Executive Director, BSCS focuses its efforts on several key areas: child education, with a specific emphasis on advancing opportunities for girls; health initiatives; women's empowerment; and economic empowerment.
2. Under Brian Yesigye Bravo's leadership, BSCS has become a catalyst for positive change, particularly for "children at risk" and their families residing in diverse regions of Uganda, including West Nile, Central, South-Western, and Eastern Uganda. By addressing the unique needs of these communities, BSCS aims to create sustainable solutions that uplift less privileged children and their families.
3. In the pursuit of its mission, BSCS works diligently to remove obstacles that hinder the progress of vulnerable children while simultaneously empowering their immediate caregivers. Through various programs and initiatives, BSCS endeavors to foster an environment where children can thrive and reach their full potential.
4. During the years 2022 and 2023, BSCS actively worked with numerous underprivileged children and families, providing vital assistance through established programs. This involved facilitating the enrollment of deprived children into educational institutions and maintaining regular follow-ups to ensure they have access to high-quality education and training essential for their future success.
5. Furthermore, BSCS has undertaken empowering interventions aimed at enhancing the economic well-being of vulnerable families. By fundraising capital and providing support for small businesses, BSCS seeks to empower these families economically, enabling them to build sustainable livelihoods and break the cycle of poverty.

## **BRAVO SHOES COMMUNITY SUPPORT**



## **BSCS PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES – 2023**



## **SHAKUR'S STRUGGLE: A PORTRAIT OF RESILIENCE IN EASTERN UGANDA**



Shakur Omiat's story epitomizes the challenges faced by many children in developing regions like Pallisa, Eastern Uganda. Despite being just 6 years old, Shakur found himself shouldering immense responsibilities due to his family's financial struggles. With his grandmother falling ill and limited resources available, Shakur took it upon himself to contribute to their household income by collecting plastic bottles for sale, a task far beyond his years.

The sight of this young boy, braving the hardships of life, struck a chord with viewers when his story aired on local television. It was a stark reminder of the harsh realities faced by vulnerable families in the region, where economic instability often forces children into roles far beyond their age.

Shakur grew up fatherless, with his mother, Tino Beatrice, enduring a heartbreaking ordeal after becoming pregnant following an encounter with an unknown person at a relative's home, who subsequently abandoned her. Sent back to her mother in the village by her uncle, this profoundly tragic event cast a shadow over both her and Shakur's lives, leading to a life filled with adversity. Despite the challenges, Tino Beatrice took on the full responsibility of caring for Shakur, providing for him, and supporting him tirelessly. Despite the hardships, Shakur clings to a powerful dream of becoming a doctor.

Thankfully, Shakur's story didn't end in despair. The intervention of Bravo Shoes Community Support Organisation brought a glimmer of hope into his life. By enrolling him in Namuwaya Education Centre, they not only provided Shakur with access to formal education but also offered him a chance to break free from the cycle of poverty and exploitation that often accompanies child labor. Tino Beatrice expressed profound gratitude to the Bravo team and all its partners for their assistance in Shakur's journey.

## **AGAINST THE ODDS: NANDABI AND NANGOMA'S JOURNEY TO EDUCATION**

Nandabi Zaituni, 9, and Nangoma Fatuma, 7, from Tororo, Eastern Uganda, showed incredible determination to pursue education despite facing challenges like heavy downpours and long treks of nearly 6 miles daily to Rock View Primary School. Their perseverance caught the attention of Bravo Shoes Community Support Organisation (BSCSO) after a viral video surfaced on social media.



With the help of social media appeals and local community support, BSCSO located the girls and pledged to support their education. The team identified the girls with the help of community members and officials, including Emmanuel Odongo, the Tororo Senior Community Development Officer. The girls' mother, Nerima Asina, shared their family's struggles, including her husband's absence due to work and health issues. Despite hardships, Nerima is determined to provide her children with better education opportunities.

## **BSCS SIGNS MOU WITH THE PALLISA DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION**



The Pallisa district is facing significant population pressures, with the unfortunate consequence of an increase in the number of toddlers found on streets like Shakur and Judith, struggling for survival. According to the 2002 national census, the population of the district was estimated at 255,900. However, this number has continued to rise steadily over the years, reaching over 426,000 by 2012, without a proportional increase in opportunities.

Recognizing the urgent need for support in such a challenging environment, the Bravo Shoes Community Support Organisation (BSCS) has taken a proactive step by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Pallisa District administration. BSCS's commendable track record in nationwide initiatives aimed at improving lives has caught the attention of Dhikusooka Majid, the Resident District Commissioner (RDC), Pallisa District, who was deeply impressed by the organization's unique activities. Dhikusooka has pledged full cooperation with BSCS in their shared goal of assisting vulnerable communities within the district.

The Deputy Vice Chairperson of the district, Alupo Mangline, expressed gratitude for BSCS's efforts in Pallisa and urged for further engagement and activities within the district. Brian Yesigye Bravo, representing BSCS, emphasized to district leaders that the organization's mission is inclusive, aiming to support children without removing them from their families or communities. BSCS values maintaining these connections and celebrates the transformation that occurs within these contexts.

## AGUTI JUDITH'S PATH TO EDUCATION IN PALLISA



The Bravo Shoes Community Support Organisation (BSCS) is making a tangible impact on the life of 6-year-old Shakur Omiat, hailing from Dwalata, Kiwumi Village, Pallisa Town Council. Shakur's journey is a testament to the transformative power of community support and educational opportunities. After facing significant challenges due to his family's financial struggles, Shakur has returned to school at Namuwaya Education Centre in Kirinnya-Bweyogerere, Wakiso District. His story has also been included in this report, showcasing his resilience and determination to overcome obstacles in pursuit of education.

But Shakur's story doesn't end there. His close friend, Aguti Judith, inspired by Shakur's journey, expressed her own desire to attend school. With the unwavering support of BSCS and the collaborative efforts of Dhikusooka Majid, the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Pallisa District, Aguti's dream became a reality as she was enrolled in school. Aguti, a 6-year-old girl, is the fifth child among eight siblings in her family. Her 37-year-old pregnant mother, Akol Annaloy, resides in the same neighborhood as Shakur, facing similar economic challenges.

Through the concerted efforts of BSCS, local officials like Dhikusooka Majid, and the resilience of individuals like Shakur and Aguti, tangible progress is being made in breaking the cycle of poverty and providing access to education for vulnerable children in Pallisa and beyond. Their stories highlight the importance of community support and collaborative action in creating opportunities for a brighter future.

## FROM FIREWOOD TO UNIVERSITY: THE INSPIRING STORY OF HENRY SSUBI KIYIMBA



Rose Nalwanga, a devoted mother of eight children, resides in Kiswa Village, Kammengo, within Mpigi district's Mawokota North Constituency. Despite facing immense financial challenges, she remains determined to provide for her family's needs and ensure her children receive an education.

To support her children's schooling, Rose and her children embark on a mission to collect firewood, which they plan to sell to cover their school fees. Their home is sustained by an array of loans acquired from various financial institutions and individuals who sympathize with their plight. Among Rose's children is Henry Ssuubi Kiyimba, an ambitious young man with aspirations of becoming an engineer. Ssuubi, upon entering Makerere University, faced backlash on social media for carrying a metallic suitcase, an incident that sparked both criticism and support. Despite the initial challenges, Ssuubi's determination and resilience were fueled by the unwavering support and encouragement of his mother, Rose Nalwanga, who instilled in him a sense of hope and purpose.

Through a series of fortuitous events and the concerted efforts of supporters, Ssuubi's dream of studying mechanical engineering at Makerere University became a reality. Joadah Consult and Development Infrastructure, a construction company, extended a full sponsorship for Ssuubi's education, signing a Memorandum of Understanding with both the university and Ssuubi himself.

On August 11, 2019, Ssuubi commenced his studies at the School of Engineering, marking the beginning of a new chapter in his journey towards realizing his ambitions. Meanwhile, Rose Nalwanga continues to balance her responsibilities as a teacher at St. Mary's Sana Primary School with her endeavors in the firewood and avocado vending business, all in a tireless effort to provide for her family's well-being.

Bravo Shoes Community Support aided Suubi and his siblings, providing them with school shoes and significant ongoing support. Suubi's mother expresses gratitude for the positive changes in their lives and the community's benefits from Bravo Shoes' assistance. Despite the challenges they face, Rose Nalwanga and her family strive to create a brighter future for themselves and inspire others with their steadfast resolve.

## LEILA HAYATI'S JOURNEY WITH BSCS



In the interconnected world we live in today, distance is no barrier to acts of kindness and support. This rings especially true for Leila Hayati, a bright young girl from Aii-vu Subcounty, Terego District in the West Nile region, situated over 500 kilometers from Kampala. Her story of hope and transformation is a testament to the impactful work of the Bravo Shoes Community Support Organisation (BSCS).

Leila's journey began in a community where opportunities were scarce, yet her determination to succeed shone brightly. Unlike Sharon Aseru, another young girl from Aii-Vu Subcounty who faced challenges after being abandoned by her mother, Leila found herself embraced by the wings of opportunity.

Selected by chance during one of BSCS's missions to uplift the lives of girls in the West Nile region, Leila was destined for a brighter future. Supported by her aging parents, who harbored dreams of providing her with a quality education, Leila embarked on her academic journey at Namuwaya Education Centre, where she has since blossomed into a brilliant student.

The impact of BSCS's intervention goes beyond educational support. On a special school visitation day on March 26th, Leila had the opportunity to connect with Adams via video call all the way from the UK. This heartwarming interaction filled Leila with renewed determination to excel in her studies.

The blessings continued as Leila welcomed her eldest sister, Jamila, on the same day. Jamila, deeply grateful for the positive changes brought about by BSCS in her sister's life, expressed her heartfelt appreciation for the organization's efforts. Reflecting on her family's journey, Jamila shared poignant memories of their past struggles. "I had to discontinue my education at senior five due to unfavorable circumstances. However, witnessing the transformation in my sister's life fills me with gratitude. We used to struggle to afford even basic necessities like shoes for Leila," she recounted.

Leila's progress has not gone unnoticed by her dedicated teacher, Charles Ewajo, who marvels at her remarkable improvement. From struggling with basic writing skills to now excelling in comprehension and handwriting, Leila's growth is a testament to her perseverance and the unwavering support of BSCS. As Leila continues to flourish academically and beyond, her story serves as a beacon of hope, showcasing the power of collective efforts in transforming lives and communities, regardless of geographical boundaries. Through organizations like BSCS, dreams are nurtured, barriers are broken, and futures are transformed for the better.

## BSCS SKILLING INITIATIVES TRANSFORMING LIVES IN UGANDA



The government's strategic plan, "Skilling Uganda," signifies a shift towards skills development for employment, productivity, and growth. The BTVET system is poised to evolve from an educational sub-sector to a comprehensive platform for skills development, aligning with market demands and embracing individuals seeking skill enhancement beyond academic qualifications.

Bravo Shoes Community Support (BSCS) has initiated skilling programs aimed at equipping all children under its care with essential skills to prepare them for future competitiveness. The BSCS Media team ventured off Gayaza Road to Masooli, Nangabo Sub County, Wakiso District, to immerse themselves in a life-skilling experience at Oaks Knit Designers. Situated just 5 miles from the city center, Oaks Knit Designers is a unique vocational school and small-scale manufacturing company that trains women, girls, and boys in employable handicraft skills. They specialize in producing knitwear and uniforms for schools and organizations.

Leticia Nalwadda, a dedicated volunteer at BSCS, shares her journey of humble beginnings and the transformative power of acquiring skills. Despite her modest educational background, Nalwadda emphasizes the value of skill acquisition, which has enabled her to not only survive but also empower her siblings. Currently undergoing training at Oaks Knit Designers, Nalwadda envisions herself as a successful entrepreneur in the future. She applauds BSCS for incorporating skilling programs into its initiatives to support vulnerable children.

Sarah Nabulime Seruwagi, the CEO and Director of Oaks Knit Designers, recently received recognition for her entrepreneurial endeavors, winning \$20,000 from the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) – NSSF Hi Innovator Women Accelerator. Nabulime, formerly a Lab Technician at Makerere University, transitioned into entrepreneurship after discovering her passion for sweater-making. Her success story has inspired numerous women, with her training programs attracting clients from various sectors.



In addition to Oaks Knit Designers, BSCS has partnered with Dala Skills, a skilling program under Supporting Minors to Improve Life (SMILE), led by CEO Gloria Musinguzi. Through SMILE, children under the care of BSCS will receive training sessions at their location in Manyangwa every December. The program aims to impart employable skills and competencies relevant to the labor market, supplementing traditional educational certificates. This initiative extends its reach to all Ugandans in need of skill development, including primary and secondary school leavers.



## RESILIENCE IN THE WILDERNESS: THE JOURNEY OF AARON OPIO AND DOREEN ACEN



The heart-wrenching tale of 7-year-old twins, Aaron Opio and Doreen Acen, originating from Kaberamaido, serves as a poignant reminder of life's harsh realities. Despite their tender age, these siblings grapple with adversity, struggling to find light amidst the darkness that envelops their world.

Residing deep within the bushlands of Ochero Sub County, Kagaa Parish, in Acyekitoyo village, the twins, along with their mentally ill mother Christine Asege, eke out a precarious existence. Nestled amidst untamed acres of wilderness, their humble abode—a small, grass-thatched hut devoid of doors—beckons only to those willing to venture through dense vegetation.

Kaberamaido, known for its lush vegetation, grapples with food insecurity, further exacerbating the plight of vulnerable families like Aaron and Doreen's. The twins' emergence into the spotlight came to fruition when the Daily Monitor shed light on their extraordinary burden as breadwinners. Despite their young age, Aaron and Doreen shoulder the responsibility of caring for their ailing mother, who often roams the Akampala Landing Site, leaving them alone for days.

The aftermath of the post-Kony Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency continues to cast a long shadow over the region, compounding the challenges faced by families like Aaron and Doreen's. With their mother's absence, securing sustenance becomes a daily struggle, and the twins and their siblings rely on the kindness of strangers to stave off hunger.



Moved by their plight, the Bravo Shoes Community Support (BSCS) team embarked on a mission to rewrite the twins' narrative, offering them a lifeline to a brighter future. After a grueling journey spanning over 10 hours, Aaron and Doreen arrived at Namuwaya Education Center, their newfound sanctuary in Bweyogere, Wakiso District. Here, amidst a community that speaks their language, they found solace and a renewed sense of hope.

Despite their tender years, Aaron and Doreen are poised to embark on a new chapter of their lives, as they enroll in baby class at Namuwaya Education Center. This pivotal moment marks the beginning of their journey towards a brighter future, one where they no longer bear the weight of their family's struggles alone.



## **BSCS COMMEMORATES THE INTERNATIONAL ALBINISM AWARENESS DAY**

Albinism, a genetic condition affecting melanin production, presents significant health risks, including skin cancer and visual impairment, exacerbated by sun exposure. In Uganda, where over 20,000 individuals live with albinism, the government's recognition of albinism as a disability in 2020 marked a positive step towards community rights.



In some regions, particularly in Tanzania, people with albinism face extreme dangers, including abduction and murder for their body parts, believed to possess magical properties. These brutal attacks, though horrific, are not the primary threat to individuals with albinism in Africa; rather, they face a slow death from skin cancer due to melanin deficiency.

Daniella Namukasa Kigoonya, a young girl (aged 3 years), defies the challenges associated with albinism with remarkable determination. Despite her young age, Daniella captivates attention as she walks the streets of Kampala, dressed in camouflaged attire, a black cap, and dark shades. She finds joy in observing the world around her, occasionally dancing to accompany her mother and delighting passersby.

Daniella's mother, Sarah Katasi, recounts the surprise and initial confusion upon Daniella's birth, as neither family had a history of albinism. Despite societal stigma and discrimination, Katasi embraces Daniella's uniqueness and advocates for acceptance and support for children with special conditions. Despite these challenges, Daniella symbolizes resilience and hope, embodying the strength to overcome societal barriers and advocate for inclusion and acceptance.

In 2023, Bravo Shoes Community Support (BSCS) took the opportunity to join in commemorating International Albinism Awareness Day on June 13th. Daniella eagerly anticipated the International Albinism Awareness Day, celebrating human rights under the theme "Inclusion is Strength." This theme, endorsed by the United Nations, emphasizes integrating voices from diverse backgrounds within and outside the albinism community.

## **NICHOLAS TUKWASIBWE: A YOUNG TOUR GUIDE'S JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE AND HOPE**



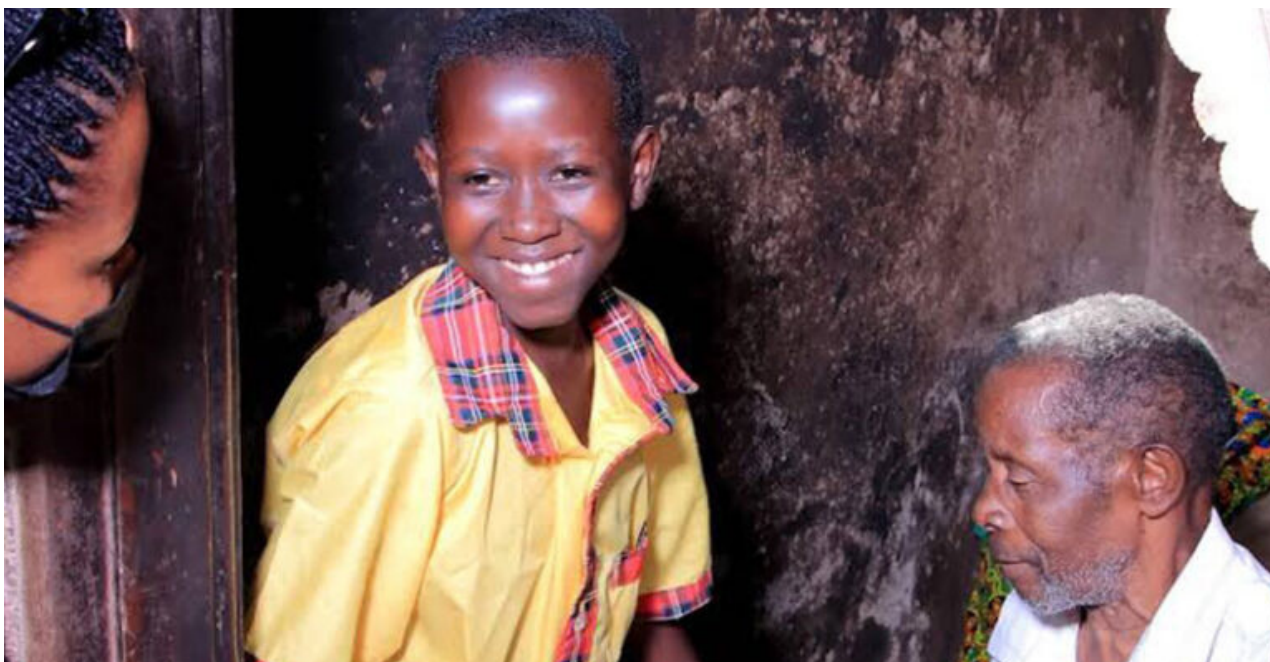
The remarkable story of 'Nicholas,' a charming 6-year-old tour guide from Mirambi, Kichamba Subcounty, Rubirizi District, Western Uganda, captivates hearts with his passion for showcasing the beauty of Queen Elizabeth National Game Park. Nicholas, affectionately known as the gateway to the park, impresses tourists with his confident demeanor, impressive hospitality skills, and remarkable knowledge of the park's attractions. Despite his young age, Nicholas supports his family, including his ailing mother, through his work as a tour guide.

Nicholas's dedication to his job and his family's well-being underscores the challenges faced by individuals like his mother, Peninah Kyomuhendo, a single mother struggling to make ends meet through casual labor. The visit of Bravo Shoes Community Support Organisation to Rubirizi District is hailed as a timely blessing by Mbonye Mark Levis, the Rubirizi District Community Development Officer, as it addresses some of the pressing needs of the community, including education and poverty alleviation.

Rubirizi District, with its diverse economic activities ranging from agriculture to tourism, faces challenges such as inadequate school resources, high school dropout rates, and limited employment opportunities, particularly for parents relying on casual labor. Despite these challenges, Nicholas's story serves as an inspiration, highlighting the resilience and potential within the community.

The young prodigy, recognized for his exceptional talents and dedication, has secured a coveted long-term endorsement from Home to Africa, one of the country's leading tour and travel agencies. Guided by Nicholas Tukwasibwe and Zedius Dedy, experienced tour guides, he embarks on a journey through the picturesque Kazinga Channel, symbolizing the Siamese connection between Lake George and Lake Albert, encountering majestic wildlife along the way. As the brand ambassador for Home to Africa Tour and Travel, Nicholas will represent the agency across East Africa, with a focus on Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda. His welfare, education, and mentorship will be supported by these countries, aiming to nurture his talent and fulfill his dreams. This partnership between Home to Africa and Bravo Shoes Community Support Organisation reflects a shared commitment to social responsibility and community enrichment. Baker Akampulira, the district Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, praises Bravo Shoes Community Support Organisation and its partners for their support of Nicholas, recognizing the value it brings to the tourism industry in Rubirizi district.

## NAVIGATING ADVERSITY: MUWANGUZI'S QUEST FOR A FATHER FIGURE



Acleo Muwanguzi, a 13-year-old boy, lived in a dilapidated single-room house in Kasangati, Gayaza Road, Kampala, with his elderly father, Aloysious Bangula, who suffered from a stroke, rendering him unable to speak or walk. Despite his young age, Muwanguzi devoted himself to caring for his father, sacrificing his education in the process.

Dreaming of becoming a technician or mechanic for cars and motorcycles, Muwanguzi's life took a turn when Bravo Shoes Community Support Organisation (BSCS) intervened. They enrolled him in Namuwaya Education Centre, Kirinya-Bweyogerere, providing him with necessary school supplies and a scholarship to continue his studies.

Following his father's unexpected passing, Muwanguzi struggled with profound grief. With no support from his immediate family, he felt lost. Aloysious Bangula was laid to rest in Zirobwe, Luwero district, marking the end of his earthly journey and leaving a lasting impact on Muwanguzi's life.

BSCS became Muwanguzi's guiding light, offering him resources and opportunities to shape his future. Embracing the transformative power of education, Muwanguzi found strength in adversity. Yet, he longed for a father figure to support him through these challenging times.

Recognizing Muwanguzi as a symbol of resilience, hope, and inspiration, BSCS held him close to their hearts. His story emphasized the power of collective efforts in shaping a child's future. In Muwanguzi's memory, the call was made to be a guiding light for others, inspired by the legacy of his father and the support of the NGO and community.

## **BRAVO SHOES COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

Bravo Shoes Community Support (BSCS) extends heartfelt gratitude to all our team members, colleagues, donors, supporters, and partners for their unwavering commitment and generous contributions throughout the year. Your support has been instrumental in enabling us to fulfill our mission of improving the lives of vulnerable children and their families in Uganda.

Together, we have been making significant strides in addressing the key challenges faced by children, including lack of education and poverty within their families. Your ongoing support inspires us to continue our work and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for believing in our mission and joining us on this journey to empower vulnerable children and build a brighter future for Uganda.

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