



*“Combined effort for Development”*



## **KITARA CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS NETWORK** **2024 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

*“Building Resilience in Our Agencies and the Communities We Serve”*





*“Combined effort for Development”*

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# List of Acronyms

<b>ACE:</b>	Accelerating & sustaining HIV/AIDS& TB Epidemic Control
<b>AGM:</b>	Annual General Meeting
<b>BAPENECO:</b>	Bunyoro Albertine Petroleum Network on Environmental Conservation
<b>BHR:</b>	Business & Human Rights
<b>CBO:</b>	Community based Organisation
<b>CFM:</b>	Collaborative Forest Management
<b>CFR:</b>	Central Forest Reserve
<b>CNOOC:</b>	Chinese National Off shore Oil Company
<b>CSO:</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>DTPC:</b>	District Technical Planning Committee
<b>EACOP:</b>	East African Crude Oil Pipeline
<b>FRECAR:</b>	Natural Forest Regeneration for Enhanced Carbon Stocks
<b>HRBA:</b>	Human Rights Based Approach
<b>IoC:</b>	International Oil Company
<b>KCSON:</b>	Kitara Civil Society Organizations Network
<b>LED:</b>	Local Economic Development policy
<b>M&amp;E:</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MO:</b>	Member Organizations
<b>NAPBHR:</b>	National Action Plan on Business & Human Rights
<b>NFA:</b>	National Forestry Authority
<b>TEPU:</b>	Total Energies E&P Uganda
<b>UNNGOF:</b>	Uganda National NGO Forum
<b>URSB:</b>	Uganda Registration Services Bureau
<b>VSLA:</b>	Village Saving and Loans Association
<b>WWF:</b>	World Wide Fund for Nature

# Executive Summary

In 2024, Kitara Civil Society Organisations Network (KCSO) made significant strides in advancing its mission to promote a vibrant civil society and sustainable development in Uganda's Bunyoro sub-region. Guided by the 2023-2027 strategic plan, KCSO achieved notable outcomes across its thematic areas:

- **Advocacy for Good Governance:** Engaged 250 stakeholders in Local Economic Development (LED) policy popularization and empowered citizens through 20 planning and budgeting meetings. In addition, KCSO engaged citizens and civic groups to demand accountability from leaders at various levels.
- **Natural Resources and Climate Change:** Collaborated with CSOs adjacent to protected areas to support 4,696 households with climate-smart agriculture interventions, restored 89.3 hectares of forest, and distributed 21,143 coffee seedlings.
- **Social Protection:** Collaborated with CSOs to retain 24,199 HIV/AIDS clients in care across Kagadi, Kibaale and Kakumiro districts.
- **Institutional Capacity:** Trained 962 CSO representatives, welcomed 5 new members, and increased income by 32.1% to UGX 1,8Bn.

Key success stories include MCODA's UGX 70 million tree woodlot harvest and transformed former forest encroachers into thriving farmers through livelihood support.

Despite challenges like compliance burdens and limited funding, KCSO learned the value of technology, collaboration, and deep community engagement.

In 2025, KCSO will focus on membership expansion and servicing, partnership building, midterm review of strategic plan, institutional home development, enhancing member compliance, and scaling climate resilience initiatives. We thank our partners, members, and communities for their unwavering support.

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## Message from Chairperson Board of Directors

In 2024, KCSON continued to provide a platform for NGOs to share, reflect, and influence governance and development processes in the Bunyoro sub-region and across Uganda. As a result, we achieved significant milestones in networking, partnerships, capacity building, and advocacy for better service delivery.

Our initiatives empowered communities, built citizen agency, and forged strategic partnerships that amplified our impact. Our governance remains a cornerstone of KCSON's growth.

The 2023 Annual General Meeting was successfully held, yielding robust discussions on KCSON's sustainability and the broader civil society sector. The Board actively fulfilled its critical oversight role, guiding the secretariat to deliver on our mission.

In 2024, KCSON's income grew by 32.1% to UGX 1.8 billion driven; by the board's oversight, the secretariat's dedication, strengthened finance and management systems and our members' commitment to their obligations.

We are deeply grateful to our members, partners, and stakeholders for their invaluable contributions to these successes. We also commend our board and staff, whose resilience and dedication were pivotal in achieving these milestones.

Looking ahead to 2025, we will build on this momentum by focusing on institutional home development; establishing a permanent base to enhance operations, while advancing our core mandates of networking, and capacity building. As we move forward, we celebrate our successes, learn from our challenges, and renew our commitment to KCSON's values. Together, we will continue to empower communities and shape a brighter future for all. We warmly invite our development partners, members, government, and the public to join us in this transformative journey.

Yours Sincerely,

Hedwig Mbaziira Birungi,  
Chairperson Board of Directors



## Message from Executive Director



It is with great pleasure that I present KCSO's 2024 Annual Performance Report, themed "Building Resilience in Our Agencies and the Communities We Serve". The year 2024 allowed us to consolidate our focus, guided by our 2023-2027 strategic plan. This report's milestones, achievements and lessons reflect our progress toward fulfilling our mandate. In our core program of advocacy for good governance and effective service delivery, we strengthened the internal governance of KCSO and member CSOs, promoted compliance, and championed accountability. For instance, we facilitated 20 planning and budgeting meetings to enhance service delivery in education, health, and the environment across the Albertine region.

Our work on natural resources, livelihoods, and climate change supported 54 community-based groupings (mostly CBOs) in promoting climate smart agriculture and nature-based enterprises, directly reaching 1,080 households in Kibaale, Kagadi, Kikuube, Kyenjojo, and Kyegegwa districts. We also restored **89.3 hectares** of forest, bolstering environmental resilience.

In institutional capacity strengthening and knowledge management, we trained 962 representatives from CSOs and socio-economic groups, building collaboration and improving the NGO sector's internal health. Our efforts also empowered a proactive, resilient citizenry. At the institutional level, KCSO began constructing its institutional home, with the foundation now completed, and enhanced staff and board competencies through targeted capacity-building initiatives. Our financial growth, with a **32.1% income increase to UGX 1.8 billion**, further strengthened our capacity.

### Looking Ahead to 2025

Building on these achievements, KCSO remains committed to strengthening networking, improving member compliance, advancing strategic goals, and completing the institutional home to enhance operations. We warmly invite our development partners, members, government, and the public to support this transformative journey. We are profoundly grateful for the steadfast support of our development partners, member organizations, government bodies, community structures, board, and staff. Together, we will continue building a resilient future for Bunyoro and beyond.

Yours in Service,

Paul Mulindwa,  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Mulindwa". The signature is stylized and written over a white background.

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# Who we are!

Founded in 2003, Kitara Civil Society Organisations' Network (KCSON) is a legally registered network of 86 Civil Society Organizations operating primarily in Bunyoro sub-region. Incorporated with the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) and registered as an NGO with National Bureau for NGOs, KCSON complies with the NGO Act 2016. Our members focus on diverse thematic areas, including governance, climate change, social protection, and institutional capacity building.

KCSON's governance structure comprises the General Assembly, the supreme decision-making body; the Board of Directors, and the Secretariat. The Board provides oversight to the Secretariat and facilitates a supportive, forward-thinking policy environment. The Secretariat is staffed by dedicated full-time professional, manages day-to-day administration and program activities. This robust structure underpins



## VISION

A vibrant and well-coordinated Civil Society where development is achieved in a just and peaceful society.



## MISSION

To contribute towards sustainable development by promoting; a vibrant Civil Society, participation of the vulnerable groups of people, effective social services, and responsible use of natural resources.



## CORE VALUES

Transparency & Accountability  
Social Justice and Equity  
Unity in Diversity



## Working Principles

- a) An inclusive network organization with a broad membership and representation both at the district and at the national level
- b) Building strong legitimacy and a voice making the Network a credible and authoritative
- c) Empowering CSO actors and groups.
- d) Communication, cross-learning and sharing on scaling up best practices.
- e) Partnerships with other existing networks and Civil Society
- f) Rights sensitive, results-focused and work-plan based.

# Our 2024 in Numbers

## Governance and Advocacy

- Welcomed 5 new members to the KCSO network, expanding to 86 CSOs.
- Supported 50 member CSOs in governance, resource mobilization, financial literacy, advocacy, and conflict management.
- Trained 100 members of women- and youth-led CSOs in governance, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), leadership, advocacy, and Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA).
- Engaged over 400 people in training and advocacy to strengthen business and human rights principles.

## Natural Resources and Climate Change

- Trained 4,696 households in climate-smart agriculture under the hub-approach through member CSOs and CBOs in Kagadi, Kibaale, Kikuube, Kyenjojo, and Kyegegwa districts, building resilience against climate challenges.
- Restored 89.3 hectares of forest with exotic and indigenous trees, supported through CBOs along the Bugoma-Kagombe landscape.
- Procured and distributed 21,143 coffee seedlings and 4,183 banana tissues to households through CBOs to enhance sustainable livelihoods.
- Restored 2 private natural forests, covering 10 hectares, for sustainable ecosystem benefits.

## Social Protection and Livelihoods

- Completed 12,946 referrals and linkages for HIV/AIDS services, contributing to retaining 24,199 clients in care across Kagadi, Kibaale, and Kakumiro districts.
- Enrolled 35 new community socio-economic groups to benefit from KCSO interventions. Supported 10 out-of-school youth with vocational skills training to enhance employability.
- Distributed 19 hybrid cows, 164 goats, and 10 piglets to 45 socio-economic groups in the Bunyoro sub-region to improve livelihoods.

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# Key Accomplishments In 2024

## Strengthened Advocacy for Good Governance and Effective Service Delivery

### Policy Popularization: Local Economic Development (LED)

In 2024, KCSO advanced LED policy popularization to empower communities to accelerate local development through community philanthropy, as outlined the 2014 LED policy. We engaged 250 stakeholders, including Local Government officials (e.g., Heads of Department, Town Clerks, District Commercial Officers, Production Officers, District Planners, District Community Development Officers, RDCs, and LC5s), private sector representatives, CSOs, and media across the Bunyoro sub-region. Through community and regional meetings with district LED Committees, we explored innovative ideas to stimulate local competitiveness, promote business growth and eradicate poverty. These efforts facilitated greater appreciation that development hinges on communities uniting to build collective power and voice, strengthening resilience in the Bunyoro sub-region.



*Chairperson LCV Kagadi, Mr. Ndiwami B. Yosia leading a discussion during one of the meetings to popularise the LED policy.*



## Citizen Engagement for Accountability

Recognizing the widespread citizen apathy toward governance and accountability, particularly due to public corruption, KCSO convened engagements across the Bunyoro sub-region to empower communities to demand for accountability from leaders at all levels. These efforts addressed the disconnect between quality of life and service delivery. We engaged over 300 citizens from diverse groups including “Boda Boda” riders, women’s associations, elderly associations, people with disabilities (PWDs), youth associations, and others. Additionally, we identified and trained 10 group conveners to facilitate regular discussions key service delivery issues, such as health access and budget transparency. KCSO remains committed to establishing regular dialogue forums to sustain conversations that boost citizen participation in governance and accountability processes across Uganda.



*Community members raising issues on service delivery during one of the community meetings organised by KCSO*

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## Government Engagement for Accountability

In 2024, KCSO strengthened partnerships with central and local governments across the Bunyoro sub-region to enhance accountability and participation in governance. Building on years of facilitating CSO-Government relations, we attended over 20 planning and budgeting meetings, presenting CSOs reports on community priorities to influence local development plans. KCSO also participated in District NGO Monitoring Committees (DNMCs), District Technical Planning Committees (DTPCs), District HIV/AIDS Committee (DAC), District Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children Committee (DOVCC), ensuring alignment with district priorities. To meet regulatory requirements, and deepen collaboration, we shared reports and workplans with district local governments and involved officials in implementing and monitoring activities. Supported by training 50 CSOs in governance and advocacy, these efforts built resilient governance structures by amplifying community voices and fostering government responsiveness to local needs.

## Oil and Gas Advocacy for Community Rights

Through the Bunyoro Albertine Petroleum Network on Environmental Conservation (BAPENECO), KCSO conducted compliance monitoring and engaged International Oil Companies (IOCs), central and local government agencies, and other stakeholders across the Bunyoro sub-region, particularly in Buliisa district. In 2024, these advocacy efforts yielded significant outcomes:

- Constructed six access roads along the Kiziranfumbi-Kabaale road in Kigaga village, improving community access to homes and businesses.
- Established an access road in Nyakasinini village, resolving a long-standing issue.
- Secured partial compensation for flood-affected households in Kisomere village under Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) 5, with the District Natural Resource Officer tasked to investigate allegations of speculation among remaining households, with findings expected in early 2025.
- TEPU committed to rehabilitating a community borehole in Kisomere village impacted by flooding from the Gunya 1 oil rig.
- Addressed dust pollution at Kasemene 1 Oil pad in Kakindo cell, Buliisa Town Council, through a joint compliance monitoring visit with BAPENECO, International Alert, and Buliisa District Local Government. TEPU's consistent watering efforts significantly reduced dust, benefiting local households.

These efforts, complementing broader governance advocacy through 20 planning and budgeting meetings, built resilient communities by securing infrastructure improvements and protecting rights in oil-affected areas.



## Private Sector Advocacy for Business and Human Rights

Through BAPENECO in collaboration with Bunyoro Business Club (BBC), an umbrella organisation for businesses across eight districts in the Bunyoro sub-region (Hoima, Buliisa, Kikuube, Masindi, Kiryandongo, Kagadi, Kakumiro, and Kibaale), KCSO organized a two-day Business and Human Rights (BHR) forum on 27th - 28th March 2024 at HB Hotel, Hoima City

The forum engaged 29 participants (10 females and 19 males) from the private sector. It was aimed to introduce BHR concepts to local companies and facilitate cross-learning on integrating the principles into business operations. Participants gained knowledge on their roles in promoting the National Action Plan on Business & Human Rights (NAPBHR), developing human rights policies and ensuring corporate policies align with NAPBHR standards.

Cross-learning from national-level first-tier contractors highlighted how integrating BHR principles provided a competitive edge and improved relationships with staff and clients. This forum strengthened resilient private sector practices, supporting sustainable community development in the Bunyoro sub-region.



Participants during one of the advocacy engagements on BHR

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# Natural Resources, Livelihoods, and Climate Change

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## a) Collaboration in Natural Resource Management

In 2024, KCSON partnered with government agencies, including the National Forestry Authority (NFA), and district natural resources departments to promote sustainable natural resource management across the Bunyoro sub-region and beyond **Key achievements include:**

- **Training women's groups:** From March to June, KCSON collaborated with NFA to train 18 women's groups comprising 217 Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) members (117 males, 100 females), across 13 Central Forest Reserves (Kalinzu, Kasyoha Kitomi, Budongo, Bugoma, Wambabya, South Maramagambo, Rwesambya, Matiri, Kibego, Ibambaro, Kitechura, Muhangi and Itwara) in nine districts (Bushenyi, Rubirizi, Masindi, Hoima, Kikuube, Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Mitooma, and Kabarole). The trainings covered business identification, planning, financial management, record-keeping, savings, and governance, and marketing, empowering members to sustain forest-based livelihoods.
- **Establishing CFM Agreements:** In partnership with Worldwide Fund for Nature Uganda Country Office (WWF-UCO) and NFA, under the World Bank-supported Investing in Forests and Protected Areas for Climate-Smart Development (IFPA-CD) project, KCSON facilitated the drafting of 19 new CFM agreements and plans for communities in the Central Forest Reserves of Budongo, Kibego, Ibambaro, Kitechura, Muhangi, Era, Mt Kei, Kagombe, Kalinzu, Kakasi, Ihimbo, South Maramagambo and North Maramagambo.

These agreements, contributed to supporting sustainable resource management.

## b) Promoting Climate Resilience

To promote climate resilience and address effects of climate change, KCSON empowered CSOs, particularly those adjacent to protected areas with community-based approaches to resilience and adaptation. **Key achievements include:**

- **Climate-Smart Agriculture Training:** KCSON trained 4,696 farmers (1,963 males, 2,733 females) across Kibaale, Kagadi, Kikuube, Kyenjojo, and Kyegegwa districts in climate-smart interventions, including mulching, shifting cultivation, intercropping, drip irrigation (using local technology, such as plastic bottles), seasonal timing, and crop variety selection. These efforts amplified resilience messages and were part of broader initiatives to support 54 community-based groups.
- **Agricultural Support:** KCSON distributed 21,143 disease-resistant coffee seedlings (wilt-resistant varieties) and 4,183 banana tissues to farmers, enhancing sustainable livelihoods.
- **Mushroom Cultivation:** Provided two community groups with mushroom dryers, supporting income-generating mushroom cultivation for 20 farmers.

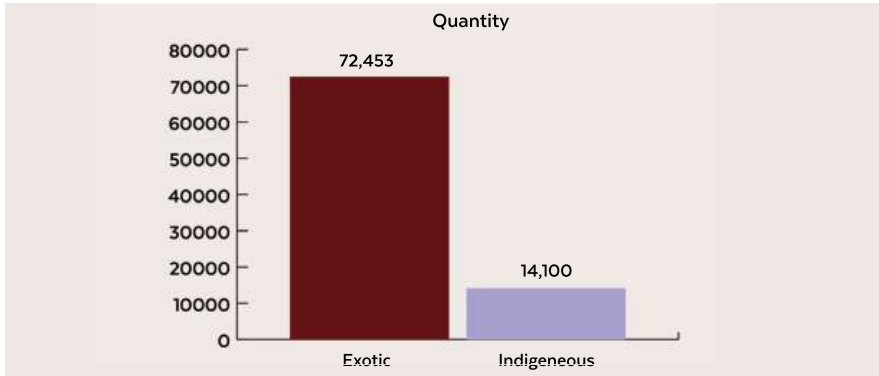
These interventions built resilient communities by equipping farmers with sustainable practices to combat climate change in the Bunyoro sub-region

### c) Forest Regeneration & Tree Planting

To expand forest and tree coverage, KCSO collaborated with community groups adjacent to protected areas in Kibaale, Kikuube, Kagadi, Kyenjojo and Kyegegwa districts to plant 86,553 tree seedlings (72,453 Exotic and 14,100 indigenous). In total, 89.3 hectares were planted on private land, contributing to sustainable resource management **Key activities included:**

- **Community-Driven Planting:** Beneficiaries expressed interest by filling out Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) forms to select tree species and quantities, ensuring community ownership.
- **Technical Support:** Farmers received guidance from local government (LG) extension officers and KCSO Training of Trainers (ToTs) on proper tree spacing and woodlot management during planting. These officers continue to follow up to ensure proper management and sustainability.
- **Environmental Impact:** The established woodlots are expected to reduce pressure on Central Forest Reserves (CFRs) by providing alternative timber and fuel wood sources, supporting long-term conservation.

These efforts built resilient ecosystems and communities by expanding forest cover and promoting sustainable alternatives in the Bunyoro sub-region.



#### d) Youth Vocational Green Entrepreneurship

To address Uganda’s youth unemployment crisis, KCSON adopted approaches to engage youth in promoting self-reliance through green entrepreneurial skills with support from WWF-UCO, KCSON enabled 10 out-of-school youth (4 females, & 6 males) from Rugashari Youth Group and Namirembe Women’s Group in Kibaale and Kagadi districts to undertake apprenticeship at TECO-Munteme for 3-to 6-month courses. **Key achievements include:**

- **Vocational Skills Development:** The youth were trained in carpentry and joinery, welding, bricklaying and concrete practice, and hairdressing, incorporating sustainable practices.
- **Employment Outcomes:** All 10 beneficiaries are now self-employed and others working in formal sectors.

These efforts built resilient livelihoods by equipping youth with skills for sustainable self-reliance in the Bunyoro sub-region



#### e) Promoting Renewable Energy Technologies

To support Uganda Vision 2040 and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7’s aim for universal access to clean energy, KCSON promoted renewable energy technologies in the Bunyoro and Tooro sub-regions. **Key activities included:**

- **Radio Awareness Campaigns:** KCSON conducted 6 radio talk shows across multiple stations in Kibaale, Kagadi, Kyegegwa, and Kyenjojo districts, themed, “Behavioural Change Campaign on Adoption and Use of Improved Renewable Energy Technologies.” Panelists, including clean energy champions, district representatives, and KCSON staff, engaged approximately 10,000 listeners (estimate) through call-in participation. Discussions highlighted energy-efficient cook stoves and solar lighting, with listeners praising reduced firewood consumption and calling for expanded training for energy champions.
- **Community Impact:** The campaigns increased adoption of renewable energy technologies among community members, reducing air pollution, improving public health, and enhancing environmental conditions.

These efforts built resilient communities through sustainable energy solutions in the Bunyoro-Toro sub-region. KCSON plans to expand training for energy champions in 2025.

### f) Training in Alternative energy Technologies

In 2024, KCSO conducted community-based trainings on constructing and fabricating energy-saving cook stoves, equipping group members with skills to build and maintain stoves using locally available materials. **Key Achievements included:**

- **Skill Development:** Trained 150 participants (63 males and 87 females) from 10 project groups across Kagadi, Kibaale, Kyenjojo, Kyegegwa and Kikuube districts. 47 (29 females and 18 males) community members also attended the training. Participants learned to construct both fixed and movable stoves, building 10 fixed and 10 movable stoves during the trainings.
- **Post-Training Impact:** Group members constructed an additional 23 stoves, totaling 33 stoves, which reduce wood fuel use, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance indoor air quality.

Building on radio campaigns promoting cookstoves, these trainings built resilient communities by fostering sustainable energy solutions that protect the environment and improve public health in the Bunyoro sub-region.

### g) Livestock Distribution for Livelihood Improvement

In 2024, KCSO enhanced livelihoods for member CSOs by distributing livestock to 45 socio-economic groups, including 35 new groups enrolled in 2024, across Kagadi, Kibaale, Kyenjojo, Kikuube, and Kyegegwa districts. **Key initiatives included:**

- **Goat Distribution:** Provided 164 improved goats (high-yield breeds) to 85 farmers within 45 groups. **Cow and Piglet Distribution:** Distributed 19 improved cows and 10 piglets to additional households.
- **Revolving System and Support:** Individual farmers host animals on behalf of their groups, managing care (security, feeding, treatment) under agreed terms. Offspring are shared among members via a revolving system every 12 months (estimate). Extension services, including veterinary support and animal husbandry training, ensured quality outcomes.

These initiatives built resilient livelihoods by providing sustainable income sources, enabling households to expand farms, acquire capital investments, improve health, and fund education, strengthening community cooperation in the Bunyoro sub-region.

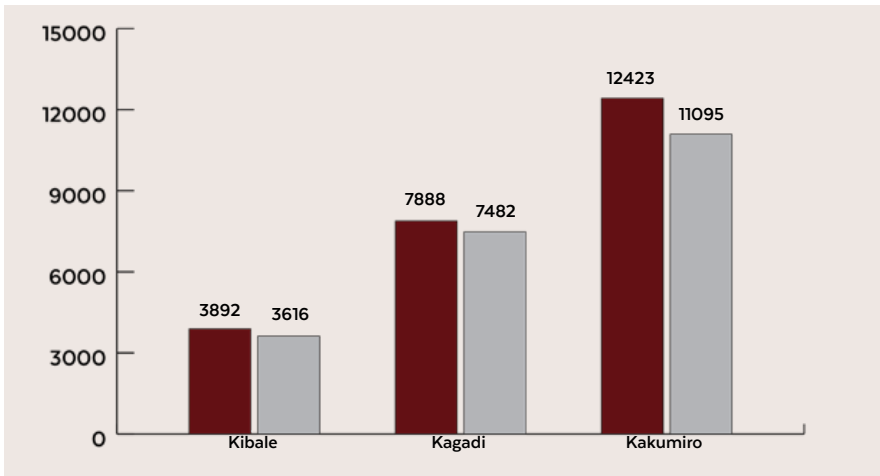


# Social Protection and Refugee Response Milestones

## HIV/AIDS Client Retention and Linkages

KCSON improved HIV/AIDS client retention by linking 24,199 clients interrupted treatment back to care across Kagadi, Kibaale and Kakumiro districts in the Bunyoro sub-region, working through 18 health facilities (Kibaale HCIV, EMESCO and Nyamarwa HCIII, in Kibaale district; Kakindo HCIV, Kisita HCIII, Kakumiro HCIV, Nkooko HCIII, Igayaza HCIII, Nalweyo HCIII, Kasambya HCIII, Kyakuterekera and Kyabasajja in Kakumiro district; Kyaterekera, Mpeefu, St Ambrose, Bwikara HCIII, Kiryanga HCIII, and Isunga HCIII) in Kagadi district. Key achievements included:

- **Community-Based Linkages:** Collaborating with Village Health Teams (VHTs) and Community Linkage and Referral Facilitators, part of 54 community-based groups, KCSON tracked clients listed as missed or lost to follow-up (Treatment Missed/Lost, TXML) and supported their return to treatment (Treatment Return to Treatment, TXRTT).
- **District Outcomes:**
  - **Kagadi:** Line-listed 7,884 missed or lost clients, returning 7,482 (94%) to care.
  - **Kakumiro:** Line-listed 12,423 clients, returning 11,095 (89.3%) to care.
  - **Kibaale:** Line-listed 3,892 clients, returning 3,616 (93%) to care



These efforts built resilient communities by ensuring sustained access to HIV/AIDS care, improving health outcomes in the Bunyoro sub-region.

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# Institutional Capacity Strengthening

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KCSON enhanced its capacity and knowledge management to support its 85 member organizations and partners across the Bunyoro sub-region, in fulfilling their mandates. Key achievements included: her Member Organizations and other actors to effectively execute their mandate, the following were done.

- **Policy Development:** Developed and approved four internal policies; Anti-Money Laundering, Data protection policy, gender and inclusivity policy, succession policy ; to guide day-to-day operations of the network, Strengthening governance.
- **Resource Mobilization:** Increased revenue by 12.1% through proposal writing (including joint proposals), government collaboration, and timely membership dues, supported by a hard working secretariat and robust finance and management systems.
- **Membership Growth:** Recruited five new member organizations, bringing the total to 85, with all completing the recruitment process and accessing membership services.
- **Compliance Support:** Ensured compliance with internal policies and statutory requirements including the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), the Pay As You Earn (PAYE), Local Service Tax (LST) and filed annual returns with the Uganda Revenue Service Bureau (URSB), National Bureau for NGOs,, and local governments. Supported members with compliance through training sessions during forums (e.g., AGM) and one-on-one assistance for returns, permits, and registrations, contributing to their capacity.
- **Governance:** Held the 2023 Annual General Meeting to approve 2023 financial and program reports and the 2024 workplan and budget, with four quarterly board meetings ensuring oversight.

These efforts built a resilient organization by strengthening governance, compliance, and resource sustainability, enabling KCSON to support its members effectively.

## Research and Learning

In 2024, KCSO advanced knowledge management through two policy research studies to inform advocacy and strengthen systems in the Bunyoro region.

- **Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) Effectiveness:** KCSO researched the effectiveness of CFM mechanisms for livelihoods and sustainable forest management, focusing on 10 CFM groups in Kikuube and Kagadi districts.

The study produced a detailed report and an advocacy position paper, disseminated to 200 stakeholders including CFM Associations, National Forestry Authority (NFA) staff, local government officials, forest monitors, adjacent communities, and CSOs through five meetings and ten media channels. **Key recommendations included:**

- Providing refresher training for CFM members in business skills and enterprise management.
- Strengthening economic activities (forest- and non-forest-based) to support livelihoods.
- Promoting Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) forms, as used in tree planting, for enterprise selection to ensure community ownership.
- Enhancing linkages to CSO and government extension services to boost CFM plans.
- Exploring direct benefits from forests, such as carbon trading and tourism. Building on training 217 CFM members and drafting 19 CFM agreements, this study informed sustainable forest management.

- **Local Government Capacity for NAPBHR:** Through the Bunyoro Albertine Petroleum Network on Environmental Conservation (BAPENECO), KCSO assessed the capacity of local governments in oil-hosting districts (Kikuube and Hoima) to implement the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAPBHR). The study report, validated by 50 stakeholders (e.g., district officials, CSOs), identified gaps in funding and training for local government staff, informing advocacy efforts. This complemented the Business and Human Rights forum engaging 29 private sector participants.

These studies built resilient systems by generating evidence to strengthen forest management and human rights advocacy in the Bunyoro region.



Participants in a panel discussion on NAPBHR at HB Hotel-Hoima



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# CSO Capacity Building

KCSO fulfilled its core mandate by building the capacity of its member organizations and other CSOs in the region. Key training areas included:

- **Governance and Resource Mobilization:** Trained 45 CSOs in governance structures and fundraising strategies.
- **Financial Management:** Equipped with skills to improve budgeting and financial reporting accuracy.
- **Communication, Reporting, and Documentation:** Enhanced CSOs' abilities to produce quality reports and communicate effectively.
- **Conflict Management:** Strengthened CSOs' skills in resolving internal and community disputes.

These organizations are now capable of sustaining community interventions in the Bunyoro sub-region.



## Stories of change



Story told by Muruli Joseph -  
Chairperson tree planting MCODA

### **MCODA Reaps UGX 70 Million from Tree Woodlot with KCSON's Support**

For over a decade, the Kikuube Civil Society Organizations Network (KCSON), in partnership with WWF-Uganda Country Office (WWF-UCO), has worked to strengthen community-led natural resource management near Bugoma Central Forest Reserve. Their shared goal: to improve livelihoods while protecting Uganda's rich biodiversity in the Albertine Rift. A standout success story from this initiative is the Mpanga Conservation and Development Association (MCODA), a Collaborative Forest Management Association (CFMA) rooted in Kitore village, Kabwoya Sub-county, Kikuube district.

#### **From Dormancy to Growth**

Formed in 2017, MCODA began with 56 committed members (37 men and 19 women). The National Forestry Authority (NFA) entrusted the group with 100 hectares of land for tree planting. But enthusiasm quickly waned. A year passed with no tangible progress, prompting some members to walk away, discouraged by the scale of the task and lack of resources.

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## A Strategic Intervention

The turning point came in 2018. KCSON conducted a comprehensive organizational capacity assessment for MCODA, identifying critical gaps in governance, planning, and financial management. What followed was a targeted capacity development plan that included:

- Training in group dynamics and financial literacy
- Establishment of a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA)
- Improved record-keeping and financial accountability systems
- Development of a business plan, annual work plan, and budget

Armed with these tools, MCODA was ready to act. In August 2018, KCSON supplied a mix of eucalyptus and indigenous tree seedlings. The group planted their first 10 hectares; marking the beginning of a steady transformation. Between 2019 and 2020, they expanded their efforts, planting 40 more hectares. By 2024, MCODA had established woodlots across 80 hectares of their allocated land.

## A Harvest of Hope

The results were tangible and transformative. At the end of 2024, MCODA harvested and sold trees planted during the early years of their project, earning an impressive UGX 70 million. The income didn't just sit in the bank; it changed lives:

- Members bought land and livestock (goats and cows)
- Families renovated homes and paid school fees
- Access to medical care improved
- Some funds covered administrative costs like office rent
- A portion was reinvested into new tree planting, ensuring sustainability

*“We are no longer the same; both as individual members and as a CBO,”* says Nyakoojo Steven, MCODA's chairperson. *“We have strengthened our systems, acquired household assets, and can now afford essential services like education and healthcare.”*

Buoyed by their success, MCODA is now aiming higher. In 2025, they plan to plant the remaining 20 hectares, completing the full 100-hectare target. Meanwhile, they are diversifying their income streams with mushroom farming, passion fruit cultivation, goat rearing, and brick making; creating a resilient and multifaceted local economy.

## A Model for Community-Led Conservation

MCODA's journey illustrates how strategic support, patient capacity building, and local ownership can drive meaningful impact. KCSON and WWF's efforts have not only protected a vital ecosystem but also empowered a community to build a better, greener future. This is possible when civil society, government, and communities come together for people and planet.

# From a Forest Encroacher to a Model Farmer: KCSO Transforms Emmanuel's Life

In Kigaalya village, adjacent to Kagombe Central Forest Reserve (CFR) in Nyamarunda Sub-county, Kibaale District, lives Besigomwe Emmanuel; a man whose life story has become a symbol of transformation and resilience.

Once a forest encroacher, Emmanuel had abandoned his small family plot to cultivate maize and beans inside the CFR, like many others struggling to make ends meet. For a time, the forest was his family's primary source of livelihood. But with the government's CFR restoration campaign, led by the National Forestry Authority (NFA), Emmanuel was evicted. The eviction came as a devastating blow.

*"I had no fallback plan," Emmanuel recalls. "Developments at home came to a standstill. Supporting my children's education became nearly impossible. Life was so hard, comrades."*

## A Second Chance Through Community Empowerment

Emmanuel's turning point came with the arrival of the **FRECAR Project**, implemented by the KCSO. The project focused on empowering communities living adjacent to Kagombe CFR through organized Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Emmanuel, now the leader of the *Kigaalya Bataka Twekambe Tukurakurane Group (KTTG)*, one of the KCSO-supported groups; benefited directly from this initiative. KCSO provided a comprehensive package of support:

- Training in land use management and planning
- Business planning and financial literacy
- Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices
- Formation of a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA)
- Inputs including banana tissue culture seedlings, coffee, trees, and livestock

*"I was supported with 300 banana tissue seedlings to plant an acre and one crossbreed goat," Emmanuel explains.*

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## A Life Rebuilt

Today, Emmanuel's story is one of restoration; both ecological and personal. His banana plantation now earns him approximately UGX 130,000 per week. He saves part of this income through the group's VSLA, allowing him to invest in a permanent house and keep his children in school.

"My life has changed completely," Emmanuel says with pride. "I've moved from depending on the forest to depending on my land. My family is stable, my children are learning, and my future is promising."

Emmanuel's journey underscores the power of targeted community interventions and the importance of sustainable alternatives to forest exploitation. Through KCSON and the FRECAR Project, former forest encroachers like Emmanuel are becoming champions of conservation and rural development. This is just an example of what's possible when communities are given the tools, knowledge, and support to thrive alongside nature.



# KCSO's Tailored Support Transforms BTCMH into a Stronger, Compliant Organization

In 2024, *Bridging the Communities for Mental Health (BTCMH)* emerged as a shining example of how targeted capacity-building can drive sustainable institutional transformation. With support from the KCSO, BTCMH transitioned from a struggling community-based organization to a well-governed, compliant, and performance-driven entity.

## Diagnosing the Gaps

BTCMH's journey began with a comprehensive Organizational Capacity Assessment conducted by KCSO. The assessment revealed critical weaknesses in three core areas:

- **Governance:** Lack of board involvement and unclear leadership roles
- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Limited capacity for data collection, reporting, and program tracking
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Incomplete registration and missed statutory obligations

## A Strategic Response

KCSO responded with a hands-on, tailored intervention plan designed to close these gaps and build long-term resilience. The approach included:

- **Governance Enhancement:** KCSO conducted a board induction workshop, clarifying roles and responsibilities. As a result, BTCMH's board became more engaged in strategic oversight, policy development, and fundraising.
- **Regulatory Compliance Support:** KCSO guided BTCMH through the full registration process with the NGO Bureau and the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB). The organization also received support to meet mandatory filing requirements, including returns and data protection compliance.
- **M&E Strengthening:** Staff participated in a series of trainings focused on data collection, monitoring frameworks, and reporting. This resulted in significantly improved program evaluations and timelier, accurate report submissions.

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## A Tangible Transformation

The results were swift and remarkable. BTCMH is now a fully compliant organization with robust governance systems, stronger internal processes, and greater external credibility. According to Director **Hedwig Mbaziira Birungi**;

*“I want to thank KCSON for the invaluable support. BTCMH had many gaps, but through the capacity-building sessions, we’ve seen major improvements. Governance has improved; everyone now understands their roles, and our oversight functions are much stronger. Staff are submitting quality, timely reports. In 2024 alone, we filed returns with the URSB, the NGO Bureau, and data protection authorities. We even signed MoUs with our districts of operation. All this was made possible by KCSON’s incredible support.”*

## A Model for Sustainable Growth

BTCMH’s transformation highlights the effectiveness of KCSON’s one-on-one approach to capacity building. By meeting organizations where they are and addressing their unique needs, KCSON is helping its members grow stronger, more accountable, and more impactful.

BTCMH is now better positioned to deliver on its mission; and serve as a model for other grassroots organizations aiming to scale their impact through improved governance and compliance.



## Lessons Learned

Through our efforts to empower communities and promote sustainable development, we've learned that:

- We learned that leveraging technology can streamline program operations and improve outcomes, but it's crucial to invest time and resources in training staff and addressing potential technical issues. Embracing innovation and technology requires a willingness to experiment, and learn from failures, ultimately leading to improved program delivery and outcomes. KCSO will therefore streamline application of technology in her program operations in the year 2025 and beyond.
- On collaboration and Partnership, we learned that collaboration is key to unlocking collective knowledge, expertise, and resources. By partnering with government bodies, donors, and local communities, we can co-create innovative solutions, build capacity, and drive lasting change. By doing so, we can ensure that our programs are context-specific, effective, and sustainable. In the year 2025, KCSO will strengthen its linkages and partnership building in areas of program implementation, resource mobilization and institutional visibility.
- Deep Community Engagement is essential for program sustainability, fostering ownership, and empowering community members. Our experience showed that investing time and resources in building strong relationships with the community is essential for achieving long-term program impact and sustainability. Community engagement is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process that requires continuous effort, listening, and adaptation to ensure that programs remain relevant and effective. KCSO will continue engaging in interventions that promote citizen participation.

These lessons have prepared KCSO for greater effectiveness and impact in the future. They reinforce the importance of continuous learning, adaptability, and commitment to our core values and mission.

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## Challenges

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- The increased requirements for compliance by multiple compliance institutions of government. The requirements are too many that many of our member organizations find it hard to fulfill them all. KCSON will continue facilitating one-on-one sessions on understanding the legal framework, maintaining proper documentation, and ensuring adherence to regulatory obligations.
- Slow response from key oil sector players to engage in CSO activities. There is also slow response from key stakeholders to effectively address the issues raised to them by civil society actors especially during dialogues. In certain instances, International Oil Companies are hesitant to participate in our activities due to the sensitivity of the issues/grievances and reception from Project Affected Persons (PAPs)
- Limited capacity of most MOs to attract funding partnerships due to weak internal systems. Many MOs still have weak internal systems that make it difficult to attract funding or make them competitive in the sector. KCSON will continue building capacity of her membership to address such challenges.
- Inadequate financial resources to fully implement the planned activities. KCSON, like many CSOs has financial constraints that make it difficult to fully run the organization's projected workplans as per the strategic plan. KCSON in the year 2025 will support some CSOs in specific areas of enhancing resource mobilization such as embracing philanthropy for development and partnership building.

## Partnerships and collaboration

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KCSON, with over 20 years of experience serving the sector, aspires to elevate its impact and sees partnering as core to its work. We actively seek collaboration and advocate for a broader impact through strong partnerships with NGOs/CSOs, academic institutions, local governments, corporate bodies, the private sector, MDAs, and, importantly, the citizens whom we serve.

We wish to extend our gratitude and appreciation to all our partners for their continued commitment, which enables us to fulfill our mission of contributing towards sustainable development by promoting; a vibrant civil society, participation of the vulnerable groups of people, effective social services, and responsible use of natural resources.

## KCSO Income in 2024

Donor	Amount (UgX)
WWF-FRECAR	697,767,950
WWF SIDA LTC-2	184,926,160
WWF SIDA LTC-Core Support	81,472,987
Baylor Uganda-ACE Bunyoro	124,582,000
International Alert-EBHR	261,157,260
UNNGOF	28,265,000
FCDE/Confluence Institute	90,875,000
Other Incomes	333,531,560
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,802,577,917</b>

**KITARA CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' NETWORK  
ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

**6.0 STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME**

	Notes	2024 Shs.	2023 Shs.
<b>REVENUE:</b>			
Donations and Grants	2.11	1,469,046,357	1,265,668,549
Other Income	3	<u>333,531,560</u>	<u>98,306,202</u>
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b><u>1,802,577,917</u></b>	<b><u>1,363,974,751</u></b>
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>			
Direct Project Expenses	4	1,653,192,212	919,775,259
Institutional Administrative expenses	5	147,646,378	447,113,423
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b><u>1,800,838,590</u></b>	<b><u>1,366,888,682</u></b>
<b>Surplus or (Deficit) for the year</b>		<b><u>1,739,327</u></b>	<b><u>-2,913,931</u></b>

The notes on pages 12 to 17 form an integral part of these financial statements.

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 10/03/2025  
signed on its behalf by:

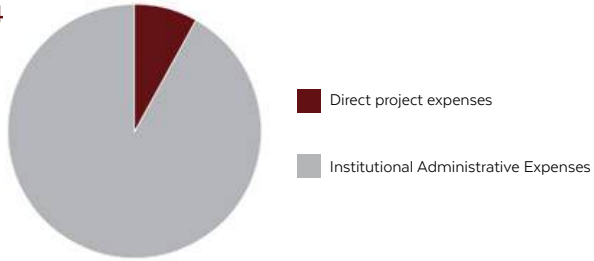
  
Executive Director

  
Treasurer

  
Board Chairperson

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## Expenditure 2024



## Our 2025 Priorities

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- KCSON membership expansion and servicing
- Program expansion through potential partner engagement (donors, government, private sector, community)
- Institutional home development with a target of ground floor completion
- Midterm review of KCSON strategic plan 2023-2027
- Fulfillment of compliance requirements by KCSON and member organizations to multiple agencies



# KCSO Board 2024



**Hedwig Mbaziira Birungi**  
Chairperson



**Januarious Rubaire**  
Vice Chairperson



**Marion Tweheyo**  
Treasurer



**Ponsius Businge**  
Gen Secretary



**Moureen Kyokusiima**  
Publicity Secretary



**Night Mary Gorret**  
Member



**Shem Ahumuza**  
Member



**Dr. Mwalimu Musheshe**  
Advisor



**John Kasajja**  
Member

# KCSO Staff 2024



**Paul Mulindwa**  
Executive Director



**Prossy Bashemera**  
Accounts & Admin Assistant



**Kizito Byarugaba**  
Project Manager-FRECAR



**Denis Ssebugwawo**  
M&E Coordinator



**Saturday Solomon**  
Accountant



**Gloria Aseera Mugonzebwa**  
Coordinator BAPENECO



**Matia Mugenyi**  
Accounts Assistant



**Robert Mukisa**  
Project Officer FRECAR



**Tanazio Byamugisha**  
Programs Coordinator

## KCSO Staff 2024 - *Continued*



**Asaba Juliet**  
DPO-Kibaale



**Francis Ssewanyana**  
Volunteer



**Fred Kazibwe**  
DPO-Kakumiro



**Julius Musiime**  
Office assistant



**Oscar Businge**  
DPO-Kagadi



**Rose Nanjwenge**  
Office Admin-Hoima

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## 2024 in Pictures





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## 2024 in Pictures



# KCSON PARTNERS 2024







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P.O. Box 560105, Kagadi, Uganda  
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Opposite St. Luke COU

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Near IGG Office

Tel: +256 393 240166  
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*"Combined effort for Development"*