

# COMMUNITY CONCERNS UGANDA INITIATIVE

## 2023 Annual Report



Community Concerns Uganda Initiative (CCUg)

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## Acknowledgement

Community Concerns Uganda Initiative (CCUg) greatly appreciates the entire team for the great work delivered during the year 2023.

We are indeed thankful to our partners and donors who have provided funding for the projects to be implemented. Your continued support makes all of our work possible, and on behalf of the CCUg staff and the women and children we serve, we thank you very much for your generosity. We pray that you will keep up with the spirit of giving.

We thank the Executive Board of Trustees (BOT) and Senior Advisor for their advice and follow-up on our work; we are indeed grateful. Not forgetting the members that engage with us throughout the year, thank you for being available and allowing us to serve you.

## Message from the Chairperson



Greetings from Community Concerns Uganda Initiative, I take the honor to thank God for the life He offered all of us in the year 2023. At CCUg, we are grateful for the strong team of partners, stake holders, the local government, donors and the entire community that made the year a success.

I am pleased to present the annual report of 2023. This report encapsulates our collective efforts, achievements, and the strategic initiatives that have propelled our organization forward. These accomplishments are a testament to our commitment to excellence and our ability to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing environment.

Over the past year, we have faced numerous challenges and seized various opportunities that have tested our resilience and innovation. I am proud to say that through the unwavering dedication of our team, the strategic guidance of our leadership, and the support of our stakeholders, we have made significant strides towards our goals.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on our mission and are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. We will continue to innovate, collaborate, and drive positive change in our communities.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our board members, employees, partners, and supporters for their continued trust and support. Your contributions are invaluable to our success, and I look forward to working together as we embark on another year of growth and achievement.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kigere Rose', with a large initial 'K'.

.....  
KIGERE ROSE  
CHAIRPERSON BOARD

## Message from the Managing Director



As we conclude another dynamic and productive year, I am honored to present the Annual Activity Report for 2023. This report offers a comprehensive overview of our initiatives, achievements, and the impactful work we have undertaken together.

This year has been marked by significant progress and transformative growth. Despite the challenges posed by a rapidly evolving landscape, our organization has demonstrated remarkable resilience. Our team has worked tirelessly to advance our mission, and I am immensely proud of what we have accomplished.

These achievements are a reflection of our strategic vision and the collective efforts of our dedicated team, partners, and supporters. Together, we have created meaningful impact and set the stage for continued success. As we look to the future, we are committed to building on this momentum.

Our focus for the coming year still remains on Education, Health and livelihood, which are designed to enhance our capabilities, expand our reach, and drive greater value for our stakeholders.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to our board members, staff, partners, and supporters for their unwavering dedication and support. Your contributions have been instrumental in our achievements, and I am confident that, together, we will continue to achieve great things.

Thank you for your commitment to our mission and for being an integral part of our journey.

Sincerely,

Brenda Doreen Nakiryia  
Managing Director

## Message from Our Senior Advisor



2023 was a pivotal year for our organization. Following a couple of tough years in 2021 and 2022, we kicked off the first quarter with “battle-seasoned” staff, a well-established package of ongoing programs and a few newly-funded projects in areas that are familiar to us. Through hard work, persistence in the face of setbacks and dedication to our mission, we expanded our impact on the lives of vulnerable women and children in the areas we serve.

From a financial perspective, we ended the year in a strong position with excellent prospects for increased positive impact due to two new partnerships – one with Amplify Change and the other with GIZ Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme (CUSP), which is co-funded by the European

Union and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development and facilitated by Capital Solutions. Both of these partnerships allow us to capitalize on well-established skills and programming methodologies that bode well for their long-term success.

Through a rigorous budget process, careful fiscal management, and control of costs and spending strictly matched to actual income, we have strengthened our financial underpinning and are well-positioned for larger, more impactful opportunities in the future. The experiences of 2023 have allowed CCUG to enter 2024 as a lean, flexible and resilient organization with tested knowledge, skills and on-the-ground expertise to successfully implement sizeable projects of considerable complexity, and capable of withstanding future financial shocks on the order of Covid. With God’s help and grace, we are confident that our knowledge, training, hard-earned experience and on-the-ground will allow us to successfully continue our long-standing programmes and incorporate new and expanded projects in the coming year.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>CCUg</b>	<b>Community Concerns Uganda Initiative</b>
<b>BOT</b>	<b>Board of Trustees</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-Government Organisation</b>
<b>OVC</b>	<b>Orphans and Vulnerable Children</b>
<b>MHHM</b>	<b>Menstrual Hygiene Health Management</b>
<b>GSP</b>	<b>Group Saving project</b>
<b>SRGBV</b>	<b>Sexual Gender-Based Violence</b>
<b>IEC</b>	<b>Information Education and Communication Materials</b>
<b>IPTG</b>	<b>Interpersonal Group Therapy</b>
<b>VLSA</b>	<b>Village Saving and Loan Association</b>
<b>SRHR</b>	<b>Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights</b>
<b>LC</b>	<b>Local Council</b>

## Background

Community Concerns Uganda Initiative (CCUg) is a legally-registered Non-Government Organization (NGO) operating in the Busoga Sub-region, specifically in Jinja, Mayuge, Luuka, Buyende, and Kamuli Districts. Our offices are located in Wairaka at Old Kakira Road opposite St. Peter's Church, Jinja District. We envision an educated, healthy and productive community free from poverty. Our mission is to provide education and skills to empower women and girls to acquire the means to generate sustainable income and to contribute to the development of their communities. CCUg is governed by a Board of Trustees and an Advisory Committee who provide supervisory input, guidance and direction to support the organization in achieving its goals. In 2023 we had a 12-member operational team plus two support staff. Their service had a great impact on the lives of many people in the communities we serve, as explained later in this report. In addition to individual contributions and donations, funding for our 2023 projects came from Amplify Change, The Waterloo Foundation, and Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). We also got new partners on who are Capital Solutions with the support of GIZ and Zoe Empowers.

### Strategic Objectives

1. To promote hygiene and increase utilization of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and mental health services in schools.
2. To empower women and girls, including vulnerable children, through literacy development.
3. To provide sustainable livelihoods for women and girls through vocational services and saving and credit schemes.
4. To reduce gender-based violence among women and girls.
5. To develop and strengthen the institutional capacity of CCUg.

### Programme Areas

CCUg programmes fall under the four major themes listed below, each shown with their associated active projects in 2023:

- Education
  - OVC Sponsorship Project
  - Vocational Education
- Health – including WASH, SRHR and Mental Health
  - Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)
  - Raising Voices against Sexual Violence in Schools (GBV)
  - Mental Health
- Sustainable Livelihood
  - Group Savings (GSP)
  - Vocation Skilling
  - Organisation Strengthening and Development

Our funding comes largely from grants and donations.

## Approaches

Our method of work involves conducting high-quality, relevant research projects in the local communities we serve. The results of these studies inform the development of specific programs to address the needs revealed by the studies. The projects CCUg designs are delivered through sustainable, community-based interaction in one-on-one and group settings, and typically include a mix of classroom-style instruction, skills training and the delivery of material resources as needed to assist beneficiaries in establishing self-sustaining income-generating activities.

## Project/Program Updates

This report mainly presents achievements, challenges, recommendations, lessons and a few success stories regarding these projects.

## EDUCATION

Under this theme, we emphasize improving access to quality education especially among economically disadvantaged children. In 2023, we implemented two programs and two projects, including activities related to positive deviance in education and sponsorship of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC), sponsored by The Waterloo Foundation, Elevate Partners for Education and private donations.

### Positive Deviance

Community Concerns Uganda Initiative (CCUg), in partnership with Elevate Partners for Education, has been implementing positive deviance programs to improve learning in the Busoga region, specifically in the Mayuge District. This program started in 2019 and is ongoing.

In 2023, as the project was winding down we conducted an endline survey in February from 30 schools from Mayuge District. The main aim was twofold: first, to assess project effectiveness and determine whether we are achieving transformational results to foster learning, and second, to offer recommendations for continued implementation and processes to improve learning outcomes of children across the 30 school communities (listed below) that comprise the district.

Bute Primary School	Lugolole Primary School	Baitambogwe Primary School
Nakasuwa Primary School	Buyugi Primary School	Bukaleba Primary School
Lwanika Primary School	Luubu Primary School	Mabirizi Primary School
Wambete Primary School	Buwolya Primary School	Bwiwula Primary School
Mbaale Primary School	Sagitu Primary School	Nakidubuli Primary School
Maleka Primary School	Mitimito Primary School	Bugade Primary School
Bukizibu Primary School	Bukatabira Primary School	Mutagisa Primary School
Bwonda Primary School	Nango Primary school	St. Babra Namadhi
Mayuge Town Council Primary School	Maina Primary School	Wamulongo Primary School
Wabulungu Primary School.	Ntikalu Primary School	Malongo Primary School

## Activities

- Recruitment and training of 30 volunteers
- Collection of endline data from schools and their households
- Child assessments
- Dissemination of results to District Education Officials and Head Teachers of all the schools and Principal of Bishop Willis, Iganga District
- Discussion with the Head Teachers of the thirty schools at Mayuge Town Primary School

## Achievements

- The endline survey was conducted and completed at all schools in the district.
- The results showed a notable decline in numeracy competencies, on average, 51% of households in our study actively engaged their schools during the second phase of COVID closures. Tuning in to our radio talk show programs increased children's attendance of remote lessons delivered via radio by 27 percentage points. Performance significantly improved in all 3 subjects assessed.

## Recommendations

- In the future, for continuation of a project, funding should be sufficient to implement the project smoothly, taking into consideration potential price changes, especially as inflation becomes more significant.

## OVC Sponsorship

The CCUg OVC-Sponsorship project, funded by the Waterloo Foundation in partnership with parents, sponsors 12 children from Jinja and Mayuge District who are in Wakitaka and Waitambogwe secondary schools. In 2023, the project paid 75% of school fees and the parents paid the remaining 25% plus the cost to provide required scholastic materials. In 2024, the project will gradually phase to full parental payment as they complete a CCUg-delivered financial literacy course and learn the importance of regular savings through locally organized group savings plans sponsored by CCUg. These aspects of the project will enable them to assume these costs independently in the future.

CCUg also sponsored two boys through private donations in partnership with their parents and the school (Busoga College Mwiri).

## Activities

- Conduct of a baseline survey among 30 households to assess the vulnerability and needs of children to inform our selection of the most appropriate students for sponsorship
- Selection of twelve students for sponsorship among the 30 households surveyed
- Payment of school fees according to the project plan, monitoring of their academic progress and follow-up to ensure all children returned to school following breaks and scheduled recesses
- Delivery of financial literacy training to the caregivers of all selected children

## **Achievements**

- Careful data collection enabled us to select the right OVC beneficiaries.
- All children were able to study the whole term without being refused admittance for lack of fees or scholastic materials. This enabled them to remain focused on their studies.
- CCUG and parents / caregivers paid all school fees on time as planned.
- The parents / caregivers learned proper financial management skills, joined saving groups and began regularly saving for their children's education expenses.
- All students were monitored closely, which improved their learning and academic performance since this allowed them to receive academic support from the project officers.

## **Challenges**

- Due to limited funding, not all families that needed this assistance were selected for sponsorship.
- Some sponsored families were extremely poor and the financial support we were able to provide was not enough to support them in overcoming their economic challenges.

## **HEALTH**

### **Menstrual Hygiene Management**

In 2023, our Menstrual Hygiene Management project focused on increased access to and awareness of menstrual hygiene and management.

## **Activities**

- Student data collection concerning their knowledge of body changes during puberty and menstrual hygiene
- Education of primary school children about their bodies, changes during puberty and menstrual hygiene management
- Training to enable students to make reusable pads

## **Achievements**

- About 500 students from Ikulwe and Lugolole Primary Schools from Mayuge District were taught on body changes and menstrual hygiene management.
- In addition, 120 students were taught how to make reusable pads. Of these participants, 40 were boys and 80 were girls.

## **Challenges**

- The schools were not supportive in mobilizing parents to become involved in the initiative. This hindered us from sharing the formal information and skills training with the parents. Lack of parental / caregiver knowledge can generally be a hindrance to how well students learn and apply the information they receive in such sessions.
- A last-minute change at one of the schools led to some disorganization on the day of training.

## Raising Voices Against Sexual Violence in Schools

This project, funded by Amplify Change, aims to reduce sexual violence among schools by use of the Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response Guidelines on Violence Against Children in Schools developed by the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports.

### Activities

- Application seeking ethical approval from MildMay Ethics Committee
- Application seeking permission from the six school districts targeted for implementation
- Application seeking permission for data collection from school administrators of all schools where the project is to be implemented
- Provision of psychosocial support to students who experienced sexual violence
- Processing and cleaning of collected data from students aged 12-24 years
- Analysis and report writing

### Achievements

- We conducted an inception meeting in the new school district of Namayingo and also renewed our MOU with those in the Luuka districts.
- A total number of 2,493 students were interviewed from the six districts; of those 1,605 were female and 888 were male.
- Data was collected, cleaned using Excel, and analyzed. A total of 37 reports were written (1 general report, 6 district reports and 30 school reports), all of which were disseminated to appropriate school authorities.
- We offered psychosocial support to students who had psychological issues resulting from sexual violence, and two students who had experienced severe trauma were provided with medical first aid. (These included one student from Bunya SS and another from Busedde Seed SS.)

## LIVELIHOOD

### Group Savings Project

Like a Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA), the GSP is comprised of from ten to fifty individuals (mainly women) living in the same villages, who are known to each other and who regularly meet to save and acquire loans from their pooled savings. The interest paid on loans from the collective savings is returned to members as interest on their savings. At the beginning of each saving year, each group agrees on a specific interest rate to be applied to loans in the coming year. CCUg has a stake in each group, as we occasionally inject money as needed to meet their credit requirements. Over the course of many years, the CCUg GSP has grown in terms of the number of members, the amounts saved, the value of loans financed, the interest earned and number of groups in operation.

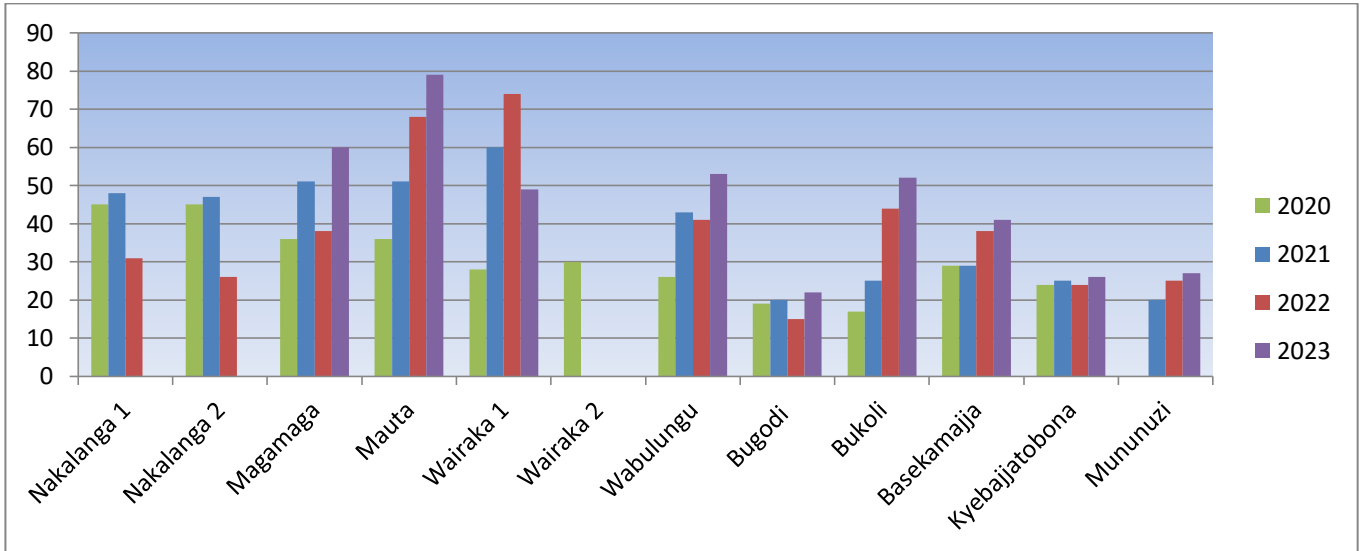
## Activities/Achievements

- In 2023, the Group Saving Project added 55 new members among eight groups; however, in two groups there was a decrease in membership as follows:
  - Membership in the Magamaga GSP increased from 51 to 60, Bukoli GSP increased from 44 to 52, Mununuzi grew from 25 to 27, Basekamajja increased from 38 to 41, Wabulungu increased from 41 to 53, Bugodi increased from 15 to 22, Kyebajjatobona increased from 25 to 27 and Mauta increased from 68 to 79.
- All 11 groups received a return of their savings with accumulated interest throughout the year totaling Ugx 20,778,400. Of these, the Magamaga group earned the lion's share with Ugx 4,893,000 followed by Wairaka at Ugx 4,083,400.
- The interest on member savings has increased due to an increase in the number of loans taken.

## Challenges

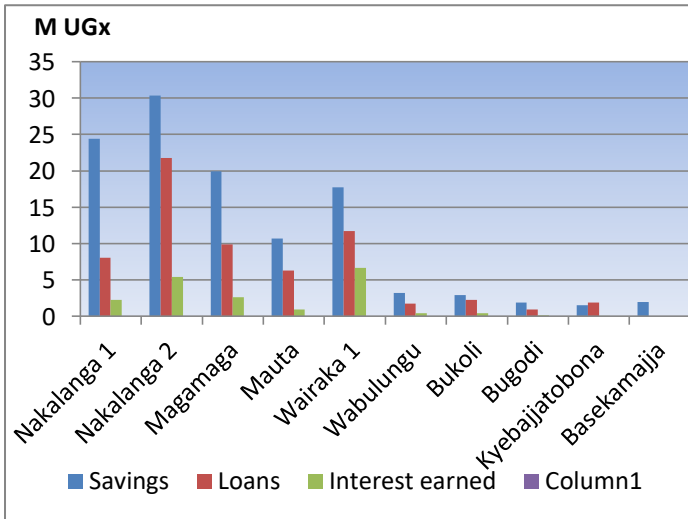
- The after-effects of the pandemic affected members' income as a result of the government-imposed lockdown.
  - There was a decrease in membership for some groups due to the reduction in business. In particular, Wairaka membership decreased from 74 to 49.
  - Another group, Nakalanga, was put on a one-year pause in activity due to an unacceptably high number of loan defaults.
  - In total we had 25 members leaving the groups because their income was too low to allow them to regularly save.
- Loan repayment for some groups was poor due to the losses incurred and the effort to re-start their businesses after the COVID-Effect.

### Growth Trend of GSP Members from 2020 to 2022

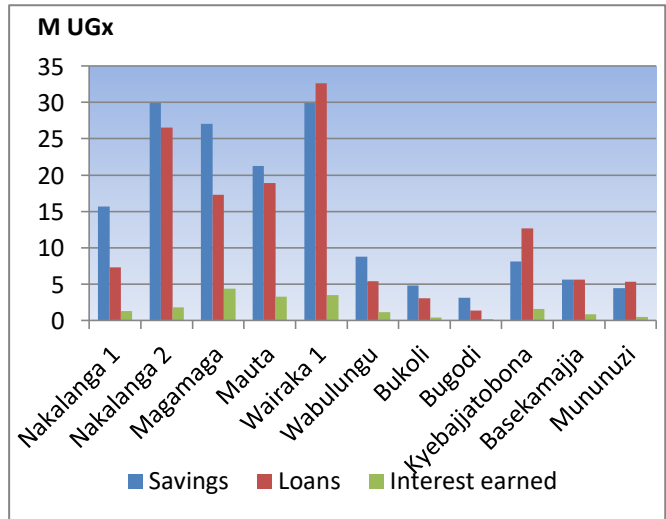


### Growth Trend of GSP Savings, Loans and Interest – 2021 to 2024

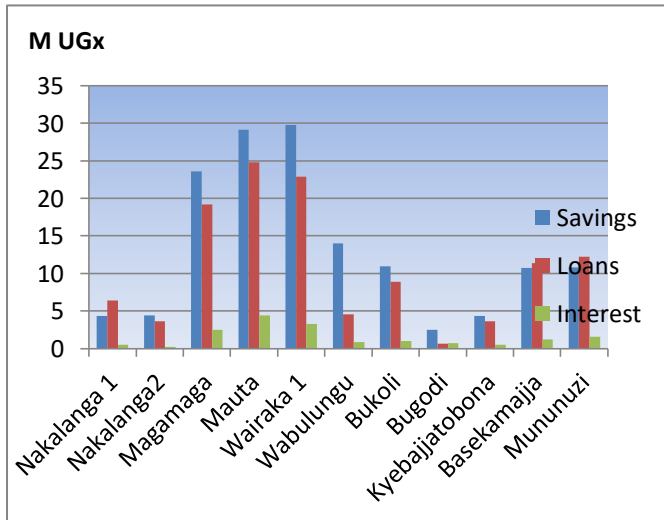
2020



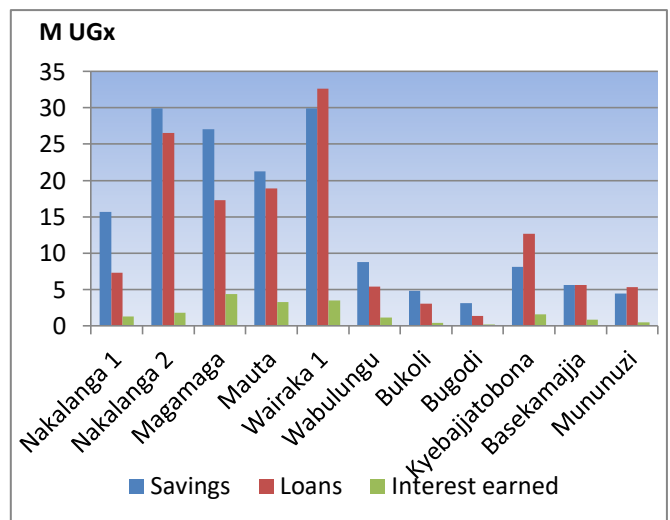
2021



2022



2023



### Comparison of Savings – 2022 vs. 2023

Group	2022 Savings	2023 Savings	% Increase
Mununuzi	10,805,000	10,773,200	-0.2
Magamaga	23,608,500	31,736,500	34
Mauta	29,105,100	32,619,800	9
Wairaka	29,774,000	34,101,000	14
Wabulungu	14,022,500	17,893,200	27
Bukoli	10,921,000	11,801,000	8
Bugodi	2,279,000	2,189,000	-4
Kyebajjatobonna	4,501,701	9,002,000	99
Basekamajja	10,805,000	10,250,900	-5

### Overall Lessons

- For any new project, it's always good to engage the district officials early enough in the planning phase to avoid delays – especially when we are sure of that the project will be implemented.
- Refresher financial literacy classes are important for Group Saving Project members to ensure they retain the information and skills they need to support the sustainability of their businesses.
- Savings Group members need to be constantly reminded of the rules concerning their participation in the group to avoid being fined for breaking them.
- As a non-government organization, it's important to have a social enterprise to support funding sustainability; the government accepts these types of programmes as legitimate and viable means of NGO financial support.

## Gallery



Students of  
Lugolole Primary  
School learning  
how to make re-  
usable pads

CCUg staff  
conducting  
Group Savings  
meeting





Conducting an assessment with a child in the Positive Deviance Project

One of our staff giving the Senior Woman teacher of Lugolole P/S for materials for reusable pads continuity of the MHM project





Capacity Building  
for Sustainable  
Organisations at  
Capital Solutions  
in Kajjansi

## SUCCESS STORIES



Nangobi is a member of the Magamaga Group Savings Project . Before joining this group, she was facing challenges of paying school fees for her grandchildren and had no land for farming. After joining the group last year, she was able to borrow money to boost her grocery shop. As her business grew, it enabled her to save and borrow more, making it possible to pay school fees for her grandchildren and buy a piece of land to grow crops for food. By the end of the year, after she received a return of her annual savings plus interest, she acquired an additional plot of land. She says that she will continue saving and build a house in 2024 in the acquired plot.

*“Thank you Community Concerns Uganda Initiative for giving us financial literacy and teaching us how to save. My business is growing. I’m happy to be part of*

*the Magamaga Group”*



Mugabi Joshua is one of the boys we sponsor under the OVC Sponsorship project. His sponsorship started in 2016 when he was in Primary 5. At that time, his father had died and his mother was struggling to pay his school fees in a government school, which by then cost Ugx 25,000. The school headteacher reached out to us to ask if we might sponsor him, as he was a leader in his class. We supported him and his performance continued to improve. Last year he sat for his Uganda Certificate of Education and scored a first grade. He wants to be an Engineer.

*"I'm so grateful to Community Concerns Uganda Initiative for sponsoring my education and loving me. I wouldn't be where I am today without them. I promise to work hard, become an engineer and support my family and other children in my community. Thank you so much."*



Isule Emmanuel is one of the boys we sponsor. His sponsorship began in 2016 when he was in Primary 5. His father had died and he was living with his grandmother and struggling to pay his school fees at the same government school as his classmate Mugabi Joshua. Again, the head teacher of the school reached out to us for support, since he used to be among the best students in his class. We accepted him for sponsorship and he continued to excel academically. Last year he sat for his Uganda Certificate of Education and scored a first grade. He wants to be a doctor.

*"Thank you so much Community Concerns Uganda Initiative for sponsoring my education. Without this support I wouldn't reach where I'm currently. I promise to work hard to become a doctor and be able to support my family and other children."*