

# ANNUAL REPORT

End of the year 31st December 2024







Dear Friends,

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If all you had to go on was social media or the evening news, it would be difficult to be hopeful about the future for today's children and youth. Across Uganda, especially in refugee settlements, young people face immense challenges whether from conflict, displacement, poverty, or the effects of climate change. 2024 was no exception.

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At Similar Ground, we witnessed firsthand the struggles of refugee and host community children in BidiBidi and beyond. Many faced barriers to education, food insecurity, and psychological distress. Girls were at risk of early marriage, and youth had limited access to skills and opportunities for a better future. Yet, in the midst of these challenges, we also saw **HOPE**

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Through our programs, we supported children and youth with education, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), digital training, and income-generating opportunities. We worked alongside communities to strengthen child protection systems, ensuring that vulnerable children had safe spaces to learn, grow, and heal. In the pages that follow, you'll learn about our impact, our advocacy efforts, and the partnerships that make our work possible. You'll meet some of the young people whose lives have been transformed by Similar Ground's programs.

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Despite the challenges, we remain committed to building a future where every child and youth refugee or host has the chance to thrive. With the dedication of our team, the resilience of the children we serve, and the support of our partners, we are shaping a brighter tomorrow.

We thank you for standing with us in this journey and invite you to continue supporting our mission. Together, we can make lasting change possible.

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In solidarity,  
Similar Ground





# OUR 2024 IN NUMBERS

**TOTAL DIRECT BENEFICIARIES  
FOR SIMILAR GROUND (SG)**

**17,827**

**INCOME**

**UGX 181,392,000**

**EXPENDITURE**

**UGX 104,900,600**





# WHO WE ARE

## OUR VISION AND MISSION

Similar Ground is driven by a single vision – to see a happy, healthy, and creative child in every community.

For several years, our mission has been to protect, educate, and stand up for the rights of children, especially those living in challenging environments such as refugee settlements. We aim to reach children as early as possible when they face hardship, and we stay to support them through their recovery. We focus on keeping them safe, helping them learn and heal from their experiences, and equipping them with skills for the future.

We also work with children and young people to advocate for their rights, and to influence policies and practices that directly impact their well-being. Our goal is to create opportunities for children to grow in environments that nurture their creativity, health, and happiness, ensuring that every child can thrive and achieve their potential.

## OUR STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

**Our five strategic principles help us achieve our mission:**

We reach children early in times of need and stay to support them as they heal and grow.

We focus on programs that make a real difference and can be sustained for the long term.

We listen to the voices of children and work to inspire others to take action and help them.

Our values guide everything we do and push us to keep improving our work and systems.

We are part of a strong network of organizations working together to create positive change.

## OUR VALUES

**At Similar Ground, our values guide our actions and shape the way we work with children, families, and communities. They are:**

### **Passionate**

We use our enthusiasm and creativity to deliver high-quality, evidence-based programs that provide the greatest benefit to children facing challenges.

### **Accountable to Children**

Children can depend on us to listen to their voices and treat them with respect and dignity.

### **Transparent**

We welcome being held accountable by our supporters and participants, responding with openness and honesty.

### **Committed to Each Other**

We support each other and our partners to achieve ambitious goals and be the best we can be. We are honest and open with each other, sharing successes and addressing challenges together.

## OUR OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

**our mission is to create a happy, healthy, and creative environment for every child. In line with this mission, our objectives are:**

- **To provide assistance to children and families affected by conflict:** We aim to alleviate hardship, sickness, and distress caused by war by offering support and relief to those in need.
- **To promote education on the impact of conflict on children:** We are committed to raising awareness about the effects of war on children and advocating for their rights and well-being.



# OUR THEMATIC AREAS IN 2024

## How we assess our impact

We assess our impact through comprehensive monitoring and evaluation processes, tracking key indicators to measure the effectiveness of our programs in improving the lives of children and youth affected by armed conflict.



**PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT**



**EDUCATION**



**LIVELIHOOD**



**CHILD PTOTECTION**



**ADVOCACY**







# OUR REACH IN 2024

Similar Ground worked directly with 17,827 children, young people, and adults through our programs in Uganda, particularly in BidiBidi Refugee Settlement and surrounding communities. This marks a significant achievement in 2024, reflecting our commitment to empowering refugee and host community youth through education, child protection, mental health support, and peacebuilding initiatives. Our efforts have continued to grow, making a lasting impact on the lives of thousands and strengthening community resilience.

51%

participated in our child protection and mental health psychosocial support programmes.

Out of the total 17,827 people reached, 9,092 participated in our child protection and mental health psychosocial support programs. Through these programs, child-friendly spaces were created, psychosocial support sessions and family counseling took place, case management and community-based protection were provided, and psychosocial, recreational

20%

Participated in our advocacy program

Out of the total 17,827 people reached, 3,565 participated in our advocacy program. Through this program, We focused on promoting children's rights, gender equality, and access to education at local, national and International levels

26%

participated in our education programme.

Out of the total 17,827 people reached, 4,635 participated in our education program. This included the distribution of learning materials, training sessions for teachers and headteachers, early childhood development programs for both children and parents, Music classes, school peace clubs.

3%

participated in our food security and livelihoods and economic resilience programmes

Out of the total 17,827 people reached, 534 participated in our food security, livelihoods, and economic resilience programs. These initiatives aimed to improve the self-reliance and sustainability of families through skills training, income-generating activities, and support for agriculture.



# OUR STRATEGY -2027

## WHY

The staggering number of children impacted by armed **conflict** has reached an all-time high, surpassing previous records. Shockingly, the resources allocated to address their urgent needs fall significantly short of what is required. The discrepancy between the dire circumstances these children face and the insufficient funding available to support them highlights a critical global challenge that demands immediate attention and action.

## WHAT

Our ambitious vision entails empowering **50,000** children and youth affected by armed conflict through our comprehensive programs by the year **2027**. Through our dedicated efforts, we aim not only to engage them in meaningful activities but also to enhance their resilience and bolster their **psychosocial well-being**.

## HOW WE OPERATE

We are committed to fostering long-term **sustainability** in our operations, aiming to create lasting positive change in the lives of children and youth.

We actively involve local communities in our initiatives, recognizing the importance of their **participation** in supporting and **sustaining** positive outcomes for children and youth

Our operations prioritize trauma-informed care, recognizing the profound impact of armed conflict on the **mental** and **emotional** well-being of children and youth.







## PILLARS



# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST STRATEGY

## PILLAR A

## IMPLEMENT A STRATEGIC IMPACT MODEL FOR OUR PROGRAMMES

### 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

Similar Ground reached thousands of children and caregivers in 2024, working in Uganda, particularly in refugee settlements. We are proud to say that we have grown our programming efforts and formed strong partnerships with key donors and Organizations. Our ability to expand our reach comes from the collaboration with these other partners, to whom we provide technical training and support. By ensuring good project management and transparent reporting, we are able to reach more children and make a greater impact than we could 3 years ago.

In 2024, we focused on deepening our expertise in key areas such as child protection, education, psychosocial support, early childhood development, and livelihood support. Through these efforts, we are continuing to strengthen our work and extend our impact, helping children and families overcome the challenges they face while creating sustainable futures.

### PLANS FOR 2025

In 2024, Similar Ground will continue to expand its work in Uganda through strong collaborations with other organizations and key donors. We are committed to ensuring that vulnerable children, especially in refugee settlements, receive the protection, education, and support they need to thrive. Our efforts are aimed at creating a sustainable future for these children, focusing on their education, psychosocial well-being, and overall development.

In 2025, Similar Ground will play an active role in advocating for better policies and increased support for children affected by conflict and displacement. We will work closely with local authorities and partners to ensure that children's rights are prioritized, and that they are protected from harm. Through partnerships with organizations like the War child Holland and other international donors, we aim to increase awareness about the specific needs of children living in refugee settlements, particularly in areas like child protection, education, and livelihood support.

Our goal is to expand our reach and continue providing safe spaces for children, access to education, and programs that help them heal and grow, while working with our partners to influence policies that will protect children now and in the future.

## PILLAR B

## MAINTAIN A SUSTAINABLE FINANCE MODEL

### 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2024, Similar Ground raised UGX 181,392,000, marking a significant 130% increase from UGX 79,000,000 raised in 2023. This growth is a testament to the incredible support from our donors, local partners, and the communities we work with. Our funding from unrestricted sources allows us to continue delivering essential programs that improve the lives of children and families, especially in refugee settlements across Uganda.

We are also grateful to our long-term supporters and the community-driven initiatives that have contributed to this success. This funding helps us sustain our programs, including child protection, education, psychosocial support, and youth empowerment, which directly impact thousands of children and their families. We continue to be inspired by the dedication of our donors, who play a crucial role in enabling us to expand our efforts and reach more children in need.

### PLANS FOR 2025

Looking ahead to 2025, We aim to build on the success of 2024 by diversifying our funding sources and expanding our outreach. We plan to strengthen our partnerships with local and international organizations, as well as to explore new opportunities for collaboration with donors. Our focus will remain on ensuring that children in refugee settlements continue to have access to education, protection, and essential psychosocial support.



# EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN FOR 2024

In 2024, Similar Ground spent UGX 104,900,600 of the total funds raised to effectively support our charitable activities and achieve our mission. Here's how the expenditure was allocated:

- **74% - Achieving Charitable Objectives and Activities [UGX 77,426,444]:** The largest portion of our funds, 74%, was dedicated to reaching our goals and fulfilling our charitable objectives. This included supporting children through our child protection, education, psychosocial support, and youth empowerment programs. These activities directly contributed to enhancing the well-being and future prospects of thousands of children and families in the refugee settlements.
- **19% - Operational Costs [UGX 19,931,214]:** 19% of the funds were spent on operational costs, which include staff salaries, office expenses, and essential supplies. These costs are critical in ensuring that we maintain smooth day-to-day operations and can deliver our programs effectively to the communities we serve.
- **7% - Fundraising [UGX 7,643,942]:** A portion of the funds, 7%, was allocated towards fundraising efforts. This ensures that we can continue to raise awareness, engage donors, and secure future funding to sustain and expand our programs.





# NO CHILD SHOULD GROW UP ALONE

We believe every child deserves a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment to grow and thrive. As a refugee-led organization, we work closely with children, youth, and communities in BidiBidi Refugee Settlement to ensure that no child is left without care, protection, and opportunities for a better future.

Through our child protection programs, we strengthen local safeguarding systems, provide mental health and psychosocial support [MHPSS], and create safe spaces where children can learn, play, and heal. Our education initiatives help keep vulnerable children in school, while our community engagement efforts empower caregivers and youth to build resilient support networks.



A young boy with short dark hair, wearing a purple short-sleeved button-down shirt, is smiling and looking towards the camera. He is standing in front of a blurred background that appears to be an outdoor setting with some structures.

# PROTECTING A CHILD'S RIGHT TO LEARN

Similar Ground believe education is a powerful tool for change. As a refugee-led organization, we work to ensure that children especially those affected by conflict and displacement have access to quality education in BidiBidi Refugee Settlement and surrounding communities.

We invest in schools, teachers, and innovative learning programs to bridge the education gap for refugee and host community children. Through child-friendly spaces, digital training, and advocacy for inclusive education, we are creating opportunities for children to learn, grow, and build brighter futures.

Together, we're protecting every child's right to learn:

- This year, we supported over 1,311 children in accessing education despite hardship in BidiBidi Refugee Settlement.
- We trained 33 teachers to improve child safeguarding, provide psychosocial support, and help children reach their full potential.
- School Peace Clubs helped children with leadership opportunities, with 48% of our 127 participants achieving the highest literacy levels.
- As part of our advocacy efforts, we worked with local and district education leaders to prioritize early childhood development and inclusive education in refugee and host communities across West Nile.



# **“I ENJOY GOING TO THE SCHOOL, IT HAS BECOME LIKE A SECOND HOME TO ME.”**

“The water rushed into our house, and we had to escape quickly.”

Sarah\* 12 and his family found safety with relatives, but he missed her school, his friends, and the chance to learn.

With the support of Similar Ground, we provided education support distributing learning materials, organizing catch-up learning sessions, and working with teachers to ensure children like Sarah could continue their education despite the challenges.

Today, Sarah is back in school, studying hard and following her dream of becoming a teacher.

At Similar Ground, we believe education is a right, not a privilege. We are committed to ensuring that every child no matter their circumstances has access to quality education and the support they need to succeed.

*\*Names changed for protection.*





A group of people, including men and women, are gathered outdoors in a grassy area with trees and buildings in the background. They are sitting on blue plastic chairs arranged in a circle. Some are wearing green and pink uniforms, while others are in casual clothing. A woman in the foreground is wearing a white t-shirt with the 'similar GROUND' logo. A blue brushstroke graphic is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text 'WE CHAMPION LEADERSHIP'.

**WE CHAMPION  
LEADERSHIP**



# WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S WELLBEING IN BIDIBIDI

At Similar Ground, we believe that building healthier futures starts with empowering and investing in local communities. By working together, we help ensure that children and families in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement have the support and resources they need to thrive, even amidst crisis. In 2024, our efforts contributed to strengthening local health systems and community resilience in the following ways:

- **Training and Capacity Building:** We trained 43 Community Protection Committees (CPCs) and local caregivers, equipping them with essential skills to support children and families, especially in maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, and providing support for survivors of gender-based violence.
- **Parenting Without Violence Sessions:** We led 21 Parenting Without Violence sessions, reaching 6,012 caregivers with crucial knowledge on child protection, non-violent parenting practices, and creating safe, nurturing environments for children.
- **Led Community Peacebuilding Dialogues:** We facilitated community peacebuilding dialogues, reaching 914 community members, including youth, caregivers, and local leaders. These dialogues focused on conflict resolution, building trust, and promoting peaceful coexistence between refugee and host communities.



# ATTENDING PARENTING WITHOUT VIOLENCE SESSIONS

In Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, Amina\*, a single mother of three, struggled to balance the challenges of displacement with raising her children. The stress often led her to raise her voice and discipline her children harshly, a pattern she longed to change.

When Amina learned about the "Parenting Without Violence" sessions offered by Similar Ground, she decided to give it a try. At first, she was skeptical, having grown up with traditional methods of discipline. But the sessions helped her understand how children are affected by violence, even if they don't show it. She learned healthier ways to handle stress and discipline, like using calm communication and positive reinforcement instead of punishment.

One day, when her son Hassan\* accidentally broke a bowl, Amina\* felt her frustration building. But instead of reacting with anger, she paused and remembered what she had learned. Calmly, she explained the situation to Hassan\*, asking him how he felt and encouraging him to help clean up. Hassan\* apologized, and Amina felt proud of how she handled it.

As time went on, Amina\* saw a change in her relationship with her children. They became more open and less fearful, and their home became a place of peace and understanding. Inspired by her experience, Amina shared her story with other mothers in the settlement, encouraging them to join the sessions.

Through the Parenting Without Violence program, Amina transformed her approach to parenting, creating a safe and loving environment for her children. Today, Amina feels more confident as a mother, knowing her children are growing up in a home where they feel supported and cared for.

\*Names changed for protection.



Leila, after treatment for severe acute malnutrition in Ethiopia

CREATING LASTING CHANGE





# BUILDING PEACEFUL FUTURES IN SCHOOLS

In 2023, our peacebuilding program in schools made significant strides towards creating safer environments and promoting harmony among children and families. Here are the highlights:

- Establishment of 13 Peace Clubs: We formed 13 peace clubs across primary schools, engaging 156 members dedicated to spreading messages of peace.
- Impact on Children: Through our club members, we reached out to 5,000 children with messages emphasizing conflict resolution and respect for diversity.
- Community Engagement: Our efforts extended beyond school walls, fostering community-wide awareness and involvement in promoting peaceful coexistence
- Advocacy and Outreach: Through strategic partnerships and advocacy efforts, we raised awareness about the importance of protecting children from conflict and promoting their rights
- Education and Empowerment: We empowered youth with essential skills and knowledge through our programs, equipping them to contribute to sustainable peace in their communities.







similar  
GROUND Advocate  
Educate Transform

# PEACE FESTIVAL

UNHCR  
The UN Refugee Agency

MAKING SCHOOLS PEACEFUL FOR ALL CHILDREN



9:00 am - 2:00 pm

- Yangani Primary school: 3/12/2024
- Ombechi Primary school: 5/12/2024
- Ayivu Primary school: 6/12/2024
- Ariwa Primary school: 8/12/2024
- Oku Primary school: 9/12/2024

CHILD ARE AT THE  
CENTRE OF OUR  
WORK





## MICHAEL: FROM BULLY TO PEACEMAKER

Michael\*, 14, used to be known as a bully. He often picked fights and intimidated other students. But after attending peace club sessions, he began to see the harm his actions caused. With support from his teachers and fellow club members, Michael changed his ways. He now stands up against bullying and encourages his friends to treat others with kindness. “I realized that true strength is in bringing people together, not tearing them apart,” he reflects.

The peacebuilding program has not only helped these children but also changed the whole school environment. Many students now report feeling safer, and teachers have noticed a big improvement in how children interact with each other. The program has also encouraged parents to teach peace at home, making families stronger and more united. Our goal is to continue reaching more children and helping them become peacemakers in their schools and communities.



## SARAH: FROM CONFLICT TO CONFIDENCE

Sarah\*, a 13-year-old refugee girl, used to struggle with anger and often got into fights with other students. Growing up in a refugee camp, she had faced many challenges, and she found it hard to trust people. At school, she would react aggressively when she felt threatened or misunderstood.

When Sarah joined the peace club, she was introduced to lessons on conflict resolution, communication, and teamwork. She learned how to express her feelings without anger and how to listen to others. With support from her teachers and friends in the club, she started practicing patience and understanding.

Today, Sarah is a different person. She now helps younger students resolve conflicts peacefully and encourages them to talk about their problems instead of fighting. “I have learned that peace starts with me. I don’t have to fight to be heard,” she says with a smile. Sarah’s transformation has inspired many of her classmates to change their behavior too.

*\*Names changed for protection.*



# PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM HARM

At Similar Ground, child safeguarding is at the core of our mission. We are dedicated to advocating for children's rights, ensuring they are protected from violence, neglect, exploitation, abuse, and emotional trauma. This year, we reached some of the most vulnerable children in refugee settlements, where conflict and displacement have left them at risk.

Here are some key ways we made a difference in 2024:

- **Supporting Displaced Children:** In Bidibidi and Imvepi refugee settlements, we helped children and families who were separated by conflict and displacement. Through our case management and child protection programs, we assisted over 300 children
- **Addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Needs:** We continued to support children suffering from emotional trauma caused by displacement and violence. Through our psychosocial programs, we reached 7,400 children, providing them with a safe space to heal and develop coping mechanisms. We also ran various mental health awareness campaigns to support caregivers and help them understand the importance of nurturing children's emotional well-being.
- **Advocacy for Children's Rights:** Our advocacy efforts in 2024 focused on raising awareness of the challenges faced by children in conflict and displacement. We collaborated with other organizations to push for stronger protections and better living conditions for refugee children. We successfully influenced local policymakers to prioritize child protection.





# FROM DROPOUT TO DREAMER: SARAH JOURNEY BACK TO SCHOOL

Sarah, a 16-year-old girl, had been living with her grandmother after being separated from her parents. Her grandmother, who struggled to make ends meet, was unable to support Sarah's education. Due to financial difficulties, Sarah was forced to drop out of school, leaving her with a sense of uncertainty about her future.

When Sarah's case was brought to our attention through our case management support program, we immediately saw the potential in her. With the help of our team, we were able to provide Sarah with the necessary resources to return to school. We worked closely with her grandmother to ensure that the family was able to cover her school fees and provide the support Sarah needed to succeed.

As a result of this support, Sarah is now back in school, determined to catch up on the lessons she missed. She is excited to be in class again, and her dreams of becoming a teacher are now within reach. Sarah's confidence has grown, and she is determined to never give up on her education.

"I never thought I would go back to school, but now I am learning again. I want to become a teacher one day so I can help other children who are like me." – Sarah

With continued support, Sarah is on a path toward a brighter future, proving that with the right assistance and determination, no child is ever truly left behind.

*\*Names changed for protection.*







**WE ARE BOLD IN  
WHAT WE DO**



# LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES

We recognize the importance of sustainable livelihoods in rebuilding lives and creating a brighter future for children and their families, especially in the refugee settlements. In 2024, we reached 3% of our total participants through livelihood and economic resilience programs, focusing on empowering both refugee and host communities with the skills and resources needed to support themselves and thrive. Here are some key activities we undertook:

- **Startup Capital Support:** We provided financial support to over 6 youth and women groups in the Bidibidi refugee settlements. These groups received cash grants as startup capital to launch small businesses, ranging from tailoring, food production, and small-scale retail. This helped them create sustainable sources of income, improving their financial independence and stability.
- **Skills Training:** We trained more than 150 youth and women in various practical skills, including tailoring, carpentry, agriculture, and food processing. These training sessions equipped participants with hands-on skills that are in demand within the community, boosting their chances of securing employment or starting their own businesses.
- **Financial Management Training:** Understanding the importance of financial literacy, we also provided training in financial management to 80 individuals. This training helped participants manage their business finances effectively, save for the future, and make informed decisions about growing their income-generating activities.





## **“THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART**

Amina\*, a 32-year-old woman Living in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, since the reduction for the Food ration, she started Struggling to support her two children, she relied on the little aid and community support. However, in early 2024, Amina joined Similar Ground’s livelihood program supported by UNHCR Uganda, where she received startup capital and training in financial management.

With the skills gained, Amina started a small business making and selling clothes. Her business grew, allowing her to support her family, pay for her children’s school fees, and improve their living conditions. She also hired another woman from her community to help with the business, empowering others in the process.

**“I never imagined I could run my own business, but now, I can support my children and help others in need. This opportunity has changed my life, and I’m proud of what I’ve accomplished.” – Amina**







**WE CHAMPION THE  
PARTICIPATION OF  
CHILDREN**



## USING MUSIC AS A TOOL FOR ADVOCACY

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we recognize the power of music to influence change, raise awareness, and create a sense of unity among the youth and broader community. Music has long been an effective tool in advocacy, serving as a medium for expressing concerns, raising voices for justice, and fostering social cohesion. Our Music for Social Change Program is dedicated to using music as a powerful advocacy tool to drive social change, promote peace, and highlight critical issues, especially those that affect vulnerable children and youth in the refugee communities of Bidibidi Refugee Settlement.

### **The Impact of Music in Our Advocacy Work**

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Over the past year, the Music for Social Change program has made significant strides in promoting key messages about child protection, education, and youth empowerment through music. As part of our advocacy efforts, we have engaged a large number of children and youth in creating and performing songs that speak to their lived experiences, rights, and the issues they face, particularly in relation to education, child marriage, and access to protection.

### **Key Achievements in 2024:**

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- **Number of Songs Recorded:** We successfully recorded over 20 original songs that cover a wide range of social issues, including child rights, peacebuilding, and gender equality. These songs were created by local youth, highlighting their experiences and aspirations, and were used to educate and raise awareness within the community and beyond.
- **Number of Advocacy Shows Held:** We hosted 15 music advocacy shows in various parts of Bidibidi Refugee Settlement and neighboring communities, reaching an estimated 3,500 participants. These events have become an important platform for youth to showcase their talent, share their messages, and engage with their peers, local leaders, and decision-makers on issues that matter to them.
- **Community Campaigns:** As part of our broader advocacy strategy, our music shows were accompanied by 3 major campaigns, which included outreach through social media, local radio stations, and public performances. These campaigns aimed to create awareness about key topics, such as child protection, the importance of education, and youth empowerment. The campaigns were designed to encourage community participation, amplify youth voices, and push for positive changes in local policies and practices.

## MUSIC FOR SOCIAL CHANGE PROGRAM

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Our Music for Social Change program is grounded in the belief that music can be a catalyst for positive transformation. By giving children and youth a platform to express themselves, we empower them to become advocates for their own rights and the rights of others. Music serves as both a form of expression and a means of communication that transcends barriers, making it an invaluable tool for advocacy and social mobilization.

Through this program, we engage young people in writing, composing, and performing songs that reflect their concerns and dreams for a better future. In addition to the songs, participants are trained in basic music production, performance skills, and advocacy techniques. This empowers them not only to use music as a medium for self-expression but also as a tool for influencing their peers, families, and local communities on critical social issues.

## LOOKING AHEAD IN 2025

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As we move forward, Similar Ground plans to continue expanding the Music for Social Change program by increasing the number of youth involved, producing more music, and hosting more shows. We aim to deepen our partnerships with local organizations, influencers, and policymakers to ensure that the voices of the children and youth we work with are heard and that their messages lead to tangible change.

Through music, we continue to foster a sense of community, spark conversations around important social issues, and support young people in becoming advocates for their own futures.



# I FOUND MY VOICE

Salma, a 15-year-old girl from Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, never knew she could sing. She was always shy and afraid to speak in front of people. Life was hard, and she felt like she had no special talent.

One day, she joined Similar Ground's Music for Social Change program. At first, she only watched as others sang and played music. But one day, a mentor asked her to try singing. She was nervous, but when she opened her mouth, everyone was surprised she had a beautiful voice!

That day changed everything for Salma. She started practicing and writing songs. Her first song was about hope and education for girls. She performed at community events and inspired many people.

"I never knew I could sing," Salma says. "Now, I feel strong. Music helps me share my story and give hope to others."

Now, Salma is back in school and dreams of using music to help her community. She has learned that sometimes, we have hidden talents we just need a chance to discover them.





# ADVOCATES FOR GLOBAL CHANGE



Photo: Save the Children



# STANDING UP FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Jackline, a youth advocate from Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, is passionate about ensuring that children's rights are upheld. She is committed to raising awareness about the importance of education for girls, the dangers of child marriages, and the challenges faced by children in refugee communities. Amina joined Similar Ground's local advocacy program to make sure that her voice and the voices of other children are heard.

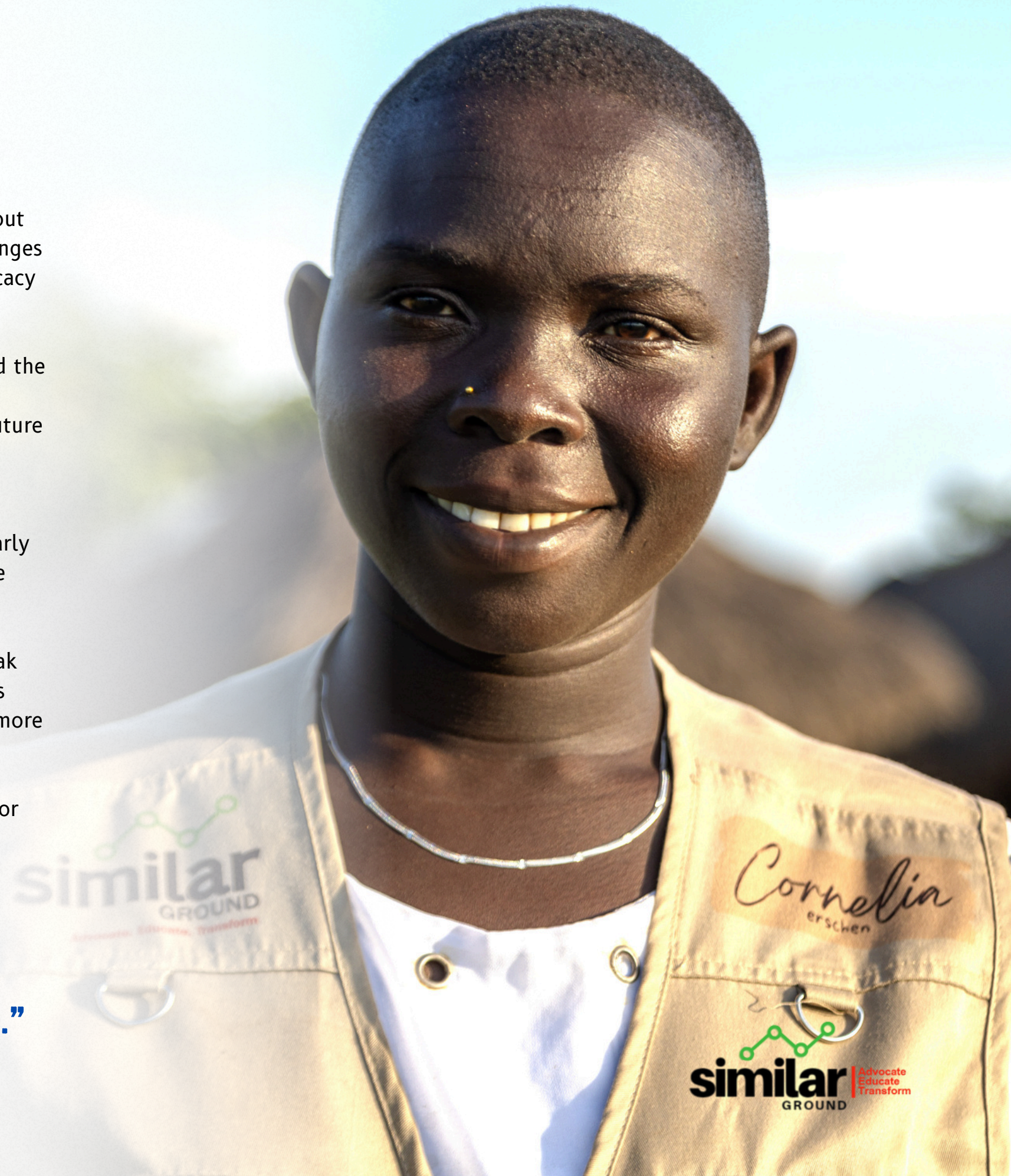
"I care deeply about children's rights. My main focus is on the education of girls and the fight against child marriages," Jackline shared. "It's crucial that children in our community, especially girls, are given the opportunity to go to school and build a future for themselves."

She also highlighted the struggles caused by limited access to resources in refugee settlements. "Many families here face economic challenges. Some children, particularly girls, are forced to drop out of school to help their families. We need to create more opportunities for education and ensure that girls are not left behind."

Jackline believes that children and young people must be given the platform to speak up about issues that directly affect their lives. "It's important for children to express themselves and make sure the government and community leaders listen. We need more spaces for young people to be heard and for our voices to influence change."

Through her advocacy work, She is helping to create a more inclusive environment for children in her community, ensuring their rights are protected, and their futures are brighter.

**"When Youth speak  
out, the government might understand better."**  
**Jackline**





# WHERE WE WORKED







**Uganda:** The refugee crisis in Uganda profoundly impacts children and youth, exacerbating their vulnerability and threatening their well-being in numerous ways. Displacement disrupts their access to education, leaving many without the opportunity to attend school and pursue their dreams. Additionally, the trauma of fleeing conflict and displacement can have long-lasting psychological effects on young minds, leading to anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges.

Moreover, Many children are forced to assume adult responsibilities, such as caring for younger siblings or working to support their families, robbing them of their childhood and limiting their future prospects. Furthermore, the precarious living conditions in refugee camps expose children and youth to exploitation, abuse, and trafficking. Without proper protection mechanisms in place, they are vulnerable to various forms of violence and exploitation, including child labor and early marriage



# HOW WE SPARK CHANGE

**BUILD AN  
AGILE,  
INCLUSIVE  
AND  
EFFICIENT  
ORGANIZATION**



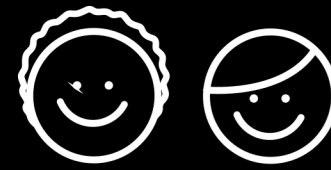
**PARTNER  
STRATEGICALLY**



**CAPITALIZE  
ON DIGITAL  
AND DATA**



**SHIFT POWER  
TO CHILDREN  
AND  
COMMUNITIES**



**ADVOCATE,  
CAMPAIGN  
AND  
MOBILIZE**



**GROW AND  
FOSTER OUR  
SUPPORTER  
BASE**







# OUR SUPPORTERS

## INDIVIDUALS

**In 2024, we achieved a major milestone, raising a total of UGX 181,392,000, marking a significant increase from UGX 70.9 million in 2023 a growth of 156%**

**In 2024, three dedicated individuals contributed UGX 92,500,000, more than doubling the UGX 39,000,000 raised from individuals in 2023. Their generosity fuels our mission to create a happy, healthy, and creative future for children.**

## NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

**We are proud to partner with like-minded organizations that share our vision. In 2024, we received UGX 88,892,000 from three organizations, a significant rise from the UGX 31,900,000 raised in 2023.**

**This incredible growth shows the trust and belief our supporters have in us. Together, we are making a lasting impact in the lives of vulnerable children**



## WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR US?

As we look ahead, we know that the world around us is changing. Conflicts are becoming more complex, and climate change is making life even harder for vulnerable children. More families are being forced to leave their homes, searching for safety and hope.

At Similar Ground, we don't have all the answers, but we do know one thing:

*We Must*

**BE BRAVE**

**THINK DIFFERENTLY**

**ACT BOLDLY**

**FIND NEW WAYS TO PROTECT AND SUPPORT CHILDREN.**

## IN THE NEXT YEAR, WE WILL:

- ✓ Expand our programs to reach more children who need help.
- ✓ Use creativity, music, and play to heal trauma and build strong communities.
- ✓ Empower young people to raise their voices and advocate for their rights.
- ✓ Work with partners to make sure no child is left behind.
- ✓ Adapt to new challenges, so we can continue making a difference.

Children inspire us every day. Their hope, strength, and dreams push us forward.

We believe in a future where every child is happy, healthy, and creative and we won't stop working until that future becomes reality.





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**THANK YOU FOR  
PROTECTING  
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS  
AND MAKING THEIR  
DREAMS A REALITY.**



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SIMILAR GROUND

