



ANNUAL **REPORT** 2023



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a forest. Several large, dark tree trunks with deeply textured bark are visible. A soft, ethereal light filters through the trees, creating a misty or smoky atmosphere. In the lower right foreground, a small, vibrant green plant with five rounded leaves is growing out of a mound of dark, rich soil.

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**CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF WHAT
RESILIENCE, CAREFUL PLANNING, AND
HARD WORK CAN ACHIEVE.**



Message from the Board Chairperson

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is with pride and gratitude that I present the Rockies Organization Annual Report for 2023.

This year stands as a clear demonstration of what resilience, careful planning, and hard work can achieve. Having navigated the challenges of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021, and the steady recovery of 2022, the year 2023 marked a period of consolidation and growth.

We are especially encouraged by the consistent progress of our Education Sponsorship Program, which supported 30 learners, including 2 in tertiary education. This represents not only continuity but also a testament to our long-term commitment to developing educated, responsible, and empowered young people.

The Bantu Cultural Troupe also flourished, staging an impressive 136 performances throughout the year. Beyond generating much-needed income, these shows strengthened our identity as the cultural troupe of choice and positioned the troupe as a leading example of a culture-based social enter-

prise in Uganda.

Infrastructure investments, such as landscaping of the compound, construction of another rehearsal and meeting room, and installation of modern cooking stoves, further demonstrate our commitment to sustainability and the long-term well-being of our members.

On behalf of the Board, I extend sincere appreciation to our management team, members, audiences, and partners. Together, we continue to build a vibrant and sustainable institution that nurtures talent, uplifts communities, and safeguards cultural heritage.

Signed,

Dr. Sylvia Tumuheirwe Alinaitwe

Chairperson, Board of Directors



MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM LEADER

Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

I am delighted to share with you the Rockies Organization's Annual Report for 2023. This year has been a remarkable one of growth, stability, and renewed confidence. We are proud to have cared for 34 resident members (14 girls), ensuring their holistic welfare through accommodation, feeding, healthcare, and mentorship.

Our Education Sponsorship Program expanded to support 30 learners: 6 in Primary, 22 in Secondary, and 2 in Tertiary. The progression of learners into tertiary education is particularly encouraging, as it signals the maturity of our program and its long-term impact.

Bantu Cultural Troupe enjoyed one of its most successful years to date, delivering 136 live performances. These not only entertained and educated audiences but also provided critical income that sustained our daily operations. The strong demand for our shows reflects both the quality of our art and the enduring value of cultural expression in Ugandan society.

On the infrastructure front, we made meaningful investments: part of the Centre compound was landscaped to create a more usable and attractive space; a new rehearsal and meeting room was built to support both practice and administrative functions; and modern cooking stoves were installed to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and promote environmental sustainability.

The year 2023 has reminded us that with resilience, unity, and vision, Rockies Organization can continue to grow stronger and more impactful. Looking ahead, we are determined to build on this momentum, expand our partnerships, and deepen the opportunities available to our members.

With heartfelt appreciation,

SSOZI BRIAN ANDREW

Team Leader

ABOUT ROCKIES ORGANIZATION

Established in 2012 and formally registered in 2014, Rockies Organization is a grassroots non-profit dedicated to advancing quality education and promoting performing arts among children and youth in Uganda. The Organization implements three core initiatives: the Bantu Arts Academy, which provides structured training in creative and performing arts; an education sponsorship program that supports learners across all levels of education; and cultural performances by the distinguished Bantu Cultural Troupe.

Rockies Organization operates a hybrid social enterprise model in which the Troupe generates income to support members' education, healthcare, and living expenses. Through this model, the Organization identifies and nurtures talented yet disadvantaged young people, from primary school through university, enabling them to leverage their artistic abilities to finance their education and build a self-sustaining cycle of empowerment. Furthermore, the Troupe provides a practical platform for Academy trainees to apply their skills, thereby creating alternative employment pathways for the youth in Uganda.

Our Vision

A Generation of Talented and Self-driven Young People Transforming Societies

Our Mission

Nurturing talents and developing skills of young people through performing and creative arts and education programs in Africa

Our Core Values

- Talent and Good Character
- Creativity / Innovation
- Team Work and Partnership
- Patience and Persistence

The Board of Directors



CHAIRPERSON

DR. SYLVIA TUMUHEIRWE
ALINAITWE



MEMBER

REV. FR. JOHN JOSEPH
SSENKAALI



MEMBER

MR. PIUS BUGEMBE
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SECRETARY

SSOZI BRIAN ANDREW

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS / ACHIEVEMENTS

The year 2023 marked a period of consolidation, growth, and strategic investment for Rockies Organization. Building on the steady recovery of 2022, the Organization strengthened its core programs, deepened its cultural impact, and improved its operational capacity.

1. Membership Growth and Sustained Welfare Support

In 2023, the organization accommodated 34 members, 14 of which were girls. As was the case in the previous years, all members benefited from holistic care covering safe accommodation, daily meals, healthcare, mentorship, and psychosocial support.

2. Expansion of the Education Sponsorship Program

Rockies Organization supported 30 learners across different education levels, signifying growth in the number of learners supported. The increasing number of secondary and tertiary learners underscores the program's long-term impact and the Organization's commitment to raising well-educated and responsible young people.

3. Record Cultural Performances and Increased Income

The Bantu Cultural Troupe had its most productive years since the pandemic. It delivered 136 live performances across different regions of Uganda. These shows not only entertained and educated audiences but also generated significant income that sustained the Organization's programs and operations. The surge in performances strengthened Rockies' visibility and role as a leading cultural enterprise.

4. Strategic Infrastructure Investments

To support its expanding programs and further improve the members' welfare, Rockies Organization made targeted infrastructure improvements during 2023. These included construction of a new rehearsal and meeting room, installation of modern cooking stoves, and leveling of part of the compound at the centre.

Program Performance

Care and Welfare of Members

As was the case with the previous years of our existence, Rockies Organization provided comprehensive residential care for all the 34 members, including 14 girls. This included accommodation, daily meals, comprehensive healthcare, psychosocial support, and mentorship.

This holistic approach ensured that young people were healthy, stable, and focused on education and artistic development. The sense of family and community within the Centre remained a critical factor in the members' personal growth and discipline, and the troupe's undeniable success on the stage.

Education Sponsorship Program

In 2023, Rockies remained strong on its path to provide access to quality education to the disadvantaged children and youth in Uganda. Out of the 34 members of the Organization, a total of 30 learners (13 girls) received education sponsorship across different levels of education. These included 6 in Primary, 22 in Secondary, and 2 in Tertiary Institutions. In comparison to 2022, 2023 saw a sharp rise in the number of sponsored learners, particularly at secondary level.

The program continued to provide to provide

not only tuition fees, but also other school requirements, scholastic materials, career guidance and transport. This comprehensive education support enabled the learners to focus on their studies and personal growth.

Bantu Cultural Troupe

2023 was always going to be a very important year for Bantu Cultural Troupe. Being the second year after the pandemic, and with restrictions fully behind us, the troupe staged 136 live performances spanning different regions across Uganda. Performances were staged at festivals, corporate functions, schools, and community events, strengthening connections with loyal audiences while attracting new ones.

Through these shows, the troupe re-established a strong presence in the cultural sector, generated significant income to sustain educational and welfare programs, and reinforced its reputation as one of the leading cultural troupes in Uganda. With every performance held, the troupe contributed to safeguarding of Uganda's diverse intangible cultural heritage.





Infrastructure Development

To support program expansion, enhance member welfare, and strengthen organizational sustainability, Rockies Organization undertook key infrastructure projects in 2023. These investments improved both the functionality and aesthetic appeal of the Centre. They include;

i) Construction of a new rehearsal and meeting room

Building on the earlier structure established in 2021, a second open-air rehearsal and meeting space was constructed. Designed with floor tiles and a traditional thatched roof, the new space provides a cool and comfortable environment suitable for intense artistic training and administrative meetings. Beyond functionality, its architectural style enhances the cultural character and visual appeal of the Centre.

ii) Installation of modern cooking stoves

The old cooking stoves in our kitchen were upgraded to a modern, eco-friendly stove. This upgrade improved kitchen efficiency, reduced fuel consumption, and contributed to environmental sustainability. It also eased the daily meal preparation for the members, ensuring reliability and cost-effectiveness.

iii) Landscaping of the compound extension

Part of the Centre's compound was extended and landscaped to create more usable open space. This development provided a safe and spacious area for outdoor activities, large-scale rehearsals, such as those involving the Mujaguzo drums, and community gatherings. The expanded compound also improved the overall ambiance and utility of the Centre.

Comparative Overview: 2022 vs. 2023

Rockies' journey from 2022 to 2023 demonstrates steady growth and consolidation.

AREA	2022 HIGHLIGHTS	2023 HIGHLIGHTS	PROGRESS/CHANGE
Membership	31 members - 15 girls - 16 boys	34 members - 14 girls - 16 boys	Slight growth in membership
Care & Welfare	Holistic care including - Accommodation - Feeding - Healthcare - Mentorship and Psychosocial support	Same level of care maintained	Consistent welfare services
Education Sponsorship	25 learners - 4 Primary - 18 Secondary - 3 Tertiary)	30 learners - 6 Primary - 22 Secondary - 2 Tertiary	Growth in total learners, stronger secondary presence
Cultural Troupe	104 performances	136 performances	Increased shows, income, and reach
Infrastructure	Maintained existing infrastructures.	- New rehearsal / meeting room constructed - Modern cooking stoves installed - Compound leveling	Continued investments in facilities

Challenges Faced in 2023

Despite the achievements, several challenges persisted during the year.

i) **Escalating operational expenditures**

In 2023, the organization experienced a sharp rise in operational costs, particularly for food, utilities, and education-related expenses. This increase was driven by two key factors: the growing number of resident members, and the broader inflationary trends affecting basic goods and services in Uganda. As a result, maintaining the same level of care, educational support, and program delivery required significantly higher expenditure, putting pressure on the organization's limited budget.

ii) **Increased financial pressure from expanding sponsorship needs**

As more learners progressed to higher levels of education, the financial demands on the sponsorship program grew significantly. Supporting students at the tertiary level required higher tuition and additional scholastic expenses compared to primary and secondary education. Compounding this challenge is the lack of tertiary institutions in Nakawuka, where the organization is based. Tertiary learners travel an average of 35 kilometres daily to access their institutions, resulting in increased transportation costs and long commuting hours. This situation places additional financial strain on the organization and affects learners' time for rest, study, and participation in other programs.

iii) **Overreliance on Performance-Based Income**

While performance income remained a strong and reliable source of revenue in 2023, the organization's heavy dependence on this stream created financial vulnerabilities. Off-seasons, market fluctuations, or unforeseen disruptions easily affected cash flow and program delivery. This highlighted the urgent need to diversify income sources to ensure greater financial stability and resilience.

Lessons Learnt

i) Financial diversification is critical for sustainability

The year underscored the vulnerability of relying heavily on performance income. While performances remained strong, it became even clearer that broadening income streams through partnerships, grants, and other social enterprise initiatives is vital for long-term stability.

ii) Strategic infrastructure investment strengthens institutional capacity

The new rehearsal and meeting space, improved kitchen facilities, and compound expansion significantly enhanced operations, member welfare, and morale. This highlighted the importance of planned and phased infrastructure development in supporting growth.

iii) Tertiary sponsorship requires deliberate long-term planning

As more learners progress to tertiary education, the financial and logistical demands increase. Sustaining this level of support calls for careful planning, targeted fundraising, and partnerships to ensure continued access to quality education.

iv) Community engagement and partnerships enhance resilience

Strong relationships with schools, cultural institutions, audiences, and supporters were instrumental in sustaining programs and expanding opportunities. Active community involvement remains a cornerstone of the organization's resilience.



Way Forward

1. Diversify funding sources for greater financial stability

To reduce the organization's vulnerability to seasonal income fluctuations from performances, Rockies Organization will actively pursue new and complementary funding streams. This will include developing strategic partnerships with cultural and educational institutions, exploring grant opportunities, engaging corporate sponsors, and expanding social enterprise initiatives. A more balanced funding portfolio will ensure that core programs such as education sponsorship and member welfare remain well resourced and sustainable.

2. Strengthen and expand tertiary sponsorship support

With a growing number of learners progressing to tertiary education, there is a clear need for targeted support strategies. The organization will explore scholarship programs, establish partnerships with tertiary institutions to access bursaries, and mobilize contributions from well-wishers. The aim is to ensure that no student's education journey is disrupted due to financial or logistical constraints, and that learners at higher levels also receive adequate academic support.

3. Deepen artistic training and expand performance opportunities

Building on the strong foundation of 2023, the organization will focus on raising the artistic bar for Bantu Cultural Troupe. This includes integrating new dances, and preparing performers for larger and more diverse platforms. This will strengthen our position in the cultural and creative ecosystem, and make us more attractive to our clients. This will in turn contribute to positioning of the troupe for regional and international engagements, which will increase exposure, income, and cultural exchange opportunities.

4. Sustain infrastructure development to support growth

Infrastructure remains a critical enabler of program excellence and member welfare. Moving forward, the organization will prioritize upgrades that improve living conditions, enhance safety, and expand artistic training capacity. Investments will focus on facilities that support both current operations and long-term institutional growth, ensuring that the Centre remains a vibrant, functional, and inspiring environment for learning and creativity.

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Conclusion

The year 2023 marked a period of consolidation, growth, and renewed confidence for Rockies Organization. Building on the foundations laid in previous years, the Organization strengthened its education and arts programs, invested in infrastructure, and increased its cultural impact.

With clear lessons, strategic direction, and a committed community, Rockies is well positioned to continue nurturing talent, advancing education, and preserving Uganda's cultural heritage in 2024 and beyond.

NOTES





ROCKIES ORGANIZATION

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