2025 Annual Report

SUSTAINING THE MOMENTUM

COUNCIL FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN IN AFRICA (CEEWA-UGANDA)

Email :info@ceewa.org

Website :www.ceewa.org

Tel:+256777048095

FOREWORD

Throughout the year, we consolidated the momentum built through efforts in the year 2024 and deepened our engagement with partners to create meaningful impact. We addressed governance gaps, linked communities with implementers, reinforced partnerships, and engaged in high level dialogues that positioned us to respond to emerging challenges.

Our participation in a research study titled *"Women, Work, and the Informal Sector in Uganda, What's Holding Businesses Back ? "* in which we developed tools, collected data, demonstrated our technical capacity, and strengthened institutional relationships with Mayuge and Wakiso districts, boosted our grassroot level connections. Our enduring ties with these community partners enabled rapid mobilisation of 521 respondents for data collection. In addition, 200 beneficiaries were linked to a skills building initiative, reaffirming our commitment to inclusive engagement and community empowerment. Furthermore, the study enabled us to test new approaches including digitalized operations, project- based staffing, virtual project implementation and knowledge capture. Among key lessons learned were the adaptability of youth workers, the value of relevant capacity building, and the importance of versatile, digitally literate leadership to sustain resilience.

Through grant applications, we expanded partnerships by way of the snow ball effect, with promising opportunities now emerging from databases that connect us directly to calls for proposals. These efforts position us favourably for future funding and collaboration.

The high- level dialogues this year shifted the focus from advocacy and policy influencing to inward reflection on funding realities. NGOs were urged to decolonize mindsets, optimize local resources including time, reframe philanthropy as central to development, and catalyse corporate giving through best practice.

Together, these achievements and insights provide a solid foundation to drive our mission into the future. They underscore our capacity to deliver impact, and affirm our readiness to navigate a changing development landscape with innovation, resilience and collaboration.

HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic Partnerships

CEEWA-U believes that meaningful, long-term partnerships are built gradually through mutual trust and alignment with shared strategic objectives. This principle continues to guide our approach. Anchored by our vision and mission, we are proactively identifying strategic partners and positioning ourselves within relevant databases to ensure we can respond swiftly and effectively to calls for proposals.

During the year, we strengthened our engagement with emerging regional and continental collaborators, including the East African Philanthropy Network, Development Dynamics, Women in Mining in Africa (WiM-Africa), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the African Collaborative Organisation. Our participation in these networks is designed to enhance visibility, leverage pooled resources, and open avenues for future funding and strategic alliances.

In 2024, we formalized an implementing partnership with WiM-Africa and this year we contributed to a consultative strategic planning process that shaped their Action Plan 2025–2030, which was

virtually validated and launched on 25th September, 2025. This framework emphasizes participatory input from stakeholders such as chapters, technical volunteers, implementing NGOs, donors, and government partners.

Collaborative priorities include:

- Coalition building and capacity strengthening for women in mining.
- Advocacy for women and host mining communities.
- Economic empowerment and sustainable development.

These priorities will be advanced through seven programmatic agendas:

1. Women-led mineral value addition and market linkages.
2. Women-only mining zones and cooperative development.
3. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives
4. Climate resilience for women in mining.
5. Legal support and policy advocacy.
6. NextGen WiM-Africa: investing in future mining leaders.
7. Digital and media influence in mining advocacy.

As an implementing partner, we are well-positioned to identify areas of collaboration. Maximizing impact requires a deeper understanding of Uganda's evolving mining landscape, particularly the growth of extractive industries, rare minerals, and emerging ventures. Engagement with the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development and identification of niches that align with the needs of informal workers, especially local artisans will be key.

At the national level, we continued to tap into linkages provided by Makerere Business School's Business Enterprise Network to establish a base from which project partners can be sourced and skilling opportunities harnessed for our target beneficiaries.

Overall, there is strong potential for expansion and for forging partnerships with like-minded organizations. We remain committed to sustaining the momentum we have built and to paving the way for continued growth and impact.

Advocacy, Policy Influencing and Networking

This year, high level dialogues shifted the focus inward, emphasizing strategies to navigate the shrinking funding landscape. Internal resource mapping highlighted the need for NGOs to:

- Decolonize mindsets and dismantle inefficient governance structures as prerequisites for establishing effective management systems and optimizing the utilization of local resources.
- Prioritize co-creation with communities, recognizing the importance of fostering ownership, contextual relevance, and long-term responsibility in development solutions.
- Reframe local philanthropy as central to development rather than peripheral.
- Strengthen collaboration across civil society, government, and the private sector to mobilise and sustain resources.
- Interrogate existing structures and frameworks shaping philanthropy in Uganda, which often constrain its growth.
- Catalyse corporate giving by promoting best practice, advocating enabling policies and aligning business contributions with national priorities.
- Amplify grassroot voices and practices that remain excluded from formal philanthropic spaces.

ASSET MAPPING WORKSHOP-GROUP WORK , HOSTED BY THE EAST AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY NETWORK

Our collaboration with Global Fairness Initiative (GFI) on the research study opened global advocacy opportunities. Through this process, GFI recognized the importance of amplifying the voices of informal workers, alongside traditional and non - traditional unions, to ensure their priorities are represented across the labour ecosystem. As part of this effort, GFI drafted a petition to the International Labour Organization, which was endorsed by us and other partners.

Building on this initiative GFI convened a webinar series *"Rethinking the Future of Workers – Voices from Ground Up"*, in partnership with the Tunisia Inclusive Labour Institute (TILI). The monthly virtual roundtables held from October 2025 to September 2026, bring together partners and worker led organisations to share experiences and strengthen collective advocacy.

The discussions examine the evolving world of work shaped by digitalisation, climate change, migration, and recurring socio- economic crises. They highlight innovations in worker organizing, labour rights advocacy, and worker led responses to global challenges, issues that are especially pertinent to the ecosystem of the women and youth we engage with.

Strengthening Community Engagement and Empowerment

We strengthened collaboration with grassroot communities in Makandwa (Wakiso District), Magamaga, Mayuge Town Council (Mayuge District), working closely with district leadership to mobilise community members and support research on the needs and opportunities for women and youth engaged in the informal sector.

Through these partnerships and our strategic networks, we successfully linked 200 women and youth workers to a skills and livelihoods initiative implemented by Juma Farm Agribusiness Consultants. The initiative empowers urban youth, women and people with disabilities through market linked agribusiness solutions. The year- long project 2025-26 is funded by the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), provides training and technical support in practical income generating enterprises including: home vegetable production, poultry and rabbit farming, yoghurt production and packaging, liquid soap making, composite flour production and packaging, and farm management and record keeping.

Our contribution forms part of a broader program designed to reach 21,000 women, 15,000 differently abled individuals, and 18,000 out of school youth across Wakiso, Kampala and Mukono districts.

This collaboration strategically positions us as a key partner to Juma Farm Agribusiness Consultants, opening pathways for future joint initiatives that expand economic opportunities for women and youth in the communities we serve.

SKILLS BUILDING SESSION IN MAKANDWA, WAKISO DISTRICT

Research and Institutional Strengthening

In partnership with the Global Fairness Initiative (GFI) and Uganda Hotels, Food, Tourism, Supermarkets and Allied Workers Union (HTS-Union), we conducted targeted data collection under the Grassroots Centre on Women in Work model. The overall research study titled "*Women, Work, and the Informal Sector in Uganda, What's Holding Businesses Back?* aimed to uncover challenges

faced by informal entrepreneurs, with a focus on business formalization hurdles, and entrepreneurship skills gaps.

Following intensive planning (January to April), consultations with district authorities and local council leaders, key study sites were identified in Wakiso district (Makandwa and Kawotto) and in Mayuge district (Mayuge and Magamaga Town Councils). Eight enumerators, primarily qualified youth were trained virtually and in person, strengthening their research skills and capacity in digital data collections using KOBO software. Field work included quantitative surveys, focus group discussions (including gender balanced representation), and key informant interviews, monitored through virtual daily check-ins to ensure quality and adherence to timelines.

The project generated valuable evidence for policy and program design, while demonstrating an agile, cost- efficient approach to implementing research and capacity building initiatives in resource constrained contexts. Key achievements that can be leveraged for future interventions were:

- **Capacity Development**: Strengthened enumerator and supervisor skills in research methodology and digital data collection.
- **Operational Innovation**: Successfully piloted a flexible , cost efficient , project-based staffing model.
- **Evidence based Generation:** Captured rich data on informal sector dynamics, women and youth employment, and barriers to business formalization.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Built strong collaboration with district authorities and local communities , enhancing trust and participation.
- **Technology and Finance Integration:** Piloted virtual project management and tested mobile money (Momo) payments ensuring efficient project disbursement and accountability.
- **Repeat Collaborations:** GFI committed to supporting research dissemination, advocacy, and potential scale up activities in 2026.
- **Influence Amplification:** Strengthened our impact on gender equity and informal sector issues.

ENUMERATOR'S IN PERSON TRAINING, HOSTED BY GLOBAL FAIRNESS INITIATIVE

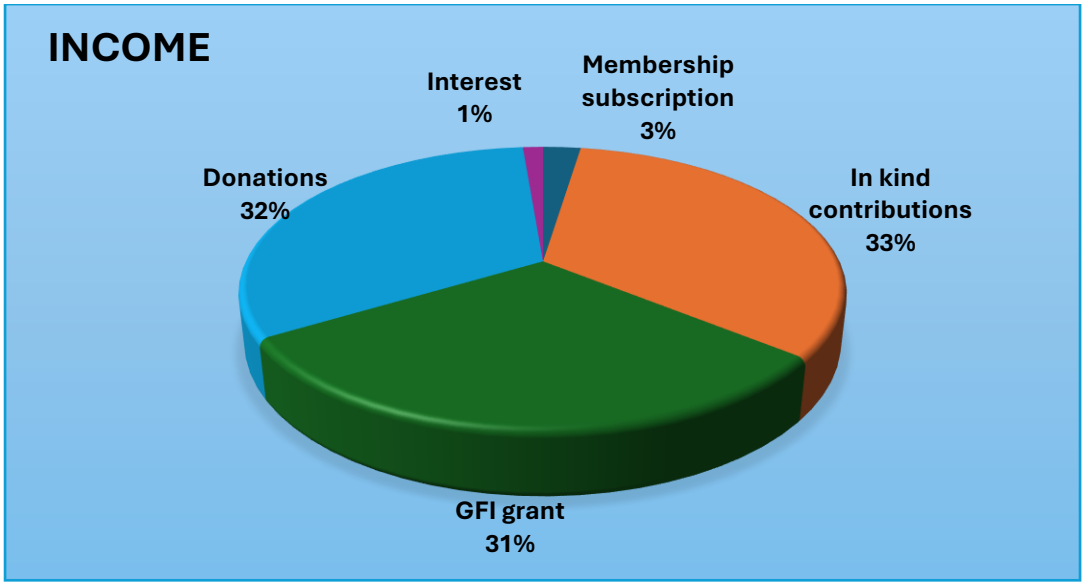
Governance and Finances

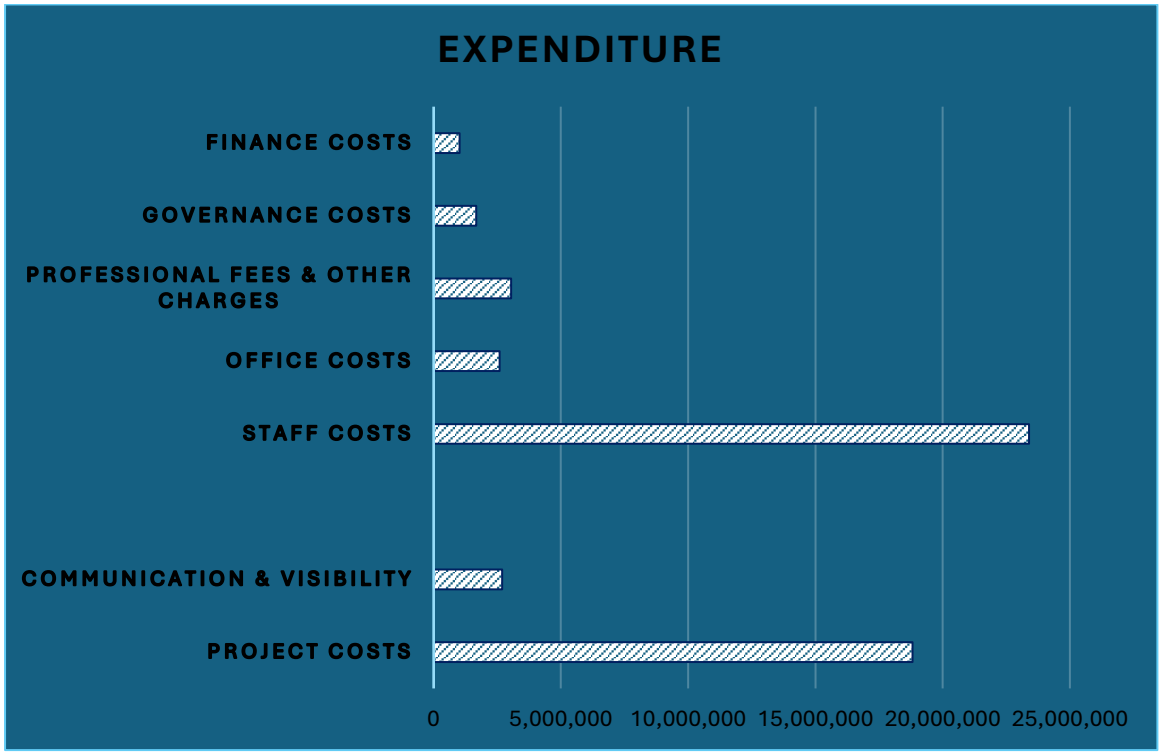
From an operational view point, we made significant progress in addressing governance gaps, and taking deliberate steps to strengthen our financial sustainability. As part of this effort, we are building our own reserves by investing a modest amount annually in units trusts. The objective is to enable our future collaboration plans to include an element of co-funding, where appropriate, while also improving our ability to cover operational and overhead costs.

Additionally, the digitalisation of operations continued. To improve payment efficiency, we successfully migrated to online banking. We also participated in regular webinars on data protection hosted by the Data Protection Office. These engagements enhanced our awareness and strengthened our understanding of cyber security and data protection requirements.

Financial summary

Cash inflows of **UGX 70,110,162** were realised from GFI grant, donations, membership contributions, contributions in kind, interest, and covered expenditure totalling **UGX 53,231,843** leaving a surplus of **UGX 16,878, 319,** yet a modest but, progressive improvement on last years' results.





2026 Outlook

Building on the solid foundation already established, we will expand our strategic partnership base by leveraging locally available resources. This will include:

- Pursuing corporate social responsibility opportunities.
- Tapping into avenues such as foundations established by for profit organisations.
- Engaging local philanthropic initiatives.
- Cultivating support from high - net worth individuals.

- Promoting partnerships with the private sector.

These efforts combined with effective use of technology an enabler, will provide a robust platform for integration into future transformation plans, ensuring that resilience and sustainability remain central to our long- term strategy.

Appreciation

We are deeply grateful to our partners for their continued confidence, and to the members, the Board and staff who despite challenges have persevered with unwavering commitment. Their tireless dedication of skills and time ensures the momentum not only sustained but strengthened for the journey ahead.