

The Recreation Project Mid-Year Report

2022



letter from our managing director

Dear friends,

I'm excited to share that this year at The Recreation Project has allowed us to get a taste of our own medicine. As you know, I believe that the magic of what we do is that we allow young people to experience situations that feel new and a little bit scary, and then let them discover their own power and resilience to thrive in those new situations. In 2022, we've been experiencing a lot of new situations and I'm proud to say, we've also been doing a lot of thriving.

In February, we welcomed Mago-Mulangwa as our Chief Adventure Officer and Executive Director. Mago has taken over the day-to-day management of our team in Uganda and is leading the expansion of our revenue generating activities (team building, corporate retreats, B2B life skills offerings, etc.) while I am continuing to deepen our relationships and fundraising efforts while supporting our strategy and vision, now based in the United States! We are incredibly lucky to have Mago at the helm of our work in Uganda. In addition to his ample experience in the social enterprise field, it is his bursting enthusiasm and deep care for the people he leads that has made him the perfect fit.

This has been an exciting and bittersweet change for me personally and for our team. However, it has been an immense joy to witness the confidence and poise with which our team in Gulu has stepped into this transition. My wish for our organization and team is that we are always graced with the type of challenges that provide opportunities like this to show how much we've grown and how far we can go.

Warmly,



Hannah McCandless
Managing Director, TRP



letter from our executive director



Dear Friends and Supporters of TRP,

I send you all the warmest greetings from our forest. It is a truly humbling and delightful experience to be working with The Recreation Project. It's not every day that you wake up motivated to positively change lives other than your own.

This year has seen me better understand why it is so vital to commit resources and time to enabling our youth in Gulu to thrive and why it is so very necessary for the community as a whole. I am now at the helm of a youthful team of 18 staff whose eagerness to be the change in their communities is truly remarkable. Their unbridled passion to share knowledge with an equally receptive group of participants assures anyone observing that this is indeed a place of wonder.

My first insight into our resilience programs has seen me interact with children who are having different life experiences. Those in remand home, coming to grips with the reality of the decisions they've made, Children living in the community, starting their journey into independence and children within the community schools whose minds are being prepared to meet the needs of society. A common thread exists for all these children: a need to overcome any barriers to their nascent potential.

While every parent would love to snugly wrap their children in a bubble of comfort shielded from life's vicissitudes, the only sure way to prepare them for the rigors, opportunities and delights of life is through imparting in them the life skills, primal knowledge that endures with them on the adventure that is their lifetime. I am therefore excited that my team is bright eyed and revving to go at this really personal mission to prepare young people to thrive. For within this forest lies the potential for true transformation for all that come by. I encourage you to join us on this journey. Together we will do remarkable things.

Eagerly,
Mago-Mulangwa



story from the field



Mercy, right, with Jovian, one of her TRP facilitators

Mercy, Climbing Club Participant

"I knew within me that I had the ability to influence, speak, debate and lead but I could not get myself out of my cocoon of fear and lack of self-confidence. I was afraid to stand out."

Mercy is the quintessential walking contradiction: an introverted public speaker, servant leader and a gentle "iron-lady."

She first joined the Climbing Club as part of her then High school's partnership with The Recreation Project and it is from there that for the first time, she reconciled these contradictions and boldly let herself stand out.

"I was very shy," she says, "But the Climbing Club program changed me completely." Her transformation was so drastic that it earned her the moniker "iron-lady" among her peers.

A string of accolades have since accumulated under her name from her various roles as a public speaker, debater, leader, creative, and social entrepreneur—something she credits to Climbing Club, which she says helped her fearlessly step into these roles and ably serve humanity in them.

"The Climbing Club was a launch pad for me that shot me through life in ways that I had never imagined possible."

program overview

Phase 1: Lifeskills and Resilience Education



NEW

Phase 2: UPShift Skills for Social Innovation



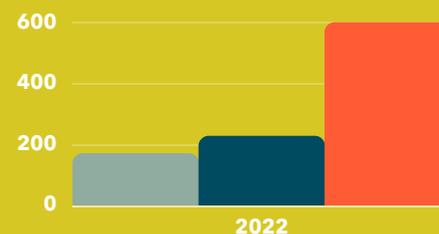
Introducing UPShift

This year, we are piloting a phase 2 of our program, with support from UNICEF Uganda. UPShift is a three-month program that allows graduates from our resilience education program to put their newly nurtured skills to identify a problem in their community and then use human-centered design to design and prototype a solution. We are piloting UPShift with 200 young people in 2022, including resilience and life skills graduates from Climbing Club and the Gulu Remand Home.

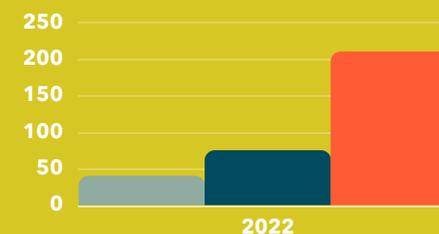
171
youth graduated

228
currently enrolled

Life Skills & Resilience



UPShift



● = Graduated
● = In Progress
● = Goal

our results

What We're Learning

In these Term 1 results we noticed a similar trend to one we measured in 2021. Consistently we see that our results are significantly lower in our Primary School Program than in our other programs. When we discussed as a team, we agreed that there are probably many factors at play here. These participants are significantly younger, we're limited to the one-hour physical education class, the program itself is less immersive than other programs, and we usually have more students to accommodate at a given time.

In term 2, our Primary School students are in groups of about 15 students, but each group is paired with two facilitators who co-facilitate the program instead of the usual one facilitator we've been using. We've already noticed a huge difference in the engagement. Furthermore, this pairing gives facilitators an awesome opportunity to grow together. As we continue to resource our programs and team, we're hoping to see a change in our results for term 2 that can justify switching all of our programs to using two facilitators per group.

Overall Term 1 Graduate Results

25% increase in resilience

31%

increase in internal resilience

54%↑

Social competence

38%↑

Autonomy

38%↑

Problem solving skills

25%↑

Sense of purpose

19%

increase in external resilience

20%↑

Social support in the community

18%↑

Social support at home

12%↑

Social support at school

41%↑

Social support from peers



Climbing Club

46%↑

Resilience

54%↑

Internal

37%↑

External



Children in Conflict with the Law

31%↑

Resilience

35%↑

Internal

27%↑

External



Primary School

18%↑

Resilience

25%↑

Internal

12%↑

External

our program updates

Term 1

- January
- February
- March
- April

Term 2

- May
- June
- July
- August

★
We're here!

Term 3

- September
- October
- November
- December

Primary School Program

124 Students Enrolled

Highlight: Launched our Teacher Training program, training 12 focal teachers from three partner schools to co-facilitate our program with our team. Adoption of SMS automated system to communicate with parents has significantly increased parent/guardian attendance and reduced operations required.

Challenge: We are excited about a last-minute increase in the number of students at our Term 2 partner Primary School, but the sudden increase puts pressure on our team and budget as numbers exceed what we planned for.

Children in Conflict with the Law

59 Students Enrolled

Highlight: We divided students into groups based on age bracket which has made a huge difference in their comfort level and engagement with one another and with facilitators.

Challenge: We've increased our facilitator per participant ratio which has put pressure on our planned and budgeted expenses

Climbing Club Program

45 Students Enrolled

Highlight: Funding from the Posner Center in Denver, CO is funding 'I am a Green Leader' partnership with local plastic recycling organization TakaTaka to train Climbing Club graduates to run plastic recycling collection points.

Challenge: We are so thankful that schools have reopened in 2022. However, while schools were closed we were overwhelmed with demand and had a long wait list for Climbing Club. Many of those on the wait list have returned to school, which is what is best for them! This has led to our team spending more time identifying out of school youth on our wait list.

UPShift

60 Students Enrolled

Highlight: TRP UPShift participants were invited to participate in the international Generation Unlimited competition. Two TRP teams will represent Uganda by pitching their innovative solutions to a problem in their community.

our highlights



Piloting UPShift and a New Partnership with UNICEF



In January we launched a partnership with UNICEF Uganda. In late 2021 we attended a training on UNICEF's UPShift program. Our team had noticed a need for continued opportunities to engage with our students after they finished our life skills program and UPShift offered an opportunity for life skills graduates to build on their skills and work through solving real problems in their communities with their peers. We piloted UPShift at the end of 2021 and are rolling the program out as a second phase of our programming in 2022 for our Climbing Club and Children in Conflict with the Law graduates. Additionally, recognizing The Recreation Project's leadership in grassroots efforts to reach youth and adolescents, UNICEF has brought TRP on as a methodological implementing partner for Northern Uganda. We are currently finalizing an agreement in which we will train other youth-reaching organizations to reach 2,200 adolescents in 5 districts in Northern Uganda through life skills and UPShift, funded by UNICEF Uganda.

our highlights

Welcoming Sean Galaway to The Recreation Project board



Sean Galaway has been working to end extreme poverty in Northern Uganda for the last 15 years. He's the Executive Director // Partnerships at CAPABLE and is passionate about community developed solutions that produce significant and durable outcomes.

He lived in Gulu, Uganda for five years, but currently resides in Mammoth Lakes, California. Whether it's riding motorcycles across continents, or exploring his home range of the Sierra Nevada, Sean values the experiences that shape us when we step into the unknown.

I am thrilled that Sean has joined our board this year. His ample experience in Northern Uganda (including many visits to The Recreation Project), his powerful network, and most importantly, his avid passion for outdoor adventure makes Sean a perfect fit for our team as we continue to grow."

-Hannah McCandless, Managing Director

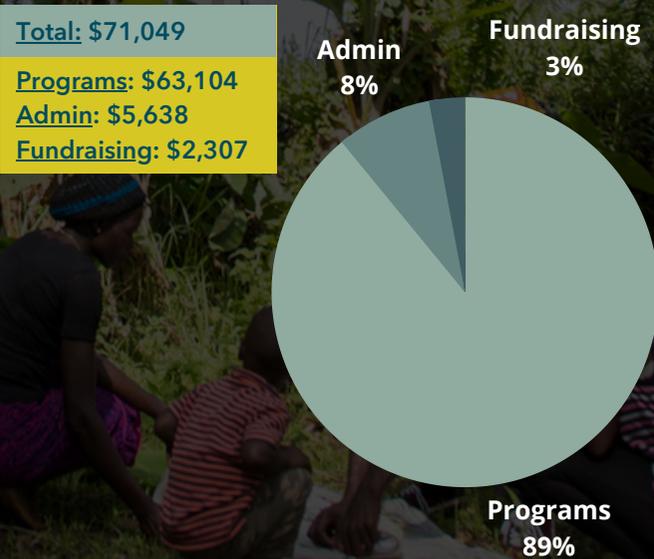
organization updates

Fundraising Update

In 2022, TRP has raised \$118,950 out of our \$156,000 goal. Leaving us with \$37,050 left to raise.



Budget Allocation Update



Thriving Not Just Surviving



One of our strategic priorities in 2022 and 2023 is to transition to a fundraising strategy that fosters thriving and not surviving, meaning we are doubling our fundraising efforts to raise money for the financial year that we are in as well as the coming financial year in effort to end the year 2022 with 50% of our 2023 budget in the bank and end 2023 with 100% of our 2024 budget in the bank or committed. As part of our new fundraising strategy, we are raising funds in three buckets: our roots funding, our trunk funding, and our branch funding.

	What?	How?
Branches	Ensure that anyone who wants access to our approach to prepare young people to thrive can have it. Scale access to transformational experiences and relationships through ToT and Technical Assistance opportunities.	Funding Target: Specific funded opportunities through strategic partners like UNICEF supplemented by support from 1-2 institutional or foundation partners interested in scale.
Trunk	Committed to excellent direct program delivery in Northern Uganda including constant program improvement and learning	Funding target(s): Restricted grant funds from foundation partners supplemented by the bulk of our individual donors (including monthly donors)
Roots	Root our growth and work authentically in our in our place, our people, and our purpose.	Unrestricted grant funds from foundation partners supplemented by a handful of leadership individual donors



Together, we can
create a world in which
all children fulfill their
limitless potential.

Our Partners



Bruce C. Abrams
FOUNDATION



VISTA HERMOSA
FOUNDATION



thank you!