

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



ECONOMIC BARAZA PROGRAM

Empowering Communities
Through Economic Literacy and
Free-Market Principles



Prepared by:
Mtindo Network Development Initiative

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Editor's Note



ANENA MOREEN CAROLINE
Programs Assistant

Beloved Readers,

It is my privilege to introduce you to the 2nd Edition of the Annual Report 2024–2025 for the Economic Baraza Program—a testament to the power of economic empowerment and community-driven change. This past year has been one of profound transformation, and I am humbled to share the stories, experiences, achievements, and lessons that have mapped our journey closer to our vision.

From the classrooms where students debated free-market principles to the local communities of Kawempe where women and youth turned ideas into sustainable solutions, this report captures the ripple effects of knowledge, opportunity, and resilience. 2078 lives were directly touched by our work, but the true impact extends far beyond numbers, it lives in the dignity of a mother providing for her family, the ambition of a young entrepreneur, and the collective voice of communities advocating for their rights.

Highlights like the UNICEF i-UPSHIFT project and our recognition at the World Intellectual Property Rights Day remind us of what's possible when innovation meets collaboration. Yet, we also acknowledge the hurdles: funding constraints, cultural resistance, and logistical challenges that keep us grounded and hungry for improvement.

As you turn these pages, I hope you feel the same pride and purpose that drives our team every day. The road ahead is filled with potential: identifying more communities to implement these programs, expanding funds to broaden our reach and deepening policy advocacy. But with the unwavering spirit of all our stakeholders, I am confident that we shall remain steadfast in our commitment to sustainable growth for a free skilled and prosperous Africa

Warm regards,

Anena Moreen Caroline

Programs Assistant

Mtindo Network Development Initiative

Executive Director's Note



DENIS BUA OSCAR
Executive Director

Dear Friends and Partners,

It is with great pride and gratitude that I present the Annual Report 2024–2025 for the Economic Baraza Program. This year, we witnessed the incredible power of knowledge, resilience, and community spirit as young people and families turned economic literacy into real change.

This year's journey has been marked by stories of courage and creativity. We saw young innovators design solutions for local challenges, women-led groups take charge of their financial futures, and communities embrace the principles of self-reliance and enterprise. Every milestone reflected the shared belief that lasting change begins when people are equipped with the tools to shape their own destinies. Together, we reached over 2,000 individuals, ignited youth-led solutions, and strengthened grassroots resilience through innovation, mentorship, and free-market values.

While challenges of funding, culture, and logistics reminded us of the road ahead, the unwavering determination of our beneficiaries assures me that a free, skilled, and prosperous Africa is within reach.

On behalf of Mtindo Network Development Initiative, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our partners, facilitators, and communities for making this journey possible. Let us continue building opportunities where there were none, and hope where there was despair.

With commitment and hope,

Denis Bua Oscar
Executive Director
Mtindo Network Development Initiative

Executive Summary

The Economic Baraza Program, spearheaded by the Mtindo Network Development Initiative, is a dynamic platform that equips young people and communities with economic knowledge and entrepreneurial skills grounded in free-market principles.

During the 2024–2025 cycle, the program directly impacted 2,078 participants through 14 diverse activities spanning schools, universities, communities, and national policy arenas.

This report outlines key milestones, impact stories, challenges, and strategic direction for the future. Notably, the UNICEF-funded i-UPSHIFT project in Kawempe is treated as an independent stream due to its unique design and impact framework.

5. Beneficiaries Corner



“Before, life was hard, no work, just caring for my sick father. But this program gave me skills and hope. Now, I’m part of a community project, and my family is proud. For the first time, I see a future where I can stand on my own feet.”

Sharon Birungi, 24, Kawempe



“Life in the ghetto is hard, but we choose to be happy. As a mother of four with no job, this program gave me purpose. Now I make soap, teach hygiene, and my family is respected. It’s not just about money; it’s about dignity. This project is mine to grow, and that gives me hope.”

Christine Nawuddo, 28, Kawempe.



“Before, I lived hand to mouth - dancing for small money, making books when I could. Now with soap-making skills from the program, I have another way to earn when work is scarce. It’s not much yet, but it is hope. I dream of growing this business while perfecting my book-making craft, too.”

Aisha Nakalema, 30, Kawempe



“In this ghetto, my repair shop barely pays - people don’t value my skills. But this program changed my view. Now I spend weekends cleaning drainage channels and teaching neighbors about waste, while dreaming bigger for my business. One day, I’ll build my own home and turn this community work into something that lasts.”

Mark Ssekitende, 25, Kanyanya.



“After losing my first love to cancer, I buried my pain in work - digging, fixing, painting, and doing anything to survive. Now this program has given me purpose beyond just income. When I see a blocked drainage channel, I can’t walk past it. My family is respected, my neighbors are changing, and I dream of a workshop where I can build more than just pit latrines.”

Jamadah Ssenoga, 27, Kanyanya.

6. Program Objectives

The Economic Baraza Program seeks to:

- Deliver practical economic education, emphasizing entrepreneurship, property rights, and free-market values.
- Build essential 21st-century skills: leadership, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.
- Inspire youth-led innovation and self-reliance through free-market advocacy.
- Promote inclusive engagement, especially among marginalized groups (youth, women, refugees).
- Strengthen community resilience and sustainable development through grassroots ownership.

6.0 Program Activities and Achievements

6.1 School-Based Seminars



Interactive learning sessions introduced secondary school students to entrepreneurship and economic thinking.

Key Sites:

- Highland Senior Secondary School (250 students)
- Brothers of Sacred Heart School (130 students)
- Modern High School (100 students)

Outcomes:

- 480 students trained.
- Formation of Free Enterprise Clubs.
- Enhanced self-awareness, teamwork, and confidence.

Challenges:

- Rain disruptions.
- Absenteeism due to school fees arrears.

6.2 University Conferences

Participants: 100 students

Highlights:

- Keynote on career development via a free-market lens.
- Pitch sessions and interactive case studies.

Outcomes:

- Increased interest in entrepreneurship (30% startup intent).
- Strengthened innovation culture.

Challenge:

- Academic calendar conflicts affected attendance.



Free Enterprise Conference, Makerere University (Jinja Campus)

6.3 Community Engagements on Property Rights



Locations: Kawempe, Kamwanyi, Kanyanya

Participants: 320

Focus Areas:

- Land law, asset leverage, and titling
- Financial literacy
- Dialogue with policymakers (e.g., Hon. Joy Kirabo)

Outcomes:

- Improved understanding of constitutional property rights (Article 26).
- Empowered women.
- Bridged gaps between communities and local leaders.

Challenges:

- Cultural resistance to women's land ownership.
- Weather and low literacy constraints.

6.4 National Forums & Policy Influence

Uganda Leadership Forum 2025



Uganda Leadership Forum 2025

Participants: 98

Themes: Youth unemployment, bitcoin, libertarian principles

Outcomes:

- Media coverage (BTM TV)
- Increased Understanding of free market, individual liberty and how it ignites economic growth and prosperity.
- Dialogue with different stakeholders including government officials, Legal practitioners and youth leaders on the need to reduce barriers to trade and business registration.
- Increased interest in ASFL's Local Coordinator Program

Challenge: Bias and misinformation on cryptocurrency.

East African E-Commerce Forum

Participants: 200

Achievements:

- Presented Economic Baraza to policymakers and development partners.
- Formed strategic partnerships.
- Mtindo received a Certificate of Recognition.

Challenge:

- Venue change led to late arrivals due to poor communication.



East African E-Commerce Forum

6.5 Africa Liberty Camp 2024



"The camp ignited my passion for advocating economic freedom in my community."

Participants: 80 youth (East Africa)

Themes: Capitalism, youth leadership, sustainability

Speaker: Prof. Christopher Lingle

Outcomes:

- Enhanced regional collaboration.
- Female entrepreneurship spotlighted.
- Plans initiated for an Alumni Network.

6.6 Community VSLA Training for Youth and Women



Location: Kikaaya Parish, Kawempe Division, Kampala

Partner: Slum Youth Rehabilitation and Development Organization

Period: August – December 2024

Direct Beneficiaries: 90 community members

In a strategic push to deepen grassroots financial empowerment, Mtindo Network Development Initiative partnered with the Slum Youth Rehabilitation and Development Organization to launch a **Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA)** Training program in Kikaaya Parish. This initiative focused on equipping youth and women with practical financial skills to establish, manage, and grow community-based savings and lending groups. It aimed to promote financial inclusion, enhance economic resilience, and foster local entrepreneurship.

Objectives:

- Ensure inclusive access to financial literacy with 70% female and 30% male participation
- Provide support in group registration, bank account setup, record-keeping, and micro-business training
- Promote long-term economic self-reliance and free-market participation at the local level

Achievements:

- 3 active VSLA groups formed and formally registered
- Improved access to financial services for low-income households
- Enhanced community trust and collaboration through shared financial goals
- Participants demonstrated increased savings discipline and entrepreneurship intent

Impact Highlights:

“This initiative gave us more than skills – it gave us a future. Our savings group helped me start a small charcoal business. I never thought I could run anything before.”

– **Grace Namubiru, 26, Kikaaya**

Challenges:

- Limited initial capital for participants to start small businesses
- Literacy gaps slowed the pace of training in bookkeeping
- Skepticism from some male community members about women managing finances.

6.7 World Intellectual Property Rights Day.



Our work was recognized with an invitation to the World Intellectual Property Day organized by the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) as one of the key stakeholders in advocating for property rights in Uganda. This event emphasized intellectual property's alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate innovation, hosting over 100 participants, including the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda and Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.

6.8 Women in Business Engagement:



In partnership with Nakawa Division Council, Mtindo Network Development Initiative co-organized a high-level engagement for women in business. This event attracted over 250 business leaders to discuss strategies for creating a harmonious business environment.

We also partnered with the Action for Development Initiative for a Market Leader Convention, engaging 50 business leaders in meaningful dialogue.

6.9 Book Distribution Project:

Continuing our ambitious book distribution project, in phase 2 of the Economic Baraza Program, we mobilized and distributed over 8,000 books on business, entrepreneurship, and free enterprise to schools, university libraries, and community libraries. This initiative promotes business and economic education across various learning institutions and communities.

7. UNICEF i-UPSHIFT: Independent Project



Location: Kawempe Youth Centre

Youth Reached: 197 (114M, 83F)

Period: February–March 2025

Partner: UNICEF

Structure & Highlights

- Inspiration Workshops: All 197 reached.
- Boot Camp: 93 youth fully trained.
- Mentorship: 20 youth supported with seed grants.

Top Performing Teams:

- Unique Group (Waste Management) – Reduced flooding via weekly drainage cleanup.
- Best Quality Magicians (Soap) – Improved quality, now supplying clinics.
- The Hearts (Bookmaking) – Affordable books for

students.

- Kikago Group (Liquid Soap) – Boosted income and hygiene awareness.

Impact Stories:

- Ali Gava: Income boost through soap sales to clinics.
- Shakira Tamale: Overcame mental health struggles to lead community clean-ups.
- Emmanuel Isabirye: Used problem analysis to address local flooding.

Key Takeaways:

- Peer learning amplified reach.
- Micro-grants (UGX 250,000) had strong returns.
- Transport refunds were critical for participation.

8. Cross-Cutting Impact & Lessons Learned

Theme	Economic Baraza Program	UNICEF i-UPSHIFT Project
Primary Focus	Economic education, policy engagement	Practical skills & prototyping
Beneficiaries	Students, youth, women, leaders, policymakers	Marginalized youth, refugees
Key Partners	Atlas Network, ASFL, UIRI, AfCED, Schools	UNICEF, War Child Canada, Kingdom of the Netherlands.
Key Skills	Leadership, economic reasoning, and public speaking	Problem-solving, teamwork, and enterprise design

8.1 Achievements

- 2,078 trained across 12 months.
- Formed Free Enterprise Clubs.
- Catalyzed community and national policy dialogue.

8.2 Challenges

- Funding gaps limited seed capital availability.
- Cultural barriers in property rights education.
- Weather and venue constraints disrupted sessions.

8.3 Lessons Learned

- Youth thrive when supported with mentorship and micro-funding.
- Inclusive planning boosts the participation of PWDs and male allies.
- Cross-sectoral partnerships scale credibility and impact.

9. Future Roadmap (2025–2026)

- **Seed Fund Expansion:** Establish a revolving fund for youth enterprises.
- **Local Alumni Hubs:** Institutionalize Baraza Clubs in schools.
- **Disability-Inclusive Programming:** Increase outreach to youth with disabilities.
- **Digital Curriculum Delivery:** Broaden access through online platforms.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Amplify youth voices in national economic policy.
- **Geographic Expansion:** Scale the program's reach to underserved regions.

10. Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to:

- **Partners:** Atlas Network, Warchild Canada, UNICEF Uganda, ASFL, UIRI
- **Community Leaders:** Local councils and stakeholders
- **Program Team:** Our 8 dedicated trainers and facilitators
- **Participants:** Whose energy and insights shaped the success of this year

11. Annexes

A. Full Impact Stories

- "After losing elections, I felt defeated - until this program showed me real change starts with action. Now our soap-making group delivers quality products, and I've set my sights higher: running for office again while dreaming of coffee farms. The secret? Good training plus seed money equals transformation. This isn't charity; it's empowerment with lasting impact." **Ali Gava, 29, Kawempe.**
- "After battling mental illness and hustling as an undervalued hairdresser, this program gave me more than soap-making skills - it restored my dignity. Now, when I walk through Kawempe, people respect me as both a beauty expert and a hygiene advocate. My dream salon will wait; first, I'm building a legacy that outlasts any hairstyle." **Shakira Tamale, 24, Kawempe.**
- When I became a father at 18, I traded schoolbooks for odd jobs - painting today, riding boda tomorrow. This program showed me that even a handyman can fix more than furniture. Now, when floods hit our streets, I mobilize neighbors to act. My carpentry workshop will come, but first I'm building a stronger community." **Emmanuel Isabirye, 25, Kawempe.**
- "As the only son among eight children in Kawempe's slums, joblessness weighed heavily - until this program sharpened my mind like chess strategies. Now I lead community projects with a focus that my parents never expected. My driver's license gathers dust while I build something greater: proof that ghetto boys can master more than survival." **Ronnie Kigozi, 24, Kawempe**
- "I became a father young and worked hard as an electrician to provide for my two daughters. This program taught me to solve community problems, like fixing wires. Now, people respect me for my work. I dream of opening my workshop and making our neighborhood cleaner for my girls." **Kato Muhammed, 27, Kawempe.**

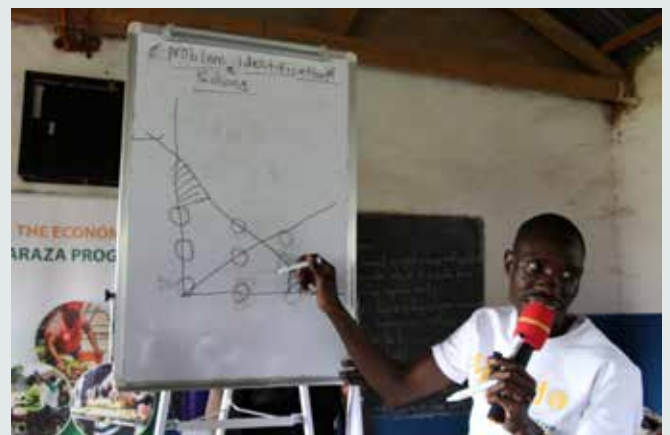
Conclusion

The Economic Baraza Program has proven to be a transformative force, deepening economic literacy, nurturing youth agency, and fostering community innovation. With growing institutional support and a scalable model, Mtindo Network Development Initiative is well-positioned to replicate and expand its impact nationally and regionally.

PICTORIAL REVIEW









Partners' Corner



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