



www.sirafrica.org

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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Dear friends, allies, supporters, partners, community and donors, It is with great pleasure that I present to you our Annual Report for 2023. As we reflect on the past year's accomplishments and challenges, we are grateful for the unwavering support of our donors, partners, volunteers, staff, and community.

This year has been remarkable for Solidarity Initiative for Refugees as we continued our mission of empowering refugees and locals through innovative programs and advocacy efforts that enhance their access to quality education, skills training, and dignified livelihood opportunities.

Despite the obstacles presented by limited access to economic opportunities, and resources, we remained steadfast in our commitment to serving our community and achieving our goals.

In this report, you will find an overview of our activities, the impact we've made, and a summary of our financial performance. We hope this report demonstrates the meaningful difference your support has made in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for your continued belief in our mission and for being a vital part of our journey.

Sincerely,

Bahana Mirindi Hydrogene

Chief Executive Officer



BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW OF OUR MANDATE

Established in 1992, Kakuma Refugee Camp currently houses over 270,000 refugees, with 74% comprising women and children. UNHCR statistics reveal that 58% of the residents live in extreme poverty. The camp's isolated location poses substantial challenges in providing education, skills training, and livelihood opportunities. Women, in particular, rely on external aid for sustenance with a few percentage working, leading to strained relations within the community.

Refugees have become an integral part of Kakuma's social, cultural, and economic fabric. An integrated economy has emerged, with more than 2,583 businesses within the camp and 232 shops in town. The market potential is estimated at US\$56 million. However, legal and practical challenges, such as limited access to digital infrastructure, legal documentation and less employment pathways, persist, hindering opportunities for both refugees and the host community.

In a world evolving at an unprecedented pace, skills development and lifelong learning are paramount. The opportunity to acquire new competencies is not confined to a specific age or stage in life but is a continuous journey. In the context of Kakuma Refugee Camp, opportunities for skills development, especially in digital skills, are limited for adolescent girls, women both refugees, and local host community.

In this era of digital transformation, the relevance of promoting digital skills and digital livelihood cannot be overstated. These competencies are instrumental in bridging the gap between marginalised communities and access to opportunities. They pave the way for economic empowerment, ensuring that individuals can actively participate in the digital economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the inequalities in the traditional workforce, but it has also provided an opportunity for marginalised communities, like refugees, to access remote work and employment opportunities.

Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR) is a registered Refugee-led Community-based organization established in 2016 in response to the pressing challenges faced by refugees in Kakuma, Turkana County in Kenya including limited access to quality education, economic opportunities, and resources. SIR was born out of the necessity to address these challenges and create a brighter future for both refugees and their host communities. We believe that access to digital skills and economic opportunities are a fundamental human right.



VISION

A world where refugees, despite the challenges they face, have the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives, contribute to their communities, and reach their full potential.

MISION

To empower refugees and locals through innovative programs and advocacy efforts that enhance their access to quality education, and dignified livelihood opportunities.

OUR CORE VALUES

SIR is guided by six (6) core values that are interwoven into every aspect of its work:



Accountability

We hold ourselves accountable to our partners, beneficiaries, and host communities



Integrity

We value integrity, honesty, transparency, mutual respect, innovation, personal excellence, mutual respect, and teamwork



Responsibility

We are responsible and accountable to the community, partners and adherence to do no harm principle



Commitment

We respect guidelines and compliance and support to stakeholders.



Quality service provision

We are committed to excellent and quality service delivery to the communities that we serve



Equity and Innovation

We are committed to innovations and equitable use of technology



OUR PROGRAMS

Digital solutions and innovations

This critical component of our work underscores the organization's commitment to strengthen market-driven skills development training, advanced digital skills and employability skills that create dignified job opportunities and increase income for refugee and host community youth.



Women empowerment and Community Agency

The goal of this program is to provide life skills (Financial Literacy, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights), and business development support, to empower refugee and host community youth and women to build economic resilience and enhanced Community Support for Children's education and Social and Emotional Learning.



Institutional growth and strengthening

We are committed to strengthening our institutional capacity and that of other local organizations in the region in key functional and operation areas. This pillar focuses on refining and strengthening SIR's governance structures and management processes to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective decision-making.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR 2023

Providing market-relevant digital skills training to refugee and local youth

- In 2023, through our Codedust project, we provided advanced ICT training to 40 young refugees and members of the host community. This comprehensive course covered key web development technologies including HTML, CSS, JavaScript, React JS, Git, and GitHub. By equipping participants with these essential skills, we prepared them for success in the ever-evolving field of web development.
- According to WUSC, students from Kenya awaiting to join Canadian Higher Education Institutions have low computer literacy which disadvantages them once they join classes with other students who have been exposed to digital literacy from an early age. This past year, in partnership with WUSC, SIR trained 66 young refugees awaiting to join Canadian universities through the Student Refugee Program (SRP) on basic computer and life skills which they will apply in their day-to-day academics.
- In collaboration with the World University Service of Canada, we empowered 114 young women with market-driven digital skills including basic computer skills, micro-working skills, and social media marketing. These skills not only open doors to online employment but also pave the way for self-sufficiency and dignity. Additionally, recognizing the specific challenges faced by young mothers, a dedicated baby care space was established to enable them learn and work online while their infants are cared for in a safe and nurturing environment. We also included life skills training and engaged the adolescent girls and young women's partners, community leaders, and parents to address the social norms and barriers affecting women's engagement in the digital economy. These initiatives contributed to improved access, attendance, completion, and transition rate to work. This past year, over 90% of women enrolled in the program completed their training and at least 80% transitioned to mentorship and are now working and earning online.



Providing mentorship support to young women so that they can succeed in skills training and digital employment opportunities

Our mentorship program is designed to bridge the gap between training completion and employment. By providing personalized support, we aim to enhance the confidence and employability of refugees, addressing common challenges they face in securing jobs. This mentorship aspect ensures that participants receive not only technical guidance but also the soft skills and professional insights needed to navigate the digital workforce successfully. This past year 121 participants benefited from the mentorship program. Our Students earning tracker reveals that last year alone, our students made over **14 million** Kenyan shillings, with an average monthly revenue standing at **2.4 million** Kenyan shillings.

Strengthening Participation of Young Women in Gender-responsive market-based skills training opportunities

Our commitment to supporting adolescent girls and young mothers is exemplified by the establishment of a dedicated creche, enabling mothers to pursue their aspirations without compromising childcare. This initiative underscores our belief in the potential of every woman and our determination to dismantle barriers to their success. Furthermore, through tailored feedback sessions and focus group discussions, we have personalized our support to address the individual needs of each participant, fostering an environment where aspirations flourish. Our dedication extends beyond skills training; it's about nurturing resilience and fostering confidence in every young woman we serve.

Strengthening Parental and Community Agency in Refugee Child Education

In 2023, in partnership with Cohere, our Nurturing the Future(NTF) project , focusing on Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL), made significant strides in Kakuma. Collaborating with six local schools, we reached 793 children, 177 parents, and 38 community leaders. Through tailored interventions, we enhanced community support for children aged 4-8, improved parental engagement with the education system, and fortified social, emotional, and peacebuilding skills among children.



Enhancing Social, Emotional, Peacebuilding skills and Environmental Awareness among Refugee Children in Kakuma.

One standout accomplishment was the planting of 200 trees across six local schools, symbolizing our commitment to environmental preservation. Beyond beautifying school grounds, this initiative instilled a profound understanding of environmental stewardship in students. Moreover, our after-school sessions focused on nurturing child development garnered overwhelming positive feedback from parents, underscoring our dedication to holistic education and fostering a supportive community environment. Through collaborative efforts, we are reshaping the landscape of refugee education, empowering parents, and enriching the lives of children in Kakuma.



for more info, visit us at <https://siraf>

Strengthening our Organizational Capacity

Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR) is dedicated to improving its organizational capabilities to enhance support for refugee and host communities in Kakuma Refugee Camp and its environs. This past year in partnership with The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) through the DANIDA SPA Civil Society Engagement Project we strengthened our organization's capacity across four vital outcome areas: Organizational Resilience, Financial Management, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL), and Governance & Leadership.

1. Financial Management

We have taken crucial steps to improve our financial management systems and practices. We engaged a consultant to conduct a comprehensive capacity assessment, reviewed existing policies, and developed new organizational systems and policies: **Anti-Fraud, Corruption, and Bribery policy; Conflict of Interest policy; Fundraising policy; Treasury and Investment policy; Gifts and Hospitality policy; Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing policy; Finance tools and templates**

Additionally, our seven-pager Finance Guideline was reviewed and expanded to a comprehensive and **contextualized 11-chapter financial and procurement manual**, providing detailed internal controls, guidelines, and checklists.



2. Organizational Resilience

- Developed a 3-year Resource Mobilization (RM) Strategy
- Established an RM Unit and hired a qualified staff to support SIR RM efforts

3. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)

With support from a consultant, we conducted an assessment of the organization's current MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning) framework. Following the assessment, an intensive workshop on MEAL was held, attended by all managers and key staff. As a result of these engagements, we developed MEAL strategies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

4. Governance & Leadership

With the support of Najj Consulting, we had an in-depth stakeholder consultation and a rigorous assessment of our governance, with the board functions taking center stage. This initial reconnaissance paved the way for a three-day intensive training workshop. This was an opportunity for our management to learn, unlearn, and relearn key governance and leadership principles that would fuel our organizational growth. We identified and addressed critical gaps, turning them into potholes smoothed over on the road to success.

With a clear roadmap in sight, we have developed a strategic plan for 2024-2028 that will guide our work for the next five years.



Fostering Meaningful Youth Engagement Within the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) Framework



Youth Consultation Summit

In pursuit of our commitment to fostering meaningful youth engagement and advocacy within the refugee community, our organization spearheaded a pivotal youth consultation in Kakuma, in Partnership with DRC in the leadup to the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF). The primary objective was to engage young people in discussions about the Refugee Act, 2021 and contribute to the overarching objective of enhancing systemic, meaningful, and effective youth participation in the 2023 GRF.

The 2 days youth consultations served as a vital platform for empowering young voices and nurturing their active participation in shaping policies that directly affect their lives. Through interactive sessions and open dialogues, youth participants, alongside key stakeholders, delved into the provisions of the Refugee Act, 2021, dissecting its potential impact and identifying areas for improvement.

Our overarching objective was clear: to catalyze systemic change by ensuring that youth perspectives are not only heard but also integrated into the decision-making processes leading up to the GRF. By engaging young people as partners in this dialogue, we aimed to foster a sense of ownership and agency, laying the foundation for more inclusive and effective policies.

Throughout the workshop, diverse voices echoed a shared commitment to fostering greater collaboration and understanding between stakeholders. Together, participants collaborated to develop concrete recommendations that reflect the aspirations and needs of the youth community in Kakuma.



The Voices Rising: Refugee-led Solutions Conference 2023



2023 Voices Rising Conference

On 28 September 2023, SIR co-organized the Voices Rising: A Refugee-Led Solutions Conference with like-minded Refugee-led Organizations to address the challenges faced by refugees in Kakuma and Kalobeyei integrated settlement. The conference objective was to determine innovative solutions for communities with experience of forced displacement and for host community members in Turkana through meaningful discussion with entities within the humanitarian and international development sector.

The theme of the conference was to empower communities, foster collaboration, and change narratives associated with refugees and Refugee-led Organizations (RLOs).

Topics of discussion included Promoting Capacity Sharing & Resource Mobilization; Partnership, Networking & Collaboration; Legal Registration & Documentation; and Skills & Enterprise Development. For more details on the conference, check out the [conference report](#).



THE IMPACTS WE ARE SEEING

+98% of our graduates of the digital skills training program reported higher earnings as a direct result of the training and mentorship support.

+14 M Kenyan shillings was generated by our students last year alone, demonstrating the significant economic impact of our programs.

80% of young women beneficiaries, out of 200 surveyed in our latest engagement survey reported receiving support from their male partners and family after community engagement sessions, enabling them participate in digital training and online work.

- Children empowered through our learn and play activities have shown a positive performance compared to those who were not engaged in similar activities.
- We have seen a sustained engagement of the parenting groups in their children's education and increased performance outcomes for these children.
- **MEAL, Financial Systems, Leadership, and Resource Mobilization:** Significantly strengthened organizational capacity through institutionalized strategies, policies, and operating procedures. Previously siloed knowledge (Finance, M&E, Fundraising) is now accessible and shared across the organization.





Breaking Barriers :Farhiyo's Journey of Digital Empowerment

At 20 years old, Farhiyo found herself shouldering immense responsibility within her family of seven. With her father facing mental health challenges and her mother focused on homemaking, the burden of providing for her siblings fell squarely on her shoulders. Yet, Farhiyo refused to succumb to the constraints of her circumstances. Instead, she harbored a deep-seated ambition to break free from the cycle of poverty and pursue her dreams.

Farhiyo's quest for empowerment led her to the Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR), where she discovered a life-changing opportunity in 2022. Joining cohort 7, she embarked on a three-month journey in digital skills training. Despite the societal and cultural challenges suggesting that a girl's place is at home, Farhiyo persevered, balancing her morning classes and afternoon training sessions. Her commitment to transforming her life and her family's future was unwavering.

Throughout her training, Farhiyo faced numerous challenges, from managing her family's expectations to overcoming her own self-doubt. With no prior experience in computers and battling low self-esteem, she found it hard to even speak in front of her peers. However, her mentor provided

constant support, helping her grow in confidence and skill. Her dedication saw her at the training center six days a week, longing for more time to learn and improve.

As Farhiyo progressed, her hard work began to pay off. She not only developed her digital skills but also started earning an income, enabling her to contribute to her family's needs and make small yet significant gestures of care. Today, she continues to thrive, utilizing her newfound skills to secure employment opportunities through platforms like LinkedIn, SteUp.One.

Now, Farhiyo is not just working; she's making strides in her community, teaching basic computer skills and inspiring her peers and younger generations. Her journey from a girl with dreams in a humble household to a confident, skilled individual and community role model underscores her message: "I want the world to appreciate every girl and give them the opportunity to showcase their capabilities, regardless of their vulnerabilities. SIR has helped me grow my skills, confidence, voice and income. I see myself as a role model, an advocate of change, and a self-sufficient and independent woman."



Aisha Luka's Journey to Self-Reliance

Aisha Luka's story is one of determination and hope. Growing up in a big family, she often relied on her relatives for support. However, deep down, she yearned to stand on her own two feet.

When she heard about a chance to learn digital skills, she was unsure at first but something inside her told her to give it a try. As she joined the SIR digital hub in Kakuma 3, Aisha found a welcoming community that encouraged her to keep going.

Through the mentorship sessions, she was able to bid and complete online transcription and data annotation tasks on freelancing platforms and get paid for them gave Aisha a sense of accomplishment. She learned not only about digital skills and freelancing but also about managing money wisely. She diligently allocated her earnings, setting aside a portion for her

family, her personal expenses, and her savings. With each contribution to her savings, she was finally able to buy a smartphone and a laptop—a big step towards her dream of self-reliance.

Aisha's message to other women is simple: set goals and work hard to achieve them. She is grateful for the help she has received from organizations like SIR and WUSC, which have supported her journey.

Thanks to the generosity of Give Internet, Aisha and five other girls received a working kit consisting of a laptop, Mi-Fi device and internet access package for 3 months. These tools have opened up new opportunities for them to learn and grow in the digital world as they can now work even from their homes at night.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Income Statement As at 31st December 2023			Balance Sheet As at 31st December 2023	
	2022	2023		2023
Grants	1432529	17861078	Assets	
Fundraising events		352200	Current assets:	
Total Net Revenue	1432529	18213278	Cash	-
Expenses			Donations	-
Administrative/Overhead Cost	17216	1046802	Grants receivable	17861078
Programs	649917	9994512	Fundraising	352200
Salaries, Benefits & Wages	677883	3051900	Total current assets	18,213,278
Travel	14800	963817	Property & Equipment	-
Total Expenses	1359816	15057031	Goodwill	-
Earnings Before Interest & Taxes	72713	3156247	Total Assets	18,213,278
Interest Expense			Liabilities	
Earnings Before Taxes	72713	3156247	Current liabilities:	
Income Taxes			Program services	2,734,745
Net Earnings	72713	3156247	Accrued expenses	578,505
			Grants Payable	-
			Total current liabilities	3,313,250
			Bank loan	-
			Other long-term liabilities	-
			Total Liabilities	-
			Net Assets	
			Net Assets with donor restrictions	-
			Net Assets without donor restrictions	3,313,250
			Total Net Assets	3,313,250
			Total Liabilities & Equity	18,213,278
Statement of Cash Flows As at 31st December 2023				
Cash Flows from Operating Activities				
Net Income		3,156,247		
Adjustments				
Depreciation and amortization		311,092		
Changes in assets and liabilities				
Increase in accounts receivable		-		
Decrease in accounts payable		-		
Net Cash from Operating Activities		3,467,339		
Cash Flows from Investing Activities				
Sale of equipment	-	-		
Net Cash from Investing Activities		-		
Cash Flows from Financing Activities				
Credit card payments		-		
Loan repayment		-		
Net Cash from Financing Activities		-		
Net Cash Flow		3,467,339		
Cash at the beginning of the year		72,713		
Cash at the end of the year		3,156,247		





GOALS & STRATEGIC PLANS FOR 2024

Digital solutions and innovations

- Enhance digital literacy and economic empowerment for **1000** youths through comprehensive digital skills training and sustainable employment linkages.
- Expand the number of digital hubs/working stations equipped with computers, internet connection, solar power, and a creche in Kakuma and Kalobeyei
- Invest in connecting Global Businesses/Firms to displaced talents
- Advocate for policies supporting refugee digital inclusion and secure strategic partnerships.

Women empowerment and Community Agency

- Empower refugee women through life skills and business development training to increase their incomes and become self reliant.
- Enhance community support for children's education and Social and Emotional Learning

Institutional growth and strengthening

- Continue strengthening our organizational governance and management practices.
- Support other local organizations to strengthen their capacity through training, joint advocacy, and collaboration.

OUR TEAM

OUR BOARD



Jessy Inga Volonte
Board Chairperson



Bahana Mirindi Hydrogene
Board Secretary



Ikram Mohamud
Board Member

MANAGEMENT



Ghak Atem
Human Resources



Sidama Abera
Program Manager



Bahana Mirindi
Executive Director



Henri Malumalu
Finance Officer



Islam Ahmed
Partnership &
Finance Associate



Joan Mochama
Resource
Mobilisation Officer



Kasi Joseph
Logistics and
Procurement



Manahil Kununa
Assistant Programs
Officer



Taylor Rutakangwa
MEAL Officer





HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Join us in making a difference for refugees and their host community! Visit our website at sirafrica.org to discover how you can contribute to providing life-changing education and skills training and livelihood opportunities to young people. Together, let's build a better world for forcibly displaced and host community young people.

ASANTE SANA!

We extend our deepest gratitude to our invaluable donors, sponsors, and supporters whose unwavering commitment has been instrumental in advancing our mission. We express heartfelt appreciation to Source Humanitarian Network, World University Service of Canada, Cohere, Danish Refugee Council, UNHCR, The Global Whole Being Fund, Give Internet, Cybersalt, Youth Initiative Development, Refugee-Led Organization Network Of Kenya (Relon Kenya), Pawatech, and others. Your generous contributions and support have enabled us to continue empowering refugees and local communities, providing access to quality education, digital skills training, and dignified livelihood opportunities.



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