



MAHABA FOUNDATION

Spring 2025 Newsletter



Message from the Director

Dear Friends,

"Mahaba," which means "love" in Swahili, embodies the spirit with which we continue our mission to amplify the voices of vulnerable communities. We're excited to update you on our ongoing projects and to share some initiatives tied to our field visit in June. We invite you to take a close look at the **"Welcoming New Arrivals"** initiative. As essential aid is eliminated, regional conflicts escalate, and the number of displaced individuals rises, we, together, can offer a small sense of peace to those displaced from the Democratic Republic of Congo and arriving at the Kyangwali Refugee Settlement. Every contribution creates a direct and meaningful impact, helping us address needs that may seem far away but are felt deeply in the communities we serve. Your ongoing support, whether through your resources, ideas, or helping us spread the word, remains essential to the success of this work. We are deeply grateful for your support and collaboration.

With love and gratitude,

Leslie Silletti

Founder & Executive Director

P.S. How to pronounce "Kyangwali"? Chang-WAH-lee



Ongoing Program

Fabrications: Sewing Arts Training Center

We are celebrating the one-year anniversary of Fabrications! In partnership with Youth Organization for Building African Communities (YOBAC), we are proud to continue our work at the Sewing Arts Training Center within the Kyangwali Refugee Settlement in Western Uganda. Our latest cohort of artisans, which began in February, is receiving hands-on, practical training in tailoring, from basic to advanced skills, with the goal of fostering economic independence.

Last year we launched the Handmade with Love Collection, made up of a selection of African wax fabric bags, totes, and aprons, handcrafted at the center in expressive, patchwork, one-of-a-kind designs. Given the limited market opportunities in the settlement and surrounding host community, this collection helps expand our reach both online and in-person, while accessing a larger audience and leveraging the strength of the US Dollar. Every purchase directly supports the continued operation of the center. You can explore the collection on our Etsy page, linked below.

The sewing center has become a vital space for community and safety, where creativity, friendship, and dignity have a home. We look forward to coming together in June and are deeply grateful to the generous donors who have made it possible for us to bring stipends for each student. Our ongoing goals include securing a regular monthly stipend for every participant and raising additional funds to support entrepreneurial and financial literacy training.

"I thank all those with humanitarian hearts who support people in need. Their help has transformed my life from hopeless to hopeful. I'm becoming a tailor and I love the direction I'm heading."

-Asifiwe Chombe



Handmade with Love Collection

The Handmade with Love Collection continues to grow, featuring unique, artisan-made items from the talented individuals at the Sewing Arts Training Center. Each piece is more than a bag. It reflects the unique stories of the makers, their journeys to Kyangwali, the miles they walk each day to the sewing center, and their aspirations for themselves and their families. 100% of every purchase directly supports the center and its participants, helping to provide resources essential to the center's operations. We're expanding our presence both online and in-person, and we're thrilled to add new pieces to the collection this July!

Can You Help?

We are actively seeking opportunities for larger orders, wholesale partnerships, and customized orders. If you know of any retailers, businesses, or organizations that might be interested in supporting our mission through these means, we would love to connect. Special orders are always welcome, and your referrals could make a huge difference in helping us expand our reach.

[Click to Access Our Etsy Page](#)



June Project

YOBAC WASH

The YOBAC WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) project is dedicated to improving access to clean, safe water for the 700 refugee children at the YOBAC Nursery and Primary School in the Kyangwali Refugee Settlement. Currently, the school relies on a well that is unsafe for drinking and unsuitable for daily use, which poses significant health risks to the children. To address this, we are working with a generous project sponsor, YOBAC, and local engineers to install a new water system that will provide safe and reliable water for the school community.

This essential project is already underway, with a target completion date in June, aligned with our upcoming field visit. We are excited about the progress being made and look forward to the positive, lasting impact this new water system will have on the children's health and well-being.

[Click to Learn About WASH](#)



June Project

Welcoming New Arrivals: Responding to Emergency

Since January 2025, 150,000 people have fled the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), surpassing the total number during all of 2024*. At the same time, the landscape of global aid is shifting, with many organizations experiencing changes in funding and support. These changes are felt most acutely by the world's most vulnerable communities, including those living in refugee settlements. The United Nations World Food Programme has made significant cuts, which means the needs in places like Kyangwali Refugee Settlement are more urgent than ever. During our field visit in June, we will set up a food distribution at the sewing center to provide immediate support for some of the new arrivals from DRC. **We need your help.**

Upon arriving at the settlement, people have only what they could carry as they fled their homes and journeyed to Kyangwali. They have no resources, no ability to work, and are faced with the trauma of escaping conflict. They must build homes, dig latrines, and plant food that will take months to harvest- just to survive. The road ahead is long and difficult. **Your generosity will help us increase the number of families that we can support with essential food staples. Our goal is to support as many**

families as possible with a one-month supply of staples, such as rice, beans, charcoal, flour, and cooking oil- resources critical to their survival.

Every single dollar you contribute will make an incredible difference. Whether you donate \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, or more, your support will provide real, direct help: a bit of peace, much-needed sustenance, and a small piece of comfort for families facing unimaginable challenges.

We invite you to join us in this critical effort. Every dollar counts, and with the strength of the US Dollar, we will make a meaningful impact. Every single dollar purchases food. As with each of our programs, there are no administrative fees and no overhead. Thank you for standing with us and with those who need it most.

(*UNHCR and partners urgently seek funding as Congolese refugee numbers soar, 6 May 2025. Pic borrowed from Al Jazeera, March 2025)

[Click to Support New Arrivals](#)



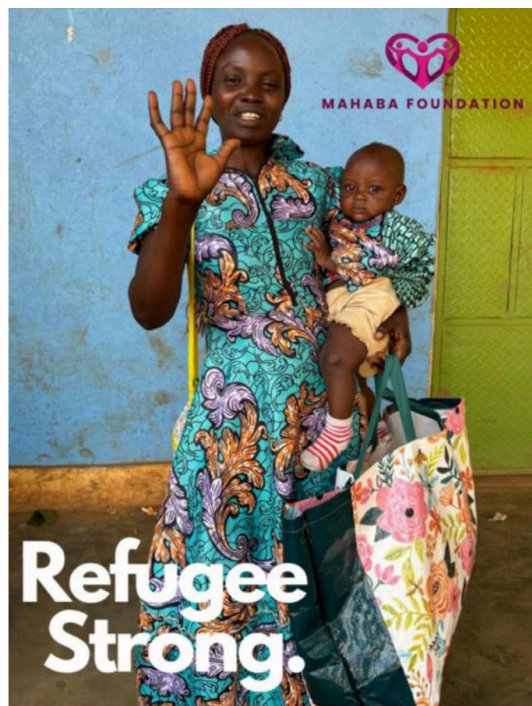
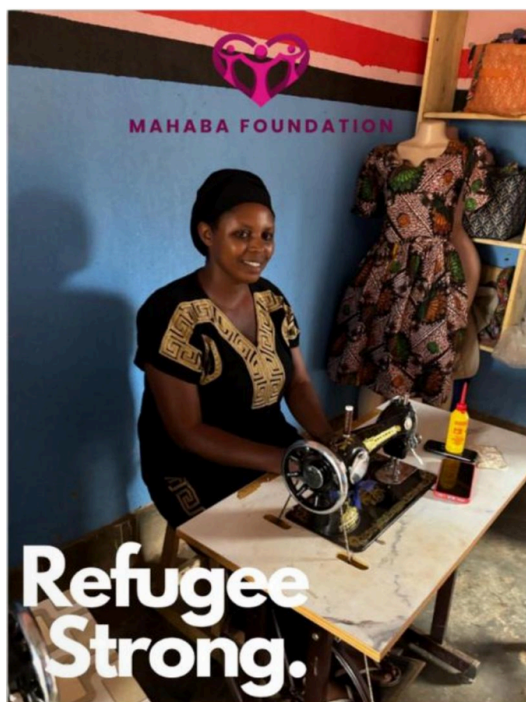
New Project

Bujagali Vocational Training and Creative Arts Center

In partnership with Igulu Foundation, this June we are launching the Bujagali Vocational Training and Creative Arts Center in Bujagali Village, Jinja, Eastern Uganda, "the Source of the Nile." Building on the Fabrications model in Kyangwali, the center will provide practical vocational training, with an initial focus on sewing and tailoring, to help participants build sustainable livelihoods. By equipping single mothers with valuable skills, we aim to create pathways for entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency. The center's products will eventually join the Handmade with Love Collection, further expanding the opportunities for the artisans in Jinja. Check out our Instagram page to see the grand opening!

Since 2018, Igulu Foundation has focused on breaking the cycle of poverty by supporting orphans, disadvantaged youth, and single mothers with programs that emphasize self-reliance and skill-building. They also offer a robust volunteer experience and continue to host volunteers from around the world. Take a look at the link below.

[Click to learn more about Igulu Foundation](#)



Stay Connected: Join the Community

There are many ways to get involved, whether through tax-deductible contributions, sharing knowledge, or simply helping raise awareness. Here are some ways you can join the community:

- **Monthly Sponsorships:** Become a consistent part of our projects by making a recurring contribution.
- **One-Time Donations & Purchases:** Donate or shop our collection to directly support our programs. Large purchases for a group? We got it covered!
- **Technical Assistance:** Share your talents and share your passion! Let us know how you would like to be involved.
- **Host a Fundraiser:** Host a virtual or in-person event to bring people together to support the continuation of this work.
- **Workplace or Group Presentations:** Would you like us to make a presentation to your employer group, congregation, or community? Let us know, and we can speak to your group about our work and how it can get involved.

However you choose to help, your support helps us make a lasting impact. Thank you for being part of this important journey.

Get in touch via the email below (info@mahabafoundation.org).

[Click to Support Mahaba Foundation](#)

Thank you!

Mahaba Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. EIN# 99-4819587

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