



## ACTION STORY



# STRETCH HANDS UGANDA

## Caring for People and the Planet

Stretch Hands Uganda (SHU) is a grassroots, non-profit organisation that's been working alongside communities in South Western Uganda since 2017. Led by a dedicated team of adults and youth, SHU focuses on supporting vulnerable groups—such as Batwa families, AIDS orphans, and grandmothers living with HIV/AIDS—by improving access to education, healthcare, clean water, income generation, and human rights awareness.

Most of SHU's work is based in the Kigezi region, where poverty and health issues—like jigger infestations—have made daily life especially hard. Projects have already reached villages in Kabale and Rubanda districts, with more communities to come.

As well as supporting people, SHU is also passionate about protecting the environment. The team runs regular “go green” campaigns, planting trees to combat soil erosion and restore biodiversity. They also work with local schools, churches, and health centres to set up vegetable gardens—teaching communities how to grow their own food and improve nutrition.

Thanks to support from partners in Uganda and overseas—like Bees Abroad and Global Landcare—SHU is continuing to make a lasting difference for both people and the planet.

## Growing a Greener Future – Tree Planting in Local Schools and Health Centres

As part of its environmental efforts, Stretch Hands Uganda (SHU) set out to green the Rubanda District by planting trees in local schools. While their original goal was to reach the entire district, limited resources meant the project was instead successfully delivered in four schools and one health centre:

- Bubaare Primary School
- Murambo Primary School
- Greenfield Nursery and Primary School
- Bubaare Health Centre IV

In each location, SHU trained a mix of students, teachers, health workers, and community members on the long-term benefits of tree planting. These lessons were described as “generational”—encouraging participants to plant trees not just for themselves, but for their children and grandchildren, just as those before them had done.

The training covered a wide range of environmental benefits, including:

- Controlling landslides and soil erosion
- Marking land boundaries
- Reducing carbon emissions
- Restoring weather patterns and climate stability
- Supporting organic honey production
- Beautifying the landscape
- Protecting nature and local habitats

In total, 50 tree seedlings were distributed and planted in each of the five locations, making a total of 250 trees planted. SHU also provided:

- 1 watering can
- 1 hoe
- Educational brochures on tree and vegetable planting at each site

This practical, hands-on approach not only helped communities get started but also built knowledge and ownership—laying strong roots for a greener future.





## Sharing Knowledge and Nourishment – Reaching Out to Batwa Communities

Stretch Hands Uganda (SHU) also expanded its work to include nearby Batwa communities—some of the most marginalised in the region—who continue to face serious challenges such as malnutrition and poor health. Recognising these pressing needs, SHU adjusted its focus from general tree planting to promoting food security through fruit trees and home gardening.

In these communities, SHU delivered practical training on how to establish small kitchen gardens using the space around their homes. The sessions emphasised growing a mix of fruit trees and vegetables to improve both nutrition and self-reliance. Although only a small number of fruit seedlings were distributed, they included guavas, mangoes, and avocados—varieties that are well-suited to the local climate and highly nutritious.

Alongside the fruit trees, SHU introduced communities to growing vegetables such as eggplants, carrots, cabbages, spinach, and indigenous varieties like pumpkins. The focus was not only on improving daily diets but also on reviving traditional food knowledge and making the most of what's locally available.

While resources were limited, the impact of the training was significant—empowering Batwa families with the skills and understanding to begin growing their own food and take steps toward better health and long-term resilience.

SHU also recognised the value of working alongside other key players already active in local communities. As part of this effort, they formed a partnership with the Nutrition Department at Hamurwa Health Centre IV. Through this collaboration, SHU agreed to support ongoing training sessions, helping to strengthen local capacity around nutrition and community health. This partnership marks an important step in ensuring their work remains integrated, sustainable, and aligned with existing community services.

S/N	Activity	Amount USD	in QTY	Total (USD)
1	Tree seedlings	200	300 seedlings	200
2	Hoes	@2	20	40
3	Watering cans	@3	5	15
4	Training materials (Brochures, hiring projectors, pens and notebooks)	245	200 brochures, 200, pens, 200 pens etc	245
TOTAL				500

## Challenges Encountered During Project Implementation

During the course of the project, SHU encountered several challenges that limited the scale and reach of their efforts. One of the main issues was the need for more resources. While the response from communities was overwhelmingly positive, the team wasn't able to provide enough materials—such as seedlings, watering cans, and training brochures—to meet the full demand. There was also strong interest from other nearby areas, which SHU was keen to support, but expanding further would require additional funding and supplies.

Transport was another significant hurdle. Many of the project sites were located at a considerable distance, and without a dedicated vehicle, SHU staff had to rely on limited or costly alternatives to reach communities.

Finally, spreading awareness across the wider district remained a challenge. While the team delivered impactful training in the areas they visited, they recognised the need for better tools and strategies to share their message more broadly—particularly around the importance of biodiversity and environmental care. Addressing these gaps will be key to growing the programme's impact in the future.



4 schools and 1  
health centre  
supported



300 seedlings  
planted



200 sets of  
resources  
distributed

