



2023

# Lobiko Annual Report



**TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY**

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# A Letter From Executive Director, Wilta Sanguma

**As I reflect on our journey in 2023, I am filled with immense gratitude and hope.**

Witnessing the transformation of Mama Mboli Sabuli, a mother who has experienced unimaginable loss and suffering and yet found hope through the Sabuli Children Center as a caregiving that empowers children to live to their full potential, reminds me of the profound impact we can create.

With limited resources, we have collectively touched the lives of over 15,000 individuals and families since our inception in 2020. While numbers tell a story, they don't reveal the heart behind them, the unwavering passion that fuels our mission.

As we launch into a new chapter at Lobiko in 2024, I want to share a personal story that shaped my leadership and commitment to this cause.

My hope is that by opening this window into my past, we can connect on a deeper level, drawing inspiration and renewed purpose as we embark on exciting new initiatives aimed at empowering even more individuals.



## A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CONT.)

### **My Foundation: Faith and Love**

My life has always been guided by two fundamental principles: a deep love for God and a commitment to loving my neighbor as myself. My faith has always been a guiding force in my life, instilling in me the belief that ordinary people are capable of extraordinary things. Looking back, I see how seemingly simple actions by those around me have had a profound impact on my life, shaping me into the person I am today.

### **My Childhood in Gemena: Joys And Sorrows**

Growing up in Gemena, a small town in Congo, my life was filled with the simple pleasures of childhood. The long walks to school, the games with friends, the treats from our uncles and aunties at the local market – these are the memories I cherish. Despite not being wealthy by North American standards, my childhood in Congo was filled with happiness, health, and a thriving community.

However, this normal childhood was forever changed on Christmas morning in 1998. Our church was bombed, turning a day of celebration into one of terror and chaos. The trauma of that day was just the beginning of the horrors of the civil war in Congo that took the lives of 6 million people, altering my childhood's familiar home into a landscape of fear and loss. At the age of 10, the brutality and chaos of war became a daily reality, as I witnessed unspeakable atrocities and the unimaginable suffering of my people.

### **Seeking Answers and Healing**

Escaping to the United States did not immediately ease the trauma. The memories of Congo haunted me, and I grappled with survivor's guilt. In college, I sought understanding through anthropology, religion, and philosophy, trying to make sense of my experiences and my place in the world. Only to realize that my life was transformed by a simple act of kindness when I was 13 years old.

### **An Expanded Family, A New Beginning**

The turning point came when a family in the Bay Area took me in during my high school years. Their simple act of kindness, offering a home to a 13-year-old war survivor boy from Congo, transformed my life. They were not saviors; they were ordinary people who chose to do something extraordinary. They gave me not just a roof, but a family, motivation, and a vision of life that I had not thought possible after the war.

## A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CONT.)

### Choosing Hope

These experiences have taught me a valuable lesson: we can either be defined by our past or use it to shape a better future. I chose the latter. I chose to forgive, to heal, and to dedicate my life to ensuring that no child has to endure what I went through. This commitment is at the heart of my work with Lobiko.

My journey has led me to some fundamental truths that are now the foundation of Lobiko. I believe in the inherent value of every life, the potential in each one of us, and the importance of sharing our unique gifts with the world. At Lobiko, we strive to transform lives from mere survival to a state of wellbeing and fulfillment.

### Transforming Lives Through Hope And Opportunity

Those who know me are aware of my bias toward action; I firmly believe that actions speak louder than words. As a parent, I'm constantly reminded and learning that what we say matters, but it matters more when our actions reflect our words. My prayer and hope for Lobiko is that our collective actions will lead to transformations from **Kobika**, a Congolese word meaning "to survive," to **Lobiko**, a word that derives from Kobika that signifies "a better life, salvation, and wellbeing."

As the Executive Director of Lobiko, I am committed to turning our collective efforts into tangible, positive changes in the lives we touch. I'm excited to embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead, staying open to growth and learning in every direction this path may lead.

I am filled with hope because the year 2023 was a testament to what we can achieve together: overcoming challenges and exceeding our expectations. We not only achieved but more than doubled our previous impact, reaching over 7,000 individuals and families in Congo – a milestone that reflects our commitment to transformative change in a region that has far too long experienced disparities. Your generosity and support, as well as our dedicated community partners in Congo, have been the cornerstone of our success.

Thank you for being a part of the Lobiko Community.

With gratitude,



**Wilita Sanguma**  
**Executive Director, The Lobiko Initiative**



# The Lobiko Story

**In the year 2007, Oliver entered a world steeped in sorrow, his first moments stained by the loss of his mother. Her life ebbed away shortly after bringing him into the world, leaving him utterly alone in a merciless realm.**

His uncle, burdened by his struggles, was tasked with the impossible duty of caring for this vulnerable soul. As Oliver's health withered like a fragile flower in a storm, his uncle, tormented by despair, reached the breaking point. After a month of unrelenting struggle, he culminated in an unthinkable act of abandonment. At a lonely gravesite, Oliver was left a tiny, defenseless figure forsaken by the one person he had left.

Abandoned and forsaken, Oliver's faint and fragile cries were heard by some children playing nearby. With hearts as pure as the dawn, they raced to the source of this tragic melody, discovering Oliver abandoned in the cold, lying on the frigid ground. These children, an embodiment of compassion, cradled him in their arms and delivered him to the warmth of a nearby hospital, where a group of nurturing women wholeheartedly embraced his care.

Sabuli, a mother who had faced her profound sorrow and difficulties - recognized the vulnerability in Oliver's eyes and was deeply moved by a mother's compassionate heart. She felt compelled to extend her support.

**Sabuli proceeded to adopt Oliver and dedicated her life to creating a secure haven for him and other disadvantaged children in need of care.**



Mama Sabuli

## THE LOBIKO STORY (CONT.)

**The world is home to hundreds of millions of children, each bearing a unique and heart-wrenching tale of deprivation, abandonment, and ill health.**

These children, through no fault of their own, endure the most severe hardships, deprived of the most basic necessities such as food, clean water, and shelter. Regrettably, these circumstances have left these children without access to quality education.

Oliver's story transcends the narrative of a child who lost his mother during childbirth. It's a story that encompasses the tragedy of his mother's death, a fate that might have been averted with access to quality healthcare. It extends to his uncle, who, trapped in the grip of abject poverty, is unable to provide for his nephew. It's the tale of a society that lacks a safety net for the most vulnerable.

**Ultimately, it's the story of Sabuli, a compassionate soul willing to assist those in need but constrained by the limited resources available to her.**

Narratives like these, though frequently aggregated within data, lie at the heart of Lobiko. Our mission is firmly rooted in our conviction that everyone deserves a rich and rewarding existence – the chance to live to their fullest potential.

We believe that children should be raised in environments with the support and opportunities essential for their growth and prosperity as they navigate life's journey.

Our primary focus is on recognizing communities facing adversity and the individuals' leading efforts toward positive and enduring progress within these communities.

We are dedicated to ensuring these changemakers have access to the necessary resources to realize their visions and attain their objectives.

**Please take a look at our [Program Highlights](#) to learn more about our strategic plan and theory of change.**







# The Lobiko Initiative

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



2023 was an incredible year. Together, **we impacted the lives of over 7,000 families and individuals in the Gemena region of Congo**; we have seen children who were once abandoned have loving homes, families who were once struggling have the means to support themselves, and once impoverished communities have the resources to thrive. Below are a few examples of how we are collectively transforming lives through hope and opportunity in Congo:

102

Children received holistic care through the Sabuli Children Center and Bas Ya Safu

3,778

Received comprehensive medical care through the Judy Medical Clinic

200

Students received a high-quality education through the Ubangi Protestant University

217

Community members completed vocational training at The Gemena Community Centre

500

Were provided employment or services through The Sabuli's Growing Garden



# The Lobiko Initiative

## GEMENA COMMUNITY CENTER



Through intentional partnership, our collective efforts have brought about profound changes in the lives of countless individuals within the Gemena community. This year, 217 community members have reaped the rewards of GCC-led vocational training programs. These initiatives have empowered them to either embark on entrepreneurial ventures or secure gainful employment, fortifying their ability to support their families and play a pivotal role in the overall advancement of the community. Furthermore, GCC's programs have cultivated 15 internal employment opportunities, and 27 other GCC graduates have gained employment through national and international nonprofits, creating a ripple effect of economic stability within their community.

217

**Received vocational certificates**

113

**Women enrolled in Vocational Training Program**

102

**IT program Graduates**

27

**Employed By other nonprofits**

# Our Collective Impact

**Meet Mama Suka, a remarkable single mother of two who has conquered adversity with unwavering determination.**

Her life was far from easy, facing a physical disability that left her unable to walk. Rent and education for her children were luxuries beyond reach, and she had no source of income or support. But then, she discovered the GCC sewing training program and her world began to transform. Through sheer determination and newfound skills, Mama Suka became a talented seamstress, creating school uniforms and beautiful dresses. With her sewing business flourishing, Mama Suka not only gained financial independence but also paved the way for her sons to attend school. Education, once a distant hope, became a reality.

**Mama Suka's story is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the profound impact of community support. With determination and opportunity, she not only stitched clothes but wove a brighter future for her family, proving that even in the face of adversity, one can overcome and thrive.**



Mama Suka



# The Lobiko Initiative

## SABULI CHILDREN CENTER



At SCC, a steadfast commitment is made to each child entrusted to its care. The center provides them with a safe and loving home, nourishing their bodies and souls with wholesome food, equipping their minds with education, and offering transformative experiences that prepare them for a future full of opportunities. There are currently 102 children being served. Of these children, 11 are located at the Bas Ya Safu transitional home, and 6 are attending universities. These children now possess the power to rewrite their life stories, emerging as transformed individuals poised to fulfill their boundless potential. Together, SCC is nurturing a generation of visionary leaders who will shape a brighter, more compassionate future.

**102**

**Children have holistic Care**

**25**

**Caregivers employed through SCC**

**7**

**SCC Alums working for the foundation**

**20**

**In Vocational Program and 6 in College**

# Our Collective Impact

**Meet Beni, a remarkable 22-year-old assistant teacher at the GCC sewing program. Her journey to this point is nothing short of extraordinary.**

Life hadn't always been kind to Beni. She, along with her three siblings, found themselves orphaned in the bustling streets of Kinshasa, often going to bed hungry. Her older brother, just 9 years old at the time, collected scraps to sell so they could put food on the table. They endured hardships and experienced the harsh realities of life with no one to protect or care for them.

But then, a ray of hope emerged when they found refuge at SCC. The center not only provided them with education but also a chance at a better future. One of Beni's siblings, Priscilla, graduated high school in nutrition, driven by a desire to combat the high rates of malnutrition in their community, fueled by the direct impact she witnessed on the SCC infants and children. Nicole embarked on her journey, starting grade 9 in computer science, while Dieu completed high school with a focus on economics.

And then there's Beni, on the verge of graduating in sewing. With newfound skills and aspirations, she dreams of becoming a designer and furthering her studies. She's diligently saving money at the World Vision bank, taking concrete steps toward her hopeful future.



**"I am proud of who I am today and thankful for the support I received from SCC, which pulled me out of suffering and ushered me into a life filled with promise," Beni reflects with gratitude.**

Beni's story is a testament to the transformative power of support and the resilience of the human spirit. From a life of hardship to a future filled with hope, her journey is an inspiration to us all.







## The Lobiko Initiative

# JUDY MEDICAL CLINIC



The Judy Medical Clinic (JMC) has become a symbol of hope for thousands of community members. This year alone, 3,778 lives have been saved. Within its walls, 44 crucial medical operations have taken place, each one a testament to the dedication of the medical team. For the hundreds of community members served every month, JMC provides not just medical care but also a comforting presence during their hospital stays. In the maternity ward, JMC continues to witness the miracle of birth, assisting in the delivery of 81 children and safely completing 16 cesarean sections. These moments were filled with hope and joy.

**3,778**

**Community Members served**

**44**

**Successful surgery performed**

**81**

**Child birth deliveries**

**167**

**Community Children Treated**

# Our Collective Impact

**Beneath the numbers, there are stories of resilience, transformation, and renewed hope. JMC is not just a clinic; it is a place where hope thrives, lives are transformed, and a brighter, healthier future is born.**

In a place where comprehensive medical care can sometimes seem distant, there's a powerful story of resilience. Meet a teenager with two painful hernias, orphaned and without family support. His previous treatment attempt left him with more complications. Desperate, he journeyed to a distant hospital. But fate led him to the Judy Medical Clinic (JMC), a sanctuary. JMC offered immediate care and compassion. They fixed his hernias and cared for the complications. Moved by his story, other patients at JMC joined in, purchasing much-needed medicine for the teenager.

**Today, he stands as a symbol of resilience, a testament to the remarkable impact of compassion. He's not just healed physically; he's been deeply touched by the warmth of human kindness.**





# The Lobiko Initiative

## SABULI GROWING GARDEN



The Sabuli Growing Garden isn't just a garden; it's a lifeline for the surrounding community. It offers year-round employment to 38 individuals, providing not only a steady income but also a sense of purpose. Additionally, it extends its reach to create seasonal employment for an additional 50 people, empowering them to support their families and aspire to a better future.

**500**

**Community Members served**

**38**

**employed with a living wage and health benefits**

**50**

**seasonal workers**

**25**

**women Led Church group utilizing garden**

# Our Collective Impact

**Sabuli's Growing Garden (SGG) was created to serve two vital purposes: to provide nutritious meals for the children at the Sabuli Children Center (SCC) and to sustain the center financially.**

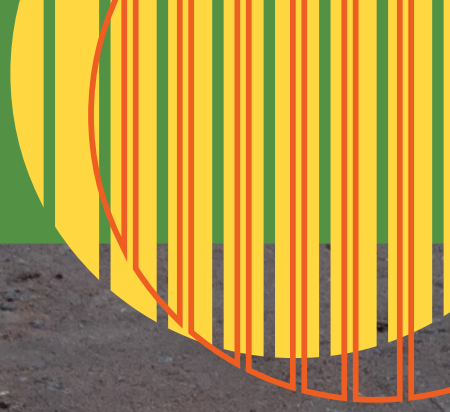
Located in an impoverished village near Gemena, where jobs are scarce, child malnutrition is widespread, and clean water is a luxury, SGG became a lifeline for the community.

SGG not only employs many locals, offering them a chance to support their families and send their children to school, but also shares its produce with the community, ensuring everyone has enough to eat. Additionally, SGG installed a water well, ending the villagers' reliance on a single, overburdened water source for bathing, washing, and drinking.

This is a story of transformation, where SGG goes beyond supporting SCC; it empowers the entire community by providing resources and opportunities that were once out of reach.

**As Margarite put it, "I am so grateful for the Garden. It has saved me and my family. When my husband died, I had no means to support my children. Because of the garden, I have the opportunity to support my family."**





# The Lobiko Initiative

## UBANGI PROTESTANT UNIVERSITY



Ubangi Protestant University has now trained over 1,500 community leaders who are transforming the Sud-Ubangi region. These individuals are not just learners; they're catalysts for change, champions of progress, and architects of brighter futures. Among these leaders, many are pastors who are breathing new life into the hearts of tens of thousands of community members. Their unwavering commitment to spiritual growth has radiated beyond church walls, infusing the entire region with hope and purpose. Others have embarked on entrepreneurial journeys, becoming the architects of their own destinies. They've birthed businesses, launched law practices, and established medical facilities, not just as professionals but as community leaders, driving economic growth and fostering well-being.

200

Students Enrolled

1,500

Individuals educated through UPU

24%

Studying In Agricultural Department

28%

Women Attending UPU



# Our Collective Impact

**Hugette Sánzá, an Economics graduate from UPU, is more than just an accomplished professional; she's a living testament to the power of determination and education.**

As a single mother, she defied the odds, embarking on a path of education that has not only transformed her life but also the lives of countless others. With her degree in Economics, she has contributed her expertise to a range of companies and societies in Gemena, leaving an indelible mark of excellence. But her story doesn't end there. Today, she stands as the dedicated manager of SCC, a role that embodies her unwavering commitment and love for the children. Her work ethic is not just admirable; it's an inspiration to all who have the privilege of knowing her. Hugette Sánzá is a rare gem, a beacon of hope, and a living example for the young girls at the center. Her message is clear: education is the key to unlocking a world of possibilities, and with determination, no dream is too big to achieve. She is a shining star in our community, a testament to the power of education, and a source of boundless inspiration for us all.



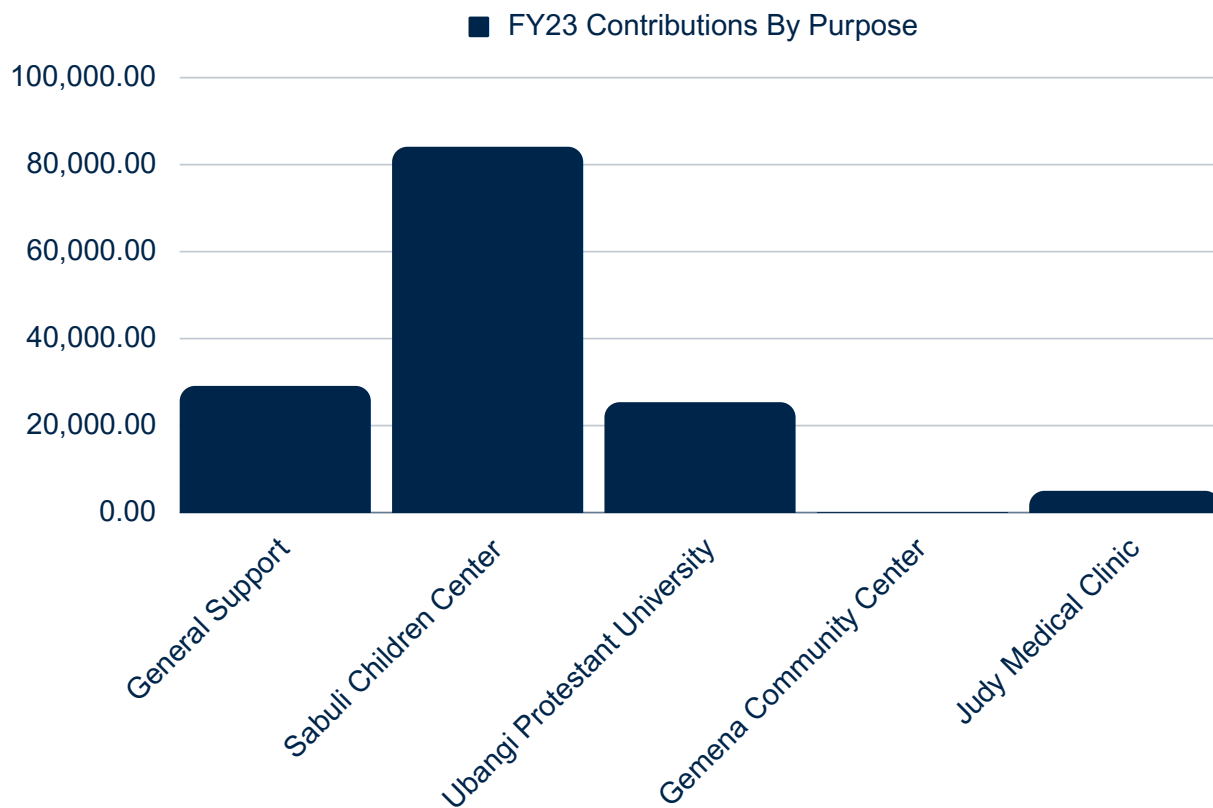
**"I am the fruit of UPU, I am proud and grateful to [the Foundation] for their work. I know I am not alone, there are many graduates who have become lawyers, government officials, and leaders in the country." - Frank Wolokola, Professor at UPU.**

Hugette Sánzá's journey from an Economics graduate at UPU to a dedicated manager at SCC is a shining example of the profound impact that UPU has on its students and the country as a whole. Just like Frank Wolokola, who is now a respected professor at UPU, Hugette's story exemplifies how UPU nurtures talent, instills a sense of pride and gratitude, and empowers graduates to become leaders and change-makers in their communities.





## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

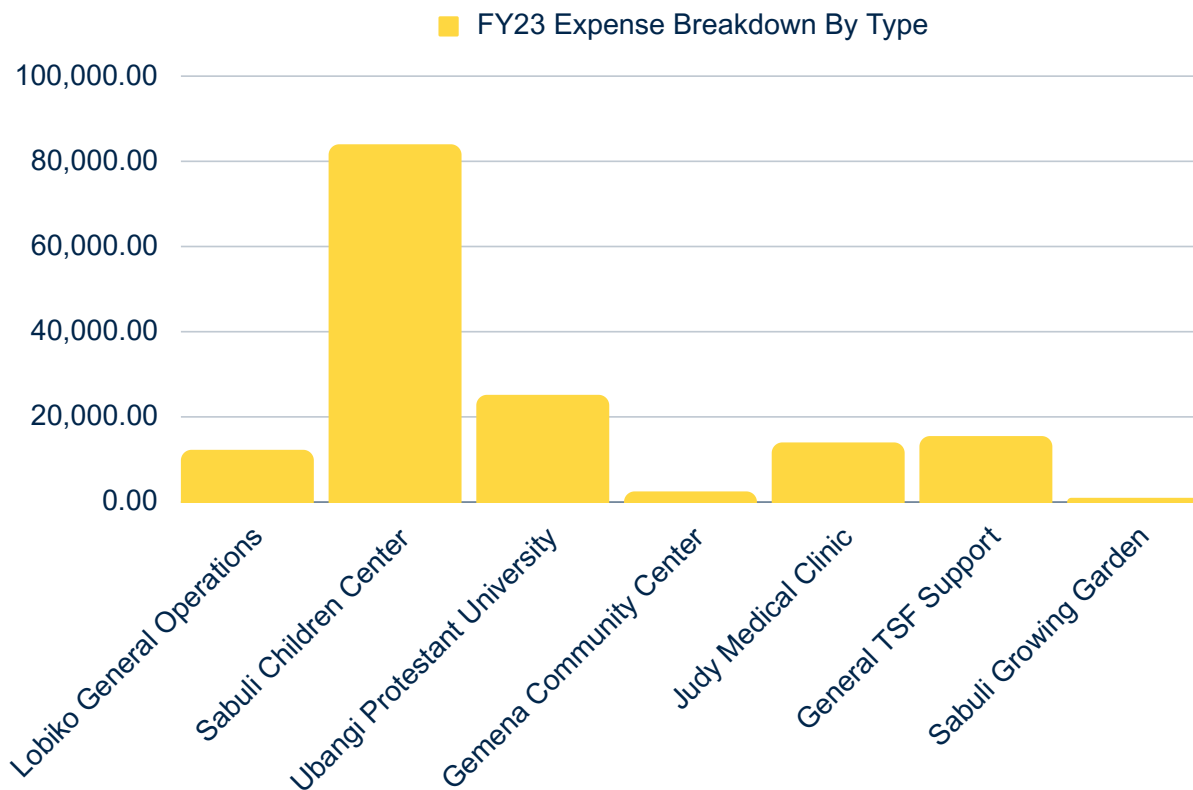


### Financial Highlights

- We **raised a total of \$143,719**.
- A **record-breaking \$48,026** was raised during our **End-of-Year Fundraising Campaign** to support the Sabuli's Children Center.
- **50 individuals/families contributed to Lobiko – a 56% increase** from last year.
- **63% of donors were retained, and 23 new donors** were added to the Lobiko Community.
- The majority of our expenses, **92%, went directly to program support** (e.g., The Sabuli Children's Center) and special projects for the Sanguma Foundation in Congo. The remaining 8% of expenses went towards Lobiko's operations, including fundraising, service fees, and marketing and communications.



## EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



### Thank You for Being Part of the Lobiko Community

We are incredibly grateful to all our supporters. Because of your support and through our partnership with the Sanguma Foundation, we directly impacted the lives of over 7,000 families and individuals in the Gemena region of Congo. Our work would not be possible without your generous contribution and support.





# Looking Ahead

**Our approach will continue to be multifaceted and laser-focused.**

We commit to nurturing and empowering children who were once abandoned or orphaned, providing them with the care, education, and opportunities needed to flourish as the leaders of tomorrow. This includes building and expanding safe homes, educational programs, and mentorship initiatives to give them the strong foundation they deserve.



# Looking Ahead

We pledge to address the pervasive issue of abject poverty head-on. We will engage in economic opportunities that empower individuals and families to break the cycle of poverty. This will encompass skill development, job creation, and support for small business ventures, all aimed at enabling self-sufficiency and financial independence.

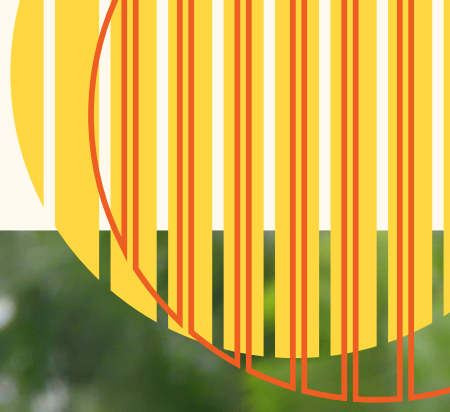
**For the broader community, we are unwavering in our commitment to creating an environment where prosperity is not a distant dream but a tangible reality.**

This means investing in critical infrastructure, including clean water sources, healthcare facilities, and transportation networks. We will promote economic development by fostering local entrepreneurship and enabling market access, bringing resources and economic vitality to a neglected region.

**As we execute this three-year strategy, our intent is to bring about lasting and positive change in the Gemena region, ultimately transforming it from a place of hardship and neglect to one of promise and prosperity.**

We are driven by the urgency of our mission and the shared vision of a thriving, vibrant, and self-reliant community.

**Together with our partners, we will work tirelessly towards realizing these ambitious goals, touching the lives of 50,000 individuals and families by the end of 2026.**







THE  
**Lobiko**  
INITIATIVE

# Join The Community

We know the power of communities when they come together to lift each other, and we hope you'll continue to journey with us as we continue on our path. **Here are simple ways to join us:**



[Donate to Lobiko](#)



[Join our mailing list](#)

[Follow us on social media](#)

