



The BIG FIX Uganda 2023: The Year in Review



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Transparency
2023

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The BIG FIX Uganda – 2023: The Year in Review

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The BIG FIX Uganda had a very successful 2023, thanks to our amazing team in Uganda, our partners in Uganda and around the world, our dedicated volunteer board, and our supporters.

The BIG FIX Uganda continues to operate the *only* animal hospital in Northern Uganda, a vast region which is home to more than 7 million people. The hospital has been open 365 days a year since it opened in 2016. During 2023, we also provided our services at 46 village field clinics. At the hospital and in our village outreach clinics, we have now historically treated 103,064 animals.

Over 100 war survivors and rescue dogs have graduated from our pioneering canine-assisted trauma intervention, The Comfort Dog Project. Once disabled by crippling trauma, our Comfort Dog guardians are now a thriving community that staffs our hospital, field clinics, education programs, and animal welfare/rescue teams.

We remain a critical force in the war on rabies – a serious, preventable threat in Northern Uganda. 2023 marked the second year we entered all vaccinations and suspected outbreaks into the Rabies Tracker App, an exceptionally useful tool gifted to us in 2021 by Global Alliance for Rabies Control. The BIG FIX Uganda was also invited to become a partner in the United Against Rabies Forum – the global leaders in the fight to eradicate rabies worldwide.

Our education program continues to include school programs, our popular radio talk shows, mural painting, and distribution of *The Great Dog Guardian Book*. To date, we have presented our education program at 326 schools and have distributed more than 30,000 copies of *The Great Dog Guardian Book*. Demonstrations by our Comfort Dog teams show children (and their teachers) that dogs can be safe, attentive best friends. Capturing these young hearts and minds is the key to a better future for the people and animals of Northern Uganda.

Thanks to one generous donor, we were able to make important improvements to our facilities during 2023, which will enable us to better care for the patients entrusted with our care.

We are pleased to provide you with our full 2023 financial statements for The BIG FIX (U.S.-based parent organization) and The BIG FIX Uganda. As you will see, we continue to have a big impact with a lean budget.

We hope you will enjoy the summary of all that was accomplished during 2023, thanks to our donors and partners. We are grateful that you share our One Health Vision that healthy animals make healthy people.



Sarah Schmidt
President of the Executive Committee
The BIG FIX Uganda

Cover photo: Onen Robert and his Comfort Dog, Iroba Nono, graduates of the 2020 CDP class. Iroba Nono had originally been placed with another guardian who died in 2019. Robert explains that he knew Iroba had bonded with him when the dog stopped escaping and returning to the home he had shared with his former guardian. Robert now works as an Animal Welfare Officer for The BIG FIX Uganda.

Overview of 2023 Accomplishments

Our Veterinary Services Department:

- ✓ Treated 10,841 animals
- ✓ Admitted 709 patients to our hospital
- ✓ Performed 408 laboratory tests
- ✓ Held 46 village clinics which reached an average of 185 animals each
- ✓ Performed 350 surgeries
- ✓ Helped guardians wash and groom 3,060 dogs in the villages
- ✓ Exchanged 5,266 unsafe neck restraints for rope
- ✓ Provided emergency rabies responses to 4 rabies outbreaks

Our Comfort Dog Project:

- ✓ Paired 12 new guardians with dogs and 100% graduated from our 20-week program
- ✓ Provided ongoing support for more than 100 program graduates
- ✓ Held *The Great Dog Games 2024* with 69 CDP teams participating
- ✓ Held 48 guardian meetings
- ✓ Provided 109 individual counseling sessions to project guardians
- ✓ Made 549 phone follow ups and 107 home check follow ups for project participants
- ✓ Admitted 35 Comfort Dogs to our hospital for treatment
- ✓ Provided 70 grief counseling sessions to members of the community
- ✓ Held 60 village group counseling sessions for war trauma survivors with an average of 19 persons attending each session

Our Education Program:

- ✓ Visited 28 schools, reaching 12,669 students and their teachers
- ✓ Distributed 12,669 copies of *The Great Dog Guardian Book*
- ✓ Painted 16 school murals
- ✓ Produced 62 radio talk shows

Our Animal Welfare Team:

- ✓ Responded to 52 community rescue calls and transported 77 dogs to our hospital
- ✓ Adopted 33 dogs and cats into homes after receiving 103 adoption applications and performing 44 home checks
- ✓ Followed up on adoptions with 279 phone calls and 109 home visits
- ✓ Cared for 439 dogs in our kennels
- ✓ Maintained permanent foster placement for two special needs dogs
- ✓ Provided 8,744 dog walks and 267 dog baths for animals in our kennels

Veterinary Services Department

In total, The BIG FIX Uganda treated 10,841 animals during 2023 (2,559 at the hospital and 8,282 in the villages) and performed 350 surgical procedures.



(Left) One of our hospital veterinary assistants, Labongo Richard. Richard is a graduate of the first Comfort Dog Project class in 2015. He subsequently was trained by The BIG FIX in veterinary nursing. (Right) Dr. Opiyo Lawrence providing a blood transfusion to a critically ill patient.

The BIG FIX Hospital

The BIG FIX hospital treated a total of 2,487 dogs, 72 cats, 3 rabbits, 1 goat, 1 chicken, and 1 dik dik during 2023. 709 patients were admitted for intensive treatment of serious conditions including (but not limited to): 240 with parvo virus, 124 with severe necrotic wounds, 51 with tick fever, 32 with helminthiasis, 32 with traumatic injuries, 29 with enteritis, 19 with paraplegia, 16 with severe Ascites, 13 with septicemia, 13 with poisoning, and 10 with fractures. 21 dogs with transmissible venereal tumors (TVT) were successfully treated with chemotherapy.

A daily average of 40 admitted patients were cared for at The BIG FIX hospital during 2023.

During 2023, our hospital staff included three full time resident veterinary doctors and two full time veterinary assistants. In September 2023, Dr. Godra Bayezibwe was appointed as our Lead Resident Veterinary Doctor.

Our three full time resident veterinary doctors received mentoring and support from Dr. Benard Agwai of Makerere University and a team of veterinary practitioners in the U.S.A.: Dr. Brenda Forsythe, Dr. Antje Joslin, and Dr. Samantha Lawton. Specialized training was provided to support each team member's educational development.

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*Dr. Godra Bayebazibwe was appointed as
The BIG FIX Uganda's Lead Veterinary Doctor in September 2023.*

We asked people to pay for services at the hospital based on their ability to pay. While this generated income of 70,000,000 Uganda shillings (about \$19,300 USD) during 2023, many guardians could not afford to pay and we provided services free of charge.



*A happy guardian and his dog at the time of discharge
from The BIG FIX Uganda's hospital.*

The Animal Welfare Compliance Procedures we enacted in 2022 continued to be practiced during 2023. One of our Animal Welfare Officers assumed the responsibility for daily checks of the hospital and kennels. These checks ensured that we provided the best possible care to each of our patients. We also maintained our *Record of Animals on the Premises* which was updated daily to provide each team member with access to all necessary information regarding each animal on the premises.



The BIG FIX Uganda Hospital

Our Hospital Administrator, Ojok Samuel, continued to improve our inventory control and procurement, especially after we were able to move into our new and spacious pharmacy annex. Our 2023 end of the year supply inventory was audited through manual counting and was found to have an accuracy of 100%.

The BIG FIX Veterinary Laboratory

Our veterinary laboratory – which remains the *only* one in Northern Uganda – continued its operation on a part time basis in 2023. In total, we ran 408 laboratory tests during 2023.

We are presently able to perform 30 different types of analyses of blood, skin, urine, and stool. These laboratory findings help our doctors to better diagnose and treat our patients.



Dr. Lawrence Opiyo in The BIG FIX Uganda Laboratory

Helping Animals in the Villages

In addition to the 2,487 animals treated in our hospital during 2023, **The BIG FIX Uganda treated 8,282 animals in the villages.**

Forty-six village field clinics were held throughout the year in the most critical areas of Northern Uganda. These critical areas are determined by: history of rabies cases or recent rabies outbreaks, large dog populations, or large number of dog bite incidents. Each clinic received an average of 185 community animals and **in total 7,785 dogs and 497 cats were vaccinated, de-wormed, and received other needed treatments at these events.**

While we prefer to perform spay/neuter and other surgeries at our hospital, 4 of the field clinics included surgeries due to their remote locations. At these clinics, **we spayed/neutered 85 dogs and cats.**

As always, our field educators (all graduates of The Comfort Dog Project) were on hand to teach grooming and washing to 3,060 dog guardians. They also exchanged 5,266 unsafe neck restraints on dogs for rope.

Working Toward Elimination of Rabies

Thanks to a very generous donor, The BIG FIX Uganda completed its second year of a 3-year program aimed at eradicating rabies from 40 key areas. Since February 2022, all vaccinations have been entered onto the Rabies Tracker App provided by **Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC)**. With the Rabies Tracker, The BIG FIX and our government partners can immediately see where vaccinations and suspected rabies cases have occurred. This empowers us to prioritize resources for vaccination clinics, maximize impact, and provide lifesaving responses to rabies outbreaks.

The BIG FIX Uganda was invited to become a member of the United Against Rabies Forum (UAR) in February 2023. The UAR is supported by FAO, WOA and WHO (the Tripartite), and brings together governments, vaccine producers, researchers, and NGOs with the goal of eradicating rabies by 2030.

The BIG FIX Uganda provided emergency rabies responses to 4 rabies outbreaks during 2023.

- In February in Omoro District/Tochi Parish/Abuga Village, we received a report that an adult man was bitten by a suspected rabid dog on February 6 and had died as a result. We provided an emergency rabies vaccination clinic at Abuga Primary School in bordering Gulu City, where 175 dogs and 22 cats were vaccinated and dewormed. We also paid for the last dose of post-exposure anti-rabies treatment (PEP) for a girl who had been bitten by the rabid dog, since the child's family could not afford the cost.
- In March in Amuru District/Pagora Parish/Coorom Village, three young children were bitten by a suspected rabid dog. A 6-year old boy died from rabies before we were alerted about the case. Our emergency response team investigated the incident, ensured that the two other children received all post-exposure anti-rabies treatment, and provided free vaccinations for dogs in the surrounding area.
- In June, The BIG FIX Uganda's emergency response team responded to Oyam District where rabid dogs had reportedly bitten 8 people and many animals in 4 villages, Ayomapwano, Aturu, Akonta, and Odele. Within a few days, we worked with the local government to mobilize for emergency rabies vaccination clinics at 7 sites, where a total of 384 animals received free rabies vaccinations and deworming.

- In August, a suspected rabid dog was reported in Olwal Trading Center/Amuru District. Our emergency response team found that 10 dogs, who had been bitten by the suspected rabid dog, had already died. The nearby communities were mobilized and free rabies vaccinations and deworming were provided to 129 dogs and 2 cats shortly thereafter.

There have been too many people and animals in Northern Uganda who have died as a result of rabies, a deadly disease which is preventable through vaccination of dogs. We are determined to bring about an end to rabies in Northern Uganda through improved vaccination coverage and monitoring. We are very grateful to the donors, local governments, the UAR, and Global Alliance for Rabies Control, for partnering with us in these efforts, but we need more support to reach all the communities in need.

The Comfort Dog Project

It is estimated that 70 percent of the people in Northern Uganda suffer from post-traumatic stress following the brutal 20-year war. Although the fighting ceased in 2007, the people continue to battle the effects of the war. Poverty in the region remains high and there are too few opportunities to earn a living. Suicide, debilitating depression, and gender-based violence are the inevitable result in a region with only one mental health worker per one million people.

The BIG FIX Uganda stepped into this mental health void in 2014 with the creation of The Comfort Dog Project, a canine-assisted trauma intervention. Since then, over 100 war trauma survivors and rescue dogs have benefitted from The Comfort Dog Project. This highly effective, canine-assisted trauma intervention is the only one of its kind in Africa.



CDP team Lucy and Sadik (2015 Cohort) at home

Leading The Comfort Dog Project is Francis Okello Oloya, our award-winning community psychologist. We are very pleased to announce that Achan Laura joined our Comfort Dog Project staff during 2023. Laura is a highly qualified social worker with extensive experience gained during years of work in our region's refugee camps.

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The BIG FIX offers a lifelong commitment to the wellbeing of all Comfort Dogs, including free veterinary services and home checks. When dogs or their guardians need it, we have an emergency food bank to provide relief.

During 2023, twelve war trauma survivors were paired with rescue dogs and all successfully completed the 20-week training as part of the Comfort Dog Project. The training program included dog training and bonding activities as well as group counseling and animal welfare education. Three previous program graduates also completed the 2023 training class with new dogs they adopted after the deaths of their original Comfort Dogs.



The 2023 Comfort Dog Project class with mentors

The Comfort Dog Project's Science Advisor, Meg Daley Olmertⁱ, provided the following observations concerning the 2023 CDP class.

- All 12 guardians experienced war trauma. Six guardians were abducted by the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army). One was involved in armed conflict. Seven witnessed murders, including one guardian who was forced to murder her elder brother. Six guardians were tortured. Two guardians were shot. Two guardians have physical disabilities as a result of the war. Four were brought up as orphans in IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) camps. One suffered the recent loss of a son. Five were currently experiencing gender-based violence (GBV). One guardian witnessed the murder of her husband by cattle raisers. Four guardians were currently experiencing severe ongoing social problems (land conflict, extreme poverty, and domestic violence).
- All 12 guardians met the diagnostic criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Trauma symptoms were measured at the start of the 2023 program using a validated measure of PTSD symptom severity, PSS-I. Two guardians had severe symptoms; 8 had moderate symptom severity, and 2 had mild symptom severity.
- The administration of the PSS-I after the 20-week training program showed that 11 of 12 guardians had an average reduction of 14 points in their symptom severity markers. The two guardians who had been initially scored as having severe symptoms dropped to the moderate range after graduation. Seven of the eight guardians who initially scored in the moderate range fell into the mild symptom severity range after graduation. The two who had pre-program PSS-I scores in the mild range experience further reduction in the mild range. One guardian, who was undergoing ongoing GBV, showed a one point increase in her PSS-I score.

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- Anxiety and Depression Self-Assessments were recorded at the beginning and end of each of the 20 training sessions. The average anxiety and depression scores indicated that guardians' anxiety and depression levels were reduced by participation in the training class.

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Scenes from the 2023 training class: Beginning with “watch me” and progressing to more complex tasks like walking and standing on a bench.

The dog training activities are carried out using positive reinforcement such as praise, pets, and food. Akumu Filda, a graduate of the original CDP class in 2015, serves as Lead Dog Trainer. Filda maintains her status as a certified Good Canine Citizen Evaluator with the AKC (American Kennel Club) and remains one of the only AKC Evaluators on the African continent.



Akumu Filda, The BIG FIX Uganda’s Lead Dog Trainer and Animal Welfare Officer

Mentorship of the CDP Training Team was provided by our Science Advisor, Meg Daley Olmert, and Samantha Hines, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Certified Animal Assisted Intervention Specialist with extensive service dog training experience.

The BIG FIX Uganda makes a lifetime commitment to each dog in the program and all veterinary services are provided free of charge. All dogs received rabies vaccinations, cocktail

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vaccination, regular deworming, and flea/tick treatment as needed. Thirty-five CDP dogs were admitted to the hospital for treatment during 2023.

Forty-eight guardian meetings were held during 2023. Free vet checks, training practice to reinforce dog-guardian bonding, and fun social activities were paired with group counseling to help support our project participants. We also provided 190 individual counseling sessions.

We maintained an emergency food bank for guardians who needed support to provide adequate food to their dogs and themselves.



Group counseling session during one of the guardian meetings, 2023

Our *Great Dog Games* were again held as part of The BIG FIX Uganda’s celebration of World Animal Day on October 4, 2023. An impressive 69 Comfort Dog Project teams participated in the games. Eighteen different contests provided all with a chance to win with events such as best sit/stay, dog calling contest, best smile, best groomed, best walking without a leash, and – a great favorite – dog who looks the most like the guardian.

During 2023, the Comfort Dog Project conducted 549 phone follow ups and guardians and performed 107 home checks to ensure the health and welfare of all project dogs and guardians.

All 2023 new Comfort Dog Project guardians received collars, leashes, and grooming tools to care for their dogs. Existing guardians were provided with replacements of items as needed. During 2023, we provided existing guardians with 41 new dog collars, 28 leashes, and 19 grooming tools. Shampoo was dispersed regularly to all guardians for dog washing.

For the community at large, The Comfort Dog Project provided a total of 60 village group trauma counseling meetings in areas which were selected due to their high suicide rates. These meetings were attended by an average of 19 people. We provided community grief counseling (to people who lost animals or human family members) to 70 people.

Our community psychologist and social worker were mentored by Philip Tedeschi, the Director Emeritus and Founder of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection and a clinical professor at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work.



The CDP Roundhouse

Education Program

The BIG FIX Uganda’s 2023 Education Team visited 28 schools, reaching 13,757 students and their teachers. Our Education Team included BIG FIX’s Education Manager, the Principle Education Officer for Gulu City, the Lead Canine Officer for Gulu Police Department, and 3 very impressive Comfort Dog Project teams.



(Left) Filda and Lok Oroma; (Right) The 2023 School Outreach Team.

The Team distributed 12,669 copies of *The Great Dog Guardian Book*, an illustrated guide on all aspects of dog guardianship and animal rights including how to feed and care for animals, recognize and prevent diseases, communicate with and train dogs, and to be an animal advocate.



A few of the 12,669 copies of The Great Dog Guardian Book distributed during 2023

Our **Art for Animals** program created 16 beautiful murals at primary schools throughout the region. These murals were designed through collaboration between The BIG FIX's talented artist (Odongkara Oscar Benjamin) and the children at each school. The murals depict positive interactions between children and dogs and deliver a powerful lesson that kindness can transform any dog into a comfort dog.



(Left) Students collaborating on a design for their school mural.

(Right) One of the 2023 school murals.

We are grateful to The Underdog International for its generous sponsorship of our school outreach and mural painting projects during 2023.

The BIG FIX Uganda is proud to sponsor the Agole Primary School Animal Rights Club. During 2023, this enthusiastic group of children and their patrons began community outreach to sensitize the people in their area about the importance of animal rights.



The patron and officers of the Agole Primary School Animal Rights Club

In 2023, our Education Program also produced **62 weekly radio talk shows that reach millions of listeners in Northern Uganda, Southern Sudan, and Eastern DRC.** Led by our Education Manager, Francis Okello Oloya, these programs covered animal health and welfare issues and helped us to address timely issues such as rabies outbreaks. Program participants included top police officials who stressed the importance of complying with Uganda’s anti-cruelty laws. A call-in segment allowed members of the public to have their questions answered. A frequent question asked by callers remains: *When will BIG FIX come to provide services in our area?*



The BIG FIX Uganda’s Education Manager Francis Okello Oloya during one of his weekly radio talk shows

We thank Mega FM and Favour FM for their generous support of our work through donation of this prime airtime for our radio broadcasts.

The BIG FIX Uganda also hosted two veterinary students from Makerere University and one laboratory technician internship during 2023. Five international volunteers spent time with us during 2023.

Animal Welfare Team

The Animal Welfare Team is fully staffed by Comfort Dog Project graduates. These devoted individuals are responsible for responding to community rescue calls, animal care and rehabilitation (including management of our kennels), and adoptions. During 2023, the Animal Welfare Team placed 29 dogs and 4 cats into homes. A total of 103 applications were received for these adoptions and the adopters were selected after our Animal Welfare Team conducted 44 home checks to determine the most suitable home for each animal.

The Animal Welfare Team also followed up on previous adoptions by making 279 phone calls and 109 follow up home visits.

The Animal Welfare Team responded to 52 community rescue calls during 2023 and took in 77 dogs and cats who needed emergency assistance.



The BIG FIX Uganda's Lead Animal Caretaker Aciro Jennifer (left) one of our dog walkers, Ogenrwot Francis (middle), and permanent foster mom to special needs dog Aweko (right). All are Comfort Dog Project graduates.

The Animal Welfare Team continued to support two special needs dogs in permanent foster care. These dogs, Aweko and Laloyo, have paralysis which prevented them from being placed in typical adoptive homes. Their sponsors (Jolene Verwey and Leanna Bacon) ensure that these dogs are able to live wonderful lives with CDP graduates.

In our kennels, a total of 439 dogs were cared for during 2023. Our dog walkers clocked a total of 8,744 walks and washed 267 dogs.

With the guidance of our Trustee Dr. Benard Agwai, we also implemented new flea/tick control protocols during 2023.

Organization Development

Thanks to a generous contribution from one donor, The BIG FIX Uganda was able to make significant improvements to our facilities during 2023. These improvements will help our buildings to maintain their structural integrity and will allow us to better serve the animals who come to us.

In the Athena House, we tiled the floors and 1 meter up the walls on the building interior. The open side of the cattery (located on the West side of Athena House) was fitted with a roll-up door to prevent rain intrusion during times of heavy rain. When weather is favorable, the open roll up door provides sunshine and ventilation to the cats in our care.



Comfort Dog “Bitey” enjoyed the renovations to Athena House during her hospitalization for tick fever during 2023

Our Parvo Unit (isolation treatment unit) also benefitted from tiling of the floors and 1 meter up the walls on the building interior. The group housing area within the parvo unit was fitted with a roll up door, again to prevent rain intrusion during inclement weather yet allowing our patients to receive the benefit of needed sunlight and ventilation during favorable weather days.



Construction of the new pharmacy annex to the hospital

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An annex to our hospital was constructed which now houses our pharmacy. The addition of the pharmacy annex has allowed us to greatly improve our hospital inventory control and has alleviated the shortage of space within the hospital building. The floors of the pharmacy are tiled and we installed metal shelving units to house the drugs and supplies needed to operate the hospital. Our pharmaceutical refrigerator was moved to the pharmacy as well.



The new pharmacy interior

The Comfort Dog Project Roundhouse was improved with a re-screeting of the floor, followed by installation of floor tiles. A ceiling was installed to control debris sifting down from the grass thatched roof.

A latrine improvement project brought running water to our pit latrine area and we created separate areas for men and women, with a changing area for each. The floors of the latrine were tiled and hand washing areas were installed on each side.

The exteriors of the Athena House, New Kennel Building, CDP Roundhouse, Gate House, and the Parvo Unit were all improved with skirting, which will prevent water intrusion and future damage to the building walls.



Skirting on the exterior walls of the security gate house, with resident dog Jack and Ocira Moses (CDP Graduate), who serves as weekend gatekeeper

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The BIG FIX Uganda operates with the regulatory authority of the Uganda NGO Bureau under an amended work permit issued in 2023. Our work permit allows us to provide services in Gulu City, Gulu District, Amuru District, Oyam District, Pader District, and Nwoya District. The terms of our partnerships with these local governments are set forth in Memorandums of Understanding. Our work plan schedule was created with the approval of the local governments including the District/City Veterinary Officer and the District/City Education Officer.

Throughout 2023, The BIG FIX Uganda worked closely with the NGO Forum (which monitors the work of local NGOs) and one of our management team leaders, Francis Okello Oloya, served for the second year on the Board of Directors of the Gulu NGO Forum.

The BIG FIX Uganda continued its diligence to comply with all laws and regulatory schemes including payment to Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) of payroll taxes and withholding taxes, contributions to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), and filing of all required reports to the NGO Bureau, URA, NSSF, and the Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA). The BIG FIX Uganda hospital maintained up-to-date licenses from the National Drug Authority and the Uganda Veterinary Board.

The BIG FIX Uganda owns 4 acres of land in Koch Village, Gulu City. The front two acres house our hospital, isolation treatment unit, Athena House kennels, new kennel building, CDP roundhouse, dog training yard, and guesthouse. The other 2 acres have been used to cultivate food which was used to cook for the animals and our staff.



The BIG FIX Guesthouse, which includes our administrative offices and housing for our resident veterinary doctors

Historical Accomplishments

From 2012 to 2023, The BIG FIX Uganda has:

- ***Treated 103,064 animals***
- ***Performed 10,182 surgeries***
- ***Visited 326 schools***
- ***Held 568 village veterinary clinics***

Acknowledgements

We are exceptionally proud of The BIG FIX staff, who tirelessly carry out the organization's mission 365 days a year. They are our greatest and most important resource and we are committed to improving the quality of their lives as they are to improving the lives of animals and people in Uganda. We provide medical insurance and 3-1/2 weeks annual paid leave to full time staff.

The BIG FIX Uganda is especially grateful to its management committee members: Odoch Honest (Executive Administrator), Francis Okello Oloya (CDP/Education Manager), Dr. Godra Bayebazibwe (Lead Veterinary Doctor), Achan Laura (Social Worker/Animal Welfare Team Manager), and Ojok Samuel (Hospital Administrator).

Dr. Benard Agwai, Trustee, is appreciated and acknowledged for his ongoing support and leadership to our veterinary team and the organization as a whole.

We thank the Executive Committee members of The BIG FIX Uganda, who serve without compensation or expense reimbursement, and who devote countless hours to providing support and oversight to everything that happens on the ground. These members included during 2023: Sarah Schmidt, Bonnie Ladwig, Tracey Talentino, Andrea Kennedy, and Stacy Mendell.

We appreciate the members of the board of directors of The BIG FIX, the U.S.-based NGO which is the parent organization of The BIG FIX Uganda: Dr. Brenda Forsythe, Dr. Antje Joslin, Meg Daley Olmert, Kathryn Mohan, Sarah Schmidt, Laura Austin, and Philip Tedeschi. The board members volunteer their time and talent so that The BIG FIX Uganda is able to carry out its mission. Administrative expenses are covered by annual board donations so that 100% of the donations received from the public are actually sent to Uganda to fund The BIG FIX Uganda's programs.

Finally, none of this could occur without the support and encouragement of the friends and donors to The BIG FIX. Every donation helps to create a better life for the animals and people of Northern Uganda. We cannot thank you enough for joining hands with us.

Financial Report

Financial transparency and accountability are two of our core values and we therefore present below our full 2023 financial summaries. The first financial statement, for The BIG FIX, accounts for all donations received by the U.S. based NGO which is the parent organization of The BIG FIX Uganda. **We are very proud that our administrative expenses are an exceptionally lean 1.1% of our total operating expenses.** Further, board members donate the amount of our administrative expenses so that 100% of donations received from the public can be sent to The BIG FIX Uganda.

The BIG FIX was again in 2023 named a Top Rated Charity by Great Nonprofits and we maintained the highest level of transparency (Platinum) with Candid (formerly known as Guide Star).

The BIG FIX Uganda, the NGO registered in Uganda operating under The BIG FIX, generated local income/contributions of 70,000,000 Uganda shillings (about \$19,300 USD) during 2023. As shown in

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the itemization of our 2023 expenses paid, our expense priorities were: (1) staff compensation and expenses; (2) veterinary drugs and supplies; (3) capital improvements; (4) education; and (5) transportation.



**The Big Fix
2023 Year End Financial Statement
(January 1 – December 31, 2023)**

BEGINNING BALANCES (January 1, 2023)

Ending balance shown on 2022 Year End Financial Statement **\$251,100.78**

Adjustment to Beginning Balance due to failure to include balance
Held in secondary account at Union Bank (now US Bank) on 2022
Year End Financial Statement

387.27

Adjusted Beginning Balance **\$251,488.05**

INCOME (January 1 – December 31, 2023)

Donations and Sponsorships	\$238,178.16
Grants	\$ 17,305.77
Volunteer Fees	\$ 1,130.20
Sale of Merchandise	\$ 200.00
Interest	\$ 3.95

TOTAL INCOME \$256,818.08

EXPENSES (January 1 – December 31, 2023)

Program Expenses:

Wire Transfers to BIG FIX Uganda 224,750.00

Purchase of supplies and equipment for BIG FIX Uganda 629.81

Sub-Total Program Expenses: 225,379.81 (98.9%)

Administrative Expenses:

Liability insurance 1,700.00

Software and Web Hosting 404.04

Government report filing fees 100.00

Wire transfer send and receive fees 243.00

Sub-Total Administrative Expenses: 2,447.04 (1.1%)

TOTAL EXPENSES \$227,826.85

ENDING BALANCES (December 31, 2023) \$280,479.28

Itemization of Ending Balance:

US Bank Main account \$100,092.01

US Bank Secondary account \$ 387.27

Certificate of Deposit with Charles Schwab (matures 3/6/24, 5.0%) \$180,000.00

Reserved Funds:

For 2024 Budget \$157,250.00

For 2025 Budget \$123,229.28

**The BIG FIX Uganda
2023 Financial Statement
(January 1 – December 31, 2023)**

	<u>UG Shillings</u>	<u>US Dollars</u>
BEGINNING BALANCES (January 1, 2023)		
U.S. Dollar Account		64,293.74
Uganda Shillings Account	17,923,937	
Cash on Hand	0	

ENDING BALANCES (December 31, 2023)		
U. S. Dollar Account		77,267.66
Uganda Shillings Account	55,713,328	
Cash on Hand	0	

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY AND ACCOUNT BALANCES

	<u>UG Shillings</u>	<u>US Dollars</u>
U.S. Dollar Account		
Beginning Bank Balance (January 1, 2023)		64,293.74
Bank deposits – Wire Transfers received from U.S. BIG FIX		224,600.00 ⁱⁱ
Bank interest		79.30
Bank fees		705.38
Bank withdrawals		211,000.00
Ending Bank Balance (December 31, 2023)		77,267.66

Uganda Shillings Account		
Beginning Balance (January 1, 2023)	17,923,937	
Bank deposits – Income Received in Uganda	70,000,000	
Currency exchanges – deposits from USD account withdrawals	771,770,000	
Deposit of ending cash on balance on 30 June and 31 December	23,207,400	
Bank fees	609,040	
Bank withdrawals	747,600,000	
Checks Cashed	78,978,969	
Ending Bank Balance (Uganda Shillings) (December 31, 2023)	55,713,328	

Uganda Shillings – Money Held in Cash		
Beginning Money Held in Cash (January 1, 2023)		0
Additions to Money Held in Cash:		
Bank withdrawals in cash	747,600,000	
Income received in cash	70,000,000	
Cash donation received in USD (\$50) and converted to shillings	172,900	
Deductions from Money Held in Cash:		
Expenses paid in cash or by bank deposit of cash	724,565,500	
Deposits of cash income to the bank	70,000,000	
Deposit of ending cash balance to bank for account verification ⁱⁱⁱ	23,207,400	
Total Ending Cash on Hand (December 31, 2023)		0

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INCOME (January 1 – December 31, 2023)

Wire Transfers from the U.S.		
Funds from BIG FIX (U.S. NGO)		\$224,600.00
Income generated in Uganda by The BIG FIX		
Veterinary services at the hospital ^{iv}	50,078,600	
House calls	1,505,000	
Local Donations	530,000	
Dog Lodging	5,260,000	
Pet Supply Shop	8,620,000	
Laboratory fees	2,290,000	
Adoption fees	695,000	
X-ray fees reimbursements	740,000	
Top up on Mobile Money	8,000	
Volunteer fees	96,800 ^v	
Guesthouse income (laundry)	176,600	

TOTAL INCOME: **70,000,000** **\$224,600.00**

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EXPENSES PAID (January 1 – December 31, 2023)

All expenses were paid in Uganda shillings. USD approximate equivalents are provided for information only, using a currency exchange of 3627, which is the average 2023 currency exchange rate received.

Category	Uganda Shillings	Percentage of Total Expenses	Top Expenses	Approximate Equivalent in US Dollars
Accounting and Professional Services	12,147,500	1.51%		\$ 3,349.17
Airtime, Internet Data, and Computers	20,862,550	2.60%		\$ 5,751.46
Animal Care	21,996,000	2.74%		\$ 6,064.52
Comfort Dog Project	22,501,700	2.80%		\$ 6,203.94
Compound and Garden	2,668,000	0.33%		\$ 735.59
Education Programs	48,576,000	6.05%	4	\$ 13,392.89
Equipment Purchases	16,512,000	2.05%		\$ 4,552.52
Government Formalities and Licenses	32,125,669	4.00%		\$ 8,857.37
Guest House	12,795,000	1.59%		\$ 3,527.71
Improvements (Capital Improvements)	63,670,200	7.92%	3	\$ 17,554.51
Insurance (including staff medical insurance)	28,554,000	3.55%		\$ 7,872.62
Miscellaneous	2,727,500	0.39%		\$ 752.00
Mobilization	7,753,000	0.96%		\$ 2,137.58
Repairs and Facilities Maintenance	6,401,000	0.80%		\$ 1,764.82
Staff Compensation and Staff Expenses	330,040,400	41.07%	1	\$ 90,995.42
Supplies (Stationery and Cleaning)	9,264,000	1.15%		\$ 2,554.18
Transportation	33,120,600	4.12%	5	\$ 9,131.68
Veterinary Services and Supplies	123,009,750	15.31%	2	\$ 33,915.01
World Animal Day/World Rabies Day Programs	8,819,600	1.10%		\$ 2,431.65
TOTAL EXPENSES	803,544,469			\$221,545.20

ⁱ Meg Daley Olmert is the author of the book *Made for Each Other: The Biology of the Human-Animal Bond*, and the article describing the efficacy of The Comfort Dog Project in the peer-reviewed *Intervention Journal of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Conflict-Affected Areas*.

ⁱⁱ The amount sent by wire transfer from The BIG FIX (U.S. NGO/parent organization) was \$224,750, however, total fees of \$150 were deducted from the 2023 wire transfers by the intermediary bank as service fees.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ending cash on hand as of 30 June and 31 December was deposited to the shillings account for reconciliation purposes.

^{iv} Guardians are asked to contribute what they can afford to pay for veterinary services without causing a hardship on their families. Guardians set the amount and if they say they can afford nothing, they pay nothing regardless of the cost of services provided.

^v Volunteer fees are collected by The BIG FIX normally, however, a balance due by 2 volunteers was tendered in Uganda during 2023.