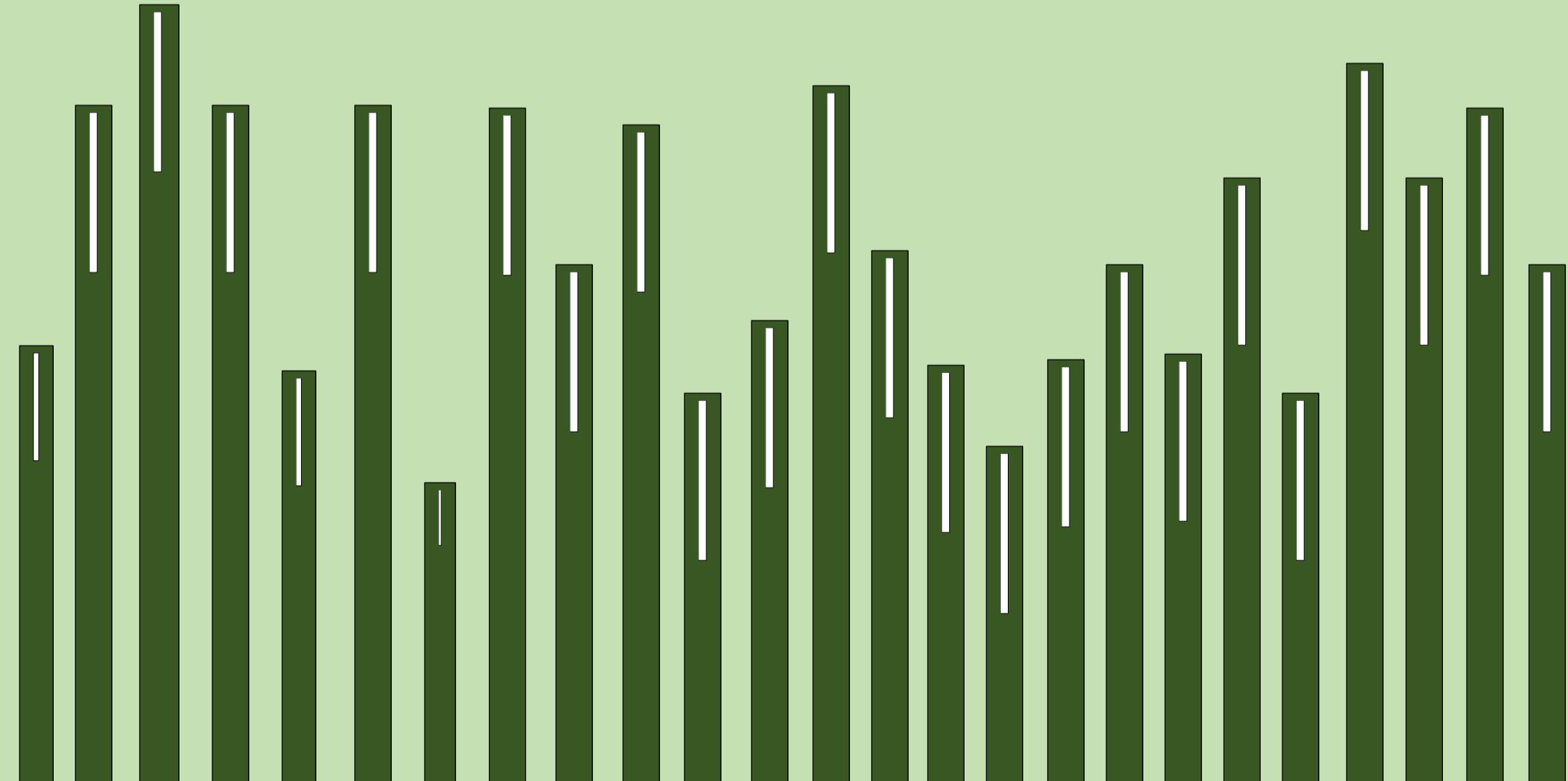




Innovation • Independence • Inclusion

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



## Team Leader's Message

The year 2024 has marked a defining chapter for Hodari Foundation. It has demonstrated the power of resilience, local innovation, and collective action in transforming refugee livelihoods.

One of our proudest achievements has been the launch of our mushroom spawn laboratory in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement once a vision, now a functioning hub at the heart of our mushroom value chain. It stands as proof that refugees are not merely recipients of aid, but capable contributors to food system transformation and national development.

Our recognition as winners of the WFP Food System Challenge 2.0, and representing East Africa at DTU NextGen in Copenhagen, affirmed the global relevance and credibility of our model. Programmatically, we expanded our reach through childcare feeding programs, regenerative agriculture demonstrations, and women's enterprise development responding holistically to community needs. We have seen children nourished, businesses launched, and dignity restored.

I draw daily inspiration from our farmers, especially women who continue to lead despite immense challenges. I am deeply grateful to our partners WFP, USAID, DANIDA, USCRI, Nourish All, and others whose support has made our work possible.

Looking ahead, our priorities include product certification, infrastructure expansion, and strengthening technical capacity in food science and nutrition. We are ready to scale what works and co-create the next generation of refugee-led solutions.

At Hodari Foundation, we are not only cultivating mushrooms, we are cultivating hope, ownership, and a future where refugee-led innovation thrives.



**Janvier Hafasha**

Team Lead,  
HODARI Foundation

## About

### HODARI Foundation

**Hodari Foundation** is a refugee-led, community-based organization working to transform food systems and improve livelihoods in displacement settings. Based in **Kyaka II Refugee Settlement in Western Uganda**, we empower vulnerable population particularly **women, children, and smallholder farmers** through sustainable agriculture, value-added food production, and inclusive market access.

Our work addresses the interconnected challenges of food insecurity, malnutrition, and limited economic opportunity in refugee communities. By strengthening local value chains and supporting enterprise development, we promote **self-reliance, dignity, and long-term resilience**.

### Our Approach

Hodari Foundation is rooted in the communities we serve. Our diverse team brings together expertise in **agriculture, food science, nutrition, social enterprise, and behavior change**, enabling us to design practical, locally relevant solutions with lasting impact. We are guided by principles of **sustainability, equity, and innovation**, with a strong commitment to regenerative food systems and improved nutrition outcomes.

A core pillar of our work is mushroom value addition, which offers a low-cost, high-impact opportunity for income generation and nutrition in displacement contexts. Our initiatives combine hands-on training, demonstration farms, enterprise incubation, and market linkages to ensure both social and economic returns.

We believe that even in the most challenging environments, people can thrive when equipped with the right tools, knowledge, and opportunities. Our work goes beyond aid it is a commitment to **agency, ownership, and transformation**.





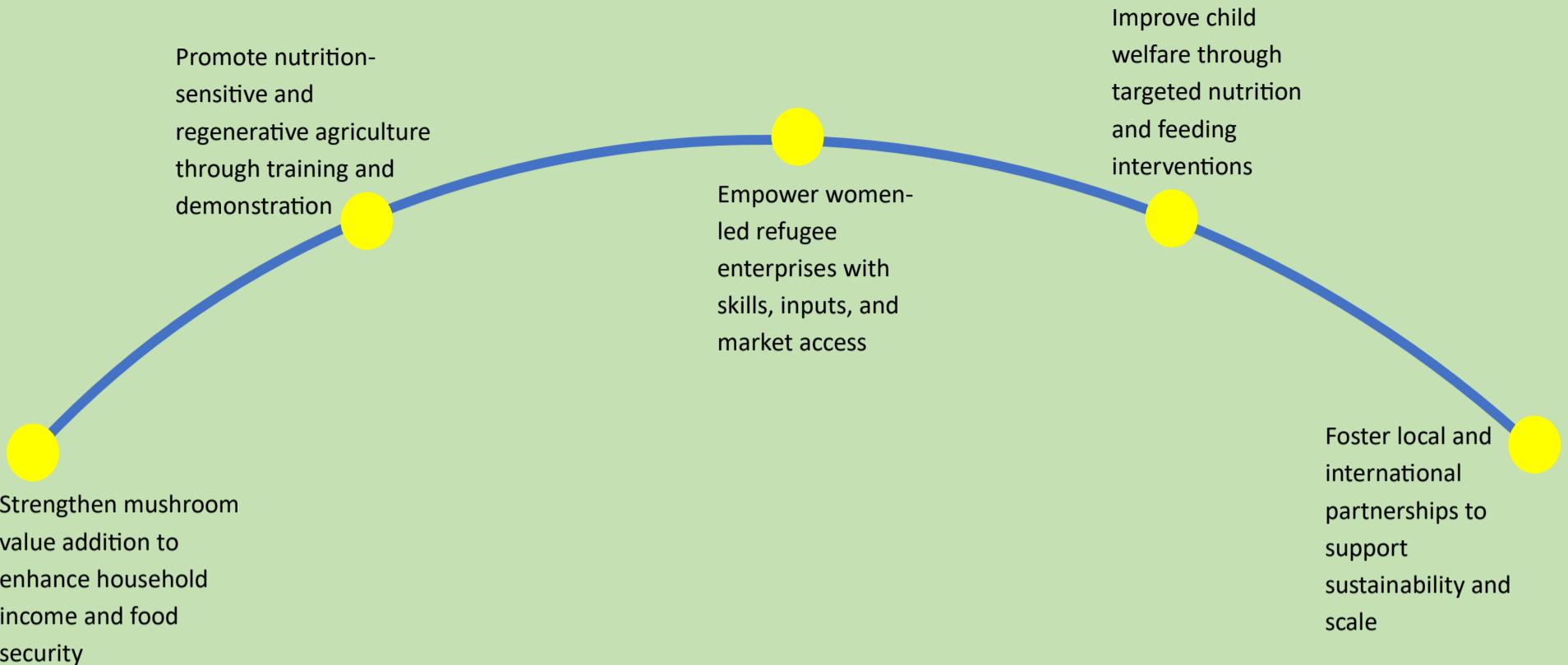
## Overview of the Year 2024

The year 2024 has been transformational for the Hodari Foundation. We made significant strides in infrastructure, programming, partnerships, and community impact. At the heart of our achievements was the launch of the Mushroom Spawn Laboratory in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement. This facility now allows us to produce high-quality mushroom spawn locally, reducing reliance on external suppliers and ensuring timely distribution to over 100 smallholder farmers.

We also secured international recognition by winning the WFP Food System Challenge 2.0 and representing East Africa at the DTU NextGen Learning Lab in Copenhagen, Denmark. These milestones positioned Hodari as a leading refugee-led innovation hub in the agro-food sector. Additionally, our mushroom value chain matured significantly, with new product lines including mushroom juice, jelly, wine, and porridge reaching new markets.

Strategically, we strengthened our operational capacity by expanding partnerships with global organizations like WFP, USAID, DANIDA, and USCRI. Locally, we participated in coordination and M&E platforms, ensuring alignment with national priorities. Our holistic approach, combining food innovation, regenerative agriculture, nutrition, and economic empowerment, reached hundreds of beneficiaries and laid a solid foundation for scalable impact in 2025.

# Strategic Objectives



## Memorable Moments in 2024

Hodari Foundation was honored to be selected among the five winning innovators of the prestigious WFP Food System Challenge 2.0. This recognition celebrated our pioneering efforts in using mushrooms to combat food insecurity, empower refugee communities, and create sustainable livelihoods. Winning this challenge provided both visibility and vital funding, enabling us to scale up our training, production, and value addition activities in Kyaka II.

In collaboration with the Danish Embassy in Kampala and WFP, Hodari Foundation had the privilege of hosting the official representative for Denmark's candidacy to the UN Security Council. The visit highlighted the role of refugee-led innovation in global development goals and reaffirmed Denmark's support for inclusive humanitarian action and grassroots resilience.

Hodari Foundation attended the Grand Bargain Country-Level Annual Meeting held at Mestil Hotel, Kampala. Under the theme "Advancing Localization and Sustainable Humanitarian Impact through Quality Funding and Accountable Partnerships," we contributed insights from our field experience and advocated for increased support for refugee-led initiatives.

We were selected to represent East Africa at the NextGen Learning Lab hosted by the Technical University of Denmark (DTU). This global platform connected us with fellow agripreneurs, scientists, and food system innovators. The experience enhanced our technical knowledge, exposed us to cutting-edge food innovation trends, and strengthened our capacity to bring back impactful practices to Uganda.

Hodari was featured as a panelist on World Children's Day 2024, hosted by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI). The panel discussed the theme "Addressing the Needs of Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Displaced Settings." Our involvement showcased the impact of our childcare and nutrition programs and reaffirmed our commitment to child protection.

We hosted visits from Ashden UK and the USCRI International Program Manager. These partners engaged directly with our farmer groups and saw firsthand the progress made in value addition, spawn production, and women's enterprise development. Their feedback was instrumental in shaping our future strategy.

A major infrastructure milestone was achieved with the construction and launch of a fully equipped mushroom spawn lab in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement. This lab allows for local production of quality spawn, reducing dependency on external sources and enabling consistent supply to over 100 trained mushroom farmers. It represents a leap toward self-sufficiency and sustainable production within the settlement.

We took part in the Humanitarian Energy Conference in Nairobi, engaging with global experts on clean energy access in displacement contexts. We shared our model of integrating solar drying technologies into the mushroom value chain and explored partnerships to expand energy solutions that enhance food security and income.

Our collaboration with DTU went beyond participation in events. We engaged in hands-on technical development aimed at improving our mushroom product lines through applied food science and sustainability research. This partnership is laying the groundwork for future product innovation and certification efforts.



# Our Programs and What we achieved

## Nutrition Research Program (Regenerative Agriculture)

Our Nutrition Research Program, under the broader regenerative agriculture initiative, is at the core of our sustainability and food security agenda. With support from Nourish All and Uganda Biodiversity Fund, we established a two-acre demonstration farm to serve as a living classroom for sustainable land management and climate-resilient agriculture.

In 2024, we trained 10 community-based mushroom farmers in spawn multiplication, a critical step in ensuring continuity and cost-effective supply within the refugee settlement. Additionally, we trained over 100 farmers in oyster mushroom cultivation, emphasizing soil restoration, composting techniques, and organic input use.

Our demo site has hosted over 350 farmer visits, where participants learned practical regenerative techniques such as mulching, crop rotation, water conservation, and integrated mushroom-vegetable systems.

## Food service Program

Our Foodservice Program targets institutional buyers such as schools, community kitchens, and training centers. We piloted integration of our mushroom products into group feeding programs, ensuring consistent demand for produce and improving the nutritional content of meals served.

Through tailored partnerships, we supplied mushroom flour for school porridge, mushroom jelly as a snack alternative, and fresh mushrooms for cooking in bulk kitchens. Early adopters have praised the flavor, shelf life, and affordability of our products.

This channel has proven critical in creating economies of scale while also supporting behavior change in institutional meal planning. We aim to formalize these supply relationships and scale them up, particularly after obtaining food safety certification.

## Nutrition Promotion (with WFP support)

In partnership with WFP, co-funded by DANIDA and USAID, Hodari Foundation implemented an integrated Nutrition Promotion Program aimed at improving food access and dietary diversity among refugee and host communities. This program centered on the production, consumption, and marketing of mushrooms, valued for their high protein, fiber, and micronutrient content.

We conducted nutrition awareness sessions, engaged farmers in recipe demonstrations, and collaborated with local health workers to promote the inclusion of mushroom products in everyday meals. Our mushroom porridge, in particular, gained popularity for its suitability among children, pregnant women, and the elderly.

Furthermore, we trained smallholder farmers to understand the nutritional value of their produce, enabling them to become advocates of food security within their communities. This behavior change component is key to fostering long-term adoption of nutritious, locally available foods.

## School Nutrition Program

The School Nutrition and Childcare Program continues to be a vital component of Hodari's social impact strategy. With generous support from Walters Ministries, we provided monthly hot meals to 150 children attending informal early childhood centers within the settlement.

In addition, we delivered food relief to 60 elderly households and supported 60 persons living with albinism with vital skin protection items, including long-sleeved clothes, sunglasses, and sunscreen lotion. These efforts helped address the often-overlooked nutritional and health needs of vulnerable populations.

The program is not just about feeding, it fosters community solidarity, dignity, and child protection, especially in households headed by single parents or grandparents. Our presence during the Day of the African Child included exhibitions and child-friendly learning activities, reinforcing our commitment to inclusive development for children.

## Retail Program

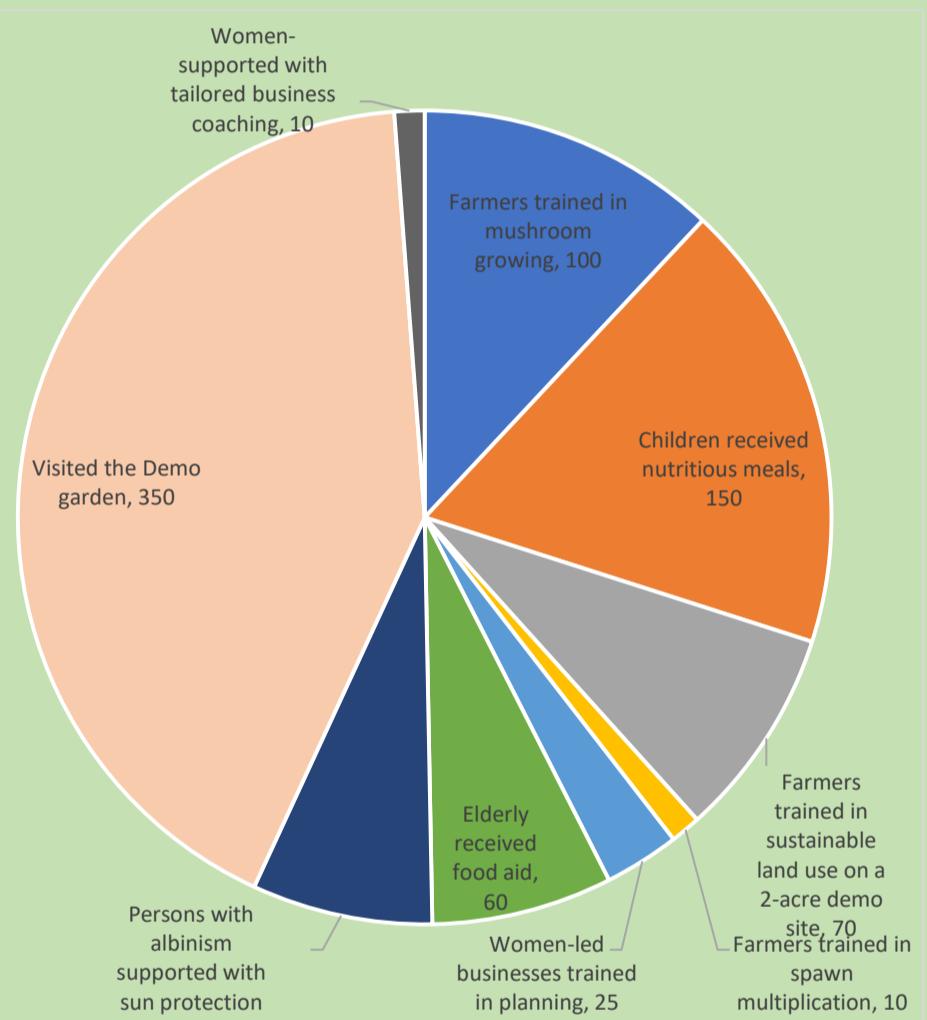
The Retail Program was a major driver of economic growth for Hodari Foundation in 2024–2025. We focused on developing and commercializing value-added mushroom products to meet the growing demand for nutritious and innovative foods.

Our product portfolio now includes mushroom juice, porridge flour, jelly, and wine, each formulated using locally sourced mushrooms and natural additives. We launched these products through pop-up retail stalls, farmers' markets, and pilot distribution channels within the refugee settlement and surrounding host communities.

To increase market uptake, we held product-tasting sessions and gathered consumer feedback to refine flavors and packaging. We initiated the process for UNBS certification, which will be critical for accessing formal retail outlets, supermarkets, and potentially export markets.

The retail program has opened a new stream of income for Hodari and participating women's groups, demonstrating how agricultural surplus can be transformed into market-ready, shelf-stable products that appeal to modern consumers.





## Conclusion

In 2024–2025, the Hodari Foundation has delivered transformative impact in Kyaka II, placing mushrooms at the heart of regenerative agriculture, nutritional resilience, and economic empowerment for refugee and host communities. By establishing a state-of-the-art spawn laboratory, training over 180 farmers in climate-smart techniques, and hosting more than 350 demonstration visits on our two-acre farm, we have equipped households with sustainable tools to restore soil, conserve water, and boost dietary diversity. Strategic partnerships with WFP, USAID, DANIDA, Nourish All, and the Uganda Biodiversity Fund coupled with prestigious recognitions such as winning the WFP Food System Challenge 2.0 have accelerated our mission to build durable, locally driven food systems that withstand climate challenges.

Our holistic approach extends far beyond production to embrace nutrition, dignity, and inclusion for the most vulnerable. Through vibrant awareness campaigns, recipe demonstrations, and institutional supply chains, mushrooms have evolved from an income crop into a daily source of high-quality protein and micronutrients, particularly for children, pregnant women, and the elderly. The School Nutrition and Childcare Program, supported by Walters Ministries, provided consistent hot meals to 150 young learners, food relief to 60 elderly households, and essential sun-protection kits to 60 persons living with albinism. Meanwhile, our Retail and Foodservice initiatives transformed surplus harvests into innovative, market-ready products porridge flour, juice, jelly, and wine generating vital revenue for women-led groups and enriching school and community meals alike.

As we enter 2025 with renewed momentum and new alliances including African Youth Action Network, COHERE, and World Vision, the Hodari Foundation is ready to scale ambitiously. Securing UNBS certification, constructing a modern food processing hub, and expanding childcare and women's enterprise support will unlock broader markets, deeper nutritional impact, and greater self-reliance. We are profoundly grateful to our donors, partners, farmers, and communities for their trust and collaboration. Together, we invite forward-thinking supporters, technical experts, and advocates to join us in cultivating a healthier, more equitable, and regenerative future for all.



### We appreciate our partners



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