

ubongo

building brains. building change.

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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UBONGO ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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What a year (and a decade) it's been! At Ubongo, we're often so busy pushing ahead that we forget to take time to reflect back on where we started and how far we've come. I want to take this opportunity to look back, and also tell you about our big plans for the future! Ubongo started in 2013 out of the shared passion and desire of a small group of artists and innovators in Tanzania to use media and technology to transform how kids learn. We were frustrated with the slow progress of educational reform in Africa, and couldn't help feeling that even some of the goals of the movement were somehow off the mark.

We wanted to take a more modern and kid-centered approach, so we just started creating content with the **goal of bringing kids in Tanzania fun, localised and top quality learning**, no matter what school they go to or background they come from... and we responded to those kids' reactions and feedback, evolving our content and our products to better fit their needs. In January 2014, with six kid-approved educational cartoon episodes in Kiswahili completed, we launched *Ubongo Kids* on TV in Tanzania.

We were optimistic but a bit unsure of what would happen. Thanks to modern technology, we could see immediately that people were excited. I still remember the exhilarating feeling as I paced in front of my laptop while the first episode showed, watching as tens, then hundreds, and then thousands of SMS messages flooded in from kids and parents all over the country. That day we knew we had something that could change not just kids' math skills, but also their approach to learning and life. Fast forward to 2019, and we've had tremendous growth, especially in the past year.

Our team has expanded to almost 50 people across 6 countries, our audience has topped 17 million viewers, and our brands have become truly multiplatform, with learners joining us across TV, radio, apps, interactive voice response and YouTube. But what brings people to Ubongo and pushes us to do our work each day is still the same: we're doing it for the kids. Ubongo looks very different these days, with a more Pan-African team and visionary group of new leaders who are taking us far beyond where we co-founders dreamed we could be.

But at the core it still feels the same. It comes down to that moment when a new hire sees the joyful reaction of a kid to their work--to a video they helped produced, or the launch of an app they raised the funding for, or to that first draft of a dub in a new African language, a language in which there has never before been a cartoon produced. That's what drives us as Ubongoers.

I have to admit, I'm a bit addicted to those moments, and I'm looking forward to so many more, as we move into a new decade and set our sights on even bigger goals for Ubongo. There are now over 500 million kids in Sub-Saharan Africa, and we are more determined than ever to empower and equip them to build a brighter future for themselves and this amazing continent.

We're setting ambitious goals, to make effective edutainment freely available to kids in all countries of Sub-Saharan Africa over the next 5 years, and scale to have reached and impacted over **60 million kids by 2025**. Our vision is for a new generation of kids in Africa who have grown up with Ubongo edutainment to be more equipped with the education, critical skills, and positive mindsets to change their own lives and communities for the better. Our job is to help lay the foundation for sustainable systems change on the continent, and for us that starts with the changemakers of the future: the kids!

With utu and upendo,



Nisha Ligon
Co-Founder, CEO
& Voice of Mama Ndege
and Bush Baby

Mission.

To use top quality, localised edutainment to help Africa's 500 million kids learn, and leverage their learning to change their lives.

Vision.

To equip Africa's next generation with the educational foundation, critical skills and positive mindsets to change their own lives and communities for the better.



• Ubongo 2025 Vision

THERE ARE NOW
500 MILLION
KIDS IN AFRICA

ALMOST
50 MILLION MORE
ARE BORN EVERY
YEAR



WE CAN SEE THIS AS
A PROBLEM



BUT IT IS ALSO AN
OPPORTUNITY



Our UBONGO vision is to equip Africa's next generation with the educational foundation, critical skills, and positive mindsets to change their lives and communities for the better!

ubongo



So we create top-quality, localised edutainment, and deliver it to African families via the accessible tech that they already have: TV, radio and mobile phones.

Where are we now?



Countries



Monthly Users



Languages



cost
\$0.07
per kid
per year

Our viewers have significant gains in:

- math & numeracy
- language & literacy
- cognitive development
- science & tech



of viewers' parents in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania say Ubongo's programs have improved their quality of life!

9 out of 10
★★★★★☆☆
average quality score from parents!

Where are we going?

By **2025** we aim to:

- Make free, localised edutainment accessible for kids in all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Have reached 60 million kids and helped them grow their cognitive, social emotional and life skills!
- Have grown an industry-leading Pan-African team and culture, spearheading a movement to create change for kids!

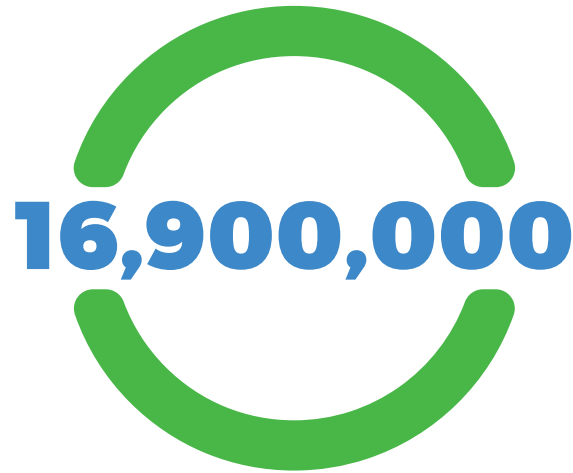


It's a big vision, so we're taking big steps to grow our leadership, our culture and our partnerships, so we can get there!

- **Key Achievements**



Countries



Monthly Users



Languages

• Impact




of parents say their kids quality of life improved 'very much' from watching Ubongo edutainment (TZ and KE).¹



90% of parents believe that Ubongo edutainment is helping their kids achieve their dreams and aspirations (TZ and KE).²

Research on *“The Impact of an Educational Media Intervention to Support Children’s Early Learning in Rwanda”* found that kids who watched *Akili and Me* in Kinyarwanda achieved significantly greater learning outcomes in pre-literacy and motor skills.³

Akili and Me viewers reach **12%** higher cognitive development than control groups.⁴

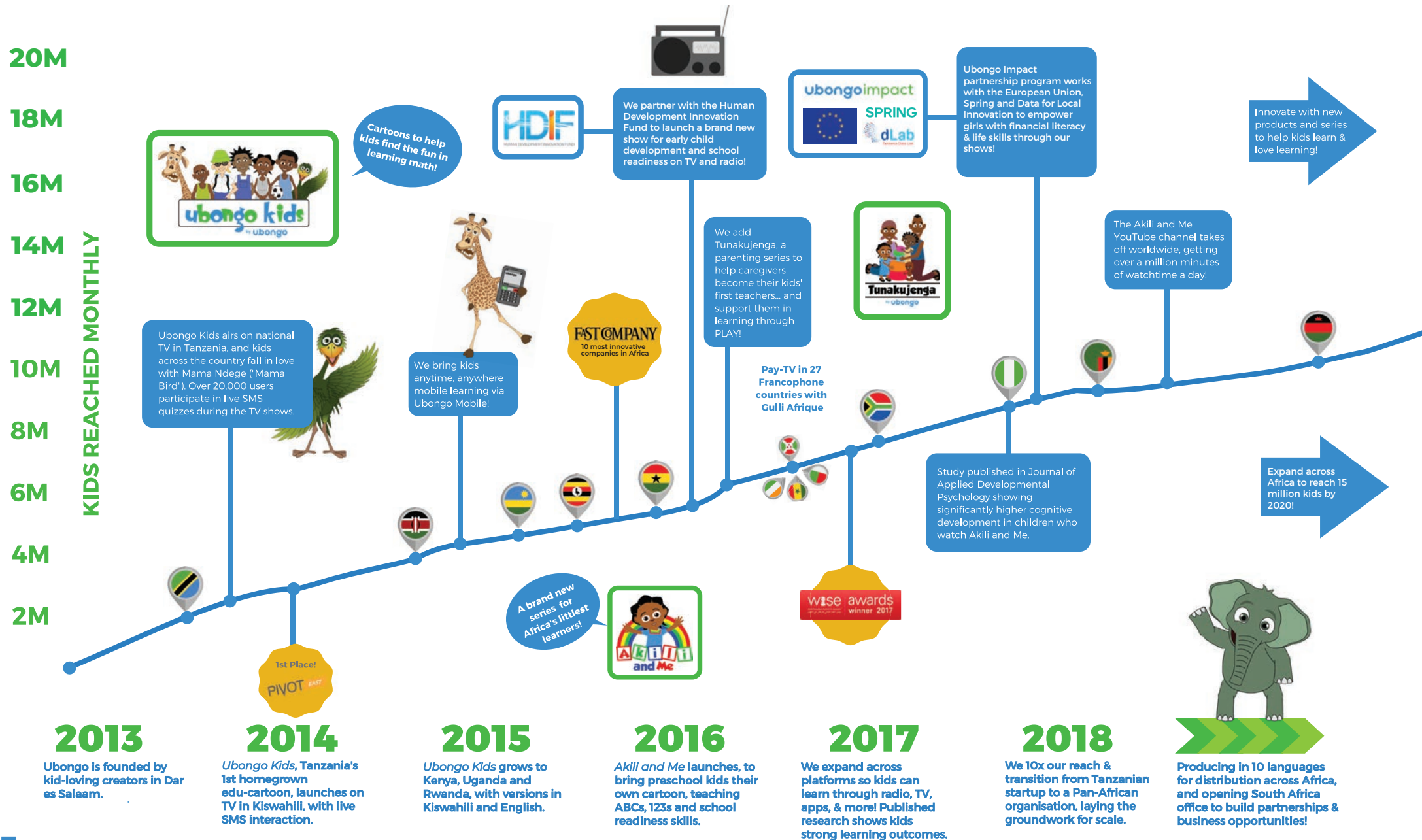
Data Source: Footnotes:

1) Lean Data Study conducted with audiences in Kenya and Tanzania, 2) Lean Data Study conducted with audiences in Kenya and Tanzania

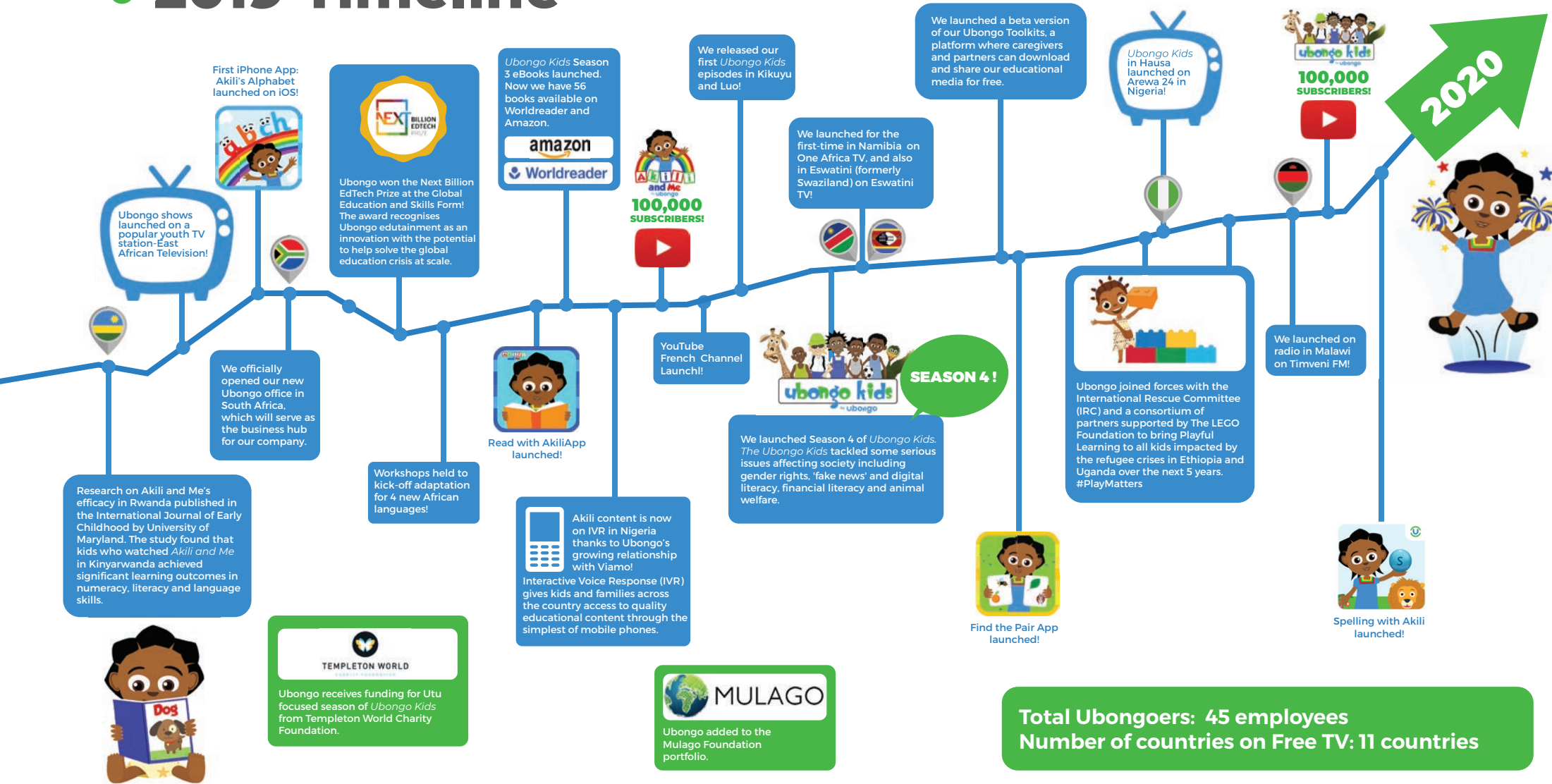
3) The Impact of an Educational Media Intervention to Support Children’s Early Learning in Rwanda (2019) International Journal of Early Childhood - Dina L G Borzekowski

4) Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology: A quasi-experiment examining the impact of educational cartoons on Tanzanian children- Dina L G Borzekowski

● Timeline and history



2019 Timeline



Total Ubongoers: 45 employees
Number of countries on Free TV: 11 countries

JAN-MAR

We truly transition to be a Pan-African company, bringing on team members from across the continent and registering another office successfully in South Africa.

APR-JUN

We developed strong partnerships which are helping us to scale our impact and reach. App partnerships with Enuma and Curious Learning helped us to quickly develop top quality learning apps, while expanding our partnership with Viamo brought anytime, anywhere Ubongo learning to many more families across Africa via basic mobile phones.

JUL-SEPT

Ubongo Kids Season 4 Launched! This was our most ambitious season yet, bringing in new topics including consent, negotiation skills, nutrition, more advanced STEM topics and so much more. We worked with more Ubongo Impact partners than ever this season, and brought a wide variety of social and behaviour change messages to our audience of millions of kids.

OCT-DEC

We launched our Ubongo Kids Quiz App on the Play Store! It took us almost 4 years to develop this interactive app where kids can learn and practice different science and mathematics concepts by going on a fun learning journey with a character from Ubongo Kids!

● PRODUCTS: Akili and Me

“This is my son’s favourite show, he is trying to count already! Thank you for this show! We love it!”

Parent on YouTube



Akili and Me is our pre-school TV and radio show that teaches 3 to 6-year-olds numeracy, pre-literacy, English as a second language, art, health and socio-emotional skills for **holistic early childhood education**.

We spent most of 2019 in production on our third season of *Akili and Me*, which premiered on TBC1 in Tanzania in mid January 2020. Season 3 of *Akili and Me* began by saying goodbye to our friend, the Swoopalulu. Friends in life come and go, but they will forever be in your hearts! Akili and her friends ventured into new learning territories with our brand new health and hygiene segment, and we took a more focused look on social interactions and skills like sharing in our social emotional learning segment. We’ve also focused on more engaging kids to more actively learn with our shows, be it dancing, shouting out the answers to help characters in need, or following along in activities for both exercise and mindfulness.

As we continue producing into 2020, we look forward to sharing Akili with our new friends across Africa, in brand new language adaptations and brand new counting and letter apps!

Exciting Research Findings

In 2016, a rigorous evaluation of *Akili and Me* in Kiswahili in Tanzania, conducted in partnership with the University of Maryland, showed that after a month of daily viewing of *Akili and Me*, viewers significantly outperformed control group by 8.2% in drawing skills, 9.7% in shape knowledge, 11.7% in number recognition, 24.0% in counting, and 12.5% in English language skills. But a big question for us after that was understanding whether these learning outcomes could still be achieved when adapting Akili and Me to other African languages. So we worked with UMD to replicate the impact study in Rwanda, with content adapted to Kinyarwanda. This research was published in early 2019 in the International Journal of Early Childhood, and showed that Rwandan children who watch *Akili and Me* significantly out-perform control groups in early learning skills including numeracy, literacy and language skills.

These exciting results have given us the confidence to more forward with many more language adaptations of *Akili and Me*, and we’re looking forward to bringing fun Akili-style learning in mother tongue to millions more kids in Africa in 2020.

Akili and Me: Digital Products in 2019

Akili and Me: Digital Products in 2019

“Perfect! I love this app. This app has helped my 18+ month old learn to identify letters and it’s (sic) phonic sounds! I love the interactive part where the child has to choose one of the different letters around to fit the correct letters in the middle. My baby is not even 2 yet and can identify, sound out, and give more than one example of every letter in the alphabet.”

Parent on Google PlayStore

2019 was a year of product releases, partnership growth and hitting milestones with our digital products. *Akili and Me's* house of digital products expanded to new platforms, utilised new technologies and took on new learning outcomes.

Through our exciting partnership with Viamo, Akili audio edutainment content can be listened to anytime and anywhere from basic mobile phones in Tanzania and Nigeria. We utilise Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology, through which families can call a toll free phone number and listen to Akili songs, stories and lesson. Akili's succinct audio lessons have been a hit on the platform in Tanzania and are steadily gaining traction among callers in Nigeria too!

Akili and Me mobile applications offer an opportunity for Kids to interact with the stories and characters that they know and love in new and innovative ways. We released four new Akili apps on the Play Store!

Find the Pair, Spelling with Akili and Pangilia Herfi na Akili are co-branded apps developed with **Enuma** to support early numeracy and literacy skills. **So Many Different Places** is the first title in the Read with Akili series of interactive created in collaboration with **Curious Learning**.

As well as launching new products, 2019 was also a year for exploration of new platforms and operating systems. We launched our first (paid) iOS app for users of Apple devices, and worked with partners to get content onto KaiOS, an operating system that brings "smartphone-like functionalities to affordable phones". By reaching new platforms we aim to bring more and more kids into the family of Akili and Me digital product users!

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Smashing Milestones

- *Akili and Me* expanded to free-to-air TV in 10 countries and reached over 12 million unique viewers!
- Both *Akili and Me* YouTube channels (English and Kiswahili) smashed the 100k subscriber mark!
- The number of unique users of Akili's Alphabet app (on the Google Play Store) surpassed 23,000!







● PRODUCTS: Ubongo Kids

"In our village, one teacher can have up to 9 subjects to teach. So the teacher doesn't have time to help individual students to understand. When we watch Ubongo Kids, we get a much clearer idea of the lesson being taught."

Boy from Tanzania



Ubongo Kids is our flagship TV and radio show which helps 7 to 14-year-olds learn **STEM and life skills** through fun, animated stories and catchy original songs. Topics include:



In 2019, the show reached almost **10.5 million families on free-TV in 11 African countries!** We also **launched Season 4 of Ubongo Kids**. Our beloved characters tackled some serious issues affecting society, from the dangers of our digital footprint to the importance of financial literacy and animal welfare.

We are particularly proud of our partnership with the European Union, with whom we co-produced a 3 episode mini-series covering consent, gender rights, and negotiation skills for the girl child.

In the consent episode, the *Ubongo Kids* character Kiduchu loves her unique spiky hairdo, and a lot of people like it too!

BUT they keep touching Kiduchu's hair without asking her - not only does this flatten her famous spikes, but it makes Kiduchu feel violated, frustrated and unhappy. She eventually learns about the concept of consent and teaches it to her friends and community.

We chose these topics after conducting extensive research with girls to determine which life skills were most important for them to learn to be able to overcome challenges related to gender-based violence and unemployment.

"People touch my hair, and now I say can you please stop, I don't like it. Thank you for teaching me"

Ubongo Kids Viewer from YouTube

We are excited to work with partners to produce even more episodes with critical social messages in 2020. Some key themes we are looking to tackle this year include disability awareness and inclusiveness, kids living in crisis zones, communicable diseases and more economic empowerment.

Research Shows Impact of Episodes

In 2018, we worked with SPRING to create 3 episode's on financial literacy. The episodes aired in 2019, and qualitative research was conducted in Tanzania and Kenya to see the effects of our episodes on girls' knowledge, attitudes and behaviour towards saving, budgeting and earning. The research found there were elements of each individual episode that encouraged wellbeing for girls by developing skills they can apply in their lives and increasing their confidence.

Ubongo Kids: Digital Products in 2019

"This app is very helpful to my younger sister. She can add (and) subtract all because of this app it's really educational. (T)hanks Ubongo God bless u we love u all"

Google Play Store review on Kibena and the Math Rats app. *Ubongo Kids Français* on YouTube!

In 2019 we took steps to broaden the digital reach of *Ubongo Kids* online as well as broadcast. The *Ubongo Kids* Kiswahili YouTube channel reached 100k subscribers. This year we also published our first *Ubongo Kids* content in French, Kikuyu and Luo on YouTube.

The eagerly-awaited ***Ubongo Kids Quiz app*** hit the Play store in December! The app facilitates kids to go on a journey with their favourite characters from the show, helping them to solve dilemmas by answering questions.

We also have 13 new ***Ubongo Kids season three*** ebooks on Amazon and WorldReader. We create ebooks in order to: make our content accessible across a wider range of devices, meet the need for relatable stories in African languages and facilitate shared reading experiences between parents and their kids.

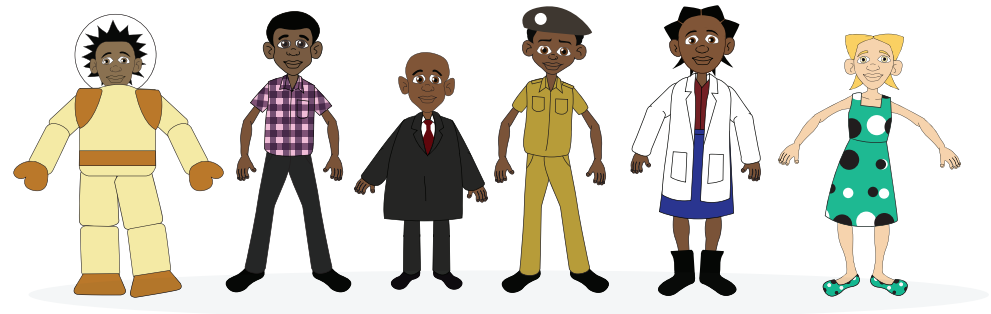
What's Next!

Season 5 of *Ubongo Kids* will be launching in mid-2020, and it will focus on the concept of **utu** (Kiswahili for shared humanity). We aim to be part of the larger conversation about deliberateness in developing utu, good character traits, and leadership skills. In addition to teaching 21st century skills and STEM topics, each episode of season 5 will be dedicated to one

main utu principle like self-efficacy, integrity, empathy and compassion.

Moreover, kids who watch the show will be encouraged to start utu clubs with their peers after each episode, and partake in utu activities like volunteering and recycling. In doing this, we aim to have the viewers of *Ubongo Kids* express and practice the principles of utu in their daily lives.

What topics and themes would you like to see covered on a future Ubongo Kids episode? Share your thoughts at: marketing@ubongo.org



● PRODUCTS: Akili Family - Tunakujenga



Akili Family (“*Tunakujenga*” in Kiswahili) is our caregiver brand that empowers parents and guardians to support children’s cognitive development and well-being at home, with public service announcements, videos, social media tips, worksheets and more

We grew our library of *Tunakujenga* content in 2019, as well as expanding the platforms through which we deliver parenting content to include online and interactive voice response (IVR). We added in-demand early childhood development topics like nutrition, hygiene and learning through play, and have taken steps to more actively engage caregivers in conversation around these topics via social media including Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp.

We also worked to adapt our *Tunakujenga* programs to English (branded “*Akili Family*” and will be releasing the content across Anglophone Africa throughout 2020, bringing our fun parent-child learning to millions more families.



“I have learned what am I supposed to teach, as a parent what are my roles to help my child.”

Father in Tanzania

In 2018-2019, Ubongo partnered with the International Rescue Committee to bring *Tunakujenga* videos and games to families in refugee communities. Ubongo’s *Tunakujenga* partnership with IRC promoted social and emotional learning for children in refugee camps by empowering caregivers in SEL through fun and engaging videos and worksheets around which parents held *Tunakujenga* clubs at their churches. The pilot project was focused on creating Kiswahili content for families in the Nyaragusu camp in Kigoma, Tanzania.

In addition to being distributed through clubs at churches, the *Tunakujenga* videos also aired on TV in Tanzania via TBC1.

We recognise that, like the IRC, a wide variety of development partners work closely with parents of young children and could benefit from using our *Akili Family* and *Tunakujenga* resources to supplement their programs. These videos, audio files and other materials are now available to partners for free through our Toolkits, so that anyone working with parents can access them and utilize them to support caregivers in providing their children with a strong start to life and learning.

Learn more about the Toolkits in the Case Study section.



“I was so tired of my daughter watching content on YouTube that never represented her identity! Thank you for creating a high quality, really engaging and educational platform for all of us!”

Parent from Instagram, USA

● PARTNERSHIPS FOR BUILDING CHANGE: Meet our Funders

We rely on our partners' support to bring Ubongo's mission to life. Their collective support through grants, co-production partnerships and distribution allows us to create truly transformative edutainment that can reach millions of children in Africa and beyond.

We are deeply grateful for the generous support of our current sponsors and partners, without whom our work would not be possible!

2019 Core Funders



HDIF (Human Development innovation Fund) funds the creation of *Akili and Me* content, impact evaluation with the University of Maryland, as well as the development of our Ubongo Toolkits: an innovative multimedia platform that can increase the access of content to more children via caregivers and ECD stakeholders to improve the health, wellbeing and development of 3.5 million under-six year-olds who we wouldn't be able to reach through TV.



Grand Challenges Canada® Grands Défis Canada

Grand Challenges Canada (Saving Brains) is funded by the Government of Canada and other partners, and funds innovators in low- and middle-income countries and Canada. Saving Brains is a project that supports bold ideas to improve early brain and child development globally. With their funding, we are launching *Akili and Me* in new markets across Africa, adapting our content into more local languages, and doing an impact evaluation study with the University of Maryland on learning outcomes for the adapted content.



TEMPLETON WORLD CHARITY FOUNDATION

Templeton World Charity Foundation aims to provide scientific breakthroughs and practical tools relating to the search for meaning, purpose, and truth. They are funding season 5 of *Ubongo Kids* which is centered around the concept of Utu 'Kiswahili for shared humanity'. With their support and the University of California Berkeley, we are launching 'utu clubs' where kids can come together and discuss and practice utu-related activities like volunteering.



JBJ Foundation seeks to contribute to lasting improvements in the lives of the world's poorest. They are supporting us to adapt content to the Chichewa language for Malawi, and pilot models for using Ubongo edutainment to support teachers and students in schools.



Mulago Foundation “finds and funds high-performance organisations that tackle the basic needs of the very poor.” Ubongo CEO Nisha Ligon participated in their two year Rainer Arnhold Fellows Program which supports social enterprise leaders in scaling their impact. Their support and guidance has helped us clarify our vision and strategy for scale and long term impact. We are delighted to have been added to the Mulago Foundation portfolio in 2019.



Imaginable Futures, a venture of Omidyar Group, is a global philanthropic investment firm that believes learning has the power to unlock human potential and works across public, private and social sectors to bring to life transformational ideas for learners of all ages. Imaginable Futures supports the creation, adaptation and growth of Akili and Me across Africa.

2019 Ubongo Impact Partners

UBONGO IMPACT is a service offering that allows leading development changemakers to use Africa's favourite cartoons to deliver life-changing messages to millions of kids across the continent. In 2019 we had a couple of exciting Ubongo Impact partners out of Kenya.

We received a grant from the **Open Society Initiative for East Africa (OSIEA)** to create an episode to help kids understand and empathise with people with disabilities. As well as incorporating Kenyan sign language in the narrative of the story for our deaf viewers.

We also partnered with **Scania East Africa**, the regional distributor for premium buses and coaches, who as part of their CSR, wanted to reach as many kids as possible with **road safety tips** and messages, as well as pollution and its adverse impact on the environment and contribution to **climate change**.

In 2019, we premiered our *Ubongo Kids* episode on donkey rights and **animal welfare**, which was co-created with **The Brooke**. They are an organisation whose goal is to improve the lives of working mules and donkeys, and to educate families in East Africa on the importance of donkeys, not just as a source of income support but as **an animal with rights**. The hope is that by educating kids through Ubongo edutainment, they will in turn inform their caregivers and also grow up to have more positive relationships with animals.





● CASE STUDY: Deepening engagement and learning through adaptation



"Muraho, Bonjour, Moni, Wimwega, Ber, Bawo ni, Sanu, Habari, Hello"

There's something undeniable about being greeted and spoken to in a language that you know and understand. In fact, various studies by UNESCO highlight the benefits of instruction of kids in their mother tongue or what we at Ubongo like to call their heart language - a child's first and usually more familiar language.

These benefits include increased likelihood to enroll and succeed in school, and increased likelihood of parents involvement in and communicating with teachers about their child's learning. Indeed, research has found that skills and concepts gained in the learner's mother language don't need to be re-taught when they transfer to a second language. This is why the adaptation of our content is critical to achieving higher learning outcomes and better engagement with kids.

In 2019, we were able to start adapting and dubbing *Akili and Me* in 3 new languages (Hausa, Yoruba and Kinyarwanda), we also started working on adapting the show into Chichewa and are looking forward to having a completed season in 2020. *Akili and Me* season 2 is currently being translated into 6 languages; Luo, Yoruba, Hausa, Kinyarwanda, and Kikuyu. We look forward to having *Akili and Me* season 1 airing across the continent in these different languages. Last year, we also had a research study done in Rwanda to evaluate *Akili and Me* as an educational media intervention.

The two-week intervention involved primary school students (mean age=7.1 years) who were randomized into two groups (intervention and comparison group). *Akili and Me*, had not started broadcasting on television in Rwanda, at the time in which the intervention started and the episodes were reformatted using Kinyarwanda to allow for full participation from the kids. The first few minutes of every episode presented a Kinyarwanda-speaking narrator to guide children. The content comprised 4–6 introduced English vocabulary words throughout the storyline, letter-identification songs, fine motor skills for drawing and writing, story time, and numeracy. Numeracy was presented in both English and Kinyarwanda languages. Findings from the study showed that kids who watched *Akili and Me* in Kinyarwanda achieved significantly better learning outcomes compared to kids who watched other cartoons for the same duration of time. This means that kids across Africa can still learn from our edutainment when we adapt them into local languages.

We keep investing in the African child so that they can have all the tools they need for success. Adapting and localising our content for the kids in Africa is one of the many ways we can invest in them. As we do this, we believe and are confident that the next generation will go on to create a better Africa for everyone. So, to all who keep this adaptation process going in one way or another we say;

"Murakoze cyane, Merci, Zikomo kwambiri, Niwega, Erokamano, E še o, Na gode, Asante, Thank you."



“The fact that it allows kids transition in learning Kiswahili and English, and because it is locally relevant.”

Parent from Facebook, Kenya



● **CASE STUDY:** Equipping the circle of care with the tools to support kid's well-being and development

Rehema Salum is a mother-of-one and businesswoman living in Dodoma, Tanzania. She downloaded the Akili's Alphabet mobile app for her daughter, Brightness who is 3 years old, and used it to entertain and engage her. Now, Brightness can count to 20 in Kiswahili and sing along to *Akili and Me* songs. This surprised Rehema as she thought her baby was 'just having fun', and never expected her to learn in the process.

From the very start, when we launched *Ubongo Kids* in 2014, we've been committed to understanding caregivers' perception and relationship to their kids learning. Our co-founder Nisha Ligon used to call at least 3 random Ubongo Kids viewers' parents every weekend and ask them about their challenges, needs, and experiences. The insights we gained, inspired us to create *Akili and Me*, as we heard again and again that parents didn't know what to do to support their kids education (other than paying school fees) and to help their youngest kids learn before they started school. In addition to the lack of tools to support their kids' education, many parents also had misperceptions about how and when kids start learning.

“At what age does your child start learning?”

For the past 3 years, we've been asking parents in Tanzania this question via nationally representative surveys. Only 13% of parents believed that kids start learning from the womb. Most believe that kids start learning at the age of 2, “when my child starts responding back” and many others believe that a child only starts learning when they reach school age.

90% of human brain development happens before the age of 5. If parents are not equipped or aware of the ways that they can support their kids' development in these critical years of life, then we are already setting up the next generation for failure from the very start.

Ubongo Toolkits

Toolkits are the solution to the problem “How might we bring localised edutainment to the hardest to reach and most vulnerable children?”

We started with the pilot of *Ubongo Kids Club* with support from the Development Innovations Ventures where kids could come to watch *Ubongo Kids* and *Akili and Me* in their community video showing centres (video bandas). We tested various models to develop a cost-effective direct-to-community approach, however, we realised that shifting the focus to delivering Ubongo's educational content to stakeholders in Early Childhood Development (ECD); partners, social workers, education practitioners who implement programs in the community is the scalable way to reaching more children.

With the support of the Human Development Innovation Fund (HDIF), we've spent the last 2 years testing and developing the Ubongo Toolkits. Our toolkits are localised educational resources for kids aged 0 - 14, covering various topics from early numeracy, pre-literacy, and social and emotional skills to engineering, science and technology. The resources cover a range of media including video, audio and printables.

They are made available to caregivers, practitioners in ECD keeping the end-user needs in mind (e.g. file size of videos range from 2MBs - 20MBs only, files are named both English and Kiswahili etc) for ease of share and usability. More so we have also developed guides on how the materials can be used in different settings (classrooms, teacher training). We distribute our toolkits to through a web platform, Flash drives/USB, Google drive and WhatsApp which will be further developed as use-cases on how partners can reach children with fun localised educational content!

The Ubongo toolkits will officially launch in March 2020, at the Building Brains Conference. The 2-day event will bring together diverse stakeholders in early childhood development to join forces and kickstart a new movement for early learning in Tanzania and across Africa. Post-launch, we will continue to test, learn and improve the toolkits as we get feedback from caregivers and partners in Tanzania, and beyond.

We will be distributing the toolkits via partners working in different communities across Africa, and can directly reach families and equip them with educational resources. We're also going to have some instructional documents (how to share content, different ways to use resources etc) as part of toolkits to help partners and caregivers to navigate the platform, use and share the resources effectively.

Since 2014, we've built two reputable brands, *Ubongo Kids* and *Akili and Me* that reach 17 million families across Tanzania, and beyond.

Beyond creating fun learning content for kids, we've used these shows to change parents mindsets around how kids learn and their role in the kids education. We intend to continue to use these platforms to promote positive parenting, play-based learning and overall caregiver engagement. And the Ubongo toolkits will enable other parents like Rehema to have access to free supplementary learning materials that support their kids development and learning.

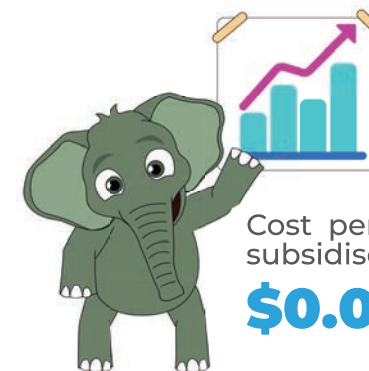
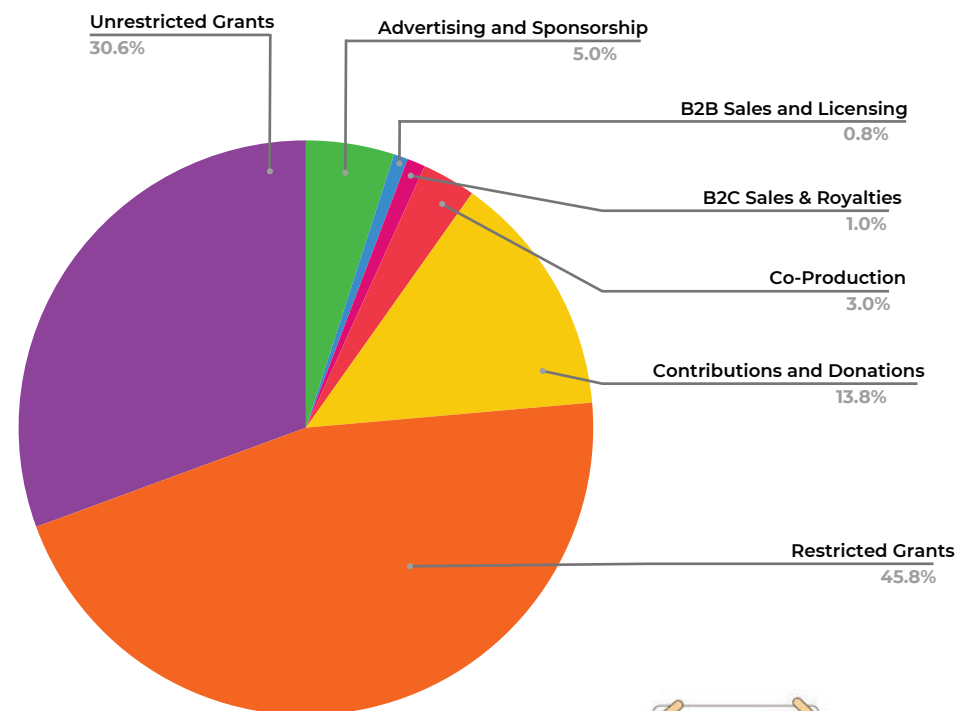


● Financial Overview

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

INCREASE OF REVENUE IN 2019	37%
INCREASE OF EXPENSES	55%
INCOME STATEMENT (2019)	Amount
INCOME	\$123,143
LESS COST OF SALES	\$3,545
GROSS PROFIT	\$119,598
OTHER INCOME	\$1,691,974
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,815,116
EXPENSES	
BENEFITS & STAFF WELFARE	\$64,515
CONTRACTORS & CONSULTANTS	\$229,315
FINANCE & INTERESTS	\$5,015
OPEX	\$302,638
PERSONNEL	\$604,141
PROJECT TOOLS & EQUIPMENTS	\$30,983
SALES AND MARKETING	\$50,541
TAXES	\$1,418
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,278,536
DEFERRED SURPLUS	\$536,580

INCOME BREAKDOWN BY SOURCE



Cost per child subsidised by grants
\$0.076

“I joined the Ubongo’s WhatsApp group through which we would get one video per day and it was great but I needed more because I homeschool my children. In the tablet I have, I went to Ubongo’s office where they transferred all localized content that I can use to teach my children and for them to enjoy learning on their own!”

Parent on WhatsApp Group



● **OUR VALUES:** Ubongoers Principles



UBUNIFU
(Innovation)



UPENDO
(Love)



USTAHIMILIVU
(Grit)



UTU
(Humanity)

Ubongoers Principles are our core values as an organisation. They are our guiding tools that inform how we approach our work, make decisions, and grow as an organisation. Since we started Ubongo in 2013, the company has grown from just 5 people working together on a shared desk to 42 employees across 7 countries. As of 2019, we have Ubongoers based in Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Malawi, Rwanda, and the U.S! As we continue to grow, one of our biggest priorities is ensuring that we maintain our core values across different teams in diverse markets - that every Ubongoer is committed to 'doing it for the kids', isn't afraid to 'fail fast, and fail forward', and is equipped to 'innovate and simplify'.

“Growing up in the U.S., as a six (6) year old Congolese refugee in Dallas, TX, the concept of embracing your difference wasn’t necessarily really one my siblings and I received. Instead, we were met by the push to quickly assimilate - to swiftly blend into a new national identity, in order to participate fully in our new country’s life. From simplifying the pronunciation of our last name to considering re-spelling of given first names, over time this became damaging to my confidence and I developed a pessimistic mindset about my potential and those around me. However, with age I have found ujasiri - courage, to work hard and overcome.

What motivates me to work, is knowing that we ‘do it for the kids.’ The opportunity to help Ubongo empower the next generation of kids in Africa to not have the same struggles that I had let’s me know, my unique personal story and experience was worth every moment in order for countless more triumphs to be had. By doing so, I can’t help but wonder how much we will experience and accomplish together as a team and with our partners’ -- building on the success of the past 5 years, and Ubongo’s investment in a global business team and our overall strategic vision for the next few years.”

Mariel Kanenene
Strategic Partnerships Lead



● **NEXT STEPS:** Big Audacious Goals for 2020

It's been a great year, we have had some successes and challenges too, but it was all worth it. We started the year strong at the the Global Education Skills Forum in Dubai where we won the Next Billion Edtech Prize! For us it was an affirmation that our innovation has the potential to reach the next billion kids with top quality education. And with that, we went on to produce new, improved content, distributed it widely across the continent, and launched broadcast in new countries including Malawi, Eswatini and Namibia to reach over 17 million kids in Africa.

As the new year speeds by, we are excited about the endless possibilities that lay ahead. By the end of this year we hope to be reaching 20 million kids on the continent with 9 languages! And more than ever before we are determined to be more inclusive of kids who are marginalised, in order to ensure they are not left behind. In partnership with Lego Foundation and the International Rescue committee (IRC), we are joining efforts on the PlayMatters project to ensure kids and their families affected by the refugee crisis in East Africa get access to playful learning.

While we work to achieve significant impact, we also want to make sure it is long lasting, which is why we are addressing Africa's challenges more holistically by paying special attention to our shared fundamental values. In everything we do, we are keeping a strong focus on the concept of Utu "shared humanity and Leadership" in Kiswahili.

Utu, Ubuntu, Unhu, uMunthu is a concept embraced by many cultures and languages across Africa.

We are launching *Ubongo Kids* season 5 with UTU at the forefront of everyone's minds, to ensure that kids grow up embracing and living out these values.

We know brand awareness and loyalty is necessary to achieve great success like we have in Tanzania, and therefore, we plan to invest resources to ensure other countries too such as Nigeria, Kenya and Malawi know, love and learn from our content. Localisation is essential in achieving the depth of love and engagement, which is why we will launch content in Yoruba, Hausa, Kikuyu and Chichewa in respective countries.

And finally, as we pursue our goal of reaching and impacting 60 million kids in Africa by 2025, this year, we plan to test new revenue models in attractive markets such as the US and operationalise those that prove to be consistent, reliable and secure. The future is incredibly exciting as we continue to bring African Edutainment to Africa and the world!



Christina Bwana
**Chief Product Officer &
 Voice of Mama Akili and
 Teacher Molota**



Doreen Kessy
**Chief Business Officer
 & Voice of Ngedere**

Acknowledgments



To all of our supporters, partners and users who helped us make 2019 an amazing year, we as Ubongoers would collectively like to say THANK YOU! Our team is getting ever bigger and we now have our office in Johannesburg, South Africa to prove it! From this office we intend to spread the vision of our Business Development across all of Africa!

We would like to acknowledge our board members Mbwana Ally, Leslie Jump, Stephen King, Nicole Klassen, Samuel Mugacha, Johnpaul Barretto, Shama Kheraj and Faraja Nyalandu for the continued commitment to what we do and being a shining light when guidance is sought. As always, no acknowledgement is complete without thanking all of our hardworking and dedicated Ubongoers, both new and old. Each and every one of you repeatedly demonstrate your passion and devotion to what we do and always put your all and more in our work. We'd also like to thank the Omidyar Network, Human Development Innovation Fund, Grand Challenges Canada, The LEGO Foundation, JBJ Foundation, Mulago Foundation, Templeton World Charity Foundation, the Lamsam family and all of our contributors for their generous funding to help us grow, and increase our impact to more and more kids year after year so that their lives and the lives of their communities can be changed! We'd also like to thank our many Ubongo Impact co-production partners, who have helped us bring exciting new learning and life-changing messaging to kids across Africa! It's been a pleasure working with you all, and we are so excited for more partnerships to come!

We of course want to also thank the amazing Ubongo parents and caregivers, who have direct impact in giving their kids a better life. We truly appreciate you inviting us and our fun learning, characters and music into your homes, lives and hearts and are truly honoured to be partnered with you. Of course everything we do we do it for the kids and therefore no acknowledgement is truly complete without thanking the kids who are the reason why we are here working hard to facilitate change in their lives and working with them as they inspire us. Their never ending journey for knowledge and joy always brings a light to our lives and helps us drive each other to always want to do better as we always remember that we are doing it for the kids! We are proud to be part of your journey and cannot wait to see what the future of this world will be as you all grow to lead it!

Ubongoers 



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