Violence at Home, Violence on the Streets, Who Will Protect Them? Are We Doing Enough?

By Damon Wamara
Who we are:

- A Christian NGO; dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of street children, abandoned babies and high-risk slum families.

- Started by Rita and William Nkemba in August 2002
Our Vision:

A society where every child has a chest to rest his head on and a place to call home.

- It’s possible -
• 1,800 have received various forms of support in their families. (31st Dec 2019).
Reached 7,140 children.
STATUS OF CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREETS IN UGANDA:

• 10,000 street connected children in Uganda
• An enumeration Report by Retrak found that there are 15,000 children living & working on the streets in just 4 districts of Kampala, Jinja, Iganga and Mbale.
• Unknown numbers in other districts
FORMS OF EXPLOITATION

1. Begging for an income.
2. Sexual exploitation
3. Trafficking for Organs, sacrifice ...
4. Cheap labour i.e. House girls/boys, scarp collections
Some of the Child Rights Abuses:

- Children on the streets are not part of the census and are not planned for.
- Children are used for Child labour.
- Brutal arrest of the children and they are kept for more than 24 hours.
- 32 children were arrested in December 2019 and charged with the offence of common nuisance.
- Police are the complainants but never turn up to testify in court.
SOME OF THE CHILD RIGHTS ABUSES:

• Probation officers are rarely involved at all stages.

• Children continue to complain of being beaten on the streets by LDU’s, Police and Military Police and the little monies they make are are taken.
SOME OF THE CHILD RIGHTS ABUSES:

• No rehabilitation facilities to handle the numbers of children. i.e. only Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre built for children in conflict with the law

• These children are victims of Child Trafficking forms of exploitation. Including Commercial sex exploitation, child Sacrifice, forced street begging…
Children are regarded as outcasts. A lost cause and some can not be integrated.

Domestic violence at homes forcing the children to leave. (2019 VAC reports that there are more children violated at home)
WHAT DWELLING PLACES IS DOING ABOUT:

- Rescue
- Rehabilitation
- Reconciliation & Reintegration
- Family Empowerment
- Education
- Prevention, Advocacy and Sensitization
We conduct a variety of activities to build relationships with the homeless children living on the streets and rescue them for care and support.
166 children received temporary accommodation, food, catch-up education, medical care, counseling, emotional and spiritual nourishment in 2018 at our 2 Transitional Rehabilitation Homes.
Health:

Spiritual welfare – children reading their Bibles:

Creative catch-up Education:

Meal time:
Caption: Mother and Daughter Reunited after months of separation
Joyful moments during reconciliation and reintegration
We Provided ongoing education support services for 431 children and youth in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>#Boys</th>
<th>#Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>219</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Support</th>
<th>#Boys</th>
<th>#Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial support only (follow up)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>71</td>
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Overall Totals: 213, 218, 431
46 families received trainings and inputs, and supported to form VSLAs for economic empowerment in 2018 to enable them sustainably care for their resettled children.
We organized 2 youth camps, 2 Music, dance & drama competitions, 2 debate and 1 quiz competitions to empower youth and children to advocate and be agents of change on child protection issues in 2018.
Children discussing their needs during one of the 2018 children’s camp.

My needs (What are my needs?)
- What are they?

MY NEEDS
- Food
- Shelter
- Education
- Friends
- Clothes
- Health
- Safe water
- Purpose
- Love
- Peace
- Care
- Security
- Things we cannot live without.
Children using drama to call on policy makers to protect them (children) from abuse and exploitation during the 2018 Music, Dance & Drama competitions.
Partnerships, Advocacy and Awareness

We organize/partner with other CSOs and Private Sector in organized media and public awareness campaigns against child abuse, exploitation, trafficking and unsafe movement under our Journey of Hope #SchoolsNotStreets Campaigns.
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

• Government needs to come up with a holistic program that is well funded to address the issue on street connected children.
  ➢ Prevention activities
  ➢ Reintegration activities

• Close down the know areas that are openly exploiting these children.
• Arrest and prosecute the persons behind the trafficking of children and exploiting them
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE:

• Building of safe guards at the source.

• MGLSD needs to commit to the UN general comment 21 on children in street situations
The General Comment number 21 provides governments with authoritative guidance on how to ensure they offer the same human rights protection to children in street situations as any other child within their jurisdiction. This is the first time that children in street situations have received this level of recognition, and have been explicitly recognized as rights holders under the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). The objectives of the general comment are:
Our Partners:
Networks and Global Alliances:
Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN)
Children at Risk Action Network (CRANE)
Consortium for Street Children (CSC)
Girls’ Advocacy Alliance (GAA)

Cultural Institutions: Buganda Kingdom

Our Supporters:
THIS COULD BE YOUR CHILD