

New Beginnings for Kampala Street Kids



It is estimated that around 10,000 children are living on the streets in Uganda. The conditions they live in have to be seen to be believed – they are truly horrendous. They are often hungry, abused, mistrustful, and haunted with a lack of hope.

For the last four years, we have been supporting a Kampala organisation, Mission for All (MIFA), to run a home for ex-street kids. The home is known as the Ebenezer Club, and is home for up to 30 boys who were found living on the streets.

We have assisted MIFA as they and the boys lived through the harsh reality of moving from street living, to living in a home. Some boys ran away, some stole from the home, and one of the children, Musa Muyambi, died of AIDS at age 12. It is a hard road for all of them and a tribute to both the boys and the MIFA staff that they now have a home full of explosively happy kids.

Over the years we have supported MIFA to develop this home, from initially living in a pretty poor quality house in the suburbs, to now living in a much larger home further out in the bush. We have seen the boys move from unhappy, serious, surly young guys who were wondering whether street life was better than having to live with rules and order, to laughing, successful, and energetic young men.

In 2005, every one of them passed their grade at school – three of them topped their classes, and six others were in the top ten of their classes. That's not bad for kids who have missed years of schooling due to street living.

Each boy has a vegetable patch to help grow fruit and veggies for the home – they are green thumbs with cassava, maize, beans, pineapples, and bananas.

Depending on what the boys have needed each year, we have funded variously – house rental, rabbits, chickens and chick feed, a giant water tank, musical instruments, food for the kids, school text books, paint and mosquito nets, outings to the zoo, an outdoor kitchen, and even a ghetto blaster and TV.

Want to 'adopt' this home of fantastic boys, through ISIS? Maybe your family, place of worship, school or office would like to commit to supporting them for a full year? The costs will start at around US\$15,000 depending on their needs. Email leo@isis.bm if you would like further information.



“Things started changing for me. I was given warm clothes, a mattress, blanket, bed sheets, and warm meals”



Claudy Salum Tells His Story

Claudy is one of the boys at the home for ex-street kids in Kampala. Here he tells his story to Reverend James Ssebagala, Executive Director of the organisation

“My name is Claudy Salum and I am ten years old. I came from Congo, Goma village, because of war, my sister and I ran to Uganda as refugees and left our parents there, so we don't know whether they are still alive. I can't even trace the year our escape did happen, because I was still so small by that time.

While in Uganda my sister got married to a man who was working as a fisherman at Gaba landing site. I used to go with my brother-in-law for fishing, as there was no money to take me to school. While with my brother-in-law, we used to stay in one small room the three of us. Later my sister decided to take me to her mother-in-law at Kalerwe, one of the townships of Kampala, with the intention of creating an opportunity for me to go to school, but the old woman had many grandkids to look after and she had no job. Therefore feeding and rent were among the problems. And we used to sleep on one mattress, seven of us, just lying our heads on that one mattress and the rest of our body parts on mats. We could also spend many days without proper meals.

I joined the nearby school that had only two classes – Primary One and Two. I joined P1 and used to reach school late because I had to first collect rubbish for our neighbours, fetch water, clean their shops for 300 shillings (6 cents) or at times I could be paid in

terms of food like a plate of rice or a cup of tea. Life was not good for me because I was punished at school for arriving late.

I dropped out of school when I was in Primary 2 and began moving around Kalerwe Market looking for money from morning to evening each and every day. We used to steal and work for people in order to get some things to eat.

In 2005 I was interviewed and selected to join the Ebenezer Club. Things started changing for me. I was given warm clothes, a mattress, blanket, bed sheets, and warm meals, breakfast every day and I also get free medical treatment when I get sick! In the second term of 2005 I got enrolled at Wampeewo Day and Boarding Primary Kasangati in Primary One.

Now I am in P2 and doing well at school. I feel good and thank God plus MIFA for all that has been done for me. During the last December holidays of 2005, our Uncle tried to trace my mother-in-law as well as my sister, and when they saw me grown, and changed, they praised God and appreciated the mighty work performed by the staff, MIFA, and our beloved sponsors. Now at Ebenezer I feel loved and have a belonging. My prayer is that I may study and get a job that could sustain me.”