



A Bumper Crop in Uganda!



ChildVoice students sorting a portion of their massive maize (corn) harvest.

Back in October, we reported on the hunger crisis that has engulfed much of Africa since 2021. In December 2022, World Food Programme reported that acute food insecurity spiked by 60 percent in East African countries (including Uganda and South Sudan) and 40 percent in West Africa (including Nigeria). In Imvepi Refugee Settlement in northern Uganda, the hunger crisis was compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as severe international food relief cutbacks.

In response, we initiated a hybrid agriculture program designed to provide the youth we serve in Imvepi supplemental food relief, while also giving them the training, tools, and supplies they needed to grow their own food. Now we are thrilled to announce that the agriculture initiative has proved to be a resounding success – and your support made this possible!

The program, which enrolled 200 adolescent girls at four Girl Empowerment Centers (GECs), provided students with both cereal grain and vegetable seeds. Each girl planted an average of one acre of land for cereal crops, and maintained vegetable gardens at their homes. The outcome: a massive harvest, with an average of 200 kilograms (440 pounds) of cereal crops per girl, with additional income also generated through sales of vegetable crops.

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A Thank-you Message to Our Supporters

It's true – while we may live and work in gratitude every day, we don't say it enough! Donor and volunteer support is indispensable for us to keep our programs going – and growing. **You are the driving force** that helps young people whose lives have been upended by war and conflict find spiritual renewal and build new, productive lives. To all of you who gave of your time, your talent, and your savings in 2022, **thank you so much** for being a part of the work we do to transform heartbreak into hope!

How You Can Help

There is more than one way to join us in our work to bring restoration to adolescent victims of war and conflict!

DONATE: Join us and be a force for good in the lives of vulnerable, war-traumatized African youth. To make a donation – or better yet, become a Partner in Hope as a monthly donor! – go to childvoice.org/makeadonation.

VOLUNTEER: There are many ways to help! You can join a sewing group and help put together THRIVE reusable menstrual pads, or even create your own fundraiser to support ChildVoice's mission. To learn more, email info@childvoice.org.

VISIT: To learn about visiting our program locations in Uganda, please contact our Team & Intern Coordinator at teamandintern@childvoice.org.

A Bumper Crop in Uganda (continued)

Aside from combatting hunger, the program also generated significant income for the participants. They now have enough food stores to provide their households three meals a day through April, and have earned enough money to purchase sorely needed household goods. Several girls are even planning to use their earnings to buy sewing machines.

And there is another potential benefit: reduction in vulnerability to exploitation and assault. Some of the students want to use the income they generated through the program to build their own homes, which will allow them to move out of heavily congested and unsafe living conditions.

We're overjoyed at the success of the agriculture training program! It's an outcome that was made possible only through the incredible generosity you, our donors, showed our students this past year, for which we can't be thankful enough.

Viola: Rising from Despair to Independence



Viola, an 18-year-old refugee from South Sudan, didn't know how she was going to feed her family, including her siblings, aunt, and cousins. World Food Programme had been forced to make drastic cuts to food rations in Imvepi Refugee Settlement, leaving the family with less than enough for one meal a day per person. To add to their troubles, they no longer received the basic household supplies they relied on.

"Life has not been easy for me," Viola said of the past four years she has spent in Uganda as a refugee. "Especially raising school fees for myself and my siblings, getting food to feed my brothers and sisters, getting decent housing, meeting medical bills single-handedly."

Things began to change for the better for Viola when she joined ChildVoice in February 2022 to learn tailoring. A swift learner, she became especially proficient at making *kitenge* dresses and school uniforms within a matter of months. She then joined ChildVoice's agriculture initiative in the second half of 2022, planting sesame, corn, sorghum, and vegetables like tomatoes and onions on a two-acre plot.

Viola's harvest was more successful than she could have dreamed! Not only does she now have enough food to last until her next harvest, she was able to sell enough surplus to enable her to buy goats, bedding for her siblings (who until that point had little to sleep on), clothing for her aunt, and basic household supplies.

"From this year onward, I promised myself to always have food in our house and avoid suffering," said Viola. "We used to look for men with money to survive, but I have forgiven myself. I am ready to work hard and survive. Thank you ChildVoice for creating a home away from home for us."

Viola envisions herself taking her siblings to school, building a house with a metal roof, and buying a tricycle to take her produce to distant markets. "I will achieve all the above no matter what," Viola proclaimed. "And with ChildVoice support, it even makes it more achievable. Since I came to Uganda, no partner has ever given me a shoulder to lean on like ChildVoice has done."