

# ChildVoice

## Our Work in Northeast Nigeria Begins



ChildVoice is experiencing a challenging time of moving into other war-torn regions of Africa, including Nigeria. The northeastern part of the country is plagued by attacks and suicide bombings perpetrated by insurgents of the Boko Haram, one of the world's most violent Jihadist militant groups.

After registering in Nigeria as an NGO, we were able to hire Nari Wuniya Welye as Country Director there. Nari graduated in 2011 with a law degree from the University of Maiduguri, and won a prestigious Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders in 2016. She also has worked tirelessly for victims of gender-based violence.

We are excited to have her spearheading the work ChildVoice is beginning in Nigeria and look forward to working with her.



## Reaching Refugees with New Hope

For millions of refugees seeking shelter and safety from the civil war raging in South Sudan, life is lived on the very edge of hopelessness. Thousands have fled to Imvepi refugee settlement outside the town of Arua in northern Uganda. More than 80% are women and children who are in dire need of the basics: food, hygiene items, medical care.

ChildVoice recently began work at Imvepi after being approved as an official emergency partner with Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Thanks to the generosity of DVE Events, a socially aware Bulgarian company headed up by Milen Raykov, we now have a secure





## Sharon's Story: Out of the Bush

Sometimes the effects of conflict last long after the war is over, as in the case of Sharon, who recently came to the Lukome Center as part of Class 11. Sharon is a child of the bush, born to a mother who was abducted by the LRA more than a decade ago.

The stigma of being a child born to an LRA rebel has followed Sharon all her life. When she and her mother escaped the LRA, she was rejected by her family and community. When she became pregnant by a young boy who promised to take care of her, Sharon's shame grew. Thankfully, ChildVoice found her and brought her to the Lukome Center, where she and her baby, little Daisy, are thriving—and where she loves her auto mechanics class (pictured above)!

**For more up-to-date news, visit [childvoiceintl.org](http://childvoiceintl.org).**

compound for staff that includes offices, staff housing, a kitchen, and bathroom/shower facilities. DVE Events sets up base camps for the UN and military units all over the world. They partnered with us to build the ChildVoice base camp at Imvepi using first-class materials and equipment, and all at cost or less—including no charge for labor! They also helped us make worthwhile contacts among other NGOs and refugees at Imvepi. We look forward to an ongoing partnership with DVE Events as we expand into other countries in the future.

To date, we have hired five staff at Imvepi: a project leader, child-protection officer, field officer, counselor, and driver. We've also started regular meetings with our first group of 160 adolescent girls, ages 12 to 18. These are among the neediest refugees at Imvepi.

Over the next few months, ChildVoice will form Girl Empowerment Communities that will provide counseling services, psycho-social support, health & hygiene classes (including hygiene packets with basic necessities), vocational training, and agricultural skills. Our goal is to reach more than 2,500 girls who are already child mothers or who are pregnant or at risk of becoming pregnant, providing them with love, hope, and life-changing programs.

This is a massive undertaking, and we appreciate your support and prayers as we reach out to these girls.

### Upcoming Lukome Center Trips

- 2018: April 7–21, August 4–18, and October 13–27

To learn more about joining a trip, contact our Team and Intern Coordinator, Kelsi O'Neil, at [teamsandinterns@childvoiceintl.org](mailto:teamsandinterns@childvoiceintl.org).

### The Peace of Healing

Team member Denise Stasik returned from the Lukome Center in November with first-hand insight and appreciation for the work ChildVoice is accomplishing there. In her blog, she tells of watching these girls, who have experienced so much trauma at such a young age, as they went about their chores and talked about their future with joy.

"While their stories are tragic, I began to see how the ChildVoice program truly was holistically restoring their voices and healing them, physically, emotionally, and spiritually," writes Denise.

Read more about Denise's experiences at [www.childvoiceintl.org/blog](http://www.childvoiceintl.org/blog).