

# GENERATIONAL IMPACT



2020

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

ChildVoice))

# FROM OUR PRESIDENT

*Dear Friends of ChildVoice,*

In his speech for the 2005 “Make Poverty History” campaign, Nelson Mandela said “overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.”

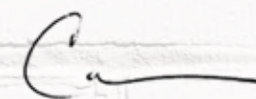
I founded ChildVoice with the concept of restoring the voices of children silenced by war. Over the succeeding 15 years of its existence, ChildVoice has evolved and adapted to address the needs not just of adolescent girls who have been traumatized by conflict, but also those vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking due to generational abject poverty. Through our programs, we’ve provided the girls with whom we work—many of whom are child mothers—the skills and resources they need to build better lives for themselves, with the hope of breaking the cycle of poverty that would otherwise inevitably trap their children as well. We’ve sought to empower them to face an uncertain future with economic and spiritual resilience.

As we entered the second half of the fiscal year at the beginning of 2020, little did we know how that resilience would soon be tested.

The COVID-19 pandemic quickly became a global threat to the health and life of millions of people. And while government-mandated lockdowns helped slow the spread of the illness, for those living on the margins in countries like Uganda and Nigeria, hunger quickly became a secondary threat of equal concern. We shifted gears rapidly to provide immediate hunger relief, and put renewed emphasis on skills such as agriculture that would help students meet their most pressing needs. It was an all-hands-on deck crisis in which staff, donors, and volunteers alike showed an unwavering commitment to our mission. But it was the fortitude and resilience shown by many of our graduates as they adapted, weathered the storm, and even thrived amid the pandemic, for which I am truly grateful.

The stories that follow in this report exemplify that resilience and provide evidence that our programs are having a positive, sustainable, and generational impact. It gives me renewed hope that as our mission continues, we can help even more marginalized young people break the bonds of generational poverty. The need has never been greater; in 2020, the World Bank reported that while 79.5 million people remain forcibly displaced, a projected 88 million to 115 million people could fall back into extreme poverty as a result of the 2020 pandemic.

Our work is only beginning.



**Conrad Mandsager**  
*ChildVoice CEO and President*



“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.”

*Nelson Mandela*

## OLIVER'S STORY

By all accounts, Oliver is a happy, well-adjusted adolescent girl living an ordinary life. She enjoys the sorts of everyday things all teenagers should be able to: going to school, reading books, watching television, babysitting her brother, hanging out with friends. To understand the relevance of Oliver's otherwise unremarkable story, it's important to look first at that of her mother, Beatrice.

Beatrice grew up an orphan. Because of the ongoing war in Uganda during the early 2000s, she lived for years as a "night commuter," traveling from her village to the city every night to hide from Lord's Resistance Army combatants in city hospitals and churches. With no way to pay school fees, Beatrice was forced to drop out of school. She became a child mother at a young age. Struggling to support herself and her child Oliver, and facing a bleak future, she became a student in the Lukome Center's very first class. At the center, Beatrice thrived, developing a variety of valuable, marketable skills. After she graduated, she was able to get a job as an office assistant in Gulu town. Later, she came back to ChildVoice, this time as an office assistant, and has saved enough money to keep both of her children in school.

Oliver was just three years old when she and her mother came to the Lukome Center. Now, she's not only in school, but excelling at her studies and surpassing her peers. "I enjoyed being at the Lukome Center. I remember playing with the other children and reading together," Oliver said of her early childhood. "We also had fun singing and dancing. After my mother graduated, life at home was not easy at first because I was used to living at the center. I missed my friends. But now I am a student at Stella Matutina Secondary School and have lots of friends! After secondary school, I want to become a doctor."

Just as it has for countless others, the COVID-19 pandemic has made life difficult for Oliver. But even amid the pandemic, Oliver is able to enjoy a life that was denied to her mother.



***"Now I am a student at Stella Matutina Secondary School and have lots of friends! After secondary school, I want to become a doctor." - Oliver***

# CHRISTOPHER'S STORY

Christopher's life began in the bush, the son of Grace—an abductee of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)—and the LRA rebel commander to whom she was given. Christopher's father died not long after he was born in 2002. It seemed all but inevitable that Christopher would be consigned to a brutal existence. When Grace and Christopher joined ChildVoice, the counseling staff quickly recognized that a long road of recovery lay ahead of them.

"Grace was very stubborn," said Post-Residential Counselor Winnie Opwonya, describing how Grace was turned away by one non-governmental program after another because of her behavioral issues.

Like his mother, Christopher was also very stubborn. Worse yet, he had a habit of abusing other children – a negative habit resulting from life in the IDP camp they had come from, according to Winnie. His teachers often didn't know what to do with him, and Grace would plead with them to keep Christopher in class.

But in time, both Grace and Christopher began learning how to "harmonize with others," as Winnie put it, and after Grace graduated, she was able to start a small bakery business.

Today, Grace and Christopher live in Alero, in a pair of huts they built themselves. Christopher attends school, and his teachers consistently give good reports about his work and behavior. He also tends diligently to the family garden, and helps his mother cook and fetch water daily. Grace is now married, but because her husband is away at work so much, she relies on Christopher for help, joking that he has now become both her son and her husband. Looking back on their incredible transformation, Grace is not only grateful for ChildVoice – she credits God's love, and learning to accept His forgiveness.

"I did not know that Christopher could change," said Winnie of the rebellious boy who has become a studious, hard-working, and helpful young man. "He's become very humble. It is a miracle."



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## LOWNA'S STORY

Lowna's mother, Sharon, became pregnant with Lowna when she was just 12 years old, forcing her to leave school in grade P6 (the equivalent of middle school in the U.S.). Their home life was chaotic. Lowna's father would not let Sharon return to school. He drank frequently and would become violently abusive, often leaving Sharon bruised and bloodied. He showed little love for Lowna as well. By the time Sharon joined ChildVoice, she had given birth to two more children.

Sharon was well-liked at the center. Many of the children were fond of her. Meanwhile, Lowna was very quiet, and would sit with her mother during meals. According to ChildVoice Counselor Winnie Opwonya, she was a shy and well-behaved child who loved playing with the other children at the Lukome Center.

"Lowna would run to report bad behavior," Winnie laughed.

After Sharon completed her program with ChildVoice, she returned home with Lowna and her other children – this time with knowledge and funding she intended to use to start a small bakery business. Lowna's father continued his abusive behavior, demanding that Sharon give him the startup money she had received. Knowing that she had to stand firm for the sake of her children Sharon refused. It was not until Lowna's father attempted to rape her in a drunken rage that Sharon decided the family could not live like this anymore.

"The trauma Lowna went through [was] terrible. She went through very traumatic situations," Winnie reflected.

But despite that trauma, today Lowna lives a very different life. Her mother has married a responsible man, and their home life is finally one of stability. And Lowna had been doing well in school and would have been in Senior 4 (equivalent to 10th grade), if not for the pandemic-related lockdowns putting her education temporarily on hold.



"The trauma Lowna went through [was] terrible..."



# LUKOME CENTER

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, THE LUKOME CENTER HAS SERVED 205 ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND 245 OF THEIR CHILDREN.

CLASS 12 TRANSITIONED OUT OF THE LUKOME CENTER INTO THE POST-RESIDENTIAL PHASE OF THE PROGRAM IN 2019.

CLASS 13 WAS IN THE TRANSITIONAL PHASE AND CLASS 14 IN THE THERAPEUTIC PHASE AT THE LUKOME CENTER WHEN UGANDA BEGAN ITS LOCKDOWN.

DURING UGANDA'S LOCKDOWN, LUKOME CENTER STAFF VISITED STUDENTS IN THE FIELD—NOT JUST THOSE CURRENTLY IN THE PROGRAM, BUT ALSO GRADUATES AND THOSE IN POST-RESIDENTIAL STATUS.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW & HIGHLIGHTS

Since 2000, our flagship program has provided a safe and nurturing environment for South Sudanese and Ugandan adolescent girls like Beatrice, Grace, and Sharon in need of the level of psychosocial care, life skills education, and vocational training that can only be achieved through a residential, center-based approach.

Many of the girls who come to the center are child mothers. While at the center, their children benefit from structured play and other social activities. They also benefit economically in the longer term, as their mothers graduate from the center and either start their own businesses or obtain gainful employment.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the Ugandan government enacting strict lockdown protocols that negatively impacted small businesses and interrupted the school year for students across the country, including those at the Lukome Center. We were ultimately forced to shift our focus temporarily to addressing emergency needs – primarily hunger. Throughout the pandemic lockdowns, Lukome Center staff members worked remotely with students as much as possible to do wellness checks, provide counseling support, and deliver much-needed hygiene supplies and food relief.

**UNHCR reports that in Uganda, 53 percent of girls and 46 percent of women aged 18–24 years reported additional pandemic-related unpaid work burden, such as cooking, housework and collecting firewood.**

*(United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2020, December). Inter-agency report: Refugee women and girls in Uganda disproportionately affected by COVID-19. <https://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/press/2020/12/5fc7a6694/inter-agency-report-refugee-women-and-girls-in-uganda-disproportionately.html>)*



# IMVEPI REFUGEE SETTLEMENT

TOTAL SESSION ATTENDANCE: 22,056

TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNSELING AND TRAINING SESSIONS: 723

NUMBER OF HEALTH AND HYGIENE SESSIONS: 90

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING SESSIONS: 164

NUMBER OF VOCATIONAL/SKILLS TRAINING SESSIONS CONDUCTED: 354

A TOTAL ATTENDANCE OF 1,267 SCHOOL-GOING GIRLS & 1,276 SCHOOL-GOING BOYS PARTICIPATED IN SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH-RELATED & OTHER PROGRAMS

NUMBER OF THRIVE KITS DISTRIBUTED: 277

TYPES OF VOCATIONAL/SKILLS AVAILABLE:  
BAKERY, HAIR DRESSING, LIQUID SOAP MAKING, AND TAILORING

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW & HIGHLIGHTS

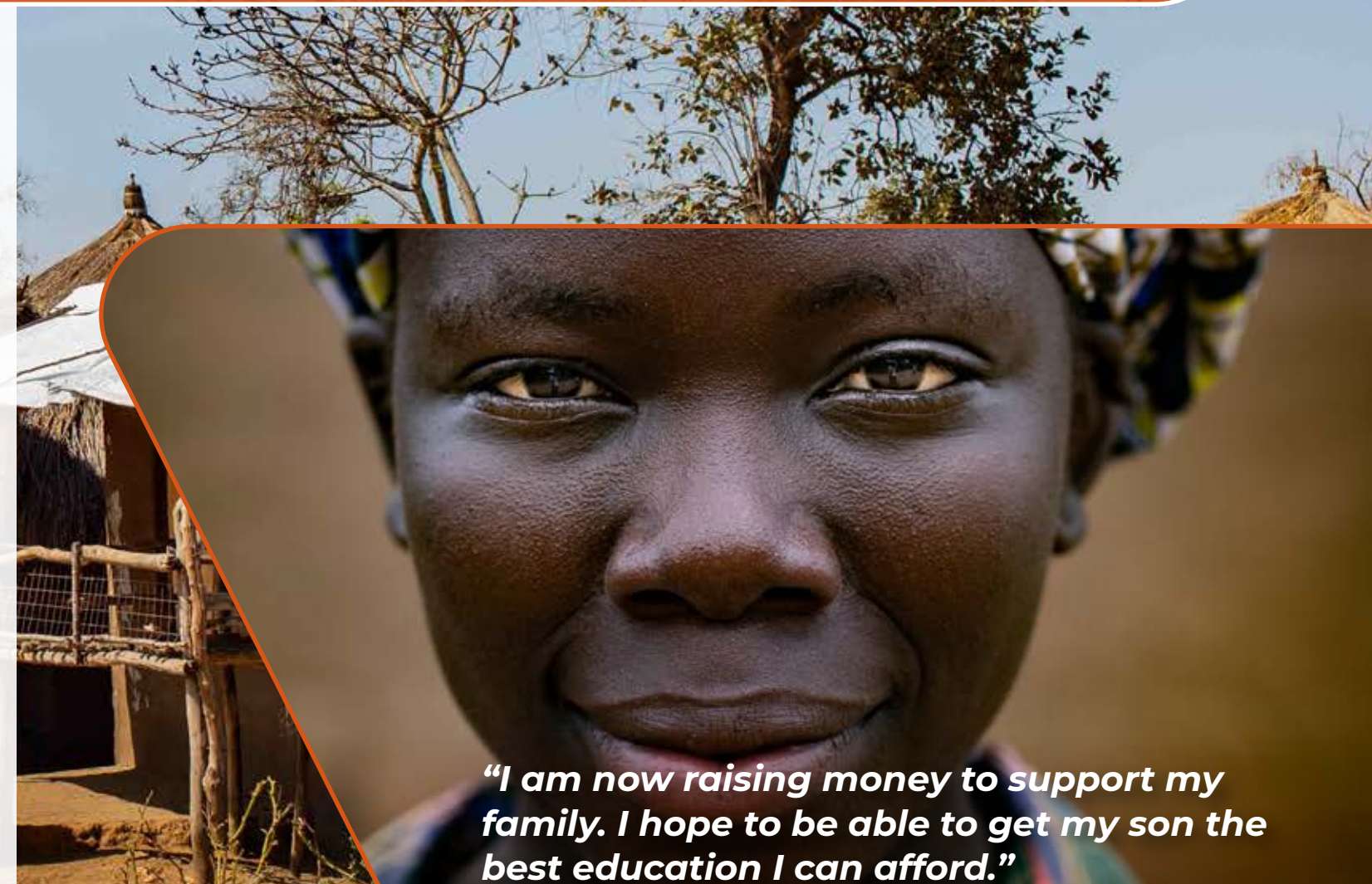
One of the more important developments in the past year at Imvepi Refugee Settlement was ChildVoice's assumption of management of the Protection House, providing a safe space for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. This came at a time when other NGO's were beginning to pull out of Imvepi, causing rising tensions amid local job losses.

In the latter half of the fiscal year, hunger rapidly became an issue at Imvepi as the pandemic spread and lockdowns were mandated. With ChildVoice staff also largely locked down, meeting with adolescent girls at Girl Empowerment Centers became impossible for several weeks. While staff members devised ways of staying connected with and offering support to the students and their children, we decided to make provision of food relief and hygiene supplies a top priority. That task fell largely on the shoulders of Child Protection Officer Alex Mundele, who loaded sacks of flour and other supplies on his motorcycle and made deliveries throughout the sprawling settlement on a daily basis.

As restrictions were eased, more staff members were able to join Alex in the field, checking in on the girls and their children, providing counseling support, and eventually leading group sessions at Empowerment Center again – albeit in limited, socially-distanced groups of no more than 30.

According to UNHCR, only 34.4 percent of Imvepi residents had an occupation in 2020. The majority of these jobs (69 percent) were farming or farm-related.

(Uganda - Refugee Statistics August 2020 - Imvepi - Uganda. (2020).  
<https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/uganda-refugee-statistics-august-2020-imvepi>)



***"I am now raising money to support my family. I hope to be able to get my son the best education I can afford."***

*- Gladys, Lukome Center graduate & Imvepi resident*



# NIGERIA PROGRAM

TOTAL SESSION ATTENDANCE: 5,108

TOTAL NUMBER OF SESSIONS: 80

NUMBER OF HEALTH & HYGIENE SESSIONS: 26

NUMBER OF GROUP COUNSELING SESSIONS: 38

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW & HIGHLIGHTS

Earlier in the fiscal year, ChildVoice staff were busy researching and implementing new skills training in the Malkohi internally displaced persons (IDP) camp, including soap and fragrance making, in addition to bakery, catering, and gardening. Activities in the second half of the year were dictated largely by the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of necessity, our efforts quickly shifted from counseling and life skills training to addressing an ever-worsening hunger crisis by providing emergency food and hygiene supply relief. In the Malkohi host community camp, a broken borehole (well) pump further compounded the rapidly deteriorating conditions. The NGO responsible for maintenance of the borehole was unable to effect repairs due to a total work stoppage in response to the pandemic.

The borehole is the camp's only source of potable water. With camp residents growing increasingly fearful that this critical need would go unmet, ChildVoice took on the task of repairing the pump.

Within the Malkohi camp, ChildVoice staff members had more flexibility than those in Uganda as the pandemic wore on. They were therefore able to hold ongoing group counseling and hygiene training sessions, with a maximum of 30 attendees per session so that safe social distancing measures could be observed.

The Nigeria team also conducted surveys within local schools in order to better target the ongoing program needs in the region. Perhaps most critically, hunger issues exacerbated by the pandemic underscored the necessity for ChildVoice to develop a more robust agriculture program in Nigeria, which we will undertake in 2021.

**UNICEF reports that Nigeria has the second-highest number of malnourished children globally, with an estimated two million suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM).**

(Nutrition. (2020, December 24). <https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/nutrition#:~:text=Nigeria%20has%20the%20second%20highest,is%20currently%20reached%20with%20treatment>)



***“Hunger is one of the biggest issues in the camps right now. People can't get enough food.”***

*– Rebecca Malgwi, Child Protection Officer*



# GIVING REPORT

2017-2018

GIFTS RECEIVED \$1,207,782

EXPENSES \$1,096,798

2018-2019

GIFTS RECEIVED \$1,329,113

EXPENSES \$1,251,318

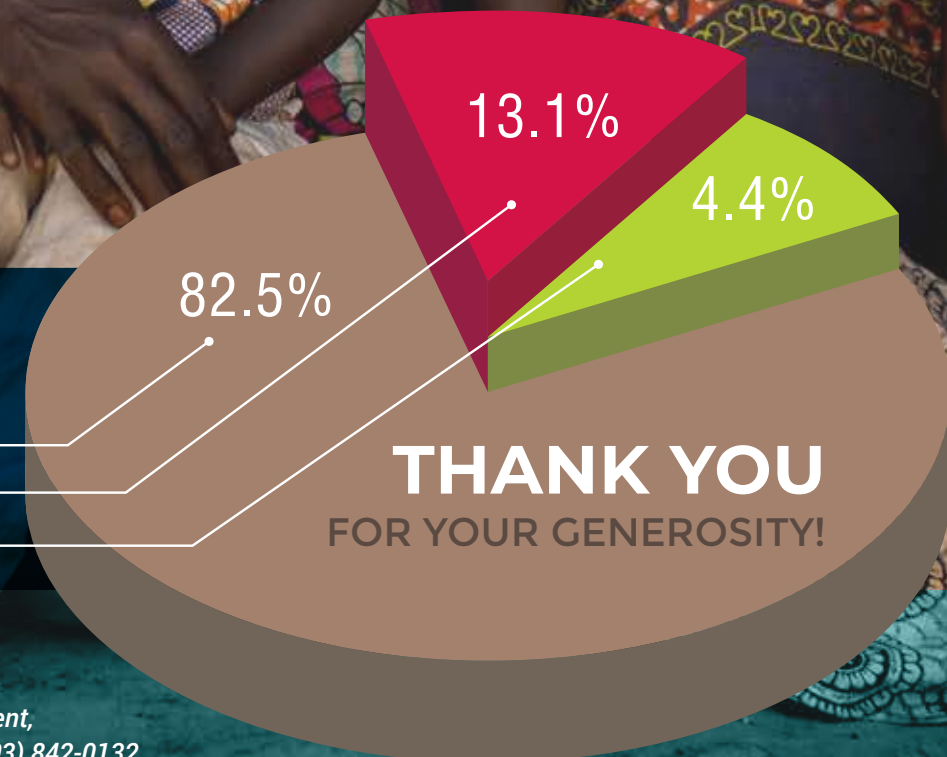
# 2019-20

# CHILDVOICE BUDGET

## 2019-2020 CHILDVOICE BUDGET

Total Budget: \$1,181,701

Program Expenses:	\$ 974,614
Management & General:	\$ 154,750
Fundraising:	\$ 52,337



**THANK YOU**  
FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

To request a copy of our most recent audit statement, please contact ChildVoice: [info@childvoice.org](mailto:info@childvoice.org) (603) 842-0132.



"Because of ChildVoice, I know how to make my own garden nursery beds and plant vegetables, and I know what crops to plant at the right time of year. I have a small kitchen garden, and sometimes I let neighbors take a few vegetables from my garden. But I hope to grow enough crops to bring them to market someday."  
— Angaika Rose, Imvepi Refugee Settlement



*Photos on pages 1, 2, 12, 13, 16, and 17 copyright © 2020 by Matilde Simas*

Matilde Simas' work as an international award winning photographer and visual storyteller, guided by her primary role of humanitarian, has taken her around the globe. Her work's primary focus is human rights, with the goal being to leverage storytelling to inform, provoke discussion, and ultimately inspire action. In 2017, she founded Capture Humanity, an organization whose mission is to increase awareness of human rights issues through visual arts and comprises photographers, filmmakers, and writers from multiple countries. "Together we work to change attitudes and behaviors toward human trafficking while seeking to engage the public through film, video, and photography, with a special focus on social documentary work."

# ChildVoice **Restoring the Voices of Children Silenced by War**

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