



UGANDA

hands for hope

# News From The First Quarter

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## Who We Are, What We Do

Hello all! Spring is in the air for most of you, as for us here at Uganda Hands for Hope April means the rainy season is upon us. For those of you who do not really know a whole lot about Uganda Hands for Hope and the work we do, let us give you a brief overview. Uganda Hands for Hope is a Ugandan based organization that is registered as a non-profit. Our primary area of focus is on providing assistance and opportunities to the children and families of Namuwongo slum so that they will eventually be able to lift themselves out of poverty. We believe education can be the catalyst to creating opportunities and overcoming poverty. Through our child sponsorship programme we provide children

from the slum who have never been to school with the opportunity to go to school and receive a quality education and a chance at a brighter future. We



**A group of children on their way from collecting water.**

realize that providing an education for the child is often not enough as the household environment also plays a key role in the child's development. We

aim to assist families by providing them with small-loans. With these loans families are able to increase their income and provide more nutritional food for their children, medicine, and better housing. If the family environment is healthy and the child is cared for at home, then they have a better chance of maximizing their potential in the classroom. We also have a small emergency medical fund which allows the children we support to access healthcare in emergency situations and other instances where the family cannot afford the treatment.

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## Where We Work - Namuwongo Slum

Namuwongo slum rests on the edge of wetlands in Uganda's capital city Kampala. Home to an estimated 7000, the slum consists of a patchwork of people from within Uganda's borders and beyond. Many of the people that call Namuwongo slum home have come here fleeing ethnic or

political violence from areas such as northern Uganda, DR Congo, Sudan, and Rwanda. Others have come from their villages to the city in search of work and a better life. The living environment of the slum is harsh, as open sewage and high population density create a

situation where the spread of disease and sickness can become rampant. Many of the mud houses become victims of the heavy rains and flooding often collapsing leaving the families with nowhere to go. Alcohol abuse is also rampant as many deal with various trauma.

# Child Sponsorship Programme



Children from the nursery pose for a photo after receiving mosquito nets from Uganda Hands for Hope.

Our sponsorship programme began in January 2008 with one supporter committing to sponsoring 100 children from the slum to go to primary school. Since then, many other supporters have come forward to sponsor children in primary school and in nursery. More than just providing an education, sponsoring a child also provides them with a school uniform, two meals a day, and an opportunity for the children to interact and develop friendships with

other children. In addition, attending school also provides the children with an environment that is stable and conducive to learning that is away from the dangers and distractions of the slum. We currently have 110 children sponsored to go to a private primary school. 52 children sponsored in our nursery with another 5 due to join us after Easter! This seems long way away from the ten nursery children we started with just over a year ago. We were

most recently encouraged and grateful when a group of Americans connected with University of the Pacific in California committed to sponsoring 26 children! As well, we often receive visitors from British Airways and KLM Airlines who have come to see firsthand the work being done in Namuwongo slum. After visiting, many of our guests have also committed to sponsoring a child, or a couple of children! Thanks to all the sponsors for their support.

## Holiday Programme



A group of the boys perform a dance during the dance competition.

As a part of the sponsorship programme we also offer a Holiday Programme for the children when they are on break from school. A blend of a variety of activities, such as art, singing, dancing, craft making and modeling, the Holiday Programme is an opportunity for the children to be creative and express themselves. The Programme

also provides the children with a safe place to come when they are on break, and where they are sure to receive breakfast and lunch. This past December and January 95 of our sponsored primary children attended the programme. On the final day the children were treated to a trip to the beach on Lake Victoria where they enjoyed

playing games and watching the fisherman out on the lake. The day concluded with a 'dance competition' in which the children showed off the moves they had been working so hard to perfect the previous week. Those of us fortunate enough to accompany the children on the trip had just as much fun as the kids, and were blown away by their dancing!

## Saturday Reading Club & Library

One of our sponsored children reads to his peers during the Saturday Reading Club



The Saturday Reading Club has become integral part of the services we offer for our sponsored children. Because the majority of our sponsored children have never previously been to school they

face more challenges than other children their age. Placed in groups of 15 the children receive more focused attention from our staff in hopes that the extra help with reading and writing will elevate them to the same academic level as their peers at school. More than just academic

tutoring, the reading club also gives time for arts, working on puzzles, and playing games. We also have an onsite library that houses a variety of books which serves as a resource for the reading club instruction, as well as allowing individual children to sign out a book for their own enjoyment.

# Income Generating Activities



**Our client Helen now has a thriving tailoring business** years of civil war in various regions. However, they all have been struggling to provide the basic necessities of life for their families. Eighty percent of families in the slum live off of less than a dollar a day making it difficult for many to even provide one daily meal for their families. That is why we feel it is very important to support these families by providing the means by which they will be able to

increase their incomes. The clients are very pleased with the progress of their businesses as many state that they can now afford school fees for their children, medicine, better foods, and even better housing. Once the women have paid back the loans the money is then recycled to provide another loan to the same women, or loans to new clients. We see this as a sustainable way in providing assistance to families who can then take hold of their future through hard work and determination.

To date we have provided small-loans for 50 women living in Namuwongo slum. The majority of our clients are single mothers/grandmothers, while many of them have also been traumatized by

## Local Staff

Uganda Hands for Hope is fortunate to employ several dedicated Ugandan staff who are involved in various aspects of what we do. We currently employ three nursery teachers that run our nursery, as well as a librarian that takes care of our library. We also have two social workers who spend time working in the community and assist us the child sponsorship and

family visits. Also, one administrative staff works in the office on the accounts, and three other Ugandan staff ensure that food is prepared for the children, donations are organized and sorted and that the area is kept clean and neat for health and safety purposes. We appreciate their hard work and commitment to the people of Namuwongo slum.



**Head Teacher Aida Kobusingye addresses the parents at our nursery Christmas programme this past December**

## Volunteers

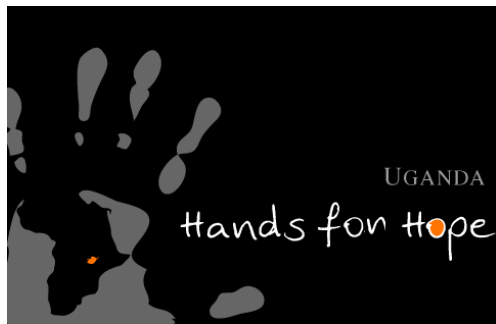
Without the many volunteers that have assisted us over the last year and a half, much of what has been accomplished would not have been possible. We encourage people of various ages, skills and interests to come and join us in Namuwongo for a few weeks, or a few months! Depending on your areas of interest, as a volunteer you could assist in our nursery, carry out

community visits in the slum to assess the living environment of the families and children we support, help with publicity, various computer work, and so much more. If there are other areas of interest that a volunteer feels they'd like to get involved with, we encourage them to be creative and even develop new areas of assistance to the people of

Namuwongo slum provided we have the capacity to do so. We currently have three volunteers here assisting us in various ways, with another seven due to come between April and August!



**Past volunteer Christina Spinney displays a card given to her by the nursery children.**



Uganda Hands for Hope  
P.O. Box 11319  
Kampala, Uganda

Ph: +256 772913001

Email: [handsforhopeinfo@gmail.com](mailto:handsforhopeinfo@gmail.com)

Website: [www.onlinehope.org](http://www.onlinehope.org)

**Helping Uganda's poorest to help themselves**



One of the 52 children from our nursery poses in her home after it was flooded by heavy rains.

## Be A Part Of Uganda Hands For Hope

People often ask how they can get involved, or what they could do to assist us in our work here in Namuwongo slum. There are many areas in which people can get involved depending on their interests, time, and skills. We always expect generous donations of clothing, books, sports equipment etc. If you are interested, for £15 a month you can sponsor a vulnerable child from the slums to go to school. Or, for a one time donation of £25 or greater, you can provide a family with a small loan for a business. For £7 you can purchase a chicken for a needy family. Malaria is also a big concern here in the slum, and £6 will provide a mosquito net. If you are not sure where you would like to contribute, you could also donate £2 a month towards our running costs. If you

have the time, we also encourage people to come and volunteer with us. Over the past while we have had several volunteers of different ages and skill levels. We believe that everyone has something to offer and to learn. If you plan on coming for a few days, weeks, or months you may want to consider volunteering with us! We encourage people whom are able to, to come for a visit and see



first hand the work being done here. You could also host a fundraiser event, as was just done by a group in Canada that raised over \$3000! For which the funds will be used to provide income generating activities for war-affected families living in the slum. If you feel that this is something you'd like to do just let us know and we can send out some info brochures and other media/publicity. We appreciate your interest and support no matter how big or small. If you are interested in getting involved, or know someone that might be interested please email us, it'd be great to hear from you! Thank you all for your support and interest in the lives of the children and families of Namuwongo slum. We look forward to hearing from you soon!