

Kuokoa Watoto UWCEA Project Report – Kiryandongo District, Bweyale Town Council, Uganda

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The Kukua Watoto project aimed to educate youth on healthy living habits, productive lifestyles, and positive mindsets to keep them away from drugs and help them become hardworking as well as open-minded citizens. The project targeted both refugee and citizen youths of Bweyale, Kiryandongo refugee camp.

As planned, we hope to start up a foundation that can continue for the rest of the generations where we can be able to offer youths life skills and continually give hope to those who feel there's no more chance in life. And now, this foundation has been set, with continued support from our volunteers, we shall always be holding seminars at least once a month where youths can come and share life sharing ideas. And in case of availability of funds, we shall be providing some entrepreneurship training with live demonstrations. Thanks to the go make a difference initiatives for making this long hoped dream come true. Great appreciation and the people were so happy for your help.

Although initial attendance was low because the project was conducted in July, a time when elections for members of parliament were going on, most youths were taken up by the excitement of the campaign rallies.

However, the project still achieved significant outcomes:

- **Sensitized 30+ youths on dangers of drug use**, including alcohol and cigarettes, which can cause lung cancer, brain damage, eye pain, body weakness, quick aging, poor vision, premature death, mental retardation, and

laziness. Youth appreciated the knowledge and expressed a desire to change harmful habits.

Discussed business ideas, with participants sharing insights based on suggested prompts. This helped them understand what they needed to start a business and how to effectively run and manage a business.

Built self-worth. The project was able to make youths realize they are valuable community members with great potential. Many wrong choices were due to unavoidable life circumstances, not deliberate ill intent, the community therefore should accept them the way they are and give support rather than criticizing them.

Restored hope among disadvantaged youths, which made them feel loved, supported, and valued despite community stigma. It was my pride to see myself come up with something like this which is a game changer.

Helped some start businesses, fostering pride in earning and saving their own income. The materials we bought using the funds are in enough quantity to ensure the start of a thriving business.

It was also a personal growth for me as the project leader by fulfilling a dream to address and inspire the community, learning public speaking, organization skills, and humility from elders.

A notable case was Mr. Opio Komakech, once better-off but ruined by gambling and drugs. He openly shared his story and admitted past arrogance, teaching the group the importance of helping others and learning from mistakes.

Lessons learned during the course of the project.

Never judge without knowing the root cause of any misconduct someone does. Others are beyond human intervention.

Life changes — today's disadvantaged may thrive tomorrow.

Hard work and patience bring results.

If repeated, the project would target more beneficiaries and secure a larger venue, as knowledge and shared ideas are powerful even without material gains.

Note.

This project was held during primary elections for District MPs and councillors, which drew away many targeted youths, especially the 25 members who signed up for candle-making.

To adjust, we increased materials for those who attended and added training in chapati, mandazi, and limited candle-making. Mandazi, though not in the initial plan, proved highly beneficial. The youths were so happy eating some of these things that we prepared.

Also, the exchange rate that was used to estimate the expected cost for this project was; 1 USD = 3650 Uganda shillings. However during the month of July which was busy and full of travels of various people into the country and elections, the exchange rate slightly decreased and this meant a bit less money unlike initially planned.

1USD = 3555 uganda shillings. However, this did not prove to be a big problem since out of the 50 initial beneficiaries, we were able to run the project with only 40 of them in total. This to a greater extent covered the loss made in exchange rate values.

How the funds were spent.

Event	Uganda shillings	USD
All materials to offer the beneficiaries.	4,991,300	1,406
Material for demonstrations during the project	1,100,000	309
Transport and hiring facility	770,000	217

Total	6,861,300	1,932
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