



First Quarter Newsletter, 2011

April, 2011

www.childofhopeuganda.org

Dear partners,

It's our joy to bring to you our first quarter newsletter for this year 2011. The year has started well but of course with the usual mixture of successes and challenges. We know that challenges are nothing new to COH, or indeed to any organization, and we are looking forward to finding ways to meet and overcome these obstacles as they arise.

This year we are focusing on consolidating the current COH activities, rather than starting anything new. Last year was very busy with all the building work and this year we are enjoying the fruits of our labours and seeing how best to develop our existing programmes.

Finally, I wish to thank all our development partners. Your kind and generous support (financial, moral and spiritual) are making a huge difference in this part of the world. Thanks once again for making COH your organization. Together we can make the world a better place.

Moses Okotel
Executive Director

The new school

Wow! After a lot of effort and time, finally the children are in their new school. The school runs from nursery to lower primary (P.3) and currently holds 192 children! The children, parents/guardians and the entire community are proud of this latest development in the slum. Child of Hope School is an answer to prayer for many uneducated children and families living in this area of Mbale. So many families, affected by poverty and HIV/AIDS, are unable to send their children to school. Though primary education is supposed to be free in Uganda,

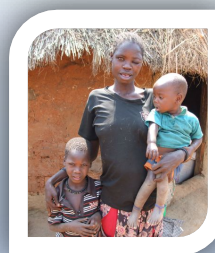
parents are still expected to provide scholastic materials and uniform etc. This is an impossibility for these slum-dwelling parents/guardian who struggle to afford even one meal a day for their children. Child of Hope new school aims to change all that for the hundreds of children in Namatala slum. Special thanks go to Martin and Philip who oversaw the building of this first stage. Its costs £60 to sponsor a teacher's monthly salary.



New children's intake

The need for education in Namatala slum continues to be overwhelming. Every year there are hundreds of poor parents/guardians seeking for vacancies for their children at COH School. It is a tricky time for us trying to determine who is eligible and who is not. The slum is so poor, characterised by high unemployment and woefully inadequate amenities. Many of the children look to COH nursery as their hope for protection and a better future – a step towards truly free primary & secondary education. This makes enrolment time difficult:

everyone wants to ensure their child is in the COH system! However, with help from the local leaders, COH was able to enrol 72 new children into the nursery; especially taking a keen interest in girl children who are often overlooked.



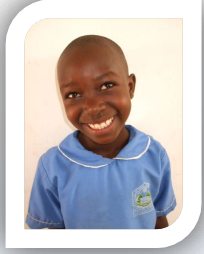
Newly enrolled Mary, 5 yrs, with her mum and little brother



**Education gives Hope,
Education Heals
and
Education Empowers!**

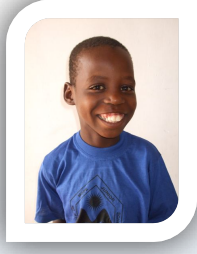
Children's stories

Feeding program



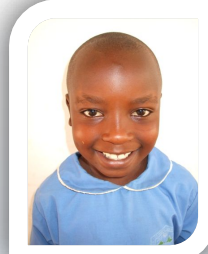
Prima Gloria, 9 years

Education gives hope!
"My name is Gloria prima, 9 years old. Am in primary three class at Child of Hope junior school. This is the best school I have ever been. The teachers are caring and teach well. The school is the best looking in the slum. I love my school!"



Patrick, 9 years

Education empowers! It's three years ago now, when COH first found Patrick. When we started helping him he had low self esteem and he was being abused because of his disability. Now Patrick is hopeful and he loves going to school. When you ask him what he wants to be in the future, Patrick will tell you that "I want to be a local politician in the slum"!



Zula, 8 years

Education heals!
Last year Zula lost her dad. She felt the world had come to an end. When we took Zula on and found a sponsor for her education, her life turned around. Now Zula is hopeful about the future. When she grows up she wants to be a nurse or teacher.



The COH feeding program is helping 120 primary children daily with a plate of hot food. Without this, many would be literally starving as their parents and guardians are often unable to provide for them at home. Through this program the children are able to eat well which gives them energy to play and learn throughout the day at school. It costs just 15p to provide a one hot, nourishing meal.

However, due to the economic climate commodity prices have risen hugely. In addition the country has had a long drought which has affected everything. Food prices in Mbale, eastern Uganda, have risen by almost 50% in some cases. This, of course, makes life in Namatala even more difficult. Everyday there are more children scavenging around in rubbish pits for food.

Community meetings

Teacher training

Fire accidents



Leaders/elders meeting

Regular meetings with community leaders and elders in Namatala slum have proven to be an absolute necessity for the success of our programs. Every quarter COH has at least one meeting with these leaders and elders of the slum, sharing problems and ideas and finding solutions together. This has promoted ownership of the COH programs in the community and strong relationships with the leaders.

In February, COH was blessed to host Rhonda Grochowski, who recently visited as a volunteer training our teachers about art & crafts for two weeks. She had a great time with the teachers who really enjoyed all her new ideas and are now starting to use them in their classes with the children. And better still... she wants to come back to carry on the good work later in the year!



Sadly this term has seen two of the pupils at Child of Hope being attacked in Namatala in separate incidents and had burning paraffin thrown on them. Alice (10 yrs) has suffered burns from her tummy up to her neck. Maria (4 yrs) has burns on her arm/shoulder and head. Although her burns were not as extensive as Alice's they have proved to be deeper and more tricky to heal and it's likely she's lost the hair on the back of her head permanently.

The woman who threw the explosive paraffin/petrol mix on Maria (and possibly Alice too) was taken to the police and COH are continuing to work with the police to ensure this never happens again.



Children scavenging for food.