Child of Hope is a Ugandan-led organisation with support from British long-term volunteers. It works to lift families out of poverty in Namatala slum, Mbale — a huge improving slum in one of the world’s poorest countries. Its main activity is providing free education, healthcare and welfare support to children from some of the most disadvantaged families (one per family, generally), who receive free nursery and primary education in the Child of Hope School and then receive sponsored secondary school or vocational training.

Education is not free in Uganda and these are children whose parents cannot afford to send them to school. Without this education their prospects would be entry into prostitution, crime, lifelong poverty and an early death. Their mothers are encouraged into economic empowerment through our Income Generating Activities (IGA) scheme — to begin small businesses to help their families become financially self-sufficient. The school children are given regular meals, food and clothing, as well as health and medical care. There is welfare support to their families and care for orphans and other vulnerable children.

WHAT WE DO IN UGANDA

CHILDREN LEARN BETTER ON A FULL STOMACH

Daily meals are provided to the children at school. All nursery children receive breakfast, and those in the primary classes are given a cooked lunch. Any children who are classed as underweight receive both meals. They access clean drinking water at school, reducing the risk of parasitic infection.
EDUCATION

There were 152 children on roll in the nursery department and 343 children in primary classes in 2018. In addition, 60 older former pupils were supported at local fee-paying secondary schools. At the CCP Vocational Training Institute, 4 young people were supported on teacher training, electronics, catering and hairdressing courses. At Mbale Community College, 9 young people were supported to learn mechanics, masonry, tailoring, agriculture and carpentry.

Exam results aren’t everything... but we’re very excited about ours! The 2018 Primary Leaving Exam results were once again a great achievement – all pupils passed the exam in the top two of the four divisions – 42% in division 1 and 58% in division 2. Many of these children are the first in their families to complete primary education. These are outstanding results, especially as most of these children would have had no education at all if it were not for our intervention.

School staff received specialist training on child behaviour management from a UK professional who visited for eight weeks.

The headteacher received regular training by the District Education Officer, which was then cascaded to all teaching staff in internal training sessions. Another UK volunteer acted as an Early Years Child Development advisor, working with nursery and lower primary staff throughout the year.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

• The school achieved its best results ever in the national Primary Leaving Exam. According to school league tables this puts us in the top 6% of Ugandan primary schools for the second year running – so our pupils are clearly getting an excellent education to help them find future jobs.

• Foster family placements were secured for all 33 vulnerable children who were either orphaned or deemed at risk in their own families – which we are delighted about! Foster parents are provided with a monthly sum of money to assist in the care of the foster child. In line with government policy, our former children’s home was closed.

• Sustainability: A full rainwater harvesting system was installed during 2018 to ensure our pupils have access to clean water at all times. A new agricultural project was also facilitated when 11 acres of farmland were secured, allowing parents to grow maize and beans. We grow rice and maize for the school and own several pigs.

• In 2018, 40 mothers were added to the IGA programme and received an initial grant of 130,000 Ug shillings (around £26) and business training. This brought the total number of parents currently on the programme to 285. During the year, IGA parents received continuing training and mentorship and were divided into small groups for mutual support. Many parents saw their businesses expand, enabling them to buy land, construct buildings, purchase livestock and pay for other children to go to school.

• Community training: Basic healthcare training was provided to members of the community to help beat diseases. Training on parenting skills was provided, with an emphasis on foster parenting and parenting teenagers. Agricultural training was provided to around 60 parents.
The FST is an integrated team with health care staff, social workers, and the IGA team. They provide a holistic approach to health and welfare, following up any absences daily and working in the slum to assist pupils and their families when they are ill, struggling or in crisis.

If children are abandoned or face danger, foster placements are arranged. Fostering is a recent innovation in Uganda and has become the government’s intervention of choice, recognised as delivering better outcomes for children. Children that have gone through the trauma of being orphaned often struggle with attendance and often show behavioural difficulties. Continuous partnership between our team, foster parents and the foster children has, however, led to improved attendance and behaviour.

Children are provided with medical and health services to give them the best chance to attend school regularly and learn. There is one nurse and an assistant based at the school. Height and weight are monitored, malaria and other illnesses are treated promptly with medicines, and ‘jiggers’ (a common parasite) are removed from the children. When in-patient treatment is needed, we pay for this at the nearby Joy Hospice. Mothers are educated in basic hygiene and given family planning advice.

The positive impact on the family of one child being included in a school programme has been demonstrated by Child of Hope and, as a result, many parents are now able to pay for siblings to attend other local schools.
Increased funding would allow us to instigate new and wider-reaching programmes that will produce even greater social impact. We are careful not to ‘spread ourselves too thinly’, but here is a list of things we would have done in 2018 if funding were available. Maybe in 2019 with your help?…

• Start building a new secondary school in nearby Namabasa, on the land we own there. This will ensure our pupils’ standards of education carry through to the secondary stage.

• Provide a more varied lunch menu with improved nutrition, instead of simply posho and beans every day.

• Build a dining hall/area for children’s lunchtimes.

• Expand the Family Support Team for increased parent counselling/training, and to roll out some of their family support programmes to the whole community.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

We estimate construction costs to be £102,550. By the end of 2018 around 29% of that amount had been raised and a further 46% pledged, totalling nearly 75% of target. We are actively seeking other funding opportunities to enable us to start construction by mid-2019.
RUNNING THE SCHOOL

It takes constant monitoring of quality and efficacy of programmes; regular review of ‘best practice’ (internationally and nationally), followed by regular staff mentoring/supervision & training to improve programmes; daily analysis of costs and scrupulous checking of expenditure; objective compassion in dealing with problems arising from families living in extreme poverty; thorough understanding of the local community and preserving a high reputation within it; prayer; and… blood, sweat and tears!

IN UGANDA:
COH Outreach Uganda is a registered Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in Uganda (reg no. S-5914/7717), and currently employs more than 80 staff in Mbale, eastern Uganda.

There are three arms to Child of Hope: the nursery school, the primary school and the family support team. All of these programmes are supported and served by the administrative and site management departments. Each section has a manager to oversee it, usually with a deputy manager. The executive director, assisted by the strategy and programmes advisors and supported by the operations and finance managers, oversees the organisation as a whole.

The primary and nursery schools, founded and owned by Child of Hope Outreach Uganda, are legally obliged to be governed by their own management committees and are overseen by a board of directors.

IN UK:
A team supports the Ugandan operation through UK-registered charity Child of Hope (England and Wales reg no.1136068). That team consists of seven trustees, two part-time paid roles of director and administrator, a part-time fundraiser who applies for grants, and a handful of volunteers.
IT’S OUR SUPPORTERS WHO HELP MAKE IT HAPPEN

SO, A HUGE THANK YOU TO DONORS, CHILD SPONSORS, TRUSTS, CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, BUSINESSES, PROGRAMME SPONSORS, VOLUNTEER FUND-RAISERS, CAKE-BAKERS... AND EVERYONE ELSE WHO HELPS US ACHIEVE ALL THIS.

Child of Hope relies completely on the good will of donors, and the result is huge change to individual children’s lives, family lives, and the community as a whole.

THE COST:

UGANDA: During 2018 our nursery/primary school, family support team and secondary school expenditure was £147,844. This does not include funds for special projects e.g. secondary school construction.

UK: During 2018, expenditure for administration, monitoring, fundraising, marketing, fees and Ugandan directors visiting the UK was £21,285 – just 11.67% of the total income of £182,368.

INTEGRATION IN UGANDA

Child of Hope partners with the Uganda National Police and the Probation Service in addressing home and community issues. It partners with the Education Officer in the provision of its education services and with the Health Officer in the provision of its health services.

The Ugandan National Development Plan II states that it will emphasise relevant skills development, starting with investments in early childhood development and improving the quality of education, training and healthcare at all levels. Child of Hope’s work directly supports the government plan.

The National Curriculum Development Centre is a statutory agency established under the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports. It provides the pre-primary and primary curriculum that our school is required to follow.

Child of Hope has adopted the Ugandan Government’s Alternative Care Framework in its fostering programme.

The Children’s Act informs all policies relating to Child of Hope’s children and the Employment Act governs Child of Hope’s employment of staff.

The National Policy on Malaria Treatment issued by the Ministry of Health guides the school’s treatment of malaria.
COULD YOU HELP?

If you are reading this document because you are interested in supporting our life-changing work in Ugandan slums, it’s a good thing you are doing! We will happily answer any questions you may have; please get in touch with our UK director

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thanks!

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