



Children's Report

June 2023

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Executive Summary

Since 2013 My Child and Me has served abandoned mothers and their children to address the lack of resources for this forgotten community.

Our mission is to elevate the quality of life of abandoned mothers and abandoned children in the Democratic Republic of Congo

In our next year, we will pivot into focusing more specifically on serving the youth and children in Eastern Congo through our programs.

Africa has the youngest youth population in the world with 70% of sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 30. By 2030 young Africans will constitute 42% of global youth and the current youth population is expected to duplicate from 1.4 billion to 2.5 billion by 2050.

While the potential of the youth population is boundless, realizing their fullest potential for the good of Africa requires addressing challenges across the continent.

Organizations from grassroots groups to major international organizations are reimaging education to nurture human development, foster both creative and technical skills, and teach practical life skills such as financial literacy and personal care.

At Mwabana, we are addressing the youths' experiences as abandoned children while assisting them in imagining a greater future. One that allows them to mature and develop without restrictions based on socioeconomic status or psychological trauma.

Our goal this year is to secure seats in school for all our children and monitor their progress in school, in order to help them meet their fullest potential and wildest dreams.

Health and Homes

In Bukavu city and the surrounding village areas, poor families find homes in areas that frequently flood and are at a high risk for landslides.

Our mothers, who are already struggling to provide for their families, rent homes in these areas and endure these conditions just to give their families shelter away from the city streets.



Adeline and her children live on the edge of a cliff in a home built of tarp

wall with no true foundation. Without beds, they sleep with blankets over a dirt floor. My Child and Me is dedicated to improving the overall wellbeing of these children to support their growth and development.

Children's issues

Congo remains on the most complex humanitarian crises in the world, with 5.5 million people internally displaced and hosting half a million refugees. In 2020, 2 million displacements were registered in Congo, making it the country with the largest number of new displacements due to conflict. Among the most vulnerable



of the displaced population are children. It's common in the Democratic Republic of Congo for impoverished children to participate in some sort of labor. Families who are unable to afford school send their children to work full time also send their children to work part-time which poses a high risk for kidnapping and trafficking. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, 1 in 5



children participate in some sort of labor. Children as young as 5 years old are subjected to the worst forms of child labor like forced mining for minerals, forced domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, and smuggling stolen goods for armed groups. Girls are frequently used sex slaves and groomed into lives of drug addiction.

My Child and Me was founded based on our founders observation of street children selling or begging for money. When she questioned these children she realized they were not orphans but the children of very poor women desperately in need of money to feed their children.

Studies have proven the best method to decrease child exploitation is to place kids back in safe school environments.

Children in school in the DRC have a drastically less chance of being exploited. The chance of girls being married off before the age of 18 drops from 37% to 6%.



Child exploitation has many sides from child labor to recruitment into militia groups and trafficking rings.



Children living in poverty find creative ways to make money to support their families.



Educate a Child Program Launch

In the Democratic Republic of Congo nearly 7 million children age 5 to 17 are not in school. 50% of school age girls in the DRC are not in school. And only 57% of the students in school successfully complete their primary school education.

Our number one priority for our youth program is to secure seats in school for all the school age children in our care.



For the school year of 2022-2023, we have enrolled 81 children in schools around the Bukavu City area. Placing children in school reduces the risk of childhood delinquency and the chances of being recruited into child exploitation by rebel groups that recruit child soldiers and run sex trafficking rings.

The cost to place a child in school and equip them with school supplies is \$20 a month. There are 423 school age children involved with the My Child and Me program in need of an education.



High School Girls Seminar

Recently, we visited the Tumusifu school to hold a seminar for young girls on personal development. The Stigma that follows our abandoned mothers begins at a young age for all women in the DRc. Women are conditioned to believe that their worth is directly attributed to how well they can find a husband and raise his family. Little value is given to their achievements and accomplishments in school or aspiring towards a high value working women in the community.

My Child and Me is dedicated to uplifting women at all stages of life and supporting their growth journeys however we can. We believe if we can intervene with the youth and address the stigmas that result in women who are bred to be codependent we can prevent future problems and build better families and women



Senior girls at Tumusifu School pose with teachers after their first seminar with Mwabana

Conclusion

In 2020, we launched our Educate a Child program sending one child from each family to school. As we've continued to grow, our desire to have more of an involved role in directly impacting the future of children has grown as well. Empowering our children with an education is our first initiative for children because this is the best method to support their growth and development while breaking the cycle of poverty in their homes.

In the next year our goal is to observe our students to better understand how we can create solutions and strategies that address that issues they face in their daily lives.

We are so grateful for our donors and partners who have chosen to come along side of us to support our youth.

For more updates, we encourage you to subscribe to our newsletter and follow our social medias.

Sincerely,

Josette Zahinda

Founder