

Tudabujja: Teaching Farming Skills to Street Children in Uganda

Kampala, Uganda Washington, United States



Joan Townsend



Year Founded:
1994

Organization type:
nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector
Project Stage:
Established

Budget:
\$100,000 - \$250,000
Website:
<http://www.retrak.org>



- [At risk youth](#)
- [Youth development](#)

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Each year, Tudabujja Halfway Farm in Uganda provides 90 street children with nutrition education and teaches them modern farming techniques. When they return to their villages, the children and their entire families have improved nutrition and greater household income.

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

There are thought to be 8,000 street children in Uganda. For these children, life is characterized by a lack of basic needs, vulnerability to abuse, ill health and stigmatization as criminals. Finding food is a major daily challenge, and many resort to rummaging through garbage dumps for anything to eat. Such an existence leads to malnutrition, disease and susceptibility to other illnesses. These children have often left home in the first place because of extreme poverty, manifested by hunger and school drop-out.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

Retrak strives to return children to families, either their existing family, when appropriate, or a foster family. Tudabujja is Retrak's halfway farm that gives street children the chance to regain their physical and psychological health and to learn agricultural skills, enabling them to return to their home villages and contribute to the wellbeing of their families. It provides children with space to adjust from street life to family life and teaches them the basic skills required for farming in their home environment. The children receive theory lessons and actively participate in working the farm, which includes a wide range of livestock and crops. When they return to their homes, the entire family has access to more nutritious food, and family income is generated through the sale of farm products.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

Ali is 13 and had been on the streets for 3 years. Ali's family was poor and he was often hungry and malnourished. He and a friend decided to go to Kampala, where he scrounged for food in rubbish pits and slept on discarded boxes on the ground at night. A friend told Ali that there was a place called Retrak where he could go for help. Ali began coming to the Retrak drop-in center in Kampala. He would stop in for a meal, or to wash his clothes. Soon he was talking to a counselor about his life, and taking classes at the Retrak Learning Center. Eventually he told his counselor that he

was ready to return home. Retrak social workers are preparing Ali and his family to be reunited. Today, Ali is staying at Tudabujja, Retrak's Halfway Farm whose name means "we are being made new", where he's being prepared to return home by living in a family setting and learning how to raise livestock and cultivate crops, skills that he'll use to help support himself and his family. Ali and his entire family will be healthier and more stable as a result of the agricultural training he's receiving at Tudabujja.

Impact: What is the impact of the work to date? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.

Tudabujja can house up to 32 boys for an average stay of 3-4 months, meaning that a total of around 90 children can stay at Tudabujja each year and leave with the skills to secure income, food and employment. Through better nutrition and access to the medical clinic, children regain their health while at Tudabujja, and the knowledge they gain about nutrition, hygiene and disease prevention helps them maintain their good health after they leave. The skills, experience and knowledge that they obtain at Tudabujja and take home with them will be passed down to future generations, benefitting the entire community. Retrak is expanding Tudabujja to include cottages for girls. Providing girls with agricultural education and training will impact not only the lives of the girls at Tudabujja and their current families when they return home, but as they grow older and become mothers themselves, their future children and families will benefit from their knowledge of agriculture and nutrition.

Sustainability

Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution's plan to ensure financial sustainability?

Retrak's approach to ensuring financial sustainability is two-fold. First, we ensure that children move to sustainable independent family and community life with no ongoing reliance on Retrak, and second, we're building our capacity to raise support through sustainable long-term local and international partnerships. Since our founding in 1994, Retrak's base of financial support in the US, Europe and Africa, has increased steadily every year.

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

Retrak differentiates itself by supporting fulltime street children who live and work on the streets and are most at risk. They tend to be highly mobile and live in the shadows so as not to attract attention. This means that standard programs, such as feeding or learning programs, are unable to reach these highly marginalized children. We tailor our programs to meet the needs of those who may fall through the cracks of these larger mainstream programs. Our integrated approach and the emphasis we place on follow-up are also key differences between us and other organizations.

Team

Founding Story

Retrak began in response to the large numbers of street children that were playing in an informal weekly game of soccer in Kampala, Uganda. Sport provided the ideal, non-threatening, vehicle by which the children could rebuild their trust in adults and, with professional help, be given a chance to move away from the streets. Today Retrak works with street children in Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. We also provide support to the families of the children in order to tackle the root causes of the problems that led them onto the streets in the first place. Tudabujja was the result of the "Aha!" moment when we saw that education in agriculture and nutrition was a key factor in the long-term health and wellbeing of the children and families.

About You

Organization:

Retrak

About You

First Name

Joan

Last Name

Townsend

Twitter URL

<https://twitter.com/RetrakAmerica>

Facebook URL

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Retrak-America/125945317456466?ref=hl>

About Your Organization

Organization Name

Retrak

Organization Country

, DC, Washington, Washington

Country where this project is creating social impact

, KMP, Kampala

Has the organization received awards or honors? Please tell us about them

Recently Retrak was:

Granted observer status in the African Union's Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;

Part of the interagency group that produced the "Protect for the Future" research paper published by EveryChild (July 2010);

A key player in "The Way Forward Project" which reported to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on family preservation and child reintegration;

Directly involved in the EU-funded "Safe Families-Safe Children" initiative which looked at the role of attachment theory in child protection; A participant in the UN executive committee for the global MDG focused "Beyond 2015" program.

Other recent achievements, which reflect the organization's competency in relation to risk management, include: a near perfect average final score of 3.6 out of 4 (up from 2.1 three years ago) in November 2011 as part of the comprehensive USAID closeout organizational assessment of the PEPFAR grant; Investors in People status; and People in Aid certification.

Nutrients For All

Where do you ensure the availability of nutrients?

Nutrient-rich farming, Full nourishment foods, Human wellness and vitality.

If you had greater capacity, which additional sectors would you like your solution to target - either through expansion, partnership, or thought exchange?

Healthy environments.

How specifically would this added capacity help you improve the quality, efficiency, or sustainability of your existing product or service?

Added capacity through support from Changemakers would allow us to expand our program to include more girls. We aim to open a cottage for girls at Tudabujja so that they too can benefit from living in a family setting and gaining agricultural skills that they can take home with them when they're reintegrated. Supporting and educating girls is key to the wellbeing of communities as girls will eventually become women and then mothers, caring for and teaching the next generation. Our overall goal is to work with more children, families and communities, as well as to do more preventative work.

Source URL: <https://www.changemakers.com/nutrientsforall/competition/entries/tudabujja-teaching-farming-skills-street-children-ugand>