





streets or religious centers, such as churches and mosques. Also, there are babies born from mothers who suffered from psychological illness or those who become pregnant through rape.

In some cases, the relatives of the women take care of the babies, but such cases are rare. Uganda is the country with the second-youngest average age in the world, and the population under 15 accounts for half of the total population.

Mubende District probation officers have reported that 12 children were abandoned (5 girls, 7 boys) in 2016, 16 children (6 girls, 10 boys) in 2017, 19 children (12 girls, 7 boys) in 2018 as of June, and 28 children (16 girls, 12 boys) between July 2018 and 2019 in the district. These numbers are only the cases that the government received. Therefore, the actual numbers of children being abandoned is presumed to be much higher and assistance for them has been desperately lacking. Thus, SORAK<sup>1</sup>, a Ugandan local NGO, established in 2003, decided to tackle this problem and save the lives of children left on the streets.

In order to ascertain the extent and seriousness of the problems of abandoned children, SORAK conducted a survey in Kibalinga Sub-county and Mubende Municipality with a senior community development officer of the district. The results of survey are as follows:

### Three case studies:

#### 1. Kisakye Mercy

A one-month-old baby boy was found near a hotel in a slum area in the Kibaati-Mubende Municipality. The baby was named Kisakye Mercy by a caretaker who found him. The caretaker is a single mother with a 13-year-old son. They temporarily lived together in a single rented room in a slum, as the caretaker received temporary custody by the district government. The baby is approximately four months old now (at the time of the survey).

***“Please help me and take care of this baby, I fear that people can come and steal him from me and I may never see him again”***

As mentioned above, the caretaker expressed an urgent need for support and protection of the baby for SORAK, as she is worried that the baby will be kidnapped for the purposes of trafficking or child labor.



Photos of SORAK staff members, community-based volunteer, the caretaker, and the abandoned baby

<sup>1</sup> SORAK is working under the vision to have an improved quality of life among vulnerable persons in Uganda and to actively contribute to a sustainable community and national development.



## 2. Shamim

Shamim is a three-and-a-half-year-old girl (at the time of the survey). She was delivered by a woman suffering from psychological disorders.

The caretaker explained that

***“One rainy morning, I found a mad (mentally ill) woman with a baby in the cold. This suffering baby needed protection from the mother. Now, this woman has given birth to another baby, and I also feel my responsibility to protect the baby again from her for safety.”***

Due to the poor prospects the baby faced, the caretaker was granted permission to take care of the baby from her husband and the village leader. The caretaker received an authorization document from the district government to foster the child, and she has lived with the baby for three years. Now, the caretaker is looking for educational assistance for Shamim and requested assistance from SORAK. Moreover, the mother of Shamim delivered another baby, and the caretaker of Shamim would like to take care of the new born baby due to the risk of child neglect and or abuse.



Left: The three-and-a-half-year-old girl Shamim who was born from a woman with psychological disorders

Right: The foster mother at the meeting with the community development officer of the Mubende District local government. To the left: caretaker

## 3. Miracle Ahimbisibwe

Another boy, aged three years old (at the time of the survey), was abandoned seven months ago in the woods. He currently lives with the village leader, Mr. Tukahirwa Christopher, and 10 family members in a house with two bedrooms. Although the caretaker has received limited social support from the local government in the form of a bed mattress, bed sheets and soap, it is not enough to support him.

Mr. Tukahirwa Christopher expressed the urgent need for support, first, by providing social support in the form of basic necessities, and second, by taking care of the child with the support of orphanage a baby home. There, social care would be provided as a search for relatives and or possible foster parents. The government and SORAK understand that the family members taking care of the baby are left with the economic burden. At Mr. Christopher's home, material support provided to Miracle does not benefit him. This is because whatever the district provides, it is shared with other needy children in the hosting home.





Above are the photos taken by household members, including caretakers, SORAK and a community volunteer, and the Community development officer.

### Current Problems and Challenges

In general, women are more economically and socially vulnerable in many cases than men. Adolescent mothers, single mothers, and mothers working as sex workers are especially vulnerable because they do not have support from others (partners, family members, and communities) and do not have a safety net to support their lives financially and in society. Therefore, many of them do not have the capacity to raise their children and their children are often abandoned.

In addition, the limited assistance of necessities such as a bed mattress, a bed sheet, and soap are provided only once when the caretaker accepts responsibility of the baby. These materials are provided for the baby, but however, often are used by other family members. Because the social support from government is extremely limited, the family who is taking care of orphans faces an economic burden, including educational expenses. Therefore, it is hard for them to take care of such orphans in the long term, as well as provide educational opportunities.

The district has only one orphanage for abandoned children; however, it is already at capacity and incapable of providing shelter to the increasing number of abandoned babies. Thus, SORAK and other related associations often receive requests for child protection and education for abandoned children.

Based on the research and above information, this project proposes to establish the “*Home of Hope*” as a safe home for abandoned children.

### “Home of Hope” Project Description

- **Goal:** Establish a “*Home of Hope*” as a safe environment and shelter for abandoned, vulnerable children by securing the well-being of children. In an environment with care and support from staff, babies and children will develop trust and healthy human bonds.
- **Locality targeted:** Mubende District, Uganda.
- **Targeted population:** The Home will focus on receiving children who lost their parents during infancy due to illness, or who were abandoned by their parents, or who were born to vulnerable mothers such as PWDs (persons with psychosocial disability, etc.)



- **Operation:** For this project, SORAK will work with the **Global Bridge Network (GBN)**<sup>2</sup> and accept a maximum of up to 40 children at the home. At the initial stage, a small number of children will be admitted. The Home will be managed by eight care mothers, one of whom will be a manager of the Home when 40 children are admitted. One care mother will take care of five children. According to the advice from a Mubende District probation officer, one mother can adequately take care of five babies. These mothers are required to obtain qualifications/certification/experience in social work, administration, and early child development. The children will be brought to the home by the Mubende District government after officially being identified and registered as being abandoned.
- **Roles of the “Home of Hope”**  
The Home will provide care and serve as a transition shelter where children will stay during a short period of time until SORAK can determine their immediate relatives, family members, legal guardian or adoption, and secure a safe living environment. When relatives and foster families are not found, children will stay with SORAK for a period no longer than six years. SORAK will send the children, who are unable to get foster/adoption parents by the age of five, to the *Precious Child Learning Center* run by SORAK for primary education. After seventh grade, the children will be sent to a vocational training school. SORAK believes that basic education and vocational skills will help the children develop life skills critical for their economic livelihood and survival. SORAK will strive to find foster parents as well as adoptive parents through a network with other organizations. Children over a certain age will be connected with other organizations providing social care. SORAK will also work with the government to undertake reintegration, fostering or adoption processes.
- **Guest rooms**  
The Home will establish several guest rooms for receiving visitors (international/national volunteers/students, visitors who come to learn about and/or participate in the activities of SORAK.) The Home will accommodate them and receive an accommodation fee to run the Home.
- **Women’s vocational training center**  
The Home will also establish a vocational training center for women. Women will learn how to process foods and add values such as snacks, doughnuts, cakes and breads, among others, and create crafts such as accessories, soaps, and candles. The Home will serve as a training and entrepreneurial incubation center that will continuously train women quickly in learning entrepreneurial skills that will help to economically empower women. In addition, these products will be marketed to earn income for the Home’s operation as well as to supplement the children’s diet at the Home.

Empowering such women who are suffering from poverty would help to solve the fundamental problems of child abandonment. In order to support such mothers to become

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<sup>2</sup> GBN is a non-profit organization registered in Japan in 2016 that aims to bridge people in the world by promoting cross-cultural communication, international support and global social business.



independent to make their living, through the sales of products created at the Home we aim to generate income for them while sustaining the operation of the Home.



Training bakery in progress: Mothers at the home will be introduced to this activity for income generation.

## ➤ **Planned process**

### **Process 1**

- 1.1 Receiving approval for architectural design from the district physical planning unit.<sup>3</sup> This is an office mandated to approve building plans at the district local government.
- 1.2 Arrange building materials and local contractor and fit-outs including electricity and water.
- 1.3 Construction of the facility as per approved architectural plan including bedrooms, kitchen, dining room, shower and laundry rooms, guest rooms, etc.
- 1.4 Purchase of furniture, daily goods, and necessities to run the Home
- 1.5 Hold official opening ceremony of the Home.

### **Process 2**

- 2.1 Procure and install play/educational materials for children.
- 2.2 Conduct children/baby medical checkups and a regular supply of basic necessities.
- 2.3 Hire care mothers and other staff who will work at the home.

### **Process 3**

- 3.1 Work together with the local government to locate immediate relatives and potential foster parents for children.
- 3.2 Conduct Early Childhood Development (ECD) training for caretakers of children aged two years old and above.
- 3.3 Conduct income-generating activities to sustain the operation of the Home.

## ➤ **Expected outcome**

1. Construction of the Home of Hope in the Mubende District will enable abandoned children to stay and grow near their original community, which makes it easier to find their relatives or adopted families.
2. Through this project, abandoned children will receive physical, social, and psychological support as well as opportunities to improve early childhood education and learning abilities.
3. The creation of guest rooms will help to provide accommodation to visitors and interns and let them participate in volunteer activities related the Home. In addition, such opportunities will help them to become involved in the areas of child education and protection in the future.

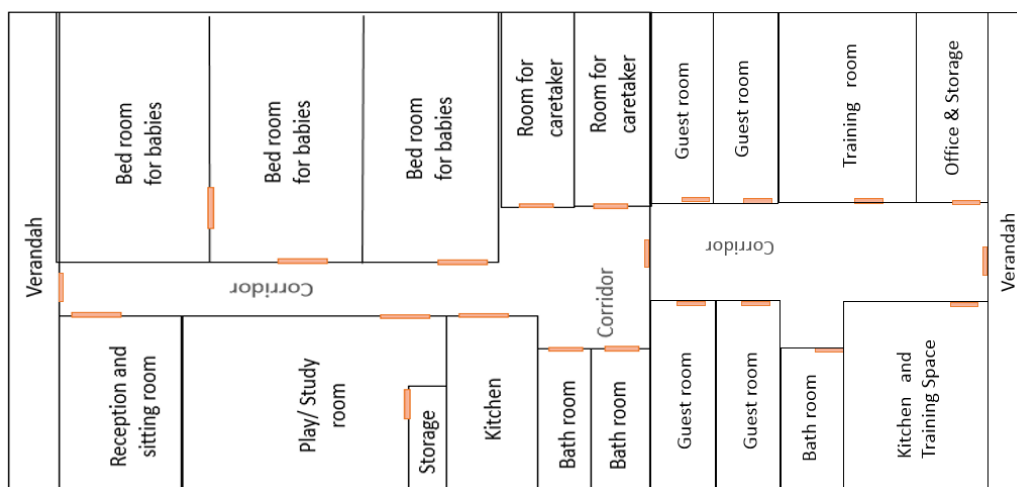
<sup>3</sup> Office responsible for approving building plans at the local district government





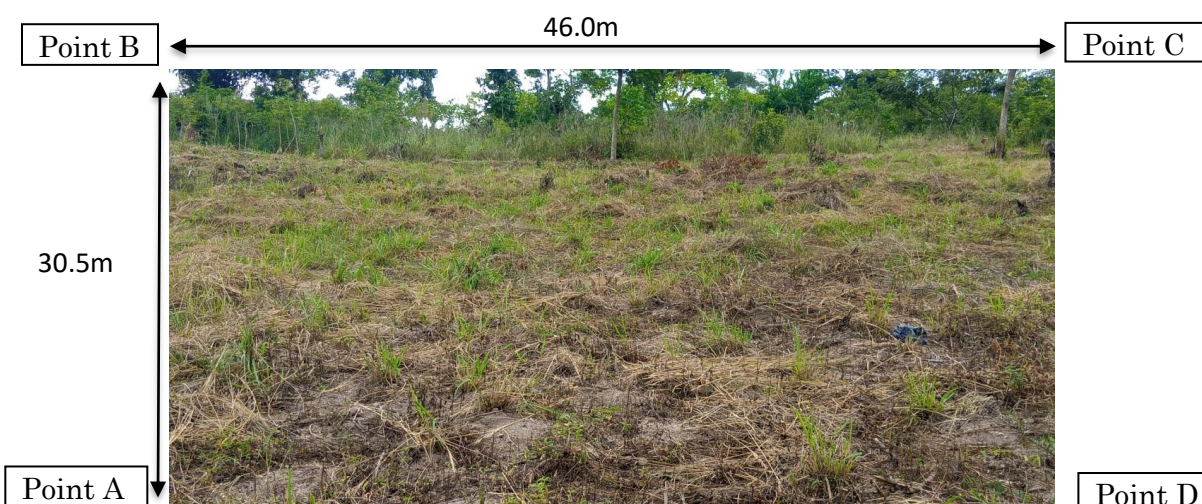
4. The vocational training center will help women, as valued members of society, to gain living skills and become financially independent. Also, participation in income generating activities together with women in similar circumstances will assist and empower them in developing a social network, which would ultimately lead to solving the root causes of child abandonment due to poverty and a lack of social support.
5. Through the various income generation activities mentioned above, the Home will be based on a profitable operational system and sustainable facility, thereby protecting the increasing number of orphans.

### ➤ Design for the *Home of Hope*



### ➤ Land for construction

- Location: Mubende District, UEB Zone, Church Road - Mulago
- Area: 46m X 30.5m = 1,403m<sup>2</sup>





Point A ⇒ Point B

Point B ⇒ Point C



Point C ⇒ Point D

Point D ⇒ Point A



➤ **Operation of the Home**

SORAK will be responsible for all operations, day-to-day management of the Home, and the supervision of care mothers. Direct supervision of the Home operation and assurance that staff meet their required role will be under SORAK supervision. The early childhood education centre will also be under the direct management of SORAK.

➤ **Security of the Home**

In order to ensure security, a fence with a perimeter wall is necessary. The Home's gate and surroundings will further be secured with security guards employed under the project. Further security precautions will be taken by maintaining constant contact with the police station located within a short distance from the Home.

➤ **Sustainability of the project**

SORAK will secure financial sustainability based on the following:

- 1) Support of goods from the district government (bed mattresses, soap, food, etc.)
- 2) Donations/grants from international/local NGOs, individual persons
- 3) Income from renting guest rooms at the Home
- 4) Establishing a women's group participating in vocational training such as food processing and craft making and the sale thereof
- 5) Food for children will be mainly sourced from SORAK's agricultural fields.

**Background of the Implementation Partners**

- **SORAK Development Agency (SORAK)**





SORAK is a Ugandan local NGO established in 2003, working with the vision to realize an improved quality of life among vulnerable persons in Uganda and to actively contribute to a sustainable community and national development. SORAK aims to fulfill its mission, through the protection of human rights and empowerment of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups in Uganda by providing sustainable interventions in the areas of health, water and sanitation, education, environmental protection, capacity building, networking, advocacy, and partnership development.

### Global Bridge Network (GBN)

The Global Bridge Network (GBN) is a non-profit organization registered in Japan in 2016 that aims to bridge people and communities around the world by promoting cross-cultural communication, international support, and global social business. GBN builds a win-win relationship between people by promoting understanding amongst different nations and their cultures, as well as providing support to each other. GBN has been partnering with SORAK to implement the following projects: 1. Improvement of school environment to combat Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) challenges to stop adolescent girls' school dropouts in Uganda and 2. Environmental protection through expanding lemon grass growing and education in Uganda. In addition to these projects, GBN and SORAK are going to launch the *Home of Hope* project.

### Project budget

#### Construction fees

(USD)

1	Materials for construction of foundation	4,140
2	Materials for construction of building	12,920
3	Outsourcing fee for construction	5,120
4	Other materials (electrical components, door locks, electric lights)	680
5	Electric distribution lines, etc.	430
6	Installing play/study materials	850
7	Furniture (chairs, desks, beds, shelves etc.)	3,840
8	Shutters (doors, windows) and paint	5,550
Total		33,530

#### Operation costs per year

(USD)

1	Labor fees (care mothers, guard)	2,880
2	Food and daily goods for children	6,000
3	Regular health check of children	300
4	Medical fees for children	800
5	Training equipment and materials for women	7,000
Total		16,980