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# FINDING SOLUTIONS



# THE BOYS

**The Boys parents have been traced. The mother has a new husband with 3 children and is not willing to take the kids in. The father is willing to take the children, but the children say they would rather go back to the tin shack we found them in. Finding a way forward is complicated.**

Most of the work to date has been focused on these 4 boys. We have successfully traced both their mother and their father and they both still reside in Kampala less than a few miles from the boys.

Mother now has a new partner and kids to look after and is not willing to take the boys in. The father is willing to take the boys but he also has a new partner and children.

While the father is willing to take in the boys, he currently lives in a one-room home with his wife and 3 children. He is a security guard at a market and earns 150,000 Uganda shillings a month (which is about \$60 CAD).

Assuming the boys decided to stay with their father, it is felt that this home environment would be untenable and we would need to engage to help the family make a better living. It seems however that we will not be required to invest in the father because the boys have decided they would prefer to try to find a way forward on their own.

We have had several lengthy meetings with the boys now. We have heard their thoughts on both their mother and father and they have shared clearly that they feel they are best finding work and beginning to support themselves. We have also shared a lot of reality with them about life as an adult. In the end, this decision is the boys to make and we will do all we can to help them.



At this time, the agreed upon solution with the boys is to help them stand on their own feet. The two older boys (15 & 13) will have to earn an income to provide food and shelter. In Uganda, there is no social services department to take the boys to, nor are we aware of an NGO that has a mandate for this sort of situation.

The boys have an interest in mechanics and we see a way that they might be able to apprentice with a local mechanic and gain the skills they need.

## WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ?

Through the course of getting to know the boys and their family, the team has learned a lot about their background. I thought I would digest a number of details that have stood out to me as significant:

- The 4 boys appear to have a fairly strong bond, possibly due to their tumultuous childhood together
- The birth mother has a new partner and she is caring for what we believe are his 3 children
- The step father is not willing to take care of children that are not his own and the birth mother is not willing to lose her partner over these boys (this is not unusual)
- The birth father seems willing to take in the boys but the boys feel this will not work

In order to accomplish this, our team will work along side the boys in a three pronged process:

1. Get training and employment at a motorcycle repair shop. We have consulted nearby and this is a realistic option that could give them an employable skill.
2. Find affordable home nearby that can be equipped to support life for the boys.
3. Learn about how to manage finances. The team will work with the boys to build a budget and learn to manage their funds.

- The boys say they have tried to live with the father twice now and in each case the relationship failed (each boy has his own stories of neglect or abuse)
- The boys tell us their birth father and step mother were previously provided with financial assistance in order to improve their income and take in the boys, this seems not to have been effective
- The boys speak Luganda and English but the birth father speaks neither of these languages, further complicating the relationship
- The step mother seems to have been reluctant to take care of the boys as they are not her children, she also seems to have been abusive toward the boys (not unusual here)
- It also seems likely that the birth mother has imprinted some of her hostility for the birth father into the boys

# THE LITTLE ONES

**Children are the living messages we send  
to a time we will not see.**

**– John F Kennedy**

**The little ones mother has been traced and we are expecting her to return to Kampala this week. Then we can begin to work with her to find a way for her and her children to survive.**

Our local team has managed to trace the mother to a small village outside Kyotera which is not far from the Tanzania border. The mother told us that when she left the kids, their father was with them. She said that she was not aware that the kids had been left alone. We offered to relocate the kids to the village but the mother explained that they would not be welcomed.

The kids grandmother was ill when our team arrived in the village and some funds were provided to help her get medical help. Then after some careful negotiations with the kids mother, she agreed to return to Kampala to the kids but she explained that she had no way to support the family and would need some help.

We are now expecting mother to return first thing next week. We will then begin working with her to find some simple employment she could do to raise the funds she needs to support the family each month. It is possible that she can be equipped to wash clothes or sell something in order to earn a living.



# CHURCH KIDS

**There are 8 more children abandoned in our community. These kids are currently living in a church building and getting scraps from church goers. We prioritized the children on the streets, but these kids will also need help.**

When we initially responded to the abandonment situation in our community, we were unsure how bad the issue really was. We took a walk into the slum with some locals to assess what was going on and on that day we met 16 children before I stopped the process. I felt like a doctor triaging patients as we prioritized the 8 kids in immediate need and then put the other 8 kids on a waiting list. While we are still working to find stable home situations for the first 8 kids, they now have food and shelter. But what was going on with the other 8 kids?

This morning I looked at the pictures I took of the remaining 8 kids. These kids are living in a local church. This church is a structure built out of wooden poles and tin roofing material as you can see in the pictures. They had shelter and they were getting a little food from church goers which made them a lower priority.

As I looked at these 8 kids waiting for help, I spotted a small one in each family and my heart fell. I sat thinking that these little children wake up each day knowing their parents abandoned them and they may not eat. As I thought about this I decided it was now time to begin engaging with these kids too.

So far, we've provided a lady living at the church with 30kgs of Maize and asked her to share a daily meal with these kids. Maize is a flour made from Corn and locals make a porridge called Posho out of it. Soon our team will begin tracing the kids families in the hope of finding someone to reunite them to.

