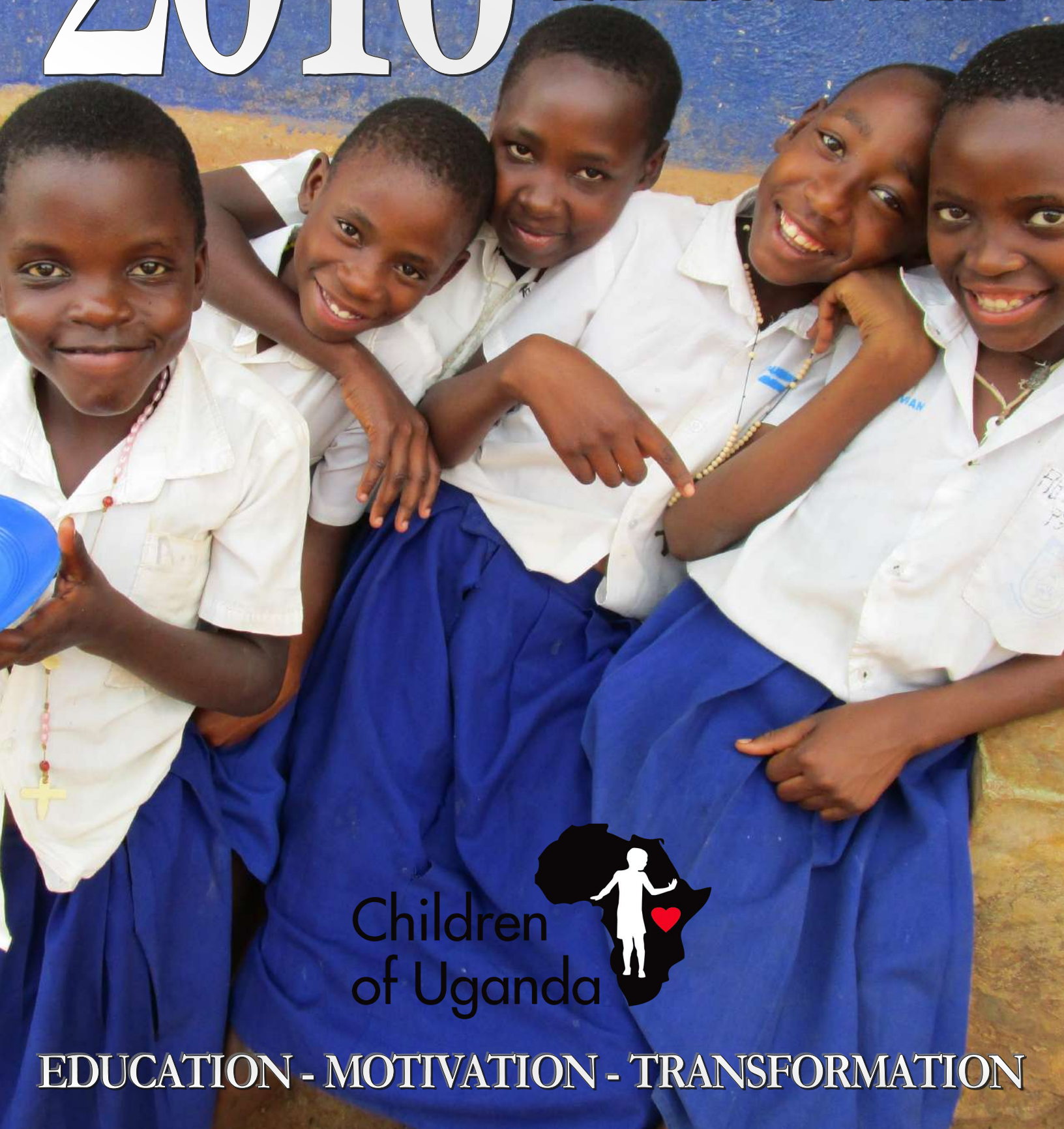


# 2016 IMPACT REPORT



Children  
of Uganda



EDUCATION - MOTIVATION - TRANSFORMATION

The 2016 Annual Impact Report includes activities during January—December, 2016.

### **Our Mission:**

To confront poverty and social injustice in Uganda, through the education and empowerment of its most vulnerable children and their families.

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**PO Box 659**

**Charles Town, WV 25414**

(800) 531-9612 (toll-free)

[info@childrenofuganda.org](mailto:info@childrenofuganda.org)

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# Focus on Family

Children of Uganda (COU) has had a tremendous year turning the vision of our Strategic Plan into reality. Numerous gains have been made in each of our key objective areas: Education, Health Services, Advocacy & Empowerment Programs and Sustainability.

The accomplishments detailed in the pages that follow, we owe to our hardworking students, entrepreneurial guardians, committed COU staff, volunteers and most importantly—*friends like you who provide the resources and support to make it all happen!*

We are excited that Ritah Namakula, a long-time COU team member, has stepped into the role of Program Director in Uganda this year. Ritah brings not only years of experience and expertise to the position, but also a genuine connection to the heart of our students—*since she was also raised by a single mother who made great sacrifices to keep her 6 children in school.*



**Program Director, Ritah Namakula (far left), leads team members Prossie Lamunu (center) and Deborah Nakiduuli (far right) in delivering emergency food and supplies to sponsored student Matia Kabanda's family.**

That being said, 2016 was not without its challenges. On Sunday, September 10th a deadly 5.9 magnitude earthquake in Tanzania sent shockwaves through neighboring Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. In the Kamuli and Rakai Districts of Uganda where we serve, 4 people died and 7 were seriously injured. **Over 500 Ugandan families** were left homeless as a result of the earthquake's destruction.

Many of our sponsored students were affected, including Julius Mugenyi—whose home in Kyempi Village was on the verge of collapse when our staff arrived at the scene. He was so concerned about the safety of his aunt that he offered to leave boarding school and become a day scholar so the extra money could be used to rebuild his house.

*This young man was willing to sacrifice the quality of his education in an effort to help his loved one—illustrating just how deeply the vulnerability of our students is intertwined with the state of their families.*

**You may have noticed that our mission statement has changed to include the families of our supported children. Over the years, our philosophy of service has expanded to serve youth more comprehensively—through broader education and empowerment programs (*tutoring and youth camps*), access to preventative and vital healthcare services, as well as investments in the guardians who love and care for our students.**

In the short-term, *thanks to supporters like you*, we were able to rebuild Julius' home and provide food baskets to families surviving on one meal a day after the disaster. However, the vision we hold for our beneficiaries is one of long-term, self-sustainability. We have already begun to make a shift in 2017 by investing in even more Income Generating Activities (IGA's), expanding local savings and loan programs and offering empowerment talks for the guardians. We hope you will join us in our continued efforts to make lasting change in Uganda and the world.

With Sincerest Gratitude,

Ellen Boudreau,  
Board Chair

Pamela Brannon,  
Executive Director

# Results You Can Count On!

**117** primary children received brand new school shoes. In addition, 26 mattresses, 16 bedsheets and 12 blankets were provided at school for those in need.



**223** mosquito nets were gifted to boarding students to help them sleep safely and comfortably.

**20** COU guardians were chosen to benefit from income generating activities (IGAs) and were trained in business and financial management. Long-term, sustainable skills will help our guardians become more self-supporting and better able to care for themselves and their families.



**160** home visits were carried out by our social workers and program assistants to monitor the welfare of sponsored children and their families (63 in Kampala/Mukono and 97 from Rakai). Water, food baskets, mosquito nets and bicycles were also distributed to some of our most vulnerable families.



**70** COU alumni members actively attended meetings in 2016. They also established a special dance group to help with fundraising, advocacy and increased visibility to attract new partners on the ground in Uganda.

# Education and Mentorship

This year, 207 children were enrolled in our sponsorship program: 119 primary; 55 secondary; 11 vocational; and 22 university students. 7 children were recruited at the beginning of the 2016 academic year – 2 boys and 5 girls.

Detailed educational assessments were conducted for all students to help identify those needing additional tutoring (*Moving forward, we will be performing assessments over 3 terms throughout the year*). Selected students received help during the school term and on holiday breaks. And during school visits, our staff counseled students one-on-one to provide support to those who were struggling academically and/or emotionally.

A career counseling program was also set-up for our secondary, vocational and university students in 2016 to help them make smart choices and to illuminate pathways to success. We aim to empower our students as they advance in their education and to provide them with the tools that they will need to be successful and self-supporting.

Book banks were established at partner schools as another way of ensuring our students have the proper resources to increase their academic excellence. We provided textbooks to St. Stephen's Secondary School Bajja, Mbuye Farm School, and St. John's Senior Secondary. Book banks were also established at our Kampala and Rakai offices for students to access as needed.

It was an honor this year to be recognized by our longtime partner St. Cyprian High School (*one of the top secondary schools in all of Uganda*) with a Certificate of Appreciation for the services rendered on behalf of vulnerable children. This inspired us to recognize our own top performing students at the primary and secondary levels with a reward for academic achievement. We were encouraged to see that this had a profound impact on our students and motivated others to work even harder on their studies.



***"I've always said thank you to my sponsors and I will keep saying it because I don't think I will ever feel like I have said it enough."***

**-Julius Agaba  
(Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy).**



**COU Social Worker, Rose Nalwoga, finds it natural to mentor vulnerable youth because she was once in their place as a sponsored child herself.**

Again this year, COU participated in the International Women's Day charity walk. We were honored to give back to the community and maintain strong social responsibility. This helped us encourage our students to participate in events that are focused on two of our core values: child equality and child protection.

Moreover, inspirational school assemblies in partnership with the Cornerstone Group were organized to teach students about giving back to communities through service projects. We strongly advocate for volunteering and provide such opportunities to our students before taking on volunteers from outside the organization. In fact, two of our sponsored students (*originally recruited as volunteers*) became COU staff members – one as a Social Worker and the other is our Finance Assistant.

COU's alumni association was also successfully reinstated in 2016. The group met monthly and began strategizing activities they could implement to mentor the younger students and give back to the community.

# “The Greatest Wealth is Health”

In alliance with ALIVE Medical Services (AMS), health assessments and medical check-ups were performed for 47 students from the Kampala/Mukono operational areas. This exercise is ongoing and has continued into 2017. In addition, a new partnership was forged between COU and the Medical Dental Missioners Africa (MDMA). They have pledged to provide free medical and dental services for our students in Rakai.

COU also continued our commitment to ensuring that the most vulnerable children (*who would otherwise not have access to a doctor*) received medical treatment. 11 children were supported with critical care in 2016. Student vaccinations are also being updated and overseen by partner healthcare providers.

We recognize that healthy and strong children have greater self-esteem, are better able to concentrate on their studies and ultimately perform their very best.

Therefore, we have continued our expansive initiative of improving partner school health clinics. Our first project was at Kamuli Primary School (*pictured above*) where we oversaw a complete renovation and restocking of their facility. This included large movable medicine cabinets, new patient beds, nurses desk and chairs, medical supplies and more. We are proud of the clinic’s ability to now offer vital care not only to our sponsored students, but to over 1,800 community children who also attend Kamuli.



Support for other partner schools will continue into 2017 with donations of medical supplies and improvements to their respective health clinics.

Health education seminars and special programs like “Sports Day” offered tips to students on how to stay healthy.

Feminine personal hygiene products were also distributed, which gave our girls self-confidence and increased the number of days they stayed in school each month.

It is our goal to keep finding new ways to provide better access to basic health care services, as well as counseling and psycho-social support programs for sponsored and local community children.



**Students enjoy a day of healthy fun and competition on “Sports Day”.**

# Investing in Hopes and Dreams

20 COU guardians we identified this year to start-up new income generating activities (IGAs) and to receive specialized training for their chosen projects. Guardians were also equipped with financial management knowledge, which encouraged them to save money and join a Village, Savings and Loan Association (VSLA).

4 new VSLAs were set up during 2016 – 3 in the Kampala/Mukono area and one in Rakai. All groups were well managed and members shared their savings at the end of the year. In Kampala/Mukono, the profits totaled 11,212,000 shillings (\$3,075 USD) and in Rakai they totaled 446,000 shillings (\$126 USD). Members used their earnings to start up personal IGAs or add capital to their already existing small businesses (*some of which are pictured below*). This is a vital component of our Family Empowerment Program (FEP) – teaching guardians long-term, sustainable skills to help them become self-supporting and better able to care for their families.

Board Members Ann Davis, Maria White and Cheryl Hargrow (*pictured bottom left with two of our guardians*) traveled to Uganda this summer and visited many of the women benefiting from our FEP programs. They delivered many in-kind gifts to improve their livelihood and self-sustainability including several water tanks and bicycles. And while we work to expand IGAs for more guardians, we recognize that many families are living in extraordinary poverty. Therefore, our staff identifies our most vulnerable students and provides them with the mandatory scholastic and personal requirements their guardians simply cannot provide.

Many parents and guardians are eager to join a VSLA, start up a business of their own and sustain their families. We have witnessed first-hand how a small investment can help realize life-long dreams. And so, it is our mission to expand these transformative opportunities to more and more deserving women in the year ahead.



# A Sustainable Future

One of our greatest enhancements this year was the adoption of a new monitoring and evaluation database. A team of consultants from *Cable Media* were hired to train and equip our staff with basic skills in using the software, which now enables us to better track our progress against performance goals.

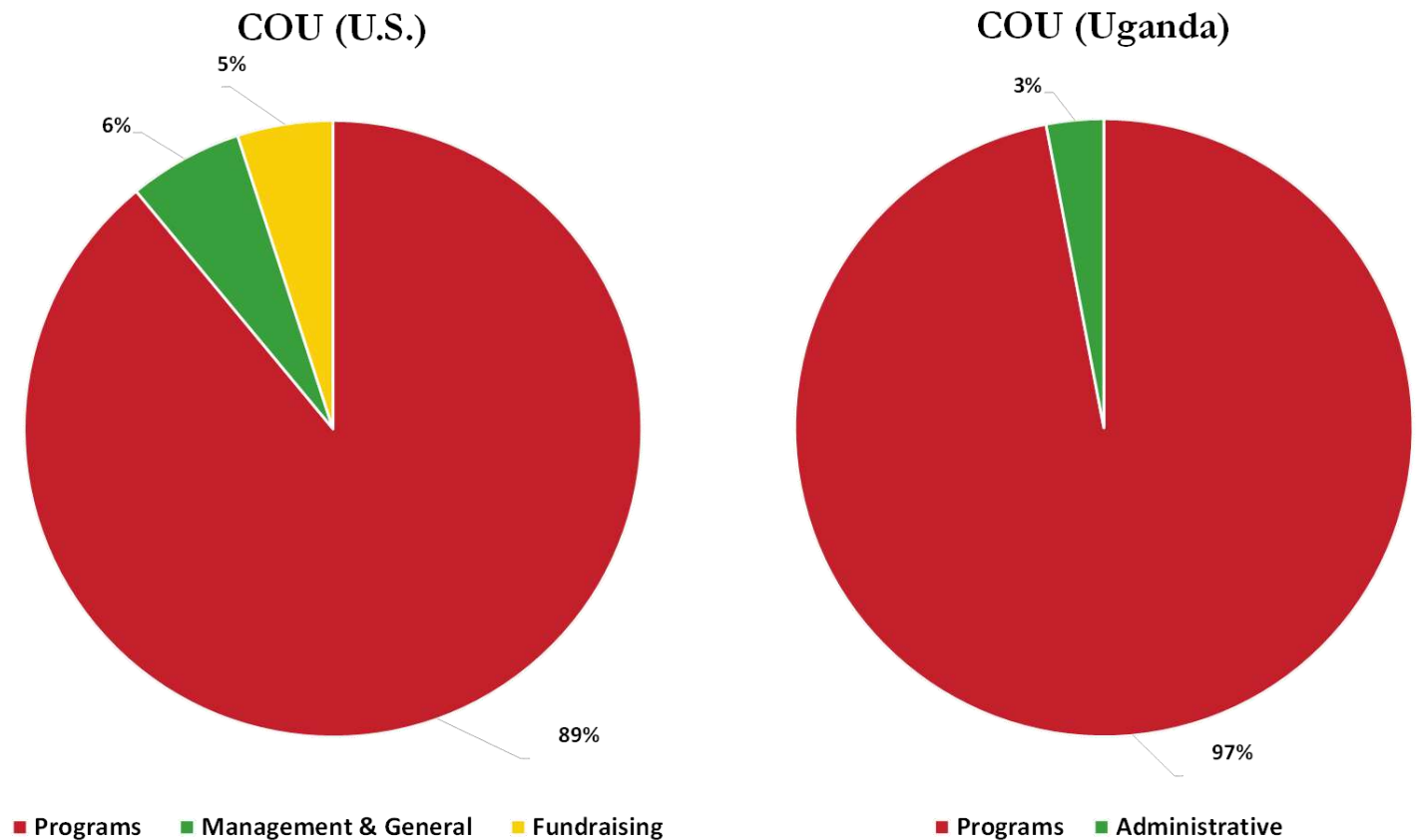
This resulted in more robust monthly, quarterly and annual reports, which are critical in evaluating the implementation of our Strategic Plan objectives, monitoring our students' welfare and academic performance, as well as recognizing successes and areas to improve.

In addition, we were able to increase work efficiency for both the Kampala and Rakai administrative offices by purchasing power inverters - to keep the lights on and productivity moving through consistent blackouts (*an ongoing challenge in Uganda*). With less power interruptions, the US team was also able to participate via Skype in Uganda's monthly management meetings, resulting in increased collaboration and oversight of the organization.



*With these crucial investments and a growing community of loyal supporters, we see a bright and sustainable future ahead for COU. "Tusiima nyo," which in Luganda means: "We are very thankful."*

# Financial Overview



*\*Audited Financial Statements are always available upon request..*



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