

# Musa

“ I didn't know about my father. I grew up with my grandmother in Nalugugu , a village in Sironko district. My mother lived in town. She rarely came to the village to check on me.

Grandma took me to a government aided primary school. She did not have to pay school fees, but, as she grew older, she could not raise money for my books and school uniform. I dropped out of school and stayed home, helping my grandmother digging in her small garden. I felt I had been denied by life itself - not being able to go to school like other children.

When I was 11, I walked from the village to Mbale - a distance of 40 km - for a better life. I stayed on the streets for several days, at times with no food. Conditions got worse and worse. I decided to find means to reach Kampala, the capitol, because I thought life on its' streets would be better.

I helped traders carry their luggage. When I had enough money, I got on the bus to Kampala. As a new comer on Kampala streets life was not easy because the boys on the street were ruder than I expected. I hate to think what would have happened if I stayed on the streets. In ten years maybe I would be dead because it is rough - you eat bad food and you are forced to do robberies and steal to get money.

After 6 months on the streets, we were rounded up by police and taken to a children's remand facility. An NGO that looks after street kids bailed me out. I was glad, I was guaranteed a meal every day and a place to sleep. However my deepest childhood desire- to go back to school - was not met.

I think it was God's will I met Steve and joined L.E.A.D Uganda, an educational leadership program. L.E.A.D gave me the chance to study. I work hard. I received the highest score ever achieved by a street kid on my 7<sup>th</sup> grade national exam. I am in 11<sup>th</sup> grade at Seeta High School Mukono. I have an 'A' average. I am so happy and fulfilled.

L.E.A.D Uganda reunited me with my family. Uncle Steve and Stephen Magezi (Deputy Director) took me back home. I was very, very happy to see my Grandmother again and my Mother too. They didn't cry. They were just overjoyed to see me. They are really proud of me now.

I am looking forward to becoming an engineer so I can help children. I will fight poverty, bring street kids back to God and back to school, and fight corruption. Someday I will buy my grandmother a big piece of land and build her a house.”

