

LEAD Uganda: Turning Forgotten Children into Leaders

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (1 page)

The Issue

The children of Uganda are suffering. The AIDS pandemic and the conflict in the north has devastated whole regions of Uganda, amplifying poverty and despair. 1.9 million orphans saw their parents die of AIDS, one million children live in IDP camps, tens of thousands were abducted by rebels and forced to become child-soldiers and sex-slaves. We serve these children.

What We Do

LEAD Uganda locates forgotten children with innate talents and molds them into leaders. LEAD Uganda is a partnership between the Stephen Shamea Foundation which raises funds and Concern for the Future, an indigenous Ugandan-run non-profit.

LEAD Uganda is a leadership program focusing on marginalized youth. LEAD Uganda gives them the world-class social, entrepreneurial, and communication skills, as well as, the confidence, necessary to lead their countries into the future. We prepare them for university by placing them in the best boarding schools. LEAD Uganda runs workshops in web design, video production, and communication. They alleviate their issues with counseling and love. We imbue the children with a strong work ethic, a devotion to democratic values, and a desire to serve. We give a strong voice to those whose dreams and aspirations are seldom heard.

Our unique contribution is creating a leadership program for forgotten children. Our distinctive, original vision is seeing that the solution to Africa's problems exists in the hearts and minds of the current, generation of neglected and excluded children. Healing traumatized children and reintegrating them into their communities, makes the community stronger. Educating leaders expands human capital. Our students will become lawyers, judges, doctors, business owners, government administrators, journalists, artists, and aid givers.

How Our Program Works

Our students had nothing. If they are going to be leaders and compete at top schools, they need to enter on equal footing with the wealthy children who inhabit the best schools. We furnish our children with books, school supplies, school uniforms, clothing, shoes, mosquito nets. We ensure they can go on class trips and take part in school activities. We build their confidence, as well as, their knowledge.

We give our scholars a high level of supervision. We work with them at school, hiring coaches and visiting them regularly during the school term. We run specialized workshops during school breaks in topics such as web design, video production, and communications. Our staff and community volunteers alleviate their issues with counseling, emotional support, and love. Our community partners ensure they maintain contact with their families and communities. Our student-members are frequently sick with malaria and other ailments common to poor and refugee children in East Africa. We provide them with excellent medical care so they do not miss school.

This approach works wonders within a year or less. LEAD Uganda has 75 students in the best secondary schools. One-third were in the top ten of their class. Two of our students were named the best students in Uganda by New Vision, the leading newspaper in Uganda. Seven of our students are prefects or class officers. Considering that they were out of school, had nothing when they joined, we consider their achievements inspiring.

Our approach is holistic. LEAD Uganda melds our 75 student-members into a family, a movement. We inculcate them with a sense of duty, a belief they can make things better, and the skills to make their dreams a reality. The students are a force for good. They burn with the desire to help other disposed Africans achieve their place in the sun.