

# CHILDREN ON THE EDGE CHILD PROTECTION TEAMS

**CHILDREN**  
ON THE EDGE



BUILDING A

PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENT

FOR CHILDREN IN

UGANDAN SLUM COMMUNITIES



## INTRODUCTION

Despite an almost universal ratification of the Convention for the Rights of the Child, the protection of children from exploitation, neglect and abuse is weak in many places across the world.

Legislation at national level often has trouble translating to the grass roots of vulnerable communities. Due to lack of resources, awareness and motivation, the implementation of child rights standards can be patchy at best. The response to this problem by charitable organisations can often be shaped by attention to symptoms rather than causes and the injection of capital rather than long-term community development.

The Uganda Police Crime report has reported child sexual abuse as one of the top crimes in Uganda, with other forms of child abuse; physical, emotional, social and economic shown as being on the rise. Currently, child-sensitive aspects of social protection activities are not well-articulated and child protection systems strengthening activities are limited<sup>1</sup>.

Through building relationships in small Ugandan slum communities, Children on the Edge have developed a simple Child Protection Team (CPT) model, which has proved effective in supporting communities in the creation of a protective environment for their children.

The CPTs act as a link between the community children and the duty bearers that are responsible for their care (i.e. parents, local counsellors, police, schools etc). They are a voice for the voiceless, intervening and advising in situations where children are at

risk. They are advocates with a focus on upholding child rights. They are also the eyes and ears of the institutions that can help.

The model is low cost, sustainable, community owned and rooted in a child rights approach. It does not have a 'one size fits all' method, it is responsive to the needs of each community, yet lends itself to the process of being simplified, replicated and scaled up to create change on a wider scale.

This approach does not detract from national frameworks set out for child protection, but identifies the capacities needed to support these frameworks at societal and familial level<sup>2</sup>. Within the context of these frameworks, communities are encouraged to identify gaps in child protection that are specific to their own area and connect with the relevant duty bearers. In partnership with these services and through the participation of the children themselves, they are trained and resourced to develop the factors that will keep their children safer in the long term.

This document will give a concise breakdown of the components necessary to create an effective Child Protection Team. It will then describe the development of this model through our initial pilot programme and its replication into the wider area.

Through the clarification of this model and the outlining of case studies profiling its success, we hope to provide a tool by which the approach can be replicated on a wider scale throughout vulnerable communities in Uganda and potentially beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> (2015) UNICEF and The Republic of Uganda - Situation Analysis of Children in Uganda

<sup>2</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child recognises that responsibilities to respect and ensure the rights of children extend in practice beyond the state to include children, parents, wider families, carers and non-state services and organisations. General Comment No. 5, supra note 6, 56.



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# 1. CHILD PROTECTION TEAM MODEL

## 1.1 Background

### Children on the Edge

Children on the Edge exists to help marginalised and forgotten children, who are living on the edge of their societies across the world. These are children without parental care, neglected or persecuted by their governments, ignored by international media and missed by large overseas agencies.

For over 25 years we have been working in partnership with local communities, helping them to create safe, child friendly environments. We support children to realise their rights, and restore the ingredients of a full childhood by generating hope, life, colour and fun.

Our expertise over this time has been built up working in situations of conflict, poverty and natural disaster. In addition to our child protection in Uganda, projects have included work with:

- Institutionalised children in Romania, Albania and Bosnia
- Kosovan refugee children in Albania and during the rebuilding process in Kosovo
- Traumatized children and youth post-conflict in Timor-Leste

- Children in post earthquake and tsunami hit Indonesia.
- Migrant, refugee and IDP (internally displaced people) children who have escaped ethnic cleansing and persecution in Burma or living within Burma and on its borders.
- Children in the post earthquake slums of Port au Prince,
- Working children and Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh
- Children from the Dalit 'untouchable' caste in India
- Syrian refugee children in Lebanon.

The projects undertaken with each of these groups are bespoke to the community we are working with. We support local people to give these children a safe environment where they are protected. Our work ensures that their rights are realised; in particular their rights to shelter, nourishment, education and play.

Our programmes are often used as models of good practice, leading to change on a larger scale and creating an impact that punches above our weight.





## Masese II slum, Uganda

Despite the high level of support expressed by the Ugandan government regarding child rights, due to lack of resources amongst other factors, these national commitments lack sufficient practical impact in many of the most vulnerable communities.

In 2011 we were invited to contribute to a children's project facilitated by a Ugandan NGO which was providing vocational training to teenagers in a very needy slum area surrounding Jinja, they identified a gap in the provision of safety and care for small children which we were asked to help address.

When we first began working in Masese II slum, children were extremely vulnerable to neglect, abuse and exploitation. Sanitary conditions were appalling, with rubbish piled throughout every stretch of the slum.

The main source of income was through unlicensed breweries which were not only physically dangerous for children but created a community of adults who were rarely sober.

This resulted in an environment where children were highly vulnerable to abuse.

Most seriously this neglect left children prone to abduction by perpetrators of child sacrifice, a practice that is sadly still common in many parts of Uganda.

Through building relationships with, and training people in the community, piece by piece we were able to support them in the creation of a protective environment for their children.

This group of volunteers provided with ongoing support, training and simple resources have motivated their neighbours to take pride in the area, to pursue productive sources of income to create an environment where children are safe.



## 1.2 The Seven Child Protection Team Components

This section will outline the basic components of creating, training and facilitating a Child Protection Team (CPT). The following sections will then give an overview of how this model served to create change through our pilot project and how it now being replicated into the wider area.

The vital components of Child Protection Teams are;

1. Community relationship building
2. Community led sensitisation
3. Election, training and resourcing of CPTs
4. Strengthening of connections with duty bearers
5. Education loans
6. The encouragement of child participation
7. Ongoing team training, retention and sustainability

### 1. Community Relationship Building

#### a) Identifying needs

The initial stages of most development projects are focused on needs assessments. With this model, building relationships with the community is essential to the identification of its needs. When starting out, although our staff have a thorough knowledge of the area through external data and statistics, these are just a context within which to place the voices of the people actually living and experiencing life in that area.

*"We always do a needs assessment and that's important, but we don't really know what's going on until we get to know the community and really talk to them."* Edwin Wanabe COTE Africa Programme Director

As a first step, members of the Children on the Edge Africa team visit the community and introduce themselves. They walk through the area and observe. They build trust and get to know people.

*"It is as simple as walking round and approaching those who are smiling at you. The next day you go back to those people,*

*ask how they came to the community and find out a bit more. If you identify someone who is responsive then you go back to them again the next day. In this process you begin to understand."* Babra COTE Africa Social Worker.

Through talking with local people they begin to get an impression about the needs and problems in the area. They then carry out surveys, play with the children and chat about their lives, make door to door visits, meet the community leaders and the chairpeople, talk to area councillors and the police. The triangulation of all these things builds up a picture of what the community identify as crucial for their children.

#### b) Building trust

*"You don't walk in like you're the boss. These people were here before you. You need to talk to them on their level, then they will open up. If you have meeting at a slum and you're thinking 'I'm so special, I can only touch things with my handkerchief' then next time no one will be at the meeting."* Babra COTE Africa Social Worker.

One of the main principles in building trust and ensuring the sustainability of the team is to avoid any kind of promise regarding resources and investment. Because of the fast turnover of various charitable organisations in vulnerable communities, when approached, people often expect the result to be a short lived project with a small group of beneficiaries. Consequently they either don't engage at all, or get involved with unrealistic expectations that lead to disappointment.

*"We don't promise anything. Our projects are completely owned by the community and they participate from the start. They identify the problems, they identify the solutions. They are a voice for the voiceless".* Winnie Biira COTE Africa

This process also serves to identify the potential members of the CPT, or at least people who can mobilise the community to engage with the sensitisation workshops in the next stage. Through the ongoing building of relationship with local people they begin to pinpoint 'opinion leaders' and pillars of the community. They are not looking for





politicians, but people that are trusted and followed, people that can motivate others.

Babra explains *"To establish who these people are, after we talk with a person I ask if I can have their number. I tell them we will be running a workshop and ask them to invite people. When the workshop happens I ask the attendees who told them about it, soon you see a pattern of influence. Also some people will talk about their difficulties and say 'I talked to this person with my problem'. It's quite a process but soon you see who is looked up to and relied upon and they are often the people who are vital in bringing change"*

## 2. Community-led sensitisation

*"It's in the workshops that we touch the real wounds of a community, the real issues come out"* Edwin Wanabe - COTE Africa Programme Director

Community sensitisation consists of a series of monthly child protection workshops tackling issues that have been identified by local people during the relationship building stage. If relationship building has been effective, the workshops will be well attended and act as catalysts for the creation of a protective environment for children in the area.

Workshops are often facilitated by members of the police, community development officers, health inspectors or chaired by local councillors to begin the process of building relationship between the community and the services available to it.

They also serve to further the understanding of needs. As the issues are broached and discussed, people open up about their own stories and the specific problems they are facing. At the end of each workshop, the COTE Africa team evaluate with the group whether the workshop met their objectives,

then they give them another week to identify the next topic that needs addressing.

Three months of these workshops lead into the election of the Child Protection Team.<sup>3</sup> Election, training and resourcing of new CPTs

## 3. Election, training and resourcing

### a) Election

The strategy of electing child protection team members following a series of workshops is based on a number of factors. Firstly it's best that people select those who will represent the children at a time when the values of child protection and child rights are fresh in their minds, as these are the same values that are important in building a child protection team. Secondly they are newly inspired and confident to create change in the community, resourced with all the information that has been imparted.

*"Sensitisation wakes the community up to the problems, if they respond well and they accept the problems, we then explain that we are just an organisation but they know the community more than we do. It is only them that can change the area, we request that there is a group that will change the area which is elected. They are the eyes and ears of the children, they can work when we are not there."* Edwin Wanabe COTE Africa Programme Director

The community are gathered for a meeting but not told there is going to be an election. This prevents potential canvassing or influence from politically motivated individuals in the area. At the meeting there is a basic refresher on all of the issues covered the workshops, a proposal about the formation of a voluntary team of 10 people and, if the community are in agreement, then there are nominations and an election.

The team then stand up so they are known, and going forward at the end of each workshop they stand up and we say that the community can report child abuse cases directly to them instead of the Children on the Edge staff.

The different roles to which people are elected to are; Chair person, Vice chair person, Treasurer, Secretary and six other team members.

#### b) Training

The training sessions that are held after the election and establishment of the CPT take them through the responsibilities associated with their roles.

They are trained on record keeping, basic counselling, confidentiality and the best interests of the child. They are coached on recognising the warning signs of abuse and domestic violence on children. They are thoroughly briefed on ethics, child protection policies, referral pathways, non discrimination and consent.

After this training they are competent in handling cases and confident in discerning when to refer a case to the police. All cases they deal with are reported back to the Children on the Edge staff who give them ongoing support as necessary.

They are then supported in creating a work plan. At this training session, the facilitator takes them through the basics, then asks them to draw up a draft work plan which is then discussed. They decide what activities are important within this period, what

resources they need to carry them out and which team members will implement them.

#### c) Resourcing

Over time and in response to the tools identified in the work plan, the teams are provided with a simple set of resources. These include:

- Gumboots - to ensure the team can access the muddy slums, even in wet weather, with their feet protected from jiggers
- T-shirts - so they can be identified as they walk around the community. The T-shirts have messages printed on the back inspiring action and awareness on an identified issue in the community
- A bicycle - for quick trips to refer cases to police or report emergencies
- A loud speaker - primarily as a warning system to alert community of the presence of individuals posing a threat to children. Also used to spread news in emergencies (i.e cholera outbreaks) or simply for community meeting announcements.
- ID cards - So they can be trusted and so someone else can't claim that they are on the CPT.
- Stationery to record cases.

Through their trainings they will learn to fundraise, but sometimes they will be given small amounts to help in their communication (i.e. phone credit). At a later stage there is an 'emergency fund' of 150,000 Ugandan shillings that they are given each quarter to help respond to emergency situations (e.g hospital visits for children).





d) CPT begins working within the community

Sensitisation workshops carry on after the election of the CPT, but they are based on the findings of the newly formed team rather than the community research done by Children on the Edge staff.

The CPT members fulfil their roles as they are going about their daily lives. Through their normal routine and work they will be interacting in the community. With the benefit of their training they can observe, ask questions and report back to the rest of the team about situations they come across.

Slowly the community recognises each team member and understands their role. By this time they are regularly approached on any issues regarding child protection and child rights. They are the first port of call for child safety.

The team meet each week and discuss any issues that have been brought to them and plan their work strategy accordingly. They record all cases with the stationery provided and are trained to know when to refer on to other agencies.

#### 4. Strengthening relationship with duty bearers

Throughout this entire process Children on the Edge develop strong relationships with local government officials, local councillors, police, and community leaders. These professionals will have been involved in the facilitation of the sensitisation workshops and are now well-known to the CPT members.

The CPT works in partnership with these duty bearers. As a result local people have their

cases taken seriously, dealt with quickly and without corruption or bribery.

In turn the police and other institutions can communicate through the CPT how people can get the best out of the service. They can also learn from the CPT about any current dangers and criminal activity that is harmful to children and act on the information quickly, tackling problems more effectively.

#### 5. Education funds

Education funds are small business loans given via the CPTs to the most vulnerable households, enabling them to create a source of income which covers the costs of providing for their children and sending them to school.

Before receiving the loans they are taken through group workshops where they acquire enterprise development knowledge and skills. They also work together to manage each other's expectations.

To receive the loan an individual will make a business plan and write an application with support from the CPT. They are given a timeframe within which to pay it back, by which time they have a thriving business, a child in school and a good knowledge of how to manage their own finances.

The repaid loan is then available to go someone else in need, they also pay a little interest (10%), so the pot can gradually increase, in order to help more people. The repayment of the loan with a little interest teaches business and budgeting skills, rather than dependency and makes the fund itself sustainable. For single mothers and



grandmothers the interest rate is reduced to 5%.

For some grandmothers that can't work, there are a small number of interest free loans. These are available as households like this are too scared to take the loan and find themselves trapped.

A major aim of this component is to grow self esteem, so the business applications only need to be very simple. The CPT forms a self help group who support each other in creating business plans and writing applications. They sign each others forms, promising to support each other to do well and get the loan paid back, in this way they support each other as a team.

As people continue to progress in their business, it opens their minds to wider options, many then request a second loan to expand. In time, the business in the area grows.

## 6. Child Participation

From a child rights perspective, the children we work with need to be encouraged to be agents of their own protection. They are not

obliged to fend for themselves, but their views are listened to regarding dangers and solutions. They are helped to gain a thorough awareness of their rights and taught about ways to avoid risks. All of this can contribute to making them less vulnerable and more resourceful.

This kind of agency needs support to develop. From the outset children are consulted about the problems in their area.

*"The voices of the children are vital in the initial assessment of an area. They can tell you places that are friendly to them. They tell you about people they run to in case they have a problem. They are naturally more honest as they just speak from the heart without putting a spin on it"* Edwin Wannabe COTE Africa Programme Director.

When the community sensitisation workshops begin, the children have their own gatherings on the verandahs where they talk about their community. They are encouraged to map out the area with sticks and stones, or crayons and paper if available. In this way they express their thoughts about places where they feel safe and places where they feel threatened.





Through time the children work hand-in-hand with the members of the CPT and are instrumental in using the teams to protect themselves and their friends. The CPT facilitates child rights workshops to help the children gain an understanding of their rights and how to realise them. These are often jointly facilitated by members of the police and probation social welfare officials, so the children can start to identify duty bearers.

## **7. Ongoing team training, retention and sustainability**

All participation in the child protection team work is entirely voluntary. This is potentially off-putting for team members yet in over five years not one person has resigned.

The reason for this is that these people genuinely want to see change for the children in their care. When we talk about these projects being community-owned it isn't a token gesture or a use of jargon. When the Children on the Edge Africa staff approach local people they promise nothing, they simply make it clear that it is the community that really know about the problems endangering their children and it is the community that have the solutions. We simply support them to bring change.

The rewarding side for the team members is that they get to see their neighbourhood transform and know that they had a part in it. They also have a sense of pride that amongst others they are known and respected for the good work they are doing.

*"The people have a heart for children. when they have made a change, they are proud, so they are inspired to keep working. The community are appreciating what they're doing, it is motivating. They always know it is voluntary, so there's no expectation of money and no disappointment."* Babra COTE Africa Social Worker.

The teams are given ongoing support and training from the Children on the Edge Africa staff. They are also invited to meet together with other Child Protection Teams from neighbouring slum areas to share experiences and support each other. Those that have just started can learn from people who are already

in the field. Through hearing stories from other teams they can understand how to achieve transformation without a huge injection of finance. This process builds hope for what can be achieved.



## 2. MASESE II CPT - PILOT PROJECT

This section describes the implementation of these components in our Masese II pilot. We focus particularly on case studies of success and lessons learnt for scaling up the model.

Masese II is one of eight peri-urban townships surrounding Jinja and was identified in 2011 as the neediest slum. There are approximately 4,000 inhabitants here, who are all cramped within 10 acres. The majority have been displaced from Northern Uganda with additional numbers having fled from Rwanda and Sudan.

When we first visited Masese II, children were at risk of exploitation, abuse and child sacrifice. As our team built relationships here and spent time with local people discussing the problems in the area, the community identified the following four problem areas with regards to the abuse of child rights:

1. **Brewing and distilling alcohol** in dangerous and unlicensed breweries. This was the area's primary economic activity meaning children were being exposed to extreme hazards. With **no productive livelihoods** parents were dependent on these breweries and could not afford to send children to school.
2. **Domestic violence and child abuse**, exacerbated by **alcohol abuse** and a lack understanding regarding parenting and childcare.

3. **Appalling sanitary conditions** in the slum.
4. **Neglect of children** leaving them extremely vulnerable to **child sacrifice**. At the time this was a monthly occurrence.

### 2.1 How the CPT bought change

Using the seven steps described in the model above, the Child Protection Team effectively tackled each of the needs identified.

The first step was to facilitate community sensitisation workshops, in order to create an impact in a sustainable manner, where the community was able to understand and own its role right from the outset.

The workshops were well attended and covered issues like child rights, child abuse (with separate sessions on different areas i.e physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect) and domestic violence and its effects on children.

These workshops also paved the way for the election of 10 trusted individuals to form the Child Protection Team, who were given training and simple resources. They began to work on developing trust and building a protective environment for their children, step-by-step. They also focussed on restoring hope and dignity in situations where abuse had occurred.



Sarah from Masese II CPT describes the building of trust in the area: *"They would see the way we managed cases, we built up the relationships slowly, slowly and it was a process of bringing people together. We speak to people with peace and don't judge. We also keep every case confidential, so we have their trust"*.

Children were consulted from the start. The CPT organised a child rights workshop which was facilitated by the previous manager of the Jinja Police Child and Family Protection Unit, who now works regularly with the team. The children were taught about their rights, how to realise them and how the CPT were a part of that. They were introduced to the CPT so they could take information to team members near their homes. Going forward the children became a major part of the activities of the team, knowing that the members work on their behalf.

The CPT also worked hard on developing their relationships with duty bearers such as the police, the 'LC1' (local councillor on the ground in Masese II), the probation officer, the community development officer and the higher divisions of government.

With the community behind them they began to address the issues identified in the following ways.

#### **a) Breaking dependence on unlicensed breweries**

At the start there were 14 breweries in the slum. Black, toxic sludge ran in streams from these places, which were situated every 15-20 metres. The smoke was acrid and the sludge pits had no fences. There were many reports of children falling into these pits in fatal accidents, or suffering the result of exploding canisters of hot liquid. Some children were fed the dregs of the alcohol mix.

If children weren't present at these dangerous breweries, they would be left unattended and vulnerable throughout the day.

The Child Protection Team were able to address this issue by providing alternative productive livelihoods. They did this through the provision of education loans and agricultural inputs. The agricultural inputs were provided in association with a local NGO who, with support from Children on the Edge, ran an Early Childhood Development Centre and planted up an area of land as a community garden. Vulnerable households in the community could receive training, work the land and receive seeds for sack gardens outside their own homes.

The education loans, described in the model above were particularly successful because of their sustainable nature. Whilst the agricultural component and sack gardens were a very positive input, the NGO providing them ran into difficulties and people were left without a source of seeds, tools or land to work.

This further honed our perspectives on the model going forward. Anything promised or introduced to the community needs to be able to be sustained by the community. Education loans do just this. With one initial input the fund keeps growing small businesses and with a small amount of interest, keeps growing itself.

Once women had means to create their own positive sources of income, the breweries started to topple. The women didn't own them, they just worked at them, the owners exploited them and paid very low wages which is why the children were always out of school<sup>3</sup>. Once the breweries had no workers, they had to close as the owners had no interest in doing this kind of job themselves.

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<sup>3</sup> Primary school is free in Uganda, but the price of uniforms, school supplies and other incidental costs are too high for many poor households. Sometimes government money is late coming through, so the only way schools can run is through the contribution of parents and many do not have the fee to contribute.



Within three years the number of breweries in Masese II dropped from 14 to 1. Here are some of examples of what then women did instead.

#### (I) Grandparent headed households - Pottery cooperative

Due to the prevalence of AIDS in the area there are many grandparent headed households. Some grandmothers in the area are looking after up to 13 children in one small hut and have no means of creating an income let alone to send their children to school.

Using the education loan system, a group of four grandmothers pooled their loans and started a pottery cooperative. The group soon grew to 10 women who met together every Thursday to work together purifying clay taken from the Nile riverbed. Over time the group has grown to 30, they have made enough money to pay for better clay, their own kiln and their own wheel.

#### (II) Farida - Soap business

Farida started out with a loan to set up a charcoal business. This began to get her on her feet, but charcoal, although cheap to buy, was not very marketable and she had two children to send school. Her second loan enabled her to begin a soap business, which needs more capital to start with. She is now doing well and able to send her children to school. When they are home they can sit with her in safety while she makes the soap.

#### (III) Katherine - From vegetable seller to landlady

Katherine started with her first loan selling vegetables, she paid it back, then got another

to start her out with a standpipe selling water. This was successful, she paid back the loan

and she was saving well. She then had the idea of building two rooms to rent out. Her savings weren't quite enough, so she applied for another loan and built two rooms to rent. Katherine is now a successful business lady, Each time she has borrowed, she has paid back more into the fund which has then gone to other people in need.

\* \* \*

These are just a few examples where small loans have enabled vulnerable households to gain a productive source of income and send their children to school. The most needy households are identified by the CPT. They have now provided hundreds of loans, including 8 loans to grandparent headed households and 25 to single mother households .

Henry from Masese II CPT describes the impact of the loans but also how the need for them is lessening as they run in parallel with community sensitisation. He says *"We are empowering them and only a few are left to pay them back, so all that will be being passed on to others who need it. We have had hundreds of cases, too many to count, there used to be about 20 a quarter, but now there is 5 or 6 because the community sensitisation is working"*.

Previously there were only toxic breweries every few metres, now the community is buzzing with many and various small industries. There are stalls that sell vegetables, kale, berries, cabbage, fruit, stalls selling cooked food, stalls selling water from standpipes and more importantly than this, there are a great many more children going to school.



## **b) Reduction of domestic abuse, child abuse and alcohol dependence**

As they got to know the community, The CPT became aware that cases of domestic abuse, child abuse and alcohol dependence were often interrelated. Through community sensitisation workshops, many home visits, much patience and a strong working relationship with the local police the CPT began to see the number of cases drop dramatically.

The initial workshops on alcohol abuse, domestic abuse and child abuse were well attended but the majority of attendees were often women. The team soon realised that the women would learn at the workshops and go home to tell the men who wouldn't agree. Soon they established a routine of home visits following each workshop.

Team members would visit the men and explain the nature of the information in humble way. This was an effective method of engaging them and they were soon comfortable reporting their own cases and knowing their own responsibilities in building a protective environment for children.

In addition to this, having a strong connection with the police and training from them about the legalities of what abuse is punishable by law, gave weight to the advice and guidance of the CPT. Not only are team members trained in the law but they can refer cases where they do not get an adequate response.

Jane Francis from the Masese II CPT explains, *"We had a case of a man from the Western Isle. People from there think they have the right to beat a woman if he feels she is disturbing him. He beat his wife every day, the children would be hurt too. Two of our team members visited him, he was very hostile so we went back all together and he knew we were serious. After having some discussion with him he changed. We always visit homes in peace, although he was hostile, we talked to him in peace. We were not going to arrest or quarrel or make orders, but talk in peace until he understood why we were there. We then told him the laws. He didn't know it was crime. We told him he would be arrested and he stopped."*

Through building connections with the police, they have also gained more support from the service in the community. Babra describes how perspectives have changed; *"The police in that community would be dismissive if people reported cases. They didn't feel it was their concern, they just thought they were a bunch of drunks and not worth the trouble. Now they take the community seriously"*.

Having a strong link with the police means that when dealing in problems of alcohol dependence and the abuse that results from it, the CPT are respected.

A case that illustrates this is a situation where a man in the community had been neglecting his family. When the CPT talked to him he complained that he had enjoyed a peaceful life before marrying his wife. He didn't want to change his easy lifestyle. This man wouldn't provide food, but would come back drunk and be abusive. He refused to change as he was severely addicted.

As a last resort, because of the abuse, the team referred the case to the police. The man agreed to start providing for the children, but he still didn't change. After a week he came back drunk and violent. The wife had cassava flour out to make dinner, he kicked it over and she poured the hot water on him in anger. The case went back to the police again, but they arrested the man instead of the woman because he had not changed his ways. This was a lesson to him.. he came home and completely changed. He says that he knows the CPT is always watching him and following him up to see if he buys food for the children.

This is just one example of hundreds of cases that the Masese II CPT have been involved with. They are the go-to people when ever there is trouble and consequently the crime rate has gone down. They are the eyes and ears of the organisations that can help and they are a voice for the children.

### c) Improving hygiene and sanitation throughout the slum

The appalling conditions in the slum five years ago were not just as a result of the toxic sludge coming from the breweries. Refuse of all sorts was piled throughout every part of the area, outside peoples homes and at every corner. There was no method of disposing of waste and faeces and people did not take pride in the cleanliness of their home or neighbourhood.

The CPT began their work through providing training at workshops and demonstration points throughout the area. They were not territorial about the project. They connected with the block leaders, the landlords, the government health inspector and village health teams. These teams were not trained and to this point had not been effective, but working in partnership with the CPT and other community members they began to make progress.

The Masese II area is divided into blocks so the CPT suggested that they engage people through their block leaders. In this way they

organised the regular cleaning of the community. As they started work on a small-scale with different households it had a knock-on-effect. As they encouraged one person to take pride in their plot, their neighbour would see it and be motivated to clean theirs.

Since this time, fortnightly cleanings are still carried out throughout Masese II and the block leaders instruct the landlords to keep up the standards.

Grace is a mother of 5, she describes how *"The cleanliness has changed dramatically. Workshops have taught people how to dispose of waste. Now there are holes dug in set places, and they put their rubbish there."*



Priscilla is a grandmother of 15 children. She says *"There used to be rubbish everywhere, and now it is much much cleaner and also you don't find faeces everywhere because of the training that is held"*.



#### d) Addressing child neglect and eradicating child sacrifice

The police have cited the eastern region of Uganda as having the highest incidence of child sacrifice cases; with Moses Binonga<sup>4</sup> blaming the high infiltration of unregistered healers. With little protection or justice from the authorities, communities like Masese II were seemingly powerless.

The combination of these beliefs and the high levels of neglect that were present in the area left children extremely vulnerable to abduction and sacrifice. The Child Protection Team was established at the seven of the killing spate in July 2012. At this time incidents were monthly and the community were desperate.

The team focussed on raising awareness on the issue of child sacrifice, tackling the beliefs, mindsets and behaviour that sustain the practice. These workshops were held together with local leaders and police.

They were equipped with a loudspeaker system so that when a child went missing the community could be alerted. This along with a bicycle that enabled members to immediately report cases to the local police has proved to be a remarkable deterrent to the perpetrators. Attackers started to realise they would easily get caught if they tried anything in that area.

The CPT's general community sensitisation work played a large part in the process of tackling child sacrifice. They provided training on child protection issues, holding community wide meetings and visiting door to door. The aim was to encourage an understanding that the neglect of children is strongly linked to their risk of abduction. This coupled with the income generated through education loans which enabled parents to send children to school, started to create an environment where children were safe.

Children participated in the process by engaging with social mapping sessions, identifying the area by the railway tracks as presenting the most risk for abduction. Children used to collect scrap around these tracks, but since the mapping session they

avoid it, and the CPT have taught them about not wandering too far from home.

All of these measures had a significant impact on the number of abductions, with seven cases in 2011, eight in 2012 and then a complete eradication of incidents in Masese II in the last 3 years.

Says Programme Director Edwin Wanabe, *"What doesn't work well are awareness campaigns that are not owned by the local people within the community. The CPT has created an impact by building relationship and trust, but the government's poster, radio and TV ads do not get the message through. This is because many poorer communities are illiterate, and people respond better to the advice of their own friends and neighbours, rather than that of strangers and authorities".*

This level of awareness is still high in the area and there have been no more abductions.

Recently there was an attempt where a man slowly befriended children who spent time around the local shop, along with their mothers. He would regularly give them small motorcycle rides, but the mothers knew and were happy with the situation. He got to know them, and they trusted him, then one day he was giving a girl a ride and suddenly took her off into the bush on the motorcycle. He stopped to call a friend and the girl got away. She went straight to a woman's house who ran to the CPT. The team alerted the neighbourhood, called the police and the perpetrator fled, leaving his motorcycle.

The CPT have requested a refresher training on the subject, acknowledging that most of their teaching in the community had been focused on the risk presented by strangers. The mother knew the man, and trusted him, so this grooming technique is a new element to be aware of both in Masese II and in the new communities going forward.

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<sup>4</sup> Assistant Commissioner of the Uganda Police and Head of the Ugandan National Counter Human Trafficking Taskforce.

## 2.2 Going forward

The Child Protection Team in Masese II has seen phenomenal success in meeting the needs they originally identified. Aside from refresher trainings and general support they are running entirely independently.

The team make their own referrals and deal with all cases themselves, writing up each one for their records and evaluation. The majority of cases that are brought out in the area are the result of the work of the CPT. The police states this regularly and are thankful for their contribution. The different duty bearers that are engaged all give credit to the CPTs.

The community members are proud of the work the team is doing and have seen the transformation in their area. They feel that before the CPT, the local councillor didn't act if there was a report, but now people know that when they report through the CPT, action will be taken.

*"Our work is sustained because we have the support of the community, even if we are not there the community carry on doing the work while we are gone. They know the principles now and they pass it onto others until everyone knows, not just us."* Faith - Masese II CPT.

*"It is not only us fighting child abuse now. The community know and they fight it too"* Henry - Masese II CPT.

Now the team is established and effective, they are instrumental in the running of sharing and training days for new teams as the model is replicated in the wider area.

All four teams meet together to talk about their experiences, learn from the original project and to be encouraged that large-scale change is possible, even with very few resources.





### 3. REPLICATION

Children on the Edge - Africa have used the experiences, successes and lessons of the Masese II pilot to take the model into three new communities (Masese I, Masese III and Loco) all facing different challenges in building a protective environment for their children.

This section looks at how replication works in different communities with different issues, drawing examples from each area. The teams here are still in their infancy but looking at the initial response to their work provides the opportunity to assess not only how successful the model is likely to be in the wider slum areas surrounding Jinja, but how effective and adaptable it might be when scaled up across many vulnerable communities in Uganda.

#### 3.1 Identification of needs

As with Masese II, as relationships were formed by Children on the Edge - Africa staff, they formed a picture of the environment and needs for children in each area.

Children were involved from the start of this process. Edwin describes how *“Children always look at things from their angle, which will be different from what the adults are saying . The adults may be proud or ashamed but the children will say ‘I pick up scrap’ ‘The last meal I had was on Saturday’ ‘We play with*

*alcohol sachets people drop’ and we will see clearly problems that we wouldn’t have seen otherwise. In Loco the children told us the latrines are too wide and they can fall in the hole. None of the adults mentioned this.”*

A summary of the needs identified are:

**Loco** is a small slum community, formed of basic rows of barracks that were owned by the railway corporation for their workers. The demise of the railway has meant that the accommodation is now rented to the poorest families at the cheapest rate in town.

The high rate of HIV has resulted in many widows, child-headed and Grandparent-headed households. **General health, hygiene and sanitation within the community is poor** and there is a serious **substance misuse problem** here, leaving children especially vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

**Rampant theft and frequent instances of domestic violence** also create a volatile environment. Child neglect is rife, with children regularly abandoned and left to fend for themselves.

The nearby nursery school and primary school are both **run down and expensive** to attend, stopping the most vulnerable children from enrolling.



**Masese I** is a large, densely populated lakeside slum community, formed mostly of internally displaced people from Northern Uganda. It is ten times the size of Masese II with a population of around 500,000.

70% of the community have no permanent jobs, and with casual labour paying an average of 1500 shillings a day (approx 30p), rent is too expensive. Consequently **many children have to work** finding firewood to pay for rent and food instead of going to school. For those that do want to pursue education, many **can't afford the school** costs or nursery fees.

The community is mainly made up of widows, single mothers, child mothers and child headed households. Many children are abandoned when single mothers try to solve their problems by marrying, only to find that their children are not welcome in the new household. Many are orphaned through HIV and malaria.

*"Because there are many children who are poor and not going to school, most men and women have grudges against one another and this affects the children. There is rape of children, there is child labour, many have to break stones to earn money, or pick scrap. There is kidnap of children for child sacrifice and we need to prevent it."* Teddy - Masese I CPT

**Masese III** is a slum community for low cost renters with an estimated population of around 5,000. The community consists of many **Karamojong people**, who are a nomadic group from Northern Uganda.

The Karamojong traditionally let their children wander unattended, resulting in many left alone all day whilst their parents are working. This results in a high number of **street children**. Child marriage is a serious issue in this area due to traditional practices, which can be brutal. Child headed households (often as a result of HIV) and child protection issues are rife and alcoholism is a recurring problem.

Over the past few years the community have become dependent on food handouts from a neighbouring organisation who is about to

move on, so they desperately need to develop sustainable incomes and food sources.

## 3.2 Creating the new teams

The subjects covered in the sensitisation workshops were decided with the community members as part of building relationships and identifying needs. It turned out with these three communities that the priority areas were all the same for the initial training, so each community received workshops on child abuse, domestic abuse, child exploitation and children with special needs.

The workshops in all areas were very well attended and responded to. They were a great preparation for the election of each CPT. Each community then elected 10 people to represent them. This went very smoothly with the exception of Masese I who against advice elected some politicians from the area. The team soon realised that the politicians were using their membership as a campaign strategy. At the next workshop they re-elected.

Once established, each team was provided with all the training and resources described in Section 1. They also began meeting with the original Masese II CPT to learn from their experiences, share stories and encourage each other.

## 3.3 Work so far

In just a few months the new teams began to make change in each area. Here are a few of the examples:

### Loco: Lowered crime rate

During a social mapping exercise with the children in Loco, one of the subjects covered was areas that are dangerous. The children identified the football grounds, saying that in the evenings people are beaten. They described how it is dangerous to even pass by these areas but some parents send them to shops at that time and they are at risk of being assaulted. They also identified the drug dealer that was doing all the selling.

To follow up on these issues the community liaison officer was contacted, after a week they sent somebody to do a fact finding





project and they dealt with some drug abusers. After three weeks the district police commander sent his assistant, the community liaison officer, the regional family and child protection officers.

The dealer has now left the community. Rather than going directly to the man, the police made it look like they were just doing a general inspection, but they knew who they were targeting. They also arrested other disruptive groups from the football area. This place is considered a lot safer now and some police officers stay there at night to crack down on theft.

Alongside actioning the police investigation, the CPT were talking to parents in the area about keeping a safer watch on their children. CPT member Annette describes how *“These places [corners of football area used for drug selling and abuse] were hidden away. A nine month old baby was dumped in one of these places, but someone came and got us, and we made sure the child was fostered. Now community members know who we are - they bring cases straight to us. We are going to be having training on substance abuse to start to deal with the issue. Many people who commit crime in the area are moving out. The community is aware of them so they can't get away with it. The community love and appreciate the CPTs as they see the changes that are happening”*.

#### **Loco: Building relationships between the community and the police**

The police have tried to engage Loco community many times before with no success. This is mainly due to the fact that

people have been disillusioned through their experience of bribery, corruption and a perception that the police are against them.

The CPT set up a meeting with the community and the police and, because it came from them and they are trusted, many people from the community came along. Seven police officers were there and the questions went on until after dark. There were so many questions that they set up a second one which was attended by over 130 people.

The Local councillor and his committee attended the second meeting. He commented about what a difference the community sensitisation workshops have already made, with police officers following up after each workshop. Many of the police policies and behaviours were questioned and explained and representatives from the police highlighted the fact that the police cannot act on problems that are not reported.

They discussed the fact that police ask for money from people who are arrested and it was made very clear that this is not allowed, and should be reported. They were encouraged not to run away from a police patrol as they are there to keep safety and order, they are not there to beat people and anyone who does this should be reported. The community were advised to read the name of the police officer on their uniform so they know who they're dealing with.

Through their ongoing and visible partnership with the police in addressing domestic violence and substance misuse, as well as the facilitation of these meetings, the Loco CPT are building understanding and trust between the community and the police.

## Loco: ECD Centre

Early childhood development was recognised as a particular need by the CPT here, as ECD provision is run down and inaccessible. With an initial capital injection from Children on the Edge UK, a new centre is being built which will cater for 40 children from the poorest households in Loco.

This centre will be sustained and managed by the community. As time goes by and local parents become more self-sufficient, they will be able to make small contributions. They will also be applying for district money and a new school management committee will be trained to fundraise.

This committee will work in partnership with the neighbouring primary school headmistress. She will bring guidance and the ECD centre will be integrated with the primary school as part of government policy.

After the sensitisation workshop on child labour and exploitation, the community have become aware of the wrongs of making their children work instead of going to school. Annette from Loco CPT says *"People used to just loiter about, but now people who are poor are hopeful that if they work they can get their children into school so they are going out to find jobs. The child exploitation workshop helped explain that children should be in school, and they can also see that an ECD Centre is coming"*.

Once the centre is up and running the CPT will set up a child rights group, where children

will learn about their rights and work together with school management committee and the CPTs. They will give their opinions on how things are run, and report issues that are going on with their friends.

## Masese I: 'Go - to' team for child protection

In Masese I the team are beginning to put their training into practice. They have been encouraging children to attend school instead of loitering, advising a grandmother headed household on caring for an HIV positive child and supporting a bereaved father in caring for his children.

Sissy, the youngest member of CPT here, has already begun to make a difference. She tells how *"There is a mother in the area who sells as a job, she leaves early and comes back late. She leaves her 2 year old in the care of an older sibling, but they just leave the small child on its own all day. Each day at dark the little one starts crying. I waited outside her home for the mother to return. I talked with her kindly about the importance of keeping the little one safe, now she makes sure he is never left alone"*.

## Masese III: Sensitisation and the Karamojong

The Masese III CPT are faced with the challenge of sensitising a community with different cultural values. The largest tribe in this area is the Karamojong, a nomadic people group from northern Uganda. Their culture have a 'hands off' approach to childcare, and as soon as a child can walk they are left all day while the mothers work.





Godfrey Rucho is the chairperson of the CPT here, he says *"They think nothing of this, as this is how they were treated when they were children, they have not gone to school, they don't value education. Some parents don't mind where their children spend the night, the children sleep outside, they don't care if they are safe or not. Pregnant women are not allowed to bathe or go in the latrines, and when their children fall sick they won't take them to the clinic, they believe it will be fine. When they fall sick the clinics tell them to bathe and come back and that is an insult, so they won't go back and they won't get better."*

To tackle the issue of communicating values across a culture, the team here have built relationships with key people in the tribe, one of whom is the chairman of the tribe and is very open to their work. Another younger Karamojong woman has become a member of the CPT.

Godfrey describes how *"It used to be if you tried to talk to a parent they said 'If you're so concerned then take them', but we are hoping that with the help of the Karomojong chairperson and a team member who is Karomojong, we can start to talk to more parents about taking care of the children."*

### **Masese III: The protection of street children**

A community member came to the CPT and told them there were a number of street children who were all staying in one rented room. There were both girls and boys, with the youngest around 12 and eldest 18. The CPT chatted with them to find out what was happening. The community had assumed it was an organisation paying for the house but it turned out the children were not being looked after. They were from all over the area and they were being mistreated.

The CPT talked to them about the dangers of living in the house, warned that they would likely be victims of crime and how it would be better for them to go home. The 12 year old said he had run away from his grandmother, they called the boy's father, who is a builder. He was working on an island and had taken the son to the grandmother, sent her money regularly and thought the son was at school.

The father was reunited with the son who told him all about what he had been through. The father took him home, got him back to school and the CPT are keeping in touch with how they doing.

Two other girls from the house aged 12 and 16 (the 16-year-old was pregnant) were counselled and supported to go back home to their mothers. One boy refused to reveal his mother's telephone number, but they found her at the market and reunited them. One by one most of the children are getting home safely, there are only two or three left in the house and the CPT are working with them.

### **3.4 The next step - Education funds**

With the success of education funds in Masese II, the scheme is now being introduced to the new communities, with training workshops on how they work in each area.

The dynamics in Loco are very different than Masese II, there is such a degree of poverty that loans cannot be handed out as simply. The CPT will be giving applicants three trainings on business rather than one. They are going to form self help groups learning about saving and budgeting, before any business loans are given out. Also in all of Loco interest rates will be reduced to 5%.

The Loco ECD centre will have two classes, a lower class and upper class, The parents of the 20 in the upper class of the ECD centre will be eligible for the loan scheme, then when they pay it back the loan money can be passed to the 20 parents of the lower class.

In Masese I and Masese III, as the education loans are not associated with a centre in particular, the CPT will identify and approach the poorest households. These areas are fairly well resourced with schools but there are issues of expense which the education loans will seek to address. At the same time the CPTs will negotiate with the schools on behalf of these households regarding reduced fees.



## 4. SCALABILITY

The previous sections have provided a wealth of evidence that illustrate the large impact a simple, low cost model like the Child Protection Teams can have.

In terms of horizontal<sup>5</sup> scalability we feel this model will be effective because of the following factors:

### **It has credibility**

Teams are respected by the individuals they work with and the institutions they partner with, which puts the model in good stead to be replicated. The work is connected in with local and national laws, policies and services making it applicable and welcome wherever it is rolled out in Uganda.

### **It has a relative advantage**

It is clear that it is these teams, rather than other services that have brought the changes described, as the work is only established in areas where there are no other effective remedies to the problems. Whilst the teams work in partnership with other agencies and service providers, it is them that identify the cases and address them. The police, local councillors and communities have all regularly attested to this.

### **It produces relevant, observable results**

Through the pilot and its replication we have become confident that we can see transformation in many new areas. This is evidenced by the tangible results of the pilot and the rapid progress of the teams in the three new areas, addressing the felt needs originally identified by each community.

### **It has a low dependence on resources**

In this model we have a very small number of paid professionals supporting a large group of trained volunteers. In this way we are ensuring high quality child protection work, facilitated at grass roots level without a crippling budget for wages.

The CPT method of change is based on the concept that communities can improve what they have rather than being reliant on the provision of expensive resources. Resources that are provided are simple. Loudspeakers rather than phones, bicycles rather than jeeps, T-shirts bearing messages rather than printed leaflets. All these resources are low cost, but effective and were all suggested by the teams themselves.

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<sup>5</sup> Horizontal scaling up is where models may be replicated in different geographic sites or can be extended to serve larger or different population groups, as opposed to vertical scaling which refers to the policy, political, legal, regulatory or budgetary changes needed to institutionalise a model at national or sub-national level.



### **It is sustainable**

As well as the low-cost element creating sustainability, the pilot has shown how well suited the model is for transitioning to independence. The Masese II CPT have not just achieved self sufficiency as a team, but have developed ownership within the community itself. The work in Masese II could continue with very little or no input from Children on the Edge and the CPT report that when they are absent, the local people carry on the work. They have embraced the values and are fully motivated to maintain a safe environment for their children.

They are not dependent on the direction, charisma and vision of one leader, but share the task as a community. This makes the work they do both democratic and robust. It is grounded in the understanding that the community have the knowledge already, with a little extra support and space to discuss their ideas, they can change the future for their children.

### **It is simple and adaptable**

The seven components of the model are basic and straightforward, they do not need to be further simplified in order to be understood by a new group.

Because all strategy and direction is founded on the needs expressed by the community themselves, the model naturally adapts to different areas and challenges.

As the approach is founded in peaceful, humble and relational impartation of knowledge and values, it is conducive to creating change across cultures. This is already beginning to take shape in the work of the Masese II CPT with the Karamajong.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The success of scaling up can only be measured at the stage of implementation, but a strong, tried and tested model puts us on good footing. The seven components of the Child Protection Team model outlined in this document should not be considered static. As implementation gets underway there is always potential change, but adaption to the needs of the local situation or changing circumstances are already inherent in how the model works.

We have already seen that scaling up is a learning process, and will continue to be. We go forward in the awareness that all learning, shaping and decision making requires a thorough use of evidence, monitoring and evaluation.

We conclude with a statement about the strengths of the CPT model and its potential.

*"I am proud of the CPT in Masese II, they do all the work with very little resources, they get on all by themselves, they refer cases and do follow ups themselves, they even do their own fundraising. They work so well even though they are not paid because it is from their hearts that they want to change the community. It's like having a child and seeing them develop. I pray that the new communities will be the same. We can't go in as Children on the Edge and change the whole community, but we can work with them to change their own community".*

Babra - Social Worker - Children on the Edge Africa.

