



**A PROPOSAL TO
SUPPORT CHILDREN
AND YOUNG WOMEN OF
NAPAK DISTRICT,
KARAMOJA REGION
NORTH EASTERN
UGANDA**

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INTRODUCTION



BACKGROUND

Napak district is found in the Karamoja sub-region in the North Eastern part of Uganda. Each year, about **90% of girls are trafficked** from this region (approximately 400-900 girls) for sexual exploitation, mostly to Kampala.

90% of the children on the streets of urban centers are from the Karamoja region—particularly Napak district.

In Napak, literacy levels are very low—with high school drop-out rates exacerbating the trafficking issue. When children leave school, migration becomes one of the most prioritized available options which significantly increases their vulnerability to trafficking. In Napak district, children who have never attended school or who drop out of school are more vulnerable to child and sex trafficking. Disturbingly, nearly 90% of girls aged 10-14 are 2 years behind in their education or have never been to school (UNICEF 2018).

51.3% of the population in Napak district relies on subsistence farming, which is severely hindered by the largely harsh, dry climatic conditions. **Nearly one fifth (1/5) of children believe that migrating to urban areas is their only option for earning a living**, not only to support themselves but also their families. Despite the risks, this migration is traditionally accepted due to lack of viable alternatives.

In Napak district, children often walk long distances to fetch water due to scarcity of nearby water sources. **On average, they may walk between 5-10 km to reach a water source.** In more extreme cases, the distance can be even greater, especially during the dry season when local sources dry up and the nearest available water may be further away. **This exposes them to various risks and takes away time from school, increasing their vulnerability to trafficking.**





PROBLEM

While in the streets these children endure dire situations including forced labour/child labour, sexual exploitation, physical abuse, and emotional abuse that leads to adverse long-term effects such as PTSD, depression, physical injuries, chronic health problems, unwanted pregnancies and forced abortions, stigma, shame, and social ostracism. Despite efforts by the Ugandan government and organizations to raise awareness, support victims, prosecute traffickers, and improve education and economic opportunities in efforts to combat trafficking and protect Karamoja's vulnerable populations, children in Karamoja continue to be lured into the bustling streets of Kampala. This necessitates continuous **rescue** and support for **recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration**.

***The magnitude of
this crisis cannot
be overstated.***





PROJECT OBJECTIVES



SHF community dialogues in Lopeei and Lopoko sub-counties unveiled the harrowing realities of how unsafe these children are and the burden they shoulder, featuring extreme suffering, exploitation, and/or even death.

***It's a chilling reminder
of the absence of robust
preventive/mitigation
measures to safeguard
these young lives.***

The objectives of the proposed intervention seek to mitigate the immediate harm associated with trafficking and to lay a foundation for sustainable child protection mechanisms, community development, and empowerment.

STRENGTHEN the capacity and effectiveness of local and regional efforts to identify, intercept, respond, and prevent the trafficking of children and youth.

EMPOWER children and young women through economic empowerment, education and awareness, and psychosocial support to enhance their resilience and ability to thrive to their full potential within their communities.

DELIVER direct emergency support to rescued children and young women, addressing their immediate basic needs and providing psychosocial support, while also establishing pathways for long-term rehabilitation and reintegration.





PROJECT DETAILS

Psychosocial Support

Providing comprehensive psychosocial support by adopting a trauma-informed, survivor approach.

This will include:

- 1. One-on-one counselling*
- 2. Group counselling*
- 3. Learning through play*
- 4. Art therapy*
- 5. Music, dance, and drama*
- 6. Spiritual devotions*
- 7. Mentorship sessions to improve their mental well-being*
- 8. Meet basic requirements equivalent to UGX 50,000 per participant per quarter (requirements will include soap, sanitary wear for girls, Vaseline, school bags, and rubber sandals/crocs)*

Reintegration Services

Assisting survivors in reintegrating into their communities through education and vocational training opportunities. This also includes follow-up support to monitor their progress and ensure their safety and well-being.

Neighborhood Watch

Formation and strengthening of a collaborative neighborhood watch (surveillance) systems involving local leaders, community members, and law enforcement agencies to identify and strengthen stakeholders within this service delivery chain to recognize signs of trafficking and exploitation and to report these signs to authorities effectively.





Capacity Building

Capacity building for formal and informal local authorities to enhance service delivery in anti- trafficking efforts.

Economic Empowerment

Supporting the formation of women's self-help groups and facilitating their active engagement in income-generating activities.

Community Awareness

Community awareness campaigns to support attitude and behaviour change leading to adoption of positive practices to eradicate trafficking and exploitation.

ALL IN ALL,

Set Her Free's interventions in Karamoja are designed to tackle the complex challenges of child trafficking and sexual exploitation through a **comprehensive, community-centred approach**. By strengthening local capacities, empowering vulnerable populations, preventing exploitation, supporting survivors, and ensuring sustainable development, the intervention aims to create a safer, more resilient Karamoja region.



PROJECT BENEFICIARIES



308 children rescued from the streets and reintegrated back into back into school in Karamoja. They are to be retained within the school environment for a period of three years even during holiday periods.

100 young women and mothers aged 17 to 24 were rescued rescued from the street but are not in school. While they are under community service, they have no available opportunities to continue with school. Those who have children are even more vulnerable to trafficking.

125 people were rescued (117 children, 8 mothers) in June 2024 from the streets. They have been received by the Napak district local government and are currently living in temporary makeshift tarpaulins at the Napak district headquarters in the Karamoja region. The available structures and support systems are constrained and cannot ably respond to the needs of these rescued children and young mothers. These survivors lack basic necessities and comprehensive support to ensure their immediate safety and protection.



WHO WE ARE

All about Set Her Free

OUR MISSION: Set Her Free equips Uganda's most vulnerable girls and young women with the knowledge, skills, and resources that they need to build their resilience, lead self-determined lives, and make informed sexual reproductive health choices, forever breaking the cycle of poverty.



WHO WE SERVE: Set Her Free serves vulnerable young women and girls and creates safe spaces for exploited children. The futures of these girls and young women seem impossibly narrow, but Set Her Free works with them to widen their horizons—to reach for futures unimaginable to so many in their communities.

OUR APPROACH: We divide our approach into four main focus areas:

- Education and Development
- Protect and Empower
- Sexual Reproductive Health
- Climate Change Adaptation

These focus areas are rooted in an understanding of our communities' contexts, addressing many of the challenges that threaten to derail the lives of young women and girls in Uganda.



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OUR IMPACT: We are proud of our impactful vocational training in beauty & hairdressing and fashion & design: 60.6% of our graduates are employed in the skill they trained in. 7.4% of our graduates start their own businesses.

 *check out our website!*