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# IMPACT

**STORIES:**  
TESTIMONIES OF CHANGE

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# CAAACS

**PROJECT**

A DOCUMENTATION OF THE  
COMMUNITY AMBER ALERT AGAINST  
CHILD SACRIFICE (CAAACS) PROJECT  
(2013 — 2015)

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Compiled by: Kato Nkimba

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Our special prayers go to the families of survivors and victims of child sacrifice and mutilation and everyone who has contributed in one way or another to the Community Amber Alert Against Child Sacrifice (CAAACS) Project.

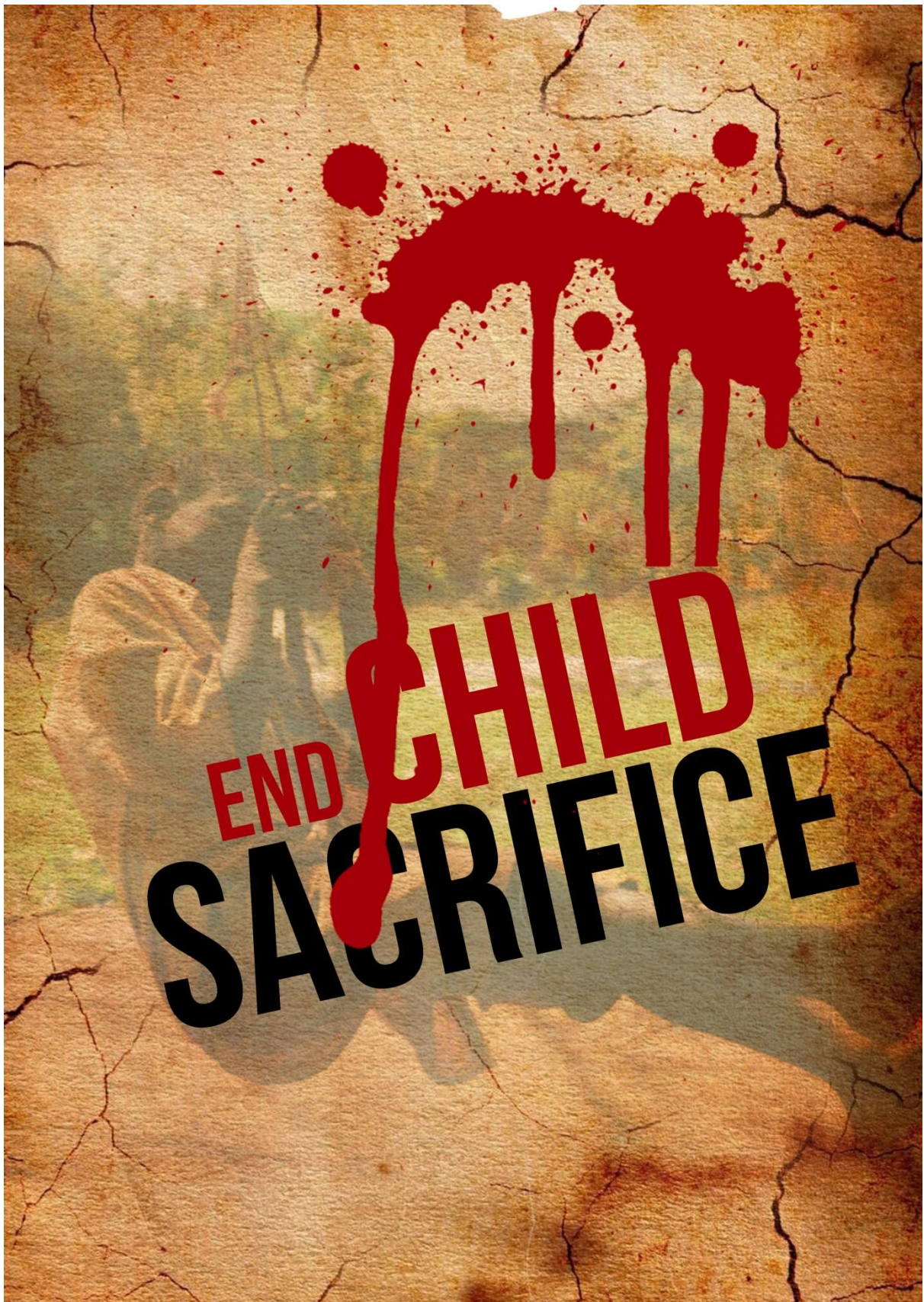
We also appreciate the support we have received from all the partners of World Vision Uganda at various levels.

It would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the time and support provided by World Vision Uganda staff, Buikwe Cluster and the Child Protection Team — Rhoda Nyakato, Lydia Akite and Obed Byamugisha.

Kato Nkimba

Documentation Team Leader





**END CHILD SACRIFICE**

## **ACRONYMS**

CAAACS	Community Amber Alert Against Child Sacrifice
CDF	Community Development Facilitator
CDO	Community Development Officer
CF	Community Facilitator
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CVA	Citizens Voice and Action
ECACS	End Child Sacrifice Coalition
GIS	Geographical Information System
GLSD	Gender, Labour and Social Development
KCM	Kyampisi Child Ministries
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
VAC	Village Alert Committee
VHT	Village Health Team
WVU	World Vision Uganda

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## 1.0 Background

### 1.1 A Brief on Buikwe District

As a District, Buikwe was carved out of Mukono District. It gained a district status in 2009.

Going by the population estimates in 2012, Buikwe has approximately 429,600 people. The District covers about 345 square kilometres. It is made up of Kikwayi and Ndolwa parishes in the north, Kiringo in the west; Namulesa and Lubongo, both of which are centrally located; and Ddungu in the south. The District has 73 Local Councils.

The populace in Buikwe is largely made up of the indigenous inhabitants of Buganda as well as other groups from the surrounding districts and far beyond — giving the District a multi-ethnic mix. With this too, is blend of cultures. While many still adhere to age old cultural norms and values practiced for generations, some have veered away from them; hence, exposing children to incidences of child sacrifice and mutilation.

### 1.2 The evil practice of child sacrifice and mutilation in Buikwe

Child sacrifice and mutilation is one of the most cruel and harmful practices in Buikwe District, placing children's lives at the greatest risk imaginable.

The Anti-Child Sacrifice and Mutilation Coalition — which is made up of the Government of Uganda, UN agencies and civil society groups in Uganda — calls this “[the] harmful practice of removing a child's body parts, blood or tissue while the child is still alive.”

It must be noted, adults have not been spared either from this vicious practice.



Summary on management of cases of ritual murders (Child Sacrifice)

“The most affected part of the District is Ssi Sub-County— what is referred to as Ssi Bukunja. The word Bukunja is synonymous with evil — in some cases, evil in the form of murder, witchcraft and other related practices. But today is the 21<sup>st</sup> century; we expect people’s attitudes, beliefs and practices to have changed. Unfortunately, nothing much has changed.”

Kyeyune                      Ssenyonjo,  
Resident                      District  
Commissioner

### **Update on cases of child sacrifice in 2014**

Out of a total number of 12 cases in Buikwe District, 8 children lost their lives to sacrifice. Only 4 were saved from this cruel practice against children.

A total of 87 cases of child sacrifice were registered between 2006 and 2014 nationwide. Of these, only 23 were committed before the High Court. And over the 8 year period since 2006, not more than 2 people have been convicted.<sup>1</sup> Sadly, it is still widely believed that traditional medicine containing body parts, blood or tissues is stronger and more powerful.

In a recent HumaneAfrica research based exclusively on first hand eyewitness accounts, there is a strong indication that many communities in Uganda are adversely affected by issues relating to child mutilation or sacrifice. In a span of only four months between June and September 2012 for example, some twenty (20) mutilations occurred in the 25 communities where the research was conducted! At this rate, at least one child was said to be sacrificed each week.<sup>2</sup>

### **1.3 Making sense of what drives this cruel practice against children**

Child sacrifice and mutilation affect many communities across the country, although the exact figures and statistics are hard to come by. This is due to a high level of secrecy in which this evil practice is shrouded. Very few cases of child sacrifice are reported to police; and even those that make it into the formal system, very few have resulted into the conviction of suspects.

It is true, many people loathe it. And in fact, some affected communities have responded violently against suspects in child sacrifice and mutilation cases due to perceived inaction or leniency by institutions mandated to handle such cases.

Recent reports have cast a bad light on Buikwe District, dubbing it as the country’s witchcraft capital. With an average of one shrine in every three households, it is not hard to grasp where critics are coming from.<sup>3</sup>

A Child Protection Committee (CPC) member had this to say, “A lot of traditional activities are going on, especially among those who own shrines. It is thought, these are the ones who are responsible for abducting our children. Of course, shrine owners deny this. They allege, it’s those seeking riches who

<sup>1</sup> Uganda Police Force, General Information on Registered Cases of Ritual Murders, January 2006— June 2014

<sup>2</sup> Simon Fellow, Child Sacrifice and the mutilation of children in Uganda, A HumaneAfrica Report, 2013

<sup>3</sup> Community Amber Against Child Sacrifice 2014, Buikwe District



are responsible for sacrificing their own children. When we investigated, we discovered shrine owners were sacrificing a lot of animals. And this is what many do. Since, we have many children around — we asked them nevertheless, 'Why then is child sacrifice still on the rise?' In some of the cases we get, we discovered children's parents or other close relatives may also have a hand in them."<sup>4</sup>



A shrine in Buikwe District

Proponents of the age old practice of traditional healing, who have taken a bad rap due to incidences of child sacrifice and mutilation, have distanced themselves from the evil practice — blaming the vice on a few bad apples masquerading in their midst. Genuine traditional healers in Buikwe District reportedly view human sacrifice as abhorrent and have engaged in efforts to expose suspected quack practitioners.<sup>5</sup> Quack or greedy

healers allegedly use human body parts to make potions that can bring success in business and love. It is also said that concoctions containing human parts can provide a cure for a number of ailments.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, such unscientific assertions inform attitudes and perceptions held by sections of the population in the affected communities. These, in turn, drive the evil practice of child sacrifice and mutilation.

A social norms change facilitator observed, "We believe that it's the community, who drive the demand for children's body parts. The society is responsible for creating this demand. People go to witchdoctors — they tell them they have problems; they want to get rich; they want to get this or that. So, we want to see the community stop going there. When they stop, no child will be at risk of being sacrificed." Rose Nalubega, Social Norms Change Facilitator, HumaneAfrica

It is in response to this cruel and harmful practice against children that the Community Amber Alert Against Child Sacrifice (CAAACS) Project was developed for Buikwe District in 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Interview on March 11, 2015 with Resty Namaganda, Child Protection Committee (CPC) member, Bubiwo Village, Kiringo Parish,

<sup>5</sup> Interview on March 5, 2015 with David Mukasa, Chairperson, Uganda Herbalist Association, Buikwe District

<sup>6</sup> Community Amber Against Child Sacrifice 2014, Buikwe District

Amber Alert is named in honour of 9 year old Amber Hagerman who was abducted while riding her bicycle in Arlington, Texas, and was later found murdered.

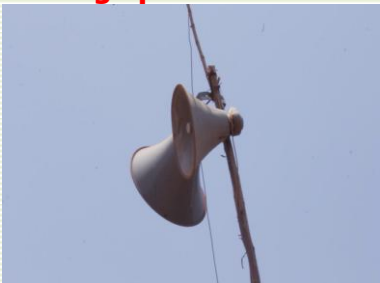


### **Sounding a drum...**



A man is seen sounding a drum after an alert has been made about a missing child.

### **An announcement made on mega phone...**



Once details about a missing child have been received by the Village Alert Committee, the information is instantly relayed to the surrounding communities using the mega phones.

## **2.0 The overall goal of the CAAACS Project**

The goal of the Project was to increase the prevention of child abuse in Ngogwe where the practice of child sacrifice and mutilation was most prevalent. Initially, the Project was intended to reach 19,300 adult males and 19,700 females as well as 11,078 boys and 11,423 girls in Ngogwe.

Since 2013, World Vision Buikwe Cluster has been implementing a Community Amber Alert Against Child Sacrifice (CAAACS) Project aimed at reversing the high demand for children's body parts in the communities by changing their behaviour against the use of body parts in rituals and treatments of illness. The Project employs three approaches — the Localised Amber Alert System, the Social Norms Change Approach and the Geographical Information System.

## **3.0 What is the Localised Amber Alert System?**

A universally known Amber Alert was localised to suit the specific context of Buikwe District, its community's needs as well as resources. It was named the Localised Amber Alert System.

The Localised Amber Alert System employs a mix of the indigenous tradition of drumming and other modern technology, such as, mega phones and phones to instantly galvanise the entire community to assist in the search for and the safe recovery of the abducted or missing child.

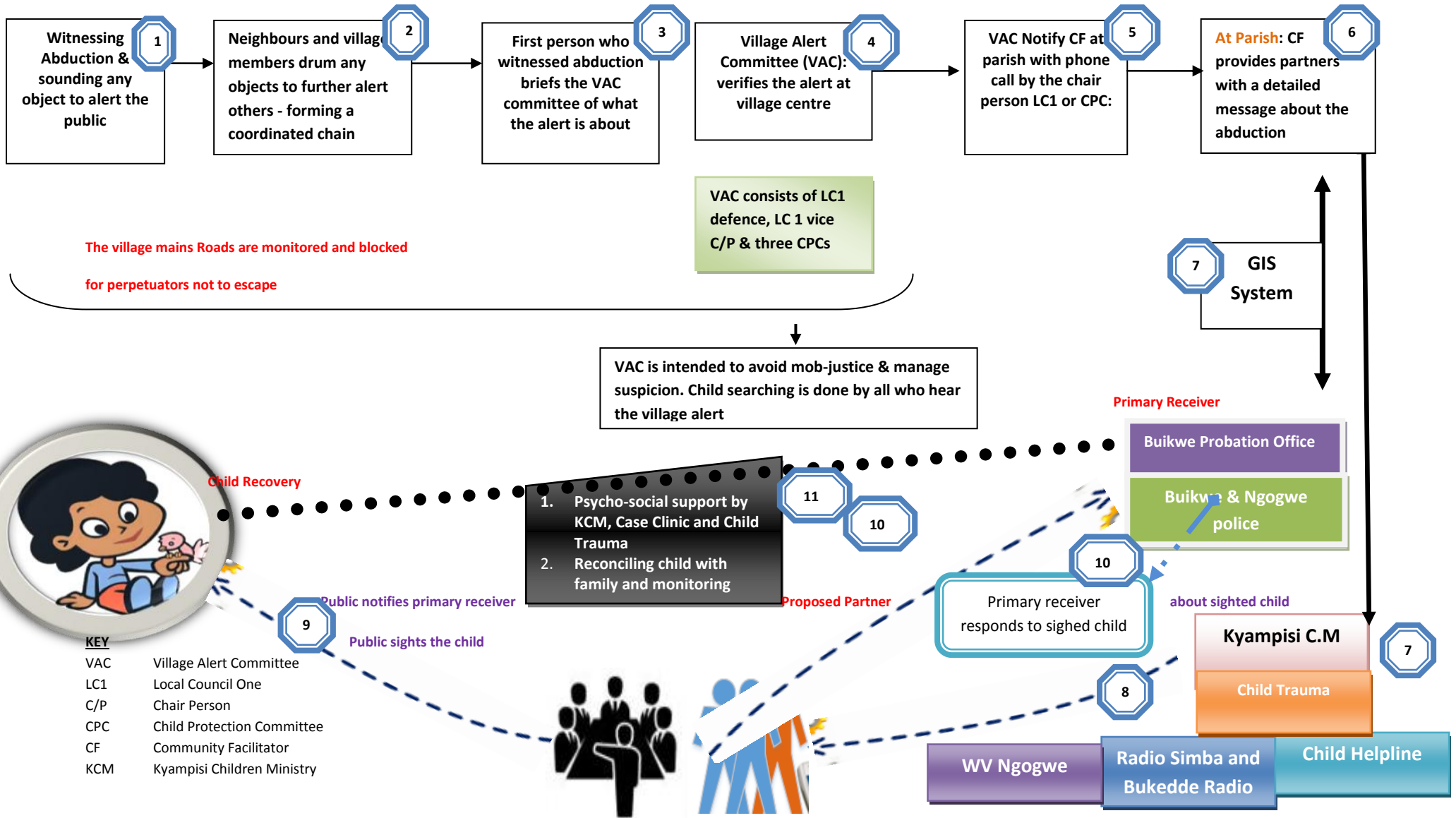
A timely eyewitness account coupled with a loud call for help (or ululation) and the sounding of the drum — commonly known as *Junju Mujje* — triggers the early warning. This is a very crucial strategy in the rescue attempt.

For wider coverage, alert messages are relayed through the mega phones erected in strategic locations.

The Village Alert Committee, made up of grassroots administrative as well as child protection structures, verifies the alerts for authenticity; and then, coordinates rescue efforts involving the community.

Alerts are also sent to the Probation Officer and the Police as well as to radio and television stations for announcement.

#### 4.0 A graphic presentation of how the Localised Amber Alert System works





## 5.0 The Localised Amber Alert in practice...

### When an alert is made...

In the event a child goes missing or has been sacrificed, we as members of the Amber Alert work together. First of all, someone may have witnessed a child being abducted or noticed a child has gone missing – or someone could have seen the abductors forcing a child into a car or speeding off with the child on a motorcycle.

Elias Muwonge, Child Protection Committee (CPC) member



**An act out:** A child from school with friends is abducted by unknown men in a car



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## **A step by step Localised Amber Alert System**

A witness to the abduction or one who believes a child has gone missing, drums any object to alert the public. On hearing the alert, neighbours and village members swing into action, by drumming any object to sound more alerts to others. In this way, a coordinated chain is formed. Here, time is of essence. Everyone must act fast if the missing child is to be found alive.

Alert messages are then quickly relayed using mega phones strategically located in each parish. This is meant to stir up the whole community to assist in the search for and the safe recovery of the abducted or missing child. The first person, who witnesses the abduction, then briefs the Village Alert Committee — made up of local leaders — of what the alert is about. Alert messages are also sent to the Probation Officer, who is charged with children's welfare in the District. The Police, both in Buikwe and Ngogwe sub-counties, also receive the messages for action. Both the Probation and the Police are regarded as primary receivers.

Media houses like radios and televisions play an important role in the Localised Amber Alert System, as they can help to get the public involved in the search for the abducted or missing child.

## **When a child is abducted...**

"The person, who witnesses the abduction, immediately goes to where the mega phones or drums are located. When the community hears the drum beat, they gather together.

The information is quickly communicated using the mega phones. As members of the child protection committee, we were equipped with phones. In each parish, they are two of us.

When we receive a call, we move quickly to the ground — where that incidence has occurred — to verify the information. Once we have confirmed, then we begin to network with other colleagues in different parishes — and also, with the District Police Commander. We have a very big network to the highest level."

Elias Muwonge, Child Protection Committee (CPC) member



**Community searching for the abducted or missing child**

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## **A child is rescued...**

One day, a child went missing in Gamba Village. A woman had stolen someone's child; and she hid the child. As part of the Community Amber Alert, we mobilised the community at around 10 O'clock at night. We all went and rescued the child from the woman. We reunited the child with the mother.

Fred Ssenkungu, Child Protection Committee Member

## A formal pledge to end child sacrifice...



Maureen Namuddu's hand in pledge to end child sacrifice

Maureen Namuddu is a Sunday School Teacher at Kitenda Baptist School. Maureen championed the "raise your hand campaign" as a pledge and commitment to abandon the practice of child sacrifice. Those, who raised their hands, were handed a commitment form — which they filled out as a commitment never to indulge in child sacrifice practices.



## 6.0 Social Norms Change Approach

The CAAACs Project also employs the social norms change approach using the workshop method. Here, World Vision partnered with HumaneAfrica, which was the first to adopt and use the social norms change approach in its own Project.

The process was meant to take apart deeply rooted perceptions that drive the harmful practice of child sacrifice. Without demand for children's body parts, there would be no supply. And no child would be sacrificed.

The multi-phased workshops were intended to have the affected communities come to terms with the reality about their own communities. Firstly, the affected communities had to acknowledge that child sacrifice exists; and it affects them adversely. And secondly, they had to be willing to re-evaluate their beliefs and attitudes to bring about positive change.



## Community-based Social Norms Change workshops

Through workshops, the community established that although their own children are at great risk of sacrifice, it is the community themselves who drive the demand for children's body parts whenever they visit the so-called witchdoctors.

At the end of the workshop processes in Fourth Quarter of 2014, a total of 1,177 community members (i.e., 602 males



For extensive coverage, the Community Facilitator informs the media. Media houses like radios and televisions. The media captures the eyes and ears of the public, regardless of audience or geographical reach. And they can help to get the public actively involved, when a child has been abducted or is missing. Also informed are the World Vision Cluster and Area Development Programme Offices in Buikwe District as well as other partners — such as, Kyampisi Child Care Ministries. An attempt is made to ensure that all relevant duty bearers and the general public are informed; and are on alert.

Community based Facilitators have mobile phones with a GIS system. The GIS builds on community efforts of drumming and relaying alerts using mega phones.

The Facilitator's role is to coordinate with the searching teams and send detailed alert messages to the media houses, response organisations and structures.

CDF, WVU, Buikwe

and 574 females) had made commitments to end the practice of child sacrifice and mutilation in Ngogwe Sub-County.

## 7.0 Geographical Information Systems Approach

With the Geographical Information System application or GIS fully up and running, authorised users are now able to



instantly receive alerts on cases of missing children from field based actors — using the GIS

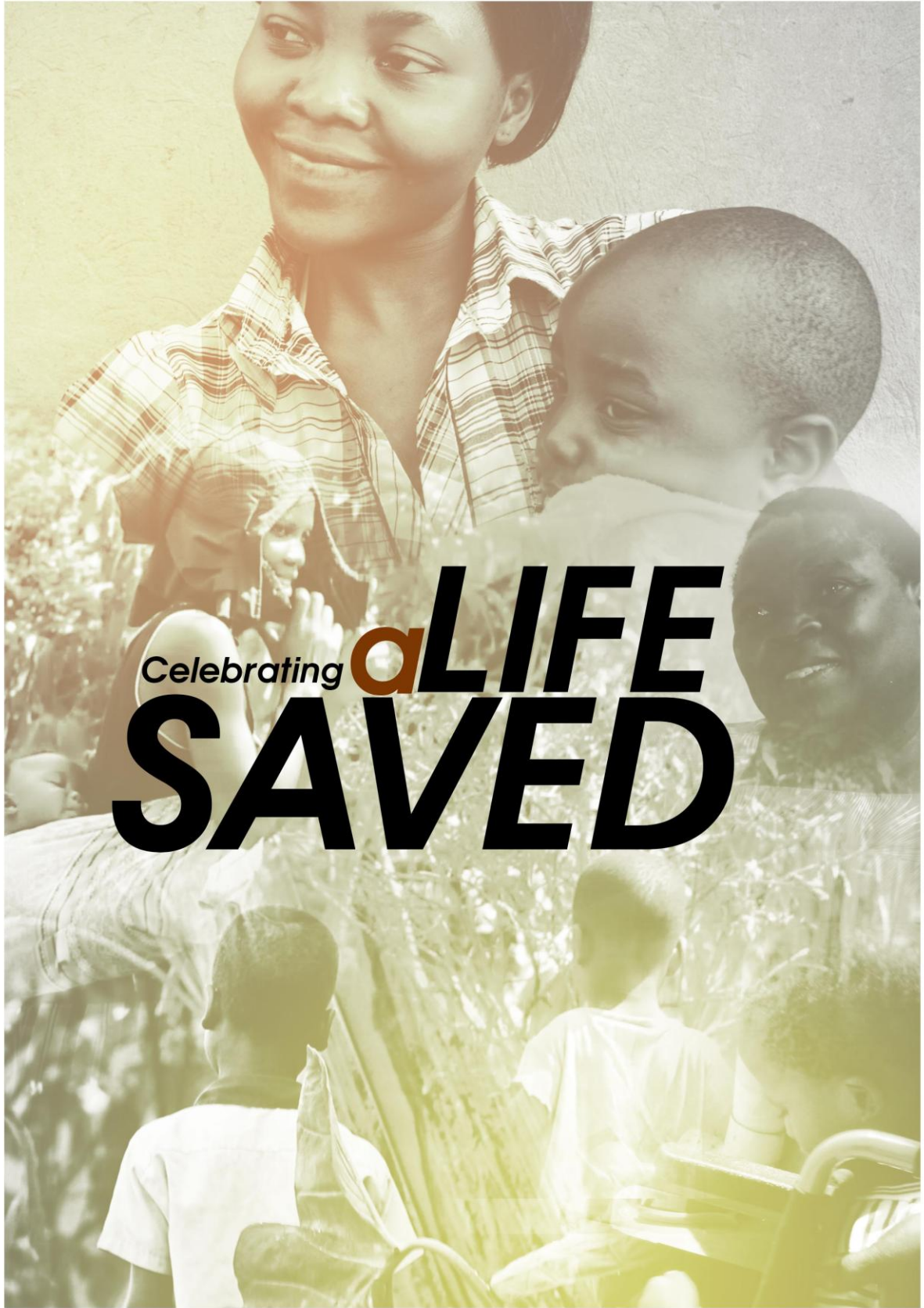
enabled phones. Authorised users include: — the Community Development Officers, Probation Officers and the Police as well as media house. And through the GIS mapping, users can also track child sacrifice cases in the target areas to educate the public and encourage reporting of cases.

Once the application has been successfully installed, users can enter records of missing children and of suspects — using a four digit pin code — and then, submit the data.

Users are also able to update the status or the results of a case using their phones.

In addition, users can view geo-spatial analysis of incidents using a Geo-Mapping Module.





Celebrating **a** **LIFE**  
**SAVED**



### Swift action helps save little Angel...

We were playing. Some men told us, "Come here!" We ran away, leaving the baby behind. I ran to Kiwa's home. They asked me, "What do you want here?" I answered, "There's a child, who has been taken by two men!" I told them, some two men dressed in dirty clothes, came. And they asked us to go to them.

### Schoolboy survives ritual murder...

In the evening of September 14, 2014, a 14 year old boy (names withheld) from Busitwe Village was abducted. Shortly after dinner, his parents sent him out to a nearby shop to buy some items. Just right at the edge of the family compound, four men instantly grabbed him, tied up his arms and legs. They quickly threw him in the backseat of their car and drove off. His abductors wanted him for rituals.

The boy had this to say, "When they were performing their rituals, they took me to a large hut. They untied me thinking I was still unconscious due to chloroform. I quickly ran into a sugarcane plantation nearby as they followed me with spears..." Upon hearing the alert on mega phones, community members began to search for him. When the abductor heard the announcements, they fled. The boy was later discovered at around 12:40PM the next day. According to the boy, he was able to escape his abductors because of the community sensitisations they had had at school. At school, children were taught on what to do when caught up in such a critical situation.

## 8.0 CAAACS Project impact stories

### 8.1 Project impact at the family / personal level

#### Amber Alert's teamwork pays off...

I heard an announcement on the mega phone; that is how I got the information. The man and his wife had left the boy and his sister of two and a half years at home alone. When Kiwa got the information, he raised an alarm while running towards the road. As he did that, he ran into Nalwanga, a Village Health Team (VHT) member who was coming from her garden. She asked him, "Mr. Kiwa, what's the matter?" He replied, "Mr. Boke's child has been abducted!" He then contacted the Councillor. At the Councillor's home, there is a mega phone.

The Councillor immediately made the announcement. He announced, "Block everywhere! Mr. Boke's child has been abducted!" The men who had abducted the child abandoned her at a boundary line. The child lay motionless. The two men had put her under sedation; but, they ran away. We knew, the phone call had helped save the child. The boy took responsibility to communicate to Mr. Kiwa; and the VHT was very key in saving the child's life.

Mary Nakibuuka, Community Facilitator



## Little Angel's life saved — thanks to her brother's quick action

### A mother's relief to have her children back and safe

When it had just begun, the CAAACS Project registered its early success story. Two children (names withheld) were saved. Using a motorcycle, the children's father took one of the boys with him to their grandmother's house. The older boy ran back home to tell his mother. On hearing this, the mother immediately activated the system. She called John Sseruwuffo, a Community Development Officer (CDO) trained in the Amber Alert, who came to her assistance. "We used the drums," He says. "We used the megaphone. Drumbeats, says John, spread the information more quickly within communities than mobile phones. In these communities, not everyone has access to a phone.

Neighbours began to drum, alerting the entire village. The next day, 95 villagers met to search. The Village Alert Committee (VAC), which protects children in the community, briefed the community about the boy — his age, his looks, his clothing. A motorcycle team blocked the outbound roads. Community development leaders spoke through the megaphones, giving updates to village members. Child Protection leaders moved from shrine to shrine, accompanied by police. Everyone was looking for the boy.

In six days, the community was able to get the boy back. The Community Protection and Development Officer notes, "If you take time to respond, you may find the child dead. Any time lost could cost a life." The boy's mother was ecstatic when she was reunited with her son. "It was the happiest time of my life," she says. It is believed that boy's father had taken the boy. No one knows why, but with child sacrifice, no one wants to find out.

Obed Byamukama, Child Protection and Development Facilitator



Community women participate in giving ideas of where the child may be hidden. The community at this point explores every possible way that would lead to the recovery of the missing child. And working together is a crucial tool towards achieving their goal.



Community members gather at the village centre on the second day. They draw a community map showing dangerous spots and main roads that perpetrators may use to escape.

## Bob's miraculous survival — A story of significant change!

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, this child sustained a deep cut on his neck. I had left him at home, and had gone to church to pray. As we left church at 3 O'clock to return home, we saw a young man on a motorcycle speeding towards us. He called, "Mama Musa, Mama Musa! I responded, "Yes!" He said, "One of the children you left at home has been cut on the neck!" As I tried to get up from where I was, I fell down. I got up, and walked back home. At home, I saw a large pool of blood on the canvas cover — it's from here, he was cut! The doctor told me, the child will be transferred to Kampala. He said, but the child is now on drip; we'll have to wait. Then, he was taken to the surgery room. Afterwards, the doctor told me to leave the surgery room. As I left the room, the doctor called me back, "Grandma, grandma, come back!" He said, "We want you to keep around. We don't want the child to get worried, since he doesn't know anyone of us! He may think, we want to harm him. After the surgery, he was placed on a bed. His condition got worse. He was then placed on oxygen support. At 10 O'clock, I saw people from World Vision Uganda and Kyampisi Child Care. Shortly after, the ambulance van also arrived. We were transferred to Case Clinic. At Case Clinic, the child underwent a number of treatments. When we left the Clinic, we were not allowed to go home. They told me, Grandma, we'll find you a place to stay with the child. It has been nine months now! Since we got here, we've had to go back for treatment now and again. We even have someone assigned to give Bob support round the clock. She's always here. His neck couldn't keep straight, without a collar band to support him. Now, he's fine. He's able to sit on his own. His hands were always firmly clenched, like fist. Now, they are more relaxed. I used to feed him. But one day, he said, "Let me feed myself!" He told me, "Grandma hold me. I'll walk!" I'm so grateful. No words can express the great joy I have inside my heart.

Jimmy's grandmother, at Kyampisi Rehabilitation Centre



Bob's miraculous journey



I look at Nkombwe community two years back and how End Child Sacrifice Coalition (ECACS) committee has been able to support Nkombwe Primary school. This community now send children to school. We have registered children whose parents did not want them in school. We are glad that this approach is sustainable and it is done by the community. The School Management Committee is also encouraged to support teachers to retain these children in schools. We are excited that our enrolments have increased as a result of the campaign. We pray that this intervention continues so that children are kept in schools..."

Benard Elungati, Head Teacher  
Nkombwe Primary School

"We take the responsibility to sensitise people about the need to reduce cases of child sacrifice as well as those of children who go missing. We also sensitise communities to stop defilement of girls and encourage children to go to school." Fred Ssenkungu, ECACS, Nkombwe, Kiringo Parish

## 8.2 Project impact at the community level

### Founding of the End Child Sacrifice Coalition

CAAACS's awareness campaigns led to the creation of the End Child Sacrifice Coalition (ECACS) by Ngogwe community. As a protective measure to reduce risks of child sacrifice, the Coalition ensured that all children of school going age were in school. The Coalition mobilises and educates the community to support children of school going age to be in school.

The Coalition is made up of the Officer in Charge of Police, Local Council Chairpersons of different villages as well as community elders. From February 2014, 12 operations around the community especially at the fishing landing sites in Kiringo Parish have been carried out. 67 (49 boys: 18 girls) out of school children, of school going age, were rounded up. Such children were easy prey for kidnappers, who wanted them for sacrifice. A segment of these children used to provide cheap labour and had little or no protection because they were employed to work for people who were not their caregivers.



### Children of school going age fishing

With only 28 children in 2010, the government aided Nkombwe Primary School at the landing site in Ngogwe Sub-county saw an upsurge in its enrolments to 319 children (149 boys and 170 girls) in 2014. These enrolments are a result of the ECACS operations and community awareness campaigns targeting parents and other caregivers.



## Increased participation by parents and other caregivers in their children's education



Community sensitisations focusing mainly on parents and other caregivers at the lakeshores have yielded positive outcomes. Sensitisation drives to withdraw children of school-going age from fishing activities were some of the CAAACS Project strategies aimed to protect children from the risk of death by drowning. Also, unscrupulous fishermen allegedly

used children's blood for boat cleansing to obtain riches. Besides fishing activities, such as drying fishing nets and picking silver fish to earn a living, children of school-going age were also involved in farming during the school term.

In March 2014, a community Citizens Voice and Action (CVA) member re-educated small groups of women caregivers at Nkombwe landing site to take their children back to school. Through CVA interventions, enrolments in Nkombwe Primary School have gone up. Enrolments in 2015 now stand at 384 children.

Sensitisations have not only seen an upsurge in enrolments; but also, parents and other caregivers are now more involved in their children's education. They participate in school meetings. They provide their children with basic essentials at school, such as, scholastic materials and contribute towards their children's school feeding. Solar lighting at Nkombwe Primary School was purely a parents' initiative to provide security as well as enable children in their final primary school year to learn at night to improve performance.



The Deputy Head teacher in class supporting Primary 7 pupils

Community sensitisations have greatly improved hygiene and sanitation as community members at the lakeshore no longer misuse latrine facilities meant for teachers and pupils.

Despite these contributions, Nkombwe Primary School needs a school fence to be erected to protect school property and children while at school. A school based housing facility will also go a long way in ensuring that children, especially girls, keep in and complete school and are protected from fishermen.

## A coordinated response to an alert message....



Michael Amato, Inspector of Police, Ngogwe Sub-County

As the Team prepares on March 11, 2015 for an interview with the Officer in Charge at Ngogwe Police Station, he suddenly receives a message by phone. Two children have just been abducted from Ssi — one of the sub-counties in Buikwe District. And the suspects were sighted speeding off with the children on a motorcycle — commonly known as *boda-boda*. The Officer in Charge wastes no time. He immediately swings into action. His immediate task now is to ensure that the children are recovered alive and culprits brought to book. He has to act quickly. By the time we leave, no word about the abducted children has been heard as yet. But, we leave the Officer in Charge still monitoring the situation.

**Update:** The two children abducted were abandoned that every day by their abductors in Kituntu village, Ngogwe sub-county. This was after announcements were heard on mega phones.

Documentation Team

## Community child protection mechanisms strengthened...

Before the CAAACS Project began, Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in the project areas of Ngogwe and Buikwe sub-counties used to perform their traditional roles of sensitising and handling cases of child abuse and neglect issues at the community level. Where they failed, CPCs would refer cases to relevant authorities at the parish and/or sub-county level. Though issues of child sacrifice were prevalent in Ngogwe Sub-County for example, CPCs rarely got involved in them.

According to Elias Muwonge, a CPC member, "The situation was very bad here, before WVU came in. When a child was sacrificed, there were no clear mechanisms as such to follow up such cases then — as we have them now. At present, we have a network in place to coordinate responses to cases of child sacrifice — and even the District is informed for action. Previously, when a child was sacrificed, there were no follow ups. And often, such cases would just end right there."

The CAAACS Project empowered CPCs in their roles and on how to prevent and respond to cases of child sacrifice. Rather than treat all of them with mistrust, CPCs began to view genuine traditional healers as key allies in the fight against child sacrifice. Children are also actively involved in sensitising their peers at school and in the community on how to report and protect themselves from child sacrifice and other child protection issues.

## Increase reporting of child protection incidents

During CAAACS Project implementation, grassroots and other child protection structures have been reinvigorated — hence, giving reporting and referral mechanisms as well as networks the much needed boost.

### Reduced incidents of child sacrifice in 2015

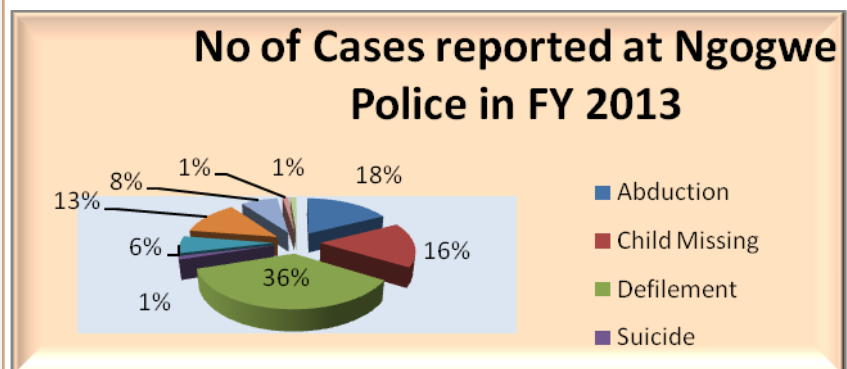
Though there have been cases of abductions reported in 2015, there is no incidence of children dying as a result of child sacrifice. Because of approaches used in the CAAACS Project, such as, the social norms change, there has been a change in attitudes and perceptions — hence, causing a fall in the number of children losing their lives.

While the Project aims to reduce the prevalence of child sacrifice, it is also addressing other issues of protection.

Rhoda Nyakato, National Child Protection Manager

Owing to sustained capacity support to CPCs in allegation management and reporting, there was a 50 percent rise in the number of child abuse cases reported in 2013 when the Project began — compared to only 40 cases in 2012.<sup>7</sup>

### Percentage of cases reported at Ngogwe Police Post



Source: Quarter 4 Output Monitoring Report September 2013

Defilement topped the list of reported cases against children, followed by abductions and cases of missing children took the third spot. These statistics served to underscore that although cases of defilement are most prevalent, cases of abduction and missing children were equally telling — hence, providing credence to CAAACS Project interventions.

Similarly, there was a significant improvement of 67 percent in the handling of child abuse cases by Police in 2013, compared to 14 percent in 2012.<sup>8</sup>

Cases reported between October 2014 and February 2015 to Ngogwe Police Post show a reduction in cases reported — with 5 defilement case; 2 abduction cases; 1 kidnap case; and 2 missing children.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ngogwe ADP Annual Report FY 2012 October 2012

<sup>8</sup> Quarter 4 Output Monitoring Report September 2013

<sup>9</sup> Report compiled by Ngogwe Police Post, Ngogwe Sub-County



## Children actively involved in the fight against child sacrifice...



The District Probation Officer in Buikwe sensitising children in Lugasa Parish, Ngogwe Sub-County, Buikwe District on how to protect themselves.

Children, together with their parents, participate in such forums to gain skills and tips on how to protect children and others from sacrifice.

Children are involved in reporting child abuse incidents, educating their peers as well as participating in decision making processes.



Children from different child clubs at Lugasa Primary School

Children were also actively involved in the development of the CAAACS Project. Getting children's view was very crucial since they are the most vulnerable

category in the community at risk of child sacrifice. Partnerships with schools in Buikwe District have provided a very good opportunity to meaningfully involve children in the fight against child sacrifice.

During implementation of the CAACS Project, children have been involved in school club activities. At Lugasa Primary School for example, children perform music, dance and drama activities developed from their own views and information they gather about child sacrifice and other abuses against

One child at Lugasa Primary School reported in a discussion, "Many children are kidnapped by those who want to sacrifice them for their blood. Evil men sell children to witchdoctors."

View such as these feed into children's music, dance and drama activities intended to sensitise peers and communities about the dangers and risks posed by the evil and harmful practices against children — including child sacrifice and



Children at Lugasa Primary School reciting a poem

mutilation. Children said that they report all cases of child abuse, including child sacrifice, to their teachers. Once this has been done, meetings are held or children are called for an assembly. "We advise children to avoid walking alone; they

should walk in groups. We tell them to avoid bad peer groups and not to go out at night.”

### Accountability and transparency by traditional healers

I’m grateful to World Vision for the good relationship we have together to fight child sacrifice and murder. When this Organisation came, I took the initiative to work with them, as the Chairperson of Traditional Healers in this District and in Buganda Region. We realised, anything to do with child sacrifice was being linked to traditional healing practices.

World Vision worked with us to clear up these impressions. Through the Amber Alert Project, we worked along with others to create awareness in the Sub-County — in about five parishes in Ngogwe Sub-County. We requested that we scale up these activities to other sub-counties, since traditional healers are found everywhere across the District. We have registered so far about 1,200 traditional healers in the District.

Chairperson, Traditional Healers in Buikwe District

When the CAAACS Project began in 2013, the work of traditional healers was unmonitored; hence, making it lucrative and attractive to those who ventured into the practice in Buikwe District. This was driven by demand from the host and other communities for “alternative” services many blindly believed could offer them opportunities, such as cure / healing, love or riches conventional methods could not.<sup>10</sup> The number of traditional healers in Buikwe District, including those singled out as witchdoctors, remains largely unknown. Despite an unmistakable presence of shrines in the District, many of these reportedly operate within the confines of their homes — away from scrutiny. According to the chairperson of Uganda Herbalist Association in Buikwe District however, the number of genuine and registered traditional healers at the time of this documentation in March 2015



stood at 1,200 and counting.<sup>11</sup>Through CAAACS’ community sensitisations and the social norms change workshops in targeted communities, there is more accountability and transparency among healers. In a bid to weed out quack healers for example, traditional healers have a registered Association of Traditional

Healers complete with a constitution to regulate their activities. Screened traditional healers carry an identification card and a certificate, granting them permission to operate. Due to very stringent regulations, it’s now an uphill task to set up a shrine. This has led to a decline of shrines constructed in the target sub-counties. A district level Task Force composed of traditional healers, security personnel and others is in place; and regularly conducts operations. In 2014, the Task Force mounted an operation in which 14 quack healers

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Edrine Kibogo, Traditional Healer, on March 5, 2015 in Kiwologoma Village, Ngogwe SubCounty

<sup>11</sup> Interview on March 5, 2015 with David Mukasa, Chairperson, Uganda Herbalist Association, Buikwe District

### Project ownership by the community

When child sacrifice was first introduced as a subject matter, there was a lot of enthusiasm. The community suggested the use of low cost and locally available resources, such as, the drums and mega phones. It was the community members, who proposed where mega phones were to be erected.

As a demonstration of ownership, individuals offered space to put up the mega phones. Others offered their generators and/ or solar panels free of charge to provide energy. The community put up the mega phones themselves.

Once an alert has been made, communities quickly converge together in a central location to map out ways to rescue abducted or missing children.

Charles Okuta, Team Leader and Community Facilitator

were arrested in Kiyindi; and another 8 were found to be illegally operating in Ssi Sub-County, without certificates.<sup>12</sup>

### Community ownership of the CAAACS Project

Ownership of the Project by the community has been amply demonstrated in Buikwe District as shown here below:

- The idea to revive the age old tradition of drumming to mobilise help or support was brought up and seconded by the communities themselves;



The communities are solely responsible for the maintenance of the drums, mega phones and other accessories — for example, the community decided to allow

mega phones to be used for other purposes, such as, death and other important announcements, for a fee of 500 Uganda Shillings to raise funds for their maintenance. Well wishers also contribute generously towards the maintenance of the system;

- Most community based stakeholders, e.g., CPCs; Police, the youth; health workers, traditional healers; and teachers, involved in the CAAACS Project volunteer their time and resources for the genuine cause of protecting children from sacrifice and mutilation. For example, motorcyclists (or bodaboda riders) offer free transportation services when an alert has been made.
- When parents learnt about the causes of child sacrifice, they assumed the fully responsibility of ensuring that their children are protected and are safe at all times;
- During community meetings, people share information about the activities of shrine owners — as a way of establishing who the genuine healers are
- Religious leaders raise awareness about child sacrifice in churches and mosques;
- In the fight against child sacrifice, shrine owners work together with other stakeholders.
- The District Local Government has provided its own funds

towards the implementation of the Localised Amber Alert — for example, calling Community Facilitators using their own resources to relay alerts.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Edrine Kibogo, Traditional Healer, on March 5, 2015 in Kiwologoma Village, Ngogwe SubCounty



### Guidance for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act...

An “Investigator’s Guide for Management of Cases Related to Trafficking in Persons”— developed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs — is now in place to provide guidance during the implementation of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009.

### Community level Bye-Laws in place...

Arising from the CAAACS process of gathering community views from Ddungu, Kiringo, Namulesa and Kiringo parishes, 3 bye-laws were developed and passed by Buikwe District Council endorsed by Ngogwe sub-county Council to protect children from child sacrifice. These include:

- All children of school going age should be in school;
- No adult should employ any child into fishing; and
- all children should live with their care-givers not on the lake.



Ngogwe Sub-County Executive discussing Bye Laws to protect children

### 8.3 Project impact at the legal and policy level

#### Process of strengthening legal and policy frameworks to protect children against child sacrifice

At the national level — the Anti Child Sacrifice Coalition, of which World Vision Uganda is a part, presented in June 2014 a Petition to the Parliamentary Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development. This was aimed to bring to the fore the existing gaps in the legal and policy frameworks and proposals to stem the vice of child sacrifice in Uganda.



Parliamentary Committee on GLSD hearing from various stakeholders on issues around child sacrifice and mutilation

“Currently as a Parliamentary Committee of Gender, Labour and Social Development, we have been handling the law on child sacrifice. We are looking for a way on how we can stop child sacrifice. It has taken a long process. We have interacted with all stakeholders — most of them, including Government, specifically the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Police, Civil Society Organisations, NGOs and even the traditional healers. We have tried to discuss with everybody; and we are now in the process of making our report, which we shall present on the floor of Parliament to come up with serious laws to stop this evil activity.” Rwakajara Arinaitwe, Vice Chairperson, Parliamentary Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development

**Update:** After a long process, Mariam’s case — a victim of child sacrifice in Buikwe District — has now been committed before the High Court ready for mention.

## 9.0 Barriers in the way

At times, we have some challenges. Some parents are the very people suspected of doing these acts. But they cannot release the information immediately to any other person, until there is a leakage somewhere — and this may come too late. This may weaken the investigations.

Michael, Amato,  
Inspector of Police,  
Ngogwe Police Post

There are a lot of problems. How do you bail someone suspected of murdering a child? When we try to fight evil here, then we give it an outlet to survive. Are we really serious? It involves handling mind and attitude change of the stakeholders. Look at the CID of Police, who starts handling the file. How does he or she handle it? He knows a child was murdered, it's clear. Then, look at those who pick samples for testing. Then, we've got state attorneys, who declare there is no enough evidence. Then, we have courts which handle cases so impersonally. They leave us asking questions without answers.

Kyeyune Ssenyonjo, Resident District Commissioner, Buikwe District

When we try to ask the Police, they tell us they have no evidence. In the villages, people would be on fire and tell you they have released a suspect. But when you call on them to be witnesses, they will not come. So, you keep the person in police [custody]. These suspects have their rights. This whole thing of releasing suspects is either corruption or no evidence.

Shelin Kasozi, Child Protection Coordinator, Kyampisi Child Care Ministries



A hearing held by the Parliamentary Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development

### Opportunities for advocacy...

Although Amber Alert Against Child Sacrifice has done a lot for Ngogwe Community and the District, there is a lot that still needs to be done in advocacy at the local and national level — influencing actors and laws that are vital to protect children.

Obed Byamugisha, Child Protection and Development Facilitator

## 10.0 Opportunities to strengthen CAAACS Project gains

- **Facilitate or support processes to strengthen structures and systems to protect children from harmful practices:** The only solution is to empower those institutions that deal with such people, i.e., the judiciary, the Police and so forth. If they get such people, they should be punished. Rwakajara Arinaitwe, Vice Chairperson, Parliamentary Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development
- **Support processes to contribute towards strengthening the Police Force to fulfill their mandate:** If the Police could train professional policemen, especially those who deal with the crime scene, it would be a lot easier for us. We've had a lot of cases that have gone unsolved up to today. One of the reasons is either the Police did not carry out investigations, or we don't have evidence anywhere or resource allocation is very poor. All this has left us helpless. Collin Owino, Field Coordinator, Kyampisi Child Care Ministries
- **Scale up CAAACS activities to cover the whole District as a way to sustain the gains already made:** Child Sacrifice is still rampant in many parts of Buikwe District; yet as a Local Government, we do not have adequate resources and capacity to handle child sacrifice. We would like to appeal to World Vision to scale up the Amber Alert Project to other sub-counties in the District. Peggy Kiggundu, Vice Chairperson, Buikwe District
- **In addition to existing partners, work also with recognised faith based groups or organisations to further contribute towards sustainability and community transformation.** For sustainability at the community level, there is a need to work through and/or with faith based organisations that would use a multi-pronged approach of spiritual nurturing along other CAAACS Project approaches which have proven to work to reduce incidences of child sacrifice. Rhoda Nyakato, National Child Protection Manager, WVU