



RELAUNCHING:

It takes a world to end violence against children



We are committed to fight for a safe and caring environment for all children to enjoy life in its fullness. Girls Not Brides Uganda is a national partnership of over 95 civil society organisations united to end child marriage and teenage pregnancies. The coalition is currently co-chaired by World Vision Uganda and Joy for Children.

Status of violence against children

Despite interventions from government and partners, the status of violence against children has not improved, more so during the COVID-19 crisis. News feeds are overwhelming with stories of child abuse, including defilement, teenage pregnancy, child marriage, neglect, and even death of children across the country.

BEFORE & AFTER COVID-19 outbreak

More than

2,400

cases of violence against children were reported from January to March 2020.

This increased to almost

5,000

cases from April to September 2020, that is a 20% increase; with fathers as the biggest perpetrators.

Source: (October 2020, Child Helpline / Sauti / 116).



Q&A

with

Irene Kagoya

Associate Director Advocacy

World Vision defines violence against children as all forms of physical, sexual and mental violence, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, harm or abuse, including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage. Irene Kagoya shares insights about It takes a world, a global campaign aimed at ending all these and more, and why it was necessary to relaunch the campaign.

What is the campaign about?

- Launched in 2017, It takes a world campaign is focused on ending child marriage, child sacrifice and violence against children in school in Uganda.

Why did we choose ending violence against children?

- Violence is the major issue affecting children today. Life doesn't have to be this way. We believe a world without violence against children is possible. A safe and caring environment is critical for the holistic wellbeing of all children.

What has been the most significant achievements of the campaign to date?

- The campaign has registered a number of gains. We have contributed to:
 - Strengthening children's capacities to protect themselves and others from violence through advocacy, entrepreneurship skilling, and support for youth friendly services. As a result more children are reporting cases of violence through the different child protection structures.
 - Enhancement of child-friendly reporting mechanisms and institutions through capacity building, community dialogues and monitoring, and strategic partnerships with faith and cultural institutions.
 - Supported interventions and influenced budgetary allocations to end violence against children in different districts such as Mpigi, Busia, Buikwe and Gulu.
 - Influenced policies such as formulation of the national parenting guidelines, Guidelines on Teenage Pregnancy, the Prevention and Prohibition of Human Sacrifice and Sexual Offenses Bills pending approval of Parliament.

Why are we relaunching the campaign?

- Our new National Office Strategy (2021-2025) recognises that preventing violence against children needs to be one of the hallmarks of World Vision, and a critical component of our integrated efforts to achieve well-being for the most vulnerable children. To achieve this, it was inevitable that we relaunch the campaign, firstly, to realign it with our new strategy.

Secondly, reaffirm our commitment to ending violence against children. World Vision will be putting its full weight behind ending violence against children. We are excited to collaborate at all levels to leverage and amplify existing efforts through all areas of our work from advocacy to fundraising, communications to faith engagement and programming.

Finally, the relaunch was to showcase our progress, reflect on the status of child protection, re-ignite collaboration efforts, and come up with practical solutions of ending violence against more than five million vulnerable children in the country, especially in this COVID-19 period when every family, community and country across the world is grappling with the pandemic and its impact.

What is different about the relaunched campaign?

- Three things. One, this campaign, unlike previous World Vision campaigns, focuses on changing the attitudes and behaviours that allow violence against children to thrive. This campaign is one step on a long journey to end violence against children and key to doing this is changing how people understand and respond violence– to change their beliefs that “it can’t be stopped” or “children are resilient”. We want to jolt deeply held and subconscious attitudes and drive change in people’s attitudes.

Two, working in partnership is key – World Vision Uganda is already building strong alliances with like-minded groups like Girls Not Brides Uganda and Joining Forces, an alliance of the 6 largest child-focused international NGOs united to end violence against all children and secure the rights of every child in Uganda. We are working with a wide network of partners including: churches and other faith groups and organizations, governments, NGOs and civil society, the private sector, media, academia and most importantly communities, families and children themselves.

Three, this is a multi-sector campaign. Violence is the most common factor contributing to children’s vulnerability; significantly impacting their health, education and ultimately their future. For example, child marriage and adolescent pregnancy are major causes of maternal and child mortality; violence at home and in school reduces learning outcomes and increases school drop-out rates, especially for girls, and seriously limits their future ability to earn an income. Due to World Vision’s holistic, multi-sectoral programming and advocacy the campaign has been integrated in strategic priority sectors of health, education and child protection thus contributing to the campaign’s goals and objectives.

What is the connection between It takes a world campaign and 16 Days of Gender Activism?

- Gender-based violence gravely impacts on children’s wellbeing. It is arguably the most prevalent type of violence affecting girls and women in Uganda, yet remains largely underreported. Women and girls’ resilience is incredible but the consequences are life-long and in some cases are fatal. To dismantle all risks leading to their vulnerabilities and going at deeper lengths, everyone is essential in this fight. This year, World Vision Uganda relaunched It takes a world campaign to mark 16 Days of Gender Activism, leveraging in this opportune moment to amplify and rally support towards ending violence against women and girls at all levels.

What do we hope to achieve?

- • Catalyse a national movement to change attitudes, raise awareness and drive courageous and effective action to end violence against children.
- Strengthen prevention and response measures to address violence against children
- Strengthen accountability for implementation of commitments to end violence against children

How can I help to end violence against children?

- • Use the campaign hashtag #ItTakesAWorld or symbol on your social media channels
- If you know a child experiencing violence, report it to local authorities, talk openly in your community about incidents of violence against children in the news and how to prevent them from happening
- Call the Child Helpline /Sauti 116 (toll free) or use the Safe Pal app on your smartphone
- Pray for God’s healing and restoration for children who are survivors of violence.
- Call on your Member of Parliament to pass the Anti-Human Sacrifice Bill and the Sexual Offenses Bill and law enforcers to implement existing laws and policies

For further information about the campaign, contact Diana Tibesigwa: Diana_Tibesigwa@wvi.org



Amplifying the child's voice to end violence

Extreme left: Lady Justice Margaret Muntonyi: "If you educate a man you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman you educate the nation. Let's arrest the vicious cycle of poverty by educating the girl child."

Second from the left: World Vision Uganda National Director Jason Evans: "The adage "It takes a village to raise a child" has never been more relevant than today. It takes all of us to create a safe and secure society for our children."

Centre: Archbishop of the Church of Uganda Stephen Kaziimba Mugalu: "I commit our support as a church to join It takes a world to end violence against children campaign."

On the left and right flank of the Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, Stephen Kaziimba Mugalu are children representatives at the relaunch of It takes a world campaign in Kampala. Speaking on behalf of other children they amplified the voice of the girl child.

Extreme right: Girls Not Brides Chairperson Moses Ntege: "Everyone should be part of this community to say NO to child marriages."

Let's come together to spread that hope. Take action on today's most relevant issues like violence against and COVID-19 by learning about World Vision's response and joining our hidden hero movement today.



Listen to us, we're experts of our own experiences — children

“During this COVID-19 period the cases of child abuse have increased. It is my hope that children will be involved and listened to as they are experts of their experiences. Children are not just passive victims but real actors who know what they want and what should be done to protect them,” said a 14 year old Maria Goretti in an exclusive interview at the relaunch of the Campaign in Kampala.

Archbishop Stephen Kaziimba Mugalu presided over the relaunch that coincided with the 3rd National Girl Summit organised by World Vision and Girls Not Brides to leverage and amplify existing integrated efforts to end violence against children. “The church will be putting its full weight behind ending violence against children and we’re excited to demonstrate our commitment to this noble cause. But as a church alone we can’t end the biggest issue that affects children today. We need

concerted effort and to work with everyone,” said Mugalu.

“It’s time for us to leverage on established partnerships to further influence policy implementation, positive behaviour and attitude, and empower children to advocate and protect themselves and others from all forms of violence especially during this COVID-19 crisis,” said World Vision Uganda National Director Jason Evans. “This campaign has raised awareness, equipped children to protect themselves and others from violence, improved child protection mechanisms and institutions, and influenced policies...but there is still need for more concerted effort to end violence against children.”

Lady Justice Margaret Mutonyi said children, especially girls, were at increased risk of experiencing violence or taking part in risky behaviours because of the COVID-19 pandemic. “The suspension of schools because of COVID-19 situation has created conditions where violence at home, child marriage and teenage pregnancy are more likely to occur due to economic hardship,” said Mutonyi. “We must equip children with practical help to fight the spread of COVID-19, support them to continue their education, and provide livelihood opportunities for their families.”

Over 400 people, led by some of Uganda’s prominent faith leaders, government and civil society representatives as well as children and their parents, attended the campaign relaunch events held simultaneously across the country where World Vision has operations.



Maria Goretti, 14, misses school and looks forward to resuming face-to-face learning when the situation is safe. Due to COVID-19, schools in Uganda were closed to avoid the spread of the virus.

Girls ask parents to stop exchanging them for small gifts

“Teenage pregnancies is the greatest issue facing children... and the situation is worse in this period of COVID-19. Because of high unemployment rate and lack of income, many parents are just exchanging their daughters for small gifts and money, and conniving with the local councils and the police,” said Pamela, 14, from Gulu district.

In a joint statement, the children petitioned the government, UN agencies, civil societies, faith-based organisations and the private sector who were represented to work together to prioritise child protection actions in the national COVID-19 response. This includes ensuring continued functioning of child-friendly reporting mechanisms, such as SOS hotlines.

Chairperson of National Fellowship of Born Again Christians for Northern region, Bishop James Ocan condemned the culture of abandoning the parenting role to NGOs and schools describing the practice an “abomination”.

He implored parents to stop looking at a girl child as property which can be exchanged at will, and children with disability as useless. “Children whether girls or those with disabilities deserve equal opportunities in life, and to be loved and cared for. Children are not merchandise but human beings created in the likeness of God, who should live and enjoy a life devoid of exploitation,” he said urging parents to protect their children by establishing safe spaces at home and changing negative social norms and beliefs.

Ocan committed to bring to the fore all issues affecting children in the summons and other church engagements. The church leaders present pledged to offer counselling and guidance to affected children and young people, majority of whom are born to parents who themselves are survivors of the Lord’s Resistance Army rebellion in Northern Uganda.

Quick facts about Northern region

In Northern Uganda, the COVID-19 outbreak has worsened violence against children. In Wol sub-county in Agago district, for example, more than 220 cases of violence were reported between February and November 2020. Poverty during this period has led to unwanted pregnancies, domestic violence and child abuse because children are not in school. Moreover, the impacts of the recent floods and locusts on crops and pastures have further exacerbated the deteriorating food security situation. There is a decrease in household incomes due to the economic shutdown, decrease of meals consumed per day (from three meals to one meal a day), and the crops harvested aren’t enough for household consumption.

Common forms of violence

1. Child neglect
2. Defilement
3. Early marriage
4. Physical violence
5. Child labour

World Vision intervention

1. Empowered children as agents of change through child protection committees
2. Strengthened child protection community structures
3. Trained and empowered faith leaders to promote peace in families
4. Raised community awareness to identify and report incidents of violence



Above: Pamela, 14, (holding a microphone) expressed the desire to educate parents on the dangers of marrying off their young daughters and called on law enforcers to implement existing laws to protect all children from harm, including child marriage. **Below:** Chief guest, Bishop James Ocan (blue suite) speaks at the relaunch of It takes a world campaign in Gulu

Children: COVID-19 has made our situation worse

Eastern region relaunch — Mbale City

“The outbreak of COVID-19 just made our bad situation worse. Whereas everyone is at risk, the closing of schools has made our life at home more difficult as people are taking advantage of the situation to abuse children especially girls. Many school girls are pregnant now because most of us are idle and doing nothing at home,” said Emmanuel, 16, from Mbale. That was the story shared by many children who spoke at the relaunch of It takes a world campaign in the eastern city of Mbale.

Speaking as the chief guest, Resident District Commissioner of Butaleja, Elijah Madoi condemned corporal punishment and negligence of parents pointing out the practice was forcing children to abandon their homes. He implored parents to create safe environments for children to grow in peace, liberty and freedom. “Today, we’ve a big challenge of street children who are involved in criminal activities because most of these children are running away from the harsh environment at home and they find streets a safe haven. Let’s do our responsibility as parents to provide, prevent and protect our children from violence,” said Madoi.



Above: Children from Eastern Uganda listen to Madoi during the relaunch of It takes a world campaign in Eastern Uganda. **Below:** Emmanuel, 16, speaks as other young people listen attentively during a discussion with different stakeholders. Children expressed the desire to be protected from violence and supported to continue their education.



Quick facts about Eastern region

In Eastern Uganda, children continue to be exposed to high levels of abuse, including physical, emotional and sexual violence. For example:

- In Busia district, 67 defilement cases have been reported since the start of 2020.
- In Mbale district, more than 1,100 cases of gender-based violence involving girls were reported from March to July 2020. Other cases were neglect (193), domestic violence (815), child labour (46), defilements (28), and child dissertation (21).
- In Tororo district, more than 3,600 girls aged 15-18 attended antenatal care from April to June 2020. This age category is supposed to be in class not delivery rooms.

Common forms of violence against children

1. Defilement
2. Teenage pregnancies / child marriage
3. Child neglect
4. Child labour
5. Child sacrifice

World Vision interventions

1. Trained faith leaders and supported radio talk shows including child parliaments to raise awareness
2. Supported referral mechanism for affected children
3. Established a reception centre for child survivors in Busia

We know what to do if our rights are violated — Children

“Before we feared for our lives,” said Anita, 16, pausing momentarily as if reflecting on the journey trekked thus far. “We even didn’t know where to report cases of child abuse,” she continued. “Thank God that now we can talk openly about violence and how to protect ourselves and others from abuse. If we know a child experiencing abuse, we can report to a local council, community development officers, police, teachers and parents, or even call the Child Helpline /Sauti number 116 for help.”

That is how it takes a world campaign has impacted the lives of children from Western Uganda. With its relaunch intended to re-ignite united efforts to create a safe and caring environment for all children, the life of Anita and those of million others across the country can only get to what it is supposed to be — sweet and enjoyable.

WorldVision has been successful at influencing and signing memoranda of understanding with all the three cultural institutions of Obukama bwa Tooro, Obusinga bwa Rwenzururu and Obudinga bwa Bamba to protect and promote children’s rights.

Rev. Father Isaiah Mayombo raised the alarm on the “appalling” and “heartbreaking” impact of violence on children in the tourism region especially heightened during the coronavirus pandemic. He said, “the Church highlights zero tolerance to defilement, early marriage, and all forms of violence against children” and commended the support of the cultural institutions in the Rwenzori region to help protect the future generation.

Father Mayombo called on government and development partners to provide with livelihood opportunities to families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as a practical solution to poverty. “A poor man doesn’t have choices. It is always a matter of survival and would anything to live for a day,” said Mayombo.

Quick facts about Western region

Violence against children in Western Uganda is widespread.. Many children are exposed to physical, sexual and emotional violence in their homes and schools. Child marriages and teenage pregnancies are on the increase because of COVID-19. For example:

- In Hoima, more than 2,600 girls aged 15-24 attended their first antenatal care from March to September 2020 (Hoima District HIMS. This age category is supposed to be in school.
- In Albertine region, over 200 cases of defilement were reported from March – June 2020,

Common forms of violence against children

1. Sexual violence/defilement
2. Child marriage/teenage pregnancy
3. School drop out
4. Child neglect
5. Child labour

World Vision interventions

1. Strengthened child protection coalitions with faith and cultural institutions, including Bunyoro Kitara Diocese and Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom
2. Strengthened children’s capacities to protect themselves and others from violence through child protection clubs in schools and communities
3. Trained and empowered faith leaders to promote peace in families
4. Equipped youth with skills in income generating activities like soap making, bakery, and crafts, hair dressing, mechanics to help them fight poverty, the root cause of violence against children



From the top: Anita, 16 and Rev. Father Isaiah Mayombo of Virika Catholic Church speak as participants listen attentively at the relaunch of It takes a world campaign in Fort Portal City.

We know what to do if our rights are violated — Children

More than 200 cases of defilement were reported from March – June 2020 in Bunyoro region. “[Sexual violence] is the biggest threat especially to the girl child who are at times left with no option but to succumb to this form of violence,” said Queen Omugo Margret Karunga Adyeri of Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom.

This was during the relaunch of It takes a world campaign in Hoima City. The event brought together 150 participants, including faith and cultural leaders, government officials, civil society and the media.

In a statement read by personal assistant, Daphine Kabatalesa Adyeri, the Bunyoro Queen encouraged everyone to report incidents of violence citing silence and alcohol abuse as major factors fueling the problem. “Keeping quiet when abuse happens and the rampant abuse of alcohol are real challenges we must address to end violence,” said Queen Karunga.

Nathan Isingoma Kitwe, speaker of Hoima district council emphasized the need to protect children particularly the girl child. “This campaign is for everyone and as a council we fully support and associate ourselves with its goal of ending violence against children,” said Kitwe.

Bridget, 13, asked the government to support children to continue with their education. “I have friends who were primary seven candidates but didn’t go back to school because they were pregnant,” said Bridget. “We’re safer when at school because we are kept busy.”

Citing more than 2,600 girls aged 15-24 who attended their first antenatal care from March to September 2020, Happy Kenneth, World Vision Uganda Regional Programmes

Manager – Western region encouraged faith and cultural leaders to join the campaign to end acts of violence. “It’s saddening that children supposed to be at school and in class are in delivery rooms,” said Kenneth.

Bishop Samuel Kahuma of Bunyoro Kitara Diocese implored men and boys to respect and protect women. “Real men protect and take care of their wives and children. If you beat your wife and exploit young girls, you’re not a real man,” said Kahuma, pledging to continue preaching against acts of violence especially against women and girls.

He commended the partnership between World Vision and the Church as well as Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom. World Vision successfully influenced and signed memoranda of understanding with the two institutions.



L-R: Samuel Kahuma, Bishop of Bunyoro Kitara Diocese, Daphine Kabatalesa Adyeri, representative of Queen Omugo Margret Karunga Adyeri of Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom, World Vision’s Happy Kenneth and Robinah Gimbo, chairperson of Hoima district Mulindambwa MJ commit to end violence.

Pray for well-being of children

“When we pray and intercede for the well-being of others, God listens. Let’s pray for our children’s well-being,” Those were the concluding remarks by the East Rwenzori Diocese Bishop Rev. George K Turyasingura as he presided over the relaunch in Kamwenge district.

He expressed concern over the increasing rate of violence against children especially defilement and teenage pregnancy in the country and applauded World Vision for initiating a campaign that involves everyone, including the church, other faith-based and cultural institutions. He said the relaunch would go further to raise awareness, change attitudes and behaviours that enable and allow violence against children to flourish.

“Whereas children are a gift from God, millions are faced with a plethora of abuses, including sexual abuse, child marriage and exploitation,” said Rev. Turyasingura adding that the most disheartening was a fact that people known to and supposed to protect children were the same violating their rights. “May we listen to children and reaffirm our commitment to ensuring all children are protected from and live without violence.”

Quoting from Exodus 2:9, Rev. Turyasingura said the Church was intentional about promoting children’s rights and wellbeing. He said declaring 2019 and 2020 as special years for children under the theme *Take Care of this Child* demonstrated the church’s commitment to ending violence against children.

The Bishop implored stakeholders present who included faith leaders, parents, teachers and the police to provide safe spaces for children and to always exhibit high integrity when handling cases of violence against children. “As we go out today, let’s affirm that our children will live in freedom and peace. We can, in hope, faith and love, break open this chapter of darkness and draw ourselves and others to walk in the path of light, and for our children to grow and live a happy life God desires for every child,” he said.

The children in a joint petition made a clarion call to the government and partners to strengthen the child protection mechanisms to help detect, prevent, and protect children from all forms of violence. “Please do not wait to act after we have been abused. Act first, and put up measures to prevent violence from happening in the first place,” said a 15-year-old Joshua and chairperson of children’s parliament on behalf of other children.



From the top: Joshua, 15 speaks as Bishop George K. Turyasingura signs a pledge board at the campaign relaunch in Kamwenge. Participants committed to take action to end violence against children.



Together, we can end violence against children

“We’re stronger if we work together.” “Change is possible if we work together to end what is considered ‘normal’ for millions around the world.” “We call on everyone to stand with children and young people to defy normal and help end violence against children, including child marriage.” “Together, we can support children in becoming empowered, confident people who decide their own futures.” These statements echoed throughout the radio talkshow on Voice of Karamoja to mark the relaunch of It takes a world campaign.

On the show was Lima, 13, from Kotido district, and Kalistus Longole, police officer in charge of community liaison in Kotido district. Longole raised the alarm on the horrifying effects of child marriage in the region. “Child, early and forced marriage is a harmful practice that disproportionately affects a girl child, and the problem has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis,” he said adding that investing in girls’ education can help end child marriage.

Research and experience show that education is the key to giving girls choices and opportunities. When a girl is educated, she will marry later, have fewer and healthier children, and earn a higher income. In fact, girls with secondary schooling are up to 6x less likely to marry as children compared to girls who have little or no education.

When prompted to speak about the state of children in Karamoja and what can be done to address incidents of violence, Lima did not mince words. She said child marriage continues to be a cultural tradition in Karamoja, one that is reinforced by deeply-rooted traditional beliefs and social norms.

She said changing these types of social norms must come from within the community. “Child marriage denies girls their childhood, limits their access to education and increases their chance of teenage pregnancy, poor life and death. Engaging boys, girls, mothers, fathers, clan elders and community leaders is essential to creating lasting change,” she said.

Lima encouraged children in Karamoja to always report incidents of violence to local authorities, talk openly about incidents of child abuse and how to prevent them from happening and/or call the toll free Child Helpline /Sauti 116 for help. “If you experience violence or know a child experiencing violence, don’t fear. Report immediately,” she said.

Quick facts about Karamoja

Sexual and emotional abuse as a result of negligence and deprivation are the common forms of violence against children in Karamoja. This occurs in homes, schools and community with girls at a higher risk than boys. Child trafficking has been witnessed in some districts of Kaabong, Moroto and Kotido. Most families are polygamous with limited sources of income. Abuse of alcohol considering it as food a commonplace of public life. Child protection structures remain weak due to low level of literacy and awareness.

Common forms of violence against children

1. Child neglect
2. Sexual abuse/child marriage
3. Child labour
4. Child trafficking

World Vision interventions

1. Supported formation and trained members of child protection structures
2. Sensitized parents on positive parenting
3. Supported referral of affected children
4. Supported school enrollment by mobilizing of children through village committees



Kalistus Longole, police officer in charge of community liaison in Kotido district and Lima, 13, (green dress) in the studio of Voice of Karamoja FM. World Vision supported the radio programme.

Diana: a hidden hero who won't hide in the face of challenges



When ordinary people come together, they make an extraordinary impact. That is the story of Diana Tibesigwa, a child advocate and a believer in the power of a person's voice to do the impossible, battle inequality and call for justice. Through advocacy and campaigns work, Diana has worked with the rank and file of the Ugandan society to change attitudes and beliefs about violence against children, ensuring girls and boys enjoy a childhood free from violence.

"To give and to put the needs of others in the first place, is a feeling that warms my soul," says Diana who for four years has been leading the It takes a world campaign as World Vision Uganda policy and campaigns officer. "The desire to protect children, their smile, the release breathing of parents, pushes me to wake up every morning energized to make a contribution towards meeting the most critical challenges of the time."

Behind all the work that World Vision has been part of for the past 70 years, ordinary people like Diana have said 'yes' and risen to call for what is right, what is fair and what is just for children. They are not intimidated by the challenge at hand. Even in the most difficult situations, where the need and impossibility is great, they have always chosen to stand by the vulnerable children and their families.

"I gather my courage primarily thanks to what I feel in my heart, and that is the love to help someone and not to give up what I am fighting for," says Diana. "I think that honesty, selflessness, commitment, resilience and empathy are the qualities that push a person to become a part of such cause. I wish to believe that I possess these."

Working with families, faith leaders, schools, and various levels of government – as well as the children themselves – Diana's aspiration is to create lasting change for children in every community in Uganda. "It's possible to create violence-free environment at home, in schools and communities for children to enjoy life to its fullness," says Diana. "If all of us work together and help one another, even a small voice when joined with other voices will be a great and powerful voice."

Guided by the principles of humanity and pushed by an unquenching desire to impact on the lives of others, especially the most vulnerable children, Diana has always been at the forefront coalescing voices to end violence against children, including child marriage, child sacrifice and violence at school in Uganda. "Nothing will come of nothing, and I don't want to be the one to just watch," says Diana. "Being a part of humanitarian call resonates in my heart and makes me feel happy and satisfied!"

Isolated in unsafe homes, sent to work or pushed into early marriage, millions of boys and girls could be facing physical, emotional and sexual abuse as result of COVID-19 pandemic. But Diana knows too well what advocacy work is all about, and hers as a child advocate is clearly cut out. "We don't just help children out of dangerous situations, we work with and among communities to address the root causes of violence such as poverty and social stigma that often lead to abuse, exploitation, and other forms of violence against children," she says.

She adds that the relaunch of It takes a world campaign has created an opportunity to harness voices to call on the government and partners to urgently increase funding for health, education and other social services that protect children from all forms of violence and abuse, especially for girls and boys at greater risk due to the impacts of COVID-19.

"We want to help every community build a safety net of loving people to protect children, prevent harm, and ensure that those impacted by the pandemic receive the help they need to recover," says Diana. "But we can't do it alone. The slogan 'it takes a world' is aimed at stirring minds and catalysing a movement of people committed to keeping children safe from harm and violence to play a part, no matter how small."

No matter how difficult things get, true heroes always find a way to make a difference. And you can do it too. You can demonstrate courage and replace fear with hope.

Up next

For the next 5 years, we shall leverage on the successes registered thus far to:

1. Strengthen children's capacity to advocate and protect themselves and others from all forms of violence
2. Continue influencing government to enact the Prevention and Prohibition of Human Sacrifice and Sexual Offences Bills, and to enforce existing laws to protect children against all forms of violence
3. Fast-track the implementation of existing partnerships with the church and other faith and cultural institutions, and to pursue new partnership opportunities as we seek to translate commitments to impact the lives of children
4. Support the integration of the campaign into programme planning and implementation at local and national level
5. Explore innovative approaches to enhance the campaign's visibility at the local and national level

The Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, Stephen Kaziimba Mugalu signs a pledge board to show commitment to ending violence against children during the relaunch of It takes a world campaign in Kampala.



It takes a world re-launch in pictures

