



House of Mercy Children's Home Lagos, Nigeria (HOM)

NGO No. CAC/IT/No 21690

Annual Report 2013

Preamble

A considerable number of children in Nigeria have good childhoods. There is much progress to report and celebrate which include improved health care and improved educational standards.

Whilst we celebrate the notable achievements that have been made to advance children's rights there is still a long way to go.

With children below the age of 15 accounting for about 45 percent of Nigeria's population, a significant minority of children are still disadvantaged and excluded from society.

At House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos (HOM), we are passionate about promoting children's well-being today and their potential to become citizens of the future.

Our priorities are children who have nowhere else to turn. We protect abandoned children from the dangers of life on the street.

We offer support to child beggars, street children and child scavengers. We give children with disabilities and children with albinism a voice.

Our approach is driven by the voices of children who are at the heart of all we do.

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The Year in Review

It has been an exciting year and we have much to be thankful for.

Our priority areas in 2013 addressed the most significant issues being faced by children in Nigeria.

By focusing our efforts in four priority areas - child abandonment, child hunger, child poverty and child advocacy, we ensured we had maximum impact with the resources available to us.

Child Abandonment => Homeless Children's Programme

Opening of a Home for Girls at risk on the streets in January 2013

A Home for Girls was opened in January 2013 to provide abandoned girls a safe environment where they can grow free from abuse and neglect.

Our goal is to eventually reunite the child with her family, whenever that is in the child's best interest. While some of the children we reach out to have been reconciled with their families, those who are not able to return to their families remain in our care.

We provide 24-hour care, protection and psychological attention, nutritious meals, education, health care, recreation and excursions for the children.

As at December 31, 2013, we have five girls aged between 6 and 13 residing in the Home.

Home for Boys at risk on the streets

Two of the boys in our Home for Boys, which was opened in March 2011, were reconciled with their families in July 2013.

Through our Homeless Children Programme, we have ensured that more children facing the dangers of life on the streets have a safe environment to live.

As at December 31, 2013, we have two boys aged 10 and 12 living and their needs provided for by HOM.

“Our priorities are children who have nowhere else to turn.”

Lagos State Common Entrance Examination

The three boys in our Home who sat for the Lagos State Common Entrance Examination passed with flying colours with 75%, 70% and 68% and were granted admission to Junior Secondary School One (JSS1) in September 2013.

We place a high premium on education. All our children are enrolled in local schools and receive academic help after school-hours.

From primary school right up to securing employment, we want to do everything possible to discover and develop the children's talents.

Child Hunger => Meals on Wheels Programme

Food price spikes in 2013 left children, the most vulnerable group, to bear the brunt of the adverse impact of the hike.

Throughout the year, we did overcome childhood hunger by scouring the streets and distributing free nutritious meals to about 200 child beggars, child scavengers and destitute on a weekly basis.

We are committed to ensuring no child goes to bed hungry in our community.

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Child Poverty => Cloth distribution

We see many children on the streets who struggle every day with very visible signs of poverty: the worn-out, tattered clothes on their backs.

The lack of basics like clothing and shoes leaves children susceptible to illness and infection and it also takes its toll on a child's self-esteem.

In 2013, we received shoes and clothing from generous donors and we distributed these items to children who needed them most.

Child Advocacy – Literacy, Disability issues...

In 2013, we strengthened our work by being an advocate for children who face discrimination or disadvantage in their daily lives.

Children with disabilities are often abused or locked away due to the stigma of disability. We recognise that little will change in the lives of children with disabilities unless attitudes change.

Ignorance about the nature and causes of impairments, invisibility of the children themselves, serious under-estimation of their potential and capacities, and other impediments to equal opportunity and treatment all conspire to keep children with disabilities silenced and marginalised.

Our Charity Work featured by the WHO

On July 26, 2013, HOM was featured in the Women Create Life Project of the World Health Organisation.

The article was entitled “Stories from the Field: A Home for the children – Nigeria”.

With so many “big name” charities out there, we were humbled and honoured to be featured.

Volunteer Support

The volunteer support that we have received over the years has been an incredible asset to HOM and we would not be at the stage that we are today without it. And the support has continued.

Two volunteers from Germany - Daniela and Christiana, joined our team from July 28 to August 10, 2013. Huge thanks to our volunteers for giving of their free time to help run our much needed services.

Having an active volunteer presence is an incredible asset and it is a positive sign for the future of HOM.

Network with others

We are a small NGO with a staff team of 5 and our influence is strengthened by the links we have with others.

In 2013, we worked across the education, health and social services sectors, with government, non-government and community organisations to ensure children had the services and supports they needed to thrive.

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Aid to other charities: Crisis in the DRC

HOM contributed a token and also lent its support to on-going efforts to provide humanitarian aid to children and women caught in the crossfire in the Kivu provinces of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Challenges Encountered

Our informal literacy classes for marginalised and nomadic children were suspended in 2013. This was as a result of opposition from the parents/guardians regarding the education of the children especially the girls.

In spite of the difficulties, challenges, and opposition we face, we continue to work as an advocate for children who have no voice towards their literacy.

Financial Overview

HOM receives no funding but relies on voluntary donations and fundraising to support its work.

Over the year, we worked tirelessly to minimise expenses while identifying opportunities to increase our voluntary income through fundraising and expanding our support base.

We are committed to helping as many children as possible today while ensuring that we have the funds available to help tomorrow's children and our strategy reflects this position.

*Copies of our financial statements are available upon request.

Targets for 2014

Throughout 2014, the main thrust of our work on the ground will continue to focus on four priority areas – child abandonment, child hunger, child poverty and child advocacy.

We are dedicated to helping the most disadvantaged children enjoy a good childhood.

Children at risk living on the streets

We have seven children in our Children's Home and we hope to welcome many more in the coming year.

As much of a challenge as this presents, we are confident that we shall continue to ensure that more children facing the dangers of life on the streets have somewhere safe to stay and a reliable person to listen to.

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Meals on wheels programme

At a time of rising food prices, we are keeping a careful watch on the ways in which the economy and government policy is affecting Nigerians.

In 2014, we will continue to work diligently to fight childhood hunger through our Meals on Wheels Programme. Our aim will be the same as ever – ensure no child goes to bed hungry in our community.

Child Advocacy

In 2014, we will continue to strive to be an advocate for children who have no voice toward their literacy.

We will endeavour to increase public awareness on disability issues in order to reduce the stigma surrounding disability, reintegrate children with disabilities into their communities and ensure that they receive appropriate services.

We envision a nation in which all disabled children are fully included as equal members of society and are able to achieve their full potential.

We look forward to being of further service to needy and vulnerable children over the coming year.

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Acknowledgements

In what continues to be a challenging economic climate, HOM has been able to deliver on its vision – to ensure that needy and vulnerable children are well-nourished, educated, protected from harm and able to participate in community life, thanks to the generosity of our supporters.

On behalf of HOM, I would like to acknowledge and express our gratitude to Mrs. Kehinde Orishayomi for raising £867.22 (~~₦226,645~~) at the 2013 Virgin London Marathon to help fund our services to needy and vulnerable children. Our grateful thanks to all who played a part in raising this fantastic amount of money.

Additionally, I would like to recognise the significant support and assistance we received from the following donors:

Ms. Ndidi Dike for the donation of snacks and food items on a regular basis.

Mr. Deji Holloway for the donation of bulk food items.

Mrs. Busola Abatan for donating ₦24,000 towards the school sponsorship of two of our children.

Ms. Joké Babington-Ashaye for the donation of clothes and a cash donation of ₦94,533.

Mrs. Kehinde Olaleye-Akib for donating ₦50,000.

Mrs. Omironke Iwayemi for donating ₦20,000.

Mr. Uchechukwu Nwabunike for donating ₦10,000.

Ms. Taiwo Orishayomi for donating 100£ (~~₦26,141~~).

Mrs. Dolapo Omotayo for donating 10£ (~~₦2,614~~).

Mrs. Shola Mos-Shogbamimu for donating £300 (~~₦78,424~~).

Mr. & Mrs. Magnus Nebdal for donating 450€ (~~₦98,828~~).

It is a privilege for HOM to be entrusted with the mechanism which helps convert financial generosity into practical benefits. A warm and heartfelt thanks to everyone who gave of their time, money and support in 2013.

Last, and by no means the least, I am thankful to our wonderful staff team for their hard work over the past year. It has been the support and commitment of our staff team over these seven years that has allowed us to carry out the work and projects we do today.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the hard work and passion of our Coordinator. Providing services to needy and vulnerable children is no easy feat. It requires tireless dedication, energy, innovative thinking, knowledge and empathy for the children we serve. As a team, we continue to strive for excellence in everything we do, as we work towards our common goal of helping disadvantaged children reach their full potential.

Our focus is firmly on the future and we look forward to an even brighter 2014.

Thank you for believing in our mission and supporting our work.

With sincere gratitude,

Bunmi Awoyinfa