



# Annual Report 2014

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

NGO No CAC/IT/No 21690

### Preamble

It is with mixed feelings that we arrive at the end of an extremely productive 2014. While we are very grateful for all that we have achieved throughout the year, we have been saddened by all the tragic events that unfolded in Nigeria this year. Our deepest sympathies are with the people and families involved in the incidents.

Never has working with children been as important or as challenging as it is today. Child poverty, child hunger, child homelessness and child illiteracy are realities throughout Nigeria.

Our sole purpose at HOM is to support the most vulnerable and neglected children, improve their wellbeing and help them achieve their full potential.

This report sets out House of Mercy Children's Home Lagos, Nigeria's (HOM) progress towards its vision and mission between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2014.

This year has been one of significant growth and change and we achieved enormous progress across every area of our operations, from outreach and provision of support for needy and vulnerable children and emergency aid to advocacy.



### Special points of interest:

Our Year at a Glance	1 - 7
Challenges Encountered	7 - 8
Financial Overview	9
Looking forward to 2015	9 - 11
Acknowledgements	11 - 12

### Our Year at a Glance

Our work seeks to bring about positive change in the lives of the most disadvantaged and excluded children. To achieve this, we focused our energies on four key areas:

- child homelessness
- child hunger
- child poverty and
- child advocacy.

## Child Homelessness >> Children's home

HOM champions every child's right to a safe, permanent and nurturing home. Since the establishment of our family-based residential home for boys in March 2011 and our home for girls in January 2013, 30 homeless street children, 10 girls and 20 boys between the ages of 3 and 14 years have passed through our children's home.

While some of the 30 children who have passed through our children's home since March 2011 have been reconciled with their families, those who have no home or parents to care for them and those who cannot be safely reunited with their families remain in our care.

HOM focuses its intake of new children primarily on destitute children from the streets who have no home or parents to care for them because they are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society.

From March 2011 to present, HOM has provided a safe nurturing family style home environment for both boys and girls. Our home is full of happy, active and well cared for children who have regained their childhood having left the streets far behind and who are busy making their futures.

Qualified medical professionals tend to the children's health needs providing a comprehensive programme of immunisation, dental check-ups and maintaining detailed medical records.

At HOM, we are committed to providing every child in our care with the education and training they need to succeed as independent adults. All our children attend local schools close to the children's home and receive after-school tutoring to improve their academic performance. It is worth mentioning that 8 of our children who could neither read nor write when we welcomed them into our children's home can now read and write and are doing well in school. All our children passed their annual exams and were promoted to the next class; some of them scored marks of over 70%. One of our girls passed the Lagos State Common Entrance Examination and was granted admission to Junior Secondary School in October 2014.

Sport is another important aspect of life at HOM. Both our girls and boys are energetic, enthusiastic and often very skilled on the sports field. Over the years we have found that playing sports has contributed dramatically to the rehabilitation of children from very difficult backgrounds.

Additionally, a farming project which includes a large vegetable garden, plantain plantation and different types of fruit trees, is helping HOM get closer to the goal of self-sustainability.

In 2014, we welcomed 1 girl, aged 3 and four boys aged, 11, 7, and 4 into our children's home. As at December 31, 2014, we have 12 children, 6 girls and 6 boys aged between 3 and 14 living in our children's home.

---

*"From March 2011 to date, 30 homeless street children between the ages of 3 and 14 have passed through our children's home."*

---

## Child Hunger >> Free food distribution

At HOM, we strive to ensure that no child goes to bed hungry in our community. Ensuring food security is a national priority, particularly for young children, because it does not only impact on their present health and well-being but also their future health. Malnourished and improperly-fed children have a compromised immune system and do not develop and grow as well as others.

Since the launch of our Mobile Kitchen Programme in 2007 till date, we have provided well over 80,000 food packs to child beggars, street children, child scavengers and distributed food items to over 500 destitute families in Lagos.

Through our Meals-on-Wheels programme, we package and distribute highly nutritious and life-saving meals for starving and malnourished children.

In 2014, 400 child beggars, street children and child scavengers benefited from our free food distribution programme.

Our vision is of a nation where each child can focus on being a child, live, learn and play and be assured of regular meals.

---

*“Since the launch of our  
Mobile Kitchen  
Programme in 2007 till  
date, we have provided  
well over 80,000 food  
packs to child beggars,  
street children, child  
scavengers in Lagos.”*

---

## Child Poverty >> Free Clothing Distribution

Although thousands of poor children nationwide lack adequate clothing, the issue is overshadowed by the more urgent needs of hunger and health care.

The effects of rising child poverty are seen every day throughout Nigeria. The worn-out, tattered ragamuffin clothing on their backs is one visible sign of the poverty that afflicts many needy children. To escape grinding poverty, children in some parts of the nation are joining rebel movements and taking up arms.

In addition to providing free nutritious meals to hungry children, HOM provides clean and gently used clothing for poor and needy children. The excitement and gratitude of the children is uncontainable when they are given new pieces of clothing and clean pairs of shoes.

In 2014, HOM provided clean and gently used clothing for about 200 children in dire need.

## Child Advocacy >> Campaigning and Advocacy

In 2014 we focused on online child advocacy through the Articles Page on our website [www.homchildrenshome.org/articles](http://www.homchildrenshome.org/articles). Our campaigning and advocacy work is about collective action to improve the lives of children.

When issues are important enough, doing research and publishing reports do not suffice. At HOM, we believe in immediate actions that achieve concrete results. Through our direct impact projects, we aid immediate needs of children before us. Through our advocacy work, we strive to impact long-term systemic change.

We look to educate, engage and activate people and also raise awareness and support for children who are often disregarded or who have difficulty having their opinions heard such as the Girl Child, Child Domestic Servants and Children with Disabilities.

- **The Girl Child**

In our work we witness how, despite the strong willingness of girls to learn, their education is often disrupted by a variety of poverty-driven factors as well as traditional or religious beliefs. The future also looks bleak for girls victimised by early marriage, being more vulnerable to maternal deaths due to under-developed bodies not ready for child bearing.

Violence against girls is prevalent in times of social and political upheaval, crisis and conflict. The abduction in April 2014 of over 250 girls from the Government Secondary School in Borno State in the Northeast region of Nigeria by Islamic insurgents and the subsequent use of girls as soldiers and suicide bombers is an example.

At HOM, we are very familiar with the problems many girls face every day and we strive to promote equal educational and skills development opportunities for girls.

- **Child Domestic Servants**

Children as young as five years of age work in the homes of a third party or employer as house boys or house girls, performing lengthy daily chores like scrubbing floors, ironing, cooking, carrying buckets of water long distances, looking after other children and caring for the elderly. Vulnerable to physical, psychological and sexual violence and abusive working conditions, they are often isolated from their families, hidden from the public eye, and become highly dependent on their employers. With a lack of proper access to schooling or skills training, the future of these young domestics remains obscure or limited.

- **Children with Disabilities**

Children with disabilities are often abused or locked away due to the stigma of disability. Most national and international development goals refer to the rights of disabled people to share educational opportunities equally with their peers. However in reality, enrolment rates and educational attainment of disabled children remain far lower than those of their non-disabled peers. According to the World Report on Disability, the school enrolment rate for children with disabilities is estimated to be just 1-3 percent in developing countries. The plight of children with disabilities therefore presents an enormous development challenge.

---

*“When issues are important enough, doing research and publishing reports do not suffice. At HOM, we believe in immediate actions that achieve concrete results.”*

---



## New website

After much anticipation and hard work, our new website [www.homchildrenshome.org](http://www.homchildrenshome.org) was launched in March 2014. Our new website is mobile friendly, easier to navigate and it contains more videos and information about our projects and the countries we work in.

The Events Page of our site [www.homchildrenshome.org/events](http://www.homchildrenshome.org/events) highlights a list of important dates designated for creating awareness of children's issues.

The purpose of the Scam Alert page of our site [www.homchildrenshome.org/scam-alert](http://www.homchildrenshome.org/scam-alert) is to alert the public to charity scams so they can protect themselves against scams, phishing attacks and fraud.

HOM is now listed on Google Maps and a map to our location can be found on the Contact page on our website [www.homchildrenshome.org/contact](http://www.homchildrenshome.org/contact).

This year, in addition to launching our new website, we focused on online child advocacy through our blog. Some of our articles can be accessed on the Articles page of our website [www.homchildrenshome.org/articles](http://www.homchildrenshome.org/articles).

The Video Gallery page of our website [www.homchildrenshome.org/video-gallery](http://www.homchildrenshome.org/video-gallery) features clips of our activities.

Our website is available in three languages - English, French and Spanish. The French and Spanish sites can be accessed by clicking on the français and español sections of the English website respectively.

Our articles are also available in English, French and Spanish on Blogger and can be accessed by clicking on the orange blogger icon on our website.

## Children's Home Renovation Efforts

In October 2014, we started a renovation project for the boys' dormitory in order to accommodate more boys.

The dining room/common room was also renovated and enlarged to comfortably seat more children.

A pantry was also built to store non perishable food items for our children's home and our mobile kitchen/meals-on-wheels programme.

## D.O.E. Grange School students visit HOM

On Thursday 8th May, we were delighted to be visited at HOM by the students, teachers and staff of Grange School. The visiting students were the winners of the Duke of Edinburgh Award for service to others. They donated food items and also interacted with our children in their primary school.

We are grateful to D.O.E. Grange School Students, teachers and staff for the visit and delighted to have the opportunity to make new contacts.

---

*“After much anticipation and hard work, our new website [homchildrenshome.org](http://www.homchildrenshome.org) was launched in March 2014.”*

---

## HOM is a member of the Child Protection Network

In December 2014, HOM was invited to attend the inauguration of Child Protection Act in the Alimosho Local Government area. The event was organised by the National Orientation agency and Child Protection Network in collaboration with UNICEF, Lagos office.

In order to better serve the children in our community, HOM is now a member of the Child Protection Network, Alimosho Local Government Chapter.

## Referrals to other NGOs

In 2014, we received numerous requests for assistance and practical advice on a wide range of child-related issues.

At HOM, we aim to help enquirers by providing information and support about children's issues. If an enquirer requires support that does not fall within the scope of our NGO, we refer them to other organisations that are able to offer the appropriate support.

---

*“In 2014, we helped  
more children in  
crisis across Africa  
in a single year than  
ever before .”*

---

## Emergencies and Humanitarian Assistance

Every year emergencies threaten the survival and wellbeing of millions of children and their families. This year has been a particularly difficult one, filled with devastating events and numerous conflicts. In 2014 we helped more children in crisis across Africa in a single year than ever before.

Throughout 2014, within the limits of available funds, we continued to extend our reach to support children in crisis by assisting with emergency aid in the Northeast region of Nigeria, Central African Republic and in Ebola affected nations - Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. Information about our emergency assistance work can be found on our website [www.homchildrenshome.org/emergency-aid](http://www.homchildrenshome.org/emergency-aid).

Working with other NGOs on the ground to respond to emergencies, we were able to ensure children were protected and that their immediate and long-term needs were met.

Our goal is to ensure that children in Africa are healthy and safe and have the opportunity to grow, learn and develop, even in the midst of emergencies and conflict.

## HOM designated Winner of Christmas Charity Contest

HOM was both humbled and honoured to be named the winner of the Christmas Charity Contest organised by Standard Alliance Group in December 2013. We are very grateful to Ms. Oluwatosin Jetawo who nominated HOM for the contest which took place online without us even being aware of it. Our sincere thanks to Standard Alliance Group for awarding us the winning prize of ₦150,000 in January 2014.

## Challenges Encountered

### Increasing Demands for HOM

HOM is a small NGO seeking to make the greatest impact with its limited resources while at the same time enhancing its skills and understanding.

In 2014, we received many more requests than we could possibly consider, as much as we wish we could. Handling requests for help without seeming insensitive or uncharitable can be quite a challenge. While we are keen to support as many people as possible, we are unable to respond to requests that fall outside the scope of our projects and our funding focus.

---

*“In 2014, we received many more requests than we could possibly consider, as much as we wish we could.”*

---

### Parents Shirking their Responsibilities

The fact that HOM provides a home for children from the streets who have no home or parents to care for them does, unfortunately, attract the attention of people who are willing to take advantage of our generosity.

At HOM, we have very strict guidelines on the children we take in. The vision for HOM is to work with street children in order to reunite them with their families. We believe that the best solution is for the child to return home as family settings are the best places for children to grow up.

While some of the 30 children who have passed through our children's home since March 2011 have been reconciled with their families, those who have no one else to care for them, especially those who are at high risk of sexual and economic exploitation remain in our care.

In 2014, we received numerous requests from parents who wanted to shirk their parental responsibilities and “dump” their children in our children's home. What is truly disturbing is the reality that these able-bodied working parents live comfortably and are financially capable of taking care of their own children.

However on the flip side, poverty is also not an excuse for child abandonment. When children are able to stay with their parents and experience the special parent-child bond despite limited resources and get an education, they are empowered and enabled to rise above their circumstances and break the cycle of poverty for themselves and ultimately their families. The HOM school sponsorship programme was initiated in 2010 to provide financial assistance for children from needy families, in particular girls, whose parents could not afford to send them to school.

Many of the problems in our society arise because of parents who abdicate their responsibilities as guardians and such parents pose massive challenges for HOM. Part of our work in 2014 included parenting education and family preservation as we sought to educate and encourage parents to take responsibility for their children and provide for their needs. Children are not pets that can be given away or sold at random. Every parent has a legal responsibility to provide adequate support until their child reaches the age of emancipation.

## Challenges Encountered

### Unmarried Pregnant Young Women

In 2014, we also received requests from unmarried pregnant young women in their early twenties who wanted to take refuge in our children's home, have their babies and leave the babies with us after delivery.

At HOM, we strive to prevent newborn abandonment and baby dumping by supporting unmarried pregnant young women in crisis and empowering single mothers in need.

We offer support and advice to pregnant girls who request for help and encourage them to inform their parents, carers and families about their pregnancies.

We also endeavor to help single mothers find jobs, which is a much better solution for them and their child. It is our aim to keep families together whenever possible because the best place for a child is almost always with his or her family.

Children should, if at all possible, stay with their birth parents, in particular their mother.

In 2014, we counselled a number of unmarried pregnant young women who came to us for advice on giving up their child. Most if not all ever did.

---

*“At HOM, we strive to prevent newborn abandonment and baby dumping by supporting unmarried pregnant young women in crisis and empowering single mothers in need.”*

---

### Suspension of literacy classes for child beggars, marginalised and nomadic children

Our informal literacy classes targeting child beggars, marginalised and nomadic children which commenced in 2008 have been suspended since 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 in key decisions made about their education.

## Financial Overview

HOM is funded primarily by voluntary contributions from the public. In 2014, we continued to provide a variety of ways for supporters to donate to suit their interests and circumstances, either through one-off donations or quarterly donations.

We provide accurate and timely donation receipts to donors no matter how big or small a donation is. At HOM, we have zero tolerance for fraud, mismanagement or misappropriation of funds and our staff members are constantly vigilant to prevent it. Integrity is our watchword!

Our 2015 Strategic Plan looks at strategies to increase not only public awareness of our programmes but also to increase the support that will flow from this raised awareness.

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.

Our Statements of Financial Activities are available on our website [www.homchildrenshome.org/annual-reports](http://www.homchildrenshome.org/annual-reports).

## Looking forward to 2015

No organisation can be the best in what it does without continuous insight, honesty and active seeking of knowledge and information from other like-minded organisations.

HOM is a learning organisation and we constantly strive to improve our services so that they meet the needs of disadvantaged children.

Throughout 2015, the main thrust of our work on the ground will continue to focus on five priority areas – child homelessness, child hunger, child poverty, child advocacy and family preservation.

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

### Child Advocacy

In 2015, we will continue to strive to be an advocate for children who have no voice toward their literacy.

We will also continue to educate, engage and activate people and also raise awareness and support for children who are often disregarded or who have difficulty having their opinions heard such as the Girl Child, Child Domestic Servants and Children with Disabilities.

We envision a safe and secure nation where children with high-quality education, proper nutrition, good health and life-skills are a reality.

---

*“Our 2015 Strategic Plan looks at strategies to increase not only public awareness of our programmes but also to increase the support that will flow from this raised awareness.”*

---

## Looking forward to 2015

### Poverty Orphans >> Family preservation

The ideal world is the harmonious one in which all people behave in a correct and right fashion; parents fulfill their parental responsibilities; social services are in place to protect the weak, vulnerable and downtrodden and people are good not because they are weak but because they owe it to the community. The ideal world is the harmonious one in which there is love and there is no corruption, poverty, hatred or injustice.

But, we do not live in an ideal world... We live in the real world, where newborn abandonment, baby dumping, child abandonment, child trafficking and other dangerous practices against children exist.

It is a well known fact that many of the children in orphanages are not “true” orphans but “poverty orphans” with living parents who voluntarily give up their children for the services provided in the orphanage.

Poverty is said to be the leading cause of family separation and reason for placement of children in orphanages.

In 2015, we will continue to strive to eradicate the phenomenon of poverty orphans. Our aim is to preserve, stabilise, and strengthen the capacity of families and communities to care for children and prevent the institutionalization of children.

The challenge of poverty orphans, however, is greater than one NGO. It will take the combined efforts of federal, state, and local policy makers and child advocates nationwide to address this most pressing issue.

### Children at risk living on the streets

There are many push and pull factors that keep children living on the street. These include “push” factors such as loss of parents, poverty, neglect or violence within the home and “pull” factors such as the lure of apparent freedom and friendship with other children on the streets.

For those children who still find themselves living on the streets and at risk, we are dedicated to assisting each child to come to terms with their past experiences and re-enter their families and society in positive and durable ways.

Our goal for the children is that they be given ample opportunity mentally, socially and intellectually to develop into healthy adults without the scars of abuse.

We work closely with the Centre for Child Welfare and Human Trafficking to offer an accountable, consistent and transparent child-centred service to protect children.

At HOM, we are dedicated to making Nigeria safer for children.

---

*“We work closely with the Centre for Child Welfare and Human Trafficking to offer an accountable, consistent and transparent child-centred service to protect children.”*

---

## Looking forward to 2015

### Children's Library

Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who do not, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures.

Our goal is to motivate children to read so they will practice reading independently and become fluent readers. That is why we plan to install a library in our Children's Home in 2015.

In sum, in 2015, we remain determined to do all that we can to improve the lives and life chances of vulnerable children in Nigeria and across Africa, however tough the external environment is.

We continue to be driven by our values of passion for working with children and aim to keep hope and aspiration at the centre of our work with children.

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

## Acknowledgements

### Volunteer Support

In 2014, volunteers from all walks of life brought a wide range of skills and expertise to complement those of our staff and enrich the lives of the children.

We extend a big Thank You to the 4 wonderful volunteers, Peace, Bunmi, Kemi and Moses who helped us pack over 200 meals and spent long hours giving away packed meals, water, snacks and clothes to about 200 child beggars, street children, child scavengers on Saturday, March 1, 2014.

We were also grateful to receive the support of businesses who offered their skills and expertise to support our work for children. Our heartfelt thanks to Mrs Benson of Nelson Football Academy for providing free football coaching sessions for our children including shuttle service to and fro; and Mrs Ariyo of Zilah Talents for providing our children with free training sessions on Essential Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes in life.

### Our staff

There is no successful organisation without a hard working and dedicated leader. Our Coordinator's hard work and creativity in responding to the increasing levels of need that we are seeing are extraordinary.

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.

On behalf of HOM, I am very grateful to our Coordinator for working tirelessly to provide assistance to all the children we have been serving since the inception of HOM in October 2006.

My appreciation also goes to all our staff members for their commitment.

As at December 31, 2014, we have a staff team of five people.

## Acknowledgements

In what continues to be a harsh economic climate, HOM has been able to deliver on its vision – to ensure that needy and vulnerable children are well-nourished, educated and protected from harm, thanks to the generosity of our supporters. We are extremely grateful to the individuals and businesses listed below for their dedication to our mission and invaluable contributions and we are humbled by the belief you have shown in us.

Ms. Ndidi Dike - ₦50,000 and food items.

Mr. Bolaji Oseni - monthly gifts and food items

The entire Babington-Ashaye Family - ₦262,795

Church of Pentecost Anglican Church - ₦30,000

First Greenwich Schools - food items

Mr Ikechukwu Ezech - 80 packs of pampers

Osas and Oseji Company - bulk food items

Ms. Bunmi Obanawu - food items

The Samuel Foundation - 88 Maths sets and toys.

Mr. Solomon - Educational toys

RWOG, Dubai - toys, clothing and food items

Elkanah Home School - ₦10,000, food items and clothing

Amaka and Uche - ₦5,000

Mr. Kelechi Okorie - ₦3000

Ms. Peace Peters - ₦45,000

Mrs. Kehinde Olaleye-Akib - ₦25,000.

Mrs. Thelma Chukwu - ₦35,000

Mr. Olukole Israel-Payne - ₦25,000

Mr & Mrs James - household items

Mr. Emmanuel Akpan ₦5,000.

Mr. Stephen Adedoyin - ₦20,000

Ms. Taiwo Orishayomi - £500

Mrs. Toyin Lawal - ₦5000

Mr. Emmanuel Awakkesien - ₦20 000

Mrs. Anneke Ogunbiyi - ₦5000

Mrs. Patricia Okeowo - food items

Igbo Businessmen Association - ₦5000

Enterprise Bank - ₦50,000

Mr. Kayode Situ - ₦50,000

Mrs. Carine Oluchi - Independence Day Party.

Trimoz Exclusive Children's World - Christmas party.

New Breeze World - Christmas Party.

Del-Marine Ltd - writing materials, toys, 4 pairs of shoes, Tshirts and notebooks.

Mr. Stanley Omobude & Perpetual - 5 dresses for girls and 4 for boys.

In 2014 we also received visits and donations of food items from various church groups. It is impossible to list each group individually, but we are tremendously grateful to everyone.

We look forward to accelerating our efforts with your support in 2015 to ensure the successful transition of children to healthy and productive adults and also light a path toward healthy and prosperous communities.

Yours for children everywhere,

Bunmi Awoyinfa

## House of Mercy Children's Home Lagos, Nigeria



**La Maison de la Misericorde**

**Casa de la Misericordia**



*Touching Lives, One Child at a Time!*

Founded in October 2006, House of Mercy Children's Home Lagos, Nigeria (HOM) is a grassroots NGO focusing on child hunger, child poverty, child homelessness, child illiteracy, child advocacy as well as emergency aid to children in crisis across Africa.

Questions, comments or feedback? Get in touch.

House of Mercy Children's Home (HOM)

44 Adebambo street

off Orelope street ,

Egbeda, Lagos

Nigeria

+234 803 722 3417

+234 803 722 3417

[contact@homchildrenshome.org](mailto:contact@homchildrenshome.org)

[www.homchildrenshome.org](http://www.homchildrenshome.org)

**Connect with us online**

<https://www.facebook.com/HouseofMercyLagos>

<https://twitter.com/homlagos>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/homchildrenshome/videos>

<https://plus.google.com/+HomchildrenshomeOrg/>