



Annual Report 2019

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

NGO No CAC/IT/No 21690

Preamble

Since its inception in 2006, House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos, Nigeria (HOM) has predominantly focused on one major objective: improving the lives of the most disadvantaged and excluded children.

Over the past thirteen years, our [work](#) has evolved significantly. New programmes are constantly being added as our organisation continues to grow and change to meet the diverse needs of the children we serve.

In 2006, we were responding to the most immediate food, clothing and health needs of street children, child scavengers, out-of-school children, orphans and trafficked children with regular outreaches to areas where children were concentrated on the streets. Today, we provide a wide variety of services to cater for the needs of children who are marginalised, disadvantaged and excluded in society.

Our programmes are complemented by research, policy and advocacy efforts. In initiating and implementing our activities and programmes, we tackle social issues and seek to support children, the weakest members of society, who often are the most affected by hunger, poverty, homelessness, abuse, neglect, disease and disabilities.

2019 was an incredible year for us at HOM, full of major challenges and great achievements. It is always a source of deep concern that the support that we are able to provide seems like a drop in the ocean compared to the level of human need. We wish we could do more.

Our Annual Report explains the impact our work has had over the year 2019, outlining our achievements and most importantly showcasing how our support has helped children and families as well as

celebrating our amazing staff, partners and supporters, without whom these results could not have been achieved.

The proverbial elephant in the room is addressed in detail in this year's Annual Report.

To gain further insight into our work, we invite you to visit our [website](#). A PDF version of our brochure titled [HOM in a Nutshell](#) featuring major highlights of our work from October 2006 to October 2019 is also available on our website.



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Our Year in Review

Child Feeding Programme

The prices of commodities in general, and food in particular, have increased dramatically over the past few years, exacerbating hunger not only in Nigeria but also in many parts of Africa.

Providing food for orphaned, hungry and extremely vulnerable children and advocating against hunger and malnutrition is one of our most important programmes. In this day and age where food is so expensive, some people can barely afford one square meal a day. Due to growing household poverty, many children go to bed hungry, wake up hungry, go to school on an empty stomach and are unable to focus and learn.



Since the launch of our Child Feeding Programme (Mobile Kitchen) designed to alleviate the suffering caused by hunger and malnutrition thirteen years ago, we have provided over 300,000 highly nutritious and life-saving meals to child beggars, street children, child scavengers and other needy and vulnerable children and distributed grocery items to over 4000 destitute families and people with disabilities in Lagos, Oyo and Ogun States in Nigeria.

In an attempt to provide some assistance to children and families living in poverty and destitution, the elderly and disabled persons, we carried out several actions of solidarity throughout 2019.

Videos of some of our actions of solidarity on [Children's Day – Nigeria](#), and during the [Easter](#) period are available on our YouTube channel.

A playlist of our [Child Feeding Programme](#) is also available on our YouTube channel.

Child Health and Hygiene Programme



Children are particularly susceptible to preventable diseases caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation.

In 2019, we supported programmes designed to ensure that children had access to safe drinking water and sanitary toilets including awareness campaigns created to teach parents about good hygiene and sanitation practices.

Throughout the year, we also distributed diapers, hygiene kits, clothing, children's shoes, school supplies and school uniforms to over 3000 children and families living in abject poverty.

A playlist of our [Child Health Programme](#) is available on our YouTube channel.

“While some of the 69 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.”

Children’s Home



House of Mercy Children’s Home, Lagos (HOM) champions every child’s right to a safe, permanent and nurturing home. While some of the 69 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.

Our residential programme provides a safe home and a stable family environment where children can learn, grow, and ultimately achieve their dreams and aspirations. We provide high-quality care for our children which includes healthy meals and snacks, comfortable sleeping quarters, clothing, books and educational materials, educational opportunities and recreational activities.

Our residential childcare workers regularly attend training sessions and seminars organised by non-profit organisations and government agencies to perfect their skills and ensure a safe and loving child-care environment.

We are committed to protecting the children we work with and we have a range of policies and procedures in place which promote child protection across our services.

In 2019, we welcomed 9 children (7 girls and 2 boys) aged between 5 and 13 years into our children’s home. 5 children were also reunited with their families through our [Family Preservation and Reunification Programme](#).

A playlist of [School Holiday Events](#) featuring children in our children’s home can be viewed on our YouTube channel.

Playlists of our [Street Children Programme](#) and [Christmas Events for Children](#) are also available on our YouTube channel.

“In 2019, we welcomed 9 children (7 girls and 2 boys) aged between 5 and 13 years into our children’s home. 5 children were also reunited with their families through our Family Preservation and Reunification Programme.”

Child Education Programme

The situation with regard to education continued to be of concern in 2019.

Of primary concern are situations of children with disabilities, working children, child beggars, street children, child scavengers, children in conflict areas and children in remote rural areas, particularly girls, who have no opportunity to go to school.

From mobile schools and school sponsorship to mother-tongue literacy programmes and educational support, HOM strives to ensure that children who are marginalised, disadvantaged and excluded in society have the necessary knowledge and skills to live a life of human dignity, learn a trade, find meaningful employment and take part in society's development.



The video of our [Children's Library](#) which was launched on International Literacy Day, September 8, 2016, to promote and improve literacy skills of children and young adults is available on our YouTube channel.

Playlists of our [Child Education Programme](#) and our [Child Beggar Programme](#) are also available on our YouTube channel.

Children with Disabilities



At HOM, we believe that children with disabilities are entitled to the same nurturance, care, protection, nutrition and encouragement as other children. That is why we constantly strive to bring the issues of children with disabilities to the forefront.

Children with disabilities belong to one of the most vulnerable groups of children. According to available statistics, they are five times more likely to be victims of all forms of abuse be it mental, physical or sexual in all settings, both public and private: the family, schools, religious institutions, infant care institutions and residential institutions.

Children with disabilities also face additional challenges in terms of stigma and discrimination which contribute to their marginalisation and alienation.

Our video on Disability Awareness features some of our actions of solidarity with children with disabilities and is available on our [Video Gallery](#) and on our [YouTube channel](#).

We also have an article entitled [Children with Disabilities: An Invisible Group in Need of Attention](#) available in English, French and Spanish on our website.

“Another emerging public health crisis is the number of children, youth and even older people experiencing high levels of stress as a result of socio-economic difficulties.”

Child Mental Health



Another emerging public health crisis is the number of children, youth and even older people experiencing high levels of stress as a result of socio-economic difficulties. These situations involve substantial psychological and social suffering in the short term, which if not adequately addressed can lead to long-term mental health and psychosocial problems.

This worrying development emphasizes the need for organisations such as HOM to focus as much on mental health issues as we do on physical health. Social and mental health issues such as mood swings, anxiety disorders, depression, self-injury, suicide attempts and lifestyle behaviours like drug and alcohol abuse need to be addressed more vigorously.

To facilitate early intervention for child and youth mental health issues, it is important to eradicate the prejudice and stigma that can sometimes prevent people from speaking about their or their family member's mental illness and seeking the help they require. This can be done by designing Child and Youth Mental Health Programmes to equip young people, families and communities with the skills to recognise and respond to mental health issues.

On the occasion of this year's World Mental Health Day on October 10, we raised awareness of the variety of situations that can lead to long-term mental health and psychosocial problems. It is our hope that mental health will be given the attention it deserves alongside physical health.

Our World Mental Health Day video is available on our [Video Gallery](#) and on our [YouTube channel](#).

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Child Protection



Child protection continued to be high on our agenda throughout 2019. Protecting children from all forms of abuse (physical, emotional, psychological and sexual) and exploitation (sexual and commercial) is a very important aspect of our work.

Articles we have published in recent years to raise public awareness and highlight steps to take to protect the weakest and the most powerless among us include: [Child Abuse is Everyone's Problem](#), [The Little Match Girl](#) and [There is a Mouse Trap in the House](#). These articles are also available in French and Spanish on our [Blogger](#) page.

Simplified versions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history, are available on our website in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#) to facilitate an awareness of the CRC.

The [Events](#) Page of our website also includes a list of dates for raising awareness and understanding of the key issues facing children.

We also published a video entitled [Stop Child Abuse](#) in a bid to combat the various forms of injustice, violence and deprivation inflicted upon so many children in different settings (home, school, community, religious institutions, humanitarian crises etc.) and change mindsets and social norms that tolerate violence against children. The video is available in English and French on our [Video Gallery](#) and on our [YouTube channel](#).

Indeed, there is a lot of work to be done in this regard by the government, but also by us, members of the general public. We encourage others to join us in influencing mindsets, attitudes and behaviours by sharing the [Stop Child Abuse](#) video with their family, friends and colleagues.

House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos, Nigeria (HOM) is a member of the Child Protection Network, Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State Chapter. We will continue to work closely with government agencies, community organisations, groups and individuals and actively take part in the collective efforts to ensure that policies and solutions being adopted and developed are aimed at addressing the protection needs of children.

*"We published a video entitled **Stop Child Abuse** in a bid to combat the various forms of injustice, violence and deprivation inflicted upon so many children in different settings (home, school, community, religious institutions, humanitarian crises etc.) and change mindsets and social norms that tolerate violence against children."*

Child Advocacy: The Tragedy of Unaccompanied and Separated Child Migrants in Africa



Addressing deprivation and vulnerabilities faced by children is an integral part of our work at House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos Nigeria (HOM).

Every year, we monitor issues relating to the security and well-being of the children across Africa and work closely with African organisations to promote child survival and development and child protection.

In 2019, we focused our advocacy on the issue of unaccompanied and separated child migrants fleeing violence, conflict, disaster and poverty, in pursuit of a better life.

The migrant crisis has led to an increasing number of children and minors going missing and becoming victims of trafficking, slavery, sexual exploitation and other criminal activities on dangerous routes to safety and a better life. These include children who began their journeys unaccompanied, or whose parents or guardians died along the way, or who were forcibly taken from their parents by predatory traffickers on the migrant route.

According to the International Organization for Migration, in June 2018, about 679,897 migrants were identified in Libya including 54,392 children, 33% of whom were unaccompanied. The majority of migrants undertaking this perilous journey to Europe transit through Niger to Libya and then Europe via the Mediterranean Sea.

While data is available on the movement of unaccompanied children to Europe, data on migration of unaccompanied children within Africa is sparse.

We prepared a video titled [Child Migrants](#) to sound the alarm about the tragic situation of child victims of trafficking and unaccompanied migrant children on the migrant route and also to mobilise action from African governments and other stakeholders to address this emergency, prevent child trafficking and provide comprehensive, trauma-informed care to children who have been trafficked.

The [Child Migrants](#) video is available in English, French and Portuguese on our YouTube channel.

*“In 2019, we prepared a video titled **Child Migrants** to sound the alarm about the tragic situation of child victims of trafficking and unaccompanied migrant children on the migrant route and also to mobilise action from African governments and other stakeholders to address this emergency, prevent child trafficking and provide comprehensive, trauma-informed care to children who have been trafficked.”*

Humanitarian Assistance: IDPs in Northeast Nigeria



For the sixth consecutive year in 2019, we continued to step up our efforts to provide much needed assistance to children and families in crisis and communities experiencing severe trauma in the Northeast region of Nigeria.

A comprehensive view of the activities carried out in support of IDPs in the Northeast region of Nigeria is available on our [Video Gallery](#) and also on our [YouTube channel](#).

The video aims to raise awareness about the plight, courage and resilience of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Northeast Nigeria.

“The aim of our Humanitarian Assistance Programme is to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in need through shelter, nutrition, health-care, sanitation, education and empowerment initiatives.”

Humanitarian Assistance: Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

In 2019, we continued to provide humanitarian aid to conflict-affected populations in the hardest to reach areas of Democratic Republic of Congo.

In cooperation with local communities in Bukavu and in addition to serving the immediate requirements of conflict-affected populations for safety and security, we also ensured that their long-term needs for food, shelter, water, sanitation, education, mental health and psychosocial support and income generation activities were met.

The video of our humanitarian assistance work in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo is available on our [Video Gallery](#) and also on our [YouTube channel](#).



Humanitarian Assistance Programme - Africa

The aim of our Humanitarian Assistance Programme is to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in need through shelter, nutrition, health-care, sanitation, education and empowerment initiatives.

Over the last 10 years, House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos, Nigeria (HOM) has committed efforts to restore safety, dignity and hope to hundreds of thousands of displaced and traumatised people who are uprooted and struggling to survive across Africa. Through our strategic work with like-minded community organisations, we are able to reach hard-to-access locations including conflict settings, remote areas, and politically sensitive regions.

In our work we see everywhere the core human values of care, generosity and mutuality present and promoted and defended by a diverse range of African citizens and activists.

We work closely with local partners not only to find durable solutions to the problems of refugees, displaced people and others affected by internal conflict across Africa but also to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. By working with local grassroots organisations who understand the languages of the affected populations, we are able to leverage existing assets to more adequately assist vulnerable populations in a cost-efficient manner.

These local partners are familiar with the cultural and political setting and also have a proven record of addressing the needs of their communities. With this symbiotic collaboration, we are able to cater for basic needs such as shelter, food, potable water, sanitation, education, health care and income generating activities.

The geographical reach of our [humanitarian assistance work](#) covers the following regions:

- [Northeast region of Nigeria](#)
- [Democratic Republic of Congo](#)
- [Central African Republic](#)
- [Ebola affected nations](#) (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea)
- [The Sahel](#)
- [Horn of Africa](#)

One of the saddest and tragic realities we have seen in various regions of the Africa is the deep suffering of children exposed to armed conflict. Children are not responsible for the difficult situation and the problems yet they bear the [cognitive and emotional scars](#) of the traumatic experiences of armed conflict.

When armed conflicts, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters force people to be displaced from their homes, women, girls and boys of all ages face increased risks of trafficking, abduction, forced recruitment by armed groups, enslavement, violence, sexual exploitation and sexually transmitted infections, sometimes from the very same people (humanitarian aid workers, peacekeepers or other persons) mandated to provide them with assistance, protection and safety. We strongly denounced this gross abuse of innocent and vulnerable African children and advocated for the protection of children in situations of crisis and emergencies in our [Stop Child Abuse](#) video launched in October 2018.

When occasion demands and funds permit, we contribute to emergency efforts aimed at alleviating the suffering of children and their mothers in the face of adversities of crisis and displacement.

A playlist of our [Humanitarian Assistance Programme](#) is available on our YouTube channel.

The Elephant in the Room

The weight of poverty and decades of terrible oppression, coups d'état, political instability, dictatorships, hardship and turmoil have grown unbearable for Africans yet “Suffering and Smiling” (Fela Anikulapo Kuti and Africa 70) continues to be the mantra of many.

At HOM, we are committed to comprehending and challenging any sources that generate and perpetuate injustice and poverty and are totally dedicated to fostering awareness and promoting peace, safety and stability in Africa.

The remaining sections of this report specifically address urgent and perennial issues - poverty, injustice, unemployment, lack of political accountability, insecurity, war, oppression, mass migration and crises - characteristic of our troubled and tension-ridden continent in an attempt to foster both action and reflection.

“To date, Africans have chosen to be patient on the belief that better situations are still coming. However, without understanding why things are where they are and how they got there, the situation will not improve on its own.”

Africa Wake Up Campaign

In 2019, we sustained our [Africa Wake Up](#) campaign.

Our [Africa Wake Up](#) campaign reflects our analysis of the root causes of poverty, injustice and conflict in our communities and societies and specific measures required to address and eliminate those evils.

To date, Africans have chosen to be patient on the belief that better situations are still coming. However, without understanding why things are where they are and how they got there, the situation will not improve on its own. We therefore need to look at history to see how all of this began and how to turn the tide.

In other words, until we recognise the far-reaching and devastating consequences of the Berlin Conference of 1884 with regards to Africa, we cannot hope to stem the tide of continued and systematic plundering of the natural and financial resources of African countries and reverse the engineered impoverishment that affects children, families and entire populations.

The hideous and inhuman traffic in slaves, the Transatlantic Slave Trade, which began in the 15th century left Africa in a state of economic and cultural ruin marked by social ravages including dire poverty, underdevelopment, destitution and disease. It also opened the door to another form of exploitation and domination - colonisation - as the slaving powers became colonial powers.

In 1881 the Scramble for Africa began with European powers invading and occupying African territories. In 1884, without the participation of a single African representative, 14 countries - Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Ottoman Empire, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden-Norway, United Kingdom and the United States - came together at the Berlin Conference to arbitrarily draw up borders and divide Africa into 50 irregular countries.

This new map of the continent was superimposed over 1,000 indigenous cultures and regions of Africa and it divided coherent groups of people and merged together disparate groups thus laying the foundation for future internal conflicts in African countries.

The continent was then invaded by imperial forces that came bearing arms and punitive armies leading to mass genocide (the Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia and the Genocide in the Congo Free State are a case in point), rape, spread of diseases, impregnation of minors who were later sold into slavery, physical dismemberment and butchering of hundreds of millions of Africans as well as the systematic dehumanisation of black people, violent segregation, racial apartheid and economic terrorism.

The sadistic atrocities committed by these armed European invaders during their colonial expeditions in Africa caused untold misery and massive damage to not only the African people but also to the African continent. The African continent witnessed the exploitation and pillage of its physical and human resources and Africans were enslaved on their own native land to serve the invading forces.

The fundamental issue at stake between the 1880s and the 1900s as far as African Sovereigns, Authorities and Leaders were concerned, was that of sovereignty, and on this, it was quite clear that none of them was prepared to compromise. An overwhelming majority of [African Sovereigns](#) were vehemently opposed to Europe's colonial ambitions and took up arms to retain their sovereignty and independence. Ethiopia resisted European attempts to colonise all of Ethiopia and Ethiopian forces led by Emperor Menelik II (1844-1913), defeated the invading Italian forces and won a decisive victory over Italy at the Battle of Adwa in December 1896.

These brave and fearless Kings, Queens, Chiefs and Spiritual Leaders stood their grounds but unfortunately, by 1914, with the sole exception of Ethiopia and Liberia, the whole of the African continent had been partitioned and occupied by the invading forces.

For centuries, the invading forces pillaged the wealth of African countries they colonised to the profit of, and on behalf of their nationals and to ensure their own economic and social development.

135 years later, the Berlin conference still has a significant impact on Africa's political and economic climate. The evidence is all around us - from the perennial imperialist influences exerted by the countries that colonised African countries to the assassinations of patriotic and honest African leaders, revolutionaries and freedom fighters to the destabilisation and aggression against States that refuse to submit to imperialism, just to name a few.

Steps were certainly taken by African nations towards regaining independence, but the implementation of these steps appears to have been purely cosmetic.

The apple does not fall far from the tree. Imperialism and conquest have not changed, only the methodology has changed. It is now neo-colonialism that is perpetuating the spoliation of African countries and the impoverishment of large segments of the population. Former colonial powers and other foreign powers control the political, economic, social and cultural spheres of former colonies through puppet regimes who claim to represent the interests of their citizens but who in fact only foment hostility and strife and keep populations in oppressive situations while the plundering of natural and financial resources continues unabated.

All this has been going on against a background of indifference, silence, acquiescence and complicity by the international community.

These facts are known, so are their perpetrators, and they generate indignation. And yet, the perpetrators show no intention of making amends and continue to exhibit a callous indifference to the lives of children, women and men in Africa. This clearly shows that the perpetrators, and those who turn a blind eye or even play an active part in these actions, have no regard for the life and welfare of the African people - and that this is a deliberate political choice aimed at devaluing the lives of Africans and breaking the dignity and honour of an entire people.

“The apple does not fall far from the tree. Imperialism and conquest have not changed, only the methodology has changed. It is now neo-colonialism that is perpetuating the spoliation of African countries and the impoverishment of large segments of the population.”

It is this total absence of law, morality, conscience and humanity that is the greatest failure of this post-truth era where truth is subjectified and relativised.

House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos, Nigeria (HOM) recalls that the right of peoples to self-determination cannot be realised without respect for their inalienable right to full and permanent sovereignty over all their natural wealth and resources. This collective right of peoples to self-determination and permanent sovereignty as incorporated in the International Human Rights Covenants are essential prerequisites for the realisation of all other human rights whether social, political, civil, economic or cultural.

The actions by former colonial powers constitute a blatant and persistent violation of international law and the international community has a legal and moral obligation to reiterate the two basic principles of international law that are embedded in the Charter of the United Nations and further defined in other international instruments. These are permanent sovereignty over natural wealth and resources and self-determination of peoples, and its international corollary, sovereign equality among States.

This begs the question: is it not the role of international law and the responsibility of international organisations to ensure that the rules of law are respected so as to avoid diktats and the domination of one country over others?

It would not be farfetched to conclude that respect for international law and its principles provides us with a yardstick by which to measure the progress of humankind towards a humane society which does not gain profit from human misery, poverty, oppression, death and destruction.

The way forward is clear but it will require Africans on the Continent and in the Diaspora coming together with a single, common purpose - to dismantle neo-colonial systems of oppression, servitude and exploitation and work towards the liberation and advancement of the African people.

It is urgent, and this is the time when it must be done; the future of Africa lies on the shoulders of those who are awake.

Our Africa Wake Up campaign is available in English, French and Portuguese at the following addresses: <http://africa-wake-up.blogspot.fr>, <http://afrique-reveille-toi.blogspot.fr> and <https://africa-acorda.blogspot.com>

A playlist of our [Africa Wake Up](#) campaign is available on our YouTube channel.

Our article [Africa: from Neo-Colonialism to True Independence](#) is also available on the Africanews website.

“The future of Africa lies on the shoulders of those who are awake.”

Africans United for Peace Campaign



Each year, hundreds of thousands of children in Africa endure the trauma of civil unrest, armed violence, war, natural disasters and other adverse events. These experiences can give rise to significant emotional and behavioural problems that can profoundly disrupt the children's lives.

In 2019, in an attempt to address this situation and highlight the extent of the crisis facing [Refugees and IDPs](#) in Africa, we launched a campaign for the restoration of peace titled [Africans United for Peace](#).

Inter-ethnic or inter-tribal conflicts rooted in colonial divide-and-rule strategies abound in many countries of Africa where different ethnic groups and cultures live in nations whose borders were arbitrarily laid down during the Berlin Conference of 1884 in the interests of colonial powers. Today, these conflicts are greatly exacerbated by the neo-colonial arrangements that characterise many African governments where leadership remains in the same hands and continues to serve colonial interests.

We must not be complicit through our silence. The time has come for everyone to speak with a clear voice, the voice of conscience.

Our [Africans United for Peace](#) campaign is the voice of children forcibly conscripted as child soldiers and incited to commit the most terrible, drug-induced acts, the voice of the tens of thousands of girls and women victims of sexual violence used as a tactic of war, the voice of displaced populations left without food or a livelihood, the voice of refugees dehumanised and left to die, the voice of millions of African children, teenagers, youth, women and men for whom wars and conflicts have caused great suffering and inflicted deep wounds and the voice of those who have been killed, who are calling for peace and justice.

It is absolutely beyond the realm of comprehension that African people who have suffered so much and for too long at the hands of unbridled violence unleashed by their oppressors and foreign invaders are perpetuating the cycle of violence ignited by the oppressors by massacring and destroying each other.

This is a problem in itself, but the problem goes deeper. Internal ethnic, tribal, political and religious conflicts are a particularly alarming manifestation of the complex, destabilising and demoralising legacy of colonialism and imperialism. The sad and painful truth is that we have been conditioned and programmed to go against our own people.

We can see the impact of that reality in our families, our communities, our religious institutions and even in the way African governments serve as lackeys of foreign powers and operate structures and systems that oppress Africans. And most dangerously, we see it in sponsored African-on-African violence, in the way Africans are hired as mercenaries by foreign powers to stir up religious and xenophobic tensions, create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, cause political instability and destroy the lives of their fellow Africans in neighbouring countries.

“Internal ethnic, tribal, political and religious conflicts are a particularly alarming manifestation of the complex, destabilising and demoralising legacy of colonialism and imperialism. The sad and painful truth is that we have been conditioned and programmed to go against our own people.”

Also, most of the social evils – child abuse and neglect, exploitation of children as domestic servants, religious abuse, sale of expired or fake drugs, sale of fake foodstuffs and drinks, systematic bribery, corruption, kidnappings, armed robberies, ritual killings etc. - that abound in our society can be traced to the same root cause.

However, perhaps more perplexing and even embarrassing is that we have a subservient attitude towards foreigners and treat them with more dignity and humanity than our own people.

Our [Africans United for Peace](#) campaign is a question and a test of how much we value the lives of our fellow countrymen, women and children. Given all the [conflicts](#) and unceasing emergency situations many African countries are experiencing, the central question we must ask ourselves is: **Are the lives of our African children, sisters and brothers not important and of value to us?**

Perhaps the greatest challenge ahead is for us to have the courage to look at ourselves critically both individually and as a group.

Even though the present-day conflicts may be the outcome of past actions, the future is being shaped by what we do today. In saying this, the idea is not to ignore the wrongs of the past or forget the atrocities that have been committed but to acknowledge that we cannot remain bitter and continue living in the past.

We are all brothers and sisters, and on this African continent, for which we are all responsible, there is no reason and no excuse for the promotion of distrust, hatred, discrimination and evil.

We must vehemently reject violence and war including external interference and external vested interests that wish to sustain conflicts and wars in natural resource-rich areas.

While we may come from different ethnic, tribal, cultural, linguistic and religious groups, it is our commitment to peace, justice, security, human solidarity and sovereignty that serves as guiding values for our respective nations and unites us as African people.

HOM is steadfast in its belief that the interests we share as Africans are far more powerful than the forces that drive us apart.

Peace with stability and reconciliation is within reach and it is absolutely imperative that we achieve peace so that we can focus our efforts on economic and social development, prosperity, and well-being not only in conflict-affected regions but throughout the continent of Africa.

Above all, for the sake of present and future generations, we must resolve to protect our most precious asset - our African children, sisters and brothers.

Together with other likeminded individuals and organisations from different regions throughout the whole African Community, we will continue to promote the African spirit of empathy, solidarity, humanity, reconciliation, harmony and peaceful coexistence and work diligently to improve the future of our countries and of future generations.

Our [Africans United for Peace](#) video is available in English, French and Portuguese on our YouTube channel.

Commemorative Events

International Women's Day: March 8



Every day across Africa, a large number of women work tirelessly in very difficult circumstances to improve their livelihoods and the prospects for their children; while many are courageously helping their communities build their capacity to deal with the social issues of education, health care, economic opportunities etc.; yet others are boldly striving to build peace and solidarity in their communities as they continue to challenge impunity for violence against children and women.

On March 8, 2019, we celebrated International Women's Day by recognising and celebrating the outstanding contributions African women have made, and are still making, to our continent and all aspects of African society.

To mark the occasion, we prepared a video showcasing the ground-breaking work being done by some of our partners in Democratic Republic of Congo. The video is available on our [YouTube channel](#).

World Refugee Day: June 20



Across Africa, millions of children, youth, women and men are displaced and live in conditions so miserable that it is hard to find words to describe them.

Gravely concerned about the perilous situation of refugees and displaced persons, on World Refugee Day 2019 we decided to focus on the [Refugee/IDP crisis](#) in Africa, which is often neglected or under-reported by the mainstream media.

We produced a video to draw attention to the deep and devastating impact of the [Refugee/IDP crisis](#) in Africa on these populations and to advocate on their behalf for the help they need.

The main aim was to urge African governments to:

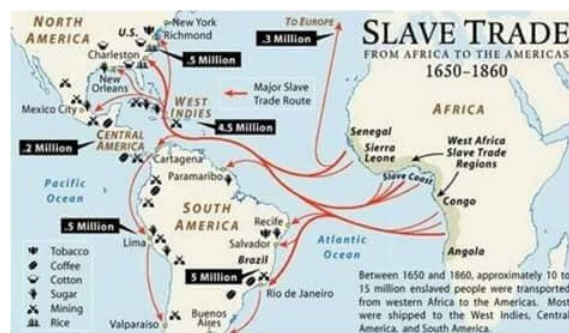
- take concrete action to meet the protection and assistance needs of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), the stateless and other persons of concern,
- put adequate measures in place to combat the trafficking of human beings and illegal migrants.
- resolutely address the root causes of all forms of forced displacement in Africa and
- foster peace, stability and prosperity throughout the African continent.

Development cooperation among African countries is also of paramount importance to facilitate durable solutions for the voluntary, secure and sustainable return or local integration of refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Given the magnitude of the [Refugee/IDP crisis](#) in Africa, government strategies aimed at achieving durable solutions for refugees and IDPs should be placed much higher on the political agenda of African countries.

The [Refugee/IDP crisis](#) video is available on our YouTube channel.

International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition: August 23



2019 marked the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in English North America aboard the White Lion, an English privateer ship on August 25, 1619. This marked the beginning of four centuries of trafficking and enslavement for millions of African children, women and men that began in Great Britain's North American colonies and continued through into the newly formed United States of America.

In his book titled "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa", Walter Rodney (1942 – 1980), a prominent Guyanese historian and political activist who was assassinated in 1980 said:

Many guilty consciences have been created by the slave trade. Europeans know that they carried on the slave trade, and Africans are aware that the trade would have been impossible if certain Africans did not cooperate with slave ships. To ease their guilty consciences, Europeans try to throw the major responsibility for the slave trade on to the Africans. One European author of a book on the slave trade (appropriately titled *Sins of Our Fathers*) explained how many white people urged him to state that the trade was the responsibility of African chiefs, and that Europeans merely turned up to buy captives - as though without European demand there would have been captives sitting on the beach by the millions! Issues such as those are not the principal concern of this study, but they can be correctly approached only after understanding that Europe became the center of a world-wide system and that it was European capitalism which set slavery and the Atlantic slave trade in motion.

Between 1500 and 1866, Europeans transported to the Americas nearly 12.5 million enslaved Africans, about 1.8 million of whom died on the Middle Passage, their bodies thrown into the Atlantic.

“African history during the period of slavery is marked by a series of unspeakable crimes and serious human rights violations which have been recognised but which have never formed the subject of any redress and reparations to the victims or the descendants of enslaved persons, while the powers responsible for the Transatlantic Slave Trade continue to profit from it.”

The Transatlantic Slave Trade, the dark side of humanity, is a heart-breaking, gut-wrenching reminder of one of the worst atrocities ever committed in the history of the human race. These enslaved African men, women and children were stripped of their names, languages, culture, customs, history and dignity and subjected to the most heinous atrocities imaginable and treated in the most inhuman and degrading manner.

According to Dr. Joy DeGruy, a renowned African American researcher, educator and author, in her theory of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (P.T.S.S), “although slavery has long been a part of human history, American chattel slavery represents a case of human trauma incomparable in scope, duration and consequence to any other incidence of human enslavement”.

African history during the period of slavery is marked by a series of unspeakable crimes and serious human rights violations which have been recognised but which have never formed the subject of any redress and reparations to the victims or the descendants of enslaved persons, while the powers responsible for the Transatlantic Slave Trade continue to profit from it.

Historically speaking, this exploitation is characteristic of the impunity for the serious violations of the rights of the victims of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. According to international law, and more particularly that elaborated since the judgement of the Nuremberg Tribunal and in the work of the International Law Commission, crimes against humanity also include gross actions against any civilian population, whether in the context of an armed conflict or outside it. Impunity for these crimes denies human beings any possibility of living in a world based on justice, peace, freedom and democracy.

The past cannot be changed and there is nothing we can do today that will take away the sufferings of the past, but yesterday's injustices must be corrected.

In an effort to honour the memory of the victims, the resisters and the survivors of the Transatlantic Slave Trade we published a video titled [The Transatlantic Slave Trade](#) on August 23, the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.

The video was also produced with the aim of promoting awareness of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, its causes and its consequences, including the contribution made by Africa to the social, cultural and economic development of the Americas, the Caribbean and Europe, and to sound a warning against modern-day forms of slavery.

[The Transatlantic Slave Trade](#) video is available in English, French and Portuguese on our YouTube channel.

We are honoured to have been included in the [400 Years of Perseverance 1619-2019](#) events list of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) alongside some inspirational people and organisations.

“The past cannot be changed and there is nothing we can do today that will take away the sufferings of the past, but yesterday's injustices must be corrected.”

World Food Day: October 16



The agricultural and livestock sectors in Africa have significant potential to create jobs, ensure food security and combat poverty. Yet for a large number of African children, being vulnerable to endemic poverty and food insecurity has always been a way of life.

Unlocking this enormous potential of Africa's agriculture and implementing initiatives to counter the effects of food price shocks on poor populations, increasing agricultural supply and ensuring food security and nutrition for all Africans should be the most urgent priority for the entire African community.

On October 16, 2019, World Food Day, we distributed over 2000 food packages containing non-perishable food items, condiments, cooking oil, drinks, beverages, breakfast cereals, snacks and more to poor, hungry, homeless and vulnerable children and destitute families in Lagos State.

Our [World Food Day 2019](#) video is available on our YouTube channel.

Challenges Encountered

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of African Children by Foreigners

[Crimes against children](#) are particularly reprehensible because they are directed against the weakest members of society who cannot speak for or defend themselves.

We are always deeply concerned when we hear about cases of foreign aid workers, peacekeepers, missionaries, quack doctors, paedophile tourists and other predators committing detestable crimes against vulnerable young children across Africa. Of particular concern are situations of sexual assault of children, child abuse and endangerment, medical experimentation, exploitation of vulnerable and uneducated mothers, establishment of unlicensed and illegal orphanages, child abduction and trafficking, removal of children from their families without proper parental consent, illegal inter-country/international adoptions and the abuse, starvation and death of African children by foreign adoptive parents.

It is incredibly tragic to see how the continent of Africa seems to have become a playground for sexual predators and an experimental ground where any foreign national can waltz in and take advantage of the institutional weakness and political instability in African countries to set up questionable “humanitarian” or “religious” organisations and carry out nefarious activities without suffering the consequences.

We are also concerned that tourists, travel bloggers, celebrities and foreign charitable organisations may be contributing to this extremely worrying trend by posting images of random naked or scantily clad African children and the areas where they live on their websites or on social media as this makes them extremely easy and vulnerable targets for predators.

Most often, these tragic and disturbing cases of abuse and sexual molestation of African children by foreigners are not reported in the mainstream media because they contradict the narrative foreign charitable organisations put forward to attract donations and public support.

This alarming trend highlights the need for African governments to do more at the local, state, and national level to [protect vulnerable young children](#) from predatory foreigners who target, abuse and exploit them. This includes:

- addressing issues of corruption and child trafficking in the area of international adoptions and promoting integrity and good governance,
- strengthening the laws, policies, regulations, social services and practices that protect children from violence, trafficking, exploitation and abuse and making sure adoption by foreigners is subject to very stringent controls,
- systematically investigating and monitoring foreigners and foreign charitable organisations providing direct service to vulnerable populations within their borders,
- ensuring perpetrators are prosecuted and punished according to the grave nature of their act and
- strengthening the capacity of families and communities to protect children through positive parenting and discussion and support groups.

Halting this trend will also require African Governments to support African-led, operated and staffed initiatives. There are hundreds of thousands, even millions of African men, women and youth and little-known organisations across the continent, working quietly and efficiently behind the scenes, implementing home-grown, country-based solutions to address poverty alleviation, hunger, water quality, education, health, rural development, disaster prevention and governance issues and they need to be encouraged and incentivised to go further.

The illusion of aid is a perpetual treadmill that we need to step off. It is no secret to the well-informed person that no amount of intervention from outsiders, however well meant, will help the African people achieve well-being. Not only are external sources of assistance band-aid solutions that do not treat the underlying problem. They are also not as sustainable as home-grown solutions and they create cycles of dependence and perpetuate the colonial mindset.

Some African countries are actually in the preposterous situation of enacting policies enabling random foreign nationals who do not speak the language of the country to gain access to “development” jobs for which they are not qualified and to earn higher salaries than African nationals with equivalent or higher qualifications.

We must stop buying into the misplaced notion that we are perpetual or helpless victims of circumstances beyond our control and that we are unable to solve our own problems and need foreigners to solve them for us.

The writing on the wall is clear. History has shown us time and again that every time foreigners, foreign nations or the myriad of pseudo-organisations claim to “help” Africans or African nations, it does not prove to be in our best interest.

A point that was frequently reiterated in our [Africa Wake Up](#) campaign is that, it is our responsibility, as Africans, to build our own solutions and take ownership of our own futures.

We appeal to local governments, legislators, policy makers and law enforcement officials to take swift and decisive action, without further delay, to enact laws and policies to protect children from foreigners who seek to prey upon children in the guise of aid, relief work, charity, missionary work or adoption and bring an immediate end to the impunity enjoyed by foreigners who commit such crimes.

Financial Overview

Financial year 2019 was another successful year for House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos, Nigeria (HOM) with strong overall performance. We continued to advance towards our vision assisting many vulnerable children and destitute families in more regions and across more service areas.

Remaining a sustainable organisation is essential. 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 2020 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.

Copies of our [Financial Statements](#) are available on our website. These documents reflect how we support and sustain our mission through responsible financial management.

House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos, Nigeria (HOM) is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, companies and foundations. All donations, large and small, regular and occasional, make a huge difference in the lives of the children we serve.

House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos, Nigeria (HOM) [cautions](#) the public to beware of donation scams to personal bank accounts of fraudsters and money transfer scams (Western Union, MoneyGram) implying association with House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos, Nigeria (HOM). Our official email address is contact@homchildrenshome.org and we do not communicate with our supporters with any other email address. Neither do we send messages to random people on social media platforms or on digital hangouts requesting for donations.

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2020 Goals

House of Mercy Children's Home Lagos, Nigeria (HOM) was established in 2006 to protect, help and assist vulnerable and marginalised children and we are constantly striving to break new ground to meet their needs.

In 2020, within the limits of available funds, we will continue to focus on the following priority areas that threaten the well-being and survival of so many children.

1. [Reduction of child hunger and malnutrition through provision and distribution of free nutritious meals](#)
2. [Education through school sponsorship including girls' empowerment and literacy projects](#)
3. [Family preservation and reunification through reintegration of children into family and community-based care](#)
4. [Reduction of child homelessness through provision of family-based residential home](#)
5. [Child protection and advocacy by engaging the public and decision-makers through online and offline campaign actions, as well as effective private lobbying.](#)
6. [Humanitarian assistance programmes for children and families in crisis across Africa](#)

As our strategy and activities evolve, we will continue to highlight our progress on our [website](#).

We are also determined in the months ahead, to continue and intensify our [Africa Wake Up](#) campaign against poverty and injustice - a task that appears Sisyphean at times - with an even greater sense of urgency.

In an increasingly unpredictable political and economic climate, the challenges of engineered poverty, hunger, disease and armed conflict faced by people and communities across Africa are even more urgent than ever and require a well-coordinated, all-hands-on-deck approach by all. Obviously there is no panacea that will solve all these problems overnight but we will continue to work strenuously and constructively with other likeminded individuals and organisations to identify and implement solutions adapted to the challenges facing the African people.

Africans and the continent of Africa as a whole have been under siege for over 2,000 years through continuous invasions, genocide, pillaging and occupation of African lands by Arabs, Asians and Europeans. As a result of centuries of being treated as inferiors through imperialism, enslavement, colonialism, medical apartheid, neo-colonialism, racial segregation, racism, whiteness and discrimination, Africans both on the continent and the Diaspora have been hoodwinked into thinking they are at the bottom of the totem pole.

Through it all, we seemed to have forgotten a most vital piece of information, that being:

Our story begins with the dawn of humanity, with the invention of culture, with the development of civilisation.

Studying the past often reveals a cache of secrets that some people are striving to keep hidden and others are striving to tell.

Long before Caucasians made their way into Europe from the Caucasus mountains, Black-skinned Africans had charted the universe, developed advanced mathematics, measured the circumference of the earth, constructed awe-inspiring monuments including the perfectly constructed Great Pyramid with all its mathematical and astronomical properties and built the earliest ocean-going vehicles used to transport huge stones to faraway shores. These Black-skinned Africans also spread themselves throughout most of the world carrying civilisation with them.

As Caucasians gradually acquired civilisation, dominated and wiped out the indigenous peoples whose territories they had invaded and learned to write, they erased the history of advanced cultures and civilisations along with the Black-skinned people responsible for producing them. White historians knowing there was no evidence of civilisation in their Caucasian homeland began claiming that Caucasian invaders were the founders of ancient civilisations thereby denying the actual builders credit for their glorious past achievements and making Black-skinned Africans feel that the inferior positions they are made to occupy in the global system are somewhat justified.

In his publication titled “Mentacide: The Ultimate Threat To The Black Race”, Dr. Bobby E. Wright (1934-1982), an African American clinical psychologist and political activist who contributed to political processes relating to the restoration of the Sovereignty of African nations, defined “Mentacide” as “the deliberate and systematic destruction of a group’s mind with the ultimate objective being the extirpation of that group” which may give a clue to why the Black race, after developing such an advanced civilization, has for the last 400 years been assisting in its own destruction and the nearly total subjugation of Africa by foreign invaders.”

Dr. James Emmanuel Kwegyir Aggrey (1875-1927), an esteemed Ghanaian educator, scholar and academic administrator also known as "Aggrey of Africa" told a parable about a naturalist who found an eagle being raised among chicken and tried to prove that the eagle would soar again if given a chance. After three unsuccessful attempts to make the bird fly, the naturalist finally chose a hill, and held the bird aloft, pointing it to the rising sun, and shouted: “Eagle, thou art an eagle; thou dost not belong down here. Thou dost belong to the sky; stretch forth thy wings and fly.” The eagle looked round, trembled as if new life was filling it, and suddenly it stretched out its wings and with the screech of an eagle, it mounted higher, and higher, and never returned. It was really an eagle, though it had been kept and tamed like a chicken!

“Aggrey of Africa” ended with these stirring words, “My people of Africa, we were created in the image of God, but men have made us think that we are chickens, and we still think we are, but we are eagles. Stretch forth your wings and fly! Don’t be content with the food of chickens.”

Africans are being called to a greater consciousness. Without this self-awareness, Africans will remain pawns in the hands of those whose agenda is to oppress, dominate and destroy.

While our focus in this report has been to shed light on the impact of imperialism, colonialism, slavery, foreign occupation and apartheid and their repercussions as well the historical and personal trauma experienced by Black people on the continent and in the Diaspora, much can be said about the African strength of spirit and its ability to triumph over a litany of obstacles and challenges.

Truth be told, [Black People](#) are determined, optimistic and resilient people. Prowess, innovative mentality and survival instinct are embedded in our DNA and there is really nothing we cannot accomplish if we put our minds to it.

In conclusion - where do we go from here? We must go beyond mere verbiage because words have not solved any of the problems facing the African people. It is now the duty of all of us to turn these words into effective deeds.

The knowledge of our [History](#) will undoubtedly provide us with the inspiration, determination and strength we need to define the desired future state of Africa and point the continent in the direction it needs to go so that we can leave a better continent for future generations.

*“Africans are being called to a greater consciousness.
Without this self-awareness, Africans will remain pawns in the hands of those
whose agenda is to oppress, dominate and destroy.”*

“Studying the past often reveals a cache of secrets that some people are striving to keep hidden and others are striving to tell.”

History Corner

At House of Mercy Children’s Home, Lagos, Nigeria (HOM), we are very enthusiastic about sharing stories of Africa's history and we have created a [History Corner](#) designed to correct misperceptions and misinformation being spread about Black people and African history.

Videos in our History Corner include:

[African Library](#) featuring a selection of must-read books on African History by renowned African, Haitian, African American, Jamaican and Guyanese historians, sociologists, researchers, experts and authors.

[The Transatlantic Slave Trade](#) honouring the memory of the victims, the resisters and the survivors of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, a period of slavery marked by a series of unspeakable crimes and serious human rights violations which have been recognised but which have never formed the subject of any redress and reparations to the victims or the descendants of enslaved persons.

[African Rulers in Defence of Sovereignty](#) paying homage to the brave and fearless African Kings, Queens, Chiefs, Spiritual Leaders, Authorities and the countless others who stood their ground firmly against imperialism, colonialism, slavery, foreign occupation and apartheid.

[Homage to African Revolutionaries and Freedom Fighters](#) honouring the memory of all the sung and unsung African heroes and heroines and nameless campaigners for the freedom and independence of African nations for their sacrifices for Africa and their willingness to ensure a brighter future for the African people.

[African History](#) a compilation featuring historical documents and pictures that offer glimpses back to the very beginnings of the human race, as well as several historiographies about specific periods in Africa’s history.

[Nigeria: 9000BC - October 2013](#) spotlighting little-known moments and facts about Nigeria as far back as 9000BC.

[Day of the African Child](#) spotlighting children from different African countries in their traditional costumes. The Day of the African Child is commemorated every year on June 16 in remembrance of the 1976 uprisings in Soweto, South Africa when a protest by black school children against apartheid-inspired education resulted in the public killing of the unarmed young protesters by white policemen.

“The knowledge of our History will undoubtedly provide us with the inspiration, determination and strength we need to define the desired future state of Africa and point the continent in the direction it needs to go so that we can leave a better continent for future generations.”

Acknowledgements

In spite of the many challenges that were presented in this report and the malaise of national hopelessness where it seems nothing can improve, one of the greatest joys of our work is knowing that there are so many caring and compassionate Nigerians, driven by a spirit of empathy and solidarity for those in need and distress, who are making tremendous efforts to help others and create a better country.

It is the magnanimous support of some of these generous, beneficent souls that enables us to make a difference in the lives of most vulnerable children and bring hope to those who need it most.

We are extremely grateful for the wonderful outpouring of love and unselfishness that our community shares. Thank you all for making House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos, Nigeria (HOM) a philanthropic priority in 2019. We applaud you for helping us to provide tangible assistance to children who needed our help and for making dreams come true for those who never thought it possible.

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BetKing - Food items

Project One Million Souls - Invitation to the Festival of Love event and gifts of miscellaneous items

Rite Foods Limited - Food items and drinks

Touching Heart Global Foundation - Invitation to the Capacity Building Workshop for Caregivers/Administrators in Orphanages and Homes

L&L Foods Nigeria Limited - Food items

Lemony Touch Events - Food and miscellaneous items

Rehdors Logistics Solution Limited - Food items and toiletries

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Digiscape Solutions Limited - ₦30 000

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Bhojraj Chanrai Foundation - Ankara fabrics

Multichoice Nigeria - Food, toiletries and miscellaneous items

Olusesan Olusanya Foundation - Shirts and T-shirts

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Hope for Women in Nigeria Initiative - Shoes and socks

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Triumph of love Foundation

Smile Foundation

Lemony Touch Events

La Penza Cloth for Less Privileged Initiative

Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank our staff members. We could not offer the services we do without the skills and talents of these remarkable people. Special thanks must also be given to our Coordinator, a long-service volunteer, for going above and beyond the call of duty. Her donation of time, skills and resources are exceptional. Thank you all for making 2019 another successful year.

We look forward to 2020 with great optimism and are confident that, together with our supporters and friends, we will continue to make great strides forward in our efforts to help improve the lives of the greatest possible number of children.

With Deepest Gratitude and Best Wishes

Bunmi Awoyinfa

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 with us.

House of Mercy Children's Home (HOM)

44 Prince Abiodun Adebambo street, off Orelope street,

Egbeda, Lagos

Nigeria

+234 802 249 9177

+234 803 722 3417

contact@homchildrenshome.org

www.homchildrenshome.org

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