

# VOICES

## Rising

ChildVoice

www.childvoice.org

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### New Staff Housing at Imvepi

#### A WELCOME CHANGE

FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, our staff working within the Imvepi Refugee Settlement in northern Uganda have been living in tent housing, with up to four staff members per tent. The tents were uncomfortably hot, and subject to damage from heavy rain. We are incredibly pleased to announce that thanks to very generous funding from some of our key partners, we have completed construction of a new permanent housing facility! It's a welcome change for our Imvepi team.

"Our staff have endured a lot over the years," ChildVoice CEO Nathan Mandsager said while inspecting the new facility and comparing them to the six-year-old canvas tents this month.

#### OUR STAFF HAVE ENDURED A LOT OVER THE YEARS...

The new structure, constructed of concrete blocks with a steel roof, offers nine separate rooms with lockable doors. Other features include a staff kitchen area, and of course, electrical service. Each room has comfortable beds with frames constructed from steel poles salvaged from the old tents.

"This new building is an achievement," said Richard Kyitarinyeba, Director of ChildVoice Uganda. "And it's a very big motivation to my staff. They are so excited!"

"We are so, so pleased with what you have offered us," added Julius Owori, our Imvepi Program Manager. "We have been battling with the accommodations for the past few years. As of now, we are no longer worried over heat. Our staff are now able to have privacy in their respective rooms. We most appreciate the donors who sacrificed a lot to be sure that we are going to be living this better life."

Immaculate, one of our longest serving staff members at Imvepi, likewise expressed a mixture of excitement and gratitude for the new housing facility. For her, it's a long-awaited relief.



#### INTERVIEW with Haylie Wright

One of ChildVoice's core tenets is the promotion of research in helping child victims of war and exploitation recover from their trauma. In light of that, we were pleased that Haylie Wright, a master's degree student at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, recently cited ChildVoice as a model nonprofit organization in her master's dissertation (equivalent to a thesis in the US). Haylie's focus was on the therapeutic benefits of sports (and adjacent activities such as art, dance, and drama) as a tool to enhance the efficacy of psychosocial healing for war-affected youth. While she was unable to visit our facilities in Uganda, Haylie interviewed multiple staff members both in the US and Uganda.

We recently spoke with Haylie to discuss her motivations, her research, and her thoughts regarding ChildVoice's work and mission...



I am so grateful to our donors for this new development," Immaculate exclaimed. "I am so excited to enter into my room. I've been in that tent for the last five years!"

We are so very grateful for our partners who donated so generously to fund the construction of this much-needed, permanent staff facility!

## AFTERCARE: Walking Alongside Our Graduates

Aftercare is how ChildVoice provides long-term support to our students after they complete their programs and integrate into their communities. It provides three years of extended support in areas such as job coaching, life skills coaching, supplementary business training, individual and group counseling, and spiritual support. This helps keep students moving forward as they integrate into their communities.

Two of our former Lukome Center students who have benefited greatly from aftercare are Teddy and Ketty. Teddy was abducted by the LRA years ago and forced to be the "bush wife" of an LRA commander. Today, she has a husband and four children, runs two shops, leads her village savings group, and is buying six acres of land for farming. All of her children attend school. Teddy needs guidance from ChildVoice to help her develop her new agriculture venture.

Ketty was likewise forced to be an LRA commander's "bush wife" at a young age. She lived in the bush for 12 years before coming to ChildVoice. Today, she has work that pays well enough for her to send all four of her children to school. Sadly, Ketty's husband was killed earlier this year. ChildVoice provided her with counseling and spiritual support as she worked through her grief.

Both Teddy and Ketty have been doing very well, and have been earning enough income to provide for their families. And through aftercare, they are receiving ongoing support to help them navigate life's challenges.

While in Uganda this month, ChildVoice CEO Nathan Mandsager accompanied three Lukome Center staff members on a trip to check in with two of our former graduates – Teddy and Ketty. The trip was on very rough roads and took just under three hours, underscoring the challenges our aftercare staff members face in continuing to work with former students.

"I'm just very happy to see [Teddy] up to this level." Said Winnie, one of our aftercare team members. "First of all, Teddy is trauma-free. . . I'm also happy for Ketty, because both of them are doing what they have trained to do at ChildVoice."

To see a short YouTube video of our visit with Teddy and Ketty, visit [childvoice.org/newsletters](https://childvoice.org/newsletters).



**ChildVoice (CV):** Tell us about your background. What were your own personal experiences that formed your worldview and brought you to your academic path?

**Haylie Wright (HW):** I'm Kiwi-American. I grew up with a kind of awareness of all things international. By the time the "stop Kony" stuff was happening, I was in high school or intermediate years. I was very much just kind of developing as a human and trying to find my voice in a world. But probably since I was about eight or nine years old, I was like, I'm going to move to the continent of Africa. That's all I've ever wanted with my whole life.

And when I got to my gap year [after high school] and I went and taught in Uganda for a few months, in a model that I definitely wouldn't do now. The school needed a teacher and couldn't afford to pay a substitute teacher or an interim teacher for a teacher on maternity leave. Of course, now I would really consider it inappropriate to have a post-high school student just go. So, I went to Uganda and I had a classroom full of South Sudanese refugees.

When I was in Uganda, I experienced acute trauma. There was an accident. . . and having seen bodies, pulling dead bodies off the road, experiencing just kind of like a war-like scene – a fraction of the experience that these people have gone through, and the trauma. Also, I already kind of was aware of child soldiers, and. . . I was just really dissatisfied with the fact that we were not dealing with childhood trauma well.

**CV:** In your dissertation, you focus on the therapeutic benefit of sports when working with child victims of war. What do you think is the core benefit of sport and related activities that creates an environment that engenders the healing process?

To read the full interview, go to <https://childvoice.org/haylie-wright>

