

Humanitarian Relief Operation “Do Not Abandon Them”

Final Activity Report: March – September 2020



September 2020

The relief operation **Do Not Abandon Them** was launched on Friday, the 27.03.2020. Since then, financial funds, medical items, and volunteer efforts have been continuously mobilized in order to meet the campaign goals in Uganda, Kenya, and other African countries. **During the past six months, close to 115,000 \$ were distributed by the campaign partners as direct aid and medical supplies to various target communities and institutions.** This report focuses mainly on the activities executed in **Uganda**.

Introduction

By late February, Uganda and many other African countries started to witness the economic impact of the COVID 19. After the shutdown of all Institutions, markets, businesses, etc. there was a dramatic downfall in the income level of weak

households. Predominantly, most of the poorer populations in Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda are hand to mouth dwellers; they make a daily living from riding motorcycles, driving taxis, farming, and carrying cargo, to name a few. The pandemic created a most challenging economic situation characterized by the collapse of trading systems and an extreme increase in severe poverty, hunger, and access to vital and life-saving health systems.



Operation Goals

The overall goal of the operation was to aid children and communities living under conditions of extreme scarcity and poverty and support local medical systems in East African countries

- 1) Distribute funds for basic food items and medical supplies and provide essential medical care to children, mothers, and families living in extreme poverty in **Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda**, and other African countries.
- 2) Provide support for the medical systems in the target countries, first and foremost to the projects in which Israeli volunteers and organizations have been involved for years - including the *Israeli Medicine on the Equator* project, which operates in the *Kiboga* hospital in Uganda.
- 3) Manage volunteers and local organizations in the various target areas, primarily the staff of "Topaz Uganda", "Tag Kenya," and "Inspiration Uganda".

- 4) Raise support and funds from the Israeli, American, and global society in order to achieve the operational goals.
- 5) Recruit partners supporting all the aspects of the relief operation.

Strategy and Implementation

Since the end of March 2020, all public and private transportation has been halted, and educational institutions, including kindergartens, schools, boarding schools, and academic institutions and much of the commercial and business infrastructure, were closed. To date, six months later, all institutions are still closed, and it is not yet clear when these educational settings will re-open. Distance learning and virtual classrooms do not exist in Uganda.

As a result of the local governments' steps, a severe shortage of essential food and medical items among the already poverty-stricken population was created. Many families live now from day to day, from hand to mouth. Soon the children, who until recently were served nutritious meals at their educational institutions, are at risk of starvation. The public system cannot assist populations living in slums, suffering from extreme hunger.

The relief operation ***Do Not Abandon Them*** set up a variety of intervention strategies:

- 1) Recruit and manage a large team of volunteers in Israel to organize and run the operation.
- 2) Guide and supervise the local teams in Uganda and Kenya (employees and volunteers) to work systematically and professionally to help thousands of children, mothers, and families under their responsibility.
- 3) Raise funds by using crowdfunding methods, as well as private and public supporters for the campaign.

- 4) Raise donations and purchase medical supplies to ship them from Israel and China to Uganda (and later to Kenya and other African countries).
- 5) Purchase and distribution of food under supervision to the target communities.
- 6) Transfer money (\$20 - 30 every or so) via mobile phone to families living in slums for essential food purposes.

Uganda Report:

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries are children, women, and poor households living in the suburbs of Kampala in Uganda, the Kiboga district in North West Uganda, and participants of Topaz Uganda programs throughout the country. We reached out to the children and families through our local partners and local projects. Some of these projects include Mirembe women skills training, Nazareth Nursery School, and AFAAYO children scholarship participants.

General Methodology

Due to the complex situation created after lockdown in Uganda, and with all public and private transportation halted, and suspension on buying large amounts of food, the local partners of Topaz , Brit Olam and Little Light developed different systems of operation to ensure food supply to poverty stricken children and their mothers.

1. We formed a team of 6 local volunteers to aid distributing foods to the beneficiaries in their areas of residence.
2. We bought various amounts of supplies from the closest markets distributed by the volunteers to our beneficiaries' families.
3. In Uganda, like in any other African country, it is common to use mobile phones to transfer small amounts of cash. We send small amounts of monies between 50,000-100,000 UGX periodically to support children and families to buy foods and essential medical requirements.

4. Our coordinators at the various distribution points invite families in small numbers of 4-5 to serve them the donated foods. This mechanism is recruited to help keep social distance and avoid the disease contagion.
5. On some occasions and only when possible, our volunteers give direct cash to families of children whose homes are known and are reachable. Parents/guardians were made to sign for these monies by putting their signatures or fingerprints against the sum of shillings received.

Brief description of some of the aid recipient's people and programs

The *Children's Hope* daycare centers

The *Children's Hope* daycare centers are a program *Topaz – Brit Olam* volunteers initiated in 2007 in Uganda. The first center was founded in the *Namungo* slum in *Kampala* - The *Little Light* daycare center, to date, takes care for over 300 children every year.

The *Nazareth* Child Center was opened in *Namulanda*, 2011. The center is located in a poor semi-rural area, on the village's outskirts, a former fishermen's settlement. To date, the *Nazareth* Child Care Center educates 10 children each year between the ages of 3-6. In *Nazareth*, the staff includes four teachers and a local volunteer coordinator.

Volunteers from Israel and other countries support the centers. A local volunteer coordinator takes care of all the needs of the volunteers throughout the volunteering period. Before mobilization, the volunteers go through various training activities. The courses cover early education, Ugandan culture and traditions, creative educational methodologies, and entrepreneurial studies.

The *Afaayo* sponsorship program gives vulnerable children from the most impoverished families of *Namulanda* the opportunity to pursue an education that will enable them to realize their full potential and build a better future for themselves. The children enrolled in the *Afaayo* program are graduates of the *Nazareth* Childcare center. The program matches an individual or a group of donors with a child they support throughout their studies, from primary school to higher

education (up to 18 years of studies). The donors receive periodic updates, letters, and photos of the child and track their progress throughout the period.



Mothers receive 100,000 UGX to buy foods for their children.



Small amounts of food ready for pickups by some of the families



Humanitarian Aid Accountability (April 2020)

Aid:

Little Light Day Care Center has been Assisting over three hundred families (support of over 1,800 children and mothers).

Nazareth Child Care Center and the Afaayo Child Sponsorship Program, both are running in the Namulanda rural area in Uganda. Assistance to over 130 families of children. (support to close to 1000 children).

Aid in these programs is mainly given through food distribution and mobile money transfer.



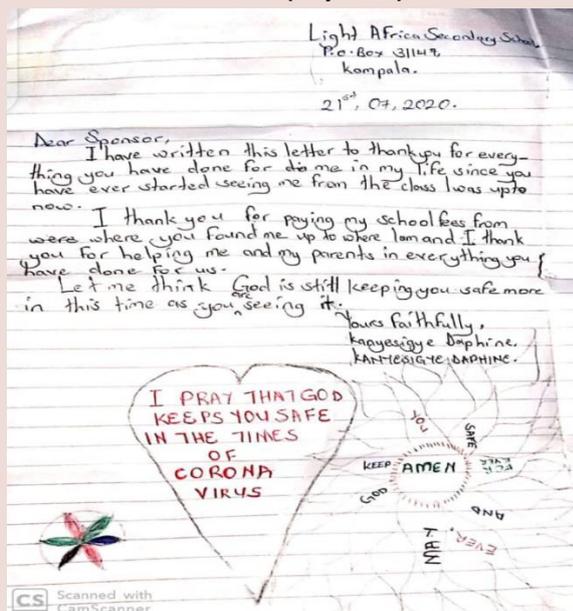
Volunteer Distributing Cash Aid (April 2020)



Children of Nazareth pictured after their parents received foods (July 2020)



Mothers lined up to receive foods for their children; children look on (July 2020)



A scanned copy of one of the letters from the children who are beneficiary of AFAAYO



Our local partners in Uganda also send mobile money in small amounts to students and families of our beneficiaries who do not live in Kampala where our team distributes foodstuff. The money is to help them buy the food and essential medical supplies from where they live.

A. G. (a refugee from South Sudan who was deported from Israel in who receives weekly financial support during the crisis (donated by an individual Israeli volunteer



Some of the children attending to the morning session at a teacher's home (August 2020)



Parents of children on the Topaz Nazareth Nursery school program receiving soap and sugar (August 2020)



Sailas Okwairwoth (Topaz Country Director, Uganda) and Mr. John Kyebatala (Deputy Principal NIAAD) hands over food to the beneficiaries (August 2020)

The Israeli Medicine on the Equator Program

The program has been operating in the Kiboga district hospital since 2007. It is located in one of the poorest districts in Uganda, 120 km northwest of Kampala's capital city. Kiboga District Hospital is a small government hospital, providing medical services to a population of around 400,000 people. The hospital has 120 admission beds, as well as an outpatient clinic. Both the hospital, as well as the outpatient clinic, are severely understaffed.

Over the years, more than 180 Israeli and international medical personnel have volunteered in the program. Each team was consisting of 4-6 doctors and nurses who volunteer for three months or more. The medical volunteer teams provide medical care, along with teaching hospital staff. It is a unique project in the Israeli development landscape, emphasizing local communities' sustainable capacity building. At the end of March 2020, all volunteers were returned to Israel.

The program is operated in collaboration with various bodies, e.g., **Kiboga** district health authorities, the Uganda Ministry of Health, and the Israeli Medical Association. **IME is** managed by a voluntary board in Israel, made up primarily of graduates of the program. Besides, a part-time coordinator in Israel coordinates the various logistics and fundraising activities of the projects.

The **Israeli Medicine on the Equator** program has been supported for many years by the **SBI company** in Uganda and **The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs - MASHAV**.

Aid:

Our initial concerns were related to providing food for malnourished children. Furthermore, we did continue maintaining the blood pressure and diabetes clinic. The clinics continued to conduct regular check-ups and delivery of drugs, treating 340 patients throughout the district.

The local team provided traffic permits to the patients for them to reach the clinic and receive the needed care. Besides, additional medicines were bought in order to preserve the therapeutic continuum. As part of the hospital's continuous assistance, funds for food and medical care were transferred to the children's ward. The aid provides support for local children, as well as for refugee children from Rwanda being treated there. With the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' support –**MASHAV**- additional equipment was purchased to strengthen diabetes and women's health clinic **activities**.

SBI International provided similar support

Furthermore, Israeli protective medical gear was sent to the hospital, and a large amount of medical equipment was ordered from China and arrived in Uganda during June 2020.



Medical Protective Items from Israel, Uganda, and China,



Mirembe Program for Women Empowerment



Mirembe Women receiving food supplies

Mirembe is a social initiative of the Inspiration Movement. It focuses on empowering Ugandan women and their families from weak rural areas to overcome poverty and become economically and socially independent. The overall goal is to redesign the women's lives through art, social and entrepreneurial skills. By advancing fair trade strategies in craft and jewelry production, by offering microfinance opportunities, and endorsing sustainable employment opportunities and education, **Mirembe** improves the quality of life of poor and marginalized women, men, families, and communities Uganda.

Each year over one hundred women participate in the program. The project operates in partnership with NIAAD, the Naggenda International Academy of Art and Design in Namulanda, Uganda. The program is implemented by the Topaz Country director in Uganda, local art teachers, and social workers and supported by the staff of the NIAAD Academy. An International Board of volunteers supports all training and operational issues concerning the program.

Aid:

Since the lockdown, the program had to be put on hold. Food and financial resources were transferred to the women and their families. In addition, a budget has been allocated to continue creating art products to ensure future sources of income for

the women and their children. As of June 2020 , the women continue producing their products in their homes, and Topaz's local staff sends shipments of products to Israel, so the program by now is "nearly" back to its regular activities.



Mirembe women receiving food supplies



Inspiration International Academy for Arts, Leadership, and Social Change

Inspiration International Academy for Arts, Leadership, and Social Change (I.I.A.) is an International Art and Leadership Educational program offering talented and ambitious students a unique chance to acquire a wide range of artistic and social leadership skills. The four-year program is a joint venture of ***Inspiration, Brit Olam, Topaz, and the Nagenda International Academy of Art and Design (NIAAD)***. ***I.I.A.*** builds upon the accumulated experience and expertise of Muse Uganda (2008-2015)

and advances the initiative. The program was launched in August 2019. Twenty students from three East African countries, Uganda, Sudan, and Kenya, are studying in the program. Some of the Students are I.D.P. and refugees. The program includes two years of intensive extra-curricular studies in community development, leadership, and social entrepreneurship. The program enables young artists to expand their expertise in a wide verity of social change methodologies embedded in creative artistic activities. The graduates will become creative and ecologically sensitive entrepreneurs. The young social-oriented artists will use their abilities to sustain themselves economically, enjoy a brighter personal future, and act as innovative, responsible, and diligent members of their society

Aid:

The students in the program mainly come from very poor economic backgrounds, and a third of them are refugees from African countries in the region. As part of the relief operation, a scholarship covering basic living and medical expenses was given to the students coming from poverty-stricken families to ensure their health and their ability to return to school after the crisis.

It is planned to establish an international online learning center in October 2020 to continue teaching and guiding students online.



As part of the "crisis assignments," all students were requested to produce artistic works reflecting the COVID19 Epidemic. A few examples.

Management and Logistics:

The operation is managed and run by the nonprofit organization **Topaz**, its various divisions - **Brit Olam**, **The Israeli Global Initiative**, the **Improve** and **Inspiration Movement** in partnership with **Tag**, an international development charity, based in the United States and supported by various public organizations, including **Solel Boneh International**, **SBI Uganda**, the **Ted Arison Family Foundation**, the NGO **A New Dawn in the Negev**, the NGO **Little Light** in Uganda, the **Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs - MASHAV** (for the **Israeli Medicine on the Equator** project in Kiboga, Uganda), the **OLAM** platform (as part of the **Olam in Motion** program) and more.

We want to express our deep appreciation to all our supporters – individual donors, charitable foundations, businesses, and Governmental Organisations. Together, we have saved many lives.





Volunteer Staff and Activists of the Relief Operation

Sailas Okwairwoth - Uganda, Dr. Yossi Ives, Lir Alter, Elina Mwanga - Uganda, Tamar Alkobi, Or Greenwald, Ran Zoltak, Hanit Henn, Dekel Yakobovich, Dr. Mike Naftali, Shmuel Sorek, Yossi Polak, Maria Abel, Tamar Zirinski-Mozel, Maria Radinski, Hadar Sagiv, Keren Stern, Boris Shindler, Dr. Shai Pintov and Kobi Landman.

Campaign operational team Contacts:

Hanit Henn , International Development Director, hanithenn@gmail.com , + 972-54-6961086

Maria Abel, International Development Director, maria.e.abel7@gmail.com, +972-52-2307605

Sailas Okwairwoth, Country Director *TOPAZ Uganda*, okwairwothsailas@gmail.com +256787622289

Dr. Mike Naftali , Founder and Chairperson, michael.naftali@gmail.com, +972-50-7605682

www.topaz.org.il