



## Life Skills for Pregnant Teenagers – Uganda

**Budget:** \$16,800 for Year 3. Fully funded.

### The Project:

This 3-year project assists marginalised teenage girls aged 10 –18 with crisis pregnancies, usually as a result of rape. The girls, who have been sent away from school, home and their communities, due to the perceived shame it brings on the family, are taken in by our partners where they reside for 2–8 months during their pregnancy. The project provides vocational training skills in arts/crafts, cooking, urban agriculture and tailoring. These skills help them to secure jobs after they have left the centre or start small businesses to break the cycle of poverty. The new mothers need a means to support themselves and their child. This is the first report for Year 3.



### Outcomes and Impact:

- 55 girls received training in vocational skills such as cookery and food safety, tailoring, arts and crafts, computer skills, entrepreneurship and financial management. These will help provide the girls with an income stream when they move away from the Centre. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, tailoring sessions now include making face masks, which are being sold and will provide extra income to the Centre.
- 22 babies were safely delivered during this period with girls cared for, counselled and prepared for motherhood during their stay. Workshops were provided to build life skills, such as literacy, infant care and hygiene – all essential to making a good start with a new baby as they reintegrate into their communities. Often pregnancies cause major family issues and many of these are resolved during the residential care.
- Two new professional teachers in Computing and English literacy were appointed.
- From mid-March to mid-May the Centre was closed to the public due to COVID-19, yet grateful to receive corporate donations of finances, food and medical care, testament to the local reputation it has built.
- COVID-19 has impacted in numerous ways, including curfews and restrictions on transport, making it challenging for staff to get to and from the centre, affecting the young mums who are running small businesses, and causing commodity prices to triple. Teachers have partially mitigated against this by setting homework for supervision by live-in staff and the teaching community has found creative ways to teach via Zoom, phone calls and sending books and material by motorcycles which are allowed.
- The new centre, built to accommodate more girls and their babies, will be ready for occupation in the next few months. It will have a garden where food for the centre will be grown for consumption and sale.

*Loyce (pictured above), whose father left, lived with her mother who could not afford formal education for her. So instead, her mother arranged to place her in a tertiary institution where a man took advantage of her by promising her money for necessities. She fell pregnant to him and was banished from the institution, out of fear for its reputation and that she would be a negative influence on other girls. Loyce had no one to care for her. Her grandmother was willing but visually impaired and the father of her child at first denied the pregnancy. Our partner welcomed her in to the Centre, where she enthusiastically took up tailoring and is now earning an income making shirts and dresses to order for local women. Mother and baby are doing well, thanks to the support she received.*

**Loyce and the other girls find a way through the adversity through the help of our partners. Without your help, these girls would be destitute. Thank you!**