



Uganda is the least developed country located in East Africa. The total population projection stands at approximately 45.6 million. Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world, with 44 per cent of its citizens under 14 years of age. Most children have experienced some form of violence and abuse that threatens and halts their holistic and positive development. Economically, Uganda is steadily progressing and has achieved moderate economic growth over the past decades.

In Uganda, many of the problems children face can be attributed to limited access to quality education services, negative social and cultural norms but also poor governance, which is characterised by corruption, lack of capacity or political will and insufficient budget allocations.

At Terre des Hommes Netherlands, we are committed to addressing the root causes that leave children vulnerable to exploitation, while also empowering them to advocate for themselves and have their voices heard.

CHILDREN IN UGANDA

Uganda has a population of over 26.4 million children and unfortunately, a significant portion of them (56%) endure multidimensional poverty and a substandard quality of life.

Over half of children under 5 years old and 38% of school-aged children live in impoverished conditions, with limited access to essential rights such as adequate nutrition, healthcare, education, clean water, and protection from violence and exploitation.

More than 8 million children are considered to be vulnerable to harm. Girls are especially at risk of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and female genital mutilation. Millions of children are working in exploitative conditions in Uganda, with 93 per cent of rural children believed to be engaged in commercial or subsistence agriculture. 1 in 10 children have experienced being asked to do something sexual either in person or online in return for money and/or gifts.

Transactional sex is also heavily impacted by the financial situation of the child and their family. For example, some girls exchange sex or sexual favours in order to get rides to school as the journey may be dangerous, others do so to buy food and clothes

It is crucial to recognise that children have inherent rights to protection, education, and the opportunity to create a brighter future.

DEMOGRAPHICS



Population

49.9 Million



Children
(up to 18 years)

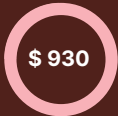
45%



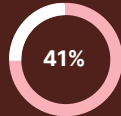
Urban - rural
ratio

26% - 74%

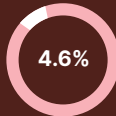
Social-economic data



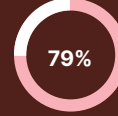
Per capita income (GNI per capita)



Living below the poverty line (of \$1.90 per day)



Annual growth of per capita (GDP growth)



Literacy rate

2024 Budget

€ 616,575

Percentage of children in school



88%

Net attendance of children in primary school age



51%

Net attendance of children in lower secondary age



25%

Net attendance of children in upper secondary age

OUR WORK IN UGANDA

In Uganda, Terre des Hommes Netherlands works on preventing child sexual exploitation, child trafficking and unsafe migration, child labour and gender and women empowerment. A lack of and/or limited access to educational opportunities coupled with poverty lead to numerous incidences of child exploitation.

◆ Sexual Exploitation of Children

Sexual exploitation is a growing, underestimated, and under-represented issue of grave social, health, economic, and policy concern in Uganda. The immediate and long-term public health consequences of sex exploitation undermine investments in education, health, and child well-being, and erode the productive capacity of future generations (UNFPA, 2020).

Research findings indicate that the lack of livelihood skills and economic disempowerment drive and sustain sexual exploitation among girls and young women in the urban slums. Many children are sexually exploited by older adults, particularly girls. Often, in rural Uganda, the transaction may not be monetary, but may present girls with a perceived pathway towards a more formal relationship such as marriage.

◆ Online Sexual Exploitation of Children

In recent years, there has been an increase in Internet access and mobile cell phone subscriptions in Uganda. Children in Uganda are already being confronted with risks posed by digital technology. Public awareness is low, efforts to prevent risks are limited, and when children are subjected to online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA), they receive little support – and few offenders are brought to justice.

40% of children between the ages of 12-17 are daily internet users, the most popular trend is to access it online, often to go on social media sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp. When victimised online, 30-40% of children only disclose the event to a friend and around 25% do not report anything at all. This accumulates to over 50% of children not reporting victimisation to authority figures.

◆ Child Trafficking and unsafe migration

Child Trafficking is a major concern in Uganda, with specific groups of children at high risk, including orphaned children, children from poor households, children out of school, children who live and/or work on the street, children separated from their parents, children with low formal education and children living in violent households (UNICEF, 2015).

Domestic trafficking predominantly affects children who are mostly trafficked from other regions to Kampala. The biggest source of child internal trafficking victims in Uganda are ethnically Karamojong. Karamoja's extremely high rate of multidimensional child poverty, which refers to a lack of both material and social needs, (84%) and a traditional acceptance of migration for livelihood increase children's vulnerability to sexual exploitation.

Girls are trafficked directly into sexual exploitation, often under the cover of working as waitresses in bars or restaurants. Forced child marriage is also a form of sexual exploitation and trafficking for girls. Children are also trafficked to Kampala to work in scrap collection, forced begging, and food vending – selling eggs and other food commodities on the street.

◆ Child Labour

Child labour poses a significant challenge in Uganda with children comprising a substantial 56% of Uganda's population, this issue emerges as a pressing concern in the country. Findings from the National Child Labour Force Survey 2021 indicate that 40% (6.2 million) aged 5-17 years are engaged in child labour (UBOS, 2022) depriving children of their childhood potential and dignity.

Most of these children work in agriculture, though they can be found in other sectors including construction, mining, manufacturing, domestic service, street work and sexual exploitation. Child labour is more prevalent among boys than girls (41% vs.38%) (UBOS, 2021a). This grave issue impedes Uganda's progress towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Target 8.7, which aims to eradicate child labour.

◆ Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Gender inequality remains one of the most pervasive forms of discrimination in Uganda. Uganda's estimated total population is 43 million people,

51% of it being female and 49% is male. While gender inequalities can affect anyone, impeding global progress towards achieving sustainable development, it is women who face the most discrimination.

Gender inequalities have strong impact on the lives of adolescent girls and young women who continue to experience multiple vulnerabilities at the individual, household and community levels. Unemployment rates are higher among young women as they encounter more difficulties finding paid work than young men, further exposing them to higher risks of poverty and sexual exploitation.

Some of the critical structural barriers to gender equality in Uganda include:

- ◆ Entrenched social norms and practices
- ◆ Rising gender inequality in economic empowerment
- ◆ Policy implementation gaps
- ◆ Gender-dimension of the Youth dividend
- ◆ Unequal capacities in adaptation to disasters
- ◆ Financing the institutional framework for gender mainstreaming is limited.

OUR APPROACH

◆ Children at the centre

Children are at the centre of everything we do. We support them to get access to education and other skills development so that they can eventually find jobs to earn better incomes to enhance their opportunities to live a decent and dignified life. We build their resilience and facilitate their empowerment. We help them amplify their voice, opening opportunities to speak up to those with the power to realise systemic change.

◆ Strengthening child protection

We educate parents and communities. We build the capacity of local structures to effectively prevent, detect, report and respond to child exploitation. We collaborate with other actors to influence strengthening of the legal and policy environment for better promotion and protection of children's rights.

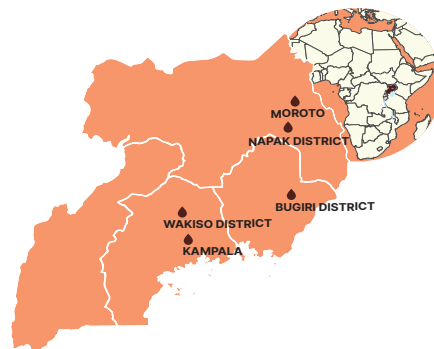
OUR PROJECTS

Project locations

Our current projects are implemented in Eastern (Napak, Moroto, Bugiri districts) and central region (Kampala, Wakiso) Uganda.

Current projects

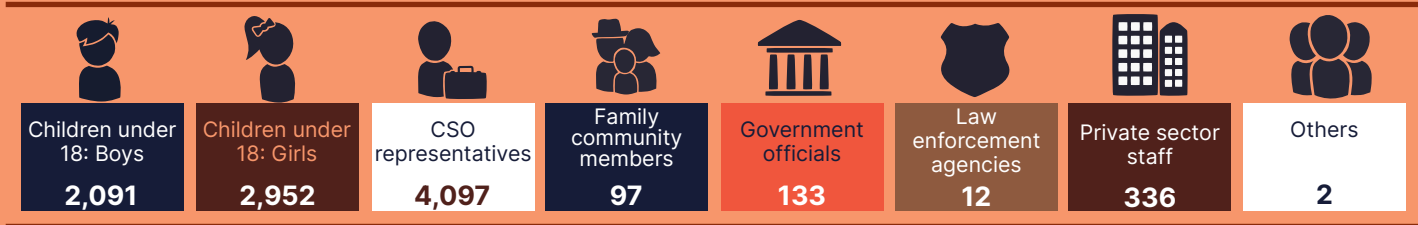
- ◆ Sexual Exploitation of Children - 3 projects



References

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- <https://www.ubos.org/uganda-profile/>
- https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/11_2022NLFS_2021_main_report.pdf
- <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-02/UNDP%20UGANDA%20Gender%20Equality%20Strategy%202022-2025.pdf>
- <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/UG>
- <https://data.worldbank.org/country/uganda> , <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD?locations=UG>

2023 REACH



ACHIEVEMENTS

She Leads Project

- Girls and Young Women (GYW) through the She Leads project are increasingly becoming empowered and receiving recognition for their work within their communities which has attracted interest from other civil society organisations. In the Karamoja project area, GIZ picked interest in the GYW safe spaces and have supported the girls with a grant of USD 20,000 to scale up the GYW activities within their safe spaces. Save the Children-Uganda sponsored a GYW as a role model and key speaker during celebrations to mark the International Day of the Girl Child in Moroto District.
- Increased recognition of and actions to end negative gender norms and practices at the community in Napak and Moroto Districts in Karamoja region. The Elders forum, which is the highest decision-making Authority in Karamoja (Napak), also the Hub for preservation of culture made a pronouncement to end forced marriage in Napak and any perpetuator will be sent to jail by the elders. Elders from Nadunget sub county intervened in a land grabbing case involving a young woman and his brother and supported the woman to recover her land; a PWD Girl from Nadunget regained her inheritance rights from her uncle who had previously denied her the right to own land because of being a Girl child supported by the local leaders.
- GYW increasingly empowered, taking up leadership roles during national events, participating in engagements to influence policy and practice. One GYW was a panellist and moderator in a discussion about GYWs milestones achieved on the journey to end Child marriage in Uganda (National symposium on Child Marriage and Teenage pregnancy) organised by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

Research and knowledge management

The study on Child labour in the coffee supply chain in Eastern Uganda was completed and the survey report developed and disseminated widely reaching out to key stakeholders including on the national print media (Monitor Newspaper). A child friendly version of the study report was also developed. Findings of the study will be used to evidence in ongoing advocacy and fundraising effort.

Meaningful child participation and involvement in our work

Up to 15 children consulted in the co-creation workshop to develop the TdH NL thematic programmes. These workshops provided good insights on causes of child labour and possible solutions in the eyes of children.

“ As a community mobilizer in Lotome, I have seen the transformative power of our monthly meetings that bring traditional and religious leaders together with girls and young women. Our work has provided a safe space for dialogue and collaboration on issues of gender equality. I have seen girls and young women speak up with confidence and assert their rights, which has been inspiring. Our movement challenges long-standing norms and empowers our community to create an inclusive and equitable future. ”

Aleper,
A She Leads girl and young women advocate

“ Violence, exploitation, and abuse in any form pose serious threats to the development and full potential of children. As the future pillars of our societies, children deserve to be nurtured and safeguarded in every possible manner. The onus to do this is the responsibility of everyone- families, communities, and most especially our leaders at all levels in society. Only through this combined effort can we effectively combat this destructive vice that jeopardises the future of children in our nation. ”

Josephine akiru
Country Director, Uganda
Terre des Hommes Netherlands

PARTNERSHIPS

Terre des Hommes Netherlands is a member of the:

- Joining Forces - an alliance of six child-focused international NGOs.
- She Leads, a five-year strategic partnership between the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and four consortium organisations - Terre des Hommes Netherlands, Plan Netherlands, DCI-ECPAT Netherlands and the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET).

In our work, we closely collaborate with the Government of Uganda, in particular, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) and other partners:

- Girl Up Initiative Uganda
- Karamoja Women Umbrella Organization (KAWUO)
- Multi Community Based Development Initiative (MUCOBADI)

FUNDING PARTNERS

Our work in Uganda currently is made possible through the generous support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



About Terre des Hommes Netherlands

Terre des Hommes Netherlands is part of the International Federation of Terre des Hommes organisations, a strategic partnership of member organisations sharing the same brand name and core values for joint lobby and advocacy around children's rights. Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) protects children by preventing and stopping child exploitation, and by empowering children to make their voices count. Our work is grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and seeks to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Under our new Global Strategy (2023 - 2030), TdH NL is redefining and refining our role as a child rights organisation, with the strategic ambition that "by 2030, Terre des Hommes Netherlands is a catalyst for systemic change to stop child exploitation. We do this by empowering children and their communities, connecting them with those who have power to enact change, and utilising our knowledge and expertise to co-create sustainable, evidence-based solutions."

In line with our new strategy, TdH NL has established three thematic programmes under which our portfolio of humanitarian and development projects and programmes will be managed. These are: **1. Child Labour, 2. Sexual Exploitation of Children, and 3. Humanitarian Action.**

The values of Terre des Hommes Netherlands are:
Responsible, Bold, Human-Centred and Playful.

The organisation's core principles are:
Children at the Centre, Intersectionality and Power Awareness, Safety and Wellbeing, Sustainability, Meaningful and Strategic Partnerships.

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