Children’s Rights and Violence Prevention Fund emergency response to Covid 19

STORIES FROM

BOLD GIRLS

ETHIOPIA, KENYA, TANZANIA, UGANDA
CRVPF empowers adolescent girls to add a critical voice to the gender equality movement by advocating for the end of discrimination against girls and women in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

The Covid-19 pandemic triggered an unprecedented crisis that more adversely affected women-owned businesses.

CRVPF supported community organizations (partners) to provide children and women owned businesses with financial support to re-establish their micro-enterprises or start new ones responsive to the new normal.

Partners’ projects have multiple themes which is indicative of a more holistic approach to ensure the recovery and resilience of women in refugee settlements, host communities, and slum communities from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**OUR GRANT MAKING PRINCIPLES**

- Targeting children and vulnerable adolescent girls through community organization partners
- Addressing cross-cutting issues of violence
- Focus on income-building support to beneficiaries through skilling and financial support
OUR IMPACT

8,525
Adolescent children and girls in slum areas reached by partners

62.5%
of organizations are women and youth led

USD 550,000
Total grants to be distributed to 35 community organizations
When Shakira Namyalo’s father chose to take a second wife, he was unable to support Shakira, her mother and siblings. Following several domestic fights over the lack of basic needs at home, Shakira and her mother left the home and moved to a one-roomed house.

However, without any source of income, Shakira and her mother were soon evicted from their one roomed house as they were unable to pay rent. The family found refuge in a charcoal store and Shakira’s mother took up a clothes washing job to support the family. Shakira often had to leave school to help her mother at her washing job which affected her performance in school.

Eventually, Shakira’s mother could no longer work due to severe backpain. Shakira was forced to start working in the evenings and nights after school to supplement the family income. On weekends she continued the clothes washing business.

“On several visits to different homes to wash clothes, male clients sexually assaulted me. When I told my mother, she advised me to look for another job. I decided to venture into frying fast foods and selling them on the street in the evenings.”
Mahlet Wabi has always worked from a very young age. When her father passed away, Mahlet worked with her mother to support the family, including two younger brothers.

Although her dream had been to join the university, Mahlet was not able to pass her high school exams as she was often working to feed her siblings and mother.

“Growing up in a slum area and being responsible for supporting your family at the young age is the most difficult challenge you can face in life”, says Mahlet.

For the last three years, she has been selling tea, coffee and roasted bread in the streets, from which she earns ETB 2000-2500 (USD 46) per month.

Following the Covid-19 outbreak, Mahlet’s business collapsed due to restrictions in movement. This was a difficult time for the family as she was the main bread winner.

When Covid-19 restrictions eased, Mahlet was enroled in the CRVPF supported Girls’ Power out-of-school program where she received financial support to re-start her business in a temporary shelter given by the local authority.
Lillian Umazi had just secured a job at a plastic manufacturing company, Jaralam Plastic Company, when the Covid 19 pandemic broke out. A single mother, with only a high school certificate, she had always struggled to find work doing daily wage jobs like washing clothes and tilling other peoples’ farms.

The pandemic, therefore, was a huge blow to her income as the manufacturing company, where she had secured a steady income, laid her off. Without a job to cater for her child and herself, Lillian was desperate. She was not able to find washing jobs as people no longer opened their homes to strangers for fear of the pandemic.

Lillian decided to start a small food stall selling Bhajia, (fried potatoes) a local coastal delicacy, supplementing this income by adding groceries to her stall. Cooking was a difficult job due to the inefficiency of her three-stoned stove. Without shelter for her stall, she could not store her food hygienically as the winds often covered it with dust.

“Sometimes I felt like the world and God had abandoned me. My worry is this little child; sometimes I find myself beating her out of frustration.”

Because of her resilience and determination, Lillian was selected for emergency funding by a CRVPF partner during a community outreach. She received KSH 38,700 (USD 387).
Jenifer John had always dreamed of being an engineer, but when her parents passed away she dropped out of secondary school to find a job to support her siblings. While working as a domestic worker in Dar es Salaam, Jenifer met some girls who belonged to a club *Wadada wa leo*. Through this club Jenifer was introduced to a community organization, Kiwohede, which enroled her in their vocational training and life skills program. During the training, the organization inspired the girls to become economically independent and overcome common challenges like early marriage, forced marriage and gender based violence.

Having successfully completed the vocational training, Jenifer was supported to set up a weaving workshop, where she supplied bedsheets, loincloths and scarves. In the girls’ club Jenifer stood out as a natural leader, winning the confidence of the girls and she was selected as the Chairperson.

Unfortunately, as the business began to grow, the Covid 19 pandemic struck. Jenifer was unable to work for three months. She lost loyal customers and was forced to pay for additional rent out of her personal savings.

“*When I re-opened the business the price of raw materials - cotton bulk and fibre had increased. This made it hard for me to run the business because my capital had decreased and I was using all my savings to promote my business to new customers.*”

In order to boost her business Jennifer received support of TSH 692,700 (USD 300) to help her restore her business.
Like many girls in her community, when Mwajumwa Ali completed primary seven, her parents asked her to leave school for marriage, while her brothers and younger siblings continued schooling.

While waiting for a suitor to be found for marriage, Mwajumwa joined Kiwohede, a community organization that works with out-of-school youth to give them vocational training and lifeskills.

With these business skills, Mwajumwa started a grocery business supplemented by selling second hand clothes. “Before the outbreak of Covid 19 I had a grocery stall where I was selling vegetables, spices and fruits. I was badly affected by the Covid 19 lockdown situation, as my customers could no longer come to purchase my products. I made a huge loss as my vegetables and fruits got rotten. I eventually had to close my business.”

Mwajumwa was supported with USD 300 to re-open her business when the Covid 19 lockdown ended.
When Josephine completed primary seven, she was not able to continue to secondary school as her parents lacked money to pay her school fees. Josephine took up a job as a housemaid and a cook and later got married.

Josephine’s life was, however, adversely affected when her husband was diagnosed with diabetes. Josephine was forced to take up the responsibility of the sole breadwinner as well as pay the hefty medical bills for her husband’s treatment.

Her fledgling restaurant, however, was interrupted by Covid-19 as physical movement was limited, schools closed and many customers chose to eat at home rather than restaurants.

“I was in despair. I had no rent, no savings and the whole family was looking to me. The landlord chased us out of the house and we had to live in one room given to us temporarily by a friend. I used to send out my young children to for something to eat; I was frustrated and out of anger I would beat them often.”

Josephine was identified through a community meeting and a parenting group where she expressed her need for business income to set up a charcoal stall. Josephine and her husband received UGX 1,750,000 and they joined a village savings and loans association to help them gain financial planning skills.
At 17 years, shortly after joining Senior One, her first year of secondary school, Margaret Bahati fell pregnant. This was followed by the Covid 19 lockdown of schools and Margaret was forced to look for a job to support her baby.

Margaret decided to start a street food business selling a local delicacy viazi karai (fried chilli potatoes) using savings from her pocket money. She did not receive any support from her mother who was angry with her for getting pregnant while still in school.

With limited customers due to the lockdown, and her lack of business skills, Margaret was not able to gain substantial incomes.

Margaret received funding of USD 150 to strengthen her business. She plans to work hard to save some money for the family and to return to school.
Queen of Tea and Coffee

Name: Hannah Endal
Age: 20 years
Business: Tea and coffee
Location: Ethiopia

In Gulit area, Addis Ababa, Hannah Endal is a vendor of tea and coffee. Growing up in a single parent home, she often helped her mother support her siblings by engaging in different informal jobs. Although Hannah was able to enrol in a vocational institute, she eventually dropped out when her mother fell sick so she could work fulltime selling tea and coffee.

The onset of Covid 19, however, disrupted Hannah’s newly found business as lockdowns drastically reduced her customer base.

“Losing this small income created chaos in my family and I was struggling hard to get daily bread during this time.”

To support her to re-establish her business, CRVPF supported Hanna with ETB 8,000 (USD 143).

Capital received: ETB 8,000 (USD 143)
Name: Hilakoze Julius
Age: 12 years
Business: Subsistence agriculture
Location: Tanzania

“I have a dream to study hard and become a highly paid woman in Tanzania so that I can support my four siblings and my parents.”

In spite of her ambitious plans, Hilakoze Julius has suffered several setbacks. Her impoverished family has always lived a nomadic life, migrating for work, which destabilized her schooling. As life became harder for the family, and they could only afford one meal a day, Hilakoze, 14 years, was removed from school and sent to work as a housemaid earning only USD 5.

After working for 5 months, Hilakoze was rescued when the Covid 19 pandemic struck and her employer was unable to pay her after losing her own job.

“I was abused for small mistakes and even beaten for things that were done by her children. I spent most of my time crying.”

Hilakoze was rescued by neighbours who witnessed the frequent beatings and reported the case to a community organization, WoteSawa, using a child helpline. Hilakoze was re-united with her family and given scholastic materials to be able to rejoin school. Hilakoze’s family also benefitted from emergency funding and farm inputs to re-build their farming business and earn a higher income so that they would not have to send Hilakoze to work as a child labourer.

Startup capital: TZS 579,875 (USD 250)
When her parents separated, Rebecca Mirembe went to live with her father and she became the primary caregiver of her younger siblings. Because she constantly missed class, due to the multiple home responsibilities, her grades suffered and her father insisted she drop out of school to prepare for marriage.

After sitting at home for 6 months, Rebecca found a job as a cleaner at a hair salon. Soon, she gained interest in hairdressing and she asked her employer to teach her how to plait hair rather than pay her for her cleaning services. The employer was impressed with Rebecca’s business acumen and taught her to plait as well as paying her for cleaning. Within eight months of learning and saving money, Rebecca partnered with a relative to start a neighbourhood salon.

Nevertheless, Rebecca’s business suffered a major setback following the Covid 19 pandemic as salons were banned from operating. She was left without a source of income for her and her newly born son.

Fortunately, Rebecca was able to negotiate with her landlady not to charge her rent for the months not worked during the lockdown. Rebecca also received UGX 1,000,000 from a community organization to help her re-open the salon.
The Cosmetics Champion

**Name:** Bethlehem Gezu  
**Age:** 19 years  
**Business:** Cosmetic products  
**Location:** Ethiopia

Born and raised in Addis Ababa, Bethlehem Gezu assumed the role of breadwinner for her family after her father passed away. She also became the primary caregiver for her mother who suffers from chronic heart disease.

After Grade 10, Bethlehem dropped out of school to work fulltime by setting up a cosmetics shop with the support of family relatives and friends of her mother. She earned ETB 2,000-2,500 (USD 46-50) monthly. Although the income was small, Bethlehem was happy because she had good working conditions compared to her peers and she was saving to grow the business into a wholesale shop.

With the Covid 19 outbreak Bethlehem’s business was closed and all the capital and savings she had were used to support her family during the first five months of the pandemic.

Fortunately, for Bethlehem, through the Adolescent Girl Power Program, the local administration provided her with a temporary structure to re-start her business. However, with the prices of cosmetics rising due to the pandemic, Bethlehem decided to initially focus on vending tea and coffee with the ETB 6,100 (USD 143) she had received from the Program.
Joan Nalumansi was adopted by her maternal aunt when her parents separated and sent her to live with her grandmother. Joan’s aunt paid her school fees up to primary six but she also required Joan to hawk maize with her to supplement the family income. As a result, Joan consistently got low grades and eventually dropped out of school.

“With the little experience I had in the maize roasting and grocery business, I used UGX 50,000 (USD 14) and bought a charcoal stove and started roasting my own maize to sell. Because maize produce is seasonal, this affected my earnings. On the side I also invested in selling vegetables.”

In dire need of additional business capital, Joan got involved with a man who promised financial support in exchange for sexual favours. However, when she fell pregnant, the man abandoned her, denying responsibility for the baby. When Joan’s aunt learned about the pregnancy, she asked Joan to leave the home but the local village council intervened and Joan was allowed to stay in the home as long as she paid for her own expenses including caring for her newborn baby. Without capital and the Covid 19 lockdown, Joan no longer had any income.

Today, Joan is hopeful that the funds provided (UGX 700,000 / USD 200) will help her to get back on her feet and expand her business by adding matooke (raw bananas) to her stall.
Ziada Joseph, 13 years, is both caregiver and breadwinner in her home. She went to school for only one year and then dropped out as her parents were no longer able to pay the school fees. To supplement the family income, she was sent to work in other peoples' homes where she earned USD 7 a month, which was sent directly to her parents.

During the Covid 19 pandemic, Ziada’s employer became extremely violent and was reported to WoteSawa, an organization which works with vulnerable children. Ziada was rescued and sheltered at WoteSawa where she was provided with food, shelter, legal aid, counselling and psychosocial support. After her case was resolved, Ziada was reintegrated back home. She was also enrolled in school and given school uniforms and scholastic materials.

WoteSawa also provided the family with iron sheets to roof their home, farming inputs and emergency funds of TZS 579,000 (USD 250) to help the family stabilize and generate household income. Ziada’s mother, who had left the home has returned and is recovering from alcoholism.
Yetinayet Tadessa was 16 years, and in school, when she became pregnant. Following the birth of the baby, Yetinayet was stigmatized by the community as a teenage mother. She became depressed, spending most of her time at home where she equally felt guilty for increasing the financial burden at home because of her baby.

With the father of the baby refusing responsibility, Yetinayet was forced to work vending tea and coffee. But her new source of income did not last long. With the onset of Covid 19, Yetinayet’s business collapsed.

“I was feeling better when I was working. The future looked bright, but Covid 19 took me back home and I was feeling depressed.”

The emergency funding (ETB 6,100) that Yetinayet received from CRVPF has helped her to start a pottery business at a nearby supermarket using the temporary plastic shelter provided by the local administration.
Lydia Mbula, 13 years, sells pampers to supplement her family income and pay her school fees as her parent’s income is not sufficient to support the family of six.

Her business faced multiple challenges including competition from other older vendors; however it was the Covid 19 pandemic that precipitated its collapse.

“Sales were very low during Covid that I decided to increase the prices of pampers in order to increase the income; but this did not work. My customers complained that the prices were too high. The sales dropped.”

During the pandemic, Lydia’s daily sales were less than a dollar. The family could not afford a packet of maize flour. Many days they ate only one meal a day.

The family received USD 150 as emergency funding to meet their basic needs.
Meet The Resilient Chef

**Name:** Nalufunya Kalvine  
**Age:** 19 years  
**Business:** Snacks  
**Location:** Uganda

Kalvine Nalfunya is a problem solver. When her single mother could no longer pay her school fees, she woke up daily at 4.30am to make samosas (local snacks) that she sold to retail shops before proceeding to school to sell the rest. With this income she could contribute to the medical care of her siblings, her tuition fees and personal needs.

However, her business was drastically affected by Covid 19 as schools (her biggest customers) closed. The restrictions in movement limited her access to customers and a significant drop in sales. The prices of vegetables, beef and spices that she uses in the samosas have since risen with the pandemic, reducing the profitability of her business. Most of her savings have catered for the medication of her sickler siblings.

Following enrollment in a vocation skilling program offered by a community organization, Kalvine has gained additional skills in making re-usable sanitary pads, liquid soap, paper bags, and preparing rice *pilawo*.

**Capital received:** UGX 1 million  
(USD 300)

**Future plans:** Set up a kiosk selling food snacks and selling liquid soap in her school
Halima Mulama has always been quick to seize opportunities. When her father passed on, she used her savings and additional income from her mother to buy vegetables from nearby farms and sell them at a profit in the community markets. Soon, she received requests to sell food as well; she partnered with her mother who cooked the food which Halima supplied mainly to construction sites.

Although the groceries and food business was profitable for the family, the adverse effects of the Covid 19 pandemic undermined it causing a rapid decline in sales. The pandemic also attracted more vendors into the food business, further increasing competition and reducing profits.

Halima received KSH 16,230 (USD 150) to support the construction of a food kiosk, purchase furniture and catering equipment. The income earned is supporting the family to pay rent, buy food and pay school fees.
Thriving on Tea

Name: Haymanot Ababu  
Age: 20 years  
Business: Selling tea  
Location: Ethiopia

At 10 years, Haymanot Ababu was collecting plastic waste on a dumping site with her aunt to supplement the family income. With her own parents deceased, Haymanot had been adopted and was required to do all the domestic work at home in addition to supporting the family needs.

Eventually, Haymanot decided to sell tea on the streets to raise more income. She started earning close to ETB 1000 (USD 25) which was able to cover the home expenses.

Unfortunately, with the Covid 19 outbreak, Haymanot’s business collapsed as street vending was prohibited and movement restricted.

Haymanot recalls: “If it wasn’t for Covid 19 I would be preparing for college. All my savings were used up to support the family.”

In order to restore her business, Haymanot received ETB 8,000 (USD 143). Through the support of the local administration and the Adolescent Girls Power Program she was able to start a new tea business at a temporary structure.
Madina Aliganyira was raised by her mother, following the death of her father. She studied up to Primary seven and dropped out of school when her mother died of HIV/AIDS in 2019, leaving her to support her siblings.

Shortly after leaving school, Madina became pregnant and was abandoned by her boyfriend. As she struggled to fend for her siblings and her newborn, a neighbour offered Madina a job in her charcoal selling business.

When the Covid 19 pandemic broke out like all businesses, the charcoal business in which Madinah was working closed leaving Madinah without a source of income. She was able to secure another job as a tea vendor which brings in only enough income.

Madinah plans on joining a technical school so that she can acquire a skill that will help her economically.
The Culinary Lady

**Name:** Hussein Hadijah  
**Age:** 18 years  
**Business:** Catering  
**Location:** Uganda

Hadijah Hussein, faces sexual violence on a daily basis. Hawking clothes to support her single mother, she endures sexual touches and gestures from male customers who promise to buy her clothes.

During the Covid 19 pandemic she barely sold any clothes.

Hussein Hadijah, was supported to start a food business as a more market-relevant business.

**Capital received:** UGX 1 million  
**(USD 300)**
Colline Awor was only able to complete primary five at age 14 before dropping out due to lack of school fees. Her parents were not able to cater for any of her basic needs and Colline decided to start digging in other peoples’ gardens. When her father died in 2017, Colline, her siblings and mother were forced to leave the land by relatives because all the children were girls.

Later, Colline’s mother remarried and abandoned Colline and her siblings in the house without food or income. At 16 years, Colline, herself, got married. In her new marriage, Colline faced domestic violence from her husband, who was also an alcoholic. When she gave birth to her first child, her husband chased her away from the home.

Eventually, Colline began work at an aunt’s restaurant which gave her a source of income to cater for the basic needs of her young child. She was also able to save money with a women’s group.

However, with the onset of Covid 19, “We didn’t have customers anymore and the little income I was earning disappeared. This again opened the painful wounds that I had closed after getting this work”, says Colline.

With her savings, Colline started her own food business but she was not able to sustain it due to the increasing costs of food and rent. She was forced to close down with no savings, a baby and siblings to feed.
Children’s Rights and Violence Prevention Fund (CRVPF)
1st Floor, Le Palm Building,
Plot 244/245 Lubobo Close, Tank Hill Road, Muyenga
P.O BOX 32387, Kampala Uganda
Email: info@crvpf.org | Phone: +256 393216519
www.crvpf.org

“Ensuring children and adolescent girls are safe and empowered where they live, learn, play and work”