

“You’ve got these kids who are very disadvantaged,
either because of poverty, or because of the war, or because of AIDS.
At L.E.A.D Uganda they can go to the best schools.
The chances are very good that they will be among the leaders of this country.”
— John Nagenda, Senior Advisor,
Media and Public Relations to President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda

Mission

L.E.A.D Uganda transforms forgotten children into leaders.

We locate the brightest children living on the edges of society — AIDS orphans, former child soldiers, abducted girls, and child laborers. We give them a family so they heal. We educate them at the best schools so they gain the entrepreneurial skills they need to achieve their dreams and help their communities.

Why

FOR THE CHILDREN. L.E.A.D Uganda exists to transform children’s lives: to give hope to kids who had no future, to heal their pain, and make their dreams come true. Our children have talent but lack opportunity. When placed in a loving family, they heal. When educated at top schools, they excel. We serve them so they can serve the world.

FOR AFRICA. We believe it is possible to end poverty in Africa and create a safer world by raising up today's generation of forgotten African children. Our vision: solutions to Africa’s problems exist in the hearts and minds of the continent’s neglected children. They can do the job if given the education and skills.

FOR REAL CHANGE. Our idea is to create real change. One thing that differentiates L.E.A.D Uganda from other non-profits is we believe training leaders in underserved communities is the most efficient way to promote development and help Africa solve its own problems.

FOR US. Redeeming them strengthens us.

What

L.E.A.D Uganda (LEAD, EDUCATE, ACHIEVE, DREAM) is an educational leadership program for children affected by AIDS, war, and poverty. The holistic approach that L.E.A.D takes to catapult poor children at the bottom of society into leaders is based on two fundamental needs: FAMILY and EDUCATION.

FAMILY: The glue of African society is the clan, which has been decimated by the conflict in northern Uganda and the AIDS epidemic. L.E.A.D is a family, the clan these children have lost. L.E.A.D’s Ugandan staff, acting as aunts and uncles, heals these broken children with love, discipline, and counseling; and makes them whole again.

EDUCATION: L.E.A.D's children are placed in the top schools in Uganda where they excel academically and gain leadership skills. Their peers, who are the sons and daughters of cabinet ministers, lawyers, doctors, and business executives, elect L.E.A.D students to leadership positions. L.E.A.D students have been accepted by top universities in Uganda, India, and the United States.

How

We find children with the potential to become entrepreneurs and innovators. We identify smart children affected by AIDS, war, and poverty. We locate AIDS orphans, former child soldiers, child laborers, youth in refugee camps, street kids, and victims of abuse with the help of community leaders and teachers, and staff visits to the communities. Once identified, children and their guardians go through a rigorous selection process.

We heal their pain, so they feel whole again. Our children have been broken by war and AIDS. The Ugandan staff nurtures and counsels them. We mentor them like aunts and uncles. The family culture we have created is a vital part of the healing process. We foster close ties with their L.E.A.D Uganda brothers and sisters. The older students nurture, mentor, and tutor the younger ones. Our positive peer culture accelerates healing.

We give our broken children a disciplined, loving family — a clan; because the clan is the glue of African society. Our children feel inadequate, depressed, and alienated because their families and clans have been decimated. We treat the children like we care for our own children, not as objects of charity. It's this level of commitment that accelerates the healing process and prepares them for academic excellence. L.E.A.D empowers the students, and imbues them with confidence. L.E.A.D Uganda's clan gives them stability and a place to stand in the world.

We give our traumatized scholars an excellent education at the best boarding schools—where the elite send their offspring—so they gain the skills to become leaders. We furnish them with everything they need to succeed: books, academic tutoring, clothing, medical care, leadership training, and discipline. We give our kids skills because we want them to grow into self-reliant adults who can compete with anyone in the world.

Most programs provide minimal educational opportunities in very poor, rural schools. That is not enough. Only 48% of Ugandan children complete 7th grade with a disproportionate burden of girls failing to proceed to secondary education. In contrast, we enroll our children at top boarding schools, where more than half receive "A" grades. Our students receive scholarships at top universities in Uganda, India, and the United States. We have more students in top schools than any other NGO in Uganda.

We train them to be leaders. We focus our students with intense mentoring and specialized workshops. We base our mentoring approach on a successful formula employed by Friends of the Children, a mentoring program in the United States that helps abused and neglected children by putting caring people from the community into their lives. Mentoring in an extended family context provides the children with discipline, builds their confidence, helps them set goals, and encourages them to blossom into leaders.

Our students are leaders at their schools and in their communities. L.E.A.D Uganda student Joseph is the 1st poor child ever elected Head Boy at Uganda's elite primary school. Some of our graduates have started their own businesses and NGOs.

We keep them in the community, not in an orphanage because we believe leaders must stay in touch with their tribes and communities. Every child in Africa has someone. We search out our student's relatives. In some cases, it takes years to re-integrate them into their kinship group. Though they left as outcasts, they return as heroes.

We transcend tribal and religious differences. Our children will be able to bring the nation together because we have successfully linked Christians and Moslems; and children from disparate tribes, twelve regions, and two nations into a strong clan.

We go the distance. We do whatever it takes to help our children succeed.

We imbue them with a strong work ethic and a desire to serve. L.E.A.D Uganda's replicable model provides a vision, a road map of how we can alleviate poverty and create a safer world.