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THE INTERNATIONAL CHILDCARE TRUST - KENYA

# STREET LIVES

SPECIAL JUVENILE JUSTICE ISSUE

June 2003

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## Training - the Best Option



Kenya still has a disturbingly high rate of unemployment which is partly due to internal politics but also reflects the recession in world economics. Formal employment is an increasingly rare commodity leaving many people doing casual labour often on a seasonal basis. Training in basic skills gives youth the opportunities to enter employment, work freelance or combine the skills they have acquired with the usual rotor of seasonal labour.

A trained mechanic with a basic tool kit can work in a garage or work from home, mend cars, repair bicycles, fix oil lamps and maintain a wide variety of household goods.

## Special

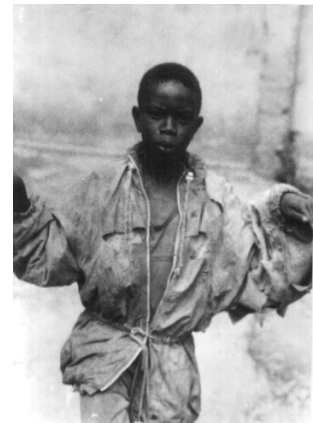


Children are regularly arrested and held in adult cells. Once there the infrastructure does not exist to inform their relatives, protect them from abuse or even to ensure them judicial process.

Article on pages 2 & 3

## Chilled (out)

Kitale town is situated over 3,000 metres above sea level in the foothills of the volcano 'Mount Elgon'. At this altitude the weather is often cool and in the wet seasons positively cold. Surprising when you consider the Equator is only 100 kilometres away. For our



friends on the streets, life is particularly hard during the rains. Not only finding somewhere

to sleep but keeping warm becomes even harder. Competition is stiff for the few dry verandas where they can shelter.



Hardly surprising then that sniffing glue

becomes a ready means of escape and solace. Glue not only takes the edge off the cold, it disguises hunger and knows no fear. A kid on glue is master of the universe, his own champion, feasting on succulent delights. Only to sober; then the same cramps of hunger, cold and wet return; the succulent delights scavenged from the rubbish of various hotels. Glue is always there; beckoning.





## Emergency Placements

The International Childcare Trust - Kenya regularly takes in children who are being held in adult cells. In this part of the world it is a crime to be 'in need of care and protection' and children as young as 4 years are often rounded up, arrested and can end up in police holding cells. Sometimes for weeks on end. This problem stems from the fact that locally the Kitale police, children's department and social services simply have nowhere else to put these children.

The nearest purpose built government centre is in Eldoret, a town about seventy kilometres from Kitale which boasts a remand home with a capacity of 80. This is a draconian institution where children receive no education, little organised recreation and a minimum of food. On our last visit (Christmas Day 2002) the

recreation area was packed with about 150 children sitting on the ground having breakfast of plain tea and bread. The home's administrators sitting at strategic points occasionally barking orders, stick always close to hand.

Like all the remand homes we have visited here it is built on a single design that is completely inadequate for any sort of child rehabilitation or development to take place: A small central patio surrounded by dormitories, latrines, kitchen, administration offices and high walls (all painted pea green). One enters the compound through a single gate in the perimeter fence. The only entrance (and exit) to the buildings is through double security doors leading into the inner sanctum where the children are held. They are rarely allowed outside this central area and most days, when it's not raining, are spent in the patio waiting.

The children's day is rigidly timetabled though hardly child orientated or full. They wake at 6.00 am, wash, make beds, clean dorms, latrines, etc. then attend parade at 8.00 am. Breakfast is over by 9.00 am. Some children help with chores. The others wait. Lunch is at 12.30 followed by an afternoon of waiting. Supper is at 6.00 pm followed by bed. All meals, parade and bed are preceded by prayer.

The idea of talking to children is still relatively new though many of the administrators are learning new techniques. It will take time but there is hope. Corporal punishment has been banned but is still widely practised. What is most disturbing is that, for many of these children, their cases are never heard in court, relatives are unaware of their internment and, without outside intervention, their remand is indefinite.

ICT-K is able to assist some of these kids because of the close relationship that has been cultivated with the relevant government departments and individuals. 100% of children placed with ICT-K from penal institutions have been successfully repatriated to their families or become active members of the ICT-K children's centres.

## Who Are These Kids Anyway?

All of these children are victims of society and have been arrested for various reasons; a few are mentally challenged, some have committed crimes, others are lost or vagrant, many are two or more of these factors. Of the children held in police cells and or remand homes most are victims of circumstance or petty criminals - more serious offenders tend to be placed in borstal type institutions.

To better illustrate the kids and their circumstances below is a compilation of just a few of the children ICT-K have been able to assist:



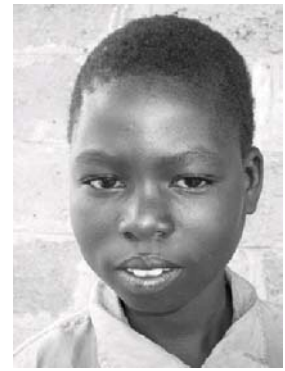
Name: Wangila  
Age: 13 yrs.  
Held: Police cells (15 days)  
Reason: Care & Protection  
Comment: Mentally challenged, became lost, home found and repatriated by ICT-K.



Name: Violet  
Age: 11 years  
Held: Police cells (4 days)  
Reason: Care and Protection  
Comment: Ran away from home, awaiting repatriation at ICT-K centre.



Name: Shama  
Age: 7 years  
Held: Police Cells (5 Days)  
Reason: Care and Protection  
Comment: Got lost looking for grandmother's home, repatriated.



Name: Naomi  
Age: 11 years  
Held: Police Cells (3 days)  
Reason: Care and Protection  
Comment: Mentally challenged, repatriated after considerable effort by ICT-K.



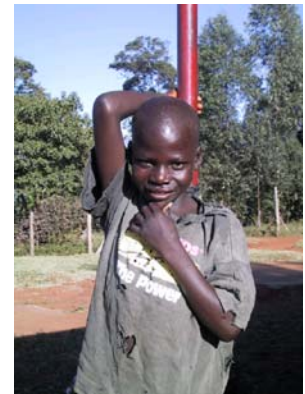
Name: Kennedy  
Age: 11 years  
Held: Police Cells (2 months)  
Reason: Petty Theft.  
Comment: Released on 3 years probation.



Name: Victoria  
Age: 13 years  
Held: Police Cells (10 days)  
Reason: Care and Protection  
Comment: Arrested in her home town and transferred to Kitale from where she claims serious abuse . Police are investigating .



Name: Bilale  
Age: 15 years  
Held: Police Cells (5 months)  
Reason: Care and Protection  
Comment: Burnt by stepmother, refuses to go home, absorbed into project.



Name: Kimburu  
Age: 9 years  
Held: Remand (Eldoret)  
Reason: Care and Protection  
Comment: Ran away from home in Uganda after arguing with his mother. Released and repatriated by ICT-K

ICT-K helps an average of four children every month to be released and rejoin their families or to join the ICT-K family at either Birunda or Liyavo projects. Repatriation takes time and can be costly especially when the child is unable to give general information such as name, home location or even the names of their guardians. Newspaper adverts have to be placed and often the child and staff members will need to travel to distant corners of Kenya. Birunda is in the process of building 2 purpose built dormitory blocks reserving 4 places in each block for emergency placements. To facilitate the repatriation process we intend to hire a full time social worker to specialise in juvenile justice who will be able to monitor children while they are in remand and inform the families or guardians to expedite their release and repatriation.

## Current Beneficiaries:

The total numbers of beneficiaries is difficult to accurately estimate as some events such as open sports days attract hundreds of people.

Those numbers aside direct beneficiaries can be summarised as follows:

### 1. Children

Resident	114
Temporary (rescued from adult cells)	48
Handicapped (special care)	7
Sponsored school	12
Sponsored training	31
Sponsored college	3
Street children, sports/awareness	780
Street children, health	640
Immunisation	1,600
Total	3,235

### 2. Adults/Families

Staff/management (local)	51
Healthcare (costs waived)	605
Healthcare (cost sharing)	2,860
Sports (community)	68
STD/HIV awareness	1,280
Total	4,864

**TOTAL DIRECT BENEFICIARIES 8,099**

ICT-K constantly reaches out to hundreds of children in Kitale town - refuses none.

Health is of primary importance to all communities, including street, as this directly affects people's ability to fend for themselves and their families. ICT-K has two residential children's centres that cater for all of the child's day to day needs; food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, remedial classes and much more.

ICT-K liaises and works closely with the following governmental officers and their departments:

Medical Officer of Health, Trans Nzoia.  
District Hospital, Kitale, Trans Nzoia.  
District Children's Officer, Trans Nzoia.  
District Probation Officer, Trans Nzoia.  
District Commissioner's Office  
OCPD & OCS, Kitale Police Station.  
District Education Officer, Trans Nzoia.  
District Technical Training Officer, Trans Nzoia.  
Senior Resident Magistrate, Kitale, Trans Nzoia.  
District Works Officer, Trans Nzoia.

And many other departments and in other areas on occasion.

ICT-Kenya is an active member of the Trans Nzoia District Children's Advisory Committee, District Development Committee and works closely with the Kitale Aids Project among others.



The International Childcare Trust – Kenya has an annual requirement of approximately Ksh. 15,000,000/= (£130,500) from international and private donors. That equals Ksh. 1,830/= (£16) per direct beneficiary per year. Registered as a Kenyan NGO, we conduct annual audits available to the Kenyan authorities and our donors. Reports and newsletters are also produced.

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All children's names have been changed to protect their rights to privacy and dignity. The stories are however true.

Please help us continue.

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