



This report presents an overview of learning and innovation at S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda during the BwB project.

Building on the findings about 'resilience' from the initial BwB research phase, the implementation phase sought to focus of practice change and development in terms of understanding how organisations can work in resilience-based ways and what happens when they do so. This report describes the journey of S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda in terms of how and why the resilience-based approach at S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda evolved through the project, their most significant learning points about resilience-based practice and some stories of change from their experiences through the project.



Building with Bamboo is an international learning project exploring resilience-based approaches to working with street-connected children who are exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The project builds on findings from Oak Foundation's Bamboo research initiative, which sought to understand resilience in street-connected children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is led by the Consortium for Street Children (CSC) and undertaken in collaboration with three partners from the CSC network: CWISH in Nepal, JUCONI in Ecuador and S.A.L.V.E. International in Uganda. Each partner has conducted learning and innovation activities to explore the forms a resilience-based approach to working with street-connected children might usefully take. Activities were designed and overseen on behalf of CSC by the social development consultancy Keep Your Shoes Dirty (KYSD) and led by Resilience Champions at each learning site.

UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE IN UGANDA

The terms *obuvumu* (in Luganda) and *obuvuumu* (in Lusoga) can be used to talk about 'resilience'. *Obuvumu / obuvuumu* is developed through the experience of facing challenges and overcoming them and is used to describe a person who:

- is able to adapt positively in adverse situations
- runs towards challenges rather than away from them
- always feels the need to be brave, bold, courageous and strong (the Luganda term, *muguma*)
- maintains a sense of control and exercises emotional self-restraint in times of adversity
- can have a confrontational manner when dealing with challenges
- is not daunted when faced with a difficult situation, not put off by the steps they must take and keep the end goal in mind
- is able to look at problems from a variety of perspectives
- is proactive in seeking help and advising others (the Lusoga term, *kubudabuda*)
- is not easily overwhelmed
- is hopeful (*suuba*) about the future

The Lusoga term '*obuvuumu*' also reflects an individual who believes that a difficult situation is not permanent and retains the hope that time will change their situation for the better. The Kiswahili word, *motuyaro*, is also used to talk about 'resilience' and refers to a 'strong-hearted person'. *Motuyaro* is a rawer, more emotional term, related to the strength of heart that a person has, the belief they have in their ability to be successful and the way they embrace challenges and don't see failure as the end.



S.A.L.V.E. International is BwB's Learning Partner in Uganda. S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda has been supporting street-connected children in Jinja, Uganda, since 2008.

They follow a child-centred methodology which recognises children's capacities and encourages them to work alongside staff to co-design their path away from the streets. The organisation's aim is to reduce the number of young people living on the streets through counselling, care and skills development. They also support children on the streets to resettle into their families and to re-enter education. S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda joined CSC's BwB project as an organisation that was using an approach to working with street-connected children at risk of sexual abuse and / or exploitation, informed implicitly by resilience or similar principles, reflected in strengths-based interventions guided by the organisation's aims and values.



S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda's Resilience Champion is Alfred Ochaya. Alfred has worked with S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda for 7 years, recently becoming the Director and previously working as the Manager of the Drop-in Centre.

He graduated from Busoga University, Iganga, with a degree in Social Work and Social Administration but developed a passion for working with street-connected children long before this when he would regularly meet and befriend street-connected children on his way to and from primary school. Alfred is a Street Invest Global Trainer with many years of experience in hands-on street work and leading social work teams. He also has experience of sexual and reproductive health training with young people for the Ugandan Red Cross. Alfred originally comes from Northern Ugandan but due to the conflict, he moved with his mother and has been settled in Jinja for the past 20 years.

LEARNING AND INNOVATION IN RESILIENCE-BASED PRACTICE

Learning partners took a dynamic, iterative and flexible approach towards resilience-based practice change and development, using cycles of learning and innovation to continually learn and feed this learning into adaptation and innovation in their resilience-based approaches over the project period. This kind of process is highly generative for practice change and development in terms of maximising opportunities to learn from challenges and failures, as well as successes. It is also particularly suitable to the unstable, uncertain and chaotic settings in which the learning partners work on a day to day basis: street-connected children's needs are complex, they fluctuate and are influenced by a variety of factors and, therefore, require a flexible, agile, adaptable and responsive approach.

OVERVIEW OF RESILIENCE PRACTICE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT AT S.A.L.V.E. INTERNATIONAL, UGANDA

S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda has evolved their approach so they work in a resilience-based way with street-connected children alongside their parents / caregivers in residential, street and drop-in centre contexts, as well as through more follow ups in the home environment and more community presence through events which bring street-connected children and community members together.

OUR LEARNING APPROACH

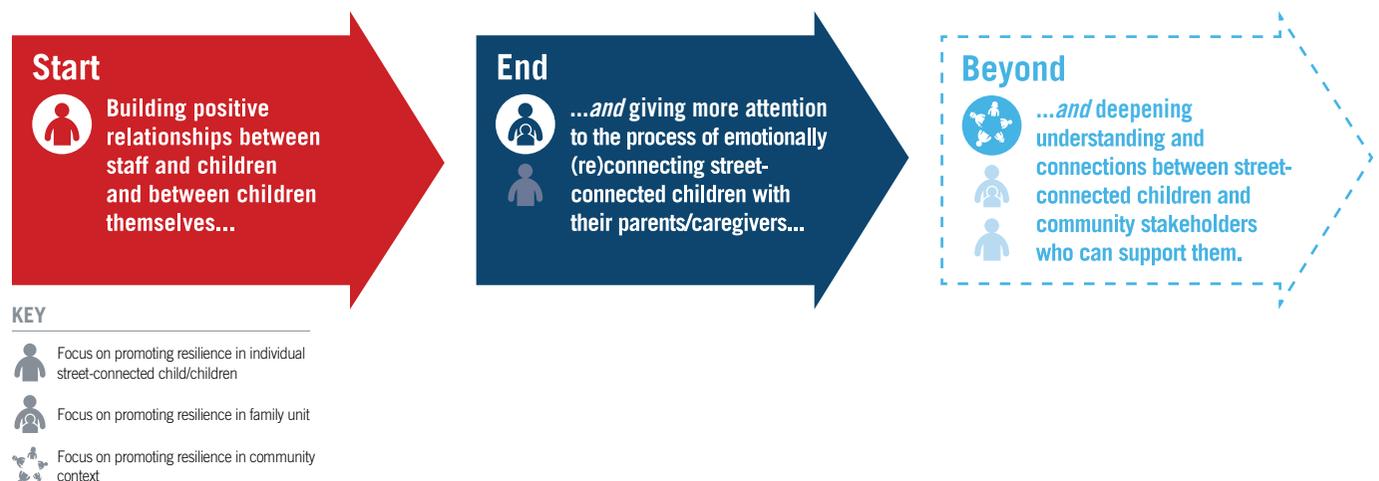
TO PREPARE



LEARNING AND INNOVATION WAS ORGANISED OVER 3 CYCLES WHICH TOOK PLACE OVER A YEAR



PRACTICE CHANGE & DEVELOPMENT



WHAT kind of resilience-practice change and development?

When S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda began the BwB project with CSC, they already had a strengths-based approach to working with street-connected children in street, residential site and drop-in centre contexts but did not use an resilience-based approach in their work in family or community contexts. Through the changes they have made S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda has retained their important emphasis on using a strengths-based approach with street-connected children whilst extending a resilience approach into their work with families and the way they work with street-connected children alongside parents / caregivers and community members to help them (re)build positive connections in their lives.

WHY did they do it?

The approach adopted by S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda has been developed in response to their learning on how promoting street-connected children's resilience is deeply connected to promoting the resilience of the whole family unit. This also furthers resilience in community contexts, and increases the support networks amongst peers, family members and community stakeholders - ultimately developing resilience at all levels.



Youth in street situations reflecting on resilience and its meaning in S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda's Resilience Programme activities

HOW have they done it?

S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda has concentrated on developing the skills and abilities of staff to (re)build street-connected children's relationship with parents / caregivers and community stakeholders alongside the creation of new systems, structures and tools which can support this work. This has involved:

Staff training and workshops. Workshops have covered content such as the specific role that positive relationships play in street-connected children's lives, and general relationship building. For example, staff were asked to write imaginary letters to people who are significant in their lives, to encourage children to reflect on that role such relationships play in their own. S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda also conducted regular, practice reflection conversations with staff - both one-to-one and in groups - to share ideas, explore challenges and develop new directions in practice to support relationship building work.

Development and use of new tools to facilitate positive relationship (re) building. A 'likes and dislikes' activity was designed to encourage street-connected children and parents / caregivers to open up to each other in non-judgemental ways. A genogram activity was also used to further explore street-connected children's significant relationships, which further cemented this work.

More one-to-one work with parents / caregivers. Working with parents / caregivers in a similar way staff do with street-connected children helps staff to develop relationships with parents / caregivers and facilitate the preparatory work required for resettling a child at home.

More regular and consistent staffed follow ups. Conducting more regular follow ups with street-connected children and their parents / caregivers over a longer time period ensured more consistency in staff assigned to particular street-connected children and their families to help improve relationship (re)building efforts.

Bringing parents / caregivers to street connected children. By bringing parents / caregivers to street-connected children, rather than the other way around, the staff work to strengthen the parent-child relationship. This can take place at the drop-in centre, residential sites or on the streets. This relationship is key before starting a resettlement process.

KEY MOMENT
KEY CHANGE

PHASES

PREPARATION

<p>Developed local narratives of 'resilience' and 'well-being' to situate concepts in local socio-cultural settings.</p> <p>JULY 2016</p>	<p>Developed local learning frameworks to guide learning around local components of 'resilience' and 'well-being'.</p> <p>SEP 2016</p>	<p>Developed learning activities to be used with children, staff and community members.</p> <p>OCT 2016</p>	<p>Trained Resilience Champions to lead the learning activities.</p> <p>NOV 2016</p>
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CYCLES OF LEARNING & INNOVATION

During each cycle we: conduct learning activities > identify emerging learning > make sense and innovate

<p>LEARNING & INNOVATION CYCLE 1</p> <p>CROSS-SITE VISIT: UGANDA</p> <p>JAN 2017</p>	<p>LEARNING & INNOVATION CYCLE 2</p> <p>CROSS-SITE VISIT: ECUADOR</p> <p>MAY 2017</p>	<p>LEARNING & INNOVATION CYCLE 3</p> <p>CROSS-SITE VISIT: NEPAL</p> <p>OCT 2017</p>
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LEARNING

Learnt about 'resilience' in a Ugandan context.

Collected stories from street-connected children and staff.

Expert Workshop in Uganda including an exhibition of resilience themed art work by street-connected children.

Continued with the learning activities.

Learned how to do a genogram with JUCONI Ecuador and began using it back in Uganda.

Understood more about the importance of building positive connections of building positive connections between street-connected children and their parents / caregivers.

Reflected on the importance of building resilience in the family unit rather than just within the child – need to give more attention to re-building child-parent relationships prior to re-settlement at home.

Realised we could not develop resilience without attending properly to repairing family relationships – street-connected children had fears about being beaten if they went home.

INNOVATION

Implemented new programme activities we planned with street-connected children - art, drama, sports - within our strengths-based approach supporting children on the streets and at our Drop-in Centre.

Held monthly resilience themed workshops with children.

Focused on **strengthening staff capacity to build better child-parent relationships.**

Ran **staff training to develop relationship building skills** – staff reflected on the role positive relationships play in their own resilience & wrote imaginary letters to significant people in their lives.

Incorporated learning activities to create time and space for continual reflection on practice – they constantly made us ask “what will we do next?” and gave staff encouragement to continue or confidence to change direction.

Used **'likes and dislikes' activity with parents and street-connected children to encourage them to open up** to each other.

Brought parents / caregivers to the street and Drop-in Centre, helping to build trust because parents / caregivers came to their children rather than the other way around.

Made changes to staff arrangements to enable more consistent staff-child relationships, building children's trust.

THOUGHTS & FEELINGS

I felt happy to be starting.

It was difficult to understand this concept of 'resilience' in Uganda.

I started to understand more about what I was doing.

The children would refer to me by asking "where is Mr Resilience?"

I didn't know that the art work could be so powerful.

I felt we were really learning.

Seeing the genogram in use helped me to understand.

The genogram and 'likes and dislikes' activities helped us identify the good relationships, something we were not doing deeply before.

We were always there – the trust between staff and children increased.

Bringing parents to the street tested their love and responsibility for their children.

S.A.L.V.E. INTERNATIONAL, UGANDA'S MOST SIGNIFICANT LEARNING ABOUT WORKING IN A RESILIENCE-BASED WAY

IT IS IMPORTANT TO...

1 ...provide street-connected children with opportunities to relax and have fun.

How do we do it?

- Run regular volleyball and football practice sessions.
- Organise local tournaments in conjunction with local schools and other organisations working with street-connected children.
- Conduct music activities during which street-connected children composed and performed songs.

What do we see happening?

Street-connected children:

- releasing stress and tension and appearing calmer which enables them to better focus on overcoming challenges.
- forming new and deeper friendships with peers as well as connections with teachers and other community stakeholders.
- learning about the importance of working as a team to overcome challenges.

Brian, 16yrs, felt relieved when he played football. It was the one time when he could forget about his problems and just be 'in the moment' having fun.

2 ...create positive connections for street-connected children which they can draw on in times of adversity.

How do we do it?

- Devise lesson plans for sessions with street-connected children at both the drop-in and rehabilitation centres which focus on forming positive and protective relationships with peers, family and community members.
- Model positive relationships through our street work approach
- Maintain a consistent approach to following up with street-connected children who we had returned home, providing a consistent staff member who will continue to visit the family.
- Put more emphasis on (re) building family relationships alongside the direct work with street-connected children.
- Work more closely with teachers in school and community stakeholders to help street-connected children form positive relationships beyond the organisation and / or their family members.

What do we see happening?

Street-connected children:

- forming more positive and supportive connections with their peers, family members and community stakeholders.
- beginning to consider themselves more important members and contributors of their community.

Derek, 14yrs, used to associate with older boys who would encourage him to steal things. After joining the workshops, he formed different friendships and began to realise that what he was doing was wrong and that he could distance himself from this behaviour.

3 ...support street-connected children and parents / caregivers to listen to each other and understand each others' perspectives on the challenges they face.

How do we do it?

- Run staff training sessions to help them reflect on the importance of positive attachments and develop strategies for working to build better parent / caregiver-child relationships.
- Facilitate 'likes and dislikes' conversations to encourage street-connected children and parents / caregivers to speak openly in front of each other about their feelings with each other without judgement.
- Bring parents / caregivers to meet their children on the street so they can better understand their realities.

What do we see happening?

Street-connected children and parents / caregivers:

- becoming more able to share their feelings with each other.
- beginning to resolve their misunderstandings.
- improving their communication with each other.
- developing empathy for each other.

Joseph, 17yrs, did not have a good relationship with his step-father and decided that he did not want to return home, despite his mother's strong encouragement. The activities enabled him to explain his feelings to his mother and helped them both to reach an understanding about his decision.

S.A.L.V.E. INTERNATIONAL, UGANDA'S MOST SIGNIFICANT LEARNING ABOUT WORKING IN A RESILIENCE-BASED WAY

IT IS IMPORTANT TO...

4 ...encourage street-connected children to visualise and verbalise their ideas about resilience.

How do we do it?

- Use art activities, like calligraphy and pottery, to encourage street-connected children to explore the concept of resilience, by composing messages about becoming resilient and then reflecting on them, sharing their feelings and ideas, discussing them and, importantly, have them validated by others.
- Staff work with street-connected children one-to-one and ask them to draw pictures of what, how and / or who was challenging them or making them feel negative things, therefore, helping the child to disclose abuse in a confidential context and paving the way for staff to support the child.
- Work closely with street-connected children to draw up plans of support that will be used to help promote their resilience.
- Used an 'I can, I am' activity in which we ask street-connected children to stand around in a circle and children take turns to stand in the middle and share a challenging situation in their lives and then listen to positive responses from the group who share positive ideas about overcoming the problems starting with the words "I can..." or "I am...".

What do we see happening?

Street-connected children:

- beginning to reflect on their lives, realise what makes them strong.
- becoming able to 'break the silence' by giving voice to their traumatic experiences, ideas and feelings, in turn, giving them more power over them.
- who are more open with each other about their feelings.
- who are increasingly confident and bold in facing and overcoming challenges in their lives.

Haruna 16yrs, said:
"Uncle, no matter what I am facing I know I am a winner. One day, one time I will succeed in life. I am confident that I will succeed and become a responsible person regardless of the challenges I am facing at the moment."

5 ...create opportunities for street-connected children to receive positive feedback about themselves and build their confidence.

How do we do it?

- Street-connected children compose and record resilience related songs and perform them at community functions and events, communicating ideas about how children can be resilient whilst on the streets.
- Organise resilience related role plays at community events which share key messages about developing resilience and include active participation from community members.
- Street-connected children conduct interviews about their performances for local television and radio stations.

What do we see happening?

Street-connected children:

- becoming more confident.
- beginning to have more self-belief in terms of what they can do and what they can achieve.

Community members:

- who are more aware, understanding and supportive of street-connected children.

Mary, 15yrs, used to be quite shy but, after performing at community events, she developed more confidence and became more able to ask for help. She is now studying in school.

*All names have been changed

5 STORIES OF CHANGE...

...FROM THE RESILIENCE CHAMPION

At first, Alfred did not know about the term 'resilience' and so he researched among the communities where he lived and worked to find out how people talked about 'resilience' in their own languages.

The street-connected children Alfred works with face many challenges in life and often struggle to cope with the situations they find themselves in on the street. Through this project, Alfred has learned the importance of having self-belief in order to overcome challenges and the power of having someone to lean on and depend on.

This project has ultimately changed the way he approaches the street-connected children and how he guides them. Now, he always encourages optimism, explaining to a child that whilst they may fail in one area, they will succeed in other areas. He encourages them to love themselves and believe that they will make it in life.

Alfred continues to encourage street-connected children to seek support and to take advice to help them overcome difficult situations and thrive in life.

...FROM S.A.L.V.E. INTERNATIONAL, UGANDA

Through this project, staff at S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda have developed new ways of working with street-connected children and families and have new tools available to them for helping children (re)build positive connections in their lives.

Whilst visiting JUCONI Ecuador, to learn more about how they are working in a resilience-based way, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda's Resilience Champion, Alfred, learned about the importance of working more closely with family members to help build stronger relationships between street-connected children and their parents / caregivers and make the process of resettling street-connected children more effective.

Tools used by JUCONI Ecuador, such as the 'genogram' (used for exploring significant relationships in the child's life from their own perspective), were taken back by Alfred to be tried out as part of S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda's work with street-connected children and their families. The genogram tool helps staff and street-connected children work together to identify an individual or individuals (including those within their family) with whom the child has a good relationship so that this positive relationship can be used by staff to help ease the process of resettlement and gradually build strong, lasting relationships.

Salomon is a social worker at S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda who has now used the genogram tool several times and is encouraging other staff members to use it as well.

...FROM A STREET-CONNECTED CHILD

Ishmail was 10 years old when his parents, both living with HIV/AIDS, separated. Ishmail remained living with his mother and a new step-father who mistreated him.

Eventually, the abuse and mistreatment became too much for Ishmail and he left to live on the streets where, after a year, he met street workers from S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda. He became involved in their Resilience Programme and attended the workshops they ran on different topics, like the importance of having a good support network, as well as participating in their art, drama and sports activities.

After a little while, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda were able to send Ishmail to boarding school which was a more suitable option for him because of the problems he faced if he went home. Whilst at boarding school, Ishmail's biological father died and he was deeply affected by this. Supported by S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda staff and a teacher from his school, with whom he was especially close, Ishmail attended the funeral and burial.

Despite the loss of his father, the challenges he faced on the streets, his mother's continued illness and the abuse at the hands of his step-father which, at the moment, makes it impossible for him to go home, Ishmail, now 13 years old, is feeling more confident about his future. He has had the opportunity to return to school, the support of S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda and some teachers who are very committed to supporting him through his next steps.

5 STORIES OF CHANGE...

...FROM A FAMILY

S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda has worked hard to equip staff with skills they can use to improve relationships between parents / caregivers and street-connected children.

One of the activities they have tried is to work with street-connected children and their parents / caregivers together to develop a list of what they like and dislike about each other. This activity is used when a child is ready to return home and they are accompanied by a staff member who acts as a mediator throughout the exercise.

Jack, 15 years old, had issues with his father and was living on the streets for around five months. His most important 'dislike' was that his father would always shout at him and sometimes beat him. The father's most important 'dislike' was that Jack was stubborn. Through the exercise they were able to realise what the other was feeling and think about how they could resolve it in the future. Understandably, the conversation was difficult at times but a S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda staff member was present to intervene and keep the conversation non-judgemental and solution-focussed.

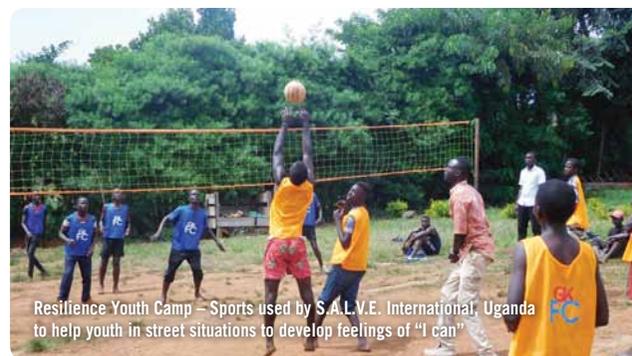
After a few weeks, the same staff member conducted a follow up visit and found that things were beginning to improve between Jack and his father, with Jack spending more time at home rather than on the streets. After another month, Jack had started to go back to school and his relationship with his father continued to improve.

...FROM A COMMUNITY

Street-connected children involved with S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda's Resilience Programme performed a drama about the challenges they face and their coping strategies for dealing with them in Masese Community in Jinja.

The drama highlighted the importance of building and maintaining strong community support networks to help protect street-connected children and families. The Masese local authorities invited over 100 people to watch the street-connected children perform and, afterwards, there was an opportunity for the community to discuss and give feedback.

The drama initiated a frank conversation between community leaders, parents / caregivers and street-connected children in which some individuals even shared about their own personal challenges and were able to receive help with them.



Resilience Youth Camp – Sports used by S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda to help youth in street situations to develop feelings of "I can"



Art exhibition – Youth in street situations participating in the Art Exhibition on resilience held in Jinja, Uganda

