

EVENT REPORT



Event Name: Street Child World Cup

Country: Uganda

Implementing Partner: Youth Sport Uganda

Programme Duration: October 6th 2022- October 17th 2022

Event Sponsor: UNHCR

Date: 5th November 2022: Signature: Karen Mukiibi



Team Uganda visiting the American School of Doha

INTRODUCTION

Youth Sport Uganda (YSU), with the support of UNHCR, represented Uganda at the Street Child World Cup, a FIFA World Cup side event that took place between October 5 and October 16, 2022, in Doha, Qatar. A team of 10 boys aged 15–18 years, including 3 refugees and 7 nationals from the Acholi Quarter slum, an IDP settlement in Kampala, used football to advocate for the right to education, as it has been documented that most refugees and vulnerable children in Uganda face challenges in attending mainstream education.

This year's edition was the fourth, following successes in South Africa (2010), Brazil (2014), and Russia (2018). The event brought together street-connected young people from 22 countries to take part in a football tournament, a festival of the arts, and advocate for their rights and protection through a child-focused Congress and General Assembly. Organized by Street Child United (SCU), the SCWC 2022 gave the most vulnerable children across the globe the chance to represent their countries and tell the world, **"I am somebody."**



YSU Executive Director, Joshua Opolot, speaking with CEO and Founder of Street Child United, John Roe about the team's future plans

Team Uganda, consisting of 10 players and 3 officials, traveled to Doha, Qatar, on October 6, 2022, and was received by Street Child United officials and volunteers and hosted at the Education City Housing Estate in Doha City. The participants took part in event activities that were channels for them to advocate for the rights of street-connected children and refugees all over the world.



Team Uganda being flagged off by Mr. Zbigniew Paul Dime, Senior Community Based Protection Officer, UNHCR

EVENT ACTIVITIES

THE CONGRESS



The team at the art session about their identity

Youth from all the participating countries took part in three congress sessions. Congress was a closed-door activity, with no media, cameras, or phones allowed. It was a safe space that provided privacy for street-connected young people to openly share their experiences, challenges, and plights. Team Uganda was grouped with Team Tanzania, with whom they shared many similarities in terms of culture, geography, and language.

The young people were asked during the first Congress session what their biggest dreams were and why they worked so hard to be a part of the street child world cup. 90% of the boys said their dream was to become professional footballers. The moderators helped the youth understand that, based on the

statistics of their home countries, becoming professional footballers may be out of their reach. They also helped them understand that the world needed them for more than just football. That also means that if they became professionals at football, they would need a career or source of livelihood after that career is over.

In the second session, the SCU volunteers, moderators, and translators guided the youth to identify the main stumbling blocks to achieving their newly polished dreams and aspirations. The majority of the youth mentioned that they needed an education to achieve their dreams. However, there are several hindrances to this. They mentioned that schools were expensive and the UPE and USE schools were overcrowded, had no teachers, and were minimally furnished. They also mentioned that the Ugandan system is heavily corrupted, government funds are not achieving their intended purpose, and there is a lot of nepotism along their way to achieving their dreams.



The team having playing foosball in the Education City Club House.

In the last Congress session, the participants were then asked what they would like to do to overcome these challenges and be able to achieve success. They called upon the government to regulate the school fees, especially for secondary education. They also asked the government to give the UPE and USE schools more priority because they support a large number of vulnerable children in Uganda.



The youth painting the Uganda flag.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Constructing all their messages from the congress session into one clear voice, the youth participated in a general assembly in which they were able to articulate their dreams, challenges, and advocacy to ministers, FIFA officials, and government officials from different countries. The chief guest for the general assembly, Her Excellency..., encouraged the young people to keep speaking up and present their advocacy papers to their leaders.

ART SESSIONS

The teams participated in two art sessions in which they were guided to express their thoughts about their identities. Team Uganda made the national flag using paint, cloth, and brushes. Using old newspapers and magazines, the youth reflected on their past, present, and future and were able to cut out materials that symbolized their journey. Team Uganda made an art piece that identified with war and displacement in their past, a present filled with poverty and slums, and a future full of hope, success, and wealth.

FOOTBALL MATCHES

Team Uganda was grouped in Group C for the World Cup football matches. Also in this group were Mauritius, Hungary, Nepal, and the Syrian Forum. The team played group stage matches, registering wins against Mauritius, Nepal, and Hungary and a draw against Syria. The matches were 15 minutes each with a 7-a-side formation. Uganda emerged as the top team in the group and played Brazil in the quarterfinals. The team drew 0-0 with Brazil and lost on penalties.



Team Uganda at the flag off ceremony

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

For their first appearance at the SCWC, Team Uganda performed exceptionally well, coming out on top of their group stage. Through the congress, the youth realized that there was more to life than football. They began to dream of and form new aspirations for career paths. Some of the boys on the team wanted to become teachers, local leaders, doctors, economists, and decision-makers in Uganda.

"Before coming here, all I wanted to be was a footballer, but now with all the problems back at home, I think I need to become first a village local council member and then a Member of Parliament so that I can speak for the street-connected children and refugees in Uganda," commented Joash Bogere after the first Congress session.



Team Uganda during their match against Nepal

Team Uganda was able to present their advocacy message in front of a large audience at the General Assembly. They shared their dreams and aspirations with the world, spelled out the challenges they were facing, and called out to their leaders to bring forth the change they desired. Other teams advocated for the rights to identity, health, shelter, and safety. Alfred Onenchan, after sharing his story, evoked the empathy of a team member from Street Child United, who pledged to send him back to school.

The boys exhibited very good football as well as discipline and won the hearts of many spectators. The squad won Group C and advanced to the quarterfinals. Each player received a medal as a souvenir from the event.

Two of the players, Joash Bogere and Alfred Onenchan, were identified by an agent from FIFA, who praised them for their skills and hoped to get in touch with YSU to see how he could link them to good clubs.

RISKS AND ISSUES

The team did not face major challenges aside from the food in Qatar. There were a number of youth who had stomach upsets due to this. However, with medication from the officials and support from the organizers, the youth were able to adapt to the new environment.



Team Uganda sharing a meal in Qatar's Education City

CHANGE STORIES



Joash Bogere, Team Captain

"I used to think that problems were only in Uganda, and I always wanted to leave Uganda for another country. But after this experience, I have appreciated that Uganda is a beautiful country with plenty of good weather and nice people. And after sharing with other street-connected youth, now I know that there are problems everywhere. Now I want to go back home and work hard. I know that I can make it in Uganda because I am gifted," said Lodio Thomas, one of the team members.

Sherment Kisangani, a refugee from the Kyaka 2 settlement, was excited to participate in the event.

"It was my first time visiting Entebbe Airport and even getting on a plane. In fact, this experience has given hope to my family back in the settlement. Now everyone knows that when you dream it, you can achieve it."



The boys after they returned from Qatar.

"I have always dreamed to play football on a big stage, and my dream has come true." I don't take the opportunity to represent Uganda lightly. Now I am ready to go back to Acholi Quarters and encourage my fellow youth to work hard. Everything is possible," narrates Joseph Owori, an IDP from the Acholi Quarters slum.



Joseph Owori, team member

"Seeing how excited the boys were about their trip and how they performed, it has really made our community proud." Who are we, as Acholi Quarters, to take children to represent Uganda? I am sure this has given hope to the hopeless youth in this community, and I thank Youth Sport Uganda and UNHCR for supporting these young people. They made us very proud." The LC1 Chairman, Acholi Quarter Slum.



The team with the Uganda Flag they had made.

"When my son said that he was chosen for the team to go to the World Cup, I was amused. In fact, I know that he loves football, but I told him that football does not put food on the table. And as a refugee family living in Kampala, we also did not have money for the passport. I want to thank UNHCR for giving my boy a passport and the opportunity to go outside Uganda. He used to be very shy and quiet, but after all of their lessons, he can now even talk to people! Our family is happy, surely, and at least now many people have seen my son's talent." Quesney Kyandanda's mother, living in Gogonya, Makindye.



I am somebody

We are young citizens of Uganda, living in Kampala. We represent other street-connected young people in our community and want to share our stories. In our experience, we do not enjoy all of the rights we are entitled to due to following issues.

Inaccessibility to quality education

Education in our country is very expensive, schools are far from home and are over-crowded. Street-connected children cannot afford private schools. The government does not prioritize villages and slums and is not constructing enough schools. Also, parents have no jobs and there are lots of broken families. Because of the inaccessibility of education, we are forced to do some casual jobs, such as carrying luggage, fetching water, collecting garbage, street-vending and becoming shamba boys.

We demand that the government make all levels of education free for all. The Government should also construct more schools in villages and slums.

Lack of representation of street connected children

Street-connected children in Uganda cannot access good education, health facilities, food and shelter. Children are ignored and not given a chance to give their opinions about policies that affect them. Also the leader elected to not give priority to street-connected children. We hawk on the street to earn a living and when we drop out of school we also carry out casual jobs like stone quarrying and collecting scrap metal. We demand the government to offer street children representation at both local and parliamentary level.

Corruption denying access to services, opportunities and professional growth

In our country, the available opportunities are only available to the people how are related or connected to leaders or those who have money. This is because of selfishness, and there are no policies in Uganda to stop corruption. Public services have a bias towards poor people and there is a lot of tribalism. This causes us to lose hope and resort to other mechanisms, like taking drugs, etc.

We demand the government to change policies around corruption and bring corrupt officials to book.

Lack of access to basic needs such as food, medical services, and clothes due to poverty

In our country, street-connected children cannot live a healthy life and go to school. This is due to loss of parents, family breakdown and joblessness. Some parents also neglect their children. Because of this, we are forced to steal to get food, street-vend for money and deal in drugs to earn a living.

We demand that the government and our parents to be more creative and innovative to create more jobs and opportunities.

We want to emphasize that the government should make all levels of education free for all street connected children to acquire quality education.

“The sweetest bell does not ring twice”- Acholi Proverb



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Shafiq and Joash having a light moment.

FUTURE PLANS

Street Child United annually identifies young leaders who continue to participate in their events, and also advocate for the rights of street connected children all over the world. They also carry out a legacy program in which the youth continue to work with street connected children through various creative interventions. YSU will continue to support the participants to apply for these programs and take part in them.

The participants will also continue to participate in the various YSU Sport for Development programs and projects as an avenue to grow their talent but as well as benefit from the values from the programs.



Team Uganda showing off their medals after the SCWC

OUR PARTNERS





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