



BULLA

**2017
ANNUAL
REPORT**

BULA'S 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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FOUNDER'S NOTE

Two thousand seventeen was a monumental year for BULA - Not only was it BULA's tenth anniversary, it was a year marked by both stability and steady growth of its programs. Entering ten years with BULA's long established programs, we could really reflect on the programs' impact over time. I have been so pleased to see students move through our Educational Fund and University Scholarship programs in Uganda - and I grow prouder by the day of the students' ambition and success. Beyond that, this year brought on a new feeling of pride at BULA - the scope of the care leavers project and the groundbreaking research we are conducting that has the potential to impact thousands of young people is awe-inspiring.

The 2017 directors' trip to Uganda allowed me to witness firsthand the necessity of the care leavers project. I attended one of our workshops in the Karamoja region of Uganda where nearly one hundred care leavers came to participate. It was crystal clear at that meeting that the lack of continuity of care following a child or young adult leaving an orphanage has profound consequences on their life outcomes. An orphanage, severing the bonds of family and community, leaves young people isolated and unprepared for life beyond the orphanage walls.

I promise to continue to learn from these young people - whose experiences can only be understood fully through their own voices telling their own stories. Together with our partners, we will respond to their stories and their views on the care leaver project - taking them into full consideration as we move into the year 2018.

Moreover, I hope that together we can lift their voices so that they are heard by all.

Lastly, I am grateful for the opportunity to do this work - the opportunity made possible by the support of our dedicated Board of Directors, our donor community, our events teams, and our partners in Uganda. The past ten years of working for BULA has been an honor.

Most Sincerely,

Melissa Fricke, Founder

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SHAUNA DIXON

JOSEPH CHARCHALIS

CAITLYN COOK

KAREN FRICKE

THOMAS FRICKE

KATHLEEN FROEHLICH

AMANDA THORMAN

Thanks to BULA's dedicated Board of Directors for another great year of leadership. Their support and guidance is paramount to BULA's success year after year.

BULA'S MISSION

OUR MISSION is to empower children and youth in vulnerable situations by improving access to quality education, by strengthening families, and by facilitating a platform of support and dialogue among, and for, young people.

At BULA, we view education as a key tool for empowerment, one that is most effective when vulnerability is diminished. We also understand that a fundamental contributor to vulnerability is the widespread institutionalization of children and youth in orphanages and children's homes. By breaking the cycle of institutionalization, by supporting the alternative care framework, and by providing support to young people transitioning out of care, we can reduce vulnerability and strengthen our educational support initiatives.

Empowerment with education and reduced vulnerability with alternative care are the guiding principles of BULA's mission. Through our programs, these principles give voice to the young people they support, while protecting their right to privacy. With that in mind, our fundraising initiatives and advocacy campaigns serve as a platform for their voice, giving rise to improved global awareness and a stage to influence the narrative on global education and childcare policy.



As BULA continues on its journey into promoting the Alternative Care Framework and supporting care leavers, it is important for our readers to understand the key terms mentioned throughout the annual report.

CARE LEAVER

A care leaver is a child, adolescent or adult who has spent all or part of his or her childhood in institutional care (also known as residential facilities, child care facilities and orphanages).

INSTITUTIONAL CARE

When referring to institutional care in the context of BULA's programs, this is specifically referring to institutionalized child care such as orphanages, children's home and other child care residential facilities.

ALTERNATIVE CARE

Alternative care refers to a method of responding to the disruption of family life for vulnerable children by categorically avoiding permanent placement in institutional care and by advocating to exhaust all possibilities for keeping children with their own families and by then seeking family based placements for children outside of parental care when that is not possible.

KEY TERMS

In our research, only

11%

of care leavers in Uganda,
previously identified as
orphans, had no known or
traceable family.

**PROGRAM
GROWTH**

Uganda Care Leavers



In 2017, BULA largely focused on the growth and development of Uganda Care Leavers (UCL) - a jointly run social welfare project that supports care leavers across Uganda.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

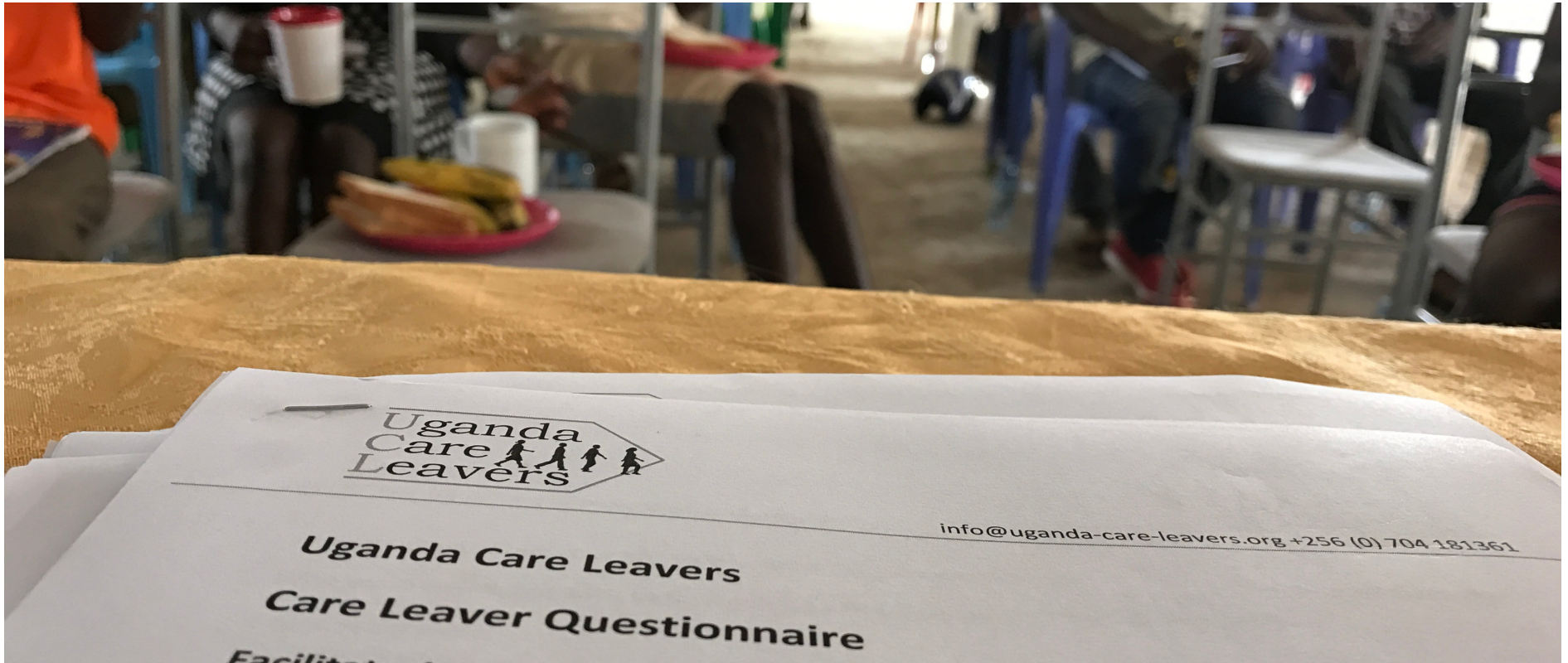
Currently in Uganda, there is estimated to be over 50,000 children living in 800 child care facilities. In 2012, there was a rise in support from NGOs and the government in Uganda to support the Alternative Care Framework, aimed at promoting family-based care over children's homes and orphanages. Recognizing the need for the growing number of care leavers in Uganda to voice their experiences of living in these child care facilities, BULA partnered with Alternative Care Initiatives to establish Uganda Care Leavers in 2016.

RESEARCH

Starting in 2016 and continuing through 2017, BULA conducted research in a number of districts identified as having a large community of care leavers, including the districts of Jinja, Kampala, Gulu, Napak, Masaka, Fort Portal, Lira and Mubende. In visiting the districts, the Uganda Care Leavers were able to create their own network of support, discuss their experiences and complete a Care Leavers Questionnaire.

The findings from this research will be compiled into a report in early 2018. The report will provide the basis for the direction of UCL's future work. As the initial findings already reveal serious child protection concerns, UCL will use the report to inform and influence government policy, service provider strategies and donors' attitudes towards residential care.





Uganda Care Leavers Launch to the MGLSD, February 2017

On February 15, 2017, BULA and Alternative Care Initiatives assembled child care stakeholders, specifically members of the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, to launch the preliminary findings of the data collected at the first workshops. In addition to the data presented, care leavers courageously told stories of their past, their fears, their newfound independence following care, and their warnings about the dangers of living in an orphanage.

One government official kindly spoke to the group as we concluded the launch sharing his admiration of the work being done, and especially of the strength he saw in the care leavers speaking before him that day. He and others asserted that the research would inform their efforts to protect and care for children, signaling to the UCL team that our work will have a profound impact. The coming months will include more workshops and further development of the Uganda Care Leavers Program.



Uganda Care Leavers Launch to the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development, February 2017

EDUCATIONAL FUND



(R) Graduate of RYDA Vocational Institute Training.
Photo taken by Ssebana Frank

Since its inception, BULA has understood the importance of education to help reduce poverty and promote gender equality. BULA has committed to providing educational support to a select group of students from primary school to the completion of secondary or vocational school.

In 2017:

- 4 students graduated from RYDA Vocational Training Institute
- 5 students were enrolled in the same school, pursuing their degrees in Hair Dressing, Mechanics, Catering, and Art & Design.
- 1 student is enrolled in secondary school focusing on math and science and has a passion for STEM

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP



(R) Graduate of RYDA Vocational Institute Training.
Photo taken by Ssebana Frank

BULA runs a scholarship program to advance successful secondary school students to the university level. The project is funded through direct donor sponsorship, giving individual donors the opportunity to support the dreams of an ambitious young person. This program is life-changing for the sponsored students - now seven in total - enrolled in the top academic institutions in East Africa.

The sponsored students work hard to uphold a high academic standard, some making Dean's List. They are recognized as leaders on campus, are captains of co-curricular activities, and are embarking on ambitious research projects. It has been extremely rewarding to see these students develop into future leaders of Uganda.

"As a part of my personal and professional development, I undertook the Child Protection Course at Makerere University. This professionally respected course took place every Saturday and Sunday over a six-week period in November and December 2017. The course included a great deal of homework and assignments.

In undertaking the course, I learned a great deal about the key elements of child protection and how we should be approaching child protection in the care leavers planning and programs.

I was able to promote the idea of family-based care among my classmates and it was often difficult as there were many social workers attending from orphanages. However, I struck up a good relationship with the lecturers who were aware of the Alternative Care Framework and supported my position during classroom discussions.

The work I have been doing with BULA has allowed me to be confident and have a much better understanding of my studies than many of my other classmates who may have been older than me with more years of working experience, but were still not very aware of alternative care."

- Mai Nambooze

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Meet Mai Nambooze, Care Leavers Coordinator, and integral member of BULA's team. In line with BULA's passion for access to education, BULA invested in Mai's continuing education to become a more effective professional in the area of child protection.



INSPIRATIONAL YOUNG PEOPLE

One of the most exciting times of year for the BULA team is the scholarship evaluation period for the scholarship BULA awards each year to a graduating senior at Bayport-Blue Point High School.

The applications - which include responses to two essay questions - are a joy to read. Through this process, we are reminded of the power of young people's ambition and passion to make a difference of the world. They inspire us to charge ahead with our own work.

In 2017, graduating senior, Abigail Auwaerter, was awarded the BULA Scholarship.

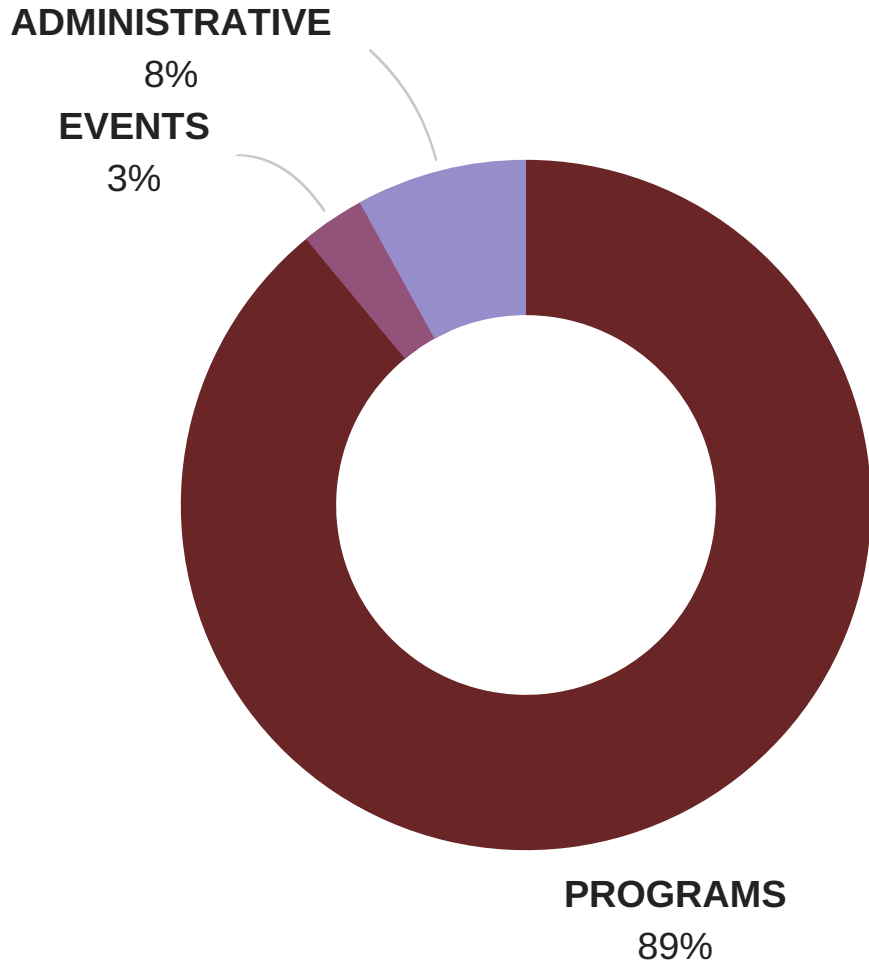


PARTNERSHIP

Alternative Care Initiatives is an NGO established to respond to the growing need in Uganda to support the Government of Uganda and others to implement alternative care solutions, i.e. family based placements for children outside of parental care.



BULA's partnership with Alternative Care Initiatives makes many of its programs possible. Working with this esteemed organization has helped BULA strengthen its leadership, its projects, and its knowledge base. Most especially, ACI's expertise has been vital in supporting BULA's staff in Uganda and has become a tremendous asset for program and project development.



FINANCIALS

Thanks to a steady stream of funding from our annual events: The BULA Cocktail Party and the Sayville Running Company's 10 Mile Run to the Brewery, BULA was able to spend nearly \$50,000 on its programs in Uganda in 2017.

LOOKING AHEAD 2018

In the year to come, we will have the benefit of the knowledge gained through our research efforts in 2017 to learn from the care leaver population. In 2018, we plan to translate that knowledge into wide ranging programs with great impact for the UCL network. We will additionally organize a strong media campaign to share that knowledge with child care stakeholders in Uganda and across the globe.

In 2018, students will continue to be educated through BULA's Educational Fund and University Scholarship Programs. Many will begin to complete their degrees and we look forward to celebrating their graduation.

We expect many good things to come in another year of BULA.



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