

# PARENTING IN AFRICA

Voices of African Children



**PARENTING IN AFRICA NETWORK**  
for the Ultimate Protection of Children

Website: [www.parentinginafrica.org](http://www.parentinginafrica.org)



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*for the Ultimate Protection of Children*

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## Foreword

Listening to children and considering seriously what they have to say is an important step in shaping their future. The family is the first institution within which children's world view is shaped, formed and indeed from where they gain the confidence to venture into the external environment. It is crucial then that they become participants in their upbringing so that their sense of responsibility has a place in the socialisation process that moulds their character.

Generally, majority of parents, in the African context, make explicit decisions over matters that concern their children. This most often results in children being timid and unable to voice out their opinions on matters that concern them due to fear of punishment. In most cases, however, this is done with the belief that parents know best about what their children need. It is therefore difficult for the African child to ask or question certain issues that they feel uncomfortable about in the family. Most often, attempts to ask or express views on issues in the family can result to reprimands or punishment as some children, in this book, point out.

Recognising that children have a right to express their views does not mean that adults no longer have responsibilities towards children. On the contrary, children cannot and should never be left alone to find their way or learn the lessons that life has to offer, rather, it requires that we recognise the value of their own experiences, views and concerns. The family, being the basic protective unit for children therefore remains the most ideal set up for children to learn and have the courage to express themselves. Knowing that their parents or caregivers regard what they feel, what they experience or how they would like their lives to be, contributes immensely to their sense of balance and responsibility.

This publication has given children across Africa a platform to talk about parenting by expressing their real life stories of how they relate with their parents and caregivers in their environments. It brings out the happy moments, the challenges and struggles that they go through as they relate with the adults in their lives and how the parenting styles and approaches have shaped them.

Undoubtedly, children's views reflect a wide range of concerns and opinions and in most cases recognise the struggles that parents and caregivers go through in order to provide for their needs. This underscores even further the need to talk to children, to let them know what is going on in the families, in their communities and to have them contribute their opinions to critical decisions that affect their lives. It is therefore our hope that these experiences will reawaken the urgent need to involve children meaningfully in our families for it is the intent of every parent that children grow to be responsible adults and reach their best possible potential.

**Josephine Gitonga**  
**Programme Manager**  
**Parenting in Africa Network (PAN) Secretariat**



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# Children from an Urban Setting



# Amelia

"My name is Amelia Cossa. I am eight years old and I live with my parents in Malhazin. it is a high density neighbourhood in Mozambique. I like it because it has good wide streets. However, it lacks electricity sometimes. I cope well with friends and parents. I talk to my parents about the way I should relate with my friends and relatives.

I am concerned that a large majority of people here do not appreciate our African culture. They prefer western cultures and I am concerned with that. I hate people wearing "tuner babies", a kind of a short, tight clothing displaying their bellies.

My parents like to listen and pay attention to me. Sometimes when I have ideas which are not good, they still listen to me, even if they do not like what I say. Sometimes they punish me. Once I was punished because I broke a glass. Sometimes they tell me not to go out and if I do not obey, I get punished.

There are times when they have text books and other me. They have promised as a bicycle but failed get annoyed but cannot I ask them to keep their several examples of parents their children's needs. For father is a miner working in means that most of the time his family. He hardly relates Other parents who work have attention to their children. that. My sister was once

*"My friend's father is a miner working in South Africa. This means that most of the time he is away from his family. He hardly relates with his children. Other parents who work have also failed to give attention to their children. Parents have a role to teach and give us guidance on what to do and not to do."*



failed to provide school materials for me other things such to get one for me. I do anything about it. promises. I know of who fail to respond to example, my friend's South Africa. This he is away from with his children. also failed to give Parents are like punished because she wet

herself while in church. She was afraid of asking for permission to go to the toilet. My brother was playing in the courtyard and injured his friend and was also punished as a result.

The most important person in my life is my mother because she brought me up. I like both parents because they take good care of me. It is nice to be loved. I like to be with my mother. She comes to fetch me from school and I also like her because she drives a car and takes me along with her to see beautiful places.

However, sometimes I get punished by my mother when I refuse to go to school. She forces me to go. My teachers are good. I learn a lot from them. My physical education teacher teaches me about sports. He tells me the benefits I can get out of being active in sports.

Parents have a role to teach and give us guidance on what to do and not to do. I talk with my father about what I would like to be in future. For example, I would like to be a pilot when I grow up.

I hate it when my father drinks and comes home late. I wish I could go for a walk with him. In future, I would like to see people preventing violence and absolute poverty."



# Patrick

"My name is Patrick Kato. I live in Ghana. I am fourteen years old and in Junior High School three. I am a very calm boy. I don't like being lonely. I like being in the company of friends all the time. I like to play football very much. In future, I want to be a journalist.

Before, I was staying with my grandmother at Santa Maria but I moved in with my parents five years ago at Sowutuom. I was very young then. My grandmother treated me so well that I thought she was my real mother. I discovered that she was not when I went to stay with my parents. Although I enjoyed staying with my grandmother, I didn't feel sad or disappointed when I was leaving. Maybe it was because I was young then. I don't know why I had to go and stay with her and I have never bothered to ask my parents. Maybe my parents didn't have a place to stay or something. I will find out later.

"I feel happy at home and I wish that my father would spend more time with us."



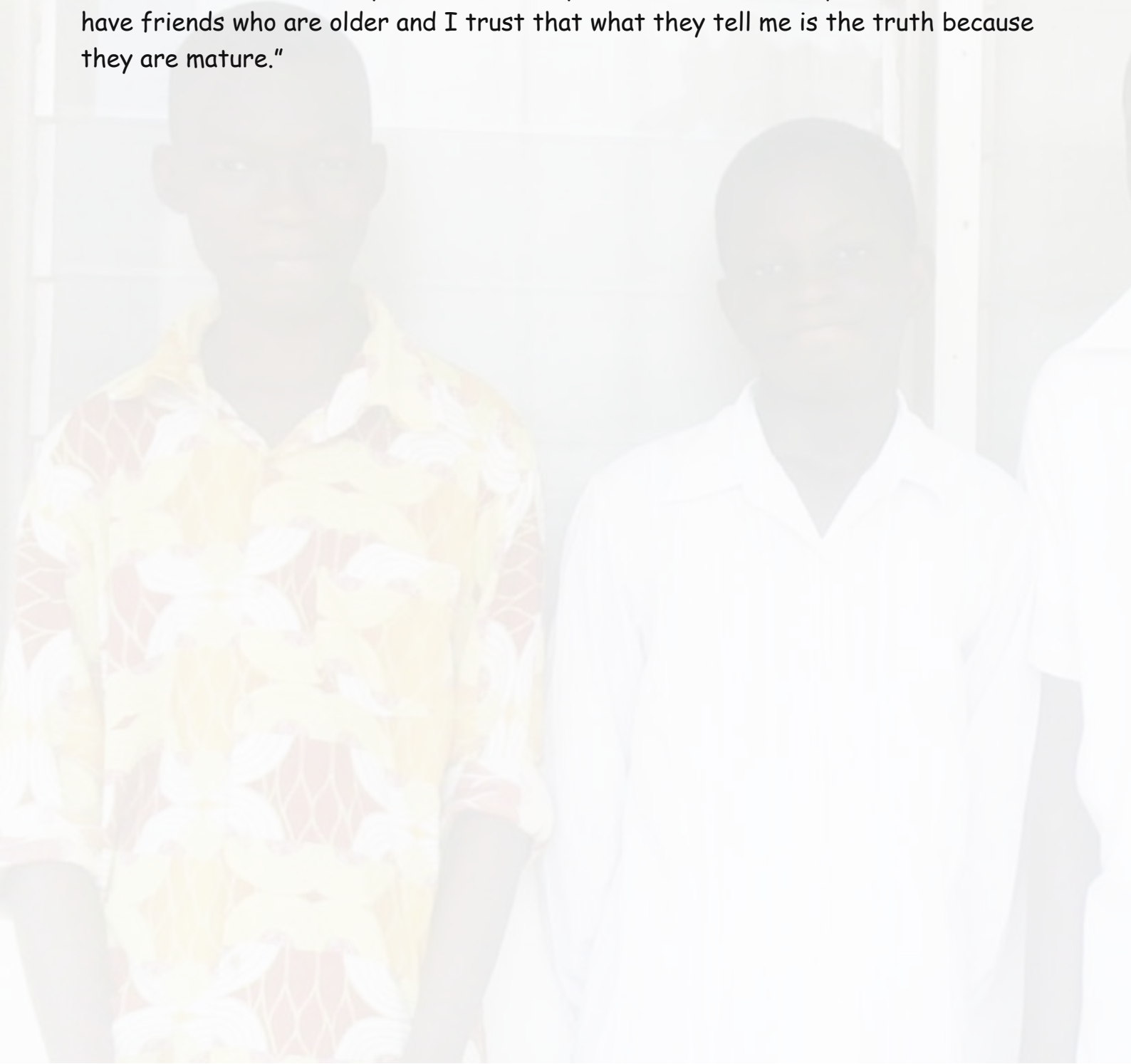
Staying with my parents is different but not bad. I am free with them. My father goes to work very early every morning and comes back late. Most weekends he prefers to rest at home. I share my problems with him whenever he is not asleep.

My father is very strict. Whenever something goes missing in the house he scolds us. He tells us that he will not give us any money until we find it. So he becomes very angry at us.

My parents are good people. They try to solve our problems especially when we are in need. My father is an engineer so he knows a lot about Mathematics and Science. He helps me with my homework when he is free. I feel happy at home and I wish my

father would spend more time with us. My mother is always around but I wish my father too could be around like her. My father gets angry but he does not punish us.

I do not discuss everything with my parents. There are things which I discuss only with my friends. If I discussed certain things with my parents, then they would think that I am a bad boy. So I talk to my older friends, like my elder brother. I have friends who are older and I trust that what they tell me is the truth because they are mature."





# Francis

"My name is Francis Godwin. I am from Ghana. I am eleven years old. I am in class four. I live with my parents and three younger brothers. I am the first born in our family. I take care of my brothers when my parents are not in the house. I like playing football. My dream is to play professional football like Michael Essien so that I can join the senior national team-the Black Stars. I will also get contracts with international clubs that can pay me well. I will then cater for my parents and my brothers.

I relate well with my parents. I like my father very much because sometimes he calls my brothers and I and tells us stories. These are stories about his childhood and the things he did when he was a small boy living in the village. The stories are very interesting and funny. Some of the things my father did when he was younger, we can not do today.

My father doesn't like it when he sends someone and he refuses to go or asks someone to do something and they disobey him. I therefore go where my parents send me. I also do everything they ask me to do, or else I will be punished. My father tells us how his father punished him when he was young. I don't want that kind of treatment, so I must obey my parents.



"All I want is that our house be peaceful. I have never seen my parents fight and pray that peace prevails in our home forever."

I don't like it when my father is angry with me because if he does, he punishes me. At times, I admit that I do wrong. But when I am not aware that I have done wrong, then they should correct me through talking. When they warn me that I will be punished the next time I do wrong, I promise not to do it again.

At times I try telling my parents that I don't like the way they treat me. Then they say they will report me to the police next time I make a mistake. I don't like police stations. They are for bad people. I watch that on television.

When my brothers and I are hungry, my father gives us money to buy bread. He also gives us money to buy food when our mother does not have any.

I remember once when we went to visit our grandmother in the village. It was a good experience. My grandmother was so nice to us. She took us to the farm. There was food everywhere. If we wanted cassava, for example, we would just go to the farm and get plenty of it. Oh, we really enjoyed ourselves!

Sometimes my parents talk to me harshly in a language I don't understand. Then I ask my friends who laugh at me before telling me the meaning of the harsh word. I really get angry. All I want is that our house to be peaceful. I have never seen my parents fight and pray that peace prevails in our home forever."



# Antoinette

"My name is Antoinette Gbordzor from Ghana. I am a girl of thirteen years and in year two at Junior High School. I come from a family of five children; four girls and one boy. I'm the last born and we all live with our parents. I am kind and I like singing a lot. Singing is my talent.

My father is my best friend. He is always there even though he has a busy work schedule. He works with a mining company, but every time he is free we talk and play a lot. I really like him and I like my mother too. I also have friends at school.




When I make a mistake, my father will talk to me but my mother will not even listen to my explanation. She shouts and likes to punish us as well. My father is not the strict type, but we need to ask for permission when leaving the house or doing something.

We hold family meetings when my father is at home. During these meetings, we talk about many things that happen at home. We discuss such things as our behaviour, house cleaning habits, etc. Anyone with a complaint is allowed to raise it during these meetings. When I make a point, we discuss it. If my parents think that it is a good idea, they write it down. One time, I informed them of how my brother had been caning me. We talked about it and since then, he does not cane me anymore.

My father is very important to me because he pays my school fees and provides for my needs. One time, I went to live with my aunt in Togo during the holidays. It was so different living with her. Whenever I was hungry I had to tell her because the people she was living with were so different from those who live with us. They do not prepare and eat their food together the way we do at home. This made me miss home so much.

Sometimes I do not understand my parents or maybe they do not understand me. At times when I complain about things they refuse to listen to me probably thinking I am still a child.



*"Sometimes I do not understand my parents or maybe they do not understand me. At times, when I complain about things, they refuse to listen to me probably thinking I am still a child."*

They sometimes punish me. They say they do not want to 'spare the rod and spoil the child'.

My parents punish us for the slightest mistake that we make. I want them to reduce the caning. I feel that I am now old enough not to be caned. There are times when I want to leave the house. Sometimes, I feel like packing up my things and going away. They should therefore reduce the punishment. All the same, I know my parents do not want me to suffer like they are suffering now. They want me to earn more than they earn and that is why they are strict on me. They give me everything and also take me to school. My only wish is for them to reduce the punishment because I have nowhere else to go if I were to leave the house."

## Efia

"My name is Agnes Efia from Ghana. I am a six year old girl in class one at Adu Gyamfi Memorial School. I am the second born among three sisters. We all stay with my mother. My father doesn't live with us. He stays at Kwashieman but he visits us. I don't know why he doesn't stay with us but I like it when he comes to visit during the weekends. I really enjoy when he comes around. I cannot ask my mother why my father does not stay with us. It is not because I am afraid of her, but I just don't know why I cannot ask her. However, when I ask my mother questions concerning school work or something which I don't understand, she tells me.

When I do something wrong, my mother tells me that she will report me to my class teacher. I would not like to be reported to my teacher because she would think that I am a bad girl. She would punish me if she found out. But, no! I can't tell her I don't like the way she canes me. She is my class teacher and she is huge!



When my mother goes to work, she sends me to my class teacher. After school, I stay with her until my mother picks me up. When I am at her house, my teacher sends me too much. I don't like it.

I wish they would stop punishing me when I do wrong. I want them to talk to me, and just warn me not to repeat the wrong. This is because sometimes I don't even know that I have done wrong. My mother should not report me to my class teacher either. If she does, all my friends would hear of it and they would tease me.

*"I want my parents to talk to me, and just warn me not to repeat mistakes. When I become a mother and my children do wrong, I would talk to them first."*

My mother does not always cane me. I like going to school. Sometimes I go there to play with my friends after school. I want to be a Medical Doctor when I grow up. My mother too says that I should be a Doctor. I would take good care of her, my father, my sisters, my class teacher and every sick person.

When I become a mother and my children do wrong, I will talk to them first. I will tell them not to repeat it. But if they repeat it, then I will punish them. I know that I don't like punishing but if I did not, they would become bad children."



# Teewela

"My name is Gabriel Teewela. I am a fourteen year old boy. I am the second child in our family. I have an elder brother and a younger sister. We live with my parents at Omanjor in Ghana. I have lived with my parents since I was born.

I want to be a scientist when I grow up. I like Science and Mathematics very much. These are the subjects that I enjoy and understand in school. That is why I want to pursue them further, to become a renowned scientist, discovering big things, in Ghana.

At home, we get along well but I talk to my father more compared to my mother. My mother is the type of person that I have to use the word "please" every time I talk to her. If I fail to say "please" then she gets angry and sometimes punishes me.

But my father does not mind at all. That is why it is easier for me to talk to him.



My father and I talk about many things. He asks me about life and school in general. I also ask him about historical facts. My teachers also ask us to do research about seasons or hail stones which my father understands well.

This is the reason why I like asking him questions. I really enjoy spending my time with him.

"Both my parents work and they provide for us at home and school. They would like me to do the same for my children."

Although I get along with my parents, I am still afraid of them, especially my mother. This is because when I forget to use the word "please" while addressing her then I get into trouble. Despite all this, I really love both my parents. They provide me with anything that I ask from them. My father always gives me money to buy my stationery for school. I obey my parents very much.

I am very close to my father. Whenever he is at home, he has time for us. He calls my younger sister and I to tell us stories. Oh, how I love his stories! My elder brother works so he doesn't get to hear the stories. I feel sorry for him.

My mother is the strict and controlling type but not my father. I went to stay with my grandmother during the holidays. My mother would call my grandmother, to ask her how I was doing. My grandmother would tell her that I was doing fine and that I am a good boy. When I am with my grandmother she treats me like a king but when I come home, it is different. One time I tried to complain to my parents about this and my father understood, but, mother said we have to live by her terms.

My mother is too short tempered. Any small mistake makes her angry. I don't like that and I wish she could change. All the same, although the punishment is sometimes severe, I think my parents do not want me to mess up my life and become a bad person in future. They want me, to be a responsible person in life. They do not want me for example, to end up in prison for stealing. Both my parents work and they provide for us at home and at school. They would like me to do the same for my children."

## Osei

"My name is Osei Biney. I am a fifteen year old boy. I live in Sowutuom in Accra, Ghana with my parents and a cousin. This cousin is more like an uncle because he is much older than me.

I recently got admitted at Aburi Mixed Senior High School in the Eastern Region. It is a boarding school and I am supposed to start school this week. But, my parents have said they cannot afford my fees this semester. They have assured me though that I will be going to school next semester. This has made me sad because my friends will be going to school and I will be left at home. However, there is nothing I can do. I am therefore looking forward to next year. I aspire to be an actor when I grow up. I have an American role model but I cannot remember his name.

My father is a sliding glass fitter and my mother is a trader. They both work very hard to pay for my school fees and to provide for my needs. When they say they cannot afford my fees for this term, then I must understand them.

At home we are not very close at all. My father leaves very early for work and comes home late. I am close to my mother because she does her business in front of our house and she is always around.



Whenever my father is in the house, we all become quiet. He is very strict and I am afraid of him because he is short tempered. What we normally do when he is at home is watch movies. He allows us to discuss them as we watch. During such times, he asks us about school. He usually asks whether we have any arrears at school or need to buy any books.



My mother is very important to me because she is always around. At times in the evening when my father is not around, she gives us money to buy bread and sweets. However, my parents do not keep their promises and I would like them to change. Sometimes they ask me to dress up for an outing and then they fail to take me out. They like changing their plans mid-way yet I cannot ask because my father is very short tempered.

Whenever I do a little mistake I get punished. I agree that punishment is one way of correcting me as the saying goes 'spare the rod and spoil the child'. However, it is sometimes too much.

I went to a boarding school for one month when I was in primary school. I did not feel comfortable being away from my parents. I missed my people and my mother's food. I did not see my mother for some time and therefore got bored and became homesick. I later left boarding school and came back home.

*"My idea of an ideal family is where parents are close to their children. Parents should have time to play with their children and to take them for outings. My family presently is not an ideal one to me as my father is too busy."*

There are certain things that are taboo in our home. For instance, I am not allowed to discuss the reproductive system after learning it at school. Discussing such a topic can make them punish me. I can also be called a bad boy. Whenever I want to discuss such topics, I go to my friends. My

grandmother also teaches me about reproductive health because she is such a civil person. Both my grandmother and my friends give me the information I need on such a topic.

My idea of an ideal family is where parents are close to their children. Parents should have time to play with their children and to take them for outings. My family presently is not an ideal one to me as my father is too busy.

My parents, especially my father, do not listen to suggestions. What my father says is always final. My parents treat us the way children were treated in the olden days. When I become a father, I will give my children the best I can. I want to be different from my parents."



## Rita

"My name is Rita Avayivu and I am fourteen years old. We live at Capital Hill in Ghana. I am the first born child in our family. I have three younger sisters and a brother. I am a very quiet person. I have not yet decided on what to be in future but I can be a seamstress, a hairstylist or a nurse. I am so confused. I know that I have to choose one of them but I can only make a choice when I grow older. I am doing my third year at Junior High School.

I am more closer to my mother than to my father. This may be so because we are both women. She has gone through stages that I am going through, and I sometimes ask her how she managed, when she was my age. For instance, whenever I get my menstrual period, I need her most. I always want to learn how to avoid temptations. So, whenever she is around, I talk with her more.



But, I only talk to my father when I need some money. My father is a mason. He builds houses for people. Because of the nature of his work, he doesn't have much free time. He is always busy.

*"I would love to see my father come home early. He leaves very early every morning and returns at around 9 pm. Whenever he comes home early, he goes to church for choir practice. I wish he would stay in the house and talk to us. My father does not have time for us."*

I would love to see my father come home early. He leaves very early every morning and returns at around 9pm. Whenever he comes home early, he goes to church for choir practice. I wish he would stay in the house and talk to us. My father does not have time for us.

My father pays our school fees on time and my mother also works hard. Whenever my father does not have money, my mother provides for us. My mother is my role model.

My father is also very important to me. If it were not for him, I wouldn't be in school. When my father is at home, he helps us to pound fufu which is an important traditional meal made from cassava. But he is very strict and rarely forgives. He punishes us whenever we make mistakes. Whenever my brother sees my father on the road he runs home through the short-cut so that he can be there before my father arrives.

I don't understand how my parents are treating us. My mother also doesn't have much time for us. She comes home late from work. Sometimes when I ask her about something she is too tired to answer.

My mother is the type of a person who doesn't take advice. When she has money, I advise her to keep it safe but she says that I am just a child. When she misplaces the money, she blames us for losing it and we have to help her look for it. She always says she knows what she is doing and that we are just children who do not know anything.

When I want to discuss things, I go to my grandmother. She is kind and talks to us. She likes explaining issues to my siblings and I. We stay with my grandparents during school holidays. They are so kind to us and they do not punish us. They talk to us and advise us when we make mistakes. They also tell us stories when they return from their farm. That is what I wish my parents would do when they come back from work."



## Arnold

"My name is Arnold Agmortey from Ghana. I am twelve years old and in class six. I will be going to Junior High School next year. From there, I will go to Senior High School then to the University. I can't wait to get to the University, My best subject is Mathematics. I want to be a Bank Manager when I grow up. Both my aunt and my sister work in the bank.

I don't have time to talk to my parents because most of the time I am either doing my home work or reading my books. I talk to them when I need school fees or something else. My parents leave the house in the morning and return in the evening. So I don't have much time with them.

My parents provide all my needs and I love them for that. The only thing I don't like about them is that they quarrel me. I don't understand why they like quarreling. I am not sure if complaining about it will make them stop. They are adults and I fear them. My mother is very kind. My father is kind too but not like my mother. That is why I like my mother more.



I don't spend time with my father. He doesn't have time even on weekends. During the weekends, I play with my friends or alone. When I am given homework that I don't understand then I ask my father. I do not tell my parents things that I discuss with my friends. This does not mean that I am afraid of them, no, I am not. It's just that I do not think it is right.

One day, I went to stay with a brother and I played a lot. We played football. We talked about everything which I cannot discuss when I am at home. I had some fun which I don't get to enjoy at home.

"My mother is very kind. My father is kind too, but not like my mother. That is why I like my mother more".

Sometimes it's difficult to understand the attitude of my parents towards us. When they talk to me harshly, I get confused. I wish they could change, so that we can live in peace."

# Johnson

"My name is Johnson Ettah. I am a nine year old boy. I am in class three. I have a small brother and a sister and I am the first born child. I live with my parents at Lomnava. It is a new site in Accra, Ghana. My mother has traveled but she will be back.

I have a good relationship with my father and I can ask him questions anytime. He does not say that I am a child so I should go away. He answers all my questions. My mother, however, says she doesn't know the answers to my questions and that I should ask my father. Last time I asked my father what a dictionary is and he gave me the answer.

My father works but has time for my siblings and I when he is at home. I love him. He is the best because he pays my school fees and buys me books.



I understand that my parents bring us up in the best way that they can. They say that they want the best out of us. They don't want us to become bad children. So when they send me somewhere, I must obey and go. I do everything they ask me to do. Good children obey their parents.

I like the way my mother and father treat me. They are not hard on me unless I do wrong. They sometimes punish me to correct me. This makes me not repeat a mistake although the punishment is so painful.

I want to have only one child when I become a parent. This is because I may not have enough money to raise a large family. I will take my child to school and I will buy her books, toys and dresses. I will also provide for her all other needs.

My parents pay my school fees and I like them for that. Some children at school are sometimes sent away because of lack of school fees. They miss classes and

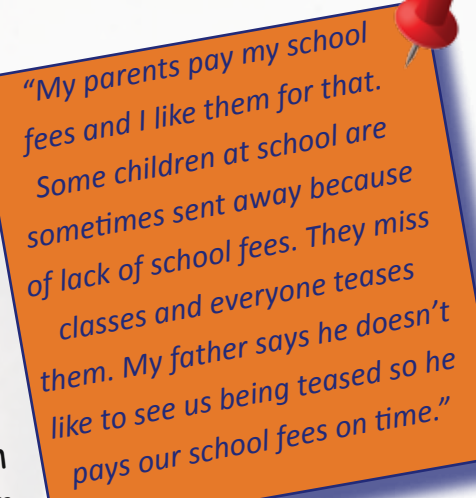


everyone teases them. My father says he doesn't like to see us being teased so he pays our school fees on time.

I don't like it when my parents travel. When they go we stay at our aunt's house. My aunt treats us well but we do not like staying with her. My parents do not tell us where they travel to. They just leave. For instance, my mother traveled last week, but I don't know where she went to and when she will come back. Nobody informs us anything. We don't know what is going on in our house.

I can't ask my parents about this behaviour because I am afraid. My father can punish me for asking. But if I ask him something about school he does not punish me. Sometimes my parents meet my needs and other times they say they do not have money. It is difficult to understand them.

My father allows us to watch news on television. He explains to me everything that I do not understand. I want to be a farmer when I grow up so that I can feed my family and other poor people. I want to be the best farmer of the year when I grow up. I want to have a very big farm to grow a lot of vegetables, maize and yam."



"My parents pay my school fees and I like them for that. Some children at school are sometimes sent away because of lack of school fees. They miss classes and everyone teases them. My father says he doesn't like to see us being teased so he pays our school fees on time."

# Winfred

"My name is Winfred Antwi and I am nine years old. I attend school at Bethel Preparatory School at Sowutuom in Ghana. I come from a family of a father, mother, three daughters and two sons. I am the second born. I talk to my parents when they are in the house. We talk and laugh a lot. I tell them things that happened in school and about my friends. They don't despise my brothers and sisters or I. That is why I am not afraid of them.



My parents don't cane me when I disobey them. They warn me not to repeat the mistake. But when I repeat the mistake, they punish me. Maybe this is because they want to correct me. I am still a child and I need to be corrected. They don't want me to be irresponsible when I grow up.

When I grow up, I would like to have two children. I want to have two girls. I will treat them the way my parents treat me. My parents provide everything that I ask for. So I will also give my children what

they ask for. I will play with them the way my parents play with us. It really feels good and I enjoy it.

However, I will not punish my children because it is very painful. I don't like seeing children crying. I will just talk to my children and ask them to stop doing bad things.

I want to be a lawyer when I finish school because it is a good job and I like it. I don't know what lawyers do, but I know that they go to court. There is no single lawyer in our family, so I will be the first.

We went to stay with my grandmother during one Christmas holiday. She didn't punish us. When we did something bad she called us and to repeat similar mistakes. It was so different from our house because it was

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because it was

Christmas time. We had lots of rice and chicken to eat and we also drank soft drinks. My grandmother told us stories. My parents also buy the same things for us.

I watch television only when I come back from school and have done my homework. It is only then that my mother will allow us to watch cartoons."



## Laura

"My name is Laura. I live in Cameroon and come from a monogamous family of three brothers and two sisters. We live in a five bed-roomed house in an urban setting and our home has electricity and water. My eldest brother is a mechanic and the other is an Information and Communication Technology technician.

I am in high school and my younger sister is in college. My father is a truck driver and my mother a petty trader. My mother stays with us but my father is away from home most of the time. He only comes home occasionally and sends us money often.

I like helping my mother at the marketplace. She sells foodstuffs like garri, beans, plantains and food spices. I help my mother in the evenings after school. Sometimes I help in selling her foodstuffs when she is away.


Occasionally, I help my mother to prepare food at home and to do the laundry. On Saturdays, I clean our house, do the laundry and then spend the whole day at the market place helping her out. My best time with mother is when we are at the market place together. She buys us good food to eat. There are times also when she buys nice dresses or shoes for me. My father sends us some pocket money and other things such as shoes, school bags and dresses. There are times when he sends food items for us to sell. These include onions and garlic grown in the northern parts of the country and are rare in the north-western part of our country. What I don't like about my father is the fact that sometimes he stays away from home for too long. He comes home twice or thrice in a year and when he does, he doesn't stay for more than a week.



Both my parents help me with my school needs. My father pays our school fees and buys our books. My mother buys the food, provides other needs like soap and pays electricity and water bills. My mother sometimes meets some of our school needs when our father does not have money to send at that particular time.

I communicate more with my mother and younger sister. This is because the three of us are together most of the time. We are very close. My brothers are mostly away from home but when they are around the family stays together. I hardly see our father though sometimes I speak with him on phone. My maternal grandmother's home is not far. Therefore, I visit her at least once a week since most of my time is spent helping my mother at the marketplace.

My mother controls and protects me most. Whenever I am not in school, she has to know where I am. She hardly punishes me, but talks to me instead. Sometimes, my elder brother canes me for not cooking food on time. However, whenever this happens, I fight back and if my mother discovers, she denies him food.



*"I would hate to be separated from my family, especially my mother. She guides me a lot and loves me very much. My father loves me a lot too. If I have to be separated from them it should be due to unavoidable circumstances such as going for further education or getting a job in the city when I am older."*

My father is the most important person in my upbringing. He pays my school fees and provides most of my other school needs. However, I would like to be given whatever I ask for in good time. I do not like waiting for too long. I would also like to visit my friends more frequently and be allowed more time to study.

During her childhood, my mother didn't have many nice things that we have today. Many times they had nothing to eat at all. They also didn't have necessities like water and electricity like we have today. Also, their parents didn't know the importance of education. As a result, they didn't take their children to school and were not interested in white-collar jobs.

My parents understand my needs very well and they provide as much as they can. They recently installed a parabolic antenna to enable us watch movies. However, I am not very sure if they understand my feelings as much. I would like them to allow



me more time to visit my friends and to watch movies on television. Most of the time they do not allow me to do this.

I go to a government secondary school. We do not have an infirmary. Whenever I am unwell, my mother takes me to the hospital for consultation.

Everybody has to respect the law, elders and the government. But the government should create more job opportunities for young people. This will assure us that we will get employment after school.

*“When I was young, my aunt used to take care of me whenever I visited her during the holidays. She is very understanding and does not scold people. I don’t visit her much any more because I help my mother. But she still sends me some money to spend. My grandmother also sends me food at home.”*

I don't like being away from my family. I am used to staying with my mother and I hardly go on holidays. I only visit for a few hours and return home.

We have tried to ask our father to come home often but to no avail. Even though he provides money for our fees and other needs, we're not happy with his being away for so long. I would like to do fewer chores at home and the market place. But if my mother insists that I have to be at the market then I have no alternative. It is through her business that we are able to meet some of our financial needs.

I would hate to be separated from my family, especially my mother. She guides me a lot and loves me very much. My father loves me a lot too. If I have to be separated from them it should be due to unavoidable circumstances such as going for further education or getting a job in the city when I am older.

When I was young, my aunt took care of me whenever I visited her during the holidays. She is very understanding and does not scold people. I don't visit her much anymore because I help out my mother. But she still sends me some money to spend. My grandmother also brings me food at home.”

# Young Adults from an Urban Setting





"Most of us come from intact well-to-do families and have attended boarding schools and now university. By and large, we learned to adapt to life on our own and, became more responsible and self-reliant in boarding school. We experienced more freedom and developed strong friendships." Jeanette

## Jeanette

"I am nineteen years old. I was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo and experienced quite a lot of social upheaval. I come from two families because my parents are divorced. However, I was able to keep contact with both parents and their new spouses. My father was an American expatriate. He was away most of the time and so, my mother brought me up. I have three younger sisters. I went to both English and American boarding schools and became quite independent there. I will send my children to boarding school as well but will do more to maintain the relationship with them. I know that some of my friends will not send their children to Boarding School for that reason.

We must find a balance between school and family life. Children should be sent to boarding school later, say, as teenagers when they have developed their own will and not at a young age when family contact will be lost. Children are taken to boarding school because parents want the best out of them although they end up missing their children. Some of us will, for that reason, not send our children away. Like one mother said, "I really lost much when I sent my child away to school". In contrast to other children, when we went to boarding school we were given a lot of freedom and responsibility by our parents.



We are lucky we have not suffered. We have pretty much what we want and have

been relatively spared from the problems related to ethnic violence. We have also been exposed to a lot and understand that you don't choose where you're born and have to do the best with what we and our parents have. Parents are in denial of this

*"We all had parents with traditional gender roles. For example, father being authoritarian and distant and mother being closer and one whom we could share 'everything' with."*



difference that occurred due to the rapid technological changes over the last few years when we were growing up. So we really don't expect to see eye to eye or find a common ground. Although we respect their position, it often does not work for us. We would try to change this and are optimistic about the opportunity for ourselves to do so and for the country as well. We hope to be better communicators and be more open, trusting and accepting of the differences that we will experience with our children."

## Makena

"I am nineteen years old and was born in Nairobi, Kenya. I grew up in a middle-class nuclear family with three other siblings. I attended school at our rural home."



## John

"I am twenty years old. I was born in Nairobi, Kenya in a nuclear family as an only child. I attended boarding school and I describe myself as a somewhat problematic youth both in school and at home. I later settled down and attended university."



## Doreen

"I am nineteen years old and was born in Nairobi, Kenya in a nuclear middle-class, professional family. I attended school at our rural home and I am now at the university."



## Reginah

"I am eighteen years old and grew up in Nairobi, Kenya. I am one of six children from two marriages each having three children. My mother passed away in a motor accident and I was raised up by my father, aunt and stepmother. I went to a boarding school in Nairobi."

"Although my father came from a poor rural background and is not educated, he managed through hard work to educate his sisters and children."



I am grateful for this, as I received top grades in boarding school. I am now in first year at the university. I expect to go into finance and accounting after my graduation."

## Esbon

"I am nineteen years old and I come from Eldoret, Kenya. I have recently had conflict with my father after the ethnic clashes that followed the Post Election Violence in 2007-2008 and which severely affected our family and caused us to lose our property. Sharing

dialogue has proved mutually satisfying and has improved our relationship. I attended a boarding school in Kisumu in Western Kenya."

"The lives of our parents were significantly different. If they did what we do now they would be punished, often severely. We now live in a world of mobile phones and facebook, while they evolved out of traditional village life and values. As always, there is a generation gap."



*With the exception of Esbon and Jeanette the young people felt that they could talk freely with their fathers. Esbon became closer to his father after the ethnic violence at his home town due to a shared trauma. As a result, they both took a counseling course through which they learned to be more open and share experiences. They now do this regularly. Other fathers proved to be less open, and often had the responsibility to "cane" their children as a form of punishment. The boys admitted to being caned but often after having, being teenagers, pushed their parents to the wall.*

*In their parenting they plan not to cane their children but develop a means of talking about difficult things. Although they all come from different parental experiences, they plan to start reasoning with their own children early so that it becomes a custom, and also set boundaries but explain why. They would create time to be together and encourage the fathers to play a parenting role, be open as families and elicit the children's views whenever possible.*



# Child Raised by a Single Parent



## Sarah

"My name is Sara Mathai and I am Kenyan. I am seventeen years old. I was born in Nairobi and raised by my mother who was is single parent. My father and mother divorced when I was nine years after a lot of quarrelling. Since then, he has been out of the picture and has re-married and has other children of his own. I was raised by my mother and I often wonder what it would have been like to grow up with a father. I however, feel that I didn't miss much in my upbringing. I am currently at the university.

I live with my mother and elder sister in a suburb estate in Nairobi. Being a single parent, my mother has brought us up through hard work. We have finished school and are now at the university. Generally, I get along well with our mother but not all the time. The relationship is sometimes unstable primarily because she tells us not to do some things without giving us a clear explanation. I feel she does not understand the world I live in and projects her experiences, fears and hopes onto me.

My sister and I often gang up against mother to get our way. It is unfair but it helps us. As a single parent, she tries to be both a father and mother, a difficult job indeed here in Nairobi, especially with two teenage daughters.

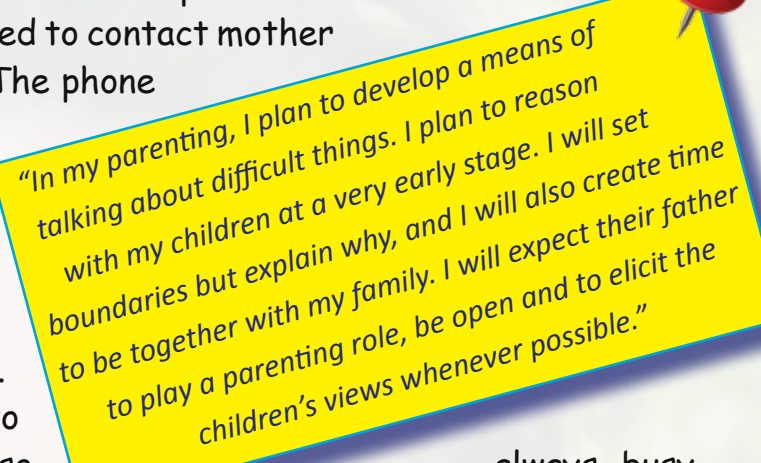
I wonder what it would be like to have both parents. When I was young they took me to swim and we spent Sundays or Saturdays together.

Since they argued a lot, I was happy for my mother when my father left but I missed the sense of togetherness in our family. I know that fathers tend to be harsher and more authoritative. I wonder how it would have been growing up with him in the house. I often ask my friends about it. But, when I hear stories about how controlling fathers can be with daughters, I miss him less. By the way, it is not just fathers who leave their families, I know of many mothers who have abandoned their families.





I have been both at boarding school and at day school. My mother's rule always was, 'do homework first when you get home'. She also provided tutors when I needed help. When away at school, I used to contact mother and my sister through a mobile phone. The phone has changed everything these days. The difference I saw with boarding school was the peer pressure. You somehow begin to experiment. I am the type of person who learns from experience and then decides what is right or wrong. My mother found it difficult to talk to us about sensitive things. She was also so she tried to educate us about sex, HIV/ AIDS and relationships through videos. We appreciate her efforts but didn't watch them, learning instead from our peers at school. All the same, I felt her love and warmth.



"In my parenting, I plan to develop a means of talking about difficult things. I plan to reason with my children at a very early stage. I will set boundaries but explain why, and I will also create time to be together with my family. I will expect their father to play a parenting role, be open and to elicit the children's views whenever possible."

During the days I lived with my mother, things changed. When I become a parent, society will have changed again. For example, I think it may be easier to talk to my children and to be more open. I hope I will be under less financial pressure then.

In my parenting I plan to develop a means of talking about difficult things. I plan to reason with my children at a very early stage. I will set boundaries but explain why, and I will also create time to be together with my family. I will expect their father to play a parenting role, be open and to elicit the children's views whenever possible."



# Children from a Rural Setting



# Lizette

"My name is Lizette. I am from Cameroon. My father is a carpenter although he does not practice it. He sometimes splits firewood for sale and cuts grass in people's farms for money. My parents also rear pigs, near our home for sale. The income that they get from rearing pigs is used for paying our school fees and to buy school books. We rarely eat pork but we occasionally slaughter one for sale and for cooking at home.

At home, I help my mother to prepare food and to keep the house clean. I also help her to do my siblings' laundry. On Saturday, we all go to the farm with mother and we fetch firewood on our way home. I like my mother because she is very hardworking although sometimes she overworks me.

I like preparing food. I also love watching movies on television at home with my mother. She, however, does not approve of my watching movies in the evenings. She therefore sends me away to go and read, or buy something for her. I help in selling my father's firewood when he is not around. Sometimes, he asks me to feed the pigs.

My mother pays all our school fees and provides all our needs. She buys us school books and uniforms. She gets her money from selling pap (a type of flour made from corn). My father hardly has any money and when he has, he gives us very little of it. He spends most of his money on beer.

I communicate more with my younger sisters. My mother is always angry about one thing or the other and we hardly talk. I only talk to her when it is very necessary. My father is hardly at home so we do not talk much either. I spend a lot of time with my mother but she makes sure that I am busy most of the time and I do not like it. Sometimes my mother punishes me by refusing to give me money to spend at school. I think that my mother does not care about how I feel.



My mother is the most important person in my life. I would like to be allowed to spend most of my free time watching movies. I would also like my parents to meet all my school needs and not just a few. They should also allow me to visit my friends and, for them to visit me too. Although they understand my needs and try to provide, I feel unhappy because I am always at home unless I am in school or church. I do not have time for playing.

My mother tells us that her parents and my father's parents did not understand the importance of education. They were ignorant and because of this, she and my father were not educated. She therefore wants us to have the best education. She also says that children who are not punished and made to do chores, grow up to be irresponsible and lazy. To her, parenting has changed. This is because parents have to send their children to school and training to enable them have a successful future.

*"My mother feels that she is doing a lot for us. She believes that she is giving us an opportunity which she herself missed. She also thinks that she is always right and that her decisions should be final and respected."*

I go to a Catholic secondary school for which we leave early. There is an infirmary at the school where we pay for medical insurance. Whenever we are not feeling well, we visit the infirmary for treatment.

Children should respect the law, community elders and the government like everybody else. There should be more teachers in schools and the country should have good roads. If the roads are good, food stuffs will be cheaper because transportation will be easy. People can also do farming as a way of employing themselves.

My father protects the family. He makes sure everybody is in the house by nightfall. He also provides most of the firewood we use for cooking. Although he is supposed to pay our school fees, our mother pays it. Our father does not meet our other school needs either. He does not carry out his responsibilities. Most of his roles are carried out by our mother.

My father's relationship with us is not cordial. He punishes us most of the time when he is drunk. He is hardly at home. Since he does not wake up early, he always complains that we disturb him in the morning. When one of us falls sick and he is informed, he looks for traditional medicine. It is our mother who pays the bill whenever we are taken to the hospital.



I think that my parents do not allow me enough time to relax. I would like to visit my friends more often. I love visiting my aunt and I would like to run fewer errands and do less household chores. I would like to be away from my family when I finish high school so that I can plan for my own time. But for now, I do not want to be separated from my mother.

Any suggestions to improve my parents' ways of parenting will only make the situation worse. My mother feels that she is doing too much for us. She believes that she is giving us an opportunity which she herself missed. She also thinks that she is always right and that her decisions should be final and respected.

I have an aunt who once stayed with us. She was very caring. My paternal grandmother is equally caring. She gives me food and does not quarrel me the way my mother does."

## Yvonne

"My name is Yvonne. I am the fourth born in a family of six children. We live in a seven-roomed house in rural Cameroon. We do not have water or electricity in our home but we fetch water from our neighbour's home. My eldest sister is a hairdresser and lives in town. My second born sister passed away. My two brothers live in the city where they work as casual labourers. They send some money home to my mother from time to time. My father was a farmer. However, he too passed away. I am in high school, thanks to the financial support of my mother and elder sister.

My mother is a farmer and sells surplus farm produce to get money for fees, household needs and for her personal needs. I like helping my mother in the farm. Occasionally, she sends me on errands. Sometimes, she sends me to take food to my grandmother at her house. I love spending time with my mother in the evenings.



I enjoy listening to her stories. We also cook and eat together and sometimes we just discuss issues amongst it ourselves.

I communicate more with my mother and grandmother. My mother controls me too much that she insists on knowing all my friends. She gives me advice whenever we are together. She advises me not to get too close to boys, because I could become pregnant. When I do something wrong, my mother talks to me and corrects me.

My father provided some of our school needs and money for food when he was alive. Now, the most important person in my up-bringing is my mother. She provides everything for me. As a child, I would like to be allowed to spend more time with my friends. It is good to go outdoors sometimes, to meet and play with friends. I would like to do fewer errands. From the stories my mother tells us, she and her siblings had a lot of freedom during their childhood. They were well fed and were hardly asked to help out in the home. She says that they remained playful children for a very long time and were well cared for.



My mother understands my needs. However, she does not like me to stay out doors too long, and I do not like that. It is not fair.

I go to school on weekdays and sometimes a lot of traditional remedies for ordinary ailments. She gives these to me and I hardly go to the hospital. Everyone has to obey elders, respect the law and follow government rules.

on Saturdays. My mother knows stomachache, headache and when I'm sick

*"My mother controls me too much that she insists on knowing all my friends. She gives me advice whenever we are together. She advises me not to get too close to boys because I could become pregnant."*

I would like to have a good job when I finish school. I will choose a good career. I would like to be an actress or a pilot although my mother disagrees. My mother does not like the kind of food that I prefer. She complains when I add too much spices in our food.

I love being at home where I am pampered. Because of this, I don't feel comfortable when I am visiting other people. My mother also does not like me to visit others too long. She is displeased when I wear short dresses, although I know that I look good in them.

I don't think that I can change how I am parented. I have to obey my mother. She meets all my needs like school fees, food and clothing. I have therefore nothing major to complain about. I get some time to relax when I visit my grandmother because she does most of the cooking. At our home, I do most of the household work. Elders and parents are best placed to give advice on good parenting methods."



# Children from Polygamous Families



## Luke

"My name is Luke from Cameroon. I come from a polygamous family in which my father has two wives. My mother, who is the first wife, has five children. The youngest is a three month old boy. We live with our mother in a four-bedroomed house and our father visits occasionally.

I help my mother around the house. I fetch water, clean the home and collect firewood for her. Even though I sleep at my paternal grandmother's place, most of the time I eat at our home. I am however allowed to eat at our grandmothers' house. My best moment with my mother is when we sit and talk. I also like my mother best when she prepares special food for us.

My father provides nearly everything in our home. He pays our school fees and buys our school uniforms and books. My mother works on the farm where she grows our corn. My father buys other types of food. Sometimes, when my father does not have money, my mother sells part of her farm produce to get money for our needs. There are times when we receive food from my grandmother, when ours is finished.



*"I communicate well with my grandmother because we spend a lot of time together. She does not punish me. When I have a misunderstanding with my mother I stay away from her."*

I communicate well with my grandmother because we spend a lot of time together. She does not punish me. When I have a misunderstanding with my mother I stay away from her. I stay in my grandmother's house. In the evening, I visit our neighbours to watch television because we do not have electricity at our home.

My father is the most important person in my upbringing. He provides most of my school needs. When I finish school, he will enrol me in a college.

My parents did not have the opportunity to go to school like we do. The few schools available then were far away. Their parents were poor and could not feed as well as take them to school. My parents therefore think that we are fortunate. During their time, their only hope was to wait to inherit property from their parents .

My parents understand my needs because they provide for me. They however, deny me time to play; time which is equally important in my physical development.

The school which I attend has many strict rules which must be obeyed by all pupils. Teachers are very serious with our learning. I hardly fall

sick but when I am feeling unwell, my father

gives me traditional medicine. This

medicine is good and it makes me

feel better. The government should

the prices of essential foods like rice

the high cost of living for poor people.

reduce

and oil. This will reduce

*"I stay in my grandmother's house. In the evening, I visit our neighbours to watch television because we do not have electricity at our home."*

My father provides food and school fees for us. He comes home most evenings with food for the next day. He plays his roles well even though he does not live with us most of the time. My parents do not see the need for me to watch television and to play. They want me to always work and I don't like it.

I like to visit friends or relatives only for a few days and then return home to be with my parents. I have tried to make my father understand about providing my needs in good time and he does so. He only fails when he does not have money. I also try to make my parents know that I like watching television so that they can create some time for me.

I don't like being away from our home because I don't think that other people would care for me the way my parents do. I want my parents to be together so that they can continue to take care of my younger siblings and I. If my father was to work away from home for some time, that would be alright with me.

My paternal grandmother is very good to me. Sometimes, I stay with her and she hardly scolds me. When she asks me to do something for her, and I obey, she hugs me. But my parents do not."



# Charles

"My name is Charles Ongoma. I am seventeen years old in class seven at Manyore Primary School. I come from Kisoko, Kenya and I am of the Luhya tribe. My father has two wives. I am the fourth of seven children by my mother. My stepmother has four children.

My father was an employee of the Ministry of Local Government but has since retired. My three elder brothers and sisters are all married. My three younger siblings are all boys and are still in school.

My relationship with my parents is good. What I like most with them is their understanding whenever I approach them with an issue. At home, my mother doesn't cope well with my stepmother although children from both homes relate well. As for me, I get attention and support from both my parents.

I don't spend a lot of time with my parents due to the nature of commitments that they both have. My mother spends most of her time selling fish at a nearby market. She has to work because modern life has become very expensive. Despite their busy schedule, I get the protection and affection I need and I feel that both my parents are in control.

I rarely get punished but whenever I am punished I take it positively. I come from a christian family which doesn't engage in traditional rituals.

Our resources at home are not adequate. My mother is the most important person in my life because she is always the first to act whenever I present my needs. I would like my mother and my stepmother to stop quarrelling because this affects us and it can create a rift between us.

However, I know very little about

my parents parenting experiences when they were young though I understand that my mother came from a rich family while my father's family was poor.

*"I would like our home to be more peaceful than it is now. A father's role in parenting is to pay school fees, protect and care for the family. But our father doesn't spend his time with us because most of the time he is not at home. I would like to see my father uniting members of his family."*

My father takes long to act when I present my needs because he is alcoholic and a polygamist. Otherwise, I feel that both my parents understand me and my brothers and sisters. Apart from my parents, our second born sister is also a very important person in my life. She has a job in the city. She sends us money for our family upkeep. Teachers also play a critical role in my life because they educate me.

I would like our home to be more peaceful than it is now. A father's role in parenting is to pay school fees, protect and care for the family. But our father doesn't spend his time with us because most of the time he is not at home. I would like to see my father uniting members of his family.

My mother encourages me. I learn a lot about parenting from her. Our family needs information that can improve co-existence among my parents. My experiences of being away from home are good. I once stayed with my maternal aunt and life was very peaceful there in comparison to our home. Her role and approach to parenting was good compared to that of my parents.

Although, I cannot improve the parenting experiences in our home, the most important thing I can do as a child is to work hard in school so that I can have a better future."

# A Child Parented by a Guardian





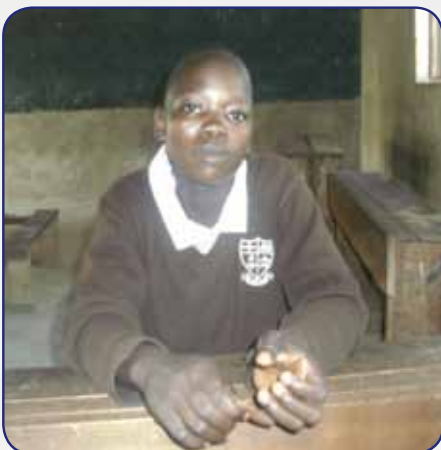
# Lilian

"My name is Lilian Bunyasi from Kenya. I am a fifteen year old Luhya girl. I come from Lwanyange village in Nambale Division of Busia District. I go to Manyole Primary School and I am in class seven.

I come from a polygamous family. My mother died when I was three years old. After her death, my father took another wife to take care of me since I was still young. My stepmother bore, four years later a baby boy who is now in class six.

My stepmother could not conceive another baby after the boy. My father then decided to marry another wife. The third wife has a daughter who is one year old. My father lives with her in Nairobi where he works as a security guard. I stay at home in Lwanyange with my first stepmother and step-brother.

My relationship with my first stepmother is good. Although my father was good and responsible, he changed after marrying the third wife. Whenever my first stepmother calls him asking for assistance, he does not co-operate. Sometimes, he becomes abusive and this has made it difficult for my step-brother and I to continue with schooling.



"My parents (caretakers) encourage me to go to school and learn so that I can become a better person in future."

Generally, my stepmother sees me as a burden, especially now that she doesn't get full support from my father. Communication is therefore not good within our family.

Attention and support from my parents or guardians has not been adequate. The time that they spent with me, at home, when I was a child was not enough. When my father comes to visit, we only talk to him when we have issues. He listens but he does not act when he is approached by my stepmother.


We do not receive the protection we need because my father is rarely home. The affection given is also not adequate. My perception of the punishment meted to us

is not negative because my stepmother doesn't give corporal punishment. However, she quarrels me when I do a mistake and this affects me emotionally.

I am not involved in rituals at home because my stepmother is a born-again christian. We don't have adequate resources especially for clothing and food.

The most important person in my life is my stepmother. She is always concerned with my general well-being. My father takes long to act on issues concerning me. I would like my father to improve his relationship with my stepmother and be helpful when she approaches him with issues affecting us. I would also like my stepmother to stop being harsh on me. I feel that she is always harsh because I am not her biological child. I don't really understand the parenting practice of my parents because I have never really enjoyed it. I believe my father is irresponsible because he lives with the third wife and not with us.

My parents understands some of my needs although I am not sure that they fully understand how I feel. I am always denied the right to study. My aunt also plays a critical role in my life because she provides for me whenever she can. Teachers too play a critical role in my life because they teach me so that I can become a better person in future.



*"The separation between my caretakers has made life more difficult because single parenthood is not easy. When both my parents are united and live with me, they can make life better by working together."*

I would like all people to live in peace and harmony to reduce cases of domestic violence and child abuse. The role of the father is generally to act as head of the family, to provide for his family and guide them. However, our father doesn't spend time with us because he lives in the city and rarely visits our rural home. I also dislike the way my father discriminates against his second wife. He is supposed to be fair and treat both wives equally.

My feeling is that modern day life has changed. Things are not the way they were. Parents are aware that parenting methods have changed but they are not serious about implementing the changes. They don't want to change with the times. It is true that there is a difference of opinion between parents and children (generation gap). Parents and children don't see things the same way, and this is a cause of conflict between them.

When I am away from the family I don't feel comfortable because it is not always easy dealing with strangers. I have tried to work hard both at home and at school to improve my relationship with my parents. Things have not changed for the better, but I am still optimistic. My hope is that my hard work will motivate my parents, especially my father, to be more supportive. In doing so, his relationship with my stepmother will improve.

The separation between my caretakers has made life more difficult because single parenthood is not easy. If my parents were united and lived with me, they would make life better by working together. My parents (caretakers) encourage me to go to school and learn so that I can become a better person in future. My stepmother gives me very helpful information which motivates me to work hard at school and to grow up as a responsible child, and thus improve my relationship with my parents.

All people should be educated on their rights especially the rights of a child as this will enhance good parenting skills. My advice to male parents is that, when they marry an additional wife, they should not neglect the first family."



# Children Living with Disabilities



# Andrew

"My name is Andrew Kato from Uganda. I am 20 years old. I am of the Mukiga by tribe though I also speak Luganda and English. I live with my parents in Bugonga, Entebbe. My parents love, care and support me in the things I do. I love them as they are.

My father works at UPACLED (Uganda Parents of Children with Learning Disability) and my mother has a dry-cleaning shop at Katabi in Entebbe. I talk to my father about my goals in life. I want to learn using the computer. He listens and encourages me to go ahead with my plans.

My mother loves and cares for me. My father, brothers and sisters also care for me. They show me love and support and this makes me feel good. I am the last born child. I feel safe at school. In the past, I would get upset because the teachers never understood me. But after spending some time with me, they now understand me and I am happy. If one stays with me longer, he or she is able to understand how I communicate.



*"I feel safe at school. In the past, I would get upset because the teachers did not understand me but after spending some time with me, they now understand me and I am happy."*

My father has been supportive in my education. He encourages me where I fail. He often says, "Kato, you can do it." And I try and I am happy when I succeed. I always remind my father to take his medicine two times a day and a ripe banana everyday because he is a diabetic.

Parents play a big role in my life and, with their support, I am able to do my chores at home. I bathe myself, change clothes and even wash them up. With extra care

and support I have been able to dress myself up and to pick out the clothes I need to wear. My father buys me clothes which are easy to wear. I have my own room and my father does not worry about me sleeping alone. I feel safe. When I fall sick, my parents take me to the hospital. I love my parents and there is nothing about them that I would want to change.

There was a time when I was naughty, but my father corrected me. Though I was upset, we discussed it and after this I felt better. Parents need to discipline their children so that they can grow up to be responsible people. As for me, I will do my Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) this year. I told my father that after I finish my PLE, my goal is to learn how to use the computer and he assured me of his support. That makes me happy.

My teachers, especially Teacher Robinah, help me at school. I like going outdoors too. I want to thank my parents, brothers, sisters and Teacher Robinah for supporting me with my school work. I don't like to see other people suffer and I want parents to love their children like mine do.

I like watching cartoons on television and listening to music. I study with the help of a tape recorder with Teacher Robinah. I like it when my brothers and sisters visit me at home and bring along their children whom I play with."



# Immaculate

"My name is Immaculate Nansubuga from Uganda. I live with my parents in Abayita Ababiri, Entebbe. I am a Muganda and I mainly speak Luganda and some English. My father works at the airport while my mother is a shopkeeper. I have two brothers and six sisters. I love my parents because they love and take very good care of me. I feel protected by them.

When I am sick, my mother takes me to the hospital. When my parents go to work, I stay at home with a house help whom I assist with the household chores. I am a special child. So I need a lot of care and attention. I also try to do some work when my mother ask me to. It was hard for my siblings to understand me when I was young, but as they grew up with me, they learnt how to communicate with me.

My mother says that I started talking when I was thirteen years old.



My father has supported me by paying my school fees, buying my uniform and all the necessary things that I needed while I was in school. I left school because I experienced difficulty in reading and writing. I then went to a vocational training school where I learnt tailoring. After that, I learnt catering and housekeeping which I really love.

Everyone at home gives me so much attention and they support me in everything I do. They talk to me and involve me in the chores at home. I feel so protected at home from the way they show affection towards me, particularly my mother. I spend more time with her. When I do something wrong she corrects me because she knows that I try, most of the time, not to disobey her. However, she would sometimes reprimand me when I do wrong. I have seen her do this to my siblings too. My mother wants us to be well behaved and disciplined children. I have access to basic needs like my own bedroom. I like it because I arrange it the way I want and that makes me feel happy. I can prepare food for myself when I am hungry, and wash up afterwards."

My mother says that I was so sickly when I was younger and that is why she calls me a special child. She brought me up well. There is nothing that I want to change about my upbringing. I feel good about it. My parents and siblings understand me. Some of my teachers also understood me when I was attending school. Some of them did not understand me and that upset me. I previously worked at Flight Motel but later lost my job. I am now looking for work especially housekeeping because I like it.



*"Everyone at home gives me so much attention and they support me in everything I do. They talk to me and involve me in the chores at home. I feel so protected at home from the way they show affection towards me, particularly my mother."*

I don't know much about the government apart from political campaigns. I see health workers when I am unwell and when my mother takes me to the hospital. They give me medicine which helps me get better.

My father made sure I went to school. Sometimes I miss him when he goes to work at the airport but I know he has to work so that he can provide for us.

The only time I was away from my family was when I went to school or work, but I always came back home afterwards. My other caretakers were my siblings and the househelps. I watch television, listen to the radio and hear stories from other people. But, I am happy and I feel safe at home."

# Child Raised by Foster Parents





## Fidelis

"My name is Fidelis Mero Ringo. I am sixteen years old and in standard six at Mwereni Primary School in Moshi, Tanzania. I live with a foster carer during my long and short school holidays. My foster family is a nuclear one having a father, mother and three children. My family lives in Kibosho in a rural village called Umbwe. It is an area occupied by different clans of the Chagga tribe. Our family is Catholic and we do not practise rituals. However, some community members believe and practise them. such rituals are led by very old people called 'Wazee wa Mila' (Kiswahili name for traditional village elders.)

My mother is responsible for all domestic chores. These include house cleaning and cooking for the family . She is also responsible for the overall parenting of children in the family.

My father works in our banana plantation most of the time. He is also responsible for looking for hay for the cattle. He is also responsible for shaping our behaviour. Sometimes he punishes us when we misbehave. He is the head of the family. My siblings and I have the responsibility of helping mother with household chores like sweeping the compound and cooking. We also help our father to feed the cattle. We are always given time to study.

I have good relations with all members of my family. The foster parents treat me as their own child. I like them because they are very hard-working people. They give me full support whenever I need it. They provide me with basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and healthcare.

In our family, the day starts at 6:30 am. Our mother does her household chores before she leaves for work at 7:30 am. She is a head teacher at a nearby primary school. My father also goes to the farm to start his work. We join him later at the farm when we are not in school. We work together until midday. During school days, our mother comes back home at around 4 pm.

We communicate well at home. When we need something, we ask our mother who then informs our father. Sometimes, we communicate directly with him which is best. That way, one's needs are sorted out faster.

We communicate and spend more time with our father because he is always at home. He does not work in the office like our mother. I like sharing my thoughts and opinions. However, I find it difficult to share with members of my family because I believe I can handle things on my own. I spend most of the time with members of the family during the weekends. They love me and treat me well and I also love them. They protect me and deal with my healthcare issues when needed. Our family has enough food. We have a very big banana plantation and some cattle. We also have a very big and beautiful house, with running tap water and electricity.

*"My foster mother is very calm and understanding. She is always ready to listen to me. She corrects me in a polite way when I make a mistake or do wrong."*



My mother is the most important person in the family. She cares the most for me and is responsible for providing our basic needs. She understands me better than any other member of the family and we talk a lot about my life.

I think that I spend sufficient time with my family. They make me happy and I get peace of mind. However, I think that sometimes I am not given an opportunity to participate in different tasks and in making decisions. I am never asked for my opinion and views regarding anything. My biological mother never gave me attention too, when I was younger. She would yell at me whenever I made a very small mistake. My foster family gives me a lot of attention and I am very happy. My foster mother is very calm and understanding. She is always ready to listen to me. She corrects me in a polite way when I make a mistake or do wrong. I think that my new family behaves like this because they are religious people. They take time to know and understand me.

Neighbours play a big role in my upbringing. They give me advice and also correct me when I make a mistake. Teachers give me knowledge and skills (education) which will help me later in life. Police, government and community leaders teach us morality. They also educate us on how to protect ourselves against crimes, and provide us with security. But our government should create more opportunities for employment. They should also put more effort in promoting children's rights.



I would like the government to train me in business skills. It should also help me access capital or a loan so that I can open up a small business. I would also want to see all children live and get their basic needs through government support. My family should ask me about my personal goals, for example, what I want to do in life or what kind of woman I would like to marry. I would like to search for my extended family members in order to prepare myself for future reintegration with them.

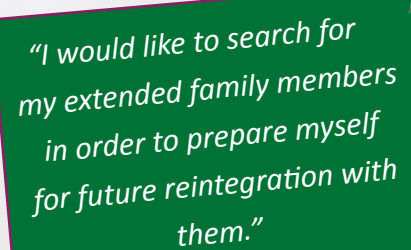
Our father is the head of the family. He takes care of our security. However, sometimes he shares his leadership roles with our mother. He also ensures that the children get proper education and other basic needs. Our father does not have enough time to spend with us because most of the time he works in the farm. He is a very hard-working person and I like him for that. He also teaches us good morals by punishing us when we do wrong. But I don't like it when he gives us corporal punishment or when he drinks alcohol.

Modern life has many positive and negative parenting challenges. This is brought about by the effects of new technology. There are many things such as the television, radio and computer that can harm children. These inventions can teach us good as well as bad things. In the past, our parents were not open to informing us about some issues like death and marriage. Now, they tell us everything openly and we all participate in discussing these issues.

It is very difficult to be away from home as I always miss my family when I am far away from them. I know that they miss me too, when I am away.

Before joining my foster family, I lived with a good samaritan called Mama Mohammed. She loved me and took care of me. She was very polite too and treated me very well. She listened to me and provided food and shelter. She was the only caretaker I depended on for my upbringing. But, unfortunately I later opted for the street life.

I learn from observing my peers and what I read and hear from the media. But, I also listen to what my teachers tell me."



*"I would like to search for my extended family members in order to prepare myself for future reintegration with them."*



# Children Affected by Instability Within their Families



# Thomas

"My name is Thomas Chacha. I am fourteen years old and the second born in our family of two children and a father. I come from the Wasimbiti tribe in Makutano, Sirari village, Mara Province, Tanzania.

My mother died when I was very young and I cannot remember what she looked like. Unfortunately, my younger brother also passed away leaving my elder brother and I. I have no idea where he is now. No one thought of taking me to school so I got employed to look after cattle for a very small salary. My father was a drunkard who would take away my salary and spend it on alcohol.

This made me run away from my employer in 2006 and I came to Mwanza town. I felt so bad seeing my fellow children reading and writing. Despite all this, I did not give up my dream of learning at a school. I therefore enrolled in Nyamagana B in Mwanza. I am now in class five. I am a polite and hard working boy who loves football. In class, I always attain position two to eight, out of fifty six pupils. My aim is to pass my class seven examination.

*"I like someone who talks to me as a way of guiding and correcting me. I hate anybody who punishes me through the cane or any other punishment that would cause me pain or torture."*

I hate stealing and I fear accidents. I do all I can to avoid these. I have seen a fellow pupil being punished (he was burnt up) because he was suspected of stealing a side mirror of a car. I felt very bad and pained by this incident. I do not like bad company.

I understand about circumcision. I would like to be circumcised. When I attained the circumcision age, I was already living in the streets so I missed the chance. Female Genital Mutilation is bad.



I like someone who talks to me as a way of guiding and correcting me. I hate anybody who punishes me through the cane or any other punishment that would cause me pain or torture.

The most important thing in my life is to learn how to read and write. I think that this zeal is my main reason for performing well in my studies and wanting to do well in life.

*"The most important thing in my life is to learn how to read and write. I think that this zeal is my main reason for performing well in studies and wanting to do well in life."*

When I am annoyed, happy or in need of help, I remember that I have no one to share my feelings with. So, I end up not sharing as I feel that no one can understand my feelings. I believe that education is the saviour for

the poor. When I come out of class, I go to the streets to beg for my basic needs, especially food and soap. However, I thank all those who have helped me in my life and in my studies, especially my teachers. I urge parents, guardians and the community in general to be responsible for their children's growth and development. Children have the right to get what is rightfully theirs, to help them in their development. But they also have a responsibility to learn. Children should be serious about life."



# Mgaika

"My name is Mgaika Samweli. I am a girl of fifteen years and an orphan. I live in the streets of Mwanza town in Tanzania. My parents died when I was young. After my mother's death in 2006, I was raised by my maternal grandmother who lived in a house at the top of Bugarika hill in Mwanza. Later, my two siblings and I were taken away to live with our uncle in Musoma town in Mara Province.



Life in Musoma became more difficult than it was in Mwanza. We ate one meal a day, so it was not easy to persevere such a life. I decided that returning to Mwanza was the only solution to my problems. I therefore ran away from Musoma leaving behind my siblings. When I arrived in Mwanza, I did not want to go back to my grandmother's house and I joined other children living in the streets. Life in the streets is far much better compared to living with my grandmother or siblings. I beg and get food from garbage, hotels or from women vendors who sell food.

Due to the suffering I went through at my grandmother's house, I do not wish to go back to my grandmother unless conditions are better. I could go back if someone promised to take me back to school. Otherwise, I will not go back.

My grandmother is old and unable to fulfill my needs, so I told her that I would not be able to live such a life. I thought that it is better to join other street children in order to fend for myself rather than die of hunger at home."

"I do not wish to go back to my grandmother unless conditions are better. I could go back if someone promised to take me back to school."

# Child Raised by Grandparents



# Kemigisha

"My name is Kemigisha Rotra. I am twelve years old and in class five. I come from Bunono village in Wakiso District, central Uganda. I live with my grandparents. I am of the Mutooro tribe.

There are eight other members of our family, that is, three younger female cousins, two uncles, an aunt and my grandparents. I have been under the care of my grandparents since 1999, when my mother died. I was one year old then. I don't have a biological brother or sister. My grandparents have to take care of all of us (six children) as we are still pursuing our education.

I relate well with my grandparents and I like them very much for they are kind. They encourage me and grandmother tells me interesting stories about her childhood. We talk freely at home and I do not fear my grandparents at all. We talk about my personal life and they advise me. For example, they asked me to inform them the day I start my menstrual period.

I get the attention and support that I need from my grandparents. They provide most of the things I need and I am very grateful to them for taking care of me since my mother died. My grandparents own a shop. During the week, I am busy at school and my grandparents stay at the shop. During weekends, they open up the shop in the morning and we spend time together in the afternoons.

*"I get the attention and support that I need from my grandparents. They provide most of the things I need and I am very grateful to them for taking care of me since my mother died."*

My grandparents love me and have told me to inform them of any problem which I may face. They take control of everything and provide the protection we need. We have sufficient access to basic needs and I thank God very much for that. They punish me when I do wrong. Grandfather punishes me when I refuse chores but his punishment is not severe. I like

to do house my grandmother very much for the great love she has shown me. Even when I do wrong, she corrects me but she does not cane me.



I think that teachers, healthcare workers, law enforcers, community elders and the government play a critical role in bringing up children. My teachers, especially, play an important role in my life. I want to be a lawyer in future and they educate me that I can achieve my goals.

However, I would like to see justice done in my community. I also wouldn't like to see children living in the streets. Parents should not abandon or mistreat their children. Children should be loved, made to feel happy and be cared for. Parents should not sacrifice their children for money or any other gain. Since the death of my mother, my father has not been very supportive. I feel that he should pay my school fees



and provide other needs and that we should spend time together. But, I spend most of the time with my grandparents. I find life very difficult when I am away from my grandparents and I miss them. I am comfortable with them and I would not want them to change.

I think that children should be corrected when they do wrong, but they should not be caned. However, if they steal, they should be disciplined because if not, they will grow up to be immoral adults and this is bad for our country.

My grandparents and I watch the news together. I see parents and caretakers burn their children as a form of punishment. I also see parents who offer their children as ritual sacrifices and I feel very bad about it. The bad incidences I see and hear have helped me realize that I am blessed with good grandparents and every day, I am happy with them."

# Life on the Streets



## Street Families

### Wycleff

"I am from Shamakhokho, Sireri in Western Province, Kenya. I have been in the streets for five years. I collect used cartons which I sell at two shillings (USD 0.025) per kilogramme. I am married with two children named Evelyn and Peter. At the moment, they live with my wife at my rural home."

### Otieno

"I am from Siaya in Nyanza Province, Kenya. I came to Eldoret after facing many problems at our rural home. My brother and I decided to come to Eldoret town to look for work. I have four children who live at our rural home in Siaya. My wife ran away and is on the streets too. She roams around everywhere and right now I have no idea where she is."

### Girl with baby

"My brother and I came to Eldoret from Lodwar in 1994 when our mother died. We are Kenyans. I am the firstborn. My little brother is a herdsboy at Soy in Budalangi. My main problem is how to take my brother and myself to school. I live and sleep under a bridge. I don't have any bedding but a white woman provides some clothing for my baby."





# Children Visiting a Drop-in Shelter

## Duncan

"My name is Duncan, and I live in Kenya. I am 17 years old. I like playing football. My favourite team is Arsenal. I miss my parents although they would overwork and deny me food. They never sent me to school although my sisters and brothers went to school. I therefore decided to run away and now I am on the streets. I even doubt that they are my real parents. However, I wish they had sent me to school. But now I am glad that I am in school. Life at the shelter is much better compared to life at home. The chores I do here are few and I relax and get some time to study.

When I become a parent, I would like my children to have a better life. I would like to get a good job so that my children can have a reason to smile. As a parent, I would be strict. I will not let them out of the compound in order to protect them from peer pressure. I do not think that being strict on children is unfair but I know that some peer pressure is bad and can cause them to form bad habits which are sometimes hard to stop. If my children misbehave, I would find other ways of punishing them but not through caning.

Sniffing glue or living in the streets is not a good life for children. They should be cared for, taken to school and their needs provided. Feeding children is important because lack of food made me run away from home.

I have forgiven my mother for caning me, when I lived with her. However, I still feel the pain and remember the pangs of hunger. At the drop-in shelter at Tumaini Centre, I get food and I am happy. However, we have less freedom of movement. The rules are strict and everything is scheduled. But the rules are good for us and we have to comply. They are meant to guide us in school. There is time for class, time to shower and time to eat."



## Frankline

"I am fourteen years old and I live at Hill School in Kenya. I like football. My favourite team is Chelsea. I ran away from home because of severe punishment and the hunger that I faced. It was my own decision to come to the streets and not my mother's.



My parents are separated. My mother works in Eldoret while my father lives in our rural home. My father would punish me severely. Since I hardly got food to eat at home, I decided to move to the streets to look for food. We are five siblings and I am the youngest. My elder brothers and sisters do not live at home. They do not care about me either. I collect scrap metal for sale.

I will probably be off the streets some day and have a family of my own. If that happens, I will make sure that my children have a better life. I will take them to school to get education and provide them with basic needs. I will not allow them to go to the streets. I know the dangers of living in the streets. I will not allow them to sniff glue and live a miserable life either. I will look for a good job that will enable me to provide for them."

## John

"I am a fourteen year old boy. I come from Kitale in Kenya. My favourite game is football. I came to the streets of Eldoret town in 2007 because I was often punished. My mother is an alcoholic so she would cane me a lot whenever she was drunk. She drinks all the time because she is a brewer in Kitale. Since she was busy and drunk most of the time, I had to cook the meals. Whenever I was late to prepare the food because I was playing or doing something else, she would punish me. I decided to go to the streets. I collect and sell scrap metal to get money for food.





I want a good life. I want to take good care of my children in future. I would give them good education and good food. I will never allow them to go to the streets."

## Alice

"I am a fourteen year old Kenyan girl. I live in the streets. I came to the street because of lack of food at home. I would come to town in the morning and go back home in the evening. However, I now stay with my uncle at the Hill School. I don't know where my parents are but I think my mother could be in our rural village in Shamakoko. I have never met my father although I am told that he is still alive. My mother remarried but they later separated after a quarrel with my stepfather. She packed her belongings; left and never returned. She however knows that I am in Eldoret.

I spend the nights on the streets but it is not safe. Sometimes, we are chased by other street children the whole night. One therefore has to be alert all the time. The problems we face can force one to do evil things. I now hope to get a good education and a safe shelter.

In the future, I want my children to live a different life from mine. I want them to go to better schools, live a happy life, have a car, and I will to support them fully."

## Engine

"I am a thirteen year old Kenyan boy. I came to the streets when my mother became sick and died. She suffered from TB for a long time. My father re-married and my stepmother mistreated me. She took her own children to school, neglecting me. I have a younger brother whom I left at home. I have never gone back.

I ran away from home because my stepmother would punish me severely. One day, my stepmother found me playing with my friends in the field and punished me while my friends watched. She then sent me to the river to fetch water. She followed and punished me again, injuring my head. I still have the scar.



I ran away to Kapsabet town. There, I met some street boys who were planning to go to Eldoret and I decided to join them. I have been on the streets for one year. Life on the street is not good at all. There are times when we miss food, and other times we get punished by people. We also fight amongst ourselves.

If I become a parent, I would like to give my children a better life. I also want to work hard and help street children. I will tell them how difficult my life was on the streets."

## Stephen

"I am a ten year old boy. I came to the streets in 2008 during the post-election violence in Kenya. We went to a certain church to seek refuge and spent the night there. Since I could not find my mother the following morning, I decided to stay in the church. There were other people there too. One day, we were told to vacate the church since the violence was over. I then met a boy called Kelvin who was our neighbour at Huruma. Kelvin asked if I could accompany him to the market in town to collect oranges. There, at the

"When I become a parent, I would like my children to have a better life. I would like to get a good job so that my children can have a reason to smile."

"As a parent, I will be so strict. I will not let them out of the compound in order to protect them from peer pressure."

market, we lost each other and since I could not recall where my home was, I decided to stay in town. I made a lot of friends in the course of my stay on the streets and this is how I became a street boy."

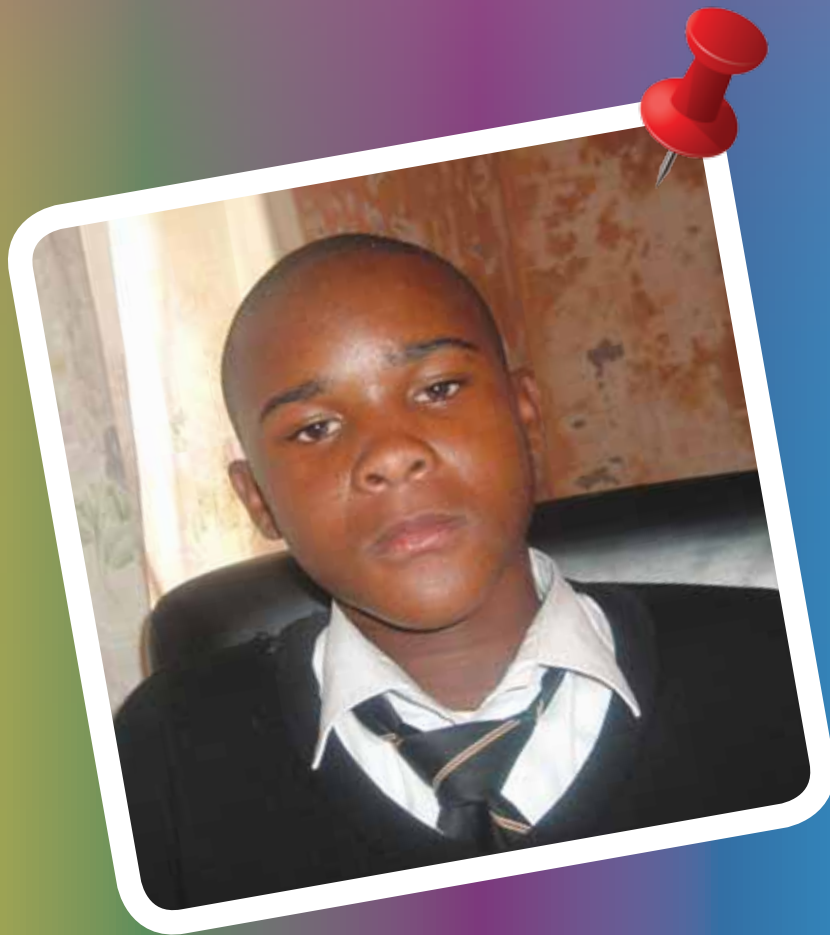
## Josphat

"I am a fourteen year old Kenyan boy. I come from Lugari where I lived with my mother. I do not know my dad but I know his name. I attended school at home, but later on my mother could not pay my school fees. She therefore took me to my uncle's home in Eldoret so that he could educate me. My uncle was a mason then. But whenever I asked him about my schooling he would yell at me saying that he did

not have money. In spite of telling me this, he could still afford to buy meat for his family. I therefore decided to run away from his house to the streets. I don't think both my uncle and my mother know where I am.

The children whom I started schooling with are far ahead of me. I just want to go back to school since life on the street is hard and not good. I would love to see my children lead a happy life, feel loved and live in peace. If I will not have a child of my own then I will adopt one."

# Child Raised by Teenage Parents





## Siyabonga

"My name is Siyabonga Skosana from South Africa. I am fifteen years old. I live with my father, mother, grandfather and my two sisters: Aluta, aged four and Zoe who is now ten months old. My grandfather lives in a granny flat (a separate, small pensioner's flat) in our backyard.

We are a sociable Xhosa family. We get along with our neighbours and enjoy inviting them to our home for important family functions. At home, we speak mainly IsiXhosa and sometimes English. I also learn Afrikaans at school. My parents were both born in the Western Cape. I have lived here all my life. We moved from nearby Gugulethu to Nyanga, four years ago. Both my parents work and my grandfather, who lives with us, also has a job. My sisters attend a day care centre and either of my parents picks them up from there every day.

My father and mother were school-going teenagers aged nineteen and seventeen years, respectively, when my mother got pregnant. Both had to leave school despite their need to further their education. However, they managed to further their education later in their lives. My mother says she knew very little about pregnancy and child-rearing when she became pregnant.

My role at home is to clean the yard and the toilet. Sometimes I don't feel like doing the cleaning but I do it anyway. Both areas must be kept clean in case visitors come by. I sometimes have to dress up my sisters. When I get home from school, I help to clean up the house. Sometimes, I collect my sisters from the day care centre and when we get home I feed them. I also take care of them when my parents are away. This, however is very challenging because they sometimes do not listen to me.

I go to my aunt when I need help and she always listens to me. Her name is Hazel. She also gives me some money whenever I am in need of it. This happens mostly when my mother does not have money for extra clothes like trousers or jerseys and takkies. These are fashionable clothes and I feel good having them so that I can dress up like my friends. My aunt understands this.

My parents understand me. But there are times when my peers fight me and I get cross and angry. My father then says, "Go and fight back." But my mother just says, "Whooo, this one is angry!" I take this as her way of opposing my father's advice that I should fight back. I also tell them that I am short-tempered so I don't want to get into a fight with my peers.



My parents have never caned me. They just shout at me and say that I am very naughty! I think that this is their way of disciplining me much. They also pinch me, especially my grandfather. But this doesn't really bother me much. Both my father and grandfather are very quiet people. They don't talk a lot but they show me a lot of love. My grandfather buys us meat. The men leave the disciplining to my mother.

I enjoy having a young mother because she is able to do everything for me. Whenever I ask for a chocolate, she always buys me some. When my grandparents visit, she treats us with food and juice and always welcomes my friends. Even though my parents are not church-goers, I go to the Roman Catholic Church.

Although my parents got me when they were still very young, I would not like to be a teenage parent. I

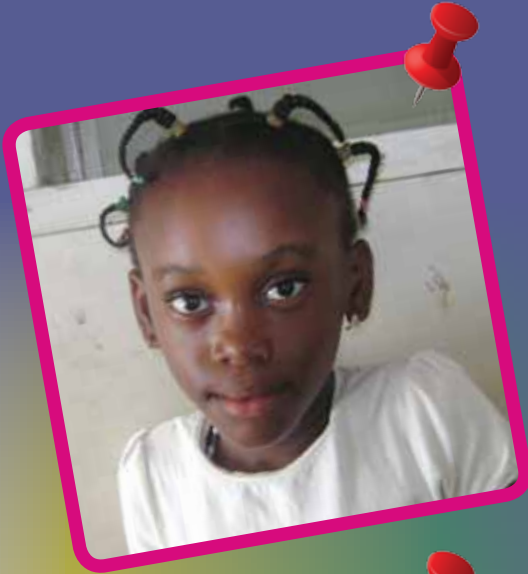
came to learn that it is difficult to take care of children through taking care of my sisters and cousin. I am quite young. I wouldn't like it. I have not completed school yet, as I am in Grade nine and I still want to further my studies.

I want to be a policeman and I want to help people. I like hip-hop and house music. I also want to be a producer. I also want to be a song writer. I try to write music though right now my computer's hard drive needs to be fixed. My father will give me money to have it fixed, even though he does not know much about computers."

*"Although my parents had me when they were still very young, I would not like to be a teenage parent. I came to learn that it is difficult to take care of children through taking care of my sisters and cousin. I am quite young. I wouldn't like it. I have not completed school as I am still in Grade nine and I still want to further my studies."*



# APPENDIX





## What the children say

- △ "I understand that my parents bring us up in the best way they can. They say that they want the best out of us. They don't want us to become bad children. So when they send me somewhere, I must obey and go. I do everything they ask me to do. Good children obey their parents " **Johnson**
- △ "My mother found it difficult to talk to us about sensitive things. She was also always busy so she tried to educate us about sex, HIV/AIDS and relationships through videos. We appreciate her efforts but didn't watch them, learning instead from our peers at school. All the same, I felt her love and warmth." **Sarah**
- △ "I don't like being away from our home because I don't think that other people would care for me the way my parents do. I want my parents to be together so that they can continue to take care of my younger siblings and I. If my father was to work away from home for some time, that would be alright with me." **Luke**
- △ "All people should be educated on their rights especially the rights of a child as this will enhance good parenting skills. My advice to male parents is that, when they marry an additional wife, they should not neglect the first family." **Lilian**
- △ " Parents need to discipline their children so that they can grow up to be responsible people." **Andrew**
- △ "I would want to see all children live and get their basic needs through government support." **Fidelis**
- △ "Children have the right to get what is rightfully theirs to help them in their development. But they also have a responsibility to learn. Children should be serious about life." **Thomas**

- △ *Corporal punishment:* "Children should be corrected when they do wrong, but they should not be caned. However, if they steal, they should be disciplined because if they are not, they will grow up to be immoral adults and this is bad for our country." **Kemigisha**
- △ "Sniffing glue or living in the streets is not a good life for children. They should be cared for, taken to school and their needs provided. Feeding children is important because lack of food made me run away from home." **Duncan**
- △ "I want a good life. I want to take good care of my children in future. I would give them good food and educate them. I will never allow them to go to the streets." **John**







**PARENTING IN AFRICA NETWORK**  
*for the Ultimate Protection of Children*







*Parenting in Africa: The Voices of African Children* gives children from various backgrounds and contexts a platform to express their views on parenting. They boldly talk about their expectations and wishes from their caregivers, and how they would wish to parent their own children someday. The various narratives presented confirm the need for caregivers to recognize the importance of child participation in the family.

Although parents and caregivers are wholly responsible to ensure that children grow, acquire character, responsibility and respect, the manner in which they raise and relate to them leaves a lasting impact on the direction that the children's lives take. Parents and indeed any person having parenting responsibility needs to remember that children have experiences, views and concerns regarding the issues and challenges they face every day. Giving them the support and space to talk without fear is important in imparting them with the skills necessary to face the world with confidence.

The book is an interesting read and offers parents and caregivers a glimpse into children's thoughts, feelings and experiences that is rarely visible. It also contributes some valuable highlights that are important in shaping parenting education programmes to be more responsive to the needs of children in Africa today.

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