



**empower**

educating Africa's orphans  
and vulnerable children

**2009**  
media kit



educating Africa's orphans and vulnerable children

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*"In 2004 I had completed primary school and desperately wanted to attend high school. I worked at a tea plantation, but could not save enough to pay for school fees. The Empower Campaign answered my call for help and now I am attending high school, working toward a career in ecotourism."*

*Mirembe Richard*

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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*"I am determined to get an education so I won't be forced to marry early. The Empower Campaign answered my call for help in 2004 and now I am attending school and working toward becoming a journalist.."*

*Nyangoma Violet*

## THE EMPOWER CAMPAIGN

The Empower Campaign (Empower) is dedicated to educating Africa's orphans and vulnerable children. Empower works with community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private and public schools in Africa to empower children and strengthen communities through education. Empower is a project of EDUCATE Foundation, Inc., a federally recognized 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, based in Athens, Ohio, USA.

The Empower acronym stands for:

(Em) **P**roviding **O**rchans and **V**ulnerable Children **W**ith **E**ducational **R**esources

### The need

By 2010 there will be 25 million orphans in Africa. Many of these orphans will grow up without an opportunity to acquire an education, explore their potential and create their own future. They will never know these opportunities because the cost of an education is completely out of reach for them.

### An example from one Sub-Saharan Country: Uganda

- 50% of Uganda's population is under the age of 18.
- 1 out of every 5 children in Uganda is an orphan.
- The orphan rate is expected to double by 2010.
- An orphan or vulnerable child is 50% less likely to attend school than a child with two parents.

### Why focus on educating orphans and vulnerable children?

- Schools provide a structured environment where orphans and vulnerable children learn they are not alone.
- Schools provide children with a safe environment, the emotional support and supervision of adults, and the opportunity to learn how to interact with other children and develop social networks.
- School is where children learn the facts about HIV/AIDS and how to care for themselves, which is especially crucial for child headed households.



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*"All I wanted was to be able to attend school, but I couldn't afford it. The Empower Campaign answered my call for help in 2004 and now I am attending school and working toward becoming a doctor one day."*

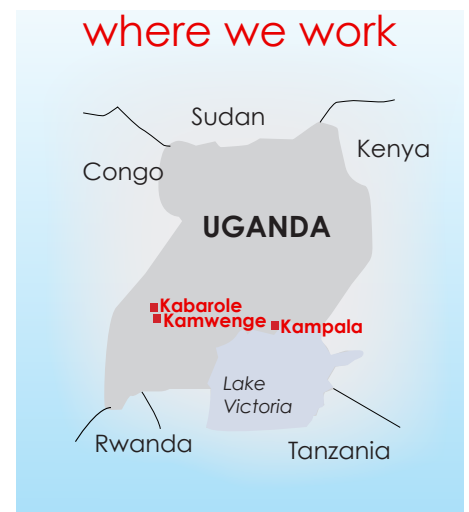
*Muhebwa Richard*

## PROJECT HISTORY

In 2004, EDUCATE Foundation Inc.'s President, Andria Sherrow, went to Uganda to complete her Master's degree fieldwork on education in rural Africa. After a couple of weeks as a volunteer teacher at a village primary school, Andria met a boy standing alone in the middle of the village road. His pants and shirt were severely torn, and he wasn't wearing any shoes. In broken English the boy said, "Help me, I have no parents."

Andria took the boy by the hand and they went to the village primary school together, where the teachers confirmed his story. His name was Muhebwa Richard and his parents had died in 2001 from AIDS. He didn't have a single living relative left in the village and was left to care for himself. Richard was 12 years old. Richard's situation inspired Andria to investigate the orphan situation in the village. Trained as an anthropologist, Andria interviewed single mothers and caregivers that had taken in orphans and asked them about how they were caring for them, with which they unanimously replied, "We can help feed them, but we can't afford to send them to school. Please help us educate them."

The interviews prompted many meetings at the grassroots level and ideas from these meetings came together for a project to help educate the orphans and vulnerable children living in villages surrounding Kibale National Park, Kabarole District, Uganda. The Empower Campaign has since expanded to include projects in Kamwenge and Kampala districts.





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*"My mother is HIV positive and struggles to raise my 5 siblings and I. Because our family has so little I could not go to high school. The Empower Campaign answered my call for help and now I am attending school and working toward becoming a doctor."*

*Kaitarima Ronald*

### **PROJECT HISTORY continued...**

After returning to the U.S., Andria decided to start The Empower Campaign project by creating EDUCATE Foundation, Inc. (EDUCATE) and begin fundraising for Empower. EDUCATE is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing access to education and educational resources to women, children and families living in vulnerable or distressed regions of the world. EDUCATE was formally incorporated on May 16, 2006 and approved as a 501 (c) (3) organization on December 19, 2006. Andria is currently the Assistant Director of the Institute for the African Child at Ohio University and the Executive Director of EDUCATE Foundation, Inc. and The Empower Campaign.

In 2009 The Empower Campaign included two new projects in Kamwenge and Kampala districts.

### **WHAT WE DO**

Uganda's Universal Primary Education (UPE), began in 1996. The Ugandan government pays the primary school fees for the children, which cover the salaries of the teachers and minimal upkeep for the school. The government does not pay for educational materials; socks, shoes, work books, pens, pencils, a mathematics set or the required uniforms that children must wear to attend school.

### **Helping educate orphans and vulnerable children**

In practice, the UPE program is not universal. Orphans and vulnerable children are restricted from attending class because they and their caregivers often do not have the financial capability to purchase the necessary educational materials; uniform, socks, shoes, work books, pens, pencils, and a mathematics set that each child needs. Empower helps orphans and vulnerable children meet this need by providing them with these educational materials -- keeping children off of the streets, away from child labor or prostitution and in school.



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## WHAT WE DO continued...

### Improving schools

We understand that in order to improve academic outcomes for orphans and vulnerable children, their schools must also be structurally sound, have functioning latrines, a source for clean water and a kitchen for providing school lunches. These simple necessities are commonly unmet in rural Africa.

- Empower builds and reconstructs debilitated schools.
- We also help provide school lunch programs.

To meet the educational need of orphans and vulnerable children, Empower partners with communities that are actively seeking a solution to their community's growing orphan rate. The most common solution communities suggest to Empower is to invest in their local economies and to help educate the orphans and vulnerable children in the community. We have addressed these requests by purchasing crafts and jewelry made by local women's cooperatives and using the proceeds from selling the crafts and jewelry at Empower fundraising events to support educational needs.

### Helping communities help themselves

The women's cooperatives make the jewelry and crafts from recycled paper or locally produced materials. Most of the members of the women's cooperatives are the caretakers of the orphans and vulnerable children we assist through Empower. We purchase the women's' crafts, fair trade, and use proceeds from our fundraising events to support access to education, school building projects and school lunch programs in their communities. By purchasing crafts from women's cooperatives we are demonstrating our commitment to helping the communities help themselves.

Our purchases provide women with incomes they would otherwise not have, allowing them to buy food, clothing and other necessary household items for their families. Unfortunately, many of the women in the cooperatives are HIV positive.

*"Because of The Empower Campaign buying my crafts, I am able to provide medicines for myself and my family."*

*Kemigisa Josephine*



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*"I am determined to get an education and have been walking 15 miles to and from school every day for the past four years. The Empower Campaign answered my call for help and now I can stay at school and study for a career in public service."*

*Ayebazibwe Francis*

## **WHAT WE DO continued...**

### **Our efforts in the U.S.**

We sell the jewelry and crafts at Empower fundraising events in the U.S. and online at [store.empowercampaign.org](http://store.empowercampaign.org). Empower has a network of student volunteer organizations that host fundraising events at Ohio University, Ohio State University, University of Miami at Ohio and University of Dayton. Empower is launching a nation-wide invitation for other student organizations to join The Empower Campaign, Fall 2009.

Proceeds from our fundraising events are to date our only source of operating income.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- We are serving 7 primary schools with educational materials for their orphaned and vulnerable students. The total enrollment for these schools is over 2,000 children.
- We partner with 5 women's cooperatives in different rural regions of Uganda. For 2 of these cooperatives, we facilitated their handcraft and jewelry training sessions. Handcraft and jewelry making is the only source of income for these women. Many are HIV positive and use their income to get access to medication. We sell jewelry and crafts at Empower fundraising events in the U.S.
- We are partnering with other Africa based community organizations that are building and reconstructing debilitated schools. Our goal for 2009 is to build Bigodi Parents Progressive Primary School. The school is currently constructed out of poles and tin sheet roofing. There are no floors or walls.
- The Empower Campaign OU Chapter internship program provides university students with the opportunity to learn how to manage a nonprofit organization. Students apply each winter term for a position as an intern. Students go through a rigorous application and selection process. Accepted students are placed in positions that relate to their major.



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### **SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE:**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Empower Campaign makes first appearance at ComFest to fundraise for African children**

Proceeds of Empower jewelry sales will benefit AIDS orphans in Uganda

COLUMBUS – A new student group at Ohio State University aims to make a big impact at ComFest 2009 with the sale of handmade jewelry from Uganda.

The Empower Campaign is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating AIDS orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda. Empower student organizations operate at Ohio University, OSU, Miami of Ohio and the University of Dayton, and the organization is growing.

Each Empower student chapter sells handmade jewelry that has been purchased from women's cooperatives in Uganda at a fair-trade price. The chapters sell the jewelry at events around the state, and the proceeds are sent back to Uganda. So far, Empower student jewelry sales have helped educate thousands of kids, build schools, initiate lunch programs and bring hope to communities half a world away.

The Empower Campaign was born from a simple request. In 2004, Empower founder and Executive Director Andria Sherrow traveled to Uganda to complete her Masters degree fieldwork on education in rural Africa. After a few weeks volunteering at a local school, Sherrow met a boy standing in the road wearing tattered clothes. In broken English, he said, "Please help me, I have no parents."

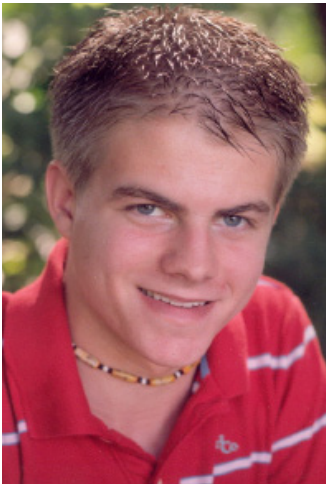
Sherrow walked with the boy, Muhebwa Richard, to the village where she learned that both of his parents had died from AIDS and the 12-year-old had no living relatives to care for him. Sherrow conducted interviews with women in the village and with their help, she formed the Empower Campaign, a project of the international non-profit EDUCATE Foundation, that she directs.

Now Empower is coming to Columbus' largest alternative, progressive community event. Jewelry, purses and headbands will be available with prices ranging from \$5 to \$45. For every \$50 raised, Empower can send a child to school in Uganda for a year.

Even though this is Empower's first appearance at ComFest, the product and cause fit perfectly with the festival's goals, and this year's theme "handmade and homegrown". All of the jewelry is made from recycled paper by women's cooperatives in Uganda and is advertised, marketed and sold by college students dedicated to this progressive cause.



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*"The Empower Campaign allows me to simply give to others, what others have given me: the gift of an education. Nothing inspires me more than empowering children in Africa to fulfill their true potential. I sincerely believe an education can change one person, and one person can change the world."*

*Brandon Croke  
President 2008-2009,  
Ohio University Chapter  
of The Empower  
Campaign*

## **EVENTS & FUNDRAISERS**

- Jewelry sales on college campuses, at churches & gatherings
- Online jewelry sales at [store.empowercampaign.org](http://store.empowercampaign.org)
- Run to Empower 5K marathons at locations across the U.S.
- University Empower Campaign Student Organizations
- Rock to Empower benefit concerts
- Empower Awareness events
- Pennies to Empower fundraisers at elementary - high schools
- Personal Empower Cause Pages through [firstgiving.com](http://firstgiving.com)
- Corporate sponsorships for school construction
- Individual child sponsorships