

# EDDOBOOZI

Voice of the Retrak children



**Retrak**  
inspiring street children

## Our Mission Statement

Through its work Retrak enables street children in Africa to have a real alternative to life on the street. We currently have projects in Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya.

Spring / Summer 2011

**RECYCLE FOR RETRAK**  
Recycle your Mobiles, Inkjets, Laser or Toner Cartridges and raise £££'s for Retrak at the same time! It's really easy - contact us for details!

## GIVING US A VOICE

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to introduce the latest edition of Eddoboozi to you, in which we are sharing some of the things Retrak has been doing over the past few months, and giving you an idea of our focus going forwards.

As street children we are encouraged that Retrak is working closely this year with other NGOs and advocacy groups to bring the issues we face into the minds of those who aren't aware of our situation. We want to see an end to the very idea of children living on the street - we want Retrak to not be needed. In the past few months Retrak have been in Geneva at the UN Human Rights Council, at Westminster with an All Party Parliamentary Group and utilising social media to make sure we are doing everything we can to make this happen.

At the UNHRC discussion on street children in March 2011, street child specialist, friend of Retrak and UNHRC panellist, Patrick Shanahan, reminded the UN member states that working to find a solution to the situation facing street children requires an approach which focuses on us, the children.

Retrak could not agree more, and are working to ensure our voice, the voice of seemingly forgotten and neglected children, can be heard. We want to make sure the rights of children are upheld, and that governments, the UN and influential leaders are clear about the need to listen to us and find a way to bring an end to children living on the street.

"In moving from a charity based to rights based approach, you give the child back their voice.

Dare to listen to that voice and you will find the beginnings of solutions."

Fr Patrick Shanahan

We hope you enjoy Eddoboozi.

With greetings from the children at Retrak.

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# News from the Field



Every month, on average, we're placing 9 children back into their families – after lots of counselling, support and working with their parents to help them.

We follow up all of the children who have been placed back home too. Last month, Prossy, one of the Ugandan social workers visited 14 children, including Jimmy\* who, aged 16 went back to live with his grandmother before Christmas. He is now making bricks to sell, and in just 6 months has built a new house for himself and his grandmother to live in. Well done Jimmy!

When children stay at our drop in centres, or at our half way home, Tudabujja, we offer an amazing 6 month "catch up" education course, to enable them to return to formal school once back in their communities. When the Retrak social workers visit the children's new teachers in the communities, they often return with the fantastic news that the children are top of the class!

Although more than 90% of the children on the streets of Kampala are boys, we are now referring girls who come to the Retrak clinic and drop in centre, to a partner organisation. We have also placed our first girl in emergency foster care. We are now looking to expand our work further with girls – an extremely exciting development.

**From our Uganda Country Director, Isabel Turner, in Kampala, Uganda**

\*Names changed to protect child's identity.

**"I am ashamed of this life, we do not like it but we have no choice."  
Iskinder, 13, Ethiopia**



I'm not sure if Werku\* really noticed the new paintwork or not as he timidly knocked on the new Retrak drop-in centre gate in Addis Ababa... All he knew so far was that, behind this big green door, were people who had come out to visit him on the street, who listened to his story and who said they would try and help him find his grandparents. On the street for 2 years after he lost both parents to HIV when he was 11, this was the first break he had had in a very long time.

Werku is one of the many children met by our street outreach team who has come to our newly renovated (by the Greater Manchester Police in November 2010 no less!) drop-in centre in Addis Ababa. This new site means we can take in more children than ever before and offer them safety and hope, and work with them to find a permanent alternative to life on the street.

An exciting development for us in 2011 is the establishment of a new Foster Care program. Our new social worker Emenet will head up this work. Learning from the experience of Retrak in Uganda, we are at the forefront of bringing Foster Care to Ethiopia - where it is still a very new concept. We are excited that soon we will be able to offer suitable children a new, safe and secure family in which to grow and develop and reach their potential!

**From our Ethiopia Country Director, Maggie Crewes, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**"I now have someone I can call father and mother, I have a family where I am accepted"  
Joseph, 15, (In Retrak Foster care) Uganda**

## Behind the Scenes of M&E

In response to our strategic priorities to become a trusted source of expertise and research on street children issues in order to influence the wider debate on street children we have been building a new monitoring and evaluation system. This development will fulfil our aspiration to design services for children that are of the highest quality. It also means we ensure ensuring that we document the work that we do with each child and family in order to learn more about why and how the programmes we run are successful in getting children back to their families and communities.

Our commended 2 year follow up of children we work with enables us to ensure each child's individual journey with Retrak from the streets back into family or community is documented and accurately monitored. Not only does our M&E system make our statistics and success stories easy to observe, divulge and learn from, but we are able to understand the needs of each particular child based on an accurate understanding of their life before and during their time with Retrak.

We are pleased to be able to ascertain from our M&E system, for example, that of the children who were reintegrated and followed up in Uganda during last year, 91% were still living with a family member. Retrak is making a lasting difference to these children's lives.

During 2011 we hope to take even more steps forward. We will continue to learn from the data we are gathering and explore further into key issues, especially around family reintegration and strengthening, through evaluations and research involving the children and families Retrak is working with. We'll also be launching our brand new purpose built child database which will mean that Retrak can store children's and families' information in one central place, allowing us to pull together information, locally and internationally, in a way that has never been possible before!

**From our Regional Development Office, Jo Wakia, in our Nairobi office, Kenya.**

# Steve Jones and Helen Skelton visit Retrak Uganda



Retrak's relationship with high profile 'celebs' has continued to grow over the past year, including a visit in November 2010 from TV presenter Steve Jones and Blue Peter presenter Helen Skelton.

Steve and Helen were at Retrak's Kampala project to see how our Comic Relief grant is helping to "turn street lives into new lives" (as Steve put it). They spent time with our staff in Kampala, helping with street outreach, playing games with the street children at the drop in centre and visiting our half way home, Tudabujja. Helen and Steve described the situation of the children we work with as "desperately sad", and the impact Retrak is having couldn't be clearer. Our partnership with Comic Relief has allowed these celebrities and the wider public (through their TV exposure) to see how real the issue of street children is, and how important it is for us to make a stand. A huge thanks to Helen and Steve for their continued support.



12th April 2011 was the first ever International Day for Street Children, which Retrak and other street child NGOs have been promoting over the past few months to help raise awareness of the situation facing many children across the world.

At Retrak we used the day to speak on behalf of the children we work with, telling our supporters and social media followers a number of comments and messages the street children we work with asked us to share.

Here are a few of the things the children wanted us to tell you about the situation they face:

**"We are not trouble makers, just ordinary kids, but we are despised because we are on the street and this takes away our joy."** Amare, 14, Ethiopia

**"People come and write about our story and just go and never come back. We used to think they are going to help us when they were writing our story, but it has never happened."** Wesesa (girl), 14, Ethiopia

**"I am on the street because of adults, it's not my fault; I am not the problem."** Lebna, 15, Ethiopia

(Find us on Facebook (Retrak Charity) or Twitter (Retrak\_Charity) to read the full list of messages.)

We asked for responses from our supporters and a handful of high profile individuals to underline the issues raised by the day and to take responses to the children in Africa to ensure they know we are listening to what they say. Here are some of those responses:

**"If you had three wishes, what would you wish for? A balloon... Toffee... Clothes."** - Response from Joseph (age 4), a street boy in Accra, Ghana.

**Street children are just that - children. Don't ever forget it if you want to work for them. They are not 'isms' nor 'problems' nor delinquents. They are children. They have the right to be where they are. They have the right to an adult they can trust. They are not 'Development Commodities'. They are children.**" Father Patrick Shanahan, President and Founding Member, Street Invest & panelist at the March 2011 UNHRC Street Child discussions.



## Retrak has the Professor X-Factor!

Actor James McAvoy has supported Retrak since 2005 when he met the staff and children from Retrak's Kampala project whilst filming *The Last King of Scotland*. This year the star of *X-Men: First Class* (released on 2nd June) joined Retrak for the 469ft abseil at Guys Hospital Tower London on 27th March, even tackling the drop facing forwards! James also 'roped in' a number of his actor friends for the adventure, including National Theatre member Ross Waiton, *Midsomer Murders* hero John Hopkins, and *Green Wing* actor Oliver Chris who was the first of the volunteers to take the plunge facing forwards; "Abseiling the tallest hospital building in the world was a massive thrill, especially facing forwards! Knowing that our participation is changing lives of children in Africa made it all the more amazing. A brilliant day and a brilliant charity."

Thanks to James and friends, as well as all our other brilliant abseil participants, for helping us have a great day in London and raise over £12,000!

**"Street Children are usually the victims of adult neglect, abuse and irresponsibility and not the problem. A just and caring society cannot ignore the plight of such vulnerable young people."** Mick Pease, Director Substitute Families for Abandoned Children and Retrak Trustee.

To add your voice to the responses, email: [lucy.derges@retrak.org](mailto:lucy.derges@retrak.org)



To join the Retrak Running team contact [Anna.Richardson@retrak.org](mailto:Anna.Richardson@retrak.org) for more information!





# UN Focus on Street Children

We were delighted to have representatives from Retrak (Diarmuid Ó Néill, CEO, and John Wallace, International Partnerships Director) in Geneva for the 16th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on 9th March.

For the first time ever the council has been discussing the situation faced by children working and/or living on the streets. Retrak is working with Consortium for Street Children and a handful of other CSC member NGOs to be able to contribute to these discussions and advise a way forward.

Emphasis was placed on what measures can be taken to protect and promote the rights of children living and working on the street by addressing the root causes and

ensuring they can be placed in environments where they can grow and develop positively.

**"The street children discussion on 9th March was a landmark day at the UN Human Rights Council but we - UN agencies, NGO's & States - need to work together to ensure it isn't a day that becomes a footnote in history."**  
Diarmuid Ó Néill, Retrak CEO

Retrak and its' partner NGOs were excited to attend the resulting All Party Parliamentary Group on Street Children in Westminster on Thursday 31st March. Alongside our colleagues from partner NGOs, Retrak heard from the representatives of foreign governments their responses to the UNHRC meeting in Geneva. Various Ambassadors spoke about national initiatives on street children, their positive outcomes and challenges, as well as responding to questions about the rights of street children.

## Fundraising News

As always our supporters and fundraising team have been working hard to support Retrak's work. With cake sales, birthday donations, gigs, sponsored events, youth group events, ceilidh's, bacon butties in Church ("Retrak rashers"! ) and non-uniform days. Thank you to everyone who has raised funds.

Some highlights over the past few months include:

### Way of the Lakes

Manchester band 'Way of the Lakes' have been busy fundraising for Retrak this year, with several gigs under their belt already - including the February launch of their new EP 'As the Night Draws In', proceeds of which will be donated to Retrak. (More at wayofthelakes.com)



### Guy's Abseil

Huge thanks to all the participants of the huge Guy's Hospital Tower abseil on March 28th, who each bravely abseiled 469 feet. Special thanks to Barry Norton and the Over The Edge Adventures (OTEA.co.uk) team for looking after everyone so brilliantly, and to James McAvoy, Oliver Chris and our actor friends who took part with us on the day.



### Greater Manchester Police 2011

Events and fundraising are already under way by our team of Greater Manchester Police Volunteers, the 24 GMP officers and staff have already raised over £9,500!

### Social Media

In line with our emphasis this year on making the public, Government and UN aware of the issue of street children, Retrak has increased our presence in social media.

Please find us on Twitter and Facebook for instant news, updates, words from the staff and children in Africa and to help us effectively promote awareness and campaigns.

(Facebook; Retrak Charity; Twitter; Retrak\_Charity).



### Japanese Embassy

Retrak is thrilled to announce a new partnership and support from the Australian Government Aid Program, and equally delighted to receive support from the Japanese Embassy in Ethiopia for our work in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



### Daniel Noble

Daniel Noble, a Grade 12 (Year 13) student at the International School of Uganda in Kampala promised to shave his hair off for Retrak, if he was sponsored more than 1 million shillings... On Thursday March 17th with pledges of 1,800,000 Ugandan Shillings (about £470) - he went from long dread locks to nothing!



## Retrak and GMP in 2011

After the huge success of the partnership of Retrak with Greater Manchester Police last year (which raised over £45,000) we are proud to be partnering again in 2011.

As with last year, it's a diverse group spanning many disciplines and skill-sets within the police force - from a counter-terrorism detective to a 999 call-handler - and they'll be bringing their skills to bear both directly upon our projects when they fly out to Africa in November, and also in an array of inventive fund-raising activities throughout the year.

Unlike their 2010 predecessors, this group of volunteers will be split into two teams. The first team of 12 will travel to Uganda's capital, Kampala - the site of Retrak's first-ever project. There they will help to build a playground for the boys living in our half-way-home cottages at Tudabujja, just outside the city, as well as skill-sharing with the Ugandan Police Force.

The second team of 12 will follow the footsteps of the 2010 volunteers by travelling to our Addis Ababa project in Ethiopia, where they will help to turn our old drop-in centre into emergency accommodation as well as meeting the Retrak pioneers helping to create Ethiopia's first programme of foster care.