

Thank you so much for joining us in praying for the children we meet daily who, often through no fault of their own, find themselves living their lives on the street – excluded from life in family and community.

In this issue of prayer e-news, we hear about Retrak's partner VVC in Zimbabwe and the work they are doing to help children move from a life filled with trauma and vulnerability on the streets, into a sustainable future within family and community. We also hear about the great work our outreach teams are doing in Uganda and some of the challenges they face. Both of these accounts have reminded me of how Jesus meets all of us where we are – at our point of need – and then sets us free, restoring us to life in all its fullness – the way God intended it to be.

Every blessing – Mike Chesterton – Retrak's Church Partnerships Manager.

A bed and changed lives - Zimbabwe

Our newest partner, VVC in Zimbabwe have been working hard to incorporate Retrak's reintegration model into the work that they do with children living on the streets of Harare, Zimbabwe's capital city. VVC run a structured day programme for these children but because of local regulations, are not allowed to accommodate children overnight.



To help build deeper relationships with some of the children, VVC recently took 15 children on a weekend camp away from Harare. Pauline Madigo, the project coordinator reported "This gave the children an opportunity to experience life outside of the street environment, away from the dangers, fear and abuse of the streets."

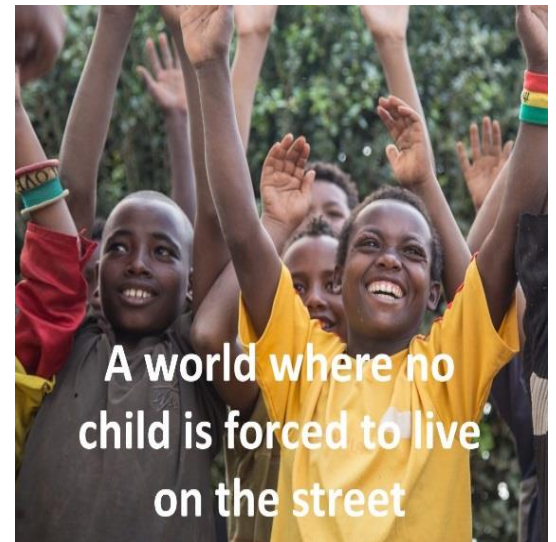
Staff were able to engage more intensively with the children. Each child was given an opportunity to share their life story and their challenges. Children took part in one to one counselling sessions, games, recreation, drama, food, and got to sleep on REAL BEDS!!

Staff were also able to share how God welcomes back, with open, loving, and forgiving arms, all his prodigals who want to turn back to Him. Pauline reflected, "For many this was the first time to hear this Gospel story."

Many of these children have been living on the street for over 3 years. Experiencing life away from the routine of that life on the streets, led to 2 children deciding they would like to return home. Many of the others are more seriously considering that possibility.

Please pray:

- for VVC as they finalise activities and follow up the children who have returned home during this first 12 months;
- that our donor would see the real difference VVC is making in the lives of these children and young people and re-commit to a 2nd year of funding;
- for God to be at work to transform the hearts of these young people, many of who have lost hope in the things of this world and feel they are not worthy to receive God's love and forgiveness;



- for Pauline and her team. It is not easy working in Zimbabwe and there are constant challenges. Pray that God would open up doors to facilitate and grow this work, and encourage the staff team.

Born into a vulnerable life - Uganda

Priyanka Zacharias, Retrak's Partnerships and Grants Manager spent some time at the end of January working with our centres and staff in Uganda. Priyanka writes, "When I was in Uganda, I accompanied our team on a night outreach visit to some of the known 'hot spots' in Kampala where many of the children we reach out to gather."

Priyanka highlights that there were many things they saw that night which need our prayer. "We saw scores of children, boys and girls, on the streets" says Priyanka "Each one trying to find the safest place they could to settle down for the night and get some rest."

"Many of the children know our outreach workers and so were happy to approach us and chat. As they did, we noticed that one girl was still sat on the makeshift bed that she had made out of whatever cardboard she could find. On the bed was a tiny little bundle that was moving slightly – she had a little 2-month old baby. The reality of the dangers that children face on the streets every day is horrific and not the start in life that any child should have to experience.



Please pray:

- for the continuous safety and wellbeing of the children
Retrak's staff meet each night, some of whom make a choice to stay on the street – a choice that as a child rights organisation, Retrak has to respect. Please also pray that they may eventually come to realise that, by accessing the services we offer, they can move away from the streets and on to a better future for themselves.
- for respite from the devastating result of the drought affecting most of the East African countries. This is having a knock on effect and Retrak's outreach teams are seeing more children on the streets – especially younger ones.
- for Retrak's outreach teams – they are incredible at meeting children in their 'life spaces'. They gain a huge amount of respect and trust from the children. However, sometimes the situations that they are in can be dangerous. Please pray for their safety while doing this important work.
- for Retrak's FRAPS (Family Reintegration and Prevention of Separation project) team. Following a fruitful end of year reflection workshop, they start the second year of the project and also have a new FRAPS project manager. Please thank God for their success in year one and pray for these good results to continue. Please also pray that the new project manager quickly settles into this role.

Thank you so much for the part you play in realizing our vision of "A world where no child is forced to live on the street". It is a bold vision but with God's grace, Retrak's proven model of care, and your support, it's a reality we are already moving towards.



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