

PEPFAR/NPI

Sustainable reintegration of orphans and vulnerable children into family and community life in Uganda and Ethiopia

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II. Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CSI	Child Status Index
FY11	US government fiscal year 2011 (1st October 2010 to 30th September 2011)
GER	Great Ethiopian Run
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGA	Income Generating Activity
ISU	International School of Uganda
IT	Information Technology
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (Ugandan Ministry responsible for OVC affairs)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOWCYA	Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (Ethiopian Ministry responsible for OVC affairs)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NuPITA	John Snow International project NuPITA providing technical support for Retrak
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
SCNN	Street Children NGO Network (Ugandan network)
SKI	Street Kids International
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing

III. Executive Summary

Retrak is a faith based NGO working with OVC on the street in Africa and committed to providing each child with an individual route back to family and community, through reunification with their own relatives or through placement with local foster care families and with support to build the capacity of these families. During this 3-year project Retrak's goal in Uganda and Ethiopia was to further strengthen and grow these programs in both countries (to reach over 1000 OVC and enable 360 to be reintegrated) and to improve organizational capacity and strengthen partnerships.

During the project period Retrak in Uganda and Ethiopia were able to:

- provide assistance to over 2900 OVC living on the streets of Kampala and Addis Ababa;
- enable over 450 OVC to leave the streets and return to family and community life;
- follow-up and support over 400 OVC in their families; and
- support over 2100 care-givers of OVC to gain skills in caring and supporting their families.

Retrak reached out to children on the streets through regular street visits and open activities, building relationships and gaining their trust. The children were invited to drop-in centers to receive health, education, shelter and psychosocial services, enabling them to be safer on the streets and begin transitioning away from life on the streets. In Uganda those most in need of support were invited to stay at a halfway home to allow a more intensive preparation. After tracing family, children were either reintegrated with their biological families or placed into foster care. Retrak provided family strengthening services to care-givers to improve their ability to care for their family.

During the project period, the size of programs increased from 857 beneficiaries in 6 months of FY09 to, 2380 beneficiaries in FY10, to 2713 beneficiaries in 12 months of FY11. In addition Retrak's organizational capacity greatly improved. Capacity assessments undertaken with NuPITA indicated that Retrak improved in all areas assessed, overall improving from 2.1 in year 1 to 3.6 out of 4 by the end of the project period.

Retrak has been able to build fruitful partnerships to increase the impact of its work, with governmental and non-governmental bodies. This in

cluded contributing to the development of national policies and guidelines through being key members of ministerial working groups, and partnering with other local NGOs to provide services to OVC, build capacity and undertake research.

Retrak was invited to present its work at several international forums and hosted a family care for street children for over 100 practitioners and policy makers. Retrak's Standard Operating Procedures on family reintegration has been developed a training curriculum for internal and external use, including in aiding the process of deinstitutionalization in Ethiopia.

IV. Overview

Program Overview

Retrak is a faith based NGO working with OVC on the street in Africa and committed to providing each child with an individual route back to family and community. Retrak's project in Uganda has been operating since 1994 and the lessons learnt have been successfully transferred to a new project in Ethiopia, which opened in June 2007. Both Retrak projects aim to enable OVC living on the streets to return to a stable and caring family setting. This is achieved through reunification with their own relatives or through placement with local foster care families and with support to build the capacity of these families to meet the needs of their children.

During this 3-year project Retrak's goal through PEPFAR was to further strengthen and grow these programs in both countries in order to provide short-term quality care and protection to OVC on the street and to strengthen families to meet the needs of these OVC in the long-term.

The 3 year strategic objectives were:

1. enable over 1000 OVC to begin the transition from street life through meeting their psychosocial, health and education needs;
2. enable over 360 OVC to be reintegrated into a sustainable family context;
3. build the capacity of Retrak projects to improve quality and efficiency; and
4. strengthen partnerships, both locally and internationally.

Project activities

Retrak's work with OVC begins on the streets, entering the spaces where children live in order to build trusting relationships. In both Uganda and Ethiopia regular street visits are held in areas of Kampala and Addis Ababa which are known to be favored by street children. In addition, in Uganda regular football training sessions, open clinics and meals, and peer HIV education allow children to get to know Retrak in a safe and unthreatening way.

Once children are familiar with Retrak they are invited to join in regular activities at the drop-in centers – safe spaces which are easily accessible from the streets. Here children begin to deal with their past experiences at home and on the streets. Since every child is different a range of activities are offered, including: counseling, sports, health care, night shelter, catch-up education, and HIV awareness and life-skills classes. In Uganda some children, who are assessed to need a more intensive period of preparation, move on to a halfway home where they can continue to receive a holistic package of services.

Children move back to family and community life mainly through reintegration with their own family. Care-givers are offered guidance and counseling and some basic support to help their child settle in and return to formal education or a suitable vocational training.

When it is not in a child's best interest to return them to their own family, an alternative may be placement with a local foster family. Retrak works through community organizations to identify possible carers, who are then screened and trained before they can be matched with a child. Intensive counseling and preparation ensures that both child and carers are ready for placement and their new family life ahead.

For both biological and foster families, follow-up visits with further counseling, training and income generation support ensure that the child and his/her siblings receive adequate care and attention, and that the care-givers and other household members have sufficient support. The goal is to build the capacity of the family to provide for all their own needs in the long-term without Retrak's intervention.

A key goal of this project was to build Retrak's capacity to ensure that children and their families receive the best quality care. Retrak staff members access regular training opportunities and policies and procedures ensure the quality and efficiency of interventions and the organization as a whole.

Retrak works with local and international, governmental and non-governmental partners to advocate for street children and to share good practice.

Summary of Results and Successes

During the project period Retrak in Uganda and Ethiopia was able to:

- provide assistance to over 2900 OVC living on the streets of Kampala and Addis Ababa;
- enable over 450 OVC to leave the streets and return to family and community life;
- follow-up and support over 400 OVC in their families; and
- support over 2100 care-givers of OVC to gain skills in caring and supporting their families.

Overall, in line with PEPFAR's goals:

- 2994 OVC were provided with a minimum of one care service;
- 1108 OVC received shelter and care;
- 1754 OVC received health care;
- 1440 OVC received education and vocational training;
- 853 OVC received protection and legal aid services;
- 2239 OVC received psychosocial support; and
- 97 OVC received economic strengthening services.

Nearly all of these results represent a 200% or more achievement of the original targets set.

The children who Retrak worked with showed an improvement in their well-being from the time they lived on the street to when they were placed into the care of families, and continued to improve after 1 year of living at home. 75% of children placed in the care of their own families remained at home after 6 months.

In addition Retrak's organizational capacity improved. The size of programs increased from 857 beneficiaries in 6 months of FY09 to, 2380 beneficiaries in FY10, to 2713 beneficiaries in 12 months of FY11. Many policies, procedures and quality standards were developed and staff members were trained in order to improve the quality of service delivery. Improvements were made in policy and staff capacity in the areas of management, finance, HR, M&E, donor relations and compliance. When reflecting back on this project Retrak staff all agreed that this increased capacity, in terms of numbers of children helped and organizational professionalism, was the most significant achievement of this project.

Retrak has been able to build fruitful partnerships to increase the impact of its work, with governmental and non-governmental bodies. In Uganda, Retrak was invited to become a member of the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development's OVC Technical Working Group which has recently developed the next National Strategic Program Plan of Interventions for OVC. In collaboration with UNICEF and two other NGOs, Retrak has been at the forefront of the formation of a Foster Care Working Group in Addis Ababa, with the aim of working with and strengthening the Ethiopian government's establishment of foster care. Retrak is also a member of the Kampala Street Children NGO Network which aims to ease referrals and ensure that good practice is shared with minimal duplication of work. Through this network Retrak assists the work done by the government at Kampiringisa National Rehabilitation Centre where many street children are placed, by providing medical care, counseling and psychosocial support. Towards the end of 2010, Retrak joined together with UNICEF and 3 other NGOs to count the number of OVC living on the streets of Addis Ababa. Nearly 11,000 children and young people were identified on the streets.

In addition, during this project period:

- Retrak was invited to presented at the First International Conference in Africa on Family Based Care for Children, in Nairobi in September 2009;
- As a follow-up to the Nairobi conference, Retrak hosted a conference in Addis Ababa focusing on family care for street children in October 2011. Over 100 practitioners and policy

maker attended representing 12 countries across Africa and from as far afield as Australia and Brazil;

- At the end of 2010 Retrak undertook research into the situation of girls living on the streets in both Kampala and Ethiopia. The findings of this research are being used to inform plans to begin work with girls during 2012;
- Over the past year a group of child care workers within Retrak have been documenting good practice by producing Standard Operating Procedures for outreach, family reintegration and foster care. The material on family reintegration has been developed a training curriculum and piloted within Retrak, there are plans to roll it out in Uganda and Ethiopia with both Retrak and partner organizations during 2012 and beyond; and
- Retrak has signed formal partnership agreements with local organizations in Ethiopia and Uganda, as well as Kenya, to build their capacity and share good practice in working with street children.

Major Challenges, Constraints and Lessons Learned

- The large number of OVC living on the street and the abuse that they have gone through, both prior to the streets and during their time on the streets, means that services can often be overwhelmed;
- The needs of female street children and the relative lack of NGOs addressing these needs, is pushing Retrak to provide direct services to help this vulnerable group. We are actively searching for funds to begin implementation of services to girl street children in 2012;
- The challenging nature of working with the donor community who do not always understand the resource intense nature of working with street children who are living full time on the street. In order to effectively meet the children's needs, Retrak aims to ensure every child has a personal plan to move forward in a way and timeframe that suits them. This requires a low child to staff ratio and an approach which allows the children to access programs for the length of time they need (not be given a short 3-6 month period).
- The general stigma leveled on street children by society does not promote nor encourage communities' participation in their care and reintegration
- Recruitment of carers for the foster care program has been challenging since foster care is still a relatively new concept in both Uganda and Ethiopia. In Ethiopia especially there has been a need to do a lot of intensive awareness raising in the local government and community groups to encourage volunteers for foster care programs.

V. Summary Table of PEPFAR Indicators

Program Area	ID Number and definition of Old PEPFAR Indicator	Cooperative Agreement Target	ID Number and definition of Next Generation Indicator	Life of Project (LOP) Target for Next Generation Indicators	Final Report Result 1 (Cumulative achievement on CA LOP target prior to NGI)	Final Report Result 2 (Cumulative achievement on LOP NGI target)
OVC: Care Sub Area 5: Support Care						
	6.2 & 8.1 # OVCs receiving OVC services AND # receiving care and support	1020	C1.1.D Number of eligible adults and children provided with a minimum of one care service		2994	
			Male	1020		2994
			Female	0		0
			<18 years old	1020		2994
			18+ years old	0		0
6.2 & 8.1 (Upstream + Downstream) # OVCs receiving OVC services AND # receiving care and support	1020	C1.1.N Number of eligible adults and children provided with a minimum of one care service		2994		
		<18 years old	1020		2994	
		18+ years old	0		0	
8.1.A Primary Direct OVCs receiving downstream support in <u>three or more</u> areas	580	C5.0.D Number of eligible children (OVC) provided services in 3 or more OVC core program areas beyond Psychosocial/spiritual support during the reporting period	310 <i>Uganda only</i>	1322 <i>Uganda and Ethiopia</i>	592 <i>Uganda only</i>	
8.1.B.: Supplemental Direct Support OVCs w receiving downstream support in <u>one or two</u> areas	440					1672 <i>Uganda and Ethiopia</i>
8.2 Number of providers/caregivers trained in caring for OVC	2370	C5.0.D Number of OVC care givers trained in comprehensive HIV management	1740 <i>Uganda only</i>	2145 <i>Uganda and Ethiopia</i>	1841 <i>Uganda only</i>	

VI. Project Implementation Overview by Strategic Objective

Retrak Uganda

Results of activities

1. *Enable OVC to begin the transition from street life through meeting their psychosocial, health and education needs*

1.1. *Outreach activities*

Throughout the project Retrak Uganda's outreach team spent time on the streets, as well as through football training, health care services and provision of lunch (funding for lunch from non-USAID sources), getting to know OVC living full time on the streets. The frequency of street visits, especially in the night, was increased as this proved to be a particularly effective way of reaching children in our target group. Following an assessment at the beginning of the project period, the Baaba program (HIV/AIDS peer education) was re-introduced, enabling children on the streets to receive training in life skills and sexual health. Selected children were trained as peer educators and, with support from Retrak's social and health workers, delivered sessions to other OVC in the streets and slums. Retrak partnered with the Aids Information Centre to carry out slum outreach for the purposes of HIV counseling and testing. The target group was street children. Retrak, together with partner NGO Dwelling Places, brought medical services to street children and teenager mothers at the Ugandan government run Kampiringisa National Rehabilitation Centre.

1.2. *Drop-in centers*

At Retrak's drop-in centre in the Mengo-Kisenyi slum, over 2400 children received basic services to help them transition away from street life.

Medical treatment was provided at the drop-in centre clinic, and referrals for specialist medical care were made to various partner clinics and hospitals such as the Surgery, Mengo and Mulago hospitals, and Midway HIV/AIDS centre. During FY10 Retrak expanded and re-furnished the clinic to provide greater privacy for the children being examined and treated. Health and hygiene classes were also provided at the drop-in centre to help children take care of their personal hygiene, avoid common ailments and reduce the risks of life on the streets.

During the project period Retrak's learning centre has been able to provide much more targeted learning for children of a range of abilities. A literacy and numeracy curriculum and assessments were developed and piloted in 2010, in partnership with Oasis Uganda, allowing the teachers to adjust activities to suit the varying levels of children's ability. The curriculum emphasizes learning around key skills so that children are able to catch-up with missed education in a shorter period. A variety of teaching methods, including the use of quizzes and debates, ensures different learning styles are catered for. In addition, improvements to the learning environment, with displays of learning charts and children's work, as well as the provision of a uniform, has improved children's commitment and ability to learn.

In order to support children psychologically and socially in their transition away from street life, Retrak Uganda provided a range of psycho-social services: one-to-one and group counseling, sports and team games and life-skills classes. The emphasis in all these activities is giving space to children to express themselves, learn new personal skills and to build their self-esteem and self-confidence. These activities were boosted through training from a partnership with Kick4Life, which uses a curriculum which based on football to build team skills and an HIV/AIDS prevention message.

Overnight shelter at the drop-in centre provided a safe space for vulnerable children to stay away from the risks of street life, and also marks the entry point into transition to family care as they begin to build a stronger relationship with adults and participate in everyday household activities.

2. Enable OVC to be reintegrated into a sustainable family context

2.1. Halfway home

During the project period 206 children benefitted from extra support through a stay at Retrak Uganda's halfway home and training farm. These children were assessed to need a longer and more intensive period of preparation in order to begin adjusting to family life and (re)learning how to build healthy attachments to adults. The halfway home has a capacity of 32 children who live in 4 family-type groups with a residential caregiver. As at the drop-in centre, these children received medical care, HIV testing/counseling, meals, one-to-one counseling, sports and life skills. They also participated in daily catch-up classes following the same curriculum as the drop-in centre, and daily agricultural activities. The children also interact with the local community, attending a local church and participating in inter-school sports activities.

2.2. Reintegration and foster care

During the project period 274 children were reintegrated with their biological families or placed in foster care. The children and their families received guidance and counseling, support to continue their education or vocational training and small grants if necessary following an assessment (these grants were funded from other sources). They were followed up physically and by phone and were given further support and counseling, and, for foster families only, maintenance allowances. A total of 1841 care-givers benefitted from Retrak's support, both in families where a child had been placed and through healthy parenting workshops in Wakiso and Mpigi districts, two key locations from where street children originate. In collaboration with Aids Information Centre, these communities also benefitted from HIV voluntary testing and counseling.

Foster carers were identified through a partnership with the African Evangelist Enterprises. These carers went through a thorough selection and training process to ensure their suitability and correct motivation.

A new livelihood manager was employed to provide a dedicated focus for business trainings. The training approach developed covers an introduction to business skills, overview of business in Uganda, sources of capital and the associated challenges and solutions. Practical training was provided to both children and care-givers.

The Child Status Index tool was introduced to allow easy but comprehensive assessment of children's situation in their family at placement and follow up.

3. Build the capacity of Retrak projects to improve quality and efficiency

With assistance from NuPITA Retrak Uganda participated in 3 capacity assessments during the project period, which showed an improvement across all the areas assessed from 2.3 in year 1 to 3.8 out of 4 by the end of the project.

Vital to this improvement were the numerous learning opportunities which Retrak Uganda staff members were able to participate in. These included training workshops, conferences, learning visits to other organizations, guidance on policy development, and partnerships with other NGOs. The learning covered a range of issues, both child care focused (such as foster care, HIV counseling and testing, creative teaching and child protection) and organization focused (such as finance management, supported supervision, fundraising, M&E, record-keeping, senior management and team building). The result of these learning opportunities has been the implementation of several new policies and procedures and an improvement in both programmatic and organizational operations, as demonstrated by the results of the capacity assessments.

In October 2011, several staff also travelled to Addis Ababa to participate in Retrak's conference on 'Returning street children home' where they were part of expert panels answering questions on family reintegration and foster care with an international audience.

Assistance from an OVC Advisor, allowed Retrak to develop various children's policies, work with Retrak Ethiopia to produce a Standard Operating Procedures and training manual for family

reintegration, and undertake research into the situation of girls who live on the streets in Kampala which is guiding plans to expand Retrak's programs to include the girls as well as boys.

4. Strengthen partnerships both locally and internationally

During the project period, Retrak Uganda was invited to be part of the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development's OVC technical working group to develop the second National Strategic Program Plan for Implementation of OVC which was published in 2011. This is a key development ensuring that Retrak Uganda is aligned with the Ministry's strategies and that street children are properly represented in the plan.

Retrak Uganda has continued to be a member of the Children at Risk Action Network and the Street Children NGO network (SCNN). SCNN is a crucial network for NGOs working with street children and aims to ensure that there is minimal duplication of work. As member organizations we work together to compliment the work done by the government at Kampiringisa National Rehabilitation Centre. Monthly meetings take place to share good practice and progress.

Retrak Uganda was also able to develop new partnerships with local NGOs Dwelling Places and Child Restoration Outreach, under a 5 year grant from Comic Relief. Retrak Uganda was also invited to provide a street child element to USAID-funded project, SCORE, led by AVSI. This ensures that street children will benefit from a project which is targeted at the community and district level, in which they would not have had the opportunity to participate previously.

Challenges and lessons learnt

- The abuse that the children have gone through, both prior to the streets and during their time on the streets, affects their ability to respond to care. Retrak aims to ensure every child has a personal plan to move forward in a way and timeframe that suits them.
- Due to the conditions children live in on the streets, medical needs can be very large.
- The holistic care that is needed by this vulnerable group of children can be overwhelming for one service provider. Therefore Retrak partners and networks with other organizations to deliver a full set of services.
- The general stigma leveled on street children by society does not promote nor encourage communities' participation in their care and reintegration.

Retrak Ethiopia

Results of activities

1. Enable OVC to begin the transition from street life through meeting their psychosocial, health and education needs

1.1. Outreach activities

Street outreach visits were held regularly throughout the project period. This is the main channel by which new street children come into Retrak Ethiopia's project. Trusting relationships built up over this time means that the children have gained trust in our outreach staff, and have even shown staff their new 'hide-outs'. Outreach workers move around the streets of Addis Ababa either very early in the morning (6-8am) or late at night (8-10.30pm) to seek out and relate to children living on the streets and invite them into the project, especially identifying and targeting those children who are highly vulnerable amongst the street child population (the very young, new to street, girls, sick, disabled etc). Retrak Ethiopia has had several referrals from the police and other NGOs as well.

1.2. Drop-in centers

Retrak Ethiopia's drop-in centre served over 470 OVC during the life of the project. These children participated in a full program of health care, literacy and catch-up education classes, counseling, life-skills classes, sports, shelter and nutritious meals (the later funded from other donations).

Retrak Ethiopia's social workers developed a life-skills curriculum, with support from the OVC Advisor (placed by NuPITA). The curriculum covers a wide range of modules from relationship building, to anger management and HIV prevention. We have been encouraged to see children begin to come forward for VCT and to discuss HIV/AIDS issues as a result. The Addis Ketema Sub-City approved Retrak Ethiopia in 2011 to provide VCT on-site, making it much easier for street children to be counseled and tested since they are normally excluded from such services at other centers. HIV prevention messages are also delivered through Kick4Life football activities, following a training workshop as part of a partnership with Kick4Life.

The teachers at the drop-in centre developed a program of classes based on the Ethiopian national government school curriculum to make the transition from the drop-in centre classes to their local village schools easier. At the same time, children who had never attended school receive an intensive literacy program.

Finally, in August 2010 Retrak Ethiopia signed a 5 year lease on a new drop-in centre. Renovations (with funding from other sources) have recently been completed providing purpose-designed areas for teaching, counseling, games and medical care. A second location (the old drop-in centre, but soon to be new premises) provides overnight shelter for all the children in the program, previously shelter was only available for OVC who were most at risk and/or sick. This shelter ensures children are safe from the risks of street life at night and aids their transition back to family and community life.

Retrak Ethiopia was able to benefit from USAID's Urban Gardens program, receiving training for key staff. The children at the drop-in center have been able to cultivate vegetables and to raise poultry in small areas around the center. This enhances the food program and nutrition of the children, plus teaches them valuable skills they can use once they have returned to their families.

2. Enable OVC to be reintegrated into a sustainable family context

(Note: Retrak Ethiopia does not implement activities at a halfway home (obj 2.1) since their drop-in centre caters for a smaller number and provides shelter for them all, thus functioning similarly to the halfway home in Uganda.)

2.2. Reintegration and foster care

A total of 179 OVC were enabled to return back home to their families with support for their caregivers. The ground work was also laid to enable children to be placed in to foster care during 2012.

Assisted by our NuPITA OVC Advisor, Retrak Ethiopia has worked on how building better community relations and linkages with other NGOs and associations in the rural areas to support families who have received back their children. She has also assisted us to develop a training module and recruitment plan to find community mentors for some of the older OVC. We are calling this program 'Retrak Friends' and are hoping that this will strengthen and encourage these young people as they move to living in the community and to form networks and relationships as a way of building a sense of belonging in their new communities.

Foster care of OVC (with non-biological family) is a new concept for Ethiopia. Retrak Ethiopia is at the forefront of developing this alternative form of child care, in line with new government policy from Ministry of Women's and Children's and Youth Affairs. In August 2010 Retrak Ethiopia ran a week long workshop to train 32 people on the implementation of foster care in Ethiopia, including 4 of our own staff. In 2011 Retrak Ethiopia employed social worker who is dedicated to the new foster care program. During 2011 and 2012 Retrak Ethiopia held several awareness raising activities and training workshops to build the understanding and capacity of local sub-city, churches and associations members in the process of recruiting, matching and monitoring foster families. In May 2012 we trained 12 new potential foster carers and are now matching them with children for placement. In May 2012 we hosted a second foster care training (funded by NuPITA) on assessment of potential foster care families and matching of children.

3. Build the capacity of Retrak to improve quality and efficiency

With assistance from NuPITA Retrak Ethiopia participated in 3 capacity assessments during the project period, which showed an improvement across all the areas assessed from 2.6 in year 1 to 3.8 out of 4 by the end of the project.

Vital to this improvement were the numerous learning opportunities which Retrak Ethiopia staff members were able to participate in with NuPITA's support. These included training workshops, conferences, learning visits to other organizations, guidance on policy development, and partnerships with other NGOs. The learning covered a range of issues, both child care focused (such as foster care, HIV counseling and testing, creative teaching and child protection) and organization focused (such as finance management, supported supervision, fundraising, M&E, record-keeping, senior management and team building). The result of these learning opportunities has been the implementation of several new policies and procedures and an improvement in both programmatic and organizational operations, as demonstrated by the results of the capacity assessments.

In September 2011 Retrak Ethiopia hosted a large conference in Addis Ababa entitled "Helping street children return home". Six international speakers gave excellent input followed by challenging Q&A sessions, resulting in plans for better collaboration and information sharing. This was also a key time for Retrak to showcase our work amongst the donor community and other NGOs to enhance future collaboration.

Retrak Ethiopia also had several consultants (supported through NuPITA) visit the project to train and support staff. This has included developing a new HR manual, installing and training staff in the use of new accounting software (Quickbooks), and having a financial review and finalization of new financial policy. These have been invaluable to build the skills and capacity of our national team as well as ensure transparency and increased accountability in our programs.

With our OVC Advisor we have established a system for Quality Assurance to measure ourselves against criteria in the Ethiopian Government Service Standards Guidelines as well as the 6 core areas of success for Retrak and developing an Action Plan to address any gaps. As Retrak strives for excellence in child care this has been a valuable exercise to challenge us to go beyond the basic minimum service standards so that OVC receive the best services possible.

We have successfully trialed a new performance management system and supported supervision since January 2011, involving setting In-Year Goals and making Personal Development Plans for all key staff. Line managers also participated in a supported supervision training at the end of March 2011.

The OVC Advisor undertook research into the situation of the girls living on the streets of Addis Ababa. The recommendations from this research, together with those from Retrak Uganda were presented to the board of Retrak in the UK. On the strength of this report the Retrak board has taken the decision that Retrak must work with female OVC on the street and is now developing an action plan to implement a pilot program in 2012.

During the augment period of this project, in collaboration with UNICEF, Retrak Ethiopia brought a foster care specialist (Monica Woodhouse from Give a Child a Family) to Ethiopia who ran an engaging 5 day 'train the trainer' foster care workshop. This has greatly enhanced the ability of our own staff as well as staff from 11 other NGOs and 4 government offices to train carers for foster care.

With the assistance of two consultants, Retrak Ethiopia has reviewed its new SOP on family reintegration in the light of the Ethiopian's governments move towards deinstitutionalization. The recommendations of this work suggest that Retrak's experience and SOP would be of great value to the institutions in Ethiopia who will be looking to reintegrate many children in the coming years.

The augment funds have also enabled Retrak Ethiopia to reorganize the administration office and create a new partitioned office for the Country Director, which allows also the Finance Manager to have better space. This has been greatly appreciated and will mean better work space for our senior management team.

4. Strengthen partnerships, both locally and internationally

In collaboration with UNICEF and two other NGOs (Bethany and FHI) Retrak has been at the forefront of the formation of a Foster Care Working Group. We are joining together to work with and strengthen the Ethiopian governments' (specifically MOWCYA) establishment of foster care. As well, we have established a Foster Care Working Group to support over 20 other NGOs who are implementing or have the desire to implement foster care in Ethiopia. Using the government's "Guidelines for Alternative Child Care" as a foundation, the Working Group is currently working on recommendations for clear definitions and legal issues around Foster Care as well as working towards the formation of a secretariat to support this work. Meetings are held approximately every 6 weeks. Funding is now in place for this new secretariat via OAK Foundation, PACT/USAID and UNICEF.

An exciting event on March 5th 2012 was the launch of the new Ethio-Alternative Child care Network. Retrak has been a founding steering committee member and it is very encouraging to see this work develop in collaboration with PACT and UNICEF.

A local NGO called 'Fekat Circus' has partnered with Retrak Ethiopia to deliver a circus, life-skills and exercise program for the OVC at the drop-in center which enhances the activities we are able to offer and involves the children in important team building and communication exercises.

We continue to collaborate with two local NGOs for the implementation of foster care and support of female OVC on the street. We have begun to work formally with OPRIFS under a new funding agreement with an Australian donor to implement a small foster care program.

Local partnerships with government, BOWCYA and local sub-city and woreda and idr representatives have included an experience sharing visit to Adama to learn about foster care and private-public partnerships to strengthen alternative child care and an awareness raising day workshop held at our drop-in centre, again with a focus on foster care and how to partner with local community for the recruitment of suitable families.

Retrak continues to collaborate with SKI (Street Kids International) in the delivery of Street Business training workshops (which has resulted in the above mentioned Master Trainer certificate) which we are opening to other NGOs as well as the wider Retrak organization.

Late 2010 saw our membership confirmed with CCRDA.

In October and November 2010 Retrak street outreach staff collaborated with UNICEF, Bosco Children and several other NGOS and participated in an Addis Ababa wide head count of street children. The results reveal nearly 11,000 children living on the streets of Addis Ababa city.

Funding agreements with the new Australian Embassy in Addis Ababa and the Japanese Embassy, have enabled the further development of our foster care and family reintegration programs and renovations of the new drop-in center and night time shelter.

Challenges

- The large number of OVC living on the street (now confirmed through the census late in 2010) is a constant pressure on our staff to take in more children. We are keen that upon completion of the renovations of our new drop-in centre we will be able to reach more OVC and give access to 45 – 50 children per day into the program.
- We are conscious that recently 2 NGOs who were providing direct services to girl street children have reduced or stopped services. This is pushing us to provide direct services to help this vulnerable group and we are actively searching for funds to begin implementation of services to girl street children for 2012.
- Challenge of working with the donor community who do not always understand the resource intense nature of working with street children who are living full time on the street. If this group of beneficiaries are to permanently move away from street life and back to community, and if lasting and quality work is to be done with this target group, then low child to staff ratio's are a must, and the children must be enabled to access programs for the length of time they need (not be given a short 3 – 6 month period) to move from street life. Otherwise it just

ends up being short-term “band-aid” treatment. The conference held in September had this as one of its aims and we continue to advocate on behalf of street children to many donor organizations.

- Issues with the installation of our new data base have delayed our going ‘on-line’ for all reporting and record keeping. The servers have just arrived and we hope to install them and start using the data base in this coming quarter.
- Recruitment of carers for the foster care program. Foster care is still a very new concept in Ethiopia and we are needing to do a lot of intensive awareness raising in the local woreda’s, associations and other groups to encourage volunteers for foster care programs. We believe this is a matter of time as people come to better understand what foster care is. Our community awareness raising days and conference feed in to increasing awareness on this subject. Our staff continue an active program of awareness raising and recruitment drive to this end. We are delighted that we have now trained our first batch of 12 carers but much work still remains. We hope to place three boys in foster care at the end of the academic year (June 2012).

VII. Capacity building

As outlined above against objective 3 of the project, Retrak has been able to dramatically improve its organizational capacity during this project period. Improvements have been made in many areas, covering all program aspects as well as management, finance, HR, M&E, donor relations and compliance. When reflecting back on this project Retrak staff all agreed that this increased capacity, in terms of numbers of children helped and organizational professionalism, was the most significant achievement of this project.

The capacity assessments undertaken with NuPITA indicated that Retrak improved in all areas assessed, overall improving from 2.1 in year 1 to 3.6 out of 4 by the end of the project period.

Retrak held an end of project evaluation at the end of FY11, the first external evaluation of its kind for Retrak. It was a very positive and encouraging experience for all involved. The conclusions of the evaluation were:

- Retrak exceeded all the targets set with two months left to the end of the project period, working with over 2800 OVC in total. Over 400 OVC returned to family and community life and it was reported that 75% of reintegration placements were successful with children remaining at home. Children’s overall wellbeing improved during their time with Retrak and continued to do so after placement with families.
- The services Retrak provide are very relevant to the needs of children and their families; and children’s participation and involvement in decision-making throughout the project is excellent.
- Retrak’s success is due to the innovative model and approaches which are applied in preparing and reintegrating OVC on the street, as well as staff commitment and technical support from NuPITA.

Various recommendations were also made, relating to programs and organizational capacity. These have been discussed by the senior management teams in each countries are being acted upon appropriately.

At the end of the project periods in both countries Retrak invited partners and supporters to hear about the achievements of this project. Those who attended these events were able to hear from the children and their family members about the difference Retrak’s work has made in their lives, and to understand more about what has made Retrak’s project such a success. In Addis Ababa, 2 parents from Hosanna town, where many of Retrak’s children come from, spoke very passionately about the support they had received in parenting skills and starting small businesses. They told everyone how they are now making sure that they spread the word in their local communities about the struggles of street life in Addis Ababa so that others will not encourage their children to go to the city to look for work, but instead how they can improve their businesses and better care for their children. The

highlight of the meeting in Kampala was the testimony from one of Retrak's foster parents. He spoke about how Retrak inspired him to foster a child, and how the support from Retrak has enabled him to raise his foster child as his own and to better understand and care for his biological children. He concluded by saying: "I am now a better father to all my children".

Other quotes from those who attended included:

- "Retrak managed not only to achieve their targets but to exceed them – not too many NGOs do this!" Tsegaye Tilahun, Activity Manager, USAID Ethiopia
- "Retrak is a very accomplished organization, working diligently, with a high attention to quality and a great deal of passion to address the needs of street children ... we're pleased to say that they've come through all of this with excellent progress" Mark Kowalski, Deputy Director, NuPITA

In June 2011, Retrak launched its leadership academy. The academy is about addressing our succession planning issue, retaining staff and building their capacity & skill set through a unique learning and development opportunity. The long term goal of this program is to generate revenue for Retrak and for it to be seen as a key development course for local staff who wish to become senior directors at Country Director level or equivalent.

Finally Retrak is currently finalizing its new strategic plan for 2013-2017 with the aim of reaching 100,000 children by 2018 in 6 countries. This plan was developed with input from staff, children and partners through support from NuPITA.

VIII. Other Issues

The work with OVC, their families and communities will continue after the close of this project. Retrak has already secured over 70% of its funding (from 4 different sources, including USAID-funded SCORE program in Uganda) needed for the next 3 to 5 years. This will help us in terms of financial stability and sustainability and the continuity of our services and programs to children.

IX. Success Story

Determined to succeed

Retrak's street outreach creates the opportunity for change



Every week Retrak's outreach workers go into Addis Ababa to get to know the children living on the streets. The bus station and market are good places to catch children hanging around in groups, hoping to get work carrying people's luggage or shopping. This was where they met Yonas*, a shy 15 year old who caught their attention because, despite his timidity, he was so positive.

Reaching out to children on the street and slowly building relationships is the beginning of Retrak's work. With the support of USAID, Retrak has worked with over 2800 children on the streets of Addis Ababa and Kampala over the past 3 years. The goal is to provide them with skills to stay safe on the streets and to give them the chance to move away from street life completely.

The Retrak outreach workers met with Yonas several times during the weeks following their first encounter. Realizing that these people kept coming back and seemed to be interested in his life,

Yonas eventually told them about how his mum had died several years ago and that he had never got on with his dad's new wife. She had refused to let him continue with his education after reaching grade 3 and had instead insisted that he look after the family's cow. One day he had got distracted by

some friends and when they finished playing he could no longer find the cow. He was so frightened of his step-mother that instead of going home he hitched a ride to Addis Ababa.

During one conversation Yonas whispered: “I hate this life, there’s nothing for me here, but I’m stuck and I don’t know what to do.” The outreach workers explained about Retrak’s drop-in centre where he could get food, medical care and join in with education classes. They also offered to work with him to help him make a plan for the future. Yonas jumped at the opportunity and was enthusiastically waiting the next day when Retrak came to collect him.

At the drop-in centre Yonas’ enthusiasm and determination became even more evident. From day one he made the most of every opportunity he was given. He quickly caught up with his education, even though he had been out of school for several years. He joined the government’s night school program and sat for his end of year exams. Retrak also supported Yonas to learn business skills and helped him set up a mini shop. He worked so hard that he was soon able to rent a place to sleep, buy food and save some money. His determination to succeed never wavered, after 18 months he had saved up enough to money to put himself through a training in hairdressing.

Recently he called Retrak to tell them he has plans to get married and is looking forward to his new life.

* child’s name changed to protect his identity

Family key to a positive future

Retrak’s foster care helps a street child become top prefect



At 10 years old, Andrew* set off from his rural home for Kampala, Uganda’s capital. He didn’t know anyone in the city, but, since his family wasn’t able to keep him in school, he was determined to find someone to help him continue his education. Like many children who end up on streets, Andrew’s vulnerability stems from poverty and family breakdown. In Uganda more than half of all children are considered to be vulnerable and over 60% do not live with their biological parents[#]. In Andrew’s case it was his father’s drinking and the subsequent beatings that drove his family apart.

Retrak, with support from USAID, regularly visits the streets and slum areas where many street children live and work in Kampala. Through these activities Andrew eventually found his way to Retrak’s drop-in centre where he was able to find a safe space to sleep, get washed, relax and receive a good meal. Andrew soon joined Retrak’s halfway home, designed to give children the security and care needed to overcome their past experiences and move forward. This was just what Andrew needed. He struggled with anger towards his father. He often retreated into himself and found it hard to accept the love and support on offer. Through a lot of patient counselling, encouragement in class and participation in fun activities, Andrew slowly learnt to forgive his father and even began to wonder how he could help his father overcome his addiction.

Retrak accompanied Andrew on a visit to his family. Sadly the situation had not changed and with his family still dispersed there was no home that he could return to. As Retrak supports the goal of the Uganda government and of PEPFAR to keeping children in families, the next step was to identify a foster family for Andrew. Although foster care for street children is still rare in Uganda, Retrak’s experience meant that a suitable family was identified and trained, and within a few weeks of arriving Andrew’s new brothers had made him feel firmly part of the family. Andrew is one of more than 400 children whom Retrak have returned to the care of a family with the support of USAID.

Despite his struggles, Andrew is a very determined boy, focused on his goal of going back to school and always watching out for his friends. Six years after he came to the streets of Kampala looking for

a way back to school, Andrew has sat for his O Level exams at a top school, where he is also the deputy head prefect. With ongoing support and guidance from Retrak, Andrew's foster family has given him the care and sense of belonging which has allowed him to go from strength to strength. The crucial care and support of a family will enable him to keep moving forward as a responsible and caring young man.

* child's name changed to protect his identity

Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (2011), National Strategic Programme Plan of Interventions for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children 2011/12 - 2015/16, Kampala.

X. Summary of all Program indicators (both PEPFAR and non-PEPFAR)

Final report		Target for life of the Project	Life of Project Result (cumulative over life of program)
Retrak indicators			
SO1 Enable OVC to begin the transition from street life through meeting their psychosocial, health and education needs	# children at drop-in centre accessed one or more care services	950	2917
SO2 Enable OVC to be reintegrated into a sustainable family context	# children at halfway home received comprehensive care	135	206
	# children reintegrated or fostered	335	453
	# children in families received follow-up support	260	407
	# care-givers receiving support	2370	2145
PEPFAR recommended indicators			
C5.2.D Number of eligible children provided with shelter and care-giving	<18 years	380	1108
C5.3.D Number of eligible children provided with health care referral	<18 years	960	1754
C5.4.D Number of eligible children provided with education and/or vocational training	<18 years	610	1440
C5.5.D Number of eligible adults and children provided with protection and legal aid services	<18 years	260	853
	18+ years	0	0
C5.6.D Number of eligible adults and children provided with psychological, social, or spiritual support	<18 years	1020	2239
	18+ years	0	0
C5.7.D Number of eligible adults and children provided with economic strengthening services	<18 years	45	97
	18+ years	0	0

Please note all children are male

Retrak Ethiopia augment indicator	Target	Achieved (Dec 2011-Feb 2012)
OVC accessing counselling and basic needs	60	34
OVC accessing life skills, medical & HIV/AIDS education	60	40
OVC receiving catch-up education	60	34
OVC accessing over-night shelter	60	40
OVC resettled with family	15	10
OVC fostered into a carer family	2	0
Families benefitting from increased capacity	25	10
OVC receiving economic strengthening training & IGA	5	5