



PRESENTATION TALKING POINTS

Why Kenya?

Kenya has one of the worst and longest refugee situations in the world. The refugee crisis has lasted nearly 20 years and has resulted in an estimated 400,000 refugees living inside its borders. Most refugees are from Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Congo and are restricted to life-threatening living conditions in the country's refugee camps where overcrowding, insecurity, and malnutrition are among their daily challenges.

What makes the urban refugee situation so desperate?

Because of the long-lasting nature of these conflicts and desperate conditions in the camps, nearly 100,000 refugees have migrated to Nairobi where the government of Kenya, the United Nations, and other organizations provide very little support and basic assistance, including medical care and shelter. Refugees are scattered throughout the city and mainly live in slums – not only are refugees competing for basic survival among Kenya's poorest, but they are also discriminated against because they are refugees and face daily harassment from police. These refugees are neglected and fall deeper and deeper into the cracks of protection every day.

Unaccompanied refugee girls and young women are in need of the most protection.

Not only have refugee girls and young women survived horrific atrocities and lost their countries, they are living in a foreign city without their families or other support networks – making them even more vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. They also:

- Face a higher risk of depression and stress-related conditions
- Have a higher rate of illiteracy and less possibility to achieve self-sufficiency
- Are at higher risk of forced marriage and early pregnancy

No human being, especially children and girls, should ever face these conditions – and yet there are 5,000 are invisible and living in Nairobi.

Heshima Kenya was created as an oasis of hope and peace for unaccompanied refugee children and youth, especially girls and young women, to rebuild their lives with hope and dignity.

60% of the girls and young women supported by Heshima have experienced some type of sexual abuse; almost all have witnessed the death of a family member; and ALL are without a country and in need of support. They don't know when they are returning home – they don't know if they will be reunified with their families – and they have been broken in every capacity as human beings.

Heshima is the Swahili word for respect. After nearly 20 years of war surrounding Kenya, is the first organization dedicated to unaccompanied girls and young women in Nairobi– it is a place where the most vulnerable regain their confidence and take control of their lives. **Here is why Heshima Kenya is important to me:** _____

This is the impact that matters – because empowerment and protection changes everything.

Heshima Kenya addresses the basic rights and long-term needs of every person assisted. Through alternative education, shelter, job training, income-generation, medical support, foster care, and community mobilization, Heshima is building a fabric of protection and participation necessary to give the children and youth a voice and place of peace. Its about providing the necessary tools to help these girls reach self-sufficiency and help restore what so many millions of girls and young women have lost in war and from sexual violence.

These powerful girls and young women are the ones building the Heshima community, but they need our help to sustain it.