The CASE-OVC project
(Comprehensive Assistance and Empowerment of Orphans and Vulnerable Children)

Around 1.2 million children in Kenya have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS, and hundreds of thousands more are living with the virus. Their status makes them vulnerable.

Compounded with high levels of poverty, changing social and economic conditions, and a lack of access to basic services such as healthcare, many of these children do not have the treatment and support they need – and deserve.

Christian Aid is working with expert, local partners to help change this. Our CASE-OVC project focuses on improving the health and treatment of these children, supporting the households they call home to become economically resilient, and strengthening the systems designed to protect them.

We hope to reach over 170,000 orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS across 18 counties in Kenya – and your support could make all the difference.

What’s more, thanks to a co-funding partnership with USAID, every £1 given to the project will provide £20 for this vital work, making your generous support go even further. You support would be a truly impactful gift for these children and their communities.

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Christian Aid and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Cover photo: Thanks to food interventions through the CASE-OVC project, Mary Wambui and her older sister Jane Wanjiku from Githanga Village in Kiambu County, Kenya, are healthier.

Orphaned and vulnerable children from Kajiado County, Kenya, are resilient and thriving at home thanks to different interventions offered through the CASE-OVC project.
A quarter of the population survive on just $1 per day, and two-thirds live on $2 per day. Most people live in rural areas or urban slums with poor access to basic services like water and sanitation, schools and healthcare. As a result, rates of many preventable communicable diseases are prevalent in Kenya. There are also high rates of malnutrition and diseases caused by poor sanitation and hygiene practices.

In this context, the thousands of children who have been orphaned or affected by HIV/AIDS are even more vulnerable. There are over 2.6 million orphans and vulnerable children in Kenya, of which 1.2 million are orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Of the estimated 160,000 children under 15 years living with HIV/AIDS, only half have access to antiretroviral treatment.

Kenya has achieved progress in scaling up HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, and in addressing the complex and multiple impacts of the disease – but the epidemic’s influence on children remains a challenge due to several factors:

- **A lack of access to quality health, education and social services.** This means children often miss vital immunisations, may suffer from malnutrition and curable diseases, and often don’t go to school.

- **Systemic structural and capacity gaps in government, community organisations and other institutions.** This leads to difficulties securing the documentation (registration of birth and identity cards) needed to claim children’s rights to healthcare, citizenship, and inheritances such as land.

- **Rapidly changing social and economic conditions.** This means that traditional extended family systems and networks which orphaned and vulnerable children rely upon for care and support are now overstretched and rendered ineffective.

To most families, HIV/AIDS presents an extra burden that exacerbates the challenges they are already facing with incredibly stretched resources. As a result, children’s care and treatment often falls by the wayside. This is the challenge CASE-OVC seeks to overcome.

While Kenya’s economy is the biggest in eastern Africa, the country still has millions of people struggling to survive, their lives blighted by poverty.
The project takes a comprehensive approach and seeks to create sustainable and lasting change. Working together with local partners and the communities in which orphaned and vulnerable children live, our activities are focused on achieving three main objectives.

Objective 1: Improved health and social status of orphaned and vulnerable children and their families affected by HIV/AIDS.

We provide:
- **HIV/AIDS support**: Children are provided with medical support including, where appropriate, testing and counselling support for HIV/AIDS. For those who test positive, antiretroviral treatment and necessary support is provided.
- **Nutrition**: Age-appropriate nutrition is provided by working with schools and health services to ensure children do not suffer from malnutrition or associated consequences of insufficient food intake.
- **Child protection**: Local safety net and support systems are extended to families with orphans and vulnerable children. These services also work with older children to ensure they have birth certificates and similar vital documentation to support their access to services.
- **Education**: Education materials, and in some instances support on paying school fees/levies, are provided. Vocational training is also provided to older children where appropriate.

Objective 2: Enhanced economic resilience, caregiving and protection capacity of households and caregivers.

We:
- Undertake an analysis to understand the market opportunities for income-generating activities and use this analysis to offer training to households in the jobs that have been identified (e.g. horticulture or bee-keeping).
- Provide support in accessing the market to ensure those producing goods get the best prices.
- Offer savings and loans models in communities to help members grow their businesses and generate additional income.

Objective 3: Strengthened protection systems that are responsive, inclusive and accountable to the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children.

We:
- Seek to improve the county-level standards of care for vulnerable children in the 18 target counties.
- Enhance monitoring mechanisms to ensure that gaps in policy and practice are identified and closed.

**Breaking barriers**: We work with communities and orphaned and vulnerable children to ensure that potentially harmful rites of passage, such as female genital mutilation, are ended and more appropriate alternatives are used.

Project name: CASE-OVC
Project partner: Pathfinder International and 27 local implementing partners.
Target: Children and young people who have been affected by, orphaned by or who are living with HIV/AIDS, as well as their caregivers and family members in their households.
Beneficiary numbers: Aim to reach 170,000 orphans and vulnerable children in 52,000 households.
Cost per beneficiary: £175 per child ($224)
Christian Aid’s CASE-OVC project enabled Redempta Ngongo to turn things around for her children and give them the best chance of reaching their potential.

Redempta (pictured right) had struggled to make ends meet after the death of her husband, who died from HIV-related issues. Determined to keep her three children in school, she set up a small grocery stall but couldn’t afford to buy much stock.

It was while seeking help for school fees that Christian Aid’s local partner, the Redeemed Gospel Church, identified Redempta for help growing her household income.

As Redempta explained: ‘Even though I had requested support for school fees and uniforms, after a thorough assessment the church thought it best to empower me with household economic strengthening as it was more sustainable.

‘They asked me what business I could do and I told them my dream of owning a shop. I explained I had experience with my small grocery stall and after a thorough analysis, they decided to support me.

‘In my heart, I knew that God would help and bless me. There was an empty shop near my grocery stall. I spoke with the owner and asked for two days to pay the shop rent. This was before I even knew I would get the support. And God was gracious.’

Through the project, Redempta received stock to start her shop and received training on business management and record keeping. She has since built up a successful business that now also sells second-hand clothes and offers M-PESA – a mobile money transfer service.

Redempta said: ‘I am happy because my children are in school as I can afford their school fees, we have a nice place to live, we have adequate food, I can afford healthcare and my business is growing. I am an independent woman.’

‘Initially, I thought living with HIV was the hardest thing I would have to do,’ said Margaret Wambui. ‘However, burying two of my children, my daughter and her husband, was harder than that.

HIV has threatened to define Margaret’s life. But with support from CASE-OVC, she’s being supported to provide a safe and stable home for her 10-year-old grandson, who also lives with HIV.

‘His parents died when he was just five years old,’ Margaret explained.

‘Back then, he would just take the medicine without much fuss. However, as he grew older, he started asking me why only he and me take drugs daily while the others did not.

‘I just told him they are vitamins and he needed them because he was young and not as strong as the others while I was old and frail.

‘I did not know he was pretending to take his medicine. He would take and go spit them outside. Soon, he started getting sickly.’

It was during this time that Margaret met with Isaac Kioi, the case worker in her area for CASE-OVC. Isaac gave Margaret the encouragement she needed to tell her grandson, and the rest of their family, about their HIV status, an important step towards managing it more effectively and overcoming stigma.

‘I remember thinking that day that the boy would either hate his parents or me. It was really a tough conversation,’ Margaret said.

‘I can tell you right now that after disclosing our positive status, he takes his drugs more diligently without complaining. I am sure we still have a long way to go and I have to keep my eye on him to make sure he takes the drugs, but Isaac guided me on how to do it.’

Margaret also received five sheep from the project to help improve her income, empowering her to provide the care her grandson needs.
With your support, orphaned and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS and their families can thrive, not just survive.

Your gift could be used to improve both the access and quality of healthcare services available to these children.

Or it could cover the cost of their school fees, giving them a chance to continue their education and work towards a brighter future.

Or it could help a caregiver set up a business that generates enough income to provide a safe and happy home.

The comprehensive nature of the project means that wherever your gift is used, it will contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of orphans and vulnerable children.

And because of a co-funding partnership with USAID, every £1 you give will provide £20 towards the project, meaning your support will go even further – even more can have the chance of fulfilling their life potential.

Should you decide to support the project, we would be very grateful. We can also offer regular updates on the progress of the work, if you would like us to.

For any further information, please contact:

Jack Merrington
Supporter Partnerships
0207 523 2119
jmerrington@christian-aid.org

Any donations over the amount required to deliver this project will be used by Christian Aid for similar work and programmes around the world.
For any further information, please contact:

Jack Merrington
Supporter Partnerships
0207 523 2119
jmerrington@christian-aid.org