



## FAMILY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME



**For just £20 a month you can give a family in Kenya the opportunity to *support themselves***

### **Who we are...**

Action for Children in Conflict Kenya, aims to alleviate the suffering of children and their families affected by various forms of conflict or crisis, be it war, famine, poverty, illness, persecution or simply neglect. Our current activities focus on the rehabilitation and long-term reintegration of street and vulnerable children in Kenya. We aim to provide these children, their families and the wider community with the skills and knowledge they need to solve their own problems, and to take responsibility for their own development.

We work in Kenya in a town called Thika, 40 km northeast of Nairobi. Once at the centre of Kenya's industrial heartland, the economic downturn and the decline of the textile industry hit Thika hard, forcing many people into unemployment. This caused the growth of slums on the outskirts of Thika town, the largest being Kiandutu, which is today home to around 60,000 people. Kiandutu has no health services, poor sanitation and a high level of violence, crime, family breakdown, hunger and disease.

### **Our success...**

Over 60% of the children we have worked with are already reunited with their families and have returned to full-time education or have begun skills training or work. Although our aim is for families not to be dependent on outside help, we have learnt that achieving this takes time. Often small businesses struggle to create enough profit to feed the family and save for the next year's set of school uniforms. Or children find the discipline of school hard to take after the freedom of street life, and go back to spending time on the street. Our approach is to accept these setbacks and to continue to strive to find a lasting solution with the family.

## How does Family Sponsorship work?

Action for Children in Conflict's Family Sponsorship Programme is a sponsorship programme with a difference. Rather than sponsoring an individual child through school, you sponsor the entire family, helping to make a sustainable difference by empowering the family to work themselves out of poverty.

Rather than working with the street and vulnerable children in isolation, AfCiC offers support to the entire family. By sponsoring a family, the benefits are not only enjoyed by the child but by the family and their community. The aim of the sponsorship programme is that by working with the family to create an Income Generating Activity (IGA) or small business they will improve their socio-economic prospects and become self sufficient by the end of the sponsorship. It is hoped that through the income generated from the the IGA or business, families will be able to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter for their children. If the family is able to meet the children's basic needs, they are less likely to return to the streets either due to neglect or in order to source extra income for the family.



AfCiC carefully selects families that would benefit most from sponsorship based on those who are able to use the loan responsibly to make the most of the scheme. A home visit is conducted by a social worker and together with the family, a business plan is created. The family is then given a loan so that they can set up the Income Generating Activity (IGA) which is followed up with bi-monthly visits and payments to sustain and monitor the business. Additional family support grants are sometimes given to help to cover immediate costs such as school fees and uniforms whilst income gained from the business can be used to support the families' long-term survival.

We work to improve the socio-economic prospects of the child's whole family in order to increase the former street child's chance of successful reintegration. We help parents to meet their children's basic needs through the provision of counselling, parenting-skills and family planning training, and by setting up income generation activities. We want the families to take responsibility for their children, and for the children to take responsibility for their futures.

The cornerstone of our approach is to encourage street children to think for themselves. Rather than making decisions for them, our dedicated staff work tirelessly with the children, encouraging them make their own positive decisions, empowering them to become the instigators of their own success. We recognise that access to full-time education is not always the solution for street children. Some have been on the streets too long and are unsuited to the rigor and discipline of the state school system. We therefore work with them to explore other options such as vocational skills training and apprenticeships with local tradesmen, enabling them to learn a profession and, consequently, to earn a living.



## Getting you involved... the Family Sponsorship scheme



We are inviting you to become part of this growing success story with us, by making a regular contribution to our sponsorship programme.

### The cost of family sponsorship

The cost of sponsoring a family is just £20 a month, but **the results this can achieve are priceless.**

Your money will become part of a specific fund which will be used to reintegrate the street children we work with and to assist their families towards financial self-sufficiency. Obviously families' specific needs will vary from case to case, but your money will pay for essential items which will include the following:

- bi-monthly home visits from a social worker over a 12 month period, to monitor relationships between street children and their parents/guardians and to ensure that any conflicts are mediated upon before they escalate
- school uniform and school expenses for former street children
- vocational skills training for older children who cannot or do not wish to return to full-time education
- a basic monthly food allowance/package if required for survival
- an income generating loan and training with other families on income-generating activities and small business start up (to increase their chance of success)
- a small medical allowance in case of emergencies so that any medical crisis does not push the family back into poverty
- transport for families to attend parental training

## Family Sponsorship... Sponsorship with a difference!

This is a sponsorship programme with four differences.

**One:** your support is for the whole family. Rather than simply helping us rescue a child from the street, you may also be helping a mother to find work or a sister to attend school.

**Two:** in our regular updates we will tell you what is happening with the family, so that you can get the real story. We will tell you the successes and the disappointments. If you only want to hear the happy stories then perhaps this is not the sponsorship programme for you. Poverty, hopelessness and addiction are complex issues. It takes perseverance for a family to make changes with many difficulties on the way. If you accept there are no easy answers and want to be part of finding real lasting solutions, then this is the family sponsorship programme for you!

**Three:** we don't aim for you to be supporting one family for a long time. We hope that after approximately 6-12 months the family will be independent and will no longer require our help. With your continued support we can then move on to help other families in need.

**Four:** Action for Children in Conflict is a small organisation. In Kenya we have an expatriate Director, several international volunteers and fifteen local staff. We want you to become not only donors, but partners with us. In our updates we will tell you about the local situation, give you background information and introduce you to the local staff members who work skilfully and patiently with the families and children.

*Please ask us any questions you have at any time. And if you are ever in Kenya you are very welcome to visit and see our programmes and the difference which your money is making.*



## Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.s)

### Why do you want me to sponsor a family rather than an individual child?

Experience has shown us that in order to provide durable solutions for street children, it is necessary to address the reasons which led the child to the streets in the first place. Often this relates to extreme poverty and family breakdown. By working with the child's family to improve their overall socio-economic prospects, we enable them to meet their children's basic needs thereby increasing the chance that once the child is home he/she will stay there and will not return to the streets.

We want to enable families and communities to find their own solutions to the underlying problems that cause children to drift to the streets. As well as helping families to transform their relationships and circumstances for the better, we also mobilise the local community's resources by linking children with local schools for education and with local tradesmen for vocational skills training.

Urban poverty creates dislocation and despair. Re-establishing links between children, families and communities enables each to help the other. This requires time and patience but is the way to create long term solutions rather than quick fixes.

### What will I receive when I sign up to be a sponsor?

- Photo and profile of the family
- Information about the way AfCiC is working in the community
- Details about how sponsor money is spent on your individual family
- Quarterly updates on the family's progress
- The opportunity to write to your family
- School reports (if money is being used to fund education)
- Monthly Family Sponsorship Newsletter
- Direct contact with the Sponsorship Co-Ordinator in Kenya

### Can I choose the child/family I sponsor?

If you feel strongly that you want to support an orphan, a single mother, a grandmother looking after AIDS orphans etc., we will try to match you accordingly. However it is more helpful if you allow us to link you with the family that most needs your support.

### How will my money be spent? How much will reach the family?

All of your sponsorship money will be used to support the family with whom you are linked, who will be identified through our Street Children Programme. None of your money will be used for administration. As stated overleaf, your money will be used to pay for items such as:

- bi-monthly home visits from a social worker over a 12 month period
- school uniform and school expenses for former street children
- vocational skills training for older children
- a basic monthly food allowance/package if required for survival
- an income generating loan and training on setting up small businesses
- a small medical allowance for emergencies
- transport for families to attend parental training

### How do I pay?

Ultimately we would like people to pay online. However, at present the scheme is in its initial stages and so we would like you to pay by setting up a monthly standing order using the form enclosed. We would then ask you to send back the attached declaration, authorizing us to use your monthly standing order exclusively for the purposes of family sponsorship. We can thereby guarantee that your payment is used entirely and uniquely to sponsor the family with whom you are linked.

### What happens if I wish to cancel my sponsorship?

We understand that people's circumstances change. You can stop your sponsorship at any

time. To help us provide continuity of care to the families we would be grateful if you let us know if you need to do this.

### **Can I write to my sponsored child/family?**

We are happy for you to send letters to your sponsored family by emailing them to the Sponsorship Co-Ordinator at [sponsorship@actionchildren.org](mailto:sponsorship@actionchildren.org) or sending them to AfCiC, PO Box 130, Thika, Kenya. To ensure the communications are suitable and comply with our own policy on Child Protection, an AfCiC staff member will check the content of the letter before forwarding to the family. We hope you understand that we have a duty of care towards the children and families we support which requires us to do this.

### **Can we visit the programmes? Can we meet the family we sponsor?**

We would be delighted for you to come and see our work in Kenya and to meet the people you are supporting. If you are going to be in Kenya and wish to visit your sponsor family and/or our programmes please contact the AfCiC Kenya office to make arrangements.

### **How long will the sponsorship continue?**

Our aim is to use your money to enable families become self sufficient. In our experience it takes approximately 12 months of support for the street child and his/her family to settle down and become independent. We hope that once you begin your sponsorship, this will continue indefinitely, in which case your sponsor family is likely to change annually. AfCiC will stay in touch with previously sponsored families and details of their progress will be provided upon request.

*Thank you from AfCiC for all of your support*

