



# Protecting Ourselves and Each Other



Rita, a 12-years old girl in primary six at Kyembogo Primary School, points proudly to a picture she drew that was included in Bantwana's innovative child protection booklet: *Protecting Ourselves and Each Other*. Not wanting to see other children suffer the same forms of abuse that she has witnessed and endured, Rita became interested in participating in the booklet's compilation. She said, "I specifically drew a picture about corporal punishment because I wanted it to feature so that the parents violating children's rights in my village and elsewhere could see it and stop torturing their children. I felt good when I saw the picture in the book; I believe children who are seeing and utilizing this book are able to learn and report such kind of abuse without fear or favor."

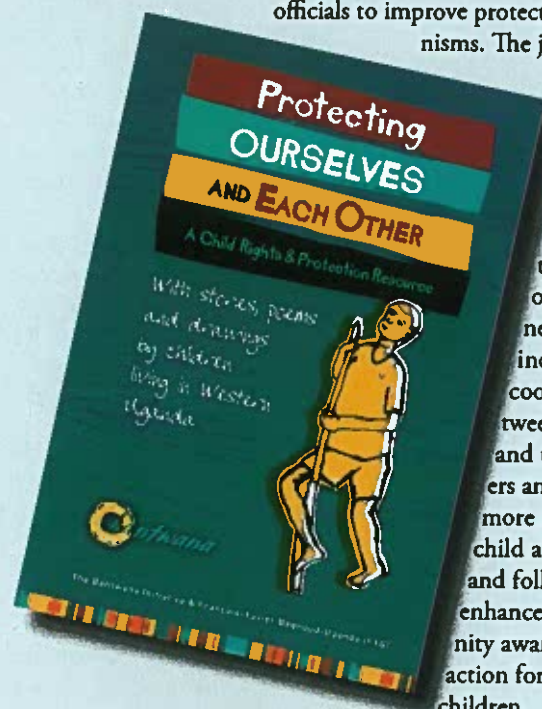
"I live with my mother and other five siblings. My mother is a single mother of ten children and my father passed away when I was still very young. We actually grew up in a bad situation, and we used to suffer a lot due to poverty," Rita recalls. "I used to spend like a week or so without going to school due to lack of scholastic material." As many other children in difficult situations, Rita's psychosocial problems affected her behaviors leading her to feel increasingly isolated.

KYEFA, a CBO working with Bantwana to provide services to OVC, worked with the school administration in Rita's area to start a Child Rights Club where children learn about their rights and responsibilities. Since joining the club, Rita has improved her behavior and made many friends. "Before joining Child Rights Club, I was fearful and less empowered; I could not express myself before people. Now I can now talk boldly in public without any fear or shame and report any form of abuse to my parents or teachers or any community leader."

In Western Uganda, Bantwana works with CBOs to provide comprehensive services to OVC, with a strong emphasis on child protection. The child protection activities are integrated with family-centered livelihoods and psychosocial support (PSS) programs. At the heart of all child protection activities is the goal to empower children with knowledge about their rights and responsibilities and to support them in taking action to improve child protection in their own schools and communities. Children have participated in Child Rights Clubs, contributed to the creation of the booklet, been featured on radio, and performed

at community events. Bantwana and CBO partners also work with caregivers, community members and leaders, and district officials to improve protection mechanisms. The joint efforts

of the communities and children have made child protection everyone's business. Results include greater cooperation between children and their caregivers and teachers, more reporting of child abuse cases and follow-up, and enhanced community awareness and action for protecting children.



## ABOUT BANTWANA INITIATIVE

The Bantwana Initiative ([www.bantwana.org](http://www.bantwana.org)) helps children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS access the comprehensive support and care they require to grow into healthy adults. To achieve this, Bantwana builds the capacity of innovative and committed community based organizations to implement programs that impact the lives of OVC in meaningful and sustainable ways.

In Uganda, Bantwana implements a rights base integrated program in Western Uganda and has been the lead agent for Civil Society Fund HIV and OVC Programs. To promote comprehensive and quality care, Bantwana is also an implementing partner for STAR-EC in East Central and has recently been selected as the TSO for the East Central region.

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