



PRESS KIT

Organisation Information	Name/ Acronym	Hiccup Circus Uganda/ HCU
	Establish Date	March 2013
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	Sector Area	Community Awareness - Education & Entertainment
	Geographic Coverage	Worldwide
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MANDATE

Hiccup Circus Uganda is an interactive, educational, entertaining and itinerant **Social Circus** - without animals - made up of young people and it uses the circus and performing arts as social action instruments. **The aim is to introduce Circus Arts in Uganda** utilizing the training sessions and live performances as alternative pedagogical tools to work with youth and communities which are marginalized or at social risk by making available an informal and creative instrument that allows them to develop motivation and efficiency. HCU, as a **Community Awareness Project**, offers to its beneficiary's the needed knowledge and abilities to navigate this increasingly complex world making the social circus approach a medium in fostering the types of values that lead to inclusive growth and peaceful living together.

A circus show can act as a "key" to catch curiosity and as a "flexible container" of meanings able to adapt to any particular need in combining creative contents with social campaigns such as Inclusion, WASH, Road Safety, SRHR/Gender, Addiction, Environmental Protection - Climate Change - Waste Management, HIV/AIDS - Immunizations, Oral Hygiene, School Drop Out, Disability, Human Rights, Blood Donation and many more.

The show and its production combine juggling, drama, puppetry, ground and aerial acrobatics, clowning, fire spitting, human pyramids, handstand, dance, acro-balance and music. It will both entertain and educate throughout its amazing circus numbers and edifying storytelling by bringing light on issues that may have otherwise been unknown or not thought about.

By its nature, HCU is very versatile and adaptable to any kind of spectator and situation. HCU artists can perform for large audience groups (our best is 3.000+) and for people of all ages coming from different social extraction - with or without the educational message(s) - and during all kinds of private animations, advertisements, birthday and wedding parties, CSR, corporate celebrations and team building, NGO/ Family days, commercials, festivals, brand activation, inaugurations, etc.

HCU HAS TWO COMPONENTS

- An infotainment Social Circus performance; a live and free show with two souls where there are serious and fun moments with exciting stories of hope and changes seeking to raise society's awareness and promote education.
- The Kasikonda Youth Circus School that trains unprivileged, at-risk youth living in slums, in the circus and performing arts. By demanding tenacity, perseverance and discipline, KYCS empowers participants to use their marginality to express themselves and establish a new relationship with the society that has often excluded them.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

We have identified Uganda as having enormous potential to benefit from HCU activities because its population is younger than of any other place on earth with 52% of inhabitants - about 22 million - below 15 years of age and there is a great need to address relevant cross-cutting social information to people and HCU is an effective tool in accomplishing this mission.

Outdated school syllabi with lack of extra-curricula activities and publicized positive behaviours models addressed to the society adversely impact the ambitions of youth and communities with serious negative implications for people's everyday life, health, environment, rights, dropout, social skills development, education opportunities, work and Uganda future at large.

The youth living in slums remains one of the least understood, vulnerable and difficult groups to reach even if various organizations, which work into these realities, have made some improvements in addressing basic needs and services. But the complexity of those needs and the very high number of youths - 80% of them unemployed - coupled with the lack of essential facilities and incentives, makes the transition to independent and healthy living difficult to achieve for the majority of them.

RESPONSE

HCU's strategy is to employ circus arts as a social action tool making HCU performances a medium for providing education and motivation. A circus show can act as a "key" to catch curiosity and as a "flexible container" of meanings able to adapt to any particular need in tackling alternative crosscutting social issues for youth and communities in filling the gaps of the school system. A live show with two sides where there is fun and serious moments besides exciting stories of hope and change that is seasoned with hints of colour, imagination and fantasy just like only the creative and magic appeal of the circus can do.

HCU want to target schools (but not only) because youth are already there in great numbers and there is no need to assemble them. Though HCU brings fun, smiles and entrainment, it occurs in a teaching institution will also reinforce the educational tone of its messages. Additionally, all schools have dedicated hours in their syllabus for extra-curricular activities and HCU actions fit into this frame. Moreover, the students' parents and the communities surrounding the show location are invited to witness the spectacle widening audience number or/and be involved with the communication and visibility activities.

A Social Circus with a purpose has an impact long after the young people have completed their training or successfully graduated. By being socially conscious, we recognize the role HCU play in providing long-term stability, ensuring social and economic development and continuing inspires young people to become creative directors of their own lives.

OUTCOMES

The adopted method changes the way persons think, feels and behaves. It fully captivates and engages the audience, focuses the attention of spectators, and actively involves them in a vivid and exciting experience. The circus show strengthens the emotional and psychological/psychosocial appeal of messages and provides an interesting, entertaining, thrilled, and different way to explore crosscutting social issues. It is this ability to touch emotions that allows our approach to influence behaviours and unlock potentials in ways that traditional education cannot.

Because art is love made public and also a different language itself, the Social Circus model can bring about a personal transformation in both, the performers and the spectators; to impact singles, groups, communities, society and organizations responsible for protection. By celebrating and demonstrating what is achieved with a different approach to education HCU ensures moments that nurture youth and communities' future aspirations.

Creative cultural acts have powerful effects on the economy, societies and the whole world, as they talk straight to the people's hearts. The HCU approach creates an innate sense of pride in those who have little chances elsewhere. With a high unemployment rate in Uganda and the rising issues with idle youth, it is possible to keep young adults focused on a goal and the provision from various organizations also means that HCU members are paid for the work they do as circus artists, trainers or support staff during the production, social outreaches or private animations.

BENEFICIARIES

HCU's main direct beneficiaries are audience members of schools, neglected communities, youth centres, paediatric wards, refugee settlements, and young adults from different social extraction. Other direct beneficiaries are the unprivileged, at-risk youth living in slums enrolled in the Kasikonda Youth Circus School. The indirect beneficiaries are the members of the spectators' families and the at large Ugandan communities reached by the communication and visibility activities.

THE TEAM

All the performers, composing the HCU's core team, come from the same neighborhood: the Namuwongo suburb. A depressed and degraded urban area of the Ugandan capital Kampala, where about 80.000 people live. With more than 500 hours of professional training combined with self-coaching, all the artists are poly-talented and able to cover at least 4 circuses / performing art abilities. Thanks to extensive extra exercise and guidance, by international volunteers, 6 of them are also trainers with leadership plus mentorship competencies and able to pass the acquired skills to others in a different setting as circus clubs in schools or youth centres, during team building activities and, more especially, in our Kasikonda Youth Circus School programme. Please note that all the HCU performers involved in our shows are above 18 years old.

PROGRAMMES

- July 2013 - HCU's Kasikonda Youth Circus School offers weekly programs on basic/advanced circus and performing arts training - in a non-competitive way - for unprivileged youth.
- September 2015 - CIRCUS CLUBS opening in 3 Kampala International Schools (Ambrosoli, French and GEMS) allowing for an extra income to 6 HCU trainers.
- April 2017 - HCU offer weekly shows to the general public at its home base in Namuwongo.
- May 2018 - OKULOWOZA... reflections. We asked viewers from schools to draw or elaborate a short text expressing their feelings after seeing our educational show.

MEDIA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sX5PYpMsnyE>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zC28_FRNK7o

https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/08/12/album-02/1502549314_514309.html

<https://circustalk.com/news/761-2/>

<http://www.voanews.com/content/uganda-hiccup-circus-brings-smiles-and-education-around-country/2609005.html>

<http://www.hiccupcircusuganda.org/videos-newspapers-and-radios>

KEY RESULTS

56,300 + youth reached as audience members

88 live educational social circus shows staged

6 different productions of educational circus show for social change realized

545 contact hours on basic/advanced circus skills and performing arts training offered

10 unprivileged youth trained as artists in different circus and performing arts abilities form HCU core team

10 international professional circus/performing art coaches - from 6 different countries - reach Kampala to teach

6 national circus coaches trained

3 circus clubs opened

THE DREAM

"There Is Nothing Like A Dream To Create The Future" is our motto and the hope is to secure our own space, have a permanent show and transform the HCU project into a real National Training Centre in Circus Arts.