

# “Disabled” children living in African slums are shunned and thrown away

Emmanuel Baraka had made up his mind. It didn't matter that he was extremely poor or that he didn't know the way. It didn't matter that he had 80% loss in eyesight. It wasn't going to stop him. He was going to make a difference by starting something for disabled children who are been left behind. To give them a chance at life.

In Nairobi Kenya, public education has very few resources, especially for children with disabilities. 96% of all school in Kenya do not provide any resources for deaf, blind, or disable kids in general. They have little to no support in the education system to learn and develop. Those that are belong to the wealthy few have support which is why 4% of the student aged children are recorded. All age students are required to pay government issued testing to advance from one grade to the next. Children with poor families struggle to find ways to pay for these tests and most wouldn't know how to test as they are not taught sign language (Kenyan Sign language). They fail and society there casts them out. No plans, no future.



Emmanuel wanted to change that, so he walked about the slums of Nairobi, finding families needing help and his idea of a school willing to let them. Quickly, he found desperate mothers looking to help their children. Emmanuel found space to teach in hallways of old buildings and unfinished roof tops to teach. Helpful mothers and a couple of fathers provided some support as best they could, but the little band struggled to make ends meet. They needed help from the community, from partnerships, and hopefully with a little luck and providence a way to help these disabled kids living in extreme poverty.

## Winter 2016: Providence

Travis West bumped into Emmanuel Baraka in Nairobi the end of October 2016. After a brief introduction, He and a friend were invited to meet the families and students on Friday evening, November 4th, 2016.



The families gathered waited for them to arrive. Travis had called ahead to let Emmanuel know that they were hours away and not sure they would make it. The sun was going down before they arrived at the door. After a brief introduction, mothers presented themselves and their children. They then started a simple but effective program with singing and sign language. The day ended, said their goodbye's, and passed out some suckers Travis had bought them earlier that day. He stayed in touch with Emmanuel and began to learn more about the challenges, conditions, and desperation Emmanuel and his group found themselves in. They had been kicked out of the building and no were to go.

It was Christmas and the kids had lost the only school they had ever known. On the street, Emmanuel called Travis and asked if he could help. A couple of weeks later, the school moved, opened a new location and expanded its vision to Employment and Social Change.

The HEVIS Center was born January 2017 under the newly formed Non-Profit Organization, My Neighbor Foundation which has a singular focus on the needs of the poor. Quickly moving to a Community Based Organization (CBO) with the National Kenyan Government and opening its new doors to disabled and impoverished children, their families, and local community.

We hope that you join us and be a part of the story. To help these families and the community.

*Thank you,  
Travis and Emmanuel, Co-Founders of The HEVIS Center*