

The [CDTD](#)'s program of working with girls is anchored on 4R's: *reach. rescue. rehabilitate. reintegrate.*

Who are the girls?

CDTD is reaching girls that most Kenyans have already defined as 'a failure in life'; girls that have 'resigned themselves to their inescapable fate'.ⁱ One-hundred percent of the child domestic workers that the Centre has rescued and served are girls from very poor rural households. The average age girls enters into domestic work is sixteen years. Seventy-five percent of the girls are orphans or have only one living parent. An overwhelming 90 percent of the girls are victims of traffickingⁱⁱ; thirteen percent being internationally trafficked and 77 percent being domestically trafficked. Many have been physically or sexually abused during childhood or adolescence.

Domestic workers in Kenya are uneducated, underpaid, overworked and often - underageⁱⁱⁱ. As one newspaper article wrote, "almost every home in Kenya has a maid, this 'luxury' is the bane of thousands of uneducated poor girls^{iv}". Kenya has approximately 350,000 children working in the domestic sector^v. Child domestic workers are predominately very poor girls from rural areas with little or no formal education; they are among the most vulnerable and exploited children in Kenya. "Girls that should be in kindergarten are working 16 to 18 hours a day, seven days a week."^{vi} Most of the girls are taken to Nairobi by people who have gained their parents' confidence by promising wages and schooling. The reality is these girls are almost always abused and exploited; working up to 18 hours a day, beaten and humiliated by their employers, sleeping on the floor and sometimes even sexually abused. They never see the inside of a classroom and they earn no more than \$10 a month, if they are paid at all.

Organization Background

[The Centre for Domestic Training and Development in Nairobi, Kenya](#) was started in 2001 to help domestic workers negotiate fair labour conditions, protect themselves from abuse, and to encourage economic and career alternatives. CDTD works with an average of 500 women and girls each year, ranging from 10 to 35 years old. For young women over 18, the Centre offers professional household management training and job assistance. For girls under 18, the Centre's focus is to remove the girl from domestic work. In doing so, CDTD provides medical care and psycho-social support; emergency shelter, legal assistance, basic education, and in some instances vocational training. As a result of the Centre's outreach and advocacy initiatives, numerous organizations and individuals know and trust the Centre to rescue and rehabilitate girls that are being exploited and abused as child domestic workers. CDTD also works to identify families and communities for the girl's reintegration.

Talia Agler Girl's Shelter - Working through 4 R's

Reaching the girls. As a locally born, based, and led grassroots organization, CDTD is uniquely positioned to reach and transform the lives of previously inaccessible girls and young women that fall outside the reach of mainstream services of larger scale interventions. CDTD is the only organization serving child domestic workers, and its grassroots approach and community-based principles are the backbone of its success reaching such hard to reach girls. The Centre has succeeded in building strong relationships and network with all key stakeholders, including current and former domestic workers, police and social welfare offices, and other child welfare organization to reach these girls.

Rescuing the girls. On a weekly and sometimes daily basis, the Centre's outreach coordinator rescues girls in emergency situations. Within 24 hours of receiving a call or a referral, CDTD staff collect and relocate the girl to their shelter. Centre staff are highly trained in best interest of the child assessments and child protection as well as in working with victims of trafficking.

Rehabilitating the girls. The Centre provides tangible and practical direct services to the most vulnerable girls who have fallen through an unfair number of cracks already. While at the Centre the girls are given a safe space in which to build relationships with other girls and young women from different tribes and different socio-economic backgrounds. The girls are encouraged and expected to participate in shelter activities such as life skills training and literacy.

"Reintegration does not start outside the shelter or after they leave the shelter"^{vii}. The Centre explicitly ensures that rehabilitation starts the day rescued girls arrive at the shelter. Perhaps most importantly, the Centre provides all of these supportive services with tremendous warmth, compassion, and unwavering commitment. The beneficiaries choose to describe CDTD as "the only home for domestic workers" and "a home where you can speak and you will be listened to".

Reintegrating the girls. CDTD provides a continuum of services to rescued girls from emergency shelter to life skills to furthering educational opportunities in their home of origin or in the most suitable and sustainable environment. The Centre's founder and director is the first to admit that their system of reunifying and tracking the girls is weak; follow-up and sustainability is not where it should or could be. The Centre's operational capacity and geographical presence is currently limited to greater Nairobi, making reintegration and follow-up on cases in distant rural locations a very serious financial and logistical challenge.

The Centre is only able to lift up and out but a small number of these girls. As a relatively young grassroots organization, the Centre has very successfully reached extremely vulnerable girls that are very hard to reach through home-grown, targeted, and context specific strategies. CDTD demonstrates the important role that grassroots organizations play in reaching inaccessible adolescent girls in ways that mainstream service providers and agencies are not able to. As of today, CDTD is contributing on a small yet transformative scale to the girl effect through reaching, rescuing, and rehabilitating girls through intensive direct services. With increased human capacity and financial resources, it has the potential to give thousands more girls a chance

Comment [11]:

to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty - thereby unleashing and multiplying the girl effect in Kenya.

