We touch lives





Strategic Plan 2021 -2023





Creating a Better World for All Children – Let's create Together





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1. Background:

Children suffering from epilepsy, down syndrome, and autism in impoverished communities in Sub-Sahara Africa are one of the most vulnerable and forgotten groups. These children are trapped in sickness, extreme poverty, rejection, and cruelty sometimes even from people who are supposed to provide them care and protection. Poverty, deep-rooted cultural superstitions, and lack of awareness about these diseases are the main contributing factors for the maltreatment of children suffering from them. Because the children are not usually diagnosed and therefore, not treated, their condition drastically degenerates to a chronic disability. This further amplifies the rejection, maltreatment, and cruelty on the children as they are also labelled as "witches" and believed to be possessed by the "evil spirit". Sometimes an entire family is stigmatized and cut off from the society simply because they have a child who is living with one of these conditions. Lack of support services for these children; absence of laws that guarantee their protection; and social, economic and health policies that lead to poor living standards also make their lives miserable. World Health Organisation (WHO) recently reported that the maltreatment of children in Africa is predominantly high and children with disabilities are four times more likely to suffer from abuse or neglect.

WE TOUCH LIVES is dedicated to improving the lives of these children and ensuring that they live a normal and dignifying life. In this strategic plan titled **"Creating a Better World for All Children – Let's Create Together"**, WE TOUCH LIVES will rescue children at risk, provide them treatment and basic healthcare, protect them from all forms of abuse, develop them, support victims and their families, build the capacity of local stakeholders, and mobilise local solidarity and support for the children. The strategic plan is action-based and goal-oriented. It has set out key strategic areas of focus (SAF) which reflect the areas where WE TOUCH LIVES will focus its efforts during the next three years. Under each SAF the goal that WE TOUCH LIVES is working to achieve is highlighted and the objectives which WE TOUCH LIVES has set to achieve the goals are

outlined, reflecting the direction WE TOUCH LIVES will be taking for the next three years to create a better world for the children.

WE TOUCH LIVES has identified four SAF as follows:

1. Sponsoring children at risk for treatment and development
2. Protecting children at risk
3. Supporting families of children at risk
4. Strengthening the capacity of local partners

2. History:

In 2018, Jipe Kelly, Founder of WE TOUCH LIVES travelled to his native village (Bangem) in Cameroon where he noted that many children in the village were living with symptoms of epilepsy and were not diagnosed and not getting any treatment. He also found out that lack of awareness and cultural superstitions about epilepsy and related illnesses such as down syndrome and autism was amplifying the mistreatment of children living with them in this community. With this, he was inspired to organise two awareness raising meetings in the villages of Bangem and Tombel that were well attended by villagers including the village notables. Important data was collected in these meetings that provided more insight about prevalence of these conditions in the community, risk factors and consequences.



12 March 2018 - Workshop with villages in Bangem - Cameroon



14 March 2018 - Workshop with villages in Tombel - Cameroon

The response from these workshops was positive and this led to the establishment of a local taskforce including some village notables that was tasked to rescue children who are victimized and protect children at risk. On returning to Ireland, Jipe set up a steering committee with the task of creating awareness and raising funds to support the work of the local taskforce in Cameroon. In developing this strategic plan, several meetings were held with the local taskforce in Cameroon and the steering committee in Ireland and recommendations from the meetings form the strategic planning.

3. Review and Re-planning:

An operation plan will be drawn up, annually, detailing key actions WE TOUCH LIVES will undertake to achieve the objectives set in the strategic plan. The intended outcome of each action, resources (internal and external) that will be required to support the action, the partners and key performance indicators will also be reviewed in the planning. At the end of the term of each Operational Plan, the Operational Plan will be reviewed in the context of the Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023 and the actions and priorities for the following year will be set.

4. Target Group and Countries:

The target groups for the work of WE TOUCH LIVES for the timeframe of this Strategic Plan will be as follows**:**

- Children suffering from epilepsy and their families including those living with symptoms and those diagnosed.
- Children suffering from autism and their families including those living with symptoms and those diagnosed.
- Children suffering from down syndrome and their families including those living with symptoms and those diagnosed.

WE TOUCH LIVES' target countries in Sub-Sahara Africa include **Cameroon, Rwanda and Kenya.**

Where the needs of children suffering from other forms of disability are similar to the needs of children suffering from epilepsy, down syndrome and autism, they will be included.



Dec 2018:
Meetings with elders in Tombel & Bangem villages to raise awareness about autism, epilepsy, and down syndrome.





March 2019:
Consignment of basic needs including cloth, food, hygiene and sanitary items provided to children and carers.





December 2019:
Volunteers participated in Mt Cameroon race to raise funds for sick children.



5. Vision and Mission:



WE TOUCH LIVES has a vision of a world of unwavering care and compassion for every child.



WE TOUCH LIVES' mission is to improve the lives of children suffering from epilepsy, down syndrome, and autism in impoverished communities in Sub – Sahara Africa and to ensure that the children live a normal, safe and dignifying life.



6. Strategic Areas of Focus (SAF):

WE TOUCH LIVES has identified six SAF under which it will centre its activities during this strategic plan. We will establish partnerships with local stakeholders on projects that centre around the SAF using a programmatic model of development. The SAF include:

1. Sponsoring children at risk for treatment and development
2. Protecting children at risk
3. Supporting families of children at risk
4. Strengthening the capacity of local partners

SAI 1 – Sponsoring Children at Risk for Treatment and Development

Goal:

The goal is to ensure that children living with epilepsy, down syndrome, and autism are relieved from sickness and that their condition does not degenerate to a disability that will be difficult to manage.

Objectives:

- Pay for the treatment of these children in recognized medical facilities.

- Ensure that children living with symptoms are properly diagnosed and an appropriate care plan is put in place to manage the condition.

- Support activities including mental, recreation and physical activities which enhance the development of children living with the conditions.



SAI 2 – Protect Children at Risk

Goal:

The goal is to ensure that children suffering from epilepsy, down syndrome and autism in this region are free from all forms of abuse.

Objectives:

- Challenge cultural beliefs, practices and attitudes that lead to the maltreatment of children living with these conditions.
- Promote norms and values that support pro-social, non-violent behaviour towards children living with these conditions.
- Recruit and support village taskforces to provide protection to the target group.
- Commission a study to look at models of protection of the target group.
- Organise and promote awareness creation and education events in targeted communities.
- Secure collaboration with local stakeholders including traditional authorities, government agencies, human right organisations, religion leaders etc. to fight the maltreatment of children with these conditions.
- Promote activities which develop and showcase the skills and talents of children with these conditions.



SAI 3 – Supporting Families of Children at Risk

Goal:

The goal is to relieve these families from stigma and poverty and to ensure that the families provide adequate care and protection for their suffering child.

Objectives:

- Support the families with training and resources to engage in income generating activities that provide them time to also care for their sick child.
- Support family-fun, networking, and training activities aimed at boosting the morals of the families and empowering them on the rights.
- Defend the families when they are victimized simply because they have a child who is sick.

SAI 4 – Strengthening the Capacity of Local Partners

Goal:

The goal is to ensure that local partners are equipped with knowledge and material resources to provide care, treatment, protection, and development of the children.

Objectives:

- Develop joint venture projects with local institutions that benefit children living with these conditions. WE TOUCH LIVES will target hospitals, schools, training centres, etc. for joint venture projects.
- Procure education and healthcare technology and equipment and donate to local schools and hospitals for use to improve the provision of care and development of children with these conditions.
- Support the provision of training to hospitals, schools, and other local institutions to build their capacity and improve their ability to manage cases.



7. Strengthening WE TOUCH LIVES' Organisational Capacity:

To be able to achieve the goals set in this strategic plan, WE TOUCH LIVES has identified the need to develop its organisational capacity that will ensure that WE TOUCH LIVES is established as a vibrant, responsible, and sustainable organisation. We will implement the following measures to achieve this:

- Register WE TOUCH LIVES with CRO as a company limited by guarantee, acquire charity status from Charities Regulator Commissioner and get all the necessary tax clearance that will enable WE TOUCH LIVES to raise funds in Ireland, and to partner with organisations with similar goals like WE TOUCH LIVES.
- Constitute WE TOUCH LIVES' board of trustees with individual who have skills in governance, fundraising, PR, etc. Also explore possibilities of establishing an Advisory Board.
- Develop the capacity of the Board of Trustees to ensure effective management and commitment of members to the organisation.
- Review Board performance on a regular basis.
- Recruit volunteers with skills in a range of areas in programme and organisational development including programme design, strategy development, governance, etc.
- Establish mechanisms including sub-committees for effective development, monitoring and evaluation of WE TOUCH LIVES' programmes.
- Develop a robust fundraising strategy that will support the delivery of WE TOUCH LIVES' programmes.
- Develop policies that ensure effective governance, management, compliance, and sustainability of WE TOUCH LIVES.
- Ensure that WE TOUCH LIVES has appropriate premises to implement this strategic plan.

- Join relevant networks of civil society organisations in Ireland and abroad including The Wheel, ADEPT, ECOSOC, etc.
- Develop and maintain WE TOUCH LIVES' newsletter.
- Develop and maintain WE TOUCH LIVES' website and social media platforms.
- Review and develop WE TOUCH LIVES' internal policies and procedures with a view to ensuring that all relevant policies and procedures are in place.

8. Governance & Management Structure:

WE TOUCH LIVES is governed by a Board of Directors who are responsible for providing leadership, setting strategy, and ensuring control. A non-executive Advisory Board will be established to be made up of people with specific skills and qualification that could, potentially, benefit WE TOUCH LIVES. The Advisory Board will provide strategic advice.

During the period of this strategic plan, a **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** will be appointed by the Board to provide leadership and day-to-day management of activities of the organisation. The CEO will recruit 4 additional staff members including Programme Manager, Fundraising Manager, Marketing and Communication Manager, Operations Director, and Administration Officer. All these positions will only be filled if the organisation is successful in its fundraising activities with respect to this strategic plan. WE TOUCH LIVES will also hire external consultants on short-term assignments if needed. In addition, WE TOUCH LIVES will develop a robust volunteer recruitment policy to support its programmes in Ireland and abroad.

9. Internal Control:

WE TOUCH LIVES will develop an internal control system that will include financial controls aimed at enabling the Board to meet its responsibilities for ensuring the integrity and accuracy of WE TOUCH LIVES' accounting records. A process of compliance will be established that will address the Board's wider responsibility to

maintain, review and report on all internal controls, including financial and operational. Key elements of WE TOUCH LIVES' internal control systems will include:

- Putting in place strict policies and procedures for the receipt, recording and control of donations received from private individuals and the corporate sector;
- Putting in place a formal organisational structure with clearly defined lines of responsibility, division of duties and delegation of authority;
- Preparing a detailed budget annually which is in line with the Strategic Plan and which must be approved by the Board;
- Ensuring that actual results and outcomes are compared regularly against budget and prior year to ensure alignment with budget, efficient administration and control, and value for money;
- Establishment of an internal Audit Committee that will report to the Board on all aspects of controls and risks.

10. Working with Partners in Africa:

Most of WE TOUCH LIVES' work will entail developing partnerships with local grassroot organisations in the region and working with partners on joint venture projects that are aligned with WE TOUCH LIVES' goals and objectives. Decision on local organisations to work with will be made by WE TOUCH LIVES Board of Trustees, that will ensure that potential partners are dully registered, extremely screened and externally audited by registered in-country auditors. If a partnership is established, WE TOUCH LIVES will review partners' financial policies and procedures and will hold independent discussions with partners' financial managers as part of routine monitoring and evaluation processes. Review of partners other donors' reports and audits will provide further security regarding financial management procedures. WE TOUCH LIVES has established an MOU with the following potential partners:

1. **Cherish Rural Life, Cameroon:** It is a non-profit organisation in Cameroon whose aim is to improve the living conditions of people living in rural villages.

2. **St Mary Charity, Cameroon**: It is a non-profit organisation in Cameroon that works with children living with physical and/or mental disability.

3. **Abandoned Kids, Cameroon:** It is a non-profit organisation that provides care to children who are living with a disability and are neglected by their parents and sometimes viciously abused in the society.

4. **Birashoboka Dufatanyije Organization (BDO), Rwanda**. It is a non-profit organisation in Rwanda that works the poorest and most vulnerable people especially children with disabilities to help themselves to realize their rights to services.

5. **South West Regional Hospital Buea, Cameroon**. It is the biggest public hospital in the South West Region, Cameroon. Our MOU with this hospital aims at streamlining the provision of treatment to children of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are suffering from epilepsy.

11. Fundraising:

Fundraising will be the responsibility of all Directors as they are charged with ensuring the short-term and long-term viability of the organisation. WE TOUCH LIVES will be proactive in developing fundraising activities and will adopt and strictly adhere to the Charities Regulator's Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public. WE TOUCH LIVES will also diversify its funding search (pursuing both project/programme and core funding) to meet short-term and long-term organisation's goals. Where necessary, WE TOUCH LIVES will partner with

organisations of similar goals to develop joint funding proposals. The following fundraising and funding sources have been identified:

- Government funding including Irish Aid, SIDA, GIZ, SDC, USAID, DFID etc.
- Funding from foundations and philanthropies including Open Society Foundation, Les Mills Fund for Children, BBC Children in Need, UN Women etc.
- Corporate Sponsorship – this will entail making solid and appealing presentations to businesses in Ireland that have corporate social responsibility focus, particularly those that have operations in the region e.g. Guinness.
- Public fundraising – this will entail recruiting volunteers' fundraisers, organising fundraising events, making funding appeals etc.

12. Management & Control Over Funds or Goods Sent Overseas:

WE TOUCH LIVES will employ a strict management and control procedure over funds or goods sent overseas to ensure that they benefit only the intended beneficiaries. The following procedures will be observed:

- Goods will only be sent overseas to provide for pre-identified needs.
- A list of beneficiaries will be compiled by local partners including their needs and WE TOUCH LIVES' Board will decide who will receive what.
- The goods will be shipped properly packaged and labelled for individual beneficiaries. The label will list all items in the package and the beneficiary will sign off on the goods received.
- Where possible, a staff or Board member of WE TOUCH LIVES will oversee the distribution of goods in the field and prepare a report. Local authorities and religion organisations will also be involved in the process.
- We will avoid sending goods in a piecemeal way to ensure proper management.
- All goods purchased locally must be properly invoiced.

- Project agreement must be signed with the benefiting partner or contractor before funds for a project in the region will be transferred to a partner or contractor.
- Local partners will be required to set up a dedicated bank account to be used on all projects with WE TOUCH LIVES.
- Withdrawal from the dedicated bank account must require at least 3 signatories.
- All project funds transferred to partners must be sent directly to the dedicated account following invoice.

13. Research & Sharing of Learning:

WE TOUCH LIVES will conduct/commission research, from time to time, to acquire greater understanding and in-depth knowledge on the impact of epilepsy, down syndrome and autism on children, their families, and communities and to surface issues including challenges, barriers, perspectives etc. associated with these diseases in rural villages in the countries where WE TOUCH LIVES will operate. This will help WE TOUCH LIVES to adapt a proactive approach to developing projects to mitigate the impacts.

As part of WE TOUCH LIVES' strategy to build solidarity and support for children suffering from these diseases, WE TOUCH LIVES will disseminate its research findings targeting stakeholders who have the power to improve the situation. Research findings will be made available for download, free of charge, on WE TOUCH LIVES website and will be communicated to policy makers and other civil society organisations which have an interest on the issues.

14. Risk Management Plan:

As it is usually the case, non-profit organisations are exposed to many risks that can threaten their existence if not professionally managed. The Directors will consider,

annually, the major risks to which WE TOUCH LIVES is exposed and will review and approve a risk register that scores risk based on the likelihood of occurrence and the impact on the organisation. They will also adopt a structured approach to manage the risks. The following have been identified as potential risks to WE TOUCH LIVES.

Potential Risk	Potential Impact	Risk Mitigation Steps
1. Inability to acquire funding	• Inability to implement and/or sustain the strategic plan. • Over reliance on volunteers and volunteer fatigue	• Diversify funding and fundraising streams. • Recruit new volunteers to bring new energy to the team. • Motivate the board to be actively engaged in fundraising.
2. Financial Misappropriation	• Financial loss • Damage to WE TOUCH LIVES' reputation • Regulatory action • Impact on funding	• Ensure proper financial control procedures • Set authorisation limit • Set time limit on leadership positions e.g. chair • Improve security of asserts. • Get insurance • Segregate duties
3. Inappropriate or loss-making fundraising activities.	• Resources withdrawn from key objectives • Resources and energy diverted from profitable fundraising • Accountability issues • Risk to reputation	• Monitor and review business performance and return • Ensure adequate budgeting and financial reporting for each specific activity • Appraise viability of fundraising activities • Ensure fundraising activities meet regulatory standard

		• Ensure adequate authorisation procedures for any funding provided by the organisation • Include funding and performance in financial reporting system
4. Lack of compliance with regulation and legislation.	• Fines, penalties, censure • Loss of licence to undertake activity • Employee or consumer action for neglect • Risk to reputation	• Identify key legal and regulatory requirements • Allocate responsibility for key compliance procedures • Undertake compliance monitoring and reporting • Prepare for compliance visits • Consider reports from regulators, auditors and others, such as staff, and action at appropriate level • Acquire relevant certifications e.g. Child First certification, Garda vetting etc.
5. Employees, volunteers and suppliers' liability.	• Court suit • Financial loss • Reputation damage	• Acquire appropriate public liability insurance • Ensure there is a liability disclaimer clause in all contracts with external suppliers
6. Conflict, adverse publicity and public perception	• Impact on voluntary income • Impact on voluntary input • Impact on use of service by beneficiaries • Ability to access grants or	• Have effective internal and external complaints procedures • Review complaints regularly • Have a crisis management strategy, including consistency of messages and nominated spokesperson • Communicate with supporters and beneficiaries

	contract funding affected • Loss of donor confidence or funding • Loss of influence • Loss of beneficiary confidence • Impact on members and staff morale	• Produce and circulate a quality annual report • Ensure good public relations

15. Volunteers Risk Assessment Plan:

WE TOUCH LIVES is aware of the potential risks its volunteers will be exposed to, particularly when deployed to remote villages in Sub-Sahara Africa. As such, we will pursue a robust risk assessment plan that will provide maximum safety and security for our volunteers when they are assigned to work in the region. Below are some of the risk factors we have identified and the steps we will take to mitigate them.



Jan 2021 – We Touch Lives volunteers planning activities in Cameroon.



Jan 2021 – meeting with Regional Hospital Buea, Cameroon.

Potential Risk	Occurrence Possibility	Mitigation Steps
Volunteers contracting tropical diseases in the field e.g. Cholera, Typhoid, Tetanus, Malaria etc.	High	• Provide appropriate orientation and training to volunteers that includes risk factors linked with tropical diseases before they travel to the region. • Provide appropriate health and travel insurance coverage for volunteers - that includes emergency evacuation, if required. • Ensure that volunteers have up-to-date travel vaccination for tropical diseases and provide them prevention medication (e.g. malaria prevention medication, insect repellent etc.), if needed. • Conduct health checks with volunteers before assigning them in the field. • Monitor outbreak and spread of viral diseases such as Cholera, Ebola, Covid19, etc. before assigning volunteers.
Safety and insecurity risks in the field including possibility of being caught in war, kidnappings, robbery etc.	High	• Monitor security situation in the field before assigning volunteers. • Ensure that appropriate authorization is acquired from authorities and security is provided when assigning volunteers to conflict areas. • Use the service of a reputable local security agency to provide security to volunteers, if required. • Work with local partners to organise volunteers' placement and activities in the field. • When volunteers are assigned to work in the region, ensure that accommodation provided to them is safe and secured. • Ensure appropriate tools are provided to volunteers when assigned to work in the region. • Ensure appropriate supervision of volunteers when assigned in the field.

Accidents including road accidents, activities accidents e.g. fundraising, etc.		• While in the field, ensure that volunteers use transportation that does not expose them to accidents. If required, use reputable agency to hire cars. • Ensure that volunteers wear and use protective gear and equipment e.g. helmets when using bikes for local transportation. • Ensure that appropriate equipment and tools are provided to volunteers when participating in activities e.g. fundraising. • Provide First Aid tool kit for volunteers when assigned in the region.

16. Projected Income & Expenditure:

Income Forecast: 2021 – 2023

Item	2021	2022	2023	Total – 3yrs
1. Public fundraising	100,000	270,000	550,000	920,000
2. Donor & legacy funding	70,000	350,000	500,000	920,000
Total income	**170,000**	**620,000**	**1050,000**	**1,840,000**

Expenditure Forecast – 2020 -2022

Item/Activity	2021	2022	2023	Total – 3yrs
	Cost in €	**Cost in €**	**Cost in €**	**Cost in €**
• Programmes Cost	100,000	420,000	680,000	1,200,000
• Staff	50,000	150,000	320,000	520,000
• IT Equipment	2,000	6000	4000	12,000
• Overheads	1,000	9,600	12,000	22,600
• Fundraising	7,000	7,500	10,000	24,500

• Staff training	000	3,000	4,000	7,000
• International Travel	7,000	11,600	15,500	34,100
• Audits	2000	4,000	6,000	4000
Total: Year 1, 2 and 3	**Year 1:** **169,000**	**Year 2:** **618,100**	**Year 3:** **1,051,500**	**1,824,100**

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