

YouthActionNet®

CASE STUDY SERIES

Help the Street Children:

*Creating Safe Havens for At-Risk
Children in Senegal*

A partnership between:



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

School of Foreign Service
Global Human Development Program



Introduction

This is one of a series of case studies produced by students enrolled in the Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University through its partnership with the International Youth Foundation (IYF). Students enrolled in a course exploring the role of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs were paired with young leaders of social ventures identified through the IYF's YouthActionNet® program. The students were given the assignment of analyzing the venture's assets, successful methodologies, and opportunities for investment to increase impact. Through this experiential learning process, the student consultants gained hands-on experience and exposure to the needs of social enterprises. The ventures, too, benefited from student insights into their strengths, areas for growth, and recommendations for enhancing their impact and sustainability. The Georgetown practicum is part of YouthActionNet's larger efforts to partner with institutions of higher learning around the globe to integrate social change into the academic experience and career interests of students.

International Youth Foundation

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities.

www.iyfnet.org

YouthActionNet®

Since 2001, YouthActionNet, a program of the International Youth Foundation, has provided founders of social ventures, ages 18 to 29, with the training, networking, coaching, funding, and advocacy opportunities they need to strengthen and scale their impact. These young social entrepreneurs have pioneered innovative solutions to critical local and global challenges, resulting in increased civic engagement, improved health, education reform, economic opportunity, environmental protection, and more inclusive societies. Our work is carried out through a network of 23 national and regional youth leadership institutes that collectively support over 1,350 young social entrepreneurs globally.

www.youthactionnet.org

Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University

The Global Human Development Program of Georgetown University is home to one of the world's premier master's degree programs in international development. An innovative, academically rigorous skills-based graduate program, the Master of Global Human Development degree prepares the next generation of development professionals to work with public sector agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations that advance development. Through coursework, extracurricular activity, and practical fieldwork experiences, our graduates develop the insights, skills, and experiences necessary to become leaders in development and make a difference in our global community.

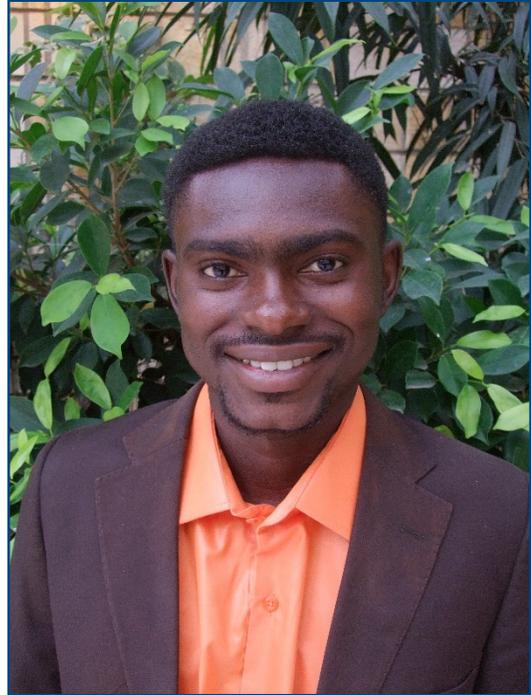
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INTRODUCTION

Meet Waly Edouard Ndiaye: Founder & President

Waly Edouard Ndiaye, Founder and President of the non-profit organization *Aider les Enfants de la Rue*—or Help the Street Children (HSC)—is a medical student at Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, and an Ashoka Youth Venture and *Projet JETS* Fellow. Waly is also Co-founder and President of the Economic Interest Group, G.I.E “And Liguey” (a Wolof expression meaning work together).

When Waly was a little boy, every morning his mother would walk him to the bus stop to take the school bus. He would see barefooted children in dirty, tattered clothes on the streets begging for money or food. This situation saddened him and he developed the desire to help and create a better environment for these children.



Waly founded Help the Street Children on December 27, 2012, after participating in a Christmas event organized by a non-profit organization serving street children the previous day. The event rekindled his childhood memories and intention to help disadvantaged children. Waly then approached his friends to join the organization and together, on January 19, 2013, they formed the first HSC board.

Help the Street Children combats child exploitation by providing services and safe spaces for vulnerable children.

The Problem

In Senegal, thousands of children live in a condition of modern-day slavery and are forced to beg on the street daily in order to survive. These children are known as *talibés*, or street children, and usually are young boys ranging in age from 5 to 15 years old.¹ Most often, *talibés* come from neighboring countries like Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and The Gambia, and are sent by their families to Senegal to gain religious instruction from local, Koranic teachers known as *marabout*. Historically, *marabout* were charged with running Koranic schools known as *daaras*² where *talibés* from across the region could safely come to receive religious education. Nowadays, instead of educating *talibés*, *marabout* in many urban areas of the country have turned to exploiting the children in their care. A 2010 report from Human Rights Watch noted that much of the food and money that the *talibés* earn from begging goes directly to the *marabout*. This report also discovered that “many of the children suffer from severe malnutrition, while the long hours on the street put them at risk of harm from car

¹ Human Rights Watch. 2010. “Senegal: Boys in Many Quranic Schools Suffer Severe Abuse.” April 15. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/04/15/senegal-boys-many-quranic-schools-suffer-severe-abuse>.

² Human Rights Watch. 2016. “Senegal: New Steps to Protect Talibés, Street Children.” July 28. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/28/senegal-new-steps-protect-talibes-street-children>.

accidents, physical and sexual abuse, and diseases.”³ As a result of such devastating conditions, many of the talibés, in an effort to escape, run away and turn to delinquent activities. Those escaping the daaras are known locally as *fakhman*, or runaway boys.³

The Solution

HSC’s main goals are to help street children access healthcare, to support their academic education and vocational training, and promote the reintegration of both talibés and fakhman into society to increase their chances of survival and promote their overall wellbeing.

HSC organizes free healthcare camps for the prevention and treatment of epidemics and chronic diseases among the street children. This has been done in Guédiawaye Gounass and Ouest Foire (two neighborhoods in Dakar) as part of the project "Health for Children Talibés," launched in September 2015 in partnership with Ashoka and the West Africa Research Center (WARC). HSC partners with the daaras to provide classes in French, civics, and hygiene to the talibés. Low cost workshops are also available to ensure the professional development of both talibés and fakhman.



Picture 1: Hygiene awareness campaign to prevent the spread of diseases like cholera.

In looking into their survival and well-being, HSC conducts both day searches on the streets where they interact with the talibés and night searches where they interact with the fakhman, and discuss the challenges they face and viable solutions. Additionally, the fakhman are either taken home or to a shelter. To date, HSC has met 140 fakhman, 386 talibés, and 6 beggar girls. HSC has also organized two clothing donation drives, dinners, a Christmas party, and recreational days for the talibés, where they receive free meals, healthcare services, and donated clothes, mats, containers, and detergents. This has happened in Parcelles Assainies, Yoff, and Nord Foire at the youth center Keur Don Bosco, and Rebeuss.

Operational Model

Help the Street Children is a nonprofit organization registered under 16114 / MINT / DGAT / DLP / DLA-PA in the Ministry of Interior, Senegal. It generates income through the sale of merchandise such as cards and t-shirts, membership fees, and monthly contributions from members. HSC also receives funding through NGO grants, crowdfunding, and individual donor contributions.

HSC is based in Dakar with its physical office at Cité Diamalaye 2 Villa 127 TE. Thanks to their partnership with Jokkolabs, a well-respected entrepreneurship incubator, they now hold their

³ Human Rights Watch. 2010. "Off the Backs of the Children: Forced Begging and Other Abuses against Talibés in Senegal. April 15. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/04/15/back-children/forced-begging-and-other-abuses-against-talibes-senegal>.

monthly meetings and host other activities at the Jokkolabs offices in Dakar at no cost. HSC currently has a membership of thirty people in Senegal with more than thirty volunteers. In July 2015, subsequent boards were created in Lille, France; Atlanta, USA; and Montreal, Canada. These are headed by coordinators Boubacar Cisse, Hassan Salam Fall, and Angelique Marguerite Berthe Diene respectively. So far, the membership is at 13 in France, 5 in the United States, and 7 in Canada. The boards are tasked with securing new partners, members, and volunteers.

To scale its reach, HSC plans to:

- **Upgrade daaras into modern Koranic centers.** In order to be impactful, HSC is aware that restructuring and reorganizing the daaras needs to be at the center of its operations. So far, there are 1,006 daaras in Dakar serving thousands of talibés who are mostly between the ages of 5 and 17. The daara offers the ideal setting for providing opportunities to the talibés. HSC can transform the daaras into centers for education and vocational training, set up a medical facility, and provide a formalized, regular meal system to feed children in the daaras to prevent begging and delinquency in the streets. It can source various partners to provide technical, material, and financial support towards this end. So far, HSC has visited several daaras to assess their conditions and develop a strategy for their transformation. This may pose a challenge for HSC, which will need to secure support from the daara owners, who may be hostile or push back. The running of daaras is seldom subject to state regulation, making it easier for abuses to occur. The Senegalese government recently created state-regulated daaras to reduce these abuses. HSC would want to explore this route by working with the state-regulated daaras first, and lobbying and partnering with the government to design and implement regulations that must be adhered to by all daaras, thus compelling the owners to restructure and reorganize. This will give HSC ground to come in and assist them accordingly with less push back.
- **Build their own shelter for the fakhman.** HSC wants to build a shelter for the fakhman that will serve the same purpose as the upgraded daaras, plus provide a decent place for them to sleep. This centralization will also help them save on their resources.
- **Expand their activities locally and to neighboring countries.** HSC is currently based in Dakar but intends to increase its presence locally in regions with many talibés such as Thies, Saint Louis, and Kaolack. This expansion will require additional manpower therefore, the organization is mainly targeting the support of students at the universities in Saint Louis and Thies. With more and more people joining the organization, the proposed structure delegates the running of programs in different regions to the partners and members who reside in those regions. This structure will be replicated in the neighboring countries of Mali, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau, who face the same conundrum of talibés and street children.

HSC's operational and financial partners are: Ker Oumoul Mouminina Social-Medical Center, Ginddi Center, Presence Medicale Saint Luc, Groupe Bon Samaritain, Ker Don Bosco Youth Center, Solidarite Pour les Enfants de la Rue (SPER), Ashoka, West African Research Center (WARC), Just Share Ideas in Harmony (JustIsh), American Council, Jokkolabs, CSM's Heart, Africa for Africans (AFA), Cathedrale College of Dakar, and Guediawaye Priorite Sante (GPS).

KEY ASSETS AND SUCCESSFUL METHODOLOGIES

HSC has two main assets: its leadership and the diverse skill sets of its members and volunteers. In this section, we explore these assets—how they came about, how they have been nurtured, and how they contribute to the functioning and success of the organization. HSC assets are interesting because they are human resource based and vital to achieving its targets. Secondly, the assets are complimentary. The leadership under Waly will be instrumental in harnessing and coordinating the diverse skill set of the members for the growth and development of HSC.



Picture 2: HSC is changing lives by lending compassion.

Leadership

All successful organizations need effective leaders. Good leadership can maximize productivity, shape a positive culture, and promote harmony. Waly has exhibited good leadership skills. His managerial and interpersonal skills have been instrumental in communicating and inspiring the entire HSC team. This has encouraged more people to support and join the organization. Their confidence in him has translated into increased financial, operational, and moral support. Delegation is also key in leadership. HSC's leadership has administered this through its scaling plans to create separate boards in separate areas and have the members who reside in those areas head the programs.

Waly acquired these leadership skills mostly through the Ashoka Youth Venture and YouthActionNet Fellowships on leadership and social entrepreneurship respectively. Furthermore, Waly holds certificates in social entrepreneurship, leadership, and social management from the University of Connecticut, West African Research Center and JustIsh. He practices the strategies learned to create and manage programs that will ensure the organization meets its targets and goals. He's also learned to be innovative and incorporate his members' ideas for good results.

Diverse Skill Set

Another asset is the diversity of HSC members, which include physicians, engineers, accountants, nurses, and translators, among many others, who represent different ages and ethnicities as well as educational levels, skill sets, and responsibilities. The following benefits have accrued from HSC's diversity:

- The multi-skilled, multi-talented members leave HSC partners satisfied with its mode of operation. The relationship between members, and with partners and other stakeholders, has improved.
- It has saved the organization money as members donate their skills free of charge, allowing the organization to provide specialized services to the talibés and fakhman.
- HSC is able to communicate to its stakeholders in a way that they understand and appreciate, helping to overcome past unconscious biases or misconceptions.

- Products, services, and packages have been designed to fit unique groups of people given the pooling of experience, ideas, and education among members.
- Members use their networks of friends and partners to help market the organization.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT

Our analysis of HSC identified three major areas that pose a challenge to the operations of the venture but also provide opportunities for investment. These are: funding sources, human resources, and monitoring and evaluation. HSC needs a clear strategic plan to guide the development of systems to respond to these areas. The venture is ready for this investment because the initial conditions are right. Furthermore, without increased funding, human resource development, and a monitoring and evaluation system, HSC will not be able to successfully meet its scaling and long-term goals.

Funding

The financial resources available to HSC are limited and insufficient to sustain the venture and ensure the growth and sustainability of its projects. Currently, HSC raises revenue through the sale of merchandise (e.g., t-shirts, cards), member subscriptions and monthly contributions, and small grants from NGOs. Financial constraints have made it increasingly difficult for HSC to manage its programs with ease. Increased funding will allow HSC to conduct more healthcare camps, buy drugs and first aid kits for more street children, and purchase food and clothes for the children. HSC also needs funding for logistics, such as transportation fees, and printing and publicity material. These projects need a substantial amount of resources to be efficient and effective in meeting program targets. HSC needs to generate approximately US\$5,000 annually to meet its program and logistical costs.

To obtain more funds, HSC will have to put additional resources into creating successful campaigns, making the right connections, and completing the necessary paperwork to apply for grants and aid programs. The disadvantage is that more attention is likely to be put toward fundraising than HSC's program goals. HSC will have to raise a lot of resources for its scaling projects such as restructuring the daaras and building the shelter. The amount is yet to be determined.

There are three main ways that HSC can raise funds to supplement grants and revenue raised from merchandise sales:

Challenge Fundraising

A challenge-based event—such as a marathon/walk, a dance, or fun day—has the advantage of bringing together motivated individuals, and their networks, to complete a challenge while contributing to a worthy cause. HSC would need to be strategic about which events it chooses to engage its network in supporting. This will be a great way to work with the government and other partners and participate in their initiatives as well. To enhance its visibility, HSC can set a table at partner events to collect donations and raise awareness of its projects.

Community Fundraising

Another viable option is raising funds through churches and mosques, sports teams, college organizations, family reunions, or the various organizations members work for. By proposing

fundraising campaigns to HSC followers in these contexts, they can decide to run a campaign through their business or community group on HSC's behalf. They will require the fundraising tools needed to collect donations quickly, easily, and most importantly inexpensively. Donors and supporters can host their own events, in their communities, on their time, at their cost, in order to raise money for the venture.

Individual Fundraising

One strategy for individual fundraising is to encourage donors and supporters to tap into their social networks to spread the word about HSC. Supporters could raise money in the context of weddings, graduations, memorials, or virtual events. Crowdfunding will also be a great way to raise revenue.

Human Resources

HSC needs more committed members and volunteers to deliver on its mandate. Its current members and volunteers must undertake more responsibilities and carry a larger workload, which can result in mistakes and inefficiencies that can negatively impact the organization.

Lack of sufficient human resources also limits the amount of children HSC can reach and assist. There are at least 100,000 talibés and 15,000 fakhman. It will require extensive manpower and support to assist even a tenth of this number. The success of the HSC street searches has been curtailed by the amount of time devoted to operations due to the low ratio of HSC staff versus talibés and fakhman. In short, if HSC had more members and volunteers, the work would be easier and it would be able to help more street children.

Third, HSC wants to build a more involved and time conscious team. This level of involvement requires not giving up, even if it gets tough. It signifies a commitment to change, loyalty, reliability, devotedness, and not quitting when it gets boring, challenging, or discouraging.

The Opportunity

HSC needs a clear recruitment strategy and plan to keep members active. How can they do this?

1. *Set clear goals and targets.* For example, target people who:
 - Form part of the constituency HSC wants to represent or work with
 - Identify with the aims and objectives of HSC
 - Support and want to work for the HSC cause
 - Have skills and experience that will help HSC
 - Can influence other people and motivate them to join the organization

The organization should decide a target number for how many members they want to recruit, and set a deadline by which they want to achieve their goals.

2. *Decide the message HSC wants to communicate to potential members.*
Why should anyone join HSC? Unless recruiters can answer this question, they will not be able to persuade people to join.
3. *Identify where potential new members can be found.*

HSC knows the area well and understands the constituency they are targeting. It needs to determine whether recruitment should be by calling a public meeting, or by going from door-to-door or other methods.

4. *Set up a team.*

The task of recruitment is enormous. No one person can do it alone. A team of five to ten people should focus on recruitment, the development of a recruitment plan, and implement it. Other members should also be encouraged to recruit new members whenever they can.

People usually join an organization because they want to do something for their community. But they also want to benefit in some way. HSC should find out what motivates members and make sure they manage them so that they stay motivated and involved.



Picture 3: Celebrating the National Day of Talibé, 2015

Monitoring and Evaluation System

HSC needs a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and plan for its key activities/programs and achievements. The organization's recognition of the plight of street children requires thorough assessment of the value of street children's rehabilitation in development and humanitarian disaster contexts. Effective, transparent M&E would reinforce the inherent benefits, risks, and limitations of addressing the issue of street children.

Without M&E, HSC is unable to achieve its full potential because of lack of consolidated information showcasing project progress. The members and other stakeholders are unable to learn from each other's experiences or build on their expertise and knowledge. Any reports HSC generates will not have the level of transparency and accountability provided by M&E, and allow for lessons to be shared more easily. HSC cannot properly trace mistakes it has made and identify paths for learning and improvement.

HSC also risks losing its institutional memory. Having no M&E in place deprives HSC of a starting point for questioning and testing assumptions, and a way to assess the crucial link between implementers and beneficiaries on the ground and decision-makers.

The Opportunity

An investment in an M&E framework would consist of a table that describes the indicators that are used to measure whether the program is a success. The M&E system would include things like who is

responsible for the program, what forms and tools will be used, how the data will flow through the organization, and who will make decisions using the data.

M&E systems are important to assess that the venture's programs are achieving set targets. Second, M&E is relevant to donors who need to assess whether HSC is a reliable partner, upon which further collaborations could be established.

An M&E system will ensure that the venture's assets are efficiently increasing the productivity of HSC. The board will be able to determine which member's skillset is more valuable and delegate and assign roles accordingly. The development of a strong M&E plan is of vital importance in strengthening the sustainability of programs as well as human and financial resources.

CONCLUSION

For almost a decade, April 20 has been marked as the National Day of the *Talibé*. In March 2013, nine children in a daara in Dakar burned to death. After the fire, President Sall and his then Premier, Abdoul Mbaye, announced the repatriation of all non-Senegalese talibés, and banned child begging on the streets and all daaras throughout the country. But conflicts at the time in neighboring Mali and Guinea Bissau forced the government to rescind the expulsion order. Additionally, the absence of child begging on the streets lasted only a few days. This proves government policies have failed, if not exacerbated the talibés conundrum.

The problem can be solved through initiatives such as Help the Street Children. Since its inception, HSC has worked toward the provision of basic needs for street children. The government and international community need to support organizations such as HSC. Now is the time to invest further as HSC members are highly motivated and many people have expressed interest in joining or partnering with the venture. HSC has demonstrated results and set new targets in line with its strategic plan. Continuous support and growth will yield promising results and in resolving the issue of talibés.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT HELP THE STREET CHILDREN

For further information, please visit HSC's social media sites as listed below:

- [Help the Children Facebook Page](#)
- Twitter: @HSC_AER
- Instagram: help_the_street_children

HSC will soon have a website available.

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