

## **KAWEESI MARK Biography**

My name is Kaweesi Mark, I am a Ugandan youth orphaned at age 15, dropped out of school, grew up in the slums and experienced homelessness. In 2008 I was exposed to breakdance and hip-hop, since then I earned a new and meaningful identity. Instead of Mark the orphan, the school dropout or the homeless boy, my label changed to Mark the breakdancer or Mark the breakdance teacher.

While still living in the slums, I started sharing my breakdance skills for free with others in communities throughout Uganda. That experience helped me to learn and develop more skills and abilities, and inspired me to start acting to solve deeper problems; low self confidence in children, disempowerment in young people and communities, bad leadership practices, inaccessibility to formal and informal learning opportunities, social divides, youth in-activeness, lack of productive employment, ineffective methods of education among others.

My tools are breakdance & Hip-Hop, creative facilitation, organizing events, alternative education and other improvisation methods.

I work with local and international schools, community centres, orphanages, prisons, drug rehabilitation centres, children's homes, seminars, events, companies, ghettos/slums, and other organizations.

I founded Imagination Circle Ltd, co-founded Break-Fast Jam and joined Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU) to work with others in tailor making sustainable solutions to such problems.

### **Special accomplishments:**

1. Featured in a book; BUILD! The power of hiphop diplomacy in a divided world. By Mark Katz.

<https://global.unc.edu/news-story/bookmark-this-build-the-power-of-hip-hop-diplomacy-in-a-divided-world/>

2. A 2016 Mandela Washington Fellow, a prestigious professional development scholarship by former U.S president Barack Obama, awarded to young African leaders making a difference throughout Sub sahara African region.

3. Featured in the documentary film “Shake the Dust,” produced by the American filmmaker, Adam Sjoberg and Hiphop artist Nas.

<http://www.shakethedust.org/>

### **Websites and Social Media Accounts:**

[Www.kaweessimark.com](http://www.kaweessimark.com)

[Www.imaginationcircle.org](http://www.imaginationcircle.org)

[www.breakfastjam.org](http://www.breakfastjam.org)

[www.facebook.com/breakdanceprojectuganda](https://www.facebook.com/breakdanceprojectuganda)

### **Mark has worked in the following countries:**

The Netherlands ( teaching workshops at pre-primary and primary schools, 2019 & 2018).

United States of America (touring with Shake The Dust film, speaking and teaching workshops at schools and universities in California, 2017).

United States of America (Mandela Washington Fellowship for young African leaders, 2016);

Tanzania (Facilitating workshops for students and after school activity leaders, 2016);

Kenya(Break-Fast Jam, Take A Break, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016);

Poland (Brave Festival 2013);

Italy (We Free Days events 2012, 2013);

Denmark (World Images in Motion youth education program 2011)

### **Mark has worked with the following organizations:**

UNICEF, European Union Commission, American Embassy in Uganda, UNHCR, Uganda Prison Service, Next Level Academy program(USA), Kampala International School Uganda (KISU), The International School Of Uganda(ISU), French School Kampala (Uganda), Ambrosoli International

School (Uganda), Brave Festival (Poland), Breakdance Project Uganda(BPU), Breakpoint (Denmark), The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs/CKU, Uganda Hands For Hope, In Need Home(Uganda), Peace and Justice Commission (Uganda), In Movement Art for Social Change (Uganda), InterAID (Uganda), Kids of Africa Orphanage (Uganda), The Naguru Remand Home (Uganda), Product Of Prison (Uganda), Sanpatrignano rehabilitation centre (Italy), Take A Break (Kenya), Peace Corps Uganda, Street Dance Kenya, Youth Legacy Africa(Uganda), You Inspire You(Uganda), Innovative Communities Organization(Canada), Cornerstone Development Home(Uganda), Ashinaga Children Centre (Uganda), People Concern Children Project(Uganda), Rainbow International School Uganda, Light Up Uganda Project, Niteo Eva Ruf Resource Centre(Uganda), Little Light Uganda, Kampiringisa National Rehabilitation Centre(Uganda), among others.