

## KAWEESI MARK - ABOUT

I am a Ugandan arts and culture organizer/promoter, creative facilitator, breakdancer and Hip-hop practitioner using such skills and abilities to see, communicate, develop and unleash potential inside people.

I have been involved in community organizing since 2008, primarily using hip-hop elements for meaningful change among young people by teaching skills & knowledge-based classes, designing & facilitating transformative processes in work & personal change, Team building, Culture & perspective shifts, and organizing community events, social activities and tailor-making effective programs for young people.

<http://kaweesimark.com/>

In 2008 I was exposed to breaking and hip-hop by Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU) where I learned many valuable life lessons. I earned a new and meaningful identity; instead of “Mark the orphan, the school dropout or the homeless boy” as I was referred to before, my label changed to Mark the breakdancer or Mark the breakdance teacher.

Such a shift in how I saw myself and how the outside world saw me empowered me so much. While still living in the slums, I voluntarily started sharing my breakdance skills for free with others in communities across the country through activities by BPU, myself and other initiatives. That experience helped me to learn and develop more skills and abilities, and inspired me to start acting to solve deeper problems. I founded Imagination Circle Ltd (est 2018) and co-founded Break-Fast Jam (est 2011) to work with others in tailor making sustainable solutions to problems.

**Imagination Circle Ltd**, is a social enterprise that increases and supports the discovery and growth of potential among young people by assisting them to find, grow and learn to use their strengths and talents well. We provide informal learning opportunities & extracurricular activities, personal and interpersonal leadership development, creative and innovative programming as ways to nurture a whole person, promote effectiveness and transform lives.

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

**Break-Fast Jam**, a Ugandan sourced unique and powerful annual festival of breakdance, hiphop, creativity, arts and urban culture. <http://breakfastjam.org/>

I work with local & international communities; schools (kindergartens, primary, secondary and colleges), centres, prisons & rehabilitation, camps, events, governmental and non-governmental organizations, embassies & diplomatic missions. I do dance & creative movement, interactive dialogue & discussions, speaking, creative facilitation, team-building, teaching workshops & trainings, individual & group growth activities, organizing events, coordinating programs, tailor-making effective solutions.

### **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,” executively produced by the American rap Nasir “Nas” Jones, filmed by Adam Sjoberg.

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

### **My recent national and international engagements:**

#### Netherlands

2022: Doing presentations, speaking on panels and participating in workshops at The Notorious IBE cultural festival in Heerlen, Netherlands.

2019: Speaking and leading workshops at Kennis (knowledge) Festival in Deventer city.

2017: Facilitating activities at De Esdoorn and many other public schools.

## United States of America

2017: touring with Shake The Dust film, speaking and teaching workshops at University of California Irvine, Chapman University, Los Angeles Leadership Academy.

2016: undergoing Mandela Washington Fellowship for young African leaders, leadership development program at Wagner college in United States of America.

## Uganda

2022/21: Coordinating artists development and capacity building virtual and live program for young Ugandan breakdancers and musicians for American Voices organisation. I was involved in a consultant capacity on recommendation of US mission Uganda's public affairs section.

2022/21: Coordinator of returnees debrief and departees pre-departure orientation events for candidates of Mandela Washington Fellowship for young African leaders initiative (MWF-YALI) for US Mission Uganda's public affairs section.

## Tanzania

2016: Facilitating workshops for students and after school activity leaders at international school of Tanganyika in Dar Es Salaam.

## Kenya

2013, 2014, 2015, 2016: directing Break-Fast Jam preliminary events in Nairobi.

## Poland

2013: managing a group of minors (boys and girls) from Breakdance Project Uganda to participate at Brave kids Festival.

## Italy

2012, 2013: holding workshops, sharing knowledge & experiences at We Free Days events with Breakdance Project Uganda.

## Denmark

2011: Leading workshops in schools, building performances, speaking during World Images in Motion youth education program in various cities across Denmark.

**I have collaborated with the following organizations as individual or with teams:**

US Mission Uganda, American Voices, UNICEF, European Union Commission 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), Kampala Community International Pre-school, 7 Hills international school, 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.

