

[00:00:03] **GEE WESLEY**

Hello everyone, my name is Gee Wesley and I'm a graduate student at the Center for Curatorial Studies here at Bard College. I want to start by welcoming everyone gathering with us today and express our deep gratitude to our guest, George Stanley Nsamba, also known as "Nes", for graciously accepting our invitation to engage you in conversation around the beauty and urgency of art and activism, a response to HIV and AIDS. So this event has been organized in conjunction with Day Without Art, which is an international day of mourning and action founded in response to the AIDS crisis and organized by New York-based cultural nonprofit, Visual AIDS, to provoke dialogue, support HIV positive artists and preserve a legacy, because AIDS is not over. Since the year 1989, Visual AIDS has commissioned and distributed a video program for Day Without Art, coordinating screenings at over a hundred venues around the world. In addition to today's event, CCS Bard is proud to partner with visual aids for Day Without Art 2020, presenting "Transmissions", which is a program of six videos considering the impact of HIV and AIDS beyond the United States. The program brings together six artists working across the world, including Nes, who we have with us today.

[00:01:25]

And George, Nes, it's been a pleasure learning about your work and collaborating with you in the development of today's program. And we're just so pleased to welcome you here online to CCS. So this invitation is the culmination of a long trail of conversations and dialogues between students here at CCS, alongside faculty and staff of our program, about ways of addressing and responding to the ongoing AIDS crisis and amplifying the work of Day Without Art. A number of students have been a part of these dialogues and conversations, and a few of them will be helping facilitate today's conversation, including myself. Caitlin Chaison, Bernardo Mosqueira, and Christine Nyce. We want to extend a special thanks to CCS staff and leadership, particularly Lauren Cornell, Ramona Rosenberg and Casey Robertson, for your support, guidance, generosity and stewarding today's program. So throughout this event, we encourage you all to participate as you wish. So video or audio on or off, via chat or by unmuting. And please note that Zoom is equipped with closed captioning if you so desire to use to

make use of that.

[00:02:37]

We also want to remind you to continue attending future programming at CCS, which you can find listed on our website, which is [ccsbard.edu](http://ccsbard.edu). And we invite you to attend our next event, which is next week, Thursday, December 10th at 7 p.m., which will be a book launch of *Perfidia*, the latest CCS publication, I believe, which was released in conjunction with our current exhibition "Centers of Somewhere", Sky Hopinka's solo presentation that's curated by Lauren Cornell. So before turning things over to Bernardo, who will introduce Ned, I want to take a moment to provide a land acknowledgment. So in the spirit of truth and equity, it is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that we are gathered on sacred homelands of Munsee and Muhheaconneok people, who are the original stewards of this land. Today due to forced removal of the community resides in northern Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We honor and pay respect to their ancestors past and present, as well as to future generations, and we recognize their continuing presence in their homelands. We understand that our acknowledgement requires those of us who are settlers to recognize our own place in and responsibilities towards addressing inequality. That this ongoing and challenging work requires that we commit to real engagement with Munsee and Mohican communities to build an inclusive and equitable space for all.

[00:04:31]

So we're all here today to enjoy the company and to learn from George Stanley Nsamba, also known as Nes. He's a filmmaker, a cinematographer, a spoken word artist, a human rights activist born and based in Kampala, Uganda. Nsamba's films "Time irreversible" from 2017, "The Dummy Team" from 2016, "Silent Depression" from 2015, "Crafts: the Value of Life" from 2015, have screened throughout Africa, Europe, Asia and the United States. In 2013, George founded the Ghetto Film Project, offering music, art, sport, chess and above all, socially engaged film productions to kids. The Ghetto Film Project has been rehabilitating, empowering and mentoring and training youth.

George describes himself as a graduate from the University of YouTube, having learned how to make movies on YouTube tutorials. And he has been an influential Ugandan filmmaker who's been developing highly inspirational movies, envisioning social change on a very short budget. George is, above all, a great storyteller. And we thank you very much, George, for accepting our invitation to be with us today. We hope that this can be a very open and kind of collective conversation. We'll pose an opening question, but we invite all of us here to be part of the discussions by making comments, asking questions at any time. Please use the chat box or say it in the chat. If you have a question, you're also free to use the raised hand feature. And there's a number of us who are co hosts on this event. And we'll be able to sort of see that if you so choose to kind of jump in that way or you are welcome to unmute your mic and our facilitators will be sure that you're given space to add to the discussion. So don't be shy at all. Just as a way to start the conversation... Nes, in our first online meeting, you mentioned that you have kind of powerful ideas about the role of art in society. As an artist yourself, as a mentor for younger generations, we'd really love to know about how art got into your life and also about which, in your opinion, is the role of art in the life of kids in the Ghetto Film Project. So, yeah, this kind of two part question about how art entered your life and and the role of art in the life of the kids in the Ghetto Film Project. So just thanks. Thanks once again for joining us. And maybe we can kind of kick things off there. Everyone else, please feel free to jump in, maybe that can give us a kind of baseline to sort of start the conversation.

[00:07:28] **GEORGE STANLEY NSAMBA**

I was saying thanks a lot for the introduction, the kind introduction and what it was said, I take it to heart. I think I didn't meet art, art met me, at a time that I needed it the most. When I was about five years old and my parents broke up, we often found ourselves... And it was me, my little cousin and my younger brother, we often found ourselves in a dark corner of the house in the night. We didn't have television, we didn't have electricity and all of the privileges that other people had. But the one privilege that I had is, at the time, it was called a privilege to lie. But over a period of time I realized it was actually creativity. So what I would do is, because of the boredom, I would sit

down and tell stories to my young cousin and my brother. And I think it was one story about a king that falls in love with a queen of another kingdom, and there is fighting between them. And I was young at the time. I think at that point, when I was about nine, I realized I want to tell stories, this is what I want to do. But then I had a rough life and I joined crime and everything that I was doing. And I kind of felt like storytelling was not the best, not for me. I was beaten by a mob. I can't forget the date, it was 11 September, 1989. I was beaten by a mob because I was caught in the shop, stealing. And I was beaten to near death and they let me go. And to me, that was another opportunity to live, because I've seen so many of my friends die, killed in front of me at a very young age, and it's on rare occasions that that would happen.

[00:09:35]

And so I kind of kept trying to find a way of finding purpose, trying to reach on with my life. And I found myself writing a lot. I found myself creating art out of clay and drawing a lot. I think with time I grew into the person I was. And the one art trait every artist has, that I think that I really had, is that artists are rebellious. We always have a way that we want to communicate our work that may not be acceptable to everyone else. And that really got me in trouble in school. But later it was appreciated and I became the person I am. So, yeah, even the form of art that I do, art for social justice is a risky kind of art right here, the subjects that we tell and everything. But I think for an artist, every artist has one role in society that is creating the world that you vision to live in. And that's what we always do. In the life of the kids of the Ghetto Film Project, why did I decide to use art? When I look at a kid, every kid is born with an open mind. But society tells them how to live, how to do this and how to do the other. And so with time I realized kids are not let free to think for themselves. And so to me, I wondered, what if every kid is let to be a kid? What if it's the other way around, kids have to tell us how to live? What if the kids were given that opportunity? And so we began with an experiment. We're doing it with every kid who grows up in the slums. And we ask them, so what do you think of mommy and daddy? And the kids drew very dark images. And we asked them, what would you want mommy and daddy to be like? And kids had bright communicating images.

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And we actually used some of those images with some of those kids to sit down with their parents and compare, like this is what a kid sees every day of their lives. You call them bad kids, these kids channeling their energy to crime and poverty. But it's because this is what they see. But then that's not all they hope from you. They know you can actually do better if you do this and that. And so I realized art gives kids the freedom to express themselves, but also the freedom to learn from each other. And it also connected people. So art [inaudible 00:12:12]. So I think I don't never answer the question, but I do believe that I have been instrumental in changing the society we're living in.

[00:12:31] **CAITLIN CHAISSON**

Nes, thank you so much. And you mentioned at this point in your life that you were finding purpose, which coincidentally is the title of the new film that you've just created for the "Transmission" series. Could you speak a little bit about that new work?

[00:12:52] **GEORGE STANLEY NSAMBA**

So "Finding Purpose" is a film about first generation positives, another film that I'm making. So with first generation positives... I got to know my mom was HIV positive when I was eight years old. And truthfully, as a kid, for a minute, I resented her. Like I knew what everybody talked about, HIV positive people. So I knew it's just a matter of time before I become HIV positive. What did she do wrong? And all these things. And I think it was hard for my mom to look at us and explain to us what it was. But then it wasn't just the pressure in the home. Outside our house people stigmatized us. My brother had to drop out of school. My sister had to sit home for some time, people called us names. And that kind of brought us together as a family, we knew we had to survive together. But not only that. Now, parents that had kids that were born positive would then bring the kids to our home to grow up in our home because they now felt our home was a safe place. And it so happened that three little girls that were brought to live with us grew up into three beautiful teenagers. Like they really had these big dreams, they

helped me out in founding the Ghetto Film Project. They had a life like everyone else. It's just unfortunate that one incident happened. When they got to the age of 16, they wanted to begin dating and it was hard, it was hard for them. They didn't know how to disclose to their partners and all that stuff. And one of them fell in love. She's called Winnie. She fell in love, it was 2017. And unfortunately, she did not disclose to her partner, and she let him find out. When he found out he pushed her to a corner and called her names and everything, and she stopped taking her medication in 2019. In December, she passed away.

[00:15:12]

That's when I realized I had to do something about this, because it wasn't the first story that I had. It was a series of people that had told me some stories. And I also have kids under my organization that also had the same experience. So these are the two girls that had remained Hajira and her sister. I wanted to do something for them to not feel alone. And that's how I started working on the film "First Generation Positives". I sat down with her and told her, we are going to tell the story and this is going to stop. We're going to create a better world. Unfortunately, the same thing happened to Hajira early last year, early this year. She stopped taking her medication and two months ago she lost her life. So at the time, Visual AIDS had already commissioned me to make a video. But the video was simply a film about me making a film that is about HIV positive kids. And across the way, I thought twice about life. And I just realized I think there's more to it than people watching me and my struggles making an HIV film. That has to be a message that is communicated. I realized, I think, my purpose in life, everybody's purpose in life is to make sure not to save the world, but to save that one soul. It could be a classmate, it could be a person at home. It might also be HIV positive people as well. But it's everybody else. To me I just feel like my purpose in life is to kind of communicate and [inaudible 00:17:03] . And that's why I came up with the title "Finding Purpose".

[00:17:14] **CAITLIN CHAISSON**

Yes, thank you and thank you for sharing the stories of your loved ones, and you've

mentioned a number of times how the experience of making films about those living with HIV and AIDS always feels like a race against time. And you mentioned that at the artists talk that took place on Monday with Visual AIDS. And within your films, there is also this kind of experimentation with time, with the narrative, with flashbacks and flash forwards and an integration of memory. I'm curious because filmmaking is also such a long and time consuming process. You know, over the course of a year, a lot can happen in terms of who you're working with. And as you mentioned, tragic losses. But I wonder about this relationship to narrative time within your films and how you experiment with thinking about memory within the films.

[00:18:29] **GEORGE STANLEY NSAMBA**

So, first of all, making HIV films is really hot here in Uganda, and now for you to make a film that people are going to watch, you really have to be creative about how you pack the message. I'm really glad I can see on the chat one of my colleagues that I did the meeting with and what pitching loads of films to do with HIV. The funny thing is when all these people heard about the films, all the corporate companies, they wanted to be part of it. But when you say it's about HIV, they always tell you, "I'll call you back," and they never call you back. And to me, it's just very personal. I believe life happens in the present, but the past is a blueprint for the future. So I usually play around with current situations, and see how the past situations could actually shape your future. It comes for me... I think I've lived my life in lots of phases and I look back at some points that I feel like there's some decisions I made that I wouldn't be proud of. And I wonder how, if today I didn't make the decisions to make it today, it would have affected the future. For example, like if you look at the film "Time Irreversible," it basically happens in the present, and we take you back into the past and we kind of think about what the future would have been if he had make better choices, and I do believe that that's how life plays around. We don't always get it right the first time. We're always gonna mess up. But if we take lessons from the past, we probably make better choices in the future.



[00:20:24] **CAITLIN CHAISSON**

I just want to invite other people as well to feel free to jump in or message a question in the chat, and I can either read it or feel free to just unmute yourself. But I do, I have many more questions so I can keep going. Yes, I think it's really beautiful what you just said. And life happens in the present, but the past is a blueprint for the future. And I think another thing that's very noticeable in your filmmaking, and perhaps your collaborators on the call can also jump in, but in many of your films, there is a boundary between, you know, on screen and off screen is very you know, it's not very set. So oftentimes you'll see a reflection of the filmmaking process itself, whether you're kind of... The camera looks off screen and you see the sound boom and the set up, and the lights or your actors break character because something else off screen affects what's going on in the filming. And so I'm curious to learn more about why that's so important in your filmmaking practice.

[00:21:47] **GEORGE STANLEY NSAMBA**

I grew up watching documentaries, and I really, really love documentaries. And what I really love about documentaries is real life stories. So when I'm making a film, I'm wondering how can they make it more real? How can they make it not feel like there was a camera, there was a take one, take two, take three. For example, "Silent Depression," most of the people for a very long time thought it was like a documentary, kind of like we basically went around shooting people and stuff. But no, it was actually rehearsed. But from the very beginning, we wanted to create a film about a situation that's happening. It feels like we are capturing what is happening in real time. It was hard finding people in form and you just walked up to them and you told them, "hey, I can I film you in your form?" They would immediately become cautious about what you're going to do and don't act it out, and things like that. So I wanted to create a film that feels like a documentary. We're going to do a series of people in their day-to-day life. And yeah, I think that's what makes it beautiful. But also it's the fact that, I mean, I think life is too short to be so serious. So we just experiment with whatever we can. My collaborator Andrew Tamale, who was on the shoot as well, can testify to that. Like sometimes we are shooting something totally different and we see something



happening in real time. And we are like, you know what? We don't have a script. We have nothing. Let's shoot and whatever we have, we develop a script. And that's how films like "The Ultimate Wedding" came across. That's how "The Dummy Team" came up. So it's usually experimenting with what we have in real time to see how we can communicate whatever it was that we have. That doesn't mean that we don't have a story in the beginning. We usually know what we want to communicate, but how the process is going to fall into place, we just let that to act. Andrew, could you say something? Andrew you're muted. So Andrew is one of my collaborators, we worked for a very long time.

[00:24:22] **ANDREW TAMALE**

Hello, everyone. I'm glad to be part of this meeting. And maybe what I can add to what George has said is that in Uganda, it's not very easy to shoot a film about HIV. And also just getting the funding is not very easy. He mentioned something about how we used to go to these big companies and pitch. And then, you know, they seem very interested in the first place. And then when they read through the synopsis and it's something to do about it, it has something to do with HIV, they tell you, you know, we'll get back to you. And then that's probably the last time you ever hear from them. It's very true. It happens a lot. Also how you package yourself as an actor. If you're going to act, if you're going to take on a role as an HIV patient, you need to think about what happens after that. You know? When you are so good at what you do, then later on in the streets, after the film is out, you can start getting stigmatized. And people looking at you funny because we all now think that you have HIV. But the truth is that you're just a very good actor, so, you know... Maybe that's something brief that I wanted to share. I'm super glad to have worked with George in lots of projects and hopefully we shall work on a lot more together. Thank you.

[00:26:30] **CAITLIN CHAISSON**

Thank you so much for being with us, Andrew, and I see we have a question also from Sarah, do you want to speak it or would you like me to read it?

[00:26:42] **SARAH**

The question is that you've mentioned today several women in particular in the narrative that you produced, your mother, but also the young women that came to live with you when they were smaller and that the experiences of those women were watershed moments. Specifically, it seemed like in the way that you said it and your realization of the connection between art and voice. And I wondered about maybe that it just happens to be the examples you mentioned. But I wondered about that idea of voice and whether this kind of comes through in a gendered way, in the way you think about your work.

[00:27:25] **GEORGE STANLEY NSAMBA**

I believe that when it comes to HIV, HIV doesn't discriminate between the genders, but the experience is actually different. Let me say, for example, in Uganda, I wouldn't say that the men don't really get stigmatized. They actually do, but it's really, really minimal. They can usually get away with it and stuff. Why? I usually, if you actually look at my works, I usually have women that are positive. It's because, one, I want them to feel good about themselves. Like, I mean I want them to feel comfortable in that one skin. When you're a guy and you are HIV positive in a movie, you'll get the next gig. When you're a woman and you are HIV positive in one film, that could be the end of your career. And I basically use women more to, one communicate for solidarities. I mean, this isn't right. I don't know if it's because I've grown up with so many women. I've grown up with about, I think twelve women in my life that were HIV positive and I've seen the extremes of it. There is one, she was called Rose. And whenever she go to a shop, the shop attendant would close the shop. Whenever she would go to the well, people would disrupt the well and let her get the water and no one would step in for a few minutes until she was gone. And I think such experiences push people to the edge. And also for men, I feel like we have so many distractions in our lives that we can easily cope. And when I look at the women, especially in Uganda, the role of the woman is still the other whole world. She has to be home, run to home and all those things.

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And all that weighing up on her. Plus, the pressure of life itself usually leads to these things. Statistically, the number of women dying from HIV is higher than the number of men, in Uganda. When it comes to adherence to medicine, you find that men take the medicine, the women don't. Why? And the reason is simple. The men have a mechanism in society that supports them. And while the women don't. And it's really important to bring out those voices and bring the balance and the equality of gender. So, yeah, it's probably why I'm not done making movies with these women, putting them places across because they also deserve an equal platform. I hope that answers you.

[00:30:18] **CHRISTINE NYCE**

George, thank you so much for being with us today. One question that I wanted to ask was in "Finding Purpose" and earlier in this conversation, you've talked about the challenge of casting films, especially about HIV and the stigma that those actors then face. But I'm wondering also if you could talk a little bit about what sorts of conversations or challenges it opens up to have an HIV negative person play an HIV positive person in a film. And what that experience is like and what conversations happen about portraying that experience. And, yeah, Andrew as an actor as well, I'm curious about your experience.

[00:31:08] **GEORGE STANLEY NSAMBA**

Thank you for that. So the experience of someone negative, so that's the actual problem that we have. When someone is HIV negative, they don't want to act that. But what we've done over the years is for the actors [inaudible 00:31:26] to what we want. We don't want to have someone that's just going to be on screen and act like a face. We engage you before you even read the script. We get engage into the understanding of HIV, people living with HIV and all that. And in some cases, we've had youth that are HIV positive, especially at my organization, meet these people and they share their experiences. And then, for one of the girls, one of the actresses, I wanna mention that she's in "Finding Purpose", I tried to get her to do a film acting HIV positive, and she just didn't really want that. And this time around, she met a little girl, about 10

years old, who explained a hard situation in school. She is ten years old, and they all shared this. Ever discussed being with people sitting in a classroom and she sometimes sits alone on the desk, and she is 10 year old. That alone, led this actress to think, why didn't they do this sooner? And so what we have to do, especially with "Finding Purpose", all the actors in the film have offered to do school and community drive thru with us, creating awareness in communities. But also the actors, our ambassadors in the film industry, talking to fellow actors and creating that awareness, is really, really crucial. And also, after the release of "Finding Purpose", we met for the first time, with youth who are below the age of 18, who are willing to talk on camera and share their experiences and see how they will also help us. So I think it's going to be interesting to see how that plays out, especially when beginning with these engagements, and the school engagements.

[00:33:31] **PATRICIA WESLEY**

Hello, I'm Patricia Wesley, nice to see you. I'm very happy to be here. And I'm African, like you, from Liberia, living in the U.S. And I'm an artist because I'm a writer. And I want to congratulate you and really thank you both for all you are doing, because I know about stigma and all of the problems associated with the issues that we take for granted here in the West and in Africa is a whole different case. My question is about community and your project. And we know that in Africa we have mostly a society of morality. People [inaudible 00:34:27] more by morality, through morality. And I want to know, how have you involved community, the different traditional communities, in helping you use your film and your talent to change community, to change the same community. And the other communities that is HIV positive. How have you involved different various communities and the larger community? And how has the community as government been helpful in supporting your work. Because your work is vital to changing the mindset of our people, not just Uganda. Our people.

[00:35:30] **GEORGE STANLEY NSAMBA**

Thank you so much. So basically, by the time we started to get a film project, the slum called [foreign language 00:35:43] is a slum that is divided into five based on tribe and

religion, which is really unfortunate because I also grew up in the same slum when that happened. And I remember we couldn't cross over to a certain football pitch because we weren't of that tribe, or we weren't of that religion. And whenever you cross that, you get beaten. Likewise when they crossed to our side, there was just a small trench but when they crossed it, they beat them up. And I felt like we as kids were programmed to live that way. And we want to change that. So we started up the Ghetto Film Project, one of the things we wanted to do is unite all of these people. We realized for the youth, it's already too late for us to unite them. But we can begin with the kids and probably the parents and these other people. And as we speak right now, the Ghetto Film Project is the cornerstone of [foreign language 00:36:39]. Whenever parents bring to us kids as young as five months, I think Andre knows that because he was doing it... As young as five months. Parents bring the kids and say like I want this kid to come through every Saturday. And so we've created a place that is more of a neutral ground. In terms of engaging the community with, especially what we do when it comes to HIV films and the promotion of living together, we have had support. Not from the government or from anywhere else, because since inception in 2012, we haven't even gotten one grant to do whatever we do. It is always been I do a project, then whatever comes, 20 percent, goes back into the organization to run all these things. But we've had support from the community and we always listen to them. We get their voices. When we made "The Dummy Team", we asked them who they thought should come through, whom they wanted to listen to, and one name that really resonated with everyone was Bobby Wayne.

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And so I basically went to talk to him, and I told him what we were doing at that time. And he was like, yeah, sure. So he came through and he helped us do awareness on testing, because many people in the slums don't want to test. People fear testing for HIV and they fear HIV itself. So "The Dummy Team" was basically made for promotion of testing for HIV. And Bobby Wayne did that with us. Then also the next film, which was "Time Irreversible", which was geared towards promoting the use of protection for the youth, he also helped us with that. So him having a country-wide following helped us

also spread the voices to places that we couldn't reach. And so basically, we've always had that engagement with the community. We have a night that had just begun before Corona. It's called The Film Night, the Ghetto Film Night, where we would be screening films that have social impact, especially those related to HIV. And it's something we keep doing. So we believe visual art has a really strong footing in creating awareness and building the next generation that we would want to see.

[00:39:20] **BERNARDO MOSQUEIRA**

I have a question. Nes, we didn't talk about that before, but after our last conversation, I found information online talking about this Italian movie called "The Greater" that portrays your mom as one of the actors of it. And maybe that had an influence on your life in the beginning of your career. So I'd like you to know more about that. How was that for you?

[00:40:04] **GEORGE STANLEY NSAMBA**

I'm really surprised, you are talking about "Greater". So I would say "Greater" was the beginning of my filmmaking career. The producer skimmed through it with to my mom as basically inquisitive. And I asked them, what do you do? So they showed me something that they do on a DVD, they left us a DVD. And to me, I think that DVD was the [inaudible 00:40:34]. At first I didn't really pay attention. But after "Greater" winning the Bubblegum Film Festival in France, I realized there is a power of storytelling because it was basically a story about my mom and our life and how we went through that. And I'm like, this is a normal story to me. But that story alone changed our lives, changed my mom's life. My mom moved around the world. She went to prison. She went to school. She went to institutions, talked to politicians around the world encouraging them. And that's when I realized the power of this medium called storytelling. I think it's also why I pivoted towards documentary, because I feel like in documentary people connect with you in first person and not second or third person. Is more first person.

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And yeah, "Greater" had a really great influence in me becoming a filmmaker, but also

in retelling these kind of stories. I would say though "Greater" with the good that it did out there, it also did major damage because it's hard to hide something from a Ugandan. They'll always find it. So I had a very rough time in school. I think my siblings, too, had a rough time at school because of the documentary. I remember I went back in school the next time and the guy that was sleeping, was sleeping on a triple decker, and I was sleeping on the lower bed. The guys that were sleeping on the two above beds, actually shifted their beds. And it was painful for me in the beginning. But I think over time I built a coping mechanism. And I had a teacher, let me just talk about one incident that happened. My youngest brother passed on. And that night when my mom came back home, I'm my school uniforms. The next morning I couldn't find my uniforms, but we had buried the previous day. So when I couldn't find a uniform, I went to school. When I came back home, I phoned the media and everyone would love it. And it so happened that they didn't actually bury the corpse. They actually buried my school uniforms and they had to dig them out. So one of the journalists looked at me and say to the cameraman, let's get this story out. In Uganda, there's a way to say that it makes sense, but it's like, let's give this story so fast before the [inaudible 00:43:19] walks away. I was just a kid and that hurt so much. And I remember it shook me so much, I became an angry kid. And one teacher showed interest in me and he asked me what the problem was. And I explained, I poured out my heart. And I remember him telling me the same cameras that are working to destroy you, are the same cameras that should work so hard that they should look for you, and you tell your story right. And so I think that was my third big motivation. And with "Greater" having all this media attention and all that stuff and getting all these things, I felt like I think this is the direction I want to go. I want to be able to keep up as many lives as possible. I can't meet a million people. I can't be in 120 countries at the same time, but my film can be in one hundred and twenty countries at the same time. So I decided to film people and use their voice to tell my story.

[00:44:20] **CAITLIN CHAISSON**

Thank you. Yeah, I like to just take a moment to invite others if there's questions to add them in the chat. And Nes, I think this, you know, this just really helps illuminate the kind



of power of creating your own production company, a collaborative effort with youth. I'm curious about the process of making films. And you spoke about this sense of frustration as a child yourself, not having agency or control over your own stories. And I'm wondering, are the students that you're working with involved in every aspect of production or are they coming up with concepts, shooting the film, editing the film? Could you speak a little bit about that process?

[00:45:17] **GEORGE STANLEY NSAMBA**

And so since inception in 2012, we've actually trained one hundred and fifty three filmmakers, active filmmakers in the film industry right now and a total of two hundred film students. And each of them is involved when we are creating these productions. So it was hard for me to convince anyone to work with me in the very beginning. That's why you see films like "Crafts: The Value of Life" that I'm almost credited for everything because I was a one man band, yeah. But after creating that, they saw the power of what we can create. We started collaborating. So basically I usually come up with stories and then everyone can add flesh into the story, they can add the spine into the story and then yeah, we are all divided. Someone is going to do sound, someone is going to do that. I love doing cinematography, so it's hard for me to let go of the camera. But yeah, I usually collaborate with them. And when they also go out and start making films and which, I don't know if it's a problem or it's something I have to be proud of, but it so happens that almost three quarters of the students that go into the industry end up doing films that are talking about social issues. There is one that has taken a niche of making films to do with teenage pregnancies. I think he has about two or three films about teenage pregnancies and stuff. So, yeah, and usually also when they get to produce their material right now, some of them are really established filmmakers, but they run, they bring the scripts through, we see what to do, we sometimes sit with the current class because every time we have a new class we register. So they come sit with that class and each one gives them their voice before they go into production. So it's highly collaborative.

[00:47:18] **CAITLIN CHAISSON**

Thank you. Andrew, you just put a message in the chat, did you want to speak a little bit more about the beneficiaries, the actors and specifically about the movie "Crafts"?

[00:47:41] **ANDREW TAMALE**

Oh, yes, we made a film called "Crafts: The Value of Life", and I was just using it as a response to a question that Dr. Wesley asked about community. These films, all of them involve community. Either they are coming in as beneficiaries or they are coming in as actors, because at the end of the day, the stories are about the life that we live every day. So that's basically the communities. So just briefly, "Crafts" centered the... I mean "Crafts" casts some street children that came to Kampala all the way from, I think, Muja. That's over five hundred kilometers away. And they came to the streets of Kampala to beg. So when we made "Crafts", we intended what we would get out of it. We would send them back home and set something up for them to be able to fend for themselves and not have to beg anymore. So with this, this is basically a situation that's very common. We walk on the streets of Kampala and see street kids everywhere. For us to help maybe one or two kids is something that we could do just within ourselves, with the capacity that we have. But unless the government takes a much more active role, you know, it's a very big problem. Yeah. So the government hasn't really helped much in the street kid situation in Kampala.

[00:50:01] **CAITLIN CHAISSON**

Thank you, Andrew. And we have about five minutes left. If there are any last questions that are coming up from people, feel free to unmute yourself and jump in or throw something in the chat. And I guess I have something that I know that I'm curious about, and I'm sure everyone here is, future projects and what you have coming down in terms of other films. And I know that "First Generation Positives" will be released soon. So that's also coming up. But maybe Nes or Andrew, if you'd like to speak to that.

[00:50:44] **GEORGE STANLEY NSAMBA**

For the future projects currently in production, we have "First Generation Positives" and with that we released another film called "Living to Die", because basically both tell the

same story. Then we also have a film about street kids that are living positive on the streets of Kampala. Because basically these are people that have nowhere to go, they don't have food, they have nothing. So basically, we want to do a film that hopefully could raise the eyebrows of some of the organizations. Because these organizations want visibility, usually. So what we do is create a film and tell them you can use it for as long as you are going to ensure that you give medication to this number of kids or you create a center. So for that one, we really want to use it to kind of fundraise for a center, a medical center where these kids can get medicine every day and at least get a meal or two every single day, that is assured. But as well, I'm working on an animation feature film, we've been working on it for the past two months and we hope to release it in 2022. So it's a long term project as well. So we are currently busy.

[00:52:31] **CAITLIN CHAISSON**

That's super fascinating. I also love this sentiment of doing things you hope to raise the eyebrows of the organizations that you're working with or keeping tabs on them through your filmmaking and your activist process. And we're getting close to the end. Any any final thoughts? This was super fascinating and a truly wonderful talk. Thank you so much, Nes. And thank you, Andrew, for joining us today. Thank you. To CCS and Visual AIDS for enabling this event to happen and to everyone here who really contributed to this wonderful conversation. So thank you so much.