



Information release

## **SURF's Partner AOCM Honoured with \$100,000 Global Friends' Award by the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child**

AOCM, *Association des Orphelins Chefs de Menages* (Association of Orphan-Headed Households), are today to be honoured with the Global Friends' Award by The World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child (WCPRC), the world's largest and most prestigious prize for outstanding contributions to the rights of the child run by the Swedish organisation, Children's World.

AOCM responds to the needs of the 100,000 children who were orphaned due to the genocide. In particular, it promotes the general welfare of its 40,000 members in 10,000 orphan-headed households. AOCM is run by orphans for orphans, and through SURF has helped its members achieve a decent standard of living, with food, clothes, schooling, homes and healthcare.

SURF actually provided the seed funding for AOCM, and has enabled it to continue build its capacity to advocate and give orphaned survivors of the genocide a stronger voice in Rwanda and raise awareness of the needs of the children whilst lobbying policy makers to help protect them. AOCM is now an established and growing organisation, and is striving to reach out to more orphans, many who are still unrepresented.

On the Award, Naphtal Ahishakiye, a member of AOCM who was 10 at the time of the genocide and survived by hiding in a river, said: *"The Children's Award will enable us to strengthen the fight for children's rights in Rwanda. The Award is also important for the reconciliation process in our country after the genocide and will raise awareness of people across the world of the plight of orphaned survivors of the genocide in Rwanda today."*

Mary Kayitesi Blewitt, Founder and Director of Survivors Fund, added: *"This Award is timely and well deserved as it will enable AOCM to continue its vital work in supporting survivors orphaned in Rwanda – more critical now than ever as survivors, particular child survivors, are increasingly vulnerable to attack from prisoners involved in the genocide being released. SURF is proud to have provided AOCM with the initial seed funding to set up the organisation, and is now working on raising further funds to enable more survivors to access the support they need in so many areas – security, healthcare, education and counselling in particular."*

Nearly 4 million children from across the world took part in the vote. The Award will be presented at a ceremony today at Gripsholm Palace in the presence of HM Queen Silvia of Sweden.

**For more information on Children's World and the Award, please see:**

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

**For more information on AOCM, please see:**

[www.aocmweb.org/english/](http://www.aocmweb.org/english/)

**For more information on SURF, please see:**

[www.survivors-fund.org.uk](http://www.survivors-fund.org.uk)

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