

Abaana News

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Issue # 35



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**Bringing Hope to the
Children of Africa**

Charity No: NIC102174

I think we might have the best supporters in the world!

By Scott Baxter

Two years ago in February 2020, I was on the plane home from Uganda. News had started to spread about a virus that had made its way to Italy. It seemed like one of those fear stories that we see on the news all the time. Far enough away to think that it was not going to affect us, yet still significant enough to hit the news.



As it started to escalate through March, like the rest of the world our yearly planner went out the window as we cancelled fundraising events, talks and eventually our summer teams to Uganda. The New Life Choir 3 children had already been selected and they were to tour in 2021... Cancelled. New plans were made, then cancelled, reworked, and then cancelled again until we realised Covid-19 was not going away anytime soon.

At the same time, schools in Uganda closed as the country went into a very sharp lockdown, which eventually led to children in Uganda losing out on 22 months of classroom education. The longest enforced absence reported in the world.

So with the challenges that we have all come through over the last two years, it may seem strange that today, looking back, we are feeling so much gratitude.

Although Covid had pretty much scrapped 90% of the things that we had planned, it didn't remove the need in Uganda and as they went into lockdown with no furlough or significant government support, the communities, the families, the children that we worked with, were on their own.

During 2020 and 2021 our supporters stepped up and raised over £100,000 towards supporting families through this time.

We have estimated that through your generosity, Abaana was able to provide over 200,000 meals in Uganda, as well as supporting education on how to stay safe during the pandemic.

We thank God for our amazing child sponsors, as we were able to offer further support.

In a time where people feared for their own job security, and many did lose incomes, our sponsors stayed loyal to their children and kept supporting. This allowed our staff to facilitate the teachers to provide home schooling materials, to visit the homes and encourage the children and families to keep learning.



There are many reports around the U.K. of children not returning to school, and we shared these concerns for Uganda. But thanks to the generosity of our donors and the hard work of the team in Uganda, we kept supporting the children, their communities and families and as the schools returned in January this year, we believe we saw the impact of this with higher-than-expected return rates for the children.

At the moment it feels like this storm is ending (when it comes to Covid), but when we look at how we came through I can't help but think about the 2531 different people, companies and organisations that continued to support Abaana during this time.

We weathered the storm because of your support and we are so thankful to God for it. During a time of uncertainty, because of you, Abaana was able to provide hope and security to around 10,000 people in Uganda.

The words seem too simple and somehow not enough to express the gratitude we feel.

But they are the only words that can begin to sum it up.

Thank you!



Thank You for Bringing Joy This Christmas

Christmas is a time when we love to be with friends and family, sharing meals and having fun.

It is a time of the year when we spend a lot of money on food and presents for people we love and care about, and this year our supporters showed their care for children in Uganda by raising an amazing £42,000. The money went towards supporting their sponsored children and enabled us to provide Christmas gifts to almost 70 children not in our sponsorship scheme at our new school, Atukubui Primary.

Our team in Uganda had the privilege of seeing the smiles on the children's faces personally as they worked tirelessly to deliver presents to 2,000 children across 16 communities (without any reindeers or need for navigating chimneys).

Each picture tells its own story of the joy that has been brought because of the generosity of so many.

So, thank you once again for all your kindness.



Hope Restored – as Schools Return

By Chris Hollies

A very welcome headline from the BBC’s Newsfeed flashed up with the title ‘Uganda schools reopen after almost two years of Covid closure.’ This was good news for the country of Uganda and in particular for the thousands of children who could once again receive an education.

Over the last 20 years, Abaana has been caring for over 2,000 at-risk children, enabling them to go to school through the payment of school fees, providing school uniforms and stationery and offering medical, spiritual and counselling support.

The school closures affected the educational progress of all children, but in particular the vulnerable children were more severely affected as they did not have access to online studies or other resources like radios as children in middle / higher income families had.

But with the help of so many of our supporters we were able to help bridge some of that educational gap through the provision of educational resources and materials, as well as employing teachers. The teachers were able to complete home visits to encourage the children and to oversee the marking of work that was done by the children during this period, and we are so thankful.

School doors have finally opened once more, albeit with a little concern about how pupils and teachers would cope after such a long gap of classroom learning, but there was an overriding sense of joy at being back at last!



P1 Pupils from Strathearn Primary

Getrude Namuli S1 (pictured) said, “I am very happy to be here today. At some point I was losing hope because the pandemic happened when I had not yet done my Primary Leaving Exams. It was a challenging time and I almost lost hope. I am happy that Abaana has stood by my side by keeping in touch with me and offering me support and that’s why I am at school today. I am now very hopeful about my future. May God bless Abaana and all the sponsors and donors.”



Prince of Peace Children Happy to be Back to School

The smiles say it all – the children are very happy to be back and learning again. So thank you for your support throughout this long and difficult period. And as Getrude says, she had almost lost hope, but as she and thousands of other children return to school – hope has been restored!



Getrude Namuli



MAD 300

Making A Difference for 300 children



Young children were forced into child labour

Before Covid, Save the Children estimated that:

- 20% of children in Uganda do not complete primary school
- 25% of children are chronically malnourished
- 75% experience violence
- 10% of girls are married before they are 15 years old

One of the challenges in Uganda is that although education is supposed to be free, it isn't. This is why Child Sponsorship is so vital in helping children gain access to school, but also keeping them in school. UN studies have shown that girls who are still in education are less likely to get pregnant and less likely to be married early.

In Uganda alone, it is estimated that 15 million children did not attend school for almost two years.

This has created a number of problems. Children, many of whom were already several years behind in education, have now fallen two more years behind. Many children not in schooling were forced into child labour when schools were closed, and teenage pregnancies increased by an estimated five percent. To top it off, some schools have closed for good, and many teachers have left teaching.

Abaana has 16 schools that we partner with throughout Uganda, and there is space at our schools to sponsor more children. Sponsorship is so vital because it gives the children and their families the security that their child can gain an education.



Many children tell us that they are so encouraged to know that someone cares for them, who is supporting them and praying for them, and this can be a major factor in motivating them to keep going and stay in education.

During 2022 we are launching a campaign, "MAD 300," where we hope to make a difference by finding sponsors for 300 children who can't access school. That is almost a full primary school! But for this to happen we need your help.

Could you be a MAD Rep and share with friends, family, work colleagues, church members, or whomever you meet, with the view to one of those people (or more!) taking on the adventure of becoming a sponsor themselves?

For more info on how you can help or if you can take on the sponsorship of one of these kids, please visit www.Abaana.org/MAD300.

News From New Life Homes

Lots of kids around the world have found the last couple of years pretty tough. We have discovered that to be the case for many children in Uganda who have run away from their homes or found themselves without a safe place to stay.

With special thanks to our amazing supporters, we are bringing six children off the streets of Kampala in the coming months.

Meet the first two children who have already joined New Life Homes



Shamiru Ssekatawa

Shamiru Ssekatawa

Shamiru is only seven years old and does not know how long he has lived on the streets. He tells us about moving around from village to village with an aunt, being treated very poorly and experiencing violence.

It is clear that Shamiru has not had much stability in his life to date. He has never been to school, but he is really looking forward to having the opportunity to go to New Foundations Primary School this term. He says he would love to be a doctor so that he can treat the sick.

'I really like staying at New Life Homes because I have made new best friends Changa and Mike. I sleep well, I have my own bedding. I also like here because we eat well, I love eating beef and posho,' says Shamiru.

Joshua Byamukama

Joshua does not know where his parents are and cannot recall the last time he saw them. He tells us he lived with his uncle and aunt, but when his uncle passed away, his aunt could no longer take care of him. He survived on the streets of Kampala where he was picked up by the police.

Joshua was referred to Abaana for care and support.

He has enjoyed settling in at Abaana and says, 'I like being at NLH so much because I'm always sure of food, here we have uncles and aunties who love us so much. I ran away from home because my auntie would beat me, but here we are loved. I like my bed and enjoy good food. I also like attending phonics classes.'

These boys have begun their journey of rehabilitation. The hope for them is that their basic rights would be restored while home tracing continues. We may never know the full extent of the trauma they might have experienced on the streets, but we are there to offer love, protection and a safe space so they can be children once again.



Joshua Byamukama

Could you partner with us and sponsor Shamiru or Joshua through their rehabilitation?

We are looking for six sponsors for each child to help provide a roof over their heads, daily meals, medical care, professional counselling, education and much more. Visit Abaana.org/NLH to set up sponsorship or email louise@abaana.org for more info or to support the work of reaching out to children who have lived on the streets.



Shamiru & Joshua when they were referred to Abaana by Probation Office



School Appeal Launched

We have just launched an appeal to raise £80,000 for St. Mary's Primary.

To date, Abaana has built 16 primary schools in Uganda. These educate over 5,000 children, giving them a chance to break free from the poverty cycle. During Covid, many schools in Uganda shut down and did not reopen, leaving an already stretched education system even more in need.

We are partnering with this school in the east of Uganda to enable them to invest in the children from their communities. The original school was started in 2007 by the Church of Uganda who wanted to promote education in the area. The school is built on eight acres of church land. It runs from Nursery to Primary 6, with some classes under trees, some classes in temporary structures and it has one semi-permanent building.



The school has 255 children registered.

To date we have raised £11,000 of the £80,000 total and we hope to start building the first classrooms this summer.

If you would be interested in supporting this project, please contact the office on 02891 451918, donate online at Abaana.org/donate or send a cheque made payable to Abaana with a note for it to go towards "St Mary's Appeal."

ST. MARY'S APPEAL





Seams like a great idea!

New Life Homes is producing budding young tailors as the boys have been learning how to make masks, money purses, even shorts and shirts to wear to school! With special thanks for the very generous donation from the consultancy company, Pebble, who have funded a sewing teacher and materials, these boys have been given a very useful skill for life.

To donate towards the work at New Life Homes, please visit Abaana.org/donate and select 'Street Kids' project.



Former Street Child Awarded 2022 Mandela Rhodes Scholarship

We hope you enjoyed reading Emmanuel's story in the last Abaana News.

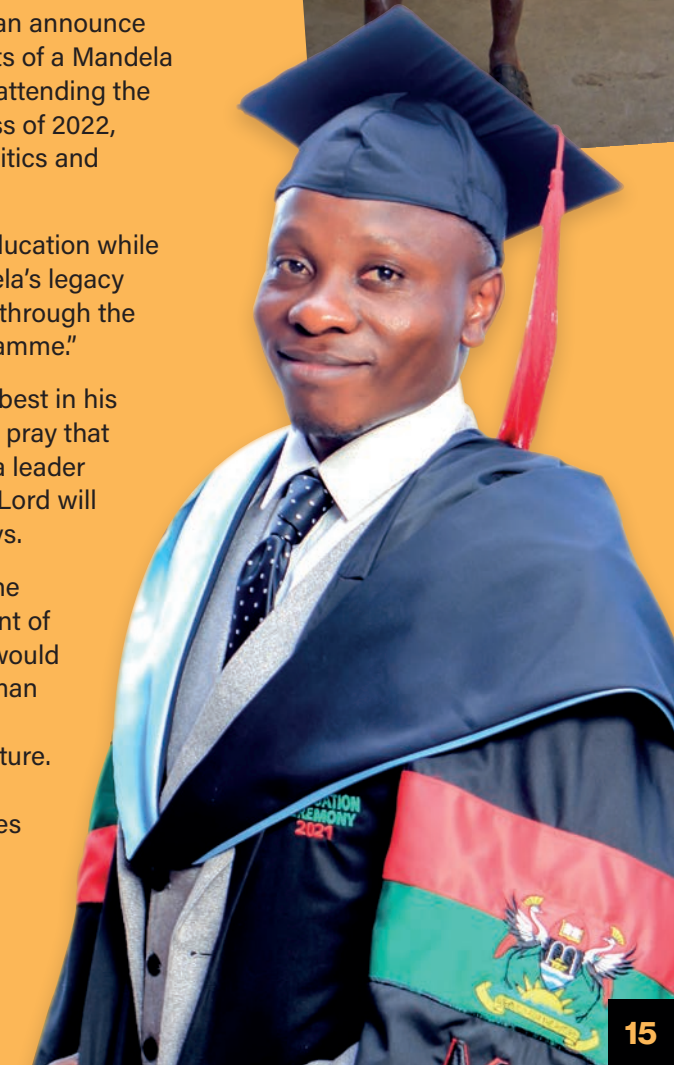
At the time of printing, Emmanuel had graduated from Makerere University, with a degree in Community Psychology and Mental Health. He had then applied for a scholarship to study at Johannesburg University.

It is with immense joy that we can announce Emmanuel is one of 30 recipients of a Mandela Rhodes Scholarship. He will be attending the University of Johannesburg, class of 2022, to study for a BA Honours in Politics and International Relations.

The scholars will further their education while becoming part of Nelson Mandela's legacy through "transformative impact through the Leadership Development Programme."

We wish Emmanuel all the very best in his studies and imminent move. We pray that he will be an agent for change, a leader amongst his peers and that the Lord will work through him in mighty ways.

If Emmanuel had not received the support, love and encouragement of his sponsors, it is likely that he would still be making ends meet as a man living on the streets. Today he is walking the path to a brighter future. It is only through your support that together we can change lives while ministering on the streets of Uganda. To partner with us in this life-changing work, please contact louise@abaana.org



Zuri Girl

Empowering girls to reach their full potential

If you would like to help support our Zuri Girl project, please contact the office or visit our website:
Abaana.org

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