

Celebrating 25 Years of



Abaana

Issue # 37



**Bringing Hope to the
Children of Africa**

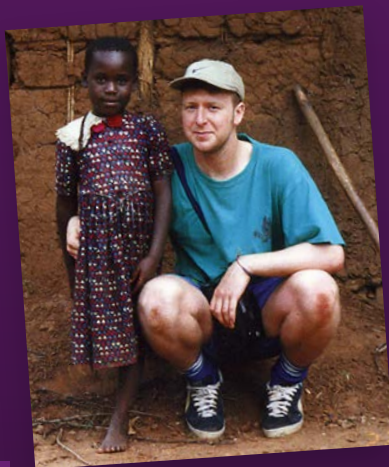
Charity No: NIC102174

25 Years of Abaana

It's hard to believe Abaana has been serving children in Africa for 25 years.

We are so thankful for all the support that we have had during this time. 25 years ago, as a teenager, I felt that God had put it on my heart to help children in Africa. I didn't know how or what that would look like. After finishing school, I set off on a gap year working voluntarily for some charities, which ended with the setting up of Abaana. At the same time I started my University degree, so I wasn't sure if this was just a short term project, or something I would do alongside a career. However, after a year at Capernwray Bible School and receiving some advice from friends, family and my pastors, I decided to work voluntarily for a year for Abaana.... I am still here, 25 years later!

Since then, many people have served as part of the Abaana family, from staff and board members to volunteers and donors. Each one has played a role in growing the work of Abaana and helping us reach this point in our journey.



In 2005 I remember so clearly sitting down at one of our first schools in Uganda, Matthew Cardwell Primary in Mpata, just after it was built. We had first visited the school a year before, and I recalled as we arrived in our 4x4, I thought I was approaching a cattle shed. When we got closer, I heard the children inside and you could see them peering out through the walls.

I still remember feeling the burning injustice, as I thought about how I had gone to a brilliant primary school in my local town.

Scott on his first trip to Uganda in 1997 with Abaana's first sponsor child, Catherine.

I could have listed what seemed like an infinite catalogue of the things I was blessed with, that these children didn't have. So Abaana set about trying to help this one school. Over the next 12 months, we fundraised in churches and youth groups, mostly around Northern Ireland, and eventually raised enough funds to build them a new school.



And here I was, sitting in the new school, with hundreds of children running around the playground at lunch time. As some of the children and staff greeted the visitors, there was a real sense of gratefulness.

As I sat and looked at each of the children and thought about the fundraising over the previous year, I wondered how many people had contributed? Each brick that was laid, each bag of cement, and each piece of wood or iron roofing sheet, was paid for by literally thousands of fundraisers and donors from back home. Some of them, the same age as the children running around and many who gave sacrificially.





It was a humbling experience as I was receiving the thanks that these people deserved. As I was presented with a chicken, I remember feeling that I wished I could bring each of those supporters out to Uganda to hear the "thank you" personally.

The Abaana community is not about an organisation or the staff doing the work. It is about every person who contributes, every donor, every volunteer who gives their time.

As we fast forward to the 25th year, this same truth is even more evident. We now partner with 17 communities across Uganda where schools have been built and have sponsored thousands of children through their education. But we can only do this through the support of our amazing donors. Many of you have been there from the early days, and some have joined along the way. All of you have played a part.

We just want to say thank you!

Throughout this edition of the Newsletter, you will be able to read some of the things that Abaana has achieved over the last 25 years, but ultimately the work

we do, is not about the buildings we build or the items we buy. It's about people and changing lives, sharing God's love, and equipping them for the future.

Recently, I had the privilege of interviewing Caroline (more of her story on page 10), one of the many children that are now exiting our Sponsorship Programme. Caroline was sitting in that "cattle shed" the day we turned up at Mpata. She remembers the old building and also the new building being built in 2005. Now she has completed her Bachelor of Social Studies degree at University. Caroline is just one example of the thousands that we are currently supporting and who are going through this journey and that is because of people like you.

25 years have passed, but the work is not finished. We know that each child we support comes through the system and becomes part of the solution, but we still have more work to do. We are so excited because we know that in the next 25 years, we can do so much more for so many more.

We hope that you will continue with us on this journey and celebrate together as we continue to invest in young people in Uganda and see lives changed.

Scott Baxter
CEO Abaana

Thank you



Some of Abaana's Alumni

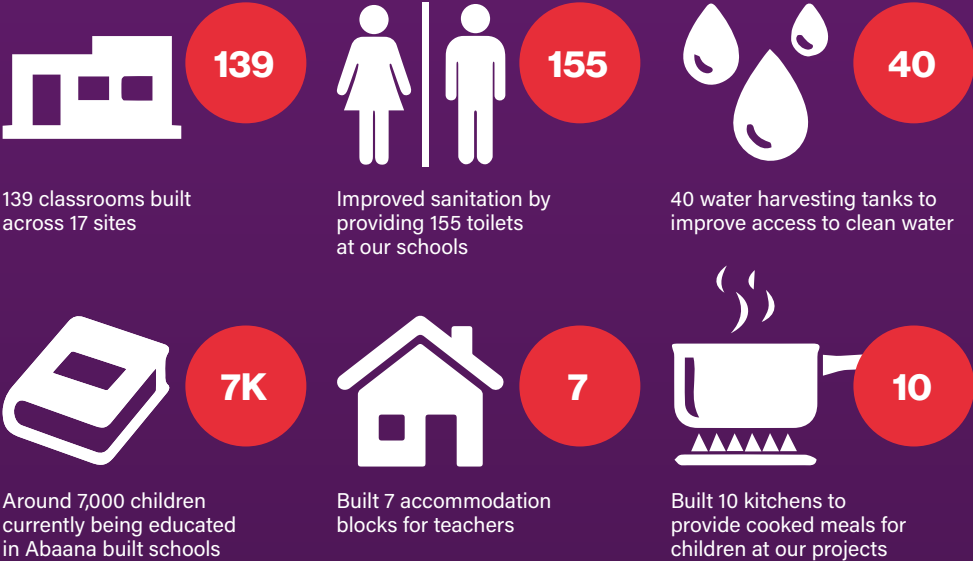


Summary of What Abaana Has Achieved

Thanks to our amazing supporters, over the last 25 years we have been able to spend £8 million on projects in Africa including:

- Investing £4.5 million into children’s education through Child Sponsorship
- £1.2 million has been invested into building projects, like the 17 schools we are partnering with, currently educating around 7,000 children

BUILDING



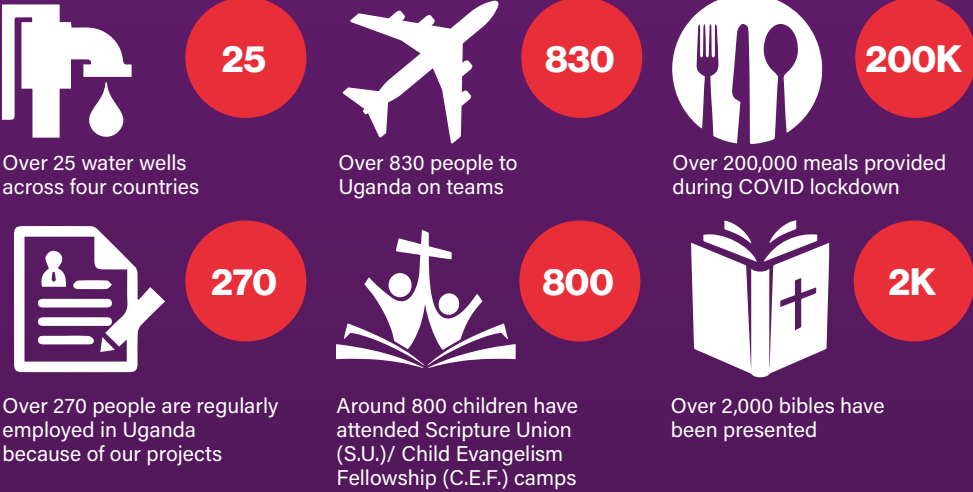
SPONSORSHIP



NEW LIFE HOMES & STREET REACH



OTHER



Category	Total
Child Sponsorship	£4,517,000
Building Projects	£1,612,000
Street Children and Children at Risk	£1,084,000
Other Projects	£354,000
Medical Projects	£110,000
Water Projects	£53,000
Education & Resources	£40,000
Relief and Family Support	£253,000
Total	£8,023,000



Street Reach - A Ministry of Change

There are an estimated 15,500 children living or working on the streets of Uganda.* When we see kids on the streets without a nurturing, safe space to grow and flourish, we are passionate about being part of the change.



Emmanuel

Built in 2006, the New Life Homes are transitional homes for boys rescued from the streets. They provide care, education and a safe place to live for the boys. The social workers also counsel the boys and help them to process some of the psychological issues that have developed through mistreatment at home and life on the streets. Ultimately, we believe the best place for the children is a home environment. So Abaana starts the process of family tracing and reconciliation to assess whether it is safe for the boys to return home or be settled with other family members.

26 boys have graduated from the New Life Homes and 64 boys have stayed for a short term before being directly resettled with family.

Listening to the life stories that children who have lived on the streets tell us, we hear of countless broken relationships. Families who live on less than £1.75 per day are in extreme poverty, according to The World Bank. They worry about where their next meal is coming from, and this compounds pressure upon pressure.

*Enumeration of Children on the Streets in Uganda across Four Locations.
(By the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda)



Emmanuel was one such child who ended up living on the streets. Raised by a single mum with four other siblings, Emmanuel had an unsettled home and school life. At the age of nine he ran away and lived on the streets of Kampala for two years.

Emmanuel was rescued and placed in the New Life Homes. Here he was given love, care and attention, was taught how to read and write and empowered to aspire to more in life. Despite earlier challenges at school, education became interesting, and he progressed really well.

As part of his care and rehabilitation, Abaana reunited Emmanuel with his family, and he reconciled with his mother. It was a very emotional time for them both but was a necessary cathartic process. With tears they apologised to each other, mending broken relationships.

Through this ministry of change and restoration, Emmanuel has flourished. He stands proud as a university graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Community Psychology and Mental Health. He is awaiting graduation this year as a Mandela Rhodes Scholar with an Honours degree in Politics and International Relations.

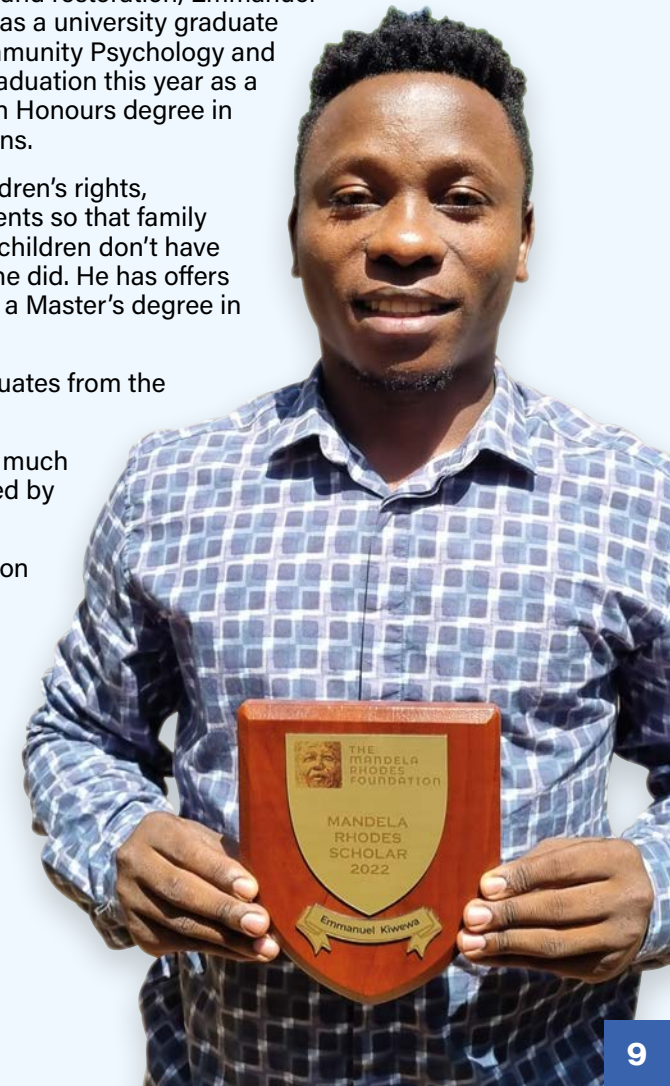
His dream is to advocate for children's rights, educating communities and parents so that family relationships can be strong and children don't have to go through the same turmoil he did. He has offers from UK universities to study for a Master's degree in Human Rights.

Emmanuel is just one of 26 graduates from the New Life Homes since 2007.

Each of them have overcome so much and we are incredibly encouraged by the change we see in their lives.

Abaana has invested over £1 million in helping street children and children at risk over the last 25 years. Our hopes are to continue supporting children, restoring relationships – with themselves, their parents, siblings, and most of all, with God.

Currently, we have 55 boys in our care. To support our vital work and be part of this change, visit abaana.org/NLH or email louise@abaana.org



25 Years of Sponsorship

by Chris Hollies

'Because of Abaana Ministries I am not what I was!'

Inspiring words from one of our young people as they finished their sponsorship.

In 1998, Abaana started its sponsorship scheme when one young man went from Bangor, Northern Ireland to Uganda, saw a need and felt something had to be done about it. He personally took on the sponsorship of five children for a year and returned to the UK to find more sponsors, so that more children could be helped to receive an education.



Caroline at the start of her sponsorship

"It has been a real privilege to watch those first children grow and through the support from so many people, to see kids in Africa gain an education and a hope for the future." Scott Baxter (CEO Abaana)

Twenty-five years later and we have around 1,900 children who are currently sponsored. Over the course of the past quarter century, we have seen several hundred children successfully complete their education with the dream being to see hundreds more do so too. And here is a flavour of the kind of courses that have been undertaken: Hair dressing, Motor vehicle mechanics, Fashion & design, Metal fabrication & woodwork, Business Administration and Mechanical engineering.

Upon finishing their education and 'graduating' from our sponsorship scheme, they become part of a wonderful group known as the Abaana Alumni.

One such person is Caroline. She commenced her sponsorship journey in 2005 at the age of 12 and graduated in 2022 with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and Social Administration.

Caroline grew up with her mother and brothers and sisters in a small house. Her father had sadly passed away and life was very hard. Her brothers didn't progress beyond primary school in their education and her sisters got married and had children at an early age.

And as Caroline says, *"They didn't get a chance, I am the only one. I am different from my brothers and sisters because I have acquired an education. And my vision is that I have got to work hard and help other people who also need help. Most importantly to help educate others...because when you are educated you have the key to everywhere."*

"If I did not have sponsorship, I would not have acquired an education. I would have even ended up like a street kid. Life would have been so tough for me."

Caroline is just one of so many talented and wonderful young men and women who have been given a tremendous opportunity to build their lives on a solid educational platform. With the ongoing help of our thousands of sponsors and supporters, we believe many more will be given very similar opportunities in the years to come. We are so grateful to each and every one who has played their part over this 25-year period, and who continue to do so.

And in achieving what these now young adults have, they have been given the tools and resources to break away from generational poverty which would otherwise have been a reality in their lives too.

Over the 25 years an amazing £4.5 million has been invested into Child Sponsorship and we have seen over 200 children complete our sponsorship scheme and in excess of 9,000 children educated through our partner schools.

Numbers aren't everything of course, but behind each one is the life of a boy or girl for whom a very real and lasting difference has been made. And they very much appreciate the help they have been given and wish to pass on to others what they have received. As Sande Edwards, one of the alumni says, *"I want to give a hand to someone. I want to give a hand to that person down there, starving, whose life is like mine was. I want to change someone who's just like me and how I was. Please keep helping people, keep helping another Sande who is down there like I was. I'm not what I ought to be, or not what I wish to be, but because of my sponsor, because of Abaana ministry I am not what I was."*



Caroline at her graduation



Sande Edwards



parents and staff, with many in tears. A gift of five hens was given from the school, (which Mr McClements joyfully held). We then began to hand out shoes which were kindly donated by the Magherafelt community. Each child was given a pair of shoes for themselves and a pair for one of their family members. Many of the team members also donated the shoes off their feet today to those children who had not received a pair. We left the children with very heavy hearts and wished we could have stayed forever.

"Life-changing", such a humbling experience to see how people just like ourselves can have such a different life-experience. It was a privilege to help build a lasting legacy (the new school build) and hopefully provide new opportunities of education to those who would otherwise not have had access to education. It was fascinating to also see Uganda, it is such a rich, vibrant, friendly country; what it lacks in financial wealth it more than makes up for in beauty in terms of countryside and wildlife. The people are so welcoming and friendly!

Neil McClements, Vice-Principal of Rainey Endowed School

Over the last 25 years, Abaana teams have enthusiastically fundraised for countless projects and gathered thousands of goods to share in Uganda. They have furnished classrooms with textbooks, shelving units, desks and chairs, and provided nursery school resources, pencils and colourful posters for their walls. Hundreds of bibles have been distributed both at schools and within children's remand homes. Thousands of meals have been shared as an outreach to children on the streets, linking in with Abaana's Street Reach programme.

Through team fundraising efforts they have:



21

Built 21 classrooms



4

Built 4 kitchens



16

Built 16 toilet stalls



627

Distributed 627 water filters



450

Bought 450 mosquito nets

Teams to Uganda

Walking in Other People's Shoes

To date, 830 people from six different countries have travelled to Uganda with Abaana representing 76 teams. These have consisted of 30 church teams, 7 school trips and 39 open teams, allowing individuals to join an open group.

Most of us will never fully understand what it is like to grow up in a developing country like Uganda.

The old proverb, to 'walk a mile in someone's shoes' gives us a guideline to live by when we consider travelling to distant locations. No doubt we expect to encounter cultural differences, but spending time with the beneficiaries of Abaana projects, helps us to gain some empathy and understanding.

Budding team volunteers preparing to travel are advised to be curious, proactive and willing to learn through relationships. They will spend time with the children in their schools and homes in their villages, learning about what it is like to fetch water, rather than turn on a tap; grow food, rather than go to the supermarket; and build a fire to cook dinner, rather than turn on a stove.

Could you walk a mile in someone else's shoes and travel to Uganda with an Abaana team? Register your interest at abaana.org/teams

Building a Lasting Legacy

Rainey Endowed are building Rainey Summit View Primary in eastern Uganda and they send teams of senior students to help to build it! Additionally, as a school community, they support 28 Rainey Primary pupils to go to the school and each team gets to meet with these children and their families.

Here is an excerpt from their team blog of their last day of the 2019 trip:

Today we arrived at Rainey Summit View Primary School for the last time. We took polaroids of all 316 children, and for many it was the first time seeing a photograph of themselves. We attended a leaving ceremony with the children singing us a farewell song written just for us. Emotions were running very high for both the team, children,



£1.6 Million Invested in Buildings in Uganda

It's 8.00am on Monday and I'm standing outside with my friends, waiting to be called into class.

After singing the Ugandan National Anthem, the teacher announces "Time for class," and everyone walks into their classroom.

Akram, my best friend, and I go into the P7 'classroom.' Although it's early in the day, it is already very hot under the thatched classroom roof and there is a strong wind blowing dust inside. We sit down on the earthen floor, with our pages and pencils on our knees ready to start our first lesson, Maths. I'm glad it didn't rain last night, as when it does, it's not very nice sitting on the damp ground.

There's not much room – we share with P6, so there are 50 of us in the small classroom. Maths class begins. The wind is getting stronger and now there's a lot of dust blowing into the classroom. There are no solid walls to the classroom, only the wooden branches which hold up the roof.

Sadly, this is the all too familiar reality for thousands of school children across rural Uganda. Sometimes in the West we look at our school buildings and feel, understandably, that they need some TLC or updating. But imagine if your local primary school was like the one above.

Over the last 25 years, with the practical help, support and encouragement of our amazing Abaana family of supporters, we have been able to build 17 new primary schools across Uganda. That's 139 classrooms in total.



It is hard to put into words the difference new permanent school buildings make to the pupils, teachers and the local community. Children able to sit at a desk for the first time in their lives, in safe, weather-proof buildings; teachers able to display learning materials on the walls and having somewhere to prepare their lessons.

What a new Abaana school consists of:

- 4 classroom block
- 3 classroom block with office
- Nursery (3 classrooms)
- 2 latrine blocks
- Kitchen
- Guttering and water tanks for water conservation – for cooking and washing

And what a difference this has made!

Rose Asekenye (P4, Atukubui Primary)

"I am happy that we are now going to study from permanent classrooms and sit on desks which will keep our uniforms clean. When the rain comes we shall not even fear or go back home. I promise to study very hard and become a teacher, may God bless you Abaana."

Akello Grace (P5, Atukubui Primary)

"I thank Abaana for giving us a good classroom which will not make our uniforms dirty and when the rain comes, we have a place to stay and study."

Wilson Otuboi, member of the School Management Committee of Rainey Summit View

"I feel overwhelmed with the new look of my school emerging from a very desperate situation of no buildings, learning under trees on a dusty floor and the children getting dirty through the day."

Thank you for partnering with us to make a genuine and lasting difference in the lives of children and their communities across Uganda.

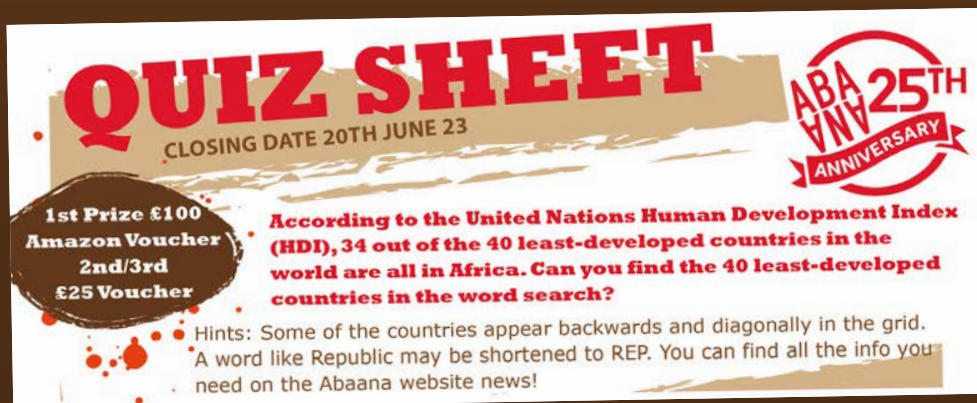


Help Celebrate Abaana's 25th Anniversary!

During 2023 we would love to raise £125,000 as part of our 25th Anniversary celebrations.

- £50,000 towards St. Mary's Primary, to build the nursery section and funding for furniture etc. (The main classrooms are currently being built).
- £45,000 towards our 2024 Choir Appeal, to help bring the New Life Choir to the UK and Ireland.
- £30,000 towards our new premises appeal. We will hopefully have some exciting news soon about this.

What could you do to help celebrate the 25th Anniversary? Ideas for individuals



1. Could you sell quiz sheets for Abaana? We have put together a special 25th Anniversary Quiz Sheet (word search)

The quiz costs £2 and the top prize is a £100 Amazon voucher. We are looking for people to sell 10, 20 or however many sheets you think you can.

2. Take part in a sponsored event during 2023 (e.g. Belfast or your local marathon/organised walk)

Could you do your own event – as an individual or a family?



This could be as simple as a sponsored walk, run or swim, or you could be creative and come up with your own fun idea. If you're up for it, we can give you as many sponsor forms as you need and you can get your friends, family, church or work involved.

3. Celebrate Abaana on your birthday!

On your birthday, ask all your friends and family by email, text or social media to donate what they would have spent on you and celebrate your birthday by making a child's life in Uganda a bit easier.



4. Run a coffee morning/a big breakfast or a pamper night in your house

Sometimes the simplest idea can be the most successful. Why not run your own fundraising event for Abaana?

Invite your friends around for a bit of fun, over a coffee and a bun, having some breakfast together or getting pampered with a facial and a foot bath!



Take 5-10 minutes of this time to talk about the work we do, and why it is important. We can give you some resources and have a small box for donations to Abaana.

5. Organise a talk for Abaana

Sometimes the easiest way to share about Abaana is to invite a speaker. We would love to come to your church, school or workplace to share with a group of people about the work of Abaana. Or, if you would like to do a presentation yourself, call the office and we can provide all the resources!

6. Sell your 'old' stuff for Abaana on eBay/Vinted/Gumtree/Facebook Marketplace or donate to the Abaana Shop

There are so many options these days and if you are having a clear out, why not consider donating the proceeds to Abaana? Or if you are local, just drop them into our shop.



Ideas for Schools, Churches & Other Groups

- Invite us to speak during 2023 (and help celebrate with your group)
- Run a fundraising event like a BIG breakfast, coffee morning, car wash, sponsored walk, quiz or auction
- Book the choir for 2024
- Nominate Abaana as your Charity of the Year

Zuri Girl



Empowering girls to reach their full potential

In the last year we were able to supply 450 girls with a dignity bag, which consisted of 3 pairs of pants, reusable sanitary pads, wash cloth and soap. Three schools also took part in the Zuri Girl interactive workshops which provided education on puberty, menstruation and sexual health to children aged between 10 and 14 years old. The feedback from these workshops has been tremendous with girls like Vanessa, who had previously used leaves as a pad (which she said was uncomfortable and irritating). She is so pleased to know how to make her own sanitary pads, when she needs them. Vanessa is also thankful that through this education, she knows how to track her cycle and when to expect her next period.

We would really like to expand the Zuri Girl programme to cover all of our schools this year. If you would like to support our Zuri Girl project on a regular basis, please contact: Louise@abaana.org or visit the website Abaana.org/zurigirl

Other ways to Support Abaana

1. Share our social media posts

It sounds really simple, but it can make such an impact. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, and simply share our posts.

We would love to be able to make more people aware of Abaana's work, so if you have a social media account, please like us and share!

2. Volunteer with Abaana

We always need volunteers in our shop or in our office, especially around mailout times or even just to help practically by hoovering the carpet. Could you give some hours each week to help Abaana?

3. Pray

Please do remember Abaana's work in your prayers. Pray for safety and good health for our children and staff and that God's name would be glorified in all that we do.

4. Support Abaana monthly

Having people who support on an ongoing basis means we can budget and plan more easily. There are several different areas to choose from:

- **Street Reach helps support the work with street children**
- **Partner donations go to the area where it is needed most at any time**
- **Zuri Girl helps balance inequity by supporting girls to complete their education**



Volunteers helping with a mailout

5. Child Sponsorship

Sponsoring a child makes a real and lasting difference in the life of a child and costs just £24 a month!

6. Go on a team

If you would like to meet the children Abaana supports and see our projects firsthand, contact us for available opportunities to travel to Uganda.



New Life Choir Coming Back In 2024



In 2017 and 2019 we had the most amazing groups of children tour the UK and Ireland with each choir consisting of 20 children.

Because of the choirs, an amazing 800 children were sponsored as well as funds raised for projects in Uganda, like the building of Atukubui Primary.

We are delighted to announce that we are bringing a choir on tour again, and the choir training will commence shortly.

Three ways you can help the choir

1. We will be opening the bookings for choir concerts very soon, but if you are interested in hosting the choir, please let us know.
2. We are looking for five chaperones to travel with our New Life Choir between January and June 2024. This is an amazing experience and opportunity to invest into these wonderful choir children. Through the tour, you will also make a huge impact on children in Uganda.
3. Become a friend of the choir. Could you support the choir programme from just £5 per month?



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