

Abaana News

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**Bringing Hope to the
Children of Africa**

Charity No: NIC102174

Kadok Primary School

By Scott Baxter



It was 37°C when we arrived at Kadok Primary School and a warm, dusty wind was rattling the tin roof covering the children. One end had already detached, and the clanging metal was ever-present during the lesson as the tin roof lifted and dropped with the wind.



Sarah



Beatrice

Sarah Atim is the Acting Headteacher at Kadok, a community school of around 300 children, under the Church of Uganda. She shared how parents and teachers were concerned about the quality of the building and the resources. "The walls give no shelter to the wind and the rain. When it rains, the children cannot learn because the water enters. We fear the roof will blow off."

Beatrice, one of the parents, has five children currently attending the school. She was one of the founding parents who helped to build the school in 2013. She confessed, "We did what we could to help our children, but we did not do a good job."

The school lacks proper desks, blackboards, and chairs for the children and exists under weak, semi-permanent structures.

As I walked into the classroom to address the children, they all stood to greet me. One of the makeshift benches was precariously balanced on some bricks. As the children went to sit back down, it toppled over, and four girls ended up lying on the dusty floor.

When I asked the children in the class what the worst part about the school was, two things kept coming up. Every Friday, the children would have to bring some cow manure

to school—not your average UK school requirement. In the afternoon, classes would stop as the children smeared the cow dung on the classroom floor.

This dung would coat the dusty floor and provide some temporary relief from its degradation. However, because of the smell, classes were then suspended until Monday morning!

The second thing they struggled with was the anti-social behaviour of people from the community over the weekends. Because the school is completely open, the children could come back to school only to find that people had gone to the toilet in or around their desks.

I couldn't imagine how I would feel if my children had this as their only option for school. I felt sad. I felt anger. But I also felt hope.

Hope because, by the end of 2025, we plan to give the community of Kadok a new school building.

Be Part of the Change

Thanks to donations through the choir in 2024, we have already raised over £50,000, and we only need another £40,000 to make this a reality.

No child should have to learn in a crumbling classroom, sit on broken benches, or be forced to pause lessons to spread manure on the floor.

Your support, whether big or small, will directly impact these children's lives.

Join us today:

- **Donate – Every contribution brings us closer to our goal.**
- **Get Involved – Engage your school, church, or workplace to support the cause.**
- **Fundraise – Organise an event and rally your friends and family.**

Together, we can transform Kadok Primary School into a place of hope and opportunity.

Will you help build a better school and future for these children?



Ways to get involved

Fundraise for Abaana and you can help transform the lives of children in Africa!



Ideas for fundraisers:

- Coffee morning (everyone likes a cuppa and a bun!)
- Sponsored event - take part in a local marathon or see how long you can keep silent!
- Abseil down the tallest building in your town
- Table quiz, test the knowledge of your family and friends
- Football tournament
- Give up your birthday for a year and ask for donations instead of presents
- Run a dinner party and ask for donations

We would love to support you in your fundraising for Abaana

Please email admin@abaana.org to let us know about your fundraiser or check out our website for more ideas of how you can support us this year.



Back to School

By Scott Baxter

In Uganda, the school year starts in January/ February, and the children from all three choirs reported to school. There is a lot of excitement for each new year. Eleven children moved from Primary 7 to the senior school, and our oldest choir child, Derrick, is now studying for A-levels, which is a big milestone. There is also the excitement of seeing friends that were missed over the holidays.



I had the privilege of visiting with the choir in March. It was so encouraging to see how they are being looked after and how well they were doing.

A Mother's Gratitude

On a visit to Buyobe Primary (a school we built), I had an unexpected encounter with the mother of Janet, Rebecca Namusoke, from Choir 3. So, I took the opportunity to sit with her and find out a little bit more about their family.

I was surprised to hear that Rebecca was a teacher in the old, original Buyobe school before it was rebuilt. She recalled, "I was there when we were told that Abaana was going to build a new school. I was so excited. I was even part of the community that provided bricks to help and support the school."

In the absence of access to a proper school, members of the community who had the best education would help teach and receive a small allowance (about £6 a month). However, as Rebecca was not a qualified teacher and had only studied up to Senior 2 herself, the building of the new school was bittersweet, as her position was replaced by a more qualified teacher.



Scott with Rebecca in front of Buyobe Primary



Male, eldest son of Rebecca

Sometime later, Janet's father was injured at work. He was a metalworker, and he damaged his hand so badly that he lost the use of it and could no longer work.

As a result, Rebecca became the main carer, and the only income they had was from farming the family gardens.

"It was difficult to get school fees for our children, and it was sad because our children really wanted to study. Other children in the community would attend school, but I could not afford to send mine. It was very upsetting. Thankfully, shortly after Abaana built the school, Male, our eldest boy, was one of the first children to be sponsored at the school. Later, we had another child, Deborah, sponsored. We thank God so much that our children now had the chance to go to school."

Male is currently studying a bachelor's degree in Business Administration at university and Deborah is in Senior 5 and is one of the top students in her class.

Rebecca continues, "When Janet was very young, we knew she had a talent. There was a Sunday school competition in the district, and Janet was sent to represent her church. She had to perform, read the Bible, do memory verses, sing, and do some drama. She won the competition against hundreds of other children.

Then one day, the staff of Abaana contacted me and told us that they wanted Janet to be part of the choir and travel to the UK. I thought, 'How has God blessed me so much that my child could travel to the UK?' We also knew Daisy from a past choir, and we knew that she came back and was doing so well. So, we knew that Abaana would look after our children.

When Janet was in the UK, I was sick. One day, while I was cooking, a part of the fire jumped out and landed in my eye. It was so painful, and I temporarily lost my sight in that eye. It took nearly a year to heal. The fact that Janet was being cared for by Abaana at this time took such a weight off my shoulders. Janet is my youngest, and you could say she was the child that needed me the most.

But at a time when I had to look after myself, I was so thankful for Abaana and had peace knowing that Janet was in good hands. Abaana kept us so well informed. Even when Janet got chickenpox, the staff kept us updated on how she was being looked after. When Janet was in the UK, they would send photographs and tell us how well the children were doing.

When Janet came home, she had grown up so much. She was speaking so well, and she had matured. She was also confident and lively, and she spoke more English than most of the family. I am so appreciative that Abaana also teaches the children about God.

Janet has a talent for performing, and the choir boosted her confidence and allowed her to fulfill that talent. She hopes that one day, she will become a doctor, or a pastor, lawyer, or even a fashion designer. She is so thankful for the support of Abaana and all their donors for helping make that happen."



Janet, (on the left), in the UK



Sponsorship – Sowing Seeds



Gillian and her friend, Elaine, have visited Uganda several times, providing incredible support to the Prince of Peace (POP) Primary School—and its surrounding community. In 2009, they were part of a group that visited a greenfield site, where they first heard the vision of local community members to build a school. Sixteen years later, that vision has become a reality. In early 2025, Gillian and Elaine had the joy of returning to the school for a special occasion—the opening ceremony of a new nursery unit, which they helped to fund. They were thrilled to be part of the celebration, reconnecting with many familiar and friendly faces.



Isaac in 2016

During their visit, they also had the pleasure of catching up with the children they sponsor—a highlight for anyone who has the chance to do so. Gillian met Martha in 2009 during her first visit. Then, in 2016, Gillian began sponsoring Isaac, Martha's son, enabling him to start school in Primary 1.

In February 2025, Gillian met with him again and in her words, she says, "Isaac is about to set off for secondary school after coming top in his class in his exams. He sadly lost his Mum since the last time we had visited. He was telling us about how he had been a Sunday School teacher and he is progressing to preaching in his church. I asked him how he trained or learnt how to do it. He replied, 'because you gave me a bible when you came to see me, I read it every night.' I was totally overwhelmed and blessed that God had used me as part of his faith journey. I feel very humbled and blessed to be able to play a part in his life and in his future."



Isaac and Gillian, 2025

Isaac's sponsorship journey is still ongoing, and Gillian remains committed to supporting and encouraging him as he moves forward. What a blessing it is to witness firsthand the progress he has made and the opportunities sponsorship has provided in his young life so far. We trust that God will continue to nurture the seed He has planted.

Prince of Peace Nursery



A Letter from Uganda

We all enjoy receiving letters, but every so often, a truly special one arrives in our post-box. When a sponsorship comes to an end—when a child completes their education—it's customary for them to write a final letter to their sponsor. Recently, one such letter arrived from a young lady named Sharon.

Sharon had been sponsored through the final stages of her education, and in her closing letter, she wrote: "I am writing this letter from the bottom of my heart just to appreciate you for the great and wonderful support you have rendered to me throughout my journey of education. It has not been very easy, but with the help of the Almighty God I completed my dream course of a Certificate in Nursing. I am currently working in Kampala at Vale Grace Clinic. My words cannot express my feelings and happiness of being a nurse, the profession I dreamt about since my childhood. I am working hard to be the best nurse to my people. This has not been by my own making but it has been by God's grace and your endless support.

I am very grateful for all you have done in my life. You have supported me just like your own child. You have become part of my family members. May your hands never lack anything in this world by God's grace.

May the good Lord continue providing and keeping you in Jesus name. Amen."

Sharon's sponsors, James and Maeve Mulholland, shared:

"We chose an older child, hoping to see her reach her goals—and we have! We're so proud that she's now a trained nurse. Her letters reflect her love for God and us. She is SO grateful—we feel truly humbled!"

We are deeply grateful to all our sponsors who are empowering and equipping their sponsored children to complete their education and break free from the cycle of poverty.

If you would like more information on sponsorship, please visit our website: abaana.org/sponsorship or email chris@abaana.org





Spreading Christmas Joy

We are so very thankful to so many of our sponsors and supporters who gave so freely and generously to the Christmas Gift scheme 2024. Through their kindness we were able to raise in excess of £70,000 which is truly amazing!

This meant that every child and their families within our sponsorship scheme, as well as a number of other children, were able to receive gifts at Christmas. Here is what some of the children had to say in response.



Patricia – from New Life Choir 2

"I feel blessed to belong with Abaana. With Abaana I have learnt what confidence means because I am confident Abaana will always come through for me. When it comes to Christmas time, I am always excited because I know Abaana will make it beautiful. I am grateful that even this Christmas Abaana decided to bless me and my family and make it colourful. I am happy for the food which I am to share with my family. I am so happy for the other personal needs like the bag, soap, a bottle and others. For sure Abaana makes my life more beautiful every time. I am very happy and hopeful, and this is because of how Abaana has loved me."



Fred – from New Life Choir 3

"I am very happy that I got a chance to be sponsored through the choir. When they took me to the UK I felt like they had done too much but you see, they have given me gifts too. I feel very special; I am very happy for my new bag. My books are going to be safe. This Christmas grandmother

will not worry about the food we will eat. I am happy they have given us enough rice. I am also happy for the biscuits and sweets which I am going to share with my friends. I am very happy and I feel like am the most special boy."

Hatim – from New Life Homes

"I and my family members we are so happy to receive Christmas gifts from Abaana. I thank my sponsors for always thinking about me and providing for me with school fees and gifts. I'm really going to enjoy this Christmas together with my family. May God bless my sponsors and may they also have a merry Christmas and a happy new year 2025."

Our thanks again for helping bring such joy and pleasure to so many children and their families in Uganda.



Street Kids Christmas Party

More than 180 children braved torrential rain last December to receive a hot Christmas lunch, sing Christmas songs and hear about the birth of Jesus at the street party celebration. The children received a new pair of sandals and Christmas sweets which brought a smile to their faces. Beyond the festivities, the event helped identify 15 boys in need of critical support, and our social workers are actively following up to help these children return to their families.





The Transformative Impact of New Life Homes

Built in 2006, the New Life Homes (NLH) 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.



Andrew during his graduation

Building opportunity and hope: Andrew graduates with a certificate in brick laying and construction

Andrew joined New Life Homes when he was just 11 years old. He started out in Primary 1, progressing through primary school. But Andrew had a sense that school wasn't for him. He tells us that he felt like a failure when he was guided towards vocational training. Little did he know, it would be the beginning of a life-changing journey for him.

Andrew discovered his passion to use his hands to build and create something. As a certified brick layer, he can hold his head high with confidence and know that he has lots of opportunities for employment. "To my sponsors and Abaana, thank you from the bottom of my heart. You have given me an opportunity that will sustain me for a lifetime."



Building on new foundations

With 21 new boys moving into New Life Homes over the past year, we have been busy helping them settle into school life. Many of these children had patchy attendance at school and so we set to work to support them to improve their reading and writing skills. With thanks to generous supporters, we have continued to employ tutors to teach phonics in addition to their regular classes. Every child has improved and every child has moved up to the next class. Their teachers commented that they are speaking English with more confidence and gave them very positive report cards. Keep up the hard work, boys!



Look what I've made!

The boys were bursting with pride to show off the shirts they had made themselves. Don't you agree - they look so smart! We aim to support boys in many areas of life and life skills training plays an important role. The boys had learned to sew their own clothes and to make liquid soap. The hands-on sessions equip them with practical, income-generating skills, fostering confidence and optimism about their future. Grateful for the opportunity, many boys shared their excitement about using their new skills to support themselves and their families, ensuring a more sustainable path beyond NLH.

New intakes

Three more boys have just been brought to New Life Homes to escape their current reality of life on the streets. We are working with them to find their families and rehabilitate them. If you would like to sponsor one of these children, please go to abaana.org/NLH or contact louise@abaana.org for more information.

Exciting Times Ahead: 150 Volunteers Set to Make a Difference in Uganda!



The coming year is set to be a busy time for Abaana, as six short-term teams prepare to travel to Uganda to visit and support our life-changing projects. With more than 150 passionate volunteers ready to roll up their sleeves, this promises to be a most impactful team season.

Each team and each person will bring unique skills, energy, and a heart for service as they work on essential projects that will directly benefit thousands of children and families in Uganda.

Their mission is ambitious, but the impact will be lasting. Each team will visit at least one of Abaana's seventeen partner schools; some will be building, others painting, many teaching the pupils and sharing the love of God with everyone they meet. Here is a snapshot of the teams and the projects they are fundraising towards.



Transforming Education and Infrastructure

- **Building of a nursery unit at Atukubui Primary by the Mullabrack and Kilcluney Parishes Team.**
- **Building of a new kitchen and sanitation facilities at Rainey Summit View Primary by the Rainey Endowed School Team.**
- **Renovations to the kitchen at Dr Andrew McAvoy Primary School by the Newtownbreda Baptist Church Team.**

Painting and Decorating

Four schools will receive much-needed renovations and a fresh coat of paint. These improvements will not only enhance the learning environment but also instil a sense of pride in students and teachers.

- **Lweza Primary School, painted by Belfast High School**
- **Kisole Baptist Primary School, painted by Archbishop Holgate's School**
- **Buyobe Primary School, painted by Mullabrack and Kilcluney Parishes Team**
- **Arise and Shine Primary School, painted by the Umoja Team**



A Journey of Impact and Transformation

For our volunteers, this journey is more than just a mission trip—it's an opportunity to forge new relationships, walk a mile in someone else's shoes and learn more about the communities they will serve.

We invite our supporters to follow along on this journey through our updates and photos on social media. Your encouragement, prayers, and donations make it possible for these teams to bring about real and lasting change. As the teams prepare for departure, we extend our deepest gratitude to each volunteer, donor, and supporter who has made this possible. Together, we are building brighter futures, one project at a time. You too, can play a part in helping to end poverty. To register your interest to join the next Umoja team, visit abaana.org/teams

Consider your ways

We love sending as many children to Scripture Union camp as possible and this year was no exception! More than 100 beneficiaries were excited for their summer holiday SU camp, where they worshipped, praised, played sports and competed in team challenges. The theme this year was 'Consider your ways' (Haggai 1:7). Campers reflected on their past and present behaviour and were encouraged to turn to God with open hearts.

Arnold, who has been living at New Life Homes for the past year, learned a lot at camp. He tells us, "I learned that just as God forgives us even when we don't deserve it, I should also forgive those who have wronged me... I made the decision to forgive all the boys who had hurt me while I was still living on the streets."

Ronald from NLH had this to say, "I made new friends and I loved starting our mornings with aerobics and music—it was so much fun! One of my favourite moments was being part of a Christmas gift exchange for the first time. I shared the sweet I received at camp with my Secret Santa, and it felt really good to give." Huge thanks to everyone who made the camp possible!





**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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