

Abaana News

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**Bringing Hope to the
Children of Africa**

Charity No. NIC102174

From the Streets of Kampala to University President!

By Emmanuel Kiweewa

When my father died in 1997, I was six months old; I was raised with three siblings by a single mother. Following his death, my mother was left to take care of us without any support. This put a lot of stress on her, and life was tough for all of us.

I was sent to primary school but there I was beaten. I became so miserable to the extent that I would hide in the bushes and go home late in the evening. When I couldn't take the struggles at home and the struggles at school anymore, I ran away and went to the streets in Kampala. I made this decision at age 9.

Life was hard, but I managed to survive by searching through rubbish and collecting sacks full of discarded plastic bottles. I would sell a sack to be able to buy myself a chapatti and something to drink.

My hand to mouth survival on the streets continued in this way for two years until I met the Aunties and Uncles from Abaana who gave me the opportunity to come off the streets. I joined Abaana's New Life Homes (NLH). I was given love, care, and attention, was taught how to read and write and I was empowered to aspire for more in life. Despite my earlier challenges at school, education became interesting, and I progressed really well.

During this time, Abaana reunited me with my family, and I was reconciled with my mother. It was a very emotional time but was a necessary process of catharsis. Through tears I apologised for running away, leaving her to think the worst, that I had died or was enslaved. And she apologised for the way she took her bitterness out on me after Dad passed away.

I continued living at NLH as Mum still didn't have the means to care for me. I really thrived with Abaana's support and encouragement, and I gained leadership responsibilities throughout school. I was a prefect in Primary School, Head Prefect at Secondary School and was elected the president of the School of Psychology during my undergraduate degree at Makerere University.

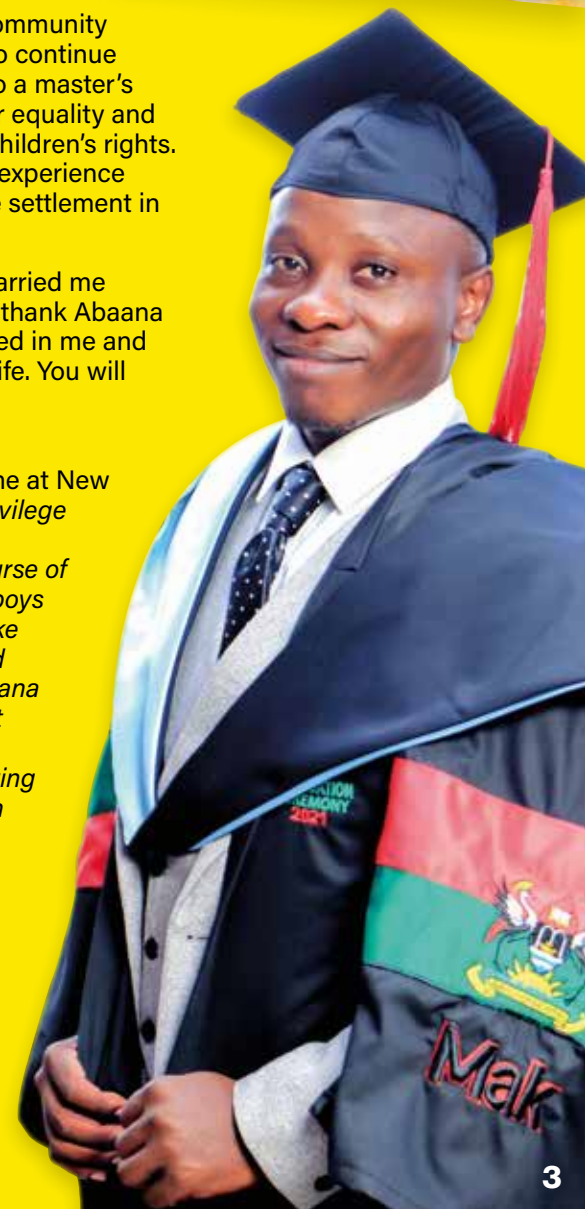
I am ecstatic that I am now a university graduate with a bachelor's degree in Community Psychology and Mental Health. I want to continue to better myself and I have applied to do a master's degree in human rights so I can fight for equality and dignity for all people and advocate for children's rights. In the meantime, I am gaining as much experience as possible by volunteering at a refugee settlement in Northern Uganda.

God has been so good to me and has carried me through the tough times. I would like to thank Abaana and all of my sponsors who have believed in me and helped to give me a fighting chance at life. You will always be counted as part of my family.

David & Ruth Manning have sponsored Emmanuel from the beginning of his time at New Life Homes. They said, *'It has been a privilege to watch how a relatively small financial commitment has changed the whole course of life for an individual. Life is not easy for boys who find themselves in circumstances like Emmanuel's but he has worked hard and used every opportunity provided by Abaana to achieve a great education. We are just so delighted to see how Emmanuel has matured into a most responsible and caring young man who we know God will use in very special ways in the future.'*

Our thanks go to all of Emmanuel's sponsors for their commitment and generosity. We have many boys starting the same journey as Emmanuel. If you would be interested in supporting a New Life Homes boy, sponsorship costs just £24 a month. Please contact louise@abaana.org or visit the website at Abaana.org/nlh

www.abaana.org



News from New Life Homes

Abaana's New Life Homes (NLH) opened in 2007 as a response to the estimated 10,000 children living on the streets in Uganda. It is a safe haven for children to live without fear, be provided with all their daily essential needs and help to reunite them with family members.



Edwin, Nicholas, Brian, Hakim, Arnold, Douglas, Saazi

PLE stars rise from NLH

After a very tough academic year that was punctuated by school lockdown, seven boys from New Life Homes sat their Primary Leaving Exam. There is no doubt that the time invested in their home schooling has paid off as each of the boys achieved excellent results.

We are so proud that three of the boys - Edwin, Brian and Nicholas, attained the highest marks possible. All the boys are excited for the transition into secondary education.

Scripture Union Camp

Each of the P7 candidates concluded their primary education with a 5-day Scripture Union Camp (before lockdown!) at a site on the picturesque shores of Lake Victoria. It was a great time of reflection after sitting their exam.

Hakim tells us, *'I was very happy when I was told that there is camp this year. As a Scripture Union leader for my primary school, I have to be a good example and encourage other children to fix their eyes on Jesus. I will stand for leader again because I have been encouraged to do so. I was reminded to have my quiet time with God, read my bible, make good choices and friends and keep my body pure as a young boy.'*

We are delighted that the boys were given this opportunity. They all thoroughly enjoyed themselves, being able to interact with others and to have some relaxation time too. Thank you to their sponsors who made their attendance possible.

We are excited to introduce Zuri Girl to you!

Zuri Girl

Zuri Girl has been created in response to the overwhelming challenges that girls in Africa face on a daily basis. Zuri means *'beautiful'* in Swahili, and we want to make sure that the girls we work with feel beautiful inside and out. Sanitary items are a luxury and when you don't have enough to buy the basic necessities, luxury items are far out of reach. Girls end up using dirty rags which can lead to infection and missing valuable school days for fear of leakage and total embarrassment. Zuri Girl project provides training for our teachers and girls to make their own reusable, eco-friendly sanitary towels, learn more about health and hygiene and give them a good foundation of self-esteem.

Currently we are supporting girls with sanitary wear and new pants through our child sponsorship scheme. It is maybe hard for us to understand how much of a difference something this simple can make, but let Harriet share her thoughts:

As the sanitary towels were being given out in a school, one girl was so excited she couldn't stop smiling. She said, *"Thank you Abaana for thinking about us. Times have surely been bad and our parents don't usually give us these items because there is no money. I am happy to have received these pads and knickers. I will not lose hope and my life has been made comfortable. I am sure to attend classes regularly even during my periods as I can't be ashamed. Thank you so much."*

We would love for you to get involved! If we can get regular monthly support for this project we can give the girls the skills to succeed. For more information on how you can help bring about change through supporting our Zuri Girl project, please contact: Louise@abaana.org or visit the website Abaana.org



Susan's Success in Statistics – A Mathematical Improbability!



It is said that numbers don't lie and there are sadly very few in Uganda who study right through school to university level. Susan Sendege, who recently graduated with a first-class honours degree in statistics from Makerere University, is one who simply would not give up on their ambitions and went against the numbers!

When Susan was in lower primary, his parents were unable to meet the minimal school fees and he was moved to a Government school, but the quality was very poor. A short while later, Abaana's sponsorship programme was introduced to his previous school, and the option was given to him to return to New Foundations, in Primary 3, under the sponsorship scheme. Susan's life completely changed due to this opportunity. He determined to work very hard achieving excellent results at GCSE-level and one of the highest possible scores at A-level. Looking back, he marvels at his journey: *'I had no hope of attending the good schools Abaana's sponsorship enabled me to. (I would have been) a school dropout.'*

His outstanding performance enabled him to study at Makerere University and his first-class honours degree is an incredible achievement. Susan says it is a dream come true and he is currently working in research with his former supervisor and is confident he will be able to contribute to the development of Uganda. Susan is certain that it was God's hand on his life, together with the support of his family and his sponsor, that has enabled him to achieve this exceptional level of success.

Susan's sponsor, Rachel, said *'His story brings home to me the importance of sponsorship and I am happy to have been a part of Susan's journey, albeit a small part.'* Rachel explains why she chose to be a sponsor in the first place, *'All children deserve opportunities, and these children (and young adults) will be the people who can make a positive difference in their countries moving forward. As a sponsor, seeing Susan graduate and knowing he has a bright future ahead, has been the biggest reward of all.'*



If you would be interested in supporting a child, sponsorship costs just £24 a month. Please contact chris@abaana.org or visit the website at Abaana.org/sponsorship

Rainey Summit View Primary

2020 was supposed to be the year in which Rainey Primary was completed, but due to Covid-19 the team from Rainey Endowed School, Magherafelt were unable to travel to help build the second classroom block. We look forward to the time when teams can safely travel once more. Thankfully, work is still going on!

Since the first phase of building at Rainey Summit View Primary School began in 2019, pupil attendance has increased by more than 60%. The school has been hugely popular, yet this puts a strain on the existing sanitation facilities. Every break time sees long queues of children waiting to use the toilet.

The 485 pupils will be overjoyed when they return to school to see a brand-new toilet block installed. Special thanks go out to the team at Pebble who have generously funded the project.



If you would like to help to fund the second phase of building Rainey Summit View Primary School, please search *'Just Giving Rainey Primary'* or simply call our office **028 91 451 918** to make a donation.





COVID Relief Continues

Sadly, COVID is still far from under control and restrictions are currently in place in Uganda, which have meant that the schools have been in a long period of lockdown. We felt it only right therefore that we continue to provide relief and aid where we could, given the restrictions in Uganda, and over the past 18 months, thanks to our incredible supporters have raised in excess of £100,000 to help those in need.

Here are some brief insights and pictures to give you a flavour of the situation faced by many and what Abaana has been able to do in response.

We worked with a number of the Abaana school communities and were able to deliver and distribute relief items such as food (flour, beans & salt) and hygiene items such as soap.

One of the sponsored children, Catherine (15), who received aid, comes from a family of 8 and the pandemic was harsh on them. Most of her family members were sick and they spent vital monies on medication leaving them short in being able to purchase food. Catherine said, *"thank you so much for the food and soap... Life is going to be better. God bless Abaana and the sponsors"*.



Our team in Uganda also sought to complement the Ugandan government's efforts by supporting health centres with hygiene items, such as liquid soap, hand sanitizer & foot operated hand washing facilities to help equip them in their fight against the pandemic. A nurse from one centre said *"We really appreciate this donation because you have equipped us to fight against COVID-19 and may God bless Abaana so much"*.

Paul, a sponsored child, was so excited to receive the aid given and smiled as he said to the Abaana staff, *"I am very happy for this food because at least I am sure that we shall have a meal today and for some days ahead. Sometimes we don't know how we shall survive because my parents are not as busy as they used to be before lockdown, and I think they don't get enough money to provide everything for us. I thank you for this support and God bless you"*.

So, on behalf of the children and families who received this aid, may we thank you, our supporters and sponsors for helping to provide once again, we are truly very grateful.



Atukubui School - the Village of the Wise

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world"
Nelson Mandela

In our last Newsletter we were excited to report that phase 1 of the project to provide new school buildings for Atukubui Primary in Ojukai village in the east of Uganda was well underway.

Thanks to the amazing kindness and generosity of so many from across the UK and Ireland and further afield, we are thrilled to let you know that the building work at Atukubui is complete. Seven new classrooms (complete with desks), an office and two latrine outbuildings have been completed.

It's hard to imagine the excitement of the children, staff, and local community as they see their brand-new school buildings. What a difference this will make! No more classes sitting on the ground, sheltering as best they can from the rain, trying to keep their schoolwork dry.

On a previous visit by Abaana staff, it was distressing to hear the principal say that other neighbouring communities referred to Ojukai as the *'village of fools'* because they did not have proper school buildings. Well, not any more!

Life is very challenging for so many communities across Uganda. Every day is a battle. Education represents the best hope for children to escape the poverty trap.



If a child can receive an education, they have a much greater possibility of getting a job, earning a wage and over time pulling themselves (and often their families as well) out of acute poverty.

Having suitable school buildings and desks to sit at plays an enormous part in the children's educational journey.

So, a huge thank you, on behalf of the children and staff of Atukubui Primary School, for your amazingly generous support and encouragement. By your kindness, you are quite literally changing lives and providing hope for a better future. And now the community of Ojukai can boast that they will no longer be known as a *'village of fools'* but rather one of the wise!





Successful Surgery Means it is Playtime Again!

Leus, one of our sponsored children, is an eleven-year-old boy in Primary 3 at Strathearn Primary school in Kampala, Uganda. During a routine visit by our staff, it was noticed that Leus seemed to be miserable and in some pain. Upon questioning Leus, he showed our staff a wound on his foot that was causing him pain and rendering him unable to play with the other children. The pain was so great it was affecting his schooling and hence his learning and development.

Leus stays with his grandmother and unfortunately, she had been unable to provide Leus with the medical support he required. Once our staff understood the extent of the challenge, they were able to contact Corsu Orthopaedic Hospital and Leus was admitted for surgery.

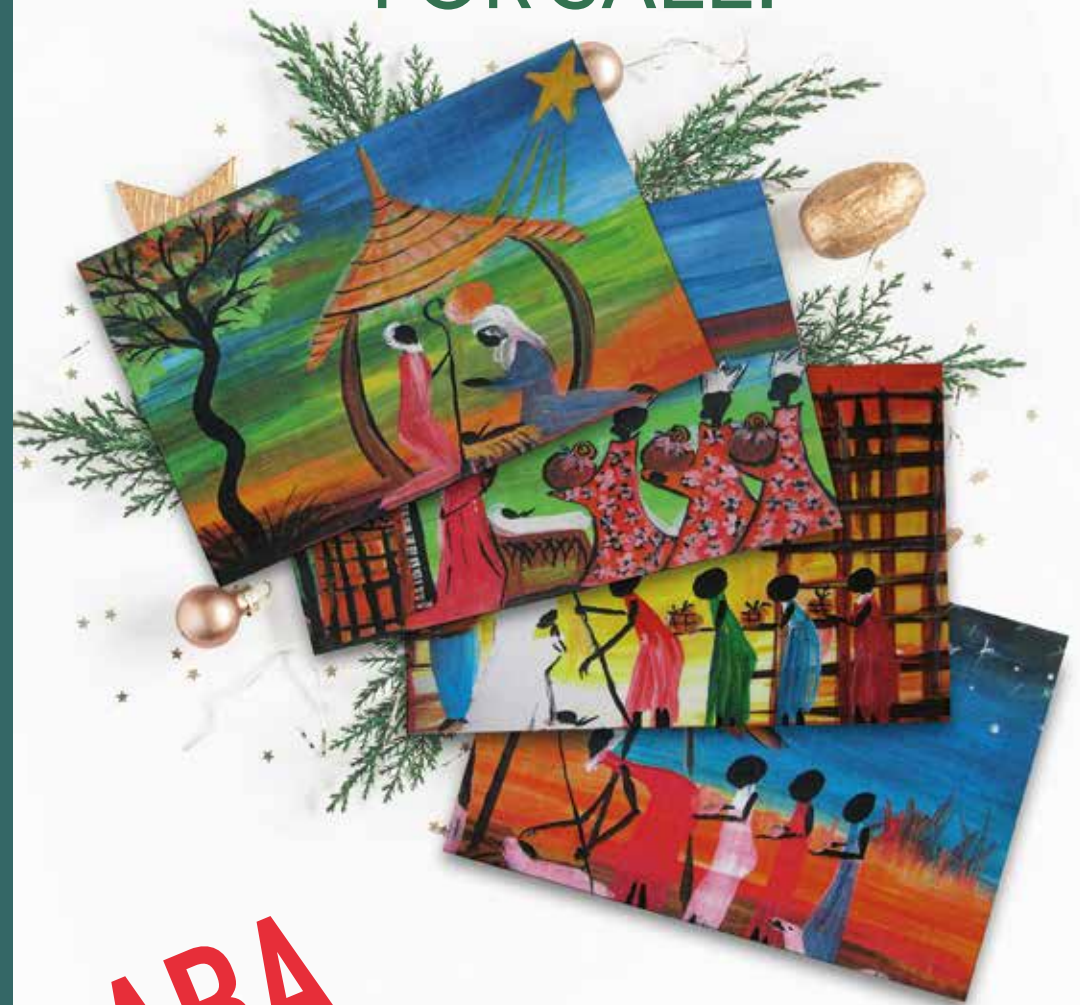
His medical diagnosis was Chronic Osteomyelitis which is an infection of the bone. It seems that several years ago he got a deep cut on his foot which then became infected and left untreated led to him needing surgery to remove the dead bone.

The surgery was successful and Leus recovered well. Now Leus will be able to join with his friends as he walks to school pain free, he can focus on his schooling and he can play!

Today, he is a very happy boy who is hopeful about his future. He says, "Thank you Abaana for helping me get treatment for my leg. I feel much better and now I can play with my friends without worrying about any wound. God bless you."



CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR SALE!



Each pack of 8 cards contains 4 different images with a Bible verse and Christmas greeting inside.

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£2.50

Charity Number NIC102174

Bringing Education to Another Village

New School Project – St. Mary's Primary

To date, Abaana has built 16 primary schools in Uganda.

These schools help to educate over 5,000 children, giving them a chance to break free from the poverty cycle. However, there are still many villages across Uganda that have no school or a very poor school structure and untrained teachers trying their best to educate the children with little or no resources.

The next school we want to focus on is St. Mary's in the east of Uganda.



The school was started in 2007 by the Church of Uganda who wanted to promote education in the area. It has 10 teachers, but they are only paid between £10 and £20 a month.

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.

The first stage of a school building project is to build two classroom blocks (consisting of seven classrooms and an office), toilets and to provide furniture which altogether costs around £80,000. Abaana is looking for partners who can help partially fund a school (e.g. a classroom at £10,000), fund a whole school or fundraise towards the general building. Are you up for the challenge?

If you would be interested in supporting this project partially or in full, please contact the office on 02891 451918.





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CHRISTMAS GIFT APPEAL

This Christmas we would love to give a gift to as many children as possible

Each Christmas our sponsors buy gifts for their sponsored children, but we have many more children who need our support.

This Christmas, you can support your child or a child who has no sponsor by visiting: Abaana.org/Christmas

If You Sponsor A Child - Please do not send a parcel to Uganda this Christmas as due to Covid-19 it may not arrive. Please use the Christmas Gift Scheme.

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