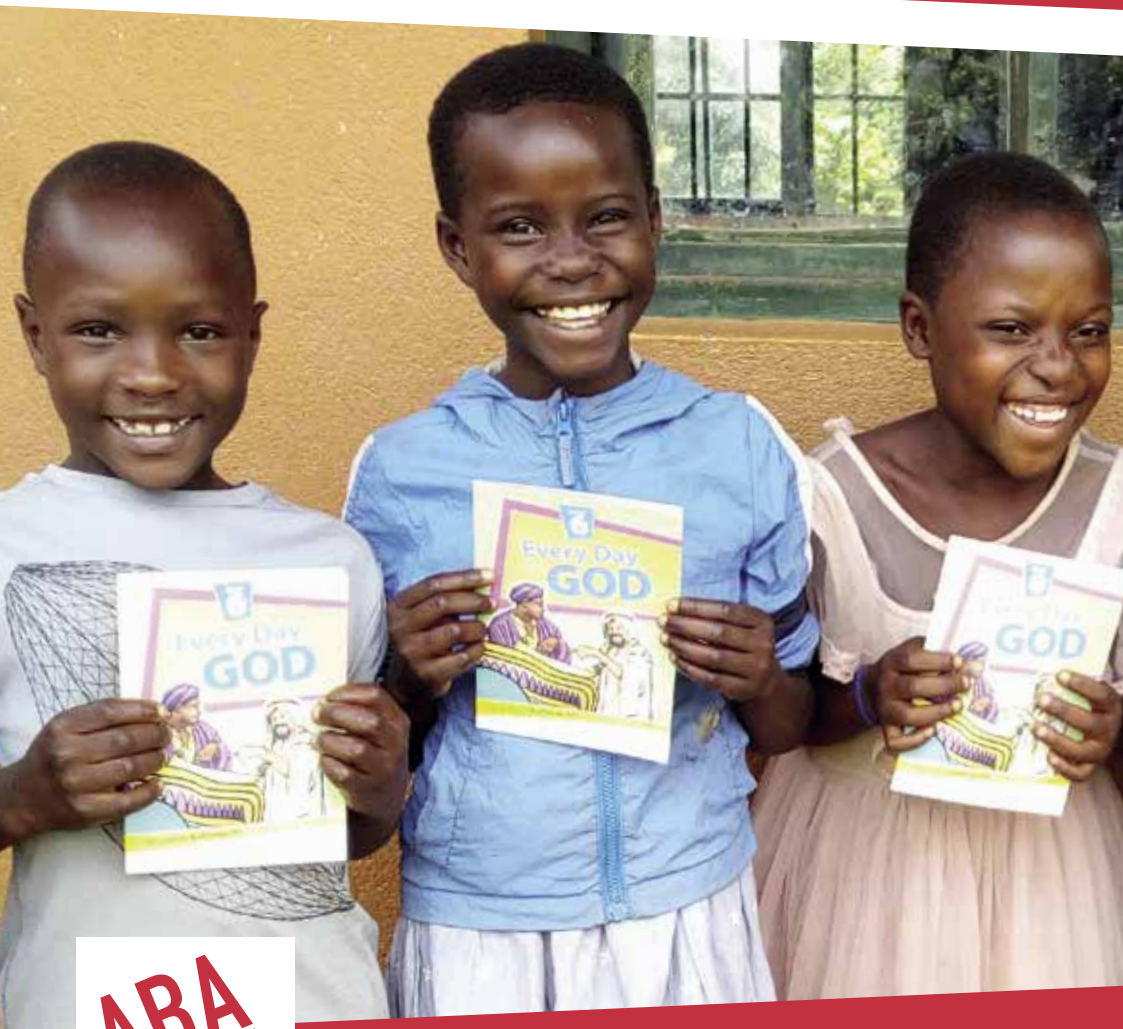


Abaana News

Follow us on   

Issue # 33



**ABA
ANA**

ABAANA.ORG

**Bringing Hope to the
Children of Africa**

Charity No. NIC102174

Thank you



We hope Choir 3 will be able to come in 2023

As I watched the snow falling from my home office window, even indoors I could tell that the temperature had plummeted. I took a photo of the frosty whiteness and sent it to our Choir Conductor, Sarah, in Uganda with the caption, **"You should be here now!"** 2021 was supposed to be the year for Choir 3.

The children had been selected and training was due to start and then everything changed! Not just for Abaana but for the whole world! It was a time of uncertainty and frustration and as with many organisations, the plans for 2020 went out the window as the year took on a whole new direction.

But as I look back over the year, I am immensely proud of how our staff both in U.K. and Uganda have adapted and looked for ways not just to react, but to be pro-active during this pandemic.

Often when countries face hard times, it is the poorest that suffer the most. The pandemic caused the first economic recession in modern African

history and the WHO estimates that it will drive 50 million people into extreme poverty (mostly children). 250 million children were pushed out of school and with almost no online learning, it is estimated that this will have a negative impact on the region for decades to come.

This newsletter will update you on some of the work we have been doing over the last year to combat this, and we are so grateful for the support of our donors that has made this possible. The team in Uganda, led by Gill, worked tirelessly especially in the lead up to Christmas to make sure we reached as many children and families as possible.

We are optimistic that with the new vaccine, we can return to some form of normality soon. We are currently hopeful that the Choir will return in 2023, and as the schools reopen in Uganda we will continue to serve those who need it most.

Thank you for all your support.

Scott Baxter C.E.O. UK

A Big Thanks From Abaana – 6000 Miles Update

Over the last year we have seen many of our daily activities stripped back: Exercise, however, has been one of the few things that we have been encouraged to do.

So in September, we started a fundraising challenge of raising £20,000 by walking, cycling, and running 6000 miles- the same distance from our U.K. office to Uganda. We asked supporters to join us in travelling some of those miles to help us achieve our goal.

Thank you to everyone who gave or took part!

We were so blessed to see over 100 people take part. We had an array of different personal challenges from 6-year-olds running to great grandparents walking. We even had one person travel their miles in their wheelchair! The individuals, the families, the workplaces and youth groups, fundraised as part of their challenge and phenomenally hit our target of £20,000! On top of that, they travelled not just the initial 6000-mile target, but 15,000 miles in total! The money raised has gone towards 3 projects:

- Building Phase One of Atukubui Primary School
- Covid-19 Relief Aid
- New Life Choir 3

Thank you for making a difference!

It's not too late to get involved.

If you would like to get your family active and help raise funds to release children from poverty, please get in touch with the office.

There are many ways to help:

Could you do a personal challenge? Donate some unwanted items to the charity shop? Or maybe sponsor a child?



A School with Walls, Doors and Windows!



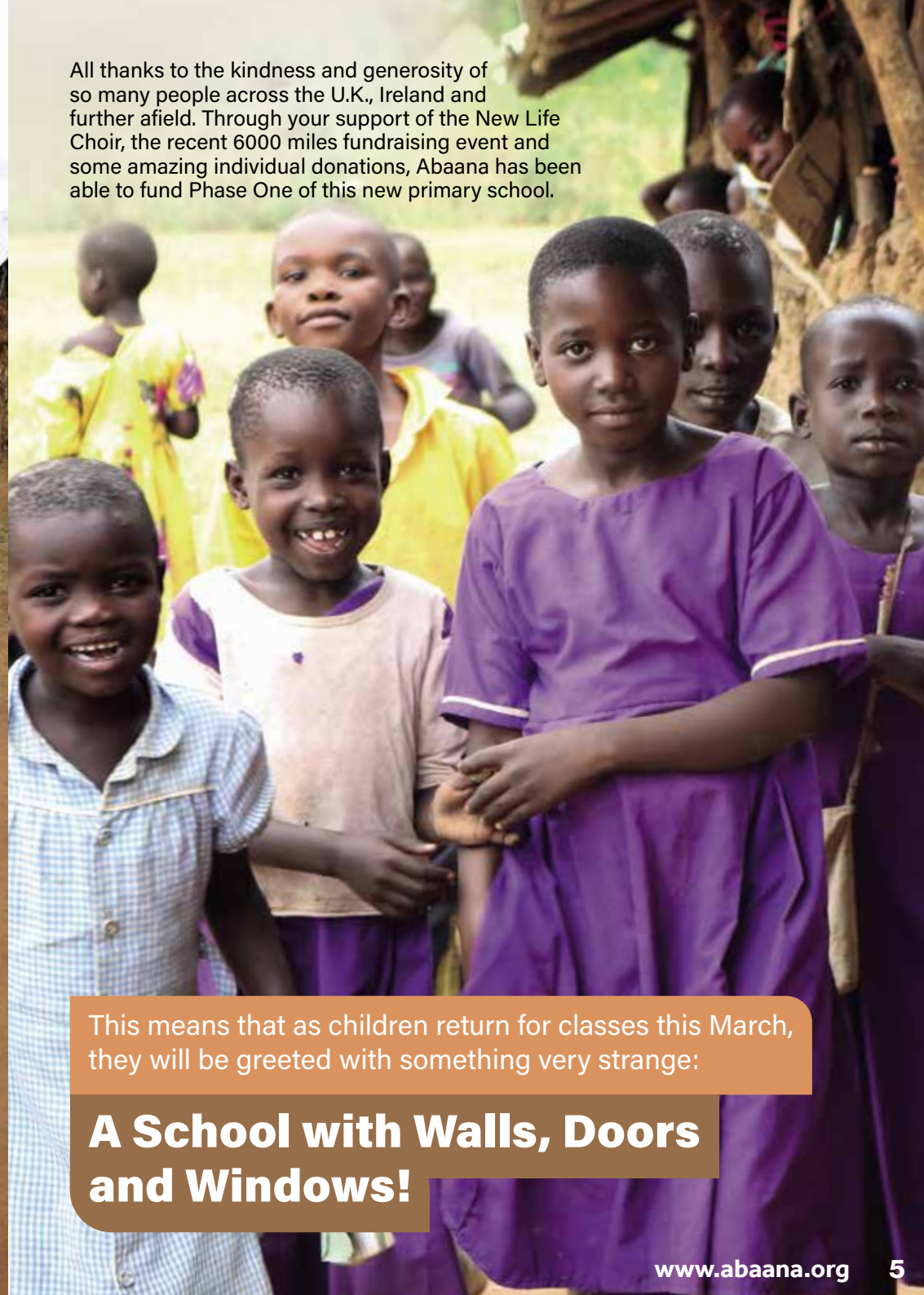
6,000 miles away in eastern Uganda, located in the village of Ojukai, is Atukubui Primary School. Here, life is very different from what we know. The shops didn't close during the pandemic because, well, there are no shops and the supermarkets didn't run out of toilet roll because, well yeah you guessed it.

However, the local primary school, like all schools across Uganda, did have to close. This school was composed of mainly a corrugated iron roof supported by wooden stakes. With no desks or seats, the children had to sit on the hard earth floor, and the teacher wrote on an old blackboard propped up in the corner. When it rains, everything gets wet.

This was the school the children left when lockdown hit Uganda. It was distressing to hear the Head teacher explain how the village of Ojukai is described by its neighbours as *"the village of fools"* - because it does not have a good school structure.

So you can imagine there was a lot of excitement in the community when they heard of plans to build a new school with seven classrooms and a staff office.

All thanks to the kindness and generosity of so many people across the U.K., Ireland and further afield. Through your support of the New Life Choir, the recent 6000 miles fundraising event and some amazing individual donations, Abaana has been able to fund Phase One of this new primary school.



This means that as children return for classes this March, they will be greeted with something very strange:

A School with Walls, Doors and Windows!

A School with Walls, Doors and Windows!



Phase One Underway

We are thrilled to announce that Phase One of the project is well underway at Atukubui, where seven classrooms, a school office and two latrines are currently under construction.



Phase Two Coming Soon

As soon as we have the funds, we will start Phase Two which includes the painting of the school buildings and latrines, the installation of water harvesting systems and the provision of desks and furniture for the children and teachers.

The water harvesting systems will capture rainwater through PVC guttering installed on the buildings linked to large storage tanks. This water can then be used by the school community for washing and cooking.

How can I help?

The work that Abaana is privileged to undertake is only possible through the commitment, generosity, and encouragement of so many people.

Right now, we are continuing to raise funds to enable the completion of the school. Just another £10,000 is needed. If you would like to help the people of Atukubui and donate towards this project, please visit our website (www.abaana.org) or contact the Abaana office.

Together, be assured, we can make a genuine and lasting difference to the lives of boys and girls living in poverty. Thank you.

"You may not be able to change the whole world, but you can change the world for one child."



More Than a Gift

"The Christmas Gift Scheme really makes children feel valued, and have a sense of self-worth and dignity despite their background, and to feel that somebody cares about them." Andrew Magero, Sponsorship Officer in Uganda.

I wonder if you ever thought that giving someone a gift, could also give them something else, perhaps of far greater value than the gift itself.

Throughout 2020, as the Ugandan children spent a long time away from schools, we wanted to make sure that they knew that Abaana and their sponsors had not forgotten about them. That we are still thinking about them, praying for them, and that they are loved.

So we set ourselves the target of sending a gift to each of our sponsored children and as many other children as possible who don't currently have sponsors. In total we were able to give Christmas bundles to 2000 homes.



15 primary school teachers from Buyobe Primary School receiving their Christmas gift bundles.

Our team in Uganda had the task of procuring these gifts. These included an age-appropriate gift, a jumper, a food package for each child's family, (including a 10 kg pack of rice & beans, cooking oil, salt, sugar and sweets), and a hygiene/ Covid-19 related package (soap & masks). All of these items were placed together in what we termed a "Christmas Gift Bundle."

Our Christmas Gift Appeal raised a fantastic £36,000! Along with the 1,800 Christmas gift bundles to the children, we also delivered 225 Christmas gift bundles to primary school teachers and their families in each of Abaana's 15 primary schools. Over the Christmas period approximately 12,150 people benefitted from these bundles.





Tom Ndugga, a teacher at Buyobe Primary School, said how wonderful it was that we were able to provide gifts for the teachers too.

"This is a package that I honestly didn't expect...what a blessing! The season has been very tough for me and my family. The lockdown was abrupt and caught us totally unprepared. We have been living each day by the grace of God. This Christmas gift from Abaana is surely an answered prayer to a desperate need. I thank God for every hand that has blessed me and my family through Abaana."

Similarly, there were many words of gratitude from our sponsored children. Olivia, a secondary pupil in Senior 6, said:

"I am so happy that Abaana has chosen to bless my family with such a wonderful gesture of generosity and love.... May God bless Abaana Ministries for this special Christmas gift!"

On behalf of all of the children, their families and their teachers, may we thank you, our supporters and sponsors for helping to give, not only a Christmas gift bundle, but something of greater worth- a sense of love, value and dignity.



A Good Night's Sleep



"Night night, sleep tight, don't let the bed bugs bite!"

Many a parent has whispered these words as they tuck the children into bed and give them a kiss goodnight. But for many African children the real life issue is not the bed bug, it's the mosquito.

According to the World Health Organisation, over 400,000 people died from malaria in 2019 with more than 90% of these cases in Africa.

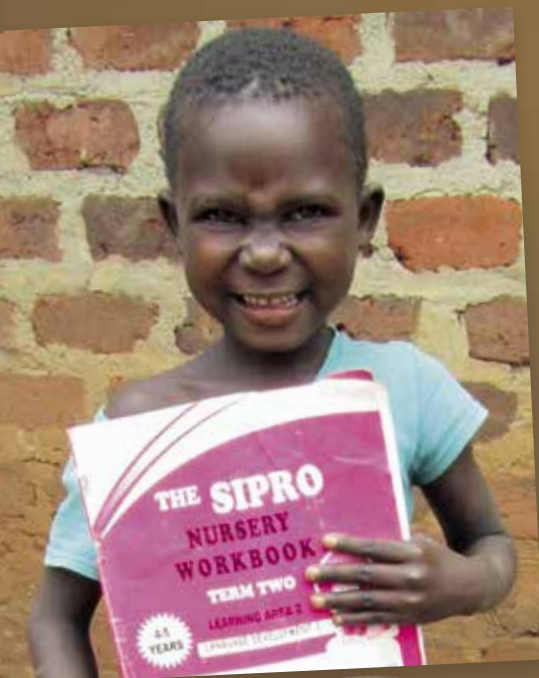
The great news is that in the last 20 years, deaths from malaria have nearly halved with over 20 countries being declared malaria free. Progress was being made, but recently funding for malaria prevention and treatment has dropped significantly and there are real concerns that Covid 19 will have a further detrimental effect on the progress.

As part of the November Covid Support intervention with our communities and sponsored children, Abaana supplied 3600 mosquito nets (protecting up to 10,000 people) and also provided 1800 mattresses.

The mattress has a dual purpose. It not only gives the children a better night's sleep (as opposed to sleeping on the cold hard mud floor), it also allows the nets to be tucked in, ensuring they both cover the children while holding the netting away from their skin.



Education - "No Child is Left Behind"



"No child is left behind" were the words recently used by the British PM, Boris Johnson, in his campaign to try to ensure that children's education in the U.K. does not suffer.

Uganda too has undergone educational challenges due to COVID-19 and schools being closed since March 2020 (with the exception of those children within important exam years).

However, there is good news, for at the time of writing (March 2021) all classes in Uganda (bar pre-primary) are returning to school this month.

At Abaana, it is our desire also, that none of the children we support are **"left behind"** in their education.

The challenges of home education in Uganda are immense. For example, as many children across the U.K. sit around the kitchen table with laptops, zoom meetings and multiple resource packs, the picture in Uganda is quite different.

Across rural Uganda, most children live in homes without electricity and sometimes even a table and chair. In a setting where most parents don't read or write, laptops and internet are not

even options, so their only hope is to self learn from printed resources and books.

That is why in 2020 we undertook a substantial logistical challenge to meet with as many sponsored children as we could to deliver educational material for home learning. Home visits were carried out by our fantastic team of staff and 'sponsorship teachers', to encourage and support home learning.

Often homes are deep in villages very far apart and only accessible by foot on dusty paths, or by 'boda boda' (motorbike). On top of this, many families in more urban areas send children to stay with relatives in villages feeling it was safer, so locating children sometimes is near impossible.

We are delighted that last term, our team in Uganda delivered in excess of 4,500 educational items to the children out of school.

To ensure that the materials once delivered could be well-utilised, members of our Ugandan team met with and mobilised teachers from the relevant Abaana Primary School in each distribution. Together, they laid out a plan for teachers to collect and mark the workbooks.

Nasubuga Milliam who is in P6 told us: **"We are so happy to receive these materials from Abaana which we shall**

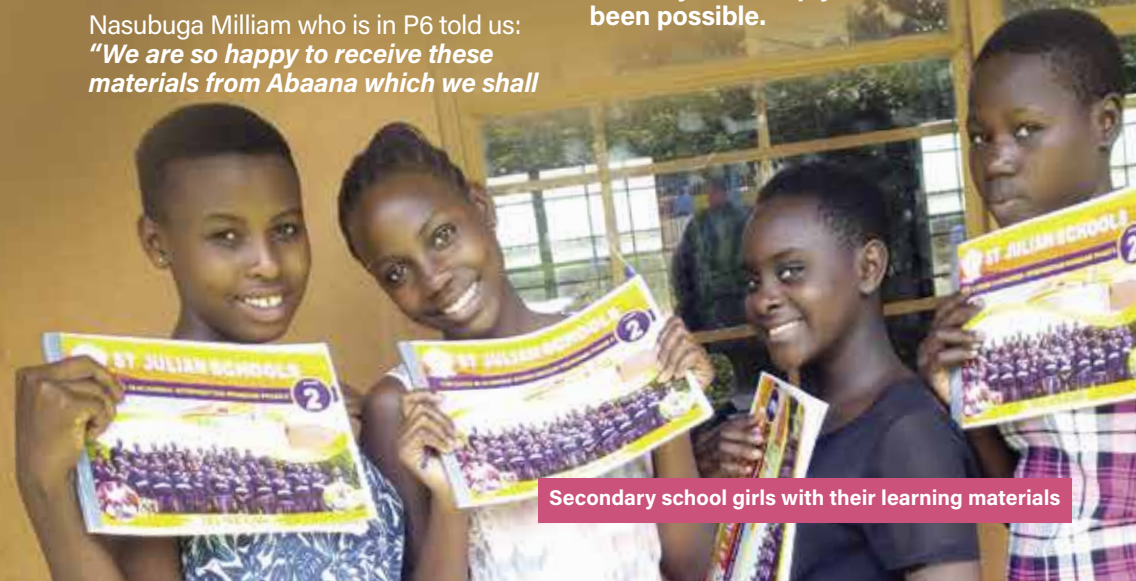
be using to read at home and bring them to our teachers to mark. This is going to help us not to miss learning even when schools are closed and when schools open again, we shall have not lost much. We appreciate Abaana for caring about our education, thank you so much"



For secondary children, one of our partner schools put together educational packs that Abaana distributed, to the relevant secondary pupils and their school coordinated the marking.

As schools begin their return in Uganda, we trust that the materials provided by Abaana will have gone some way to help the children keep up in their education.

Thank you for helping Abaana to do what we can to see that no child is left behind in their education, as without the generous donations by so many, this simply would have not been possible.



Secondary school girls with their learning materials

200,000 Meals in 2020

"Food poverty is contributing to social unrest. Add school closures, redundancies, and furloughs into the equation and we have an issue that could negatively impact generations to come. It all starts with stability around access to food."

These were Marcus Rashford's words focussing on food poverty in the U.K. in 2020. Heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic, they resonated across the globe. Access to food, according to Rashford, is fundamental to helping provide social stability.

During 2020, the struggles faced in eating regular, nutritious meals greatly intensified due to the pandemic. Although, thankfully, the rate of infection in Uganda has been far less than in the U.K.

Like most of the world, Uganda also went through lockdowns, that have greatly impacted the economy and livelihoods. Unfortunately, the consequences were mainly felt by people in low-income communities, in informal employment, and especially those in urban or semi-urban settings who live 'hand to mouth' and are reliant on petty jobs for their daily income.

For such people, they were left without any social welfare or furlough system to support them through their days at home, not working, and many of these are the parents of Abaana sponsored children.

Abaana, working alongside local leaders were able to intervene through our Covid-19 and sponsorship appeals during 2020.



Our team in Uganda, with the help of our wonderfully generous donors, were able to provide over 200,000 meals during 2020! That is a truly staggering number, and we are so very thankful to all who donated last year, whether that was through our Covid Relief Appeal, our Christmas Gift scheme, or simply through regular donations.

Priscila is one of the sponsored children who benefitted:

"This is so amazing to know that someone is thinking about us. Together we are going to share a nice meal as a family during this Christmas. For me it is the most beautiful thing to do."

Priscila Nanyonga (P5)

Harimah, (pictured below), lives with her mother and siblings. They live close to a lake and do not have land to farm themselves. She says, ***"My mother was struggling to get us food since our father is not here and sometimes we could afford only one meal. I am very happy today because Abaana has given us food. At least for this time my family will not go to sleep hungry. God bless you Abaana and all the sponsors."***

On behalf of the many lives impacted by this act of generosity in 2020, thank you for helping them have access to food and thereby helping to provide some social stability.





**ABA
ANA**

ABAANA.ORG

**Just £24 a month can change
the life of a child.**

**COULD YOU SPONSOR
A CHILD TODAY?**

Abaana, 78 High Street, Bangor, BT20 5AZ, N. Ireland
T: 02891451918 E: info@abaana.org

Charity Number: NIC102174