

## Build Africa Strategy to 2018





## Our vision

People in Africa leading fulfilling, happy lives

## Our mission

To partner with African communities to create lasting educational and livelihoods opportunities

# What is our Purpose?

Africa has developed rapidly over the last twenty years. As a result we have seen tremendous changes to the rural communities Build Africa works with. There have been increases in the numbers of children accessing primary school and in the incomes of many Africans as a result of economic growth. Where people used to see a risk, they now see an opportunity. Unfortunately it is not just GDP that has risen: so has inequality. Rural farmers and their families struggle to support their families and whilst access to education has increased we have not seen substantial improvements in the quality of education being delivered.

We can no longer simply focus on access to education: we must also improve the quality of learning, and even as economies grow, we must also ensure that subsistence farmers and small business owners are able to provide their families with their basic needs: food, education and healthcare.

Build Africa's role is to make sure that over the next five years we improve the quality of education and the livelihoods of more than a million people in rural Africa. This strategy outlines what we intend to do to achieve these ambitious plans for the future and how you can be involved as a volunteer, a partner, a supporter or as a member of the team. It shows how we will extend the reach of our work, explore innovative ways to increase our impact, and develop the insight, capacity and resources to tackle the challenges ahead and transform the lives of Africa's poorest communities.



The new water pump at Jeeja Primary School, Uganda

# What are we trying to do and why?

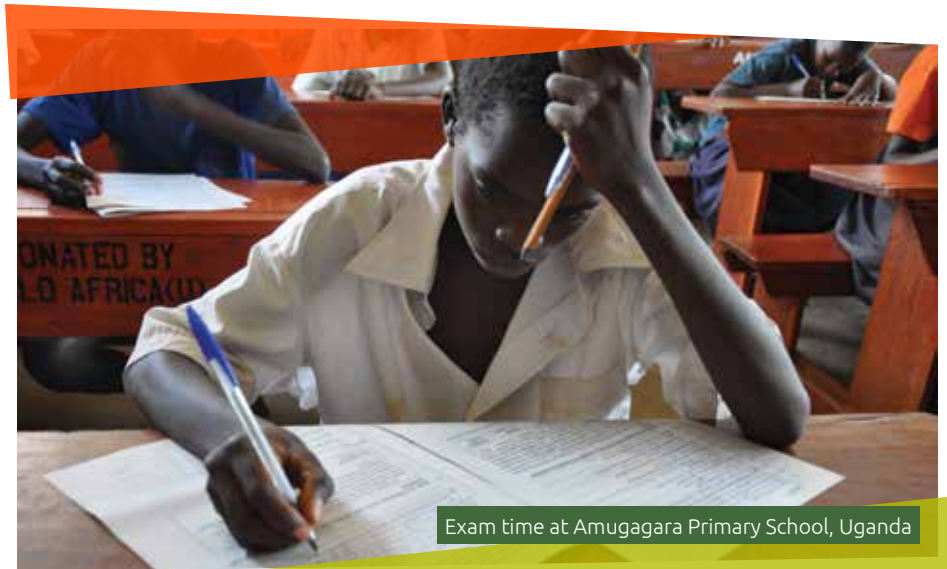
For the communities we work with education and livelihoods are key priorities. Build Africa believes that they are interconnected: we have seen that parents with better livelihoods keep their children in school longer and children with a good education get better jobs when they become adults. Therefore doing both within the same regions increases our impact.

In order to deliver our education and livelihoods work we are committing the whole organisation to a strategy with seven key approaches. These approaches reflect the aims and aspirations of the communities we partner, and will guide all our programmes. Working closely with families and children, we will ensure they have the skills and knowledge to make informed choices about their futures. Together, we will create opportunities to escape poverty for good.

## 1 Laying the foundations for learning.

Supporting early learning is critical in ensuring children are able to fully benefit from all the learning opportunities they will receive throughout their lives. However, many young children do not receive the support they need from parents or have the resources to prepare them for school, and formal pre-school systems fail to deliver quality education.

Build Africa will improve the school-readiness of girls and boys by using innovative approaches to working at pre-primary level, changing parental attitudes to early learning and increasing the resources available for young children to aid their development.



Exam time at Amugagara Primary School, Uganda

## 2 Maximizing learning.

Good progress has been made in enabling children across Africa to go to primary school. However, too many still receive an education that does not give them all the practical, critical and social skills that they will require as adults, nor does it address the obstacles to education that are specific to each gender.

Build Africa will develop the skills and competencies of children across all the countries and areas in which we work so as to increase the number of children reaching the end of primary school. We will do this by improving the quality of teaching; increasing access to clean water and food; increasing the engagement of parents in the education of their children; improving the management and governance of schools; expanding the availability of appropriate books and equipment; and providing a conducive environment for both genders to learn in.

## 3 Including girls.

African girls face specific challenges that prevent them going to school. Their education is often less valued and they are often forced to drop out. As a result they remain in poverty and

are excluded from decision-making on matters that affect their lives.

We will increase the number of girls who benefit from a quality education by changing attitudes, building self-esteem, giving girls more say in the decisions that affect their education, introducing teaching styles that are sensitive to girls' needs, and giving girls positive role models.

## 4 Preparing for continuous learning.

Post-primary education is one of the best ways to guarantee a child's future life chances and a way out of poverty. Unfortunately many children do not continue their education beyond primary school at all and therefore lack the relevant skills and knowledge they need to find work or start their own business.

We will increase the number of children who have the relevant skills and abilities to make the successful transition to secondary education or work. We will do this by improving vocational skills, ensuring parents and communities support post-primary education of their children and ensuring children are receiving good quality education.

## 5 Supporting financial services and business development.

Without savings and credit, families often struggle to invest in their businesses, pay health care bills and provide for their children's education. For individuals to become more financially secure they need to be able to save money, and to have access to it in times of need.

Build Africa will improve the income-generating abilities of rural people through better access to financial services and improved business skills. We will make this possible by providing people with the opportunity to save and access credit through savings and loans groups, and by giving them the skills and knowledge they need to get their business up and running and diversify their sources of income. We will also support them as they develop their businesses. The scheme's popularity with women has meant more investment in children's education, health, access to food and nutrition, as well as an improvement in women's involvement in decision-making at household level.

## 6 Boosting harvests and increasing access to markets.

Smallholder farmers often struggle to produce a surplus to sell, or even to produce enough food to feed their families. Farmers often sell their produce to middlemen at very low prices because of the low quantity and quality of their produce. Lack of market information and opportunities makes it difficult for farmers to negotiate from a position of strength and to secure a fair price.

We will work with rural farmers to increase the returns achieved on their agricultural enterprises, resulting in improved incomes and food security. We will help them to do this by looking at new ways to increase the value of their produce, by training them in ways of improving productivity, and by exploring opportunities to provide access to wider markets with better prices.



We are boosting harvests and increasing access to markets

## 7 Strengthening resilience to shocks and stresses.

The communities we work with are vulnerable to shocks: their plots of land are often small and of poor quality, and lack of decent irrigation means water shortages during the dry season. They often have limited access to savings or any other form of safety net. Therefore, events outside their control (such as climate change, drought or price fluctuations) can have devastating consequences on the lives of individuals and families.

Build Africa will help individuals prepare for and withstand environmental and economic shocks and stresses. We will continue to develop new approaches, and work in collaboration with others, to build community resilience, focusing on measures such as income diversification, water and land management, and conservation.



A member of the Ukila Tui Village Savings and Loans Group, Uganda, selling vegetables at her kibanda (market stall)

These seven approaches represent a broad and ambitious strategy. To ensure our work is of the highest quality, and to avoid the risk of overstretching ourselves, we will build on the experience we already have and create centers of excellence for each of the approaches in the regions where we work. We will then use this experience to expand the approaches to new districts and countries over the next five years.



Tamula Primary School, Uganda

# What will a successful BA look like as an organisation?

A successful Build Africa is an organisation that is expanding the depth and breadth of its work, both refining its programmes and expanding its area of operation into regions of Africa where we can have the greatest impact and where there is the greatest need. On entering any community we will begin by listening and understanding. We will then work with the community to build on their strengths and resolve their challenges, in order that they can take the first steps in their development. With their support and engagement, we will then use our development expertise to create innovative projects or scale up impact.

## Case Study:

### Listening, Understanding and Responding

In 2013 we planned and delivered a two phase consultation in Kwale, Kenya. In Kwale, 75% of the population live below the poverty line. Girls are particularly disadvantaged, with more than 60% of them dropping out of primary school.

During the consultation we met Grace and one of her brothers. Grace is ten years old and lives with her grandmother and four brothers. Her father is in prison and her mother died from an HIV-related illness.

Grace told us that she has never been to primary school because she has to care for her younger brothers, as well as help to look after the house and cultivate the garden.

Grace's grandmother, like many of the parents and community members we spoke to, didn't think a girl's education was as valuable as a boy's. This means that many girls in the region do not attend school and are unable to break out of the poverty cycle.

We spoke to over 480 children, parents and teachers in Kwale. Certain themes arose that influenced and informed the development of a project that focuses on changing community attitudes and supporting girls to enrol, stay-in and complete primary school. The deep level of understanding we have gained through these consultations has helped us develop a project that is effectively responding to specific challenges within the region.



Grace with her youngest brother

# Values

To be successful we must be an organisation made up of people who share a set of key values. These five core values will be embedded in all our activities, will shape the actions of everyone who works for us, and determine our responses to the challenges we meet:

## 1 Putting the wellbeing of children first, in everything we do.

We will focus on ensuring that a child's wellbeing is a priority for all of us, that it is fundamental to our organisation's culture, and that it informs our actions and responses in all our projects.

## 2 Reflect, learn and share to develop highly effective ways of working.

We can be proud of our culture of constantly 'pushing the envelope', striving to achieve high standards in everything we do. We aim to be an organization that constantly reflects on our own actions, one that learns from our partners, from the communities we work with, and from external agencies.

## 3 Pushing the boundaries of development.

We actively encourage creativity and innovation to identify new and improved social, environmental and technological ways of tackling the causes and consequences of poverty. This will ensure we can deliver a much wider range of projects at a greater scale and quality.

## 4 Empowering our people.

Strong leadership will help empower every member of staff, encouraging them to act with integrity at all times, be open to new methods of working, and to make best use of opportunities for personal and professional development.

We will only achieve our goals by raising expectations and helping our people to meet them. Every member of staff, trustee and partner is an ambassador for Build Africa, whether they are answering a phone call or running a project.

## 5 Inspire people to work with us.

We may work with small savings and loans groups or multinational agencies to deliver change, but all of them must be inspired by Build Africa and by what we are trying to achieve.



Mbombo Primary School, Kenya

### Case Study:

## A Journey out of Poverty

Kahara school in Masindi, Uganda has developed rapidly since we began supporting it. By working with the community in response to their most pressing needs, and by building on their strengths, Kahara is now a school with motivated and effective teachers and an active community. As a result the number of children passing their exams has quadrupled in just two years. This school will continue to effectively support the children in their community as we gradually phase out our support.

Ernest Wamalwa, a Kahara parent: "We feel very happy about Build Africa because they have equipped us with the skills and knowledge we need to make life simple for ourselves. For example, the Village Savings and Loans Association group has equipped us with saving skills. We can buy uniforms, soap and other essentials as a result. My eldest son is a teacher at the primary school: his approach has seriously changed since he was trained in child-friendly, learner-centred methods.

The food programme is another example. Instead of going to the market for our vegetables we can feed the family with our own vegetables. We are very proud of this. And water is very near now as well. A while ago life was hard. Now we see happy children going to school and they are happy throughout the day. There has been a lot of change in the family and everything is moving on according to plan."



The Wamalwa family

# Where are we now?

Build Africa has progressed step-by-step to its current position. We are building on our ability to listen to, understand and respond to the needs of the communities we work with, creating integrated earning and learning projects that complement each other for maximum effect. We are using experience gained from one project to inform and develop future projects, while forming partnerships with NGOs and other organisations to help us achieve our goals.

We are now also able to develop work that is focused on realising both our programmatic aims and the bespoke requirements of our donors. We believe that these two

complementary goals are essential for our future growth and success. As our programmes are being refined so too is our practise of taking potential supporters through the project design process so that they have a real understanding of what their support can achieve.

As a result we have been able to increase the organisation's income and evolve our programmes, developing the depth and breadth of our livelihoods and education work. The organisation has become a very reputable award-winning development organisation. The last few years have seen a number of significant changes in the nature of

the projects we support: we have developed new work based on consultations and analysis, our own and other organisation's evidence of what works, reaching ever more areas in Kenya and Uganda.

We have come to a pivotal stage in our development. We have the ambition, capacity and expertise to significantly increase the quality and reach of our programmes, fundraising and resources in order to achieve our ambitious targets. We are now in a position to fulfil a strategy that will enable us to dramatically increase the number of people whose lives will significantly improve as a result of working with us.



Itherero Primary School, Kenya



A member of the Ukila Tui Village Savings and Loans Group, Uganda, selling vegetables at her kibanda (market stall)



# What will we do to get there?

The entire organisation needs to be focused on developing its capacities if we are to realise our ambitious goals. Over the next five years we will:

- 1 Expand strategically into new communities, districts and countries, following clear criteria and transparent processes.

By 2018 we will have expanded to six new districts in Kenya and Uganda, and into two new countries with plans for a third.

In order to manage this expansion we will have to ensure that our programmes and financial strategies are continuously supported, reviewed and updated.

- 2 Increase consultation with communities to determine the work we will do. Solutions will be developed in close collaboration with communities and the work we do will be continuously reviewed by them and adjusted when appropriate.

By 2018 we will have increased the number of consultations and reviews undertaken, the range of people involved and the number of methods used.

We will ensure we have the right skills to do this well, and allocate sufficient resources so that consultations are meaningful and useful.

- 3 Identify and test innovative ways of working to improve our effectiveness.

By 2018 we will have conducted five pilot projects that will explore and assess new ways of meeting our objectives with the intention of further testing effective solutions in other geographical locations or at a greater scale.

We will do this by increasing our research capacity, creating a culture that encourages good ideas and rigorous assessment of our approaches; and by creating a fund that allows us to trial new ideas, and establishing funding streams that support innovation.

- 4 Proactively share with NGOs and others the lessons we have learned from our work.

By 2018 we will have developed ten papers focusing on what we have learnt from our own work – both the successes and the areas for improvement. These papers will be made widely available and accessible to NGOs in the UK, Uganda and Kenya, as well as to relevant Ministries and members of the general public.

We will do this by increasing our capacity to evaluate the design and delivery of projects, whilst nurturing a culture of discussing, documenting and sharing what we have learnt with colleagues across Build Africa, the sector and with the general public. We will improve our opportunities for learning by developing projects that are specifically designed to produce information that is key to understanding our successes and failures.

- 5 Strengthen our external relationships in areas where partner organisations can complement our skills or experience. These relationships will enable us to work together to deliver better quality programmes but also support our fundraising and provide the organisation with the resources it needs.

By 2018 we will have a broad network of relationships that allow us to work in partnership to deliver increasingly effective projects.

Our partnership strategy will provide guidance on when to coordinate, collaborate or enter into a more formal relationship with other organisations so that we partner with the right organisations at the right time in order to help us deliver better results. We will proactively look to form new alliances, seeking opportunities for additional skills or specialist knowledge.

- 6 Place child safeguarding and protection at the centre of our work. Irrespective of whether it's a project, activity or donor visit, whatever we do, we need to make sure that children are listened to, protected and safeguarded. At the same time, our programmes and projects will promote the protection of the rights of children.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and guidelines will provide our staff with the necessary skills, knowledge and capabilities; and we will foster relationships and partnerships with organisations that can provide services and support beyond our capacity.



**Build Africa UK**

Second Floor, Vale House  
Clarence Road  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent TN1 1HE  
T +44 (0)1892 519619  
E [hello@build-africa.org.uk](mailto:hello@build-africa.org.uk)

**Build Africa Kenya**

Off the Nairobi to Machakos Road  
Next to Machakos Teachers College  
PO Box 1259-90100  
Machakos, Kenya  
T +254 (0)20 235 9464  
E [bak@build-africakenya.org](mailto:bak@build-africakenya.org)

**Build Africa Uganda**

Block 245  
Plot 431 & 424 Kabalagala  
Central Zone, off Gaba Road  
PO Box 7224  
Kampala, Uganda  
T +256 (0)414 267828/9  
E [bau@build-africauganda.org](mailto:bau@build-africauganda.org)

**Build Africa Inc. (USA)**

501 (c) (3) organisation (4601439696)  
c/o Chapel and York LTD  
1000 N West Street  
Suite 1200  
Wilmington, DE 19801  
E [enquiries@build-africa.org](mailto:enquiries@build-africa.org)

**Chief Executive:**

Oliver Kemp

**Country Director (Kenya):**

Annah Kyoya

**Country Director (Uganda):**

Specioza Kiwanuka

**President of Build Africa Inc. (USA):**

Tanya Royle



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