

HABARI

A voice for young people in Africa

Issue 47 | Autumn 2012

Take the Water Challenge

In rural Uganda diarrhoea is killing nearly one in five children under the age of five. Help us stop it.

ALSO INSIDE

Magnet Theatre: puppet theatre with a serious message
.....

'We all want education to improve': parent power in the Meli community

 **Build**
AFRICA

Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn 2012 edition of Habari.

Inside you will find more up-to-date news from the frontline of our development work in East Africa. We feature stirring tales of resurgent communities, inspiring stories of village savers making the most of their limited resources, and a fascinating feature on street theatre and how it is being used to recruit new savers.

We also introduce you to the Water Challenge: a simple and quick way for you to raise money for Build Africa. And you don't have to spend a penny! Simply log on to the Build Africa website (www.build-africa.org/water-campaign) and answer the five water-related questions. For every quiz completed £1 will be donated to our water projects by our sponsors. It's that easy.

Happy reading and happy quizzing!



Chris Pearson,
Editor

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Read by Build Africa
Uganda's Communications
Officer, Beatrice Achieng

BBC Radio 4 Appeal

We're delighted to announce that we've successfully secured a BBC Radio 4 Appeal. Focussing on our gender equality work, we are using the opportunity to raise awareness and funds for our community radio shows in Uganda. It airs on Sunday 9th December, so tune in, tell your friends and let's make this the best one ever!

BBC
RADIO

92-95 FM



A power of good: from dart boards to detergent

Your support can turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. Hear direct from the mouths of the people whose lives you have helped to transform.

When you send a donation to Build Africa you do something amazing. You empower. You give ordinary individuals that small, but vital leg up that enables them to do extraordinary things for themselves, their families and their communities. The key to empowerment is choice (traditionally a very rare commodity in the developing world); it is the freedom to make decisions based on

what you think is best for you. That's why every member of a Build Africa savings group has a tale to tell and why every group has such a wide variety of stories.

Take the Myanyu group in Kisiyani, Kenya for example. Its 25 members have come up with some ingenious money-making schemes, using its limited resources (the abundant sisal plant being one of them) in some really inventive ways. They include basket-weaving, rope-making, detergent-brewing, tree-planting, poultry-farming, vegetable-selling; one particularly ingenious lady has even made inroads into the dart board industry by providing sisal fibres to a textile company. Here are some of their achievements in their own words:



The wonder of sisal

"Build Africa has helped us make things like baskets. They can cost 1,400 Kenyan Shillings, and even more if the basket is sold on its own. The baskets made from sisal are a little bit cheaper because they are plain. It takes four years for a sisal plantation to grow, but once established it lasts forever. Each individual owns a plot of sisal land. They use it to fence their land."

Ruth Kimundia

A fresh start

"We also make detergent. There are eight different chemicals which we mix. No moisture must get in because it could react with the chemicals and combust. We mix for 2 ½ hrs, add colour and then leave for 24 hours. We use it for washing clothes, surfaces, walls, toilets, utensils, vehicles, as soap and shower gel."

Stella Mutet



Always on the go

"When I get money from the group I buy vegetables every Friday from far away. I sell them to pay for the loan and make a profit. I make ropes while I am selling the vegetables so I am never idle. I can also harvest as many as 3,000 tree seedlings in one go. I have sold seedlings to the headmaster at Kisiyani Primary School for example. I also make 'Mandazi' (a snack made of fried bread) and doughnuts from the flour that I buy."

Kioko Felista



Right on target

"I have been given the contract to sell sisal fibres to a textile company. They dry the fibres and then sell them to a company near Nairobi who make dart boards for the American market. I don't play but I would like to learn."

Panina Mwemba



For all the group members, empowerment has meant a new-found confidence and belief in a better future:

"I am very grateful because I had no source of income before. Children used to be sent home from school all the time because we could not afford the school fees. But since the group started none of our children have been sent home. We used to look down on ourselves but now we look forward to better things."

Peter Ndetu

Theatre of Schemes

By Martin Ross



Nothing draws a crowd like a fight; so when a man threatens his wife in public should we join in the applause?

The scene is a typical Kenyan village on market day, a day of hustle and bustle, of animated transactions and heated conversation.

“Help! Someone help me please. Don’t hurt me!” The scream makes me whip round; a man is jabbing his finger in a woman’s face in the marketplace.

“How did you get these shillings? Have you got another man?” he bellows, looming over her.

My heart starts to pound. A crowd is gathering.

Now the woman’s fighting back: “How dare you say that! I made this money myself. I joined a savings scheme to pay for our children’s education, to buy food and medicine. That’s more than you’ve ever done!”

He shapes as if to spit. I lunge forward, only to be stopped in my tracks by applause. I look around bewildered; it’s only then that I notice the shipping container draped in black cloth and decorated with a large Build Africa banner. The argument is a set-up aimed at encouraging the audience to join a rural savings scheme. And I’ve been had!



The puppet theatre in full flow

Puppet theatre with a serious message

Fortunately no-one else seems to have noticed. Instead their eyes are drawn to two dramatically large, friendly puppets, now centre stage. The show is great fun, but the message is serious: instead of living from hand to mouth the villagers could be saving money in a safe place, taking out small loans to invest in farming and business enterprises and drawing on a welfare fund in times of emergency.

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Once people are watching, they might buy into the Build Africa-supported savings scheme and realize the need to work together in groups and grow incomes.
.....





Samuel Wahome: a happy village saver

.....
 Samuel, a barber, was persuaded by Magnet Theatre to approach Samuel Mburugu, a Build Africa community-based trainer. Samuel and his group have finished training and started saving in September. He says, "The acting attracted a huge crowd and the information given by the puppets was entertaining and informative."

Samuel Wahome outside his barbers shop



Samuel Mburugu reaches more people

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 Samuel Mburugu is a community-based trainer in Gitare. He told us:

"The presentation reached over 300 people on market day. I have already started training three savings groups. This has taken me beyond the Build Africa-supported schools where I train. The young people, who are hard to convince, approached me and I am determined to help them."

Samuel Mburugu

What is Magnet Theatre?

After the show, I go backstage to find 30-year-old Albert Ochieng, a founder member of Onyx Players, the group behind Magnet Theatre, who put the show on.

"What are the puppets called?" I ask, waving at the giant figures, now lying on the floor.

"We've two main puppets," chuckles Albert. "The names vary according to where we are. Sometimes we use Njoroge wa Matangi and Kichwa Kubwa (Kiswahili for "bighead") other times we call them Agripina and Anyaturuta. Audiences love them because of their nature and size. Some people believe they are real!"

"What kind of reactions do you get?" I ask. "Do any of them think the argument is real too?" I add sheepishly.

Albert says: "Since it's new, we can grab people's attention through mock fights, singing games, music, and funny noises. Then we challenge them to form groups and introduce Build Africa Kenya officials who talk through the rural savings scheme."

"You used a woman to play the role of group member. Was that deliberate?" I query.

Albert nods, "We use women to give their views on savings and loans because they are still discriminated against in rural areas."



Albert Ochieng with some of the trophies the Onyx Players have won

"We also target specific times to perform. Market day afternoons are best," he adds.

"How did the theatre group get started?" I ask.

"As Onyx Theatre we owe our existence to Build Africa," says Albert. "In 2002 we got our first training and funding from Build Africa (then Partners for Progress). We're happy since we have recently started working with Build Africa again and are looking forward to greater things."

.....
Magnet Theatre is also known as "attractive theatre". And if it carries on attracting crowds to the idea of rural saving, then this kind of drama is going to help ensure people are never in a crisis again. It is the theatre of schemes.



The theatre attracts large crowds of onlookers, every one a potential saver



A big gift for the big day:

Build Africa supporters Ambra and Antonio Gatti tell us why they chose to support their favourite charity on their wedding day

We are very fond of Africa, where we have spent countless unforgettable moments in the past decade. When we decided to get married, we thought that the least we could do was to thank Africa with something that would have a small but long-term impact on its most valuable and fragile treasure, its children.

This is why we got in contact with Build Africa. Every year a significant amount of money and resources is made available by governments and private individuals to cover short-term emergencies in Africa. There is also little reassurance that every penny is going where it is needed most.

**What makes Build Africa different?
.....
In our opinion Build Africa stood out for its different approach: for its long-term development objectives, for its strong African presence and focus on partnering with local communities, for its well established organization in Europe and its impressive methods of monitoring and evaluation.
.....**

Our wedding guests responded enthusiastically to our charitable gift list (towards the improvement of a primary school in Miduuma) with its clear fund-raising target and budget. And so did our employers by matching the guests' gifts. It has been fun and rewarding to have something different than a standard gift registry, and our guests and relatives have embraced the spirit and importance of the project wholeheartedly, largely because of the information Build Africa helped us provide via our wedding website.

The new classroom block that Ambra and Antonio helped fund



'...further resources are needed to top-up the investment'.
A temporary classroom at Miduuma



The funds we raised have been spent promptly and efficiently, the improvements to the school buildings clearly shown in a lovely video we received a few months after our wedding. But the real challenge starts now: we have already discussed with Build Africa the results of the first survey conducted to monitor, among other things, the pupils' progress and exam grades, the total enrolment (in particular for girls), the suitability of the classrooms, the morale of the teachers and the involvement of the local community.

A long term approach to development

This first survey shows that results are hard and slow to achieve, that a successful project requires constant attention and monitoring, and further resources are needed to top-up the investment. **The professionalism and enthusiasm shown by Build Africa makes us confident that they have the capacity to manage and consolidate this still fragile progress;** we are enthusiastic and more proud than ever to have fostered this initiative and are committed to support it further.

We are looking forward to visiting the school in Uganda as soon as possible to celebrate with the people and the continent we love so deeply with a proper 'school-opening' party!



The happy couple by Ambra Gatti



The children of Miduuma Primary School

Getting married? If this story has inspired you to do something really different and rewarding with that wedding list then contact Elaine Gordon on elaine@build-africa.org.uk for more details.



The *Revival* savings group

Parent power:

Jacinta Njenga and the new spirit of change in the Meli community

Meli is a name that many Build Africa supporters will recognise. In 2009 we launched a successful Christmas Appeal to supply new water gutters and tanks to its remote and overlooked primary school. Critically we also asked for your support to train 15 School Management Committee members so that they could draw up and implement a long term development plan for the school.



Jacinta Njenga

Three years on and a lot has happened at Meli Primary School, not least because of its re-energised parents. We asked one of those 15 members, Jacinta Njenga, to tell us about the role of the parents in the improvement of the school:

“We have seen a lot of changes here.

Because of a lack of education most of the parents did not value education, but now they think differently and assist with the leadership of the school. Those who kept their children at home now bring them to school.

The new gutters and tanks have relieved the burden on the students of carrying water from home, sometimes over long distances; while the supply of sanitary towels has improved girls’ attendance and the new latrines have been a godsend.

Combined with the Build Africa-hosted seminars and training of the School Management Committees, these improvements give me great hope for the future.”

Fellow parent Jeremiah Muigai put it to us in more practical terms:

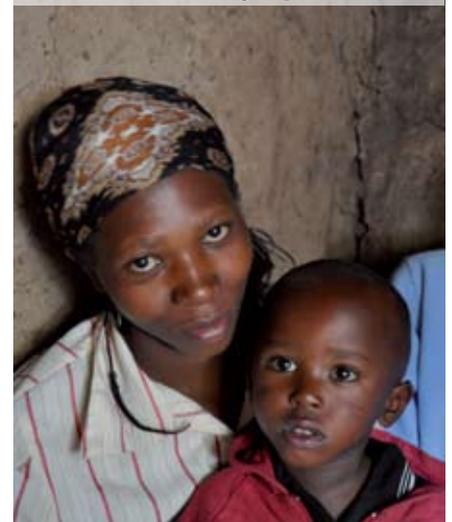
“We have fixed all the doors and shutters, so it is much better. That was our contribution. We as parents, we are not idle! We have contributed furniture; shelves for books and fibreglass windows for the ceilings in the admin block; and we pay for four of the teachers.”

A community re-born

The parents have been agents of change in other ways too. In 2011 a Build Africa-supported savings group was also established in Meli. Its 17 members have 32 dependants at the primary school, 31 children and one granddaughter. The group’s name, *Revival*, is significant:

“The name of the group reflects the fact that some things had died and disappeared and we wanted to revive them”, the chairman Robert Javan told us. “After post-election violence in 1991 all our livestock was stolen from us by raiders. Out of bitterness our parents decided never to keep livestock again. They were so greatly discouraged that we didn’t start restocking until 2002.”

Saving for the future: a member of the *Revival* group



Meli means ‘sheep’ (apparently the valley is in the shape of a sheep). For a community steeped in the traditions of animal husbandry, the decision to give up livestock farming was a disastrous one:

“There was also a drought in 1998. As a result the only money-making enterprise

that the community could follow was burning wood for charcoal. The previous generation made a lot of mistakes. They cut down trees and put no effort into educating their children."

Robert and his fellow savers are determined to avoid the mistakes their parents made (admittedly under very difficult circumstances), not least in their attitude to education:

"We make sure our children go to school and we all want education to improve: we know that it is one of the great benefits that our community can do something about. Some of us have bought sheep and goats with the money we are saving, and we want to buy cows next so that we can further prosper. Other members have established small businesses."



'Those who kept their children at home now bring them to school'

Improvements at Meli Primary School

	2010	2012
Attendance	86% of girls; 74% of boys	91% of girls; 94% of boy
Average class size	214 students	33 students
Leaving exam passes	7% of boys; 29% of girls	100% of boys; 100% of girls

Revival statistics (as of August 31st, 2012)

Membership	16: 9 women; 7 men
Money Saved	39,800 Kenyan Shillings (£291)
Total value of savings and loans per member	6,912.50 Kenyan Shillings (£51)

Eggs for education

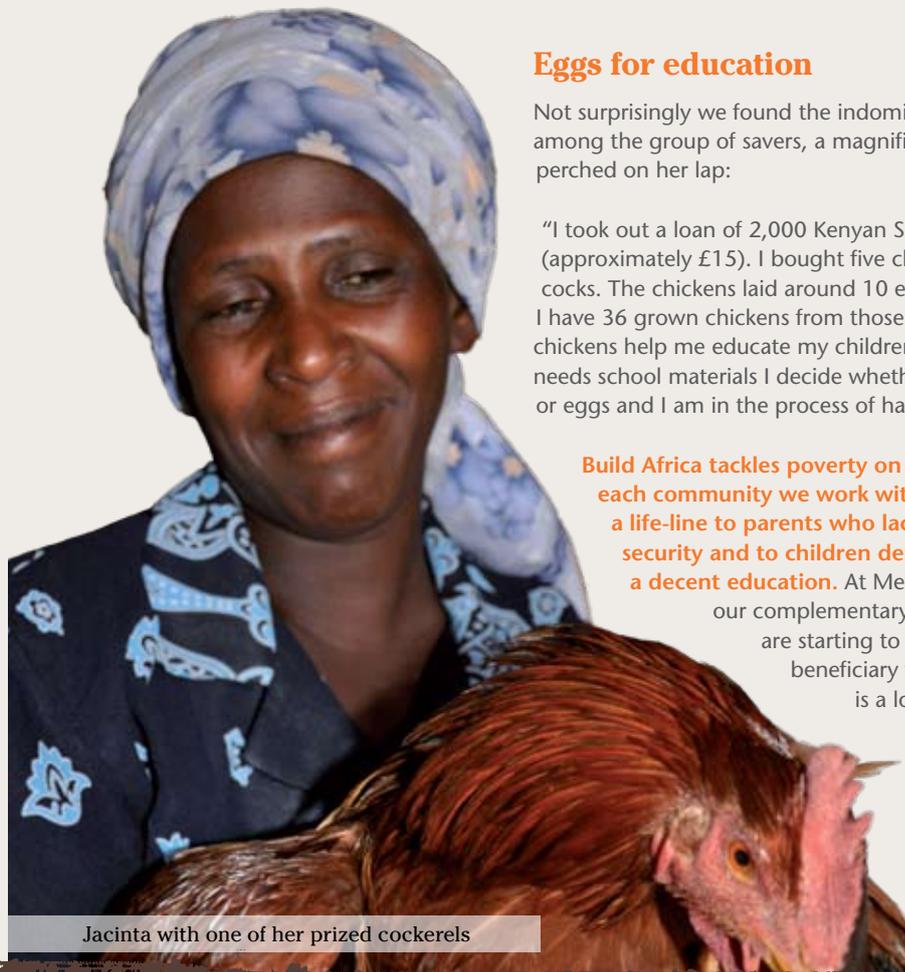
Not surprisingly we found the indomitable Jacinta among the group of savers, a magnificent cockerel perched on her lap:

"I took out a loan of 2,000 Kenyan Shillings (approximately £15). I bought five chickens and two cocks. The chickens laid around 10 eggs each: now I have 36 grown chickens from those eggs. These chickens help me educate my children. When a child needs school materials I decide whether to sell a chicken or eggs and I am in the process of hatching eggs again."

Build Africa tackles poverty on two fronts: in each community we work with we provide a life-line to parents who lack financial security and to children denied access to a decent education. At Meli the fruits of

our complementary programmes are starting to be felt by our beneficiary families. There

is a long way to go, but with your support we will continue to give the parents of Meli the training and resources they need.

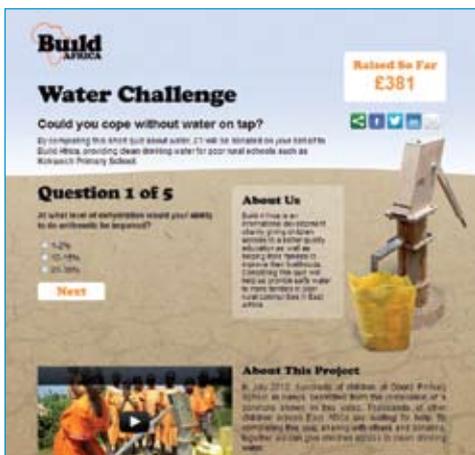


Jacinta with one of her prized cockerels



Take Build Africa's Water Challenge:

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it takes two minutes and it won't cost you a penny!
Just go online between now and December 31st:
www.build-africa.org/water-challenge



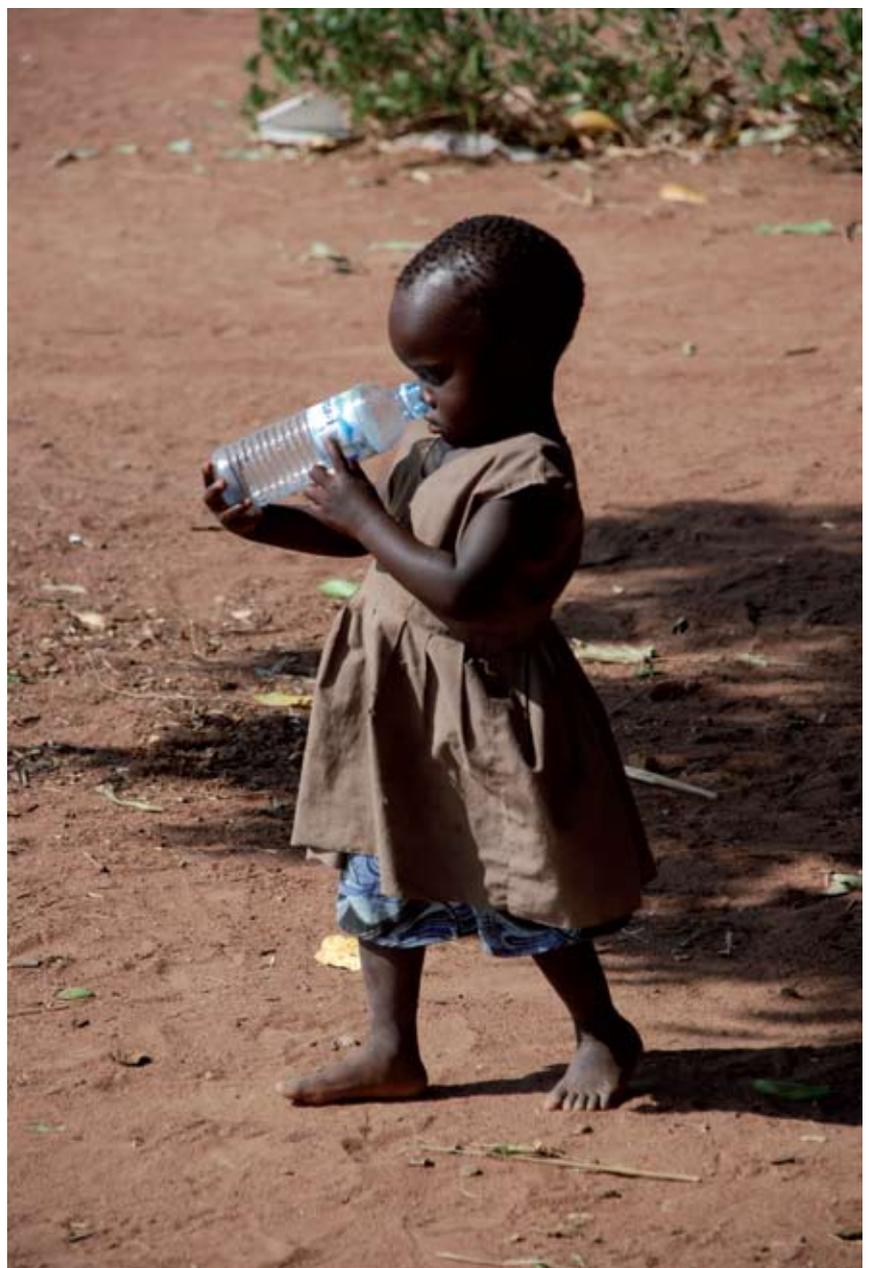
What is the Water Challenge?

Part of Build Africa's greater water campaign, the Water Challenge is a short online quiz that asks individuals to consider the consequences of not having access to clean drinking water.

The idea is simple: go online and take just 2 minutes to complete the quick 5-question quiz. For every quiz completed, £1 will be automatically donated on your behalf towards the installation of a water pump at a poor rural school in Uganda.

Be Part of the Solution: Spread the Word

In order for the campaign to be a success, we need your help in making the Water Challenge go viral. Share the Water Challenge with your friends, family, colleagues and contacts, both personally and through social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. In this way we can reach as many people as possible and introduce new people to our work.



Water Challenge in Action: Kokwech Primary School

All sponsorship of the Water Challenge will go directly to fund the provision of clean, safe water at specified schools in remote villages in Uganda.

Kokwech Primary School in Uganda is just one of the many schools we are aiming to help. Your support could help us drill a borehole and install a water pump at Kokwech, benefiting 682 pupils and a further 818 men, women and children in the wider village.

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Dirty water: Children at Kokwech School are currently at risk. In Ugandan communities such as Kokwech, diarrhoea kills nearly one in five children under the age of five due to dirty water, poor sanitation and hygiene.
.....

Scarce water: Children currently walk 2km from their school every day to an unsafe water source, missing vital lesson time. In the surrounding village water is too scarce for farmers to use. Without this precious source, crop yields are low, leading to poor nutrition and putting families at risk of further illness.
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A water pump at Kokwech School

Clean water on tap will dramatically reduce the time children at Kokwech have to spend collecting water, which means they can concentrate on their studies, pass their exams and have the opportunity to go to secondary school.

.....
The water pump will be drilled to a depth of 100 metres or more, ensuring a source of fresh clean safe drinking water for the whole village for many years to come. This water will prevent sickness and life threatening diseases. A water source means that families living in Kokwech Village will be healthier and their farming more productive.
.....

A water committee will also be trained to manage and maintain this valuable resource, ensuring a safe water supply for generations to come.
.....

Find out more

If you would like more information on the campaign, visit www.build-africa.org/water-campaign or get in touch by emailing hello@build-africa.org.uk or calling 01892 519619.

Special thanks goes to our sponsors The Spayne Lindsay Foundation and the Brummette family for making this campaign possible.



A new classroom block at Kokwech Primary School



In Ugandan communities such as Kokwech, diarrhoea kills nearly one in five children under the age of five due to dirty water, poor sanitation and hygiene



The new water pump at Kokwech Primary School will provide clean water to all 682 pupils



Your legacy, our promise

We understand that choosing to leave a legacy is an important and deeply personal decision and that the family should always come first in your thoughts when making a Will. You have spent your working life providing for yourselves and your family; what you leave behind has been hard-earned, carefully managed and is extremely important to you.

But if you do choose to include Build Africa in your Will, we will ensure this continues to be the case and promise to use your gift to directly support our beneficiaries in rural Africa. Any legacy, whatever the amount, makes a huge difference to our work.

A legacy is a generous gift which can have a long-lasting impact; from giving children the education they deserve, to helping their parents invest in their family's future through joining a savings and loans group, to providing a source of clean drinking water for an entire school community.

Our Promise

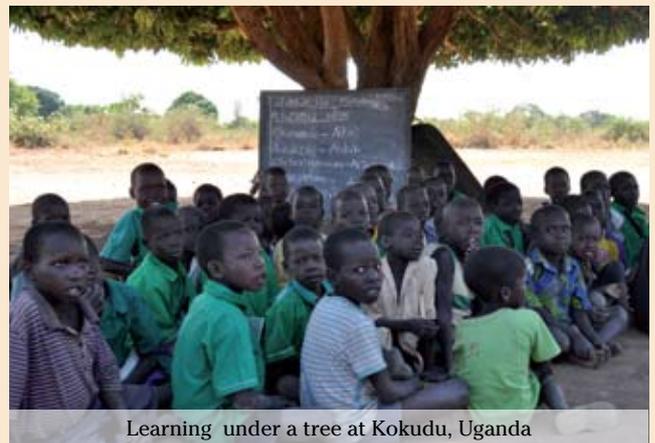
- We know how important your gift is and we promise to use it wisely and effectively
- We will respect your privacy – we will not ask how much you are leaving
- If you decide to let us know that you have included us in your Will, we will treat this information in complete confidence
- We appreciate what you are doing for us, and we take our responsibility very seriously in efficiently administering all funds that we receive

Our mission is to build a better and brighter future for the rural communities we work with. Legacies left by supporters of our work, just like you, go a long way in enabling us to change thousands of lives for years to come.

If you have any questions about leaving a gift to Build Africa in your Will, please call Abi on 01892 519619 or email abi@build-africa.org.uk.

See the difference

We would be happy to arrange for you to visit some of the communities we work with in rural Kenya or Uganda so that you can meet the beneficiaries, who are just like those you would be helping through leaving a legacy.



Learning under a tree at Kokudu, Uganda

You can see for yourself the difference supporting a Primary School can make; from children learning under a tree or in dilapidated and unsafe structures with little or no resources, to a fully furnished classroom with desks, textbooks and a well-trained teacher.



Old and new classrooms at Minyalala, Kenya