



**Nelima**  
(the businesswoman)

**Silas**  
(the teacher)

**Ernest**  
(the school  
committee member)

**Mary**  
(the future)

**Joseph, Teresa, Joseph and Monica**  
(the pupils)

## Meet the Family ...that's making the most of Build Africa's projects

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Joyce fights back: how the village savings scheme is giving one woman the strength to carry on  
.....

Charlene's Project: how one young girl's courage and selflessness is changing lives in Uganda

# Editor's Letter

Dear Build Africa supporter,

This edition is all about the impact our work is having on the rural poor in Uganda and Kenya. Our projects are providing long term benefits in a variety of ways. Just look at our focus family from Kahara: because of Build Africa mum, dad and all the children are making a change for the better.

The same family has also benefitted from Charlene's Project, the legacy of one girl's determination to improve the lives of schoolchildren in rural Uganda.

We also feature Joyce's remarkable story. A victim of a terrible attack, she was in desperate straits until the local village savings scheme gave her the practical support she needed, and the strength to carry on.

Lastly, we go back to nursery class. Please read about the wonderful improvements to early learning at Kagumu Primary School in Kenya.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Habari and that it inspires you to help us carry on the good work. We are working tirelessly to give children the quality education they deserve, and to create healthier, wealthier and happier African communities now and for the long term. Together, let's do all we can to make it happen.

*C. Pearson*

Chris Pearson,  
Editor

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**Look out for our new website, coming soon!**

We have revamped our website to make it easier for you to get involved in our work and follow our projects in Africa. We'll be launching in November, so watch this space.



Please follow us on:



Search: BuildAfrica

# Joyce Fights Back

**When Joyce was brutally attacked by thieves in her own home, who would have thought that her fighting spirit and a village saving scheme would prove her salvation?**

When her daughter found her, Joyce was lying unconscious in a pool of blood. The hut had been ransacked by burglars: what little she had was gone. She had put up a fight, but there had been too many of them and they were too strong for a 60-year-old woman on her own. They could have tied her up and walked away with her things. Instead they chose to beat her unconscious; then they slashed her face and chopped some of her fingers off with a machete.



The legacy of that terrible attack

She could replace many of the stolen items, but not her fingers. How could she grip her spade to dig the land or hold a pot to cook her food? She was now completely dependent on her daughter's hands around the home and her son's precarious farming income.

“They slashed her face and chopped some of her fingers off with a machete.”

## The five steps to self-sufficiency

Ten years on and Joyce has rediscovered the independence that she once knew, and all because the Build Africa village savings scheme has given her that little bit of financial security that she needs to carry on. Step-by-step, this is what she did:

**Step 1:** She borrowed a small sum of money from her son and put it in the group fund, topping her savings up each week;

**Step 2:** After five weeks of saving she qualified for a loan;

**Step 3:** With the loan money she paid her son back and set up a pancake business from home (with help from her daughter):

**“I am a subsistence farmer but I also sell pancakes, tomatoes and small fish in the trading centre. The mat you can see is covered in cassava stem chips that I will grind down to flour. With this I make the pancakes and bread that I sell at my stall every day”.**

**Step 4:** With the money she makes from the pancake business she can repay her loans and afford to employ someone to work on her farm:

**“The money I get is split between household improvements, the children and paying back the loan. Because of my bad hands I also pay people to help me dig my land”.**



Joyce with her cassava stem chips

**Step 5:** Now she uses the money she makes from her farm to invest in her business, and uses the savings she makes from her business to cover her when the harvest is bad.

“I have no regrets now and I do not fear.”

There is no welfare net to help Joyce and her family stay afloat; but still she has a 90-year-old mother, a son, a daughter and four grandchildren to look after. As just one of the many ultra-poor people living in rural Africa she has had no other option but to ask her friends and neighbours for help at times. Life is still hard, but the village savings scheme has made all the difference in the world:

**“I am surprised by the extent that my life has changed because of the group. I have no regrets now and I do not fear; I feel strong again because I have a purpose. I can once more give my family the protection and support they need because it pays for school fees and uniforms. Without it the grandchildren wouldn't be growing up the way they are. I'm determined to see them grow up for as long as I can help them”.**



Three generations of the family depend upon Joyce's income

# Happy Families

**Life is very tough in rural Uganda; but Ernest, Nelima and their five children are a great example of a family using every last bit of Build Africa's help to make a change for the better.**

We asked them to tell us more about how life has changed since Build Africa began working with the Kahara community; how improvements at school and home have improved their standard of living and given them hope for a better future.

## Finances

**Nelima:** "My husband and myself have been members of the St. John savings group since it began in 2011. I'm the money counter. Life was not easy before the savings scheme was established. Silas was a pupil at Kahara then and it was difficult for us to pay his fees."

"Life was not easy before the savings scheme was established."

**Silas:** "I had to stay at home many times while at primary school. After I finished I was at home for a whole year while my parents saved for my secondary school education. The younger ones are luckier than I was. Hopefully there will be no delays in their education."

**Nelima:** "Life is now good because I can ask the group whenever I need help and I receive a loan. My husband and I combine the money we borrow to buy maize seeds. We then sell the maize at a profit."

## A safer school

**Nelima:** "We are very happy with how the school is doing. When the old structures were there Silas came home many times because of the rain. He sometimes missed as many as twenty days a term."



**Joseph:** "Our classrooms were dirty and dusty with leaky roofs. There were terrible jigger fleas. I suffered badly with them. It was so painful. I just had to keep removing them from my feet. But I was determined that I wouldn't drop out of school. Now it is all history because the classrooms are very clean and free from jiggers."

## A better managed school

**Silas:** "The community members now know their roles. The parents actually come to school now without being asked to find out how it is progressing. The School Management Committee and Parent Teachers Association members had no skills before, but now they know what they have to do."

"Build Africa has equipped us with all the skills and knowledge to make life simple for ourselves."



**Silas**  
(the teacher)

**Nelima**  
(the businesswoman)

**Joseph, Teresa, Joseph and Mo**  
(the pupils)



Monica at the new latrines

## Equal opportunity for girls

**Monica:** "The health club is great. Just last Friday we had some health workers come in from the hospital and told us about sanitary protection. Our periods catch us unawares and we have to come home from school. They told us about how we can use pads cheaply. My mother now provides reusable pads so I don't have to come home."



Monica and Joseph at the borehole

## A healthier and cleaner school

**Joseph:** "The old toilets were in a very, very bad shape. But they are great now. It seems too much. The health club helps many children. It tells them many ways to prevent disease, to stay clean by maintaining personal and environmental hygiene."

## Clean water

**Isaac:** "Water used to be a big problem. We had to fetch it from very far away, 24km in fact. Or we got it from a river nearby, but it was dirty. Some pupils would get tummy aches. But now Charlene's Project and Build Africa have provided us with a new borehole. We have clean water and no more tummy aches."

## Better business opportunities

**Nelma:** "With the money we make from the maize we buy goats and cattle. I also have a small shop at the trading centre. I sell general merchandise such as salt, sugar and soap powder."

**Ernest:** "This year has not been so good because of the lack of rain. I am a farmer whose crops have withered. I buy animals cheaply and then sell them for a profit in urban areas. But we are the lucky ones: the income from this and our shop in the centre will cover the loss from the poor harvest."



Ernest with his cattle

## Teacher training

**Silas:** "Build Africa has conducted school management and teaching courses at Kahara. My approach to teaching has seriously changed because of the child-friendly, learner-centred training that I've had."

We now sometimes use teaching methods such as the jigsaw method, or 'Think, Pair, Share', in which the pupils are split into small groups and they teach themselves. In this way they learn a lot, much more than they used to when the learning was by rote. The teacher just guides them. They explain their reasoning to each other and then come to an agreement as a group. It is a simple but very effective way of learning, because they trust each other. You can cover a lot in a very short period. The results have reflected this."



Silas monitoring a jigsaw session



**Ernest**  
(the school committee member)

**Mary**  
(the future)

Monica

## A bright future

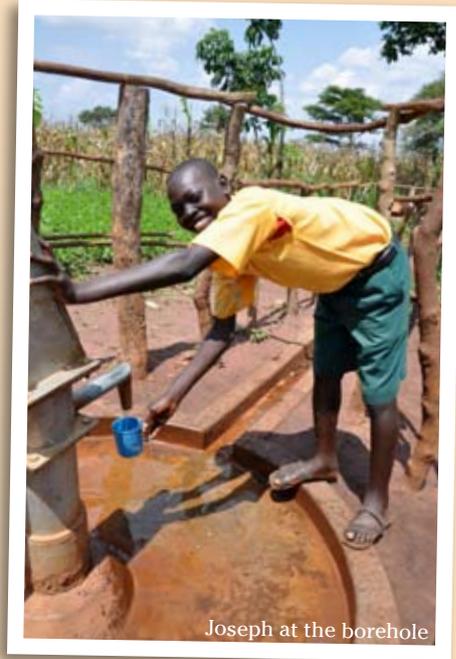
**Ernest:** "We feel very happy about Build Africa because they have equipped us with the skills and knowledge that we need to make life simple for ourselves. For example, the savings scheme has equipped us with saving skills. We can buy uniforms, soap and other essentials as a result."

"We have a happy family now."

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.

We see happy children going to school and they are happy throughout the day. They only ask for dinner which we provide with ease.

The water is very near now as well. A while ago life was hard. We have a happy family now. There has been a lot of change in the family and everything is moving on according to plan".



Joseph at the borehole



Nelima (mum) and Ernest (dad) are village savers with a flair for business.



The oldest son, Silas, is a teacher at Kahara Primary School who is making the most of recent training opportunities.



Joseph, Teresa, Monica and Isaac are pupils who now study in a safer, healthier and happier school environment. Not only that, Teresa and Monica know that they will be given the same opportunities to progress to secondary school that their brothers have.



The youngest, Mary, will soon be an early learner at the school: the quality of education she receives and her prospects for adult life will be better than any of the older members of the family have known.

# Food for thought

## Has your support made a difference to the school gardens at Kahara? Read on and find out!

Last summer we asked you to help our communities provide lunches to the schools worst affected by food shortages. We wanted to set up school gardens that would not only put healthy veggies on the menu, but would serve as demonstration plots for the local communities as well. Kahara was on that list.

We asked Nelima and Ernest about the difference the school garden has made to their family over the past few months:

Nelima: "Before the garden was established our children would often miss lunch. They were exhausted by the afternoon and dead on their feet by the time they ate supper.

“But last term saw a great improvement in performance because of the school garden.”

### The school's first harvest

"We were able to supply 35 school meals to every pupil at the school last term. And we want to supply more after the next harvest. The parents have offered two more acres (to increase the school garden to five acres) and we will be using organic fertilizer next time we plant. This should help a lot!"

### Food at home as well

Ernest: "We have our own vegetable garden at home as well now, using surplus seedlings from the school garden. It's also used as a demonstration plot that other families can learn from.



“Eventually every household will have its own garden.”

As a garden facilitator I have been trained by Build Africa in good farming practices to improve productivity and quality. I have the skills and equipment needed to grow cabbage, red peppers, indigenous vegetables, beans, cow peas and pumpkins.



Maize is the staple cash crop at Kahara

I no longer have to spend much money on food because the food is on our doorstep. I pick it, I cook it and I'm saving money. Ugandans think that good eating must include beef, chicken and fish. We have neglected vegetables.

But this is very good food for families as well.

Because of the generosity of Build Africa's supporters, all the children in the community are getting a more balanced diet now, both at home and at school."

### Lunches for all

**9,500** children across Uganda are now receiving school meals because of our gardens project.

### Ernest's fabulous organic fertilizer

"I have been trained to make organic pesticides and fertilisers. This is why we grow red peppers. They are an essential ingredient, along with washing powder, ash and water. We don't spray the vegetables with chemicals because they will have side-effects over time. The peppers mix with the detergent, then the ash. This is a serious substance that will kill all pests but won't damage the environment."



Hot stuff - chilis are a chief ingredient of organic fertilizer

### Harvest time:

**9.8** tonnes of food was produced from the first harvest. Many schools have achieved successful harvests of beans for the first time.

# Bright and early

Great early learning and childcare can make a big difference to children's future success in school and later life. That's why we are helping the schools we work with to give their youngest pupils the best start to their education by building safe, well-furnished and well-stocked nursery classes. The first of these, at Kagumu Primary School in Kenya, is now complete. We asked health club patron and senior teacher Joseph Chege about the difference the new classroom will make to the quality of education at the school:

## The new classroom

"The old building had two rooms, both too small for the number of pupils. It was made of mud and stones, had poor ventilation and bad seating. Learning was not a comfortable experience for them. Now they have a big, modern classroom with a cement floor and good ventilation. It also has talking walls (the pictures and letters that you can see) which help the children learn. The old classroom had nothing like this.

Now they have a big, modern classroom with a cement floor and good ventilation.

Some parents can't afford uniforms because they are poor. Their children have bare feet and suffer at the moment because of the cold. It would have been very uncomfortable at this time of year in the old building because it had no window panes.

Also, teaching aids would have disappeared because there was nowhere to lock them away. Now there is good security: our books, picture cards and wall charts will be safe and locked up and the teachers can use them to plan their lessons."

## Laying the foundations: a critical time to learn

"The nursery year is very important. According to the Kenyan education system, it is the foundation of a child's learning. Without it they would have no preparation for primary school. It would be very difficult for them.

The old class was so far away that the children didn't feel part of us. But with Build Africa's help the site was transferred. They feel part of the school community now, mingling with the other children.

They learn counting and matching, reading and drawing. They begin to talk, socialise and express themselves. They learn to share and interact with one another, developing their self-confidence. They are also taught discipline, how to behave and how to take care of their belongings.



The new nursery classroom



'Now they have a big, modern classroom'

These are important lessons for their later years at school. A child who hasn't been to an early learning class is at a disadvantage, having to learn all of this and catch up later on. It is an important transitional period.

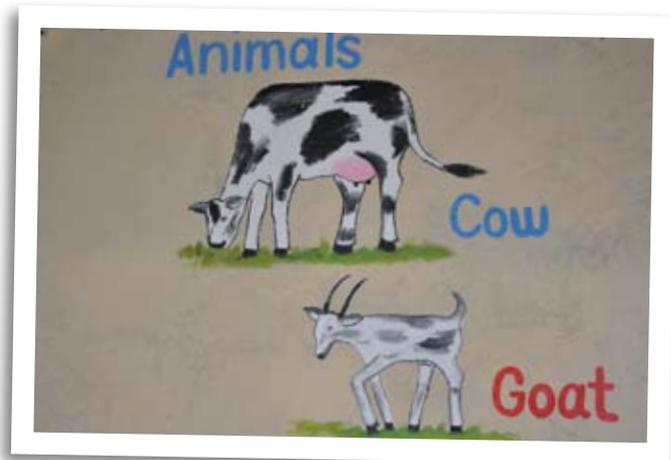
The school already performs quite well but I am confident that it will perform better now

We get to know their weaknesses and strengths at an early age: we can help with the weaknesses and build on the strengths. There is a smooth transition now and the children will now love to learn because the environment is conducive. The school already performs quite well but I am confident that it will perform better now.

The new class has attracted many children from the surrounding area. The parents know that the early learning stage is important. The parents have said that it's a landmark in the development of the school, and all provided by Build Africa."



Joseph Chege



'It also has talking walls which help the children learn'



## One Girl's Vision: Charlene's Project

**Charlene Barr had Cystic Fibrosis, but when she visited Uganda in 2008, she was touched by the challenges the children there faced. In this moving account, her father tells how one young girl's courage and selflessness changed lives.**

'It is with great pleasure that I write this article about our recent trip to Kahara Primary School in Western Uganda, a year after we saw the school for the first time and chose it as the school that Charlene's Project would work with. What amazing progress there has been at the school because of the hard work of the management committee, the teachers and the staff from Build Africa.

One of our daughters, Charlene, was born with Cystic Fibrosis. In Easter 2008

Charlene, her five siblings, mum and dad paid a short visit to Uganda as a result of a very generous gift from a friend. We visited quite a few schools and fell in love with the children of Uganda. We all were touched but Charlene in particular was challenged by the difficulty many children faced in getting to school. We all saw the many things we in Britain and Ireland take for granted.

“ She needed a double lung transplant urgently if she was going to survive ”

We returned home and life continued with the normal day to day routines we had experienced for so long.

Slowly however things changed. Charlene, who had always been in and out of hospital for treatment, began to respond less quickly to her medications. She had always been a fighter but her breathing

was becoming more laboured and early in 2009 she was informed that she needed a double lung transplant urgently if she was going to survive. The whole family was devastated.

“How am I going to spend my time if I can't go to school and I have to wait for a lung transplant?” Charlene cried. But slowly Charlene reflected. “I know what I will do. If I can't go to school I will fundraise to build a school in Uganda.” So that very night, against all the odds, Charlene's Project was born.

Charlene gave the remainder of her short life to that vision. When she was well she emailed, texted, sent Facebook messages and sat for radio and television interviews. She threw all her energy into her goal. With the amazing support of so many,

“ If I can't go to school I will fundraise to build a school in Uganda! ”

the money flowed in and Charlene believed that she would get her new lungs and the school in Uganda would be built. Sadly it was not to be. Her vision and her love for the children of Uganda never wavered, but sadly on 30th October 2010 she passed away peacefully at home, just days before the ground was cleared for the building of Hidden Treasure Primary School (the first project that we had raised money for) just outside Kampala.

“As a family we didn't think we could continue what Charlene had started.”

As a family we didn't think we could continue what Charlene had started. But after reading so many of her diaries it was clear that Charlene Barr had so much more planned. After officially attending the bitter sweet opening of Hidden Treasure Primary School in 2011, we as her family and friends decided to look for a second school in Uganda that we could help.

In June 2012 we visited Kahara, situated in the most remote place imaginable. What absolutely wonderful people greeted us! I will always remember the welcome and the difficult conditions the teachers were trying to educate the children in. We were so impressed with all the community development that Build Africa had already done and we knew immediately that this was a school and a community that Charlene would have wanted to partner with.

This summer my wife Janice and I led a team of 40, mostly young people from Ireland and USA, to Uganda. One of the highlights was our visit to Kahara Primary School. We spent three wonderful days delivering programmes in that community. The welcome was even more amazing than the year before. The new borehole we had fundraised for at Christmas was pumping water. The new school block was almost complete. We also saw the school feeding programme. We had the privilege of officially handing over the farming implements bought on our behalf by Build Africa. We visited some of the families in their own homes.

Build Africa has been such a wonderful partner in helping us to fulfil Charlene's vision; a vision that was born in the most difficult and painful circumstances in a restaurant in Belfast just four years earlier.

We are on a journey. There is so much more to do. We are exploring the next step with Build Africa. But through it all we are so thankful that Charlene was brought into our family. While humanly speaking she was taken from us far too early, as a family we are committed to finishing the work she started and we believe that we really can make a difference in Africa.



Dicke and Janice Barr testing out the new borehole



Dickie and Janice Barr presenting farming equipment to Kahara



'What absolutely wonderful people greeted us!'

## Leave something vital. Remember Build Africa in your Will

Charlene's legacy will be a lasting one: her project will give future generations of pupils at Kahara Primary School an education that gets better all the time. If you would like to leave a similar legacy, to make a whole world of difference to some of the poorest communities in the world, then an in memory or legacy gift to Build Africa would be a great way to do it.

**If you would like to speak to someone about leaving a gift to Build Africa in your Will, please call Abi on 01892 519619 or email [abi@build-africa.org.uk](mailto:abi@build-africa.org.uk).**

# Running For Their Lives

Far from being solely for personal wellbeing, running can provide lasting benefits for Build Africa communities as well. We asked seasoned Build Africa runner Richard Thomas, and Build Africa Programme Assistant Moses Kiptu Kuwi to tell us about their love of the sport.

## 1. Why do you run?

**Richard:** To stay fit, relieve work stresses and raise funds for Build Africa.

**Moses:** Running is a passion. I am fortunate that I used to see athletes in my home town who were an inspiration for the rest of us. Runners can achieve great things. You can ensure your children will get a good education for example.



## 2. How long have you been running?

**Richard:** I have run since I was a teenager, so over 40 years, but only competitively in the last 20 years.

**Moses:** My passion began in primary school. The distance between home and school was 6.5km. I used to run home for lunch and run back. My high school was 24km away: there's no transport so I ran.

## 3. Who are your running heroes? Do you know much about the running tradition in Africa?

**Richard:** David Bedford, Paula Radcliffe, Haile Gebrselassie and Mo Farah. How can you not be aware of the runners, particularly from Ethiopia and Kenya, who have dominated distance running?

**Moses:** My area is rich in athletes. Koech and Boit, for example. One famous Kenyan runner, Parm, would come to our school and take us for training.

## 4. What sort of running legacy would you like to see following the 2012 Olympics?

**Richard:** I hope it inspires British children to take up running and emulate Mo Farah, Jessica Ennis and Alistair Brownlee.

**Moses:** Many successful Kenyan runners come from my community. We are inspired because we do well. Mo Farah trained here before the 2012 Olympics.

## 5. How do you prepare for a race?

**Richard:** Normally I run 25 miles a week but 4 months before a marathon I do 50 miles a week. The week before I "taper down" and try to relax as I get nervous!

**Moses:** My work takes up time but I run 36km on a Saturday. I have run two marathons this year. I had to stop at 23km during one because my shoes wore out!

## 6. What's your greatest running challenge?

**Richard:** Right now! In April, 3 days before my 11th London Marathon for Build Africa, I suffered a heart attack. I had two heart operations and have had rehab to get me running again. My motto is "Be strong and never give up". In July I ran the British 10k for Build Africa and in October I ran the Royal Parks Half and the Chicago Marathon, just 6 months after my "little setback"!

**Moses:** A lack of resources. We don't have great sports facilities and people can't afford running shoes.



## 7. What is your proudest running moment?

**Richard:** Finishing my first Comrades Marathon in under 11 hours. The Comrades is a 56-mile ultra-marathon in South Africa.

**Moses:** I represented my school and the Rift Valley Province in national events. My passion is for the 3,000m and 10,000m.

## 8. Why do you support Build Africa?

**Richard:** I have run 10 London Marathons, 3 New York Marathons, 3 Comrades and 1 Two Oceans Ultra Marathons, and numerous half marathons raising £55,000 for Build Africa. I visited the Masindi District in Uganda in 1995 to open a building at Nyakibete School funded by the Build Africa marathon runners. It was life-changing to witness all the good that the charity does. This motivates me to keep on running for as long as my body lets me.

**Moses:** My inspiration for becoming a programmes assistant was the chance to change the lives of children. This year I helped select pupils from Morop Primary School for running competitions. I advised them on training and one girl now represents the district.

**Do you feel inspired to fundraise for Build Africa? Need some advice from our experts? Log on to our website or call Deirdre on 01892 519619.**

Build Africa, Second Floor, Vale House, Clarence Road, Tunbridge Wells TN1 1HE.

Tel: +44 (0)1892 519619 Fax: +44 (0)1892 535484 Email: supporter@build-africa.org.uk

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