



Pupils of Morop Primary School, Naivasha, Kenya

July '09 Update

In 2009 the Build a School Campaign is working with 49 schools in Kenya and Uganda. We are constructing or renovating classrooms in 26 schools and continuing to give support to a further 23 schools, where the infrastructure has been finished and where we are investing in the people that make up the school community.

In Uganda the need for Build Africa has always been obvious. So many of the schools where we work have nothing. Classes have to be held under the shade of a tree, which is fine when the sun shines, but not when it rains. Then the children have to be sent home and so miss out on vital lessons. It is little wonder that the academic standards are so low.

In Kenya it is a different story. The need is as great but it isn't as obvious. When Kenya introduced universal primary education in 2003 the existing schools in the rural areas simply could not

cope with the influx of children. This means that schools like Kanyongo, featured on page 2, have had to continue to use buildings that have been condemned as unsafe. Or they have had to throw up the kind of temporary structures that we have become familiar with in Uganda.

Malera Okouba in Uganda, featured on page 3, is one such school. We are working there for the first time this year, beginning the process of turning a collection of stick and mud huts into a thriving school that will benefit the community for years to come.

None of this work would be possible without the help of our loyal supporters. On behalf of the communities we work with, thank you.

Rebuilding Kanyongo Primary School



Until last year's post election violence erupted and was broadcast across the world, Kenya was a country regarded by many as stable, relatively prosperous; a popular tourist destination. It was an image which hid the fact that almost half the population – 17 million people – currently live under the poverty line. This is particularly evident in rural areas where we work, where unemployment is high and drought is a constant threat to people's livelihoods.

The schools we work with suffer from a severe lack of funding; schools like Kanyongo, which was in a poor state when we began working with it in 2008. The classroom walls had gaping cracks running down them and many of the roof timbers had suffered from serious termite damage, making them a real concern to the pupils' and teachers' safety. Leaking iron roofs, unplastered walls, small windows and earth floors contributed to them being not only dangerous but dark, dusty and uncomfortable to learn in.



51 children learn in this classroom

The staff, pupils and community identified the classrooms as the school's most pressing need and renovation of three classrooms took place last year. Stephen Mutukuisika, Chairman of the School Management Committee (SMC), told us how the community worked closely with Build Africa Kenya to achieve this,

"In the renovation work we as parents sat down, planned and most importantly reached agreement about what the parents and their partners were going to do. We brought local materials like sand, water, stones and timber and brought them to the school."

This year we are continuing to work with the school, renovating a further three classrooms and training teachers and the SMC members, so that they can teach and govern the school as effectively as possible. Kanyongo Primary School was founded and built by the community, so there is a real sense of civic pride in the school and an understanding of how much its future matters to their children. There is no doubt, however, that the crumbling buildings and lack of resources that the school has had to contend with over the years has had an effect on the school's morale.

Build Africa's partnership has given the school a much needed boost. Stephen told us:

"We are doing all this for the benefit of the children – to improve the quality of their education. They should feel comfortable at school. It is our wish and our prayer that if we receive continued support the children will have a quality education at the end. That is our aim and our goal."



The renovated classroom in the foreground contrasts dramatically with the old structures

Together with Build Africa, the community of Kanyongo can give its school the long overdue investment in its buildings, resources and quality of teaching that will make it a source of even greater pride.



Children enjoying their newly renovated classroom

Malera Okouba, Bukedea, Uganda



Malera Okouba was founded in 2008 by the local Catholic Church. It was started to meet the needs of the community because the nearest school was 4kms away. It began with 278 pupils but now, just one year later, there are 673 children all trying to study in very difficult conditions.

There are no permanent classrooms, no desks, no textbooks and only 3 temporary toilets to share between all the children and the teachers. But the community is committed to doing all they can for their school. They have put up shelters so that the children can study under some cover, even if they do have to tolerate the snakes and fleas with which they share the space. The community have also built houses for the teachers, given them land to cultivate and they also monitor pupil and teacher daily attendance.



With no desk or exercise book, this little boy scratches his vowels in the mud

Deborah Achom is one of the teachers. She came to Malera Okouba after 10 years' teaching experience in Kampala as it would give her more opportunities to train and to upgrade. She teaches mainly English to P5 & P6 but can teach science and RE as well. Compared to Kampala, she thinks the children are slower to learn in the early years as they have not been to nursery school, and their English is weaker, but they are all very keen and they enjoy their lessons despite the crowded conditions and lack of teaching aids. Francis Akol, a teacher

currently being supported by the PTA whilst he applies for a government licence, agrees. He also thinks the teachers would benefit from more training, or district workshops to share knowledge.



The Headmaster's makeshift office

This is something that Build Africa will be addressing during 2009. In fact, the work has already started. The community have been so keen to see their school change from a collection of temporary shelters to a series

of permanent classroom blocks that they have demonstrated their commitment to the project by supplying all the materials that we had requested. They have also set up a building sub committee and as Mr Anguria, the Chairman of the SMC, says: 'We want to see that the right materials are used, that nothing is stolen and that the mixing and building process works.'

We will also be helping teachers like Francis to get the additional training that he wants and linking the school to the government textbook suppliers so that both the teachers and children of Malera Okouba can benefit from some decent teaching materials. As a result of your support, the learning environment at the school will improve and in time, we believe that the quality of the education on offer at Malera Okouba will come to match the community's dreams for their school.

'I would like to improve the children's ability so that they can compete with children in non rural areas but it is difficult when we have no books or school equipment to help us with the teaching.'

Francis Akol, teacher



Sandra Akurut is 12 years old and in Primary 6. She used to go to Bukedea Demonstration School but she transferred to Malera Okouba when it opened because it is much closer to her home.

Sandra is the youngest in her family and has a brother and sister also at Malera Okouba. She works hard to help her mother with the household chores before and after school, but is

lucky enough to be able to go home for lunch, unlike many of her friends.

She likes school but not the temporary classrooms. She is looking forward to having a new classroom because then, 'snakes would not come into class from the roof'. And she showed us the bruise on her arm that she got while running away from one that had fallen into the class a few days before our visit.

Campaign News

House of Commons Reception, 3 June 2009



Greg Clark, Shadow Secretary for the Environment and Climate Change, and a Patron of Build Africa, hosted a reception for our supporters in the House of Commons on 3 June. Those who came were able to

hear Her Excellency, Mrs Joan Rwabomere, the Ugandan High Commissioner, praise the work of Build Africa in supporting Uganda's efforts to give children a good education. They also heard from George Kidenda, Country Director for Kenya, who spoke about the crisis in education in the rural primary schools in Kenya. It was a great evening and we were able to thank our supporters for their loyalty in difficult times and to share with them some of the things we have achieved with their help. So, to all of you who were not able to come to the event, thank you. None of this work would be possible without your help.

Build Africa Website Goes Live

After some delay, we launched our new look website on 1 April. The new format is refreshing and offers easy navigation to information on our work. Upcoming additional features include an interactive map of Kenya and Uganda with links through to videos, photos and profiles of the schools that we support. Log on and explore. And make sure you take a look at our new alternative gift shop when it opens in September!



Build Africa Ambassador Dinner & Auction 2009 at Quaglinos

On 8 October, Build Africa will be holding its fundraising dinner at the stunning location of Quaglinos restaurant in London.



200 tickets are on sale for the evening, which will include a champagne reception and tailored three course meal with wine. The entertainment will include a range of performances provided by the unique variety show Medium Rare. There will be a silent auction held throughout the evening, culminating in an exciting live auction at the end of the night.

Table prices are £1750 for a table of ten or £175 for an individual ticket. For a booking form please contact Helen Sharpe on 01892 519619 or helen@build-africa.org.uk.

Build Africa has a range of supporters who provide us with items or experiences for auction. If you or someone you know can offer a prize, please contact Helen.

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