



This edition's theme: Working with communities, changing lives for good

Working together for the common good

Archbishop Desmond Tutu used to tell the story of an anthropologist who'd been studying the culture of a remote African tribe. Before he left the village where he'd been working, he put together a gift basket filled with delicious fruit from around the region and wrapped it with a ribbon.

The man placed the basket under a tree and gathered up the village children. Then he drew a line in the dirt and told the kids 'When I say go, run to the tree and whoever gets there first will win the basket of fruit.' When he told them to run, they

all took each other's hands and ran together to the tree. Then they sat together around the basket and enjoyed their treat as a group. The anthropologist was surprised, and asked why they all went together when one of them could have won all the fruit for themselves. A young girl looked up at him and said, 'How can one of us be happy if all the others are sad?'

Tutu described the girl's thinking using the word ubuntu, which means 'I am because we are.' He explained the concept by saying 'Africans have a thing called ubuntu. We believe that a person is a person through

other persons. That my humanity is inextricably bound up with yours. When I dehumanise you, I dehumanise myself. The solitary human being is a contradiction in terms. Therefore seek to work for the common good because your humanity comes into its own in community, in belonging.'

This story, and the concept of ubuntu, is worth remembering as we consider the community of Advantage Africa helping to transform the lives of vulnerable people. As you read the stories and updates in this edition of Milestones, we hope that you will feel that you belong to Advantage Africa's community working together for the common good.

Mobility for people with physical disabilities



Advantage Africa's support to Migori Women with Disabilities Group and Kibwezi Disabled Persons' Organisation is enabling people with disabilities across Kenya to access wheelchairs and other vital appliances. Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, 220 people have benefitted from wheelchairs alone in the last two years, most of whom had never had a mobility aid before.

Isobel from Kuria in western Kenya is one such beneficiary. Since her parents and brother died she has lived alone in a small mud house, and before being assessed and fitted with

a wheelchair she suffered the indignity of being moved around in a wheelbarrow. Today, with support from people like you, she has a new wheelchair designed for the rough terrain around her home; she sits upright and her confidence and outlook have been transformed. Our local co-ordinator Sheila Adoyo says 'Isobel was so happy when she came for her wheelchair fitting; she had never before had any help like this and she was very thankful. And Isobel is smart, she knows how to do business, I think she can now think about starting a small enterprise'.

Isobel after being fitted with her new wheelchair. Previously, she could only get around in a wheelbarrow pushed by well-wishers.

Sustainable incomes for vulnerable families

In eastern Kenya, Advantage Africa has been assisting vulnerable families, including those affected by HIV & AIDS, to meet their needs for food and income by keeping goats for milk and meat. Our support includes training in animal husbandry and the provision of hardy Galla breed goats and a small water tank for each family. We follow this up with visits to check on how the families are doing and assess the impact on their household incomes.



Water tanks for families to rear goats.

Constance receives her goats after the training in May 2022. 35 families are being supported through this project.



Millicent's son Vincent with the family's cow, bought with proceeds from their goat rearing project.

Millicent started her goat-keeping enterprise four years ago with two goats. Now she has 15! She also owns a cow she bought using the proceeds from selling three goats which means she is well-equipped to survive the economic crisis and drought now taking place in Kenya.

The success of Millicent and others like her have led us to recently train another 35 disadvantaged

families, like Constance's above, and supply them with goats and water tanks. Burgwin Muthoka, the local Coordinator of our partner Rescue Team says, 'People always ask us for help with getting a sustainable income, it is their top priority. That's why the goat projects are so appreciated. The success of many other families we've supported in the past show we're on the right track'.

Bright futures for young people with intellectual disabilities

In Kenya, young people with intellectual disabilities often become 'stuck' in school, repeating years, or drop out with no meaningful plan for their future. Outside the protective school environment, they feel excluded and vulnerable, and are at risk of depression, addiction, anti-social behaviour, exploitation and abuse. To address this critical and neglected problem, Advantage Africa has pioneered a new and practical approach to support school-leavers' transition and produced a colourful illustrated handbook for teachers, parents and carers. With our partners, The Kenya Institute for Special Education, we have designed and run a new training course, the first of its kind in Kenya.

The first 22 special needs teachers to undertake the course all rated the content as highly relevant and the delivery excellent. Most importantly, they have put their learning into practice by assisting 22 school-leavers with disabilities to start their new lives after leaving school. With small grants provided by Advantage Africa, some are rearing chickens, goats, sheep or cows, and others are making jewellery, tailoring, weaving or catering. The school-leavers have gained independence and self-esteem, and with their families they are reversing the negative perceptions held about people with disabilities in their communities.



Since leaving school, 19-year old Dennis, who has learning disabilities, has started a popcorn selling business. As part of our project we trained his teacher Mrs Obondo and helped purchase the equipment needed. He is one of 22 young people who have bright futures through this ground-breaking project.

Hope for people with albinism

Uganda hosts more than 1.5 million refugees, including children and adults from neighbouring countries who have fled persecution because they have albinism. With our partner the Source of the Nile Union of Persons with Albinism (SNUPA), we're providing refugees with albinism in the Nakivale and Rwamwanja Settlements in south-west Uganda with skin checks, sunscreen and hats so they can keep safe from skin cancer. Discrimination, even in the settlements, means that most are excluded from work and live in chronic poverty, often eating just one meal per day. Alongside our skincare support and some basic food relief, we've recently enabled refugees to share their stories directly with the UN's new Independent Expert on Albinism, equipping her with evidence to alert the global refugee agency UNHCR to the neglected needs of refugees with albinism. It's just one example of how, alongside our practical work, Advantage Africa is highlighting the needs of vulnerable people to decision-makers to change the policies and practices that perpetuate poverty.



Recovering from her successful surgery, Annette receives her first bottles of sunscreen from Peter of SNUPA.

A refugee from Somalia is joyful at meeting Peter from SNUPA.



Children with albinism sit with their siblings as they await skin checks.

With COVID-19 restrictions on travel and meetings now lifted, we have resumed regular skin clinics in south-east Uganda at which more than 1,000 children and adults with albinism receive skin checks, hats, sunscreen and cryotherapy to protect against skin cancer.

We also support those who already have skin cancer with life-saving treatment. Until contacting SNUPA about the wounds on her ear, Annette had never met another person with albinism or seen a bottle of sunscreen in her entire life. As is often the case for children born with albinism, she was abandoned at birth and has lived an isolated and stigmatised life ever since. She was entirely ignorant of the genetic basis of her condition or the need to protect herself from the sun, 'had no idea why she was white' and was routinely charged more than others to travel in public vehicles.

We recently supported Annette with surgery to fully remove her skin cancer, which had eaten away part of her ear. She is now cancer free, equipped to care for her skin and has found solidarity and hope. After experiencing the love and care of our team she described them as 'my new family'.



Our dermatologist Dr. Ngobi running the skin clinic in Nakivale Refugee Settlement.

How your donation could help

£10 can provide a vital support visit to a family affected by poverty, disability or HIV.

£25 can help a person with epilepsy to manage their condition and establish a reliable supply of medication to control their seizures.

£75 can provide livestock for a vulnerable family to create a long-term source of food and income.

£100 could fund the costs for 12 people with albinism to access a skin clinic.

£300 can enable a young person with intellectual disabilities to establish a sustainable enterprise to help their family after leaving school.

Transformed lives for people with epilepsy

Epilepsy is very common in Uganda, but people affected are routinely shunned and neglected because it is misunderstood or attributed to witchcraft. What's more, they and their families usually live in deep poverty, struggling to meet their basic needs.

Building on our successful epilepsy training in Dwaniro in 2021, in early May this year we undertook a further 3-day training course in the community of Muwanga. This supported 139 children and adults with epilepsy, their carers and community leaders, to understand and

manage the neurological disease and resist the myths and discrimination that surround it. All 139 people with epilepsy were assessed and provided with tailored medication to put them in control of their condition; since then almost all have reported their lives have been transformed by a complete end to the debilitating and life-threatening seizures from which they previously suffered. We're now keen to support these families to start small income-generating enterprises to lift them out of poverty and further boost their confidence and self-reliance.



People affected by epilepsy gather for the first day's training.



16-year old Moses (who is orphaned and lives in extreme poverty with his younger siblings) is assessed and receives epilepsy medication for the first time in his life.

Amanda's birthday fundraiser



Amanda with her UV protective sunhat and cream, to protect her against skin cancers.

As she approached her 64th birthday, Advantage Africa supporter Amanda told us 'Over the past 11 years I've had 17 areas of skin successfully treated for various types of pre, early and malignant cancer including two operations. I'm so lucky, but many others are not...' She determinedly set out to mark her birthday by raising funds so that people with albinism who have advanced skin cancer could have life-saving surgery. She's already raised over £1,000 for our cancer care fund on her JustGiving page <https://www.justgiving.com/page/amanda-brook-1653737540341> which will remain open for the next year.

Could you do a birthday fundraiser or sponsored event for Advantage Africa?

Summer Concerts

After several years of no fundraising events due to COVID-19, we recently enjoyed three summer concerts for Advantage Africa, with choral, rock, Cajun and blues music all featured. Each concert raised about £500 towards our life-changing work.

Could you organise a concert or other fundraising event in your community, church, school or workplace?

Some of the Musica Charity Choir perform for Advantage Africa.



Milestones is published by Advantage Africa, who support people affected by poverty, disability and HIV to improve their education, health and incomes. Our work helps people to help themselves and build a better future for their families and communities.

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