



This issue's theme: New Beginnings

A fresh start for Beatrice

We recently met a 38 year-old woman with albinism called Beatrice. Her husband threw her and their children out of the house because of pressure and mistrust from his family. In Uganda people with albinism (who lack melanin pigment in their skin and appear white) are often ostracised and regarded with fear and suspicion. Desperate about feeding her young children, Beatrice returned to her former home to seek help. This time she was brutally attacked with a knife, beaten and chased away in fear of her life.

Although a qualified teacher, Beatrice ended up with no job, no home and no food. Not a penny with which to feed her four children. And she felt very afraid. The police ignored her saying this was a 'family affair' about which they could do nothing. She came to us sobbing and seeking safety, worried that the severe knife wound on her face would make her more vulnerable to skin cancer.

With help from Advantage Africa's supporters like you, Beatrice is now safe with a roof over her head. Her rent is paid and we're pursuing the case, as we do with many others. She and her children will not go hungry today. We'll ensure that they eventually get back on their feet following her trauma. We'll help Beatrice to heal in all the ways she needs to and to find a secure source of income with which to meet her family's basic needs.

Today, as always, we'll be working to prevent such violence from happening again as we campaign



Beatrice was given practical and emotional help to recover from her ordeal.



Your support is also helping women with disabilities in Kenya to prevent and respond to violence and abuse. This work is led by our partner Agnes Musembi (pictured).

for greater understanding about albinism and people's rights to a life free from abuse, discrimination and fear. This includes striving to prevent the skin cancer that causes many people with albinism to die young. Your support for Advantage Africa is what makes this happen. It enables people like Beatrice to make a new beginning, keep safe and become self-reliant.

In this edition of *Milestones* we explore the theme of new beginnings further, with a report from a life-changing project in Katente, Uganda and news of our new office and Trustee board. We hope you find it an encouraging read.

From anguish to joy in Katente, Uganda

Advantage Africa's Uganda Programme Manager Jane Betts reflects...

When asked how Advantage Africa's work helps vulnerable people, we often refer to safe water, education, income-generating skills and improved health. More difficult to describe is the effect of our work on people's mental health, resilience and independence. Helping marginalised children and adults to realise their potential, form supportive friendships and have the confidence to make a better future for themselves and their families is what really ensures our work has a lasting impact.



Meeting with the Katente community.



Journeying together; Mutual support and friendship has enabled 60 single parent families in Katente to work their way out of poverty.

Five years ago, I met families in the rural village of Katente with our partner the Single Parents' Association of Uganda (SPAU). I spoke with more than forty single parents and carers and heard their harrowing stories of illness and death from

polluted water and malaria, chronic poverty and fear for their children's future.

My meetings with widowed mothers and grandmothers, struggling daily for their families' very survival, left a deep impression on me. I particularly remember Justine, whose husband was dying from throat cancer and who sat in detached and silent anguish.

With a clear needs assessment, a successful grant application and support from individuals like you, we began to work closely with these families so they could improve their own lives. We helped the wider Katente community to establish a new borehole and prevent malaria using treated mosquito nets. Sixty of the most vulnerable single parent families learned skills to earn an income through livestock-rearing.

The next time I visited Katente, the families had made a new beginning - everything had changed. They told me there was no longer any illness caused by dirty water. Malaria had all but disappeared, and with improved health and a regular income they were sending their children to school. One grandmother had been so successful in rearing pigs that she was passing on piglets to other families and helping several orphans to attend school with her own grand-children. Most significantly, there was a palpable sense of optimism and unity across the Katente community.

As we walked in a large group between people's homes to see their livestock, there was

friendly rivalry about respective poultry and pig sizes, camaraderie and joy. While these families were equipped with practical resources and skills to improve their lives, the process of learning together through challenges and successes had transformed their outlook and they delighted in each other's company. Justine told me she couldn't find adequate words to express how



35 single parents in Katente are rearing poultry for eggs, meat and a sustainable income.



A further 25 single parents are rearing pigs.

much her life had improved since we'd first met. She was full of excitement that one of her pigs was pregnant and that her children were doing well at school. Most of all, she and her fellow parents knew that a brighter future was theirs for the taking, bolstered by mutual support and friendship.

Five years on, the families' determination and hard work has ensured their livestock rearing enterprises are still going strong and the Katente community's sustainable water supply is being used as a model of good practice in other projects in Uganda.



Justine before and after the project.



Martin

'The pig project is going well and we have been really motivated to work together. The manure from the pigs is a good fertiliser and I'm putting it on my crops. I promise I will work hard to keep things going well!'

Martin

What the Katente community say:

'Many of us had never reared a single chick before, but now we have the skills to do so! The water too is wonderful and we have plenty for the birds - before we were going far distances to collect and the hills were so stressful. Now within two minutes we can all get to the water!'

Harriet

'I'm short of words. I can't adequately express how my life has changed since the project began. I'm so grateful for the pigs and the feed and vaccines to keep them healthy.'

Justine

'The water is wonderful. Diseases from dirty water are out of Katente now.'

Francis

'We are moving from being poor to a different level.'

Damali

Safe, reliable water is now available in Katente.



Could you help more vulnerable people to make a new beginning?

£25 per month can help provide regular support visits to vulnerable families in places like Katente.

£50 can help a single-parent family like Justine's to rear livestock for a sustainable income.

£100 could enable someone like Beatrice to recover from domestic violence and get back on their feet.

Partners' Workshop in Uganda

In April 2018 we held a week-long training workshop for all our partner organisations from Kenya and Uganda. The workshop covered project management for

impact, strategic planning, fundraising, safeguarding, finance, mental health and much more besides! Old friendships were reinvigorated and new ones formed as everyone reaffirmed their commitment

to serve the most marginalised people in their communities. A highlight was a visit to the nearby village of Kirondo to meet single-parent families and see the life-changing impact of our work there.



Learning together.



Exchanging gifts and renewing friendships.



Other new beginnings

Trustees work together, voluntarily, to lead and govern a charity, ensuring it remains solvent and well-managed and delivers the objectives for which it was set up. As several of our trustees will be leaving soon, we have refreshed our board, and warmly welcome Pratima Dattani, George Mwaura, Alice Githoni, Sandra Golding, Mandy Smith and David Barnett to the team. We're looking forward to gaining from their wealth of experience and expertise. You can find out more about them on the 'Who's who?' page of our website.

We will be launching our new Strategic Plan next year with a focus on expanding our sexual abuse prevention and albinism work and ensuring the long-term sustainability of our partner organisations in East Africa.

Following the sale of our former office building we've recently relocated to a first floor office on Olney High Street. Our new address is 9 High Street, Olney, Buckinghamshire, MK46 4EB.

GDPR

Please keep us up-to-date with any changes of your home or email address and let us know if you'd rather not stay in contact with Advantage Africa so we can comply with your wishes and data protection law such as the GDPR. Thank you.



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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