



ADVANTAGE AFRICA
SUPPORTING INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE

Dear Advantage Africa Supporter,

I'm writing to enclose our latest newsletter with updates on some of our projects in Kenya and Uganda. I hope that you will be challenged, encouraged and inspired by what you read.

A real success for us in 2009 has been to see two of Advantage Africa's first initiatives, the special units for disabled children at Mitaboni and Kisayani primary schools in Kenya, approach sustainability. Both are now being supported with staff and resources from the Kenyan government and the local community, and our assistance to them has become minimal. Our focus is shifting to ensure that the special unit in nearby Thinu and the inclusive primary school in Bombo, Uganda become similarly well established over the next few years.

Advantage Africa's disability work is featured in our newsletter and also on a six-minute film now on YouTube. Just go to www.youtube.com and type 'Advantage Africa in Kenya' in the search box to find it. And if you'd like a high quality DVD of the film to show in your church, workplace, coffee morning on World Disability Day (3rd December) etc, please let me know.

We recently welcomed Ann Tennant and Munirat Ogunlayi to our board of Trustees and Liz Lynch joined our small staff as Finance Officer. We will soon be saying thank you and goodbye to Jacinta Sweeney, who has supported our partner organisations over the last two years, but is now leaving Olney to be closer to her family in Scotland. We're currently seeking her replacement, as well as a part-time fundraiser to help us grow through and beyond the current financial situation. Full details are on our website www.advantageafrica.org.

We enjoyed seeing Paul Lwanga from the Single Parents Association of Uganda (SPAU) and Jack Okoth from Obambo during their summer visits to the UK in the summer. I showed Pastor Jack the house in Olney where John Newton wrote 'Amazing Grace' and the church where it was first sung. Paul met with a donor who had supported a SPAU poultry initiative to update them on the good progress being made, and we had a fruitful meeting with Gingerbread, a charity for single parents in the UK.

Our Christmas catalogue is enclosed and I hope you will enjoy choosing from our new designs. This year we've included some cards handmade by a group of single parents in Uganda, many of whom are living with HIV. These cards are special in more ways than one; not only do they look great, but they provide these inspirational women with income so they and their children can celebrate Christmas too. I just can't imagine you'll find anything fairer trade than that on your local High Street!

Our newsletter shows how with your help, we are improving the lives of many disadvantaged people. To our practical support we add our prayers for those across East Africa suffering from the impact of a serious drought. Thank you for your partnership, in so many ways, in this life changing, and sometimes life-saving, work.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Betts, Director



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Advantage Africa News

Issue Eleven, October 2009

This newsletter is also available on CD and by download from our website www.advantageafrica.org



Child Rights and Wrongs

Today, as on every other day in Africa, some 27,000 children under five will die from preventable, poverty-related causes such as pneumonia, malaria and malnutrition. This appalling thought draws me to the miniature copy of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that I keep on my desk. It's message is clear and uncompromising: Every single child on earth has the inherent right to life, food, healthcare and education.

Advantage Africa and its partner organisations are working to make this Convention a reality in the communities where we work. During my recent visit to Obambo, western Kenya, I met Tony, a young boy whom local pastor Jack Okoth described as a 'total orphan'. By this he meant that there was simply no more extended family to care for him; they had all died through AIDS. Previously sick and malnourished, Tony had regained his health by joining our orphans' nutrition programme. He now attends school and has joined Pastor Jack's extended family where he found acceptance and love.

There are many boys and girls struggling like Tony was in the communities where Advantage Africa works and our priority is those children whose basic rights have yet to be realised: Disabled children kept hidden indoors because of stigma and fear, children orphaned by AIDS, and street children at risk of sexual and economic exploitation. Our partnerships with inspirational people like Jack and their community groups can bring stability and hope into their lives through opportunities for better health, nutrition and education.

This is incredibly challenging work for Advantage Africa and its partners: A mother's death, a bout of malaria, a difficult politician, a power failure and an increase in the price of maize are all in a morning's issues to be overcome. And although I sometimes look in that miniature book for encouragement, we don't need the UN Convention to tell us that this work simply must be done; our God-given sense of justice and compassion tell us so.

It can cost very little to make all the difference in the world to a child like Tony who has been denied the rights in the UN Convention. And right now, drought in East Africa threatens the lives of many orphans like him. So if you are not already supporting Advantage Africa with a regular donation, please use the form at the back of this newsletter to help make that difference. Thank you.

Andrew Betts, Director

Kenya Food Crisis

A crisis is unfolding in Kenya where four million people are currently lacking food. Advantage Africa urgently needs funds to support the Obambo orphan feeding programme and to help develop the community farm.

A regular donation of £15 per month can provide a daily nutritious meal for an orphaned child like Tony - often their only meal of the day.

A gift of £500 will sustain the programme for a month.

Our 2009 Partners' Workshop

In March, 26 representatives of Advantage Africa's partner organisations attended our week-long training workshop in Kisumu, Kenya. The workshop enabled our partners and staff to share experiences and update their knowledge and understanding of development, disability and HIV.

We explored home-based care and memory work among families affected by HIV, managing community projects and early childhood development. We also visited Obambo's Community Action Group (CAG) to learn from their work caring for disadvantaged families. The workshop ended with reflection on all that had been learned and

everyone setting personal targets for the year ahead.

'Encouraging', 'impacting', 'developmental', 'important', 'educational' and 'adventurous' were among the comments received from the participants, as they returned home to their projects reinvigorated.



Changing Lives in Obambo



A real highlight of the Partners' Workshop was our visit to Obambo, where our partner, the CAG support the community's poorest households. Salome (left) is an elderly blind woman and one of the project beneficiaries. Not long ago, she was deceived into opening her house to thieves who took all her food. When Andrew Betts and local project co-ordinator Otieno discovered this, they couldn't believe people would exploit such a frail and vulnerable woman. But as they comforted Salome, a neighbour turned up with a gift of 500 shillings (£5), and she then recounted how she'd forgiven the thieves and felt no anger towards them. Andrew and Otieno went away blessed, their faith in humanity restored.

Many of the 25 families in the Obambo home-based care project are headed by women in failing health like Salome. They look after their young grandchildren because their own children have died through AIDS. CAG members visit the families in their homes to provide emotional and spiritual support, clean water, nutritional food, medical treatment and help with farming. They even mobilise the local church to rebuild their homes, which have frequently become derelict and uninhabitable.

The project is transforming the lives of people like Salome who have so little, and was recently expanded from 17 to 25 families; our eventual target is 50. Just **£20 per month** helps a family to meet their basic needs and **£500** runs the project for a whole month.



With a grant from Guernsey Overseas Aid, Advantage Africa has helped the CAG to build a laboratory and install electricity at the Obambo clinic. We are now seeking funding for equipment and staff so that malaria and other diseases can be more easily diagnosed and treated at the clinic, which serves 5,000 people.



Rescue Team Progress

With Advantage Africa's support, the Rescue Team for HIV & AIDS in Kalulini, Kenya have recently completed construction of their resource centre, using generous funding from Warwick's Castle Hill Baptist Church. The centre is now being furnished and equipped and will soon be approved by the Kenyan government for voluntary counselling and HIV testing (VCT). Rescue Team's goal is to provide a welcoming and accessible place where young people can be equipped to live healthy and productive lives. While building the centre, the Team have continued their prevention and care activities in the community, including a weekly kids club, VCT and visits to orphans and people living with AIDS.

Rescue Team volunteer David Muthoka recently found Eunice and Mwithia critically ill and bedridden but neglected by their families, who believed they were 'bewitched'. He comforted them and arranged for the Team's trained counsellors to do an HIV test in their homes. Both were found to be HIV positive and are now provided with food, treatment and the emotional and spiritual support they need. The experience of Eunice and Mwithia prompted Rescue Team to start house-to-house visiting and VCT, and they helped 16 people in their homes during the first month alone.



When Rescue Team's volunteer Zipporah found Nduku, she had stopped taking antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) because she couldn't afford food to eat, never mind the bus fare to the hospital to collect them. Zipporah put her in touch with a local support group for people living with AIDS who helped get her on a good diet and back on track with her treatment. Nduku is now 'living positively' with renewed hope for her life. She says: 'I would have died if it wasn't for Rescue Team and the support group. I had no hope but now I'm inspired to live again.'

An HIV test kit costs £5 and £100/month pays for a full-time community worker in HIV prevention and care.

Including Disabled People

Advantage Africa supports all its partner organisations to include disabled people in their work. This year we've helped partners build accessible latrines; primary schools to run units for disabled children and the Kibwezi Disabled Peoples Organisation (KDPO) in Kenya to provide essential services and advocate for disabled people's rights.

Pauline is a young disabled woman who, sponsored by one of Advantage Africa's supporters, has gone to college - almost unheard of in Kenya - to study IT. She says this support has given her 'hope for a colourful future' and she wants 'to bring other needy people back to life'. She's become a role model, and Rescue Team recently invited her to be the guest of honour at their football tournament themed 'creating a disability barrier free community'. The event drew hundreds of people who were challenged and inspired by her message of acceptance, inclusion and opportunity.



Six-year-old Makau Collins is an orphan with cerebral palsy living in a place where many people fear disability and believe it's a curse. With support from KDPO and his determined grandmother Janet, Makau is changing those beliefs. Just a year ago he was unhappy, uninterested in his surroundings and appeared lost in the yard of his own home. Now he wears a smile - especially when he's using the walking aid KDPO made for him!



Advantage Africa supports the ideas and work of inspirational people in Africa to overcome poverty and disadvantage. We work in close partnership with determined individuals and community groups, supporting their ideas and plans so that disadvantaged people can improve their lives. This particularly includes people who, alongside poverty, face prejudice and stigma as a result of disability or HIV & AIDS. Advantage Africa provides encouragement, resources, advice and training as well as links to other sources of knowledge, skills and funds.



Charity Number: 1092719 **Company Number:** 4388034

Staff: Andrew Betts, Jacinta Sweeney, Liz Lynch **Trustees:** Rob Aley, Jane Betts, Ann Tennant, Munirat Ogunlayi, Chris Harvey, David Saint, Paul Winnan. **Patron:** Martyn Joseph.

Address: Advantage Africa, 26a Market Place, Olney, Buckinghamshire, MK46 4BA.

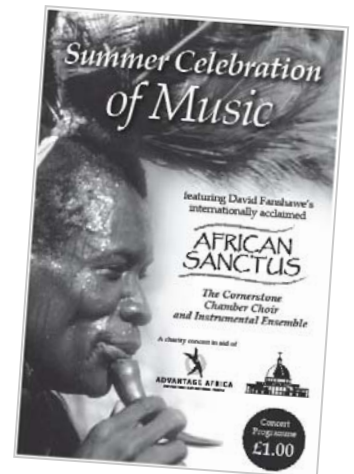
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Funding News and Needs

We've recently been touched by donations of hundred of pounds from people facing challenging circumstances in their own lives, but determined to help others living in even greater difficulty in Africa. In July, 300 people attended our *African Sanctus* concert in Milton Keynes which raised nearly £1,500 towards our work. Andrew and Jane Betts, Liz Lynch, Tony Locke, Ashley Pettican, John Palin and Alun Rees have all run in races ranging from 415 yards (the Olney pancake race) to 26 miles (the Disney Marathon) and raised nearly £5,000 in sponsorship. And British Airways have supported us with the gift of four free flights to East Africa.

Our current needs are for orphans' nutrition, malaria and HIV testing in Obambo, Kenya (£10,000 needed for the next year) and child-headed households in Masese, Uganda (£5,000 needed). Here's some ideas on how you can help:



Make a **monthly donation** to our work. Just £10 a month can make a real difference!

Give presents that will make a lasting difference this Christmas: we don't do goats but our attractive **Gift Certificates** help meet real needs in Africa. Available in £5, £10 and £20 denominations.

Organise a coffee morning, or Christmas evening with mulled wine and mince pies, where friends and family can buy **Christmas cards**.

Ask a friend or family member whether they would like to receive our **news updates**.

Write to request our **legacy leaflet**.

Sign up with us for the **London 10km Run** in June 2010.



I'd Like to Support the Work of Inspirational People in Africa

- £5: a diagnostic test for HIV treatment
- £15/month: a daily nutritious meal for an orphaned child
- £30/month: home-based care for a widow living with AIDS
- £100/month: a salary for a community worker
- £1,000: a simple kitchen for an orphan feeding programme

1 I would like to make a regular gift of £ _____ to Advantage Africa every month by standing order (a regular gift is especially valuable as it helps us and our partners to plan ahead) starting on: _____ (date)

Bank/building society name and address:

Account name:

Account number:

Sort code:

Signature:

Date:

Standing order instructions to your bank or building society: Please pay the amount above, starting on the date indicated and on the same day of every month thereafter to: HSBC Bank, 19 Midsummer Place, Milton Keynes, PO Box 1888, Coventry CV3 2WN; sort code 40-33-33; account name Advantage Africa; account number 81549200.

OR: Here's my single gift of £ _____ payable to Advantage Africa.

2 My name, address and postcode:

3 If you are a UK taxpayer, please tick the box below to add 25p to every £1 you donate at no cost to you.

I am a UK taxpayer and I would like Advantage Africa to treat this donation or standing order and any future donations as Gift Aid donations. I understand that I must pay an amount of Income or Capital Gains Tax in the relevant tax year equal to any tax reclaimed by Advantage Africa in that period.

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4 Please send this completed form to: Advantage Africa, 26a Market Place, Olney, Buckinghamshire, MK46 4BA. *Thank you.*

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SUPPORTING INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE

Order Form

Please send this form to reach us by 11th December in time for Christmas.
If you have any questions about your order please call us on 01234 711005.

ITEM	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
All Seated on the Ground		£3.50	
Golden Bethlehem		£3.50	
Stable in Bethlehem		£3.50	
Icy Friends		£3.50	
Skiing Nuns		£3.00	
Travelling Musicians		£3.50	
Noel		£1.50	
Joy		£1.50	
Peace		£1.50	
£5 Gift Certificate		£5.00	
£10 Gift Certificate		£10.00	
£20 Gift Certificate		£20.00	
Total cost			
Postage and packing 1-3 packs £2; 4-6 packs £3; 7-10 packs £5; 10+ packs £6 Gift certificates & Uganda handcrafted cards free			
Donation to Advantage Africa			
GRAND TOTAL Please make cheques payable to Advantage Africa			

PLEASE COMPLETE IN CAPITAL LETTERS

Name:

Address:

.....

..... Postcode:.....

Email:

Telephone: (we'll only call if there is a problem with your order).....

We'd like to send you information about Advantage Africa's work by email and occasionally by post.

If you'd prefer not to receive such information please tick here:

Please return your order form and payment to:
 Advantage Africa Christmas Cards, 26a Market Place, Olney, Bucks, MK46 4BA