



Living on the Edge

Good neighbours

The big stories currently dominating the news such as the refugee crisis, EU referendum, US presidential race and even the UK's aid budget seem to pose a common question: Do we tighten our national and personal boundaries in order to look after ourselves better - or do we keep them more open to others? The parable of the Good Samaritan, that Christ told when a teacher of the law asked him 'Who is my neighbour?', sheds some light on this theme: The Jew who fell among thieves and was left for dead was rescued not by the priest or the politically elevated Levite from his own tradition, but by a Samaritan from a tribe despised by his own. It seems Jesus defined a neighbour not in tribal or geographic terms, but as someone willing to cross the

boundaries of difference and go the second mile to help someone in need. Even to the point of committing to pay an open-ended hotel bill for a stranger!

It's not surprising that many hospitals and charities are named after the Good Samaritan, and the story also inspired the foundation of Advantage Africa, which aims to help those living on the margins in desperate need, disregarded by many around them. In pursuing this mission, my colleagues and I have spent time with children and adults who are living on the edge: people dying of AIDS, locked inside homes because of ignorance surrounding cerebral palsy, living in child-headed households or afraid of abduction because they were born albinos. Advantage



A contemporary take on the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Africa exists to be 'good neighbours' to vulnerable people like them - those affected by disability and HIV who are denied their basic rights and ostracised to the point of losing self-worth and their hope for their future.

Our vision is for such vulnerable children, women and men to be respected as equals, free from poverty, discrimination and fear. This edition of Milestones tells four stories of people in Kenya

and Uganda who, with the help of Advantage Africa, have been brought back from the edge as we work towards that vision.

Thank you for your interest in, and support of, this life-changing work.

Andrew Betts,
Director

Beset by almost constant floods, single parent families living in Ggaba slum of Kampala, Uganda, know what it means to live on the edge. Advantage Africa is determined to help them improve their health and living conditions.



Our Programme Manager's notes from her visit to Ggaba in January.

26/1/2016
Ggaba group
Without words.
Flooded homes
Sewage, rubbish.
Beyond belief.
Children with flu, diarrhoea
cholera, malaria, rotted toes.

Living free from abuse and hunger

11 year-old Rachel* lives in Luwero District, Uganda. Her father, a chronic alcoholic, used to beat her mother who died in 2014 following one of these assaults. He remarried and Rachel's miserable life worsened as she was forced to work, denied school and given insufficient food. Thankfully, a brave local woman called Rose alerted our partner SPAU to the situation and has since adopted Rachel as her daughter. With SPAU, Advantage Africa has helped Rose to care for

Rachel and meet their basic needs through poultry rearing. Rachel also joyfully received her own mattress, sheets and soft blankets recently and can now sleep off the floor undisturbed by parasites.

Advantage Africa has supported 70 further single parents in Rachel's community to care for their families with safe water, livestock-rearing, malaria prevention and health kits. The parents form strong, supportive



Rachel is happy to carry her mattress home.

friendships while their children, like Rachel, can learn, play and look forward to a better future.

Turning their lives around

Peter, Elizabeth and Simon* have albinism and live in Mukono District, Uganda. In July 2014, their father died when protecting them from abduction by witchdoctors. Their mother Esther continues to fear for her children's safety and accompanies them on their four-mile round trip to school every day. Life has been much harder since her husband's death and they've had no sustainable source of income.

With our partner SNUPA, Advantage Africa is helping Esther's family to turn their lives around. We've supported Esther to start a fruit and vegetable business so she can pay school fees, buy medicine and other necessities. Her children have hats, high protection sunscreen and lip salve to protect them from skin cancer. Their head-teacher attended our recent training course for schools in the region to help staff understand albinism and support pupils with the condition. The impact of addressing myths and misconceptions about



Peter aged 14, Elizabeth 5 and Simon 8 with their mother Esther.

albinism is already being felt in Esther's community, and is helping the family feel safer.

We're working with hundreds more families like Esther's in eastern Uganda so they too can meet their basic needs, prevent skin cancer and live free from fear.



SNUPA Project Officer Sarah shows Elizabeth how to apply lip salve.

Could you be a 'good neighbour'?

£5 per month can protect a child with albinism from skin cancer.

£10 per month can provide regular home visits and physiotherapy for a disabled child.

*Names have been changed to protect individuals' privacy

Ending myths about disability

The brothers before their surgery to correct club foot.

Many people in Kenya still believe in traditional myths about disability. That is why when Catherine* gave birth to not just one, but two children with disabilities she was rejected and victimised by many in her community. They said she was being punished by her ancestors and some even believed that the children's disabilities could be contagious. This extreme stigma caused the family to become reclusive, the children didn't attend school and they remained unaware that specialist help was available. Their situation changed when they met the outreach team of Advantage Africa's partner

Kibwezi Disabled Persons Organisation (KDPO). Alongside the team's work to debunk the myths about disability in their community, they explained the possibility of simple corrective surgery for the children. Oscar and Dennis* subsequently had operations on their club feet and are now walking unaided, attending school and mixing freely with other children in their neighbourhood. The family are no longer feeling desperate or 'on the edge', and like hundreds of others supported by Advantage Africa in this region, have hope and strength for the future.



From living on the edge - to helping others

If like Nthioki, your mother is a poor single parent with a learning disability, you certainly know you have some challenges to face in life. If you also experience intolerance and stigma because you have your own intellectual disabilities you know life will be very tough indeed. And, if like Nthioki you are seen as an easy target and are raped by a neighbour when you are still a school girl, you are certainly 'living on the edge'.



Nthioki outside her small bedroom.

Despite living with the stigma of a disability and of surviving sexual violence, Nthioki is one of the most positive and courageous

young women we have met. With support from Advantage Africa and our local Kenyan partner

KDPO she has now improved her gynaecological health and even joined our campaign team to combat the sexual abuse of people with disabilities. As part of this work, we supported her to speak openly and movingly about her experience to hundreds of people at

an international conference in Nairobi and demand action against perpetrators of sexual violence.

to people living on the edge like these?

£20 per month can provide training and resources for families to start rearing poultry or pigs.

£50 per month can fund events to challenge myths around sexual violence, disability, albinism or HIV.

£100 per month will pay the salary of a full-time community worker.

Funding News and Needs

Would you drink this?

Kavumba, Uganda has many single parent families and no access to clean water. People have to walk up to 2 miles to collect water from this polluted pond, and they live with the constant risk of water-related disease. Children are often too sick to go to school and adults to work. Water is the community's priority - but £6,000 is needed to dig a borehole and create a safe and sustainable supply in their community.



The Peak District Challenge on 19-20 August is a brilliant team event over the stunning Derbyshire Hills with four distances to choose from. *Please visit www.advantageafrica.org/PDC to find out more.*

We are grateful to the congregation of Trinity Church Chelmsford for sponsoring our disability project coordinator and physiotherapist in Kibwezi, Kenya. *Could your church, community or company sponsor a development worker like them?*



Our Patron Martyn Joseph's charity, The Let Yourself Trust, awarded Advantage Africa an invaluable grant towards our albinism project in Uganda. Martyn promoted the project at over 100 concerts to raise £18,000 to prevent cancer and improve opportunities for 400 people with albinism. *Could you introduce us to a well-connected or influential person with potential to raise Advantage Africa's profile and income?*

Let Yourself Trust

Providing a choice and a chance



The company Ultrasun also donated 3,500 bottles of medical grade sunscreen to the project. Their enthusiastic CEO Abi Cleeve said: 'Today it really feels like we're saving lives'. *Could you attract the interest of your company in our life-changing work?*

ultrasun Professional Protection

Sally Easton has wrapped Christmas presents, volunteered at events, swum the length of the English Channel and run a 5k for Advantage Africa. With eight others, she's now in training to take on the famous Yorkshire Three Peaks in 12 hours and raise £500. www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Sally-Easton3P

Emma Wise recently started a regular monthly donation to Advantage Africa. She says: 'Advantage Africa is a small charity with big outcomes. I'm moved and impressed by their success stories and the diligence of their team that ensures funds have an impact.' *You can set up a monthly direct debit using the enclosed form or online at www.advantageafrica.org/support-us*

Jane Betts recently ran two marathons in two weeks to raise funds for Advantage Africa. Her amazing sponsors and a kind 'matching donor' raised £10,365 to help vulnerable people overcome poverty. *Could you do a sponsored run (it doesn't need to be a marathon), cycle ride, hike or other event for us?*



Jane holds off a late challenge from a dragon as she finishes the London Marathon.

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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I'd like to make a single donation to help people living on the edge overcome poverty



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