

ZOZU project



IMPACT STORIES

Stories that
reveal the life
change made in
2022

PRINCIPAL DAVID SHARES

In 2022 your
generosity,
letters, gifts,
time and prayers
made a
difference!

MEET ZAHARA BIRUNGU

2022

IMPACT REPORT

zozuproject.org



Because of you – lives are changing

What it looks like when we achieve together

By David Ssmuvubi
Head Teacher at Solid Rock
Christian School

In Uganda, there are seven primary school years, from P.1 to P.7. At the end of P.7, students are required to sit for their first major national exams called the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE). The PLE tests students on four main subjects – English language, mathematics, science, and social studies. Results ultimately determine whether or not the student can advance to Secondary School. On November 4th and 5th, Zozu Project's P7 candidate students sat for their PLEs. The best possible score one can achieve on the PLE is a total of 4 aggregates (which means 1 point – a distinction – in each subject), while the worst is a total of 36 (9 points for each subject, which results in a failure). Students with between 4 and 12 points pass with a first-grade or Division One.

Zozu Project-sponsored students who pass their PLE advance to secondary school. This has two stages; the first 4 years (S1 to S4) constitute O-level. At the end of S4, students take the second major national exam known as the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE).

The results are in and 54 out of 60 students managed to make it to the High School level after a long journey of seven years! 8 candidates scoring 1st, 32 candidates scoring 2nd, 8 candidates scoring 3rd, 6 candidates scoring 4th and 6 candidates will retake exam.

Emerging as the best school in Arua District from the recently released National Primary Leaving Examinations, Solid Rock Christian School is still celebrating this great achievement. Great thanks go to our dear donors and sponsors of the Zozu Project who have shouldered us for all these years! Our Directors and Staff, you are the most precious gift we have ever received from above! God has used you to meet all our school requirements. You have fed, treated, dressed, and above all loved us! The world had rejected us, but you saw value in us and picked us up! You have owned, encouraged, and blessed us! We are soon joining Solid Rock High School and we have no doubt, we shall continue achieving together!





Overcoming Obstacles

A glimpse into the life of Birungi Zahara

By Joan Nasirumbi - Child
Sponsor Relations Officer
Solid Rock Christian School

Zahara Birungi is a 14-year sponsored child. I would describe her as shy and quiet but intelligent. She comes from a very humble family. Zahara has three sisters and a brother. Her parents separated when she was three months old, and she stayed with her mother, but her father passed away. Zahara's mother is a peasant farmer, so she can sell some food to feed her children. According to Zahara, her mum took her to a government school. Still, she needed help paying fees, stationery, feeding, transport, and medication. However, luck knocked on her door at the end of 2015 when she came to Solid Rock through her mum's friend.

She was offered a place in 2016 and started in grade one the following year. Now, her grades have significantly changed throughout her school years for the better. She is in grade 7 now. She is also so happy being at Solid Rock Christian School. Child sponsorship has brought a tremendous change in Zahara's life. The ongoing support that Zahara's sponsor, Carol Freeborn, provides has helped fill the gaps between what she has and what she needs. A few years back, she received a gift and bought a goat. The goats multiplied, and sometimes the goats were sold to get other family needs for her siblings. Currently, Zahara has three beautiful goats, and she is grateful to her sponsor and Zozu Project.

Halima Ajuru, Zahara's mother, has faith in her daughter's education at Solid Rock. **Halima believes in the teachers because they are so caring and loving, and she now has hope for a bright future for her daughter.** Zahara receives two meals a day, books, and medical care. Whenever she is healthy, it helps her focus on her studies at Solid Rock. She's working hard in class and wishes to become a lawyer. Best of all, the friendship and encouragement through the letters from her sponsor, Carol, helped her believe in her potential and inspired Zahara to live it thoroughly every day. Sponsorship is so much more than a monthly charity donation. It's a commitment to a child. And it matters.





648 gifts given

Throughout the year, sponsors provided gifts of food, clothing, and personal needs to bring smiles



226,000 meals served

With 565 students in the sponsorship program receiving two meals daily, our cooks have been busy!



365 Mosquito Nets

To stop the spread of a national crisis of malaria, quick action was taken by the staff to purchase and distribute nets.



120 pairs of shoes

Thanks to our church partner New Life Pismo, the children received a new pair of kicks that will last!



2028 medical visits

Medical Director Rose and her staff provided medical care and support for the children and their families.



50 new preschoolers

By faith, Zozu enrolls 50 preschoolers each year, with much excitement for them to get a sponsor!



13 Teacher Housing Units

The joy of having a home was felt throughout the staff when many received keys to their new home!



49 New Sponsors

Thank you to our new and continuing sponsors for loving your sponsored children so well!



Coming Home

A visit to Solid Rock Christian School

By Katy Griffin,
Executive Director

Traveling to Uganda is a journey in itself. After over twenty-four hours of flying, our small team landed in Kampala, Uganda. With joy, we were greeted by our Director, John Paul, and after a quick sleep, we were off for the 10-hour drive. John Paul was an excellent driver on a road that may need some repair. Upon arrival, our team - Mick Lebens, Zozu Project founder, myself, and my son Gunnar found ourselves anxiously awaiting the following day to visit the school. The morning came quickly, and we headed off to the school. Because of the pandemic, our journey back to Arua had been three years in the making. On the way to the school, we noticed the local area had grown, and new businesses were now beginning to take root.

The road to the school felt the same in all its familiarity, with several smiling faces peering into the windows! Once at the school, the children were thrilled to see Zozu Founder Mick Lebens, affectionately known by the staff and children of Solid Rock as Uncle Mick. What a gift to watch the older children and staff come out to greet him. Not knowing what to expect due to the Ugandan government's most prolonged covid shutdown, we were surprised and overjoyed to see the campus flowing with children, new buildings, and families. The staff had weathered the shutdown and provided care and education above our expectations. The next few days were filled with many hugs, home visits, sponsor gifts, letters, and school photos.

As the days moved quickly, we thoroughly soaked in each moment. On the last day, we worshipped with the staff at Arua Community Church on the campus of Solid Rock. Leaving the campus after church is always a heart tug, but knowing inside that this is "see you later, and not goodbye" gave me peace. That afternoon Mick offered to take the staff for a luncheon. During the luncheon, he gave a talk with one of the staff's children on his hip; there was not a dry eye in the room. **Mick's words were filled with encouragement, love, and gratefulness for the staff's dedication to the children and families of Arua.** One by one, around the room, staff shared their thankfulness to the Lebens and Zozu Project sponsors/donors; they had made their dream a reality.





Staying the Course

Growing up at Solid Rock Christian School

By Joan Nasirumbi - Child
Sponsor Relations Officer
Solid Rock Christian School

Simon Oloki is 16 years old, an intelligent boy driven by so much passion for changing his family and community. He is full of energy and very optimistic about life. He comes from a family of several children, four sisters, and five brothers, and he lives in the outer town of Arua. He is the fifth child in the family, living with his mum and his siblings in an unfinished mud house. Although his dad is living, he does not live with or support the family. His elder brother, a plumber, helps meet some of the family's basic needs, like flour, soap, and sugar. His mum cuts grass for thatching houses, which she sells and adds to the family's needs. Simon experienced many childhood traumas, trying to stay alive each day. While attending Sunday School, he saw his friends taken for sponsorship, but he wasn't chosen because no one stood up for him.

Zozu Project rescued him, and in 2015, he joined the school enrolling in grade 4. He is now in High School. **Child sponsorship has changed his life by allowing him an education and all the medical attention he needs; in 2020, he suffered from Covid-19, and the medical clinic at the school helped him deal with it.** Simon is also an intelligent boy who is naturally creative and is loved by all who know him. Last year, he received a gift from his sponsor, Susan, and purchased a grinding machine. He helps grind flour from the cassava root for the neighboring communities while earning money for his family. His mum, Lillian Okwongi, dropped out of school in grade 4 and is hopeful for a bright future for her son, Simon.

Lillian stated that she always wants her son at school because life is tough for her, and she does not want to see Simon struggle the same way she has for many years. She always encourages him to finish school to have better opportunities. Simon's performance is quite good. He also plays number 7 on the school football team. He won a gold medal for the MVP on the team. On top of his football talent, he wishes to be a Doctor. So, do you know if child sponsorship works? Yes! Sponsoring a child as part of the Zozu program directly impacts that child's life. At Zozu, we know exactly how far our children are on their journey to self-reliant adulthood.





TO GIVE, ZOZU PROJECT.ORG
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