



Dear Friends of Bwindi children,

Greetings from all the children here at Bwindi ECO Children Uganda. As the year comes to an end, the home and school would like you to know that we really appreciate your support. Despite COVID-19 challenges, the home continues to survive through overwhelming generosity of donors. We highly acknowledge all those who have helped to sponsor education of our needy children.

Today, BUCC sponsors over 40 orphans at Bwindi Junior School, while our financial partners sponsor 25 more students. Our school currently has a total of 500 primary school pupils and 18 secondary school children. 35 of our pupils will be graduating from primary school this year and will be joining high school next year. All the children we serve here are in good health.



### **STUDENT OF THE YEAR**

Madinah Akampa has been selected the student of the year! She is 10 years old and is in primary fifth grade. She is the youngest leader who was elected by her fellow students as a health prefect. During her first term of office this year, she has done her work extraordinarily well as a prefect far exceeding the school's expectations.

Her ideas and strategies of maintaining proper sanitation and personal hygiene have been super throughout the year. Everything regarding the general health and hygiene of our children completely changed to a positive direction since she was elected a health prefect. She is very well respected by her colleagues and every staff member and is being encouraged to apply for the head prefect position come next year.

## COVID-19 UPDATES

As you may be aware, all schools in Uganda were closed March. The re-opening of schools started in September in a phased manner. To date, the whole of upper primary section is open, churches have also opened for a maximum of 200 people, while tourism is opening slowly. Only a few clients under restrictions are coming to track gorillas, however, the incidence of COVID-19 has again started increasing in Uganda in the recent weeks.

10 tourists who visited Bwindi in the last month have tested positive, and 13 of the staff who attended to them have tested positive also. All their contacts are now self- isolated.

### Our children have been amazing.

They easily coped with the COVID practices and changes like wearing face masks, observing social distancing, regular hand washing and other practices.

In Uganda today, the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases are 28,168 and the number of deaths are 225. Tourism has heavily been impacted, causing many businesses to fail and many employees have lost their jobs. Many members of our community no longer have any income.

Many of our parents are not able to get food and other essentials for their families. Over 60 percent of our able parents, who have always contributed fees for their pupils have not been to do so. At meal time we have had several occasions where hungry children from villages come to ask for food left over to have it as their daily meals. The situation of Bwindi Eco children Uganda is currently stable. There are no reports of COVID-19 amongst our children, their families or our staff.

All the children we serve are in good health. We count on the support of our donors to be able to supply our children with all their daily needs.

A special thank you to Bwindi Uganda children charities for COVID-19 relief assistance offered to us on 7th August, 28th September and 3rd November 2020.

**God bless all board members of BUCC and your families for your sacrifice. You made a difference!!**



### TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Teacher Anita has been selected the teacher of the year! Her special love for children and her guidance and counseling skills are superior. She has always been the first to arrive at school every morning at 6:15 a.m. and she was always the last to depart from school at 9:00 p.m. She teaches English subject in 5th and 6th grade classes, and children have performed better in her subject than any other subject in school. Over 90% of children passed with a distinction in English, making her the best performing teacher in our school.

Congratulations to Madinah Akampa and Teacher Anita!

## STAFF

We currently have a staff of 28 – 16 teachers, 1 enrolled nurse, 4 cooks, 2 house security guards, 1 farm manager, 1 instructor and 1 bursar. They are all hard working and devoted to work. We have not been able to meet payments for their salary. Since August 2020, we resorted to paying them half salary but still we have not been able to pay them half month salaries for October and November. With help from BUCC, the school nurse and farm manager are receiving their full salaries. It is still BUCC that helped us pay the salary for the rest of the staff members in September. Since then, none of our other staff has received any payment, but they are happily serving the children.

## PROJECTS

### 1. Poultry

Our poultry project is doing very well. We currently have 500 layers and 200 broilers. On average we get 10 trays of eggs each day and a tray of eggs costs \$3. On average, we would be earning \$300 per day if we sold all the eggs, but we sell half and our children eat half of our daily produce. Broilers are often sold when they are mature at six months.

### 2. Mushroom project

This project is also doing well. It gives enough mushrooms which we cook together with beans Monday through Friday. It gives our children a special daily delicious meal. They love it so much and that is why they look healthier than ever before.

### 3. Goats Project

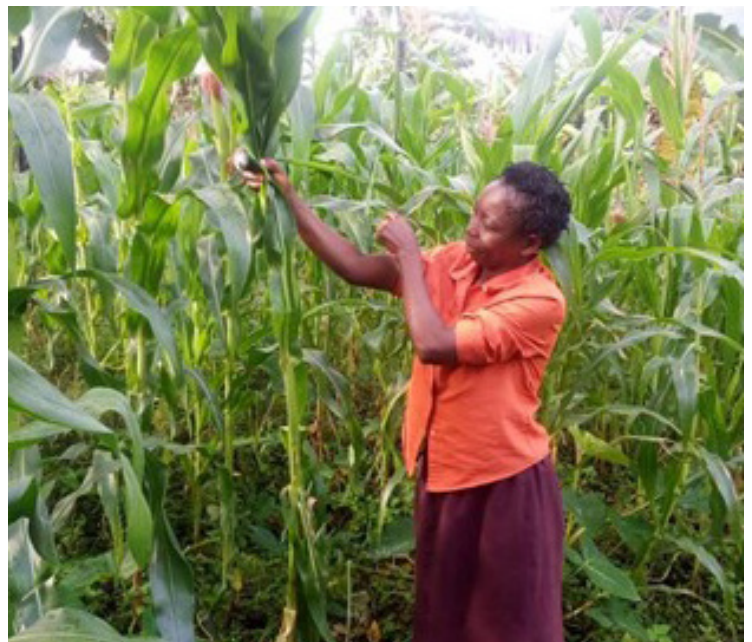
We shifted all the goats to the new farm land which we bought in Kinisa – Iraaro. The project is doing well; we get 10 liters of goats' milk everyday which we mix in pupils' porridge at every breakfast. It makes our breakfast more nutritious. All farming projects are also helping us teach our children farming and business. We currently have a total of 87 goats at the farm.

### 4. Gardening

On the land which was purchased at Kinisa – Iraaro, maize, cassava, rice, beans and vegetable have been planted. All the produce from the farm is used to feed our children.

We have done our first harvest for some crops, such as vegetables and maize and we really no longer have food problems for the orphanage as before.

We expect more good harvests in January and February. Surely we can never stop to say thank you to BUCC for the wonderful support and new ideas you give us. The picture below is of maize at Kinisa-Iraaro.



## 5. Christmas

Thank you BUCC for donating \$2,000 towards Christmas celebrations of Bwindi Children. We will celebrate Jesus' birth in two rounds. The first round will be for lower primary, that is primary one, primary two and primary three, and will have their celebration in the school main hall on December 22, while upper primary; primary four to primary seven pupils will have their celebrations at Buhoma Community Rest camp on December 23.

Best performers in class work will also be rewarded each with a goat from the school farm. At every celebration, our chapel teacher Millia will take us through the story of the birth of Jesus in Luke 2:1-20



## 6. Primary 7th Farewell Party

We shall have a special day for saying good bye to our wonderful 7th grade pupils as they start the next stage of their educational journeys. They are 35 in number who will be going off to secondary school next year, January 11, 2021. Their farewell party is scheduled for January 7. Any support to make this possible will be highly appreciated. The first picture above is of our graduating students.

## 7. Education Tours

Due to COVID-19, we did not have any have any education tour this year. Our children love touring and have continued demanding for it especially 7th grade children who are leaving for secondary school. We promise to make that tour if the situation normalizes and we shall include our 35 learning students on the next tour. It will therefore be a big group secondary 1 students, primary 7th, 6th and 5th pupils. The tour is expected to be done towards end of term in April 2021.

## SERIOUS MATTERS THAT NEED SPECIAL ATTENTION

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| 1. Staff salaries   | 6. Improvement of the kitchen                         |
| 2. Sponsorships and care of orphans and vulnerable children | 7. Playground equipment                               |
| 3. Clean water supply                                       | 8. Perimeter fencing of the school                    |
| 4. Building a medical clinic                                | 9. Stocking library with Uganda curriculum text books |
| 5. Expansion of toilets                                     | 10. School bus  |

Finally, allow me to extend our sincere gratitude to you and BUCC for keeping us running. You have helped us continue moving in the journey of helping needy children. The recent donation you have made towards purchasing the land across from the school will shift our chicken and mushroom projects early next year. Your total commitment and support of the children in Bwindi is truly making a difference in their lives.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOVE AND SUPPORT

Francis and the entire Bwindi Children family feel supported by the BUCC board, sponsors and all other supporters. Some of our supporters such as Glenn, Dian, Deryl, Morgan, Ken and many more have been supporting Bwindi ECO children for over three years now.

Your financial contributions, advice and commitment mean a lot to us. You have truly empowered us to continue touching lives of Bwindi children.

Thank you!! Thank you!!

A merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2021.

In God I trust,  
Francis Byamukama.  
Managing Director BCU  
[www.childrenuganda.com](http://www.childrenuganda.com)

## TESTIMONY FROM AYEBARE P.7 CLASS

My name is Ayebare. I am 12 years old. I was born into a big family of 8 members and I am the seventh born. Before I was rescued from my village where I was stranded 2 years ago, I was living with my mother in a hut-like house which had only two rooms. One bedroom for my mother while the other room would serve as the living room, a dining room and the bedroom for me and my siblings at the same time. I, my three sisters and four brothers would share this room as a bedroom at night and would lie on a papyrus mat and cover ourselves with another papyrus mat. Every morning we would remove our beddings from the room and store them in our mother's bedroom leaving the other room to serve other purposes of dining and living room during day time.



We would have one meal a day which we always got at 3:00 PM every day. It would either be cassava with beans stew or sweet potatoes with no sauce at times. I and my four siblings had stopped schooling to give a chance for our two sisters to study because our mother could not afford to pay school fees for all of us. All the day I and my elder sister would fetch water from the well for families in the nearby town and we would be paid Ugx. 200 per Jerry can, which is an equivalent of USD \$0.05. In a day, I would carry 10 jerry cans of water walking a distance of 3 kilometers to and from per the well of carrying one jerry can. Life was really very difficult for me and I had started disliking myself. One day, I decided to abandon home and walked a distance of 40 kilometers from my home to Bwindi seeking employment. I looked for a job of working as a house girl in vain until I got an old woman who would accommodate me for some days but had no job for me. After 2 days staying with her, she asked me to walk with her and she led me to Francis. When we reached there, she entered the office with me and introduced me to Francis and then asked me to narrate a story about myself to him. I did as she asked. Francis hesitated accepting me and said I have heard but will have to first do an investigation from your home village leader and will present this to the board and teachers and will be getting back to you. I went back unhappy and started living with Madam Maudah, who fed me and provided me a fair shelter for some time.

After two weeks, I received good news from Francis that I have been accepted into their home. Now I am a very happy girl staying at Bwindi children's home and studying at Bwindi Junior School. I sleep well in a very beautiful dormitory donated to us by the Gulbas family; I eat 3 meals a day and receive a quality education. I have got a sponsor and friend Mr. Gerald Gallina from Australia who promises to support my education up to university level. Now I am assured of my education and my dream is become a doctor when I finish my studies. I hope to help my family and my community members when I get a job in future because I know there are many other children back in the communities who are living a desperate life like I used to do. Long live Bwindi Junior; long live our sponsors; long live the Gulbas family. Long live our supporters and long live our beloved director.

From Ayebare, proud student of Bwindi Junior school