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BINGWA

FIGHTING CORRUPTION BY BUILDING INTEGRITY IN THE CHILDREN OF AFRICA

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CHILD AFRICA:
25 YEARS
OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Child Africa
we make a difference



Jan-Tore Øvrevik has been sponsoring four children through Child Africa for a long time.

When did you start sponsoring a child through Child Africa and why?

In 2005, I was very lucky to get to know Child Africa through Julie and Rino Solberg, who had personally invested a lot of time and personal money in this charity organisation for years. What struck me at that time was their unique way of doing things compared to other similar organisations I knew about. I loved the fact that the money I gave went directly to my sponsor child and no one else could sponsor my child. Once I sponsored a child through Child Africa's website, the child would no longer be available for others.

I wanted to sponsor children who were in the same age group as my kids. That way, I would show my own children what others of the same age went through in life, and how we could make a difference for them by helping them get an education.

My first sponsor child, Promise Nahurira, was four years old when I started sponsoring her and she turned sixteen this year (2016). A few months later (in 2005), I saw the cutest three-year-old triplets on Child Africa's website and I just could not resist sponsoring them too. Since then, I have had the pleasure of following up on my four sponsor children for almost a decade with the knowledge that at least four individuals get the chance to attend school -something the rest of us take for granted.

What do you think your sponsorship means to the children you have sponsored and for you as a sponsor?



I had a period in my life where my personal finances were pretty tough. During that time, I had to see where I could save money. I had four sponsor children and it all adds up. It occurred to me that if I quit sponsoring these children to save some money, it would really change their lives for a lot worse than what it would cost me in-terms of sacrifices, so I continued sponsoring them. As I have my own kids, they need to know that they are safe and in good hands. That is what I have tried to give my sponsor children: a safe childhood and adolescence where they can join school and get their education, food and medical attention when needed through Child Africa. The messages I receive from my sponsor children are full of greatness, thankfulness and kindness. They look at you as a blessing in their lives. It makes me very humble and a lot more aware of not taking things for granted.

Have you seen how the money you send has been used for your children?

One way I keep myself updated is through www.childafrica.org. I also had the pleasure of visiting my sponsor children in Uganda in 2009 and 2015. The welcome I (and others) received

was absolutely out of this world and extremely emotional. The happiness these children show by having little or nothing makes you rethink your own values in life. I have visited the schools my sponsor children attend, their homes and even church. Their gratitude is overwhelming and I realize that every penny spent has changed someone's life. My sponsor children are able to get education, textbooks and materials they need at school, medical attention when needed and food at school – all because of my support. Their parents (who have little income and struggle to survive) can also have the peace of mind that their child is taken care of at least during school time. There is no doubt that the money sent for my sponsor children reaches them through Child Africa.

Would you recommend others to sponsor a child through Child Africa and why?

There is nothing more satisfying than helping others, but you need to prepare for a long-term commitment to sponsor a child through this organisation. This is not like other organisations where you have many sponsors for the same child (even if it may look like you are the only sponsor). If you quit your commitment, then the child will be without a sponsor and immediately be kicked out of school. That is really brutal. You will rip apart the child's security and their whole future may be turned upside down. Another sponsor may sponsor this child, but it may take months or years. So, if you do not feel like this is something you want to follow up for years, then my recommendation is not to start what you cannot finish.

For me to see updated images of my sponsor children online, read and send messages from time to time, see their school reports and progress and know about their family situation. This information is highly appreciated and valued by me as a sponsor. I have a close relationship with them and can see and understand more of what is going on in their lives. Each sponsor can get as much contact as they want; some just want to hear and see images from the child without replying. Others want more interaction and may even visit their sponsor child/children at Child Africa's schools, as I had the chance of doing.

Child Africa is not among the well-known and huge charity organisations in the world, but the money is going where it should go-to



your sponsor child. Child Africa is unique and distinct in many ways compared to other child charity organisations I am aware of. I would like to mention that their integration of hearing-impaired children and teaching of the sign language to all the children is one of a kind.

With all my heart, I recommend everyone to sponsor a child through Child Africa. Seeing my sponsor children blossom from childhood into bright young adults has made me very happy. My best wishes for Child Africa and all the amazing work they do.

If you feel the urge to help out a child in need, there are hundreds of children waiting for a sponsor at www.childafrica.org. Do better and feel better.