



“Kids of Africa is a place where a sense of happiness seems almost tangible”

A person who is well known and respected throughout Uganda

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1 A story about the importance of a happy childhood

“Kids of Africa is a place where a sense of happiness seems almost tangible,” I was recently told by a person who is well known and respected throughout Uganda. He

continued: “Kids of Africa has set a new benchmark for sustainable development work that is widely recognized in Uganda.” Positive impressions such as these are shared by the employees at Kids of Africa, as well as by visitors to the village. This may explain why none of our volunteers have ever cut short their stay and, instead, have often extended their time with us. Of course, Kids of Africa is not entirely without the occasional upset or argument. However, we probably all need to experience quarrels or sadness in order to appreciate true happiness. And when you visit Kids of Africa, you can't help but be overwhelmed by a sense of happiness, as my brother and I witnessed once again during our most recent visit there last weekend. It could be the constant laughter of children that is so contagious.





Or perhaps it is the pleasant atmosphere of industriousness that prevails in the village on a normal working day. Or it could simply be the sense that people are perfectly satisfied with their lot. These are all impressions that have been confirmed to me by longstanding employees such as our farmer Christopher or Jocelyne, one of the mothers, as well as by Shafi who takes care of the technical side of things in the village and often builds things with the children.





2 Eighteen ways to find happiness

I recently read a short story by François Lelord entitled "Hector's journeys or the search for happiness". In this wonderful tale, the psychiatrist Hector writes down a series of 'lessons' during his personal quest for happiness.

- Making comparisons can spoil your happiness.
- Happiness often comes when least expected.
- Many people see happiness only in their future.
- Many people think that happiness comes from having more power or more money.
- Sometimes happiness is not knowing the whole story.
- Happiness is a long walk in beautiful, unfamiliar mountains.
- It's a mistake to think that happiness is the goal.
- Happiness is knowing your family lacks for nothing.
- Happiness is doing a job you love.
- It's harder to be happy in a country run by bad people.
- Happiness is feeling useful to others.
- Happiness is to be loved for exactly who you are.
- Happiness comes when you feel truly alive.
- Happiness is knowing how to celebrate.
- Happiness is caring about the happiness of those you love.
- The sun and the sea make everybody happy.
- Happiness is a certain way of seeing things.
- Rivalry poisons happiness.



This automatically made me think of Kids of Africa and of the fact that we have been taking these lessons to heart ever since we founded the village – not just because they form part of an educational concept or a development strategy but because they reflect the values and behaviour of everyone involved in Kids of Africa. This is a way of life that has developed



naturally and become an integral part of who and what we are at Kids of Africa. This genuine spirit is something that has a lasting impression on all visitors who come to the village – whether intentionally or by chance.

3 Happiness often comes when least expected

I was reminded of this lesson several times last weekend. One example was when we visited the All Nations School – which has very friendly ties with Kids of Africa – on the last day before the long summer holidays. As soon as I got out of the car, I was met by a throng of excited children who had just been given their school reports. Each of them wanted to be the first to proudly show me their results. Practically all of the kids had managed to improve their work compared to the previous school term. This was the day on which our continuous, skilled teaching efforts both in and outside school were rewarded. Despite all their hard work, the children seemed astonished by how well they had done. As Hector said: happiness often comes when least expected.

The benefit of all this hard work was also reflected by how well the children performed by national standards. For the very first time, a few of the kids ranked among the top pupils in their age group for the whole of Uganda. There were also a few other surprising moments of happiness at Kids of Africa that day – both big and small – that I could share with you. For example, there was the large maize crop that we were able to harvest in a single day by all working together, and there were the ten small piglets that were born on the farm

just the day before. That's not to mention the many enthusiastic participants in our regular Children's Olympics that we held over the weekend.

But I don't just want to tell you about individual events. I also want to talk about my belief that most of us are, to some extent, the authors of our own happiness. I am convinced that we can spread more moments of happiness if we don't just think of ourselves but also consider others – particularly those who are less privileged. This applies in two respects at Kids of Africa.





On the one hand, the village was founded to help children in need. The families of carers and our village community want to support these kids and to help them develop the skills and motivation they will later need to take care of themselves and future generations in Uganda. On the other hand, Kids of Africa is also about looking beyond our own immediate surroundings to the world outside. Each one of us bears a degree of responsibility for the environment in which we live. This is why we are convinced that Kids of Africa needs to help drive sustainable socioeconomic and environmental development beyond the boundaries of the village. It is only by taking this type of integrated and far reaching approach that we will be able to successfully realize our primary objectives on a long-term basis.

On that note, I would like to take the opportunity to express my enormous thanks to our village directors, Dorte and Tage Budolfson. With their exemplary commitment and the support of many loyal employees and numerous volunteers, they have helped to ensure that Kids of Africa can now make an even greater and more sustainable contribution to the development of future generations in Uganda.

Best regards

Burkhard Varnholt

4 Kids of Africa on facebook

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