

WEEK TWO

A Day in the Life of Beatrice Biira of Uganda

When I was a child, I would wake before dawn. I'd sweep the yard while it was still dark inside the house. I'd bring my bedding outside to clean and dry it, but I would have no breakfast because it took too much time to gather wood, start a fire and cook.

Adults and older children walked about an hour each morning to our village garden where they grew food. They worked until noon. The younger children like me cared for community goats. We had to change their grazing area every two hours. After we received quality animals from Heifer Project International, and learned to carry fodder to them, this work became much easier.



Late morning was my worst time of day. I had to fetch my family's water from the stream. It was an hour's walk and I would carry a large can or pot on my head. I used banana leaves as a cushion. The walk there wasn't too bad, but the walk back – when the can was full – was uphill and it was always in the hottest part of the day. When I returned with the water, I had to gather firewood for our mid-day meal – plantain mixed with beans and banana leaves.

After lunch I'd go back for more water. This time, we would play a little in the stream. Then, I'd come home, bring the goats back from their grazing and bring my own bed into the house. The evenings were my favorite, when the workday was over and we'd play games – jump rope and dodge ball. We only had one candle in our house, so we didn't do much after dark. But sometimes, we would hear stories of the past, and I really liked that.

Now, because of the goat my family received from Heifer Project, a sponsor is sending me to high school in Kampala. I still get up before dawn, but my life has changed completely. I wear a uniform and I am in classes all day long. I work very hard at school, but the work is different. I work with my mind instead of my legs and my back. You get knowledge here from every corner.

But I cannot go home now because a civil war is going on. It is a dangerous journey. The rebels are hiding everywhere. You can't spend a day without hearing bullets. Sometime I feel like a refugee. I feel sad when I don't see my family. Maybe they think I am neglecting them, but I tell them I will come soon.

Education has a great impact on my life. Now I can dream. I plan to be a veterinarian for big animals. I want to start a high school that includes a working farm so student can understand how to produce food and income for themselves, and whole villages can prosper. I want to have only a small family so that I can work at home and also work at my profession. It is hard to care for a big family, even if you are rich.

Hold your books tight. The opportunity to go to school is a gift from God, so don't ignore the gift.

Thought for the Day

Sunday: In developing countries, one child in 10 dies before his or her fifth birthday. By comparison, in the United States one child in 165 die before turning five years old (UNICEF)

Monday: Almost 800 million people – about one-sixth of the population of the world's developing nations – are malnourished. 200 million of them are children (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)

Tuesday: An average six-year old girl in a developing country can expect to attend school for 7.7 years, compared with 9.3 years for a boy

Wednesday: Educated girls usually have smaller families when they grow up, and healthier pregnancies. A 10% increase in girls' primary enrollment can be expected to decrease infant mortality by 4.1 per 1,000 babies

Thursday: Seventy percent of the world's poor are female (UNICEF)

Friday: Often it takes just a few simple resources for impoverished people to be able to become self-sufficient. These resources include quality seeds, appropriate tools, and access to water. (OXFAM)

Saturday: Many hunger experts believe that ultimately the best way to reduce hunger is through education. Educated people are best able to break out of the cycle of poverty that causes hunger (UNICEF)

Getting Involved



Heifer animals (and training in their care) offer hungry families around the world a way to feed themselves and become self-reliant. Children receive nutritious milk or eggs; families earn income for school, health care and better housing; communities go beyond meeting immediate needs to fulfilling dreams. Farmers learn sustainable, environmentally sound agricultural techniques.



Heifer funds more than 80 Women in Livestock Development projects, which provide women with food and income producing animals, as well as training in leadership, community development and environmentally sound farming.

Give the gift of a goat or another animal.

To find out how

- ◆ log onto: www.heifer.org
- ◆ Call Heifer International at **1-800-422-0474**
- ◆ Or write: **Heifer International,
PO Box 8058,
Little Rock, AR 72203**