

Kelvin's Story

'My dream is to upgrade my certificate...and to send myself to school so I can become a civil engineer'

Kelvin Bwalya is a 21 year old builder from Kawama, Zambia. Kelvin supports his family of 11; two sisters, two brothers, his mother, three grandparents, his wife Elisabeth and 14 month old son London. They live in a three roomed house without electricity or toilet. Water is collected from a nearby communal water tap.

Kelvin is the only one in his family to have reached grade 12 in his education, but like many people in Zambia, he found it difficult to find paid work after school.

'Before I was doing nothing, until I joined the training of Build IT. That is when I learned how to build. I learnt to set out the building, make blocks and lay them, plastering, roofing, fixing door & window frames'

Kelvin was a building trainee at the Kawama Community School Project in 2009. At the end of the project he took his official trades test and passed as a Grade 7 brick layer and plasterer with certificate.

Since then he has been busy, working for two construction companies including five months on a new football stadium in Ndola. He has also secured his own small jobs tiling and improving stalls in the Kawama market. At the moment he has been hired by the contractor on another Build IT project.

Kelvin is now able to earn a modest but secure income and provide food and shelter for his family.

'It makes me most proud that my two young sisters go to the school I built – this is the most exciting thing'

Kelvin is one of 150 men and women trained by Build IT over the past three years in a country where unemployment is 50%.

In November, Kelvin was invited to share his experiences at a reception at Lancaster House sponsored by Edison Investment Research and Pelham Bell Pottinger. He had never been outside of Zambia – it was the trip of a lifetime. He spoke in front of almost 100 people about the changes in his life.

'Thank you very much , please continue with the same spirit, and may God bless you all for the things you are doing to help...myself, my country Zambia, my community Kawama, we are very thankful'

Build IT International is a UK registered charity, building schools, health clinics and housing primarily in Zambia, whilst training local people in building skills.

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