

PROMISE'S JOURNEY TO SUCCESS THROUGH THE COVID PANDEMIC.

Okello Promise Joshua got 11 aggregates in the previously concluded national Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) and he emerged as the best pupil in his school Luigi Giussani Pre-primary and Primary School (LGPPS). Not only was he unsurpassed but he is the first to get grade one in his school and they were very happy about it.



Joshua in front of their home

Promise is a fifteen-year-old boy staying in Banda B1 one of the areas where Meeting Point International (MPI) operates in. He lives in a family of seven members; he lives with both his parents. His mother is called Komagum Christine and she works as house maid where as his father Koma Lucky James does casual labour. Promise was enrolled for support in 2019 because his parents were planning to take him back to the village; they could not manage to pay school fees for him anymore. However, one of his neighbours was moved with his situation and introduced the family to MPI. Hearing his story, Rose (*MPI director*) decided to support him. With the support he got, he was able to study well without interruptions of being chased for defaulting school fees.

As anyone else, his life was also interrupted by the pandemic especially in regards to education. He stayed home for almost a year as schools were closed to reduce the spread of covid-19. *“When I heard that schools were closed, I felt like they were wasting my time,”* said Promise.

However, this didn't deter him from studying; he used all available methods to learn i.e., text books that his mother bought him, he also made use of the lessons that were being broadcasted on televisions and self-study materials that his school provided. When schools were opened for the candidates to prepare and sit for the national examinations, his teachers also put in a lot of efforts to make sure that all the students pass even with what was going on. *"They were caring about us, they didn't want us to fail, they gave us very good revision. There was a certain teacher called Teacher Mariam, the children were saying she is making us tired by giving us work all the time. For me, I was seeing that she wanted us to pass."* Promise said. However, it wasn't only his teachers' efforts that enabled him to succeed. *"Promise is very bright and focused on academics, he is very hard working and resilient. He had the belief that if he works hard, then he would make it."* Mariam one of his teachers commented about his traits which attributed to his good results. In addition to his efforts and those of his teachers, Promise was also glad with the method that his school uses. *"Luigi doesn't cane students like how it was at my former school, for me if you force me to learn, I don't do it."* His teachers further elaborated on this saying Promise is reserved, shy and a gentle boy who doesn't open up easily but when you build a relationship with him, he opens up. However, when he is in a hostile environment, he closes up which makes it hard for them to teach him. With all these factors, it enabled Promise to pass well.

When the results were released by the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB), Promise was not sure of his marks but he expected a first grade. With the help of his sister, he was able to check them via phone and he was very happy when he found out he got aggregate eleven, division One. He got distinction 2 in English, credit 3 in science, credit 3 in Social Studies and credit 3 in Mathematics. Joshua wishes to become a farmer, a job/ profession that most young people are not so interested in Uganda as they do it as a last resort; others refer to it as a job for villagers. However, despite what the other youth think about farming, Joshua is passionate about it. Luigi Giussani High School (LGHS) is one of the places that he will go through to lead him to his dream; he will join it when schools are open. The school teaches Agriculture and it is also involved in a project that skills the youth in it.

Promise's parents were very happy about his achievement at school. His mother Christine so much agrees with what the teachers say about him. Besides, she is also happy to belong to the MPI family that really loves and support her. She said before encountering MPI, she was living a life where everyone around her i.e., her family, husband and communities she encountered reduced her to the circumstances she was facing. Her family members left her to face life alone. At one point they said, *"we don't care whether you die, we shall burry you."* Her husband didn't also want her, he desired that they separated because he didn't feel like she was the right woman for him; she felt alone and without any value. She said amidst all these, she was only certain about the love of the Person making her and it is what kept her strong; the opinions of the others about her didn't matter because she was loved beyond everything else. She was even more happy when she met MPI because she felt at home; she was treated as a value.

Besides the love of MPI, LGPPS also showed great concern and love for Promise and the family. They visited him at home to find out how he was doing which she didn't see with any other school.

With what Christine has met, she feels comforted, loved and she now has a lot of hope in life. She is also happy that Promise will go to a school where they will see him with a lot of value which will even enable him perform very well.

We desire for Joshua to be happy and that he achieves his dream, we shall accompany him in his journey. *"I want to thank my sponsor (Familie Schneider) for having a kind heart, thank you very much."* Promise concluded.

We shall keep journeying with his family so as they can keep rediscovering themselves and living a happy life.

Story compiled by ***Adoch Mary Clare***

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