



## Compassion UK Celebrates Dads on Fathers' Day

Compassion often encounters two extremes of fatherhood. It's as if extreme poverty brings out both the best and the worst. In all cases, Compassion tries to meet the needs of the children whilst empowering parents to provide the best possible care for their children.

One brave, devoted father Compassion works with is John Bosco Kazibwe from Uganda. He has been the sole carer of his little daughter, Gloria Namirembe, since his wife left without a word. "I was very confused. Why did she abandon a young suckling child? How would I cope? I purposed to do my best to raise Gloria single-handedly, but I did not have money to buy her milk or medical help. Gloria was attacked by malaria fever because we used to sleep without mosquito nets. I was worried that very soon this child would die."

Then John and Gloria were discovered by Compassion workers looking for families to join their Child Survival Programme. John is the only male among 57 mothers in the project but he is not deterred. As well as receiving practical help in terms of food, bedding, toys and medicine, he has also benefitted from business start-up advice which has enabled him to begin a small pig farm.

He is also developing as Gloria's spiritual role model, leading worship at meetings and praying with Gloria every night before bed. He is absolutely devoted to his role as a father: "I wish to encourage fathers that bringing up a child is not a woman's role alone. The child belongs to the two parents and both parents should share the responsibilities of raising the children."

But many sponsored children don't have fathers like John. For example, Rugarama Ziade's father abandoned his mother while she was pregnant. Not long after, she was killed in the 1994 Rwandan genocide leaving Ziade all alone. Eventually, at 10 years old, Ziade met his father for the first time. "He bought me clothes once. He later died of HIV-related sicknesses, leaving behind a sick wife and two children, ages 10 and 7. They are my family today."

When Compassion resumed its work in Rwanda, Ziade was enrolled in a project and began a long development process. It culminated with him being chosen for the Leadership Development Program aimed at school leavers who excel spiritually and academically. Today, Ziade is in his third year at the School of Management and Finance pursuing a degree in Accounting.

Despite the bad example of fatherhood he'd known, Ziade wants to break the cycle. He uses his pocket money to pay his younger half siblings' school fees and to help his stepmother with rent. "My family includes my siblings that my father left behind. In LDP we learn about cherishing family. I shall love them, provide for them and take care of them as my very own. Like Christ chose me from many children, I want to show this love to others," Ziade shared. "I want to take care of my wife and children, contrary to my father. I want to do for them what I was given. I was never loved by my father but I want to love my family."

**For a full story and images, please contact Jemima Lewis: [JemimaL@compassionuk.org](mailto:JemimaL@compassionuk.org).**