

## Florinda Nguendalelie's Story

When artist John Keane met Florinda Nguendalelie, 14, and her brother Henoque, 10, they had been living in Betanea village for one month.

When the war reached their home town in Angola the Nguendalelie family fled to neighbouring Zambia. Tragically Florinda and Henoque's father was shot dead by soldiers as they were all trying to escape the country. The rest of the family had to carry on and ended up living in tents in a refugee camp in Zambia for two years.

When they heard that the war was over the Nguendalelies decided to return to Angola.



Florinda (in white) playing a clapping game with a friend

*"The journey was terrible because we had to wake up early in the morning and walk until midday when the sun became so strong we had to stop under the shadow of a tree," explains Florinda.*

*"Around 2pm we would continue walking until night. The hardest thing was that we had no food, so we had to keep walking without eating anything."*

It took the family two months to reach Betanea village. When they arrived the villagers welcomed them and gave them food to eat, even though they didn't have much themselves.

Betanea village was formed in 2004 and most of the people in the village have either come back from Zambia are refugees, or internally displaced people (people who are forced to move from their own homes but remain within the same country.)



Henoque

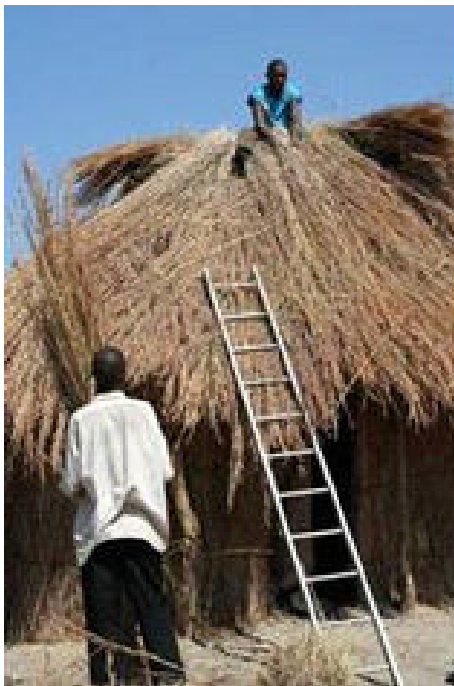
## Children in Conflict

*“The people here are very welcoming but they are also facing a lot of problems. They have no way to support us,” says Anita, Florinda’s mother. “As soon as we arrived the community got together and built us this house as it was very cold. It’s not quite finished yet, we need to put some mud in the walls.”*

Florinda is really impressed with her new home.

*“This is my first ever house and I’m so happy with it. During the war we would build a shelter then the following day we would have to leave.”*

IECA, a charity supported by Christian Aid, has just given Anita and her family a homestarter kit. This includes a bucket, seeds, blankets and knives. The family didn’t have any possessions before this, not even a blanket.



Villagers helping to build Florinda's new home

*“I have no way to get back to my home town of Huambo, even though that’s why we came back from Zambia,” says Anita. “I’ve decided*

## Children in Conflict

*we'll stay here because my sister is in this village, although when we arrived there had been a lot of rain so all the crops were damaged and my sister's family have nothing to feed us."*

*"My hope is that as soon as it starts raining and people start working on their crops I will have a job. For now I have to rely on my younger sister for food for my family. One day I hope I will be able to grow my own crops and then I will have a good harvest and I will improve the life of my children. They will be able to go to school, have food and clothes," she adds.*

At the moment Florinda and Henoque aren't able to go to school because their mum can't afford to buy any school materials.

*"I'm hoping that I will be able to go to school next year because I have never been before," smiles Florinda.*

John Keane responded to this story with this painting, Bridge.



Bridge 192 x 117, oil and inkjet transfer on jute.  
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