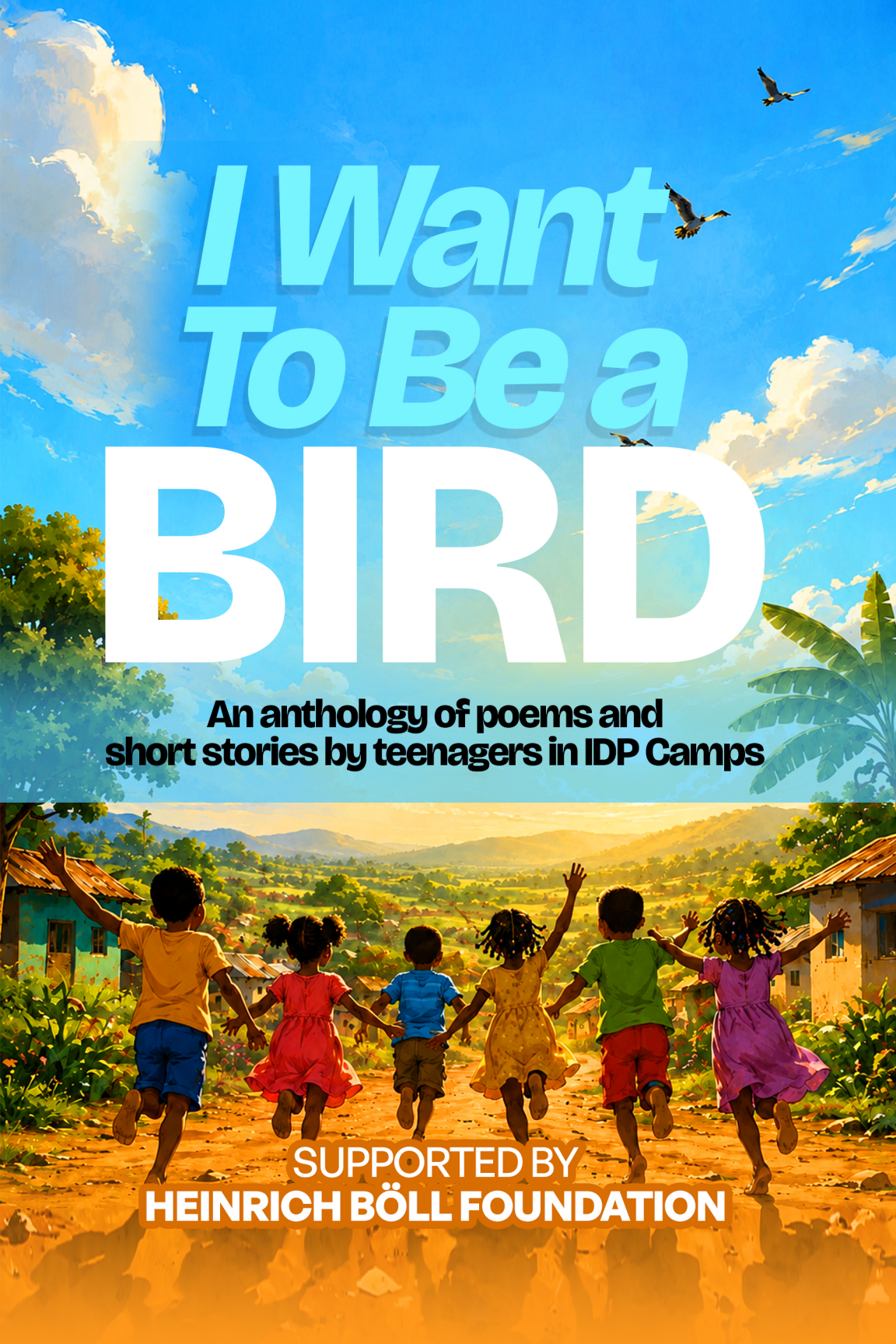
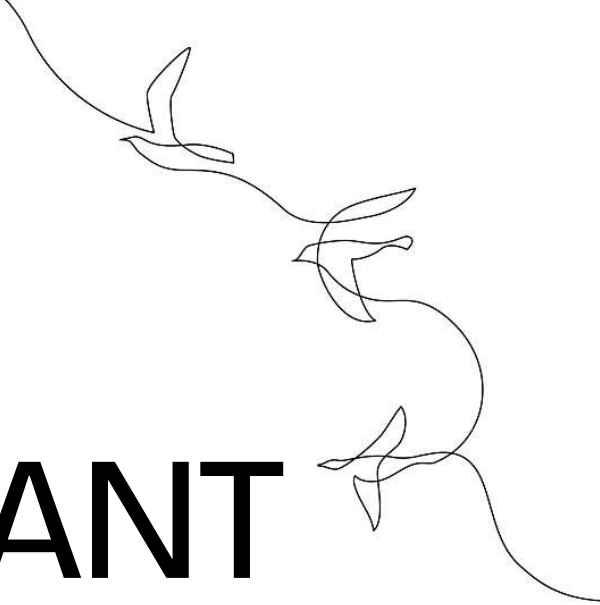




I Want To Be a **BIRD**

**An anthology of poems and
short stories by teenagers in IDP Camps**

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 **HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG**
ABUJA
Nigeria



I Want To Be a Bird

(An anthology of poems and short stories by teenagers in IDP Camps)

Edited by:

Odu Ode

Onyila Aloba



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I WANT TO BE A BIRD

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stories by teenagers in IDP Camps)

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What Birds We'd All Want To Be

I want to be a bird. I want to flap my wings and fly so high above the rainbow. I want to sing my song and dance in the clouds without any cares in the world. The humans say: the sky is the limit, but I say the sky is my playground. On this ground, there is more than enough space for everyone to play freely.

Ornithologists, the scientists who study birds, generally agree that there are roughly 11,000 living species of birds worldwide, each with their unique features.

Not all birds can fly, but all birds have wings. When I hear- bird, I think flight. I imagine the sky. I see rising above limitations and breaking boundaries. I envision endless possibilities.

That's what the Creative Expressions, Awareness, Skill Acquisition and Emotional Healing (CASE) Project is about. Equipping teenagers who are affected by conflict and currently living in IDP camps with lifelong skills to thrive in the face of the uncertainty of life. Conflict has robbed teenagers of their ability to dream big. Migrating from their good and comfortable homes with little or nothing tangible has reduced their resources and shaped their identity. Creative Expressions, Awareness, Skill Acquisition and Emotional Healing (CASE) Project is using creative expressions and skills acquisition for emotional healing and awareness of mental health and overall wellbeing.

Birds move a lot for different reasons, but wherever they find themselves, they still flap their wings. These teenagers have had to migrate from their homes under sad conditions, but the CASE Project is about reminding them that they can still soar and break limitations even in the IDP Camp. This anthology is a representation of different teenage voices from Kuchingoro and Guruku IDP camps in Abuja and Nasarawa State, respectively. They are telling their story of resilience, courage, strength and hope for a future where they soar above their current situations and limitations. As you flip through the pages and read every word, I want you to ask yourself: how can I give flight and speed to the ‘little’ bird behind this? This is an invitation to join the CASE project to expand the reach and give more birds the needed push to fly (soar).

Onyila Aloba & Odu Ode

*Editors of the Anthology and Curators
of The Case Project*

Foreword

Heinrich Böll wrote that literature's task is to give a voice to those history has tried to render voiceless - not to speak for them, but to make the conditions under which they might speak for themselves possible. That conviction is not merely a literary principle. It is a political one, and it sits at the heart of everything the Heinrich Böll Foundation (hbs) does.

At hbs, we believe that a just and democratic society is only possible when everyone in it can be heard - including, and perhaps especially, those whom circumstances have pushed to the margins. Young people living in displacement are too often spoken about rather than spoken with. Their experiences are cited in policy documents; their needs are debated in conference rooms. What is far less common is the simple act of handing them a pen and making space for what they have to say.

This anthology is the result of exactly that act. The Creative Expressions, Awareness, Skill Acquisition and Emotional Healing (CASE) Project, conceived and carried forward by Nigeria Green Academy Fellows, Usman Odu Ode and Faith Onyila Aloba, brings together the voices of teenagers from the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps of New Kuchingoro in Abuja and Guruku in Nasarawa State. It proceeds from a premise that hbs fully shares: that the creative dignity and mental wellbeing of a displaced young person are not secondary concerns, but foundational ones - inseparable from any genuine understanding of recovery and resilience.

The CASE Project emerged from the Nigeria Green Academy, a format established by the hbs office Nigeria in 2022 to equip a new generation with the knowledge, networks, and critical thinking needed to address Nigeria's most pressing challenges. This anthology is one concrete expression of that investment. It is modest in scale, but significant in what it demonstrates.

We are proud to have supported this work. We commend it to every reader as evidence that when young people are given the conditions to raise their voices, they do - with clarity, with courage, and with a great deal to teach the rest of us.

Sophie Knebel

Country Director, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Abuja,

August 2026

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PROSE



Baby Zion

By: Peace Ibrahim

A long time ago, there lived a little baby girl called Baby Zion. She was a happy, beautiful baby. She had no teeth but was always smiling. Her father's name was Mr Peter, and her mother's name was Mrs Peter. Mrs Peter was a teacher at Catch Them Young Academy. She loved her pupils, flogged less and taught more. Pupils and parents loved her too. She always came to school early with her little baby. Baby Zion. Mrs Peter always went to school early. She would wake up very early, pray for her family, then do the house chores, and drive to school at 7:30 am to get ready for the day.

She loved conducting the school morning assembly because she was a woman of God. Mrs Peter would always come up with new songs and rhymes. It was the simplest way to teach the class and the whole nursery. When Baby Zion began to attend school, Mrs Peter told her that she would like her to be the best. Zion's father bought shoes, eye glasses, and clothes for her good effort. During the holidays, Baby Zion went to Enugu to spend her holiday. Enugu is a cool place where one can enjoy life. Baby Zion enjoyed her stay in

Enugu with her aunty. She was registered for the royalty lards contest. The competition was for lands from one to eight years. Five hundred Naira was the cash prize for the winner. Baby Zion and co-kids were there for the contest. Baby Zion was presented on the stage to answer the following question. “What is your name?” “My name is little Baby Zion Peter.” She was smart and answered all her questions correctly while others failed. She was later crowned.

One day, Mrs Peter came with a new song that captivated her pupils as she sang Elephant, Elephant, are you big? Oh yes, oh yes, I am biggy, biggy. I am very tall. The pupils enjoyed the poem and begged Mrs Peter to come again with another poem next time.

At school, Baby Zion’s behaviour was encouraging. She was a quiet learner, very smart in all her activities. Again, she never cried in class like others do. She behaved wisely. One day, Miss Flora was teaching her class two-letter words. As she wrote two-letter words on the blackboard, she then taught her pupils, saying two-letter words are: i – ning, b – e be, i – t it, dodo, and so on. Baby Zion repeated everything their teacher said. Miss Flora turned and said, give her a sound clap. Her class pupils clapped for Baby Zion. At the end of the first term, Baby Zion took first place in her Royalty Best kid for the year. What a happy baby like Baby Zion!

The Wicked Step-Mother

By: Talatu Simon

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Amara. She lived in a remote village. She was hardworking, brilliant, and intelligent, and she was doing well at school. After her mother's death, she stopped attending school.

When her father, Emeka, married another woman, Chidinma, with her two children, Amara began to suffer because her mother was no longer alive. Amara was a hardworking girl. She was the one doing all the chores in the house, while the stepmother's children were laughing at her and making her suffer.

One day, Rey announced that the prince would choose a bride in the village. Amara's stepmother told her she would not go to the King's palace because she was a dirty girl and had no clothes to wear. Amara's stepmother told Amara to iron all her children's clothes so they could go to the dance, hoping the prince would choose the bride. But they took Amara from that village to the neighbouring village. She went to school and found someone who would help her. Amara studied very hard and forgot about the prince who wanted to choose a bride.

Mono's Life

By: Favour Sephen

Once upon a time, there was a village called Laman Kara, where many families and friends lived happily together. There was a beautiful couple, Mrs Evans and Mr Zuda. They lived with their children, Mono and Tada. On the other hand, Tada did nothing. She was so pampered by her parents, but she was intelligent. Mono worked hard and helped his parents with school fees and other expenses. One day, Mono went to school. After school, he came back and did some house chores, while Tada, on the other hand, did nothing in the house except play.

Mono said to her, “Can you just try to do something, even though you are not good at it?” So, she tried her best and did it.

One day, Bandit entered their village. They killed many people, and many lost their fathers, mothers, sisters, and other loved ones. Mono and Tada lost their parents in the incident, so they had nowhere to go and nothing left. Mono told his sister to be strong for him and to have faith in God, that no matter how hard it is, there is a solution to the problem. They set out on a journey and eventually reached a

place called Yola, where he lived with his sister. They worked hard to make sure they were okay, but life was not easy for them, so he had to work harder than he had thought to solve their problem.

So, Mono started a business selling bananas and groundnuts. He earned money and saved some for his sister's school fees. His sister started a new school in Yola. The school is called Jopu International School. Tada started going to school. When she arrived, she saw many things, but she remembered what her brother told her to always concentrate on her studies and be attentive in class. So, Tada worked hard to make her brother proud of her. Tada did her assignments and classwork on time before she did her house chores.

Tada was so intelligent that the teachers and her classmates liked her. Tada had a friend named Sumto. Sumto was kind and caring towards Tada, but there was a girl, Emthe, who was very mean and rough towards Tada. Tada always avoided trouble with Emthe.

One faithful day, their English teacher told them to prepare for their upcoming competition. Tada was so happy when she heard this. She told her friend to study hard so they would win the competition and change their lives, hers and her brother's. Tada told herself that, to win the competition, she had to study hard, so she decided to create a timetable for the competition. She was surprised when she was chosen to represent the school at the competition.

After school, Tada was happy that she was going to make it. When she reached home, she explained everything to her brother. Her brother was so happy about it. He encouraged her to study and work hard for the competition.

The day came. She prepared herself, and her brother prayed for her success. The competition began with King's College. Before Japu

International School, King's College presented their own, and it was time for Japu International School. Tada stood up with hope and confidence and began to present her own school. As Tada finished the presentation, everybody clapped for her wonderful speech. As the judges stood up to announce the winner, everybody fell silent to hear the winner.

The judges announced that Tada was the champion of this competition, and all her classmates were so happy for her. Her teachers were very proud of Tada and her classmates. The competition awarded her a sum of 7 million. When Tada heard this, she shed tears of joy. Her brother was so happy and proud of Tada.

Now Tada said to herself that the suffering had come to an end and that our life would be better. Tada finished secondary school and planned to go to university. Mono said that God had finally done it.

The Three Best Friends Without Unity

By: Maryam Gadir

Long ago, three cows lived in a forest. They were the closest of friends and were always together. They never separated. They ate and slept together. These were their colours: The first cow was white, the second was black, and the third was reddish brown.

There was a lion living beside the forest, and it was reddish-brown too. It tried to eat the cows one after the other, but it couldn't because they were always together. Every day the lion stayed beside the forest, waiting for the cows to separate, but they were always together. Seeing that they would not separate, the lion decided to be their friend. One evening, the cows were playing and laughing together, and the lion came and said to them, "Please, can we be friends?" The two cows refused, but the reddish-brown cow said, "Why not? Let us accept him as our friend."

The two cows said they couldn't accept the lion as their friend. The reddish-brown cow told the lion, "Sir, you are welcome." The two cows tried their best to stop the reddish-brown cow, but she refused

to listen to them, so they separated from her, and the reddish-brown cow now followed the lion.

The lion said to the cow, "You know my colour. Black is the opposite of white, so let's call the black cow to join us so the white cow will be alone, because our colour is also black." After that, the black cow left the white cow alone. The lion said to them, "It is better that I eat the white cow, so that in this forest there will be only the three of us." The two agreed with what the lion said, and the lion ate the white cow.

After a few days, the lion was hungry, so the lion said to the reddish-brown cow, "You know, you are my colour. What if you joined reddish-brown and black? I think it would be better if I ate the black cow, so in this forest it would be only me and you." The reddish-brown cow agreed and left the black cow alone. The lion ate the black cow too.

After a few days, the lion was very hungry, so the lion called out to the reddish-brown cow, "Where are you?" The cow replied, "Here I am." The lion shouted, "Get ready. Today is your turn for me to eat." The cow said, trembling, "Sir, what has happened? Why do you want to eat your colour and your best friend? I did everything you said, and I also obeyed your words, but why will you eat me?"

The lion shouted at the cow, saying it was none of his business, but he would also eat her, as he had eaten her two friends, the black and white cows. So, the cow began to beg, but the lion refused. The cow said, "Okay, let me cry out three times before you eat me." The lion said, "Be quick."

The cow said, crying, "I was eaten the very day the white cow was eaten. I was eaten the very day the black cow was eaten. I was eaten the very day the reddish-brown cow was eaten by its best friends."

As the cow finished crying, the lion rushed towards it and ate the cow. The lion said to itself, “I have finished my job. Now it is time to go to another forest.”

The Jealous Friend About a 300 Gold

By: Manasa Bitrus

Once upon a time, there was a jealous friend who was not happy about receiving 300 gold. For a good 3 days, they lived in the village of Tunaku.

Her friend's name was Mercy, and the jealous friend was Joy. Before they became friends at a school called Grace of God, they were in SS2. All of them had a great best friend, but Joy was jealous of hers. So, Mercy's best friend was a rich man. It was the month of March, and Mercy was trying her number, but she did not answer.

As the day went on, Joy and her best friend, Daniel, finished celebrating the birthday, but Mercy was so angry because it had not been announced to her. The father was so confused because he saw that his daughter was not eating. He was surprised, so he called her into the sitting room and advised her to stop complaining about her arrogant friend, Joy. But Mercy was crying over everything her lovely dad had told her. Her father's name was Jolowanu, and her mother worked at an Efiye Jamula Hotel, selling food and drinks. Her mother's name was Jennifer.

On the day of her birthday month, her best friend, Moses, came. He brought her 300 gold in a jacket. Mercy was very happy to receive his gift, and she stayed happy throughout the day.

But what Daniel gave Joy was an iPhone 14 Pro and N10,000000. Joy's parents, Faith & John, were unhappy about the 300 gold that Moses gave to Mercy, his best friend. This was all about being jealous of a friend. But the people of Tunaku village were happy for Mercy and her family, and for Moses. Then, one year later, Moses's family, Mrs/Miss Tukuku and Joycine, were thinking of marrying their son to Mercy, and they were excited. They agreed they would get married.

But Joy and her family were so angry and jealous. About three years later, Joy married her best friend, Daniel. In her, there was no peace and patience.

Mercy and Moses finally got married. They had two children, Faith and Christopher. Faith was 5 years old, and Christopher was 1 year old. Over the years that Joy and Daniel were married, they had only two children, whereas Mercy and Moses had three more, making a total of five children. That is the end of the story.

Bridget and the Ijaw Community

By: Stephen Marvelous

Once upon a time, there was a village called Kura. Kura was a very peaceful village. There was a lady called Bridget. Her mother's name was Sango, and Bridget had two friends, Favour and Beler. They lived peacefully in their village. Bridget helped her mother in the shop, and her two friends came to help her go out and call for customers. After they finished selling their goods, they returned to the shop.

"Thank you, my children. Let me go and get something for you guys," said Sango.

"Okay, Mama," said Bridget and her friends.

As the mother left, they were happy and joking with each other. When Sango came back and bought a meat pie and Hollandia yoghurt, they ate and left for home. When Bridget and her mother reached the house, they were happy because they had come back early, so they prepared what to eat. After they slept the next day, Bridget went to the shop. When Bridget came to the shop, she met her mother hurrying out.

Her mother said. “I have an emergency call. Let me go. My daughter, be careful. Please give the correct change, okay?”

“Yes, Mama, I will do that,” said Bridget.

After the mother left, two women came to their shop. “Where is your mother?” asked one of the women.

“She is not around,” said Bridget.

“We heard that you and your mother are selling original goods,” the woman said.

“Yes, ma,” Bridget replied.

After they looked around and saw that nobody was watching them, they kidnapped Bridget and took her to a bush. They handed her over to the evil boys. They gave the two women money, and the women left. They asked her, “Did you people have money?”

“No, Sir,” Bridget replied. She started shouting, “Take me home, please. Don’t kill me. Take me home. Don’t kill me.”

The evil boys asked, “Where is your home?”

“It is where I live. Home is everything to me. Take me home, pls,” Bridget begged.

“We will not take you home. Take her to the Shrine.”

When her mother returned to the shop, she found it open, with no one inside. She shouted, “Bridget, Bridget, Bridget, where is this girl?” No one answered. She asked the owners of the nearby shops whether they had seen her daughter.

“No, madam, I did not see her.”

She passed through the area, asking for her daughter. Everyone said no. She came back, closed the shop, and went home. She didn’t

see her Bridget, and she also asked her neighbours at home. People were entering their houses and going to sleep, so no one had any idea. She returned home and kept thinking about her daughter throughout the night.

When they took Bridget to the Shrine, she began to pray, and they all fell to the ground, losing themselves in the thing they had tired her. She started running and headed out to another village called Ijaw. She met people there and asked them, “Can you please take me home?” Because people were living in the bush, with nothing like a house, they asked again, “What did you say?” She answered, “Can you please take me home?” As she cried, all the people in the community gathered. She told them what had happened, and they pitied her. Some brought water, food and fruit for her to eat.

They all sat down, and she started telling them stories about where she had lived before they kidnapped her. She told them what home was like and how people lived in the community. They enjoyed the story. That night, she kept telling stories. The next day, she gave them some advice and said, “Can we build some houses so that we can live inside and stop staying under the trees?” They were surprised.

“How can this small girl, a 10-year-old, want to build a house?” said the people.

She answered, “Let's try.” So they started cutting trees and began building. They built the houses with clay blocks and roofed them with long grass and sticks. They built many houses and started living inside. She taught them how to cook good food and many other things.

When mummy Bridget was on the road, she met Bridget's friends. “Good morning, Mama,” her friends greeted her.

“Good morning, my daughters. Have you seen Bridget?”

“No, Mama. We want to go and see her now.”

“She is not at home. Since yesterday.”

They shouted Jesus. They all continued to look for her.

One day, the elders of the Ijaw community met. They discussed Bridget and said this girl had done many wonderful things in the community. Can't you see? We should find her home. The other elders agreed. They met Bridget and told her what they had discussed.

“You have done so many things for us in the community, so we want to return good for good.”

Bridget was happy. The next day, they set out on the journey. They passed through the bush, and many things attacked them, but they overcame them until they reached Kura village. When the mother saw her daughter, she ran towards her. They hugged and began to cry. “Where have you been? I have been looking for you.”

When they reached Bridget's home, they told the mother everything Bridget had gone through and what she did for them. The people said to Bridget, “We are proud of you. It is time we return.”

“It was already night. Sleep here. You can leave in the morning.” They agreed. The next morning, they set out and returned to where they were living. Bridget and her mother went to the shop. After some years, Bridget visited the Ijaw village. They gathered some money from the business. She built a road, connected electricity, and deepened boreholes. They packed out from Kura to Ijaw. She started selling goods and taught them how to farm and secure their own resources. They lived in peace in the community, with food everywhere. Bridget and her mother became elders in the community.

Kobri

By: Anonymous (Gurku IDP Camp)

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there was a man called Kobri in a village called Yazza in Marghi land. Kobri was a hardworking man. He was a farmer with three wives, and they were all united. They loved each other as a family. He was always proud of his family. But none of his wives gave birth, and he was still thankful to God for everything.

One day, his last wife, Amarya, told him she was pregnant. He was very happy, as it was the best news he had ever received, and he organised a celebration. After 9 months, she gave birth to a baby boy. The baby was named Watsuda (What is my problem). He was very happy with that, because it was the only thing he had been praying for. After some years, Watsuda grew up with his family. His father taught him to be a hardworking man and a great farmer. Watsuda became a hardworking man and cared for the people of the village.

One day, on his way back from the market called Gullala, he met a man named IJOUWA (God is hiding). Ijouwa was blessed and told Watsuda that he had always seen how Watsuda behaved and wanted

him to marry his beautiful daughter, WADI (Happy). After some time, everything was prepared for the wedding. Watsuda married Wadi, and they lived as a very happy family.

After some years, Wadi couldn't have children. She kept crying and told him to go and marry another wife. But he refused because of his love for her. After 19 years, God answered their prayer and gave them a baby boy, whom they named Walliya (I found a child). He grew up with his family and became a businessman, going from market to market.

One day, while at his business, he saw a lady called Papka (the beautiful). He married her as his first wife. He looked back and saw that his grandfather had one son and that his father also had one.

Tortoise and the Birds' Feast

By: Emthe Musa

Once upon a time, in an animal kingdom, the birds wanted to hold a feast in the sky. Tortoise, a greedy animal, heard about it and wanted to be there too. The tortoise could not fly because he had no wings.

Tortoise thought about how to reach the sky. He finally decided to go to every bird to borrow a feather. All the birds wondered what the tortoise would use the feathers for. A day before the feast, he stuck the feathers to his body with gum and flew up to the sky. He saw all the food set out on the table for the feast. As the tortoise could no longer control himself on seeing the set table, he ate all the assorted foods and drank palm wine till he was full, then slept off. Tortoise was still sleeping when the birds came for the feast the following day. They were surprised to see Tortoise sleeping. They also saw that he had eaten their food and finished the drinks.

In anger, two of the birds, Sparreille and the eagle, led the others to pluck his feathers. Later, when the tortoise woke up, he found that all his feathers were gone. The tortoise started begging the birds

to carry him, because he could no longer fly. After much pleading, Vulture agreed to carry the tortoise home. On the way, Vulture complained that the tortoise was too heavy for her to carry, so she dropped him on a tree branch and asked him to find his way home. Unfortunately, the branch of the tree on which Vulture dropped the tortoise was too weak to support the tortoise's shell. The branch broke, and the tortoise fell. As he fell, his shell was broken into pieces as a result of the crash, and this is why the tortoise's shell remains rough to this day. Tortoise with a broken shell?

The Poor Man and His Family

By: Grace Yusuf

Once upon a time, there was a man called Abungani and his lovely wife, Tina. God blessed them with four children, Faith, March, Obadiah and James.

They lived in a village called Leho rigiya. He was a farmer and always worked hard to support his family. He farmed maize, groundnuts, beans and cassava. He wanted his children to be educated, but there was no school where they lived. He decided to take them to the nearest village, Grandarma, to study. He advised them not to follow bad friends or take anything that did not belong to them, especially the lady must not follow men. He always said that nowadays men just dislike you, but pretend to like you, and leave you, so be careful.

Gradually, they finished their secondary school, made their parents proud, and were all very happy. After that, he wanted to take them to the next level, but he did not have enough money to take them all. He decided that his daughter, Faith, should become a doctor, and Obadia would become an engineer. He would come back very

proudly. Obadia went to look for a job. Later, Obadia came back and took his parents and his sister/brother to the UK, and Faith worked in a big hospital in Abuja.

Tortoise's Story

By: Evelyn Amos

One day, the tortoise was invited by his in-laws to a party. He needed to take a lot of money with him, as he had to spend it to honour them at the party. But he had no money, as he had never worked hard. So, he decided to borrow money from some of his friends.

First, he went to the Fox. He said, "Please, my friend, Mr Fox, could you lend me some money? I need to give my father-in-law a lot of money. Would you kindly give me a thousand naira?"

The fox had never tried the tortoise; they had always known the tortoise to be a lazy fellow. So, he refused to help. He said, "Oh, hmm, sorry. I wish I could help, maybe some time."

The tortoise left for the house of Mr Hare. When he met Mr Hare, he said, "My friends, Mr Hare, I need your help. I need a lot of money for my in-law's party. Could you kindly lend me a thousand naira? I will return it within a month." Mr Hare didn't have that much, so he said, "I am sorry. I can't help now. Try another of your many friends." So, Mr Tortoise left, and nobody gave him the money because he was such a very lazy man.

David's Tale

By: Patience Shawulu

Once upon a time, there was a boy called David. He was a smart boy in the village. His mother and siblings were good, and his father was Iduonk. He was a small vessel, and his teacher loved him. He loved cooking rice, yam and cocoyam, etc.

He was good at reading his book in class, at home, and in the market. His family own a stall called Bake and laveBake.

The Sun and the Water

By: Jethro Musa

A long time ago, the sun and the water were very close friends, so every time the sun visited the water, the water did not return his visit. One day, the sun told his wife, the moon, that he always visited his friend, the water, but the water did not return his visits. He told her he would ask his friend why he didn't return the visit.

**

When he asked his friend, water told him that he and his family were very plentiful, so if he wanted him to return his visit, he had to build a very big house. Then the sun told him that he would build a large house. The sun told his wife what his friend had said, and they built a large house. Then, when the sun told his friend that he had already built the house, the friend was satisfied.

**

The water started to flush in. The water asked the sun if he could bring in more of his family members. The sun told him to bring

more of his family members in. The house was filled with water. He and his wife went out of the house and sat on the road, but the house kept filling. It did not stop until the house was full, and the sun, with his wife, went up to the sky. That is why the sun and the moon are in the sky.

The Result of Disobedience

By: Favour Irmiya Yusuf

1

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Joy. She was very disobedient. One day, her mother told her not to follow her friend to the river. Her mother begged and begged, but she refused. She said, “Why would my mother tell me what to do?” Then her friend came and said, “My friend, come, let us go to the river.” They went to the river, and Joy was swept away. They could not see her again. They came out of the river very fast, went to Joy's house, and told Joy's Mum. She cried and cried.

2

One day, when the orphan was about thirteen years old, another Calamity befell her. The orphan had a natural beauty that no treatment, under-nourishment, or old and tattered clothes could hide. The poor, innocent orphan did not know that Auntie Cynthia's husband had started eyeing her that day. Auntie Cynthia had left for her office while her husband had gone to the market and the children had left

for school. Auntie Cynthia's husband had suddenly come back from the market at about 10:00 am. In her innocence, the orphan thought that man must have come back for something he had left in the house. She did not know, not even in the least, that the devil had sent him to come and add to her misery by causing her discomfort she had never known.

Tale of Mr and Mrs Tortoise

By: Dauda Hussaina

Once upon a time, there lived a family called Mr and Mrs Tortoise. He was very lazy and greedy. His wife was very hardworking and content. She had a small poultry farm where she kept fowls, and she sold many items of her choice. She had confidence in what she was doing and was content with what she had, but her husband was so lazy and greedy. He had friends, a cat, a dog, and a lion. The cat was very hardworking. He had a plot of land and a garden. He was a farmer, and the dog had many properties, while the lion was the king of the animals.

Tortoise had a life of stealing. He was a thief who stole many things and even sold his friend's property. Because of his laziness, he was jealous of his wife's poultry farm. Every morning, he asked his wife to sell all her fowls, but as a wise woman, she refused. Many people in the town hated him because of his laziness. His friend, the cat, wanted to help him and said to him, "Tortoise, my friend, I have many gardens. As your friend, I will give you one. Use it for your proper consumption."

“Can I be able to do this work?” Tortoise replied. Tortoise said it was too hard for him to do farm work, and he normally said he was sick when he was asked to do work. So, as the lazy person he was, he was always jealous of his wife. He asked his wife to cook 2 fowls for him, but she said no. “You have to buy them before I will cook them for you.” Because of his laziness, he pretended to be sick one day. His wife was so worried about his illness that she asked them to go to the hospital, but he said no. Not knowing that the tortoise had made a plan to become a native doctor, he told his wife, “Please, I want to go to the native doctor.” She said, “Alright, I will go there with you,” but he said no; he could go alone. So, when the wife left for her shop, he also left for the shrine. When she returned, he ran into the room and pretended to be sick, shivering when he saw his wife. His wife was worried and said, “Please, can we go to the native doctor tomorrow morning?” He answered, “Yes.”

The tortoise woke up around 4 a.m. and then went to the shrine. He covered himself with a black-and-red rag, powdered his face, and began pretending to be a native doctor. His wife didn't know it was him and went there in search of medicine, but he said to her, “Madam, the only thing that will heal your husband is to kill two fowl, prepare them deliciously, serve them on a table with a cool juice, and give them to him every blessed day. He will be fine, okay!”

“Alright, I will do as you said.”

He began to laugh immediately after she left. He quickly changed and then headed straight home. As he arrived home, he lay down on the bed. When his wife saw him, she said, “Don't worry, you will be fine, okay!” She said the native doctor had told her to kill some fowls and prepare a delicious meal with a cool juice, and that he would be fine when she did that, not knowing that he was the one telling her all that.

Not a Story

By: Kwada Daniel

From the beginning, it was clear that the driver enjoyed driving fast. He did not obey any road signs. Wumi soon felt unsafe and began shouting again. “Driver, please reduce your speed. Our lives might be in danger.”

The driver shouted back, “Shut up! Are you the only one on the bus?”

Unfortunately, the other passengers said nothing, so the driver continued speeding. Suddenly, one of the tyres burst. The driver lost control, and the bus ran into the bush. Luckily, a big tree stopped it from falling into a big pit. The bus was damaged, and only a few people had minor injuries. Among them was the driver himself, who had a deep cut in his foot.

Wumi had no injuries at all. When everybody had climbed down, Wumi spoke out again. “I had warned him not to drive too fast. If he had listened, this would not have happened. When I spoke, nobody joined me. If only others had joined me, this would not have happened.”

Daniel, The Great Hunter

By: Timothy Gideon

Once upon a time, there was a boy named Daniel. Daniel was a strong man. Though he was tall and handsome, he was not lazy, as some men who happen to be handsome usually become lazy because they do not want to get dirty if they engage in serious work.

As a brave hunter, Daniel usually killed different types of wild animals. One's feat would one day attract favour or recognition. This was evident in Daniel's life, as the killing of a lion one day attracted serious recognition from both the villagers and the king.

When the King saw Daniel, he was amazed, for Daniel was a giant. The King looked at him as if he had just seen a ghost. Daniel bowed in respect and greeted the King.

"Good day, my King. May you live long," Daniel greeted. "Good day, my son. You are welcome. You may have a seat," the King replied. Daniel sat down. He looked around the living room. Pictures lined the walls.

The King shook his hand and hailed him for his bravery. The King sent one of his servants to serve him with Kola-nut. Later, they offered him food and drinks. Daniel ate and drank to his satisfaction.

Daniel and His Friends in Serion School

By: Hauwa Yakubu

Once upon a time, there was a boy called Daniel. One day, his friend David told him, “Hi, Daniel, you are studying very hard. Why not take some time off? The examinations are a long way off.”

“We were talking in class, so I would refresh my memory,” Daniel replied without looking up from the book he was reading.

David frowned. “You are too serious.”

Daniel looked up at him. “So, all the advice our principal and teacher gave us to work hard has fallen on your deaf ears? If you don’t take it seriously, you will regret it. You know that only serious people enjoy their lives.”

“But you ought to have fun. You only live once, and you have to try to get as much happiness as it is possible to get on the planet Earth. You are passing through school, Daniel,” David said.

“David, have you finished? I want to finish the biology chapter before I move on to another subject,” Daniel said in a stony voice.

“Well, you may feel that I am disturbing you, but I am only concerned for your welfare. As a social being, a man must socialise in order to be truly happy. Life is not all about hard, grinding work and swotting calculations.”

Daniel was still looking at his textbook. He had a stubborn set to his jaw, which did not sit well with David.

David, with his watchful eye, saw a letter addressed to Daniel: "Dear Daniel"

How are you? I hope you are well. You are the only serious boy in this class. You know my feelings for you. I love you, and I will pray for you to find a place in your heart for me. I am so far away yet close. I will wait to hear from you. Lots of love.

The Idolent Man

By: Solomon Gwita

Chapter One

One faithful day in a village called Amuda, the weather was bright and sunny. There was a man named Kulkwate. He had two sons, Ashipa and Lamisa. Ashipa was the oldest, and Lamisa was his younger brother. They lived happily with their father, a very hard-working man who had taken on every responsibility since his wife's death two years earlier.

But unfortunately, Mr Kulkwa died after being bitten by a poisonous snake on the farm. From that time on, life changed for Ashipa and his younger brother. They even had barely enough to eat.

Three years after their father's death, Lamisa had been the breadwinner for his brother and himself. He worked very hard and took on many jobs, but he was good at splitting firewood. Lamisa split firewood for people in exchange for money, and from farm produce he earned more money from his customers, and, of course, in the market. In his spare time, he saved some money, which he used to pay his wife's bride price.

Lamisa got married and relocated to a neighbouring village to live there with his family, leaving his brother behind in the village.

Chapter Two

But Ashipa was different from his brother; he was his brother's direct opposite. Since his parent's death, Ashipa was unable to do anything meaningful for himself and his family.

Fortunately for him, while his father was still alive, he was betrothed to Tam, the daughter of Tadda, the great hunter. His father paid for all the marriage rites when he was young, which helped him marry his wife. He had two sons and two daughters. He was too weak to care for them and was very lazy. Because of his laziness, his wife and his children left him in his father's old house and moved to her maternal home.

Ashipa had no food to eat; he was just parasiting off his friends. When his friends grew tired of him, they forgot about him, calling him names and even mocking him.

Ashipa's life at this point was hopeless. While sitting on a wooden bench in his house, he noticed the mango tree in the centre of his house. The mango tree was fresh, bearing so much fruit, both ripe and unripe.

Out of his idleness, he said to himself, "Now I know that manna falls from heaven; God will never let me die of hunger." After a brief moment, he went inside to sleep as usual.

Early in the morning, Ashipa picked some ripe mangoes and ate them for breakfast. He also picked some unripe mangoes and ate them for dinner. For one year, he practised this as his daily routine. Sleeping was his perfect habit.

Chapter Three

After a good year, Lamisa was ready to visit his brother in his hometown. He quickly summoned his wife and children. That evening, he told them, "I will be travelling tomorrow to visit my brother. It has been a while now." His wife and children were eager to go with him, but that was not possible, so they wished him a safe journey.

Early in the morning, he set out to meet his brother. By sunset, he arrived and found his brother still asleep. "Knock, knock, knock," he called, knocking harder. "Brother, am here," he shouted, still standing by the door with his axe. "Yes, am coming," Ashipa murmured when he recognised his brother's voice. He quickly got out of bed, stretched, and tried to open the door. Finally, they met and hugged each other with great joy.

"Ah, brother, you are here. You are welcome. How is your family? I hope everybody is doing well," said Ashipa, embracing his brother.

"I am fine. My family is too. We thank God!" Lamisa replied with a huge smile.

After a brief exchange of pleasantries, Ashipa ushered him inside and offered him a seat.

eh, brother, sit down. let me get some refreshments for you!

That day, Lamisa was welcomed with ripe mango, and in the evening, he was offered unripe mango. Lamisa thought dinner would be served later.

This continued for two days. Early in the morning, Lamisa called out to his brother for a brief chat. He greeted his brother warmly. "Good morning, brother. How was your night?"

"Morning, I am fine. How are you too?" answered Ashipa.

Lamisa continued his speech, "Eh, really, brother, I want us to talk. Brother, are we not going to farm, or don't you farm? Besides, where are your wife and children?"

"Are you done? Fine, yes. I don't farm. My wife and my children abandoned me. So, what is this all about?" replied Ashipa, yawning.

"I'm not done yet. This mango you always offer me, ripe in the morning, unripe in the evening, I'm tired of it. When will you cook? Don't you have any food in the house?" Lamisa fired back.

Angrily, Ashipa responded, "Oga, if you are tired of the mango, you can come and eat me up. Appreciate what you see. If you are not comfortable, you can go back to your family."

At this point, the duo were furious with each other. There was a moment of silence. Lamisa broke the silence, looking for his axe, ready to set out for work.

"I go and hustle the first lazy man," said Lamisa as he walked away.

Chapter Four

Later that evening, Lamisa brought food from the market for them both to eat.

"Brother, come and eat; at least you will not kill me with this mango of yours in this house," Lamisa lamented.

"I am coming. You are back already. You are welcome. How was your day?" Ashipa said, trying to wash his hands. "It was fine. We thank God," Lamisa answered, washing his hands too.

They ate their food in peace, without any dispute. Ashipa thanked his brother for the meal. "Thank you for the food today, as if you knew what I was craving".

Chapter five

"No problem, you are welcome. But you need to start doing something," Lamisa tried so hard to advise his brother.

After a long conversation, they went to bed. "Good night, brother," said Lamisa. "Good night, too," replied Ashipa.

At midnight, Lamisa was still awake, thinking about how to tackle his brother's idleness. He thought for some hours and immediately came up with a brilliant idea. That night, he picked up his axe and went straight to the mango tree.

"Let me see how you will do without this mango tree. You have to work hard," he said to himself as he finished cutting down the mango tree. That midnight, he ran away without his brother's knowledge.

It was morning when Ashipa woke. He went straight to the mango tree to pluck some as usual, only to find it already cut down. He clutched his head in despair. "Who did this to me?" Ashipa cried loudly, and even the neighbours heard him. The neighbours rushed down to his house to find out what was the matter.

They were surprised to see the mango tree was down.

"Somebody should help me. No solution for this? Please." Ashipa cried harder.

A brilliant neighbour said to him. "If I were you, I would pack the mangoes and take them to the market to sell them. Use the money to do business and use the remainder to farm".

Quickly, he did as the neighbour suggested. He packed everything and went to the market, where he made a lot of profit that day. He finally invested in business. Months passed. Ashipa became a rich man. He farmed, reared livestock, and traded in the market. Everybody in the village was amazed.

His friends now came to him for reconciliation. Even his wife and children, when they heard that he was now rich, immediately travelled back to their father, along with his brother Lamisa.

When they arrived, Ashipa welcomed them happily and was excited to see his family.

Already, Lamisa asked for forgiveness, but his brother rebuked him, saying, "No, no, you helped me. After you cut down that mango tree, my life changed. Now I am rich like others, from grass to grace. I should be the one saying thank you".

Ashipa thanked his brother. That day, there was a great feast at Ashipa's house. They ate and drank with their neighbours. They danced happily. Everybody was jubilant about Ashipa's new lifestyle.

Tarihin Gaskiya

By: Nasara Markus

Suna na Nasara markus. Ina da labarin rayuwana kamar haka.

An haifini ni yabju dayane amma dana girma na kai Shekara biyu sai kakana yayi tafiya na bani jindadi sai nazo na tafi garimu wato Minika na kai Shekara biyar a can. Ana so inyi makaranta amma kakana ta kara ni lo naje makaranta. In an daukoni sai ta hanani amma dana girma nazo inda aka haifeni sai na yita kuka da cewa Mamana ta sani a makaranta. Amma sai tace bata da kudi. An kaini guri, babana sai yayi ya kaini makaranta da na yitoni sai na kai shekarar balaui sai na ce zan fara zuwa makaranta lokacin Atitilne yana kan idoi Gana fara zuwa ciki Ukli na duba saina Samu kudi na Samu takarda na Atina ta kaini maksara ta naw lay i Primary 1 har zuwa Primary 5 sai zita ce zanya Prubuda Koman saina pubuda Primary 1 har Shai saina headmaste da maka ranta yazo yayi mini muguta Amman kaka Allah bai barmi ba na zo na Sha ga sil jss 1 A mubi sai na yi da Jss 2 mizsa nayi transifa na zo mararaba mubi na yi Jss 2 na kuma tashi daga Cikin mararaba mubi Sai na zoma A 20 Ama! dami Primary four Amana Ja na Eya karatu sai babana yace Ammafa ta Eya karatu

sai headmeste yace babu wai du ban = Eya English ba Amma zan
Eya yin karatu furuce dana hausa English Uma yana bani wahala tian
yzozov Ada dana ro Nasarawa state ban Eyko brokin ba amma yazu
na Eya ko come and go na Eya Kada kada Emma dakam bafin Eya
kuma de English ba Kakada Anna yazu nazamu kiwway dayawa masu
bani ji badi suna koya mun furuc

Can You?

Emthe Simon

Drugs are medicines that doctors use when a person is sick. A sick person needs to take drugs to get well. There are different types of drugs. Some are in tablet form, some in powder form, some in liquid form, and some in the form of injections. If a person falls sick and does not take drugs, they might not get better. Rather, the person might get worse and finally die. However, a sick person must be careful when taking drugs. It is dangerous to take drugs anyhow in the first place. If a person is sick and just collects drugs from a friend, the drugs might not be the type that is good for them. A friend is not the best person to give drugs to a sick person if they are not a doctor or medical worker.

Can you do everything by yourself? Can you, without any assistance, achieve the things that are necessary? The answer. No.

School Girl's Struggle Tale

By: John Zarah

Once upon a time. There was a girl named Inda who was afraid to go to school. Bullied and struggling tremendously with learning, attention and social difficulties. It was such a nightmare for her that she developed stomach ulcers and became school-phobic. Because she was a well behaved child who tried hard, most teachers didn't address her with difficulties, neglecting her education and allowing her to slip through the cracks. This little girl is me.

As I grew older, I discovered trying harder didn't work. My only option, it seemed, was to stop caring because that made the stomach aches go away. Soon, my high school guidance and counsellor was telling me I wasn't college material. It was devastating life and my future seemed hopeless. I was cutting school and associating with other kids with the same struggles and getting into trouble.

Despite this, I started college at the age of 19, I worked really hard, spent many more hours studying than my peers, and actually graduated with honors. It was all trial and error because.

I had no clue what I was doing but I was determined to be something. I wanted to be special education teacher and help children who suffered as I did.

A Boy Who Worked Hard

By: Elizabeth Bala

Once upon a time, there was a boy named Jack. Jack lived with his parents who are poor. Jack is just 13 years of age. Jack worked so hard to earn a living.

One day, while working, a man walked up to him and asked him to come work with him in his company. Jack worked, with James in the company, as a cleaner.

He rose from the position of a cleaner until he became a manager until he rose to becoming the CEO's PA.

Jack's hard work positioned him to becoming the CEO after the retirement of the CEO.



POEMS



The River of My Life

– Ruth Ayuba

I was born where life first taught me to smile,
Though the road has stretched for so long.
My parents worked with faithful hands
As hope grows like seeds.

School has now become my favourite place
A dream I carry with all of the courage I can get.
One day I'll study and make my parents proud,
Standing strong before the people of my land

The past still whispers
But hope is louder than my fears.
Like a river, I keep flowing,
Believing my brightest days will come.

The Song of Lamung

Tina John

Lamung sings with joy
Through dancing feet and colourful arts
When harvest comes, we celebrate

But storms once found our homes
And fear made many people run
We climbed the hills with empty hands
Searching for where we can find kindness

Our story still did not stop here
God sent helpers like a friend.
Today we stand with gratitude

Home Still Lives in Me

Andrew Musa Indawa

My village lives inside my mind,
A peaceful place I long to find.
The rivers flowed and the fishes were free
And every path belonged to me.

Then fear arrived with smoke
Darkening our skies till we choke.
We left our home but not our dreams
Holding hope through the broken realms.

Now I learn, read and grow,
Planting seeds my future will know.
Though my journey took a different turn
Home still shines inside each day.

When Hope Found Us

Adafu Simon

Our village woke with songs each day
Until the sound of guns found us.

We ran through bushes, cold with fear
Praying that tomorrow would come.

We carried our lives
Holding on while hope survived.

Kind people welcomed us
And helped us heal from our pain.

School replaced our fear
Fields grew green with our courage.

Though the past still calls my name
Faith has kept us all

The Many Voices of Glavda

Anonymous (Gurku IDP Camp)

A tree once gave our people a name
And from it our story started

Many voices and a proud land
With different tongues

Across the hills we grow our language
Like rivers only we can know
Each word carries songs of our ancestors
More precious now than pots of gold.

Though the world may change
Our roots will never fade away
As long as children learn our song
Glavda will always be alive.

I Still Choose Tomorrow

Ismaila Ishaku

I was still young when fear came,
But somehow we all survived.
We left our home with heavy hearts
Watching life fall apart.

School became my dream-place
A quiet light of hope
Every lesson helped me see
Who I still could choose to be.

Though my grandfather is gone
His courage guide my courage.
I'll keep learning
And building hope along my way.

Caution

By: Mary Musa

Know the friends you keep
Keep the friends you know

Know the people you go around with
Go around with people you know

In your compound or area
Be careful of people you walk with at night

If I Should Have a Friend

By: Joshua Mathias

If I have friends
My mother should know them
Because not all friends are good
And not all are bad.

Who I Am

By: Patience Irimi

My name is Patience
I am a lover of mathematics

When I grow, make me a doctor,
Dear God.

My name is Irimi Patience
Tell me the story of the rat and the cat

Playing football is a hobby for me

Job The Cattle Herder

By: Helen Gabriel

Job shepherds
But do not help
Job losses a cow
And no one helped

Advice

By: Thank-God James

Stretch a helping hand
So the world can smile at you

A grain of rice or seed of bean
Can go a long way to bond

Friendship

By: Benjamin Lydia

Friendship makes one grow

Friendship strengthens one

Friendship builds people's good characters

Friendship makes people get closer to God

Friendship is good

The Cat

By: Hassana Musa

The cat sings

The cat is friendly

The cat is good

The cat is softhearted

The cat is a pet

The cat is a companion

Go to School

By: Hauwa Mathias

Go to school to become a president

Go to school to become a governor

Go to school to become a manager

Go to school to become a teacher

Go to school to become a pastor

Go to school to become a newscaster

Pray

By: Grace David

Pray when in need

Pray when blessed

Pray for life

Pray when ill

Pray for your parents

Pray for yourself

ABOUT THE BOOK

This anthology holds the voices of young people living in the New Kuchingoro IDP Camp in Abuja and the InterFaith IDP Camp in Guruku, Nasarawa State.

Their words are not just stories. They are wings.

Through poetry and short stories (fiction and nonfiction) they tell us what they have lost, what they remember, what they fear, and what they still hope for.

Their words show bravery, creativity, and resilience that refuse to be caged by circumstance. Proof that young lives are still growing, still reaching, even in displacement.

I Want to Be a Bird is an invitation.

To listen.

To honor their voices.

And to rise up to build more pathways so the next generation can discover their path, and soar above the skies.



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