

# **ATTITUDES TO DISABILITY IN EAST AFRICA AND THE WORK OF EKISA**

Michael English

What is the common attitude to disability in the UK?

What is my attitude to disability?

Is thinking about “ABILITY” more helpful?

Commonly (I think)

most people in the UK have sympathy but  
also some embarrassment because they don't  
know how to act.

Attitudes in the UK have demonstrably  
changed over the years

Lost Voice Guy won Britain's Got Talent in  
2018 but would he have been voted back on  
Opportunity Knocks in the 1960's?

Not all disability is visible

So what about East Africa?

This video clip was made in Uganda, but the attitudes expressed apply equally to Kenya or Tanzania

<https://vimeo.com/382249427>

Emily Henderson

Grew up in Milton

Took a Holiday Job at a Ugandan Orphanage  
in 2009.

She was appalled at the lack of provision for  
children with special needs.

On graduating she returned to Uganda and  
with Emily Worrell from Indiana, US  
started Ekisa children's home

Ekisa means “Grace” in Lugandan

It quickly expanded.

A community-care team was added to help parents care for children at home.

A school was started

Adoption in Uganda can be a source of  
problems

Rich westerners have paid money to  
adopt children.

Ekisa's policy has always been that a  
child should first be fostered for a year in  
Uganda before being taken abroad and  
no money changes hands.

This is now enshrined in Ugandan law.



Let's look at one child.

His name is Crispus

<https://vimeo.com/296624579>

I retired in 2016 and visited Ekisa.

From there we visited the orphanage where  
the two Emilys first worked.

Some of the Ekisa children helped at the  
orphanage.

Jane, an 8 year old seemed to have the making  
of a brilliant primary school teacher, but  
without Ekisa she would have been discarded  
as a waste of space

For more information see:

[www.ekisa.org](http://www.ekisa.org)

and

[www.ekisa.org.uk](http://www.ekisa.org.uk)

the latter is a charity registered in England and  
Wales number 1167405