



For Immediate Release

Build A Plane's Most Unusual Project: Aba, Nigeria!

Riverside, California, April 18th, 2007—Build A Plane, which promotes aviation education by giving kids a chance to build real airplanes, is celebrating the completion of a unique project in Aba, Nigeria on the African Continent. The story of this particular project is worth telling.

Two years ago, 17-year-old Kasarachi "Kasa" Ejimofor contacted Build A Plane after a satellite dish was installed in his village that allowed him to watch television programs about aviation. He had been in love with anything that flew as long as he could remember, and this sudden exposure to the variety of aviation programs available on TV was all it took to bring him to a critical moment in his life: He designed his own airplane.

Watching the passion for aviation in their young son, Kasa's parents encouraged him to leave the village and travel to Aba, a large city in southeastern Nigeria. He would stay with his step-sister and brother-in-law and look for opportunities to do something about his love for airplanes. His inquiry about finding some help in building the airplane he designed was posted on homebuiltpairplane.com and someone there referred Kasa to Build A Plane.

What better mentors could Kasa have than two brothers from the United States who also started building their own airplane designs when they were young, Alan and Dale Klapmeier? When Build A Plane asked if them if their company, Cirrus Design, would be interested in helping this young man in Nigeria, there was not a moment's hesitation.

Building the airplane went slowly and was fraught with difficulties, an experience that the Klapmeiers might tell you is inherent in the process. But some of Kasa's problems along the way were not the norm; he watched his brother-in-law get gunned down in a robbery, and though Kasa quickly borrowed a car and drove him two hours to the nearest clinic, it was not in time to save his life. Now his adopted family had no income, no money for food.

"But I decided to continue working on the project because I loved the airplane, I love aviation and I knew it was part of my future," Kasa says now. The principal at his school, C. G. Onuoha, encouraged him and the other kids who were helping Kasa build his airplane to look at everything that happened as opportunities to grow and learn.

“Their Build A Plane project built the spirit of facing challenges and hard work,” Onuoha said.

Kasa and his friends from school continued. They learned to weld the components of the airframe, they learned to work with fiberglass, they scavenged for parts and materials. When problems stopped them temporarily, they had to figure out a solution. They were building an airplane of their own design, from scratch, without any instructions. When it came time to finally cover the wings and fuselage in fabric, they did find some help via the Internet from Jon Goldenbaum, owner of Poly Fiber at the historic Flabob Airport in California, and a trustee at the Thomas Wathen Foundation. Finally, two years after Kasa had sketched his idea to build a plane, he and his team of young aircraft builders stood in the dirt area at their school, a completed aircraft in front of them. It was a joyfully sad moment; they had finished what many had told them was impossible and yet... the project was over.

“Building this airplane changed the lives of all participants,” principal Onuoha said. “They learned to solve problems in their academic endeavors.”

“Every aspect of the project is related to mathematics, engineering and science. I now have a renewed interest in all those areas,” said Peter Joseph, on the smiling kids.

“I’ve always wanted to be an electrical engineer,” Chibuzo E. Uzoka remarked. “Now this project has clearly shown the importance of math and science as needed in all engineering fields.”

“I learned the basic dynamics and principles of flight. I now have a better understanding of how aircrafts work, and I’d love to build another one!” said Obinwanne Paul Ogbaka.

For Kasa, looking at his completed aircraft was more than a dream-come-true. “I want to thank Cirrus and Build A Plane because this project has highlighted my whole life. I wish more young people around the world the same opportunity.”

For Kasarachi Ejimofor, his project is over, but we’d like to help him continue his experience and support his remarkable dedication to aviation. Build A Plane is now looking for a scholarship for Kasa to come to the United States and continue his studies in aviation engineering. Want to help? What a great ending to this story that would be. Contact us through our website, www.BuildAPlane.org