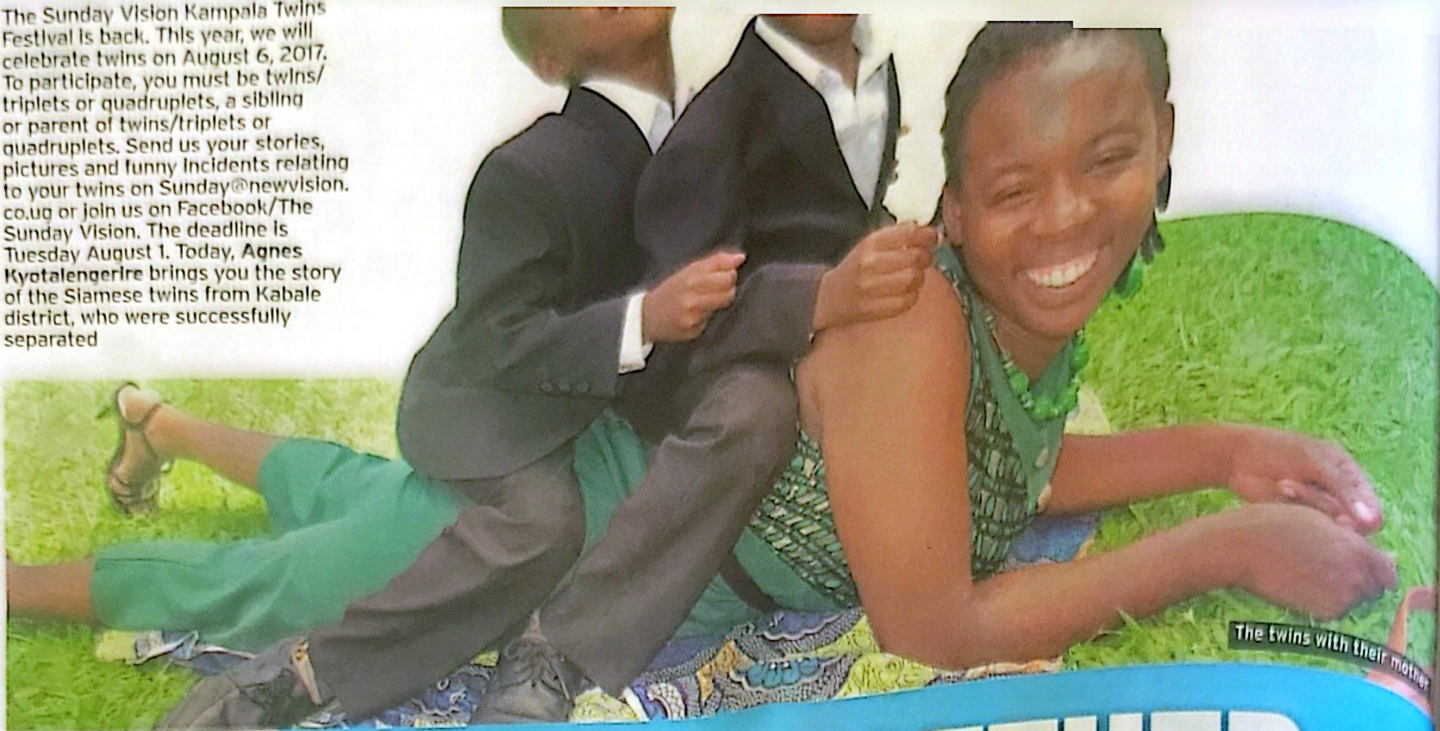


The Sunday Vision Kampala Twins Festival is back. This year, we will celebrate twins on August 6, 2017. To participate, you must be twins/triplets or quadruplets, a sibling or parent of twins/triplets or quadruplets. Send us your stories, pictures and funny incidents relating to your twins on Sunday@newvision.co.ug or join us on Facebook/The Sunday Vision. The deadline is Tuesday August 1. Today, Agnes Kyotalengerire brings you the story of the Siamese twins from Kabale district, who were successfully separated



The twins with their mother



BOUND TOGETHER, SEPARATED BY MAN

Many people say they cannot tell the boys apart, but they are totally different. Timothy Twinomugisha is slightly taller and Trevor Beinomugisha is bigger in size," she goes on to describe the distinct features of the boys as she watches them play full of admiration.

Rosette Tusiime, the mother of the separated conjoined twins, adds that even in their stage of growth, Timothy would do something first and Trevor would follow, something that has continued up to today. That is how we got to determine that Timothy is Kakuru; a Runyakitara name given to the twin who is born first, narrates Tusiime.

Although the twins are now grown and healthy, Tusiime says it has been a tough journey caring for them right from the time they were still conjoined and after separation.

On the night of June 9, 2011, Tusiime went into labour and she was rushed to Kabale Hospital, where she delivered a set of conjoined twins through a C-section on June 10, 2011. However, during the operation, she heard the doctors say she had twins who were stuck together and they could not separate them.

"I started crying, but the doctors assured me that they would take the babies to Mulago Hospital and



The twins before they were separated. Taking care of them was the hardest bit of life

would be separated," she narrates her ordeal.

OVERWHELMING SUPPORT
After news went round, relatives

and friends got concerned, they contributed money for fuel and the twins were transferred to Mulago Hospital, where they were admitted in the intensive care unit.

NURSING CHALLENGES

Tusiime says dressing the conjoined twins was very difficult and they had to find special clothes for them. Carrying, bathing and feeding the

“The twins shared a heart, liver, diaphragm, intestines and the ribs and the operation to separate them took 13 hours

babies was very tiring. "When one baby woke up, he automatically woke up the other. So we had to watch them so that they do not scratch and hurt each other," Tusiime explains.

According to Denis Owomugisha, the father of the twins, meeting the babies' feeding needs was another hiccup.

"The twins fed on six tins of NAAN a week which was very expensive, yet we did not have enough money. Besides, we had to keep them dry in diapers all the time, which added on

BEAT ODDS

to the costs.
Owomugisha, who by then worked with Simba Casino, was given a paid leave immediately the twins were born and joined his wife in Mulago Hospital to take care of the babies," he explains.
Luckily, an arrangement was made and on November 13, 2011, the babies were flown to Wadi Elyni Hospital in Cairo and they were successfully separated on November 18, 2011.

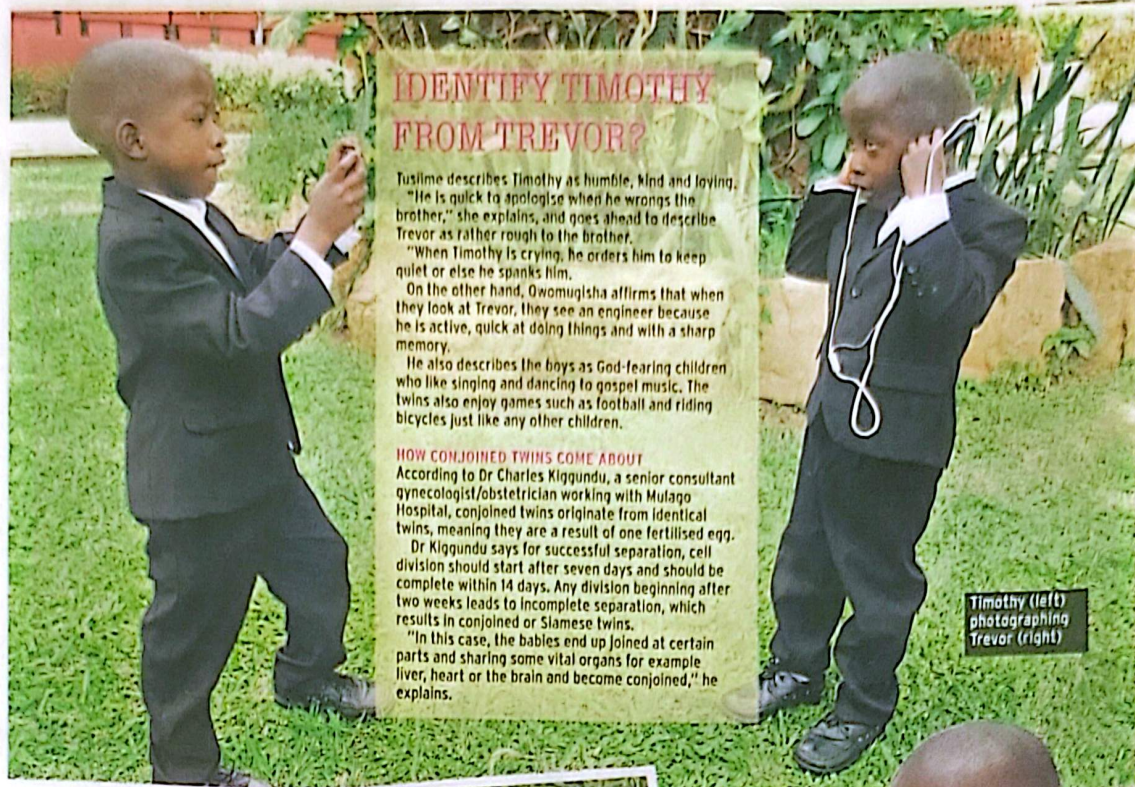
SURGERY
While in Cairo, it took a week while the doctors did tests to find out which organs the twins shared. The test results indicated that the twins shared a heart, liver, diaphragm, intestines and the ribs.
Memories of the stressful day the couple endured while they waited for the babies to return from theatre are still fresh.

"The babies were taken to theatre at 5:30am. We remained in the room quiet and praying until Dr John Ssekabira, a paediatrician working in Mulago Hospital, who had travelled with us, returned at 5:30pm with the news that the operation was successful," narrates the overjoyed couple before Tusiime cuts in.
"We had lost hope about their recovery, but we had moved with our Bible. While in the theatre, we opened Psalms 138 and read David's thanksgiving prayer which ends with the verse ... 'God do not abandon the works of your hands...' This comforted us, but at a certain point, we thought the babies had died and the doctors were taking time to break the news," Tusiime explains, adding that seeing the twins living as two separate people is a testimony; a kind of total miracle to them.

AFTER SURGERY
The twins were put in an intensive care unit and taken care of by nurses at the hospital.
"We were not allowed to touch them, but only saw them through glass walls. I would express the milk and put it in bottles for the nurses to feed them," Tusiime recounts.
The babies were handed over to the couple on December 5, 2011, with all the medicines needed to continue treating the babies. The following day (December 4), the couple flew back to Uganda.

The babies had turned seven months, but they refused breast milk, so they embarked on feeding them on formula milk and semi-solid food. "Formula milk was expensive, but the fact that they had got used to it, the doctors advised us to continue with it. We gradually introduced the local cow milk."
"We had to buy milk, diapers and sometimes medicines whenever the babies fell sick, which was rather expensive," recalls Owomugisha, adding that along the way, the babies got diarrhoea and were admitted to Mulago Hospital, where they were treated.

MILESTONES
Tusiime says it is after separation that the twins started achieving their milestones. They learnt to sit and crawl at one year and eight months, however, they delayed to stand and walk.
When they turned three years

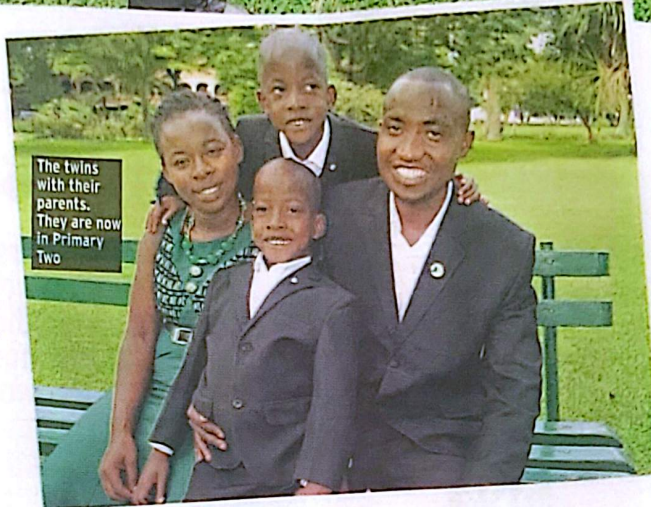


IDENTIFY TIMOTHY FROM TREVOR?

Tusiime describes Timothy as humble, kind and loving. "He is quick to apologise when he wrongs the brother," she explains, and goes ahead to describe Trevor as rather rough to the brother.
"When Timothy is crying, he orders him to keep quiet or else he spansks him."
On the other hand, Owomugisha affirms that when they look at Trevor, they see an engineer because he is active, quick at doing things and with a sharp memory.
He also describes the boys as God-fearing children who like singing and dancing to gospel music. The twins also enjoy games such as football and riding bicycles just like any other children.

HOW CONJOINED TWINS COME ABOUT
According to Dr Charles Kiggundu, a senior consultant gynecologist/obstetrician working with Mulago Hospital, conjoined twins originate from identical twins, meaning they are a result of one fertilised egg.
Dr Kiggundu says for successful separation, cell division should start after seven days and should be complete within 14 days. Any division beginning after two weeks leads to incomplete separation, which results in conjoined or Siamese twins.
"In this case, the babies end up joined at certain parts and sharing some vital organs for example liver, heart or the brain and become conjoined," he explains.

Timothy (left) photographing Trevor (right)



The twins with their parents. They are now in Primary Two

and six months, the twins were enrolled At Aunt Frida's Kindergarten in Kabale.
"We had to tell the teachers about their health history. Timothy and Trevor loved school, they were friendly and the teachers loved them back," Tusiime narrates.
At the beginning of this year, the twins were brought to Kampala and enrolled in top class at St. Martin Nursery and Primary School in Mulago.
Timothy and Trevor are the second set of Siamese twins in Uganda to be separated. On June 10, the pair celebrated their sixth birthday.

SUPPORT FROM GOOD SAMARITANS
Owomugisha says right from the time the babies were born; their survival has greatly depended on Good Samaritans and his employers at Simba Casino, Excel Hot Consult and Family Choice.

The couple is also grateful to the staff of Mulago Hospital, Kibuli and Wadi Elyni Hospital in Cairo for saving the lives of their children as well as friends who supported them spiritually, physically and financially from the time the twins were born.
Tusiime also acknowledges the owners of Standard Supermarket where she was employed before she accumulated capital to start up her own business.
However, Owomugisha says without an adequate source of income, they are finding it challenging to meet the needs of the twins.
"We would be happy to have good jobs that give us a stable income to enable us take care of the twins," Owomugisha appeals to well-wishers.
The thirty four-year-old Owomugisha is a resident of Nyakitunga cell, Bukora parish,

Nyarushanje sub-county in Rukungiri district. He holds a bachelor's degree in environment and disaster management from Uganda Christian University Mukono. Twenty-nine-year-old Tusiime was born and raised in Mparo, Kabale district. She holds a diploma in gender and development studies from Uganda Christian University Mukono.



Trevor carrying Timothy