



# **I Am Because You Are: How the Spirit of Ubuntu Inspired an Unlikely Friendship and Transformed a Community**

*Jacob Lief, Andrea Thompson*

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In 1999, Teach For America and City Year weren't yet popular post-graduate options, and no one talked about social entrepreneurship as a career path. But when Jacob Lief, a 21-year-old college student, traveled to a post-apartheid South Africa, he was compelled to action. Inspired by the spirit of *ubuntu*, roughly translated as "My humanity is bound with yours," Lief moved to South Africa and, with a dedicated team, formed the Ubuntu Education Fund.

Shunning traditional fundraising models, Ubuntu invests significantly into fewer kids on a grassroots level. The nonprofit's premise goes well beyond building a school or offering free lunches--as Lief learned, a child's best chance at success happens from "cradle to career," with household stability, structure, and support. After more than a decade of hard work on the ground, Ubuntu's program has yielded college graduates, while other aid-to-Africa ventures have failed.

*I Am Because You Are* offers an eye-opening look at how we can affect change from a micro to a global level and challenges us to re-examine how any child can--and should--be raised to succeed and thrive.

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