

July 2022

Supporting the Education of Disadvantaged Children in Uganda

Newsletter 17

Welcome to SEDCU Newsletter No.17 covering the period February 2022 – July 2022

Ugandan schools, colleges and universities are recovering from the extended COVID lockdown, and all are now about midway through the 2022 academic year. While life was starting to return to normal, COVID infection levels remain significant, and the population is only partly protected: 11.6 million fully vaccinated out of population of 48.6 million. There have been other major issues from which the education sector (and hence SEDCU) cannot remain isolated. The impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine have caused the price of wheat, fertiliser, and fuel to increase steeply across Africa, with shortages causing starvation in some countries. And there is fighting in the border region between Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo on which we report in this newsletter. Despite all these challenges, SEDCU continues to do all it can to support the schools where it is active and the sponsored children, whose number has risen to 33. The generosity of all our supporters continues to inspire us!

Report on National Athletics Competitions

The Competitions were held from 18-26th April 2022 in Mbale District which is in the eastern region of Uganda. With the support of SEDCU, who provided 75% of the funding, KDS managed to send 12 children with physical, hearing, and visual impairments and 2 teachers to represent the school and Kisoro Municipal District in the disabled section. This was a reassuring sign that life is slowly returning to normal!



The special needs team took part in different categories for under12, under14 and under16s. This meant pupils who had moved on from KDS to other schools and colleges could take part as well to represent both KDS and Kisoro Municipal Council! Sports included sprints of differing lengths, discus, shot put and javelin, hurdles, high and long jumps!

M (8 yrs.) stood out as the youngest participant at the event, doing well in running!

The journey helped the children to understand the size of Uganda. They met children from other districts, too, thus learning about the regional differences.

As the Headteacher (Stephen) and Municipal Education Officer (Gerald) wrote:

“Since it was both a competition and learning trip the children were able for the first time to see and know about the following;

- *Seeing a railway line*
- *Seeing storeyed buildings that a taller than a tree.*
- *The Source of River Nile in Jinja*
- *Saw Lake Victoria the largest Lake in Uganda, the Source of River Nile and the Lake shared by 3 East African Countries.*

- They were able to see Mabira Forest
- Sugar Cane Plantation i.e., Lugazi and Kakira (Producers of Sugar in Uganda)
- They saw Tea plantations and Rice.
- Went through the following Cities; Mbarara, Masaka, Kampala, Jinja then to Mbale City.
- They saw Fly over roads which they had never seen.
- They Saw traffic lights that they used to hear of and see in books.
- They saw the 2nd deepest lake in Africa and 1st Deepest in Uganda.
- They saw swamps and wetlands
- They were able to interact with children of different languages, tribes and cultures.”

What an experience! Full marks to the school and staff for making this possible and to the students who acquitted themselves so well. The Trustees are proud of you all!



Arrival at the venue



DD (deaf) putting the shot

Kisoro District Swamped by Congolese Refugees

Readers may be aware that there is currently fighting in the border region between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The M23 rebel militia (named after the 23rd March 2009 peace accord) has made a comeback in the East of the DRC and old patterns of violence and displacement are impacting hundreds of thousands of people. A spokesman for the UNHCR has commented “DRC already has the largest displacement numbers in Africa with 4.5 million Congolese displaced within their own country and 864,000 abroad as refugees. This new crisis is opening a new front for us with no additional resources.” Humanitarian workers are reportedly worried that, with the war in Ukraine and donor fatigue, organisations and Governments will not provide the resources needed to deal with this fresh emergency. The impact of the global cost of living crisis is compounding the situation.

All this is creating significant difficulties in Kisoro where SEDCU is most active, as it has been swamped in recent months by refugees fleeing the conflict. The main border crossing between the two countries is at Bunagara, only 8 miles from Kisoro. The number of refugees who have recently arrived is estimated at 33,000 and growing. Our contacts tell us this is having a huge impact on Kisoro whose population in normal times is 17,500.

Supporting Landslide Victims near Mgahinga



On January 24th, 2022, disaster struck in an area close to Mgahinga where SEDCU supports Mgahinga Community Junior School. Houses and crops were destroyed and nine people died due to heavy flooding and mudslides. This was caused by exceptionally heavy rain in this region of South West Uganda. The affected area was on the slopes of Mount Muhabura, the highest volcano of the three in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park.

With farming a significant source of livelihood in this community, the affected families lost their food, shelter and income. The Mgahinga Community Development Organisation (MCDO) launched an appeal for emergency funds for temporary shelters, food supplies, medical care, and seeds to enable replacement of lost crops. MCDO is also looking for long term solutions to prevent similar disasters in future. If you would like to make a donation through GivingWay please go to the Mgahinga Community Development Organisation website or their Facebook site.

Kisoro Demonstration School

After such a long Lockdown the school year finally began in January 2022 after an inspection, monitoring and assessment was done to ascertain whether the school had followed the guidance from the Ministry and maintained the Observed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) set.



SEDCU sponsored children were provided with all necessary scholastic materials and, where necessary, transported to their relevant institutions. Teaching went on as usual but considered social distancing in class and in the dormitories. Sensitization of special needs children and their parents on COVID 19 was done continuously from the beginning of term to the end by emphasizing on wearing masks daily, washing hands, use of

sanitizers in important places and keeping social distances. The children and parents are also encouraged to keep proper hygiene in their homes as well as at school.

Vulnerable children are involved in vocational skills training i.e. computer studies, tailoring and knitting skills to enable access to a variety of skills that will help them to live independently in future. They are also trained in games and sports to strengthen their muscle development. All children with special needs are continuously taught agricultural skills both theoretically and practically on the school farm, being involved in gardening activities like planting crops, weeding, ploughing, pruning, harvesting and storing the harvested crops.

The Head Teacher and Governors are determined to continue improving the welfare of children with hearing and visual impairment through food supplements that will contribute to build up their bodies, as well as create changes in the health status among learners with deafness and blindness.

The Head Teacher and Governors also provided salaries for the support staff helping the school in the upkeep of the deaf and dumb children. The school continues to care and maintain the facilities in the school with special concern for the deaf and blind children.

Term 1 lasted 14 rather than 12 weeks and ended with 780 children on roll of which 136 are children with various categories of special needs. At the end of term, all children at KDS are assessed according to their abilities and the results are recorded. There has been a big change in the lives of the new children who are being sponsored by SEDCU this term.

Most of the parents of newly enrolled children could not believe that their children would understand the meaning of the signs and dots in braille. It has been decided that sign language training to the parents will continue. Every year new deaf children are enrolled and their parents need to have sign language orientation and skills to communicate at home. During home visits, it was also found that many people within the villages were interested in studying sign language. Ways to carry this forward need to be considered.

New Sponsorship



I is 13 years and the 3rd of 5 children from an impoverished family. He attends KDS but is only in Primary 3 due to a very disrupted education. He loves school but has had to find jobs and work to provide his own school materials – hence the disruption. The school staff feel he has great determination and potential and SEDCU is delighted to have found a sponsor to support him in his studies

Mgahinga Community Primary School

For reasons explained on page 1, life in Mgahinga is particularly difficult at the moment and communications with our key contacts have been understandably sparse.

The following are extracts from our contact at MCJS:

“Mgahinga Community Primary School finally reopened on 10th January 2022 as expected. Our supported students all reported and the turn up at the Mgahinga Community Junior School is good as we have got more than 120 pupils. In December, we spent some money in order to buy some children's necessities in preparing them for the school as they lacked almost everything they needed for the school and some warm clothes to put on after school.

We had a parents and teachers' meeting on 7th January 2022 in preparation for the school reopening. On the same day, we handed gifts to the eight former P.7 pupils for their good performance, and they have all joined secondary school. “

“The best of all is that term 1 ended well and the second term is running in a good environment.”

Fundraising

Your AmazonSmile Impact

THANK YOU to all those supporters who have chosen SEDCU as their Amazon Smile charity. As of May 2022 we have received an amazing

£97.07

Easy fundraising

You can raise money for SEDCU through easyfundraising. So far this year supporters have raised £45.65 simply by shopping online! Over 6,000 shops and sites will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself!

These donations really mount up and make a BIG difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely FREE and only takes a moment.

You can find our easyfundraising page at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/sedcu>

London Marathon

On Sunday the 2nd of October Lee Coulson, long suffering husband of our trustee Kate, is running the London Marathon for the second time. Lee has supported Kate to achieve many personal challenges, not least running London together in 2017 when he stayed with her for the whole race when she became sick, forfeiting his personal time goal. This year is Lee's opportunity to shine, and we are super grateful he has chosen to raise money to support SEDCU. You can show your support for Lee via our JustGiving account [Donate – JustGiving](#) or by using the QR code below;



The Great North Run

We are looking to get a team together to run the Great North Run in 2023! If you would like to run, jog or walk around the historical course and raise money for SEDCU please get in touch ASAP so we can secure your place.

Fundraising at Allendale Forge Studios



SEDCU
Supporting the Education of Disadvantaged Children in Uganda

SEDCU is a small charity based in Hexham whose aim is to provide an education for severely disadvantaged children living in the remote southwest corner of Uganda.

In this exhibition you will see paintings by David Almond which are part of a collection bequeathed to SEDCU by his family for the purpose of raising funds. 100% of the money raised will go to Uganda for the benefit of the children.

1 - 30 April 2022
Studio 11
Allendale Forge Studios
Market Place, Allendale Town, NE47 9BD
open daily: Shop & Gallery 10am - 5pm, Cafe 9am - 5pm
allendaleforgestudios.co.uk
tel: 01434 683975



The Trustees are very grateful to Allendale Forge Studios for offering them Studio 11, at no cost for two months, to display some of the watercolours by the artist David Almond, which were donated to the charity by his family. Happily, several paintings sold!

To date, taking into account all the paintings sold since the Lockdown eased in 2020, plus costs and commissions, SEDCU has profited to the sum of £950.

The paintings are framed, mounted or neither and the very reasonable prices reflect this. If you have a favourite place in the Lake District, Pennines, Isle of Skye or Yorkshire Dales we may just have a painting to suit you! Information without obligation!

Thank you to our sponsors, donors, supporters and all who take an interest in SEDCU. Together we can continue to make our stated mission a reality. If you wish to donate you can do so through the website or by cheque made out to SEDCU and mailed to Lowstead, Highford Lane, Hexham NE46 2DP. Or you can pay online into the SEDCU account, sort code 20-74-81, account number 83561356.

Email us at info@sedcu.org.uk Visit us at www.sedcu.org.uk