

**SEDUCU**

**Supporting the Education of  
Disadvantaged Children in Uganda**

**ANNUAL REPORT AND  
ACCOUNTS**

**2016**

## **Introduction**

This is the third SEDCU Annual Report covering the period from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016. This has been a year of consolidation and continued growth as the charity has become more established and has increased its level of activity in Uganda.

SEDCU's mission is to broaden and strengthen support for disadvantaged children in Uganda so that they can benefit from good quality education and realise their full potential. We focus on schools we have visited in the extreme South West of Uganda and working with people whom we can trust to be aligned with this aim.

Despite continued growth this year, it is not our aim to build a large organisation but to focus on supporting small numbers of individual children, as well as funding small projects at their schools which will make a difference. We recognise that the country faces huge challenges, and we are powerless to tackle them, but we do believe that our approach does have the potential to change lives and give individual children the start in life which they deserve. All those who choose to support SEDCU will have the opportunity to be kept informed of the progress of each of the sponsored children and each project we fund at their schools.

## **The Schools**

Kisoro Demonstration School (KDS) is a state funded school but one with a difference. It has established special arrangements for children who are deaf, blind or partially sighted or with other disabilities and who can receive an education there which otherwise would be impossible. These children have to board, and in many cases their parents (if they have them) are unable to pay the

costs. A number of children are sponsored through SEDCU to attend KDS. The school also struggles to fund special equipment and facilities needed for these children. This year SEDCU has primarily funded an arts and crafts project, the purchase of musical instruments so that the children with disabilities can learn to play them and form a jazz band, and attendance of SEDCU sponsored and other children at a Ugandan National Scouting Jamboree and a National Disabled Sports Gala. The Head Teacher of KDS has gained promotion and his successor is to be appointed. Arrangements are being made to seek to ensure this change does not have any adverse impact on the continuing strong SEDCU/KDS collaboration.

Mgahinga Community Nursery and Primary School (MCNPS) is on the boundary of a National Park very close to the borders with Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo. It is in a very rural environment where most people live off the land and poverty is rife. There is no mains electricity or water supply. The school is growing steadily and a number of children are sponsored through SEDCU to attend. In addition, SEDCU has this year been able to fund a solar power installation to provide lighting in the boarding quarters, the purchase of text books, the continuation of a three year training course for the acting head teacher to become fully qualified, and the salary and accommodation for a teacher recruited to teach the newly established top class (Primary 7). The Mgahinga Community Development Organisation is managing the construction of a new classroom block for MCNPS for which SEDCU has committed to provide funding for the roof. A first stage payment for this was made at the end of 2016.

As the children sponsored by SEDCU progress through their education, they reach the point where they are ready to take their exams and move up to Secondary Schools. In addition to KDS and MCNPS, SEDCU is now sponsoring children at five other schools.

Where SEDCU sponsors children or funds projects it receives termly reports on the children's academic progress as well as regular project progress reports and photographs to show what has been achieved.

SEDCU is of course not the only charity operating in this part of Uganda, and we have sought to cooperate with other charities active in the same schools as ourselves. We have been particularly appreciative of collaboration with School Places and with Sustain for Life which are both funding building and other projects at schools where we are involved.

## **The Children**

SEDCU's primary aim is to sponsor the education of disadvantaged children so that they can realise their potential. During this year, the number of children sponsored by SEDCU has risen from seventeen to twenty three. Of these, eight are at Kisoro Demonstration School, nine are attending Mgahinga Nursery and Primary School, and six are at other schools – in the case of three of them as a result of them having passed exams to move up to secondary schools where SEDCU continues to support them.

Sponsorship pays variously for school fees, scholastic materials, meals, boarding costs, uniforms, braille paper for blind children, mattresses, transport and a range of other necessities. For some children with no home to go to, SEDCU pays for holiday boarding costs. For the older children at secondary school the fees are higher and there are additional requirements for scholastic materials. We receive regular termly or mid year and end of year academic reports on each child, and often other news and photographs to keep us informed of progress of each child and results of any exams they must pass to rise through the system. All of this is shared with sponsors. Some of the children write letters for their sponsors, and we ensure that each sponsor receives regular information about the progress of the child they are supporting.

## **Fundraising and Administration**

During the course of the year a number of additional sponsors have been found, entirely through word of mouth; this is very much in the spirit of how we wish the charity to operate, with each sponsor able to develop a personal relationship with SEDCU and with the child they have chosen to support. To fund projects which have been identified by the schools as necessary to enhance the children's education and/or out-of-school school activities and experiences we have undertaken broader fundraising activities. These have included corporate events organised within specific organisations, fundraising at local events, information evenings and many individual donations. We acknowledge with gratitude every donation. The total raised was £15,097 including Gift Aid recovered from HMRC, which compares with £10,912 last year, an increase of 38%. We are profoundly grateful for the generosity of all our donors.

We have developed and regularly updated our website at [www.sedcu.org.uk](http://www.sedcu.org.uk) and this has received 1289 visits from people in 54 countries over the 12 month period. Of these, 979 were new visitors to the website and 310 were returning visitors. The highest numbers of visitors were from UK, USA and Russia. We have published two editions of a half yearly eNewsletter which we use to keep supporters informed of recent events.

SEDCU is registered with the Charity Commission and this Report and our Accounts will be filed in compliance with their requirements.

Every pound donated is transmitted from the SEDCU Bank Account to the schools for defined purposes, and receipts obtained for the amounts received in local currency, or is held in reserve to meet future demands. Gift Aid recovered is used to cover our minor administration costs and the balance goes to fund priority projects. In the 12 month period covered by this report, £14,440 was sent to Uganda (less £305 for bank charges and printing costs) and a cash balance of £5312 was held in the SEDCU bank account at the year end. Much of this sum is already committed for sponsorship expenditure in January 2015 at the start of the new school year and for project funding installments.

The breakdown of our expenditure was as follows:

Sponsorship 52%

Projects 46%

Administration costs 2%.

It is noted that the amounts sent to KDS are significantly higher than those sent to MCNPS even though the number of children sponsored at each is comparable. The main reason for this is that three of the KDS children are, in fact, now at secondary school where fees are much higher. Also there were some relatively high one-off project costs at KDS which will not recur in future years.

The SEDCU policy is to maintain a reserve of at least £1000 so that, should a sponsor drop out, we can maintain sponsorship payments for a year for the affected child while a new sponsor is located, as well as maintaining payment of committed project funding instalments and coping with currency fluctuations – a particular problem this year following the BREXIT decision. There are no administrative costs to run the charity apart from bank charges for funds transfer and newsletter print costs which are recovered from the Gift Aid refunds. SEDCU founders aim to travel to Uganda every two years at their own expense to liaise with the schools, verify that SEDCU funds are being spent as intended and to establish future needs. Our visit in October 2015 was highly successful and enabled us to confirm that our donations were making a real difference to schools and children. It also enabled us to reset priorities for sponsorship and project funding. The next visit is planned for November 2017, and will, among other things, give us the opportunity to meet the new KDS Head Teacher and assure ourselves that he or she is fully behind the continued collaboration with SEDCU.

The following represents the financial outcome for the twelve month period ended 31 December 2016:

	2106	2015	
<b>Cash at start of year</b>	4655	3257	
<b>Receipts</b>			
Donations received	12220	9204	
Gift aid refunded	2877	1708	
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	15097	10912	38% increase
<b>Payments</b>			
Mgahinga School	(4986)	(4057)	
Kisoro Demo School	(9149)	(4527)	
Items sent to schools	-	(655)	
Bank Charges/Print costs	(305)	(275)	
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	(14440)	(9514)	52% increase
<b>Net increase in funds</b>	657	1298	
<b>Cash Fund at Year End</b>	5312	4655	

### Future Outlook

We have been gratified by the level of donations received during the past year. Our aim will be to continue to maintain sponsorship for the existing 23 children, also as they progress through secondary and – eventually – tertiary education. We may seek additional sponsors for further children identified by the schools as exceptionally needy and with the potential to benefit from education through SEDCU sponsorship. We also plan to continue to fundraise by diverse means to deliver funding to the schools for projects that will contribute directly to improving education as well as giving the children new experiences and enhancing their lives outside school hours and – in some cases – during the holidays. With six of the sponsored children having moved to other schools we will continue to maintain contact with them through their teachers. Above all we will work tirelessly to achieve our mission and enable the growing number of children to realise their potential.

The SEDCU Trustees