

**SEDCU**

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



**ANNUAL REPORT AND  
ACCOUNTS  
2020**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This is the seventh SEDCU Annual Report covering the period from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2020.

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 with whom we have developed a relationship in the extreme South West of Uganda and working with people whom we can trust to be aligned with this aim.

It is not our aim to build a large organisation but to focus on supporting modest 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 the sponsored children and the projects we fund at their schools. In this spirit, our Annual Report again details where money has been spent during the year.

However, 2020 has been a very different year. While it began normally with sponsored children returning to their schools, colleges and universities, their education was abruptly disrupted by the impacts of the corona virus pandemic.

All schools, colleges and universities were shut down completely as a result of a strong national lockdown implemented by the Ugandan Government in March 2020. Reported statistics show that the country has been far less impacted compared to most countries around the world. Levels of infection and mortality are at relatively low levels, but the Government remains cautious and there is a recognition that, despite all the precautions, matters would become much worse were the virus to spread across the African continent.

There was some easing of restrictions in July, and in mid October exam year students taking Primary School leaving exams, as well as O level and A level students, were allowed to return to schools provided they could demonstrate that specified precautions had been taken to prevent spread of the virus. Some vocational colleges re-opened, again just for exam year students. Special needs

children with disabilities were also permitted to return to school. All of these children have returned to school in mid January 2021 after the Christmas break, but at the time of writing the full re-opening of schools, colleges and universities is still some way off.



## THE SCHOOLS

SEDCU continues to focus on two schools in Kisoro District where the majority of sponsored children are either being educated or have been educated before moving on to other schools for their secondary education.

**Kisoro Demonstration School (KDS)** is a state funded school but one with a difference. It has established special arrangements for 104 children with a range of disabilities including deafness, blindness and visual impairment who can receive an education there which otherwise would be impossible. The range of disabilities catered for at KDS includes:

Deaf, Deaf/Blind, Blind/sight impaired, Physical handicap, Mental health issues, Trauma PTSD, Autism, Dyslexia, Multiple Disability.



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 continued to fund an arts and crafts project, now in its 7th year. Children with hearing impairment have been trained in knitting using the machines donated by SEDCU, and some can produce school sweaters and crochet book bags.

Children with visual and hearing impairment have been actively involved in the maintenance of trees planted in the school compound, cleaning the school environment, and working on the newly created school farm, funded by another charity Sustain for Life. There has been a continued focus on improving the nutrition of the meals provided to the children, partly relying on the produce they grow.



*Tending an avocado tree*

In recent years, SEDCU has facilitated the attendance of sponsored and other children at a Ugandan National Scouting Jamboree. It also funded KDS to send a team to the Disabled Sports Event organised by the Ugandan Paralympic Committee. However, neither of these events could take place this year due to the pandemic.



The Head of the Special Needs Unit at KDS, Joseph Mugabe, has been given a grant by SEDCU to enable him to pursue a three year course in his own time each school holiday. This has led to him being awarded a degree in Special Needs Education.

**Mgahinga Community Nursery and Junior School (MCJS)** 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 expanding steadily and a growing number of children are sponsored through SEDCU to attend.

The Mgahinga Community Development Organisation (MCDO) has managed the construction of a new classroom block for MCJS for which SEDCU has provided the majority of funding for the roof. SEDCU was also able to fund the construction of a 20,000-litre water tank which collects rainwater from the new roof. The new block was brought into use in 2018 and SEDCU trustees were delighted to visit it in Autumn 2019.

In 2018 MCDO developed plans to construct a further building to house a kitchen and dining hall, replacing old structures no longer deemed fit for purpose. The dining hall is also intended to act as a community centre out of school hours. SEDCU funded the foundations and walls for this building and the whole brick- built structure was completed in Summer 2019, the roof being completed in the Autumn with funding from another charity. However, the national lockdown occurred before the final fit-out was completed and this has still to be achieved.

*The new dining room*



In Autumn 2019, SEDCU enabled a start to be made on replacing the existing woefully inadequate latrines by a new, much larger, Sanitary Block which will make use of a modern bio energy septic tank. SEDCU has funded the whole of this building whose construction was completed in early 2020; however, the finalisation of the septic tank /biogas system was also held up by the national lockdown.



*New Bio-toilet with Bio-gas system as fully supported by SEDCU 2019/2020 (Front view)*

## **Secondary Schools and Colleges**

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, College or University. During 2020, 8 children sponsored by SEDCU were in secondary education. One other continued at University, another was at Teacher Training College while another attended Vocational College. Two other young people were awaiting confirmation of places at University or College. During 2020, in addition to KDS and MCJS, SEDCU sponsored children and young people at six other institutions: **Kisoro Vision School; Hornby High School, Kabale; Bishop Wills College, Iganga , St Bruno Vocational Training Institute, Kyabirukwa and Chemequip Medical College, Ishaka, Bushenyi.**

## **Reports**

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.

## **Collaboration**

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, Sustain for Life and Swedish charities which are funding building and other projects as well as sponsoring children 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 remains 30. Of these, 4 were at Kisoro Demonstration School, 11 were attending Mgahinga Community Junior School, and 8 were at secondary schools and the balance were at colleges or university. One college graduate was given start- up costs to establish her own business.

Sponsorship pays variously for school fees, scholastic materials, meals, boarding costs, uniforms, braille paper for blind children, mattresses, transport, school trips and a range of other necessities. For some children with

no home to go to, SEDCU has been paying 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**

Funding for the education of individual children is provided by sponsors who 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. In order to fund projects which have been identified by the schools as desirable to enhance the children's education and/or out-of-school school activities and experiences, we have generally been dependent on donations by individual supporters as well as on income from fundraising events. During 2020, the latter have been practically impossible due to the various lockdowns in the UK. Even so, our income has been relatively strong despite all. 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). The website received 177 visits from people in 12 countries during 2020. The countries with the most visitors to the website were USA, Japan, France, UK and Uganda. We have published two editions of a half yearly Newsletter which we use to keep supporters informed of recent events.

SEDCU is registered with the Charity Commission and our 2020 Accounts have been filed in compliance with their requirements.

Every pound donated is transmitted from the SEDCU Bank Account to the schools for defined purposes, whether to fund sponsorship of specific children or selected projects. Receipts are obtained for the amounts received in local currency. Gift Aid recovered is used to cover our minor administration costs



(which we have again kept at about 3.4% of expenditure) and the balance goes to fund priority projects.

## **FINANCIAL RESULTS**

Despite the difficult situation, and our limited ability to fundraise, the trustees are pleased to report that SEDCU's accounts are in good shape. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, our income held up well at £23,535. There was much less opportunity to fund projects this year because schools were closed and there were severe restrictions on movements across Uganda. Our expenditure was lower than in 2019 with £11,491 sent to Uganda for sponsorship and £8,962 for projects. The details of how funds were spent are shown in the tabulation below. As a result, we generated a surplus of £2,348 and so were able to increase our reserves, ready for the demands which will no doubt be made on them once normal life resumes.

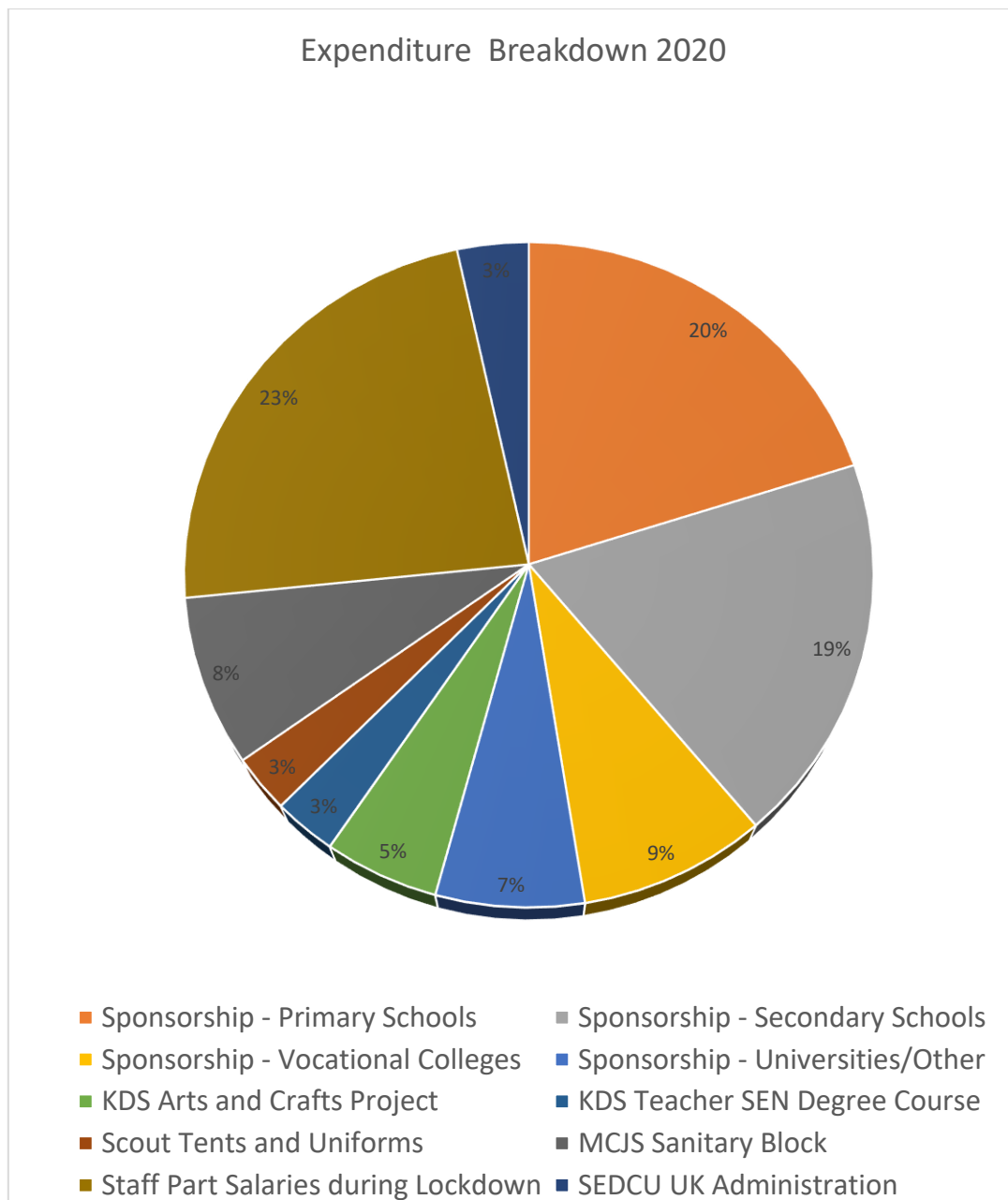
However, in this very different year, these numbers do not tell the whole story. SEDCU pays the sponsorship monies for every child for the whole year at the start of the year. This money is then held in accounts in Uganda to be paid out in three tranches, one for each term. Most of the children have only been at school for (less than) one term, some for two terms. In addition, there have been some payments to seek to prevent hardship for staff and children and their families. However, a substantial fraction of sponsorship monies (ranging from 25% up to 65% depending on individual situations) are still held in local banks ready for when children return to school.

### **SEDCU – Approximate Breakdown of 2020 Expenditure**

Purpose	School	Amount (UGX)	Amount (£)
<b>Sponsorship</b>			
Sponsorship – nursery and primary level	KDS, MCJS	19,849,700	4,265
Sponsorship – secondary level	Hornby High School, Kabale, Kisoro Vision Secondary School	18,503,000	3,976
Sponsorship – vocational college	St Bruno Training Institute, Bishop Wills Iganga	8,441,000	1,816

	Primary Teacher Training College		
Sponsorship – University	ChemEquip Medical College, Ishaka	730,000	155
Other		5,946,000	1,279
<b>TOTAL SPONSOR</b>		53,469,700	11,491 (54.3%)
<b>Projects</b>			
Arts and Crafts	KDS	5,249,000	1,114
Teacher special needs degree course	KDS	2,905,000	617
Scout tents and uniforms	KDS	2,750,000	584
Staff part salaries during lockdown	KDS and Hornby High	6,930,000	1,500
Staff part salaries during lockdown	MCJS	8,894,000	1,938
Materials for face masks	MCJS	1,000,000	218
Payments to enable P7 class only to re-open and be maintained	MCJS	5,985,000	1,248
Sanitary Block 2nd payment	MCJS	8,113,150	1,743
<b>TOTAL PROJECTS</b>		41,826,150	8,962 (42.3%)
<b>UK Administration</b>			
Print costs – two newsletters			148
Bank charges – funds transfer			255
Cost of framing donated watercolours for sale			330
<b>TOTAL ADMIN</b>			733 (3.4%)
<b>TOTAL</b>		95,295,850	21,186

This can be more easily visualised from the following pie chart:



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 funds for payment of committed future project funding instalments and coping with currency fluctuations. There are no administrative costs to run the charity apart from bank charges for funds transfer, newsletter print, and web hosting costs and some costs associated with fundraising which are recovered from the Gift Aid refunds. SEDCU trustees 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. They also aim to meet every sponsored child and to meet every one of their teachers. These visits help us to confirm that our donations are making a real difference to schools and children and enable us to reset priorities for future funding. Our most recent visit was in October 2019

The following represents the financial outcome for the twelve-month period ended 31 December 2020:

**SEDCU Financial Outcome 2020**

	2020 £	2019 £	
<b>Cash at start of year</b>	9,878	7,520	
<b>Receipts</b>			
Donations received	17,971	27,226	
Gift Aid refunded	5,564	3,580	
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	23,535	30,806	
<b>Payments</b>			
Amount sent to schools in Uganda	(20,454)	(27,942)	
Administration costs in UK	(733)	(505)	
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	(21,187)	(28,447)	
<b>Increase/(decrease ) in funds</b>	2,348	2,359	
<b>Cash balance at year end</b>	12,226	9,879	

Our 2020 accounts have been audited and the Annual Report will be posted on our website in mid- February 2021.

## **Future Outlook**

The future outlook for SEDCU in 2021 depends on decisions taken by the Ugandan Government on re-opening schools, colleges and universities while continuing to combat the COVID virus and protecting the health of the population. At the start of 2021, only exam year classes were continuing together with those for special needs children, so around 1.2 out of 15 million pupils were in school. Of the 30 children sponsored through SEDCU, 6 were in school. As this Report is published the Government has issued a roadmap for how different year groups would return to school and college/university in the coming months. As a charity, SEDCU must remain flexible and stand ready to assist as best we can while the whole country seeks to return to normal. We do have some financial reserves and we are also confident our supporters will continue to demonstrate their commitment to SEDCU and what we stand for. Above all we will work tirelessly to achieve our mission and enable every one of the sponsored children to realise their potential.

### **The Trustees of SEDCU**