

SEDCU

Supporting the Education of Disadvantaged Children in Uganda

ANNUAL REPORT and ACCOUNTS 2015

www.sedcu.org.uk

SEDCU Annual Report and Accounts 2015

Introduction

This is the second SEDCU Annual Report covering the period from January 1st to December 31st 2015. This has been a year of consolidation and modest 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. In October 2015 we visited all the schools attended by the children sponsored through SEDCU and were gratified to see our objectives being realised.

We do not 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 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. 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, a poultry rearing project, equipment for blind children and attendance of SEDCU sponsored and other children at a Ugandan National and subsequently an East African Scouting Jamboree.

Mgahinga Nursery and Primary School 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 SEDCU has this year been able to fund the completion of a solar powered computer installation, a water tank, text books, and the first year of a three year training course for the acting head teacher to become fully qualified.

In October 2014 we decided to discontinue sponsorship and project funding at Victory School for reasons explained in last year's Annual Report.

Where SEDCU funds projects it receives regular 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 assistance received from School Places and for collaboration with Sustain for Life which is 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 ten to seventeen. Two more will be sponsored from January 2016. Of these, seven are at Kisoro Demonstration School, eight are attending Mgahinga Nursery and Primary School, and four 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, boarding costs, uniforms, braille paper for blind children, mattresses 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. Many 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 £10914 including Gift Aid recovered from HMRC, which compares with £7892 last year. We are profoundly grateful for the generosity of all our donors.

We have developed and regularly updated our website at www.sedcu.org.uk and this has received 4,390 visits from 108 countries over the 12 month period. We have published two editions of a half yearly eNewsletter which we use to keep supporters informed of recent events.

During the year we 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. In the 12 month period covered by this report, £9514 was sent to Uganda (less £275 for bank charges) and the balance of £4655 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 projects funding installments. The breakdown of our expenditure was as follows:

Sponsorship 48%

Projects 42%

Purchase of items for schools 7%

Bank charges 3%.

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. There are no administrative costs to run the charity apart from bank charges for funds transfer 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 following represents the financial outcome for the 12 month period ended 31 December 2015:

| | £ |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Cash at start of year | 3257 |
| | |
| Receipts | |
| Donations received | 9204 |
| Gift aid refunded | 1708 |
| TOTAL RECEIPTS | 10912 |
| | |
| Payments | |
| Mgahinga School | (4057) |
| Kisoro Demo School | (4527) |
| Items sent to schools | (655) |
| Bank Charges | (275) |
| TOTAL PAYMENTS | (9514) |
| | |
| Net increase in funds | 1298 |
| | |
| Cash Fund at Year End | 4655 |

Full accounts in Charity Commission approved format are attached.

Future Outlook

We have been gratified by the level of donations received during the past year. Our aim will be to continue to seek more individual sponsors for 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 four of the sponsored children having moved to other schools we will need 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

5th February 2016