

SEDCU

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



**ANNUAL REPORT AND
ACCOUNTS**
2022

INTRODUCTION

This is the ninth SEDCU Annual Report covering the period from January 1st to December 31st, 2022.

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 they progress through the Ugandan educational institutions. We also fund 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.

A CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT

During 2022, Ugandan schools have continued their recovery from the extended 2020/21 COVID lockdown. While life has been returning to normal, infection levels have remained high this year, and there have been long term impacts from the COVID pandemic. Across the country, a substantial number of children dropped out of education and may never return. In the privately funded schools sector, where SEDCU mainly operates, a large number of schools closed permanently, and those which have reopened have found this year particularly challenging. Parents have struggled to pay fees with so much damage to the economy.

There have been other major issues this year 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 sharply across the whole of Africa, with shortages causing starvation in some countries. And there is fighting in the border region between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. This has continued throughout the year despite international efforts to seek a way to resolve the situation peacefully. As a result, Kisoro District, where SEDCU operates, is swamped with refugees.

Of course, there are serious economic issues in the rest of the world too, and for charities in the UK the impacts of high inflation and other related factors make fundraising more difficult for charities and create financial challenges for many SEDCU supporters.

Despite all this, SEDCU has continued to do all it can to support the sponsored children (now 33 in number) and their schools. We are pleased to be able to report that the children have been doing well and a number have passed exams and moved from primary to secondary school, or from secondary to tertiary education during 2022.

THE SCHOOLS

SEDCU continues to focus on two primary 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 and eventually to colleges and universities for tertiary education in some cases.

Kisoro Demonstration School (KDS) is a state funded school but one with a difference. As of the start of the new school year for 2023, It has established special arrangements for 145 children with a range of disabilities including deafness, blindness and visual impairment who can receive an education there which otherwise would be impossible. The full 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. In past years, SEDCU has funded a range of projects to improve facilities at the school and to enhance the breadth and quality of education. However, as a result of the pandemic, projects have inevitably been

suspended until more normal times return, although this year we have been able to support opportunities for disabled children to participate at National level in a Paralympic Sports competition and Scouting Jamborees.

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 water supply or drainage, and mains electricity has been limited. The school has been expanding steadily although numbers have fallen slightly due to the pandemic but they have bounced back and as of the start of the 2023 school year there are now some 183 children enrolled. A growing number of children are sponsored through SEDCU to attend MCJS.

Over a number of years, the Mgahinga Community Development Organisation (MCDO) has managed the construction of a number of new buildings and other facilities to cope with the growing number of children attending and to improve the environment for their education. A number of projects have been delivered, most of them involving part – funding by SEDCU. However, with all the disruption and school closures caused by the pandemic, future projects have been suspended and there were no deliverables during 2022. SEDCU did, however, continue to provide some financial support to the school to help deal with a deficit in their accounts for the year

Secondary Schools and Colleges

When SEDCU was established, all the sponsored children were in Primary School. However, as these children have progressed through their primary school education, a number have reached the point where they are ready to take their exams and move up to Secondary Schools, Colleges or Universities. During 2022, 20 children sponsored by SEDCU were in primary education, 7 were in secondary education, and 6 were in either college or university.

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 have funded 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.

Sponsorship pays variously for school fees, scholastic materials, meals, boarding costs, uniforms, braille paper for blind children, mattresses, bedding, 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 or college or university, the fees are generally higher and there are additional requirements for scholastic materials, field trips, books, laptops, tablets and/or smart phones.

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. Some of the older children have moved into the modern age and communicate with us or their sponsors by WhatsApp!

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 activities

and experiences, we have generally been dependent on donations by individual supporters as well as income from fundraising events. The latter have been practically impossible until quite recently due to the various lockdowns in the UK. Even so, our income has been relatively strong despite it 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, and also post updates on social media. Each year, we have published two editions of a Newsletter which we use to keep supporters informed of recent events.

SEDCU is registered with the Charity Commission and our 2022 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 kept at about 2% 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 for 2022 held up well at £27,741.

Our expenditure on sponsorship totalled £11,360, and project expenditure totalled £9,570. The details of how funds were spent are shown in the tabulation below. As a result, we generated a surplus of £6,409 and so were able to increase our reserves, ready for the demands which will no doubt arise. In fact, experience from the first two months of 2023 has shown that school/college/university costs have all risen sharply due to inflation which is rampant in Uganda, and a number of children have moved up to secondary or tertiary education which is a great deal more expensive. This has already led to quite a few demands on the reserves and the Bursary Fund (see below).

Recognising the issue which would arise with these sharp increases in fees at secondary and tertiary level, and the need for example to purchase laptops or

smart phones for students in tertiary education, the SEDCU trustees decided in 2019 to create a Bursary Fund and some of the reserves at that time were transferred into this new Fund. Since then, there have been some further transfers from Reserves and also some supporters have donated money specifically to add to the Bursary Fund. At the end of 2022, the Fund stood at £6774. This is not extra money, it is a subdivision of our Reserves designated for a particular purposes.

Approximate Breakdown of 2021 Expenditure

Purpose	School	Amount (£)
Sponsorship		
Sponsorship – nursery and primary level	KDS, MCJS	3,934
Sponsorship – secondary level	Hornby High School, Kisoro Vision, Standard Secondary School	1,236
Sponsorship – colleges awarding diplomas	St Bruno, KIVI	1,024
Sponsorship – Universities awarding degrees	Chemequip Medical Faculty, Makerere , Bishop Barham, ,African College of Commerce and Technology	5,166
TOTAL SPONSORSHIP		11,360
Projects		
Teacher education	KDS	1010
Support for refugees attending college	KIVI	750
Participation national sporting and scouting events	KDS	6170
COVID relief payment	MCJS	1640
TOTAL PROJECTS		9,570

UK Administration		
Print costs – two newsletters		168
Bank charges – funds transfer		210
Other		24
TOTAL ADMIN		402
TOTAL		21,332

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, and we had to postpone our planned visit in 2021 due to the pandemic. A visit is now taking place in March 2023.

SEDCU Financial Outcome 2022

The following summarises the financial outcome for the twelve-month period ended 31 December 2022, with a comparison with the previous year.

	2022 £	2021 £	
Cash at start of year	15,080	12,227	
Receipts			
Donations received	21,681	20,988	
Gift Aid refunded	6,060	2,211	
TOTAL RECEIPTS	27,741	23,199	
Payments			
Amount sent to schools in Uganda	(20,930)	(20,014)	
Administration costs in UK	(402)	(332)	
TOTAL PAYMENTS	(21,332)	(20,346)	
Increase/(decrease) in funds	6,409	2,853	
Cash balance at year end	21,489	15,080	

Our 2022 accounts have been audited and the Annual Report will be posted on our website in March 2022.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

With all schools, colleges and universities reopened after the pandemic in January 2022, life has largely returned to normal although there are other significant issues which create challenges for the education sector. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we were able to keep schools afloat during 2021 with our COVID relief funds, and 2022 was a year for education to get back on an even keel. We are delighted that the number of children supported through SEDCU has risen over the last 2 years, even though a couple have dropped out of education. We are also proud to see more of the sponsored children progressing to secondary or tertiary education in recent months, despite all the obstacles they had to overcome. 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 and to overcome fresh challenges. We do have sound 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