

SEDCU

July 2018

Newsletter 9

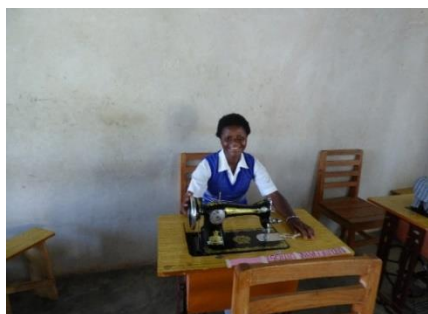
Supporting the Education of Disadvantaged Children in Uganda

Welcome to SEDCU Newsletter No.9 covering the period January 2018 – June 2018

Last year was extremely positive for SEDCU. Our income rose to £17,455 and we dipped into our reserves to send £18,897 to the schools we support in Uganda, an increase of 31% on 2016. If you would like to see the detail on how our funds were spent please view our Annual Report 2017 at <http://www.sedcu.org.uk/annual-reports>. The number of children sponsored through SEDCU has risen to 28 and we also continue to fund a number of projects, some of which are described in this edition.

Life at Vocational School

E is 17, profoundly deaf and enjoying her seventh year of sponsorship by SEDCU. Initially she attended Kisoro Demonstration School (KDS) and is now at St Bruno Vocational College in Kyabirukwa where she started a two year course in February 2017. She was particularly successful at KDS in acquiring practical skills through the SEDCU funded Arts and Crafts project, and she was accepted by St Bruno to develop her knitting and tailoring skills in a specialist unit where most of the 46 children are deaf or have hearing or mental challenges. The students also study business skills.



The ambition of St Bruno is to establish a co-operative where groups can live and work together under a manager, so they could make and sell garments through a shop, shop window or a stall. For young people like E who come from remote areas where there are limited communications and no electricity it would be impractical to work from home.

Maghinga Community Junior School (MCJS) Updates

The school name has been altered and registration with the Ministry is now underway, made possible by favourable inspection reports and completion of the new classroom block compliant with national standards. As part of this process, there will now be separate management of the nursery and primary sections of the school. The five classroom block has now been completed with interior plastering, flooring, ceilings and painting complete along with windows and doors and safety fencing, SEDCU funded most of the roof and also the main water tank.



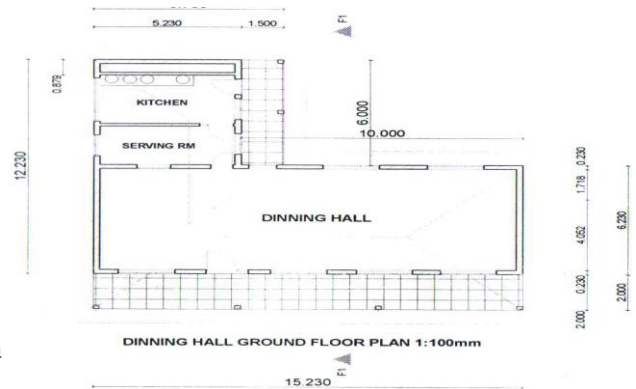
Thanks to donations by various other charities and individuals there are 50 new desks and new bookshelves to accommodate 300 more textbooks.

The old potato sheds where the school began in 2006 have now been demolished, being judged not fit for purpose, and the school now lacks a dining hall for the children. Also, the old kitchen must be replaced – it is extremely basic! The Mgahinga Community Development



Organisation (MCDO) have created a design for a new Kitchen and Dining Hall, with the idea that the latter would be multipurpose and available as a meeting room and community centre.

MCDO estimate the cost of this building at about £17,000 of which the community will contribute about £3,000 plus the land. SEDCU wishes to make a contribution and is seeking donations from our supporters for this worthwhile and indeed essential development. Any support will be gratefully received.



Some time ago we committed to fund a solar panel on the roof which will power ten lights as well as the school computer laboratory. This will cost £800 to cover the solar panel, battery, electronics, wiring, lights, sockets and installation, and the work is underway.

The standards of education are also vital. Consequently, we were delighted to learn about the performance of pupils in the top (P7) class – the class established 2 years ago, with SEDCU funding the teacher Mr Niyibizi George (and the roof of their classroom!). Our contact from MCDO wrote to us in February “*I am glad to inform you that the previous primary seven pupils (2017) sat for the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) and have scored relatively good as the majority(10 out of 13) came out with 2nd grade. It is only few schools who could have beaten us in the area and we now aim at the summit!*” One of the ten children was M, sponsored through SEDCU, who has now moved to Kisoro Vision Secondary School.

We are also delighted to report that another child from Mgahinga, P, sponsored through SEDCU, gained good grades in her Ugandan Certificate of Education exams (GCSE equivalent) at her secondary school, St Gertrudes. As a result she has returned there to study for her A Levels in History, Divinity, Geography and ICT with a view to going on to study law at University.

Donations to SEDCU have also made it possible for us to fund a three year in-service training course for the Head Teacher, Kobusingye Annette, who – like many in Uganda- is not yet a qualified Head. She attends training in her own time each vacation and recently wrote to us and her supporters

“Let me take this opportunity once again to thank you for the great support you are providing me. I have successfully finished 2nd year and start 3rd year , which is the last year of my course, in May 2018. My performance in exams in English Language Education, Music Education, Primary Education and other subjects was 71.4% on average, which gives the result of ‘credit ’from the Institute under Kyambogo University. I am also happy to inform you that our school is improving significantly.”

The following are profiles of the two latest children sponsored through SEDCU.



She was 4 in January and started school in February! She is one of 4 Batwa children for whom parents and the community requested sponsorship. Although very young she is with children from her community. This photo was taken in November 2017 when we met her and her father who told us that this is what he wants so as to give her the best opportunity in life.

On the same occasion we met U with her mother. She is another member of the group of 4 Batwa children. She started school previously but dropped out due to travel distances and hunger. She is 5. The family is overjoyed that U is now at MCJS and benefitting from education, regular meals and proper accommodation.



News from Kisoro Demonstration School (KDS)

KDS continues to play an indispensable role in the education of children with a range of disabilities drawn from across Kisoro District. We have just been informed that the number of such children has risen from 77 to 98, of which 41 are deaf and 32 have sight impairment. SEDCU continues to provide active support to the school, as do others with whom we are in contact, notably Sustain for Life and The Kisoro Trust. We have received a report from the Head Teacher in which he highlights a number of recent achievements including

- Children being actively involved in wildlife conservation activities by planting trees and caring for the school environment as well as working in the school garden
- Children being trained in agricultural skills by the farm manager and special needs staff, mostly on Saturdays
- Pupils benefiting from a better and more varied diet including meat, ground nuts, rice, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, bananas, beans, sweet potatoes, spinach and sukuma wiki, resulting in health improvement
- Deaf and blind children being given computer lessons and learning to type
- Involvement of special needs children, especially the deaf, in using the knitting machines with support from a trainer (whose salary is paid by SEDCU)
 - We were delighted to be able to provide the school with a second knitting machine thanks to the generosity of a donor.



We are pleased to report that, following their success at the National Scouting Jamboree, KDS special needs children were invited to represent their

country at the East African Regional Competition in

December 2017 which involved Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Ethiopia. SEDCU is proud to have provided the funding to make this possible and delighted that the team again came out on top. They received certificates, a trophy and a 50Kg bag of sugar!



July 2018

Newsletter 9

News from Kisoro Demonstration School (KDS) cont.

Whatever is achieved at KDS is largely down to their dedicated staff and we recognise that they should have opportunities for personal development. The SEDCU trustees have decided to agree to a request to fund the Head of Special Needs, Mugabe Joseph, to undertake an In Service Course which will lead to his obtaining a Bachelor Degree in Special Needs Education. He will undertake this course in his own time each vacation over the next 3 years.

SEDCU and its sponsors continue to support children who have completed their primary education and moved up to other schools or colleges. We are delighted to report that G, a blind boy who has been sponsored for 6 years, gained excellent results in his Ugandan Certificate of Education at Hornby High School and has now moved to Iganga High School in the East of Uganda which has a unit for blind children which is particularly highly regarded.



S, a former student of KDS and St Mary's, Kabale, is now studying to become a laboratory technician at Chemequip Medical School, Ishaka campus. At the end of her first semester she emailed: ***"am very happy because i have passed with out any retake and the highly passed subjects are for mr.masereka samuel where i have 73 in general laboratory practices and 71 in practicals"***. This photo which was taken in November 2017 shows S with her tutor, Mr Masereka Samuel.

Safeguarding

You will almost certainly be aware of the scandals concerning staff and volunteers working overseas for UK charities such as Save the Children, Oxfam and Plan International. The Charity Commission has sought assurances from all relevant UK charities that they have an appropriate Safeguarding Policy in place and they seek assurances from overseas partners. SEDCU has developed such a policy document and we have sent it to our key contacts in Uganda to seek such assurances. We have received responses which show that this issue, and the need for them to ensure that the children they are educating do not come to any harm, is well understood.

SEDCU is delighted to welcome on board a fifth trustee, KATE COULSON. We are confident she will bring new energy and fresh ideas to the team. There will be an article from her in the next edition

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