

SEDCU Annual Report and Accounts 13/14

Chairman's Introduction

I am pleased to introduce this first Annual Report covering the period from the establishment of SEDCU in August 2013 to December 2014.

My wife and I have founded the charity with the mission 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 have focused 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.

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

Following a visit to Uganda in 2011, Jan and I decided to sponsor two children at each of three schools: Victory Nursery and Primary School, Buhoma; Kisoro Demonstration School, Kisoro; and Mgahinga Nursery and Primary School, Mgahinga. We transferred this sponsorship to operate through SEDCU after it was established, and revisited all three schools in October 2013.

In October 2014 we decided to discontinue sponsorship and project funding at Victory School. During our 2013 visit, we were very impressed with the rapid development of this relatively new school and with the staff whom we met. We were struck by how much they were doing with extremely limited funds, and recognised that many parents were impoverished, hence our modest input was truly valued. Subsequently, the School developed a new relationship with an American charity, the Kamukama Foundation, and they set out plans to support fast continued growth of the school and for every child at the school to be sponsored by them. We concluded it would be best to transfer the sponsorship of the two children we were supporting to the Foundation and to focus our input where there was greater need.

We have built up SEDCU's relationship with the other two 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. SEDCU has funded an arts and crafts project, a poultry rearing project and attendance of SEDCU sponsored children at the first national disability sports gala organised by the Ugandan Paralympics Committee.

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. The school is growing steadily and SEDCU has been able to fund most of the cost for roofing materials needed to create an extra classroom for the new top class. It also funded bedding for sponsored children having to board. SEDCU has just completed funding a solar powered computer installation so that older children and staff can gain access to the Internet – there is no mains power or water supply.

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 (Rev Jenny's charity) and School Places when we were setting up SEDCU. More recently we have been grateful for collaboration with Sustain for Life which is funding building and other projects at schools where we are involved.

The Children

Over the first 16 months of SEDCU's existence it has sponsored, for some or all of the period, two children at Victory School, three children at Mgahinga School and five children at Kisoro School. One of the children has left Kisoro School and moved up to another, Hornby School, and SEDCU continues to support him there. Sponsorship of another child at Mgahinga has been committed and will start in January 2015. Sponsorship pays variously for school fees, scholastic materials, boarding costs, purchase of uniforms, braille paper for blind children and a range of other necessities. For some children with no home to go to, SEDCU pays for holiday boarding costs. 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.

Fundraising and Administration

When SEDCU was established my wife and I were sponsoring a number of children which we now do through SEDCU. Additional sponsors have been found through word of mouth and this is very much in the spirit of how we wish the charity to operate, with each sponsor able to develop a relationship with 'their' child. To fund projects which have been identified by the schools

as necessary to enhance the children's education and/or after school activities we have undertaken broader fundraising activities. These have included corporate events organised within specific firms, a sponsored walk, fundraising at local fetes, an information evening organised by a Rotary club and many individual donations. We acknowledge with gratitude every donation. The total raised was £7892.06 including Gift Aid recovered from HMRC.

We have developed and regularly updated our website at www.sedcu.org.uk and this has received xxx visits from x countries over the xx period since it went live. We have published two editions of a half yearly e newsletter which we use to keep supporters informed of recent events.

Registration with HMRC in March 2014 has enabled us to recover gift aid for donations where we have received the relevant declaration.

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 16 month period covered by this report, £4435.36 was sent to Uganda and the balance of £3256.70 (net of bank charges) was held in the SEDCU bank account at the period 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 SEDCU policy is to maintain a reserve of at least £350 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. There are no administrative costs to run the charity apart from bank charges for funds transfer which are recovered from the Gift Aid refunds. My wife and I aim to travel to Uganda every two years at our own expense to liaise with the schools, verify that SEDCU funds are being spent as intended and to establish future needs.

The following represents the financial outcome for the period ended 31 December 2014:

	£
Receipts	
Donations received	6815
Gift aid refunded	1077
TOTAL RECEIPTS	7892
Payments	
Victory School	(572)
Mgahinga School	(1289)
Kisoro Demo School	(2574)
Bank Charges	(200)
TOTAL PAYMENTS	(4635)
Cash Fund at Year End	3257

Future Outlook

We have been gratified by the level of donations received during the first 16 months of our existence. 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 after school life for the children. With one of the sponsored children having moved to another school (Hornby) we will need to consider whether to develop a relationship with this school and start to look at sponsorship and projects there. We aim to visit all the schools and meet with sponsored children (and parents where possible) in October 2015. We also will need to register SEDCU with the Charity Commission.

Dr Bernard Herdan CB

Chairman

