

SEDCU

Supporting the Education of Disadvantaged Children in Uganda

July 2024

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Newsletter 21

Welcome to SEDCU Newsletter No.21 covering the period February 2024 – July 2024

As we reach the mid-year point in the Ugandan academic year, news from the schools is positive. Our focus as a charity continues to be on raising the quality of education through teacher training, and on broadening the children's horizons through new experiences. There are a number of relevant articles in this issue. Of course, none of this would be possible without the generosity of organisations who have awarded grants to SEDCU, as well as individual donors. On this theme, we are appealing now for sponsorship of two trustees who are participating in the Great North Run half-marathon in September - and we are sure you will want to encourage them on their way!!

MUST BE MAD!!



On the 8th of September two of our trustees, Ben, and Kate, will be completing the Great North Run in aid of SEDCU. The event was established in 1981 by the famous Brendan Foster and is now the largest half marathon in the world! Kate and Ben are looking forward to joining 60,000 others on the 13.1-mile run, which they will both find a challenge.

Ben says he does not expect to emulate Sir Mo Farah this time. On the contrary he identifies with the gentleman who ran the London Marathon earlier this year and was greeted at the finishing line in the early hours of the following morning!



Kate says she is looking forward to dusting off her trainers, having not run any distance events in over 5 years, and is embracing the challenge! She never expected to be in 'training' again but is really excited for the opportunity to be part of such a momentous event.

If you would like to support our brave runners, please follow the link below or see back page for other payment options:

<https://checkout.justgiving.com/7i7r02ksz7>

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G graduates from Uni



G will be a familiar face from the pages of the SEDCU Newsletters. He was the first disabled boy we sponsored in 2012 at KDS. We have watched him progress through primary and secondary schools and he has now graduated in English from Makerere University. He has also featured because of his sporting prowess, most recently in archery, and his determination to represent the disabled. We wish him every success in life wherever it takes him.

Staying in touch

When students leave KDS to progress to Secondary School or Vocational College, the staff at KDS monitor their progress – academically, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

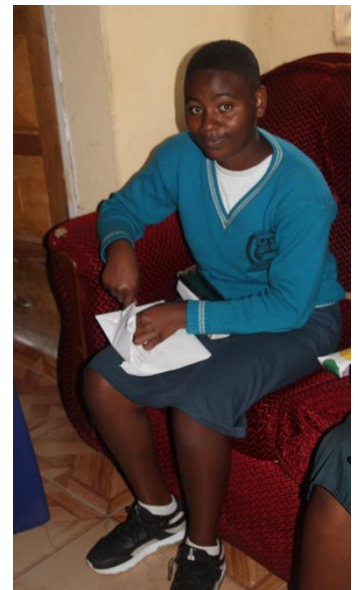
Here, the Welfare Officer, Alex, is visiting Hornby High School in Kabale. (The three boys in the photo are all sponsored through SEDCU). He will ensure that he is happy with their well-being. He will confirm that they are satisfied with their dormitory arrangements, their meals, the teaching, clubs, their friendships etc. He will give them the opportunity to say if they have any concerns. He will furthermore discuss their progress with the school and raise any issues.



Aiming for a Nursing Career

D is one of the girls who has been sponsored through SEDCU for many years. She decided at the end of last year that, at the age of 17, she wished to leave her academic studies at Secondary School and seek to transfer to a vocational course, ideally at University. We have recently heard that D has been accepted to undertake a 2 1/2-year course at University that will hopefully lead to her being awarded a Certificate in Midwifery. This is such amazing news! Considering her background, and all the ups and downs in her life, this is already quite an achievement - and would never have happened without the steadfast support from her sponsor.

Her course starts on July 15th and is at the Metropolitan University which has a campus in Kisoro which Jan and Ben have seen when they were last in Kisoro a year ago - very impressive new buildings close to the centre of town. We have received D's admission letter for the academic year 2024/25, which includes a truly daunting list of all the things which each student must bring with them on the first day of term. This includes a large number of medical textbooks, uniforms, medical equipment - stethoscopes and the like - personal clothing, bedding etc. And of course, fees must be paid before arrival for the first year. We are grateful to her sponsor for his continued support, which will be supplemented by payment from the SEDCU Bursary Fund to cover much of the set-up requirements.



KDS Pupils compete at National Athletics Championship 2024

SEDCU funded a team from KDS to participate in the Ugandan Children's National Athletics Competition, which took place at Kitgum in the far north of the country, so extremely far from Kisoro which is in the very South. 162 districts from across the whole of Uganda participated. Of these 78 had Special Needs children in their teams. KDS entered 16 visual or hearing-impaired children and they were accompanied by 2 teachers.

The children from KDS entered many events, including various track distances (60 - 800 m), javelin, shot put, long jump and discus. While individuals did well, overall KDS had been disadvantaged by not having enough children to participate in every event category – something to consider for next time. The teachers also noted the children were tired from the journey, and the venue was very hot compared to Kisoro (which is quite high and therefore relatively cool).

Despite these issues the participation of the children was an amazing experience for them, as was the travel itself as they got to see parts of the country where there were many chimpanzees, the Ichuya forest reserve and the Murchison waterfalls. We also heard that *'children were excited to see old women cycling in Kitgum as in Kisoro they neither ride cycles nor motorcycles!'*



Teachers with the team at Kitgum



5000 meters race!



KDS team that went to the Sports competition (Athletics)

MCJS Environmental Study trip

In February 2024, an environmental study trip was undertaken by 20 pupils in the top class (P7) of MCJS. The trip was fully funded by SEDCU. Four staff members and governors plus the Head Teacher also participated. The following report was sent to us by the Head Teacher immediately after they returned.

“I'm very grateful that we did return well from the school environmental science trip. It was really an interesting experience for both teachers and pupils. A lot was learned, new discoveries were made.

Pupils learned much about waste management, had a look and learned much about different animal species, visited the Uganda Museum where they learnt much about history of Uganda.

We had an experience at Entebbe International airport, where myself witnessed one of the biggest planes for the first time. Being sincere, it was my first time to have such a chance. Can imagine now how it was for the pupils. We were also briefed about aviation and other procedures for booking and travelling.

We had a drive to Jinja city, through Mabira Forest and Lugazi sugar works. We visited the source of the Nile, pupils asked a lot of questions about it. This was an extra amazing study for the pupils and teachers. In this case, pupils used to learn about it, but had no idea if it ever really existed.

My testimony is that everything was interesting and educational. Pupils learned a lot from the facilitators and have promised to apply all the knowledge and experience in their learning. Very soon, each one of them will draft a handwritten report/essay summarizing the course of their trip, and I will send you scanned copies from pupils and teachers who participated.”



Pupils and teachers at the Wildlife Museum Library



At the source of the River Nile

The Deputy Head Teacher sent a more detailed report including the following additional points:

“At the Ugandan Wildlife Education Centre, we saw captured animal species like rhino, cheetah, serval cat, lions, monkeys, chimpanzee, zebra, elephant, giraffe, crocodile, tortoise, otters to mention but a few.

We saw the crested crane standing on one leg, a sign that Uganda is moving forward. As they say ‘as proud as a peacock’ indeed it is true. The peacock has all the colours which makes it very proud.

While we were still continuing with the tour we visited the Victoria Mall Supermarket. The children got the opportunity to go in a lift and have fun! The children moved around the supermarket seeing how prices of commodities are tagged. This enabled them to understand there is no bargaining.

Throughout the whole journey no one got an injury or fell sick, Glory to God!"



Learning how to recycle tyres and plastics

In a more recent report, the Head Teacher wrote the following reflection:

“Allow me also to share with you the incredible impact of our recent school trip on both our pupils and teachers. Your support made this experience possible, and we're grateful for your investment in our educational journey.

The trip had a profound effect on our pupils offering them knowledge to:

- ***Develop teamwork and collaboration skills through group activities and group discussions.***
- ***Build confidence and resilience through challenging experiences.***
- ***Enhance their problem-solving skills and think creatively.***
- ***Cultivate empathy and understanding through environmental and cultural immersion for the new developed curriculum.***
- ***Form lasting bonds and memories with their peers.***

For us teachers, the trip has provided,

- ***Opportunities for professional development and networking***
- ***Enhanced knowledge and understanding of the subject matter in the school curriculum.***
- ***Strategies for incorporating experiential learning into our teaching practices.***
- ***A deeper understanding of the pupils' strengths and abilities.***
- ***A renewed sense of purpose and enthusiasm for teaching.***

The skills gained during the trip are transferable to various aspects of life, including academics, personal growth, and future careers.

Our pupils and teachers returned from the trip with a renewed sense of excitement and purpose, ready to apply their new skills and knowledge in the classroom and beyond.”

SUPPORTING TEACHERS AT UNIVERSITY

As our supporters will know, the Trustees continue to be very keen to support teachers at KDS and MCJS with upgrading their qualifications and acquiring new ideas to improve their teaching – and their enjoyment of their chosen profession. We fund their fees and necessary books and equipment. They do their studying in their own time.

MCJS Headteacher

In January, the Head Teacher of MCJS, Iragena Innocent, began a degree course in Education at the Metropolitan University of Uganda in Kisoro. In June he wrote:

“University life has been a transformative experience, challenging me to grow both academically and personally. I'm developing valuable skills, making lifelong friends, and discovering new passions. Your sponsorship has allowed me to focus on my studies, explore more teaching and administration knowledge, and become a more confident and independent teacher.

The benefits of your support extend far beyond financial assistance. Your belief in me has instilled a sense of purpose and motivation, driving me to excel in all aspects of my life. I'm gaining a deeper understanding of my field, more developed critical thinking skills, and becoming a more well-rounded person.

I'm committed to making the most of this opportunity. I'm honored to have you as a part of my journey and look forward to staying in touch and sharing my progress with you after completion of the first academic year at university in December. I have completed my sessions of December and May intakes. I sat for my end of semester examination in May and awaiting the results in August intake. I'm so much hopeful for the best result.”



Iragena Innocent outside the University in Kisoro

KDS Special Needs Teacher

We have previously written about Niyonzima Nestor. As Head of the Special Needs Department at KDS he has been studying for a Bachelor's Degree in Special Educational Needs at Kyambogo University. He will complete this in December 2024.

Anticipating Nestor's graduation, the Trustees of SEDCU agreed to support another teacher from KDS who currently holds a Diploma in Special Needs Education from Kyambogo University. Ngaboyisonga Edward is now studying for a degree. We have met Edward on numerous occasions and are always impressed by his quiet and gentle manner. He teaches deaf pupils and is in charge of scouting.

As he is teaching full time, he will also attend and study during the holidays. The duration of the course is three years from the time of admission where every year is studied in Sessions. There are four sessions in a year.

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Edward wrote to us saying that “as a teacher I have an interest to undertake a degree course still in special Education needs such that I can meet the following objectives.

- To improve or acquire more knowledge, skills, and values on how to handle children with different special needs
- To improve on assessment methods and identifying learners who have special needs.
- Making proper placement, modifying the environment where necessary for their survival as well as making necessary referrals to other specialists for further interventions.

The course content for Year 1 is:

- Introduction to special needs training.
- Identifying common types of SEN.
- statutory assessment for SEN.
- Supporting pupils with SEN.
- Supporting children with autism, Dyslexia and ADHD (attention, deficit, hyperactive disorder)
- Creating a safe learning environment and dealing with difficult situations”.

We wish Edward every success with his studies.



This is a photo of all the KDS Special Needs teachers. Nestor is on the left leaning against the tree and Edward is in Scouts uniform, 5th from the left.

AFTER SCHOOL AND WEEKENDS

At KDS, all the children with disabilities who have been sponsored through SEDCU have always boarded at the school. Many stay at school through the holidays as well. This means that they have time after school and at weekends to fill with activities other than schoolwork - once their homework has been completed.

Learning how to garden and grow vegetables is important and they can spend time on the school farm. They can also spend time on craft activities, making mats, bags, necklaces etc. These three photos show that, from an early age, the children are taught other practical skills such as how to use the knitting machines. They are also taught how to make potato crisps and liquid soap!



Children learning to use the knitting machines to make sweaters

Children learning to make potato crisps



Children learning to make liquid soap



A CONCERT FOR SEDCU

In April, Welshpool Rotary Club held a second concert to benefit SEDCU. The first one was held in 2019 and was a great success. The second proved to be even more successful raising £1000! The profits will go to support the education of teachers. Participating teachers will undertake studies through in-service courses in their own time during school holidays, with SEDCU funding fees, travel, accommodation, and laptop where needed.

THANK YOU WELSHPOOL!



FUNDRAISING

Community Support

In our last Newsletter we highlighted Seasons for Women. We are delighted that **Soroptimist International Tynedale** has chosen to support it as their overseas charity.

SEDCU is once again extremely grateful to the **Inner Wheel Club of Hexham and Tynedale** for their very generous donation which will go to support the Bursary Fund. This was set up to provide students leaving school and going to college or university with textbooks, computers and other scholastic materials.

Thank You Leo Lion!

SEDCU was delighted to receive a substantial grant last year from Leo Lion Foundation (formerly COINS Foundation). A number of the activities and projects featured in this newsletter might not have been possible without this. In particular, this grant funded the Environmental Study Trips for children at KDS and MCJS, KDS participation in the Junior Athletics Event for special needs children, and the first year of the MCJS Head Teacher degree course. As we go to press, we have been informed of another grant awarded for the coming year. Thank you so much on behalf of the children and teachers!

COLOUR RUSH TURNS INTO CLIMB!

Unfortunately, in June, Team SEDCU were unable to participate in the Colour Rush event due to it being cancelled without notice. Following this disappointment and after putting our heads together, we decided to undertake the O2 arena rooftop climb! The O2 is 52m high and involves an ascent and descent of up to 30 degrees. There are 12 of us partaking, 8 of whom are children ranging from 9-11 years old. We aim to complete this in September 2024. Thank you so much to everyone who has already sponsored the team. If you would like to support our courageous climbers, please follow the link: <https://checkout.justgiving.com/mwaz4z2fyk>

Thank you to our sponsors, donors, supporters and all who take an interest in SEDCU. Together we can continue to make our stated mission a reality. If you wish to donate you can do so through the website or by cheque made out to SEDCU and mailed to Lowstead, Highford Lane, Hexham NE46 2DP. Or you can pay online into the SEDCU account, sort code 20-74-81, account number 83561356.

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