

**SEDCU**

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



**ANNUAL REPORT AND  
ACCOUNTS**  
**2024**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This is the eleventh SEDCU Annual Report covering the period from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

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 Southwest 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 2024, there have been some global issues 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. There are also terrorist groups 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. There have also been some serious terrorist incidents leading to substantial loss of life.

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 may make fundraising more difficult for charities as supporters struggle with the rising cost of living.

Despite all this, SEDCU has continued to do all it can to support the sponsored children 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. A total of 38 children have been sponsored through SEDCU over the years. By the end of 2024, 8 children had completed their education, graduated from colleges or universities, and are now classified as “SEDCU Alumni”.

## **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. During the 2024 school year, it has been providing Special Needs Education for some 145 children with various categories of special needs 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, and multiple disabilities.

These children have to board, and in many cases their parents (if they have them) are unable to pay the costs. Some children have no home to go to and spend their holidays at school. A number of children are sponsored through SEDCU to attend KDS. Over the years, SEDCU has funded a range of projects to improve facilities at the school and to enhance the breadth and quality of education.

**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 as yet no mains water supply or drainage and mains electricity has been limited. There are plans to address these issues. Meanwhile, the school has been expanding steadily and during the 2024 school year there were nearly 200 children enrolled. A 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. In 2024, SEDCU continue to provide some financial support to the school and funded several projects aimed at enhancing the breadth and quality of education.

### **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 2024, 12 children sponsored by SEDCU were in primary education, 11 were in secondary education, and 5 were in either college or university. A total of 5 have graduated and completed their education this year.

### **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 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 almost 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. This year we are also pleased to report we have received some substantial grants, as a result of which our income has risen significantly. As a result, we have been able to send more funds to Uganda in 2023 and 2024 than ever before. We are profoundly grateful for the generosity of all our donors.

We have developed and regularly updated our website at [www.sedcu.org.uk](http://www.sedcu.org.uk), and 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 2024 Accounts have again been checked by a finance professional and filed in compliance with the Commission's 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 1% of expenditure) and the balance goes to fund priority projects.

## FINANCIAL RESULTS

The trustees are pleased to report that SEDCU's accounts are in good shape. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, our income for 2024 held up well at £42,328.

Our expenditure on sponsorship totalled £10,966, and project expenditure totalled £25,412. The details of how funds were spent are shown in the tabulation below. As a result, we generated a surplus of £5,436 and so were able to increase our reserves, ready for the demands which will no doubt arise. This has already led to some demands on the reserves and the Bursary Fund (see below).

Recognising the issue which would arise with 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 income and also some supporters have donated money specifically to add to the Bursary Fund. At the end of 2024, the Fund stood at £10,095. This is not extra money, it is a subdivision of our Reserves designated for a particular purposes.

### Approximate Breakdown of 2024 Expenditure

Purpose	School	Amount (£)
<b>Sponsorship</b>		
Sponsorship – nursery and primary level	KDS, MCJS	1,714
Sponsorship – secondary level	Hornby High School, Kisoro Vision, Standard Secondary School, BAVOSS	4,726
Sponsorship – colleges awarding diplomas, work experience	St Bruno, KDS work experience	4,030
Sponsorship – Universities awarding degrees	Bishop Barham,	496
<b>TOTAL SPONSORSHIP</b>		10,966

<b>Projects</b>		
Teacher degree level education	KDS & MCJS	2,700
Textbook Library	MCJS	300
Participation national sporting events	KDS	3,300
Participation in national and international scouting events	KDS	7,150
Arts & Crafts project	KDS	1,224
Environmental Study Trip	MCJS	3,200
Environmental Study Trip	KDS	5,546
Teacher holiday pay	KDS, MCJS	1,905
Other		87
<b>TOTAL PROJECTS</b>		25,412
<b>UK Administration</b>		
Print costs – two newsletters		263
Bank charges – funds transfer		195
Other		24
<b>TOTAL ADMIN</b>		482
<b>TOTAL</b>		36,892

Note: Costs are allocated to the year when funds were sent to Uganda, in some cases not when activity actually took place.

The SEDCU policy is to maintain a reasonable reserve 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.

Since SEDCU was founded, SEDCU trustees have aimed 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 with parents, teachers and community members. 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. Due to the pandemic, there was a pause in these visits, but we are pleased to report there was a very successful visit in March 2023, and the next is provisionally planned for July 2025.

### **SEDCU Financial Outcome 2024**

The following summarises the financial outcome for the twelve-month period ended 31 December 2024, with a comparison with the previous year.

	2024 £	2023 £	
<b>Cash at start of year</b>	24,850	21,489	
<b>Receipts</b>			
Donations received	39,684	41,777	
Gift Aid refunded	2,644	4,616	
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	42,328	46,393	
<b>Payments</b>			
Amount sent to schools in Uganda	(36,378)	(42,520)	
Administration costs in UK	(514)	(482)	
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	(36,892)	(43,002)	
<b>Increase/(decrease ) in funds</b>	5,436	3,361	
<b>Cash balance at year end</b>	30,286	24,850	

Our 2024 accounts have been audited, and the Annual Report and Accounts will be posted on our website in March 2025.



## **FUTURE OUTLOOK**

We are delighted to report that the number of children being educated at the two primary schools supported by SEDCU has continued to grow. With the passage of time, we are also proud to see more of the sponsored children progressing from primary to secondary or tertiary education, and a number have graduated this year. Looking into the future, the proportion of sponsored primary school children will continue to fall those in secondary or tertiary education will grow, as will the number of SEDCU Alumni who are embarking on their careers. SEDCU has sound financial reserves and we are also confident our supporters will continue to demonstrate their commitment to SEDCU and all that 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**