

SEDCU

Supporting the Education of Disadvantaged Children in Uganda

December 2015

Newsletter 4

Welcome to SEDCU Newsletter No.4 covering the period July – December 2015

HEADLINES

Jan and Ben spent the first half of October in Kisoro District. Although it was an exhausting schedule it was overwhelmingly positive and they saw many examples of the difference SEDCU is making. As well as meeting all the sponsored children they met a high proportion of their parents, grandparents or guardians and discussed the progress of each child with their school staff. Tangible results of the projects funded by SEDCU over the past two years were very evident. Jan and Ben wish to record their gratitude to those who gave up so much time to make their visit so fulfilling.

SEDCU is delighted to report that, although the year is not quite completed, we are confident that we will have exceeded our financial targets. We had aimed to raise £8000 during the year (including Gift Aid recovery) but thanks to committed efforts by so many of our supporters we expect to reach £10,000. Much of this money has already been transmitted to the schools in Uganda for sponsorship and projects. The recent visit clarified priorities as identified by the schools and communities. Further funds will be sent accordingly in the coming weeks.

SPONSORSHIP

The number of children being sponsored through SEDCU has risen to 16. While we continue to focus on Kisoro Demonstration School (Disabled Unit) (KDS) and Mgahinga Nursery and Primary School (MNPS) three of the children have passed their exams and progressed to three different Secondary Schools where SEDCU is monitoring their progress and development.



ID, seen here with her mother, is the latest child to be sponsored through SEDCU. She is a 10 year old twin and deaf. Both her parents are disabled and struggle to make a living. Her twin is also being sponsored locally. ID hopes to be a nurse!

The sponsorship arrangement was made when Jan and Ben met with ID and her mother in a remote village near the border with Congo. Their local villagers witnessed the conversation and showed their approval by spontaneously applauding!

REPORT ON VISIT TO MGAHINGA

Jan and Ben made their third visit to Mgahinga and stayed at the Community camp. They were warmly welcomed and spent much of the time reviewing the progress made by MNPS and discussing plans for the future. Since their last visit in 2013 the school has grown from 97 to 119 children and 2 additional classes have been added, P5 and P6, in the building whose roof was part funded by SEDCU. The opportunity to meet with all the sponsored children and their family members was enriched by being able to give the children a letter and gift from their sponsors in the UK. From their reactions it was obvious that they had never before received a wrapped present or card in an envelope!



A meeting was convened of the School Governors, representatives from Gisozi Duterimbere Farmers Association (GDFA) - which founded the school - and from Mgahinga Community Development Organisation (MCDO). Jan and Ben were invited to address the meeting and participate in a lively Question and Answer Session. This demonstrated how valuable SEDCU's input has been and helped to establish priorities for the future.

SEDCU was also delighted to meet with the Chair and key members of MCDO Management Team together with the Chairs of School Governors and GDFA. Together they discussed the future direction for MNPS including plans to add a new class (P7) and a project to rebuild a substantial fraction of the school to meet Government standards. A meeting with the school staff highlighted their list of priorities to raise standards and enhance school facilities



One of the donated laptops was gratefully received and will be powered by the solar cell system previously donated by Welshpool and District Rotary Club which we saw in operation.

REPORT ON VISIT TO KDS

On arrival at KDS it was immediately apparent that there had been a number of significant improvements to the fabric of the school with the aim of making access easier for blind and physically disabled children. These were funded by Sustain for Life, another larger charity active in Uganda, with whom SEDCU collaborates. Again the sponsored children were given gifts and cards from their sponsors and this caused great excitement.

Amongst other things the Braille Machine bought with the collection from Swineshead Carol Service 2014, a donated laptop and the knitting wool and needles donated by Well Pharmacy in Irchester were gratefully received.



Chiza Wilson, a boy sponsored through SEDCU for two years is clearly delighted with the Braille Machine.



The wool being distributed by an instructor to ensure fair play!

The progress made with the Arts and Crafts Project, which has been funded through SEDCU since January 2014, is most impressive. It has now become part of the curriculum across the whole school and has started to generate some income through sale of products! It will still require ongoing support to realise the educational benefits.



On a very wet Saturday afternoon the disabled children were obviously enjoying a range of craft activities. Some of them are making tote bags from recycled plastic bags as Uganda has recently banned them. These are very popular with parents!



The Poultry Project has continued to grow which has led to questions as to how it should best be accommodated in the future.



KDS special needs children had the opportunity to participate in the National Scouting Jamboree in Entebbe in August. SEDCU funded a significant fraction of the costs. They were highly successful, awarded a trophy and one of the sponsored blind children was presented to the President of Uganda in recognition of his poetry recital. As a result KDS was featured on national media. Their success means they have been invited to participate in the East African Jamboree

Jan and Ben had the opportunity to make some visits to the homes of four of the children sponsored through SEDCU and met their families. They were accompanied by the Head Teacher. These were emotional occasions highlighting the extreme poverty in which they are living and served to reinforce the value of sponsorship.

Visits to other schools

Visits to three different secondary schools to meet the older children sponsored through SEDCU proved fruitful. They all appeared to have settled in well, were applying themselves to their studies and harbour career ambitions which we can only hope will be realised in due course.



S with a laptop donated to SEDCU



With P at her new school



G has been sponsored for 4 years!

HOME OFFICE EVENT ON VOLUNTEERING

SEDCU was delighted to be one of three charities invited to participate in a Home Office meeting aimed at demonstrating to its management staff the benefits of volunteering. It was an opportunity to speak about Volunteers wishing to fundraise for SEDCU in the UK or to spend periods of time with Mgahinga Community Development Organisation in Uganda.

Email SEDCU for more information
info@sedcu.org.uk

LOOKING AHEAD

SEDCU's primary objective continues to be the funding of the education of disadvantaged children who would otherwise be unable to attend school and realise their potential. The schools continue to request support from SEDCU for the most needy children.

SEDCU continues to raise funds for priority projects identified by the schools.

Thanks to the magnificent donation of proceeds from their Family Concert the Braga family are providing the funding for the Acting Head teacher at MNPS to gain her formal qualifications over the next three years. She will do this during the school holidays and had the full support of the staff and community.

MNPS is desperately in need of another tank, to collect rain water from the roof, as the school has grown. The fundraising BBQ organised by Alison Miller-Varey, one of our supporters in Cumbria, has made a significant contribution and the tank is on order!

A second knitting machine has been donated to KDS for the Arts and Crafts Project and funding for a part time instructor has been committed. Thank you!

However the list of projects for funding continues to grow and we are currently seeking support for the following:

The boarding house at MNPS is currently without power and needs a solar powered installation to provide lighting.

The continued development of Arts and Crafts Self Sufficiency Project at KDS has an ongoing requirement for materials

As already mentioned SEDCU funded a number of children to attend the National Scouting Jamboree. As a result of their success they have been invited to participate in the East African regional Jamboree in Nairobi. SEDCU would like to contribute to make this possible.

MNPS has a continuing need for text books! The teachers have also requested support to attend training courses.

With the plan at MNPS to add the top primary class they have asked SEDCU if it would be possible to fund the salary and accommodation of a suitably qualified teacher for the next three years. (The school is currently two teachers short).

At KDS there seem to be relatively few relaxations available for the blind and visually impaired children outside school hours, especially when it rains. SEDCU has donated Braille games, footballs with bells in etc. but there is still room for more. We are discussing with the school the possibility of establishing a recorder group for these children and funding an instructor.

STOP PRESS

At Jan and Ben's second presentation to Welshpool and District Rotary Club in mid November they were surprised and delighted to be presented with a very substantial cheque at the end of the evening. It will make a big difference.

For the second year running Bright Horizons Foundation for Children Europe has awarded a Volunteering Grant to Rebecca Sanders Herdan for SEDCU. This recognises the impact made through her volunteering as a Trustee of SEDCU and her commitment to maintaining the website and publishing the twice yearly Newsletters

THANK YOU to our sponsors, supporters, fundraisers and all who take an interest in SEDCU. Together we can continue to make our stated mission a reality.