



Uganda Humanist Schools Trust

## Progress Report on the Mustard Seed School, Busota from the School's Director, Moses Kamya

December 2017



Mustard Seed Senior 2 student at her home with sister and brother

In 2017 we have seen tremendous progress at the Mustard Seed School, Busota. We ended the year with an enrolment of over 500 children from S1 to S6, the largest since we began.

We are proud of our association with UHST, which has worked tirelessly with us to foster the school's progress over the years.

A donation of additional Z-box computers now makes a total of 15 in the computer lab. They are all equipped with the RACHEL repository, which contains a wide range of material selected for schools from Wikipedia, a wide choice of e-textbooks and videos, including those from the Khan Academy. The materials cover all subjects and are invaluable for students who wish to gain an edge in their

examination preparation. Our children enjoy using the computer room whenever they are free from routine lessons. Having good computers qualifies our O and A level UNEB examination centres to enter children for examinations in computer studies as a subject.

UHST donated each year much needed text books and science equipment. These have helped to transform educational standards at Mustard Seed School.



*Prize for Reading for Pleasure Awards*

As well as the formal curriculum, our school places much emphasis on co-curricular activities, which students take part in outside lessons. We participated in the Coca Cola sponsored Kamuli District post-primary football competitions and successfully represented the district at the regional tournament. Our scout group, which attracts both boys and girls, did well in the district competitions and proceeded to national competitions at Kaazi near Kampala.

The school's Humanist Club has kept the spirit of humanism alive in the school with weekly lively debates on key topical issues. The humanist club led the school twice in doing communal charity work in the nearby Busota trading centre, where they picked up litter, cut grass and planted trees.



*Dancing during International Friendship Visit*

The International Friendship Week was successfully conducted at the school. We hosted visitors led by Steve Hurd from the UK and Germany. They organised lessons and talks to students and staff and expressed delight at the school's progress.

Scholarships extended to the Mustard Seed school from UHST have enabled over 50 needy but academically bright children to attend our school through the year 2017. These would not have had such a chance had it not been the support from different humanist groups and individuals from different parts of the world.



*Hilary with Senior 5 and 6 scholarship students*

Further donations from UHST have enabled our school to expand its infrastructure. Following the growing success of the school in national examinations we have experienced a huge rise in the demand for places and first year class sizes were beginning to exceed 100 students.





*New 4-classroom block with staffrooms*

We are pleased that the pressure has been relieved by the construction of a new four-classroom block beside the playing field. This will allow us to run two parallel streams in the next school year starting in February 2018. Furthermore, to improve security the playing field site has been enclosed with a chain link fence.



A really important effort has been made this year to improve access to clean water in the school. Our original borehole ran dry, as the local water table fell. We are relying on a second borehole funded by UHST, which is on the outer limits of the school land. It is only possible to fill one jerry can of water at a time, so there have been long waits for water for washing on a morning. As school numbers have grown we have to run a continual rota of students throughout the day to fetch water for washing, cooking and cleaning. This means that our students have been losing valuable lesson time.

Fortunately, once they saw how desperate the situation was, UHST stepped in and paid for a pipeline to bring water from a new pumping station on the River Nile. The pipes are in place and we have two overhead tanks ready for the water (the picture on the left shows the storage tank on our upper school site). We are just waiting for the pumping station to be commissioned. Unfortunately, we have just heard that a planned improvement in the local road will make it necessary to dig up and move 0.75 km of the new water pipe 4 metres to avoid the road digging. This will entail further expense and will delay the completion time. In the meantime, we will have to continue working with a single lift pump.

In spite of the above achievements, more needs to be done to take the school to greater heights.

- The computer room is too small to serve its intended purpose, a bigger room is required.
- The school still needs more text books, science equipment and computers to facilitate evidence based and independent learning.
- We need more dormitories to decongest existing hostel facilities.
- The school needs a bigger multi-purpose hall for use for a wide range of roles by the increasing student numbers, e.g. as a dining room, examination room, reading room and as class space.

- Teachers need houses near the school for proper student management.
- Maintaining scholarships to enable academically gifted but financially disadvantaged children to attain education remains a cardinal duty in our efforts to serve humanity.

We appeal to all our humanist friends, both individuals and as groups to financially support the mustard seed school good cause for improving humanity in the coming year 2018.

We would like to express our gratitude to all UHST supporters who have provided the funds which have allowed us to transform educational opportunities in this very needy part of Uganda. Our staff and students really appreciate your efforts.

Regards

Moses Kamya

Director, Mustard Seed School, Busota.

If you feel you or your group would like to contribute to meeting any of these or other future needs then please contact [stevehurd@uhst.org](mailto:stevehurd@uhst.org) (01782 750338).

Donation and standing order forms can be found at:

<http://www.ugandahumanistschooltrust.org/donate/>