



Uganda Humanist Schools Trust

## Update on the Mustard Seed School, Busota from the School's Director, Moses Kamyá

December 2016



Girls' netball team at district championship

Mustard seed secondary school Busota has concluded its 11th year of existence. I should like to thank all our supporters, well-wishers and friends for enabling us to reach this far.

### **Enrolment**

We ended the 2016 school year with 367 children in total, 215 boys and 152 girls. 57 candidates entered for national examinations at O-level, while 15 candidates took A-levels. Last year we gained 8 first grades at O-level, placing the school in 5th position overall out of 29 schools in Kamuli district. At A-level we were ranked in 7th position in Kamuli district out of 15 schools. Performance in 2016 is expected to be better.

Printing internal examination papers for the end of year examinations for every child in every subject is a significant expenditure for the school, and in previous years all the money has gone to outside printing businesses. This year, thanks to funds from UHST, we have acquired a highly efficient, low-maintenance, high-capacity RISO printing machine, which has seen expenditure on printing fall dramatically. This is good news as it will lower our cost on printing exams by over 50%. The printer uses news print paper whose cost is three times lower than photocopying paper we have been using before.



Providing hand-outs for classes will now be possible and this will improve teaching and learning. This Riso printer is expected to boost performance in science subjects in particular and excellence in academic performance generally. I have been trained in its use and two other staff are undergoing training. The printer uses electric power already at school. It is stored in a dust free room. Refilling its ink cartridge is equally affordable costing about 4US\$. This will only need to be done once every term. Thanks to UHST for this donation.

## Staff

The school has a qualified teaching staff of over 20, supported by a team of 12 ancillary staff, including ground staff and administrators. Upon recruitment, teachers are inducted to make them aware of the expectations in a Humanist school regarding children's welfare. We apply guidelines developed within the Humanist Ethos Project, which involved the three schools belonging to the Uganda Humanist Schools Association. In common with other schools in the Association we expect our teachers to administer positive discipline, which is based upon guidance rather than violence – corporal punishment is outlawed in the school. New teachers sign forms to show they accept the Humanist Ethos of the school.

## Games and sports

This year we have participated in several games and sports to develop all children and to identify those with a particular talent. The school football team excelled, taking the CocaCola trophy for Kamuli district post primary football competitions. The top photograph below shows the boys team lining up for the final. The next one shows the girls football team playing a neighbouring school.



We also participated and excelled in Kamuli district boys netball, girls netball, athletics and music dance and drama. Much of the above was achieved because we have our playing field. In interclass competitions, senior three and two excelled in netball and football respectively. They were each awarded with a goat at the end of year, which they roasted to feed themselves and their parents.

## Welfare

Children's welfare is paramount. Children are fed predominantly with posho (made from maize flour) and beans. There is an occasional change of meal for boarders at weekends. Prolonged droughts, throughout this year, has led to high prices for produce, which has put pressure on the school budget.

Children have had access to clean safe water from the school borehole. Efforts are under way to connect the school to piped water by a district female member of parliament now that we are in Kamuli municipality. The pictures below show students pumping water from our borehole, and our cooks bringing water by bicycle for preparing school dinners.



A grant from UHST has allowed us to issue all girls with ecological re-useable sanitary pads. This has greatly increased girls' comfort and classroom attendance.



A matron, for girls, and a warden, for the boys, look after boarders. Staff salaries have been paid but they remain low compared to the current cost of living.

## Humanism

Posters with vivid humanist ideals are displayed in different public places. The humanist club organises weekly debates on key issues relevant to humanism. Membership is voluntary. Members of the club volunteer to look after flower gardens and trees at school and help those in need in our neighbourhoods. The humanist club operated a poultry project, which reared chickens to enrich the diet of hostel students.



The humanist ethos project funded by IHEU and UHST provided a framework for the management and administration of discipline in school. This term one senior five student had to be suspended indefinitely by the school disciplinary committee for propagating extreme Pentecostalism and faith healing

among children. The student in question was warned several times but refused to heed to the staff advice interpreting it as satanic.

## Clinic

UHST funded the construction of a school clinic, which has been fully operational this year. It has saved us a great deal on medical bills for treating malaria related ailments. The clinic also gives first aid to patients from neighbouring communities. Our nurse is pictured below.



## The school and community

The school enjoys cordial relations with the community. All food items consumed through out the year are supplied from the nearby farms and trading centre. Local women come into school to sell local breads, sweet bananas and sugar cane to children. Neighbours are allowed to fetch water from the school borehole. The school convenes meetings with parents on termly basis to discuss management issues.

## Challenges

We have had prolonged droughts leading to food shortages and high prices. In future we may have to look at growing some of our own food. The computer room is small and inadequate to cater for the children's needs. At present computer lessons are compulsory for A-level students who do not offer Economics.

With UHST's help, we hope to convert the current main hall into a library/computer lab. A new multi-purpose hall then will be built below the school playing field. At the moment

there are plans on paper but work is awaiting sufficient funds and for long-term leases on the school land to be in place.

Many parents are booking places for the Senior 1 coming intake. Recruitment is, however, restricted by space in dormitories and class room space. The school rents houses for permanent staff in nearby Busota trading center. We need to put up staff houses at school. This will improve staff retention and give us more staff on site at all times to take care of the growing student population.

The school needs more money to spend on textbooks, computers, science-equipment, games and sports gear and to improve staff welfare. The pictures below show the school library which is desperately short of space, sixth form students making science experiments and students in the refurbished but very small computer lab.



We would very much appreciate help from our international friends with these things.

Moses Kamy, Mustard Seed School Director

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.ugandahumanistschoolstrust.org/donate/>