



## Uganda Humanist Schools Trust

# Uganda Humanist Schools Update May 2025



Samuel Ssebulime of Isaac Newton School on research trip to Korea

Hilary and I are off to Uganda on 28<sup>th</sup> May for 3 weeks. We will be visiting the following Humanist schools: Mustard Seed primary and secondary, Eagle's View primary, Isaac Newton primary and high, and the Kasese schools which include Municipal High and Rukoki, Kahendero and Muhokya primaries. We will be missing out the two remote primary schools near the Congo border, Kanungu and Katumba. I visited Kanungu in October with Peter Kisirinya, Chair of the Organisation of Humanist Schools in Uganda, and Katumba is currently unsafe due to its proximity to fighting in the Eastern Congo.

The schools are doing well but always face new challenges. Here is a summary of their news.

### *Isaac Newton Humanist Schools*

The high school will be celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary during our visit. This makes it the longest running Humanist high school in the world. Ezra Mulwana, the school's headteacher, has invited 20 former students to talk about their lives since leaving school – as an inspiration to current students.

We have just learned that a former high achieving Isaac Newton student, Samuel Ssebulime, has arrived in South Korea to work on a joint Uganda-Korean agricultural research project. After gaining a 1<sup>st</sup> class honours degree in agriculture and a Masters in Crop Science he was chosen as one of 7 research students in an open competition across the whole of Africa.

News arrived today that an Isaac Newton debating team (below) came 4<sup>th</sup> out of 50 teams in the national competition. They have been chosen to represent Uganda in the wider East African Debate Championship.



Isaac Newton debating team

The schools' progress is a huge testament to the vision and hard work of Peter Kisirinya, the school's Director. Peter is currently undergoing treatment for bowel cancer. This is a worry for Peter and for everyone involved with the school. We wish him well with his treatment.

### ***Mustard Seed Humanist Schools***

Owen Kafambe is making his mark as the new headteacher of the school. An old boy who taught part-time at the school as a way of funding his degree studies, he knows the school well and is a committed Humanist. Although only 26 years old his 1<sup>st</sup> class honours degree in science and education affords him the respect of other teachers, who are delighted that they are being led by someone who is able, works hard and has a vision for the future of the school.

As well as being head teacher, he teaches science to examination classes. He led the boys' and girls' football teams to success in the local schools' competition. School debates are back, and Mustard Seed recently won the local schools' music, dance and drama competition.

Since Owen took over the school, UHST has provided money to bring the science and computer labs up to the standard required by Uganda National Examination Board. We have funded some essential repairs, but there is much more to do. Owen has requested funds for repairs and painting across the whole

school, including the girls' dormitories. The school cook house was poorly built, and the stoves have collapsed after only 6 months use. UHST funds are under pressure but, as soon as more donations arrive, the needs of Mustard Seed will be high on the list of priorities.



Mustard Seed kitchen during construction in 2024

### ***Kasese Humanist Schools***

UHST provided significant help to the Kasese Humanist Schools as soon as they registered as a not-for-profit organisation and agreed to audits of their annual accounts. On the main Rukoki site of the school we funded improvements to the science lab, library and school dormitories. Earlier this year, the very run-down Kahendero primary school at the fishing village on Lake George was transformed with a complete makeover. Attention has now turned to the Muhokya school, which has been connected to mains electricity and is undergoing major refurbishing.



Refurbished classrooms at Kasese

Having well maintained and attractive buildings lifts the spirits of children, staff and the whole community.

### ***Eagle's View Humanist Primary School***

A UHST supporter paid for a fine new kitchen/cook house at the school. A new toilet block has been completed for girls and female teachers. We have almost half the money required to build decent toilets for boys and male staff toilets. Once we raise the further £3,000 required, work will begin.

The school gets good primary leaving certificate results despite its appalling facilities. Temporary classrooms, made from corrugated iron sheets held up by termite eaten poles, provide the learning spaces for over 400 children. We hope to be able to raise funds to replace them in phases with 3 new teaching blocks, each costing in the range of £22,000-£27,000.



Temporary corrugated iron classroom

Eagle's View School is crucial to the local community. It provides local children with an escape route from the drudgery of work in local sugar plantations.

### ***Katumba Parents' Humanist Primary School***

The Katumba community is desperately poor and the school offers a lifeline to children. Settlements cling to the steep slopes of the foothills of the Ruwenzori Mountains. Torrential rains made worse by climate change and deforestation bring floods and landslides.

In the recent rains a local lady was washed away as she tried to save her goats from the floods. Guttering was ripped off the Katumba nursery block as were the doors of the school hall. There was further damage to the nearly completed girls' dormitory. The school needs help to fix these but UHST does not have sufficient funds to help them.



Construction of girls' dormitory

The school Director works hard for the school. He has a Masters degree in Phyto biology and we are helping him to gain teaching qualifications. He is on course to gain a Postgraduate Diploma in Education by the end of the year.

### ***Kanungu Humanist Primary School***

The Kanungu school hall was recently finished. This completes the essential infrastructure of the school and enables national primary leaving examinations to be held within the school. Kanungu children will no longer need to make a long journey to a regional centre to take their examinations. The hall will also be used for many other school and community functions.



Sunrise at Kanungu

This school has risen from the ashes of the local church where 800 community members were burned to death by a 10 Commandments evangelical preacher in the worst cult massacre the world has seen. Early apprehension about sending their children to a secular Humanist School is subsiding as the local community see that the school is providing high standards of education and welfare. Enrolment has risen to over 200 children.

Long-term donations from UHST supporters are transforming prospects for children in some of the most impoverished communities in Uganda, while spreading inclusive education based on reason, compassion and tolerance. A heartfelt thanks of behalf of the more than 4,000 children who attend the Humanist schools.

### **Supporting the Humanist Schools**

If you feel you or your group would like to help us to support the Humanist Schools in Uganda, or to sponsor a high school student then please contact [stevehurd@uhst.org](mailto:stevehurd@uhst.org) (07773 972601).

Donation forms can be found at:  
<https://ugandahumanistschoolstrust.org/donate/>