

2023 END OF YEAR REPORT

KEC-A VILLAGE OF HOPE

SUMMARY:

This year was a challenging year for KEC-A Village of Hope. It was challenging for two reasons. First, we saw a decrease in student enrollment in the school (Kaguma Education Centre (KEC)) from 367 to 220. Secondly, we lacked the right person to run the school. With a reduction in students, we saw a reduction in income, so it was difficult to make ends meet. During our 29 May-10 June visit, we interviewed and hired our first Director of Operations, but it did not work out. We believe the new hire had another job opportunity just two weeks after she started at KEC. In December 2023 we conducted more interviews and hired Samuel Warawa to take on this role and the huge challenge of managing our school. Samuel comes to us from Eastern Uganda, with experience from a private school that in our opinion, sets the standards for private schools in Uganda.

The school struggled to pay the bills this year, but KEC-AVOH was able to assist them meet their minimum needs. We are hopeful that school enrollment will increase in 2024.

This was the first year that we had a P7 class. These students were in the P3 class when we established KEC-AVOH as a non-profit organization in 2018 and began helping the school. It has been rewarding to see the young students grow over the years, and finally graduate from primary school. Much of the last term in 2023 was spent preparing the P7 students to take their candidate exams.

The new water well was capped off this year after being dug in 2022, and our partners (Run4Water) dedicated it in June. Having fresh water is a significant change for the Kaguma community and will cut down on illnesses among our students and their families. The water well was constructed on the school property that was purchased in 2021. In the future we hope to use the water for irrigation for various agricultural projects that will be implemented with the goal of generating funding for the school.

During our visit to KEC, optometrists tested the students and other local children and adults. KEC-AVOH provided financial support for the surgery of a young girl who had scarring in her retina, with the hope of improving her quality of life. The surgery was successful and we are grateful for the generous support provided by ophthalmologist, Dr. Brian K. Do, from Fairfax, Virginia.

We continued to mentor and advise our Ugandan counterparts throughout the year, holding at least two meetings a week, one covering finances and the other covering operational topics.

This year, five personnel traveled over 20 hours to visit the Kaguma Education Centre and offer our assistance. Representing KEC-A Village of Hope was Karen Jennings (Chairperson), Keith Seaman (Business Development/Outreach), Tara Jennings (Social Media), Martha Shepard (Secretary), and Jennifer Berube (Teacher).

Everyone worked very hard to help the school in their own way. There were operations projects in the office that were accomplished based on deficiencies found in a recent audit. Many construction projects were worked on to bring the school up to standards, correcting maintenance, sanitation, and other facilities issues. From an academic perspective, we took the KEC Board, teachers and the P6 and P7 students on a field trip to Queen Elizabeth National Park. Jennifer Berube met with the teachers daily to teach them new teaching techniques. She also wrote an assessment of the academics at the school. Supporting charity, we purchased clothing and shoes for many students and brought food to four needy families. We partnered with Run4water and dedicated a well to the community. We also partnered with Ausaman Kisembo from AAID and with Andre Buller from the US Peace Corps to work on environmental and sanitation needs at the school.

Below is a summary of accomplishments made during the 29 May-10 June visit to KEC:

1. Operations:
 - Reviewed the 2022 Audit and worked off many of the deficiencies.
 - Created employee files.
 - Filed all existing documents into employee files.
 - Created spreadsheet to track the status of each teacher's required documents and credentials; provided a copy to the Head Teacher.
 - Created Contract Letter for KEC employees.
 - Created spreadsheet with employee entitlements.
 - Identified future impact for NSSF and PAYEE funds.
 - Developed trip permission slips.
 - Developed asset management receipts.
 - Started creating a SMART book with key documents in it for future audits.
 - Worked on the employee handbook-90% complete.
 - Coordinated and interviewed two candidates and hired a new Director of Operations, who started work on 26 June. Prepared Contract letter.
 - Organized the textbooks and library books.
 - Purchased a bicycle for transport from one school site to another.

- Purchased a desk and monitor for the new Director of Operations, cleaned, and organized the DOO/Bursar Office.
- Started work on establishing an office for the Director of Programs. Purchased white paint for both offices.
- Purchased additional supplies: math sets, chalk, large poster board, large teacher math set, hard shell for architectural plans, fire extinguishers.
- Brought five suitcases from the US filled with school and books.

2. Programs:

- Repaired desks in classrooms to make them safe and sturdy and to give students more writing space..
- Put latches on the doors and started building racks for bookcases.
- Purchased 15 hard plastic chairs for teachers/staff.
- Purchased grounds and office trash cans.
- Purchased hand washing facilities for two latrines and eight jerry cans for cleaning hands/sanitation.
- Established power to the second office, which is for the Director of Programs and to be shared with the teachers, with a desk for training on the computers, as well as many bookshelves.
- Fixed bulletin board with new glass and showed KEC staff how it should be maintained.
- Painted and installed blackboards in 9 classrooms.
- Created individual slate/blackboards for children to write on (need to be painted).

3. Academics:

- Took P6 and P7 students and all teachers to the Queen Elizabeth National Park; took a boat ride and visited nearby salt flats. This field trip was a “first” for most students and teachers.
- Purchased scholastic materials for the teachers for term 2.
- Jennifer Berube worked with the teachers and head teacher on new teaching techniques, and prepared a report on her visit. She monitored each classroom, assessed each teacher, and provided valuable feedback to all teachers.

4. Community/Charity:

- Purchased clothing and shoes for needy students (36 pairs of shoes (\$175) and additional clothing (\$75). Shoes were the priority.
- Gave teachers clothes, undergarments and costume jewelry, incentive stars, 2 showers, and purchased more plastic for showers.
- Visited 4 needy families and purchased food for them.

5. Partnerships:

- Run4Water
 - The well dedication ceremony was held on 8 June.
 - Eye and hearing exams were held on 7-8 June.
- Peace Corps: Met with the Director of the Peace Corps in Uganda (virtual meeting) and the Peace Corps Health Care representative in Fort Portal. We will be seeking Peace Corps support in the future; it takes two years to establish the requirement for support. The Health Care representative (nurse) indicated an interest in helping with feminine hygiene needs,

establishing a wash program, a health club and an environmental club at the schools. He recommended the use of ash and banana leaves to help lessen odors from the latrines.

- AAID: Met with the AAID team, received an estimate of how much it would cost to build the latrines, school and community center (\$250K) on the new school land. Run4Water shared that they paid 30% more using AAID versus another bidder for the well project.
- Met with architect, Mr Ntambi and will continue discussions with him regarding other construction options.

6. Board:

- Conducted a Board meeting and the KEC Board Chairman was absent. Reviewed the strategic plan and calendar in detail. Discussed the audit report and the Treasurer gave a finance report that was deficient and unsatisfactory. KEC could not identify where the funds went for the land title. The KEC-AVOH team will conduct a reconciliation, as we have all bank statements.
- Reviewed and discussed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between KEC-UG and KEC-AVOH and agreed to work together.

Finances:

Income-Donations/Donations in Kind: **\$13,573** + \$10,787 in Kind=\$24,360

Expenses-Donations to KEC-UG: **\$11,415**

Operating Expenses for KEC-AVOH: **\$1307** +\$10,787 In Kind)

Net Income: **\$851**

Appreciation:

We want to thank all our donors for your support in 2023. We cannot do what we do without you. Please know that you are helping us make a difference in the lives of the children, teachers, and the community in Kaguma, Uganda.

Karen L Jennings

Karen Lee Jennings

Chairperson

KEC-A Village of Hope





