

April Newsletter 2024



Dear Supporters,

Busy First Term of 2024

As the sun sets on the first term at Nabugabo Community Primary School, we are delighted to report that it has been a good, strong start to the school year. In February, we welcomed **20 new pupils into Primary 1** and they have all settled in well enjoying making new friends and having the opportunity to engage in learning and sport. Equally important, **20 students proudly moved up to Primary 7** enjoying being at the top of the school but also ready to approach their last year with a necessary seriousness given the opportunity of secondary school on the horizon.

This term we implemented a house system **to foster teamwork** while promoting inclusivity and minimising gender divisions.

Under the steady management of Headteacher Vincent, the school has benefitted from a **stable and collaborative team of 13 staff** which has contributed to the smooth running and happy atmosphere, that is Nabugabo.

All children received vaccinations against yellow fever which was paid for by HUGE.



The library



Any supporter of HUGE will know how important we value having a **dedicated library** at the school. In a region, where access to books is extremely limited and costly, it serves as an important area for learning and discovery. For all our students, it's their first encounter with a story or information book. We are extremely grateful to our partnership schools, **Pangbourne College and Sotogrande International School**, for their continued support in this initiative especially in the donation of relatable literature. The library was given a much needed makeover in February with a new floor and redecoration – **thanks to Marc Batten and his team**. The makeover

is work in progress as one of the ongoing challenges is the relentless damage caused by termites who love a book or a bookshelf! When funds are available, we are hoping to replace the wooden bookshelves with a plastic alternative from Ecobrixx, a local Ugandan company that specialises in making timber substitute furniture from recycled plastic bottles. This is a sustainable and cost-effective option that will not only address our immediate needs but also aligns with our commitment to environmental principles.

Extension to Beatrice House

Beatrice House and the Ark are two facilities which offer safe shelter on site and a refuge for vulnerable young girls facing serious abuse of various forms at home. Cultural and socio-economic factors in rural communities such as Nabugabo leave many girls at risk within their households. The shelters offer a haven, combining support with education ensuring uninterrupted access to schooling and importantly protection from abuse. The shelters have a resident matron and safeguarding officer who provide counselling and help foster a community of support. Sadly, the number of girls facing abuse has increased and it has been necessary to extend Beatrice House. We are fundraising for this unplanned item of expenditure at present, but in the meantime, construction has started so that these girls can get the protection that is their right and the ability to continue their educational journey.

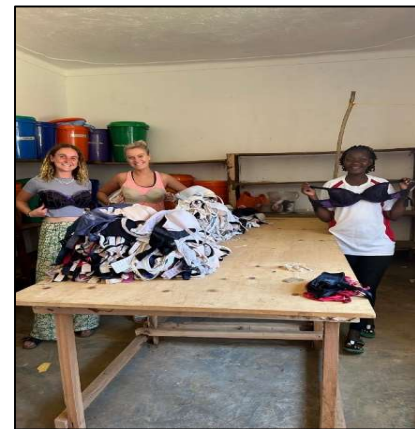
St Kizito Secondary School

St Kizito is the preferred secondary school in the area for Nabugabo children after leaving primary. It is private and not a government school and annual fees for each child from Nabugabo are paid for by HUGE. Ensuring access to secondary education is a vital step in HUGE's mission to empower the children of Nabugabo and help them become responsible citizens within their communities. Following the 100% pass rate at the Primary Leaving Exams in November 2023, **we now have 62 at St Kizito**. Importantly, **9 children are sitting O Levels in November 2024 (average of 9 O levels)**. Withstanding the pressures and challenges these children face, especially the girls, must not be taken lightly and we are so proud of their commitment and diligence in trying to break out of traditional norms.



Community Engagement – Donation of Bras

During our visit in February, we were able to carry out a community initiative of handing out **300 bras to the local female community**. This was entirely thanks to **Mystique in Marlborough** who donated them as part of a recycling enterprise. We are extremely grateful to them for this essential and valuable donation. Sadly, we understand Mystique is closing so if anyone has any ideas or connections on this front do, please get in touch.



Visit by Marc Batten and his family

The school was very fortunate to have **Marc Batten, fellow trustee, and assistant head of Bassaleg School in Newport** and four members of his family visit for 1 week in February. Marc and his team were incredibly busy during their stay and some of the valuable work that was undertaken included safeguarding training for all staff, redecoration of the library, preparation of classroom resources, introduction of different teaching methods, guidance on sports and wellbeing and engagement with St Kizito secondary students.



New Beds for Beatrice House and the Ark

A HUGE thank you to Ollie Middleton and Tadgh Patten for designing and building beds from scratch for Beatrice House and the Ark. These were much needed and Benon, our matron, and the girls are very happy. Despite a few setbacks (and stitches!), the boys persevered and delivered beautifully made beds. Ollie is also a very accomplished artist, and he worked very hard in the preparation of school resources. Thank you, Ollie and Tadgh.



Fundraising Thanks

We would like to say a **HUGE thank you** to our many supporters who have contributed during the year either through a fundraising event or as a regular donation – none of the above would be possible without your continued support. Special thanks go to:

Emma Barker and the dedicated team at St Andrews Berkshire for holding the very successful annual hockey tournament for children and parents.

Alice Dutton who organised and played in a Girls v Boys netball match and **Poppy Shepherd** for designing and selling tracksuit bottoms in aid of HUGE. Both are from Pangbourne College and have admirably held the roles of **Nabugabo Charity Cadet Captains**.

Nia Batten in conjunction with Esynergy Solutions who not only donated new underwear for all the primary children but raised a significant sum towards operational costs.



Nick Bland of Nicholas James hair salon in Great Portland Street, London who is holding an amazing 24-hour hair marathon all in aid of HUGE from midday on the 9th of June. **So, if you fancy a haircut and blow dry for only £50 ring the salon on 02039153922 and make a booking.**

Amy Batten who climbed Kilimanjaro in January for HUGE and is spending part of her gap year working at the school.



Helping **UG**anda **E**ducate

We would like to thank the following schools for uniform and trainer donations - **St Andrews, Berkshire, Oratory Prep School, Headington Prep and Senior School, Englefield Junior School and Bloxham School.**

We are also extremely grateful to our two partnership schools in Spain and the UK, **Sotogrande International School and Pangbourne College** for their ongoing fundraising efforts and, their creativity in new ideas and initiatives. The Nabugabo community is stronger with their continued help and support.

We are very much looking forward to Pangbourne College's annual volunteering trip in July headed by Richard Follett who will be accompanied by 12 students. As well as assisting at school, they will be building a house for a vulnerable family in the community.



With growing numbers at primary and secondary and the impact of rising costs, there is an ongoing need for future funding. In addition, we have unplanned expenditure extending Beatrice House. All donations, large and small, are always very much appreciated - <https://www.justgiving.com/hugepartnership>. Or scan the unique QR code to the left.

The HUGE Partnership

The HUGE Partnership is UK registered charity which has been set up to make a difference to children in Uganda. It specifically provides financial and resource support to the Nabugabo Community Learning Centre, a private NGO set up originally by David and Judy Batten solely to provide free education and support to vulnerable and disadvantaged children, who would otherwise not be able to attend school. Now in its 13th year, NCLC provides umbrella support to the Nabugabo Community Primary School, the Secondary Education Fund and ongoing initiatives in the community relating to education, welfare, recycling, and female empowerment.

The governing principle of HUGE is to provide children, most at need, with a caring education, a confidence in their own abilities and genuine belief and ambition that they can contribute to the future success of their lives and those of the community.

If you have a specific query or would like to speak to one of the trustees, please email **Mel Batten at melanie.brandon@icloud.com**.

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