

News from Bududa – November 2017

Greetings from Barbara

By Barbara Wybar, Executive Director, Bududa Learning Center

Dear Friends,

I returned from Bududa late October and feel that now the dust is beginning to settle at my feet as I work for Bududa mostly at my computer. So much is happening as we grow and expand. Challenges abound but successes are there also. When I returned, I wanted to report to the board of Bududa Canada Foundation, and so I wrote a report, which my colleague, Sheila Havard helped me with. I am including it below with my Greetings because I think it says all.



Wishing everybody a happy holiday season,

Sincerely,

Barbara Wybar

Report by Barbara Wybar and Sheila Havard

Sustainability is key to the future of Bududa Learning Center as we approach 2018. Succession planning is vital as Barbara, our Executive Director and major fundraiser, despite her passion for the project, will need a successor sooner or later. We also need to improve enrollment and introduce income-generating activities. A shop front in the Bududa trading center is another idea we are working on.

What's new



In November, we welcomed David Kern and Karen Vaccaro. The couple will be a terrific asset, overseeing the project and making it sustainable. David and Karen attended the first African Great Lakes Initiative workcamp and labored away building the first vocational school with Barbara in 2003. David, as former head of Penn Charter Lower School in Philadelphia, is well versed in administrative issues. Karen was the first International Coordinator of the Children of Bududa Program. These two see the big picture and have a very positive attitude, as well as being great fundraisers and attracting talented people to Bududa.

Left: Karen Vaccaro and David Kern

Ruth Tait, a former student at Barbara's Montreal high school, has left us a legacy of £15,000. The consensus of Bududa stakeholders is that the greatest need is for enough reliable power to run the three-phase carpentry machines, the hairdressing dryers and other electrical tools, as well as the computer lab.

We look forward to 6-8 visitors from Myers Park Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, in February, 2018, and another group in late June.



The Children of Bududa Program is going well. The new vocational skills program has been successful as the orphans are learning practical skills like basket making, fabric weaving, machine sewing, word processing, and the latest agricultural methods.

On the recommendation of a friend who heads up a huge charitable organization, we were able to identify a Makerere University student, Pascal Mugisha, to conduct market research to identify job openings here in eastern Uganda and recommend new skills to be taught.

Starting this Christmas holiday we will offer shorter courses in our existing disciplines and perhaps also motorcycle and cell phone repairs if we find there is interest .

Above: Barbara Wybar with two of Bulali Doreen's brothers

Current needs and challenges

Low enrollment at the Bududa Vocational Academy is a major issue. This is explained by poverty and the negative attitude to vocational education in Bududa District.

A boys' hostel is urgently needed. There are two potential funders but no confirmations yet. To buy the land and build the hostel would cost about \$19,000 US.

The Board has proposed introducing poultry rearing as an income-generating activity. The idea is to purchase a plot directly below the school with money set aside in the Mbale bank account to buy land. About \$500 US is needed to implement this project.

Environmental challenges

The political situation in Uganda is tense. President Museveni wishes to abolish the age limit enshrined in the Constitution for terms, meaning he could rule forever. This move is universally unpopular and there are protests throughout the country, which are promptly suppressed by the police.

Equally alarmingly, Statistics Uganda reports that millions more people are slipping into poverty, mainly in the eastern area where Bududa is located.

In conclusion, we have much to celebrate with new blood coming to the project, and more investment, but we still have our challenges. The positive spin we could put on that is the longer we work at this the more we seem to gather new folks and new interest which encourages us to be the best we can be and overcome our challenges.

Profile of a child: Bulali Doreen

By Barbara Wybar



Chapter 1: Teacher Jane brought a child to me and said: “This one is sick.” I looked Bulali Doreen over and she looked pretty healthy from a distance. She was clean and neatly dressed and she beamed at me.

When she came closer though, I saw an oozing pimple on top of her closely shaven head and nasty sores all over the back of her head and neck. In addition, her whole body was covered in little pimples. This child had a bad case of scabies. I knew a little about scabies as it also occurs in the West. I knew it was not life-threatening but I also knew that this case would be hard to solve.

Doreen is an orphan. Her Mom died giving birth about three years ago and she, and her three brothers were left in the care of her Granny. Dad does not contribute to the family as he drinks.

Above: Bulali Doreen with scabies infection on back of her head and neck

We quickly took Doreen to an old woman, Edith, who has a dispensary in the maduka, (Swahili word for shops). Edith said Doreen did indeed have scabies and the scabies had caused an infection. There was also a fungal problem.

We ended up with four medications: two creams and two sets of pills. Some had to be taken once a day and some had to be taken four times a day. I knew it was asking too much to expect Granny to take charge of administering the medication.

Fortunately, our school nurse, Nakuti Madina – who happens to be a graduate of our Children of Bududa program – took up my suggestion and offered to take Doreen home for a week and see to all the medications, as well as all the daily bathing and washing of clothes and bedding.

Doreen was to come back to the Children of Bududa program a week later, hopefully cured. Meanwhile, we had to help Granny and the other siblings, who also had scabies, or Doreen would just be re-infected when she went home.

We arranged for Granny to bring her grandchildren to the program the day after the Ugandan, Independence Day. The plan was to treat everybody and encourage Granny to wash the clothes and bedding every day, perhaps with the help of some of our students who are studying on scholarship. So this was how we spent Saturday, October 7th, Canadian Thanksgiving week-end, here in Bududa, Uganda.

Chapter 2: Granny did arrive as arranged, dressed beautifully and with four young boys in tow. They were also clean and neatly dressed, but all four were badly infected with scabies. Social worker Martha Nanzala and I took them all to a local clinic in Bududa run by an American NGO, the Foundation for the International Medical Relief of Children or FIMRC, where they were very well looked after although we had to purchase the necessary medication ourselves. We then had to help Granny get the house and bedding as clean as possible.

A major problem was that Granny's goats lived in her house at night. She said they would be stolen otherwise. So we offered to build her a goat shed attached to the house. We got some of our young scholarship students to build it, but then it seemed a cook house was needed as well. This was also built.

Afterword: Doreen has now been declared clear of scabies thanks to our nurse Nakuti Madina, but I left Bududa before I could find out if the boys had been cured. Stay tuned for Chapter 3.

Reflections 1

By Sophie McKenzie

2017 Volunteer Intern from McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Leaving Bududa was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. After spending three indescribably fulfilling months in the community of Konokoyi, I felt as if my heart was laid in the rolling green hills in front of the guest house, in the shining smiles of the women tending to the fields, and in the playful spirits of our many young friends. Mornings on the porch watching the sun quietly rise amongst a backdrop of chirping birds, walks with our dear friend Apollo through vast corn fields in the evenings, and feeling the sun on my face whilst sitting on the back of a Boda Boda rejuvenated my soul. Being in Uganda was a respite from my hectic and busy life as a McGill student, and being away from major sources of stress allowed me to focus on what is most important to me. I will deeply treasure all the beautiful daily interactions I had with friends and with strangers for the rest of my life.



Above: Sophie McKenzie with a Child of Bududa

I will never forget the honour of being allowed into people's homes to conduct visitations with BLC's Social Worker, Martha. Hearing about both the sources of hope and of tribulation of community members deeply inspired me. I met many women who have overcome unimaginable circumstances, and continue to live with optimism and tenacity. This gives me hope for the community, as children will learn the honourable values of their mothers. Although my time in Bududa was short, I am grateful for these brief interactions that deeply affected the way I perceive the world.

It was very difficult first returning to Canada, and adjusting back to a busy schedule full of commitments and deadlines. However, I try to periodically take time to reflect upon my summer in Uganda to remind myself of the inspiration provided by my friends and coworkers, as well as the serenity I felt as a result of being constantly surrounded by beautiful natural landscapes.

I know that a little part of my heart will always be with the people of Bududa, and I am convinced that I will one day return to see their many accomplishments. Not a day goes by where I don't think about what they are up to, and whether their families are well. I am extremely grateful for Grace, Martha, and Robert who continuously provide support to the people of the community. I anxiously await the day when I can roll up Bududa's bumpy road to be greeted by all of my wonderful friends.

Reflections 2

By Tamara Yang

2017 Volunteer Intern from McGill University, Montreal, Canada

I am whole-heartedly grateful for my experience with BLC this past summer. I learned many things, some complementing my degree in Political Science and International Development Studies back at McGill. However, the most important things I learned have to do with the real work by real people, making lasting changes in real lives. I am so lucky to have spent time with amazing people, and to have gained these skills I will keep with me as I continue my studies.

After my time in Bududa, I spent some time in Tanzania and South Africa. Leaving my wonderful and loving Bududa family was not easy, I found myself constantly thinking about the people I had seen every day for three months. I would look through the pictures on my phone as I was travelling – pictures of Konokoyi village or the Children of Bududa program. My head was full of fond memories of eating jackfruit, story-telling, and working with Martha and Grace in our little office.



Above: Tamara Yang with a computer student

Many wondered if working in a rural environment would be isolating, but in fact I felt so much closer to everyone around me. Waking up every day to enjoy breakfast with my fellow interns and Justine, taking the boda boda and passing the Namaitso trading centre, and walking through the BLC gates filled with students in orange t-shirts was a daily routine filled familiar faces. Bududa taught me a lot about the importance of relationships. I miss my daily lunches of rice and beans in Betty's office with the laughing BVA teachers, because now I eat lunch hurriedly between work and class, often listening to music or a podcast. It is important to stop and say hello, get to know your neighbours, and build these friendships.

I extend my deepest gratitude to BLC for having me, teaching me, and loving me during my time in Bududa. I miss you all!

Please Donate



Above: Bulali Doreen's granny dressed in her finery on a visit to Bududa Learning Center

Bududa Learning Center could not exist without your donations. Although students at Bududa Vocational Academy pay course fees if they are able, the fees represent a small percentage of the overall operating budget. The Center receives no government funding. We are growing our capacity for earned revenue by encouraging our students to apply their vocational skills to produce marketable goods. Students can also earn money for course fees by working on brick making and carpentry for the building of the new campus.

It is donations from individuals, families, foundations and small businesses that provide 90 percent of our operating funding. In Canada we have formed our own charitable foundation, Bududa Canada Foundation, which issues tax receipts to Canadian donors. Through our partnership with Friends Peace Teams (USA), we provide charitable receipts for tax purposes in the United States. And through our partnership with Global Giving, we provide charitable receipts for tax purposes in the United Kingdom.

Wherever you live, please [CLICK HERE TO DONATE NOW](#). We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support of Bududa Learning Center.