



Young Seeds

Growing Hope from Despair



2015 REPORT

YOUNG SEEDS PHILOSOPHY

“The Young Seeds Foundation is founded on the belief that education is a fundamental human right principle and that every child deserves a fair chance to acquire quality education to better their well-being. YSF strongly believes that education is the core pillar of a just and fair society which will enhance human dignity & freedom and enable young people to achieve their dreams. We all benefit from this progress.

The Young Seeds Foundation raises funds via child sponsorship and other fund-raising initiatives to provide residential education scholarships to at risk children living in South Sudan and Northern Uganda”.

THE HARD TRUTH – SOUTH SUDAN *(source (UNMISS) United Nations Mission in South Sudan).*

2.4 million People in South Sudan are food insecure and require assistance

230,000 Children are impacted annually by malnutrition

4 % of arable land is cultivated

10% of children complete primary school despite high enrolment rates of 1.4 million

1.6% of children in South Sudan enter secondary school

84% of women cannot read or write

1/7 children will die before their fifth birthday

32% of the population does not have access to clean drinking water

ORGANISATION / ADMINISTRATION

Committee Members: The Executive remains the same as on our web site

www.youngseeds.org.au. We have had one committee member (John Lenga) leave due to the constraints of not living locally and we have two new committee members (Kym Griffiths & Annette Strickland) who have been with us for a while now.

Meeting Schedule: Depending on the need and the time of the year, we meet approximately 6 weekly, sometimes more often if we have important decisions to make.

AGM: As a legal entity we are required by law to hold an annual AGM and to submit a financial report to the Department of Justice, Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading.

THE SCHOOLS

Yei Primary School, South Sudan – 2 children currently enrolled

Pajok Primary School, South Sudan – 2 children currently enrolled

Star Education Centre, Bweyale, Uganda – 11 children currently enrolled

Blessed Comboni Secondary School, Uganda – 2 girls were enrolled here but we are in the process of sourcing new schools for them to attend in 2016

St Julians Secondary Boarding School, Kampala, Uganda – 3 boys attending

We currently have 20 children sponsored, 11 girls and 9 boys. We attempt gender equity as much as can. Unfortunately we are not able to obtain written school reports for you due to a lack of a reliable means of communication from Africa. However, we do receive verbal reports on the children's progress and all children this year have been successful to go onto the next grade in 2016. The children at Star Primary are struggling academically due to a lack of high quality education in South Sudan. Young Seeds has negotiated a price with the school for all these children to have extra tuition in 2016.

Star Education Centre is committed to building the infrastructure of the school and utilises all YS payments to better the school. Since our involvement in 2011 they have:

- Built a brand new dormitory for the girls (with 2 matrons constantly supervising)
- Brought 2 school buses so they can take the children on tours to expose them to another way of life
- Are currently building a boys dormitory
- Are currently building a medical centre

The children in the local schools are doing well with one boy excelling.

The 2 secondary school girls are doing very well in their studies also. One of them is now ready to do her A levels (College) in 2016 for 2 years and then she will be able to fulfill her dream of undertaking nursing studies.

The 3 boys at St Julians have academically excelled this year. Two of them received first division honours and the other second division honours. They all enter their final year of secondary school next year and are well on their way to fulfilling their dreams to be a doctor (2) and the other a politician (as he is committed to equality).

Below is a photo of the 3 young men with our coordinator (in the red), and the 2 young women in secondary school.



RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS

This occurs through various means. We have to be very careful not to favour a particular tribe and the founder of Young Seeds, Lowilla Okello, is very familiar with these sensitivities and guides us through this process. Where possible, the village leaders are also consulted. We also may rely on our local (paid) coordinator. It is important to note that it is written in Young Seeds constitution that there will be no family members of the Committee offered sponsorship, therefore there is no connection at all with African Tasmanian families.

The families of the children sponsored are eternally grateful for this opportunity for the child. It requires travel to South Sudan to understand the extreme need for children. When the village becomes aware that a YS representative is doing their annual visit, there can be as many as 300 children (brought by family members / carers) to attempt to have this slim chance of not only a quality of life, but often the gift of life itself. It is overwhelming to visibly see so many children in extreme poverty, many with the life gone from their eyes, just hoping that it may be them. Obviously if we had more sponsors we could do more. If you travelled to South Sudan / Uganda you would immediately be family.

DO CHILDREN SEE THEIR FAMILIES DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS?

Yes. If the families live in the Kiryandongo Camp at Bweyale in Uganda then the children will return there for all of their school holidays. If the child's family is still in Pajok, South Sudan, then they will stay with extended family members during the short breaks and are taken

home to South Sudan by our coordinator for the long Christmas break. This is a dangerous journey and we are always relieved when the children have arrived safely and our coordinator, John Oroma, is back to his home. John literally puts his life at risk to undertake this journey. This is also the case for YS Executive members who travel to Africa each year to meet each of the children and visit every school, and usually accompany the children back to South Sudan apart from this year as sponsors also visited Uganda and it was deemed too dangerous.

2015 VISIT

Earlier in 2015, Juma Piri Piri (YS Exec) travelled to South Sudan and met the children at the local schools in Yei and in Pajok Village.

Recently, 3 sponsors travelled with myself to have the opportunity to meet their sponsor child and to spend time with them. Each sponsor also met the mother of the children. Sponsors were treated as extremely important people wherever we went. Star Education Centre, which is committed to the performing arts and wins national championships each year, organised an amazing day for us all. The 'choir' performed all day for us with dance, poetry, music and song (3 YS children are members of the choir). We were treated to an amazing array of traditional food and the school had prepared food for us for 3 days. This was at the Director's expense. Two of the sponsors were also treated to a day at the Star Secondary school where they were able to sit in a class and interact with the students. Of course they were treated to yet more delicious food.

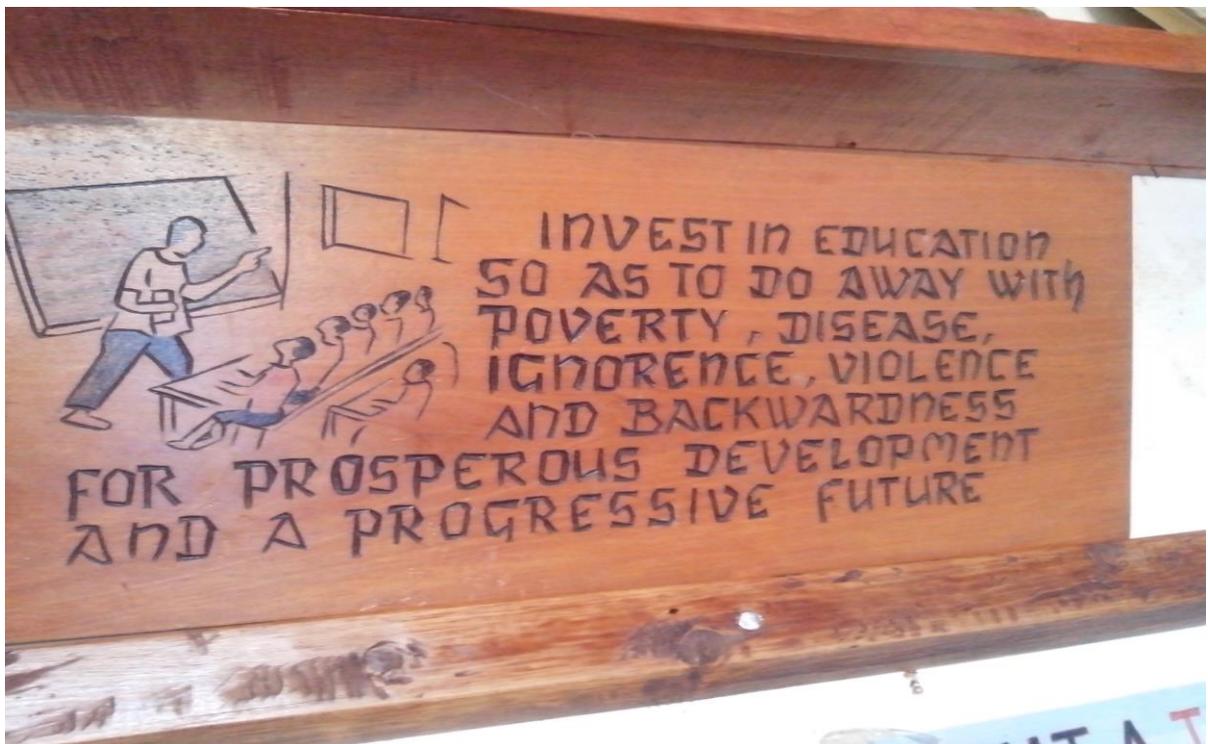
We were very warmly greeted by all the mothers / carers of the children when we entered our coordinator's village. The women, led by John's mother, performed a welcome song for the sponsors and engaged us in a dance circle and then provided more food for us despite them not having the resources to do so. Sponsors were able to engage with all of the mothers which is a very special opportunity not afforded to many people. On another night we went to a different part of the camp to visit a friend of mine. When we arrived they had organised a party for us – more food and more dance. It is very humbling how all these people, with very little to give, gave so generously to us. We were constantly invited into people's homes for meals and we offered a small amount of money for this as people do not have money / food to freely share.

We were also invited to dinner at the Director (Richard Amadro) of Star Education's house in Kampala and were treated to a very special meal offered by his daughter. Our coordinator John, and another friend, Jonny, left their families for 2 weeks to travel with us and to ensure the comfort and the safety of all of us.

The Launceston Bhutanese Community raised funds for me to take to support YS children. Below is a photo of all the children at Star Education with purchases for them that had been made because of the generosity of the Bhutanese Community.



Below is the motto of Star Education which is in the Head Principal, Eric Ubuya's office.





The Principal of Star Education Primary.

The Young Seeds Team takes pride in absolutely guaranteeing that every cent you pay for sponsorship goes directly to your sponsor child. The fees you pay include school fees, board at the school, uniforms, basic health care, uniforms, and all personal needs such as a mattress, soap and toilet paper.

Young Seeds does not take anything from sponsor payment for administrative or other costs. The Executive members personally incur the cost of travel to Africa each year to check on the children and visit all the schools.

Young Seeds pays for:

- The cost of safe travel for the children back home and return to school the next year. This is often dangerous travel and requires considerable money to ensure this.
- Pays a modest wage to our coordinator. John is very trusted by the children and they have no hesitation in telling him if something is problematic for them. John is a passionate advocate and will make contact immediately to YS. He loves the children and puts their comfort and safety well beyond his own, as reported by the children.

- The children also report being very fond of John's mother who provides for those who have no family nearby. She does not get paid to do so but fulfils a very caring role and ensures the children have adequate food when they stay there.
- The cost of medical treatment (sometimes sponsors will offer to pay this as you are always informed if something is not ok with your sponsor child). This year alone we have had 2 serious cases of typhoid, one of cerebral malaria and we were very close to losing a child who has spent weeks in a hospital. He is now on the road to recovery after a surgeon from Nigeria operated on him. We also paid the medical costs for our coordinator who was involved in an horrific accident (undertaking YS work) late last year. John was the only survivor with 20 other people dying in the accident. He sustained serious head and back injuries.
- Extra tuition for the children at Star Education primary school.
- We are hoping to be able to build a house for the YS children who do not have family to be with during the school holidays. This will take a considerable sum of money so we are hoping that we can fund raise enough to do so.

Personal Connection

We also believe that we differ from some other organisations in that we encourage you to develop a personal relationship with the child you sponsor. This may include letter writing to be sent with the Executive member at end of the year, phoning the school to talk with the principal and hopefully the child (at some schools). If you wish to have phone contact with the principal I suggest you let me know and we can organise a time in 2016 to get together and I can help you to make the initial contact.

In conclusion, while YS is a registered charity it seems we have to undertake further steps for tax deduction of sponsor payments to be possible. This is because all of our work is undertaken overseas so we cannot claim through the Australian taxation system. We need to obtain certification from Africa that confirms the work we do there. We are in the process of doing so and are awaiting this necessary documentation. We sincerely apologise to you if this has been a problem and will inform you as soon as this has been completed.

We at Young Seeds sincerely thank you for your ongoing support in the lives of the children. As I stated earlier, unless you have had the opportunity to travel to South Sudan I don't think there is a way of possibly understanding the extent of need that exists for children.

The Young Seeds team wishes you and yours peace and happiness throughout the festive season.

Please do not hesitate to contact if you have any queries.

I will conclude by quoting some extracts from letters that sponsor children have written to Young Seeds. You are welcome to view these at any time.

Kindest regards, the Young Seeds team

Dear Young Seeds,

I am one of the children you are offering support to in Africa who would like to send her warm greeting and word of appreciation to this organisation with a lot of joy and happiness for the wonderful and great supports offered us.

Not only that but also I would like to thank the almighty God who has protected this organisation and I pray that may God bless each one of you for the good work you are doing for us.

I promise to double my effort to work hard and achieve my goal (to be a nurse) so that I will also join and work with such a helpful organisation to help others in the future to come.

Dear Young Seeds,

I hope you are glad to hear from me. This is a great pleasure to communicate to you through this letter, the reason being that since you started sponsoring me in 2011, I had never written a letter of appreciation to you. Now I feel my English is good enough to do so.

I'm really so thankful in that the Lord has directed your hand upon me. I would like to thank you for coming up with such a foundation. For this I would like to say you are taking the world somewhere fine. I believe and affirm that this foundation has a very bright future.

We are not only young seeds but young viable seeds that will germinate, grow and produce fruits of high value to the world (an aspiring doctor).