



September 2021

Dear friends and supporters

What a difficult time it has been for everyone- coping with illness, disappointments and sadness. However, we must be thankful for what we have and for the freedom that the vaccine programme is giving to so many of us. Unfortunately, things are not so easy for those that we support in Uganda, with schools closed again for the foreseeable future. Originally the President said that the schools wouldn't reopen until all students over the age of 12 had been vaccinated. The headteacher of Nyakabungo Girls Secondary School has now indicated that all teachers will have to be vaccinated prior to schools reopening. With the very slow vaccination programme in Uganda, it seems that it will be quite some time before this happens.

Despite all the challenges that our girls have had you will be pleased to hear that the girls who sat their A levels at NGSS all attained grades sufficient for them to study degree or diploma courses. The two Mary Wood Trust sponsored girls, Confidence and Naome, were at the top of those results and qualify for entrance to a degree course at university, if they choose and the opportunity arises. In fact Naome has now written and asked if we could sponsor her to study for a degree in Business Administration at Bishop Barham Christian University. We will do our best to make this happen.

The O level results from NGSS were also encouraging considering the problems faced over school closures and of our 5 MWT girls 1 achieved Division 1, 2 Division 2 and 1 Division 3. I think students and teachers alike need to be congratulated on this achievement but of course there is the great concern as to whether all the girls will return to school after such a long time away.

The new semester for our four girls already at university has begun but all the courses are now online. To facilitate this, we have recently provided the girls with reconditioned laptops and money to allow them to access the internet. However, for some who live in remote villages this still can still prove to be a problem as there is no internet access.

Nursing schools have been allowed to reopen and one of our O level girls, Modern, has requested that we support her to study for a certificate in Nursing.

During the closure of NGSS and Ruth Memorial Nursery School we have realised how hard it is for the teachers, many on local part time employment and not getting paid. We have therefore tried to offer financial support to them in a small way and while the schools remain closed, we will try and do this again. At the nursery school we have also offered food support to the families of all the 75 children who are registered at the nursery.

Before this latest imposed closure of NGSS we facilitated the upgrading of the Fine Arts Room- providing much needed text books, stools and drawing boards, paper, paints and pencils. Fine Arts is always a popular subject and these will be ready for use once the school reopens.

As a charity we understand that all of you who give regularly to support individual girls may be concerned as to how your money is being spent. We have mentioned food and teachers' support and laptops and data. However, we are unable to give any guarantee that those of you who support individual girls monthly will actually see them return to school and continue their education once it is allowed. This puts us in a bit of a dilemma and we would welcome your feedback.

Education in Uganda is being severely disrupted as the country tries to cope with the coronavirus, shortage of vaccines and keeping everyone safe. Please be reassured that your money is safe and just waiting for the time when students can return to school once again. In the meantime it may give us the opportunity to be more supportive of the girls who wish to go on to further education as this is not under the same strict lockdown regime.

Thank you very much for your ongoing support.

God bless you and keep you safe.

Clare, Peter, Kath, Ann and Pippa

(Mary Wood Trust trustees)

