

**Newsletter**  
**Edition 53**  
**October 2025**



**Project Region: Uganda**



**Fourteen intensive days in East Africa, with an in-depth look at four school and education projects**

**Smiling Angels – an exemplary educational initiative supporting young (often very young) mothers and their children**

After our first visit in February 2024 to the Smiling Angels facility in Matugga, about 30 minutes north of central Kampala on Bombo Road, we returned this year to take a deeper look at the concept behind this small nursery school, which already stood out during our initial visit. Since 2023, Stephen, Lovisa, and Gorreth have been operating a nursery, a preschool, and, with two classes, the beginnings of a primary school on a modest plot of land. Their mission is to





“put a smile back on the faces” of disadvantaged children and their teenage mothers, particularly those who became pregnant at a very young age. This mission is also the source of the school’s name: *Smiling Angels*.

Visitors to this institution will find this smile not only on almost every child’s face, but also on those of the teachers and educators. In the tent, which was purchased with our support this year and set up on an open space in front of the school building, the children welcomed us with folk dances, songs and poetry. Both the younger group (ages 3–4) and the older children (ages 6–7)

participated with enthusiasm and pride. The national anthems of East Africa, Uganda and the school were, of course, part of the programme. A six-year-old boy read a welcome speech in English with astonishing self-confidence and composure. The traditional rhythmic dances - performed to energetic drumming - captivate the children, their hips swaying with a naturalness that even athletic Europeans find difficult to achieve. Many of the children sing along to the accompanying lyrics by heart. A short video is available here: <https://youtu.be/lfKtCOsERSU>.



One of the most compelling aspects of this project is its consistent educational approach. Currently, the school can provide for children from ages 3 - 8. The school’s approach centers on play-based learning, social interaction, holistic development, a child-centered environment, and early exposure to vocabulary. We spent a full day with the children in their classrooms and during breaks and saw how naturally and joyfully learning and play structure the school day, and the impressive results this produces.

About a year ago, the school purchased a small bus through a hire-purchase arrangement to transport the children, and it has now been fully paid off. Unfortunately, shortly after our return, the bus was involved in an accident during a school

trip to the Kampala Zoo. A brake failure caused a collision with another vehicle. Thankfully, no one was injured. We are covering the resulting financial shortfall - taxi transport for the children, repairs, and other related costs - amounting to approximately €4,000, through our remaining 2025 budget. However, the school will need a newer, larger minibus in the long term, and we are seeking donors.



The school’s greatest challenge is lack of space. The tent purchased in summer 2025 provides protection from



sun and rain but occupies the former outdoor play area. It now serves as a daytime learning and play space and doubles as a rest area for the youngest children. Until recently, the school's founders - Stephen, Lovisa, and Gorreth - were pursuing a vertical expansion, adding a second storey to the existing one-storey building to create three additional classrooms. However, a horizontal expansion by acquiring adjacent land would be a significantly better long-term solution.

Across the street from Smiling Angels is a 1.5-hectare school property currently for sale by an insolvent owner. The asking price is UGX 280,000,000 (approx. €70,000), which exceeds our own financial capabilities. We are therefore exploring funding models involving additional partners. As an interim step, we are considering the possibility of renting a school building on the site while continuing to work toward a long-term solution.

*It is not what our hands hold on to that makes us rich, but what our heart gives away.*

*(Thomas Romanus)*

## **Anne Namuddu Motherhouse – A Place that Fosters High-Quality Education and Training**



The Motherhouse was our “home” in Uganda during our 14-day stay, as it had been in previous years. Over time, and especially during this visit, it has truly become our Ugandan home. The Motherhouse is a home for children without families. Yet it is much more than that. It is a driving force behind high-quality, person-centered schooling and vocational training for disadvantaged children.



# T+H HOENE STIFTUNG

- A child who comes to the Motherhouse, usually from the most miserable living conditions, receives a personal welcome and basic education that offers meaningful opportunities for development.
- All children attend school, supported by the Motherhouse. The individual guidance provided, especially by the director, Teddy, always considers which school and educational path best nurtures each child's strengths.

Seventy children and young people benefit from this support and personal attention, something far from common in Uganda. This is immediately apparent among those who live at the Motherhouse year-round, as well as those who return during school holidays or whom Teddy visits at their schools. Teddy and her team, together with all the children, have become a family, and the Motherhouse has become their cherished home.

We visited during Term III. As a result, only nine children were living in the house at the time. Below are the beautiful faces of these children.





The Motherhouse also operates an agricultural enterprise - a working farm with 600 chickens, pigs, a banana plantation, maize cultivation, and, more recently, a coffee plantation.



This farm is essential for providing food for the children at the Motherhouse and for helping to cover education and operating costs through the sale of products such as eggs and, in the future, coffee. Many private and institutional donors in Germany still cover the vast majority of expenses. These include schools and kindergartens that organize fundraising activities, often by selling goods produced in Uganda or through other initiatives.

Currently, more than €110,000 per year is required to cover education and operating costs—a significant undertaking that many supporters sustain year after year. In the long term, within four to five years, and assuming all goes well, the Motherhouse aims to cover most of its costs through its own activities.

We are working on this together with the Friends of Uganda /Aalen/Stuttgart/Ortenberg and, above all, with Teddy and her team, a crew of 10 to 12 people that includes George, Symphrose, Margret, Resty, Immaculate, Betty, Aidah, Francis, Denis, John, Felix and Uncle John.



## **St. Jude School in Kikondo and “Our Friends” – Developing Step by Step!**

Since early 2023, we have been supporting the development of this school, founded in 2018 by Jude Kayiwa (Head Teacher of Uganda Martyrs Kagwa Primary School) in a rural region located about 45 minutes south of Masaka on the Masaka–Kakuto Road. The aim is to develop the school into a model institution for rural Uganda. The area is marked by fertile soil but a largely impoverished population. Many families cannot afford regular school fees or the additional costs required for their children to attend school.

When we first visited in November 2022, the school was in poor condition and required substantial investment to create a real path for development. Since then, the situation has changed significantly, although much still remains to be done.



The school currently has 412 pupils, 121 of whom are boarders.

The class structure is as follows:

Nursery		P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7
Lower 3-4 J.	Upper 5 J.							
24	48	36	48	60	63	47	48	38

The school has 15 teachers and 7 other employees (1 caretaker and storekeeper, 1 secretary, 2 matrons for the dormitories, 2 cooks and 1 bus driver).

Since we became involved at the beginning of 2023, the following has been achieved:

**Step 1 (spring 2023):** Renewal of school furniture



Old classroom



New classroom

**Step 2 (end of 2023):** Construction of a drinking water well with a 10,000-litre freshwater cistern





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**Step 2 (springtime 2024):** Purchase of a 14-seater school bus (Toyota Van)

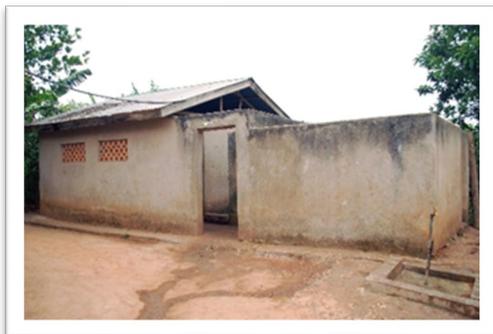


**Step 4 (early 2025):** Renovation of a building for classrooms + new furniture + uniforms and scholastic materials



**Step 5 (1. December 2025 until 01. February 2026)**

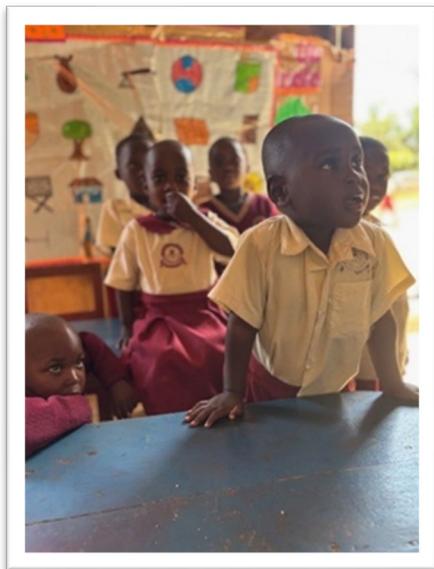
Demolition of the old sanitary building and construction of a new one as part of the WASH project, 'Cleanliness promotes health', funded by the EZ Small Projects Fund (administered by the Schmitz Foundations) in cooperation with ECOSS (Empowering Community for Self Sustainability) <https://ecossuganda.org/>





We observed lessons across several classes. Compared to our last visit in 2024, noticeable changes in teaching practice have taken place. In P7, much of the instruction now takes place in groups, and group work is also beginning to appear in the lower classes. The school has established a choir, which performed at an outdoor school mass. The school's dance group also presents impressive performances.

<https://youtu.be/0V6SIzsjZzQ>



The children's discipline at mealtimes—washing their hands beforehand and waiting patiently to receive food—is noteworthy. Overall, the children appear content and cheerful. Part of the large courtyard has been bordered with stones and planted with greenery. This not only improves the appearance of the space but also creates a more welcoming environment.

The school building, renovated earlier this year, now stands out in a positive way from the four neighboring buildings, which remain in their original

condition. In addition, a large rainwater cistern has been constructed at the corner of the main building that houses the dormitories and the school office.



## Future Steps

### *A second well*

With the new sanitary facilities - particularly the flush toilets - coming into use, the school's water consumption will increase significantly. The drinking-water well constructed in 2023/2024 will not be sufficient on its own and the rainwater collected in the newly installed cistern on the dormitory roof does not provide a reliable year-round supply, ~~even if additional cisterns are added to the classroom buildings as planned~~. To remedy this, a second well will be drilled and installed at the lower left end behind the classrooms.

Estimated cost: UGX 24,445,000 (approx. €6,056).

### *Renovation of additional classroom buildings*

Once the renovation planned for early 2025 is completed, additional classroom buildings will also be refurbished. Movable interior walls will allow the creation of a main hall for the school. A new section will also be added to house the school office, which will free up space in the dormitory building and expand the boarding facilities.

## **Used laptops wanted for the school office!**

Two laptops (Windows 10) are required, including used laptops that are still in working order. If you have a working laptop and would like to part with it, you can help the school! Please pass it on to us and we will arrange for transport to Uganda.

## **CoRe and the Business Game – An Important Step in the Right Direction**



In our commitment to education and school development in Uganda, strengthening the quality of schooling is essential. This is why we are very interested in the CoRe project developed by the ADEPT e.V. association. CoRe stands for *Cooperation & Responsibility*. The project aims to encourage secondary school students in Uganda to take more initiative, engage in cooperative learning, and develop entrepreneurial thinking through three consecutive components: *Child-friendly School (S1)*, *Business Game (S2)*, and *Step (S3)*. In cooperation with the Masaka Diocese Education Secretary (MDES), the project is currently being implemented in four secondary schools in the diocese.

During our visit to Uganda, we had the opportunity to join Gabriele Rolfs (Chair of ADEPT e.V.) and the MDES project coordinators (Denis Kaliyango and colleagues) at three of the participating schools and to observe the implementation of Phase 2, the

Business Game. The visits took place at St Bruno's School in Ssaza/Masaka, St Anthony's in Kyazanga, and St Mugagga's in Kkindu.

On each visit day, the game was played in one Senior 2 class, with approximately 50–60 students per class divided into five groups of 10–12. The game is conducted only once per class. Prior to the school sessions, teachers received training from specially trained mentors, preparing them to lead the game. Supported by members of the MDES project team, the teachers assume roles such as game leader, moderator, accountant, and card manager. Students in each group elect a spokesperson and a minute-taker.

The card game consists of four rounds, each representing a stage of human life (ages 0–16, 16–35, 35–60, and over 60). Alongside cards showing investment options—such as school education, a house, a mobile phone, a wedding, or a motorbike—the groups receive “coins” (play money) to invest as they choose. After each round, the investments are evaluated, and “life stars” are awarded accordingly. The objective is to accumulate as many life stars as possible. Poorly rated investments incur costs, while better-rated investments earn stars.

From the second round onward, event cards introduce sudden positive or negative developments. Positive events provide additional coins, while negative events require groups to give some away. A player can also take loans from from the second round, but these must be repaid over the subsequent two rounds. Between rounds, groups take part in question-and-answer sessions, during which they can ask one another to explain their investment decisions.

The students participated enthusiastically. As the game progressed, groups developed a clear ambition to win and were visibly disappointed by negative ratings or events and excited by positive ones. The group dynamics that emerged through teamwork were particularly encouraging. We consider this to be the game's greatest strength.



We learned about the other two components - Child-Friendly School and Step - through reports from school administrators and teachers. In the Child-Friendly School component, the topic of fire safety appears to have had significant impact. Administrators and teachers were very enthusiastic about this work.

The third element, STEP, involves real-life entrepreneurial experience. Students are expected to develop their own business ideas in groups and put them into practice using real money,

which must be repaid. Students may keep any profits earned at the end of the project. There was a wide and creative range of business ideas: ironing school uniforms, producing and selling fruit juices from school-grown crops, planting and harvesting onions, cultivating mushrooms in small growing facilities, and more. Reports across



the schools were consistently positive, and teachers expressed strong support for the program.

We were unable to observe STEP directly, as our visit coincided with the examination period at the end of Term III. Nonetheless, the project represents a valuable contribution to aligning school education in Uganda with independent, team-based problem-solving. It supports the student-centered approach now required by the new national curriculum, moving away from the traditional teacher-centered model often used in very large classes (sometimes up to 90 students).

We believe that expanding this initiative beyond the four current schools is highly worthwhile. We have indicated to MDES that we are, in principle, prepared to assume the role previously held by ADEPT in supporting CoRe as it expands further. MDES is still in the process of evaluating this possibility, with a decision expected in the first half of 2026.

## Project Region: Israel/Palestine



There is a lot to share from happy and grateful students about their academic achievements, exam results, graduation ceremonies, and more. However, this newsletter is already filled with reports from our recent trip to Uganda. And with November already half over, I will save these updates for the next newsletter, which will be published soon.

**Our next trip has already been scheduled for 25 March to 7 April 2026, and this time we will return to Israel/Palestine.**

*“You can everything take from me, but not what I have gained by education in my head.”*

*(Robin, 19 years old, scholarship holder from South Africa)*



## Have we raised your interest?

Visit our homepage [www.fam-hoene.de](http://www.fam-hoene.de)! Contact us at [stiftung@fam-hoene.de](mailto:stiftung@fam-hoene.de) or by telephone on +49 7152 3537299!

If you would like to support our work, whether by providing information about educational projects worthy of funding or in any other way, we would be delighted to hear from you. If you would like to support us through donations or endowments, you can also do so on a project-specific basis. We guarantee that your donation will be used in full, exclusively and directly for the project of your choice. In the case of project-specific endowments, we ensure that the income attributable to your endowment is used exclusively for the project you have selected.

**If you would like to do so, you will find the necessary information on our homepage. Our donation account at Kreissparkasse Böblingen (BIC BBKRDE6BXXX) has the IBAN DE17 6035 0130 00011098 14.**

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