



# BISHOP MASEREKA CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION

Plot 1-5 Stanley Street / P.O.Box 411, Kasese, Uganda, Mobile phone: 265 483444780  
 Email: bmmcentre@bmcf.org, Website: www.bmcf.org

## END OF YEAR REPORT 2015

The BMCF Education staff in Kasese is thankful to the US BOARD for the tireless support to the program in achieving the BMCF mission of providing holistic support to orphans and vulnerable children in the Kasese District.

In 2014 BMCF supported 658 students, 464 with school fees through support from US donations and 194 with scholastic materials through support from Inter Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU). The following provides a breakdown of our supported students at the end of June 2015.

<i>OVC in formal education</i>		<i>OVC in Vocational /apprenticeship</i>	
<b>Formal Primary</b>	<b>76</b>	Female	8
Female	47	Male	16
Male	29	<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Formal Secondary</b>	<b>211</b>		
Female	123	<b>Completed University in 2014</b>	
Male	88	Female	4
<b>Formal Tertiary</b>	<b>61</b>	Male	13
Female	25	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>
Male	36		
<b>Formal University</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>Completed Tertiary Education in 2014</b>	
Female	40	Female	12
Male	52	Male	7
<b>Drop outs</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>
Female	01		
Male	01		
<b>Total</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>Total Students Currently Supported</b>	<b>464</b>

Sponsorship is the integral component of the BMCF education program. As we engage students throughout their academic career, BMCF provides material and emotional support to students. Many of the problems faced by children in Uganda revolve around the difficulty of remaining in an educational environment- whether formal or informal- because the associated fees and obstacles are disproportionately high to the cost of living for many families.



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BMCF has been solely supported by churches and people of good will from the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, St. John's Carlisle, St. James Batavia, St Luke's Episcopal Church, Individuals from many other parishes in the US, Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, Jubilee Ministry, St. Lukes Annapolis, Episcopal Women of the Church, St. Andrews Episcopal church and Inter Religious Council of Uganda.

## **Accomplished Activities in 2015**

### **Financial Sponsorship**

The Education Program has to date received Ugx. 255,924,340 from the US Board. About 89% has been disbursed to the planned sponsorship for the second Term, 2015. Through our cooperation with the area schools, we are able to ensure that students can remain in class throughout the term and improve their chances for academic success.

### **School Visits**



Within the first weeks of the new term, the staff visited all 43 secondary and primary school within Kasese District, as well as several in neighboring districts, where there are BMCF-supported students. The purpose of visiting the children in their schools is to establish their pattern of attendance and how the scholarships impacts on their performance.

During the school visit, all students were found to be in school apart from a few who would be out of school due to various health or family reasons.

While they visited, the BMCF staff interacted with the supported students, head - teachers, teachers and school finance officials. In addition to interacting with the students, they as well received scholastic materials.

### **Medical Care**

BMCF has continued to support BMCF OVC living with HIV with treatment of opportunistic diseases and ART.



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This has in turn reduced deaths in PLWA pediatrics and their turn up in schools and academic excellence has been observed. It has also been observed that self esteem has been restored to children live with HIV because they learn to cope to live positive and productive lives.

## **Networks and Linkages**

Apart from education support, BMCF is being supported by other organizations in meeting the OVC needs. With help from Inter religious council Uganda (IRCU) and Baylor Uganda, the BMCF positive children are receiving ART from identified health facilities in Kasese District and those within Kasese town receive medical care at BMMC.

With limited funds, the education program could not continue sensitization of communities about HIV / AIDS. However this has been alleviated by the BMCF – CSF project that is sensitizing the communities and carrying out HCT services.

## **Social economic support**

BMCF aims at economic independence of households where BMCF beneficiaries live. Most of the caretakers of OVC are equally vulnerable and do not have the means to sustain their families. To reduce on household vulnerability, BMCF has formed VSLAs to create a revolving fund among the families that run micro businesses. IRCU has actively been involved in the training of parents / guardians in small business management and record keeping.

Supporting children in school too yields socio-economic support for families in that those children who have completed school have started helping their younger siblings.

## **Psychosocial Support**



BMCF always endure to have a one on one contact with her beneficiaries. This helps them identify children who are going through difficulties both in their homes and communities. This can be achieved through home as well as school visitations.



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## **Child protection**

The fact that BMCF deals with orphaned children, some of whom have no caretakers (from child headed families) and therefore get into contact with the law. This last term, we had two cases (girl and boy) that could not settle in school and disrupted school activities. They were arrested by their respective schools and made to drop out of school for violating school rules and regulations!

BMCF advocated for them to be released from prison but to date do not know how they can be handled come 2016.

## **Improvements and Changes in the Education Program in 2015**

Announced in 2014, the amount required for sponsorship of a student with BMCF was risen along with the natural rise in tuition and prices for attending school in Uganda. Nearly all of our sponsors have transitioned to the new fees structure, and it has had a tremendous impact on our ability to support BMCF students.

Additionally, BMCF Education has undertaken a campaign to involve more fully the local participants in our programmatic decisions and activities. Meetings with these stakeholders (students, parents, schools, and alumni) are set to begin in April 2015.

This year, three meetings were held both for students, teachers and guardians. For students and guardians, the issue of contributing to the education program was overly received. However, the teachers expressed fear involving their schools arguing that most of their schools already were overwhelmed by helpless children that were not on BMCF program and would therefore not welcome ideas that would not include other vulnerable children in their schools.



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### Sponsorship Fee Changes for 2015

Beginning this year, the cost to support students through BMCF rose from \$330 to **\$480 annually**.

Item	Cost in USD	Frequency (annual or termly)	Total USD
<i>Fees paid to school</i>			
Tuition	\$100.00	3	\$300.00
School Uniform	\$16.00	1	\$16.00
<i>Scholastic Materials</i>			
Three dozen books	\$3.30	3	\$9.90
Two dozen pens	\$1.70	3	\$5.10
School bag	\$10.00	1	\$10.00
Mathematical set	\$1.00	1	\$1.00
<i>Other</i>			
Lunch	\$18.00	3	\$54.00
Mosquito net	\$8.00	1	\$8.00
Shoes	\$16.00	1	\$16.00
BMCF Administration costs	\$20.00	3	\$60.00
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>\$480.00</b>

### BMCF MOVING FORWARD

BMCF envisions an enlightened, healthy, and self-sustaining Kasese, and to achieve that vision we must first turn to our community. Our community includes all the staff, directors, students, patients, families, donors, and teachers that are affected by our programs.

In this current period of transition, BMCF has partnered with Tatua Kenya (Tatua means “to solve” in Swahili), an organization based in Nairobi that is dedicated to facilitating grassroots solutions to development issues. Focused on the idea that *all* people have resources, ideas, and skills to offer, Tatua is building an international network of organizations committed to creating sustainable development by changing the way community problems are approached. BMCF will become a *Pamoja* (together)



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Community and build transformative relationships to increase understanding and investment at all levels of the BMCF family.

With knowledge from Tatua, the community of students has been organized into smaller groups (5). These groups through their leaders are now involved into income generating activities and the proceeds will be contributed towards fees support.

The alumni too were contacted and out of these contacts, two of the alumni have partnered to support one student who will be joining senior one 2016. They will jointly contribute Ugx. 300,000= for the child each academic term.

## **The Future of the Education Program**

The education program will use this period of transition to address current challenges, while participating in the transformation of BMCF into a truly community-driven movement. This exciting period of change will not affect the programs we currently provide for students. To the contrary, students will be expected to take a more active leadership role in the management of things that will affect them.

The education program seeks to continue providing financial support for vulnerable students in formal education or vocational training, psychosocial support and guidance to students, and economic empowerment programming for vulnerable families. The education program will work during this process toward the following objectives:

1. Improve financial sponsorship system by streamlining our databases to more efficiently provide information to staff, schools, and sponsors and monitor students' progress in school.
2. Develop screening tools for the schools in Kasese District to better manage the complexities of students switching between schools.
3. Network with our existing partners to move toward a streamlined process of full sponsorship for each student.
4. Invest in staff development to offer more comprehensive counseling and guidance, but also involve students in mentoring their peers in school, home environments.
5. Facilitate increased membership and power of the SACCO (savings group) comprised of guardians to our students, including training and financial coaching.

Ultimately, the BMCF education program envisions an education centre to address the growing need for quality and affordable education in Kasese. This school or academy will form in response to the needs of vulnerable students and families, both through the administration and pedagogy of the institution.





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## Success stories



My names are Jessica Biira who has just graduated from Uganda Christian University – Mukono. I lost both parents as a little girl and I was taken in by my maternal uncle. It was difficult growing up without parents but my uncle shouldered me. Much as he had a large extended family that did not accept me at first, I have not known any other home than his. The BMCF has been paying my school fees since I was in primary six. I was so excited to be supported by BMCF because when my parents died, one of my father's brothers offered me to a family to be a house maid. If my uncle had not offered me a home, I would not be where I am. I would possibly be married with more vulnerable children!! But I am proud of the BMCF support and in particular my sponsor Jim and Joan Ellison who have supported me through my secondary and University education. I never imagined I would ever join University but I thank Ann Nyangoma for encouraging me and always counseling me whenever I faced challenges at home.



As a growing girl, I felt alone yet in a huge family. People who have not lived my life may never understand that I felt so bad when my guardians would not inquire about school performance at the end of the term, let alone wanting to know when I would be going back to school. My fees at first was never anywhere in the family's budget but after BMCF, I never worried about fees. I went to good schools that enabled me perform well. I am now out of school and cannot believe that I have come this far. Ebenezer! My prayer now is that we quickly get employment and we promise we will give back to BMCF (Jessica & Morris say).

God bless you all our sponsors for loving us and reaching out to us.



My name is Morris Bwambale. I have just graduated from Uganda Christian University Mukono with a bachelor's degree in Economics. I am honored to have gone through BMCF and I thank God I did not disappoint. I lost both my parents while I was 5 years and was left with my maternal aunt who continued supporting me until P5. In P.5, I was discovered to be having AIDS and the world seemed bleak. I was advised to stop schooling since I had started being weak. However in



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my heart, I felt I wanted to study. For one year I studied at the mercy of the school head-teacher (Eunice Sande). I kept performing well despite my status. She is the one who referred me to BMCF for financial support.

Ever since I became a beneficiary of BMCF, I have never looked back. I have been going through school like a rich man's child. I have never failed to report to school in time and at least there was someone from BMCF who always visited me at school, counseled me and I felt loved.

At times, I felt depressed especially when I joined university and saw the other side of social life. I hated myself knowing that I would not freely relate with the opposite sex. I was distressed and sometimes made those distress calls to Ann at the most wrong times of the night. But I thank God she referred me to a group of people like me that encouraged me to hang in there.

In BMCF, I found my family, love, hope and satisfaction. I would not have asked for more.

God bless BMCF, all our sponsors and most especially Nicki Week. Thank you all for loving us the BMCF children.

## **Challenges**

-We are challenged by children that do not have homes. BMCF's effort in educating these children is always thwarted.

-The number of University continually increases thus stressing the education pocket.

- Changing people's mind set toward community mobilization / organization is difficult since there are other actors that do not require community involvement.

Compiled by:

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