



CONCEPT NOTE FOR PURCHASE OF A NEW SCHOOL VAN FOR SHAK JUNIOR SCHOOL – BULABAKULU

1.0 Introduction

SHAK Junior School is a Mixed Nursery and Primary School located in Bulabakulu Village, Ziropwe Sub County, and Luwero district – one of the rural districts of Uganda. The school is premised on the aspiration for establishing a successful and sustainable educational center that provides affordable, high quality comprehensive education services to children especially those from low income households in the community. Driven by the principle of social inclusion, our approach will enable to create a conducive environment that embraces social, religious and cultural diversity while supporting every individual learner to achieve their full potential. We strive to offer a dynamic learning community where teachers and parents work harmoniously together in supporting students to become long life learners. As an independent private school we shall always target key areas that holistically develop our students as successful and motivated learners who strive to achieve their best. Our ultimate goal is to give every student the best education and equip them with skills to adapt to and flourish within a consistently changing world.

2.0 Problem Analysis

Academic achievement is an important indicator for the future success of the learners. Education for All is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) initiated by the United Nations in setting targets for countries to offer children free and compulsory, equitable and quality primary and secondary education by 2030 (Human Right Watch, 2017).

The fact of concern is that in many communities including Ziropwe sub county in rural Uganda, the construction of the existing public schools did not pay attention to home-school distance experienced by potential learners. The overlooked factor includes other related concerns like transport challenges, meals availability, study time and safety issues the learners are likely to face as a result of long distances from home to school. Consequently, long-distance to and from school is a critical aspect of concern as it directly affects students' academic progress and performance (Melack, 2014; World Bank, 2019).

The problem is common in developing countries like Uganda in which some of the students travel very long distance on foot or by bicycles to access education (Human Right Watch, 2017). UNICEF (2017), in a compilation of the Guyana out-of-school children study, found that home to school distance affects children's school participation due to physical barriers and the associated community surroundings. Sabeen (2007) on reviewing distance from home to school suggested that for learners of primary schools, the maximum distance from home to school should be 1.6 kilometers. However, in Uganda and more specifically in Ziropwe and surrounding areas, many children have to travel over 8 Kilometers to access the nearest school.

Muhia (2015) established that long distance to school decreases the quality of communication /time of contact between teachers and students, something which may affect the academic progress of the learners. Furthermore, because students spend a lot of time traveling at the time when they could be at school learning, the quality of their learning outcomes is likely to be

affected too. Besides, Bashaiza (2016) reported that the long distance to school reduces student concentration in class as some of them reach school while sweaty, stressed and depleted physically and mentally, thus affecting learning.

Literature Review Various studies have identified a strong bond between School- Home Distance and Students' Academic Performance among the learners. School- home long distance is associated or linked with students' lack of breakfast and lunch, transport problem, inadequate students' safety, inadequate study time, lateness, temptation and tiredness that disrupt students learning. Acham, Malde, Theron and Egal (2012) in their study on breakfast, midday meals and academic achievement in rural primary schools in Uganda found that poor performers had poor patterns of feeding due to long distances they travelled from home to school. This is due to the fact that the long distance prevented students from going back home for breakfast and lunch. Thus students found it difficult to keep on studying with empty stomachs.

Long home-school distances are also responsible for chronic truancy or absenteeism from school which affects students in the sense that when a student is absent his /her fellow students proceed with learning and leave him or her behind.

Melack (2014) established that long walking distance made students reach school very exhausted which resulted in poor concentration on the subject being taught and sometimes dozing in class hence failing to learn effectively. This is because of tiredness, students' minds and bodies fail to work effectively and efficiently, hence poor ability to learn. Thus, circumstances like this, act as an obstacle to effective learning because learning requires calmness of mind and if by any chance the learner is stressed, disturbed, is nervous, harassed, or is worried he or she cannot learn effectively.

Distance-related variables lead to tiredness and lateness among students hence reduces their time in learning. Furthermore, long distance may force students to leave from school early so as to avoid arriving home late (Human Rights Watch, 2017). This may cause students to miss the participation in extracurricular learning experiences like sports and games which take place after class hours. Muhia (2015) argue that long distance reduces the time which teachers and students could be in contact because the students have to spend a lot of time in walking instead of being at school. Therefore, the long distance to school results in smaller time used in productive learning. According to Luneja (2001), if school distance is very far from home, adolescent girls who live in rural areas tend to abandon school due to susceptibility to sexual harassment which may affect them psychologically since on the way to school, their security is not guaranteed (Human Right Watch, 2017).

3.0 The Intervention

As strategy to address the above challenges, the school management of SHAK Junior school established a transportation service system for learners that come from far distances from the school. This system necessitated the purchase of a school van that supports to pick learners from their homes in the morning and drop the back in the afternoon after classroom sessions.

4.0 Our Current Need

Initially the school engaged 7 seater Noah car (petrol Powered) that was dedicated to this function. However, this proved so inadequate given the overwhelming numbers. Through the support of our friends in Germany we were able to secure a diesel powered 14 seater van which we have been using since the school reopened after the COVID-19 lockdown.

However, with time, the number of learners has greatly increased. Currently close to 50% of our learners (102/220) come from distant communities surrounding Bulabakulu, where the school is located and therefore require services of the school van for them to attend school. A big majority of these are young ones between 3-10 years old.

Given the escalated fuel prices, the school found it non cost effective to engage the petrol powered 7-seater alongside the 14-seater van. Therefore, the 14 seater has to transport this big population.

Our observations indicate that the 14 seater is currently overwhelmed in such a way that to catch up with school time, the driver has to start picking the children too early in the morning at around 4.00am. Moreover, the learners have to be squeezed beyond the recommended seat capacity to ensure that the van does not have to make many trips (so as to save on fuel and time). However, this may have a negative impact on the learners since they are forced to wake up very early to catch the van, so they don't get enough time to rest. While at school, learners are sometimes forced to leave school early so as to reach home early. squeezing the learners may also have negative health implications.

Against that background, we realized the urgent need to have an extra van to catch up with the increased number of learners and support them to move in a safer and comfortable way.

We therefore appeal to our dear friends to extend a hand of support to the school for this cause.

The successful purchase of the second van is anticipated to foster improved learning as well as safety among the students.



Figure 1: Learners waiting to board the school van back home



Figure 2: Teacher guiding learners into the school van back home



Figure 3: Learners boarding school van guided by the teacher to get organized



Figure 4: Driver overseeing learners as the board school van back home on one of the days

5.0 Estimated Cost

Scenario	Type	Estimated Cost
Alternative 1	Bigger Van, 36-seater – Coaster type	Approximately 21,250 Euros
Alternative 2	Additional 14 -seater Van (Reconditioned)	Approximately 85,00-95,00 Euros

6.0 Source of funding:

This critical project is expected to be achieved through generous financial contribution/donation from our friends and supporters in Germany through the Germany based Association of: "**Friends and supporters of the Shak Junior School**".

Prepared by



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