

## Friends Association

### Freunde und Unterstützer der SHAK Junior School in Bulabakulu, Uganda e.V.

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About me: My name is Klaus Gresser (\*1956). I am married and the father of three grown-up children. I have lived with my family in Engen/Hegau since 1997. I have been retired since Sept. 2019. Before that, I was a teacher at primary and secondary schools for 35 years. Of these, I was a deputy head teacher for six years and then head teacher for 14 years at a primary school in Singen/Germany

#### **The back story - How did a support association come to be founded and how does it work?**

I was looking for a meaningful task for the time of my retirement and registered with the SES (Senior Experts Service) in Bonn at the beginning of 2019. This organisation, supported by the German government and business associations, is looking for pensioners and retirees who can then pass on the knowledge and experience they have gained during their working lives to institutions and people all over the world.

In September 2019, I received a request from SES asking if I would be willing to support and further a school in Uganda, SHAK Junior School. In early February 2020, I travelled as an SES expert to Bulabakulu, Uganda - a cluster of huts in the very rural Zirombe district, two hours' drive north of the capital Kampala. My task was, on the one hand, to familiarise the teachers with modern teaching methods and, on the other hand, to show the school, the teaching team and the school management ways in which the school can be further developed under the given circumstances.



After the first two weeks, it quickly became clear to me that the task would not be completed with a one-off, comparatively short stay of four weeks. The school, the entire team on site, needs longer-term, if not permanent, support and accompaniment. During the last days in Uganda, I thought about how I could support the school community of SHAK Junior School in the long term. For the first time, the idea of founding a support association came up. In many discussions, mostly in the evenings, I further developed the basic idea of our support association together with the school director Saad Luyinda. The support association should combine the greatest possible support for the school with the greatest transparency and cost efficiency under one roof.

In concrete terms: The donor decides from a "we need list" of the school what he wants to donate for - e.g. for a teacher's desk. The donor transfers the amount on the list to the Friends of the School account. The Friends send the money to Uganda to the school's account. In our example, the school director buys the desk and uploads a picture of the desk as proof for the donor, which is then published on the homepage of the development association.

Back in Germany, together with Mrs. Ricarda Simon from Ulm-Böfingen, the support association was founded as a **registered association and is recognised as a non-profit organisation** by the Singen tax office in a letter dated 25 November 2020.

The association manages without administrative costs as far as possible. All costs incurred, such as web hosting, printing of flyers, etc. are covered by the two chairpersons. Only the transfer fees to Uganda (99 cents per transfer) are incurred.

### **The 2nd chairperson of the association**

Ricarda Simon (\*1958) lives in Ulm. She is a retired secondary school teacher and is now involved as the elected chairperson in her home parish "Zum Guten Hirten" in Ulm Böfingen.

In addition to her work in the parish and in the SHAK Junior School supporters' association, she is also involved in Father Bloching's Zambia school project in Zambia.

### **The school foundation**

SHAK JUNIOR SCHOOL is a private primary school with an attached nursery and was founded in 2017 by Saad Luyinda. The founder is a trained social worker with extensive experience in working with children and young people. One focus of his work dealt with children and young people who have to grow up under difficult socio-economic conditions. His special attention has therefore always been on weak and disadvantaged children and youth. His experience as a social worker in a number of projects, his skills in project planning and management led him to found a school for this group of disadvantaged children, in a rural area of Uganda, where it would otherwise be almost impossible for the children to attend school. He is supported in the three-member school board by the co-director Halima Namakula, a trained teacher, and Mr. Hassan (formerly a teacher at a secondary school).

As a private institution, the school is financed exclusively by the (small) school fees paid by parents. Since the end of 2020, the support association has been trying to help the school with purchases that would not be possible through school fees alone.

### **SHAK Junior School in Bulabakulu**

SHAK Junior School is a mixed (nursery and primary) public school in Bulabakulu Municipality. Bulabakulu is located two hours' drive north of Kampala, the country's capital, in Luwero District (Zirombe sub-district). The municipality of Bulabakulu is very rural and cannot be compared to the German concept of a municipality. It is rather a collection of individual farms and villages scattered over a wide area.

Therefore, the majority of the children, 111 out of a total of 192, have to be transported by the school's own buses. At present, 192 children are taught by 9



full-time teachers. As a private institution, it is recognised by the government (**EMIS number 210756**) and is committed to teaching in accordance with the rules and agreements of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Uganda. In addition, Islamic and Catholic religious education is provided, in each case according to the specifications and guidelines of the respective religious community.

The Ugandan primary school comprises grades 1-7. The nursery is divided into baby class, middle class and top class.

### **Objectives**

- The school aims to equip all its learners with the skills for lifelong learning so that they can later achieve a decent standard of living.
- All members of the school community shall be given equal opportunities for development.

- The school is a part of the Bulabakulu community and strives to maintain a constant and intensive connection with the community.
- Parental rights shall be strengthened with the involvement of parents in the work of the school.
- The children shall be educated to become responsible and God-fearing citizens within the community. To equip them with all the skills needed in an ever-changing world.
- To enable learners to build stable social relationships based on justice, mutual understanding and cooperation.
- To create employment for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Within and outside the community, the school aims to make a positive contribution to the development of Ugandan society.

### Values

- Love, care and commitment to learners
- Discipline
- Respect for human dignity
- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Cooperation
- Striving for the best for all

### What has been achieved so far?

The support association has been able to finance the following projects:

- Two school buses
- Complete kindergarten building with rest room (beds, mattresses)
- Roof for main building extension
- Classroom furniture with teacher's desks, chairs and classroom shelves
- Power supply for the school by means of a solar system
- Own independent water supply by drilling a well on the school grounds
- Various balls (basketballs, volleyballs) for sports lessons



### The planned future development

The school, the work of the teachers and the board of directors is very successful. From year to year, the number of pupils is continuously increasing. The material requirements, which are also increasing as a result, such as school buildings, school equipment, teaching and consumable materials, teachers' salaries and much more, represent an enormous challenge for the school. This is a broad field in which the development association is also active.

**Pictures from everyday school life at SHAK Junior School in Bulabakulu, Uganda**



Drilling a well for water supply



School founder and director Saad Luyinda



New school furniture



Nursery school in the construction phase



Morning assembly before school



Nursery building



Internal teacher training



Finally, real balls to play with!