

Our Mission.

We work to foster sustainable and vibrant Ugandan communities through unique partnerships focused on education, women's empowerment, food security and health.



Our Principles.

Empower Individuals. Innovate Sustainable Solutions.
Address Global Challenges. Forge Partnerships.
Seek Local Knowledge. Defend Human Dignity.

Our History.

In 2009, 23-year-old Brooke Stern and her father Ken wandered into the small, impoverished village of Bujagali in Eastern Uganda. They were struck by the lack of basic necessities but also the people's spirits and enthusiasm, even in the face of extreme poverty. Brooke spent the next 13 months living with and listening to the community's needs, wants, and frustrations. Surrounded by failed examples of aid, she recognized that a new model was needed to address the underlying complex causes of poverty. Through this experience, Supporting Opportunities for Ugandans to Learn (S.O.U.L.) Foundation was born.

Five years later, S.O.U.L. works in **14 villages** in the Jinja and Iganga Districts, directly and indirectly impacting **9,000 Ugandans**.

Brooke resides in Uganda the majority of the year, working with a Ugandan staff to oversee the day-to-day activities and impact of the Foundation. The organization is also supported by a U.S.-based Executive Director and Board of Directors. S.O.U.L. is a registered nonprofit organization in both the United States and Uganda.

Our Model. Hand up, not hand out.

The cost and effort behind every S.O.U.L. initiative are shared by the community members, making them stakeholders in the success and long-term sustainability of holistic programs that address several facets of poverty.

Our Programs. Education. Women's Empowerment. Food Security. Health.

Education: Creating a shared approach to increased enrollment, learning, and achievement, with a focus on young women and girls.

Soul to S.O.U.L.: Providing Access to Education

S.O.U.L. partners with parents and 40+ Ugandan schools to make education possible for children who otherwise would find it difficult if not impossible. Families are required to pay 50% of tuition and book fees and are responsible for becoming more involved in their children's education through participation in school-sponsored parent associations organized by S.O.U.L. What started with just 40 students has grown to over 400 sponsored students at the primary to the university level, including medical school. The majority of sponsored students are girls, who are disproportionately denied access to an education.



Preschool Program: Preparing Children for School

S.O.U.L. created a preschool program staffed by three Ugandan pre-primary teachers. The program provides a safe childcare environment for working mothers and an enriching early childhood education curriculum that prepares young children for formal education. The program enrolls 130 students annually and is self-sustainable.

Technology Program: Equipping Uganda's Future Leaders with Increased Opportunities through Technology

S.O.U.L. provides students and community members with access to computers and computer training that helps further prepare them for university studies and other job opportunities. In 2014, we partnered with solar engineers to create a solar computer lab at our community center that offers 20 solar-powered computers and two training courses per day. The

lab is used by at least 80 Ugandans weekly. Additionally, S.O.U.L. set up an additional computer lab with 10 Raspberry Pi computers at a rural secondary school for 300 students.

Mentorship Program: Guiding Students and Instilling Leadership

Launched in 2014, the program includes 25 students whereby older secondary students mentor younger students at least once a week. It is expanding quickly, and we plan to soon incorporate primary students into the program.

Women's Empowerment: Providing opportunities for economic and social empowerment.

Women's Cooperatives: Equipping Women with Education, Skills, and Income

S.O.U.L. provides skills and business training, including financial literacy courses, along with initial seed grants to groups of women with strong business proposals. To date, 14 cooperatives have been established (10-80 members per group) in aquaculture, agriculture, livestock, tailoring, and other artisan crafts. Over 700 women have participated with an average of 400 women at any given time. The women tripled their earnings from \$1 to \$3 a day and invest the majority back into their families.



Food Security: Improving the quantity and quality of food for families and communities

Food Security Groups: Producing Sustainable Jobs, Income, and Food

- **Fish Ponds:** S.O.U.L.'s eight fish ponds produce 50,000 tilapia each year, valued at roughly \$23,000. The fish increase food security in the surrounding villages and are also sold throughout East Africa.
- **Get-A-Goat, Give-A-Goat:** Members receive a dairy goat after successfully completing training and guidance sessions. They then gift their goat's first kid to S.O.U.L. so that the Foundation can gift the baby goat to a participant in a new group. The group members keep the following offspring, benefiting from the nutritious milk and increased income.
- **Agriculture Group:** Members learn successful and sustainable agricultural and business practices. The group has since harvested greens, tomatoes, okra, and other vegetables and has started selling their product to surrounding villages.
- **Chicken Groups:** S.O.U.L. works with four groups of women as they rear an average of 300 chickens as well as learn business skills to become financially literate.
- **Livestock Learning Center:** S.O.U.L. is launching this Center to train 200+ rural women in sustainable methods of farming and raising new breeds of livestock thereby further increasing food security and economic opportunities.

Health: Increasing education of and access to quality healthcare with a focus on maternal and child health.

Delivering with Dignity Program: Ensuring Safe and Sanitary Birthing Conditions

- **Maternal Health Network:** Working with 400+ women, S.O.U.L. seeks to increase education of and access to maternal and newborn care. Our long-term maternal health strategy includes the creation of a village birthing center staffed by both local midwives and a qualified physician.
- **Midwife Partnership:** S.O.U.L. works with the local midwife, Clementina, to improve the conditions in which women in rural Jinja give birth. Clementina delivers an average of three babies a day as a midwife is often the preferred and only accessible option for assisted birthing. We installed solar lighting, windows, a roof, doors, mattresses, and a water collection and drainage system on the midwife's birthing inn and provided clean birthing supplies. We also improved the comfort and safety of the birthing inn by adding a waiting room, bringing potable running water, constructing overhead showers and pit latrines.

Community Health Initiatives: Disseminating Health Information

S.O.U.L. provides free community health discussions covering first aid, basic hygiene, family planning, sexual and reproductive health, HIV prevention, and malaria prevention.

Sports Initiatives: Encouraging Physical Activity and Teamwork

S.O.U.L. constructed a sports field which is also used for routine community meetings and events. We also support a football team for boys and a net ball team for girls to encourage physical fitness and teamwork.



Learn. Volunteer. Join.

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