

Empower Life - Inclusive Quality Education Project Progress Report: January 2025

On November 26, 2024, staff from the Jeremiah Lucas Opira Foundation Uganda and Jeremiah Lucas Opira Foundation Sweden (JLOF) visited Archbishop Janani Luwum Primary School in Mucwini. The primary objectives of the visit were to engage with the school administration, the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA), and other key stakeholders to assess the school's current needs and challenges affecting the quality of education for both boys and girls.

JLOF has been supporting the school since 2015 to improve educational opportunities and outcomes. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and a complete turnover of school staff disrupted this support. The lack of a proper handover during the transition period created significant gaps in continuity and assistance.

Purpose and Activities of the Visit

The visit sought to engage with school stakeholders - including the administration, PTA, and School Management Committee (SMC) - to discuss challenges, priorities, and potential areas for improvement. The team conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to propose actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing the school's quality of education.

Key activities included:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Meetings were held with the health teacher, PTA members, and the SMC chairperson. These sessions facilitated individual and group discussions, providing stakeholders with a platform to share experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improvement.
- **Moderated Discussions:** The discussions were moderated to maintain focus and ensure productive outcomes. All observations and contributions were meticulously documented.
- **Root Cause Analysis:** The team explored underlying causes of the challenges and identified effective strategies to address them.

General Issues and Challenges

The Deputy Headteacher, PTA members, and SMC chairperson expressed their gratitude for JLOF's support over the years. However, they highlighted that the school's remote location, classified as a Hard-to-Reach (HTR) institution, presents persistent challenges requiring sustained external assistance.

A key concern is the sharp decline in student enrollment, which has dropped from 868 pupils in 2022 to only 358 currently. This decline, coupled with inadequate teacher accommodation, exacerbates the school's difficulties. The absence of proper housing for teachers undermines their stability and consistency, directly affecting the quality of education.

Summary of Main Challenges

- **Teacher Accommodation:** Current accommodation facilities are grossly inadequate. Many teachers, including those with families, are forced to sleep in the school halls.
- **Inadequate Staffing:** The school has only five government-paid teachers and two PTA teachers, resulting in an overwhelming workload. The district's focus on 'model

schools' has led to staff shortages, as teachers are frequently transferred to these prioritized institutions.

- **Examination Fees:** Many parents cannot afford PTA and examination fees, which hampers student progress and the school's financial stability.
- **Student Attendance and Hunger:** Hunger and long travel distances contribute to poor afternoon attendance, negatively impacting academic performance.
- **Sanitation and Hygiene:** Non-functional latrines, lack of washrooms, and inadequate facilities for menstruating girls pose significant health risks and lead to absenteeism, especially among female students.

Appeal for Support

The school community has reached out to the Jeremiah Lucas Opira Foundation (JLOF), along with its partners and supporters, for assistance in addressing critical needs, including infrastructure enhancement, educational resources, energy and water supply, teacher support, and health initiatives.



During a recent meeting, the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) and the School Management Committee (SMC) pledged active support for the project. Parents from the nine villages within the parish have committed to providing bricks throughout the project's duration until completion. Additionally, they have agreed to assist with the collection and transportation of water to the construction site. This initiative reflects the community's long-standing tradition of contributing to school development efforts. While the parents will supply bricks, they have made a heartfelt appeal to JLOF for the remaining necessary materials. This collaborative effort underscores their unwavering commitment to improving educational facilities for their children.

Conclusion and Call to Action

The recent assessment visit has highlighted the pressing challenges faced by the school and its community. While the school has made significant strides in its educational mission, several obstacles continue to hinder its full potential. Declining student enrollment, inadequate teacher accommodation, staffing shortages, financial constraints, and poor sanitation remain persistent barriers.

However, the resilience and dedication of the school community are profoundly inspiring. The proactive involvement of the PTA, SMC, and local families - who have pledged their resources and efforts to this project - demonstrates a collective determination to create better opportunities for the next generation.

Your support is now more crucial than ever. By contributing to this cause, you can help address systemic challenges and lay the groundwork for sustainable, high-quality education. Every effort, whether through donations, organizing fundraising events, or volunteering your time and expertise, every effort you make brings us closer to creating lasting change

We invite you to join us in empowering communities and changing lives.

Here are some ways you can get involved:

- **Donate:** Consider making a one-time or recurring donation to sustain our programs and initiatives. Visit <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/empower-life-inclusive-quality-education/> to contribute.
- **Organise Fundraising Events:** Mobilise resources and raise awareness by organising fundraising events. [Empower Life Fundraiser](#)
- **Volunteer Your Time and Expertise:** Share your skills to help us map and write grant applications. Reach out to us at info@jlof.net.

Together, we can create lasting change and provide students and their families with the education they deserve. Your involvement makes a tangible and meaningful difference.

We deeply value your commitment and look forward to continuing this impactful journey with you. **Thank you for making a difference!**