ACTION FOR RURAL WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

Project Report for Breaking Barriers to Education through Improved Access to classroom facility in St Joseph senior secondary school Vumba

Submitted to Strategies for Life
Year of grant: April 2012

PROJECT REPORT
August 2012
Introduction

In April 2012, ARUWE received a grant of USD 18,800 from Strategies For Life to support the renovation of a five-classroom block in St. Joseph Senior School Vvumba. This was aimed at contributing towards the improved School Education of 520 students through increased access to better educational facilities and increased adoption of appropriate hygiene practices in St Joseph’s Senior secondary School.

The project objectives were:

- To improve the accessibility to quality education among 520 School students of St. Joseph’s Senior Secondary School Vvumba by February 2012
- To improve the school enrollment from 520 in 2011 to 721 in 2012
- To improve the hygiene condition of St. Joseph Vvumba by 40%

In response to the poor studying conditions that were faced by students of St Joseph SSS and given the limited resources, the school management and the Kyankwanzi district leaders, contacted ARUWE to support them in completion of the school blocks, water, hygiene, sanitation and school nutrition. The renovation of school blocks presented a pressing need as it presented problems such as poor class room hygiene which compromised the health of students, lesson interferences during rainy seasons and limited space to accommodate more students in the school.

Given the above need, ARUWE contacted the Strategies For Life to support the school to renovate the five classroom block. Prior to the renovation, ARUWE conducted several meetings with the school management, B.O.D from where a steering committee was formed. The committee consisted of the school B.O.D chairperson, the school headmaster, the P.T.A Chairperson, a teacher, the students’ leaders and 2 of ARUWE team members. The committee played an important role in the monitoring and reporting progress of the project.

To achieve the desired objectives, the following activities were carried out:

**Planning meetings with all school stake holders**

2 planning meetings were held with ARUWE and the school stake holders including the school Board of Directors, School management, PTA and staff team and the student governing body. From themmeetings, the steering committee which was to oversee the project was formed. This included the head teacher, the school board chairman, 1 teacher and the school head girl and head boy and ARUWE program manager.
Mobilization of the school to contribute local materials

To foster ownership and participation, the school made the following pledges as contribution to the renovation: Food for skilled and un-skilled labor during the construction process, Water for construction, Store for keeping the materials, un skilled labor, Residence for 4 technical engineers, 4 wheel burials, 4 spades, 2 hammers, 4 hoes and bricks. The materials were contributed both the school treasury and parents (community) since the block under renovation was a community initiative.

Contract engineers for construction and renovation

ARUWE contracted engineers for the construction and renovation of the school. A contract was drawn out between ARUWE and the WATCOM engineering company.

Purchase of construction materials

Construction materials were purchased. These included: 25 windows, 10 doors, Aggregate stones, 512 bags of cement for making the floor, plastering and veranda, A fire extinguisher, Paint, Face boards, Roof and iron sheets and Technical labor costs. Attached is the financial report detailing the expenditure.

Delivering materials to the school

The construction materials were delivered to the school where they were stored.

Bags of cement delivered to the school, students involved in the construction get ready to unload them. It was important to involve students as this created ownership of the project.

Muyanja Bosco was one of the students who participated in the renovation. He says he enjoyed the experience very much as it gave him the opportunity to put his time especially in holidays to good use. Working with experts in the field was eye opening to him as it gave him the chance to learn a lot about construction. “If given chance and resources, I believe civil engineering would be a good vocation for me to pursue”, He said with smile.
**Purchase of metallic shutters i.e. Windows and doors.**
Metallic shutters were purchased and delivered to the school.

**Metallic shutters stored ready for construction**

**Plastering of the walls and rough casting of the floor**
The walls of the building were plastered since they were bare bricks before. Plastering was important to give the building a good outlook and cleanliness.

**Workers and students plastering the walls of the building**
“I am so glad our classroom floor was cemented. Before it was rough and full of dust which exposed us to dust related sickness like jiggers, flu, skin rushes and our general classroom hygiene was compromised,” says Talemwa

“With the new cemented floor, he continues to say, we have no worries of contracting those illnesses and our general classroom hygiene has greatly improved.” He greatly appreciated the support from Strategies for life to create a better learning environment for him and his colleagues.

Putting up a new roof on the building
A new roof and iron sheets were put up on the building given their poor conditions and the health threat and discomfort during rainy seasons it caused the students.

“We are so grateful for our new roof and iron sheets. No longer do we have to bring our lessons to a close or a teacher having to leave our classes during heavy rains as it was the case before when the old roof was leaking,” said Navugga. She continued to say that with the new glass windows and metallic doors installed in the building, the students would no longer suffer the coldness that came with morning hours and rainy seasons. “In addition, our health is not affected as we are not exposed to rain. This is so perfect to enhance our academic excellence!” She concluded with a smile.
With the roof renovated, Students would be able to get clean and safe water from rain water harvesting in the 30,000 Ferro cement tank that ARUWE had constructed for them. Before the renovation, the rust on the roof made the harvested water unsafe for the students.

**Constructing the veranda**

Verandas play a big role in the maintenance of the structure and hygiene. Therefore, it was of paramount importance to construct a veranda for the school which was not the case before.

The newly constructed veranda takes into consideration disabled students which was not the case before. Prior the construction 3 disabled students failed to study from the schools as it never catered for this special need. It was therefore of paramount importance to consider this feature during the construction.

The field coordinator demonstrates the use of a fire extinguisher. Before, the renovation, the school did not have a fire extinguisher which posed a danger to the students and teachers incase a fire broke out. The student governing body and the school deputy headteacher were put incharge of the operation and maintanance of the equipment.
With the assistance of the school matron, students planted flowers around the school block to give it a good ambiance. “Such small things as a beautiful compound have the ability to attract students to school or build students’ pride in their school and education” Said the head prefect who was part of the steering committee. The building was painted white and maroon as colors chosen by the school and the student team.

What the school administration had to say about the renovation project

• Not only had the school been beautified but also more room had been created to allow more students to be admitted in the school. This gives more children an opportunity to be educated and become better citizens.

• More space has been created to give room for other extracurricular activities such as Music Drama and Dance arts.

Community Impact

• The community was greatly appreciative of the renovation of the building as it was a community initiative. Prior the renovation, the building was in poor shape that parents were required to make contributions towards repairs time and again. Jjaja Rose, one of the grandmothers under ARUWE program, sending her 2 OVC to the school was happy that with the renovation, she no longer had to incur the costs but divert it to meeting the scholastic needs of her grandchildren.

• The local leaders of the Kyankwanzi district were grateful for the boost given to the education sector of the community. The Local Council V Chairperson of Kyankwanzi district remarked that the renovation was more than a building. “It is a kind gesture from people who have a heart to promote the education of our children”. He concluded with sincere appreciation for ARUWE and Strategies for Life for the support given.

Commissioning of the school class room Block

The building will be commissioned on the 14th of September 2012 as students being their new term. Local district leaders, education personnel, parents and other well wishers will be invite to attend the event. The commissioning is meant to hand over the education facility to the school and the entire community to build ownership not only for the building but also encourage parents to bring their children to school. A report will be compiled and sent to the Strategies for Life.
Student participation

Students’ participation made the project worthwhile. Students have grown an attachment to not only their school but their education as well.

Class teachers reported the class attendance over the past few months has been consistent with absenteeism registered only in inevitable circumstances. This shall bear greatly on their improved performance national wide.

“I am even more proud of my school now that it has been renovated,” says Mvesigwa. “I boast out loudly to my friends that St. Joseph SSS Vvumba is the best school in the whole of Mulagi Sub County and I encourage them to attend school,” he continues with a giggle.