



June 2022

Dear Friends of the BEL-initiative,

The BEL team would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution and support toward the BEL's vision of transforming Bwoga through education. In that pursuit, we are creating a resourceful place (library) where the children of Bwoga can access books and other resources to help them develop valuable life skills. At this point, the BEL team wanted to share with you a semi-annual report on the progress we are continuing to make together.

1. Library Structure Construction

The main library structure, including roofing, ceiling, and installation of door and window burglars has been completed. The remaining construction work involves plastering, painting, flooring, plumbing, and electrical installation. Below is a picture of the current status of the library structure.



Fig 1: Library structure showing the front and main entrance. Also in the picture are Bwoga kids on break during a summer reading session (May 2022).

2. BEL Scholarship Fund.

Launch Date: **January 2022**

Amount goal for 2022: **\$15,000**

Amount raised so far: **\$2200**

Number of current Beneficiaries: 10 children

Motivation: The education completion rate in Bwoga is very low, much lower than the national average. For example, less than 1% of families in Bwoga have a child who has completed post-secondary education. The main reasons for the low rate are poverty, absence of role models, and lack of supportive learning environments or infrastructure.

The goal of the BEL Scholarship Fund

The goal of the BEL Scholarship Fund is to help increase the education completion rate in Bwoga by helping gifted and in-need children gain access to educational opportunities. Funds will be used to pay school fees for these children or provide them with school supplies such as uniform and books.

Award and Eligibility Criteria

We use the following criteria to identify scholarship beneficiaries:

1. **Greater need:** Working with local community leaders, we identify children that need help the most, such as orphans. But many families in Bwoga live in abject poverty, therefore many kids would meet this criterion.
2. **Adherence to BEL's vision:** More consideration is given to children whose parents are involved with BEL activities, such as volunteering and participating in life skills like summer reading, weaving baskets or making other African crafts. BEL strives to look for markets for such products and encourage parents to invest some of the proceeds in their children's education.
3. **Giftedness/ Role models:** We offer scholarships to students who demonstrate superior performance in national (exit) exams or other areas such as playing music, athletics, etc. We want to encourage children to be role models and help other children in developing positive attributes.
4. **Gender-based:** Whereas problems endemic to Bwoga affect every child, we know that girls are affected more than boys for cultural and historical reasons. Therefore, we include gender as a criterion.

Below is a picture of students currently being supported through the BEL scholarship fund (school fees and supplies).



Fig 2: Bwoga students on BEL scholarship fund accompanied by two BEL community leaders, Ms. Kansiime (L) and Ms. Hilda (R), (May 2022).

3. Summer Pilot Program

The BEL team is delighted to report to you that BEL had its first summer reading program (a pilot program) in May 2022 as students in Uganda were on a 3-week break from school. The pilot program was a success. First, although we had anticipated about 10 kids, the actual attendance was 50—five-fold our anticipated number! Second, although 3 weeks is a relatively short time, the kids still had an opportunity to do some reading, as well as engage in some character-building activities.

Below are some pictures from the pilot summer reading program (inside the unfinished library).



Fig 3: Bwoga children inside the unfinished library during the pilot summer program (May 2022).



Fig 4: Bwoga Children meeting with BEL mentors on the children's last day of the pilot summer program (May 2022).

Thank you so much for your support. We are grateful that you have been involved with the BEL-initiative since its founding. We hope to continue working together to transform Bwoga community. It is your efforts and donations that have made BEL's work possible. We continue to welcome support to help fund BEL's projects (Library construction, library operations, and BEL scholarship fund). Please consider donating through our website: <https://belprojects.org> or by using the following link for the GoFundMe fundraiser: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/bwoga-elementary-library-construction-fund>. No act of kindness is too small, and every dollar helps! I understand that now may not be an ideal time to donate but know that any amount of effort helps and is greatly appreciated!

Best regards,
Peter Agaba,
BEL Co-founder and Director