



Bwoga Elementary LIBRARY

Serving the Community

December 2021

Dear Friends and Well-Wishers of the BEL Initiative,

The BEL team would like to take this opportunity once again to thank you for your contribution and support toward the BEL's vision of transforming Bwoga through education and exposure to the outside world. The BEL team is pleased to report that we had made great progress towards creating a resourceful place where people, especially the children of Bwoga, can have a reading space and books to read, access to various educational materials, and other opportunities to help develop valuable life skills. Your contribution and support will go a long way in giving every student in Bwoga an opportunity to dream and aspire, become lifelong readers, create change, and impact so many Bwoga generations to come, which will help advance the Bwoga community.

Isaac Ahimbisibwe, BEL's Assistant Director/Community Engagement Leader, was in Uganda this summer to fall and had the opportunity to visit Bwoga and interact with many families and their children. Isaac discovered that children's opportunities for growth and education for Bwoga have not improved since our childhood days, and in most cases, the situation has worsened. For instance, the population of children has increased, and many of them miss school or quit altogether because they lack resources to motivate them to stay in school.

The situation has become direr during these Covid-19 times. Bwoga Elementary, the only school in the village, has been closed since the pandemic, causing many kids to stay at home, work on the farms, or roam in the town. Unfortunately, several young girls have become pregnant or forced into early marriages. If a place like BEL had existed, it would have covered this education gap by keeping children busy and providing the much-needed programming to help them learn and be constructive. This is evidenced by the testimonies from community members shared here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLmK3bEmOgE>

As we come to the end of 2021, BEL would like to give you some of the highlights and milestones we accomplished together this year, 2021:

1) **Fundraising**

BEL hosted its first-ever Zoom fundraiser event on December 14th, which about 50

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people attended. The event was a great success, given that this was the first time we hosted such an event. In addition, BEL conducted a fundraising campaign from giving Tuesday to December 30th through three platforms: GoFundMe, Silent Auction, and Website. We are encouraged by the success of these efforts, which saw us raise \$5,110. We plan on expanding the fundraising efforts in 2022 with the target of raising at least \$15,000.

2) Construction and community Engagement

As described in October's report, we have had a series of community engagement meetings led by Isaac, emphasizing making the community a part of the project. The construction started this year on August 30th, and we have completed the roofing as indicated in the picture below. The construction of the library structure is expected to be completed by September 1st, 2022. I have also included below a YouTube link that shows both the construction progress and a series of community engagements:

<https://bit.ly/3Jg8opY>



Fig 1: Current Status of the Library Structure

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3) Updated and added media platforms

- Facebook: <https://bit.ly/3wpCn96>
- Website: <https://belprojects.org>
- Instagram: @bwogaelementarylibrary
- LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3H1zuAe>

It is worth noting is that our social media participation and viewership have continued to grow, and we expect to expand on these efforts in 2022.

4) Looking Ahead

One of the priorities for 2022 will be a **scholarship fund** to help some Bwoga children who are gifted and/or in a greater need. This fund will help pay school fees for several children or buy school supplies for some. **If this interests you, please reach out to the BEL team to learn how you can participate.** Note that any contribution will provide an education to the children of Bwoga while creating real change and a long-lasting impact on the community. For example, a gift of \$40 can help educate (tuition fees, plus school supplies materials) a student for the whole year at Bwoga elementary.



Fig 2: Bwoga Children Walking to School

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Once again, thank you so much for your support. We are excited and looking forward to seeing the BEL Initiative transform Bwoga through creating opportunities that will help the community develop talents and essential life skills. We are grateful for your efforts and donations that have made this work possible. Allow me to reiterate that you can become involved with BEL in so many ways, such as sharing your thoughts, advice, and encouragement, partnering with BEL, or volunteering, among others. Lastly, we are still welcoming support to help fund the Bwoga Elementary Library and acquire supplies of educational materials. 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>



Fig 3: Women Weaving Baskets

Best wishes to you and your loved ones in 2022!

The BEL Team

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