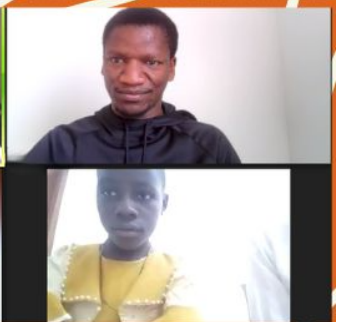


# BWOGA ELEMENTARY LIBRARY (BEL) INITIATIVE JUNE 2023 SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT



Bwoga Elementary  
**LIBRARY**  
Serving the Community

GIVING EVERY CHILD IN BWOGA AN OPPORTUNITY  
To Read Wide and Dream Big



**Executive Summary**

We, the Bwoga Elementary Library (BEL) team would like to convey our heartfelt appreciation for your support and dedication to our cause. Your contribution in helping create a resourceful place for the Bwoga community has been truly inspiring. In the library, Bwoga kids will have access to books and other resources to help them develop their reading and other essential life skills.

We are grateful for your generosity, which has played a pivotal role in our quest to provide reading access and foster literacy within our community of Bwoga. Thanks to your donations, we have made remarkable progress in this endeavor. Your financial contributions have allowed us to make significant strides in furthering the construction of the library and establishing other essential BEL initiatives, including summer reading programs, and a scholarship fund.

We firmly believe that the library, once completed, will serve as a beacon of hope and for learning. It will, especially, be a sanctuary for many Bwoga kids, offering a multitude of resources and opportunities for personal and intellectual growth. Indeed, the impact of the library on the lives of Bwoga kids is immense, and it is thanks to your generous contributions that this dream is becoming a reality.

We are excited to provide you with some updates on the progress we have made, thanks to your support.

**Library Structure**

The structure of the library is steadily taking shape, with construction nearing its completion. Our current focus is on exterior landscaping, while the remaining stages of construction include painting, security fencing, installation of window glasses, and electrical work. It is truly inspiring to witness the realization of our shared vision. Soon, this library will transform into a vibrant center of knowledge and learning, nurturing the minds of countless individuals within our Bwoga community. We anticipate finishing up all construction tasks by November, with an official launch planned for December this year. Below are pictures that offer glimpses into the library's magnificent structure and interior.



**Figure1:** The library from a distance.



**Figure 2:** Interior of the library showing terrazzo floor

### Scholarship Fund

The scholarship program (established last year, 2022) continues to provide needed support to children, offering them opportunities and hope for a brighter future. Currently, the scholarship initiative is benefitting 8 elementary students, consisting of 5 girls and 3 boys. These 8 kids are attending "Masheruka Primary School" as boarders. Additionally, there are 4 high school students, comprising 2 girls and 2 boys. The high school students are enrolled in separate schools, with the boys attending "St. Kagwa" High School and the girls attending "Kyeizooba" Girls School. The separation is because we mostly have single-sex high schools in Uganda. The scholarship fund covers tuition and other school expenses for the students, alleviating the financial burden that would otherwise hinder their education. For these children, the scholarship program has become a source of hope and a catalyst for dreams they once thought unattainable. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to individuals like you, whose unwavering goodwill and contributions continue to make these students' dreams a reality. Below are pictures showing the children who are currently benefiting from this life-changing scholarship fund.



**Figure 3:** Elementary students on scholarship standing in front of the library before going to boarding school (May 2023).



**Figure 4:** Highschool students on scholarship (and their parents) before they reported to boarding school (May 2023).

### Community Moms Basket Weaving

As part of the scholarship fund, Sarah (co-founder of BEL) has initiated the "Community Moms Basket Weaving" project. This project brings together mothers from the Bwoga community to engage in the art of basket-weaving. In turn, Sarah tries to find market for the baskets, including selling them through her small "SaSa Samosa Kitchen" business in Louisville, Kentucky. Within the community, these moms have emerged as a formidable force, driving positive change throughout the area. Uniting under the shared goal of supporting their children's education and uplifting the community, these women are displaying unwavering dedication. Through their basket-weaving sessions, they not only craft beautiful pieces but also exchange stories, ideas, and strategies for improving their lives and the well-being of their families. Since the inception of the project, these determined moms have consistently gathered, weaving baskets while passionately discussing ways to enhance the Bwoga community. Below are pictures of one of the basket weaving sessions, and some sample pieces of the moms' work.



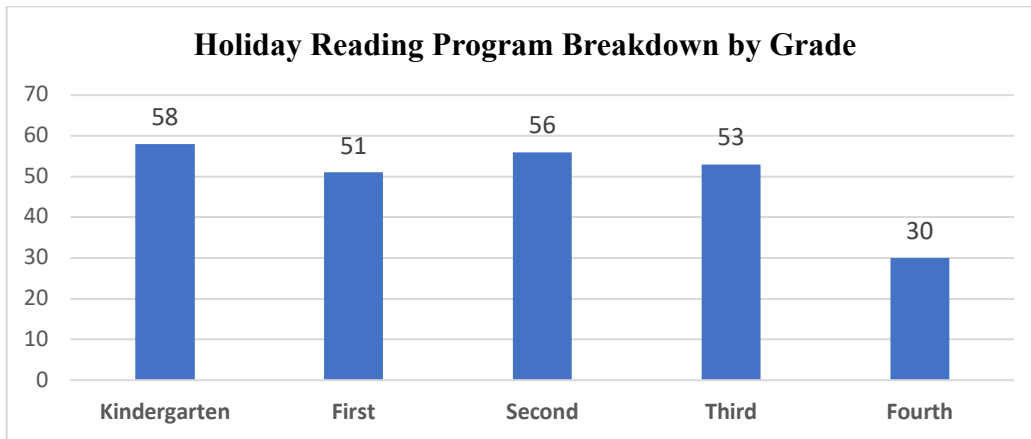
**Fig 5:** Community moms weaving baskets inside the unfinished library (February 2023).



**Fig 6:** Some of the moms' baskets at Sarah's place in Louisville, Kentucky.

### Holiday Reading Program

In a remarkable opportunity, the BEL initiative hosted its third holiday reading program at Bwoga Primary School, spanning from May 5th to May 28th, 2023. The program was thoughtfully designed with both morning and afternoon sessions, catering to a total of 248 pupils. The morning session had 165 pupils and the afternoon session accommodated 83 pupils. Please see in the figure below the break down (by grade) of the students who attended the holiday reading program.



This exceptional holiday reading program provided valuable educational experiences for the pupils, leaving a lasting impact on their academic journey. In classroom, students primarily focused on English and math. In English, they honed their skills in reading and interpreting simple passages, while also learning the effective usage of conjunction words such as "because." In math, their practice revolved around addition, subtraction, and graphing. In addition, every child had the opportunity to unleash their creativity. During the morning session for lower classes, students were introduced to age-appropriate projects such as crafting balls, ropes, and mats using banana fibers. In the afternoon session, they took part in more advanced activities like making dresses and scratch books. These engaging tasks not only enabled them to acquire fundamental crafting techniques but also fostered a sense of personal growth.

Through a holistic approach that combined classroom exercises, handwork, and spiritual nourishment, pupils were provided with valuable opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and teamwork. These aspects were demonstrated through various group activities, promoting the development of both social and emotional skills, and fostering character building.

As part of the holiday program, community work was integrated to instill a sense of social responsibility among the pupils. This involved engaging in cleaning activities at significant social service locations such as Health Centre 11, the library, and the local church. These endeavors not only encouraged teamwork and cooperation but also promoted community volunteering, contributing to the overall growth and development of the students. Below are pictures depicting holiday reading program activities.



**Fig 7:** Pictures of students during the holiday reading program. On the left are students making crafts and on the right are students cleaning around the local church as part of community service.

**BEL Kids Louisville**

This year, BEL initiated BEL Kids Louisville as a means of bringing together children of East African backgrounds. What started as a local endeavor in Bwoga Uganda is now growing to encompass a broader scope, extending its acts of kindness to children in Louisville, KY as well. While BEL's primary focus remains providing education to children in Bwoga, it also places emphasis on cultural awareness for the children in Louisville.

BEL in Louisville is bringing together children (primarily from East African immigrant families) and offering them valuable insights into the traditions and customs of their homeland. We strive to facilitate a reconnection with East African cultures, while also promoting cultural awareness among those who have not had the opportunity to visit East Africa. Given the immense diversity of cultures in East Africa, BEL is employing various mediums such as art, music, dance, drums, storytelling, games, and food to convey the rich stories and teachings about the region. Looking

ahead, BEL envisions expanding this program to reach a greater number of children, even extending the reach of East African culture within the United States. This may be achieved through music presentations, storytelling, dances, and other creative means, enabling the sharing of East African culture with people across the country.



**Fig 8:** BEL kids Louisville posing for pictures after performing at the GlobalLou festival in Louisville, Kentucky. GlobalLou festival is held annually to celebrate cultural diversity in the city of Louisville.

**Fundraising goal and giving to support BEL**

BEL has set a fundraising goal of \$30,000 for the fiscal year 2023, and we are grateful for the contributions that have been made so far. Through the generous support of individuals, fundraisers, matching funds, and charitable organizations, we have already raised \$4,000 as of June 2023. These funds play a crucial role in supporting the operations of the library, enabling us to provide reading books and other resources to our community. Additionally, the funds contribute to the BEL scholarship fund, enabling us to empower deserving children through education.

We are truly thankful for your generosity, as it makes all this possible. Your continued support is greatly valued and appreciated. If you would like to contribute, you can make a donation through our [GoFundMe](#) page or directly on our [website](#). Furthermore, we invite you to stay updated on our progress and initiatives by signing up for our newsletter through the following link: [News Form](#). Together, we can make a meaningful impact and create positive change in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you,  
BEL Team