

# Horace and Beth

## Update from Uganda

November 2023

Dear friends,

Last Friday (17th November) was an exciting day for JJ with the college holding its first **graduation ceremony**. 107 alumni of JJ Excel College (including a few who studied at the former college, before its purchase by JJ) were able to officially graduate. Special guests included the Minister of Local Government (a Cabinet member with a home in Bushenyi District), a representative from Uganda Business and Technical Examination Board, Hand in Hand's East African Development Manager, and local government leaders. Events kicked off with a procession of staff, current students and members of the board of governors, led by a marching band, and some boda bodas (!) through the nearest main town and to the college ground. As the procession neared the college, the Guest of Honour (Cabinet Minister) joined at the back in his vehicle, with a heavily armed police escort, and there was a rising sense of anticipation at the college as the band got closer. Despite a delay of over two hours due to heavy rain, the procession went ahead and thankfully the sun shone for activities at the college. Current students provided entertainment during the ceremony, served as ushers and helped to prepare food for guests alongside staff and hired caterers. 16 of the graduates were recognised for having achieved a Division One or Distinction, the top grades in their respective courses.



Graduates were encouraged to put the college motto "**Skilled to Serve**" into practice and to contribute to their communities and the wider society, using their skills to help others, and not only to secure income for themselves and their immediate families. The alumni representative, speaking on behalf of graduates, noted how he and two of his friends are already doing so, by providing internship opportunities for current students at their workplace.



### Where are they now?

All 58 students who graduated with certificates in Early Child Care and Education are now either employed or, in a few cases, married and not looking for employment — the college principal has had no students to recommend despite receiving requests for nursery teachers. Three graduates are employed as chefs in a big hotel in the nearest city, two as hotel receptionists and one as a hotel manager (in different hotels), another is a school secretary, two work for a construction company, one as a paymaster for the army, others in small businesses...



*Congratulating the best performer*

## Outings and parties



JJ's two schools have also organised some exciting activities, including off-site, over the past few months: Both the primary and secondary schools held a study tour/field trip to Queen Elizabeth National Park and other areas of interest, exam candidates participated in dedication services and farewell parties, secondary students studying Kiswahili and/or history attended workshops to improve skills in these subjects, and competitions in debating and sports were held with other secondary schools. After a win in a football match, a group of



JJVocSS's award winning debater in action and left, Primary pupils on a field trip,

enthusiastic supporters from the school's local "boda stage" provided a rather noisy, very conspicuous, escort of boda bodas (public service motorcycles) back to the secondary school, adding to the day's excitement!

## Building developments

In the previous newsletter, we mentioned funding needs for a classroom block at the secondary school, and a dormitory at the college. These are still our larger funding priorities, but in an effort to provide more immediate space at the secondary school, with a lower budget, we began work on an extension to the secondary administration block. The plan is for the two rooms to ultimately be used as a library and study area, but in the shorter term to use them for A level classes, (Senior 5 and 6) which will free up the third rooms in the girls and boys dormitories. However funding is needed for the roof before the rooms can be used, and doors and windows also need fixing. Pray with us for UGX 15m (approx £3260) to add a roof plus UGX 3m (approx £650) for the doors and windows, ideally in time for the next academic year which begins in early February.



Administration block extension and (below) cladding work.



At the college, some cladding work was needed rather urgently on the two main classroom blocks. We are very thankful for a donation that covered this work.

Young people studying building construction at the secondary or college provided most of the labour for these projects (for some pocket money!) under the supervision of their teachers.

And finally, hot off the press(!), **land for sale:** The college principal last night reported that land neighbouring the college is on sale. It includes a small house currently rented by the college to provide a room for a matron/duty officer, and a staff room. The sale price is UGX 50m (approx £10,870/\$13,600) and the seller is offering it to the college first, although another neighbour has already expressed his interest. As well as being useful for staff accommodation, the land would be ideal for dormitories. Even half of the land would be a valuable asset ... pray with us to Jehovah Jireh, our provider.



Students who study Swahili preparing to travel to a workshop (A level students in navy)

With love and thanks,

*Horace and Bethan*

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*Working in Uganda with:*

JJ Community Transformation (U),  
Uganda NGO no: INDR1057118NB, [www.jjctuganda.org](http://www.jjctuganda.org)

*In partnership with:* Hand in Hand,  
UK Charity no: 1069976, [www.hihand.org](http://www.hihand.org)

**For personal support:** We receive no pay/personal income from JJ but rely on personal support and Horace's employment income. Bethan is a registered recipient with Stewardship, who have set up a support fund for our ministry. You can support us by making a gift to Stewardship for our fund. Please ask for a form, or visit [www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20135200](http://www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20135200).