



Hope for the Future

Annual Report 2022/2023

*“For I know the plans I
have for you,” declares
the Lord, “plans to
prosper you and not to
harm you, plans to
give you hope and a
future.”*

Jeremiah 29:11

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CEO's Report

Dear valued partners and supporters

Hope is a word that means many things to different people. For some, it conjures thoughts of achieving ambitious dreams, or for those of us who have faith, we may think of a future day when all pain will cease. For many of the children we serve in East Africa, hope can simply mean hope for a plate of food, hope for clean water, or even hope for safety.



Recently in Uganda, I met a 12-year-old girl who had tragically lost her mother and had then been chased out of her home with an axe by her mentally-ill father. As I sat in front of her in tears, she thanked me for the hope that had been given to her - hope to have a safe home, hope to go to school, and hope in God, who would always love her and never leave her. Humbled, it reminded me of everything I take for granted.

This year's annual report reflects the very essence of who Fields of Life are - building hope for the future. Within these pages, you will encounter stories of resilience, growth, and transformation in the lives of children and young people we serve. Each of these stories tell us something different about the hope which you have helped to provide this year.

We believe every child deserves the opportunity to thrive. Through programmes that nurture excellence, open doors to opportunity, ensure safety, and empower the next generation, your support and prayers are laying the groundwork for a brighter tomorrow.

I hope you enjoy reading about the journeys of hope embarked on by the children you support. We are so grateful to God for your generosity and dedication in shaping a future filled with promise for these children. We could not do this without you!

With heartfelt thanks

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Gaston". The signature is stylized with a large 'T' and a cursive 'G'.

Tony Gaston
CEO



Thrive

Northern Uganda



7

Partner Schools

South Sudan



8

Partner Schools

Rwanda



8

Partner Schools

Improving the quality of Christian education and life skills for **over 7,800** vulnerable children across Northern Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan. The Thrive programme aims to ensure every child can say: "I am educated, I am fed, I am safe and I am loved."



I AM EDUCATED

A quality education requires trained teachers, good leadership and good learning materials.



I AM FED

When children receive a meal, they can concentrate better in class and are more likely to come to school each day.



I AM SAFE

Safe buildings, clean toilets and workshops in child protection, gender equality and menstrual hygiene management.



I AM LOVED

The opportunity to learn about God's unconditional love.



Highlights

- 3 Early Childhood Development Centres (nurseries) constructed in Northern Uganda.
- 4 new toilet blocks with washrooms and handwashing facilities constructed in South Sudan.
- 92 children attended a two-day Youth Outreach Camp in Rwanda.

■ Thrive Northern Uganda

Hope for the Start in Life Children Deserve

In Uganda, 9 in 10 children aged between 3-5 years old miss out on formal pre-primary education. Yet, access to early education is proven to be one of the best investments overall for lasting development. When children are reached early, their risk of dying under the age of 5 is reduced and they are more likely to stay in school and complete their education.

Thanks to your generosity, the children and community of Onialeku in Northern Uganda now have access to pre-primary education through the provision of a new Early Childhood Development Centre (ECD). The new facilities consist of a classroom block with 3 classrooms, furniture including desks, chairs, chalkboards and a kitchen that provides children with meals at lunchtime.

Amos Adriko, Head Teacher of Onialeku Nursery and Primary School shares the difference that the new facilities have made for many children:

“Our old nursery was not plastered inside and the floor was always dusty. The roof would also leak and teaching would be affected during the rainy season as the floors would become flooded. Now, the children have a clean and conducive learning environment.

The completion of the ECD centre has attracted parents from near and far to bring their children and it has led to an increase in enrolment, not only in the nursery section but there has also been a significant increase of new students registering in the primary section.”



■ Thrive South Sudan

Hope for Excellence

South Sudan is ranked as one of the poorest, most fragile countries in the world, devastated by 50 years of conflict and war. Today, at least 2 million children are estimated to be out of school in South Sudan, making it the country with the highest rate of out-of-school children globally.

The average teacher in South Sudan is paid around \$10 per month, and most teachers only have primary school qualifications. This means that for Fields of Life partner schools in South Sudan retaining good teachers is very challenging.

Thanks to your support, Fields of Life are investing in in-service teacher training, staff incentives, and staff professional development so that teachers are motivated and well equipped, and schools are well managed. This not only improves teacher retention but for every teacher trained, a classroom of students benefits from better quality teaching resulting in improved pupil attendance and academic performance.

Thank you for supporting students who strive for excellence, like Stephen:

“My aim was to be the best pupil all over South Sudan. This encouraged me to work very hard by studying past papers, attending group discussions and above all making sure I didn’t miss class.

What helped me most was my teachers, who encouraged me and give me all the support that I needed. God heard my prayers, and I became the best in Maridi County.

My dream is to become the Archbishop of the Anglican Church of South Sudan or the Bishop of Maridi Diocese. Thank you for encouraging our teachers so that they can support us well.”

Stephen, student in Maridi, South Sudan



■ Thrive Rwanda

Hope for Collaboration

Engaging with stakeholders - including teachers, school administrators, local government, local church, and parents - is key to achieving project ownership and sustainability.

Fields of Life staff visited the 8 partner schools in Rwanda, meeting with the various stakeholders to help them understand the project better. This has helped gain support and participation from local communities, which will be very important as the programme progresses. Inception meetings were attended by a total of 62 participants at partnership level and school level, with representation of school beneficiary communities. The participants included local church leaders, school leadership and community leaders.

Nzaramba, a parent at Kairos nursery and primary school, noted:

“Before Fields of Life built a school for our children, we only had a small church building the size of the school kitchen, and our children had no classrooms to study in. We now have classrooms, a school fence provided by Fields of Life and a proper running school, and we cannot fail to support what will yield to the sustainability of the projects that will be implemented at the school for our children. As parents, we know the value of this school. This is our school- we are in full support and will continue to champion all the activities of the project. What remains is for us to pray for each other to achieve this goal collectively. Thank you!”



Child Sponsorship



1,848

Sponsored
Children



1,048

at Primary
Level



645

at Secondary
Level



155

at Tertiary
Level



10

University
Graduates



89

Number who
sat final exams



■ Child Sponsorship

Hope for Opportunity

The Fields of Life Child Sponsorship Programme has been changing the trajectory of thousands of children's lives. As a result, we are now seeing a generation of young adults who are rising up to be change makers in their families and communities.

John lost his father in 2004 when he was very young. His father had worked hard to provide for the family but left behind a wife and six children, who struggled to make ends meet following his death.

In 2007, John was sponsored and was showing great interest in learning at primary school. With focus and determination, he went on to complete his secondary school education at Grace High School, achieving remarkable results.

In 2023, John graduated with a Diploma in Civil Engineering from Kyambogo University and is now working with an Engineering Company on a road project near the Kenya border. He is passionate about improving the infrastructure and development of his community.

Our Community Development Coordinator, Daniel, shared how John's character outshines his academic achievements:

"John is not only a successful student and engineer, but also a responsible son and brother. He has two sisters, who are older than him, and three brothers, who are younger than him. He supports them financially and emotionally, and is also taking care of his mother. They are all very proud of him and his accomplishments."

John is an example of how one can overcome adversity and achieve excellence with hard work, perseverance, and support. He is grateful to his sponsors, teachers, mentors, and family for helping him along the way. He is also humble and generous, willing to help others who are in need. John is a role model for many young people who aspire to follow their dreams."



Financial Report

The financial accounts for Fields of Life in Northern Ireland (NI) have been audited by UHY Hacker Young & Fitch Limited and Republic of Ireland (ROI) have been audited by UHY Farrelly Dawe White Limited. We are in the process of winding up the operations of Fields of Life GB Limited and bringing it in under Fields of Life (NI). We also received a small amount of income through Fields of Life USA. The signed audits for the year ending 30th June 2023 are available at www.fieldsoflife.org. Overall, consolidated income grew by 12% on the previous year, which is an incredible achievement considering this financial year saw the onset of the 'cost of living' crisis.

We closed both our charity shops in Newtownards and Coleraine in June 2023 as the leases were coming to an end. We are so thankful for the faithful support of our shop staff and volunteers over the years and look to our new charity shop opening in the Autumn of 2023 in East Belfast.

Fields of Life strives to keep operating costs and overheads as low as possible, while ensuring good governance and appropriate administrative capability. Investment in fundraising activities is essential as we seek to grow our income and transform more lives in East Africa. We are delighted that 85% of our expenditure was on charitable activity. The figures below show the totals for FOL in NI, ROI, GB and USA combined together, expressed in the three different currencies.

Thank you to all our donors for their continued support throughout this year, so we can continue building hope and transforming lives in East Africa.

Róisín Scott, Financial Controller. BSc, MSc, FCA, ChMC MCI

David Thompson, Treasurer. BSc(Econ) CMC FIC FCA



Voluntary Income

By Category	2021/2022	2022/2023
Child Sponsorship	£750,583	£707,039
Trust and Foundations	£604,758	£836,893
Institutional (Irish Aid)	£214,950	£175,500
Individual Giving	£663,174	£527,995
Churches	£113,496	£101,042
Teams	£0	£91,512
Other*	£241,966	£461,225
Total	£2,588,927	£2,901,206

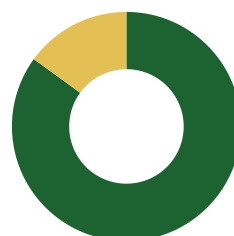
*Shop income, legacies, events, Gift Aid, interest.

How we spent your donations

By Category	2021/2022	2022/2023
Quality Education	£952,652	£1,534,656
Health & Wellbeing	£655,780	£860,358
Resilience & Livelihood	£582,099	£110,546
Fundraising	£380,830	£477,328
Governance/Other	£34,357	£38,398
Emergency Appeal	£22,943	£0
Teams	£0	£69,119
Total	£2,628,661	£3,090,405

For every £1 we spent:

- 15% was spent on fundraising.
- 85% was spent on changing lives and building hope.



Thank you to everyone who supported Fields of Life.
Your donations are changing lives!

■ Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Clean water changes everything!

Here is a snapshot of the impact you helped to make in Kumi and Butebo Districts, Eastern Uganda, and Omoro District, Northern Uganda, over the past year.



62

Boreholes drilled



47,000

People provided with clean water



390

Water User Committee members trained



Average distance to reliable water sources reduced from 1.5 km to 340 mts



Handpump mechanics empowered to fix minor breakdowns promptly



Average time spent collecting water reduced from 45-60 minutes to 15-30 minutes



Community members now have more time for productive activities (gardening, income generation, school)



Reduced cases of water-related illnesses



Improved hygiene and sanitation around boreholes and homes



■ Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Hope for Transformation

Back in October, Fields of Life gave a talk in my children's school about the fundraising project to drill a well in Uganda. I couldn't stop thinking about what I heard that night - that girls miss school to walk 6 kilometres to collect water each day for their families; that the water isn't clean or safe for consumption; and that they can be attacked by sexual predators, snakes or crocodiles while fetching the water. I thought of my own children and their beautiful school with its water fountains in every corridor, and I felt a deep sense of shame that we have so much here in Ireland and that children, the same age as my own, don't have access to a basic human right - clean and safe drinking water.

My mum had passed away the year before, and her death hit me hard. She was a wonderful woman, generous and joyful, and she loved children from every walk of life. I thought about combining how I felt about Fields of Life's work in Uganda with honouring my mum, and that is how the idea to fundraise for a well in her memory came about.

Throughout the summer, I organised events to raise money with the immense support and guidance from the Fields of Life fundraising team. I held a coffee morning with all my school friends, I raffled off an original painting of a local landmark in my hometown of Greystones, Co Wicklow, and I did two 100 km stationary cycles - one outside of my gym and the other outside a busy local restaurant with a spare bike for people to jump on and cycle some of the way with me! I also matched what I raised up to the first €5000 as I wanted to contribute to the well myself.



By September, I had raised enough to commission the well in Mum's name, and then the amazing team of drillers in Uganda set to work in the remote village of Alongoyitebit to bring safe water to 250 families in the area.

By the following February, I had the absolute privilege of travelling to Uganda with a really experienced team from Fields of Life. I got to meet the workers who had drilled Mum's well and, in what can only be described as one of the most special days of my life, we visited Alongoyitebit. I was there when they cemented in the beautiful plaque in memory of my mum. The whole village came out to welcome us, with singing and dancing, and the vibrant energy that I experienced everywhere we went in Uganda.

As I write this, it's been two months since I got back from my trip and already, I'm itching to return. I'm looking forward to seeing what I can get involved in next to support Fields of Life in the life-changing work that they do in a country that still has so much need of our support.

Jane McCarthy

I AM GIRL

Reducing the barriers to girls' education in East Africa

Our goal is to educate communities on:

- Menstrual hygiene management;
- Gender equality;
- Child protection.

Providing school communities with:

- Improved washing facilities;
- Reliable water sources;
- Appropriate sanitary protection.

Highlights

32 I AM GIRL Clubs were trained to help boost school feeding by creating fruit gardens at each school.

8 new girls' toilet blocks constructed with washrooms, rainwater harvesting tanks and handwashing facilities.

491 district and local leaders trained in Child Protection and Gender Equality.

64 teenage mothers were supported to return to school.

19,120 children and young people impacted.



■ I AM GIRL

Hope for Safety at School

Only 25% of girls make it to the end of secondary school in Uganda. The I AM GIRL project is developing safe, child-friendly environments where girls are supported to stay in school.

One of the biggest barriers preventing children, especially girls, from completing their education is a lack of access to safe toilets. Girls are forced to stay home during their periods and miss valuable days of school.

Thanks to your ongoing support of the I AM GIRL project, 8 toilet blocks have been constructed at 8 schools in Eastern Uganda. These facilities include washrooms and handwashing facilities, so that girls can have a safe space to manage their menstruation safely.

Gloria is the secretary for Menstrual Hygiene Management in Butesa Primary School's I AM GIRL Club. She shared the difference the new toilet block has made for her:

"I was really unhappy about the state of our old bathroom. Sometimes I would leave school and go to the nearby village to relieve myself. There was no privacy for us, adolescent girls. My friends and I made it a habit to stay home during our periods because we had no clean water at school. When I heard the news that we were getting a new toilet block, I thought it was a lie. You have put a smile on our faces! I will work with my fellow I AM GIRL Club members to look after our new toilet block."

Mary, from Nakwazi Primary School, also shared: "The situation at school was really miserable. The bathroom had no shutters, no washroom, broken flow, cracks in the walls and nowhere to wash our hands. My friends and I used to be scared to go. During menstruation we would go home, and we missed classes. The situation has now changed with the construction of our new toilet block. Our teachers also guided us on how to use the hand washing facility. Now we feel excited to come to school. We are very comfortable whenever we visit the toilet block because it is safe and it provides privacy since it has lockable doors."



Vocational Training Institute

The Vocational Training Institute in Gulu, Northern Uganda, is helping to transform the lives of hundreds of vulnerable young people who have missed out on education. Through the provision of vocational training, new skills and qualifications, young people are given the opportunity to gain employment.

Location: *Gulu, Northern Uganda*

Students: 227

Students supported with bursaries: 145



**Fashion
& Design**



**Building &
Construction**



**Metal
Fabrication**



**Hotel &
Catering**



**Automotive
Mechanics**



**Cosmetology
& Beauty**



■ Vocational Training

Hope for Inspiring the Next Generation

Vocational scholarships are providing 143 students in Gulu, Northern Uganda, with the opportunity to rewrite their future. For one student, the life changing gift of a vocational scholarship has ignited a passion to inspire the next generation of girls like her.

Overcoming a difficult start in life and many challenges, Justine, a Welding and Metal Fabrication student, has shown resilience and determination to pursue her dreams. With the goal of becoming an engineer, she can be found practicing her welding skills at a local workshop even during the school holidays. She hopes to encourage other young girls so that they can pursue careers in engineering and other trades that were once traditionally reserved for men.

"This opportunity has done wonders in my life. I really appreciate my course and the kindness that has been shown to me."

Engineering has always been my dream. I am so grateful, and it is a privilege to be at this school studying the course that I have always wanted to study. In the future, I hope to open my own welding business. I want to inspire other girls, so that they can also feel that they can do any kind of work."



■ Income Generating Projects

Hope for Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

Thanks to the support of people like you, parents from Fields of Life partner schools in Rwanda have received training to form village savings groups. These small, member-run microfinancing groups enable those living in poverty to build savings and take out loans at low interest rates. They also create opportunities for families to generate income to feed their families and send their children to school.

“My name is Bernadette. I’m a widow with two girls in secondary school and one boy in Primary Five. Meeting the needs of my family was not easy but the training we received from Fields of Life opened my eyes to borrowing and investing in income generating activities. I took my first loan to start a coffee business and after a short time my capital doubled. Every week, I began to get a profit of at least 3,000FRw (Rwandan Francs), which had never happened before in my life. My children are happy with my business as it helps me to buy some school materials and food. I gathered all the money I had and was able to buy a pig, which was my year’s target.”

“My name is Marguerite. I have two children in primary school and two in secondary school. We used to rely on subsistence farming for our daily income but were not able to cover our family needs. I was thankful to join a parents’ savings group at the primary school my children attend and receive training from Fields of Life. God bless our trainer for his very important advice! I used a loan to invest in a banana business. From the profits, I was able to expand by selling tea and in the future, I hope to sell bread and other fruit.”

We are inspired by the determination and resilience of these groups to improve their standard of living and create a better future for their children. Thank you for bringing hope to families in Rwanda!



Hope for Life

At the very heart of all the work of Fields of Life is the desire for children to know that they are loved by God. Motivated by faith, Fields of Life staff in East Africa work tirelessly to serve the least of these and to encourage vulnerable young people to grow in their faith.

Over 2,000 children and young people gathered at the Vocational Training Institute in December for a four-day youth camp. In partnership with the Diocese of Northern Uganda, Fields of Life staff welcomed youth from different parishes and schools and were amazed by their passion and devotion to God. Life can be very challenging and confusing for these young people, but at the youth camp they were reminded that Christ is the source of their hope and joy. They shared their personal stories and testimonies, and also discussed issues facing many of the youth in their communities.

Francis, a teacher from Abura Parents Primary School, shared his testimony of how attending this youth camp transformed his life and ministry.

He said, "The camp was a powerful time of praising and worshipping God with other believers. I learned a lot from the speakers and the activities. I also saw a remarkable change in the school children who joined me at the camp. They have become more involved in the devotions at our school. They lead the prayers, read the Bible stories, and encourage others to join them. I am grateful that God is using them to spread His word."



President's Report

Each year in the ongoing story of Fields of Life, I am continually encouraged by the work that is taking place in East Africa, and this year was no different. I was overjoyed to hear reports from the first-year graduation day at the Vocational Training Institute in Gulu, Northern Uganda. As most of you know, this region was ravaged by war and destruction.



Many of these students and their families were affected by these atrocities. Thankfully, there has been peace in this area for some years now. What encouraged me most as various students testified about their courses at the VTI, was that none of them mentioned the past, but instead focused on the future and the difference their newfound skills will make to not just themselves but also to their families. What a blessing to see over 450 students graduating on that day and know their lives have been changed for the better! I look forward to hearing stories from our new friends in the future.

The work in our partner schools is ongoing, and how wonderful to see many changes in the infrastructure of these schools. The quality of education is continually improving, and it is great to hear stories of how some of these schools are the best performing in their districts. The I AM GIRL project is having a profound impact on so many girls lives and their families too, and I am astounded by the difference this project is making. Additionally, income generating projects are helping many in these school communities to a better livelihood.

There are many unsung heroes throughout Fields of Life, but a special mention goes to our drillers. They spend months away from home and loved ones, working in tough conditions. Yet the work they do is amazing, like when you see that spurt of water coming from a hole in the ground where they have been drilling for days. The shouts of joy from the community who now have fresh, clean water will be a scene etched in my mind for the rest of my life.

A very special thanks to Tony and Esther who lead their respective teams, and what special teams they are. The unseen work but noticed by our Heavenly Father is truly outstanding. Thank you to each one of you for the special gifts you bring to Fields of Life. A special word of thanks to our Board of Directors for all they do to ensure the smooth running of the organisation. To all our friends who support us in so many special ways, thank you so much for all you mean to us. You are family.

I continue to thank God for bringing us on this journey and for what He is doing through so many people and seeing His transformation of people's lives, both practically and spiritually, here at home and in East Africa.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trevor Stevenson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Trevor Stevenson
President





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