M-LISADA
NEWSLETTER
JANUARY - MARCH, 2018

SEE INSIDE FOR ARTICLES ABOUT: DANCE OF HOPE TOUR, QUILT WORKSHOP, READING TO THE RESCUE, MENSTRUAL HEALTH WORKSHOP AND OTHER EVENTS
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DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

Many new projects, activities and programs were initiated at M-LISADA Organization during first quarter of 2018.

In January we made dramatic changes to our staff. Having new people as part of the M-LISADA family is refreshing and has brought us new energy and power. I thank each and every one of them for their big effort and commitment towards their work.

A lot has happened in our Skills and Music Departments, as well as in our M-LISADA Library and the Health Department. The Solar and Environmental Project achieved great outcomes and we have done some exciting work in the field of fashion. I am truly delighted to see M-LISADA working in so many different areas.

The Dance of Hope Tour in the U.S. and the construction of the M-LISADA Primary and Vocational School are our biggest and most thrilling achievements. They could not have been realized without the help and support of all our friends and partners. I am grateful for every donation and all of the other kinds of support you have given to us.

I am full of optimism and positive thoughts when looking at the following months and the coming projects. The whole M-LISADA team, including all of the children, is the reason for my optimism. I believe that M-LISADA will never stop growing and developing and I feel that we as a family are ready for whatever may come.

May the Almighty God bless you abundantly.

Yours faithfully,

Emilly Donia
Director of M-LISADA Organization
NEW STAFF MEMBERS

This new year 2018, we welcomed a number of new faces at M-LISADA as part of the staff. We want to introduce them.

Huldah Siima, Counsellor
Wandera Zakeri, Warden
Ruth Ayebale, Accountant
Sandra Irumba Kaahwa, Nurse
Evelyn Mukisa, Librarian
Leticia Mbabazi, Band Manager
Annett Kemigisa, Child Protection Officer
Charles Lukyamuze, Administrator
Lilian Akochi, Matron
Our long planned “Dance of Hope” program has finally be implemented and the team of 10 M-LISADA children left Uganda in January to travel to the U.S. They are accompanied by Segawa Bosco, Kinobe Herbert, Samuel Nalangirla and other care givers and supporters.

“Dance of Hope is a touring program produced through the collaboration with M-LISADA organization, created to explore the primal transforming power of music and dance, and to raise awareness, and to improve the way of life for children in need.”

It is an extraordinary opportunity for our young and talented children to present their dance and music skills on a new level, to travel and to spread our mission and our spirits through their shows. While performing this intercultural exchange, based on the love and passion for traditional African music and art, all of the children, from both countries, gain knowledge and impressions about a different culture.

The tour travels to different states and the shows are done at schools, Centers for Performing Arts, and festivals. Based on applause, the good feedback and positively written articles, the performances have been successful and each of them has been unique. The audiences have been impressed and touched by the vibrant rhythms, diverse choreographies and colorful costumes. During workshops, the team is interacting even more with other children and pupils.

The children are hosted at families’ homes, in what constitutes another special and wonderful experience for them.

After the first months of touring we have booked another 5 shows for October and we are so excited about that. It demonstrates the impact of our music and the interest for African and particularly for Ugandan culture.

We would like to send out, from the bottom of our hearts, a big Thank You to everyone who is involved in the Dance of Hope program and who is supporting it. This tour is definitely a step into a new and exciting direction and we believe it is only the start of a long journey.
MUSIC LESSONS

The holidays provided time to increase musical and instrumental training. Teacher Tony spent a lot of time here at M-LISADA teaching our children how to play the violin, recorders and the flute. So many children are keen on learning and playing. It’s so good to see that they are using their time for improving their talents and that they even continue practicing when no teacher is around. Big thanks to Tony and also to Annabel Griffiths and Martha Torrington from the UK, for your patience and love in sharing musical skills.

CULTURAL DANCE TRAINING

Aunt Rashida began to give dance lessons again in cultural dance and recruited a new team of mainly community children. Both boys and girls from the community attended the classes with true interest and passion. They trained regularly during the last three months and made big progress. Their first little performance was during the launch of the “Reading for the Rescue” program. Even some staff members took part in the training, and performed as well. We are looking forward to continuing the training and give the children a chance to reach their creative potential.
PERFORMANCES AND CONCERTS

From January to March the M-LISADA brass band, culture group and acrobats were part of several events performing as a main act or accompanying different activities. The Green Pastures Brass Band from Korea gave a concert at AIM in January, which was opened by the M-LISADA musicians. It was a special opportunity for them to meet and join this amazing and talented Korean brass band that was touring through East Africa and has performed all over the world.

As a preparation for the Dance of Hope Tour, the team performed at Kampala International School rehearsing their shows for the U.S. It was an excellent performance and increased our excitement even more seeing that all these children loved the music and the dances. Organized by BeadforLife - Kampala Street Business School, three graduation parties took place during the last three months. The M-LISADA brass band was part of each of them, accompanying the marches of the graduating students. These repeat bookings demonstrate to us that people are content and happy with our performances, which is very pleasant and encouraging.

Our M-LISADA brass band also joined the Women’s Health Walk in March, organized by Women’s Health Foundation Uganda in cooperation with many other institutions who are supporting women’s empowerment. It took place on Women’s Day on 8th March. We are glad that we could be part of such an important campaign and proud of our musicians who are always giving their best by contributing wonderful brass music to these parades.
DANCE LESSONS WITH MINDLEAPS

Besides the cultural dance training, the community and some M-LISADA children also get trained in other dance styles. Three days a week, we welcome dancers from MindLeaps who are teaching a diverse mixture of dances. The children are enjoying the energetic and funny classes and are learning very fast. We look forward to continuing the classes next month and we thank MindLeaps for their vibrant and motivating kind of entertainment and teaching.

NEW BANDSTAND IN KALANGALA

In March, M-LISADA Kalangala collaborated with Brass for Africa to open a new facility on the Ssese Islands. “Jo’s Bandstand” was funded by Elton John AIDS Foundation and is going to be used for trainings and concerts. The grand opening was a special and unique event, and we are delighted to have such a beautiful bandstand for all the children and brass band lovers in Kalangala. Thanks to Elton John AIDS Foundation and to all of the people that were part of the opening.
The Menstrual Health Workshop was held again this year. Aunt Rashida resumed the project of sewing reusable sanitary pads at M-LISADA teaching children as well as staff members. Our nurse Sandra talked about the menstrual health cycle and other hygienic aspects that are a part of becoming a woman. It is an essential topic for all girls and women of this world, but unfortunately many of them don’t know much about it and are insecure in dealing with it. Especially among the rural areas of Uganda, women don’t have access to buy sanitary pads or are lacking the money to afford them. In many cases menstrual pain and cramps force girls to stay home and miss school. Sewing cheap and reusable sanitary pads is a first step to enlighten women and girls and to make them feel more comfortable about this natural occurrence.

Many of the girls from the community listened well while Rashida explained the different steps for producing the pads. We hope these sessions produce good results.

HEALTH CHECK UP

In February, the C.C. Optical Center came to M-LISADA to do eye exams with our children. It was successful and finally managed to close a gap in our health department services. It’s really important to always ensure that all the children are doing well and if not, to give our best in taking care of them. We would like to thank C.C. Optical Center for their work and support.
WOMENA ORGANIZATION AT M-LISADA

In February as well, M-LISADA was visited by WoMena Organization for a whole day. WoMena is an NGO based in Kampala that strives for the insurance of reproductive health research and technologies, with the main aim of introducing acceptable, suitable and safe reproductive health solutions. They focus on neglected but important menstrual health issues and work on both a local and a national level to create more awareness and education on this topic. At M-LISADA, they first talked to children and staff members about menstrual health and presented the most important facts illustrated by vivid posters. Additional to our Menstrual Health Workshop and the pad making, the WoMena sessions supplemented our children’s education. Later that day, the WoMena team taught the whole M-LISADA family how to ride bikes. Indeed, all of us had a lot of fun and we want to thank WoMena Organization for their informative presentation and their support.
This time we would like to present the recruited boys who were part of the Peer-to-Peer program for the last three months, carrying out activities like book making and t-shirt printing. There were six boys in total, but the focus will be on Timothy’s story and background, which we managed to reveal by doing an investigation.

Timothy grew up with a family thinking they were his real parents. He was struggling with a hard childhood. His father forced him to do child labor, refused to pay his school fees, and was always talking to him in an abusive language. That’s why Timothy left home and started to live on the streets. When he was recruited by M-LISADA, we started to trace his background based on the information and contacts he could give us. His family never accepted our calls so we went to their home. Timothy’s family was compelled to tell the truth. His real mother died at his birth without telling who the father was, which lead his aunt and uncle to raise him. For Timothy it was a shock. He has always believed that his aunt and uncle were his real parents and would take care of him. Furthermore, after we met them, his uncle didn’t want him back home. That’s why Timothy is still at M-LISADA and getting psychosocial support. We are trying to give him hope and a feeling and understanding of family, love and solidarity.

Besides Timothy, two other boys are remaining at M-LISADA as well. The others were successfully reunified with their families and one was brought back to school. We are sure, that the skills that they have learned at M-LISADA will help them in their future life and we wish them all the best.
Our Environmental Scouts are made up of the Peer-to-Peer boys and community children. We are organizing different trainings and workshops for them, always focusing on environmental topics and issues.

During this quarter, we hosted a German volunteer called Bruno from Senior Experten Service. For three weeks, he worked together with our scouts on solar energy activities. In the training they learned how solar lamps work and how to build and install them. After the theoretical work, they built their own solar lamps. The workshop also included an outreach to the community. We assessed those families who are really in need of lamps and electricity and gave out solar lamps to them. Some of the recruited boys installed the lamps at the homes of these families. We will follow up, to see if they are using them wisely and what impact they have on their lives.

Furthermore, Bruno introduced some general basics about business mentorship, marketing and record keeping to the scouts. Indeed, it was a very interesting and relevant workshop and we thank Bruno for his support.
QUILT WORKSHOP WITH ELLEN

In March, we again hosted our dear friend Ellen Grace Ruden from New York City at M-LISADA. She is funding our sewing projects and donated sewing machines and new fabrics. This time, she came to facilitate a quilting workshop for our staff members. Before coming to Uganda, she reached out to friends all over the world to donate any kind of fabric. Many people sent beautiful and various fabrics to her. For two weeks the whole team worked hard and passionately on the quilts and the outcome was definitely amazing. We made 5 quilts, each in a unique patchwork design. When the work got complicated or we were doubting or helpless, Ellen encouraged us. On that way we all learned not only a lesson for our work but also for our life. “We are all human and mistakes will be made, but it can all be fixed.” The time was running too fast and all of us wanted Ellen to stay longer, but she left the books we worked with at M-LISADA and we are going to continue with regular quilting classes. The 5 quilts were sold in the U.S. and it made us really proud seeing pictures of people using them at home.

First of all, we would like to thank Ellen. Her energy and patience was inspiring and we really enjoyed the time with her. Furthermore, we thank all the people who donated fabrics. It is incredible how much generosity and helping hands you can find out there. We have just finished our first two quilts in the absence of Ellen and we feel ready to make more and more of them.
In February, we started our second season of Fabric of Life - My True Story Beyond Fashion Lab. During the first season the M-LISADA children had so much fun in designing and making their own clothes, and the fashion show at the end of the project was very special.

This time, community members are part of the program and we believe they will gain a lot of useful knowledge during the classes. It is so good to see the development of the participants of the first season and their never-ending interest. They have many ideas and images in their heads and will surely come up with beautiful and creative designs.

The first sessions were really promising, and we are grateful for the chance to work together with such talented minds like Kebirungi Nina and Whitney. We also thank Daina Leigh, founder, and the whole Fabric of Life team, and are truly pleased about the good cooperation.
"Reading to the Rescue" is the name of our new M-LISADA library program that was launched in March and is going to run for the whole year. We invited different schools, and each prepared a small presentation. We saw dances, heard poems and the youngest children from Mummy Foundation showed us their reading skills. Even our non-schooling community children recited a poem and surprised the audience with a cultural dance performance that they practiced in only one week. It was so much fun and we enjoyed all the presentations. The library program contains different activities. Firstly, the M-LISADA library is going to be accessible for all community members, students, parents, teachers and people who are interested in reading books. Secondly, we are planning to have a mobile library to spread the importance of reading even more, and to share our books with schools and organizations. And lastly, we will organize reading festivals and competitions. We are very excited about sharing our beautiful library and books and we hope to reach out to as many people as possible. Thank you to Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation for supporting this project and thanks to all the people and schools who were part of the successful launch.
BOOK MAKING PROJECT

We finally started the practical part of our new book making project. M-LISADA received the Community Driven Development (CDD) fund by KCCA last year to support this project. With all the materials purchased with that money, both staff members and M-LISADA children are working regularly on making the books. Many steps are needed until a book is finished. The books are going to be sold and we hope that many people will like and buy them. We thank KCCA for their generous support.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN KAMPiringisa

Since last year, we are in closer cooperation with the Rehabilitation Center in Kampiringisa. Our M-LISADA staff started to facilitate psychosocial support for the children who are living in Kampiringisa. They are working together with the staff of the Rehabilitation Center and we have had several workshops and meetings to train all the staff members and to prepare them for working with the children.

With the start of this quarter, we are going once a week to Kampiringisa to do different activities there, all concerned with Trauma Healing. In this way we aim to achieve continuity in our work and we hope that this increases the impact on the children’s lives, and helps them to overcome their traumas. The children will learn to express their feelings in the forms of acting, drawing and writing. They all may be traumatized differently, but we managed to reach and provide support to almost all of the 121 children staying at Kampiringisa. It makes us truly happy to have the opportunity not only to facilitate and train M-LISADA children, but also go beyond our borders to share our knowledge and skills in social work and psychosocial support with other institutions. We are grateful for the good and strong cooperation with Kampiringisa and look forward to the following sessions and activities.
M-LISADA BRANCH IN BOMBO

This quarter, we started cultivating our land in Bombo and were able to bring potatoes to the M-LISADA main branch. We are also planning to plant maize in Bombo and therefore were digging the grounds. We thank the M-LISADA staff who travelled to Bombo for planting and working there.

Besides the farming, the construction of the M-LISADA Primary and Vocational School were finally initiated. We have been waiting for a long time to obtain enough funds for this big project, but we found many supporters and want to thank all of them, especially Yves Baes, Wim, Ilona, World Mission Help and all the other supporting people from Belgium. It was a long-awaited dream that is finally coming to reality and we can’t wait for the day when the school will be finished and ready for usage.
VISITORS…

During the last three months, M-LISADA was honored to welcome several visitors. Each time, the children and staff members are excited and give their best to make the visitor’s time at our organization as pleasant as possible.

In January ECLOF Organization, spearheaded by Alison Dorah, came for a visit. They brought many donations in the form of clothes, shoes and scholastic materials.

The family of our German volunteer Clara visited M-LISADA in January as well, and brought different donations and sweets for everyone and enjoyed an amazing performance of our acrobats, brass band and culture group.

In March we received volunteer Chiara’s mother and in that way the families of both our volunteers got to know M-LISADA as the place where their children are working.

Furthermore we welcomed members from Mind the Soul, with whom we have a strong and special partnership.

Lastly, we were visited by a group of young people from all over the world working together for the organization of Youth With A Mission (YWAM). They sang together with our children, presented a skit and went into small discussion groups to talk about Jesus and how believing changed their lives. It was truly interesting and we all enjoyed the time with them.

We thank all of our visitors for coming around, spending time with us, and supporting us to such an extent. It means a lot to the M-LISADA family.

… AND DONATIONS

We thank all of the people who continuously contribute to our M-LISADA family in the form of clothes, scholastic materials, food and technologies.

We received clothes from Nina and Charity, who are also facilitating the Fabric of Life Program at M-LISADA; from our former German volunteer Anna, from Guen and her family, and also from the families of our currently volunteers Clara and Chiara. Organized by Guen, M-LISADA was also given an iMac computer and an iPad. We appreciate the generous support and are grateful to have so many friends all over the world.
THANK YOU

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