M-LISADA
NEWSLETTER
APRIL - JUNE, 2018

SEE INSIDE FOR ARTICLES ABOUT WELCOMING OF THE DANCE OF HOPE TEAM, MOBILE LIBRARY, CULTURAL GALA AND OTHER EVENTS
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DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

The month of June is coming to an end and it seems as if the past three months have passed incredibly fast. I feel so blessed to have such an amazing team of staff at M-LISADA Organization with whom to share all the events, activities and achievements. I can truly say that all of us have done a great work and the determination to continue this amount of commitment and cooperation is high.

Besides our usual programs, some special occasions took place. Our M-LISADA Brass Band reached the next level by playing for Coca Cola Beverages Africa. It is a great achievement to be booked by such big companies, and represents a high professional standard for our own organization.

The school constructions in Bombo are continuing professionally and on pace. It is exciting and motivating to see this project moving forward and I believe it is going to be completed successfully and on time.

One of the most emotional moments during the last three months, doubtlessly was the arrival of our Dance of Hope Team back from the U.S. The day they came back to their M-LISADA home and family brought so much joy and love.

It feels good to have them back together with us and I am grateful and glad that all of them stayed safe during the whole journey. I am sure they feel fulfilled and happy as well to be back to their roots. M-LISADA will always be their home, no matter how far they are travelling. To give children an understanding of home, safety and family is so important and I am proud that M-LISADA is doing exactly that.

I want to thank all of our dear friends, family members and supporters for being there with us, for sharing our love and for working hand in hand with us.

May the Almighty God bless you abundantly.

Yours faithfully,
Emilly Donia
Director of M-LISADA Organization
MOBILE LIBRARY

In the course of our new library program “Reading to the Rescue” we started the M-LISADA Mobile Library in April. Our library team began visiting different schools around the community. Every week, Aunt Evelyn, Aunt Hilda and one of our German volunteers went to at least two schools. They carried story books of all levels, papers and colors for artwork, and work sheets. A session included reading a story book, asking questions related to the story, followed by painting and independent reading. We can proudly say that these sessions were something special and exceptional for the children. Many of them have never been to a library and don’t have access to story books or novels. It didn’t matter if we worked together with younger or older students, their attention and cooperation was always high and they admired the different stories. The times we visited a school repeatedly showed us what an impact this project has had. The children were excitingly expecting us and couldn’t wait to hear a new story. Their interaction in answering our questions got better every session. Our favorite question to ask was “What lessons have you learned from the story?” We heard many creative and inspiring ideas.

During the holidays, we continued the Mobile Library with children from different communities around M-LISADA. It was always a surprise how many children would turn up, but luckily we managed to get a big number most of the times. Some of these children were school-going others were not. That made it even more special and also challenging at some points. What impresses us most was how they all got caught up by the course of the stories.

We are grateful to have such a big and well-equipped library at our M-LISADA center and for the opportunity to share it. For July, we are planning to start this lovely project again and are already collecting new ideas and ways of reading and telling stories.
The 23rd April was World Book Day. That’s why we chose this day to have our first Reading Festival at M-LISADA Organization. The theme was “Reading to the Rescue / Reading - A Key Tool to Success”, utilizing the same title we used for launching the new library program. It was a day full of competitions in many different activities. Students from BEUPA Learning Center, St. Antonius Primary School, St. Paul’s Primary School, Pride Nursery and Primary School, and Mommy’s Foundation were giving their best in coloring pictures, reading story books, spelling, counting and acting. M-LISADA was represented by our community children who are studying from the M-LISADA library. It was stunning how confidently most of the young children managed to fulfill the given tasks and they proved their intelligence, especially in dealing with difficult words and reading skills. At the end, the judges announced the best student or students for each activity and these children proudly received their gifts and certificates.

We thank the single schools for participating and for their good work. As the guest of honor we invited Bob Muhumuza, and we also had Madame Florence, the Education Officer, as part of the audience. Thanks so much to everyone for being part of that special day. A big Thank You also goes to our Library Team, spearheaded by Aunt Evelyn, who organized the whole Festival.

All of us enjoyed this day and we hope to encourage more and more children to learn how to read and to use the M-LISADA Library as one of the community libraries.
BOOK MAKING PROJECT

Our book making project is continually running on. In April, the first phase was concluded. We made 589 books by that time, a number we can all be very proud of. The books are going to be sold to schools and the community. We also opened a small shop at Kalangala from where books and other stationery are being sold. When some of our staff went there in June, we were delighted to see that many people are buying books or using the printer. We are looking forward to making more and more books. As the project is supported by the CDD Fund (Community Driven Development) by KCCA, we are thanking them once again.
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF STREET CHILDREN

“Equality for Street Children starts here. Let’s make it happen”
That was the theme of the International Day of Street Children on 12th April. As M-LISADA Organization also recruits children from the street with the main aim to reunite them with their families, we were part of the celebration. Our M-LISADA Brass Band played for the march of different institutions that are supporting and working with children from the streets. Hundreds of children connected to the streets joined the march as well and enjoyed the program afterwards at Freedom Square.
Some of our recruited boys gave testimonies about their past and how coming to M-LISADA changed their lives. At the parliament, a debate was organized and one of our boys, Sharif, represented M-LISADA there. We are very proud of him.
We are also pleased that our Brass Band performed so well. Last but not least, we are proud of our staff members, who are working so professionally with children that once were living on the streets but now are gaining important skills and a new understanding of family and life.
PEER-TO-PEER PROGRAM

Recruiting of new members
We recruited new street boys for our Peer-to-Peer Program in April. On their first day at M-LISADA, Aunt Stellah picked the 20 boys from Kinseyi, where they all used to live, and brought them to our main branch in Nsambya for registration. They got porridge for breakfast and later posho and beans for lunch. From that day on they were part of the M-LISADA family. During the last 3 months, our whole staff gave their best to integrate them and make them feel welcome and at home. The boys could decide freely to come back to M-LISADA or not depending on their amount of interest and their willingness to cooperate. Many of them didn’t come back and the number is changing from time to time, but currently we have five boys who are part of M-LISADA and the program. We thank Interkultura for supporting the Peer-To-Peer Program. Working with these children is a big and important task but we always believe in the strength of our staff members and also in the strength within the boys themselves.

School Outreaches
As a new part of the program, we started to reach out to schools by doing Peer-to-Peer Education with the students. The few sessions our team held so far were very interesting and successful. Topics that the team talks about with the children include Communication, Life Skills, Health, Children’s Rights and Child Abuse. We already noticed that the pupils are eager to share their experiences, to ask questions, and to gain more knowledge in these areas. We are really looking forward to intensifying the trainings and to visiting more schools.
M-LISADA BRASS BAND PLAYING FOR COCA COLA BEVERAGES AFRICA

In the months of April and May, our M-LISADA Brass Band was honoured to perform at three events of Coca Cola Beverages Africa. The first time they played at the Ground Breaking Ceremony at the Coca Cola factory near Kampala, where Coca Cola launched a new project. Our M-LISADA musicians looked very nice in their Coca Cola uniforms and their performance was truly professional. The chairman even spent some time introducing the single brass instruments and the audience enjoyed the music. For the other two events, the Brass Band and our acrobats travelled to Mbarara for the Copa Coca Cola football matches performed by many Ugandan schools. Our band played while they marched around the football field bringing the different teams onto the field. Both times, they had so much fun and felt really blessed to perform at such big occasions. We are proud and grateful that they took such a long journey to give a performance and to represent M-LISADA. We also thank Coca Cola Beverages Africa for cooperating with M-LISADA and trusting in the skills of our children.
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTIONS IN BOMBO

In March, the constructions of the first M-LISADA Primary school in Bombo have started. Part of our staff was visiting the place regularly over the last three months and we are all impressed and surprised how fast the building has grown so far and continues to grow. To build and open that school has been a long-awaited dream and we can hardly believe that it is coming to reality now. The plan is to finish the whole building by October and hopefully to receive the first children there in February. The whole M-LISADA team is working hand in hand and is organizing and planning. We are going to start with Primary One and Two, which will be our pioneers. The registration of children has already started and we want to bring the M-LISADA community children in first.

Thanks to all our sponsors who have helped to realize this dream and thanks to the team who builds our school in Bombo.

Special thanks to Yves, World Mission Help, Spinoy Foundation, Spreeuwen School and Torfs, Wim and Ilona, Monne and Carla Peeters, Tom and his team of teachers and students, Isabel, Barbara, Christie and Marc, Chris Weigers and Rochelle.
We started the second season of the Fabric of Life – My True Story Beyond Fashion Lab Project. Every Sunday, the facilitators Nina and Whitney came to M-LISADA and held workshops with our children. In general discussions they talked about what each of them wants to achieve during the sessions, how to express their selves and where to get inspiration from. Furthermore they learned how to use sewing machines and started to design their own pieces. We hope to see beautiful outcomes from this project and are grateful for the support of Nina and Whitney and the love they are bringing to M-LISADA each time they come.
HOLIDAY PROGRAM

In During the holidays, all the M-LISADA children came home. Together with the community children and Congolese refugees we had a very big number of children at our M-LISADA center. We drafted a timetable with different activities involving all the children. In the mornings, the school-going children had their remedial classes while the others could learn and read from the library. We found this room of books always full and almost overcrowded, so that we even took the tables and chairs out of it. It showed us once more how much the children love and enjoy the library and we are so grateful to have so many books and materials to share.

The afternoons were filled by dance trainings and music lessons. The team of MindLeaps was teaching and of course the Culture Dance with Aunt Rashida was going on as well. Even before lunch had started, some children couldn’t wait to dance and the way they attended the classes was very impressive. Some older M-LISADA girls helped out with the training and to see the younger ones learning from them made us proud. The community children especially were improving so much during that time, which they proved at their performance for the Cultural Gala.

Not only the children’s dance skills got more professional, even the community band trained hard to perfect their playing more and more. Playing together as a team is not easy, but they are giving their best and we can see small improvements each time they are training. The most important thing is that they have fun and are passionate about what they do and we can assure that learning music gives them these feelings.
COMMUNITY CLEANING

In May, our staff and children took one morning off to clean the way to our M-LISADA home. This street has always been full of garbage, just as many other streets all over Kampala. All of us worked hand in hand and the big masses of garbage were picked by Homeklin afterwards. The street looked better and we felt good about knowing that it was our work that brought these results. Keeping the environment clean is so important and very easy as well. Unfortunately many people just throw things on the streets or don’t know how to collect their garbage properly. We hope to create more awareness about that topic among the surrounding community.
WELCOMING THE DANCE OF HOPE TEAM

Our Dance of Hope Team came back to Uganda on 22\textsuperscript{nd} May and was welcomed the following day by the whole M-LISADA family. We spent that day with lots of good music, dances, speeches and special food. Our hearts were filled with joy and pride and it felt so good to see the children and Uncle Bosco arriving at their home.

It has been a long journey for all of us. Looking back at the preparations almost 4 years ago and seeing the first tour finished now is almost unbelievable. While travelling and touring through the U.S. our children have gained many new impressions and experiences. It has not been easy all the time, but they have all made it.

It’s only the start of letting the world know about M-LISADA and our mission. All of us are inspired and motivated and of course so grateful to the team of young dancers and musicians that represented us. Nobody else could have done better.

"Life brings you to unexpected places but love brings you home" It doesn't matter how far and how long we are away from home, love always brings us back to our roots. Our love brought them all back to Uganda and back to their M-LISADA home.

We thank all the people who were part of this journey! The next tour is already getting planned. It is stunning how many more people out there caught interest in what we are doing and we can’t wait to continue this journey – together with you.
MENSTRUAL HEALTH WORKSHOP IN KALANGALA

Part of our M-LISADA Team went to Kalangala in June together with Emmanuel O’Kane from Seam The World. We visited our branch there; all the children were so happy to see us and welcomed us with a lovely concert. The following day, we went into the community to carry out a Menstrual Health Workshop. Before we went to Kalangala, we made 190 sets of reusable sanitary pads (a set contains one shield and two flannels) at the M-LISADA center in Kampala. About 108 women and young girls attended the sensitization session on Menstrual Health and learned how to maintain the sanitary pads. The rest who came in late were sensitized as well and were advised to pick their sets from the M-LISADA office. In addition, all the women received knickers. The whole session was truly successful and the women were really interactive and attentive. We are planning to continue this project and are very grateful for the strong cooperation we have with Seam The World and Emmanuel O’Kane. Without his support, this trip and the project couldn’t have been realized. Thank you so much!
“Don’t leave any child behind for Africa’s Development” was the national theme for the day of the African Child, which we celebrated together with different schools at M-LISADA on 16th June. As our own motto we chose “The Uniqueness of an African Child when given Opportunity”. We started the day with a band march through Katwe and continued with a varied program including poems, skits, dances, speeches and testimonies. As an organization working with and supporting vulnerable children it is our wish and aim to reach out to as many children as possible and to give them chances to raise their voices. Not only on a day like the 16th June should this opportunity be given to them. Each and every day all of us should work for the improvement of these children’s lives.
As a second event on 16th June we had the 3rd M-LISADA CULTURAL GALA. Many weeks before, we started to organize and rehearse, and our staff members moved out to sell tickets. On that day, all the performances were simply amazing. The M-LISADA Senior Band gave us an extraordinary professional concert. This was followed by a Cultural Dance Production combining different dances presented by the Dance of Hope Team, the community children and our “Oldie Girls”. Our staff members showcased their traditional cultural wear and also the children modeled in self-made outfits. The final part of the performance was filled by our acrobats who surprised the whole audience with a new and exciting show. Beside that program, we also exhibited all the M-LISADA products like Briquettes, Liquid Soap, Reusable Sanitary Pads, Bed Covers, Solar Systems and Books. The children as well as the staff were dressed in gorgeous Kitenge outfits and all of them made the day so colorful. We thank the visitors who came and celebrated together with us and all the supporters that contributed to that special event. As it became an annual event to have a Cultural Gala, we are all looking forward to the next one in 2019.
THANK YOU

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