

how can i help



followings
foundation
2022 Review



Welcome

Founder message

Lauren Exton

Director Followings
Foundation

I acknowledge the people of the Gumbaynggirr nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which this report was prepared. I also pay respect to all Elders, past and present, and extend this respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait people from other nations across Australia.

It's a precious life we all live and so many humans are privileged to fill their lives with the people, activities and work that they choose. Mine's been packed pretty full recently: I work full-time, I'm studying part-time, raising a family and managing to turn up to ballroom dance class most Mondays with my partner!

And, of course, there's Followings.

Followings. This incredible little Foundation that has inspired so many people to help build and sustain the Busubi Empowered Community (BEC) Learning Center in rural Uganda. The Centre kicked along beautifully for most of 2022 since reopening last year after COVID tried its best to knock the wind out of its sails for almost 2 years before that.

In our daily reports from the Centre, you can see the common theme is always positivity and gratitude for what the community has created, and the constant need for sewing machine repair persons!

The leaders at BEC who write those reports are busy, like me. But it's a different type of busy to mine. They are busy creating opportunities for learning and education that we often take completely for granted. They are busy reaching out to the most vulnerable families in the village and opening their eyes to new possibilities. They are busy negotiating with not-for-profits who send in dodgy workers to repair boreholes that provide the drinking water for the entire village. Busy repairing holes in mosquito nets to protect themselves and their children from malaria. Busy trying to find ways to work yet another job so they're able to feed those children as the cost of living in Uganda continues to skyrocket.

It's a different type of busy.

It's the type of busy that I am moved by. The constant struggle that is so different to the struggles of those in the global north. It's representative of the inequity that I strive to help balance (in some small way) through our work. Talking about it encourages people to check their privilege, to examine their personal moral and ethical framework.

It encourages us to ask questions like: What could I go without today in order to help balance the scales. In order to help make this world safer, more beautiful and most importantly equitable for all.

When I talk about Followings, the conversations are always joyful. I share beautiful stories and gush about how brilliant the team in Uganda are and how I'd be lost without Beck, our Creative Director.

Sometimes, tears will well when I'm asked about the pressure I feel, or the conflicts I have around many methods of fundraising.

Despite that, I relish any opportunity to engage with anyone (and maybe brainstorm) about the big issues our world faces and how busy is different depending on your privilege.

Here's to another year of big conversations about how we can all do something about the things that matter to us in the way that moves us.

And thank you so much for your support!

- Lauren Exton

Founder & Director

Staff (paid) and volunteers from Busubi Empowered Communities



John Ssentamu

Director



Shallon Nakimwero

Manager



Milly Nasejje

Tailoring



Ronald Nsubuga

Performing Arts



Pauline Namatovu

Hairdressing



Claire Nakimbugwe

Computers & Catering



Dr Brian Ssenkumba

Medical Volunteer



Paul Nkalubo

Agricultural Volunteer



Joshua Niyomugabo

Security



Derrick Ssebuggwano

Sports Coach Volunteer



Lydia Nasejje

Leadership Volunteer



Vincent Senge

Finance & Savings Volunteer

Foundation Objectives

Objectives

To continue to support and fiscally sponsor the staffing, resourcing and maintenance of BEC Learning Centre as they move towards becoming financially independent.

To increase the breadth of Followings Foundations' traditional corporate social responsibilities, ensuring the best possible social and developmental impact.

To create partnerships with non-government organisations and community groups addressing poverty, social disadvantage and environmental protection.

To continue to be an active ally against systemic racism in all its forms.

Followings Foundation Board

Rebecca Boon
Secretary



Lauren Exton
Treasurer

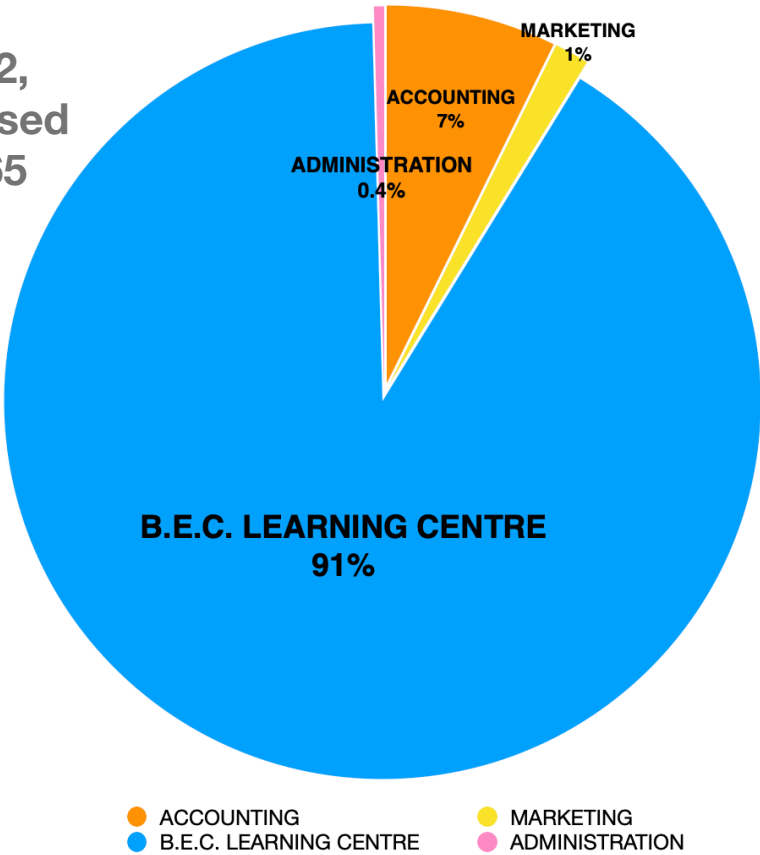


Liz Lynch
Director



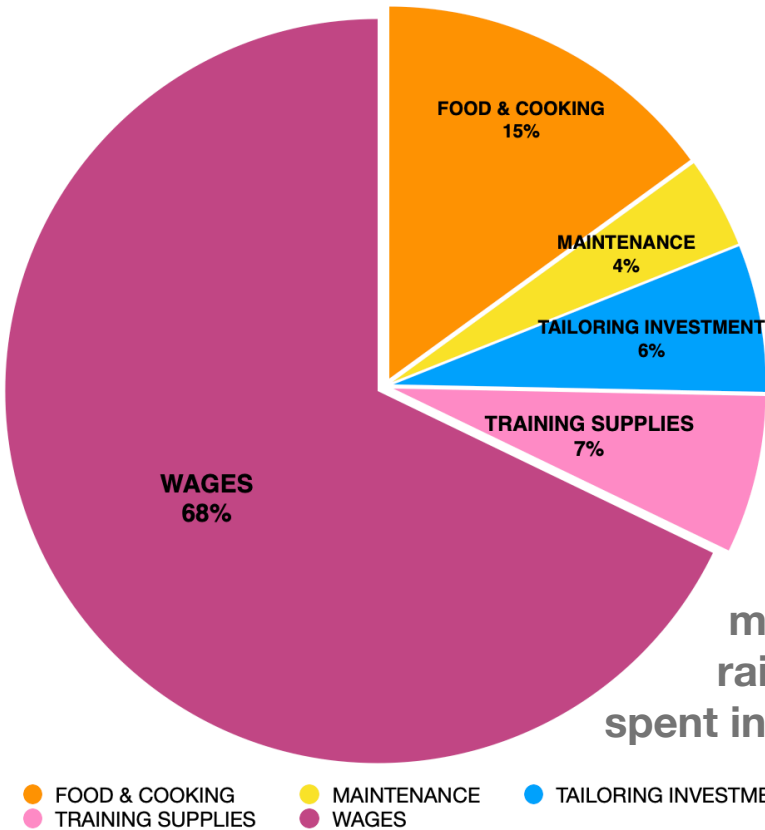
Fundraising & Spending in 2022

In 2022,
we raised
\$23,065



For every \$100 we raise, **\$91 goes directly to our project in Busubi, Uganda.**

	TOTAL
Income	
Sales	23,065.21
Total Income	A\$23,065.21
GROSS PROFIT	A\$23,065.21
Expenses	
Accounting and bookkeeping	1,630.00
Advertising and marketing	331.77
Bank charges and fees	14.95
BEC Learning Centre	20,349.34
Telephone & internet expenses	81.76
Total Expenses	A\$22,407.82
Other Expenses	
Unrealised Gain or Loss	0.00
Total Other Expenses	A\$0.00
NET EARNINGS	A\$657.39



How the
money we
raised was
spent in Uganda



2022 Highlights

Q1

A New Year wish from from BEC.

“We have ended our year that has been filled with uncertainties but we are grateful that we have been able to sail through when all our trainees, trainers and distinguished partners have survived.

We have agreed that we shall open for the new year on 5 January 2022. We trust that 2022 will be the year we shall start receiving volunteers after missing them for a long period.”

Hydro for the win

We felt heart-bursting gratitude to read reports that all 10 computers were able to be used at once without failure thanks you to those vollies and donors who supported our campaign to connect electricity to the Busubi community. These moments are what we worked for. Electricity connected to BEC learning centre means uninterrupted computer studies class—which before was at the mercy of solar power.

Thank you to our awesome intern, TJ

“I picked this internship with Followings because I admire the work that the charity does. Being a part of their team, even if it is a small one, is an honour. Followings have allowed me to obtain as much experience as possible, including working as part of an international, virtual team. They have taught me a great deal and working with them has been an absolute pleasure.”- TJ

Self-sustainability from school uniforms

The impact of the pandemic took a huge toll on Uganda's economy. The cost of living and meeting basic needs increased, whereas incomes have remained the same for most who have been able to stay employed. To disrupt this downward cycle of poverty, John Ssentamu and BEC's leaders pursued a new program to generate an income for senior students as well as fund a small portion of the Learning Centre's activities. We fundraised to sponsor the start-up funds (approx. AUD\$1,500) to begin this program and invited people to donate any amount, big or small, to help BEC in this exciting step of their journey to self-sustainability.

Q2

New guitars donated by Australian vocal coach

The trainees expressed excitement for the new guitars that vocal coach volunteer Barbara Prestia sent to this class to ensure thorough musical training through instruments.

Sunday 5th June 2022 Report

Class: Music Dance Drama

Trainer: Dickson and Barbara Prestia

No of Trainees: 26

Training Time: 10:05am - 4:30pm

“Barbara Prestia led the morning training activities and when she came online some trainees were already in the study room ready waiting. Barbara was so excited to meet the MDD class once again.

All the trainees and staff thanked Barbara for the wonderful gift of the guitars and promised to make the best use of them.

Barbara promised more help to this section so as to empower girls who are interested in music.

She continued with vocal training and left tasks for trainees to practice throughout the week.

The afternoon training session was facilitated by trainer Dickson who taught guitar and keyboard playing. Trainees started well the practice of playing the instruments and Dickson said he has no doubt trainees will learn how to use the new guitars quickly because the practice is now hands on.”

Outdoor classroom!

Last week, Agricultural students were taught the value of nurturing the land to provide food and a source of income. Under the guidance of Trainer Vincent, the student's current project is a nursery bed. Trainees ploughed the land and cleared off unwanted grass.

We fundraised to support You can support Busubi's ongoing agricultural program through a donation:

AUD\$50 allows purchase of a wheelbarrow

AUD\$20 provides a shovel and a hoe

BEC's library of tools continues to be available to community members to borrow to help tend their gardens and crops.

Q3

First electric sewing machine!

After a few hiccups, loads of love and an unending supply of belief that we can do hard things with patience... Busubi Empowered Community and Learning Centre (BEC) at last has an electric sewing machine!

Given the centre had no power when it was first built 5 years ago, this is a pretty lovely milestone! Now, the centre is connected to hydroelectricity, and after running on solar for most of its life things like electric sewing machines haven't been possible til now! A special thank you to everyone who has supported the Tailoring program at BEC! Bigger and greater things are on the way IN, and pedalling each stitch is on the way OUT!

Thursday 21st July 2022 Report

Class: Computer

Trainer: Arnold

No of Trainees: 04 Training

Time:10:00am-03:30pm

“We have had Computer lessons today with four trainees. Three of these are students in University in their holidays plus Vicky. These students requested the administration for the opportunity to be trained in computer within this period their in holiday. These students said, though they're studying ICT, at their University it's not possible to have practical Computer lessons as it's here at the Center. For them to have a reasonable time for training we decided Thursday Computer lessons to be for them and other trainees to be trained on Saturday. At the end of the training sessions, Vicky (a medical student) saw it right to share some health issues with her fellow youths. She shared with them about personal hygiene, drug use and reminded them to protect themselves against virus and disease.”

We marked 3 years since Followings volunteers last visited BEC

Q4

Update from John - General Manager BEC

Generally, 2022 was a challenging year for BEC. In November, all the skilling activities were paused to focus on the Tailoring Contract we secured.

We had a total number of 53 trainees and were training in Tailoring, Hairdressing, MDD, Agriculture and Computer.

I am continuing to coordinate the school uniform contract and identify experienced tailors to lead the way before 2023 term opens.

I also reached out to international online volunteer trainers in MDD and Hairdressing and each volunteer accepted to offer an hours training session once a week. This greatly helped the trainers and trainees in those sections.

We know that the world economic storm will settle and Followings Foundation team and partners will get the ability of supporting BEC to resume operations full scale.

As staff, we believe that having a self sustaining project will go a long way.

We look forward to welcoming Lauren and Ross in March 2023.



Looking ahead

Some of our goals for 2023

- Followings volunteers to visit Uganda in person after almost 4 years
- Renew partnership goals between BEC and Followings Foundation
- Re-establish self-sustainability goals
- Fundraise for locally run income generating projects



Social Media



Follow Followings!

When you engage with our posts by sharing them or commenting on them, we can reach more supporters!



@followings.love



@followings.foundation



Followings Foundation



2022
in
pictures



“Getting a community building built was a major achievement and it now serves as a focal point for the community and all locally driven programs”





followings
foundation

Leap now, your wings will follow.