

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Neil Howard and I am a Trustee of Stand Up For Africa (SUFA), a British-based, African-led charity working to support youth-focussed community projects across the African continent. We raise funds and awareness to support grassroots interventions throughout Africa and with our partners on the ground we strive continually for the empowerment of the young.

We have recently been contacted by Ms. Victoria Cheng, Mr. Jeffrey Xing and Mr. Timothy McKinley regarding the feasibility of collaboration between ourselves and a team from OLPC. Having consulted extensively with our partners both in London and on the ground in Uganda, we would like to confirm our overwhelming enthusiasm to do so.

In Uganda, we work with in- and out-of school youth from a very poor urban slum on the outskirts of Kampala. The majority of the children in this area are from either poor suburban families or from families who have recently migrated from the countryside. This is an area of real resource-deprivation, where schools struggle to provide enough books, let alone any IT equipment. The chance to be involved in a project such as this would therefore be of incomparable benefit to our community.

In the community we work with children from around 6 or 7 up into their late teens. We therefore envision this intervention to be beneficial to those in the 6-12 age-range and also to their older peers. Crucially, we are just completing a youth drop-in centre to serve as a hub for our youth work in the community (attracting both in- and out-of-school youth, during and outside of the school calendar) and have recently established a network of youth groups in the schools all around our slum. This network has been widely praised (including by government officials) and we believe that this should serve as the organisational basis for the OLPC intervention, with IT facilities (and classes) being established in each school.

We have consulted with the schools and their head-teachers and all are extremely excited about the prospect of working with OLPC. The school year runs until mid-August and so provisions are already being made for the OLPC team to be integrated into the curriculum for the 9 weeks of their stay. This will not cause any inconvenience as previous projects we have carried out in the schools have required similar levels of commitment on the part of the teachers and students, to great success. Each school is already taking steps to ensure that there will be space for a computer room to house the computer classes.

In terms of sustainability, I should also point out that we envisage employing an IT teacher to continue the work once the OLPC team depart. We believe that this new staff member can ensure the maintenance of the computers and the IT classes they will be used for. This will guarantee the longevity of the project and ensure that it benefits future generations of schoolchildren. Should there be any funds left over from the summer project, they will go to this. In their absence, we will use some of the funds we have for available for such purposes and will source further support from the local authorities.

Whilst we are certain, then, that the project can achieve its desired ends of bringing computer technology to a wide range of severely under-privileged children, we are also convinced that, logistically, the project can be set-up without any problems. We are not unfamiliar with the Ugandan customs system (having received other large deliveries from partner NGOs in the past) and have access to transport in order to collect and deliver the laptops to their destination. We have a large volunteer base to help with transport and set-up and we also have the facilities to store the laptops safely whilst the project is being rolled-out (either in our youth centre, or in an apartment we own and which we use for visiting staff and storage. Both of these buildings are guarded 24/7).

Similarly, we are sure that there will be no problem housing and feeding the students whilst they are on the ground putting the laptops in place. Our large youth centre has a purpose-built section to house volunteers and the apartment we own is also ideal (having been used to house volunteers many times in the past). The students will be well looked after by our staff and volunteers (all of whom speak perfect English, the lingua franca of Uganda) and we are convinced that they too will benefit from this experience.

We would like to thank you sincerely for your consideration in this matter and we look forward to hearing from you in due course. Should you have any questions or need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely,

Neil Howard

Trustee
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