

Dunstan Wai

Memorial Charitable Foundation

March 2019

Dunstan Wai Scholars from Kajo Keji Find Shelter in Uganda

The Dunstan Wai Memorial Charitable Foundation began operations in Kajo Keji County, South Sudan in 2006 in honor of Dr. Dunstan Wai, a native son. As a youth in 1964, Dr. Wai and his family fled from Kajo Keji to Uganda to escape the civil war. He then went on to great accomplishments in international development until his life was cut short at the age of 58. In his memory, the Foundation has proudly sponsored, each year, the secondary school education of more than 100 girls from Kajo Keji County, South Sudan and northern Uganda.

In early 2016, however, the Foundation's operations in Kajo Keji came to an abrupt halt when – in a case of history repeating itself -- South Sudan's civil war forced nearly the whole population of Kajo Keji to flee across the border to Uganda. Among them were the local administrators of the Foundation's scholarship program from the Comboni Missionary Society, along with the families of some sixty-three of our S-2 to S-4 scholarship recipients.

Within a matter of weeks, Comboni Sister Lorena Ortiz and her assistants Christine Poni and Rufina Kinyaa were able to locate our scholars in the different refugee camps and to place them in four secondary schools in northern Uganda. They then succeeded in recruiting additional students, so that as of the end of 2018, the Foundation was funding the education of 135 girls -- 103 from South Sudan and 32 from Uganda –in Ugandan secondary schools.

The transition for our South Sudanese scholars has not been an easy one, given that their new course of studies in Uganda is entirely different and the standards are much higher. Added to those difficulties are the deprivations the girls experience in their new lives as refugees. Nonetheless, most are finding their way. In 2018, twenty-eight of these scholars graduated from secondary school at the S-4 level. One has also achieved an S-6 advanced level certificate.

Scholarships Allow Advanced-Level Students to Thrive

Despite the ongoing civil disturbances in South Sudan, The Dunstan Wai Foundation's program of tertiary-level scholarships is showing amazing resilience. These advanced-level scholarships, which were launched in 2013 in response to multiple requests from secondary-school scholars, are awarded to selected graduates to study in post-secondary schools for a minimum of three years. Sister Lily Grace Akedi of the Comboni Missionary Sisters has overseen this program since its inception.



Comboni Sister Lorena Ortiz and scholarship recipient Guo Robina, who graduated in 2017 with the third best secondary-school final exam results in Moyo District.

In 2018, the Foundation sponsored scholarships for six young women studying in Juba and twelve students in Uganda. Four of these young women graduated this year, making a total of seven who have complete their studies so far. The fields of study undertaken by the students include nursing and midwifery, information technology, international relations, and business administration.



Comboni Sister Lily Grace Akedi joined Akujo Angela at her graduation from the Kajo Keji Health Training Institute.

One outstanding Wai scholar is Angela Akujo who in August received a diploma in Clinical Medicine and Public Health from the Kajo Keji Health Training Institute (relocated to Uganda) and was named the Best Performing Student in her class. Angela, who is interning at Arua Teaching Hospital, is effusive in her praise for the Foundation’s backing which, she says “has planted a true tool of life (education) that can never be uprooted.”

New Scholarship Administrators Take the Helm

In January, 2019, The Dunstan Wai Foundation had the honor of welcoming Sister Florence Oryema and the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, based in Moyo, Uganda, as the new administrators of the Foundation’s Secondary School scholarship program in Uganda. The Sacred Heart Sisters have agreed to assume the role skillfully played for the past thirteen years by the Comboni Missionary Society, which is closing its Ugandan locale.



Sister Florence Oryema, Provincial Administrator in charge of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Nyakwea Wai, the President of The Dunstan Wai Foundation, expressed her pleasure that the Sacred Heart Sisters will be responsible for identifying and supervising the 130 plus girls who receive Foundation scholarships each year. “We feel extremely fortunate to make this new arrangement – not only because of the Sisters’ sterling reputation worldwide, but also because they are already familiar with our host schools and the community. Sister Oryema’s impressive expertise and skills will be critical to our success.



Dunstan Wai Foundation Board members visiting at the Kajo Keji Health Training Institute at Arua in March, 2018.

The Dunstan Wai Memorial Charitable Foundation is a U.S. non-profit organization managed by a Board of Directors based in Washington, DC.

www.dunstanwaifoundation.org

