

# Namuwongo Literacy Project, Uganda

Judy Labow and Howard Shapiro

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The Namuwongo Literacy Project was founded in 2006 by two Montreal educators, Judy Labow and Howard Shapiro, who continue to actively co-direct the programme. The Project was designed to promote the development of a literate, secure and peaceful community of children and youth from diverse tribal backgrounds and lost children. Their goal is to bring literacy and numeracy to 20 children per year in the Ugandan shantytown, Namuwongo, on the outskirts of Kampala. The focus is on children from the poorest section of Namuwongo, Soweto. Most are true orphans, though some live with extended family who cannot afford public school. The children have no access to a formal education and would otherwise remain illiterate.

The Namuwongo Literacy Project's budget pays for the teacher's salary, student uniforms, all books and school supplies, all teaching materials and two meals per day. The teacher follows the Ugandan Ministry of Education guidelines, making it possible for some of the children to enter the regular stream, thus receiving primary and even secondary certification.

The Project maintains a classroom, rent free, at Kisugu Junior School. Namuwongo Literacy Project students are included in all Kisugu Junior School activities and events which provides them with further experiences.

Currently, the Project has three Associate Directors and a host of dedicated volunteers. Members of the executive and the volunteers make yearly visits to Uganda at their own expense to over-see and work on the project. They spend anywhere from 2 weeks to 4 months at a time at Namuwongo.

The Montreal committee raises funds locally by selling items made in Uganda, with all the funds raised going to the project in Namuwongo.

This year, they were proud to announce that 8 students were graduating from primary school and now entering secondary school!