

THE MTAALA FOUNDATION

Frequently Asked Questions

What does "mtaala" mean?

"Mtaala," pronounced *um-tah-lah*, means "learning" in Swahili.

I would like to sponsor a student. What's the next step?

If you have a specific student in mind, great! If not, please get in touch with us and we can help you choose a student to sponsor, or select one for you. You can then make your contribution on our website at www.mtaala.org. After we have received your donation, you will receive a welcome packet via e-mail with a letter, a photograph of your student, and information regarding the sponsorship. Sponsorships are one year in length and may be renewed annually.

Why does the Mtaala Foundation work with secondary students?

Uganda currently has Universal Primary Education (UPE), which was implemented to provide free primary education to all Ugandan children. While the program has not been fully successful in its implementation, the state of secondary education in Uganda is even more dire. Only 40% of primary students go on to complete secondary school. Most children cannot afford the tuition, fees for books, uniforms, and school supplies, and room and board. Although secondary students are just as needy as primary students, their needs are addressed much less frequently by nonprofit organizations. We never cease to be amazed at the efforts of our students to succeed in school and complete their degrees, despite the significant trials that they face along the way.

Are all of your students orphans or former child soldiers?

Due to widespread poverty, disease, and lack of education, there is an immense need among most Ugandan children, whether they have been orphaned, or abducted and forced to fight as child soldiers, or have lived with their parents and siblings for their entire lives. The Mtaala Foundation works with all of these children. Many of our students have lost one or more parents (often to HIV/AIDS) and a number of them have directly suffered from the brutalities of Uganda's civil war.

I am interested in traveling to Uganda. Can I volunteer abroad with the Mtaala Foundation?

The Mtaala Foundation does not currently have a formal volunteer abroad program. However, if you are planning to travel to Uganda, we encourage you to contact us before your trip. It may be possible to arrange a visit to our school or a meeting with our staff in Uganda during your stay.

How is secondary education structured in Uganda?

Secondary schools in Uganda have six grade levels. (Primary schools have seven.) The six secondary levels are Senior One, Senior Two, and so on. Unlike many countries in North America and Europe, grade levels are not determined by age. Because so many students drop out of school so they can work to help their families or earn money to pay their own school fees, it is not uncommon for an eighteen-year-old student to have several years left in secondary school. Our student sponsorship program relieves a huge burden from our students and allows them to focus on their education.

How can I learn more?

Visit us at www.mtaala.org or e-mail us at info@mtaala.org.

www.mtaala.org