



Friends Ugandan Skills Training Fund

a project of Olympia Monthly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

June 26, 2025

Dear FUST friends and supporters,

It has been a long while since we communicated with many of you. It is hard to believe that it has been over eleven years since our Quaker Meeting (Olympia Monthly Meeting) initiated and approved the FUST (Friends Ugandan Safe Transport) project. This project was proposed in response to Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act of February 2014. You may recall that this Act became law but was soon ruled invalid based on a technicality – but homosexuality remained illegal and LGBTQI Ugandans continued to be assaulted, harassed, rejected and disowned by their families.

The FUST project has been a resounding success. Over a ten-year period, we raised more than \$250,000 from over 25 Friends Meetings, several other faith communities and many individual donors. Our Ugandan underground conductors safely transported 3,010 passengers to safe houses on the border. From there, passengers were matched with sponsors from one of 14 countries. Sponsors helped them relocate, get visas and begin a new life.

In late 2023, the Ugandan government passed a new, more draconian Anti-Homosexuality law. This law includes life in prison and the death penalty. Those suspected of or reported to be LGBTQI can be arrested.

It is no longer safe for the FUST conductors to transport passengers out of the country. As a result, they have shifted their focus to finding ways to support LGBTQI Ugandans with greater safety as they remain in the country. They have explained to us that if Ugandans live closeted and are self-sufficient with jobs, they are much more likely to not stand out to others, and thus can be safe.

With this in mind, FUST has adjusted its mission to support skills training programs that focus on helping LGBTQI Ugandans find reliable work.

We currently support two training centers which are working with students to gain literacy, math skills, and practical job skills such as carpentry, cosmetology, coding, and tailoring. These centers serve LGBTQI students who reside at the centers and are being financially supported by FUST. There are currently 10 residents plus an additional 30 LGBTQI nonresidents who are receiving limited services. 35 students have already completed their training and are living and working in safer conditions, including 10 who have emigrated and settled with jobs in other countries. Because the centers also serve straight/cisgender students as day students, it helps the programs blend into their communities.

We are maintaining our acronym, which now stands for Friends Ugandan Skills Training.

We are reaching out to you, our past and current FUST donors, urging your continued support for our LGBTQI friends. It is still very dangerous for them and requires that they keep a low profile regarding their sexual and gender orientation. The centers are successful and doing wonderful work. Their work cannot be sustained without the help of FUST donors.

Please help us do what we can to provide safe refuge and skills training for these threatened friends. If you have questions or would like additional information, please visit our website (friendsugandanskillstraining.org) or contact Kathleen O'Shaunessy (kkosha22@gmail.com) 360-943-0489 or Gabi Clayton (gabiclayton@gmail.com) 360-888-5291.

In peace and light.

Warm regards - Gabi Clayton and Kathleen O'Shaunessy

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You can donate to support FUST **using PayPal with your debit or credit card** from our website: <https://friendsugandanskillstraining.org>

You can **send a check** made out to "Olympia Friends Meeting."
Be sure to put "FUST" in the memo line.

Send to:

Olympia Friends Meeting
3201 Boston Harbor Road NE
Olympia, WA 98506-2800

Note: Contributions to Friends Ugandan Skills Training Fund through Olympia Monthly Meeting (Olympia Friends Meeting) are tax-deductible. Olympia Monthly Meeting is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Cash and non-cash contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of applicable law.

Our Employer Identification Number (EIN) is: 94-3145171.

Our registered name is: Olympia Monthly Meeting Of The N Paci Yly Metg Of Religious Soc Frn.