Bega Kwa Bega

AFRICA SCHOOL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

Our School Development Model
Dear Friends,

_Bega kwa bega_ is an old Swahili saying that literally means “shoulder to shoulder” but is really more symbolic of partnership and a spirit of collaboration. Villagers from the remote community of Mbasseny in rural northeast Tanzania first taught my friends and me the meaning of _bega kwa bega_ when we were digging out a hillside together to create a soccer pitch for the first school ASAP had helped fund. They didn’t speak English, and our Swahili was even worse. Despite these barriers, we spent a week working side by side, each contributing what we could and feeling proud of our investment in the project. Together we finished the first three classrooms and soccer pitch at Mbasseny Primary School.

The effect of that first partnership was powerful for all of us, Americans and Africans alike, and the founders of ASAP realized that if our school building model was to be successful then it must be predicated on the concept of _bega kwa bega_.

Since then, we have built community schools for over 1,000 children in rural Tanzania in partnership with local communities. This partnership ensures the schools will be locally owned and sustainable long after we leave the village. Further, our model is scalable and replicable and is being put into use in new areas of Tanzania.

None of this would have been possible without the help of our dedicated funders and over 130 American volunteers. I hope you will stand shoulder to shoulder with ASAP to build more community schools and bring a brighter future to children in rural East Africa.

Susan Bachar
Executive Director
executive summary

“If you want to walk fast, walk alone. If you want to walk far, walk together.”
-- African Proverb

ASAP is building schools for children of underserved, rural communities in East Africa. Why? Because education, more so than any other sector of development, seeds dramatic improvement in poverty reduction, gender parity, health outcomes, child immunization, AIDS prevention, environmental protection and wildlife conservation. Simply put, widely available public education will lead to a prosperous, peaceful and sustainable future for Africa.

For now ASAP has chosen to focus on Tanzania because it struggles with one of the worst education systems in East Africa. Student outcomes are low. Many communities lack schools and, where they do exist, several are only partially built or not functioning. And there is such a severe shortage of secondary schools that two-thirds of Tanzanian students cannot attend. As a result, completion rates from primary school to secondary school plummet and only a lucky few make it to higher education of any kind.

The government of Tanzania is working hard to address the problem but, like most African nations, they simply don’t have the funds to build proper schools in every place they are needed.

Our solution is to systematically develop community schools in rural regions of Tanzania for the purpose of expanding classroom access, improving the quality of learning and providing a safety net for girls who face a dismal future without access to school. Importantly, our school building model is scalable and replicable to maximize our impact in the greatest number of places.
contents

i. education as a means to holistic development 5

ii. the state of education 6
  
  millennium development goals & global education
  
  education in tanzania

iii. asap: who we are & what we do 9

iv. the asap model: expanding access to community schools 10
  
  school selection
  
  forming a partnership
  
  guarantee of local ownership & sustainability
  
  construction

v. the asap model: improving quality at community schools 13
  
  promoting gender parity
  
  improving student health
  
  improving student performance
  
  educational resources
  
  teacher focused initiatives

vi. monitoring and evaluation 15

vii. board of directors 16
i. education as a means to holistic development

“Education is a major driving force for human development. It opens doors to the job market, combats inequality, improves maternal health, reduces child mortality, fosters solidarity, and promotes environmental stewardship. Education empowers people with the knowledge, skills and values they need to build a better world.”

--BAN-KI MOON, SPEAKING ON THE U.N. GLOBAL EDUCATION FIRST INITIATIVE

There are countless avenues for improving the condition of the world’s 1.2 billion people living in absolute poverty. At the Africa School Assistance Project (ASAP), we believe education is the most effective tool for combating poverty and creating a brighter, more peaceful future for the people of East Africa.

Education is a fundamental human right, as stated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26). Education dramatically increases an individual’s earning potential, as each extra year of schooling increases an individual’s earnings by 10%\(^1\). Education also promotes social and gender equality, fights preventable diseases (and related stigmas), encourages environmental sustainability and plays a central role in overall global development.

Further, the benefits of education for girls are indisputable. Girls who receive a secondary education will marry later, tolerate less domestic violence, have fewer children and at an older age and give their children better care, thereby reducing infant mortality rates. Educated mothers immunize their children 50% more than mothers who are not educated. And, AIDS spreads twice as quickly among uneducated girls than among girls with some education.\(^2\)

These outcomes are significant. No other independent initiative is comparable to education in promoting holistic social development. For this reason, ASAP is focused on expanding access to quality education for rural children who currently have little or no access to school.

“In sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 1.8 million children’s lives could have been saved in 2008 if their mothers had at least a secondary education.”

-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)


ii. the state of education

millennium development goals and global education

In 2000, the United Nations Millennium Summit adopted eight international development initiatives known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Currently, 193 United Nations member states and approximately 25 international organizations have committed to these ambitious benchmarks ranging from eradicating extreme poverty and hunger to achieving universal primary education (UPE) - all by 2015. With only one remaining year left to achieve the MDGs there is much work to be done.

Unfortunately, the data show that achieving universal primary education is not probable within the year. More than 57 million children worldwide are denied the right to primary education, half of which will never enter a classroom. 52% (30 million) of the world’s children without access to UPE are in sub-Saharan Africa alone. And, academic outcomes are appalling for those children who do have access to primary education. Many do not obtain foundational skills such as literacy and numeracy, resulting in only 24% of African students matriculating to secondary education.

While much of the development world has focused solely on increasing access to education in recent years, ASAP believes that both access and learning are key to closing the achievement gap in Africa.

“61 million children of primary school age – one in every two (in Africa) - will reach their adolescent years unable to read, write or perform basic numeracy tasks. Perhaps the most shocking, however, is that over half of these children will have spent at least four years in the education system.”

- Brookings Center for Universal Education

education in tanzania

Tanzania is struggling with very poor performance at almost every level of education. This is true even when compared to other East African Community nations and African Low Income Countries (LICs). Not surprisingly, research reveals a direct connection between secondary school education and employment rates. A recent analysis in Tanzania shows a great need in the labor market for those with post-primary education and training, yet Tanzania continues to have one of the lowest secondary school enrollment rates in the world, contributing to low employment and high rates of poverty (68% of Tanzanians live below the international poverty line of $1.25 a day).

primary education in tanzania

Since 1997, the United Republic of Tanzania has made significant progress toward achieving universal primary education. The nation currently has a 93% enrollment rate in primary education. In fact, Tanzania will likely become one of the few African nations to achieve the MDG goal of universal primary education by 2015. Unfortunately these statistics are misleading. Many schools are only partially built and are not functioning. And, the government has been able to do little to improve the

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quality of education and infrastructure for the additional students. Inadequate numbers of teachers struggle to perform in crowded classrooms, sometimes with 200 or more children. Teachers and students must make due with four or more children to a desk, insufficient books and learning materials, and unfinished classrooms that expose students to the elements.

"UNESCO statisticians have developed a new education indicator, the "effective transition rate," which estimates the likelihood of a student moving to a higher level of education. While some of the world’s lowest transition rates are found in sub-Saharan Africa, the situation varies dramatically between countries: 98% of students transition to secondary school in the Seychelles, but only 44% in Nigeria and just 36% in Tanzania."  

secondary education in tanzania

Most African children are effectively precluded from attending secondary school and those living in Tanzania are no exception. In fact, two-thirds of Tanzanian children have no access to secondary school. There are many reasons for this but the biggest is a chronic shortage of secondary schools, and those that do exist are short of materials and are ill-equipped to teach the national curriculum. As a result, Tanzania is plagued by poor secondary school attendance and low completion rates.

This dramatic chart clearly shows a precipitous drop from primary school attendance (115.4%) to upper secondary school attendance (3.6%). As a result, only a select few Tanzanians make it to higher education. Fortunately, the Tanzanian government is trying to rectify the problem and in 2008 made secondary school education compulsory for any primary school student who passed his or her final exams. While the law is laudable in its intent, this was a sudden decision for which Tanzania’s education infrastructure was not prepared. An unacceptable number of communities still lack schools because the government doesn’t have enough money to build all that are needed.

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girl's education in tanzania
As in many countries throughout the developing world, girls in Tanzania are disproportionately affected by the lack of access to higher education. Conventional wisdom is that a dismal 5% of girls in Tanzania who begin secondary school actually graduate. Why? Girls in Tanzania often walk great distances to attend school. Many girls are raped on their long walks, become pregnant and are forced to drop out of school. And, while girls have equal access to education under the law, traditional culture often makes it very hard for teenage girls to complete their education. Marriage at a young age also contributes to high dropout rates of girls in Tanzania.

Despite these obstacles, many girls in Tanzania are determined to achieve a secondary school education. In growing numbers, girls are moving away from their villages into urban accommodations known as “ghettos,” where hundreds of girls rent mud huts so they can live in close proximity to a school. These mud huts have no electricity and no water, and the girls living in them have no protection. Girls living in these ghettos are often victims of attack and rape. Though girls tolerate life in a ghetto because it offers them a chance at an education, dropout rates among students living in these ghettos are staggeringly high.¹¹

iii. asap: who we are & what we do

The Africa School Assistance Project (ASAP) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) status organization based in Denver, Colorado, USA that builds community schools in partnership with rural Tanzanian communities.

mission

The Africa School Assistance Project (ASAP) believes that increasing access to education and improving the quality of learning, especially for girls, is fundamental to a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable future for Africa.

From the beginning, ASAP has worked deliberately to create a replicable education development model that is efficient, effective and culturally appropriate. Through collaboration with organizational partners and African communities, ASAP systematically develops holistic schools in rural regions of Tanzania for the purpose of expanding classroom access, improving the quality of education and providing a safe haven for girls to pursue their studies, offering them a chance at quality secondary level education and healthy, economically prosperous lives. ASAP builds schools with a high priority put on community ownership and project sustainability.

To date, ASAP has completed the development of schools that currently serve +1,000 children in Tanzania. In 2014 ASAP will continue building schools and will pilot simple but important ways to improve the overall quality of learning in the classrooms. ASAP’s goal is to continue expanding access to education and improving learning for children in Tanzania and ultimately throughout East Africa.

In addition to its school building initiatives, ASAP leads groups of volunteers to Africa each June to lend a hand in the school construction process. This allows donors to see the tangible effect of their contributions and to experience the incredible culture and sights of East Africa while putting “sweat equity” into the schools. ASAP believes this concept of bega kwa bega (Swahili for “shoulder to shoulder”) is valuable both for personal development and global perspective and discourse. Trips are fully funded by the volunteers.

ASAP is also committed to providing a volunteer experience that promotes appreciation and conservation of Tanzanian culture. We strive to ensure that all aspects of our work conform to responsible tourism practices that promote environmentally sound, sustainable local development.

“The positive impact ASAP has had on the children and our entire community has been enormous. Working side by side with us ASAP has helped bring hope and a brighter future to Mbaaseny.”

- Maganga Lorry,
  Headmaster Mbaaseny Primary School
iv. the asap model:
expanding access to community schools

ASAP funds the development of community schools in rural Tanzania through a partnership with local communities for the purpose of expanding access to quality education. Our projects are scalable and replicable. Above all, ASAP demands local ownership of the schools in order to respect local culture and ensure sustainability of the schools. The following section of this report briefly describes the process through which we select schools; form partnerships with the local community and government; guarantee local buy-in, ownership and sustainability, and; manage the construction of the schools.

school selection
ASAP pursues partnerships by identifying communities that meet specific standards of need and demonstrate a commitment to a school. ASAP also accepts applications through its website.

Projects are chosen according to specific criteria, some of which are: number and quality of schools in the ward (both primary and secondary), number of students without adequate access to education in the area, specific infrastructural needs of the school, level of a community’s commitment to address their educational needs, and the community’s willingness to partner and contribute to ASAP projects.

An integral part of ASAP’s development model is to focus on the development of schools throughout a particular ward or region. The idea is to raise the standard of education -- pre-primary through secondary level -- for an entire community, thereby having a more comprehensive impact on the future standard of living of the area. For this reason, it is critical for ASAP to analyze the structure of the entire ward of the applicant school in order to determine comprehensive need and potential impact.

Need is great in most rural communities and therefore one of ASAP’s greatest challenges is to determine which projects meet our rigorous standards and will have the greatest impact on overall education quality. ASAP conducts a thorough initial application process and then, if basic benchmarks are met, additional criteria of the project are reviewed and partnership expectations are discussed. Only then is the project considered as a finalist for ASAP engagement.

*A copy of our preliminary application can be found on our website for those interested in browsing specific selection criteria more closely.

forming a partnership
Prior to beginning any project, ASAP forms a partnership with the local community and appropriate branches of local government for the purpose of setting forth expectations regarding collaboration and contributions to the school. This is possibly the most important part of the ASAP model as it is the central reason for the sustainability of our projects. Contrary to traditional aid models, ASAP views its role as helping Africans to build their schools. By creating a relationship of partnership, rather than one of “donor-recipient,” we ensure that both sides feel equally invested in the long-term success of the school.

school/community partnership
ASAP staff hold extensive meetings with the school’s headmaster, staff, school board and relevant community leaders to thoroughly understand the infrastructure needs of the school and the ways that each side can (and will) contribute to the build out of the facilities. Further, discussions are had regarding ways to improve the quality of learning at the school and student
outcomes. Once each side is satisfied with the arrangements for (and expectations of) a collaboration, ASAP and the school leaders sign a Letter of Intent to Partner.

government partnership
ASAP staff hold meetings with district and regional government bodies for all parties to become acquainted and to discuss and agree upon terms for a partnership between ASAP and the Tanzanian government. Often these meetings include Members of Parliament, the District and Regional Commissioners, the District Engineer, the District Executive Officer and applicable members of the District Education Office. When all parties have agreed to acceptable terms, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is signed between the District Executive Office and Africa School Assistance Project.

While each MOU is case-specific, the minimum requirement is that the Tanzanian government contribute to the school in all ways it is already legally bound to. For instance, Tanzanian education policy states that if a community has funded the construction of classrooms or other school buildings then the government will provide funds for the roofs of these structures. A number of policies such as this exist, but are often not fully implemented, if at all. The ASAP MOU holds the government accountable for these guarantees. This process provides a solid framework for partnership and cooperation between ASAP and the regional government and helps to assure government accountability.

guarantee of local ownership & sustainability
ASAP believes that a project must be necessary, appropriate and 100% owned by the community if it is to be sustainable. To this end, it is imperative that a platform be created and maintained so that the community (as well as ASAP) may have their opinions, concerns and desires heard during the development of all projects. Further, it is also important that certain measures be taken to govern the projects to create oversight, local ownership and prevent corruption. When projects are completed with this cooperative and transparent system of governance, the community understands they have retained control and ownership, resulting in greater likelihood of long-term sustainability.

community open forum
With a Letter of Intent to Partner with the community and an MOU with the District Executive Office in place, ASAP then calls for a community-wide meeting. All community members within the school’s immediate village/ward are invited to an open forum where ASAP staff is introduced to the community and the intent of the partnership is explained. This meeting serves to clarify for the community what is expected of them and what should be expected of ASAP. The meeting is designed to promote an open dialogue and a chance for the community to express their thoughts and concerns. If terms are agreeable to all parties, a formal Agreement of Partnership will be signed by the ASAP Project Director and representatives of the school board and local community. A schedule will also be set for future community forums to be held so that individuals have a platform to be heard throughout the project.

governance & formation of multilateral committees
Planning for the formation of oversight committees takes place during the community open forums. ASAP requires each school project have a School Board (consisting of school staff) and a Building Development Committee (consisting of community members from all villages/communities directly impacted by the project, the headmaster and ASAP’s Project Director). The headmaster is the only person to sit on both committees in order to act as the liaison between the two. These committees serve to represent the interests of all parties
involved in the development project and create a system of “checks and balances.” The committees also serve to assist with project planning, conflict and dispute resolution, community investment, and to help retain project appropriateness and community ownership.

**community investment**
In East Africa it is common practice for a community that has little or no financial resources to contribute “in-kind” to large projects. These contributions vary based on project location and availability of local materials. Examples of past in-kind contributions include land (this is mandatory), locally made bricks, white, black and red sand, and stones of all sizes. In addition, community members often volunteer on-site for large excavation or other manual labor projects.

**construction**
Construction is only ready to begin after partnership agreements are in place, community meetings are held and committee formation is complete. At this point, ASAP and the Building Development Committee identify and hire contractors, purchase materials and oversee all construction.

Construction is done in stages, with the next phase beginning only after successful completion of the prior phase and only after careful review of the finances associated with it. Africa is riddled with partially completed buildings and other construction projects. ASAP is careful to move construction along at the appropriate pace to assure completion of each project.

The government engineer and his staff visit the project site throughout the process to assess construction quality and to ensure that the projects are implemented according to Tanzanian regulations.

**local materials and labor**
All ASAP projects are locally staffed and provisioned. All materials are purchased from local suppliers and whenever possible contractors and laborers are hired from the project’s community. This helps to drive the local economy and increase community ownership.
Improving access to education is only half of the battle in East Africa, particularly Tanzania. In order for Tanzania to make significant improvements in education it is imperative that school development include an emphasis on quality of learning.

ASAP develops community schools that are required to follow the national curriculum however there are modest things that can be done to enhance student learning and positively influence student outcomes. In 2014, ASAP will research and pilot a Learning Improvement Initiative to address core deficits at our schools. This Learning Improvement Initiative will seek to: 1) provide girls the extra support they need to be successful in secondary school; 2) implement basic health & wellness initiatives, including improved hygiene; 3) support early childhood education and other ways to improve long-term student outcomes; 4) ensure schools have adequate educational resources, and; 5) ensure schools are provided with the proper number of trained teachers as required by Tanzanian law.

promoting gender parity
Every child deserves equal opportunity, especially when it comes to education. Gender disparity in education remains a significant challenge worldwide, but most notably in sub-Saharan Africa. Most often young female students are left behind when it comes to access to education, despite proof that girls’ education is one of the most cost-effective strategies to promote development and economic growth. This is also true in Tanzania, where a dismal 5% of girls who enter secondary school end up graduating.

In 2014, ASAP will be developing the first phase of a girl’s dormitory that will ultimately provide 144 girls with safe housing, study space, electricity, sanitary facilities and nutrition so they have the chance to complete a secondary school education.

improving student health
The idea is simple. Sick and malnourished children are unable to learn and perform as well as those that are healthy and well fed. Tropical diseases, contaminated water, parasites, malnutrition, and poor sanitation are just some of the health issues that negatively impact academic attendance and performance. ASAP believes that promoting a healthy school environment will lead to healthier students and therefore improved learning. We will implement the following programs in partnership with community schools.

access to clean, potable water
ASAP has always constructed sustainable, long-term water systems at its schools. In 2014, rainwater catchment and borehole groundwater systems will be combined with a water purification program that can be used for cooking and drinking purposes. Students will not be deprived of clean drinking water while at school.

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improved sanitation
Throughout much of the world and East Africa in particular, inadequate sanitation leads to myriad illnesses and communicable diseases. In an effort to minimize this, ASAP constructs toilet facilities that ensure clean and appropriate disposal of human waste and will begin constructing hand-washing stations as part of the Clean Toilet Facility design. Information and instruction pertaining to proper sanitary practice and hygiene will be provided to each school and permanent information will be posted to each hand-washing and toilet facility.

improved nutrition
ASAP will strive to provide all students with a consistent and reliable school lunch program. In partnership with local community leaders and third party providers, ASAP will work to design sustainable animal husbandry and farming techniques combined with community food contribution programs to provide a nutritious lunch program for students.

improving student performance
early childhood education
Early education programs have been proven to improve cognitive development and overall school readiness and to decrease repetition and dropout rates in the early grades, leading to higher primary completion rates. In Tanzania, the average pre-primary school enrollment rate is a mere 36.7%. For these reasons, ASAP will continue building pre-primary classrooms so that children have access to education from their earliest and most formative years.

foundations program
Many children are left behind academically when they are advanced to the next grade level without obtaining the skills required to advance. To assist students who have not gained the necessary skills and knowledge commensurate with their academic level ASAP will begin the research and design of a program that will allow students to relearn foundational material outside of regular class time and avoid repeating an academic year.

educational resources
It is widely accepted that very little learning can occur when a school lacks educational resources. The school may have good facilities and teachers, but if students have no access to textbooks, desks, adequate writing utensils or math and science materials they cannot be successful.

In Tanzania it is common to find 4 or 5 students sharing a desk and a single textbook. Officially the average textbook to pupil ratio is 5:1, but in many areas textbooks, desks and other resources are nowhere to be found.

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ASAP endeavors to supply every partner school with desks, textbooks and other basic resources to ensure that every teacher and student has necessary materials. In secondary schools and select primary schools ASAP also may furnish libraries, science laboratories (physics, biology and chemistry) and computers with Internet capability. Schools needing electricity are equipped with solar power through a partnership with Sun Partners International.

**teacher focused initiatives**

Tanzania has a severe shortage of trained teachers. To compensate for this, untrained volunteers are often found teaching in the classroom. While these volunteers provide needed manpower, the quality of education is frequently poor and students are unintentionally taught inaccurate information. ASAP helps to ensure that trained teachers are supplied to its schools in accordance with the government’s responsibility to supply them. Additionally, ASAP will begin the research and design of a teacher improvement/incentive program.

**vi. monitoring & evaluation**

ASAP strongly believes that in order to be an effective organization it must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of its programs. ASAP is in the process of designing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation program that will provide valuable information so that organizationally and programmatically we can continue to evolve into a more effective organization.
## 2014 board of directors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position and Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Akerson</td>
<td>Professor, University of Denver Sturm College of Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Bachar</td>
<td>Partner, Ireland Stapleton Pryor &amp; Pascoe PC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Dolan</td>
<td>Retired Partner, Resource Capital Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Eddy</td>
<td>Owner, Mark Eddy Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Ganz</td>
<td>Vice President, Public Affairs, Vail Resorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise Goldin-Dubois</td>
<td>Teacher/Educator, Cherry Creek Schools,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erika Hollis</td>
<td>Vice President &amp; General Counsel, Regis University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Madden (ex officio)</td>
<td>Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Charles Musiba</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Anthropology, University of CO, Denver</td>
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### Advisory Board:

- Pete Boukouzis
- Beth Conover
- Regina Drexler
- Anne Hanson
- Aimee Kinning
- Richard Rainaldi
- Martha Records
- Rob Roberts
- Kim Roberts
- Mike Stratton
- Sara Stratton
- Chris Watney