



*Supporting Girls' Education in Africa*

## AfricAid's Long-Range Vision: An Overview

### *Mission*

AfricAid is a nonprofit organization that supports girls' education in Africa in order to provide young women with the opportunity to transform their own lives and the futures of their communities.

### *Vision*

AfricAid envisions a future in which all African girls have access to high-quality educational opportunities that empower them to identify needs in their own communities and take action to address them.

This vision can be summarized in four actionable components:

1. Provide educational opportunities for girls who might not otherwise be able to attend school
2. Enhance both the quality of education offered to girls in the classroom and its applicability to post-educational career and life opportunities
3. Create opportunities for personal growth outside the classroom for young women, particularly through community-based service and leadership initiatives
4. Encourage young women to continue to engage with their own communities and mentor the next generation of young girls

Moving forward, AfricAid will continue to support and expand its existing programs that meet one of these four core criteria, and will work to implement new programs that address these needs.

### *Rationale*

AfricAid's origins date back to 1996, when its founder, Ashley Shuyler, traveled to Tanzania with her family at the age of 11 and saw first-hand the enormous educational needs that exist there. Determined to find a way to help, she formed AfricAid, which gained its nonprofit status in 2001, and which has since raised over \$600,000 in its efforts to help support the educational needs of girls in Africa.

Since 2001, AfricAid has provided educational opportunities for thousands of students in nine schools across northern Tanzania. Specifically, AfricAid has provided over 200 secondary



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school scholarships, built classrooms at three overcrowded schools, started a school lunch program, provided computers for vocational training, and supplied over \$100,000-worth of textbooks, school supplies, and other classroom materials to needy Tanzanian schools. Most recently, AfricAid has expanded its reach to establish an innovative, countrywide teacher training initiative that will drastically improve the quality of teaching in Tanzanian classrooms over the course of the next five years.

In recent years, AfricAid representatives, including AfricAid founder Ashley Shuyler, have spent an extensive amount of time teaching, working, and doing research in Tanzania. As a result of these cumulative experiences, AfricAid's vision has evolved in recent years. Specifically, AfricAid now believes that it can achieve even more in Tanzania by supporting innovative educational initiatives that seek to enhance and improve upon what is offered – or not offered – by the country's formal education system.

AfricAid understands that there is still a considerable, and basic, need for the provision of educational opportunities for young women who otherwise wouldn't have the chance to attend school. The benefits associated with the education of girls are great. An increasing body of research shows that, when a girl receives an education, she is more likely to marry later, have fewer children, and invest the increased income she earns into her children's health and education. However, as the Tanzanian government continues to build primary and secondary classrooms across Tanzania, and more girls are thus given the chance to go to school, AfricAid believes that it can make an even greater contribution by offering opportunities for meaningful learning outside of the classroom. Indeed, the research of AfricAid representatives has indicated that there is a gap between what a girl learns in school, and the applicability of that knowledge upon graduation; often, young women leave their secondary school years unequipped with the necessary tools to become self-reliant, or to address needs in their own communities. AfricAid has therefore determined to focus much of its future efforts on providing girls with the educational experiences they need in order to not only become self-sufficient, but to become the next generation of leaders in their communities and nation.

### *Program Overview*

In order to achieve its vision, AfricAid plans to focus its primary energies and efforts on the following programs in the future.

#### *Teaching in Action*

Teaching in Action (TIA) is a one-week long teacher training seminar that takes place each June at Mwenge University College of Education in Moshi, Tanzania. Created by University of Minnesota Professor, Dr. Fran Vavrus, TIA is designed to help teachers move away from rote instruction and to increase the use of student-centered teaching techniques in Tanzania schools.



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Since 2007, secondary-level teachers from across Tanzania have participated in the annual workshop in the effort to improve the quality of instruction in their own classrooms. During each day of the workshop, the teachers work through specific case studies, which are designed to help them understand how to use active, participatory techniques in their lessons, even in the face of the great challenges presented by overcrowded and resource-deficient Tanzanian classrooms. As such, these case studies include the utilization of these techniques when teaching large numbers of students, when teaching without teaching and learning materials, and when teaching students of mixed abilities and genders. During the workshop, teachers also have the opportunity to prepare model portfolios to share with their colleagues in their home schools.

In 2009, an evaluation was conducted of the two initial pilot years of the TIA program. The evaluation confirmed that the TIA workshop is effectively helping teachers to move away from rote methods of instruction, and it indicated that greater opportunities for sharing these techniques are needed in schools across Tanzania. AfricAid will therefore continue its support of this important educational initiative, which is effectively improving the quality of education offered to thousands of students in classrooms across the country. Ultimately, it is expected that the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology in Tanzania will invest in its continuation, allowing the program to be carried out at other teacher colleges and universities across the country.

### *Assistant Medical Officer Program and other Tertiary-Level Scholarships*

As part of AfricAid's vision to empower young women to engage with their own communities, AfricAid will continue to provide scholarships that give young women the tools they need to return to their communities and effectively address the needs that exist there.

The Assistant Medical Officer (AMO) Program is one such program that will equip young women to address the growing health needs in their communities. AMOs are paraprofessionals with much the same rights and responsibilities as medical doctors. After completing a two-year training program, AMOs can see and diagnose patients, prescribe and perform more routine surgical procedures, and address medical problems that have established protocols such as gynecological issues, internal medicine problems, malaria and other tropical diseases, and AIDS. Moreover, because they are not full-fledged medical doctors, AMOs are much more likely to be willing to return to and practice medicine in the rural areas from which many of them come, and that are in the most need of medical care. AfricAid will partner with Selian Hospital in Arusha, Tanzania in order to support the establishment of an AMO program there. Furthermore, AfricAid will provide program funding that will help enable young women to undertake and complete AMO training. It is AfricAid's hope that many of these young women will have originally come from rural Maasai villages and been educated at AfricAid-supported schools, such as the Maasae Girls' Lutheran Secondary School.



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Additionally, AfricAid will continue to provide scholarships for girls to attend teacher training colleges, when the organization has the funds with which to do so. AfricAid believes that it is essential that girls be given the concrete tools they need to return to their home communities and mentor other young women there. Teaching provides an excellent opportunity for girls to do just that; AfricAid will therefore continue to provide scholarships at the teacher training level for those young women who demonstrate a commitment to living and working within their home communities.

### *Muungano Vocational Secondary School*

In order to enhance the quality of education offered in the classroom, AfricAid will also continue its support of Muungano Vocational Secondary School in Usa River, Tanzania. Muungano is designed to train students in practical skills that will help qualify them for jobs that are critical to the Tanzanian economy, or enable them to start their own small businesses. The vocational skills that Muungano plans to offer in the future include: computer training, business management, tailoring, carpentry, agriculture, and mechanics. Such vocational training is essential in a country where unemployment levels can reach 40 percent and will give students the practical tools necessary to become self-sufficient in their home communities.

AfricAid will work with Muungano to establish its first two workshops and will continue to assist the school as it expands to include future workshops. Ultimately, it is expected that the school will be able to cover its own ongoing costs through tuition fees.

### *Losinoni School Lunch Program*

Losinoni Primary School is located in a rural Maasai village by the same name, not far from the Kenya-Tanzania border. AfricAid has assisted the school in many ways, including the construction and rehabilitation of several classrooms, the construction of latrines, the implementation of a solar power project, and the creation of a school lunch program.

In the future, AfricAid will continue to provide support for the school lunch program at Losinoni Primary School. This innovative micro-finance project was designed by Nina Shuyler when the mothers of the students at Losinoni approached AfricAid to ask for assistance in providing their students with a school lunch. The mothers now make beaded jewelry, which is sold by AfricAid youth groups across the United States, with all of the profits used to provide a school lunch for students at the school. Dozens of American students have now participated in the program and have found it to be a meaningful way to make a difference in the lives of Tanzanian students.

AfricAid will continue to support this program moving forward because it increases the quality of education at Losinoni Primary School in a dramatic way: since the start of the program, daily attendance rates at the school have increased by 30%, and the teachers now report that the



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students can focus while in the classroom.

### *The Jamii Leadership Project*

In order to achieve its vision, AfricAid will also implement a new program, The *Jamii* Leadership Project, which will create educational opportunities for young African woman and will empower them to become leaders and mentors in their own communities. Through this initiative, AfricAid will provide school scholarships to some of Africa's brightest young women – girls who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to continue their education. Believing that students need more than a classroom education in order to learn critical leadership skills, AfricAid will provide leadership training in the form of workshops, mentorship, and outdoor experiential education to these young women. Upon graduation at the end of this two year experience, the AfricAid scholars will be prepared to return to their home community for a six month period and, in partnership with their own mothers, provide mentorship to young girls in the areas of goal-setting, decision-making, communication and the formation of healthy relationships. Ultimately, it is envisioned that these scholars – and the girls they mentor – will be the next generation of leaders in their own communities, and in their nation's businesses, organizations, and political institutions. In this way, one school scholarship provided through The *Jamii* Leadership Project will have an exponential multiplier effect.

Additionally, The *Jamii* Leadership Project will give families and individuals around the world the opportunity to engage meaningfully across borders. By way of a dynamic, web-based platform, individuals in Africa and families in the United States will be connected in order to learn from one another, and in order to provide the mutual inspiration needed to strengthen community and family ties. As both partners share their challenges and joys of their life stories with one another, they will grow closer to one another and undertake the meaningful experience of working together to enrich their communities – both local and global in nature.

In this way, The *Jamii* Leadership project will help AfricAid to achieve its vision by offering young women in Tanzania the educational experiences they need to return to their home communities and become effective leaders and mentors of other young women there.

### *Conclusion*

As AfricAid continues to grow, it looks forward to supporting girls' education in Africa in ways that will have broad-based impact for the next generation of African women, and the communities to which they belong.



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With the above strategy in mind, AfricAid believes that, one day, its vision will be achieved: a future in which all African girls have access to high-quality educational opportunities that empower them to identify needs in their own communities and take action to address them.