

NEWSLETTER

April 2021 | Spring



VEGA EDUCATION FUND



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WHAT WE DO

While education is free in many African countries, high schools are typically built only in large cities, which means children from poor farming villages are not able to continue their education past grade 8. Boarding schools are available for those who can pay, but this is far beyond the grasp of families who are already struggling to feed their children. Vega Education's founders have lived and worked in Tanzania and learned that while a lot of good work is being done, educating a student is among the most transformational things you can do. Without a high school education it is impossible to get a good job. In Tanzania, family culture is strong and one person with a good job can set an entire family – sometimes an entire village - on a better path. Vega Education Fund provides high school scholarships to promising youth in Africa who are struggling to stay in school due to poverty.



Ready to learn!



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

With our first year now behind us, and finding ourselves well into our second year, it is time to look back and take stock of the difference we are making for kids in Tanzania. In 2020, eight students completed their first high school year and are now able to speak English, the language of opportunity in Tanzania and around the world. They attended their classes every day in quality uniforms, gym clothes and running shoes, just like all the other kids. They were provided extra tutoring to bring them up to speed in English and other subjects as they needed it. After three more years, they will be able to go to college, apprentice to learn a trade, or complete two additional years school for university preparation if they choose to pursue that path. They will have OPTIONS. In Canada we take for granted the options we have simply because we live here. In Tanzania, the large majority of the population subsists. Subsisting means trying to keep the family alive – it's about survival. It cannot be compared to living on a low income in Canada with government health coverage and post-secondary education subsidies. Most of us do not know what it is like to not have options.

Vega Education Fund is grateful to be partnering with Canadians like you who are not content with the inequities we see in the world. Now in our second year, we have 25 students in high school who would otherwise be trapped in a cycle of subsistence. Their world has opened up wide, complete with a new set of options that will transform their future and those of their families and communities. Thank you supporting these students. We hope you will find the stories and updates in this first quarterly newsletter informing and inspiring.

Sincerely,

Leah Katerberg

Leah Katerberg
President



Leah Katerberg

OUR VISION AND MISSION

Our vision: A quality educational system that is fully accessible to all, regardless of income level or location.

Our mission: To provide opportunities for quality secondary education to academically promising, disadvantaged students in developing countries, beginning with Tanzania.

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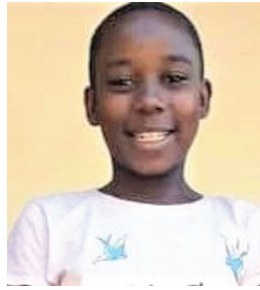
2021 IN NUMBERS

25 students in high school,
56% girls, 44% boys



Year 1 students in Mwanza - new uniform, new shoes!

MEET TWO OF OUR NEW STUDENTS: RIZIKI AND EMANUEL



RIZIKI

When Riziki's mother died, her father abandoned her, leaving her alone in the village with her younger siblings. An older lady gave them a room in her hut but had little to feed them. Eventually social welfare was alerted and Riziki, then age 11, was brought to KidzCare, a children's home that Vega Education partners with. Although she had not attended school regularly, she worked very hard to catch up while attending primary school at KidzCare. Now sponsored to attend her first year of high school through Vega Education, the high school is already very pleased with Riziki's progress. Riziki is a sweet girl who is very grateful for her opportunity, and we are confident she will do well in her studies.



EMANUEL

Emanuel has lived at the KidzCare children's home for a number of years, and completed elementary school last year. Prior to coming to KidzCare, he had been living with his grandmother as both his parents had died when he was young. His grandmother was struggling to support him and his siblings, as they lived in a very poor village and she had little means to provide for the children. Emanuel has always been a very hard worker at school and helpful in the home. KidzCare is happy that he has been sponsored to attend a quality high school through Vega Education, and is confident he will do well in his studies. Even though he had a difficult start in life, Emanuel now has a bright future!

A NOTE OF THANKS FROM YEAR 2 STUDENTS



AMILI

Amili is an orphan being raised by his aunt, who makes a meager income as a street vendor. This is his second year of sponsorship through Vega Education, and he is excelling in biology, reading and writing. Here is what he has to say:

"I have enjoyed my first year at school as you have been taking care of me here at school and home. May God bless you for your heart of giving and helping me in my studies. I ask you to proceed supporting me until I finish my studies. I also ask you to support other students who cannot afford to accommodate the school fees like us, as they will be so happy as we are. Also, they will thank you as we are doing and praying for you."



MARY

Mary's father died a few years ago, and then her mother abandoned her and her siblings. She is being raised by her mother's sister who works as a seasonal farm labourer. Mary was among the first group of students sponsored through Vega Education in 2020. Now in her second year, her favourite subject is math. Here is a note from Mary:

"I have enjoyed my first year because our teachers are teaching very well and we understand. I also would like to thank my sponsors for supporting me with all the requirements, including food. I have plenty of time to study due to the good school environment. I would like to thank my sponsors for their compassionate heart. May God bless the work of your hands and increase your life. I promise to study hard this new term. I pray that God will bless you all for your great support you gave me and my friends."

OUR VISION FOR A STRONGER EDUCATION SYSTEM



JUDITH LYANDER,
board member

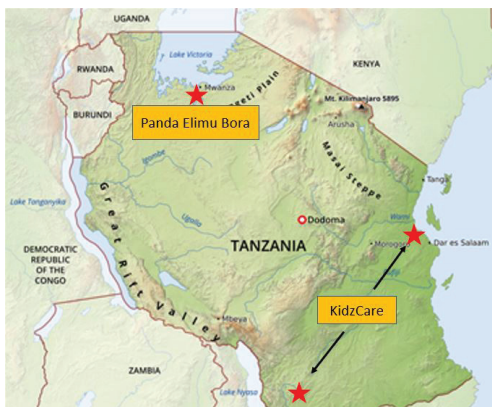
While Vega Education currently focuses on improving the lives of the students we sponsor, we have a grander vision that we will grow into. In the future, we plan to partner with governments to boost their primary and secondary educational system through training programs for teachers, curriculum strengthening, a teacher exchange program, better trade school and apprenticeship options, and post-secondary loans for students who would like to continue their education.

One of our board members, Judith Lyander, a retired Ontario high school teacher and school board administrator, left her career early to get a PhD in

Education so that she could make a difference in Tanzania, the country where she was born. We will build on the progress and connections she has already made within Tanzania and aim to establish partnerships with the Tanzanian Ministry of Education, Global Affairs Canada, and foundations/civil society who are passionate about education, so that we can 'move the needle' on the entire education system in Tanzania. This will result in a significant scaling up of our impact over time, creating a brighter future for many more students and making a lasting change within the country.

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

Vega Education Fund partners with two on-the-ground charitable organizations in Tanzania, who have experience working with kids and are passionate about education. This allows us to sponsor students from three locations within the country (see map).



KidzCare provides a home for orphaned, abused or neglected children, giving them the chance to grow up in a happy, safe and secure home environment. They also prioritize education for these children, to give them a future. Since its early beginnings of teaching children under the trees in the villages, KidzCare has grown to having four Early Childhood Education centres with 300 children and two Primary Schools with 350 children enrolled. As they do not engage in high school education, our partnership with them is a perfect fit: we sponsor some of their most promising students to receive a quality secondary education, taking the baton, as it were, once these students complete grade 8.



Panda Elimu Bora

Vega Education's founders, Leah and Tim Katerberg, helped to start Panda Elimu Bora (which means, in Swahili, "Stepping Up into Better Education") when they were living in Tanzania a few years ago. It was clear to them that education is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty, but there were no organizations in the part of the country where they lived that were well-suited to start working in this area. Panda Elimu Bora now has its official charitable status in Tanzania and is run by dedicated and compassionate Tanzanian friends living in Mwanza. Given the current global movement to 'decolonize' charitable work in developing countries, we are so thankful to have Panda Elimu Bora running the day-to-day work, including screening prospective students from villages, selecting quality high schools, and working with schools to ensure the students have everything they need and are working hard to succeed.

*"If you are planning for a year, sow rice;
if you are planning for a decade, plant
trees; if you are planning for a lifetime,
educate people."
– Chinese Proverb-*

*"Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world."
– Nelson Mandela*