

# NEWSLETTER

July 2021 | Summer



## VEGA EDUCATION FUND



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## MEET SOPHIE

Sofie came to KidzCare's preschool when she was just 4 years old. Her single mom was desperately poor, living with her in a grass hut and eking out an existence by planting food around the hut. From those early years, Sophie showed promise and worked diligently in school. She was top of her class in grade 8, which led to her acceptance in a very competitive high school, which she attends through a Vega Education sponsorship. She is now in her second year there and continuing to do well in school. KidzCare thanks Vega Education for prioritizing the future of girls in Tanzania. Vega continues to ensure that at least 50% of our students are girls.



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The world is truly a smaller place than we think.

Over the past year and a half, not being able to travel to Tanzania, the bond I have with this country and the friends I have there has grown only stronger. Social movements over the past months have made me value even more the meaningful relationships Vega Education has with our Tanzanian partners. They are more than partners – they are friends, and truly incredible individuals. You will read about one of them, John Simba, in this newsletter. Our family met John while living in Tanzania and he quickly became our friend. He is probably the kindest-hearted person I know (and I know a few). He's the mentor-type – as soon as you meet him, you can see in his eyes that he has a lot to offer you, that he knows something about love and peace and compassion that you need to learn. And you learn by watching, and then by doing. I am so grateful to have people like John in my life, as well as Joyce, Makala, Mary and Rob – the people who run our partner NGOs in Tanzania.

It is because of these people that we are able to make a difference in the lives of 25 kids 13,000 km away, even while homebound in Canada. Most of these children I have not yet met. Maybe you will meet some of them one day (post-covid travel rebound, anyone?). So, while the 'big word' from last quarterly newsletter was *options*, this newsletter's word is *relationships*. Because of our relationships, the world has become smaller. We need more of these – we need a smaller, tighter world.

Sincerely,

*Leah Katerberg*

Leah Katerberg  
President



“ An investment in knowledge pays the best interest  
– Benjamin Franklin - ”



Mwanza, Tanzania ('Rock City')

# 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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**Number of sponsors: 20**  
**Number of students: 25**



**A few Vega students saying hello**

# PHILANTHROPIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

John was born a twin in the early 1950s at a time when his tribe held to the ancient belief that twins bring bad luck. When his mother delivered the twin boys, they were immediately taken to a mountain top and left there to die. A local catholic priest was made aware and organized a search party to find the boys. By the time they located them, only one boy had survived: John. The nuns took John to their convent and nursed him back to health.

John began to put into practice his passion for philanthropy shortly after getting married. Together with his wife, he opened a non-profit kindergarten for children from poor families. They funded this school themselves, and also raised donations from neighbours and local businesses. After retiring from the army, John and his wife began to work with street children and poor adults in Mwanza. At first, they would carry tea and bread on their heads to the streets to feed children roaming around in search



**John Simba, President, Panda Elimu Bora ("Stepping Up into Better Education"), one of Vega Education's partner charities in Tanzania**

of food. "Sometimes we would get up to 40 kids waiting for us," John explains. Over time he was able to recruit more donors and supporters for this initiative and the operation has expanded significantly. "I even get to deliver food by car now," he says. In addition to managing Panda Elimu Bora, Vega's partner charity in Mwanza, Tanzania, John spends his retirement by feeding people on the street and collecting donated clothes, blankets and toiletries for the leprous camp outside the city.

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*"It always breaks my heart to see children not attending school because of financial barriers," he says. When asked why serving others is so important to him, John responded, "I was left to die on the top of a mountain, but I survived because others stepped in. Therefore, I believe my life has to be a blessing to others."*

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## MEET BERTHA



Bertha is the third-born in a family of five. Her father is a fisherman and her mother bakes buns and sells them at the local marketplace. When Bertha is home for the holidays, she likes to help her parents with their work. She says, "I want to give them a break from their work, so they have time to rest and to pray for me and my siblings, that we would have a good future." Bertha has a clear goal: she wants to be an accountant, her favourite subject being math. When she's not studying, Bertha enjoys playing soccer and singing in the school choir.

## MEET ERAMBIKA



Erambika comes from a farming village, where both of his parents work on their small plot. They cultivate various crops and sell them in the market to cover the family's basic needs: food, clothing and shelter. A good high school education for the children, and a future beyond that is way beyond the grasp of Erambika's family. "I like reading all kinds of books, especially biology," he says. "Some day, I want to be a doctor." In his free time, Erambika likes to play soccer, volleyball, and ping pong.



# VEGA'S FIRST SPONSORED STUDENT NOW IN MEDICAL SCHOOL

Busanya is a third-year medical student at Bugando University in Mwanza, Tanzania. He is in the top half of his class and has always dreamed of being a doctor.

Busanya's father left the family when he was young and his mother managed to sell fruit at the village roadside to provide what little she could for him and his sister. Despite his meagre living conditions, Busanya worked hard at school and had the grades to show it. We first met him when he was 11 years old and learned that his life-long dream was to one day become a doctor. Given Busanya's current conditions, this dream was far out of reach. His mother could never afford for him to continue past primary school.



**Busanya in front of his high school with Leah, her kids and John Simba, 2013**



**Busanya in second year medical school**

When Busanya was ready for high school, we sponsored him to attend a quality, privately-run boarding school in Mwanza, where he learned to speak English quickly and excelled in math and science. We watched him grow in confidence as he gained friends and began to see his dream come into reach. Upon graduating, Busanya applied for medical school and was accepted. He returns to his village often to say hello, even though both his mother and sister have passed away in recent years. Village life is difficult and Busanya is an example to his neighbours that education pays off. He gives other parents hope to do all they can to help their children succeed and stay in school so they too can break the cycle of poverty.

Five Canadian post-secondary students are pooling their funds to sponsor a Vega student. We asked some of them why and here's what they told us:



"Helping students in Tanzania get a good education means breaking the cycle of poverty because even helping one student can change their community for the better of countless generations after them" – Lilly



"I believe education is a powerful tool in helping kids reach their full potential and a great way to build a better future. I have seen the impact of education in my own life and the benefits in others as well." – Jasmine



"Education has broadened my worldview and provides me with a future of opportunities. I want to extend this privilege I have and provide for others with the same blessing I have been given." - Tristen

## HELP SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT VEGA EDUCATION!

This is the time of year when Vega Education Fund and its partners start planning for the coming school year, which begins in January 2022. Our partners use an effective screening system to identify prospective students who are in their final year of primary school, working closely with teachers and community leaders to ensure we find students with academic promise who are truly in need.

That means this is also the time of year where we begin to look for sponsors for next year's new students. Will you help? Do you know anyone, like you, who is passionate about making a difference in a practical way?

One easy way to let your friends and family know about Vega Education Fund is to simply share this newsletter with them. Will you join us in spreading the word about empowering kids through education by **sharing this newsletter with at least 3 people?**

Did you read the quotes from the Canadian students above? If students can sponsor a student, then anyone can get involved! Think for a moment: who in your life might be keen to help a child live his or her dreams by obtaining an education, their ticket out of poverty? If each of our 20 sponsors connected one person to Vega Education, then we could enrol up to 20 new students in high school in 2022. Together, we can do this!

**July**

Vega Education begins appeal for new 2022 sponsors

**September**

Screening begins for prospective new students for 2022

**November**

2022 new students selected and begin pre-high school training

**January**

New students enter high school!