

so they can

Annual Report 2023

Australian Aid

Australian Council For International Development

What's inside...

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It is not beyond our power to create a world in which all children have access to a good education. Those who do not believe this have small imaginations.

Nelson Mandela

Cassandra Treadwell

A message **from our CEO.**

2023 was an amazing year on many levels for So They Can and our global community.

It started off in February, with a fair amount of anticipation as we headed into our Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) assessment. I could not be more proud of our So They Can family, responsible for seeing So They Can awarded full accreditation by the Australian Government. This is a significant recognition, given to less than 1% of Australia's 60,000 charities. Following rigorous assessment by DFAT, this accreditation acknowledges that our organisation operates at the highest standard, to deliver sustainable development outcomes.

I then flew out to our projects in March, bringing with me two clinicians from Australia, and our ambassador Thomasin McKenzie, to meet the children and their communities that she has represented for the last 6 years. It was great to watch our visitors connect with both our communities and our team on the ground. It was a reminder of the mutual importance of our partnership.

My time with our children and communities in Africa brought its usual combination of inspiration and heartbreak, both extremely motivating. Running with children from our partner schools in Baringo for our March, 1HumanRace was an absolute highlight for me. Hearing some of the senior students in the crazy, huge, running pack we created shout out “pole pole muzungu Cass” (slow down Cass is a white person) is firmly tattooed in my memory. As humbling as it was, it was also a real reminder of the generous and caring community spirit of those that we work with.

This year has seen us grow our international presence. We have attracted 3 more high-calibre Directors to our US Board. 2023 also saw us begin our preparations for launching in the UK, bringing So They Can’s presence to 6 countries, all working together under our Global Alliance Agreement to alleviate poverty through education.

2023 ended on a high with our team in Kenya arranging an Alternative Rites of Passage workshop with over 100 men and women meeting over 3 days and children meeting separately during that time to collect their thoughts and discuss ending female genital cutting (FGC). The response was so encouraging. When I first went to Baringo 7 years ago I didn’t think I would witness the historical cultural practice of FGC ending in my lifetime, I was wrong.





I am so proud of our whole international team for all they do. We have achieved so much this year and that is all due to the dedication, hours, kindness and determination of our incredible team that I am grateful to call family.

Cassandra Treadwell
CEO/Co Founder
So They Can



Scan this QR code for an interactive map of our Partner Schools and projects in Kenya



A Story of Impact: Aberdare Ranges Primary School

The primary school at the heart of So They Can's evolution, starts operating independently

Aberdare Ranges Primary School (ARPS) first opened its doors in 2010. The founding project of our organisation, it's a school community that holds a special place in the hearts of many people across our Global Community. Needless to say, it was a defining moment, when our ARPS journey came full circle in 2023. The school's transition to operate independently was complete, our first partner school to do so. It brings both pride for our achievements, and reflections on our learnings.

1,790 children have accessed quality primary education at ARPS since it opened in 2010.

The Beginning

ARPS is unique for So They Can. It was established under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Kenya who committed to fund teachers, water, electricity and roads; and So They Can, committed to fund construction, learning and teaching resources, teacher training and support to the Board of Management. It remains the only project where we constructed, and established, a new government school.

The Impact

Our significant investment over our 15-year partnership, can be understood when we measure the school's progress against the pillars of our Sustainable Schools Framework:

- Access to all primary levels - 1,000+ students (51% girls) enrolled from pre-primary to Standard 8.
- Effective School Management Committee: Can competently use resources, and engage with the School Management.
- Parental Engagement: Parents' Committee is established, and engaged in the school's operations, with increased understanding of child rights and protection.
- Student Success: High level of attendance, retention (85%) and learning. Gender parity in enrolment. 71% scored 250+ in the Kenyan Certificate in Primary Education in 2023. Pupils are confident, understand their rights and are able to express their opinion.
- Infrastructure: 29 classrooms; 13 administration facilities; water borehole and community water kiosk constructed by So They Can.

ARPS has become the foundation for children living in poverty to fulfil their educational journey.

A Story of Impact: Aberdare Ranges Primary School

840 children have graduated from ARPS. Of those who have reached the age for tertiary studies - 41 have enrolled in University and 57 in College.

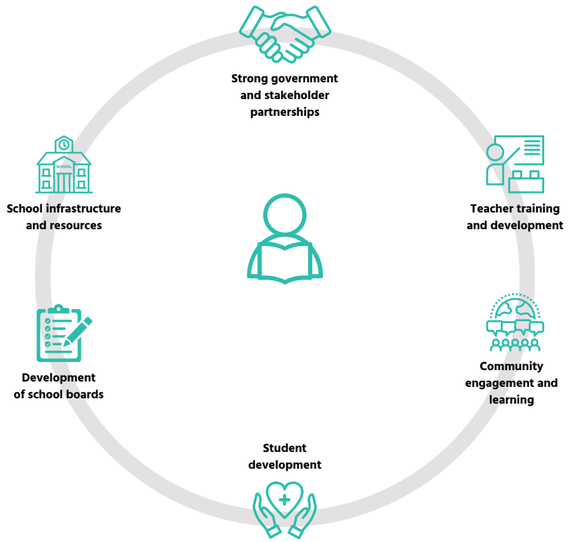
'My dream is to become an accomplished journalist. I want to tell the world about the social issues affecting my community. It will be my way of giving back to my community and making the world a better place for all of us.'

Phrister was eight years old when she started at ARPS in 2010, today she is an undergraduate student at Kenyatta University.

The Key Learnings

As an organisation, we quickly learnt through ARPS that bricks and mortar only, is aid that promotes dependency. Knowing the significant need across so many school communities, we wanted to adapt our approach so that we supported schools to deliver, and sustain, quality education. It was the start of our Education Program in 2012, and later what informed our Sustainable School Development Framework.

Our evolution has been from aid to 1 school, to sustainable development across 51 partner government schools. The balance of a holistic approach, where infrastructure is one of many interlinked components.



Now, our first step with every new partner school is community engagement. From the outset, schools know that our support is over a defined time period, aligned with our Sustainable School Development Framework.

The Way Forward

It is important for us that meaningful local partnerships are at the core of our work, for sustainability. We attribute our improved education outcomes to the collective action of students, parents, teachers, school leadership, local government and the broader community.





Phrister today

Challenges persist - climate change, drought, deteriorating economies - but so do we. As we plan for more schools to transition out of our Education Program, we are strengthening our work in community development, income generation, food and water security, to realise sustainability across more schools.





Munzurul Khan

A message from our Chair.

Being Chair of an Australian, DFAT fully accredited NGO, is one of my major accomplishments. It is no easy feat to achieve this level of Australian Government endorsement to strategically spend Australian Government funding in the international development space for the good of humanity. I am proud of our international So They Can team for being so firmly recognised, and trusted by our Government.

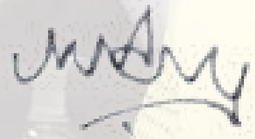
Our organisation has been working in education and poverty alleviation in Africa for 15 years. In 2023, we partnered with 5 new government primary schools in Kenya. Now we reach 32,000 children across 51 government primary and secondary schools through our Education Program, and 20,000 community members through our Community Development Program.

This year we raised over $4 million, thanks to all of our supporters. The impact of this is life changing to all of the community members that we reach.

When I was in Africa last year, I was stunned by the extreme poverty that I encountered. I was born in Bangladesh, and I have travelled to over 60 countries, including time spent in India and South East Asia in a philanthropic role. I was not expecting to feel so impacted by the poverty of our So They Can communities.

As Chair of So They Can, I want to lead by example. Accordingly, I am proud to say that my family foundation has granted So They Can significant funds over the next 12 months to develop So They Can's partner Chesirimon Clinic in Baringo, Kenya. This will enable it to significantly improve the standard of medical care provided at the clinic, including lab and pharmacy, and most significantly, provide maternity care. The photos to the left are from my family foundation's visit to Baringo in 2023.

2023 was a wonderful year for So They Can that has put us in good stead for 2024, and our future.



Munzurul Khan
Chair of the Board
So They Can

Board of Directors.

Munzurul Khan
Chair, So They Can Board

Cassandra Treadwell
Chief Executive Officer, Director and Co-Founder

Keri Chittenden
Director and Co-Founder

Andrew Bloxham
Director
(Resigned 9 May 2023)

Dianne Lucas
Director
(Resigned 5 Dec 2023)

David Southon
Director

Jennifer Price
Director
(Resigned 15 Aug 2023)

Poppy Rouse
Director

Get to know our Global **Boards of Directors...**



Governance Bodies: So They Can Global Alliance...

So They Can: New Zealand

Ellen Cheyne
Diana Crossan
Linzi Ebbage-Thomas
Samantha Hayes
Michelle Luping
Cassandra Treadwell
Hayley Whatarau

So They Can: Kenya

Christie Esch
Roselyne Mariki
Boniface Mouti
Sean Mura

So They Can: Tanzania

Christie Esch
Paulo Loishiye
Boniface Mouti
Sean Mura

So They Can: USA

Monica Bua
Valerie Danielewicz
Christie Esch
Harry Margolis
Tre Maxie
Joanna Riley
Cassandra Treadwell
Samantha Wainaina
Naima Warsame





A Story of Impact

The power of partnership closes the gap on schools' critical infrastructure needs

In Tanzania, universal access to education is supported by the national Government with fee-free primary and secondary education. However, the funding that schools receive directly from the Government is inadequate to cover operations or infrastructure costs.

The Government of Tanzania provides the equivalent of AUD $3.60 per enrolled child, per year, direct to a school. There is no funding for pre-primary children, or for schools with a total enrolment of less than 70 children.

Unsurprisingly, severely under-resourced schools with a lack of safe, inclusive infrastructure remain one of the leading causes of low attendance, performance and transition in the country. Parents and community members living in poverty, cannot afford the costs of construction, renovation and maintenance of school facilities, which continue to rise with inflation.

Yet, 2023 was our biggest year to date in closing the gap on schools' critical infrastructure needs. Thanks to meaningful partnerships, across 27 schools our impact was extensive:

- 12 new classrooms constructed
- 54 classrooms renovated
- 53 toilet pits constructed*
- 4 girls' changing rooms constructed*
- 1 water borehole drilled*
- 11 water tanks, total of 74,000L clean water storage, donated
- 4 energy efficient cooking stoves donated
- 557 pupils' desks and 27 teachers' tables & chairs donated
- 50 bunk bed and mattresses donated

"In 2014, before So They Can's Education Program started, students' Primary School Leaving Exam results were on average in the 50% band. Today it has increased to 90% as a result of the support provided through our partnership with So They Can, including school infrastructure improvements, various teaching and learning training, and resources."
— Charles, Mamire Ward Education Officer.

*So They Can was a co-contributing partner in project implementation.

A Story of Impact Continued: The power of partnership closes the gap on schools' critical infrastructure needs

The Power of Partnership

School Communities

During a year when prolonged drought decimated agricultural yield, which 95% of families rely on for their main household income, the sheer determination and commitment of parents and community leaders was remarkable. For all of the infrastructure development works completed in 2023, communities rallied together to provide their 10 - 30% contribution, in most cases through volunteer labour and local materials (such as sand, gravel and bricks), and in some cases payment to the local contractors.

Australian Government

So They Can's School Improvement Project is delivered in partnership with the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). So They Can's full accreditation through DFAT, and our subsequent increase in ANCP funding, meant that we tripled our ANCP allocation towards increased classrooms in 2023.

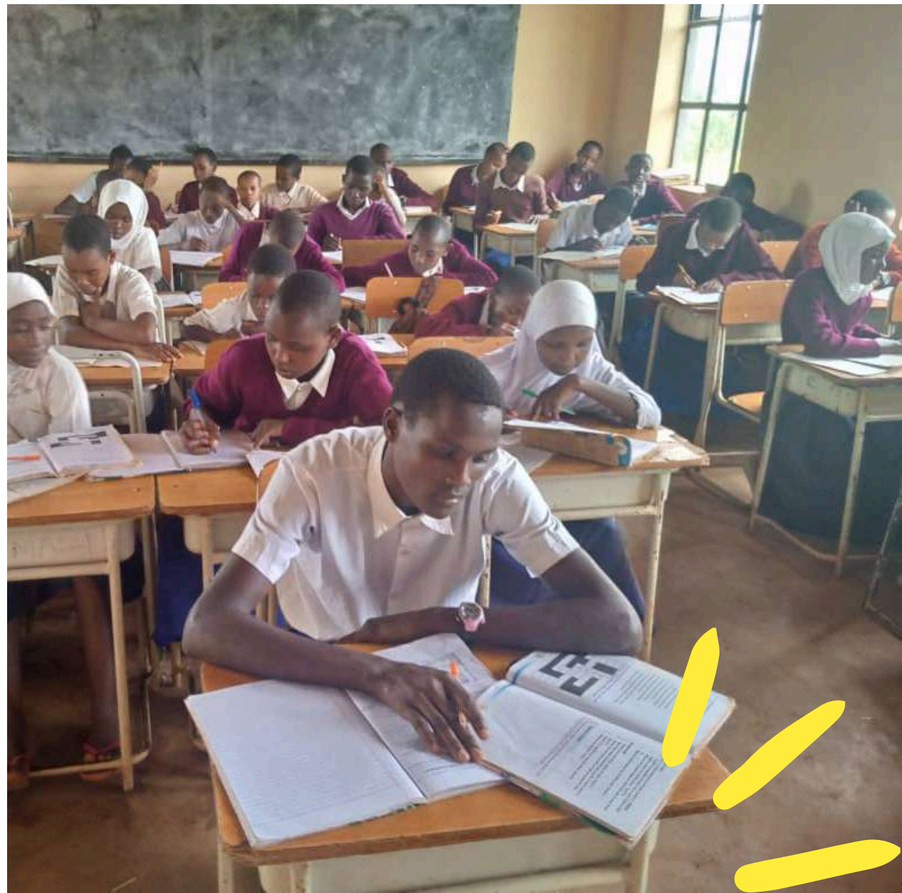
Tanzanian Government

The Babati District Council, has been the key Government partner of So They Can since 2012. In 2023, the Government of Tanzania through the Babati District Council, funded classrooms and toilets in our partner schools worth $249,000. Under the leadership of the District Executive Officer, we coordinate efforts to:

- Request the inclusion of projects within the Council's education budget. In 2023, 4 of our partner schools were selected for government funded SWASH projects, with a 10% co-contribution by So They Can.
- Ensure timely completion of works, assessed and approved by the District Engineer.
- Forward plan infrastructure works within schools, mapping out, and maximising co-contributions from partners
- Advocate for funding at higher levels. In 2023, for the first time, So They Can's Country Manager was the selected representative of the District's non-public institutions, including NGOs, to participate in the Babati Member of Parliament's Finance Committee. This provided a valuable opportunity to provide input into the government's annual budget, including the allocation of funds within the education budget.

'We suffered a lot from poor infrastructure. Our classrooms didn't have windows and doors, so cold, dust, and rain would come in. But now we can enjoy learning in well-equipped classrooms, with lots of light, air and space. During our after school remedial classes, we can close the door to keep us safe from wildlife that sometimes come into our school grounds'

— Joshua, Grade 7, student at Manyara Primary School
(pictured below, studying to achieve his dreams of becoming a pilot).



2023 In Numbers

*So They Can was a co-contributing partner.

A year of impact.



51
Schools partnered with to deliver projects



31,935
Students reached through our education projects



100
Classrooms constructed or renovated



532
Teachers supported in our Partner Schools



665
Student and teacher desks donated



77
Toilets constructed*



688
Students and teachers trained in climate smart agriculture



147
Families empowered through economic empowerment initatives



16,697
People medically assessed and treated



225
Student scholarships provided



20
Water tanks donated — creating access to 134,000L of clean water



2
Water boreholes/ rain water harvesting systems operationalised*



14,520
Washable sanitary pads distributed



9,774
Adolescents trained on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights



3,548,173
Daily school meals served



4,388
Books donated



147
Community Champions advocating and protecting children's rights



5,838
ECD students reached through reading, writing and numeracy



168
Community farmers supported with farming inputs and training



281
Special Needs Education students reached



42
Mamire Teachers' College Graduates participated in 2-year Internship Program



A Story of Impact

Empowering women in Kenya

"I bought a small milling machine with my KSH 50,000 loan (approx. $515) from the group. With the purchase I am now getting about KSH 3-5,000 (approx. $31-51) profit every month. That money supports my farming activities and pays school fees for my child in primary school and child in high school. As my profit increases with my mill, my plan is to start a retail shop".
— Salina, 45 years old, Mother of six children.

There are 12 women in the Tolosie Women's Group. Their ages range from 24 to 50 years old, and most are small farmholders. Since 2012, they have been meeting weekly in their remote hometown village of Perkerra, Baringo in Kenya. They do so to support one another, as friends and as business women who know that pooling their knowledge and resources benefits everyone.

The group joined So They Can's Wezesha Business Skills Project (WBSP) in 2021 to increase their business knowledge and access capital for their group. This year together as a group, they planted a 20-acre plot of mung beans, generating KSH 15,000 profit (approx. $154), which was added to the group's table banking.

3 of the women were part of a group of WBSP participants who joined the Nakuru Agricultural Society of Kenya event in July, to learn more about agribusiness.

"This year extra support through WBSP – business skills training and a KSH 50,000 loan – was of great help to me and my entire family. I leased a two-acre plot of land and planted maize. The capital meant that I was able to plough and plant on time, and it improved my yield. I sold my maize to the Kenya Seed Company for a profit of KSH 60,000 (approx. AUD $617). It was very timely, as one of my children is joining university this year, and I also have one child in high school and one in primary school. I hope to lease more acres next season".
— Hellen, 49 years old, Mother of three children.

These women lack access to formal finance institutions, and by self-organising they become economically empowered. For them the group has numerous benefits to:

- Instil a culture of saving, through group motivation and encouragement.
- Provide table banking and group savings, which is used for group lending.
- Increase discipline and promote hard work to repay loans on time.
- Nurture friendship and teamwork, and build leadership skills.
- Learn about effective farming practices from one another.

In 2023, 16 women's groups — made up of 188 women — in Baringo and Nakuru benefitted from So They Can's Wezesha Business Skills Project. Their participation in business training, and the provision of capital loans, has a direct impact on the profitability of their businesses, and the health and wellbeing of their families and children's education.



Highlights from our projects.



Safe, inclusive classrooms

2023 was our biggest year yet - 83 classrooms renovated, and 17 new classrooms constructed. 18 of the classroom renovations were at our 5 new partner primary schools in Kenya.

Children who had been learning outside under trees, or in collapsing buildings with dirt floors and no windows, can now enjoy their learning experience.



Trainee teacher scholarships

We awarded 22 scholarships to aspiring teachers from Baringo. Now, government appointed teachers in Baringo schools often only stay for a short period due to the challenging conditions. Our investment in young people from Baringo with lived experience, is an investment in sustainable quality teaching. The 3-year scholarship covers the costs of a Diploma in Primary Teacher Education.



Strengthening child protection

In Tanzania we established Child Protection and Safeguarding Desks in 33 schools. These desks ensure that child protection and safeguarding measures are respected and implemented both in and outside of schools. Awareness sessions were held with all students, students then elected their peers to represent them as Desk members, with support from selected teachers. 498 students (50% girls) and 66 teachers (50% female) were trained to operate their school's desks.



Ending child marriage

For the first time, we partnered with local stakeholders in Baringo to facilitate awareness sessions over 3 days for students, and community elders, on Alternative Rites of Passage (ARP). 105 children (77% girls) from local schools and 90 elders participated. ARP is widely recognised in Kenya as a substitute ceremony in traditional communities, which as opposed to female genital mutilation, acknowledges when a girl enters womanhood, while upholding her rights, and protecting her health and wellbeing.

Highlights from our projects.



Teachers' Development

In Tanzania we piloted a Teachers' Acceleration Model, to promote continuous improvement. 35 teachers (43% female) from 11 of our partner schools were selected to participate in monthly Growth Mindset sessions facilitated by an expert coach. Participating teachers shared that it taught them to collaborate, apply cooperative learning methods, and share knowledge – especially in challenging areas like teaching English and literacy, and avoiding corporal punishment.



Msomi Scholarships

225 students in Kenya and Tanzania are continuing their educational journey to secondary and tertiary studies, thanks to our Msomi scholarships.

This year our assessment of Msomi families in Tanzania revealed that 91% of parents/guardians earn less than AUD $31 a month. These scholarships, that cover academic materials and boarding accommodation if necessary, are often the difference between child labour and a promising future.



Mamire Teachers College Interns

In 2023, 23 more graduates were recruited to join our 2-year internship program - bringing the total to 42 interns (43% female) supporting teaching and learning in 28 primary, 5 secondary schools, and benefitting over 17,000 children.

Since the program started in 2016, 167 graduates have participated, gaining valuable practical experience while they seek permanent employment.



Climate-smart agriculture

3 primary schools in Tanzania installed 1-acre drip irrigation systems on their schools' crop farms. The introduction of this climate-smart technology, the annual yield is expected to double to 12,000kgs of onions, and 13,000kgs of tomatoes per acre. Our Community Development Manager trained 300 students and 6 teachers from the 3 schools so that they can competently manage their new systems to increase yield, and improve crop quality.

Highlights from our projects.



Strengthening vulnerable families

11 new families from Baringo joined our Family Strengthening Project this year, bringing the total to 41. Among the new families there are 64 children, but due to poverty 25 children were not attending school.

With our 3-year direct family support, children return to school, and parents are equipped to improve their household income. This year 13 new parents attended our 2-day business skills training, and received 5 goats each as business capital.



Improving community health

Our partnership with 2 rural medical clinics in Baringo continued, reaching 12,972 patients. We also conducted 1-day medical camps, facilitated with government medical personnel, which provided access to basic care to marginalised community members. In Kenya, 3 camps reached 1,596 people — and in Tanzania, 5 days of school-based camps reached 2,129 people, which included the screening of 402 children for disabilities and referral for follow-up treatment.



Empowering female entrepreneurs

We supported 95 female small business owners with capital loans totalling $13,800 this year (with 85% already repaid). These women were part of the 188 participants - 68 from Nakuru and 120 from Baringo - of our 3-day business skills training.

These women lack access to formal finance institutions, So They Can's support to their self-organised women's groups means that they can become economically empowered.



Our Global Community

$1.25 million raised through community fundraising, and 814 student sponsorships!

Our Sydney Party and Kiwi Dinner, 1HumanRace, and the Chain Reaction Cycle were calendar highlights. Our staff also took to the global stage, with Roselyne, a panellist at the US Exchange Alumni Thematic International Seminar in Egypt; Grace, a representative at the WISE Summit in Qatar; and Emily, a speaker at the Inside Network ESG Retreat in Tasmania.



A Story of Impact

Disability is not inability: Mainstreaming disability across our work

Disability inclusion is one of the cross-cutting issues that is central to So They Can's development approach. In Tanzania, like many countries, children with a disability are least likely to enter school, and the most likely to drop out. They are often abandoned, severely mistreated, or hidden in homes, for a number of reasons:

- Children with disabilities, and their families, face stigma and discrimination.
- Children are not properly identified or referred for treatment.
- Supportive services are not available, such as trained teachers, adapted learning materials, or assistive devices.
- Lack of inclusive school infrastructure.
- Poverty, which compounds all of the above.

In early 2023, 84 children were identified by Ward Education Coordinators (WEC) as being in need of special education across our 28 partner primary schools in Tanzania.

UNICEF Tanzania reports that less than 1% of children in pre-primary, primary and secondary school have a disability, even though it is estimated that 7.9% of Tanzanians are living with a disability.

In response to a recommendation from our mid-program evaluation in Tanzania in 2021*, that children would benefit from strengthened disability inclusion, we have been working to better integrate it across our work, and align with new policies and guidelines published by the Government of Tanzania.**

Disability is not inability, is now the guiding motto across our partner school communities.



A Story of Impact Continued: Disability is not inability

The Patandi Special Education Teacher Training College (PSETTC) has been an instrumental partner in informing our strengthened approach. Following a learning visit to the College in Arusha, experts from the College came to Babati to conduct an assessment. It resulted in key recommendations, and follow up:

1. Identification, treatment, and awareness of disability in school communities.

An initial community consultation was conducted by PSETTC in August, that started awareness raising among children, parents, teachers and community members, 402 children were screened for visual, hearing, physical, and intellectual impairments, and referred for follow up treatment.

2. Accessible school facilities, that promote an inclusive school environment, and meet the recommended standards set by the Government.

So They Can's School Improvement Project is delivered in partnership with the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

So They Can's full accreditation through DFAT, and our subsequent increase in ANCP funding, meant that we tripled our ANCP allocation towards increased classrooms in 2023.

3. Trained teachers equipped to practise disability inclusive teaching and learning, with accessible resources.

87 primary school teachers from 28 primary schools, 4 WECs, and 4 So They Can Tanzania program staff participated in a 4-day intensive training facilitated by PSETTC, also supported through ANCP. Key learning outcomes were the development and use of appropriate teaching and learning strategies, plans and tools; and the use of vision and hearing screening tools.

4. Engagement of technical partners that specialise in disability.

- Kafika House, a care-house for children under operative and rehabilitative care.
- Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre, for specialised eye surgeries and treatment.
- Kyaro Assistive Tech, for assistive devices.
- Patandi Special Education Teacher Training College, for holistic inclusive education support.

*So They Can's current strategic program plan (2019-2024), was independently assessed through a mid-program evaluation in 2021, and an end-program evaluation is scheduled for 2024.

** The Government of Tanzania is implementing a: National Strategy for Inclusive Education; National Guideline on the Screening and Identification of Children with Special Needs; and Guideline on Home Visits for Children with Special Needs.

"Now, there is light, where there used to be darkness. Especially because my classmates have come to understand and value me. The classrooms have ramps, my classmates don't have to lift me up anymore. So They Can have also installed a toilet for girls with special needs like me, that I can access with my wheelchair. I have a sense of belonging and being valued in my school community."

— Upendo, pictured below
Grade 7 student at Gijedabung Primary School in Tanzania



Meet some of our Champions.



Muhidini

Champion Father in Endakiso Village, Tanzania

'As a Champion my goal is to ensure that children are safe, and are protected from violent acts so that they can fulfil their dreams.'

After a 20+ year career as a doctor for the Ministry of Defence and Security, in 2023 Muhidini came to Babati to retire. When he heard about So They Can he became interested in joining the volunteeer Champions' Network, knowing that cases of childhood pregnancies, and rape were occurring in his community. He felt called to act and make a difference.



Margaret

Champion Mother in East Pokot, Baringo County, Kenya

'Since I became a Champion Mother I have been able to rescue teenage mothers and get them back in school. I regard it as my biggest achievement and I hope to assist more young mothers.'

A mother of 8 children (4 girls and 4 boys) Margaret knows the value of education and has ensured that all of her children go to school. She loves to see her own children, and the children in her community, succeed in life. 2 of her children are in school, in Grade 4 and 8, and one child is joining college.

Meet some of our Champions.



Joshua

Champion Father in Chemolingot, Baringo County, Kenya

'I want to be a role model in my community. I want to bring change by ensuring that every child gets the chance to receive a quality education.'

Joshua is a Champion who believes it is important to live by example - he has made sure that all of his 6 children go to school. His Champion role gives him the opportunity to connect teachers, parents and students, and work towards resolving the many challenges that affect the school community.



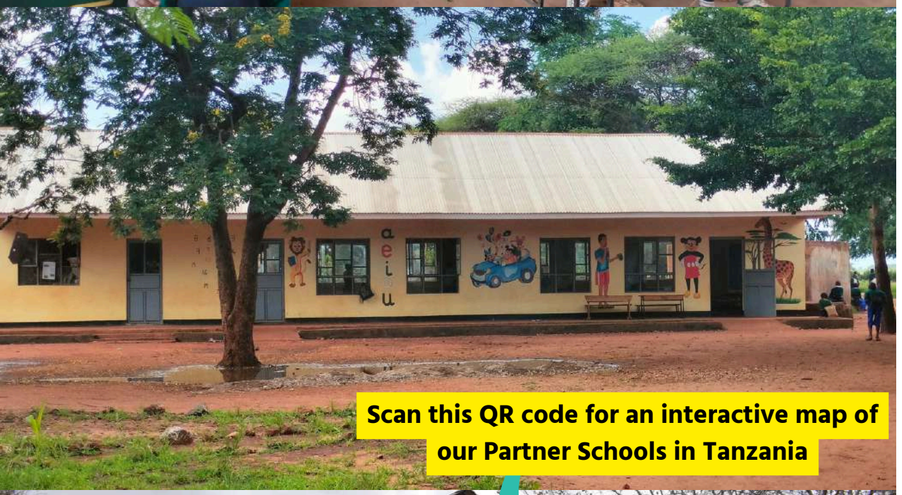
Zainabu

Champion Mother in Orngadida Village, Tanzania

'Being a champion I want to ensure that the community gets the right education and stops acts of violence against children, especially sexual violence'.

Zainabu, a Champion Mother in Tanzania, is dedicated to serving the Orngadida Primary School community. As the mother of 4 children, she feels strongly about ensuring that parents and the community are aware of, well-educated on, and uphold childrens' rights.





Scan this QR code for an interactive map of our Partner Schools in Tanzania



A Story of Impact

Get to know one of our Partner Schools in Tanzania!

So They Can has partnered with Gijedabung Primary School since 2014. The school is located in a rural village where 50% of community members are pastoralists, and some families move with their livestock in search of food for the animals.

With the support of our Education Program, the community has developed into a strong, collaborative force for quality education. Champion Mothers and Fathers, the School Management Committee (SMC), Village Council, and the school's leadership have worked together with So They Can to improve education outcomes.

In 2023, when severe drought hit the community, the school's feeding program continued, and children were served porridge every day, contributed by parents.

Today, Gijedabung Primary School is 85% sustained, as defined by So They Can's Sustainable School definition. The school educates 900 students (47% girls), with academic performance consistently improving. In fact, Gijedabung Primary School is home to some of the highest performing students in the district, especially girl students. Faraja, who graduated from Grade 7 in 2023, ranked first in Endakiso Ward in the Primary School Leaving Exam, topping both Mathematics and Science.

In 2023, So They Can empowered Gijedabung Primary School with the following infrastructure and resource support:

- Construction of 2 classrooms; a girls' changing room, with 6 toilets; and 1 toilet for children with disabilities;
- Donation of a 2,000L water tank;
- Funding for 2 fuel and cost efficient cooking stoves, reducing the school kitchen's firewood consumption by 85%;
- Distribution of NIA Dignity Packs to 57 girls, inclusive of 6 reusable sanitary pads, underwear, soap and a carry pouch; and
- Training of 900 students on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights by Health Officers and Champions.

Flora is a 7th-grade student who received an NIA Dignity Pack from So They Can in 2023. She said:

"It has given me the freedom to engage in school activities, even sports, with my peers... I feel more confident now that I have sanitary pads. I don't feel self-conscious, and I can fully participate in my studies and not miss classes... The pads, and our school's environment, with a dedicated changing room for girls for personal hygiene, are factors that continue to make me enjoy going to school and study diligently to achieve my dreams."

Our Commitment & Values

Our approach to education.

So They Can is committed to implementing ethical, accountable and effective programs that support marginalised communities in East Africa, with a continual focus on child protection and fundamental rights.

We place communities at the centre of everything we do, and as an accredited international non-government organisation our work is underpinned by best practices in international development.

Locally-led

Meaningful local partnerships are at the core of our work. Our impact is a result of collective action sustained through a participatory approach. Students, parents, teachers, school leadership, local government and the broader community lead our development processes and as a result projects are responsive to the unique needs of each community.

Cross-cutting

We know that poverty is multifaceted and requires cross-cutting solutions to tackle its root causes. Our Community Development Program is delivered in parallel to our Education Program, to focus on improving the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of all. We improve the living standards of the whole community to break the cycle of poverty.

Inclusive and Rights-based

Undeterred by hard-to-reach locations, we prioritise the most vulnerable communities through our commitment to leave no one behind. Our work is guided by the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and international protection frameworks. Every community member, regardless of their identity, is valued, and their rights are acknowledged, protected and promoted across our programs.

Scalable, Sustainable and Innovative

We work in a 6-8 year development cycle. School communities move through three phases of support - foundation, core, sustained - which advance their capacity until a level of development is reached that can be independently sustained, so that we can transition our support out and commence working in a new surrounding community that is in need. The lessons learnt and knowledge acquired from our experience of more than a decade working within national education systems, enables us to be innovative and agile in our programming and respond to evolving needs.



Accountable

First and foremost we are accountable to the communities with whom we work. This responsibility also extends to the staff, supporters and partners of our organisation. Transparency ensures that we maintain our accountability to all of our stakeholders. Our operations are regulated through comprehensive policies and procedures; our impact is measured and assessed through a robust monitoring and evaluation system; and our fiscal health is overseen by an independent Board of Directors.

Learn more about our history, commitment and values by scanning or clicking here:



2023 Financials

So They Can's **Financial Report**

2023	Group	Australia	2022	Group	Australia
Revenue	4,006,949	3,116,731	**Revenue**	3,047,563	2,457,342
Expenses*	3,877,618	3,536,147	**Expenses***	3,157,870	2,817,423
Surplus/(Deficit)	129,331	(419,416)	**Surplus/(Deficit)**	(110,307)	(360,081)
Cash Balance	2,471,549	1,838,659	**Cash Balance**	2,239,067	1,691,081

***Expenses include all funds transferred to Africa for project implementation**

- Group inclusive of Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Kenya and Tanzania
- All amounts are in Australian Dollars (AUD)

With thanks to...

Our Partners

So They Can is accredited by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), responsible for managing the Australian Government's aid program and receives support through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

We are thankful for all our supporters including the many individual donors, sponsors, trusts and foundations who give so generously.

So They Can is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, which is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice. As a signatory we are committed and fully adhere to the ACFID Code of Conduct, conducting our work with transparency, accountability and integrity.

We would like to thank the following organisations, and those who have chosen to stay anonymous, for their support in helping us empower more children living in poverty through education.

Government Partners

The United Republic of Tanzania

Republic of Kenya

Baringo County Government

Trusts & Foundations

Trusts & Foundations Continued...

Pro Bono

NGOs & Social Enterprises

Education

Business

Coalitions, Networks & Implementing Partners



Looking to the future...

We are a global community of dedicated staff, partners and supporters bound by the vision to change the future for children and communities living in poverty through education.

In 2023, we supported 51 schools in Kenya and Tanzania to provide quality education to 31,935 vulnerable children. It is significant growth from our humble beginning in 2009 supporting 1 school in Kenya.

Our impact is a testament to our bold courage, determination and resilience. We look forward, confident in our ability to reach 33,000 children by 2030. Together, we can be the difference.

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