so they can

Jan - Sept 2022 Program Highlights



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Jan - Sept 2022 Program Highlights

Education is life-changing for a child, their family and their community

So They Can is pleased to share some of the highlights from our work in Kenya and Tanzania achieved to date this year, from January to September 2022. Through the data, lived stories and images featured in the following pages, we hope that you can understand the breadth of the life-transforming impact of So They Can's Education and Community Development Programs, which is only possible thanks to the ongoing support of you, one of our valued partners. Our interlinked projects not only affords enthusiastic and resilient school-aged children a quality education, it supports their families and the entire community, to lift themselves out of the poverty cycle.

In 2022 So They Can's Education Program expanded its reach and is now working with 47 public primary and secondary schools in impoverished regions of Tanzania and Kenya (an 11% increase in the number of participating schools compared to 2021).

This year the residual impact of COVID-19 has been felt across the communities where we work, and it has been exacerbated by the global economic downturn as a result of the ongoing war in the Ukraine, as well as persistent drought - in Kenya, 4 rainy seasons in a row have failed, and it is anticipated that the rains normally expected in October will also fail. For that reason, at the end of this report some of our urgent funding needs are detailed In the case that you and/or your network can provide partnership to bridge the funding gaps on those pressing priorities.

25,464 children and 516 teachers are directly benefiting form our Education Program in 2022.

18,726 community members are also receiving direct support through our Community Development Program.

We remain steadfast in our vision to change the future for children living in poverty through education. You are an important part of that journey and this report presents some of the far-reaching impact that we have achieved together.

Asanteni sana - thank you!



Education Program
New Schools

Three schools join the Baringo Education Program

In late 2021, following consultation with the Baringo County Ministry of Education State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education, three schools in Marigat Sub County in Baringo were identified in urgent need of support. Subsequently So They Can commenced assessment with the Boards of School Management at Perkerra Primary School, Ng'ambo Primary School and Meisori Secondary School, and proceeded to enter into formal agreements with each of the schools at the beginning of 2022. The schools are in the Tugen region, and their inclusion in So They Can programming and support is anticipated to improve the quality of education and strengthen cohesion between the warring East Pokot and Tugen tribes.

Perkerra Primary School

In the 2022 academic year, there are 209 students enrolled in Early Childhood Education to Standard 8 (111 boys: 98 girls) who are taught by 10 teachers (4 males: 6 females). The school needs support to improve existing infrastructure. Currently lessons are conducted in 8 classrooms, and 2 classrooms



With support provided through our partnership with the Bayer Foundation, Perkerra Primary School underwent significant school improvement to ensure that school infrastructure provides a safe and inclusive learning environment, including:

- renovation of classroom floors and roof replacements for all classes from Grade 1 to 8;
- fencing off of its 7.2-acre perimeter with 'chain link' wire and the installation of a school gate;
- mounting of the school's existing 2 x 4,500 litre plastic water tanks onto concrete bases and installation of a gutter system ensuring all rain water is tapped into the tanks and utilised.





At Perkerra Primary School So They Can has also commenced support through the following projects: Our School Community - where we upskill and strengthen the School Board of Management; Teacher Development - teacher training with an added focus on special needs students; School Improvement - capital infrastructure, provision of learning and teaching materials and WASH materials; My Voice - sensitising children on their rights and responsibilities; Keeping Girls in School - increasing enrolment and retension of girls in school, provision of washable sanitary products to adolescent girls and information session on sexual and reproductive health and rights and menstrual hygiene management.

Ng'ambo Primary School

In the 2022 academic year, there are 352 students enrolled in Early Childhood Education to Standard 8 (186 boys: 166 girls) who are taught by 12 teachers (4 males: 8 females). The school is in desperate need of infrastructure. Currently, there are no formal classrooms and students are learning in under trees in the school grounds.

So They Can has commenced support through the following projects: Our School Community - where we upskill and strengthen the School Board of Management; Teacher Development - teacher training with a focus on special needs students; School Improvement - capital building and provision of learning and teaching materials and WASH materials; My Voice - sensitising children on their rights and responsibilities; Keeping Girls in School - increasing enrolment and retension of girls in school, provision of washable sanitary products to adolescent girls and information session on sexual and reproductive health and rights and menstrual hygiene management.





The training of teachers on special needs has led to the identification of 37 children in the local community with special needs who are kept locked up at their homes due to stigmatisation. As a result the teachers have started engaging with the parents of those children and providing information on how they take care of their children. Both Perkerra and Ng'ambo Primary Schools intend to open a Special Needs Education Unit for these children, once support is mobilised.

Meisori Secondary School

In the 2022 academic year, there are 167 students enrolled in Form 1 to Form 4 (90 boys: 77 girls) who are taught by 7 teachers (4 males: 3 females). Academically the school is performing well. In 2021 the school's mean score in the Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education was 5.74, putting it in first place in the sub-county out of 28 schools. There are four classrooms that are being utilised, and 2 additional classrooms are needed, specifically the School Board of Management priority is to establish a laboratory for science class instruction.

So They Can has initiated support through the Keeping Girls in School project, which is particularly pertinent due to the adolescent-aged student cohort. This has included the provision of information on sexual and reproductive health and rights and menstrual hygiene management, as well as washable sanitary products to female students.

Education Program
Our School Community

New Special Needs Education Unit opens at ARPS

In May a Special Needs Education (SNE) Unit for children with mild to moderate autism was opened at Aberdare Ranges Primary School (APRS). The unit enables students to learn in a formal setting based on the requirements of the school curriculum. Importantly these children do so by being integrated in the mainstream education system, developing social skills, behavioural strategies and communication skills from interactions with their teachers, peers and the broader school community.

The opening of the unit, to provide much needed support for children with autism, was a significant achievement for ARPS. So They Can provided on-going support to the school to adhere to the Government's standards for such a unit, namely the construction of additional sanitation and changing blocks, as well as construction of the unit's classroom. The process of registering the SNE classroom with the Kenya Ministry of Education commenced in January 2022, and following approval, opened at the beginning of the 2022 academic year.

The Government assigned two qualified SNE teachers, who can look after a maximum of 6 children with a disability each at any one time in a class. Currently 5 students (4 boys: 1 girl) who have mild autism and are aged between four and eight years old are enrolled. As they start their educational journey there is a focus on psychomotor and speech construction development, which is being supported both at school and at home. Students' progress is monitored through individual school diary reports.

Plans to expand support include nutrition education, occupational health services, career guidance and general community awareness on disability. A number of students with special needs remain out-of-school in the local area surrounding the school. Transport to and from school for these children has been identified as one of the main barriers to their attendance, and a solution is under discussion.

In preparation for the unit's launch So They Can Kenya staff attended the 2021 Bright Start International Conference; Early Years Excellence in Practice, part of which was specifically facilitated for educators working with children on the Autism Spectrum Disorder. So They Can will continue to partake in similar relevant professional development and carefully monitor the progress made by the children as well as their interaction and integration into the wider school community.

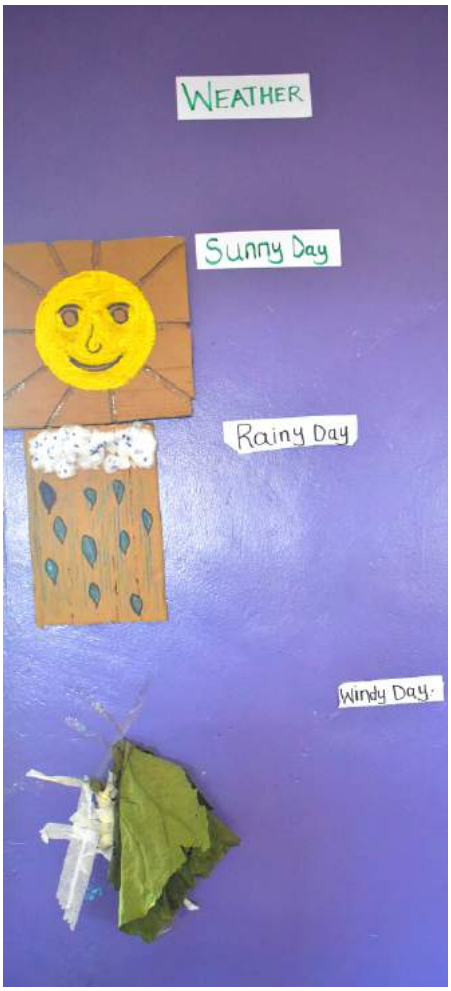


Learning in Action at the Special Needs Education Unit

Above the door at the ARPS SNE Unit a sign reads, Practical Life and Sensorial Room. The classroom provides a learning environment with tactical aids to improve student outcomes













Education Program
School Improvement

Construction, renovations and donation of goods

Across our program-supported schools in Tanzania, the School Improvement project continues to be prioritised to ensure that every child can learn in a safe, inclusive environment that is adequately equipped and that is conducive to quality teaching and learning.

In 2022 we are on track to meet our targets across construction and renovation works at selected schools. To date this year our progress can largely be attributed to support from the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), as follows:

- 22 (85%) of the targeted 26 classrooms renovated in 11 program schools
- 4 (100%) of the targeted 4 new classrooms built in 2 program schools
- 1, 300 students (678 boys: 622 girls) using the renovated and new classrooms
- 3 (100%) teachers' offices renovated
- 200 (80%) of the targeted 250 desks donated to 5 program schools
- 720 (353 boys: 367 girls) students utilising the donated desks
- 35 (127%) cooking pots donated to 11 program schools
- 17 (154%) of the 11 program schools received cooking pots
- 11 (110%) water tanks donated
- 5,500 (110%) of the targeted 5,000 students have access to safe drinking water through donated water tanks
- 12,671 (167%) of the targeted 7,500 students have access to their school's feeding program
- 9 (90%) of the targeted 10 tables donated
- 9 (90%) of the targeted 10 chairs donated
- 9 (90%) of the targeted 10 program schools received tables and chairs

With additional support from one of our partners, SMEC, we were also able to facilitate construction and renovation of classrooms in Ayamango and Gijedabung Primary Schools, as well as changing rooms for girls in Endagile, Hallu, Endakiso and Gijedabung Primary Schools. The changing rooms will provide a safe and hygienic space for girls to change so they no longer have to miss out on days of school each month during their menstrual cycle.





Education Program
Teacher Development

Mamire Teachers College graduation and enrolment

The 7th commemoration of Mamire Teachers College (MTC) graduation was held in April. This year 176 teachers graduated from the college, among them 30 teachers qualified to pursue a Diploma in Secondary School Teaching and 146 qualified to pursue a Certificate in Primary Education Teaching.

In 2022, 39 MTC interns are working in 19 program-supported schools, and 6 MTC interns have been placed to work in Silverleaf Academy institutions in Arusha.

This year 245 students are enrolled to study teacher training at the College. 40 students will commence their Diploma in Teaching, and 205 students will commence their Certificate in Teaching.



The Ministry of Education Science and Technology has committed to fund 2 new dormitories (one for females and one for males) at MTC. Each dorm will house 8 student teachers to enable increased enrolment in 2023.









Education Program
Leave No Girl Behind

Young mothers realise their right to education

The Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) project addresses the underlying drivers of early pregnancy, as well as providing short term residential and non-residential care and support for young pregnant girls and mothers. In 2022 there are 7 girls participating in LNGB in Tanzania, 11 in East Pokot, Kenya, and 5 in Nakuru, Kenya.

All of the 7 girls in Tanzania are staying at Faraja Centra in Arusha, a young womens' development centre that So They Can has partnered with for this project. At the Centre the teen mothers receive vocational training in skills such as tailoring, hair dressing, cooking as well as parent and life skills training. Medical support for the young mothers and their children is also provided. The girls commenced their stay at the Faraja Centre in January, and will continue to reside there for a period of 12 months.

In Kenya all 16 participating girls are in the process of returning to school. The 11 girls from East Pokot will attend Nginyang Girls' Secondary School, one of So They Can's program-supported schools. The girls come from disadvantaged families, some of them have lost one or both of their parents, and in most cases the primary income-earner of the family is their single mother. The girls are aged between 16 to 18 years old and their children are between 9 months to 3 years old. Most of the parents/guardians are contributing to the young mothers' education through the provision of transport and/or some learning materials.

The 5 girls in Nakuru, all come from the Nakuru West slum area and are returning to school – two girls will return to primary school, and 3 girls will return to secondary school.







Impact Story
Leave No Girl Behind
Felisters' story of survival and hope

So They Can met Felisters when she had almost lost hope. Devastatingly, she thought that her only option was to undergo Female Genital Cutting (FGC) so she could be married off.

After finishing Standard 8 and passing all of her exams, Felisters fell pregnant. She was quickly shunned from her family and felt instantly isolated from everyone in her community.

“I had hopes of joining high school, but due to the pregnancy this was not an option. The father of my baby boy said the child was not his, so my family would have to cover for everything, including the expenses of the baby.”

“I suffered a lot. When I was experiencing labour, I was alone, no one was there for me. Even when I was at the hospital giving birth, I was alone. I was only helped by a doctor who gave me her home”.

After staying at the home for over a year and caring for her son, Felisters had reached rock bottom. At this point she thought FGC — a cruel practice which despite being made illegal in 2011, is still widely practised in communities throughout Kenya — was the only way out.

“I saw female genital cutting as the only option, because in my community you cannot get married if you haven’t been circumcised.”

On the day of the ritual, a friend asked Felisters:

'Why don’t you speak to So They Can? I’ve heard that they have a project called Leave No Girl Behind, where they give girls a second chance’. Little did Felisters know that this short exchange would transform the course of her future.

Following the conversation, Felisters visited the So They Can office where she was met by Jane, So They Can’s Project Coordinator in Baringo County. After a few conversations, So They Can was able to help Felisters to attend Nginyang Girls’ High School, where she now enthusiastically attends school with continued support.

75% of the students at Nginyang Girls’ High School have run away from home as a result of FGC and early marriage. Many of them, just like Felisters, are young mothers.

Now 16 years old, Felisters feels empowered and optimistic about her future. She is driven to achieve her dreams of becoming a university lecturer, and one day wants to be a motivational speaker, so she can show other vulnerable girls that there’s always a reason to ‘push forward for a second chance’.



Education Program
Let's Learn

Solar Buddies combat energy poverty

Energy poverty is a key barrier to education. In our school communities both schools and homes lack a stable supply of electricity which impedes teaching and learning. In Q2 our team in Tanzania safely received a shipment of 4,200 solar lights from our partner, Solar Buddy. Through our Let's Learn project, these life-changing mobile lights will be distributed to lower primary school children in our Program Schools, enabling them to study at home and complete their homework in the evening after school.

At the time of this report, quality assurance on the goods is being carried out. So They Can staff are checking the bulbs, batteries and functioning of the devices before they are distributed to students from Pre-Primary to Standard 1 grades who come from households with no electricity.

To date through our partnership with Solar Buddy we have already distributed more than 6,000+ solar lights between 2019 and 2021 across our program schools. With this new shipment, our impact on addressing energy poverty will extend to more than 10,000 households in Babati.









Impact Story
Adult Literacy Program
Parents access structured learning support

480 students at Samta Primary School in Babati Tanzania can access quality education in 2022 thanks to support provided through So They Can's Ubuntu Consortium. Beyond students – parents, teachers and the broader community all benefit from So They Can's interlinked and complementary projects implemented in the school community through an holistic approach that improves quality education, and achieves cross-cutting community development. Access to education and literacy can change a child's life. Now, in an exciting development at Samta Primary School, it is also changing the lives of parents through an Adult Literacy Program.

The three R's - reading, writing and arithmetic - are the foundation skills of literacy and numeracy. However in underserved communities, like Babati in Tanzania, older generations lack these important skills due to intergenerational and multi-dimensional poverty. Two dedicated teachers at Samta Primary School are on a mission to change that. They have initiated the Adult Literacy Program, which invites students' parents to access their skilled support through a structured learning program at the school. The first cohort of enrolled parents consists of 8 eager adults (4 women: 4 men) who attend classes from 2pm until 5pm on weekdays at the school. 60% of the parents have already mastered reading and writing skills since commencing studying this year. All participants have shown remarkable dedication and determination in their learning given their responsibilities managing their young families, and they will continue attending classes throughout the remainder of the year.

Now with improved reading skills, the parents can also access and enjoy books through Samta's Mobile Box Library. Both children and their parents can enjoy the experience of reading through engaging story books in the local language, Swahili, books which were donated in 2020 as a part of So They Can's Let's Learn project. The mobile library is a collection of 175 books in boxes and shared across Standard 1 and 2 classrooms for students to access, and their parents through the Adult Literacy Program. It ensures that despite limitations in the school's infrastructure to provide a dedicated library space, everyone has the opportunity to further develop their literacy through reading.





Education Program
Provision of Small Grants

Building income generation capacity

In 2022, So They Can Tanzania commenced providing small grants to local groups via the Education Program. These grants provide the capital needed to commence income generating activities. Through So They Can's My Voice and Keeping Girls in School (KGIS) projects, 13 student groups were assessed as eligible to receive a grant worth TSH 500,000 (approximately AUD $300) to support activities conducted in their schools to build their skills in entrepreneurship and financial management, as well as important soft skills such as discipline, responsibility and teamwork. Grants are also available to students who are living under difficult conditions, for example in a single-mother household with limited income. For those students the grant can be used towards school materials.

Through the KGIS project, 5 enthusiastic entrepreneurial student groups were awarded grants to establish retail shops, a hairdresser salon and a Maasai blanket decorating service. Through the My Voice project 7 student groups have commenced income generating activities with their grants including shops (where students sell school related items during daily lunch breaks), a tailoring shop (for school uniform repairs); a beekeeping project and a liquid cleaning product business.



In the local network of mothers and fathers who are locally-embedded Champions of Change, grants up to TZS 500,0000 are also available as economic support to stimulate livelihoods. To date this year 5 champion groups have been awarded grants which have provided capital for them to establish businesses in goat keeping, tailoring, a canteen, horticulture and the sale of sunflower oil.







Education Program
ARPS Scholars

Supporting leaders of the next generation

So They Can's first program-supported school, Aberdare Ranges Primary School, opened for the first time in 2010, to provide education to children who were internally displaced due to the 2007 election violence in Kenya. From that beginning, the school has grown significantly to cater for the needs of the expanding local community, and approximately 120 new students have enrolled in the school every year since. Today, 1,238 students (634 boys: 604 girls) are enrolled across Grade 1 to Standard 8 (from pre-primary to secondary school), and they are taught by a dedicated and skilled cohort of 30 teachers.

It was with great pride that the students, teachers, parents and the So They Can team witnessed the first cohort of program-supported students of ARPS, graduating from secondary school in May 2022. It is a significant achievement given the historical circumstances of these young people, who have overcome the trauma and hardships of displacement to achieve outstanding academic results.

Following the Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education exam, which students sat in February 2022, 24 students qualified to enter university, and 23 students qualified to enter college. In a competitive field of secondary school graduates seeking to secure limited tertiary education opportunities, half of the student cohort succeeded in securing placements and the remaining half are set to pursue both formal and informal vocational training. Their chosen fields of study are diverse and show great promise for producing skilled young people who can contribute in all areas of the labour market and civic society. Students are enrolled to commence study in September in both bachelor and college programs in education, nursing, science, commerce, engineering, computer science, human resources, pharmacy and law. Their commitment to better themselves through education, despite the multiple barriers which they have faced in their short lives, is a testament to their resilience and determination.

So They Can has shared the costs of school attendance with each student's parent(s) and/or caregiver during their primary and secondary years, and remains committed to continue to do so during their tertiary years. 40 of the students will receive scholarship support from So They Can to meet their basic needs and education-related fees. For each student, eligibility for support is determined through a needs assessment, carried out by so They Can's Social Workers. Once support is established regular face-to-face family visits enable them to build trusting relationships, and track improvements in students' wellbeing, education attendance and performance. Each parent(s) and/or caregiver, and the supported student, signs a formal agreement with So They Can, as a requirement of the scholarship. It is agreed that contributions are subject to the ongoing commitment of all parties. Namely, the submission of quarterly academic performance reports to So They Can, good academic results which are reviewed annually, and importantly a commitment by students to give back to their community once they complete their studies.

Impact Story
Phrister, an Aspiring Journalist

Set to pursue her dream of attending university

When her family was forcibly displaced from their home during the 2007 election violence, Phrister together with her parents and four siblings, sought safety at a temporary camp for internally displaced people, in a camp in Nakuru.

She was eight years old when she started studying at Aberdare Ranges Primary School (ARPS) in 2010, and right from the start she was a conscientious and high-performing student. Phrister attributes her success to the encouragement she received from both the teaching and non-teaching staff during her formative years at ARPS. In particular she recalls that her class teacher, Madam Rose, always motivated her and her classmates to work hard in their studies. In a home environment where her parents struggled to put food on the table, and missing meals was common, the provision of supplies from So They Can was invaluable. Phrister recalls how lucky she felt when she received reusable sanitary pads, as it meant that she did not have to miss school, and her grades would not suffer from missing classes. It was also the So They Can supported feeding program that assured she had at least one nutritious meal a day.

Her hard work and perseverance paid off, she was able to attend a secondary school for high performing students. It was daunting at first to join a diverse student cohort, whose family backgrounds, and life experiences were so different. But regular mentorship sessions, facilitated by So They Can, gave her the confidence to tackle the challenges that she faced, and develop as a capable young woman.

"My dream is to become an accomplished journalist. I want to address, and 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."

It is still hard for her to believe that shortly she will be an undergraduate student at Kenyatta University. As a child of parents who, due to extreme hardship, did not have the financial means to support her education, it is with enormous gratitude that she says asante sana to the supporters of So They Can.



Community Development Program Family Strengthening Project

Empowered communities nurture thriving children

Following community-based consultations in East Pokot, and a comprehensive needs assessment carried out by So They Can's local Social Workers 20 new families were invited to participate in our Family Strengthening Project this year, bringing the total number of families receiving support to 40. Support is provided over a three-year period, during which time families become informed on child wellbeing and given income generating training and support, ensuring the preservation of the family unit, and the continued education of the children.

A decent and stable income is an important determining factor in whether or not the children in a family can continue their education. Consequently, ensuring that adults are adequately equipped with skills and resources to generate an income is critical in order to break the poverty cycle. To enable income generating activities, So They Can conducted 6 one-day training sessions for families participating in the Family Strengthening Project from marginalised communities in Baringo County in early 2022. 31 participants from 20 families (half of all of the project-supported families) participated. The training sessions, conducted over a five-month period from March to July 2022, were facilitated by So They Can's specialised social workers and training facilitators, and covered training on business skills, as well as child protection and parenting. The main focus, business skills training, covered a range of relevant skills including idea generation and review; planning and research; communication; marketing; and the 4 Ps (products, prices, place and promotion). Participants also had the opportunity to draft their business plan, and receive feedback from the facilitators.

At the conclusion of the training, a graduation ceremony was conducted to acknowledge graduates active participation, and celebrate their commitment to put theory into practice and improve their livelihoods. The families were encouraged to sustain their enthusiasm beyond the training room, and strive to become ambassadors of positive change in their communities by fully utilising their newly acquired business acumen. Together with a graduation certificate, families received goats to support them to commence income generation activities independently. A total of 95 goats were disseminated among the participating families, all of whom expressed their thanks to So They Can. The families will rear the livestock and sell the offspring at the local market. In the most marginalised areas of Kenya, such as Baringo County, such families are at high risk of perpetual multi-dimensional poverty. Through the Family Strengthening Project, So They Can remains committed to ensuring that no one is left behind, and that every child is afforded their right to quality education, even in the most hard-to-reach areas of East Africa. By 2030 the Family Strengthening Project will empower over 1,000 at-risk children, ensuring that they can access quality education. 250 families will also be supported with knowledge, skills and resources so that each family unit can independently provide a safe environment for children to thrive.

Impact Story
John, a FSP participant

Pursuing his dream of attending school

John, aged 12, is a conscientious student in grade 5 at Sunrise Primary School in East Pokot. His family (his mother and five siblings) started receiving support this year through the So They Can Family Strengthening Project.

When John saw his friend Kiptoo and other students arrive at school in uniforms he admired how smartly they were all dressed, and he felt hopeful that his turn might come soon. 'I first learnt about So They Can when I asked my friends about their new uniforms. They told me that they give families goats and help enrol their children in school with uniforms, school bags and shoes'. It was also around that same time, that a So They Can Child Protection Officer visited Sunrise Primary School, to teach John and his classmates about the importance of good behavior, and child rights.

Shortly after, a So They Can Social Worker visited John's family. Following an assessment of his family's needs, due to their vulnerability, and the hardships they were facing, they were encouraged to join the Family Strengthening Project. Bravely John's mother left her abusive husband, and together with her children resettled in a small house to start a new life.



'I work hard in class because I know that I will be supported to continue my education, and it is my hope that I can join high school in the future'.

The support which John's mother receives enables her to meet the immediate needs of her children, and generate a sustainable income, so that she can fulfill her wish to send her children to school. 'My mother came home three weeks ago with six goats that she received from So They Can. I felt very happy, the goats will multiply and we will have many animals at home!' The income from the sale of the goat's offspring will supplement the small income she generates making wood products (beds and stands). Over the next three years John's mother will be able to participate in a series of training, and access support, which as a single mother, will put her in good stead to provide for her family.



Community Development Program Wezesha Business Skills Project

Economic empowerment for marginalised women

In 2022 alone, 300 women will directly benefit from our Wezesha Business Skills Project (WBSP). The project aims to build the financial and social capacity of women through business skills training and the provision of loans. This allows women to build and sustain an income and provide for their families.

This year five women trained through WBSP secured employment, which they largely attributed to being able to present the Women Empowerment Certificate provided to them upon completion of the project's three-day business training. The women gained formal employment in the hotel and retail sectors. Their regular salary will greatly contribute to an increase in household income for the women, improving the well-being of their family members and ensuring the continued education of their children.

Additionally under this project Inclusion and engagement with a new community, the Ilchamus Womens' Group in the Loosampurmpur area of Baringo County, commenced this year. The group has a strong membership of 100 local women who quickly started benefiting from the project's activities During Q1, 95 of the women gained knowledge in the area of business management, gaining skills in business planning and management, sales and marketing and bookkeeping through a business skills training session conducted by So They Can. The training was well received, and the women participated enthusiastically, determined to better their lives through improved livelihoods.









Impact Story
Lilian, A Successful Entrepreneur

Pursuing her dream of becoming a fashion designer

'It doesn't matter how little you start with, you can be great at what you love. There is no bank account limit on realising your dreams'.

Lilian, a Wezesha Business Skills Project (WBSP) participant, knows this to be true, she speaks from her own personal experience.

Lilian lives in Nakuru, Kenya and she had to overcome many challenges to become the successful business woman that she is today. When she started working, she was doing simple tailoring and repairs at a rent-free area in her local shopping centre. She worked hard to gain customers, and earn a living through small jobs, with the little equipment that she could afford. Business started slowly, but she was persistent, and even from the beginning customers understood Lilian's skill and passion.

Today she is the proud owner of a fashion design shop in Nakuru. The support she received through So They Can's WBSP in 2018-19 provided her the capital and business skills to harness her talent and passion, and establish a profitable small business. Lilian recounts that 'the first cheque I ever saw and touched was for KES 60,000 (approximately AUD $730) from So They Can. With that loan I bought two sewing machines. More than business growth and success, there is so much satisfaction in knowing that I am now able to feed my family of six and educate my children.'

With the new sewing machines, Lilian's business quickly expanded. It allowed her to finish orders in a shorter time-frame and increase her customer-base. She was also able to provide employment to three local women, and mentor them in both tailoring and business skills.

She enjoys that her work varies from designing wedding dresses, to formal attire, to casual wear. Her designs are innovative and stylish, making her a well known name in Nakuru. Lilian proudly showcases her designs on her Facebook page, Jaynewang Mundia, and is regularly invited to talk about fashion on local radio and tv programs. Her ambition is to become one of the most sought after designers in Kenya, and she is well on her way!



Community Development Program Community Health

Medical camps in hard-to-reach communities

To ensure that no-one is left behind, in early 2022 So They Can started medical camps to reach the most hard-to-reach and marginalised community members. In partnership with selected government clinics within the communities, qualified medical professionals (including Clinical Officers, Nurses, Community Health Volunteers, a Pharmacist and Camp Coordinator) travel to remote communities. The camps ensure the provision of preventative, curative and referral health services and information to marginalised community members in those areas who have limited or no access to health care due to barriers of distance, cost and low literacy. The camps provide a broad range of essential services including COVID-19 vaccination, immunisation, deworming, family planning, cervical and breast cancer screening, provision of basic medicines and consumables for common illnesses, as well as general health talks and the dissemination of Informational, Educational and Communication (IEC) materials.

Communities that are healthy, informed and able to take a proactive role in supporting the health and education of their children is a key focus of So They Can's holistic programming. Healthy children and communities have the best chance of thriving, however, currently government health services and supplies are not sufficient and even basic treatable ailments can result in fatalities. For marginalised community members, particularly in hard-to-reach areas, the issue is exacerbated. The distance to medical treatment, and the cost of transport and subsequent service provision, result in large community populations suffering from treatable health conditions. Access to community health messaging is also an issue. In particular women, who are least likely to access health services, are not informed about their sexual and reproductive health and rights, which results in unintended pregnancies and also a high risk of harmful cultural practices such as FGC.

In June 2022 the first medical camp was delivered by So They Can Kenya, in the Kamathatha community in Nakuru County. The local Kamathatha Primary School provided their facilities for the camp, and 250 adults (80% of whom were women), and 60 children received free, quality basic health care, improving their general health and wellbeing. Due to the success of the camp, in 2023 So They Can Kenya plans to conduct 6 medical camps to enable 2,000 community members to directly benefit in underserved communities in both Baringo and Nakuru.

School-based medical camps were also carried out in all program-supported schools in Kenya. So They Can's Education team in collaboration with the District Medical Officer facilitated the camps at each school to provide students' 3 to 15 years old with a basic health check-up. The check-ups conducted were on eyes, ears, mouth, skin, and physical disabilities, the aim was to provide parents with a basic guide on their children's health, and how to seek further treatments and or medication if needed.

Community-Based Medical Camp

310 community members attended the one-day medical camp in Kamathatha, most of whom were mothers with children in need of basic health care.













School-Based Medical Camps

All students accessed a free basic health check at program-supported schools in Kenya, facilitated in partnership with the District Medical Officer

















Urgent Funding Need
ARPS Scholars - AUD $10,000

Tertiary Scholarships for Promising Kenyan Students

We are seeking an AUD $10,000 contribution to ensure that 40 Kenyan students can pursue tertiary education in 2022.

So They Can's first program-supported school, Aberdare Ranges Primary School (ARPS), opened for the first time in 2010, to provide education to children who were internally displaced due to the 2007 election violence in Kenya. From that beginning, the school has grown significantly to cater for the needs of the expanding local community, and approximately 120 new students have enrolled in the school every year since. Today, 1,238 students (634 boys: 604 girls) are enrolled across Grade 1 to Standard 8 (from pre-primary to secondary school), and they are taught by a dedicated and skilled cohort of 30 teachers.

It was with great pride that the students, teachers, parents and the So They Can team witnessed the first cohort of program-supported students of ARPS, graduating from secondary school in May 2022. It is a significant achievement given the historical circumstances of these young people, who have overcome the trauma and hardships of displacement to achieve outstanding academic results.



Following the Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education exam, which students sat in February 2022, 24 students qualified to enter university, and 23 students qualified to enter college. In a competitive field of secondary school graduates seeking to secure limited tertiary education opportunities, half of the student cohort succeeded in securing placements and the remaining half are set to pursue both formal and informal vocational training. Their chosen fields of study are diverse and show great promise for producing skilled young people who can contribute in all areas of the labour market and civic society. Students are enrolled to commence study in September in both bachelor and college programs in education, nursing, science, commerce, engineering, computer science, human resources, pharmacy and law. Their commitment to better themselves through education, despite the multiple barriers which they have faced in their short lives, is a testament to their resilience and determination.



So They Can has shared the costs of school attendance with each student's parent(s) and/or caregiver during their primary and secondary years, and remains committed to continue to do so during their tertiary years. 40 of the students will receive scholarship support from So They Can to meet their basic needs, education-related fees, and break the cycle of poverty. This is ensured through financial support towards tuition fees,, books, learning supplies, uniforms and boarding fees (when necessary). For each student, eligibility for support is determined through a needs assessment, carried out by so They Can's Social Workers. Once support is established regular face-to-face family visits enable them to build trusting relationships, and track improvements in students' wellbeing, education attendance and performance. The home visits also serve as an important opportunity for parent(s) and/or caregivers to seek confidential advice, and request additional support to address any new or persistent impediments to the family's wellbeing..

Each parent(s) and/or caregiver, and the supported student, signs a formal agreement with So They Can, as a requirement of the scholarship. It is agreed that contributions are subject to the ongoing commitment of all parties. Namely, the submission of quarterly academic performance reports to So They Can, good academic results which are reviewed annually, and importantly a commitment by students to give back to their community once they complete their studies.

All of these students have worked hard, despite challenging conditions, to gain entrance into universities, colleges and vocational training institutes in the hope of developing specialised skills, to secure work, and a stable income.







Urgent Funding Need
Water Solution - AUD $12,000

A clean, safe, reliable water supply for children

Through partnership with Well Aware, we are positioned to establish clean, safe water for schools. Mobilising AUD $12,000 would ensure that 173 primary school students at Katikit Primary School would have access to clean drinking water.

So They Can, as part of our School Improvement Project, is committed to delivering water solutions in our partner schools. Reliable access to water is critical for the Core schools as they move into the Sustained phase in order for them to be able to maintain the achieved high standard of education and learning, run school feeding programs, prevent girls from having to collect water each morning before school - often being exposed to violence at the collection points, and enable them to remain in school when they have their period.

At present in Kenya, a lack of water means lessons are sometimes cancelled so pupils can go to fetch water from other sources, losing valuable learning time. Additionally, the general cleanliness of the school environment and personal hygiene of students is impacted. The water currently used by the schools is often unsafe and contaminated as it is fetched from dirty ponds, creeks and canals often shared by people and livestock. This leads to many health issues. Scarcity of water sources leads to overcrowding at the source of water and increases the risk of outbreak of diseases such as typhoid and amoeba.

A reliable access to clean water has an immense impact on the wellbeing of the schools' communities and wider communities. It leads to:

- improved health, hygiene and sanitation;
- improved efficiency of learning and teaching;
- increased food security as a result of increased yields from farms and gardens;
- stimulation of economic growth in the community; and
- sustainability of other outcomes achieved through So They Can Education Program.

Through our comprehensive School Improvement needs assessment, carried out by our Education staff in Tanzania, Katikit Primary School in East Pokot has been identified in urgent need of a water solution. Through partnership with Well Aware, we can establish a rainwater harvest solution in the school community through a 50/50 cost share agreement. In 2022, 173 students are enrolled at Katikit Primary School (111 boys: 62 girls) and would benefit immeasurably from clean water, as would the broader school community.



Urgent Funding Need
Family Strengthening -AUD $25,000

Empowered communities nurture thriving children

AUD $25,000 would ensure that 20 new families, in dire need, and at risk of extreme poverty, can join our Family Strengthening Project in 2023.

Family strengthening is a key enabler to child wellbeing. The family unit provides a critical source of love, nurture and encouragement that enables a child to thrive. With the understanding that the family unit is central to the progress and success of a child's educational journey, So They Can's Family Strengthening Project focuses on empowering vulnerable families.

A dedicated network of community mobilisers, known as Champions of Change, are embedded in local communities to identify, assess and support families facing severe hardship. By participating in the project, a family is assured that they will receive support to meet their basic needs, send their children to school, and break the cycle of poverty.

Tailored support enables long-term sustainable transformation. Support is provided based on the specific needs of each family. It can range from assistance with a child's educational costs; short term emergency food parcels; donation of household items, solar panels and/or water tanks for the home; training for parents' on income generating activities, child protection and children's rights; start-up capital for incoming generating activities; to assistance with family health and nutrition.

Our focus is to enable families and school communities to provide a loving and supportive environment that nurtures every child, so that vulnerable and at-risk children can thrive both in and outside of the classroom. By 2030 the Family Strengthening Project will empower over 1,000 at-risk children, ensuring that they can access quality education. 250 families will also be supported with knowledge, skills and resources so that each family unit can independently provide a safe environment for children to thrive.

Katherine, a Champion of Change in East Pokot, sees first-hand the remarkable impact of the Family Strengthening project. 'Families living in extreme poverty in East Pokot are ostracised from their communities. The support they receive from So They Can transforms their lives - mostly through income generation, and education support. They go on to become valuable community mobilisers - they lead by example and encourage others to participate and send their children to school.' Apura picture below in 2015, and in 2022, attending school with support form this project.





Urgent Funding Need
Classrooms in Kenya - AUD $100,000
Access to quality education at Ng'ambo in Baringo

The learning conditions at one of our new partner schools is dire. Students are learning under trees, in tents and iron sheet shacks. We urgently need to mobilise AUD $100,000 to construct safe, permanent classrooms.

School: Ngambo Primary School
County: Baringo
Sub-County: Baringo-South
School Community: 353 primary school students (186 boys: 166 girls); 10 teachers (4 male: 6 female)
Total number of classrooms: 5 (2 concrete; 2 iron sheet; 1 tent)

Ngambo Primary school was established next to Lake Baringo. However, due to changes in the climate, the lake has continued to expand, and in the process engulfed all community structures situated close to the lake. Over time the entire school became submerged, forcing the school management to relocate the school's facilities to much higher ground, approximately 6km away from the expanding lake. The community within their limited financial capacity have worked hard to construct 2 permanent classrooms, and sourced a tent from the Kenya Red Cross to provide temporary spaces so that all children can continue to attend classes. With a student cohort of 353, the need for a permanent solution is dire. Currently there are two concrete classrooms which are in the process of being completed, two iron sheet classrooms, a tent which accommodates a majority of students across the various grades, and some tables and chairs set up outside under some trees.

The urgent need for support was brought to the attention of So They Can by the County Council. Upon assessment the school was deemed eligible to become a partner school, due to the significant need in the school community, and commitment to provide full support, from both the school management and the school community, for implemented projects. So They Can and Ng'ambo Primary School signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in January 2022, and from then So They Can has commenced working with the school. Additionally the school is continuing to try and mobilise resources independently to ensure that the children can continue their education in a safe, and secure environment that is conducive to learning.

Initial estimates to construct new classrooms have been obtained by our Country Manager in Kenya to provide a school infrastructure solution to the school community. Constructing 7 new permanent classrooms, to add to the 2 permanent classrooms currently being finalised, would ensure that the school student cohort is divided into classes of up to 40 students. Ultimately improved teaching and learning conditions in government primary schools means an increased number of students move through key transitional points of their education enabling them to break the poverty cycle and provide for their own needs.

Current learning environment

Classes are being conducted in temporary classrooms, under the trees and in makeshift iron-sheet rooms.

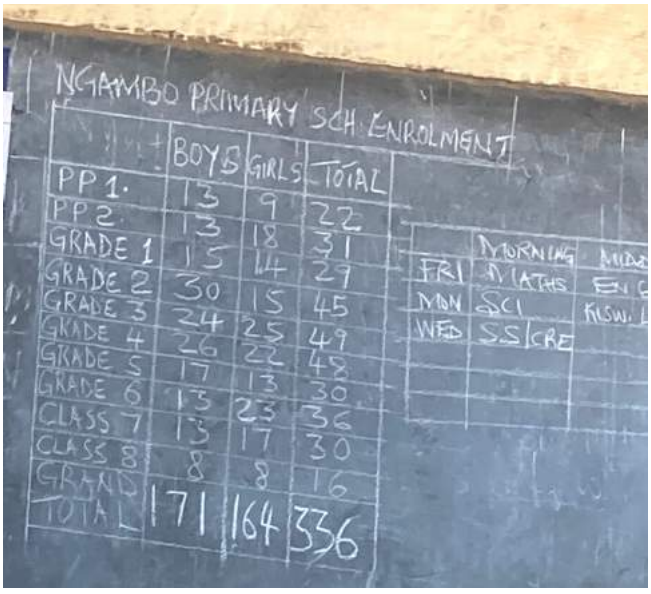
















Current learning environment

The school received a tent from The Kenyan Red Cross, and some classes are being conducted inside.

















so they can

By 2030, our goal is to provide quality education to 36,000 children a year who are living in poverty in East Africa.

Together we can be the difference.



Learn more and get in touch...

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