



Life-Changing Volunteer Adventures

# COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS 2020



023 8178 0957



info@african-adventures.co.uk



www.african-adventures.co.uk







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# OUR STORY

African Adventures is an ethical social enterprise that provides humanitarian and financial support to educational projects in Africa, whilst delivering eye-opening and rewarding volunteering experiences for people from across the UK.

Company Director Dan Mew first travelled to Kenya in 2007, where he volunteered at a community project called The Walk Centre. Set up by local pastor Alex Maina and his wife Patricia, it provided a basic education and lunchtime meal for children living on or around the nearby dumpsite.

Dan was so impacted by his time at The Walk Centre, that he decided to spend his professional life supporting similar projects and increasing access to education for as many disadvantaged children in Africa as possible. Two years later, African Adventures was born, and we are proud to have celebrated our 12th anniversary this year.

Today, the company employs almost 50 across the countries we operate in,

Over 6,000 volunteers have travelled with us, and over £600,000 has been given by both African Adventures and African Adventures Foundation – our charity arm – to aid our partner projects' development.

There is no denying that the past 18 months has been a very tough period for both African Adventures and The Foundation, and the impact on our partner projects has been considerable. We have worked hard to adapt to the situation and focus on longer-term aims for the business and the charity, whilst trying to maintain a quality service for our volunteers, and ensure continuation of funds into The Foundation.

Our principle aims as a company are to enable development at our partner projects in order to increase access to education for young people, and to provide valuable learning experiences for people from across the UK. We very much look forward to being able to focus on these aims once again.



# FOREWORD

The coronavirus pandemic has proven to be the most significant global challenge in decades. International travel was brought to a grinding halt, the majority of our freedoms were restricted in ways most have never experienced, and the world was forced to watch on as a global pandemic devastated communities.


Whilst some businesses were able to adapt to working from home, and pivot their product/service, those of us working in travel and international development were wrestling with arguably the greatest challenge in either sector's modern history.

At African Adventures, all our trips were either cancelled or postponed, which significantly restricted the support we could offer our partner schools in Africa.

Whilst Africa has managed to avoid the high number of hospitalisations and deaths seen in much older, predominantly Western countries, the economic impact has been devastating.

As you will see in our Communication on Progress, we became something of a food relief agency for the first six months of the pandemic, and I am proud of how our team has balanced providing emergency support to our partner schools in Africa with the obvious pressures imposed on our business in the UK.

The immediate travel climate remains uncertain, but we are looking forward to getting back to what we do best soon – providing life-changing volunteer adventures.



Dan Mew  
Founder  
African Adventures





# THE AFRICAN ADVENTURES FAMILY

**We know that local people are the best people for the job.**

There are no UK staff based in-country, simply because there is no need – our in-country teams know their communities far better than we ever could. This supports the economies of our host destinations by providing productive employment and decent work opportunities, in line with SDG 8 and Principle 6.

All of our work is organised in partnership with the projects (SDG 16); we would not presume to work in areas where our support was not actively requested. Projects provide us with a clear direction for their own development. We respond to their needs in the most effective way possible, by providing volunteers, capital and resources for sustained growth. Throughout the past 18 months, whilst

we have been unable to provide volunteer support, or regular income as a result of volunteers, we have been in regular contact with our in-country teams and provided the most effective support that we could in the circumstances; our focus has been on fundraising for feeding programmes and food parcel provision, and our local staff have delivered this service where it is most needed.

Our core staff teams in Africa have done a great job of collaborating with the relevant parties to ensure that support is provided where it is needed, and we look forward to welcoming back all those staff who work with us to deliver a great experience for our volunteers.



## OUR WORK

The past 18 months have been challenging both for African Adventures as a business and for the community projects we support in Ghana, Kenya and Zanzibar.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has meant that we have not been able to send volunteer groups to our partner projects for well over a year. As a result, our partner projects in Africa have missed out on the humanitarian and financial support they would normally receive through our volunteer programmes. In addition, the widespread closures of businesses and schools at

our host destinations has had a profound impact on the children we support, and their families. With this in mind, we have adapted our focus in an effort to meet the immediate needs of our partner projects and the communities where we work.

Our work over the past 18 months would not have been possible without the generosity of our supporters, and we would like to say a huge thank you to anyone who has donated to African Adventures Foundation.





## Food Parcels and Feeding Programmes

Since April 2020, a large proportion of our work has centred around funding feeding programmes and food parcels for the children who attend our partner projects, and their families.

For many of the children we support, the food they receive at school may be the only meal they eat that day. Widespread school and business closures at our host destinations – designed to curb the spread of Coronavirus – created much food insecurity and economic uncertainty.

As a result, in April 2020 we launched our ‘Fund a Food Parcel’ campaign, which aimed to raise the funds needed to enable our partner projects to continue running their feeding programmes for the duration of the school closures. Between April and June 2020, African Adventures Foundation raised £10,268.30 for our partner projects, enabling them to provide food security for families in their local communities when they needed it most.

In November 2020, we launched our annual Christmas Meal Appeal fundraising campaign, which raised further funds for the feeding programmes at our partner projects. Through this campaign, the Foundation raised £4,715.78.

In January 2021, after nine months of closures, schools at our host destinations began to reopen. As volunteers were still unable to travel, our partner projects were in desperate need of additional funding in order to cope with the costs of reopening. For this reason, we launched an additional fundraising campaign to support with these costs, which raised a further £2,500.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, between April 2020 and April 2021, African Adventures Foundation funded 211,000 meals for the children at our partner projects.

## Mitigating the Risk of COVID-19 at our Partner Projects

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Another key focus of our work over the past 18 months has been helping to ensure that our partner projects are able to reopen safely to their students.

As such, African Adventures and African Adventures Foundation have provided funding for key equipment to promote good hygiene practices.

Our partner projects in Kenya have received funding for water tanks with taps for hand washing, as well as hand sanitiser, face masks and thermometers. To mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic, we have also provided funding to help cover administrative costs such as rent, teachers' salaries, utility bills, textbooks, exam fees and exercise books.

This has been alongside the ongoing funding of feeding programmes.

In Ghana, each of the 10 community projects we support received a Veronica bucket in April 2021, funded by African Adventures Foundation.

These simple but effective hand washing stations consist of a water tank with a tap installed and a basin underneath, so that staff and students can wash their hands in clean, running water. Ideally, each school needs two or three Veronica buckets to cater for the number of students who attend, and funding these will be one of our core aims over the next few months..



# Water & Sanitation Hygiene and Menstrual Health Management Programme



As a result of grant applications, African Adventures Foundation has been awarded funding for a new Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH) and Menstrual Health Management (MHM) programme which will benefit 8,253 girls and 7,798 boys who attend our partner projects in Zanzibar.

Through a combination of educational workshops and construction of better sanitation facilities, the programme will enable the students to reach their full potential by ensuring that all children feel safe and able to attend school.

This programme is vitally important because, currently, all three of our partner projects in Zanzibar have inadequate sanitation facilities. At Fuoni School, there are just four latrine toilets for 3,727 children, with no toilet paper or handwashing facilities. Similarly, at Kijito Upele School, there are just three latrine

for 6,212 children; at Kinuni School, 6,102 children share just four latrine toilets. At all three schools, the water supply is dependent on rainfall.

This lack of adequate facilities, combined with poor understanding of hygiene and menstrual health, has resulted in reduced attendance amongst boys and girls.

Our WASH & MHM programme will improve understanding of good hygiene amongst students through the delivery of hygiene education workshops at our partner schools. The Foundation will also fund the construction of new latrines and handwashing facilities, and the installation of clean piped water. This will enable the students to put their improved understanding of good hygiene into practice



## Water & Sanitation Hygiene and Menstrual Health Management Programme



The programme will also promote better understanding of menstrual health amongst boys and girls aged 10–17. After engaging with our stakeholders on the ground to understand the challenges involved in this, we plan to work with the teachers at our partner schools to increase their sensitivity to menstrual health management. As a result, the programme will equip the staff at the school to be able to deliver educational workshops to students in this age bracket. Students will also be able to attend monthly after-school clubs, organised by our partner schools' newly established Health Committees.

Five local women at each school will also receive training on how to make

reusable sanitary pads for the female students. To help with this, the Foundation will provide two sewing machines, start-up materials, and a sanitary pad template.

Finally, a dedicated sanitation facility will be constructed at each of our partner schools, to give girls a private and hygienic space in which to manage their menstrual health.

This transformative programme will begin in summer 2021, and is set to run until spring 2023. Monitoring and evaluating the progress made through our WASH & MHM programme will be another core aim over the coming months.





## Partner With a School in Africa

With schools from the UK unable to run overseas trips for the past 18 months, we felt it was important that students in the UK and Africa could continue to make connections with each other to learn about global citizenship, cultural exchange and education around the world.

With this in mind, we adapted our offering to meet the challenging circumstances, and launched our Partner With a School in Africa scheme in November 2020. This free initiative gives schools in the UK the opportunity to form a mutually beneficial partnership with one of the schools we support in Ghana, Kenya or Zanzibar.

UK schools who take part in the scheme receive a framed certificate confirming the partnership, and students exchange half-termly pen pal letters with their counterparts in Africa.

UK schools also have access to an exclusive webpage containing a welcome letter from their partner school in Africa, free educational resources, a photo gallery

and information about their partner school's goals for the future.

UK schools also have the option to fundraise for their partner school should they wish to, and can even travel there to volunteer in the future. As a result, the scheme has created an additional source of funding for our partner projects, with several UK schools choosing to raise money for their partner schools to help them continue to stay open during this challenging time.

So far, over 30 UK schools have formed a partnership with a school in Africa, giving their students the chance to learn from young people in Africa, and promoting a deeper understanding of the wider world.

We plan to continue to offer the scheme to UK schools in the future, as a valuable way to facilitate cultural exchange and learning on both sides.



## Construction Work

With volunteer groups unable to travel to our partner projects, key construction projects have had to be put on hold, due to a lack of financial and humanitarian support.

That said, a small amount of construction work has taken place over the past 18 months, largely thanks to the support of major donors who have kindly provided funding via African Adventures Foundation.

At two of our partner schools in Zanzibar, perimeter walls have been built to improve security and keep the children safe throughout the school day. The funding for these projects was provided by two UK schools who have previously travelled with African Adventures.

Thanks to a generous donation from a previous volunteer, one of our partner

projects in Kenya has also been able to relocate to a new, three-acre plot of land, and funding has been provided for the construction of three permanent, brick-built classrooms. The new land also has a water source, so a borehole has been dug to provide fresh water for the school. So far, two classrooms have been completed, and work has begun on the school's new toilets.

Finally, another of our partner projects in Kenya relocated to a new site in 2020, and, thanks to funding provided by a UK school and African Adventures Foundation, the school now has three permanent, brick-built classrooms.

We are very much looking forward to resuming construction work across our partner projects when our volunteer programme is able to run again.





# THE ENVIRONMENT

Prior to the pandemic, environmental considerations became a real focus area for African Adventures, so much so that we created a committee dedicated to ensuring that we were taking all reasonable steps to reduce negative impacts from our work. A number of practical steps were taken in this regard, such as changing to sustainable suppliers for all our business needs, adopting various recycling schemes to minimise our net waste, and challenging our business travel needs.

In addition, we set up a Gyapa stove initiative in Ghana, which involved the provision of energy-saving stoves to a trial number of families connected to our partner projects.

Naturally, the pandemic has required a shift in focus for our staff, as we have been working to ensure the sustainability of African Adventures in a very challenging and unprecedented situation. Our environmental aims have not changed, but our timeframes have. We will continue to review and challenge what we do, to see whether we can make better choices to protect the environment.

An unexpected positive from the pandemic is that we have learned that we can provide effective launches and forums through video conferencing, so we will continue to use this function as appropriate, for the resulting environmental and financial benefits.



# 2020 GOALS

Whilst COVID-19 has had a profound impact on our work and what we have been able to achieve in terms of our 2020 goals, we remain committed to supporting the development of our partner projects and operating in a way that is sustainable, environmentally friendly and ethical.

Our goals for 2020 were:

**Carbon neutral:** Continue to operate a carbon neutral office in the UK, as set out in our three-year company development plan, in support of SDG 13 and Principle 8.

The disruption caused by the pandemic has meant that, for large portions of the previous 18 months, our UK staff have been working from home. As such, we have not been able to see the full impact of the

environmentally friendly policies we put in place for 2020, which included using sustainable office suppliers, recycling our waste where possible, and reducing our business travel. However, we remain committed to mitigating our environmental impact wherever possible, and will continue to challenge how we work to ensure that our environmental impact is kept to a minimum.

**Security:** Construct perimeter walls at our partner projects in Zanzibar to keep the children safe throughout the school day, in support of SDG 4

Thanks to generous donations from UK schools who have previously travelled with us, we have been able to construct perimeter walls at two of our three partner schools in Zanzibar: Kijito Upele and Fuoni.





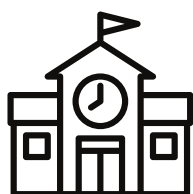
**Micro-finance:** Roll out sustainable micro-finance initiatives, in the form of souvenir shops, at all non-government organisation schools in Kenya, in support of SDG 8.

As no volunteers have been able to travel to Africa due to the pandemic, and because our focus has been on meeting the immediate needs of our partner projects and those who rely on them, this goal was put on hold. We look forward to establishing souvenir shops at our partner projects in Kenya when it is appropriate to do so.



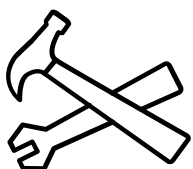
**Educate:** Continue to educate and inform our volunteers about the importance of waste reduction and recycling, in support of SDG 13 and Principle 7.

Over the past 18 months, our communications with our supporters and volunteers have largely focused on in-country updates and promoting our fundraising campaigns, in order to help meet the needs of our partner projects. However, we will continue to focus on the importance of waste reduction and recycling when organising future trips, and will use our newsletters, blogs, and social media channels to further support this messaging.



**Dedzidi Community School:** Complete the construction of a new two-storey, eight-classroom block at Dedzidi Community School in Ghana to further reduce class sizes, in support of SDG 4.

Unfortunately, as no volunteers have been able to travel to Dedzidi Community School since 2019, this goal has not yet been achieved. We now aim to complete the remaining four classrooms in the new block by 2023.



**School Office:** Construct a new office at The Walk Centre in Kenya to provide staff with a better environment in which to mark their students' work and plan lessons, in support of SDG 4.

As our focus throughout the pandemic has been on food provision and meeting our partner projects' immediate reopening costs, this goal has not yet been achieved. We aim to finish construction of the new office by 2023.



**Gyapa Stoves:** Expand the Gyapa stoves offsetting scheme to 250 families to offset 50% of carbon emissions from volunteers' flights, in support of SDGs 7 and 13 and Principles 8 and 9.

No volunteer flights took place in 2020, however we remain committed to rolling out our Gyapa stoves carbon offsetting initiative in the future. As international travel becomes possible again, we will set out clear targets to hold ourselves accountable and ensure we are mitigating our environmental impact wherever possible.

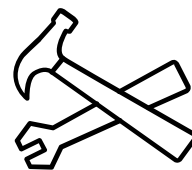
# 2021/22 GOALS



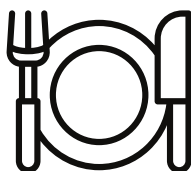
Continue construction of new classroom block at Dedzidi Community School



Continue to reduce our carbon emissions through the Gyapa stove offsetting scheme



Continue construction of permanent classrooms at seven partner projects in Kenya



Provide food security at partner projects in Kenya through feeding programme support



Provide Veronica buckets for all 10 partner projects in Ghana to support post-Covid WASH initiatives



Complete WASH programme at one school in Zanzibar





**THANK YOU**