TELL US ABOUT EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN

Rod: Education for all Children, or “EFAC” as it’s known, is a scholarship, mentoring and career preparation program that provides a path out of poverty for extremely bright, poor students in Kenya. We founded it in 2008 and have offices in Portsmouth NH and Nairobi, Kenya.

HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?

Rod: EFAC scholars are chosen at the end of 8th grade based on extreme financial need, rank in class national test scores, and leadership qualities. They come from slums and extremely remote villages where it’s very likely that they are the first person in their family to be educated.

WHAT KINDS OF SCHOLARSHIPS DO YOU AWARD?

Nancy: Our baseline scholarship is for four years of high school at one of Kenya’s top performing schools. EFAC sponsors’ donation of $1000 annually, or $83 a month, cover all of a student’s educational costs, including room, board, tuition, uniform.

Rod: At the end of high school, every qualifying scholar, based on a national test, receives another full 4-year scholarship. 98% of EFAC scholars have qualified for higher education programs vs 30% nationally. Sponsors who support a student through college pay $92 a month or $1100. This covers college tuition, living expenses, and a laptop for each student. It’s a testament to the personal relationships that our sponsors develop with their students that almost 80% of them continue their sponsorship through all eight years of our program.

WHAT ELSE DOES EFAC DO?

Nancy: Beyond the financial support, our Kenya staff has developed a robust program to provide extremely disadvantaged students with the tools they need to succeed in life. We weave mentoring, life-skills training, and career preparation through all aspects of our program. Our annual, residential “Bridge Workshops,” for example, teach everything from personal health/wellness to financial literacy, computer skills, and career networking.

HOW MANY STUDENTS HAVE YOU SERVED SINCE YOUR INCEPTION?

Rod: Over the past decade, we have helped 600 students, including graduates, get an education and find thriving careers. We currently accept 90 students a year. Our goal by 2020 is to take 100 students a year which would give us a total of 800 at one time.

WHY IS ADDRESSING GAPS IN GLOBAL EDUCATION SO IMPORTANT TO YOU? WHY THIS CAUSE?

Rod: When we first started traveling in developing countries, the poverty we saw was so overwhelming compared to what we have. There were barefoot kids wearing rags, wandering the streets, begging and having no educational opportunities - we knew we wanted to do something to help alleviate that.

WHAT ARE SOME DATA POINTS YOU HOPE PEOPLE CAN REMEMBER ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR MISSION?

Nancy: Currently, 50% of children in Kenya don’t continue past the 8th grade because high school is not free. More than half of the children who were able to raise funds for the first year never complete high school because of lack of funds. If that continues unabated, there will be even greater numbers of young people who will be uneducated and either unemployed or significantly underemployed.

Rod: We firmly believe that an educated population is a country’s best chance to grow and prosper. Right now, Africa has 19% of the world’s population of young people between the ages of 15-25 - 220 million. In just 10 years, the U.N. estimates that number will increase by 42% to 300 million. Frankly, it’s in each of our interests to promote growth and prosperity in developing countries to help ameliorate a host of problems - increased violence, systemic corruption, mass migration, high rates of infant mortality and climate degradation. Our goal is to limit the sheer waste of talent that results from leaving so many people uneducated.

WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES AS A NONPROFIT?

Nancy: The biggest challenge today is building our career development program in order to insure our graduates successfully access the job market. Another challenge is taking kids from places where no one has had a job or gone to school and getting them to believe that they are the future of Kenya and the change makers. Once they get that and it comes across in an interview, they get the job, support their siblings and are truly Kenya’s future. These are incredible young people. They just need a little support to realize their potential.

To learn more, visit educationforallchildren.org.