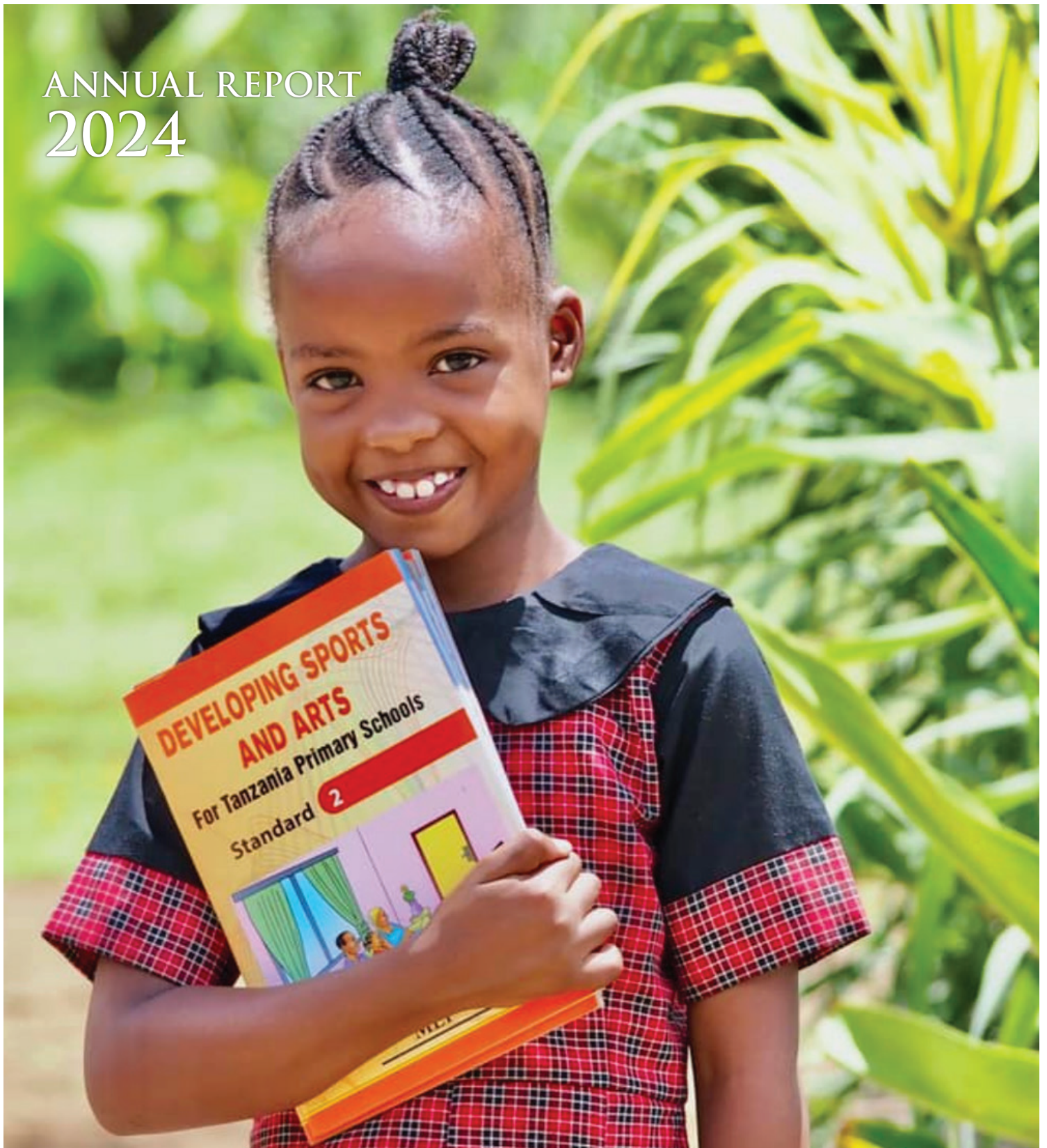


# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



“EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL  
WEAPON WHICH YOU CAN USE TO  
CHANGE THE WORLD”

– NELSON MANDELA



MAASAI EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION







## MEF MISSION STATEMENT

To improve the educational, social and economic equality of members of the Maasai ethnic group in Tanzania by enhancing the education of Maasai youth through financial and technical support of rural schools serving Maasai youth and scholarships for individual Maasai youth.

Our main focus has been the establishment and expansion of the Engaruka English Medium Primary School and the continued organizational and financial support of the associated operational and student scholarship needs.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It was another incredible year for the Maasai Education Foundation and the Engaruka English Medium Primary School (EEMPS). This was our first year with students in every class, preschool through seventh grade. The EEMPS 7th graders passed their national exam with an A or B average, meaning that the students that graduated EEMPS in December 2024 are now eligible to go to secondary school.

Looking to the future, the Engaruka Community Initiative Organization (ENCO) and the Engaruka community started planning a secondary school early in 2024. MEF was not involved in this planning, but we did agree to accept donations for student sponsorships and school construction.

This year, five MEF donors visited EEMPS for three days in May to learn about the school. If you are interested in visiting the school and an incredible safari, email [maasaieducationfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:maasaieducationfoundation@gmail.com).

Finally, I would like to thank all our generous supporters. Your donations continue to make an incredible difference. I have been the chair of the MEF Board of Directors since its founding in 2016 and will be stepping down in February 2025 to be a regular board member. Working with our EEMPS partners and MEF supporters and board members has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Thank you!



**Theo Dillaha**  
MEF Chair



**Martha Mereso Sengeruan**  
EEMPS Manager and  
ENCO Executive Director

# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

On behalf of Engaruka English Medium Primary School (EEMPS) and the entire Engaruka Community Initiative Organization (ENCO) team, I want to say thank you for all the support you have given us in 2024. Your help has made a big difference in the lives of many children, and we are truly grateful.

Last year was a great year for EEMPS. We had our first-ever Grade 7 graduation, a special moment that showed how far we have come in providing education to the children of Engaruka. The boys dormitory was completed and can now accommodate students, making it easier for them to stay in school and focus on their studies.

We also made big progress on the ENCO Secondary School project, starting construction before the end of the year. This means that by early 2025 our students will have a place to continue learning after finishing primary school. More parents are choosing to bring their children to EEMPS, and our student enrollment has grown, showing that our school is now well-known for providing a good education.

Thank you for believing in us and for standing with us. Your support is helping change lives, giving hope to children, and creating a brighter future for Engaruka. We look forward to doing even more in 2025 with your continued support.







## MAASAI EDUCATION FOUNDATION HISTORY

In November of 2016, a group of friends in Blacksburg, Virginia, formed The Maasai Education Foundation (MEF). MEF's mission is to support the activities of the Engaruka Community Initiative Organization (ENCO) in improving educational opportunities for Maasai children in rural Tanzania. Maasai students need a good foundation in English to be able to pass the national secondary school entrance exams and further their education.

Construction of the Engaruka English Medium Primary School (EEMPS) began in May of 2017. In February 2018, ENCO opened EEMPS with its first preschool class of 48 students in a new two-classroom building. Since then, every year as students move up to the next grade level, a new grade is added and a new group of students starts preschool.

Today EEMPS is a rural boarding school with 276 students in pre-school through 7th grade, the highest level in Tanzanian primary schools. As enrollment increased every year, the facilities also expanded. The campus now includes a dining hall, seven classrooms, offices, an improved water supply system, a playground, gardens, orchards, maize and bean fields, livestock facilities, boys and girls washrooms, and boys and girls dormitories.

While ENCO operates EEMPS, MEF is the main financial backer, providing half of the schools' operating funds and most of its construction funding. Almost 70% of EEMPS students come from low-income families with many students sponsored by MEF or other donors. The school now ranks in the top 10% of Tanzania primary schools on mandatory standardized national exams

This year was once again a very successful year for MEF and EEMPS.







# 2024 — A VERY SUCCESSFUL YEAR

We were able to accomplish a great deal during this past year that we can all be proud of, due to the generous support of MEF donors and partners.

- In 2024, generous MEF donors contributed \$297,907 in donations, plus an additional \$11,858 in-kind contribution from the creative agency AccessU of Roanoke, Virginia, for their work in redesigning the MEF website.
- MEF's two annual fundraisers raised a total of \$108,638 with the Mid-Year Matching Fundraiser raising \$54,598 (including a \$10,000 match), surpassing its \$35,000 goal for EEMPS, and the Giving Tuesday/December Fundraiser raising \$54,040 (including a \$10,000 match), again surpassing its \$40,000 goal.
- The Giving Tuesday/December Fundraiser raised an additional \$9,350 in sponsorships for the new ENCO Secondary School, and a \$103,000 donation from the Crane Family will support construction of biology and chemistry laboratories and washrooms at the secondary school.
- In 2024, MEF sent \$255,603 in grants to ENCO. That total included \$188,253 for the construction of the boys dormitory and \$60,000 for student sponsorships and school operations, \$1,000 to support at-risk students who stayed on campus during the December break, \$350 in gifts that sponsors sent to graduating 7th graders, and \$6,000 to support secondary school expenses for Maria Papaa Kingi, the girl who inspired the creation of MEF and the school.
- Two hundred and seventy-six children were enrolled at the Engaruka English Medium Primary School during the 2024 school year, 142 girls and 134 boys, in preschool through 7th grade. All but eight were boarders. Seventy-four students were directly sponsored by individual MEF donors at \$700 per student per year, 62 by their parents, and by 25 other sponsors that paid ENCO directly. The remaining non-sponsored students were funded through EEMPS operational funds provided by MEF.





- In 2024, EEMPS faculty and staff included fourteen full-time teachers and two part-time teachers. Seventeen non-teaching staff included the school director, a girls matron, a boys patron, cooks, cleaners, guards, livestock keepers, an accountant, and a public relations person.
- A much-needed addition of two classrooms and an ENCO office to the original TX Foundation building was completed in July. This addition was generously funded by Tom and Dani Neils directly through ENCO. Tom, a dear friend of Martha and Abby Olemisiko and a landscape architect who serves as an advisor to the MEF Board of Directors, has been instrumental in planning the school campus. They visited EEMPS twice in 2024 and updated site plans for the boys dormitory and the ENCO secondary school, and assessed the construction progress of the TX Foundation addition, the boys dormitory, and the new ENCO secondary school classroom buildings.



*Vegetable garden*



*Classroom addition*







## DONOR IMPACT — BOYS DORMITORY

Thanks to \$188,253 in contributions from MEF donors, construction was completed on three of the four wings of the new boys dormitory in December. Each wing includes a washroom and houses approximately 60 boys, so the three completed wings can accommodate 180 boys. ENCO plans to add a fourth wing and patron's quarter when funds are available. This is a major accomplishment for EEMPS that frees up classroom space that had been used to temporarily house boys, and provides room for additional students to enroll in the school. The new dormitory significantly enhances the living conditions for students, providing them with a safe and comfortable environment that supports their academic journey.



## SPONSORSHIPS

For 2024, sponsoring a student for an academic year remained at \$700. These funds help provide food, bedding, school supplies and other essentials, as well as staff salaries. Information can be found on MEF's website

[MAASAI EDUCATION FOUNDATION.ORG](https://maasaiducationfoundation.org)







## FIRST GRADUATION

The end of 2024 brought one of the school's major milestones, the first-ever grade 7 graduation. This was a joyous celebration of the success of our students who have worked so hard to complete their primary education. Sixteen female and 13 male students passed the national Primary School Leaving Exam, making them all eligible for secondary school and furthering their education, which they all plan to do.

*Pictured above (l to r): graduating 7th girls and 7th grade boys*

Graduate Ndeya Masiaya, one of our very first students, shared these thoughts...

I am proud to be one of the first students to graduate from Engaruka English Medium Primary School. When I joined EEMPS in 2018, I never thought I would reach this point. Many girls in my community don't get the chance to finish school because of challenges like early marriage and cultural beliefs that say girls should only stay at home and help with chores or get married at a young age. The teachers at EEMPS didn't just teach us, they mentored us and encouraged us to dream big. They taught us that education is the key to changing our lives and our community. Without this school, many of us would not have had this opportunity.



*Ndeya Masiaya in middle*



*Nemayan Daudi, right, an EEMPS student since preschool*



# A GROWING REPUTATION

The Engaruka English Medium Primary School is becoming very well known for providing an outstanding education. More parents are choosing to bring their children to EEMPS, resulting in increased student enrollment. In 2024 EEMPS had the honor of being chosen to host inter-school competitions for sports and academics for the first time, welcoming more than 10 different schools to Engaruka to participate. Governmental support for EEMPS' accomplishments was also demonstrated by visits to the school from two Members of Parliament and other government officials.

This year 17 EEMPS 4th grade students received an overall grade of A on the required national Standard Four National Assessment (SFNA), while 16 received a B, making the overall grade for the school an A. These 4th graders ranked 7th out of 89 (92 percentile) Monduli district primary schools. This table compares the results of EEMPS with the two public schools in Engaruka.

2024 National Standard Four National Exam (SNFA) for Engaruka Schools						
PROFICIENCY GROUP	Engaruka English Medium PS (private, 33 students)		Engaruka Chini PS (public, 141 students)		Engaruka Juu PS (public, 167 students)	
	SCORE (/50)	SCHOOL GRADE	SCORE (/50)	SCHOOL GRADE	SCORE (/50)	SCHOOL GRADE
Swahili Language	45.0	A	14.2	D	23.0	C
English Language	45.5	A	10.4	D	14.1	D
Social Knowledge	39.7	B	13.4	D	18.5	D
Mathematics	34.9	B	10.2	D	17.0	D
Science and Technology	36.5	B	14.0	D	23.1	C
Citizenship and Ethics	41.5	A	18.7	D	23.8	D
Overall School Score	243.1	A	80.9	D	119.4	D



All 29 EEMPS 7th graders passed the national Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE) with 18 A and 16 B averages, and, again, the school received an overall "A" rating. EEMPS graduates are much better prepared for secondary school than their local public-school peers.

The school's commitment to empowering girls, providing a safe learning environment, and maintaining high academic standards has encouraged more families to enroll their children and pay tuition and fees to help support the school.



2024 National Secondary School Entrance Exams (PSLE) for Engaruka Schools						
PROFICIENCY GROUP	Engaruka English Medium Primary School (29 students)		Engaruka Juu Primary School (public, 112 students)		Engaruka Juu Primary School (public, 81 students)	
	SCORE (/50)	SCHOOL GRADE	SCORE (/50)	SCHOOL GRADE	SCORE (/50)	SCHOOL GRADE
Swahili Language	42.1	A	29.6	C	27.8	C
English Language	48.1	A	22.9	C	18.5	D
Social Knowledge and Work Skills	39.7	B	28.9	C	22.1	C
Mathematics	37.5	B	19.8	D	19.0	D
Science and Technology	40.7	B	29.2	C	25.3	C
Citizenship and Ethics	40.9	A	26.7	C	20.2	D
Overall School Score	248.9	A	157.1	C	133.0	C





# SERVICE WITHOUT BORDERS

In May 2024, eight Virginia Tech Service Without Borders (SWB) students and faculty advisors Brian Benham, Steve Conner, and Jarek Campbell visited the school. Brian and Steve are both MEF board members and Jarek is as SWB alum.

During their two weeks at EEMPS, the SWB crew helped expand the school's orchard by preparing additional land for planting and by purchasing fruit tree seedlings. They also assisted the construction of the boys dorm by helping masons as they poured concrete columns and laid wall block, and by digging a several hundred-meter-long sewer line ditch.

While there, the SWB students donated eight new laptops to the school's computer lab. SWB raises funds to both support projects at the school and to pay for their travel. MEF accepts donations and corporate matches on behalf of SWB and passes those funds on directly to SWB. In 2024, MEF transferred \$26,000 to SWB that SWB had raised. No other MEF funds are used to support SWB activities, and SWB advisors pay their own way.



*Positioning stone blocks for masons*



*Expanding school orchard*



*EEMPS ladies schooling Aidan and Zach in the fine art of netball*

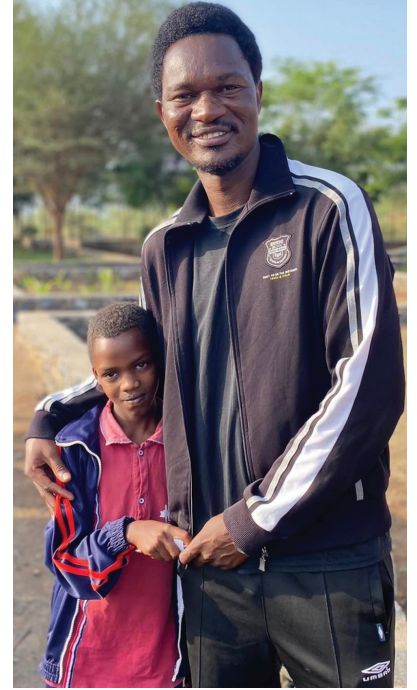


# TO THE FUTURE

Since EEMPS was graduating its first class of seventh graders in December, the Engaruka Community Initiative Organization and the Engaruka community were concerned there was no quality secondary school for the graduates to attend, so they began planning the ENCO Secondary School (ENCOS) early in 2024. MEF was not involved in this planning, but it agreed to accept donations for student sponsorships and school construction.

ENCO and the community raised funds to construct four classrooms. Construction began in October 2024, and two classrooms will be completed in early 2025. To help support ENCOS construction, the Crane Family of Columbus, Ohio, donated \$103,000 to fund the construction of biology and chemistry laboratories, and girls' and boys' washrooms. Six members of the Crane family visited EEMPS in May of 2023.

Once completed, the new ENCOS classrooms, labs, and washrooms will provide an active learning environment for current and future ENCOS students, enabling them to continue their education in Engaruka if they so choose. ENCO is working hard to secure additional funding to support the expansion of the secondary school. This includes 12 additional classrooms, a physics laboratory, a computer lab, offices, and eventually dormitories. Almost all MEF donors that had been supporting a graduating EEMPS 7th grader have elected to continue sponsoring their child as they move on to ENCOS, and many have elected to begin sponsoring a new, younger EEMPS student as well.



*EEMPS Principal  
Moinga Mbukoti Mandalo*



*ENCO Secondary School classroom  
building under construction.*



# 2024 MAASAI EDUCATION FOUNDATION UPDATE

## 2024 Finances

Balance on Hand 1/1/2024	\$141,505
Income (Donations)	\$309,764
Expenses (ENCO Grants)	\$293,661
Expenses (Overhead)	\$406
Total 2023 Expenses	\$294,067
Balance on Hand 12/31/2024	\$157,202

## 2024 MEF Expenses

EEMPS Construction	\$189,253
EEMPS Operating & Sponsorships	\$60,000
Maria Paapi Kingi Sponsorship	\$6,000
Overhead	\$406



### 2024 TANZANIA STANDARD FOUR NATIONAL ASSESSMENT (SFNA) 4TH GRADE EXAM

EEMPS received an  
overall grade of



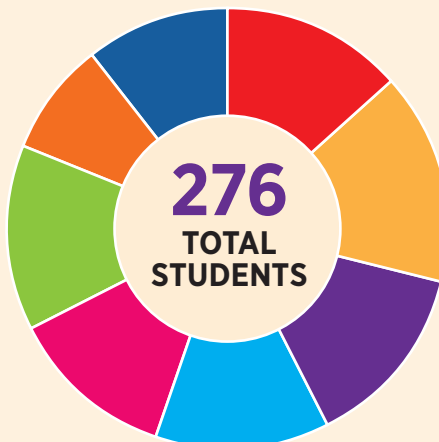
### 2024 TANZANIA NATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVING EXAM (PSLE) FOR 7TH GRADE

EEMPS received an  
overall grade of



## IN 2024, EEMPS HAD...

- Preschoolers: **37**
- 1st Graders: **43**
- 2nd Graders: **38**
- 3rd Graders: **35**
- 4th Graders: **34**
- 5th Graders: **37**
- 6th Graders: **23**
- 7th Graders: **29**



**142  
FEMALES**



**134  
MALES**





## 2024 MEF BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

Dr. Theo Dillaha (2016–present)	CHAIR
Dr. Brian Benham (2016–present)	TREASURER
Randy Stith (2018–present)	SECRETARY
Dr. Audrey Spielmann (2016–present)	CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE
Rebecca Caldwell (2016–present)	
Steve Conner (2021–present)	
Dr. Margie Lee (2020–present)	
Karen Scalf-Benham (2016–present)	
Nina Tarr (2021–present)	

## TANZANIA LIAISON AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

Martha Mereso Sengeruan

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ENCO, EEMPS MANAGER, AND MEF TANZANIA LIASON



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MAASAI EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION

