

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



“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

The Maasai Education Foundation (MEF) and the Engaruka English Medium Primary School (EEMPS) had an outstanding 2023 with 226 students in pre-school through 6th grade. In October, our 38 4th graders took the 4th grade national exam and EEMPS ranked 7th out of 81 primary schools in the Monduli district. In May, MEF board members Brian Benham and Steve Conner traveled to the school with five Virginia Tech Service Without Borders (SWB) students, and in July, 21 other MEF board members and donors visited the school. All were amazed with the school's progress since it opened in 2018.

We took a break from school construction in 2023 and spent the year raising funds for a new boys dormitory that will be constructed in 2024 and we raised \$132,564. MEF donors also provided half of the school's operating funds as well as sponsorships for 62 specific students. None of these accomplishments would have been possible without our donors and we cannot thank them enough for their continuing generous support.



Theo Dillaha
MEF Chair



Martha Olemisiko
EEMPS Manager and
ENCO Executive Director

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

We are delighted with the significant developments and achievements at Engaruka English Medium School during the year 2023, made possible through the generous support of donors like yourself. Your contributions have had a transformative impact on our school community, enabling us to enhance our facilities and educational programs for the benefit of our students.

Thanks to your assistance, we were able to establish a reliable internet connection at our school. This development opened up a world of opportunities for our students, allowing them to access online resources and participate in virtual learning activities. The installation of a hand washing trough, made possible by the generous contribution of Thomas Neils, has significantly improved hygiene practices among our students. This simple yet effective intervention has helped promote good health and prevent the spread of infectious diseases within our school community. We were also able to provide our students with access to Google Space, a platform that enables communication among the students and their sponsors and pen pals and prepares our students for the digital age.

On behalf of the entire school community, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Maasai Education Foundation and its donors for their unwavering support and commitment to the cause of education. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of our students and laying the groundwork for a brighter future.





MAASAI EDUCATION FOUNDATION HISTORY

The Maasai Education Foundation (MEF) was formed in November 2016 by a concerned group in Blacksburg, Virginia, to support the activities of the Engaruka Community Initiative Organization (ENCO) in improving educational opportunities for Maasai children in rural Tanzania. Construction of a school began in 2017, and, in 2018, the resulting Engaruka English Medium Primary School (EEMPS), operated by ENCO, opened 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 group of students starts preschool.

Today EEMPS is a boarding school with 226 students in grades pre-school to 6th grade. MEF is the main financial backer of ENCO and provides well over half of the schools' operating funds and more than 75% of its construction funding.

As enrollment increased every year, the facilities also expanded, so now, along with the original building, there is a dining hall, additional classroom and laboratory space (including the five-room Crane Classroom and Library Building), a water supply system, a playground, a garden and orchard, a boys restroom building, and the newest building, a girls dormitory.

This year was another very successful year in the progress of the school.



2023 — ANOTHER 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 2023, MEF (a dedicated group of incredible donors) contributed \$195,301 in donations, and \$91,437 in grants were sent to ENCO for EEMPS student sponsorships, operating funds, and furnishing the new girls dormitory. The Mid-Year Matching Fundraiser raised \$52,000 and the Giving Tuesday/December Fundraiser more than doubled its goal, raising \$96,858. Much of this money will be used in the construction of a new boys dormitory.
- MEF provided 50% (\$80,000), of the school's operating/sponsorship funds. An additional \$31,437 was provided for new school initiatives like the school public relations officer, a prosthetic leg for one student, and housing over winter break for at risk students. An extra \$7,760 in secondary school expenses was provided for Maria Papaa Kingi, the girl who was the inspiration for MEF.
- 226 children were enrolled at the Engaruka English Medium Primary School, 114 girls and 112 boys, in classes preschool through 6th grade. All but eight were boarders, and 62 students were directly sponsored by individual MEF donors at \$700 for the year. Another 57 were sponsored by their parents and 13 by ENCO. Ninety non-sponsored students were funded through MEF's operational funds.
- On the 2023 4th Grade Tanzania National Exams, our 38 EEMPS 4th grade students received an overall grade of B, ranking 7th out of 81 district primary schools. Eight students received an A overall grade.
- There were 11 permanent teachers for the year and one intern teacher. Twenty non-teaching staff included the director, matrons, cooks, cleaners, guards, livestock keepers, an accountant, and a PR/media person.
- In May, MEF board members Brian Benham and Steve Conner traveled to the school with five Virginia Tech Service Without Borders (SWB) students and advisor Jarek Campbell to work on various projects, including setting up 10 new computers they donated. And in July, a group of 21 other MEF board members and donors visited the school to observe firsthand the incredible work being done there.
- In June, Tom Neils, a landscape architect and advisor to the MEF Board of Directors, made a trip to the school to measure and map the grounds to update the site plan and provide aerial drone photography. He also helped clear the area set aside for a new boys dormitory and donated money for new handwashing troughs to go along with the new water supply system.



SPONSORSHIPS

For 2023, 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

maasaieducationfoundation.org



VT VIRGINIA TECH.



NEWS



Taking 'Ut Prosim' to Africa

Six years ago, Theo Dillaha, a former Virginia Tech professor, and a group of people with Virginia Tech connections started a nonprofit organization to build a school in Tanzania. Today, the Maasai Education Foundation is teaming with Virginia Tech's student-led Service Without Borders to build the school and make a difference in many children's lives

IN THE NEWS:

Since so many people involved in MEF are also affiliated with Virginia Tech, VT News published an online story about MEF's history and activities that includes a link to a video.

[Read Taking 'Ut Prosim' to Africa](#)





MEF SCHOOL VISIT

In July 2023, the Maasai Education Foundation organized its first visit to the Engaruka English Medium Primary School for both MEF board members who had never visited the school and some interested donors. A total of 21 people participated, including six of the nine board members, some who brought family members along. The additional participants were donors.

The group spent three days touring the school and interacting with students and staff. All the students were eager to engage in conversation, practicing their English skills. They also convinced a few in the group to play soccer with them. It provided a wonderful opportunity for sponsors to meet and spend time with the impressive students they sponsor. In several cases participants also met the parents of their students. It was a very emotional experience.



Looking at photos from sponsors



Sponsor meets her student



During the visit, several of the named wings of the new girls dormitory were dedicated with the donors present, and members of the Crane family were able to see in person the facilities bearing their name. It was a wonderful trip, and everyone was extremely impressed with the children, the staff, and the facilities.



Above (l to r): Crane family members in front of the Crane Classroom & Library Building. The Daphne Kibler & Maria Paapi Kingi girl's dormitory wing dedication

Before arriving at the school, the group went on a 5-day safari and visited Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Crater, seeing the big five (lion, leopard, elephant, rhinoceros, and Cape buffalo) as well as countless wildebeest, zebra, giraffe, hippos, and other animals during Africa's great migration. It truly was a life-changing trip, particularly the visit to the school. It was so successful that MEF is now planning to organize similar trips in the future.



SERVICE WITHOUT BORDERS



In May, 2023, five Virginia Tech Service Without Borders (SWB) students and faculty advisors Brian Benham, Steve Conner, and Jarek Campbell visited the school to help improve the school's food production. Brian and Steve are both MEF board members.

They funded and helped install a drip irrigation system for the school's vegetable garden, dug 100 one-cubic yard pits for planting fruit trees, and funded the drip irrigation system for the fruit trees.

They also donated 10 new laptop computers to the school's computer lab.

In Blacksburg the group focused on fundraising, raising \$16,700 through MEF to support their trip. No other MEF funds were used to support the trip.



2023 MAASAI EDUCATION FOUNDATION FINANCIAL REPORT

2023 Finances

Balance on Hand 1/1/2023	\$67,098.47
Income (Donations)	\$195,301.41
Expenses (ENCO Grants)	\$119,644.03
Expenses (Overhead)	\$1,251.22
Total 2023 Expenses	\$120,895.25
Balance on Hand 12/31/2023	\$141,504.63

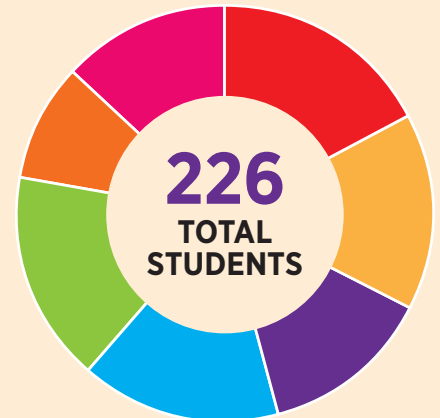
2023 MEF Expenses

EEMPS Operating & Sponsorships	\$91,437
Maria Paapi Kingi Sponsorship	\$7,760
Audrey Spielman for MES	\$3,750
SWB Service Learning Trip	\$16,697
Overhead	\$1,251



IN 2023, EEMPS HAD...

Preschoolers:	39
1st Graders:	35
2nd Graders:	30
3rd Graders:	35
4th Graders:	37
5th Graders:	21
6th Graders:	29



**114
FEMALES**



**112
MALES**



2023 Major Donors

Steve and Ann Marie Conner
Essra and Colin Kibler
Shannon and Rob Crane Family Fund
Theo Dillaha and Rebecca Caldwell
Brian Benham and Karen Scalf-Benham
Jennifer Spori

Scott and Shanna Bird
Whitney Crane
Caroline Bonnes and Susie Nist
Audrey Spielmann
Jack and Sandy Davis
Lori Jackson Higgins

Margie and John Lee
Robert and Brigitte Rotche
Mitchell Scalf
Richard and Marie Block
Jacqueline Bruce



2023 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 Olemisiko
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ENCO, EEMPS MANAGER, AND MEF TANZANIA LIASON



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MAASAI EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

