

Moving Forward, Together

The Yonso Project



2012 Annual Newsletter

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Yonso Philosophy

Real, valuable improvements to communities can be achieved by just a few dedicated people working across continents and cultures to address people's needs

Funding Dreams

Since the inception of the Yonso Scholarship Program in 2007, over 180 students, ages ranging between six and twenty-six, have been able to overcome the economic disadvantages they face while pursuing higher education, thanks to generous donor contributions to YP that have totaled upwards of \$30,000 in scholarships.

In the 2011-2012 school year, 96 students continued to be supported by YP donors. Elementary and Junior High students were provided uniforms, sandals, school bags, math sets, pencils, notebooks, and one free lunch each day. Several students were also provided individual care, such as doctors fees, glasses and mattresses. Senior Secondary School (SSS), the equivalent of a U.S. High School education in Ghana, is not public, however, and high school tuition rates often times impede students from graduating from SSS. The Yonso Scholarship Program allowed for 43 students to

attend SSS in the 2011-2012 school year, and of those students, five (5) were graduating seniors who took the West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Exam (which is similar to the U.S. SAT Exam) and passed with great results. We are especially proud to cast a spot light on Ohene Nyantakyi, who overcame great obstacles in order to pursue academic excellence.



Ohene Nyantakyi

Ohene is a 28 year old young man who completed basic school in 1996 but was unable to pursue Senior Secondary School due to his family's financial struggles. After

resigning himself to letting go of his academic dreams, Ohene became an apprentice to his uncle, a cobbler, to learn skills that would allow him to financially support his family. Ten years after having completed his primary education, Ohene was encouraged by YP's Country Director, Kwabena Danso, to apply for a YP scholarship. The Yonso Project supported Ohene throughout his Senior Secondary School education and Senior Secondary Certificate Exam. Today, Ohene is proudly enrolled at the Atebubu College of Education in Ghana where he plans to focus his studies on education in order to become a teacher.

When asked how YP changed his future, Ohene humbly said *"I owe Yonso Project and my sponsor my life. I promise to do my best for my community and country as the Yonso Project would want us to be."*

Yonso Project & Starbucks Empower Youth

In the fall of 2012, YP was the humble recipient of a \$9,991.00 grant from Starbucks through the International Youth Foundation.

The funds will go to start a new school initiative which will provide children with classes and mentorship in the areas of financial management, sex education, community

development, child rights and career guidance.

Currently, the program is scheduled to run in 10 schools and reach over 500 hundred children. YP's goal with this new initiative is to aid in the holistic development of the rural child and empower each child to make informed decisions, foster

growth and contribute to progress.



YP students

It Started With One. . .

What started with one community library in the community of Akrofosso, has paved the way for many more libraries in rural villages of Ghana. In order to improve the academic development of our children, YP felt it imperative that reading become part and parcel of children's lives. In rural Ghana, many children are denied access to education due to lack of resources and educational materials. After completing our library project in the Akrofosso community with support from the Chen Yet Sen Family Foundation in 2011, the library has gone on to serve over 500 children and youth within the rural community.

Watching the impact having access to books and library resources has had on the children has been truly inspiring. In 2011, before the library was established, the schools in Akrofosso had a National Exam percentage pass rate of 10%. In 2012, student standardized testing scores increased to 22%. Much of the credit for the student's improvement has been attributed on chil-

dren having access to reading materials and resources, which are provided by the new



YP Scholars



Students at the Akrofosso Library

community library. We foresee a great improvement in the 2013 national exam as we project that over 50% of the candidates are going to pass their exams to have access to secondary school education. This year the Chen Yet Sen Family Foundation is giving \$11,468.00 for the implementation of literacy improvement programs, which includes the

provision of a library, organization of academic competitions and the setting up of reading clubs in various schools.

The YP libraries project continues to have tremendous impact on the academic future of rural children's. Currently, there is a new library for the community of Sekyere, a rural community with a population of about 7,000 inhabitants over 50% of who are children and youth. YP has provided the furniture, computers and books from the grant money for the library whilst the community, in conjunction with the Community Library Implementation Committee, has contributed the building space and renovation work necessary to get the library done. In addition, the organization is setting up five additional rural community libraries this year through a partnership with the African Libraries Project as well as four additional libraries in 2013 year through a partnership with the African Libraries Project.

From Bamboo to Beautiful

The Yonso Project bamboo bikes program continues to gain recognition around the world for its effectiveness in



Bamboo Road Bike

bringing jobs to youth, especially those in rural areas of Ghana.

The youth participating in our new Bamboo Center initiatives are mainly unemployed girls who are being trained to make durable ladies handbags, hand fans, place mats and sandals from bamboo. Our products are currently being sold around the world. **You can contact us for your orders.**

Apart from providing employment, the program also



Bamboo handbags and placemats

"In 2011, before the library was established, the schools in Akrofosso had a National Exam percentage pass rate of 10%. In 2012, student standardized testing scores increased to 22%."

Congratulations, Danso!

The Yonso Project co-founder and Country Director, Kwabena Danso received two prestigious award in 2012 for his dedication and commitment to rural community development.



Danso receiving the Airtel Touching Lives Award

In February, Danso received The Airtel Touching Lives Award, which honors and rewards individuals who are improving the lives of others. Airtel made a full thirty minute documentary about the activities of the Yonso Project with the bamboo bicycles and highlights of Danso's life. Airtel Touching Lives Award included \$5,000 to support the YP bamboo bicycle program, a truck and land with a storage facility.

In October 2012, Danso received the Gold Award for Grassroots and Rural Community Development

from the Ghana National Youth Achievers. This recognition came from an initiative of the President of the Republic of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama.



Danso receiving the Gold Award with President of Ghana John Dramani Mahama

Funding the Future

The Yonso Project micro finance program continues to grow and improve the lives of women in rural communities. In 2011, YP supported 200 women fund small business in four different communities. In 2012, YP has expanded to fund the dreams of over 300 women in six different communities. As the program grows at a tremendous rate, we are able to boast of

100% recovery and about 100% increase in capital. Currently, preparations are being made to enter four more communities and target over 50 women in each new location. We project reaching a client base of 500 women by the middle of next year.

When YP started the micro-finance program in 2007, we began the program with only 36 women. Having survived

the initial bumps in the road, the program has continuously grown over the last five years and we have seen an increase in the number of rural women turning to the Yonso Project for support. Many of our entrepreneurial women have found voices in their homes as a result of them being empowered economically.

"Many of our entrepreneurial women have found voices in their homes as a result of them being empowered economically."

Microfinance Spotlight:

1. Janet Fobi now owns a big store in the community of Kyekyewere (a super market according to the village standards) helping her to support her two children
2. Afia Kobuwaa has been able to support her husband to put up a house through her plastic products trading business

3. Fati Adama would have lost her daughter who was attacked by a serious mental illness had it not been the savings she had been able to mobilize as a result of her expanded food vending business



Danso with the women of the microfinance program

About Us:

The Yonso Project is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit that currently operates in Seven rural communities in Ghana, West Africa: Apaah, Kyekyewere, Yonso, Akrofoso, Sekyere, Banko and Bomeng.

Our mission is to increase access to education and economic opportunities for all residents in our partner communities with hopes to expand in the near future.

The Yonso Project is 100% volunteer operated in the US, and every cent of funding and donations collected reaches Ghana to uphold the goals of our organization.

We're on the web:

www.yonsoproject.org

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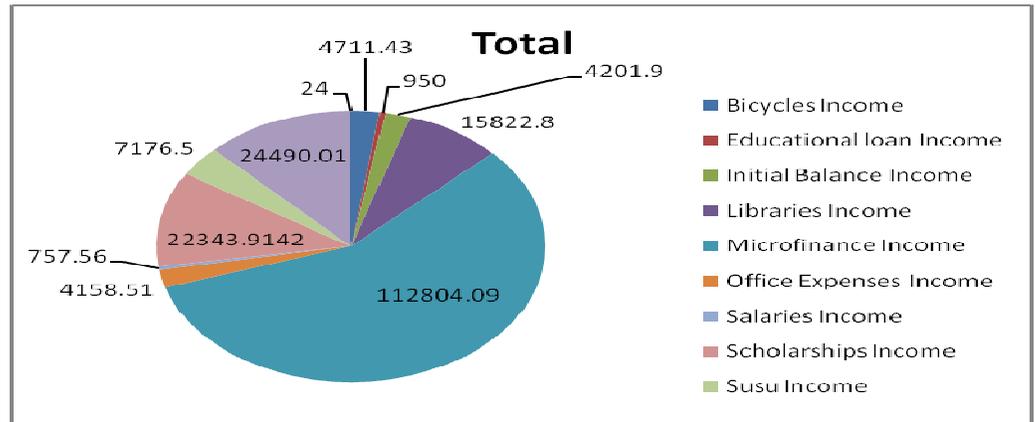
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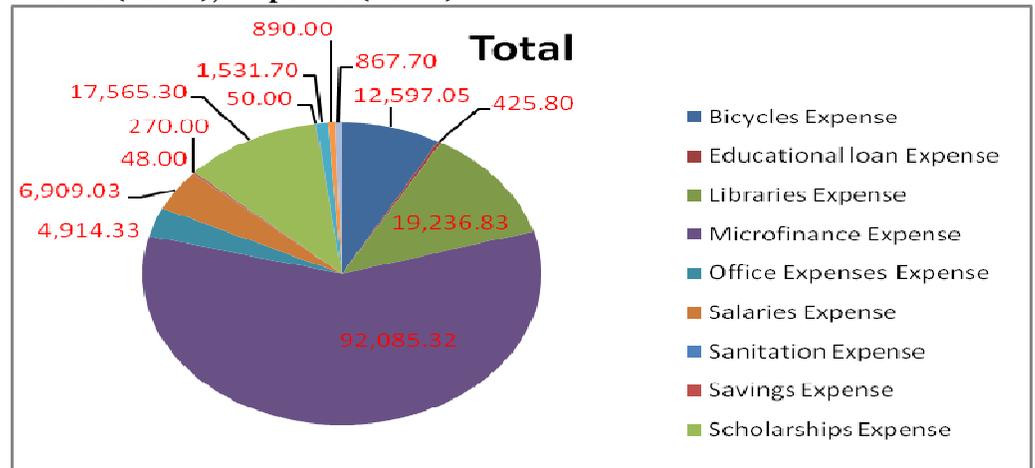
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2012 Yonso Project Financials*



Income (Above), Expenses (Below)



*All figures are in Ghana Cedis. The exchange rate is \$1.00 US=1.87 Ghana Cedis



YP youth working on bamboo bicycles



Danso receiving an award

To sponsor a YP student or to make a general donation, please visit

www.yonsoproject.org/donate

or contact Sonja Good Stefani, YP Finance Manager,

sonjags@yonsoproject.org