

The Yonso Project

"Moving forward together"



**The Yonso Project
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The Yonso Project is a not-for-profit organization that works to promote educational and work opportunities in rural Ghana. We would like to make it clear that **NONE** of our US staff is paid. We are all volunteers. We have 3 Ghanaian staff members, earning a Ghanaian wage, who make sure our programs run smoothly over there. Rest assured that your donations are not getting lost in needless overhead.

LETTER FROM A SCHOLAR

Dear Sponsor,

I, Osman Muhammed has seized this opportunity to show my sincere gratitude and appreciation for offering me a scholarship. Had it not been you, hope of furthering my education would have been shattered. Thank you very much for your kind gesture. May God bless you and every development project you will do.

First I was wondering about how to further my education, but now I am very happy in school. And because of that everything is going on smoothly for me. It is all because of your assistance. I will continue to pray for you all the time.

I am a boy of nineteen years of age and a very hard working pupil. I don't really entertain friends but rather devoted much of my time studying. I will continue to work hard to sustain the great honor done me. Unfortunately I have lost my parents and am now staying with my brother in the village of Kyekyewere. Because of your kindness and hospitality for giving me a scholarship, it has motivated me a lot that I am learning very hard. My ambition is to become an engineer and I am working hard to achieve it.

I hope that you will kindly continue to support me for my dreams and aspirations to become reality. Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

Muhammed Osman

Some numbers to think about:

\$100

The price it costs to send one child to school in Ghana for a year. This includes one meal a day for the entire year.

100

The number of children we've sent to school.

121

The number of women that have received a micro-loan.

\$50

The most common micro-loan issued

\$0

The amount that we pay our staff in the United States.

SPOTLIGHT ON A SCHOLAR



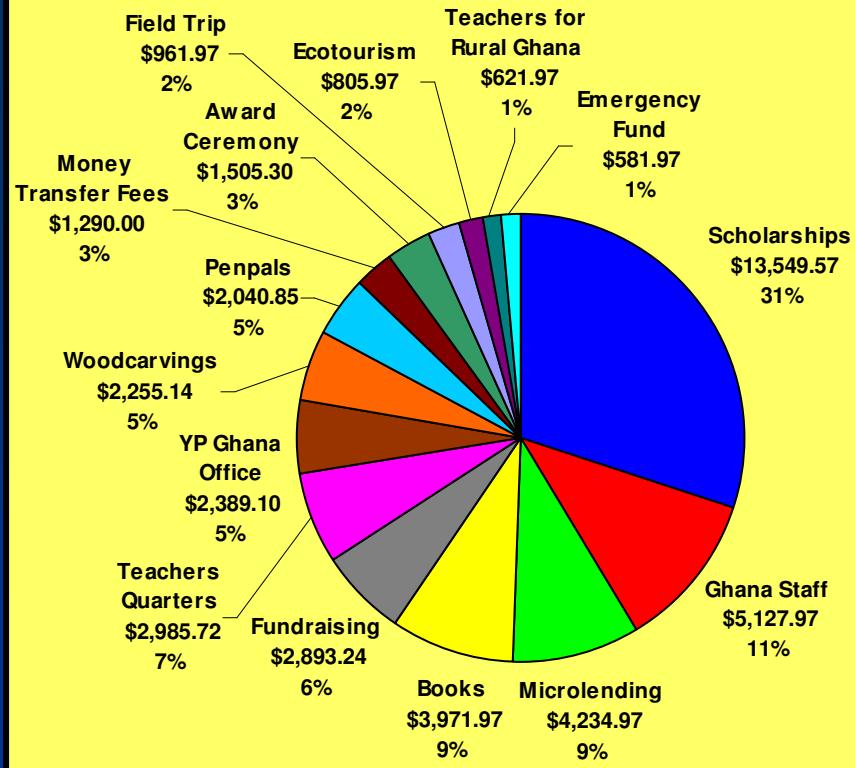
When Muhammed Osman was in the 4th grade, his parents died in a car collision. His older brother agreed to take him in if he quit school and helped on the farm. Left with no other option, Muhammed became a coco farmer at age 10. He woke up at 4 in the morning and was on the farm until it got dark. The farm brought in an average of \$1.50 a day. This was made to feed all nine people living in his brothers house. Muhammed was often hungry.

Despite his older brothers protests, at age 16 Muhammed decided to re-enter school. He entered into the 6th grade. At the end of his 7th grade year, he was second in his class. Even though he had worked so hard, his brother informed him that he could no longer afford to send Muhammed to school. Muhammed heard about The Yonso Project through a classmate and decided to apply for a scholarship so that he could stay in school. Muhammed became a Yonso Project Scholar in 2007 and was able to complete the 8th grade with his scholarship.

We met with Muhammed this past summer to check on how he was doing. He had just finished taking the country-wide exam to see which high schools he qualified for. In Ghana, getting into high school is almost like getting into college in the USA. Muhammed's results were astounding. He ranked so high that he was eligible to attend the Prenpe High School in Kumasi; one of the best high schools in the country.

However, when he told us this at the interview, he seemed very anxious. It became clear that he expected us to say that it would be too expensive and that he would not be able to attend. Muhammed has no other means of support. Without high school, he would be forced to go back to his brothers farm. When we told him that his Yonso Project sponsor would provide the funds for ALL of his years in high school, he started to cry, shook all of our hands, and prayed that only good things would happen to his sponsor and The Yonso Project. Muhammed Osman's high school bill is just over \$300.00 a year. He wants to become an engineer when we grows up.

Where does the money go?



These figures are a calculated on spending since the inception of The Yonso Project. This is all of the money spent since the fall of 2005.

MICROLENDING WORKS

Microloans are loans of amounts normally between \$50 and \$500. They are a common tool in the financial and non-profit sectors in developing countries used to stimulate economic growth on the individual and community levels. They are normally issued to women to help expand or start their small businesses. The most common business of borrowers around the world is producing, trading or selling food related commodities. Some of the most common loan uses are to buy more goods to sell or to purchase equipment or fixtures needed to increase production or make room for more stock.

Microloans are beneficial to individuals because they allow people to access larger amounts of capital than they would otherwise have access to, and make a higher net income as a result. This increased net income helps parents provide better for their families and helps them grow their businesses so that when the loan cycle is finished they are able to produce more income than they were before the loan was issued. Microloans also boost the economies of small towns with the inflow of capital created. More goods and services become available locally, often for lower prices than before, and local productivity is increased. Fewer families are hungry and more children are equipped for school.

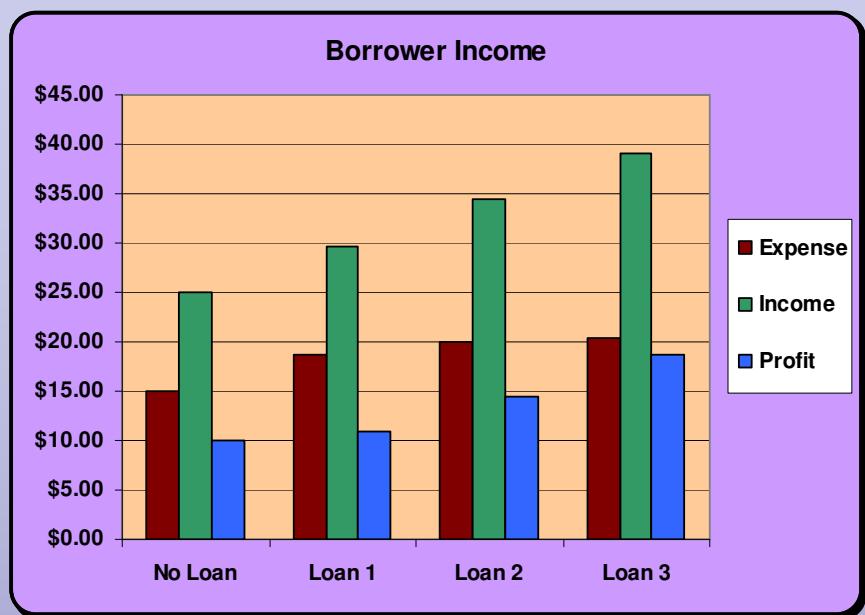
Since its inception in 2007, the Yonso Project Microlending Program has issued 121 loans. Of those loans, the first 94 have been completely repaid. The other 37 loans are due to be repaid before the end of December. Of the 94 loans completely repaid so far, 31 were repaid early. The program has an average weekly repayment rate of 84% and all late payments from closed loan cycles have been collected.

"I have tried to get loans from Banks and other financial institutions many times, but never successfully. Either I was not able to get the required collateral to acquire the loan from the bank or the interest rate on the loan was so high that I would have ended up taking losses from my business. Sometimes the interest rates are between 30% and 40% and even before the money would be given out, deposits have to be made to the issuing organization.

When the Yonso Project announced their loan package to the communities, I was reluctant to take the loan because I thought it was just like all the other organizations. After going to their office and listening to their staff explain things to me, I decided to give it a try. I went through the first cycle successfully and when I finished paying I immediately had an increased loan amount of \$100 with an interest of 18% and a repayment period of 24 weeks. This gave me the opportunity to increase my stock of plastic products to double the size I was buying initially. There is no pressure on me in repaying the loan and I make sure I make my repayment every week so as to finish on time and move up to the next loan bracket.

I live with my husband and my two other kids in Yonso. Generally, I am now comfortable. Though not rich, I am able to provide for my family and, with the help of my husband's income, we have now started our housing project which could not have been possible if I was not financially sound. I use whatever I earn to cater for the family whilst my husband uses his income on the building. At the same time, I am able to repay my loan on time and this means that the benefits are fantastic."

-Afia Kowibaa, Trader



WILDERNESS CENTER

Thanks to the continued efforts of our Country Director, Kwabena Danso, in negotiating with the Ghanaian Forestry Commission, the Yonso Project Wilderness Center is nearing its grand opening. In a partnership deal, the Forestry Commission and the Yonso Project will be opening the Wilderness Center as a joint venture. The Wilderness Center will operate as an ecotourism endeavor, where local guides will take visitors for overnight camping trips into the Ongwam Forest Reserve, home to a locally threatened population of Campbell's monkeys and several species of antelope. The Center will also offer hiking and bicycle excursions to nearby culture sites, such as Bonwire, the nationally recognized center of Kente cloth weaving.



Trail lookout and camp site.

Forest Reserve, home to a locally threatened population of Campbell's monkeys and several species of antelope. The Center will also offer hiking and bicycle excursions to nearby culture sites, such as Bonwire, the nationally recognized center of Kente cloth weaving.



Ecotourism director Sam Dupre doing field research on the future trail,

Project community development projects.

You, our donors, can help found this promising project. In order to stock the camping supplies necessary for our ecotourism offerings, the Yonso Project will be starting an equipment donation drive. In the next few weeks, we will be releasing a list of camping equipment necessary for the Center to succeed. A donation of any new or used items on the list will be a huge help to our organization, the Yonso villagers, and the resident Campbell's monkeys.

Your donation will allow us to use donated funds far more efficiently, without needing to purchase this equipment. More information will be available on the Yonso Project website in the near future.

Most importantly, we would like to extend our warmest of thanks to all of our generous donors. The Yonso Project would not be what it is today without your continued support. Over and over again the people of the Yonso community asked us to bless and thank you for your donations. We couldn't agree more with them.

TEACHERS FOR RURAL GHANA

Teachers for Rural Ghana hopes to combat two community needs and one critical need for our organization. As an extension of the Scholarship Program, we are sponsoring four individuals from the Yonso community in teacher training college. These future teachers have signed an agreement stating that after they complete their college degree, they will return to the Yonso community to teach in the government schools for at least three years. In this way, we are providing a free college education for them, and they are providing the community with new teachers. The costs of one year of teacher college is roughly \$150 dollars. They will be in college for three years. Once they start teaching in our rural communities, we will provide a \$100 living stipend for each year following their graduation. A further agreement is that these new teachers will provide assistance to the Yonso Project staff with our programs.

The local director of education in Ghana strongly supports the program. These students are being given an opportunity to expand their education and obtain a respected and livable job upon their graduation. In addition the community will have educated individuals returning to their villages and educating their youth, giving back to those very towns in which they lived. Lastly, the Yonso Project will gain additional support for their programs in Ghana, allowing the organization to expand programs such as field trips, scholars, microloans and much more.



We have many children waiting for a scholarship. If you would like to become a sponsor, it is only \$100.00 a year, and that includes their food!