


Expanding Opportunities

Annual Report 2000



*Increasing self-sufficiency through
educational and charitable projects for
people nationally and internationally.*

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Background Information

Overview of the Organization

Expanding Opportunities is a non-profit organization with the mission of increasing self-sufficiency through educational and charitable projects for people nationally and internationally. Founded in 1999, the organization currently has six main projects: The Street Children Fund, Books for Kenya, Friends Across the Ocean, Distance Learning Centers, STEMS (Success Through Education, Money and Support), and Aina Moja. At present, all of the projects are directed towards the developing country of Kenya, Africa.

A small governing board guides the projects of Expanding Opportunities. The board consists of nine members with a President, Beverly G. Stone; Vice President, Julie M. Watkins; Treasurer, Julie M. Watkins and a Secretary, Audrey Lawson. The Board meets quarterly to discuss fundraising strategies, progress of the projects, and to direct the operations of the organization.

A Brief History

Expanding Opportunities grew out one woman's dream of helping a struggling nation gain victory over adversity through success of its individual citizens. Beverly Stone dreamed of Africa as a young child in elementary school. She entered college as a pre-med student to study to become a medical missionary in the nation of Africa. That dream faded as dreams sometimes do when life presents us with choices. Beverly switched her major and became an educator. The dream never disappeared completely and when fed and watered, grew into actuality when Beverly was presented with an opportunity to teach in the country of Kenya.

The Teacher

In 1996, an American teacher named Beverly Stone applied to the Teachers for Africa Program for a one-year volunteer teaching experience in a Kenyan high school in Africa. Beverly was accepted into the program and was assigned to teach English and biology at the Tengecha High School in Kenya. In August of 1996, Beverly, along with her eleven-year-old son, packed her bags and left for the African continent. Little did she know that this was a venture that would change her life forever.

Teaching in an African school was very different from teaching in an American school. There were rigid rules, students wore school uniforms, and caning was commonly used to impose discipline. The most startling difference in the African

schools was the lack of resources. Often, the teacher had the only textbook. There were no Xerox machines, computers, overhead projectors or other equipment. Supplies such as paper, pencils, erasers, and chalk were a scarcity. Students sharpened their few pencils with razor blades.

Immersed in the culture of this foreign country, Beverly learned much about the Kenyan people. She gained knowledge of their traditions, family structure, social customs, history, and adversities. It was their adversities and their determined nature which struck her the most. She became determined to help these people help themselves.

The Beginning

The first need evident to the American teacher was the need for educational resources for the students and teachers. Her letters home indicated this fact and several of her friends began sending small items in an effort to compensate for the lack of resources. Paper, pencils, erasers and sharpeners were the first items to reach the African students. After she arrived home, a drive to send used American textbooks and ship them to Africa (**Books for Africa**) was initiated and achieved.



African students carrying used American textbooks they received through the Books for Kenya Project.

Another obvious need was for food, shelter, supervision and education for the many “street children” in the city streets (some of whom are orphans). Beverly sought out a respectable African citizen and asked if he would be interested in overseeing the **Street Children Fund** if money could be raised to buy the children food. Small donations started trickling in and about 20 children began receiving one meal a day.

Poverty was evident everywhere but the entrepreneurial nature is strong. Beverly saw this and decided that one way to assist this strength was to provide money in the form of a business loan (**STEMS**) to aid the struggling business people. Money was obtained through a grant from the World Wide Foundation and the first loan was awarded to a young man operating his own soap stone business.

A business venture was initiated which involves selling handmade African products throughout the United States and the world. (**Aina Moja**). The business aids the people of African in two ways. The items are purchased directly from African people, which increases their sales, then resold on the Web at a profit with the proceeds going to the different projects of Expanding Opportunities.

Since the African students were so eager to learn about America, Beverly decided that one way to gain knowledge was through personal contact. She began the Pen Pal Project which joins African and American students as pen pals. Then she decided that an interesting venture would be to have American students take a field trip to Africa and visit the students in person. These activities lead to the development **Friends Across the Ocean**.

The Incentive

Kenya, Africa

Its Geography



The Republic of Kenya straddles the equator, covering 582,640 square kilometers. It borders the Indian Ocean and Somalia to the east, Sudan and Ethiopia to the north, Uganda and Lake Victoria to the west and Tanzania to the south. Its varied terrain rises from sea level at the coast to Mount Kenya (5,199 meters) to the east of the Great Rift Valley, and Mt. Elgon (4,321 meters) to the extreme west. The country is bisected by the Rift Valley that runs the whole length of the country from north to south. For a tropical country, Kenya enjoys relatively moderate weather, especially in the highlands to the east and west of the Rift Valley and the lake region, as opposed to the extensive hot arid and semi-arid plains in the south, east and north of the country.

The People

By 1998 estimates, Kenya's population stood at 28.6 million people; its birth rate, one of the highest in the world, at 3.2 per cent per annum while the population density is about 400 per square kilometer in high density areas. Whereas a majority of the people live in the rural countryside, the urban centers are rapidly growing due to rural-urban migration. The average literacy rate according to the 1989 census is 69.4 per cent. Kiswahili, the national language, is spoken all over the country while English is the designated official language that also serves as the medium of communication in schools, institutions and in official transactions. Christianity, Islam and Hinduism are the main religions although a substantial number of Kenyans especially in the rural areas still practice traditional forms of religious worship. Kenya is also a land of ethnic contrasts with 42 different tribes deriving from three major groups - the Bantu who comprise the majority, the Nilotics and the Cushites. Bantu



Due to a lack of jobs, many Africans become independent businessmen as a means to support themselves and their families. Salim Mabonga (above) is a self-employed African Guide.

tribes are found at the coast, in central and western Kenya, the Nilotics in the west and most of the Rift Valley, while the Cushites predominantly occupy the expansive northeastern parts of the country.

The Need



- *Over 8 million children are orphans in sub-Saharan Africa.*
 - *The annual per capita income in U.S. dollars is 270.*
 - *Political uncertainty adversely affected investments and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was expected to drop from 4.6 per cent in 1996, to 3.6 in 1997.*
 - *The birth rate in Kenya is one of the highest in the world, at 3.2 per cent per annum*
 - *In some rural villages, infant mortality is 30 per cent*
 - *The unemployment rate is 35 per cent*
- *Thirty-one per cent of adults can not read or write*
 - *Twenty per cent of school pupils in the 14-17 year age bracket are HIV positive. He said 20 per cent of girls in the age bracket 15-19 years have the killer virus as do four per cent of boys in the same age bracket*
 - *Less than 20 per cent of the population have reasonable access to uncontaminated water. In rural areas, only 15% have access.*
 - *Contaminated water is a direct cause of 80 per cent of all diseases*

Kenya Statistics in Brief	
Population	28,600,000
Mortality rate under 5 years	9%
Underweight children	23%
Stunting under 5 years	34%
Annual population growth	3.5%
Literacy rate among adults	69.4%
Unemployment rate	35%

The Report

In the spring of 1999, Expanding Opportunities made application to the federal government for non-profit status in the United States. Non-profit status was officially granted in November of 1999 and was retroactive to June 1, 1999. Though Expanding Opportunities has only existed formally as a non-profit organization for approximately six months, many of the projects of the organization have been in existence longer than that. Therefore, it is important to note the achievement of these projects before becoming a non-profit organization.

Achievements

Once non-profit approval had been established, the board of Expanding Opportunities began an active search for funding sources through public and private contributions, fund raisers, and grant seeking. Many press releases were written announcing the founding of the organization as a non-profit organization with its mission. Regular board meetings were scheduled. A web site was created for the organization which contains information and many photographs on each of the projects. An application for NGO (Non Governmental Organization) status in Africa was sought and received and first steps were taken to complete the application.

Books for Kenya

The first project, Books for Kenya, began in 1994, when the Expanding Opportunities' President's son returned from a teen missionary trip to Kenya, Africa. Her son's group was responsible for building a library at one of the public schools. The library was completed but there were no books. His tales of need in the African schools spurred his mother to begin a drive to collect used American textbooks with plans to ship them to Kenya, Africa. In September of 1998, over 6,000 pounds of used American textbooks were mailed to over 30 different Kenyan schools.

After the first successful Books for Kenya mission, board members continued to collect books and supplies which have been placed in storage. Plans are being made to transport many of the books in luggage when the Y2Kenya trip takes place in February of 2000 (see Friends Across the Ocean).

STEMS

STEMS (Success Through Education Money and Support) started in 1998 when the Expanding Opportunities President wrote a grant to the World Wide Foundation for \$1000 for a micro loan program. Through a contract with an NGO (Non Governmental Organization) in Kenya, \$800 was loaned to a Kenyan businessman to assist him in his soap stone business. The young man began making monthly payments to repay the loan. The nature of this project was recycle the money into other loans to assist other business people in the same manner.

The first STEMS loan will be paid back completely at the end of January. Applicants are being sought for the second STEMS loan which will be given some time during the first of 2000.

Street Children Fund

In 1997, the Street Children Fund (formerly Street Children of Kericho) began through personal contributions of a few interested people. The project's focus was to purchase one meal per day for several of the street children. A local resident in Kericho took charge of the project assisting the children in obtaining the daily meal and providing them with counseling. This project serves 20 children.



The twenty children originally involved in the Street Children Fund continue to receive one meal a day and sometimes clothing. The Kenyan citizen who took the group on in 1997 is continuing his work with the children. Some of the children were taken back to their parent's homes, which they had left because of poverty and lack of food. The parents and children received counseling in an effort

to keep the families together.

Friends Across the Ocean

Friends Across the Ocean started when the President of Expanding Opportunities returned from a volunteer teaching experience in Kenya, Africa. She found the Kenyan students eager to learn of the United States and decided to match Kenyan students with American students as pen pals. Some American classrooms were eager to write to Kenyan classrooms and so the project began. With much interest from American students, the President initiated the Travel Course for Students. The goal was to arrange for a group of American high school students to travel to Kenya to meet with Kenyan high school students and experience African culture first hand.

The first Travel Course for Students will take place in February of 2000. Searsport District High School in Searsport, Maine has twenty students committed to the course. The President and a teacher from the high school are making plans for fundraising to pay for travel costs. Participants are obtaining passports, medical exams and shots in preparation for the trip. The group expects to be gone fifteen days. Students and adults involved in the project are purchasing novelty items such as pens and books to share with the Kenyan students.

Aina Moja

Aina Moja is a retail business that sells African crafts and artwork. Its goal is to assist African artisans by purchasing their products for resale. The proceeds from the sale of the items go into the various projects of Expanding Opportunities. Artists receive fair market value for their goods which are sold through Aina Moja. This enhances

the awareness of their goods and products, increases their sales, and advances their standard of living.

Plans are being made to sell the Aina Moja business to Expanding Opportunities as a business venture to earn money for the projects. The transaction is expected to take place in January through a contract of sales.

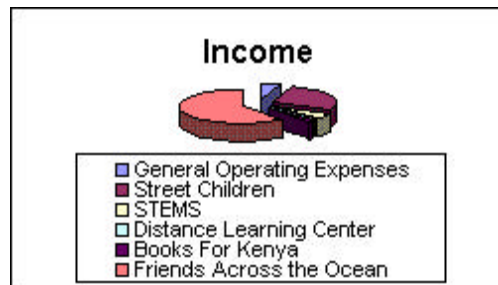
Distance Learning Center

Expanding Opportunities would like to establish Distance Learning Centers to allow people to participate in educational programs while remaining close to home. The idea for Distance Learning Centers is built on the foundation of the Internet. A small, solar-powered, satellite-linked learning center would be built in a rural but well populated town in Kenya, Africa. The Center would offer onsite individualized and small group literacy instruction as well as certificate and degree programs over the Internet. A parcel of land has been donated to the Project and the NGO bureau in Kenya has offered support. This project would greatly expand the educational opportunities for many Kenyans.

Since June, the President has been seeking funding opportunities for the Distance Learning Center. Some building material has been donated to the project and several Kenyan citizens have committed themselves to the construction of the building.

Financial Report

	Beginning Balance	Income	Total	Expenses	Balance Forward
General Operating Expenses	0	194.09	194.09	194.09	0
Street Children	100	982.75	1082.75	1082.75	0
STEMS	208.68	0	208.68	0	208.68
Distance Learning Center	0	20.46	20.46	20.46	0
Books For Kenya	0	43.13	43.13	43.13	0
Friends Across the Ocean	0	2399.67	2399.67	2399.67	0
TOTAL	308.68	3640.1	3948.78	3740.1	208.68



Board of Directors

Name	Position	Citizenship
Beverly G. Stone	President	United States
Julie M. Watkins	Vice President, Treasurer	United States
Audrey Lawson	Secretary	United States
Mike Lawson	Board Member	United States
Nancy Foreman	Board Member	United States
Janet Gilbert	Board Member	United States
Charles Gitonga	Board Member	Kenya
Charles Mutai	Board Member	Kenya
Deborah Moorehead	Board Member	United States
Chris Gooseman	Board Member	United States
John Purinton	Board Member	United States