



Summer 2009

Dear friends of ASAP,

“Every time you spend money, you’re casting a vote for the kind of world you want”. For this reason, every dollar you contribute to ASAP means so much more than money to us. It represents your vote and acknowledgment that our long-term approach to producing life-changing improvements in Africa is worthwhile and has value to you. In May and June we received over 1,100 “votes”- that is dollars - to help our new ASAP program in Malawi survive these tough economic times. We are thankful for each and every vote!

We are delighted to announce that Cordaid has approved funding for three years to support the Village Savings and Lending (VS&L) portion of the ASAP Africa Malawi’s “Chimvano pa Chuma” (CCP) project. (Unity through Economic growth” in the Chichewa language of southern Malawi.) Those of you that are closely connected to ASAP know that this funding announcement comes as a major relief – “but we are not out of the woods yet” according to ASAP’s President Tom Arsenault “we are still searching urgently for a major donor for the agriculture components of the CCP program”.

ASAP Malawi’s partnership with Total Land Care (TLC) in Malawi has kick-started the agriculture component of the program. Fifty treadle pumps have been donated to ASAP and made available for purchase to farmers at a subsidized price. These pumps have proven to be a real asset to each farmer using one. It allows a farmer to grow two or three cycles of crops during the year instead of only one. [Click here](#) to view a short video about the treadle pump. Using available funds from their successful VS&L savings clubs, 50 farmers now have access to a consistent water supply for farming. Thanks to the technical training offered by TLC, ASAP’s three field officers have the knowledge and skills to build the capacity of rural farmers to use small scale irrigation, rain water harvesting and conservation farming techniques such as zero tillage and mulching to increase crop yields in these drought prone areas.

According to Victor Katchika-Jere, ASAP’s Country Director in Malawi, “the demand for the project has been overwhelming”. Leaders and chiefs from all the neighboring villages have expressed an enthusiastic desire to have ASAP begin working in their villages. “This is both surprising and encouraging, given the history of hand-outs in the area. At ASAP we were concerned that the dependency syndrome was so strong in this area that our self-help ethos would not be well received”.

It sounds as if these village leaders in rural Malawi would agree with a recent quotation about ASAP made by Irene Dunlap, co-author in the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* book series:

“One of the things I love most about ASAP Africa is that they teach people how to utilize their soil, which is sometimes the only resource that the people they serve have. The strategy of training people to learn a skill that will help them gain some self-sufficiency is by far more effective than feeding them for the short term.”

We are truly grateful to Irene Dunlap for these kind words as well as a generous contribution of \$3,000

toward ASAP's Rural Family Health Initiative in Zimbabwe. These were proceeds from "A Harvest of Hope", a Home and Garden Fundraising Event she and Stacy Robbins held in May to Help the Hungry. ASAP's goal is raise funds for 100 drip irrigation kits before purchasing, in order to secure a bulk discount.

A new project with Rotary International, The Peachtree City Rotary Club, and the Borrowdale Brooke Club in Harare Zimbabwe will provide an additional 155 drip irrigation and treadle pump kits to rural Zimbabwe later this year. ASAP looks forward to this renewed partnership with Rotary, after the very successful book-drive, which provided two 20' containers of gently used textbooks and readers in 2007. These books were donated to the 142 schools in ASAP's ongoing Bridge the Gap (BTG) math teacher training project, and are cherished by the recipient teachers and students.

The BTG project will end this December. In 2010 ASAP is looking forward to extracting the lessons learnt from this 5 year project and taking a new outcomes-based approach. A new Bridge the Gap-Kufusa Mari Junior (BTG-KMJ) project combines the strength of VSL with the BTG to apply math skills in primary schools, promoting entrepreneurship and increasing access to secondary school.

We are pleased to announce the receipt of an early entry prize from ASHOKA Changemakers *Champions of Quality Education in Africa* competition for the BTG-KMJ project. Please [click here](#) to read more about this project and award winning entry. Please **Save the Date - August 5th** - and cast a vote for this project. We will send you an email on August 5th and hope you will take the time to vote for this project to benefit the children of Zimbabwe.

The focus of the Zimbabwe program continues to be the VSL program, which ASAP has been implementing in Zimbabwe since 2001. Current projects will improve the household and food security of over 200,000 rural poor during this time of uncertainty. The Unity Government has been established although there seems to be little progress in the way of agreement. However, with the dollarization of the economy, goods are now available in the shops, although many people still struggle to get their hands on US Dollars or South African Rands.

It is said there is no better way to test your knowledge than by teaching and ASAP did just that in early July. With over 8 years of experience implementing VS&L project, the Zimbabwe team was delighted to share their insight and experience with a Norwegian Church Aid delegation from Darfur. Through the expertise gained from ASAP Africa in Zimbabwe, the group will return home and work to build the income and food security of internally displaced persons in the South and West Darfur region. Mohammed Abdelkarim Elsafi led this delegation, which departed from Zimbabwe after a fruitful week of learning.

Reflecting on these accomplishments, we become overwhelmed with how privileged we are to be a part of something working to create the world we want – a world without abject poverty – a place where there is enough for everyone. We are honored that you chose ASAP and entrust us to help create this change. Together we will succeed!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Bara
Executive Director

PS. - If you are a federal employee, (or know one), ASAP Africa has again qualified as a participating organization in the Aid for Africa Federation of the Combined Federal Campaign. We are proud to have met the rigorous financial, accountability and governance standards and ask for your CFC support. Our CFC number is 10029.