



## Letter from the Executive Director

Elizabeth Bara

Springtime is a time of hope and new beginnings. What a spectacular and appropriate time to embark on replicating ASAP's program into a new country.



Compared to Zimbabwe, where ASAP Africa has been working since 1994, operating in Malawi should be a breeze. The currency, the Kwacha, is stable, fuel is available and the government has recently implemented a very successful farm input subsidy scheme, resulting in prosperity for many subsistence farmers.

Given our unwavering commitment to ASAP's vision of creating a world without poverty, success will be ours. As in all endeavors, scaling-up will be accompanied by risks which challenge our comfort zone. At this time of uncertainty, a little reassurance can go a long way to prepare us for the new journey.

Such an opportunity presented itself in March. I attended the Social Business and Microeconomic Opportunities for Youth conference led by John Hatch, the founder of FINCA.

Dr. Mohammed Yunus delivered the keynote address. A message filled with hope and inspiration that will carry us through the toughest of times that may lay ahead.

Often considered the father of the micro-credit movement, Dr. Yunus asks us to join him in declaring that severe poverty is unacceptable in a civilized human society, and to re-dedicate ourselves to creating a poverty-free world - a world where poverty exists only in museums.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Letter from the Executive Director	1
Math Skills, Youth & SB Enterprise	2
Kufusa Mari Update	3
New projects in Mutasa District	3
Ways you can help ASAP Africa	4
Malawi Project Campaign	4
<b>Birth of ASAP Malawi</b>	4

To quote Dr. Yunus:

"No is not an answer."

Please, we ask you to join this world-wide effort by contributing to our Malawi Program Launch fund raising campaign today. To help create a world where every single individual on earth has both the potential and the right to live a decent life. A world filled with hope.

Thank you for your interest in our work.



*John Hatch, founder of FINCA and Mohammed Yunus address questions from participants at the SBMOY conference.*

# Math Skills, Youth and Small Business Enterprise

Bridge the Gap (BTG) is an education project that aims to improve the teaching and learning of math in 100 rural primary schools in Eastern Zimbabwe. The goal is to improve the transition of students as they move from Primary to Secondary school math studies.

The five year project started in 2005 by working with grade 3 students and teachers, funding math club activities for both teachers and pupils, academic competitions and teacher training workshops. ASAP tracks test scores and each year most BTG schools perform well above the provincial average.

ASAP developed the BTG project concept in 2001, working with school leadership, teachers and the Ministry of Education to identify the priorities of all stakeholders. If the value of the local currency is used as a gauge, life in Zimbabwe has changed tremendously since 2001 when the Zimbabwe Dollar (ZWD) traded at 30 to 1 USD. Today it takes over 30,000,000 ZWDs to buy 1 USD. (Yes that's million!) The country has taken a severe downturn and these are desperate times for most.



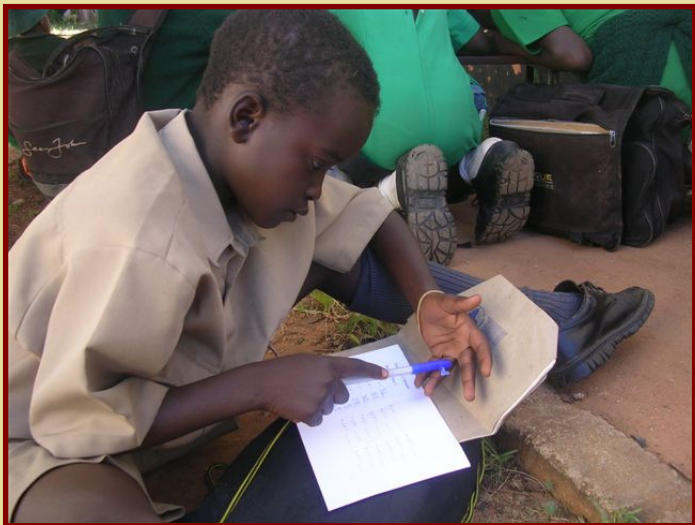
*ASAP introduced Kufusa Mari Junior project that brings the Village Savings and Lending activities into the BTG school math clubs.*

As conditions change, ASAP strives to adapt our work to ensure our efforts produce the most benefits possible for the situation as it exists TODAY. This is why ASAP introduced the Kufusa Mari Junior project in 2007, an ASAP pilot project that brings the Village Savings and Lending activities into the BTG school math clubs. Given the fact that less than half of the children in primary school have any hope of attending secondary school, ASAP was challenged to adapt the BTG project to be more relevant to the world that the child is living in today. Applying these concepts directly, supports and improves pupils' micro-entrepreneurial activities and increases their Math comprehension. This improves each child's ability to survive and prosper.

The project has shown the potential to be a great success. 328 children from grade 4 to 7 have formed 46 savings clubs since May 2007. By December, over 480 loans had been issued by participating students within these clubs. At the end of the school year most groups shared the fund, and plan to start again next year.

In this life-skills program, children learn to handle and manage money and apply math skills to activities that are relevant to the world into which they will be forced to survive. This not only encourages entrepreneurial activities but also builds self-confidence and self-esteem.

Another great thing about the project—kids love it. As Gibson Mlambo declared enthusiastically, "I'm going to be a Kufusa Mari member until I die!"



*Application of math skills – life skills – survival skills relevant far beyond the classroom*

# Kufusa Mari Savings Club Update

Kufusa Mari (Save for the Future) was the name given to ASAP's Village Savings and Lending (VS&L) project in 2001 by the founding members. To date, ASAP has helped over 25,000 savings club members learn how to manage their savings and lending activities, improving the household security for their families.

Today, ASAP is honored to be working as an implementing partner with CARE, Catholic Relief Services and Concern World Wide, sharing our VS&L project expertise — working together to increase the household income and improve the quality of life for thousands of families during these challenging times.

Here is a summary of each of ASAP's current Kufusa Mari projects:

The Kufusa Mari Two Project, the second KM project funded by the McKnight Foundation, has improved the lives of another 7,663 families as it comes to its completion in March 2008. Forming savings clubs has enhanced the quality of life and self esteem for the mainly rural woman participants and their families living in Nyanga District.

There are already 257 clubs and 1,471 member saving and borrowing in Mutasa district under the 5 year Rural Micro-Finance Project that started in June 2007. Working in partnership with CARE, ASAP's goal is to improve the standard of living of over 17,800 rural economically active poor women - 11,000 new savings club members and 6,800 existing savings club members will be assisted by ASAP to diversify their income sources through additional business training.

The goal of the Community Empowerment and Services Project is to reduce the negative impact of HIV/Aids on women and girls aged 10 to 49. ASAP's role in the 3 year partnership with Concern Worldwide, Family AIDS Caring Trust and two rural mission hospitals is to improve and increase the safe and appropriate livelihood activities for 1,500 rural women including training in VS&L.

ASAP, in partnership with Catholic Relief Services, has trained 1,119 children between the ages of 12 and 17 in VS&L basic skills, in a new three year project to address the unique and urgent needs of Out of School Adolescents. The 3 year project commenced in October 2007, with an objective to provide vocational, small business and life skills training for 2,100 children.

## New Projects in Mutasa District Begin in 2008

In June 2007, ASAP expanded the Kufusa Mari VS&L project into the Mutasa District. When working in remote rural areas, ASAP strives to maximize the value and benefits we offer the community. When rural women come together each month to save and borrow money, many walk for hours to attend the gathering. ASAP field officers monitor these savings club meetings on a regular basis, providing guidance and helping groups to address problems as they arise. It is during these meetings that ASAP field officers, University educated professionals living and working within the community, share additional life skills and knowledge through the Health and Nutrition Development Initiative Project.

After completing the HANDEI project successfully in 2007, an additional \$30,000 has been made available to offer life skills, conservation farming and HIV/AIDS awareness training to savings club members in Mutasa District during 2008. Plus an additional \$8,000 grant from Friends of the Honde Valley will allow ASAP to expand agricultural skills training to better meet local needs.

In addition, the Flora Family Foundation has funded a 2 year project to expand the Bridge the Gap project to enhance math skills for grade 6 and 7 students in 31 schools in the Mutasa District. The project is well underway and all Headmasters and local authorities have enthusiastically welcomed the BTG project.

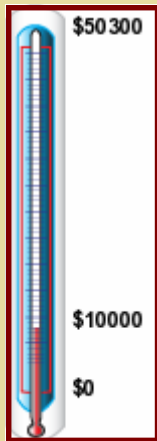


*In the Shona language "HANDEI" means "Let's Go". At ASAP it means a community will be empowered with knowledge and skills that will improve life, health and nutrition each day.*

# Ways you can help ASAP Africa

## Contribute to the ASAP Malawi Campaign

ASAP has launched a campaign to raise \$50,300 for the Malawi program by Memorial Day. The Dan and Page Walden Christian Fund of Dunwoody, GA has kicked started the campaign — we are already nearly 20% of the way to the finish line! Donate on-line today. [www.asapafrika.org](http://www.asapafrika.org)



## Pre-sell On Safari Coffee

*On Safari Coffee Initiative* is ASAP's way of working to fund our own operating costs - to cultivate our own self-reliance. We achieve this by roasting, packaging and customizing coffee and offering it to help other organizations raise funds. Groups earn \$5 for every pound of coffee sold and there is no upfront costs to the organization. Labels are customized and the coffee is fresh roasted after it is ordered. Fund raising doesn't get any easier than this. So please support ASAP while helping your own cause too! Please call Mary and ask for details (770) 632-7451

## In the greater Atlanta area, invite us to make a presentation

ASAP welcomes the opportunity to speak in churches, schools and organizations to create interest in ASAP's work.

Please partner with **ASAP** to help make the Malawi project a great success!

## The Birth of ASAP Malawi

P.O. Box 44, Chiwawa Malawi Phone: 265-5-512-753

Jeanette Batiste, ASAP Africa's Malawi Program Coordinator, departed from New York for Chikwawa, in southern Malawi on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Jeanette will spearhead establishing ASAP's new program in one of the most impoverished districts in Malawi.



**Enjoy that pizza while you can!**  
Jeanette Batiste arrived in Chikwawa, Malawi March 5th, where she will help ASAP establish a new locally-driven program.

Jeanette is no stranger to the area, she spent 1 ½ years working with African Parks Foundation and 2 years for Peace Corps in Chikwawa before earning her Master's degree in Environment and Development from the London School of Economics. "It will be like returning to my second home, helping people I have grown to understand to improve their own lives". Working together is the key to success and ASAP's poverty alleviation & health program combined with skills training will bring a needed boost to this desperately poor area.

Speaking the local language will be a real advantage as Jeanette works to recruit key staff members that share ASAP's ethos and vision to achieve sustainable improvements, first within their own communities and then beyond.

### A Self-Help Assistance Program

189 Fulton Court  
P.O. Box 2275  
Peachtree City, GA 30269

**Phone:**  
770-632-7451

**E-Mail:**  
[info@asapafrika.org](mailto:info@asapafrika.org)