African Initiatives is a rights organisation, challenging injustice in Ghana and Tanzania. Together with African partners and the communities in which they work, we fight to realise the rights of marginalised people so that they can enjoy the same basic freedoms and resources as us. We share our learning with communities in the UK and Africa to change perceptions, challenge inequality and increase understanding of global interdependence.

www.african-initiatives.org.uk
www.globaleducationinitiatives.org.uk

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Cover photo courtesy of Anne Oswald
RealEyes Photography

Help girls to shine

£54 could pay for a girl like Santieli to attend a Song and Dance club and participate in the project for 3 years

£65 could pay for a girl who is unable to attend school during the day to go to evening classes for a year

“My name is Santieli Ephraim. I’m in class six in Nainokanoka primary school in Tanzania. I’m an official in our song and dance club that is Olakira A. Olakira means star. We named our club a star because a star shines all over and we also want to shine all over. This project has really motivated parents and the population of the school has really increased. Our club Olakira has really motivated many parents and children. Right now three girls from our club who couldn’t read before can now, because of our help. We are still recruiting other girls so that we can give advice to each other and therefore share and solve our problems as a club. Our vision as Olakira A is to ensure that parents educate children especially girls and are aware of the importance of education to both boys and girls. Not so many girls are getting pregnant now and they are studying hard because the project is motivating them.”

The Song and Dance project is delivered by the Pastoral Women’s Council and works with Maasai communities in the Ngorongoro District to increase enrolment, retention and performance of girls in primary school. The project uses traditional forms of communication - song, dance and drama - to raise awareness of girl’s education and change attitudes across communities.

“Darkness has now passed and light has come. Initially girls were not educated as the people were still in the darkness. The light has now come and the girls are educated since parents have seen the light”

Lyrics from an Olakira A club song.
Loliondo in northern Tanzania is no stranger to land disputes. The latest one between the Government of Tanzania and 66,000 local pastoralists has increased tensions and calls into question the viability of a whole way of life.

In April 2013 the Ministry of Tourism decided to divide the Loliondo Game Controlled Area into two; providing 2,500 square kilometres for local people and portioning 1,500 square kilometres of their land as a “wildlife corridor” as a measure to end the two decade dispute between local inhabitants and Dubai based hunting company, the Otterlo Business Corporation (OBC). This in effect, will evict local people in favour of hunting and squeeze them on to an ever decreasing portion of land. If plans go ahead there will be less pasture for grazing livestock and fewer water sources to take advantage of.

African Initiatives works with the Ujaama Community Resource Trust (UCRT) in Tanzania to secure land rights for pastoralists. Due to increased population and competition for natural resources; including pastoralists with their grazing herds; tourism; hunting; mining and conservation; the access, use and ownership of land is becoming increasing political. Evictions, permanent and temporary, are not uncommon and are becoming more violent.

UCRT supports pastoralist communities to undertake large scale “land use planning”, which records the ways in which the land is used for, providing the basis for a legal document - a “land certificate” - which can then be used to protect their rights to this precious resource.

Over 19,000 people in the past year have benefited from this project, having secured access to their land and therefore their livelihood. Women, who traditionally are not allowed to own land have been empowered:

“If today my husband sells land that belongs to both of us without my involvement, I will fight to the end to return the land because I have learnt that the law can protect me from such injustice. Also my fellow women who have been victims of land rights injustice, you have a right to follow it up and you have the support of us women. When we go to our leaders to request for land, they usually tell us that our husbands already own land and we get satisfied with the feedback we get but now we know otherwise.”

Teresia Aloise; Emboreet Village; Simanjiro District

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£16.50 could pay for one woman to participate in training to equip her with knowledge and skills about land rights

£25 could pay for a community leader to learn skills in advocacy to protect their village from land rights injustice
The Accused: Witchcraft in Ghana

Women in northern Ghana have no right to land, to inheritance, to bringing up their children, even to control over their own bodies. But among the most marginalised are those who are accused of witchcraft. Often this happens during outbreaks of disease, when frightened communities look for reasons for their suffering. Once accused, women are subjected to severe torture whilst any property they have been able to acquire is torched, vandalised or “inherited” by their accusers. Often their ‘guilt’ depends on nothing more than how a chicken lies when slaughtered.

In the Northern Region alone there exist seven ‘witches’ camps’ spread over six districts. They house approximately 3000 women and over 600 children of school going age that have been accused and sent away. Generations of women are in the camp; allegations follow daughters even when they try to move away. When a woman is accused of witchcraft she withdraws from the community, becoming invisible and faceless. They are banished from the heart of their families and their community and condemned to living in severe poverty, without adequate provisions or facilities.

This year, African Initiatives hopes to work with a new partner to support these women. The Grassroots Sisterhood Foundation is based in Tamale and has begun to support the inmates of the camps and the communities that condemn them. They believe that the key to challenging these harmful traditions is education: education for those victims who need to understand where they can go to for support and education for the communities both to prevent the allegations in the first place and to prepare the way for the reintegration of the accused. Education leads to understanding, and it is only by understanding the violations of these women’s rights that they can be protected from them.

Nebiang goes to school through The Pastoral Women’s Council’s girl’s sponsorship programme. They support girls through school in northern Tanzania financially; on the understanding that those girls will then return to their communities as role models in the future.

The Girl Who Ran Away To School
Nebiang’s Story

“My father didn’t want me to come to school, so I just ran away. Then my parents told me to find some other parents because I ran away from them. My father went to the Pastoral Women’s Council and told them not to support me in going to school because he wanted to marry me off. I woke up early one morning and came to school. I didn’t know anybody, any teacher, but I told everyone my problem. They told me to go and get myself a mattress and a trunk. Then I came back to school and a teacher bought me things like my uniform, blanket, shoes and exercise books.

I really study hard at school but I know I won’t live in peace in the holiday because my parents do not want me to go to school. I’m afraid because once I go home they will force me to marry and I don’t want to be married. I want only to study. I want to study, go to university and then come back and be a teacher.”

Change a Life

£300 could fund a girl like Nebiang through school for a year

£36 could pay for her uniform and books and other incidentals
Gemma Lovering volunteered to help organise our International Women’s Rights Conference in March. Here she describes her experience.

“This was a fantastic opportunity for me to not only get some more event organising experience but also to work for a such a driven and successful charity that has got some very emotive issues at the heart of everything that they do.

Prior to my arrival the fantastically diverse programme had been all but set. To name but a few speakers: women from Afghanistan talking about their experiences; someone from Tanzania exploring girls’ education and women’s empowerment; Integrate Bristol discussing Female Genital Mutilation; UNISON highlighting women’s rights in the workplace and Daniella Radice from the Green Party speaking about politics and the environment.

Being part of this conference taught me a massive amount about event management and organisation including marketing, budgeting, managing a team of volunteers and not least a huge deal about women’s rights issues”.

The conference was a collection of amazing perspectives and experiences from around the world, conveyed by individuals who are truly passionate about their subject area. The feedback from delegates confirmed this. One person said, “There is a great issue of smoke and mirrors surrounding laws and policy regarding women’s equality.” I hope that our conference managed to dispel some of the smoke and navigate around the mirrors. As another delegate told us, “I learned that women’s struggle for equality takes many diverse and multicultural forms.”

Our next International Women’s Rights Conference will take place early in March 2014.

Cordelia Scott, Year 4 teacher at Paragon School, Bath explains why they decided to raise money for African Initiatives’ partner the Pastoral Women’s Council.

“In the first half of the Spring Term, the children wrote their own mini ‘Tanzania Project’. A lot of the children included information about education for girls in Tanzania, as they had gleaned information about it from a fantastic workshop that African Initiatives had delivered to introduce the children’s project work for the half term. After the workshop, the children decided that they would like to hold a cake sale to raise money to sponsor a child’s education for a year.

After school on a Tuesday 26th February from 3-4.30pm our two Year 4 classes (and parents!) organised and ran a cake sale with cakes that they had made and brought in from home.

The children felt that it was fantastic to raise money for such a worthy cause, especially as it was about school, so they could relate to it. The children also prepared a class assembly about the cake sale and shared their knowledge about education for Maasai girls in Tanzania.”

Year 4 at Paragon School are sponsoring two Maasai girls in Tanzania who would otherwise not be able to afford to attend secondary school. Naishowra S. Kilayo, eldest of 7, who wants to be a teacher and Soola Koriata, one of 17 children (her father has 4 wives). Soola is one of the 10 best students in her class.

If you know a school which may be interested in raising money for us please visit our website and download our “Fight for Our Rights” School’s Fundraising Pack which includes case studies and ideas to use in the classroom.

“A collection of amazing perspectives from around the world”

PARAGON SCHOOL CAKE SALE SPONSORS

SCHOOL FEES FOR 2 MAASAI GIRLS

£7.50 would pay for one woman in Ghana to attend a women’s rights or domestic violence workshop in their community.
Thanks for Making a Difference

We would like to thank the very many individual supporters who continue to fund our work including those runners who participated in the Bath Half Marathon in March 2013.

Special thanks also to the Trusts and Foundations below:
The Waterloo Foundation
The Dorfred Charitable Trust
The Joe Franklin Charitable Trust
The Noel Buxton Trust
The Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Settlement
The Sylvia Adams Charitable Trust
The Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust
Open Gate
Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust
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Joan Spence Marsland Deceased Trust
Roger and Sarah Bancroft Clarke Charitable Trust
The Morel Trust
John and Susan Bowers Fund
The Cotton Trust
The Enid Slater Charitable Trust

And finally, a big thank you to our major funders who have believed in our work and made it happen

Make a Wrong a Right. Donate to African Initiatives today.

Please use the enclosed donation form and envelope.

Not being able to go to school is wrong.
Being evicted from your home is wrong.
Being subjected to violence or abuse is wrong.
“I was pleased to be able to run for African Initiatives for several reasons. I’ve had a long association with AI as trustee and so know from close up the dedicated work that staff and partners do, in cramped spaces, on tiny budgets and with the constant vagaries of competitive grant environments. I know how important it is to have capital raised for the organisation that is not completely ring

fenced by donors. Most of all, I think African Initiatives, whilst technically a charity, is really a genuine partnership between many: women farmers, pastoralists claiming land rights, the NGOs who support them, the staff and team in Bristol and others besides, who all aspire actively for an equitable world. It’s those values I ran for.”

David Mowat

Interested in running the Bath Half Marathon?

Run for African Initiatives and your support will make a significant impact in the fight for global equality.

Sunday 2nd March 2014
Contact us and sign up today
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