

The Africa Educational Trust

Vision

The Africa Educational Trust's vision is of a continent composed of fully independent, peaceful states, which are responsive to their citizens' needs and wishes, and provide appropriate education for all their inhabitants. Education is essential if people are to participate effectively in the life of their own communities and contribute to democratic processes in their countries. In short we hold that:

“Education for all is the key to development”

Founding principles

The Africa Educational Trust was established as a charity on 1st August 1958 with the aim of promoting “the study of, and the dissemination of knowledge concerning African affairs, or the general education in Africa for all persons and outside Africa for persons who in the opinion of the Trustees are wholly or partly of African descent”.

During its first four decades, the Trust's priority was to provide further and higher education opportunities to those excluded by the white minority regimes of Southern Africa. In subsequent years, the Trust has focused primarily on those people within Africa who have been excluded from access to education as a result of conflict and war.

Mission

The current mission of the Africa Educational Trust is to support people in Africa, regardless of age or gender, religion or physical capacity, ethnic group or displacement through conflict, where they are excluded from an appropriate education. Such support enhances access to quality education and may be provided directly to marginalised people, or indirectly through existing organisations.

In all its operations, the Africa Educational Trust is committed to

- Promoting concepts of life-long learning and universal access to education
- Providing quality education that encourages independent thought
- Ensuring that education strengthens communities and self-empowerment
- Eliminating exclusion from education, especially on grounds of gender and disability
- Developing local ownership of programmes
- Involving staff and volunteers in organisational policy making
- Developing appropriate programmes for conflict and post-conflict areas

To fulfill its mission, the Trust has needed to decide where we should focus our limited resources, on what we should concentrate within the chosen geographical areas, and how we should deliver our programmes for maximum effect.

Where we work

AET currently operates primarily in the fragile and war-torn states of Eastern Africa, including countries dealing with the legacy of conflict. We are happy to work outside this area if it is consistent with our central mission. Our work in the United Kingdom focuses on raising the resources necessary to carry out our work, and engaging in debate on development issues where our expertise is particularly relevant.

What we do

AET works in collaboration with local communities, Ministry of Education officials and local organisations to provide formal or alternative education and basic skills training. Our work includes projects aimed at reducing poverty and illiteracy among women, children, disabled people, those who have suffered displacement and instability, and those in nomadic and pastoralist communities.

How we do it

We deliver our programmes by involving local communities, local employees and local political structures where appropriate, in a transparent and co-operative manner that emphasises collaborating rather than instructing. Recognising that we cannot by ourselves meet the development needs of the countries we work in, we aim to: develop practices that can be replicated by other bodies; provide sustainable support arrangements; and strengthen governmental systems of education so that their quality is enhanced.

Our commitment to 'education for all' is developed within the context of local cultures wherever possible, and delivered through local participants who then come to own the schemes supported by AET.

Translating the Mission into Action

Strategic Framework

To fulfill its mission, AET organises its work under five broad themes:

- (1) Developing high quality innovative programmes to fulfill educational needs in African contexts.
- (2) Raising funds from donors who share our vision, and building up unrestricted funds to enable us to broaden our impact.
- (3) Developing relationships and networking with local stakeholders as well as donors and other NGOs working in the field.
- (4) Building and sustaining an organisation that is open, egalitarian, transparent and accountable.
- (5) Disseminating our learning about impact, our knowledge and our expertise widely within the academic and donor communities, in line with the original intentions of the founding trustees.