



Exponential Education

February 2014

****Akwaaba!****

Director's Welcome

I am excited to write the welcome address for Exponential Education's first ever installment of our new monthly newsletter. There is so much going on in our communities in Africa today that I know I speak for our entire team around the globe when I say that we cannot wait to find out what 2014 holds for us.

To bring all of you, our loyal supporters, up to speed: throughout the latter part of 2013 Expo underwent a tripling in size and a bit of restructuring. Led on the ground in Ghana by our fearless Director of Operations Mr. Spencer Campbell, directed by the diverse group of men and women on our board who each brings a unique insight and perspective to Expo's goals and mission, and supported by a world class team of specialists across numerous time zones, our group of newest program managers are spreading out across the Ashanti Region of Ghana, teaching leadership and life skills to the students who need it most, making secondary education accessible to those who it would otherwise be prematurely joining the labor force and supporting young teachers in adopting new innovative teaching techniques. We could not be more impressed with the hard work and dedication of our team in Ghana which I think is matched only by the excitement and eagerness of the students in the communities they serve to learn. Today, we are thrilled to announce that our reach has impacted over 1500 students since its beginnings in 2010.

Nearly 14 years ago the world gathered in New York to set the

eight targets we now see as the Millennium Development goals. One of these, the most near and dear to my heart, was working together to provide universal access to primary education. As we near this self-set deadline of 2015 much work still needs to be done but entering the conversation of access to education is the topic of quality of education. If a student is in school but is not learning then we are still failing. Unfortunately this is something we see all too often all across Ghana. When we first enter a community and begin to assess the junior high students (usually aged around 13-17) more often than not we find that a majority of the kids can not complete simple addition and subtraction problems, much less multiply and divide or read and write in either English or their native language, Twi. Despite the complexities of this problem and the challenges that lie ahead I am beyond proud to be part of an organization that is working at multiple levels to bring access, quality, and opportunity in education to students across a region that is thirsty for change.

I want to welcome all of you, our supporters, our friends, and our families, to our newsletter, and invite you to also feel proud of the work we have all been able to do together. There is strength in numbers and without the constant backing all of you provide, each in your own way, we have been able to create amazing change in the lives of hundreds of kids. I want each of you to know that your contributions,



in whatever form, are immensely appreciated and essential to the work we are all doing together.

With that said, I invite you to follow along each month as you meet each of our program managers and many of our students from across the Ashanti Region. We have big plans for this year, many of which are already in the works, so we hope you will stay tuned as we share stories with you.

Sincerely,

Amber Shevin and Helen Gradstein



From the Village

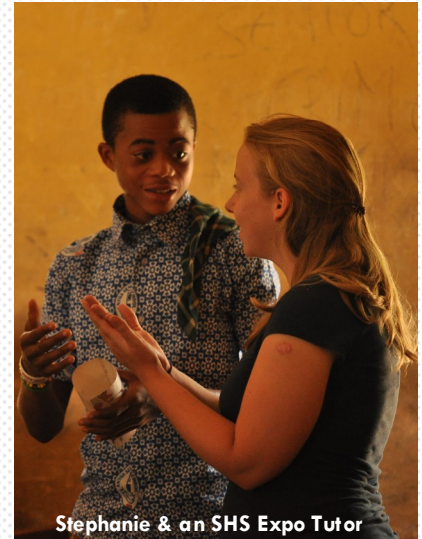
My name is Stephanie Grace Jones (now Akua Grace) and I'm new to Ghana, if not new to Exponential Education. For the past few months, I've been helping Expo with some fundraising work from my home base in Virginia, near Washington, D.C. Two weeks ago, I arrived in Ghana to help Expo with their tutoring programs as a Program Manager. I will be working with the JSS and SSS schools in the town of Antoa, about 30 km east of Kumasi.

Although I was happy to help Expo from the United States, the lure of experiencing our programs in-person was an opportunity I couldn't pass up. I've never travelled in the developing world before and am thrilled to do so now as part of Exponential Education's team. My program officially begins this Friday, and I'm hoping to meet with my SSS tutors tomorrow to establish our meeting time and discuss expectations. Thankfully, Matt Hotmer worked in the Antoa schools last term and therefore has a good crop of tutors ready to help with our program again. We've already met with the JSS headmaster to request his help identifying the students who most need our help – I may meet with him again before Friday to make sure all of the arrangements are in place for the pro-

gram to start.

I feel fortunate to have had two weeks in Ghana before the beginning of my program to acclimate to the climate and culture. Having left D.C. under a sheet of snow, my arrival in Ghana was a minor shock to my system. Now my body has fully adjusted to believing it is summer, and the weather is not unlike August in Virginia. The cultural adjustment has taken longer, moved more slowly, and is undoubtedly still in progress.

I can say with confidence that the rumors are true: Ghanaians really are exceptionally friendly. Even the most reserved, shy visitor to Ghana would have difficulty not making friends. I'm already losing count of the number of times I've been lost (or just looked lost) in Kumasi, Antoa, or anywhere in between, and received multiple offers of guidance from strangers who seem simply happy to help. The whole town of Antoa has welcomed me with open arms, and I find language tutors everywhere. No one wants to let me go without practicing my Twi, for which I am extremely grateful (if a little embarrassed by my ignorance). I'm learning quickly.



Stephanie & an SHS Expo Tutor

While I'm a little nervous to finally get my program off the ground, I'm looking forward to meeting all of the kids on Friday. The JSS students will need to take their pre-test to determine what levels of proficiency we're starting with, and then I'll be able to discuss important areas of focus with the SSS tutors. Hopefully another post will follow this one to report on our activities and progress. Until then, I'll be here in Antoa, getting lost and forgetting Twi. —Stephanie Jones, Program Manager, Kwabre-East School District



Peace Core Volunteer Jessica Starts an Expo Program in the Upper West!

Name: Jessica Keeton

Age: 24

From: Farragut, Iowa

University: Simpson College, Iowa

Community Name: Dondometend

Region: Upper West

Arrived in Ghana: September 2012

School: Dondometend Junior High School

School Population: 180

Most Memorable Moment in Ghana:

I think the most rewarding and the most memorable is seeing my students succeed...and smile. When they come to me for help, encouragement, or just to thank me, that makes this whole experience worthwhile.



Jessica at work

Why Did you Join The Peace Corps?

I joined the Peace Corps because I wanted to make a difference in the world, big or small. I love Gandhi's quote "Be the change you wish to see in the world." I want to live up to that quote and do everything I can to make the world a better place. I also love learning about new cultures and traveling. So all of those combined helped me decide to join the Peace Corps.

Who inspires you?

Like I said before, Gandhi inspired me to make a difference in this world. My family has also inspired me. They have supported me through everything, and when I told them about joining Peace Corps, they were so proud and wanted me to make the most of this crazy adventure.

Why did you want to run an Exponential Education Program at your school?

I have fallen in love with my students. And I want more than anything for them to succeed. I believe that through Exponential Education, this can happen. They are so motivated to learn and to pass their exams, they are willing to do anything. I have so much hope and belief in them. I want to do everything I can to help them succeed.

Have you run any similar programs before?

I have done after school tutoring at my school before. It was just me and maybe 15 students. We would meet 3 times a week, and I would let them ask me any Mathematics question they had, and I would do my best to explain/teach them. We had a lot of fun, and those students had some of the highest Mathematics scores on their BECE exams.

What other project or programs have you been doing with your community?

School library, school garden, spelling club, Girls' Camps, malaria activities, school development projects (classroom construction, latrine), after school computer classes, health classes, HIV/malaria talks.

Introducing Program Manager Dara

Greetings Expo Followers!

It's Dara, reporting from Kumasi! I just landed in Ghana a week ago, and I'm really excited to begin my work with Exponential Education and to be in West Africa. It's been quite a ride to get to this point, and I'm feeling great about starting this journey on a new continent, with an awesome support team here in the field (and in the States!).

I was born in Ohio and spent my adolescence in a small town where the population never broke 500 people. When I was 18 I moved to New York City under the guise of pursuing higher education. I attended The City College of New York where I (finally!) graduated with my BA in English this past December.

While living in New York I volunteered for New York Cares and I was on the Advocacy Council for Planned Parenthood of New York City. I was an English tutor and conversation partner, and I also worked on projects helping to prepare Hispanic immigrants to take the United States Citizenship exam. I was in PPNYC's Sex Education group, where I helped to prepare workshops and disperse safer-sex to the public. I loved being able to serve my city in several different ways because I got to connect with so many people on the local level. I felt like I really got to know my fellow New Yorkers despite all the differences that stood between us, which created a space for mutual learning and understanding.

After travelling to northern India this past summer to study, I was overwhelmed with the same feeling of oneness with the people there too. I found that even amidst cultural, language, and socio-economic barriers, there was still a place for genuine connection and compassion. This realization, combined with my natural curiosity for the seemingly strange and foreign, propelled my fascination into the complex world of international aid and development.

As an Exponential Education Program Associate I will be setting up a tutoring program in Ejisu (a suburb of Kumasi), that will be targeting low performing junior high students to help prepare them for the BECE, an exam that they must pass to get into high school. Right now, only about 40% of all junior high students in Ghana pass this exam, and far fewer than that actually go to high school because they cannot afford the large tuition fees. My program will take 5 SHS students and have each of them teach and tutor 5 junior high school students. We will be offering small stipends to the SHS students to help offset their tuition costs, and will be selecting the best performing tutor for a full scholarship for that year. The junior high students also benefit because they are able to go over material that will be on the BECE. They receive more individualized attention in the target areas of English language and Mathematics.

Additionally I will also be working as an SAT tutor in select high schools across Kumasi, as a college advisor, and really, whatever else Expo asks of me!



Dara & a Student in the Office

I'm so proud to be about of Expo and I'm so excited to be in Ghana, to be learning Twi (the local language), and to be getting to know my neighbors and my students! I'll be dropping by the blog every now and again to say "Hello", but until then, "Ye-bish-shia!" - *Dara Den-ny, Program Manager, Ejisu-Juaben School District*

Contact Us for Feedback and Questions at
ExponentialEducationProgram@gmail.com
www.ExponentialEducationProgram.org



Exponential Education

Organization Overview

About Us | Exponential Education improves access to and quality of junior and secondary education through primarily through peer to peer tutoring programs. In each program we select High School students, provide them with comprehensive training, and pay them a small weekly stipend so that they can stay enrolled in school. In return, they each tutor five Junior High School students in Math and English. At the end of ten weeks, the most accomplished senior high tutor in each program receives a scholarship to pursue higher education. In addition to our after school programs, Exponential Education has several other major initiatives. We currently operate a social business called Expo Tutoring Center where we provide SAT, GRE, and College Application assistance to ambitious Ghanaian students who want to study abroad. All profits from our tutoring center feed directly into our non-profit programs as a source of sustainable funding. Exponential Education, in collaboration with the Ghanaian National Service, is also working to provide creative learning teacher trainings nationwide. Other initiatives include leadership workshops, region wide research projects and helping the Ministry of Education develop GIS maps.



Our Partners | Exponential Education is currently partnered with the United States Peace Core, Empowerment Works, the Ashanti Regional Ministry of Education and the Ghana National Service. We are also partnered with a number of smaller organizations who have adopted our system abroad.

Our Reach | To date, Exponential Education has worked with over 40 schools throughout the Eastern, Central, and Ashanti regions in Ghana. The program has awarded over 40 university scholarships, provided over 200 SHS students with tuition assistance, given free tutoring in Math and English to over 1000 JHS students, and given SAT/College Advising to over 60 students. We have a total reach of approximately 1500 students throughout Ghana, Sudan and India when combining our various programs and initiatives.

Our Funding | Exponential Education receives funding through four different sources. Our first source is through soliciting donations from our avid supporters and holding fundraisers to receive in-kind donations and program funds. Our second source is through a combination of grant writing and social innovation competition awards. Our third source uses a dollar-to-dollar matching scheme. Exponential Education is able to maintain many programs at half the cost by matching funds raised by peace core and current volunteers who run our programs under our jurisdiction. Our fourth and most important revenue source is our Expo Tutoring Center, which generates and provides sustainable funding to our organization through SAT/College Application assistance

