

# Transforming Lives *through* Self-Sufficient Schools



"Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day.  
Teach him how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime."  
*Ancient Chinese Proverb*

"Teach the young how to profit sustainably from the land  
and everyone will eat.  
Teach them in Self-Sufficient Schools and education will be  
available to all."  
*Teach A Man To Fish 2011*



**TEACH**  
**A MAN TO FISH**  
*Education that pays for itself*



# TEACH A MAN TO FISH

*Education that pays for itself*

## Foreword

*"Teach A Man To Fish is a young organisation, but one that brings together development practitioners with many years of experience in the field of agricultural education.*

*The concept of helping others to help themselves – as exemplified in the ancient Chinese proverb from which we draw our name – is far from new, yet it is as true today as ever.*

*We have a moral responsibility to ensure that the young are given the skills to support themselves and to enjoy the broadest opportunities for self-fulfilment. **Teach A Man To Fish** is about expanding the availability of such an education by emphasising the importance of creating sustainable institutions.*

*Please take the time to find out a little more about what we do - I hope you will be able contribute to making our vision a reality"*

Nik Kafka, Managing Director, **Teach A Man To Fish**



Organic Vegetable  
Garden



Learning By Doing



Students Marketing Their  
Produce

# Aiming High

## Our Vision

A world free from the extremes of absolute poverty, one in which all individuals are able to enjoy the empowering benefits of an education that meets their needs and aspirations in life.

## Our Mission

To broaden access for the poor to a high quality education combining vocational training and entrepreneurship by supporting institutions working in this field to increase their financial self-sufficiency.

# The Background

## The Problem: Poverty

We live in an age where over half the world's population has to survive on less than \$2 a day. In developing countries the majority of people continue to depend on traditional agriculture, yet the difficulty of maintaining a living in rural locations leads more to the cities every day.

## The Solution: Education

Education represents a powerful tool for generating jobs, improving incomes, and expanding the opportunities available to young people in developing countries. In meeting the needs of sustainable rural development the importance of agricultural education is indisputable.

## The Challenge: Funding

If developing country governments had sufficient funds to provide a first-rate education for all those who wanted it poverty would be far rarer. The reality is that while governments continue to struggle to fund basic education – as must be their priority – the vitally important area of vocational education remains significantly under-funded.

**The model promoted by Teach A Man To Fish is designed to overcome the difficulties of funding vocational education, increasing the sustainability of such educational programs to reinforce their role in poverty reduction.**

# So What's The Big Idea?

## **Taking A Revolutionary Approach...**

It was not so long ago that governments and NGOs were accustomed to pumping large sums of money into subsidized credit schemes. These programs offered cheap loans to the poor at below market rates. The focus was on providing the service, rather than making the service sustainable. The result was that when there was no more money the services collapsed. The people who had received credit were little better-off in the long term than before.

The microfinance revolution started however when the need for the institutions providing credit services to be self-sufficient was recognized. As a result credit services are now available to millions more people than was ever possible before, and these services are playing a real role in long term poverty reduction.

## **..To Inspire A Revolution In Education**

The same type of revolution needs to take place in vocational education – starting with agriculture.

What are needed are schools that focus on ensuring their own financial sustainability, and in doing so increase the capacity of the education system - extending the benefits of an education to an ever greater number of students.

What is needed is a new paradigm for education – the ‘Self-Sufficient School’.



- Learning in the Fields -

# How Can A School Be Self-Sufficient?

The obvious answer would be to charge students fees; yet there is plenty of evidence to suggest that this serves to exclude those from poorer backgrounds.

So what's the alternative? A model that builds on the work already carried out in vocational schools.

## **A Hands-On Approach...**

Agricultural vocational schools have long appreciated the benefits of 'learning-by-doing' – no one ever learnt to drive a tractor from reading a book! Skills are often best learnt on-the-job, and improve with practice.

## **That Generates Income....**

Where refining skills is aimed at delivering a product of marketable quality – from honey to maize to milk - the natural next step is to actually make and sell this product. Schools rarely have difficulties finding a use for income generated in this way!

## **On An Increasing Scale....**

Once a school is successfully producing a product for demonstration purposes, it's often proportionately not much harder to adjust production to a much larger scale. Students benefit from greater exposure to each stage of the product process, economies of scale increase productivity and profitability, and the school generates greater income.

## **...Till Self-Sufficiency Is Attained!**

When each activity across a school's curriculum is taught in this manner – i.e. essentially run as a profitable business unit – financial self-sufficiency becomes a realistic prospect.

## **Self-Sufficiency: A Model For The Future**

In summary, at its simplest a Self-Sufficient School is one that generates enough income to cover the costs of providing a quality education to its students.

Could a school eventually be 100% financially self-sufficient? We're certain of it. There are several examples of schools around the world that have gravitated towards such a model out of a combination of financial necessity and belief in its educational benefits.

# A Model Example

## The San Francisco Agricultural School Paraguay, South America

The Fundación Paraguaya – an innovative Latin American NGO committed to poverty reduction through supporting entrepreneurship - found working in rural settings, particularly in agriculture, extremely challenging.

Small-scale farmers were often skilled in production, yet constantly ran into financial difficulties because they lacked basic business skills.

The opportunity to manage an agricultural school that had run into funding difficulties offered a chance to find new ways of plugging this skills gap.

As an upper secondary school catering for over 150 students - with support from the state unlikely, and not wishing to rely exclusively on funding from donors - it was soon obvious that for the school to survive as a long-term proposition it would have to be able to generate its own funds.

Adopting the Self-Sufficient School model meant a complete change in the way that the school was run.

In this new regime business plans for each activity emphasise the profitable use of student time – both from an educational and financial perspective. Students in the lowest year receive as wide an exposure to different activities as possible focussing on theory and practical skills. Those in the final year are able to specialise and build on their entrepreneurial skills by taking over responsibility for the profitability and productivity of their chosen business areas.

With a carefully researched business plan for attaining full financial self-sufficiency in hand - and despite having only 60 hectares of land to work with - the school was able after 5 years of hard work to cover all of its recurring costs through production activities, generating an impressive \$300,000 in sales.

**Teach A Man To Fish** is now committed to helping other organisations across Africa and Latin America to replicate the San Francisco Agricultural School's success. With partner projects in Nicaragua, Bolivia, Paraguay, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania we're working hard to show this was far from a one-off success, it's a viable model for sustainable education – something disadvantage young people around the world have been waiting a long time for!

# Working Together...

**Teach A Man To Fish** works in pursuit of its mission in two core roles:

## **As a Network**

The **Teach A Man To Fish** international network brings together over 2,000 NGOs, agricultural schools, and development professionals from more than 120 countries committed to sustainable approaches to tackling rural poverty.

The network provides a forum for practitioners and organisations involved in vocational education to share ideas and innovations, and to foster South-South relations in this field. Membership is free and offers members the chance to take part in online forums, attend international conferences, and receive a quarterly newsletter.

The network is open to all educational institutions, non-profit organisations, and individuals that work in the field of agricultural vocational education. To sign up just visit our website [www.teachamantofish.org.uk](http://www.teachamantofish.org.uk) or send us a letter including all relevant contact details.

## **As a Project Partner**

**Teach A Man To Fish** works with partner organisations directly in a number of countries implementing educational projects which have the capacity to become self-funding within a specified time period.

While projects will usually focus on a specific productive activity, they can be added together as modules, and are designed over time to increase a school's financial resources towards full self-sufficiency.

Once a project proposal has been accepted **Teach A Man To Fish** will work alongside the local partner to secure sufficient funds for its implementation. It is normal that the initial project will be relatively small scale but built upon in subsequent projects. Funds may come from **Teach A Man To Fish** itself, international partner NGOs, or foreign sponsors. The local partner is usually expected to contribute towards some proportion of project costs. Where there is a need for specific expertise we can also help identify and source individuals and organisations with these capabilities.

All project proposals which are in accord with our core mission are welcomed. Proposals should be sent to our head office address or emailed to [projects@teachamantofish.org.uk](mailto:projects@teachamantofish.org.uk).

# Working For You...

In addition to the core roles already outlined we realise that there are other areas where agricultural schools may need support. **Teach A Man To Fish** is committed to finding ways to bridge the skills and technology gaps often faced by our network members:

## Technical Support

Institutions which are already at full stretch running existing programmes can find themselves lacking capacity to maximise the income generated from these activities.

**Teach A Man To Fish** can offer experienced program management support, as well as arranging more specialist technical support as required.

As part of the network concept, we also aim to support the exchange of skills between members. Funding may also be available for this purpose.

## Technology

Keeping up with appropriate technology is key to ensuring that vocational education offers students the best opportunities upon graduation.

**Teach A Man To Fish** aims to support network members in finding the best technology for the activities they run. Our contacts and partners, both in the North and South, enable us to keep you up to date with advances in technology, and to support your efforts to locate or promote specific technologies.



- Beekeeping Project -

# Educational Benefits

## Practice Makes Perfect

At the very core of vocational education is an understanding that skills differ from knowledge. Knowledge informs the techniques applied to achieve a desired result, but it is practice that builds the actual skills that determine whether such techniques do indeed yield the desired results.

Though students may understand the long-term benefits of practice, it does nonetheless imply a degree of repetitiveness which can in turn lead to lack of motivation.

Practice needs a focus; the Self-Sufficient School model provides that focus. Students work together on products and then sell those products. Better products sell more easily – and for higher prices. As the students face the customers themselves, taking responsibility in teams for a given product, the students' natural competitive tendencies ensure that motivation is kept high – in turn ensuring they get the most out of their time spent practicing.

## The Business Of Business

The ability to produce efficiently is only the base requirement for a successful business. If the aim of schools is to equip students to run their own enterprises they need to understand book-keeping, marketing, sales and a range of other business skills.

These skills also need practice, and a suitable focus for practice. Many otherwise excellent business education programs let down their students because they are unable to provide a realistic environment to practice these skills in.

Failure is a natural part of learning, but failing in business in the real world is a scary prospect particularly for the poor who lack a safety net to fall back on. The Self-Sufficient School model provides this realistic environment in which to practice business skills - yet shields students from the most severe consequences of failure. The net result is graduates who are empowered to succeed in business – because they have already experienced success in business!

# Contact Details

**Teach A Man To Fish** is always interested in hearing from schools, organisations, and individuals working in the fields of education and agriculture.

Whether you have a query about our work, are interested in collaboration, or just want to share with us your insights, please contact us using the details given below.

For more information, visit our website at [www.teachamantofish.org.uk](http://www.teachamantofish.org.uk)

For general enquiries email:  
[info@teachamantofish.org.uk](mailto:info@teachamantofish.org.uk)

Or telephone:  
Outside the UK +44 7263 2306  
Within the UK 020 7263 2306

All mail intended for **Teach A Man To Fish** should be sent to:

Managing Director  
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## Core Principles

### **1. Student Welfare**

We will strive to provide a safe environment in our schools. The mental and physical welfare of our students comes before everything else.

### **2. Educational Standards**

We exist to educate. Educational goals will always supersede any other aims our programs have.

### **3. Empowering the Disadvantaged**

We believe in education as a vital means of escaping poverty. We will seek in to empower students from low income families and marginalized communities as a priority.

### **4. Environmental Sustainability**

We respect the environment. In all our activities we will aim to minimise our impact on the environment, and maximise our contribution to its preservation.

### **5. Financial Sustainability**

We will strive to become financially self-sufficient. We will live by the principles we teach. In teaching our students how to produce a living income from activities, we will endeavour to generate sufficient income from these activities to cover all costs.

## We Are Committed To

### **Local Ownership**

We are here to support our members, not to tell them what to do. Schools will always retain full control of how their activities are run.

### **Transparency**

We believe in openness. Transparency aids organisational learning and inspires trust. Schools will share financial and technical information both within the network, and within their communities.

### **Equality**

We value all individuals equally. Schools will strive to incorporate gender equality into their programs, and will not discriminate by race or religion.

### **Entrepreneurship**

We see enterprise as a powerful force for economic prosperity. Schools will seek to provide their students the tools and inspiration to create wealth for themselves and their communities.

### **Innovation**

We view innovation as crucial to long term success. Schools will embrace experimentation as a means of consistently improving their programs.



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## **CONTACT DETAILS**

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[info@teachamantofish.org.uk](mailto:info@teachamantofish.org.uk)

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