

June 15, 2020

To A Better World supporters,

Your generosity and concern have made such a difference in our world. Because I want you to know how lives were changed in 2019, I'm sending you the A Better World (ABW) Newsletter.

You may wonder how A Better World is faring in this new world in which we find ourselves. Last December, ABW received more donations than usual. This has been vital as we've faced 2020 and its shortfalls: your heartfelt support in 2019 allows many ABW projects to continue functioning.

Although school building projects have been put on hold, other important activities endure. We continue to perform surgeries, facilitate rehabilitation, conduct clinics, continue feeding programs, provide masks and other personal protective equipment, and furnish additional water tanks which encourage scrupulous handwashing and other sanitation. When governments allow schools to resume, we will begin our building projects for this year.

I also want to share with you an exciting change in the ABW office. For the past 30 years, we have been located on the lower floor of Parkland Place in Lacombe, sharing office space with Advanced Systems (AS), the computer and IT business that I founded in 1986. Thanks to the generosity of our landlord, Warren Schnoor, and his family, the ABW portion of the office has been rent-free. The time has arrived for ABW to become more independent, to have additional space, and to establish its own identity that provides for long term growth and stability. Because of contributions given specifically for a new office and the continuing support of Mr. Schnoor, ABW will be moving into its own office on the main floor of Parkland Place. AS, having consolidated its Red Deer and Lacombe offices, will be housed on the upper floor of the same building. AS will continue to provide technical services and to share personnel with ABW as long as there is a need. Personally, I'm looking forward to my commute between ABW and AS—I'll just need to climb one flight of stairs rather than drive 23 kilometers between Lacombe and Red Deer! Please feel free to come by and see the new office.

I hope that the COVID-19 crisis has not affected you in a critical way. If you find that you still have the desire and ability to share, I encourage you to continue your support of ABW. Please call me to explore projects that are of special interest to you. Your actions affect the lives of so many people who are blessed by your generosity and commitment.

Gratefully,



Eric Rajah

# 2020 NEWSLETTER

30 YEARS OF SUSTAINABLE CHANGE TO IMPROVE LIVES



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**Effective July 1st**, the A Better World office will be moving just one floor up in the same building. More information on our move to follow in the near future.

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At the Mwisho Wa Shamba Primary School in Tanzania, there are so few desks the children take turns sitting on the floor.

## A BETTER WORLD'S 2030 EDUCATION PROGRAM GOAL

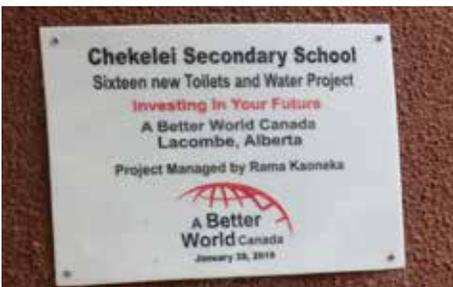
A Better World is setting a new target for its education program: 75,000 children in its schools by 2030. ABW is starting off nearly two-thirds of the way there. As of 2020, more than 49,000 students already attend schools that have been built or significantly renovated by ABW, in Kenya, Afghanistan, Rwanda, Tanzania and other countries around the world. Over the next 10 years, ABW will increase the number of classroom seats by more than 25,000.

as the most crucial initial steps toward long-term impact. Providing effective, successful education to as many children as possible is the most important means of ensuring the future stability and success of communities.

By 2030, a total of 1,650 classrooms will need to be in place to meet these educational goals. These developments will also include supporting projects such as toilets, kitchens, dormitories, teacher residences, gardens, teacher development, and as many as 40 water projects, either on-site or off-site with pumps and piping back to the schools. Off-site projects (which may also benefit the surrounding community) such as community clinics will be considered when they benefit the schools and support students, allowing them to attend school and succeed. This is expected to result in having 25 clinics in place by 2030.

The long-term plan includes interim targets to help measure progress. By 2025, 1,405 classrooms should be in place, housing more than 63,000 students.

A Better World will continue to work with local governments and form community partnerships to ensure that projects respond to community needs. ●



BELOW: At the Lamu School for the Mentally Challenged in Kenya, children with developmental disabilities are given the chance to have a more fruitful and happier life.



This program represents a shift in emphasis for ABW within its strategy of community development. The new 10-year goal gives ABW a measurable target in poverty reduction. Overall success in poverty reduction is remarkably difficult to quantify – especially for a small agency. Rather than attempt to provide extensive research demonstrating sustained poverty reduction in the communities where work is being done, ABW is relying on existing research that indicates investing in children has the most impact in ending the cycle of poverty.

Educating and caring for children have always been core elements in ABW's strategy; now education has taken on a special focus. The agency has chosen to home in on its programs that are generally accepted by respected authorities

## SUCCESS STORY



Sharbona is one of the many young people who are succeeding thanks to your contributions through A Better World. The 19-year-old graduated in 2017 from Arab Khana High School, one of the schools benefitting from our 100 Classroom Project in Afghanistan. She is now studying law at university in Sheberghan.

Sharbona hopes to become a member of parliament someday, and dreams of creating a country that is free of war, where women need not fear violence and can have freedom of choice. She hopes to help improve the quality of education in Afghanistan and make it accessible to everyone. ●



### New Science Lab at Ringa School

At Ringa Secondary School, in an agreement with the Government of Kenya, ABW built a science lab to supplement the two classrooms built by the government. Students required the science lab credits to graduate. The secondary school is a recent addition to the Ringa school complex – a long-term site for ABW projects.

## FROM THE CO-FOUNDERS



Brian Leavitt (L) and Eric Rajah

**These are challenging but fascinating times**, as everyone finds new and innovative ways to keep moving ahead in the face of a global health crisis unlike any we have seen in over a century. We appreciate the support that has been provided to A Better World, and we are doing everything we can to ensure that our resources are used in the best possible way to

preserve our existing investments overseas and continue development in the communities where we work.

As this agency moves forward, it is developing a new focus to streamline operations and place emphasis on the kinds of work we do best, targeting projects that have the greatest impact on the future of communities. These changes are outlined in the story on the facing page about our new 10-year goals.

Despite circumstances that may lead some to feel pessimism, we believe that the world will continue to turn and we will continue our efforts to make it better. We maintain our hope, and fully expect to emerge from this crisis in the coming months as a stable and stronger agency, continuing the work that we have done with our extremely generous donors and dedicated volunteers. ●

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Recently, we celebrated our grandson's 16th birthday (COVID-19 Birthday) with a parade, so his special day wouldn't be forgotten in the crisis. In spite of the heavy rain, 17 vehicles showed up honking horns, waving posters and literally throwing gifts at him.

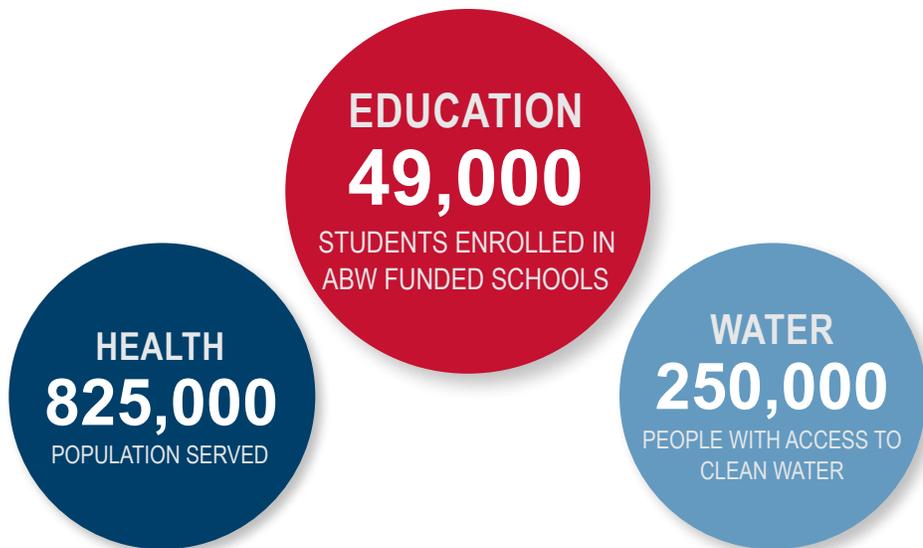
This is A Better World's 30th birthday! And yet while we need to celebrate, the circumstances of the pandemic are posing a real challenge: trips cancelled, donations down, etc. But we too need a parade! Even if it needs to be a virtual one for now. There would be hundreds of vehicles with you, The Backbone of A Better World, showing the many pictures of reaching out and investing in schools, wells, gardens, etc.



Ron Sydenham

Let's be sure to not allow circumstances to "rain on our parade." Please continue to support A Better World's vision of sustainable change to improve lives. ●

## RESULTS ACHIEVED TO DATE



## NEWS UPDATES



### Ground Up Campaign

The Ground Up Campaign continues the work of the 100 Classroom Project in Afghanistan. At the Baba Ali School in Jawzjan Province, schools are continuing to be built in places where students are sitting on the ground to learn.



### Ready to Serve Their Students

At Chekelei Secondary School in Tanzania, 16 new toilets and a water project were completed last year. The toilets are equipped with running water and septic tanks, and serve 375 students.



### New Health Centre

A new health centre was completed at Chesinende in Kericho County, Kenya. The health centre was initiated by the government and local community, and completed with the support of ABW. It will serve hundreds of patients each year.



### Newly Renovated Outpatient Ward

The outpatient ward and waiting area were completely renovated at the Mombo Health Centre in Tanzania. The renovation included electrical wiring and replacement of windows and ceiling tiles, among other surface improvements.



## THE CORE OF A BETTER WORLD

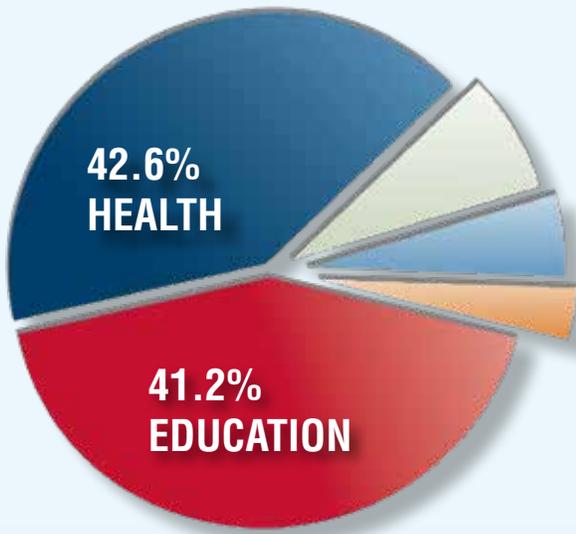
Volunteers continue to be the core of A Better World. Health care professionals have racked up nearly 60,000 hours of volunteer time on ABW trips and projects, and will soon surpass that number.

Dental teams, pictured here, are just one of the medical groups that travel with ABW to provide free clinics and training. Medical and physiotherapy teams travel every year and work with local health professionals to improve the lives of children and families.

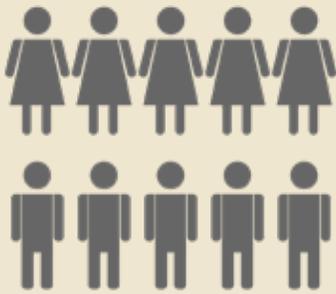
The recorded hours of the Health Care teams, while impressive, are a fraction of the overall time put in by volunteers. Education teams visit schools, Project Managers regularly travel throughout their areas of supervision, and general volunteers perform varied and numerous duties while on trips or working on administrative tasks in Canada.

Those are just a few examples of the multitude of volunteer roles that help make ABW such an efficient organization. Donors can invest completely in projects without a loss to overhead expenses because of the number of people who simply want to make the world a better place. ●

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2019



- 7.6% **PROGRAM DELIVERY / OPERATING COSTS**  
\* Funded by specific donors
- 5.4% **WATER**
- 3.2% **CANADIAN PROJECTS / YOUTH**



Our big goal by  
**2030**

**75,000** children enrolled  
in classrooms developed by  
A Better World.

The communities from where these children come from will also have access to health services and clean water developed by A Better World.

Today  
**49,570**

2020  
**52,000**

2025  
**63,570**

2030  
**75,000**

Infrastructure in Place	
# of classrooms	1105
# of health clinics	15
# of water projects	29

Infrastructure in Place	
# of classrooms	1155
# of health clinics	16
# of water projects	30

Infrastructure in Place	
# of classrooms	1405
# of health clinics	21
# of water projects	35

Infrastructure in Place	
# of classrooms	1650
# of health clinics	25
Serving Population	125,000
# of water projects	40
Serving Population	200,000

In his book **Children in Jeopardy : Can We Break the Cycle** , Irving B. Harris, wealthy philanthropist & founder of the Chicago based Irving Harris Foundation, promotes that in order to break the cycle of poverty, **investing in children is the wisest investment with the greatest return.**