

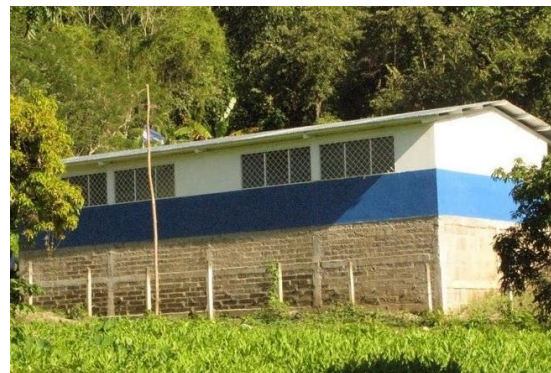


March 2025 Newsletter

An old Chinese saying has it: "If your time horizon is one year, plant rice. If it's ten years, plant trees. If it's thirty years, build schools." We instinctively understand the wisdom of this.

Long-term change only comes about when people are better educated. Otherwise, they revert to their old ways of doing things, rooted in custom, superstition, myth, and lore. Nothing ever changes.

There's another, hidden insight in this lesson. Better educated people see that their children become still better educated. Think of how your parents made sure you were educated, and you, your children. Better education bootstraps itself into eternity.



Above, are two of the many schools we've built in Nicaragua. Education is the best investment we can make in a better world. That's why TGUP's focus is on education. [Our mission](#) says it all: "Helping the world's children learn."

But education is amazingly diverse. It requires everything from books and desks and curriculum and good teachers and pathways, to classrooms, science labs, latrines, playgrounds, kitchens, help for those with special needs, and more. That's why for every classroom we build, we build at least six surrounding sub-projects. It's like a car.

It's easy to think of the car as the engine. But without the frame and transmission and drive shaft, axles, wheels, tires, brakes, and 1,000+ other parts,

it's just a lurking hunk of metal on a lab bench that goes "Vroom!"

So, this is a quick drive-by tour of just some of the elements of what it takes to help the world's children learn. Where to start?

We do a LOT of latrines. Here is a "Before" of a set of latrines we're replacing, right now, in Cameroon. And, there's the "After" (from a different school) of what it will look like when it's finished. Which would you rather use?



It isn't just that they're gross. When they get filled up, the health department shuts down the school because the kids end up going in the bushes and the place becomes a disease factory.

One of our favorite projects is playgrounds. Maybe it's our inner child busting its way out. But the truth is that educating the whole child works better than just educating their brain. And kids that have run off that extra energy learn better. Here are two iconic playgrounds that we love, one in Brazil, the other, in Kenya:



The most exuberant, joyous video we've ever seen is of the 487 children at Kiahuko school, in Kenya, when we opened their playground. To see it, [click here](#). Remember that joy?

Then, there's something as mundane as desks and notebooks. In a lot of schools in Africa, they don't have either. But how can you learn your ABCs, or 123s, if you don't have a workbook where you can practice them?

Here are two schools we're working with, one in Uganda, and one in Cameroon, in West Africa. One has neither desks, nor notebooks. In the other, we've installed both. In which classroom are the students better equipped to be learning?



In many countries, the meal the children get at school is their only meal of the day. So, it's super-important that it be good: nutritious, and sufficient. Here is a "Before" and "After" of the kitchen we just finished at the Loibor-Siret school in Tanzania.



Water? That's pretty important, wouldn't you say? But believe it or not, many schools have no water, or water that's not potable. Here's a 120-foot deep borehole we just finished digging, by hand, in Uganda, so that the school's children weren't having to walk a mile each way to fetch buckets of water.



It's unthinkable to us that we wouldn't have all the water on hand that we need.

Old timers of this newsletter know that Science is one of our main focuses. Our [Science Lab in a Box](#) enables developing world high school students to do world class laboratory work in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Here are students working with two new SLaBs, in Nepal and Kenya.



Finally (although we've hardly exhausted things), there is TGUP's [Save a Girl™](#) (SaG). SaG is a set of washable, reusable sanitary pads that help girls manage their period so they can stay in school. A kit costs \$7 to make and lasts three+ years. We give them free of charge to the girls. We've made and distributed [more than 100,000](#) of them.



Save a Girl™ might be the most plausible path known for improving the human condition. It is simple, proven, and inexpensive. It holds the portent of doubling the aggregate human potential by helping get educated that half of humanity that is not, now, fully educated: the female half.

TGUP's Brenda Birrell, the inventor of *Save a Girl™*, is in India right now, opening our sixth SaG sewing Center (after Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Cameroon, and Nepal). Next month's newsletter will be devoted to her trip and the new center.

Final Word

If making the world a better place was easy, it wouldn't be so prized. But we shouldn't be scared off by its complexity, either. No one of the above projects is

so hard in themselves. They just take will, focus, and resilience.

Every single one of them provides a better chance in life for the children they help. That's the key. We're not pushing on a string. We're installing the bottom rungs on the ladder of life so that the children can get a toehold and begin their own ascent. And boy, do they ever.

You couldn't believe how hard children work when they see there's a better chance for them. That's what we're trying to liberate: that most powerful of human motivations; the desire for a better life.

And, there's that side of the equation here, at home. The conventional wisdom is that it's all too impenetrable, or remote, or difficult, or whatever. It's not. We only need to believe in ourselves, and our capacity to bring about that better world that everybody fantasizes about. Only it's not fantasy.

As this is being written, on Thursday morning, March 27th, we've completed 521 projects just like the ones you see, above. They will help [almost 3.3 million](#) of the world's poorest children have a better chance in life. It's what we would hope for, for ourselves, if we were in their shoes, isn't it?

Thank you to those who make this possible. We don't know of a more noble endeavor than to lift up even a small part of humanity.

A final special shout-out to Bill at [Cynthia's of Bend](#), in Bend Oregon, for the generous donation of a sewing machine that is now being used to produce SaG kits in Uganda. Thank you!

TGUP

Here are ways you can help:

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