

Inspired by a volunteer trip to Tanzania, founders Stacey Monk & Sanjay Patel created Epic Change in 2007. They realized the power of the local stories they heard during their journey, and believed that they might be a potential means to raise funds to support the impoverished communities they visited and others like them across the globe.

Our Mission

"We help hopeful people in need share their stories to acquire resources that will improve their lives."

Epic Change believes that people's stories are assets that can be used as resources to improve their lives. We help people in need share their "epic" true stories in innovative, creative and profitable ways to help them acquire the financial resources they need to create positive "change" in their communities.

Our Approach

We use donations to provide interest-free loans to local partners to finance their community improvement efforts. We then facilitate loan repayment by collaborating with our partners to share their stories through projects that generate income. Finally, we "pay it forward" by recycling repaid loans to help fund Epic Change in other communities.



Our Prototype Project: Shepherds Junior Primary School in Arusha, Tanzania

- Our proof-of-concept project seeks to rebuild and expand Shepherds Junior, a small primary school in Arusha, Tanzania at which Monk and Patel volunteered in during their 2007 trip to Africa.
- Mama Lucy Kamptoni, a savvy and passionate local woman, founded the school in 2003 on land she rented next door to her home using the income from her poultry business. The school nearly closed in 2007 when a developer bought the rented land, and Kamptoni had no access to the capital required to relocate.
- The school has grown from 6 students beginning in 2003 to 335 children in 2009, all between the ages of 3-13.
- The school is entirely English medium, but includes courses in Swahili, the country's primary language, and has clubs that celebrate the vibrant culture and history of Tanzania. In addition, the school focuses lessons on local social and cultural issues, including poverty, HIV/AIDS, gender equality, child labor, and more.
- The school charges tuition to most students, and uses its income to subsidize the costs of orphans and lower income children who attend the school.
- It's estimated that the new school will cost \$175,000 to build, and will take 3-5 years for construction and loan payback.



Progress to Date

- Epic Change made its initial loan of \$35,000 in December 2007. Using these funds, the school was able to purchase new land and complete construction of 4 new classrooms within 100 days. Students started classes at the new site on March 3, 2008.
- In late 2008, Epic Change made additional loans of just over \$30,000. These funds were used to construct an additional classroom and purchase a refurbished school bus that provides safe, reliable transportation.
- In November 2008, Epic Change launched a line of cards and gifts including candles by West Hollywood designer Timothy Jay (<http://www.timothyjaycandles.com>) as well as stationery and holiday greeting cards by GreenerPrinter (<http://www.greenerprinter.com>) that feature artwork by the children at the school and photos by award-winning photographer Tim Llewellyn (<http://www.fourl.com>). Each product shares the story of the child(ren) that inspired or assisted in the creation of the design. Through sales of these products, the school has been able to repay over 15% of our initial \$35,000 loan in just over a year.
- Since our initial investment, the student body has more than doubled in size, from ~115 students to well over 300. There are currently 167 boys and 168 girls attending Shepherds Junior.
- In November 2008, Shepherds Junior participated in national exams for the first time. The school ranked #1 out of 117 participating schools in the Arusha district.

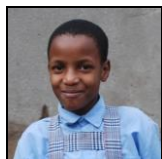


The Students

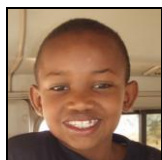
The children at the school come from diverse backgrounds, some from working families who work hard to pay the school's nominal tuition, some orphans and other needy children in difficult circumstances who attend the school tuition-free. Listed below is a representative sample of their incredibly poignant, touching and compelling stories.



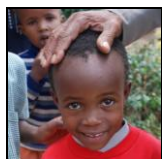
Alice and **Damares** are best friends. They're in the same preschool class, are both five years old and share a favorite song called "Be Happy!" Damares is taller. Alice aspires to be a doctor, Damares a teacher. Already, their own teachers ask these precocious little girls to lead morning assemblies, and they direct hundreds of their peers to sing, dance and stand at attention. When Damares demands silence, they listen. These best buds are born leaders in a country where women have traditionally not held positions of power. At their school in Tanzania, students perform plays about women's rights in their culture, and stage debates on whether boys are better than girls.



When we asked **Glory** her favorite place, she said it was the ocean. She said she'd never been, but she just knew it was beautiful. This aspiring teacher who is consistently ranked at the top of her class is also an orphan who often struggles to meet basic needs. Glory currently lives with her sisters in a house made of mud and sticks that has a patch of banana trees in front where their outhouse is located and both their parents are buried. During one of our visits, Glory, who's rarely absent and loves school, mysteriously missed class for three consecutive three days. We later learned it was because she'd lost the sole on one of her shoes, the only pair she had to walk the mile or more to school. This is the same little girl who wrote to us in crayon on a construction paper thank you card a note that simply said: "I am so lucky." There's more about Glory's story on our blog at <http://epicchange.org/blog/?p=36>.



When we asked **Gideon** to draw a picture of what makes him happy, he drew a picture of himself playing in the rain. He dreams of one day becoming an astronaut who reaches new planets. When we interviewed Gideon's father, a welder who's volunteering his skills to help build the new school and is also a minister, Mr. Gidori wondered aloud how they could have the same God as the people he once visited in Australia, why they would have so much while his people have so little. He went on to say, "if you tell a man he is weak, he will be weak, if you tell a man he is poor, he will be poor," illustrating perfectly the reasoning behind the Epic Change model: we treat our partners not as recipients of charity but rather as leaders who possess the strength and resources (i.e., their stories) to improve their own communities - and even to improve other communities in need elsewhere on the globe. Learn more about Gideon on our blog at <http://epicchange.org/blog/2008/04/26/just-a-kid/>.



Little **Naomi** loves school. Her Babu (Swahili for "grandfather") says even if she catches a cold, she refuses to stay home for even a day; she doesn't want to miss a moment in Teacher Happy's classroom at her school in Tanzania. Babu is an elderly man who, despite a difficult life, wears a constant grin that bares few teeth and much joy. Babu cares for his granddaughter as she's lost both her mother and father. To him, Naomi is hope.



Sayuni lives in an orphanage a few blocks away from Shepherds Junior. When we visited there, we met Mama Ana, a woman who couldn't be older than about 20, who single-handedly - and without any pay - cares full-time for Sayuni and 10 other orphans, ages 3-15. While we asked for some details about where Sayuni came from, and what happened to her parents, Mama Ana knew very little, except that she was brought to the orphanage by someone who attended her mother's funeral. Like over 1 million orphans in Tanzania, Sayuni has lost both of her parents. At Shepherds Junior, though, she attends school in an environment that doesn't brand her with a mark of poverty or shame, in a uniform that is washed regularly by her teacher, Rachel, to ensure that little Sayuni fits in with her peers.



During one of our visits to Tanzania, we went on a field trip with the children and our safari bus broke down stranding us in a wild game park for nearly 8 hours with the children. **Leah** helped us pass the time by sharing the story of a little girl who wanted to touch the stars in the sky, and tried to convince butterflies to carry her up to see them. As the evening wore on, we switched to a new topic, and the children wanted to know more about us and about America. Leah asked questions so insightful you can't imagine them from a third grader in a third world country: "What motivated you to return to Tanzania?" "Do you love your president?" she asked and continued "Were you happy when Saddam Hussein was killed?" I responded hoping, likely in vain, that my answers were nearly as intelligent as her questions. When we asked what she'd do if she were granted omnipotence, she replied that she would cure HIV and help street children. When she grows up, she wants to be a pediatrician, or the president.

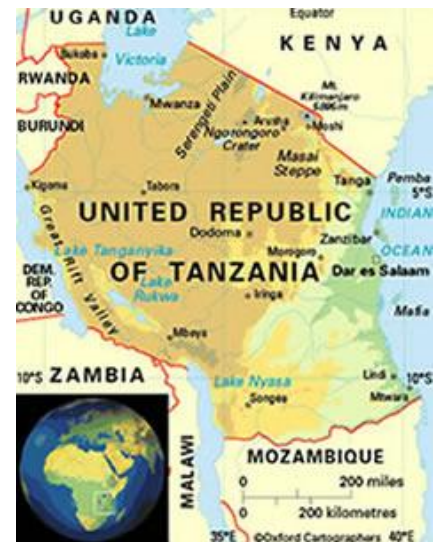


Pius is a six-year-old boy whose mother, Anna, thinks he just might be president someday. At his school in Tanzania, his teacher Selena says he's consistently the top student in her kindergarten class. To his mother who struggles with HIV, and who lost her husband to the disease, and to a country gripped by poverty, Pius represents hope. Learn more about Pius and Anna on our blog at <http://epicchange.org/blog/2008/06/22/pius-is-hope/>

Tanzania

The school is located in Arusha, Tanzania. The country is among the most impoverished in the world. A few key statistics are presented here for context:

Key Statistics	Tanzania	US
Per capita income, USD (2006) <i>The CIA World Factbook</i>	\$350	\$34,586
Life expectancy (2000-2005) <i>United Nations World Population Prospects, The 2006 Revision</i>	49.7 yrs	77.4 yrs
Human Development Index Rank out of 177 countries (2006) <i>United Nations Development Programme</i>	#162	#8
Estimated AIDS Deaths (2005) <i>UNAID 2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic</i>	140,000	16,000
Total Population (2007) <i>The CIA World Factbook</i>	~39.5 million	~301 million



- As of 2005, there were estimated to be 1.1 million orphans under 18 living in Tanzania.
UNAID 2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic
- From 2001-2003, it is estimated that 44% of the population of Tanzania was suffering from undernourishment.
United Nations World Population Prospects, The 2006 Revision

Our Organization

- We are run entirely by volunteers – from our founders to our web engineer to our attorney to our graphic designers.
- We've raised over \$80,000, primarily through personal donations, since our 501(c)(3) status was approved in September 2007. The vast majority of donors are microphilanthropists who have given \$40 or less.
- Epic Change was the May 2009 winner of Ideablob and received a \$10,000 prize which will go toward the construction of a technology lab at the school in Tanzania. Construction of the lab is slated to begin in the fall of 2009.
- Epic Change was in the top 5% of all US-based charities who participated in the 2007-2008 America's Giving Challenge competition; we were awarded a \$1,000 grant from The Case Foundation for our efforts.
- Epic Change has been widely recognized for our innovative use of social media. Our organization creating a viral Twitter campaign called *Tweetsgiving* in November 2008 which raised over \$11,000 in 48 hours, enough to build a new classroom in Tanzania.

Our Values

Local Leadership

We believe that epic change can only be created through passionate commitment from local individuals who have demonstrated successful leadership within their communities. While we provide access to global resources and global ideas, we use those only to empower local leaders to make critical decisions based on their understanding of and a deep respect for their own culture and people.

Self-Sufficiency

We believe that communities can only be transformed from within, and therefore support only changes that are proposed, funded,

implemented and sustained by people who live locally. We adamantly refuse to rob communities of their sense of value, power and autonomy by fostering a relationship of dependency on our organization or any outside group.

Incremental Success

We think big, and start small. We ensure that organizations build the infrastructure necessary to support each implemented change and demonstrate success before we make further investment.

Sustainability

We work with our partners to ensure long-term success by developing plans for local maintenance and continuous improvement of project outcomes.

Focus

We concentrate our efforts only on as many opportunities as we can thoughtfully manage with adequate resources. We undertake new projects only when existing initiatives are well on their way toward successful outcomes.

Repeatability

We leverage our resources effectively by investing only in those ideas that have the potential to be repeated in more than one community.

Founders

Epic Change Founders **Stacey Monk & Sanjay Patel** have worked together since 2000 to lead organizational change efforts in their roles at the Santa Clara County Social Services Agency, Genentech and Funken Consulting, a firm they founded in 2004. A former Deloitte consultant, Stacey has her MA from Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz School of Public Policy. Sanjay is a UCLA graduate with a degree in Economics.

Press & Blog Coverage

Epic Change has been featured in over 200 online publications. For links to all of the articles below, visit our "News" page at <http://www.epicchange.org/news>

- **Twiterville Notebook: Stacey Monk of Epic Change** *Global Neighbourhoods* (3.25.09)
- **Interview with Stacey Monk, founder of Epic Change** *Ode Magazine* (March 2009 Issue)
- **School of Hope: Brevard nonprofit provides African kids with life-changing education** *Florida Today* (1.04.09)
- **Twittering To Fame And Fortune** *The NonProfit Times* (12.23.08)
- **Tweetsgiving: What are You Thankful For?** *Mashable* (11.26.08)
- **Recycling for Change: Epic Change uses a pay-it-forward approach to saving the world** *PlanetSave* (11.20.08)
- **The Next Generation of the Ndugu Model** *Kiva Business 4 Business* (11.09.08)
- **An Epic Tale** *Carnegie Mellon Today* (10.01.08)
- **Epic Change, Charity of the Day** *Luxist.com* (6.15.08)
- **Stacey Monk of Epic Change & Social Media Marketing** *Marketing 4 Change Podcast* (5.15.08)
- **Epic Change Starts with One Person** *What Gives?* (5.04.08)
- **Instrumenting Social Responsibility** *ZDNet* (5.02.08)
- **Social Media Meets Social Responsibility** *Triple Pundit* (5.02.08)
- **Guest Post: Stacey Monk Goes Big** *Go Big Always* (5.02.08)
- **Indialantic Woman Partnering to Help Students in Tanzania** *Florida Today* (1.13.08)

FAQs

• ***Is Epic Change a 501(c)(3) organization?***

Yes, Epic Change is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and our federal tax identification number is 26-0155393.

• ***Why should I donate to Epic Change?***

By donating your dollars to Epic Change, you are making a "perpetual" gift. Because we reuse repaid loans to fund future projects, your donation may be used to support the construction of a school in Africa and, upon subsequent repayment, the expansion of a hospital in Peru or the improvement of a program in the United States to serve the homeless, for example.

Additionally, unlike many organizations that perform global service, we are not affiliated with any particular political agenda or religious denomination. To avoid potential conflicts of interest and ensure our organization doesn't participate in undermining indigenous cultural norms and beliefs, we don't promote propaganda, proselytization or evangelization of any kind.

• ***How are you different from existing micro-lending organizations?***

Epic Change has certainly adopted some of the key elements of successful micro-lending practices. Most importantly, the projects

we fund are proposed and led by members of local communities and we provide loans instead of grants to fund selected project proposals.

We do differ significantly, however, from micro-lending organizations inasmuch as they typically make small loans that enable individuals to engage in for-profit activities whose proceeds they will use to pay back the loans. Epic Change instead makes somewhat larger loans to not-for-profit entities and individuals in need (e.g., schools, hospitals, community-based organizations, etc.) and, therefore, partners with loan recipients to implement profitable means to enable loan repayment.

Additionally, because we feel it's critical to improve global awareness about the causes we address, Epic Change is particularly focused on leveraging local stories as assets rather than engaging in any potential profitable enterprise to raise funds for loan payback.

- ***How do you decide which causes qualify for your program?***

Epic Change looks for causes that have a compelling story to be told and are driven by effective, local leaders that are passionate about improving their communities.

- ***Why does Epic Change provide loans instead of just giving the money outright?***

The Epic Change model is unique because we provide interest-free loans to partners, rather than charitable gifts. A parent of one of the children at our first project site once said, "If you tell a man he is weak, he will be weak; if you tell a man he is poor, he will be poor," illustrating perfectly the reasoning behind the Epic Change model: we treat our partners **not** as recipients of charity but rather as leaders who possess the strength and resources (i.e., their stories) to improve their own communities - and even to improve other communities in need elsewhere on the globe.

Epic Change believes that giving the money outright only perpetuates a sense of inequality and conveys an implicit feeling of dependence. We adamantly refuse to rob communities of their sense of value, power and autonomy by fostering a relationship of dependency on our organization or any other outside group.

We also believe our model enables sustainable outcomes. Since we work with our partners to pay back loans over a period of 3-5 years, we're also helping them to develop the means to raise income long after they've paid back their initial loans, which is crucial to their continued self-reliance. Our model of loans and repayment also gives us the opportunity to recycle the same funds multiple times; instead of building one school, the funds we raise may fund many, many projects across the globe for years to come.

- ***How does Epic Change earn the money for the loans?***

Loan money comes directly from donations made to Epic Change. Once we have collected enough money to complete our first project, an estimated \$175,000, we're hoping that the combination of recycling the repaid loan amounts and sales of different storytelling products will be enough to fund all future projects and get Epic Change out of the traditional fundraising business.

- ***How do non-profit organizations pay back the loans?***

Epic Change reviews each loan request carefully to determine whether payback will be possible and we only approve loans where complete, successful payback is anticipated. Once a loan has been granted, Epic Change works hand in hand with each organization to determine the most effective loan repayment projects and provides support from inception to completion of each project. We also connect loan recipients to global resources that can help them to generate sufficient income to pay back loans.

Loan repayment projects may include creation and sales of books, t-shirts, CDs, greeting cards, arts & crafts, theatrical performances and other creative, profitable ideas based on local stories.

- ***What happens if an organization can't repay its loan?***

If an organization is unable to pay back the loan within the specified terms, but has made every effort to partner with us on recommended payback projects, we anticipate that the loan amount would be forgiven.

- ***If my donation is used as a loan, do I get my money back at the end of the project?***

No, all loans that get repaid will be used to fund epic change in another community. In essence, we pay it forward as many times as we can so your donation may actually fund a number of worthy efforts across the globe.

- ***Does Epic Change only fund projects in Africa?***

While we're starting in Africa, we plan to undertake projects throughout the world, including the United States. Therefore the impact of your donation to Epic Change is not limited to a particular geographic region.

- ***What is the next Epic Change project?***

We're thinking big, but we've started small. We've made a conscious decision to focus our efforts on only one project at a time right now to really refine our model and ensure the success of this specific effort. We anticipate that we may choose another geographic location or a different type of effort; and we may use the repaid funds to make multiple loans to support more than one cause.

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