

JACK DORSEY'S #STARTSMALL INITIATIVE INVESTS IN TRANSFORMING GIRLS' EDUCATION IN RURAL AFRICA

- **#STARTSMALL Gives \$3MM to four organizations to serve 20k more girls**
- **Girls' education is best long-term solution to existential problems facing the world**
- **Brought together by the Obama Foundation's Girls Opportunity Alliance**

San Francisco - Mar 30, 2021 - Jack Dorsey closed out Women's History Month with a \$3 million grant to support girls' education in rural regions of sub-Saharan Africa through his #StartSmall initiative.

The grant will be split (\$750,000 per organization) between [AGE Africa](#), [Asante Africa Foundation](#), [WISER International](#), & [Women's Global Education Project](#), four award-winning organizations brought together by their involvement in the Obama Foundation's [Girls Opportunity Alliance](#), Former First Lady Michelle Obama's girls' education initiative. **"We created the Girls Opportunity Alliance to bring together and support grassroots organizations that are removing barriers facing girls all over the world,"** said Tiffany Drake, Executive Director, Girls Opportunity Alliance, a program of the Obama Foundation. **"We are thrilled that Advancing Girls' Education in Africa (AGE Africa), Asante Africa Foundation, WISER International, and Women's Global Education Project (WGEP) are joining forces and doing remarkable work for adolescent girls across Africa that has been recognized by #StartSmall and Jack Dorsey."**

This support comes one year into the COVID-19 pandemic that has disrupted the education of a generation of African girls. AGE Africa, Asante Africa Foundation, WISER International, & Women's Global Education Project will use grant funds to scale their community-led programs to support 20,000 more adolescent girls through comprehensive education and empowerment programs, and to strengthen response programs targeting food insecurity, gender-based violence, and illiteracy stemming, in part, from school closures, movement restrictions, and other regional challenges during the pandemic.

"We are honored and inspired by Jack Dorsey's generous investment and belief in the ability of grassroots efforts to change the lives of girls in Sub-Saharan Africa," said the four organizations in a joint statement. **"Together with our supporters worldwide, this opportunity empowers us to expand our work, fight for gender equity, and bring critical skills and resources to adolescent girls in economically disadvantaged communities. With #StartSmall, we will fundamentally transform the lives of thousands more girls, giving them a voice and a choice in what their futures hold."**

The four organizations have a combined 57 years of operating experience in remote, rural regions of Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda, and have experienced periods of significant growth in the last decade. The organizations' unique partnership will enable them to leverage their combined expertise and ensure that thousands of girls will continue their education through and beyond this crisis.

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About #StartSmall: #StartSmall is Jack Dorsey's philanthropic initiative to fund global COVID-19 relief, girls health and education, and efforts towards Universal Basic Income (UBI). Dorsey transferred \$1 billion (28% of his wealth) to #StartSmall in 2020, and has tracked each grant in a [public Google spreadsheet](#) since.

About Advancing Girls' Education in Africa (AGE Africa): [AGE Africa](#) is a DC-based nonprofit organization operating in rural Malawi dedicated to providing life-changing opportunities to girls in Malawi through targeted initiatives in education, mentoring, and leadership development. AGE Africa believes that targeting adolescent girls is key to achieving women's socio-economic empowerment as the experiences, knowledge, skills, and agency acquired in adolescence have important implications for an individual's prospects in adulthood.

About Asante Africa Foundation: [Asante Africa Foundation](#) is a 501c3 non-profit educating East Africa's youth to tackle life's challenges, thrive in the global economy and catalyze positive change. As an on the ground implementing organization, invest in youth living in "off the paved roads" rural Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, empowering them with the skills they need to be successful in school and rise above the challenges they face. Their interconnected educational, life skills and livelihood programs, facilitated within "safe-space" learning groups, utilize learn-do-teach methodology, keep at-risk youth on the path to learning, accelerate academic classroom learning and develop future leaders, confident job seekers and innovative entrepreneurs.

About WISER International: [WISER](#) works with girls to transcend poverty, HIV/AIDS, and gender-based violence. We do this by creating environments that empower young women to drive change in their communities. The WISER Girls Secondary School takes a holistic approach to the boarding school environment. Unlike other schools in the area, WISER provides everything a girl needs to be successful including — clothes, books, safe housing, female role models, leadership training, healthy food, mosquito nets, HIV education, and essential medicine.

About Women's Global Education Project (WGEP): [WGEP](#) is a Chicago-area nonprofit organization working to empower women and girls in rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa to build better lives and foster more equitable communities through education. Since 2004, WGEP has worked closely with grassroots organizations and local leaders in rural Senegal & Kenya to dismantle the structural barriers keeping girls from attending and succeeding in school.

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