



Winter 2009/10

Dear Friends of ASAP,

As the chill and splendor of winter is now here in the US, the warm summer rains are soaking the fields of Zimbabwe and Malawi. This is where, with your support, ASAP's projects continue to help thousands improve their own lives through the Internal Savings and Lending (IS&L) micro-finance project. There are so many success stories to share, like that of Precious Chirunda. Precious, a widow with four children, scrounged for food and could not pay her children's school fees before joining an IS&L savings club. With money borrowed from her savings group, she has built up her sewing business; today her children are in school with uniforms and shoes and she is secure in the fact that she has enough food to feed her family on a daily basis. Thanks to you, there are thousands of success stories like this from ASAP's projects.

ASAP's Country Director in Malawi, Victor Katchika-Jere reports the rains in Malawi have been good so far this year. Bumper harvests will contribute substantially to ASAP's current effort to scale-up IS&L in the southern region of Malawi. The project is known locally in the Chichewa language as "Chimvano pa Chuma" (CCP) which means "Unity for Economic Growth". Initially, Cordaid provided a grant of € 20,000 to seed the project. Seeing is believing! After Cordaid visited ASAP last year and saw the phenomenal success of the IS&L activities underway, they funded a large part of the scaling up of the CCP with a €200,000 grant. The project will improve the lives of nearly 7,000 rural poor in southern Malawi over the next 3 years. More than 2,400 people are already actively involved in savings clubs and ASAP field staff work flat-out to meet the demand for training.

In partnership with Total Land Care (TLC) in Malawi, ASAP is promoting sustainable farming along with the IS&L training. This includes using permaculture and other organic techniques because the previous use of commercial fertilizers depletes the soil of nutrients. Negotiations are currently underway to scale-up this project as well, due to the success thus far and overwhelming demand for the project in the Lunzu area.

The Zimbabwe program continues to improve the lives of women and children in the Eastern province of Manicaland. The five year Bridge the Gap Math teacher training project has come to a close. The Project Manager, Collins Mutsvairo has been busy collecting data in order to document the project outcomes in a report to be released in March 2010. The urban-based IS&L project partnership with CARE ended in December 2009. ASAP is thankful for this opportunity to learn how best to adapt the IS&L to an urban environment – which has been hugely successful and very well received. Rural IS&L project partnerships continue with Concern WorldWide, CARE, Plan International and Catholic Relief Services.

Here in the US we are eagerly looking forward to 2010. With ASAP's vision for the future now in place, a new steering committee has been nominated. Please read about our new direction and goals by going to [www.asapafrika.org/about\\_us/long-term\\_vision.php](http://www.asapafrika.org/about_us/long-term_vision.php). Beginning in January, together we will create the momentum to move ASAP forward. We will scale-up our efforts to improve the lives of many more people in Africa, while at the same time working toward becoming a self-sustaining organization through social enterprise. Practice that which you preach is ASAP's philosophy.

Your year-end donation to ASAP Africa is needed more than ever. Remember, it only takes \$25 to change a life like Precious Chirunda's; putting another family on the path to self-reliance and dignity. PLEASE give generously! We truly appreciate your support. All of us at ASAP Africa wish you the best in 2010.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Bara  
Executive Director