**ASEF’s website**

**About us**

African Students' Education Fund (ASEF) is a non-profit organization based in the United States of America that has been providing scholarships to vulnerable yet bright secondary school students in Rwanda since 2007. These students have the promising intellectual capacity yet are in great financial need. ASEF works as an INGO under the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) and holds 501(c)3 status in the United States.

Before receiving ASEF’s sponsorship, things were not easy, I was studying without hope of continuing advanced level. Many times, I asked my parents how we will solve that issue and they always responded that only God knows (they didn’t have any answer).

**Mission**

Our mission is to make a better life possible through education for Rwandan children who do not have the financial means.

**Our Founder**

In 2007, ASEF Founder and President Erik Schmollinger first came to Rwanda as a tourist. He was immediately struck by the good nature of the Rwandese people. He was traveling throughout East Africa and to hear him tell it, “It was like a breath of fresh air” when he crossed into Rwanda.

There was something tangibly different. Given the troubled past, Erik could not believe that these were the same people that had suffered so greatly just over a decade before. The joy and incredible spirit of Rwandans inspired him to want to share in the healing and the light present here in Rwanda. He extended his stay and spent a few weeks volunteering in an orphanage in Musanze. During this time, he met numerous children who were in desperate need of help.

He decided if he could help a few children go to school, he could somehow join in creating a brighter future for all of Rwanda. That first year he sponsored 3 students to go to secondary school. He came back the next year and added 5 more students. He has expanded every year since then to sponsor more and more students. This year, ASEF is providing tuition and supplies to over 1,200 students in Rwanda.

**Meet The Team**

ASEF team is made of professional and experienced individuals who are passionate about helping the students to achieve their best in life.

* Gilbert Ndikubwimana, Program Director
* Jolly Nyiratunga, Community Outreach Director
* Braise Mucyo, Student Outreach Director
* Sandra Gikundiro, Field Coordinator
* Nicole Uwase, Field Coordinator
* Innocent Iradukunda, Field Coordinator
* Diane Umutoniwase, Program Associate
* Youssouf Mvuyekure, Driver

**How we work**

ASEF has been providing full tuition and school supplies to secondary school students in Rwanda since 2007. Currently, ASEF sponsors over 1,200 students in 11 districts of Rwanda which are Burera, Gakenke, Gisagara, Kamonyi, Musanze, Nyabihu, Nyanza, Rulindo, Ruhango, Rutsiro, Rwamagana.

**Involvement of Local Authority in Selection of ASEF Scholars**

ASEF collaborates with the districts and sectors authorities typically District Education officers (DEOs), Vice Mayor Social Affairs, Director of Social Affairs, JADF Officers, Sector Education Inspectors (SEIs) to identify the vulnerable and bright students. Not always ASEF works with these administrators; it depends on the district and the people last worked with.

Every time before new intakes, ASEF plans a meeting with district and sector authorities to be in line for the selection as the opportunities are only for students who meet all criteria listed as below on **Criteria of Selection.** In these meetings, ASEF shares the current criteria and remind the attendants that the candidates should come with all required documents listed on **Required Documents**. The flyers and posters are also provided to be published in sectors, and cells to maximize the opportunity of getting ASEF scholarship to all vulnerable and bright students who meet the criteria.

Picture of ASEF having meeting with local authorities[/caption]

The students who think they qualify for the selection must request to be considered on sector list. After confirming with the district that all the students come from families under poverties, the sector inform the students the specified dates of selection at the district. Students must attend the selection at the district in person to be considered, and they must be sent by their sectors.

Further notices about ASEF applications are given at the district in meeting with all candidates from sectors. Please be reminded that being on the list of candidates from sector doesn't guarantee ASEF scholarship.

**Criteria of Selection**

* Entering S1 or S4
* Be in the top 10 of the class in previous academic year.
* Be among students with highest aggregate in their district during national examinations.
* Be coming from a family under poverty.
* Good behavior

**Required Documents**

A student whose name was submitted by Sector Education Inspector (SEI) must bring the following documents on the date of selection:

* REB results copy from the school showing their national exams results.
* Previous year's school report - Original
* Letter of vulnerability from the sector - Original and signed by the Sector Executive Secretary.
* Student national ID if they are of age.
* The original ID card of both parents or guardians
* Student Birth Certificate from irembo

**Note:** Being on the list of candidates from sector doesn't guarantee ASEF scholarship. A scholarship is guaranteed after being selected at the district.

**Our Programs**

**Supplies**

ASEF thought about giving the supplies to the students as the basic demands in their studies that come up to the tuition fees because the schools require the students to bring them each term. Most of ASEF beneficiaries are from rural areas where their families do not take hygiene as the priority due to the supplies are too expensive and they can’t afford them. ASEF does all those things just to make sure that the students are safe at school with all the possible supporting financial means including hygiene as an important pillar to health.

Each student gets full package and backpack that are containing the hygienic materials and the school stationaries. Those supplies are 6 large notebooks, 12 small notebooks, 15 blue and 6 black pens, backpack, 10 packs of sanitary pads and sanitary belt for girls, sheet set (set of 2), towel, 20 rolls of toilet papers, 3 toothbrushes/toothpaste, 10 body soaps, 6 bars of laundry soaps. For rising senior 1 and senior 4 students, ASEF adds mattress, basin, clipboard, mathematical set, ruler, and blanket.

ASEF encourages the students to use them well because they are provided once per year at the beginning of term one. This enables students to develop the mindset of managing the recourses they have without taking advantage of and use them in the wrong way. The students are always expected to have hygiene and being healthy since before getting the supplies, ASEF provides guidance in using the supplies in giving each student a hygiene sensitization copy. Besides that, ASEF would wish to see the bright future for all supported students and their families looking happier.

**Advisory Meetings**

ASEF does not believe that paying tuition fees and providing school supplies to our students is enough for them to succeed in life. We think that they need more than that and we are more than ready to do our best to help them in various ways.

It is in this context that ASEF organizes advisory meetings that take place at the end of each term in our beneficiaries’ district of residence to review and evaluate their behavior and school performance. We discuss issues they may have encountered at school and help them to solve those issues. We also engage and share various tips and advice to empower and help them achieve their different career and life dreams.

ASEF uses that opportunity to also talk to their parents and share with them the best way of helping students to keep performing well, we do that through different programs like [**Positive Parenting**](http://asefrwanda.org/our-programs/positive-parenting-2/)**.** We also remind them that with ASEF supporting their children’s education does not mean that their responsibilities are done. ASEF work hand in hand with parents, guardians, and authorities in the education sector to bring a positive impact on our students’ daily lives.

**Graduate Meetings**

ASEF beneficiaries complete their scholarship with ASEF at the end of senior 6. Those who finish senior 6, are called ASEF graduates because they are no longer supported by ASEF. Most of them continue to study at different universities and colleges. The big part continues their studies in Rwanda, some go to UR, IPRCs, Kepler, ALU, UGHE, or RICA. But we have others who apply for abroad scholarships and study in the USA, Germany and Asia.

Even if ASEF does not support graduates with tuition and supplies, ASEF also gives them guidance for their future after leaving the program through meetings called “ASEF Graduates Meetings (AGM)”. Because of the lack of internet and computers, some of them lack mostly information about what’s going on. ASEF helps them doing the application process in Rwandan universities where they are allocated. ASEF takes that opportunity to share with them different abroad scholarship links to apply and other opportunities.

Furthermore, ASEF does the selection of interns, selected graduates help ASEF in advisory meetings and other activities which help them to improve their professional experience. ASEF expects that all graduates will continue their studies in different universities around the world, develop themselves, their families, and the community for better future by using the leadership and problem-solving skills that we always encourage them to have, ASEF hopes that they will be role models for the society.

**School Visits**

First of all, I plan to use more pictures than words, the pictures will have to be self-explanatory.

1. Jolly Nyiratunga - ASEF’s Community Outreach Director talks about her experience with school visits. “I have been doing school visits for about 5 years now and it is among my favourite activities within ASEF, I enjoy the travels, learning a lot of things about different schools but the most exciting part of these visits is the joy it brings to our students”.
2. **Students’ reaction during the visits**: Most of our students study very far from their home which becomes difficult for their vulnerable parents to visit them so often. They have appreciated ASEF so much and consider it as their second parent because even if they know parents won’t make it, but they are sure that ASEF can visit them anytime. It is hard to see a sad student during our visits to schools; they mean a lot to our beneficiaries.
3. **The purpose of the visits**: Building a strong relationship with school administration: It is very important for the school to meet representatives of an organization that supports students in their school. We explain our activities and the school asks necessary questions and gets answers.

It is also a good time for us to explore everything about the school and available teaching and recreation like the computer labs, science labs, playgrounds, history of the schools among others. We also make sure to resolve any issue that may be between our students and the school or the general feedback to the school.

1. **Activities:**

* Our students are involved in different extra-curricular activities which they proudly share during our visits, some are class representatives, dormitory captains, heads of clubs and movements, to mention but a few. Listening to them is really amazing, there are some schools we visit, and the activities are unique.
* They combine those activities with studies and make sure they are not affected.

1. **Advice to students:**

* All the students are reminded of the importance of education. ASEF representatives do deep follow up on students with poor performance and involve the school if necessary.
* Immediate action is taken about student’s behaviour at school, if a student disobeys the school, ASEF involves the person in charge of discipline to ensure that the students make tangible changes over their behaviours
* Students feel free to share their personal issues and concerns during visits. It is always easier to talk to a small number of students than a large group.
* Ordinary level students are given advice on the options and available opportunities once they reach S4.

**Home Visits**

ASEF covers the sponsorships of tuition and school materials to vulnerable and bright students in secondary schools. ASEF used to meet with sponsored students at their districts and schools only. It is in that context that ASEF had the curiosity to start visiting sponsored students at their homes in order to know where they spend their holidays, what they do and with who they live together.

This activity started in 2019 and ASEF staff travel together with students from their schools up to their homes. It is interesting to reach in a new village and home; students and their parents are very welcoming. During home visits, ASEF sees the real life of students with their families and it helps ASEF to have fruitful conversations with students during meetings they have at the end of each term.

*Picture 1 - Towards one of ASEF students' home*

Picture 2 - Towards one of ASEF students' home

In 2019, ASEF conducted 60 home visits in all Rwandan provinces. It is a good experience and ASEF is happy to continue the activity since it increases the interaction between ASEF, students and their families.

However, due to Covid-19, from 2020, ASEF stoped home visits, but the activity might resume in coming future.

**Annual Camping (AC)**

Even if ASEF students are very bright, they are challenged in the university admissions process. 2 years ago, ASEF initiated AC to support top-performing students by preparing them to be thoughtful, expressive, creative thinkers starting from the time they are young.

ASEF conducted a camp in April 2019 at St Andre College in Kigali. There, all students were excited to use the best smart labs in Rwanda, but also it opened their eyes to how the technology is being developed, although they were bright they have never exposed to such technology. After the sessions, you could realize how they were freer to express themselves and adjusting their ideas with happy faces due to lessons they got such as public speaking, essay writing, and how to use available resources properly like computers and the internet. It was not easy to have students from 12 districts logged together for 1 week, and ASEF appreciates the time and a lot of effort put by [Peace Corps](https://www.peacecorps.gov/) Volunteers, Education Advisor in the [US Embassy in Kigali](https://rw.usembassy.gov/) to prepare materials used and being near students during the camp. Hands up to Jessica Linus for helping in group interviews and storytelling lessons in December 2020.

**Criteria for attending AC**

* First position in class for the previous academic year
* Exemplary behaviour
* Basic English proficiency
* Succeeding in oral interviews

**A brief history**

In December 2018, more than 100 students did the interview. Among them, 35 were selected to do the camp of one week in April 2019. In July 2019 ASEF met them near their districts to follow up with the lessons they learned in April. In December 2019, ASEF conducted group interviews that had a speciality of how to be good storytellers.

Currently this program stopped and ASEF is looking for a way to revamp it in near future since it has been affecting the whole group of ASEF students, where all of them want to be the first of their class to become AC candidates.

**Downloads**

* Add all volumes of Jyejuru

Other downloads

* Uburyo bwo gukoresha ibikoresho by’isuku
* Amategeko n’amabwiriza agenga umunyeshuri ufashwa na ASEF

**Positive Parenting**

In partnership with [RWAMREC](https://www.rwamrec.org/), ASEF organized sessions with parents of its beneficiaries (students) on positive parenting and gender knowledge. Some of our students have been victims of domestic violence, lack of parental care and love. Special thanks to [RWAMREC](https://www.rwamrec.org/) for providing us with useful resources whose content will be shared in this article.

Parents were given time to share their ideas in group discussions, asked questions and gave feedback on how the session went.

They discussed the following:

* What does a family mean and a family in the Rwandan context?
* What is the difference between gender equality and equity?

Parents were able to gain knowledge and skills necessary for the effective role of male and females in building peaceful families and positive parenting. They also learned about different types of gender-based violence and realized that they were violent in different ways but committed to change after our meetings.

**Positive parenting benefits for parents**

* Feelings of confidence and competence in parenting
* Less depression
* Less stress
* Fewer conflicts between parents and children

**5 Key principles of positive parenting**

**1. Creating a safe, interesting environment** The following are strategies on how this can be achieved.

* Develop predictable routines
* Provide supervision
* Have interesting things to do

**Benefits for children**

* Children feel secure and wanted
* They are safe
* They live in a predictable world
* They have lots of interesting things to do
* They have opportunities to learn

**2. Having a positive learning environment**

Strategies:

* Spend time with your child
* Speak nicely

Role play:

* Chat and listen often
* Share your own experiences
* Be affectionate
* Use descriptive praise
* Give your child attention
* Use incidental teaching
* Get involved in your child’s school

**3. Using assertive discipline**

Strategies:

* Prepare in advance
* Arrange activities
* Set some ground rules
* Praise good behaviour
* Watch and supervise
* Use your voice effectively
* Give clear, calm instructions
* Start instructions
* Stop instructions
* Take away a problem activity
* Back up instructions with quiet time

**4. Having realistic expectations**

Consider:

* Your expectations of your child
  + *What do I expect?*
  + *Is this rule necessary?*
  + *Can my child understand/do this?*
* What other parents expect
* What your child’s school expects
* Your expectations of yourself
  + *Are my expectations reasonable****?***

**5. Taking care of yourself as a parent**

Balancing work and family

* Have realistic expectations of yourself
* Reduce unnecessary commitments
* Avoid conflict after work and prepare for the ‘second shift’
* Teach your child to be independent
* Organize good, reliable child care
* Notice when you are feeling upset with your child
* Identify what negative / unhelpful things you are saying to yourself about the situation, particularly why it is happening
* Try to change negative thoughts to helpful, more rational thoughts

Positive parenting, our hopes and dreams during this training were to raise healthy well-adjusted children in a safe, secure, loving and low conflict environment who have the skills to:

* Develop skills and be able to communicate their needs
* Get on with others and build friendships
* Try to do their best at school
* Manage their emotions
* Feel good about themselves
* Have fewer behavioral and emotional problems
* Less likely to become involved in drug abuse or delinquent behavior

**Take home messages for parents who attended the meetings**

* Make your family a priority
* Create a warm, loving, safe environment
* Encourage your child’s learning
* Use assertive discipline
* Have reasonable expectations
* Take care of yourself:
  + Look after your own needs
  + Balance work and family responsibilities
  + Talkback to negative thinking
  + Work as a team
* Working as a team:
* Talk with your partner and other caregivers about daily experiences with your child
* Share the workload fairly
* Reach agreement on discipline
* Model problem-solving skills
* Hold regular problem-solving discussions

To keep the journey going, ASEF adds a sector in each of [our Jyejuru newsletters](https://asefrwanda.org/2019/06/05/newsletter-sign-up/) so that parents who were not able to attend the sessions can get a chance of learning, we believe in better results in the future.

**Our Address**

La Bonne Adresse Building, 3rd Floor

KN 4 Roundabout

B.P. 1107  Kigali, Rwanda

[googlemaps https://www.google.com/maps/embed?pb=!1m18!1m12!1m3!1d3987.517388988051!2d30.0608969!3d-1.9459594!2m3!1f0!2f0!3f0!3m2!1i1024!2i768!4f13.1!3m3!1m2!1s0x19dca42155a5db79%3A0xa11d75e9630125f6!2sAfrican+Students+Education+Fund+(ASEF)!5e0!3m2!1sen!2srw!4v1542179543513&w=600&h=450]

**FAQs**

**What is ASEF?**

**Who is an ASEF beneficiary?**

**What support does ASEF provide?**

**How are the beneficiaries selected?**

**How does ASEF work with students?**

**What is ASEF?**

* What is ASEF? - *African Students’ Education Fund (ASEF) is a non-profit organization that provides scholarships to vulnerable yet bright secondary school students in Rwanda. ASEF works as an INGO under the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) and holds 501(c)3 status in the United States.*
* How many students does ASEF support in Rwanda? - *In 2024, ASEF is supporting over 1,200 students across 11 districts of Rwanda.*
* In which districts of Rwanda does ASEF support students?

*Southern province: Kamonyi, Ruhango, Nyanza, Gisagara*

*Northern province:  Rulindo, Gakenke, Burera, Musanze*

*Western province: Nyabihu, Karongi, Rutsiro*

*Eastern province: Rwamagana*

* Is ASEF expanding activities in more districts in Rwanda? - *ASEF does not intend to expand into additional districts at this time. Expansion plans will be considered in the future.*
* When did ASEF start to operate in Rwanda? - *ASEF started informally in 2007, achieving INGO status in 2013.*

**Who is an ASEF beneficiary?**

* Who is an ASEF beneficiary? - *ASEF beneficiary is a promising and bright student who lack financial means to pursue secondary school education.*
* Are there age limits for the ASEF beneficiaries? - *Though many of the beneficiaries are young, there are no specific age limits to who can be an ASEF beneficiary.*
* Is it a must that ASEF beneficiaries live in ASEF’s districts of operation? - *Yes, the beneficiaries must from the mentioned 12 districts of Rwanda of ASEF activities.*

**What support does ASEF provide?**

* Does ASEF pay full tuition? - *Yes, ASEF pays full tuition as it appears on the parent sheet provided by the schools.*
* Does ASEF pay teachers’ prime? - *Yes, ASEF pays full teachers’ prime, a motivational bonus provided to students at Rwanda’s most competitive public schools.*
* What supplies are provided to all ASEF students? - ASEF provided the following supplies to ASEF students:
  + *6 large notebooks*
  + *12 small notebooks*
  + *15 blue and 6 black pens*
  + *Backpack*
  + *10 packs of sanitary pads and sanitary belt for girls*
  + *sheet set (set of 2), towel*
  + *20 rolls of toilet papers*
  + *3 toothbrushes/toothpaste*
  + *10 body soaps*
  + *6 bars of laundry soaps*

*ASEF provides the following extra supplies to S1 and S4 students:*

* + *Mattress*
  + *Bucket*
  + *Clipboard*
  + *Mathematical set*
  + *Ruler*
  + *Blanket*

*Girls get extra 10 sanitary pads and 1 sanitary belt. Boys don’t get these supplies.*

* Does ASEF support students from private schools? - *No, ASEF only supports students from the public schools as assigned by the REB (Rwanda Education Board) school allocations.*
* Does ASEF support university students? - *No, ASEF doesn’t support university students. With the Government of Rwanda’s support, university students are eligible for government loans.*
* When does ASEF supports end? - ASEF supports student until finishing secondary school.

**How are the beneficiaries selected?**

* How does ASEF work with local authorities to select students? - *ASEF collaborates with select district and sector authorities to identify the most qualified vulnerable and bright candidates.*
* What are the criteria of qualification? - *ASEF considers the following students:*

1. *Entering S1 or S4*
2. *Be in the top 10 of the class in previous academic year.*
3. *Be among students with highest aggregate in their district during national examinations.*
4. *Be coming from a family under poverty.*
5. *Good behavior*

*Selection begins prior to the start of the academic year, once National Examination results have posted.*

* When a student is nominated at the sector level, does that mean he/she is guaranteed ASEF sponsorship? - *The sector provides a list of candidates to apply for a scholarship. In doing so, the sector agrees to vet candidates of all ASEF criteria prior to nominating students. ASEF makes the final selection considering students proposed by the sector leaders.*

**How does ASEF work with students?**

* Why does ASEF visit students at Home? - *ASEF visits students at schools to strengthen the relationships with school administration (or school administrators) and to see what activities that ASEF students are involved in. Through these visits, ASEF staff are also able to talk with school administration about tuition issues and students’ wellbeing.*
* Why does ASEF visit students at schools? - *ASEF considers home visits as an opportunity to meet parents and to understand the life of students at home. Through these visits, ASEF staff are also able to understand the challenges that the students face at home and to see if they qualify for the program.*
* Does ASEF take into account the importance of discussing performance with students? - *Yes, during each term, ASEF organizes advisory meeting to discuss performance with every student in one to one discussion. Students who performed well are encouraged to keep up, and fairing students are encouraged to perform well.*
* What opportunities are given to ASEF graduates? - *Graduates are inviting to meetings with the aim of supporting them in the university admissions process, sharing information regarding university opportunities and scholarships abroad.*
* What are the objectives of ASEF Internship program? - *With the internship program, outstanding graduates are selected to work with ASEF in different activities to better prepare them for university studies and the competitive job market in Rwanda.*