



Isaac Nanyaro is the head of Imbaseni Primary School. Often there are 130 or 140 students in a classroom built for about 45. Textbooks are in short supply as well; Imbaseni has one textbook for every eight students.

Students take advantage of the Jifundishe Free Library's resources, sometimes laying their hands for the first time on a textbook they've been learning from. "Both the students and the teachers benefit a lot from the library," says Nanyaro. "Books are expensive and most libraries in our country are in urban areas." The accessibility of materials through Jifundishe has made a significant impact academically on the students at Imbaseni. "In fact they have improved academically- when I give them exams and tests they do better," Nanyaro says.

Mwalimu Nanyaro knows how hard girls struggle to successfully complete primary school. Often, after reaching the age of 10 or 11, families begin to demand more work from young girls in the household and in most cases their academic achievement suffers. Jifundishe is in the process of collaborating with the school head in an effort to establish an after-school program for girls that will allow them to use some of their own time to reinforce the material that is being taught to them in classrooms.

Teachers use the library's textbooks as well. Some use them to craft lesson plans. Many teachers go there to study for classes of their own; Tanzania is in the process of reforming the education system, requiring teachers to pursue higher level degrees in order to continue to teach. The University of Arusha is located just one kilometer from the primary school so many of the teacher's are attending classes there.

In fact, the entire community seeks educational opportunities at the library. Aside from the students and teachers perusing the shelves (including members of Arusha University), adults frequent the library as well. Many participate in the adult literacy class, aimed at teaching basic English to adults who were unable to attend school or simply desire to learn. Many are there to catch up on the local and national news by reading the many newspapers available at the library.

"We are so lucky to have this library close to us," says Mwalimu Nanyaro.