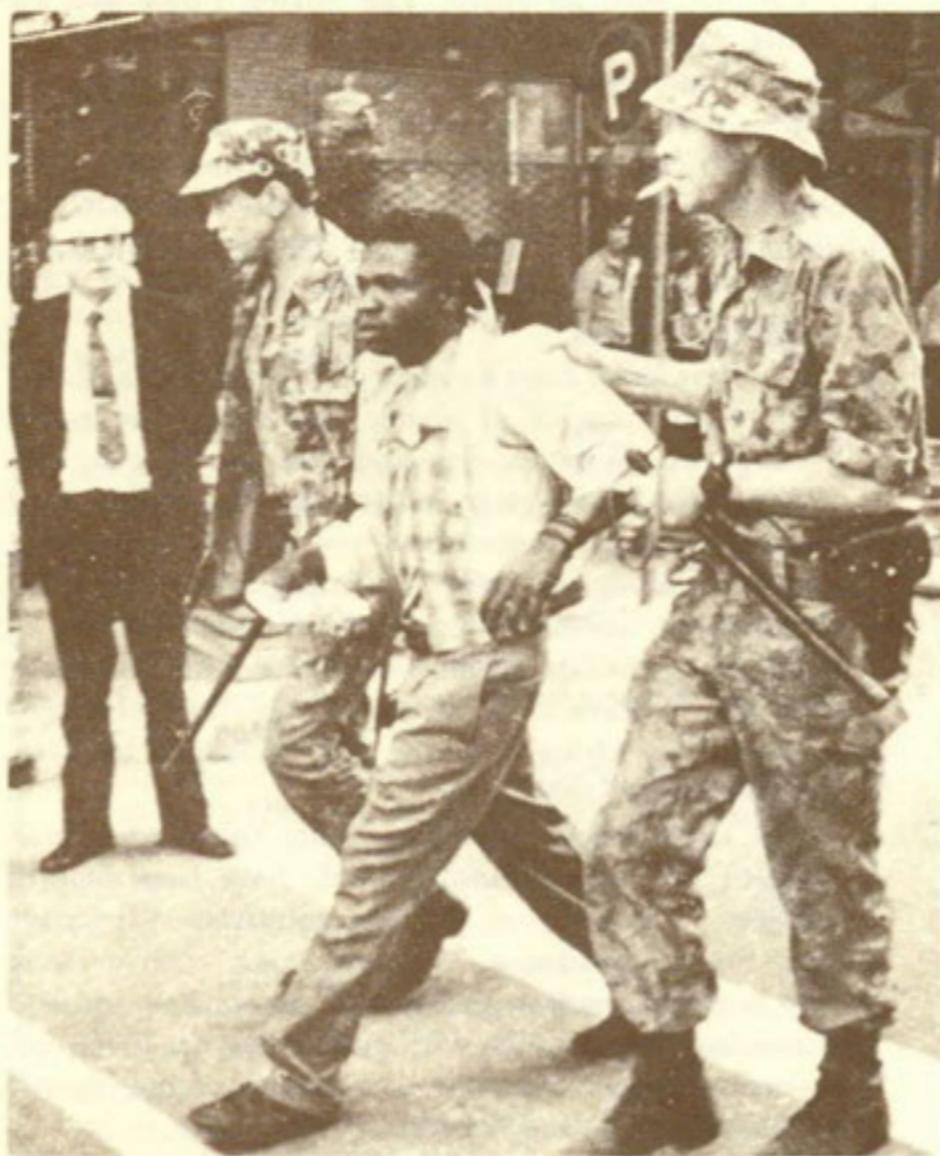


# THE AFRICA FUND

## *Emergency Assistance Program*



This South African protestor is in trouble.  
Perhaps The Africa Fund can help.

The scene is repeated often: a young African walks into the Africa Fund office and asks to speak to the director. Somewhat diffidently, he explains that the nature of his business is private. Outwardly, he gives no indication that he literally does not know at this moment where else to turn for help.

In time, however, a personal history emerges. It may be that the visitor's visa is about to expire and he is afraid that if he is sent back to Rhodesia, his reputation as an opponent of the white minority government will prompt his arrest. Or perhaps the visitor is a young woman whose sister has been seized by security police in South Africa, leaving no one else at home to provide for ailing parents and younger children. Or again, the visitor may be a prospective student who has arrived in the US with the promise of a scholarship in Ohio but no means of getting there.

For the past 25 years, The Africa Fund and an earlier, associate organization have been assisting in just such situations as these. As far back as 1956, we were raising what money we could to assist the families of South Africans arrested for demanding their rights and charged with treason. More recently, in 1976 we donated several thousand dollars toward the defense of South Africa students tried in connection with a series of demonstrations.

Ours has never been a source of large amounts of aid. We are not capable of giving scholarships or major living grants. What we do—and what no other organization in the US is set up in the same way to do—is to provide small amounts of money in true emergency situations, along with help in locating lawyers, family, or temporary shelter. Sometimes we make referrals to other organizations capable of giving larger or long-term aid. Outlays for a variety of types of assistance, primarily to Africans in the US, averages between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year.

Not surprisingly, in recent years those who have come to The Africa Fund for help have been mainly refugees from southern African countries still struggling for independence. In many cases, such persons dare not ask friends or family at home for help for fear of causing them trouble with authorities. In 1978, our assistance went primarily to persons from South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).

We do not, however, restrict aid to any area of the continent: for example, a number of Ugandans living as refugees elsewhere in Africa or in the US have

## case

Jacob L. came to the US as a refugee from Rhodesia in the spring of 1978. Having worked briefly as an aviation mechanic, he hoped to obtain a scholarship for advanced training in his field. He arrived without contacts or a sponsor, however, and with only \$600.

Jacob stayed at the YMCA and ate only one meal a day, but as the weeks passed and approval for a scholarship still did not come, his meager funds began to run out. He was also faced with the problem that his temporary visa was about to expire and he faced possible deportation.

In an appeal to The Africa Fund Jacob wrote: "Now as from today, I remain with only \$150, and I do not know what will happen to me when this amount is finished." The Africa Fund's emergency assistance program was able to provide him with temporary shelter, a lawyer to help deal with immigration authorities, and, when his funds expired, a small cash grant for food.

This help enabled Jacob to continue with his plans, and by the fall he had been granted a UN scholarship and was enrolled in an advanced engineering program at a university in California. Jacob hopes to contribute the skills he is acquiring to development efforts in independent Zimbabwe.

appealed to us in recent years.

At the same time, we have helped people of widely differing backgrounds. Among the South African refugees who have been assisted is a young white conscript who refused to serve a second tour with the South African Army in Namibia after witnessing acts of brutality by his fellow troops and becoming convinced of the illegality of South Africa's occupation of Namibia.

We are particularly pleased when we know that the person we are helping will be returning to his or her country to assist in nation-building. Such was the case several years ago when a young student from a country

then still under colonial rule came to us in a time of need. Recently, that student, now Ambassador to the UN of his recently independent country, reminded us of our assistance and said he had never forgotten it.

We have learned over the years that our small aid really can make a difference. Our emergency assistance program spends as much as it takes in, but we never have enough to help all of those who call on us. Our goal is to raise at least \$35,000 for emergency assistance this year.

## case

Samuel B. was already a well-known poet in South Africa when he came to study in the US in the early 1970s. He was also an active member of the Black People's Convention, the now-banned organization formed by the late Steve Biko and others to work toward an end to apartheid rule.

While here, Samuel continued to work with fellow South Africans active in the movement. He also gave a number of poetry readings at anti-apartheid gatherings. From time to time, Samuel requested, and received, emergency grants from The Africa Fund.

Early in 1977, Samuel was ready to go back to Africa, but he felt the situation in South Africa made a return home impossible. He decided instead to go to Botswana, currently home to many South African refugees. The Africa Fund contributed most of the cost of his ticket.

At last report, Samuel and a number of other exiles had formed a cultural group which was putting out a newsletter focusing on keeping the spirit of freedom alive.

All names have been changed to protect individuals and their families.



School children in South Africa.

The letter excerpted below is one example of the many requests for emergency assistance received by The Africa Fund. The writer is now pursuing an advanced degree at an American university.

1977

Dear Sir:

I am writing to appeal for financial assistance from your organization. . .

(After receiving a degree in the US) I immediately returned home to Johannesburg, South Africa. I was hoping to start work in the field in which I had been trained. Six days after I reached home (Soweto, Johannesburg), the Soweto uprising occurred. As you are well aware, the black uprising has continued to the present date.

The South African Government responded to the events by killing and arresting literally hundreds of people (young and old). Schools were closed. The police were bent on questioning more and more people (of whom I was one); some disappeared, while others died at the cruel hands of the police.

Under such conditions, I felt that I was not safe at all if I remained in South Africa during the crisis, all the more since the Government had come out with a statement blaming United States Black Power as the cause of the uprising.

I can assure you that any assistance you give me will not only benefit me, but is a contribution towards the efforts of self-help by the entire oppressed population in South Africa, amongst whom I hope, with God's grace, to work after completing my studies.

Yours Faithfully,

## OTHER PROGRAMS OF THE AFRICA FUND

The Africa Fund, a tax-exempt organization, was founded in 1966 to provide humanitarian aid to African people struggling for independence and to work toward increased American understanding of African issues through a program of research and literature production.

Currently, The Africa Fund is sending large shipments of medicine and equipment to an estimated 150,000 Zimbabwe refugees who are living in centers in Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana.

Other ongoing or recent projects include sending medicines, hospital beds and spare parts for hospital equipment to Mozambique and Cape Verde and providing technical textbooks for a school to train Namibian refugees in Zambia.

In the US, The Africa Fund is the major source of literature on southern Africa for church, university, union and civic groups and individuals interested in issues affecting the area.

In 1978, The Africa Fund spent more than \$244,000. Of this, \$149,000 was devoted to grants and projects, including emergency assistance; \$72,000 went to research and education; and \$23,000 was for member services and program coordination. Our budget for 1979 is \$250,000.

The Africa Fund depends almost entirely on voluntary contributions, primarily from individuals, to carry on our work. Contributions are tax-deductible.



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