



SMALL STEPS FOR AFRICA

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



INTRODUCTION



What a year 2020 was, in ways that none of us would have expected as we waved the New Year in. When we first set up Small Steps for Africa, responding to a global pandemic was not something I ever imagined we'd need to do. Yet here we stand, after a long year of emergency response and support – with lots still to do.

COVID-19 has had a serious impact on Madagascar from a health and economic perspective. As soon as lockdown hit, many of the families we support found their incomes drastically reduced. Price inflation due to limited air and freight transport meant the cost of some goods went up by 500% overnight. Schools closed in March 2020 and as well as the obvious impact on children's education, the loss of two daily hot meals in the school canteen was keenly felt – in many cases these meals are the only ones that children receive in a day.

SSFA launched a COVID-19 appeal, which raised more than £5000 – this money was used to implement a series of emergency interventions with our partners Ankizy Gasy and Akany Avoko Faravohitra. We paid for face masks, emergency grants, food parcels, hygiene equipment and medical costs, to support the young people in our programmes and their families through these tough times. The needs haven't stopped and we continue to monitor the situation closely and support families where needed.

Away from COVID-19, we still have some extraordinary success to celebrate. You may have read in the past about Therezia, the oldest child in our Ambohidratimo programme, with ambitions to go to university. In November 2020, despite all the disruption to her schooling, she passed her Baccalaureat school leaving exam and we hope she will start university in early 2022. Her sponsors, our partners Ankizy Gasy and SSFA have made that happen and I couldn't be prouder. We also have had five sponsored children come in the top three in their class this year and receive special commendations, despite school being cancelled for so many months.

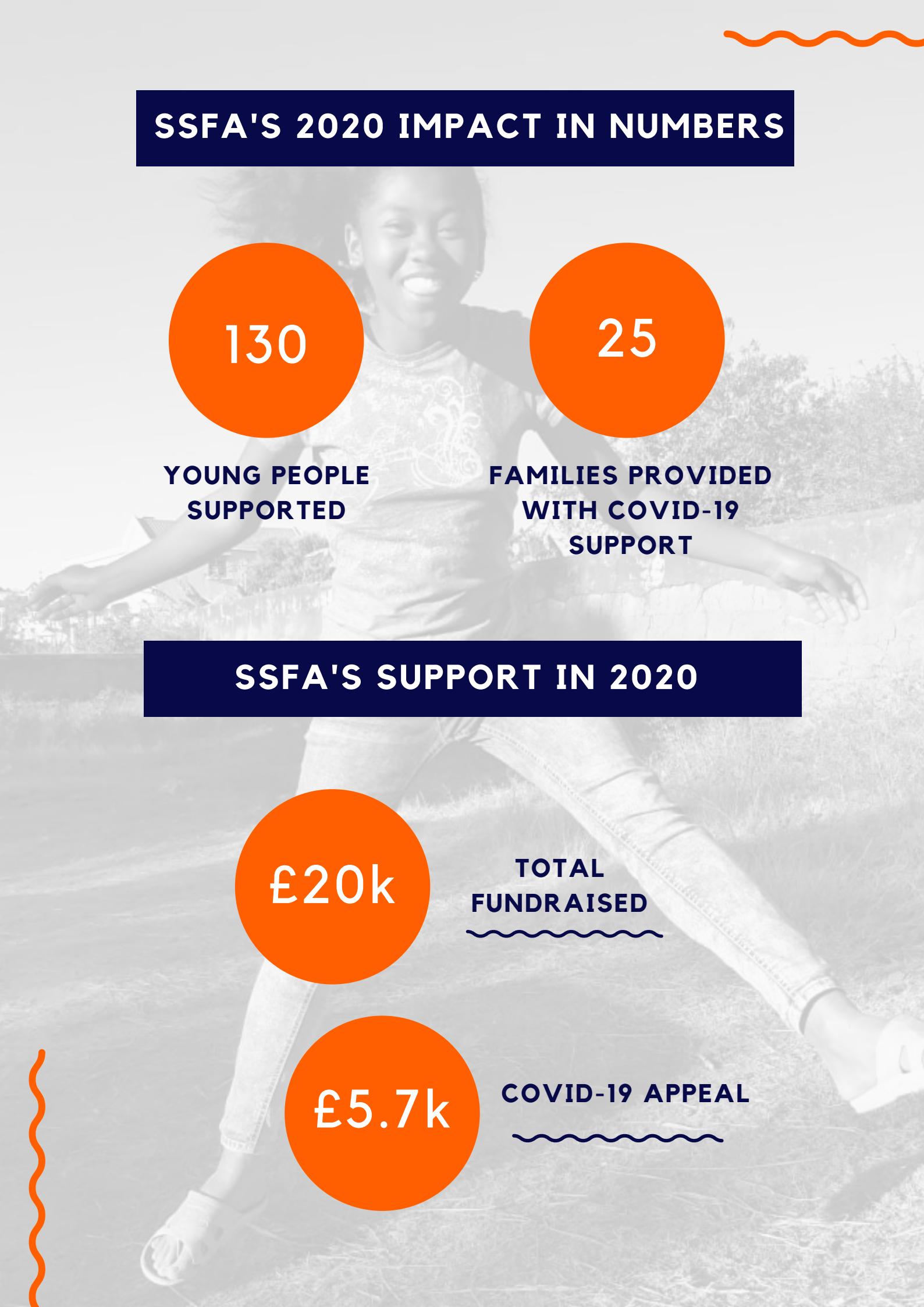
At Akany Avoko Faravohitra, we were able to fund a much needed renovation of the toilet block, increasing the number of working toilets from two to five, shared between more than 80 girls. Girls from the centre also continue to excel academically, regularly coming top of their class at school and college.

This is a brief summary of what we've been doing this year, but you can read more in the report. As ever, we are so thankful to our incredible supporters, who have shown incredible generosity to the families we work with, and have enabled us to do our vital work. We are also indebted to our partners on the ground in Madagascar – Ankizy Gasy and Akany Avoko Faravohitra – who have continued to deliver amazing support to families in this most difficult year.

Charlotte Baker

Director, Small Steps for Africa

SSFA'S 2020 IMPACT IN NUMBERS



130

YOUNG PEOPLE
SUPPORTED

25

FAMILIES PROVIDED
WITH COVID-19
SUPPORT

SSFA'S SUPPORT IN 2020



£20k

TOTAL
FUNDRAISED



£5.7k

COVID-19 APPEAL



PROJECT UPDATE: ANKIZY GASY



43

YOUNG PEOPLE
SPONSORED IN 2020

60%

SPONSORED CHILDREN
PASSED STATE EXAMS

250

COVID-19 SUPPORT
GRANTS GIVEN TO
SSFA FAMILIES

SSFA's partnership with **Ankizy Gasy** entered its eighth year in 2020 and our focus was the emergency response to COVID-19. In 2020, SSFA delivered together with AG:

- School sponsorship for **43 children**, thanks to the generosity of sponsors in the UK, the UAE, the USA and elsewhere
- **250 COVID-19 support grants** to the families of the young people we support - primarily to help them provide breakfast and lunch while schools were closed
- **100 face masks** to children in our programmes and their families, which were made by the girls in our other programme at Akany Avoko Faravohitra
- **More than 30 emergency food parcels** to families in difficulty





CASE STUDY

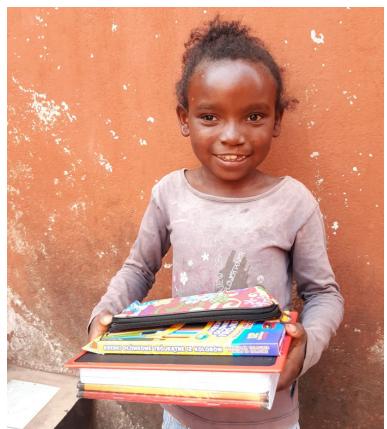
Louis Frank, Jean-Francois and Valimbavaka

When Madagascan schools closed in spring 2020, Louis-Frank's mother was desperate. The COVID-19 lockdown had left her without work and the sudden need to provide breakfast and lunch for her children every day left her in a dire situation. Desperate, she took her young baby and 14 year old son Franky, and sought work in a nearby quarry. This work involved breaking up and carrying rocks, and earned her and Franky 25p per day - a meagre salary, but better than nothing. The family were scraping by when suddenly, without warning, they were made homeless when their landlord returned from the countryside and wanted his room back.

When SSFA and Ankizy Gasy learned about this situation, they immediately engaged with Franky's mother to see how they could help. SSFA agreed to support the provision of emergency food supplies, provide temporary support with rent, and crucially, to cover Franky's wages from the quarry, if his mother promised he would not return to work there. Franky and Jean-Francois's sponsors provided extra donations to support this work, helping SSFA to keep providing food parcels and financial help. Ankizy Gasy staff also supported the family to find a new home, and a start-up grant from fellow British NGO Money for Madagascar resulted in Franky's mother finding an alternative income. Franky and siblings were delighted to return to school when they reopened later in 2020.

By the end of 2020, the family was doing much better, living in a new home, with a more stable financial situation and the children back in school. Franky's sister Valimbavaka has needed help with her vision, and SSFA has supported the cost of opticians appointments and glasses.

This is part of SSFA's approach to support every aspect of the child's life that could affect their education - we believe there's little point in supporting a child at school if their home situation doesn't allow them to thrive.





FOCUS FOR 2021



Ankizy Gasy and SSFA have ambitious plans for what they can achieve together in 2021, despite the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social worker support: In 2021, SSFA is supporting the employment of a new full-time member of staff at Ankizy Gasy, who is an experienced, qualified social worker. She will help Ankizy Gasy reach out to more families, to support the children at home to achieve the best possible results in school. This project is made possible thanks to generous individual support from an SSFA donor, who used to be a social worker herself.

Study centre: SSFA intends to support the creation of a new study centre in Ambohidratimo, to give children the opportunity to do their homework in a room with good lighting, access books and laptops with internet access, and gain extra academic input for those who may be struggling or have exams approaching.

Supporting more children: Thanks to sustained interest from new sponsors, SSFA aims to increase the number of children supported through Ankizy Gasy by 10% in 2021.





PROJECT UPDATE: AKANY AVOKO FARAVOHITRA

14

YOUNG PEOPLE
SPONSORED IN 2020

100%

SPONSORED CHILDREN
PASSED STATE &
SCHOOL EXAMS

£1.3K

INVESTED IN NEW
FACILITIES AT AAF

SSFA's partnership with **Akany Avoko Faravohitra** entered its sixth year in 2020 and our focus was supporting AAF through the COVID-19 pandemic and enhancing hygiene facilities at the centre. In 2020, SSFA worked with AAF to:

- **Facilitate sponsorship of 14 children by sponsors in the UK, the USA, Ireland and elsewhere**
- **Provide emergency COVID-19 support grants to help the centre deal with food price surges and purchase soaps and hygiene products**
- **Renovate the toilet block, replacing two broken toilets with 5 new full toilets with seat and flushes**
- **Support the wages of three staff members at AAF**





COVID-19 SUPPORT



2020 was a very difficult year for the girls and staff at Akany Avoko Faravohitra. The girls were confined to the centre for weeks on end during the lockdowns in Madagascar, and the vocational training centre at Manonga - which is home to a training hairdressing salon support by SSFA, along with a restaurant and handicraft workshop - could not open for most of the year.



Despite these difficulties, staff at AAF worked very hard to keep the girls' spirits up, hosting talent contests and teaching them new skills. Girls at the centre learned to make face masks, which SSFA and Ankizy Gasy purchased to distribute to families in our project in Ambohidratimo. When things began to open up, girls also took part in a tree-planting away day and started to play football at a local centre.

And even though they missed many months of school, most of the girls at AAF sailed through their end of year exams and many came in the top three in their class. The strong success in vocational and academic qualifications sets up the girls for future success once they leave AAF.



FOCUS FOR 2021



In 2021, Akany Avoko Faravohitra and SSFA will work on three priority areas:

Reintegration programme: some of the girls who have been at the centre for some time may be eligible to return home to their families if their home situation improves. Girls taking part in this reintegration programme will still have social worker support from AAF and receive financial help with studying, but will live outside the centre, either with their family or independently if they are aged 18 or above. SSFA will be supporting this programme in 2021, via its sponsorship scheme.

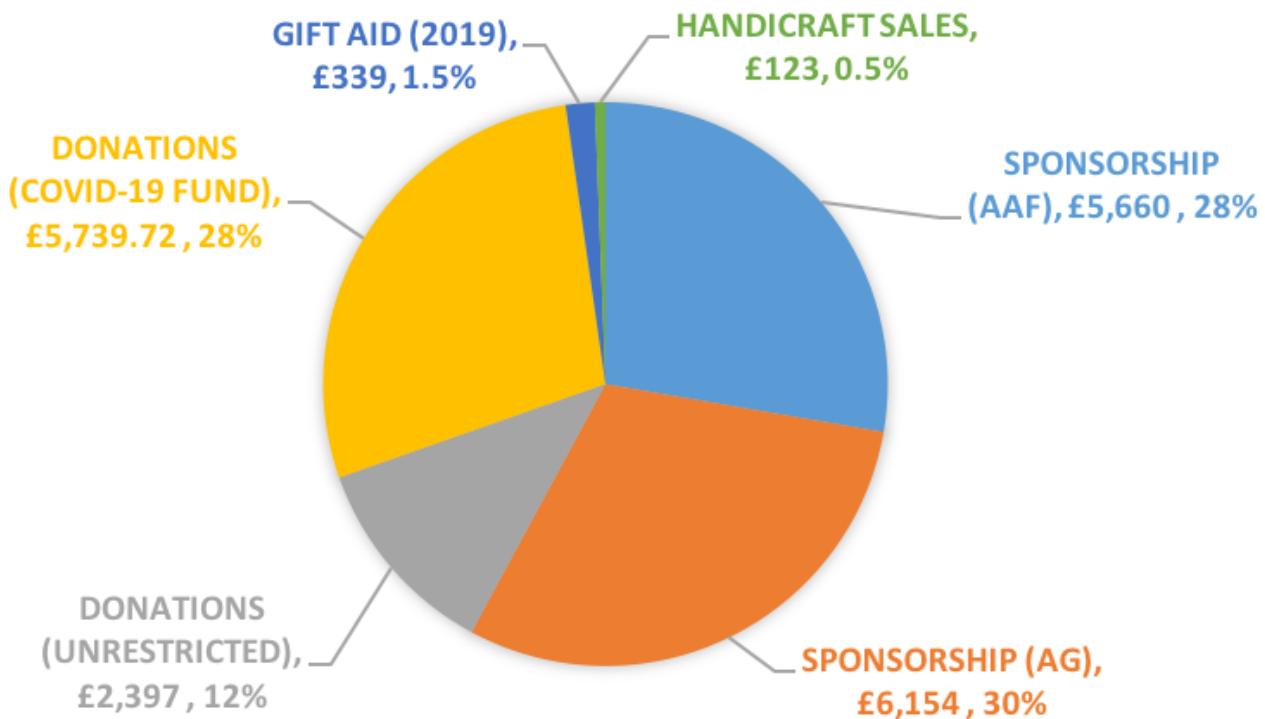
Football team: Around 20 girls at AAF have been benefiting from taking part in a local football scheme, where they attend weekly training sessions. The ambition is to continue this programme and enable the girls to play in matches. SSFA and sponsors are providing football boots for the girls in our programme and are working on a plan to provide more long-term support to the team.

Supporting more children: In 2021, SSFA will aim to increase the number of supported girls to 22 - representing 25% of the girls currently living at AAF.



SSFA'S INCOME 2020

INCOME 2020



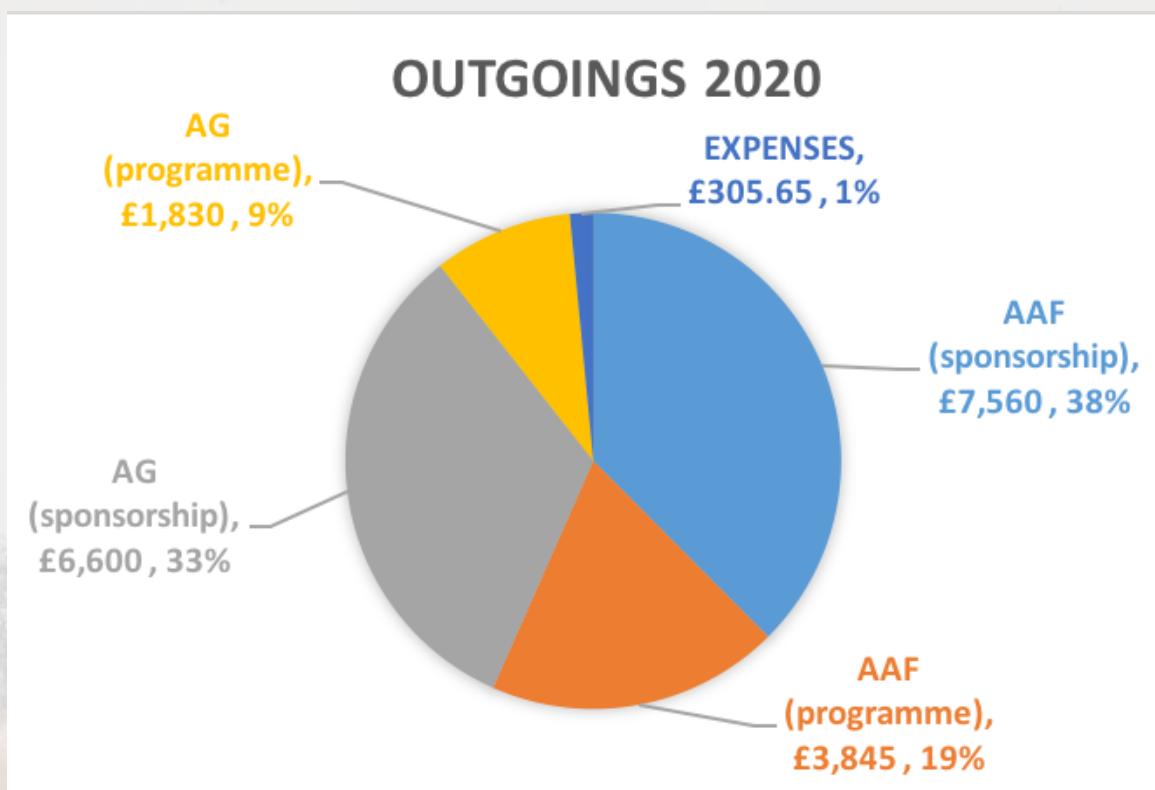
Total income = £20,413

SUMMARY: Despite the difficult circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and the inability to host fundraising events, SSFA's income grew by more than 20% in 2020.

Much of this growth was driven by the fantastic response to SSFA's COVID-19 appeal, which raised nearly £6000 and continued to support families in difficulty into 2021. SSFA also saw more sponsors come forward to support children and unrestricted donations also more than doubled in 2020. Many sponsors reached out to offer extra support to their sponsored children and their families during the pandemic.

SSFA was also kindly supported by donations from: Christchurch Masonic Lodge; St Luke's Church, Kew (Annual Quiz Night), The Lady Eleanor Holles School

SSFA'S OUTGOINGS 2020



Total outgoings = £19,897

SUMMARY: The majority of SSFA's programmatic work is focused on our individual child sponsorship schemes with Ankizy Gasy and Akany Avoko Faravohitra. These programmes continue to offer excellent value for money**, at £160/year for the Ankizy Gasy programme, and £420/year for the AAF programme (which covers everything an individual girl at the centre needs).

Alongside facilitating the direct support from sponsors that covers costs of school fees, uniform, books and the canteen, SSFA invests in complementary activities. These are shown in the programme sections above, and include medical costs, emergency food supplies, one-off infrastructure investments and tailored support for families in need.

Expenses were low in 2020, due to the absence of the annual field visit undertaken by the SSFA Director, due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

** The cost of the Ankizy Gasy programme has risen by 60% since it was launched in 2013, but most of this rise can be attributed to the inclusion of lunch, then breakfast into the annual fees. The AAF programme has increased by around 16% since it launched in 2016, a modest increase that tracks inflation and the enhanced provision offered at the centre.

SSFA'S ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES 2021

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- 1) Further develop SSFA's **web and social media capacity**, via the launch of a new website and social media strategy
 - 2) Recruit a part-time **volunteer or intern** to assist with programmatic and communications aspects of SSFA's work
 - 3) Recruit a **new trustee**, ideally with financial experience
 - 4) Develop **new partnerships** with educational institutions and sports clubs, to help support our work.
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