



Mwanza, Tanzania



*A ministry of the United Methodist Church*

**Providing faith-based education to first-generation college students who are passionate about their communities**

- **\$20/month** supports one student's living costs at our College dormitory
- **\$42/month** pays one student's tuition
- **\$2,000** provides a year-long scholarship, covering all costs for one student



**"My education will help the community to lead itself toward development and away from poverty."**

Jenipha Kasiani – Wesley College Theology student



**"God willing, I want to start my own NGO to help the community with their many challenges."**

Abel Ignas – Wesley Community Development student

# Wesley College, Mwanza, Tanzania

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## Our founding story

Wesley College began as a dream of American United Methodist missionaries, Liz and Eric Soard. They had spent their first few years of service in rural Tanzania (the Mara region) planting churches and working alongside ministries supporting orphans, village women, and street children. Over time, Eric was struck that there were so many people in the villages who had huge hearts and obvious leadership potential. But higher education was out of reach for them. Many had not even completed secondary school. Eric began to believe that education was the best route to both transform individuals and build a better community.

In 2014, a group of Tanzanian United Methodist pastors came together to consider starting a college. As they dreamed together and developed a vision, they didn't look at what other colleges in the region were doing. Instead they considered the unique needs of the people of Tanzania. Soon they were working through the accreditation process and looking for land. Wesley College was endorsed by the United Methodist Church in 2015, and it opened its doors to students in February 2017.

## About Tanzania

With 45 million people, Tanzania is the most populated country in East Africa and the sixth most populated on the continent. It is 10% the size of the United States, or twice the size of California. Several of the most well-known African locations are found within the country: Mt. Kilimanjaro, Serengeti National Park, Gombe Chimpanzee Reserve, and Lake Victoria.

A land of generally peaceful and friendly people, 43% of Tanzania's population is under the age of 15, making it one of the world's youngest populations. An estimated 17.5 million people are presently between 15 and 34 years, a number expected to double by 2035.

According to the United Nation's Human Development Index (2014), Tanzania ranks 159 out of 187 countries in poverty, with 68% of its citizens living below the poverty line of \$1.25 a day.

## About Mwanza

Wesley College is located in Mwanza, the second largest city in Tanzania and a major port on the southern shore of Lake Victoria. The population of the city is 924,221, with over 2.7 million living in the greater Mwanza region. Compared to the largest city in Tanzania (Dar Es Salaam), Mwanza is generally lacking in resources, including options for higher level education.

## Some background on education in Tanzania

Primary school is available to the vast majority of children today, but access to secondary education is far more limited. Currently, just 52% of the eligible school population is enrolled in lower-secondary education and far fewer *complete* it. Challenges include a 'school leaving' exam that cannot be retaken by those who fail, and economic pressures forcing youth to leave school to help support their families.

In 2015, the Tanzanian government took the important step of eliminating school fees for secondary students. While a key move resulting in more students enrolled, as an unintended result schools are now more underfunded than before -- and unequipped to serve a growing school population.

## Issues related to an uneducated workforce

Tanzanian youth are challenged to find employment with no more than a primary or uncompleted secondary education. Entry level job requirements have risen drastically in the past 10 years, making formal work increasingly inaccessible. More and more, uneducated young people are falling through the economic cracks, a situation that Wesley College is committed to solve.

## Traditional post-secondary education in Tanzania

For those who can afford it, post-secondary studies in Tanzania are primarily theoretical in nature, preparing students more for continued education than for the workforce. This results in a lack of local expertise and the need to hire from other countries. Many recent university graduates find themselves unemployable, due to a mismatch between what they have learned and what the country needs. This results not only in unemployment of college graduates but low performing organizations and businesses.

## How is Wesley College different?

**Wesley College provides excellent, hands-on education.** We use innovative approaches, and students practice what they learn. When they graduate, students are ready to become employed or to employ themselves. Our programs are focused on job skills for success today and success tomorrow.

**At Wesley College, we are committed to students with low levels of formal education.** In two years, we help students prepare for and pass secondary school exams, opening new doors for their futures.

**All are welcome at Wesley College,** and we aim to create an inclusive learning environment. While inspired by our Christian faith, we strive to be a diverse college with regard to religion, gender, tribe, and ideology.

**We are producing servant leaders,** not just educating students. Our ultimate goal is to build a better community through our graduates. We invite all those who share our passion to join us as students, staff, prayer partners, volunteers, or donors.

## What do Wesley College students study?

Our programs currently include theology, business administration, and community development. We also offer shorter-term training in computer skills and an intensive English program. Other program offerings will be added incrementally as the College grows.

## Who are Wesley College students?

Much like community colleges in the United States, Wesley College focuses on students who missed the traditional path to college, often due to poverty or poor performance in secondary school. In addition, the typical Wesley College student enrolls with a heart for community service.

## How does Wesley College prepare pastors?

In Tanzania, a large proportion of pastors have no formal training as church leaders. They are often faithful followers of God, who feel called to begin ministering the church. Also, a large number of Wesley students have a heart for ministry yet are lacking even basic secondary education. Therefore, Wesley College has developed an approach that allows students to graduate with a diploma in theological education and a diploma in secondary education at the same time.

In addition to an academic education, we know that more is needed for students to be formed as spiritual leaders. Daily prayer, worship, and weekly chapel are all part of the Wesley College experience. All theology students are assigned to host churches where they worship on Sundays and are regularly invited to teach Sunday School, preach, and learn more about the leadership of the church. Area pastors from different denominations help provide regular teaching in the application of scripture to life and leadership.

### How you can help

Your support will help us build a better community through students who would otherwise have no access to higher education. When you give to Wesley College, you equip the next generation of capable leaders for Tanzania. We invite you to become a partner in this transforming ministry. Together, we can provide faith-based education to first-generation college students who are passionate about their communities.

Your gift goes far in Tanzania:

--**\$20/month** supports one student's living costs at our College dormitory

--**\$42/month** pays one student's tuition

--**\$78/month** (\$940 across the year) pays one faculty member's salary for one month

--**\$2,000** provides a year-long scholarship for one student, covering all expenses

To support Wesley College you can give through the Advance of the United Methodist Church, on-line at [www.wesleycollegetzfoundation.com](http://www.wesleycollegetzfoundation.com) or you can send a check to:

Tanzania Wesley Education Foundation:  
c/o John C. West  
1872 Lake Ridge Road  
Birmingham, AL 35216

To learn about more ways to support Wesley College, please visit [www.wesleycollegetzfoundation.com](http://www.wesleycollegetzfoundation.com) and go to 'Get Involved.' You'll find options for volunteering, providing prayer support, and engaging your church, Sunday School, or small group as Wesley College supporters. We also hope that you will sign up for our e-newsletter, in order to keep in touch, read stories of how Wesley College changes lives, and learn more about the work of the church in Tanzania. Sign up on our website!

Here is why Eric Soard, UMC Missionary and College Principal, thinks you should get involved:

“After years of development work here in Tanzania, I know that ministries can pour money into people, but education is about helping people do things for themselves. It's about innovation and not just survival. Wesley College is about developing the country and moving away from an aid mentality.”



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