



Tanzania Adventist Primary School

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Isacka Vitus Ndaruhekeye, D.Min. (Adventist University of Africa), is a committed pastor and practical theologian. He has served as district pastor in Nzega, Bachu, and Bukoba, where he nurtured congregations and contributed to the advancement of the church's mission. Dr. Ndaruhekeye has lectured in Applied Theology at the University of Arusha and has published extensively in the field of Practical Theology. He currently serves as Chaplain and Pastor at the University of Arusha, offering spiritual leadership and mentorship to the university community.

Tanzania Adventist Primary School (TAPS), established in 1991 in Arusha Region is a significant Seventh-day Adventist educational institution in northern [Tanzania](#). Founded to meet the educational needs of children

associated with Tanzania Adventist College (now the [University of Arusha](#)), the school has developed from a small, single-classroom initiative into a well-established primary institution offering holistic Christian education.

Developments Leading to the Establishment

The establishment of Tanzania Adventist Primary School must be understood within the broader expansion of Adventist education in Tanzania during the late 20th century. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Tanzania Adventist College (TAC) experienced notable growth, attracting both Tanzanian and expatriate staff.¹

A major challenge soon emerged regarding the education of their children. Most Tanzanian primary schools used Kiswahili as the language of instruction, creating difficulties for expatriate children who lacked proficiency in the language. This linguistic barrier, combined with the desire for an education grounded in Seventh-day Adventist values, created a strong demand for an English-medium primary school within a Christian environment. In response, Tanzania Adventist College initiated plans to establish a primary school that would meet both the academic and spiritual needs of its community.²

Founding and Growth

Tanzania Adventist Primary School was officially established on January 1, 1991, under the administration of Tanzania Adventist College. The school began modestly with five pupils, one classroom located in the college cafeteria, and a small teaching staff.³ The founding staff included Dorcas Kusekwa Mbuti (headmistress), Joshua Kitua Mhale (second teacher), and Caleb Peter Maduhu (teacher).⁴ The initial curriculum comprised nine subjects: Music, Art and Craft, Kiswahili, English, Science, Mathematics, Geography, Bible, and Sports.

Over time, administrative responsibility for the school transitioned from Tanzania Adventist College to the Tanzania Union Mission, later to the Northern Tanzania Union Conference, and currently to the Tanzania Rift Valley Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁵

Following the upgrading of Tanzania Adventist Seminary to Tanzania Adventist College in 1992, institutional support for TAPS increased significantly. Enrollment and staffing expanded steadily as demand for English-medium Christian education continued to grow. By 1993, the school had been strengthened by key pioneers, including Dr. Mussa Masanja Kinyantulu, Dorcas Kusekwa Mputi, and Caleb Peter Maduhu.⁶ Additional contributors included William E. Lukuta, Singo Saimoni Mfue, Pastor Sedekiel Shehemba (chaplain), and Julius Hanania Magembe.⁷

In 1994, TAPS had expanded to include Standard One through Four with a total enrollment of 20 pupils.⁸ A major milestone was reached in 1997 when the first Standard Seven class graduated with 13 pupils.⁹

Registration

On July 2, 1996, the school was officially registered under the Seventh-day Adventist Church (registration number AR 02/4/002). It is currently recognized by the National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) under registration number PS0105088.

The success of TAPS contributed directly to the establishment of Tanzania Adventist Secondary School in 1999, which was later formally registered in 2012.¹⁰

Curriculum and Infrastructure

Over time, the curriculum expanded from nine to 12 subjects to align with national educational requirements and Adventist educational philosophy. Additional subjects include Civic and Moral Education, History, Vocational Skills, Culture and Arts, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).¹¹

Infrastructure development has paralleled enrollment growth. The school now includes 12 classrooms, four student hostels, a library, two teachers' houses, and a dining hall. Support from the Northern Tanzania Union Conference has included the provision of school buses, computers, and furniture.

As of recent reports, TAPS serves approximately 254 pupils with a teaching staff of about 15.¹²

Location and Community Context

Tanzania Adventist Primary School is located in Ngongongare Village, Maji ya Chai Ward, Meru District, approximately 25 kilometers northeast of Arusha town. The school is situated near the University of Arusha and in proximity to Arusha National Park.¹³

The institution maintains strong relationships with the surrounding community, providing employment opportunities and limited sponsorship programs that enable some local children to access Adventist education.¹⁴

Historical Role and Significance

TAPS has played an important role in nurturing the spiritual development of its pupils. The school actively participates in Church programs such as campmeetings, evangelistic campaigns, and Pathfinder activities, including participation in international camporees.¹⁵

The school contributes to local community development through education and employment. At the national level, TAPS has demonstrated consistent academic performance. In 2023, all Standard Seven pupils successfully passed the Primary School Leaving Examination administered by NECTA.

Through participation in international Pathfinder events, including the 1999 Oshkosh Camporee, TAPS has maintained connections with the global Seventh-day Adventist community, reinforcing its identity as part of a

worldwide educational and mission network.

The mission of Tanzania Adventist Primary School is to provide holistic Christian education that nurtures learners spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially.

Despite its significant achievements, the school continues to face challenges, including the need to expand infrastructure, strengthen ICT integration, enhance teacher professional development, and increase sponsorship opportunities for disadvantaged learners.

Addressing these challenges will enable the institution to further strengthen its role in advancing Adventist education and mission both locally and globally.

List of Principals

Dorcas Kusekwa Mputi (1991–1997); Dishon Mbega (1997); Simon Arego (1997–1999); Dishon Mbega (1999–2000); Mr. Mkwizu (2005–2006); Yohana Kagogora (2006–2008); Joshua Mhale (2008–2012); Saimon Nchaisaba (2012–2013); Saimon Mayunga (2013–2016); Damascus Chambiri (2016–2017); George Melchior (2018–2022); Hamari Mchome (2022–2024); Deogratius Nyangibo (2024–2025); Yohana Kahingiro (2025–present).

SOURCES

Kabangut'se, V. P., and M. S. Muneja. "University of Arusha." *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2020.

National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA). "Primary School Leaving Examination Results: Tanzania Adventist Primary School (PS0105088)," 2023.

NOTES

1. Swahibu Issa Shehemba, interview by the author, January 26, 2026.

2. Ibid.

3. V. P. Kabangut'se and M. S. Muneja, "University of Arusha," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2020.

4. Caleb Peter Maduhu and Sadikiel Shehemba, interviews by the author, February 19, 2026.

5. Swahibu Issa Shehemba, interview by the author, January 26, 2026.

6. Seriver Nganyilwa Tafisa, interview by the author, February 19, 2026.

7. Swahibu Issa Shehemba, interview by the author, January 26, 2026.
8. Caleb Peter Maduhu and Sadikiel Shehemba, interviews by the author, February 19, 2026.
9. Seriver Nganyilwa Tafisa, interview by the author, February 19, 2026.
10. Milembe Salum Sende, interview by the author, January 23, 2026.
11. Swahibu Issa Shehemba, interview by the author, January 26, 2026.
12. Swahibu Issa Shehemba, interview, January 26, 2026.
13. Molice Emmanuel, interview by author, University of Arusha, January 23, 2026.
14. Ibid.
15. Seriver Nganyilwa Tafisa, interview by the author, February 19, 2026.

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