

## **The Aspiring for More project: Inspiring the youth of Jamestown to create and achieve life goals**

*College: Grinnell College, Grinnell IA*

*Country where the project took place: Ghana*

*Student: Angela Adom Frimpong (Ghana); Important Partner: Bennet Brown (Ghana)*

**Project Goals:** My project had two main objectives; first, it was aimed at empowering and teaching public school children in Jamestown ways of utilizing educational opportunities, specifically using the internet positively by involving them in a seminar, and thus redirecting school children away from the more dangerous and destructive activities, such as internet fraud, that are so common in this area. I also planned to purchase motivational books, computers and internet routers from the schools the students were enrolled in.

I did not receive any additional funding for this project. However, I did partner with Vodafone Ghana Foundation, the social responsibility group of Vodafone Ghana (a Telecom company in Ghana). I partnered with them because they provide educational services which students could access online.

**Report on Project:** The preparations for the seminar in early July marked the start of the project. The preparations included securing a venue for the event, determining the duration of the event and planning the schedule for the event. I had a lot of challenges with this project because of its grand scale: I worked with four schools, 140 students, eight teachers and more than 10 other facilitators of the seminar/project. Although I tried to get as much input from the parties involved as possible, there was still conflict in the scheduling of the event and so I had to reschedule the second phase of the project (the seminar) to the third week of August. I also had to change the venue of the seminar and the duration because it was not favorable with some of the schools. Other things I did during the first phase of the project included buying motivational books from a local bookstore and purchasing three computers as well as internet routers for each school. I also took inventory of a few very important teaching aids the schools needed and provided those for them to aid teaching and learning in the schools.

The second phase of the project was the seminar itself. I rescheduled it to be a one-week activity packed event because of concerns the teachers had about students' interest waning if the seminar lasted for more than a week. Some activities we involved the students in included watching and interpreting a film (Queen of Katwe), a setting life goals discussion, and several sessions of inspirational and motivational talks led by the diverse group of speakers at the event (the profiles of the speakers ranged from an Associate Professor of Classics at the University of Ghana and life coach to final year pharmacy student and young entrepreneur). Vodafone Ghana Foundation also attended the event and introduced the

student to Instant schools, an online platform where students can use educational resources curated by Khan Academy.

The fact that I was familiar with the culture of the people I worked with and also that I could speak the local language proved especially valuable while working on this project.

**Contributions to peace:** Personally, I believe that peace is having a clear understanding of who you are and what you value. I believe that a society that is peaceful is one that respects every individual's expression of themselves and truly believes in its people's potential. I think my project, especially the seminar allowed the students to think deeply about who they truly are and who they want to become and how they can use resources available to them to get there (short term). In addition, the group activities we did instilled values like respecting other people and their values in the students. Ultimately, these students will become their true selves, by achieving their goals and creating a society that encourages others to do same (long term).

**How this experience changed me:** My project taught me to believe. I did not know many of the students who attended the seminar but then I did believe that they have the potential to achieve no matter their background.

**Sustainability:** Money was deposited in a bank account for the schools for the payment of internet. The whole event was also recorded and copies were given to each school so other students can have access to the event. Also, plans to start ICT/motivational clubs as a means to continually remind students to use the internet positively and work hard in school are in the works.

**Lessons learned:** The most important thing I learned from this project is communicating effectively, especially, expectations I had of other people. I learned that when leading people, it is important to clearly state roles and expectations. My second biggest takeaway from my project is coordination. I could not be several places at the same time during the seminar and so seeking and accepting help from others, while being specific about my expectations really helped me organize the event. The last thing I learned was how to deal with impromptu challenges such as sudden changes in schedules of speakers or facilitators.

"I think the biggest takeaway for the students was not only the new books/learning materials, computers or even the internet connection they received but that they now believe and have confidence in their ability to dream, to work hard and to achieve. I am certain that the students, with what they learned, will be able to impact their communities positively by staying in school, using the internet positively and becoming role models for their peers; because of this, I am convinced that the future for the youth of Jamestown is so much brighter than before" – Angela Frimpong

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One of the speakers, Bertha Jamal-Wensah, speaking with the whole group of students.

Esi writing down her life goal.

It read “one day I want to be a journalist and to get there I will have to do the following; study hard at school...”



Presentation of teaching/learning aids to Bishop Girls School