

Trinity College

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Tanzanian Women's Health

Objectives: Members of the Trinity College Student Organization, African Development Coalition (ADC), plan to construct a maternity ward and to implement a program on HIV/Aids prevention and education in Tanzania. ADC was established in the fall of 2008. The organization's mission is to raise awareness about contemporary African culture, politics and economic issues on the Trinity campus and beyond, ultimately bringing together a network of civil servants to work towards peace, education and development in the continent. The Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations called our goals "very promising" and praised us for "championing African development." We also received praises from the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki Moon. In 2008, we received the Human Rights Young Activist Award from the United Nations Association of the USA and Business Council of the United Nations. Since the founding of our organization at Trinity almost three years ago, ADC has raised about \$80,000. We have carried out successful projects in Guinea and Sierra Leone. In Guinea, we renovated a crumbling primary school in a small village, installed a clean drinking water pump in the school and built a house for teachers. In Sierra Leone, we built three computer labs housing a total of 80 computers in the oldest university in West Africa, Fourah Bay College. Every school year, ADC selects a country to focus on for the year. Our focus this year is Tanzania.

Background: The United Republic of Tanzania is located in Eastern Africa and is one of the largest nations on the continent. Formed in 1964 from the unionization of the mainland, formerly known as Tanganyika and the Zanzibar Isles, Tanzania has a population of over 41 million people consisting of nearly 120 African ethnic groups. This diverse population is one of the many aspects that make Tanzania such a rich and vibrant nation. ADC is focused on completing a project in Tanzania targeting pregnant women and mothers. The infant mortality rate in 2008 was 67 out of 1000 live births, with the leading cause of death for children being malaria, and HIV/Aids for adults. Many people do not have access to hospitals or clinics. In fact, it is estimated that there are approximately .05 physicians and .09 hospital beds for every 1,000 people.

The tendency to equate peace with the absence of war and gunfire is rather common. Many often neglect the suffering and impoverishment that can potentially act as a root cause of war and conflict. In many parts of the world, lack of basic needs, such as the right to health care, has led to a death toll that often surpasses the death toll in a war zone. ADC believes that peace is when women have access to their reproductive rights – access that leads to life-saving care. Ultimately, peace is when giving birth to healthy babies is the norm for women and not the exception.

Construction: The ADC team plans to construct a new maternity ward for the villagers in Moshi. Currently, women in three surrounding villages are forced to walk nearly 4 km before they can take a taxi to travel another 35 km to be able to see a doctor. For pregnant women in need of medical attention, such a long wait delays their access to the care they so desperately need. This delay also deters many women from seeking vital prenatal care that can save their babies and even their own lives. Our goal is to facilitate this process for the many women that either neglect care or suffer a day's worth of traveling to see a doctor.

The maternal ward will be an 8-meter by 8-meter room that will be able to house up to five beds. The room will be divided into different partitions to ensure privacy for the women. ADC will equip the rooms with beds and desks. Our work will be communal. We plan to include the young people, especially the village women, in the process of making this clinic a better place. We will paint the facility together and do all of the tasks that do not require professional expertise. We will contract local carpenters to make the beds and other required furniture. In addition, we will also hire professional construction workers to build the new room. Working with local businesses will help to support and strengthen the local economy.

The challenge this community faces is a lack of medical facilities and medical personnel to serve the 15,000 residents of Himo. Thus our primary concern is providing a well-built, brand new facility. A new maternity ward will enable doctors to serve their communities better. Having received the assurance

of the government to appoint at least one doctor to the village, ADC wants to help facilitate this process (a letter confirming such support from the Office of the Minister of Health in Tanzania is on file at Trinity College). By building a new maternity ward in the village, countless women will be able to receive the vital care that they need, both during and after their pregnancy.

The \$10,000 grant we hope to receive will complete the maternity ward. However, another main concern is that villagers do not have access to clean drinking water. As a result, waterborne disease is rampant in this community. In Tanzania, the four major infectious diseases, bacterial diarrhea, Hepatitis A, Typhoid Fever, and Schistosomiasis, are all waterborne diseases. ADC is working with the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation to place a water pump next to the clinic for all three villages to use.

Educational Program: The educational program ADC seeks to implement in conjunction with the creation of a maternity ward is mainly focused on prenatal and postnatal care and transmission education for women and children living with HIV/Aids. The program will also have a prevention education program for women and children who are not infected with HIV/Aids. In order to ensure that the implementation of this project runs smoothly, we will be working with the following contacts. An ADC member traveled to Tanzania in January 2011 where she established a relationship with a community leader, Ibrahim Mkwizu, and District Medical Officer at Moshi, Dr. Wonanji V.T. (Trinity College has on file letters of support from Mr. Mkwizu and Dr. Wonanji.) Mr. Mkwizu will serve as ADC's project coordinator in Tanzania.

Justification: ADC chose Tanzania because it has one of the highest rates of HIV/Aids infection and transmission in Africa. More specifically we targeted the village of Himo, in rural Moshi as our project site due to its high rates of infection within Tanzania. Our focus is women and children, especially those living in rural areas due to an increase in mother-to-child transmission. Our educational program will target women of all ages, but an emphasis will be on women of childbearing age. Women are also the primary caregivers in Tanzanian society, a significant role that entails socializing and instilling values in their children. Thus, if we educate women we are educating the nation, as is often said.

The strategy of our HIV/Aids prevention education program will be aimed at decreasing the risk of infection among the general population, with an emphasis on women and youth. We will accomplish this through enhancing knowledge and community understanding. This will help contribute towards a dialogue about sexuality, gender roles and cultural practices which will engage participants in critical reflection and action to reduce local factors that increase risks of HIV infection. We intend to connect with the Tanzania Commission for Aids to assist us with the implementation of our education prevention. With the help of translators, and our own ADC member who is fluent in Swahili (the official language of Tanzania), we will have women consent to participation in our educational program of their own accord.

Promotional Campaign: In our advertising campaign, we plan to collaborate with reputable organizations, such as Rapid Funding Envelope for HIV/Aids: Tanzania that advocate for prevention and behavior change communication around HIV/Aids issues in Tanzania. In addition to working with these local organizations, we intend to launch our own advertising campaign for the education program, with promotional materials such as T-shirts and flyers announcing upcoming events. The main goal of our promotional campaign is to raise awareness of our presence in Moshi and our good intentions for the members of the community. We expect that through this campaign, people will be eager to work with us to help create the maternity ward.

Benefit to Trinity: ADC prides itself on diversity of talent and ideas. Members of our organization have filmed, edited and produced short films and documentaries on our previous projects. We will do the same with this project and schedule a time in the fall of 2011 to showcase our work. We will heavily advertise this event and bring students together for a dialogue on African issues. A significant number of our participants are underclassmen, with a majority being from the freshmen class. They will continue to take action and raise awareness of African issues at Trinity College for years to come. The time they spend on the ground in Tanzania will be an invaluable experience, which will inform their activism on campus.