

Davis 100 Projects for Peace
Good Hope Peace Project - Tanzania

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Time Frame: June 27th - August 10th - Project is still going on today!

Project Summary:

My summer project took place in Onana community located in Moshi- Kilimanjaro region, the Northern part of Tanzania. A project that started out as merely a construction of a facility for HIV/AIDS started out as a merely construction job and later developed into something extremely complex. I worked hand in hand with the director of Good Hope Trust¹: an orphanage that takes in children that are orphaned from HIV/AIDS. In my proposal, I intended to somewhat revive some of the projects that helped in the sustainability of the orphanage but after my first visit to the orphanage I decided to put all my energy and resources on the completion of the facility due to the desperate need of a health facility in the community thus changing my goals to:

- To construct and hopefully finish a small a three room clinic for counseling, testing, and the provision of HIV/AIDS vaccines to the local people of Onawa Village. This is going to bring the service closer thus allowing more people to take advantage of it at a no/ lower cost compared to if people had to go to town to get the services
- Involve the community members in the construction process to not only provide short term employment but also to create a sense of ownership among them since the facility will be there for them once it starts operating.
- Talk to the health officials of the Moshi district to see the possibilities of the government to bring in medical specialists on HIV/AIDS to the facility once it's finished and also provide the medicine and apparatus necessary for the running of the facility.
- To mobilize young people in secondary schools to discuss issues pertaining HIV/AIDS in Onana Village and encourage them to make use of the facility once it starts running by having gatherings with other youth who are not luck enough to get education.
- Find a project that will be able to provide some income for the future running of the clinic since the 10,000 was not going to be enough.
- Spend time with the young ones at the orphanage when not concentrating on the construction work.

Project Results:

- Changed from the original plan of a three room building to a four room building with a social hall for HIV/AIDS workshops so as to qualify for the government requirements to authorize a health facility.
- June 27th - August 11th 2007, managed to finish the foundation and build of the structure. I left Tanzania when they were about to complete blundering and roofing of the facility which will allow the finishing of the four rooms needed for the running the facility to be done.
- By mid October 2007 four rooms of the building will be completed and ready for government inspections - Director of Good Hope, Josephine Machuwa with the help of my mother, Victoria Mushi will ensure this happens while I am here.
- Managed to not only get authorization for the facility, but also a signed letter from the head of the health department for Moshi district, stating that apparatus for testing HIV/AIDS ,certified councilors and physicians will be provided freely by the government once the facility is ready² .
- By changing the original plan of the facility to a bigger size did only enabled the facility to get authorization but also ensured a yearly funding from the government that is provided to all health facilities in Tanzania - it is a small amount but it will help in the sustainability of the facility.

¹ Josephine Machuwa

² - original copy of the agreement

- The addition of the social hall to the original plan that will be used for workshops will also be rented when not in use to provide extra income for the everyday running of the facility.
- I managed to spend time with the orphans by sleeping at the orphanage every time I was in Moshi for the project.
- I attended village meetings to get a sense of belonging to the community and also to hand over the ownership of the facility to the community.
- Future plans include the mobilization of young people from different backgrounds to use the facility. I figured it will be easy to do that once the facility I up and running.
- I plan to get funding from well-off people that are originally from the area to help develop this facility and hopefully start a network of such projects in other villages in Moshi.
- It is the beginning for me – my goal is far from being reached even though I believe I did my best under the time and budget constraints.

Implications on Peace

In my proposal for this grant I mentioned that construction of this facility is meant to reduce the misery brought about by HIV/AIDS in Tanzanian communities: socio- economic conflicts in families that have contributed to the increasing levels of poverty. Bringing this service closer to the people will empowering members of the community – *youths* – to make more informed decisions on their sexual health thus reducing chances of HIV/AIDS contractions. This will help reduce the socio- economic and cultural conflicts brought about by HIV/AIDS which directly increase peace at the grassroots of a nation: FAMILY and eventually the nation as whole. Onana community is a starting point, hopefully other hard to reach communities will benefit from projects like this.

While working on my project I found out that there were religious clashes in Onana community that I did not know about, clashes that directly affected my project. Onana village has for the longest time *been* a catholic community and any other Christian denomination let alone Islam has been objectionable. Religious organizations have been playing a big role in the provision of HIV/AIDS education but it was limited to members of the specific religious group. Working with Good Hope, an NGO run by a non - catholic made it hard for people to accept my project or even take part in the process. This gave my project a whole new dimension; convincing members of the community and possible future donors that there were no any religious ties to my project and that this facility was open and belonged to all members of the community despite their religious affiliations. Being a Catholic my-self this was a big challenge for me. I am hoping that this will be a place where people from different religious backgrounds can get together to discuss something they have in common “HIV/AIDS” for the benefit of the whole community as opposed to a certain religious group. This is why the addition of the social hall was necessary so as to create a common room for people of different backgrounds to talk about their different approaches to tackling HIV/AIDS.

This project helped me confirm that “changing the world is not easy” and that it can be very frustrating and draining. I figured that focusing on one goal was the way to go; I concentrated all my energy and resources on the construction of the facility despite all the other desperate needs of the community. If every human had one thing at the back of their heads that they want to see change in their societies, maybe then the world may change; otherwise alleviation of poverty will forever fail.

Special Thanks to:

- ~ The Davis Foundation for the giving me the opportunity be the change I want to see in my society.
- ~To God for my family and Good Hope Trust Fund