

“Take a Break From the Hot Sun, Child” | Karera, Uganda.

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Darius Katono Aruho | University Of Oklahoma



Rationale for the Project:

The abysmal state of the Universal Primary Education system in war torn regions of Uganda has led to many a citizen, especially those who have had their fair share of education, to struggle and establish small free rural schools that would typify what a quality Ugandan school lifestyle needs to be. My project seeks to offer support to one of such small rural schools, Faith Day and Boarding School, which was started in 2003, in an empty house to accommodate only disadvantaged children who could not walk to main schools miles away from the village. Over the few years, the primary school has had an overwhelming enrollment influx that cannot be accommodated, especially with non-monetary tuition, like firewood, harvested food and school labor.

Background:

In summer of 2013, after graduating from the UWC in New Mexico, USA, I went back to my village, Karera, Uganda, a very dense rural area in western Uganda in the district of Sheema. I had such tremendous reverse culture shock that some scenic experiences and people’s expressions made me freeze. I could see the desperation and worry that filled people’s eyes. I sometimes wished I had a trailer full of Hershey’s candy to give to the people, especially the children. But all I had was a hopeful thought that one day, I would make a difference however small it would be in that village. Like anyone would concur, I am proud of the fact that in this community, I was brought to life, amidst unprecedented famine, attacks from the Armed Defense Forces Rebels (ADF), flooding, viral coffee and banana wilt diseases.

To no surprise, my line of thought has been levitated around an educational plan with a polarity towards the poorest of the primary schools. I paid a visit to a well-respected, retired teacher, Canon Tr. Kabigumira David, whose personal story lies in his struggle of fighting infertility stigma in the society since wedding his wife ten years ago. However, Tr. Kabigumira was visionary enough to “lay a foundation with the bricks thrown at him.”¹ He started a small school in his house in 2003 since the family was having trouble getting children. Faith Day and Boarding school is now a seven-level primary school, which was opened in 2003, started with thirty underprivileged pupils and has exponentially risen to 400 pupils aged seven to fifteen. Starting with only four teachers, the pioneer pupils enjoyed the best education, excelled and an expansion was made on his father’s land with three brick classrooms that same year with support of the community and church.

Proposal:

My project comes in a time when the exponential increase in enrollment at the small school has prompted the administration to hold off admission to an unfortunate sum of underprivileged children as a result of shortage of classroom facilities. While on a visit at the school, I was taken around the classrooms, some of which are now improvised shades of thick grass and under big trees. It was sad to watch a seven-year old child cover his sweaty shiny head with a book and hands in attempts to counteract the hot sun rays. In other words, he has no peace; he could barely focus. In some cases, the children were lucky to have a bench but a two seat bench cannot hold seven kids. However, the pupils always wore an enduring smile of hope that graces their innocence.

My proposed project is a new program titled, “Take a Break from the Sun,” in which I seek to boost the learning confidence in selected rural schools and create such a peaceful congenial environment for learning with an emphasis on infrastructure. I will focus on western Ugandan rural communities, and later extend to

¹ "David Brinkley." BrainyQuote. Xplore Inc, 2014. 25 January 2014.

other districts of the country. Unlike in temperate regions, where one is highly aware of a snow pattern, rainstorm, ice storms or a hot summer day, the village of Karera is a few degrees away from the equator line. The sun shines from dawn to dusk creating a painful sultry weather let alone the heavy afternoon rains. Neither of these is conducive for a ten-year old child who has walked miles and miles to learn the English alphabet. The goal for my 2014 Davis Project for Peace grant is to offer young pupils, at Faith Day and Boarding School some shelter after walking miles in the dusty roads under the hot sun along which I also trod barefoot during my childhood. Take a break from the sun, and focus. Let the brain focus on what the teacher has to say and not what the sun has to do.

Plan of Action and Construction Timeline:

A block is to be constructed with a grant of \$10,000, and will house two spacious classrooms and an office room. With wooden doors and metallic window frames, the block will house a large population of the increasing number of pupils. Land has already been acquired and the procurement of construction materials and hiring will commence upon the approval of the proposal and receipt of the grant in late April. In addition to my charge and presence at the construction sites, the school's head teacher, Mr. Kabigumira will acquire as much help, as needed, from local community as volunteers and paid laborers. Concerning the costs, the classroom block, well-finished without furniture, is at an approximate of twenty million Uganda Shillings~US\$10,000. This project will take advantage of local business traders, and natural resources such as stone, sand, clay bricks and household tools of digging such as hoes, pangas and saws. Services and processed material such as cement, iron rods, lime, and metallic accessories will be purchased and transported to the work site. All of the construction work will begin in May and be completed in July. This project has a timeline of 4 months from the date the grant is received.

Activities	Month
Acquisition of land	Already Acquired
Expected grant notification	April 2014
Procurement of building materials	April 2014
Construction of block begins	May 2014
Completion of block	July 2014
Evaluation and report	August 2014

Details attached in the budget.

Future Outlook and final statement

I humbly request for your support in establishing a classroom block for the pupils of Faith Day and Boarding school. Not only will the project provide a positive experience for the young children but it is a way to inspire the youth of my age to always remember where they came from. I hope it can also be a trail blazer for the young teens who grew up in similar conditions of struggle, scared of rebel abduction and poverty and sanitary diseases.

The long term goal is a nationwide project that surveys the country, Uganda and sets up clean, hygienic and well-constructed classrooms under the Davis Projects for Peace. I hope to name the upscale classrooms, Davis halls. Classrooms are an integral of education which does an incredible job in the appreciation and discovery of one's identity and potential. The notion of helping over a hundred young children, through a summer Davis project will be a tremendous achievement and one of the many fruits of my family and community investing in my education. I watched things happen ever since I lost my father over a decade ago