

## **Section I**

### **a) Project goals:**

The goal of this project was to facilitate women's empowerment/gender relations in athletic programs at the Chukwani School in Zanzibar, Tanzania through the construction of a soccer field for girls and boys, construction of a net-ball court for females, and development of community workshops for the encouragement of youth involvement outside the home in such activities. We hoped to create a more peaceful society by breaking down entrenched discriminatory attitudes, building relationships between men and women, and empowering the youth with sports skills such as team-building and decision-making.

### **b) Fund-raising:**

The project totaled \$1,116.81 more than the Davis Project for Peace Grant. This money was fundraised through collaboration with the non-profit organization Students Helping Children Across Borders.

### **c) On-the-ground project details:**

Upon arrival at the field, my head began to spin: my Tanzanian partners had most certainly exaggerated their progress. The beautifully manicured areas from previously sent pictures were, indeed, real. However, these sections were also isolated, with several large holes, hills, and divots rendering the field unplayable. Overwhelmed at the huge task that lay before us, I felt tears mixing with the sweat from the blazing African sun. Instead, I took deep breaths. "3 weeks," I told myself. A classic Swahili saying popped into my mind – "*Pole pole ndio mwendo*. Slowly, slowly is the way."

Starting that first day, we encountered difficulties characteristic of a developing country, from lack of efficient equipment such as bulldozers to the inevitably slow stride of donkey carts carrying cement. In the face of this sluggish place, the most crucial characteristic of our work became its steadiness: the consistent collaboration between the students, project leaders, and community members was absolutely incredible. For example, the Assistant Head Teacher, Khalfan, created a system in which a different class helped with the work every hour in the hope that by the end of the project the entire student body would feel personally invested in its success. This type of unswerving community involvement each day from morning until evening created a bond not only between the volunteers and the project but also between the individual volunteers themselves. The day of the opening ceremony, hundreds of community members – teachers, parents, girls, and boys – showed up to celebrate their work and to show their support for the future of the project. Although I had hoped for widespread participation, I never imagined that by the end of our three weeks I would be standing in front of literally hundreds of people, thanking them for welcoming me and for giving me a second home in what was once a beat-up backyard of the school.

The Chukwani School has 1,300 children who will have the chance to use these facilities. However, throughout the course of the project, children from outside the school also showed up to help, and we believe the facilities should be open to the entire community. A crucial aspect of the project's maintenance is the fact that it took place in a school system, a relationship that offers an existing structure of leadership and responsibility. The school as an institution will not want

the programs and quality of the sites to be degraded. Furthermore, the inspiring community ownership of this project as well as the fact that the project's objectives grew out of community needs and desires gives me hope that these stakeholders will continue the project's success. We hope that in the future we can strengthen the sports programming at the school to make it more organized and official. Right now, we are working to ensure that this happens – Khalfan has expressed a dream of being “Coach Khalfan,” so we have faith that the right people are working on this aspect of the project.

## **Section II**

### **a) Peace:**

A flash of red darts past. A shriek of joy fills the air as the ball flies into the net, and a rambunctious team hug ensues. Throughout the past three weeks, I had grown slightly disappointed that a slow pace and lack of time had stolen our opportunity to put more programs in place and to “ensure the progress of peace” more. Standing there as the sun began to fade, however, I realized that I was staring directly at the foundation of peace.

Peace is not a glaring light that suddenly switches on. Instead, as clichéd as it may sound, peace is the hug at the score of a goal. Peace is girls and boys working together out on a field when normally they would be standing on opposite ends. Peace is the language of laughter when words of a foreign tongue cannot suffice. Peace is community members standing side by side as they take ownership of the collective space they have built. Peace is all of these tiny fragmented moments of joy and fraternity that work every day against the things like poverty and discrimination that divide us. Slowly, these moments find each other and string together until their sum is more than that which held them apart.

In the short-term, my project creates these opportunities for the children of Chukwani – the net-ball court and football field are places where, facilitated by school programming, these “moments of peace” can flourish and grow every day. In the long-term, these relationships have the potential to break down barriers between genders and to confer skills such as teamwork and collaboration that can be carried by the young people of Chukwani into the greater society of family life, politics, and employment, to name a few.

The project has reminded me how truly important community ownership of a project is. Without the commitment of the citizens of Chukwani, this project would not have been possible or sustainable. So often, developing countries are viewed as full of victims, full of people who suffer but cannot help themselves. Chukwani is proof that this image is thoroughly false: the people of Chukwani are strong, intelligent, passionate, and capable of change. What they lack is often not the brains or the will but simply the resources and infrastructure to make these goals happen. I will not forget the fact that Chukwani had to work with shovels instead of bulldozers and donkeys instead of cars in a world where we take our tools for granted. However, I will also never forget the ways in which the people of Chukwani came together in the face of these challenges to achieve something for their future.

- b) Personal statement (Meghan Casey):** This project taught me that peace is all of the tiny fragmented moments of joy and fraternity, such as the collaboration of boys and girls on a field, that work every day against the forces that divide us. This project works to create these moments for the children of Chukwani by facilitating the formation of relationships and sports skills that extend beyond the athletic field into the greater society.

