

Education Reform Efforts in Tanzania

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Location: Zanzibar, Tanzania

Tanzania is a beautiful, diverse country that sits on the East Coast of Africa along the Indian Ocean. It is home to approximately 47.4 million people. Agriculture makes up nearly 25% of the gross domestic product. Zanzibar is an island off of the coast of the mainland of Tanzania and is inhabited by over 1 million people. The predominant religion of Tanzania (including Zanzibar) is Islam.

Public Education in Tanzania

- According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, many children in Tanzania, especially girls, drop out of school before finishing primary education
- 30.8% of children make it to lower secondary education and 1.9% enter upper secondary education
- Most of the higher education and job opportunities require a firm comprehension of the English Language



Special Studies

My global special studies focused on the public education of Tanzania and the implications of its current state. My studies consisted of a literature review of the country, volunteer efforts and learning opportunities abroad, daily journal entries, and a synthesis paper of my overall experience.

Agency/Community Partner

My global field experience was with Growth International Volunteer Excursions (GIVE). Their mission is to inspire growth, empower global citizens, and ignite sustainable change worldwide. GIVE partners with host communities in an effort to improve infrastructure, education, sanitation, water supply, and the environment. Education efforts include English tutoring for the residents of Kiwengwa in Zanzibar and the construction of an accessible school (per the community's request).

Outcomes

In the course of the few weeks that I was in Tanzania, I worked alongside local *fundis* (which means "skilled workers" in Swahili) in constructing an accessible school in Kiwengwa, engaged in conversations with local adults and youth in English, discussed topics relating to volunteerism with the Zanzibar Volunteer Society (ZAVOS), and tutored English to the residents.

Major accomplishments included:

- Tutoring 7 young people daily on various parts of speech in English
- Painting several classrooms, preparing construction materials such as cement, and transporting such construction materials to the *fundis*
- Completing the next phases of classroom and bathroom construction at the school site

Skills Utilized/Developed

From my global field experience, I increased my ability to:

- Engage in discussion with stakeholders and gain buy-in from them
- Assess community needs
- Interact and communicate with individuals despite language barriers
- Gain buy-in from youth about their education

Connections

Field Placement:

After returning from Tanzania, I had the opportunity to share my experiences with the psychiatric, nursing, and social work staff at the Adult Partial Hospitalization Program within the St. Joseph Mercy Health System. Through my presentation, I raised awareness about educational disparities in Tanzania and facilitated a dialogue of how this may relate to their work within the field of mental health.

SW 799 Social Entrepreneurship:

While taking this course, we talked about the pros and cons of giving donations to underdeveloped countries. Pros could include performing a charitable act while cons could include stifling the country's economic growth and development by providing donations.

Career:

As a former educator, it was interesting to compare and contrast issues relating to education in America and Tanzania. I hope to one day work with an organization that provides global experiences to young adolescents in order to engage them with global issues and raise awareness within their respective communities.

Lessons Learned

- The best way to empower a community is to specifically ask them in which ways they would like support and have them participate in some way
- Donations to other countries can be detrimental to their local economy
- Education and knowledge are important factors when discussing solutions to large world problems and disparities

Advice

- Make a strong effort to learn the native language of the country to which you plan to travel
- Apply to as many funding sources as possible
- Try to stay as busy as possible in order to combat homesickness while abroad
- Identify and process one's own privileges, biases, and/or prejudices before traveling

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