Mutima Outreach Ministries
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Entebbe, Uganda

In Uganda, about 7.2 percent of the population is living with HIV/AIDS. This amounts to around 1.4 million people, including an estimated 190,000 children. Fishing villages along Lake Victoria are particularly impoverished and impacted by HIV/AIDS. One village in particular is home to many women who are supported by Mutima Outreach Ministries.

Advice
(1) Research programs that will allow you to have an authentic cultural immersion. (2) Access to Internet and technology can actually hinder the experience.

Community Partner
Mutima Outreach Ministries is a HIV/AIDS organization located within Entebbe. Mutima provides women’s education programs aimed toward increasing self-sufficiency and HIV/AIDS awareness through outreach on hygiene and transmission.

Project Information
Over the course of three weeks, I facilitated women’s education lessons on various mental health topics, supported outreach efforts relating to health and sanitation, and spent time crafting with the women.

Skills Utilized
- Cultural humility
- Assertiveness
- Empathy
- Engagement

Outcomes
(1) Facilitated two round table discussions that demonstrated a clear need for a formal support group among the women. (2) Mediated the removal of an organization mandate that required volunteers to pay for weekly group meals and transportation of all persons conducting outreach.

Lessons Learned
Through this experience, I challenged perceptions on privilege and oppression daily. This includes beliefs on gender roles, sexuality, consumerism, government policies, and stigma relating to HIV/AIDS.

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Career Connections
With each social interaction, I worked toward humility of the local culture. Given any diversity of my current and future clients, I want to present myself in a manner that is continuously inquisitive of the person I am supporting. Ultimately, I desire to find ways to generate a partnership best attuned to the uniqueness of each individual.

Classroom Connections
SW 799 – HIV/AIDS: Evidence Based Programs, Policies and Services. This mini-course presented a brief overview of the history of HIV/AIDS in the United States as well as common barriers to treatment.