

October 5, 2008

Ramadhan was a time of reflection and introspection for me this year. My MS has been acting up a bit but it's good for me to remember that I need to pace myself and be responsible for my daily physical condition. I have made some changes and doing much better. I've had a bit of a hard time since I returned from the US and have had to do some soul searching to get back on track. I am very fortunate to be able to choose the way that I want to live – to do work that is fulfilling and fun and to pay attention to the quality of my life. I started my foundation Participate Now! in January of this year and am learning what exactly it all means. I became a bit confused after visiting the US in May and June. I felt like a failure on a number of levels when I returned home to Zanzibar. I gave many presentations in the US but didn't feel that I was able to really get across to people what Zanzibar and the work that I do here is like. And although I don't believe "it's about the money" people kept asking "So how much money did you raise?" and I felt like a failure. I did raise enough money for this year and isn't that usually the goal – to have enough??? I also became a bit confused because the idea of the foundation was becoming quite complex – business plan, project timelines, marketing a "product", budgets for the future. It all made my head swim and I finally, finally came to the realization that my foundation is all about self respect and dignity and that includes mine. I cannot become what someone else may want me to be – I am successful when I can be the best Kathryn possible. So – I'm feeling like I've been through a metamorphosis and I'm going to focus on keeping things very simple, doing the work that is most important and the rest will happen as it is supposed to. I raised two wonderful boys alone and we never starved – I'm a hard worker and I will be fine. I have had to rethink the goal of Participate Now! – I don't want it to become some multi million dollar foundation – I don't want to become famous – I just want to live in Zanzibar and listen and learn all that I can so that we can make some small sustainable changes concerning international development.

### **I'm in a Book!!!!**

In July of last year I received an email from John Gartner and I knew the moment that I opened it that my life was going to change – but I didn't know exactly what the outcome would be and it is still in process like a flower bud opening. John got my name from a mutual friend (links – always links) – he told me that he was planning on writing a book about President Clinton and was traveling with the President and his entourage on his annual Africa tour and that he would like to have coffee with me in Dar if possible to learn more about the Clinton Foundation work in Zanzibar. I was already planning on going to Dar for the event as I was still employed by the Clinton Foundation at the time. John then emailed a few days before the event and said that the schedule had changed and could he come to Zanzibar the day after the Dar event. I said "sure" - I met him in Dar on the day of the event and we left early the next morning for Zanzibar. Now – the very cool thing about all of this (karma that's all I can say) is that none of that visit was scripted – it was all serendipity. John was writing a book about President Clinton and after he left Zanzibar he emailed me and said "Kathryn you're going to be the last chapter". The book came out in the stores last week – the title is [In Search of Bill Clinton: A Psychological Biography by John Gartner](#). I have not seen the book or read it yet but I am the last two chapters – it's called "Mamma Kathryn" and "The Last Day". John wrote about my being one of the catalysts for bringing Clinton Foundation and the ARVs (anti-retroviral drugs) to Zanzibar. I have never had someone write about me like that before and it's an eerie experience. But John did a great job for only being here for two days – he did get a good sense of how wonderful Zanzibar truly is. There might be some minor details that I would quibble about but I think that is always natural when a second party is writing about something.



## Clinton Visit to Zanzibar July 21, 2005

First of all – there were many other people involved with bringing ARVs to Zanzibar and also responsible for the Clinton visit in 2005. I won't go into long details but I just want to add to what John wrote. On the left is Farouk who was the heart and soul behind ZAPHA+, myself, Heidi Becher, the project manager for the HIV clinic, President Clinton and Nadine Beckmann who was instrumental as she spent every day at ZAPHA+ talking with the women and learning about them. The next photo is of Heidi Becher and Sandra Cress who was the Tanzanian country director of CHAI (Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative) at the time. Sandra has incredible enthusiasm and was open to listening to and considering any of our crazy ideas. It was Sandra who decided that it might be nice for the President to visit Zanzibar and to see the HIV clinic and ZAPHA+. Heidi had gotten the HIV clinic organized and running quite smoothly in only a few months and many people were on ARVs and had the opportunity to live for the first time. Sandra used to visit Zanzibar and she and Heidi often came to ZAPHA+ to talk with the members – they certainly learned a lot. So – let's just be clear that I may be the big mouth in this crowd but I am only one of a magnificent team. I want to tell you about the next photos because it is very dramatic the effect that Clinton Foundation has had on people living with HIV. The five members of ZAPHA+ were some of the first to have their CD4s tested – the two women on Khamis's right both died within a month. Khamis Mtumwa was able to get ARVs and his wife Mtoro (on the right with their two girls) made sure that he took the meds and ate healthy food. Mtoro went on to be one of the trained peer counselors and she has been working at the HIV clinic since then. Yes – it makes a difference if people can stay alive and then become productive citizens who can take care of their families and attain self respect and dignity.



## Passing of a strong woman

And here are some more dramatic photos – I'm sitting with Munira in my lap in the chair that President Clinton is going to sit in and later she sat on his lap. At the time in 2005 she was 3 years old and HIV+ but there were no options for her. The photo in the middle John took when he visited in 2007 – she has been doing well on the ARVs although she still has side effects and some health problems but I have never heard her complain or cry. Now – on the right is Tausi in

red, Amina with the blue head scarf and Consolata sitting with her. Amina is also in the above photo of the first five to have their CD4 tested but her CD4 was very high so she didn't go on ARVS. But Amina has been very ill the past few years with bouts of malaria and other ailments that I'm not sure exactly what they were. She died two weeks ago after finally going back in the hospital for the last month of her life. The hospital here can be quite frightening if you try to compare it to the West but I was struck by how many visitors people had. Tausi visited Amina almost every single day, bringing her food, medicine and washing her and changing her sheets and her clothes. Amina had been voted in as the secretary of ZAPHA+ in June 2005 and she came to the office every day – she would talk to new people and sit with the women and she was always a strong presence. I am still very bad with my Swahili but Amina would be so patient and sit with me and we would try to talk. She has a 14 year old son Faisal who is now a member of the youth group at ZAPHA+ and he has a good support system around him to help him through this very difficult time. I went to Amina's funeral and it was quite an honor to sit with the women while they mourned the loss of our special friend.



### Friends visiting Zanzibar

Of course I have had a lot of visitors – Katelin Wilton was here last year working with the youth group at ZAPHA+ - she is back again and doing a fantastic job – that is a photo of her and my beautiful housegirl Bettina. Dion Graham, an actor who is on the HBO series The Wire, came to Zanzibar after climbing Mt Kilimanjaro (go Dion!). We visited our local Obama tree (that's Dion with Obama – Masoud Said is a Zanzibari who proudly backs Obama for President – he even organized an Obama rally in Stonetown. I heard it was great but I didn't attend. The next photo is a group of Princeton students who were on a cultural tour with a friend of mine – they came up to my house for a simple meal and I was able to tell them about Zanzibar and the work that I'm doing. I have found that I am much more effective showing people Zanzibar through my eyes when they are physically here rather than trying to show them a Power Point presentation. It reminded me of my classes at Tufts University – there were always a few of the students who would come up to me afterwards wanting to know more. Talking about Tufts – on the right is Samantha Diamond in the white shirt – she and I met in an Economics class at Tufts in 2002, became fast friends and have stayed very close. Samantha spent two years in Congo with USAID and other organizations. She has been helping with my website and my overall structure for my foundation - she is a great sounding board and does a fabulous job of clarifying much of what I'm saying into something that makes sense. She came to Zanzibar and I was able to take her around to visit some friends. Here we are in a rural village with Suleiman in the background – he is the project manager for our agricultural project and also the author of the foundation's wonderful quote "Being rich is having enough to share with others".



## Farming Plots and Chicken Coops

We visited my friend Khamis Mbarouk at his farming plot – it was interesting in that it was one plot within many. People own or rent plots to grow their food – Khamis’s wife had rented out her plot to someone who grew cassava for three months. I definitely will be learning more as to how all of this works. In the center is Samantha, Khamis, Suleiman and Senga who is my taxi driver and translator. You can’t believe where we had to drive (and then walk) to get to Khamis’s plot!!! We were driving on walking paths as I think you can see – we drove for at least 30 minutes after turning off the main road – it was raining, there was mud, nasty red ants and Senga’s car got scratched (his pride and joy). He said that he’s going to have to buy a 4 wheel drive if we’re going to be doing a lot of projects in rural areas. Then we went to Khamis’s house so that he could show me his chicken coop – I was scared standing inside with all these chickens flapping around. The food bells hang so that the chickens can get food any time they want. But as usual, there is more to raising chickens than just having a coop – they need vaccinations against disease and there’s all other sorts of considerations which I will also be learning about in the next year. Now onto the current Participate Now! projects – please remember that I cannot make judgments concerning any other development projects except the ones that I actually experience here in Zanzibar.



## Entrepreneur Project Update

We had a meeting of the entrepreneur project of which there were 9 women who were given business management training. I think the most important lesson learned is that I will never be able to assume that I know the outcome of a project before it’s finished. I can go back to our original proposal of what we expected the outcome to be and we learned so many other things!!! These women did a great job – I believe in strengthening the local economy – if there are no tourists and no donors then what is left? The answer – a lot!!! Mzee Mohammed is the project manager and has been so wonderful with all of the women. I do have an email that I wrote about this project on the website if you care to read more about it. In this meeting I learned a number of things – first these women are HIV+ and they get sick often. It is important for them to have someone to help them when they get sick although that is not always possible. Sada, the woman in blue at the end of the table, impressed me the most. She cannot read or write Swahili but she listened every day of the workshop. She didn’t take a loan because she had been quite ill at the time and wasn’t ready to start up her business again. She came to this meeting as the most

successful and that was because she found a product that had a low investment (she makes shangas which are beaded waist bands) and she had her sister helping her so that even when she was sick the shangas could still be produced and delivered to the customers. Zainab is in white with the chapattis and juice. She had taken a loan of \$20.00 and paid it in full in two weeks because she had been able to cook for a big celebration in the village. She was afraid that she might spend the money if she didn't pay it back right away. She also had some nice profit but then she got sick. She had her son selling the juice but he was giving most of it away to his friends so that wasn't working. She decided to invest and buy a chicken rather than just spending the money. But she became sicker and had to sell the chicken and use the money. What is the answer??? I don't know – I just keep on listening and trying to learn. Mzee left the women to talk and had Sada facilitate the group so that the women could brainstorm as to possibilities that they could do for their businesses. Many of them have small capital (big lesson I have learned – not everyone wants a loan) and just needed advice as to what to do. They talked about how much an investment a business would need, how many hours you would have to work, where your market would be and do you need transportation or telephone costs? These are topics that we had covered in our workshop months ago but now the women were able to discuss it in practical terms in relation to what they'd actually been experiencing. I believe that this project taught me that in the future it's important to have small groups that meet once a month or so with a skilled business person to facilitate the group. Not much money is needed for that – a venue to hold the groups and a consulting fee (hourly basis) to be paid to the facilitator.



## Start of new agricultural project

And now we get to the good part – the farming project that we're doing. On the left is Suleiman's new plot that he is "renting". He used to be with the Ministry of Agriculture and is now an independent "consultant". He had been managing a large plot for a foreigner and also working at a tourist agency. He now has this new plot and he is growing mint, basil and many other things that he is selling to hotels and restaurants – he is a very good businessman. He has been working hard preparing the project that we will be doing for the next year – he believes strongly in doing a participatory project that will be sustainable. He believes that it's important to focus on the very poor in rural villages where most donors don't go because the transport can be too difficult. In the next photo Suleiman is at my house working on the budget – Samantha helped us to set up the template and he and I have been going over it with a fine tooth comb. The entire project totals \$10,000.00 and he has control over it and can budget the money as he chooses. Because Participate Now! projects are all about learning we are being very flexible and the budget can be reworked as long as it doesn't go over the total. We have decided to have 3 phases and 3 activities within each phase so that it's manageable to track and learn what changes should be made for future projects. The final objective is to document and share the results with all of the participants and if the Ministry of Agriculture or an NGO choose to utilize what we've learned to write a larger scale proposal then we'll be very excited. But Participate Now! is only about small scale projects that we can hopefully use the lessons we learn as a model. Already – transport is a large line item in the budget – it is important to meet all of the people in the district and the government to let them know exactly what we would like to do with the project, where we want to do it and whom we would like have as participants. There is a photo of Suleiman, me and the sheha (mayor) of the larger village (we will be focusing in Koani which is part of Mwera). She is a wonderful sheha and she was very happy that we came to speak with her first. Then Suleiman

called for a “technical meeting” which was Activity 1 in Phase 1. He included Hassan and Mohamed from the Ministry of Agriculture who he had worked with before and Rashid who is the district officer for the Ministry of Agriculture in Mwera. The photo on the right is us visiting with the District Commissioner for the Central district, Ali Hassan. Rashid introduced us and Suleiman explained the project – I thought it was very cool because I wasn’t seen as the “head” of the project I was just seen as Mamma Kathryn who was able to raise some funds so that they could do the project. The District Commissioner thanked us for coming and said that we will have 100% cooperation. Whew – so now I think we’ve covered everyone and we can start doing the survey of 20 farmers and then choose 7 to work with.

I just want to tell you of a few things that I’ve learned already – I say that I have to acknowledge my “assumptions” as an American woman from Connecticut every day. It’s so easy for me to try to decide what is best for “those people”. I have to work so hard to try to put my assumptions aside and listen and learn. First lesson – people don’t live in tract houses in rural villages – if we’re going to survey 20 people it’s going to take some time. You have to drive and then often walk for a kilometer or more to get to someone’s house – many people will live as close to their plot as possible. Suleiman figured that he can have 4 people doing the survey and do it in 2 days. I have learned from the past that it takes more time than just having people answer questions so that you can check off a box. There is always a lot to talk about. The technical meeting was great and I’ll try to just tell you about two things that really struck me. Suleiman had budgeted “material inputs” for each of the farmers – a hoe, a machete etc etc. Hassan said “Maybe we should wait until we have the Participatory Planning Meeting (activity 3 of Phase 1) with the 7 farmers that we choose – maybe they don’t need a hoe or a machete – maybe they will need something else”. WOW!!! My biggest complaint (and I don’t have the easy answer) is that often donors sit in their offices in New York, DC, Dar, or even my flat in Stonetown deciding what the project needs – down to each budget line that can not be changed once the budget has been approved. So – this was exciting to have the team decide that they had chosen the amount of money to be spent on material inputs but that we can take the time and include the participants in deciding just what to spend the money on. I talked about my assumption of a “farming” project – I would assume it was all about people in the fields planting crops to eat and sell. But as we talked we realized there is a lot more to an agricultural community than just that. These plots are way in the middle of nowhere and people need an oxcart to get their crops to the road or the market – someone must have an oxcart business. The team also felt it was important to teach the participants simple bookkeeping and record keeping – that may be other people besides the farmers. They felt it was important to make it very clear to the farmers that this is not just a “donor project” that will end – that it is an opportunity for the farmers themselves to learn how they can support each other and put systems into place that work for them. We are planning for the project to take a year and to spend much of that time doing monitoring visiting during Phase 3.

## **Personal Update**

To end I would like to give you a quick update and info for people who may be new to my emails. I was honored to have worked for the Clinton Foundation but I left them last year to start my own foundation. I am also no longer working directly with ZAPHA+ - I am now focusing on small business development within the local economy working with ZEDO (Zanzibar Enterprise Development Organization). John Gartner stated in his book that I had a small inheritance that I was living on and then I received a small salary from Clinton Foundation. I am now the director of Participate Now! and will receive a small salary from that if and when I raise enough money. The first priority is to finance the projects and we have enough for our agricultural project at the moment and I’m very grateful to all who donated. I know that the US economy is very bad and that many people are fearful of losing their jobs, health insurance and possibly their homes. This is not an easy time for anyone in the world. I have realized that all that I have control over is my own daily expenses – I am fortunate to pay very little for rent compared to most places in the US. But, like many, I have school loan payments and health insurance (that is going to run out soon) and food and transport. I try to consider every day what my “needs” and my “wants” are and then try to make good choices as to how I spend my money. In this way I am no different than many

people anywhere else and that includes the very poor here in Zanzibar. We all want to have a comfortable life and to give our children the opportunity to have a better life that we had – that is very difficult now with the current global economic situation. So – maybe the most important things we can try to give our children is love and knowledge so that they can make good decisions concerning the quality of their lives. One of the most important things that I have learned while living here in Zanzibar is that “enough” can be just fine – I can be happy with what I have rather than always wanting more.

Please visit our website <http://www.participatenowfoundation.org/> to learn more about our foundation. Please remember that we are in the process of redesigning the website – I am trying my best to keep it as simple as possible. Thank you for taking the time to read this email.

Participate Now!  
424 Riverside Drive  
Fairfield, CT 06824