

Zanzibar Update

July 21, 2011

Hello everyone,

I had been traveling in Asia and then visited New England in the spring and now I am back in Zanzibar until the end of the year. I was fortunate to meet an American woman in Bali Indonesia who liked the work that I am doing. She trusted me enough to give me what I consider a large donation that is unrestricted which means that I can spend it in any way that I see fit. I am honored to have her trust and that is why I am all the more careful to make sure that the money is spent well. This also poses a challenge to me as I am now the "donor".

I think that the most important lesson I have learned since coming to Zanzibar in September 2004 is that "designing and managing a project" is not viable or sustainable for me. I cannot decide what is best for anyone besides myself. I truly believe that the people themselves should design and manage their own projects. Yes they do need help with guidance and technical support but I cannot seem to get donors to fund the "local consultants" who know more than anyone else what can be successful and sustainable. I always come back to the question "How do you define success?". For Participate Now it is to be involved with the local community as they decide what is best for them.

Being a donor is not a simple and easy task and there are always potential problems when money is involved. Many people in Africa are donor dependent and feel entitled to donor money so I have decided that I will do my best in the future to fund and support organizations that are already established. With that let me tell you how I have spent some of the money that I raised.

Zanzibar Sober House



I gave Suleiman Mauly who started the sober houses, \$2,500.00 in May. I have asked but not received a report as to how the money was spent but I was given these three photos. They have bought computers, a printer, a bookcase and a gas stove. The sober houses are doing a good job trying to help the recovering addicts in Zanzibar. I also gave them donations that I had received in America of a laptop, an iPhone and some cell phones (that sadly did not work because the American cell phone technology is different than the rest of the world). They have been doing fund raisers on their own and seem to be quite successful.

Kendwa Water Project



Hurray we are finally going to finish this project and I am thrilled. I was so happy to return home and meet with Participate Now Zanzibar and tell them that I had raised the \$5,000.00 needed to finish the project. Al Noor, the drilling company, returned to Kendwa and drilled a second bore hole (the first one that they dug in December was dry). The team went up to see the bore hole and met with the village water committee and the villagers are thrilled to be moving forward. If you remember, the villagers raised \$3,000.00 towards the drilling of the bore hole. Now, they are responsible to build a shed around the bore hole, dig the trenches for the pipes and build holders for the 13 water taps that will be placed around the villages. On Sunday some of our team went up and spent 6 hours doing a water test to make sure that the bore hole had enough water and won't go dry after the rainy season ends. We are all very excited and there will be more photos and reports as we finish up this project.

Welezo Old Age Home



I donated \$1,000.00 and Ali Hussein bought all of these wheelchairs and other equipment that can be used by Welezo Old Age Home. The Home is under the Ministry of Social Welfare but this one is managed by the Sisters of the Precious Blood and Sister Lucy is an amazing woman. What I love best about Welezo and Sister Lucy is that they don't wait until a donor comes along before they do something. They work hard every day taking care of their 30 men and 35 women patients and do it with a smile. Ali Hussein has been their guardian angel and he links people with Welezo who can then help them directly. I'm most excited because I brought my friends, Dr Vincent (a Belgian neurologist) and his wife Mianne to visit. Vincent and Mianne have moved to Zanzibar and want to open a clinic that will provide medical services for the ex-pat and the local community. At the moment they are living up the coast and Vincent is working in a local clinic and loving it. Welezo desperately needs some sort of medical assistance and I am very aware that Vincent does not have the time to provide any services but he has now physically experienced Welezo and he could maybe recommend it to someone who might be appropriate. As Sister Lucy says – "We just keep talking and eventually God provides".

ADEA Arts Project



My American friend, Douglas McFalls, is the director of ADEA <http://www.adeafrica.org>. He has lived in Mtwara, in southern Tanzania for almost 10 years and works with the local artisans and the local community. Like me he is busy with his daily work and therefore does not have time to fund raise or publish. Many large foundations have marketing staff to get the word out about the work that they do but we don't. ADEA has also helped to start an annual local festival and a community Maasai school – they are truly working to build on existing situations in their area. A number of years ago I was desperate for some funding and Douglas donated a small amount of money that I knew he could ill afford. I was touched by his generosity and so I have donated \$4,000.00 to his organization. I will be visiting Mtwara in December and will take photos and write about all that I learn.

Maulidi ya Homu and Mama Balozi



And of course there is always Maulidi ya Homu. We were honored to have Mama Balozi, Jackie Lenhardt, the wife of the US Ambassador to Tanzania visit us. This is her second time visiting Maulidi ya Homu and she brought her friend Dr Bea Taylor, who teaches Art History at Howard University. The performance was moving and spectacular – the boys have been practicing hard. Afterwards, Hashim Pondeza, a Zanzibari who studied at Bowling Green University in Ohio translated a wonderful conversation between the boys, Jackie and Bea. I appreciate that I am able to show people Zanzibar through my eyes. I am also grateful that I am able to present opportunities for local Zanzibaris to talk casually with people that they would not normally have access to. Jackie and Bea answered many questions about America, President Obama and the future of the US. Both Bea and Jackie talked about their admiration of the community and family spirit that they have experienced in Tanzania and Zanzibar. It was a wonderful evening for all and my dream is that one day we will have a small delegation from the US Embassy come to attend a Maulidi performance outside in the neighborhood plaza – inshallah.

So as usual I am living and learning something new every day. As a donor what is the criteria that I follow when giving money to people or an organization? I am here in Zanzibar so I am able to physically see exactly how the money is being utilized and I can follow the progress over the future. That is not always possible for donors who are based in the West and I understand how difficult that can be. Yet there are so many groups and organizations that are working hard in the small communities and deserve recognition and support. In the end, all I can do is hopefully make a difference to a few people.

Kathryn

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Participate Now is dedicated to continue working for the welfare of the people of Zanzibar. We strive to make the biggest impact possible with very little resources. We do have a wealth of love and caring to share with others who are interested in raising the quality of their lives.

“Being rich is having enough to share with others”

through PayPal.

Participate Now!
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