The Tanzania Experience

By Catalina Calvera

MLK once said: "Life’s more persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?". Ever since 2014, the British International School of Boston has focused on supporting others by sending a group of students to Tanzania to volunteer through helping improve a primary school's facilities. The trip is organized by Nord Anglia Education, a global family of more than 40 international schools, and brings the Boston students together with more than 100 other students from around the world to work on a noble cause.

In 2015, the British International School of Boston expanded their work in Tanzania's Natron region, working with the Tanzanian (known as Maasai) village school and other local organizations to develop a sustainable garden (known as a *bustani*) at the school. The garden has continued to grow since then, and serves as a vital educational tool for the village and surrounding communities. After much more work and several years of valiant efforts, a test drip-irrigation system has been added to the original garden/bustani site which has now been expanded into a 4 acre farm, (known as a shamba) and much more work has been done at the farm to help stabilize the food supply and further develop the site.

Victor Echaniz, a former BISB student from the Class of 2020, who went on the service trip, reflected on his experience poetically. “Why is it you can never hope to describe the emotion Africa creates? You are lifted. Out of whatever pit, unbound from whatever tie, released from whatever fear. You are lifted and you see it all from above. You can see a sunset and believe you have witnessed the hand of God. You watch the slope of a lioness and forget to breathe. You marvel at the tripod of a giraffe bent to water. In Africa, there are iridescent blues on the wings of birds that you do not see anywhere else in nature. In Africa, in the midday heart, you can see blisters in the atmosphere. When you are in Africa, you feel primordial, rocked in the cradle of the world.”

Participating in this trip is clearly an amazing experience; making an immense impact both for those helping and those being helped. Unfortunately BISB hasn't been able to go to Tanzania for the past two years. "Nevertheless, the cause it stands for doesn't lose its value and the team is going out of its way to fundraise money to send in the form of supplies back to the region.”

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