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Freshman Engineering Program
Nyambogo Service Trip
Community Engagement
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Abstract

I plan to be an active member of the UC chapter of Engineers Without Borders and travel with them to do community service in Nyambogo, Tanzania in the summer of 2015. The project is to install a water pump in the town that will provide clean, fresh water to over 4,000 citizens. We are currently in the beginning stages of this project, so during fall and spring semester I will help plan the project. This project is personally meaningful because I have always been inspired by things like habitat for humanity and other groups that travel to serve other countries. Engineers Without Borders is a great way to get involved and make a difference in thousands of people's lives. This project greatly and directly affects over 4,000 people, and I want to be a part of this and to contribute my time and effort to make these people's lives a little better.

The project includes weekly hour-long meetings, totaling 15 hours over spring semester. There are occasionally additional meetings to finish things up by important deadlines, like submitting the project proposal to get it approved. This adds an additional 6 hours. The travel portion will be a week long, and we will be working 8 hour days, which totals 40 hours, giving 2 days for travel. Reflection will take about half an hour per entry during planning, an hour during the service, and an hour and a half to do an overall review. This totals 14 hours. So the overall time spent on the planning, project, and reflection will be around 75 hours.

Learning Outcomes

Possess awareness of purpose of service, including need for reciprocity, understanding of social issues, and ability to see those issues from multiple perspectives.

By working on the water pump in Tanzania in person, I will become more aware of how the project affects the citizens. Interacting with the people will help me understand the issues that are important to them, and probably change my view on the issues that are important to me. Seeing the project from their point of view will help me to understand the real impact of this project. I hope to learn about the lifestyle of the citizens in Tanzania and see how the project affects the individuals by talking to and forming relationships with some of the citizens.

Relates, communicates, and works effectively with others towards sustainable social change.

This entire project is done as a group, so it is necessary to work well with others. Working closely with Tanzanians will help me to strengthen my communication skills. It will be more challenging to get my ideas across and to listen to theirs when we do not speak the same first language. This is a great opportunity for me to begin understanding people from different cultures better.

Together, Engineers Without Borders will create the sustainable change of bringing the citizens of Nyambogo clean, fresh water. At this stage in the project, only 4,000 of the 7,500 citizens will be served, but we plan to expand the project later on to reach all of the citizens. We also will teach them how to manage the water pump, including how to clean it and how to repair it. This is why the project is sustainable. It would be ineffective and impractical if the only people that knew how to use the pump were the members of Engineers Without Borders. If the project is to last, we must teach the citizens of Nyambogo how to take care of the water pump.

Participates in community and understands own role as a citizen of community.

I will serve this community in Nyambogo and learn as much as I can about the society. I hope by doing this I gain an understanding of their culture, and also see my own culture from a different perspective. I think this will help me to see how my actions affect others and what the full effect of community service really is, both in Nyambogo and in Ohio. By serving this community, I will more fully understand my role in my own community and why service is necessary for a strong and happy community.

Goals and Academic Theories

- A. The project helps me achieve my personal goals of assisting the underprivileged and improving the lives of people in third world countries. I hope to use this experience to learn more about less privileged societies and gain a more global perspective. I have never been to a third-world country, and I think the experience will broaden my world view and help me understand others a little better.
- B. “#InstagrammingAfrica: The Narcissism of Global Voluntourism” by Lauren Kascak with Sayantani DasGupta

This article is about how oftentimes overseas service work is done for the volunteer, not the community. The volunteers go to Africa usually, and spend their time taking pictures that make them look like a hero. They do it to get

attention and make themselves feel good, not for the sake of serving the people there. I chose this article because I had not thought of that, and I want to keep Kasak and DasGupta's article in mind while I am in Nyambogo. I want to go to Nyambogo to install a water pump to improve the lives of the citizens, not to get a lot of attention on social media. This article will remind me to focus on the service and the people, not the trip and the pictures. Through the service, I want to learn and grow as a person, though I do not want the service to become about me. I do not want it to become voluntourism, when, according to the article, "voluntourism is ultimately about the fulfillment of the volunteers themselves, not necessarily what they bring to the communities they visit."

"Helping, Fixing, or Serving?" By Rachel Naomi Remen

This article distinguishes between helping, fixing, and serving, and explains the meaning of each when referring to community work. If you help a community or fix a community, you see it as lesser or broken, but when you serve a community, you see it as whole. I chose this article because it will keep me from seeing myself as better than those whom I am helping. Like Remen said: "service is a relationship between equals," and I want to remember that I am the community's equal, not their superior. I will remember to always serve the community, never to help or fix it. Serving this community will help me see myself as part of my own community rather than someone above it who can help it. This article will help me stay humble and feel more connected to my own community.

"Countries and Their Cultures: Tanzania" by Robert G. Carlson and Marion Pratt

This article gives a detailed summary of life, history, and culture in Tanzania. I will use it to gain background knowledge on the culture of Tanzania and their customs. The article explains that most of Tanzania's economy centers around agriculture and farming, and it is a very poor region. It also details the social customs of Tanzanian society, such as when hosting a ceremony, it is shameful if the guests leave hungry. The information from this article will help inform me on the proper way to act and how to be respectful while in Tanzania. It will also give me a deeper understanding of the region through a brief history lesson.

Initiative/Independence/Creativity

I am contributing a fresh perspective to the project. Most of the team members have already been on this project for at least a year, so a new set of eyes can go a long way in thinking up new ideas and seeing problems with old designs. I have demonstrated initiative by researching possible designs for the tanks that will be holding the water, and the best way to connect them to the well. I took into account the amount of piping required, the effect each design will have on the ability to clean the tanks, and the likelihood of each design leading to standing

water in one or more tanks. I shared this research with my team, and helped come up with the final design.

I will also be using this project to learn more about serving other countries and the difference in cultures between Nyambogo, Tanzania, and here in the United States. I plan on doing this by spending time with the citizens of Nyambogo and experiencing some of their lifestyle, and committing myself to the project we are doing. I will use my current knowledge to help implement the design we came up with, and teach the locals how to help build and maintain it. By connecting with the citizens, I will learn a lot about life in rural Tanzania and how the locals feel about foreigners coming in and trying to help, and I will put this knowledge toward service projects in the future to help make the citizens more comfortable with the incoming groups.

Reflection

I will use a journal because Nyambogo, Tanzania won't have wifi. I will reflect once a week during planning stages. In Nyambogo I will reflect every night. After the project is complete, I will reflect on it as a whole. My reflections will include details about how the experience is helping me achieve my learning outcomes and how it relates to the theories and readings I chose. I will say how it is changing my view of the world, of community service, of third world countries, and of the Cincinnati community. I will reflect on how it is changing me and any ideas or goals that arise because of this experience.

Dissemination

I will create a video presentation to be shown to a group called Teen Institute from my high school, Berne Union. Teen Institute is a community service based organization, and I want to show them how much service can actually help, and that it doesn't have to be limited to ringing bells for the Salvation Army. I want them to see opportunities that may be outside of their comfort zone, because many of them have never traveled out of Ohio. I hope that by showing them my project, they will be inspired to get involved not only in their own community, but in others as well.

Project Advisor

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Dr. Kalubi is the professor of African Studies at University of Cincinnati and is well acquainted with Tanzanian culture, as he takes his students there every year and grew up near there. He will be able to advise me on their culture and a little bit of their language.