

Empowering Women through a Recreational Center
Rwanda
Carleton College
Georgie Mukeshimana
June 12 – September 5, 2022

Project summary: Due to a lack of education among women in rural areas and a lack of employment opportunities, women in Rwanda tend to stay at home, working their own small plots to grow a few crops. These crops are often their only source of living. The women of Kanazi, a region in the Eastern Province of Rwanda, have expressed interest in vocational training in areas such as cooking, sewing, and handcrafting to improve their welfare. My goal is to work with the local non-profit Nibakure Community Village (NCV) to provide training in sewing and handcrafting to the women of rural Kanazi. These women will be learning new skills that they can use in starting their own businesses. They can take the products they make to the market and start generating revenues for their families, which will be sustained through NCV's efforts to build this market. If I am awarded the Davis Projects for Peace funding, my goal is to support these women in collaboration with NCV by offering them sewing training.

Why this is a peace project: Rwanda faced a huge tragedy 28 years ago from the genocide against the Tutsi people, which left much of the population, but especially women, vulnerable. Most of these women were raped and widowed, left with children to raise despite the emotional trauma experienced during the genocide. As a Rwandan born after the tragedy, if given a chance to implement this project, I will not only promote financial stability among Rwandan women of Kanazi, but also promote healing and collaboration in the community as a whole. I believe that I can promote peace in the lives of the women of Kanazi through this project by modeling kindness and empathy, as I learned in a counseling program. This project will serve as a platform to give a voice to the women of Kanazi who feel excluded and have limited access to opportunities. It will also encourage discussion of controversial issues such as domestic violence, gender equality, and sexual harassment that overwhelm their daily lives.

Why I am qualified for this initiative: I consider myself very qualified to carry out this project. I was abandoned by my mother at a very young age, and to this day, I don't know who my father is. I was sent to an orphanage in which "foster mothers" were paid to raise us. These "mothers" were survivors of the Rwandan genocide. It was always hard to express my emotions in fear of unintentionally hurting these women's feelings. Fortunately, Christian missionaries visited us at the orphanage. They gave us counseling lessons and taught us how to deal with trauma, which was especially valuable to us as vulnerable orphans. I received a certificate for this training in 2016. Since then, I have decided to dedicate my life to helping other girls and women who go through similar experiences. My life goal is to give them some of the support they need to overcome these challenges. My background helps me understand their experiences and be compassionate toward this society.

Concrete goals:

- The main goal is to provide training to approximately 100 rural Kanazi women in skills such as literacy, accounting, cooking, parenting, teamwork, sewing, and handcrafting in order to improve their welfare. This project will help women of Kanazi create business opportunities for themselves by making clothes, bags, and fashion accessories.
- To provide a safe place where rural women of Kanazi can have access to counseling and emotional support from each other, especially the 1994 Tutsi genocide survivors.
- To promote advocacy through social media platforms and the organization's website where women will share ideas and sell their products to different consumers.
- To create networking and mentoring opportunities between the women of rural Kanazi and women with outstanding careers. Inviting influential women for career days at the center will encourage women of Kanazi to overcome their challenges and strive for a brighter future.

Partner organization: Nibakure Community Village (NCV) is a non-profit organization in Rwanda that supports its community through formal education, farming, and vocational training. More than 60% of Rwandans live in poverty, and the country's unemployment rate is 16%. Nearly half of all children under the age of six suffer chronic malnutrition, and there is poor access to formal education across the country, especially for women and girls. NCV has built a facility to implement a program that will work primarily with women in rural Kanazi who are some of the most forgotten people. These women typically have little education and live in poor conditions – often with no electricity, running water, or access to health care.

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With 10 years of experience working in Rwanda, NCV has successfully transformed its community. I propose to partner with NCV to establish and equip a new training program to generate new income opportunities for the women of Kanazi. This program will provide training in sewing, handcrafting, weaving, and business skills so the women can develop new products to market and sell and therefore expand their opportunities for generating income. The training will be on the general and specific use of equipment (e.g. sewing machines) as well as training related to the production of particular items intended for the marketplace: clothing, bags, and other fashion accessories.

My role in the project: As the founder of this project, I will be the mediator between our partner (NCV) and the cooperative so that we can create a long-lasting friendship and ensure that the cooperative's goals are being achieved. I will give instructions to guide the work and also manage the project funds. I will appoint the cooperative's committee and select new leaders among the women. In addition, I will supervise the women, dividing them into different groups for handcrafts and sewing. I will also design courses to help train the participants.

Anticipated outcomes: I have been working with women in Kanazi for three years. They are interested in becoming entrepreneurs and starting their own businesses to become financially independent, but one of the main challenges they have is finding funding. If I receive the Davis Projects for Peace funds, I would work with NCV to support these women by offering them sewing and handcrafting equipment. On one hand, success will be demonstrated by the number of women who will enroll in the program and the products they will be able to produce for sale on the market. On the other hand, success will also be measured by seeing women around the community start their own sewing and handcrafting businesses to support their own families. Last but not the least, another successful component of the project will be building teamwork and collaborative skills by teaching the women of Kanazi to work in groups or create cooperatives where everyone has a role to play.

Sustainability: This project will be sustainable as it will mainly be an income generating project. Women will be working on different projects and exposed to different markets. They will sew clothes for different schools to earn money that will be partially reinvested in the business to continue its operation. Leaders will be chosen democratically from the group based on demonstrated capability and rotated in order to give everyone a chance to contribute their knowledge in developing their cooperative. This will help reduce internal conflicts, which may be one of the roadblocks in achieving set goals. Plus, my partner organization, NCV, will provide advice on how to better run the operation after the summer. I will continue to collaborate with the organization from a distance in order to give guidance to the women and provide any support they may need.

Safety: Rwanda has been ranked the sixth safest country globally for solo travelers. In 2018, the country was ranked the second safest country in Africa by the 2018 Gallup Global Law and Order report, with 83% of residents expressing confidence in the local police force. Crime is relatively low, and locals are welcoming, friendly, and hospitable. In other words, Rwanda is one of the safest destinations in Africa. International investment is also encouraged in Rwanda. With the facts mentioned above, the safety and sustainability of the project is assured.

Name: Georgie Mukeshimana
Project Name: Empowering women through a recreational center.
School: Carleton College

Note: all funds in US dollars.

TOTAL FUNDS REMAINING:
 \$ -

Projects for Peace grant: \$ 10,000.00
 Additional Funding, if any:
Total funding available: \$ 10,000.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURES:
 \$ 10,000.00

Student Expenses					Project Expenses				
Travel (Including Airfare)	Lodging	Communications	Food (Biweekly)	Miscellaneous	Non-Student Travel and Lodging	Direct Equipment and Supplies	Marketing and Event Support	Staffing Costs	Miscellaneous
\$2,100	\$0	\$200	\$400	\$500	\$0	\$4,650	\$1,200	\$500	\$450
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
\$ 2,100.00	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 4,650.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 450.00

Total Student Expenses: \$ 3,200.00

Total Project Expenses: \$ 6,800.00



Nibakure Community Village

Rwanda

Educate | Transform

Georgette Mukeshimana
Carleton College
300 North College Street
Northfield, MN 55057

January 4, 2022

Dear Georgette Mukeshimana:

Thank you for your email requesting to carry out your humanitarian project with our non-profit organization in Rwanda this summer of 2022.

From the description of your project, we will be honored to have you work with the women of our community in Cyeru, Kanazi in Rwanda. It is indeed a very much needed program which matches our vision and work in Kanazi.

Please note that we will not be charging you any lodging expenses. We usually don't charge volunteers who spend more than 3 weeks working directly with our community.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to our center this summer.

Sincerely,

Floriane Nibakure
Founder/Executive Director



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