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TITLE: USAFI KIJIJINI OGADA: PROPER SANITATION IN OGADA

COUNTRY: KENYA

TIME DURATION: 06/01/2020- 07/31/2020

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Kenya experiences many economic problems faced by developing countries but sanitation seems to be the least of the government's concern. There are meager funds allocated toward sanitation, and most of these funds are channeled into large cities with populous slums like Kibera. Rural areas are almost completely ignored.

I come from Ogada, a small Kenyan rural village which straddles the border between two of Kenya's less-populated counties. Being located at the border ensures that Ogada is completely cut off from social services provided by both counties. Pleas for better sanitation in Ogada have been ignored by both county governments.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

In the last few decades, human pollution and pollution from the local sugarcane plantations have threatened the river, the source of our village's livelihood. Neither of these pollutants should be a surprise. The sugarcane plantation owners don't care about the people living there and there are less than five toilets that serve the whole village of 350 people. People can no longer use the river water to clean clothes and definitely not for drinking, but they still eat fish from the water. Sometimes, entire schools of dead fish have been found floating along the river banks. Water games for children - one of the most exciting childhood activities in the area - are no longer possible.

Picture a number of young, naked, and barefoot children hovering around small bushes and disposing waste on the grass. Imagine the buzzing sound of a swarm of flies hovering around the affected area. When the rainy season comes, much of the fecal matter washes into the river. The fecal matter in the nearby school latrine rises and spreads toward the classrooms. The overflowing river, the accumulated human waste, and the poorly drained clay soils lead to rampant waterborne diseases, especially cholera. At least a few children die of cholera or typhoid (which are contagious) per year in Ogada and neither county government takes responsibility for national government health mandates such as regional immunizations.

Growing up, my primary school's budget could only accommodate one latrine, which was shared by all students, teachers and visitors. Most students resolved to use nearby bushes behind the classes for waste disposal. Ten years later, the school still has one toilet. The community-owned school cannot afford to build more toilets when students are lacking other resources like books and classrooms.

MY INTERVENTION

I want to bring 13 toilets to public locations in Ogada and I want to educate the youth and community members about the adverse effects of human pollution.

This project will impact the lives of around 150 school going children and around 120 adults in the village. This is technically my whole village. As a result, we will be saved from communicable water-borne diseases. Moreover, fishing becomes a healthier activity, leads to better income and nutrition by the villagers, and leads to further development. The solution to these problems needs to be sustainable and sanitation education is crucial to the long-term sustainability of this project. Thus, I plan to develop a weekly sanitation education program for the community. When I leave, we will elect "Youth Sanitation Ambassadors" to continue these meetings.

When I was awarded a cash prize for being a top performer in the national exams by the President of Kenya, I used the money to build a toilet for my family and our close neighbors. I am one of the first people in my village to attend a national school in Kenya and I am certainly the first to study abroad for university. Because of these

successes, most of the village youth turn to me when they have problems. I am the best person to implement this project because I have spent all of my formative years experiencing the adverse effects of poor sanitation in my village and without government intervention to solve this problem, I am committed to solving it with a community solution. If I receive the Davis Projects for Peace grant, it will not only remove some of the environmental pollutants but it will also show the youth the potential of hard work. The project will encourage people to attend school in order to solve the various challenges that my community faces.

Strategic Toilet Locations

1. The School: More than half of the village population includes school children and many community events take place in the school compound.
2. The Church: Used by almost every villager and the church is on the way to the river.
3. The Market: Every villager relies on the market for food and it is located next to the river.
4. At other community-selected locations: My village is divided into 10 major clans. Each clan will be able to build a toilet for their clan members.

Timeline of the Project

STAGE 1: RESEARCH

- The livelihood of my village is on the line here so in the months leading up to summer, I will put in hours and hours of research to ensure that this project is carried out properly, according to a community needs assessment and researching other organizations' work in the sector.
- When I arrive in Kenya, I will meet with potential partner organizations in the sanitation industry in developing countries such as Toilet Board Coalition, Sanivation, and Sanergy.

STAGE 2: EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- Organizing weekly community-wide meetings in Ogada Primary School to raise awareness on the adverse effects of improper sanitation.
- I will partner with organizations to develop educational materials and educational comic books on the problems and solutions in the sanitation sector.
- The 10 clans will be asked to decide on the suitable locations in their compounds which are convenient for the toilet points.

STAGE 3: CONSTRUCTION

- Hiring local labor and a sanitation installation company and purchasing local construction materials (e.g. sand, bricks, cement, iron sheets) to boost the local economy.
- Managing the construction of the toilets with local officials overseeing the projects.

STAGE 4: CONTINUING EDUCATION

- Weekly education and awareness meetings to educate the public about the responsible use of the toilets, proper cleaning techniques, and other related information.

Expected Outcomes and Sustainability

I expect this project to reduce sanitation-related diseases, to improve the local economy dependent on clean water, and to improve the daily lives and living standards of all villagers. The project will also bring some short-term employment to locals in constructing the toilets, promote a sense of community and will leave a lasting belief that through education, Ogada can solve its own problems.

The project will be sustainable because we will build long-lasting toilets, we will have an education program to enhance maintenance of the toilets and to increase awareness of the need for proper sanitation. With the proper continuing education and Youth Sanitation Ambassadors in place, the villagers will remember to conserve the environment and the River Migori will once again become a reliable source of livelihood.