

Project Spark: Sparking Entrepreneurial Spirit Combatting the Water Crisis | Country: Kenya

Dates of Project: Aug 1st – Aug 21st | **Student Participants:** Anaa Jibicho, Brian Bishop, Pomona College

Purpose: More people die annually from the water crisis than all forms of war and violence combined (UN 2010). Africa is the continent hardest hit by the water crisis with over 500 children dying every day (UNICEF 2015). In trying to combat the water crisis, aid organizations play on emotions by representing Africa as a place that is desperate and helpless in order to guilt trip donations. This approach is misguided. Rather than being desperate or helpless, Africa is where the next Einstein, Da Vinci, and Newton can be from. We would never have heard of those names if they had to spend an average of 2 hours daily, as many women and children do, searching for water and then having to drink and clean with that unsafe water instead of living up to their potential. Despite all of these obstacles there are people doing amazing things in Africa: building unique cars out of scrap metal, creating innovative Afrobubblegum art, and music that is shared across the world. Now imagine if those same people did not have to deal with the water crisis. In other words, Africa's vast potential is currently being stunted. The cure for cancer could come from Africa, but youth are forced to trade in their dreams for a jerry can to fetch water. Rather than provide aid by sending money we want to give those future Einsteins the tools and resources to solve their own problems. Our project's purpose is to spark entrepreneurial spirit amongst youth in post-conflict areas by teaching them Human Centered Design (HCD) and connecting them to entrepreneurs so they can go on to tackle issues like the water crisis.

Background: Despite billions of dollars of investment and aid to solve Africa's ongoing water crisis, there is still much to be done. Every hour, 115 people die from diseases such as cholera, typhoid and dysentery across Africa. According to UNICEF, a quarter of East Africa's population has to travel more than half an hour one way to fetch water. Beyond the obvious health implications, the lack of safe drinking water also damages educational and economic prospects, making long-term development even more difficult. The sheer variety of African climates, topography and cultures means there is no one-size-fits-all solution, which may explain why, according to the UN, half of all donor-led schemes to provide safe drinking water fail in the first two to five years.

To solve a problem on such a scale requires new ways of thinking – solutions that can work locally, yet still be scalable. We, as founders of a social enterprise that tackles the water crisis, understand the importance of entrepreneurship and the impact it can have on communities. Africa is increasingly taking its place on the global stage as a continent of growth and opportunity. For this reason, African entrepreneurship is central to Africa's future. African entrepreneurs continue to face significant domestic challenges that impede their efforts, including a lack of access to funding, support services, skills training, and mentorship. Entrepreneurship can be a powerful tool to combine the need for access to water with people's desire to control their own destinies and build a more prosperous future for their families and communities.

Implementation: We will work with key community leaders to select 10 high school aged youths from underserved communities to provide them with the tools and community they need to pursue careers in social entrepreneurship. The program will take place over 3 weeks, 5 days each week, from 9am to 3pm. Interspersed throughout the camp are a series of presentations, a goal setting activity for all the students, team-building activities, interactive design thinking activities, and of course fun breaks and lunches. Throughout the program, the students will visit with local entrepreneurs, hear from inspiring speakers such as Fred Leichter, a Harvey Mudd Professor of HCD, and Ken Surrite, CEO of Water is Life, about their work and have virtual calls with other speakers. During the week, each student will be paired with a mentor from Water is Life who will help them set short and long-term goals for their future. The students will then go through a HCD workshop led by us and Fred Leichter. Students will develop the ability to empathize, define specific human needs, generate ideas to meet those needs, create prototypes, and test prototypes to refine how they can best solve problems. Ken Surrite, CEO of Water is Life, one of the largest clean water access NGOs, and staff will also educate youth in the program about the water crisis on a broad scale in preparation to put their HCD skills to use on creative solutions to combat the water crisis. At the end of the program, the students will pitch their ideas to members of the community at a culminating "Demo Day" event. The winning pitch will receive seed funding of

\$500 USD to implement their prototype and all students will collaborate on seeing that project come to fruition. Throughout the week we will be documenting the progress of the kids through aside interviews to share their stories of triumph on WATERisLIFE's platform to contribute to shifting the narrative of Africa from helpless and desperate to entrepreneurial and self-sufficient.

Preparation (pre arriving in Kenya)	Co-designing curriculum by actively involving stakeholders in Kenya to design a program that meets their needs. Work with Water Is Life, our non profit partner on the ground, to recruit 10 students from Gifted Hands Educational Center school in Kibera, Kenya to take part in the program.
Week 1	Arrive in Kenya and commence introductions (Water Is Life and The Hive) and team building activities. 1 career and goal setting workshop, 2 interactive HCD workshops, 2 virtual or in person presentations from business leaders for insight into their field and career path and how HCD is beneficial for them, and 1 educational workshop on the water crisis.
Week 2	3 presentations from business leaders and 3 HCD workshops. We will begin the Demo Pitch where we outline the rules of the competition and practice giving a pitch. The design question will be: how can you solve the water sanitation problem in Kibera, Kenya? Students will end with presenting their projects to community members.
Week 3	After a weekend deliberation we will give feedback to all of the groups on their presentations, and announce the winning group. The rest of this week will consist of providing students with the means to carry out the winning group's project: funds, setting goals, creating a business plan, and \$500 in seed funding.

Sustainability Model: Entrepreneurship is the process of coming up with solutions to problems that you or people in your community have. With a project that they created implemented in their community, work on it will continue and the benefits will multiply. Furthermore, instilling this entrepreneurial spirit will spark beyond the students that we are teaching to those they share it with. Also, to facilitate that process we will leave materials and resources with the cohort; create goals and benchmarks for students to follow through with; and facilitate collaboration between mentors and business partners for long lasting connections.

Expected Outcome (Contribution to Peace): Billions are wasted every year by NGOs because working with the communities is not prioritized. African youth have skin in the game and ~%50 of the Keyan population is <18 (Mundi 2020). They are the ones who understand the community, and are therefore, most apt to make the most impactful changes. With the necessary tools to determine their own destiny they will have a final project to better their community with plans, connections, and funds to implement it. Furthermore they will have learned how to think like entrepreneurs / problem solvers leading them to become leaders in their communities and take on future challenges. This knowledge and passion will be shared across others in their school and community. Lastly, we will have a short documentary with stories of African youth succeeding to share how Africa is capable of solving their own problems and inspire action for the world to support Africa in its growth.

Team and Support Network/partnership: To work in a post crisis zone means to build close relations with good, honest and highly motivated people in the country, people who know the local conditions and the local culture. Our primary partnership is with the school in Kenya Gifted Hands through Water is Life, a non-profit that focuses on sustainable long term solutions to the water and hygiene crisis. Ken Surritte, CEO of Water is Life, is a social entrepreneur who has innovated creative solutions to the water crisis and provided over 4 billion liters of water to those who need it the most. To make the biggest impact on the community in Kibera we are going to co-design the specifics of the program so that the result of this program is a tangible benefit to the school and surrounding community. We will also be working closely with staff from The Hive, a leader in designing interactive curriculum for students to creatively solve real world problems based off of strategies developed at Stanford's d.school.