Project Title: Computer Literacy in Northern Uganda, **Country**: Uganda, **Nominating University**: Methodist University, **Project Leader**: Akoko Mary Nono, Uganda, Methodist University 23, UWC Mahindra College of India. **Project Dates**: May to June 30. 2022. **Location**: Archbishop Flynn Secondary School, Pader District, Uganda.

Summary:

The purpose of this project was to improve the computer lab at Archbishop Flynn Secondary schools in the Pader District to increase access to and affordability of high-quality digital literacy education.

Project Overview:

The Lord Resistance Army (LRA) conflict in Northern Uganda affected the people and economy massively. The conflict hampered the growth of its educational services. Covid -19 pandemic further demonstrated the necessity for increased computer literacy training in Northern Uganda and the nation. While online education was still available throughout the rest of the world, it wasn't available in Northern Uganda. Uganda took over two years to resume classes after the covid pandemic. I believe giving students access to computers will improve their digital empowerment and help them access the resources they need to succeed. It will also help them prioritize relevant online content for civic engagement and peacebuilding by making sure that public information is easily accessible. Moreover, it will create a platform for knowledge sharing where the students can engage with other student groups from around the world and interact and learn from each other.

Narrative I

We decided on Archbishop Flynn Secondary School in Pader District, Northern Uganda, since I'm originally from Pader and I grew up noticing that the district's secondary school's computer literacy falls behind that of the rest of the nation. The project was originally intended to take place at Lagwai Seed Secondary School, but after numerous consultations, assessments, and evaluations with all the stakeholders, we decided to shift the project to Archbishop Flynn Secondary School, also located in the Pader District. The crew had to move locations for security and safety reasons. The administration of the Lagwai secondary school was hesitant to guarantee the protection and correct usage of the computers, the school lacked adequate security measures like gates surrounding it and year-round security guards. In addition, we also bought a projector alongside the ten computers. The projector was bought because the Head Teacher of Archbishop Flynn explained that it would be useful in demonstration for a class of 40 students. After discussing with all the district officers, friends, and families in the USA and Uganda, the project was transferred to Archbishop Fynn Secondary. The Davis Peace Project was best carried out there, in my opinion.

I tried to raise additional funds by telling people about the project and asking them to donate through social media, but it was unsuccessful. However, I started a YouTube channel where I talk about Northern Uganda and the project I worked on. This is done to connect with the audience and possible funders who might be moved by this kind of initiative.

All the significant suppliers were contacted by the end of April to the beginning of May, and orders were placed with each of them. When the money arrived at the university, all the suppliers were paid, and the project's implementation went according to schedule. We bought ten new computers, a projector, a router, and furniture, with additional necessary components to turn it into a fully functional computer lab. The head teacher, Atim Berna, and the deputy head teacher were present to accept the laptops and all the accessories when they were delivered to Archbishop Flynn Secondary School. Prior to the arrival of the computers, the computer lab was prepared and renovated. The space was repainted, and furniture and electrical wiring was installed.

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Reflection:

The impact of this digital learning space's launch is already apparent. Access to foundational, high-quality computer education that will equip students at Archbishop Flynn Secondary School for a prosperous future is a given. Over 500 students and more than 50 teachers will benefit from the program annually. The project will continue to help the students in the nearby areas because so many locals send their children to this school. The computer lab at Archbishop Flynn can accommodate 40 students. The long-term impact of this project will provide computer education to many generations of children attending this school. The program will pave the way for higher education and motivate them to enroll in higher institutions. Due to the availability of sufficient information from using computers, students will make well-informed judgments and prepare for higher schooling. In the long run, the project will foster peace by bringing the people of Pader District together through education; in the short term, it will assist students in becoming computer literate, which will prepare them for future employment.

"Peace is not merely the absence of violence; peace is the development of a society in which everyone may prosper, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, gender, class, or any other social status" (Nelson Mandela). Despite the end of the conflict, there was still no peace due to the impacts of the war. I think peace to me, means equal access to basic essential human rights like education for anybody around the world. I believe this project contributed towards achieving this goal.

Furthermore, this project brought students and teachers together since the new technologies can help prevent conflict by reducing the gaps in communication and facilitate peacekeeping through new tools relevant for communication in complex environments. They are challenged to turn their focus away from their differences such as ethnicities, religions, and political beliefs and focus toward achieving the personal and community development they need.

One of the challenges we faced was the rising inflation, which had a significant impact on the price of furniture and computers. When compared to the actual market for goods, my early-planned anticipated budget was incredibly low. To cover everything as I had anticipated doing was incredibly expensive. Another obstacle I faced was not being able to complete the project in person because of political restrictions that prevented me from returning home. My country had recent changes in passport law that hindered me from going home. Even though my passport was set to expire in 2027, I can't use my current passport. I lacked the funds and time to apply for a new passport. This forced me to do the project online.

I have always aspired to be a changemaker for my community being raised in a post-conflict area. After putting this idea into action and watching the results, I am now more motivated than ever to work on initiatives that provide opportunities and alleviate problems, especially for people who would not otherwise have such opportunities without advocacy.

I would like to use this occasion to express my gratitude to CEO of Marissfa, Rebort Bob Okello, the Head of Archbishop Flynn Secondary School, Atim Berna, and Ojok Michael, Commercial Officer of Pader District for their contributions to the project's success.

Personal Statement:

Growing in a post-conflict community and going to school that didn't have computers, I never knew it was a huge problem until I traveled outside my country. Since I have always believed in the saying "It takes a village to raise a child" I realized that it was upon me to bring solutions to the lack of computer literacy to my community by doing this project.