

**Growing Futures: Agricultural Empowerment for Hosanna Children's Home
Githunguri, Kenya
Davidson College
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Background

Situated in Githunguri, Kenya, [Hosanna Children's home](#) is home to over one hundred orphans, destitute, and needy children. The children depend on the home for basic needs like food, shelter, clothing, and education. Hosanna is also a community center that helps people in need with necessities and where the Githunguri community, especially the youth, congregates to volunteer, play soccer, and discuss community issues. I grew up close to Hosanna, and most of my friends and schoolmates are from there. We attended the same primary school (equivalent to an elementary school in the US) and spent lots of time together. Because of this, Hosanna children's home has a special place in my heart.

While Hosanna houses welcoming and loving kids and is a big community pillar, it faces many challenges as the largest children's home serving the Githunguri constituency. Some children have been in and out of school due to financial constraints. For example, some of my primary school friends could not enroll in high school because of a lack of fees, and many high school graduates fail to join universities because of a lack of fees. Some Hosanna kids, who are 18 years and have graduated from Hosanna, end up engaging in criminal activities to sustain their lives after leaving Hosanna.

Consequently, the home is largely dependent on donations and funding from well-wishers. I have severally joined my friends from Hosanna in the fundraising efforts, moving around the town and asking for financial assistance from community members. While people donate food and clothes to Hosanna, there is a huge need for financial assistance to sustain the home and meet running financial costs. Food donations only last for a day or two, and the little money donated does not address the financial challenge plaguing the Hosanna children's home. My project, Growing Futures, seeks to meet the financial costs of Hosanna through sustainable agriculture. The project will help meet Hosanna's running costs and provide the community with a space to learn about sustainable agriculture.

Project Proposal

The project came after consultations with Hosanna Children's home and will involve constructing a pigsty and equipping it with pigs for sale. Hosanna had plans to venture into pig farming, but financial constraints have inhibited the plan. Githunguri is close to Kenya's largest meat-processing plant, Farmer's Choice, which mainly processes pork products. The closeness to the plant provides an opportunity to start pig farming and gain income to sustain Hosanna. The plan is to construct a pigsty and equip it with landrace and duroc breeds of pigs which Hosanna will sell to Farmer's Choice. We also plan to buy the required farm inputs to sustain Hosanna Children's Home through the first production cycle. We will have a mix of boars and sows, which will breed, supplying the pigpen with a supply of pigs, which, when sold, will meet Hosanna's financial needs. In addition, the pig farm will be a learning center for many farmers and students in the community looking to venture into pig farming. Hosanna is close to several primary schools, and students would have an opportunity to see first-hand what they have learned in their science and agriculture classes as offered in the national curriculum. The pigsty will be a community learning center. Hosanna will take care of the pigsty as they have a property employee who takes care of their small garden and will be trained, alongside other community members, to care for the pigs. In addition, Hosanna has some students who just graduated high school but did not pass their national exams and will not proceed to universities. These students will have the option to work in the pigsty as they look for job opportunities. The students will be reimbursed for their work.

Additionally, Hosanna hosts a group of persistent volunteers from the Githunguri community and their immediate neighbors who will offer help and guidance during the farming process, providing a support system that increases the project's chances of success. Lastly, the Hosanna compound is well-fenced and has a security officer who protects the children and the facility from theft-related issues. This will prevent poaching of the pigs, further increasing the project's chances of success.

A committee comprised of the Hosanna leadership, staff and children, and community members

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will be formed two months before the project's start date. The committee will steer the implementation of the project and plan the pre-project activities and engagements. For example, the committee will help send invitations to the project partner organizations, engage farms we hope to visit to learn, and conduct initial meetings with Farmer's Choice's field agents.

The second phase will involve the first training focusing on farm establishment and setting. This phase should take around one and a half weeks. All project activities are offered to the Hosanna community, its immediate members, and the Githunguri community farmers. We plan to visit the [Waruhiu Agricultural Training Center](#), a center that links farmers with other stakeholders, to gain training in farm establishment, learn the ins and outs of pig farming, and know the pigsty construction guidelines. This phase will also involve meeting with [Famer's Choices'](#) field agents to learn about their agricultural requirements. We plan to understand their construction, breeding, and rearing requirements and start the contracting process (which is a two week process).

The third phase involves starting the pigsty construction, which should take five weeks. The Hosanna community will gain many construction insights from Farmer's Choice's field agents and the Waruhiu Training Center training. We will contract a local company to lead the construction alongside the local community. In addition, the committee will involve a local Farmer's Choice agent to ensure the construction meets the company's requirements on lighting and sanitation. Construction activities include purchasing construction materials, setting up the structure, and equipping it with pigs from local farmers and the two farms we will visit to learn the science of pig rearing.

The fourth phase will involve conducting two farm visits. The farms we plan to visit, Eunique Pigs Farm and Ruiru Camborough Pig Breeders Farm, have been pig farming for quite some time. We plan to see first-hand pig farming, have an experiential learning opportunity, and ask questions regarding the rearing process. Through this, we hope to be knowledge-equipped to start our farm and network with the farmers. In addition, we plan to visit two local farms close to Hosanna to see small-scale pig farming and the farming techniques used by these farms.

The fifth and last phase will focus on agribusiness to ensure the community learns the business aspect of farming. We plan to engage [One Acre Fund](#), an agency with a reputation for helping Kenyan farmers increase their crop yields by equipping them with the training they need to survive. One Acre Fund is well known for its agribusiness training for its farmers. Through the training, the Hosanna community will be well-equipped to run the pig farming business and meet the home's financial needs.

I expect to have difficulty fitting everything into the schedule while completing the project. The committee of people with different ideas and minds will keep everything in line and ensure every activity is exhaustively done. In addition, the committee will plan to have some activities happen concurrently to ensure every task is completed.

Ensuring Peace and Sustainability

This project uniquely promotes peace by empowering Hosanna to provide basic needs to the Hosanna children and needy community members. Meeting basic needs reduces poverty, promotes stability and well-being, and provides a space for individuals to participate in their communities. When people's needs are met, they are less likely to engage in conflict over resources and are more able to focus on cooperation and mutual benefit. Addressing the basic needs will also increase trust and reduce tensions in the community. Lastly, the learning aspect of the project provides the youth with a chance to learn about agriculture and shun crime.

The project's sustainability lies in its cultivated community ownership. It incorporates community members in training, farm visits, and the actualization phase to instill a sense of belonging and responsibility. The project's design incorporates community members in training, farm visits, and the actualization phase. As a result, it has enormous potential to help Hosanna and grow the future of the Githunguri community.