A two-sentence summary of your project
My project was a six-week financial literacy bootcamp held from July 1st to August 12th, 2023. The goal was to empower 30 refugee high school students from Tongogara Refugee Camp in Zimbabwe, enhancing their financial knowledge, wealth-building skills, and prospects for a brighter future.

How did you decide what issue(s) you wanted to address and what approach(es) or strategies you chose to implement in your project?
I decided to address the issue of generational poverty among refugee high school students in Zimbabwe because of my personal experiences and observations during my gap year internship with Education Matters Africa. Through interactions with students, friends, and colleagues with refugee status, I became acutely aware of the dire living conditions and lack of financial independence faced by refugees in the Tongogara Refugee Camp. The economic challenges in Zimbabwe, characterized by hyperinflation and high unemployment rates, further exacerbated the difficulties faced by these youth. Witnessing the mental and physical toll of financial uncertainty on young refugees, I realized the importance of providing financial literacy education to break the cycle of poverty.

Why did you choose your host site? In what ways did local relationships support you or contribute to the project?
I chose Tongogara Refugee Camp as the host site for the project because it presented a unique opportunity to directly impact the lives of refugee high school students who make up a significant portion of the student population at USAP Community School, an institution under Education Matters Africa. The camp had the necessary infrastructure, including access to electricity and basic needs, making it feasible to conduct the bootcamp there. Additionally, the camp’s proximity to USAP Community School and its location along a highway facilitated easy transportation for participants. Local relationships played a crucial role in supporting and contributing to the project. The local farmers in the vicinity of the host site generously allowed us to visit their ongoing agricultural projects, providing valuable insights into the role of agriculture in Zimbabwe’s economy. These visits enriched the educational experience and helped students understand the practical aspects of financial literacy, especially in the context of agricultural entrepreneurship.

What changes or adjustments did you make to your original plans, and why?
N/A.

Did other fundraising efforts contribute to your project? What were they?
There were no other fundraising efforts contributing to the project apart from my personal commitment of pledging $2,000 to fund the payroll of small-scale entrepreneurs who would continue to facilitate workshops after I returned to school.

Are there opportunities for continuing your work on this issue? If so, please describe.
As for opportunities for continuing the work on this issue, the project’s sustainability is built into the design. The poultry production capstone, which was initiated during the bootcamp, is intended to remain operational as a school work-study program run by students. The revenue generated from this initiative will not only sustain itself but also support future cohorts of students. This project has the potential to leave a lasting impact on refugee students in Tongogara Refugee Camp, contributing to their long-term financial independence and well-being.

Over the next two years, I will be part of the Social Innovation Fellowship at Brown University’s Swearer Center, providing a platform to further develop and refine my project. During this time, I aim to expand the reach of the financial literacy and entrepreneurship initiatives, not only within Tongogara Refugee Camp but also in other marginalized communities in Zimbabwe. My goal is to address economic disparities on a broader scale and contribute to rebuilding the economy by empowering these communities. I envision this project evolving into a full-time career dedicated to improving the economic prospects and overall well-being of marginalized populations in Zimbabwe.
How do you define peace?
I define peace as a state of financial well-being, both individually and collectively. In the context of my project, peace translates into financial security, which brings peace of mind and good health. It's about having the means to meet basic needs and pursue one's dreams without constant financial worry.

In what ways might your project contribute to peace? What changes occurred? Short-term? Long-term?
My project contributes to peace by providing refugee high school students with the knowledge and skills to attain financial security and explore entrepreneurship opportunities. In the short term, participants gained a better understanding of financial concepts and tools, which alleviated immediate financial stressors. The entrepreneurship component of the project also sparked their creativity and inspired them to think about income-generation opportunities in their communities. In the long term, the project has the potential to break the cycle of poverty, empower these youth to make informed financial and entrepreneurial decisions, and improve their overall well-being. By teaching financial literacy and entrepreneurship, we are equipping them with the tools they need to build a more secure and peaceful future while contributing positively to their communities.

Identify a significant conflict you observed or encountered in your work (it could be any level of relationship: intra- or inter-personal, community/group based, and/or societal/global). How did you navigate the conflict and what would you like to learn more about as a result?
One significant conflict I observed was the tension between the students' aspirations and their current financial limitations. Many of them had big dreams but felt constrained by their economic circumstances. Navigating this conflict involved providing them with practical financial knowledge, entrepreneurship skills, and strategies to bridge the gap between their aspirations and their current reality. I'd like to learn more about the psychological aspects of financial empowerment and entrepreneurship and how to help individuals develop the confidence and resilience to pursue their goals despite financial challenges.

Has your project changed the way you think about the world? How has the project changed, challenged, or inspired you?
This project has reinforced my belief in the transformative power of education. It has changed the way I think about the world by highlighting the importance of addressing economic disparities to promote peace and well-being. It has challenged me to be more proactive in my efforts to make a positive impact and inspired me to continue working toward empowering marginalized communities through education, financial knowledge, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Personal Statement
"Through my financial literacy and entrepreneurship project, I've witnessed the transformative power of knowledge and opportunity. I've learned that by equipping marginalized youth with the tools to build financial security and explore entrepreneurship, we're not only breaking the cycle of poverty but also fostering a brighter, more peaceful future for communities in need."

By,
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