United Against Unplanned Pregnancies and STDs
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UWCCR’19

Davis Peace Project Report

Section I: Narrative

A two-sentence summary of the goals of your project

The goal of this project was to educate Rwandan youth about reproductive health with the focus on how to prevent unplanned pregnancies and STDs through destigmatizing sex education, providing unbiased information, and free services such as counselling and HIV testing.

Did other fund-raising efforts contribute to your project? What were they?

There were no other fundraising efforts.

How did you come up with the idea for your project?

The idea for my project arose from witnessing young girls and women from my own community unable to achieve their career and educational goals due to lack of proper sex education, lack of access to birth control methods, and the stigma around seeking information on menstrual or sexual health. I decided to be part of the movement educating young girls about their bodies and facilitating access to resources that allow them to make informed choices for themselves.

Why do you think the issue your project is responding to exists?

This issue is a direct consequence of a misogynistic culture in which women are not given access to educational resources that they need to make informed choice over their bodies. Another important part of the problem are some religious beliefs that condemns women that try to get unbiased information about their bodies.

Why did you choose your host site to work in?

I chose my host site because it is my home country, and I was moved by the situation there specifically.

What was it like to work in your host site?

Given the conditions with covid-19 in Rwanda, it was challenging but I received support from people more experienced in health education, and we managed to complete it.

Did you feel at any point that the project was not going to work? In what ways?

Yes, we had several covid lockdowns over the summer in Rwanda, and I was worried about not having time and access to people for the project.

What were the challenges you encountered in communicating with people?
The biggest communication challenge I encountered was getting in contact with some local government officials for approving our in-person meetings. Sometimes it was hard to get in touch with leaders who usually have a very busy schedule.

How do you define peace?

Peace is a state of security for yourself, your people, and your belongings.

How does or will your project contribute to peace? Short-term? Long-term?

My project taught women and girls to be in control and secure about their reproductive rights and choices. The people who attended had access to sex education, free HIV testing and counseling, and in-depth discussions on social issues that lead to the stigmatization of female sexuality. I believe that being well informed about your life and the many factors affecting it is conductive to peace in the sense that you are aware of the options you have and how to deal with any arising issues. Our goal is that those who were able to join us will educate others in their respective homes who couldn't join us and create a ripple of information so that more people are well educated about their reproductive health and the social issues that lead to ignorance and misinformation.

Has your project changed the way you think about the world? How has it changed you?

The project has shown me how important education is. With quality unbiased education there is hope for a good future for everyone and this ultimately leads to the development of nations.

The project changed my view on education and has since inspired me to be involved in providing educational opportunities for other Africans as much as I can.

Was your project impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? Yes

If yes, please describe any impacts you and/or community members engaged in your experienced.

We had several lockdowns and travel restrictions in my country over the summer so we could not go to some districts as planned but we were able to replace those, and we also had to change the dates of the events.

How did you advance your projects goals despite these challenges?

My team helped me by advising on how to navigate the challenges we faced, so we were flexible and able to pivot to other options if the ones we had in mind didn’t work out as we planned.

What advice would you give to future PIP grantees given the pandemic-related challenges you experienced?

Have a trustworthy team and advisers to help you through the difficult times, and then do your best to make it work.
Bias-free sex education is a human right that should be enjoyed by everyone especially those who have historically been limited to proper sex education. ~ Diane Toussaint Mbahoze

Please provide team leader full name and, if applicable, full list of team member names along with associated permanent contact email address for our PfP alumni database (do not provide your college/university issued email address).

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