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Breaking Tribal Barriers Through Sports  
Marsabit, Kenya  
University of Rochester  
Davis Projects for Peace  
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**Background/Problem Identification**

Marsabit County is the second-largest county in Kenya, located in the northern part of the country along the Ethiopian border. Mostly composed of pastoral communities, the region is home to over 300,000 people representing more than fourteen tribes. Over the years, these tribes have been engaging in a fight over the communal land for pasture and water for their livestock, usually resulting in serious injuries and sometimes loss of lives. Sadly, revenge from previous injuries and lack of dialogue have exacerbated a lack of unity and coexistence among Marsabit’s people. As a result, women and children suffer the most from the frequent conflicts, which often lead to displacements (Internally Displaced Persons— IDPs). Due to the displacements, many families have been torn apart and school-going children end up being dropouts—their dreams and aspirations shattered. In the recent clash between Gabra and Borana tribes, seventeen schools in Marsabit were closed down just a few days before the national exams due to fear of school shootings.

The lack of sustainable peace has hindered education and prevented general development in the region— economically, socially and even politically. Local investment is poor despite the abundant resources the region is endowed with. Due to its proximity to Ethiopia it is often considered the “other” Kenya and is tragically being forgotten. According to the 2018 Business Daily Report, Marsabit was among the top ten poorest counties with a poverty level at 63.7% and a large population of residents struggling to meet even basic needs such as water, food, and shelter.

**Our Approach**

We decided to use sport as our main tool for conflict resolution and restoring peace in Marsabit County. We strongly believe that through sport, we can break the tribal barriers that exist in the region. In view of this, we will run a two-week peace volleyball tournament for the youths of the county. Though the youths are major actors in violence, they play little to no role in promoting peace, as they are less involved in decision making in the county. Growing up, they get indoctrinated in corrupt tribal and political propaganda. Through this tournament, we hope to bridge the gap that divides the people, especially the youths, who form the largest proportion of the population. Marsabit is a hub of talents, hence the tournament is also a way to nurture this talent while encouraging peaceful dialogues. We believe sport is an effective way to enhance interaction among people and catalyse unity, which will enable them to forget about their differences.

This tournament will be more than just volleyball; however, the tournament is centred around a uniquely designed curriculum that we created last year. The curriculum seeks to raise awareness about peace and conflict resolution by building consciousness about the importance of peaceful coexistence. We hope to develop conscious mind-set individuals, free of tribal and political bigotry, who subsequently serve as ambassadors of peace and development in their localities across Marsabit. The tournament will be combined with daily activities tailored towards peacebuilding. Impactful events shall be delivered through guest speaker lectures, team dialogues and one-on-one conversations among participants. Before the start of every game, different experiential games that encourage empathy, promote diversity and peaceful coexistence (such as Walk Apart, Walk Together, Potato Activity and Connecting the Dots) will be delivered.

**Weekly Overview and Planning**

| Week 1 | -Marketing the Tournament (we hope to have a total of six teams participating, total of 60 people)  
|        | -Identifying field constructors (we will construct two new volleyball courts where the tournament will be run) |
|        | -Registering teams, setting up fields, finding game officials (referees, linespersons)  
|        | -Meeting with guest speakers (we have spoken to all guest speakers and confirmed their availability) |

For week 3, each day will start with a guest speaker lecture, followed by 20-30 minutes of activity from the facilitators and then the tournament fixture for that day.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Guest Speaker</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>DAY 1</td>
<td>Grace Mitambo, Director, Ministry of Sports, County Government of Marsabit</td>
<td>Appreciating Our Diversity as People of Marsabit</td>
<td>Hello in Different Languages</td>
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<td>DAY 2</td>
<td>Michael Kabacja, Officer, National Drought Management Authority</td>
<td>Role of Youths in Peace Building</td>
<td>Whisper/Broken Telephone</td>
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<td>DAY 3</td>
<td>Mr Harrison Kinyua, Manager, Equity Bank, Marsabit Branch</td>
<td>Creating a Stable and Sustainable Society</td>
<td>Connecting the Dots</td>
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<td>DAY 4</td>
<td>Mr Eddie Lemoile, Founder, Mallarb Company Limited</td>
<td>Are We Rational as Marsabit Residents?</td>
<td>Walk Apart, Walk Together</td>
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<td>DAY 5</td>
<td>Senior Bernard Mwiti, Kenya Administration Police</td>
<td>I’m a Peace Ambassador!</td>
<td>Potato Analogy</td>
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**Expected Outcomes**

**Mutual understanding and co-existence**
We hope the sport tournaments will translate the existing tribal differences in the region into potential and viable means to restore harmony. Moreover, we will guide critical conversations that will restore and build trust throughout the peace tournament.

**Strengthening cooperation**
By helping the communities to realize that peace and unity are the unshakable basis of community development and strong pillars for sustainable growth, we hope to turn a new era of peaceful coexistence in Marsabit County.

**Breaking barriers**
The tournament will include all tribes so as to enhance fruitful and cooperative dialogues/interactions through sports in order to break tribal barriers and foster long-lasting peace among these communities. This will in turn nurture peace and prosperity, particularly among the youths.

**Peace as a tool for sustainable growth**
We will promote the realization that peace and co-existence are tools for sustainable development, in contrary to the tribal violence that has left behind war ravaged ruins and hatred. Our sports project also aims to expose the broader effects of the tribal conflicts over the past years in an attempt to prevent recurrences of any future conflict.

**Feasibility and Partnership**
The entry point to this project is through collaboration with Marsabit County Government’s Ministry of Sports and Culture. The Director for the Ministry of Sports, her Excellency Grace Mitambo, will be one of our guest speakers during the tournament. The ministry will also help us connect to various volleyball teams in the town. We are also partnering with the Kenya Police Service, which has agreed to offer us the land where the volleyball courts will be established. The Police Service will also provide security and maintain law and order throughout the period of the tournament. We have already created synergies with these organizations and we hope this will help us propel the project to a greater level with maximum expected impact.

**Sustainability of the project**
Going forward, the project is sustainable because it will be an annual peace tournament run by Marsabit Volleyball Team. With the establishment of the two new outdoor courts, they will be able to invite more teams from across the county and even from other regions of Kenya. The courts are also centrally located, and as the only two courts in the town, they will be able to rent the courts for different volleyball games, thus creating revenues and ensuring continued success of the project. The police center will remain a safe place for the players to continue being peace ambassadors, which will go a long way in restoring peaceful coexistence in Marsabit.

**About Us**
Dokata is a sophomore from Kenya and African Leadership Academy alumnus majoring in Economics and Statistics. He is also a sports enthusiast—a talented track & field athlete, and a volleyball star. Dokata has already created a uniquely designed curriculum centered around peace-building and implemented an entrepreneurial leadership boot-camp back in Kenya at the Kakuma Refugee Camp. He is a Wings to Fly Scholar and alumnus of the Equity Leaders Program where he now mentors over 100 students across Kenya.

Chernor is a Liberian and an alumnus of the African Leadership Academy. He is double majoring in International Relations and Public Health. Being zealously passionate about peace led him to take part in many peace initiatives, including serving as president of his former high school peace club in Liberia. As a Bezos Scholar and young social entrepreneur, Chernor has conducted numerous projects and participated in many leadership programs, including the South African Ideas Festival, which he believes has given him skills that will help inspire positive change in Africa.