

Project Description

Organization: WomenCraft Social Enterprises

Location: Ngara, Tanzania

Dates: April 2013-October 2013

History of the Region: Ngara, Tanzania is nestled between Rwanda and Burundi, two countries that have a shared history of conflict. Since both countries have the same ethnic populations, Hutu and Tutsi, an outbreak of violence in one country often carried over into the other. The violence in the two countries peaked between 1993-1994 when Burundi was consumed by a civil war and Rwanda was torn apart by genocide. As a result of the extreme violence, and because of its proximity to both countries, Ngara became home to hundreds of thousands of Burundian and Rwandan refugees.

Organization Background: In response to the influx of refugees, and due to Ngara's remote location and limited access to economic opportunities, WomenCraft Social Enterprises was established in the region in 2007 as an implementing partner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). WomenCraft's mission was to create collaborative economic opportunities for local women and remaining refugees. Today, WomenCraft provides economic empowerment to over 300 local artisans by providing a link for them to sell their products in the global market. By empowering local women, WomenCraft is paving the way for a more holistic approach to community development in the Ngara region of Tanzania. The artisans WomenCraft employs are now able to create local jobs by hiring workers to tend to their farms, educate their children, as well as invest in their own educational development and business initiatives.

Project Description: In April 2013 I will be moving to Ngara, Tanzania to complete a six-month fellowship with WomenCraft Social Enterprises. I will be working as the Women's Empowerment Fellow, which will give me the opportunity to work directly with WomenCraft's artisans and local staff. I will be teaching them the skills they need to take ownership of their work and the future of the organization as a whole. Under the umbrella of this fellowship I intend to focus my position and this project on four main goals:

1. **Program Sustainability:** WomenCraft hopes to have the organization locally run as soon as it is feasible. In order to help them reach their goal I intend to build a sustainable Women's Empowerment Program and curriculum, which future staff and interns can implement. To that end I will create and conduct a needs assessment to evaluate the current program and to determine the best direction for the future program. While I hope to find other areas within the program to improve, currently I intend to build and implement three programs in the areas of leadership, language, and technology. In order to build long-term program sustainability, these workshops will be available to both the artisans as well as the local staff.

2. **Leadership Workshops:** As an organization founded, built, and sustained by women, I intend for the leadership curriculum to be centered on women's leadership roles across cultures. I will use the following resources in the leadership training curriculum, but depending on language levels will use different methods of implementing them:
 - Excerpts from books and speeches written by strong African leaders
 - Podcasts, Ted Talks, films and documentaries aimed at bringing the global discussion on women's leadership roles to the remote region of Ngara
 - Have local leaders participate or deliver speeches to the artisans so they can hear personal success stories from their own communities
 - Create group activities focused on building leadership skills
 - Teach and discuss concrete concepts and theories on leadership as a skill
3. **English Language Training:** I will be teaching English language skills to a wide variety of learners. Since the local staff at WomenCraft has advanced English skills I will focus the training curriculum on writing workshops, grammar reviews, and more advanced readings. The curriculum for the artisans will be centered on more critical language skills. Meaning, in addition to teaching beginning grammar and language concepts, the curriculum will also be tailored to the specific language skills the artisans need to work with WomenCraft as well as to create and sustain their own businesses.
4. **Computer Training:** Computer literacy may be one of the greater challenges I face when conducting workshops with WomenCraft's artisans. Since Ngara and the surrounding areas are so remote, most of the artisans have not had regular access to computers. That being said I intend to focus the curriculum on the following areas:
 - E-mail: creating and managing an e-mail account
 - Typing: practicing and improving basic keyboarding
 - Word: how to create a word document
 - Excel: how to create basic spreadsheets and budget outlines for a business
 - PowerPoint: how to create and give a business presentation with PowerPoint