

Nourishing Minds

A Quarterly Newsletter published by The Jifunze Project



158 Packard Road
Stow, MA 01775
U.S.A.
Tel: 1.978.897.8767
Email: info@jifunze.org

Box 67
Kibaya – Kiteto – Manyara
Tanzania
Tel: 255.27.255.5332/5318
Email: kiteto@jifunze.org

Website: www.jifunze.org

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Our Mission:

The Jifunze Project works alongside individuals living in under-served parts of rural Tanzania to help them create innovative, empowering and sustainable educational opportunities that will expand their possibilities for livelihood and enrich their lives.

The Power of Sunshine

The donation of four solar stoves has allowed the CERC to create an educational exhibition on solar cooking, introducing CERC visitors to the possibilities of solar technology. A solar stove, used to purify drinking water each day, is located prominently in front of the centre. Information about the advantages of solar cooking and instructions for the construction and use of the solar stove are posted in Kiswahili on a board nearby. Becca Brown, a current Jifunze Project volunteer, constructed the display, then worked to train a member of the CERC support staff who is now responsible for the solar purification of the



Centre's water. The stove and the idea of solar cooking have been a hit with the community. The citizens of Kibaya, especially the women, face the daily burden of boiling drinking water and heating water for laundry and cooking. The use of free, sustainable solar energy for these tasks would result in significant savings of time and money that are used to obtain charcoal and firewood. Additionally, solar power use contributes to environmental conservation by reducing the use of pollutants and the cutting of trees. The solar stoves were donated by Sally Palmer of Marin California.

Computer Class



In preparation for the opening of the CERC's computing centre, Jifunze Volunteer Thomas Robson held a week-long computer training seminar for Salehe Mgonza and other members of CERC

and Jifunze staff. This training focused on understanding the basic components of the motherboard and drive-bays in a computer and how they work. The seminar was designed so that members of the CERC staff, particularly the CERC Computer Program Coordinator, will be able to diagnose and solve computing problems as they arise without outside assistance.

CERC Health Program Expands

The CERC Health Bulletin Board Project, designed to provide information on various health topics to children and adults visiting the center, has been expanded! This grassroots health information program is sponsored by our supplementary health grant from the Global Fund for Children. This project provides accurate, up-to-date health information in Kiswahili for the Kiteto community. Health information in the Kiswahili language is rare, out-of-date and inaccessible for the majority of the Kiteto community. The CERC has implemented creative strategies to get health information to youth, children and adults. Most recently the CERC has developed a series of one-page, laminated health fliers that hang in all the bathroom stalls of the CERC. There is a double series of fliers, one hung at "child-height" with brief, colorful reminders about nutrition and hygiene, and one hung higher, which will include more detailed, text-based information. The "adult-height" fliers are coordinated with the monthly themes of the Health Bulletin Board and contain more detailed information, particularly sensitive information on sexual health that individuals may feel more comfortable reading in privacy.



Playground Dream Becoming Reality

Thanks to a generous donation from the Global Fund for Children, the CERC will soon open its new playground, designed by Jifunze Project Volunteer, Thomas Robson. The new playground will include monkey bars and a climbing structure as well as a slide, a large sandbox, a seesaw and two swing sets, one for youth and one for young children. The playground is being constructed entirely by local craftsmen, which is in alignment with Jifunze's philosophy of building local capacity and strengthening the local economy through development projects. By

providing a safe space for children to play and interact, the new playground will enhance their growth and development. Play is an essential part of early childhood education, building children's imagination, social skills and self-confidence as well as their physical coordination and strength. Reinforcing these aspects of physical and mental growth corresponds with Jifunze's mission of providing innovative educational opportunities.



Donor Spotlight

This month, we are proud to spotlight The Global Fund for Children as our featured donor. The Global Fund for Children was founded in 1994 by Maya Ajmera on the premise that an educational nonprofit group could use the entrepreneurial skills of a start-up company and the power of the market to create a new kind of wealth—social wealth. The Global Fund for Children strives not only to improve the lives of children, but also to integrate their voices into all that they do.

Steve Ginther, our Programs Officer, goes out of his way to personalize his work and to reach out to their grantee partners. He has helped us to strategize for the future, brainstorm possible funders, and advised us on ways to develop our Board. He, and the rest of the staff at Global Fund for Children, have consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of grassroots development and an ongoing desire to continue to learn more about the challenges we face in implementing innovative projects to help our constituency. The Jifunze Project received our first funding from the Global Fund for Children in 2002. We hope to continue working in partnership with them for many years to come.

Funding for the Adult Education Centre

The Jifunze Project received funding from the Fieldstone Foundation in December last year which assisted us in building the foundation, walls and roof for an Adult Education Centre. This past July, Elimu ni Ufunguo, our local NGO partner, received funding from the Belgian Embassy in Dar es Salaam to complete construction, furnish and equip the Adult Education Centre. The funding from the Belgian Embassy has enabled us to procure furniture and educational materials for use in the Adult Education Program. This is the first donor funding that Elimu ni Ufunguo has received and are impressed at the success they have had in implementing this grant with the support of the Jifunze Project. These two grants have completed the CERC building and have given Kiteto's adult learners an educational space so that they can continue their education regardless of what level they are currently at.

Two New Staff!

Joan Wells has been recently selected as the new Program Director for the Jifunze Project's Tanzania Office. Joan will assist our teachers in continuing to develop innovative programs to run from the CERC, in addition to managing our volunteer program and administrating grant implementation.

Mary Malekela has also joined the Jifunze Tanzania office as the Tanzanian Country Director. Mary is a Maasai woman from Kiteto District and has experience in working in NGO management. She will lead Jifunze's capacity building among the partners managing the CERC.

Swaziland Education Conference

Carrie Oelberger, Executive Director, and Mary Malekela, Tanzania Country Director, recently traveled to Mbabane, Swaziland for one week (28 September – 4 October) to participate in a workshop being held by USAID regarding education in Africa. The workshop focused on increasing access to learning opportunities, improving the quality of teacher training, and improving the availability and the quality of learning materials. Carrie and Mary presented on the importance of community involvement in increasing individuals' access to education, specifically talking about our work in developing the CERC in Kibaya. They presented a video at the workshop which was prepared by Jifunze Project volunteer Thomas Robson. The Queen of Swaziland attended their presentation and was impressed with our efforts. The workshop was a wonderful opportunity, allowing us to learn a great deal from the educational experiences of others' from around the continent of Africa, and giving us the opportunity to continue to network and expand our partnerships.



Mary Malekela, Yolande Miller-Grandvaux, Basic Education Advisor for USAID and Carrie Oelberger

Community Interest Groups Established

The Steering Committee of the CERC has begun implementing structural changes designed to increase the direct input of community members into the governing of the centre. These changes include the establishment of ten community interest groups, each of which will represent a specific population within the community. Student interest groups have been established in each of Kibaya's three primary schools and at the one secondary school. Other interest groups which will soon be established include: a Children's Interest Group and a Youth Interest Group, which will represent children and youth who are unable to attend school, an Adult Education Interest Group, a Teachers' Interest Group, an Early Learning Centre Interest Group, and a Continuing Education Interest Group. Each Interest Group will be composed of between ten and twenty-two members and will meet once a month to discuss the opinions and recommendations of their constituency regarding the CERC and its programs. Representatives from these groups will be members of the Steering Committee, forming a strong avenue of two-way communication between the community of Kibaya and the CERC. CERC Interest Group membership provides a unique and rare opportunity for the children and youth of Kibaya to exercise a leadership role in their community.