

Nourishing Minds

A Quarterly Newsletter published by The Jifunze Project

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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.

English Language Program Focuses on Teachers

The CERC's English language program will soon enter a new phase in its development. The program, which began in October 2004, was originally structured to provide English instruction to CERC members. Beginning April 1, in order to increase the program's long-term sustainability and impact, the focus will shift to capacity-building by working with local English teachers, many of whom lack formal training in foreign language instruction. The CERC, in collaboration with Jifunze, will provide these teachers with a series of seminars on teaching English.

In the program's first phase, Tara Mulqueen, a Jifunze Project volunteer, worked with CERC staff to provide six weekly ESL classes to members of the primary and secondary school rooms, as well as daily English instruction in the Early Learning Center. For the past six months, Tara has experimented with innovative teaching strategies, evaluating their success in the classroom, while also observing the strengths and weaknesses of CERC members in their English language studies.



Tara and ELC Director Christina Gabriel leading class in rousing chorus of "When it is the morning, we say good morning!"

The first teacher's ESL seminar shared a preliminary evaluation of this first phase with local teachers, as well as an overview of the planned changes. Through several facilitated discussions focusing on identifying and overcoming current obstacles to successful English language instruction in Kibaya, the seminar provided teachers with the opportunity to collaborate in the development of the program's new structure and the content of future seminars.

Offsite Trainings Assist Jifunze Capacity-Building

Facilitation and Mediation

As part of Jifunze's ongoing capacity-building efforts with CERC staff, several individuals recently attended programs at the Mapambazuko Training Centre in Ngaramtoni, Arusha. A one-week course on facilitation and mediation skills was attended by the Jifunze Project Management Advisor, Mary Malekela; the CERC Steering Committee Secretary, Epafra Lema; and the CERC Primary School and Children's program Coordinator, Joyce Nnko. The course focused on basic facilitation, community mobilization, and mediation skills. All participants felt grateful for the opportunity, as the skills they gained will prove very useful for their future work at the CERC.

Indigenous Plants and their Many Uses

The CERC Early Learning Center Coordinator, Christina Gabriel, and a CERC Groundskeeper, Iddi Juma Ismaily, attended a four-day course in Swahili on the topic of Indigenous Plants and their many uses.

During the course the attendees discussed applications of various indigenous plants for common ailments, as well as their many uses as nutritious food. Also discussed were methods to recognize certain native plants and the important safety issues related to their use. They look forward to integrating what they have learned into our experiential teaching garden at the CERC.



Jifunze Welcomes Three New Volunteers

With the addition of volunteers Emily Harney, Susan Ketner, and Michele Christle, we are operating at full capacity! Emily, a former professional dancer with a background in nonprofit arts administration, is working closely with the Center's Drama Club, coaching them in new techniques and helping them prepare for their next performance. Additionally, she and Susan are assisting the Primary and Secondary room teachers to develop arts curricula for the

Center's Saturday Programs. Susan, a visual artist, is currently painting a mural that she designed in collaboration with CERC teachers and staff. The mural, which will be painted on the shipping container that originally carried many of the supplies for the CERC, will highlight diverse sections of the Kibaya community engaged in learning activities. Michele, our newest volunteer, is using her background in sociology to assist in gathering statistics related to CERC attendance and further developing the Center's self-evaluation processes.



We're happy to welcome our fabulous new volunteers!

Jifunze Welcomes New Program Development Advisor

In February 2005, the Jifunze Project welcomed new Program Development Advisor, Rebecca Brown, to Kibaya. A former Jifunze volunteer, Becca first came to Kibaya in 2003, following completion of a Fulbright scholarship for Kiswahili language study in Morogoro, Tanzania. Over the next two years, Becca will focus on capacity-building with CERC



*Rebecca Brown
Program Development Advisor*

staff, helping them become more independent and comfortable experimenting with innovative teaching strategies. She also aims to strengthen the CERC's ties to the community, saying, "I hope to promote a deepening of the existing relationship between the CERC and the community, as we increase the Center's visibility as a community resource."

Becca graduated with honors from Bryn Mawr College, where she received her B.A. in Political Science. Before becoming Program Development Advisor, she worked in Washington, D.C. with Citizens for Global Solutions, a grassroots advocacy organization focusing on cooperative U.S. engagement on international issues.

"Jifunze is one-of-a-kind, and I feel incredibly lucky to have found my place here again. I am amazed at how far the CERC has come since I left in the autumn of 2003 and even more amazed when I think back to the stories of its beginnings that other staff and volunteers have shared with me. With your support, we will continue to provide innovative educational opportunities to the Kibaya community. Karibuni Tujifunze! (Everyone is welcome to come and learn!)"

Donor Spotlight: New England Biolabs Foundation



We have been very lucky to receive early and continuing support for the CERC's progress from the New England Biolabs Foundation. NEBF is an independent private foundation begun in 1982 by the president of New England Biolabs, Inc. Based in Beverly, Massachusetts, the foundation supports both domestic and international grassroots organizations that are concerned with the environment, social change, the arts, elementary education, and science.

We have recently received our fourth grant from the foundation to contribute to funding our Management Advisor position, currently filled by a longstanding Kibaya resident, Mary Malekela.

While NEBF funding over the past two years has supported the Management Advisor position, NEBF has also been instrumental in the development and construction of the CERC. Using funding received in 2001 we were able to ship our twenty foot container to Kibaya full of books, computers, maps, educational games, and office supplies that our members use daily. Additionally, in 2002 NEBF generously provided us with funding to construct tables, chairs, desks, lab benches and bookshelves; allowing us to transform our building into a working educational institution.

We greatly appreciate the New England Biolabs Foundation's belief in our project and their continued support – it helps keep the CERC a truly innovative and ground breaking model for international grassroots development.

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