

# EMPOWERING DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

## LEADERS OF THE FUTURE – EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIV/AIDS ORPHANED CHILDREN IN JINJA DISTRICT – UGANDA

PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR JINJA DISTRICT

DURATION: 2010-2012

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## INTRODUCTION

Empowering Development Alternatives (EDA) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization based in New York and operating in East Africa. Our mission is to partner with disadvantaged communities and individuals in East Africa to creatively support unique opportunities for wholesome human and economic development. We focus on grassroots initiatives and bottom-up solutions. Our philosophy is based on the belief that communities are capable of determining and addressing their own needs. We target projects that generate sustainable income, support education and promote primary health care.

EDA believes that poverty should not be viewed merely in economic terms, but as social, political and spiritual powerlessness. Our vision is to strive for development alternatives committed to empowering people in their own communities, and to mobilize them to have an active role in directing their own destinies. In contrast to blanket development policies regulated and implemented at the national and international level, development alternatives restore the initiative to those in need, on the grounds that unless people are actively involved in their own growth long-term progress will not be achieved.

The goal of EDA's Leaders of the Future project is to assist orphans in safely impoverished households in Jinja, Uganda, realize their full potential through access to quality secondary education and to improve their standard of living.

Since 1980, roughly 1 million people have died of AIDS in Uganda. Most AIDS related deaths are amongst young adults, and as a result there are 2 million children who have been orphaned<sup>1</sup>. Many of these orphans are left at the whim of life's chaos to face obstacles such as a lack of education and health care, forced child labor, physical abuse and malnutrition. As the circle of support and resources shrinks they are forced to drop out of school. Leaving school at a young age inhibits them from being all that they can be, it robs their creative mind from opportunities that can enhance their position in this world, socially economically and spiritually.

EDA believes education is the most important way for communities and countries to tackle the root causes of poverty; it offers the most viable options for a stronger and better future. Education can make a difference and effectively change the life of not just the individual but of the entire country.

The objective of the project is:

- To ensure education access by providing scholarships for selected orphans.
- To engage in partnership opportunities with secondary schools that offer high quality education.

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<sup>1</sup> UNAIDS 2008 Report on the global AIDS epidemic

- To explore the possibility of finding and rewarding effective teachers in the selected schools as a means to ensure quality education.

The project design involved the community to identify the problem and contemplate solutions. The expected outcome of the project will be increased education opportunities to reduce the level of vulnerability to social and economic problems for orphaned and vulnerable children. The evaluation process will be inclusive, where the stakeholders will create a committee to organize, implement and monitor project activities. Evaluation will be quarterly with involvement of all stakeholders. Effectiveness will be measured by graduation rate (estimated at 80%) of students being sponsored, test scores, and by finding at least 2 effective teachers. For full implementation of the project, **\$50, 000** will be needed over 2 years. For the first year, **\$25, 000** is needed.

## 1. PROBLEM ANALYSIS

Despite Uganda's impressive efforts to combat AIDS, the district of Jinja continues to experience an increase in new cases of HIV infections. In 2006, out of 4500 people tested, 10% were found to be HIV positive. Consequently, this major health problem has affected the increase in the number of orphans. The Jinja Municipality reports there are currently over 5000 orphaned children, in most cases due to losing one or both parents to AIDS-related illnesses.<sup>2</sup>

When the traditional family support system breaks down children become vulnerable to many factors of extreme poverty, one of them being lack of education. Missing out on education can have a devastating effect on their fragile future, as it is not just children's educational success that is put at risk, but also their safety and wellbeing.

Historically government programs aimed towards HIV orphans have been weak. In the last decade, there have been some positive attempts to address the socio-economic impact AIDS has on children. Recently Uganda launched a no-cost HIV testing campaign aimed at children born to parents living with HIV/AIDS and those orphaned by the disease. This program has enabled thousands of children to be tested. Furthermore, in 1996, in an effort to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE), the government decided to remove school fees for up to four children per family (of which two should be girls) for all children aged 6 to 12 years old. This decision notably promoted the importance of education. By 2001, student enrollment increased to roughly 7 million in primary education.<sup>3</sup>

This success, however, was not without serious repercussions. There have been concerns over the quality of education, low test scores and high dropout rates. Government efforts have not increased accordingly to cope with the massive expansion in student numbers. The student-classroom ratio has jumped as high

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Jinja Municipality Council

<sup>3</sup> Data reported by The World Bank: Education Notes on Uganda

as 1:145 in crowded urban schools. Furthermore, a random sampling of tests at the national level shows a decline in test scores. The number of students who achieved a passing grade in mathematics dropped from 48% in 1996 to 31% in 1999, and from 92% to 56% on the English oral test.<sup>4</sup> This is a strong indicator pointing to the decline of academic achievement.

Repetition and dropout rates are also high throughout the education system in Uganda. Recent data shows drop out rates are at 57% and repetition at 20%.<sup>5</sup> When a student fails to pass a minimum set of requirements and is forced to repeat the grade, the cost to educate that student doubles.

## **2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The primary goal of the project is to empower the selected children to realize their full potential by providing access to quality education, thus improving their standard of living.

This will be possible by:

- Providing scholarships for secondary education for 20 orphans and vulnerable children.
- Establishing linkage with secondary schools to focus on effective teachers.
- Find and reward up to 3 effective teachers as a means to ensure quality education.

EDA will set up a Local Orphan's Committee (LOC) to include different community representatives: a church leader, a youth representative, a school principle and a teacher. The purpose of this committee is to assist with different stages of implementation and monitor project activities. The committee will also be instrumental in offering support and communicating needs for selected orphans throughout the school year.

The program will focus on secondary education due to an increased need and demand. For most people in Uganda high school is considered a luxury. Nearly all high schools are boarding schools and they charge high fees, which are too expensive to afford for most rural families. According to UNICEF only 33% of children who finish primary education are able to attend high school in Uganda.<sup>6</sup> For orphaned kids it is less than 10%.

EDA will award scholarships to a select group of 20 talented and deserving students. Scholarships provide tuition, room and board, books, and healthcare. Scholarships are tenable for four years, provided the student remains in good

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> World Bank 2009

<sup>6</sup> Source: UNICEF 2006

academic standing. The EDA selection process is an extensive undertaking that enables EDA to award scholarships to some of the most impressive young people from the most vulnerable segment of Ugandan society. We consider a wide array of factors when reviewing applicants.

**Phase 1: Application:** In the first phase, applicants submit essays on their academic goals and background, national exam scores, and a government document verifying their vulnerability status.

**Phase 2: Interviews:** Finalists are interviewed by a panel of EDA staff and representatives from our Local Orphan's Committee (LOC). The goals of the interview are to assess motivation and to learn more about each applicant's personal background.

**Phase 3: Verification:** Before new students are officially accepted into the program, EDA staff members verify their vulnerability status by traveling to applicants' home sectors and checking the information in their applications.

EDA has identified three secondary schools that provide quality education in the Jinja district: a) Wanyange Girls Secondary School; b) Busoga College Mwiri; c) Kiira College Butiki. These schools enjoy a reputation as leading academic centers in the area due to these factors:

- Effective administration which ensure well being of students and teachers.
- Experienced teachers.
- Good security which has ensured the safety of both students and teachers.
- Presence of modern technology i.e. computer labs and internet access.
- Decent libraries and laboratories with very functioning equipments.

However, by simply having access to education, as we have seen in Uganda, does not guarantee a balanced, quality education. To address this problem EDA plans to invest in evaluating and rewarding effective teachers. What are the characteristics of the top teachers? Can we study what they do, to replicate their talent, to raise the average capability, and to encourage effective teachers to stay in the system? A top quartile teacher has the capability to increase the performance of their class based on test scores by over 10% in a single year.<sup>7</sup>

By improving teachers we believe we can improve the quality of education and increase the graduation rate. To accomplish this goal EDA's will evaluate student test scores. This data will be used to inform teachers on how effective their teaching methods have been. Awareness of how well the teachers are performing will make them more engaged with their students. Currently in most Ugandan schools teachers are not aware of how much improvement is a result of their work. No data is collected to scout the best performing teachers and acknowledge them.

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<sup>7</sup> Based on Gates Foundation research data on how to make education better in United States

Initially focus will be placed on test scores to provide a picture of each student's current education level. The results will allow EDA to understand which teachers are doing well and approach them to find out what techniques they are using. The objective is to take the best teachers and annotate their methods so that everyone sees what has worked and who it has worked for. EDA plans to retain and financially reward these teachers.

Our strategy is to offer teacher wage incentives to make the teaching profession more attractive. In our research we find that many teachers have left teaching to pursue banking, telecom companies, or the local government, because these other options offer better salaries. The secondary school teacher in Uganda earns an equivalent of \$312 (sh514, 000) per month and this is very low compared to other occupations. EDA believes a wage incentive is likely to reduce the number of high quality teachers leaving the profession to join more lucrative options.

Based on the data, EDA believes that this model can be successfully introduced to Ugandan schools and tested. If successful, EDA plans to expand the partnerships and project to additional schools

### **Objectives & Activities**

**Objective 1:** Ensuring the child's future. Provide quality education for selected children.

**Objective 2:** Improving the quality of education. Establish linkage between secondary schools to evaluate effective teachers to improve the quality of education and ensure the child's success in school.

**Activity 1- Increase the capacity of local structures** to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on orphans and other vulnerable children.

- Create a Local Orphan's Committee (LOC) to include teachers, parents/guardians, etc.
- Review student applications and conduct interviews.
- Verify vulnerability status via government documentations.
- Select orphans to be assisted.
- Train the Orphan's Committee to enable them to understand the needs of orphans and objective of the project.
- Recruit and in-country coordinator to oversee the day to day project's activities and to coordinate the project's activities with intended goal and objectives.

**Activity 2- Increase access to essential services**, specifically for education for orphans and vulnerable children.

- Meet guardians and/or parents.
- Offer scholarships to secondary school orphans.

- Provide scholastic materials and school fees to the students selected.
- Meet with selected school management and teachers to discuss the importance of effective teachers.
- Analyze test scores from schools selected to identify effective teachers.
- Identify and evaluate top teachers
- Acknowledge and financially reward the best teachers.

### **3. PROJECT METHODOLOGY AND LOCATION**

#### **Project Location and Target Population**

The project will be implemented in Jinja district (see Annex1) located at the source of the Nile River, 80km east of Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

|                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Population:</b>              | 106,000 |
| <b>Orphans:</b>                 | 5,000   |
| <b>HIV prevalence rate (%):</b> | 10      |
| <b>Unemployment rate (%):</b>   | 38      |
| <b>Poverty rate (%):</b>        | 45      |

EDA is focusing in Jinja due to the high number of orphans in the area. There are over 5000 orphans in the Jinja Municipality, mostly due to the impact of HIV/AIDS.

#### **Project Methodology**

The project will ensure community participation.

The main project strategy will be:

- Capacity building for orphans to attain sustainability
- Education

### **3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The monitoring of activities will be done quarterly by the project team, LOC and representatives from the selected schools. Every quarter they will meet to monitor the previous activities, plan the next quarterly activities, revise the indicators and results, as well as solve problems. Effectiveness will be measured by graduation rate (estimated at 80%) of students being sponsored, test scores, and by finding at least 2 effective teachers.

### **4. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND LEADERSHIP**

EDA is capable of successfully implementing this project; our experienced leadership has the necessary background and expertise to accomplish these goals. Our two-fold approach – 1) providing scholarships to talented students and



2) focusing on effective teachers to improve the quality of education - is unique to our organization. EDA's approach was based on extensive research and we are ready to proceed. There is no other organization like EDA in Jinja, Uganda, bringing the community together to test strategies that work best with orphaned youth and address teacher effectiveness to improve quality of education.

Furthermore, in January of 2008 EDA started two Income-Generating projects – Bujagali Crafts and Poultry Project – involving 23 women from Bujagali province, Jinja, Uganda. We were able to identify great benefits from crafts production and agro-processed goods. By earning income through their craft skills, women were able to support their families and improve the quality of life. EDA has sponsored both projects for the first four months. After this initial step, the women now depend on income and savings generated from the production of their goods. In the future EDA plans to provide small loans to encourage further growth. The women from the craft's project plan to buy land and build their own shop in the town of Jinja.

## **Leadership Bios**

### **V. Bonnie Nezaj: Founder**

Bonnie self-financed her visits to East-Africa to observe what actions grassroots organizations and individuals are taking to tackle the roots of poverty. The purpose of her trip was to create an avenue for their voices to be heard and visions exposed. Inspired by what she saw Bonnie founded Empowering Development Alternatives in 2009 to assist individuals and local organizations in approaching the challenges and solutions for holistic development. She has worked with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in New York, International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Geneva, and is currently working at Endeavor Capital Holdings Group, LLC. Bonnie holds an M.A. from the New School University in International Affairs and a B.A. from Fordham University in Philosophy and Political Science.. She is fluent in English, Albanian, and conversant in Italian.

### **Robert Kainamura: Director**

Rob is the founder of Gates of Gades Capital, a private equity firm based in N.Y. He has 8 years of entrepreneurial experience in finance and information technology. Mr. Kainamura adds to EDA a cultural and educational diversity that stems from his studies and professional experience in different parts of the Americas, Africa, and Europe. Exercising his beliefs in creating a difference in the lives of others, he leverages his technical expertise engaging with nonprofit organizations. Working at the Computer Disaster Operations of the American



Red Cross, he was among the first volunteers assisting in New York City's post September 11th recovery. He is fluent in English and French, conversant in Amaharic and Kinyarwanda. Rob earned his graduate degree from Columbia University in 2003 where he studied Information Technology. In addition to his formal education, he was awarded four Industry Certifications from Nortel, Lucent, Intelsat and University of Maryland.

**Fr. Tom Smith: Director**

Fr. Tom is a catholic priest from the Camillian congregation of the Irish Province. In 2000, he started a community based program in Uganda, covering many villages, providing comprehensive care and support to HIV infected clients. From here he launched a mobile clinic that reached the far off villages to bring help and support to HIV/AIDS sufferers and their families. He lives in Jinja, Uganda since 2000.

**Management**

EDA will manage this project. The Program Coordinator, based in Jinja, will have the responsibility of overseeing project implementation. We will also recruit volunteers and experienced teachers, to help out.

**5. BUDGET PLAN FOR THE FIRST YEAR**

EDA is choosing to invest only in 20 children and up to 3 teachers for now to see how the implementation of this new methodology will turn out. If we see a high success rate, we plan to increase the number of children and teachers.

| PARTICULAR   | AMOUNT USHS | US DOLLARS       |
|--|-------------|------------------|
| SPONSORSHIP FOR 20 CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18: TEXT BOOKS, SCHOLASTIC MATERIALS, UNIFORMS, SHOES, HOT LUNCH, ETC.<br>@ 500 per student | 20,202,300  | \$ 10,000        |
| FINANCIAL REWARDS FOR UP TO 3 TEACHERS<br>@ \$100 per month for 3 teachers   | 8,080,900   | \$ 4000          |
| COMPUTERS AND ACCESSORIES  | 6,464,750   | \$ 3200          |
| COORDINATOR ALLOWANCE<br>@ \$400 per month   | 1,989,000   | \$ 4800          |
| TRAVEL EXPENSES  | 4,607,9504  | \$ 3000          |
| <b>SUB TOTAL</b>   | 28,799,850  | <b>\$ 25,000</b> |

# Appendix

## Map of Africa



## Map of Uganda, Jinja District

