



PROJECT PROPOSAL 2023

Drafted by Tracy Ochieng

For

The Rotary Club of Coolamon

"Paso corto vista larga"

Introduction

Background

Twelve years ago when I completed my primary education at Valley View Academy in Mathare Slums, I was invited to a Rotary Kid's Club to talk about children who were likely not to join secondary school because their parents or guardians weren't able to afford their education.

Given the circumstance that my family was going through at the moment and the rejected scholarships that I had applied to, I fit perfectly into this category of children in Mathare in 2011.

As I picked up the phone that morning accepting the invitation to give a talk in front of my peers and *wazungus* from Rotary and Hope World Wide, I didn't know that it would be the precedent for the work that would be set before me and put a burden so heavy to serve my community. I spoke about the importance of education and how it is the thing that would save my community.

I advocated for 200 children who would waste away in the community without a fair fighting chance to education and to life thus the birth of Tracy and the 200.

After twelve years of maturing the dream, I saw a big gap in my paternal home in Kendu Bay, Homa Bay county. This county is on the map for teenage pregnancies, HIV/AIDS, illiteracy levels, high levels of poverty, and low value for education. This would be a great year to actualize the dream that was born twelve years ago.

Problem statement

The issues that affect Kendu Bay are detrimental to the progress of this society as it is a cyclic web, one leads to the other. The poverty levels here are so high, it is possible for a family to survive under 1 dollar a day and with the current inflation, the circumstances have tightened.

High levels of poverty will drive young teenage girls to have relations with or marry men who promise "better" than their families can offer. Young girls start bearing children from as early as 13 years old.

The young boys who have seen no immediate fruits of staying in school drop out of school to be able to cater to the needs of their families. With this, they also take up familial roles early, sometimes marrying the young girls who dropped out of school. Their primary means of income is offering transportation using motorbikes (bodaboda), collecting sand by the rivers, or fishermen by Lake Victoria and other rigorous labor.

When poverty has you by the chokehold and you aren't as informed as well, you can do anything to survive and as a result, you are unable to negotiate for safer sex because you need to meet a need; food, sanitary towels. This age group that we are targeting records high new HIV infections daily in Kenya.

Why this Big Sisters' Edu project is essential is not about delaying marriages or having a fixed mindset of education being the key to success. It is all about exposing these young boys and girls to an education and not indoctrination that will allow them to negotiate for better things in life in terms of their careers, families, and their contributions to the growth of their communities.

What is our why?

Big Sisters' wants to change the narrative of the area by influencing change that would help tackle the issues of this community thus our motto, "*Paso corto, vista larga,*" which means small steps, big vision.

When our young people are given the tools to negotiate for better choices in life, then other issues become bearable as more people in the community get exposed to this positive wave.

Despite the fact that our young girls are able to go back to school after delivering their babies, the cost of raising a child can be strenuous. Many young girls become mothers by the age of 13 and even more disturbing, they become wives to men who have children their age.

Reform programs like Big Sisters' are lacking for this target group as well as programs that are investing in youth to promote the value of education and cater to HIV-affected youth.

This initiative confronts the Luo-Nyanza community, the younger demographic in particular, with their mindset, and choices, thereby creating an awareness that results in them taking ownership and control of their own lives even in an environment mired with so much hardship.

Strategy 2023-2024

Tracy and the 200 turned into Big Sisters in 2020. Plus the idea was to come up with a similar that I passed through as a child. This program not only helped pay for my primary education but also taught me life skills that nurtured the woman that I am today.

There are children in Kendu Bay who completed their grade 8 education last year whose chances of getting secondary education are blurry by the day and financial constraints and the perceived value of education for folks in this area cause this.

Our goal as we begin this journey is to identify at least 10 kids, both male, and female who have received admission to schools in their locality that are cheaper to fund.

200 dollars could keep a child going to a Day secondary school for a whole year, supplying them with school fees and school uniforms.

Who will benefit? What will the selection requirements be?

The child must;

- be an orphan or
- have guardians who are unable to support them.
- have attained 250 marks in their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education.
- be a member of the local community of Kendu Bay.
- have been accepted to local secondary schools in Kendu Bay.

Vision- Empowering young people through education

Education opens our worlds to immense opportunities for personal growth which in turn cascade down to our communities and generations to come. the vision of big sisters is to increase the value of education in this area.

Mission- Everyone has a chance

Big Sisters' seeks to offer opportunities for education scholarships to a group of children who want to go to school but poverty hinders them. We want to break the idea that "education is for the rich."

Through our mentorship program, we will be able to train youth on a mental, emotional and social level enabling and empowering them to make informed decisions.

Why you should be part of this

"Slavery is one of the worst forms of violence – as is the denial of education. Education is key to liberating children from slavery."

– Kailash Satyarthi

This is a one-of-a-kind program that will exist in Kendu Bay dealing with young people who are in an area that is choked with poverty.

HIV/AIDS, early marriages, and teenage pregnancies will not be the things that destroy the lives of these children, at the very root of all these issues is the low value of education.

When people aren't equipped with the tools to help them survive, they fall for anything from self-limiting beliefs, to false indoctrination to the outlook of their communities and their nations at large. A nation's most significant resources are in its people, think tanks that can either contribute to its progress or destruction.

Big Sisters' Initiative would like to appeal that you join us in waging a war against illiteracy.

Professional biography of Tracy Monica Ochieng



Tracy Monica Ochieng is a Mindset coach working with women and youth in underprivileged areas like the slums and rural areas of Kenya for six years now.

She is a USIU-A graduate where she pursued Journalism(PR and Advertising) with a minor in Psychology.

She is currently working part-time with My Drive in Life, reaching out to young boys and girls in high schools to inspire change, new attitudes, and perspectives.

She has been a beneficiary of Rotary

through PDG John Glassford and PDG Fred Loneregan who she met in 2011 after she completed high primary school education.

Her passion and work are in serving her Kenyan communities through life skills and mindset coaching.