

MUTHONI KIBAARA

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ABSTRACT

Community service can be described as acts of willing kindness or helping hand to those in need in the same residing community. This responsibility can be taken up by individuals or teams of people as the volunteer to assist those in need. Our project begun at the beginning of the semester as a mandatory course for the pharmacy program that enabled us to take responsible and challenging actions for the common good of those in our community surrounding us or that we are in. This project took a total number of three months to be planned, executed, finalised and most importantly help us discover the universal aspects of human nature as well as lend a helping hand to those in need. The main sources of funding that the team received were from the 3000 ksh contributed by the 18 students in the team, family, friends and finally the team created an M-changa fundraising platform which was shared across social media and kind people contributed. Community service benefited the students life and personal development together with the community as a whole by helping raise social awareness and responsibility in the community. It was a heart-warming experience especially seeing the children's faces and reactions when they received all the items. The joy they had gave me joy and hope that the future of these children will be bright. It gave me hope that the children will feel like they are part of the society with the opportunities they have been given to study, play and have a normal life like the rest of the children who are not in homes. Protecting the welfare of children is important for everyone in the society because they are the future generation and a lot is expected of them. Ensuring that they live quality lives with good health and education will give hope to the future of the country.

INTRODUCTION

A community can be classified as a team of individuals living in a common area that share similar characteristics and qualities. Community service can therefore be described as acts of willing kindness or helping hand to those in need and in the same community. This responsibility can be taken up by individuals or teams of people as the volunteer to assist those in need. Those offering the helping hand normally do not receive anything in return for their help however, they may be given t-shirts that may identify the organization representing the service givers.

NATURE OF THE PROJECT

This project began at the beginning of the semester as a mandatory course for the pharmacy program that allowed the students to take responsible and challenging actions for the common good of those in the community surrounding us or that we are in. The project took a total number of three months to be planned, executed, closed and most importantly help students discover the universal aspects of human nature as well as lend a helping hand to those in need. Each student was placed in a team that chose their preferred location that required assistance in various aspects. Everyone in our specific team contributed 3000 ksh to start off the project and made an M-changa which is a digital fund raising application used in order to acquire enough resources for assistance. The team went to visit the chosen location which was a home called El Shaddai Grace Childrens Home and asked them what items they are most in need of and they gave the team a list. The team then divided into subteams comprising of students who will take part in allocated duties of purchasing and delivering the items. Every subteam wrote a budget plan of the items that will be purchased and the project officially was implemented. The items purchased included a 3000L water tank, foldable tables, water purifier, sanitizer, handmade liquid soap, sanitary pads (6 per kit), stationery, masks, girls panties, boys boxers, bras, vests, jik and soap, t-shirts, branding (labels), braiding hair and football. Food supplies purchased were maize flour, wheat flour, rice, cooking oil, sugar, red beans, maize kernels gunia. What made this project unique is the fact that the team considered giving the children not only the necessary items they require for their basic needs but also items such as a football or colored hair braids that would make them happy and feel seen and cared for. The project ended by having a hand-over for delivering the items which were to go to the home. It was only the tank which I personally went and delivered it to the home individually and ensured that it was set up well.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

The main sources of funding that the team received was from the 3000 ksh contributed by 18 students, family and friends and finally the team created an M-changa fundraising platform which was shared across social media and kind people contributed. The team also received some donations from a non-profit organization called Shah Ranmal Raja Charitable Trust which included the food supplies that we provided to the home.

SWOT ANALYSIS

This analysis stands for the strength and weaknesses of the project which involved the internal factors affecting the team project and opportunities and threats which represent the external factors affecting the project. Strengths of the project involved a good leader who was able to place students in the team into different sub teams which would eventually make the work easier and more efficient. Aside from having a good leader with amazing leadership skills we also had students who were willing to go out of their way in order to ensure all is working well and that the items were purchased and delivered in good time. Another strength was the availability of enough funds for the project to be executed. These funds enabled the whole plan of the project come to fruition and all items purchased including sweets which proved to be the icing on the cake for the children. One weakness that the team had was time. The semester was busy so finding enough time to purchase quality items was very much limited considering the fact that this project was squeezed in a three-month timeline. The main opportunity we had was the home which required our assistance. They gave us an opportunity to provide a helping hand and make children and the guardians more comfortable especially during the pandemic. Another opportunity we had was the access to the online platform that allowed the team to share all across the medias in order to get contributions from well-wishers. We also had the opportunity to purchase items online due to the digitalization of the country more so, during the pandemic period which did not allow us to be flexible and attend every purchase physically. This saved us time and allowed us to attend school as well as do extracurricular services such as this one. The main threat that we had was the virus COVID-19 which was a global pandemic that shut down the country. Delivering items during this time was challenging and proved to be a threat to the team however, we managed to go around it and make it work.

IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON SOCIETY

Impact on the school

Community service benefited the students life and personal development together with the community as a whole by helping raise social awareness and responsibility in the community. This enabled students to understand the needs of society by giving us a first-hand experience of the conditions and state certain parts of the community is in. It also improved our interpersonal, communication, problem solving and critical thinking skills. This activity has also enhanced our social relationship skills with other students as we collaborated with each other on the project allowing for more connections and direct involvement with the community. This helped in ensuring better relations between USIU and the community.

Impact on the home

The food items will provide a balanced diet and help the kids grow in health especially during these times of the pandemic where a healthy diet is required in order to boost the immune system and avoid acquiring the disease. Water is an essential component of life and carries out various functions and so the need for a clean supply of water will provide protection and control against diseases and infections, among other obvious needs for water. This will also allow the sustainability of access to water due to harvesting using the water tank we provided.

The need for face masks, sanitizers and hand wash is in relation to the current state of the world trying to avoid COVID-19 disease as well as help us perform our duties as pharmacists to help stop the spread of this infection. Hygiene is improved by providing soap, detergents and sanitary pads.

Allowing them to sit together and share a meal brought togetherness and homeliness to the children and this was done by building a dining table for them that would act as a table for school as well, thus, enhancing their long-term quality of life, educational needs and togetherness.

Providing writing material and accessories to help children in their studies was done by purchasing stationary such as books and pens. This was done to ensure that the children will be able to improve their creativity and learn better and with similar opportunities given to other children in the country.

Impact on the Kenyan constitution

According to the Kenyan constitution chapter 4, section 3 and part 53, “a child’s best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child”. Every matter includes all aspects of life from the tangible ones which are food, clothing and shelter etc to intangible ones which include emotional comfort, guidance and protection etc.

Impact on vision 2030

This vision aims to transform our country Kenya into an industrialized, middle-class society that provides high quality of life to all of its citizens by 2030 in a clean and secure environment.

The team’s efforts and contributions aim to support this powerful vision as we hope to improve the quality of our young ones through creating a conducive environment that has clean water and provides a good quality of life. This was established by our funding that ensured availability of clean water, food security for the children and quality education. This vision aims to move all Kenyans to the future as one nation with equal opportunities everywhere.

The team is also improving quality of life by providing proper sanitary measures such as sanitary pads, soap, water tanks to store enough water, sanitizers and masks for the children and the guardians.

Impact on the sustainable development goals

The sustainable development goals also known as SDG’S are the goals set by the United Nations in order to end all forms and dimensions of poverty by the year 2030. This commitment targets the most vulnerable people and assists them by increasing the necessary resources and services, as well as support communities affected by conflict and climate-related disasters.

The team was able to find an NGO that volunteered in providing food stuffs which do not easily perish in order to sustain them for years to come, and this in line with the SDG goal 2-zero hunger.

SDG 4 - quality education was achieved by the NGO which went further to offer secondary education sponsorship to of some children.

SDG 6 - clean water and sanitation was achieved by investing in adequate infrastructure that encouraged hygiene and provided sanitation facilities for safe, sustainable and affordable drinking water. This facility was the water tank which will allow the home to harvest enough water that will cater to the children and the home sufficiently.

PERSONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

What I have learnt from this community service experience will forever stay ingrained in me. The benefits of giving by far outweigh the benefits of receiving and this opportunity allowed me to personally experience that. I had the task of purchasing the tank and delivering it to the home which I did, and this act allowed me to personally visit the home and interact with the children and the guardians. It was a heart-warming experience especially seeing their faces and reactions when they received all the items. The joy they had gave me joy and hope that the future of these children will be bright. It gave me hope that the children will feel like they are part of the society with the opportunities they have been given to study, play and have a normal life like the rest of the children who are not in homes. Aside from giving a helping hand, this project has allowed me to interact with my classmates on a level that I had not done before. Planning, executing and closing of the project was done smoothly and as a team which brought a great sense of team work and community as well as strengthened bonds which will go on in the future. This project allowed me to know myself better in a way I had not thought of before in regard to taking charge and implementing my leadership skills.

Empathy was also a trait that came to play when I was interacting with the children. I was able to understand where they are coming from and what they need in order for them to grow healthy and wise and be of benefit to the society and economy at large.

This project also gave me a new sense of determination to end poverty in this country by assisting where and when possible. Eradicating poverty will have a ripple effect on other factors such as peace and justice, quality education, proper sanitation, gender equality etc.

COVID-19 AND THE PROJECT

COVID-19 is a global pandemic that has affected the entire world and impacted our lives in various ways. During our planning, the team had to factor in this current situation when purchasing and delivering in order to avoid spreading or catching the disease. Safety precautions were observed and as the project was closing no casualties were found. We ensured that during all our interactions with the home all the Ministry of Health precautions were observed by mask wearing and sanitizing often. This pandemic has also played a role in some of the items the team purchased such as masks, sanitizers, soaps and a water tank which are all in the sanitation and hygiene maintenance category.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The project went on smoothly with minimum to no mishaps. However, there are some recommendations I would like to give in order to improve such practices in the future and they include:

- Removing the mandatory 3000 ksh contributions and allowing the students to offer what they can, some may be going through tough times especially during this pandemic period and may have a problem raising such funds although it may seem affordable to some.
- The school should step up and offer some funds for the students during the project to ease off some load from the student. The school has the capability to provide funds for such projects.
- Extending the time duration of the project. So many things can be done including building infrastructures if more time was allocated to the project e.g., 6 months.
- This project should be placed in a semester that has few pharmacy courses because this will allow the students to properly offer their time and services with no added pressure of completing assignments on time and studying for exams.
- The teams should have fewer students in order for the assistance to cut across more in need communities.

- The school should not be grading the course although it should still be a mandatory course. This is because the motivating factors leading to the helping hand may not be of good and pure intentions but just to pass and graduate. The grading should be removed in order to change the intentions of our actions

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the project was a success and the team was able to purchase and deliver the items to the home. The handing over ceremony was also a success. The opportunity to lend a helping hand and be helpful to the community through selfless services is the greatest of all time. There is nothing better in this life than to assist those in need because it brings a deep sense of purpose and fulfilment. The home we chose had the loveliest guardians who take amazing care of the children and it was encouraging to see the number of selfless people around us offering all they have to take care of children. The children were so pure and a bright shining light that bring joy to everyone they interact with, with their positivity, innocence and pure joy. Protecting the welfare of children is important for everyone in the society because they are the future generation and a lot is expected of them. Ensuring that they live quality lives with good health and education will give hope to the future of the country.

References

1. <https://www.stakeholdermap.com/project-management/the-nature-of-projects.html>
2. <https://blog.prepscholar.com/what-is-community-service>

APPENDIX**Budget**

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE(KSH)	TOTAL PRICE(KSH)
Water tank	1 (3000litre)	19300	19300
Foldable tables	2		12500
Water purifier	1	5000	5000
Sanitizer	4(5litre)	2200	8800
Handmade liquid soap	Assorted (20litre)		2075
Sanitary pads(6 per kit)	17kits	800	13600
Stationery	Assorted		3325
Masks	4	450	1800
Girls panties	7 (dozen)	1200	8400
Boys boxers	Assorted		5000
Bras	3 (1/2 dozen)	700	2100
Vests	Assorted		1600
Jik + soap	Assorted		3100
T-shirts	30	500	15000
Branding (labels)	Assorted		2500
Abuja hair piece	Assorted		2375
Football	1	2500	2500
Transaction fees+ Transport and deliveries			1586
TOTAL			110,561

Picture Gallery



When I delivered the tank to the home



A few members who were representing the team together with some of the children and guardians



Handing over ceremony with the Community Service Coordinator's Office Mr. Hussein.

