

Final Report, October 2019

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My 10-week fellowship in Harare Zimbabwe ended on August 23rd. What follows are the details of what I was able to accomplish, the challenges I faced, and what I learned. This experience was valuable in so many ways and despite the difficulties and frustrations, I will always count it as incredibly important to forming my life experience – and more importantly I hope that I was able to add value to the group I was working with.

As I mentioned in my interim report, the determination of WAP's (Women Advocacy Project's) leadership in the face of such challenging circumstances was very admirable and inspiring and I am lucky to still be in contact with them even after I left the country.

My main goals for this fellowship:

- I had the goal to prepare WAP for my departure from day one –I wanted to equip them with as many skills and plans as possible before I left so that they would be able to be increasingly productive and successful as an organization working independently.
- I also wanted to raise money for WAP, survey their current programs to see how they have been successful or not, and to get the income-generation (soap-making) project started.

I feel like I was fairly successful in equipping WAP with skills and knowledge in IT, social media and communication. Their website was redone, they now have a Facebook, and they received training on those platforms as well as in Excel. They also have manuals that they can utilize to update WordPress and utilize Excel. We talked a lot about organization, budgeting, communication, and project design. In addition, I feel that my surveying and assessment of the Ambassadors program went fairly well.

Unfortunately, fundraising was fairly fruitless, though I was able to raise close to \$2,000 for them through Global Giving crowdfunding. I laid the groundwork and fundraised for the income-generation project, but it did not start until after I left.

My greatest accomplishments:

- The capacity-building administrative trainings and skill-building support I was able to provide to WAP.
- The money I was able to raise for them and the fundraising proposals we completed.
- I was also proud of the interviewing/data collection I was able to assist with to give WAP a better sense of the impact of their work with the Ambassadors program.

Skills that I learned:

- I learned a lot about website development, project design and grant-writing
- I would have liked to have had a hands-on experience implementing an economic empowerment project

Things I have gained:

- This experience working closely with capacity-building will help with my academic focus on community-driven development work and human security
- Having so much responsibility and being given so much trust by a small community-based organization will be very helpful for my professional career. I was able to get hands on experience designing a website, doing trainings with my host, writing a project proposal and omnibus plan, completing an annual report, fundraising, etc.
- I feel that I was able to gain a good overall picture of how small non-profits operate abroad, and the fieldwork experience is an important qualification for my career goals

Greatest challenges/obstacles:

- The largest challenge was lack of funding for WAP. Without a backup plan in place for receiving a large grant that was expected, my ability to do work with the organization was impeded and could only lay the groundwork for the income-generation (soap-making) project
- This lack of funding and the challenging economic situation presented problems for even the simplest day-to-day work.
- I also faced personal challenges since I ended up spending a large amount of time alone and not working, and the current state of the country is quite bad. There were frequent (daily) power cuts, issues with currency conversion, food and fuel shortages, and political/protest violence. There were several violent protests, mass arrests, beatings and assassinations while I was there. Lack of electricity, fuel and food also spurred theft and violence. I had several days where I felt somewhat anxious about what was going to happen and whether I might have to leave to a neighboring country for a few days. Transportation was not easy or cheap and I did not know many people when I arrived, so I spent quite a few days staying alone at my guesthouse.

Outcomes:

Liquid Soapmaking Income-Generation Project:

Desired outcome: economic empowerment and income-generation to improve situations of marginalized women and girls at risk of child marriage

- I was able to lay the groundwork and attempt to fundraise for the project
- I raised over \$2,000 through Global Giving (crowdfunding)
- A standalone proposal was created and project plan drafted
- I am very pleased to say that this project was launched in early September, and girls are now creating soap to be sold (Global Giving report [here](#))
 - WAP hired a trainer (whom I met with during my Fellowship) to carry out the soap-making trainings.
 - Protective equipment and clothing as well as the soap materials were purchased

- Trainings are being carried out and bottles have started being sold for about \$1.50
- Five of the girls participating take the soap to local “tuck shops” (corner stores) and make a sales pitch to sell the soap there



Supporting and growing the Ambassadors program:

Desired outcome: Ambassadors continue to be engaged and supported by WAP and more girls are trained to be Ambassadors in order to grow the reach and approach of the program

- Wrote grant proposals to help secure funding for WAP Ambassador salaries
- Monitoring and evaluation template created for Ambassador program participants (to be used by WAP in the future)
- Evaluation of current program (interviews of current ambassadors, beneficiaries and families) – out in the field
- Held additional interviews to understand why girls in clubs have not gotten married
- Created growth plan for program going forward – improve communications and plan for how girls will be engaged/supported going forward

I was able to interview many of the club members one on one (some of them several times) and I also spoke with all four active Ambassadors. Despite issues with girls not showing up when we went into the field and being quite late to several site visits (due to lack of fuel), my conversations and surveying of the clubs went fairly well. I do feel like the program is having an impact on the participants, particularly in the way it has given girls a lot more knowledge and empowerment in regards to sexual/reproductive health and their human rights.

There have been challenges with this program due to the attitudes/behavior of several of the Ambassadors, issues with irregular stipend payments, and not meeting regularly. Two of the Ambassadors – Trish (Epworth) and Evelyn (Chitungwiza) – have managed to uphold their work agreements and have a serious impact on the girls in their communities. WAP and I discussed several options for upkeeping this program in the future, such as sports groups, drama, dancing, and embroidery activities.



Telling the story:

- 9 blogs completed (posted [here](#))
- 166 photos and 8 video clips (on [Flickr](#))
- Internet and power outages made it difficult at times to finish certain deliverables like uploading photos and blog posts and communicating via email.

Embroidery Squares for the child marriage advocacy quilt:

Desired outcome: Increased understanding and awareness of the situation of young girls in Zimbabwe who have already been married, are at risk of child marriage, or who have been able to avoid child marriage. Increased awareness of WAP and its programs.

- Coordinated obtaining embroidery supplies
- Put together two embroidery training sessions (with local Zimbabwe quilters)
- Collected the completed squares and the accompanying stories/descriptions which I brought back with me to the U.S.
- I am excited to report that the squares are now being assembled and the quilt will be exhibited at a forthcoming UN summit on women's health in Nairobi (ICPD25).

- WAP's director will attend the conference and use her quilt to explain child marriage to an international audience



Strengthening the Organization:

- Administrative trainings and assistance: I trained WAP staff in WordPress, Excel and Facebook and created several manuals for their future use
- We also had trainings on password management, email communications, budgeting and receipt organization.
- I spoke with WAP about M&E and the importance of data collection and provided access to the spreadsheet I created for the Ambassadors/beneficiaries survey. I hope that WAP will use that going forward to add information and/or use it as a template for creating their own tracker
- We worked together to complete WAP's omnibus plan/budget for the coming year as well as their Annual Report. I encouraged them to be keeping diligent track of activities and expenses throughout the year to make sure they are prepared to put their next Annual Report together quickly
- Fundraising: I raised about \$2,000 for the soapmaking project through Global Giving, and coordinated the submission of 5 grant proposals

Website and social media

- I completely updated WAP's WordPress site (<https://wapzimbabwe.org/>) and migrated the content from their old site (and then removed the old site)
 - I also trained WAP on how to add/edit content (and created a manual for that as well). I hope that they will continue updating and polishing the website to reflect new projects, photos, blogs, etc.
- WAP now has a [Facebook page](#) as well and I trained them (and the 4 Ambassadors) on how to create content, schedule posts, look at analytics etc. I tried to explain the importance of using the social media platform and it seemed like they were excited to use it