Alternative income generation for Kenyan women: Preventing prostitution and the spread of HIV

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HIV/AIDS in Molongo, Kenya

Mombasa Highway and Weigh Station
- Truckers spend 3+ days waiting to be processed, providing a customer base for prostitution
- In Kenya, 27.6% of female sex workers are HIV positive and only 26.8% use condoms with all of their partners (Morris, Morris, and Ferguson, 2009).
- The rampant spread of HIV and lack of contraception has led to rapid growth in the population in an area that has little ability to support any residents
- Development of Slums that now line the highway

Challenges and Confounding Disease Dynamics

Unique Challenges
- Multiple generations of one family sleep in a single room, exposing children to sex at an early age
- Extreme religious beliefs limit sex education and discussion
- Luo Tribe Wife Inheritance and the spread of HIV within a family of brothers

Limitations and Confounding Disease Dynamics

- Limited access to healthcare
- High incidence of rape
- Stigma of HIV/AIDS

Living Positive Molongo

Living Positive Molongo (LPM) is a local non-governmental, community based organization that aims to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS by empowering women and children in the local community

Group Therapy and Counseling
- Improving the mental health and wellness
- Education about HIV and disease prevention
- Group support and safe space to discuss disease

Orphan and Vulnerable Children Support
- Day care for 100 children 2-10 years old
- One hot meal per day, which may be their only one
- Regular home visits to ensure that the children are safe and attend school

Sponsors for Kenya Kiotani Center
- A community in which orphans, vulnerable youth, and women can live and work on a sustainable farm.
- A place to create a family setting allowing orphans and vulnerable children to have as normal and nurturing a childhood as possible rather than placing them in an institution

Community Empowerment
- Empowers the community to take action in their own problems and to find solutions that work best for them
- Women from each slum have taken on the role of community liaison in order to maintain the strong partnership between LPM and the community

Ukwell Tours: Experience the Real Kenya

Goal
Create a market and customer base for women in order to increase the sustainability of LPM and reduce the need for prostitution
- Create a daylong tourist attraction that brings a group of 15 tourists to the slums with a trained guide
- Learn to cook, do chores, and craft in traditional Kenyan fashion.
- Opportunity to talk with the women and learn more about what it is like to live in slums.
- See firsthand what the majority of Kenyans live like.

Advantages
- No competition in the region
- Aligns with the Kenyan National Tourism Strategy 2013-2018
- Intervention programs including microfinance loans lead to increases in the economic stability and decreased risky behavior among female participants in South Africa (Pronyk et al., 2008).

Disadvantages
- Terrorist threats and political unrest
- Start up costs
- Training resources and time for LPM staff and participating community members
- Requires safe transportation and protection of tourists during visit

Next Steps and Long Term Goals

Next Steps
- Fundraising for the start-up costs for Ukwell Tours: $2000
- Complete training of women involved in Ukwell Tours
- Partner with local university students to help with management training, publicity, and ultimate execution of Ukwell Tours

Long term Goal: Medical Clinic Partnership with Sidney Kimmel Medical College and LPM
- Desperate need for access to reliable medical care
- If a patient dies in the hospital, the corpse is held until the family can pay the hospital bills and disposed of if this family cannot pay
- Distance to clinics is a significant obstacle to accessing care and most people cannot afford to get there

References
- http://discovermagazine.com/tags/infectious-diseases