



Working To Empower: Lugufu Camp Seminar

Lugufu refugee camp is a magnified village, appearing at first glance like a small village, however it extends for miles upon miles. Nearly 120,000 refugees live in Lugufu Camp I and Lugufu camp II. All of which being Congolese who have spent, on average, the last ten years in this location. They left their home country of DR Congo due to the war, often referred to as the “Africa World War,” and the subsequent civil war. This all began in 1996, and thus many are living in this camp for their tenth year. Within the camp small houses of home-made brick and mud line the streets, roofed with thatch and occasionally UN tarp material to keep the rain out. The streets of such houses continue on for miles, one can walk in any direction for at least an hour and still be within the Lugufu I camp area.

The seminar originally had listed forty participants, all of whom received t-shirts and meals for the duration of the seminar. We ended up with a higher demand, fifty-two participants that we were able to accommodate. The t-shirts given out had Swahili slogans on the back, AIDS ribbons on the arms, and the CELA (partner local organization) logo on the front. The topics covered were the same as the previous seminars, however according to the program design there were different outcomes. On the day after the seminar we invited leaders from the 33 villages in Lugufu I to come and discuss the learned ideas. In addition to showing a video for the participants (French) we showed a video (Swahili) for the village leaders to help with awareness. They were impressed we had invited them to share knowledge and not just to ask for their help. CELA directors and I worked with four selected peer educators on the following days to design projects for the future of Lugufu camp. These four peer educators will receive monthly incentives for the next six-months to continue the HIV/AIDS educator process in the Lugufu community. Such activities include sport-education, drama-education, speaking in churches, speaking in schools, holding large seminar meetings once a month, working with local radio shows, and video presentations.

The CELA office has now become an HIV/AIDS resource center, with the purchase of a sign for the front and a bookshelf for the inside, which was filled with items donated by WTE and will continue to be filled with donations of books in the future. In order to reach more people within the community CELA and WTE purchased team jerseys, soccer balls, basketballs and net, volleyballs and net, which will be used for sport-education in the future. Other items, such as a generator for CELA, will help them with projects in the long-run.

Setting up and running the seminar wasn't all that was accomplished. Working To Empower recently started an education sponsorship program called 'Emebet Education

Program,' within which school fees are paid for the most vulnerable, orphans and older girls. In Lugufu camp, as with Tanzania, Primary school is free but Secondary is not. As such, only some are able to attend. To display this, World Vision has 16 primary schools but only three secondary schools. Also, World Vision does not pay secondary teachers so they have to rely on fees from students. For this upcoming school year, Working To Empower and CELA will help to sponsor thirty secondary students. This program is working in partnership with World Vision's Child Protection Agency as well as Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots program. World Vision will help to identify children in the camp and children from Jane Goodall's education program will also be selected due to need, ten of the thirty students have been presented by Roots and Shoots staff and they were added to the education sponsorship program.