North Maragoli Kiritu Kitchen Site. Final Report

Blake Barkley

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We faced several initial setbacks when first arriving in the community. These included major infrastructure issues; such as, no running water, no electricity, and construction shortfalls (ie. no window panes, paint etc.). Furthermore, the largest setback we faced was not having access to a lab facility within a reasonable distance from the kitchen. We traveled as far as Kisumu, Kakamega, and Bungoma in search of such facilities, unsuccessfully. It was at this point that we realized we would need to construct an on-site lab and train Muungano staff to culture the probiotic. We were initially unsure whether or not Muungano would be able to fund the lab, as it is not within WHE’s mandate to do so. When funding was secured through Louise Bourassa, we (with the help of a local hospital lab technician) researched lab equipment prices and contacted Chemoquip (a Kenyan lab supply company). Upon traveling to Nairobi we placed the order and supplies including; an incubator, pipettes, autoclave, beakers, etc. were delivered to the community within two weeks. Maggie and Lavender, two young teachers at Muungano were trained by Gillian in proper Lab protocol and technique. They were incredibly successful in their pursuits and pending maintaining proper supply levels, should be able to continue culturing the bacteria for the foreseeable future.

In terms of our issues with Kenya power, it took 1.5 months to coordinate the power connection and much effort on the part of both myself, Gillian, and Muungano. We were initially asked to pay a bribe (40,000/- KSH) to have it done in less time, however not seeing that as an option we decided to submit the application normally and wait. Muungano was put in the position to pay to install new power posts and lines to connect the school building to the power grid (we were informed that power to this region of Kenya is sourced from areas of Uganda which contributes to its substandard reliability). Also, we used a local electrician to wire the building in preparation for the power installation.

We had initially intended to rely on KEMRI to maintain small lab equipment supplies. Francis Denga, the lab technician that worked with the Oyugis kitchens was facilitating our agreement. However, there was a minor falling out between our organizations due to a
misunderstanding of intentions. We then purchased the equipment that we were initially planning on getting donated from KEMRI. In the months following my return to Canada, I maintained correspondence with Francis and put him in touch with Muungano (Through Charles, the manager) to facilitate the delivery of the supplies that were never received due to the aforementioned falling out.

Further setbacks and complications were faced upon opening the kitchen space as we were unable to find a reliable dairy supplier that was willing to provide us with undiluted product in the necessary quantities. Which was eventually sorted out by making use of multiple small dairy farmers that were known to members of both the HIV/AIDS support group and Muungano.

Relationship With Muungano

At the time of our departure, an agreement was under development between WHE and Muungano in order to find a way to provide free probiotic yoghurt to the children attending the school as part of their breakfast program in addition to those community members listed on the PLWA registry.

Furthermore, the lab facility & equipment is owned by Muungano and shares the space with the kitchen. It is the organization’s responsibility to maintain the equipment, while the working relationship between the Mamas and the school staff is necessary to create a proactive working environment. Zipporah, head of the HIV/AIDS support group that staffs the kitchen as well as Muungano’s main social worker is integral to maintaining this relationship. She has personal relationships with each group member as well as the staff and students at Muungano.

Training

The Mamas at our site were initially trained by the Baraka Women’s Group in Oyugis, Kenya. We brought back yoghurt samples, however one of the women that attended the training (formerly a Muungano employee) stole a large portion of the sample and Louise decided that it was in the best interest of both Muungano and the Kitchen that she be let go and removed from the project. We reached a mutual agreement after she admitted to taking the yoghurt.

Subsequent training occurred with the entire group of Mamas the week before the kitchen opened on August 11th 2012. From the time we began supervising regular kitchen
activity the training appeared to be effective and yoghurt was being properly produced for the registry and for sale. Meanwhile, Gillian’s lab training with Maggie and Lavender was effective and the culturing was successful.

**PLWA Registry**

We completed the registry with ID cards for 55 individuals and master lists in both English and Kiswahili. and individuals began receiving their daily yoghurt. However, due to the short time frame with which we had once we were sure the project would move forward, the system was altered and we moved to the staff members checking off those receiving the yoghurt as opposed to the collection of signatures. This will need to be corrected in the future, as it is not proper protocol for keeping records in the registry. Furthermore, At the time of our departure, we were still attempting to sort out the exact process for transferring funds from WHE and APYN to the Muungano site.

**Recommendations**

- **Organizational Infrastructure** - the exact duties, roles, and responsibilities between Muungano and the WHE kitchen should be distinguished to ensure that all parties are able to adequately complete their roles to ensure the continued functioning of the kitchen.

- **Continued WHE Intern Presence** - Although there is a strong support network provided by Muungano, I recommend that maintaining an intern presence in this site should be a top priority. This is due to the amount of work that needs to be done to ensure its longevity. The yoghurt still needs to be marketed and packaged for sale in local markets and revisions to the registry system need to be made to bring it in line with the other APYN projects. Also, the lessons learned from the issues faced by the Oyugis kitchens have taught us that maintaining communication should be of top priority so that partners in Canada can be notified when hardships are faced and when Interns are necessary to offer support and consultation to the kitchens. Given the needs of this site I would suggest Interns with Business/Marketing or Science/Microbiology backgrounds.

- **The Lab** - Although owned by Muungano, WHE should take an active role in maintaining support for the lab. Interns with appropriate experience are a must, meanwhile WHE should take an active role in organizing the procurement of the small non-renewable supplies that are expended through the culturing process.
• KEMRI - There is value in the relationship in order to maintain the supply of small lab equipment, therefore Interns should make every necessary effort to secure the supply of small equipment (free of charge) for the kitchen. Francis Denga is the main contact person for this (francisdenga@gmail.com)