4-2006

Operational Debriefing Report: Western Heads East Internship Placement

G. Jonathan Birinyi

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/wheempdev
Operational Debriefing Report
Western Heads East Internship Placement
June 2005 to April 2006
G. Jonathan Birinyi
Table of Contents

Disclaimers
Terms of Reference
Preface: Program Summary

Section A: General Issues

Selection Process

Deployment
Pre-departure Training
In transit
In Mwanza

Project Location
The Mwanza apartment
Mwanza City

B - Direct Services

Amenities
Food
Entertainment

Health Concerns and Precautions
Malaria
Medications
Food and water

Personal Services
Buswel-Tecumseh Partnership

C - Support Services

Logistics and Feasibility
The Community Kitchen
Alternate location of Yogurt Production
Milk sources
Housing Cows
Yogurt Production
Selling Yogurt
Research
Resource Management
Skills Matching
Male Internship placements

Media Relations
Online Journals
Media in Mwanza and Tanzania
Media in Canada

Community Liaisons
The roles of Kivulini
The roles of NIMR
Baluhya
The Yogurt Mamas
Other NGOs

Communications
Internet and phone service
Swahili – the language barrier
Tanzania – the cultural barrier

Management
From Canada
Flow of Information from WHE to Intern and Visa-Versa
Transition to successors

Finances
Availability
Accountability

D - Overview
**Disclaimers**

- This report does not represent the opinions of Western Heads East, or any group or individual associated with the said project and only stands for the author’s, G. Jonathan Birinyi.*With the exception of the preface - where the author's name is cited.

- The use of “us, our, etc.,” refers to when Dallas and I were both in Mwanza together. This report does not speak upon her behalf.

- I rarely use specific names when describing my interactions with members of either WHE or the community groups. I don’t think the intention of this report is to be critical of individuals, but rather the organization and process holistically.

- As I state a few times in this report, it would be beneficial to read/understand my Internship journals prior analyzing this document. I purposely leave out some commentary to reduce this length and hence, the journals will contain this missing information.

- All usages of the word Intern(s)/Internship relate to specifically WHE interns.

- The duration of my Internship was from June to November 2005 and from January to April 2006.

**Terms of Reference**

**NIMR** - The National Institute of Medical Research: Mwanza, Tanzania

**YMs** - Yogurt Mamas

**Kivulini** - Kivulini Women’s Rights Organization: Mwanza, Tanzania

**UWO** - University of Western Ontario

**WHE** - Western Heads East: Sometimes referred to as the administrative body at UWO or as the project itself (note the context used).

**Intern(s)** - a WHE student intern (from UWO unless otherwise noted)

**Internship** - an Intern’s time spent in Mwanza working on WHE
Preface: Program Summary
by WHE program coordinator, Jethro Odanga, November 2005
UWO–Tanzanian Collaborative Project to Reduce
Morbidity and Mortality Associated with HIV/AIDS

Previous studies have shown safety of probiotic strains such as Lactobacillus rhamnosus bacteria in HIV positive subjects. These bacteria have the ability to kill the virus, colonize the vagina after ingestion, and reduce the risk of bacterial vaginosis. In a tangible and practical example of strengthening local support for good, healthy food, an initiative driven by the housing department and in collaboration of people in four faculties at UWO, a project was started with collaborative players of women’s rights organization and National Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) in Mwanza, Tanzania.

Three primary objectives were formulated to guide activities of this project. First, we envisaged using staff, faculty and interns at UWO with colleagues in Tanzania to establish a community kitchen in Mwanza, Tanzania to produce probiotic yoghurt. Second, we envisioned creating systems and testing them on site for the safety and quality of yoghurt produced. Third, we foresaw this partnership creating a foundation that would allow the Tanzanian collaborative players to develop practical research and development initiatives built around probiotic foods.

The success of the project required we develop good working relationships with NIMR; ensure that our students were settled safely and had support groups and means to communicate back to Canada; set up a kitchen and fermentor and train local women on how to prepare yoghurt; and assess initial health benefits and side effects of yoghurt.

Three major activities were carried out. First, preliminary visits were made to Tanzania to meet colleagues, government and other potential collaborative players to create a foundation of working relationships. The second and third activity involved sending our groups of interns comprising of two students per project phase.

To date, we have achieved the following outputs within the UWO – Tanzania collaborative project. (i) Mutual relationship exists with Kivulini Women’s Rights Organization and its members have been trained in the development of yoghurt. (ii) We do have an established link with NIMR who provide technical support to the project. (iii) We have acquired some equipment, which is being used by the project. (iv) We have determined sources of milk used in the project. (v) The longevity of yoghurt when not refrigerated has been determined and (vi) consistency in quality of the produced probiotic yoghurt has been achieved.

Based on achievements and lessons learned in the present studies, we propose to extend our collaborative ventures to be able to (i) determine the nutritional benefits of daily consumption of probiotic yogurt by participants, (ii) determine feasibility of probiotic yogurt being a small business venture for women in the Mwanza community, (iii) set up a manual to be used by NGO’s, which shows
step-by-step approaches in establishing a probiotic program in similar communities, (iv) determine acceptability of yoghurt in daily food intake, (v) determine microbiological tests to determine end of things and (vi) determine preferences (if any) of various flavours of yoghurt.

Section A: General Issues

Selection Process

My relationship with the WHE team was confusing at the start. I did not receive a clear indication whether or not I was actually formally selected as an Intern. Instead, I was encouraged to start preparing items like my passport and immunizations. In addition, before receiving confirmation on my selection, I never had a formal interview with members from the steering committee. I don’t think it’s necessary to dwell on further examples – mainly because I believe the problem has been corrected internally; however, these initial struggles with WHE administration highlight communication-breakdown, which progressed further into my internship.

As time progressed, I was notified that I would be working with Dallas Curow, whom was selected as the recipient for the second Canada Corp grant. I had known her indirectly, whereas she was a student leader (“Soph”) in my residence from my freshman year at UWO.

A matter that’s worth mentioning was the process of obtaining a faculty advisor. I was advised, from WHE, that I needed to obtain a professor in microbiology/immunology, since that was the [intended] Internship work. After a lengthy search, it was unpredictable whether or not I would have a faculty advisor in time of my departure – putting the CIDA funding and my internship in jeopardy. Later on, another suggestion came from WHE stating I could just pick Dr. Gregor Reid as my advisor (since he was already involved in the project). It would be important for future instances to ensure all of this and other essential tasks are completed in due time prior to departure.

The last issue I had to clear up was acquiring course credit for my work with WHE. This was another requirement of the CIDA funding. Luckily, the Science Internship Program accommodated this unique situation well. I would strongly advice future Interns in the Schulich Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry or Faculty of Science to pursue the same services.

Deployment

Pre-departure Training

All of the pre-departure training events were facilitated with both Dallas and I present. This provided some positive relationship builders between the two of us –
an important aspect since we would be living and working with each other for the next three months. However, I would have to question the specific training we were provided. The training period was designated at one week – which ended up being about four weekdays.

During this time we met with some of the primary participants of the WHE program at UWO. These encounters were rather useful. The interactions allowed us to gain some insight of who was involved with the program, but lacked education in terms of learning objectives and strategies of work.

I believe at this point I was still a bit of a daze that we were about to head to Tanzania – and hence did not prepare enough questions beforehand. In the future, I would suggest a pre-departure meeting with several (if not all) key WHE-UWO players where a more in-depth understanding of the internship can be discussed. This would be extremely important in the case that future interns would not be overlapping. I digress.

The second portion of our time was spent in Dr. Reid’s microbiology lab. The experience seemed very rewarding to me at the time. However, as it is explained later in this report, I never utilized these skills – nor were there many applications that I felt I could have. Dallas’ involvement in this portion of the training could be stated as unnecessary and may have been better spent learning something within her Internship realm. We also received some training in Dr. Hekmat’s lab. This information was used a bit more since it involved the daily procedures of yogurt making. The staff was however very knowledgeable regarding their certain fields and did a great job encouraging us with our future work.

Brian and Cynthia’s journals were in addition, a huge help prior to departure. They did a good job outlining their activities and getting us motivated for our trip.

Lastly, it also would have been beneficial more time to spend doing the cultural and language training – whereas it was limited to just one afternoon. However, I realize that work obligations might have played a role in the small time we had, and nevertheless, we were provided with lots of material to read over before departure.

There was no formal second pre-departure training when I returned to Canada in the winter of 2005. Instead, a WHE-committee meeting was held where I provided an updated report. I believe the meeting ran rather unsuccessfully; mainly because several key members could not be in attendance and some unnecessary issues dragged on too long and ate up valuable time.

In transit

Despite some small problems here and there, Dallas and I left for Mwanza on time and full of excitement. The flights went fine and the small details aren’t worth mentioning. Charles Mbakaya from KEMRI (Kenya Medical Research Institute) met us at the Nairobi along with Brian and Cynthia. The following day, the four Interns went to
KEMRI with Charles, where he showed us some of the projects going on with his institution. Having him and our predecessors around with us was a great way to put us at ease and make us feel welcome and comfortable with our new surroundings.

Throughout the duration of my Internship, all of my other flights to/from Mwanza worked well. KLM/Kenya Airways were a good airline choice and arriving from Nairobi – although more expensive than traveling via Dar es Salaam, was a suitable transfer city.

Nairobi’s vast amenities were very beneficial. Hence, should future interns need to pick up specific items (i.e. lab equipment) for Mwanza, Nairobi should continue to be the transit point. I would only stress that a pre-arranged taxi service be negotiated before arriving from Nairobi – either from Charles at KEMRI, through a reputable hotel or a trustworthy friend in the city.

In Mwanza

A few things worked well during our orientation in Mwanza. First, the week overlap with Brian and Cynthia was extremely crucial. It allowed us to put into context what we had read on their blogs – while being able to ask questions along the way. Because we only had a week with each other, the orientation was fast-paced, usually spending the mornings and early afternoons working on project related tasks, while spending time later in the day and evenings on cultural matters (ex. heading to the market, going to local eating establishments, orientation around the city, etc…). In addition, we were able to meet with several of the key players, including most of NIMR and Kivulini staff.

However, a few problems arose. First, it was very difficult being able to communicate with local Tanzanians with the start because of the language barrier. Brian and Cynthia had obtained a good level of proficiency and Dallas and I realized that we had some work to do to get to that same level. There were several matters that needed to be organized; which needed an immediate attention and a good grasp of the language.

Another initial difficulty arose when trying to comprehend the overall purpose of WHE and how our roles would fit into the program’s intended direction. The amount of new information we were being bombarded with during this week also took a long time to sink in. And naturally, we were never able to get all the information that was necessary. I can say in hindsight that I didn't ask enough questions to Brian and Cynthia while they were with us in Mwanza. However, at the time, I would have to say that I didn’t know what questions to ask.

**Project Location**

The Mwanza apartment

The apartment in Mwanza was a good choice for Interns to stay during their placements. Firstly, the location next store to Kivulini was especially convenient,
when I had any general concerns or questions the staff there was more than willing to help. The proximately to downtown Mwanza, NIMR, and Mabatini (the area where the Yogurt Mamas lived) were all very close and within walking distance. Security for the building was sufficient – whereas the apartment had a night watchman.

Other good aspects include the clean environment provided for the yogurt production. Since the product was being made in a room within the apartment, it was easy to keep in sanitary conditions and be aware of any problems, such as fire hazards. The electricity for the apartment was somewhat stable, given frequent power-outs which plagued the city.

Again, since the apartment unit was adjacent to Kivulini, it was convenient for staff to supervise the project when I (and Dallas) weren’t around. When Baluhya came in board to act as the new yogurt supervisor, the location was convenient for her because she could supervise production while doing work with Kivulini. However, because of this proximity it was often very difficult to get “in house” work done during the day. Personally speaking, I work better during long stretches, rather than small clumps. This environment change forced me to change these habits. In the future, I would suggest Interns being firm with habitual visitors to respect the privacy when they need to get work done or to relax. I acknowledge that this problem does stem from cultural differences, however during attempts in requesting privacy, feedback was usually positive.

Our house help, Pendo, was extremely helpful as well. She spoke absolutely no English but her bright outgoing personality was very beneficial in helping understand Swahili and Tanzanian culture. I encourage Interns to keep her in the future.

Mwanza City

Mwanza is a city of roughly 400,000 people. Off the southern coast of Lake Victoria, it happens to be the second largest city in Tanzania by population and one of the fastest growing as well. Its commercial hub remains relatively small but for the most part I could find needed amenities, like internet access, transportation, and general public services. The only major problem was not being able to find suitable lab supplies - including beakers, mercury-less thermometers, and lactometers. These and other items had to be brought from Canada or purchased in Nairobi.

Besides that, I believe that Mwanza was a relatively good choice for WHE. The city doesn’t have other programs as unique as ours – where larger “NGO-cities” like Arusha/Moshi, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam might. However, should the yogurt program require more resources – these other locations may want to be considered.
B - Direct Services

Amenities

Food

Before coming to Tanzania, I was very curious what new animals and weird items I would end up eating. However this list isn’t very long mainly because the staples in the Mwanza diet are quite neutral and similar to what we have in Canada. Fish was usually the order of the day, since Tilapia is so prominent in Lake Victoria. Fresh vegetables, rice, corn-porridge (ugali), chicken, beef, were all available and consumed on a regular basis as well. I never had many concerns with the food I was eating, however picky eaters may want to change their mindset before coming to Mwanza. The preparation practices do differ from Canada.

Entertainment

Mwanza had a surprisingly large list of things to do. I usually attended (one of three) western-style gyms for a workout a few times a week. Also, the city offered things like video stores, a swimming pool and a plethora of unique eateries/pubs. The latter were enjoyed most evenings, usually with one of three of my roommates and/or friends from NIMR and the international elementary school. I also purchased a television the day before my departure in April, thinking future Interns may appreciate something to play DVDs from the video store. I hope they enjoyed it!

Health Concerns and Precautions

During the course of my time I was seriously sick on only two occasions, the first being, food poisoning, which was from food that Dallas and I had actually made ourselves. The second time was malaria, which is mentioned in the following section.

Malaria

Malaria is an epidemic in the Mwanza region. Interns need to take the proper precautions to prevent themselves from acquiring the parasitic disease. Precautions I took included purchasing a properly-fitting bed net, using bug repellant, and taking anti-malarial prophylaxis. A few things should be noted about these items.

I highly recommend Interns not purchasing a mosquito bed net in Canada since it’s a highly subsidized product in Mwanza. Also, suggested prophylaxis include the following; internships 3 months or less, Malarone and for over 3 months, doxycycline. Since Malarone is quite expensive, doxycycline could be taken for shorter Internship placements. These should be bought in Canada, but they are available in Mwanza if need be.
Like I said, I acquired Malaria - mainly due to my own fault; I had stopped taking my doxycycline. I was only bedridden for a day, and after receiving treatment (one-time medication), I was fine by the end of the week. I have to stress that receiving diagnosis and treatment for malaria is necessary as soon as one feels the symptoms of the disease. Ignoring the warning signs of malaria will only make matters drastically worse in the end.

Medications

Mwanza has a good collection of pharmacies – I read that Tanzania has one of the most extensive pharmaceutical schemes in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, when I had a severe hay-fever attack (for reasons that are unknown to me), I was able to find non-drowsy Claritin®. However, if a future intern has a serious medical condition or medication requirement, I would suggest doing some research on availability beforehand.

Food and water

It was common routine to have a dodgy stomach while in Mwanza. Of course, things like contaminated water and improperly cooked food played a role in this. Precautions I took included buying bottled water or boiling and/or filtering what came from our tap. Food precautions were similar. When preparing food at home, pouring boiling water over raw-vegetables (i.e. tomatoes for a salad) was common practice. Lastly, when eating out, I began to understand which pubs were starting to make me feel sick – and hence, I would try and avoid them. There’s no guarantee in not getting a bout of diarrhea here and there. Remember always have a roll of toilet paper, and when the problem lasts more than 4 days, get a stool sample. In addition, eating the yogurt did make my stomach feel better on most occasions.

Personal Services

Buswelu-Tecumseh Partnership

Although the work I did in this field was not related to WHE objectives, I think its worth noting. With cooperation of a teacher at Tecumseh Elementary School in London (Mrs. McInnes), Brian, Cynthia, Dallas and I were able to transport penpal-like letters to-and-from Tecumseh and another school just outside Mwanza City, Buswelu Elementary. In addition, we helped transport monetary funds raised by Tecumseh for their Tanzanian counterparts.

The time spent with this was pretty minimal, but the rewards of participating in this program were very fulfilling. The children from both schools really enjoyed reading and responding to the letters from their friends overseas. Also, the money raised by Tecumseh went a long way in helping Buswelu renovations and helping buy school supplies for the children. The most prominent fundraising initiative came in a desk-building program for several classrooms in the school. Before, many students at Buswelu were forced to sit on the floor during class time simply because there weren’t enough desks. However, in early 2006, the funds transferred
to Buswelu were being used to build approximately 40 desks to help curb this problem.

Being able to participate in this ‘side project’ was one of the most rewarding experiences during my internship. Since Buswelu is in more of a rural setting, it allowed me to get away from the sometimes hectic Mwanza City. Also, Buswelu and their 1000 students were very appreciative of the help they received and are looking forward to more work with the Interns. Hopefully this side project will continue to work effectively in the future.

C - Support Services

Logistics and Feasibility

The Community Kitchen

Facilitating the progress of the community kitchen construction was one of the first priorities on things to work on. When Dallas and I arrived, the yogurt was made in our personal kitchen. This continued until September, at which time, production was moved to a separate room in our apartment, dubbed “the yogurt room”. The switch was easy. However, getting the community kitchen built was a much different story.

Upon arrival, at the community kitchen, the foundation, and the walls, was about all that had been constructed. Hence, there was a whole list of things that needed to be assembled (both in a physical and organizational sense).

It took a while to obtain all the information from different labourers needed to complete the construction. From June to August we were able to collect all the relevant information and in September and October many items like the floor, door, windows and wiring were built and installed.

Soon afterwards, a pipe was installed outside the kitchen by a third party donor not related to WHE. Therefore, the last thing that needed to be completed was hooking up the electricity. Nevertheless this last task was by no exaggeration, the hardest piece of my Internship. It seemed like such a minute undertaking, but after many attempts and nearly six months later, it still wasn’t completed. The electrical company was monopolistic and lacked a decent infrastructure. The rest of the problems, in essence, related to corruption and me being a westerner. On a side note, I did research the idea of solar and/or a gas generator extensively; however, due to the fact that we use two large fridges, these were not sustainable options.

Although it may seem important, I don’t want to dwell on the specifics of not being able to get electricity from the electrical company. At the end of the day, the situation was unique and matters were totally out of my control. I would only suggest that future Interns take the following advice closely.
In situations where handing over money is a central issue, try to involve a credible local participant as much as possible, from inquiries, negotiations, to transaction. For example, someone from Kivulini could help with this occasionally. Otherwise the receiving party may see it as an opportunity to take advantage and demand a higher-than-usual rate. This struggle is not necessarily always the case, but its something one should keep in the back of their mind.

I know at the time of writing this report that the electricity problem was eventually dealt with. So at least there is a good ending to it.

You may recall that I mentioned the community kitchen required some organizational work as well. This came in the form of mobilizing the community leaders and understanding the agreement set in place on building the kitchen. Like the electricity, this was no easy task.

The community kitchen is just one of three rooms of a larger building owned by the community. However, I was not aware from the beginning that WHE was being responsible for contributing money ($2000 USD) for the construction of the remaining rooms. To reiterate, this vital piece of information was not communicated to me and/or Dallas. Hence, when October came, the community leaders were becoming increasingly upset and threatening to allow commercial interests take the room.

There were arrangements made with the community leaders to help remedy this problem and I believe it worked well. It’s difficult to determine whether or not this situation could have been avoided - it’s impractical to think that all information can be transmitted from one Intern to the next. I was probably guilty of this as well. However, it may be wise to keep a separate list/archive of important documents and information that can be handed over during this transition. Keeping these items in a specific location within the Mwanza apartment may be a good habit to keep up.

Alternate location of yogurt production

During the fall of 2005, I visited an old abandoned yogurt factory – the physical state of the building and area surrounding it was in poor shape. Kivulini initially arranged the tour to see if any viable equipment was left and available for sale – there was none. However, the main lessons taken from this trip was the fact that an entrepreneur had unsuccessfully started a yogurt-making business. I was given several reasons on why this happened: distance from city centre, poor roads to Mwanza, too big of a plantation, and not enough initial investment from the owner - whom apparently wasn’t the best businessman. Kivulini is more familiar with this situation and should be inquired further about it.

Milk sources

One of the initial dilemmas Dallas and I were presented with was the decision to continue obtaining our milk from cows or switch to goats. Later in the summer of 2005, we came to the conclusion to keep using cows. This decision was based on
several factors, including test-batches social acceptance surveys, and economic and feasibility causes.

Other than that, most of the milk related issues were acute and simple to deal with. Through the entire Internship, we kept the same two milk suppliers, one worked at NIMR, the other lived in the same community as the Yogurt Mamas. The Yogurt Mamas would normally bring in their community source, while the other was delivered. The system was fine-tuned and slowly I withdrew my role in having to be a part in this daily process. Hence, when I returned to Mwanza in January, the Yogurt Mamas and Baluhya had their own system of collection that no longer needed my involvement. Instead, I did frequent walk-ins just to ensure that production was running smoothly and interact with the Yogurt Mamas and Baluhya.

Housing Cows

The road to pursuing land and cows was a pretty long process; therefore, I will try to be brief and concise. In a nutshell, two options were being pursued. Either purchase or share an existing cow-shelter or purchase a piece of land and build a new shelter. Leases were also being considered. Eventually, either option would end with us buying cows to use in the acquired area.

An extensive search for this land culminated in September and October. Through cooperation with the Yogurt Mamas, we found one site in particular which was in a good location and already next to pre-existing cow shelters. However, the owner of this land demanded an extraneous amount of money – much higher than its book value. The Yogurt Mamas did not want to pursue this option mainly because of this inflated cost.

When I returned in January, the search for another plot of land began. I made several attempts of acquiring land through the Mwanza City Planning Office, but came up empty handed. Later, it became apparent that one of the Yogurt Mamas already owned a piece of land and offered it for the project.

There were no specific problems associated with this task; instead it was mainly just a long process of sorting things out. With the community kitchen residing in a suburban area, land was scarce and there was nothing we could do to change that. It does however bring up the question on whether or not a plot of land should have been arranged and negotiated prior to committing to building the community kitchen. I was very concerned, that if the community kitchen construction terminated for any reason, we would be stuck with a plot of land. I am not familiar with how this situation continued after my departure but to my knowledge, this did not end up being the case.

Yogurt Production

On the whole, the actual yogurt production was one of the most stable portions of the program during my Internship. However, this varies greatly when considering the production of strictly yogurt with probiotic bacteria (probiotic yogurt).
The beginnings of these problems were experienced with Brian and Cynthia. Occasionally, some of the probiotic cultures being made at NIMR would spoil and not be suitable for mixing in with the regular yogurt. At first, this was just a once-in-a-while occurrence, around 30% of all yogurt being made within my first month of the Internship. However, this number increased significantly with time. Eventually, by November, essentially all probiotic cultures coming from the NIMR lab were disposed because of spoiling. I kept Dr. Reid and Dr. Hekmat in as close communication as possible about this issue and they were just as perplexed as myself.

NIMR’s microbiologist Simon was also very confused and concerned on why this was happening. He spent a considerable amount of time tinkering around with the procedure list and ensuring that everything in his lab were hygienically sterile.

The latter point was thought upon significantly because many of us thought that it was contamination from foreign bacteria that was causing this problem. Nevertheless, much of the evidence that we collected did not necessarily support this theory. For instance, Simon could not find any additional/foreign bacteria with the resources he had – also, spoiled cultures sometimes coincided with viable cultures.

My personal belief was that yogurt production was not being made in suitable anaerobic conditions. The incubator in the NIMR lab did not work very often, nor did the jars that the cultures were placed in. The larger containers of cultures usually spoiled more than the smaller ones - I believe this was due to the fact that the candle (oxygen-removal system) was being extinguished before all oxygen could be removed. Its like putting a spoon over an open flame. The lid of the jar and the large containers inside acted in the same way.

When I left Mwanza in November, I had an agenda to consult with Dr. Hekmat and understand how to solve this problem. However, when I returned in January a different problem arose. One of the items needed to make the probiotics – MRS, had hardened from its original powdered form and was unusable. This was probably due to the warm temperatures in the lab. The fallout of this was felt until my second departure in April.

I had attempted to find a local source of MRS; however, I came empty handed. I then requested for the item to be shipped from Canada/UWO. By the time the MRS arrived, it was nearly April, and the end of my internship. There were only two weeks/two attempted batches of probiotic cultures, both of which all spoiled. I realized that there was nothing I could do at this point, and the matter would be in the hands of my successors to help sort out. I documented production of the last batch of probiotics made and outlined the procedures to Dr. Hekmat and Jaimie, the intern assigned to this problem, upon my return.

Throughout my 10 month internship, I’m estimating that only 15-20% of all yogurt made was probiotic.
Selling yogurt

I was approached in September by Kivulini’s newly opened restaurant regarding the purchase of yogurt. I told them that it was fine as long as it was not probiotic. The Yogurt Mamas were keen to this idea, and the money made went into their project bank account.

However, during my hiatus in-between my two Internship placements, the Yogurt Mamas started selling the yogurt to selected individuals within the public. Initially, this was a big concern for me, but actually, I was expecting it to happen.

First, we needed to decide where the money was going. The Yogurt Mamas really did an excellent job in realizing that it would be wise to save this initial fund rather than immediately distribute it to themselves. Financial tracking (including yogurt sales) were arranged and recorded in accounting books by the Yogurt Mamas and Baluhya.

Secondly, we needed to ask who the yogurt would be available to. At first it was just going to selected families within the Yogurt Mamas’ community, of who were very sick. The Yogurt Mamas did another great thing in sacrificing their own yogurt for those who really needed it more.

Lastly, my concern was what they were telling their community the yogurt was for. Remember, this was in January and all the yogurt was just plain, non-probiotic. I stressed to the Yogurt Mamas that they couldn’t be going around the community saying that they were selling “special” yogurt. I believe they understood - but I cannot be certain.

As time progressed, eventually we began selling the yogurt to anyone who wanted it. This often included Kivulini employees and guests. It was a favourite with many, and we had many repeat customers.

I believe going down this road instead of keeping the yogurt “internally” had many benefits. Chiefly, it provided a lot of exposure with our yogurt and the project we were starting. It also gave some incentive for the Yogurt Mamas to keep in close contact with the project - money was finally being generated. This was demonstrated with the attendance of yogurt production, which drastically increased after implementing this new concept.

However, there were problems associated with it. Since we were selling yogurt, there was the concern of obtaining a business license. However, Kivulini was able to find some loopholes that if the project was for health reasons, we could get away without having one, and hence not have to pay taxes. Secondly, there was a great deal of financial responsibility on me – some of which I don’t know if I was properly prepared for. This mainly came in the form of setting a proper price for the yogurt we were selling and ensuring that the new “business” was heading down a sustainable track. With no prior business experience, I mainly had to learn some quick skills in a business book I purchased and ad-lib what I thought was right.
Lastly, and already briefly mentioned, was my concern that the community would start thinking that we were producing “maziwa virutubisho” (probiotic yogurt) that could prevent AIDS. Therefore, I strongly believe that education become a main component of this program. Even though researching the affects of probiotics is one of WHE’s intentions, this should go hand-in-hand with teaching the Mwanza community on how to obtain a healthier diet and how our yogurt can play a part in this role. I believe that this issue does relate to Canada’s tri-council policy statement on research and should be looked into more.

Research

Upon arrival in Mwanza and during the initial project assessment, I realized that most of my work would probably be focusing around the further project development rather than research on the effects of probiotics. The following reasons supported this decision.

Firstly, the amount of spoiled probiotic cultures made at NIMR was increasing dramatically. Not having a reliable source of the product would have made research impossible.

Secondly, the test group at the time was assumed to be the Yogurt Mamas and their families. However, since they were consuming probiotics (daily) before my arrival and no baseline data was collected prior to this, it essentially took them out of any probable research group. Keep in mind, the Yogurt Mamas were essentially being paid in yogurt for the work they were doing – should had we decided not to continue providing them yogurt and give it to someone else, we would have had to pay the Yogurt Mamas some monetary compensation instead. This action did not seem appropriate at the time mainly because there were no underlying goals or organizational structures that would help facilitate this transition. Therefore, it was not further pursued.

Other items like not having the program based closer to a community of a possible test group and the general output of yogurt production also played a role in focusing my time on up-scaling the program instead.

I did consider doing other research activities other than strictly the effects of probiotics. In hindsight, it’s probably an area I should have pursued more. Yet, although my Internship spanned almost 10 months, I was pretty much on-the-go for most of it and don't know if I would have had enough time to dedicate to more duties.

I firmly believe that research will become a bigger part of this project in the near future. I realize that its implementation probably took longer than expected; however, with key up scaling developments almost done, these undertakings will be of higher value (both in terms of quality and relevancy). Research findings will also play a major role in future funding proposals - I only have faith in the benefits of probiotics and hope that conclusive evidence demonstrating this will
become one of the great accomplishments of this project. In addition, I hope that other areas outside of probiotics are incorporated into WHE's research as well.

**Resource Management**

**Skills Matching**

Coming into my internship, it was evident that I would be working as a microbiology student, facilitating in the research of probiotics and working in the NIMR lab. I think this was a fair assumption to make considering half of my pre-departure training was spent in Dr. Reid’s labs and that my CIDA application form explicitly stated related objectives. However, I came out as a community-development worker instead.

Don't get me wrong, I was not unsatisfied with this course. I would not have signed up for another four months on the project if I disliked what I was doing – in addition, being able to take part in these activities has drastically changed my personal career outlook. However, I will acknowledge that I was unprepared for a lot of what I was to deal with, and I at times did not have the suitable skill set to properly carry out needed objectives.

Nonetheless, I think this issue must be taken seriously. When future Interns are dedicating their time and working overseas in this project, they should be given a clear indication on what they will be doing. Had I not enjoyed my new role, I could have fussed about it and probably left the Internship prematurely.

I feel that WHE may still be taking this course of action by asking for specific objectives on the current application form and guaranteeing these students an Internship a year or more in advance. I would only caution them not to assume that project activities will be predictable that far in the future.

On a completely different tone, during our three months together, Dallas and I as a team worked well. I think our personalities and skills were both different from each other, but we managed to balance these traits and assign various roles based on these aptitudes. One of these traits is touched upon next.

**Male Internship placements**

Being a male and working as an Intern in Mwanza had clear ups and downs. Most of the time, I felt pretty comfortable in terms of personal safety. Although being a westerner, I took extra precautions; it was not so much of a constant threat as it was with my female counterparts.

However, I think for the following reasons, a female Intern should be considered before a male. Firstly, I think by being a man, there were instances where the Yogurt Mamas did not feel comfortable being candid with me, and hence I was unaware of concerns they were having.
Also, one of the issues that I know I always thought about was my work with Kivulini. In many ways it makes more sense for a female intern to be working along a women’s rights group. This is not to declare that I didn’t enjoy my work with them - but it does say an extra something when a women can step up to this role and demonstrate to the community what Kivulini is all about.

Just as a quick aside, I believe the number of Interns also plays a crucial role in productivity. Being a solo-Intern for the majority of my Internship, I often found the work load too restricting and could have benefited sharing the duties with another counterpart.

A lot more of the activities are shifting into the hands of the primary participants in Mwanza; and hence, more independent, research-focused work may the new focus for Interns. However, I don’t think this should go ignored - having multiple Interns working together is a good way of sharing ideas and having someone nearby to relate to.

**Media Relations**

**Online Journals**

Throughout the 10 months I spent in Mwanza, I wrote and posted online journals (including photos) outlining my work and everyday experiences. The process worked fairly well given the limitations of internet in Mwanza City. Writing a weekly (or bi-weekly) summary allowed me to understand my progress better while it connected me to family, friends and WHE staff. Another benefit came with educating prospective Interns at UWO. They were able to read all about my work and gain a better understanding of what they would expect. This came into a critical role for my successors, of who did not have the advantage of Dallas and I by having an overlap of Internship placements. Therefore, I believe it’s critical to keep this tradition alive and encourage future Interns to create and post online journals.

**Media in Mwanza and Tanzania**

There were limited media opportunities within and around Mwanza. However, some may be effective for generating further support and education surrounding the benefits of probiotics. Between June 2005 and April 2006, there were two major connections with the WHE project and the Mwanza media.

The first came in late September 2005 where I was invited to do a show on the national English-speaking radio station in Mwanza. The DJ happened to be a good friend of mine, so we were able to organize it quite smoothly. The show itself worked well; I managed to get across some key points on how probiotics work its benefits and our project in Mwanza. The entire set lasted about 2 hours and I was generally satisfied with how it went. However, I didn’t receive any other feedback from the general public.
While I was in Canada during the 2005 Christmas season, some members at Kivulini organized members of a local Tanzanian (Swahili-speaking) Television station to come in and do a story on the yogurt project. Although I didn’t see the spot, I was told that Baluhya received some feedback from an individual in Uganda. Even though nothing directly came out of it, I think its occurrence was beneficial.

Comparing the response of these two instances is a noteworthy way of suggesting further contact with the media. Even though radio is more widely used than television, I believe the key factor is language. The majority of Tanzanians don’t understand English, and those that do may still have a limited knowledge. Therefore, further correspondence with the media in Tanzania should be conducted in Swahili. If WHE was interested in doing a story in Kenya (for example), then the opposite may be true.

Also, print and direct education sessions (festivals, promotional meetings, etc…) should be looked into the future as well.

Media in Canada

Not having a close relationship with media sources in Canada was a let down for my internship. Although I did produce the aforementioned online journals, they didn’t get much attention past the blog and WHE websites. I would have really enjoyed doing a piece in one of UWO’s publications, the Gazette or Western News, however after some attempts in getting in contact with key players, nothing materialized. It was quite frustrating to try and organize this within Mwanza, and I would have greatly preferred to have had a steady media contact arranged prior to departure(s).

Community Liaisons

The roles of Kivulini

Kivulini played an integral role in social, logistical and moral support throughout my Internship. The staff there happened to be an extremely hard working group of people who still took time out of their busy schedule to help out our project when needed. A few examples include providing translational services when I required precise communication to Swahili speakers. Also, they were able to facilitate transportation, and on a few occasions, accommodate meeting facilities free of charge. Lastly, many of their staff would often pop into our adjacent apartment area and provide some encouragement or advice with whatever tasks I would be taking on that day.

Nevertheless, the role of Kivulini does go much deeper than providing general support for Interns. Kivulini has a vested interest in the WHE yogurt program. Their organization takes pride in the high quality work they produce – and throughout my Internship, they wanted to make sure that this project was no exception. I believe they were becoming frustrated with the progress of the project, especially within the last three months of my time in Mwanza. I believe their
reasons for feeling this way were justified to some extent: they wanted the yogurt program to start working on its own. This would allow Kivulini to become more of a contact person rather than a key player and hence not tying up some of their resources anymore.

One of Kivulini’s suggestions was making the Yogurt Mamas their own non-governmental organization (NGO) - a controversial proposal at the time, but one Kivulini pushed for nonetheless. This event and a few others are an example of the sometimes imbalanced relationship WHE and I sometimes had with Kivulini. Although I believe they tried very hard and advocated for the project in best intentions - when I sometimes disagreed or questioned a stated course or issue, their opinion often took dominance. This is perhaps due to that they could communicate to the Yogurt Mamas a lot better or had a stronger understanding of the culture. Nonetheless, I sometimes felt inferior to some of their decision making choices and did not feel like my voice was always being heard.

Besides being cc’d on a few emails, I also think that Kivulini did not have much more contact directly with WHE. WHE may want to make a better attempt at strengthening these bonds (to NIMR as well) since these are after all, our key partners - this is especially true in instances where Interns are absent and are not able to transmit the information themselves.

I don’t want this to seem that I had a rocky relationship with Kivulini. I did enjoy working alongside them very much and overall the effectiveness of this partnership was good. I was impressed on a daily basis on the hard work and great activities they performed (outside of the yogurt project). Their staff and reputation in the community are outstanding and their involvement (on any level) will always be a valuable asset to WHE.

The roles of NIMR

The role of NIMR was often a touchy issue with me, mainly because during a large portion of my internship, their involvement seemed stagnant and wasn’t going in any direction. NIMR’s main objective in this project is research. Hence, since the research component of this program was very neglected during my Internship, I found it difficult to find a venue to make them more engaged with the project. Because of this distance, I felt that their future involvement with the project was endangered.

Another central issue with NIMR management was compensating their technician, Simon in return for his time spent making the probiotic cultures. The general agreement arranged prior to me arriving was that this reimbursement was not subject to a timeline, rather whenever WHE could afford these funds, the payment would commence. There was no steady or predictable funding during the first portion of my Internship, and given the information I was being provided by WHE, it was hard for me to determine whether or not I should have provided any funds to him.
However, during the end of my fall term, we began to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between WHE and NIMR. This document intended to outline the broader terms of NIMR's involvement - indirectly including Simon's (and other staff's) key role. When I returned to Canada during my winter hiatus, I was encouraged by WHE to make arrangement to get the MoU negotiated and accommodate Simon's payment. Albeit slow, this process worked out before I departed the following April.

By the time I had left, the MoU had been agreed upon and was being sent out to NIMR's main headquarters in Dar es Salaam for approval. I would assume that once that is finished, payment to NIMR will begin.

In retrospect, there was a growing frustration from Simon and his personal resentment of not being paid. Although we were within the initial agreement, I think that he had been hearing the same thing for too long and was getting impatient. This is understandable, since there was no timeline settled. Nevertheless, it also wasn't straightforward to pinpoint a definite price on his services or concretely define the MoU with management. I too was becoming frustrated because I wasn’t always given clear messages regarding these issues.

As the project develops further and research becomes a bigger component, NIMR's involvement will naturally become bigger and I don’t think the problems we encountered will necessarily become an issue. My suggestion with NIMR would be the general task of strengthening bonds and relations with the project and WHE. Much like how the Yogurt Mama's role developed, NIMR can become a bigger player by taking part in more of the goal setting and project orientation - beyond the aforementioned MoU.

Baluhya

Baluhya joined the Mwanza team in September 2005 as a full-time yogurt supervisor. Up to this point, there was a growing need to hire a manager whom would fulfill some of the responsibilities that Interns had previously been doing. This includes, daily check-ups on production, keeping track of project expenditures, and communicating with Kivulini on progress. In addition, the yogurt supervisor would help act as a liaison between the Yogurt Mamas and I; before this, communication was often difficult whereas the Yogurt Mamas essentially speak no English.

It didn’t take long for Baluhya to fit into her role. The transition was pretty smooth and since Dallas’ departure coincided with the hiring of Baluhya, this allowed me to dedicate more time to other areas of the program rather than have to always be involved with the daily yogurt making activities. Also by having Baluhya involved, I firmly believe this rapidly increased the progression of goal setting and project planning, which was desperately needed.

Baluhya was under contract to continue her work through September 2007. Although her responsibilities may not be the same by that time, I think future Interns should consider keeping her involved in the project in some capacity. Her
excellent communication skills and understanding of health promotion (where her education background is in) directly benefits Intern’s project interaction and the yogurt project’s objectives respectively.

I would suggest reviewing the contract I designed for her previous working period when negotiating the price and obligations of her next term. Kivulini may be able to provide some further insight with this, as they did with me.

The Yogurt Mamas

The role of the Yogurt Mamas was and still is pretty clear: to make yogurt and be the main benefactors of the project. At first, the process was that the Yogurt Mamas took shifts every week, made a batch of yogurt and received a sufficient quantity of the product every day. However, as priorities changed, so did this relationship.

In the middle of September, Kivulini, Baluhya and I began one of many discussions on the future of the yogurt program, which often surrounded the responsibilities of the Yogurt Mamas. At first, this involved obtaining funding for the group so they would be able to carry out activities properly. I assisted in writing a couple of these proposals, one to a local charity ball in Mwanza, the other to an NGO – which both ended unsuccessfully.

However, it became apparent to Kivulini that the Yogurt Mamas may need to re-establish themselves as their own NGO. I was weary of heading down this path, and with some good advice from WHE, encouraged the group away from pursuing this idea. By this time it was November, and it became apparent that more funding would be entering the project, hence I told them that obtaining money wasn’t a key issue and forming an NGO wouldn’t be necessary. Nevertheless, these NGO and funding applications that the Yogurt Mamas had begun filling out provided a big learning experience.

Starting in January, I began to work much more closely with the Yogurt Mamas with future goal setting. However, essentially all of the ideas presented were coming from the Yogurt Mamas instead of myself. I think this aspect was the cornerstone of the project whereas they began to understand their role a lot more. In addition, this gave them a lot more control over future courses of action. For example, they expressed how the overall problem of HIV/AIDS affects their community and how the yogurt program is beneficial for this cause, especially for women and girls. My involvement in this process was sometimes as a facilitator and other instances as a resource for questions mainly regarding finances and future resources.

I probably consider the development of the Yogurt Mamas as a group the best success during my internship. I am not taking credit for this happening; rather I was just very satisfied with how this process went. I know the Yogurt Mamas became more zealous, and developed a better sense of direction - and for that I couldn’t be happier. For the yogurt project to become truly sustainable, this direct involvement with the Mamas must be further embraced.
One last side note with the Yogurt Mamas came in the form of their families’ view on their involvement – particularly from their husbands. I was notified during the end of my Internship, that some of the younger Yogurt Mamas were being beaten for taking part in the program because the husbands were suspicious of their activities. Eventually, this problem was handled by the elder men by telling their younger counterparts that the project only had good intentions and should not be a source of suspicion. I believe this incidence provides a valuable lesson that cultural barriers must be investigated thoroughly and if the necessary involving one of many of the Mwanza project partners to help (Kivulini, Baluhya, NIMR, project liaisons, etc...)  

Other NGOs

Mwanza has a great supply of other NGOs, many of which are faith-based, youth-focused or responsible for wide-ranging development. However, two NGOs in particular were connected to the project upon my arrival. The first was Heifer International – having a site just outside of Mwanza City. Brian and Cynthia had arranged to use their services in helping us obtain livestock and sustainable techniques to house them. Because of time restraints, Brian and Cynthia asked Dallas and I to continue where they left off.

This involved simply speaking to the Heifer-Mwanza’s coordinator on discussing the final requirements for our project. Brian and Cynthia had negotiated with them that WHE would be able to receive livestock (cows) for the Yogurt Mamas in Mabatini. However, this did not end up being the case. When Dallas and I visited Heifer, the previous coordinator had left the organization and the new one had no previous knowledge of this agreement. Furthermore, he stated that we would not qualify for their assistance because the project only supported rural-based programs – ours was considered a suburban setting. I won’t dwell on our attempts to reclaim their support. The bottom line being they were no longer able to assist our activities.

Another NGO associated with us at the time was Kimkumaka. Their purpose was to provide educational sessions on sustainable cattle rearing techniques. Throughout the course of my Internship, their services were never used solely because the Yogurt Mamas and I agreed that the educational sessions should be conducted immediately before obtaining our livestock. This was to prevent everyone forgetting what they had learned. For reasons discussed elsewhere in this report, unfortunately, the livestock were never obtained, hence the educational sessions were never held.

While the other two aforementioned NGOs had legitimate reasons for not being directly involved with the project during my Internship, I believe that Charles Mbakaya and KEMRI could have played a bigger role with the project had I made a better effort of doing so. After my initial encounter with Charles in Nairobi, I never contacted him again. Furthermore, when I returned to Canada in April, I was made aware that was frustrated that he wasn’t ‘in the loop’ and not able to help with the project anymore. I realize now that Charles and his team probably could
have helped out with two key issues. First, KEMRI could have provided some logistical support when we had troubles with our spoiled probiotic cultures. Secondly, they could have been contacted when I needed the MRS material - which ended up taking months being sent from Canada.

I also remember Charles as being a very kind and welcoming person - his keenness in our project would have probably helped my confidence when I was having the slew of difficulties especially in my last 3 months. I know that my successors have already been introduced to him and I can only stress that in the future they not forget him as a valuable resource.

Communications

Internet and phone service

Much of the communication between Tanzania and Canada is mainly limited to Internet (e-mail or sometimes instant messenger services). It often took around 2 days for a reply from emails sent to Canada - which was due mainly because of the natural time difference. Not much can be done to change this. There were four main internet facilities I used, one of which was in the Kivulini apartment; albeit, it was slow and sometimes offline.

Phone service during the Internship was relatively stable. I purchased a cell phone in Mwanza and used it frequently for local and overseas calls. Locally, it was a necessity to have - for instance, if a milk delivery didn’t arrive on time, it was much easier to call our distributor rather than visit him/her in person or tell the delivery-boy the next day. Internationally, I mainly just received calls from home - which was worth the phone purchase in itself.

In the future, I would suggest Interns purchasing a phone in Mwanza (spend <$100) just because phone theft/pick-pocketing is common.

Swahili - the language barrier

For understandable reasons, not speaking any Swahili coming into Mwanza provided great difficulty for me. Although the major players (Kivulini and NIMR staff) had a working level competence of English, the vast majority of the Mwanza public did not. This proved great difficulty when dealing with the Yogurt Mamas, community leaders and public workers to name a few.

There was little of getting around this other than “talking-the-talk” by learning Swahili. For the initial couple of months, I attended the Mwanza International Language School nearly every day. The course was taught by a Tanzanian-German lady whom was fluent in English. As my proficiency increased, I slowly took less and less classes, mainly to accommodate the extra work for the project.

I found it easy to rely on Swahili/English-speaking friends around me to communicate when I was having difficulty. However, it’s a bad habit to get into. The best way is to start early - and communicate in Swahili as much as possible.
Writing Swahili was not a very big concern and shouldn’t be strained over too much - unless future interns are planning on staying for a year or more, or will have lots of writing-responsibilities.

With Swahili-speaking members involved in WHE at UWO, it would be beneficial for future Interns to get some experience speaking in the language prior to departure. Even if it was just an hour a week - the early preparation would go a long way.

Tanzania – the cultural barrier

Like the language barrier, the cultural differences took some time adjusting and getting used to. Many of the solutions to this were also similar. During my Swahili lessons, my teacher often broke into discussion on characteristics unique to Tanzania. Also, it helped to make an effort and interact with the community as much as possible. Hence, had I hid in my apartment all day, I probably wouldn’t have come to terms on a lot of these differences. I would suggest reading some of my journals to get an understanding of some of the things I took part in.

Management

From Canada

During the course of my Internship, the WHE team from Canada did a great job dealing with a slew of issues, including pre departure preparedness, providing relevant feedback on emails, and providing overall encouragement and support.

However, there were a couple things that didn’t work well. First, it didn’t seem that there was always a person with WHE that could give an answer to a general concern, or the responses themselves would be conflicting between the members.

For instance, project objectives were always a priority with me and I often sought advice from different members on what should be done. It seemed that reactions were at times complete opposites and it was obvious that not all members were on the same frame-of-mind on where things were headed.

I think it’s vital for the key players of WHE expand their knowledge of the project and be open to one another about their perceived solutions on program issues. One way to do this is breaking out of the habit of using email as the default communication medium. Regular meetings should be conducted amongst the members and individuals should each bring their own ideas to discussions and make sure that they are stated.

Flow of Information from WHE to Intern and Visa-Versa

Communication from myself to WHE was at times very difficult and frustrating.

When issues required three or four replies via email, it often took a week or more from start of conversation to finish. It was also very hard to explicitly state
positions and expect that the other (WHE) person would understand. Another beef I had with the emails was that there were just too many being sent. Over time, I believe this created a sense of apathy. Because of this, many times when an urgent reply was needed, it was not taken as such. I am not being critical of those individuals; rather I’m trying to make a point that the communication link is inherently flawed.

I think WHE needs to take some more creative ways in reducing the amount of emails and increasing the effectiveness of communication. I would make three example suggestions. First, I think it would be a good idea to begin an online discussion board that members could check at their own leisure and read how other members have responded. Second, I would encourage WHE members to read Intern’s logs comprehensively and become more educated on the project progress, to prevent multiple emails from being sent. Lastly, phone call check-ups should be attempted from WHE to Intern periodically (ex. 15 minutes every two weeks) – this form of oral contact would really help the speed and efficiency of this overseas communication.

Transition to successors

In April, soon after my return to Canada, myself and many WHE members met to discuss some key issues regarding my Internship, and goals for the future of the project. Hence, I was able to touch upon some of the issues, all of which are highlighted in this report. During this debriefing meeting, I could tell the WHE staff was a lot more well-informed and organized compared to when I was entering the project the same time the previous year. It was apparent that all the members were really starting to understand their roles in WHE a lot better, evidence of that came in the form of a large research grant WHE was due to receive and the selection of future Interns, including a project evaluator. As well, I was informed that a lot of program development and awareness campaigns had taken place on UWO – generating a very strong response from the university community.

The only part I found puzzling of the debriefing meeting was that it didn’t seem that individual members were reading my journal postings (very closely or at all). For example, many members were shocked to hear that the program hadn’t been making probiotic yogurt for the last six months, even though I had explicitly stated this problem throughout my emails and blogs. Nevertheless, I think my main concerns made some headway with the team, especially through the work of my successors, Ellena, Jaimie and Grace.

It seemed that the interns arrived safely and without any major problems. They made me aware of one problem regarding finances left for apartment fees during the gap between the two sets and how it wasn’t clear on how this money was supposed to be spent. For future Interns, I would recommend negotiating these terms with both Mwanza and Canadian parties.

Before my successors left, I tried to stress the WHE team that I was still interested in helping with the project and would love to know of any updates that were
taking place. I did obtain some information during their first few months, but as time passed I received essentially no more information on what was going on with WHE. After spending nearly a year of my life working on this project and not really hearing any more updates was a bit trying for me. I feel like the transparency of communication I tried to push for during my Internship has not been reciprocated back to me since my return.

**Finances**

**Availability**

The amount of funds I was provided with during my internship was sufficient to carry out the needed activities of the program.

**Accountability**

Due to the CIDA internship requirements I was required to keep track of literally every shilling I spent while in Tanzania. While this proved to be very difficult at times, I managed to keep it up over the 10 month period. Ruta Lawerence helped me to a great extent with putting my financing summary together. Although it took about two whole days in the summer to complete the task, in the end the statements balanced out as expected.

Should the reader require further information, documentation can be found at her office. Overall, I was due to receive a compensative-check from the university, because I had spent my personal savings for many project related items. This money simply came out of an account that the grant money was in.

Now that CIDA has changed these requirements and giving the grants directly to the Interns, instead of the University, I realize that the paper work I had to go through is no longer practiced. In summary, I believe the new system should work much better and efficiently; however, Interns may want to keep a very detailed list of items spent to ensure that the accountability of their expenditures can be verified, should the program be audited.

**D - Overview**

WHE took on a daring role in starting up their own project rather than joining forces with a pre-existing one. As it has already shown, there is a great need of commitment from all individuals involved with this project – far beyond the Intern or primary participants. Therein lies the challenge of being able to communicate effectively and provide relevant, well-informed contributions to project situations. In addition, goal setting and project direction is an issue that must involve these same members unilaterally, with discretion. As more progress is made by these efforts, additional consideration will also need to be taken in account for short and long term feasibility, sustainability and effectiveness of project activities; community education and awareness will need to be incorporated and emphasized to ensure these can occur.
I would like to end this report with a special thanks to all of those who have worked on Western Heads East on any level, including our valued partners: Kivulini, NIMR, the Yogurt Mamas and their community. What I believe is so powerful of this program is the involvement of such a diverse group of people on opposite parts of the world, focusing down on one common goal. There is no easy answer on how this project will commence throughout the following months and years. However, at the very least, we have already accomplished so much by incorporating a ground-breaking product to alleviate some of the effects of poverty and HIV/AIDS in Tanzania. Thank you - Asante sana.