Building a Clever Cubs School Hostel in Namibia, Africa

An appeal and argument for the construction of a domicile for the abandoned and orphaned students of the Clever Cubs pre-primary school located within N/a'ankuse Wildlife Sanctuary

Tag Words: Namibia; Clever Cubs; education; third world; hostel; children; literacy; Africa; N/a’ankuse

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Summary
N/a'ankuse Wildlife Sanctuary houses a small population of children from the San Bushman families that work and live on the sanctuary. However, there are many children that are left as orphans on the reserve from other Bushman tribes that are unwilling to or cannot take care of them. While N/a'ankuse does have a pre-primary school for these children called the Clever Cubs School, it does not yet have a place for these orphaned kids to live. Building a hostel inside the wildlife sanctuary's Bushman village will provide these orphan kids with a proper place within which they can live and further their developmental growth. We approached two student groups within Rutgers with the intention to raise awareness about this issue. With the following proposal, we aimed to argue the economic social, moral and cultural benefits of constructing such a hostel. Moreover, we hope to provide N/a’ankuse Wildlife Sanctuary with a feasible model unto which they can use to help start their hostel project. Fundraising will help raise money for the supplies needed to build the hostel, estimated to be about N$ 52,000 or USD$ 7,500. Overall, the hostel will give the orphan kids a warm place to live at and to study at, and provide the stability that they will need to mature into fully functional adults participating within Namibian society. (DP/CX)
Video Link
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szL6319kRtA

Background Information

N/a’ankuse Foundation, located about half an hour away from the city of Windhoek in Namibia, was started in 2007 by Marlise and Rudie van Vuuren. The missions of this organization are the conservation of Namibia’s wildlife population and the preservation of its ethnic Bushman community (“About N/a’ankuse”, 2011). Several projects are run through the foundation including:

- Wildlife Sanctuary which provides a safe haven to rehabilitated injured and/or orphaned animals
- A Carnivore Research Station which currently focuses on developing sophisticated methods to track large cats once from the sanctuary that were released back into the wild
- A Lifeline Clinic which provides free health care to the impoverished San Bushman community
- A Clever Cubs School which provides free pre-primary education to San Bushman children (“About N/a’ankuse”, 2011)

The latter is what our project will focus on. Specifically, we would like to help N/a’ankuse fulfill their vision of creating a hostel for orphaned children who currently attend their Clever Cubs School. This hostel would also provide accommodation for the school’s full-time teacher, Hilma Kapewasha, and give them a means to learn basic life skills that would facilitate their eventual transition into the adult world, as is desired by the N/a’ankuse staff.


The San Bushman

It has been reputed that the San Bushman culture in Namibia is one of the oldest cultures in the world. Traditionally hunter gatherers, they have been forced to give up their nomadic lifestyle as the government continually sets aside their original lands to cattle producers for grazing use. Moreover, adapting to a different, more modern standard of living is made difficult for the Bushman community by historical prejudices—education, medical care, and job opportunities are not often available to San Bushman as a result of the long-standing discrimination. Consequently, this forces the San into great political, social and economical exclusion from society which only exacerbates the problematic and unstable relationship that the San people have with the Namibian government (“Assessment for San Bushman in Namibia”, 2003).

Although steps have been made to officially end the discriminatory policies against the San that had previously dominated the Namibian government, San are still often barred from public and
civil office positions, denied access to legal documents and national recognition, and have limited access to education (“Assessment for San Bushman in Namibia”, 2003). For this reason, the San have high rates of illiteracy. About 60% of the community lives in poverty (though percentages vary by region), and most have suffered from preventable disease like tuberculosis, nematode infections of the feet, and/or alcoholism.

Furthermore, San children often do not get the chance to go to mainstream schools due in part to physical or learning disabilities stemming from their underprivileged living conditions and linguistic barriers. While Namibia operates through Afrikaans or English, must like South Africa, the San—having been kept out of Namibian politics, culture, and society for years—communicate using unique variants of Khosian click languages (“Assessment for San Bushman in Namibia”, 2003). This relegates these children into an unfair linguistic disadvantage early on in their life which only proves to further isolate them from assimilating properly into society in their future.


The Clever Cubs School

Fortunately, N/a’ankuse Foundation has established several programs with the intention to improve the impoverished conditions the San Bushman live in. Not only has the organization striven to better the lives of the San Bushman people by providing adults with permanent jobs as N/a’ankuse Wildlife Sanctuary staff, but through the establishment of the Clever Cubs School, it has created a safe, learning environment for the Bushman staff’s children who would have otherwise never had the opportunity to attend school that is both free to them and close to home (“About N/a’ankuse”, 2011). The school is especially a lifeline for orphaned children or for those who have been abandoned at the sanctuary. Without the Clever Cubs School, many of these children would not have found a stable and innovative milieu in which they can mature creatively, socially, and academically.

Since its establishment in 2009, the Clever Cubs School has expanded its curriculum to include English, Math, Arts & Crafts, Sport and Environmental Studies (“About N/a’ankuse”, 2011). It has also enabled 13 of its pre-primary graduates to enroll in the mainstream primary school located in the city of Windhoek, securing these children access to a proper education that would provide them with a better future. Many of these children have been previously rejected from school for neonatal conditions. For example, one of the students, 12 year old Kanna, suffers from fetal alcohol syndrome and debilitating physical impairment from polio. However, under the guidance of Hilma at the Clever Cubs School, he has been given a chance to an education that would have never been afforded to him. In another example, 6 year old Levy, who initially suffered from social anxiety and uncontrollable anger when he first join the Clever Cubs School last year, has developed so profoundly in his academics, social skills, and mental prowess that he was awarded a bursary from one of Namibia’s most established private schools to complete all his schooling years (“About N/a’ankuse”, 2011). This fantastic opportunity could not have been available to him had he not initially had the support of Hilma and the rest of the staff behind the Clever Cubs School.
Clearly, the school’s importance to the community cannot be understated. At Clever Cubs, the children are given the stability, attention and guidance that they need, which is an environment that some parents may not be able to give them at home. Furthermore, the school provides a complimentary lunch for these children. Often times, this is the only substantial meal they receive a day (“About N/a’ankuse”, 2011). Additionally, besides learning essential language, math, and critical thinking skills that would greatly aid their interpersonal communication in the future, these children are also given an opportunity to properly socialize in a fun and safe environment under adult supervision.

It is often due to this innovative learning environment that these children are able to get the start in life they deserve and develop proficiency in academic skills that would help them gain entrance into mainstream schools in Namibia. The 13 Clever Cubs graduates who are currently enrolled in primary and secondary schools in Windhoek have integrated well into their new environment, and have often been rewarded with “Certificates for Good Behaviour” by their respective teachers (“About N/a’ankuse”, 2011). This indicates that they have been well prepared by the tutelage they received under the Clever Cubs School program.


The Issue: The Lack of a Home for Abandoned and Orphaned Clever Cubs Students

As much as the Clever Cubs program has sufficiently provides students with an environment for academic, emotional, and developmental maturation, the school does not have enough funding to also provide dorms for orphaned children who have been abandoned at the school. There are about 6 – 8 children who currently have no permanent home, but without the proper resources, the foundation cannot provide a stable home for these kids to live in. Consequently, they have been forced to shuffle these children around to temporary housing units. However, the staff at N/a’ankuse are concerned this will be detrimental to their mental health in the long run.

In this day and age, it is unfortunate that many children are still unable to gain access to first rate, quality education either because it is too costly to do so, or because they have been denied access due to historical prejudices. This should not be the case. In fact, in 2000 the United Nations declared eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) with the aim to improve social and economic conditions in the poorest countries of the world by 2015 (“Millennium Development Goals”, 2010). Among these goals included the following:

Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1)

Achieving universal primary education (MDG 2)

To help realize these goals by 2015, it is important that the people of the world act together. The Clever Cubs School initiative begun by N/a’ankuse is a project that already takes steps to fulfill Millennium Development Goal 2 (MDG2). Additionally, it also takes indirect steps to fulfill Millennium Development Goal 1 (MDG3). By educating the generation of the
future—children—we will set them on a path that will give them the skills to sustain jobs and obtain a means to provide for themselves for life.


Arguments for the Construction of the Hostel

(DP) Statistics show that one out of four kids in Sub-Saharan African countries do not receive an education (Aitchison and Harley, 2006). Children who are homeless are even more likely to lack access to a proper education, which affects their future ability to get jobs and find a proper means to support themselves. Building a shelter and school will not only help poor children but also the economy of the country as a whole. Education is important because it lays the foundation for a strong economy by creating a more intelligent and versatile workforce. By ensuring that the youth are able to read and write sets the nation on a path to greater success. Increased education will help these Bushman to attract new economic opportunities to their region or at the very least become more efficient at the jobs that they already do. Future generations will be able to enjoy a better standard of living then those of the past. Remember the famous Chinese proverb, “Give a man a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a man to fish and you will feed him for a lifetime.”

The following are the four reasons why the shelter should be built:


Economic Arguments:

Education is a long term solution to the problem of poverty that affects much of South Africa. Increased literacy rates will help later generations compete with surrounding regions for better economic opportunities (“Education in South Africa,” 2011). Business needs to have a capable supply of labor to compete and education may be the key to aid this economically depressed area. Education will also increase the efficiency of agricultural land through the use of new farming methods and techniques. Take into consideration this account from N/a’ankuse. It is not uncommon for young adults to not finish their secondary education because it was necessary for them to care of their siblings. For those kids there is no future. It is essential that Namibia increase their people’s level of education so that their nation will be more marketable in the global economy.

The path to literacy is not an easy one though. Many children are born to parents with no education further entrenching the existing cycle of poverty. If previous generations were able to survive without the benefits of education why should future generations bother? By building the shelter for these Bushmen it will allow these people an opportunity to improve their people. Constant interaction with a teacher who lives as part of their community will allow them to listen to regular English language throughout the whole day and not only school hours. This will give them a greater exposure to the language which will help them remember it more.
Many African children start their education late due to family obligations or disbelief in the importance of education ("Education in South Africa," 2011). These children already start behind children in other countries. Statistics show that at least one out of four kids in South Africa did not attend school in 2008. This percentage is unacceptable by any standard and needs to be immediately remedied. Children born into this cycle have little hope other than poverty. These children have no future prospects or learned skills to improve their lot in life. If they can’t support themselves, how can they provide for their future families?

Learning English in school is also very helpful. Africa has many different dialects which makes it difficult for everyone to communicate. Nations in both Europe and Asia strengthened their economies by increasing literacy rates and standardizing the language of their countries. Nations whose people speak and write one standard language are able to communicate ideas more efficiently and effectively. This new unified nation is strong.

(DP/CX) Proficiency in English will allow the Bushman people to compete in the new global economy that dominates the world today. This area would be better suited to tourism if it was able to provide quality service to English speaking guests. Take for instance my own recent trip to Africa. During my stay it was very hard to talk to the bushman people. We had to communicate with them by showing with hands what we wanted. They are very smart people but the language barrier made everything very difficult. Trying to speak to the kids and asking them what they are playing involved so much effort which could have been avoided if they were more proficient in English.


Moral Arguments:

(DP/AG) People forget that there are parts of the world that still suffer from poverty. These people have no education, no food, and are forced to deal with the evils of discrimination. It is true that these nations receive aid, but even still minority groups like the Bushman are neglected. The bushman kids live in slums, receive little education, and are isolated from the rest of the world. They basically live in a bubble. Providing them with education and a better place to live is the right thing to do. Fundraising seems to focus on money and food, but that is something that is in great supply. Redirect these efforts to improve education. These people need is an opportunity to learn about life and other cultures outside of their parochial world.

(DP) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that “everyone has the right to education.” (Article 26) It is a moral and social right to educate and help the ones that do not have the money and resources to learn. This historic document was created in 1948 by the United Nations as a framework of basic rights that all humans should enjoy. The UDHR states earlier that “Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.” (Article 25) Many children in Namibia are homeless orphans that wander the streets of rural communities. A shelter/school will provide a community center to help cure this social ill. Not only will they
have a place to live but also a new social outlet as well. Children should be entitled to special care and assistance. It is morally correct to help them in their time of need, and to provide them with a safe, warm place to stay. Another point the UDHR makes is that:

”Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”

As obvious from the quotation above it is important to teach children about respect for other humans and the evils of discrimination. By living together they will learn to respect one another and appreciate each other’s company.

(CX) Research has shown that a child’s emotional development is as important factor affecting their ability to focus in school (Sherrod, 2002). In order to promote literacy and other academic skills, educational programs should tailor themselves not only on a child’s education but on the child’s life as a whole (Raver, 2002). Moreover, according to research presented at the National Symposium on Homelessness Research in 2007, “young homeless children experience more developmental delays and emotional problems” compared to domiciled children in both middle and low class families. Research also shows that conflict, trauma, and violence tend also to be prominently featured in the lives of homeless children.

These studies highlight the shocking dichotomy between the developmental impact of children with homes and children without homes. Furthermore, they show the importance of having stability in a child’s life in relation to their future learning ability. For this reason, we feel that it is highly important that a hostel be built for these children. It would serve like a dorm for the children to live in, and gift their full time teacher the opportunity to live with them to help them learn other needed skills in life such as laundry, cooking, interpersonal communication skills, and how to properly take care of themselves.


Cultural Arguments:
Culture is defined as “development or improvement of the mind by education”. Minority groups in Africa do not have the opportunity to learn about other cultures, especially orphan children of the bushman people. The children in N/a’ankuse are only surrounded by their own kind. They only learn about their culture and language, and never get to see what is beyond. In this new developed world, English is important to master. Most books are now written in English and in most countries this is the language that is spoken. If the children become literate they can read about the history of their own kind which will help preserve their culture and beliefs.

From my own experience with the bushman kids, most of them did not know about other cultures, costumes, and religion. For me they lived in a bubble which is not good. Building a school-shelter for them, these kids can learn the different costumes; they can teach it to one another and then pass it on to their own families. If the kids lose their costumes, their culture and language will sooner or later die out. If they become literate they will always be able to record important cultural knowledge to pass on from generation to generation.

There is still a lot of discrimination against the bushman people and their culture and the way of being. As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.” These people have a right to follow their own culture and live freely as they choose.


Social Arguments:

A good education provides the children with a solid background to have successful futures. It is especially important that the children are given the opportunity to learning their English language instruction in primary school, as both English and Afrikaans are used interchangeably in daily Namibian exchange. It is proven that at an early age it is easier to pick up a second language. A “linguistic study shows that children who begin learning a second language before adolescence [age 14] exhibit more native-like pronunciation and are more likely to become fluent speakers” (“Learning a Second Language: When & Why”, 2010). This means that if the child begins learning the language at an early age, it is easier for him/her to become fluent and speak more clearly. If English can be taught correctly and well at the primary schools in Namibia and the rest of South Africa, the children have a better chance of retaining the language and using it more in the future.

Learning English is certainly important for day to day communication, but we cannot forget about the significance of proper reading and writing skills. About 9 million people in South Africa (over the age of fifteen) are considered to be illiterate (Aitchison and Harley, 2006). This probably stems from the fact that they were not taught English at a young age, or even at all. The key problem is the age which the language is taught. Many students in the United States have to take a foreign language in high school. They study it for roughly three years as part of the
compulsory school curriculum. After completing their required years, however, they stop using it every day and the language begins to fade. In comparison, learning the language at a younger age, such as in elementary school, the students stick with one language usually and continue to study it from grade one through high school. That is twelve years of studying a language (if learning until twelfth grade). Having a strong primary education that not only focuses on speech, but also on reading and writing can help lower this statistic. Being able to read and write can help these children go out into the real world and be able to communicate to others. The ability to read in English can connect them to the entire world. They can keep up with current events and trends happening all over the place. Being bilingual is also a bonus when looking for jobs within their country as well as anywhere English may be spoken.

Along with education comes the social aspect of attending school and interacting with classmates. It is important for the children to know that there is a world outside of their small tribes. At school, the children can interact with other children from all different places and learn about their cultures and life. Even though they come from different places and may speak different dialects, they can be friends and be unified at a school. Additionally, school teaches team work through group projects. When the children learn to work together at school, they can transfer that to working together with their tribe for a greater good. Giving the children daily homework makes them learn time management and also that they should be proud of any work they accomplish. Finally, the kids have different teachers who may focus on specific topics or teach a certain way. This broad range of learning and interactions help the children adapt to society. This is especially true for the Bushmen tribe kids on the Na’ankuse wildlife reserve. The reservation is aware of how important socialization is for their children, so they bus about a dozen of them every day to neighboring towns for schooling.


Service Project: Raising Awareness About the Issue and Appealing for Project Donations (AG/CX) Originally, we were going to help expand on the Clever Cubs School because many of the children have to be bussed to other schools in the neighboring towns. We thought initially that creating a larger school could help N/a’ankuse financially in the long run in terms of getting rid of the need to bus children to schools in neighboring towns, which over time becomes a heavy drain on the foundation’s resources. However, we learned from Dara, the Head of Finances at N/a’ankuse Foundation that the children actually enjoy going to the other towns for school because they get to socialize with other children from other Bushmen tribes and towns. Moreover, this socialization is great in terms of helping them assimilate more smoothly into Namibian society in the future. So, we decided to focus our attention on another related problem – the large amount of orphaned children at the reservation.
Na’ankuse has a small population of children from the families that work and live on the wildlife sanctuary. However, there are many children that are left as orphans on the sanctuary from other Bushman tribes that do not or cannot take care of them. They are abandoned at N/a’ankuse’s Clever Cubs School because the Bushmen people know that they will be taken care of well. The sanctuary however, has no extra housing available for these children and they have to be taken in by the families that already struggle to make ends meet.

(AG) Our service project consists of raising awareness and persuading others to donate so that N/a’ankuse would be able to accumulate enough funds to complete their vision of a children’s hostel. As a non-profit organization, N/a’ankuse completely relies on volunteer donations to complete their projects while receiving no government funding. The hostel would be located at the existing Bushmen village on the border of N/a’ankuse Wildlife Sanctuary. This way, the children do not feel secluded from the rest of the community and can socialize with everyone else. We want the children to feel that they are a part of the N/a’ankuse’s Bushmen village. Dara Barrett, the financial coordinator of the foundation, explained that there are roughly 6-8 children who are currently homeless, but this number does fluctuate. They would need the hostel to at minimum ten children, most likely two per bedroom. The hostel also must include plumbing and possibly some other living space. There would need to be one extra bedroom for their guardian. In this case, the school teacher (Hilma) would be living in the hostel with the children to supervise them. She already acts a parental figure since she spends almost every day with the children and educates them, so she would be the best person to live at the hostel.

We contacted Dara over the last few months and received a lot of positive feedback from her and her organization about our idea (D. Barrett, personal communication, 2011). She provided us with a list of required supplies as well as their prices. With this information, we will be able to plan out approximately how much money we need to raise as well as what materials are needed to build the hostel.

(CX) We also wanted to contact the list of well-known N/a’ankuse investors who had previously contributed large donations to N/a’ankuse Foundation (such as, for example, Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt), but Dara wished to keep that information private. Therefore, we decided to turn to students for our appeal, specifically the Africana House—which is a Douglass based living learning community that focuses on African issues—and the Douglass Student Recruitment Network—in which Cindy is the Community Service Chairwoman.

They allotted about ten minutes for us to speak to them about our Hostel Initiative at one of their meetings. We summarized our experience at N/a’ankuse, the reasons why we wanted to help the foundation build a hostel to support the orphaned and abandoned children at the Clever Cubs School, and the research supporting the positive effects of building such a domicile for homeless children. After our presentation, we opened up the floor to questions, comments, and feedback. We were very excited that the students we spoke to were enthusiastic about the idea of possibly donating and/or going to N/a’ankuse in the future. We will keep in touch with them to see their progress in the future.

Please visit Appendixes I and II for our proposed blue print and the estimated budget we compiled based on information Dara presented to us about the construction costs of the Clever...
Cubs School. We made our calculations based on the type of material that N/a’ankuse would most likely construct the hostel out of (concrete) and took into account any particular characteristics of the building (such as solar powered electricity) that Dara specifically asked be included in the model blue print (D. Barret, personal communication, 2011).

(CX/AG/DP) This hostel that we propose would be constructed in the likeness of a dorm. To be specific, it will have three bedrooms with three bathrooms. The following are the measurement specifications of the hostel:

- Total of 111 m\(^2\)
- Boys dorm 20.31 m\(^2\) with 7 m\(^2\) bathroom
- Girls dorm 20.31 m\(^2\) with 7 m\(^2\) bathroom
- Teachers room 17.22 m\(^2\) and 7 m\(^2\) bathroom
- Kitchen / living area 32.35 m\(^2\)

Children would be housed between two gendered bedroom rooms that include private bathrooms, and two bunk beds with closet, desk, and shelf space. A private room, also with a bathroom, will be provided to the teacher in residence, Hilma. These bedrooms would be opened into a common room and kitchen, a living space with the intention of serving dual functions: to act as a place of socialization, and to act as an in-house classroom wherein Hilma can provide extra attention to the kids and continue to teach them topics ranging from school subjects to how to do every day chores. Under her guidance, the children will learn important house keeping skills such as laundry and cooking, how to properly care for themselves, and be able to improve upon their interpersonal communication skills.

(AG) We have also currently set up a beta website (http://naankusechp.blogspot.com) which has information about our project. Moreover, we set up a PayPal link on our website for interested individuals to make donations through, and we also printed out brochures (Appendix III and IV) with information about our project which we handed out during our presentation.

Resources


Appendix I
Proposed blue print of Clever Cubs School Hostel
Appendix II

Anticipated Budget
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<tr>
<th>Measurements (11 mtrs x 18 mtrs) 2.5 mtrs high</th>
<th>Supplier</th>
<th>Qty</th>
<th>Price (NS)</th>
<th>Total (NS)</th>
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<td>Grand Total (In USD$)</td>
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All prices are in Namibian Dollars (N$) unless otherwise noted. Quantity is in units of bags. Costs are based off of the actual cost it took to construct the Clever Cubs School.

**UPDATE:** As of 12/1/11, after talking with Dara, the new budget looks to be around N$100,000 – N$120,000 (USD $12,000 - $14,800). She does not have the spreadsheet yet.

**Appendix III**

**Outside Sleeve of Brochure**
Our Mission

The Na’ankuse Foundation has a small population of children from the families that work and live there.

However, many children that are abandoned on the reservation from other Bushmen tribes that cannot take care of them. Unfortunately, there is no extra housing available for these abandoned children.

Our service project consists of raising money, awareness, and appealing to potential donors to invest in building a hostel for the orphaned children of Na’a’ankuse.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN

Please contact the following websites for more information.

Donations accepted via PayPal with credit card or check

Na’ankuse’s Website:
www.naankuse.com

The Hostel Project:
www.naankusechp.blogspot.com

Adda Otman
Cindy Koe
Darle Pozdior

The Hostel Project

At
Na’ankuse Wildlife Sanctuary
Namibia, Africa
The Hostel Idea

The hostel we propose would be constructed in the likeness of a dorm. Children would be housed two to a room in separate bedrooms with closet, desk, bed, and shelf space. Additionally, a private room will be provided for the teacher to live in the hostel with the kids. These bedrooms would open into a common room with the intention of serving dual functions: to act as a place of socialization and to act as an in-house classroom where extra attention to the kids can be given.

“A child’s emotional development is as important as their...

“Conflict, trauma, and violence tend to be prominent features in the...
Letters to the Editor

Sent to National Geographic

Cynthia Xue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Re: Educating the San Bushman Children

Dear Editor,

For being people who retain one of the deepest links to the human family tree—as was mentioned in your fieldwork post, “Discoveries in South Africa for Genographic Project,”—the San Bushman are extremely marginalized from society. This situation is even made more unfortunate for the many San children who still lack access to a proper education, thereby decreasing the likelihood that they are able to break out of this circle of discrimination to build a better life for themselves than was dealt to their parents.

In 2007, N/a’ankuse Foundation committed themselves to combating this injustice through the establishment of their Clever Cubs School. There, San Bushman children are afforded the opportunity to learn from a full pre-primary curriculum, which includes the subjects English, Afrikaans, Maths, Art, and Physical Education in a safe, supportive environment with staff who encourage and cultivate their creativity, interpersonal communication skills, and critical thinking processes. However, while this is a great learning milieu for children who would have otherwise been forced into activities that would have only hindered their assimilation into society as adults, the stability that they find in school must be matched with the stability they have at home to be conducive to their mental maturation.

In particular, the staff at the Clever Cubs School wishes to build a hostel for those of their students who came to them as orphans. Currently, these children are shuffled around in temporary housing amongst families at a neighboring Bushman village who have room to house them. Clearly, this is not the best housing situation to put such children in. Rather, a hostel with a live in teacher would serve to be a better environment and provide the stability that these children need.

My friends and I are committed to helping N/a’ankuse fulfill their vision. As mere Rutgers University undergraduates, however, we cannot do it alone. Moreover, we believe that National Geographic, in providing journalism coverage for the hostel construction and perhaps sponsorship to this cause, would be spreading awareness about N/a’ankuse’s project while fulfilling one of the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals that they vowed to achieve by 2015:

*Achieving universal primary education – Millennium Development Goal 2*

The year 2015 is fast approaching. Will you help us in our goal to give these children access to a proper education?
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Xue

New Brunswick, NJ

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_Sent to the New York Times_

Dear Editor,

While working in Africa this past summer as a volunteer at the N/a’ankuse Wildlife Sanctuary in Namibia, I was shocked to see many homeless and destitute children. You hear stories about poverty in Africa but you never truly understand until you see their suffering first hand. Although the trip has ended, the images of the people there still remain strong. I am writing this letter to you in an effort to raise awareness of the conditions of the N/a’ankuse Tribe, and hopefully draw more attention to their struggle.

To complicate matters further for these tribesmen, many of their children have no standard form of education to offer any hope for the future. Education is a right that every human being deserves. No progress will ever come to this region of the world if its people are denied the opportunity to improve themselves and their families. With only one primary school available for the local children to go and learn, most of these kids will never have a chance to reach higher levels of education.

I would like to help change the current conditions of the N/a’ankuse people and build a hostel for many of the children. Stable living conditions are needed for a safe and productive learning environment. By improving the living conditions of some of the poor children in the area, we hope to improve conditions for these people as a whole. Now children will be able to learn how to interact with others, learn self-reliance, and improve academic achievement. The teachers that live on the small campus will serve as “role models” that the young people of the area can emulate. If these children start receiving some of the same opportunities as other children around the globe then might be able to succeed just like anyone else. The more children that receive an education will lead to a better quality of life.

Many of us are so focused on our own lives, school, work, and family that we forget about those people in third world countries. Poverty is horrible and the symptoms of this dangerous disease linger for generation after generation. I am asking for your help to increase awareness about the struggle of the children from N/a’ankuse. I know this region already receives lots of help, but there is still so much work to be done. If there is any way that you could help to promote this important cause, it would be greatly appreciated. The more people that become aware of this tragedy in South Africa will only lead to the eventual eradication of this issue.
Thank you for your time,

Daria Pazdzior

Rutgers University

New Brunswick, New Jersey

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*Sent to the Targum*

Dear Editor,

I am writing in regards to the article published on October 21st, “Students fast to shed light on African Famine”. The money raised during the fast went towards Save The Children. This non-profit group uses donations to get children in Africa food, clean water, sanitation, and an education. I would like to focus specifically on the education aspect for these children. As mentioned in the article, many children in Somalia, as well as many other under developed African communities get, if anything, a poor education. Teachers are practically impossible to find on top of supplies and other materials that are needed to keep a school running. Before even thinking about those items, the community needs money to build a school house.

One Bushmen community in Namibia, Africa was able to get the attention of donors and investors and were able to raise funds to build a small pre-primary school for their community. They hired one teacher to teach all of the children every subject. The kids stay at the school until they are about 6 years old. Then, depending on the funds from the year, a select number of those kids can graduate and can go to a primary school about an hour away. Because the future of the students depends on donations and left over money, the number of graduates averages to about five. The children who are not selected to continue their education have to wait an additional year, or even more to get an opportunity. These children’s education is put on hold.

Not only does a proper and complete education matter, but attending school regular at a young age establishes many core values that we take for granted. Going through a good school system taught us the importance of homework, study skills, reading, writing, and not to mention how to socialize with others. All of these skills helped us assimilate into society and build up many important traits that we carry with us through our daily lives.

Currently, through a course at Rutgers, my group and I hope to raise awareness about the education problems that Namibian and other African communities face. They are in desperate need of donations to either create or enhance their education programs. We are focusing our efforts on the Namibian community of Na’ankuse and hope to help them create a bigger and more thorough schooling system for EVERY child.

Adda Gutman
SEBS Student
Class of 2012