

### 3 MONTHS VOLUNTR Y WORK AND LIVING IN TANZANIA, FEBRUARY 16<sup>TH</sup> – MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2018

Raleigh International's 'Livelihoods project' is about creating and developing sustainable futures in rural areas by setting up and maintaining businesses as well as generating opportunities for entrepreneurship. This project allowed myself with a group of UK and Tanzanian volunteers (TZ'S) to teach a group of approx. 60 entrepreneurs from our village, 'Lyamgungwe' located in Iringa region. We provided entrepreneurs (who were all village residents) with the knowledge and skills they need for their businesses to be successful and sustainable. All entrepreneurs were between the ages 18-35 and could pitch their business ideas to Raleigh deputy operational managers (DOM's) for grants in support. However, anyone could attend sessions to learn and those that achieved 75% attendance or more could receive a certificate from Raleigh to say they've completed the business and entrepreneurship course.

I along with a group of approx. 100 UK volunteers between the ages 18-25, working for the charity Raleigh International arrived in Tanzania on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2018. For the first week, we stayed in the region of Morogoro where we met the Tanzanian volunteers, team leaders and Raleigh staff, some of whom we would spend the next 3 months living and working with. In Morogoro, Raleigh staff gave us training about life in the rural villages, expectations, Health and Safety – discussing different scenarios of how we would respond, training and developing our knowledge of business skills and entrepreneurship. I participated in group activities such as team building exercises and personal development. Towards the end of the week, everyone was sorted into 'Echo groups' 1-7 and balancing a ratio of approx. 6 UK's and 6 TZ's volunteers as well as 1 UK and 1 TZ team leader. I was part of Echo 4, so we travelled from one region to the next together to reach our village.

On our first full day in Lyamgungwe, we collected as much information as we could about daily life and saw what opportunities lay ahead for the village. Lyamgungwe has approx. 300 residents but the many red brick and straw mud huts are widely spread across acres of maze fields and farms. At that time, the village only had 3-4 small shops for food, clothes and any general appliances. Some residents had businesses either from home or door to door services. There was no electricity, so the locals relied on suitable weather for solar power. The village was strongly Roman Catholic, so there was an enthusiastic sense of community shared among the 3 main churches. There was also a small primary school, but the children would then have to walk 2 hours a day for secondary school. We took the chance on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February to visit the churches and meet members of the community including the pastor's and village leaders. The church service was a vibrant blessing to take part in, with lots of clapping and signing. We also took time at the end of the service to introduce ourselves to a majority of the village community and talk about Raleigh, our sessions that we would be teaching about business and how we welcome everyone to attend.

That evening, I spent the time getting to know my Tanzanian home stay family and my fellow TZ Raleigh volunteer that I was sharing a room with. Our home stay was a small red brick house with our own separate room attached to the side of the house. There was a hut for cooking, an indoor seating area, our 'Mama's' bedroom and 'Kaka Ezekia's' (Our home stay brother, Mama's son) was on either side. In the middle was a large yard where the chickens would frequently roam around. My counterpart, Ritham was from Zanzibar but had been living in Morogoro so had heard about Raleigh from friends. Fortunately for me, Ritham spoke excellent English so was a brilliant friend to explain and teach me Kiswahili. It was important to me to try learning the language because I wanted to be independent and be free to ask a question or simply greet a fellow volunteer or home stay family. It made me feel more integrated with the local community and confident in being a part of the project. The week beginning Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February our Echo met every morning to participate in tasks such

as emergency and medical training, conducting research survey's in the village about what businesses are needed and knowledge skills and attitudes (KSA) survey's that the villagers had to fill out individually. This had a great response from the villager's as everyone was very intrigued by the project to see how we could support their ideas. We also gathered further information about the current businesses in the village such as what the shops were selling. Products like rice, beans, maize, chai tea, peanuts, sweets, biscuits, football boots, hats, fizzy drinks, and tools were common or easy to get hold of, so this gave us a better understanding of gaps in the market. We also held an 'Action day' encouraging locals to meet us and learn about the different areas of business that we would be teaching; Market research, Business Model Canvas (BMC), Cash flow, Alternative sources of finance, Raleigh grant scheme, generating business ideas and the importance of benefiting small communities. The day was very successful as many villagers attended and signed up to attend sessions starting on the following week.

The Raleigh DOM'S came to visit our Echo and took the time to review how things had been going so far at nearly 2 weeks into the project. The DOM's are also previous volunteers and team leaders from past Raleigh cycles so they had experience in the livelihoods project and were useful to listen and learn from. I and another UK and 2 TZ volunteers delivered our first session which was attended by over 60 people keen to learn an introduction to businesses and entrepreneurship. We explained about the course content and got people to participate in group activities to think about how they would like to see their village become. With the first session finished, the DOM's gave us constructive feedback on how we can make future sessions more engaging and how crucial time is. After the DOM's left, we continued the week planning and delivering our sessions. The charity East Africa Dairy Development (EADD) which covers the Iringa region and is supported by Raleigh came to run a session. The EADD supports dairy and livestock farmers, giving them advice on how they can develop their farms. We also arranged for a local government representative to come and talk in a session about the importance of funding and making connections. At this point, our team leaders introduced regular Kiswahili/ English lessons every other day in the mornings when our Echo would all meet. We thought that this would be a good chance to share more about both our cultures and experiences as well as being able to get to become closer friends.

In the following weeks and months, we settled into the life of the village. Our days became much of a working environment from 8am-5pm we would all be planning sessions for the week and practising languages, sharing stories and learning from others. We delivered 2-hour sessions every day and kept a register of those that attended. We made our sessions as creative as possible with the resources we had so encouraged games and energizers to keep people interested. On Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March we also began our side project, so we went to the local primary school to teach a class of students ages 8-11 years about sustainable development goals. One thing Raleigh strives to teach communities about is the 17 Global Goals that the UN agreed to achieve by 2030. Because of our age group, we wanted to make the lesson fun but with focus on educating about sustainability. We split the children into small groups and asked them to go and find an item around the school which they thought was interesting and bring it back to their groups. We then asked them to work together to build something with all their items that they had collected. It was remarkable to see what the children came up with and had created a variety of inventions from Monkey sanctuary's using leaves and old buckets to a sweet shop using plastic bottles and string. For me, this was a highlight of the programme and I found a real passion for encouraging children to learn from their outdoor surroundings. We did a similar lesson with the secondary school as well in the next village.

Over the weekend we then left our village for a couple of days and drove to River valley campsite for our phase review. Raleigh got the others Echo groups that were in Iringa together, so it was lovely to

see familiar faces again. Raleigh gave us information for the second phase of the programme including instructions for pitching day and other events that we had to organise. We returned to our village feeling very positive about the second half of the project and were excited to see our home stay families and village friends again. In the following weeks leading up to pitching day, we covered session topics in a lot more depth as they became more complex. The work load became more serious and it was up to the entrepreneurs on the course now to prove that they wanted this opportunity. They had to create all their own copies of documents such as a Business model canvas, cash flow showing all their finances and conducting their own market research surveys. We also began practising how to pitch in front of a panel and giving constructive feedback on their presentations. It was then up to us to select a maximum of 15 business ideas from our group of entrepreneurs that we thought were successful and eligible to pitch to Raleigh. Finally pitching day came and there were mixed feelings of hopefulness with nerves. Many prayers were said, and one by one entrepreneurs gave their presentations to the panel. All the volunteers and team leaders had to wait with the other entrepreneurs separately and insure the day ran smoothly. The final pitch finished about 5pm and then the panellists had to discuss which entrepreneurs had a solid business plan. The Raleigh panel can fund up to 10 business ideas out of the 15, so for us it was completely unclear who could get the grants because we knew how hard everyone had worked so thought everyone should deserve it. Then at about 6.30pm the team leaders were called in to talk to the panel and given general notes on all the entrepreneurs. The team leaders then got all the volunteers together to share the information and we were notified that 7 business ideas had successfully secured grants from Raleigh. This was a great achievement as it meant 7 new businesses would be set up in our village including; Fruit and Veg shop, Clothes shop, Barber's, Hairdresser's, Textiles printing, mobile finance and sim store and a restaurant. The next day, those that were successful went into town with some of our TZ volunteers as support, to purchase any items needed for their new businesses. The rest of us began to complete any other admin that Raleigh had asked us to do including finalising any reports, and planning for our graduation day.

After pitching day, things seemed a lot less stressful and with only a few weeks left before the end of the project, we continued to work hard to insure all the villagers had what they needed to sustain their businesses. We ran a session on alternative sources of finance to encourage those that didn't receive grants to show that it's possible to access grants from other institutions. On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May, we hosted our graduation day for our village. It was a celebration of 'Hehe tribe' culture with songs and dancing from the villagers that we had great fun being part of. We then presented all the entrepreneurs with certificates and congratulated everyone for all their demanding work and input. It was a wonderful day to see how happy the villagers were and spend time with friends and family. Looking back, there is a powerful sense of positivity from every person in the village and fellow volunteers. They really shine as characters and I learnt a great deal of life lessons from spending time with such an influential community. It remains one of the most challenging things I've ever done so far in life. I am honoured to have been a part of the project and in doing so have been more broadly educated and forged lasting friendships.



Left: Speaking to some of the village in Church.

Below: All our entrepreneurs after one session.



Echo 4 volunteers: All from Left; Front row - Bibek (UK), David (TZ), Ritham (TZ), Sal (UK team leader). Middle row - Phoebe (UK), Zac (UK), Yohana (TZ), Sisti (TZ), Eliza (UK). Back row - Andrew (UK), Hendry (TZ team leader) and Malcolm (UK)





Top above: My home stay Family. From Left, Ritham (My TZ counterpart), Mama Zaveria and Kaka Ezekia.



Right: Some of our entrepreneurs working on their documents before pitching day. These three women all received grants from Raleigh.

Below: Meeting the village leaders and church pastor.





Above; Teaching Lyamungwe Primary School children about Sustainable development and creativity.

Below: A group of girls from Isimila Secondary School in the next village discuss the 17 Global goals and present to the class how they would tackle issues on gender equality, poverty, quality healthcare etc.





Top above: Our entrepreneurs in session and working with the volunteers before pitching day.

Above: Day after pitching, the entrepreneurs that received grants went into town for a shopping day. They unload their stock from the truck and distribute correctly to each other's destinations.