



Hopkins Center for the Arts

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Jeffrey H. James
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May 16, 2011

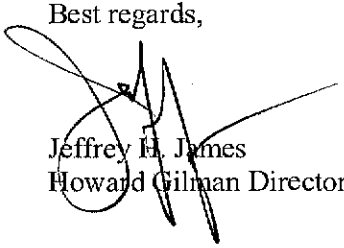
Mr. Peter A. Bleyler
43 Berrill Farms Lane
Hanover, NH 03755-3216

Dear Pete,

I am pleased to let you know that Sarah R. Schewe '12 has been selected as this year's recipient of the Class of 1961 Arts Initiative Award. Sarah is studying abroad and will be unable to attend this year's Dartmouth Arts Awards ceremony on May 24th, so we will mail her award to her. The award will support Sarah's project "Tanzanian Kangas: Wrapping Women in Hope" – an innovative public health campaign using traditional textiles as functional art. A copy of Sarah's application which includes her biography is enclosed.

Sarah is a very thoughtful young woman who hopes to tackle public health challenges in new and creative ways. Thank you on behalf of the Hopkins Center for allowing her to explore ways the arts can be a tool for social change.

Best regards,


Jeffrey H. James
Howard Gilman Director



APPLICATION FORM**Name:** Sarah Schewe**Class:** 2012**HB:** 4366**E-mail:** sarah.r.schewe@dartmouth.edu**Project Title:** Tanzanian Kangas: Wrapping Women in Hope**Faculty Sponsor:** Louise Hamlin**Brief Description of Project:**

I'd like to design a kanga, a traditional Tanzanian textile, with messages about safe motherhood. These kangas will be functional art and use graphic and Swahili text elements to list warning signs for high-risk pregnancies.

In Tanzania, a woman dies in childbirth every 21 minutes. Approximately 8,500 mothers die annually; 86 times the rate in the United States. Many of these complications are treatable, but half of all Tanzanian women still give birth alone or with an untrained attendant and far from a health facility. When complications arise, women simply cannot reach a health facility in time. The goal of the project will be to use this traditional textile to increase awareness of warning signs for a high-risk pregnancy so women can reach a health facility *before* complications arise.

Amount Requested: \$1,500 to print 500 kangas**Please find attached:**

- A full project proposal
- An itemized project budget
- A biography of the applicant

Recommendations/Statements of Support will be submitted separately from:

- ✓ Louise Hamlin, Studio Arts Faculty
- Coleen Fox, Geography Faculty
- Jolene Mullins, WellShare International's Tanzania Country Director
- ✓ Margaret Lawrence, Programming Director for the Hopkins Center

**Tanzanian Kangas:
Wrapping Women in Hope**

Class of 1961 Arts Initiative Fund Proposal



Sarah Schewe '12
Advised by Professor Louise Hamlin

October 26, 2010

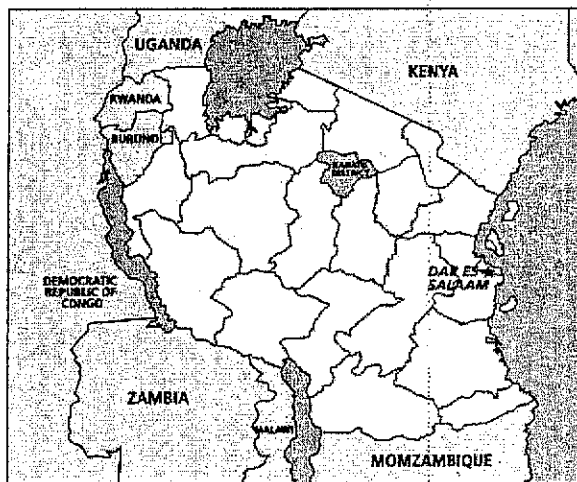
sarah.schewe@gmail.com

Project Idea: Promote Health Messages on Indigenous Clothing to Improve Maternal Health

In the East African country of Tanzania, village women wear kangas, traditional rectangular cloths, which come in many designs and colors. Women wrap their kangas as skirts, shawls, head wrappers, or baby carriers, or they use the fabric to make dresses. Kangas are not simply decorative, but have a social function. They often contain a written Swahili inscription with messages that can range from religious to social messages or parables to political statements. I propose to design a kanga that provides information about safe motherhood and critical warning signs during pregnancy.

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world. In the highlands of northern Tanzania, just one paved road runs through Karatu District (highlighted in yellow in adjacent map). The rest of the district, a sprawling 2,500 km², relies on dirt roads and foot paths – dusty in the dry season, muddy in the rainy season, and rocky year-round.

The region's poverty creates devastating health disparities, particularly in women's and children's health. In Tanzania, a woman dies in childbirth every 21 minutes. Approximately 8,500 mothers die annually, which is 86 times the rate in the United States. Many of these complications are treatable, but half of all Tanzanian women still give birth alone or with an untrained attendant and far from a health facility. When complications arise, women simply cannot reach a health facility in time.



In Laja village, the nearest health facility is 17 km away, and women in labor are carried in a makeshift stretcher. In good weather, the journey takes 10 hours by foot. In bad weather, the roads are impassable. This distance makes it critical that high-risk pregnancies are identified as soon as possible, so that women can get to a health facility *before* they go into labor.

I'd like to design a kanga which uses graphic and Swahili text elements to list warning signs for high-risk pregnancies. These kangas will be functional art. They will be distributed to community women and used as a teaching tool by Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs, usually older community women who provide medical advice and acts as a bridge between communities and formal health facilities). The goal is that if women in the community are wearing kangas which remind them that bleeding, impaired vision, abdominal pain, severe headaches and swelling of the feet (among other signs) are signs of a high risk birth, they will absorb this knowledge and be able to use it if they recognize these symptoms in themselves, their friends or daughters.

The kangas will be both beautiful and informative. Although I don't yet know the specifics of the design, I'd like to use a mother and child image and traditional Tanzanian geometric patterns to accompany the health messaging. For the kangas to be effective, they must be something that women want to wear.

Why this project?

Communicating with rural Tanzanian women can be a challenge. The roads in Tanzania are in poor condition, and most homes are still without electricity, making it tough to reach these communities with traditional media like newspapers, radio and television. Designing a piece of clothing/textile which also includes health messaging offers a unique and, I hope, effective way to reach Tanzanian women, particularly because the kangas will use imagery and symbols to communicate to women who may be illiterate.

Further, these kangas will represent and celebrate a traditional aspect of Tanzanian culture and dress. Too often, public health interventions pit modern medicine against traditional culture. I think that the modern and the traditional can coexist and in the most effective interventions, they work cooperatively.

Finally, I believe that art can be a means of social change, particularly when it permeates daily life. Art creates a unique space to express ideas and emotion in a way we often cannot, or do not, in other aspects of our lives. In Tanzania, kangas have shown to be an effective medium for communicating ideas; in 2008, during the United States presidential election, Barack Obama kangas were incredibly popular. When I was in Tanzania earlier this fall, Tanzania was gearing up for its own presidential election and CCM (a political party in Tanzania) kangas were all over the place. This is a powerful statement – Tanzanians have far less political freedom than Americans and defacing a political poster can land you in jail, but wearing your politics on your kanga is OK. Art creates a unique space. To my knowledge, kangas have not yet been used for health messaging/behavior change campaigns.



A Maasai woman (center) wears a Barack Obama kanga.

Inspiration for the Project:

I first started learning about the impact of maternal mortality and health disparities when I volunteered with WellShare International in 2007, when I spent four months volunteering in Uganda and Tanzania. The experience was overwhelming, deeply moving and has been formative in shaping my undergraduate experience at Dartmouth. At Dartmouth, I've focused my studies in Cultural Anthropology, Women and Gender Studies, and courses which relate to public health, healthcare delivery, and the complex gender, political and economic issues that shape health disparities.

I've tried to take every opportunity I can to understand these health inequalities, from an Alternative Spring Break trip through the Tucker Foundation to the Dominican Republic (where I worked with Haitian immigrants in a border town), to a medical mission trip to visit rural communities in the Ecuadorian Andes, to several study abroad programs. Last winter, I was part of the Anthropology FSP to

the University of Auckland, where we studied indigenous/Maori culture in New Zealand. I returned to Tanzania briefly this fall, and I'm currently in South Africa, where I'm taking part in the Environmental Studies FSP to South Africa, Namibia and Lesotho, where we explore development in the context of conservation and biodiversity. This winter, I'll be on the Women and Gender Studies FSP to India, where we will study globalization, gender, and the media.

The farther I travel, the more my heart comes back to East Africa. I grew up in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, which has one of the highest East African immigrant populations outside of Africa, mostly Somali immigrants. Because East Africa was my first (and arguably most formative) experience in the developing world, this project would be very special to me.

Although this is a "stand-alone" project, in that it is not part of an independent study or honors project, nor is it affiliated with any student organization, it reflects my growing interest and passion for public health and in particular, women's health, and how the arts and good design can be used to create positive social change influence health behavior.

Literature Review: Health Messages on Clothes

My design strategy will be informed by a review of the literature on promotional clothing and health messages on clothing. Survey studies suggest that promotional clothing worn by role models is an effective method for promoting a specific health message. Here's a sample of some of the articles I will review:



Corti, Billi, Donovan, Robert J., and Holman, C. D'Arcy Jr. "Using Sponsorship to Promote Health Messages to Children." *Health Education and Behavior*, June 1997. 24:276-286. Found 10/26/10 at <http://heb.sagepub.com/content/24/3/276.abstract>

Long, Terry *et al.* "The Heart Truth: Using the Power of Branding and social Marketing to Increase Awareness of Heart Disease in Women;" *Social Media Quarterly*, March 2008; 14(3): 3-29, found 10/26/10 in <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2574437/>
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/educational/hearttruth/about/index.htm>

"About the Heart Truth," National Heart Lung and Blood Institute; found 10/26/10 at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/educational/hearttruth/about/index.htm>

"Flip Charts: Trachoma Health Education Materials Library." The Carter Center. Found 10/26/10 at http://www.cartercenter.org/health/trachoma_education/flipcharts.html?printerFriendly=true
Workman, Jane E. "Alcohol Promotional Clothing Items and Alcohol Use by Underage Consumers." *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, March 2003. 31(3): 331-354. Found 10/26/10 at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1177/1077727X02250140/abstract>

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Partnerships, Plan of Action & Timeline:

I plan to partner with WellShare International in designing and distributing these kangas. WellShare, the USAID-funded NGO that I volunteered with during my gap year, has years of experience and a strong presence in Karatu District.

Under the guidance of Louise Hamlin and Jolene Mullins (WellShare's Tanzania Country Director), the kangas will be designed this winter and spring, and then will be printed and distributed in Tanzania during the summer of 2011.

This timing works well with the Class of 1961 mini-reunion during the fall of 2011. I would love to give a presentation on the project and present one of our finished kangas at the reunion.

Faculty Advisor & Additional Support:

This project has the support of Louise Hamlin, area head of Printmaking and member of the Studio Arts faculty, who will advise on the aesthetic aspects of the project; and the Jolene Mullins, WellShare's Tanzanian Country Director, who has 30 years of experience working in international public health. Jolene will advise on health messaging and public health aspects of the project. Given Jolene's knowledge of the Karatu community and WellShare's well-known presence, her support will be critical in designing and distributing the kangas.

Budget:

This budget is just one line because 100% of the funds will go to printing the kangas. Although there will be other expenses in printing and distributing the kangas (eg. fuel to cover transport to rural villages to distribute the kangas), I am partnering with WellShare International, so that we can incorporate distribution and education into their routine field visits. This will allow the kanga project to piggyback on and benefit from WellShare's expertise and long-term presence in Karatu District, and will make it possible for all funds to go to printing the kangas.

Kangas are traditionally measured in meters, with a typical kanga being 1.5 meters by 1 meter. This is approximately 1.64 yards of 40" wide fabric per kanga. To be clear, I do not intend to print the kangas myself, but will create a kanga design for these metrics which can be printed by existing kanga manufacturers locally. The goal of this project is to create a design which is beautiful, functional and promotes health behavior change, but also for the project will work within the existing infrastructure in Tanzania so that this is not simply a "one shot" project, but a design that can be re-printed and re-used for many years in Karatu. I plan to give my design to a local textile printer who will print the design for me and will be able to re-print the design if demand allows. This means the project funding will go directly into the local economy and is the most economical way to print the kangas, since it minimizes transportation costs of shipping the kangas.

The Class of 1961 Arts Initiative funding will allow me to realize this project. \$1,500 will fund 500 kangas. The hope is that this quantity will generate some demand for the design, which will be given to local kanga designers to reprint as needed to meet demand.

Item	Unit Price to Print in Kangas in TZ	Total
Printing kangas	4,000 Tsh (about \$3 USD) x 500 kangas	\$1,500 USD

My Experience:

Sarah Schewe is passionate about women's health and is committed to social change, particularly social change through the arts. Before coming to Dartmouth, Sarah took a gap year and volunteered on a women's reproductive health project in Uganda and Tanzania. Last spring, Sarah was the Hopkins Center Class Divide Intern. She developed the "Post Secret project," where the Dartmouth community submitted "secrets about class" which were part of a Class Divide Booklet Sarah created that summarized the Class Divide Initiative. Sarah has been active in women's issues on campus. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Dartmouth Coalition for Global Health, and she sings in the Dartmouth College Gospel Choir. Sarah's coursework has been focused in Cultural Anthropology, Women and Gender Studies, and courses from various departments focused on health and healthcare. Sarah also has experience in managing grants. In 2009, Sarah received a \$10,000 grant from the Kathryn Wasserman Davis Foundation for a community gardening project in the Hunts Point neighborhood of the South Bronx. In 2010, Sarah was a co-recipient of the Peter D. Smith Student Initiative Fund for THE FIRST TIME project, a film project (currently being edited) which aims to foster discussion of sexual decision-making at Dartmouth. Post-Dartmouth, Sarah plans to pursue post-graduate degrees in both public health and graphic design and use the arts to improve public health campaigns.