

UN study on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, Conservation and Inclusive Development

1. **Initiative:** Olanakwe Community Fund – Primary Education Inclusion Program

2. **Implementing Body:** Olanakwe Community Fund (www.olanakwe.org)

3. **Location:** Mang'ola Village, Karatu District, Tanzania

4. **Community:** Hadzabe

5. **Scope of the project:**

- Promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities
- Enhancing sustainable livelihoods of IPs and local communities
- Empowering Indigenous peoples, including women and youth

Purpose of the project:

The UN Sustainable Development Goals call for inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. Despite this, Indigenous children often face systemic barriers to accessing education, with foragers (hunter-gatherers) attending school at significantly lower rates than other Indigenous peoples (Hays et al. 2019)¹. Further compounding the issue for foraging communities specifically, is that many formal education systems (often presented as a solution to marginalization) often reproduce existing social hierarchies – which poses additional barriers to participation. The current project aimed to increase access to education and improve learning quality for children from the Hadza community of foragers who reside in the northern region of Tanzania.

Tanzania is extremely culturally diverse, home to approximately 130 different ethnic groups and over 100 different ethno-linguistic groups (spoken dialects). While many ethnic groups in Tanzania are struggling with access to basic human rights, the Hadza community is struggling at a higher rate – which is a trend that is repeated worldwide for foraging communities (Valeggia and Snodgrass 2015)². Currently, an estimated 1,300 – 1,500 people identify as Hadza, or *Hadzabe*, and reside to the east and south west of Lake Eyasi in largely rural areas with limited access to water and power infrastructure and limited participation in the market economy. There are currently three distinct land use systems in place in the region: agriculture, pastoralism, and hunting and gathering (semi-mobile foraging for wild plant and animal foods). As a direct result of the widening of different subsistence practices, coupled with population growth, climate change, and expansion of protected wildlife corridors (“buffer” zones outside of national park systems), natural resources are increasingly finite. In recognition of the connection between the Hadza and the land in this region that is their ancestral homeland and economic base, the Tanzanian government issued a Certificate of Customary Right of Occupancy for rights to approximately 57,000 acres in 2011 – with an additional 90,000 acres secured in 2012 for shared space with the Datoga pastoralists (Smith 2015)³. While the community is now working with some NGOs and CBOs in country, participation is almost exclusively tethered to land rights and environmental conservation initiatives (e.g. UN REDD +, UN Equator Initiative). The existing organizations operating in the area, while partnered with the community, are neither community-based nor led by any member of the Hadza ethnic group. Additionally, their existing programming does not focus on initiatives that the community has identified as top priority, including increased access to education.

The Olanakwe Community Fund is a US-based 501c(3) that is operational in Tanzania as an International NGO. It is the only community-based organization that was founded by members of the Hadza community in collaboration with volunteer anthropologists and health care workers with ties to the community. Our model is built on the premise that lasting systemic change for the rights of Indigenous children needs to begin with the Indigenous community that is being served. Community-based organizations are one of the greatest unsupported global assets that can effect positive change and aid in the creation of sustainable and inclusive environments for marginalized peoples, altering the long-term trajectory of youth opportunities in Tanzania and other Sub-Saharan African countries.

¹ Hays, J., Ninkova, V., & Saugestad, S. (2019). The Research and Advocacy Group for Hunter Gatherer Education. *AnthropoChildren*.

² Valeggia, C. R., & Snodgrass, J. J. (2015). Health of Indigenous Peoples. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 44, 117-135.

³ Smith, J. (2015). Survival in the Great Rift. *The Nature Conservancy Magazine*, January 2015.

6. Methods:

The Primary Education Inclusion Program began as a way to increase access to primary school education for Hadza children at the Endamagha Primary School in Mang'ola village in the Karatu region. The project was identified by the community as a top priority to begin addressing the education gap that exists between the Hadza and other ethnic groups in Tanzania. Despite numerous international instruments advocating for universal rights to education, Indigenous peoples do not fully enjoy these rights. Out of a total student population of approximately 600 children attending the Endamagha Primary School, only 80 of these pupils are from the Hadza community.

The aim of the initiative was four pronged: (1) to provide uniforms and basic school supplies for Hadza children in the community who are in attendance at Endamagha school; (2) to provide reliable transportation to and from school, which is often a barrier to voluntary participation from families living in remote areas; (3) to provide the school with necessary equipment to provide additional supplemental learning materials that might work towards fostering inclusivity; and (4) to provide sports equipment so that children from across ethnic groups attending the school can play soccer – as a way to promote social inclusion and communication across cultural barriers.

Fundraising for these initiatives took place primarily in the United States, Tanzania, and the United Kingdom (although donations from donors in other nations were received). The board used an online fundraising platform based in the US and all funds raised were transferred to Tanzania. The team on the ground consisted of all Tanzanian nationals, all volunteers: two Hadza community members (one is the Co-founder and Co-leader of Olanakwe and one is a teacher in the school), the headmaster, and the project manager – who is a nurse from a different ethnic group who volunteers in the community.

7. Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations:

Results included: (1) the purchase of basic school supplies (pencils, rulers, notebooks, etc.) for every Hadza child in attendance at the school; (2) the procurement of safe and reliable transportation for approximately two dozen Hadza children attending school to return home to residential camps over winter break in December 2020; (3) the purchase of a laptop computer, photocopy machine, and solar panels to operate the equipment; this purchase was identified in a community meeting between Hadza representatives and the headmaster as a necessary way to deliver additional printed educational materials for Hadza children entering the school system; and (4) the purchase of soccer equipment and uniforms so that students can participate in matches at the school and regionally. Like all sports, soccer fosters social inclusion, the process of improving how individuals and groups take part in society – in this case, the school community.

Three major conclusions can be drawn from the project. First, the speed and efficacy in which this programming was carried out demonstrates that the Hadza community was ready for a self-led organization. Incorporated in the US in June 2020 and in Tanzania in September 2020, all initial stages of this project were complete by February 2021. Second, one of the reasons why the programming was so effective may be linked to the mission and structure of Olanakwe Community Fund. As a community based mutual aid organization, it is member led, member organized, and everyone is welcome. It is structured as non-hierarchical and supports the principles of democracy, shared leadership, and consensus-based decision making - thus promoting egalitarianism, a key feature of Hadza social identity. Third, and arguably most significantly, we concluded that community interest and need currently outpace our current strategies and we are actively working to scale-up.

We faced several challenges while implementing the project. As we make decisions via consensus, board meetings are very long and must be done via telephone – both in accommodation of board members residing in three countries and best practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. We solved this issue by scheduling 2 hours for each meeting, leaving room for connectivity issues or needing to re-connect some board members multiple times throughout the meetings. An additional challenge that we faced was how to handle the overwhelming support from the community, at large, that led to further requests that were not part of our initial programming. Members of Olanakwe Community Fund have now been approached by the headmaster from another rural school serving Indigenous children, including Hadza, in Yaeda Chini. This primary school has approximately 800 students – the percentage of Hadza students is yet unknown as we have not begun programming in this region of Lake Eyasi. Finally, an additional challenge is that it has become very clear that we need to expand beyond fundraising and will begin in 2021 to solicit

funding from granting agencies to help our organization grow. We aim to apply to funders who focus on locally led early-stage community-based-organizations and those prioritizing African entrepreneurs.

Many of our challenges also function as lessons learned. Finding creative, community based solutions to problems that arose have made our team stronger. There is a persistence and grit demonstrated by board members that many self-report as being associated with being part of a mutual aid – being both members of the community and also members of the body providing aid to the community. We have learned that matching the structure of the organization to the social structure of the targeted community benefits all parties involved – as a hierarchical structure does not work in all instances.

Recommendations for action include continued identification of root causes that prevent Hadza children from attending school and from preventing them from succeeding once they are there. We aim to identify solutions using community dialogue and community-driven assessments – scaling up from what has already been a successful inaugural year of programming.

8. Capacity development needs:

Capacity development for our organization means to improve access to and quality of existing schools in Mang'ola and in Yaeda Chini. We aim to directly impact the individual lives of Hadza children and their family members, but also the community as a whole and the systems and structures that Hadza families navigate. By focusing on access to education, Hadza children are given tools to build their own success – and the support is coming from within the community, supporting children of their own ethnic group. This acts to stimulate structural shifts in local systems, as the implementation of community-based initiatives have the ability to change how national and international actors perceive the Hadza. Specific needs include the following:

- Organizational resources
 - A community center where all stakeholders can convene. Currently, no such structure exists in the entire nation of Tanzania.
 - Technology equipment including cell phones for each board member so that they can reliably participate in board meetings and two laptop computers, with locked storage, and solar panels to power them.
 - Financial support to host a forager summit between Hadza community leaders/elders and San leaders/elders. The San peoples are a foraging community spanning Botswana, Namibia, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and South Africa who have successfully initiated community-based programs.
 - Financial support for Co-leader to participate in a UN sponsored internship program (e.g. OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme).
- Organizational infrastructure:
 - Training for local Tanzanian staff on basic computer skills. Team members will work to train other members of the community who would like to participate.
 - With basic training complete, additional training for local staff on financial literacy and management (budget preparation and execution, enrolment on payroll, etc.).
 - Training for local staff in grant writing, as a means to move beyond fundraising. This is a critical component to our capacity development, as self-sustainability and longevity of programming is a key priority for the community.

9. List of partners and their roles:

- Hadzabe Empowerment Project, a Community Based Organization in Tanzania. Role = execution of community-driven assessments; technology training.