



ELIZABETH CENTRE

2018

Florentina Foundation

ABSTRACT

A short side-report made from our time at the Elizabeth Centre in Tanzania.

Investigating the role the Elizabeth Centre plays in local economic development on behalf of the Florentina Foundation.

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Introduction

This report examines the role the Elizabeth Centre has in the local economic development (LED) of Kolila and the surrounding community close to Arusha, Tanzania. This report provides a brief overview of the current development in Kolila, identifies projects the centre has created and provides insight to how these develop the community.

The OECD (2013) defines local economic development as “a cross cutting and integrated activity where the physical development of a place is linked to public service, place management, and wider drivers of change such as employment, skills, investment, enterprise, innovation, productivity, quality of life, and positioning”.

The Elizabeth Centre plays a key role in this kind of local integration.

While the primary role of the Elizabeth Centre is to provide education where, ‘learning is fun and fulfilling’. Their role in the community has been more significant in relation to economic development, from planning and development services, to provision of water, microfinance and livestock, with their work reflecting their vision of ‘helping each other’.

This report largely consists of information collected from speaking and spending time at the Elizabeth Centre. We did not gather any specific figures on how much the Elizabeth Centre has put into the local community and how it has grown over the years which limits the detail this report can offer.

More information about the Elizabeth Centre and the research we conducted can be found in our main report, about how the Elizabeth Centre improves prospects for graduates.

2.0 Initiatives used by the Elizabeth Centre to promote local development

2.1 Elizabeth Centre School

‘Helping each other’ serves as the common spirit behind running the EC and embraces the core values of the Sisters that emphasize the development of the human being. The focus is not solely on the development of the students’ cognitive abilities, but also the social, mental and physical well-being of students. For this reason, the Sisters describe the EC as a *centre* rather than just a school.

The centre is made up of 383 students split into primary and secondary students, 330 and 53 respectively. The students attending the school receive so much more than the standard information on the curriculum. Apart from the education being superior to any of the other schools of the area, the children also learn some important lessons that will be useful in their future lives. Through the core values shown by the sisters, all students are encouraged to look out for each other at school and in the local community. This provides the foundations of a generation of young, prosperous, local people caring and upholding the community spirit for generations to come.

The students are engaged in the support and responsibility of self-maintenance and local agriculture through maintaining the plants and gardens of the centre on a frequent basis. They learn the importance of the provision of plants and livestock as they take care of the

gardens. This is something that is particularly important for rural parts of Africa as agriculture is imperative to the livelihood of families and communities. Through these skills, students are able to further complete duties around the home. Sister Immaculati informed us on the praise she had received from parents when their children had returned home and were able to help.

Furthermore, the education the school provides is of a high standard, this can be seen in further detail in the report. The quality of education is matched by the enthusiasm the students have for further education. Hopefully there will be a new generation of local graduates from the Elizabeth Centre with a high quality of education that are able to further give back to the community.

Since the Centre is managed by the Sisters of the St. Charles Borromeo charity, the students are made aware of the role of the church in the community and the world. Boarding students are encouraged to attend Church on Sunday morning. The students of the Elizabeth Centre have also helped in the development of the new Church that is being built, through planting trees around the grounds. Through the values echoed by the Sisters, the students are able to understand the importance of the unity in the community and how everyone looks out for each other regardless of age, gender and race.

The broad range of soft skills learned through school will be beneficial to all of the students later in life. They will have been shown core values that benefit whatever community they find themselves in.

In the report, The Elizabeth Centre 2018 , further recommendations have been identified that the centre can do itself to continue with the improvement of the social development of the students. These include; a local bus service to help more students to get to school safer and quicker, a medical centre that will allow immediate medical attention with the reduced risk of the illness spreading, expanding the boarding facilities as well as increasing the students in secondary school. And finally offering vocational training to students as well as local people. This offers a more practical based career path for those who wish to choose it, increasing the opportunities of students.

2.2 Employment opportunities

For the Elizabeth Centre to be maintained and develop there is a wide range of employment opportunities for people. While at the centre we witnessed the team behind making the centre run on a daily basis, including the teachers, cooks, farmers and watchmen. These all have individual roles that are crucial to the running of the Elizabeth Centre.

The sisters also provide further development and support of the staff, including teacher training certificates and living facilities for those that live too far away to commute. These are mutually beneficial for the school and the individuals as they are able to invest in each other's interests.

To help build and expand the centre it employs local contractors to do the work, for example, creating a wall between the boys and girls boarding facilities for privacy was done using a team of local workmen.

By using local community members in work, money is able to flow directly back into the community. This is more efficient and beneficial to the local community than using multinational corporations. Money that circulates locally keeps the community alive. It means there is something that can bring together the Elizabeth Centre with local crafts men who will spend this money on raw materials in the local area.

2.3 Facilities

Over the decade the Elizabeth Centre has been active it has acquired and built a range of facilities that benefit the students as well as the surrounding community.

The centre has flowing, clean water that is from Kilimanjaro Mountain that is put into a tank. The centre allows the local community to collect water from the tank and asks for a donation of 100 TSH per litre. This fee has been reduced over the years to allow access for more people. This creates the opportunity for business to further develop as individuals may sell this water on at a higher price enabling a small income.

The Elizabeth Centre also has allowed a local tradesman to sell his carvings at the facilities they use to process maize in the middle of the village. This is offered at a small fee which can be afforded by the tradesman. As mentioned this also where a maize mill is stored and used which can be accessed by the local community to ensure food provision.

Other facilities that the Elizabeth Centre has supported include a local car wash which has created employment opportunities for local people as well creating a necessary service that has benefited the local people.

2.4 Microfinance

The Elizabeth Centre is also a key provider of microfinance to teachers, staff, families and friends using money from the Florentina Foundation. With the money provided to these families they are able to build their own houses, referred to as social housing by Sister Immaculati, as well as for example start their own small businesses. The restaurant at the Kia junction and some houses next to the Centre are examples of projects achieved by means of micro-finance.

The Sisters have lent different amounts to locals, which they expect to receive back after a certain period, without interest. This type of micro financing by the Sisters is mostly based on trust between the Sisters and the local community which continues to grow. Sister Immaculati has been around the village since 2000, which suggests the relationship she has built up with the community over the years is strong. This was witnessed while spending time with Sister Immaculati, with everyone pleased to greet her. This microfinance has

helped local people to start-up businesses, build up livestock and develop their well-being who otherwise would have been side-lined by bigger institutions.

3.0 Conclusion

During the time spent at the Elizabeth Centre we have identified many different bottom up approaches the Centre takes towards the local development of Kolilia. The Sisters have grown their relationship with locals and is founded upon trust, essential for a community to prosper. The range of local economic development functions carried out by national and local authorities appeared to be limited due to the remote location of Kolila. With this in mind the Centre is able to offer opportunities to those individuals that may not have access to a range of facilities and provisions otherwise. As mentioned before this report is limited due to the lack of in depth case studies, however while at the Centre it was evident that the Sisters played an integral role in local society. As the Elizabeth Centre continues to grow with more students coming in over the next few years, it has the ability to continue to serve the community with a range of potential projects.