

“Cementing” Children’s Education in Intabazwe, South Africa

Thank you for expressing interest in our South Africa service-learning program! My name is Jacqueline Zamitalo, and I am a sophomore at the University of Central Florida in the Burnett Honors College and the U-LEAD program. One of the most important parts of childhood is learning. A positive learning environment can cultivate a desire to learn for the rest of our lives. Growing up, I was lucky to learn in a safe and expansive learning environment, which has nurtured my love for learning. However, not everyone is born as lucky. In the township of Intabazwe, the elementary school where the children ages 3-8 start their learning journey is made of tin. It’s aging, unstable, and open to the outdoor environment. With my project, I hope to provide the children of Intabazwe with a safe and welcoming learning environment so that they can reap the benefits of a positive learning environment.

My project in Intabazwe is to reconstruct the tin elementary school with cement. Currently, the tin school is unsteady in the unrelenting Intabazwe winds, and it’s not safe for the children. By rebuilding the school with cement, the children can learn in a secure environment. A cement building is not at risk of being blown apart; it’s sturdier and will last for decades, unlike the tin construction. On top of rebuilding the school, I aim to fill the classroom with elementary-school items commonly seen in American schools, like carpets, a whiteboard, and wall posters. By filling the classroom and painting the walls, I hope to make the classroom a more welcoming and exciting learning environment for the kids.

Although constructing a new building is less expensive in South Africa than in the United States, it still requires a sizable amount of money to complete, so I am asking for your help with this project. Overall, rebuilding the classroom and filling it with educational supplies will cost about \$6,000. With \$6,000, I can pay for the labor and supplies required for the project, and I can give the elementary school teachers their yearly salary, which is a mere \$150. The supplies for this project include enough cement to construct a roughly 32” x 22” x 8” building, two doors, some windows, flooring, and the classroom items mentioned above.

Before leaving for Africa, I will be supplying the community’s pastor with enough money to pay for the cement, labor, and building materials so that the foundations of the school will be built by the time I arrive in Intabazwe. While in Intabazwe, I will help put the finishing touches on the building by painting and installing doors and windows, and I will complete my project by filling the classroom with whatever school supplies we can provide.

I am incredibly excited to give back to my global community. Thanks to donors like you, my classmates and I will change lives in South Africa. By traveling to Intabazwe this May and rebuilding their elementary school, I hope that the community’s children will feel safe and excited when learning. Thank you very much!

Best,

Jacqueline Zamitalo