

Matthew T Panhans
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What is so great about the Ford Family Program is that it encourages development by working with people, through participatory development practice rather than imposing programs on rural villages. This allows for the rural poor to find empowerment and real ownership of the projects and programs that the Ford Program helps them to initiate. The down side, however, is that it is hard to tell beforehand exactly what a summer with the Ford Program will entail. As I boarded the plane bound for Entebbe International, I was still unsure of exactly what I would be doing. I was told during orientations that there may be work to be done in areas such as micro venturing or health, but nothing was sure or very specific. This is because, when you work with people for development, you cannot tell them what to do. Instead, the work becomes more of a dialogue, and this will cause plans to change.

When I arrived at Uganda Martyrs University, I was told that in addition to helping out with the Ford Family Program meetings and workshops, I would have a focus area in exploring microfinance possibilities with both a local farmers association and with the villagers of Nnindy. But the first week and a half was spent just getting to know the Nkozi area. I visited around, met with people, ate the local food, and had Luganda lessons so that I could greet the villagers and introduce myself. These first few weeks of relationship building turned out to be some of the most important.

My first task in the microfinance area was to determine the extent to which financial services were already available in the area so as to ascertain that this was a real need for the farmers. At the same time, even if financial services were lacking in the villages of Nnindy, I had to be sure that this was something that the farmers wanted. If they had no desire to invest

time and energy into such a program, then we should by no means impose it on them. That is a sure formula for failure. To do this first task, I attended community meetings in the villages of Nnindyé as well as meetings with the Nkozi Agri-Business Training Association (NABTA), which is a local farmers association consisting of about 600 farmers who are divided into 40 groups. It turned out that farmers had very limited access to financial services, and they needed them.

As far as providing financial services to farmers, I was fortunate enough to have the resources of Uganda Martyrs University's Department of Microfinance. In particular, one staff member from Germany gave me valuable insight. I was also able to attend some of the courses and lectures. The most important presentation I attended was given by the Catholic Relief Services' Savings and Internal Lending Community Program director, Michael Katambira. He convinced me that the Savings and Internal Lending Community approach to financial services would be greatly beneficial to the farmers and villagers of Nnindyé. I spoke with him, and he said CRS was willing to work with the Ford Program and that it would be a great thing to do; someone just needs to organize it. If only I had had more time, this would have been my next goal. But given the time constraint, all I could do was write up my findings of the potential benefits of such a program and recommend that someone organize this collaboration between the farmers and CRS.

While attending meetings with NABTA, there were some other concerns and issues that came up. One was that the members of NABTA were interested in procuring a mill to grind maize. They said that there were no mills nearby, and the farmers claimed they were overcharged when they went to the few that did operate, far away. Another issue was that of tents; this was an issue that I did not expect before I had been to East Africa, but after being there it seems

obvious. You see, whenever there is a celebration of any sort in East Africa, be it a wedding, birthday, graduation, or religious celebration, it is very common for the hosts to rent chairs for the guests and sometimes tents as well for protection from the hot sun. NABTA owns many chairs, and they often rent them out to people; however, the leadership committee said that often the people are also looking to rent tents, but NABTA can only point them to someone else. They were interested in getting tents to rent along with their chairs, but we wanted to make sure that this was something that they actually wanted. We also had to make sure that there would be market demand for the tents and use of the mill to make them worthwhile investments. We also had to be sure that these items could be obtained and maintained through completely local means so that the projects could be maintained. I also needed to determine to what extent the farmers were willing to contribute, since it would be contrary to the Ford Family Program philosophy to just give things to the farmers. I explored these issues and submitted a report to the Ford Program with my findings and recommendations.

Aside from working in my focus areas, I also assisted with the day to day work of the Ford Program. This included planning and helping out with faculty and donor visits, attending community meetings, helping to prepare for and evaluate a three day workshop for community representatives, and learning about participatory development programs by observing them in action. Some of this work was the most beneficial because I was able to experience development work, and the Ford Program staff appreciated the help I could offer. This was also an exciting time to be with the Nnindye project, as the results of the baseline survey were being presented to the villagers and feedback was received. In the workshop, the results and feedback were discussed and evaluated with community representatives, who were then also trained and sent back to the villages to discuss with the community how they can proceed in developing their

villages. Depending on what they decide, the Ford Family Program will likely assist them with carrying out group formations and projects or programs they hope to implement. The decisions that should be made in the next few months have been long awaited.

I know that my work helping out with the day to day operations was helpful for the staff of the Ford Program. Some staff members were always very busy, and I think they appreciated having some interns around. As far as my focus areas, I believe that working with NABTA should also be very helpful for the Ford Family Program. They can stand to gain a great deal by further developing the partnership with NABTA. They are a group of local farmers who really want to improve their lives and seem to be active and willing to contribute however they can. They just need a bit of assistance to reach some great aspirations, and I believe the Ford Family Program can offer that assistance.

I learned a great deal from my summer with the Ford Program. I learned more about East African culture, and even some Luganda, and thereby learned more about my own culture. I also grew academically, as this experience gave me a new perspective on my studies of economics. For example, I was able to use my background in economics to ask important questions about rural class structure and how that would affect the development work I was involved with. By experiencing development work, I learned of the potential for greatness that lies inside so many Ugandans. I am very grateful for all of the experiences I had and the people I met during the summer.