

Statement of Mr. Buey Tut

My organization's mission, Aqua-Africa, is a reflection of who I am and where I come from. I am a native East African who immigrated, along with my family, to the United States at a young age. I have been in the United States 16 years. I graduated from Heartland Christen School with my high school diploma, attended University of Nebraska where I served student body senator, Vice President and captain of Speech and Debate team. My professional career includes interning for congressman Lee Terry, serving as the District Executive for Boy Scouts of America, appointed board of Trustee, by Mayor Jim Suttle to the Omaha Public Library Board, board of Trustee for South Sudanese Community Association and currently serving as the founder and Executive Director of Aqua-Africa.

When considering the impact of water programs on global health, the results or continuing need is not at question, but rather its application. The United Nations declares that to date 2 billion people have gained access to clean water. 1.8 billion people have gained access to improved sanitation. The United States alone has invested \$953 million to improve access to clean water and sanitation. Despite this remarkable progress however, there are still 780 million people without access to clean water and countless others without adequate sanitation. This means 780 million people suitable to water borne diseases like Cholera, typhoid fever and hepatitis A, dysentery and the list goes on and on. This results in 4,000 children a day to can easily be prevented. The question I get asked all the time is, what was my motivation in starting Aqua-Africa. The simple answer is, that I could have been one of the 4,000 kids. Although we have made remarkable strides to improve access to clean water and sanitation, it's imperative utilize multiple methods of application. These include, public-private partnerships, the inculcation of native African's in the design stage of any future policy, program and leveraging Africa's economic growth. Implemented effectively, I believe these methods will usher programs away from aid and foster development for a lasting solution.

As East Africa natives, Jacob and I both remember the countless hours spent on finding, transporting and purifying water. Admittedly, as kids, this was more of an in-convenience detracting from valuable time honing soccer skills. For our parents however, the absence of water, let alone clean water was a burden that weighed heavily on their thoughts. It affected our health, education, economic viability and overall quality of life. We both remember helping strap 20 lbs clay pots on to our mothers back twice a day as she transported water back and forth from the river. I remember being in a perpetual game of hide and seek to avoid my mother "requesting" my help in this dreadful task. This memory served to inspire us, but drove us to act was the conviction that as African's we have to design our own solutions to our own problems. No longer would we settle for aid to get us by or sustain us, but espier for development that will help us grow.

Our commitment to development stems from various indications of Africa's current standing. In the past decade, Africa has made remarkable economic progress. Over the past ten years, real income per person has increased by more than 30%, whereas in the previous 20 years it shrank by nearly 10%. Over the next decade its GDP is expected to rise by an average of 6% a year. This leap forward is largely due to a working relationship between private sector and governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

Aqua-Africa's belief is "Without water, nothing can grow." Aqua-Africa focuses in three areas of development, Clean Water and Sanitation, Micro-Democracy and Resource Management. Initially, Aqua-Africa drills water wells for communities with populations ranging from 200 - 2,000 people as part of its clean water initiative. The availability of clean water impacts a communities health, economy and environment. Using access to clean water as foundation, our organization administers micro democracy and resource management training. Using access to clean water as foundation, Aqua-Africa administers democratic training and applications. Per 500 individuals served, Aqua-Africa oversees an election process to elect six members of committee to administrators of the water well. After training, the committee members are charged with the task of constructing policy for the use of the water source. This is intended to introduce people to the principles of democracy and its applications on a grassroots level. Lastly, Aqua-Africa provides resource management training. By using the water as example, Aqua-Africa trainings villagers the limitations on natural resources and the importance of vigilance and involvement in policy construction.

In 2011 I left my Job with the Boy Scouts of America, as district Executive to run Aqua-Africa full time. I used my savings I had accumulated for the first year as the organization was unable provide a wage. In addition to the challenges of raising money, I have been jailed in South Sudan for refusing to bribe a soldier in Central Equatoria, have been forced to dismiss several workers because they did not meet the organization's standard and have spent countless hours crafting our programs. To date, the organization has served 4,500 South Sudanese. In 2013 the organization hopes to serve more people than the past two years combined. Our convocation is a product of who we are.

As part of our five strategic plan we conducted a Strength, Weakness and Opportunity (SWOT) analyses. We concluded that our major challenge moving forward will include Africa's political climate, culture and infrastructure. It is precisely our strength as native East Africans that helps overcome these weakness. we are in the unique position to design, implement and execute developmental inactive that we feel is necessary. This aspires ownership, accountability and most of all legitimacy.

No longer are developmental plans designed by outsiders and imported into developing nations for natives to execute. Africa's current circumstance has encouraged natives to partner with other natives and supporters from the international community to design appropriate development tactic . Organizations with similar mission or vision are starting to exchange experiences and information to efficiently utilize limited resources. Aqua-Africa is currently working with Water for South Sudan to expand operations throughout South Sudan. This partnership fosters accountability and encourages coordination.

Sustainability has been a buzz word in the philanthropic world for years. As native East Africa with plans to move back to East Africa to live, sustainability is not enough. We aspire to become a productive member of the global economy. To realize this dream however, we need to have the basic building blocks like water and sanitation in place. Unlike previous decades Native African's are not only willing but continuously able to take on the challenges the content faces. With partnerships amongst established and upcoming organizations, privet and public sector, this dream is well within reach. Without water, nothing can grow and this basic necessity has to be a right for any nation to thrive.