Purpose Statement: The purpose of this project is to reduce violence, discrimination and marginalization of PWA in northwestern Tanzania. In the affirmative it is to increase understanding of albinism, build acceptance and respect, and facilitate safety and social inclusion of PWA within their families and communities. It is appropriately named, *Watu Kama Sisi* (People Like Us).

Project Activities: 40 Village Education Meetings for approximately 2,000 villagers in the Mara Region

CONTEXT

The upsurge in violence against people with albinism in Tanzania began in 2006, with some witch doctors telling clients that the body parts of an albino made the most powerful potion for becoming wealthy. Since then there have been 75 killings, 63 mutilations, 1 abduction, and 18 grave robbings.

After an 18-month period of relative peace, violence against people with albinism is escalating, and many suggest it is because of the general elections in October — apparently it’s not only ignorant rural peasants who believe albino body parts can make you wealthy — and even win elections. During this six-month period we have seen:

- February 15, 2015 (Geita Region): An 18-month-old baby named Yohana Bahati was abducted by 5 men armed with machetes, and found two days later in a shallow grave with his arms and legs hacked off.
- February 2015 (Simiyu Region): A 17-year-old mute teenager named Masalau was gang-raped by 5 men, and left with two STDs and pregnant.
- March 7, 2015 (Rukwa Region): The hand of 6-year-old Baraka was cut off with a machete. Seventeen suspects have been arrested, including Baraka’s father and brother.

- May 14, 2015 (Katavi Region): Thirty-year-old Limi lost her right arm in a machete attack. A secret ballot of villagers surfaced several suspects, including her brother two witch doctors who live close by.

- June 12, 2015 (Tabora Region): A 6-year-old girl named Margareth was abducted from her home. Her mother, who also has albinism, raised the alarm and villagers started a search. One villager reported to police that there had been a man looking for a buyer willing to purchase Margareth. The police set a trap, rescued Margareth and arrested her 44-year-old uncle.

As you can see from the map, the violence that has historically been confined to the areas around Lake Victoria seems to be extending south through the most rural parts of Tanzania. We continue to believe that superstitious beliefs, fear and stigma are pervasive and powerful, especially in rural areas, and that these meetings are our best hope for reducing violence in the long run.

On a more positive note, June 13 was the first International Albinism Awareness Day, proclaimed last November by the UN. The President Kikwete attended, as well as hundreds of the citizens of Arusha, in a sign of solidarity that I’ve not seen before. People with albinism seemed to feel surprised, affirmed and supported. In past years the event was much smaller, with about 200 PWA, and this year we provided 400 wide-brimmed hats with the Rotary logo, and still ran out half-way through the day.
PROGRESS ON OUTCOMES

We’re ahead of schedule for meetings, and the participation rate has been much higher than we’d anticipated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned For 2-Year Project</th>
<th>Actual For Jan-Jun 2015 (Target: 25%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Meetings</td>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We had planned for an average of 50 villagers to attend each meeting, and we have welcomed an average of 87. In areas where radios and newspapers are rare, we are in debt to our highly stylized, community-based advertising: the village drummer traipses up and down the surrounding hills the evening before the meeting, stopping periodically to call out our meeting subject, place and time, and beating his drum(a.k.a. plastic water container) in between stops. At times he dresses for the part, no doubt enhancing his credibility. And all this for only 5,000 Tanzanian Shillings, about $2.50 USD.

We also think the time is ripe. It seems that even people who may have been neutral or somewhat negative about people with albinism in the past have been shocked by the violence, and are now feeling compassion for people with albinism. As a nation many are embarrassed that the international community associates Tanzania with the killing of albinos, rather than as the country of peace, as they were known for so long because of the absence of tribal warring. So calling the village together to discuss albinos attracts a lot of interest, people seem ready to learn, and even ready to take steps to protect and advocate for people with albinism.
Key Changes and Project Adjustments:

1. **Village Planning Workshops**: We had intended to close each meeting by facilitating action planning for the village, but have found that people are sort of “maxed out” by that point. Yet at every meeting so far people have asked us to return (“More people need to hear this, we want to take this to villages around us, but we need more information,” “Our neighbor should not be farming in the hot sun, we should set up a small business for him and then patronize it,” “How can we keep these girls safe?” “The schools should know about these children’s eyesight.”) It was our dream that villagers would address issues like these, and so we’ve reorganized our plan so that we can return to each village (upon request) for further training in albinism and assisting them to develop Action Plans. We have conducted four so far and they have been well attended by committed leaders of the communities. So we will continue that pattern, alternating between initial Village Education Meetings and then Village Planning Workshops two to four months later, to assist in mobilizing the communities for action. One thing to note is that a Village Planning Committee will likely have 15-20 members, so our total number of participants for the 40 villages will not be as high as if we did all Education Meetings. But we believe it will be worth the investment, facilitating real structural change to support the attitude change villagers are demonstrating.

2. **Skin Protection Education**: We have also found that almost all the people with albinism who attend have received no previous information about their condition or skin cancer. Sister Martha of Albino Peacemakers now uses about 30 minutes after the meetings to teach them how to protect themselves and distribute donated hats, sunscreen, and sunglasses. Watu Kama Sisi wristbands (with Rotary and Albino Peacemakers printed as well) and the book written by Rotarian Alan Suttie, may he rest in peace.

**Learning:**

For each Village Education Meeting we bring the Facilitator, a member of the local Tanzanian Albinism Society and a member of the local Traditional Healthcare Practitioner Association who serve on a panel with the Peer Educator (Sister Martha), as well as the new Project Assistant and Driver (who also manages equipment setup and take-down, and conducts Pre- and Post-Tests). After every meeting, on our way back to Musoma, we debrief: “What went well?” and “What do we want to do differently next time?” We have captured an amazing amount of information from every member of the team, and we’ve made numerous
improvements to the workshops a real tribute to “participatory development.” Some examples:

1. **Location:** “Try to find an outdoor (or neutral) location, because some Muslims and even other Christians won’t come into a Mennonite Church, even if they are invited.”

2. **Genetics:** “They are so interested in the genetics of albinism!” (which I had *never* anticipated!) “How can we teach it in a way that is understandable?” So Specioza, the Tanzanian facilitator, developed a great process of bringing men and women, albino and non-albino, to the front of the room and putting them in couples, each person with two “genes” on paper with either a capital “R” for rangi (color), or a small “a” for albinism. Specioza flips a coin to determine whether each individual holds up their right or left hand, and when the couple is holding up each of their sheets, she asks the audience to say whether the baby will be albino or dark-skinned. (Because albinism is a recessive gene, $RR$ and $Ra$ are black, and only $aa$ is albino.) The most exciting part is when the participants realize that two dark-skinned parents, each with a recessive gene for albinism ($Ra-Ra$), can have an albino baby if the two $a$’s come together. This unravels the myths about the baby being the result of the mother sleeping with a white man (or a ghost), as well as the superstitions about albinos being somehow supernatural — either being a curse from God, or their body parts making you wealthy, or a myriad of myths in between.

3. **Melanin:** Also surprising, villagers have been interested in melanin, how some people have it and others don’t, its relation to skin sensitivity to the sun, and the difference between PWA and “*wazungu*” (Caucasians). We now pull three people from the audience and, together with me as the only *mzungu*, we stand in a line: the first person very dark-skinned, one lighter African, myself and then and a person with albinism. We tell them that the skin of the darkest person makes the most melanin and has the most protection from the sun; I explain how I burn in the sun, and we progress up to the PWA who is largely unable to make melanin and so is extremely sensitive to the sun (and vulnerable to skin cancer). It seems to be an “Ah ha!” moment for the group, as they see it as a continuum, and it seems to normalize albinos as part of a natural range of color. I think it also, perhaps unconsciously, confronts people with the contradiction between how they view *wazungu* as superior to them, and yet albinos are inferior to them. Once again the message, “Watu kama Sisi” (People like Us). It’s been as powerful as it has been simple.
4. **Students:** Often, while we are setting up for the initial meeting, school-age children have been peeking in the doors and windows, curious as to what is happening. Our most recent meeting was during their June vacation, and children actually came in and sat in the chairs—filling almost all of them, and setting me to worry where the adults would sit! It was 15 minutes before the posted meeting time, and most adults don’t show up until 30-45 minutes after that, so we decided to offer an abbreviated session for the students. Within minutes of starting the video more children slipped in, doubling up on chairs, filling the floor, and crowding every window and door. Eventually there were 180 children absolutely captivated by the video. Afterward the facilitator asked about what they’d learned, and they reported very clearly both the facts and the impacts of false myths on people with albinism. We’re now exploring how we can incorporate a session for students, in addition to that for adults, into future meetings.

**REPORTING ON ROTARY RESOURCES**

We’ve spent $5,904.28 in the first six months of the project, 14% of those budget line items it was thought MCC might draw from for this project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL EXPENSES</th>
<th>GRAND TOTAL</th>
<th>2-YEAR BUDGET</th>
<th>BUDGET TO DATE</th>
<th>OVER/(UNDER) TO DATE</th>
<th>% BUDGET SPENT TO DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peace Travel</td>
<td>$ 2,844.56</td>
<td>$ 1,059.85</td>
<td>$ 3,904.41</td>
<td>$ 19,829.00</td>
<td>$ 4,957.25</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner Coordination</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$ 62.92</td>
<td>$ 62.92</td>
<td>$ 16,062.00</td>
<td>$ 4,015.50</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>1,662.01</td>
<td>55.56</td>
<td>$ 1,717.57</td>
<td>1,983.00</td>
<td>495.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational Materials</td>
<td>43.28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$ 43.28</td>
<td>3,460.00</td>
<td>$ 3,460.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational Training</td>
<td>176.11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$ 176.11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$ 4,725.96</td>
<td>$ 1,178.33</td>
<td>$ 5,904.28</td>
<td>$ 41,334.00</td>
<td>$ 10,333.50</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **Participation:** We originally planned on 30 villagers at each of our workshops on albinism. At our first meeting we counted just over 100, and at the second, Chitare (pictured here), there were over 180. (This is likely due to the fact that, when the 2:00 starting time came and there were only a handful of people present, the visiting Rotarians from Musoma and the U.K. went out through the village inviting people; in this photo they are discreetly seated inside the back wall with the hole in it, damaged in a storm). Most people were seated inside the mud brick church, but about 30 were looking through the hole in the back wall, and still others squeezed their faces into the open-air windows, and there were more than 100 children on the dirt floor. When we finished our meeting at 5pm, they were disappointed because they thought we were going to continue into the evening and stay the night. Because two of the people with albinism had never seen a doctor and had no protective clothing, we covered the cost of transportation into the town of Musoma, where we took them to see the Regional Dermatologist and shopping at the second-hand clothing market for long-sleeved shirts and pants.

2. **“Kwaya”:** We were all surprised to arrive at the first village meeting and find a 20-person choir waiting for us. The Mennonite pastor in a nearby village had attended the Interfaith Leader Orientation, and returned home to write four songs about albinos being “People Like Us.” They had walked two hours on dusty roads in the hot sun, carrying their heavy sound system and four huge speakers on their heads. Villagers were thrilled at their performance, complete with the Swahili-style dancing so beloved by Tanzanians. We provided for their transportation and lunch costs for the next several meetings, and MCC has paid for the creation of a DVD that we can take to villages that are further away.
3. One of the children who attended in the small village of Chitare, Matekere, has xeroderma pigmentosum, an inherited condition similar to albinism where the skin is mottled and sensitive to the sun, but also completely unable to repair any damage. As a result they are even more vulnerable to skin cancer so the average length of life is only 20 years. His eyesight is poor and his teacher was unaware of that genetic disability. He was always extremely shy. After the meeting his mother spoke to his teacher and asked that he be able to sit at the front of the classroom near the blackboard. Clearly he also gained some self-confidence during the time between our first and second visit. In four short months he has moved up from #11 in the class to #4.

At one follow-up Village Planning Workshop we asked about any developments since we saw them last. One young woman with albinism stood up and said, “Before you came we were treated like animals; but now we know we are human beings.”
### MCC’s Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Beyond Rotary Project Goals, Which Are the First Two Indicators)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Community members have a good understanding of albinism | 1,400 community members learn about albinism in 24 Village Education Meetings* | Teach villagers about albinism, its causes and effects, separating facts from myths  
- Produce a video with PWA to convey factual information about albinism, its causes and effects  
- Video and panel give humanizing stories of challenges and accomplishments, reducing myths and fear that inhibit valuing PWA  
- Include Traditional Healers on the panel to lay bare their brothers’ lies about albino body parts making one wealthy  
- Distribute printed materials on albinism to attendees  
- Invite people who influence the beliefs of others to participate, including village leaders, pastors, imams, teachers, and “opinion leaders”  
- Invite people with albinism | # of villagers who attend meetings | Zero | 1,214 of 2,000 planned participants |
| | | | # of Village Education Meetings | Zero | 19 of 40 village meetings |
| | | | % of representative sample who demonstrate improved understanding of albinism after the meeting | Zero | Data being analyzed, due Sept 2015 |
| | | | #/% of PWA who believe their communities understand albinism better | PWA assessments of growth in community understanding | Yet to come |
| Community members demonstrate acceptance of PWA | 16 of the 20 villages initiate Planning Workshops to take action to support and/or protect PWA | Facilitate planning sessions for villages who request it at the initial Village Education Workshop  
- Provide advanced training and educational materials  
- Involve PWA and community leaders  
- Provide support and follow-up afterward | #/% of village Planning Sessions | Zero | 4 of the 19 meetings were planning sessions |
| | | | #/% of Action steps completed | Zero | Yet to come |
| | | | #/% of PWA who feel more accepted in their communities | PWA self-report | Yet to come |

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*MCC recently modified the plan to distinguish Village Education Meetings from Village Planning Workshops.