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# Retreat as a learning medium for health, empowerment and transformation of Tanzanian girls

Rebecca S. Hartwig  
*Augsburg College*

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RETREAT AS A LEARNING MEDIUM  
FOR HEALTH, EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION  
OF TANZANIAN GIRLS

Rebecca S. Hartwig

Submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Nursing Practice

AUGSBURG COLLEGE  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

APRIL 24, 2015



Archives  
Thesis  
Hartwig  
2015

# AUGSBURG COLLEGE

Augsburg College  
Department of Nursing  
Doctor of Nursing Practice Program  
Scholarly Project Approval Form

This is to certify that **Rebecca S. Hartwig** has successfully presented her scholarly doctoral project entitled "**Retreat as a Learning Medium for Health, Empowerment And Transformation of Tanzanian Girls**" and fulfilled the requirements for the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree.

Date of presentation: April 24, 2015.

**Committee member signatures:**

Major Advisor: Katherine Baumgartner Date April 24, 2015

Faculty Member: Cheryl Leuning Date April 24, 2015

Faculty Member: Joyce M. Mui Date April 24, 2015



## Presentations

Stepping Back for a Quantum Leap: Retreat as a Learning Medium  
for Health and Transformation of Tanzanian Girls  
Westberg Symposium 2015  
April 9-12, 2015  
Memphis, Tennessee

Retreat as a Learning Medium for Health, Empowerment and Transformation  
of Tanzanian Girls  
Augsburg School of Nursing  
March 3, 2015  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Retreat as a Learning Medium for Health, Empowerment and Transformation  
of Tanzanian Girls  
Rasmussen School of Nursing  
February 6, 13, & 20, 2015  
Blaine, Minnesota

'Kipepeo' – Girls to Women: Transformational Retreat for Vulnerable Girls  
Toward Becoming Community Leaders in Rural Tanzania  
Augsburg School of Nursing  
October 16, 2014  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

'Kipepeo' – Girls to Women: Transformational Retreat for Vulnerable Girls  
Toward Becoming Community Leaders in Rural Tanzania  
Girl Scouts of America  
October 5, 2014  
St. Paul, Minnesota

'Kipepeo' – Girls to Women: Transformational Retreat for Vulnerable Girls  
Toward Becoming Community Leaders in Rural Tanzania  
Emmanuel Mennonite Church  
September 7, 2014  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

'Kipepeo' – Girls to Women: Transformational Retreat for Vulnerable Girls  
Toward Becoming Community Leaders in Rural Tanzania  
Asante Africa  
July 16, 2014  
Arusha, Tanzania



Abstract submitted:  
Retreat as a Learning Medium for Health, Empowerment and Transformation  
of Tanzanian Girls  
41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of The Transcultural Nursing Society  
October 28-31, 2015  
Portland, Oregon



## Dedication

This final project is dedicated to the young ladies from *Kipepeo* retreat who will remain in my thoughts and prayers while they work to become their community's next generation of great leaders. Young ladies, may you continue to support one another, to seek guidance from your trusted adults, and to persevere in following your dreams. Remember always - that you are Loved and Cherished; Creative, Smart, and Able; and possess the Character Beauty that your peers have named. You will change the world!

*Asha Omari,*

*Betina Kisiga,*

*Devota Alex,*

*Doto Nihedi,*

*Eva Lwena,*

*Fadhila Mtandi,*

*Fiona Petrie*

*Halima Kalama*

*Jamila Kidore*

*Taraza Madumba*

*Wini Amos*



## Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank all of my esteemed professors for their expert shepherding of my classmates and me along our DNP journey, even when the path was neither clear nor smooth. Three years of study has illuminated new ways of delivering respectful health care to diverse peoples.

I would give a special acknowledgement to my advisor, Dr. Katherine Baumgartner - for her patience in listening to a myriad of project ideas, and asking questions that helped me sort out just what my knowledge, skills, and passions could offer to a worthwhile project. I received only encouragement towards trusting my inclinations and welcoming the unknown as my DNP project unfolded.

Nor could this work have happened without a local partner, Chilwa Selubawa. Chilwa welcomed me to Ruaha Mbuyuni and paved every inch of the way from my learning tour to facilitating the pilot retreat to arranging a follow-up mini-retreat. She will continue to be a support to each of the retreat participants as they go forward.

I am deeply grateful to the Girl Scouts who gave of their time and their care, June and Madelynn who came with me to Tanzania, and to all who donated toward costs of this project.

And finally, because I don't say this often enough, I would like to thank my parents - Bill and Lyn Smith, my mother-in-law -Shoonie Hartwig, my children - Daniel, Jenny, Kirsten, Heidi and Nate Seth, and most of all my Kristopher - for the love and support that has brought me to this place of privilege.



## Abstract

### Retreat as a Learning Medium for Health, Empowerment and Transformation of Tanzanian Girls

Social determinants of health in Tanzania include poverty, low educational standards, and pandemic diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS. Girls in Tanzania are at an increased disadvantage in educational and vocational opportunities relative to boys. They are also an identifiable 'at risk' population regarding access to health care and health education. To address vulnerability of girls, a 5 day retreat for 12 year old girls was held in July, 2014 in Ruaha Mbuyuni, a small village in Iringa region of Tanzania. Using circle process, focused group discussions, and creative arts, participants were given the opportunity to express their hopes, dreams, and concerns, and to share these with the group and with trusted adults. Specific goals for retreat participants were to affirm positive self-worth, to discover personal strengths and life goals, to receive accurate information on girls' health, and to foster a sense of empowerment and agency. Strengthening connections with family and to the community included forming a mentor relationship with a trusted adult of their choice, and becoming better acquainted with community women experts for questions, concerns, or advice. Each day had a theme corresponding to goals for a particular day. This was a pilot project using Florence Nightingale's knowledge of arts in healing, Madeleine Leininger's Culture Care: Diversity and Universality Theory, and Jean Watson's Caring Science Theory, applying key concepts to a very local setting in Tanzania.

*Key words:* retreat, Tanzania, girls, health, education





# Retreat as a Learning Medium for Health, Empowerment and Transformation of Tanzanian Girls

Rebecca Hartwig  
In Partial Fulfillment for  
Doctorate of Nursing Practice Degree  
Augsburg College

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## Tanzania - Fast Facts

- Population of about 45 M,  
with 50% under the age of 17
- 68% live on less than \$1.25/day
- One in 16 is an orphaned child
- 6-8% of children in Tanzania can be identified as  
'most vulnerable children'

3

### Focus on Girls

- Social determinants of health:  
poverty, low educational standards, disease
- Girls most at risk for inadequate access  
to education and health care  
-----
- Empowerment, health education,  
kinship and community advocacy



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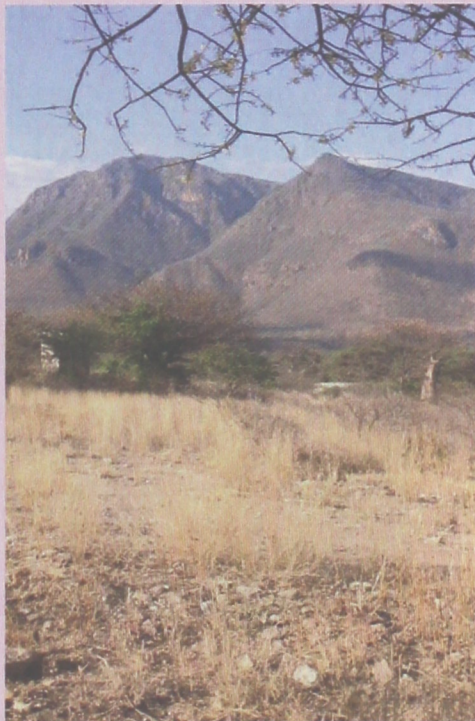
Tanzania, E. Africa



5



Ruaha Mbuyuni, Iringa



6



“...be transformed by  
the renewing of your  
mind.” Romans 12:2





Ukiwa mkubwa, utakuwa nani?

Mwanjakazi

Daktari

Mwalimu

Kipapoo 2004  
Rashid Mbuyuni

8

“Who do you want to be when you grow up?”



## Nursing Theorists



- Florence Nightingale - Nursing: Notes on Nursing (1859)



- Jean Watson - Caring Science Theory



- Madeleine Leininger - Culture Care: Diversity and Universality Theory

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13



Rebecca



Chilwa



June



Fiona

Madelynn

## Facilitator Team



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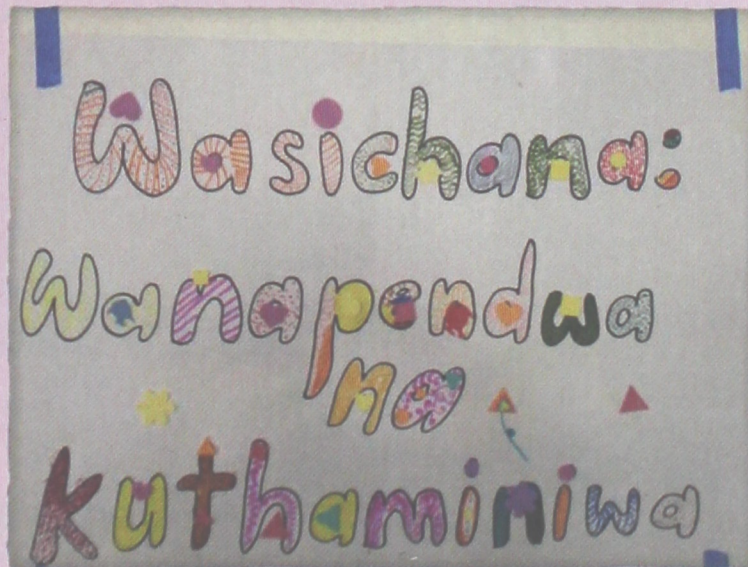


Mikumi National Park



15

"UZIMA" - Wholeness



Day 1: Girls - Loved and Cherished



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## Circle Process

17

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## Journals

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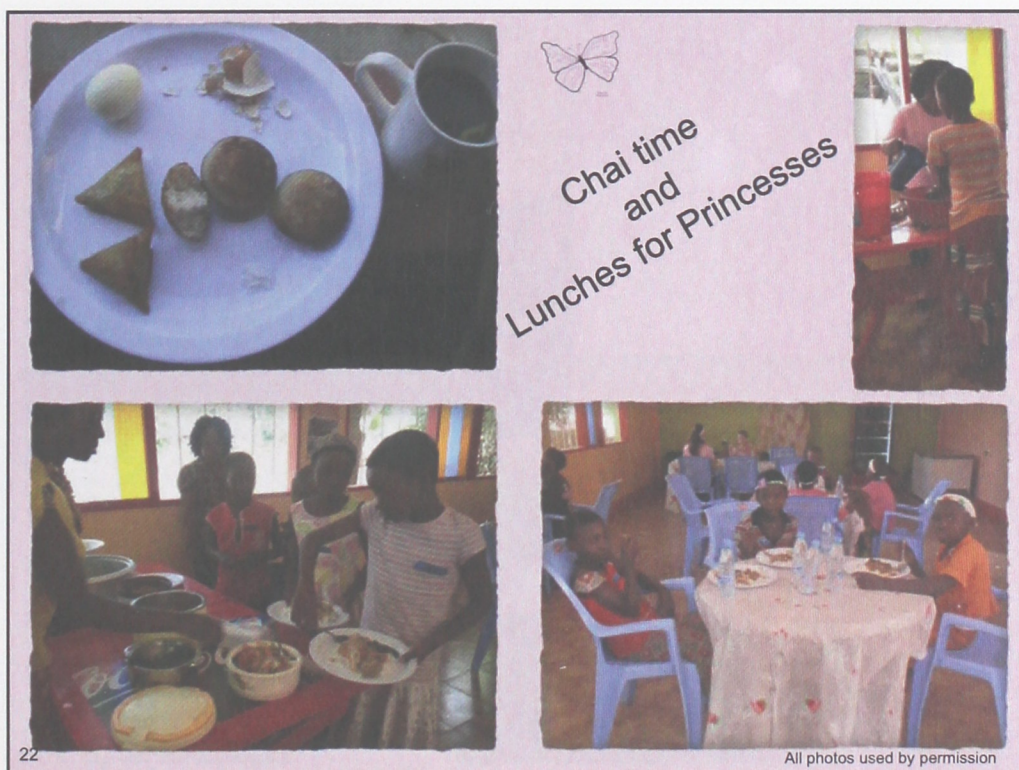
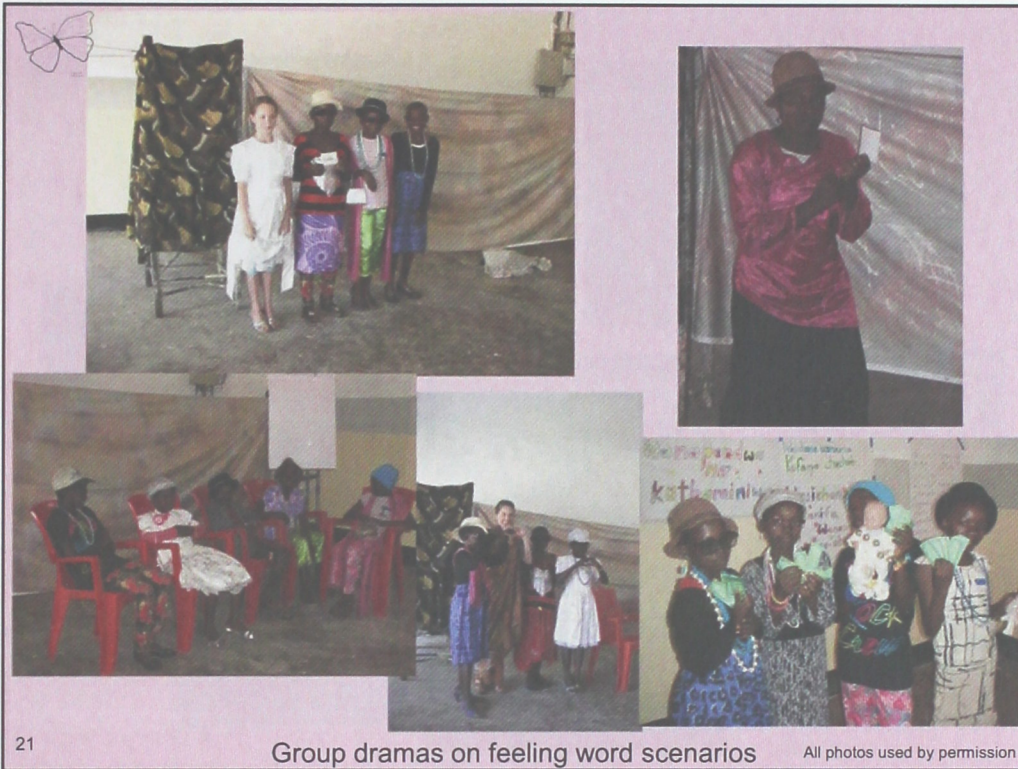
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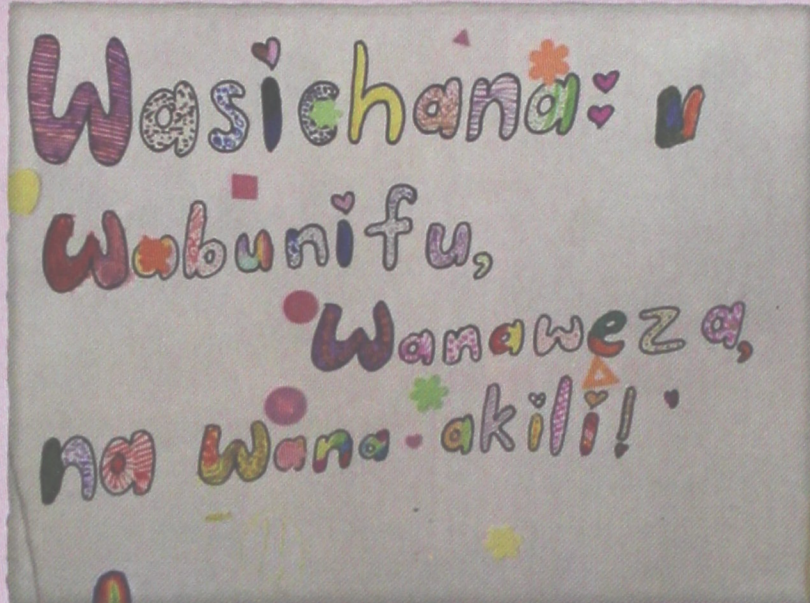
## Cooperative Play



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Day 2: Girls - Creative, Smart, and Able



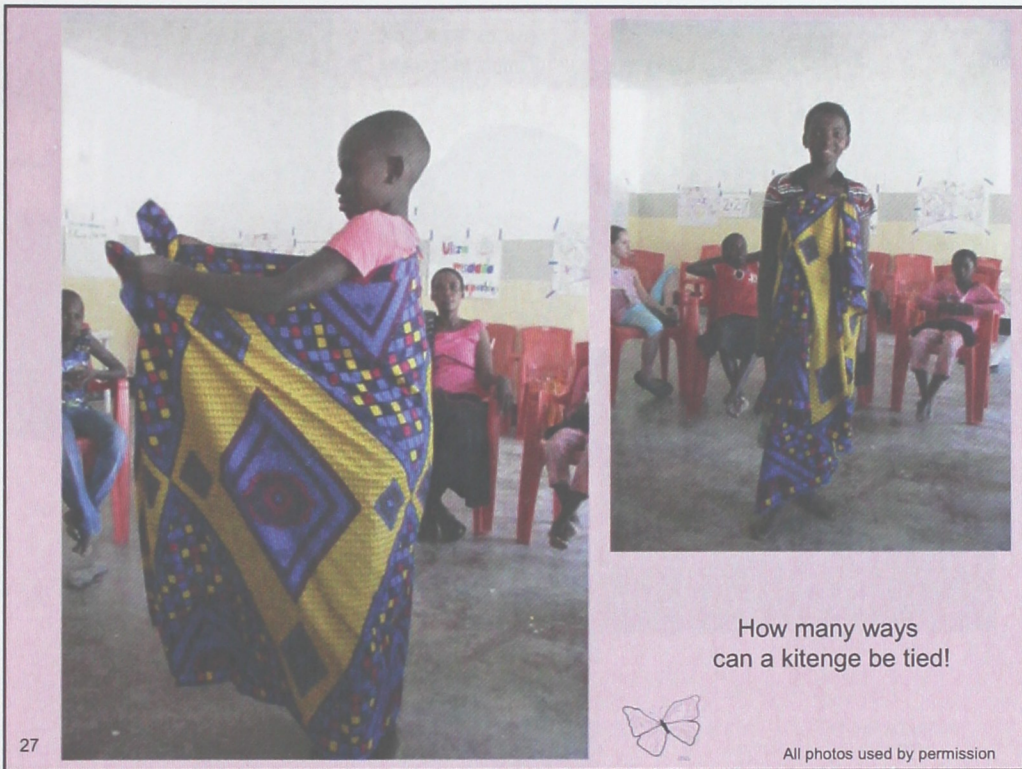
Natural talent?



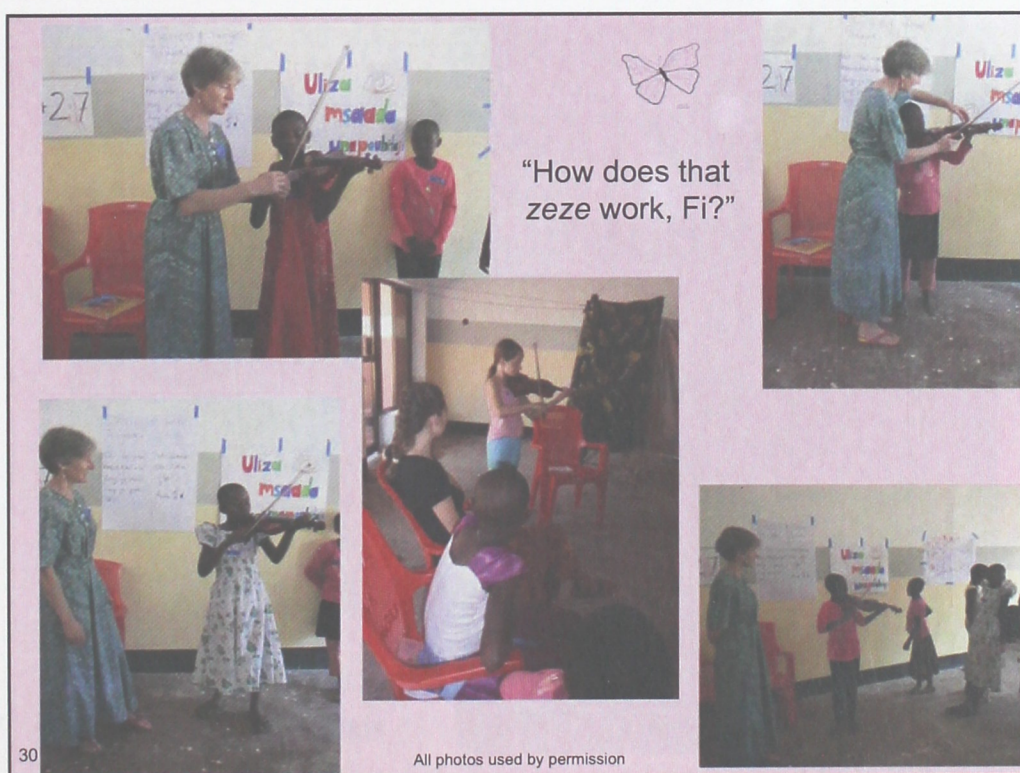
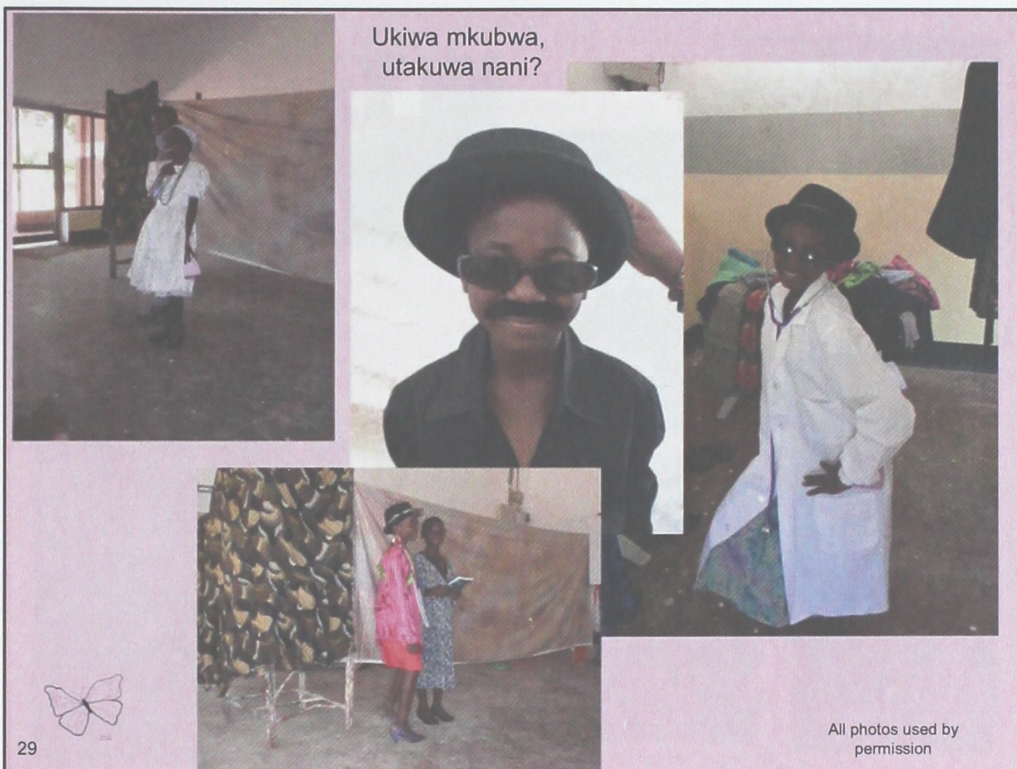
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Photography 101



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Day 3: Girls to Women  
Healthy Bodies

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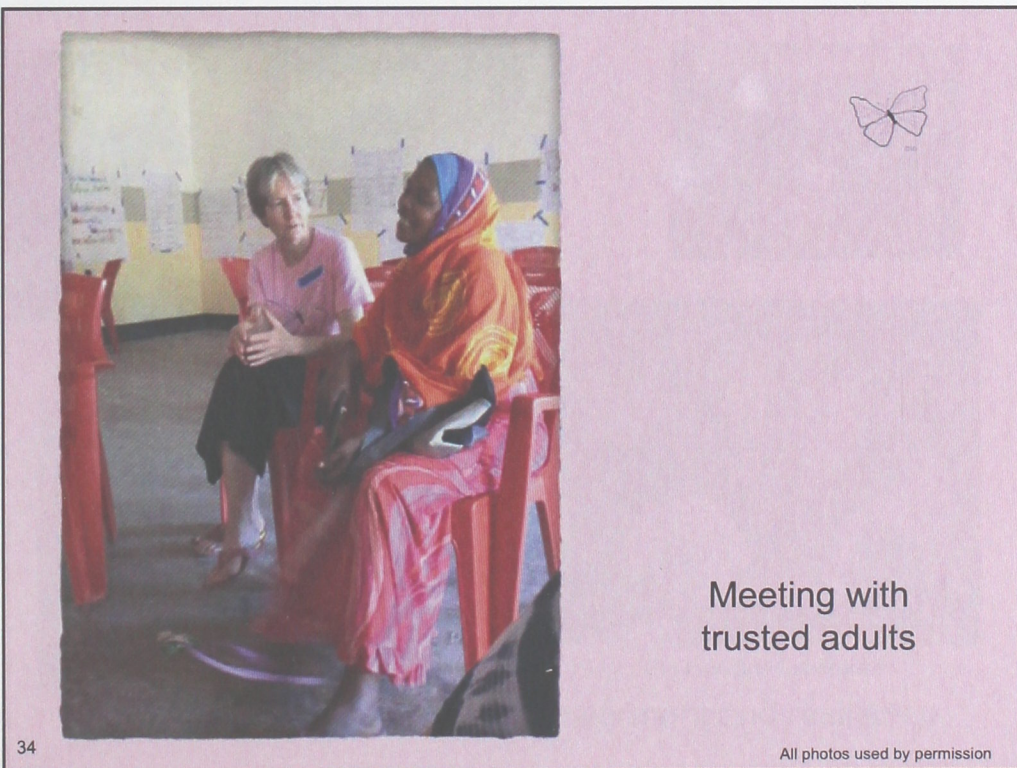




Health Kits  
and  
Dramas

33

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Meeting with  
trusted adults

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## Day 4: Girls and Beauty

35

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Character beauty  
The Rough-Face Girl

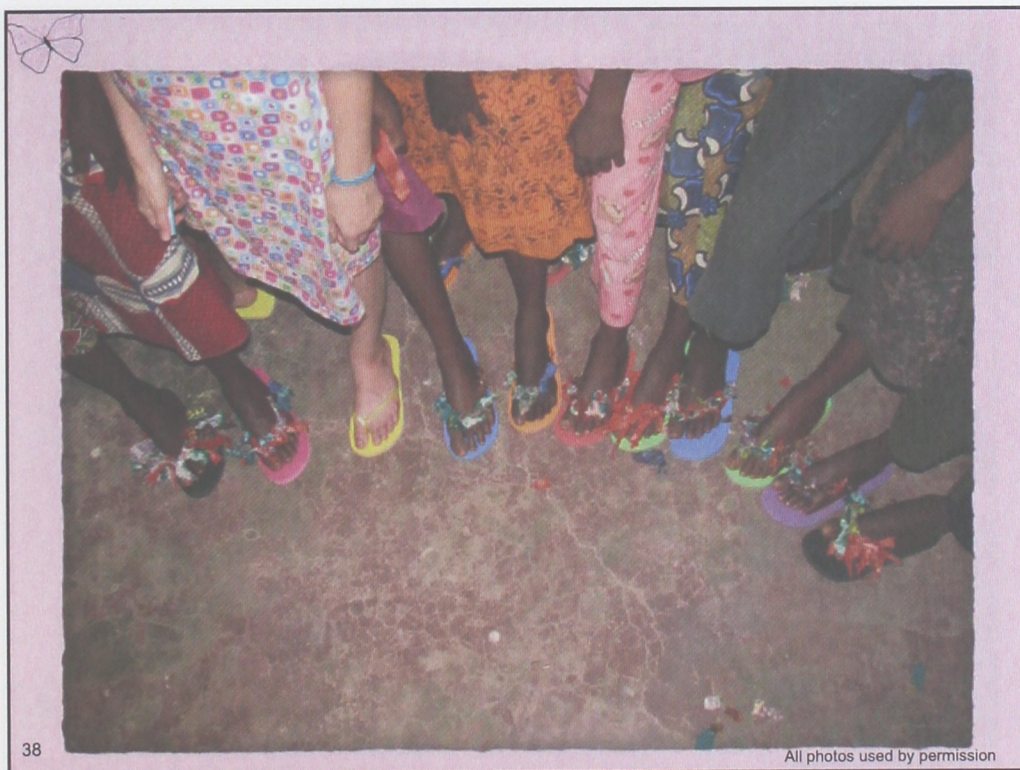
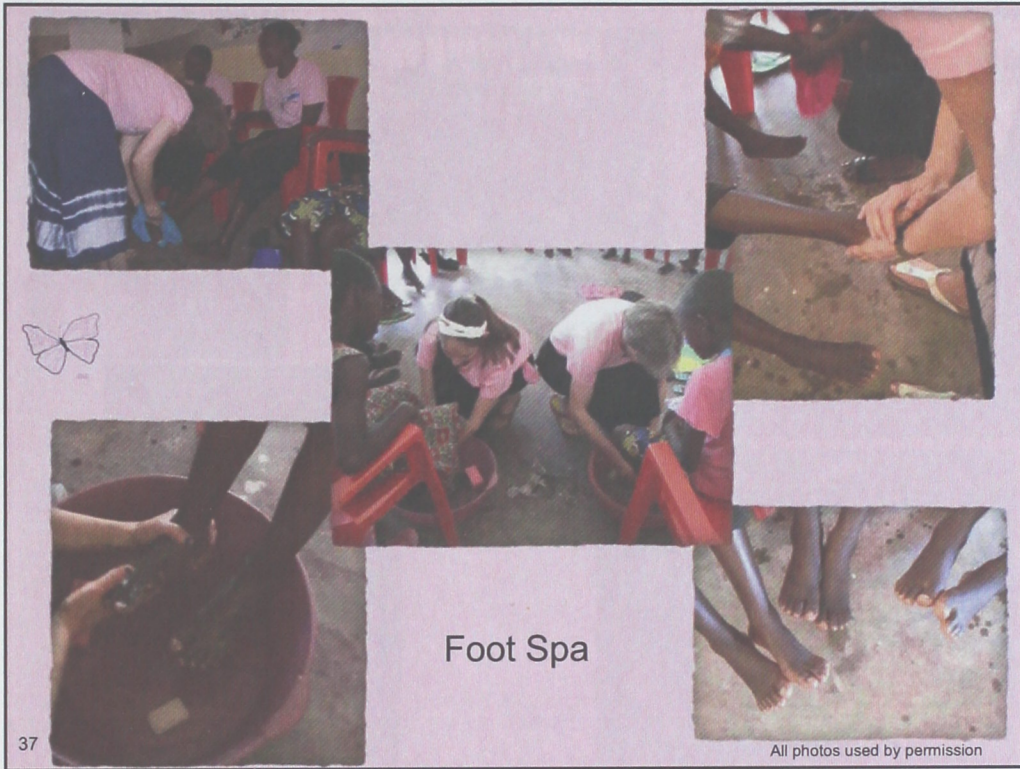
The Lion and the Mouse

Books toward creativity, empowerment and resilience

36

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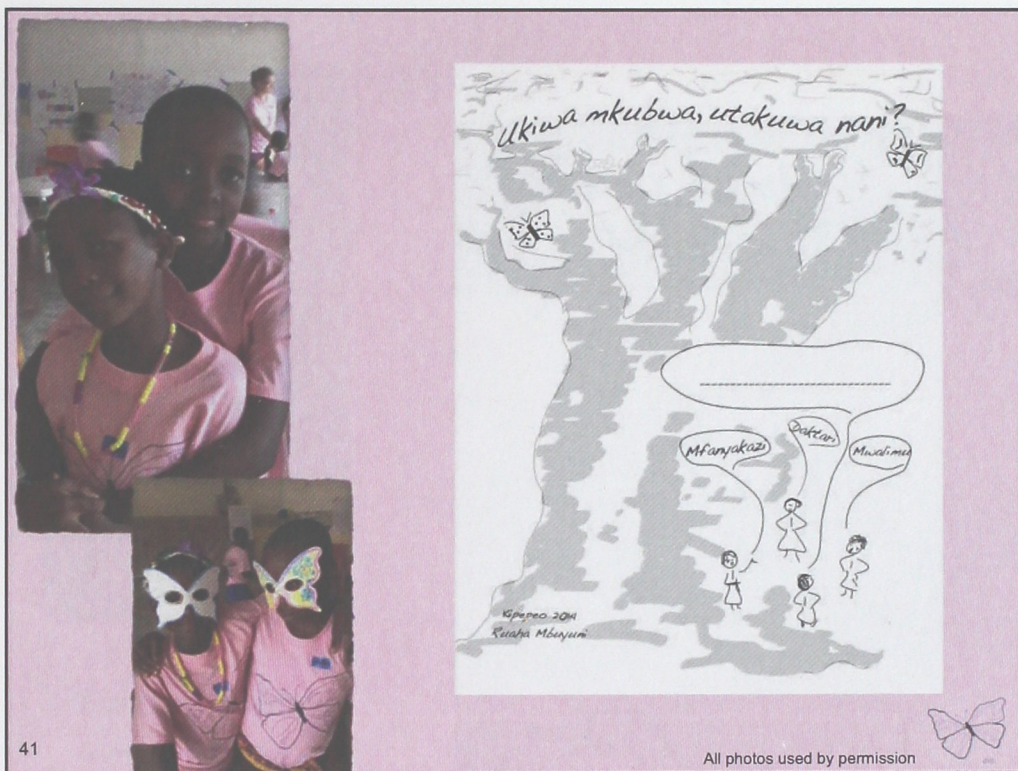






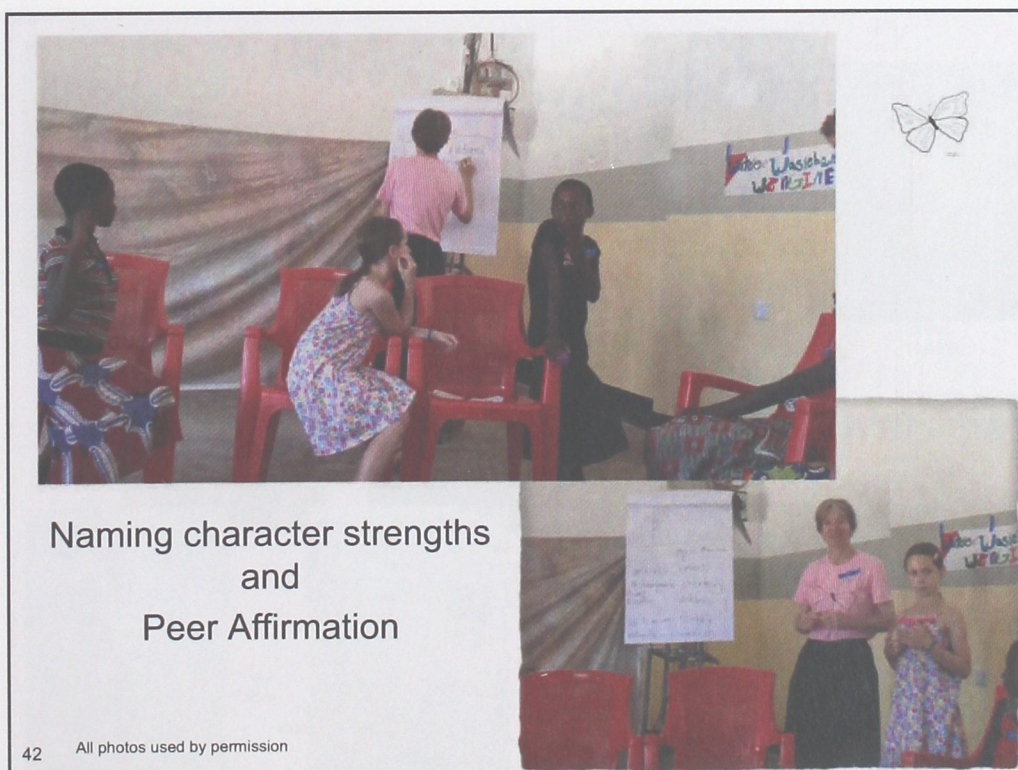






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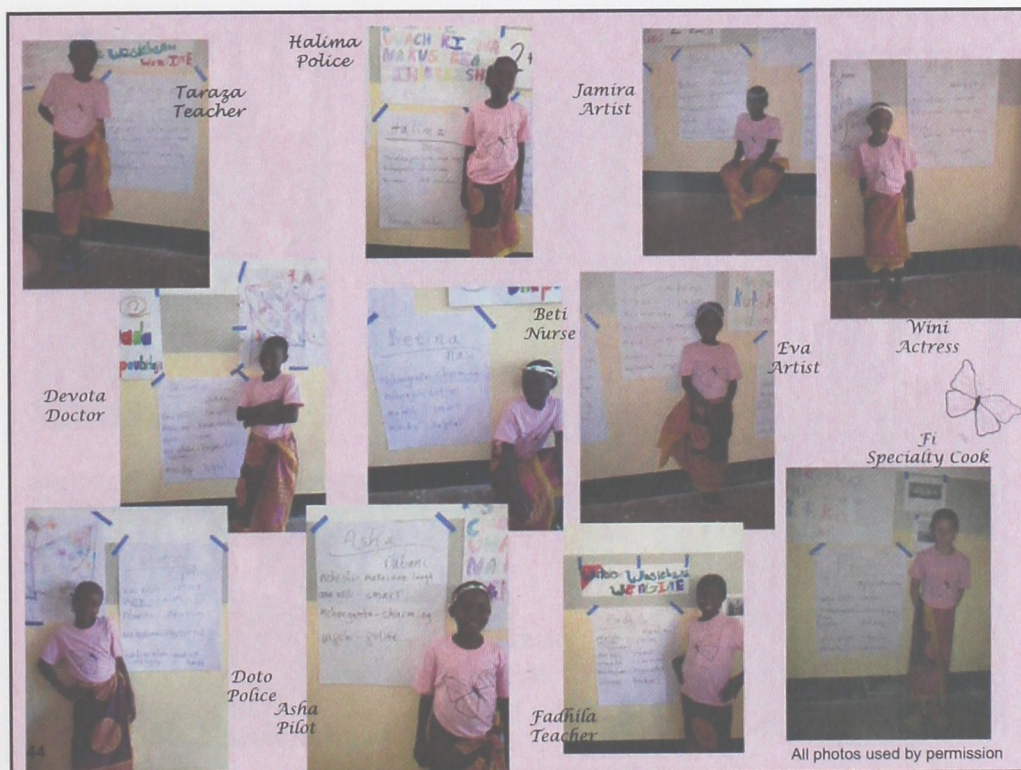
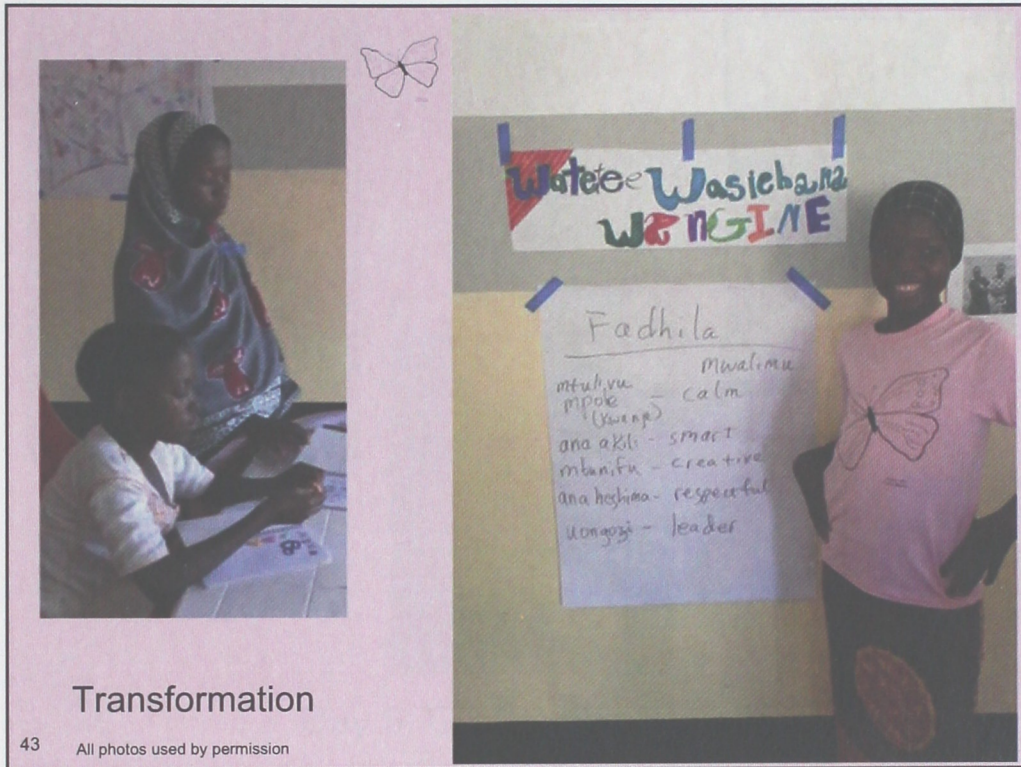


# Naming character strengths and Peer Affirmation

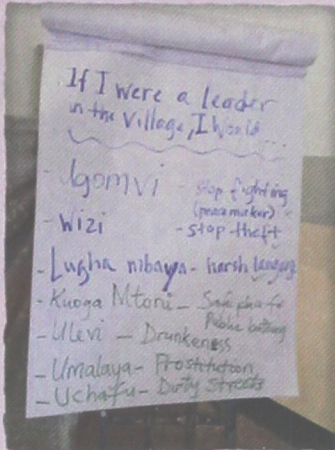
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## Day 5: Girls in Community

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## Final celebrations



## Gift exchanges with trusted adults



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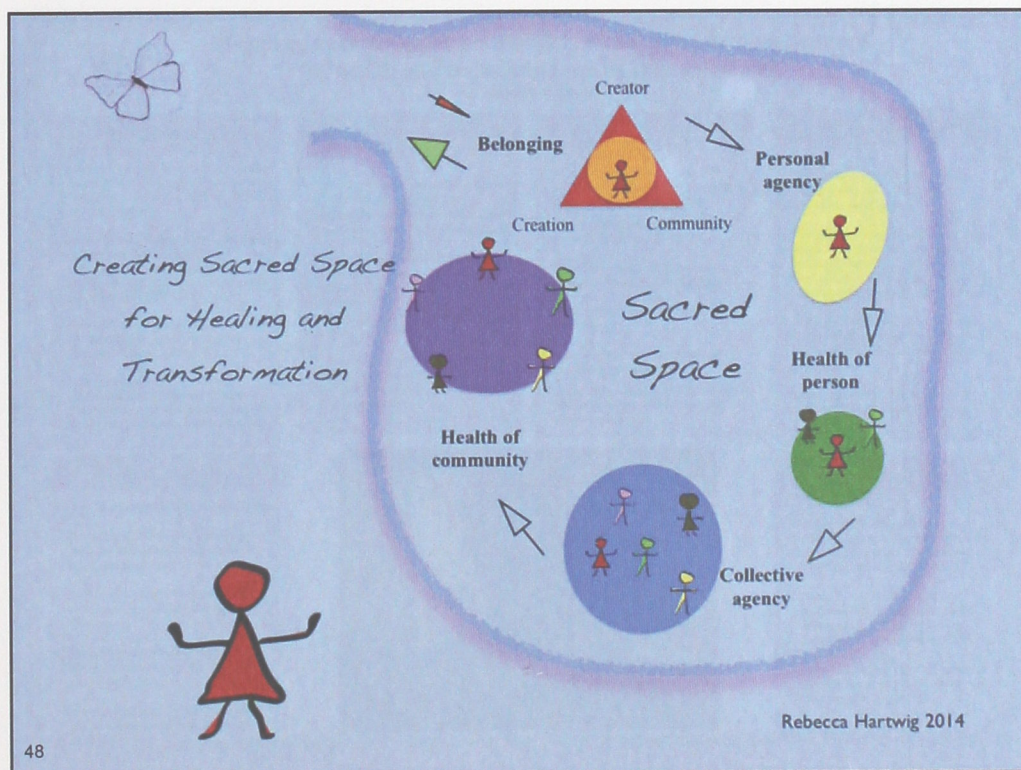
Retreat as a  
Learning Medium  
for Health,  
Empowerment  
and  
Transformation  
of Tanzanian  
Girls



Creating  
Sacred Space  
for  
Health, Healing,  
and  
Transformation

## Morphing Practice to Principles

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## Conclusion



*At the same time that we are  
wearing our ancestral DNA,  
we are creating  
the DNA of future generations.*

*R. Hartwig*



## Stepping back for a quantum leap: retreat as a learning medium for health and transformation of Tanzanian girls

*Rebecca Hartwig*

### Introduction

- Nursing "land(s) between those who are vulnerable and the community that may forget them, not care for them" (Mead, 1956, p. 1002)
- Environmental challenges in child health in Tanzania include poverty and undernutrition, low educational standards, and pandemic diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS
- About 6-8% of children in Tanzania can be identified as 'most vulnerable children' (Leach, 2007, p. 20)
- Girls are particularly vulnerable as sociocultural determinants affect academic success, choices for vocation and access to accurate health education

### Project Description

- A five day retreat for twelve year old girls included health education, activities toward empowerment, and intentional community networking
- Daily sessions included a gathering circle, topic presentations, and related activities using focused group discussions, arts and crafts, photography, reading, storytelling and drama
- Trusted adults and "go to" women in the village were named and welcomed as 'knots' in the safety net of the community

### Findings

- Retreat is an important venue for affirming belonging and providing a space for creative discovery
- These twelve year old girls warm quickly to group activities,
- are reserved in asking questions about health and body changes,
- are delighted to discover personal strengths, and
- are eager to endorse positive attributes of their peers
- Participants strongly rely on friends for information, affirmation, and decision making

### Practice Implications

- Using peer groups as a supportive environment for exchange of knowledge and ideas
- Promoting awareness of choices that impact health and personal goals through education, empowerment, and examples of children's creativity in overcoming significant challenges
- Voicing concerns of vulnerable girls to caring adults through development of personal mentorships and community participation
- Improving educational standards by introducing new ways of learning

### Project Goals

- To affirm personal value and belonging
- To build confidence and leadership skills by self-discovery of talents, goals and ambitions
- To provide accurate information concerning girls health and body changes
- To develop trusted adult relationships between women in the community and retreat participants
- To name challenges in the community and to view oneself as an agent of change



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3. Mead, M. (1956). Nursing primitive and civilized. *American Journal of Nursing*. 56 1001-1004.



### **Past presentations**

07/2014 Asante Africa, Arusha, Tanzania  
07/2014 Friends and Family, Colorado and Minnesota  
09/2014 Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Minneapolis, MN  
10/2014 Girl Scouts, St. Paul, MN  
10/2014 Augsburg Nursing Classes, Minneapolis, MN  
02/2014 Rasmussen Nursing Classes, Minneapolis, MN

### **Poster presentation**

04/2015 Westburg Symposium, Memphis, TN

### **Abstract submission**

10/2015 Transcultural Nursing Society, Portland, OR

### **References:**

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Chilwa S.

Village  
leaders

Jema and Jane

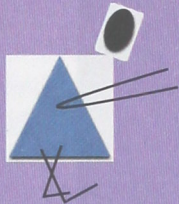
Mama Baraka  
Mama Furaha

June B

Fiona P.

Madelynn C

THANK YOU!!!



## Gifts of:

Welcoming and  
Planning  
Time and Materials  
Thoughts and Prayers  
Cost Assistance

Beth J.  
Jane C

Emmanuel  
Mennonite  
Church  
Mutti

Annamary B

Jana J.

Gr! Scouts

The Brain Sore

Katherine B.

Kristi M.

Kava Z.

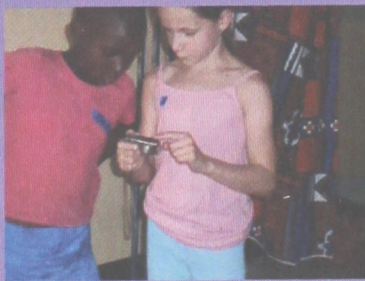
Marni S

Pam O.

Mary H.



Asanteni Sana!  
Thank You



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Follow-up Mini Retreat  
21-22 March, 2015  
Mikumi National Park



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Mikumi National Park

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**Slide 1:** Welcome. I'm Rebecca Hartwig and looking forward to presenting my DNP capstone project: "Retreat as a learning medium for health, empowerment and transformation of Tanzanian girls". Thank you for joining me on a recap of this journey!

**Slide 2:** It is no surprise to anyone, that I would develop a DNP project having to do with Tanzanian children. After all, I am a pediatric nurse practitioner by profession, have worked in Tanzania for thirteen of my adult years, and it is my place of birth and early childhood. What is surprising, is to take a look back over my life and the past three years at Augsburg College, and to see how so many of my life experiences, classes, and practicums have equipped me for the nursing project I was enabled to do.

**Slide 3:** Think about a country where half of the population are children - and where more than half live under the international poverty line. There are exponentially more orphans and vulnerable children in Tanzania today than ever before, primarily due to HIV/AIDS, and welfare of vulnerable children is a major concern.

**Slide 4:** Social determinants of health in Tanzania include poverty, low educational standards, and pandemic diseases such as malaria and HIV. Beyond primary school, girls in Tanzania are at an increased disadvantage in educational and vocational opportunities relative to boys. For many, the end of primary school marks the end of formal education - and the end of possibilities toward professional hopes and dreams. How could a DNP project work to empower girls, to provide appropriate health education, and to strengthen kinship and community advocacy?

**Slide 5:** While I was reviewing literature on the topic of child vulnerability in Tanzania, and planning an exploratory visit, our class gained a new classmate, Shangwe, from Tanzania. Enter serendipity. I made good of an invitation to her family's village in south central Tanzania last January in order to better identify what my project could be. While there I learned the difference between an 'exploratory visit' and a 'learning tour'.

**Slide 6:** Inviting spiritual direction on this learning tour, a verse from scripture seemed to appear everywhere I looked that week.

From Romans 12:2, "Do not conform to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

**Slide 7:** During my learning tour I spent time just 'hanging out' with children orphaned by one or both parents.

I was able to see the challenges of a mother trying to provide for her household, gleaning from her relative's field - some few leaves to sell or cook for her family; and the children, taking on adult responsibilities in order for the family to survive. I observed a strong social fabric being stretched and torn: by poverty and by personal hardships resulting from disease, lack of education, and sometimes it seemed, just bad luck.

I also experienced the joy of a young girl, Beti, reading a book in her language that was simply for pleasure, or drawing to her heart's content with bright new crayons and fresh white paper that I'd brought along. Beti took me to her school.



**Slide 8:** In a country where fully half of the population are children, and where primary school is compulsory, teachers are in short supply and large classroom sizes leave limited opportunity for personal attention.

The picture on the right represents a baobab tree, for which the village (Ruaha Mbuyuni) is named, with a group of girls below, discussing their dreams. “Ukiwa mkubwa, utakuwa nani?” Who do you want to be when you grow up? And...my question, “who will help you along the way”?

My own story: Florence Nightingale is known as our ‘lady with the lamp’. But I knew a different lady with a lamp. From the time I was about four years old, I knew that I wanted to become a nurse “when I grow up”. That was because my “superhero” was Sister Jenny von Stebut, an older German deaconess who lived at Nkoaranga mission station where I was a child of missionary parents. The kerosene lamp because our village was yet without electricity. Sr Jenny worked tirelessly in this remote hospital on the hill, taking a special interest in the hospital’s orphans. She saw fit to open a small orphanage, and until today the legacy of that orphan care continues at Nkoaranga hospital.

So in thinking about something special for vulnerable girls, girls like Beti, the idea of a summer camp came to me. Just as easily, the name, ‘Kipepeo Retreat’ became the camp I began to dream of developing for my girls. Kipepeo - butterfly in Swahili, was an easy metaphor for the transformative project I was beginning to imagine, and later became a logo on our tee-shirts and stationery.

**Slide 9:** The idea of a five day girls’ retreat made perfect sense to me from past experience of attending summer camps as a child, and later, summers spent working as a camp councillor for young girls. Those experiences of stepping away from the ordinary and having the chance to consider other ways of knowing and dreaming gave me the confidence to put this project into action. I based my retreat curriculum on specific goals for participants. Self-worth, personal strengths, accurate information on girls’ health, and a sense of empowerment and agency. I also knew that these girls would need the advocacy of trusted adults and other community women for encouragement beyond the week of the retreat.

**Slide 10:** Once I determined my goals, I wrote out a detailed curriculum for five days. I chose these themes in a particular order, with a concurrent seminar for trusted adults and community experts.

I was amazed at the way my Augsburg practicums, which seemed a bit random, prepared me for each of the ingredients that went into the curriculum’s development. I learned the power of using creative arts with children - from Augsburg’s music therapy department, the value of mentorship - from time volunteering at Urban Ventures, about storytelling - from work with Somali women at Brian Coyle Center, about politics and advocacy - by an immersion trip to Guatemala, and about restorative justice - from Strategies in Trauma Awareness and Resilience training.

Our classroom readings and assignments were chosen to challenge us, and often had me thinking and dreaming in music, poetry, and metaphor. “Know your shoe”, “Mind the



Gap”, and other phrases often come to me now as reminders of the creative ways we learned to process subject matter. Throughout our coursework we also read about the work of a number of nursing theorists.

**Slide 11:** Those with theories as broad as my own gave strength to my project’s foundational constructs and include Nightingale, Watson, and Leininger.

Florence Nightingale, our mother of nursing, was way ahead of her time. She understood and used many creative arts in healing with her patients during the Crimean War - such as music, paintings, and light therapy. She wrote, “The goal of the nurse is to assist the patient in staying in balance.” The nurse does not heal, but provides an environment where optimal healing can take place. (Nightingale, 1859) I, too, would use creative arts and retreat as a medium for healing and transformation.

Jean Watson’s Caring Science emphasises caring processes and the spiritual component of nursing, integral to my project.

Finally, Madeleine Leininger is considered the founder of Transcultural Nursing, whose work brought to light the importance of delivering appropriate nursing care within the context of culture and cultural diversity.

**Slide 12:** For months before going to Tanzania, I lived and breathed the idea of this retreat. Because it was first and foremost on my mind, a number of people got to hear about it, and I experienced how enthusiasm and passion can be contagious.

A store volunteered to donate recreational toys, cameras came out of back drawers from people in my church; and family, friends, and teachers donated generously toward costs of t-shirts and lunches for retreat participants.

While at a random house party, I met a woman who happened to be a girl scout leader. Could they be involved in helping to sew the health kits? I was thrilled! I had tags ordered to sew onto each kit. The tags read “For girls, by girls”.

**Slide 13:** A classmate volunteered that she and her sister would love to sew washable flannel menstrual pads for the health kits. Thank you Beth. What a gift!

A nurse I connected with by e-mail, Marni Sommers, did her doctoral project in Tanzania a few years ago. She published a “grow and know” book on puberty, “Vipindi vya Maisha”. This book is beautifully written in Swahili and illustrated in the cultural context. She arranged for us to pick up enough copies from the publisher in Dar es Salaam at no charge. These were added to the bag.

**Slide 14:** Without any recruiting, I had just the right people join our facilitator team.

June from my church, with her young daughter Fiona; Madelynn, a college graduate from upstate NY, and to meet us on the other side, my host, Chilwa, Mama Shangwe - at the ready to make every event run as seamlessly as possible.

It may seem that most of my project was spent in the preparation phase, and it was. But finally the day came to board that plane!



**Slide 15:** Our journey to the village passed through Mikumi National Park, only two hours from where our girls live, and yet a park none of them had yet visited.

**Slide 16:** Retreat beginnings: “Girls - Loved and Cherished”

The word “Uzima” means wholeness in Swahili. A common greeting in Tanzania is “Mzima?” Are you whole? Health is wholeness. And embedded in wholeness is membership. This was the goal of day one.

**Slide 17:** We began each day with circle process. This is used in many traditional cultures and works well to give each individual equal opportunity to express themselves as well as to take a leadership role.

**Slide 18:** Preparing journals for the week.

**Slide 19:** Crafts: I was given kitchen privileges to make up a large batch of play dough. The girls loved the feel of the warm dough in their hands, watching a few drops of food colouring transform their blob into something exciting to work with.

**Slide 20:** By moulding and remoulding, many ideas could come and go until the ‘potter’ was satisfied with her creation.

**Slide 21:** Another tool we used was a flip chart to write down ‘feeling’ words, building a toolbox of expressive vocabulary. From this list, girls formed groups, dressed up, and acted out the feeling words given to them. Drama was very well received as a culturally traditional way of communication and storytelling.

**Slide 22:** In addition to balanced nutrition, this was a chance for the girls to feel like conference women, with grown up etiquette and a chance to socialise in smaller groups.

**Slide 23:** And afterwards, the freedom to be the children that they are.

**Slide 24:** On most days we took time for cooperative play - working as a unit, strengthening peer support.

**Slide 25:** “Girls - Creative, Smart, and Able”

**Slide 26:** We discovered that our girls were very gifted as we took advantage of spontaneous intercultural talent exchanges. Why was it so funny for these girls to watch westerners try to balance something on our heads, and why was it so difficult for me to even GET a bucket of water on my head - a bucket one of our girls was carrying home from the well, a good distance away.

**Slide 27:** Creativity: Any 12 year old Tanzanian girl knows at least a dozen ways to fashion a piece of cloth.

**Slide 28:** Down to a girl (or woman!), each was ready and anxious to contribute to our spontaneous fashion show.

**Slide 29:** Digging into the drama bag to express ‘who will you be when you grow up’ brought creativity to an entirely new level.



**Slide 30:** The girls were delighted to try out Fiona's violin, and to appreciate the beautiful music effortlessly played by a girl just their age.

**Slide 31:** From the time these girls had a chance to learn the art of snap shot photography, and to hold a camera in their hands, they were completely trusted to use and care for the cameras throughout the remainder of the retreat. This tool was very empowering to the girls, and a great way to use expressive arts in sharing.

**Slide 32:** Girls to Women - A respected community elder came to present the sensitive topic of girls' health during puberty, in a language and format acceptable and understandable to the girls. She used Marni Sommer's book as a guide, which was empowering to the presenter as well.

**Slide 33:** Dramas on feminine hygiene as well as scenarios on gender safety were played out by the facilitators. Health kits were then distributed and eagerly received.

**Slide 34:** On this same mid-week day, we held an evening gathering for the trusted adult that each girl had chosen on her first day of retreat. We talked about the importance of mentorship, the honour of being chosen to this purpose, and the great effect their advocacy could have on the future of each young girl.

**Slide 35:** "Girls and Beauty" - Girls from a remote village in Tanzania are just as interested in beauty as girls in this country at a time when they begin to "look in the mirror".

**Slide 36:** We brought a small library of children's books, all carefully chosen for cultural context, at an easy reading level, and all having to do with resilience when faced with adversity or challenges. The Rough-Face Girl, by Rafe Martin, is a Native American 'Cinderella' story where character beauty wins the day. We used this story as an introduction to what we would be considering later in the day.

**Slide 37:** Following story time, we had the girls remove their shoes, and surprised them with a foot spa. Having elders wash one's feet, using foot scrubs and lotions that smell sweet and that tingle, was a powerful experience for these girls. They were uncharacteristically quiet and solemn during this intimate process. And it was just as special to those of us doing the washing.

**Slide 38:** The girls then had fun decorating their newly gifted malapas (flip flops) with strips of fabric cut by our generous Girl Scouts.

**Slide 39:** During craft time, the girls made adornments for themselves as well as a gift for their trusted adult.

**Slide 40:** The girls were then given their retreat T-shirts and kangas, wrap-around cloths. Applying lip gloss and a look in the mirror completed the process.

**Slide 41:** As you can see, on the front of the t-shirts is our 'kipepeo' logo.

On the back of the shirt is this picture, "Ukiwa mkubwa, utakuwa nani?" - "Who will you be when you grow up". Using indelible markers, we filled in the blank with what each



girl chose as her dream, and if all the dreams come true, the village will one day be blessed with talented nurses, doctors, pilots, artists, actresses, pastors, and policewomen.

**Slide 42:** Relating back to our 'Cinderella story', our focused group discussion for this day was to have each girl stand up in front, and to have her peers name what they viewed as her strengths. We talked about how each of the character strengths would contribute to the professional goals that girl had chosen. Peer affirmation at this age (and maybe at any age!) is a very strong boost to self image and motivator towards success.

**Slide 43:** I want to share just one example of what I considered a transformative experience.

On the right is Fadhila ('Kindness'). It hardly seems the same person as the girl standing on the left, the first day, where Fadhila was reluctant to even take part in the activities. She changed her mind from thinking about becoming a seamstress after primary school - to getting further education to become a teacher. Her peers have told her that she is calm, smart, creative, respectful, and a leader. I think that is a very promising start for a teacher in the making.

**Slide 44:** These pictures were printed off as portraits for each girl's journal - a reminder of who they want to become, and how their peers have supported their dreams.

**Slide 45:** Our final day, Girls in Community, began with a morning focused group discussion on challenges the village faces, and what the girls would like help to change. These were shared at the afternoon celebration when trusted adults were invited to the closing ceremonies. It was a chance for the girls to show all of the arts, crafts, and flip chart discussions, and activities they had experienced over the week.

**Slide 46:** On this final day, we exchanged gifts with our trusted adults - our new partners.

It was a celebration of what we had learned and a celebration of the new partnerships we had made to assist in success toward new aspirations.

Before finishing this presentation, I want to take you into the theoretical for just a moment, to consider how the process used in Kipepeo retreat could be used more broadly.

**Slide 47:** I believe that the progression of daily themes used in my pilot project can be applied to almost any therapeutic nurse-client setting. The constant is the role of the nurse in creating sacred space for health promotion, while project themes give way to core principles.

**Slide 48:** This conceptual model remains a work in progress, but uses everything I have learned from my DNP project.

Movement of the red figure represents the reshaping or re-imagining of self in relation to others that occurs during the transformative process. Please follow the red girl on her journey...

"Girls: Loved and Cherished" becomes belonging - to Creator, creation, and community.



“Girls: Creative, Smart, and Able” becomes discovering personal agency, singular integrity.

“Girls to Women” demonstrates a process of looking at personal health and connecting to supports - these could be health experts, trusted adults, or support groups.

“Girls and Beauty” looks past oneself and sees strengths and agency of others.

Finally, “Girls in Community” views oneself, joining others, as a agent of change toward a healthier communal environment.

This process is supported by writer Wendell Berry, who proposes that our sense of “singular integrity and of communal belonging is our personal standard of health for as long as we live”. (Berry, 1994)

**Slide 49:** In conclusion:

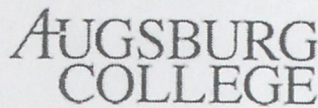
If we are what we came from, for many it is a history of brokenness.

But at the same time that we are wearing our ancestral DNA, we are creating the DNA of future generations. I believe that nurses, as knowledgeable and compassionate caregivers, are in a unique and trusted position to exercise the creative art of healing and to assist others in their process of regaining wholeness. We can, in fact, make the world a better place.

**Slide 55:** Continuing the journey: I made a follow-up with these girls March, 2015, 8 months after the retreat. Dada Chilwa and I took the girls to Mikumi National Park for an overnight mini-retreat. During this time we spent talking with the girls both collectively and individually about significant events since our last gathering and how their lives were going. I asked them individually what they remembered most from the retreat in July. I also had asked them to write a ‘story about a girl’ – fiction or true – to share with us during this time. They spent some time drawing illustrations for their stories after reading them to the group.

**Slide 56:** The following morning we went into the park with a wonderful and knowledgeable guide to experience a real African game safari. Riding two hours in the back of a pick-up truck, we returned to the village wet, cold, tired, and exceedingly grateful for an unforgettable weekend together.





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