World Youth International (WYI) has a long history of supporting community development projects in Kenya and has been partnering with local Kenyan communities and NGOs for the past 16 years. WYI has been primarily based in Western Kenya and has supported a multitude of projects ranging from classrooms, kindergartens and eco-toilets to community centres, irrigation projects, goat breeding and more recently, the construction of a brand new community hospital in the tiny village of Odede.

Odede is located in the Rarieda District, Nyanza province in Western Kenya which is comprised of agricultural and fishing villages located along the shores of Lake Victoria. The district has some of the highest HIV/AIDS and maternal/infant mortality rates in the country, and it is estimated that 1 in 4 children die of malaria before their 5th birthday (Duke Global Health Institute, 2010).

Much of the population of the Rarieda District lives in extreme poverty (less than $2 per day). The communities in this district are rural and therefore have limited access to basic infrastructure and services such as health and education. Maternal and infant mortality rates are unacceptably high, with 55 out of 1000
infants dying before their first birthday each year (World Health Organisation, 2010). There are some nearby dispensaries which offer basic medications and treatment; however the nearest hospitals are between 1 hours walk and 2 hours drive away.

In 2012, after months of discussion and community-based facilitation amongst various stakeholders from the Odede community and the local Health Department, a proposal for a new community hospital was developed. The proposal and governance structure was designed in accordance with all of the necessary government criteria, and the hospital ultimately aims to bridge the health service gap that currently exists between what is available in the region and the local people’s needs. Increasing the health seeking behaviour of the community is a critical plank of the Hospital’s health service strategy.

In addressing the region’s most critical health and development needs, the hospital will provide a range of services including:

- Safe maternal health services to both expectant and nursing mothers;
- Child health services including immunisations and the prevention and treatment of child-related illnesses;
- Reproductive health services to the youth of Odede village and beyond;
- HIV/AIDS-related care and counselling services;
- Public health education and awareness campaigns; around healthy hygiene and sanitation practices
Progress update (As of January 1st, 2013)

- A comprehensive budget, project plan and exit strategy has been approved by WYI.
- Additional government-recommended structural modifications construction works are currently underway, including partitioning, painting and the building of pit toilets.
- The management team are currently stocking up the pharmacy and sourcing the last remaining materials and equipment required for official registration.
- A 40ft shipping container sent from Australia has recently arrived, providing essential equipment and consumables.
- Key income generating activities are underway, including the development of a large-scale millet farm.
- The Hospital Board are currently seeking key hospital staff, including doctors and nurses.
- The Community Health Management Team are currently being mobilised to facilitate discussions between the Hospital and the Community.

Overall, the excitement is really building in Odede. This is enhanced by the fact that WYI will be sending its inaugural “Nurses In Action” program across in March 2013. All 11 participants are extremely excited about their first ever allied health trip to Africa and are looking forward to working with and learning from their local counterparts.

How you can help

World Youth International has committed to this project for a minimum of seven years and is working closely with the Odede Hospital Board to ensure local fundraising and income generation efforts can help to ensure long-term sustainability. However, WYI is a tiny non-profit organisation that relies on the generosity of its supporters, so naturally there are a number of ways you can get involved in this amazing project:

- **Lend your skills and expertise**
  - Ongoing capacity building and training for local staff will be essential in providing a high quality service. WYI has 25 years experience facilitating volunteer programs and can tailor specialised volunteer placements for skilled health professionals that suit your timeframe.
- **Sponsor a local staff salary**
  - Why not sponsor a Nurse, Doctor, or Community Health Volunteer for a year?
- **Support the provision of life saving medical supplies**
  - Including drugs, consumables, birthing kits etc.
- **Help us construct staff accommodation**
  - This will enable the provision of housing for local health staff and visiting health professionals to ensure a steady flow of capacity and support
- **Help us continue further capital works**
  - As demand for the service increases, so too will the need for structural modifications. Sponsor the construction of a children’s wing,
- **Provide a capital injection for income generating projects** (i.e. Millet farming, Goat breeding)
  - Help the hospital team become fully self sustainable!

For more information on the Odede Community Hospital or any of WYI’s other major projects, please contact WYI’s General Manager, Adam Whitefield:

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