



UHAMBO|USA
MAKING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBLE

About the Kenya Wheelchair Center

Purpose

Uhambo USA is launching a wheelchair center outside of Nairobi, Kenya, that provides fee-based repair and maintenance services to wheelchair users, hospitals and medical centers. Along with providing such critical services to people in need, the center will provide a strong training program for people with disabilities in disadvantaged areas and thereby increase their access to employment opportunities.

Funding

Uhambo has been awarded a Challenge Grant of \$15,000 and is raising the matching \$15,000. This funding will support the following phases which are scheduled for September 2013 – January 2014.

- **Phase 1:** Enterprise Manager Training – Uhambo evaluates, monitors, measures and teaches management skills for the team. These are specialized skills to effectively implement and run the wheelchair center.
- **Phase 2:** Site Assessment – Uhambo conducts a 5 day site assessment to evaluate current skills and capabilities of the team members (technicians) and create a comprehensive training plan.
- **Phase 3:** Technician Training – 2 week training at Uhambo South Africa's seating clinic and in the field at off-site clinics; training is designed based on the above site assessment.
- **Phase 4:** Launch Enterprise!

The Problem

People with disabilities remain a marginalized population in many developing countries. People with disabilities in Africa tend to be poorer, less educated, and have fewer employment opportunities than those without disabilities.

Disability issues and services are not a priority focus of the government in most African countries. For example, progressive government policies that support people with disabilities may be in place, however they are rarely executed. Centers and clinics that serve people with disabilities in Africa are underfunded and lack the proper equipment and training to adequately support the disabled population.

The Solution

Due to these factors, Uhambo has experienced an increase in demand from organizations and governmental departments who are committed to disabilities. They are interested in establishing an effective and replicable wheelchair provision model to serve more people with disabilities in hard-to-reach regions of Africa.

Uhambo has built on this request to also address the employment and job skills need. A regional wheelchair center or hub would allow for wheelchair products and services to be distributed on a wider scale, create job and training opportunities for people with disabilities in their communities and generate economic opportunities for regional partners.

Uhambo's wheelchair center will serve wheelchair users, hospitals and medical centers with repair and maintenance services, while providing a strong mentoring and training program to develop job skills for people with disabilities.

This enterprise-based model can be expanded and rolled out in other regions. It offers a unique opportunity to create meaningful employment and enterprise development opportunities while providing improved quality of life to wheelchair users, their families and all related support networks – most of whom would *not* have such an opportunity otherwise.

Services

- 1. Wheelchair Seating and Mobility Services:** High-quality, modular wheelchairs will be assembled on site. Wheelchairs will be provided at wholesale, representing only a slight profit over production costs, and at much lower cost than if they were procured on the open market. Shonaquip wheelchairs are engineered to be highly customizable, in order to meet the unique needs of each individual. They are designed to be rugged and durable to more effectively traverse the rough, uneven rural terrain where the hubs will be located. These wheelchair services align with the mandatory requirements to uphold the WHO Guidelines on appropriate wheelchair provision and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
- 2. Clinical Support and Therapy:** Each wheelchair recipient undergoes an extensive assessment with a specialized therapist to adjust the customizable chair to the user's specific needs. Once a standard chair has been customized, these professionals ensure a proper fit for each individual. Follow-up visits are scheduled at varying intervals to ensure ongoing fit and function depending upon each individual's level of disability and specific needs.
- 3. Caregiver Training:** The hub will offer training courses led by professional therapists to parents, caregivers, teachers and other healthcare professionals. Courses range from beginning to advanced and cover all aspects of care, from wheelchair design, care, and maintenance, to personalized instruction on the best methods to assist chair users in performing functions of normal daily living.
- 4. Parts, Repair and Servicing:** The center will repair any wheelchair, regardless of its make to maximize the service offering to the local community. Additionally, some local hospitals have excess mobility devices of varying quality in storage. While the chairs themselves are usually not in a functional state, the hub would seek to partner with the local hospital to maximize the utility of these chairs. If chairs can be donated to the hub, they can be used for replacement parts for repairing local devices.

Outcomes

The wheelchair center will create impact in the following areas:

- A. *Jobs & Training for People with Disabilities:*
 - 1. The regional hub will employ people with disabilities to assemble and maintain chairs, provide clinical support, provide training to caregivers, and manage the overall business operations. Uhambo projects that in the initial phase of launching the center 30 new jobs for people with disabilities will be created.
 - 2. In addition, the center will positively impact government medical care workers, physical therapists and other health care professionals by providing them with professional development and advancement opportunities through the hub's training.
- B. *Provision of Services & Products:* We are targeting to reach 31,500 persons in the northeastern Kenya and Nairobi region. This includes 4,500 direct beneficiaries. Indirect beneficiaries include approximately 27,000 beneficiaries such as family and community members.
- C. *Community Awareness:* An important part of serving persons in the disabled community involves advocating for people with disabilities within the local community and with appropriate government agencies. Uhambo aims to transform the public's perception of people with disabilities from one of unproductive people who divert resources away from critical priorities to the proper perception that they are honorable, productive members of society who make positive contributions to both their communities and economy.
- D. *Decrease in Health Care Costs:* The hub will provide service to a region that typically does not have many options. As a result the hub eliminates or decreases waiting times for wheelchair users and their family, reduces transit time and costs and overall reduces the health care costs to the family and the system.

About Uhambo USA

Uhambo USA was founded in 2010 to improve the lives of and provide opportunities for people with disabilities in under developed areas of Africa including rural areas, settlements and townships. Uhambo USA builds on over 20 years of on-the-ground experience in Africa by supporting the goals and programs of the Uhambo Foundation of Cape Town, South Africa. Uhambo and Shonaquip Founder Shona McDonald designed and built her first wheelchair more than 25 year ago after being told that her daughter who was born with Cerebral Palsy should be placed in an institution.

Uhambo improves the quality of life of people with disabilities by removing barriers of access to information, resources, services and devices, advocating for changes in policy and delivering holistic programs. Uhambo's programs operate under the premise that a mobility device is a tool and must be accompanied with proper training and service. The organization focuses its efforts on rural areas and informal settlements, where access to medical care and support for people with disabilities is very limited, if not entirely absent.

During Shonaquip's years of operation, over 63,000 children and adults have had their lives improved through access to quality wheelchairs, posture support services, and training for parents, clinicians, and other caregivers. Today, Shonaquip is an internationally recognized social enterprise that designs, manufactures and distributes unique and appropriate mobility devices and services in Africa.

Email Lucinda@UhamboUSA.org to learn more about this project.