**Meda Ase Inc.**

Meda Ase is a nonprofit organization that makes it possible for urban youth to study a selected country for one year, develop a business plan with the support of experts fund a portion of travel to the country, interact with and eventually meet students from the country, and generate media, writing, and artwork that reflects their learning experience. Meda Ase also supports the travel of parents so that entire families can benefit from this life changing experience. Our mission is to prepare underserved DC students to become globally competent, thriving world citizens.

**Our Model**

**Development of Entrepreneurial Thinking, Business Planning and Execution**

Students work with mentors to create a business plan. Through a series of lessons they learn how to plan, structure, and create their own business ventures. Proceeds from the business fund a portion of the cost of their travel packages. In our pilot students sold snacks, personal artwork, and organized fundraisers where they entertained donors with spoken word poetry, rap and singing. They gained a strong sense of themselves as capable business owners able to achieve goals and determine their tomorrow through planning and hard work.

**Interaction with Global Youth**

Students meet and interact with youth from the country studied. They engage through a number of mediums including email (digital pen pals), live video chats, video messages, and photo journals. Student interaction is guided through a series of projects, and questions of inquiry.

**Study of Country**

Students take part in a number of projects, and work-stations where they study the history, culture, landscape, and politics of the country studied. They will 3 explore current events in the country, meet chefs and prepare global dishes, participate in workshops with musicians, dancers, sculptors, jewelry makers and other artisans.

**Travel to Country**

At the end of the year-long study, students will travel to the country studied and participate in an educational tour. They will visit significant landmarks that represent the country’s landscape, people, history, and culture. Students will also meet their pen pals and engage in collaborative service learning project with their international peers.

For the past two years, Meda Ase’s founder has used her classroom in southeast DC as an incubator and pilot for the program. Students have used the model, outlined above, to travel to South Africa and Jamaica.

**(Flip the page to learn about our past and future projects.)**

**Meda Ase’s Projects**

**Southeast 2 South Africa**

* Students at Orr Elementary School in southeast DC and Parkfields Elementary in Cape Town, South Africa learned that their lives were surprisingly very similar. They communicated through a pen pal program that helped them to dispel stereotypes and learned that issues like drug abuse, illiteracy, and violence were common themes in both communities. Three Orr students were able to meet their pen pals when the group visited Parkfields for a program organized on their behalf.
* Students compared and contrasted the history of Apartheid in South Africa with the Civil Rights movement in the United States.
* Students visited historical sites and landmarks such as Soweto, Table Mountain, Cape Peninsula, and other locations.

**Southeast 2 Jamaica**

* Student embarked on the “Jamaican Liberation Tour” where they studied the legacy of resistance in Jamaica.
* Students traveled to Maroon villages to study Nanny of the Maroons, Kofi, and other rebel leaders who fought against slavery and created secure communities for people of African descent within the mountains of Jamaica. Students learned how Nanny and other maroon military strategist influenced modern military practices.
* Students studied at Liberty Hall, a museum constructed in honor of Marcus Mosiah Garvey and visited his home in St. Ann Jamaica. They learned of Garvey’s role in sparking pride, dignity, and self-determination in Africans across the diaspora leaving a legacy responsible for the civil rights movement in the US and the anti-colonial movements across Africa.
* Students studied the historical and cultural significance of Bob Marley’s work and legacy. They visited his museum in Kingston and traveled to his birth place Nine Mile.
* Students hiked through Jamaica’s countryside and learned of the healing properties of various plants and herbs including Aloe Vera. They ate coconut “jelly” and jack fruit straight from the tree.
* Students visited various beaches, waterfalls, and other luscious sites in the country. From mountaintop to beach, forest, and valley they studied Jamaica’s diverse landforms.

**Goals**

* To increase the number of students and parents who are able to travel abroad by securing more funding through individual donations, grants, and other methods.
* To partner with community groups and organizations with a similar mission and expanding our impact on the community through these joint ventures. Currently Meda Ase is working with Sadiki, a travel non-profit, to take DC students on an educational tour of Tanzania in the summer of 2018.
* To partner with local businesses, institutions, and universities to create robust programing for travel to Brazil, Egypt, Benin, Ghana, Columbia and other countries.