

Rebecca Young

MSc Poverty Reduction and Development Management (2007)



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Having volunteered in Africa and Asia for several years, it was evident that a masters would give me the leverage I needed to get on the career ladder within international development. The IDD masters (MSc Poverty Reduction and Development Management) was invaluable.

The staff were passionate and full of experience, expertise, patience and enjoyed challenging us to think outside of the box. The actual content of the course was intense but really brought us up to speed and I still use logical frameworks and various tools for participatory research. My fellow course mates were a joy. We are still in touch and it was amazing to be among such a vibrant, lovely group of people from so many different backgrounds. Coffee break was an education in itself; meeting people from different cultures, discussing experiences and being amongst 40 different nationalities was inspiring and added value to the masters as a whole.

Equipped with a Masters from Birmingham I moved to Tanzania to manage a performing arts centre called Tanzania House of Talent (THT). The centre supports disadvantaged former street youth, heads of households and orphans by giving them a supported space to develop their music, dance and theatre skills. The centre provides them with meals, a living allowance and medical treatment, as well as a platform to perform live, or to record albums, jingles and sound tracks for film which in turn generates income.

As the General Manager and Development Advisor, my role is capacity building, mobilising resources and finding innovative ways of achieving sustainability. THT is considered one of the most revolutionary movements born out of the music and entertainment Industry of East Africa and I have presented the model to the cultural sectors in Kenya, Uganda and most recently Ethiopia. It has been an exciting journey to see how all sectors in society can play a key role in not only promoting culture but contributing to the social development of urban youth who are at high risk of unemployment, crime and HIV/AIDS.