

Rotary



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Lonnie Hackett
Rotary Scholar



Growing up in the US, Lonnie first travelled to Zambia when, as a 19-year old college freshman, he received a fellowship to conduct research on HIV/AIDS and volunteer as a schoolteacher.

He began to realise that, for many Zambian children, the biggest problem was ordinary childhood illnesses, infections, and poor sanitation—issues we know how to deal with for relatively little money. In Lusaka, Zambia healthcare is available and free, but few school-aged children are accessing it. As Lonnie explored this disconnect, he came to believe that schools were the key. By training teacher health workers and moving the access point of health into schools we could dramatically change the picture.

Now six years later, this idea has grown into Healthy Kids/Brighter Future (HK/BF), an NGO implementing a replicable model for improving children's access to health. The result has been better health for children, improved school attendance and a new professional status for participating teachers.

While at Bowdoin College, his growing passion for global health made him even more engaged in his coursework in biology, mathematics and Africana Studies. He has received fellowships to run field studies investigating the determinants of healthcare utilization in Zambia, as well as Nepal.

For his senior thesis, Lonnie explored the intersectionality of colonialism, macroeconomics and the spread of HIV/AIDS. In 2014, he accepted a yearlong Global Health Corps fellowship, where he worked alongside Dr. Groesbeck Parham to co-lead the development of a market-based approach for the delivery of cervical cancer services. Upon completion of the fellowship, Lonnie has devoted himself full-time to the presidency of HK/BF and has overseen the expansion of our services to 62 schools and 30,000 children. They plan to reach 100,000 children by 2019 and seek to demonstrate our model's replicability elsewhere in the developing world.

His commitment to international health will be grounded in his ongoing work improving children's access to healthcare.