

50|50

Small Loans. Big Changes.

PEMBA PROFESSIONAL TRAINING CENTER

Location Description



Pemba is a tropical island situated in the Indian Ocean 50 km off the coast of mainland Tanzania. One of the two islands that form the fabled territory of Zanzibar, it is extremely lush and verdant (visitors over the centuries have called it “the Green Island”), with mangoes, bananas, and cassava growing in abundance. The island is dotted with historic ruins dating from nearly one thousand years of rule by the Omani sultans. Surrounding the island are beautiful dive sites, with pristine coral reefs and marine life. Pemba’s capital is the town of Chake-Chake, and Swahili is the primary language of communication.

Estimates of the island’s population are imprecise, ranging from 135,000 to 400,000. The local economy is based largely on fishing, clove production, and small-scale farming. Though its sister island, Unguja, has seen growth in tourism in recent years, relatively few visitors make their way to Pemba. It is difficult to find accurate estimates, but per capita income is believed to range from US\$ 150 to US\$ 400 per year. Though blessed with natural beauty, Pemba’s residents face serious problems including deep poverty, malnutrition, inadequate health care, and poor education. Yet despite these challenges, people are overwhelmingly friendly and usually optimistic about their future.

Project Overview

After consulting many residents of Pemba about local needs and economic conditions, it became clear that adult education is a major need, and presents an opportunity both to assist the people of Pemba in acquiring new skills and to establish a viable business that fills a market gap. Education on the island is described by residents as mediocre at best, and often leaves even hardworking students without the necessary skills to earn a living and improve their conditions. Residents identified three principal areas of interest that would be of enormous use: (1) Languages (primarily English but also Arabic, Spanish, and French); (2) Computers and the Internet (how to set up an e-mail account, build a basic website, etc.); and (3) Business and Marketing.

To meet this need, 50/50 is working with local entrepreneurs to set up the Pemba Professional Training Center, a new resource for the community that will enable local people to gain practical and useful professional skills. We have identified several possible locations around the town of Chake-Chake and are currently negotiating to find the best available arrangement. As part of the start-up funding, we will be providing desks, chairs, computers, books, and other training materials. The Center will offer classes on a variety of subjects and at different skill levels to provide students the instruction they need. Classes are



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expected to run 75 minutes each and student fees will be 500 Tsh (about 30 cents) per class, with discounts for paying for a full session in advance. This price point was recommended by local residents as affordable, yet substantial enough to both encourage commitment from students and allow the Center to be profitable.

About 50/50

50/50 is a non-profit microfinance organization that helps people start or grow their own small businesses around the world in places where access to funding and training can be difficult to obtain. We partner with entrepreneurs to assess viable business ideas, determine the resources necessary to begin, and provide the start-up funding needed to get going. Then we provide business training to help them acquire any specific skills they'll need and ensure they are connected with the right markets so that their business can succeed. Through peer-to-peer lending, 50/50 connects people around the world who want to help entrepreneurs build better lives for themselves and their families by facilitating investments that provide the needed start-up (or expansionary) funding. Please see the attached backgrounder for more information about 50/50 or visit us at fifty50.org.

Volunteer Position Description

We are looking for a hardworking, passionate, adventurous, driven, and energetic volunteer to help get the Pemba Professional Training Center off the ground. You'll be creating something out of nothing—something incredibly helpful and lasting in an unfathomably beautiful, albeit poor, part of the world where your efforts are severely needed. You'll be teaching classes in English (and other languages if you know them), computers, and business; just as importantly, you'll also be teaching the new local teachers, who will be taking over from you and providing full-time instruction once you take off, how to run a classroom effectively. You'll be helping the entrepreneurs, who have very little experience but enormous dedication and enthusiasm, with organizing, marketing, and managing the Center on a daily basis. Those are just the anticipated duties you'll have—to be honest, you may also end up encountering occasional power outages, and upset stomach, nosy officials, too few students, too many students, mothers bringing sick and screaming babies to the center, and all kinds of unforeseen—but, with patience and a level head, entirely manageable—circumstances. But you'll also get the satisfaction of equipping talented young people with life-changing skills, helping to start a new and sustainable business, sharing breeze-filled rooftop dinners with new friends, and, if all goes the way we think it will, having the time of your life.

50/50 is a start-up with a unique culture. We don't do hierarchy, job titles, or bureaucracy. We believe in developing good ideas and then putting them into action. Everyone involved with the organization is a volunteer and has chosen to be a part of it because they want to have a tangible, immediate chance to help those living in difficult circumstances. In this position, you will have support from the rest of the organization, but you will be responsible for making decisions on the ground and in real time.

This position will last 6-8 weeks beginning in August or September 2012. We will cover all the expenses to fly you to Pemba and provide you with housing. If you're interested, please contact ethan@fifty50.org.

www.fifty50.org