



## BACKGROUND

For over 15 years, Kenya Connect has been devoted to improving education of the rural schools in the Machakos District (17,000+ students) by breaking down barriers to education and providing innovative teacher professional development and empowerment and enrichment classes for students in primary (K-8) and secondary Form 1-4. Originally established as a Pen Pal program to connect children in distant cultures, we have developed into an organization whose goal is to enhance education. Kenya Connect has developed a multipronged approach in its effort to accomplish its mission of engaging and empowering rural students and teachers to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We provide a variety of programs that support education and health initiatives.

From a health perspective, if children are healthy and consistently present at school, they will have more educational success. As a result, we have implemented a variety of health programs:

- Installation of water tanks
- Installation of hand washing stations, clean hand education, and liquids soap making program
- Provision of de-worming medications, working with local health professionals
- A reusable sanitary pad pilot program to encourage girls to stay in school during their menstrual cycle.

We have heard from the teachers and head teachers that these programs have dramatically improved the attendance of their students. From an educational perspective, we have focused on providing a variety of programs to enhance the education of the rural students and teachers. The ultimate goal being to provide access to educational and technology programs that might not be available to them because of where they live and that will allow them to succeed in the future. We provide innovative professional development programs for teachers and a variety enrichment classes for students at our 55 partner schools. Our largest milestone in accomplishing our educational goals was the building of our solar powered **Learning Resource Center (LRC)** in 2012 in the rural village of Wamunyu. Our LRC was designed and built with local resources by local craftsmen, therefore having a positive economic impact on the local community. Within the center, we have 30 networked computers and Internet access via satellite, which are used for our technology programs. Our LRC has been a “game changer” as it has allowed us to provide technology programs for student success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as a large lending library to encourage reading and enhance literacy.

With the opening of the LRC, we are now providing many written and technological resources to our partners. Most of Kenya Connect’s schools are without decent electricity and lack basic resources including books and adequate facilities, and only recently have received technology for Standard 1 and 2 students. Close to 70% of the community earn less than \$2.00 per day as subsistence farmers, woodcarvers, and basket weavers. With the opening of the LRC, students in these rural schools have been exposed to computers for the first time and are now taking higher level STEAM classes including coding, animation, computer assisted design (CAD), robotics and 3D printing in partnership with Level Up Village and Global One to One. This year Kenya Connect purchased a BRCK Kio Kit and a World Possible Rachel Plus to bring even more technology and content to students in rural schools with so little.

The LRC also houses a library of 5,000 books—the only library for 100km. The collection includes books in English and Kiswahili and also ones written and published in Kenya. We are working to develop a culture of reading and teachers and students have begun borrowing books. Along with direct

programs for students, Kenya Connect has held over 12 professional development workshops for teachers on literacy, kinesthetic learning, arts integration, and the teaching of English.

Our second largest milestone was the recent purchase of our bus, which we fondly refer to as our “Magic School Bus.” With a large portion of our partner schools located in extremely remote areas, our goal was to purchase a bus so we can provide equal access to our programs. We feel strongly that your geographical location shouldn’t impact educational access. Our current model with the bus is to transport a trained LRC staff member and the BRCK Kio Kit and Rachel Plus to a remote school. Our staff member will remain at the remote school and work with the students using the technology. At the same time, the bus will return to the LRC with a group of students from that same remote school for technology classes. At the end of the day, the children will ride on the bus back to their schools and the LRC staff and technology will be returned to the LRC. We expect our bus will dramatically improve the remote access to our programs, which the parent’s are very excited about.

Kenya Connect’s programs are led by Co-Founder and Executive Director, James Musyoka. James and his team work closely with the local community and all programs are created and implemented with input and support from teachers, tribal leaders, ministry of education officials, and parents.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE**

- Water tanks installed at 55 partner schools
- 74 hand washing stations installed at partner schools and a liquid soap program has been implemented at 55 schools
- 3,248 SunKing Pico solar lights have been distributed on a “rent-to-own” program so students can read and study at their homestead at KC schools. Another 1,311 pico lights have been issued to 8 schools in Kyaithani cluster. As parents pay funds, more lights are purchased to distribute to the community.
- Students at 28 partner schools participate in quarterly deworming exercises
- Wings Poa, Kenya Connect’s Reusable Sanitary Pad Program is being piloted at 6 schools and two groups (Access and TSF secondary school girls) with total of 181 girls beneficiaries.
- 600 students have completed KC’s 8 week technology program
- 800 students have taken STEAM technology classes through Level Up Village including Global Inventors using Tinker CAD and Sketch up programs, Global Conversations and Coding video games.
- 40 students have been funded for secondary school through The School Fund and have participated in KC enrichment programs including tutoring during breaks, geocaching field trips, and special workshops with visiting teams.
- 12 teacher professional development workshops led by visiting teachers from the U.S.
- 43 teachers participating in the U.S. Embassy’s Teachers of English MOOC’s classes
- 21 secondary students participating in the 2 year U.S. Embassy ACCESS English program
- 125,000 letters exchanged since 2002 in Kenya Connects Pen Pal program

## **2018 INITIATIVES AND BEYOND**

### **Literacy**

- Library Card program launched in January with 1000 library cards being distributed with plans to expand. The program includes bi-monthly library days at participating schools
- Parent Literacy Program to teach parents about the importance of reading for the children and providing guidance on how to support reading. This program is in conjunction with our Library Days.

- Book Days at the LRC to be held during school breaks. Book Days will include hands-on interactive reading/book activities
- Develop strategies on how to scale the program so all schools will be able to participate in Literacy Programs

### **Professional Development**

- Tablet Training for teachers provided the government issued tablets on how to use them and incorporate with the Kenyan curriculum
- Professional Learning Communities for teachers from four of Kenya Connect cluster of schools. These PLC's will work to provide teachers ideas on how to best implement the Kenyan Curriculum using 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching methodologies.

### **Mentoring Program**

- Develop and implement a mentor program for TSF, ACCESS and other secondary students that includes life skills training, leadership development, and career/workplace opportunities
- Create a speaker bureau with individuals from a variety of professions speaking to Wamunyu students
- Create a Social Innovation contest to encourage entrepreneurial activities for these students

### **Assessment**

- Continue to develop and implement assessment metrics to ensure our programs are meeting intended goals and purpose

### **PARTNERS**

- U.S. Embassy in Nairobi
- The School Fund
- Level Up Village
- Global One to One
- Suncoast-Sechelt Rotary Club of British Columbia
- Simmons College (digital media partner)
- 20-30 U.S. schools each year
- ONE (KC was a top three finalist for the ONE Africa Award)

### **Governance**

Kenya Connect is a registered NGO in Kenya and a 501 c-3 in the U.S. Both entities have independent boards and follow best practices of governance. Kenya Connect, U.S., is the fundraising and friend-raising arm of Kenya Connect with the Executive Director and board working to garner resources that are wired as grants for the operations of Kenya Connect. The Executive Director also brings teams of focused practitioners to help with professional development workshops, health initiatives, mentoring and leadership programs and lessons in the classrooms. The Board also assists the Kenya Connect, NGO, in developing assessment methodologies and best practices for delivering programs. The Kenya Connect NGO directs all programming and works closely with the local community and Head Teachers of our 55 partner schools to determine programming and initiatives.

### **MORE INFORMATION**

Visit [www.kenyaconnect.org](http://www.kenyaconnect.org) or follow us on social media (facebook, twitter, instagram)

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