

Worldreader's National Scale Project Empowers Kenyan Libraries as Hubs of Information and Technology

Worldreader releases results from the LEAP (Libraries, E-Reading, Activities & Partnership) project in Kenya, showcasing the positive effects of digital reading on libraries and communities

Nairobi, Kenya/San Francisco, Calif.-- August 1st, 2018 – [Worldreader](#), the global nonprofit that believes everyone can be a reader, in partnership with the [Kenya National Library Service \(knls\)](#), today released the learnings from a project that boosted the transformation of Kenyan public libraries nationally as hubs of information, technology and progress. LEAP (Libraries, E-Reading, Activities & Partnerships) brought Worldreader's digital reading platform to 61 public libraries in Kenya, contributing to Kenya's Vision 2030, achieving national scale and laying a foundational model for replication globally.

Worldreader and knls' partnership delivered 3,000 e-readers and more than 600,000 e-books across Kenya, over 3 years from 2014-2017. This was realized through the gracious support of a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. In the process, Worldreader and knls established a new forum for librarians to convene and share knowledge, trained more than 200 librarians and library staff, conducted more than 500 library support visits and loaned e-readers out to patrons more than 500,000 times.

“Worldreader and knls strongly believed that in order to move the needle on Kenya's national ICT strategy and catapult Kenya to a new level of digital access and information sharing, it was necessary to harness and enhance the power of libraries,” said Joan Mwachi-Amolo, Director of East Africa Programs, Worldreader.

“With access to thousands of new reading materials and innovative digital reading technology, often brought outside of the library walls during outreach activities, communities developed and improved upon digital literacy in ways that would not have been possible before,” said Richard Atuti, CEO, knls. “The new technology was exciting, helping librarians to market their library services, motivating librarians in their roles, and building the capacity of the library system as a whole.”

Knls is poised to maintain the digital reading program well into the next decade, while Worldreader applies the lessons learned and forms new partnerships with library services throughout sub-Saharan Africa. The next phase of Worldreader's library work is already in progress. Worldreader launched LOCAL (Local Content for African Libraries), focused on local language content and library activities for young children across Ghana, Uganda and Zambia.

“Worldreader is proud of the success and impact of the LEAP 2.0 project and of knls' dedication to its libraries, librarians, and patrons,” said Rebecca Chandler-Leege,

Chief Impact Officer, Worldreader. “In the coming years, Worldreader plans to iterate upon the lessons of LEAP 2.0 and our knls partnership, to launch nationwide library digital reading projects in new geographies. We are excited to see the continued impact of digital reading on individuals, communities and countries.”

To read the full LEAP report, visit: <http://bit.ly/LEAPKenya2018>.

To learn more about how Worldreader brought the LEAP project from pilot to broad scale adoption, read the Digital Reading in Kenyan Libraries: Lessons from Pilot to Scale paper: <http://bit.ly/PilottoScale>.

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About Worldreader

Worldreader is a global nonprofit whose mission is to help the world read. The organization provides students and their families with a free digital library available on e-readers and mobile phones, complemented with a suite of reading support programs. Since 2010, over 6 million people across 50 countries have read from their digital library of over 35,000 local and international e-books. Worldreader works with device manufacturers, local and international publishers, government agencies, education officials, and local communities to help readers worldwide.

To read free books on your mobile phone, visit read.worldreader.org. For more information on Worldreader, please visit www.worldreader.org.

About Kenya National Library Service (knls)

Kenya National Library Service (knls) Board is a statutory body of the Government of Kenya established by an Act of Parliament, Cap 225 of the Laws of Kenya in April 1965. knls is mandated to promote, establish, equip, manage and maintain libraries in Kenya. To date, a network of 62 branch libraries has been established in different parts of the country. Provision of information for development through the national and public library network enables people to fight poverty deprivation and illiteracy and thus supports reading and recovery programmes by the government. Access to information about the country enables citizens to participate effectively in the art of governance. Through various reading campaigns, knls provides opportunities for communities to enhance their reading and information seeking habits, and therefore sustain literacy. knls is committed to offering access to information and knowledge for empowerment in response to needs of Kenyans.

For more information on knls, please visit <http://www.knls.ac.ke/>

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