



Volunteers Foundation

Potential. Enabled.

Project Pamoja: A call to action for Education and Self-Sustainability

Executive summary
April 2021

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1. FOREWORD

Our "VF roof": Volunteers Foundation envisages a gender equal world, free of poverty and violence for everyone built by altruistic globally aware citizens.

Our "house pillars": To achieve its vision the foundation operates under the Education, Health and Nutrition pillars and with the community, for the community.

From vision to practice

What if all children in Kibera could receive a quality education and achieve their full potential? If only they were given the opportunity to attend schools and education programs aiming at nurturing their minds and hidden talents, what would it mean for their families and the whole Kibera population? What if we expand our vision to the entire Kenya? Imagine the impact, imagine the change, imagine how this project steers the future!

We believe that by understanding the local culture, identifying local champions and leveraging years of educational experience in combination with up to date educational programs and tools, we can change the status quo and improve the lives of hundreds of children and their families, and eventually impact the whole community.

That is exactly why Volunteers Foundation was born in 2010. Education generates endless effects: economic security, reduction of hunger, better knowledge of sanitation, and good health, all of which helps to stop recurrent cycles of poverty.

We *all* have a duty of care toward others

At the heart of Volunteers Foundation is building a fairer world for everyone, where all abilities are put to use and where like-minded, altruistic people get together to deliver impact.

We want to work with individuals and organisations who believe in what we believe and who want to work together so that we can all succeed. We are looking for people to stand side-by-side with us in pursuit of the same goal.

Project Pamoja, (*Pamoja means Together In Swahili*), will be hosting the VF's pulsing educational heart.

This project is a key milestone in further catalysing sustainable change and creating impact. Through it, not only the Kibera community will thrive but, by 2025, an additional many students, in VF remote hubs, will benefit of quality education via the use technology and blended learning methods.

Through this project, the Volunteers Foundation team and I are very excited about working together with you, to secure a bright, sustainable future for the children and Kenyan Communities.

Sincerely,

**Monica Dan,
Volunteers Foundation Founder**

“Volunteers Foundation and the work it does is changing and saving lives, period! We all understand the importance of education and we want it because we want to provide opportunity and options, it helps people break the cycle of poverty.”

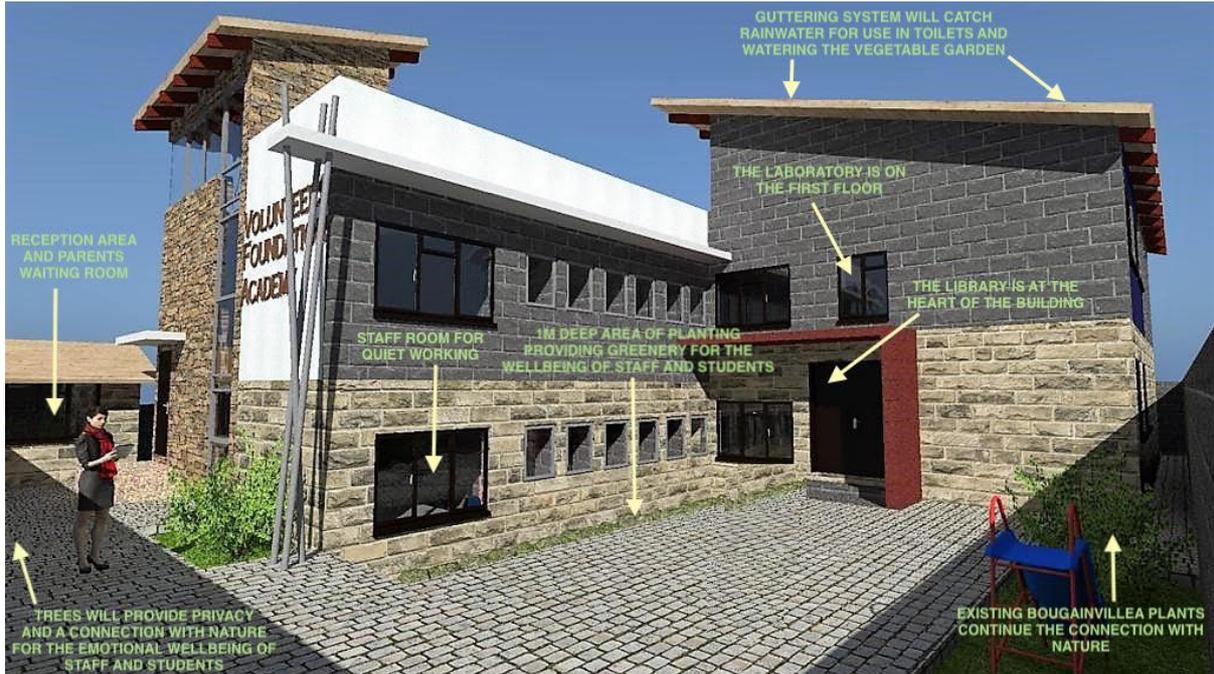
Sid Espinosa
Director of Philanthropy and Civic Engagement at Microsoft

2. PROJECT PAMOJA: A CALL TO ACTION FOR EDUCATION AND SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

Project Pamoja's guided principles

At the heart of the construction we seek to build, the Project Pamoja (Pamoja means 'together' in Swahili), is the desire to make an impact together. The underpinning guided principles are:

- **Preserving Kenyan identity.** The school outlook will reflect the Kenyan culture and traditions expressed through the choice of colours and materials used.
- **Sustainability.** We will re-use and recycle current materials as well as locally sourced building materials. The solar panels will generate electricity to the school, and excess will be distributed to the community.
- **Safety and hygiene.** In Kibera, there is no drinkable tap water or public sewage system. Therefore, hygiene standards are very low allowing diseases to spread quickly. However, as it sits on the border with Kibera, the school building is already connected to Nairobi's sewage facilities.
- **Local expertise.** We have sourced a pro-bono team of architects and interior designers who has local knowledge and relies on local labour.
 - Brenda Morra - Project manager at Betts & Townsend
 - Denis Dang'ana - Project manager at Betts & Townsend
 - Ian Mwangi - Architect
 - Grace Mwenda - Interior Designer at Design Partnership
 - Malaba Jonah - Structural Engineer
- **Designed with the children and teachers' emotional well-being in mind.** Connection to nature and space for reflective thinking have been given special attention in the building concept.



Design of the new Volunteers Foundation Academy building - view from the front



Design of the new Volunteers Foundation Academy building - view from the top



Design of the new Volunteers Foundation Academy building - view from the back

What we are asking for

Project Pamoja requires funding before the work can commence and the building needs to be ready for the new calendar year 2022.

- **We are seeking to raise a total of £80,000 for the construction of the building.**

We are asking for your partial or full financial contribution to the project.

What will you be contributing to:

- **Build one of the five classes/library - contribute with £ 10000**
- **Build the refectory area - contribute with £15000**
- **Tecnologically enable VF Academy - laptops/tablets - contribute with £10000**
- **Vertical Vegetable garden - contribute with £5000**

3. APPENDIX

Volunteers Foundation Academy: at the heart of our mission

In 2016, our major milestone so far: we launched our own Volunteers Foundation Academy (VFA), a primary school which allow us to deliver a quality education based on our ethos. Since 2019, VFA is based in our own building which we were able to purchase thanks to the generous support of our donors.

We are a non-selective co-ed school. We accept any child regardless of race, belief, gender and social background.

VFA seeks to do the absolute best for every girl and boy regardless of their character, their ability, or the amount of attention they may demand from us, knowing that this will set them on the path to success and make a difference.

With VFA, we are able to provide quality education in a caring, nurturing and contained environment. Students benefit from small classes, experienced teachers and extracurricular opportunities makes of. With currently 120 students (aged 6-11yrs) in 5 classes, VFA is an important contributor to the development of the community.



Students at the Volunteers Foundation Academy in Kibera

Parents pay a reduced fee for the education of their children. We believe that this partial contribution from the parents is a key component for the sustainability of the project and ensures the families' engagement and commitment to the education of their children. We have also a number of scholarships that we offer to particularly poor families, offering a 100% support.

On top of the normal school days, we are now opening the building every Saturday to provide the children - and the community, with a quiet space and access to IT tools, both essential for quality learning.

The VFA school building: today's challenges and tomorrow's goals

Currently the one-floor school building can host 5 classes of 120 primary school students. The space is very tight, and since the introduction of social distancing requirements, some classes are being taught in the playground, diminishing the space that is devoted for play.

There are other challenges associated to lack of space that are impacting on the whole-school strategic approach and the dispense of an education that is broad, rich and deep:

- we have a long waiting list for the 5 grades;
- we cannot accommodate a full primary school cycle;
- we don't have any space for a laboratory or a library.

Our solution is to extend the school by adding a second floor to the building, making room for a total of 240 students (an extra 120 students) with a net enhanced impact. The quality of the education and the body of knowledge children will gain during their time at school will be greatly improved due to the new building dynamics and learning areas.

In addition, VFA will be acting as the VF Central Hub of Knowledge for the 2025 vision where remote VF hubs will be delivering lessons via blended learning methods and use of technology. This is Project Pamoja.

An insight into Volunteers Foundation Financials

Fundraising: a challenge since 2020

The last year has been extremely challenging due to the Covid pandemic restrictions throughout the world, which has dramatically reduced donations to Volunteers Foundation.



VF Income and expenditure for the 2016-2020 period (source: Charity Commission)

	31/03/2016	31/03/2017	31/03/2018	31/03/2019	31/03/2020
Income from government contracts	£0	£0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Income from government grants	£0	£0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other income	£50.05k	£46.58k	£85.37k	£91.76k	£92.68k
Total expenditure	£41.16k	£46.09k	£50.84k	£224.20k	£65.79k

At VF, we work tirelessly to fundraise through events or individual and corporate sponsorships.

In the 2019 calendar year, we were able to raise £100,000 to buy a plot of land and build our own Volunteers Foundation Academy.

However in 2020 our fundraising efforts were thwarted by the Covid19 situation and we experienced a downward trend as most charities did.

Our projection at 2024 to fulfil ambitious goals

The overall budget to run the charity, the school and related projects is shown below. The forecasted increase is based on the increase of classes and students to complete the full primary education cycle (i.e., from Year 1 to Year 8).

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Schooling running costs	52,766	53,821	57,418	63,111	71,338
Projects		13,171	13,435	13,704	13,978
Building extension	2,857	80,000	14,286	7,143	

Figures in GBP

‘School running costs’ includes the base expenditure to run Volunteers Foundation Academy and fees paid to partnering secondary schools (e.g., personnel, maintenance, utilities and food)

‘Projects’ includes all the projects as described in the [Volunteers Foundation projects: designed for specific needs, aligned to UN goals](#) section.

‘Building extension’ refers to the development plan of the current VF Academy site aimed at developing a former residential house into a two-storey school with eight classes, refectory, laboratory and office to accommodate up to 200 children.

Your opportunity to help

Year 2020 marked our 10th anniversary. During these ten years, we have been able to establish the Volunteers Foundation as one of the most successful primary co-ed schools with the highest educational standards in Kibera. More than three hundred children and their families have benefited from our Education, Health and Nutrition programs.

In order to build upon what we have created and maximise the full potential of more children, parents and our partners, we need to invest in better facilities, educational tools, training, so we continue to build on the quality and value of our educational offer.

“The bottom up transformation is stronger than ever and everyone can be a change maker, with the right mind-set and this is why I am so happy to be a part of the VF’s journey.

Together we share a certain sense of urgency, from sustainability standpoint as well as education standpoint. Ultimately, we want to have an impact and want to have an impact very quickly.”

Peter Schelstraete
Co-founder & CEO of UBUNTOO

Building solid structures and impactful programs, together with delivering mind-shifting experiences, are the prerequisites to rendering the project self-sustainable in the long term.

We are always seeking individuals, companies, academic institutions around the world who want to contribute to our mission and help achieve our vision goals.

If you are interested in making an impact together with us, please get in touch at info@volunteersfoundation.org

OUR CHARITY

Educational system in Kenya and the challenges for children in Kibera

Kenya has a total population of 51M people (2018) with a life expectancy of 66 years.

Kenya literacy rate for 2018 was 81.54%, a 2.8% increase from 2014.

Kibera is an informal settling in the south periphery of Nairobi. It is one of the largest slums in Africa. Poor living conditions, lack of sanitation and basic infrastructure make Kibera a very challenging environment for children to grow in.

In 2008 Kenya launched its Vision 2030 development blueprint, just two years before Volunteers Foundation started their activities.

As part of the development plan of the country, education takes a primary place, and it is recognised in the Kenyan Constitution as a basic human right.

In 2003 the government offered free education to all children up to the age of 14 and, more recently in January 2018, free education for all children aged 14 to 18. The education public sector has seen a major increase in the enrolment of students, with classes of up to 50-70 students.

The enrolment rates are outpacing the growth of state schools resulting in overcrowding and diminishing standards of education. This leads to a rise in demand for quality education as there is a growing need for a skilled and educated workforce. Fee-paying (private?) schools are therefore on the rise but are often not affordable for many. Consequently, the population based in Kibera faces a challenge in getting quality education for their children as they cannot afford to send them in fee-paying schools and are often not even able to get them into a state school with a good educational standard.



About Volunteers Foundation

Volunteers Foundation was created in 2010 with the aim of improving the living conditions of children in Kibera (Nairobi) through the provision of quality education.

Volunteers Foundation enables children in Kibera to reach their full potential via a 360 degree education approach.

We operate under three key pillars: Education, Health and Nutrition. We currently have 200 children, aged between 6yrs and 18yrs, in our programs.

All the people involved in supporting the charity are volunteers. Therefore, we use 100% of the funds we raise to run the programs we operate.

At the heart of our educational approach sits Volunteers Foundation Academy, our own primary school.

Volunteers Foundation projects: designed for specific needs, aligned to UN goals

In 2015, the UN set out 17 goals that are a blueprint to achieving a better and more sustainable future for us all, addressing the challenges our world and the people in it face on a daily basis.

Alongside the formal education program, VF has set up a number of additional projects which focus on knowledge transfer, skills training, mentoring and mental support and are aligned with many UN goals.

❖ TeacherToTeacher

A collaboration-based program between educators in the UK, other countries and our teachers in Kibera with the aim to exchange knowledge, review, learn and apply best educational practices and enhance the in-class experience for teachers and students.

This knowledge exchange covers a wide range of topics: from literacy to sport education and from farming to sustainability. We held five sessions over a period of six months in 2020. The project continues in 2021 with a focus on implementing the knowledge acquired in the previous sessions and specifically aimed at enhancing the students' academic performances.

The project is a great opportunity for all parties involved to gain new knowledge, understand different perspectives, build on different cultural backgrounds and enhance personal development and teaching skills.

❖ ExpressYourself

Art, music, and dance workshops/clubs are offered by VFA as extracurricular activities to increase focus and allow students to develop and flourish in their creativity.

For example, the art club includes crafting, drawings and bricolage focused on different artistic styles inspired by both, African and Western culture.

As for music, in 2019 we offered regular music sessions with the main objective to introduce music fundamentals and identify musical talent among the children.

❖ **YouWork**

A work experience program for older children in the program. Offered for one or two weeks at various partnering local companies and institutions such as ECO Bank, Kensington Kindergarten, and others. We are currently looking for additional organizations which can offer work experiences/internships going forward.

❖ **EatingWell**

Three meals (i.e., breakfast, morning snack and lunch) are provided throughout every school day. With a balanced diet we aim to provide approx. 80% of the required daily intake. We provide regular information sessions about balanced nutrition to educate the children and tackle some bad eating habits (for example, excess of sugary food, etc.). During the pandemic, despite the VF Academy being closed, we carried on providing food to the families of our children. A total of 70,000 meals have been provided to 172 families. By partnering with Farm to Feed, an organisation that supports rural communities by transporting their fresh vegetables to the city and urban informal settlements, we managed to purchase fresh supplies at reduced cost.

❖ **WellnessYou**

Regular health checks (three times per year) in cooperation with the St. Gertrude's Children Hospital. The program focuses on assessing the health of each child, supplying vaccinations and individual treatments, introducing dental hygiene practices, and providing education on how to prevent diseases. Sports activities (i.e., PE, Football, etc.) are also part of the program. According to latest studies, being healthy and fit improves the cognitive ability and builds resilience in children allowing them to achieve more and better.

❖ **CleanWaterCleanHands**

In Kibera, there is no drinkable tap water or public sewage system. Therefore, hygiene standards are very low allowing diseases to spread quickly.

At VFA, pure water facilities and drinkable bottled water are provided around the school. We make sure to regularly talk about the importance of drinking pure water and washing hands to prevent diseases.

❖ GrowYourself

Education around the importance of growing organic, sustainable vegetables. Vegetables are grown in VFA's schoolyard in Kibera and used to prepare some of the daily school meals. Children are involved in the entire process from planting seeds to watering and harvesting. The vegetable patch is also used as a 'science laboratory' where the knowledge acquired in class can be applied.

VF aim for the Academy to be completely self-sustainable by 2027.



❖ TalkToMe

A series of six annual counselling sessions called "Talk for Youths", is offered to all our students aged 11 to 18 years, some young mothers and parents. The sessions are provided by counsellors under the supervision of a paediatrician and a psychologist. They are extremely engaging for the children as they are held in a public park in central Nairobi with a mix of fun, sport and talking activities throughout the day. The informal setting allows children to enjoy the day in full and relax away from their normal life in Kibera. Often this gives them the confidence to open up and discuss a number of personal topics with the counsellors.

In addition, every child from 14 to 18 years take part in the "VF Mentoring Program", which aims at developing human potential, professional skills and facilitating students' success in graduating from school and beyond.

For teachers, we implemented the "Enhance Emotional Resilience" program aiming at emotional support during the Covid lockdown period. In total, 800 collective hours were given by 16 members of different VF committees.

5. CONTACTS AND USEFUL LINKS

For any additional information, please get in touch. We will be happy to answer your questions and share with you our passion for education of young children.

Volunteers Foundation

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Useful links

Volunteers Foundation Website

<https://www.volunteersfoundation.org/>

Twitter

[@VolunteersFound](https://twitter.com/VolunteersFound)

Instagram

[Volunteers_foundation_kenya](https://www.instagram.com/Volunteers_foundation_kenya)

LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/volunteersfoundation>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/VolunteersFoundationUK>

Georgina Buckle, Varsity, University of Cambridge: "A call to action: Volunteers Foundation, the charity championing education and self-sustainability"

<https://www.varsity.co.uk/features/20175>

Simon Sinek: "Stop calling yourselves not-for-profit organisations and start calling yourselves for-impact organisations"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kDZ8M8GX0Q>