


# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Knowledge
Empowering
Youth

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023, Knowledge Empowering Youth Trust (KEY) advanced its mission to promote equitable access to quality learning through advocacy, the launch of new school libraries, the introduction of robotics programs, and strengthened librarian training.

A key milestone was hosting the first School Librarians Workshop, in partnership with Goethe-Institut, the Kenya Library Association, and the Kenya National Library Service, bringing national attention to the vital role of libraries in education. KEY also shared its work internationally, including at the American Library Association Conference, highlighting the role of school libraries in under-served communities and the importance of access to information and digital tools.

Looking ahead to 2024, KEY will restore under-resourced libraries, expand regionally, and deepen its impact on reading culture and innovation in schools, advancing SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Mokwo Mixed Day and Boarding Primary



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

Imagine a child in rural Kenya discovering a new planet in a science book, learning to code, or reading a story that mirrors their dreams. Picture another, wide-eyed, watching a tornado swirl across a smartboard during a library lesson. That's the kind of magic made real in 2023, thanks to the commitment of schools, librarians, publishers, partners, and the entire KEY community.

This past year, I've seen an exciting transformation unfold in schools across Kenya. Some schools had no library space at all. Others had neglected rooms without books: bare walls, empty shelves, and dusty floors with holes. Today, those spaces pulse with life. I've watched students huddle over books, experiment with robots, and begin to imagine new futures.

At Knowledge Empowering Youth (KEY), we believe access to knowledge is a right, not a privilege. In 2023, we opened libraries in Chebisian (Bomet County), Kinyona (Muranga County), and Kidfarmaco (Kikuyu County); distributed 6,758 books; installed 19 computers; and introduced smartboards.

In April, we hosted Kenya's first School Librarians Workshop. It trained 45 librarians and launched a national conversation on libraries in public education. Many returned to their schools reinspired, ready to teach, lead, and transform their libraries.

We also took our story global, presenting at the American Library Association Conference in Chicago. We shared a simple truth: Kenyan students' hunger for learning is unmatched. The only thing missing has been access.

This work is not charity. It is justice. With every step, we move closer to a future where every child we reach can imagine, learn, and lead.

Thank you for turning pages with us.

With gratitude,



**RITA FIELD-MARSHAM**
CEO and Founder,
Knowledge Empowering
Youth (KEY)



# ABOUT KNOWLEDGE EMPOWERING YOUTH



## WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe that **knowledge transforms destinies** – children's, communities', countries'.

## OUR MISSION

We work to ensure school-aged children–regardless of background or location–have **access to a rich library of current, captivating, and impactful resources,** because only through knowledge and access to worlds beyond their own can children imagine what is possible and choose the future they want.

## HOW WE DO IT

Guided by **our values – knowledge, excellence, openness, respect, and self-leadership** – we create inclusive, high quality learning spaces that meet international standards, empower children, and strengthen communities.

### OUR VALUES

**KNOWLEDGE**
**EXCELLENCE**
**OPENNESS**
**RESPECT**
**SELF-LEADERSHIP**

## WHAT WE DO

**WE PROVIDE**
turnkey school libraries that empower youth.

**WE ENHANCE**
language and technology proficiency.

**WE STRENGTHEN**
educational curriculum and vision.

**WE FOSTER**
active and engaged citizens.

**WE PROMOTE**
national culture and pride.

# REACH OF KEY LIBRARIES
## IN 2023

**54,028**
STUDENTS REACHED



**21,520**
BOYS REACHED

**32,508**
GIRLS REACHED

**2:3**
RATIO - BOYS : GIRLS

**13**
COUNTIES REACHED

# COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

**"The library provides a serene environment where our students do their private studies. The furniture is comfortable and relaxing different from the one in class. The computers and the internet in the library help the students while doing their research either for the course work or the co-curricular activities for example debates."**

**SR. MARY WACHIRA**
Principal,
Precious Blood Secondary School Riruta

**"The library plays an important role in promoting information literacy, current awareness, network service for efficient research and better decisions making through reading of novel, getting daily newspapers and use of computers. The school community makes use of the library as well."**

**CAREN ROTICH**
School Librarian,
Nakuru Girls High School

**"The former Minister of Education, Prof. Magoha used the library as a benchmark when former president Uhuru Kenyatta gifted Eliud Kipchoge with a community library in Nandi County. It is an exemplary facility with a positive impact to the academic achievement of the boys. The library provides a safe space for digital innovation, collaboration and the usage is really high."**

**MR. KIPCHUMBA MAIYO**
Principal,
Kapsabet High School

**"Knowledge Empowering youth is one of our key stakeholders in supporting school libraries and cultivating a positive reading culture across the country and beyond. KEY with other partners, drafted the first school libraries policy in 2018."**

**STEPHEN MAU**
Director Records and Library Services,
Ministry of Gender, Culture, The Arts and Heritage

# OUR TRUSTEES



**RITA FIELD-MARSHAM**
CEO and Founder,
Key Libraries



**CHARLES FIELD-MARSHAM**
Trustee



**WANDIA GICHURU**
Trustee

# OUR TEAM



**NYAKUNDI NYAMBANE**
Key Head Librarian,
Key Libraries



**GLADYS KERICH, PMP**
Programs Manager,
Key Libraries



**CHRISTINE SIMANI**
Project Coordinator,
Key Libraries

# GOALS & RESULTS
## FOR 2023

| Goals | KEY Results |
|---|---|
| **Expand Access to School Libraries** | • Renovated and refurbished library spaces in Chebisian, Kinyona, and Kidfarmaco, impacting hundreds of learners. |
| **Introduce and Scale Technology Integration** | • Piloted robotics program in Kpasabet Boys and Shella Primary Schools. |
| **Build Librarian and Teacher Capacity** | • Trained over 45 + librarians through the 3-day KEY School Librarians Workshop. |
| **Increase Visibility and International Engagement** | • KEY Team presented at the ALA Conference in Chicago on Making a difference in school libraries, creating a global visibility. |
| **Strengthen Strategic Partnerships** | • Deepened collaborations with KNLS, Goethe-Institut, KLA, and others. |
| **KEY Impact Highlights** | • New Libraries Established: 3<br>• Computers Provided: 19<br>• Interactive Boards Installed: 5<br>• Books Distributed: 6,758<br>• Learners Reached: 6,500+<br>• Robotics Pilot Schools: 2<br>• Librarians Trained: 45+<br>• Global Conference Represented: 2<br>• Strategic Partners Engaged: 3 |

# LIBRARY PROJECTS

## CHEBISIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

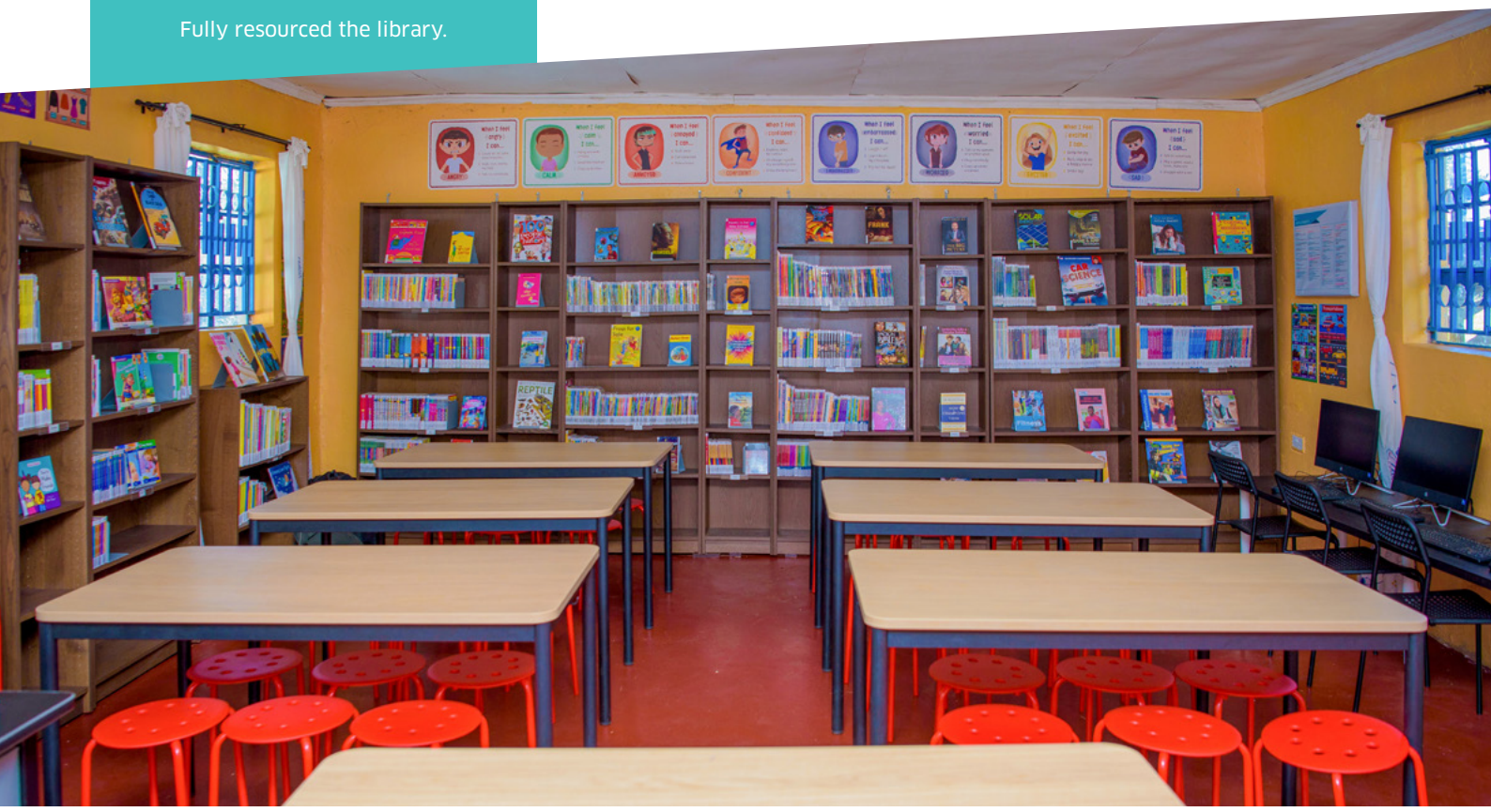
This library project was made possible through the dedication of community members and the Parent-Teacher Association, who raised funds for the building. It all began with a Nairobi-based driver who, inspired by KEY's work, spearheaded the effort to build a library for children in his community and rallied local support to make it happen.

Once the building was complete, KEY, at his request, stepped in to fully resource the library and provide training for the librarian—ensuring the space became a vibrant and sustainable learning hub.



Before KEY involvement.

Fully resourced the library.



## LIBRARY PROJECTS

### CHEBISIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

KEY provided an interactive board and more.



## KINYONA PRIMARY SCHOOL

KEY renovated a dedicated space at Kinyona Primary School in Murang'a County, establishing a new library to support literacy development in this rural community.

The school was identified for its strong potential and clear need for enhanced learning resources. Through KEY, students and teachers now have access to a well-equipped reading space stocked with age-appropriate and diverse books, computers, interactive board, furniture and games. The library is a significant step toward strengthening the reading culture in the area, offering a supportive environment that encourages curiosity, independent learning, and improved academic outcomes.

Photos of the Library Before Refurbishing









Photos of the Library After Refurbishing

## KIDFARMACO PRIMARY SCHOOL

At Kidfarmaco Primary School, the library project was driven by a strong collaboration between the school board, community leaders, and multiple supporters. KEY played a key role by supplying books and computers, while other partners contributed to furnishing and equipping the space. This united approach ensured that the library was not only well-resourced but also rooted in community involvement. The shared commitment and local leadership have been instrumental in creating a functional and inspiring learning space that continues to support literacy and student engagement.

### REFURBISHED LIBRARY



Furniture Donated by Other Partners



Condition of Existing Books



Upgraded Library Books

## LIBRARY PROJECTS

### KIDFARMACO PRIMARY SCHOOL



# LIBRARY PROGRAMS

## INTRODUCTION OF ROBOTICS TO KEY LIBRARIES

KEY introduced a pilot robotics program at Kapsabet Boys High School and Shella Primary School, in collaboration with Jennifer Chae.

This initiative aims to inspire creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills among learners by exposing them to hands-on STEM education. Through structured robotics sessions, students are learning the basics of coding, and teamwork–skills that are essential for the future workforce.

The collaboration reflects KEY's commitment to bridging the digital divide and preparing young learners in both rural and urban settings for the demands of the 21st century.



Students at Kapsabet building robots.



Students at Shella Primary building robots.

# CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

## SCHOOL LIBRARIAN WORKSHOP

The first-of-its-kind KEY School Librarians Workshop, themed Empower, Inspire, and Connect, was held from April 25–27, 2023. The workshop brought together 36 KEY school librarians from across Kenya, one librarian from Ghana, 10 invited librarians, 10 facilitators, and representatives from the Kenya National Library Service, Kenya Library Association, and Goethe Institut. Designed to equip school librarians with practical skills in library management, reading promotion, and digital integration, the workshop focused on training and mentorship to enhance student engagement and literacy.

**37**
**KEY SCHOOL LIBRARIANS**

**10**
**INVITED LIBRARIANS**

**10**
**FACILITATORS**

**3**
**DAYS**




The workshop equipped librarians with practical skills.

**"Each session at the workshop was not only insightful but also engaging. The level of organisation, range of presentation topics and the content was timely. The social events and informal gatherings enabled the meaningful exchange of ideas and collaborations that have proved beneficial to my personal professional growth and to that of the Kenya Library Association. I would highly recommend this workshop to more school librarians in the future."**

**ISAAC NYARIGOTI**
Executive Officer,
Kenya Library Association (Partner)

## SCHOOL LIBRARIAN WORKSHOP GUESTS & MEDIA COVERAGE

The launch event drew high-profile guests who value education and professional growth, including Hon. Sabina Chege, Senator Joseph Kamau Githuku, Lamu County Speaker Hon. Azhar Ali Mbarak, celebrated author John Kiriamiti, marathoner Lornah Kiplagat, KLA President Prof. Peter Gatiti, and KNLS representative Ms. Mary Kinyanjui. The workshop received widespread media coverage, including a feature in People Daily, and all sessions are available on YouTube as a resource for best practices in school librarianship.

### IN THE NEWS




From Left to Right: Business Quest, May 2nd 2023; Daily Nation, June 5th 2023; The Standard, May 1st 2023; Newsroom, via Twitter

## AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

KEY made a presentation in 2023 at American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago, USA titled “Making a Difference in School Libraries in Kenya – an opportunity for you to volunteer.”




### KEY TAKEAWAYS

**1**

#### VISIBILITY AND ADVOCACY

Attending the library conference increased KEY’s visibility, fostering new partnerships and support for the professional development of its school librarians.

**2**

#### CAPACITY BUILDING

The conference enhanced the skills and knowledge of KEY’s staff, improving their ability to manage and innovate within their libraries.

**3**

#### ADOPTION OF BEST PRACTICES

KEY gained insights into innovative library practices, enabling the adoption and implementation of effective strategies within their institutions.

**4**

#### PARTNERSHIPS

The event facilitated the establishment of new collaborations, expanding KEY’s network and access to valuable resources and expertise.

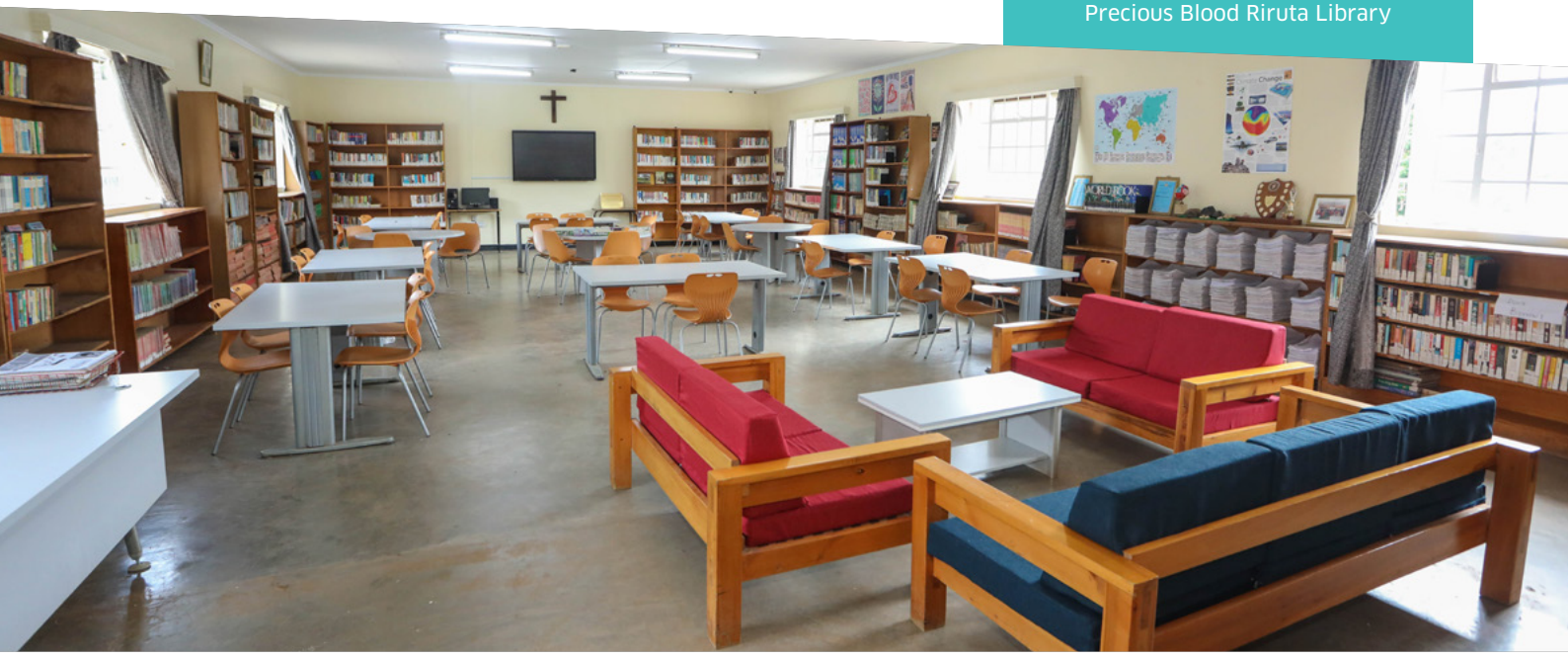
# UPGRADES TO EXISTING LIBRARIES

## PRECIOUS BLOOD RIRUTA

Precious Blood Riruta received a KEY library in 2012. Due to the high usage and consistent engagement with the space, KEY provided additional resources, including an interactive board to replace the faulty one, games, a computer for the library management system, and new books to enrich the collection.

## LEWA DOWNS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lewa Downs Primary has fully utilized its library since its establishment in 2015 and has extended access to the surrounding community. To support this growing demand, KEY supplied an interactive board to replace the faulty one, computers, games, and additional books.



Precious Blood Riruta Library

## UPGRADES TO EXISTING LIBRARIES

### PRECIOUS BLOOD RIRUTA



## MUSKUT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Muskut Primary School has benefited from a container library since 2013. With time, the structure required renovations and resource upgrades. KEY responded by renovating the container providing a computer for the library management system, games and replenishing the book collection.

Muskut Primary School Library



## UPGRADES TO EXISTING LIBRARIES

### MUSKUT PRIMARY SCHOOL



## BRIGHT GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL

It is the only KEY-supported secondary school library in Shella, Lamu County. To ensure its continued use and relevance, KEY added furniture, books, and a computer with the library management system.

## NAKURU GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Nakuru Girls High School reported issues with their existing library management system. To address this, KEY provided a new computer to facilitate effective library operations and ensure continuity in service delivery.

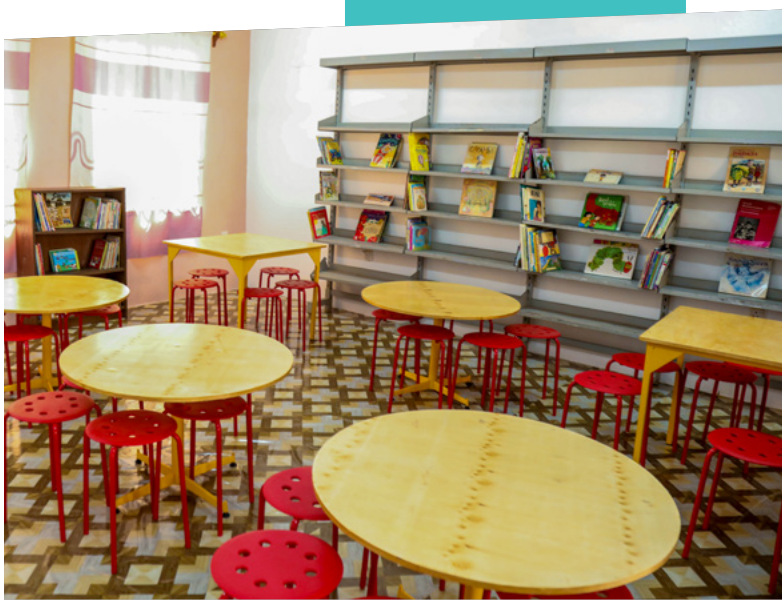
## SHELLA PRIMARY SCHOOL

In 2023, KEY renovated the lower primary library at Shella Primary School to create a more welcoming and age-appropriate space for younger learners. The upgrade included the addition of child-sized tables and chairs, new bookshelves, and educational posters to enhance both functionality and visual appeal.

Bright Girls Library



Shella Lower Library



# PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

## INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

To successfully deliver on its mission of improving access to quality learning resources, KEY recognizes the importance of collaboration with like-minded organizations. KEY partnered with institutions that share a commitment to literacy, education, capacity building and library development.

Goethe Institut

Kenya Library Association

Kenya National Library Services

# FUTURE KEY PLANS
## FOR 2024

| Goals | Plans |
|---|---|
| **KEY School Librarians Workshop 2024** | • Engage more school librarians to impart the knowledge on library management and activities. |
| **Partnerships** | • Seek partnership with to support the initiative and promote the importance of school libraries. |
| **Projects** | • St. Thomas Kapchorwa Secondary School and restoration of suboptimal libraries. |




St. Joan Academy Library

# ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The financial statements of Knowledge Empowering Youth Trust comprising of the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2023, statement of income and expenditure and accumulated funds, statement of cash flows for the year then ended and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies have been audited by an independent auditor – BDO East Africa Kenya. An unqualified opinion was issued. The financial statements are available upon request.






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