



Project goals – Sponsor displaced students (students who had to be transferred to John Paul II school after the post-election violence); Improve the basic facilities of the school (toilets, laboratory); Consider funding the food programme for students as suggested by the head teacher.

A school born as a community initiative

John Paul II Mixed Secondary School began its activity in 2004, as an initiative of Christ the King Catholic church in Kibera. The school is relatively well equipped, thanks to donations from the Ambassador of Spain, St. Marian Catholic School in California and, more recently, Rockbrook School in Ireland. It currently has 170 students and 12 teachers. As with most of the schools in Kibera, John Paul II has many students whose guardians are infected with HIV, and there are many children of single mothers, and many who have been abused at some point.



Main building of John Paul II Mixed Secondary School in Kibera, recently painted with the funding from Rockbrook School of Ireland



A view of Kibera from the school. Kibera is the slum dwelling where the school is located and where the students live.

With the main facilities in relatively good shape, school fees are the biggest problem for John Paul II school. Since most of the parents and guardians of Kibera youth are jobless, they are not able to pay the KSH 10,000 (ca. EUR 100) annual fee. It is out of these fees that the school manages to pay the teachers and buy the basic facilities that enable them to run the school. Even an extra KSH 400/month (aprox. EUR 4) per student would allow the school to provide them with food.

Kibera – one of the biggest slums in Africa

The school is located in the Kibera slum, 5km. south west of the centre of Nairobi. Kibera is the biggest slum dwelling in East and Central Africa, with an area of ca. 260 ha. (2.5 sq. km.) and a population of anywhere between 0.6 and 1.2 million people, from all the major ethnic backgrounds. This multi-ethnic nature has led to many conflicts, the most recent being the post election violence in January 2008. The high rate of crime, together with the lack of building foundations (the ground of Kibera is mostly composed of refuse and rubbish) and the cramped sprawl of the area, slow down any upgrading effort in the slum. Moreover, Kibera slum is an “informal settlement” (i.e., it does not officially exist) and therefore the government provides no basic services such as schools, lavatories, running water, sewerage system, electricity, proper roads, etc.

Very densely populated (ca. 300,000 inhab./sq.km.) and heavily polluted by waste, dust and human and animal faeces, Kibera is home to many illnesses and, according to some sources, to more than 300,000 people infected by HIV.



Above, Kibera slum with John Paul II School in the background

Left, learning conditions have improved a lot since Strathmore University began its collaboration – there's still a lot to do, though

The Community Outreach Programme of Strathmore University has collaborated closely with this school during the last few years through motivational talks to the students and the channelling of funds to the school from national and international donors for books, scholarships and maintenance of the school facilities. Further funding would be used for the following:

Item	Need (Ksh)	Raised
Library Books	100,000	100,000
Scholarships for displaced students	250,000	250,000
School painting	50,000	50,000
Food programme	TBC	-
Rehabilitation of toilets	TBC	-
Furniture for administration building	TBC	-
Piping of laboratory for Form Four	TBC	-

1 EUR = 100 KSH (approx.). For further information on the above items and other needs of John Paul II please contact the COP at Strathmore University.

2004 – John Paul II Mixed secondary school begins its activities with the sponsorship of Christ the King Catholic church in Kibera.

2008 – Rockbrook School in Ireland provides approx. 400,000 KSH for the acquisition of library books and scholarships for displaced students. Further financial aid received was used for the reconstruction of a perimeter wall destroyed during the post-election violence earlier in the year.



Above and left: Girls and boys from John Paul II secondary school. Attending secondary school will give them the possibility to gain access to University and the hope of a better life – outside the slum

Caxton and Charles, two of the John Paul II success stories



Caxton Musyimi (left) and Charles Chirchir (in Blue) when they visited Strathmore University on October 31st 2008.

Caxton Musyimi, 18, and Charles Chirchir, 21, completed their secondary education at John Paul II school. Caxton, originally from Kitui, lives with his father in Kibera. The school awarded him a scholarship as a result of an excellent performance in his Kenya Certificate of Primary Education. After completion, he received help from an individual to take a Certificate Course in Computer Applications, and now wishes he could make it forward to University. Charles also lives in Kibera. He was educated through a similar scholarship at John Paul II secondary school, and now runs a small scale grocery business in order to cater for his rent and personal needs. Both Caxton and Charles collaborate with NGOs to help other Kibera dwellers deal with the many challenges faced by slum inhabitants: high crime rate, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, irresponsible behaviour, desperation and loss of hope. Both are very grateful and appreciate what they gained from John Paul II: "Discipline and hard work has made us more responsible in our own lives; it is hard to guess where we would find ourselves if the school hadn't awarded us those scholarships." In the future, both are willing to participate in the upgrading of the slum and the education of youth who, like it happened to them at some point, have lost hope in life.

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www.strathmore.edu/cop

Mission Statement of Strathmore University

"We dedicate ourselves to the advancement of education through teaching, scholarship and service to society by providing an all-round education in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility, creating a culture of continuous improvement, fostering high moral standards and developing a spirit of service and respect for others"