

January-March 2025 Issue 1



Quarterly
Newsletter 1-2025

INTRODUCTION

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are" Theodore Roosevelt

Thank you for your interest and welcome to this edition of **our first ever**

Newsletter! 

Welcome to the inspiring dream behind RICCA and the founder's journey with mentors Paul Kronenberg and Sabriye Tenberken during his time at Kanthari in India (May-Dec 2024), culminating in founder's speech on rethinking education in rural Kenya. And the support from the Founder of Bramble Network from Nigeria, Odunayo Aliu.

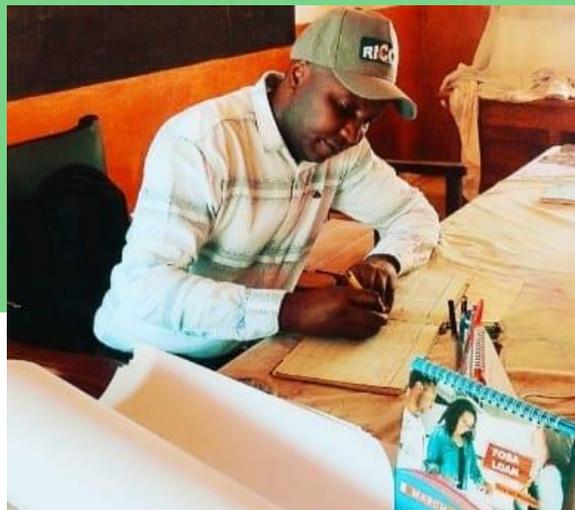


Critical highlights:

- ✓ What is Poverty in the eyes of a child: is it lack of shoes? Or absence of dignity| hope
- ✓ Walking barefoot to school—a daily reality for many in rural Kenya
- ✓ The struggle of overcrowded classrooms and limited resources
- ✓ Constant threat of dropping out of school due to poverty

🔍 Learn how these challenges shaped the founder's vision for change and why rethinking education is the key to unlocking a more inclusive future for every child.  Watch Now:

https://lnkd.in/eZPFd_p



A Word From The Founder

Dear friends and partners

The RICCA idea has been widely received by stakeholders, interested in our solution; revolving around the intersection between education and child protection in enhancing quality education in rural and marginalized communities. Community leaders, parents, educators, children and partners endorse our focus -child protection, wellbeing and education, and the opportunities abound in the target rural areas of Kenya.

I am delighted to share our highlights and achievements for the first quarter of 2025(January-March).

In this issue, we share in our first leg of our journey; Insights from [Our Teacher Training Workshop Pilot Project](#) and revisiting my former Kang'aru and Kagio Primary schools in Mwea West subcounty in Kirinyaga. We targeted 10 participants- but 30 teachers turned up for the digital education training, from kindergarten to grade 9 of junior secondary. It was informative, interactive and participatory sessions, displaying the enormous need for digital teaching methods and child friendly education in rural areas that yearn for support to bridge this digital divide. During this quarter, we managed to submit our registration to PBO Authority in Kenya, constitute interim board of directors, develop our policy document, our constitution, fundraising, teacher training curriculum and conduct pilot project.

I am inspired! The little but notable steps that we have made offers a glimpse into the future that lies ahead despite the challenges we face today. **Enjoy the reading!**

Project Updates

Pilot Project

At RICCA, we are committed to reducing school dropout rates in rural and marginalized communities by creating safe, child-friendly learning spaces. We started by working with public primary schools in Kirinyaga, Kenya—where I grew up—to address the root causes of this issue.

Expected Outcomes

Our pilot project focused on teacher training because we know that motivated and well-equipped teachers create a better learning environment. By challenging traditional teaching methods, we aim to inspire teachers to become active partners in improving education.

"Focus on the Teacher: Tũrore Arĩmũ Pilot Project"

The Project title drawn from native Kirinyaga language. When I planned the digital education training, I anticipated around 10 participants. But the reception exceeded my expectations, 30 teachers showed up, highlighting the overwhelming need for support on effective teaching methods. This experience, combined with the insights I gained from revisiting my former Kangaru Primary School, has provided valuable lessons that will shape and enhance future training sessions to create even more impact.



Through this project, we work closely with teachers to make learning more engaging, promote digital literacy, encourage play-based learning, improve hygiene, introduce sustainable farming, and involve parents in their children's education. Most importantly, we empower children to take the lead, use their voices, and play an active role in shaping their learning experience.



"The project of RICCA did not come to tell us what they wanted to do. Instead, they listened to our needs, which is a good thing. For example, we told them that we wanted a projector teaching aid. New support on training our teachers to effectively deliver learning through play and training on digital literacy at school ... They returned to their donors. After a while, they came back with a positive response and supported us as they could manage, collaboratively we kicked off teacher training on digital teaching methods." (Headteacher, Kagio Primary School, Kirinyaga Kenya, pictured above).

"After getting all this support received from the project, we are taking care of children on top of teaching and trying to improve the quality of education for the learners to have an excellent future." (Teachers at Kangaru primary School).

"The knowledge I acquired from this RICCA teacher training has empowered me to assume a leadership role both within the school environment and in the broader community, I now follow up with children who miss school at their home, to get them back to class." (Emily Wanjiru, Grade 4 teacher).

Baseline Survey

In our series of initial engagement with educators, we did a baseline study to gather essential data on teacher training that will act as a reference point for monitoring progress towards the project's objectives. The baseline explored current school challenges, opportunities, teacher attitudes, gaps and student learning outcomes. RICCA also collected data on community participation in education, training needs and current teaching methods. This provided data to form a MEAL framework that outlined informed indicators, while using greater specificity in measuring impact of the teachers' training.



"The strength of RICCA is collaborating with the school and teachers. Before they start this project, the committee, parent representatives and students are included. They all have a big say" (School head, Kangaru Primary school)



Community Mapping Exercise

RICCA conducted a series of engagements with local communities and schools in rural part of project target area in Kirinyaga, to understand the available resources, gaps, assets, opportunities and challenges. We mapped 5 villages altogether and alongside their meaning including, **Mũthīgi** – (Stick), **Rūkū** – (Riverbank), **Kĩthĩma** – (Well or water source), **Tũthamba** – (Where we wash or bathe), **Rĩagitũgũ** – (foundation) and **Gĩtondo** – (Morning). These are located in **Mũtĩthĩ** location, Mwea South subcounty **Kĩrĩnyaga** county where we launch the first afterschool centre in the region.

Our mapping exercise established that children from these villages attend 5 schools within and around a radius of 14 kilometers from the villages-**Kang'arũ** primary, **Kagio** Primary, **Kathakā** primary, **Kinyaga** Primary, **Kandongu** and **Rwangondu** primary. This informed the basis of selection of schools to establish collaboration, starting with one where our founder attended - **Kang'arũ** and **Kagio** Primary schools, for the pilot project.

What came out is lack of a conducive space to establish an afterschool. Buildings including church compound, places/buildings to lease or even spaces within schools are not structured or designed in a way that can allow us to establish a safe, child friendly space.

Out of this, we have prioritized securing of a piece of land-3/4 to 1 acre in the central village, either **Mũthīgi** or **Rūkū** where we can establish our own child friendly space and children from the other surrounding villages can access with ease.

Team Update

At RICCA, we prioritize an effective **Board of Directors**. Currently, we are in the process of establishing an **Operational Board** to drive fundraising, outreach, financial management, and program implementation. As RICCA grows, we will transition to a **Governance Board** for strategic oversight.

- ◆ **Current Board Members:** Jones Muchendu, Teopista Nyachwo, Sr. Jane Kailu
- ◆ **Open Positions:** 2 female-only vacancies in finance and a youth.
- ◆ **We have Professional Board Members:** 2

Staffing Update:

Currently, **RICCA's Founder** is the sole staff member, overseeing all departments and operations while shaping the organization's strategy help of volunteers. But want to **employ soon**



Partnerships & Fundraising

At RICCA, we believe in **building strong, trust-based partnerships** with donors, volunteers, and supporters. We appreciate all those who have supported us at this point.

Key Updates:

- ✓ Established connection for financial & HR skills training and technical support
- ✓ Engaged with the Embassies of the Slovak Republic and Japan in Nairobi for fundraising opportunities



CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Delay in Securing an Office Space & Volunteer/Staff Recruitment

- We did not achieve some of our targets, including securing office space and recruiting staff, impacting efforts to have a centre of operation for our activities.
- We have faced challenges in finding a **conductive space** for an **afterschool centre**. Many available spaces—including **church compounds, rental buildings, or school premises**—are not structured in a way that allows us implement RICCA idea to create a **safe, child-friendly environment**.

Registration of RICCA Delays

- The process of acquiring **official government registration** has taken longer due to multiple regulatory requirements and document processing delays.

Resource Limitations

- **Intense competition and complex donor requirements** have posed challenges, especially for new start-up NGOs like RICCA.
- We commend the shift by some donors toward more impact by **grassroots, small NGOs and start-ups**, supporting social ventures with **not only grants** but also **capacity building, unrestricted funding, and fellowships**.

WAY FORWARD & QUARTER TWO PLANS

Lessons Learned

- ✓ **Early preparation & timely submission** of documents will be key for future government approvals.
- ✓ A **diversified funding strategy** and **strong governance** will strengthen donor engagement and financial sustainability.
- ✓ We have invested **significant effort** in building a **strong foundation** for RICCA in this area in terms of strategy. This is to ensure that we enhance trust from the onset with financial stability, monitoring and evaluation systems that demonstrate impact in our projects.

What's Next? (Q2 2025 Plans)

- ✈ **Buy land** for RICCA Afterschool Centre
- ✈ **Recruit & train staff/volunteers**
- ✈ **Lease space** to launch **Phase 1** of RICCA Afterschool Centre (**along Sagana-Kagio Road, Kirinyaga County**)
- ✈ Conduct **monitoring activities** through **classroom observations & a midterm pilot project review**



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