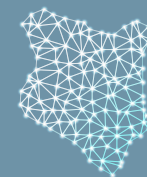




Digital Life: Kenya Report 2017



Good Things
Foundation

In July 2017, Good Things Foundation launched Digital Life: Kenya, a pilot project in partnership with the Kenya National Library Service (knls).

We aim to help people in Kenya improve their lives through digital and evaluate how can the internet can help alleviate economic and social challenges people in Kenya face. We are testing how effective elements of the Good Things Foundation's digital inclusion programme and resources are in supporting people to improve their lives.

The pilot will run for 12 months, from July 2017 until July 2018 and will support libraries and library users to explore the social benefits that being online can bring.

Our main focus for the pilot is to further understand the social challenges that people in Kenya face, and how they relate to the Sustainable Development Goals and digital skills.

“Young people didn't come to the library much before we had computers. The community will change. The children will take the excitement back home.”

Librarian, Kingambu Library

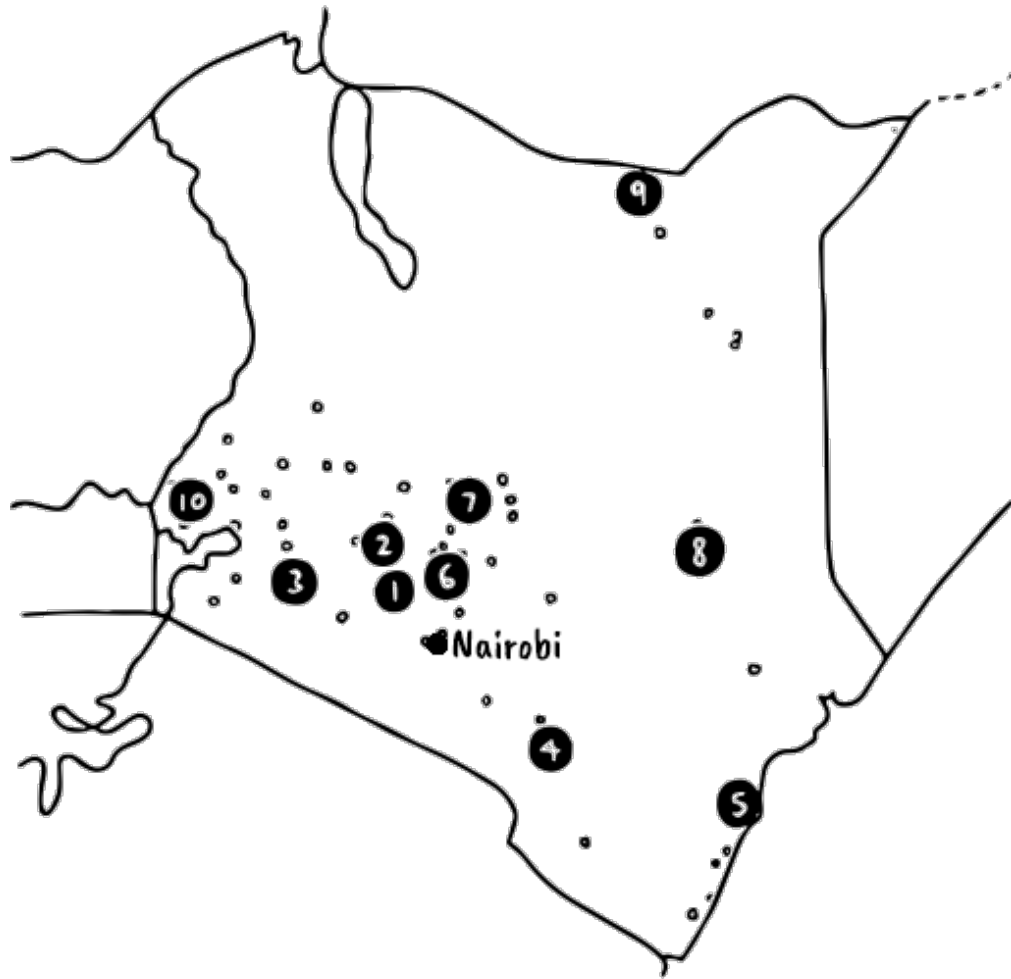


Learn My Way

We have made an adapted version of Learn My Way - an online learning platform to help people develop their digital skills - available to all of the libraries in the knls network. We are working closely with 10 of them (marked on the map), providing face to face Digital Champion training and webinar support. These 10 pilot libraries are situated in:

1. Naivasha
2. Gilgil
3. Silibwet
4. Kinyambu
5. Malindi
6. Kangema
7. Timau
8. Mbalambala
9. Moyale
10. Rambula

All other libraries have Learn My Way available to them together with online learning guides including How to be a Digital Champion. In addition to this, all libraries receive bi-monthly newsletters.



210 people have registered on Learn My Way Kenya in the first two months of it being available. This includes 20 learners registered at non-pilot libraries.

In July 2017, Emily, our Service Designer, and Michael, our Learning Designer, visited four of the knls libraries and delivered Digital Champion training to 20 librarians from 10 libraries. The library visits were extremely valuable in getting an insight into the lives of local people and some of the challenges they face. Here are some of our most interesting things we found out:

- knls relies on **external partners for training** as the Kenyan Government no longer funds training which is not for highly specialist areas, such as the renewable energy sector.
- knls works in partnership with a number of **international organisations** to design and deliver programmes within their network, tailored to suit local contexts. Sustainability is a factor in all their programmes; they “think global, act local.”
- Libraries in Kenya are popular with **people under 20 years old** to help with their college studies. Children come to read everyday during lunch breaks and after school.
- Fewer older people come to the libraries, as they consider the library to be for young people. Older people mostly visit to read newspapers.
- Most libraries don’t have a standard process for teaching or recording basic digital skills learning, and lack training materials.

Some of the challenges local people face are:

- The typical wage in some rural areas in Kenya is \$1 a day or less.
- Youth unemployment is high, with people commuting to local towns for employment and skilled people leaving rural areas.
- A **lack of digital skills** amongst librarians. One said: “You can’t serve a digital customer without having the skills yourself”.
- Lack of clean water and sanitation are big problems.

We heard lots of positive stories during our time:

- We heard about a library customer who earned \$500 in a month translating a book using library computers and Wifi. Earning online is something Joseph Njeru, Head Librarian at Gilgil Library is keen to promote.
- Librarians currently support their library customers to access their pay slips and fill out their appraisal forms online independently.
- Several libraries deliver **outreach sessions** in local schools teaching basic digital skills.
- At Kinyambu Library, we met members of the **ICT4 Digital Generation Self Group** - library customers who had previously attended computer classes and who hope to become Digital Champions as part of Digital Life: Kenya.

Personas

During the two day training event, we asked librarians to think about who could benefit from digital skills in their community. These personas illustrate a typical library customer and help us to understand the digitally excluded population in Kenya.

1. An unemployed young person:

A school dropout whose goal is to finish their education, earn an income and become productive, “Learn to earn through digital”.

2. A person with learning disabilities:

Their goal is to learn to use the internet and be a good example for people with learning disabilities. They’re frustrated by “being neglected by society” and not having access to specialist equipment.

3. A farmer:

Their goal is to learn farming methods to be a better farmer. They’re frustrated because computers weren’t available when growing up.

4. A landowner in their 60s:

His goal is to access reliable land law information only available online and to gather enough evidence to fight for his land.





Kinyambu Library

At Kinyambu library, over 50 library customers have registered on Learn My Way, many of whom have already completed the courses and received their certificates.

The library now runs a Community Digital Club on Saturdays where they support customers to use Learn My Way. Courses are proving very popular and the librarians have asked for more courses to be provided on Learn My Way. There have already been some success stories with two library customers getting jobs after completing Learn My Way.



- The majority of learners are aged 19-30; although some are over 40.
- Librarians have found that older customers are taking longer to learn.
- Library customers are encouraged to attend in the morning when connectivity at the library is better.

What Next?

- We were pleased with how the Digital Champion training went. We believe that librarians would benefit from sharing in learning from their peers in other libraries and from a greater knowledge of the available learning tools. Learn My Way has potential because it's free, and offers both a curriculum and learner management.
- We are keeping in touch with the pilot libraries via video conferencing and regular email to support them and to hear about their successes and challenges.
- Our evaluation framework links back to two Sustainable Development Goals (4. Quality Education and 5. Gender Equality) and we will be continuing to test with the pilot libraries and their Learn My Way users the link between digital skills, use of the internet and broader social outcomes.
- We will visit the libraries again in early 2018 to ensure that the pilot resources still meet the needs of the library users. We also hope to meet other interested organisations and hear about similar work and successes. A further report will be available following our next visit.



Follow the pilot:

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