MVP ANNUAL RETREAT 2013

The annual MVP retreat this year is scheduled to take place in Kigali, Rwanda, during the week of June 17th. The Team Leaders, Sector Leads, MDG Centers and Millennium Promise will discuss the broader MVP strategy as it relates to operations, budgets, with updates from sites and look ahead to plans for the upcoming year. Outcomes of discussions will be shared after the retreat, at site, regional and NY offices.

Learning Task Force Continues!

We are looking forward to hearing from all sites on children's specific learning goals (such as literacy level/targets) and effective teaching techniques. At the end of the month, Education Coordinators will share examples from their sites that they have observed, which helped to enhance basic numeracy and literacy skills for primary school children.

One example shared with Learning Task Force Google Groups this month has been on teaching phonics and letter recognition for literacy. Please see the clip and note the various strategies the teacher uses (checking for comprehension, repetition, student engagement, listening and clapping with sound recognition, etc.)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwOtEku4qtw

- Around the 7 minute mark, they play a game where the teacher tells the students to listen for a specific sound. He then says words aloud and the students are to clap when they hear a word beginning with that sound.
- Around the 15 minute mark, the teacher teaches sounding out and spelling of words
- Around the 24 minute mark he does an exercise teaching the students sight words such as “and” “the” “too”

SAURI SCHOOL 4K CLUB SHINES

By Richard Ogeda
Education Coordinator, Sauri

Since 2011, the 4K club of Nyamninia Primary School in Sauri has developed to attract both National and International limelight. 4K is coined from 4 Kiswahili words Kuungangana, Kufanya, Kujenga Kenya, meaning uniting to work and build Kenya, a concept initiated by the Kenya Ministry of Agriculture and involves working with children in schools to learn agricultural skills in the school gardens. This has been well synergized with the Income Generation and Learning Activities (IGLAs) concept of the Millennium Villages Project, in which schools are encouraged and capacity built to initiate small enterprises in schools to generate income for the schools and also have the children learn business and agricultural skills.

In this front, Nyamninia primary school has excelled, thanks to the technical and material support by the Millennium Villages and the commitment of the School headteacher and the members of the schools 4K club.

In 2011, Nyamninia school 4K club received two major awards from the Ministry of Agriculture: they were voted the second best managed 4K club in Kenya, and also voted the best in Siaya County, the region where the school is located. The following year in 2012, the student leader of the 4K club and the school administration of Nyamninia primary school were invited by His Excellency the President of Kenya to present the concept of Home Grown School Feeding Program at an International conference held at the capital city of Kenya Nairobi, and everyone marveled at what children can do when they are well guided by the teachers. Since then, the school has received several invitations to schools locally and internationally to educate other schools on how to initiate successful microenterprises in school.
Nyamninia primary school is today a beehive of activities, a model school where integrated learning takes place. Visitors come in from locally and abroad in droves to see for themselves what children are able to do. Visitors who come learn a lot on how to initiate small agri-based enterprises in schools. The 4K club runs several activities including dairy, poultry, rabbits, tree nursery and vegetable farming.

The head teacher Ms Millicent Obare shares with all visitors one key lesson: “I let them explore their potential by doing it on their own… all we do as teachers is to guide them on sound decision making…” And it really works for them!

At Nyamninia, the little children of the 4K club draws their own operation budgets, draws their own activity plans, distributes assignment to members, runs their own bank account…. etc and only presents their plans to the teacher in charge and head teacher to advise! Today, the 4K club runs a bank account that supplements a lot of activities in school. They have bought uniforms for OVCs in their school and also support the school feeding program.

The parents first formed an association called Kabuyanda Girls Education Association. They made a constitution, which they shared with the project staff and these were finally streamlined into a potential cooperative.

The starting point was to create a fund that would be the source of funds to ensure that the children’s education is not interrupted by the project end. The members totaling 50 in number agreed to save 25,000 Ugandan shillings a month equivalent to $10 a month, the association has opened an account in the village bank and have so far saved close to US$5000 in less than a year of operation, the association is in advanced stages of preparing to register as a cooperative.

As a result, the parents in another area, Ruhiira which has as part of it the research village has followed the example and also forms their association, theirs was formed much after and they have saved close to 3000 in the village bank, in period of about half a year, members are encouraged to make a monthly saving in a joint account in a village bank, a ledger of individual member savings is maintained and operation procedures and rules are followed, the two associations members meet monthly to receive reports and to make plans for the future.

In summary they plan to invest the money into steady, reliable investments like planting trees, planting coffee, rearing goats and others so that eventually the proceeds can be used to support the beneficiaries.

They plan that with technical support from the project they can write proposals for potential partners who can work with the association to further the program in future and if possible turn it into a foundation. During the most recent meeting of scholarship beneficiaries and their parents together with the community members and opinion leaders, which are routinely held to review the performance of the beneficiaries the executive of both associations lobbied the parents of all the beneficiaries to join the association.
The bored by the beneficiaries are also mentored by both education and business sectors on making small investments like planting trees, rearing goats and chicken which can later be sold to cater for fees payments.

Pictured above: The chairperson of one of the scholarship investment associations addressing the beneficiaries and their parents at one of the holiday follow-up meetings

Data Collection

School-level monthly report cards have been completed for its first round! The report cards are tools to allow Coordinators to advocate for additional attention and resources to low performing schools. It enables individual school performance to be monitored.

The report cards should inform the project, staff, schools, communities, and local governments on the education status of the schools and we encourage site teams to share the report cards to channel future efforts to target schools and areas with most need.

Flyer is forthcoming to assist coordinators in their discussions with local governments to explain the data gathering process!