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Kenya slum gets digital centre

BY CORRESPONDENT

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NAIROBI, Kenya, Jun 19 - Thousands of Nairobi children will cross the digital divide and access a global network of opportunity courtesy of a state-of-the-art community centre launched at Mukuru Kwa Njenga slum.

The community centre was custom-designed for Slums Information Development Resource Centre (SIDAREC) and the needs of Nairobi youth, including access to the Internet, computer and technology training, health clinic services, early childhood development programs, and a community theatre.

An assistant minister in the office of the Prime Minister Alfred Khangati said: "The Government recently launched the Sh50million Kazi Kwa Vijana initiative which is geared towards creating 300,000 jobs for the youth in the next six months. I urge the 50x15 Foundation and other such organisations to work with the government in ensuring the success of this noble venture."

Dan Shine, the President of the 50x15 Foundation observed; "Our global goal is to provide affordable Internet access and computing capability to 50 percent of world's population by 2015. This project is aimed at creating a path to individual and community empowerment within the community and Nairobi city at large."

The centre was financed by the 50x15 Foundation and Architecture for Humanity.

"We are trying to improve the livelihoods of young people and their families by encouraging them to participate in and benefit from the life services offered by this centre which include healthcare information, financial services, job hunting, education and communication, accessible by the Internet," added Dan Shine.

The SIDAREC community centre's design expresses the community's own vision for itself. The design team worked closely with local youth and leaders to identify needs of the community.

"We were given an opportunity by our partners to expand the resources of our existing efforts with a brand-new community and technology centre that will incubate our youths' potential to improve their lives and living conditions. It is in this regard, we are developing a strategic plan with 50x15 and Architecture for Humanity to ensure the community centre is sustainable," the executive director of SIDAREC Lucy Maathai said.

The SIDAREC partnership with 50x15 and Architecture for Humanity plays a key role in a new feature documentary, "One Peace at a Time," which had its Nairobi premiere on the same day.

The film's director, Turk Pipkin, was on hand to discuss the film and its focus on the achievable goal of providing basic rights to every child on earth. Pipkin is the founder of the global education nonprofit, The Nobility Project, and worked closely with Nobel Peace laureate Wangari Maathai on his previous film.

The 50x15 Foundation's mission is to accelerate worldwide digital inclusion rates to 50 percent of the world's population by 2015,

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15 years faster than the current growth rate. It seeks to enable affordable, sustainable and accessible Internet connectivity and computing capability in high-growth markets provides communities with the means to participate in and benefit from the global network of commercial and educational opportunity.

To date, the 50x15 Foundation, in collaboration with its ecosystem of public and private partners, has launched more than 30 technology centres in more than a dozen countries around the world.



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