

THE COLLECTIVE FOR ORPHAN CARE AND EDUCATION

ANNUAL REPORT
2023



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As the Executive Director of the Collective for Orphan Care and Education (COCEKenya), I am honored to present our annual report to our esteemed funders and supporters. This year has exemplified the truth of the African proverb: it takes a village to raise a child. Together, we have achieved remarkable milestones that resonate deeply in the communities we serve.

According to Amref Health Africa, the harsh reality is that 65% of women and girls in Kenya cannot afford sanitary pads. Shockingly, 2 out of 3 pad users in rural Kenya receive them from sexual partners, and 1 in 4 girls do not associate menstruation with pregnancy. In response to this pressing need, COCEKenya took action by supplying hundreds of reusable pads to three schools in villages in Busia County. Yet, we recognize that there is still much more to be done.

Another significant highlight of the year was the groundbreaking collaboration between COCEKenya and the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). This partnership facilitated the first study abroad program by UTA to work in villages in Busia County, marking a crucial step towards sustainable development and education in our communities.

In our previous year's report, we shared our progress on the library project, including the completion of preliminary work such as building plans and approval from the County government. Today, I am thrilled to announce that our dream is close to reality. Thanks to your unwavering support, the building stands tall, with the foundation, walling, and roofing in place.

While we celebrate our accomplishments, our journey is far from over. We humbly ask for your continued support to complete our library project and enhance educational support for the children we serve. Our commitment to sponsoring students in need through school remains steadfast, and with your continued assistance, we are poised for an even more impactful 2024.

Together, let us continue to be the community that uplifts and invests in every child, ensuring a brighter future for generations to come.

Sincerely,



DR. EUSEBIUS SMALLS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2023 OVERVIEW

In 2023, COCE (The Collective for Orphan Care and Education) continued to make significant strides in fulfilling its mission of empowering Kenyan youth through education and community development.

Here's a brief overview of our key initiatives and accomplishments:

CULTIVATING PARTNERSHIPS, INCREASING VISIBILITY, AND MAKING AN IMPACT:

Collaborated with PadMad Kenya to address period poverty through reusable menstrual pad distribution and menstrual education efforts.

- We purchased and distributed over 100 menstrual kits to young women in three middle schools in Busia County, Kenya—Sijowa, Nangina, and Bukhulungu. These kits provide essential menstrual hygiene products and education, ensuring that these girls can stay in school and relieving financial strain on their families



OUR MISSION

We strive to build a world where rural Kenyan youth possess the knowledge, power and tools necessary to lead healthy, safe and productive lives. COCE embraces a change strategy utilizing community-driven strength based approaches to leverage local and external resources needed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable youth living in rural Western Kenya. COCE seeks to create lasting effects by empowering the most vulnerable members of the community to become agents of social change.

Partnered with the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) to support the School of Social Work's study abroad program in June 2023.

- COCE expanded its global reach by forming a strategic partnership with the UTA Study Abroad program. This collaboration enabled us to host students from UTA and conduct impactful educational events in rural Kenyan communities. COCE organized a series of educational events, including workshops, visits to community schools, cultural exchanges, and community service projects, aimed at fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting social awareness



We also:

- **Received grants from two foundations located in Houston, TX: The Andrews Foundation and the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word to support library construction**
- **Hosted our 3rd annual Growing Literacy 5k Virtual Race in October 2023 to raise funds for the construction of our community library and support education for youth in the Sijowa area**
- **Posted regularly on social media and published newsletters and blogs to update supporters and partners on COCE's work**

**2023 OVERVIEW
CONTINUED**

COMMUNITY LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION

Advanced the Community Library project with support from GlobalGiving and our amazing donors.

- Through GlobalGiving's platform, we were able to raise awareness about our library project and secure vital funding to drive its construction forward

**Began construction on our library:
A cornerstone project aimed at
fostering literacy and knowledge
dissemination in the community.**

- Advancements include laying the foundation, building walls, and roofing.
- We are engaging local stakeholders, including government authorities and community members, to ensure the successful implementation of the project



STUDENT SPONSORSHIPS



COCE Kenya was founded with an intent to enable students, especially those who have been orphaned and those living in extreme poverty, to further their education.

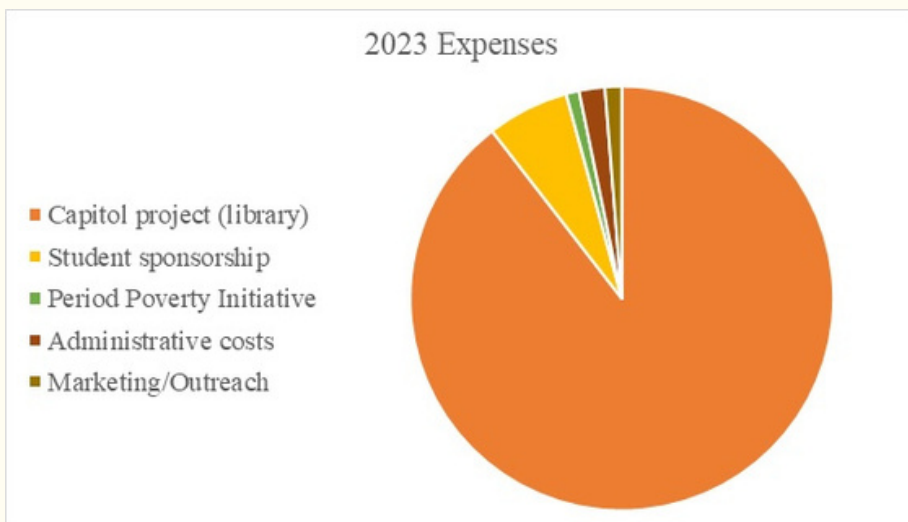
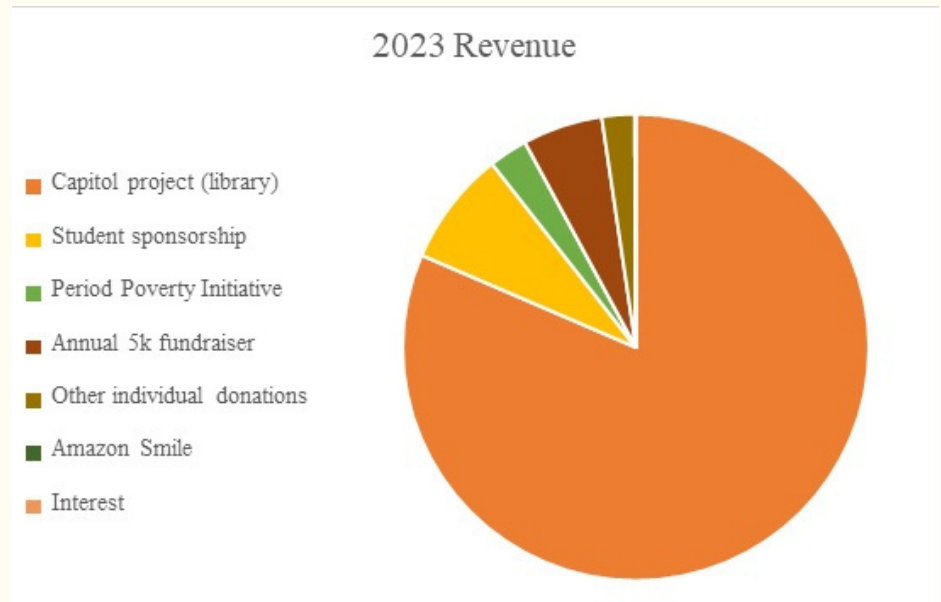
- In 2023, 4 of our students continued their sponsored education through COCE Kenya. At the end of 2023:
 - Two completed secondary school
 - One advanced to the next secondary school grade
 - One completed their first year of university

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Collective for Orphan Care and Education (COCE) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit registered in the United States and is also a Kenyan NGO. In 2023, COCE had total revenue of \$53,681.53.

We received two foundation grants—one in the amount of \$2,500 and another in the amount of \$15,000. The rest of our revenue came from individual donations. Just under \$9,000 was restricted for our capitol construction project for the future community library. Just over \$4,000 is restricted for student sponsorship and another \$1,4000 for our Period Poverty Initiative.

The rest of the individual donations, donated directly or raised through our annual 5k race fundraiser, as well as Amazon Smile donations and the interest accrued in our savings account, were unrestricted funds, to be used for general operation expenses as well as a supplement to student sponsorship and library construction, as needed



COCE's expenditures for the year totaled \$62,933.60. Expenditures for the capitol construction project went toward materials, labor, and contractor costs to build the library foundation, walls, and roof.

Student sponsorship expenditures covered tuition, fees, room and board, and personal hygiene needs for all sponsored students.

COCE has no paid staff. The administrative costs incurred included website hosting and domain renewals, marketing, postage, financial audit fees, nonprofit registration fees, and wire transfer fees.

FEATURED STORY

PATHWAYS OF PURPOSE: A JOURNEY INTO KENYA'S COMMUNITIES BY: MERCY OGUNMOYIN (UTA STUDENT)

During my time in Kenya, I was immediately struck by the breathtaking natural beauty and the warmth of the people. Exploring Nairobi's vibrant culture, from its rich history at the national museum to encounters with majestic wildlife at the David Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage and the Giraffe Centre, left a lasting impression.

However, my journey truly unfolded when I ventured to Funyula, where I witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by local communities. From the lack of proper footwear and torn uniforms among students to sanitation issues and the scarcity of textbooks, the reality of daily life was stark. Despite these obstacles, the resilience and spirit of the people shone through as they welcomed me with open arms.

Interacting with students and teachers, coaching the girls' soccer team, and witnessing the joy sparked by a simple gesture of providing shoes reinforced my commitment to making a difference. As I reflect on my time in Kenya, I'm reminded of the power of community, compassion, and the transformative impact of lending a helping hand.

Through ongoing support and collaboration, we can continue to address the pressing needs of these communities, fostering hope, opportunity, and lasting change.

