

Case Story: Mbaka Oromo Pr. School

Kisumu Kenya, Africa

2009



emPowering Education

The students and staff at Mbaka Oromo Primary School in Kisumu Kenya now arrive to a school with lights, access to computers, small businesses, and more teaching time, thanks to solar power.

Mbaka Oromo is a top performing school in Kenya with over 500 primary students. Located on the outskirts of Kisumu, Kenya, Africa, it is one of the poorest in the country. Where 40 percent of the students have been orphaned by the AIDS epidemic and many cannot afford lunches or shoes.

“The kids here come from an area of not very well off families, so at home they don’t even have enough time to read,” said the English teacher at Mbaka Oromo.

Without electricity at Mbaka Oromo, simple activities are often turned into difficulties. One teacher often wished to meet with students in the morning but couldn’t because teaching could not start until the sun had risen enough to light the school. Teaching students how to use computers also proved difficult. “We have four computer laptops available to us, but we can not use them of course, because we do not have electricity,” said William Kabbis, Headmaster of Mbaka Oromo.

The nearest source of electricity access was a drive into town, a time consuming task during the school day. In addition, teachers were forced to relieve the kids to go home earlier because schoolwork cannot continue throughout the night.

To ease these difficulties, a group of Cornell students and staff raised funds to bring electricity to the school through solar power. After hearing about Mbaka Oromo Primary School through the Partnership for African and Lansing Schools (PALS) program, the group chose to work with Sunflower Solutions. Sunflower Solutions supplied the Cornell group with an emPower Plant™ at 1/3rd less cost than other solar alternatives available to the group.

Once the money was raised, the emPower Plant™ was installed at the Mbaka Oromo Primary School in just two days with help from several Cornell students, the school and local villagers efforts.



The emPower Plant™ at Mbaka Oromo Primary School, Kisumu Kenya, with space left for additional solar modules to be added later.



A student, Eugene, at Mbaka Oromo Primary School is the first to use a computer powered by the emPower Plant™.

Location: [Kenya, Africa](#)

Organization: [Business Opportunities in Leadership and Diversity Program](#)

Scope of Project: [Powering the Mbaka Oromo Primary School in Kenya](#)

Products Used: [Sunflower Solutions' emPower Plant™ Solar Power System](#)

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“Currently the solar system has helped us because we can read,” said William Kabbis. “Students can read during all hours, even when there’s a lot of darkness, like it used to be.”

The emPower Plant™ not only empowers the school, but it empowers the community as well.

“By bringing the electricity, at least we can get to use the computers. We can use the computers to get more practice,” said Christine, teacher at Mbaka Oromo.

Within the first week of receiving power, teachers of Mbaka Oromo started two small businesses on the weekends, teaching computer lessons and cell phone charging.

Generating revenue for the first time, the extra money has allowed the teachers to do more. The school now cooks at last one reliable meal for the children a day, a life changing benefit for the orphans.

“Nowadays I am attending lessons and I have a dream of one day owning my own computer that I will use to support my school and fellow pupils. Through you I know it will be fulfilled,” said Eugene, student at Mbaka Oromo in a letter addressed to Sunflower Solutions.

The community has also come together to support the school. A rotation of guards volunteer to watch the emPower Plant™ 365 days a year, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, to make sure it stays secure.

“To us, solar power has changed our lives and the lives of our children and students,” ended William Kabbis.

When asked about these results, Chris Clark, founder of Sunflower Solutions said “Our work at Sunflower Solutions is not about solar power or electricity; it's about what that electricity does for people. We are a company that improves education, provides clean water, fosters economic growth, develops better health care and supports agriculture and it just so happens that solar technology is the best vehicle to make all those things happen in areas currently without power. We couldn't be happier with the results at Mbaka Oromo.”

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The schools lights are turned on and ready for class.



Cell phone charging and computer lessons provide extra income for Mbaka Oromo Primary School.

For more information or for purchasing, please contact us at 216.255.3072 or info@thesunflowersolutions.com