

African Digital Schools Initiative is launched in Kiambu County, Kenya

Nairobi, September 23, 2016. The Ministry of Education of Kenya and GESCI launched on September 20, 2016 a program to transform 20 secondary schools in Kiambu County into digital schools of distinction.

The African Digital Schools Initiative (ADSI) was inaugurated on the premises of **St. Peter's Secondary School and Ndumberi Secondary School** in Kiambu. The event was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Education of Kenya, the Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI), Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and county school principals.

The initiative is in line with Kenya's aspirations as spelt out in Vision 2030 and the National Education Sector Plan (NESP 2015 -2019). The two blue prints among other documents outline efforts - including ICT integration - towards improving the quality of education and by extension building a workforce that will steer the country towards transformation into a competitive economy and a progressive society.

Addressing the audience, the Director of Basic Education at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kenya, Mr. Habat Sheikh Abdi stated that: *"In our preliminary analysis it has been observed that schools with good mean scores and performance in computer studies are posting improved performance in other subjects."*

GESCI's CEO, Jerome Morrissey expressed his great satisfaction in witnessing the launch of the ADSI programme to transform secondary schools in Kenya into digital schools of excellence. ADSI builds on the successful Partnership for Strengthening Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education (PSIPSE) project, which was piloted in Kenya and Tanzania in 2013-2015. He underscored *"the important role of the teacher in getting young people to understand mathematics, stay with science subjects, love them and pursue them to college and higher levels of learning"*.

The Director of Culture, Gender and Social Development, Mary Kirobi, representing the County Executive Committee member in charge of Education in Kiambu affirmed that *"The initiative will no doubt revolutionize the teaching and learning in our schools and by extension, the economic trend in our county and country as a whole by encouraging innovation."*

Professor Ruth Wanja, the Chairperson of the County Education Board in Kiambu and chief guest, of the ceremony, officially launched the ADSI initiative, noting that *"There is nothing we can do in the current world without ICT. Everything, including new innovations that are saving lives are hinged on it."*

The event in Kiambu precedes three other ADSI launches that will take place this month in the counties of Taita Taveta, Narok and Nyamira. Altogether, ADSI will be rolled out in 80 secondary schools in Kenya at the beginning of 2017 - reaching out to 20 schools in each of the four counties.

ADSI will also be rolled out in Tanzania and Côte d'Ivoire starting 2017-2018.

ADSI is implemented by GESCI with support from the MasterCard Foundation. It is a unique, innovative program that seeks to turn secondary schools into digital schools of distinction. The program facilitates the deep integration of ICT on a whole school basis. It is designed specifically to build student 21st century skills, including in Science Technology, English and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, and teachers' practice, using ICT in a way that is responsive to the needs of knowledge economies and societies and in the work place.

The *Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative* (GESCI) is an international non-profit organization based in Nairobi, Kenya. It was established by the United Nations Task Force on ICT in 2003. GESCI supports governments in their efforts towards socio-economic development, through the integration of ICTs in the development of knowledge-based societies.. More on GESCI at www.gesci.org

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