



HOPE FOR LITERACY

EMPOWER  
IMPACT &  
TRANSFORM  
Communities

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TRANSFORMING LIVES ONE PENCIL AT A TIME

**HOPE FOR LITERACY** 

# THIS IS KENYA

Kenya, a middle-income country, still grapples with significant poverty levels, especially among children. Over 42% of children in arid and semi-arid lands lack access to basic educational tools, perpetuating the cycle of poverty. At the same time, environmental degradation poses a severe threat to future generations. The need for sustainable solutions that address both education and environmental conservation is urgent.

To date, 34% of primary school students in Kenya often still miss classes due to poverty. They lack basic essential writing tools like pencils, putting them at a disadvantage compared to students from well-off families. This poverty cycle is generational and often, parents can't meet basic family needs so education is given least priority over other necessities like food and shelter.

But we have a bigger problem than poverty. Climate change has caught up with us and the world is now facing the outcome of years of environmental degradation like deforestation, pollution, floods, drought etc. has led to a systemic lackluster approach to solving the literacy problem and children bear the brunt of this catastrophe. This is blowing away their dreams and hope for literacy.







## Our Story

Inspired to ensure that the global mistakes committed many years ago don't repeat themselves, we at MOMO Pencils created a social campaign called HOPE FOR LITERACY. The essence of the campaign was to Empower, Impact and Transform communities starting with school children. They are our future and tomorrow they will be stakeholders on decisions and outcomes concerning education and the environment.

The campaign is aligned with UN SDG 4 and UN SDG 13 and it empowers school children to get a quality education through the donation of pencils to the needy, impacts children through the experience of tree planting and Transforms communities through environmental responsibility and climate action. We have chosen to focus on planting indigenous fruit trees which have the added benefit of being nutritious for school children, the school and communities surrounding the schools.





## Why Journey with Us

### HOPE

Our campaign has already impacted 150,000 children and planted over 10,000 trees in Kenya alone. In one school, our visit was the first they had ever received, creating excitement and joy among the students. In another, children sang songs about the importance of tree planting, showing their appreciation.

### GRATITUDE

A headteacher shared how the pencils have relieved families from the burden of buying writing tools, ensuring no child misses school. These stories reflect the profound gratitude and positive change brought about by our campaign.

A portrait of Mahamud Omari, a middle-aged Black man with a mustache, smiling. He is wearing a brown and orange plaid blazer over a light blue shirt and a dark red tie. A blue pocket square is visible in his blazer. The background is a blurred interior with a grey wall and framed artwork.

MAHAMUD OMARI  
Chief Executive Officer

Starting MOMO Pencils with my founding partner in 2017 made me realize that a pencil is more than just a writing tool. It has the power to impact generations and shape the future. Every creation, apart from what has been created by God, begins with a pencil. My background in advertising, marketing, and communication production has equipped me with the skills to connect various elements and bring tangible products to life. I use this expertise to improve the lives of others by creating employment opportunities for communities living around our factory. Additionally, we are serving as a beacon of hope to future generations through the HOPE FOR LITERACY campaign.

*Mahamud Omari*





RASHID OMAR  
Chief Operations Officer

As the Chief Operations Officer at MOMO Pencils, a leading subsidiary of the Mo & Mo Group, I leverage my extensive background in logistics and operations management to drive efficiency and innovation within the company. Prior to joining MOMO Pencils, I refined my skills at prominent logistical freight companies in Kenya.

During my tenure there, I managed complex supply chains and streamlined operations, significantly enhancing service delivery and customer satisfaction. My strategic vision and leadership were instrumental in achieving operational excellence and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. At MOMO Pencils, my commitment lies in optimizing operational processes, ensuring high-quality production standards, and fostering sustainable practices. My leadership is pivotal in navigating the dynamic landscape of the pencil manufacturing industry, focusing on innovation and growth.

*Rashid Omar*

A portrait of Andrew Okallo, a middle-aged Black man with glasses, wearing a light-colored suit jacket over a blue patterned shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a wall covered with many small, framed photographs and a larger framed portrait on the right.

Andrew Okallo  
Executive Creative Director  
& Lead Brand Strategy

My role puts me in an amazing space because no two days are the same.

Our pursuit in search of hope for literacy is not a race, it's a relay so we never tire. I come from a heritage of growing world class brands an experience that has turned out to be very valuable. In Tanzania I headed strategy for "Miti kwa Umri" an organisation that saw us plant over 66,000 trees, whose shade we will never sit under and whose fruit we may never taste or collect firewood to cook our food. We donated pencils, desks and mobilised unique community engagements that use sports as a vehicle for climate action for generations that will live long after we have left.



ESTHER OTIENO  
Project Manager  
Hope for Literacy

**Esther is an Alumni of the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication, the genesis of Kenya's leading mass communication practitioners.** She prides herself as being a change agent with a soft spot for marginalised communities and is proficient in Kenya Sign Language, a gift that enhances her ability to engage and communicate effectively with a diverse audience, fostering inclusivity and accessibility. What touches me is the transformation that takes place after we plant trees in schoolyards turning bare yards into green spaces that inevitably create healthier environments for students, teachers, and the community around. Tomorrow the children will sit under the shade of the tree they planted today and eat its fruit from the dedication, protection and nurturing that they have committed themselves to

*Esther Otieno*



# HOW WE WORK





## Our Goal Empower

Is to donate 1 million pencils and plant 1 million trees, mostly fruit trees in schools. Despite the goal being ambitious, the campaign has so far impacted 145,000 school children in Kenya and planted 10,000 trees in the last 3 years. This has been achieved through partnerships in sustainability (UN SDG 17) with like-minded organizations that share similar values that the HOPE FOR LITERACY campaign embodies.

2 million  
wood free  
Pencils

20 million  
Fruit tree  
Seedlings





Transform

I have witnessed the priceless transformation as well as the gratitude in the eyes of the children when you gift them a pencil giving them hope for success in life, coupled with the excitement of a child as they plant their first fruit tree and the great lengths they go to, to care for the seedlings.

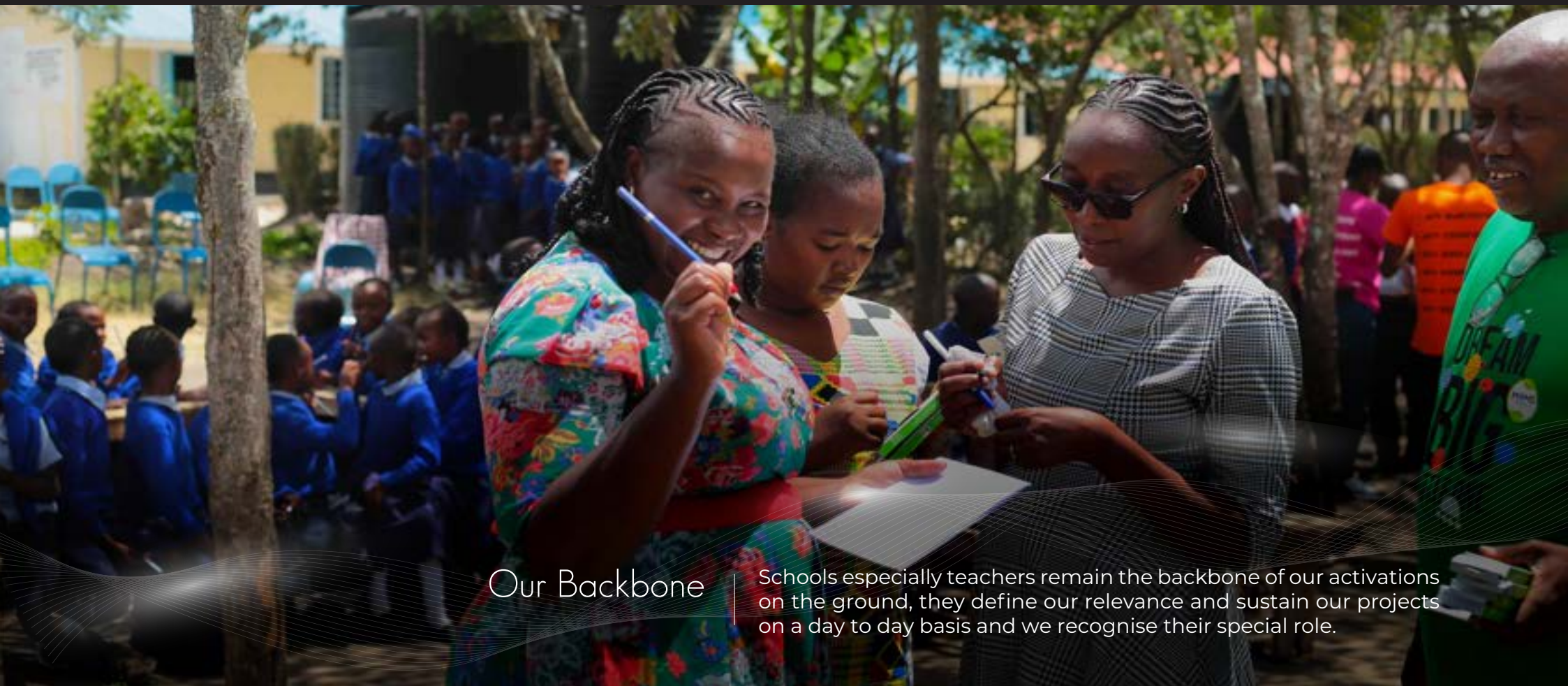
72  
Schools



## Impact

The challenges in education and environment are the same in all developing countries and through partnerships we can create generational impact in Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi to change lives and together we can change the world one pencil, one tree, one child one mother one community at a time.





## Our Backbone

Schools especially teachers remain the backbone of our activations on the ground, they define our relevance and sustain our projects on a day to day basis and we recognise their special role.

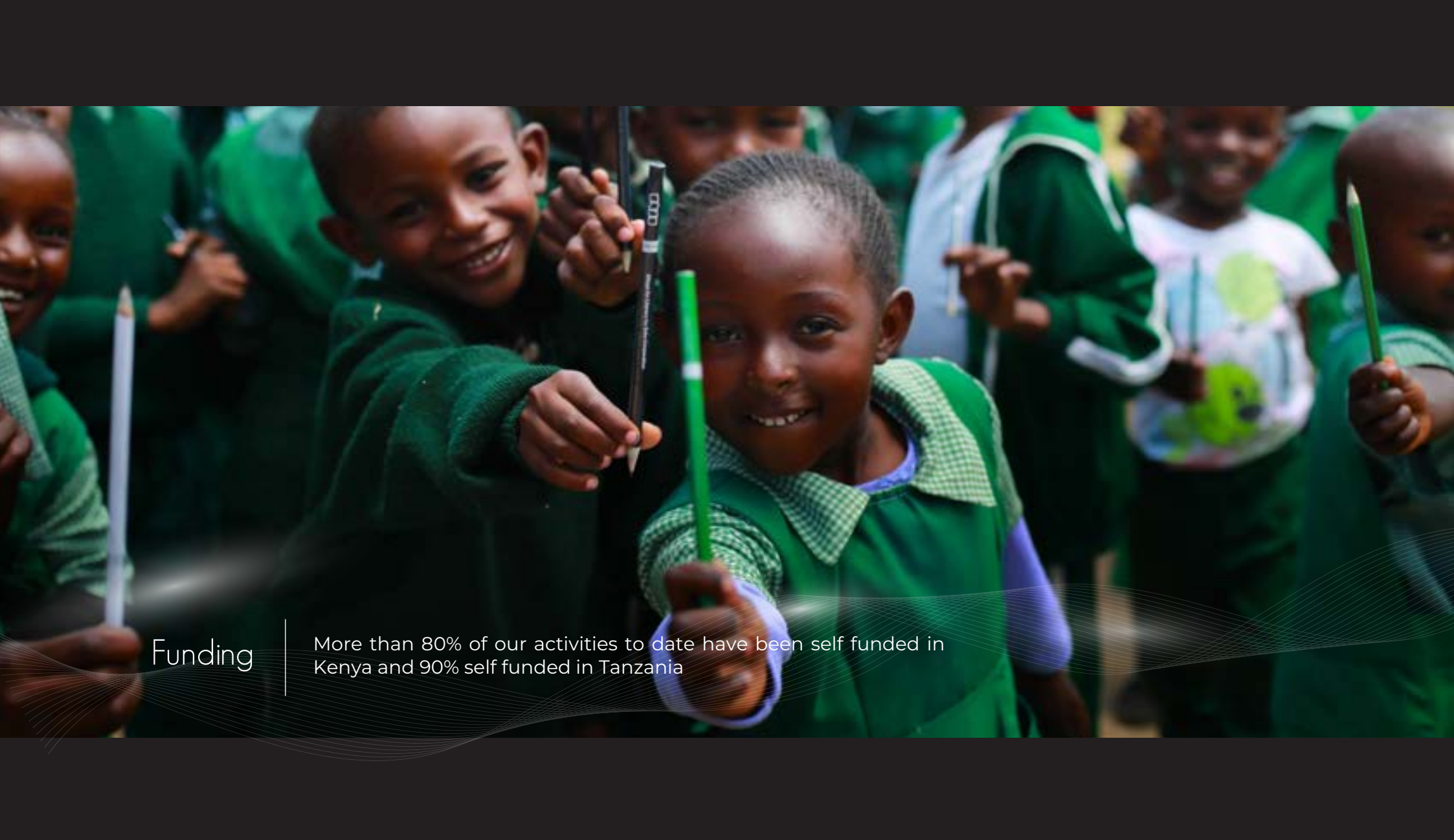




## Scale Up

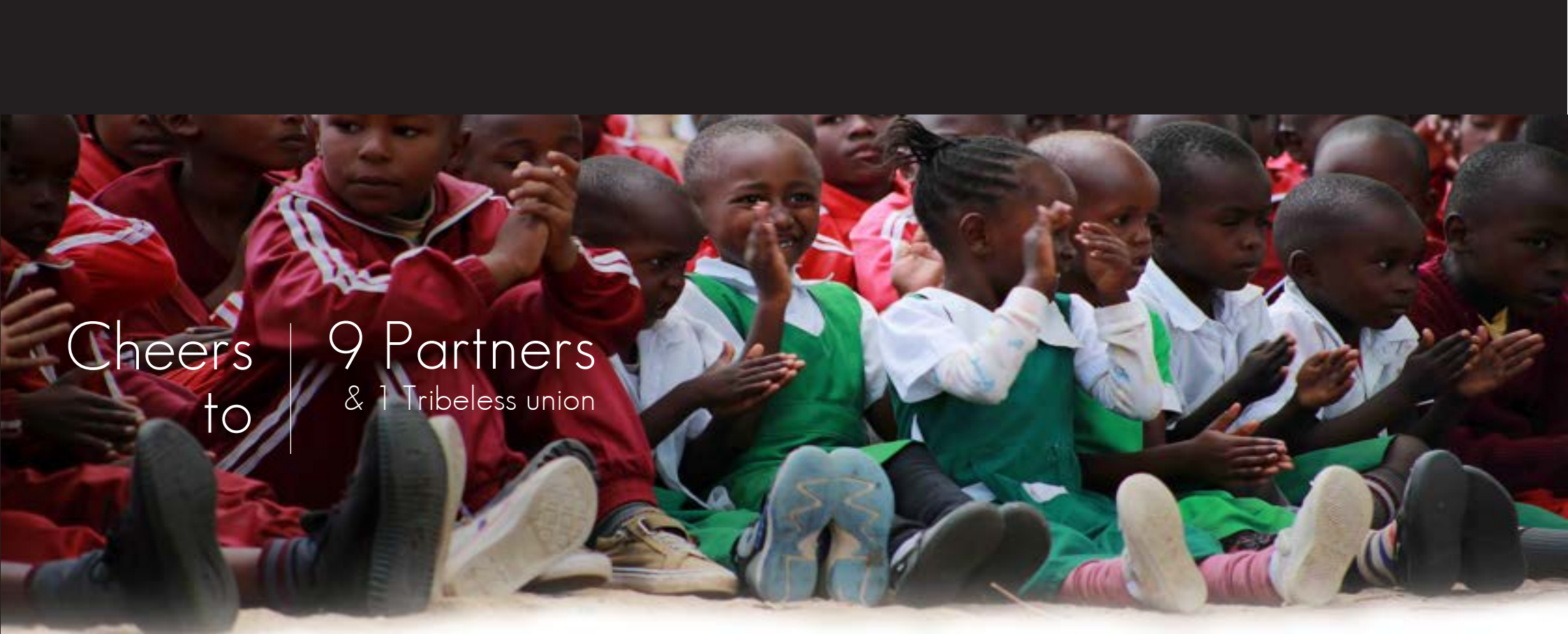
We desire to scale up these experiences across the country and want to impact those hard to reach areas that have long been neglected





Funding

More than 80% of our activities to date have been self funded in Kenya and 90% self funded in Tanzania



# Cheers to | 9 Partners & 1 Tribeless union



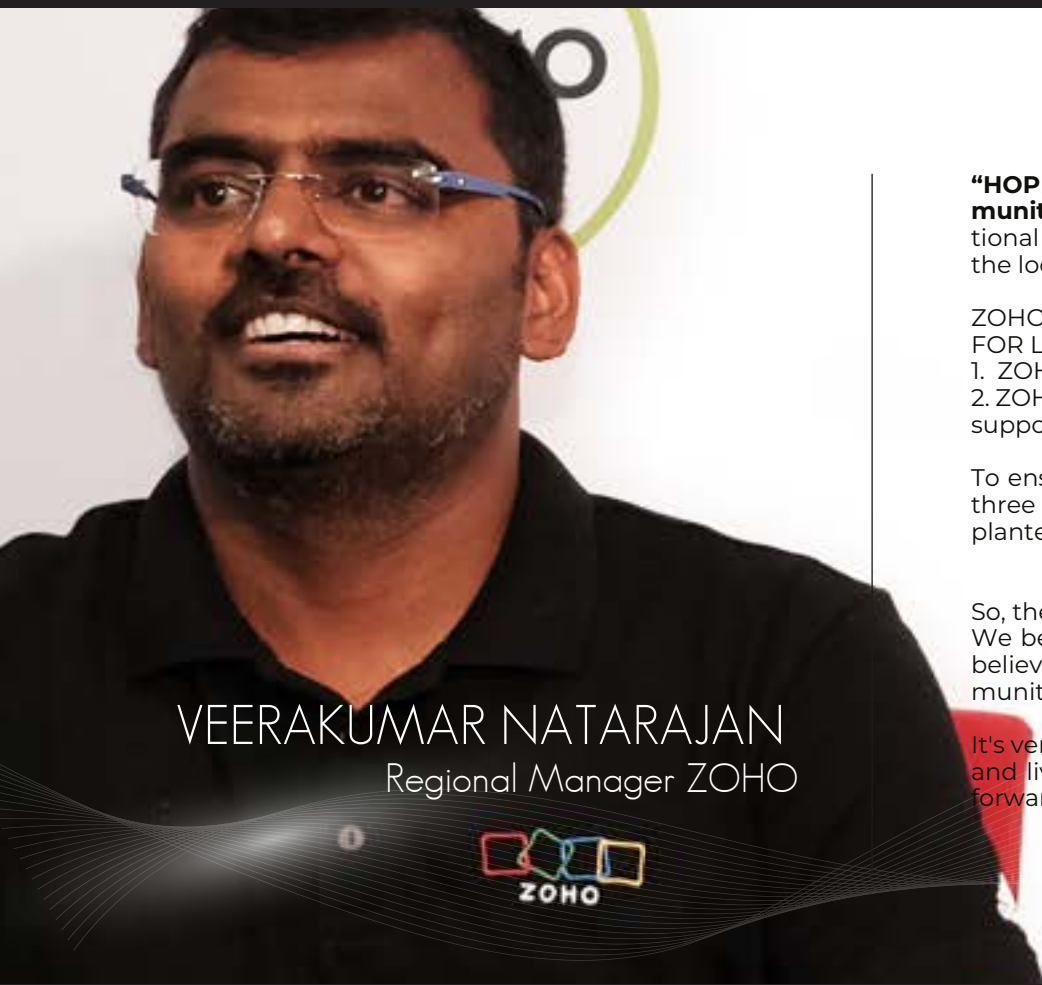




## Journeying with ZOHO

We're delighted to have Zoho join us as one of our partners in this journey of transforming Kenyan families, schools, and communities.

As part of this alliance, Zoho hosted around 25 students from Creative Minds, a primary school in Athi River at its Nairobi, office, as part of the MoU signing on February 14. The students were introduced to the future of work and the various career opportunities available in the STEM fields. Additionally, to drive environmental awareness among students, Zoho and MOMO Pencils jointly donated 25,000 wood-free pencils across select schools and conducted tree-planting activities in those schools throughout the year. Zoho will also started providing life skills mentorship support to students on these school visits, starting with the Creative Minds school.



VEERAKUMAR NATARAJAN  
Regional Manager ZOHO

**“HOPE FOR LITERACY” campaign aligns with our founder’s idea of giving back to the community.** We call it transnational localism. Transnational localism is a concept where as a multinational company, we bring in the technology, we bring in our style of working, but we work with the local entities and local partners.

ZOHO then support the local communities and businesses to run their businesses. In the HOPE FOR LITERACY campaign, we had a two pronged approach that aligns with our ideology.

1. ZOHO supported the under privileged schools in the region, in the country.
2. ZOHO joined the pursuit of taking care of the environment by planting trees in the schools they supported.

To ensure the campaign remains sustainable, ZOHO will continue monitoring the project every three months so that at the end of the year we can evaluate the progress of the trees we have planted and the impact on the environment.

So, the partnership is not only for CSR and it's not a one-time partnership. We believe that we have a right attitude as well to support the community and the students. I believe that's one of the big takeaways as well as the right idea towards giving back to the community.

It's very clear that MOMO PENCILS will be able to take care of the trees so that we follow through and live up to our commitment. All in all the partnership looks very bright and we are looking forward to a long-term partnership.”

*Veerakumar Natarajan*





ZOE OCHWANGO  
ZOHO Regional Marketer Kenya

**We hope to reach as many school-going children as much as we can, to give them an opportunity for greater and higher levels of education** because, most students here in Kenya especially at the primary school level, miss school because of some very simple reasons like lack of pencil. Some of them even lack food. So through the HOPE FOR LITERACY campaign, we hope to reach as many students who lack pencils.

We are also planting trees in these schools, these are not just any trees. These are fruit trees. And you know in Kenya, especially in primary schools, students go to school and stay hungry for the whole day. But because of these trees that we are planting, apart from just giving students the pencils that they can use in class, they also get access to these fruits, in the schools which we're planting. Through this partnership, we hope to broaden our scope, especially in terms of helping people at the grassroots level. And as ZOHO we're trying as much as possible, to reach out to the needy communities. My main takeaway is that every child is our child. There's a lot more children there who lack opportunities, lack access to support and mentorship because people never rose up to the opportunity available to them. And this is something I'm taking at heart. And we are going to spread it even to more children. Every child is our child under this campaign



Journeying  
with ZOHO  
one little footprint  
everyday

25,000  
wood free  
Pencils

1,000  
Friut tree  
Seedlings

*Zoe Ochwango*







"It has been a nice experience. The learners are very excited. We've planted around 100 trees and the learners will take care of them. So, to me, I want to say it's a plus to Momo group and the partners for choosing our school for this kind of giving back to the community through planting fruit trees and giving every learner a pencil. As you leave here today, you've left a legacy. We have now the fruits and the learners will take care of them. After some time these learners will be coming back to this school, it will be like a legacy. They will say I did this. And with the pencils you are eliminating illiteracy in my school."

Anne Ndunge Munyao  
Head Teacher  
Katoloni Primary school



"Today we have done great. When you came, we interacted with you people. Our people were also very happy after planting the trees. And I know those fruits will be ready when they are here. And they will be the first people to taste them. We are proud of Momo pencils. What you have done, we have appreciated. As well as the impact that you have done to our learners today and to our communities at large. Today every homestead will have a good story to hear. Because we have planted those trees. And I want tell other stakeholders to follow what the Momo pencils are doing. Thank you so much, Momo pencils and Zoho cooperation. Kudos."

Josh Munyao  
Head Teacher  
Ivumbuni Primary school



"I'm happy because I've gotten a chance to plant a tree. I'm privileged to plant a tree, which I've not done in a very long time. Thank you so much, Momo Pencils and Zoho corporation, for the good job you are doing. And I hope you will impact more lives and communities, not only in this county but also the other counties."

Rachel Ruto  
Volunteer  
West Pokot Resident





"Basically, it was a lively experience. The pupils were able to learn, not only learning by listening, but learning by doing. The children are going to appreciate the importance of tree planting and take whatever they have learned from here to their homes. These are not only trees, but they are fruit trees. We expect in the future the same children, the same community is going to enjoy from the fruits of these trees. Whatever has happened today will not only be felt today but for generations to come. I'm sure we are going to get more innovation from the same young students who are still the entrepreneurs of the future."

Antony Kilonzo  
Head Teacher  
Makyau Primary school



"I want to thank Momo pencils and the Zoho corporation. You have really done a commendable job. We are really grateful to you, and we really pray that may God give you more strength to reach other communities elsewhere so that whatever you began, will grow to a bigger nation. You have left a big impact in our school. One of them is the gift you have given the learners, the pencil. They will always talk about the pencil wherever they go. For the storybooks, they are going to read the books, and it will nurture the reading culture in the school. Lastly, the trees we have planted have left a mark in Miwongoni primary school. And I promise you that when you come back, you'll find a changed environment in our school."

Joyce Adima  
Head Teacher



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