

READING CULTURE | Ms Rita Marsham plans to bring state-of-the-art libraries to schools across the country

From Canada with goodies for schools

A Somali refugee girl who rose to become a law don at Harvard University inspired Ms Marsham to stock libraries in Kenyan schools

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You can see excitement written all over their faces as they grasp and read storybooks at their new state-of-the-art library.

These are pupils of Lewa Primary School in Buuri subcounty in Meru County. The clean, neatly-arranged and well-stocked room, with an on-line library and an interactive smart board is the talk of the school located within the Lewa Conservancy.

The library is a dream come true for Ms Rita Field-Marsham, who, inspired by a true story of a Somali refugee girl in Kenya, who read books to become a law lecturer at the prestigious Harvard University, decided to set up a library for Lewa primary pupils.

In fact, this is what stirred the passion to avail modern libraries to children in Kenya, not just at Lewa. It was in 2007 when Ms Field-Marsham, a lawyer, realised how powerful books can be in transforming lives, even to the most marginalised Kenyans. In her own words, "I discovered that opening a book can open the world to a child."

Were it not for books, the Somali girl could not have reached that far," she said. Ms Field-Marsham is the Chief Executive Officer of Rita and Charles Field-Marsham Foundation.

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We provide books to enhance language proficiency. This will lead to better grades and academic standards that prepare students to become successful citizens in today's globally competitive world”

Rita Field-Marsham



Pupils of Lewa Primary School enjoy the comfort of the bean bag cushions in the new library recently. The library was built at a cost of Sh10 million by Rita and Charles Field-Marsham (below) Foundation from Canada.

PHOEBE OKALL | NATION

CHRONOLOGY

How donation of books was started

2007: When the idea to stock libraries in schools in Kenya was born. Donated books to schools in Lamu and Kibera slums.

2012: Stocked Precious Blood Riruta library with e-books and smart boards which make it easy for students to access different material.

2013: Founded Knowledge Empowering Youth to start libraries in schools.

She started off her passion by donating books to schools in Lamu and Kibera slums.

As she recounts, her initiative has paid off with pupils who have benefitted from her generosity recording improvement in languages, self-esteem and academic performance in national exams. In 2013, she founded Knowledge Empowering Youth (KEY) to scale up her mission to deliver state-



of-the-art, custom-made libraries across the country.

"We believe in the transformative power of language, reading and a well-rounded education. KEY's mission is to drive meaningful change in Africa's vibrant communities by providing their educational systems with fully functioning libraries to ensure that children have the knowledge they need to shape and transform

their own destinies," she states.

Since then, Ms Field-Marsham, who is also the KEY CEO, says the organisation has also established libraries with books to teach communities about the environment. She noted that more than 80 percent of schools in Kenya lack library facilities.

"We provide books to enhance language proficiency. This will lead to better grades.

International students leave after terrorist attack scare

BY DICKSON MWITI
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Eight international medical students have left Maua Methodist Hospital in Meru County following a terrorist attack scare. Four were from Hong Kong University and the other four from Texas University in China and the United States respectively.

Medical officer in charge of the hospital Dr Inoti Murithi told the *Sunday Nation* by phone that the students left after advisories from their respective embassies. He said the first four to leave were from Hongkong University.

"Immediately after the Garissa University College attack, we received a letter from the Chinese Embassy advising us to release their students on grounds of insecurity. We also received a telephone call from the American Embassy which also placed the same request on behalf of their students from Texas University who were the latest to leave," he said.

However, Dr Murithi said the attack was not specific to the Methodist hospital. He said there were leaflets dropped around Maua town indicating that a hospital or a church would be attacked by the Al Shabaab terrorists.

He said they had so far advised their staff to increase vigilance as well as collaborate with other government security machinery to ensure their institution was secure. "We call on our clients to relax as everything was being handled by the security officers in the right manner," he said.

Igembe South police boss Patrick Mbarire said there was no solid information about the attack and the security team was investigating claims that were coming from members of public.

He said enough security officers had been deployed to all institutions to ensure they were secure.

Registrar of Companies to provide details in property row

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The records for a multi-million investment company which the Registrar of Companies has been directed to provide in court could give crucial information necessary to resolve the dispute between a group of elderly men and their children.

Trading under Muguga Investment Company Ltd, the elderly men approached the court challenging their children's decision to dispose of part of their multi-million shilling investment.

Record of the Registrar of Companies is crucial component in determining the issues. Therefore, the Registrar shall provide the court with certified copies of the entire file for Muguga Investment Com-



PAUL WAWERU | NATION

Pastor Simon Ndung'u Thuo (left) talks to shareholders of Muguga Investment Company outside Milimani High Court after the hearing on Friday in a case where they are challenging their children's decision to dispose of their multi-million shillings investment.

pany Ltd within seven days from today," High Court Judge Francis Gikonyo directed on Friday. He added that if it becomes necessary, the Registrar will be summoned to appear in court to offer clarification or be cross-examined by the parties.

There are currently orders stopping the sons and Nuni General Trading Company Ltd from taking over the properties, until the dispute is heard and determined.

One of the elderly men, Mr David Njane Ruiyi, had in an affidavit claimed that they learnt with shock that their sons wanted to dispose of some properties without their consent.

The ageing men came together as 34 families in May 1974, and formed Muguga Investment Company Ltd. The company's main business is in real estate tenancy and distribute the rent to shareholders.