

MAKUTANO SCHOOL LIBRARY PROJECT

A Place to Read, Discover and Grow

Needs Assessment & Partnership Proposal

*Makutano Primary & Junior School
Kathonzweni, Makueni County, Kenya*

*A Partnership Between
Books & Beyond | A is for Africa | Makutano Primary & Junior School*

August 2026



BOOKS & BEYOND

**A child-led initiative bringing libraries and a
culture of reading to rural Kenya**

Website: www.booksandbeyondonline.org

Nairobi, Kenya



Table of Contents

1. The Story.....	3
2. Books & Beyond – Building a Culture of Reading.....	3
3. About Makutano Primary & Junior School.....	5
4. A School Growing Faster Than Its Resources.....	6
5. An Opportunity Has Opened.....	6
6. Transforming the Room.....	7
7. Filling the Shelves	8
8. More Than Shelves of Books.....	9
9. Library Management – Making the Library Last	9
10. Makutano Will Not Stand Alone	10
11. From Europe to Makutano – Children Helping Children	10
Adults Supporting Schools.....	11
12. A Partnership with Clear Roles	11
Books & Beyond.....	11
„A“ - is for Africa & European Partners	11
Makutano Primary & Junior School.....	12
13. International Exchange, Advocacy and Project Visits.....	12
14. What Success Would Look Like	13
15. Proposed Timeline	13
16. Media Outreach - Voices of Makutano.....	14
Before – The Starting Point	14
The Grand Opening – Celebrating the Partnership	14
After – Showing the Impact	14
17. A Simple Investment. A Lasting Impact.	15

1. The Story

Imagine being a child who loves stories, science, animals or discovering new places, but having almost no books to choose from.

This is the reality for many children at *Makutano Primary & Junior School*, a public mixed-day school near Kathonzweni Town in rural Makueni County, Kenya.

Makutano is a growing and ambitious school serving *453 children from PPI to Grade 9*. The school has worked hard to improve learning and has embraced new opportunities, including an ICT programme. Yet one important learning resource is still missing:

Makutano has no functioning school library.

The entire school currently has only about *50 donated storybooks from StoryMoja Publishers*, mainly suitable for younger children in Grades 1–3. For older learners, there are very few general reading books beyond their curriculum textbooks.

For a child who may have few or no books at home, the opportunity to walk into a library, choose a book simply because it looks interesting and take it home to read can open a completely new world.

Books & Beyond, together with A is for Africa, would like to help Makutano create that opportunity.

2. Books & Beyond – Building a Culture of Reading

Books & Beyond is a student-led community initiative founded by sisters *Surina and Keisha Kasaku* to improve access to books and build a lasting culture of reading in rural schools in Makueni County.



The project has grown from collecting books into an established model that combines *library renovation, book mobilisation, cataloguing, borrowing systems, reading activities and school-led book drives*. Books & Beyond has already supported several schools in the Kathonzweni area and aims to expand its network to *10 school libraries*.



Our project contributes to the following UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

SDG	Goal	How Our Project Contributes
 SDG 4	<i>Quality Education</i>	Improving access to books, libraries and reading opportunities.
 SDG 5	<i>Gender Equality</i>	Supporting equal access to learning and reading opportunities for girls and boys.
 SDG 10	<i>Reduced Inequalities</i>	Helping bridge the gap in educational resources between rural and better-resourced schools.
 SDG 17	<i>Partnerships for the Goals</i>	Bringing together schools, communities, donors and partners to improve educational opportunities.

Our vision is simple: *every child should have the opportunity to read beyond the classroom, discover new ideas and imagine possibilities beyond their immediate surroundings.*

MORE THAN BOOKS ON SHELVES

Books & Beyond believes a successful library must be *used, enjoyed and allowed to grow.*

We encourage:

- ◆ *DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) Time* - a dedicated class period for independent reading.
- ◆ *Reading clubs & reading buddies*
- ◆ *Storytelling and read-aloud sessions*
- ◆ *Student librarians*
- ◆ *Teacher-led reading activities*
- ◆ *Parents, alumni and communities helping to grow the book collection*

The goal is simple: turn access to books into a lasting culture of reading.

The project also creates connections between children from different backgrounds.

- ◆ Children who donate books learn the *value of sharing and giving.*
- ◆ Children receiving books gain *access to stories, knowledge and new opportunities.*

Through the proposed partnership with *A is for Africa*, the project could build meaningful links between schools in *Europe and Makeni*, beginning with student-led book drives and growing into wider school-to-school partnerships. These connections could:

- Mobilise *books, learning materials and resources* through European schools and communities.
- Create *student-to-student connections* across different countries and cultures.
- Encourage *joint reading, storytelling and educational activities.*
- Build awareness of the needs and potential of *rural Kenyan schools* among international school communities.
- Expand access to *potential donors, supporters and partner networks.*



- Create opportunities for *cultural exchange and shared learning* between children in Kenya and Europe.
- Develop *long-term school partnerships* that extend beyond a one-time donation.
- Strengthen the *sustainability and international reach* of the library project

Makutano represents the next step in this growing network: transforming an available classroom into a library that children will use, enjoy and continue to grow for years to come, *while opening new opportunities through our partnership with A is for Africa to connect learners, schools and communities in Kenya and Europe.*

3. About Makutano Primary & Junior School

Makutano Primary & Junior School is a Government-run school serving the surrounding Kathonzweni community.

Headteacher: Geoffrey K. Muthusi

Learners: 453

Grades: PP1–Grade 9

Teachers: 18 permanent and 3 BOM teachers

School Motto: **Hard Work Pays**



The school has grown considerably in recent years, from *221 learners in 2021 to 453 learners in 2026*. This growth is encouraging, but it has also created pressure on classrooms and learning resources. Grade 8, for example, currently has *54 learners*, while Grade 4 has *51*.

Term 3 Enrolment – 2026

Grade	Boys	Girls	Total
PP1	20	18	38
PP2	17	17	34
Grade 1	25	21	46
Grade 2	14	16	30
Grade 3	22	15	37
Grade 4	24	27	51
Grade 5	26	17	43
Grade 6	25	18	43
Grade 7	19	14	33
Grade 8	27	27	54
Grade 9	25	19	44
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>244</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>453</i>



MAKUTANO SCHOOL 25/8/2026			
TERM 3 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT			
GRADE	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTALS
PP1	20	18	38
PP2	17	17	34
1	25	21	46
2	14	16	30
3	22	15	37
4	24	27	51
5	26	17	43
6	25	18	43
7	19	14	33
8	27	27	54
9	25	19	44
TOTALS	244	209	453

HEAD OF INSTITUTION
MAKUTANO PRIMARY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 108, KATHONZWENI
DATE: 25/8/2026

SUMMARY DETAILS		
MAKUTANO PRIMARY SCHOOL - KATHONZWENI		
1. INSTITUTION ID	14701174433	
2. COUNTRY	LESOTHO	
3. SUB-COUNTRY	KATHONZWENI	
4. DIVISION	KATHONZWENI	
5. ZONE	KATHONZWENI	
6. ENROLLMENT	453	
7. PHYSICAL CLASSES	11	
8. PERMANENT TEACHERS	18	
9. BOM TEACHERS	3	
10. POSTAL ADDRESS	106 - 90302	
11. PHONE NUMBER	0723749147	
12. NAME OF HEADTEACHER	GEORGEY K. MUTHUSI	
13. SCHOOL MOTTO	Hard Work Pays	
14. SCHOOL VISION	To bring up quality citizens to the country and for world harmony.	

4. A School Growing Faster Than Its Resources.

Makutano's challenge is not a lack of enthusiasm for learning. It is a lack of resources to match that enthusiasm.

Many learners come from families of modest means where purchasing children's books for the home is difficult. Government resources understandably concentrate largely on curriculum materials, leaving children with limited access to fiction, biographies, science, history, geography, wildlife, technology and books simply read for pleasure.

At present, the school has no central place where books can be safely stored, catalogued, borrowed and enjoyed.

The school has embraced digital learning and has received *52 learner digital devices from the Government*, although only around 25 are currently operational and must be shared.

A library would complement this technology by strengthening the foundations that children need in every subject: *reading, comprehension, curiosity, research, communication and independent thinking*.



5. An Opportunity Has Opened

The Government is expected to construct *two new ECD classrooms* at Makutano.

Once these are completed, an existing classroom is expected to become available for conversion into a library, potentially from *October 2026*.



The room was previously used as a computer room. It is structurally useful, but it needs renovation and imagination to turn it into somewhere children will genuinely want to spend time.

The proposed room measures approximately $30\text{ ft} \times 25\text{ ft} = 750\text{ sq. ft.}$

This is enough space to create a welcoming library accommodating *48 children at a time*, with:

- ◆ 8 six-seater reading tables
- ◆ 48 student chairs
- ◆ Bookshelves around the room
- ◆ A Library Patron desk and chair
- ◆ Reading and book-display areas
- ◆ Space for issuing and returning books
- ◆ Safe circulation space between tables and shelves

The aim is not to create an expensive facility.

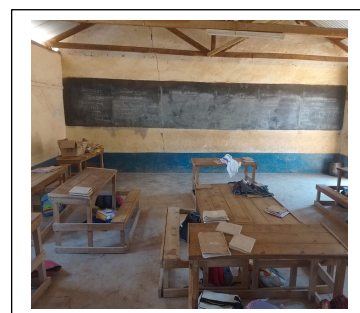
It is to take an existing classroom and make it bright, comfortable, practical and full of books.

6. Transforming the Room

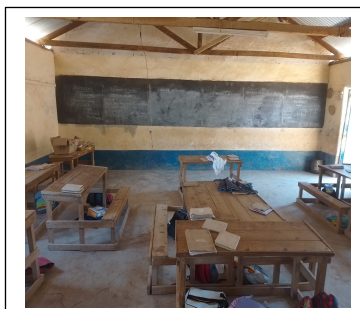
Before the books arrive, the room itself needs attention.

Priority Renovation Works

- ◆ Repair and finish the floor
- ◆ Repair and repaint interior and exterior walls
- ◆ Repair and weatherproof the roof
- ◆ Install a ceiling to reduce heat and dust
- ◆ Improve windows, ventilation and security
- ◆ Improve electrical wiring and lighting
- ◆ Build and install bookshelves
- ◆ Provide 8 reading tables and 48 chairs
- ◆ Provide a Library Patron desk and chair
- ◆ Create an attractive reading and book-display area



Transform an underused classroom into a colourful, organised and welcoming space to read, learn and grow.



PICS - EXISTING CLASSROOM PROPOSED FOR THE NEW LIBRARY RENOVATIONS

7. Filling the Shelves

Books & Beyond proposes to build an initial collection of approximately *1,000 books*, appropriate for children from PP1 through Grade 9.

Rather than shelves dominated by textbooks, children would be able to explore:

- ♦ Picture books and early readers
- ♦ Children's fiction and adventure
- ♦ Books for teenagers and young adults
- ♦ Science and nature
- ♦ Wildlife and the environment
- ♦ History and geography
- ♦ Biographies
- ♦ Technology and innovation
- ♦ Art and creativity
- ♦ Reference and general knowledge

The objective is simple:

Every child who enters the library should be able to find something they genuinely want to read.

Books would be mobilised through a *joint partnership between Books & Beyond and A is for Africa*, including student-led book drives in selected European schools and wider donor networks. Children would be encouraged to share books they have enjoyed, creating a meaningful *child-to-child connection between Europe and rural Kenya*. Working together, the partners would support the collection, sorting, transportation and distribution of suitable books to Makutano and other participating school libraries, while gradually building longer-term connections between the schools and their communities.



8. More Than Shelves of Books

The success of the Makutano Library will be measured not by books on shelves, but by books read, shared, discussed and borrowed.

The Project will work with the school to encourage:

- ♦ Timetabled library periods
- ♦ DEAR – (*Drop Everything and Read*) Time
- ♦ Home borrowing
- ♦ Reading clubs
- ♦ Reading buddies between older and younger learners
- ♦ Storytelling and creative writing
- ♦ Book reviews and reading challenges
- ♦ Student librarians
- ♦ Supervised reading opportunities

These activities are designed to make the library part of everyday school life rather than a room that is opened only occasionally.

9. Library Management – Making the Library Last

Sustainability is central to the Books & Beyond model. The aim is not simply to provide books and furniture, but to establish a well-managed library that continues to grow and is actively used by learners.

The Makutano Library will include:

- *Library Patron & Student Librarians* – A designated Teacher Library Patron, supported by trained student librarians, will oversee the library.
- *Book Identification & Care* – Books will be labelled, covered where necessary, catalogued and entered into an inventory register.
- *Borrowing System* – A simple lending and return register will allow learners to borrow books and take them home.
- *Training* – Teachers and student librarians will be guided on book management, lending and care of the collection.
- *Reading Activities* – Library periods, reading clubs and *DEAR (Drop Everything and Read)* sessions will encourage regular reading.
- *Growing the Collection* – The school will be encouraged to run its own “*Bring a Book, Share a Story*” drives involving learners, parents, alumni and the wider community.

In this way, the library becomes a *living learning resource*—not simply a room of donated books—and can continue to grow and serve future generations of Makutano learners.



10. Makutano Will Not Stand Alone

One of the strengths of this project is that Makutano would become part of a growing network of *Books & Beyond* libraries in Makueni County.

Books & Beyond has already supported libraries and book collections at neighbouring schools, including *Kathonzweni HGM Primary School, Kwakavisi Primary School, H. G. M. Vitale Primary School, and St. Jude Girls Senior School.*

Learners and teachers at Makutano have seen neighbouring schools receive books and improved reading spaces. There is therefore already excitement about the possibility of Makutano having a library of its own.

Books & Beyond's wider goal is to support *ten school libraries in Makueni County*, creating not isolated projects but a growing community of schools where reading becomes part of children's everyday lives.

11. From Europe to Makutano – Children Helping Children

The Makutano Library offers an opportunity to create something wider than a traditional donor relationship.

Through collaboration between *Books & Beyond* and *A is for Africa*, schools, students, educators and supporters in Austria and elsewhere in Europe could connect with Makutano and, over time, other Books & Beyond partner schools in Kathonzweni.

Children Helping Children

European schools could participate through:

- ♦ Student-led book drives
- ♦ Small fundraising activities
- ♦ Reading and storytelling projects
- ♦ School-to-school exchanges
- ♦ Letters, stories and creative projects between students
- ♦ Sharing books that children themselves have loved

A book enjoyed by a child in Vienna, Graz, London or another European city could find a second life in the hands of a child in Makutano. This creates a connection based not simply on giving, but on *children sharing stories, ideas and opportunities across countries and cultures.*

Adults Supporting Schools

A is for Africa could also draw on the experience and networks of its members, educators and supporters to contribute beyond books. Depending on the needs identified by each school, this could include:

- ♦ *Leadership mentoring* for school heads and senior teachers
- ♦ *Teacher training and professional development*
- ♦ Support for *reading, literacy and library programmes*
- ♦ Mentoring and motivational sessions for *students and teachers*
- ♦ Sharing teaching ideas, resources and good practices
- ♦ Virtual exchanges with *educators and professionals in Europe*
- ♦ Connecting schools with individuals and organisations able to offer *specialist skills or support*
- ♦ Supporting longer-term *school development and capacity building*

Makutano could serve as an initial model for this wider collaboration, with successful activities gradually extended to *other Books & Beyond partner libraries and schools across Kathonzwani*.

In this way, the partnership can grow beyond providing books and furniture into a longer-term exchange of *knowledge, skills, mentorship, friendship and opportunity*.

12. A Partnership with Clear Roles

Books & Beyond

Books & Beyond would provide *overall project management and local coordination*, working with Makutano School, A is for Africa, donors and relevant education authorities. Its role would cover the needs assessment, renovation and construction, procurement of furniture and shelving, quality oversight, and progress and donor reporting.

Books & Beyond would also lead *library development and reading promotion*, including book mobilisation and selection, cataloguing and labelling, library layout and management systems, and support for DEAR time, reading clubs and the Library Patron. It would monitor the growth of the school's reading culture and support Makutano to strengthen its library and identify wider opportunities for the school and its learners.

„A“ - is for Africa & European Partners

„A“ - is for Africa would lead the *international partnership, fundraising, outreach and capacity-building component*, connecting the project with schools, educators, donors and supporters in Austria and elsewhere in Europe. This could include fundraising for renovation,



furniture, books and learning resources; European school book drives and shipment of books to Kathonzwani; and media and international outreach.

Through Mardi Byers and the wider „A“ - *is for Africa* network, the partnership could also provide *leadership mentoring, teacher training and professional development*, together with school-to-school, reading and cultural exchanges. These networks could progressively benefit other partner schools and libraries across Kathonzwani.

Makutano Primary & Junior School

Makutano would provide *local leadership and ownership*, including the library room, support for agreed renovations, appointment of a Library Patron, management and protection of the collection and facilities, and regular library and reading periods. The school would also engage teachers, learners, parents, alumni and the wider community in promoting reading and growing the collection.

Maintain the library collection in good condition, repair damaged books, promote responsible borrowing and returns, and apply appropriate measures for lost or damaged books to teach learners *care, responsibility and good library management*.

This partnership combines *Books & Beyond's project and library experience*, „A“ - *is for Africa's international networks and resource mobilisation*, and Makutano's *local leadership and ownership* to create a sustainable library and a wider platform for educational opportunity.

13. International Exchange, Advocacy and Project Visits

The partnership also provides an opportunity to build meaningful links between students and schools in **Kathonzwani and Europe**. As young founders of Books & Beyond, **Surina and Keisha Kasaku could visit participating European schools** to share their experience of establishing school libraries in Kathonzwani, raise awareness of the programme and encourage students, families and school communities to support the initiative through **book drives, fundraising and other practical contributions**.

Similarly, **Mardi and members of the A is for Africa team could visit Kenya** to see the libraries first-hand, monitor progress, engage with participating schools and communities, and support the continued development of the wider reading programme.

Over time, the partnership could also create opportunities for **students from participating European schools to visit their sister schools in Kathonzwani**, meet Kenyan students and participate in reading, cultural and community activities. These exchanges would extend the initiative beyond books and libraries, building **lasting school-to-school relationships, cultural exchange and shared learning between young people in Kenya and Europe**.

14. What Success Would Look Like

Within the first year, the project aims to achieve:

- ◆ *453 children with access to a school library*
- ◆ *1 renovated and equipped library*
- ◆ *Approximately 1,000 reading books available across different ages and interests*
- ◆ *48 learners able to use the library at one time*
- ◆ *Regular scheduled library sessions*
- ◆ *A functioning borrowing system*
- ◆ *Books being taken home and returned*
- ◆ *Student librarians supporting the library*
- ◆ *Reading activities taking place throughout the term*
- ◆ *A well-used, well-maintained and growing library with a strong reading culture.*
- ◆ *A collection that continues growing through future book drives*

The school and Books & Beyond can track library sessions, borrowing figures, participation in reading activities and growth of the collection. Teacher and learner feedback can also help demonstrate changes in reading habits and engagement.

15. Proposed Timeline

Period	Key Activities	Lead / Support
Aug–Sep 2026	Partnership planning; finalise project scope, detailed budget and funding requirements ; fundraising and donor outreach; European school book drives; government approvals; website and media outreach	B&B / A is for Africa / Makutano
Oct 2026	Library room released; final site assessment and procurement; renovation begins. Confirm donor funds and transfer arrangements; explore partnerships with eligible foundations/organisations to facilitate tax-efficient giving; secure courier/shipping partners for transporting donated books to Kenya	B&B / A is for Africa / Makutano
Oct–Nov 2026	Repairs, painting, ceiling, windows and lighting; furniture and shelving procurement and installation	B&B / Makutano
Nov 2026	Book shipment and delivery to Kathonzweni; sorting, cataloguing and labelling with teachers; shelving and borrowing system established	A is for Africa / B&B / Makutano
Nov–Dec 2026	Teacher and Library Patron orientation; DEAR time and reading activities; library set-up, handover, opening and communications	B&B / Makutano / A is for Africa



Period	Key Activities	Lead / Support
Jan–Feb 2027	Monitor library use, borrowing and returns, book care, reading activities and learner participation; review progress and provide feedback to partners and donors	B&B / Makutano

Timeline subject to completion of the Government’s new ECD classrooms and release of the proposed library room.

16. Media Outreach - Voices of Makutano

The story of the Makutano Library should be told through the *voices of its learners, teachers and community*, documenting the journey from an empty classroom to an active school library.

Before – The Starting Point

Before renovation begins, short interviews and photographs could capture the current situation and expectations of the school community:

Learner: “What would having a library at your school mean to you?”

Teacher: “How would having more books help your learners?”

Headteacher: “What difference could a library make to Makutano over the next five years?”

Photographs and short videos of the existing classroom would provide a clear *baseline and record of the transformation*.

The Grand Opening – Celebrating the Partnership

The official opening would provide an opportunity to celebrate the learners, school, community and partners who made the library possible. Learners could lead parts of the programme through *speeches, readings, storytelling, poetry or demonstrations of the library*, while teachers, parents, education officials, donors and partners share in the occasion.

Photographs, short interviews and video footage could document the transformation and acknowledge the contributions of *Makutano School, Books & Beyond, A is for Africa, donors and the wider community*.

After – Showing the Impact

After the library has been in use, the same learners and teachers could be revisited to capture *what has changed*. Stories could highlight borrowing and reading habits, favourite books, DEAR time, reading clubs, reading buddies, student leadership and how teachers are using the library.



This *before–opening–after approach* would provide an authentic record of the project’s journey and impact, while giving Makutano learners and teachers the opportunity to tell their own story.

17. A Simple Investment. A Lasting Impact.

For many Makutano learners, this library could be their first opportunity to walk into a room filled with books, **choose a book simply because it interests them, take it home, share it and return eager to discover another**. It will provide not only access to books, but a new space for curiosity, confidence and independent learning.

The investment is simple: **transform one existing classroom into a welcoming, active library filled with books, reading spaces and opportunity**. Its impact, however, can extend far beyond the room itself. Each year, learners will discover stories, science, history, wildlife, different countries, cultures, professions and ideas that expand their understanding of the world and what may be possible for their own futures.

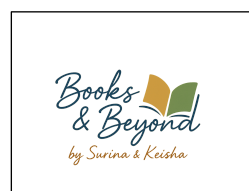
Through the partnership with **A is for Africa and European schools**, Makutano learners can also gain valuable **cross-country and cross-cultural exposure**. School exchanges, letters, shared reading and creative projects, reading buddies and virtual interactions can connect children in rural Makueni with children from different backgrounds and cultures. These experiences can build **confidence, communication skills, cultural awareness, friendships and a broader global outlook**.

The library can also create opportunities for learners themselves to become **young leaders**—as reading buddies, library monitors, reading-club leaders and ambassadors for the library. Older learners can support younger readers, students can help care for the collection, and children can take an active role in building a reading culture within their school.

With the combined strengths of **Makutano Primary & Junior School, Books & Beyond, A is for Africa and international partners**, the library can become much more than a collection of books. It can be a platform for **reading, leadership, mentorship, cultural exchange and opportunity** for 453 learners today and thousands more in the years ahead.

Together, we can turn one classroom into a gateway to the world—and books into bridges between children, cultures and opportunities.

*With gratitude,
Books & Beyond Team*





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