

Kansanga Resource Centre

The Kansanga Resource Centre is located in an impoverished neighbourhood at the edge of the bustling capital city of Kampala. Like so many parts of the city, the streets are unpaved, dusty and pitted with potholes. Vendors sit at small vegetable stalls or stand over charcoal fires, flipping chapatis or frying cassava. Children run through the streets in bare feet and torn, ill-fitting clothing, unperturbed by the grazing cows, goats and chickens. Garbage lies in smouldering piles next to ditches filled with fetid water. It's not always an inviting place.

The centre offers a bit of a reprieve from these conditions. The rooms inside are clean and bright. Bookshelves filled with colorful picture books, puzzles and board games line the walls. Alphabet letters and safari animals decorate the walls of playroom filled with building blocks and other playthings. Outside, a small community garden, green shrubs and flowering tropical plants brighten the grassy yard. It is a simple place, one without many of the amenities we've grown accustomed to, but it is a safe place and it comes alive when the children arrive to play and learn.

Niteo Objectives

- facilitate programs that promote student-led initiatives in Uganda to create an atmosphere of social responsibility
- provide a safe, supervised resource centre for children to study, read, and engage in extra-curricular activities
- to staff the centre with trained facilitators to be responsible for administering and providing materials and technology for schools, teachers, students, and communities
- promote care for the basic needs of children, including health, food, shelter, and safety, thus providing an environment where growth and learning can occur
- build capacity among teachers and administrators to implement current best practices of teaching
- influence educational policy through participation with strategic partnerships, discussion, collaboration, and assessment within the educational sector
- solicit funding and create wealth to promote the initiative's activities and ensure sustainability

Getting Started

The project originally began in September 2010 as an after-school program operating out of St. Henry's Primary School in Kansanga. Twice a week, we brought sports equipment, art supplies, and books to the school and ran a loosely organized program with the 80-100 children who came from both St. Henry's and other surrounding schools. We soon realized that transporting equipment back and forth week after week was inefficient, time-consuming, and energy-draining, so, in November, we began to look for a rental facility out of which we could operate our programs and which would serve as a centre that would benefit the entire community. Thus were planted the seeds for the Kansanga Resource Centre (KRC) which opened in January of 2011.

In the course of researching and planning for the launch of this initiative, we had connected with a Canadian NGO (and Ugandan non-profit company, limited by guarantee) called Niteo which runs a community resource centre in Ntinda, also in Kampala. We have since partnered with Niteo to open the KRC and have attempted to model our centre after the Ntinda centre. Many of the resources used to open the KRC were generously donated by the centre in Ntinda (Eva Ruff Centre).

ni•te•o (ni tā yō) v.
shine, glitter, look bright;
be sleek/in good condition; bloom, thrive

Like children all over the world, the children of Uganda are bursting with potential. Each one represents a seed for change, hope for a brighter future. Collectively, given the right conditions, these "seeds" have the opportunity to blossom and thrive in a country which currently struggles under its heavy burden of corruption, high unemployment, and the aftermath of years of civil war. As the meaning of its name suggests, Niteo aims to partner with Ugandans to provide resources and a stimulating learning environment that will promote an active mind and a buoyant spirit in every child we meet.

