

# EDUCATION



*“Quality education that will yield greater learning outcomes requires more than just a well designed and scholarly curriculum, state of the art facilities, and abundance of books or academically well qualified and trained teachers. It is holistic and integrated.”*

- Isaac Bekalo, IIRR President

## Highlights

- Re-enrolled 3,930 kids in formal primary school and shepherd classes through the Education is Cool campaign.
- Installed solar lights in 250 schools in Kenya and Ethiopia, vastly improving student performance, especially for girls.
- Built water storage tanks in 38 schools to improve the hygiene of thousands of children and save time and energy for girls who usually travel long distances to fetch water.
- Installed climate-smart energy-saving stoves in 34 schools to save children the time-consuming chore of collecting firewood
- Increased enrollment due to 20 climate-smart classrooms, new toilets, and two dormitories accommodating 180 students. Girls now feel safer because of these new facilities and their performance has improved.
- Boosted the confidence and leadership skills of 1,395 girls who participated in summer camps.
- Reduced drop-out risk of 785 girls who received goats to help pay for their own school expenses.
- Trained 296 primary school teachers from the Philippines, South Sudan and Cambodia on school nutrition gardens (BIG). These teachers have in turn trained thousands of students, established their own gardens, and influenced communities around them to establish gardens as well.



Girls with “education is cool” campaign bags.

Quality education requires more than just a well-designed curriculum, clean and safe facilities, trained teachers, or even books. While all of these are essential, more is needed to meet the unique needs of children from pastoral communities.

Access to water allows children, especially girls, to stay in school during times of drought instead of traveling long, risky distances to fetch water. Having lights in schools enable students to read at night after completing household chores. Energy-saving stoves decrease the time children spend fetching firewood, and in turn reduce tardiness and absenteeism at school. Dormitories and hostels keep girls safe from threats of abduction or early marriages that can result from long commutes to and from school.

Attending summer camp, joining clubs, and taking part in organized sports keep children, especially girls, engaged in school, and build their assertiveness, confidence, and leadership skills. Engaging parents and gaining community support also helps remove cultural and traditional obstacles to girls’ education. And finally, when girls and young mothers are economically empowered, they learn business skills that help them become independent and realize their self-worth and dignity.

**The followings are select examples of IIRR’s accomplishments in education in 2015:**

**Water in Schools:** In 2015, 38 water storage systems (34 in Kenya and 4 in Ethiopia) were installed in schools. This has significantly increased girls’ punctuality and attendance and decreased the incidences of abduction, and other forms of gender-based violence, that normally occur when girls trek long distance to fetch water. Meals are also now being cooked with clean and safe water.



Newly installed water is key to healthy learning.

**Climate Smart Energy-Saving Stoves:** Every day, children carry firewood to school to cook meals. With energy-saving stoves, kids no longer have to carry firewood and are free from hazardous smoke. The time they used to spend gathering kindling is now spent preparing for class. The benefit to the environment is significant too, as fewer trees are being cut down for fuel. Schools have also been able to reduce their fuel wood cost by as much as 50%.

**Solar Lights:** In 2015, a total of 250 solar panels were installed (225 in Ethiopia and 25 in Kenya). This has enabled children, especially girls whose time is split between household chores and homework, to read at night. Teachers also make use of solar lights to prepare their lessons and can help student-formed study groups at night as well. Having light in schools has the added benefit of improving security for girls who are easy targets when it gets dark.

**Improved Classrooms:** In hot and humid areas, teachers often lead classes under the shade of trees to escape the heat. In 2015, IIRR built 20 new “climate smart” classrooms in Ethiopia and Kenya, which are specifically designed to stay cool. They are well ventilated and have good aeration, leading to a much more conducive learning environment. Because of the additional classrooms, enrollment increased significantly. Teachers report students are more alert and attentive and teaching is more fun and relaxed.



School stoves saves money, energy and environment



Small energy saving stoves save women's time.



Solar lights improve security for girls



Conducive learning environment in a new classroom.



**Hostels/Dormitories:** In 2015, two dorms, one each for boys and girls, were constructed and furnished in Samburu and Marabit counties of North Central Kenya. Each dorm accommodates up to 90 students. These dorms provide a safe environment for girls who are often harassed by men/boys on their way to school. By living in the dorm, girls can fully concentrate on their studies since there are no household chores occupying their time. They can also interact with fellow girls and have time for extra-curricular activities like clubs and sports, which help build their assertiveness and confidence. There is also a correlation to a reduced incidence of teenage pregnancy for girls who live in the dormitories, and the dorms also serve as Rescue Centers for girls who are under threat of being forced into early marriage within their communities.



The new boys dormitory.

Samburu country governor Hon Moses Lenolkula told the crowd upon the opening of the Lksin Primary School dormitory, *“Construction of a dormitory in this school was a very good idea by IIRR. This will reduce the high number of girls who drop-out of school, and also help increase literacy levels among the community. Empowering female students benefits to the whole community. In appreciation of IIRR’s work, the county government commits to build a boys’ dormitory to help young herder boys get an education.”*

**Girls Camps, Clubs and Sports:** Girls camps allow female students from neighboring schools and communities to meet one another and engage with role models (teachers, chiefs, police officers, nurses, members of parliament, etc.) who have come from similar backgrounds as themselves and succeeded in life. Through interactions with these mentors, girls learn valuable leadership skills and gain confidence. As a result, it has been noted they interact better with teachers and can articulate their needs to their parents and school authorities better. They have also increased their negotiation skills with parents and men who wish to marry them while they are still young. There is evidence that girls who participate in camps have reduced dropout rates and perform better than other students in national and school exams. A total of 1,395 girls participated in summer holiday camps.



Girls learn valuable leadership skills and gain confidence in a Summer Camp in Northern Kenya.

**Special Needs Education:** The Kenyan National Survey for Persons with Disabilities counts 1.3 million people living with disabilities in the country, which is 3.5% of the total population. The global average is 15%. This notable discrepancy is largely because many families hide away their children with disabilities. Of all children with disabilities who should be in school, only 39% have attended primary school and only 9% attended high school. In 2015, IIRR provided three schools in Kenya with tools to help students with special needs. These included: 40 teacher's guides for the 5 examinable subjects for each class (1-8), 14 braille machines for pupils, 19 foldable walking canes, braille sentence builders, communication boards, speech kits, wooden abacuses, counters, pegboards, 5 wheelchairs, and multiple hearing kits. Two classrooms were also rehabilitated with ramps for the visually impaired. These tools have made it much easier for special needs children to thrive in their classrooms. In Uganda, 12 girls received eyeglasses, four were fitted with lumber corsets, two boys provided wheelchairs, one girl given crutches, and two girls underwent eye surgery to restore their eyesight.

**Goats for Girls (Goats4Girls):** The Goats4Girls program is an "earn and learn" initiative that aims to provide economic opportunities for girls to stay in school while simultaneously earning an income. Each girl receives two mature goats to start their herd. They then pass on two young goats (the first born) to another girl selected by community leaders and teachers, and can sell the other kid goats to pay for school expenses and other personal needs.

In 2015, IIRR dispersed 906 goats to 453 girls, and an additional 664 goats were passed on to 332 girls by beneficiaries from previous years. As the result, 785 girls who dropped out of school, or were at risk of dropping out school, were able to continue their education.

Through the program, girls finally have control of their own destiny. And for young women who have never owned anything before, having the goats provides a unique sense of control and empowerment. In 2016, IIRR plans to expand this program to 1,000 girls in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.



Blind students in Isagargaro Integrated School using brailles provided by IIRR.



Happy Ethiopian girl with her healthy looking goats.



Kids in Philippine school proudly display the beans they have harvested.

**Healthy Eating and Healthy Learning:** When kids are hungry and undernourished, they can't concentrate on their studies. In the Philippines, IIRR has adopted the Bio Intensive Gardening (BIG) approach to support school nutrition programs in Cavite province. In addition to supplementing school feeding programs with healthy vegetables, BIG is a powerful tool to teach children and community members about nutrition, climate change, food system and the environment. In 2015, IIRR, in conjunction with partners in the Philippines, South Sudan, and Cambodia, trained 122 elementary schools teachers. Additionally, in the Philippines, 296 parents/caregivers received seed packages so they could start their own gardens at home.



Grade 5 kids learning by doing.

**In the Philippines:** The Department of Education recommended that all schools include BIG in their school gardening programs, and also encouraged each school to have a crop museum. Eleven daycare centers in two municipalities (Magallanes and General Emilio Aguinaldo) adopted BIG and nutrition training. Since then, the cost of purchasing vegetables has reduced since vegetables are readily available in their gardens, and more varieties of vegetables are available to feed their students. There has also been an increased awareness of indigenous vegetables as teachers and parents also plant gardens in their own backyards.



Althea was one of 146 under-nourished schoolchildren who joined a school supplementary feeding program where the main ingredients were fresh garden vegetables grown in school gardens. After successful intervention, she has the following to say:

*"You may say that I didn't grow bigger or taller, but eating vegetables made me active and strong and enhanced my resistance to illness. I am no longer sickly and I want to be a teacher."*

Althea is 7 years old grade 2 student in General Alona Memorial Elementary School in Cavite, Philippines.



Kids and parents learn about nutritious vegetables.

**In Cambodia:** Over 1160 lbs (530 kg) of local vegetable seeds have been harvested and distributed to eight schools, as well as monks and other community members. As more schools adopt gardens, home backyard gardens are also becoming more commonplace. An increase in the consumption of a variety of vegetables has improved the nutritional status of students, teachers, and community members. It has also been seen that students want to attend schools with gardens because the kids there are healthier.



South Sudan school students in action.

**In South Sudan:** There are 150 students organized into Farmers Field School. Children from this program are encouraging their parents to begin growing vegetables at home to both better their nutrition and earn extra income. As more families construct gardens and begin consuming a larger variety of vegetables, their nutritional status also improves. A general shift from dependency on food aid to production of food at households has also been noted. Mutayi Sylvia is a teacher and promoter of BIG at Redeemer Primary School in Juba, South Sudan. He had this to say, *“After receiving training from IRR on BIG, I was motivated to grow vegetables. I have focused on onions and Kudra, a local vegetable variety, because of its high demand in the community. Last season, I harvested two huge bags of onions. It was more than enough for my family and I was able to sell the excess and buy a female goat. My wife and children are so excited, and we are taking up vegetable growing as a business”.*