

COLUMN/AFRICA FEATURES

By SUNDAY NEWS
Reporter

MLIMANI Sumawe Secondary School computer lab was a hive of activity as excited students, dying with anticipation and fascination were introduced to the ABCs of using a computer.

“I am overly excited, though I was a little bit nervous before I was able to log in into the computer, thanks to my computer teacher,” stated 13-year-old Form Two student, Witness Emanuel when asked about her experience of using a computer, as Witness, just like several other students at the school, had never used a computer before.

Witness was part of the first batch of 20 students who were selected to access for the first time the 20 newly installed solar powered computers at their school located in Karatu District, Arusha Region.

Witness and her colleagues are the latest beneficiaries of SPARC (Solar Powered Access to Raspberry Computing) donated by Potential Enhancement Foundation (PEF) in partnership with Powering Potential Inc (PPI).

The newly installed system will enable students and teachers to access academic materials online without the need for electricity or the internet. It consists of a solar-power system, 20 user computers, a projector, a digital library, digitised Tanzanian secondary school curriculum and training for students and teachers.

The donation is part of the mission of PEF in partnership with PPI to use technology to enhance education and expand opportunities for students and teachers, especially in remote areas with limited electricity and internet.

PEF Executive Director, Eng Albin Mathias handed over the SPARC Lab to the Headmaster of Sumawe Secondary School, Mr Philemon Awe during a brief ceremony held recently in Karatu District.

“We are delighted and grateful to PEF and PPI for this donation,” said Mr Awe excitedly after the handover witnessed by a section of students and teachers from six other secondary schools in the district which are also lined up to receive the computers this year. “Installation of the system will surely transform all of us academically,” he observed, noting that he will ensure all 430 students and 29 teachers at the school benefit since all the notes and materials required by

students and teachers can easily be accessed digitally.

The Karatu District’s Statistics and Logistics Officer, Ms Brenda Mlay who represented the District Secondary Education Officer at the handover ceremony acknowledged the contribution of PEF and PPI to transform academically the remotely located schools and urged other well-wishers and sponsors to support such efforts.

“Students and teachers should fully capitalise on the computers to improve academically and ensure they are not left behind in a globalised

world,” she said, adding that the school should not take the donation for granted as numerous other schools are desperate to have such system installed at their schools but have not been as lucky.

The Executive Director of PEF, Eng Albin Mathias said of the seven secondary schools earmarked to receive the computers this year, three including Mlimani Sumawe have had the SPARC lab installed and ready for use. The other two secondary schools are Endabash and Domel. “In total we expect to install SPARC labs to 23 secondary schools

in the district in the next three years,” he disclosed.

Eng Mathias expressed hope that the system would be properly used and serve as an eye opener to most students, hence trigger tremendous improvements in their academic endeavours as well as the overall performance of the schools.

Mr Barnabas Kapange, the PEF Board Member called upon the entire school community to fully utilise the newly installed system and protect it to ensure it operates optimally and for the intended purposes.

He pledged that PEF and



Karatu District’s Mlimani Sumawe Secondary School students using solar powered computers jointly donated recently by Potential Enhancement Foundation and Powering Potential Inc.

PPI will continue to mobilise funds from donors and well-wishers to facilitate installation of more SPARC labs in remote schools in the country.

“To encourage donors and well-wishers to contribute more towards this cause, you must make full use of the readily available learning materials on the computer to improve academically,” said Mr Kapange.

For Form One Student Elfrida Constantino, flying a plane as a pilot has been her childhood dream and believes installation of the computers at the school would make learn-

ing easier and more enjoyable, hence pave way for her to realise her dreams. She is interested in science subjects, especially physics and mathematics.

“I expect to access lots of learning materials in Chemistry and Biology, which should set me on the right course to realise my ambition,” said Jenipher John, a Form Two student, who aspires to become a nurse upon completion of her studies so that she could take care of sick people in her community.

“I’m grateful for this donation and look forward to fully

maximising the installed computer programmes to improve academically,” said Form Four student, Maria Stephano who is interested in arts subjects, especially History and English.

On the other hand, Mr Mosson Kivuyo, a teacher at Mlimani Sumawe hailed PEF and PPI for the donation, noting that he expects the computers to transform the school academically.

“Students will no longer have to rely on our notes and other handouts alone since they can easily access more learning materials digitally,” he observed.

