



## The Mizizi Project

The Mizizi Project is a pilot program designed to take science education and cross-cultural learning into the 21st century by uniting students and educators on opposite sides of the globe within a single collaborative virtual learning experience. By delivering a shared science curriculum through synchronous and asynchronous video conferencing, Mizizi will create a “global classroom” enhanced by the diversity of geography, culture and perspective it encompasses.

Through Mizizi, a rural Kenyan primary school will partner with Packer Collegiate Institute, a leading New York-based preparatory school, to participate in lessons broadcast live and in real time by the New York Hall of Science. For the first time, students from both schools will take science classes “virtually” side by side via video conferencing, allowing the students a unique opportunity to engage not only with teachers from other countries, but also with classmates a cultural world away. The result will be a more complex and diverse learning experience for students and educators than would be possible within either country alone.

In addition to providing an academically rich course of study to both student bodies, the program will bring a dynamic array of educational possibilities into the classrooms and communities of both countries. Children from the North Kenyan Samburu region and from Brooklyn, New York will receive training that is increasingly necessary to participate in and benefit from the digital information age, and will be challenged with unique opportunities to think and interact in a genuinely global environment. Teachers from both cultures will develop a breadth of critical skills as they work collaboratively to conceive and implement the new curriculum. The long-term benefits of the program will be numerous and far-reaching.

Following consultation with and approval from the Kenyan Ministry of Education, the Mizizi Project will also bring graduate students to the Sereolipi Primary School to act as curriculum collaborators and learners. Trained in advance of their placement, the graduate students will assist the project administrators with the management, coordination and implementation of the program day-to-day. As a result, these students will gain first-hand experience of the practical and potential role that science and cross-cultural studies programs can play in primary schools.

Executed successfully, the Mizizi Project will offer a vivid demonstration of the transformative, unifying power of technology within and between classrooms. It will also establish the program as a pioneering and replicable model for global studies and science education.

## **Background**

The recent history of education in the remote North Kenyan Samburu region is one of potential, adversity and success. Over the last decade the number of children attending school has grown from 130 to more than 1,000, illustrating the commitment and dedication to learning of families and educators in this region.

In 2009, a team of arts educators and administrators from Packer Collegiate Institute entered into a partnership with the Ndonyo Wasin Primary School. Fourth graders from both schools participated in portrait and pen-pal exchange projects – an initiative that helped broaden cultural understanding on both sides through experiences that were personal and concrete. For most, if not all of the students, the projects provided the first real glimpse of lives that in material terms were vastly different from their own. But the projects also allowed students to discover and share an abundance of common ground between them.

Eager to expand the partnership's curricular scope and inspired by advances in telecommunications, the project's founders, Elizabeth Eagle and Liz Titone, collaborated with the New York Hall of Science to conceive The Mizizi Project.

## **Goals – 2011/2012**

In order to achieve the goal of launching The Mizizi Project, e<sup>2</sup>, the pilot's parent organization (not-for-profit status pending), is seeking funding for the following program components:

- Construction of a single technology-enabled classroom
- Broadband implementation, maintenance, and monthly service charges over a three-year period
- Installation of a solar energy power source
- Classroom furniture and supplies
- Curriculum development, teacher training fees, and supporting educational materials
- On-site ongoing technical support
- Transportation and short-term accommodations for educators, administrators and curriculum development experts from the New York Hall of Science, e<sup>2</sup>, and Packer Collegiate Institute
- Project administration

The architects and development team associated with this project welcome the opportunity to engage with prospective supporters and financial donors who share an interest in advancing the vision of The Mizizi Project.

For additional information about the initiative, please contact:  
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e<sup>2</sup> Co-Directors and Co-Founders