

# ***Education is Power Empowerment Week Programs***

The main purpose of Education is Power (EIP) empowerment week programs is to give East African high school students an opportunity to develop skills and experience that will help them become engaged community members and responsible global citizens. We focus on important aspects such as access to information and resources, leadership, self-confidence, as well as other personal skills that help people succeed in life while helping those in need and the natural environment. A major part of empowerment weeks is to facilitate volunteer opportunities within the students' community. During these weeks, there are also many opportunities for EIP East African students to receive tutoring on academic subjects that they may be struggling with. It is our aim to provide an enrichment program for students that goes above and beyond the traditional model of education.

The components of EIP empowerment weeks include:

- Workshops and activities
- Volunteering
- Tutoring sessions
- Field trips
- Ongoing mentorship

**Workshops and activities:** For 1 hour to 3 hour time periods we will conduct activities, workshops or other initiatives that focus on one the following themes (or other similar aspects): leadership, teamwork, communication, public speaking and listening skills, assertiveness, trust, creativity, compassion, access to information and resources, career guidance, critical thinking, respect, cultural diversity, peace building and conflict resolution. Activities may be led in the form as a group discussion, team challenge, outdoor activity or other appropriate means. Group reflections and debriefs will be structured into activities in most cases.

**Volunteering:** For half day periods during Empowerment Weeks we will facilitate community volunteer activities with local community groups or government agencies. All volunteering activities aim to promote environmental conservation and to improve the quality of life. In return, these volunteer contributions are aimed to foster a feeling of self-worth and respect. The aim of our volunteer activities is also to promote skill development, socialization, and fun. We strive that there will be positive benefits for the volunteer as well as for the individual or community served. It is also intended to make contacts and generate ideas for possible employment.

**Tutoring Sessions:** For half day periods EIP high school students will have tutoring assistance in academic subjects they cover in the Kenyan school system. Students are to come with specific school work that they need help with as well as specific questions on academic material that they need a better understanding of. Tutors and teachers leading the session may also decide to do group lessons or reviews on relevant material.

**Field Trips:** We aim to facilitate field trips whenever financially possible. Field trips are aimed to give students more exposure to the outside world and surrounding community, while providing insight to career paths and other opportunities. It is also a means to gain insight for solutions to complex issues that

communities are facing.

**Ongoing Mentorship:** Since EIP empowerment weeks happen on a continual basis (3 times per year), we aim to foster mentorship from post-secondary EIP students (or dedicated volunteer community members) to EIP high school students. Mentorship may happen through workshops or sometimes high school students or first year post-secondary students are paired with older or more experienced EIP post-secondary students. The main idea is that younger community members will have role models to learn from and look up to as they find ways to empower themselves and give back to their community. Currently the mentorship program is somewhat ad-hoc as we work to develop it into a more organized system where all EIP students and graduates can participate.

## **Logistics of the EIP Empowerment week programs:**

EIP Empowerment Weeks are organized by EIP past or current post-secondary students or by dedicated community members who are willing to volunteer some of their time. They will happen three times per year in accordance with the breaks of the Kenyan high school calendar. Sessions will be for one or two weeks in duration. Since EIP is a volunteer run organization we will aim to limit our budget as much as possible. We will do our best to use volunteer tutors, leaders and facilitators who will be either past or current EIP post-secondary students or dedicated community members. Volunteer tutors may receive a travel and food stipend which needs to be negotiated on the budget. When necessary we will hire affordable academic tutors or workshop facilitators who demonstrate that they strongly believe in the merit of Empowerment Weeks and EIP's mission.

## **Background:**

Education is Power (EIP), a registered Canadian charity, is a volunteer organization based in Kenya, Tanzania and Canada. EIP's mandate is to improve access to effective education for Africa's future leaders. Since its inception in 2008, EIP has enabled 72 disadvantaged East African youth to study at public schools in Kenya and Tanzania. Twenty-one of these students have been at the post-secondary level with the others at the high school level. EIP has also employed one Kenyan primary teacher since 2009. We have been running mentoring and tutoring programs since 2012. Our East African post-secondary student's help organize EIP fundraising initiatives and community awareness campaigns as well as form committees to oversee high school mentorship activities, the selection of new students, and other key organizational aspects. EIP is also involved in outreach at Canadian schools to foster community volunteerism, youth empowerment, as well as responsible global citizenship which altogether helps EIP fundraise for its programs in East Africa.

## **Defining empowerment in Education is Power's perspective:**

“Empowerment is the process of enabling people to increase control over their lives, to gain control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives, to increase their resources and qualities and to build capacities to gain access, partners, networks, a voice, in order to gain control.”

- *Definition provided by the United Nations.*

“Empowerment means to help others in the community to adopt simple but powerful skills that helps them to change the quality of their lives, it also makes them take the responsibility and have an active role in the society in a sustainable way. All this will lead to build a better world and make a positive difference.”

- *Zahra Hedaiety Executive Manager Bahrain Women Association*

“Empowerment is instilling in a person the awareness that they have the ability to take on tasks, to make a difference, to be an example to others, to contribute their talents to a cause that can benefit others. An important component of empowerment is education.”

- *Kathleen Ries Board President Unanima International*

“On an individual level we see empowerment as building confidence, insight and understanding, and developing personal skills, for example, being able to analyze situations and communicate more effectively with others. Being empowered also implies someone who cares about others and is tolerant of other's views and behaviour (within limits!)”

- *Powerful Information Grassroots International Development*

Empowerment is:

1. Having decision-making power.
2. Having access to information and resources.
3. Assertiveness.
4. A feeling that the individual can make a difference (being hopeful).
5. Learning to think critically; learning the conditioning; seeing things differently; e.g.,
  - a. Learning to redefine who we are (speaking in our own voice).
  - b. Learning to redefine what we can do.
6. Not feeling alone; feeling part of a group.
7. Understanding that people have rights.
8. Effecting change in one's life and one's community.
9. Learning skills (e.g., communication) that the individual defines as important.
10. Changing others' perceptions of one's competency and capacity to act.
11. Growth and change that is never ending and self-initiated.
12. Increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming stigma.



[www.educationispower.org](http://www.educationispower.org)

“Empower one who can empower others.”