PRESIDENTIAL DIGITAL TALENT PROGRAM 2016 QUARTERLY MEETING NATIONAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD SEPTMEBER –DECEMBER (KIRINYAGA COUNTY)

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# **1.0 INTRODUCTION ABOUT PDTP**

The Presidential Digital Talent Program popularly known as PDTP or Digitalent is an initiative which aims at building ICT management capacity within the government so as to meet its service delivery objectives to Kenyans all over the country. This transformative initiative undertaken by the ministry of ICT Is scheduled to run for 12 months where the cohorts undergo training in both the public and private sector. As with any such large undertaking, the assignment came along with many lessons and experiences that are highlighted in this report alongside various challenges that could only be conquered through the hard work, dedication and sacrifice of each and every cohort.

# **2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE PDTP JOURNEY 2016**

The Presidential Digital Talent Cohort II ICT Management Trainee Program that kicked off in the month of August 2016 marked the start of the second enrollment and dispatch of 400 talented individuals from all corners of the country who shared a passion for ICT and the technological advancement of Kenya as a whole. After its inception, the PDTP program started off with a rigorous recruitment process that ensured the onboarding of the best talents available in the country followed by in-depth and informative induction processes at the Kenya School of Government (on the goals and objectives of the program as well as public service) and the Kenya Education Management Training Institute (DLP training). Once the inductions were completed the cohorts were dispatched to their designated stations in various government offices, ministries and government institutions for a month after which we were redeployed to our respective counties of birth or residence to undertake the Digital Literacy Program for 3 months.

# **3.0 PDTP RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

The journey began when the Information Communication Technology Authority with authorization from the ministry of ICT advertised the 400 post for the interns and online applications were invited from eligible candidates from 14th Feb 2016 to 28th Feb 2016. Following a huge number of applications, 846 applicants were shortlisted and invited for an interview that was conducted in the mid July 2016 leading to the selection of the top 400 applicants.

## **3.1 APPLICATION PROCESS**

As you would expect from a government organization that seeks to spearhead the country in its adoption and utilization of ICT for its development and global marketability, the advertisement and application invitations were carried out online. The application involved the provision of personal details as well professional and academic milestones and achievements. Aside from that, it also involved the answering of a few questions aimed at accessing ones personality fit and workplace ethics and problem solving. The process was well organized, straightforward and easily accessible.

## **3.2 SHORTLISTING**

Based on the online applications and assessments, the 846 most outstanding applicants were selected out of the over 1,000 complete applications that were received and summoned for an interview. Shortlisted applicants were contacted both via email and text message.

## **3.3 INTERVIEWS AND CONFIRMATION**

Due to the large number of shortlisted applicants, the interviews ran for several days. Applicants were required to carry their original certificates and other relevant documentation that were assessed by the various panels of interviewers. The interviews were rigorous and intensive as the stakeholders of the program wanted the cream of the crop. Once the interviews were completed, the best 400 out of the interviewed 846 were selected and confirmed into the PDTP program. The successful candidates were then contacted via email and text message.

# **4.0 INDUCTION PROCESS**

Once the cohort of 400 talented ICT professionals was selected, confirmed and contacted, we were expected to undergo induction processes that would help us not only learn about what was expected of us as part of the PDTP program and getting to know one another, but also learn about the goals, objectives and scope of the program while getting to meet and interact with the various stakeholders involved in the program. We also got to learn much about how government works and what is to be expected of us as public servants during the 1 year period that the program is scheduled to take.

## **4.1 KSG INDUCTION**

The first induction took place at the Kenya School of Government (Lower Kabete, Nairobi) for one week from the 4th to the 9th of September 2016 and was attended by the 400 successful PDTP Cohort II ICT management trainees. During the induction period, the trainees were introduced to all the various heads of state within the ministry of ICT and the ICT Authority fraternity as well as all the stakeholders both in public and private sector that were involved in making the PDTP program a success. The cohort was given a lot of exposure and training from these top officials from both private and public sectors in regards to public service, goals and objectives of the program, government and private partner initiatives in regards to ICT, codes of conduct, expenditure, investment and saving of money / income among other insightful topics. The presentations were detailed and informative giving us a clearer picture of the undertaking that was ahead of us and what we were expected to achieve.

In addition to the educative and informative nature of the seminars, the cohort was also treated to team building activities and the end of each day and sumptuous meals that kept us active and rejuvenated at all times. The team building activities, while helping us to blow off some steam, also helped us interact with each other at a more personal level which helped us get to know one another and our superiors better. A lot was also learnt during these sessions as the team that was selected to lead these activities ensured that a lesson or two was taken away from each of the enjoyable exercises and challenges. Finally, after each day of activity we retreated to the quality accommodations that the capable ICT Authority team had procured for us for a good night’s rest.

### ***4.1.1 Training and Certification***

During the induction period the cohort was also assured of ICT training and certification immediately after the first three months in the public sector. We were therefore asked to express our interest in 4 different fields of ICT which the trainings were to cover. These included:

* Applications
* Networks
* Security
* Project Management

### ***4.1.2 Deployment to Ministries***

Once all the introductions, informative seminars and orientations were completed we were finally placed into different government ministries and institutions, which included the DLP initiative, according to the areas of ICT that each of has had expressed interest in. All members of the PDTP Cohort II were expected to report to their various work stations in the ministries and government institutions so as to begin the first phase of the PDTP program which was to work, learn and develop the public sector for improved service delivery to the citizens of Kenya. Once at the stations, one was expected to report to their immediate supervisor who would explain one’s duties and responsibilities in the organization as well as explain the code of conduct that was to be expected of them while working there. Once oriented and enrolled into the various ministries each cohort member was expected to work diligently in accordance to the guidelines offered both at KSG and by the supervisor at the ministries.

### ***4.1.3 Challenges at the Ministries***

The talented team of PDTP Cohort II management trainees deployed were a capable lot and once at the ministries and government institutions they were quick to put their skills into practice and their best foot forward in handling all their allocated duties. However, we did encounter some challenges along the line of duty, these included but not limited to:

1. **Relocation to the Nairobi environs.**

Some members of the cohort had to relocate from their original places of residence outside Nairobi County into the Nairobi environs so as to be in close proximity of their allocated work stations.

1. **Distance from one’s residence to the allocated work station**

For some of the cohort members who were already residing within Nairobi County, some of the allocated ministries and government institutions were located quite a distance away from where the trainees reside. This meant that they incurred huge expenses in regard to daily commute to and from their work stations.

1. **Insufficient stipend**

Considering the two challenges mentioned above and the additional deduction of the taifa laptop for those who requested for one, the stipulated stipend amount of Ksh 25,000 (ksh 19,957 after deductions) was quite a challenge to manage considering that some of the trainees have families as well as Nairobi’s high standards of living.

### ***4.1.4 Recommendations***

The PDTP program is a well-organized and structured program with clear and definitive goals that are quite feasible in nature. Having this in mind it’s a program that suffers from various challenges that can be easily overcome with careful planning, learning from past experience (cohort I) and consideration of the cohort II challenges and recommendations. Not to say that the management does not take our challenges into consideration but a bit more effort put into it would go a long way. For instance, when the cohort was asked to source for positions in the private sector for placement of the members on their own it clearly showed the unprepared nature of the management since nothing of the sort was mention during induction leaving the members of the cohort thinking that positions had already been secured for them.

## **4.2 KEMI INDUCTION**

The second induction took place at the Kenya Education Management Training Institute for three days starting from the 13th to the 15th of September 2016 and was attended by the 400 PDTP Cohort II ICT management trainees. The induction was focused on enlightening and training the PDTP management trainees on the DLP project that was underway. The trainees were fortunate enough to meet major DLP stakeholders from Moi University and Jomo Kenyatta University who have been tasked with the duty of making the Digital Literacy Program, better known by the public as the “Laptop Project”, a success. During the 3 day training period, the ICT Authority fraternity were again gracious enough to handle our nourishment and accommodation that was quite lavish.

The induction process had the trainees interacting with the DLP teaching devices first hand, learning how to operate and troubleshoot them as well as obtaining all the necessary information and guidelines on how to handle the devices safely and efficiently. At the end of the rigorous 3 day training period, the cohort had to undertake a written test to prove that they had grasped all the concepts that entail to the DLP devices and program as a whole after which certificates of participation and proof of literacy on DLP were given to the trainees.

# **5.0 DEPLOYMENT AND REDEPLOYMENT TO DLP**

In September 2016 every cohort was deployed to their respective ministry or government institution for their public sector training/internship. During this first deployment, some of the trainees were also deployed to the DLP project. Later in the month of September however, the need for more manpower in the DLP project saw a necessity to redeploy the cohorts to the forty seven (47) counties in the republic. From October 2016 to December 2016, the cohorts have mainly been in the counties making the DLP project a reality.

## **5.1 OVERVIEW OF DLP**

The Digital Literacy Program (DLP) is a Government initiative introduced in public primary schools to ensure pupils in Kenya have ability to use digital technology and communication tools in learning while also enabling teachers to use digital technologies to create and deliver learning content.

The Digital Literacy Program also popularly known as the “Laptop Project” or “Digi School Project” is one of the many government projects that are in line with vision 2030 of Kenya. The vision is aimed at actualizing Kenya’s industrialization efforts and spurring economic growth. Since vision 2030 requires us to promote a knowledge based economy, integrating ICT in the education system will easily and effectively prepare the next generation of globally competitive individuals for the digital age of the future.

## **5.2 SCOPE OF DLP NATIONALLY**

### ***5.2.1 Key Stakeholders to DLP***

The DLP program is planned to run through a multiplicity of government agencies whose main coordinator is the Ministry of ICT through the ICT Authority while the institutions that are in charge of procurement and delivery of the DLP devices are JKUAT and Moi Universities. Other government organs include the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Industrialization and Enterprise Development, Ministry of Energy & Petroleum and the National Treasury. Other stakeholders include:

* The Teacher’s Service Commission (TSC)
* The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT)
* The Kenya Primary School Heads Association (KEPSHA)
* School Boards of Management (BOMs)
* Field Officers
* Teachers
* Learners / pupils
* Parents and the community at large.

### ***5.2.2 Size of Counties / Total Number of Schools per County***

In reference to Kirinyaga county, there are a total of 198 public primary schools. Kirinyaga County is divided into five Sub-counties namely; Kirinyaga East, Kirinyaga West, Kirinyaga Central, Mwea East and Mwea West.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KIRINYAGA COUNTY | |
| KIRINYAGA CENTRAL SUB-COUNTY | **36** |
| KIRINYAGA EAST SUB-COUNTY | **47** |
| KIRINYAGA WEST SUB-COUNTY | **43** |
| MWEA EAST SUB-COUNTY | **38** |
| MWEA WEST SUB-COUNTY | **34** |
| TOTAL | **198** |

### ***5.2.3 County Crews / Teams / Quality Inspectors***

In reference to Kirinyaga county 10 quality inspectors were deployed to help out with the DLP program but later 1 got out of the PDTP program. These quality inspectors were:

***Kirinyaga East Team:***

1. Michael Kariuki Muchira

2. Eric Kang’ethe

3. Benson Karani

***Kirinyaga Central Team:***

4. Anthony Muthii

***Kirinyaga West Team:***

5. Jane Wambui

6. Kevin Wanjohi

***Mwea East Team:***

7. Dennis Kuria

8. Eric Karuri

***Mwea West Team:***

9. Bancy Mutugi

## **5.3 DLP MILESTONES**

Since the arrival of the quality inspectors to Kirinyaga County and start of their roles as quality inspectors and trainers of trainers, the table below represents all that the milestones that the capable team achieved:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total Number of POC (Proof of Concept) Schools | 3 |
| Total Number of Schools Inspected | 198 |
| Total Number of Schools Ready | 172 |
| Total Number of Schools with Devices Installed | 42 |
| Total Number of Teachers Trained | 158 |
| Distribution of Training Centers in Kirinyaga County | 5 |

*Figures in the table above represent figures in regards to Kirinyaga County Only!*

## **5.4 DLP EXPERIENCES**

The Digischool project in Kirinyaga County was launched on 18th October 2016 in an occasion held at Kibirigwi Primary, by Principal Secretary in the ministry of Education, Dr. Bellio Kipsang, among other distinguished guests.

  

From the beginning of the program, when we began our quality inspection, it was quite evident that the project was a long awaited initiative by the school heads, teachers, learners, parents and the community of Kirinyaga as a whole. Once they knew we were in the county and what we were there to do all they wanted to know was when the devices were to arrive at the schools? The school heads and fraternity were all quite cooperative and eager to be considered ready to receive the devices and therefore did their best to follow our recommendations on acquiring and constructing all that was required in order for them to be considered ready. The weather during inspection was also quite conducive since the rains had not started but the same cannot be said for the period during delivery as it was rainy and quite muddy making it hard for vehicles and motorcycles alike to traverse the sticky and slippery terrain. Transportation was readily available and only became cumbersome during the rainy season of delivery and installation.

The Kirinyaga team was coordinated by an AICTO who went by the name John Maina, a capable, committed and diligent leader who inspired us to do our best. He insisted on being involved in most of the teams’ activities after which we were all to report back to him in regards to our progress. Most schools in Kirinyaga were found to be ready and only a few were deemed to be ill prepared to receive the DLP devices. Some of those who were ready had their devices delivered by the G4S team from JKUAT who were the contractors handling the procurement and dispatch of devices as well as training of the teachers in Kirinyaga County. On delivery, a member of the JKUAT team, Doris, would join us in installing the devices and checking to ensure they were all functional after which she would take them through a short refresher course on using and troubleshooting the devices.

Later on in December, the TSC conducted DLP trainings in all sub-counties of the county that were attended by teachers from most of the schools in the region. The trainings went on for 3 days from 8th to 11th December 2016. The tutors came from the JKUAT team and we as ICTA representative and trained individuals were charged with the responsibility of presiding over the trainings as well as assisting the tutors to train and elaborate DLP concepts to the teachers.The training centers were in the following locations:

* Kerugoya Boys Secondary School (Kirinyaga Central)
* Raimu Primary School (Kirinyaga East)
* Lower Baricho Primary School (Kirinyaga West)
* Karoti Girls Secondary School (Mwea East)
* St. Augustine Boys (Mwea West)

All in all, the experiences that different quality inspectors in the Kirinyaga County region got vary from individual to individual. However, in light of all their submitted reports ,it was quite evident that the experience was as enjoyable as it was challenging. Some of those who were sent there yet Kirinyaga isn’t their county of residence got to see new places, meet new people and experience a different way of life. For those who were sent to Kirinyaga County, yet it was their county of birth or residence got the rare opportunity of bringing development to their community and have a hand in bringing visible positive change to members of their own society.

## **5.5 DLP ACHIEVEMENTS**

Through the period of October to December 2016, the team of quality inspectors in Kirinyaga County has achieved quite a lot. Primarily they were able to accomplish all that they had set out to do and leave a positive mark in the lives of the Kirinyaga County community. These achievements include:

**1. Successfully visiting and inspecting all the 198 schools in Kirinyaga County.**

The most notable achievement in Kirinyaga County was whereby the PDTPs were able to finish their quality inspection throughout the county. This in turn paved way for the rollout of devices in schools which had met the standard put in place by government.

**2. Human capacity development**

Human capacity development has also been a great achievement for the Kirinyaga County team. By the end of the year 2016, ICTA in collaboration with the contractor (JKUAT) and TSC, were able to train more than 100 teachers from all the sub-counties in the region.

**3. Delivery and installation of DLP devices in 42 schools in Kirinyaga County**

Due to the dedication of the Kirinyaga County quality inspection team in visiting and inspecting all the schools in the region in a timely manner, coupled with frequent and accurate reporting to our coordinating regional AICTO, 42 schools have already received their devices and had them installed ready for usage when schools open this January (2017).

## **5.6 DLP KEY CHALLENGES**

As with any project, the DLP program, however inspiring and ground breaking, did come with a myriad of challenges both to the team of quality inspectors as well as to the schools’ administration. These challenges included:

### ***5.6.1 School Administration Challenges***

**1. Insufficient school funds to streamline e-readiness**

Reports of inadequate resources to streamline readiness for the DLP project in schools have hit the inspectors’ ears from almost every head teacher. With claims that the allocated amount of ksh 60,000 for preparations was not adequate, some schools within the county had no classrooms while others were struggling to renovate theirs as per the set standards. Others had no suitable furniture for use in the classroom and this extended the burden to the parents and also led to these schools being counted among those that were not ready to receive the devices.

**2. Increased expenditure for school administrations**

Aside for the funds required to ensure that all measures are constructed and put in place so that a school is deemed ready to receive DLP devices, the schools have also been forced to dig deeper into their pockets so as to sustain the project. For instance, since electricity is required some schools have been forced to get connected to the national power grid. Though this can be looked upon as progress or as an advantage to the school, some school heads look upon it as another financial burden that they will have to incur even with the school budget being ever so tight. Security of the devices has also left most school administrations panicked causing them to invest in day and night watchmen, another expense they did not incur before the DLP project.

**3. Low learner to device ratio in some schools**

Some schools within the county have a huge number of class one pupils yet the delivered devices are less. Some even fear huge admission in the coming year and are worried about the few DLP resources.

**4. DLP content not being in line with school curriculums**

It was also reported from a number of head teachers that the digital learning content does not rhyme with the other syllabus taught like the *Tusome* .

### ***5.6.1 Quality Inspector Challenges***

**1. Tough terrain especially in the rainy season**

During the rainy season the terrain in the county got quite muddy due to the lack of tarmacked roads. Finding a mode of transport in some areas was very difficult. Some terrains were not accessed by motorcycles and vehicles especially when the rains started. In most cases, transport cost was high as the locals took advantage of the fact that some of the quality inspectors were new to the place and since the terrain was terrible.

**2. Finding accommodation**

Finding accommodation was another issue that some of my colleagues faced. Some sub counties are so remote to the extent that finding a house to rent was hard. However, the Kirinyaga team was resilient and finally found accommodation.

**3. Distance to Schools**

Some of the schools were in very remote places. As a result, it would take several hours just to get to one school so as to conduct a quality inspection.

**3. Poor communication from the contractor**

During delivery of the devices and installation there was poor communication from the contractor, which made the team appear disorganized. Many are the times when they claimed to make a delivery to a school on a particular day and at a particular time and yet failed. They also often refused to disclose their location during deliveries.

**4. Online update issues**

Though the online platform for updating school e-readiness status information was later updated, the platform was quite buggy and missed a lot of information on various schools. Some schools had similar ID identifiers which caused various information on some schools to be redundant and overwritten by different quality inspectors in the country.

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT DLP**

The DLP program is a ground breaking initiative that can change the country for the better. In light of this and based on our experience on the ground as quality inspectors, there are a few recommendations that we would suggest in order to make the program more successful. For instance, more resources need to be pumped from other sources in regard to the need of some schools within Kirinyaga County so as to ensure smooth preparing and implementation of the DLP project. The delivery and installation of the devices should be done as soon as the teachers are trained so as to give them an opportunity to immediately apply the skills learnt. This will improve the grasp of the system by the teachers and reduce the need for numerous refresher courses.

Proper communication especially on the contractor’s end should also be established. The head teachers should be given information on time, concerning teacher’s training, gadgets maintenance/installation and delivery. Finally, the digital content should be developed in line with other supplementing syllabus curriculum like Tusome so as to ensure efficient learning.

# **6.0 CONCLUSSIONS**

In conclusion, the PDTP and DLP programs are both great government initiatives with the potential of changing the live of the Kenyan people for the better. The journey has been an educative, informative and enjoyable one with challenges that have brought out the best in all the members of cohort II. All stakeholders involved in both projects have also been of great help and support proving that they are just as eager to see them succeed. The DLP project is one of the greatest milestones in education that will transform the education sector in Kenya by equipping the learners, right from their young age, with skills and knowledge necessary for the digital age and it was a privilege to be a part of it. We can’t wait for the next assignment we are given as the PDTP cohort II consortium.