

Gemin-i.org Annual Report

Charity registration number: 1122931

April 2008 - March 2009

gemin-i.org
LEARNING THROUGH CONNECTING

Introduction from our Chief Executive

Recent world events have led to increased international tensions. Now, more than ever before, it is essential that young people grow up with a strong cross-cultural understanding, knowledge of international issues and an awareness of the role they can play as individuals to promote change.

As an organisation we are passionate about using innovative technology to connect young people around the world, to help them better understand each other and the issues they jointly face growing up in a global society, and to provide them with an opportunity to voice their concerns on issues which matter to them.

The last twelve months have been a hugely exciting time for Gemin-i.org. During this period our work has revolved around our three social enterprises - Rafi.ki, Webtools and Reflections. Over the last twelve months we have significantly scaled up our work and we are currently running projects with young people from more than 100 countries.

Through Rafi.ki, our online learning community, we are now helping teachers and students from more than 1,300 schools worldwide to work together on educational projects which are increasing understanding of pressing global issues and helping to build skills across the curriculum.

To finish - a big thank you to everyone we have worked with over the last year - students, teachers, partners, and all who have supported our projects.

Henry Warren
Chief Executive

Values

- We pride ourselves in developing and delivering quality programmes and services.
- We are responsive to the needs of stakeholders.
- We value young people's voices and believe in their capacity to promote change.
- We believe in the potential of innovative ICT usage to bridge the digital divide.
- We believe in dispelling cultural myths and stereotypes through communication.
- We strive to work with other organisations rather than in competition with them.
- We work at giving disadvantaged or excluded groups a voice.
- We embrace open, honest and effective communication.
- We value the essential contributions of staff and volunteers.
- We embrace change and pursue rigour in our actions.
- We respond to external environments and continually seek ways to improve.

History, objectives and activities of the charity

Our work started on a very small scale in 1997, giving talks to schools in the East Anglia region of the UK. The talks were informal and contained large elements of audience participation.

In exchange for these talks the schools kindly provided us with their second hand textbooks and the money to ship them to Africa. These were vetted for suitability and then shipped by container.

On arrival they were distributed to schools by our partners in the field.

Now, we have grown away from books and build innovative web based solutions to improve education in developing and developed worlds. As an organisation we work at bridging cultural, religious and digital divides between disparate peoples around the world. We also specialise in using technology to give a voice to those who rarely have one, raising their concerns with policy makers and ensuring they are adequately represented. To date, we have run dozens of projects in over 100 countries across the world and involving tens of thousands of pupils.

Mission

Gemin-i.org develops and implements innovative and accessible web-based solutions to empower, educate and inspire young people using collaborative learning environments to facilitate the exchange of ideas between them.

Vision

To ensure future generations understand and experience diversity across the world and that through education, young people will comprehend the nature of conflict arising through lack of understanding.





Educational Projects - Rafi.ki

Rafi.ki - our global online community for schools - has grown significantly over the last 12 months. It is now being used by more than 1,300 secondary schools in 109 countries! Teachers and students are using the site to form links with other schools around the world, and to work together on global projects.

Students and teachers use Rafi.ki's simple web design tools to create their own personal pages, which they share with

partner schools. They then use Rafi.ki's communication tools to talk to their peers from other schools around the world.

In the last year, Rafi.ki has also hosted more than 33 educational projects which are helping young people understand the many challenges they face growing up in a global society. This means everything from climate change to global health, and from conflict resolution to migration.

The impact

Rafi.ki is currently undergoing an evaluation in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University. This is revealing the impact we are having on young people around the world. Our 2008 report told us that:

- Rafi.ki is significantly increasing knowledge of world issues among 81% of participating students.
- Over half of all students on Rafi.ki are in regular contact with online friends from at least 6 different countries.
- Over 300 messages are sent every day on Rafi.ki.
- 96% of participating teachers say that Rafi.ki adds to the motivation of the most disengaged learners.
- 91% of students on Rafi.ki use the site at school and at home.
- 62% of students said that participation in Rafi.ki had influenced their thinking about future work choices.

Example project: Cold Shoulder

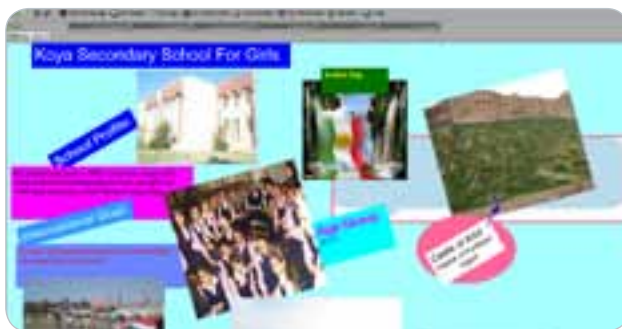
Ann Steventon, a Rafi.ki teacher from Moat Community College in Leicestershire has been leading on the Cold Shoulder project, which tackles social exclusion and encourages students to think about why some groups in society are ignored. This has formed the basis for a larger Rafi.ki project called Diverse Links, which is being supported by the Rayne Foundation.

Schools are working together on this project to share case studies and learn how excluded groups in society can differ from country to country. Those involved include schools from the UK, Georgia, Morocco, France, Poland, Spain, Italy, Bangladesh, Greece, The Gambia and Serbia.



School links between Iraq and London

Currently, our most active users outside the UK are in Iraq. The Central Foundation Girls' School in Tower Hamlets is working with the Koya Secondary School in Iraq. Students from both schools are using Rafi.ki's instant messaging tools to discuss a range of issues, including attitudes to the invasion of Iraq. Students are enjoying meeting people online from different backgrounds, and having their preconceptions challenged.



Students with special educational needs

"Eddie B" from Essex in the UK, has been one of our most active users this year. Eddie, who has atypical autism, manages the "School Yard" area of the site. He says,

"My time on Rafi.ki has been excellent. I have made loads of new friends and I communicate with people around the world."

Rafi.ki removes obstacles facing students with special educational needs by giving them the confidence and motivation to develop their learning at a pace that suits them. By enabling a child to learn with others from a wide range of different countries about many different topics, learning becomes a different experience altogether, it becomes fun.

"It is without question that Rafi.ki has had an extremely positive effect on Eddie's social development and confidence. He has been able to use his natural affinity with technology to reach out and interact with other young people without the restrictions placed on him by conventional face to face communication."
Melanie Hopgood, Eddie B's ICT teacher

What's the best thing about Rafi.ki?

We asked the students on Rafi.ki what they like best about the site:

"I like the pages you can make."

"It's fun to make new friends from around the world."

"You can ask about a country you don't know much about."

"I like getting to know more about the world in a fun way because in schools it's usually no fun."

And as one of our teachers told us:

"They [students] now understand better that other people exist as well...it has helped a lot with bringing the outside world into contact."

Awards in 2008/2009

- **March 2009:** Rafi.ki was the Winner of an Educational Resources Award for 21st Century Learning Environment.
- **January 2009:** Rafi.ki was a finalist in the BETT Awards Secondary Digital Content category.
- **May 2008:** Rafi.ki was awarded a diploma for excellence in the use of information technology for international development, in the education category of the Stockholm Challenge.





Educational Projects - Rafi.ki Kidogo

In January, with support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Cisco Foundation and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, we launched Rafi.ki Kidogo - the online learning community for primary schools around the world.

The community is growing fast and already has more than 200 schools worldwide, working together on educational projects.



“Rafi.ki is such an amazing site. I love it... we can connect to other countries - that is really helpful.”

Raz A, Koya Secondary School, Iraq

Educational Projects - Reflections

Reflections is a software tool for critical self reflection and teacher training for use in the classroom and teacher training institutions. The Reflections kit consists of a laptop and webcams, which allow teachers to record and playback their classes from multiple angles. As well as being a teacher training tool, it is used to assess pupil progress and to structure a personalised learning environment for students.

In 06/07 we piloted a very basic version of the software which was tested in conjunction with Manchester Metropolitan University. The results were very positive, and using this data we sold 100 licences to schools in Manchester and then developed a fully working version.

In 08/09 we took on a Director to take the product to market properly. The product was well received and we sold many more licences to educational institutions across the UK. Following a strategic review in the final months of 08/09, during which we discussed how we can best use our resources to achieve our mission, it was decided that we should focus our efforts on Rafi.ki and Webtools, where we can achieve our charitable objectives on a global scale. We therefore decided that we should look for a partner to whom we could license out the Reflections software; this process is currently underway as we move into 2009/2010.

Educational Projects - Webtools

Through our Webtools social enterprise, we have in previous years created numerous different bespoke products for partner organisations, from websites to complex online communities.

Each of these has helped another organisation use innovative technology to connect with their stakeholders. In doing this we have fulfilled our charitable objectives whilst also creating a sustainable funding stream.

In 08/09 we changed Webtools slightly to take advantage of the success of Rafi.ki. Whereas previously we had built stand alone tools, it became apparent that there was real value in hosting other organisations' projects and educational resources within Rafi.ki.

During the year we have worked with a number of organisations including Channel 4, Médecins sans Frontières, and the British Red Cross.

Gemin-i.org Fundraising

Events

In what was The Sucata Run's (www.sucatarun.com) third year in the making, it seemed fitting that the charity's annual summer fundraising event would eclipse its predecessors and be the BIGGEST ever.

We had more garishly decorated £250 bangers rattling their way down to mainland Europe's most westerly point than ever seen before (over 50 in total) and some of the greatest fancy dress ever donned by Sucateers.

However, most importantly 08/09 Sucata Run saw the setting of a new fundraising record with an astonishing £90,000 raised by those teams who took part. A huge THANK YOU to you all and an extra special thanks to our top ever Sucata fundraisers, The Banghera Knights, who contributed a whopping £7028.93 to that total.

The income generated from the event helped pay towards the Rafi.ki "Blood Diamonds" project, which will enable students to explore global interdependencies. This will be launched later on this year.



Accounts Summary

		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2009	Total 2008
		£	£	£	£
Incoming Resources					
<i>Incoming Resources from charitable activities:</i>					
Educational projects		83,481	376,837	460,318	167,168
<i>Incoming resources from generated funds:</i>					
Events		98,684	-	98,684	54,564
Recharges		27,550	-	27,550	10,120
Bank Interest		301	-	301	-
Total incoming resources		210,016	376,837	586,853	231,852
Resources Expended					
<i>Cost of generating voluntary income:</i>					
Fundraising expenditure		60,780	-	60,780	70,605
<i>Charitable Activity:</i>					
Educational projects		237,472	178,987	416,459	214,853
Governance costs		33,731	-	33,731	24,549
Total resources expended	3	331,983	178,987	510,970	310,007
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources	2	(121,967)	197,850	75,883	(78,155)
Transfer of assets from Africa Bookcase		158,447	-	158,447	-
Funds at 31 March 2008		-	-	-	236,602
Funds at 31 March 2009		£36,480	£197,850*	£234,330	£158,447

*Much of these restricted funds are allocated towards core operational costs for Rafi.ki and Kidogo

Moving Forward To 2009/2010

As we move into 2009/2010 we want to build on the successes we have had this year and we have ambitious plans! We will be moving offices and growing our team of staff and interns.

Our key priorities over the next year are to:

- Scale up Rafi.ki and Kidogo to reach many more young people around the world. This will include improving our technology to help schools in remote areas join our programmes. Only 21.9% of the world's population currently have access to the internet which means that a significant number of young people around the world are not able to engage in online learning. Over the next year we will be looking at ways in which we can use innovative technology and connectivity solutions which will enable children in remote areas to connect and learn with other students around the world.
- Build more partnerships with like-minded organisations through our Webtools programme. We have a number of exciting projects in the pipeline, and we will be working with a range of partners.
- Create additional educational projects within Rafi.ki to cover more global themes. We have already secured support from a number of donors including the Department for International Development.
- Develop our evaluation programme so that we can continue to measure the impact of our work in a meaningful way.
- Ensure continued and sustainable financial growth by increasing the income we generate through social enterprise.

Thank You

We are hugely grateful to all organisations who have generously awarded us grants. Without your support we would not be able to reach the tens of thousands of young people involved in our projects.

In 2008/09 we received grants from:

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation • Rayne Foundation • Cisco Foundation • Department for Children, Schools and Families
Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Settlement • Arnold Burton 1998 Charitable Trust • Brian Mercer Charitable Trust
Coutts and Co. Charitable Trust • Edward Vinson Charitable Trust • WW Spooner Trust

Gemin-i.org

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