

# Executive Summary

## Company Profile

### Management:

Faraja Kotta Nyalandu, ED  
Lyric Doshi, Acting CTO  
Iku Lazaro, General Manager  
Fatma Said, Finance Director

### Industry:

Educational Technology

**Number of Employees:** 14

### Main Office:

Dar es salaam, Tanzania

### Branch:

Nairobi, Kenya

### Contact:

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Shule Direct's goal is to provide local and accessible digital educational content for young learners across Tanzania and Africa to improve their learning outcomes. We are working with qualified teachers to create digitized learning notes, tutorials, quizzes and multimedia content and developing technological solutions to deliver comprehensive curriculums on web and mobile solutions.

## 1.1 Introduction:

Shule Direct delivers web and mobile platforms as supplementary and alternative solutions to the knowledge and information divide for Secondary School students. We offer the entire Secondary School curriculum, Life Skills and Financial Education content on a Web platform, a Mobile Application for android and iOS, an SMS platform and an offline Learning Management System. Initial early effort in content build and structuring of our digital content repository has enabled us to use it for current platforms and into the future for variety of different platforms and applications without recreating our content.

Students and Teachers can subscribe on Shule Direct online platforms on any mobile device and license the Shule Direct offline Learning Management System developed exclusively for computer labs in schools.

## 1.2 Problem/Solution:

Governments, parents and schools in Africa strive to provide quality education for their children and youth. Over 16 million children are not in school. 7 out of 10 Secondary School teachers are absent in rural Tanzania. Every year millions of children are not able to progress to Secondary School and over 60% of those who did, fail their Secondary School national examination. Budget constraints, low family income levels, harmful

traditions, gender discrimination, geographical and physical disabilities make the promise of quality education for all difficult.

Educational technology offers an effective and efficient solution to bridge the educational resources divide by providing access to qualified educational content, available to learn at an individual pace, anytime and anywhere. In the last three years, Shule Direct has had more than 1 million users accessing the local Secondary School curriculum, engaging with a virtual teacher and other learners and testing their comprehension via thousands of quizzes.

Current alternative learning solutions do not provide local content that can enable students to fill the educational gaps due to absent teachers or lack of libraries so that they can do well in their national exams and beyond. Most students therefore resort to tuition classes to learn after school hours, but these informal learning settings are not regulated and there is no quality assurance of the subject matter. Girls, if they are able to attend are often subjected to risky behaviors, otherwise this is not an option due to domestic chores and other family responsibilities.

Shule Direct solves these challenges by creating content that is local, developed according to the national curriculum and monthly market surveys of users' learning needs that can be accessed anytime and anywhere on available devices. A student can learn on a feature phone or a laptop from content that is developed by qualified teachers and reviewed by the Ministry of Education. This not only gives them an opportunity to learn at their own pace but also meeting their learning needs overcoming their gender, geographical, disability, cultural or income challenges.

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## 1.3 Market Need and Opportunity:

Educational Technology offer more impact per dollar than any other form of alternative or supplementary learning. An e-book for an updated syllabus can get to a students' hands faster than what it would take for the physical book. The e-learning industry in Africa is growing rapidly highly favoured by the growing average mobile penetration rate at 80%.

Shule Direct is currently targeting Secondary School students and teachers where the market in Tanzania alone is almost 2 Million, with over 10 million when we include the 5 African countries Shule Direct plans to reach. At a conversion rate of just 10%, this provides an opportunity to improve the learning outcomes of over 1 million young learners in the region enabling them to realize their potential.

## 1.4 Competitive Advantage:

**Local Content:** Shule Direct learning platforms develop and provide local content that is addressing market needs and filling an existing gap. We develop content in consultation with the users and the stakeholders involved in the ecosystem. This enables us to always be in demand and retain users as much as gathering new ones.

**Contextual User Experience:** Shule Direct's interfaces are simple and easy to use. Emphasis is placed on having a user experience that takes into account the digital skills level of the users and provision of content in formats that can support access such as the HTML text based content. We grow with our particular users and their technology advances and not just market technology advances. As we are moving to multimedia, it is in response to projected users' behaviours and preferences. We also enhance the users' experience with integrated artificial intelligence that is provided on the interfaces as study guides.

**Repository Technology:** Shule Direct's educational content repository and its Application Programmer's Interface (API) enables organization and management of potentially massive amounts of information and resources. Content can be added, amended and restructured without messing with the user interface (UI).

**Traction:** Shule Direct launched operations in June 2013, from December 2013 to December 2018, its premier platform [www.shuledirect.co.tz](http://www.shuledirect.co.tz) has had over 1,500,000 million users and more than 25,000 registered teachers; Shule Direct is also available as a Mobile Application for android software and iOS with over 85,000 downloads in total. Makini SMS, Shule Direct's premier offline platform, is an SMS learning and revision platform for all types of phones, where over 70,000 subscribers access unlimited quizzes, short lessons and a virtual teacher. Recently, we have developed an offline Learning Management System for schools equipped with students and teachers dashboards for content creation support and access to learning resources currently licensed in 80 secondary schools in Tanzania.

## 1.5 Growth and Scalability:

Each of Shule Direct learning platforms is designed for scalability and can be replicated easily in other countries with desired content. We are expanding beyond Secondary School education, our technology can easily be applied to other education and learning needs. Entering these other learning levels will position Shule Direct as a premier provider of relevant digital content in Africa.

### About Ndoto Hub

Ndoto Hub which is a branch of Shule Direct, is an innovation hub that seeks to create a conducive working and learning environment for aspiring women entrepreneurs in Tanzania. The mission of Ndoto Hub stems from the systemic education and gender inequities present throughout the country. The education system is both inaccessible and inadequate, especially for women, and under-prepares young women for the workforce. Furthermore, for the young women who are fortunate enough to finish their secondary education, the entrepreneurial environment in Tanzania is male dominated and women remain excluded. There is evidence that the use of online learning and the presence of innovation hubs has the power to

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bridge gaps in education and catalyze innovation. With this evidence as a foundation, Ndoto Hub has a vision to mend these societal transgressions and empower women through access to entrepreneurial skills for personal and professional growth.

Ndoto Hub's long term goal is to create a sustainable and collaborative environment to propel the next generation of women entrepreneurs. Ndoto Hub offers a 8-week business curriculum. Currently, 3 cohorts have graduated through Ndoto Hub in its first year curriculum. Over the next 5 years, Ndoto Hub aims to refine the curriculum and sustain 6 cohorts a year, as well as launch an online platform to increase access to the hub's resources. Similar to Shule Direct, Ndoto Hub has the potential to build up their community, and Tanzania as a whole, through their delivery of education and specialized business skills to allow Tanzanian women to empower themselves through self-efficacy.

## **1.6 Management:**

Shule Direct is led by a wholistic management team covering diverse skills to provide solutions that meet the varying needs of the market. The Executive Director Faraja Nyalandu has vast experience in community development and human rights, Lyric Doshi currently acting Chief Technology Officer, is working part time with Shule Direct while working full time with Google in California as a Systems Engineer. Lyric has been Shule Direct's CTO since 2014 and is currently transitioning to Shule Direct's Advisory Board. Iku Lazaro the General Manager is an experienced Project Management professional having worked in Telecommunications in East Africa and Fatma Said the Finance and Administration Director has a Masters of Science in Finance and Tax Administration.

The Management of Shule Direct is also governed by an Advisory Board made up of a group of professionals covering a range of expertise including Technology, Finance and Investment, Human Centered Design, Marketing and Communications. The board is made up of 5 individuals out of which 3 are women and 2 men with ranging nationalities and backgrounds.