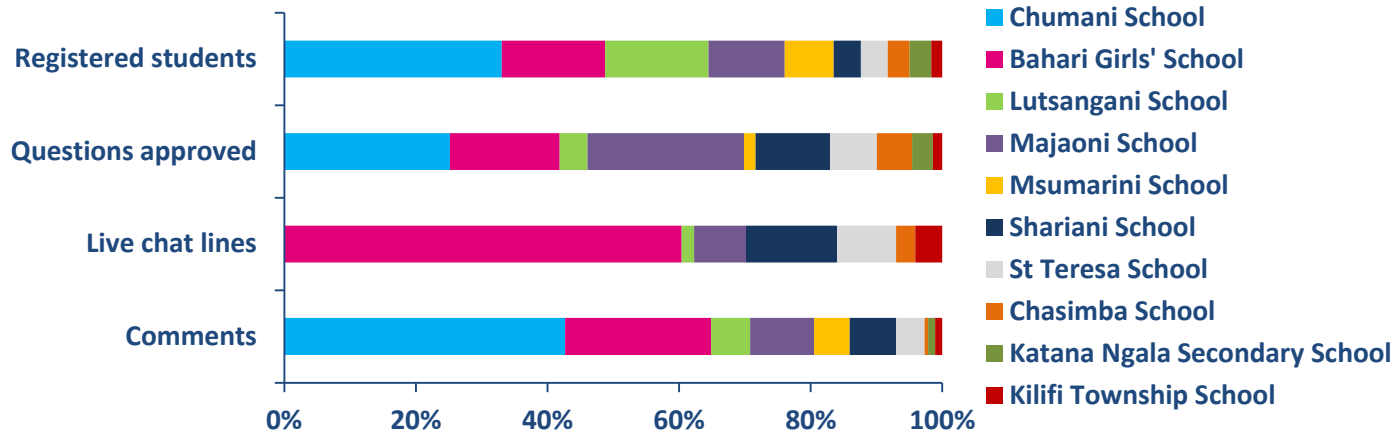
September-October 2014

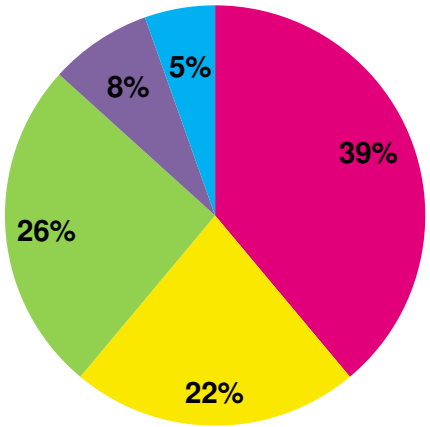
This is the first time we've run I'm a Scientist in Kenya. And it's been a pleasure. The format worked, the students were hungry for information – and kept outstanding spelling both during the chats and in the questions– and the scientists were very enthusiastic about the event. We introduced several modifications to overcome the connectivity challenge: teachers could bulk-upload students' questions, votes could be registered by email, we adapted our website to be more phone friendly, and most of the chats were done through the teachers or with groups of students sharing one computer.

School data at a glance

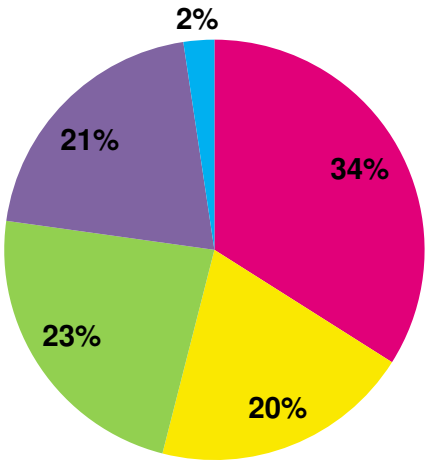


Scientist activity

Answers



Lines of live chat



Scientist profile	Page views	Position
Priscilla Ngotho	364	Winner
Melissa Kapulu	376	2nd
Dorcas Kamuya	218	3rd
James Otieno	238	4th
Moses Kiti	195	5th

Number of page views during the event (plus previous week)

HEALTH ZONE	PAGE VIEWS
Total zone	10,400
ASK page	1,412
CHAT page	795
VOTE page	674

Key figures from I'm a Scientist Kenya September- October 2014

	HEALTH ZONE
Registered students	136
% of active students (used ASK, CHAT, VOTE or commented)	86%
Questions asked	487
Questions approved	282
Answers given	203
Comments	89
Votes	298
Lines of live chat	1,051
% of students who asked questions	82%
Live chats	10
Schools	10

Popular topics

There was a lot of interest in infectious diseases. The students wanted to learn more about Melissa's and Priscilla's research on the malaria parasite. The students asked questions about our body, the differences between males and females, sexually transmitted diseases, birth control, and sexual health in general.

There were also general science questions about the world that surrounds us, like "*Why is the sky blue" "Why do people yawn?" "Where does the salt in the sea come from?*", and questions about controversial topics, like cloning or processed foods.

Chat

Keywords from live chats in the zone (the size of the word represents its popularity)

Ask ?

Keywords of questions asked in the zone

Keyword	Number of times
Body	15
Virus	11
Cause	11
Work	9
Disease	8
Female	7
Colour	6
Male	6
Food	6
Malaria	6
Effect	6
Cure	6
Human	5
Scientist	4
Sleep	4
Aids	4
Birth	4
Gender	4
Mosquito	4
Size	4
Birth control	4
Death	4
Blood	3
Drug	3
Discovery	3

Example questions
"Do researchers have babies and if so do their babies grow to become researchers?"
"Why do scientists encourage the use of contraceptives yet they know they have effects?"
"What causes elephantiasis"
"What causes albinism?"
" is it true that deep kissing reduces the chances of a person to be affected by mouth cancer?"
"How is DNA test done using hair?"
"What are the various evidence of organic evolution?"
"What is the cause of Ebola? "
"Can plastic surgery remove wrinkles on face?"
"How does mosquitoes relate with malaria?"
"Do plants with purple leaves carry photosynthesis"
"Is it normal to dream every night?"
"What is an internship?"
"What is your best invention?"
"What's genetic engineering? How can genetic engineering be applied in the current society?"

Examples of good engagement

All of the scientists had a passionate and engaging tone, they were open and ready to clarify misconceptions and answer all types of questions, even those involving social or ethical issues.

> *"A husband and wife have 4 girls. what can they do to increase chance of their fifth child being a boy"* – 228heaa28, student

> "*Scientifically the man determines the gender of the child. Humans carry 46 chromosomes, 22 pairs (44 chromosomes) are autosomal and 1 pair (2) are sex chromosomes. The two sex chromosomes are either XX for females and XY for males. That means only the father can give the Y chromosome hence determine the gender of the baby. Therefore it all seems to happen by chance, that the baby either gets the X chromosome from dad and is a girl (XX) or gets a Y chromosome and is a boy (XY). All the other theories going round about how things like diet, time of conception etc have not been scientifically proven."* – Priscilla, scientist

Certain students also asked very personal questions, related to their own health conditions and personal concerns, and the scientists were quick to give advice and direct the towards the right place to follow up. For instance, when a student asked *"I am addicted to drinking alcohol and I would wish to stop drinking, what should I do to stop it?"* , Melissa explained how addiction can be very harmful and recommended visiting a local drug abuse clinic.

Scientist winner: Priscilla Ngotho

Priscilla's plans for the prize money: "*We have an ongoing school engagement program and I would support a group of high school students to come and have a day in our labs to see a typical day in a research lab and maybe have a chat over lunch with some of the scientist."*

Student winner: Mariana

For asking great questions demonstrating both impressive knowledge and curiosity and having read the scientists' profiles, Mariana will receive a 3,000KSh voucher and a certificate!

Feedback

We're still collecting feedback from teachers, students and scientists but here are a few of the comments made during the event…

''*Before I'm a Scientist I thought all scientists were white people, now I know we have scientists in our local community"* – student.

"The chat was so educative. Keep it up, it inspires the young generation to know more about science." – teach399a, teacher

"Wow, at long last…the question which has been eating up my mind has been answered." – Achievers, student.

"Excellent you have really taken me somewhere in terms of knowledge." – Evard, student