

BREATHING ON EMBERS

Hundreds of millions of young people are growing up amid severe hardship. Crisis response feeds, houses and protects young people, and it should. But far less is done to address the crisis they carry inside.

In the Dzaleka Refugee camp in Malawi, one of the harshest environments imaginable, we found a group of teenagers who rediscovered one of the oldest human tools for emotional survival. Poetry.

*"Poetry is like breathing
healing words to people."*

— Nyota Ephraise
17 year-old poet in Dzaleka



WHY POETRY?

For over four thousand years, ordinary people used poetry to make sense of life and keep going. It costs nothing to begin. And for young people it offers a way for them to say:

**This is what I feel,
this is what I have lived,
and this is who I am.**

EMOTIONAL SURVIVAL

Survival is more than basic needs. Young people also carry crushing emotional weight. And when there is no one to help carry that weight, and mental health support is out of reach, it does not simply disappear. It often turns into harm, directed inward or outward. Emotional survival is a real need.

BREATHING ON EMBERS MISSION

**ENGAGE MILLIONS OF YOUNG
PEOPLE FACING HARDSHIP
IN POETRY AS A SHARED
PRACTICE FOR EMOTIONAL
SURVIVAL.**

The Poetry For Survival Kit (PSK)

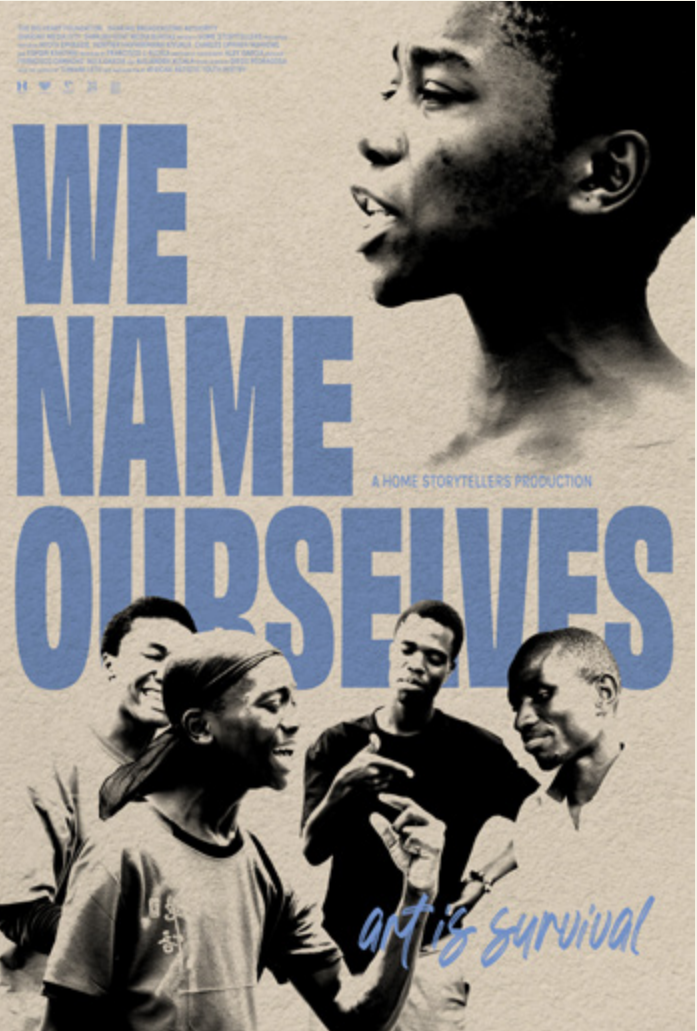


WHAT IS IT?

A digital first guided creative experience hosted by the young poets from Dzaleka. Participants enter through the film We Name Ourselves, then move through six short modules: witnessing, reading, writing, voicing, sharing, performing. The film tells the story. The Kit lets the audience step into it.



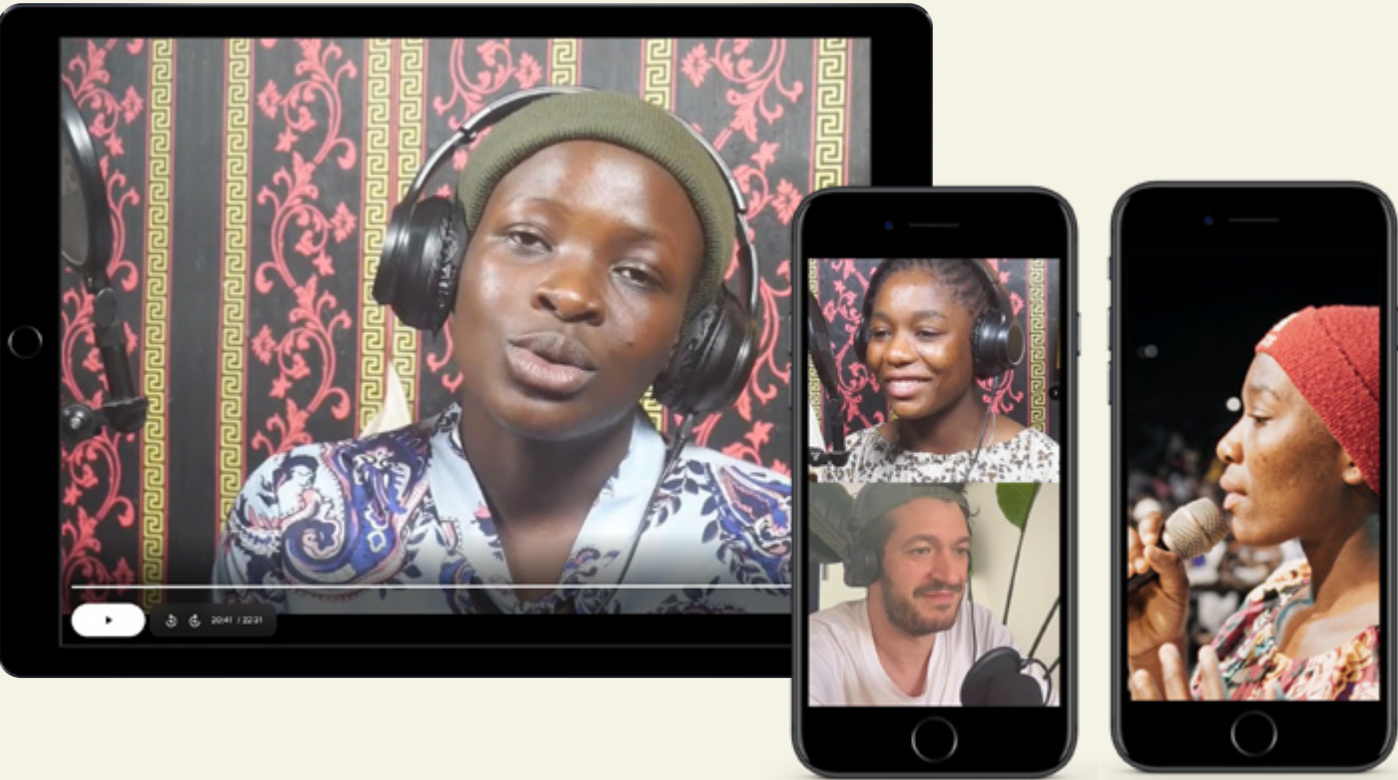
INSIDE THE KIT



THE FILM

Brings credibility and emotional engagement to the PSK experience, showing the practice already thriving in Dzaleka and introducing the 10 voices behind it. It is an integral part of the product.

6 MODULES — 10 VOICES



Witnessing, Reading, Writing, Voicing, Sharing, and Performing



The PSK is not a poetry class...
It is an invitation to begin.
To find a voice for what remains silent.
Taught through lived experience.

BENEFICIARIES

The PSK is designed for young people around the world facing severe hardship. It is distributed as a free tool to improve their mental wellbeing and continue with courage.

SUPPORTING AUDIENCE

People around the world drawn to creative practice, social impact, and mental wellbeing purchase the PSK and gain access to a meaningful practice in return.

Belonging is a two way road.

The PSK connects marginalized communities with audiences worldwide, not only bringing opportunity in, but carrying knowledge, creativity, and lived experience out into the world.





PHASE	FOCUS	TIME	TIME
● PRACTICE & ORIGIN	Dzaleka Refugee Camp	Document the lived experience of young poets who have already created and sustained a youth-led poetry community.	2024 - 2025
● PRODUCT DESIGN	Build the model (PSK + Complete Community Experience)	Turn the Dzaleka practice into a structured, repeatable experience.	2026 Module 1 & 2: October Module 3 & 4: November Module 5 & 6: December
○ PROOF OF CONCEPT	Kakuma Refugee Camp Pilot	Test the model with partner(s).	2027
○ LEARN & REFINE	Evidence + Model 2.0	Measure results and refine the model.	2027
○ INITIAL ROLLOUT	Multiple Communities	Implement the model in new communities through local partners.	2028
○ REPLICATION & SCALE	Partner Network	Expand through a growing network of delivery partners. Lower-cost expansion and stronger local ownership.	2028
○ LONG TERM ECOSYSTEM	Youth-led continuity	Enable participants to become practitioners and leaders.	2028

The Pilot

WHERE?

The pilot will be implemented in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. Existing infrastructure, an English speaking population, and a large, diverse community make Kakuma an ideal environment to test and refine the model..

WHAT WE AIM TO PROVE

1. THE PRACTICE TRANSFERS

Poetry improves mental wellbeing beyond Dzaleka Refugee Camp.

2. THE DELIVERY MODEL IS EFFICIENT

The PSK can be delivered efficiently beyond Dzaleka Refugee Camp.

LET'S PROVE IT TOGETHER

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Research and learning partners to measure outcomes and strengthen the evidence base
- Program Design Partners
- Funding partners to support pilot

Building bridges of belonging through storytelling

We elevate underrepresented voices, attract resources, and turn global attention into locally defined opportunities, while ensuring that knowledge and value flow from marginalized communities to the wider world.



CONTACT INFO

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