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## **PAS Kenya Reaches Out to the Swahili Coast during Black History Month**

U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Henry Mendelsohn spearheaded a week long Muslim outreach/Black History Month series of programs to the Swahili coast of Kenya February 20 – 24, 2012. During the week Mendelsohn taught 3 half day workshops on Effective Internet Search Skills and Introduction to the eLibraryUSA, Inaugurated an Islam in America/Black History Month 2012 poster show at the Kenya National Museum – Malindi, and spoke to 3 secondary schools about the US civil rights movement.

Two of the three internet workshops reached over 40 Malindi school teachers, librarians, NGO leaders and students and the third included over 50 faculty members at Pwani University, a new university located in Kalifi, Kenya. The workshops were timely because of the Government of Kenya's initiative to install computers and Internet access at public schools. One school teacher who participated is in charge of the new computer/internet center at the Kibokoni Secondary School, Malindi. The workshops for the Malindi school teachers and librarians were organized in partnership with the Malindi Education and Development Association, a Muslim NGO that focuses on community and educational development programs.

Mendelsohn inaugurated Islam in America/New Black Leaders poster shows at the Kenya National Museum – Malindi on February 21. The inauguration drew leading Imams and city elders all of whom expressed surprise at the scope and breadth of the Islamic community in the United States. The poster shows will circulate to other Kenya National Museums in Gede and Mombasa before residing permanently at the American Corner Lamu.

Finally, Mendelsohn spoke about the US Civil Rights movement and the contributions of African American women to US history to over 800 students at three secondary schools including the coeducational Kibokoni Secondary School, the all male Malindi High School, and the all female Islamic Ummul Qura Senior Girls High School. The latter program also included local Microscholarship Access students, both male and female. Although most Kenyan students have heard of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., most knew little about the American Civil Rights movement and asked many pertinent questions and attempted to assimilate the lessons learned into the Kenyan struggle for independence and human rights.



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