





Kenya
Red Cross

Our Vision

A leading humanitarian organization sustainably promoting the well-being, health and resilience of communities.

Our Mission

We facilitate communities to respond to humanitarian emergencies to alleviate human suffering and work with partners to implement innovative community driven programmes That transform lives and enhance community resilience.

Core Values



**SERVICE TO
HUMANITY**



ACCOUNTABILITY



**COMMUNITY
CENTERED**



INCLUSIVITY



INNOVATION

OUR VALUE PROPOSITION

ALWAYS THERE

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PHOTO: GIDRAPH MBUGUA/ KRCS

Foreword

I wish to start by extending my appreciation to our dedicated volunteers, members and staff. The burden on our shoulders over the past few months has been enormous, but you have risen to the occasion. Your commitment to alleviating human suffering has been exemplary. Your timely interventions across the country have not only saved the lives of many Kenyans but also their property. I appreciate your time, sacrifice and resilience, even working in difficult conditions to support the communities we have committed to serve. Thank you once again for your excellent work. Let us keep up the same spirit.

My sincere gratitude to our staff, volunteers and partners for their unwavering support and unmatched efforts during the MAM Rains response.

This quarter began with the country facing devastating floods since the third week of March 2024. The flooding, which affected over 500,000 people in 43 counties, came on the heels of El Niño-induced rainfall that hit the country during the short rains of October-November-December (OND) 2023. Many families had little time to

recover, with only a brief respite in January and February before being struck again by the recent March-April-May (MAM) rainfall, making the situation even more challenging.


In addition to over half a million people affected, more than 330,000 were displaced and were hosted in 288 camps countrywide. Tana River County had the highest number of active camps, with 88. Infrastructure such as roads (68), health facilities (45), schools (151), business premises (1,373), acres of crops (65,377), livestock (11,539 lost), and water sources (2,458) have been severely damaged.

To address this situation, the Kenya Red Cross Society has been worked closely with both the National and County Governments, private sector, as well as development partners. As the Secretary General of the Kenya Red Cross, I had the honor of presenting updates on the humanitarian situation at various forums attended by government officials, development partners, and private sector representatives. Such collaborative efforts have been crucial in supporting this response.

The Kenya Red Cross Society has been providing immediate assistance to families in the areas of food, Non-Food Items (NFI), health outreaches, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). This has been supported by generous donations from our partners and many well-wishers, including the US Embassy, Korean Embassy, French Embassy, German Embassy, UAE, Shelter Afrique, Airtel, and Bolt, among many others.

Many media outlets have also been instrumental in highlighting the situation on the ground and the ongoing work of the Kenya Red Cross Society. The support for our work has been invaluable, demonstrating solidarity with the families affected by the floods.

With the rains now reducing in many parts of the country, our focus has shifted to helping families recover and rebuild their lives. Discussions around early recovery have already begun, and the Kenya Red Cross Society will continue to work hand in hand with the affected communities on this journey.



Dr. Ahmed Idris
Secretary General

Highlights

Kenya Red Cross Hosts German Delegation



On May 10, 2024, the Kenya Red Cross had the honor of hosting H.E. Jennifer Morgan, State Secretary and Special Envoy for International Climate Action at the German Foreign Office, together with the German Ambassador to Kenya H.E. Sebastian Groth.

During her visit, she received a comprehensive briefing from our Secretary General, Dr Ahmed Idris, on the ongoing floods causing

devastation in the country, and afterward committed funding support to flood-affected families.

State Secretary Morgan and the German Ambassador, along with Kenya Red Cross Governor Hon. Geoffrey Korir, also actively participated in a tree-growing activity as part of the National Tree Growing Day in Kenya.

2024 Annual General Meeting

The 64th Annual General Meeting was held on 28th June 2024. Members, volunteers, and representatives from the IFRC, ICRC, and partner national societies attended the meeting. During the event, participants reflected on the successes and challenges faced by the organization.

The meeting underscored the commitment to advancing the organization's mission and making a positive impact in the communities we serve.



Global Fund Grant Signing

The Kenya Red Cross signed a grant agreement with the Global Fund on June 24, 2024, for the next three years, starting July 1, 2024. This grant will support comprehensive HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support efforts towards achieving Universal Health Coverage in Kenya.

Since 2012, the Kenya Red Cross has been managing this grant, significantly increasing the number of communities accessing HIV prevention and treatment services.

Additionally, key and vulnerable communities affected and infected by HIV, including survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, have greatly benefited from comprehensive health service delivery and human rights awareness initiatives. These initiatives have facilitated a better understanding of their rights, thus increasing access to justice.

This new grant (GC7) will sustain these gains and reduce the structural gaps that impede access to health and social services.



US Ambassador to Kenya Visits Mathare, Announces Increased Flood Relief Support

The US Ambassador to Kenya, H.E Meg Whitman, and Secretary General Dr. Ahmed Idris were in Mathare today visiting flood-affected families, expressing continued support. They toured Mradi, Mathare 4A, where residents were hardest hit by the recent flooding, before visiting one of the evacuation camps established, which is currently hosting 252 families.

With new funding announced by the Ambassador, the Kenya Red Cross will



increase its humanitarian support to communities adversely affected. Appreciation was extended to the American people through the USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, who have been providing invaluable support for temporary shelter and settlement needs and WASH NFIs, in addition to the normal emergency programming.



Disaster Management



Effects of MAM Rains



43
Counties
Affected



101,132
Households
Affected



55,109
Households
displaced



162
Missing
Persons



294
Fatalities



68
Roads
Destroyed



151
Schools
Affected



1,373
Businesses
Affected



65,377
Acreage of
Crops affected



45
Health Facilities
affected



11,539
Livestock
Lost



2,458
Water Sources
Destroyed

OUR INTERVENTIONS



WASH NFIs to
36,933
Households



Food Distribution to
24,296
Households



Shelter NFIs to
13,064
Households



35 M
Early Warning Messages
(SMS) Sent

*As of May 2024

Floods Response





Drought to Deluge: Tana River's Double Disaster

By: Molly Saja & Abigail Mueni

The aftermath of the flash floods in Tana River County is heart wrecking. At Kenya Red Cross, we are doing all we can to handle the situation at hand but it's still not enough. Urgent action and collaborative efforts are needed to mitigate the ongoing hardships faced by the flood-hit communities. The scale of the population and the complexity of the issues far exceed the resources at our disposal.

Hassan Musa
KRCS North Eastern
Regional Manager

Reeling from a near five-year drought, then ravaged by El-Nino floods; that is the sad state of thousands of households in Tana River County. They have clung on the scraps of their lives in their sweltering by day and ice-cold by night tents, provided by the Kenya Red Cross (KRCS).

And now, in crowded KRCS makeshift camps, they face new enemies: simmering tensions over dwindling water supplies and waterborne diseases, save for a desperate scramble through muddy fields and knee-high water, with no food.

The heavy rains, which began in October, triggered severe floods, affecting at least 793,452 people nationwide, the government said. Tana River County's Tana Delta mouth region has over 180,756 people impacted, with 83,634 forced out of their homes, KRCS estimates.

Exacerbating this plight is a grueling five-year drought that has already left Tana River communities vulnerable and struggling to meet basic needs. Many households are unable to fend for their families as their crops withered, and now have their farmlands submerged.

According to KRCS coast regional manager, Mr. Hassan Musa, the community faces high water levels, leaving many unable to feed their families. The compromised sewer systems, as a result, have increased the risk of waterborne diseases.

Access to essential health services has also been disrupted due to impassable roads and overflowing dams. Vast stretches of farmland remain submerged, halting farming activities that sustained their livelihoods for years. The rains have put their livelihoods on a perilous

path, he says.

Mr. Hassan paints a grim situation in Danisa B Camp, where three babies died during delivery. He expressed frustrations, describing their unfolding emergency as forgotten amidst global crises taking center stage.

“In Danisa B Camp, we lost three babies during delivery, exemplifying the dire situation. Ours is like a forgotten emergency since other global emergencies have taken center stage,” Mr. Hassan said.



Survivors' Agony

The communities are faced with multiple challenges, including water scarcity, insecurity, tribalism, and lack of food. KRCS has in earnest rolled out a plan to support their essential needs by treating and distributing clean drinking water, essential non-food items and sensitising communities on hygiene.

Survivor stories paint a vivid picture of their struggles in the camps. Mrs. Namkuu Moroa, residing in neighbouring Dumi Camp, one of the camps in Garsen Sub-County, endures a long, gruelling trek daily in scorching heat to fetch water, returning home past 2 pm.

She, like her neighbours, faces the harsh reality of displacement, often missing breakfast to embark on the water quest. The nearest shared water point is approximately five kilometres away.

“I endure walking for close to five kilometres daily to get water. It’s exhausting, but I have no choice; we cannot just sit and hope for the best,” Mrs. Harowa says, adding that her family is forced to miss breakfast as she joins other women to trace water points.

She believes that the recent efforts by the county government to distribute clean water have been a relief - much needed but temporary solution.

Lack of sanitation, the community at the camp concludes, has put them at risk of diseases. Their struggles have been worsened, as over five families share a toilet or depend on pit latrines in nearby schools.

Children Missing School

In the neighbouring Onkolde camp, Mr. Mauli Dhara echoes a similarly distressing narrative. Impassable roads have halted daily life, preventing work, travel and schooling. Aid is limited for the 174 households in the camp. They are facing a scarcity of clean water, food and shelter.

Mr. Mauli says the current deluge has been more devastating than what he saw in 1997, save for the mild 2018 El-Nino rains.

“Going to work, travelling or even schooling for our children has stopped due to the impassable roads,” says Mauli adding that unlike in 2018, when their houses were submerged, little aid has reached them.

In addition, their tarpaulin makeshift shelters, provided by KRCS offer little relief, prompting some family members to brave the night outdoors to reinforce security.

It gets worse during the day. Temperatures rise to over 34°C, but that is swept by cold nights, full of mosquito bites. Despite these challenges, communal support prevails - residents are addressing each other's needs, espe-

cially during medical emergencies.

The struggle for survival forced many to embark on long walks to the nearest towns in search of casual jobs to make a living, even as the cost of food skyrocketed twofold on bad roads.

While grateful for temporary aid like bladder tanks from the County government, residents acknowledge its limitations. The unpredictability of disaster response by emergency players, including intermittent water supply, adds to ongoing challenges.

Reflecting on the floods in 1997 and 2018, the community notes the escalating severity of recent deluges. Contrary to predictions, flash floods struck unexpectedly, causing widespread losses of essentials and threatening their livelihoods.

In a plea for sustainable solutions, Mauli urges collaboration between the KRCS and the county government. The community remains open to urgent, comprehensive support to overcome these ongoing challenges.





Resilient Community

Nevertheless, amid these tribulations, resilience surfaces. Jason Babusa, 28, armed with a diploma in nutrition, uses his skills to offer entertainment and phone charging services within the camp, generating income and hope.

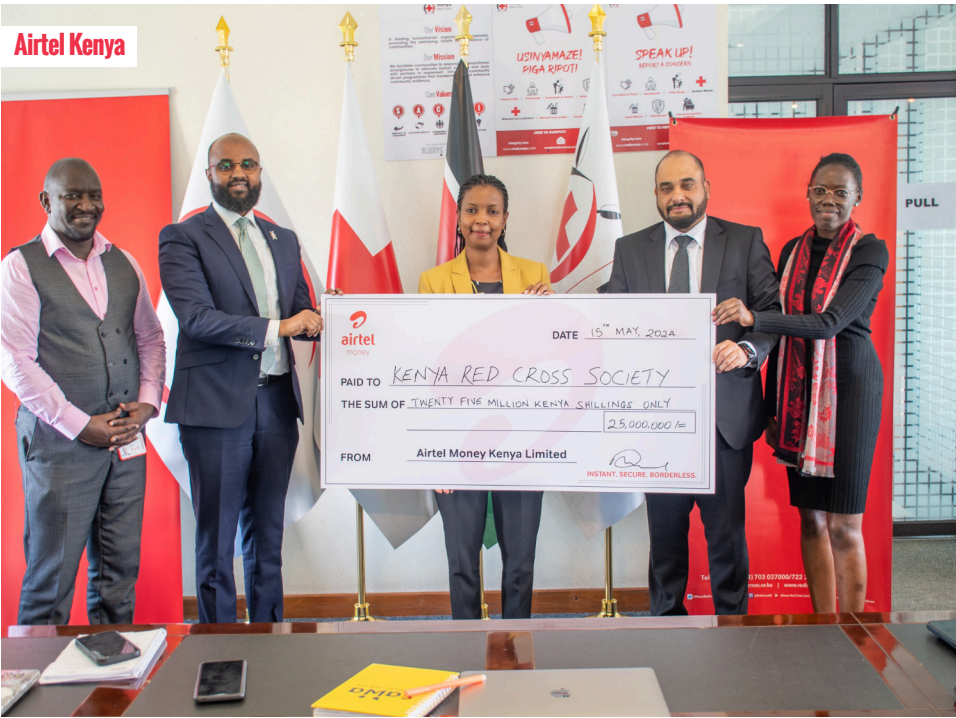
He is charging a modest fee of Sh. 30 per game and offering phone charging services at Sh20 for smartphones and Sh10 for regular phones and he is slowly becoming self-reliant in the face of adversity.

“With eight customers daily, I have enough to provide my family with basic needs,” Jason says, adding that the new lease of life has enabled him to support his extended family too.

This inventive approach, amidst the broader struggles, remains a profound testimony of resilience and entrepreneurial spirit within the displaced community.

He argues that when empowered, such skills would be his arsenal in the face of hardship and for the future.

Floods Donations



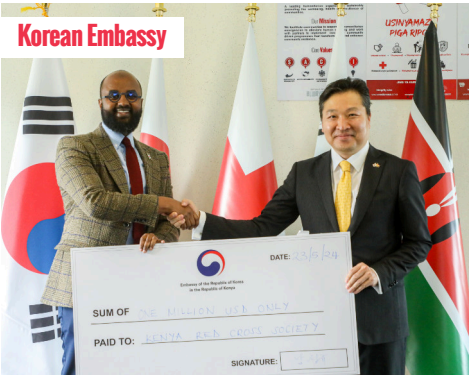
Platinum Credit Limited

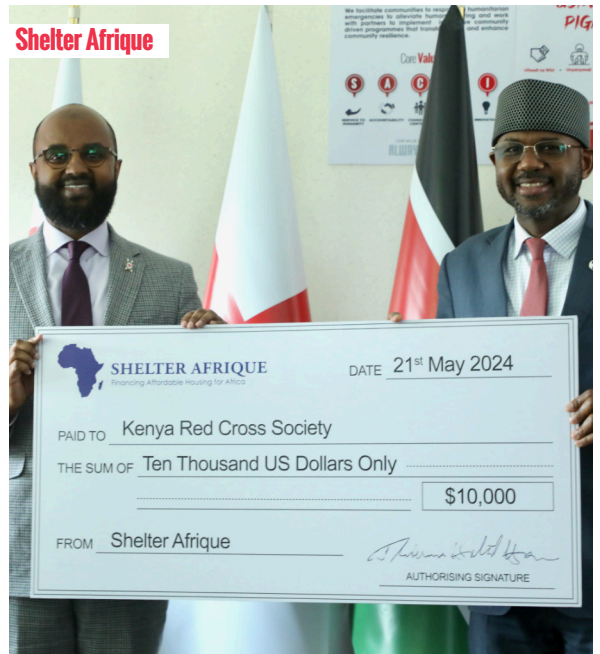


Prudential



Stima Sacco

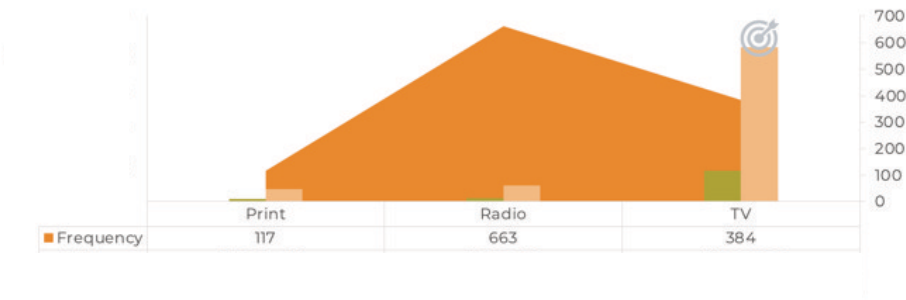




March-May Rains Extensive Media Coverage

International and National Media

OUR response to the devastating flooding during the March-May rains has been featured in a variety of international and national media outlets, including prominent news organizations and platforms. This widespread coverage showcased the impact and importance of our initiatives.



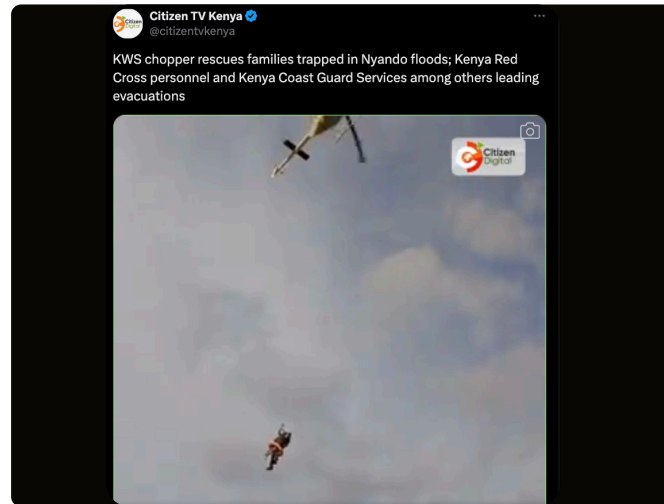
This graph illustrates the extensive coverage the Kenya Red Cross has received, totalling to 1164 mentions in the media during the MAM rains.

International Media

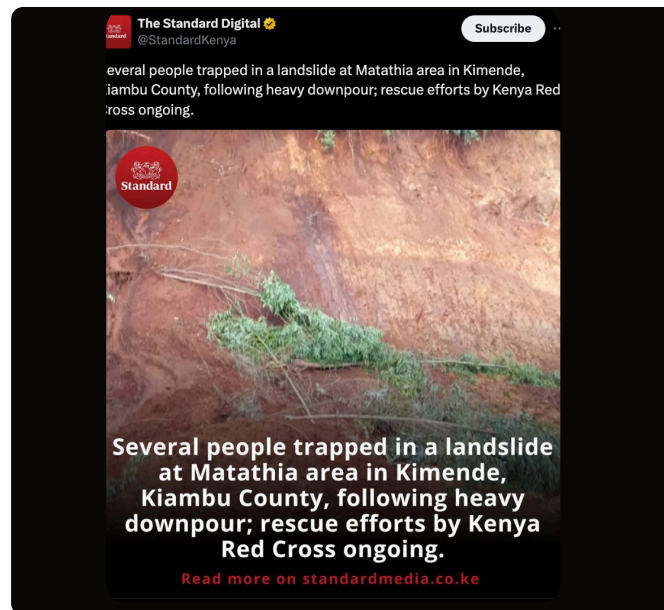


Our secretary general Dr. Ahmed Idris in a Sky News interview segment

Social Media Highlights



KWS chopper rescues families trapped in Nyando floods; with Kenya Red Cross personnel and Kenya Coast Guard Services among others leading evacuations.



Several people were trapped in a landslide at Matathia area in Kimende, Kiambu County, following heavy downpour; Kenya Red Cross led in the rescue efforts.

Impact of Media Coverage

The widespread media attention has significantly boosted our reach, resulting in strong support towards our floods operation. We extend our grati-

tude to our media partners for their efforts in amplifying our mission and work.

Against All Odds

The Unyielding Spirit of Motherhood in Tana River's Floods

By: Grace Waigumo
PR & Communication



In many cultures across the globe, the month of May emerges as a month of celebration, a time when we pay homage to the nurturing spirit of motherhood. It beckons us to pause and reflect on the profound influence of mothers in shaping our lives and communities, a time to honor their unwavering love, sacrifice, and resilience.

We encounter motherhood in different facets; the biological mothers who bring life into the world through the pain and joy of childbirth, mothers who open their hearts to embrace adopted children as their own, and the nurturing figures who offer love and guidance not anchored on biological ties. This month serves as a reminder of the sacrifices mothers make each day, often unseen and unacknowledged. From the sleepless nights spent tending sick children, to the quiet moments of encouragement and support, mothers pour their hearts and souls into nurturing the next generation, shaping the future with their steadfast dedication.

Across the globe, in times of crisis and hardship, mothers rise to the occasion, drawing upon their inner strength and resilience to navigate the most challenging circumstances. Whether it is fleeing from armed conflict, braving natural disasters like floods, or enduring economic hardships, mothers exhibit a remarkable capacity to adapt and persevere, driven by their unconditional love for their children.

Maternal health revolves around the health and wellness of women and girls, particularly when they are expectant, at the time they give birth, and during child-raising. Due to vulnerability at the community level, many women and young girls of reproductive age go through a lot of challenges where they suffer health-wise and sometimes even die.

In the heart of Tana River County, where the mighty Tana River flows, a blend of stories weaves through the landscape, tales of strength, sacrifice, and the undying bond between a mother and her child. Here, in the embrace of May's gentle warmth, we find ourselves drawn into the lives of remarkable women, each a testament to the resilience and steadfast love that defines motherhood.

As the floodwaters rise, threatening homes and livelihoods, the spirit of maternal care shines brightly amidst the darkness. In Bondeni village, nestled within the Lafume area, there resides a beacon of hope known affectionately as Mama Mwamburi. Though her path has been marked by loss and hardship, she radiates a warmth that touches every soul she encounters. Her journey began in the shadows of adversity, when as a young widow, she was left to raise four children on her own, who have now joined different parts of the world. Yet, from the depths of her struggles emerged a calling, a purpose fueled by compassion and a deep-rooted understanding of the trials faced by mothers in her community. With the gentle guidance of her grandmother, she learned the art of midwifery, a skill she would wield with grace and determination for decades to come.

She speaks with a somber tone as she recounts the challenges faced by mothers in her community, especially during floods. Since 1996, she has been dedicated to this role, providing support to expectant mothers in her community and aiding in the delivery of over 1000 babies. Through floods and storms, Mama Mwamburi emphasizes how midwives have proven to be pillars of strength within their communities, their hands guiding new life into the world even amidst the chaos and uncertainty. In her eyes, every birth is a miracle, every mother a testament to the enduring power of love. She speaks of the challenges faced, of roads washed away by torrents of rain and limited medical supplies, yet her resolve remains unyielding.

Access to basic needs such as food, clean water, and medical care becomes scarce during floods, further intensifying the struggles of motherhood. Expectant and lactating mothers face heightened vulnerability, as they contend with the added burden of ensuring their health while caring for their children. Inadequate nutrition, lack of prenatal care, and limited access to safe delivery facilities increase the risk of maternal and infant mortality.

Moreover, the destruction of shelters and displacement disrupts the bonds of stability and security that are essential for nurturing children. Mothers are forced to navigate the challenges of makeshift shelters, overcrowded internally displaced camps, or unfamiliar environments, all while striving to provide a sense of normalcy and comfort for their families. The psychological toll of displacement, trauma, and uncertainty weighs heavily on mothers, impacting their mental well-being and ability to cope with the demands of motherhood.

She continues to state that before any expectant mother goes to the health facility, they must pass through her for assessment. There are times when the mother is not due, so she will request them to hold on and find traditional ways to ease their pain. During floods when the expectant mother is fully dilated, Mwamburi reminds us that they do not have cars, bicycles, airplanes, or boda-bodas and the only means of transport is the canoe, which she passionately refers to as Mwau. She accompanies the expectant mother for

her delivery, across to the dry land where the health facility is situated, ensures she is well taken care of, and takes her back to her family, with her new bundle of joy. With a wide smile on her face that expressively exposes her wrinkles, she expresses her gratitude to her community for believing in her skills which her daughters-in-law and larger regions like Lamu, have benefited from as well.

Not all births have been easy, as Mwamburi recalls. Just as life throws lemons, so does pregnancy, it is not one shoe fits all. She has encountered complicated deliveries that have made her at times question her skills due to the challenges that come with it. She has had to deliver babies amid very heavy rainfall, where the roads are impassable due to the damage brought about by the floods, and there is no form of transport. The sacred duty falls on her, and she can only thank God for the safe deliveries in these adversities. The midwives' innate ability to find creative solutions to the most pressing birth challenges ensures the survival and well-being of the newborns, often at great personal sacrifice.

Across the river, in the makeshift shelters of Bandi camp, another tale unfolds, one of hardship and resilience intertwined. Here, amid the rubble of homesteads lost and dreams shattered, Fatuma Godana stands as a guardian of hope. Her days are filled with the rhythm of childbirth, each cry a reminder of the fragility of life in the face of adversity.

For Fatuma and her fellow midwives, every birth is a triumph against the odds, a testament to the strength of the human spirit. Yet, their own struggles weigh heavily upon their hearts, the memories of displacement and loss still fresh in their minds. They speak of the challenges faced, and resources scarce, yet in their eyes, there remains a flicker of hope.

In a day, Fatuma delivers between three to five children, and as we were indulging, she mentioned that she had left a mother in labor who was being monitored by her fellow midwives. When the situation is dire and the mother-to-be is fully dilated, the midwives will take it upon themselves to deliver the babies; however, their biggest challenge is medical supplies. During floods where they are forced to move to higher grounds, the midwives take the expectant mother to the nearest health facility, and once the community settles in a new area, they return to get the mother and newborn baby. Looking away with heavy balancing tears, Fatuma mentions that she lost her livelihood from her former home in Bandi village. This tragic period is still very fresh in her mind; losing her livelihood and now living from hand to mouth, in a shelter by the roadside.

The five midwives within this camp, have not had it easy to deliver children through the floods. Fatuma speaks of conditions that are not the most favorable for expectant mothers and cries out for help to have access to healthcare services within the camp. Mothers-to-be and those with newborns suffered from displacement, lack of proper medical attention, medication, food, and clean water for consumption. It has been tough. She has been forced to deliver life in the most unsafe conditions, even by the roadside while relocating to shelters and just like Mama Mwamburi, as midwives, she has encountered childbirths that have been challenging. During such moments, Fatuma calls on her fellow midwives from the camp to assist her; however, when the process becomes unbearable, they must find a means of transport to the nearest medical facility, miles from the Bandi camp.

In the wake of a disaster, the fabric of normalcy frays, leaving behind threads of uncertainty and upheaval. For mothers thrust into the chaos of displacement, the journey becomes a delicate dance between

strength and vulnerability, resilience and fragility, grappling not only with their safety but also with the well-being of their children. As makeshift shelters rise from the rubble of once-sturdy homes, mothers find themselves navigating unfamiliar terrain, their children clinging to their sides in search of solace and security. In the crowded confines of refugee camps, where the air is thick with the scent of uncertainty, they strive to create a semblance of normalcy amidst the chaos.

But the road ahead is filled with challenges, each step a test of resilience and resolve. As the days turn to weeks, and weeks to months, the psychological toll of displacement becomes increasingly apparent. The trauma of loss, the uncertainty of the future, weigh heavily upon the hearts of mothers, casting shadows upon their once-bright spirits. Mothers continue to stand tall amidst the ruins of their former lives, their hearts filled with hope for a brighter tomorrow. For in their purpose to nurture and protect, they embody the very essence of resilience, lighting the way for generations yet to come.

Amidst the challenges faced by women of reproductive age, with unwavering commitment, the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) assumes a pivotal role in delivering vital health services to the displaced communities grappling with the aftermath of the calamity. Leveraging on its vast network of skilled personnel and dedicated volunteers, the Society orchestrates a synchronized emergency health response across the affected regions. Through collaborative efforts of the Society and the Finnish Red Cross (FRC), they champion a project dedicated to enhancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, alongside combatting gender-based violence (SRHR/GBV). Their mission extends beyond conventional boundaries, with a focus on inclusivity for women with disabilities, ensuring no one is left behind in the pursuit of better health outcomes. Through strategic interventions, such as integrated health and nutrition outreaches facilitated by KRCS and UNICEF, expectant and lactating mothers are provided with vital support and guidance. Bi-weekly sessions serve as lifelines, not only monitoring delivery dates but also fostering awareness of the significance of hospital births and the critical importance of breastfeeding in the early months. The synergy between the Ministry of Health (MoH), KRCS, and grassroots actors like traditional birth attendants (TBAs) and male circumcision champions forms a robust frontline defense against maternal health challenges. These community champions, armed with knowledge and empathy, traverse cultural barriers, dispelling myths, and advocating for early antenatal and postnatal care. Within the Tana North subcounty, health facilities stand as pillars of comprehensive primary care, offering a spectrum of services tailored to women's needs throughout the reproductive journey. From family planning to postnatal care and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, these facilities epitomize a commitment to holistic well-being. As KRCS continues to fortify partnerships and empower healthcare workers, the vision of safer pregnancies, healthier mothers, and stronger communities steadily comes to fruition amidst the verdant lands of Tana River.

As we parted ways beneath the golden hues of sunset, we carried with us the memory of Mwamburi's and Fatuma's grace, their courage, and their determination to bring light into the darkest of nights. And in them, we find hope, a beacon of resilience amidst the chaos of life's tumultuous waters.

During the chaos, these women stand as beacons of light, their hands reaching out to soothe, to comfort, and to heal. They are the embodiment of maternal love, a force of nature unto themselves. And as May's gentle embrace envelops the world in its warmth, let us pause to honor these unsung heroes, the mothers who embody the very essence of resilience and compassion.

Cultivating Resilience

Bomet Integrated Food Security & Livelihood Project's Transformative Journey

By Shirley Juma

The unforgiving sun may have scorched Bomet County, leading to drought and temporarily halting life. But in Chebunyo Ward of Chepalungu sub-county, a quiet revolution is blooming. Farmers, under the guidance of the Nogirwet Irrigation Scheme, are coaxing life back to their side.

As drought swept their livelihoods, farmers took a new and promising initiative. Organised in groups, they are slowly embracing an ambitious two-year Bomet Integrated Food Security and Livelihood (IFSL) project that is a turnaround for their livelihoods.

The program, funded by the British Red Cross and part of the Kenya Red Cross Society's (KRCS) ambitious strategy in mitigating the impacts of drought through food production, has attracted locals and is helping them get back to farming.

The 13.2-kilometer water pipe Nogirwet Irrigation Scheme was formed to improve food production in the ward. Farmers can now tap into a network of laid-out water pipes snaking through their villages, providing a steady drip of water for their crops.

Despite its short distance, given the vastness of Bomet County, the water piping project has impacted 517 farmers. The pale-yellow-to-green vegetation transition in the region can now be traced. Farmers have watermelon, cabbage, tomatoes and kale nurseries, with transplanting peaking during dry seasons.

The project tackles four key areas: livelihoods

through modern farming, water projects that aim at supporting irrigation systems, environmental conservation in tree planting, and ending SGBV. The Bomet project has not only lit up the hearts of Chebunyo residents but is also feeding them.

"Chebunyo ward experiences long dry periods that affect residents' farmlands, which are their main source of livelihood. This project's goal is to ensure that they have a secure and sustainable source of livelihood." Mr. Victor Cheruiyot IFSL project officer in Bomet, says.

To discourage overproduction of one crop, seedlings allocation was spread across different blocks.

Homemade solutions

In addition to the irrigation system, a set of 50 farmers were also provided with 2,500 enhanced free-range chicks, commonly kienyeji chicken, with a survival rate of 94 per cent.

Identified chicken farmers were each provided with two bags of nutrient-rich chicken feed and key vaccines in a bid to stop the mortality rate. Luckily, the region's warm temperatures have buoyed poultry rearing. Mrs. Alice Biomnto, on hearing of the project through the area chief, underwent training on how to properly take care of the chicks handed to her. With the new skills, she took care of the chicks, feeding them, and they have since turned into fully grown chickens.

This program will not only benefit my family and me but also my community, as I can offer the newly hatched chicks to my neighbours for breeding or sale

- Alice Biomnto



PHOTO: KELVIN KIMANI / KRCS



When she ran out of feeds, she resorted to improvising. She has since learned to make use of her idle homemade grinding mill to grind cereals, including maize, soybeans and sorghum.

As the new finance champion in the village, she is now selling eggs collected daily from the chicken shades as she propagates the same knowledge to her peers. She has been successful in making the income trickle in, despite the challenges she faced.

Sprinkles of joy

Similarly, another beneficiary, Mr. Rutto Kiprono, who was among the worst hit residents by water scarcity and was brewing tensions with his neighbours, is turning his farming around. The irrigation pipes helped him to silence the tensions.

Initially, as a farmer, he was struggling to support his family. Nonetheless, with dry farmland in the face of climate change, shortfalls abound. His land was dry and could not sustain farming.

Luckily, the 13.2-kilometer pipe snaked through his farm, to his advantage. Being connected to the main line was cheap. He sought the extension of the precious commodity – water – to his farm to grow crops. At first, he started farming tomatoes, a three-month endeavor that would change his life.

Now, Mr. Rutto, armed with a money-maker pump, uses the pump to sprinkle waters of joy on his crops to feed his family. He is also earning a living from horticultural produce sales.



PHOTOS: KELVIN KIMANI/ KRCS

To increase forest cover in the county and encourage the cultivation of indigenous trees, 25,850 fruit tree seedlings, including mango, pixie oranges and lemons, have been distributed to local farmers.

FGM phase-out

Another rural group, the Reformed Cutters Group, a women-led group, is taking the cue from pioneer Nogirwet Irrigation Scheme in championing the conservation of indigenous trees.

The group's 22 women members have been trained, and their skills are now being adopted by young generations, ultimately ending their archaic female genital mutilation career.

Their transformation journey took the intervention of their chief, and it wasn't a walk in the park.

"After we met the chief, we decided to change our ways for we knew of the dangers FGM posed to our girls. We turned to farming and later formed this group to conserve traditional trees that have medicinal value," says Sarah Kalya, the group's chair.

Through the support of KRCS's program, women, previously FGM perpetrators, have abandoned the practice and are leading efforts towards environmental restoration in addition to farming.

When the trees reach maturity, the group intends to seek a market to sell the fruits and use the earnings towards their family needs and the collective welfare of the group through savings.



FROM A HUMBLE SPARK TO AN EMPOWERING POWERHOUSE

THREAD & INK TEXTILES LIGHTS UP THE NORTH RIFT

By Tracy Maguta

Imagine a vision of transforming a simple concept into a powerful engine for an entire region. This is the story of Thread & Ink Textiles Limited, a social enterprise that ignited out of a discussion and an enterprise that began as a spark and has grown into a symbol of excellence, creativity, and empowerment.

Located in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Thread & Ink Textiles, proudly owned by the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), and operated by the North Rift Region, is more than just a business. Founded in 2018 in the North Rift Region, they began by screen-printing t-shirts. Their ambition, however, stretched far beyond branding colorful T-shirts. They aimed to attract investment and create a sustainable economic force for the region.

A turning point arrived with a call for submissions to the National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA) funding, pooled funding from the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent (IFRC), and the International Committee of Red Cross/ Red Crescent (ICRC). Thread & Ink's dedication was recognized and accepted into the Accelerator Program, where they received a significant boost from NSIA of over 540,329.83 Swiss Francs which is about 78 million Kenya Shillings. This funding fueled their dream of expansion into a fully operational factory, officially launched on 18th December 2023.

Today, Thread & Ink Textiles has become a one-stop shop for branding and printing solutions. They offer a comprehensive range of services, including screen printing, stitching, Direct-to-Film (DTF) printing, embroidery, sublimation, engraving, and even branding for non-textile products. Their motto, "Your Visibility. Our Responsibility," reflects their commitment to making your brand shine.



But Thread & Ink's impact extends far beyond production. Their partnership with the KRCS is a powerful testament to social responsibility. The KRCS leverages Thread & Ink in two keyways: First, Standardization and Emblem Protection: it ensures consistently high quality for all Kenya Red Cross merchandise. Furthermore, keeping merchandise production in-house safeguards the integrity of the KRCS emblem. Secondly, Thread & Ink's commitment goes even deeper. They have



established a unique "Revolving Fund kitty," channeling a portion of their profits back to Society. This kitty provides branches with access to affordable loans and grants, fueling their income-generating activities. It's a cycle of success, ensuring the society's long-term sustainability and empowering communities across Kenya.

The 14-member team at Thread & Ink Textiles embodies their dedication to the community. They are a testament to the power of local talent, with some team members being passionate volunteers from the North Rift region itself. Thread & Ink Textiles' journey is a beacon of hope, illuminating the path toward a brighter future for the organization. From humble beginnings, they have transformed into an empowering force, creating jobs, fostering financial sustainability, and making a lasting impact on the communities they serve.



Inclusion In Action

**CBM Global, in Partnership
with Kenya Red Cross,
Promotes Inclusive
Climate Change Resilience
in Bungoma County.**

By: Grace Waigumo
PR & COMMUNICATIONS

Waking up to clear skies, crisp fresh air, and distant sounds of waking villagers, the sun cast a golden hue across the landscapes as the Kenya Red Cross Society and CBM Global teams geared up for another day of service. The team's convoy made its way through the bustling roads of Bungoma, and ventured into the heart of Kanduyi sublocation, where the rhythm of life seemed to slow down. Traversing the 40-kilometer stretch toward Mechimeru ward, the journey transitions onto a bumpy murram road, its rugged surface smoothed by the gentle caress of the daily rains.

Here, amidst the high bumps that almost throw the team to the car roofs, they are met by sights of flourishing maize fields, an electric tuk-tuk carrying passengers by the roadside, the vibrant Ekitale junction with a bustling market and bodabodas being washed by the small water points by the roadsides that are formed by the streams of Chwele, Kitinda, and Khalaba all pouring into Nzoia river that flows into Lake Victoria.

As the team arrived in Mechimeru, they were greeted by mothers carrying their young children upon their backs with practiced ease, men tending to their herds of cattle, and community members eager to collaborate and assist in their efforts. Together, they embarked on their mission to interact with the community on the impact of the CBM Global-supported project, which has been focusing on addressing the impact of climate change on communities in Bungoma County, through livelihood support, climate change awareness, and the provision of assistive devices.

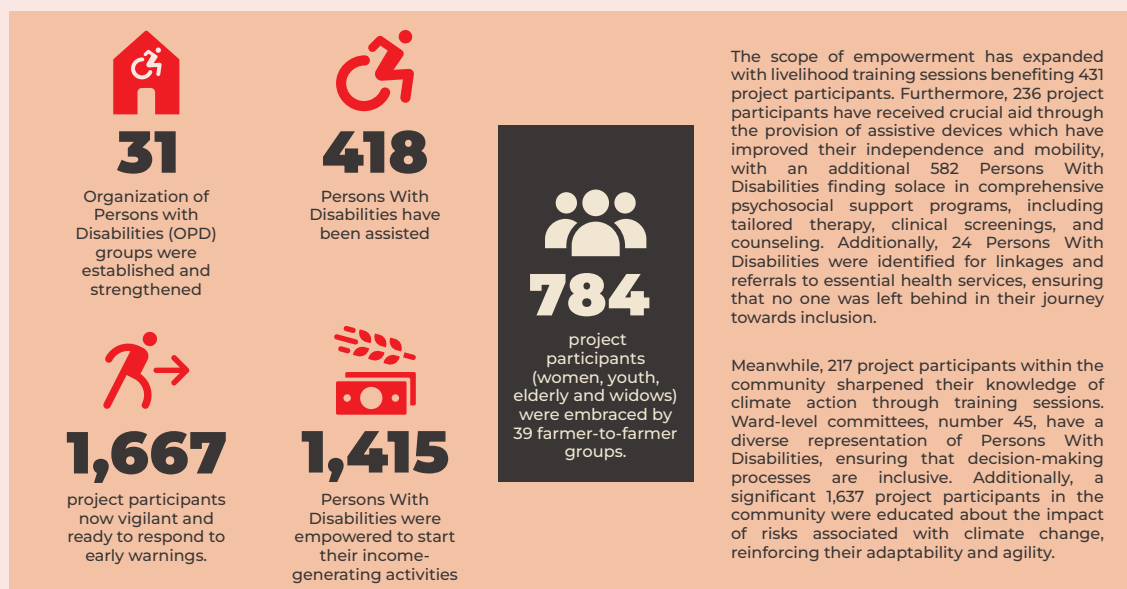
Climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity, and health professionals worldwide are already responding to the health harms caused by this unfolding crisis. In Kenya, according to the 2019 Kenya census report, persons with disabilities made up 2.2% of the population, though the global estimates point to a possibly higher figure across countries (an estimated average of 15% of the global population have a disability). Persons With Disabilities remain relatively marginalized, despite strides made in disability inclusion generally. Some remain dependent on poorly integrated livelihood systems with high rural burden, operate within disabling or weak disaster risk management and climate change adaptation policy framework, with low level or absence of service provision and non-representative, non-inclusive systems. Therefore, there continues to be a need for sustained support and programs to strengthen inclusive livelihoods, provision of access to basic services, risk reduction, better adaptation and resilience, preparedness, and mitigation, to the environmental challenges that climate change brings and affects people with disabilities and their communities.



The impact of climate change has resulted in extreme weather events in our country that have led to the loss of lives, reduced agricultural productivity, displacement of populations, and destruction of infrastructure among other adverse impacts. Bungoma County has found itself grappling with increased flooding, landslides, and drought, resulting in people displacement, infrastructure damage, and low agricultural yields. It has also presented enormous challenges and opportunities for mankind everywhere as it has to be tackled to ensure sustainable development is achieved.

The CBM Global-supported project implemented by the Kenya Red Cross has imparted crucial information and awareness, fostering a resilient and informed community in the realm of climate-induced adversities. Since the project's inception in 2023, the KRCS teams in Bungoma have achieved notable success in critical areas that they set out to accomplish.

Titus Ndalu, the Chairperson for Bungoma Organization of Persons With Disabilities (OPD), warmly welcomed us into the homestead of Nafula, a widower living with her two children and a participant in the Inclusive Climate Change project in Mechimeru. She is joined by three other project participants, who happily dive into the ongoing conversations. Nafula and Bwire, found themselves facing numerous



challenges in accessing livelihood opportunities due to their physical disabilities. However, through the project implemented by the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) in partnership with CBM Global, their lives took a transformative turn. They became involved in a local Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPD) group supported by the project, where they received assistive devices, enabling them to navigate their surroundings with greater ease and contribute to community activities with greater ease. Nafula implements climate change actions at her homestead by planting eucalyptus, cyprus, bananas, and assorted trees. Today, Nafula and Bwire are not only able to move around and create a source of income for financial independence but also serve as an inspiration to others in their community, demonstrating the power of empowerment and inclusion.

Nakhumicha faces the daily challenge of caring for her two children with disabilities. Born with disabilities, her children require constant care and support, which often strains her both emotionally and financially. Through the project, Nakumicha and her children received livelihood support, rehabilitative services, and assistive devices tailored to their needs. The project provided specialized training to Nakumicha on how to care for her children's unique requirements, including mobility aids and adaptive equipment to improve their quality of life. Additionally, she received psychosocial support and counseling, offering her much-needed emotional resilience to navigate the challenges of raising children with disabilities.

With the support of the Inclusive Climate Change project, Nakumicha's confidence grew, and she found a renewed sense of hope for her family's future. She learned practical techniques to improve her children's mobility and independence, enabling them to participate better in daily activities. Moreover, the project connected Nakumicha with a supportive network of other parents facing similar challenges, fostering a sense of community and solidarity hence reducing stigma with Persons With Disabilities. Today, she is empowered to provide the best possible care for her children, thanks to the assistance of the CBM Global-supported project. Her story serves as a testament to the transformative power of inclusive and community-based initiatives in supporting Persons With Disabilities and highlights the Kenya Red

Cross Society's commitment to promoting dignity, inclusion, connectedness, and ensuring that no one is left behind in the society.

Farmers in the county have also borne the brunt of the increasingly erratic weather patterns brought about by climate change. Wepukhulu, an elder in the village, has been a farmer for the past 60 years of his life. His crops were unyielding, and his family's livelihood was at risk. However, through the CBM Global-supported project, he received training and support in climate-smart agriculture techniques and disaster preparedness. He joined a farmer-to-farmer group supported by the project, where he learned sustainable farming practices and received early warning information about weather-related risks. Equipped with this knowledge, Wepukhulu diversified his crops, and implemented water conservation methods, and these contributed to building his resilience against climate shocks. As a result, his farm became more productive, ensuring food security for his family even in the face of adverse weather conditions. His story highlights the vital role of community-based interventions in building climate resilience and safeguarding livelihoods in the face of environmental challenges.

Our society is more interconnected when we work together. Through the implementation of the CBM Global-supported project by the Kenya Red Cross Society, Bungoma County has exemplified the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, fostering partnerships for sustainable development. The County Government has facilitated the legal and policy framework through a Climate Act, Climate change policy, and a Climate action plan, to name a few. The growing collaboration between various stakeholders, including local communities, persons with disabilities, and governmental bodies, embodies the spirit of SDG 17, and emphasizes the importance of inclusive and participatory approaches to development. By working together, the project has strengthened livelihoods, improved access to essential services, and built resilience against climate-related challenges, thus contributing to the overall sustainable development of Bungoma County. This collaborative effort serves as a beacon of hope and a model for achieving sustainable development goals through collective action and partnership.

Of Uncles, Pregnancy and Death of a Newborn

Wairimu's Hell With Relatives

By Shirley Abade
PR and Communications

FOR WAIRIMU, the walls of Bondeni Children's Rescue Centre and Schools nestled in Athi River in Machakos County haven't just been shelter; they've become her sanctuary.

Here, amidst the fading echoes of childhood laughter and the reassuring presence of her lawyer-turned-friend and now confidante, Christine Mwarani, she walks tall despite the weight of her past.

A year and a half ago, she arrived here with a broken soul, her spirit fractured by the cruel hands of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Today, a genuine smile graces her lips, a testament to the resilience that burns within her.

When this writer arrived at the children's home entrance, Wairimu, 18, was standing alongside her colleagues, ready to greet and receive the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) team. She was happy, with a bright and genuine smile. She looked peaceful.

Wairimu and Christine's paths crossed in the tragic theatre of gender-based violence (GBV). One morning, a chilling call from Mavoko neighbourhood pierced Christine's calm. She was asked to attend to a gender-based violence case involving pupils at Mavoko Primary School.

"A social worker called to inform me that there were some cases in the school that would interest me. I immediately dashed there, and that is how I met Wairimu and her colleagues," Christine says.

The school had three cases of gender-based violence at the time, a stark illustration of the prevalence of this issue within Mavoko sub-county. Mrs. Christine, a lawyer experienced in handling GBV cases, knew her alarm for help had gone off.

When Wairimu lost her parents ten years ago, her tribulations and nightmares began. At first, she moved to stay with her uncle in a village within Nakuru. Later,

she was taken to her auntie's place in Athi River where her ordeals simmered.

It wasn't long before her uncle started defiling her, and he did so often for years. One day she got tired, picked up her belongings, and left for her sister's place, within

Athi River – to another fury.

“
I used to avoid
getting out. I
was always
worried I
would be
attacked.”

This was an unfortunate shift. Her would-be haven turned into hell. At this new home, her sister's husband took advantage of her and continually assaulted her.

“The very brother-in-law would set her up against her sister,

telling his wife how she was coming home late after hanging out with men in the neighbourhood. Her sister bought into the narrative, kicking her out,” Christine says.

“When I met her, she was pregnant, but we could not ascertain the paternity of the child,” Christine explains. She adds that the two relatives vowed to take a paternity test to absolve themselves of blame, after they were arrested. At the time, Wairimu had already sought refuge at a friend's place. Luckily, the mother of her friend allowed her in.

It was not until then that she gathered her courage to inform her teachers, aunt, sister and grandparents of her pregnancy, associating it with her assailants, who denied responsibility. Nevertheless, when her two relatives were confronted, they denied ever defiling her.

“The two said that they were ready for a paternity test after the delivery of the child to prove that they were not responsible and also denied having been defiling her altogether,” Christine adds.

The Path to Justice

Christine and the school, agreed to seek justice for Wairimu, but not until her actual age was ascertained. She had to be booked at Nairobi Women's Gender Violence Recovery Center for this. It turned out she was underage.

“Since we did not have documents indicating her age, such as a birth certificate, we were referred to the Nairobi Women's Gender Violence Recovery Center to ascertain her age,” she adds.

Wairimu, despite carrying her pregnancy to term, lost her girl child later in May 2022, amid trials in Mavoko

Law Courts of her two persons she trusted with her whole life.

After dozens of sessions of testifying in court in a year-long trial, her uncle and brother-in-law were found guilty of defilement. The two have since been incarcerated for fifteen years.

In the heat of trouble, Wairimu tells this writer that she contemplated robbing her own life. She felt there was no more reason to live. Her traumas, back-to-back, made it hard to concentrate in class, save for her newfound desire to become a designer.

The Kenya Red Cross, through a program in partnership with the Global Fund, has been her saviour after her ordeal. Today, as she walks with her lawyer Bondeni Children Rescue Centre and School compound, she knows she is grooming herself into a designer.



“I used to avoid getting out. I was always worried I would be attacked. Now that they are locked up, I feel safe and I can move around without any fear,” Wairimu says.

Despite her relief, her aunt and sister hold a bile for her. She has been endlessly approached to pardon the two men in prison and have them return home one year later.

“My aunt and sister keep begging me to have their husbands freed, as they were the breadwinners. I feel bad when they say they are suffering because their husbands are no longer around. But I feel safer with them locked up,” she concludes.

Christine is glad she was able to do what she did, and that justice prevailed. She is happy that Wairimu now sees her not only as a friend but also as a confidant.

She is also happy that Wairimu's life is back on track and that she has a chance of fulfilling her dreams. As a trained paralegal, she is content knowing that she has been impacting lives like Wairimu's.

Christine is among the fruits of a partnership between the Global Fund and the Kenya Red Cross, who trained as community paralegal aides, to help end sexual and gender-based violence (SBGV).

Global Fund

Blossoming Hope

Where Young Lives Find Refuge and Strength in Siaya County

By Shirley Juma
PR & Communication

She set aside different utensils for me, and nobody else would use them. At some point, it made me stop medication and ultimately face death.

- Paul

WITHIN THE hallowed walls of Bondo County Referral Hospital in Siaya County, lies a beacon of hope – the Bondo Youth Wellness Centre. Built by Mildmay International Kenya, it's a refuge for young souls, where barriers crumble and unity blossoms.

From the outside, it seems quiet, save for the occasional wails from the children's clinics - a normal hospital scene. But step inside, and you see a remarkable narrative unfold: lives transformed, burdens lifted, and futures reclaimed.

Children and youth, from curious ten-year-olds to spirited youths, flock here seeking solace and solutions. The air hums with open yet difficult dialogues, as the Centre welcomes up to 200 individuals daily,

addressing their struggles head-on.

More than just crucial medical care: The Bondo Youth Wellness Centre offers a lifeline to those battling HIV/AIDS. Here, hope takes root, and futures bloom anew. This is a centre for new dawn for youth with HIV/Aids.

A vibrant, young and energetic woman, Winnie Atieno, who is among those at the centre, exemplifies this transformation. She has the transformation on her face, standing tall to showcase what the centre has achieved since its establishment.

After taking medication for four years for a disease she didn't know, Winnie Atieno, is among those at the centre, she seeks to know the truth about her dosages from her aunt. She learned of HIV/Aids in class four, which piqued her to relate to her medication.

"I knew of my status while in class four, and that left me confused. I had no one to guide me and it took me a while to accept my status," she tells this writer, adding that she later embraced it.

As she grew older, her desire to help other young individuals who were HIV-positive grew stronger. Determined to make a difference, she volunteered at a local health facility deep in the village.

It was there that Atieno crossed paths with Mildmay officials who recruited her and trained her to become a Community Adolescent Treatment Supporter (CATS). She was equipped with the required skills to effectively change lives.

During her journey as a CATS, Atieno encountered Jane* (not her real name), a young woman struggling with a dangerously high viral load count. With Atieno's unwavering support and follow-ups, Jane's viral load dropped to undetectable levels in just six months.

Seeing the profound impact she had on others, Atieno realized that by helping her peers, she was also helping herself be accountable for her health. This self-discovery further fuelled her dedication as a CATS.

'Family abandoned me'



Paul Onono's story is yet another testament to the Centre's transformative zeal. Facing health challenges since childhood, he relied on his brother for support.

When diagnosed with both tuberculosis and HIV, his brother's wife ostracized him, leading Paul to abandon his medication and spiralled into despair.





“After receiving my test results, my brother told his wife about it and with it, she warned her children not to get close to me. She set aside different utensils for me, and nobody would use them. At some point, it made me stop medication, and ultimately face death,” he recalls.

Through support groups’ sessions at Bondo County Referral Hospital, he later accepted his status and resumed medication. Recognizing his resilience, the hospital recommended him to Mildmay for CATS training. Now, Paul heads the CATS program at the Bondo Youth Wellness Centre.

Paul’s role is crucial. He helps his newly infected peers and those struggling with high viral loads. Among them is a 14-year-old boy whose viral load was at a staggering five million. Paul’s commitment and guidance helped the boy achieve an undetectable viral load, and the boy has become a mentor to others himself.

Employing his own experience, Paul aims to inspire and empower all those he meets who are struggling with their treatment and acceptance. He embodies the spirit of the Bondo Youth Wellness Centre, where hope and support empower young people living with HIV to thrive.

Winnie and Paul have made remarkable changes in their respective areas due to the support they have received from the Bondo Youth Wellness Centre as Community Adolescent Treatment Supporters (CATS).

CATS are trained community volunteers who support community-based HIV interventions through a peer-to-peer approach. Their key

responsibility is to ensure that all young individuals who are HIV positive have successfully connected to a HIV care and treatment service at a facility of their choice.

The National Syndemic Disease Control Council (NSDCC) report of 2022, notes that there has been a spike in new HIV infections in Siaya County. It is further approximated that 97,000 people are living with the disease in the county. The national tally remained slightly above 1.5 million.

The report further notes, three out of every five new infections occur among adolescents and young people. Recognizing this urgent need, Mildmay International Kenya (MIK) working with the Kenya Red Cross, established a haven where affected young individuals could seek assistance on their status without facing stigmatization.

The Bondo Youth Wellness Centre has become a refuge for them, providing an environment where young people could freely express themselves. Their goal is to bring change and ensure that all adolescents living with HIV lead healthy lives.

The Centre is a youth-run project by Mildmay International Kenya funded by the Global Fund HIV Prevention Program under the administration of the Kenya Red Cross Society.

Embracing **Virtual Care** Pathways During Adversities

By: Grace Waigumo
PR & Communication



PHOTOS: GIDRAPH MBUGUA/ KRCS

Our country continues to face ever-changing rhythms of nature, where the landscape often shifts from peaceful rivers to raging floods, from fertile lands to drought-stricken fields. These natural calamities not only devastate homes and livelihoods but also leave a lasting impact on the mental well-being of those affected. The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) has borne witness to these trials and, in response, has embarked on a transformative journey to integrate digital technology into mental health support.

At KRCS, we firmly believe that mental health is not a luxury but a fundamental human right. This conviction drives us to safeguard and nurture mental well-being, particularly in times of adversity. Emergencies; whether natural disasters, conflicts, or public health crises, exert a profound and often long-lasting toll on

mental health. Recognizing this, we have woven mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into the very fabric of our emergency response framework. From the onset of any crisis, our teams on the ground are not only focused on addressing physical needs but are also equipped to provide immediate psychological first aid. This involves techniques for active listening, empathy, and emotional support, essential for mitigating the immediate psychological impacts of emergencies. Yet, our efforts extend beyond direct support.

In our quest to ensure mental health remains at the forefront of our humanitarian efforts, we have embraced the potential of digital technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI). Enter Chat Care, an AI-powered mental health chatbot born from a partnership with the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA), Microsoft, and Pathways International. Chat Care is not just an

algorithm—it is a lifeline available 24/7 on platforms like Telegram, Facebook Messenger, and the KRCS website. With its user-friendly interface, Chat Care offers more than just information. It provides a virtual shoulder to lean on, extending empathy and guidance to individuals grappling with anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. By reaching into remote regions and breaking down the barriers of stigma, Chat Care has become a beacon of hope, having interacted with over 3,000 people since its launch.



The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the urgent need for accessible telehealth services. In response, KRCS launched a USSD platform integrated into our emergency hotline *789*1199#, developed in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Lavington. This platform allows individuals to identify and refer themselves or others in need of mental health services to a dedicated helpline. It is a revolution in providing mental health support, offering not just access but also hope, especially in rural areas where traditional services may be scarce.

Beyond direct interventions, we understand that fostering community resilience is crucial in promoting mental well-being during and after emergencies. We actively engage with communities, organizing gatherings, workshops, and support groups to strengthen social cohesion and mutual support networks. This community-centric approach is a cornerstone of our Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Framework, developed in collaboration with the Danish Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) PS Reference Centre.

This framework champions community-based interventions, resilience-building, and stigma reduction, reshaping our emergency response strategies. It serves as a testament to our commitment to enhancing mental health support and ensuring that no one faces the psychological impacts of disasters alone.

As we harness AI to revolutionize mental health support, we remain acutely aware of the ethical considerations involved. Data privacy measures, continuous monitoring, and feedback mechanisms are integral to our digital platforms. We acknowledge that while AI offers significant value, it cannot replace human interaction. Therefore, users have the option to choose between interacting with the AI chatbot or speaking directly with a human agent, ensuring that the support provided aligns with their preferences and needs.

Our journey to integrate digital technology into mental health support is built upon a foundation of collaboration and partnership. We have worked closely with leading experts in AI technology, mental health professionals, and community stakeholders to ensure that our initiatives are informed by best practices and tailored to the diverse needs of our population. This collective effort is a testament to the power of coming together to foster a society where mental well-being is prioritized and supported.

Let us remember that in every disaster, beyond physical damage lies a profound impact on the human spirit. By embracing digital technology, we are not just addressing the symptoms of mental health challenges; we are nurturing resilience, fostering hope, and building bridges of compassion.

Building On Opportunities Within the In-School Robotics And Coding Programs

In today's world driven by technology, coding and robotics are no longer just cool hobbies - they're critical keys of unlocking a bright future. This tech-desire has in recent years seen digital revolution sweep across the globe, with classrooms trying to keep pace.

Unlike in yesteryears when only schooling was more of infrastructure. Now, coding and robotics programs are the new powerful way to equip students with the skills they need to thrive in this new world. It is an assurance to their future's literacy ability and application in problem-solving.

However, in developing countries like Kenya, turning this vision into reality still faces a stark reality: a lack of resources and reliable infrastructure. This is where innovative partnerships and dedicated efforts come in, paving the way for these transformative programs to reach even the most remote classrooms.

This is what the innovations unit at the International Center for Humanitarian Affairs (ICHA), which focuses on developing and implementing innovative solutions to address these social and humanitarian challenges, has been tirelessly championing.

Through its partnerships with Tech Kidz Africa and Raspberry Pi, the innovations unit has been able to provide in-school robotics and coding programs to students in Kenya, even in areas where internet connectivity is limited.



It has also been working to upscale humanitarian coding and STEM programs through the Kenya Red Cross Society's Youth Structures. By providing training and resources to young people, the unit is empowering them to become leaders in their communities and use technology to address social and humanitarian challenges.

In this light, a stakeholder meeting of representatives from Raspberry Pi, Tech Kidz Africa, Kenya Red Cross Society, Compassionate, and the County Director of Education was held at Close the Gap on 19th April 2023 to discuss partnership opportunities for the in-school robotics and coding programs.

The Senior Regional Head of Partnerships from Raspberry Pi was oriented on the progress, feedback, and gaps that can form opportunities for redesigning the Coding and Robotics programs.

The meeting also included the Trainer of Trainers (TOTs) that were engaged during the implementation of the in-school programs.

Moreover, the innovations unit has been advocating for coding and robotics to be included in the Kenyan school curriculum. By doing so, they hope to provide all students with access to these essential skills and help bridge the digital divide in Kenya.

Innovative Approaches to Disaster Preparedness, Response & Recovery

By: Grace Waigumo
PR & Communication

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) has made remarkable strides in leveraging telecommunications for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery across 47 counties in Kenya. As we face increasingly complex and frequent disasters, integrating technology has become crucial in ensuring efficient and effective humanitarian aid. At the Society, when carrying out our day-to-day activities, we have one elementary fact that stands out; disasters strike without warning.

Take a minute and visualize a county like Tana River, where the Pokomo, Orma, and Wardey communities are frequently challenged by natural disasters—floods, droughts, and epidemics that threaten their lives and livelihoods. In these critical moments, the ability to communicate quickly and effectively can mean the difference between chaos and coordinated action, between suffering and survival. The ability to send real-time alerts is crucial. In partnership with Safaricom, KRCS leverages on Trilogy Emergency Relief Application (TERA), a system that sends targeted messages to people in affected areas. These messages provide communities with crucial information such as climate advisories, evacuation orders, safety tips, and updates on the current situation. During the recent March-April-May (MAM) rains that caused havoc in different parts of the country, KRCS shared 70 million TERA messages to the 47 counties, based on the weather forecasts and safety tips. Following the dispatch of these messages on the rising water levels, 1000 people willingly and independently evacuated to higher grounds in Tana River County. This timely information allowed families to evacuate to higher ground, secure their belongings, and avoid the devastating impacts of the floodwaters.

We anchor effective disaster management on accurate and up-to-date information supported by the International Center for Humanitarian Affairs (ICHA) which is the knowledge and research hub of the Kenya Red Cross Society, boasting expertise in Climate, Research, Innovation, and Data. The satellite and drone imagery enable the teams to assess disaster impact, plan interventions, and monitor recovery efforts. From there, the teams can identify vulnerable areas and support the development of risk maps, provide real-time images of affected areas, and aid in damage assessment and planning rescue operations. All these combined efforts build on the KRCS's disaster recovery by monitoring rebuilding efforts, and ensuring that recovery activities are progressing as planned. Amid the MAM rains in April, ICHA deployed drones that spotted a young child who was alone and had been marooned by floodwaters in Yatta, Machakos County. The team promptly alerted the Kenya Police, who then deployed a chopper for the rescue.

Financial aid is a cornerstone of disaster recovery, enabling affected individuals to meet their immediate needs. During some of these disasters, KRCS teams are faced with logistical challenges like cut-off roads and marooned communities among others in the affected areas. To support our initiatives, there is a need to ensure we have accessible systems and improved delivery mechanisms for cash-based aid addressing humanitarian needs. With a GSMA fund through the British Red Cross partnership and a 510-designed solution under the Netherlands Red Cross, KRCS piloted the 121 Personal Cash Aid system for Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA). It offers a comprehensive, user-friendly platform that streamlines the entire process of aid distribution, from beneficiary registration to final payment. The solution was centered around the creation of digital identification of vulnerable populations to support receiving cash transfers, mostly those without any form of identification. The pilot explored data protection and privacy, data literacy of affected populations, and the aim of self-sovereign identity including the policies and legislations that exist on the issuance of legal identification.

The system has scaled in refugee camps, and the solution has been taken on to support our programs under Cash Transfer as part of our digital transformation journey. Through a partnership with Safaricom, who have waived all transactional costs for sums of money sent to beneficiaries, they have further incorporated MPESA services into the 121 system, making the provision of cash aid to beneficiaries fast and seamless. This ensures efficiency in the delivery of aid and empowerment by providing the recipients with the autonomy to use the funds according to their specific needs, whether for food, shelter, or healthcare.

The Kenya Red Cross Society has embraced digital technology including Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enrich the humanitarian work it does. In partnership with the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA), Microsoft, and PathWays International, it has birthed an AI Chatbot that stands ready 24/7 on various platforms—Telegram, Facebook Messenger, and KRCS website and the *789*1199# USSD developed in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Lavington. The teams have worked closely with leading experts in AI technology, mental health professionals, and community stakeholders to ensure that our initiative is informed by best practices and tailored to the needs of our diverse population.

The integration of telecommunications by the Kenya Red Cross Society represents a transformative approach to disaster management. AI-powered mental health chatbots provide critical psychological support, TERA messages ensure timely communication, digital cash solutions offer flexible financial aid, digital identities streamline aid distribution, and satellite and drone imagery enhance situational awareness.

These technologies not only improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our response but also empower communities to recover and rebuild with resilience. As we continue to face new challenges, the innovative use of technology will remain at the forefront of our efforts to protect and support those in need.



Welding, Plumbing And Electrical Classes At The Technical University Of Mombasa



Funded by the Embassy of France in Kenya under the KRCS FSPI project, a call for applications was launched in partnership with the Technical University of Mombasa (TUM).

Over 7,000 participants applied for the short courses in Electrical, Plumbing and Welding, highlighting the significant need for similar workshops in Mombasa County to help resolve joblessness crisis.

A rigorous selection process named shortlisted applicants who were invited for interviews. The interview panel included judges and observers from Toolkit, TUM, and I.O.Me 254.

Priority was given to participants with some experience in the fields applied, particularly those from the Juakali informal sector. Ultimately, 30 students were selected.



The workshops aimed to enhance professionalism in Electrical, Plumbing, and Welding. Students received thorough training on safety procedures and proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in workshops and labs.

The learning modules covered diverse topics, including electrical installation, fixing floating switches, drainage systems, pipe fitting, water supply, wastewater disposal, cesspool management, water storage cisterns, and site and tool safety procedures.

To further enhance their practical skills, the project team partnered with Con-Tech to offer apprenticeship opportunities for some students.

These apprenticeships will involve supporting the container fabrication of the I.O.Me 001 Innovation Lab, allowing them to apply their newly acquired skills to a tangible project.

Our Partners



Government Of Kenya



Croce Rossa Italiana



European Union





TREAT YOURSELF WITH KINDNESS



Improving your mental health and well-being is a journey. Don't rush the process – take one step at a time.

If you need counselling support, call us on **1199** for free counselling, or any necessary referral and linkage to psychosocial support.



ReachOut

www.redcross.or.ke