

EMPOWERMENT ECHO



Quarterly Newsletter



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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Hello and welcome to the third edition of our quarterly newsletters.

The quarter has been eventful and impactful towards realization of our shared vision of seeing safe and empowered Children living in a community with sustainable livelihood. I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for your unwavering support and commitment towards championing the rights and safety of the children we support. Your support and commitment to our cause is the driving force behind our efforts to create lasting change in the communities we serve.

We launched and implemented initiatives aimed at addressing the pressing needs required by the community we serve to adapt to climate change, and I am proud to report that our programs have touched over 2,500 people in Makueni and Kajiado counties. Through partnerships, we were able to implement water programs promoting both access and governance as an enabler for growth, development and adaptation to climate change. Most importantly, we were able to conduct research and baseline on water governance challenges in the rural areas with the aim of addressing the root causes of poor rural water governance. Additionally, we supported the children through education at all levels through bursary and provision of requisite learning materials and vocational training tools and equipment. These together with crosscutting programs including health, Child protection, food security and livelihoods have influenced change in the community. I encourage you to read through the updates in this newsletter to see the impact we have created.

Collaboration has been key to our success. Together, we are creating a robust network that amplifies our efforts and maximizes our impact. I want to thank each of our partners for their invaluable contributions and shared vision.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on our strategic goals, which include strengthening collaboration to address root causes, health and nutrition challenges, water access challenges, food security and livelihood challenges as well as education and sustainability. As we move into the next quarter, I invite you to stay engaged. Join us in upcoming programs, share our message within your networks, and consider how you can further contribute to our mission.

Thank you once again for being an essential part of our journey. Your belief in our mission inspires us every day.



Victor Aduda



Access to Safe Water Transforms Lives in Kajiado County

Access to safe and clean water has long been a challenge for the residents of Kajiado County, a predominantly semi-arid region plagued by frequent droughts. Girls and children often endure walks of over 5 kilometres to fetch water for household use. Borehole failures have further added to the water crisis, forcing families to travel long distances in search of this necessity.

Elizabeth Katii, a mother of 10 and a resident of Oltinka, has experienced these hardships firsthand. When the borehole near her hometown broke down, she and her family were forced to seek water elsewhere, making the already difficult situation worse.

“We used to wake up as early as 6 a.m. to walk all the way to Samli to fetch water, and by the time we returned home, it would be 6 p.m.,” Elizabeth recalls. “At my age, the long distances became unbearable, and carrying water on my back was too difficult. I had no choice but to send my children to fetch water for the family.”

Although her children helped, Elizabeth still faced difficulties, particularly on weekdays when her children were in school. Without water, she often had to hire a motorbike to carry water for her family. In times when money was scarce, she had no choice but to make the long trek herself, which worsened her back pain.

“There were days when the kids were at school, and the water ran out at home,” she says. “I had to hire a motorbike to get water, but when I didn’t have the money, I would walk the distance myself. As you can see, I’m an old woman. That journey is no joke, and my back would hurt terribly. There was even a time when I couldn’t cook because I couldn’t get water.”

Recognizing the community's urgent need for a sustainable water source, Emali Dedicated Children’s Agency, with input from residents during a needs assessment survey, rehabilitated the borehole at Oltinka. This vital project, which restored the damaged borehole that had been non-operational for many years, has brought clean water closer to the residents of Oltinka.

The impact has been life changing. With access to water now just a short distance away, families no longer have to bear the financial burden of transporting water or the physical strain of walking long distances. This has not only provided relief but also freed up time for other economic activities.

“I can now access water very close to my home, and I no longer have to spend extra money to get it,” Elizabeth says, expressing her gratitude. “We didn’t have water before, but now we do. Many people, along with their livestock, are benefiting from this water. Thank you so much!”

Emali Dedicated Children’s Agency remains committed to ensuring that communities have access to clean and safe water, a critical step in improving livelihoods and building resilience in drought-prone areas like Kajiado County.

Marching with confidence



Scouting is a movement that provides young people with opportunities to participate in programmes, events, activities and projects that contribute to their growth as active students thus enabling them to become agents of positive change who inspire others to act.

Scout students at Nduundune Comprehensive school for the longest time have lacked scouting uniforms to help them fulfil their duties and make them have a sense of belonging. The expensive uniforms made it difficult for the parents to be able to afford them leaving students to participate in activities without uniforms and that made them feel left out whenever they saw other children donning their uniforms.

“We did not have scout uniforms and that made us not advance to the next levels of our competitions. We also were not happy, and we did not have the confidence because we did not look like the others,” says Joan, scout student.

“The students were very demoralized especially when we go to competitions and see that other children had uniforms, and they did not have. That took away their confidence because they felt like they did not belong in those forums and felt odd one out,” added Madam Eunice, scout teacher.

We supported the school with scout uniforms which had proven hard to acquire given that the uniforms are very expensive, and most parents were not able to provide uniforms to their children. From the support, they were able to proceed to the regional levels of their competition, cultivating more confidence in the students. Through that more students have expressed their interest in joining the club activities.

“When we got the scout uniforms, we were very happy, our team qualified to participate in the regional competitions and that made us very happy. It was my first time travelling to Kitui and that made me very happy that I was able to go, and this time fully dressed like the other scouting members. We belonged and did not feel left out,” says Joan excitedly.

Scouting isn't just an extracurricular activity. It's an activity that instills discipline in the children who get to serve as role models to the other students in school. It helps improve their character and makes them have good behaviors. It instills leadership skills to the students even at a young age and creates team work among the members. The sounds of their chants are an expression of the teamwork that goes into ensuring that everything they do is successful.

“I always tell parents that scouting isn't just any other activity, it helps cultivate discipline because the children are becoming role models to the other students through their school performance where they are excelling well. I have seen an increase in the number of students expressing their interest in joining the club. I honestly wouldn't mind if the entire school wanted to join scouting. I am very happy, and the students are happy,” adds Madam Eunice.

We work to ensure that children in our communities are educated and confident.

Bridging the Skills Gap: How Makueni County's Vocational Training Centres are Preparing Youth for the Job Market

On September 19, we joined the Governor of Makueni County, H.E. Mutula Kilonzo Jr., along with the residents of Makueni, to launch the first Makueni County Vocational Training Centres Skills Exhibition at Springhill Kwakakulu County Technical Training Institute (CTTI). The event, themed "*Translating Skills to Employability*," aimed to showcase the exceptional talents of youths trained across various vocational disciplines. It provided a unique platform to highlight the potential of skilled trainees and their readiness to contribute meaningfully to the county's economic growth.

"This is one way of ensuring that our youth get the skills that will improve their lives because job opportunities are very scarce and this will help them gain skills that will help them become self-reliant not only in Makueni county but across the Country," remarked H.E. Mutula Kilonzo Jr, Makueni County Governor.

We always strive to ensure that the children in our communities are growing up educated and skilled and we supported Springhill Kwakakulu CTTI with 4 state of the art sewing machines that will help the students taking tailoring course with practical skills that they can use for the job market and even begin their own business ventures.

"We are today donating 4 industrial sewing machines that will help modernize the skills students get to match with the industry needs. We will continue partnering to ensure that youths have adequate skills to contribute meaningfully to the society," said Victor Aduda, CEO EDCA.

Vocational training institutions help build the technical skills of students ensuring that the skills gained are informed by market needs so that they can enhance their livelihoods as they are economically empowered.

"I would encourage every youth who is at home to come and join vocational training. I want them to come get skills and knowledge and that way they can become self-sufficient. It's hard for someone to sleep hungry when you've got the necessary skills and resources," quips a student at SpringHill Kwakakulu.

Through initiatives like this, we strive to fulfill Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, particularly in education and economic empowerment.





Launch of the Climate Change Adaptation Project

In a bid to enhance the adaptive capacity and resilience of small holder farmers and community members affected by climate-related threats in Emali community, we launched the Emali Integrated Food Security and Climate Adaptation project at Nembuya Farmer Field School. The Project Launch was graced by H.E Joseph Ole Lenku.

“During the drought season, we used to travel as far as Nakuru to get fodder for our animals. Sometimes we would get very bad fodder that would threaten the lives of our livestock and in some instances cause their death. We are grateful for this project because we now see the benefits of growing our own fodder,” says Titus, Farmer Kenyawa Poka.

During the launch, over 300 participants, including county officials, development partners, and community members, gathered to learn about innovative farming techniques and the importance of financial literacy. Through exhibitions and demonstrations, we showcased how alternative livelihood concepts can sustain livelihoods, improve incomes, and ensure food security amidst impacts of climate change.

“We will continue to sensitize our community members that they practice modulated pastoralism. Having a small herd of livestock with enough feed is much better compared to having many cows with little feed that won’t survive when another drought hits due to climate change. As a county, we have come up with plans to embrace feeding plans for livestock, quality produce and dairy, beef and skin value chain production,” says H.E Joseph Ole Lenku, Governor Kajiado County.

In line with our commitment to climate-smart solutions, we completed the solarization of the Nembuya borehole. This project, which involved the installation of 26 solar panels, will support fodder production and livestock activities at the Nembuya Farmer Field School. The borehole is expected to benefit 1,200 farmers, enhancing their agricultural output and resilience to climate change while reducing energy costs using renewable solar power.

To further improve access to water in drought-prone area, the construction of a 10,000 cubic meter surface water reservoir along the Muuoni River was launched. This is part of a broader effort to increase water availability for smallholder farmers practicing climate-smart agriculture. By ensuring a reliable water supply, the project is helping farmers adopt sustainable practices that will improve food security and reduce the impacts of drought on agricultural productivity.

The project aims to:

- Increase smallholder farmers’ productivity and incomes through improved irrigation and climate smart agriculture where 100 small holders supported to practice irrigation and aquaculture.
- Increase smallholder farmers’ milk production and income through improved climate smart dairy production. 100 dairy farmers will be supported to increase milk production, and a Climate Smart field school established to support 500 dairy farmers.
- Increase financial literacy and inclusion for small-holder dairy and irrigation farmers for sustainable development. 600 dairy and crop farmers will be equipped with financial literacy skills and advocacy.

Enhancing Child Well-being Through Positive Parenting



Four of our staff members; Erick Bwire- Programs Manager, Felix Syuki- Sponsor Relations Coordinator, James Mutunga- M&E Officer and Charity Kiluva- Programs Assistant had the opportunity to attend a refresher training on responsive positive parenting where they learned new techniques to support positive child development. The training was conducted by Moth Pritchard, CEO, Kindergarten Experts International.

Responsive Positive parenting (RPP) is a holistic approach to child development that aims to ensure that children develop to their full potential, enjoy good physical and mental health and live in stable families and supportive communities that interact in non-violent ways. RPP focuses on secure attachment, inclusive caregiving, and play-based learning with an aim of improving early childhood outcomes.

This approach emphasizes play, communication, responsive caregiving, health and safe pregnancy and delivery, complementary feeding and dietary diversity, a safe home environment and WASH, and understanding how children learn and grow.

Over the past years, we have reached and trained 318 caregivers on responsive positive parenting to ensure they are better equipped to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children, contributing to their cognitive, physical, and emotional growth.

“RPP training was of great help to me. I learnt a lot concerning parenting. I also knew the different pointers to look for in nurturing and caring for my kid especially with things to do with play, diet. Environment of my child and general hygiene. When I apply these lessons to my parenting, it will have a positive impact to the upbringing of my children,” says Victoria, a participant in the RPP training sessions.

EDCA's Responsive Positive Parenting (RPP) program was carried out in Kajiado and Makueni to support caregivers of children under 5 years old, as well as expectant mothers. The program reached 318(11M, 307F) caregivers. It aimed to help parents and caregivers improve their parenting skills, focusing on early childhood development, health, and positive parenting techniques.

The program was facilitated by 16 trained individuals who guided the sessions and 4 mentors from the community who played a key role in supporting the caregivers. These mentors shared their own parenting experiences, provided advice, and helped reinforce what was taught during the sessions. They also followed up with the caregivers, ensuring they could apply the parenting techniques in their daily lives. Their involvement ensured that the caregivers had the necessary knowledge and ongoing support to improve the well-being of their children.

Improving children's nutrition with Kitchen Gardens for Schools



We are scaling up our efforts in climate-smart agriculture by introducing multi-storied kitchen gardens in six schools. With support from the Aflatoun and Aflateen clubs in Entaretoi primary, Oldonyo Lenkai Primary, Nairataat primary, Kiliku Primary, Matiku primary and Tutini primary school, 213 students have been involved in gardening activities using innovative kitchen bags and a variety of vegetable seeds as they enrich their education experience and develop their practical skills.

"I've been able to apply what I learned in science class to the garden. Growing vegetables has helped me understand concepts like photosynthesis, plant nutrition, and ecosystems in a practical way which aligns well with Competence Based Curriculum (CBC)." Said Veronica, club member.

"The kitchen garden kits have transformed our lessons, breaking class monotony and giving students a real-world context for what they're learning in the classroom. It's useful especially in teaching subjects like science, biology, environmental studies and agriculture for both primary and junior secondary school," added Mr Mukare, club patron.

18 multi-storied kitchen bags, and assorted seeds such as 12 packets of coriander each 50g, 12 packets of kales each 50g and 12 packets of spinach each 50g were acquired from trusted suppliers, meeting stringent safety and quality standards which will initiate gardening greening activities. This venture is set to instill agribusiness skills to the children as well as curbing malnutrition as they feed on vegetables which are rich in zinc, magnesium, manganese, iron and Thiamin (vitamin B1) which will help in improving their health as well as their learning outcomes.

Advancing Climate Action Through Advocacy and Community Engagement

Makueni County, Kenya, faces a critical water shortage, with only 36% of the population's demand for water being met. This leaves 64% of the residents reliant on unimproved sources, significantly increasing the risk of waterborne diseases. Women and girls are disproportionately affected, traveling an average of 5 kilometres to fetch water—a task that not only exhausts their time and energy but also exposes them to risks of violence.

Alarming, 90% of water projects in the region fail, underscoring the need for sustainable interventions. Recognizing this, the Makueni County Government has made water a top priority in its development agenda. Access to reliable water services is not only vital for addressing immediate health needs but also plays a crucial role in climate change mitigation and adaptation, particularly in agricultural production and tree propagation.

PAMOJA-Collective Action on Climate Change project has been instrumental in empowering communities to engage in climate advocacy. Our advocacy issue is brought about by poor rural water governance leading to the collapse of water supply schemes that denies children and vulnerable families access to safe and clean water. We therefore ask the County government to amend the Makueni County water policy, 2019 to institutionalize rural water governance structure to promote accountability and reliable water access for children and vulnerable families.

Two consultative meetings with the Makueni County Government and the Makueni Rural water Board have been held to align our climate actions with local development plans.

Additionally, we facilitated the formation of climate change advocacy networks, training 30 members incorporating the children, local religious leaders, youths, and teachers on climate action and good water governance advocacy. These efforts are ensuring that communities are not only aware of climate risks but are actively participating in influencing policies that influence climate action. The community advocacy network was further facilitated to cascade the trainings and carry out sensitization forums to 500 households and youth groups served by the target water points on advocating for climate action, environmental conservation and tree growing.

In partnership with Makueni County Government, EDCA conducted a comprehensive training on water resource management for rural governance bodies. The training emphasized integrated water management, pollution control, and legal frameworks governing water governance in Kenya. By building the capacity of these leaders, we are ensuring that communities can sustainably manage their water resources while also safeguarding children's rights and promoting environmental conservation.

10 climate change school clubs have been formed in 3 secondary schools and 7 primary schools. Through school clubs, the children will also be trained and equipped with simple advocacy modules and messaging materials like talking walls, books, and leaflets to enable them take active roles in climate action campaigns. Equipped with the knowledge and skills, school clubs will be resourced to carry out environmental conservation activities that will contribute to growing 1500 trees.





Adoption of Climate Smart Agriculture set to boost food security and livelihoods for farmers in Makueni County

Climate change has disrupted the performance of agriculture in Makueni County with farmers recording poor crop performance and, in some cases, total crop failure. This situation is worsened by knowledge gaps on coping with climate change, climate smart agriculture and carbon credit opportunities. Water scarcity, caused by sporadic rains plus the high salinity of ground water has posed a risk to soil fertility when used for irrigation.

Rose Kitili, a farmer from Mithumoni village in Nguu Masumba ward, Makueni County, has faced numerous challenges in farming. The mother of six, who has been dedicated to farming for many years as her primary source of income, attributes her poor agricultural produce to drought and lack of adequate farming knowledge.

“Lack of water has been a major challenge for us. For our crops to do well, we need enough water, and that has not been easy. As you may know, we always have a water problem due to drought. We also had a problem with the seeds because we did not know which ones to plant,” narrates Rose.

Being dependent on farming, Rose also faced financial challenges, forcing her children to be sent home due to lack of school fees.

“My children were sent home for school fees and that has been hard for me because where do I get the money? I had to take on menial jobs to help cover the expenses because my children have to go to school,” Rose laments.

Through the Mithumoni water project, Rose was among the 50 families capacity built to increase income by practicing climate smart agriculture. She was facilitated with drought tolerant certified seed; Maize (DK8031) and green grams (KS20) and trained on good agricultural practices.

“I was very happy when I received the seeds to plant during that rainy season, but even more, I was very grateful for the lessons we were given to ensure a bountiful harvest. I was taught how to space my planting holes and how to plant in furrows with the correct measurements for applying fertilizer. I was also privileged to go a demonstration farm in Kathonzweni where I learned what other farmers are practicing for better yields,” says Rose

During the harvest period and after putting into practice the good agronomic practices, Rose was able to harvest seven sacks of maize (90 kg each) and 50 kg of green grams. She used the harvest to provide food for her family and managed to take some of the produce to school to cover her children’s school fees.

“I was so happy when I got this harvest, it reminded me how important it is to put into practice what we are taught. From what I harvested, I was able to get food for my family and, most importantly, take some of the produce to school to pay my children’s fees. They are happily in school now,” says Rose excitedly.

Good climate smart agricultural practices can play a key role in eradicating poverty and improving food security for many families amid the challenges of climate change.



How sponsorship is making a difference in Janet's life

"I want to be a teacher, and not any other kind of teacher but a university lecturer," says Janet with a huge smile curved on her face.

Janet's life took a huge turn in 2016 when she was first sponsored through our organization with support from ChildFund New Zealand, marking the start of a life-changing chapter for her and her family. Coming from a large family, the financial strain of meeting basic needs and covering school fees was immense. But sponsorship through Jenny Sharpe brought a ray of hope into their lives.

"I have a family of 10 children and before Emali Dedicated Children's Agency enabled us get a sponsor, we had a hard time providing the basic needs for my children and they would at time be sent home for school fees and they would stay for days without going to school since we had to look for it," says Njeri, Janet's mum.

Through Emali Dedicated Children's Agency with support from ChildFund New Zealand, Janet has received food items both at home and at school, has access to clean and safe water and provision of bursary which has enabled her stay in school without the worry of being sent home for school fees, a common challenge most children face in her community.

"I have received bursaries from EDCA that have helped me stay in school without fear of being sent back home. My family has also received food items that have helped us eat healthy and they also brought some food items at school that is helping my fellow students not to miss school." Said Janet.

The impact of sponsorship didn't just stop at that. Janet's sponsor sent gifts that went beyond meeting immediate needs; they helped the family build a more sustainable future. With the gifts, Janet's family was able to purchase sheep. Over time, the sheep multiplied, providing a source of income for the family. The sale of some sheep helped pay for Janet's school fees and even supported her siblings' education, keeping the family afloat during tough times.

"My sponsor sent me gifts and from that I was able to purchase sheep for my family. I bought two sheep which multiplied over time, and we were able to sell them and the money was used to pay for my sibling and the rest of the income bought food and other school items," said Janet.

Janet is grateful to her sponsor; she looks forward to the time she gets to write letters to her and also getting a response from her always makes her days.

Janet's academic journey has been marked by determination and a deep desire to give back to her community. Inspired by the impact education has had on her life, she dreams of becoming a university lecturer. She has seen firsthand how teaching can transform lives and wants to play a role in helping others achieve their dreams. Janet is driven by a passion to support her community, and one day, she hopes to provide school fees for children who face the same challenges she once did.

What began as a simple act of kindness from a sponsor has grown into a beacon of hope for an entire family and community. With each passing day, Janet moves closer to her dream, armed with the support, love, and encouragement she has received along the way. Her story is a reminder that when we invest in the potential of children, we are investing in the future of entire communities.



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