

EMPOWERMENT

Global Health Connections Quarterly Newsletter



Empowerment and Sustainability

Empowerment is about supporting people to be drivers of their own solutions. The centerpiece of our operational work focuses on Community Health and Empowerment Clubs (CHECs), which empower villages to be architects of their own solutions for social and economic growth. We build infrastructures to help our villagers improve their health and well-being, and in turn, reach their potential and develop their livelihoods. In order for these changes to be sustainable, we believe that communities should be in the driver's seat—as no one can identify challenges and solutions better than communities themselves.

Our villagers face challenging economic and social environments and we aim to strengthen their resilience by creating opportunities to thrive.

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We want to build healthy, strong households and communities, give them ample capacity to cope with the changing environment, and increase their social and economic participation. We also want to ensure our work is sustainable. That's where the Sustainable Governance piece of our model comes into play. After all, true empowerment is sustained over time and change, and our work is not complete until we can ensure our villages are well-equipped to sustain the changes we develop together.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Sustainable is a lofty word. In today's language, it means more than its dictionary definition. It has a green meaning. An Earth-first meaning. A deeper social and economic meaning. The concept can be vague, encompasses many different facets, and is often an over-used buzzword. But in the broadest sense, sustainability refers to the ability to maintain or support a process continuously over time, and from GHC's perspective, this is exactly what we want to accomplish. This is our approach to sustainability and the one that drives us every day. We aim for the long-term viability of a community—from an environmental, economic and social standpoint. We aim for sustainable villages—ones that will continue flourishing on their own, long after GHC hands over the reins!

-- Mimi Gordon

PICTURED ON FIRST PAGE: A CHEC MEMBER FROM KANYAMFWA'S TAILORING GROUP.
 PICTURED ABOVE RIGHT: A VILLAGER FROM OUR NYAMAGESA CHEC USES HER TIPPY-TAP
 HAND-WASHING STATION. CHEC MEMBERS LEARN HOW TO BUILD THEIR OWN AS PART OF
 THE HEALTH CURRICULUM,



Successes and Challenges

The past three months have been a whirlwind! First and foremost, we completed our mid-line surveys in our six new villages: Kanyamfwa and Kanyipir in Homa Bay County and Nyasumi, Nyamagesa, Nyamecheo and Nyanturago in Kisii County. The data show statistically significant improvements in almost all the health, economic and social indicators that we measure, when compared to the baseline data. We have carefully selected meaningful measures and designed data methodology tools to identify progress and have successfully captured this data to prove effective behavior change is not only taking place, but is sustainable and improving the health and economic well-being of our villagers. If you are interested in seeing the results from this round of data collection, please contact us at info@globalhealthconnections.org.

As we look ahead to 2024, we see multiple opportunities and some challenges. We are in the beginning stages of finding partners to help us carry out our mission and to scale what we believe is a sustainable model. Our plan to expand to other parts of western Kenya is ambitious and exciting and even though there are a lot of unknowns, we are optimistic that we can be successful.



Please check out

www.greenerhillshoney.org to see and read about the new apiaries!

Our Homa Bay Villages are engaged in other economic pursuits:

- Kanyipir: Cereals, Tailoring/Sewing, Rock Quarry
- Kanyamfwa: Cereals, Tailoring/Sewing, Water Purification project, Rice Farming

Malnutrition screenings were repeated in mid-November in Nyasumi and Nyamecheo villages due to low turnout in August. The results are impressive and show significant improvement in decreasing or eliminating malnutrition in children 5 and under over the baseline assessment done in January '23.

Village & Apiary Updates

We are beginning to wrap up our first Rotary global grant in our six villages, and the members have begun their various economic projects.

All of our Kisii Villages--Nyasumi, Nyamagesa, Nyanturago, and Nyamecheo--will be doing Beekeeping.

During September we trained over 52 members on beekeeping and apiary management. We had two consultants from the National Beekeeping Institute of Nairobi come to Kisii and we conducted four 3-day sessions which included theory and practicals. After the training, the beekeeping groups began constructing the apiaries in each of their villages. Land was donated in each village by a club member and materials were purchased by GHC. These members are now ready to catch and manage bees, and harvest honey.



Sustainable Governance Committees

GHC's proprietary Sustainable Governance/Leadership Curriculum was launched in early October. Mimi Gordon taught the curriculum to the GHC Kenyan team so they in turn can teach it to the 6 newly created Sustainable Governance Committees in Nyasumi, Nyamagesa, Nyanturago, Nyamecheo, Kanyipir and Kanyamfwa. We are excited to test out this part of our CHEC model. The Kenyan team has just begun teaching the curriculum and the feedback has been positive.

For an in-depth look at this piece of our model and the importance of Sustainable Government, please check out the blog on our website:

<https://globalhealthconnections.org/f/the-ghc-difference-long-term-sustainability-in-our-villages>

Greener Hills Honey

Greener Hills Honey Cooperative is in full swing! We are using the HiveBloom app to manage the hives in all six of our existing apiaries (Mokubo, Tabaka, Biome, Kegati, Ititi, and Kiagware). We intend to use it to manage our brand new apiaries as well. This is a fantastic app that lets us share data across continents about inspection dates and the health of each and every hive in all of our apiaries, along with harvest dates and liters of honey collected.

So far we have harvested honey from 67 of our 190 hives and collected a total of 208 liters of honey. By the end of the year we intend to do several more harvests bringing up this total number. The revenue from the honey is important for our villagers and helps them to pay for school fees, new household roofs, medical costs, etc.



PICTURED ABOVE LEFT: A MEMBER OF THE NYASUMI BEEKEEPING GROUP STANDS IN FRONT OF THE NEW APIARY.. PICTURED BOTTOM RIGHT: PART OF THE NYANTURAGO SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE.



New Strategic Plan

GHC's executive team recently completed a new Strategic Plan for 2024-2026, and the Board of Directors voted to accept it at the December board meeting. This plan sets the direction for GHC and guide's the course of action towards meeting the 6-month, 12-month and 36-month milestones. We have accomplished a lot since our first strategic plan was written in 2021 and met all the milestones set forth in it. This new plan highlights our challenges moving forward, which include scaling our CHEC model, bringing attention to the impact we are making and gaining visibility. We will review this plan on a regular basis to monitor progress, make any necessary adjustments, evaluate performance, and make strategic course corrections. The plan is not rigid but adaptable and flexible and we are prepared to modify it in response to changing circumstances, emerging opportunities, or unforeseen challenges.

The executive team will also be working on the 2023 Annual Report throughout the month of December. Please be on the lookout for an email on how to access it once completed. We hope you enjoy reviewing all we have accomplished in 2023!

Heading into the New Year

At the end of August we were just starting to write a new Rotary global grant proposal. We have completed the proposal and are now in the middle of recruiting Rotary clubs in and around the Denver area to commit funding to our project.





We are excited about the new opportunities in our plan. It is ambitious and aspirational and proposes the following:

- Initiating 1 new CHEC in either Kisii or Nyamira County
- Initiating 3 pilot project villages:
 - 2 involving new teams and remote training: Kajiado County (Maasai tribe) and Nakuru County (Kikuyu and Kalenjin tribes)
 - 1 involving a partnership with Lwala in Homa Bay (Luo tribe)
- Reinforcing existing income-generating projects in our current CHECs; starting new poultry project in Kajiado pilot village and new pyrethrum project in Nakuru pilot village
- Developing Sustainable Governance Committees in CHEC villages (2nd – 3rd year)

We are hopeful for a brand new year full of opportunities to further our mission. We have set our sights far and wide and hope to accomplish more in 2024 than we did in 2023. Undoubtedly this is no small task, but we are confident in our model, in our team's commitment and in our ability to create sustainable, lasting change in the lives of western Kenyans. Thanks for being a part of a great year.



We hope you will consider partnering with us in the following areas:

1. Individual Donations to support CHECs in current villages and expansion into new villages.
2. Adopt-a-Village or Adopt-an-Apiary Sponsorship: Work with GHC to learn about everyday life in Western Kenya while supporting the health, economic empowerment and sustainability of villages. By adopting a village or apiary, an individual or club will be immersed in the CHEC transformation process and will have the opportunity to see firsthand how GHC has a direct impact on empowering individuals.

Be sure to check our website for new information and our social media accounts for weekly updates!

www.globalhealthconnections.org