

# EMPOWERMENT

Global Health Connections Quarterly Newsletter



## Empowered Entrepreneurs, Expanding Communities: GHC's Growing Impact

As we approach the end of the year, we reflect on the incredible impact of our empowered entrepreneurs, especially women, within Global Health Connections (GHC). This quarter, we celebrate the remarkable success stories of some of our female CHEC members who have not only transformed their own lives but have also become catalysts for change within their communities.

We are thrilled to introduce our newest GHC workers, all of whom are women, leading the charge in two of our four new villages. Their dedication and leadership are inspiring, and they exemplify the strength and resilience of women in our programs.

With our recent global grant, we've expanded our reach into four new villages, bringing our mission to more communities than ever before.

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This growth underscores our commitment to empowering individuals—especially women—and fostering vibrant, healthy communities. Join us as we share these inspiring stories and the strides we are making together to create a lasting impact.



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As we reflect on our journey this quarter, I am filled with pride at the strides we've made in empowering communities through Global Health Connections (GHC). At the heart of this impact are the women whose resilience and leadership drive transformation. Our theme, Empowered Entrepreneurs, Expanding Communities, captures our unwavering commitment to connecting communities to innovative health initiatives and economic sustainability programs.

Numerous studies have shown that when we empower women, we uplift entire communities and create pathways out of poverty. This belief drives our work as we witness female CHEC members stepping into leadership roles and making significant contributions to their villages.

I am particularly excited to highlight our newest female GHC workers who are leading efforts in two of our four new villages. Their passion and commitment embody the change we strive to create. With the support of our recent global grant, we've expanded into four new villages, reinforcing our dedication to fostering sustainable, empowered communities.

As we celebrate these milestones, let's continue to support and uplift one another, knowing that our collective efforts are building a brighter future for all. Thank you for being a vital part of this journey.

--Mimi Gordon



## New Contractors

In this quarter's newsletter, we're thrilled to introduce three remarkable new contractors who have joined GHC's mission of empowering communities and transforming lives. Quinter Obungo now oversees Soklo Village on Mfangano Island in Homa Bay County, where her efforts are already making a tremendous impact. Be sure to read more about her inspiring journey in the "GHC Spotlight" at the end of the newsletter. Additionally, Lynn Sinet and Grace Namunyak are leading the charge in Kimuka Village in Kajiado County. We're incredibly proud of what each of these dedicated women has already accomplished, demonstrating leadership and resilience as they bring GHC's vision to life.

## Village & Apiary Updates

Last month, we conducted endline surveys in three of our 24-month old CHEC villages—Nyamagesa, Nyamecheo, and Kanyipir. We re-administered the same health, economic, and social impact surveys given at baseline and midline, allowing us to measure our members' progress over time. The results were remarkable and aligned perfectly with what we'd hoped to see.



### *In other village news...*

The napier grass in Nyamagesa is thriving and members are just two months away from their first harvest! Additionally, through their weekly merry-go-round funding initiative, members have begun purchasing chicks. Last week, they collectively bought 200 chicks, which were distributed among 21 contributing members. Inspired by this success, more members are eager to join the merry-go-round funding initiative.

Across nearly all health indicators, we observed significant improvements, with scores moving from red (indicating a low score on indicators such as handwashing) to yellow and green (showing average to above-average or excellent scores). We saw similar progress across economic and social impact indicators. These inspiring results show that our efforts are not only making an immediate impact on the health and well-being of our villages—they're creating a lasting difference.

The same initiative is thriving in Kegati, where several members pooled their funds to lease nearly an acre of land. They successfully sold all their napier grass and used the profits to lease additional land. The group has discovered that selling napier grass in urban-rural areas, like Kegati, generates higher earnings compared to purely rural regions.



PICTURED ABOVE LEFT:PREPPING THE LAND IN NYAMAGESA FOR NAPIER GRASS.  
PICTURED ABOVE: MONTHS LATER, THE NAPIER GRASS IN NYAMAGESA IS ALMOST READY.



Our first honey harvests in Nyasumi, Nyamecheo, Nyamagesa, and Nyanturago were a sweet success! With a total of 181 liters collected from 33 hives, the members were thrilled with the results, inspiring them to aim even higher. As the apiaries grow, all four clubs are eagerly anticipating the proceeds from their honey sales to further support their community initiatives.

In Kegati, we recently harvested 19 liters from 5 hives, while in Ititi, construction is underway for a new apiary. With the original apiary at capacity, the members are building a new space to house 50 hives—growing their impact and income potential even further.

At GHC, we're equipping members in all our villages with apiaries with the skills to market and sell their honey to villagers and local markets. While GHC continues to assist with packaging, our goal is to empower members to confidently manage the entire process on their own. By learning these essential marketing and sales strategies, they can turn their honey into a sustainable source of income, driving economic growth and self-reliance within their communities.

Check out [greenerhillshoney.org](https://greenerhillshoney.org) for more recent pictures and videos!



PICTURED ABOVE LEFT AND BOTTOM RIGHT: MEMBERS FROM NYASUMI DISPLAY THE HONEY HARVEST. PICTURED BOTTOM LEFT: MEMBERS FROM NYAMECHEO 'SMOKE OUT' THE BEES DURING THE HARVEST.



## Villager Success Stories

Meet Brenda Kemunto, a 27-year-old entrepreneur from Nyamagesa Village, who has taken her first step toward financial independence. With an initial merry-go-round contribution of Ksh 500 (\$4), Brenda invested in second-hand clothing, which she resells at a profit in her village. Her success has enabled her to expand, now reaching customers at the nearby Moturumesi Market as well. At each weekly CHEC meeting, she brings her clothing inventory, offering items to her fellow members.

Brenda, a wife and mother of two, has been able to contribute significantly to her family's well-being. Her income supports her carpenter husband, helps cover school fees, provides food for the family, and meets other essential needs. Thanks to her dedication and hard work, Brenda can now confidently provide for her family.



From her savings, Milka decided to start a tree nursery, recognizing the environmental benefits of planting trees even in the face of water scarcity. Despite relying on a seasonal dam as the main water source and often walking miles to find water, she has successfully grown and sold seedlings for Ksh 10 each (about 1 cent). Her determination has significantly improved her family's living standards, enabling her to pay school fees and put food on the table. Milka credits GHC's economic empowerment program for giving her the opportunity to transform her life and her community.

Kanyipir, known for its dry climate, seemed like an unlikely place for a tree nursery—until Milka Dan changed that perception. A 35-year-old member of the Kanyipir CHEC and Tailoring Group, Milka lives with her husband and their seven children. With seed capital from GHC to support their tailoring business, Milka and her group began making and selling dresses, generating profits, and saving a portion of their earnings.





## New Global Grant

In our September newsletter, we announced the approval of our new global grant. Now, we're thrilled to share that we have successfully launched four new CHECs: Nyamokenye Village in Kisii County, Maugo Village in Homa Bay County, Soklo Village on Mfangano Island (Homa Bay County), and Kimuka Village in Kajiado County. Soklo and Kimuka mark our first remote CHECs, and we're pleased to report that seven weeks into the health curriculum, progress has been strong! To prepare for these launches, our team spent 13 weeks training our dedicated remote members—Lynn and Grace in Kimuka, and Quinter in Soklo—on the GHC health, economic, and leadership curriculums. The training culminated in hands-on activities and village visits in Kisii, equipping them with the skills to lead these CHECs independently and effectively.

With 125 villagers enrolled in each club, we now have 500 new direct beneficiaries and approximately 3,000 indirect beneficiaries. Attendance has been remarkable, with villagers enthusiastically participating in each session and embracing our interactive, participatory approach.

As we approach 2025, our vision is brighter than ever, filled with new avenues to drive our mission forward. This year promises transformative milestones, each bringing us closer to stronger, healthier communities. The challenges are real, yet the passion and dedication of our CHEC members continue to inspire and energize our work.

To close this edition, we're proud to share a story that exemplifies resilience, empowerment, and the spirit of change—qualities that fuel our progress and make every step forward meaningful.

This is Agnes Moraa, a 35-year-old mother of three whose life has seen remarkable improvement since joining the Nyamagesa CHEC. With her first merry-go-round contribution of Ksh 750 (\$6), Agnes launched a business selling household essentials like matches, sugar, salt, washing powder, and rice. Over the past year, her business has flourished, bringing a new level of stability and independence to her life.

Previously, Agnes relied solely on her husband to support the family, but now they work as a team, strengthening both their finances and their relationship. Her husband's pride in her accomplishments has also deepened their bond. With Ksh 5,000 (\$39) in savings, Agnes is ready to cover her children's school fees in January, a milestone she's thrilled to achieve independently.

Together, we are empowering communities and helping to create sustainable villages!



PICTURED ABOVE: AGNES MORAA FROM NYAMAGESA VILLAGE IN RISII

## GHC Spotlight

Name: Quinter Obunga

Title: Project Officer in Homa Bay County

Note: Quinter is one of our new GHC contractors who works in Soklo Village on Mfangano Island.

*1. How long have you been working at GHC?*

*What is your area of expertise?*

I have been working with GHC for 7 months, bringing my expertise in community health, paralegalism, social work, and community development to the organization.

*2. What motivated you to pursue a career in this sector, and what drives your passion for the GHC's mission?*

My passion for this sector stems from a deep desire to advocate for others and connect communities to innovative, sustainable initiatives and projects.

What drives me most about GHC's mission is the opportunity to improve access to healthcare, financial support, and mental health services while contributing to a more equitable society. By empowering communities through evidence-based interventions and promoting gender rights, I feel I am making a tangible impact. This work is not only fulfilling but also offers the chance to create lasting, measurable change in the lives of others.

*3. What strategies do you use to build trust and rapport with community members in Soklo village on Mfangano Island?*

To build trust and rapport, I prioritize being a role model and a champion for the rights of all genders. I approach the community with humility and respect, ensuring that every interaction reflects their value and importance. Additionally, I make it a point to keep my promises and honor commitments, including those related to time, which helps strengthen trust over time.

*4. How do you ensure community participation and ownership in development initiatives?*

Ensuring these two things involves a collaborative approach. I actively engage stakeholders, such as chiefs and village elders, in the planning and micro-planning stages of projects.



## GHC Spotlight

I also prioritize giving consistent feedback, leveraging my relationships with community members, and exploring alternative solutions together to address their unique needs.

*5. Can you discuss a project or initiative you are working on in Soklo?*

I am working on a project aimed at improving community health and financial well-being by introducing innovative ideas in collaboration with the Ekialo Kiona Center. This partnership leverages the power of the local radio station, Ekialo Kiona Radio, to disseminate vital information to the community. Through this initiative, we aim to reach a broader audience with messages that promote health education and economic empowerment.

*6. What strategies do you employ to ensure the long-term viability of the CHEC?*

I focus on establishing clear roles and responsibilities. Conducting a thorough needs assessment and identifying local partners is a key step in aligning our efforts with the community's priorities. Collaboration is another cornerstone of sustainability. I actively engage with the entire GHC team, leveraging shared knowledge and resources to strengthen our initiatives.

*7. What are your long-term goals and aspirations for community development on Mfangano Island?*

My long-term goals focus on creating sustainable impact and lasting transformation. To achieve this, I aim to incorporate sustainable measures into project designs to ensure long-term efficiency and resilience. Developing a clear vision for the communities' growth and well-being is central to guiding our efforts and aligning with their aspirations.

*8. What do you like to do for fun? What are some of your passions outside of work?*

I love adventure! And I am especially passionate about helping vulnerable populations, such as orphans, and being part of meaningful efforts to improve their lives.

*9. What's the best part about working for GHC?*

The best part about working for GHC is the sense of adventure that comes with the job and the opportunity to make a real difference.

*10. One random fact about me that most people don't know about me is...*

I am an introvert.



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

**1. Colorado Gives Day Fundraiser:** Every donation to GHC not only helps fund vital community programs but also boosts our incentive funding from the foundation, amplifying your impact.

<https://www.coloradogives.org/story/Empowerkenya>

**2. Adopt-a-Village or Adopt-an-Apiary Sponsorship:** Work with GHC to learn about everyday life in 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](http://www.globalhealthconnections.org)**