

EMPOWERMENT

Global Health Connections Quarterly Newsletter



Stories of Resilience

At Global Health Connections, we have long been inspired by the remarkable resilience of the communities we serve. Despite facing numerous challenges, our CHEC members continue to demonstrate unwavering strength, determination, and courage in the face of adversity.

Sprinkled throughout this edition, we are honored to share with you stories of resilience from the heart of our villages. Over the past three years, from the rural green hills of Kisii to the shores of Lake Victoria, we have witnessed incredible tales of triumph over hardship, perseverance in the face of obstacles, and the power of community to uplift and support one another.

Through our innovative programs, initiatives, and partnerships, we are committed to empowering our members and their communities to thrive and flourish. Whether it's through our

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health and finance curriculums, vocational training or economic opportunities, we believe in fostering pathways to empowerment that enable individuals and families to build brighter futures for themselves and their communities. In short, we are working hard to lay the groundwork for a brighter future where every individual has the chance to thrive.

Pictured here is Florence Mokeira Ogera: She is 60 years old, from the Nyasumi CHEC. Florence has received merry-go-round funds five times. She invested all that into buying hens. She sells eggs and generates income for her daily needs in her household. She shared that raising chickens has been an absolute game-changer in her life! Amidst caring for her elderly parent, this venture has become her lifeline, empowering her with the means to afford vital medications and nutrient-rich food that her garden can't provide. And what's more, she is even able to help pay her grandchildren's school tuition.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

In this newsletter, you will have the opportunity to meet just a few of the inspiring individuals whose resilience and determination have touched our hearts and transformed lives. Their stories remind us of the boundless potential that lies within each and every one of us, and they serve as a powerful testament to the resilience of the human spirit. You'll also learn about our latest projects, partnerships, and upcoming global grant that are shaping the health and economic landscape of western Kenya.

I invite you to join us on this journey of empowerment and change as we continue to witness inspiring stories of individuals who have overcome obstacles, seized opportunities, and transformed their lives through our programs. Together, we can pave the way for a more resilient and prosperous future for all, and make a lasting difference where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

--Mimi Gordon



Village & Apiary Updates

Our CHECs are flourishing, with members actively engaged in one or more economic initiatives. Altogether, GHC oversees 33 ongoing income-generating ventures across 15 villages. Remarkably, we have 672 members dedicated to beekeeping and an additional 402 members participating in various other projects.

Our Kisii village members are primarily involved in beekeeping, with a few involved in napier grass cultivation, soap making and a tree nursery. In Homa Bay, members are participating in cereals, rice farming, quarry mining, tailoring/sewing, mat making, to name a few. Our most recent honey harvests amounted to 55 liters being collected and our four newest apiaries have 168 of 240 hives already colonized. When all the hives are finally delivered over the next month, we will have a total of 476 hives in our apiaries!

Our rice farmers in Kanyamfwa have been quite busy over the past several months as well. They have harvested three times in their first season and averaged 10 unmilled sacks of rice in each season. They already planted the second season's rice around the end of March and expect to have the first harvest ready in the next month. Rice farming has been so lucrative that we will be giving them another 3 acres of land with the new global grant.



As mentioned in our last newsletter, one of the things we teach members during the health curriculum is the merry-go-round funding concept. Then, at the end of the financial literacy curriculum, we teach them about table banking. In general, a merry-go-round program is a small group of members who contribute small amounts of money on a regular basis, most often weekly. The funds are collected at each meeting, and on a rotating schedule, one member is paid the entire amount. Table banking is similar, except members contribute an amount to a group “bank” and the bank loans out money to other members with very low interest.

Pictured above is Benica Adhiambo Agalo, sitting next to her small shop in her house. Benica is a 48 year old widow and a mother of 6 children, chairlady of the Kanyipir CHEC, and a member of the Kanyipir tailoring group. Prior to GHC, she was doing small-scale farming to make both ends meet.

Now she and her talented tailoring group craft stylish dresses and school uniforms. With the profits she made, she has been able to save some and contribute to the Kanyipir table bank. She recently took out a loan from the bank and decided to open a small business in her home. In addition to selling sundries, she has expanded her store with homemade detergent she learned how to make during the GHC health training curriculum. This has boosted her income enough that she can ensure her children's school fees are always paid on time.



Above meet Dorothy Atieno, a dynamo of the Kanyamfwa CHEC. At 48, she's not just a member of the Kanyamfwa tailoring group—she's the backbone of her household, supporting her husband and 5 children. But there's more to Dorothy's story! Inspired by the soap/disinfectant training she received during GHC's health curriculum, she's turned this activity into profit by crafting her own line of Dettol antiseptic and disinfectant. Her customers rave about its versatility—it's not just for cleaning latrines, but also a handy snake, insect, and cockroach repellent!



Marketing Updates

Have you caught a glimpse of GHC's fresh new look? If not, check it out above! Say hello to our revamped logo, inspired by the vibrant hues of Kenya! We've given the logo a modern twist that's bright and refreshing!

We've also been busy making new videos:

- A short 1 ½ minute Highlight Video. This video will take you on a quick journey through the heart of our organization as we showcase our proudest moments, impactful projects and the incredible people we are fortunate to serve. From empowering communities to making positive change, this video captures the essence of what we do and stand for. Check it out here → <https://globalhealthconnections.org/highlights-video>
- New Mini Documentaries. We're thrilled to present not one, but TWO inspiring mini

documentaries featuring incredible women from our Community Health and Empowerment Clubs! Get ready to be inspired by their stories of resilience, courage, and empowerment. From overcoming challenges to making a lasting impact, these documentaries shine a spotlight on the strength and determination of women in our CHEC villages. Please take a moment to watch the remarkable journeys of Mary Kwamboka Odera and Evelyn Bwari Mose.

You can find both here:

<https://globalhealthconnections.org/highlight-videos>

Meet Marren Akinyi Odera below, a true matriarch at 65! Living with her husband and two grandchildren, she's the heart of her family. But there's more to Marren's story! As a proud member of the Kanyamfwa Cereal A group, she's turned her entrepreneurial dreams into reality with a little help from her table bank. From milk to money, she's transformed suppliers' milk into delightful sour milk and artisanal cheese using a traditional milk gourd, passed down through generations. With GHC's guidance, she's not just running a business; she's securing her financial future.





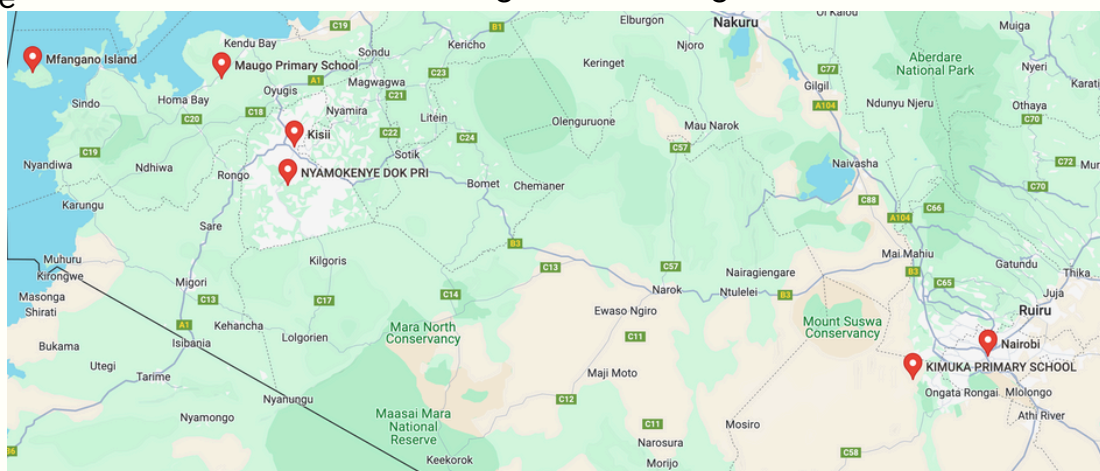
Meet Thadeus Ooga, the 60 year-old dynamic leader of the Nyasumi CHEC. As the club's chairman, he's not just a figurehead; he's a visionary. With a Ksh 2,500 boost from his merry-go-round group, he's transformed his idea into reality. With these funds and his hard-earned savings, he invested in a chicken brooder, igniting a wave of opportunity in his village. By offering brooding services to his neighbors, he's not just incubating chicks; he's earning extra income. This project is not without its challenges however. For Thadeus, it's the unpredictable village blackouts. But fear not, for this entrepreneur is already plotting his next move—soon, a power backup system will ensure his business never dims!

New Global Grant

We recently submitted our new Rotary International global grant and needless to say, we are excited! This is GHC's second grant and it is bigger and more ambitious than the first. We have plans to enter into four new villages (see where they are located on the map), and two of these villages will be remote pilot CHEC projects—a first for GHC. Below are the new villages, with their corresponding economic projects:

- Nyamokenye village in Kisii County → Beekeeping
- Maugo village in Homa Bay County → Rice Farming
- Soklo village on Mfangano Island in Homa Bay County → Beans, Nuts and Roots Farming
- Kimuka in Kajiado County → Chicken Farming

The grant also proposes funds to reinforce or introduce income-generating projects in several of our current CHECs, including beekeeping, rice farming, napier grass, and brick making. Lastly, we plan to continue building sustainable governance.



We are optimistic about the rest of 2024, brimming with opportunities to advance our mission. With ambitious goals set, we aim to achieve remarkable milestones throughout this year and beyond. Though our work can be challenging and demanding at times, the dedication and spirit of our CHEC members make it incredibly rewarding.

We hope you've enjoyed meeting some of the inspiring individuals whose resilience and determination have profoundly impacted our lives. Their stories highlight the boundless potential within each of us and stand as powerful testaments to the strength of the human spirit. We leave you with one more story that exemplifies fortitude, empowerment and entrepreneurial spirit.

Meet Abigael Kwamboka Mokaya, a dynamic 65-year-old from Nyasumi CHEC. Through her participation in the community's merry-go-round, Abigael has received her share four times. With her first payout, she bought a chicken. Once it began laying eggs, she invested in more chickens, which grew into a thriving flock. Selling them all, she bought a goat for Ksh 3,500. After a few months of care, she sold the goat for Ksh 5,500, using the profits to pay her grandchildren's school fees. She is already making plans for how she will use the next merry-go-round funds, and has her sights set on two more goats. Abigael's story is a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit and determination of so many of our CHEC members.



PICTURED ABOVE: ABIGAEL KWAMBOKA MOKAYA FROM NYASUMI CHEC

GHC Spotlight

Name: Salome Aluoch Nyariro,

Title: Project Officer/Regional Coordinator -
Homa Bay

1. How long have you been working in this line of work?

I have been in this line of work for 11 years now.

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

My motivation was triggered by my mentor, who is a public health officer, and who also happens to be my sister. She used to invite me to attend some of the community outreach programs like Community Dialogue and Action. Through these I found myself loving it. I like giving back and working with communities by empowering them and teaching them how to live a healthy and productive life, and also helping to solve issues affecting their livelihoods. These are initiatives and strategies that GHC employs to help improve the lives of community members.

3. What strategies do you use to build trust and rapport with community members in rural villages in western Kenya? How do you ensure community participation and ownership in development initiatives?

To build trust and rapport with community members, I am always honest and clear with them all and make sure to explain the purpose, goals and expectations of the CHEC. I also ensure the GHC rules and memos of understanding are known upfront. To ensure participation and ownership, I try to choose active and agile members of the CHEC who are understanding and of good character, who can help me bring the community together and who can lead the other members.

4. Can you discuss a successful project or initiative you and the GHC Team implemented in a village? What were the key factors contributing to its success?



GHC Spotlight

- The GHC team and I make sure each income-generating group has a certificate from social services and their own bank account. This ensures that members of the groups are able to save their profits in the bank, start building credit and perhaps down the road be able to get loans from lenders.
- The distribution of water filters to each household. Water filters have helped some of the water borne diseases like typhoid, cholera and diarrhea to decrease because members are now able to use clean water for everything.

5. What strategies do you employ to ensure the sustainability and long-term viability of our CHEC programs and initiatives?

- Setting clear expectations for each member.
- Ensuring the mission of the project inspires and motivates the community.
- Ensuring a strong Sustainable Governance Committee, visiting the CHECs on a regular basis and always following up.

6. What are your long-term goals and aspirations for community development in rural villages in western Kenya? How do you envision achieving sustainable impact and transformation in these communities?

I want to ensure that our communities are fully knowledgeable on all the health topics we teach (WASH, diseases, nutrition, etc.), and empowered economically and socially. I also envision achieving sustainable impact by making sure that they invest, make profits and save money from their businesses so they can be financially independent.

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

For fun, I enjoy learning new things, engaging in creative activities like brainstorming ideas and solving puzzles. Outside of work, I'm passionate about being with my family, exploring the depth of human knowledge, understanding different perspectives and helping others make a change.

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

The best part is my coworkers! We all love teamwork and we can join hands together to meet expectations and achieve the goals of a project.

9. One random fact about me that most people don't know about me is.....that I am a go-getter!



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

PICTURED ABOVE: GHC'S MARK, ALONG WITH THE NYASUMI BEEKEEPERS, PREPARES TO INSPECT THE APIARY USING SMOKERS