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ActionAid and Regis Runda Academy Handover Classroom and Ablution Block to Paranae Primary School



Students and teachers from Regis Runda Academy, along with ActionAid staff, joined pupils from Paranae Primary School and the Paranae community for the handover ceremony of a new classroom and ablution block in Paranae, Kajiado County

On July 24, 2024, ActionAid International Kenya, in collaboration with Regis Runda Academy, handed over a newly constructed classroom and an ablution block to Paranae Primary School in Kajiado West Sub-County, Kajiado County. The new facilities, which include a classroom and an ablution block with six doors, were funded by contributions totaling KSH 1,500,000 raised by learners from Regis Runda Academy through the Big Me Campaign.

“This is a beautiful moment. When we first visited, there was only one classroom and a two-door ablution block shared by both teachers and students—boys and girls alike. Some learners had to study under trees or attend school in shifts because the existing facilities couldn’t accommodate everyone,” said Samson Orao, the Programmes and Strategy Lead at ActionAid International Kenya (AAIK).

“It was a significant challenge when boys and girls shared restrooms, especially regarding sanitation, hygiene, and meeting global standards.”

The BigMe Campaign was introduced at Regis Runda Academy in May 2022. By June, grade four, five, and six students had raised KSH 530,000. Robert Wafula, the Head of the Section for Upper Primary and Junior School at Regis Runda Academy, remarked,



Robert Wafula, head of section Upper Primary and Junior School at Regis Runda Academy speaking during the handover ceremony at Paranae Primary School on July 24, 2024.

“It wasn’t easy convincing the learners and their parents to participate, as they had never done this before. However, over time, parents embraced the initiative. In 2023, we expanded the campaign from three classes to eight, and the learners raised KSH 1,500,000. Today, we celebrate the efforts of our students and parents in ensuring that the students of Paranae Primary School have a new classroom block and a six-door washroom block. It gives us a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction, and we hope to see more children benefit from future projects.”

Wafula’s sentiments were echoed by Brian Kabii, a parent at Regis Runda Academy, who said,

“This is an awesome initiative, and it’s something I will continue supporting with even more passion. This is not something I would naturally have started, but with ActionAid, you see the direct impact of the collected funds on the community. This community needs significant investment in education. Raising awareness about the challenges different communities face can inspire genuine efforts to help one another, making Kenya a better country.”

Orao expressed AAIK’s appreciation for the Elangata-Wuas Ward community’s involvement in planning, procurement, and executing the project. He also commended the students of Regis Runda Academy for mobilizing their parents, relatives, and friends to raise the necessary funds. “We are witnessing meaningful changes in Kenya. If young children at Regis Runda Academy can mobilize resources and accomplish this, how much more can be done with public resources from our taxes? We must ensure accountability and sufficient investment in educational infrastructure to achieve long-term development goals as a country.”

ActionAid Kenya has partnered with Regis Runda Academy and other schools in the Nairobi metropolis for this campaign, with plans to expand it nationwide.



The six-door toilet block constructed with support from Regis Runda Academy, through the BigMe Campaign.

Buzzing and Clucking to Prosperity: How Makima Farmers are Thriving Amid Climate Challenges



Mary Makau, a pioneer apiarist at the Makima site, is part of a community-based organization supported by ActionAid Kenya through the Local Rights Programs Approach

In Makima, Mwea Sub-County, Embu County, the harsh realities of climate change have deeply impacted traditional farming practices. With failed rains leading to widespread crop failures, many farmers have struggled to sustain their livelihoods. However, the resilient spirit of these farmers, supported by ActionAid Kenya, has led them to explore alternative sources of income. Embracing poultry farming and beekeeping, these farmers are addressing food security and achieving a steady income despite the changing climate.

One inspiring example is Mary Makau, a member of the Pioneer Apiary Group. Mary and her fellow farmers have turned to beekeeping, a venture less dependent on rainfall.



A section Beehives donated by ActionAid to Pioneer Apiarists in Makima stand as a symbol of sustainable livelihood.

“We have gained numerous benefits from beekeeping, including selling honey for income,” Mary shared.

“Previously, we relied on farming, but our crops failed due to insufficient rainfall. Beekeeping requires a conducive environment for bee vegetation rather than constant rain.”

The Pioneer Apiary Group, established in 2018, initially faced technical challenges that hindered their progress. In 2022, ActionAid Kenya stepped in with training and skill development, revitalizing the group’s beekeeping efforts. With the addition of 100 modern beehives from ActionAid, the 50-member group transitioned from traditional hives to more efficient methods, significantly improving honey quality and production.

Samuel Muturi, a group member and clergy, noted the transformation:

“Previously, our traditional beehives didn’t produce good quality honey. With ActionAid Kenya’s support, we’ve maximized bee farming and increased our income.”

In addition to beekeeping, poultry farming has emerged as a viable alternative in the region. This shift not only provides a steady income but also enhances food security within the community. The Makima Improved Chicken group, consisting of 200 members, focuses on hatching chicks and selling them to other farmers. A visit to their hatching section, supported by ActionAid Kenya, reveals their dedication to generating income through chick sales.

John Njiru, another member, emphasized the benefits of adopting alternative livelihoods:

“This hatching site, supported by ActionAid, provides us with chicks to sell, contributing to our income.”



Newly hatched chicks at the Makima Improved Chicken group hatching site.



Mary Muthini tends to her chickens at her homestead in Makima, showcasing her dedication to sustainable farming and self-reliance.

Mary Muthini, a poultry farmer and a member of the Makima Improved Chicken group, shared her experience:

“The training and support from the group allowed me to start poultry farming at home. I now have 40 chickens and over 100 chicks. I can sell two trays of eggs weekly and use the rest for my family’s consumption. With ActionAid’s support, I also established a small fishpond for rearing 350 mudfish, and I expect to make my first sale in three months. Additionally, I have a small dam for small-scale irrigation around my homestead.”

Water scarcity has been another significant issue in Makima. Recognizing this challenge, ActionAid Kenya initiated the Makange Water Project, providing essential water access to 70 households and six schools, benefiting approximately 300 pupils and staff. James Wachira, a technician involved in the project, explained,

“When ActionAid arrived in Makima, water scarcity was a major challenge. They supported the community through the Makange Water Project, investing in water pumps, solar power, and piping to deliver water to the area.”

The Makange Water Project has not only alleviated water scarcity but also enabled the community to focus on productive activities like poultry and beekeeping. This comprehensive approach aligns with ActionAid Kenya’s Local Rights Programme, which funds projects to ensure sustained improvements in the quality of life for people living in poverty and exclusion. By promoting access to fundamental rights and services, ActionAid Kenya empowers communities to overcome challenges and secure a brighter future.

The stories of resilience and adaptation in Makima, Mwea Sub-County, highlight the importance of innovative solutions and community-driven initiatives in the face of climate change. As farmers like Mary Makau, Samuel Muturi, Mary Muthini, John Njiru, and groups like the Pioneer Apiary Group and Makima Improved Chicken continue to thrive, they inspire hope and demonstrate the power of collective action in transforming lives.



Pupils from Makima Primary School fetch water, provided by the Makange Water Project with support from ActionAid Kenya. Ensuring clean water access for a healthier learning environment.

Women Leading Change in Marafa, Kilifi County

Patriarchal cultures in Kenya have long suppressed women's voices in decision-making spaces, even in matters specifically affecting women. However, the picture is changing in Marafa, thanks to ActionAid International Kenya's (AAIK) work in the Marafa Local Rights Programme (LRP) over the past decade. AAIK has empowered women to know their rights and assert their voices in decision-making processes.

Many women in Marafa LRP have assumed leadership roles at different levels, boldly articulating community issues before both county and national governments. Janet Kadzo Katana is a testament to how women in Marafa LRP have embraced leadership roles and are making a difference in their communities. Kadzo, 40, is a village elder for Mwangaza and the chairperson of a water committee in Garashi. She shares her journey to becoming the first village elder for Mwangaza Village.

"Life before the coming of ActionAid was not good. Women were very vulnerable in my community, and it seemed okay to our menfolk. Most of us had resigned to this fate," Kadzo explains. "I was a housewife, required to stay at home to take care of my husband and children. I depended on my husband for everything, which did not accord me and my fellow women respect. Furthermore, I was not allowed to attend any meeting, not even the chief's baraza (meeting). Decision-making spaces were reserved for our husbands, who would return home to inform us of the decisions they had made, even on issues that concerned women."

Kadzo felt particularly vulnerable as she had married a man nearing retirement, which brought a sense of urgency and fear due to his unaccomplished plans. Her husband soon retired, and life became difficult for Kadzo's family.

According to Kadzo, a mother of five, 2015 marked the beginning of a new chapter for her and her family when AAIK started its programming in Marafa LRP.



ActionAid Kenya Team and partners at the National Alternative Justice System Conference held at Kabarak University, Nakuru County.

"ActionAid came into my life in 2015 when they invited women from my community, including myself, for a women's and children's rights training. That meeting was an eye-opener for me, and the urge to sit in decision-making arenas began welling up in me," says Kadzo

"A few months later, ActionAid organized a women's leadership training. At this point, no woman occupied any leadership position in my community. Men always controlled these spaces and disregarded women, making us lack the confidence to vie for or offer ourselves for leadership positions. I shared the knowledge I had acquired with my husband, and he encouraged me to break the norm by starting to attend village meetings. I was very confident when conversing with men in meetings and community processes, and they surprisingly listened to my contributions with admiration.

It is through my continued participation and valuable contributions that my community members appointed me as a village elder.”

Kadzo is proud that there are now over 10 women leaders in Garashi. She has also started mentoring other women to seize leadership opportunities in various spaces within her community, including school and health committees, as they continue to fight for women’s rights.



Kadzo at her farm in Garashi, Marafa, Kilifi County,

Kwabwai Youth Rise to Leadership Role



Vivian Ouda: A fearless youth leader and champion for women and girls' rights, lighting the way for a more just and equitable future.

In the rural and conservative communities of Kenya, young women often face numerous challenges that leave them feeling voiceless and constrained. Traditionally, their roles have been limited to nurturing their families and maintaining their homes, discouraging them from expressing their opinions and pursuing leadership positions. However, change is slowly brewing in these communities, thanks to efforts by organizations like ActionAid International Kenya (AAIK).

Vivian Ouda, a quiet and reserved young woman from Kwabwai village in the Nyokal Local Rights Programme (LRP), Ndhiwa, Homabay County, exemplifies this transformation.

For a long time, the 27-year-old Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) teacher harbored a passion for serving her community but felt compelled to conform to the conservative ways of her village. Despite longing for change, Vivian rarely attended community meetings, as women were seldom allowed to publicly voice their opinions.



Vivian Ouda facilitating a women's meeting in Kwabwai village.

As the Kwabwai Ward youth representative, Vivian identified the lack of impactful participation in policy-making by the youth, especially young women. She noted that many young women, including young mothers, lack knowledge about the issues that affect them in the community. Even when they are aware, they often lack the confidence to articulate their concerns effectively.

To address this, Vivian initiated a mentorship program for young mothers, empowering them with the knowledge and skills needed to tackle community issues. Through this program, it became clear that economic empowerment was also necessary. Vivian organized training sessions on sustainable food production and poultry keeping. As a result, the participating families are now food secure and can trade their surplus yields.

In addition to economic empowerment, Vivian is a staunch advocate for children's rights in her community. She works to create a conducive environment for holistic child growth by sensitizing parents about child protection issues. These issues include teenage pregnancies, school dropouts, defilement, sexual exploitation, and physical and emotional abuse.

"I thank ActionAid for investing in me. This has given me the confidence and a platform to bring change to my community," added Vivian.

Vivian Ouda's journey from a reserved young woman to a community leader highlights the potential for transformation when women are given the opportunity and support to lead. Her story is a testament to the power of education, mentorship, and the unwavering desire to bring about positive change.

The promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 marked a turning point for women's participation in political processes and decision-making spaces. The two-thirds gender rule enshrined in Articles 97 and 98 mandated both governmental and non-governmental organizations to work towards gender equality. This new beginning created a conducive environment for communities like Kwabwai to embrace women's leadership.

In 2021, during community inception and sensitization meetings, AAIK made its entry into Nyokal LRP, opening opportunities for women to step into leadership roles. Vivian, driven by her desire to contribute to her community, visited ActionAid's offices to explore how she could get involved. In June 2022, along with 32 other young people from Nyokal LRP, she was invited to attend a Leadership, Organizing, and Social Movement Building training.

With young women often perceived as unprepared for leadership positions, Vivian challenged this notion by seeking the youth ward representative position.

"The training increased my knowledge on issues of governance and leadership. It is this training that awakened my zeal to seek a leadership role in my community, and I successfully ran for office to become a Ward Youth Representative," said Vivian, a mother of two who now aspires to vie for the Member of County Assembly (MCA) position in 2027.

Taita Taveta Farmers Boost Food Security with Innovative Farm Ponds



A newly constructed farm pond in 2023 in Kishushe, Taita Taveta County.

Kenya has faced prolonged droughts in recent years, affecting the livelihoods of millions of pastoralists and crop farmers. The community in Kishushe, Taita Taveta County, is among those severely impacted. The extended dry periods have led to significant losses in farm crops and livestock, which constitute the primary source of income for the locals.

Without an irrigation system, smallholder women farmers like Gladness Wachia, who relied entirely on rain-fed farming, experienced devastating losses. With consecutive failed rainy seasons from 2020 to November 2023, Wachia's harvests were negligible, if any.

"For three years leading up to November 2023 (six rainy seasons), we did not receive any rainfall in Kishushe, which severely affected our food security," said Wachia.



Gladness Wachia proudly stands next to her newly constructed farm pond in 2023 in Kishushe, Taita Taveta County.

In response, ActionAid International Kenya, through the Women's Rights Programme III (WRPIII) and under the climate justice objective to build the resilience of small-scale farmers, distributed dam liners to 41 farmers. Wachia received several dam liners, which she used to construct a farm pond on her land for harvesting rainwater for irrigation during dry periods.

The farm ponds are designed for rainwater harvesting, providing significant benefits for farmers, such as micro-irrigation and livestock watering. This artificial water reservoir helped Wachia overcome water scarcity, allowing her to cultivate her farm year-round and increase crop diversity.

"After I installed the farm pond, everything changed. I could water my crops, which allowed me to expand the variety of crops I grew and increase my harvests. My family now has enough food, improving our nutrition, and I can trade the surplus produce," added Wachia.

The other 40 farmers also utilized their dam liners effectively, enjoying good harvests following the November-December 2023 and April-May 2024 rains. The increased yields have significantly improved household food security within the Kishushe Local Rights Programme (LRP). These smallholder farmers are also trading their surplus harvests, thereby increasing their income streams.

Amidst the adverse effects of climate change, this innovative technology provides a solution that ensures water availability for small-scale farmers, especially women. Farm ponds are becoming increasingly popular, vital for managing water resources, and promoting agricultural sustainability.

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