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## ActionAid Kenya Honours Humanitarian Workers on World Humanitarian Day



ActionAid International Kenya's project coordinator Cynthia Asafi speaking with participants during the celebrations of World Humanitarian Day in Tangelbei Baringo County

ActionAid International Kenya (AAIK) marked World Humanitarian Day on August 19, 2024, by celebrating the dedication and selflessness of humanitarian workers in Baringo County and across the country. The event brought together key stakeholders to discuss achievements, challenges, and opportunities in the humanitarian sector, aiming to serve better vulnerable communities impacted by disasters.

A forum in Kabarnet included representatives from the national and county governments, parastatals, non-governmental organizations, civil society, human rights defenders, and the media. Together, they reflected on humanitarian progress in Baringo County and shared insights on the path forward.

This year's theme, Act for Humanity, was echoed by Samuel Nyutu, Fundraising and Institutional Partnerships Lead at AAIK, who urged Kenyans to commit to humanitarian work at both individual and local levels.

"This day is not just a reminder of the humanitarian principles that guide us, but also a call to action to deepen our commitment to alleviating human suffering and promoting dignity for all. At ActionAid, we are dedicated to building community resilience, especially in response to climate change. One way we do this is by promoting agroecology, which requires ensuring communities have access to clean and potable water," Nyutu emphasized.



Celebrating World Humanitarian Day; Cynthia Asafi shares insights with Baringo County Governor Benjamin Cheboi, highlighting the power of community support and collaboration in creating lasting change.

Baringo County Governor, Benjamin Cheboi, who graced the event, paid tribute to humanitarian workers for their compassion, empathy, and solidarity.

“Today, we honor the dedication and sacrifice of humanitarian workers who have committed themselves to this noble cause. We also reflect on our collective responsibility to support and protect the most vulnerable among us,” Cheboi remarked.

He acknowledged the various challenges Baringo County has faced—prolonged droughts, floods, intercommunity conflicts, and landslides—that have claimed lives and livelihoods. He expressed gratitude to the humanitarian community for their continued efforts, including providing emergency food distribution, establishing water points, and offering resources that have improved the well-being of local communities.

“The boreholes, water pans, food, and financial assistance you’ve given have played an important role in tackling the climate crisis, strengthening disaster risk reduction, and coordinating humanitarian activities. Your contributions to peacebuilding, governance, and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) are essential in uplifting our communities. As a government, we cannot do this alone due to limited capacity,” the governor added.

Governor Cheboi also urged the people of Baringo to remain vigilant, especially with the ongoing landslides in the region, to reduce loss of life and suffering.

Other organizations that joined AAIK in celebrating World Humanitarian Day included the National Government, Baringo County Government, National Drought Management Authority, GiveDirectly, PeaceNet, UNICEF, Save the Children, World Vision, Kenya Red Cross Society, and Kenya Television Network (KTN), among others.

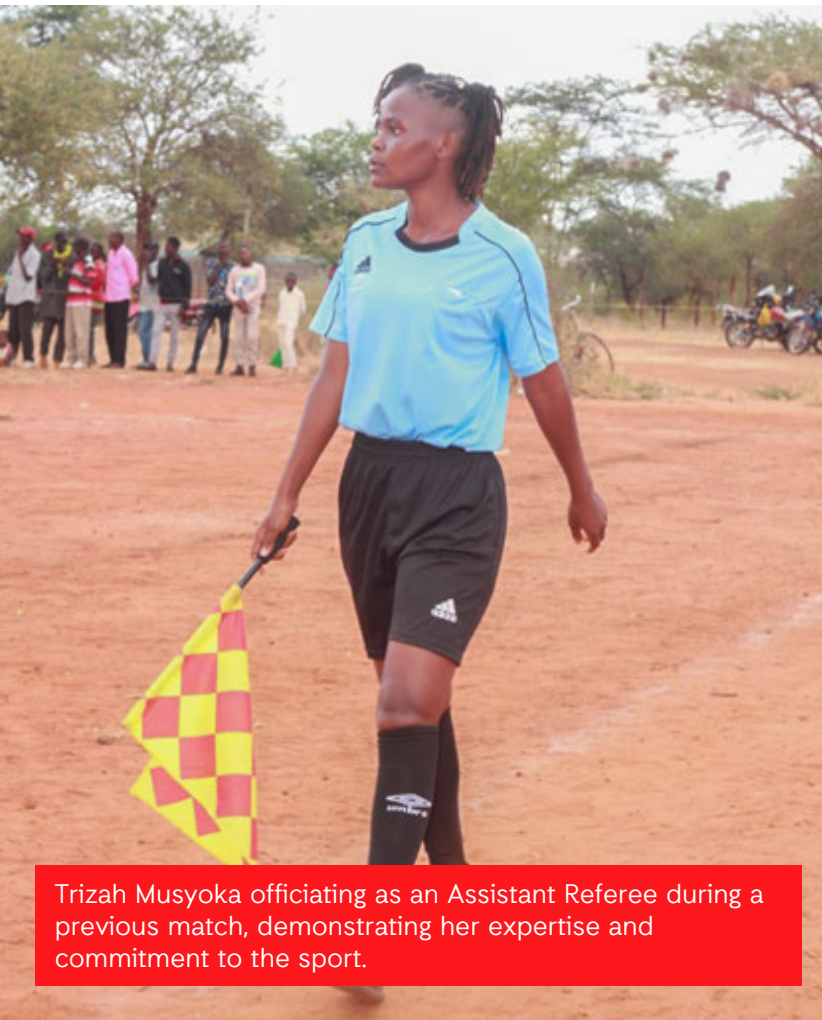
# Breaking Barriers: Trizah Musyoka's Trailblazing Path in Football and Community Empowerment



Trizah Musyoka, the first accredited female referee from Makima.

In Makima, Embu County, a powerful narrative of resilience and determination is reshaping traditional gender roles. Trizah Musyoka, a 24-year-old mother of two, is making history and inspiring her community. As the New Beginning Youth Group chairperson and a passionate advocate for social accountability and women's rights, Trizah is redefining what it means to be a woman in her community.

Supported by ActionAid Kenya through the Mwangaza Women Rights Organisation, Trizah leads a group that champions governance issues within Makima and runs a computer hub providing vital services to the community.



Trizah Musyoka officiating as an Assistant Referee during a previous match, demonstrating her expertise and commitment to the sport.

Trizah's journey has not been without challenges. As she began officiating matches, she encountered resistance and criticism, especially when making contentious calls. "After my training, I found it challenging to officiate matches due to the backlash," she admits. Despite the difficulties, these experiences only strengthened her determination to succeed.

Starting as an assistant referee, Trizah faced teasing from fans but used these moments to build rapport. "Initially, they teased me, but over time, we became great friends," she says with a smile. These interactions helped her grow personally and professionally, and she gradually moved up to the role of center referee, a position that demands confidence and authority.

Despite initial hurdles, Trizah's persistence has paid off. She has officiated 10 matches, including those involving men's teams, earning the respect of players and spectators alike. Her presence on the field has become a symbol of fairness and impartiality. "With time, I have perfected my skills, and now I enjoy the support of football fans who cheer me on," she proudly shares.

Trizah's story is not just about her achievements in refereeing; it's about breaking barriers and challenging stereotypes. Her success has inspired many in Makima, particularly young girls who now see new possibilities for themselves. The support from ActionAid Kenya and the Mwangaza Women Rights Organisation has been crucial, providing her with the training and confidence needed to excel.

Trizah's journey is a beacon of hope and a powerful reminder of the transformative power of determination. Despite financial challenges that prevented her from pursuing further education, she has carved out a path that blends leadership, sports, and community service. Her role as a referee in a male-dominated sport challenges long-standing gender norms and sets a new standard for what women can achieve.

The group recently conducted social accountability initiatives to ensure local amenities are well-equipped to serve the citizens of Makima. Additionally, Trizah's contributions extend beyond governance and technology into sports, where she has made an unprecedented mark as Makima's first accredited female referee.

In a community where football is traditionally a male-dominated sport, Trizah's achievement is groundbreaking. She received her referee certification in November 2022, a milestone that garnered both admiration and skepticism.

"Many people wondered why I chose to become a referee, given that it's usually a male-dominated field here," she reflects. Yet, her passion for football and desire to challenge societal norms fueled her pursuit of this unconventional path.



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

As she continues to lead her youth group and officiate matches, Trizah remains committed to her mission of empowering women and promoting gender equality. Her story is a testament to the fact that with passion and perseverance, one can overcome societal barriers and inspire others to do the same.

In Trizah Musyoka's words, "My passion wouldn't allow me to give up." Her story is a powerful narrative of breaking barriers and serving as an inspiration not only to her community but to anyone who faces barriers due to gender or societal expectations. Trizah's journey is a vivid reminder that when women are given the opportunity and support, they can achieve incredible things and become true agents of change.

# Young Women Call for Inclusive and Protective Laws and Policies



Empowering Voices: Young women come together at the forum to tackle gaps in the law-making process that contribute to gender-related income disparities and high poverty levels

Young urban women are urging lawmakers to consider economic profitability and the social, health, and political outcomes of their decisions when enacting laws. This was a key finding from research commissioned by ActionAid International Kenya (AAIK) through the Young Urban Women (YUW) project. The research, conducted between January and May 2024 in Nairobi and Mombasa, aimed to explore the impact of neoliberalism and international financial institutions' policies on Kenya's macroeconomy. The findings are intended to inform advocacy for a feminist well-being economy.

The study highlighted how unintentional gaps in the law-making process contribute to gender-related income disparities and high poverty levels. The young women involved are advocating for inclusive laws and considering society's diverse needs. They emphasized the importance of lawmakers assessing how different demographics are impacted by legislation.

Researcher Khamati Shilabukha from the University of Nairobi's Department of Anthropology, Gender, and African Studies, and an independent consultant, noted that violence linked to crime and lack of productivity is on the rise. He emphasized how policies enacted over the years have disproportionately affected women, particularly young women, in areas like health, labour, and gender-based violence.

"We need policies that serve the interests of the Kenyan society," said Shilabukha. "For example, a tax on sanitary towels is discriminatory, it affects women, especially those who are poor and cannot afford them. Such laws are retrogressive, taking us back to a time when menstruation led to the seclusion of women and girls. Menstruation is a natural process, and it's unfair to penalize women for it."



Millicent Akinyi, a young urban woman from Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Nairobi, called on Kenyans to exercise their civic duty by electing representatives attuned to the needs of women and society. “We need to re-evaluate the cost of healthcare and education to make them affordable for everyone. Taxes should be used to facilitate these critical services so that citizens can benefit,” she asserted.

Samson Orao, Programme and Strategy Lead at AAIK, stressed that austerity measures proposed by multilateral financial institutions, such as employment freezes in healthcare and education and cutbacks in agriculture, water, and infrastructure, would disproportionately affect women and youth. These sectors are vital to Kenya’s development, and reducing funding would have widespread consequences.

Key Recommendations from the Research Include:

- Strengthening labor policies and rights, particularly for informal, vulnerable, and unemployed workers.
- Ensuring multinational corporations pay their fair share of taxes by bolstering anti-tax avoidance policies.
- Advocating for expanded social protection schemes to support young mothers and the unemployed.
- Implementing progressive domestic taxation systems that enable the government to finance gender-responsive public services and social protection.
- Advocating for and adopting feminist economic alternatives that prioritize gender-responsive budgeting and planning at the national level.
- The research concludes that macroeconomic policies should prioritize creating an enabling environment for young women in Kenya.

## Persons with Disabilities Receive Mobility Aids in Tangelbei and Kathonzweni



Recipients in Tangelbei, Baringo County, joyfully receive mobility aids, paving the way for greater independence and inclusion

On August 19, 2024, during World Humanitarian Day celebrations, 50 individuals with disabilities from Tangelbei Division in Baringo County and Kathonzweni in Makueni County received much-needed mobility aids from ActionAid International Kenya (AAIK) and its supporters. The recipients, ranging from children to elderly men and women, reside in the vast arid lands of these regions.

The donation included 20 wheelchairs and 30 walking sticks/canes for visually impaired individuals, provided through AAIK's Gender Responsive Alternatives to Climate Change (GRACC) initiative. .

The recipients expressed heartfelt gratitude for the support, sharing how the mobility aids will transform their daily lives.

Hellen Lonene, a mother who received a wheelchair for her child, remarked,



Phyllis Muendo proudly sits in her donated wheelchair, flanked by her husband and a representative from the Kathonzweni Women's Movement, celebrating newfound mobility and community support

"I am so thankful to ActionAid for donating the wheelchair to my child. This provides much-needed relief, as I no longer have to carry him everywhere. It has been physically and emotionally exhausting, with him entirely dependent on me for movement and survival."

In Kathonzweni, 73-year-old Phyllis Muendo, who suffered a stroke and was in desperate need of a wheelchair, expressed her joy: "This wheelchair has allowed me to move around easily, go to the market, and come back home."

Cynthia Asafi, a project coordinator at AAIK, emphasized the importance of community inclusion, urging the Tangulbei community to embrace individuals with disabilities.

"In the spirit of humanitarian action, I encourage everyone to include persons with disabilities in all community activities. They have valuable contributions to make toward the well-being of our society. Let us support each other in any way we can," Asafi stated.

The deputy county commissioner for Tiaty Sub-County echoed these sentiments, calling on ActionAid and other humanitarian organizations to continue their support for people with disabilities in Tangulbei and the broader Tiaty region. He highlighted the urgent need for collaboration to address the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in the area.

This initiative marks a significant step toward enhancing inclusivity and empowerment for individuals with disabilities in Tangulbei and Kathonzweni, fostering a spirit of solidarity and hope within the community.

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