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Closing The Gap

HARAMBEE

Junta de Castilla y León

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FOREWORD

It is my sincere pleasure to welcome you once again to **'Closing The Gap'**, a booklet taking us through the implementation and sustainability of the Water Supply and Food Sovereignity Project 2015-2017 in Lorroki Division, Samburu County.

The writing highlights a paradigm shift from nomadic pastoralism to agricultural practices with aim of ensuring food security.

This venture had its main objective of ensuring water and food accessibility among the marginalised communities in Lorroki. I am happy to report that all set goals have been successfully achieved.

With a view of ensuring adequate water supply, two shallow wells and one subsurface dam, were constructed. Similarly, one spring was successfully protected. As a way of taking advantage of the rare rainfall, 20 water tanks were procured and installed to help in rain water harvesting. The end result being, adverse effects of perennial droughts have been averted.

In ensuring sustainability of the venture, five Water Management Committees (WMCs) and 12 community-based artisans were trained on operation and maintenance of water equipment.

On matters of nutrition, over 40 Community Health Workers (CHWs) were trained on improved nutrition uptake. It is worth noting that because of this intervention, 32 schools in the region are now involved with the water supply and food sovereignty project through their schools' Health Clubs.

In an effort to improve region's health standards, 20 dispensaries attached to the project were supported and are now rendering services. In the same breath, 10 CHWs were attached to Maralal Level Four Hospital to render their services.

I extend my appreciation to Junta de Castilla Leon for finding it worthwhile to finance this project. My gratitude is also extended to the County Government of Samburu for their continued support.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to all the stakeholders involved in planning and implementation of the initiative.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Land
FIETS	Financial, Institutional, Environmental, Technological and Socio-cultural
DTC	Drought Tolerant Crop
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
CHW	Community Health Worker
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
NTD	Neglected Tropical Diseases
IYCN	Infant and Young Child Nutrition
WMC	Water Management Committee
IMAM	Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition
HINI	High Impact Nutrition Interventions
PIT	Project Implementation Team

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge Junta de Castilla Leon, who have supported us since 2009 in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion (WASH) projects: because we owe it all to you. Many Thanks!

We're grateful to our partners: Samburu County Government, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and Ministry of Education for the technical support offered throughout implementation of the project.

A very special gratitude goes to the community of Lorroki Division for their continued commitment, participation and support towards the success of the project.

And finally, to the Amref Health Africa in Kenya project team for working tirelessly to ensure success in the implementation and sustainability of the project. This success is accredited exemplary work done by this team.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of the Water Supply and Food Sovereignty Project

The Water Supply and Food Sovereignty Project began in July 2015. The main aim was to contribute towards poverty reduction and improved health status among women and children of Lorroki in Samburu Central Sub-County of Samburu County. In addition, the project aimed to improve the nutritional status of the community by encouraging farmers to practice climate smart agriculture.

The project targeted 26,500 people in the following vulnerable groups: mothers of child bearing age between 15-49 years, children under 5 years, elderly people, People Living With HIV&AIDS and farmers.

Prior to this intervention, the situation in Lorroki Division, Samburu County, which is in an arid and semi-arid area, was characterised by most of the population living below the poverty line. This was worsened by the high prevalence of WASH related diseases such as cholera, typhoid fever, dysentery, amoebiasis, scabies, trachoma and intestinal worms. Moreover, most of the population had no access to proper health care (84%), basic sanitation (80%) and access to safe water (69%). There was also increased conflict and cattle rustling over scarce water resources, pastures. This consequently, led to insecurity and high levels of poverty in the region.

Samburu County was in dire need of support.

The project enhanced the capacity of the County and National Government to involve communities and local authorities more actively in the management of WASH, nutrition and food security activities. The project sought to:

- Increase access to safe and adequate drinking water from 31% to 45% in Lorroki by June 2017
- Improve nutrition, maternal and child health services by 30% by June 2017

- Increase production of drought-tolerant crops by 30% through Climate Smart agriculture techniques by June 2017
- Document and disseminate safe water and food sovereignty models, lessons learnt and experiences and best practices for wider adoption and replication.

By the end of June 2017, three shallow wells, one spring and one sub-surface dam were constructed, making it possible for over 2,500 community members in Lorroki Division to access safe drinking water. The construction also made it possible for residents to engage in crop growing.

The project further facilitated the training of five WMCs on operation and maintenance of water facilities besides training 40 Community Health Workers on improved nutrition uptake, IMM, HINI and IYCN.

The project had planned for its exit/phase out as envisaged since inception as follows:

- Ensure that the work done is sustainable through capacity building of farmer groups, water management committees, CHWs, transfer of knowledge to community members and capacity building Government officers (agricultural extensions staff) as well as involving all Government agencies in programming and implementation and linkage to markets
- Hold exit meetings with relevant stakeholders through project PIT meetings
- Advocate for County Government to initiate agro-pastoral activities
- Ensure strong relationships with other partners, communities and policy makers who are involved in similar project activities
- Develop proposal for similar funding opportunities in the future.

WORD FROM THE PROJECT MANAGER

After witnessing human suffering caused by prolonged drought of mid-2000, there was growing need for intervention. In response, Junta de Castilla Leon, through the Amref Health Africa in Spain office agreed to fund our proposal to pilot water supply and food sovereignty interventions in pastoralists' Samburu Central Sub-county.

We first, conducted our planned activities – erection of drip irrigation and conservancy farming using a variety of drought-tolerant crops.

Today, the project has yielded results in integration of WASH issues with food security and agricultural conservation. Through construction of shallow wells, rehabilitation of boreholes and erection of water pipeline systems, the project has not only improved accessibility to water but also improved hygiene practices. Even so, there were challenges of cattle rustling and tackling negative culture – inculcating crop growing in a largely pastoralist community.

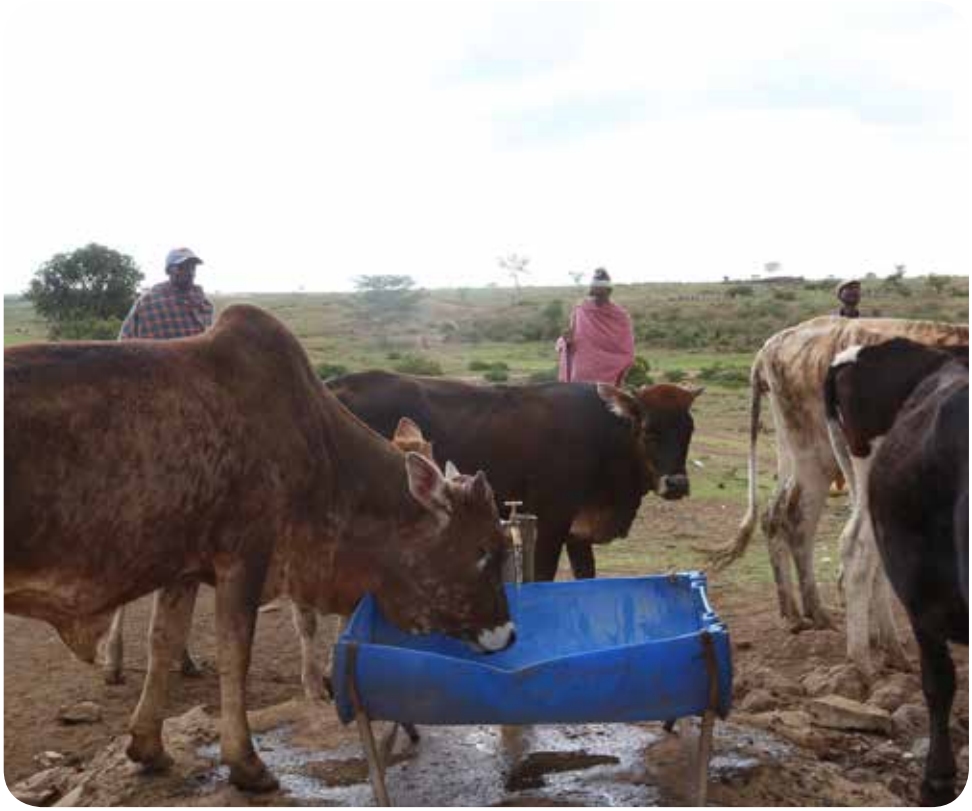
Nonetheless, we were able to convince the community to farm vegetables and fruits as an alternative source of earning descent income. To ensure ownership, community members were involved in the project design. This was realised with technical support from County Government line Ministries. The Ministry of Water took center stage and deployed agricultural expert from the Ministry. Similarly, a Public Health Officer under the Ministry of Health was responsible for health and hygiene. Worth noting, the farmers' groups and water management committees were trained to maintain and sustain the projects.

The project involved several key players at all levels, right from inception, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. At the local level, the community, through various governing structures – Shallow Well Management Committee was the main partner. At the County and Sub-County levels, the oversight was provided by the Project Implementation Team comprising of County line Ministries – Health, Water and Agriculture.

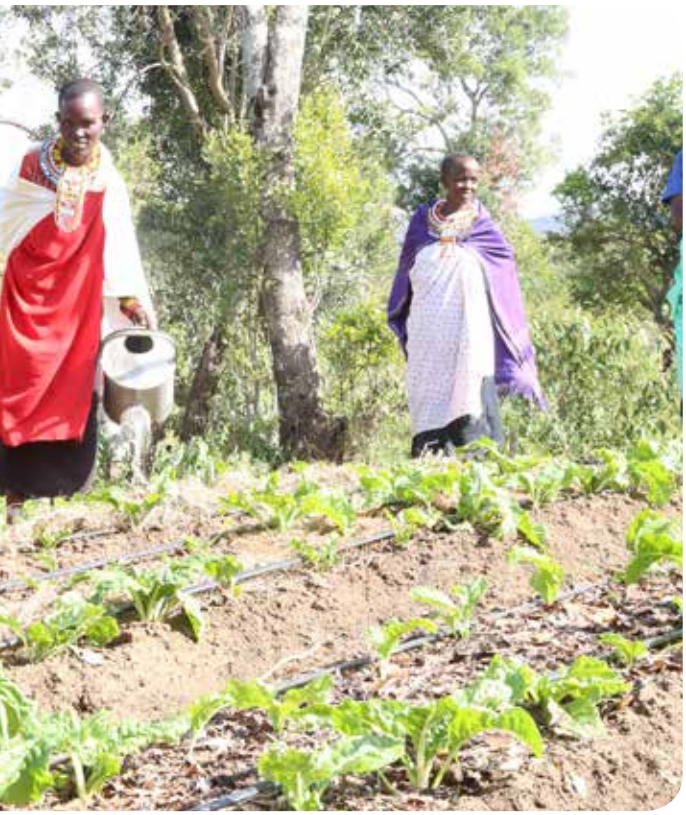
Similarly, Amref Health Africa was involved in forums at the County and National levels. Finally, at the international level, Amref Health Africa in Spain played a key role in Donor relations and resource mobilisation.

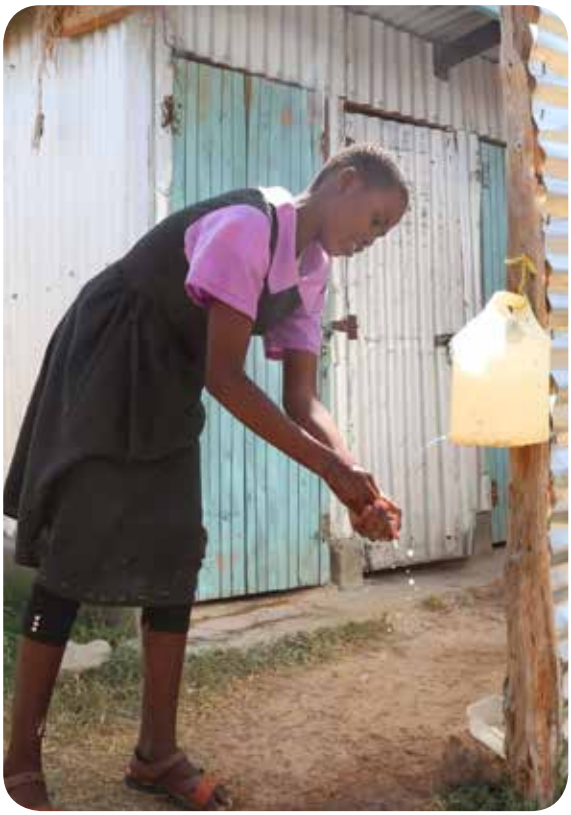
We greatly appreciate their support and look forward for a fruitful future engagement.

Francis Dikir, Project Manager




GREEN GRAM SEED

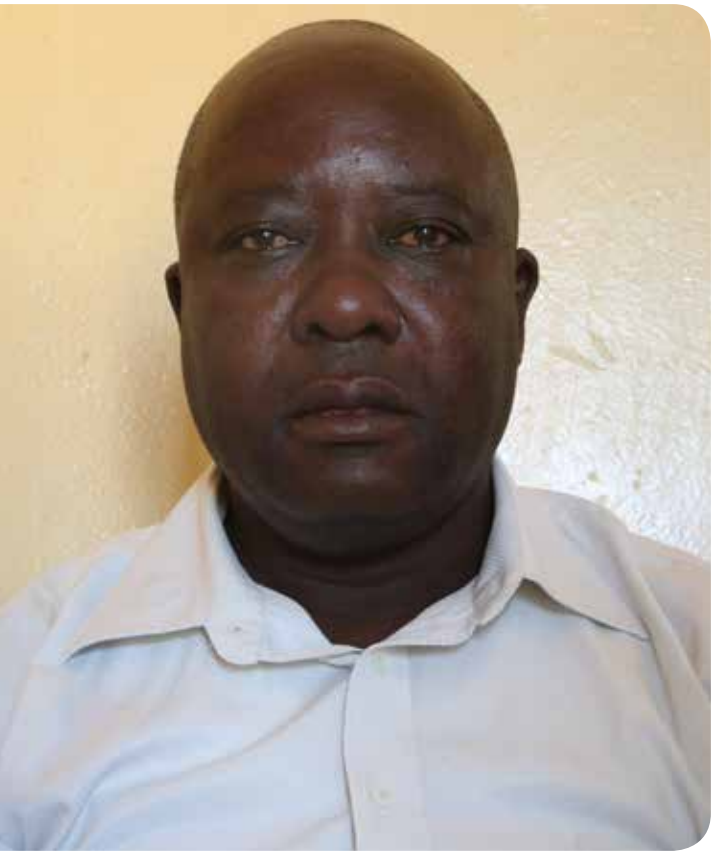




CAPTIONS

1. Livestock drink water from Baawa rehabilitated borehole and pipeline by Amref Health Africa funded by Junta Castila y Le'on.
2. Members of Baawa village water their Kitchen garden.
3. A pupil of Baawa Primary School Washes her hands after visiting the Latrine.
4. Samburu Moran Fecthes water from Suguta Amref protected Spring.
5. Mr Francis Dikir, Trachoma Project Manager distributes seeds to farmers during a farmers Field day gathering.

SAMBURU COUNTY GOVERNMENT WORKING HAND IN HAND WITH AMREF HEALTH AFRICA IN KENYA TO PROMOTE BETTER HEALTH THROUGH THE SAMBURU WATER SUPPLY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY PROJECT



The County Government of Samburu has partnered with Amref Health Africa to enhance access to water and food to the impoverished Samburu residents.

In recent past, the residents have witnessed surging cases of malnutrition because of lack of proper diets.

The partnership programme under a programme called Water and Food Sovereignty Project has however, seen Amref Health Africa establish water storage tanks, distribute water purification tablets as well as build latrines in the region.

"The result has been that we have eliminated incidences of water borne diseases such as cholera and diabetes," said the County Public Health Officer Erastus Sinoti.

The long-term public private partnership built by the County Government of Samburu and Amref Health Africa, has worked wonders for the realisation of better health and sanitation standards in the community.

The partnership has seen Amref build latrines for residents and schools in the area, as well as conducting awareness campaigns on hygiene and sanitation.

"We first made contact with Amref Health Africa in 2006. By then we housed them in our offices as they carried out a project in trachoma," Sinoti narrates.

"As they increased their programmes we couldn't house them anymore. We had to part ways when they moved to bigger offices. But we continued cooperating with them to help the community."

Sinoti numerated the many projects that Amref Health Africa initiated in the area lauding the organisation for positively shaping the landscape of Samburu County.

"As a Public Health Officer, Amref Health Africa's Water and Food Sovereignty Project has helped the county to wither from effects of drought," he said.

Before the inception of this project, residents suffered from water and food-related diseases.

"And when the project came on board, they assisted the residents through the Community Health Workers, to teach locals how to treat water using aqua tabs to keep at bay diarrhea. They were also taught on importance of healthy eating through planting drought-resistant crops," he noted.

This has gone a long way to helping residents realise better and healthy living.

Amref Health Africa has also used its expertise to commemorate events such as World Handwashing Day that emphasises the importance of hygiene in the homes.

In an effort to boost nutrition, the programme is supporting residents to rear dairy goats for milk purposes.

This means that families are now able to get enough milk to supplement their diets and money from surplus to support households.

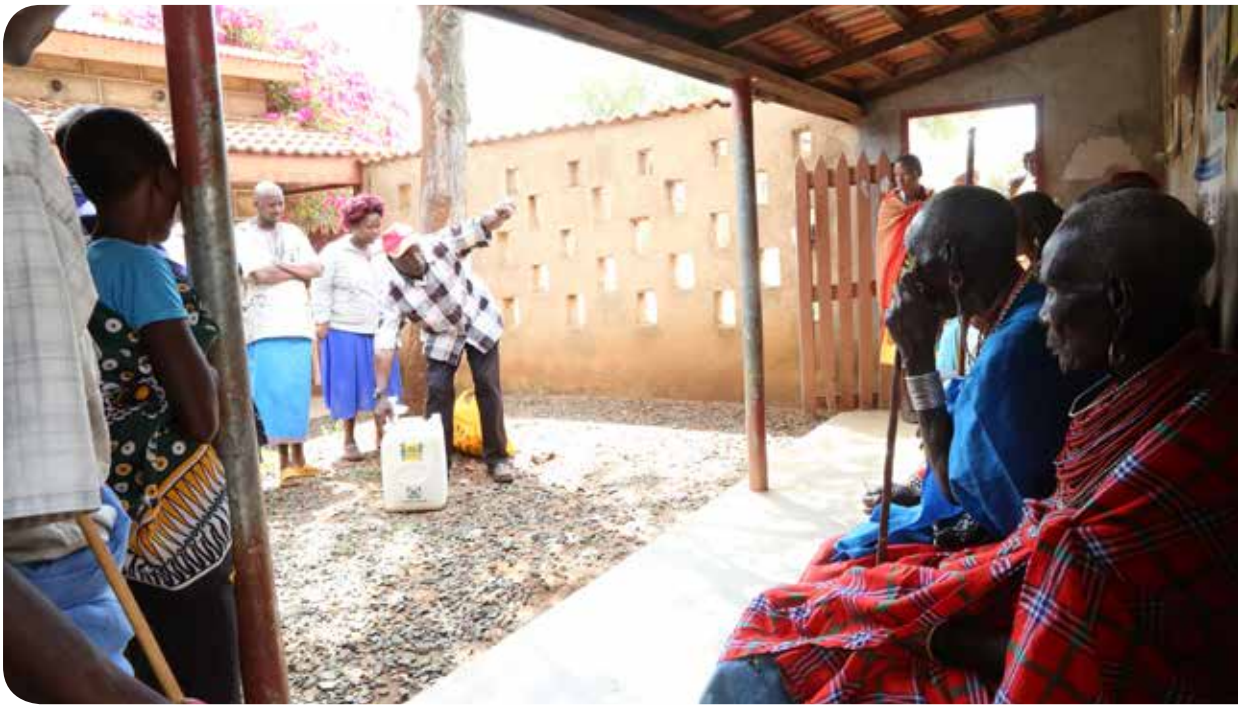
Because of lack of education, negative cultures have hindered eradication of poverty in the region.

As the project offers solution in changing lives, the county officials believes scaling up such programmes remains imperative.

"I still feel there is potential to reach even more people with the projects. As a county we are always willing to assist to extend the programs to touch more lives," Sinoti proposed.

BETTER HEALTH BROUGHT NEARER TO THE PEOPLE THROUGH OUTREACH

Good news for Samburu County residents as Amref Health Africa implements Samburu Water supply and Food sovereignty Project. The project involves issuing of plastic water tank for rain water harvesting and handwashing facilities, monthly routine medical outreaches targeting maternal child health services, family planning and nutrition services.



The region has grappled with a number of health challenges including inadequate supply of medicines and equipment as well as poor road networks that have made it difficult for locals to access the much needed services.

At the core of this project are the Community Health Workers (CHWs) – members of a community who are chosen by community members or organisations to provide basic health and medical care.

In the initiative, the CHWs has bridged gaps in health care provision by moving from door to door mobilising members of the communities to come for medical outreaches where they are treated and given drugs.

"By teaching them good health practices, we help tame preventable diseases. We also offer counselling on HIV/AIDS to curb its spread and take care of the affected persons," said Michael Ole Sambo, the Public Health Officer in Kisima location.

The CHWs visit homesteads to counsel locals on health matters such as importance of drinking and using clean water and also importance of washing hands.

Others includes, educating mothers on the importance of immunisation and as well as use of MOCK to monitor nutritional status.

In cases where a child is malnourished, they are treated and followed up to ensure improvement.

"So far we have reached over 6,000 people in the area and we are increasing this number. We carry out five outreaches in a month throughout the county," noted Michael.

With growing demand for medical outreaches, the project has faced myriad of challenges.

"We have witnessed huge numbers turning up during the outreaches. Sometimes our supplies are depleted, so we have to send them away without giving them the services," said Michael.

"Staff shortage is yet another issue as it makes it difficult to deal with the large number of patients who show up at the outreaches."

Michael however, urged all stakeholders to chip in and ensure all the facilities are equipped to serve the communities effectively.

He also called for better cooperation between health stakeholders, picking out Amref Health Africa and the County Government as examples.

"I urge the County Government to join hands with Amref Health Africa since the latter, has initiated successful projects in the region. With better cooperation we can even do much more," he said.

A SUCCESS STORY; SAMBURU GETS A LEASE OF LIFE IN FARMING

As drought takes toll on cattle keeping in pastoralist communities, Samburu residents have found a new lease of life in farming, thanks to a partnership programme between the County Government and Amref Health Africa.

While farming diversification has remained critical for dry regions of Kenya including Samburu, because of prolonged droughts, finding suitable alternative has remained a nightmare.

When touring Lorroki plateau, you will encounter lush sprouting onions, beans, spinach, cowpeas, green grams, kales, cabbages and citrus fruits.

It is no doubt that crop farming is slowly taking shape in the region.

To make this dream a reality, the project first installed water tanks and pans to provide water throughout the year.

Coupled with provision of drip irrigation kits to various groups for irrigation purposes, Samburu residents are finding farming a lucrative venture.

With growing threats of climate change which has seen residents steadily lose their main source of livelihood – livestock, today the project has seen residents grow enough crops to sustain families.

They are able to pay school fees as well as purchase uniforms for their children by supplying the crop proceeds to nearby schools and local markets such as Kisima, Mararal, Poro and Loosuk.

According to Stephen Engasia, the Deputy County Director of Agriculture, the partnership is critical in ensuring food security at the household level in the region.

"Food security is one of the visions of the County Government and Amref Health Africa is kin to make this dream a reality," he said.

"The partnership is right from the planning of the project where the key strategic areas are shared and identified within the County Integrated Development Plan."

It first started by identifying the groups, then, Amref Health Africa team led by Patrick Mariti identified suitable field extension officers.

Group needs such as water and farm inputs was then provided through participatory rural appraisal and participatory needs assessment.

Later, the groups were asked to send in their proposals where the most viable and active groups are selected.

From that level the project comes in fully to support in capacity building.

Additionally, the groups are provided with hardware such as moneymaker irrigation machines.

"When we talk about food sovereignty we look at a household capable of producing its own food and selling surplus to the markets," said Engasia.

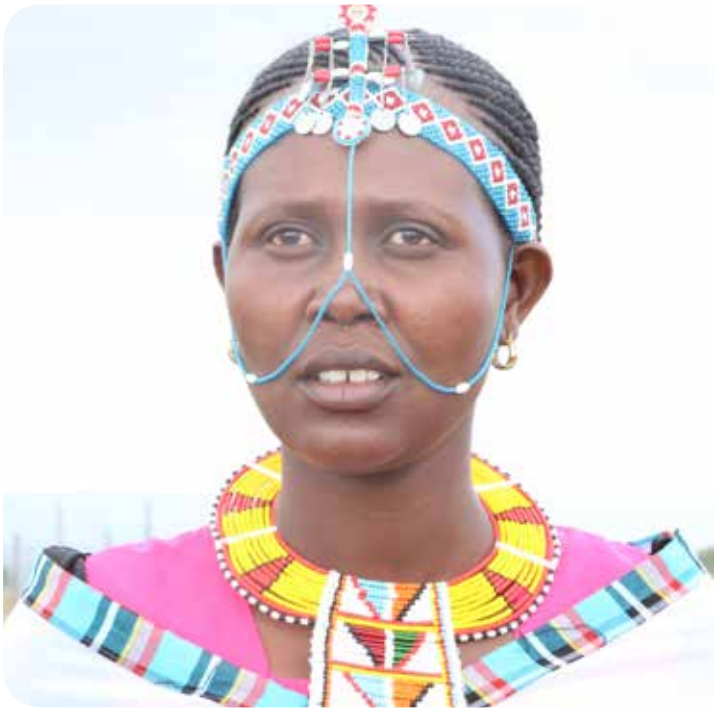
The famers have also been supported in planting drought-tolerant seeds.

"Five years from now I am looking at a Lorroki plateau that is ever green and food sufficient. A situation where people can be able to get fruits and green vegetables at their doorstep," the Director noted.

Besides farming, other programmes like the early child development initiatives have not been left out either.

Since the approach is mainly done at group level, the two partners are replicating the same idea in other homesteads.

A DREAM COME TRUE: NKIRETU NATALA WOMEN GROUP



A It's easy to despise the day of small beginnings because it often comes with hard work and little help.

When Shiina Lekochere joined hands with five other ingenious women to form Nkiretu Natala Women's Group in Lchingei village in Samburu, they had no idea what the future had in store for them.

What started as a merry-go-round where members would contribute Kshs 200 every month to purchase utensils for members, has today become a profitable venture, thanks to Water and Food Sovereignty Project.

The group started way back in 2011 under the leadership of Shina who was elected to steer the group and turn it around to a profitable venture.

Understanding that healthy living was crucial in frealising this dream, a few weeks after inception, they bought blankets to keep themselves warm and keep pneumonia at bay.

Their relentless efforts to shape their destinies attracted the attention of other women and by 2015 their membership drastically shot to 12.

It is at this point that the Water and Food Sovereignty Project noticed their unrelenting efforts and started supporting them.

Nkiretu is among 12 other groups the project supported with drip irrigation kits in Lorroki division in Samburu County.

In an effort to share ideas and grow the group and remain cohesive, the 12 ambitious women meet regularly.

Samburu being a dry a region, the project has supported the group to put up small gardens to plant drought-resistant grains and vegetables.

The seedlings were donated alongside drip irrigation kits to irrigate the dry land to become productive.

Nkiretu women were also taught on how to plant crops such as maize, beans, and vegetables and how to store harvested foods.

Some other lessons they received includes, pesticides selection, operation of drip irrigation lines and guidelines on how to make seedbeds.

From once poverty-stricken village, the 12 members are now harvesting enough crops to feed their families and sell surplus to buy chicken.

Waterborne diseases still remain a threat to them.

The project has however, trained them on sanitation issues – need to build latrines far away from their houses.

Borrowing from the training, the group has set up rubbish pits in their homes which have gone a long way in improving sanitation and hygiene behaviors among them.

Lack of water is the largest constraints to sustainable livelihood in the county.

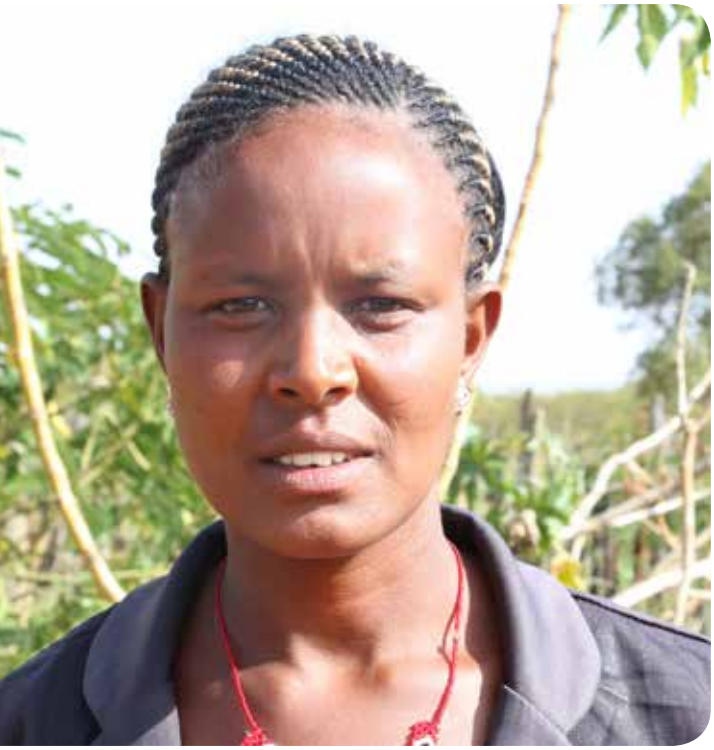
To address this challenge Amref Health Africa through the project embarked on interventions aimed at increasing water accessibility to the women.

With this, the health institution has supported the community in erecting a water tank and pipeline from Lchingei borehole. Through this development, the group is able to harvest enough water to farm throughout the year.

Additionally, the women in the village have enough time to undertake activities both at home and in the farm since they no longer walk long distances to fetch water.

"We were once regarded as lowly in the society, but now we are reputable people. Thank you Amref Health Africa for educating us on hygiene and best farming practices," said Lekochere.

A LITTLE HELP CAN GO A LONG WAY. REHABILITATION OF A BOREHOLE IN BAAWA



Water is life and no known living thing can function without it.

If your water source has never dried up, it will be easy to dismiss this phrase.

For Elizabeth Leshoomo, fetching a jerry can full of water from a community borehole is a dream come true.

A few weeks ago, accessing clean drinking water was only a pipe dream to the people in her village.

For decades, Elizabeth and her entire Baawa village in Nkiloriti Sub Location have grappled with water shortage.

The young woman is the Chairperson of Baawa Committee water management.

While community boreholes have existed for several years, because of lack of maintenanace, many have become non-functional.

In response to their plight, Amref Health Africa initiated a project aimed at rehabilitating water sources in the village to increase water supply in village.

Today, the once thirsty village has setup a water kiosk and is selling water to the entire community at a subsidised price.

The funds collected is then used to buy fuel as well maintanace in the event a breakdown with aim ensuring the water keep flowing.

The borehole water supports households in domestic use, quenching livestock's thirst as surplus used for irrigation – watering crops.

To make this dream a reality, Amref Health Africa officers first trained the village's committee on water resource manganament – the operation and maintenance of the rehabilitated water source.

Other trainings included, hygiene related diseases, water-related diseases, sustainability mechanisms and promotion of sanitation practices.

Members like Elizabeth then shared the knowledge with their communities.

In return, the committee promised to ensure the pipeline is constantly running by undertaking repairs in the event the pipes get damaged.

Currently, the proposed number of individuals benefitting from the pipeline stands at 400 community members. This includes two primary schools each with an average of 200 and 300 pupils respectively.

Elizabeth's expectation is that pipeline will help them both for use at home and in the farm.

With the project in place, the lives of Elizabeth and entire communities living in Nkiloriti have drastically changed.

The distances previously walked to fetch water have greatly been reduced, allowing more time for productive activities such as cultivation of gardens.

Moreover, the diseases associated with drinking unsafe water such as stomachaches and diarrhea has equally diminished.

As water flows steadily, the residents have some sense of hope.

"Amref Health Africa has really done an important thing for us. We're able to access clean safe drinking water. I am very grateful," Elizabeth said.

"We hope that more water points will be built in the nearby area to extend water reach in the region."

HARD WORK PAYS: BARAKA SELF-HELP GROUP TASTES SUCCESS

Baraka self-help group symbolises what unity of purpose can achieve with the right support.

When Amref Health Africa was searching for a reliable partner to partner with, Baraka self-help, being a well-organised one was lucky enough to be selected.

Over the years, the group has earned respect when it comes to bee keeping.

Even though their efforts have never been rewarded, this time round Amref Health Africa came knocking their doors.

The health institution was ready to provide funds for the group.

First, the group was privileged to be trained on beekeeping.

The training has proved to be a success as the group that once operated a few dozen beehives, now boasts of 288 beehives.

Currently, bee keeping has remained group's main source of income.

Through value addition, they now make various products such as royal jelly, honey and milking salve from honeycombs.

This assures them adequate income to feed and educate their families.

With the help of the Ministry of Agriculture and Amref Health Africa, the group has become giants in beekeeping.

"After selling honey for a short while they acquired honey harvesting machinery for processing the honey and we sell it for a tidy sum by the kilo," said John Leadura, a member of the group.

The Ministry of Agriculture trained the group on how to use honey-harvesting machines to harvest honey.

Today, the group harvests one tone (1,000 kilograms) of honey and sales at Ksh 250,000 with a kilo going for Kshs 250.

Through this John is able to educate his three children in secondary school and one child in the University.

"My first born has already graduated from the University courtesy of income generated from the project," said John.

Baraka self-help group which boasts of 20 memberships (11 men and 10 women) was formed about eight years ago.

"We formed the group with the aim of empowerment. As a minority community, we wanted to create a group that would help us have a voice as a community through wealth creation. We wanted to educate our children just like any other Kenyan," said John.

Additionally, through the Water Supply and Food Sovereignty Project, the group was trained on how to plant crops such as kales, millet, sorghum, green grams, cow peas, pigeon peas and maize.

They were also taught on raring dairy goats to provide milk for malnourished children.

The group took advantage of the resources they had, farming whatever they could on their lands to supplement the dependence on livestock rearing.

"We began with planting grass and other crops on our farms. We also began taking care of our livestock better and milking them to sell for a profit. The women in the group also took up chicken rearing which did very well," John said.

These activities attracted other members of the community who were eager to learn from the group with aim of replicating the same in the village.

"This was a good gesture. When it comes to development, we wanted to move forward together as a community. We were very happy to set a good example for other members of the community," John noted.

Baraka self-help didn't stop there.

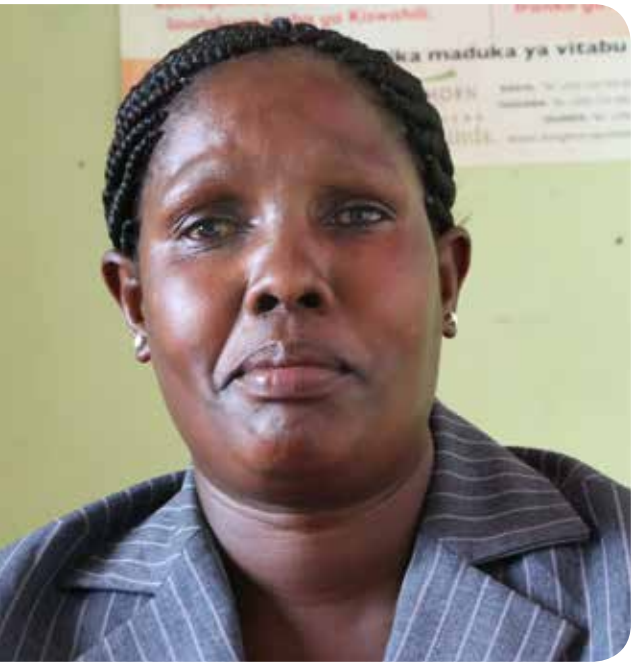
The group partnered with the Government who later helped them incorporate better animal husbandry practices thus resulting into even more results.

Despite making strides in eradicating poverty among its members, Baraka self-help group members face numerous challenges that threaten group's growth.

"We have failed to realise 100 percent yields because of invasion and destruction of our farms by wildlife, including Zebra. Besides that, rampart cutting down of trees has impacted negatively on rainfall," John reported.

John however, lauded Amref Health Africa for the consistent help and follow ups to ensure the projects succeeds.

BREAKING THE SILENCE: MARY EIRIA EDUCATING GIRLS ON MENSTRUAL HYGIENE



When Mary Eiria saw her students dig through trash heaps as others tear clothes into rags to create makeshift sanitary towels, she was disturbed.

In Lorroki division where many schools don't have toilets, clean water and soap for good menstrual management; some girls who can't access descent sanitary pads often stay at home during menstruation out of sheer embarrassment.

This consequently impacts negatively of their class studies.

When Amref Health Africa under a programme called Water and Food Sovereignty Project donated a water tank for storing water in Mary's school (Baawa Primary School), she saw this as an opportunity.

After decades of sitting back, the 42-year-old has joined a new generation of women determined to break the silence on menstrual hygiene.

Although, menstruation is supposed to be invisible and silent, sadly, it is not so for thousands of girls who are subject to restrictions in their daily lives during this period.

The class three teacher is teaching the girls on how to take care of themselves during menstruation – proper disposal of used sanitary towels and showering at least three times a day now that water is available.

Since many students cannot afford sanitary towels, provision of water comes in handy in ensuring girls keep themselves clean.

Besides the health problems due to poor hygiene during menstruation, lack of appropriate sanitary products may push menstruating girls temporarily or sometimes permanently out of school.

This negatively impact on their right to education.

Apart from routine class teachings, Mary has found herself additional work of providing counselling for the girls – talking about their health and proper Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM).

MHM is the absorption of menstrual blood onto clean material which can be changed in privacy, according to UNICEF.

It also incorporates the availability of soap and clean water to wash re-usable sanitary materials and the body, as well as a suitable place of disposal for used materials.

These lessons are carried out every mid-month.

Amref Health Africa has supported the school in training and organising workshops for the girls with sole purpose of learning basic handwashing skills, personal and menstrual hygiene.

The girls are now enlightened and understand that menstruation is an integral and normal part of human life.

During pad demonstration sessions, students receive practical instruction on the correct and consistent use of sanitary pads.

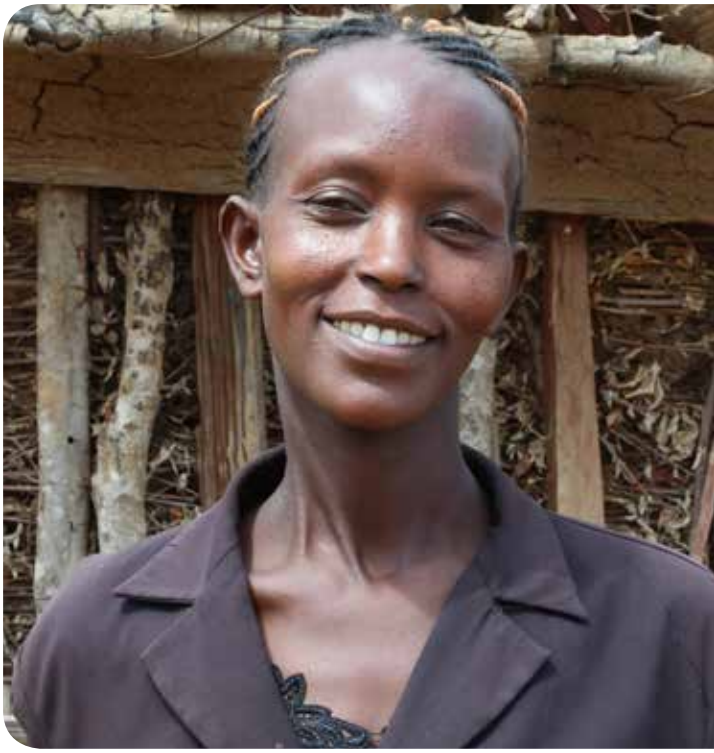
Students are also sensitised on how to manage cramps and monitor their cycles via the calendar.

The overriding objective of the project was to ensure that the target school girls will not have to miss school simply because they are menstruating.

Before the water infrastructure was rehabilitated, the girls suffered a lot because of lack water, but now that has changed. They now consider themselves as better people in the school as they access knowledge on menstruation matters.

Today, the project is yielding good results as girls can now attend all classes without fear of stigma.

RUTH LEPATA BENEFITS FROM WATER SUPPLY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY PROJECT



Ruth Lepeta, a young mother of four lives in Lpetepet village and is a happy woman, thanks to training by Amref Health Africa through the Community health workers.

She says the training has been a big blessing as it has helped improve quality of her family's life.

Armed with the training, Lepeta has resorted into giving back to the community by advocating for construction of pit latrines to reduce incidences of contagious disease and bring dignity to members of the community.

"We were taught how to dig pit latrines and use them. Before then, we used to defecate in the bushes, this brought about the burden of diseases among our people," she recalls.

The training she says is a major turning point and has gone a long way in curbing outbreaks of diseases such as cholera and trachoma.

Additionally, Lepeta was also trained on proper waste management, general household cleanliness and hygiene.

Simple activities like sun-drying utensils she says has helped reduce chances of contracting infectious illnesses.

"We were instructed to dry our clothes before wearing. Amref Health Africa also helped us to dig compost pits to dispose trash. This has helped us in keeping our homes clean for the safety of our children," she says.

In a community where livestock keeping is a predominant economic activity, oblivious of potential health risks Lepeta previously shared common roof with the animals.

With the training, she now understands that these animals could be capable of transmitting life threatening diseases.

Because of this, she set up a cattle shade, a distant away from the home.

In addition, she was also trained on proper animal handling techniques, especially during milking.

Personal hygiene was also emphasised to help reduce probability of disease transmission.

Apart from hygiene, Ruth now understands the importance of using a treated mosquito nets and regular re-treating to ensure her children are safe from malaria-transmitting mosquitoes.

Nutritional health has also been crucial component advocated by CHWs doing rounds to monitor young children's health progress.

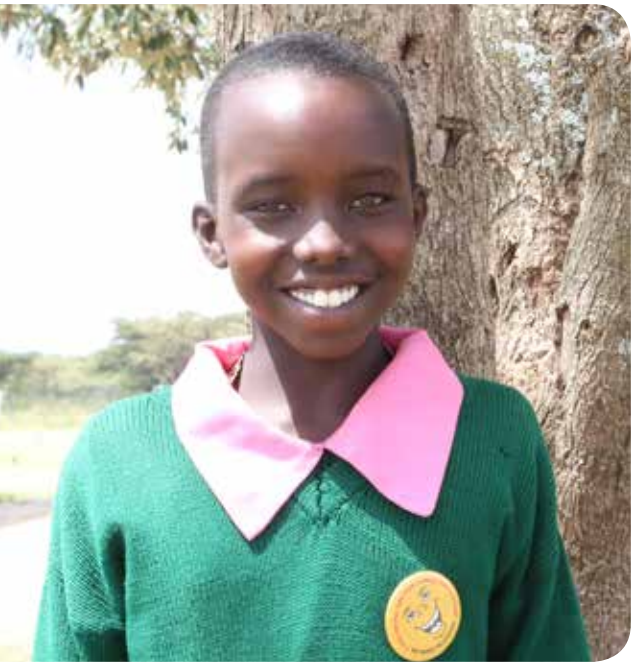
With such gains, the services of community health workers and volunteers have lately been extended to schools.

Through Water Supply and Food Sovereignty Project, school-going children are trained on matters touching on nutrition, hygiene and health during the health club session.

In turn, they transmit these values at home, leading to better and healthier lives for their families.

This has proved effective in the area.

BETTER HEALTH FOR BETTER LEARNING



Marie-Susan is only 12 years and she's already going places, thanks to Amref Health Africa.

At grade seven, Marie has become an advocate of hygiene and sanitary pads usage among her school-going peers.

"I enjoy educating young girls like me the importance of good hygiene. Personally, I want to be a doctor, when I grow up," she explains.

Being a member of her school's health club the sky is the limit for the little girl.

"When I first instructed my mother to wash her hands with soap before cooking, before eating, after visiting the toilet and after changing baby's diapers and she obeyed, I felt so proud," she says.

"I have earned respect in the community. Today, I even help other girls to use sanitary pads in the village," she continues.

Amref Health Africa's Water Supply and Food Sovereignty Project is stepping up efforts to support school children with hope of improving their hygiene standards and that of the communities.

An important aspect of the project is the provision of sanitary equipment to school-going girls to curb frequent absenteeism during menstruation.

"Before sanitary towels were provided by the schools, girls missed out of schools for three days during their menstrual periods, but with the help of the government and organisations such as Amref Health Africa, they're now provided with two packs per month," a teacher explained.

Adding that "On personal hygiene, we emphasise using clean running water to do face washing and hand washing, especially in school and at their homes."

Back to Marie-Susan, she was eager to go into the details of what she had learned through the health club.

She says that their health club is headed by a patron who makes sure that there is a link between the pupils, teachers and the community.

The linkage she says is crucial in helping identify some of the gaps in the health and hygiene components.

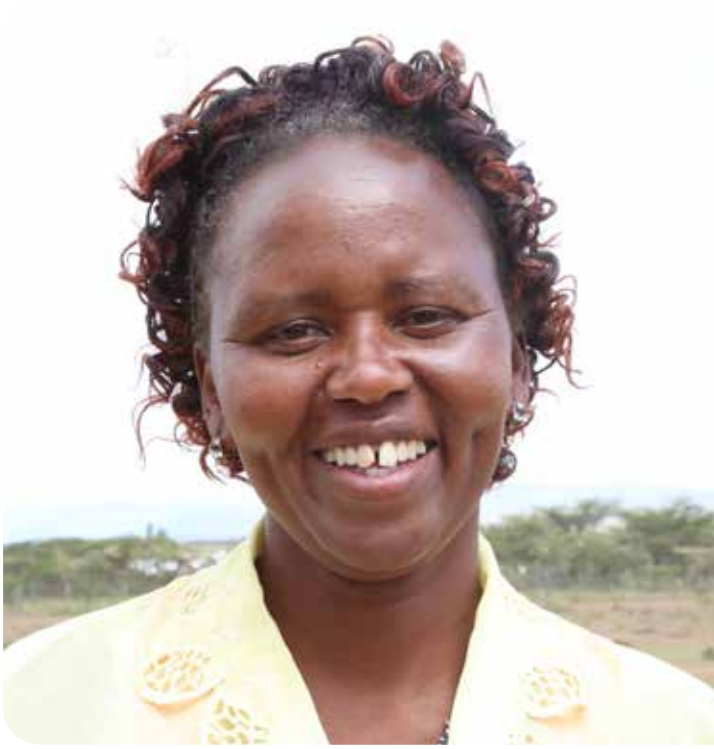
"We are taught to take a bathe twice daily if there is sufficient water and once if there is water shortage. We also make sure we wash our hands before touching food and after visiting toilets. We keep our nails short to keep them clean all the time," she explains.

The other gain is the natural transmission of these values to homes as the children take the hygiene training to their families.

Today, the club has brought some positive changes in the school.

"I want to really thank Amref Health Africa for the Health Club and the many things that we have learnt," she concludes.

DETERMINED TO SERVE: ELIZA LEROSION



Eliza Lerosion has helplessly watched her community members die of preventable diseases until she stepped in and started serving as a Community Health Volunteer (CHV), a job she loves most.

Hailing from Lodokejek community unit in Samburu, Eliza's sole motivation is to eradicate hygiene-related illnesses in her village.

Today, Eliza has remained critical in mobilising her community unit on medical outreaches, monitoring of malnutrition, educates on importance of immunisation and does follow up on malnutrition cases.

The 32-year-old has also spared part of her time to give back to the society as she volunteers as a trainer in a local Early Childhood Development School.

Eliza appreciates Amref Health Africa's M-learning app which has aided her to expand her knowledge by getting training using a mobile phone.

Through her phone, she has received training on nutrition, hygiene, breast feeding among other topics.

Eliza's close interaction with the residents, means that she is their first contact person in matters of health thus, strives to build a good rapport with them.

Eliza admits that she is quick to inform her community members about health outreaches to help them deal with a number of health conditions.

"The outreaches have brought services closer to the residents – providing health education to the communities by teaching them good health practices. This has helped curb a number of preventable diseases," said Eliza

Furthermore, Eliza does community education where she discusses with both genders on different issues relating to maternal and child health.

She regularly visits expectant mothers and advises them on nutrition, prenatal clinic visits, and the importance of hospital delivery and exclusive breast feeding for six months. In this regard, she promotes infant and child feeding practices at community level which aim of promoting child health and nutrition. Additionally, she regularly visits women of childbearing age in their homes to monitor growth of their infants and referring them to health facilities for medical examinations.

The community now understands the importance of hygiene in reducing the spread of diseases like trachoma, diarrhea and cholera.

"Before the training, many people did not know the importance of hand washing or how to use the toilet. But through the project, my community members now understands this subject pretty well," says Eliza.

But there are challenges.

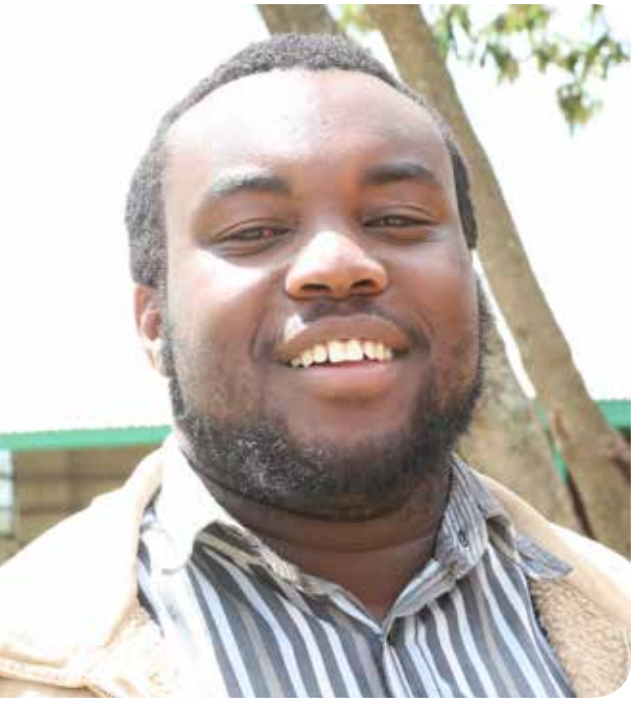
Poor road network for instance makes it difficult to reach the communities who live in remotest places.

The community also still has a strong affiliation to some elements of archaic culture such as belief that they don't need latrines since they have huge pieces of land where they can defecate on.

Thirdly, some pregnant women still would want to treat delivery as a private issue thus shy away from delivering in hospitals. Because of her relentless work, Eliza has gained respect from her community members; this is evident during her public forums where community members turn up in large numbers to listen keenly to what she says.

"The m-learning training has greatly helped me and my community, I'd like to urge Amref Health Africa to keep training us on more topics to make our communities disease-free," she concluded.

SCHOOL HEALTH CLUB IMPROVES WELLNESS OF STUDENTS AT NKEJU-EMUNY PRIMARY DAY AND BOARDING SCHOOL IN LORROKI DIVISION



Through the Water Supply and Amref Health Africa steps up efforts of providing Lorroki School with water to tame trachoma, an infectious disease that is the world's leading cause of blindness.

Without access to clean water for face washing, battling trachoma has proved difficult to contain in many parts of Kenya.

After decades of struggle to tame the disease alongside other hygiene related-diseases, Nkeju-emuny Primary Day and Boarding School today has something to smile.

"After drafting our health plan about five years ago, Amref Health Africa came in and helped us acquire a 5, 000 liter water tank and piping for rain harvesting," said Benson Wamae, the school's Deputy Head Teacher.

"They also supported us with handwashing equipment (improved leaky tins). This enabled us to start health and hygiene training for our pupils," he added.

The health and hygiene training involved teaching the recipients proper handwashing and face washing techniques.

Mr. Wamae noted that face washing which is known to tame trachoma was emphasised.

The students were also trained on personal hygiene and the importance of eating a balanced diet.

"We also put emphasis on hand washing during all the critical point for example washing hands with soap before cooking, before eating, after visiting the toilet and after changing baby's diapers," noted Wamae.

Another important facet of the program was the emphasis on use of toilets and pit latrines at homes.

The girls were later trained on menstrual hygiene and thus provided with sanitary towels.

"We have a training session once every week. We also teach health and hygiene regularly in the classrooms," said Mr. Wamae.

"There has been great impact as cases of dysentery and diarrhea dwindle. This is primarily because most homes now have toilets and pit latrines."

Even though, there are challenges.

"One of them being lack of alternative water sources to guarantee steady supply. We largely depend on water harvesting, but during dry spell, we're forced to rely on Lentoto River. The problem is that it is a seasonal river," Wamae laments.

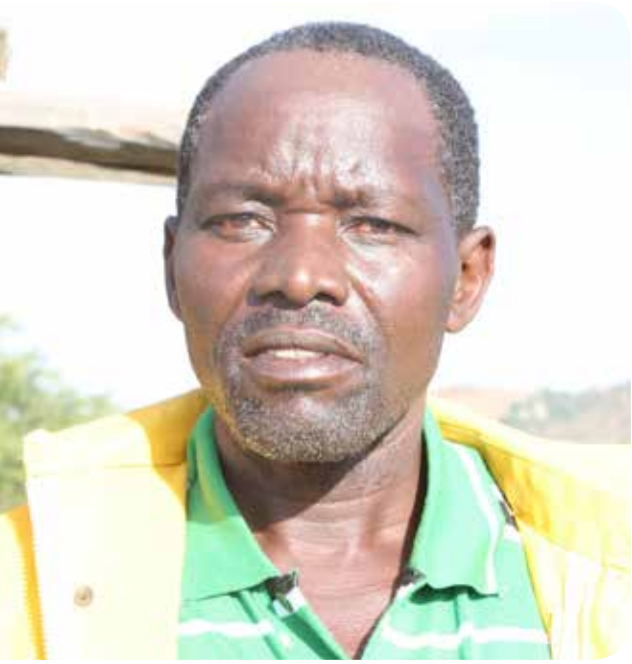
"The other alternative is a borehole that is located several kilometers away. Amref Health Africa has helped bring this water closer home through piping. However, this too has become unreliable as pump keeps breaking down. "

Mr Wamae has two suggestions to tackle this challenge.

"Acquiring equipment to pump water would be a great deal," he says. "Another option would be to drill a borehole within the school compound."

He however, remains optimistic regardless of the challenges and hopes the program will continue bringing lasting change in the community.

FARMERS FIELD DAY



Through the Water Supply and Food Sovereignty Project, farmers from Lorroki Division Samburu County have successfully hosted educational field events, including farm demo to learn best farming practices. This has been made possible courtesy of Amref Health Africa, the Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders.

The events usually include demonstrations of specific farm management practices and equipment and/or highlighting research methods and results.

Nelson Ndongi, an agricultural officer explains what farmers' field day is and its role.

"It is usually held twice a year, especially before and after the short rains.

This event is meant to educate farmers on importance as well as steps involved in farm management – land preparation, planting, weeding, chemical spraying, harvesting and post- harvesting.

Normally, the funding as well as advertising of the field days is usually facilitated by various partners including, Amref Health Africa.

One such farmers' field day which was facilitated by Junta de Castilla Leon through the Water Supply and Food Sovereignty Project was held in Maralal.

In June 2017, another field day was held in Baawa to educate the community on various farming methods, including farm management. I am happy to report that this event was hugely a success.

Apart from being educative, the forum offered the farmers a rare opportunity

of meeting as well as interacting with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education.

Baawa Farmers' field day saw a total of 20 enthusiastic farmers participate. It was indeed, an all-inclusive forum, attracting 300 kids from Loreto and Baawa Primary Schools.

Also in attendance, were the Amref Health Africa's Project Manager and other stakeholders.

The key participants had sessions to educate and showcase their products. For instance, beekeeping project was showcased, thus, translated into participants purchasing bee products.

The farmers were also educated on various crop farming techniques such as planting drought and disease-tolerant crops issued by Amref Health Africa's Water Supply and Food Sovereignty Project.

The Water Supply and Food Sovereignty Project in Lorroki Division has seen targeted persons plant kales, cabbages, onions and tomatoes. These products were also showcased and sold during the field day.

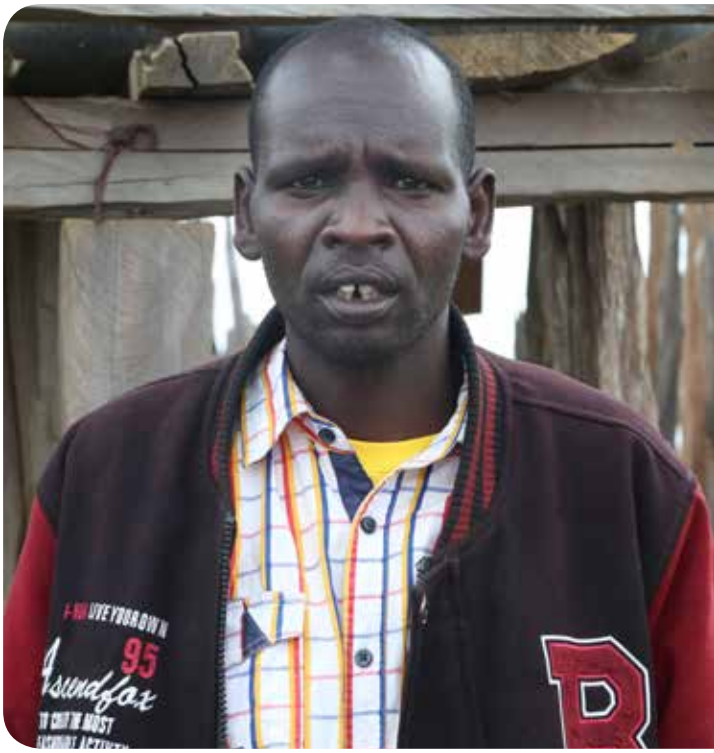
The session was certainly, interactive.

We're looking forward to having such farmers' field days continue and even scaled up."

Nelson however, proposes that the farmers' field days should be funded regularly to continuously equip farmers with farming skills. He exudes high level of optimism that the drought-tolerant crops can successfully be planted in Samburu County and other counties.

His final suggestion is that the farmers' field days should be held more often, and if possible, on a quarterly basis within the financial year.

MEMBERS OF SIAMBU FARMERS GROUP USE FARMING TO BETTER HEALTH AND LIVELIHOOD OF ITS PEOPLE



In today's competitive business environment, age is just a number and William Letonon understands this pretty well.

He is the chairman of Siambu Farmers Self-help Group, consisting of nine women and 11 men.

Barely three years since inception, William says the group has made great strides in farming.

"We started this project with the aim of helping us farm. We knew that with teamwork we would yield meaningful results," he narrates.

After a while, William says, they established a demo farm to share their farming experience with other community members.

It is at this point Amref Health Africa came knocking their doors – to offer skills and resources with hopes of taking the group to the next level.

"When a team of Amref Health Africa visited our farm, they realised we were doing some good work. They then brought trainers who taught us better farming techniques – selection of best seed variety and herbicide and fertilizer application," William recalls.

With this boost, productivity increased by tenfold.

In no time, they began earning money from their produce and by selling seeds to group members.

“The skills have enabled us to earn some good money from our farms and now we are able to even educate our children,” William reports.

As if that wasn’t enough, the health institution, then donated water tank for steady water supply for domestic and irrigation purposes.

That support didn’t stop there; Amref Health Africa equipped the group with table banking and group dynamics skills.

Even so, there were challenges as pests remained an obstacle.

Similarly, even though the group harvests huge volumes of water, they lack a water pump as well as pipes to channel the water to the farms.

This means the group have to ferry jerry cans manually, which is not only tedious work, but also time consuming and ineffective.

As crops flourished, cases of crop theft also grew.

William however, remains optimistic to propel the group to greater heights.

“We want to acquire bigger lands for our members so that we can do large scale farming. We also plan to establish a greenhouse to grow more profitable crops like tomatoes. We are already writing a proposal to mobilise funds to purchase a greenhouse,” William explains.

ACHIEVEMENTS

INSTALLATION

- **20** water tanks for rain water harvesting

CONSTRUCTION

- **2** Shallow Wells
- **1** Subsurface Dam

REHABILITATION

- **2** Boreholes reaching over **2,000** people

TRAINING

- **5** WMCs trained on Operation& Maintenance of water facilities
- **12** community based artisans on development, operations & maintenance of the developed water facilities.
- **40** CHVs on improved nutrition uptake IMAM, HINI & IYCN.

PROTECTION

1 water spring

OUTREACH

5 per month reaching more than than **1,500** people

FARMER GROUPS

12 farmer groups supported with drip irrigation system

INVOLVEMENT

32 schools

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