

## Summer Newsletter 2021

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter. As Kenya begins to recover from a third wave of Covid-19 which has placed immense strain on health services, we update you on all the hard work that continues in Kenya despite the challenges, and share some exciting HCK news!

### Our new UK Aid funded project

We are delighted to announce that we have successfully secured funding from the UK government's Small Charities Challenge Fund. After passing a rigorous due diligence assessment, our new project funded with UK Aid from the British people started in January and will continue over two years.

This is a huge opportunity for us as a small charity and for our work in widening access to palliative care across Kenya. In partnership with Ongata Ngong Palliative Community Care, Nairobi Hospice and Siaya Roselyne Hospice, the project will improve the lives of over 1,000 people living with cancer and their families and carers, through the development of community-based palliative care in Siaya, Kajiado and Nairobi counties. Over two years we will train 225 community health volunteers and 50 health workers, and support them to raise awareness of cancer and provide life-changing home-based palliative care.

The first group of 20 volunteers was trained at Uhembo, Siaya County in March, and they are now equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to provide palliative care in their rural communities and teach others about the signs and symptoms of cancer. Work to raise awareness of cancer, in particular cancers affecting women, has already started with community meetings in Siaya and Kajiado. We will keep you posted on the progress of this exciting project.



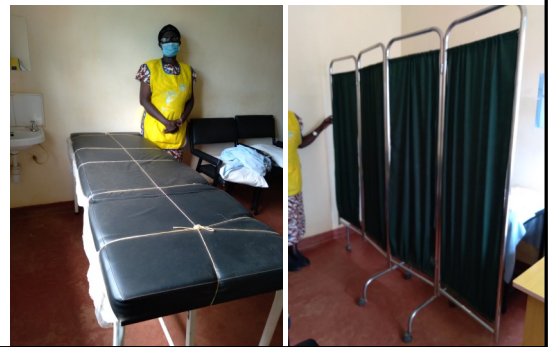


# News from Kenya

We helped Siaya Hospice make some much needed renovations to the hospice building. The hospice underwent a full repaint and plumbing repairs, including new sinks and toilets. New screens and patient couches were also installed. The hospice is now a more functional, welcoming and comfortable space for patients.

Siaya Hospice nurse, Elizabeth Odalo, told us;

*"The Hospice was in bad shape as since it was built in 2010 no maintenance had been done. There were breakages to sinks, toilets and doors. The furniture had become torn and broken. The hospital donated three beds but no mattresses which we needed as sometimes we are overwhelmed by patients who can't sit but need to lie down. The Hospice is now very beautiful, the toilets are comfortably usable and the sinks are perfect. Thank you very much Hospice Care Kenya for the continued support."*



Nanyuki Cancer Support Group held a highly successful cancer screening event to mark World Cancer Day in February, with support from Hospice Care Kenya. The event took place at Muramati Dispensary in Laikipia North and aimed to reach out to people in this underserved location and give them the opportunity to benefit from cancer screening. On the day 273 people attended for cervical cancer, breast cancer or prostate cancer screening, resulting in 28 people being referred on for further investigation. The team also led well attended talks on cancer awareness and maintaining good health. Congratulations to Nanyuki Cancer Support Group and their partners on reaching out to this isolated rural area.

Photo top - Rapid PSA blood testing for prostate cancer; Photo below - Susan Muragu, breast cancer survivor, leading a breast cancer awareness session.



Nurses share essential information and patients share their personal stories at support groups in Nanyuki, Kasufini and Malindi.



# An update on our BBC Radio 4 appeal projects

We have now committed all of the funds raised during our BBC Radio 4 appeal in June 2020 to training 480 community health volunteers and the community workers that support them, across eight Kenyan Counties. 265 volunteers have already been trained and provided with support to carry out their duties in caring for patients at home and raising awareness of cancer in their communities. We will follow up the progress of the newly trained volunteers over the next year. As they begin work to provide home-based care in their communities we'll find out how their work is widening access to palliative care for many more people in rural communities and changing lives.

***"Quite a lot of our people have different health issues and I think the training has been great in giving us the opportunity to learn how to take care of our community members who need palliative care. It's all about having passion in what we are going to do. As we go out there let's do it from the bottom of our hearts to support our community members"***

**Benedine Kipruto, CHV in Illula village, Kapsoya**



Photos top left - Group work during training at St Mary's Medical Centre, Eldoret

Top right - Training taking place in Taita Taveta County

Below left - Training and mentoring in Ganda Village, Kilifi County

Below right - Volunteers are provided with comprehensive resources to enhance their learning and support them to provide home-based palliative care to patients.

***"Training these volunteers has helped our hospice extend a wide range of services throughout Taita Taveta County. We have already seen an increase in patient referrals from rural health facilities through good coordination between the trained volunteers, community workers and rural health centres"***

**Muriel Gacheri Kinyanga, Taita Taveta Hospice nurse**

### Lucky's story



Top - Lucky with his father; Bottom - Lucky's family



Eleven year old Lucky and his family live in west Malindi; a rural, arid area of Kenya where poverty rates are very high. Lucky is HIV positive, along with his mother and three siblings, however all the family stopped taking treatment. They believed they had been cursed and rejected conventional medicine in favour of traditional healers. Superstitions persist in rural Kenya with serious illness and death often blamed on witchcraft, preventing patients from seeking the care that could benefit them. Then Lucky contracted TB.

Palliative care nurse Sophie was told about the family and started visiting Lucky regularly. She ensured he took his treatment correctly, monitored his condition and kept him comfortable with pain medication as his health deteriorated. Sophie offered comfort to Lucky when he was afraid and provided counselling to the whole family. Sadly, Lucky died two months later but Sophie continued to visit the family, supporting them through their bereavement and educating them about how to maintain their own health.

**Please help us to reach out to the most disadvantaged families in need of palliative care across rural Kenya. Just £50 supports a hospice to carry out home visits to patients for a whole month, and can ensure that families are not left to cope alone.**

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