



Welcome to our Winter Newsletter for 2021. In this edition we update you on some of the palliative care activities taking place in Kenya and suggest a couple of ways in which you could help us to raise more funds this Christmas at no extra cost to you.

We would like to thank all of our friends and supporters for your dedicated support throughout the past year and wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2022!

## Improving access to palliative care

Samburu County in northern Kenya remains one of the country's poorest counties, with over 75% of the population living in poverty. In this arid and drought prone landscape, the majority of the population eke out a living as nomadic pastoralists or small scale farmers. There is no hospice, and government delivered palliative care services are in their infancy. Under the guidance of dedicated palliative care nurse, Claudia Bonaya, two county hospitals have recently set up small outpatient palliative care units in the first steps towards developing the service, but with few trained staff their reach and capacity is very limited.



*Above: A palliative care information radio broadcast taking place.*

*Right: Wamba PCU staff visit patients across Samburu.*



Over the past year we have been supporting the development of palliative care in Samburu County for the first time. With our support the palliative care unit in Wamba has been able to provide home visits to the most isolated patients across the county, nurses travelling up to 105 kilometres to reach them. They have also carried out local radio broadcasts and interviews to raise awareness of the palliative care services available. For the first time 51 community health volunteers, drawn from across the entire county, have received training in basic palliative care skills to widen access out into the community.

Over the coming year we will continue to support this development by widening our training to more than 200 health staff and volunteers from across Samburu to ensure that palliative care services become better integrated into the county's health system.

*"During this Covid-19 pandemic, where vulnerable patients need to minimize their visits to the hospital, home-based care remains the only option for them to be freed from pain and their symptoms".*

Claudia Bonaya, Wamba Palliative Care Coordinator, Samburu



Our project to develop community based palliative care in three counties, funded with UK Aid from the UK government, is progressing well. So far a total of 91 community health volunteers and 25 health workers from primary care facilities have been trained. The volunteers are now being supported to provide home-based care in

their communities through joint home visits to patients. This work has been complemented by increasing community awareness through meetings with community and religious leaders. This increases knowledge of common cancers but is also important for increasing community acceptance and ownership of the project, which in turn enhances its sustainability.

**Photos top: Community health volunteer training taking place in Mbagaa, Siaya County.**

**Photos below, left to right: A home visit to a patient in Kajiado County, community leader meetings taking place in Siaya and Kajiado, palliative care nurse and project co-ordinator Stella (far right) meets with church leaders in Kajiado County.**



## Palliative care news from Kenya

In a major step towards improving palliative care services in Kenya, the country launched its first ever National Palliative Care Policy in October. The policy is the culmination of hard work and advocacy by the Kenya Hospice and Palliative Care Association (KEHPCA) working in partnership with the Kenyan Ministry of Health.

A 2018 survey revealed that of 800,000 Kenyans in need of palliative care annually, less than 15,000 people were able to access services. To work towards meeting this need, the policy provides a framework for implementation of palliative care as part of Universal Health Coverage and a guiding tool for policy makers and health service managers to finance palliative care services for all people in need in Kenya.



**Photo below: Nurse leaders in training**

This crucial step is testament to hard work and advocacy by our partner KEHPCA. This year we are supporting KEHPCA to train palliative care nurse leaders who will champion palliative care and train others. We are also supporting the development of resources for health workers on the role of palliative care in a range of communicable and non-communicable diseases.





We are delighted to announce that a Charity Concert in aid of Hospice Care Kenya will be taking place at Great Malvern Priory on Saturday 5th February 2022 at 7.30pm. Organised by friends and long-term supporters of HCK, Iain and Gwyn Sloane, the concert promises an evening of choral highlights with an international flavour, featuring the HCK singers and music from around the world. Tickets cost just £10 for adults and £5 for concessions. These can be booked in advance on our [website events page here](#), or on the door on the night.



In December we say goodbye to Lee Barker (photo left), Director of HCK for the last seven years. Lee has done an excellent job of overseeing the delivery of our charitable mission and developing HCK into an efficient and competitive organisation. We want to thank Lee for everything she has done for the charity and wish her a long and happy retirement.

We welcome Pauline Everitt as our new part-time Director and we look forward to a new chapter in HCK's mission to bring compassion, care and support to those in need in Kenya.

***"Hi I'm Pauline and I am honoured to be the next Director of HCK.***

***My career started in the NHS, originally as an orthoptist and latterly as a manager in Public Health, but for the last 15 years I have worked mainly within the voluntary sector. I am based in beautiful Worcestershire but have spent a lot of time living and working in the Caribbean, both for the Red Cross and the UN.***

***I spent lockdown trying out many new recipes, although I wouldn't qualify for Bake Off! My hobbies are cooking, entertaining and fitness training, to burn off the calories ingested by the former two!***

***I am so looking forward to serving this amazing charity and hopefully meeting some of you in the future."***



**Simple ways to help raise even more for our work in Kenya this Christmas**

## DontSendMeACard.com



This Christmas why not send e-cards to your friends and family using [DontSendMeACard.com](#) and donate what you would have spent on cards and stamps to us! Just visit [DontSendMeACard.com](#) and search the charity register for Hospice Care Kenya. Simply choose one of our Christmas card designs, make your donation, then you will be given a set of e-cards to either send in bulk or individually personalise.

## smile.amazon.co.uk

Don't forget you can use your Amazon purchases to donate to us at no extra cost to you by shopping through Amazon Smile. Visit [smile.amazon.co.uk](#) and select us as your chosen charity. We will then receive a donation of 0.5% of every spend on eligible purchases.



*Miriam shows nurse Muriel the medicines given to her by the traditional healer*

## **Muriel Kinyanga, palliative care nurse at Taita Taveta Hospice in southern Kenya tells us about her patient:**

*“A community health volunteer told me about a lady in her village who was suffering with severe pain. She lived two kilometres away and since we have no vehicle we walked as we enjoy the beautiful view of Mount Kilimanjaro. On arrival a stench hit us. In the house a lady called Miriam was laying on a mattress on the floor under a mosquito net full of flies. She was groaning in pain and looking in a mirror at a wound on her cheek. An old lady by her side looked tired and helpless.*

*“Miriam had lost weight and was pale, dehydrated and complaining of pain. They had visited a traditional medicine man who gave her a*

*concoction of traditional medicine. Of course, her health deteriorated day by day. We suspected her wound was cancerous and referred Miriam for a biopsy. We gave her liquid morphine and paracetamol for her pain. We cleaned the wound and organized for her community health volunteer to visit daily to dress the wound.*

*“A few days later we again found her in severe pain. Her condition had deteriorated. The medicines we gave were intact. Miriam told us the traditional medicine man had warned against using the drugs given by the hospice. We informed them of the risks of using traditional medicines and referred her to our social worker for counselling.*

*“When we visited a week later Miriam and her mother welcomed us with smiles. Miriam’s face looked brighter. To my surprise they had followed their prescription to the letter. Our team’s daily visits had given them hope. The smell had gone, she was pain free and now could happily invite her friends and church members to visit her.*

*“Three days later we received sad news of Miriam’s death. We visited the family to offer bereavement support. They told us that Miriam died in her sleep but they were grateful for the care the palliative care team provided.”*

**Lack of cancer awareness, mis-information and late diagnosis present many challenges for extremely under-resourced Kenyan hospices. Just £50 provides regular home visits and medicines to a patient over 3 months.**

**Please help us improve the lives of those in need with compassionate home-based palliative care.**

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**www.hospicecarekenya.com** (Registered charity no. 1141469)

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