



Save the Children

JUKWAA LETU

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Message from the Country Director



Yvonne Arunga, Country Director for Kenya and Madagascar.

This year marks a great time not only for Save the Children Kenya and Madagascar, but also for the entire Save the Children movement. The global movement is embarking on a three-year strategy as we seek to increase our impact for children faster and on a larger scale than ever before.

In 2021 alone, the impacts of COVID-19, climate change and the pace of digital transformation challenged all our pre-conceptions and priorities. We are however, alive to the fact that change is the only constant, and it makes our mission for children more critical than ever.

In 2016, Save the Children agreed to a 15-year global ambition in line with global Sustainable Development Goals. Three target breakthroughs for children were set for us to achieve by 2030:



Survive: No child dies of preventable causes before their fifth birthday.



Learn: All children learn from a quality basic education.



Be protected: Violence against children is no longer tolerated.

In executing these breakthroughs, we agreed to put the rights of the most deprived and marginalised children first, and to advocate for others to do the same.

The Kenya and Madagascar 2022-24 Country Strategic Plan builds on our strengths and successes from the previous three-year strategy, while also stretching us to grow as we work towards achieving the 2030 breakthroughs. It defines what we want the world to look like for children by 2024 and how we are going to help make that happen.

The strategy is ambitious and transformative, and focuses on **four strategic goals** namely:

1. Children under five thrive
2. Improved wellbeing for youth and adolescent girls and boys
3. Strengthened child sensitive shock-responsive social protection systems for vulnerable communities
4. Access to safe and quality education

Our four goals imagine the change we want to see for children and will help us work smarter and more efficiently, so we achieve more for them.

Our vision is to see more children survive, enjoy protection, develop and participate. Currently, we are losing too many babies at birth and in the initial years. The neonatal mortality rate in Kenya now stands at 22 deaths per 1000 live births, accounting for 42% of under 5 mortality and 59% of all infant mortality. Twenty-six percent of children under 5 years are stunted, 4 percent are wasted, and 11 percent are underweight. The leading causes of under 5 morbidity and mortality are pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria with malnutrition as an underlying factor. All these can be prevented.

When it comes to education, we all know that disadvantage creates further disadvantage in an ongoing cycle that starts in the first years of life. If we are to break the cycle of disadvantage, we need to intervene early, so every child gets the chance to fulfil their potential. Research shows that children from low socio-economic backgrounds are:

- Least likely to have engaged in early childhood education in the first 1,000 days
- Least likely to have engaged in pre-kindergarten programs, and
- Most likely to start school developmentally behind and stay behind.

All these factors make it hard for these children to thrive – but we can change this.

We also note that many children are still growing up in poverty, affecting their ability to learn, survive and to be protected. Internationally, hundreds of millions of families have been pushed over the brink of poverty since the start of the pandemic as parents lost work, impacting children's access to healthcare, education, food and housing. Kenya and Madagascar have not been spared.

Inadequate access to climate resilience capacities (to improve food security and

livelihood) remains a key barrier among the most vulnerable households in both Kenya and Madagascar who suffer from the impact of climate change and poverty. Furthermore, as our children grow into youth, they're hit by realities on the ground like unemployment. Our 2022-23 Country Strategic Plan has pushed us to ask ourselves how we can do things better to create a better impact for children.



Noting the high rates of technological advancements globally, we cannot afford to be left behind. In the next three years, we will seek to use digital innovations within our programming to drive greater impact for children. It is also key that our interventions are driven through cohesion – by working side by side with children, young people, families, communities, staff, volunteers, supporters, partners, and governments.

Indeed our ambition for children is massive, some would say impossible. However, as our founder Eglantyne Jebb said, “It’s impossible only if we make it so. It’s impossible only if we refuse to attempt it.”

Our 2022-2024 strategy is our best attempt to make it possible.

We do hope that you'll help us make our ambitious strategy a reality for children.



Jennifer Tomen holding 4-month old Tifah outside her house.

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“Tifah got sick and was found to have contracted pneumonia. She had a blocked nose and a congested chest. We could see that every time she coughed she would be in pain because she always cried so much. I did not have peace at all because I could see she was struggling to breathe,” Jennifer says.

Little Tifah’s battle with childhood pneumonia

On a very warm Tuesday afternoon, inside the vast Kibra informal settlements, we find twenty-two-year-old Jennifer breastfeeding her four-month-old baby girl, Tifah. Jennifer is a mother of two, Tifah and her three-year-old brother.

As we settle in Jennifer’s house, we cannot help but notice how healthy Tifah looks as she tries to catch a glimpse of her unknown visitors while engulfed in the warm embrace of her mother. Asking her about how her beautiful baby has been fairing on she shakes her head smiling lightly.

She narrates that a few weeks before we visited, Tifah would not be breastfeeding as comfortably as we found her. The little bundle of joy had been unwell to the point that she was unable to breathe; a situation that left Jennifer worried and restless.

Childhood pneumonia, a preventable disease affecting the lungs, remains the biggest killer of children under five globally. It manifests in various signs and symptoms such as coughing, fast breathing, chest in drawing and wheezing. According to World Health Organization (WHO), close to 800,000 children die every year from this deadly disease globally.

Data from Kenya’s Ministry of Health shows that pneumonia accounts for 15% of all child deaths. In 2018 alone, pneumonia claimed the lives of 9,000 children.

Though fatal, pneumonia can be prevented. Guardians can ensure that their children don’t contract pneumonia by ensuring that they receive full doses of the pneumococcal vaccine, addressing environmental factors such as indoor air pollution by use of affordable clean cooking stoves, ensuring adequate indoor ventilation and most importantly, seeking medical care and advise when children show any of the signs and symptoms of pneumonia.

This is rarely the case though. Due to economic challenges among others, access to healthcare services for those living in places like Kibra remains a tall order. Oftentimes, caregivers end up buying over-the-counter drugs from nearby chemists when they or their children fall sick, something that is not advisable.

This is also what Jenifer did after seeing her daughter's predicament. Tifah's health however, was not improving. In a panic, Jenifer resorted to calling a Community Health Volunteer (CHV) who works with Save the Children, in Kibra Sub-County.

"When I saw that things were not well with my child, I called Violet, our area CHV and told her that my child was in a bad condition. Violet advised me to take the child to Shofco Health Centre in Kibra and that's what I did," said Jenifer adding that Tifah had to be put on oxygen support because her condition had really deteriorated.

Thankfully, after a few days of admission, Tifah's health improved and she was discharged from hospital.

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In partnership with the Ministry of Health, and in line with our **Country Strategic Goal, Children Under 5 Thrive**, Save the Children aims to reduce child mortality rates of children under 5 years caused by preventable diseases through scaling up health interventions at the community level to protect, prevent and treat all children.

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"I am so grateful for the CHVs working in this area and especially for Violet. She means everything to us. Sometimes, when our children get sick we go to her home; she has been a great asset to us because she gives us advice on what we need to do when we barely know the steps to take when our children fall sick. She has encouraged us to visit health facilities whenever our children are sick and to avoid over the counter medication," says a cheerful Jenifer.

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Community health outreaches in Wajir County helping children suffering from malnutrition



In Wajir County, the rotting carcasses of cows, sheep, and goats lie in various stages of decomposition. The bodies of animals keep increasing every day, festering in the scorching sun. We meet a lone camel walking in the dusty streets, about to collapse in the soaring heat.

While drought is relatively common in North Eastern, Kenya, the current drought is one of the worst to be experienced in recent years. Pastoralists are more vulnerable to the drought because they live in harsher lands, which experience little to no rainfall yearly.

On a recent trip to Wajir County, we met 20-year-old Siada Adan, a married mother of three and a resident of Garse Ake, Buna Sub-County; grazing her cattle in the bushes.

Siada informed us that the drought crisis has really affected the lives of residents in her village. She says several people have lost their livestock, which, for many pastoralists in Northern Kenya, is their main source of livelihood. As a result, many others are surviving on only one meal, if at all any, a day. This has had adverse effects on the residents, but most especially children and expectant and lactating mothers.

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“It is now about two years since the drought started.

There are no vegetables in this town. We neither have milk nor food to give our children, so they end up becoming weak and malnourished,” she says.



She tells us that her children were on the brink of malnutrition until she heard about the outreach programs by Save the Children.

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“My children were really weak and had become very thin. I heard about the community health outreach programs through a neighbor and decided to take my children. Their health has since improved because they are given plumpy nuts to help boost their immunity,” Siada narrates to us.



Together with the Ministry of Health and the County Government of Wajir, we conduct outreach programs every two weeks in different areas in the county. We provide services like vaccination, vitamin supplements, care for lactating and expectant mothers, training on how to take care of children among others.

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“I want my children to be in good health and grow well. I want them to go to school and study well so that they can become doctors, nurses or teachers. I want them to study well so that they can help me also,” a hopeful Siada concludes.





According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), the effects of a third consecutive below-average rainy season are resulting to deteriorating food security outcomes driven by the impacts of poor crop and livestock production, resource-based conflict, livestock disease and mortality, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In its annual Short Rains Assessment report released in February 2022, the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) reported that there are around 3.1 million food-insecure people in pastoral and marginal agricultural areas, a 48 percent increase since August 2021.

Multiple shocks driven by climate crisis have contributed to increasing vulnerability in the northern Kenya counties with pastoralists being among the worst affected households.



Dr. Asma Awadh attends to Abinel at the AMREF Health facility in Kibra

A father's quest to see his two-year-old son survive and thrive

During one of our community health outreaches in Kibra at the AMREF Health Facility, we met with 32-year old Michael Onyancha, with his two-year-old son, Abinel. As we converse with Michael, we can't help but sympathize with his son due to a persistent cough he has. Michael tells us that he has come to the immunization health outreach to seek treatment for his son.

Michael stands out from the crowd since he appears to be the only father that has brought his child for treatment. The facility is crowded with mothers and their children. The role of a father in being present in the life of a child is evident from Michael's determination to get his son attended to at the facility. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Michael, who worked as a bus driver for a touring company, lost his job. Due to the high cost of living, he had to relocate to Kibra informal settlement. He now works as a casual laborer in the area.

"The greatest challenge as a father is ensuring that you have provided for your family, and most importantly, your children. Sometimes I sacrifice my meals so that Abinel doesn't sleep on an empty stomach," says Michael. "For breakfast, my family of three survives on twenty shillings (\$0.20). My wife and I will split one cup of milk between ourselves and leave one cup for baby Abinel. I do not want to watch my son go hungry because it affects me psychologically. I have to ensure my little one grows up healthy," Michael says.

Many residents in Kibra Sub-County are unable to access health services because they cannot afford it. Many a times they're forced to choose between buying food for their families and seeking healthcare when they fall sick; a decision they shouldn't have to make because both are important. It is for this reason that Save the Children in partnership with Pfizer Foundation launched an immunization project in the locality. The overall goal of this project is a sustained reduction in mortality among children under five years in Kenya.

The project intends to achieve this goal through; increased immunization coverage; increased social acceptance, care seeking and health-promoting behavior for immunization services by families and communities in project sites; improved capacity of Ministry of Health (MoH) and National Immunization and Vaccines Program (NVIP) Division to steward the vaccines and immunization program.

"I brought my son for a check-up when I heard that there was free provision of healthcare services here. My son has been having a persistent cough, trouble breathing, and a blocked nose for a year now and it has been hard to get him treatment because I have never managed to raise enough money to take him to hospital and to get him the treatment that he needs," says Michael. "I was very happy when I was informed about this outreach. My son has today been diagnosed and given medication free of charge!"



Michael's dreams for his child are big. He wants Abinel to survive, thrive and be the best he can be. It is heart-warming to see a father who takes care of his child the way Michael does.

"I want my son to be a leader in the future. I want him to lead a life that is better than this life I have given him in this place. I hope that he becomes a high-ranking officer within the Government," says Michael.

As we leave, we are encouraged with little Abinel's smile. It gives us hope that even if we face troubles in life, we should stay hopeful for a better tomorrow.

One-year-old Ekerete gets another chance to smile

One-year-old Ekerete, a lastborn child in a family six, lives with her five siblings and their mother Veronica in Kerio Turkana Central Sub County. Since birth, Ekerete had been a bubbly baby until she turned a year old when Veronica noticed that her last-born baby was not herself.

Veronica tells us that Ekerete stopped playing and was suddenly withdrawn. She attributes this to the drought and the fact that the food consumed in their household had significantly reduced. They could no longer afford to eat three meals a day.

She adds that before the drought, her babies had enough food and plenty of milk to drink but that had since changed. All her goats had subsequently died with each failed rainfall reason.

"I was very helpless and worried about Ekerete's health.



The nearest health facility is about 4 hours walk from here and with the hot sun, it is quite impossible to make it" says Veronica.

When Veronica heard about Save the Children's mass screening exercise at the emergency health outreach, she saw this as her only chance to get her last-born daughter the medical check-up she needed.

At the outreach, Dominic Ekal, a Health Officer, took Ekerete's vitals (height, weight and Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) measurement). From the screening, Ekal noticed that Ekerete had a MUAC of 11.1 cm, height of 68.8 cm and she weighed 6.0 Kgs. Had this been an 8-month-old's vitals then there would be no cause for alarm, but for a 17-month-old baby, this was indeed worrying.

"For Ekerete who is 17 months old, this was very concerning because it meant that she was severely malnourished and her health was at risk. She needed immediate treatment," explained Ekal.

Ekal put her on Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) sachets for 28 days.

"Today, her MUAC is 12.7 and she weighs 7.2

Kgs. This is significant progress in just 28 days. We have given her more RUTF and I am positive she will fully recover,” adds Ekal.

“I am happy because my baby got the nutrients she needed and today she is the happy baby I once knew,” says a happy Veronica.

The Integrated health services supported by Save the Children in partnership with the Ministry of Health come in handy to community members such as Ekerete who cannot access health facilities. They get to receive vital and lifesaving health services which they would ordinarily miss, because health facilities are too far away.

Using simple interventions, the routine integrated health outreaches offer general health services, which mainly include general checkup, treatment for malnutrition, immunization services for children and reproductive health education.

Save the Children Kenya and Madagascar aims to help children like Ekerete survive and thrive and have a chance to celebrate their fifth birthday happy and healthy.

Generation Hope: Voices of Children

Our global economy is built on inequality that is fuelling the climate crisis. The pandemic’s impact is being felt most acutely by the poorest children and families. These two crises are interlinked, whereby 1 billion children are at extreme risk of climate change and 1.2 billion children are estimated to live in multidimensional poverty, while the world spends \$423 billion annually to subsidize fossil fuel.

In Kenya and Madagascar, effects of climate crisis and social inequality continue to be felt mostly by children living in marginalised areas. Drought coupled up with other adverse climatic effects continue to ravage communities putting children in Kenya and Madagascar at risk of survival.

“Many children around the world and across the Save the Children movement are leading the way on climate change and inequality activism in a campaign dubbed Generation Hope. Children in Kenya and Madagascar have not been left behind. We held child hearings sessions in both countries and this is what children had to say:

Nicole, 11, Madagascar

“The climate crisis has affected us very much. Some children are affected by the floods and cyclones and their houses are destroyed.”



Dalton, 14, Kenya

“Climate change has affected us so much. We are experiencing a prolonged drought and people are struggling to get maize because of high food prices. I also note that the gap between the rich and poor is increasing. I call on the government to create more forums where we can talk about climate change and social inequality.”



Sabrina, 11, Madagascar

“We call on our leaders to educate adults and children on proper waste disposal. People should throw rubbish in the dustbins and not on the streets. Both children and adults need to preserve the environment”



Sarah, 12, Madagascar

“People are encouraged not to destroy forests. If you cut down one tree, you should plant two more. Cars that emit a lot of smoke should no longer be used. This will help us stop climate change.”



Brighton, 17, Kenya

“Climate change has caused food shortages and we are now seeing many children getting malnourished. In our school, we see children who are unable to clear their school fees while others can. We are planting trees in our school to conserve the environment and to address social inequality we have counselling sessions for students every Friday night to address the challenges students are facing and to seek for possible solutions.



Jenny, 12, Madagascar

“Climate change and social inequality can be prevented if people are educated on the need to plant trees and gardens. Everyone needs to be aware of the need to preserve the environment.”



Lavelle, 17, Kenya

"Nowadays we see a lot of floods destroying people's homes and making many families homeless. We are also seeing drought being experienced in many parts of the country leading to starvation. Young children like us are also suffering from severe malnutrition. Leaders should listen to us because we have many ideas to solve climate change issues."



Toky, 12, Madagascar

"One thing I am afraid of is that when a child is sick, he she can't get treatment because he or she doesn't have money. Climate change and social inequality have led to our parents not having enough money to care for us."



Geofry, 16, Kenya

"I have observed that climate change leads to widespread poverty therefore children cannot access essential needs. Children in pastoral communities are missing school as a result of constant migration in search of water and pasture for their families livestock. I call on government to enhance public campaigns to help inform adults of the importance of conserving the environment."



Farming in Garissa County is helping children win the war against malnutrition



In Balambala Sub county Garissa County, we find Sabir and his family sitting somewhere on their farm, sharing a watermelon. Hawa, Sabir's mother, tells us since Save the Children distributed seeds to them in December last year, they have had two bumper harvests.

The first harvest was in February this year where they harvested 5,000 kilos of watermelon. They replanted the seeds and were able to harvest another 3,000 kilos in April. In Garissa, a kilogram of watermelon ranges from 17 to 30 Kenya shillings depending with

the market demand. Alongside watermelon, they have also harvested green maize and replanted some more. Hawa, who is Siyat's 3rd and youngest wife says they started farming about 8 years ago, and this was the best decision they ever made as a family. She says their life has changed for the better since. Other than constantly having food to eat, Hawa says they also get nutritious fruits and vegetables from the farm; this helps their children get a balanced diet, cutting down the risk of malnutrition.

Ensuring children under 5 thrive

"Most of our neighbours' children are severely malnourished because now with the drought, animals do not produce milk. In fact most of them have died and the rest have moved to areas with better pasture," she says. "We are lucky because we eat 2 or 3 meals a day since food is readily available. Most community members only eat one meal a day because they cannot access or afford it."



Hawa further adds that being a large family consisting of 16 children, their farm has been a very important source of income. They are able to cater for other needs of the family as well as buying variety of food such as wheat flour and rice. Siyat tells us that they decided to venture into farming because of unpredictable weather patterns and consistent and prolonged drought. With the money he got from selling watermelon, he is now able to sustain his family comfortably.

“We are now experiencing the fourth failed rainy season. If I did not have this farm, my wives and children would be forced to sleep hungry. We would not have any money to buy food and other basic commodities. The seeds and farm tools have really changed our lives,” he explains.

Farming in Balambala is done in farmers’ groups where they farm collectively. Siyat and his wives belong to Saka Youngster Farmers Group, which consists of 28 farmers who own about 20 acres of land. They pump water from the river using a generator and use canals to distribute the water to the farms.

Data from the Ministry of Health (MOH) indicates that in the last year, Balambala Sub-County has recorded 4,375 cases of moderate acute malnutrition and 645 cases of severe acute

malnutrition. Siyat is grateful all his children are very healthy.

To support the improvement of farming practices and farm yields, Save the Children with funding from the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) facilitated the training of farmers on land preparation, seeding rate, spacing, Zai pit technology, weeding, post-harvest handling, water management and pest management.

The targeting criteria for the intervention includes households that present low Food Consumption Scores (FCS) and high Coping Strategy indices (CSI), vulnerable women-headed households with more than 75% dependency ratio, and vulnerable households who have been involved in farming activities in the past two farming seasons.

Save the Children provided farm inputs to 350 smallholder farmers in Garissa County in the form of seeds for vegetable crops (jute mallow, watermelon, pumpkin, amaranthus) and staple crops (maize, beans, sorghum) as well as farm tools (hoes, spades, forks racks, machetes, hermetic grain storage bags, watering cans).

Through this project, we hope to see more children under five thrive in Garissa County.

Event Highlights

Day of the African Child

Save the Children marked this year's Day of the African Child on the 16th of June, in Kajiado and Nairobi Counties, where children participated in various activities. This year's theme was "Eliminating harmful practices against children: progress on policy and practice since 2013".

The national celebrations were held in Kajiado, at Elangata Wuas Primary School in Iloodokilani Village in Kajiado West. The event was marked with stakeholders including officials from the Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizens Affairs and Special Programs and the National Council of

Children Services, as well as children, community members and other government partners. Government officials pledged to advance children's rights and ensure that all harmful practices against children are eliminated. Save the children on the other hand, committed to scale up social protection interventions which will help in the elimination of harmful practices.

In Nairobi, children from Shauri Moyo and Kibra Sub-Counties joined hands for a walk within Kamukunji Constituency in an effort raise awareness and join the clarion call to eliminate harmful practices against children. Save the Children used the forum to educate children on their rights, harmful practices that may affect them and what to do should they feel threatened or are in harm's way. They also used the event to popularize the toll free lines 116 and 0800720216.



Launch of the Kenya and Madagascar 2022-2024 Country Strategic Plan



Save the Children Kenya and Madagascar Country Office launched the 2022-2024 Country Strategic Plan on the 28th of July in Nairobi, an event that was attended by government officials, local partners and other stakeholders.

The 2022-2024 Country Strategic Plan will cost the organization USD 26million; finances that will be raised through enhanced resource acquisition and mobilization both locally and internationally.

Speaking during the event, Yvonne Arunga, Save the Children Kenya and Madagascar's Country Director said the strategy focuses on the most marginalized and vulnerable children.

"We want our children, when they're born, to stand the greatest chance of survival. Currently, we are losing too many babies at birth and in the initial years, from preventable causes like pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria and malnutrition," said Yvonne. "We want children to have safe and quality education; we also want to be in a place where when shocks happen, these children together with their families, don't fall further behind because they're already at a disadvantage."

Mr. Shem Nyakutu, Secretary of Children's Services from the Directorate of Children Services lauded Save the Children for the three-year strategy noting

that it is an ambitious yet transformative plan that will safeguard the rights of children in Kenya and help them achieve their full potential. Stating that children constitute approximately 52% of the total population, he said many of them face various challenges including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, parental neglect, child labour, exploitation, and other forms of violations adding that partnering with like-minded organizations like Save the Children, goes a long way in safeguarding their rights.



"Child Protection calls for a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach to prevent and respond to various ills committed against the child. The Child Protection Workforce, which provides services to children, is drawn from various disciplines and is found in both State agencies and non-state actors. We can work together to strengthen government systems for enhanced prevention, coordination, and support,"

said Mr. Nyakutu.



The four goals within the strategy are a product of collaborative efforts between the organisation and key stakeholders including the children, community members, the national and county government, donor partners, civil society organisations among others. They build onto the 2019-2021 strategy that recently ended and have largely been informed by the great need in terms of access to children's rights and the three Cs: Covid-19, climate change and conflict.

While addressing the drought and its effects on children, Mr. Nyakutu announced that the Directorate of Children's Services is strengthening child protection at the community levels in the drought-affected counties and has trained 250 Child Protection Volunteers from the counties to enhance the prevention and reporting of child protection concerns to inform appropriate intervention, especially during this crisis.

While making her remarks during the launch ceremony, Hellen Avisa, Deputy Director of Education, Directorate of Field Coordination and Co-Curricular Activities, Ministry of Education, noted that the strategy will go a long way in helping the very marginalized children and those in emergencies, access education. She raised concern about the drought emergency saying it is highly affecting children and their education.

"Almost 1.13 million girls and boys of primary school age (6 to 13 years old) are out of school in Kenya, according to an Out-of-School Children Initiative study conducted in Kenya in 2020. The situation has worsened due to the impact of COVID-19 related school closures, followed by drought in 23 ASAL counties," said Hellen adding that emergencies exacerbate pre-existing marginalization amongst vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities, children living in poor rural areas, orphans, street children, ex-combatants, child labourers, ethnic minorities and children on the move.

Noting the power of localization, Save the Children will be implementing the strategy with local partners and communities, national and county governments and most especially children, as they're at the heart of our work.

"We are embracing the fact that power is slowly shifting to those we work with, what we call our localization agenda. In the implementation of our strategic plan we want to progressively increase the leadership and authority of affected people in determining how resources are used within their communities to address their priorities," said Yvonne.



The unveiling of Save the Children Kenya & Madagascars Country Office's new Country Strategic Plan

New Programme Portofolio

Universal Child Benefit

The Government of Kenya together with implementing partners, Save the Children, UNICEF and the World Food Program, is piloting a Universal Child Benefit (UCB) program targeting 8,300 children aged 0-36 months in the counties of Kajiado, Embu and Kisumu.

The Universal Child Benefit project is a social protection flagship programme that employs a Cash plus Approach where the target beneficiaries receive cash transfers combined with complementary interventions and or linkages to other services and interventions. Under the project, families with young children get financial support.

In addition to the cash transfers, the UCB has three other complementary 'plus' components, these are; nutrition, positive parenting and disability.

The purpose of the project is to maximize the impact of the cash transfers and to address other key risks and vulnerabilities faced by children and particularly heightened by the COVID-19 Pandemic, such as higher risks of malnutrition, exclusion and greater probability of experiencing violence in the home.

The pilot project's main objective is to generate evidence on the impact of social protection on children, families and the local economy – to further strengthen the case for implementing a national-level UCB in Kenya. The pilot is also meant to provide valuable lessons about the operational process of implementing a UCB.

Staff Profile

Cynthia Ngesa:
Project Officer-Health



Cynthia's quest to ensure children under five survive and thrive

On a normal day, you will find Cynthia Ngesa walking around the busy and crowded informal settlements of Kibra, Nairobi County. Her main motivation? Children.

Cynthia, a project officer with Save the Children's Kenya and Madagascar Country office based in Nairobi, supports the day-to-day implementation of a Pfizer funded project that seeks to reduce infectious diseases in children under 5 years through immunization. The project being implemented in Mandera, Wajir and informal



settlements of Kibera and Langata, aims at improving immunization coverage, improving acceptance and positive health seeking behavior towards the uptake of immunization services and improving technical capacity of Ministry of Health (MOH) staff at county and national levels. Cynthia is a multi-skilled humanitarian professional with over 7 years'

experience in emergency and development programming. She is a trained public health officer and is currently pursuing a Masters of Development Studies at the University of Nairobi. She has worked for Save the Children for four years in various sectors including humanitarian and development projects.

She is very passionate about preventive health with a bias towards child health. She insists that children do not have to die, especially when something can be done to prevent these deaths.

"My work supports parents or caregivers, healthcare workers and communities to ensure that children receive vital and lifesaving vaccination thus enabling them to live long, healthy lives. This is inline with out Country Strategic Goal of ensuring children under five thrive," says an enthusiastic Cynthia.

When we asked Cynthia about what motivates her, she said, "The world of children is a world of many possibilities. Even with very few opportunities, children have shown that they can thrive and become successful citizens; and as a mother myself I simply want to be part of that progress."

In Kibra, Cynthia is well known by parents and caregivers; they understand how vital her work is in preventing infectious diseases among their children.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Cynthia has been working with the Ministry of Health (MOH) officials by conducting door-to-door immunization campaigns for children under the age of five.

"Every end of day when I go to bed, I am very content that I have done my best to ensure a child does not die due to preventable causes. My joy is in seeing these babies celebrate their fifth birthday. Even on a bad day, this gives me the motivation to keep going," concludes Cynthia.

Children under five in Mandera County getting a better chance at survival

When *Mariam took her two-year-old daughter to a community health outreach site at Umur, Kiliwehiri Sub-County in Mandera County in January this year, she didn't think her little girl would survive. Her daughter Nasra, was acutely malnourished and had a mid-upper arm circumference of 12.1 and a weight of 6.7 kg.

Mariam could not take Nasra to a health facility because they were too far away. With the drought that has affected the residents in Northern Kenya, it is much more difficult to walk for long distances because many of the residents are too weak, having eaten one meal a day or none.

"When your children or one family member gets sick in our area, it is really stressful because the health facilities are more than 20km away. Since there is no means of transport, it means that we have to walk all the way. It is very difficult, especially if you're walking on an empty stomach," says Mariam.

Mariam blames the drought for her baby's malnutrition.

The drought has been very hard on us. We survive on one meal a day; sometimes we have nothing to eat," says Mariam.

Luckily for Nasra, she managed to be seen by a health officer during one of the community health outreaches organized by Save the Children and the Ministry of Health. She was treated for acute malnutrition and put on growth monitoring; she was later ruled out of risk.

Nasra is now well built, healthy, and happy.

According to Mariam, one of the reasons that facilitated Nasra's recovery was the bi-weekly health outreaches as the health officers were able to keep track of Nasra's health and the cash transfer program that's being implemented in the area by Save the Children.

"Save the Children has really helped our families. We are now able to come to the health outreaches and be seen by health officers for free. This has lifted a huge burden off our shoulders. The money we receive from them has helped us buy nutritious meals for our children," says an elated Mariam.

In light of the drought crisis being experienced in Northern Kenya, Save the Children, under emergency

grants, supported the scaling up of health and nutrition interventions through cash transfers, integrated mobile health, nutrition, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) outreaches in 44 sites in Mandera County.

Services provided during the integrated health, nutrition, and WASH outreaches include nutrition assessment and intervention for children under five years and pregnant and lactating mothers with acute malnutrition, immunization of children under five years, antenatal and post-natal care, health education, Vitamin A supplementation, deworming, treatment of minor ailments among others.

Treatment of acute malnutrition in Kenya is largely facility based thus distance to health facilities exacerbates low access to nutrition and health services, especially during drought.

Staff Excellence

Congratulations Judy Njuguna!

Our Finance Specialist, Judy Njuguna has been feted for her excellent work. While congratulating Judy, Save the Children Kenya and Madagascar's Country Director Yvonne Arunga referred to Judy as a fantastic example of a colleague who goes above and beyond the call of duty.

Judy was feted for her outstanding performance during deployment as Finance Manager in New York Advocacy Office & Pan African Advocacy Office, efficient stock reconciliation process and efficient Management of the new Fleet service charging component.

Congratulations to Judy for her service excellence!



Finance team celebrated for high performance

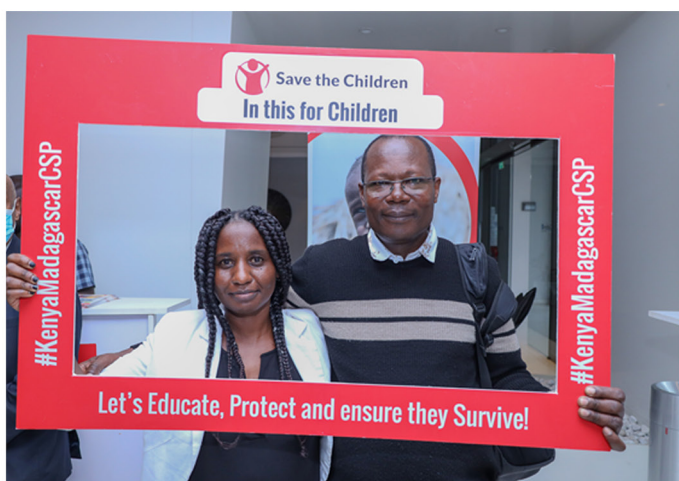
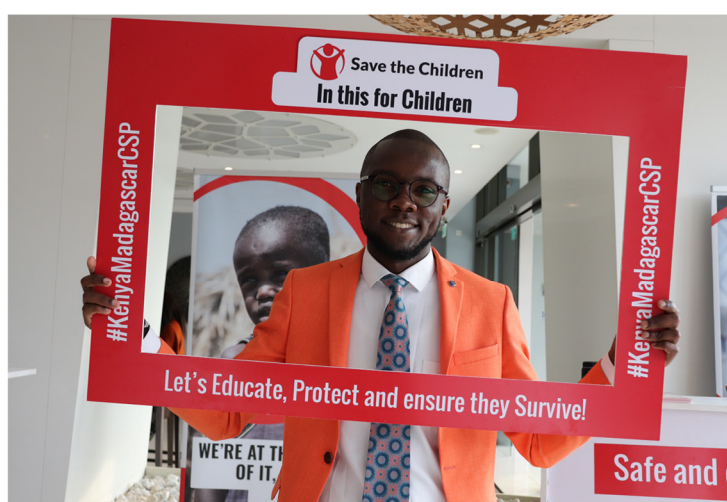
The Kenya and Madagascar Finance team is among the teams that emerged victorious during the Yearend and Audit Awards for their high performance. The team was recognized for timeliness and completeness of supporting documents and upholding high standards throughout the arduous audit process.

Well done Finance team!



The CSP Launch in Pictures







Save the Children

JUKWAA LETU

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