

PROGRESS REPORT

JUNE 2024



In March, 2021, the Green String Network began piloting Kumekucha Quest with funding from Grand Challenges Canada. Kumekucha Quest is an innovative movement that adapts Green String Network's existing community-led social cohesion Programme, 'Kumekucha: It's a New Dawn', for children, teenagers, and young adults aged 10 to 24 years old in Kenya. The movement comprises three Programmes: Kumekucha Quest (for 18 to 24 year olds); Kumekucha Vijana (13 to 17 year olds); and Kumekucha Watoto (10 to 12 year olds).

IMPACT

68% improvement in overall wellbeing based on the WHO Five Wellbeing Index

58% decrease in levels of post traumatic stress based on the HTQ

100% increase in knowledge and awareness on trauma and mental health

100% using emotional regulation tools by Programm end

See the **Kumekucha Quest Impact Report** for an in-depth reporting of findings.

VISION

Kumekucha Quest is a uniquely designed initiative that engages and supports local youth volunteers to facilitate and sustain the change they wish to see in their communities. At its heart, it aims to build connections between community members, foster mentorship and learning within these new connections that promote hope and healing, and empower them to flourish without any formal framework. Kumekucha Quest is a social movement, not simply a collection of Programmes, and is designed to offer long-lasting healing and transformation to communities. We are working to transform communities—or, more specifically, to have transformed youth transforming their communities—and, with your help, we can reach those most in need of these Programmes.

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We are thrilled to announce that the accreditation development process for Kumekucha Quest Facilitators is well underway! Currently, we are finalizing the Needs Assessment Report, which is crucial for justifying the necessity of our proposed Diploma and Certificate programs at Tangaza University. This report, supported by extensive data, will help us secure formal establishment and recognition of these programs, marking a significant milestone in our mission to empower and professionally certify our facilitators.

Kumekucha Quest (KQ) has made significant strides in formalizing the process of our partnerships! Over the past few months, we have been developing robust partner assessment tools, a crucial component of our newly codified partnerships policy. This collaborative effort involved extensive input from GSN and our KQ co-leads at Samba Sports. These tools are now being actively used to evaluate and welcome new partners, starting with our proposed incoming partners in Nairobi: Break Margins Africa and Teenseed. We're thrilled to expand our network and continue fostering impactful collaborations!



In late March, we conducted an Introduction Meeting for our two incoming Nairobi partners, Break Margins Africa and Teenseed to prepare them for their inclusion in the Kumekucha Quest (KQ) network. This meeting was instrumental in acquainting them with the plan for TTS1 and outlining their roles in our collective mission. It also provided a deeper understanding of our vision and the vibrant network they are joining. The session was a resounding success, with both organizations expressing great enthusiasm for their roles in the KQ movement and eager anticipation for the upcoming assessment and organizational support process.

- Break Margins is a community-based organisation working with marginalised individuals within the Nairobi metropolis. Their commitment is to restore hope, confidence, self-reliance, and purposeful living among marginalised individuals through a holistic focus on economic, social, and psychological development and empowerment.
- Teenseed is a women-led, feminist community-based organisation founded on the lived experiences of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) in all their diversities and by those who have suffered Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

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- Teen Seed's mission is to empower AGYW politically, socially, culturally, and economically to make informed choices about their lives and to be a catalyst for change, facilitating grassroots communities to foster healthy relationships that respect the rights of young women and girls.

Kumekucha Quest (KQ) proudly participated in the United Nations Civil Society Conference 2024 on May 9th and 10th at the United Nations Offices in Nairobi. This gathering, in support of the Summit of the Future slated for September 2024, aimed to unite global leaders in shaping a more promising present and safeguarding the future. During the event, our team actively engaged in vital conversations focused on fostering multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow. Particularly inspiring were discussions centered on the deliberate inclusion of youth voices at the decision-making table. KQ remains committed to advocating for meaningful youth participation in shaping a brighter future for all.



At the beginning of May, GSN welcomed 3 new interns: Aatisha, Collins, and Dennis. Learn about them below.



"Hello, I am Aatisha. I'm a student of Psychology and English Literature at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Before moving to Canada, I've lived in many cities across India and Nigeria. Due to the migratory nature of my childhood, I've been very interested in learning how people interact, learn and grow together in different communities. Hence, my academic interests brought me to GSN in May 2024. I'm here as a researcher who will be helping write an academic paper on the impact of the Kumekucha Quest program run by GSN. I am curious about GSN's focus on the healing centered paradigm and their impact on the community here in Kenya."

Hello, I'm Denis Wachira, a dedicated professional in community health and development with a strong passion for sustainability and its role in enhancing well-being. Currently, I'm focused on supporting vulnerable communities through the Kumekucha Quest program, which utilizes healing-centered practices to support survivors of trauma and violence. Additionally, I'm conducting research on the impact of community mental health programs at Tangaza University, aiming to build resource-oriented initiatives. I'm committed to driving positive change in our communities.



Hi! My name is Collins O. Owiti. I came to GSN because I'm passionate about using psychology to empower communities. My background is psychology of counselling, and what truly excites me is fostering community ownership in addressing community issues. Right now, I'm heavily involved in the Wellbeing and Resilience project, and I'm thrilled to see the positive impact it will have on communities!



SambaSports recently organized a highly successful three-day event known as the 3-Day International Women's Day Mini Olympics on Localizing SDGs in Kwale. The event kicked off on March 6th with a Beach clean-up and beach football match at Amigos beach, followed by the Chachawiza sporting activity held at Ukunda sports ground. In the afternoon, a joint Grant writing workshop for CSO partners was conducted. The second day, March 7th, featured a mass cycling event around Diani, followed by Track events at Ukunda Showgrounds.

In the afternoon, the Paralympics and a panel discussion on social inclusion and protection were held. The final day, March 8th, included a women's mini-marathon, an exhibitors' gallery walk, keynote speeches by the host governor, and an awarding ceremony. The event was a resounding success, showcasing SambaSports' commitment to promoting gender equality, community engagement, and the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region.



On May 27, 2024, the Green String Network (GSN) had the pleasure of joining SambaSports and the Little Theatre Club for the "Storytelling by the Fireside" event in Mombasa. This vibrant gathering showcased live poetry, traditional dances, and compelling Swahili narratives performed by talented local youth, providing a powerful platform for them to share and process their life experiences through the arts. The event underscored the community's commitment to decolonizing mental health and highlighted the importance of storytelling, music, and dance for emotional resilience. A standout moment was participating in a drum circle, where the youth's invitation to dance by the fireside created a lasting, joyful memory that emphasized the significance of cultural traditions in promoting mental well-being.



In Oldtown, a known hotspot for youth gangs in Mombasa County, Akilimali successfully organized a beach soccer tournament on June 7th, 2024. This event engaged young people aged 14 to 24 in a competitive yet constructive environment, providing them with an opportunity to network and improve their mental well-being and health.

The initiative was part of the ongoing efforts to enhance the Kumekucha Quest (KQ) and Kumekucha Watoto na Vijana (KWV) programs in Mombasa by focusing on community engagement and support. The tournament served as a trial for using sports as an alternative form of circle implementation, aiming to foster a deeper sense of belonging, connection, and overall well-being among the participants.

MOTIVATION

So why do we do what we do?

Youth in Kenya—representing upwards of 60% of the population—experience chronic stress and trauma as a result of high levels of poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, police harassment, and exposure to traumatic events such as violent crime, extra-judicial killings, and terrorism. There are also high levels of fear and stigma in Kenya when it comes to talking about mental health.

In response to this, we wanted to create a newly adapted version of our flagship Programme, Kumekucha: It's a New Dawn, that is specifically and contextually adapted for this group. The Kumekucha Quest movement, consequently, is informed by youth who come from the communities it operates in and was developed with their issues, voices, and recommendations in mind. We see this movement as something needed desperately by youth in Kenya and bridging a gap rarely touched on in community programming.

The extent to which young peoples' lives are being transformed by these Circles is humbling and almost unbelievable. The simple provision of safe spaces for these young people to learn about and grow their emotional well-being but, more importantly, to share on their experiences is boundless in the impacts it has already achieved and will continue to realise in the coming years, and we could not be more excited to watch it unfold!

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Kumekucha Quest (KQ) will attend and present at the Society for the Improvement of Psychological Services (SIPS) 2024 Conference, dedicated to enhancing psychological science practices. The conference, focusing on bridge-building and learning from non-academic researchers, aims to foster community growth through collaboration. Partnering with Busara, a Nairobi-based nonprofit specializing in behavioral science for poverty alleviation, KQ's presence will highlight its innovative approaches and contributions to psychological and community well-being.

We are excited to announce the assessment, training, and onboarding of new Nairobi partners into the Kumekucha Quest (KQ) family, starting this June. This expansion will strengthen our network and enhance our collective impact on community resilience and mental well-being.

Additionally, our partners at the coast, SambaSports, and Akilimali, continue to spearhead vibrant community events, fostering engagement and support across the region. Stay tuned for more updates as we grow together!

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Currently, the Green String Network is exploring the need for Diploma and Certificate programs in Applied Community Mental Health at Tangaza University.

These programs aim to equip community leaders with practical skills to identify and address mental health issues at the grassroots level.

We invite you to participate by following this link:

enketo.ona.io/x/9AaOpgMS

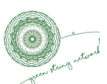
In May 2024, we shared the inspiring story of Abigael, a Circle Keeper from Kwale County, Kenya. Discover how she's nurturing healing as a youth through her support circles.

Check out her journey on [DonorSee!](#) Help us by sharing this impact story on your networks. Thank you.



THANK YOU

to all our donors and volunteers for your continued support. Your contributions are truly helping to transform youths and, by extension, transform communities across Kenya.



THE GREEN STRING
NETWORK

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