

PROGRESS REPORT

OCTOBER 2025



In March, 2021, the Green String Network (GSN) launched 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, for 13- to 17-year-olds; and Kumekucha Watoto, for 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 (**KQ**) 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.

PROGRESS

Since our last update, KQ has officially concluded its Transition To Scale 1 (TTS1) period. During this time, the movement has successfully implemented the 12-week community healing youth programme in two new locations in Nairobi, hosted 22 campaigns in communities across the Kenyan coast, and reached over 2,200 direct and indirect beneficiaries.

In total, over the 4 and a half years since their inception, this means the Kumekucha Quest, Kumekucha Vijana, and Kumekucha Watoto programmes have now been successfully implemented in **3 counties**, with **4 partners** and **150 facilitators** reaching **1,120 Circle participants** and **10,798 indirect participants**.

The movement's results continually prove how its healing-centred, community-owned, community-based, and culturally relevant approach is of vital importance to improving the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of individuals and communities hurting from social and collective traumas. As during the pilot phase, the TTS1 period saw participants gain improved trauma and mental health awareness, increased self-acceptance (and therefore self-esteem), healthier coping mechanisms, improved emotional regulation, improved social connections and relational well-being, increased concern for others, increased capacity to see long-term and big-picture, and the support and skills to handle life's challenges, now and in perpetuity. That is, participants are recognising stressful and/or traumatic experiences from their past or present, understanding how these manifest and what these do to them, practising techniques to help them feel better (where these include both self and community), feeling more confident in their understanding and acceptance of themselves, and, through this reconciliation

Over the TTS1 period, the movement and its network of partners have also put in incredible effort into various forms of engagement to showcase and spread the word about our work, as well as gather more interest, potential funding, and potential partners. Since January 2024, we have actively participated in the following conferences and networking opportunities.

1) Society for the Improvement of Psychological Services Meeting

In June, KQ's Project Coordinator, Wanjiku, and Assistant Project Coordinator, Jeremiah, attended the Society for the Improvement of Psychological Services (SIPS) 2024 Meeting held in Nairobi.



At the conference, Wanjiku presented on the KQ Conference as part of the exhibitors during the Poster Presentation. The team also engaged with and disseminated information cards on the movement to various attendees for further information and possible connection.

2) University of British Columbia Lecture Day

In May 2024 and again in May 2025, GSN—in conjunction with Kenya Medical Training College (**KMTC**)—put on a day of learning for KMTC and UBC students. This lecture day was a continuation of GSN's ongoing partnership with UBC where, for the past three years, it has hosted students and/or provided teaching for the Global Mental Health programme offered by UBC's School of Social Work in collaboration with ORICE.

The theme of the day was 'Reimagining Mental Health Interventions in Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution' in 2024 and 'Innovations in Mental Health Engagement: Why Going Against the Grain Works' in 2025. Both years comprised the GSN team facilitating the exploration of groundbreaking approaches to mental health that challenge traditional paradigms and offer innovative healing-centred, community-initiated and community-based, and culturally contextualised solutions for promoting wellbeing in conflict-affected regions, delving into the concepts of de-pathologising, politicising, and indigenising mental health interventions and examining how these strategies can lead to more culturally relevant and sustainable approaches to healing, all through the example of KQ and its demonstrated impact.



3) United Nations Civil Society Conference

KQ's Project Coordinator, Wanjiku Waibochoi, and GSN's outgoing Director of Programmes, Yvonne Gache, proudly participated in the United Nations Civil Society Conference (**UNCSC**) 2024, held on May 9th and 10th at the United Nations Offices in Nairobi. This gathering, in support of the Summit of the Future that took place in September 2024, aimed to unite global leaders in shaping a more promising present and safeguarding the future.

During the event, the team actively engaged in vital conversations focused on fostering multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow. Particularly inspiring were discussions centred 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 and made sure to be vocal in doing so during the conference. Whilst there, the team engaged with various attendees for possible connection.

4) HEARTH Summits

Wanjiku further represented the KQ movement at the HEARTH Summit Nairobi 2024, and GSN's Executive Director did the same at the HEARTH Summit for Higher Education 2024. Whilst there, the GSN team spoke with numerous attendees to share on our work and, once again, disseminated information cards on the movement to various attendees for further information and possible connection.

Having had such a productive time in Nairobi and Mexico, Wanjiku and GSN's Communications Coordinator, Wairimu, attended the HEARTH Summit Thies, Senegal, in October. There, Wanjiku was part of a panel talk entitled 'Dreaming through Change: building Youth wellbeing in a Changing World' and both members networked with fellow attendees from across the continent and the globe.

5) Africa Global Mental Health Institute Conference

The Africa Global Mental Health Institute (AGMHI) Annual Conference 2024, taking place on 4th to 6th November, aimed to foster collaborations and catalyse solutions to improve mental health outcomes through innovations in research, training and education, clinical care delivery, and advocacy and policy.

At the conference, Wanjiku presented a talk on 'Innovations in Mental Health Care Delivery: The Case for Healing-Centred, Community-Initiated and Community-Based, and Culturally Contextualised Interventions', and Angi also hosted a joint panel with Dr. Churu and Dr. Grace Mwangi, entitled 'FROM AFRICA TO THE WORLD: Pioneering Mental Health Strategies for Global Education'. These talks were very well received by both attendees and

conference hosts.

6) Being Global Gathering

Both Wanjiku and Steven Lichty, KQ Research Partner, gave a presentation on KQ at the annual Being Gathering 2024 and networked with other GCC innovators from around the globe.

7) Charles R. Drew University Lecture

Following the very well-received AGMHI presentation, Wanjiku was approached to conduct a similar presentation for psychiatry students at Charles R Drew University of Medicine and Science, at the request of Dr. Denese Shervington who was moved and impressed by the presentation. This virtual lecture, entitled 'Reimagining Mental Healthcare', took place in August 2025, focusing on abandoning colonial constructs of mental health and, instead, innovating the field of psychiatry by creating healing-centred and culturally contextualized interventions.

8) African Futures Conference

In October 2025, Steven and Wanjiku jointly delivered a keynote speech at the 2nd annual African Futures Conference. Entitled 'Imagination Unlocked: Story, Culture, and Healing as Engines of Africa's Future', This speech sought to reframe imagination as a practical capability that can be taught and scaled, and showcase African initiatives like KQ where story-led, trauma-informed practice results in real outcomes and drives imaginative approaches for social transformation.

9) Global Mental Health Summit

KQ has been accepted to the poster presentation at the Global Mental Health Summit 2025 taking place in Cape Town in November.

Over the TTS1 period, GSN has also written two book chapters on healing-centred peacebuilding, based on the work of KQ, set to be published in the coming months.

1) Healing-Centred Peacebuilding in Kenya: Approaches for Civil Society Organisations Countering Violent and Hateful Extremism

This chapter examines KQ as a means to address the psychosocial dimensions of violent and hateful extremism in Kenya, recognising that cycles of violence are sustained not only by structural injustices but also by unaddressed individual and collective trauma. It outlines how the KQ programme facilitates community healing through storytelling, trust-building, and civic engagement and contextualises KQ within Kenya's broader civil society landscape, underscoring how civil society organisations have historically led peacebuilding and trauma recovery efforts.

It is poised to be published in the book 'Kenyan Civil Society and the Challenge of Extremism', edited by Leanne M. Kelly, Rahma Ramadhan, and Dave Husy, and published by Springer Nature Singapore.

2) Healing Collective Traumas to Foster Social Transformation in Kenya

This chapter examines KQ's healing-centred peacebuilding approach and how it provides a scalable model for sustainable peace in Kenya and other post-colonial, conflict-affected settings across East Africa.

It is set for publication in the 'Routledge International Handbook of Trauma-Responsive Peacebuilding', a book edited by Sara Clarke-Habibi and Cordula Reimann and to be published by Routledge, an imprint of Informa UK Limited trading as Taylor and Francis Group.

Collectively, these publications underscore KQ's continued efforts to solidify and proliferate its evidence base, in service of our healing-centred, community-initiated and community-based, and culturally contextualised model being recognised more widely for its immense relevance and impact, and being established more dominantly in the mental health landscape of Kenya. With our work, we truly believe (and can prove) that these kind of interventions are the way forward.

NEXT STEPS

As GSN continues its efforts to scale up the Kumekucha Quest movement, a bold, data-driven 5-year scaling plan has been developed, that would take this innovative movement to areas and heights yet uncovered. Currently, we are seeking funding to make this happen.

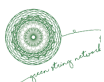
HOW CAN YOU HELP?

GSN is dedicated to engaging as many young Kenyans as possible in well-being support. We invite you to share our website and social media pages within your networks, and donate what you can if you can. Together, we can make a meaningful impact!



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**

HEALING-CENTRED
PEACEBUILDING



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