

PROGRESS REPORT

FEBRUARY 2023



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

62% improvement in overall wellbeing based on the WHO Five Wellbeing Index

83% 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 Preliminary 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.

PROGRESS

Since the pilot began, we have trained 28 Circle Keepers, 60 Youth Mentors, and 3 Resource Facilitators who are leading upwards of 500 young people on journeys of self-discovery and healing across Kenya. Since our last report, GSN completed its evaluation of the first Round of Kumekucha Quest (KQ) Circles, as well as embarked on Round 2 of KQ and the Kumekucha Watoto and Vijana (KWV) Circles.

From our evaluation, we found that KQ had a positive effect on youth participants, with particularly significant impacts on self-awareness and emotional regulation, social connections, and futures consciousness. Preliminary evidence suggests that, through the KQ Programme, young people are gaining: improved trauma and mental health awareness; healthier coping mechanisms; improved social connections and relational well-being; increased concern for others; increased capacity to see long-term and big picture; the support and skills to handle life challenges; and increased futures consciousness. Many participants on the Programme had their lives changed by KQ, which served as a foundational element for the ongoing growth of their mental health. As is our Vision, KQ is beginning to bring social healing to communities and we could not be any more excited!



Beginning in the second half of 2022, a second Round of KQ groups began in various locations in Kenya namely Nairobi, Kwale, and Mombasa. Of note, KQ was also able to conduct a handful of groups with inmates at Kwale Prison. The transformation among these inmates was so profound that the county's Prison Commander has already affirmed his commitment to have KQ scaled up to prisons across the region. As for the watoto and vijana, over the past few months Youth Mentors in Kwale took 29 groups of participants through the art-rich, game-intensive Kumekucha Watoto and Vijana Programmes. A handful of groups were also held with primary and secondary schools students in Nairobi, conducted by Green String Network's own young staff.

Throughout the KQ and KWV Programmes, there has been a deliberate and extensive focus on healing through arts and sports. All Programmes utilise rich storytelling techniques in the way they are taught. Our implementation partners in Kwale and Nairobi have also held several community-wide sporting and creative events in service of the Programmes. As well as affording young people on the Programmes and in the community a chance to get together to have fun, interact, and learn, these events also allow for participants and community members to forge connections across the network of groups.

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!

NEXT STEPS

Currently, the Green String Network is preparing to scale up the Kumekucha Quest movement with the continued support of Grand Challenges Canada and you the donors. As we look to the future, we envision incorporating Kumekucha Quest into youth livelihood programming, gender-based violence programming, and counter-violence programming to reach as many in-need youth as possible, all of which we have already begun to develop partnerships on. We are also exploring bringing Kumekucha Watoto and Vijana into schools in Nairobi and, eventually, the whole of Kenya.

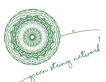
**“The Programme
has helped me to
feel loved and
cared for”**

**“I can accept any
challenges I come
across”**

Quotes from Kumekucha Quest Participants

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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