



## ***Kumekucha Quest:*** **Connections for Healing and Hope**

**October 2023**

### **Introduction**

Individual and collective well-being sustainably strengthens the social fabric of society resulting in self-owned agendas for increased agency, connection, resilience, and peace. This is what we are aiming for and, when this is done, then we can realize our vision of transformed communities or, more specifically, transformed youth transforming their communities.

In our last report, we aimed to embed KQ into existing and to-be-developed issue-focused programming, the movement has also identified target sectors, populations, and locations for KQ to delve into for its continued success and scale out. In brief, the 3 main sectors KQ will be looking to branch into are education (schools, teacher training), criminal justice (prisons/corrections, probation, diversion), and social care (orphanages/children's homes, foster care). KQ will also look to target more male-centric locations, as this is the population evidently most in need of this Programme.

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. Currently, KQ is on the verge of beginning the third round of groups across several schools in Kwale.

Kwale County is one of the worst affected counties on mental health issues, with trauma, depression, and suicides increasingly observed. While Samba Sport Youth Agenda- our local partner, is the pillar organization for psychosocial support under the CVE Action Plan in Kwale County, they felt more synergy needs to be demonstrated across the wealth of stakeholders to mitigate against mental health disasters.

### **Progress**

In pursuit of a Kwale County that is more aware on issues of mental health, and inspired by the community care and relational well-being model of KQ, Samba organized for this Wellness Bash; a forum for youth to be at the forefront of sensitizing the wider community on wellbeing, wellness, and connection.

The Wellness Bash was held outside the Kombani Social Hall and particularly focused on suicide prevention. This location and theme were chosen as the surrounding village, Waa, had recently suffered at least six suicide cases in the last two years, with all the deceased being young adults. The event comprised of:

- **Traditional Dances and Community Walks**
- **Placard Reading and Giving Meaning:** Placards displaying a multitude of messages were printed,



and various attendees asked to read them out and share a message around them.

- **Poems**

- **Skits:** Two engaging skits were performed by the Shade of Samba group and students from

Mwakigwena Junior Secondary School.

- **Motivational Talks and Testimonies:** The forum heard from

**Dominic, a KQ prison participant,** who told of how he was able to forgive himself and those who

had landed him in prison, and how the Circles helped him accept himself and not seek revenge having left prison but, rather, focus on continuing with his journey to healing outside the prison walls.

**Queenter, from Girls to Girls Africa,** who shared her story of being betrayed and embarrassed by an ex-partner, her attempts at suicide because of this, and how she overcame that to be the person she is today.

**Dan Sonko, a well-known local actor** from Mombasa, who narrated the hardships he went through—from losing his wife in 2017, his job in 2020, and being admitted to a mental health hospital in 2021 for suicide ideation and attempts—and how he, too, overcame them to be the passionate advocate and symbol of hope he is currently.

- **Declarations of Commitment:** At the end of the event, various stakeholders were asked to share their commitments to contributing to a society that is mentally and emotionally sound.

### **Next Steps**

We aim to continue to engage communities, and strengthen our horizontal and vertical partnerships. We are committed to growing our work cross sectors, we are currently pursuing inclusion of the KQ model into a GBV programme in Nairobi.

**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.