

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2024



The names of people and places in this report have been changed in order to conceal the identity of the persons featured.

All the children whose stories and photos appear in this report have been consulted and a written consent has been obtained from their parents or guardians.



Only Through Community

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



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Message from the Trustees

Returning to Nyahururu last November was a joy, as we celebrated 25 years of shared service in St. Martin. This annual report not only captures the activities of 2024 but is also an expression of deep gratitude for the privilege of working with the poor over the years. Reflecting on this long journey, I wish to remember the birth of our St. Martin community prayer. Twenty-five years ago, while publishing small diaries in Nairobi with the Paulines Africa, Sr. Teresa noticed the back cover was blank. She suggested adding our vision and mission, but neither existed at the time. Instead, she urged me to write a prayer. In a few minutes, it poured out as if it had always been within me: together with several grammatical errors, it carried the tender love I had already received from those we served. Over the years, this prayer became our identity, a mirror of our mission.

Our Father...

Our—not mine!

We pray together as a community, recognizing our shared dignity. Our deepest desire is to become a family rooted in faith where differences are celebrated, justice pursued, and obstacles to equality removed, especially for the most vulnerable.

Remove from us selfishness and make us ready to give freely as we have freely received...

Selfishness is a sickness; giving is the cure. Self-interest is the greatest pandemic, giving freely is the best vaccine, the antidote to isolation and loneliness. Our Father's dream is that we live as brothers and sisters, sharing what we have. Selfishness hinders this, but when we choose to give, it transforms lives.

...let us follow your example in caring for the poor...

The able are the main target of our mission. If we wish to bring people together, we immediately realize that the poor already know their need for the rich...what is necessary is to convince the rich that they too need the poor: this is a really difficult task, yet it remains our calling.

...always remembering that the greatest is the one who serves more...

Many school mottos focus on excellence, competition, and individual ambition. Jesus does not discourage ambition but redirects it. He instead calls us to excel in service, help the needy, and show tenderness. Even St. Paul urged competition, but only in the field of life: "Compete in appreciating others: honor one another above yourself".

Always remembering...

I am always remembering the first bunch of volunteers who started their service in 1997 and also the few members of staff who joined us at the end of 1999: two of them continue to serve with unwavering love and the late Ans Van Keulen now watches over us from the

house of the Father. Others, known and unknown, have given themselves fully, touching the heart of many people without really knowing that they have been touching the heart of Jesus. Saints are often thought to be distant, yet I see them among us—like the late Jane Mwihi, whom I had the privilege to share life with at L'Arche Kenya's Effatha Home, a woman with multiple disabilities who radiated love, or many of our volunteers who serve joyfully and freely.

...bind us together against the one who tries to divide us...

At almost 60, one truth is evident; reasons for division will always exist. However, our unity is rooted in love, a greater force. We need to pray daily, because only in prayer can we find the strength to reject division and embrace unity.

...and give us forgiveness and mercy.

Unity is the result, but forgiveness is the way. However, it becomes an unpassable way unless we recognize how much we have been forgiven. I have seen the deep pain of withheld forgiveness and the grace that comes through reconciliation in St. Martin. I will never forget how little Martin, a foster child with a disability, reconciled his foster mother and her sister. Perhaps the greatest gift we can receive from the poor is this ability to live mercy and bring reconciliation.

We thank you, Lord, for the joy of sharing with the poor...

After 25 years, gratitude is our loudest voice. At the Silver Jubilee celebration, words often failed me as emotions overwhelmed my heart. I met many people who had healed from past wounds and had become wounded healers to others.

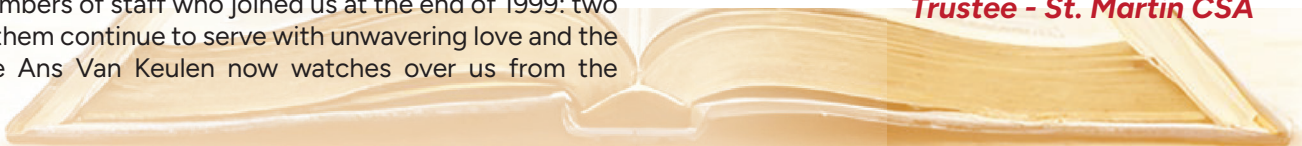
I am so grateful to our Father for the grace of sharing with the poor, but I am also full of gratitude for so many sisters and brothers, whose dedication, faithfulness, and love define St. Martin.

...and for the healing of our hearts.

Each of us needs healing. Only when we recognize our inner disabilities can we truly walk with those who have physical disabilities. Only when we face our addictions can we accompany those labelled as "addicts." Only when we embrace our poverty can we see the richness in others.

The image of St. Martin giving his cloak remains a guiding light. Coming down from his horse, he knelt before the poor man, recognising his poverty. In sharing, both were warmed—the poor man by the cloak and the poor Martin by love. May we continue to share, so that we, too, may be transformed.

Fr. Gabriele Pipinato
Trustee - St. Martin CSA



Message from the Management Board



In 2024, we celebrated the Silver Jubilee of St. Martin Catholic Social Apostolate, a remarkable milestone. Looking back on the organization's journey, I am filled with humility and profound gratitude. From a chance encounter between a young man with a disability isolated in rural Nyahururu, and a young Italian Catholic priest who had the opportunity to serve as a missionary in Kenya, St. Martin has grown into a beacon of hope for people in vulnerable and marginalized situations. It has also been a transformative school for those of us who once thought we had it all in life.

This year, we celebrate 25 years of solidarity, transformation, and impact. We have shared this theme with our volunteers and the communities we serve, who embody our mission firsthand.

On this special occasion, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to our funding partners, trustees, board members, program management committees, community volunteers, staff, collaborators, and well-wishers. Though each played a different role, we have remained one united body. This unity has been the foundation of our success and the glue that has held us together for the past 25 years. The journey has not been easy. There were challenges, moments of doubt, and times when we feared we might have to close our doors. Yet, in those moments, we found guidance and support from the most unexpected sources.

It has truly been 25 years of providence. I take this opportunity to say a heartfelt "Thank You" to everyone who has been part of this journey for their unwavering love, support, and commitment.

Over the last twenty-five years, we have evolved, adapting to changing needs and circumstances. Some of our founding programs have been transferred to other organizations, while others have been phased out. The Community Program for People with Disabilities was transitioned to L'Arche Kenya and the Community Program for HIV/AIDS to Talitha Kum Children's Home. Similarly, our Community Program for Savings and Micro-Credit was phased out as the market introduced more pro-poor credit facilities. Our non-formal school closed in 2002 following the government's introduction of free and compulsory basic education. These changes reflect our ability to renew and respond to emerging realities. Yet, through it all, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to building a just and equitable society that upholds the dignity and amplifies the voices of the most vulnerable.

Our philosophy, "Only Through Community," has remained our guiding principle, rooted in authentic community engagement. From the very beginning, we recognized that our communities hold valuable resources that, when shared in the spirit of love, can transform lives.

As we look ahead to the next 25 years, we do so with hope and optimism. The journey will not be without challenges. Political, social, cultural, technological, economic, ecological, and religious landscapes are shifting rapidly. The family unit, the cornerstone of society, is being redefined by modernization. New forms of vulnerability and marginalization are emerging, as are changes in our sources of funding. In response, we must be creative and innovative, ensuring that no one is left behind. We must work twice as hard as we did in the last 25 years while upholding the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and faithfulness to the spirit of St. Martin. The trust placed in us must be honored, and we take pride in having lived up to that trust.

We embrace the future with the belief that solidarity, transformation, and impact will remain fundamental in addressing the challenges of our evolving society. I am humbled to know that we are not alone in our mission. With the stewardship of past and present members of our Board of Trustees, along with the unwavering support of our donors, staff, volunteers, policymakers, local leaders, and community-based organizations, we are working together to build a more just society.

With my best wishes,
Joseph Murega,
Chairperson,
St. Martin Board of Management.

Message from the Director



The year 2024 was a significant year at St. Martin CSA. It marked the first year of implementing the 2024 - 2028 Strategic plan, the first year of implementation of a 3-year special project whose objective was to strengthen the organization's reach, influence and impact at the county, national and international levels. Keeping up with the St. Martin CSA financial sustainability plan, we continued implementing the restructuring plan, put in place strategies to improve efficiency in using organizational resources and revamp our local resource mobilization initiatives.

Additionally, 2024 was also the year we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of St. Martin CSA, whose theme was **25 years of Solidarity, Transformation and Impact**. This was a special moment for us as a community: the staff, volunteers, external stakeholders and beneficiaries to recall our founding story, be grateful for all that we have lived and what we have become, and shared gratitude to God and all those who've played a part in building St. Martin CSA to what it is today. It was an occasion to honour our founders, men and women who inspired the foundation of St. Martin CSA and those who committed to the service of their brothers and sisters in need.

I was moved by the testimonies from St. Martin CSA beneficiaries, community volunteers, management committees, the board of management, trustees, and external stakeholders. One outstanding thing from all of them was that irrespective of the reasons for their involvement in St. Martin CSA, not a single person who encountered St. Martin CSA left the same way they came. They were transformed into new human beings. Each one felt they had become a better version of themselves: more aware of themselves, caring, mindful of the struggles of those around them and much more open to being involved in the service of their communities. As you read this report, you will come across, among other things, the number of people supported by St. Martin CSA in the reporting period. Believe me, in those numbers are human beings carrying distinctive stories of lost hope rekindled, a life saved on the brink of death, dignity restored, etc.

"For 12 years, I never experienced the love of a mother," shared Mercy, the daughter of a lady with mental illness supported through the Mental Health programme to access treatment. I am eternally grateful to all those who made it possible, through your generous contributions both in cash and kind, for people like Mercy to experience the love of a mother once again, for needy children to pursue their dreams by affording them education, for single mothers from ultra low-income families to attain financial sustainability and regain their dignity. THANK YOU.

I also want to appreciate all those vulnerable groups of people who allowed us into their lives: men and women with mental illnesses and their family members who dared to speak out and ask for help, those children in difficult situations who trusted us to walk with them through their pain and suffering, men and women from impoverished families who allowed us to walk with them through their journey of socio-economic recovery. THANK YOU.

I am encouraged and deeply inspired by the commitment of the staff and volunteers in the spaces the Lord has called and placed them, from the top leadership team to middle-level management, frontline workers, finance, security, drivers, hospitality and the entire logistics team. Each person has continued to practically give their everything to help realise the achievements contained herein.

Uniquely, I wish to thank everyone who played a role in welcoming me back into St. Martin after being out for 14 years and for helping me find my place in this special mission. I look forward to taking on this journey with renewed vigour and conviction in the mission of St. Martin CSA. I pray that everyone who has the opportunity to read this report will also find a reason to commit to this noble mission of **strengthening community capacity and systems that care for and empower vulnerable and marginalised people in mutually transformative relationships** in our society.

In communion,
Muthiga Maurice
 Director – St. Martin CSA

In the footsteps of

The GOOD SHEPHERD



There will be one flock and one shepherd



The year 2024 brought us deeper into the reflection of the gospel of 'The good shepherd. As narrated in John 10:11-18. This piece of the Gospel gave us inspiration and the motivation that we needed to sail through the year.

The words of Jesus saying that He is the good shepherd who knows his sheep and the sheep know him was a great assurance that we have a master who owns our service and with whom we serve. We endeavored to know him better, to invite him to be the driver of our service and to copy his style in serving those whose eyes look upon us. Copying his style meant that we too become shepherds on his behalf in our small ways. It meant going out there to know our beneficiaries in a deeper way, to render our voice to them so that we speak the same language and to lay down our lives for them so that they get to know our purpose for them and follow our call to rise and walk. We are no longer hirelings who run away in the face of danger but true shepherds in union with the master.

The Gospel further called us to unity so that we could invite those who are not in our fold and bring them into the service. Jesus remembers those sheep that are not yet in the fold of service and aspires to call them through us so that we may be one flock under one shepherd, hearing and following the voice of our father in heaven and jointly spreading the love that He has lavished upon us. We are called to do everything possible to guard this unity so that the wolf, the enemy who comes to scatter and to destroy, does not take control of the flock. We pray that the voice of our shepherd will ring in our hearts every day calling us to walk in his footsteps. And that in those footsteps we will find the strength and courage that we need to keep going on even when the tides are against us.



OUR PROFILE

Core Values

Our 'cultural cornerstones' (core values) lay the foundation for what we care about most. They provide a common purpose that all internal stakeholders understand, work towards and live by. They are principles or standards of behaviour that represent our highest priorities, deeply held beliefs, and fundamental driving forces.

Integrity: Integrity is our first core value and a foundation for others. We are committed to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, transparency, accountability, responsibility and stewardship. We demonstrate consistency between words and actions.

Professionalism: We are reliable and our work ethic is characterized by excellence in the execution of our duties, use of the most appropriate skills and competencies and conduct, behaviour and attitude that best serve the interest of our target groups.

Respect for all: We treat everyone - staff, partners, donors, beneficiaries and other stakeholders with dignity and sensitivity. We view different cultures, ideas, faith communities and approaches as opportunities from which to build synergy, tap experience, and promote talent.

Cooperation: Everybody has their own talents and abilities, but we know that these are multiplied when we work together, understanding each other's expertise, respecting each other's contribution and challenging each other to achieve even more. This collaborative approach doesn't stop at the office door but extends into the way we work with communities and individuals, and with our partners, donors and supporters.

Equity: We are committed to overcoming prejudices and disadvantages and promoting fair and just access to resources and opportunities.

Volunteerism: We are inspired to meet the diverse emotional, physical and spiritual needs of people with compassion, grace, and an open heart. This cannot be achieved by paid work alone. We are called to be volunteers first and to nurture the sharing of talents and resources in our communities.

Solidarity: We consider solidarity as the most human value in working with vulnerable and marginalised people. We encounter the poor, weak and vulnerable people without distinction, limits or conditioning and promote chains of solidarity in our communities around them.

VISION

A just society in which communities uphold the dignity and respect the voices of vulnerable and marginalised people.

MISSION

To strengthen community capacity and systems that care for and empower vulnerable and marginalized people in mutually transformative relationships.

St. Martin Catholic Social Apostolate is a faith-based organisation committed to partnering with communities to restore the dignity and the voice of poor people in vulnerable and marginalised situations. St. Martin CSA serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. St. Martin CSA was established in November 1999 through a trustee deed



Celebrating 25 Years of Solidarity, Transformation & Impact



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25 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATION, SOLIDARITY AND IMPACT

TRANSFORMATION

In our 25 years of existence, we witnessed transformation in the lives of individuals and communities. Social transformation means the restructuring of all aspects of life; from culture to social relations; from politics to economy; from the way we think to the way we live. To make positive changes in our

communities, we focused on the changes that need to occur within ourselves in the process. We were convinced that lasting transformation could only happen through our own personal growth. Therefore, we focused on the formation of the heart. In this process, hundreds of people were transformed from self-centeredness that seeks own interest and gain to people centredness that seeks the common good. Where people were transformed, we witnessed systems and community transformation. This personal transformation was manifested in solidarity with the poor and positive changes in vulnerable people lives and communities wellbeing.

SOLIDARITY

Literally solidarity means unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest and is characterised by mutual support within a group. This form of solidarity is widespread and pronounced in the communities we worked in. For 25 years, we promoted a different kind of solidarity; solidarity with the poor. In the early years people responded to this call by showing concern for poor people in vulnerable and marginalized situations during Christmas period or occasional visits to our children rescue centres. This transitioned to having a genuine concern for the poor and vulnerable people throughout the year, not only to those under institutional care but also those in their neighbourhoods. This was a major milestone as communities identified and self-organised to care for and empower needy people in their midst. Today, we experience a different form of solidarity with the poor where families and communities integrate them in all aspects of their life. This is in recognition that poor people-people with disabilities, people with mental illness, survivors of violence, children in need of care and protection and all those in the margins of the society are human beings with dignity and worth who suffer misery and injustice. Today, solidarity with the poor leads to mutually transformative relationship where the poor and those abled differently have something to give and the rich have something to receive. Communities have discovered in the words of Pope Francis (July 2013) that, "only when we are able to share do we truly become rich, everything that is shared is multiplied. The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty." Mutual transformation in the communities we work in is built on the idea that as we transform the lives of the poor and vulnerable; they will transform our heart and life.

IMPACT

Our theory of change focuses on creating lasting change at individual, family, community and society level. In our 25 years of existence, we have witnessed positive changes in knowledge, skills, behaviour, health and living conditions for children, adults, families and communities. The traditional worldview of people with disability, people with mental illness, people with HIV and other vulnerable groups as outcasts and cursed has changed to an empowered worldview of people in need of medical care, inclusion and integration. We witnessed hundreds of people who were hidden, neglected and lived undignified life being taken to hospitals for treatment and cared for in communities. The communities' attitudes towards the poor have changed from people in need of charity to people in need of social justice. Our approaches change from needs-based to rights-based to justice-based approaches. The communities' behaviours towards the vulnerable changed from exclusion to inclusion. Poor people in vulnerable and marginalized situations now participate in family and communal life. We witnessed improvement in the quality of life of vulnerable groups and poor households' wellbeing.

Transforming lives as a long-term process

On December 11th, 1999, Ken walked away from a broken family to the streets of Nyahururu. He was a victim of child abuse and neglect from his alcoholic stepfather. Due to the harsh environment at home, Ken always took the lowest position in his class academically. He was given extra schoolwork to do at home but the environment was not conducive. When his father was sober, he instructed his studies with cruel methods of punishment. At that time, there were many children in the streets. Basic education was beyond the reach of many poor families. Ken was identified by St. Martin volunteers based in Nyahururu town. The organisation had trained volunteers in the central business district to support in identification of children immediately they arrive in the streets. ***If such children were rescued in real time their reintegration was slightly easier.***

Ken was admitted in St. Martin Rescue Centre where he received counselling and guidance. While at the rescue centre, we tried to address the challenges back at his home to make the environment safe for his return. However, this was not feasible in the short run. We found a foster family for Ken. The family was of humble means with 5 other children and no stable source of income. Yet ***they felt they had a big space in their household to provide Ken with family love, security and belonging.*** The St. Martin trained community volunteers mobilized the neighbourhood community to support the education of Ken. This mobilization was different from the common Harambee (pooling together). It was an invitation to be in solidarity with Ken and his foster family, to welcome Ken with his beauty and fragility in their lives. During the solidarity meeting, one family was challenged by the kindness of Ken's foster family. They had two children, better income and prospects in life, but they were poor at welcoming. They offered to meet the education needs of Ken up to high school. They community came together to build an extra room where Ken and other boys in the family could live together, something cultural for boys to live in a separate roof from their parents.

Ken foster parents considered Ken as a gift in their family. Despite, their humble means, Ken taught their children virtues of sharing and caring for one another. Hitherto, every child in the family struggled to get the best on their side. There was a hidden competition as they fought for the meagre resources to pursue their live goals. Ken enabled them to focus and appreciate what they had - a caring and loving family. Ken was fully integrated in this new community. With time, our follow up and contact became less and less. This is part of our disengagement and sustainability plan. Occasionally, the foster family would update us on Ken's wellbeing.

In 2024, Ken came to our office to say thank you. Very few of us would remember him. He progressed with his studies up to the University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education. He is now a high school teacher. Ken's greatest desire is to give another needy child an opportunity in life to pursue its dream.

To change people's heart (transformation), solidarity with the poor (seeing the poor differently) and positively changing lives (impact) is a long-term process that requires resilience, patience and hope. It goes beyond a calendar year or a three-year project. We capture and celebrate every milestone in this journey. After 25 years of existence, we can look back to countless testimonies of transformation.



MILESTONES

Rescue of Ken from the street

A 2018 census by National Census of Street Families estimates that there are 46,639 street persons. Of this, children aged below 19 comprised 15,752 of the population. Street children are one of the most vulnerable groups of urban poor. Street children face difficulties in providing themselves with good sources of food, clean drinking water, health care services, toilets and bath facilities, and adequate shelter. They also suffer from absence of parental protection and security due to the missing connection with their families. In addition, they lack any kind of moral and emotional support. The rescue of Ken from the street to institutional care was a major milestone.

Alternative care family care

According to the Directorate of Children's Services, (2023) there are an estimated 45,000 children living in over 845 charitable children's institutions. There is evidence has emerged suggesting that children within institutional care may grapple with attachment disorders and developmental delays, spanning various domains including social, cognitive, physical, and neurological aspects. The transition of Ken from institutional to family care was a major milestone.

Community solidarity

According to African culture, a child belongs to a large family, a clan, and the care and discipline of children are communal responsibilities. Without any set of written rules, the clan takes on the responsibility of caring for orphans. But with modernization the traditional form of foster care has given way to state foster care. The reawakening of this community to their positive traditional value system was a major milestone. Ken enabled individuals and the community as an organised entity discover their talents and gifts that could be shared for the wellbeing of the vulnerable. Ken was not therefore a burden but a brother, a son, a grandchild and a gift in this community.



It is the kindness of people like Jacob that gives hope to humanity

For the last 10 years, Jacob Maina, a youthful subsistence farmer has faithfully brought a bag of maize from his own harvest to support children in our rescue centre. Even when his maize crop failed due to drought, he purchased a 90kg bag of maize and kept his promise. Year after year, Jacob's simple yet profound gesture has become a symbol of hope and a testament of faith in action.

St. Martin is a movement of people yearning for a more just and equitable society through the spirit of love and solidarity.

Love makes the world a better place to live in. It is the kindness of people like Jacob who gives hope to humanity.

As Jacob fed children in our centres, a family in Germany through Kindernothilfe provided a salary for the staff who cares for the children, a family in Nyeri fostered a child from the centre and a family in Italy through Fondazione Zanetti provided for the education of the child. **Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation.** Healing is an act of communion. Our children in their vulnerability, are facilitating new world order based on care and compassion.

All the maize cereals and 70% of the vegetables and fruits that were consumed in our St. Martin and St. Rose Rescue Centres was a gift from our communities.

"In the garden of the soul, the virtues of faith, hope, and love form the centerpiece. Traditionally called theological virtues, they come as free gifts from God and draw us to God. We cannot earn these virtues; God has already freely planted them in our soul."

- Bishop Robert F. Morneau

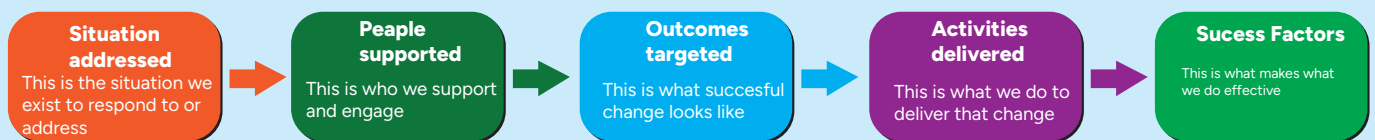


Our Work

In 2024, our work was organised in 6 thematic areas - children rights, mental health, peace and reconciliation, gender equality, youth development and livelihoods support. Each area of focus has unique principles and standards guided by international, national and local best practices and operating procedures. At organisational level, there were six approaches/strategies that were integrated in all our programmes and projects in line with our mission, guiding principles, theory of change and policies. These are community capacity strengthening, community engagement, promoting local philanthropy, awareness and advocacy, psychosocial support, strategic partnership and faith and development.

Each thematic area was guided by an impact strategy that combined sectors best practices with insights from program design, implementation and evaluation. The impact strategies in each sector were both practical and actionable.

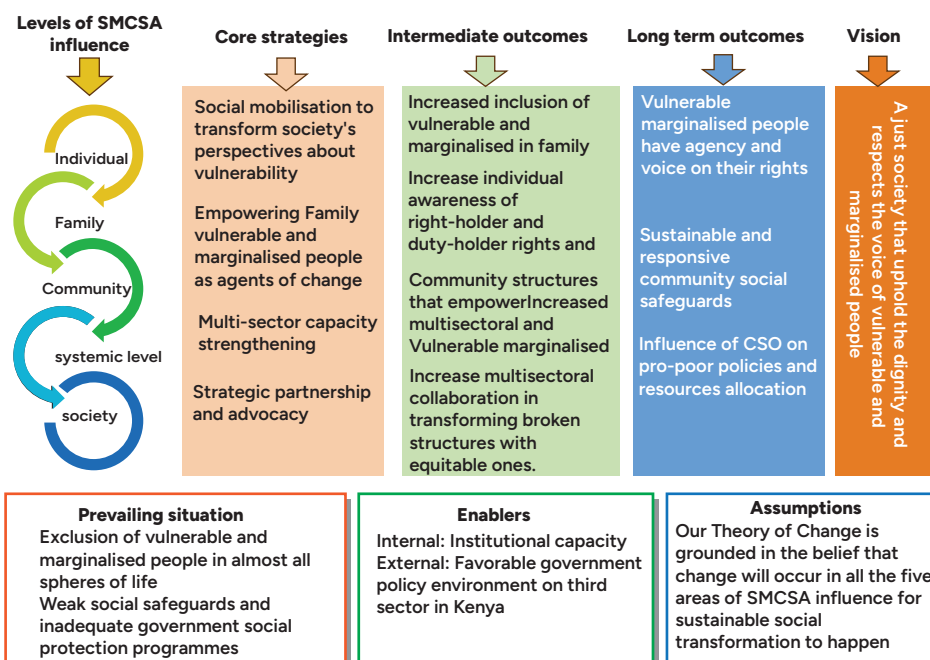
St Martin CSA Impact strategy Model



Our Theory of change

Our Theory of Change is an ongoing process of reflection to explore change and how it happens in our context. It is a powerful learning lens which makes us ask ourselves simple but important questions about what we are doing and why. By focusing attention on the lasting changes that we aim to bring and reflecting on what really contributes to those kinds of changes, it helps us step out of 'project activity' mode, question our assumptions, and focus on what really matters. It enables us to learn from others, build a common understanding of our work and develop clarity in our strategies and partnerships. It provides a clear framework for learning, monitoring and evaluation

SMCSA Theory of change



Community capacity strengthening



Community capacity strengthening is at the heart of our *raison d'être*. Over 40% of our resources are committed to strengthening the capacity of local communities to develop, implement and sustain their own solutions to problems in a way that helps them shape and exercise control over their physical, social, economic and cultural environments. We are deliberate on the word strengthening instead of building. We have learnt that people in the communities we work with have skills, knowledge and experience and they are quite capable of looking after their own people and fight for their future. However, modernisation has created gaps and communities may lack certain skills, knowledge and experiences.

We therefore use strength-based approaches in our capacity strengthening efforts that are sensitive to the particularities of local culture and context. For example, in 2024, we strengthened the capacity of 300 duty bearers, 540 volunteers and 2000 service recipients in children rights, mental health, peace building, gender equality, youth development and resilient livelihoods.

Empowering agents of change

Mr. Stanley Njoroge is an Electrical Installation instructor at Rumuruti Vocational Training Centre (VTC). He has been a dedicated trainer since 2019. He is known for his passion for teaching, as he goes above and beyond the standard curriculum to equip his trainees with market-ready skills. He believes in preparing his students for real-world opportunities by teaching them practical skills like DSTV installation, CCTV installation, and Local Area Network setup. Beyond the classroom, Stanley often involves his trainees in private contract projects, offering them hands-on experience and exposure.

One challenge Stanley faced as a trainer was his lack of expertise in solar technology. Recognizing that Rumuruti is a semi-arid area with limited access to electricity, he saw the growing adoption of solar technology for both household and farming applications as a key opportunity. He strongly believed that introducing solar technology skills to his trainees would be transformative for the community. However, without the necessary skills himself, Stanley felt limited in fulfilling this vision.

Through the Industrial-Based Instructor Reskilling Program supported by the project, Stanley was sponsored to attend a crash course on solar technology at Toolkit Innovation Centre in Nairobi. There, he acquired comprehensive skills in solar installation and maintenance, equipping him to bring this much-needed expertise back to Rumuruti.

Stanley is now determined to introduce a solar technology course at Rumuruti VTC. His goal is to empower youth with skills that are not only in demand but also crucial for the sustainable development of their community. "I'm excited to support as many young people as possible to embrace solar technology," he shared. "This skill can open doors for them while also addressing the energy challenges in our area."



Community Engagement

In 2024, we continued to build on our 27 years of deep history and understanding that community voice, ownership and local knowledge and expertise are necessary. Our history is rooted in development that is expounded in the motto Only Through Community. This approach has become ever more important in today's prismatic society. The traditional threads that held the society together are weakening and hundreds of poor people in vulnerable and marginalised situations

are slipping out of community safety nets. The number of families transitioning to the streets are growing, the number of people struggling with mental illnesses is on the rise. Additionally, the number of households experiencing food insecurity is on the rise, the number of young people without decent employment is bulging and the gap between the poor and the rich is widening. Despite these challenges, we are cognizant to the fact that in every community that are resources that can be shared to improve the wellbeing of those at the periphery of the society. For example, we worked with 556 volunteers at the community level as agents of change. They sensitized their communities on the plight of vulnerable and marginalised people and worked together to care for and empower vulnerable people in their midst.



Category of volunteers	Number
Mental Health Volunteers	203
Children Rights Volunteers	151
Peace and Reconciliation Volunteers	149
Programme Management Committee Volunteers	30
Community Counselling Centre Volunteers	14
Board of Management Volunteers	11

Mary will be 67 years old in 2025. She is among the very first St. Martin volunteers when the organization did not have a structure or form. She can be described as one the most active volunteers. She has seen the organization grow and she has grown with the organization. She has transitioned from a traditional birth attendant to community rehabilitation worker to HIV/AIDS volunteer and today mental health volunteer. She comes from Maina village, a low-income settlement area in our target area. Like the 49% of Laikipia County residents who live below poverty line, Mary is humble means. She was windowed at 45 years and she has struggled through casual work and subsistence farming in leased plot to bring up her children.

Mary cannot read or write but she understands her role very well. In 2024 alone, she identified 6 people with mental illness and referred them to the organization. She follows their family to ensure they adhere to their medication and clinic. In every monthly volunteer meeting, she gives a verbal report on the progress of the people she follows. Through her self-giving and commitment, tens of mothers who could not access maternal health in those days had safe deliveries in her hands, tens of children with disability were put on treatment and rehabilitation path, tens of people living with HIV got a new lease of life and today, tens of people with mental illness can resume their functionality. The words of Pope John Paul II, "Nobody is so poor he has nothing to give" are written in the heart of Mary.

Volunteers contribute 40% of our workforce. They are a strong pillar to our sustainability and they have enabled us to reach a bigger constituency of poor people in vulnerable and marginalized people and impact on more lives. They give hope to humanity and restore the dignity of those who are excluded and at the margins of our society. We salute all our gallant volunteers.

Promoting local philanthropy



In all our programmes and projects, we take communities from the periphery of development interventions being implemented in their areas, to the epicentre in terms of their involvement and participation at all levels. This promotes inclusion and sustainability in the development process. In 2024, individuals and local institutions contributed goods, money, time and skills to promote the well-being of others and the betterment of the community within which they live and work. For example, for the 5th consecutive year, the community concerted their effort and raised Ksh. 4 million towards the support of people with mental illness. This is a community led initiative with an incredible 100 committee members! Besides financial resources, this initiative has brought people from all walks of life around a common agenda - preferential option for the poor. We promote local philanthropy to strengthen community capacity and voice, build trust and most importantly tap into and enhance local resources.

In Kinamba Location, a small but dedicated group of farmers has been quietly sowing seeds of hope, not just in their fields but in the hearts of vulnerable people through their unwavering maize donations to St. Martin CSA. Among these selfless individuals is Kariithi, a man whose life has been deeply intertwined with the mission of St. Martin since its inception.

Inspired by the organization's commitment to uplifting the most vulnerable members of society, Kariithi made a personal promise many years ago. "Even when the harvest is inadequate," he says, "I'd rather buy maize and donate it to St. Martin CSA due to the promise that I made to myself to give back to the community." True to his word, Kariithi has been donating maize faithfully after every harvest season, regardless of the circumstances. His donations, along with those of other maize donors from Kinamba, have become a vital part of St. Martin's efforts to restore dignity to those in need.

One poignant example of the impact of these donations is the story of a mother who recently arrived at St. Martin CSA in dire need. She lives on the outskirts of Nyahururu town and had walked nearly 5 kilometres to attend a medical checkup and later sought help at St. Martin's offices. She looked emaciated and exhausted, and she was accompanied by her four-year-old son, who could barely muster the strength to walk. On her back was her infant whom she had delivered barely 4 months prior.

The staff at St. Martin welcomed her with a cup of tea and some biscuits, which the little boy devoured eagerly, showing faint signs of recovery. The sight was heart-wrenching yet hopeful. Thanks to the maize donations from Kinamba, half a sack of maize was offered to the mother to take back home. Overwhelmed with gratitude, she exclaimed, "This is a blessing I did not expect. I had no idea where our next meal would come from, but now I have hope for my children."

What makes this story remarkable is that this woman had never heard of Kariithi or the other Kinamba maize donors. Her gratitude, though directed at St. Martin, truly belonged to the unseen heroes like Kariithi, who, driven by goodwill and a sense of solidarity, had made it possible for her and her son to have a meal.

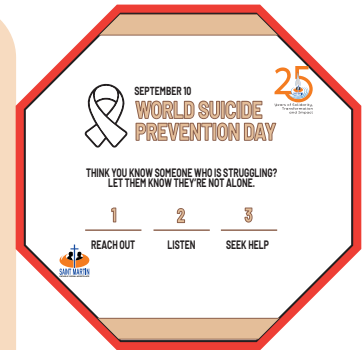
Similarly, Kariithi and his fellow donors remain largely unaware of the specific lives they touch. Yet, their acts of generosity ripple through the community, transforming despair into hope and hunger into nourishment. This symbiotic relationship exemplifies the essence of solidarity: strangers supporting strangers, connected only by a shared humanity and a commitment to care for one another.

The partnership between the Kinamba maize donors and St. Martin CSA demonstrates the profound impact of collective action. It shows how one man's promise, one community's dedication, and one organization's mission can converge to bring light into the darkest moments of someone's life. This is the power of solidarity, a bond that transcends knowledge, proximity, or expectation and uplifts the human spirit.

Awareness and advocacy

Many people in vulnerable situations and marginalized communities are unaware of available services, the options available to them and their rights and may suffer in silence. Our awareness campaigns provide invaluable support to those in need, empowering them to navigate systems, access resources, and exercise their rights. In 2024, we used different platforms and strategies to inform and educate people about topical issues with the intention of influencing their attitudes, behaviours and beliefs towards the achievement of a defined purpose or goal. For example, the help seeking behaviours on mental illness increased by 40% measured by people with mental health conditions who sought help in our offices. Our social media presence grew by 121% in 2024.

Advocacy services serve as a lifeline for vulnerable individuals who may be experiencing discrimination, abuse, or facing complex legal or bureaucratic processes. We used advocacy to influence pro-poor policies, decision-makers, county and national institutional structures, stakeholders, and people, communities and civil society organisations.



The trickle effect of awareness

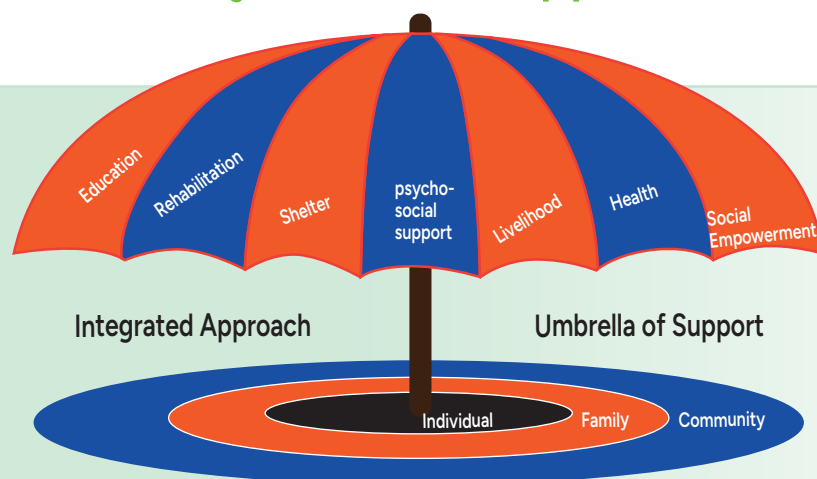
In 2023, we brought together 12 households affected by disabilities and mental health for livelihood support using self-help group approach. Memuli Livelihood Self-Help Group is one of the 19 livelihood self-help groups that we formed under the mentorship of community volunteers. Memuli, has emerged as one of the most vibrant self-help groups. They have diversified their income streams and embraced group projects that are climate resilient.

Inspired by the power of self-help group approach, they brought together a group of young people recovering from addiction to form a self-help group. The group is called GALI an acronym coined from two geographical areas -Gatundia and Limunga where members come from. The GALI group meets regularly peer to peer therapy and managing tree seedlings project. They also started a monthly saving scheme to promote a culture of savings and build a pool from which they can borrow money for investment in future.

Some of the documented outcomes of awareness raising included increased knowledge about a topic, changed attitudes and perceptions, motivated behaviour change, public engagement, improved understanding of an issue, greater support for a cause, and ultimately, positive actions taken by individuals or communities based on the information presented in the campaign. The case of Memuli Livelihood group demonstrates our impact stories on awareness creation and advocacy.



Psychosocial support



We embrace community based psychosocial support in recognition that all communities and individuals have resources and strategies for dealing with difficulties, illness, and distress. However, despite the enormous community goodwill and support, the needs and rights of poor people in vulnerable and marginalised situations exceeded the marginalised communities' capabilities. People in poverty not only have needs, but also the right to have these needs met. In our rights-based approach, we respect, understand and enable individuals, families and communities in the journey to their recovery.

In our interventions, we appreciate that a combination of factors is responsible for the psychosocial wellbeing of people and these are biological, emotional, spiritual, cultural, social, mental and material aspects and cannot be separated from one another.

The term "psychosocial" refers to the dynamic relationship between the psychological and social dimensions of a person, where the one influences the other. The psychological dimension includes emotional and thought processes, feelings and reactions. The social dimension includes relationships, family and community networks, social values and cultural practices. It is important to note that what happens in one of these areas will affect aspects of the others. Therefore, we adopt an integrated approach that brings different actors for holistic interventions. In 2024, we invested Ksh. 14.1 million in psychosocial support alongside counselling services and social-emotional assistance provided by staff and volunteers.

EDUCATION	HEALTH	REHABILITATION	LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT	SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT
3.5 million	1.8 million	6.6 million	0.5 million	1.7 million

The power of psychosocial support

Mwaura, 30-year old, is recovering from alcohol addiction after participating in our 13-week Intensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Program in 2024. He was orphaned at a tender age and welcomed by a foster family through our children rights Programme. Prior to his fostering, he endured numerous challenges after the demise of his parents as he was hosted by different family members for short periods.

Mwaura was destitute, with low self-esteem, self-hate and chained by despair in life. His only solace was in found alcohol that ruined his life and relationship with foster parents especially the mother. During and after the rehabilitation programme, Mwaura found a shoulder to lean on, a hand to support him and an ear to listen to him and after weekends of group and individual therapy, something started shifting in him. He became happier, more open, hopeful and more self-aware.

During a therapy session organised for caregivers of recoverees, Mwaura foster father could not hide his joy. He said that Mwaura used to steal and sell household goods, farm produce and money from

family business to sustain his drinking. He further said that during home assessment, before admission to the Programme he never believed it would amount to anything. He believed his foster son was beyond any help. Gradually, however, Mwaura's father noticed some positive changes in his behaviour. He would wake up early to milk the cows or go to the farm to weed. During the day, instead of idling in the local market as was the tradition, he supported the family business and his hygiene had begun to improve.

With time, Mwaura gained his foster parent's confidence, and when the parents are away, he is fully entrusted to run the family business. Mwaura has started his own salon business in his hometown. He is a shadow of his former self, a community pride and a role model to many young people.



Strategic partnership

Social challenges have persisted over the years only evolving in form and magnitude. In 2023 and 2024, the humanitarian community faced numerous challenges in delivering principled humanitarian assistance, compelling us to innovate our programmes. Many of these challenges were familiar - witnessed over decades in our 25 years of existence - however they have changed in their complexity, scope and depth, requiring more nuanced adaptations in response.

In tight and uncertain fiscal circumstances, we found ways to do more with less. We continuously sought innovative and collaborative ways to maximize our impact. Through partnership, we shared resources,

mitigated risks, leveraged expertise, and unlocked new opportunities that would have been impossible alone. For example, in 2024, we partnered with L'Arche Kenya and Fondazione Fontana Italy to develop a project to strengthen our reach, influence and impact through advocacy, networking, replicating and scaling working practices, inter-organisation learning and organisation capacity development in gender transformative approaches, strategic partnerships, systemic level advocacy and strategic communication. We partnered with county government, institutions of higher learning and civil society organisations in implementation of our activities.

County Government of Laikipia  Partnership in transforming Nyahururu and Rumuruti vocational training centres as models that can be replicated in other vocational training centres	Laikipia University  Partnership in evaluating and documenting our working practices in foster care, volunteers programme and community philanthropy.	County Government of Nyandarua  Partnership in training Community Health Promoters in mental Health. This will increase access to mental health services at level I of health care system in the County	L'Arche Kenya  Partnership in sharing physical and human resources, joint training of human resources and implementation of activities. This brought synergy and efficiency in our operations.
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We met Lucy through a distress call from Nyahururu sub-county hospital. Lucy had collapsed on her way home from school and she was rushed to hospital by well-wishers. She had remained under doctors' observation for 12 hours. The cause of her fainting was determined as general body weakness, due to hunger. The hospital requested us to assess her households and develop a plan of action. On the fateful day, Lucy was resuming school after three-week absence due to unpaid tuition.

In our assessment, we discovered that Lucy was a teenage mother, the primary caretaker of her 3 siblings and the sole caregiver for her bedridden ailing mother. Her father had passed on some years back, and as the eldest child in the family; she was responsible for providing for the basic needs of the family, primarily through casual employment. We developed a plan of action that involved several stakeholders. The volunteers formed a community support network to guarantee adequate food to the family. This included members of the business community who provided food and clothing.

Lucy's school agreed to retain her in school with or without school fees. She was added to the list of students requiring financial assistance, which entitled her to a free feeding program. The teaching staff collectively agreed to provide financial and in-kind assistance to Lucy and her family. The Member of County Assembly committed to ensure that Lucy was put under government bursary fund to complement community initiatives. Meanwhile, Nyahururu sub-county hospital attended to Lucy's mother medical needs and waived all the bills. Finally, we enrolled Lucy's mother to our livelihood support programme. She was supported to start a small income generating project. In 2024, Lucy completed her secondary school education. The family can now meet some of their basic needs. The community volunteers will continue maintaining close contact with the family and support networks until they fully stabilize.

Faith and Development



As is true for many African countries, Kenya is a richly religious society in the sense that a multitude of institutions that are widely diverse in nature and dynamic in their response to social, economic, and political change are linked to religious beliefs and practice in many ways. Interactions among ethnic, economic, cultural, and religious forces are complex, making them difficult if not impossible to disentangle. We use biblical values and principles to transform the development agenda in our target communities. We promote empowered world view to support communities recover their true identity as human beings created in the image of God and discovering their true vocation as productive stewards, faithfully caring for the world and all the people in it. In a study conducted on the motivation of our volunteers, 80% of the volunteers said that they are intrinsically motivated by their Christian faith to serve others. Therefore, faith integration is at the heart of everything that we do.

Freely you have received; freely give -Matthew 10:8

The most profound part of the Kamwimoya SHG story is how a group that once received support has come together to give back to the society. In 2023, we brought together caregivers of children with disabilities and parents of children at risk of dropping out of school due to poverty to form a self-help group. We empowered the group socially and economically to sustainably meet their needs. The group is based in a semi-arid area that is characterised by crop failure due to drought, invasion by wildlife and cattle rustling. We supported each group member with seed capital to run a project of their choice after training on livelihoods diversification. Additionally, we established a group fund that members could access to strengthen, protect or diversify their livelihood. The group has been performing well and the wellbeing of the members is on an upward trajectory.

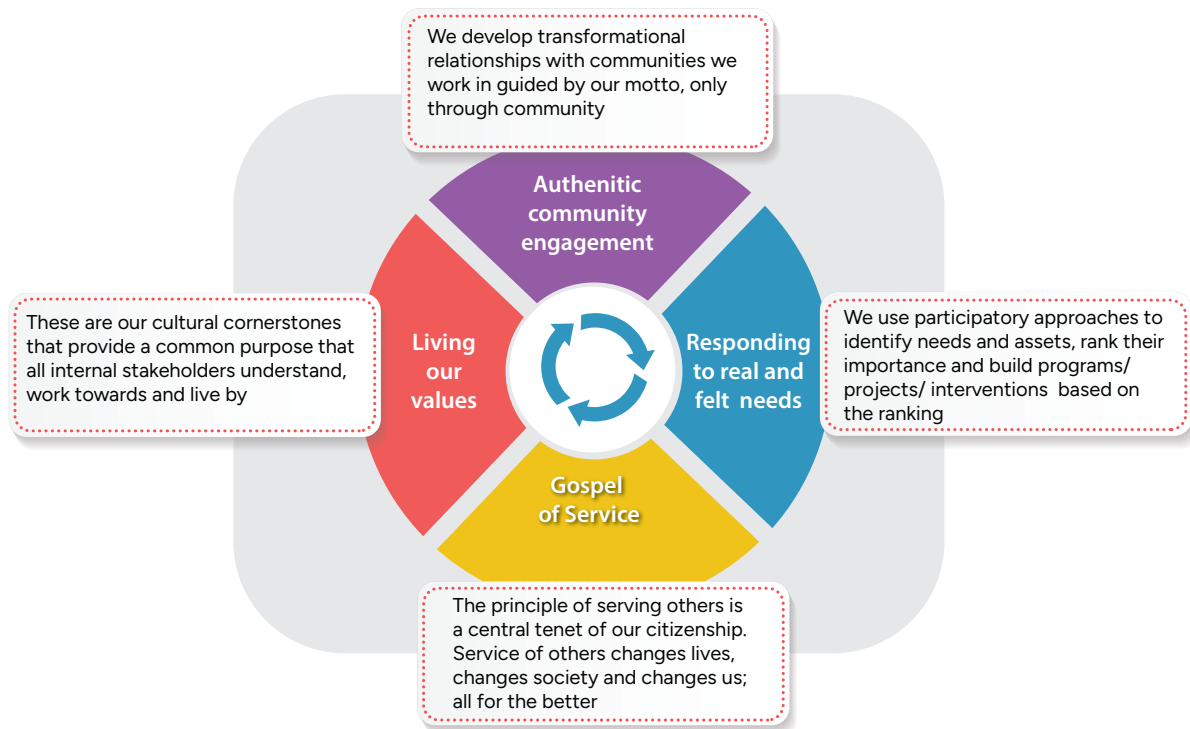
In August 2024, the group members paid our girls centre, St. Rose a surprise visit. They brought their farm produce to share life with the children. This was a profound gesture and an intentional one, a journey of 50 kilometres. During the visit, their leader said, "we received your support with love and understanding and we learnt not give out of our abundance but with love".



Members of kamwimoya SHG at St. Rose Rescue Centre

Our Success Factors

These four areas of knowledge, skill, traits, attitude and values is part of what makes us succeed in our work.



Responding to real needs

Dorcas is the youngest of five siblings. She has faced significant challenges in her life. Her mother passed on when she was 10 years. Her father who was struggling with alcoholism and unstable source of income was unable to care and support them. They moved to their aging grandparent's household. Despite their advanced aged and health challenges, they took up the responsibility of caring for the entire family.

Dorcas was identified by our trained Community Peace Ambassadors when she was at the verge of dropping out school due to financial challenges. We partnered with Dorcas community to support her education. She was committed to her studies despite insurmountable challenges at home and determined to change the course of the river of her family to blue oceans.

Dorcas sat for her Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in 2024. She requested for our support to enrol for a short vocational course as she waited for her results. We supported her through our Youth Development Program to pursue a vocational course in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Dorcas scored a B- in her KCSE. Dorcas's future is full of big dreams. She plans to join a university in September 2025 to pursue a career in either medicine or education. She is committed to building a brighter future for herself and her family.

"I thank St. Martin and volunteers for trusting in me and always encouraging me to focus ahead instead of focusing on my family challenges. It's because of your encouragement and support that I felt a great urge to go on and attain my life goals. Sincerely, I was hopeless and looked for ways to escape from my miseries at home," Dorcas.

According to United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) 2022 report on the progress made by countries towards achievement of sustainable development Goal indicates that close to 35% of Kenyan secondary school education by 2030. Our fidelity to responding to real and felt community needs is what makes us succeed. Many people identify themselves with our mission as a result.



Dorcas at vocational training centre

Our work, Reaching the Most Vulnerable

This report details St. Martin CSA contributions towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in 2024. St. Martin positively impacted 100,000 people across three counties, addressing various challenges at individual, household and community and society level.

Change among people in vulnerable and marginalized situations

- Increased utilization of knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Greater social capital, voice, agency and confidence.
- Improved access to education, health, legal and human rights, financial resource.
- Improved feeling of physical, mental, social, and financial well-being.



Changes in households, groups and communities



- Improved social, psychological and economic functioning
- Increased capacity to protect, strengthen and diversify their livelihoods
- Empowered worldview of vulnerability and social transformation
- Improved household wellbeing - safety, health, and financial stability of all family members.

Changes in households, groups and communities

Transformational changes in: -

- Policies
- Practices
- Resource flows
- Relationship and connections - greater social cohesion
- Stronger community-based/led structures



Target Groups

The target groups received one or more than one intervention based on programmes and project design.

Community Programme For Children in Need

Target groups	Planned	Achieved
Pupils in Children Governments (6-12 years)	260	261
Children admitted into the centres	90	79
Children reintegrated into the community	60	51
Youth in vocational training	14	15
Youth living in the streets/children on the streets	67	130
Children supported with psychological debriefing	500	942
Vulnerable children identified	150	336
Student attending mentorship programme	100	144
Parents	250	226
Children right promoters	150	126
Police/local security guards	30	32
Chiefs/ Chiefs elders	30	34
Teacher Patrons	33	53
Competency Based Curriculum Champions	100	111
ECDE Teachers	60	63
CAC Members	30	36
Members of the education Board	10	11

Community Programme for Mental Health

Target groups	Planned	Achieved
Mental Health Volunteers	120	133
Community Health Promoters	100	182
CCC counselors	12	12
People with mental illness (PLMIs)	92	174
PLMIs caregivers	50	44
Recoveree	50	25
Recoveree significant others	40	43
Duty bearers		49
Youth and adults at risk of mental illness		385

Community Programme for Peace and Reconciliation

Target Groups	Annual Planned	Achieved
Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission officers	3	4
Headteachers and principals	15	11
Amani Club teacher patrons	15	13
Amani club members (Learners)	375	307
Youths	1000	1732
Community Peace Ambassadors	150	149
Parents	100	58
Peace Committees	60	147
Boarder line Peace Committees	0	0
Community sensitization	1000	4177
Peace Stakeholders	20	18
Opinion leaders and elders	0	0
Children in Need	20	24
Alternative Justice Committee	15	15

Youth Development and Empowerment Project

Target groups	Planned	Realized
Youth out of school	10,000	11,400
VTCs students in the 2 pilot VTCs	235	446
Vulnerable students from ultra-poor households	50	56
VTCs Instructors and secondary school teachers	100	103
Industry Partners	100	98
Other vocational training centres	10	16
Parents	1800	2,000
General public in Laikipia county	40,000	36,855

SORII-Project

Target groups	Planned	Achieved
Education stakeholders	30	30
Higher education institutions	2	2
Intellectual disabilities stakeholders	15	15
Charitable Children Institutions	3	3

Livelihood Support Project

Target group	Planned	Achieved
Sustainable livelihood champions	20	20
Single mothers heading households	50	45
Heads of households with a vulnerable person	196	

Communications and Community Engagement Office

Target group	Planned	Achieved
Religious leaders	40	35
Churches	100	148
Corporates	150	156
Civil Society organizations	0	0
Media Houses	10	15
Friends of St. Martin	150	227



Children Rights

 **96%**
of the reintegrated
children remained stable in
their places of placement.



Our Commitment:

To promote the rights of children in need of care and protection by addressing all forms of violence and abuse

'Watoto Tuwalinde' project goal

To contribute to the safety of children at home, school and in the community

UNSDG 16.2

To end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children

INTERVENTIONS AND APPROACHES

In Kenya, thousands of children are still exposed to violence and abuse, harmful practices and lack of parental care. There is a clear link between fulfilling children's rights and achieving improved quality of life among children and young people. Our Children's Rights Programme exists to enhance the realization of children's and young people's rights by addressing the root causes of the challenges they face in their families, communities and schools.

Empowerment of children on their rights

We work to ensure children are aware of their rights and possess the knowledge, skills, and confidence to actualize them. This approach fosters a sense of empowerment by equipping children, with the knowledge and skills needed to actively participate in decision making, ensure their safety and enhance their well-being at school, at home, and in their communities.

Child Protection

We work with children and duty bearers to protect children from physical, sexual and emotional abuse including neglect. Through our rescue centres, we ensure rescued children receive the care, rehabilitation and psychosocial support as they are prepared for reintegration with either their parents, relatives or foster families. Reintegrated children are further provided with post-residential care services that include visits to encourage connection and offering regular post-placement follow-up support.

Strengthening Child Protection Structures

We engage in collaborative and partnership activities with government agencies and other relevant actors with the objective of developing shared goals, strategies, and interventions for child protection.

In this endeavor, we apply a set of interventions that focus on the strengthening of the child protection system at the community level, thereby empowering local communities to enhance the protection of children from abuse.



Social and economic empowerment of parents

We work to empower economically disadvantaged parents, with a particular focus on women, in a holistic manner, encompassing economic, social, personal, and political dimensions. This strategy is designed to address the challenges posed by poverty, lack of information, and inadequate skills, with the aim of facilitating sustained changes that will enable these parents to transform their lives and ensure that their children's needs are met

KEY RESULTS

In 2024, we made significant progress towards protecting the rights of children and amplifying their voice

Child Protection



We **rescued and admitted 62 children** (38 boys, 24 girls) in St. Rose Girls and St. Martin Boys rescue centre where they received holistic support including psychological support, legal aid, home based learning and preparation for reintegration. 51 children (26 boys, 25 girls) who were undergoing rehabilitation were reintegrated back into the community either with their parents, relatives or foster parents.

Child Right to Participation



We **trained 261 pupils** (131 boys and 130 girls) in the 65 primary schools through the children's government structure child rights and child participation. This played a significant role in making their schools child friendly thus indirectly impacting the lives of 26,720 children

Survival and developmental rights



We **supported the education of 757 children** (418 boys, 339 girls) from poor households who were at risk of dropping out of school. The children were identified and follow up by volunteer children's rights promoters. We empowered 942 students (533 boys, 409 girls) in 5 secondary schools with life-skills to enable them navigate life's challenges effectively. Additionally, we supported **36 young people** (23 male, 13 female) to pursue vocational training. 70% of them are now earning a stable income.

Capacity building of duty bearers



We **empowered 216 parents** (51 male and 165 female) in good parenting through one-on-one sessions, support group therapies, workshops training and community dialogue sessions. We **trained 313 actors** in children rights and welfare on different topical issues to enhance their capacity to safeguard the rights of children by improving processes, structures and systems. We worked with 126 St. Martin trained community-based volunteers to promote the welfare of children in need of care and protection and improve children's structures at community level.

Children rights impact story

According to the children's Act 2022, "foster care placement" means temporary placement of a child or children in the care of a person who is not the parent, relative or guardian of the child; foster parent" means a person with whom a child is placed in accordance with section 174 of the Children's Act. This is the definition applied by St. Martin.

Foster care is intended to serve as a temporary haven for children in need of care and protection who cannot safely remain with their families. The children are placed with another family that voluntarily agrees to care for and educate them for a certain period of time, normally until they can return to their families or become self-reliant. Over the years, St. Martin has observed that many children are separated from their families with the

leading causes of children leaving home being poverty, family breakdown, child abuse and neglect, dropping out of schools, child labour, the effect of peers, and other social and psychological reasons related to the social environment or to the personality of the child such as behavioural disorders or sensation seeking. We consider foster care where re-uniting a child with their birth parents or relatives is not possible.

Foster care enables children to stay in a family environment and reduces unnecessary placement in institutional care. Research has shown that children placed in foster care have higher development, health and psychosocial outcomes than children in institutional care. Blessing is one such child who was placed with a foster family.





As children, we are concerned about some critical issues in our counties that are hindering our rights. We are concerned about the quality of education, corporal punishment and harmful practices like child marriage."

-Susan
Sub-county Children Leader,
Igwaremity Primary School

***In 2024,
we reintegrated 51 children (26 boys and 25 girls)
back to the community.
63% of the children were reunited with their parents,
27% with relatives,
8% with foster parents and***

Dr. Tom Ochieng, Director of Children Services in Laikipia County named St. Martin rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration and resocialization programme as a working practice that should be replicated by other charitable Children organizations.



Jane's testimony

I am Blessing Wangeci, born in 2010. I am the eldest of two siblings. My younger sister died as a result of neglect and physical abuse at the hands of our grandmother. My mother passed away when I was still a minor, leaving us under the care of my maternal grandmother, who provided us with a stable and nurturing environment. Subsequently, my grandmother also passed away, leaving us in the care of her sister who was still our grandmother by extension. The quality of care provided by this grandmother was such that it contributed to the death of my younger sister. She would physically assault us and withhold sustenance, resulting in us going without food on a near-nightly basis. The demise of my sister had a profound impact on my emotional and psychological well-being, effectively altering the course of my life.

I was compelled to engage in strenuous household chores, as well as on the family farm. My responsibilities included collecting and splitting firewood, doing the family's laundry, and tilling the farm. Furthermore, I was not as consistent in my academic pursuits as I should have been, which ultimately led to my underperformance. My grandmother would punish me for small mistakes by burning my body with heated metal. The resulting injuries, including burns and assault scars, left me with a profound sense of self-hate. I attempted to end my life on multiple occasions in an effort to escape the pain I was enduring, yet my suicidal ideations never materialized. On other occasions, I sought refuge in the neighbourhood, but my presence was met with threats. With the assistance of neighbours and well-wishers, I was able to secure admission to the St. Rose Rescue Centre for Girls in St. Martin.

At that time, I experienced feelings of rejection and a fear of undergoing a similar experience in the new family. I was unable to trust anyone. I was prone to emotional outbursts, the cause of which was unclear. I was gratified to find that the teachers and other girls at St. Rose, who were also admitted for care and protection, extended a warm welcome. Furthermore, they prepared my bed for me that night and provided reassurance regarding my safety. I was taken to the hospital due to malnourishment, but with time, my health improved. As a result of the daily debriefings and counselling sessions provided at the Center, I began to accept myself. Additionally, I was able to forgive my grandmother, although this process took some time. I was able to engage in conversation without fear, my social interactions became more positive, and I began to excel academically.

The teachers at the Centre provided invaluable assistance with my studies, which contributed to my improved performance. I acquired a range of skills through the Centre's practical activities. Among these, I found the most enjoyment in mat-making, beadwork, bottle decoration, and baking. My time at the Centre was characterized by a sense of stability and contentment. However, I experienced a certain degree of apprehension when the teachers emphasized that we would eventually be returned to our communities. I was unprepared to depart from the Centre, as it had become a source of stability and support during a period of significant transition.

I recall one occasion when my stepmother visited the office and expressed a desire to see me. She asserted that she had no regrets about her actions, stating that she was merely correcting me. She demanded that I return to support her child, who was living with a disability. I was unprepared to resume my relationship with her after becoming aware of her bad intentions. She proposed that I stay with a relative, but unfortunately, there was no other relative apart from her and her children who had also mistreated me. At that juncture, I was queried as to my preference, and I indicated that I was ready to stay with any other individual, but that I was not inclined to do so with my grandmother. I was queried as to my opinion regarding fostering, and I indicated that I had no objection. I was prepared for fostering by the staff, who facilitated my reintegration with a foster parent who is caring and loving. I refer to her as "my mother." She provided transportation to school, and I am currently in the fifth grade, performing satisfactorily in my academic pursuits.

I am grateful to the kind neighbours who provided me with shelter and assistance when I was experiencing distress and had lost hope. The teachers and students at St. Rose School played an instrumental role in restoring my sense of dignity and hope for the future. My current mother is an exemplary figure, and I am currently pursuing my long-held ambition of becoming a teacher."

Mental Health

 **30%**
of people with
mental illness resumed
full functionality



Our Commitment:

To promote healthy lives and the wellbeing of poor and marginalised people at all ages.

***“Making the invisible visible”
project goal***

To strengthen community capacity to promote mental health, prevent mental disorders and care and support people with mental illness.

UNSDG 3

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

INTERVENTIONS AND APPROACHES

Mental health situation in Kenya is not very well understood particularly because there exists limited nationwide disease burden surveillance data. Studies conducted in parts of the country indicate high prevalence of mental illness ranging from 10.8% to 25%. A study conducted in Laikipia County commissioned by St. Martin CSA found that there was a high prevalence of mental illnesses. For example, the study found that up to 59.7% of all the respondents presented with signs of depression. Promotion, prevention and treatment of mental health in Kenya is faced with many challenges that include- limited budgetary allocation, low psychiatrist to patient ratio, limited and/or nonexistence of mental health services at level 1 and 2 of Kenya's health system, limited awareness on mental health and high mental illness stigma levels. Our response include:

Community capacity strengthening

We give power to communities to promote mental health, prevent incidences of mental disorders at primary, secondary and tertiary level and care and support people living with mental illness and households affected by mental illness. We build the capacity of community mental health volunteers, caregivers, duty bearers and partner with county government in retraining community health promoters. This is aimed at increasing awareness on mental health, reducing stigma and enhancing help seeking behaviour

Increasing access to quality mental health services

We support people with mental illness regain their dignity and functionality through referrals for psychiatric assessment and treatment, inpatient treatment, purchase of drugs and health insurance cover. We also run an integrated intensive outpatient rehabilitation programme to support people struggling with substance abuse. This community-based intervention employs a mixed-method approach, integrating the biopsychosocial, 12-step Alcoholics Anonymous and disease models. Additionally, we run a community counselling centre where 16 volunteer counsellors provide psychological and emotional support to members of public.

Supporting recovery journey

We support the recovery journey of people with mental illness and affected households through home visits, family psychoeducation, aftercare support structures such as alcoholic anonymous groups and livelihood support. This helps in achieving optimum clinical and personal recovery.



In 2024, we commissioned an external evaluation on the efficacy and impact of our Intensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Programme. The evaluation revealed that **55%** of respondents reported relapse within the first six months post-treatment. However, most relapses were short-lived and reduced exponentially. **86%** of clients recorded sustained sobriety at the time of data collection.



The lead investigator, Dr. Simon Kingori (Phd Counselling Psychology) concluded:

"The approach and the program were successful in facilitating the clients' statistically significant improvement in quality of life functioning psychologically, physically, socially and spiritually from very low and low functioning levels before treatment to high and very high functioning levels after treatment, registering high sobriety maintenance of 86% by fostering resilience, awareness, and supportive relationships, aligning with global best practices in addiction treatment".



In 2024, we had **14 volunteer counselors** (certified by Kenya Counsellors and Psychologist Board) in our Community Counseling Centre. They provided **therapy to 385 clients** majority of whom had substance use related challenges.

KEY RESULTS

Capacity enhancement



We trained **124 mental health volunteers** on community based mental Health. **72.5%** of the volunteers demonstrated increased knowledge in the management of mental health. The volunteers identified and referred **79** people living with mental illness. All of them were placed in different treatment plans including counselling services and accessing psychiatric treatment. For the first time, the volunteers organised community led activities to mark the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Additionally, we trained **182 Community Health Promoters** from Nyandarua County on community based mental Health management in partnership with County Government of Nyandarua. This increased the number of mental health resources persons at community level.



We trained **98** (82 F, 16 M) **caregivers** of people living with mental illnesses including those recovering from drug addiction on treatment adherence, addiction cycle and recovery process, selfcare, and client management. They demonstrated increased knowledge and skills in caregiving. This was witnessed in an increase in the number of caregivers who accompanied their kin for monthly clinics, increased consultation with the mental health social worker and unconditional positive regard to their kin. Some of the people living with mental illness attributed their recovery process to care and support that they received from their families.



We **strengthened the capacity of 61 internal stakeholders** to manage and implement community based mental health programme. 40 members of the management board and programme management committee were trained on mental health self-care. 15 staff and management committee members were trained as trainers in community based mental health programming. 16 volunteer counsellors under Community Counselling Centre were empowered on how to deal with emotions during counselling sessions and counselling demands in 21st century.



Psychosocial support

We supported **35 people at level 1 and 2 of addiction** to undergo rehabilitation through our 13-week intensive outpatient rehabilitation program. **71% recorded great improvement in their personal and social lives** observed in personal grooming, decision making, resuming parental responsibilities and contribution to their household's budget.

We supported **29 people with mental illness** (PLMIs) with 6 months health insurance cover. This provided relief to their families and enabled PLMIs access quality health care services. 8 PLMIs received inpatient treatment using the medical cover. The cover also supported other medical needs in the household. For example, in one household, a child with physical disability was admitted in hospital for five months and all the bills were cleared using the mother's health insurance cover. **60%** of PLMIs supported with medical cover demonstrated improved health.

We supported 162 people with mental illness (PLMIs) from poor households to access medication. This increased drugs adherence by 80% since majority of the people were missing medication due to finances to procure them on time. **90%** of the beneficiaries demonstrated observable improvement in their ability to think, feel and act in ways that created a positive impact on their physical and social well-being. **30%** of them resumed full functionality and independence in day-to-day activities including drugs and clinic adherence, involvement in activities such as farming, parental responsibilities, house chores, running family businesses. Another **35%** of the beneficiaries were able to partly function by themselves with extra support from their caregivers. **25%** recorded notable health improvement but fully depended on their caregivers to function due to the nature and severity of their mental illnesses. The improvement included improved sleep patterns, recognizing faces, improved speech and reduced agitation and movement.





We provided **counselling to 385 clients** through the community counselling centre. This included students in primary and secondary schools and adults. **18%** of the clients reported improvement in behaviours, self-esteem and decision-making during post counselling interviews. **64** (43 F, 9 M) **caregivers** received psychosocial support through group therapies. In a post therapy evaluation, **89%** of the caregivers said that the therapies were educative and therapeutic. It made them to open up in ways that they have not done before on their journey with people with mental illness under their care in understanding and non-judgemental environment.



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IT IS TIME TO PRIORITIZE MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE



Awareness and advocacy

We trained and sensitized different stakeholders to mark the World Mental Health Day 2024 under the theme, "Prioritizing mental health at workplace". This includes **18 Police Officers, 31 Human Resource managers and 52 staff** from 3 civil society organisations. This sensitized participants on mental health wellness at workplaces and the importance to advocate for the same.

Mental wellbeing impact story

A Renewed Future

When a family member suffers from mental illness, the family is usually thrown into emotional and mental anguish. When it's more than one family member suffering from mental illness, the family experience double tragedy. This is what befell a family in Losogwa area of Laikipia County where a father and daughter (Maria) suffer from mental illness.

Damaris, the wife and Maria's mother, recounts the genesis of the mental condition that robbed her of peace of mind for over 10 years. Before the illness, the family lived in harmony and the father provided the basic needs for the whole family. Maria developed her mental illness while in Form 2. She was psychotic and out of touch with reality. Her condition worsened where she would even defecate on herself, forcing her mother to use nappies on her. When her mother thought she had seen it all, her husband started having epileptic episodes which saw him hurt himself and being in and out of the hospital. The epileptic episodes graduated into psychosis. The family was thrown into dismay as their father, who was a sole breadwinner, was not able to provide. They could not believe that the once loving and caring father of his 6 children had become a threat to the lives of the same children. As fate would have it, the father would beat the children and Damaris to a pulp, forcing them to improvise ways to keep him away from them. They would barricade the door and would not sleep due to fear of being harmed. His 6 young children underwent trauma and could not go to school.

because they could not fathom how two members of the family could be psychotic. They isolated them and could not answer Damaris's cry when she needed them. Whenever they would go to fetch water at the nearest well everyone would run away, they had become an outcast to the community that they had lived in for a long time. Later a Saint Martin volunteer in the area identified the family and reported about them during their monthly meetings. After the initial assessment was done, they were assisted to visit the hospital and purchase psychiatric medication.

After a few months of ensuring treatment and drug adherence, coupled with follow-ups and home visits, the two started showing signs of recovery. Maria eventually became herself again, went back to school and completed her secondary education. The father toned down on his aggression episodes and reverted to functionality. "I have seen great improvement in him, previously, he would not differentiate between food crops and weeds and would uproot everything. Today, he is taking care of those potatoes and green vegetables that he planted," recounted Damaris while pointing at a farm full of flowering potatoes and healthy kales and spinach.

Today, Damaris can sleep peacefully and can afford a smile due to the restored peace of mind. She is positive that the two will continue improving health wise and she is willing to support them in the recovery journey.

The community believed that the family was cursed

Peace & Reconciliation



52% disputes were referred to Amani clubs and resolved amicably.



Our Commitment:

To promote inclusivity and peaceful coexistence within communities for integral human development

"Dumisha Amani" project goal

To promote peaceful resolutions to political and social conflicts among communities of Laikipia West Sub County.

UNSDG 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

INTERVENTIONS AND APPROACHES

Conflict is inevitable in human interaction, occurring in various settings such as workplaces, relationships, and even within us. We work in areas with a history of intergroup and societal conflicts. These conflicts are attributed to historical injustices, control of communal resources, natural hazards such as drought, political competition, cultural intolerance among other factors. Our Peace and Reconciliation programme promotes intra and inter-ethnic dialogue, peaceful solutions to conflicts and social cohesion, building a foundation for long-lasting unity. This is done through:

Engaging children in peacebuilding

Children can be considered as peacemakers and peacebuilders, or conversely, as troublemakers. They represent the future of the country; therefore, engaging them in peace processes and socializing them as peacebuilders early on is important. We introduce and empower Amani clubs in Primary and secondary schools to promote peaceful coexistence in their schools through creative art. Arts for peace allows children and youth a temporary escape from destructive conflict and simultaneously provides them with an outlet for their emotions, opinions, and hopes for the future.

Engagement of youth in peacebuilding through sports

We use football to engage young people from different ethnic groups in peace building. For decades, sport has brought together people from all over the world regardless of their age, gender or ethnicity, to inspire and unite everyone. In Nelson Mandela's words: "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope, where there was once only despair." It provides a space for the upcoming generation to interact, learn social skills, have an inter-cultural exchange and develop their personalities in a positive environment, thereby building a more inclusive community

Empowering communities on peace building

We recruit and empower volunteers as community peace ambassadors across different ethnic groups. They work as agents of conflict resolution and transformation by addressing the unique cultural, social, and historical realities that shape conflicts within local communities. Community peace ambassadors promote restorative justice where cultural integrity is maintained while also adhering to established legal frameworks.

Empowering duty bearers in strategic peace building

We strengthen the capacity of existing structures at all levels of the society to establish and sustain relationships among people locally. The aim is to resolve conflicts peacefully and build societies, institutions, policies, and relationships that are better able to sustain peace and justice.



KEY RESULTS



We trained 13 (7m, 6 f) **teachers** from 15 schools as facilitators and mentors of Amani club patrons. There are **281** (161 boys, 120 girls) members of **Amani Clubs** in the 15 schools. There was an increased utilization of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

"My daughter was to undergo the FGM during the last school holiday, before the set date, we had a CPAs training at Sosian planned by St. Martin CSA. I attended and we learned about children's rights and responsibilities. I protected my daughter from the cut (female genital mutilation) but it did not sit well with my community members. I took time and explained to my daughter why she should not join her agemates during the initiation ceremony. I have been accused by my community that I am encouraging disrespect for culture. My joy is that until now my daughter feels loved and protected against the harmful culture," Paul, Community Peace Ambassador.



10 comprehensive schools participated in activities that fostered environmental stewardship, such as maintaining peace gardens and engaging in performances that communicated messages of unity. This involvement promoted a sense of ownership and strengthened community integration. **80% of the Amani clubs** were run by the learners with minimal guidance from the patrons.

"Nowadays, the leaners have owned the club and are using the learners' manual to do the activities by themselves," Chris Amani club patron at Simotwo comprehensive school.



We trained 149 (76m, 73f) **volunteer community-based peace ambassadors** on peace building and the nexus between conflict and violation of children's rights. The peace ambassadors **addressed the needs of 79** (40 boys, 39 girls) and safeguarded their rights.

"I am greatly impressed by the follow-ups that are conducted by the trained Peace Committees and CPAs especially to parents whose children are found out of school during school sessions", Naomi, Chief Ndurumo Location



We sensitized 2907 (1,600m, 1,307f) **members of public** on the importance of peaceful coexistence and conflict transformation approaches. **5 Youth peace groups** were formed to propagate peaceful co-existence and to seek alternative ways of earning a living. Majority turned into sports as a peace initiative strategy and others into tree planting. This changed the community perception of the youth being troublemakers. They are now being invited into peace meetings and some reconciliation sessions. We **worked with 1 peace committee in each of the 5 locations** in Rumuruti division trained in the previous year. The peace committees in collaboration with other stakeholders facilitated 6 peace dialogues. 5 of them had positive outcomes.



We partnered with the Rumuruti Law Courts to train **15 members of Alternative Justice System committee** on children rights, mediation and leadership. The training enhanced their capacity to handle cases referred to them from Rumuruti law courts. For example, they settled **22 out of the 31 cases amicably** with a win-win outcome reducing the likelihood of future conflict. They also expedited cases involving children and ensured relationships were sustained at family and community level without compromising on the rights of children. As members of Rumuruti Court Users Committee we participated in an open day for children. This gave children a rare opportunity to interact with duty bearers and discuss issues affecting their welfare. 10 national and county government officials participated. They affirmed their support in protecting and safeguarding the rights of children.



We hosted **4 football tournaments** at Sosian Location in Salama Ward, Laikipia West Sub-County which has a history of inter-ethnic clashes to commemorate International Day for Peace. The theme was cultivating the culture of peace. Over 600 people from different ethnic background and from all walks of life and age groups attended and participated in the event.

"St. Martin CSA has promoted bottom-up approach to peace building where peace dialogue is initiated at the grassroots level. Hitherto, the top government officials used to come here to talk about peace when conflict erupted. Today conversation about peaceful coexistence is a daily agenda. We have seen remarkable difference since St. Martin came to our division. As it is said, there is no way to peace, peace is the way," Ms Florence, Sosian Division Assistant County Commissioner.

Conflicts arise from a range of factors, including economic, political, cultural, and psychological differences between individuals and groups. Conflicts are often the result of misunderstandings, misperceptions, and miscommunications.

-Johan Galtung



Photo: Peace and Reconciliation Programme staff with female Community Peace Ambassadors, 2024

In a study investigating the role of peace ambassadors from St. Martin CSA in conflict resolution within Laikipia West, Kenya, where inter-ethnic tensions have historically exacerbated through drought and resource scarcity, Dr. Sarah Rolker - the lead researcher writes:

"Peace ambassadors use their local knowledge and cultural understanding to mediate disputes primarily between pastoralists and farmers. They adopt a proactive, directive approach to conflict resolution, focusing on calming tensions, listening to both sides, and guiding parties toward mutual understanding and forgiveness. Their work is situated within a context marked by structural and cultural violence stemming from poverty and competition over resources."

"The role of peace ambassadors extends beyond mediating disputes; they also engage in community sensitization on critical social issues, such as gender-based violence and children's rights. The training programs conducted by St. Martin are vital in empowering these ambassadors, equipping them with necessary skills for effective intervention," Study findings

Peace Building impact story

The role of children in peace building

Established in 2014 through a collaboration between the National Cohesion and Integration Commission and the Ministry of Education, Amani Clubs are fostering a culture of peace and understanding in Kenyan schools. These student-centered groups aim to promote good relations, harmony, and peaceful co-existence, not just within schools, but also extending to the surrounding communities.

Amani Clubs empower young people to address issues of ethnicity and diversity head-on, planting seeds of tolerance and appreciation for different cultures. They equip students with the skills to navigate challenges peacefully and inspire them to become responsible citizens who promote peace in their daily lives. The clubs stand as a testament to the power of education in transforming societies and building a more peaceful world.

In 2023, the Dumisha Amani project embarked on an initiative to revise the Amani Clubs training manuals informed by the need to align the training content with the evolving educational landscape, especially the recently introduced Competency-based Curriculum (CBC), and the desire to address feedback from the clubs' patrons.

There was a lack of pragmatism in aligning the contents of the manuals with the expectations placed on the students. For example, while the manuals advocated for the use of ICT to connect with other club members across the country, this approach was impractical considering the limited technological infrastructure within the schools in these areas. Another patron cited the complexity of the manuals as a basis for revising the manuals. "the first edition of the manual was written entirely in the English language, posing challenges for students with limited proficiency. In response, the revised manuals are now:

- Clear and easy to navigate: Streamlined content and

improved organization enhance understanding.

- Bilingual: Including Kiswahili alongside English ensures inclusivity and caters to diverse learning styles.
- Activity-oriented: Practical exercises and age-appropriate activities enhance engagement and application of concepts.
- Student-centered: The revised materials encourage active participation and empower students to take ownership of their learning.

The revised manuals were handed over to the schools through their respective Amani Club patrons in a colorful event graced by the Sub-County Education Officer, in Rumuruti on 23rd February 2024. The patrons registered their appreciation for the project's efforts with Marura- Narok's patron saying "the manuals are clear and easy to navigate. I am also impressed by the fact that the manuals now incorporate the English & Kiswahili languages, as opposed to the previous versions which were only in the English language. This thoughtfulness will go a long way in promoting inclusivity and ensuring that students who do not have the best grasp of English are not left behind."

The training manuals were received with enthusiasm by all the teacher patrons present during the event. "We are happy and proud to see that the recommendations were considered." One teacher patron remarked "I am particularly impressed to see that the new manuals have incorporated illustrations and are in the English and Kiswahili languages. This will not only enhance the club members' understanding of the content but also ensure that no members feel excluded due to language barriers."

The Dumisha Amani project facilitated the review of the manuals after careful consideration of the teacher patrons' views who had interacted with the clubs and the manuals. "After our annual monitoring workshop, we were compelled to adjust the manuals considering the



challenges and recommendations cited by the patrons. One of the glaring gaps in the manuals was that the content was too general, and there was a need to tailor-make the content to fit the operational context of the target area. Seeing that the target area is predominantly rural where the English language is majorly used in schools, we purposed to translate the manual into Kiswahili to encourage the clubs' members to easily disseminate learned lessons to the community members in a language that is widely used and easily understood in the community. Furthermore, there was a shared sentiment that the manuals were instructor-centered, prompting a need to revise the content to ensure that children realize their right to participation." Project staff.

The stories shared by Amani Club patrons further highlight the far-reaching positive impacts of these clubs beyond the school walls. From the establishment of Amani gardens for conflict resolution to tree-planting initiatives promoting environmental consciousness, the Amani Clubs are sowing seeds of positive change that extend to entire school populations and communities.

"The Amani Club members in the school established an 'Amani Garden' where they assemble to resolve conflicts detected among the pupils. Apart from the Amani garden's reconciliatory role, the pupils have planted maize, beans, and potatoes, which go a long way in ensuring that the whole school is fed." Kandutura primary school Amani Club patron.

"In Olarinyiro secondary school, the Amani Club members mobilized the other students together they planted over 1000 trees which they take turns watering. I have also observed that the students are more care-free regarding whom they choose to study and play with.

Groupings by ethnicity have reduced considerably, which is a testament to the positive impact of Amani Clubs." Amani Club patron.

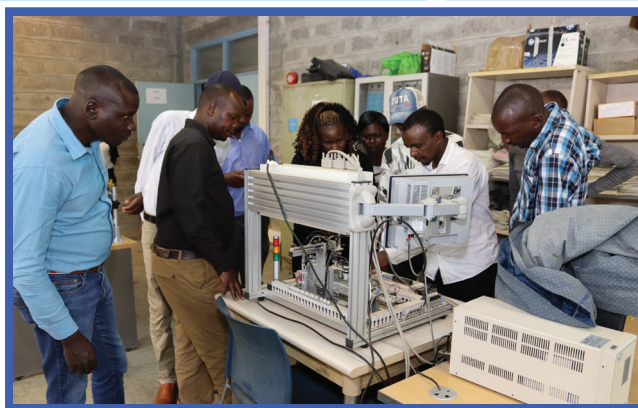
Amani Clubs exemplify the power of education and community engagement in building a harmonious and peaceful society. The positive feedback from the teacher patrons affirms the impact of these changes, making the manuals more accessible and enhancing the overall experience for both students and educators.



Youth Development



The enrolment in Nyahururu and Rumuruti VTC increased by **112%** in one year



Our Commitment:

To empower vulnerable and marginalized youth to unlock their potential, gain employability skills and make significant contributions to the development of their communities

Youth Skills Development & Empowerment project goal:

To enhance the capacity of Vocational Training centres in Laikipia County to attract and produce innovative graduates with the skills and capabilities required to be integrated in the labour market.

UNSDG 8

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all

INTERVENTIONS AND APPROACHES

Kenya recognizes the crucial role of Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) in addressing youth unemployment (20-40%). Despite national efforts outlined in the 2012 TVET policy and 2013 TVET Act, challenges persist, including inadequate funding for Vocational Training Centres and a gap in training and skills acquisition. Laikipia County, with a population of 518,560, faces challenges in facilities, equipment, and human resources, hindering its ability to fully address these issues. In alignment with Kenya's Vision 2030 and recognizing the crucial role of technical vocational education and training in addressing youth unemployment we have partnered with the County Government of Laikipia to develop 2 model vocational training centres through our Youth Skills Development and Empowerment Project. This is achieved through:-

**Campaign to change attitudes and behaviour towards TVET**

We are influencing the attitudes and behaviour of different target groups towards TVET through strategic communication. There is documented evidence that strategic communication can change attitudes and behaviour towards TVET and increase enrolment in TVET and employment of graduates.

Holistic skills development

We are strengthening the integration of transversal skills, entrepreneurial skills, digital competencies and dual TVET approach in the VET curriculum to prepare well-rounded graduates. Diverse and high-quality skills are associated with positive development outcomes in terms of employment and productivity, and for economic growth and competitiveness at the national level.

Support to vulnerable youth

We support youth in vulnerable and marginalised communities with information to make informed career choice, school levies, mentorship and business start-ups. This is to ensure that young people from poor households are not left out in skills development and in the job market.

Institutional strengthening

We are strengthening the capacity of the Nyahururu and Rumuruti VTCs by:

- ◆ Developing a policy to govern vocational training in Laikipia County
- ◆ Curriculum review
- ◆ Strengthening training processes through mentorship of instructors
- ◆ Retraining of instructors on the job and in an industry-based set-up
- ◆ Complementing existing equipment's with the latest modern machinery and equipment to deliver industry-relevant skills.
- ◆ Support for production units for sustainability



KEY RESULTS



Positively influencing attitudes towards vocational Training

Out of our interventions, the enrolment of students in Nyahururu and Rumuruti vocational training centre **increased by 117%** from 223 trainees in 2023 to 446 trainees in 2025. We **reached to 13,949 youth and community members** through awareness creation and campaign to change attitude towards VTCs. We held 30 dialogues with key stakeholders, conducted 40 awareness sessions in the community, organised 7 career fairs held in Nyahururu and Laikipia West Sub-Counties, trained 55 secondary school teachers on career development and technical skills as a career path and held 4 Expos on vocational in Nyahururu and Rumuruti VTC



Enhancing VTCs Systems, structures and processes

We **developed 3 transversal skills manuals** to support integration of transversal skills in vocational training. Additionally, we commissioned research in partnership with Laikipia University on the existing VTCs curriculum/courses to inform the review of the VTCs courses and align them to Laikipia County vision and aspirations. We **trained 91 instructors** to enhance their knowledge and skills; 53 instructors were trained on competency-based pedagogy, 30 on transversal skills and 8 were sponsored to undertake industry-based retraining. The trained instructors in turn **trained 226 youth on transversal skills**. We equipped 2 Nyahururu and Rumuruti VTCs with **6 ultra-modern machines** to enhance quality of the training. In addition, we established 1 ICT hub in each of the VTC. We introduced the dual vocational

education training model and mobilized 93 industry players to support the programme. 59 trainees were offered industrial attachment. Additionally, we recruited 12 industry-based mentors.

Increased enrolment of youth from poor background and marginalised communities in VTCs.

We **supported 56 youth** to pursue their career dreams through vocational training. We offered career guidance to the youth through counselling and training. This enabled them to reflect on their interests, ambitions, abilities and qualifications. This enabled them to make decisions about work and learning and therefore the course to pursue.



Youth empowerment impact story

John's life has been a series of battles, as he has endured multiple surgeries and life-threatening ailments due to a chronic liver condition. His health issues have restricted his ability to perform strenuous work, which was the only type of work available to him, given his high school education.

John's situation seemed hopeless until we met him during the identification and assessment of vulnerable youth for the partial sponsorship program in vocational skills training. Listening to John's story was heart-wrenching. Despite his hardships, John's resilience shone through. His physical appearance did not match his age, leading many to think he was younger, a testament to the toll his condition had taken on his body. John shared his immense passion for the Hairdressing and beauty therapy industry, a dream he had to set aside due to his constant medical needs, which his mother struggled to manage alongside household expenses. He spoke of the stress he felt watching his mother bear these burdens alone and how the church often came to their aid when they lacked food or when medical bills became overwhelming.

When John was selected for the program to pursue Hairdressing and beauty therapy at Nyahururu VTC, he broke down in tears of joy. "I can see my dreams coming true," he said. "Now I will be in a position to acquire skills to empower myself and consequently support my mother and build her a home so we can move out from this given space." John's dreams are big, but he firmly believes the program is the turning point his life needs. Since joining the program in May, John has thrived. His enthusiasm in class has earned him the respect and admiration of both teachers and fellow trainees, leading to his appointment as the class representative. He also said that the skills he has gained in class enable him to make schoolgirls' hair from his neighborhood over the weekend earning him small income. For the first time in his life, John feels a sense of hope. He attests that his health has improved and that he has never been happier.

John's journey with the program is not only giving him vocational skills but also restoring his hope for a better future, where he can support his mother and build a new life for themselves.

Livelihood

 **30 %**
of women-led
households reported an
increased income



Our Commitment:

To build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to shocks and disasters.

Livelihood diversification project goal

To strengthen poor households' capacity to sustainably meet basic needs

UNSDG 1

End poverty in all its form everywhere.

INTERVENTIONS AND APPROACHES

Poor and vulnerable people in marginalised situations often face challenges in accessing formal finance from banks and decentralised financial systems. We are implementing a livelihood project in Laikipia County where 49% of the residents live below poverty line. Prevalent and severe droughts have over the years affected agriculturally based livelihood. This has adversely affected poor people's capacity to sustainably feed their households and earn an income. Our interventions prioritize women led households in vulnerable and marginalized situations. Women are flag bearers in ensuring household wellbeing in the rural areas of most developing countries. They play key roles as food producers and agricultural entrepreneurs who dedicate their own time, income and decision making to maintain food and nutritional security of their households and communities; and ensuring the stability of food supplies in times of economic hardship. Thus, rural women are key agents for achieving the transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. They need more access and control of resources, which together constitute the empowerment capabilities leading to improvement in their livelihoods.

We employ ultra poor graduation model - a holistic livelihoods program designed to address the multi-dimensional needs of extreme poor households with 5 key components: -



Consumption support for basic needs before their livelihood earns income. We provide a regular and time-bound cash transfer to enable project participants meet basic needs and promote positive coping strategies. This helps stabilize households and reduce the need to sell productive assets.

Social empowerment interventions. We empower women with life skills to develop skills and knowledge that enhance their capacity to address key social and health challenges and retrogressive perspectives in the community. Several studies have shown that addressing these issues is fundamental to tackling root causes of poverty and can lead to improved livelihoods, higher levels of productivity, increased savings, self-sufficiency and empowerment, as well as to better social relations and integration.

Formation of self-help groups. We facilitate the formation of self-help groups and train women through these group on self-help group approach, financial literacy and access to microcredit and formal savings services. Financial inclusion plays a critical role in enabling families to plan for the future and build economic resilience. It builds a participant's financial awareness and management skills, their ability to use a range of available services, and their ability to apply their skills and knowledge to manage financial shocks.

Livelihoods support. We empower target groups to start, restart, strengthen or diversify existing livelihoods through financial support. This is intended to enhance households' resilience to natural and economic shocks, enable households to meet basic needs sustainably and increase incomes.

Close mentorship of participants throughout the process in a way that develops their self-confidence.

We mentor individual households on practical every day issues affecting social protection, livelihoods and financial inclusion. Mentorship also reinforces training outcomes by focusing on individual needs, preferences and situations.



KEY RESULTS



Improved saving culture

At the beginning, members of the groups could not dream about possibilities. Their challenges that they faced in life limited their capacity to dream an alternative life for themselves. They did not even believe it was possible to save Ksh 5. In 2025, **23 groups collectively saved a total of 546,000.00**. This was a great milestone in mindset change and empowering possibilities.



Credit for development

Poor people have been regarded as unworthy credit. We transformed this mindset by arguing that the existing credit facilities were not aligned to the needs of the poor. Group members **borrowed a total of 150,000/-** to strengthen, diversify or protect their livelihoods. **80% of the loans were repaid** on time demonstrating strong accountability and financial discipline.



Livelihoods resilience

At the contracting phase, most beneficiaries relied on one major source of income that exposed them to economic and climate related shocks. In 2024, **70% of the members** with agriculture-based and 20% with urban-based small businesses **diversified their livelihoods**. This increased income and spread risks.



Group projects

Group work helps in exposing people to a variety of perspectives, which can lead to new ideas. It also fosters collaboration and teamwork, where everyone has an important role to play. **12/23 groups-initiated group projects**. These include livestock feeds, posho mill, agricultural based projects-maize, pyrethrum, dairy goat and poultry farming and tree nursery. Members of these groups demonstrated reinforced skills in their own individual projects.



Improved Household wellbeing

Family well-being includes the safety, health, and financial stability of all family members. Safe, healthy, and financially secure families are more likely to reach the goals they set for themselves and their children. **80%** of members reported being **food secure** while **50%** of households reported **improved access to nutritious food** from eggs and milk. **60%** of members implementing livestock projects experienced **asset growth** through calving. **30% of the households reported increased incomes**.



Additional resource mobilization

The success of self-help groups depends on resources -time, money, skills, etc. and the ability to use them. 9 groups secured additional resources to further their objectives. **1 group mobilized for Ksh. 50,000/- grant** from Laikipia County Government while 8 groups partnered with different development actors including Food Systems and Resilience Project, Goats Kenya and One Acre Fund. This demonstrated **growing independence of the groups and increased capability**.

Imagine the moment a doctor tells you that your husband won't recover. Esther Wangui faced this devastating reality as she sat by her husband's bedside, knowing their lives were about to change forever. Before his illness, Esther and her husband managed a household supported by her small business refilling and distributing LPG, complemented by his work as a public service driver. However, the financial strain of medical expenses led to the collapse of Esther's business after her husband's passing, leaving her to struggle alone to provide for their children's basic needs.

Now, Esther stands at a crossroads, surrounded by empty gas cylinders that once symbolized their

shared livelihood. With the support of this project, she revived her business, refilling 15 gas cylinders at the start. During this reporting period, Esther has made significant progress, having refilled 28 gas cylinders. Each day, she earns a minimum profit of KES 500, as her business thrives in the town. She plans to relocate to the town to operate more effectively.

"I am happy for this project; it has revived my daily income. Please send my most sincere gratitude to the people who support us, even though they may not know us personally. May God bless them abundantly. I am happy for this project; it has revived my daily income," Esther shares.



A person's livelihood refers to their means of securing the basic necessities of life. It is a set of activities essential to everyday life that are conducted over one's life span. Livelihood diversification is the process by which rural families construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities in their struggle for survival and in order to improve their standards of living.

St. Martin believes that poor and vulnerable households can and must be equipped to do more than just cope. Interventions must be carefully planned to build their skill sets and asset base as well as their confidence and social capital (i.e. community inclusion, gender empowerment, etc.) so they can remain food secure, lead sustainable economic lives and ultimately become more resilient.

BEEP self Help Group is one of the 23 groups that collectively saved of Ksh. 546,000 in 2024. At the group formation stage, over 90% of the group members did not believe that saving a shilling was possible due their daily struggle. Worse still, they were averse to credit. In 2024, members borrowed Ksh. 150,000 from their respective groups and 80% of the loans were repaid on time demonstrating strong accountability and financial discipline. "At the beginning, many members feared loans. What resonated in their minds was that a loan would lead to losing their belongings. I often wondered why we were being forced to confront this 'enemy' called a credit. Today, our lives have been transformed by our capacity to take credit for investment, save and repay loans promptly," Treasure of BEEP SHG.

0798761092

DATE	Contribution	Savings	Loan	Loan Repayment	Balance	Signature
24/1/23	100	450				
5/10/23	100	450				
2/11/23	100	400				
7/12/23	100	400				
4/1/24	100	400				
12/2/24	100	400	30,000		30,000	
7/3/24	100	400		5150	25,750	
4/10/24	100	400		5150	20,600	
2/12/24	100	400		5150	15,450	
6/10/24	100	400		5150	10,300	
17/7/24	100	400		5150	5,150	

They explained to me that the bank cannot lend money to poor people because these people are not creditworthy...poor people always pay back their loans. It is us, the creators of institutions and rules, who keep creating problems for them.

-Muhammad Yunus, the founder of microcredit and father of social business.

Gender Equality

 **25%** girls from pastoralist community who sat for 2024 KCSE attained university admission grade



Our Commitment:

To empower poor and marginalised women and girls to reduce inequality within and among boys/men and girls/women.

Soma Mwana project goal:**UNSDG 1**

End poverty in all its form everywhere.

INTERVENTIONS AND APPROACHES

Gender inequality is a very serious problem which affects almost all societies sub-Saharan Africa. Some communities tend to suffer from this problem more due to cultures that promotes male superiority and female victimization. This is done by the type of role African cultures allocate to men and women. Men are given the more prominent, sophisticated roles while women are given subordinate roles which are somewhat looked down upon. Over the past decade, legislative and policy reform has established a basis for gender equality across all sectors. However, stark regional disparities still exist, compounded by the intersections of poverty, age, and education. Addressing gender inequality is a prerequisite for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and is a core element of our intervention. Gender equality is one of our crosscuttings and No One is Left Behind agenda. In our 2024-2028 strategic plan, we plan to mainstream gender issues in all our intervention. Our interventions include:

Training programme managers in gender transformative approaches

We train programme managers on gender mainstreaming as a strategy for making the needs and interests of all genders an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, policies and organizational processes, so that everyone has the opportunity to benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. Additionally, we train on project coordinators on gender-transformative approaches to empower them with skills and knowledge to address root causes of gender inequalities, remove structural barriers, and empower

Enhancing education outcomes among girls from pastoralist communities

Education is considered as key element in the social and economic development and transformation of societies. Indeed, available research data indicate that no country has experienced social and economic development without investing heavily in human resource development. Quality education is also regarded as key to poverty reduction. We support the education

of girls from pastoralist community to ensure every girl have access to quality education and transit from primary to secondary and tertiary education for them to realize their full potential. This is done through school levies support, life skills training and mentorship and promoting a stimulating, safe, inclusive and child-friendly school learning environments to motivate more girls in school.





- Susan
Sub-county Children's Health
Igwarimi Primary School

According to a study by Muchoki Paul (2020) on influence of intrinsic reward on volunteers' retention at St. Martin CSA, 43.1% of the volunteers are intrinsically motivated. The study further found that St. Martin volunteers are attracted to the mission and see volunteerism as a way of giving back to the community and exercise of Christian duty. 72% of the volunteers were classified as active volunteers

Members of Gatundia community informed Alice, a community mental health volunteer about a lady in their village who looked unkempt and had slept in the cold for three nights. Alice went out, though late in the evening looking for the lady. She found her begging passerby. She engaged her with compassion and learnt that she was from Nyeri County. She had come to the area looking for employment opportunities. It was clear though that she was unwell. As the volunteer was engaging her, a key public gate keeper passed by. The volunteer beckoned him to listen to Jane and to advice how to intervene. The gate keeper probed Jane, took a photo and later offered an advice that such people should be ignored, as they will eventually find their way home.

The volunteer felt differently. Jane could not be ignored. She was desperate and in need. She mobilized a few people, bought food for Jane and placed her in a hotel for the night.

Fortunate enough, Alice was meeting other volunteers the following day for their monthly zonal meeting.

She shared on her encounter with Jane. The volunteers moved into action and made Jane their only agenda for the day's meeting. They tried to connect dots from what Jane shared and using their networks and social media, the volunteers were able to contact Jane's relatives in Nyeri. They were informed that Jane was a poly drug user, which had interfered with her mental wellbeing. Jane's brother facilitated her return home.



KEY RESULTS



We concluded the awakening suppressed voices project in 2024. The goal of the project was to nurture communities where women and girls were free from all forms of violence and girls are empowered to claim their rights and pursue their own goals. The agents of change – police officers, nurses, religious leaders and community facilitators that were trained by the project continued to provide services in their respective communities. They **referred 24 survivors of gender-based violence** to our Bega Kwa Bega office and they were supported through a survivor centered approach.



We **worked with 60 girls** from the pastoralist community and their parents to enhance their education outcomes. We **supported 30 girls** with school uniform and an **additional 58 girls** with psychological and education therapies. 45 parents of the girls said that they have regained their smile after their daughters demonstrated renewed interest in education and hope for a brighter future.



We **sponsored 2 staff** to study a professional course on gender transformative approaches. This is geared to strengthening our capacity in gender mainstreaming at organisation, programme and project level. We joined other partners in commemorating 16 days of activism against GBV in Laikipia County. The year's theme, "Unite to End Violence Against Women and Girls,". The theme underscored the urgent need to renew our collective resolve in combating all forms of GBV, with a particular focus on femicide.

Gender impact story

INCEST AND POWER DYNAMICS

Incest is taboo in this part of Kenya as it is almost everywhere. According to Kenyan laws and in particular the sexual offences Act, incest is sexual relationship between two people who are closely related through blood. Section 20 and 21 of the Act provides that any person who commits an indecent act or an act which causes penetration with another who is to his knowledge his relative is guilty of an offence and where it is proved that the other person is under the age of eighteen years, the accused person shall be liable to imprisonment for life. According to a report on gender-based violence, in every 160 defilement cases reported, 59 are incestuous cases.

Tabitha is 14 years old, the second born in a family of six, and in grade 6. She was living with her parents. She started feeling unwell and was taken to a nearby hospital for medication, but the drugs were not responding, and she had to go back to the hospital now and then. It was at this point that the doctor decided to test her for HIV and she unfortunately turned positive. The doctor shared the information with the parents and were advised accordingly. The doctor engaged Tabitha in a discussion, and she openly shared about sexual abuse by a relative and threats if she disclosed to anyone.

Tabitha and her parents lived in the same compound with the extended family. One of the brothers to the father was working away from home and had not gone back home for some time. Later they received a report that he was very sick and was living alone. The family members agreed to bring him home so that they could take him to the hospital. Tabitha's father was given the responsibility to go for him, he was taken to the hospital and treated. The doctor informed the family that he was suffering from HIV and thus had to adhere strictly to the drugs. Tabitha's father volunteered to house his brother so that he could take good care of him. The family went beyond their means to see that he fed well and adhered to the medication. Gradually

he responded well to the medication and started to regain his strength. After some time, he did not need so much attention and could be left home alone. Other times during the weekends and school holidays, he was left behind with the children as the parents attended to other things in the community. This is the opportunity he used to abuse Tabitha.

The doctor advised the parents to report the case, but the idea was not taken kindly after they shared the information with the extended family members especially Tabitha's grandmother who was of great support to the whole extended family because she had resources. They felt it was a family issue and should be addressed by the family members. Tabitha's parents were in a dilemma about whether to agree with the doctor or the family. By then the information had gone out of hand and some neighbours informed the local authorities; the uncle got arrested.

Things did not turn out well for Tabitha and her parents after the matter was reported. The relatives rejected her saying she had shamed the family and that she was not part of them, the parents were lost and confused. The strong painful rejection words from the relatives traumatized the girl, she felt alone and was affected psychologically. However, the teacher followed her up and realized that the girl needed rescue and counselling. Through the teacher, she was rescued and referred to St Martin St. Rose Rescue Centre for Girls for counselling, care and protection.

After a period of stay in the rescue centre, a home visit was conducted, there was a clear indication that Tabitha was unwanted at home, even the parents were warned against living with her unless they relocated. After extensive exploration with the parents, a sister to the grandmother who was living at a distant place agreed to host her. Her reintegration was successful, and she was to join a nearby school.

Mission Outreach



Revenue from community led mental health fundraising initiative increased by **25%**



Collaborative approach

Collaboration with other organisations and institutions widened our pool of supporters and increased our reach and impact within the community. We made significant progress in establishing partnerships and strengthening relationships with stakeholders.

Through our Peace and Reconciliation Programme we participated in the Nyandarua County Non-State Actors Forum. St. Martin was appointed as the secretary for the **55** non-state actors. We also partnered with Laikipia and Nyandarua County Governments, different national government offices including children's department, police, judiciary and institutions of higher learning for example Laikipia University and Nyandarua polytechnic in the implementation of activities.

We collaborated with other civil society organisations for intra-organizations learning for example Elimu-Malindi, Civil Society Network-Kisumu, Christian Impact Model-Yatta.

The religious institution formed an important pillar of our work. We engaged **148 churches** across denominations in the implementation of our activities and hosted **20 religious leaders** to discuss the role of faith-based organizations in responding to the needs of poor and vulnerable people. We engaged with **157 corporate institutions**, including banks, SACCOs, hospitals, and hotels as important actors in our communities.



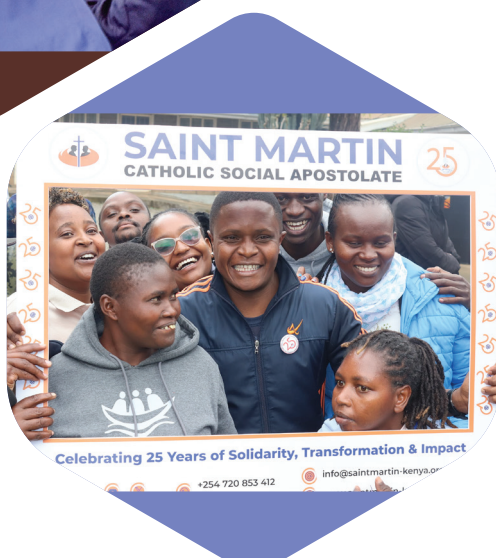
Development communication

We used various media platforms to amplify the mission of St. Martin, facilitate meaningful participation, and foster social change. Our social media through **Facebook grew by 121%** reaching 68,840 people with 516 new followers. We registered **14,500 content interactions**. We expanded our digital presence to TikTok and Instagram. Media play a fundamental role in development communication. We held a media breakfast with **15 local and national media houses**. During the year, 4 television stations covered and aired 3 St. Martin major events

Solidarity events

A solidarity event is much more than a simple fundraiser: it is the involvement of many people united by the same ideal. We organised many events at community level around poor people in vulnerable and marginalised situations. At organisation level, hosted **5** events at community level to celebrate volunteerism and the work of the volunteers. 168 volunteers participated in the celebrations and 2063 members of the community graced the celebrations. 2024 was a remarkable year as we celebrated our silver jubilee since the organisation was registered as a trust in 1999. We celebrated 25 years of transformation, solidarity and impact. Different group of **visitors donated Ksh 432,464** in support of our mission while **individual and group local philanthropists contributed Ksh. 718,500**

That gratitude that flows from giving selflessly is a gentle reminder of the power of kindness and the profound impact we can have on each other's life.



Formation

We are all spiritual beings. We have physical bodies, but our lives are largely driven by an unseen part of us that shapes the way we see the world and ourselves, directs the choices we make, and guides our actions. Our spiritual formation involves a process whereby we adopt practices that help us deepen our openness and receptivity to God's presence and action in our life. **94 members** of Mental Health Local Fundraising Committee participated in a one-day retreat under the theme 'The Ministry of Fundraising'. **40 staff, management, and board members** attended 8 days residential retreat at Mwangaza Spiritual Centre individual retreat fostering personal reflection and renewal. **30 members** of Betania Spiritual Formation Team participated in 5 retreats to reflect and prepare for the spiritual formation of staff and volunteers. They facilitated 30 formations during trainings, 5 volunteers' day celebrations and 4 staff retreats



Immersion Programme

The immersion programme offered an enriching experience to the participants. It offered them an opportunity to explore new horizons, broaden their perspectives, and gain a deeper understanding of our organisation and what it has to offer. In an increasingly interconnected world, possessing global awareness is beyond important. Through this programme, we promoted north-south and south-south dialogue. Additionally, the program offered students hands-on experience in professional settings, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations. This enhanced their employability, cultural competence, networking opportunities and academic integration. **421 local and international visitors** participated in the mission of the organisation. These visits significantly enhanced the organization's visibility, promoted its mission, and strengthened global and local connections. We offered 1 day to 3 months experience and internships to 55 students from different institutions of learning. We also welcomed 2 catholic sisters from the Congregation of Reparatrix Sisters for pastoral experience.



Local fundraising initiative

Local fundraising initiatives diversified income sources for the organisations. They provided a great opportunity to utilize and motivate existing philanthropists. It provided a stronger sense of belonging to our cause. We run a successful mental health fundraising event for the sixth consecutive year. The **event raised Ksh. 4 million** and **interacted with over 10,000 people** in the process through mental health **awareness in 143 churches**, 5239 raffle tickets and one on one engagement with the staff, management committees, board and local fundraising committee members. We organised **3 friends of St. Martin forums** in Nakuru and Nairobi City and Nanyuki town. **224 people** participated in the events. **43.2% more people participated** compared to 2023. This initiative is a source of moral, financial and technical support to the organisation

Whenever and however, we serve another person in love, life spills out of us – and by God's grace brings new health and life to them.

"In every struggle, I see an opportunity to uplift others, because the true measure of success is the impact we have on those around us." Peter, a friend of St. Martin CSA

"Understanding the history of St. Martin enabled us to fully embrace the project's perspective. The phrase "no one is so poor that they have nothing to give, and no one is too rich that they have nothing to receive" has left a lasting impression on our time there. We have learned about the many realities in which St. Martin operates and observed how each is driven by a profound spirit of community and generosity." CSA guest

The Power of Volunteerism in shaping a noble course



The Mental Health Local Fundraising Initiative has stood as a beacon of hope for countless individuals struggling with mental health challenges in our community for the past five years. This initiative, driven by passion, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to social change, has transformed lives in ways that were previously unimaginable. At the heart of this noble cause is Wallace Nderitu Kariuki, the chairperson of the organizing committee, whose servant leadership exemplify the power of volunteerism in shaping a noble course.

Wallace's involvement in the mental health fundraising initiative began in 2019 during St. Martin's 20th anniversary. He was invited for a dinner at St. Martin by a friend but he was not aware what he was responding to. However, the mental health fundraising dinner sparked in him a deep and lasting passion for mental health advocacy. The event became a turning point in his life, as it opened his eyes to the dire need for mental health awareness and the plight of people with mental illness who suffered in silence.

In 2020, Wallace among a group of people who were invited to a round table discussion on how the community can play a central and greater role in organizing mental health local fundraising initiative. Wallace was appointed the Chairperson of the committee. In his acceptance speech he said, "service to humanity is service to God" and he wholeheartedly accepted the challenge. He was

new in the field of community engagement and mental health. He chose to walk by faith and learning in the process. Over time, his awareness and understanding of mental health deepened through interactions with individuals battling mental health conditions; listening to their stories of struggle and resilience, their hopes and inspirations after they recover. These encounters fired flames in him to work tirelessly to break the stigma and foster a more compassionate society.

Under Wallace's determined leadership, the fundraising initiative has experienced tremendous growth, expanding its reach and impact. One of the core objectives of the initiative has been raising awareness about mental health, a mission that has yielded remarkable and tangible results that include: -

- ◆ A significant increase in the number of individuals seeking mental health support, demonstrating a notable shift in public perception on mental illness.
- ◆ The establishment of a Community Counselling Centre at St. Martin CSA to provide vital services to those in need.
- ◆ The setup of a psychiatric clinic at Nyahururu County and Referral Hospital, an essential facility that did not previously exist, now serving as a lifeline for many.
- ◆ Recognition of mental health initiative at County and national level at the national level, exemplified by the attendance of the then Principal Secretary for Health, Dr. Mercy Mwangangi, at the 2022 fundraising luncheon, and Laikipia County Governor His Excellence Joshua Irungu in 2023 a testament to the initiative's growing influence and credibility.

Beyond financial contributions and logistical support, Wallace emphasizes that the initiative's true impact lies in its ability to change hearts and minds, fostering a culture of empathy, understanding, and collective responsibility. He recalls a particularly moving moment that was highlighted on St. Martin CSA's social media:

'Thank you for giving us back our son,' words spoken by a family whose son was rescued from addiction that was taking a toll on his mental health.

One of the key lessons that Wallace has learnt is that people contribute in diverse ways, each according to his ability. Some offer financial support, while others give their time and skills. Recognizing and valuing the unique contribution of each member has been instrumental in maintaining elevated levels of engagement among organizing committee members. He believes that for volunteerism to work, a seed of love needs to be planted in the heart. He says that helping other does not mean we don't have our own burdens, but sharing makes our own burdens lighter.

Wallace envisions a future where this initiative is not only sustained but scaled to national level. He hopes that more institutions such as churches, schools, and prisons will establish dedicated mental health support structures to widen mental health services. "It would be amazing to see preachers nourishing not just the spiritual lives of their congregants but also advocating for their mental well-being. Imagine if school counsellors could not only correct student behaviours but also help students who are mentally distressed. Their parents and teachers could benefit from such an arrangement, too" says Wallace.

To sustain volunteer motivation in the committee, Wallace suggests enhancing retreats and reflection sessions, ensuring that volunteers remain energized and engaged. We are pushing forward without breaks, but I believe we need to pause and reflect occasionally. If we do not, we risk exhaustion and losing sight of our purpose." He also believes in spreading the spirit of volunteerism beyond the initiative. We must sow the seed of volunteerism in people's hearts by showing them the fulfilment that comes from serving others." One of his long-term aspirations is to transform the perception of mental health support from being seen as solely the responsibility of institutions to being a shared community-driven effort. He believes a healthy community is a wealthy community. If we all play our part, we can change lives and build a future where no one suffers in silence.

Wallace Kariuki's unwavering leadership and the dedication of the Mental Health Local Fundraising Committee serve as a testament to the transformative power of volunteerism. Through their tireless efforts, mental health awareness has significantly increased, essential services have been established, and a growing number of individuals are now receiving the support they desperately need. As the initiative continues to evolve, its impact will undoubtedly extend far beyond its current reach, inspiring a nationwide movement for mental health advocacy and community-driven change.



LESSONS LEARNED

Reflecting on the events of 2024, valuable lessons have been learned through the implementation of different programme and project interventions.



Our Human Resource

In 2024, we maintained an engaged workforce in a conducive environment that enhanced productivity. We continued to invest in our performance management system, emphasizing team centric approach to our work, individual staff engagement and support. Through focused training at the programmes and projects level, professional development, and supportive policies, we have made significant strides in achieving our human resource strategic goals.

WORKFORCE OVERVIEW

We worked with a diverse workforce across several categories to deliver on the mission and objectives of the organization.

In addition to this workforce, we had a dedicated and selfless board of trustees that ensured St. Martin remained a going concern and true to its mission.

CATEGORY	TOTAL No.	% of the total workforce
Community volunteers	540	82.6%
Staff on contracts	43	6.6%
Programmes management committee members	30	4.6%
Counselor volunteers	12	1.8%
Casuals	10	1.5%
Board of management	9	1.4%
Attachees and interns	7	1.1%
Office volunteers	1	0.2%
Expatriate	1	0.2%
Total	653	100%

Onboarding: We welcomed 3 interns and 7 students from various institutions for industrial attachments, offering them valuable practical experience. Furthermore, 2 interns were offered contracts in support of the Youth Project and Capacity development office, demonstrating our commitment to nurturing talent.

Offboarding: 4 staff members departed the organization to pursue alternative opportunities, while 1 staff member retired after years of dedicated service.

Training and Development: We recognize the crucial role of training and development in enhancing workforce capabilities and career advancement. Key initiatives during the year were planned and realized. These included:

Continuous Learning: Departments and programs conducted ongoing team learning, debriefings, and team-building activities to enhance job mastery across thematic areas.

Spiritual Formation: Staff participated in spiritual retreat sessions to foster wellbeing and promote team cohesion. A team of 20 staff and management/board members attended a 8-day silent retreat at Mwangaza Spirituality Centre spread throughout the year.

Professional Development: We supported 4 staff in their professional development through professional certification and accreditation in human resource, general counseling, and addiction counseling.

Partnerships: We continued to collaborate with our funding partners, Kindernothilfe (Germany) and Comundo, to provide staff with short courses focused on children's rights programming and advocacy. In addition, our staff worked with Laikipia University, and The Career Development Association of Kenya where our staff gained more practical skills on career development, research skills and manual development.

Moving into the future, we are committed to building a motivated, skilled, and engaged workforce. We remain dedicated to creating a workplace where employees can thrive and contribute to the organization's mission.



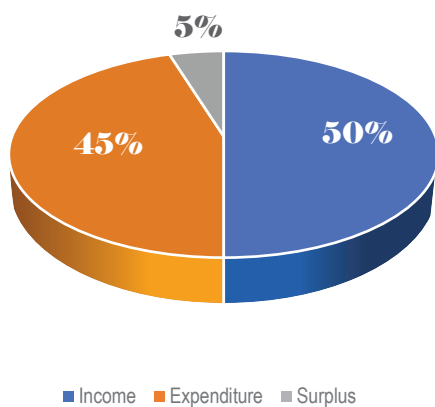
Financial Summary

This presentation of 2024 financial report is interim. The audit will commence early next year in January and conclude in February. We will share the audit report as is our tradition with all key stakeholders. However, this report is a fair presentation in percentages and ratio on our financial conduct and commitment in 2024. We received a sum of Ksh 87,806,009 locally and internationally towards our mission. 51.17% of the funds received was restricted against 48.83% unrestricted funds. Part of the unrestricted funds came from the disposal of unutilized and depreciated assets and proceeds from interest on fixed deposit and exchange gains. Our expenditure stood at Ksh 79,688,266.00 with a balance of Ksh. 8,117,743.00. Some of the scheduled activities were not concluded by the end of the year due to exogenous factors. Part of the funds will be utilized early next year, since the organization had entered in contractual agreements with service providers.

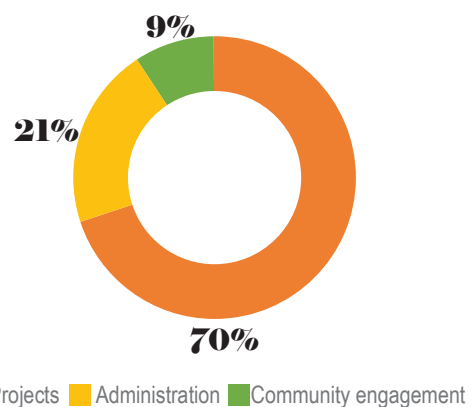
We're always working to keep our overhead low. In 2024, we used 70% of our total operating expenses for programs that benefit children, families, and communities in need. This is 8% improvement from last year. Expenses on general administration dropped by 7%. This is a strategic commitment to make sure that for each dollar, euro or shilling donated to St. Martin CSA, we commit more of it to strengthen communities and structures to sustainably respond to the needs of vulnerable people.

The gratitude that flows from giving selflessly is a gentle reminder of the power of kindness and the profound impact we have on each other's lives

Income versus expenditure (ksh)



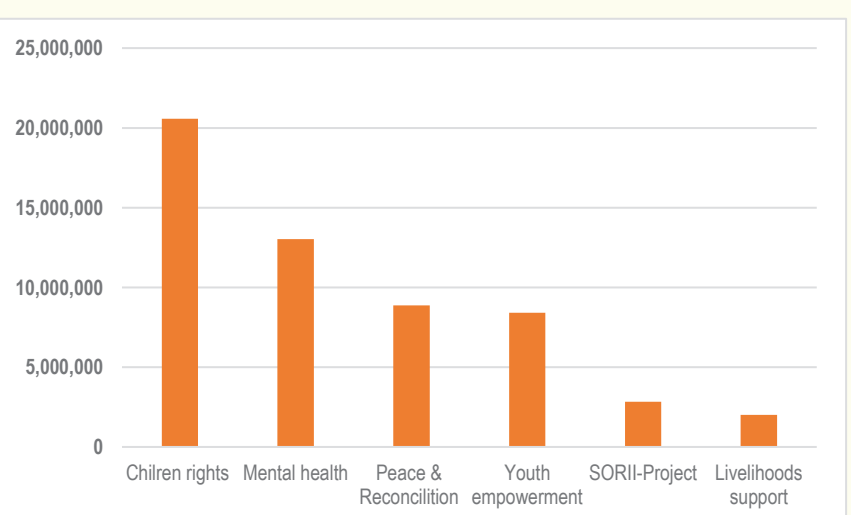
% share of the budget



Expenditure by thematic area

This analysis does not represent organization commitment and prioritization of societal issues. It is based on our capacity to mobilize resources in different thematic areas and availability of resources.

All the thematic areas are interrelated and intertwined. In many occasions, we take household approach to respond to multiple needs. For example, we encounter gender-based violence in households affected by mental health sometimes due to poverty. Children in these households might require care and protection due to either mental illness in the household, violence or poverty that leads to violations of their rights.



OUR GRATITUDE



2024 was a significant milestone in the history of St. Martin CSA as we marked quarter of a century of success, growth and resilience. It was a momentous occasion as we celebrated a journey of transformation, solidarity and impact at individual, family and community levels. It was a time to reflect on the past and celebrate the present. It was a moment to look back at the challenges and triumphs that we faced over the past 25 years. It was also a time to appreciate the hard work and dedication of the individuals who have contributed the transformations, solidarity and positive changes in our communities. The silver jubilee celebration also served as a motivation to continue with the mission: strengthening our reach, influence, impact and reaching new milestones in the future. On behalf of St. Martin CSA, I extend my heart gratitude and deep appreciation for the thousands of people from all walks of life who have been part of our mission. You made it possible for us, individually and collectively.

We are grateful to the almighty God for his providence, protection and guidance over the years. When I look back, it is not easy to see how we made it in different seasons, but God made it possible for us. He sent angels in human skin to accompany us through this journey. I convey our immense gratitude to everyone who became an instrument in the Hands of God to restore the dignity of poor people in vulnerable and marginalised situations.

It is not always obvious to be welcomed in a new community. The geographical communities in Baringo, Laikipia and Nyandarua counties where we implemented our programmes and projects gave us priceless opportunities to understand their challenges and strengths/assets. This made us design projects that responded to real and felt needs while preserving and restoring their dignity to discern the future of their communities. Your contribution of time, skills, and resources to enhance the well-being of needy people in your midst and cohesion in your communities was invaluable. We found hundreds of people who generously volunteered to serve in our mission. You walked for miles, touched wounds and unconditionally served vulnerable people and your communities. Thank you is an understatement for the kindness you have shown towards our ministry. You taught us how to live the gospel of service.

Sincere thanks to all the individuals, groups and organisations that partnered with us in carrying out our mission. We have met some of you; know others by name, and countless more we have yet to meet. Yet you all believed in our mission and shared your resources with us. It is this kindness that gives hope to humanity. Thank you so much for your help. 2024 would have been impossible without you. You made our apostolate a network of selfless and generous people inspired to work for a more just society while caring for and empowering vulnerable people.

The results that we celebrated in 2024 were made possible by the Trustees, Board members, Programmes committee members and the staff who ensured the health of the organization. We united around a shared vision and responded to constantly evolving context with grace and courage. You worked round the clock to make St. Martin sustainable in years to come. You translated policies, strategies, projects and other resources to life giving interventions. Each one of you was a special gift!

Last but not least, I convey my gratitude to the people that we served. They looked beyond their vulnerability and believed in their potentiality. They turned their malediction to benediction. They allowed us to touch their wounds and vulnerability and became a source of healing for those us who were ashamed, weak or afraid to welcome our vulnerability. While at one point they were a rejected stone, they became a cornerstone for transformation and solidarity in our families and communities.

In everything we give thanks; for this is God's will for you
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Irene Wamithi,
Member, Board of Trustees,
St. Martin CSA.

With Gratitude to our Funding Partners, Collaborators and Friends



Street Families Rehabilitation
Trust Fund



PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO



County Government
of Laikipia



Civil Society Organizations



Faith Communities



Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu



County Government
of Nyandarua



Target communities



Well Wishers



Volunteers



Service recipients

2024



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