

Accelerating investments towards child Development

God, your love is so precious!

You protect people as a bird
protects her young under her wings

Psalms 36:7-8

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from Samuel Wambugu

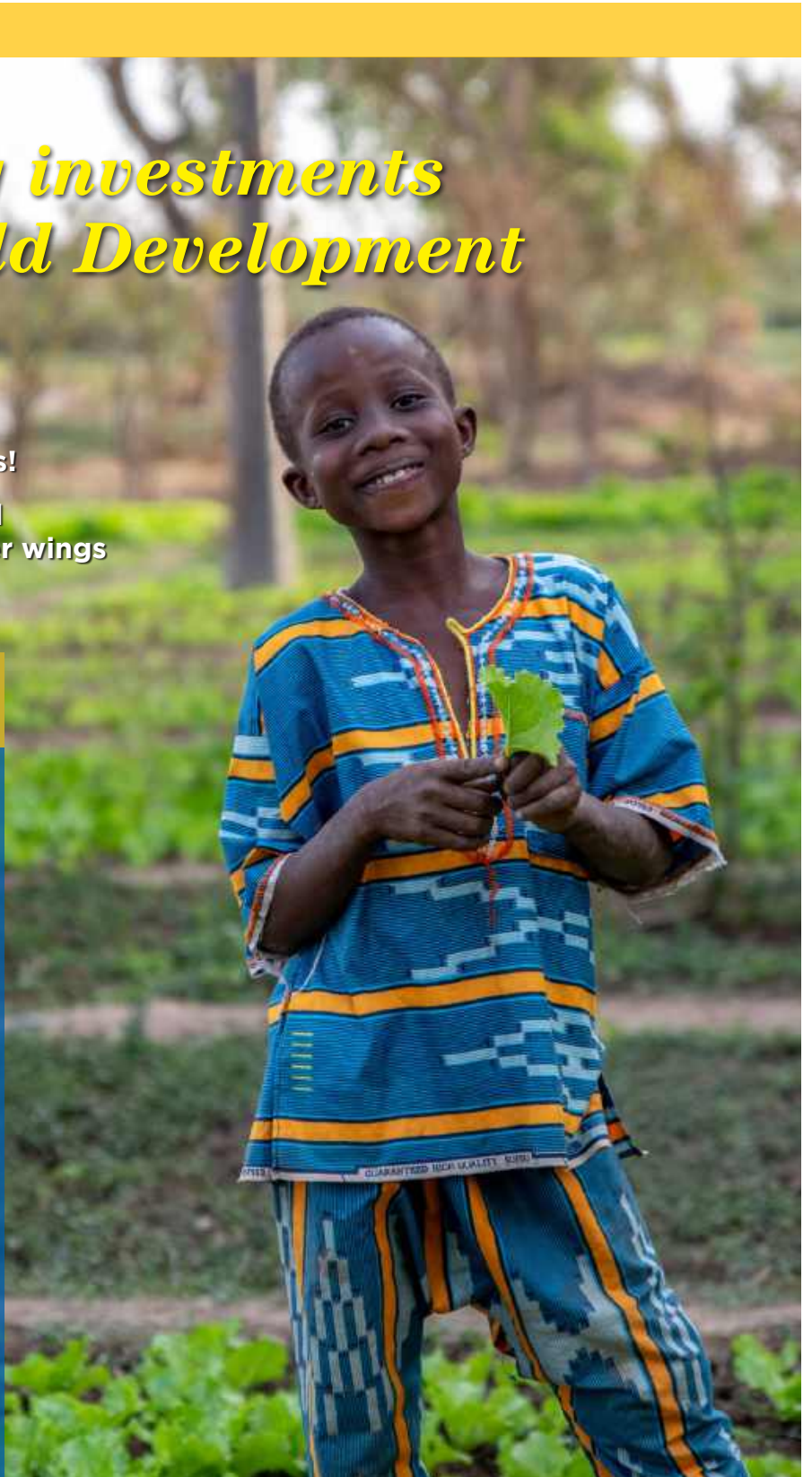
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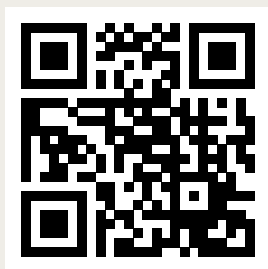
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Our Mission



Releasing Children from poverty in Jesus' name

Our Vision



As a result of our ministry to children in poverty, Compassion will be trusted by the Church worldwide as the leading authority for holistic child development and will be the global benchmark for excellence in child sponsorship.

Core Values



Integrity

Discernment

Dignity

Stewardship

Excellence



Introducing Our National Director

Samuel Wambugu,

Seventeen years ago, Samuel Wambugu felt a profound sense of urgency to work with an organization aligned with his core values. Joining Compassion was a no-brainer with the tagline 'Releasing Children from Poverty in Jesus' Name'. Compassion was right up his alley. At the time, he also served the church and volunteered with charities supporting low-income families.

Years later, he is learning the ropes of leading the largest non-governmental organization (NGO) in Kenya dedicated to creating a better and safer world for children living in extreme poverty.

A little Tale of History



In February 2005, Wambugu married Angela and joined Compassion Kenya three months later. For most people in a new relationship and a new job, things can be magical. It's a weird combination of excitement and terror that has you on the edge of your seat. If you meet Wambugu, please, ask him all about it.

Wambugu took up several other roles in Compassion, including Sponsor Donor Support Associate (SDSA), Sponsor Donor Support (SDS), Supervisor, Partnership Facilitator, Training and Support Manager, and Change Network Lead. From January 2018 to December 2021, he served as the Senior Manager of Program Support.

Times and seasons are beautiful in God's time

Stepping into a leadership role — whether as a seasoned executive or National Director, is challenging and exciting. But learning that leadership is not heroic is what is truly transformative. Wambugu echoes these sentiments when he explains leadership is about unlocking the forces that bring people together and inspire change. Importantly it's all about trusting God.

“Trusting in God is foundational to my faith and life as a believer. It is the only way to be effective at servant leadership,” he shared. His confidence as a leader comes not from his strength but from letting go and letting God in.

It's a marathon, not a sprint

Much like a business where successful returns come with consistent capital contributions, seeing positive outcomes in the lives of children and their families takes a steady, focused investment and time.

“For any leader, in any industry, seeing that your work has an impact is what is truly exciting. Seeing children thrive despite their situations and outcomes. But that's a gradual transformation; it can't come overnight.”

The family as a transformative pillar

Have you ever wondered what a National Director would take to a deserted Island? You guessed right if you thought of a phone to keep in touch with family.

Wambugu is devoted to his family and believes strongly in the transformative power of family connection. He shared that there is power in presence and intentionality when raising children. When we slow down and take the time to be mentors to our children, they can be who God designed them to be.

The Radical Runaways:

Inside a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Rescue Centre for Girls



In a thicket off the dusty road, 10-year-old Faith* surveys her options. Which tree will be the safest to spend the night in? The shadows are lengthening, and she glances nervously over her shoulder. **A spotted hyena, a lion, her older brothers — she’s not sure which would frighten her more.**

She chooses a sese tree, sturdy and reassuring. Jamming her feet onto footholds, she hauls herself up into the branches. With the solid trunk against her back, she shuts her eyes in relief. **She’s in northern Kenya’s wilderness, alone except for hidden, prowling predators. She spends the long night squinting into the darkness and jumping at sounds.**

But she refuses to climb down and run home. The danger there, the dread of three strange letters — FGM — feels more terrifying.



“In our community, when a girl reaches about 9 years old, she is taken through FGM and then married off. So, when my parents told me that they would do that to me, I ran away and hid in the bush for a day,” Faith explains.

“On returning home, my brothers threatened to beat me with sticks. I ran away for good. I know girls my age who went through FGM and look like grandmothers now because of their difficult lives and the depression they suffer.”

A Violation of Human Rights

Performed by traditional circumcisers known as “cutters,” or even medical professionals, FGM is a brutal ritual. It involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is usually performed on girls before age 15 — sometimes on girls as young as babies.

Traditionally signalling a girl’s readiness for marriage, FGM is a violation of children’s rights.

Each year, around 4 million girls like Faith are at risk of being cut. The consequences are immediate and lifelong. Infections, chronic pain, difficulty urinating, infertility, psychological trauma — and even death. **Despite being illegal in most of these countries, FGM continues in western, eastern, and north-eastern Africa, as well as among immigrants in places like Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States.**

FGM and child marriage often go hand in hand. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reports that almost 1 in 4 Kenyan girls are married before age 18 and almost 1 in 20 by age 15.

“I tried to implore my parents not to marry me off, but they were adamant,” says Faith. “My biggest fear was not being able to attend school, and I was also afraid of being a third or fourth wife to a man older than 50. That is not the life I had envisioned for myself.”

She heard hope-filled whispers of a primary school 62 miles away that offered refuge to girls in her situation. With her future narrowing before her eyes, Faith fled. **After one week of walking, pale with fatigue, she reached the school gate.** Dozens of girls played in the yard. One by one, they stopped to stare.

In her traditional goatskin skirt, vest and beads, Faith stood out among their neat school uniforms.

The girls knew what to do, though. They led Faith into the school building. To **meet Florence.**

No Ordinary School

Florence has a beaded bracelet in the pattern of the Kenyan flag. It’s appropriate: This head teacher of the local primary school could easily be described as a mother to her nation. Her dark eyes are quick and observant, her arms always ready to pull a child in for a hug.



Florence embraces Faith.

She remembers the first time she met Faith four years ago. “She could only speak Pokot dialect and was dressed in traditional regalia,” says Florence.

“She was tired, filthy, and emaciated. We took her in, cared for her, and gave her all the psychological support she needed.”

Florence knew exactly how to help Faith — she had once been in her position. **Her father had nine wives and 77 children. He didn’t believe education was necessary for girls, so Florence snuck to school each day.** Once, he caught Florence still wearing her school uniform. He beat her. When she was 12 years old, her family received an offer. “An old man from a neighbouring village wanted me to be his fourth wife,” says Florence. Her eldest brother had already accepted the bride price of camels, cows, and goats. **After the ritual cutting of FGM, she would be considered the man’s property.**

Florence did the only thing she could. She ran.

Over the next decade, Florence lived with friends so she could attend school, then college, sending word to her supportive mother that she was OK. Graduating with a teaching degree, she became the first of the 38 girls in her family to finish her education.

At 21, she married the man of her choice — a privilege few women her age knew. She was appointed head teacher at a primary school and was excited to mentor young girls.

What occurred next, she says, “happened as if by the plan of God.”

The Rescue Centre for Girls

In 2003, two girls arrived at the school, desperate and dishevelled. Florence looked into their eyes and saw herself as a child. They had run from FGM and early marriage.

Knowing the girls couldn't return home, Florence converted a classroom into a dormitory. Mattresses replaced school desks. The rescue centre was born. As word spread, other girls sought refuge. **The average age of the arrivals is 12 years old.** The youngest was just 9.

"They arrive traumatized and sometimes injured. Many girls must make the treacherous trip to the centre at night. Some spend days walking with no food or water, depending only on well-wishers or foraging in the bush for whatever they can eat. They reach the centre tired, dirty, and emaciated," says Florence.

Each girl is enrolled into school, often for the first time.

“Poverty and FGM are like brother and sister,” explains Florence. “Many families, because of poverty, only look at girls as a source of income.”

In Kenya, “bride price” is still widely practised, where the groom's family pays their future in-laws in money, gifts, or animals. “Girls are not enrolled in school, and as soon as they are 9 years old, a suitor is sought. **Not educating girls continues to promote poverty, as women cannot make decisions since they are wholly dependent on their husbands.**”

She continues, “Girls and women are the pillars of a nation. An educated girl means the community can make better choices at a family level. When girls and women are economically empowered, the entire community experiences the benefits.”

By day, it's an ordinary school. “But as soon as the regular students leave at the end of the day, we become a centre for girls who have run away from home, seeking a chance to make a better future for themselves and their families,” says Florence. “Here, they receive counselling, food, and their basic needs are provided.”

At the end of the school day, Florence also switches roles — from teacher to mother.

“She has a genuine love for all of us that can only be God-sent,” says Faith.

When the pandemic forced schools to close in Kenya, Florence took two dozen girls into her own home. Faith says simply, “If that is not love, then what is?”

However, it's dangerous work. Florence and her team are defying centuries-old traditions passed down from generation to generation. **“I am challenging the status quo as a woman, so I am constantly at risk,” she says.** She has been confronted by a group of men armed with canes, men intent upon reclaiming an intended bride — and teaching Florence a lesson. Thankfully, the police arrived to intervene.

Florence remains undeterred.



A Life-Changing Partnership



As she blazes a trail in her community, Florence is not alone. Her husband is supportive, and their 27-year-old daughter helps to mentor the girls. And in 2016, Compassion partnered with the local church to launch Compassion's Child Sponsorship Program in the community. **Florence was unanimously selected to chair the committee overseeing the child development centre.**

“My role at the Compassion centre entails championing the rights of the children. With the help of Compassion, we can empower the community to take up child protection seriously,” she says. “Compassion has provided immense knowledge to help me in the championing of children's rights.”

With Florence and the local church's efforts, change is happening. There is a new generation of girls who will never know the pain of FGM or the consequences of early marriage.

“The Child Sponsorship Program will give the children a ray of hope,” says the Rev. Yusuf, the church pastor.

“We give them the opportunity to relearn, and the tools to be able to shun cultural practices that do not honour God. **The Word of God is the greatest tool for transformation, and we believe that as we disciple our kids to disciple other kids in the community, there will be a ripple effect of change.**”

Parents, too, are trained in children's rights and are offered an alternative Bible-based coming-of-age ceremony to replace the traditional rituals. **“We need the parents to be at the forefront of protecting their kids from any practices that infringe on their rights,”** says Yusuf.

The centre’s dream is to empower girls to be role models at the forefront of change in the community — and even the world. **“We envision girls who are governed by the Word of God, who value themselves and their bodies, and believe that God made them wonderful as they are,”** he says.



Nine-year-old Joan, left, is in Compassion’s program. She and her family have the support of the Rev. Yusuf and his church.

A Pillar of Hope

Since 2003, more than 413 girls have sought refuge at Florence’s school. Many are now attending high schools, boarding schools and colleges around the country, some on scholarships Florence helped to secure. **Today, 14-year-old Faith is wearing the neat school uniform she had always longed for. She says the school is her home now and dreams of being a doctor.**

“It is my desire that the stories of resilience and courage by the many girls I have met here are shared,” says Faith. “The work that Florence does is of immense importance and must be prioritized if FGM and early marriages are to be resolved.”

Sadly, seven girls who left the centre and returned home during COVID-induced lockdowns are now married. **UNICEF reports that the COVID-19 pandemic’s effects — shuttering schools, increasing child marriage, disrupting advocacy programs — could lead to an extra 2 million cases of FGM over the next decade.** As poverty increases, parents’ fears over their daughters’ futures leaves them facing heartbreaking choices.

Faith believes everyone can play a part in ending the practice. “People can help by supporting the efforts of people like Florence and by offering their platforms and influence to address the issue of FGM,” she says. **“It is a violation of so many rights of children and must be treated as such — a crime.”**

Asked how she’d like to see the rescue center in 10 years’ time, Florence dreams of it being “a pillar of hope.” But if you ask Faith and the hundreds of girls who came after her, who stumbled into the school under a stark sun or in the dead of night, when they were dazed, desperate and desolate — it already is.

By Zoe Noake

Child Protection Policy



Our main objective in 2022 is child safety and advocacy at the community level. As a church, we had to train the caregivers, so they could select from amongst themselves leaders capable of being trainers of trainers (TOTs), within their communities.

We have a group of 18 caregivers who train other caregivers in their villages. They also help the project follow up with child protection cases at the community level; for the registered beneficiaries and other children in the community. The caregivers selected the TOTs from their grassroots leaders spread across the beneficiaries' villages.

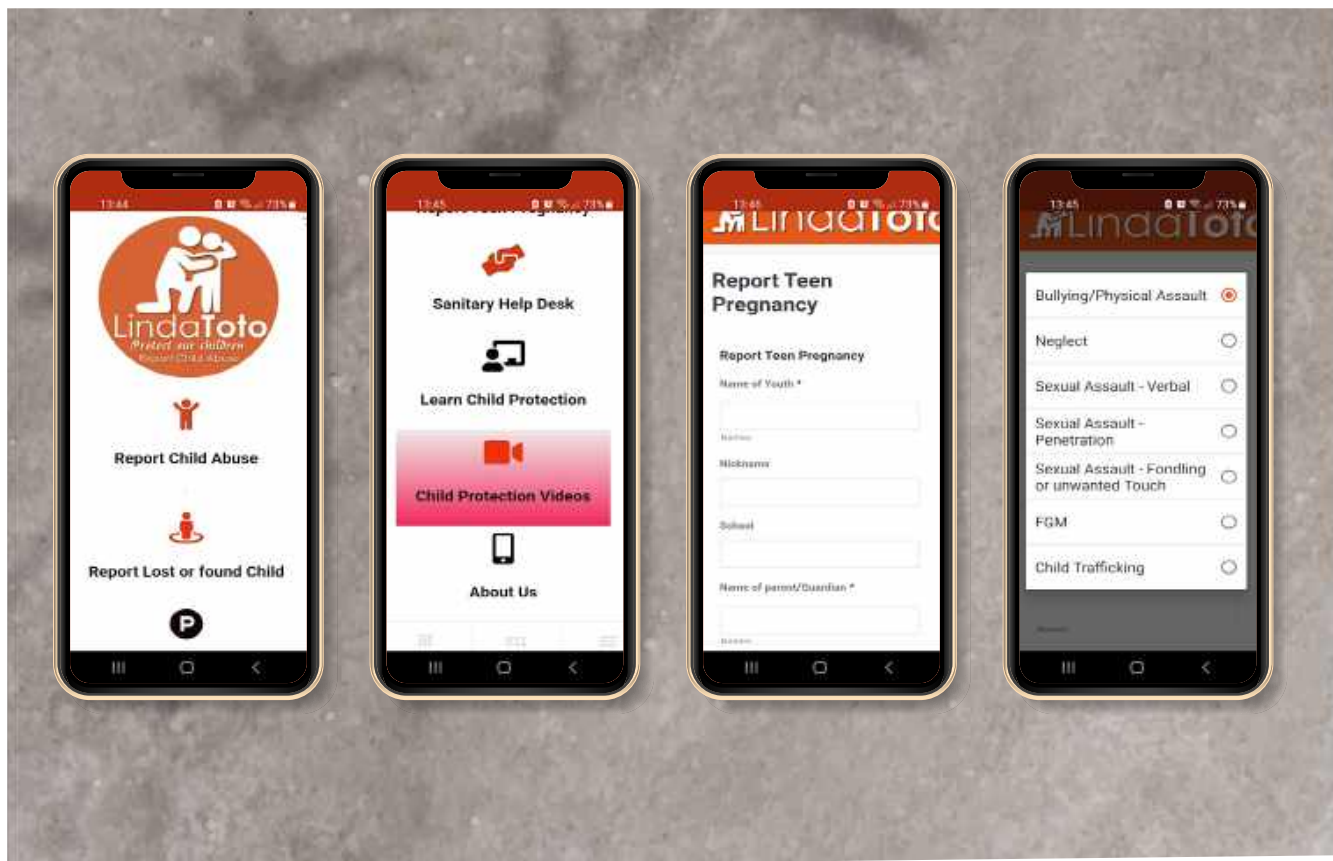
Through quarterly refresher courses, we provide them with training in child protection. We also engage them in the Holistic Parental Education Curriculum (HPEC) by taking them through the curriculum's lesson plans.

The project facilitates the trainers with the training materials (translated to Swahili,) airtime, and transport to reach the caregivers. Together with the project Patron, we supervise their progress by attending the training meetings at the village level.

We thank God that they are now working hand in hand with the village elders and assistant chiefs in their localities to keep them informed of the cases that need following within the community. We also have many caregivers with no beneficiaries at the FCP accessing the training.



Linda Toto App



LindaToto is an app meant to support android phone users in reporting child abuse cases. The app reduces the reporting time for child abuse cases and preserves the whistleblower's privacy. With the app, the reporter remains anonymous. The app was developed by ACK MALABA CYDC, with support from PF Rev. Zacharia Minyiri.

The idea of the app was a response to the recommendation of the cluster's PF to develop a methodology to increase reporting of child abuse cases, KE0458 embraced technology. It involved the ASM members and child protection champions, who wanted to curb red alert cases and incidents of child abuse cases in families/homesteads, usually swept under the rug.

1. The app has been rolled out in the project and within the cluster with the KE0458 encouraging adoption of the app amongst the police, local administration, like-minded organizations on child protection, and the children's office.
2. It can also report lost and found children. With a click, information about a lost child can spread in a wide area to help reduce child trafficking.
3. The app can be found by typing lindatoto in PlayStore.

Snapshot



In February 2022, Compassion Launched the survival intervention in Baringo, Kilifi, Kilifi-Ganze-Kaloleni, Narok, and Marakwet,

In Taita Taveta, the survival Intervention program was officially Launched by Compassion Kenya National Director Mr. Samuel Wambugu. The new Classroom was also officially opened by Tata Taveta Senator Hon Jones Mwaruma. The Occasion was well attended by Compassion staff.

The Senator Taita Taveta and his team attended the occasion, World Vision representative, Ministry of Health staff from Taveta Hospital, County government representatives, The administration, Few church partners from the County and other stakeholders were also present

The earliest stage of Compassion's program, known as Survival, helps prepare children for long-term holistic development by supporting pregnant moms and caregivers through their child's first year of life. This is a critical time when parents and caregivers set a foundation for their child's development. Coming alongside them with encouragement, education and support in the beginning strengthens that foundation and reaps substantial benefits into the child's future.

New Staff:

David Oyoo Ouma



We are pleased to introduce Mr. David Oyoo Ouma who has joined as a Program Support Specialist in the docket of Food Security and livelihoods (FSL).

David holds a BSc degree in agricultural economics. As a Community Development Officer, he promotes exemplary talents in project management and policy development. He is energetic and detail-oriented with five years of experience in fostering community growth and sustainability. His focus has been on livelihood and resiliency modeling, climate-smart agriculture, and Agri-enterprise development.

David previously worked with Intelli-Wealth Limited consulting for INGOs on agribusiness, livelihoods, and social inclusion programs, Farm Africa, Agriculture Sector Development Support Program (ASDSP), and Agriculture & Food Authority (AFA). He has worked in strengthening agricultural value chains, contributing to the implementation of livelihoods and empowerment projects, training, and providing technical advice in development, planning, and implementation of

Agribusiness projects through enterprise development, management, and sustainability planning; working with youth and women's groups in the creation of market research and linkages, and applying participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning practices.

David is single, born again, and has been fellowshipping at Ukunda Redeemed Gospel Church where has been serving as an usher.

We welcome David to the Compassion family!

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.
(Proverbs 31:8-9)



**FOR ANY
FEEDBACK OR
COMMENTS PLEASE
CONNECT WITH US**



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