

ConnectSwiss

Building a brighter future
in rural Africa



2023 Food Relief Programme

ConnectSwiss

Destitute families struggle with high food prices

In the face of soaring inflation and economic challenges, the most vulnerable members of Kenyan society are enduring severe hardships, particularly in this challenging year.

Low-income households, already grappling with economic difficulties, have been disproportionately affected by the escalating cost of living. This impact is particularly pronounced for those who allocate over 60% of their income toward food expenses, as surging food prices further exacerbate their struggles.

To address this urgent need, ConnectSwiss implemented a food relief programme in October and November. Through this initiative, we provided essential support to families, offering four or five goro-goros (2kg tins) of maize, along with cooking fat and bar soap. In times of high food prices, even basic hygiene items like soap become a luxury, contributing to health problems when not readily available.

In Teso North, we were able to assist 52 families, and in Emuhaya, an additional 60 families received crucial support. Many of these families are headed by grandparents with no income and their struggles were intensified as they found it challenging to provide even one meal a day for the children under their care.

Your support makes a significant difference in the lives of these vulnerable individuals. Through your donations, you are helping us continue and expand our relief programmes, ensuring that more families receive the essential support they desperately need. Together, we make a positive impact on the well-being of those facing the toughest challenges in our community.

While distributing food parcels in Teso, we encountered the following families (see pages 2, 3, 4 and 5).

Patience, an 18-year-old, serves as the head of the household, caring for her newborn baby and overseeing five younger siblings solo. Her father disappeared long ago, and her mother, in search of casual jobs in Nairobi, rarely reunites with the family.



Rehema's responsibility: Caring for a grandmother & 5 siblings

Respa, an incredible 86 year old, is looked after by her granddaughter, Rehema, and they live in a two-roomed semi-permanent house with another five of Rehema's siblings. The responsibility of looking after everyone therefore falls to Rehema, the eldest in the family, as her parents are away seeking employment. The children all sleep on the mud floor in the living area next to the fire, without a mattress or bed. Respa has a bed (right photo below).



Kefina: a grandmother's struggle

At 65 years old, Grace is the caregiver for three grandchildren – Joffrey, Kefina (right) and Milly.

Kefina is physically handicapped and cannot use her right arm and hand. She is 7 years old but is severely malnourished. Despite her quiet demeanor, Kefina engages in conversations when prompted and does not exhibit any cognitive impairments.

Fortunately, we have secured a sponsor for Kefina to attend St. Luke's Special Needs School in 2024. This ensures that she will no longer spend her days alone outside the house while her siblings attend a nearby primary school. We believe that with the appropriate support at St. Luke's Special Needs School, Kefina can access a quality education and lead a more normal life.



Children assisted in food relief programme



In the face of economic hardships and surging food prices, the food relief programme plays a crucial role in addressing the pressing needs of children who are often restricted to just one meal a day. For these vulnerable youngsters, the programme provides a lifeline, offering sustenance that goes beyond mere nourishment. Access to regular meals is pivotal for their physical well-being, cognitive development and overall health.

The programme not only alleviates immediate hunger but also lays the foundation for a brighter future by ensuring these children have the energy and focus to engage in education and other essential activities, breaking the cycle of food insecurity and its associated challenges.



Food packages at the Children's Support Centre

Over 60 families in Emuhaya received vital assistance as parents gathered at the Children's Support Centre to collect essential food packages, containing maize, cooking fat as well as soap.

This outreach initiative not only addressed immediate needs but also fostered a sense of community and solidarity, acknowledging the shared difficulties faced by these families. By distributing these food packages directly to parents, the programme ensured that assistance reached the heart of each household, offering a lifeline to very poor families during this challenging period.

The Children's Support Centre continues to play a vital role as a resource for the community to prevent malnutrition and support vulnerable children.

The Centre also provides lunch every day to between 30 and 50 children.



Background to Kenya's maize crisis, a sharp decline in 5 years

Recent data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) reveals a staggering decline in the production of Kenya's primary staple food, maize, by over 10.9 million bags (corresponding to 23%) over the past five years up to December 2022. This decline, attributed to adverse weather conditions, has posed a significant challenge to the country's food security efforts. Maize production plummeted from 44.6 million bags in 2018 to 34.3 million bags in the previous year, marking the lowest output in over a decade.

The fall in maize production to 34.3 million bags in 2022 contrasts sharply with the annual consumption of 52 million bags. Factors such as poor rainfall and the invasion of armyworms have contributed to this exponential reduction. This dip in production has led to an escalation in prices (reference: <https://www.millingmea.com>), compounding the hardships faced by those already struggling.

In 2023, maize prices rose sharply due to delays in importation and fierce competition for the limited supply between millers and humanitarian agencies. The World Food Programme (WFP) contracted the



National Cereals and Produce Board to purchase maize for humanitarian assistance, offering a price higher than the prevailing market rate. The cost of maize in 2023 surged, with a 90-kilo bag, typically priced at Ksh 2,200 (outside of the "hungry season" while waiting for the harvest), reaching a high of Ksh 8,000 at the end of May 2023.

Unfavourable weather conditions have also resulted in substantial losses of major crops such as beans, potatoes, sorghum, and millet. Bean production has declined by 39% (3.6 million bags) from 9.3 million bags in 2018 to 5.7 million bags in 2022, leading to a record price of Ksh 16,000 per bag. Similarly, sorghum production decreased by 20%, falling from 1.5 million bags in 2021 to 1.2 million bags in 2022.

Seeds of Hope: provide a family with maize in 2024

During this Festive Season, would you consider supporting a family to plant maize in 2024?

A donation of just CHF 50 can assist a family to harvest about 2 bags of maize (180kg). This will help sustain a family of six for approximately 45 days. Your support can make a meaningful impact on their well-being. Your donation of CHF 50 would pay for: 2 bags of maize seed, DAP and CAN fertiliser.

Diammonium phosphate (DAP) and Calcium ammonium nitrate (CAN) are common fertilizers* with distinct applications in agriculture:

DAP: Commonly used during planting or as a starter fertilizer to provide essential nutrients for seedlings.

CAN: Applied during the growing season to provide an additional nitrogen boost, supporting overall plant development.

** While ConnectSwiss does teach organic farming, for many families it is too labour intensive and a mixed solution which also applies fertilizer has the best results.*

Two ladies below, on the left with her hoe, weeding her maize and beans (intercropped) and on the right, planting sweet potatoes.



Children's Support Centre

Over the years 1000's of children have been treated at our Children Support Centre, thank you to our donors who help toward their treatment ensuring they live a better & healthier life.



International Village School

The School opened its doors in 2008, educating 100's of children. Special thanks to many private donors, including Friends of the International School (FOTIS in Geneva) and Tushirikiane (Spain).



Become a ConnectSwiss Member

Anyone who shares the objectives of our organisation can become a member of ConnectSwiss and belong to a non-profit organization that alleviates poverty and provides high quality education for some of the poorest people in East Africa. Membership fees help cover administrative costs so that 100% of donations go directly to the projects.

As a member you will be able to contribute to the development of new projects with your ideas, donations and/or sponsorship. For example, members can contribute their expertise and ideas by providing network support, writing funding proposals, helping ConnectSwiss accomplish its tasks and much more.

Other benefits of being a regular member include receiving our newsletter, as well as having access to ConnectSwiss Annual Report and Accounts.

Membership costs only:

- United States: USD 50 per year
- Switzerland: CHF 50 per year
- U.K. GBP 45 per year
- Europe: EUR 50 per year
- Rest of the World: USD 50 per year



ConnectSwiss

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(CH-550-1067424-1)

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Asante Sana —Thank you — Merci!

Thank you for your wonderful support in 2023.



If you wish to make a donation kindly contribute by using the QR code for a more convenient payment method or visit:

<http://www.connectswiss.com/get-involved#donate>

If you wish to make a donation, please indicate the project for which the funds are intended, and your name and address for receipt.

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