

Dear colleagues,

As individuals reflect on their lives so do organisations reflect on their mission. We have already previously concluded that our mission is to “Save lives and empower people”. This mission statement explains to me in a way also how we believe that sustainable change can be accomplished. Putting people in security needs to be followed by other measures to heal and strengthen individuals to continue life stronger and better equipped. In that way they can influence their families, their local environment, and in the end the whole society.



Theory of Change

We do not only aim to save people's lives physically, we want to continue our work for children, men and women, through crisis, and ensure that they survive with a chance to become stronger. And we believe that the way individuals become empowered is through the work we do in our thematic areas.

We have all had the Strategy document 2020 – 2023 sent out by the Acting General Secretary two weeks ago and also presented in an All Staff meeting. Part of it regards our Theory of Change which very simplified expresses healthy empowered people enabled to take collective action for sustainable change. It is our view on how we believe a lasting impact can be achieved.

Change in real life... not only a theory.

John Kanyaaru and Evangeline Kagendo from the town of Maragwa in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, share the same experience. They are both farmers, married with four children, they have both struggled to support their families and have both been thinking on how to solve their long-term water scarcity problem. Hope came in September 2020 when they both joined the water harvesting project run by IAS Kenya.



John tells how he ever since his childhood remembers how hard life has been in relation to water scarcity.

- There is no permanent river in this location apart from Tana River over 23 kilometers from my home. We get our water here from shallow wells dug in the riverbeds of seasonal rivers

which last for only one month after the rainy season and are risky for people to fall inside. I also constructed stone and earth embankments which held water for two weeks. Through this project a tractor has excavated a big water pan on my land that is expected to hold water at least for more than two months”.



- I am so happy for now my water problem is permanently solved. It has also increased friendship and good will among my neighbors who also benefit from it. My plans are now to expand the size of my livestock and setting up a small kitchen garden and fruit orchard.”

There is more benefit from water harvesting than only water availability. It improves the environment and is also time saving for other economic activities. For women and children, who are mostly engaged in water activities, it also contributes to secure their safety.



Evangeline: - It was like a storm in the desert in my life the time I saw a shovel tractor getting into my farm to excavate a water pan. It was unbelievable to me having tried digging a water pan with my weak woman hands for more than three years and only managed a



small pan that only harvests few liters of water, but now, look here!"

Evangeline's life has been very difficult due to unfavorable climatic conditions making her so vulnerable to water shortage, food and financial insecurity.

- Most of the time, the area here receives inadequate rainfall that contributes to the failure of food crops, drying off of water resources and leaving me and the community to depend on markets for food and water. During these hard times, market value for food goes up. Life has been very hard for me and my children and for periods we have been without both food and most of our basic needs.

Evangeline Kagendo rejoices inside her newly excavated water pan ready for water harvesting.

- I can see a lot of crops in my farm now, a variety of vegetables, fruit trees, dairy cows and goats, fish farming and many more from the water pan. I have been walking six kilometers for water and now I would be walking zero distance to source for water and my time would be saved for other economical work. Hallelujah, God has come at the right time".

This project is a brilliant example on when several local and international actors join hands together to push for long term change. The successful advocacy and local ownership are key factors in this work, and we can all draw inspiration from it.

Contact:

Eva Björkander

Internal Communications

Phone: +46(0)8 620 02 00 / Mobile: +46(0)70 696 33 61
Läkarmissionen, Siktgatan 8, SE-162 88 Vällingby, Sweden