Transforming Lives

Together we are making a difference

 Academy that’s developing Thinkers, Doers and Leaders
Whole new ball game for rising rugby star

Bringing health facility back to life
Desks that made all the difference

Safaricom Foundation
m-pesa FOUNDATION
The Foundations work with their partners to increase access to water amongst water insecure communities.

The Foundations seek to improve the lives of needy students by increasing access to equitable and innovative educational opportunities.

The Foundations invest in health projects to address infant and maternal mortality as well as increase access to screening and treatment.

Safaricom has achieved success by integrating sustainability as a central business strategy.
Opinion

The road ahead is by no means an easy one, but we have chosen the path less trodden and tagged at partners who walk with us and win with us in the full spirit of Twaweza – for when we come together, great things happen.

Enjoy the read.

Joseph Ogutu
Chairman, Safaricom Foundation

Our impact

There’s nothing in the world like winning alone. None at all. That’s why a goalkeeper celebrates as much as the striker in a football match once a powerful volley is delivered to the net. The coach jumps off his seat as does the manager. There’s a whole arrangement that precedes the performance that leads to a great win – and that includes those we never see like team nutritionists.

Even in individual sports like track events, the most spectacular of our sportspersons never win alone. There’s always the coach who works with the athletes for months before the event.

I’m alluding to the sports analogy in parallel to what we do at Safaricom.

We attribute this success to the pursuit of purpose rather than the pursuit of profits. Our purpose is transforming lives. To attain this, we put people first and profits naturally follow.

This model of a purpose-driven business allows us a long view into the future; what will this company and the society in which it thrives look like in 25 years from now? What about 50 years or even 100?

The answer to that question is found in the decision to set up the Safaricom Foundation and the M-PESA Foundation to pursue the transforming lives agenda. At the Safaricom Foundation we are currently focusing on three thematic areas: Health, Education and Economic Empowerment. Under these three themes we will focus our efforts on: Maternal and Child Health, Diabetes in Children, Improving Learning Outcomes, Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Economic Empowerment for the Youth.

At the M-PESA Foundation, we invest in interventions that improve the social and economic status of Kenyans. M-PESA Foundation has invested in large scale health, environmental conservation, education and integrated water projects. The Foundation integrates the use of mobile technology in its investments to increase the impact.

Inside these pages are some of the stories that bring our purpose to life, about the efforts that our teams and partners are making every day – and have been for the past decade and a half - around the country.

Our objectives in the Safaricom Foundation and the M-PESA Foundation are aligned to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals adopted by countries to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all.

This magazine is about curating these transforming lives efforts so that they can form not only a part of our annals but also as learning opportunities for future endeavors.

You will find the power of partnerships and how that unleashes a kinesis to raise the next generation of transformed leaders – who look at life from the perspective of purpose and how that can transform society.

The road ahead is by no means an easy one, but we have chosen the path less trodden and tagged at partners who walk with us and win with us in the full spirit of Twaweza – for when we come together, great things happen. Enjoy the read.

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In this inaugural edition, we will take a deep dive into the impact that our interventions have had on the communities that have given us a licence to operate.
Safaricom Foundation Trustee, Rita Okuthe with Rahma Basimah and her newborn after she handed over a baby pack during a handover ceremony of a new maternal shelter, funded by Safaricom Foundation in Witu Health Center. The shelter can accommodate 12 mothers at a time. The shelter is meant to accommodate women who are close to their due date and those that have just given birth. Lamu has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in Kenya and the shelter will give women, who would otherwise have had to travel long distances, a safe place they can deliver with skilled midwives at hand to assist them. Lamu Governor H.E. Fahim Twaha and Joe Ogutu, the Chairman of the Safaricom Foundation presided over the opening of the shelter in February 2019. The project is part of the Maternal and Newborn Health programme.

Thika School for the Blind received a solar power system from Safaricom Foundation that will ensure learning is not interrupted when there are power outages. The solar system will also help the institution cut down on electricity costs. The system saw the installation of solar panels and LED lighting in the classrooms, dormitories and computer laboratories. The system was handed over by James Maitai, Head of Nairobi West and Mt Kenya Regions in February 2019.
Sitting 45 kilometres north of Nairobi is a wellspring of knowledge that is etched on the flat plains in Thika, a quiet town that lies between the Aberdares and the distant Kilimambogo hills on the horizon.

The M-PESA Foundation Academy is set in a serene area that is truly fit for learning. Getting past the gates into the compound reveals a campus designed to place great emphasis on the holistic development of all the learners not just in academics but also in technology, music, sports, the arts, outdoor pursuits and community service.

The Academy admits students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds—four from every county—after a rigorous process that lasts about 10 months in the year preceding admission, says the Academy’s Director of Teaching and Learning Dr. Stephen Walker.

“The school really is all about trying to break the bondage of poverty. We look for a student who’s a bit different. A student who perhaps has already shown some leadership skills, some community awareness, a student who, perhaps, has already shown some talent in sporting, art, or other fields,” says Dr. Walker.

Beyond academic performance, the school is developing a philosophy of shaping a smart student. “We're trying to make a much more rounded individual than someone who's just good at passing examinations. We're trying to produce that kind of student who will fit into society as a leader,” says Dr. Walker.

M-PESA Foundation Academy is going beyond academic performance and places great emphasis on holistic development of all learners.
We’re trying to do with the students to produce witnessed in the learners. Students can develop a broad sense of the world. Covering an expansive array of topics so that on their fingertips. Knowledge from virtually around the world right weeks of joining the school allowing them to access Apple Screen. Where the audio-visual tool used for teaching is an easy manner. "In to the workplace, whatever that might be, in a very easy manner."

In the campus are world-class amenities from the tennis courts, the sports field, the music rooms, the art room, the farm to the classrooms where the audio-visual tool used for teaching is an Apple Screen.

Every student is also supplied with an iPad within weeks of joining the school allowing them to access knowledge from virtually around the world right on their fingertips. The library is also equipped with books covering an expansive array of topics so that students can develop a broad sense of the world.

Dr. Walker is happy with the change he has witnessed in the learners. "It’s fantastic. There are also many other things we’re trying to do with the students to produce transformative leaders," says Dr. Walker. The learners go home to contribute to transformation in their home areas.

The school is running 24 entrepreneurship programmes ranging from barbershops, shoe making, jewellery making, picture framing and baking. Students put in proposals in their second year in school after which they receive a loan to run their enterprises. Upon leaving school, the money they make is returned as seed capital for a new group and they are allowed to keep any profits upon graduating from school.

"The cake making business is the most profitable business we’ve had so far. What they do is whenever we have events here at the weekend, which is quite often, they’ll make a whole range of cakes and buns and pancakes and sell them to people who come for those events. They also make them for the students on the weekends," said Dr. Walker.

"He is my mentor, he gives me a lot of push to excel," says Kelly. "I am one of Kenya’s top rugby players who has anchored Kenya’s team to international status.

Kelly’s journey to the Academy was nothing short of miraculous. His father died barely two months after he was born while his mother died a decade later. Kelly together with his six siblings lived in a single room at Mathare slum and he barely made it through primary education at Mathare Primary School. "My older brother is my hero. He worked as a casual labourer and he still managed to take care of all his siblings. He provided seed capital for a new group and they are allowed to keep any profits upon graduating from school."

"I change the approach every year to ensure that the process remains rigorous and no one has an undue advantage because, you know, people talk to each other," says Dr. Walker. "We were trying to encompass students who are differently abled as much as possible in order to diversify the community fabric of the school and enrich the socialization of students," said Dr. Walker.

"I believe I have been given a lifetime opportunity that will allow me to study here and maybe overseas. I intend to make a big difference in whatever I choose to do in the future. Joining the Academy was a Godsend," says Kelly.

Kelly has an undying love for robotics. With other students, they worked on a project called ‘exam-credibility’ which is expected to lead to a massive reduction in exam cheating. They have already presented their proposals in their second year in school after which they receive a loan to run their enterprises. Upon leaving school, the money they make is returned as seed capital for a new group and they are allowed to keep any profits upon graduating from school.

"Where I was in Class One, I always fancied myself becoming a rugby player," says the 16-year-old Form Two student at the M-PESA Foundation Academy. Otieno has walked the talk, putting in hours to perfect his skills.

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The learners go home to contribute to transformation in their home areas. "The cake making business is the most profitable business we’ve had so far. What they do is whenever we have events here at the weekend, which is quite often, they’ll make a whole range of cakes and buns and pancakes and sell them to people who come for those events. They also make them for the students on the weekends," said Dr. Walker.

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A lawyer-cum-politician in the making

Umulkheir Ahmed Yusuf, a charming 17-year-old student at the M-PESA Foundation Academy, is both a student and an active leader. She has already gained a lot of recognition for her hard work and dedication. "I am growing both in my leadership and intellectual skills as a result of a programme we go through called entrepreneurship and leadership. It grows us not only as a person but also understands the outside world and what the world expects of us," she says.

"When I assume leadership, I would like to stand up for my people and give them a voice. Children, especially those from poor backgrounds, are vulnerable and I would like to give them support. They don't get quality education, they don't get good health, yet these are basic necessities in life," says Umulkheir.

What drives her, she says, is not money that is usually associated with her choice of career but the quest to ensure such children get a fair chance to fulfill their dreams.

And when she talks, you can see the drive that has seen her through a tough upbringing in a harsh environment. "I am not in it for the money but to help people since we have been taught here (at the Academy) that whatever we do, it must begin with passion. Once you have the passion, the money will follow. Most people are in careers that just benefit them or their families but people need to challenge themselves and look at the bigger picture, the society and see how we can all play our part in transforming the society," she says.

The teaching at the Academy, she says, provides the students with all-rounded skills because as much as academics are important, the institution goes the extra mile to inculcate other essential skills such as leadership and entrepreneurship.

Umulkheir comes from a family of eight, with both parents without an income to meet high school and other financial obligations.

She had a normal upbringing - as normal as it can get in a pastoralist setting - but her big break came when her father saw an article about the M-PESA Foundation Academy in a newspaper. She applied and was among the two students selected from Garissa County.

"We should have more of such schools in the country because I can feel the difference since I joined. I have grown in my confidence, in my communications skills and as a person. It has been a great experience," says Umulkheir.

"When I assume leadership, I would like to stand up for my people and give them a voice. Children, especially those from poor backgrounds are very vulnerable."
EVEN AT HER tender age, Leslie, the first born in a family of three, has seen it all. In her younger days, she used to attend private schools in Kisii before her parents relocated to Mlolongo in Machakos County.

At Mlolongo, when her sister was born, instead of the expected celebrations, things took a turn for the worse and their father left. At the time, Leslie was in class four. “After my dad left, my mother had to work hard, pull all stops and support her family out of the dire straits they faced,” explains Leslie.

Leslie would always be at the top of her class and the mathematics teacher saw a bright light that was on the verge of being dimmed by poverty.

He encouraged and supported her throughout her difficult schooling at Mlolongo Primary School till she sat the KCPE examination. She scored 369 points. In the meantime, the Mathematics teacher had informed Leslie’s mother about the M-PESA Foundation Academy and after application and rigorous vetting, Leslie was picked to join the school.

“Initially, it was hard for me to cope with the new environment, meet new people, new faces. It was my first time to interact with people but doesn’t settle on one as his singular role model. When asked about any famous personality he would like to sit down for lunch with, he effortlessly and calmly said? “I’d like to have lunch with Bob Collymore.” He admires Bob for his leadership and leading a great company to great results despite the challenges every business faces.

“I am happy to be part of this fraternity. I will not disappoint either the teachers or my family. I will excel in whatever I decide to do,” says Leslie with conviction.

School has changed the course of my life

At Mlolongo Primary School till she sat the KCPE examination. She scored 369 points. In the meantime, the Mathematics teacher had informed Leslie’s mother about the M-PESA Foundation Academy and after application and rigorous vetting, Leslie was picked to join the school. Whenever it rained, raw sewer would sweep into their house and life was completely unbearable. You couldn’t leave the house without wearing protective gear.

“Whenever it rained, raw sewer would sweep into their house and life was completely unbearable. You couldn’t leave the house without wearing protective gear,” adds Leslie.

In the Academy on January 25, 2017. “I am happy to be part of this fraternity. I will not disappoint either the teachers or my family. I will excel in whatever I decide to do,” says Leslie with conviction.

However, that was before one of his primary school teachers encouraged him to apply to join the M-PESA Foundation Academy.

“The teacher had heard of this school in Thika and encouraged me to fill the application forms,” he said.

He successfully underwent the rigorous selection and was finally admitted. He says he will never forget the day when he joined the Academy on January 25, 2017.

“I was shocked especially when I walked into the dormitories. It was different from anything I’d ever heard of about high schools. I expected one large hall and not the cubicles. The meals were great too. Fish is rarely eaten where I come from, but I now eat it regularly,” he said.

“I intend to be good at what I do because I believe I should inspire the younger generation. I will not disappoint either the teachers or my family. I will excel in whatever I decide to do,” says Leslie with conviction.

The teachers, says Leslie, looks genuinely interested in the success of their charges.

“They are genuinely interested in imparting knowledge to us. I am especially grateful to them because they are not just teachers but foster parents to some of us,” says Leslie.

Leslie says she wants to be an architect or a neurosurgeon. She also has an interest in art. She says she would also love to see fewer people go out of the country for treatment and surgeries that can be carried out here.

“Initially, it was hard for me to cope with the new environment, meet new people, new faces. It was my first time to interact with white people!” says Leslie with muted laughter.

The teachers, says Leslie, looks genuinely interested in the success of their charges.

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Leslie says she wants to be an architect or a neurosurgeon. She also has an interest in art. She says she would also love to see fewer people go out of the country for treatment and surgeries that can be carried out here.

“I intended to be good at what I do because I would like to earn money and help my family out of their current situation”.

Fortunately, the two younger siblings have recently been sponsored to attend a private school in Kitengela not too far from where they live.

“I am happy to be part of this fraternity. I will not disappoint either the teachers or my family. I will excel in whatever I decide to do,” says Leslie with conviction.
**Opinion**

Foundations

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Foundations

**I am a young man** with huge ambitions. I am driven by entrepreneurship. You know Chris Kirubi as a brand, right? I am Chris Mwaniki. And I am the next big brand!**

This is how Chris Mwaniki, an 18-year-old student from Karatina currently a Form Four student at the M-PESA Foundation Academy introduces himself.

And it is not just empty talk. Chris is already making huge strides towards making his name as recognizable as that of Chris Kirubi, the celebrated businessman in the country.

Together with four other students, Chris started a pastry business within the school that has surprised him with its runaway success.

So far, the ‘pastry chefs’ have raked in more than Shs200,000, an amount that is growing with each cake sold with majority of the customers being fellow students.

According to M-PESA Foundation Academy Director of Teaching and Learning Dr. Stephen Walker, the students are encouraged to explore their businesses potential, and are supported by the Academy with the seed capital.

“Any amount that the students will have saved up by the time they leave the school will be shared among the members of that enterprise which will go towards funding their start-up,” says Dr. Walker.

For Chris, baking is not just a way of making money, it is a passion that he has nurtured for the last couple of years. He started collecting recipes from newspapers when he was in Class 7 in Kiaritha-ini Primary School and with continuous experimentation he has perfected the art of baking.

“Our teacher mentioned something about a student who used to collect recipes and I thought that was an interesting idea. I started collecting recipes from newspapers and experimenting with them at home. I now have a whole book,” he says.

“I am crazy about pastries and I want to be the next Cake Boss like Buddy Valastro, the American celebrity chef, entrepreneur and reality show host,” Chris says.

At the Academy, customer queues start forming when word goes out that Chris and his team have donned their chef’s uniform.

“We enjoy a monopoly here. We have a good market. I find it very easy to sell because people can’t avoid eating. When we decide we are making crepes or pan cakes, you should see the queues. Some students will even order five pieces at a time.” One pan cake goes for Shs35.

Chris’ fame goes beyond the hallowed walls of the Academy. He is becoming a celebrity of sorts, and in very high places for that matter.

“President Uhuru Kenyatta and Ambassador Amina Mohammed have sampled my cakes. Safaricom CEO Bob Collymore loves our fruit cakes,” says Chris.

In the three years Chris has been at the Academy, he has also learnt a lot of vital lessons which he hopes to put into practice once he ventures out on his own.

“I have learnt how to manage people, from their emotions and how to interact with different people. I will apply these lessons when I set up my businesses. I already know the market challenges and how to deal with them.”

Other than his desire to create an empire to rival that of Mr Kirubi and earn loads of cash, he says he hopes to help society overcome the challenge of unemployment.

“The only way to touch lives and to help Kenya grow faster is to build an empire. It may sound like I am building castles in the air but I believe when I combine my passion with my talent, I will make a huge difference.”

Chris was brought up mostly by his grandparents since his mother passed on when he was young.

By coincidence, Chris’ aunt lives near the Academy. She had watched the Academy coming up with keen interest and she persuaded Chris to apply. As fate would have it, he was among the one percent or so who qualified to join the Academy. The SMS confirming acceptance to the school was sent to his father on New Year’s eve of 2016.

“It was the best new year gift I could have hoped for,” says Chris.

He is also interested in things to do with IT, which he says, can be used in solving societal problems.

Chris and other student have developed an app dubbed App254tuongee that provides a platform for people to talk and share ideas online.

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DEADLINE 31ST July 2019
With clean water, the difference is clear

A special school in Shavihiga

Lack of water was a challenge until Safaricom Foundation funded the drilling of a borehole.

When the burden of taking care of disabled children in Shavihiga became too much, the community got together and agreed to hire some land out of Shavihiga Primary School for the establishment of a special school.

There had been a surge in the number of children with
disabilities abandoned by their parents in the village in Kakamega, a problem caused by the community’s belief that disability is caused by a curse and the only way to escape it is by getting rid of disabled children.

It is here that children abandoned by their parents end up, hoping to get a second chance at life.

The school teaches the children basic life skills depending on their abilities, among them, expressing feelings, personal identity, socialization, speech therapy and even physiotherapy. The hope is that the students can get to a level where they can be integrated with normal pupils in the sister school.

Apart from offering the 8-4-4 curriculum, learners are taught using a syllabus for the physical disability, which includes the Kenya Sign Language, and the mental disability syllabus, among others.

To save the pupils the trouble of going home and coming back every day, the school last year decided to start a boarding section. Without funds to construct a dormitory, they converted an unused building into a sleeping area but there was one problem.

“We realized we had a huge challenge of water because unlike other learners, those with special needs require constant cleaning,” says Augustine Mudi, the deputy head teacher.

“We had to buy 20 jerrycans of water at Sh200 but sometimes the amount rose to Sh500 per day and it was too much,” he says.

It happened that one of the teachers was a classmate with a Safaricom employee at High School who raised the matter at the Safaricom shop in Kakamega. The day Safaricom Foundation employees visited the school for a preliminary assessment, they found two sick girls at the head teacher’s office. The girls had taken contaminated water.

The Safaricom Foundation acted fast and allocated Sh1.6 million for the drilling of a borehole which was handed over to the school in November 2017.

The borehole has been a life saver not only to the institution but the community around. Previously the nearest source of water for the residents was Kangariu stream, which is three kilometres away.

Today, for just five shillings, they can get a 20-litre jerrycan of water from the school.

“We haven’t had a sick child for a while,” says Mrs Otieno, a teacher.

“The children love the fact that there is a lot of free water. Some of them have even taught themselves how to wash their clothes which is helping in developing their muscles,” she says.

The water from the borehole was also used in constructing a new dormitory which partly cut the construction costs. The dormitory, which was constructed by the Salvation Army, the school’s donors, will be complete by the end of the year.
EVERY TEN MINUTES, a motorbike rolls into the compound of Isecha Level Four Hospital right at the northern edge of Kisii County. On one of the motorbikes, a mother tightly embraces a child, wrapped in a warm blanket. She has come for a medical review having spent three days in the hospital’s new inpatient wing and been discharged to recover from home. She walks towards the building and into the Clinical Officer’s office. “She got here just in time,” Stellah Kwamboka, the Clinical Officer says. “She had severe malaria. But we are glad she is recovering well.”

The hospital is surrounded by tea plantations as far as the eyes can see. Further downhill are dozens of streams that are a beauty to look at. The constant gurgle of fresh water running over pebbles is refreshing to listen to. But when the rains come, and this is often, this gift of nature turns into a curse. Mosquito larvae need stagnant water to metamorphose into adult mosquito. Frequent convectional rains occasioned by Kisii’s proximity to Lake Victoria result in plush bushes which make it easier for larvae to multiply. The results to humans can be devastating. “The biggest malady here is malaria. It is not uncommon to see whole families put down by it,” Kwamboka says. A few years ago, a serious bout of malaria would mean admission at a health facility. Often, back then, this would mean a 10-kilometre journey to Isecha town. “Ten kilometres sounds like a short journey. But when you are on a motorbike, with a patient at the back being held into position by a relative, this journey to the nearest hospital would take hours,” Reuben Omwenga, a boda boda rider says.

Omwenga, who is often called upon to ferry patients from their homes to hospitals with inpatient facilities kilometres away, is the first to acknowledge the difference that a recently commissioned inpatient wing has made. “Going to hospital is no longer stressful. People walk in, get admitted, get treated and get discharged,” he says. “Before this, many people chose not to go to Isecha because they were usually referred to other hospitals with inpatient facilities.” Because of this, many women and children often suffered at home, trying to fight off diseases through sheer will.

An estimated 216 million cases of malaria worldwide were reported in 2017, a majority of which were in sub-Saharan Africa. Of those infected, 445,000 died, with 16,000 of the deaths occurring in Kenya. It’s devastating when you bring the statistics closer home; it means in Kenya alone, an average of 43 people succumbed to malaria in Kenya every day of 2017.

For children, malaria is a particularly devastating disease. Official data shows that 70 percent of those who die from malaria are children under five. “If they do not get the necessary treatment, which might include admission, then this is a war we may never win,” says Vera Makabe, a nurse at Isecha Level Four Hospital.
Residents of a village in Embu were faced with a dilemma; whether to shut down the maternity wing at Kanja Health Centre or source for funds and renovate it. That was 2017 and everything had almost come to a standstill at the health facility located in Embu County: the windows were broken, there was no running water, pipes were leaking and there was no medicine.

Constructured through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), the maternity wing of the health centre was opened in April 2012 with a bed capacity of 12. However, without money being set aside for its maintenance, conditions slowly deteriorated.

Expectant women were often forced to travel to Runyenjes, 20 kilometres away, to deliver, despite the existence of a maternity unit close to them.

"Imagine a woman comes to deliver and there is no water?" Benson Mbogo, the chair of the facility says.

"Things were bad but the worst part was that women were coming here for pre-natal care but when the time to deliver came they had to go to other facilities," he recalls.

Respite came one day when the county’s Governor H.E Martin Wambora came for a function at the neighbouring Kanja Polytechnic. As is usual at such events, local leaders were given a chance to address the meeting and when it came to Mbogo’s turn, he did not waste it.

"I told the Governor, ‘the only maternity unit in this area is in a dire state, you need to visit it and see for yourself your Excellency,’" recalls Mbogo.

Before leaving, the Governor passed by the health facility on his way out.

"Sometimes, lives are saved just by monitoring patients, which can only be done if they are admitted," Nurse Vera says. "Of course, it helps if the health facility has the right kind of equipment and clean water too."

In June 2018, the Safaricom Foundation handed over the new inpatient wing as well as a 20,000-litre water tank to Kwamboka, the senior most employee at the Isecha Level Four Hospital.

"Sometimes parts of Kisii experience water scarcity. Sometimes we would go for days without water in our taps," Kwamboka says. "This put the health of the recovering patients and even our health at risk."

The availability of running water round the clock has also improved the cleanliness of some key installations within the hospital grounds.

"This means that patients admitted to the hospital can also have a chance to use indoor toilets. If we didn’t have water they would be forced to use pit latrines which are almost 50 metres away," Nurse Vera says.

"This has greatly reduced infections within the hospital."

Now, although more motorbikes roll into the Isecha Level Four Hospital grounds loaded with passengers, almost all of them leave with only the rider, the patient left behind to embark on the journey to recovery.

"We are now happier. We’ve got everything we need right here," Omwenga says.

But on this cold evening, some warmth runs through the nine patients admitted at Isecha Level Four Hospital. A warmth that comes from the safety and convenience of receiving treatment close to home.
maternity unit and he was very touched by what he saw. He then told the management that since the county had no money to fund the renovation of the maternity wing at that moment, he would try and secure funding. Within a month, officials from the Safaricom Foundation came to assess the facility and immediately engagement on its renovation began.

At a cost of KSh1.2 million, the Safaricom Foundation not only renovated the facility but also provided beds, bedsheets, bedside cabinets, gumboots and high density mattresses. The Foundation also helped connect the facility with piped water and transformed an unused room to a fully equipped kitchen. The facility was handed over in March 2018.

Today it handles at least 12 deliveries a month, from almost none the previous year. And since it is run by the County Government of Embu, delivery services are free, a fact Njeru Taratisio, the nurse-in-charge says has led to a surge in demand for maternity services.

"On the month it was reopened, we did a record 20 deliveries," she says.

Emily Ndwiga, who gave birth in December, was happy to deliver at a facility near her home. Her first child was born at Runyenjes Hospital and she did not like the trips she had to make to get pre-natal care.

"There are days I did not have money for bus fare which meant missed appointments," she recalls.

"Then the day I went into labour, it was raining and the roads were bad. It is only by God's grace that I got to the hospital safely," she says.

To increase usage of the facility, the county government is currently enrolling all expectant women to a free maternity program linked to the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) dubbed Linda Mama. The programme which is aligned to the government's Big Four Agenda that advocates Universal Health Coverage, enables expectant women to attend post-natal and antenatal clinics, as well as one-year long child health services in public and select private hospitals.

This year, the management of Kanja Health Centre intends to improve its facilities to enable it perform cesarean deliveries. They have already written a proposal to the Embu County government to post the required personnel in order to make this a reality.

"We have the infrastructure in place, what we need is the professionals to make this possible," says Mbogo, the chairman.

Joseph Kimani, 57, has been undergoing dialysis treatment twice a week for the last nine years. The father of three also suffers from hypertension and diabetes. Treating the three conditions has taken a huge toll on his family, especially on finances.

Kimani worked for the Kenya Farmers Association, previously named the Kenya Grain Growers Cooperative Union (KGGCU), until he was retrenched in 1998. Thereafter, he got a series of short-term jobs and in 2004, doctors diagnosed him with diabetes.

"My illness started interfering with my work, having to ask for permission to get treatment or rest. After a while, this became untenable. I left employment and started my own business hiring out cars. This one has no stress as I mostly do it over the phone and can work from anywhere. My wife helps me out and I have one employee who assists me in," he says.

He started treatment at Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) before the family moved to Nakuru where he gets his dialysis treatments at the Nakuru General Hospital.

"When I lived in Nairobi, I needed a minimum of KSh150,000 a month to manage my condition. These diseases are so expensive to treat that you lose friends and even family because people get tired of supporting you. I have sold five cars to get money for treatment but I have survived by God's grace," he says.

Currently, he spends KSh20,000 on medication for high blood pressure every month. A single dialysis session used to set him back KSh9,500 (KSh76,000 a month) but fortunately, the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) currently pays this amount in full for members who contribute to the scheme.

"NHIF has really helped ease my cost burden. At least I can use that money to Re-igniting hope for kidney patients

The purchase of one extra dialysis machine at the Nakuru General Hospital meant that kidney patients did not have to wait for long to undergo treatment

"We have the infrastructure in place, what we need is the professionals to make this possible," says Mbogo, the chairman.
improve on my diet, which is important for managing kidney diseases, which weakens immunity and makes me prone to other infections,” he says.

Kimani is just one of the beneficiaries of a dialysis machine donated to the 500-bed capacity hospital by Safaricom Foundation. The hospital has 16 functional dialysis machines housed in two different wards. A dialysis session lasts four hours. Each machine caters to about two patients a day. Safaricom Foundation helped to reduce the waiting time for patients to get treatment.

“There is very high demand for these machines. All the machines are constantly in use,” says Joyce Isika, Nursing Officer at the hospital who wrote to the Safaricom Foundation in 2010 asking for a donation.

“In late 2012, Safaricom Foundation sent a team to tour the hospital; we had a discussion and they opted to buy a machine for the hospital,” she says.

The dialysis machine has a touchscreen, which makes it easier to use.

“We get patients from Nakuru and referrals from neighbouring towns.”

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“We get patients from Nakuru and referrals from neighbouring towns.

“Initially I was doing it twice a week but that frequency reduced after I improved on my diet.”

He is not the only one facing this problem. The Kenya Renal Association estimates that there are roughly four million Kenyans suffering from chronic kidney disease. Of this number, only about 10 per cent can afford dialysis services.

Official data shows that high blood pressure (hypertension) and diabetes are the most common causes of kidney disease. High blood pressure, for instance, causes just over a quarter of all cases of kidney failure.

Dialysis machines are costly, with prices averaging at above KSh1 million. Some brands like the high-end Gambro machine retail at KSh1.5 million. Nakuru General Hospital purchased 11 machines between 2010 and 2018, while five machines are under the Managed Equipment Service (MES), a government initiative.
IT WAS AN END of term practical examination for Chemistry but from the excitement on the faces of the Form Four students of Kigwambiti Secondary School, it was hard to tell that the students were going in for an examination. With clip boards in their hands, 59 eager learners rushed into the school’s laboratory, almost causing a stampede and forcing their teacher, Simon Ngure, to call for order.

Everyone was settled within minutes, ready to practice what they had learned in the classroom.

The students then paired up and started mixing chemicals into concave flasks and test tubes before attempting to heat them. A lab assistant and two extra teachers were at hand to assist those who got stuck.

Like Wamuc, a Form 4 student, knows too well what having a well-equipped laboratory means when you love science subjects, like he does, but the facilities are not there to enable you actualize your dreams.

“This was not a nice place to be,” he says of life at the school in the semi-arid plains of Mbeere, Embu County, started in 1991 and run by the Catholic Church.

The terrain is rocky and the rainfall is sparse. These and a myriad other factors have contributed to the high poverty rate.

The natural consequence of poverty was the lack of resources to put up a well-equipped laboratory.

“The students were using metallic benches and you know with metals, the acids corrode them,” said Chris Muchiri, the head of the Sciences Department at the school.

“We had a lab yes but technically you couldn’t refer to it as a lab because it was just a hall with some equipment which students were using for practicals,” he recalled.

Construction of laboratory at secondary school made all the difference for learners

270 Student number at Kigwambiti Secondary School. The number increased after the construction of a laboratory in 2017
So bad was the situation that at times the school’s administration had to ferry the students to another school during the examinations so that they can do their practicals. The school’s head teacher Mbogo Muceke conceptualised whatever you learn in class, “he says. Wamae has been teaching for three years. “Life was very difficult here. It was difficult to travel, it was difficult to do an assignment. We could not give homework to the children because one book was shared by five students”, she says. Most of the pupils here are from poor families who must make difficult choices daily between what meal to have and which to miss."

For most of the pupils, their quest for education has been littered with hurdles. The mean score for example incluso upwards from 3.2 to 3.7 in last year’s KCSE. This improvement means a lot to the humble community. For the first time, a student scored the university admissible C plus grade. “Excelling in sciences starts with the student getting motivation. Nowadays, students are motivated and keep asking for practicals,” said Sam Ngare, a physics teacher. “Since the lab was opened whenever there is a double lesson, the students insist they want it to be held here even if we don’t have a practical planned for,” he said. Wamae has felt a difference. "It’s not just me but the attitude towards sciences has changed. Doing practically what you see in books makes it so easy to conceptualise whatever you learn in class," he says. As soon as word went round that Kigwambiti Secondary School had a new science laboratory, student enrolment went up by more than 100 percent from 120 students to 270. Students from three surrounding schools now come to Kigwambiti for their science practicals, a complete turnaround for a school that was facing similar challenges. “This one has been a real morale booster for the school. Do you know in the whole of Mbene sub-county we don’t have a lab like this one?” Muceke, the head teacher, posed. “When you mention to people here about Safaricom Foundation, they think it is just about making calls or M-PESA. But now we know better that, the simple text you send or call you make can come back to the society,” he said. The Safaricom Foundation is also servicing and making replacements for equipment in the laboratory for the next one year.

Often, they have to help fetch water from kilometres away for domestic use after school. This, the headmistress says, took them away from books. “We never had water in our school. Children would carry water every morning and sometimes we would not cook because there was no water,” Nancy says. Because of this, the children would always be late for school. Apart from water, learning materials were scarce. Three pupils would share a desk, making it hard for them to write or focus. The casualties of these unfortunate truths are many and their sentiments are all too familiar to those of Mary Zabilon a 12-year-old Standard Seven pupil. She aspires to be a doctor and recalls how she missed out on good grades. “The jerry cans were heavy and by the time I arrived in school the lessons were already on and I was often late. I used to fail because I missed most classes,” Mary says. The Safaricom Foundation funded the purchase of 90 desks and a 10,000-litre tank for the school. The renewed urge and zeal of the pupils here is almost tangible. Caroline Mzae, another pupil, also wants to become a doctor and her plan is to educate the community on HIV and AIDS. “I had never attained 300 out of the possible 500. But in the last term examination I managed to score 300 marks,” the Class 8 pupil says with a smile.

With 222 pupils, the school’s mean score has seen gradual improvement from 206 in 2016 to 215 in 2017. This year, their sights are set at 250. "Because of the revision books, we had seven A’s in English," Nancy says as she points to the blackboard in her office. “The children can now learn with ease and concentrate,” she says. “We want the community to embrace education and this can only start with the children loving school.”

So had was the situation that at times the school’s administration had to ferry the students to another school during Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations so that they can do their practicals. The school’s head teacher Mbogo Muceke proposed the idea for the construction of a laboratory to parents in the year 2015, but the parents did not buy into the proposal. In 2017, the lab was used for the first time as soon as word went round that Kigwambiti from Voi Town, preventing one from seeing Wundanyi’s Town rise from the hills. But when the fog lifts as the sun climbs higher and the temperatures rise, school children can be seen hurrying their way up the steep slopes of the Taita Hills to schools dotted around the town. Some of them are pupils at Ngulu Kigwambiti Primary School, rushing to get to class in good time. At the school, 49-year-old Nancy Mathurua does her daily routine in the new classroom blocks as keen Standard Eight pupils scan through their revision books. Nancy is the headmistress and she has been at the institution for three years. “Life was very difficult here. It was difficult to travel, it was difficult to do an assignment. We could not give homework to the children because one book was shared by five students,” she says. Most of the pupils here are from poor families who must make difficult choices daily between what meal to have and which to miss. For most of the pupils, their quest for education has been littered with hurdles.

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Whenever I pay a visit to the M-PESA Foundation Academy, there is a particular indulgence that I allow myself: some sweet pastries made by a student at the Academy.

This young man, Chris Mwaniki, epitomizes what the Academy stands for: passion, commitment, ambition and a never-say-die attitude.

Mwaniki, who is in Form Four, makes pastries which he sells to the M-PESA Foundation Academy family. He is onto a good thing, because he says his pastries are sold out even before he steps into the kitchen. His ambition is to build his own empire, be a ‘Cake Boss’ and create opportunities for those behind him. Mwaniki is just one example of the kind of talent we are nurturing at the Academy.

We are striving to mold young people who are focused on making a difference in the world, by nudging them to follow their passion and stride into the real world, secure in the knowledge that they have been equipped with the right academic credentials and mental state to face the world.

And this is how we view the M-PESA and Safaricom Foundations – not just as a must-have appendage for our business, but as an altruistic intervention that touches the lives of the communities who have given us a license to operate.

Our business models need to be equipped to deal with today’s realities, especially on matters sustainability. For many years, sustainability was an afterthought. It was merely seen as switching off the lights, changing to low energy light bulbs and using water sparingly. While all these are good, businesses needed to change their understanding of sustainability and embed more responsible business practices into how a business produces and delivers its goods and services.

My understanding of sustainability is about being able to sustain a business responsibly with a deep understanding of how our actions and decisions today affect the world in the future.

We are committed to transforming lives through the Sustainable Development Goals which are a set of United Nations’ goals adopted by countries to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. We have adopted nine of these goals to define our impact and relevance to society.

The integration of the SDGs has taught us to view sustainable development as a business response to the challenges we face as a society — to use business driven approaches to create lasting economic growth to address social needs and empower communities.

This is what drives us to continue supporting the Safaricom and M-PESA Foundations and the impact has been phenomenal. For example, through our health programmes, we leverage our mobile technologies to transform lives by improving access to quality and affordable healthcare services and by promoting wellbeing for all. This has enabled us to transform the lives of thousands of men, women and children in marginalised areas.

Under education, we promote inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. This is evident, for example, at the M-PESA Foundation Academy, where we are going beyond the recommended curriculum by equipping learners with skills and knowledge that will sustain them and others long after they leave the Academy.

Sustainability extends to our people too. We strive to have a healthy workforce with the right skillset working in the right environment. Without this, output and quality of work suffer, absenteeism increases while turnover and recruitment costs soar. The bottom line suffers too.

We view all these as an essential part of our quest to ensure our business is here for the long haul.

Bob Collymore, Safaricom CEO
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