

Kenyans for Kenya Initiative

Underscoring Accountability in use of Public Funds

“From those to whom much is given, much is expected”

This quote, which is attributed to John F. Kennedy, aptly describes the overwhelming response by the Kenyan people when television images brought home the reality of hunger and deprivation in 13 districts across Kenya.

Conservative estimates indicate that by July 2011, 3.75 million Kenyans were on the verge of death by starvation. The government’s move to declare the hunger situation a national disaster, underscored the seriousness of the situation.

According to the United Nations, this was the worst drought to hit the Horn of Africa in over 60 years. More than 12 million people including 2 million children in Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti were facing a grave humanitarian crisis with lactating and expectant mothers, school going children and the elderly being the most affected.

When the images of a people robbed of their dignity emerged, many Kenyans similarly felt robbed of their own dignity. Many at home and in the diaspora wanted to help but they had no ready and credible platform to channel their contributions.

The first steps

A coalition of companies, including the Media Owners Association, launched a rapid response initiative to raise funds to provide emergency assistance to vulnerable people, particularly children, the elderly, lactating mothers and the sick.

The initiative was driven, on behalf of Kenyans, by a steering committee comprising representatives from Safaricom Limited, Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) Limited, Gina Din Corporate Communication (GDCC) and the Media owners Association.

Its initial target was to raise Kshs500 million for emergency food and medical intervention. The steering committee also committed to invest a portion of the funds raised in medium to long term livelihood programmes to empower people in arid and semi-arid districts to produce their own food and consequently, end reliance on food aid.

But Kenyans, in their true caring fashion, surprised everyone, including the international community. Kshs300 million was raised during the first week of the campaign, with the bulk of the donations coming from individual Kenyans donors both at home and in the diaspora. Majority of the donations came in through mobile money transfers such as M-PESA, Zap, Orange Money and Yu-Cash. A significant portion also came in through a dedicated KCB account.

The record breaking donations inspired the Kenyans for Kenyans Steering Committee to raise the target from Kshs500 million to Kshs1 billion.

In a recent interview with the Kenya Red Cross Society Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Gina Din-Kariuki, she said the greatest lesson she learnt during the campaign is never to underestimate a people's ability to make a difference.

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), the leading humanitarian relief organisation in Kenya, brought into the campaign credibility, competence and experience in managing humanitarian operations. The organisation led massive efforts to alleviate the suffering of people in arid and semi-arid districts, with some 1.8 million most vulnerable people receiving direct aid.

Fundraising Initiatives

Several fundraising initiatives targeting different segments of the private sector were held. The first fundraising event was held at the Serena Hotel, Nairobi. It targeted mostly major companies, with majority of the corporates being represented by their own CEOs. This was the clearest indication that the famine crisis had moved to the top of the national agenda. Other fundraisers were held for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Savings Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs).

The methods used to raise the funds were as varied as they were creative. Some employees chose to skip their meals and benefits, some contributed a portion of their salaries, while others organized concerts and sold items to get that much needed coin. Indeed, every coin mattered at this stage.

The Alcatel-Lucent Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Alcatel-Lucent, went for a Global Matching Gift Program for its employees. The program provided a way for employees to contribute to efforts to alleviate the crisis and to enable them to make a difference to the lives of the children and their families impacted by the drought. The initiative resulted in Kshs15 million, which was donated to the Kenya Red Cross to help combat the humanitarian crisis.

The Winning Continent and Public Vote

GE Healthcare challenged Twitter users around the world to tweet what they were doing to stay healthy and keep fit, while representing their country and continent. The Get Fit competition prompted a broad international response, from calorie-conscious dieters to marathon-running exercise fans, but ultimately the highest number of tweets originated from the Middle East and Africa.

With the winning continent decided, the final stage of the competition involved a vote by visitors to the GE Healthcare Newsroom to determine which country's Red Cross or Red Crescent Society would receive the \$20,000 donation. A late surge in votes tipped the scales in favor of Kenya.

Artistes on board

Kenyan artistes and celebrities played a major role in rallying people to the Kenyans for Kenya cause. They were present at the numerous flag offs in Uhuru Park, travelled with the Kenyans for Kenya Steering Committee to drought areas and staged their own concerts to raise funds.

Achievements

During its latest review meeting, the Kenyans for Kenya steering committee, which comprises Safaricom CEO, Bob Collymore, Kenya Commercial Bank, CEO Martin Oduor-Otieno, KASS

Media Group Chairman, Joshua Chepkwony, Kenya Red Cross Secretary General Abbas Gullet and Gina Din-Kariuki of Gina Din Corporate Communications, announced that malnutrition rates in Turkana have dropped to 13.7 per cent up from 37.4 per cent as a result of direct intervention by the Kenyans for Kenya Initiative as well as other partners. This is a phenomenal improvement against the threshold of 15 per cent.

The committee also reported that 2,057 metric tonnes of Unimix has so far been distributed to 285,729 school going children in 2,381 schools in the affected areas. An additional 1900 metric tonnes, is currently being distributed to schools in ASALs under the school feeding programme.

These are truly encouraging signs considering that by July last year, more than 3.75 million people in arid and semi-arid districts were in dire need of food assistance. Malnutrition rates were at emergency level, and more than 385,000 children below 5 years in 13 districts were suffering from acute malnutrition. The Government consequently declared the drought a National Disaster.

Since the launch of the Kenyans for Kenya Initiative, some 326 metric tonnes of certified drought resistant seeds have been distributed to over 200,000 farmers while 3100 families in the greater Yatta region benefitted from 1,000 cassava cuttings each, through a collaborative venture between the Kenya Red Cross and Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) - Katumani. More than 500 greenhouses were also distributed to schools and community groups across Kenya. To support school feeding and hygiene promotion, emergency water trucking interventions were also carried out. The purpose, the Committee said, is to empower communities to produce their own food as one of the ways of preventing future drought emergency.

Some 32,901 beneficiaries also benefitted from curative and nutritional screening services and a polio campaign was carried out in 149 districts with the Kenya Red Cross being involved directly in 35 districts, as part of the Initiative's health intervention.

Overall, the Initiative has been a huge success and has set standards as one of the best audited programmes in recent times. The Steering Committee acknowledges that there were challenges around the initiative but notes that lessons have been learnt, which would ensure similar programmes in the future are better managed for the benefit of the beneficiaries.

The Kenyans for Kenya Initiative has won wide acclaim worldwide. It was even cited at the African Union (AU) as a foundation to build on for a possible Africans for Africa to encourage African people to take responsibility for the development of their own countries and not look to the West for aid.

Locally, the Kenyans for Kenya Initiative won the 2011 Millennium Development Goals Award for championing the realization of some of the MDGs. It also won the overall PR Campaign of the Year Award as well as the Not for Profit Campaign of the year.

Lessons in Accountability

Audit firm Deloitte and Touche, assisted by Ernst & Young, KPMG and PwC, with the support of volunteers from the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK), verified the entire Kenyans for Kenya process including procurement, transport and distribution in the field.

Audited accounts show that Kshs633, 854,734 had been received by the end of October 2011 while a further outstanding balance of Kshs43, 861,928 was still to be received. In addition the audit team recognised donations in kind totaling Kshs278 million made up of food stuff, fuel, media coverage and various support services

A total of Kshs114 million was incurred in purchasing and distributing Unimix: Kshs112 million for the direct purchase and Kshs2 million was used for hired transport which supplemented KRCS provided transport.

As per the commitment, the Kenya Red Cross Society will invest over Kshs300 million in long term sustainability projects that focus on food security and livelihood improvement. The strategy seeks to increase community resilience to drought through strengthening and

protecting livelihoods and assets. Three regions have been earmarked as pilot projects namely North Turkana, East Pokot and Moyale .The interventions will take an integrated approach through programming of livelihoods into health, water and sanitation and agriculture. Farming has been introduced as an alternative livelihood in areas where pastoralism is no longer viable due to the impact of climate change. This should significantly reduce dependency on food aid.

Bob Collymore, CEO, Safaricom Limited

The biggest lesson we learnt “We Can”

Safaricom has ongoing programmes with the Kenya Red Cross, mostly in the area of water and sanitation. In the wake of the 2011 drought emergency, we felt that what was already being done was not enough. We therefore reached out to our partners, among them Kenya Commercial Bank and the Media Owners Association. Safaricom’s M-PESA became the platform for the Kenyans for Kenya Initiative, giving Kenyans a ready and convenient channel their contributions.

There were many heartwarming experiences during the Kenyans for Kenya campaign, such as the policeman who gave up his entire month’s salary so that others may have food to eat. There was also the first corporate fundraising, at which so much money was raised. This was a powerful demonstration that people care.

Like every other major initiative, there were lessons learnt, the biggest of them being, “We can”. We learnt that Kenyans can take control. With their donations, which were sometimes as low as Kshs10, sent via the M-PESA platform, people knew they could make a difference.

It should be noted that the Kenyans for Kenya steering committee did not just stop at dealing with the drought emergency. We made a conscious decision to invest a significant amount of the proceeds in long term initiatives that would empower communities to produce their own food.

I believe success will come when we give people choices. There are several technology solutions that can transform the arid and semi-arid regions into agriculturally productive regions. However, the current situation in arid districts leaves people with no choice.

The other fundamental is the need for infrastructure fix to open up the arid and semi-arid regions to other opportunities.

Safaricom, in partnership with the Kenya Red Cross, is already engaged in projects that could give communities such choices. These include drilling of boreholes and farming through irrigation. We are aware that such projects can alleviate the current food security problem only for some. But it would be a mistake to think that what you are doing is too small and therefore not worth your investment. What we are doing demonstrates that it can be done and this can allow replication by other stakeholders.

The Kenya Red Cross has set the pace. It has demonstrated that it can be done. I urge the private sector to partner with the Kenya Red Cross to enhance sustainable livelihood programs for our people.

Martin Oduor-Otieno, Chief Executive Officer, KCB Group

The Kenya Commercial Bank's corporate responsibility focuses on five thematic areas. These include education, health, enterprise, environment and humanitarian work.

When we saw pictures from Turkana; of children, women and men dying of hunger, it pricked our conscience. The situation was pathetic. A people's dignity had been taken away.

We decided to do something about it. During our conversations with our partners at Safaricom Foundation, the idea of Kenyans for Kenya Initiative was born.

The whole initiative was a positive experience for me. I cherished the spirit of volunteerism that was evident at the pledging session and that was exhibited by members of the Steering Committee. Young Rose Nasimiyu's speech was moving and the musicians, who volunteered their time and talent, did a great job in drawing crowds.

I believe we can end food insecurity in this country, especially within the framework of Vision 2030. The question is when and how.

One of the causes of food insecurity is the imbalance between supply and demand and the planning and logistics around re-distribution from areas that have surplus to areas that have none.

We need to take a critical look at the types of food crops that we grow, whether we grow enough as well as the question of strategic grain reserves.

Technology does and can play a major role in turning around the fortunes of the arid and semi-arid districts. In this regard, we need to look at irrigation, long term water harvesting techniques, construction of dams and boreholes as well as investment in green houses. The challenge for us is sustainability. We must therefore build capacity to manage technology investments on a sustainable basis.

As the new county governments come into place, they will have a major responsibility to secure food availability for their people. This will be their primary role. The county leadership will need to ask themselves what else they can do to meet the needs of their people if farming isn't economically viable.

Joshua Chepkwony, Chairman, KASS Media Group

As media owners, we felt we had an obligation to disseminate information and rally Kenyans to support themselves following the worst drought to ever hit the Horn of Africa.

The initiative succeeded because the Kenyan people responded. Credit goes to all Kenyans, both at home and in the Diaspora, who responded to our appeal. The steering committee simply provided the platform while the Kenyans were the actors.

It was a completely new experience for me. One of the fundamental lessons I learnt is that our solutions lie right here with us. We don't have to look outside for solutions to our challenges.

My best experience was the first launch at Serena. It was exhilarating. Kshs.300 million was raised at that launch. This was a sign of confidence in the process. I knew that we were going to save lives.

I have no doubt that we can end food insecurity in this country, once and for all. Images of severe deprivation were disturbing to all of us. The good news is that a sustainable solution is within our means.

First, we need to put money in agriculture. We have plenty of arable land. Peasant farming is not sustainable. We must focus on commercial farming, harvest water and create incentives to transform farming into a viable business for investors.

Secondly, we need to urbanise our people and invest in a skilled workforce as happened in the Nordic countries. This will free land for purposes of agriculture.

Third, we must put more money in research and development to empower institutions such as the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) to produce seeds that are resistant to diseases and the effects of climate change.

Four, we need to extend affordable credit to farmers to make the cost of production to come down. This will ensure local produce is competitive in the market.

Finally, I would like to conclude with the words of President JF Kennedy. "*Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country*". JF Kennedy was right. The responsibility for this country rests upon the Kenyan people.

Brenda Mulinya, Senior Reporter, NTV

Over the years, Kenyans have demonstrated their ability to rise to the occasion with compassion and generosity whenever their fellow countrymen are faced with hunger and/or other natural calamities. The K4K simply provided a platform for all concerned Kenyans of goodwill to come together and do something on a grand scale.

My best moment of the campaign was watching the first flag off of relief food for the most affected areas. It was on a Sunday morning at the historic Uhuru Park. I was really impressed

to see very young Kenyans take charge of the situation; it was heartening to hear from the policeman who gave his entire month's salary towards the cause.

I think the biggest lesson Kenyans can draw from the K4K campaign is that we can achieve so much if we pull together with proper organisation. We don't have to wait for the powers that be to do things for us. Whatever we set our sights on, no matter how big the target seems to be, we can achieve it as one nation.

Kenya must plan and invest in drought mitigation measures. Kenya is a rich country in terms of resources and should never have to suffer famine. With proper usage of technology and investments, we can be a net exporter of food.

David Mathenge “Nameless”, Acclaimed Kenyan Musician

I saw images of parents with their children. They could not help themselves. They could not help their children, and it was through no fault of their own. The emotions came together and we all realized we could do something. I believed in the K4K idea. The name, too, was a great idea.

As a country, we have the capacity to eradicate hunger. We can produce adequate food. The challenge is in management of resources to meet the needs of all of us. But, we need leadership, good governance, effective planning and sustainable initiatives.

The citizens must also hold the government accountable. We must insist, for instance, that we need budgetary allocations for irrigation and boreholes.

Through my music, I will continue to entertain, but I will also communicate relevant messages because music has a way of connecting us and creating a sense of urgency.

Linus Gitahi, CEO, Nation Media Group

The Kenyans for Kenya Initiative was much similar to what the Nation Media Group has been involved in for the last 20 years.

We have been running the Save-a-Life Fund in partnership with East African Breweries and Standard Chartered Bank. Through this, we have a fund through which we can intervene whenever there is a drought emergency.

I remember when NMG found Aro Koriang in Turkana more than 10 years ago. We have never abandoned her and today she is in secondary school.

My finest moment is when I see lives being saved and particularly when I see funds being channeled in the right manner to support those who need it most.

The lesson I learnt is that the emergency initiatives are not sustainable. That is why we all agreed that a portion of the funds raised under Kenyans for Kenya was going to be used for long term sustainable initiatives. This is why the NMG team did the KiliClimb to raise funds for sustainable projects.

The one way to put dependence on food aid behind us is to refine our Agricultural Policy and make it more transparent. We have huge opportunities for irrigation but some of the local investors do not know, for instance, how they can access opportunities for farming in the country.

The creation of Counties under the new Constitution is also going to create healthy competition between Counties, leading to innovation and better informed investments. Every County should start asking, "What is my competitive advantage and what can I produce to sell outside the county or country?"

Abbas Gullet, Secretary General, Kenya Red Cross Society

No one should be going hungry in Kenya in 2012. There is no dignity in being the perennial recipient of food aid.

Today, more than ever, we have the incredible opportunity to turn around this situation, not in another 50 years, but within the next decade.

We have demonstrated that dependence on food aid is a “national state of mind” rather than a hopeless situation in itself. Kenya is rich and many parts of Kenya enjoy two rainy seasons a year. We have permanent rivers that run through the country draining into the Indian Ocean and Lake Victoria. Moreover, the quality of researchers in institutions such as the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) is one of the best in Africa.

Gina Din-Kariuki, Chairman and Managing Director, Gina Din Corporate Communications

My finest moment was when a little orphaned child from a Nairobi Children’s Home brought chicken that had been donated to them, as his contribution. I feel a deep sense of gratitude to all those who contributed. Everyone wanted to do something and we gave them the platform to do it. The credibility of the Red Cross was also a key factor in bringing people together.

Some of the initial images we saw were of people stripped of dignity. Through the Initiative, we not only gave them back their dignity, we also restored our own dignity.

The main lesson I learnt is that we must not underestimate the power of people coming together.

I look forward to going back to Turkana, to see the reaction on people’s faces when they finally have water.

Norah Odwesso, Public Affairs & Communications Director, Coca-Cola Central East & West Africa

Coca-Cola made a decision to contribute to the Kenyans for Kenya initiative because we knew that we could make a significant contribution towards alleviating the ravaging drought

situation in the country, working alongside other partners to bring a lasting difference. We are a firm believer that our business is only as strong as the communities in which we operate.

Our best moment was when we saw the beneficiaries receiving and benefitting from all of our contributions, and seeing Kenyans come together in one-ness with a sincere desire to make a difference to fellow Kenyans in need.

I believe that with one-ness in purpose, anything we set ourselves to accomplish is possible. All it takes is belief in a cause.

No one entity can manage this problem alone. We must mobilize all our efforts, Government, Corporate and civil society groups, must all work together to develop and deliver home-grown lasting sustainable solutions to this problem.

Geeta Manek, District Governor, Rotary Club

We accompanied Kenya Red Cross to Turkana. The situation was absolutely shocking.

The lesson I learnt is that every human being can make a difference. We dispatched many trucks of food through the Red Cross. We also agreed to partner with Red Cross and other partners for long term initiatives. The Rotary has also pledged 20 boreholes.

Every Kenyan has an interest in making sure this disaster does not occur again. Our leaders need to take interest in the people who vote for them. It is not right for a 14 year old to run around with jerricans for 20 or 30 km looking for water. Food and water are basic human rights.

Map of Kenya

Proposed Longer Term Plan

The general sentiment of most leaders, humanitarian and development organisations, companies, and citizens of goodwill, is that alongside emergency relief, long term solutions must be found to the perennial food crisis in the horn of Africa.

The Kenya Red Cross plans 22 long term projects in arid and semi-arid areas to empower people to produce their own food and end reliance on food aid. Out of these 22 planned projects, three shall be supported under the Kenyans for Kenya Initiative at over sh300 million. It is anticipated that the projects will assure food security for more than 42,000 people with 14400 in East Pokot, 12600 in Walda (Moyale) and 15000 in Turkana North.

The interventions will take an integrated approach through programming of livelihoods into health, water and sanitation and agriculture. The strategy is to increase community resilience to drought through strengthening and protecting livelihoods and assets.