

# Mukuru Promotion Centre

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

VOL 10 ISSUE NO. 2 2025

JOURNEYING 40 YEARS WITH THE MUKURU COMMUNITY

## MPC DIRECTOR

Dear Partners, Supporters, Family and Friends,

This month's highlight was the visit from the Auxiliary Bishop of Vienna, Stefan Turnovszky, along with the DKA staff. It was the first time a bishop visited the Mukuru Promotion Centre and those with experience of bishops in their dioceses were amazed by Bishop Stefan's humility and his engagement with the local community and our students. He even joined in a dance when St Michael's Secondary School students invited him to participate. It was wonderful to reconnect with Herbert, who is now in charge of DKA, as well as to meet Ute, our current liaison officer with DKA, along with Martina and Sigrid, who are involved with the Catholic Youth Movement in Austria and help gather essential contributions for our work here.

We thank Dr Jana Popovova, Dr Claudia Correll and John Wanbugu for their ongoing medical education efforts with the Clinic staff. Congratulations are in order for Hannah and her team for managing the increased patient numbers. We commend the Primary Headteachers and staff for accommodating the new CBC education system, and we are proud of the achievements of our students under this system.

We greatly appreciate the support of KWAL and Tamarind Hotel for their ongoing efforts with our catering students at OLMVTC.

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We are deeply grateful to Jansen Sjors from the KWES Foundation for his visit to the primary and secondary students, sponsored by his family foundation, to check their progress. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to Airtel Kenya, our neighbouring telecommunications company, for their visit to St Michael's Secondary School and the documentary they produced showcasing the impact of their sponsorship over the past ten years.

Strathmore University continues to support the mentorship of St Michael's Secondary School students by involving their students in interactive sessions that teach them how to balance academic, spiritual, and social aspects of their lives. Sky Fest treated our teenage girls to a documentary about making sound life decisions. Tangaza University College also mentored our students on healthy sexuality and invited some students to participate in a debate, where one of our students, William Mwacharo, was awarded the Best Male Debater. We are grateful to all these mentors.

Form 3 parents held meetings with teachers about subject choices, fostering collaboration between parents and educators for the ongoing formation of their children. This is just one of the many ongoing activities at St Michael's Secondary School that we are all part of. The social workers at St Michael's are discerning which students are in the greatest need of sponsorship. Additionally, our students placed fourth in the Makadara Sub-County sports event, and we congratulate those chosen to advance to the next level of the competition.

Songa Mbele na Masomo Children's Centre is working on registering with the Ministry of Education to enable greater protection for the Centre. The Rehabilitation Centre staff are also involved in the recruitment drive for the new cohort of boys, as the previous group have either been reintegrated or sent to primary and secondary boarding schools or day schools near their homes.

MPC is currently facing challenges due to illegal dumping occurring opposite the schools, driven by powerful cartels. The pollution and toxic fumes have led to health issues for many in Mukuru caused by burning of rubbish illegally dumped at the site. We ask for your prayers for a resolution to this issue.

We also asked for your prayers for Imelda, our 15-year-old St Michael's secondary student. Unfortunately, I am saddened to report that the cancer is advancing. We are doing everything we can to assist Imelda and her family. Thank you to each of you for your ongoing support, whether as individuals or organized groups. Your support makes positive impacts for our beneficiaries. As you know, we could not survive without your help.

Asanteni Sana, for creating the **possibilities for change**.

Sr Mary Killeen  
*Director*

# Archival Corner

*“Leo Katika Historia – Today in History”*



## Founder of Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Njenga Mwenda Kariuki, takes a Bow on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Njenga was born in Ngarariga village in Limuru, Kiambu County in 1936 and was among the few early settlers in the slum just a few kilometres from Nairobi’s CBD.

He arrived in the slum at 22 in 1958 without formal education. Some friends directed him to the quarries in Mukuru, where menial jobs were readily available. White settlers operated these quarries, while Njenga and a few other Kenyans worked as casual labourers. Once the quarries were dug, the open valley and deserted land strewn with rocks were left unattended. Njenga saw an opportunity to set up a shanty to accommodate quarry workers from the surrounding areas and to establish a liquor joint for entertainment, particularly after work and on weekends. The pub was opened in 1959, and since then, people have referred to the area using his name, resulting in the slum being named “Mukuru Kwa Njenga.” What was once a desolate area, Njenga's vision and hard work transformed it into a vibrant community.

Njenga went on to serve as the chairman of the slum for 60 years. Residents would approach him to resolve disputes and seek advice on various matters. Today, Mukuru Kwa Njenga is one of the largest informal settlements in Kenya, with the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census estimating its population at 242,941. The settlement is divided by a railway line, creating Mukuru Kwa Reuben to the west and Mukuru Kwa Njenga to the east.

Recognizing the need for educational opportunities for children in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, the Sisters of Mercy, through Child Aid, Ireland and Fr Pat O’Toole built a few mabati classrooms that became Mukuru Kwa Njenga Primary School in 1991. Shortly after it was built the Ministry of Education claimed it as a public school. It currently has an enrolment of over 1,000 children.



Kwa Njenga Primary School

## Social and Health Services

### Activities In February

All social workers in our learning institutions diligently followed up on absenteeism cases, ensuring that instances were dealt with promptly. An extensive and thorough assessment of vulnerable students who would benefit from scholarship programs was carried out for primary and secondary school students. Our primary school pupils stand to benefit from scholarship offers from an anonymous donor, who has offered to sponsor 30 primary pupils in each of the 4 MPC Primary Schools. KWES Foundation has offered to sponsor 5 pupils and 10 further scholarships for students at St Michael's Secondary School. Interviews were carried out with prospective St Michael's students. Whistle Foundation, Ireland offered to sponsor school fees for vulnerable St Bakhita preschool children.

Support was needed to cover nutritional and clothing requirements, and, at times, financial requirements were carried out for vulnerable students and community members. The social workers conducted home visits to validate said claims and ensure the most vulnerable residents of Mukuru received the appropriate support. Students in need received vital support in underwear, uniforms, sanitary pads, and stationery, and school fees were waived. The school lunch program, an essential and, at times, the only food source for many, continued without interruption to serve free lunch meals to MPC students. Some leftovers are available for students to take home if needed. Our social services ensure we retain students in our schools and support their home environment.



A needy Sancta Maria pupil receives a donation of textbooks



A sick child receives amaranth flour from St Catherine's Social Office



St Michael's students receive food and clothing support



St Elizabeth PP2 pupil receives a new uniform



A restock on food items for vulnerable students and community members was carried out in the Head Office. This included food items such as beans, green grams, rice, fortified maize and wheat flour. Similarly, the restocking for monthly feeding program at St. Catherine's social office, which caters for sickly 0–17 year old children, pregnant mothers and 3-month post-natal mothers, was actioned. This included the aforementioned food items, supplemented with fresh fruits and vegetables to ensure that the sickly had access to a well-balanced diet. Furthermore, the amaranth flour distribution to vulnerable adult and child clients was also carried out. This is a highly nutritious flour which is vital in boosting the immune system of chronically ill patients, such as those who suffer from HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, cancer and other diseases.

Mentorship sessions, designed and delivered in collaboration with the child protection office and counsellors, were carried out to our primary, secondary and vocational school students. The topics covered in our mentorship sessions are designed to guide the participants through life and its challenges. These sessions not only motivate participants but also help in curbing behavioural issues which understandably plague some from disadvantaged backgrounds.



St Bakhita Grade 4 pupils mentorship session



Songa Parents Unit 1 Meeting



Former prisoner receives food support from the Skills Social Office

Throughout the month our social offices were productive in carrying out both routine and novel activities as required. We are indebted to the generosity of our donors, without whom our work would not be possible.

## Mary Immaculate Clinic

### Activities In February

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The Clinic has experienced a steady increase in patient numbers over the first quarter of 2025. This trend was expected due to the seasonal illnesses. The total number of registered patients for February was **2,726**, a **22% increase** from January's **2,233**. The paediatric unit also saw a 34% rise, with **1,557** children treated, up from **1,160** in January. With the increases across the Clinic, a notable surge in laboratory tests was observed, with **1,531** tests, **45%** of which were for children. The most prevalent condition was respiratory infections for children and adults. Over 130 mothers attended the ANC clinic, and 121 children were immunized.

In February, Dr. John Wambugu, a consultant in Paediatrics, presented on 'Diarrheal Diseases in Children' and 'Pneumonia in Children' as part of the Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions. Diarrhea remains a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in children, contributing to approximately 2 million deaths annually among those under five years old. The peak incidence of diarrhea occurs between 6 to 11 months during the complementary feeding stage. The primary route of transmission is through the ingestion of contaminated food or water. Key risk factors include poverty, poor sanitation, and a lack of access to safe water. Preventative measures emphasize the importance of rotavirus and measles vaccinations, promote breastfeeding, and educate parents on proper handwashing and food hygiene. These CME training sessions equip healthcare professionals to engage with local communities to develop sustainable solutions that tackle the root causes of diarrhea, such as inadequate sanitation and insufficient access to safe water.

Efforts may involve collaborating with local governments to create lasting change. Training healthcare providers to include residents of slum areas in developing solutions—like promoting household-level water treatment or improving waste disposal—can empower communities to take action and reduce health risks. Additionally, educating families about the complementary feeding stage (6 to 11 months) and the significance of hygiene during this critical period can help prevent diarrhea-related deaths.

The statistics for pneumonia in children are alarming. It accounts for 14% of all deaths in children under five. It can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or fungi. The simplest way to prevent pneumonia is through immunization, adequate nutrition, and addressing environmental factors. Treatment is easy if you have access to antibiotics; however, only one-third of affected children receive the antibiotics they need. The Clinic has received support from Pablo Horstmann Foundation and Dr Veronica Lambert from Swiss Medical Association to provide free and readily available drugs, which will help reduce pneumonia-related cases.

Dr. Jana Popovova conducted additional Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions on “*Antibiotic Stewardship*”. There is a growing reliance on antibiotics, leading to instances of over-medication. Training staff on the appropriate use of antibiotics to avoid unnecessary prescriptions and ensure positive health outcomes is crucial. Not all fevers require antibiotic treatment, especially those caused by viral infections. The overuse of antibiotics contributes to antibiotic resistance, which results in the spread of resistant bacteria. Therefore, promoting proper infection control practices, hand hygiene, and sanitation is essential to prevent disease transmission.

We are happy to announce that we have created additional space at the clinic by modifying and expanding a container. This improvement has enabled us to accommodate our social worker and clinician, effectively addressing the previous space shortage. The new rooms have greatly enhanced our service efficiency and provided essential comfort for staff and patients.



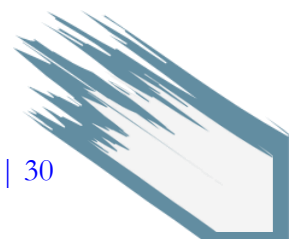
New working station for clinician and social worker

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Pablo Horstmann Foundation and well-wishers who have donated medications. These donations have been invaluable in helping the underprivileged individuals in the slums who depend on our services for their healthcare needs. Your contributions have directly impacted the lives of these individuals, providing them with essential medications and healthcare services they would otherwise not have access to. Every contribution makes an impact, and we truly appreciate the kindness and generosity of our supporters.

In February, 104 mothers were successfully scanned, bringing the total for the year so far to 156. Many learned the gender of their babies, which allowed them to prepare in advance. It's important to note that this service is provided free of charge, thanks to the support of our generous donors, for ANC mothers from all Mukuru slum villages.

The clinic has experienced a growing number of adult patients seeking financial assistance to manage chronic illnesses, such as kidney disease and other life-threatening conditions. Many struggle to afford essential medications, consultations, and specialist follow-up appointments. Their inability to work due to medical conditions intensifies their financial hardship and perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

Although the social office continues to provide food rations, the demand far exceeds the available resources. While the clinic subsidizes medications, the budget for expensive treatments for adult chronic and life-threatening illnesses presents a significant challenge. The rising costs of essential drugs and medical care further strain our capacity to assist all those in need. Maintaining food and medical support for all patients requiring assistance is becoming increasingly difficult.





## Primary Schools

### Activities In February

During February, primary schools focused on co-curricular activities, such as sports days, arts and crafts activities, music performances, and other club activities. These activities, in line with the competency-based curriculum, started taking place after the mid-term break. The emphasis was on combining academics with personal development through sports and other co-curricular activities, all while adhering to age-appropriate guidelines set by the Ministry of Education (MoE). Schools were advised to set time after classes for such activities, and to help learners identify their talents and potential through these activities.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has launched the School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment (SMEA) initiative for all schools to enhance the quality of education. This initiative aims to identify areas needing improvement and make appropriate adjustments. It evaluates various aspects, including teaching, learning, and management, to enhance student achievement and overall school effectiveness.

Teachers receive regular feedback about their performance, which is assessed according to the Teacher Performance Appraisal Development (TPAD) guidelines. This evaluation occurs annually, ensuring a continuous focus on improvement. A school report is also provided to the Headteacher for reference and record-keeping purposes.



JSS St Bakhita school laboratory



St Bakhita reading culture



St Bakhia soccer team

Parental involvement in education is crucial in ensuring good academic performance among students. The cornerstone of this involvement is the parent meetings. These meetings are not just a formality, but a vital platform for open communication, allowing parents to support their child's learning journey effectively. During these meetings, teachers can discuss specific areas where students may need improvement, enabling a joint effort with parents to help learners reach their full potential. The parent meetings were organized by grade level, starting with parents of students in grades 1, 2, and 3, followed by those in Grades 4, 5, and 6, and concluding with parents of students in Junior Secondary Grades 7, 8, and 9.

Before the mid-term break, schools conducted assessments as per the Ministry guidelines to assess students' understanding of skills imparted in each subject. The children did both practical and theory assessments, which will later be uploaded to the KNEC website for grading purposes.



The County Government, through the County Development Fund Office (NG-CDF), has officially approved the construction of four Grade 9 classrooms at Sancta Maria Kayaaba Primary School. The new structure will address the existing classroom shortage; however, it will also pose a challenge, as it will be located in the children's playground area.



Grade 9 classrooms construction at Sancta Maria Kayaaba Primary School

In preparation for the Grade 9 students parents have assisted in purchasing the lockers (desks) for the school. A donation of the ProFuturo Tablets was received by the students.



New lockers (desks)



ProFuturo tablets

The schools began preparations for the upcoming sporting competitions scheduled for March. They organized selection processes to identify talented students who will participate in ball games and athletics. The competitions are structured at various levels, starting from Zonal and advancing to Regional, with winning teams progressing to the National level.

In February, the primary schools received European visitors. The visits enabled the donors and well-wishers to meet with project beneficiaries and hear their stories. Bishop Stephan Turnovszky, Auxiliary Bishop of Wien (Vienna) visited Kenya to see some of the projects supported by funding agency DKA Austria. MPC hosted Bishop Turnovszky and his delegation and interacted with all MPC Departments. The children in the primary schools were delighted to meet a Bishop.



St Bakhita Primary School pupils welcomes Bishop Stephen Turnovszky to MPC with a dance.



Quess Foundation visited MPC to monitor the progress of their beneficiaries in the schools (primary and secondary) and community members.

Kwes Foundation representative, Jansen Sjors meets the sponsored beneficiaries.



DKA funded the Loyola Foundation to conduct climate change awareness sessions in schools. One school involved was St. Bakhita Junior Secondary School, where students organized a community cleanup along the very polluted Ngong River.



In addition, they tackled concerns about a nearby dumpsite that poses a hazard to local residents. Armed with trash bags, the students worked hard to remove litter, showcasing their dedication to preserving their environment and creating a safer community.

St. Bakhita Students clean-up at Likoni Road dumpsite.



## St Michael's Secondary School

### Activities In February

In February, St. Michael's School was bustling with activity as Airtel film crews captured the impact of sponsorship on its beneficiaries. Airtel Kenya, a telecommunications company, has supported students at St. Michael's for over ten years, helping many achieve their educational goals. The documentary aims to highlight the life-changing outcomes of this sponsorship and inspire further support for academic initiatives. The heartwarming stories of two students, the Principal and Deputy Principal, were shared, emphasizing how the sponsorship has empowered them to pursue their dreams. They also encouraged others to dream big despite the challenges they face in their everyday lives.



Airtel crew taking a documentary shoots as they interview the Principal and Deputy.

In February, Strathmore University students organized mentorship sessions for all St. Michael's students to maintain educational momentum. These sessions focused on helping students balance their academic and social lives. The Strathmore team grouped the participants by class and gender, ensuring the sessions were well-organized and interactive.



Strathmore university students giving talks to our students



A Sky Fest was held at MPC Hall in February. "Sky Girls" is a Pan-African empowerment program for teenage girls, which has a presence in six African countries. Since its launch in Kenya in 2020, Sky Girls has been a highly successful and well-supported movement, inspiring young women to stay true to their values and avoid negative influences. The program provides a supportive community of peers to help teenage girls pursue their passions and confidently refuse temptations that do not align with their values and enhance their confidence, self-reflection, decision-making, and refusal skills, enabling them to make positive choices that reflect their true selves. The main event is scheduled for March 1, 2025, at the Kasarani Stadium Grounds.



St. Michael's girls watch Sky Fest film about making sound decisions



The St. Michael's Debate Club participated in an engaging and educational session of the debating competition for schools in Nairobi at Tangaza University. The theme of the debate centred on raising awareness and educating children about the sexualization of youth while also enhancing their communication skills.

Before the debate commenced, our students had the opportunity to attend an enlightening session where they delved into various topics related to sexualization, learning about the importance of maintaining chastity to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and early pregnancies. They also gained a deeper understanding of the significance of personal responsibility in achieving their future goals. Two students William Mwacharo and Macleans Awuor, took the stage to represent our school in the debate. Their

active participation and dedication were truly inspiring. William's exceptional performance earned him the title of the Best Male Debater, and he was awarded a Trophy and a T-shirt on Chastity.



Form 3 student, William Mwacharo awarded as Best Male debater at Tangaza University



Performing students, William and Macleans

The Form 3 Parents Meeting was held in February to provide academic support, foster stronger home-to-school collaboration, and spend time on the progress of the Form 3s. Living in the slums has complexities that impact the student's academic performance. The school wants the parents to know that teachers can provide guidance at one level; however, parents must be engaged and assist with developing strategies to support their sons' and daughters' learning. The meeting featured one-on-one sessions for each student-parent pair and a group discussion that allowed for exchanging ideas and



Our students having one on one consultation with teachers together with parents

approaches. The format was interactive and allowed for direct feedback and discussion. Parents were urged to observe their children's discipline and help the teachers where possible to promote positive behaviour.

The English and Kiswahili teachers accompanied the 140 students to see the Set Books Live performance by Jicho 4 Productions at the Sarakasi Dome Hall. Watching a performance of what they will learn in Form 3 and Form 4 provides a good backdrop and understanding of the plays.

Form 3 girls attended a mentorship session courtesy of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Office. It was an interactive discussion, with a lot of information shared on self-awareness and identity regarding sexual orientation. The Form Three girls were advised to take self-identity seriously regarding sexual orientation to observe healthy relationships.



Girls' mentorship in session

The Sponsorship Office and St Michael's social worker conducted assessments and interviews for prospective needy cases with exceptional ability students. These students, despite facing significant financial challenges, have a genuine determination to succeed at school. The Team listened to their stories of overcoming obstacles, articulating their dreams for the future, and the passion that drove them to excel academically. These heartfelt conversations weren't just about test scores or transcripts but about understanding the human spirit and the courage it takes to pursue a better life. The empathetic approach truly underscored the belief that every talented student deserves a chance, regardless of financial circumstances. The Sponsorship Office is to make a final decision.



Form 2 students being interviewed for sponsorship

Mr. Ngai, the Principal of St. Michael's, and the entire school community warmly welcomed Bishop Turnovszky and his Austrian delegation, supported by DKA Austria. The students entertained the guests with a traditional dance, highlighting the school's diverse talents. Everyone came together as Bishop Turnovszky celebrated Mass for all the MPC departments. During his sermon, he expressed his appreciation for the lively nature of African culture and its way of worship.





Bishop Stephan Turnovszky being entertained



Mass in the multipurpose hall

This year, the Form 4 cohort held an important meeting to discuss strategies for improving academic performance. The Deputy Principal Mrs Loice Chege, Mr Steve Biko, Leaky Lekakeny Rotich, Harrison Eteye Siego, and Mr Bob Paterson, MPC Board member, engaged with the candidates to explore practical approaches for success. They emphasized crucial areas such as discipline, consistent revision, time management, and seeking teacher guidance.



Form 4 Performance Meeting

In an encouraging gesture, Bob Paterson offered a special incentive to any student who improves by two grades. The meeting strongly reaffirmed MPC's commitment to student success, highlighting that such achievements are possible through dedication and hard work.

St. Michael's also participated in the Makadara Sub-County sports competition held at Buru Buru Girls and Aquinas Boys High Schools. The school was well represented by the girls' handball and boys' and girls' basketball teams, alongside a determined athletics squad. The basketball and handball teams put forth commendable efforts, reaching the semi-finals. Although they narrowly missed the finals and finished 4th place, their resilience and teamwork were truly inspiring. The athletics team also performed outstandingly, with several athletes securing spots in the Regional Championship. The following students stood out and will represent our school at the next level.



Sarah Narasto	(4N)	10,000m Women's Walk
Angela Shayo	(2N)	10,000m Women's Walk
Kelvin Misero	(3N)	10,000m Men's Walk
Fridah Nyatich	(4N)	5,000m and Cross-Country
Joy Chelimo	(4N)	5,000m
Benjamin Vundi	(3E)	5,000m
Glen Muganda	(2N)	3,000m and 800m
Aramata Omar	(3E)	High Jump

We commend the dedication and sportsmanship of all participants and wish our regional qualifiers success as they prepare to compete at the next level.



Glen Muganda winner 3,000m



St. Michael's vs Buruburu girls



Handball girls vs Huruma girls

The school community came together at the beginning of February for a meaningful Mass. The atmosphere was filled with reverence as Father Paulinhos, with the supportive presence of Brother Alphonse, led the gathering in heartfelt prayers. Father Paulinhos inspired the students throughout the service by drawing insightful parallels from the Gospel. He emphasized the importance of being mindful of one another and fostering a spirit of support during this Jubilee year. With the theme of "Pilgrims of Hope," he encouraged everyone to embody compassion and unity, reminding them that they are all on this journey together.



Fr. Paulinhos and Br. Alphonse animating the mass



## Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre

### Activities In February

OLMVTC students had amazing experiences in February that enhanced their training and made the learning process smoother. With increased student enrolment, the learning experience has become more dynamic. Most of our students come from St. Michael Secondary School, and we have many young single mothers aged 19 to 23 enrolled in various classes. The learning environment is thriving, reflected in a remarkable class attendance rate of 98%.

In February, we held a second orientation for new students who learned about the MPC code of conduct, policies, mission and values, skill regulations, dress code, and discipline expectations.



We are fortunate to maintain a partnership with Kenya Wine Agencies Limited (KWAL) and collaborate with Tamarind Group Hotel who have sponsored 28 catering students to complete an upskilling program at Kibondeni Catering Institute. These students have received uniforms and learning materials. KWAL has also sponsored a new cohort of 40 additional students.

Evaluation meeting at MPC with cohort 2024 currently at Kibondeni cohort.



Kibondeni Catering Institute class for 2025



New uniforms to the cohort 2024 cohort



OLMVTC was also pleased to welcome Bishop Stephan Turnovszky, Martina Erlacher from DKA Austria, and the Kenyan team. They visited each class, interacted with our staff and students, and our catering class prepared and served them lunch at MPC's Pride Restaurant. Later that afternoon, OLMVTC students attended Mass in the MPC multipurpose hall.



Martina Erlacher, DKA and Bishop Stephan Turnovszky sign in the Visitors' Book



Welding class



DJ Class



Plumbing and masonry class



Catering Class



Donations of materials and resources are always appreciated. In February, we received various items from donors and local well-wishers, including second-hand clothes, books for catering practicals, sanitary towels, hairdressing and beauty products, and garment-making materials. These donations enhance our students' practical experiences, assist in their training, and help reduce the Centre's costs. MCA Waithera Chege generously donated 36 chickens, which we distributed to provide meals for all the students at OLMVTC.

The staff held follow-up meetings with students, particularly those from Kibondeni, to ensure everything was going smoothly and they were maximizing their experiences. The students also had the opportunity to gather, share their experiences, and learn from one another. We were relieved to see the last mabati structures at the Vocational Centre to go. The storeroom was erected out of necessity while St. Bakhita and St. Michael's new permanent buildings were under construction. For two terms the Form 1 had their classes held there. We had to store equipment in the old mabati store, which had stood since 2016 and, while practical, it was quite unsightly. With its demolition, the ground will be cleared for the next permanent building dedicated to Skills Training.



## Songa Mbele na Masomo Children's Centre

### Activities In February

The Centre continues to support a diverse group of children with disabilities by implementing individualized educational approaches tailored to each child's unique strengths and challenges. These approaches include personalized learning plans, one-on-one tutoring, and adaptive teaching methods. In February, an average of 102 children attended daily, consisting of 63 boys and 39 girls, resulting in a gender ratio 62:38.

The 102 children served during the month included three new admissions. The Centre's commitment to creating a nurturing environment is evident in the various therapeutic support programs we offer, such as speech therapy, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy. These programs are aimed at enhancing functionality and helping children achieve specific milestones. In February, 68 children participated in regular sensory and physiotherapy sessions, while 21 children participated in speech therapy sessions that included balloon blowing to strengthen jaw muscles and improve vowel pronunciation. The caregiver team is dedicated to addressing the emotional and psychological needs of the children and assisting them with their daily activities.

Songa Mbele Children's Centre has garnered a solid reputation in Nairobi over the years for being a trusted, compassionate provider of services for children with disabilities from Mukuru slum. It stands as a beacon of hope and support for families, frequently recommended by parents for its effectiveness, offering care and empowering children to achieve their fullest potential. The Centre is dedicated to holistic care, personalized therapeutic programs and a supportive, inclusive environment. Sometimes, we must ensure the children are from our catchment area. The best way to ascertain this is to conduct home visits. In February, 4 home visits were conducted to determine if the children lived in Mukuru before admission. Our visitors from DKA Austria accompanied the social workers and MPC Deputy Director Dinah Mwendwa on the home visits.

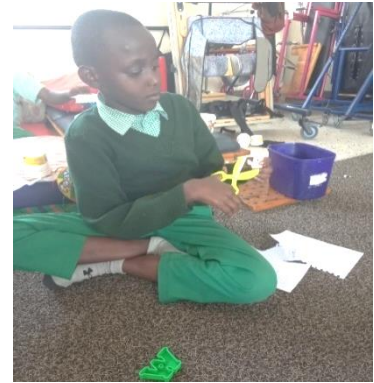


Harel Mungai's home



Abdalla Khadaji's home's together with the DKA Visitors

This month's standout achiever is Emmanuel Baraka, an 11-year-old from Unit 1. Emmanuel has autism and faces challenges with hyperactivity, low attention span, limited eye-hand coordination, and difficulty following instructions. However, after ongoing therapy at the Centre, he has made remarkable progress. His hyperactivity has decreased, his attention span has increased to 20 minutes, and he can now follow simple instructions, make eye contact, and identify colours. Emmanuel's progress is a testament to the hope and impact that the Centre brings to the lives of these children.



Emmanuel Baraka

Parents with children living with disabilities must be able to help support the child at home. Many parents are casual labourers and need flexibility to support their children. One program that the Centre has initiated is the Small Business Start-Up Program, which enables parents to run a small kiosk where they can help with a steady source of income and flexibility with hours. In February, the Centre assisted 2 parents with Start-Ups of their choice. One parent affected by floods and demolitions in May 2024, Fridah Moraa, was supported by a second-hand clothes (mitumba) business at City Stadium. The other parent, Ruth Kavuli, was assisted with a grocery business, selling carrots, nduma, potatoes, minji and onions at City Stadium.



Mama Mark Muchina



Mama James Ombango



Mama Meshack Musyoki

Mama James Ombango operates a small business selling vegetables and boiled green maize. In the mornings, she sells boiled green maize in the South C, primarily targeting casual labourers on their way to work. In the evenings, she sells vegetables in the Mareba area (Lunga Lunga), where her family lives. Her business is thriving, allowing her to meet her family's needs. Recently, she has also started selling charcoal in packaged bags at 50 KES each, which has been popular. Another parent has been supported in starting a second-hand shoe business in the Reuben area. She reported that sales were high in December but dropped significantly in January. Additionally, she has set up a food kiosk selling cooked meals aimed at casual labourers.



Mama Angel Stacy received support to start her Malimali (plastic household items) business in November 2024, located in the Kayaaba area. This venture has allowed her to meet her basic needs more effectively. She is also working to clear the rent arrears that accumulated during 2023-2024, a time when she gave birth and was hospitalized for several months. Additionally, she takes on casual cleaning and washing jobs when available.



Mama Angel Stacy business follow-up

A recent mentorship session was held at the Centre for Unit 3 learners who face learning difficulties and intellectual challenges. The session focused on understanding and managing behaviour in various settings, including school, home, and other social environments. Ten learners participated in the session, where they were guided on navigating and adapting their behaviour in different situations. The mentorship aimed to provide practical strategies for promoting positive behaviour and improving social interactions across various contexts, helping the learners develop essential life skills.



Mentorship Session



## Mary Immaculate Rehabilitation Centre

### Activities In February

In February, the focus was primarily on the recruitment program for a new group of street boys. The team worked in the Mukuru catchment area, visiting locations such as Pipeline Black Army, Muthurwa Market, the CBD, and Gikomba. As a result, 44 new boys were recruited. However, further investigation found that some of the 19 initially assessed were ineligible due to their age. In contrast, others chose to leave because they found the routine too demanding or struggled with drug addiction. Currently, there are 56 boys at the Centre.



A few of the new recruits

Before the end of February, the Centre conducted academic assessments to evaluate the boys' educational abilities and determine the best ways to support their return to education. The Ministry of Education mandates that all students must be registered by the end of March, and the newly recruited boys mustn't be excluded from the KNEC portal. Additionally, the Centre has been actively following up on 36 former boys from the residential program who are currently under sponsorship.

The new recruits have undergone academic assessments, and the social office has successfully registered those in Grade 3 at St. Catherine to take their exams while residing at the Centre. Sister Mary visited the Centre to welcome the new recruits and emphasize the importance of the rehabilitation program and education in their recovery and developmental process.



Sr Mary, MPC Director visited teacher Elvis and the new boys



Teacher Terry Ann with her class, Year 1 students

A thorough orientation and induction process plays a vital role in unlocking each boy's potential and fostering personal growth. In February, the dedicated counsellors facilitated 11 engaging group sessions that explored a range of crucial topics. These sessions provided valuable insights into navigating change, understanding transitions, managing behavioural shifts, recognizing the dangers of substance abuse, enhancing psychoeducation, and developing effective anger management strategies.

In addition to the group sessions, the counsellors also held 21 personalized individual counselling meetings. These were tailored for boys who expressed a longing to return to the streets, as they found the demands of a structured routine to be a significant and often overwhelming adjustment. Through these efforts, the counsellors aimed to provide support and guidance, helping each boy navigate his unique journey toward a healthier and more stable life.



The new recruits at the group counselling meeting

Staying updated on the latest policies and procedures is crucial. Some rehabilitation staff recently attended a professional development training organized by AOSK-CCCK (Association of Sisterhood, Kenya, and Charitable Child Institutions) in Karen. The workshop focused on implementing and evaluating care reforms, compliance and licensing requirements for child welfare institutions, strategies for transitioning from institutional care to home-based support systems and preparing CCI administrators for Phase 2 of the care reforms. Additionally, the AOSK workshop provided a valuable opportunity to connect with various agencies in Nairobi, allowing participants to share ideas and experiences.





*AOSK Workshop on Care reforms*



*Commissioning CCI Administrators*

The sponsored boarding school boys excitedly returned to the Centre for their mid-term break, bringing an air of enthusiasm and camaraderie. It was heartwarming to see their familiar faces and to hear about their experiences, with the majority having successfully adapted to mainstream school life. Although a few boys have encountered challenges along the way, there is a sense of optimism that they will overcome these hurdles with patience and support. Feedback from the school has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting not only their exemplary discipline but also their remarkable talents in sports and music, showcasing their well-rounded abilities and potential.



*St Peter and Paul Secondary School, Embu*



*St Teresa Secondary School, Kilungu  
accompanied by Josi and Sophia*

The Centre's social worker carried out two school visits, Embu and Nyeri to follow up on the sponsored boys.



*Teacher Benta with the boys at St Peter and Paul's Embu*



*Teacher Stephen with Lewis Mwangi in Nyeri*





Every parent understands that educational resources can be costly. The Centre was fortunate to receive a generous donation of educational books from the Phoenix Lion Club, in Dubai to support young learners in Kenya in improving their reading skills.

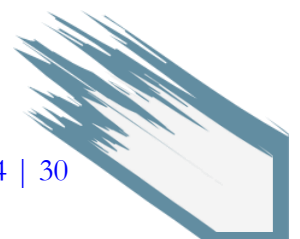


Phoenix Lion Club distribute the books to the boys.

The extracurricular activities at the Centre are always engaging, and the boys truly enjoy them. From music and art to soccer, rugby, gardening, and caring for chickens and rabbits, these activities add a valuable dimension to the rehabilitation process. One exciting new addition has been the revival of the **drama club**, which has been fantastic for fostering greater involvement and a sense of belonging.

The boys were also given a unique opportunity to perform for Bishop Turnovszky and his Austrian delegation. It was clear that the boys are incredibly talented, and with the right guidance and direction, they have the potential to achieve great things. Teachers Terryann and Benta have been instrumental in mentoring them, providing the support they need to hone their skills and pursue their passions.

The weekly music sessions at AEF Reuben Centre have continued, ensuring that the boys are practising regularly, as well as back at the Centre with Collins. The practice is paying off, as most of the boys taking music classes are showing a lot of improvement and are able to play a musical piece.





Music students at AEF Reuben Centre

The art classes have been going well, and the boys have each discovered a craft they are passionate about. They are working with Samuel to learn the basics and techniques of beadwork, drawing, and candle making. Samuel has been very supportive in helping the boys nurture their talents. Art is one of the most popular activities among the boys, as demonstrated by the amount of time and seriousness they dedicate to it.



Art class



University and the soccer team jerseys with coach Benta

The boys have been working hard on the field this month, practising daily under Coach Benta's guidance. To strengthen their teamwork, they participated in three friendly matches against various teams. Their efforts caught the attention of a donor from Catholic University, who generously provided them with jerseys to use in their tournaments. He also promised to return with more support in the future.

Steve from Catholic

It's been very hot in Nairobi for the last couple of months making it difficult for crops to grow. We tried irrigation but due to little water availability at the Centre it proved a hard task. However, the boys were able to harvest and enjoy juicy sugarcanes as well as traditional vegetables terere, manage and sagaa.



Vegetables in the garden





Free range chickens

The chicken and rabbit houses were renovated and has provided them with more space to be 'free range'. The boys were excited to enjoy taking care of the chicken and rabbits and to see them exercising more.

The Centre recently hosted a group of enthusiastic students from Strathmore University, eager to explore the potential of implementing a bio-digester. This innovative project aims to harness organic waste for cooking, significantly reducing the Centre's reliance on firewood and contributing to a cleaner environment by lowering pollution levels. The students are committed to conducting thorough research. They will return for a follow-up visit to present their findings and recommendations for the bio-digester initiative.



The Research Team

The Centre deeply values the kindness of individuals who recognise its needs and generously provide essential contributions, including food, educational materials, and their time. A special mention to Action in Focus who have been a steadfast partner for many years, delivering an abundance of fresh produce each month. This vital support greatly enhances the nutritional well-being of the boys at the Centre, helping them thrive and grow healthier.



Action in Focus



Nairobi Cleaning Services Ltd



MCA Office

## Sponsorship Office

### Activities In February

February was marked by significant activities aimed at engaging donors, supporting beneficiaries, and expanding our sponsorship efforts to ensure that more vulnerable students receive the assistance they need to continue their education.

Jansen Sjors from the KWES Foundation recently visited MPC, where he had the opportunity to interact with 27 students currently sponsored in MPC Primary and Secondary Schools. During his visit, he explored the possibility of sponsoring an additional 40 students in need. The beneficiaries expressed their heartfelt gratitude, and Jansen received updates on their progress. This firsthand experience was invaluable, as it allowed him to connect with the students personally, making the impact of the sponsorship feel more tangible and meaningful—far beyond just names on a list.



Mr Jansen Sjors the KWES Foundation

Airtel Networks Kenya, a valued and long-time supporter of our organization, has produced an inspiring documentary that vividly illustrates the profound impact of their sponsorship on the lives of beneficiaries. This powerful film aims to capture the transformative experiences made possible through their generous contributions, ultimately encouraging others to support educational initiatives.

In the documentary, two exceptional Form 4 students and a former beneficiary share their personal journeys, articulating their heartfelt gratitude for the sponsorship that has empowered them to chase their dreams and achieve their goals. Their stories are filled with determination and hope, reflecting the life-altering opportunities they have received.



Furthermore, the documentary features insights from the Director and two dedicated teachers, who candidly discuss the remarkable changes they have observed in their students thanks to the support from Airtel Networks Kenya. Their perspectives add depth to the narrative, showcasing the broader impact of sponsorship on the educational environment and the personal growth of the students involved.

Airtel interviews Phostine Jarega a former sponsorship beneficiary



Interviews were held for vulnerable Form 2 students to better understand their financial situations, academic achievements, and personal backgrounds. This thorough process aimed to identify the candidates most deserving of support. Listening to their heartfelt stories and challenging circumstances is profoundly moving and highlights the urgency of our mission. As we face the complicated reality that

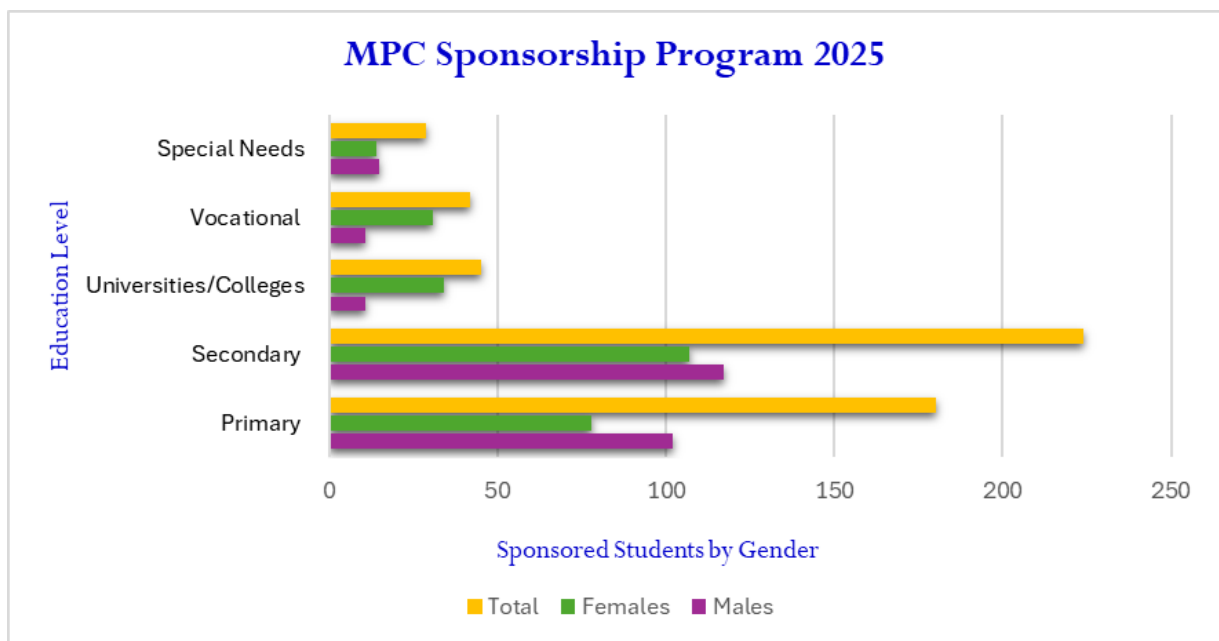


we cannot sponsor every deserving student, we are committed to ensuring that those with the greatest potential for success receive the opportunities they need to continue their education and build a brighter future.

### Form 2 Prospect Interviews

After the hectic pace of January, this month has offered the Office a valuable opportunity to update the profiles of students in need. We have taken great care to ensure that each profile is relevant, accurate, and comprehensive, providing a clear picture of each student's circumstances and aspirations. These updated profiles will be retained in our system to assist potential sponsors as they prepare for the upcoming academic year.

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, we are thrilled to announce that 520 students will be enrolled in various learning institutions in 2025. We have also achieved gender parity, ensuring equal opportunities for all students, regardless of gender.




## Announcements

### Activities Outside the Department

While the various departments of MPC provide an overview of the month's events, the Head Office works behind the scenes to facilitate many activities that support and align with departmental objectives and targets.

Amid all these activities, there are also other events and developments to note. Below are some additional updates.

 MPC welcomed Bishop Stephen Turnovsky, Auxiliary Bishop of Wien, Austria and Mr George Ogolla from White Gazelle Tours and the DKA team from Austria.




Bishop Stephan Turnovszk, Sr Mary and George Ogolla



The DKA Team - From left: Ute Mayrhofer (DKA), Mercy Chege DKA Kenya Consultant, Janet Shavola (White Gazelle Tours), Martina Erlacher (Federal Chairwoman of the Catholic Children's Movement), Bishop Stephan Turnovszky, Sr Mary, Herbert Kiennast (DKA), Sigrid Kickingreder (DKA Managing Director) and Rion Teegan.



 Representative from Jonaron visited MPC for a monitoring and evaluation meeting.

Sr Mary Killeen, Dinah Mwendwa, Margaret Gichuki, Mary Kanana and Zilpa Chuchu from Jonaron.





# Mukuru Promotion Centre

Empowerment Step by Step

*Ministry of the Sisters of Mercy*

## 40 Years Anniversary

[www.mercymukuru.co.ke](http://www.mercymukuru.co.ke)

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