

# KANCO

Healthy people, empowered communities

## WEEKLY BULLETIN

Easter Edition



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## CENTRAL KENYA IS LOCKED

**KANCO AND CENTRAL KENYA DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (CKDN) CONVENE A WORKSHOP FOR THE CENTRAL REGION ECONOMIC BLOCK (CEREB) IN NAIVASHA**



KANCO Executive Director Prof Allan Ragi and KANCO Head of Programmes and Policy Mr Jack Ndegwa join other attendees including Governors Kimani wa Matangi (Kiambu) Muthomi Njuki (Tharaka Nithi) Mutahi Kahiga (Nyeri) Moses Badilisha (Nyandarua) and Deputy Governor Reuben Kamuri for a photo opportunity at the tail end of the CEREB workshop.

The Central Kenya Development Network and the Central Region Economic Block signed an MOU on resource mobilization for strategic health and development interventions for the counties.

CKDN and KANCO agreed to collaborate in evidence-based socio-economic interventions in the ten counties in Central Region Economic Bloc.



Prof Allan Ragi makes a keynote address on the first day of the workshop

The Central Region Economic Block (CEREB) is a regional economic organization in Kenya that was established in 2015. It comprises 10 counties located in the central part of the country, namely Kiambu, Murang'a, Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Nyandarua, Laikipia, Embu, Meru, Tharaka-Nithi, and Isiolo. CEREB was formed with the aim of promoting economic growth and development in the region by leveraging on the strengths and resources of the member counties.

One of the key objectives of CEREB is to promote regional integration and cooperation among the member counties. This is achieved through the development of common policies and strategies that are aimed at addressing the economic, social, and environmental challenges facing the region. By working together, the member counties are able to share resources, expertise, and best practices in various sectors such as health, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, and infrastructure development.

CEREB counties face various health challenges that affect the well-being of their populations. Among them is the High Prevalence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). NCDs such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases are on the rise in the region. This can be attributed to changes in lifestyle, including unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and substance abuse.

Inadequate Healthcare Infrastructure also poses another challenge. Most of the health facilities in the region are understaffed, under-equipped, and lack essential medicines and medical supplies. This makes it difficult to provide quality healthcare services to the population, especially in rural areas.

Maternal and Child Health is another challenge. The region has a high maternal and child mortality rate, mainly due to inadequate access to quality maternal and child healthcare services. This is further exacerbated by poverty, illiteracy, and cultural belief

that limit women's access to healthcare.

Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse are prevalent in the region. However, there is a significant shortage of mental health specialists and facilities to provide adequate care and support.

The region is prone to outbreaks of infectious diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and malaria. This is mainly due to poor sanitation and hygiene practices, inadequate access to safe water, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure.

The region experiences a shortage of health workers, particularly doctors and nurses. This limits the capacity of the healthcare system to provide quality healthcare services to the population.

The Central Region Economic Block faces health challenges that require urgent attention to improve the health and well-being of its population. The collaboration between KANCO and CKDN will enhance support in sector-based integrated planning for CEREB counties, develop engagement mechanisms with CEREB and the specific county governments, co-develop strategies in addressing access to quality public service delivery at the community level, oversee the provision of solutions in Public Health Emergencies and other social-economic menaces, explore collaborative areas in Research and Innovations for technology-based solutions and co-develop solutions for the economic empowerment of communities through effective and efficient governance.



During the Tuberculosis procession in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County

**KEY FACTS**

- » The day is commemorated every year on March 24 and is designed to build public awareness about the disease
- » The bacteria that cause tuberculosis are spread from person to person through tiny droplets released into the air via coughs and sneezes

KANCO was presented at the Huruma Grounds in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County by Beatrice Awino. A similar event was held in Bungoma where Sheila Kobia, KANCO program assistant TB.

The day is commemorated every year on March 24 and is designed to build public awareness about the disease.

This year's event was presided over by the Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and Health CS Susan Wafula and will be marked at Huruma Grounds, Eldoret in Uasin Gishu County.

This year's global World TB Day theme is Yes! We can end TB and it calls for togetherness in the fight against the disease.

It commemorates the day when Dr Robert Koch in 1882 announced his discovery of the cause of Tuberculosis - the TB bacillus (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*).

At the time of Koch's announcement, TB was responsible for the death of one out of every seven people in Europe and America.

Koch's discovery opened the way for diagnosing, treating, and curing TB.

Today, TB remains an epidemic in most parts of the world, causing the deaths of nearly 1.5 million people each year, mostly in developing countries.

TB is still a major public health problem globally with WHO ranking Kenya among the high-burden TB countries.

Tuberculosis is a potentially serious infectious disease that mainly affects the lungs.



**World Health Organization**

On 7 April 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) will mark its 75th anniversary, along with its 194 Member States and other partners, by calling for a renewed drive for health equity.

Seventy-five years ago, in the aftermath of the deadliest and most destructive war in human history, the Constitution of the World Health Organization came into force: a treaty between the nations of the world, who recognized that health was not only a fundamental human right, but also fundamental to peace and security.

Over the past seven and a half decades, there has been extraordinary progress in protecting people from diseases and destruction, including smallpox eradication, reducing the incidence of polio by 99%, saving millions of lives through childhood immunization, declines in maternal mortality and improving health and well-being for millions more.

Over the past five years, WHO has invested in science and digital health, creating a Science Division led by the Organization's first Chief Scientist.

## NEWS

## KANCO PARTICIPATES IN THE DELIBERATIONS ON NHIF STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027 IN A MEETING AT MERCURE HOTEL UPPER HILL NAIROBI



The attendees pose for a photo at the end of the meeting held at the Mercure Hotel

The meeting was attended by CSOs drawn from the health, private sector, research and learning institutions involved in HIV and Aids, TB and other public health care concerns.

During the meeting, the attendees participated in the presentation and discussions on the impact of KANCO and FIND interventions on COVID-19. The presentation also detailed the successes, challenges and the emerging issues that need to be incorporated into the new NHIF strategy for 2023-2027 in the fight against COVID-19.

The meeting also saw the dissemination of findings on the decentralized catalytic Covid 19 action project integrating Covid -19 service delivery in Kenya a case study in Kiambu County.

A reporting on the evaluation of Antigen Rapid Di-

agnostic Test for community identification of severe Acute Respiratory syndrome Corona Virus 2 in Kiambu.

A presentation of the Global fund road map and identification of opportunities for CSO engagement with well cut out timelines for Partners engagements culminating to grant signing and the contribution on the Kenya Youth in regards to their engagement in programming was also done during the meeting that was held at the Mercure Hotel in Upperhill, Nairobi.

The Government was urged to synchronize the Edu-Afya NHIF package to be in sync with the Nemis registration system for students in schools to ensure that not child is left out on this health insurance package.

## NEWS

## KANCO HEADQUARTERS WELCOMES NEW STAFF, AS ANOTHER MAKES HER RETURN TO THE INSTITUTION



Teresa Watetu (Left) Ephraim Kiwago (Center) and Josephine Murwanjama (Right) looking happy as ever to be part of the KANCO team

Teresa Watetu makes her return to KANCO as a Program Officer and the party is large, the more the merrier. Ephraim Kiwago joins as a Program Manager while Josephine Murwanjama will hold the Monitoring and Evaluation officer docket.

The three new entrants bring a wide array of expertise and experience into the institution and will see an upping the ante in the institutions programs and operations.

The new officers seem to have settled in quite well, and expeditiously for that matter. Speaking to KANCO Bulletin, Ephraim Kiwago expressed his enthusiasm on his new career venture. "It quite an honour and privilege to be here. I feel excited about the opportunities presented to me and look forward to working with my colleagues to achieve KANCO's goals and aspirations." Kiwago said.

Josephine on the other hand seemed more impressed by the tranquility at KANCO headquarters. She said that the location of the institutions nerve center is perfect for a working environment. She said that she loves the trees and flowers. I wonder what her reaction will be when she meets one of the owls that also love to call KANCO home.

KANCO Bulletin wishes to formally welcome our new staff to this estimable institution, and look forward to working together. We are thrilled to have you on board and are excited to work with you. As you settle into your new role, we want to ensure that you feel supported and valued. We are committed to creating a welcoming environment and offering ongoing support and recognition.

Again, welcome to the team, and we wish you all the best as you begin this new chapter in your career.

## MY DATA MY HEALTH CAMPAIGNS GAINS MORE GROUND

KANCO continues to lead the My Data My Health campaign to agitate for Health Data Governance policies.

Health data management is the practice of collecting, storing, and analyzing health-related data in a secure and efficient manner. This data can come from a variety of sources, including electronic health records, medical devices, patient-generated data, and more. By managing health data effectively, healthcare providers and organizations can make informed decisions, improve patient outcomes, and ultimately save lives.

One of the key benefits of health data management is the ability to identify patterns and trends in patient health over time. By tracking metrics such as blood pressure, heart rate, and blood sugar levels, providers can gain a deeper understanding of a patient's health status and identify potential issues before they become serious. This can lead to earlier interventions and better outcomes for patients.

Another important aspect of health data management is the ability to share information securely between healthcare providers. With electronic health records and other digital tools, providers can quickly and easily access patient data from anywhere, improving collaboration and communication between different healthcare professionals. This can help to reduce errors, improve efficiency, and ultimately improve patient care.

## RECOUNT

## KANCO DONATES DESKS TO PUPILS OF ILMERIJO PRIMARY SCHOOL



Professor Allan Ragi joins the school's Board members and the Headmistress for a photo opportunity

Professor Allan Ragi the Executive Director KANCO was joined by other staff from the institution as they delivered the well constructed wooden desks to the school.

Imerijo Primary School, which only recently got upgraded as a fully fledged primary school after having been operating only as an Early Childhood Education Center, will benefit majorly from the KANCO donations. This in light of its increasing pupil population as it is the only such public institution serving the community.

Early childhood education is a crucial part of a child's development, and it has a significant impact on their future success. By supporting early childhood education, we can provide children with the best possible start in life and set them up for a lifetime of success.

Early childhood education refers to programs and educational experiences designed for children from birth to age 8. During this period, children's brains are rapidly developing, and their experiences and interactions with the world around them shape their future cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Research has shown that early childhood education has many benefits. For example, children who attend high-quality early childhood education programs are more likely to be successful in school and in life. They are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, and have higher earning potential as adults.

Early childhood education also plays a critical role

in supporting children's social and emotional development. Children who attend high-quality early childhood education programs are more likely to have positive relationships with their peers and adults. They are also more likely to have better self-regulation skills, which can help them to succeed in

school and in life.

In addition, early childhood education can help to close the achievement gap between children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Children from low-income families are often at a disadvantage when it comes to their education. They may not have access to the same resources and opportunities as children from higher-income families, and they may be exposed to more stress and trauma in their daily lives. High-quality early childhood education programs can help to level the playing field by providing these children with the support and resources they need to succeed.

Early childhood education has significant economic benefits. Research has shown that every Kenya shilling invested in early childhood education yields a return on investment of up to Kshs.1,600. This is because children who attend high-quality early childhood education programs are more likely to succeed in school, graduate from high school, attend college, and have higher earning potential as adults. They are also less likely to require government assistance, which can save taxpayers money in the long run.

Supporting early childhood education is crucial for the future success of our children and our society as a whole. By providing children with a strong foundation for learning, supporting their social and emotional development, and helping to close the achievement gap, we can set them up for a lifetime of success. In addition, investing in early childhood education has significant economic benefits and can save taxpayers money in the long run.

## 'BY HIS STRIPES WE WERE HEALED'



Jesus Christ is widely recognised as a religious figure and a savior in the Christian faith. However, beyond his role as a spiritual leader, Jesus was also a pioneer in the field of public health. He championed principles of hygiene, sanitation, and health that have since become essential components of public health practice. In this article, we will explore why Jesus was the first public health officer and how his teachings and practices have influenced public health over the centuries.

Jesus was born in a time when hygiene and sanitation were not well-understood concepts. People lived in close quarters, with limited access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities. Diseases were rampant, and people had little understanding of how to prevent their spread. However, Jesus recognized the importance of cleanliness and sanitation, and his teachings and practices laid the foundation for many of the principles of public health that we know today.

For example, Jesus emphasised the importance of cleanliness and purity in his teachings. He instructed his followers to wash their hands before eating, a practice that is now recognized as an essential component of disease prevention. He also taught that people should take care of their bodies, avoiding behaviors that could harm their health. For example, he spoke out against excessive drinking and gluttony, recognizing that these behaviors could lead to illness and disease.

In addition to promoting hygiene and cleanliness, Jesus also focused on healing the sick. He traveled throughout the region, healing people of various illnesses and diseases. He demonstrated compassion and care for those who were suffering, reco-

gnising that good health is essential for a happy and fulfilling life. His healing practices laid the foundation for modern medicine, which recognizes the importance of treating the whole person, not just the disease.

In addition to promoting principles of hygiene and sanitation, Jesus also practiced public health in his daily life. He was known for his outreach to the poor and marginalized, providing food, shelter, and care to those in need. He recognized that poverty and lack of access to healthcare were major barriers to good health, and he worked to address these issues.

One of the most famous examples of Jesus' public health outreach is his feeding of the 5,000. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus saw a large crowd of people who had gathered to hear him speak. He recognized that they were hungry and needed food, so he miraculously fed them all with just five loaves of bread and two fish. This act of compassion and care for those in need demonstrated Jesus' commitment to public health and his understanding of the importance of access to nutritious food.

Another example of Jesus' public health outreach is his healing of the blind and the lame. According to the Gospels, Jesus healed many people who were blind, deaf, or otherwise disabled, restoring their health and their ability to participate fully in society. By healing these individuals, Jesus recognized the importance of physical health and well-being, and he worked to ensure that everyone had access to the care they needed to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

Jesus also recognized the importance of mental health and well-being. He spoke out against stress, anxiety, and worry, recognizing that these emotions could have negative effects on people's health. He encouraged people to have faith and to trust in God, and that should be our greatest endeavour as we celebrate Easter.

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## OPINION

## IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHAT AI DOES TO THE HEALTH SECTOR



By Francis Njenga - KANCO utility player

The entire world has been taken aback by the tremendous progress that Artificial Intelligence has had over such a short time. It was almost as if it were just one minute ago we were getting intrigued by ChatGPT, the artificial intelligence chatbot developed by OpenAI, and then the other minute we

were seeing all kinds of artificially generated images of the pope dressed in street clad to artificially generated voices of various music artistes.

Yet AI is just at its inception stages, and may soon have an impact in the medical field as well. Maybe sooner than later, surgeries may be conducted by bots, what we don't know is whether the precision will be better than the current state.

Nonetheless, AI will have an impact on public health.

AI systems can analyse large volumes of medical data, including patient records, diagnostic images, and lab results, to help identify patterns and risk factors for various diseases. This can lead to earlier detection and diagnosis of diseases, which can result in better outcomes for patients.

AI can also help healthcare providers develop personalized treatment plans for individual patients based on their unique genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors. This can lead to more effective treatments and better outcomes for patients.

AI can analyse large volumes of biomedical data to help identify potential drug candidates and predict how they will interact with human biology. This can speed up the drug discovery process and lead to more effective treatments for various diseases.

AI can help public health officials track and respond to disease outbreaks in real-time by analyzing data from social media, news reports, and other sources. This can help to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and improve public health outcomes.

AI can help researchers analyze large datasets and identify new insights into the causes and treatments of various diseases. This can lead to the development of new therapies and a better understanding of how diseases work.

Overall, AI has the potential to greatly improve public health outcomes by enabling earlier detection and diagnosis, personalised treatment, faster drug discovery, better public health surveillance, and more effective medical research.

But while AI has the potential to greatly improve public health outcomes, there are also potential negative impacts that need to be addressed. Some of these negative impacts include:

AI systems rely on large amounts of data to make decisions, and if the data is biased, the algorithms can perpetuate that bias. This can lead to disparities in health outcomes for certain populations. This also brings concerns on security. If this data is not properly secured, it can be vulnerable to hacking and misuse. This can result in significant harm to individuals and public health more broadly.

AI has the potential to automate many healthcare tasks, which could result in job displacement for healthcare workers. This could have significant economic and social consequences.

AI raises a number of ethical concerns related to informed consent, privacy, and decision-making. These concerns need to be addressed to ensure that AI is used in an ethical and responsible manner.

There is a risk that healthcare providers may become over-reliant on AI systems, which could lead to a reduction in human expertise and decision-making. This could have negative consequences for patient care and public health outcomes.



## NUGGETS OF WISDOM

*"Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass, it's about learning to dance in the rain."*

# KANCO

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## WEEKLY BULLETIN

 HAPPY  
*Easter*

Wishing you a joyful holiday!

 **ENLIGHTENMENT**

*Did you know that Easter is that it is not celebrated on a fixed date each year, but rather is determined by the first full moon following the vernal equinox. This means that Easter can fall on any Sunday between March 22 and April 25. The reason for this is rooted in the ancient lunar calendar that was used by various cultures and religions, and was later standardized by the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD*

 **ALL IN A DAYS WORK...**

*Why did the nurse need a red pen at work?*

*To draw blood!*

## BACKPAGE

## MEET KANCO HEADQUARTERS' INTERNS



Salome Gor (Left) and Florence Kamoni (Right) are integral cogs in the wheel runs KANCO

I feel that I must start by explaining that I should have been part of that photo, but unfortunately I was on the other side of the camera. That however does not demean how much I, as the rest of my fellow interns are, joyous and appreciative of the opportunity to work at KANCO.

The opportunity has presented us a great learning experience, and the support we continue to receive everyday from our colleagues is immense, and that word does not even fit how much great the support has been.

Speaking to KANCO Bulletin, Salome Gor, or Sally, as we fondly refer to her around expressed her gratitude to the entire Finance Department that she says have been very nice to her. "They are amazing! They throw you at the deep end sometime, but they

would never let you drown." She added.

Florence Kamoni (Flo) was more reserved, as she often is, and our question on her experience in KANCO was answered with a big wide smile, which was more than we needed for an answer.

KANCO continues to offer opportunities to many young people to mould their careers, and many are grateful to Prof. Allan Ragi - Executive Director KANCO, for seeing the little gems in them.

We look forward to being of greater service to KANCO.



## BIRTHDAYS CORNER

*KANCO wishes a Happy Birthday to Salome Gor on 12th of April and a Happy and Belated Birthday to Francis Njenga who celebrated his on 24th March!*

*May you find joy in your new stages, as you unfold new horizons and may you grow to be toothless mammals!*

*NB: If you wish for a shoutout from us on your birthday, please drop us an email.*

Keep the 🔥 burning!

