



# The Western Focus

*A quarterly newsletter comprising of ADS Western activities & achievements*



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**The Mountain Remains Green, Colorful and Peaceful than Ever**

**SPECIAL EDITION**



**Mr. Stephen Amusala**  
CEO ADS Western Region

## STATEMENT FROM THE CEO

### CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

**W**hen the Anglican Development Services Western Region (formerly Anglican Church of Kenya Western Region Christian Community Services - ACK WRCCS) set out, the aim of the organization was to empower poor rural populations to achieve socio economic development. The impetus for venturing out was to intervene socio-economically given the high poverty levels, with communities leading undignified lives. Right from the onset, CCS reached out to and partnered with like-minded institutions to make this goal a reality. Progressively, the organization embraced an integrated approach to community development in its strategic focus thus giving attention to livelihood interventions, advocacy, health, environmental stewardship, education, and governance. In the context of a national realignment of the development arm of the Anglican Church, ACK WRCCS was rebranded to Anglican Development Services Western Region (ADS-W) in 2014.

This year, as we celebrate the silver jubilee of ADS Western, we look back and are very grateful to God, to our partners and stakeholders at all levels for the milestones that we have achieved. Notably, ADS Western and her partners pioneered some of the agricultural technologies that have been widely embraced both within the region and beyond. Some of these include propagation of tissue culture banana, promotion of hematic bags for post-harvest handling of grains, championing of grain amaranth production, and pioneer contributor to the apary value chain in Western Kenya.

Purposefully, our silver jubilee celebratory initiatives are in line with our thematic interventions and institutional sustainability as follows:

**Peace promotion:** Given that our anniversary celebration falls within an election year and in line with our advocacy interventions, we aim at promoting peace before, during and after the general elections mainly through continuous peace messaging targeting more than 1 million people, directly and indirectly.

**Tree planting and growing:** As part of our efforts towards environmental stewardship and through the Green Anglicans Movement, we aim at mobilizing and planting 250,000+ tree seedlings across the region. The target is to plant in learning institutions, churches and religious institutions, community areas, and rehabilitation of degraded forest areas – Maragoli Hills Forest, Kakamega Forest and Mt. Elgon Forest.

**Development of a regional resource center:** The aim is to establish a center of excellence with training facilities, a demonstration section of our various technologies, office space and offices to sub-let as part of institutional and community sustainability.

**Impact documentation:** The aim is to document the impact of ADS-W interventions together with her partners over the years, through audio-visual capturing and a handbook. These will be made available to the wider audience through various channels including mainstream and social media.

As we celebrate this silver jubilee, we are alive to the fact that there are still significant challenges that must be surmounted in the journey towards dignified and wholesome lives. The poverty levels within our target Counties are still high, high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, high levels of environmental degradation, increased incidences of sexual and gender-based violence, challenges in service delivery within devolved governments among others. Indeed, it is *Aluta Continua*.

The greatest aspiration of ADS-W appertaining to our next steps is to build a sustainable and resilient institution for sustained community engagement. We remain very grateful to our esteemed partners and stakeholders for accepting to journey with and coming alongside ADSW in the journey of transforming lives.

As we journey on into the foreseeable future, we remain committed to our guiding scripture:

**Luke 4:18-19,**

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

**Our Prayer:**

**Psalm 90:17**

“May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us — yes, establish the work of our hands.”



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

# ADS Western 25th Anniversary: The Journey of Social Transformation



The CEO ADS Western Mr. Stephen Amusala and Bishop Charles Kaskan of Maseno North Diocese receive a gift on behalf of ADS Western from The Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit during the 25th Anniversary Celebrations Ceremony held in Bukhungu International Stadium Kakamega County.

The much-anticipated ADS Western 25th Anniversary Celebrations started off at the Kakamega County Commissioner's office with a peace walk whose main objective was to call for peace before, during and after the forthcoming general elections slated for August 9th this year. Kakamega County Commissioner Mr. John Ondengo urged political aspirants to hold peaceful campaigns and asked the youths to decline any attempts to be used in fueling and promoting violence during this period. "Nothing can be done without peace. For development to be realized, peace must be upheld," emphasized the County Commissioner. He also encouraged the Peace Ambassadors Kenya, as they embarked on a 20 day walk from Kakamega to Nairobi, to firmly preach the message of peace and draw encouragement from The Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit who once had a peace walk from Mumias to Nairobi.

The Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit, Archbishop of the Anglican Church

of Kenya, in his address encouraged everyone to uphold peace. He urged Kenyans to choose leaders with an interest to serve the people and foster development. He also advocated for leaders to respect all tribes and shun tribalism for Kenya belonged to every tribe. The County Commissioner and the Archbishop officially flagged off the ADS-W Mini-Peace Walk which started from the County Commissioner's office, passed by the Office of the Governor with the final stop being Bukhungu Stadium where the 25th Anniversary celebratory event was taking place.

Dr. Ole Sapit who was the Chief Guest then visited the exhibition stands where he had a fill of what the exhibitors had to offer. Afterwards, the program of the event started with different guests acknowledging ADS Western for the far it has come. ADS Western was challenged to continue aiming for excellence and to keep up the good work it is doing. During entertainment, Modesta Minayo a beneficiary of the MWENDO – OVC

project, moved the audience with an electrifying poem presentation with her message on abstinence being very clear.

ADS Western Region CEO Mr. Stephen Amusala could not hide his joy when he took to the podium to deliver his speech.



**The heart of ADS is empowerment, building capacity, resilience, unlocking potential, giving people opportunity to interact, awareness creation, enabling people to see that which they couldn't see before and try them out.**



The Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit visiting various exhibition stands to see the different technologies, products and services exhibited by various organizations during the 25th Anniversary Celebrations Event.

“When we were thinking of celebrating our anniversary, we thought of having anniversary initiatives to accompany the celebrations. We thought of peace promotion using key messaging targeting to reach 1 million people in partnership with Hatua Trust and National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), tree planting campaign under the Green Anglican Movement targeting to plant 250,000 trees which is currently underway, sustainability efforts by putting up a regional resource center where we can exhibit our various technology and lastly, documentation of our activities and achievements which is currently on-going,” said Mr. Amusala in his remarks.

Despite making an impact, the CEO acknowledged that more work needed to be done seeing the high prevalence of HIV and that the poverty index in Western Region is still high. He added that environmental degradation was still a challenge and the state of service delivery needed improvement. This prompted the CEO to make a rallying call for our partners and other relevant stakeholders to continue partnering with ADSW for wholesome and dignified lives.

“When Anglican Development Services (ADS) was first imagined, it was to make the Church relevant with communities by enabling them to move from poverty, to a state of sufficiency to be able to feed themselves and share with their neighbors,” said the Archbishop in his remarks. He went ahead to say that the Anglican Church is about improving livelihoods, increasing the capacity of communities and building them to become people with dignity, thus ADS focuses on making communities to live wholesome and dignified lives.

He emphasized that the heart of ADS is empowerment, building capacity, resilience, unlocking potential, giving people opportunity to interact, awareness creation, enabling people to see that which they couldn't see before and try them out.

Dr. Ole Sapit called on our development partners and exhibitors to work together to lead communities out of captivity because of poverty, ignorance and thus spur them to explore their full potential. He also said that we should challenge power through advocacy and call out the people responsible to take up action.

On matters concerning education, Dr. Ole Sapit said that the empowerment of the mind was very important and should be a continuous pursuit at all levels. ADS Western Board Member Madam Priscilla Were led the cake cutting session followed by the gifting session which saw Pelum Kenya gift ADS-W for the environmental conservation initiatives through tree planting. The Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit presented ADSW with a plaque bearing a message of recognition of our excellent work. ADS Kenya led by the Board chair Rt. Rev. Joseph Kibuchwa acknowledged the work of ADS Western and gifted the region with a plaque to congratulate our efforts in social transformation.

With the curtains closing down on this memorable day, the challenge of making ADS Western is vividly clear and so is the impact of transforming lives. We would like to sincerely thank our esteemed partners and all stakeholders for making this event a success and historical in the books of Anglican Development Service. Surely, we shall forever be nostalgic and remember this day with pride. Happy 25th Anniversary.



Let us join hands and Save the Divine Gift of Mother Nature  
by planting 250,000 trees in 2022.

# Conserving Forests through the 25th Anniversary Tree Planting Campaign

## Let us Rehabilitate and Conserve Kakamega Forest



Members of Muileshi CFA pose for a group together with ADS Western staff and the Kakamega Forest Station Manager Mr. James Gishia after receiving a donation of tree seedlings through a collaborative effort by CIC Insurance and Equity Bank Kakamega Branch.

**T**ree planting is one of the main activities promoted by ADS Western in efforts to conserve the environment and rehabilitate degraded parts of the Kakamega Forest. According to the records of Muileshi Community Forest Association (CFA), ADS Western is the first Faith Based Organization to work with the group in matters of conserving the Forest. During the ADS Western 25th Anniversary Celebrations Tree Planting Campaign Launch in the forest on 8th June, 2022, the Chairman Muileshi CFA Mr. Joseph Mbayi in his opening remarks thanked ADS Western for the continued support the organization has been offering the community since the first time it started engaging with them. He urged the organization to keep working closely to ensure that Kakamega Forest is fully rehabilitated.

Kakamega Forest Station Manager Mr. James Gishia was happy to receive 5,000 tree seedlings donated by ADS Western through a collaborative effort by CIC Insurance and Equity Bank Kakamega Branch.

He emphasized on the need to conserve the forest for it provides us with fresh air, helps reduce carbon gas emission to the atmosphere and attracts rainfall which is good for agricultural activities.

He also emphasized the need for the community to continue participating in conservation efforts and adhere to the 2016 Forest Conservation and Management Act to avoid legal implications especially due to deforestation. "The government is still committed to achieve 10% forest cover in efforts to address the challenge of climate change. For that to happen, we have to not only plant trees in the forest but also in our homes," said the Forest Manager. He concluded by saying that the forest, if well managed, will generate income for the community around it through Nature Based Enterprises (NBEs) and encouraged everyone to replace trees cut by planting new ones.

The CEO ADS Western Mr. Stephen Amusala was present during the event. In his remarks, he thanked

Muileshi CFA and the community at large for attending the tree planting launch. He also thanked CIC Insurance and Equity Bank Kakamega Branch for the partnership in tree planting. He urged everyone to commemorate important dates like birthdays, anniversaries and weddings by planting trees equivalent to the number of years one is celebrating. "ADS Western through the years of working with the community and Kakamega Forest Management has been able to reclaim 28ha of degraded forest. I am pleased to confirm that there is a tree I planted here in the year 2020 which has grown significantly," he said.

Rev. Joyce Chimita who was representing Bishop Charles Kascan of Maseno North Diocese said that tree planting was commissioned by God during creation because he directed man to have authority over his creation and guard it. "Let's plant, look after and preserve trees and do not forget to pass the message of conservation to your children for continuity," concluded the Rev. Joyce.

## Greening back Maragoli Hills



The current state of Maragoli Hills Forest which is densely covered with rocks and very little trees or vegetation.



Rev. Phillip Waka and Davis Nyangweso planting a tree together during the Maragoli Hills Forest Tree Planting Campaign.

**W**hat was once densely covered with trees is now a shadow of its former self full of loose rocks, posing great danger to the lives of community members living around Maragoli hills due to the sliding rocks. The area has also been receiving little rainfall which has led to inadequate food production. Residents decried the current state of climate in the area and are willing to change the face of Maragoli Hills.

On 31st May, 2022, ADS Western held the 25th Anniversary Celebrations Tree Planting Campaign which was attended by the National Council of Churches (NCCK) Western Region Chairman Rev. George Magomere, Clergy of Maseno North Diocese Rev. Phillip Waka representing Bishop Charles Kascan, the CEO ADS Western Mr. Stephen Amusala, staff from the Department of Environment, Water, Energy and Natural Resources Vihiga County led by their Director Mr. Kevin Msyega and community members living around Maragoli Hills. Equity Bank Luanda Branch donated 3,000 tree seedlings for the event.

Mr. Msyega urged the community members of Maragoli South to take the rehabilitation process seriously. He said that the Governor of Vihiga County Hon. Dr. Wilber Ottichilo was very passionate about environmental conservation.

A similar campaign took place during the World Environment Day Vihiga County at Maragoli Hills Forest where 10,000 tree seedlings were planted. The event was led by the Governor of Vihiga County who joined community members and other stakeholders in the noble exercise of 'Greening back Maragoli Hills'. During his speech at Egago Dispensary, Hon. Ottichilo said, "According to the Kenya Forest Service, Vihiga County is ranked third after Nyeri and Nyandarua Counties with 35.9% forest cover, way above the national constitutionally accepted target of 10%." He urged everyone to keep working towards achieving more forest cover to ensure rivers water, carbon gas emission to the atmosphere is minimized and more rainfall is realized as a result of

planting more indigenous trees.

Equity Bank Representative Miss Milka Wamalwa said that they have a target of planting 35 million trees by 2025. She encouraged the community members who have huge parcels of land to come and register with them to get tree seedlings as long as they will assure the bank of planting and taking care of the trees. The bank in its part will geo tag areas where trees are planted and follow up on the progress. Currently, Equity Bank Mbale Branch has donated 8,000 tree seedlings to the County Government of Vihiga.

ADS Western has been instrumental in championing for climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience through sensitization and training of communities within the 25 Wards of Vihiga County. Ward Climate Change Planning Committees (WCCPC) have been established and trained on understanding the environment, the importance of environmental conservation and the consequences of environmental degradation.



# Vihiga Gubernatorial Debate: Epic Showdown as Leaders Defend their Ideologies and Track-records



Former County Secretary Hon. Francis Ominde, former Governor Hon. Moses Akaranga and the Governor Vihiga County Hon. Dr. Wilber Ottichilo participating in the Vihiga Gubernatorial Debate at Kaimosi Friends University College.

A battle of ideologies, manifestoes and track-records ensued during the Vihiga County Gubernatorial Debate 2022, which took place on 17th June at Kaimosi Friends University College (KAFUCO). Political bigwigs of Vihiga County who are eyeing the Governor's seat were put to the test on why they should be elected come the General Elections in August. The debate was organized by the Vihiga Stakeholders Forum Chaired by Dr. Moses Siboi Okonda. ADS Western is part of the forum and participated in the planning committee. The debate presented ADS Western's aspiration to contribute to issue-based political discourse as part of contributing to ethical governance and accountability.

The Principal of KAFUCO Prof. Nandi was delighted to host the debate and welcomed all participants and attendants to the debate. He was also proud to announce that the Commission of University Education (CUE) had approved the institution to be awarded its own charter making it the first university in Vihiga County.

The Chairman of the Stakeholders Forum remarked that Kenyan leadership was embedded on the reality of devolution. "As stakeholders, we agreed to come together and help strengthen good and progressive leadership by holding a debate and have our queries answered by aspirants and also get to know the kind of manifesto they have for us," said Dr. Okonda. The current Governor Vihiga County Hon. Dr. Wilber Ottichilo, former Governor Hon. Moses Akaranga and former County Secretary Hon. Francis Ominde were the aspirants who managed to attend the debate. Bishop Charles Kascan of Maseno North Diocese led the aspirants in the signing of Peace Charters before they embarked on the debate. The questions were derived from the areas of health, governance, agriculture economy, infrastructure, gender, youth empowerment and people living with disabilities. The debate was moderated by Mr. George Ajowi and Miss Velina Oduor.

This debate marks the first step to helping the people understand

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**The debate presented ADS Western's aspiration to contribute to issue-based political discourse as part of contributing to ethical governance and accountability.**

that they are the owners of power and political leaders are entitled to serving them appropriately. It also served the purpose of creating awareness to the people on why accountability is important in leadership and that development agendas should form the basis of why we should elect someone and not his or her tribal affiliations. Special thanks to the Stakeholders Forum for making the debate a great success..



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*We keep our word*

# The Mountain Remains Green, Colorful and Peaceful than Ever



Brod Representative Jane Tournee and Bishop George Mechumo of Bungoma Diocese pose for a group photo together with ADS Western CEO Mr. Stephen Amusala and his team, WKPI project representatives and beneficiaries at Kipsiro ACK Church in Mt. Elgon.

Anyone who has experienced the effects of war knows the value of peace. This was evident during a recent meeting between the Bread for the World (BROT) Representative Jane Tournee and the residents of Kopsiro, Mount Elgon region. Jane paid a two day project monitoring visit to ADS Western where she went to various project sites implementing initiatives funded by BROT. She was pleased to meet elders, church leaders, women group leaders, youth leaders and the administration from Kopsiro where the Western Kenya Peace Initiative (WKPI) project is being implemented.

Pastor Kirwa, one of the project leaders and beneficiary was very pleased to receive Jane. He was very much thankful to Brot for funding WKPI project implemented by ADS Western because of its impact in promoting peace among different communities in the area. "Previously, the people of Mount Elgon had become hostile and did not want to stay and work together," said Pastor Kirwa. He said that the youths in the area had become tough-headed and unruly, to the extent that they would tell their elders to **'circumcise their mouths'** whenever they wanted to talk. The youths used to refer to themselves as the digital age and women did

not have any say. "Things are now changing. Youths can now listen to their elders and they have become more tolerant and prefer solving issues peacefully unlike before," added Pastor Kirwa.

The elders present were also very thankful for the project and admitted that it has encouraged togetherness among community members. Previously, elders from different communities never sat in one room nor talk to one another. Through the peace project, the elders can now sit together, share ideas and solve community disputes successfully. He even mentioned that they had integrated those who were part of the Sabaot Land Defense Force (SLDF) back to the community since they believe that they will never fight again.

Women leaders acknowledged that peace had returned in the area. Previously, the responsibility of raising children had solely been left to women because men had been drawn into clashes. Women had been silenced and could not speak among the youth and men. Teenage pregnancies were on the rise and a myriad girls were sitting for their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams while pregnant. Through the numerous peace campaigns and messages in barazas and public



***The people of the mountain had become hostile and did not want to stay and work together. Now things have changed.***

gatherings, teenage pregnancies have reduced significantly. People are much more engaged in agricultural activities for sustainability and have no time to engage in unlawful activities.

"I can now sleep at night," said the area chief who was also present in the meeting. This is attributed to the fact that very minimal cases of violence are being reported. Domestic violence has also reduced meaning that households are living in harmony and families are solving their disputes well among themselves. The chief thanked the elders for taking up the responsibility of preaching peace and solving disputes before they blow out of proportion.

Despite the good work done by ADS Western, the current political undertones might threaten peace because they are full of tension. Therefore, there is still the need to sensitize the community on the importance of good politics. Politicians have been discouraged from using youths to push their agendas and especially for propagating violence.

Jane was very happy to listen to the different groups saying how the WKPI project had changed their perspectives and lives in the area. "Peace begins with you. Use any available forum you have to preach and promote peace in your area," she said.



# SOTE

## TUDUMISHE AMANI

Tudumishe amani kabla, wakati, na hata baada ya uchaguzi



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