



Environmental REPORT 2025



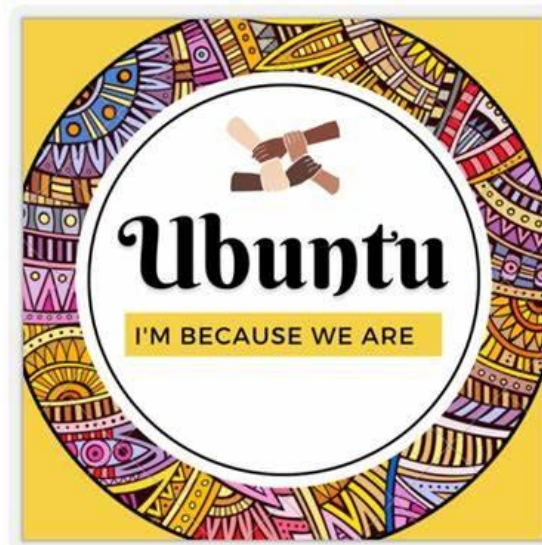
A Genuine Connection with People and the Planet



PREFACE

The African Ubuntu Philosophy: “I am because we are”

Originating in the Bantu and Xhosa people of Southern Africa and popularized by Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, the Ubuntu philosophy embodies a communal ethos that emphasizes shared responsibility, trust in each other, and interconnectedness among the community.



An anthropologist proposed a game for some children from an African tribe. He placed a basket of fruits near a tree and told them that whoever reached it first would get the fruits.

When he gave the signal, all the children held hands and ran together. Upon arriving, they sat down and shared the fruits among themselves!

The anthropologist asked the children why they chose to run together when only one could have won the prize. They replied:

Ubuntu: How can one be happy while all the others are sad?

/By Beatrice Esmer, Journalist, Writer/

INTRODUCTION

This year, on April 22, the world celebrated the 55th anniversary of Earth Day. The Day recognized the Earth and its ecosystems as humanity's common home. World Environment Day is celebrated annually on the 5th of June and encourages awareness and action for protection of the environment.



This year HAE Group has much to share with the world. Step by step we have been learning on how to harness collective energy, take responsibility to protect the planet and inspire action. Our new environmental policy is aligned with the global and the aviation industry's response to climate change; IATA FUTURE of the AIRLINE INDUSTRY 2035, IATA Policy Roadmap 2024 recommendations to the air transportation industry, the UN Global Compact Environmental Principles, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Environmental Programme guidance and the UN initiative Reducing Emissions from Degradation and Deforestation (REDD+) in developing countries. The project is also aligned with the vision of the County Government of Nyeri: A wealthy county with happy, healthy and secure people.

As a GSA to many airlines we have the ability to connect people, businesses and markets, and we know that we need to include the planet to strengthen the entire system because we exist embedded in nature. Our words are matched with our actions. We have launched a new initiative designed to

increase our positive environmental and social impact. It is also tailored to provide a learning fieldwork for our staff.

Our Environmental Awareness Survey 2025 revealed that it is important to our staff around the world that we contribute to protecting the environment as the success of our business depends on the health of the planet. More than 80% of our employees would like to better understand aviation cargo and HAE's impact on the environment and 100% support the company's investment in environmental initiatives.

EMPTY SPACES PROJECT



Project Background



Catherine Miriri, a Kenya dataair employee can be credited for creating the title for this project and bringing this idea to her village. She explained that inspiration came from a similar project that she visited in Muranga county last year, where she talked to the farmers who were beneficiaries of the HAE Forest initiative implemented in cooperation with Treedom. “During the visit I learned that the Muranga trees were already bearing fruits only after 3 years and their prices are much better than those from Nyeri county. In Muranga a kilo of export quality Hass avocados is more than 100 KES per kg while in Nyeri it is 20 KES or less per kg for the few avocados found here” explained Catherine.

Shortly after the visit in Muranga, a project feasibility study was carried out in Ngandu village, Nyeri county, by agroforestry experts from Effective IPM Association, a local Kenyan organisation lead by Dr

Nehemiah Mihindo. A consultation with the local community of Ngandu village was also organised to explain the idea and assure 100% support and engagement. Poor soil quality and empty spaces were noted on each household's farmland during the study visit. Additionally, many abandoned coffee trees also featured the landscape in the area as the coffee beans business is in decline due to very low prices and low productivity.

The Mount Kenya Times reporter, Charles Kinyua, explained that due to climate change and soil degradation, the coffee plants' productivity decreased dramatically; 30 years ago one plant produced 10-20kg of beans and today only 2-3kg. This proves the point that reliance for income on one cash crop has intrinsic vulnerability. Families in Ngandu and surrounding villages have been gradually losing their livelihoods because of environmental degradation. As Richardson (2023, p. 183) put it "All extinction starts with local loss, but we get little feedback of such losses", possibly because a local loss is unnoticeable until it escalates into a massive problem. This also leads to the conclusion that the answers on how to fix environmental degradation can be found locally, by supporting and guiding local communities towards sustainable and diversified economic activities. The World Agroforestry Centre (2025) stressed that more diverse fields also make farms more resilient to drought and heat waves. The Centre experts also believe that scaling local solutions can deliver a global impact.

The Mount Kenya Times noted the significance of HAE's initiative; an international company's presence and support highlighted the issue and reignited environmental degradation discussions locally. According to Charles, Nyeri county has the highest forest cover in Kenya, at 47%, but also suffers one of the most devastating environmental degradation through logging. The residents still can recall famine in the area that was triggered by destruction of the Karima Hill Forest. The local villagers still remember that just in 1970 there were 22 streams and now only one is left due to the replacement of indigenous trees such as mugumo, mui, mutundu and muringa with water-thirsty eucalyptus trees. These trees destroyed the natural ecosystems that helped gather and retain rainwater.

Project partnership and concept

In February 2025, a Partnership Agreement was signed between HAE Group and Effective IPM Association, a membership organization that promotes community development through integrated pest management and other agroecology interventions after direct consultation with the Ngandu community in Mathira district, Nyeri county.

The idea of filling empty spaces with fruit trees was developed with the aim to transition to more sustainable agriculture practices, restore the environment and create new economic opportunities in Ngandu village by ***tackling together the five Interlinked Global Crises in Biodiversity, Water, Food, Health and Climate Change.***

Agroforestry is an innovative and sustainable approach to farming that integrates trees, crops, and livestock into a single, harmonious system. As a multifunctional system, agroforestry supports food security, economic stability, and resilience to climate change. It's about working with nature, not against it, to create farms that get better every year instead of worse.

It is anticipated that the project will generate benefits for a minimum of 40 years.

HAE Group contributed by providing the critical initial investment package consisting of 2000 fruit trees, extensive training in agroforestry, consultation, and monitoring for 2 years to guarantee an impact as expected. The farmers are convinced that their avocado, mango, macadamia, pixie orange, apple and pawpaw trees are their way out of poverty.

Launching the project

On the 27th of March, HAE Tree Planting Club, a group of 20 members of HAE Kenya and datacair staff, travelled to Nyeri. The team delivered 700 fruit tree seedlings in cooperation with Effective IPMA staff just at the beginning of the rainy season. The HAE Tree Planting Club distributed the seedlings to 30 farmers, who attended initial training and participated in tree planting. The team received a warm welcome from the local community and local and national media covered the event.

We organise these trips for our staff not only to raise their environmental awareness but also to create a connection with nature and communities. “The human-nature relationship and people’s connections to nature are seen as one of three key realms for transformational sustainability interventions” (Richardson, 2023.p. 169). Community approach is key to this project as it brings meaning, provides purpose and unites people to protect their local ecosystem.

The HAE Tree Planting Team had some thoughts to share about the visit to Ngandu village.

Mike Mwangemi, Head of Commercial Operations at DC Business International, reflected: “The trip was deeply inspiring. Beyond the joy of planting trees and connecting with the Ngandu community, I was reminded of the incredible impact we can make when we come together with purpose. Seeing the smiles on the faces of the farmers receiving the Effective IMPA seedlings and witnessing firsthand how our actions contribute to long-term sustainability was truly moving.



One thing that stood out to me was how the local community embraces nature as part of their daily lives. It reminded me that environmental stewardship isn't just about big actions, but also about everyday choices rooted in care and respect.

This project isn't just a corporate initiative — it's a living, breathing movement of hope and restoration. I'm grateful to be a small part of it and proud to share this journey with such passionate, fun, and supportive colleagues. Every tree we planted is a step toward a greener, healthier future for us and for generations to come.



Cecilia Ngure, HAE Product Manager

Middle East and Africa said: “It started as a modest trial initiative, yet a deep-seated passion fuelled its progress, inspiring many like-minded individuals to fully engage with enthusiasm. Through some research and a commitment to restoring nature, along with a desire for a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, I have found joy in participating in these efforts. My involvement includes helping to offset current emissions and removing CO2 that has persisted in the atmosphere for decades or more. Our trip to Nyeri, and

hopefully many more in the future, ignited a strong passion within me to become even more involved in this initiative. The planning, execution of the trip, and the overall event were flawlessly organized. The joy and satisfaction I felt returning from Ngandu is unforgettable, leaving me eager for our next adventure”.



“The Nyeri trip was truly a memorable and enriching experience. It was more than just a visit it was a moment to connect, give back, and reflect on the real impact of our actions.

Being part of the tree planting activity and engaging with the Ngandu community reminded me how deeply intertwined our work is with the wellbeing of both people and the environment.

What stood out most for me was the sense of unity and purpose among the team, and the genuine warmth we received from the community.

It made me feel proud of what we stand for and the direction we’re taking with this project. Knowing that some of the seedlings we planted will grow into lasting symbols of change is incredibly powerful.

Thank you once again for the opportunity and for making this such a special journey”. /Erastus Kinyua, dataair Credit Control/

“The project plays a vital role in supporting the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)**.

Focusing on **SDG 15 (Life on Land)**: Protecting, restoring, and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss.

SDG 13 (Climate Action) - Recognizing that tree planting contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation by sequestering carbon and improving air quality.

Thank you once again for showing such great spirit and commitment.

Let’s continue to work together in building a sustainable and responsible organization”.

David Odori, Cargo Sales Coordinator, HAE Kenya



Our Kenyan customers also commented:



Customers could have come along...I like the idea of fruit trees vs miti ya matawi (trees that do not bear fruits). You guys are on long term view of things...

Good job from...



Project scope exceeds its initial vision

The second delivery of trees on the 23rd of April was overwhelming. The initial project scope was 30 beneficiaries but more than 200 farmers turned out at the old coffee factory event and expressed their interest in joining this initiative. The community decided to share the precious the seedlings; every participant received 5 seedlings to take home, but it was clear that there is a massive demand for the fruit trees and people are desperate for change. This community gathering and solidarity also produced an unexpected outcome; it was unanimously decided that local resources can be pooled for the establishment of their own fruit tree seedling nursery. The idea was proposed by the chief Patrick Ngunjiri Kabiru and very well received by the local administration. The details were discussed and roles were distributed in a separate community meeting. It was also agreed to involve the local schools.

1000 avocado seeds were planted on the day and the community does not want to stop there. The plan ahead is to nurture another 9000 diverse tree seedlings for the next season. This collective spirit and energy laid the foundations for change and demonstrated that sometimes even a small external intervention can trigger a greater transformation.





Our colleague Catherine, being at the centre of this big gathering, reported that it was unanimously agreed by the elders that the fruit tree planting project is the best project ever that the Ngandu community participated in.

This amazing community energy attracted even more support. Peter Njambi, HAE Country Manager Kenya, invited one of his customers, Fresh Handling Kenya, to join the project. They donated and delivered another 2000 trees including macadamia, silver oak and cypress to the village on the 21st of May, the day of tree nursery establishment. Esther Kibugi, Managing Director of the company was present, and promised her continuous know-how support to the community. Esther said that her company is happy to be involved in such projects as she has loads of interest in anything green & growing. It so happens that her grandparents were from this area.

Peter Njambi and Dennis Mwendwa represented HAE on the day and helped to plant avocado seeds and later joined an event at the local school planting silver oaks. Dennis said that it was a memorable day for him to see how the local community and the local government embraced the initiative lead by Catherine, and were hands on in participating together determined to make this project into a success where everyone could benefit.

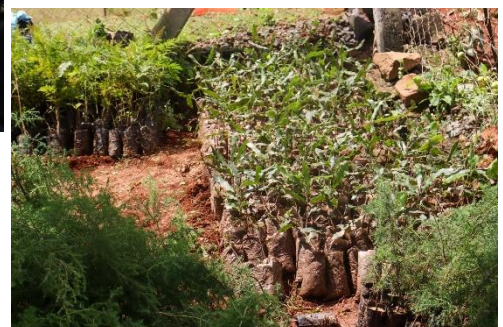


Peter Njambi summarized the project by saying: “What began as a CSR initiative by HAE has now blossomed into a true community-led movement. The local community’s decision to establish their own seedling nursery demonstrates their strong ownership of this vision—a testament to the lasting impact of our efforts.

I was deeply impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment shown by everyone involved; the local community, village elders, schools, our business partners, and the local administration. Their collective energy has transformed this project into something far greater than we initially envisioned, and I have no doubt it will create lasting change.

It is an honor to be part of this journey, and I look forward to seeing how this initiative continues to grow”.

Edward Gitonga from Kenyan TV and Charles Kinyua from the Mount Kenya Times also were there and covered the event commenting that it was a very inspiring day.





It is obvious that our commitment to sustainability and direct engagement with the stakeholders delivers results and attracts more support. With great confidence we anticipate many more wonderful stories of humanity at its best.

Fruit Tree Planting Logic and Impact



According to the principal scientist of the Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture Dr. A.K.Trivedi the contribution of fruit tree species in carbon sequestration, environmental and ecosystem services and improving aesthetic value has been overlooked.

Our last year's report highlighted the benefits of planting **avocados**; a mature avocado tree can absorb up to 21 kg CO₂ per year and 500kg in its lifetime. Other environmental benefits include preventing the release of CO₂, soil erosion, improving soil health, water retention and infiltration. Also, "the fruit from just one tree can pay for the private education of a secondary school student for a whole year - up to \$600 (£450) in Kenya, according to a BBC Report. "

Avocado, mango, and citrus fruit trees are the top three most lucrative fruit trees to grow due to high demand and high prices for the fruit, especially in the global market. Growing fruit trees provides income and employment opportunities.

Dr Trivedi explained that the benefits of planting mango trees are significant. Aside from fruit, mango trees also provide wood for furniture and timber for construction. The pharmaceutical industry even uses its leaves, bark, fruits, seeds, and kernels. In addition to the economic and medical uses, mango trees render vital environmental and ecosystem services such as production of oxygen, purification of the air, moderation of the surrounding temperatures, attracts rainfall, provides a windbreak, and thereby plays a critical role in the hydrological cycle. Annual average carbon sequestration of an individual mango tree is more than 50kg.

Ngowe mango trees are one of the best and most popular varieties in Kenya. The fact that they are popular and are climate change resist makes affordable access to seedlings problematic. Wealthnote 254 (2024) points out that an acre can hold up to 70 mango trees, with each mature (5 years) tree yielding over 500 fruits per year. If you access markets that offer 10 KES (0.05p) per fruit, you can earn 350,000 KES in a single season, that is a little bit more than £2,000.

Pixie oranges. The soaring demand for pixie oranges in Kenya and export markets is far from being met.

Healthy soil. It is also important to emphasise that growing fruit trees improve soil quality. Scientists are calling healthy soil a “secret weapon” against global warming. Making soil richer and more alive is a powerful tool to fight climate change. “The Rodale Institute’s trials show regenerative practices can increase soil carbon by over 20% in just a few years. Healthy soil can store more carbon than all the world’s forests combined.” (Climate Cosmos, 2025).

HAE Kenya as GSA to several airlines facilitates the international fruit trade between Kenya and the Middle East. Peter Njambi, Country Manager, said that in 2024 HAE Kenya transported approximately 1,040,000 Kgs mix of avocados, mangoes and pineapples to the Middle East. Therefore, it is logical for us to support such project as we directly empower people whose produce empowers our business. As per African ubuntu philosophy, the project represents shared responsibility, trust, global community interdependence and interconnectedness.



Much joy, as
the first pixie
oranges trees
blossom.

May 15, 2025

CONCLUSION



The project was launched on the 27th of March 2025 when HAE Group and Effective IPMA teams delivered the first 700 trees to Ngandu village community. It was the most amazing experience to see so much joy shared between people; gifting and receiving trees. The event attracted local and national media attention that was such a great opportunity to promote the project and HAE Group.

This simple fruit tree planting initiative is underpinned by the science on how to restore the environment and build communities' resilience. It is a grassroots initiative aligned with global policies, and is a good example that everything in this world is interconnected; and how the line between local and global is blurred. The initiative led by local people, implemented with the guidance of local agroforestry experts and funded by an international private business represents a global cross-sector partnership.

It is anticipated that all parties involved will benefit from the project in different ways, and we will be able to measure our positive impact on real people and places. The establishment of the nursery and attracting more external support indicates that just in 3 months this project transformed into something much greater than we initially envisioned. Focusing on things that are both timeless and urgent we create; whether it is the Snowball Effect, The Ripple Effect, The Domino Effect or The Butterfly Effect, we will see in the future.

All of us, who were present at the project launching event in Ngandu village, the second gathering in the old coffee factory and the Nursery establishment day, we know we experienced our "Ubuntu

Moment”, the power of sharing, human and nature connection, the need to matter and the need to learn; everything what transcend times and crisis.

Remember the famous Charles Dickens “One Day” quote: “that was a memorable day to me for it made great changes in me. But, it is the same with any life. Imagine one selected day struck out of it, and think how different cause would have been”.

Neville Karai HAE Group CEO said: *" This project is 100% supported by all our employees in the UK, Ireland, USA, Brazil, Chile, South Africa, Egypt and of course Kenya. As this wonderful and multicultural team we aspire for a world where business powers a regenerative economy that enriches life "*.

STORIES OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE OUR HELP

THE STORY OF PATRICK MUGO



Patrick is one of the beneficiaries of this project and received 50 fruit tree seedlings. He is 80 years old, and all his life worked hard on his land that he inherited from his father; cultivating coffee and bananas to generate some cash and growing his own vegetables for family consumption. He also worked for the Mathira Dairy Cooperative from 1970 to 1984, however, he never earned enough to have a secure retirement and his family remained extremely vulnerable to unexpected shocks like illness. He cannot slow down at his age because he has to support two daughters who have serious health issues and his three school age grandchildren.

Patrick's family is in a very difficult situation due to medical bills.

They had to sell everything what they could sell; their only cow and trees for the wood. Their electricity had to be cut off as they no longer could afford it.

He also pays for his grandchildren's school fees that amounts to 27000 KES (£157) per year per child and this does not include books, uniform and shoes.

Patrick even at this advanced age has a lot of energy and a positive can do spirit even out of necessity taking manual labour jobs from his neighbours especially during dry season, where he earns 500 KES or £2.9 per day to put some food on the table.



Patrick is extremely grateful for his fruit tree seedlings and asked to extend his thank you to HAE Group management for this support. Seeing his little trees growing every day is a hope that life is going to be better when the trees start producing precious fruits. Patrick knows that he will have to keep going and provide for his family for as long as he can, but this project is something good that happened at this extremely difficult moment for the family.



THE STORY OF ALICE GAKENIA



Much gratitude for the gifted trees comes from Alice, who is struggling in the vicious circle of poverty. She recently returned to her village to her abandoned parents' house with nothing to start a new life on her own after leaving an abusive marriage behind.

The house was unoccupied for many years and is in extremely poor condition but there is a small plot of land that she can cultivate, so she is making the best out of it but it is an endless struggle. There are some coffee plants in her garden but they are no longer productive, and do not generate any income. The little maize she grows in her garden is just enough to sustain her for a while every season. She relies on doing manual jobs in neighbouring homes but sometimes she cannot work as she feels weak and ill. Alice often is being forced to choose between putting food on the table and buying medicine. It is extremely difficult to escape poverty in such situation. She is very vulnerable and unable to address economic, social and psychological factors keeping her trapped in extreme poverty on her own.

However, things are slowly start getting better. The community helped her to repair the roof of her house and helped to construct a toilet. Alice received HAE fruit trees with the initial delivery in



March, and she has much hope that being part of this project and engaging with the community is a way out of extreme poverty for her. The gifted trees and community support created psychological safety for Alice and put her on the path of healing from the traumas of her past. It has been observed that her mental and physical health improved significantly, and she is now a fully engaged member of the community, volunteering at the new community nursery.

Alice's case demonstrates the healing power of kindness and of growing fruit trees. Mayka Jimenez in her 2025 article in *JardineriaOn* pointed out that "growing fruit trees also has a positive effect on our emotional well-being and community social life. Caring for a tree, watching it grow, and harvesting its fruits generates a sense of accomplishment and connection with nature that is difficult to replicate with other activities".

THE STORY OF ELIZABETH NAYMATHIRA



Elizabeth Nyamathira is originally from Nanyuki Lapikia County. She was brought to Ngandu village by the daughter of an elderly man. His wife had passed away earlier and he needed someone to take care of him. Elizabeth was very young, but she agreed to marry the man in spite of their huge age difference. Being an elderly man's wife was an opportunity for her to be able to receive help to raise her three children from a previous marriage that did not work out. It was also good for her husband as Elizabeth looked after him until he passed away.

He left two acres of land to her and her children when he died.

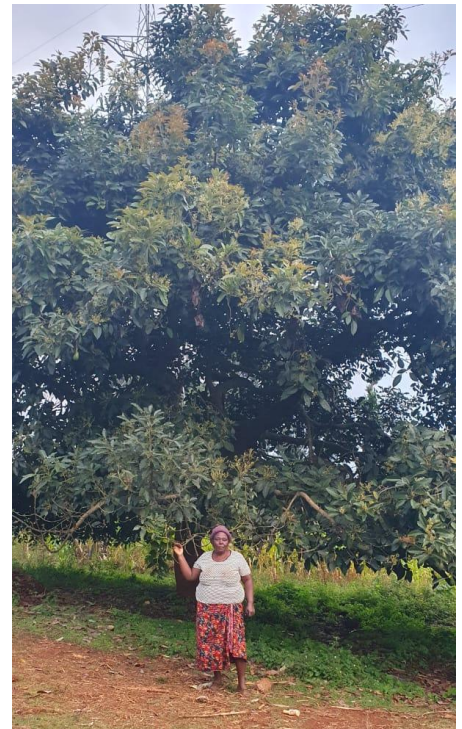
Unfortunately, this piece of land did not assure financial stability and a way out of poverty. It generated just enough income to put some food on the table. Due to a lack of finances her children only managed to obtain primary school certificates. She could not afford to pay their high school fees and they even had to take on manual labour jobs to help make ends meet.

Elizabeth and her children never imagined that it would possible to escape poverty, but finally they have hope that their piece of land will bear fruit. She joined the Empty Spaces project from its consultation stage and was selected as a beneficiary together with other 30 farmers. She received 20 Hass avocado, 10 mango and 5 pixie orange trees when HAE Group employees arrived to the village to distribute tree seedlings to the participating farmers.

Elizabeth volunteers in the newly established village tree seedling nursery. She never misses a day to come work at the nursery because she believes in this project and she wants to plant more trees on her land.

Elizabeth told us that the coffee plants that she has on her land are not productive anymore. Most of her income comes from a single avocado tree that she has on her compound. Selling fruits from this precious tree has helped her for many years to provide food for her family. This year, she could even buy two young goats. She also bought three rabbits to multiply hoping to sell them in the market. Elizabeth explained that she knows the value of avocados as her single Fuerte avocado tree in her compound has been helpful throughout the years. She knows that having more trees in her garden is a way out of poverty and she appreciates being included as a beneficiary of the HAE tree planting project.

Her new dream is planting trees in every available space on her land, and to educate the community on sustainable fruit tree growing practices by sharing her story.



This project has touched her life in a positive way and renewed hope for a better future. It is filling the empty spaces in both the land and deep in her family's hearts, helping them to share their untold silent stories.

THE STORY OF LOISE MWARANIA



This is a story of Loise Mwarania, one of the key participants of the Empty Spaces project empowered and inspired by the HAE Group. Loise would like to plant about 100 assorted fruit trees on her land that was left to her by her late husband.

Loise is a 50 years old widow with three daughters and a grandson. In 2009 her husband was murdered when he intervened in an argument defending his brother. Since that time Loise has been taking care of her daughters on her own as best as she can.

Her eldest daughter started working young as a house help in Karatina town, but later she successfully secured a job as a prison warden in Mombasa where she is currently still employed. Her salary is very low but it's better than working as a household helper.

Her second daughter passed her high school exams and was admitted to Kaimosi University studying criminology, however, she could not complete her final year because they had no money to pay the university fees. She had to migrate to Mombasa to find employment leaving her six years old son with Loise.

Her youngest daughter also lives with Loise. She is a student at Mathira Technical and Vocational College studying to become an electrician. However, it is a struggle to pay the last year fees as bursaries do not cover all costs. She fundraised but now Loise is thinking to sell her only cow that her daughter could complete the course and get an Electrical Operator Qualification.

Loise is the chairperson at the Ngandu community health unit, a government initiative. She earns 2500 Ksh or £14.40 a month. It's little but she enjoys working there, helping the community gives her purpose. She also does manual labour jobs on other people's farms when not involved in community health work.

Loise found out about the assistance available from the HAE Group's Empty Spaces project on the project launch day. She did not receive any trees as she was not registered as a participant. During the second distribution, when the community decided to share the gifted fruit tree seedlings, she

received seven mixed varieties of trees. Loise says that watching them growing brings much joy to her family.

She hopes to fill her land with many fruit trees and she understands now that life would have been easier if she had planted them years back. It would have been much easier for her to pay for her daughters education.

Loise works hard at the tree nursery since the day of establishment. She contributes to the collective effort, and hopes to receive enough fruit tree seedlings in the future to replace her failing coffee plants.

Loise said that being engaged in this project also helps her to overcome the trauma from the time when her husband died. She felt that unexpressed grief was holding her back. By telling her story, she heals and opening up is filling the empty space in her heart. She says that many people in the village have deep down wounds, but never talk about them.

Loise feels that something has changed for better in her world. Growing and nurturing her seven fruit trees feels uplifting and inspiring. She smiles more and sleeps well because she can let her worries about the future go. She feels empowered to do something about it thanks to the renewed community spirit and people far away who delivered this precious gift to her community.



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