

Hidden Voices Kenya

(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Trustees Annual Report

for the period 1/07/2023 to 30/6/ 2024

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation Number: 1174076

Trustees' Annual Report

For the year ended: 2023/2024

Charity name: HIDDEN VOICES KENYA

Other names the charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any) 1174076

Charity's principal address

% 61 Third Avenue, WF15 8JS

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

Reference and administration details

| Trustee Name | Office (if any) | Dates acted if not for whole year | Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any) |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Dr Christine Kahigi -Chair | Chair | 2023-2024 | Elected by Members |
| Peninah Wangari-Jones | Secretary | 2023-2024 | Elected by Members |
| Rahma Hassan | Treasurer | 2023-2024 | Elected by members members |
| Simon Kahigi Muigai | Board Member | 2023-2024 | Elected by members members |
| Dr. Jacinta N.Wachira | Board member | 2022-2023 | Elected by members members |
| Patrick Mugo | Board Member | 2022-2023 | Elected by members members |
| Dr. Alice W.Gikandi | Board Member | 2022-2023 | Elected by members members |

Governing document: Constitution

How the charity is constituted Trustee selection methods

Charitable Incorporated Organisation Appointed by members

Structure, governance and management

HVK is governed by its trustees and a chairperson who is responsible for setting the strategic direction and policies of the charity. The trustees carry the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the charity and for ensuring that the charity satisfies its legal and contractual obligations. The

trustees meet as often as they need to and delegate the day-to-day operations of the charity to the Chairperson.

Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

To promote and protect good mental health in Kenya in particular but not exclusively by:

- (a) Educating the public about mental health illnesses by raising awareness, and reducing stigma, fear, intolerance, and stereotyping by working directly with people in various settings and in culturally appropriate ways
- (b) Providing services and opportunities for people with mental illness, and their carers and families, by working in partnership with people in various settings and in culturally appropriate ways.
- (c) Advocating for better support and mental health services by working at the community level and with other service providers to increase the awareness of issues relating to mental illness, amongst politicians and government officials in an objective and persuasive way to help shape government policies and use of resources in the future.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects

The period has continued to be difficult for many Kenyans as the cost of living has stayed really high and the communities who are most impacted by these are those in the lower classes. The factors impacting on lifestyles and mental wellbeing by default are impacted or exacerbated by the following factors.

1. The after effects of covid-19 and introduction of CBC (a different education system from 844 system used before) that has been rolled out across the country in a short space of time, has put a massive strain on schools, teachers, the administration and particularly students and their carers.
2. The country has continued to face disasters related to climate changes with extremities of drought that led to crop failure, and loss of animals for pastoral communities and related conflicts. There has also been an increase in flooding that has led to loss of life, property and land causing displacements and thereafter conflicts and poverty increase. Poorer communities have been forcefully moved or displaced from their dwellings leading to ethnic tension and protests against the government.
3. Whilst the elections date back to August 2022, there are still reverberations that emerge from ethnic divisions heightened and worsened by politicians during the campaign trails and after those who took positions of power resulting in fears and tensions between communities.
4. Actions or inactions following the results of the elections has over time created a level of instability with the opposition calling for mob action, worsening an economy fractured by inflation, unemployment and other social injustice in the country. The finance bill, a proposition to increase taxes in most areas of society has become an issue that most of the Kenyan communities led by the Gen Z have united against. There have been countrywide protests and demonstrations with people taking to the streets, parliament and so forth. This

has also been followed by police brutality en masse, arrest, torture and as we at hidden voices imagine this will have a huge toll on mental health and likely to get worse before it gets better.,

All of the above have impacted on the majority of people's mental health and impacted on Hidden Voices Kenya activities.

That said there was increased demand and requests to HVK for mental health talks. It is believed that the communities were observing and experiencing a higher need for intervention. Reported incidents of suicide, violent murders then suicides, alcohol abuse, violence, poverty and so forth in the mainstream media heightened this senses.

The main activities include;

1. Public talks and workshops on mental health issues and illnesses.
2. Public talk about the relationship between mental health and alcoholism and drug abuse
3. Therapy sessions for individual cases that contacted the organisation through its social media platforms-twitter, facebook and instagram.
4. Public walks in the community and engaging communities in public spaces like markets, bus shelters about mental health.
5. Engaging with schools and delivering workshops in high schools about mental health.
6. Fundraising for emergency support of a few individuals severely impacted by mental health after ongoing miscarriage of justice.
7. Fundraising and ongoing donations to support volunteers engagement and activities.
8. Team building activities.
9. Posting content on mental health issues and thematic posters in the HVK website and other social media platforms.
10. Signposting people to relevant and known services.

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

As stated above, the main achievements relate to meeting the charity's objectives of raising awareness of mental health through public forums, signposting to services and professionals, advocating for better mental health support and services, training and developing own and other capacities to better understand mental health and counter stigma.

The charity has become popular and the demand for talks has increased with other organisations inviting the members to hold talks. There has been an increase in calls for help by individuals and have had to assist some cases for legal, medical and shelter in certain occasions, which was offered by professional members of the trustees.

The charity is still trying to raise funds to make it possible to meet the rising demand for mental health awareness, and so far, two trustees have been making financial contributions to assist with activities and associated expenses.

One trustee has been leading and assisting HVK ambassadors to deliver talks in the community and schools.

Two active members have been mobilising and organising the activities in the community and high schools after promoting them on social media. They have also recruited, carried out training and team building with newer members and volunteers to HVK and few donations coming in have gone on to pay for expenses incurred undertaking the activities.

Two trustees are a trained counsellor and psychotherapist has been offering services to those who have reached out to the organisation but lacking in funds.

Achievements and performance

- Activities continued to focus on raising awareness of the charity and of mental health, through a few introductory events led by volunteers in different locations within the country. Examples include awareness sessions in Githurai, Kiambu and Nairobi..
- Monthly meetings and gatherings by active members of HVK has meant that need is picked up and particularly topics that they would like to be covered or clarity. This method of community engagement and listening has been effective and actionable and one they can see results as most who have attended mental health awareness sessions have reported back on usefulness and ease in having these discussions with families and colleagues. With this training, there are people who approach facilitators or trainers for extra support or deeper knowledge.
- HVK gets contacted via social media as are the members when they speak of mental health. There was a particular case of mental health and law injustice that HVK picked up on following a training session. These objectives were met during this third activity.
- HVK trustees and ambassadors have continued undertaking mental health related activities and tasks outside of hidden voices in Kenya, raising HVK's profile. Several members have now undertaken the 10 week course that was said to be invaluable and adding to their knowledge and understanding therefore communicable to the rest of society. The beneficiaries of this added knowledge through training will be the communities who are contacting HVK and asking to be served.
- There was no external funding received through the course of the year. Expenses related to the few meetings, training sessions, refreshments for volunteers and attendees was met by HVK individuals.

Lack of resources and funds has been one of the biggest barriers in actioning the charity's objectives. A few years ago the board of trustees agreed that it would be helpful if work was carried out by two or three of the HVK ambassadors. As a result of this, monthly contributions from two donor trustees to two active members has sustained the work and made it consistent.

This action was fulfilled and as a result two workers have been doing the grassroots work, one as a mobiliser and organiser of meetings, networking and relationship/engagement with communities around the country. The second worker would concentrate on doing communications, managing social media platforms, publicity, preparing flyers, recording sessions and uploading them. The other members who have skills and knowledge on mental health, will present talks and training. The donations will not pay a salary to the workers but they will help meet expenses incurred in community engagements and also acknowledge their valuable skills.

- As agreed in the previous year and post pandemic, there has been concentrated efforts and focus on young people and liaising with schools. This is because it was clear from previous years work that there is a great need for building a better understanding and more open discussion about mental health and how it can affect people and their families.

Overall outcomes

Hidden Voices Kenya continues to be deeply committed to carrying out its objectives but continues to be thwarted by the challenges of finding suitable funding and lack of day to day resources that enable trustees and volunteers to carry out activities. Thanks to the generosity of some, it has been possible to maintain momentum and ambition as the subject of mental health becomes more widely promoted

through the media. The pandemic, travel restrictions, overwhelmed students and teachers and also greatly impacted on the plans intended for the year 2021, however this increased significantly in 2023-2024. We were able to conduct and run 8 sessions to youth members, parents, parents of children, survivors of sexual abuse, carers of people with mental health, friends and families of people with alcohol and substance misuse, church audiences and schools. We were able to organise sessions in schools and 2 5 mile walks with an estimated reach of about 500 people in total.

With the ongoing political protests in Kenya we anticipate them having an impact on the activists relating to burnout, trauma of violence being meted out or being witnessed amongst other things. We anticipate an increase in demand for mental health support for the victims and their carers/communities.

HVK opened a Triodos Bank account in 2019 and the total funds in the account are £160. The second financial activity that has occurred has been a monthly donation of £100 to pay two workers to conduct HVK activities and meet activity costs. Other donations to meet project activities i.e transport were from members totalling £200, and recent acquisition of a rental office space at £80 per month bringing to a total of £1600 as of July 2024 for direct costs.

With minimal financial activity at this stage simple records have been kept. Although HVK is surviving on a bare minimum amount of money because we have been unable to attract grants, it is important to say that in-kind support received from all who volunteer to organise, train, give lifts to members, bring cooked food or snacks to monthly events, give therapy and counselling sessions for free is invaluable and were it to be monetised, what HVK spends in a space of a year is much much more.

Financial review

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view, the trustees should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ascertain the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature



Name Dr. Christine Muthoni Kahigi

Position Chair

Date 03.05.2025