

TRIP REPORT



Stories from the Learning Tour to Kenya, April 9-14, 2023

PARTICIPANTS

Christy Gleason
Executive Director, SCAN

Hilary Griffith
Judge, Salem/Roanoke County J&D Court
Rep. Morgan Griffith (VA-09)

Rep. Morgan Griffith (VA-09)
U.S. Representative

Rep. Jahana Hayes (CT-05)
U.S. Representative

Milford Hayes
Rep. Jahana Hayes (CT-05)

Rep. Jonathan Jackson (IL-01)
U.S. Representative

Rep. Sara Jacobs (CA-51)
U.S. Representative

Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove (CA-37)
U.S. Representative

Arion Laws
Legislative Aide
Rep. Sara Jacobs (CA-51)

Michelle Nunn
President and CEO, CARE

Ritu Sharma
Vice President, U.S. Programs,
Policy and Advocacy
CARE

Janti Soeripto
President and CEO, SCAN

Rep. Lauren Underwood (IL-14)
U.S. Representative

Darla Underwood
Rep. Lauren Underwood (IL-14)



The delegation met with a group of civil society leaders from Somalia on their first night of the Learning Tour.

OVERVIEW

A bipartisan delegation of six U.S. Congressional Representatives traveled to Kenya with CARE and Save the Children's Action Network to learn about how U.S. foreign investments are enabling communities to thrive and find durable solutions to hunger and malnutrition in the region, even as they experience economic hardship, conflict, and humanitarian crises.

East Africa is currently in the midst of an ongoing food crisis, with vulnerable communities seeing their food systems eroded by the compound shocks of conflict, climate change, and global inflation. In Kenya, almost 1 million children under the age of five and 115,725 pregnant and lactating women are acutely malnourished (CARE). These are part of the 4.4 million Kenyans who are facing a severe drought and acute food insecurity (WFP). The Government of Kenya declared the drought a national disaster in September 2021 but as the cost of living skyrockets and the country continues to feel the impact of the Ukraine conflict, it is expected that hundreds of thousands more people will continue to slip into hunger. The hunger crisis has also caused massive displacement, with estimates indicating at least 3.2 million people across the Horn have moved from their homes in search of food and water, even crossing borders. Kenya alone hosts nearly one million refugees. (UNHCR)

Over six days the delegates visited humanitarian and development programs throughout the country, spending time with communities and seeing firsthand how they are impacted by hunger and poverty. They met with local leaders and community members to learn how communities have come together to build financial security after losing their livestock and subsequently their financial stability. They spoke with mothers who have adopted new forms of livelihood to support their own families as well as their neighbors. The group explored how emergency response must be paired with and often evolves

into long-term development when crises and challenges like those facing the Kenyan people are recurring and protracted. Finally, they met with businesses that are working with smallholder farmers to create more equitable and resilient supply chains.

→ DAY 1

SOMALI CIVIL SOCIETY PANEL

Sadia Allin, Country Director, Plan International

Halimo Weheliye, Regional Coordinator, Somalia NGO Consortium

Nafisa Yusuf, Executive Director, Nagaad Network

Iman Mohamed, Executive Director, Population Aid Services

Suleikha Ali Yusuf, Partnerships and Resources Coordinator, Zamzam Foundation

The delegation kicked off the Learning Tour with an evening panel discussion led by five Somali civil society leaders on the challenges related to food and nutrition security, gender equity, and conflict in Somalia. The panelists shared that 2.4 million Somali children are out of school due to the hunger crisis.

The delegation learned that while women and girls contribute significantly to the support and upkeep of their households in Somalia, they still face harmful forms of gender discrimination on a wide scale, including restrictions on their mobility and exclusion from decision-making spaces. 80% of household income comes from women, yet there are 0 women in parliament. 98% of women and girls have been subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM), and girls are often married off as soon as they hit puberty. Civil society organizations are working to address these gendered exclusions or barriers through coordinated action, financial aid for girls' secondary and higher education, livelihood training, and support for women running for office.

KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP

On the Learning Tour's first full day, the delegation flew to Kenya's western border with Uganda to visit the Kakuma Refugee Camp to learn about how the global hunger crisis is affecting migration and impacting levels of malnutrition. There are nearly 547,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya, with more than half originating from Somalia. The Kakuma Refugee camp alone has a population of over 200,000. The delegation visited four key sites within in the camp:

RECEPTION CENTER: At their first stop, run by Lutheran World Relief, the delegates observed the reception process for new arrivals at the camp. They saw how families are entered into a biometric tracking system and given a core relief kit with the basic supplies needed for their initial stay at the reception center. Families typically stay at the reception center for two or three weeks before being resettled in the camp. For the first time, however, the camp is receiving an influx of climate refugees leading to overcrowding and wait times as long as three months before families are moved out.

EXTENDED DISTRIBUTION POINT (EDP) AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION POINT (FDP): The delegation then toured a large warehouse where World Vision works with WFP to store food supplies that are sourced from within Kenya and donor countries around the world including the U.S, Ukraine, and other East African countries. The WFP team then led them through the center where, every month, WFP distributes a general food ration to refugees, which consists of cereals, pulses, vegetable oil, salt, and a nutrient-enriched flour made from soya and maize. Finally, the delegation sat down with members of the Food Advisory Committee, a group comprised of refugees tasked with providing oversight over the quality and quantity of food being distributed to the camp population.



Members of the Food Advisory Committee, comprised of residents of the Kakuma Refugee Camp, share their perspective on international food aid with the delegates.

HOSPITAL VISIT: Next, the delegation made its way to a hospital run by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) which serves both the refugee and host populations. They spoke to doctors and community health promoters about the maternal and child health and nutrition services being offered free of cost there. In the nutrition stabilization ward, they learned how children under the age of five and pregnant and lactating women are monitored and treated for acute malnutrition. The stabilization ward has seen a spike in cases of acute malnutrition due to food scarcity caused by the ongoing drought and resource constraints resulting from the war in Ukraine.

CASH VOUCHER SYSTEM: Finally, the delegates learned about WFP's cash voucher system, which now accounts for half of the food aid distributed to refugees. The cash voucher system allows refugees to choose from a wider variety of foods available in the general stores in the camp called Bamba Chakulas. At Bamba Chakulas, refugees can buy foods not given at the WFP distribution centers such as meat, milk, fruits and vegetables. The delegation stopped at one of these stores, where the owner, a refugee himself, explained that the cash voucher system was a boon for business, increasing consumer demand and allowing him to open a second shop.



Rep. Sara Jacobs spoke with a group of new arrivals at the camp's reception center.



A doctor at the IRC hospital demonstrates how malnutrition is monitored by checking the mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC).



Rep. Griffith, Rep. Underwood, and Darla Underwood visit a Bamba Chakula store in the heart of the camp.

→ DAY 3

SETTING THE SCENE

On Day 3, the delegation returned to Nairobi for a day of briefings on the state of development in Kenya.

In the morning, the delegates attended a briefing session with the U.S. mission to learn about U.S. development and humanitarian investments in Kenya and U.S. government priorities in the region. Sheila Roquitte, Deputy Mission Director for USAID in Kenya, outlined the top three priorities of USAID: addressing the drought and building resilience toward climate shocks; economic growth, trade, and investment with a focus on finding private sector solutions to development challenges; and ensuring local organizations are leading development in Kenya. USAID's Matt Hutchinson described some of the challenges facing the Kenyan government, including a debt burden equivalent to 70% of GDP, 40% youth unemployment where 70% of the population is under 19, and a relatively small tax base given that the informal sector makes up 80% of the economy. Nonetheless, Kenya has experienced steady economic growth over the past decade, recently achieving middle income status. The country remains East Africa's financial hub, with the largest percentage of venture capital in sub-Saharan Africa and a growing tech sector known as Silicon Savannah.



The delegation attended a briefing on the political and historical context of humanitarian and development programming in Kenya and East Africa.

Rep. Jackson praised the progress Kenya has made in the sixty years since it gained independence from Britain, urging his fellow delegates to not allow existing challenges to development such as national debt and corruption dissuade them from investing in a country with such enormous potential.

The second briefing of the day focused on the political and historical context of humanitarian and development programming in Kenya and East Africa. Leah Kaguara, Country Director, CARE Kenya, talked about the need to include gender as a focus at every stage of the humanitarian response to crises like the drought. Yvonne Arunga, Country Director, Kenya and Madagascar, Save the Children, stressed the importance of ensuring good nutrition at a young

age as malnutrition causes irreversible damage to a child's cognitive and physical development. Finally, Dancliff Mbura, Field Coordinator, Action Against Hunger discussed the need for greater collaboration between the agricultural and financial sectors in establishing a sustainable food system that produces food to eat, is a source of income, and sustains and protects the land.

The delegation closed out the day with a dinner briefing on the humanitarian-development nexus and locally led solutions to humanitarian and development challenges, led by Ikeny Kapua from USAID's Nawiri, Beatice Gaukuba from the African Women's Agricultural Network, and Suada Ibrahim from Red Cross Kenya.

→ DAY 4

INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES

The delegation returned to Turkana on Day 4, spending the morning with residents of Riokomor village. Riokomor is one of 100 villages being supported by the USAID Nawiri Program, a Food for Peace Title II non-emergency Resilience Food Security Activity (RFSA) that is implemented by a consortium of partners, including Save the Children and Mercy Corps. Nawiri is focused on ending persistent acute malnutrition by building resilience to shocks and stresses due to climate change, conflict, and other crises. It applies multisectoral interventions that work to build functioning markets and viable alternative livelihoods while treating immediate needs, such as malnutrition. The residents of Riokomor are pastoralists traditionally engaged in raising livestock, however, the drought has rendered this way of life untenable, leading to increased food insecurity and malnutrition and forcing community members to seek out alternative livelihoods.

Delegates first met with a fresh vegetable shopkeeper who explained how she set up her business with training and seed funding from Nawiri, how she uses her profits to support her family and reinvest in her business, and how she sources nutritious food for the shop, increasing the

availability of nutritious food in the community. They then met with a mother-to-mother group where they learned how community members advise and support one another on issues related to maternal and child health and nutrition. Finally, they met with a youth group focused on adolescent health, ending gender-based violence, community savings initiatives, basic literacy and the maintenance of community gardens for personal consumption and sale within the village.

After saying its goodbyes to the people of Riokomor, the delegation flew south to Kangalita, to learn about how Concern Worldwide (CW) and the World Food Program (WFP) are supporting pastoralist communities in the transition to farming as a resilience strategy in the face of drought. The program involves the construction and maintenance of a canal that supplies water over 512 acres of farmland cultivated by around 500 farmers. The water is used for farm irrigation, household consumption, and raising livestock. The group heard from local farmers who explained how CW and WFP had trained them on modern farming methods and encouraged them to plant a variety of nutritious vegetables to address the problem of food insecurity.



Rep. Hayes interacts with community members in Riokomor Village, Turkana County.

ADAPTING LIVELIHOODS

The delegates began the day with a breakfast briefing on climate-smart agriculture to learn about innovative solutions for adapting agricultural practices to overcome impacts of climate change from CARE Kenya's Mwendu Kusewa and Concern Worldwide's Hassan Olow.

The delegation then made its way to Naivasha, about an hour and a half outside of Nairobi, to visit a site where CARE had started a Farmer Field and Business School. They were led through the farm by members of the community group "Ba-be Stop," who took turns explaining how they had learned modern, climate-change resilient farming techniques. They work together to practice these techniques on a model farm about an acre in size. They have learned farming practices such as crop diversification, planting drought-resilient produce, crop spacing, sowing natural pesticides, and seed and soil conservation, which have improved the quality and quantity of their yield during harvest. Their trainings also include gender dialogues to challenge inequitable cultural norms, lessons on post-harvest management, and strategies for accessing larger markets. Each farmer also has a personal plot on which they grow produce for personal consumption and sale. The program has had indirect benefits for the wider community; their neighbors now have local access to fresh, nutritious food and vegetables and often ask graduates of the FFBS for advice on improving their own farms.



The delegation was led on a tour of a farm co-managed by smallholder farmers trained under CARE's Farmer Field and Business School program.

After the farm tour, the delegation observed a meeting of the community's Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA). group of 17 farmers (12 women and 5 men) from the community meet every Tuesday to contribute a set amount of money to a common savings pool. Members can then take loans from the common pool to spend on daily living expenses, their children's school fees, and small business investments, which they later pay back with interest, ensuring the cash pool continues to grow. Interest rates on these loans are typically much less than what local banks offer to the average

farmer. Most VSLAs, including this one, also have a social fund that community members can draw on in emergencies and are not expected to pay back. This particular VSLA saved over KSh 400,000 (over \$3100 USD) last year.

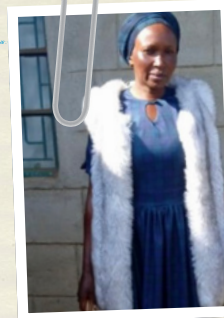
Later that evening, CARE and Save the Children Action Network hosted a reception at Slate Kitchen & Bar in Nairobi for the delegation. In attendance were local government officials, representatives of U.S. government agencies, NGOs, and other civil society leaders.

SCALING FOR THE FUTURE

The delegation began the final day of the trip with a tour of VegPro, a vegetable processing, packaging, and exporting plant operating out of Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. With implementation support from Feed the Future, VegPro has built partnerships with around 2,500 local smallholder farmers, providing them with a direct link to global markets. This has helped farmers cut out middleman brokers and increase their own profits. VegPro also supports farmers by training them on modern farming methods, installing solar powered water pumps and storage tanks, and managing transportation of produce from the farm to the processing plant. The delegates saw how nearly a thousand women work to process around 200 tons of produce each week to be shipped to destinations around the world, including upscale retailers such as Marks & Spencer in the UK. After the plant tour, they sat down with a group of smallholder farmers who shared how their partnership with VegPro had impacted their general welfare.

A Story from the field

Jane and Agnes are sisters and leading members of a smallholder farmers' collective in the semi-rural township of Naivasha that they co-founded after participating in one of CARE's Farmer Field and Business School programs. While both take turns tending to the group's communal farm, they each own separate plots of land where they grow produce like maize, potatoes, and cabbages for sale to local markets and to add nutritious foods to their household consumption. Climate change has reached their doorstep, however, and they've had to make adjustments on the fly, experimenting with new crop rotations, to compensate for unexpectedly failed harvests. Jane also serves as a Community Health Volunteer (CHV), providing health education and services, with a focus on maternal and child health and nutrition, to the local community. Both sisters are active members of their



community's Village Savings and Loan Association. Jane serves as secretary, while Agnes has made use of VSLA loans to purchase a water tank for her kitchen garden. Using materials given to her by the local government, and equipped with technical know-how from CARE, Agnes built a multi-story kitchen garden in her front yard that allows her to efficiently grow a variety of nutritious vegetables in a compact space. After a long day of work, Agnes says, it is comforting knowing she does not have to go far to find fresh ingredients for the evening's dinner that add vital nutrition to her family's meals.

→ POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Build upon U.S. leadership in combatting the global hunger crisis through flexible, reliable and comprehensive funding

- The U.S. has been a global leader in humanitarian response through the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) and Migration Refugee Assistance (MRA) accounts and Food for Peace emergency programs. Funding to these accounts must be robust to meet rising global needs and maintain sectoral and geographic flexibility to meet the needs of families in crises. This includes funding humanitarian assistance appeals to address the “secondary” impacts, such as heightened protection risks and population displacement, of the food insecurity crisis.
- While working to address emergencies, the U.S. must break down silos between humanitarian and development programming to address food insecurity at the root.
- This starts with robust funding for several accounts through FY24 appropriations:
 - International Disaster Assistance – \$5.27 billion
 - Migration Refugee Assistance – \$5.2 billion
 - Global Food Security Strategy (Feed the Future) – \$1.2 billion
 - Nutrition – \$300 million
 - Food for Peace Title II – \$2 billion
 - McGovern-Dole Food for Education – \$2.65 million

Strengthen and reauthorize the international food aid programs in the 2023 Farm Bill

- The Farm Bill is a critical tool in fighting both acute and chronic hunger. Title III of the Farm Bill authorizes several important international food aid programs including Food for Peace Title II (emergency and non-emergency) and McGovern-Dole Food for Education.
- In the 2023 Farm Bill reauthorization, we must:
 - Strengthen Food for Peace Title II non-emergency programs to allow programs to fully reflect the local context and streamline award management for increased efficiency.
 - Increase capacity building and resources for local smallholder farmers within McGovern-Dole.
- By investing in things like savings groups (including VSLAs), agricultural loans, education on water management and risk management practices, amplifying resources for female farmers and increasing their participation in local and global decision-making spaces, non-emergency programs are proactively preventing future hunger crises. These programs change lives, but we know they could work even better. Through small technical changes, we can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of these programs, reaching more people with comprehensive programs to save lives and build resilience.

Empower local solutions to global challenges

- International programs are most successful when they are built on local knowledge, context and expertise and led by those close to the participating communities.
- We must recognize that women are on the frontlines of health and humanitarian action and support their leadership. This includes making fast, flexible funds available to partners such as local women’s rights organizations, women-led organizations, and female first responders.

Invest in gender equality to address needs and proactively prevent future crises

- Persistent gender inequities are both a cause and an outcome of unsustainable food systems. Women and girls play a transformational role in global food security but are held back by discriminatory laws, policies, and societal biases and restrictions that limit their participation, access, and influence across food systems. Women and girls must be acknowledged leaders and their equitable access to decision-making spaces must be ensured.
- We must ensure that all food security analyses, policies, and response plans consider the particular challenges that women and girls face, as well as how their unique experiences position them to find solutions to global hunger best adapted to the needs of their communities and families. Of 86 hunger action documents written by the U.S. government, multilateral organizations, and INGOs in 2022, 25% of the reports were gender unaware and 47% did not mention gender inequality at all. ([CARE](#)).
- The U.S. government should mandate the inclusion and integration of gender analyses across programming and investments to ensure that assistance is appropriately addressing inequities and reaching women and girls, who are often the most marginalized.
- The U.S. should also invest in programs and activities that proactively work to change harmful gender norms and inequities within society to mitigate and minimize gender disparities in crisis.
- To break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition, it is critical to invest specifically in supporting adolescent girls in overcoming the unique barriers they face.

Support communities in building resilience to shocks and stressors

- While humanitarian programs address emergency needs, it is important to simultaneously invest in the resilience of families to manage chronic challenges and bounce back from sudden shocks.

U.S. programs like Feed the Future and Food for Peace are stronger when they incorporate resilience-building activities that help communities weather the shocks and stressors that can lead to hunger and malnutrition.

- Climate- and water-smart agricultural practices help to build food systems that are sustainable, productive, equitable, and resilient. These principles emphasize the primary role of small-scale farmers and the importance of supportive institutions and access to markets, climate resilient agricultural practices (including livestock and fisheries), and environmental stewardship.

Incorporate multisectoral approaches in U.S. policy and programs

- Multisectoral programming that integrates livelihood, access to food, nutrition, gender and water, sanitation, and health (WASH) has the most sustainable impact. We cannot address these issues in silos.
- Feed the Future is excellent at creating market linkages, as demonstrated at VegPro, but when it doesn’t integrate nutrition and small groups savings programs, especially those that are women-led, into the model it is leaving opportunity for impact on the table. As Congress provides oversight for the implementation of the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act (passed last Congress), it is crucial that a multisectoral approach to nutrition and VSLAs be integrated from the start.

We are deeply grateful to the many people who generously gave of their time to make this visit to Kenya a success.



CARE USA
1100 17th Street NW
Suite 900
Washington, DC 20036



SCAN
899 North Capitol Street NE,
Suite 900,
Washington D.C. 20002