



**Compassion International Tanzania Unveils “Our Neighbor Promise”: A Five-Year Vision for Child and Youth Development**

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**Iringa Unite for a Major Campaign for Child Protection**

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# About Compassion

We are a child-advocacy and development ministry with a profound mission to pair compassionate individuals with children living in extreme poverty, working tirelessly to liberate them from spiritual, economic, social, and physical hardships. At the core of our organization is an unwavering passion to translate compassion into action, empowering every child left vulnerable by the harsh grip of poverty.

Our strategy in combating poverty is deeply focused and personal, encapsulated in three simple yet powerful words: Compassion for children. For seven decades, we have been dedicated to providing children with the opportunities they need to break free from the suffering and fear inflicted by poverty.

Established in 1999, Compassion's ministry in Tanzania has flourished into one of the largest Christ-centered, church-driven, and child-focused advocacy and development organizations in the region. Our growth reflects a commitment to making a lasting impact on the lives of children in Tanzania, addressing not only their immediate needs but also fostering spiritual, social, and economic well-being.

As we celebrate 70 years of service in the world, our resolve remains steadfast, driven by the belief that compassion is a powerful force for positive change. We are dedicated to continuing our mission, partnering with individuals and communities to break the chains of poverty and offer children a pathway to a brighter future.

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## Our Mission

Releasing Children from poverty in Jesus' name.

## Our Core values



Integrity



Excellence



Stewardship



Discernment



Dignity



# Rafiki Bulletin

## Welcome to Rafiki

In this second edition of Rafiki Bulletin, we dive deep into the transformative initiatives and impactful stories that shape the compassionate work of Compassion International Tanzania (CIT). The pages unfold narratives of resilience, collaboration, and unwavering commitment to the well-being of children and youth.

The launch of “Our Neighbor Promise” sets the tone for a visionary five-year strategy, reflecting CIT’s dedication to unlocking the immense potential within 1.7 million children and youth in Tanzania. This comprehensive initiative, spanning from 2023 to 2027, stands as a testament to CIT’s mission, reaffirming their commitment to uplifting every child as a divine gift.

In Iringa, we witness the community’s united stand against the distressing incidents of child abuse. The comprehensive campaign, initiated by 13 Child and Youth Development Centers, doesn’t just raise awareness; it sparks tangible change. As we read through these stories, we witness the collaborative efforts of government officials, community leaders, and compassionate individuals, highlighting the power of unity in protecting our future generation.

Our newsletter also takes you behind the scenes of the CIT Staff Retreat, where excellence and integrity are not just words

but values embraced and lived by the team. This annual retreat is more than a break; it's a transformative experience fostering personal, professional, and spiritual growth.

As we celebrate International YouthDay in Dodoma, the energy, enthusiasm, and commitment of the youth resonate through the pages. "Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World" becomes more than a theme; it's a call to action for the youth to shape a sustainable future.

Dotto's journey from struggle to stability exemplifies the transformative impact of collaboration. The combined efforts of Compassion International and the government of Igunga bring hope and stability to a family facing adversity, showcasing the profound impact of community support.

Lastly, we encounter the unstoppable starlet, Flora Patience Kihombo, whose journey from hardship to triumph inspires us all. Through her talents in acting, singing, and unwavering determination to become a highly educated artist, Flora's story encapsulates the essence of our shared commitment to creating a brighter future.

In every story, in every initiative, and in every collaborative effort, we find the heartbeat of compassion pulsating, driving us toward a future where every child is seen, heard, and empowered. Thank you for joining us on this journey of hope, transformation, and unwavering compassion.

**Melkizedeck Karol**  
Editor, Rafiki Bulletin

# Events' Corner

## Compassion International Tanzania Unveils “Our Neighbor Promise”: A Five-Year Vision for Child and Youth Development



*A cross section of participants during the Launch of “Our Neighbor Promise”*

In September 2023, Compassion International Tanzania (CIT) announce the launch of “Our Neighbor Promise,” a visionary five-year strategy that aims to make a profound impact on the lives of 1.7 million children and youth in Tanzania. This transformative initiative, spanning from 2023 to 2027, reaffirms CIT’s commitment to unlocking the immense potential within every child, a divine gift central to its mission.

In a momentous event attended by pastors, bishops, and

program participants, Compassion International Tanzania launched its visionary five-year strategy, titled “Our Neighbor Promise.” The strategy aims to make a profound impact on the lives of 1.7 million children and youth in Tanzania from 2023 to 2027.

The launch event was graced by the presence of Honorable Dr. Nandera Mhando, Commissioner of Social Welfare from the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups, who served as the guest of honor.

“Our Neighbor Promise” is a comprehensive initiative, developed in collaboration with church allies, addressing seven critical areas of impact: Health & Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH), Education and Youth Development, Child Protection, Livelihood, and Disaster Management. Each facet of the strategy is designed to create a brighter and more secure future for the children served by Compassion International Tanzania.

“Our mission has always been to uplift children from the depths of poverty. This strategy, which we’ve named ‘Our Neighbour Promise,’ is our roadmap for the journey we have undertaken. We do this wholeheartedly as God has directed us – to love our neighbor as ourselves.” Acting Board Chair Dr. Elishi Kisinza

Dr. Elishi added that “The strategy serves as a fundamental blueprint for enhancing the effectiveness

and sustainability of church partners in nurturing child development. The commitment of Compassion International Tanzania to organizational growth and effectiveness is evident, ensuring they are well-equipped to achieve their objectives in child and youth development”.

CIT’s National Director Mary Lema emphasized the significance of addressing the root causes of poverty and achieving aspirational goals, adding, “We firmly believe that this strategy represents the optimal path to addressing the root causes of poverty and achieving our aspirational goals for the betterment of children, families, and communities.”

Mary extended gratitude to the CIT Board, staff, and church partners for their invaluable contributions. She also acknowledged the support of partner organizations,



*CIT National Director Mary Lema speaking during strategy launch*



*Guest of Honor Dr. Nandera Mhando, Commissioner of Social Welfare with the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups speaking during the launch*

the government of Tanzania, and donors whose unwavering commitment has propelled Compassion International Tanzania toward the realization of its previous strategy.

The guest of honor, Dr. Nandera, affirmed the government’s commitment to collaboration. “Due to the importance of the services and interventions implemented by Compassion International Tanzania, I promise that the Government will provide great cooperation to ensure that together we will implement the interventions outlined in the Strategic Plan for that 5-year period,” she said. Dr. Mhando also highlighted an ongoing memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Social Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups and Compassion International, expressing

confidence in the strengthened partnership.

Tanzania has registered commendable strides in improving access to healthcare, lowering child mortality rates, expanding access to free primary education, boosting enrollment rates in both primary and secondary education, and executing targeted social protection initiatives for impoverished households. However, child development in Tanzania faces a complex landscape influenced by a combination of factors, including socioeconomic disparities, limited access to quality education and healthcare, and harmful sociocultural practices. This East African nation is home to a youthful population, with over 40% of its people under the age of 15, highlighting the importance of addressing child development issues for the country’s future.



# Iringa Unite for a Major Campaign for Child Protection



*Youth and Children in Iringa during recent peaceful demonstration*

In the heart of Iringa, a region marred by distressing incidents of child cruelty, Compassion International Tanzania, in collaboration with 13 Child and Youth Development Centers (CYDCs) took a stand against the rising tide of child abuse. Media reports consistently highlighted the alarming number of cases pouring into Iringa District Court, prompting a call to action.

To address this pressing issue, a comprehensive campaign was launched with a peaceful protest on September 9th, engaging participants from all corners of Iringa municipality. The campaign, initiated by CYDCs, is a testament to their unwavering commitment

and zeal for positive change. The overarching objective: “To increase child protection awareness, reinforcing child safety in the Iringa community by December 2023.”

Kilolo Constituency Member of Parliament Justin Nyamoga, the guest of honor during the launch, commended the efforts, stating, “It’s our duty to ensure the safety of this future generation.” The campaign, set to conclude on the 16 Days of Activism in early December 2023, is not merely a symbolic gesture; it’s a concerted effort to bring about tangible change.

The campaign drew inspiration from baseline information collected through community data, participant

surveys, and child abuse assessments conducted by CYDCs in collaboration with Compassion International Tanzania. The reports revealed a staggering 76% prevalence of child abuse in the region.

“The “Child Protection Campaign” aimed to raise awareness about various forms of violence, including rape, prostitution, exploitation, neglect, and more, ensuring that children in society are shielded from such atrocities”.

As the campaign gained momentum, the government became an integral part of the process. Social welfare officers, Iringa Municipal and District Executive Directors, Town Executive Officers, community development officers, and police gender desk officers joined forces with the community.

Bujo Paight, the Project Coordinator, expressed optimism, saying, “This campaign has helped to a great

extent, and we believe it will reduce and completely end the cruelty of children as the society has gained sufficient understanding about the protection of children.”

Recognizing that violence, exploitation, and abuse often originate from within the child’s immediate circle, the campaign took a holistic approach. It aimed not only to educate children about their rights but also to enlighten adults, parents, guardians, teachers, and the broader community on their responsibility in ensuring child protection.

Pepetua Ngwaya, a parent, acknowledged the need for change, saying, “Through this campaign, we have learned a lot, especially about better way of parenting, and we promise to protect our children. We, as parents and the community at large, will not tolerate anyone who abuses a child.”



*Guest of Honor Hon. Justin Nyamoga (MP) making remarks marking the official launch of campaign*

# Empowering Youth for a Sustainable Future:

## Sustainable Future:

International Youth Day Celebration in Dodoma, Tanzania



*Some youth and children representing various Child and Youth Development Centers show casing their work during commemoration of International Youth Day Dodoma*

In a vibrant celebration of International Youth Day on the 11th and 12th of August 2023, the city of Dodoma in Tanzania came alive with energy, enthusiasm, and a shared commitment to fostering a sustainable world. The event, a collaborative effort between the government, youth-focused organizations, and stakeholders, including Compassion International Tanzania, focused on the theme “Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World.”

Youth Symposium: August 11, 2023

The Mabeyo Hall in Dodoma hosted a Youth Symposium on the 11th of

August, bringing together 600 youth and stakeholders from various sectors. Among the participants were 105 youths from different regions, representing Compassion International. The symposium featured a dynamic program, including panel discussions, capacity building sessions, policy brief presentations, keynote speakers, career speed mentoring, and breakout sessions.

Compassion International took the lead in presenting one of the key topics: “Green Economic Opportunities for Youth.” Alaike Laizer, Complimentary Interventions Specialist from

Compassion, emphasized, “Green opportunities for young people encompass business projects, skills, and creativity that focus on environmental friendliness to reduce environmental and ecological impacts.”

### Youth Bonanza: August 12, 2023

The celebration continued with a Youth Bonanza in the Chang’ombe area on August 12th. Dr. Mwiga Mbesi, the Director of Youth in the Prime Minister’s Office, Labour, Youth, Employment, and Persons with Disability, graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour. The event featured a variety of recreational activities, including sack races, tug of war, chicken races, bao, and dance competitions.

Dr. Mwiga highlighted the collective responsibility for environmental conservation, stating, “Environmental conservation is the duty of all Tanzanians. Conserving and maintaining our environment today will secure our future.”

The Youth Bonanza showcased talents from across Tanzania. Sadik, a participant from Morogoro displayed impressive acrobatics, while participants from Karatu and Turiani demonstrated Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) skills. Mpwapwa showcased the art of shoemaking, and PEFA Kalansi presented modern cooking stoves utilizing stones and minimal charcoal.

Dr. Mwiga was visibly impressed and encouraged the youth to seize available opportunities for loans. He emphasized the importance of enhancing the aesthetics of their products to attract a broader market, urging them to take pride in their work and contribute to the nation’s sustainable development.

The celebration of International Youth Day in Dodoma was not merely a gathering but a call to action, inspiring the youth to embrace green skills and take an active role in building a sustainable future for themselves and generations to come.



*Exhibition during International Youth Day*

# ECHOS OF JOY

## From Struggle to Stability:

Dotto's Journey with Compassion and the Government of Igunga



*Dotto with her triplets Nulat, Nailat and Naushad*

**D**otto Shabani's life has been a series of challenges, from being an orphan in her early years to facing the harsh realities of poverty and single motherhood. However, her story took a turn when Compassion International Tanzania, in collaboration with the government in Igunga District, stepped in to provide a beacon of hope and support.

Born in the Tanga region and raised by her uncle since childhood,

Dotto's path was marked by hardship. Despite graduating from Mabawa Primary School in 1996, the burden of poverty prevented her from pursuing secondary education. Instead, she turned to small business to make ends meet. Early motherhood added complexity to her struggles, and by the time she got married in 2022, life seemed to offer a glimmer of hope.

In January 2023, Dotto faced a new challenge - she gave birth to triplets. Sadly, her husband abandoned her, fearing the increased financial strain.

Left alone with five children, Dotto found herself without a home and unable to provide for her family.

A Samaritan's Intervention and Government Support

A compassionate Samaritan extended temporary shelter to Dotto and her children. Recognizing the dire situation, the Samaritan reported the case to the District Commissioner's Office, triggering a collaborative effort between Compassion International and the government.

The government swiftly responded, providing immediate assistance with food and essential needs. "Dotto and her children were registered in the survival program here at FPCT Elimu, with the Project Health Personnel ensuring comprehensive follow-up and training for Dotto to better nurture her children". Silus Manase Project Coordinator.

The collaboration between the church and the government reached a fundamental agreement. The government committed to providing a mattress, a plot of land, and financial support, while the church took charge of health-related support.

## A Grateful Heart

Expressing her gratitude, Dotto shared, "I'm so grateful for Compassion and the government for providing me with the needs of my three children. They have provided me with clothes, soap, a bed, and mattresses, capital to cook mandazi, paying the bill for milk for the children, maize, and

beans, paying my house rent, plot of land, and constructing a house for me and my children. I will always keep praying for you. May God bless you all."

Dotto's journey doesn't end here. The district government through the District Commissioner Hon. Sauda Mtondo generously allocated land for the construction of Dotto's permanent house. Compassion, in partnership with the government, is set to commence the construction soon, ensuring that Dotto and her children will have a stable and secure environment, free from the uncertainties of renting.

This collaborative effort between Compassion International and the government of Igunga exemplifies the transformative impact that can be achieved when organizations join forces to uplift those facing adversity. Dotto's story is a testament to resilience, compassion, and the power of community support.



*Igunga District Nutrition Officer assessing Dotto's children growth*

# Unstoppable Starlet:

## Flora Patience Kihombo's Inspiring Journey



*Flora holding one of her trophies during International Youth Week in Babati*

In the town of Isimani, Iringa, a shining star named Flora was born in 2007. As the fourth child in a family of seven, her early years were marked by resilience, faith, and an unwavering spirit.

Growing up in a rented house that also served as a place of worship, Flora's father, a devoted servant of God, faced the challenges of poverty. In September 2014, Flora's journey took a pivotal turn when she was registered at TAG Rwang'a Child and Youth Development Center,

opening doors to new opportunities and a supportive community.

The Kihombo family faced a severe setback in 2018 when heavy rains and strong winds demolished their house. "It's truly miraculous that no one was harmed, but we lost everything – our shelter, food, clothing, and more. Thankfully, the church, through the Child and Youth Development Program, reached out to assist us and played a crucial role in facilitating the reconstruction of our home." Narrates Flora

Despite the challenges, Flora's talents blossomed. A multifaceted artist, she discovered her passion for singing, preaching, playing netball, and excelling in both film and comedy. In 2019, Flora embarked on her dream journey by starring in the film "Kesho" ("Tomorrow"), which earned her a golden trophy and a 5-million Tanzania Shillings (About US\$2000) reward as the Best Actress in Swahili Featured Films during the International Film Festival in Dar es Salaam.

Flora's artistic achievements didn't stop there. In 2022, she starred in another Swahili film, "Binti Jasiri" ("Brave Girl"), winning the Best Actress Five Star Golden Trophy and an Honorable Mention from the Global Film Festival Awards in Los Angeles.

Her journey has been marked by numerous nominations at various film festivals, showcasing her versatility and talent. From "Binti Jasiri" to "Doa la Matumaini" ("A Stain in Hope") and "Nuru ya Maisha" ("The Light of Life"), Flora's performances have earned recognition in Tanzania and globally.

Beyond her acting talent, Flora is a gifted gospel singer. She has recorded an album titled "Komando wa Vita" ("War Commander"), featuring nine soul-stirring gospel songs.

In the realm of academia, Flora shines just as brightly. Her dedication and hard work serve as a beacon of hope for a promising future. "I aspire to be a highly educated artist, not only in Tanzania but on a global scale. I believe in the boundless possibilities that lie ahead, and I am determined to make my mark in the world of art." Says Flora

Flora's story is not just one of personal triumph but a testament to the transformative power of resilience, faith, and the unwavering pursuit of one's passions. She is, indeed, an unstoppable starlet, inspiring many with her talents, dreams, and the belief that tomorrow holds boundless possibilities.



*Flora holding her two swahili films (The Light of Life and Tomorrow)*



# Staff Retreat 2023

Embracing Excellence and Integrity with  
Compassion International



*All staff during the second day of retreat at Mt. Meru Hotel*

Compassion International Tanzania understands the importance of giving its team members the opportunity to step away from the hustle and bustle of daily office life. The annual Staff Retreat is a cherished tradition that not only provides a break from routine but also fosters personal and spiritual growth among the staff.

“The Staff Retreat is not just a break

from work; it’s a holistic experience that combines learning, team building, and spiritual rejuvenation,” says Mary Lema, Compassion National Director, during the official opening of the retreat. “I wish each of us should have time to hear God’s voice through his word and grow in our relationships with him, and we also wish to have time to socialize.”

The 2023 Staff Retreat, held at Mt. Meru hotel in Arusha from July

25th to 27th, followed the theme of “Embracing Excellence and Integrity.” This theme emphasized the importance of consistently acting in an honest and ethical manner, upholding values even in challenging circumstances.

Dr. Lucas Shalua, a distinguished Speaker of the event along with his wife, shared valuable insights over the two days before the unforgettable Tarangire trip. “Since we are working for the Lord, we must work diligently with all our

minds to develop and maintain excellence. This means giving the best effort based on our ability, knowledge, and understanding and going the extra mile in what we are doing,” emphasized Dr. Shalua during his powerful message.

The retreat wasn’t just about spiritual nourishment; it included financial well-being sessions, team building activities, and a night of traditional shows and barbecue. The diverse range of activities, from chasing chickens where the National Director



*All staff during Tarangire trip*

emerged as the chicken-catching champion to intense tug of war and sack races, brought the teams closer together.

However, the highlight for many was the Tarangire National Park visit on July 27th. Participants marveled at the park's famous herds of elephants, making the trip truly unforgettable.

The Compassion Staff Retreat serves as more than just a getaway; it's a transformative experience

that helps staff return home feeling refreshed, energized, and equipped with new skills. It creates an environment where connections are strengthened, skills are honed, and a deepened relationship with God is cultivated. As the team disperses back to their respective responsibilities, the impact of these two days resonates in their professional and personal lives, fostering a culture of compassion, excellence, and integrity.



*National Director Mary Lema addressing staff to officiate the opening of staff retreat*



*Dr. Shalua speaking during staff retreat*



*Tug of war game during team building activities*

# OUR PEOPLE



## **Elida Busagala**

### **Elida Transitions from Compassion**

Elida Busagala, who served with Compassion International Tanzania since June 2019, has recently undergone a transition. Elida worked as a Partnership Facilitator for Ngorongoro Base and, most recently, with Central Base at CIT.

Her service with the organization “has left colleagues with beautiful memories” says, Akinyi Migire, Partnership Facilitator for Central Base.

Expressing gratitude, Elida stated, “I thank God for granting me the opportunity to be a part of Compassion for these four years. Now, I trust that God is guiding me toward a new chapter. My time with Compassion has been fulfilling, and I have witnessed the presence of the Lord throughout this journey.”



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