

# Nawiri FY24 Q1 Humanitarian Stories

## Story I: Transformative Water Initiatives by Nawiri Bring Prosperity and Resilience to Communities in Turkana North



It's already midday in Longolemwar village of Turkana North and the unforgiving rays of the scorching sun are spread across the arid landscape. The sweltering heat creates a mirage as the last traces of moisture trapped in the compact soil escape into the atmosphere.

Ms. Lokwang Edome, a dedicated member of the Longolemwar crop producers' group, seems undeterred by this harsh weather condition. Just a few meters away from the recently installed elevated tank, by USAID Nawiri program, she is seen skillfully wielding a hoe, locally known as jembe, as she weeds her vegetable garden which is under irrigation.

Her enthusiasm and steadfast commitment demonstrate the positive effects of the USAID Nawiri program, an initiative that has instilled renewed sense of hope and resilience in a community that has long struggled with the hardships of extended drought and unreliable access to water.

Ms. Lokwang, a mother of seven, shares her perspective on this evolving situation, "Our community has always perceived farming, particularly of crops, as a survival option for the desperately poor. With scarce water hindering crop growth, we have prioritized livestock rearing over crop cultivation. Our main meals were basically animal products—milk and meat—neglecting the value of homegrown vegetables."

For many women like Lokwang, daily life revolved around the arduous task of fetching water for household needs and sustaining livestock. She says, "I used to dig shallow wells in dried-up rivers daily to get water for our livestock. As a mother, this became time-consuming, leaving my children unattended for hours. With time, the wells got deeper, demanding more effort. I could only return home by midday, affecting not just my daily life but also my children's health."



*Ms. Lokwang Edome, fetching water at the Nawiri rehabilitated Longolemwar water point*

She further states, "After spending the first half of the day searching for water, the second half would be spent figuring out what my family would eat. The only viable choice was to engage in charcoal burning. This required an additional 8 km walk to the market, with no assurance of selling the charcoal the same day. The proceeds would then be used to purchase maize grains to boil for my family."

The arrival of the USAID Nawiri program in the village sparked a hope in a community that was identified, through program assessment, as one of the most vulnerable to malnutrition.

"Our village was in a desperate situation. USAID Nawiri stepped in at the right time with critical interventions. The first breakthrough came with the repair of our broken water system. Suddenly, hope was restored in our community," Lokwang explains amidst smiles.

In addressing persistent acute malnutrition (PAM) in Longolemwar village, the program has implemented a series of layered, sequenced, and integrated interventions. This approach effectively targets to address both the immediate and underlying factors contributing to the stubborn issue of malnutrition.

In 2022, as the program initiated integrated interventions in the village, Longolemwar grappled with a significant Global Acute Malnutrition rate of 27.8%, surpassing the WHO classification of anything over 15% as a 'critical' emergency. The implementation of WASH-related interventions is positioned



to make a substantial impact in creating a favorable environment for the success of broader initiatives addressing malnutrition in Turkana. This is especially crucial in the Longemwar village, where the Nawiri aims to decrease GAM rates to less than 12% by the end of the program period.



*Nakeny Kotome, a pastoralist watering his livestock at the Nawiri supported water trough at Longolemwar village*

"To enhance crop production and encourage the cultivation of nutritious leafy vegetables for household consumption, the program has provided the community with a 30,000-liter raised steel tank. This facilitates water storage and distribution, currently serving various purposes, including farm irrigation, household, and livestock use.

The impact of the program extends beyond crop cultivation, reaching the heart of pastoral livelihoods. The upgrading and optimization of water systems by USAID Nawiri means that young pastoralists like Nakeny Kotome no longer have to risk their lives searching for water in conflict-prone areas.

He asserts, "Water shortage in our village forced us to venture far into conflict-prone areas in search of mountain spring water. There we faced the constant threat of losing our livestock and even our lives. Thankfully, these life-threatening challenges are now history, thanks to the intervention of USAID Nawiri in addressing water issues in our village."

As a parting shot, Lokwang confirms, "The support from USAID Nawiri has transformed my life. I no longer spend half a day searching for water; the rehabilitated piping system supports my household and livestock needs. We've also received training on agroecological practices, and I'm part of the REAP for Nutrition program, engaging in livestock business with two partners. I feel



*Goats watering at the Nawiri supported water troughs in Longolemwar*

empowered with health messages and an enhanced ability to provide my family with diverse nutritious foods."

## Story 2: Empowering Community Health Promoters to Triumph over Malnutrition in Samburu County



In the remote village of Ntalentiani, situated sixty-three kilometers north of Baragoi town in Samburu County, a remarkable young woman is making a significant impact on the health and well-being of her community. Felister Leokoe, a 22-year-old Community Health Promoter (CHP), serves approximately 40 households in this pastoral Samburu community, where the way of life revolves around livestock rearing.

Ntalentiani village, primarily inhabited by the nomadic Samburu community, receives essential support from Loonjorin dispensary, situated 10-15 kilometers from the village. This health facility operates under the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) program, catering to the health needs of approximately 2,872 residents. The closest market, Kurungu, located approximately 30 kilometers away, serves as a vital source for the villagers to acquire essential household commodities and food supplies.

"In this community, people refer to me as a 'daktari' or simply doctor. It's a title that has been earned through connections established and trust we've built together while attending to their health needs by either treating them or referring them to the nearest health facility," says Felister as she proudly holds a referral book.



In July 2023, a survey conducted by the Samburu County Health Department, in collaboration with Nawiri and its partners, highlighted a concerning Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate of 33.3% in Nyiro ward, exceeding the county-wide rate of 20.3%. The survey pointed to prolonged drought and regional insecurity as key factors contributing to this high statistic. These challenges have significantly affected the community's way of life, influencing both their livelihoods and dietary intake.

In response to the current situation, USAID Nawiri recognizes the importance of strengthening the capacity of Community Health Promoter (CHP's), as a key pathway to establish a resilient Community Health System (CHS). Felister, affiliated with the Loonjorin Community Health Unit (CHU), has undergone essential skills training and plays a vital role in supporting the program's goal of addressing issues related to acute malnutrition.

CHS serves as a crucial connection between community members and essential services for the early identification and handling of acute malnutrition. Essential strategies encompass home visits, screening initiatives, outreach efforts facilitated by CHP'S, and the implementation of Integrated Community Case Management/Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (iCCM/CMAM).

USAID Nawiri is also enhancing rural health systems through establishing structured feedback channels, among health stakeholders, and fostering collaborative learning with county governments. The initiative focuses on contextualizing training materials, building capacity through peer-to-peer learning and digital platforms, and facilitating learning exchanges with county governments to establish efficient referral and feedback procedures, enhancing the rural health system's responsiveness and effectiveness.

Felister, along with a group of nine other CHP'S, participated in comprehensive training that encompassed advocacy, leadership, communication, counseling, Water and Sanitary Hygiene (WASH), and nutritional aspects. Equipped with a CHVs kit containing vital supplies such as the mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) tape, medicine to manage common childhood ailments such as malaria, diarrhoea and malnutrition, Felister is warmly referred to as the "village doctor" by her community.

Her daily routine includes home visits for health promotion, treating common ailments, and establishing protocols for Community-Based Maternal and Newborn Health. Reflecting back on the inspirational moments in her work, she shared a touching incident involving saving the life of a young boy named Lengaisiu.

"I remember a young boy once fell ill with diarrhea in my village. I was called to check on the boy in the wee hours of the night." Felister, applying skills acquired from her training, performed tests, checked his temperature, and treated the young boy with oral rehydration solution. Her efforts

have not only safeguarded community health but have also led to increased awareness and demand for medical services.

The integration of CHP'S, in the community health system has been very instrumental in promoting access to healthcare services in the rural areas. "The head of the Loonjorin dispensary acknowledges the impact of CHP'S, like Felister, noting an increase in demand for medical services and a healthier community overall. Felister also provides crucial support to pregnant mothers, ensuring they attend clinics and immunize their children."

Before Nawiri's interventions, there was little demand for medical services, and the immunization default rate was high, among other challenges. Felister provides crucial support to pregnant mothers throughout their pregnancy journey, ensuring they attend clinics and immunize their children.

In addition to her efforts in healthcare, Felister has emerged as a dedicated advocate, mobilizing her predominantly pastoralist community to adopt farming as an alternative livelihood. This initiative has played a significant role in promoting the cultivation of a variety of nutritious food options. Due to Felister's influence, the cultivation of vegetables such as Amaranthus, spinach, kales, and cowpeas (kunde) from home gardens has become a common practice in the community.

### Story 3: Emuria's Story: Nawiri Empowering mothers to manage household nutrition-related challenges amid shocks and stresses.



In the vast Turkana South region, specifically in Lokapel village, the transformative impact of the Nawiri program shines through the story of Emuria Ereng, a four-year-old girl living with her nomadic pastoralist parents. Once thriving in livestock, the family encountered hardships amid the persistent challenges posed by recurrent droughts. What initially seemed like a story full of hope took an unexpected turn, evolving into a tale marked by moments of desperation.

Joyce Akiru Ereng, Emuria's mother, responded to the adverse weather conditions by settling in Lokapel as an alternative means of survival. Unfortunately, this decision led to little Emuria experiencing malnutrition, prompting her admission to the nutrition program at the Lokapel health dispensary. The family struggled to sustain themselves on non-nutritious wild fruits, reflecting the broader challenges faced by many in the region.

She emotionally described the family's struggles in seeking food, often relying on limited and monotonous diets, such as white maize. "The situation was not good before Nawiri came here. During droughts, water for both households and livestock was scarce, and food was a problem. We used to skip meals and consume only one meal a day."



However, hope arrived when the USAID Nawiri program intervened in June 2022. The program provided assistance through community health volunteers (CHVs), nutritional education, and economic empowerment initiatives.

“My husband truly values Nawiri's support. He motivates me daily and reminds us of the challenging times when our child was on the red Measurement of Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC). The program's combined approaches, related to water, farming, peace, health, and more, stands out! ” Joyce passionately narrates.

Proudly engaged in the adapted mother-to-mother support group (AMTMSG), she actively participates in sessions focusing on nutritional care, screenings, and education. This group not only tackles health issues but also economically empowers women through savings and loans. Joyce leveraged this support to set up a shop, linking the Lokapel irrigation scheme to the market and becoming a crucial food supplier for the community

She further mentions, “I am in two groups, the adapted mother-to-mother support group and the Rural Entrepreneur Access Project for Nutrition (R4N) business group. I benefit significantly from both, saving and taking loans to boost my business. Our improved business helps combat malnutrition, and Emuria no longer needs to be in the nutrition rehabilitation program. We now have three meals a day.”

The program's positive outcomes extend beyond Joyce's family, with a decrease in malnutrition cases noted by Selina Ichor, the nurse in charge at Lokapel Dispensary. She attributed this improvement to Nawiri's comprehensive approach covering various villages. The nurse remarked, “Community health workers at Emuria village manage 10 villages, reducing the facility's workload. Nawiri's impact surpasses that of five other partners, ensuring timely outreaches and close supervision for quality work.”

Peter Erukudi, the nutritionist associated with the Lokapel Dispensary, pointed out that the program's training initiatives, encompassing topics like WASH, community nutrition, and family MUAC, have played a vital role in arming community health volunteers with essential skills. These initiatives have proven effective in diminishing malnutrition cases and imparting crucial knowledge to mothers. The program not only addressed immediate nutritional needs but also empowered communities economically, fostering self-sustainability and resilience against future challenges.

## Story 4 : The Nawiri Effect on Natoo Village: A story of Entrepreneurial Growth and Nutritional Prosperity



"I would have never imagined that our village would undergo the radical transformation we are witnessing attributed to the Nawiri Rural Entrepreneurship Access Program for Nutrition (R4N) initiative. From having 3 poorly stocked kiosks lacking most essential food commodities to now having 51 business groups engaging in small kiosks stocked with diverse food commodities for the community members. It's a change we had not anticipated."

These are the words of Apeyonon Ejore, a cheerful mother of 7 from Natoo village in Turkana North, who shared these sentiments about the positive changes in her village.

Natoo village, situated in the rolling hills of Turkana North, is gradually experiencing a positive transformation under the influence of Nawiri. Over the last three months, a total of 51 groups, each comprising three women, have been supported in a well-designed business graduation model focusing on monitoring their business growth with a special emphasis on community nutrition priorities.





*A Nawiri R4N participant in Natoo village at her business stall with a business record book used to track all her business records*

Pamela Kalowas, the R4N Mentor supporting Natoo village, takes pride in the way the target participants have fully embraced business activities, overcoming the initial access challenge.

"In addition to making food commodities accessible in Natoo village, the business groups are taking a deliberate step in acting as focal points in sharing health and nutrition messages to the rest of the community members," stated Pamela.

To strengthen community knowledge on health and nutrition messaging while tracking the nutrition status of the various



program participants, the mentor notes that the program deliberately collaborates with primary



healthcare workers, including Community Health Promoters, Community Health Officers, among other health officers.

Despite commencing their businesses in simple open-air markets, Ms. Apeyonon and her two business partners are hopeful that their business will have grown by the end of the 18-month graduation period.

"Our target is to have our business grow to a point where we can split the business among ourselves by the end of the program. I am optimistic that by that time, I will have constructed a simple semi-permanent structure where I will be running my business. Nawiri support came when I expected it least, and I will work hard to ensure my business grows as a way of conveying my gratitude to Nawiri for the timely support."

The Nawiri business model operates through the establishment of business groups of three women, each representing different households. These groups are equipped with key business skills and enhanced knowledge on essential health and nutrition messages. The 51 business groups in Riokomor represent a total of 153 households whose health and nutrition needs are positively impacted by the program.

## Story 5: From Arid to Abundant: The Inspiring Tale of Mr. Daniel Loteng'an's Agricultural Triumph in Remote Loodot Village



In the heart of remote Loodot village in Turkana South, we had the privilege of meeting the incredible Mr. Daniel Loteng'an—a true testament to resilience and unwavering commitment in the face of challenges. Despite age and water scarcity, Mr. Daniel is a champion of crop production, cultivating a variety of nutritious veggies, pumpkins, and engaging in small-scale fruit farming.

During our visit, Mr. Hussein Noor, Nawiri's Chief of Party, took a moment to applaud the extraordinary efforts of Mr. Daniel and 282 other farmers in Loodot. He emphasized our commitment to overcoming challenges, especially by fast-tracking water infrastructure rehabilitation to enhance crop production.



*Nawiri Supported 50,000 litres raised steel tank at Loodot Farm set to enhance water storage and distribution to boost irrigation*

To date, we're proud to share that we've successfully doubled on-farm water storage capacity in Loodot, from 50,000 liters to an impressive 100,000 liters. This achievement was made possible through the installation of a raised steel tank, significantly contributing to improved water storage and distribution for agricultural purposes.

But our impact doesn't stop there. In Kagitankori village, a tank of equivalent capacity has been set up to address domestic needs and provide water for livestock consumption—truly making a difference in the lives of the local community through our program.

These efforts are part of our collaborative initiative with Turkana County to enhance water access for farming beyond subsistence levels. We're thrilled to be working hand-in-hand with the community to create lasting positive change.



Mr. Peter Kospir, the Deputy Sub-County Water Officer for Turkana South, expressed appreciation for the County's collaboration with Nawiri. He highlighted the training provided to Water Users Association (WUA) members on best practices for managing water, with a focus on operations and maintenance to enhance the sustainability of water systems.

In Turkana South, Nawiri continues to make strides in land reclamation, offering farmers valuable training on best practices, bush clearing, and destumping invasive plants. "We're fostering both food and fodder production in Loodot, ensuring food security and safeguarding livestock during droughts," notes our Field Director, Mr. Gabriel Ekuwam.