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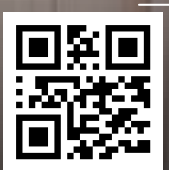
MEDIA

SPECIAL  
EDITION

BIO MAGAZINE

# MAUA

WHEN AFRICAN WOMEN RISE



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**RUKIA WARE ABDULKADIR**

Pioneering Prehospital and Maternal Health care in Kenya's  
Remote Areas. Transforming Lives Through Community  
Empowerment and Innovative Healthcare Solutions

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## Behind the scene

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# MAUA

WHEN AFRICAN WOMEN RISE

*BioMagazine*

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**This edition highlights the Women in Sustainable Prosperity (WiSP) Project. Rukia Ware Abdulkadir stands at the forefront of change, anchoring maternity health as the cornerstone of sustainable prosperity, ensuring every mother and child in Marsabit County, Kenya has a strong foundation for a healthier tomorrow.**

**Her tireless efforts resonate far beyond healthcare—they pave the way for a brighter, more prosperous future where women play a central role in building local economies.**

**Rukia's approach is wholistic with her focus extending beyond immediate health outcomes. She advocates for livelihood opportunities, vocational training, and income-generating activities that empower women to contribute to thriving and self-sustaining economies and communities.**

The Women in Sustainable Prosperity (WiSP) project was established in recognition of women's unparalleled contributions to sustainable economic development. By advancing an environment where women can thrive, United Village Global (UVG) aims to uphold its foundational principles: "Stabilize, Grow, and Prosper".

The project spotlights women who have turned adversities into opportunities, establishing opportunities that not only secure their livelihoods but also energise local economies. With a proven track record of success, these stewards are poised to scale their ventures, creating waves of positive change that ripple through communities and transcend generations.

# WOMEN

## IN SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY





# RUKIA WARE ABDULKADIR



“

Affectionately known as “Madam Rukia”, Rukia’s innovative healthcare delivery in Marsabit County, Kenya, through donkey outreach and a staunch battle against female genital mutilation, has bridged traditional and modern practices, saving lives and empowering women. Her legacy is to build a sustainable health model, ensuring generational prosperity and transformative impact.

# It's all about Madam Rukia!

Rukia Abdulkadir's journey in Marsabit County, Kenya, embodies selflessness and transformation. Her story reveals the stark realities of healthcare challenges, particularly for mothers and children, in remote regions. Through innovative solutions like donkey outreach and sustainable health programmes, Rukia has spearheaded initiatives to combat female genital mutilation and improve maternal health. Her narrative is a testament to the power of community-driven change, leadership, and the relentless pursuit of sustainable healthcare development. Rukia's work with UVG and the Safe Motherhood Campaign exemplifies her commitment to creating a lasting impact on society

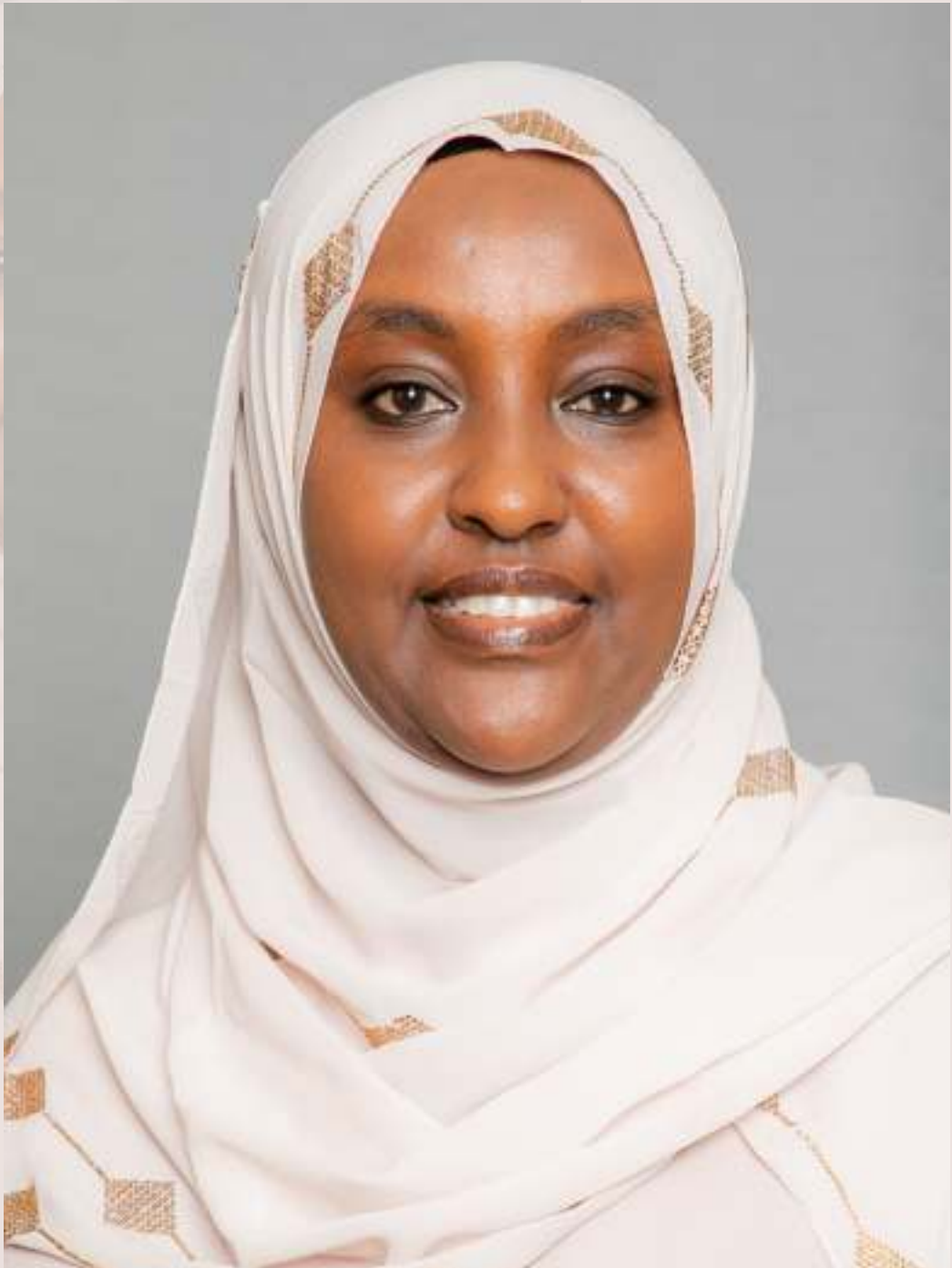
**Happy Reading!**



*Hazel*

Editor In Chief

# FOUNDER AMEN KENYA & COO UNITED VILLAGE GLOBAL



## **RUKIA WARE ABDULKADIR**

Health Systems Specialist | Public Health  
Advocate | Quality Management Enthusiast |  
Community Resilience Champion | Public  
Health Practitioner – Health Systems  
Strengthening.



**IN  
PURSUIT  
OF HEALTH**

I come from Marsabit, a town located in the northern region of Kenya within Marsabit County, one of the largest counties in terms of area among the 47 counties in Kenya. In our area, girls often experience considerable marginalisation. Together with various organisations and members of the community, we've been involved in mentoring young girls through our leading Girls of Legacy programmes, which worked to raise awareness about the importance of education, health and the necessity of abandoning harmful cultural practices and empowerment initiatives.



## MY EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY WAS DRIVEN BY MY DESIRE TO ADDRESS HEALTH ISSUES IN MY COMMUNITY

I pursued a nursing degree at the University of Nairobi and later completed a master's in public health, focusing on health systems strengthening, quality and risk management, community development and empowerment. With over 10 years working as a paramedic and emergency medical services, I now handle quality management and innovations in prehospital care.

My educational journey was driven by my desire to address health issues and economic status in my community. In our region, maternal mortality rates are alarmingly high, with nearly 1,000 deaths per 100,000 live births, among the highest in sub-Saharan Africa. This dire situation spurred my collaboration with the Phillips Foundation to enhance public and primary health care access and address maternal health challenges in Marsabit. Phillips Foundation's primary purpose is to provide access to quality healthcare for underserved communities.

## AWAKENING TO A CAUSE

Our initiative, as part of the Safe Motherhood campaign, began when we partnered with the Phillips Foundation, which provided the Phillips Backpack. This backpack supports community health care, facilitating maternal follow-ups during pregnancy and assessments of newborns and young children. We presented the community's maternal health issues to the foundation and received support for our approach.

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The project utilises community health workers to monitor pregnant women's health, including nutrition and blood pressure, throughout their four antenatal care visits. Our efforts are particularly focused on first-time young mothers, who often lack experience and understanding of pregnancy and its challenges.

Dubai 2023

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**QUALITY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**



Picture Source: Phillips Foundation

[www.ma-au.org](http://www.ma-au.org)

## THE SAFE MOTHERHOOD CAMPAIGN

“The global campaign to lower the death rate of mothers started in February 1987 at the Safe Motherhood Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. This important meeting, led by UNFPA, the World Bank, and WHO, focused on the serious problem of women dying from pregnancy and childbirth issues and urged the world to take action. Following this, in 2018, the Philips Foundation and AMEN Kenya launched a project that greatly improved the abilities of community health workers, making maternity care better and more accessible. These workers showed great determination and creativity, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, by providing healthcare in very remote areas. Their work shows how important it is to give community health workers the right tools and knowledge to improve health services and support the health of mothers and communities.”



Save a Mother Initiative project



# INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

## INTEGRATED HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEM

The health backpacks provided by Phillips foundation have proved invaluable. Initially, the community health workers, who are volunteers, lacked motivation. However, through incentives and comprehensive training that covered new health dynamics, their engagement and effectiveness improved significantly. These workers care for not only mothers but also the elderly and young children, advancing preventive care by addressing issues like deworming, water purification, and the prevention of diarrheal diseases. Their training encompasses hygiene, sanitation, and various aspects of primary and preventive health care.

The community health workers have become proficient in using the Phillips Backpack, with the foundation providing additional technical mentorship and training. This support has enabled us to monitor their performance and the quality of data collected from the community. Regular community dialogues help us understand health progress and learning needs, allowing for effective feedback and improvements in community health initiatives.

Collaboration with the government has been crucial, especially in understanding and utilising data collected by the health workers. The information gathered is managed by community health assistants before being integrated into the health information system. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, particularly with infrastructure and emergency response. Transporting patients in crisis, often via motorbike or makeshift stretchers, highlights the urgent need for better emergency services. Regrettably, even when patients reach hospitals, the facilities' capacity to manage emergencies is often lacking. This has necessitated additional support, such as requesting ambulances from the Ministry of Health, which unfortunately are not always adequately equipped, further exacerbating the challenge.

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*Picture Source: Phillips Foundation*

## **INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS- THE DONKEY OUTREACH INITIATIVE**

To overcome the lack of road access in hilly and remote areas, we introduced donkey outreach. By loading donkeys with water, backpacks, medication kits, and other essentials, we were able to reach communities otherwise inaccessible by vehicles. This innovative approach not only proved cost-effective but also demonstrated that effective solutions can be found to deliver healthcare to mothers in need.



# CHAMPIONING CHANGE

## FIGHTING AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Furthermore, combatting harmful practices like female genital mutilation (FGM), prevalent in our region has been an area of focus. These practices have devastating effects on young mothers during pregnancy, leading to complications like fistulas and other pregnancy-related injuries. In collaboration with fellow organisations within our county, we have echoed and reinforced their voices and spurred collective efforts in tackling these harmful practices, with a particular emphasis on their health ramifications.

The intensified campaign against female genital mutilation has successfully dispelled deep-rooted myths that have persisted for centuries, while simultaneously educating communities about the detrimental consequences of such practices. Consequently, there exists a heightened awareness regarding the adverse effects of these harmful traditions. Our collaboration with traditional birth attendants and elderly women, who were once practitioners of these rituals, is aimed at instigating sustainable change in both behaviour and mindset within our communities. Through various programmes, such as the "Leading Girls of Legacy" initiative and other burgeoning projects, we strive to empower young girls, encouraging them to reject these harmful practices and assert their rights—an aspiration strongly supported by numerous women in our region. This paradigm shift has enabled us to target and address the health issues faced by young girls and mothers within our communities more effectively.

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## MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT CAMPAIGN #ENDPERIODSHAME

In addition, Amen Kenya has initiated the menstrual hygiene campaign #EndPeriodShame. This campaign aims to raise awareness and educate on sexual reproductive rights. Through this initiative, Amen Kenya has launched a pilot project that distributes reusable pads, targeting girls within Marsabit County. Follow us and join the campaign.





**#EndPeriodShame**  
*Campaign*

SCAN ME



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**Our goal is to create a robust system where Women and youth can thrive economically and create a positive cycle of growth and prosperity.**

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**CRAFTING A  
SUSTAINABLE  
VISION FOR  
THE FUTURE**

Addressing sustainability, we recognised the need to reduce reliance on donations and ensure the programme's long-term viability. Prompted by questions from the Foundation, we embarked on a mission to devise strategies for self-sustainability. The urgent need to save lives drives our efforts, as the loss of mothers and young children remains a critical concern. We are committed to finding ways to maintain service continuity without depending on external funding. Our goal is to create a robust system where mothers can reliably access medical assistance.

Evaluating our impact is vital; we aim to see ongoing projects and improved maternal health outcomes as indicators of success. Planning for the future involves advocating for comprehensive, long-term solutions with the Ministry of Health, partners, and government officials to achieve sustainable healthcare delivery.

**UNLOCKING THE  
FULL POTENTIAL  
OF WOMEN FOR  
A SUSTAINABLE  
TOMORROW**

Sustainable prosperity is a multidimensional concept that aims for a balance between economic advancement, social equity, and the preservation of our communities. It envisions a future where the well-being of both present and future generations is safeguarded. Central to this vision is the empowerment of women, who represent half of the global population and whose potential remains largely untapped. When women are granted equal access to education and employment, they not only enhance their personal prospects but also contribute significantly to the broader economic landscape through heightened productivity and innovation.





# INFLUENCING THE NEXT GENERATION

## THROUGH WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY (WISP) PROJECT

We are thrilled to collaborate with the United Village Global (UVG) team, focusing on sustainable models that move beyond traditional donation-based support. Inspired by our donors' evolving perspectives, we are motivated to create self-sustaining programmes. A key initiative in this endeavour is the WiSP project, which aims to equip young women and women in villages with knowledge of health and selfcare while promoting equal opportunity and supporting women in business. This project emphasises maternal healthcare and seeks to bridge the gap in infant mortality by facilitating access to healthcare services.

Over the long term, this project will empower women in these villages to take ownership of and collectively develop solutions that will establish sustainable healthcare infrastructures and resources, benefiting their communities for years to come. The scalability of this model ensures that it can be adopted in numerous other villages.



A photograph of a woman and a young girl in traditional African attire. The woman, on the left, is wearing a blue and red patterned wrap and multiple colorful beaded necklaces. She is smiling and looking towards the right. The young girl, on the right, is wearing a red wrap over a green shirt and a red and white patterned skirt. She is looking towards the left. They are standing in front of a mud-brick building with a thatched roof. The background shows some trees and a clear sky.

## ADDRESSING GENDER EQUALITY GAPS

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Despite progress, the journey toward gender equality is far from complete. Women around the world still confront significant barriers that limit their educational, economic, and political participation. These include, but are not limited to, restricted access to essential services, discriminatory legislation, unequal pay, and a lack of representation in decision-making forums. Such obstacles not only impede individual women but also stifle the global movement towards sustainable prosperity.

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# LEADERSHIP AND LEGACY

Our journey has also been about building leadership skills, focusing on mentoring young girls by sharing our leadership experiences. Unlike traditional roles of authority, we emphasise guiding and nurturing, instilling values and principles that build a success-oriented mindset. I am grateful to my mentors for helping me understand the essence of leadership, which is fundamentally people-oriented, guiding my principle of mutual assistance.

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Currently, I am involved in quality management, dealing with standards, performance monitoring, and process mapping. These elements are crucial in achieving our objectives. Having the best ideas and resources is insufficient without the necessary management skills to execute these plans effectively. At UVG, we aim to integrate these skills to make a tangible impact on people's lives, drawing on our experiences and lessons learned.

We have encountered visionaries with strategic insights, yet realising these visions often requires finding the right donors to turn ideas into reality. Meeting the unique needs of each donor presents a challenge, but our experiences have prepared us to address these effectively.



# LOOKING AHEAD

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND ASPIRATIONS

To reach our goals, we require both financial and human resources. Together, these will enable us to build infrastructure and build project growth in a sustainable and impactful way. At UVG, we've been meticulous in assembling a team ready to face these challenges. My hope is for UVG to grow exponentially, becoming a beacon for empowering women, youth, and communities. As a member of UVG, I am committed to continuous learning and collaboration, striving to make our organisational significant force for positive change.

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# WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY



Within United Village Global, we have a programme called the Women in Sustainable Prosperity (WiSP). WiSP celebrates the narratives of women: those who have paved the way and those who are yet to emerge. It focuses on stories that are not only told but also sell and build, creating a community of women who are powerful, bold, gentle, and loving. These women bravely share their journeys, highlighting their triumphs over adversity, ongoing impact, and the legacies they aspire to pass down through six generations..

**RUKIA WARE ABDULKADIR – FOUNDER AMEN KENYA  
& COO UNITED VILLAGE GLOBAL**

SCAN ME



WATCH NOW



A woman wearing a white hijab and a light pink, long-sleeved dress is sitting on a black leather sofa. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. Her hands are resting on her lap, and she is wearing a gold watch and orange nail polish. The background features a red brick wall and a patterned cushion with green and blue leaves. The text 'MESSAGE TO THE FUTURE ME' is overlaid on the image, with a large red 'A' at the beginning of the word 'MESSAGE'.

# A MESSAGE TO THE FUTURE ME

The cornerstone of a thriving society lies in nurturing wellness, fostering resilience and embracing prosperity. Enabling a future where every individual can flourish and embrace challenges as opportunities to innovate and uplift every life.

Let's build a legacy of wellness that endures, ensuring that the health of tomorrow is seeded in the actions of today.