



Friends of Kenya Rising

In partnership with United Kenya Rising in Kakamega, Kenya

2023 Annual Report





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Dear Friends,

It is a great honor to share with you this report of our accomplishments in 2023. I invite you to join us in this recap of last year as told through numbers and inspiring stories.

In 2023, for the first time, eighty families graduated from our Family Care program. They are now standing independent and strong on their own. A similar number of additional families graduated early in 2024.

The Family Care program has evolved into a fully mature model, creating lasting change in the lives of families we serve. Just a few years ago our approach was merely an idea, and then it became an experiment. Today, it stands on its own having proven its worth and viability far beyond our expectations.

On the following pages you will read more about the milestones we reached in 2023 and the transformative changes catalyzed through Family Care. I am truly grateful to all our stakeholders for your support and trust, which has allowed these achievements to be realized.

Our work is very far from complete. Looking forward, we are ready for many new families to enter the Family Care fold.

To our supporters and partners: thank you for walking with us. Together, we are building a lasting impact and creating a more equitable world for future generations.

With deep appreciation,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Chisholm".

John Chisholm, Executive Director

About Us

We exist to support our partner in western Kenya, *United Kenya Rising* (UKR), in pursuit of our shared mission to assist families as they rise out of poverty.

Our work goes back 22 years. We are made up of volunteers and donors who were previously the driving forces behind Crossroads Springs Africa and Friends of Kakamega. In 2021 we officially consolidated to become Friends of Kenya Rising in support of our Kenyan partner's Family Care program.

We are unique because of our focus on whole families. Our sector is not education, livelihoods, agriculture, public health, or health (although our work covers all of these). Our sector is "the family."

We are proud to take a deep-impact approach, and would rather assist a smaller number of people transformationally, than a larger number lightly.



Mission

We assist Kenyan students and their families as they rise out of poverty.

Vision

A world without poverty where all people are equipped to build the kinds of lives they want and value.

Our Partnership

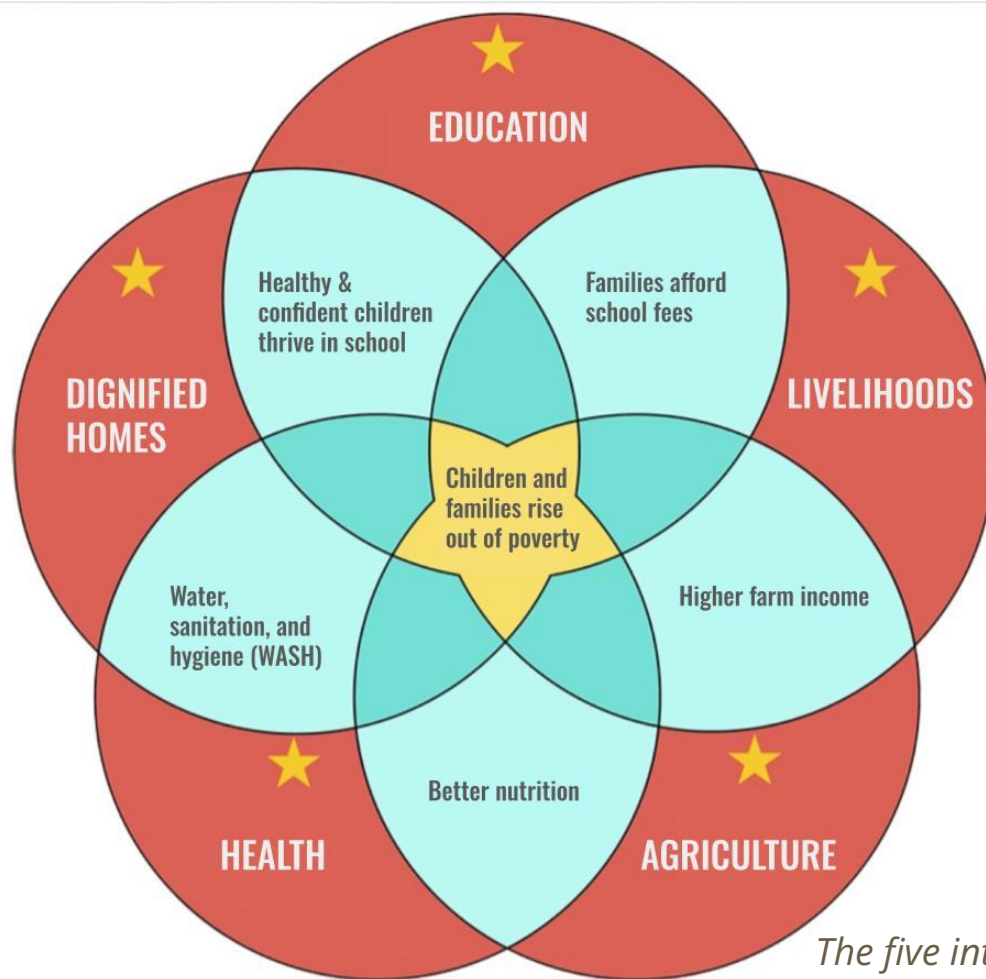
Our sole partner is United Kenya Rising (UKR), based in Kakamega, Kenya. The organization's leadership and board come from the western Kenya communities where UKR makes its impact.

We as Friends of Kenya Rising are an American 501(c)(3) charity that supports United Kenya Rising and its Family Care program. We are led by a volunteer Board of Directors who have spent time in Kakamega and care deeply about UKR's work. We watch what goes on closely, and we are very proud of what our supporters have helped UKR build.

Throughout this 2023 Annual Report, “we” will speak with one voice.

Instead of repeating phrases like “our Kenyan partner UKR's social work team,” this report simply says “our social work team.” Doing this makes reading much easier, but we do not want it to suggest that “we” the Americans at Friends of Kenya Rising operate Family Care. Our Kenyan partners do that. We are here to support them and grow the incredible impact UKR creates with the donor funds we steward.





The five interconnected Guiding Stars of Family Care

The Family Care Model

Family Care works through five pillars or “Guidings Stars,” all of them interconnected:

- *Education*
- *Livelihoods*
- *Agriculture*
- *Dignified Homes*
- *Health*

The Family Care program collaborates with families to help them overcome their challenges and leverage their unique strengths.

Social workers and agriculture officers work closely with each family for three years, visiting frequently and knowing them well. The education team mentors students, and public health staff guide home improvements.

A flexible budget is available for use - as needed most - to assist in each unique family's situation. Financial help is usually co-financed by the family itself, and is oriented toward accomplishing specific goals.

We also offer scholarships for bright students, building materials for homestead renovations, tree seedlings for the future, and critical home goods like water filters for the present.

Highlights of 2023...

- UKR launches its **website** (www.unitedkenyarising.org)
- Need-based distributions of **mosquito nets** and **water filters**
- Innovative new **brick machine** introduced for better structures, climate, & income
- Free community **eye clinics** reach over 1,500 people in the villages we serve
- **Visits, partnerships, and friendships** with like-minded organizations including WEWASAFO, Grace Initiative, Transforming Nations, Kesho Kenya, Friendly Water for the World, Segal Family Foundation, and Weza Care
- A **mini-documentary** on our Family Care model, [Nyota Zetu](#) (“Our Stars”) is released on YouTube
- Our first cohort of **80 families graduated** at the end of the year! Another 77 families were being prepared for graduation in the first half of 2024
- An amazing new **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system** was implemented, and provides numbers for this report. We don’t have all “before” data for graduating families, so their outcomes are sometimes compared to the situations of our newest families in this report.

Family Care’s impact touched
205 families
and
1,425 people

We provided
383 scholarships
to students in high schools,
vocational training, and
universities

38 UKR staff
and
343 FKR donors
made it all possible. Thank you!

The *EDUCATION* Guiding Star

Family Care ensures all children can access K-12 education, and opens opportunities for youth to reach new heights

Where we work, people believe that education is key to success, and cost is usually the greatest barrier to children's learning. To address this, we help families pay for schooling and guide students on getting the most out of their education.

Our social work and education teams engage with students through home visits and one-on-one counselling. They also visit students at schools, and offer life-skills workshops in areas like self-motivation, character development, and sexual & reproductive health.

We believe in walking together, instead of taking over. And we've learned that families' financial involvement also leads to higher levels of parental engagement in students' academics. Over the course of their three-years in Family Care, families take on an increasing share of education expenses and are asked to chip in toward any scholarship students' studies.

HOW IT WORKS

All Family Care students & youth

Partial help for basic education is available from each family's flexible-use budget.

Over time, through success in farming and business, families take on these reasonable costs.

658

primary and high school students assisted through Family Care in 2023

High school and university scholarships for top students

Enable high-performing students to attend top public high schools and pursue university degrees.

163

high school scholarships &

87

university scholarships in 2023

Vocational skills scholarships

All Family Care youth have a chance to study at trade school and gain hands-on skills for (self) employment.

133

vocational training scholarships in 2023

Two young Black female students in school uniforms are smiling and posing for a photo. They are wearing grey V-neck sweaters over white collared shirts. The student on the left has her arms crossed and is looking towards the camera. The student on the right is standing slightly behind her, also smiling. Both sweaters feature a school crest on the left chest. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

In 2023...

63% of families with post-high school youth were proud to have **university or vocational** student(s) or grad(s)

42% of our high school grads achieved **university admission**, nearly **twice** the national average of 22%

97% of families' primary and high school students **advanced in school** as they should



Ann's dream is to develop medical software

Ann's success story

"It was while studying at high school that I discovered my happy place to be, the computer laboratory," shared Ann Nyawino, a third year student at KCA University. Ann is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Applied Computing under one of our scholarships.

As a girl, Ann loved to help repair broken radios and other discarded gadgets, nurturing her interest in technology. When she grew older and understood the weight of her older brother's cerebral palsy condition, her interest in technology escalated. Most of Ann's family's finances were being spent on her brother's treatment, and it seemed to her like every new doctor started from scratch. There was no coordination, and this sparked her dream to help the situation.

Ann's mission became development of medical database systems for the health sector, so that the sector can better treat her brother and others like him. "I feel like if we impact more technology in neuro treatment, a permanent cure [for cerebral palsy] can be achieved."





High school students
at a UKR life skills workshop



Kosgey Liyosi as a
Chemical Engineering grad



A vocational student
tailoring a suit



Knowledge is
power

The *LIVELIHOODS* Guiding Star

Family Care helps families develop multiple sources of income from business and farming, building momentum toward financial independence

A meaningful and sustainable income is the cornerstone of success for families struggling to rise above poverty.

The Family Care program focuses on guiding families to develop multiple sources of livelihood. This grows their resilience to withstand unforeseen challenges. Staff use an approach inspired by *Street Business School* to train about market opportunities and business planning & operation.

For parents in Family Care, a successful livelihoods combination usually includes agriculture projects and other non-farm business ventures.

Meanwhile, for the next generation, our university and vocational education scholarships under the *Education Guiding Star* equip youth with skills for employment or self-employment.

HOW IT WORKS

Business Training

The social work team implements a micro-entrepreneurship training curriculum. This trains families on simple and clear methods to conduct market research, plan and manage a business, and invest for growth. Meanwhile, the agriculture team organizes field trips for seeing and learning about successful farm business ventures.

Capital

Families “start small” on their own to prove a business concept. Then, ventures showing commitment and promise benefit from capital boosts through flexible Family Care budgets. We also introduce budding businesspeople to microfinance banks.

174
small businesses supported with
capital to grow in 2023, helping
1,062 people
benefit from higher family income

Savings and investment

UKR families are encouraged to save for both investment and emergencies. They also engage in financial empowerment through their own village-based savings groups.

73%
of families supported in
2023 participate in village
savings groups

In 2023...

62% of families
graduating have their own
individual savings

53% of graduating
families operate a
non-farm business
they say is profitable and
worth continuing,
compared to only 8% of new
families

78% of families earned
income from their
farms, compared to only 32%
of new families joining

82% of
families graduating
are now above the
\$1.90/day "extreme
poverty" threshold
(according to the Poverty
Probability Index)





Cooking up chapati at the family eatery

The Musindayis' success story

A few years ago, Lilian struggled to grow food for her children and had no source of income apart from casual labor on other people's farms. Today, she runs an eatery serving local dishes, and she also earns from her farm's bounty.

Lilian's oldest child, Kays, studied to be a professional cook through our vocational scholarship program. He often gets gig work, but doesn't yet have a full-time job. You will often find him helping his mom at the family eatery, keenly focused on producing the tastiest food possible.

The eatery is a result of Lilian's two years of work "starting small" on her own selling roasted maize. Over two years, her savings grew and UKR matched what she had so she could realize her dream of launching the eatery. Part of what she now serves is grown on her own farm.

Apart from the eatery, Lilian raises and sells eggs, chickens, sweet potatoes, spring onions, and six types of leafy greens. She also earns from macadamia nut trees, and she's invested in the future with a growing herd of goats and a maturing orchard of avocado, papaya, and citrus.





A family's well-stocked shop and M-Pesa business



Making pottery for sale



A mother displays her new maize grinding mill



A mother and daughter frying mandazi for their business



A father and son pressing interlocking bricks

The *AGRICULTURE* Guiding Star

Family Care helps farmers sustainably increase their farms' diversity and productivity, improving both nutrition and incomes

Despite being blessed with one of the rainiest climates on earth, farmers in western Kenya face great challenges. These include tiny farm plots, depleted soils, and a rapidly changing climate.

For families who grow most of the food that they eat, agriculture training through Family Care is an invaluable resource helping put more food on the table. Farming also offers tremendous opportunities for income generation.

UKR provides farmers with essential knowledge, inputs, and tools to make their farms resilient and productive. The result is higher incomes and sufficient, nutritious meals.

HOW IT WORKS

Training and exposure

The *Agriculture* Guiding Star of our Family Care program promotes new techniques and new crops, all with a focus on diversification and climate adaptation.

Farmers learn through extension visits on their farms, small-group trainings, larger workshops, and exposure field trips. They engage in-person with UKR's agriculture officers about twice per month.

On average, there are
20
different **fruit & food crops**
growing on 2023 families' farms

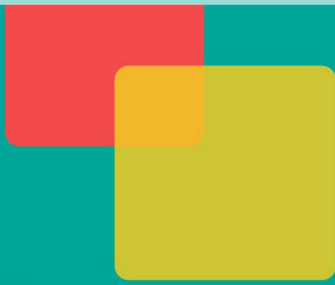


Seedlings, animals, inputs, and tools

Often, training cannot be well implemented without other assistance. The program's flexible-use family budgets assist a lot in terms of agriculture.

Families receive fruit tree seedlings and seed packets or cuttings of novel crops. The program may help with buying fertilizer as families also produce compost and manure for the long-run. Costly items like animals or wheelbarrows may be provided based on families' unique situations and goals.

82%
of families **make their own**
compost after 3 years of
Family Care, versus only
32% of new families joining





In 2023...

Our agriculture team offered

1,595

individual training sessions and

361 group training workshops

\$583 average value of graduating families' farm animals, compared to **\$96** for new families

Graduating families' maize harvests averaged **878 pounds**, compared to only **113 pounds** among new families joining



Laura smiles in one of her veggie patches

The Barasas' success story

Benson and Laura joined our Family Care program in 2021, and since then they've overcome many challenges and transformed their family's situation. They now earn from horticulture, fish farming, a fruit orchard, and livestock.

Their eldest child, a son, will graduate at the end of 2024 from a renowned public high school. He continues with his last year of study under a UKR scholarship.

The family can now fully support their four younger children's education, and all five of their children's basic needs.

With a thriving farm that provides good food and a solid income, the Barasas are a fantastic example of how Family Care changes futures.



Cows multiply, grow in value, and provide families with income



A learning field trip



A well-earned break from hard work



A mother plucking the softest pumpkin leaves to cook for dinner



The *DIGNIFIED* *HOMES* Guiding Star

Family Care helps ensure families have basic needs like light and power, and collaborates with them to build safe, decent homesteads

For families struggling to rise above poverty, a healthy home environment is a crucial step toward happiness and dignity in the community.

Our goal is for every family to live in a respectable home that is secure, leak-free during rain, with access to a hygienic pit latrine, and free of dangerous smoke from cooking fires.

We also seek to ensure all families have electric light, a comfortable place to sleep, nets to protect from malaria, water storage for home use, and safely treated water for drinking.

Safety and comfort at home are essential for mental health and facilitate people's ability to focus on bigger dreams like education or business. Good home conditions also positively impact all family members by helping prevent illnesses.

HOW IT WORKS

Collaborative homestead renovations

The most urgent home situations are addressed first. With these major projects, we ask families to contribute significantly.

Typically, each family offers around 1/3 of construction costs in the form of sweat equity and locally available materials. We usually provide cost-prohibitive building materials like rebar, iron roofing sheets, and cement.

57 new houses, roofs, latrines, and kitchens built by families in 2023, helping

217 people live with greater dignity

Essential goods for daily life

We offer some basic items like blankets, solar lights, and rainwater storage tanks as gifts, where needed.

94% of 2023's graduating families have electric or solar light and at least 500 liters of rainwater storage



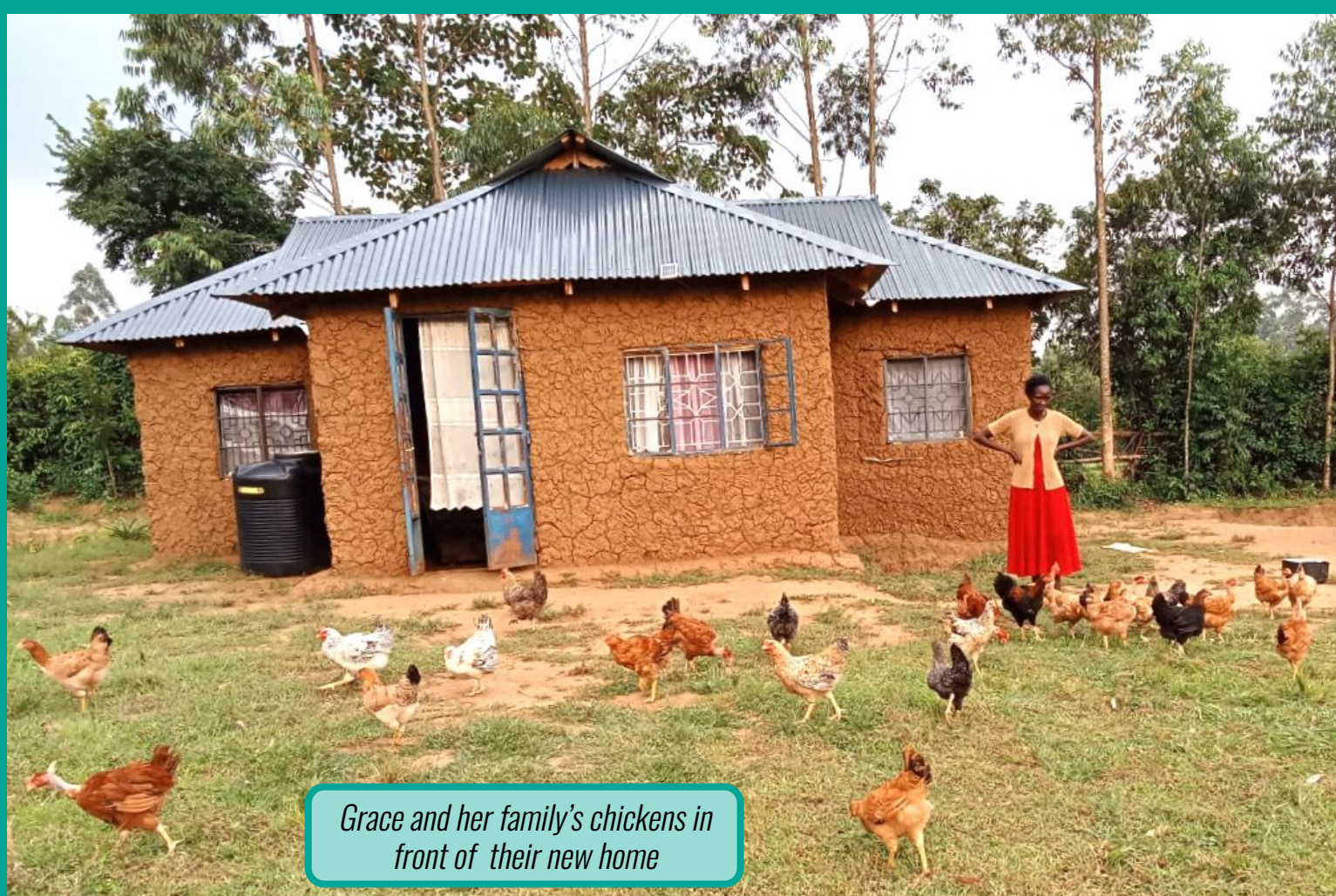
In 2023...

We collaborated with families to build:

- **17** new, hygienic **latrines**
- **16** dignified, leak-free **homes**
- **24** separate **kitchens** to keep cooking smoke out of homes

93% of families graduating live in houses free of woodfire cooking smoke, compared to only **67%** of those same families when they joined Family Care.

90% of families graduating say that their home is adequate, dry, and secure. This compares to only **11%** of new families joining.



Grace and her family's chickens in front of their new home

The Adalas' success story

When they joined our Family Care program in 2021, Grace's family lived in a cramped house of two tiny rooms. She shared this small space with her expectant daughter and her grown-up son. Grace felt ashamed of her homestead.

After developing a plan with the UKR team, she began saving towards a better house. Grace saved from her egg sales and earmarked an entire sugarcane harvest toward her goal, and it was enough money for her to afford most of the construction. Our program helped pay local laborers and provided the iron roof sheets that were still needed.

Grace's eldest son Clevens was studying public health under one of our scholarships. During school holidays and weekends, he contributed significantly with the heavy work needed to help mom get the construction accomplished.

Today, the family lives in a beautiful and relatively spacious semi-permanent home that will last Grace through old age. They also built a new pit latrine, replacing a hazardous old one. The family was blessed soon after with a baby girl, Grace's granddaughter. They all now sleep in an adequate space, on beds and mattresses, with blankets, under a leak-free roof.

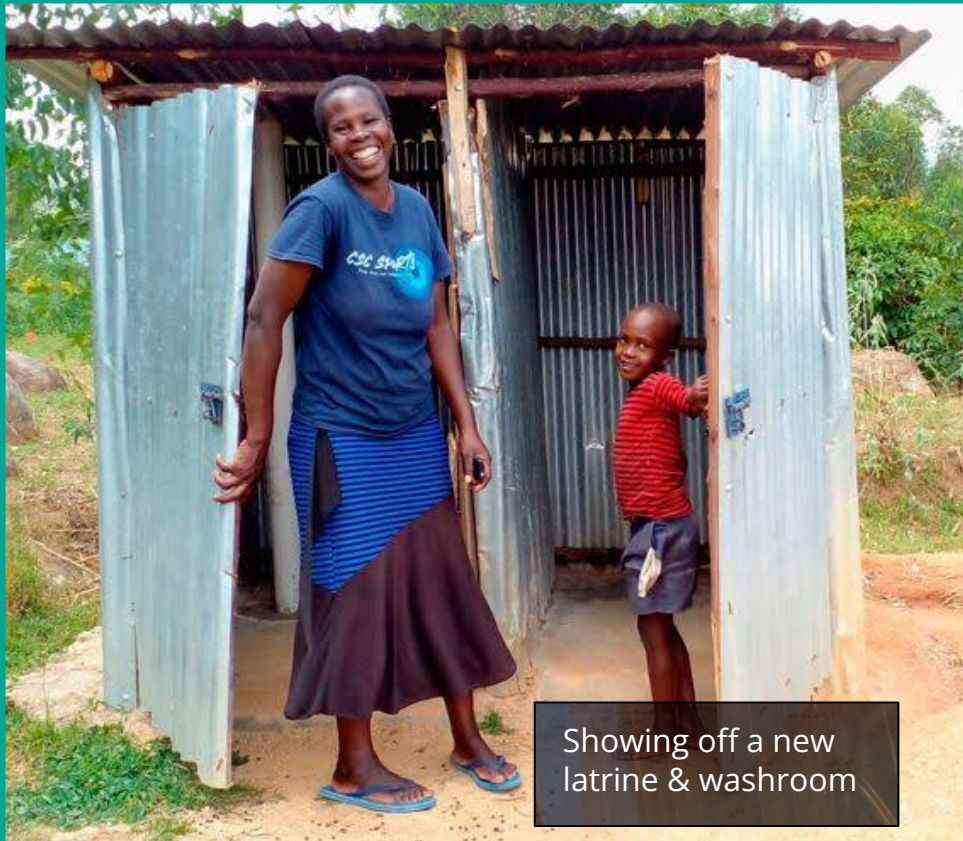




New house, happy home



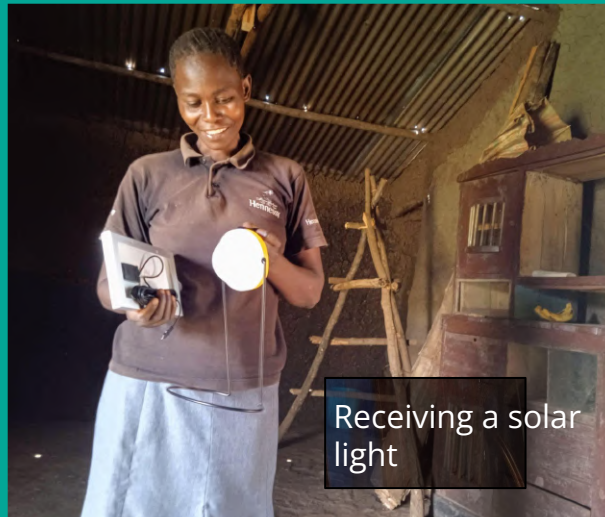
Framing a pit latrine structure



Showing off a new latrine & washroom



Blankets and mattresses for a family in their new house



Receiving a solar light

The *HEALTH* Guiding Star

Family Care helps families to prevent illness, access medical care, and treat conditions in order to lead a healthy routine

Good health is a foundational element of life quality. In sickness, little else matters, but in good health it is possible to find the energy, mindset, and hope to work hard for a brighter future.

Our *Health* Guiding Star trains families on basic health principles, and guides families on government-backed health insurance. In some cases, we will directly fund life-improving or life-saving medical procedures and medicines.

Families affected by conditions like HIV and Sickle Cell Disease get special attention from our agricultural officers and social workers to ensure good nutrition. Affected families are also linked with support organizations focused on their unique challenges.

In the larger community, we run eye clinics through a partnership with the Masinde Muliro University Optometry Department.

HOW IT WORKS

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

In concert with programming under our *Dignified Homes* Guiding Star, families have clean drinking water, sufficient mosquito nets, and hygienic latrines.

In 2023, we distributed

710

treated mosquito nets, and

85

long-lasting water filters

Training and counselling

Workshops and individual counselling for a healthy lifestyle, on topics like nutrition, domestic violence, vaccinations, family planning, and more.

Direct medical interventions:

Families' flexible-use budgets can provide financial support for medicine, emergency care, and life-changing procedures

Community eye clinics and glasses

Free clinics in the communities where we work help Family Care clients and thousands of others access vision care.

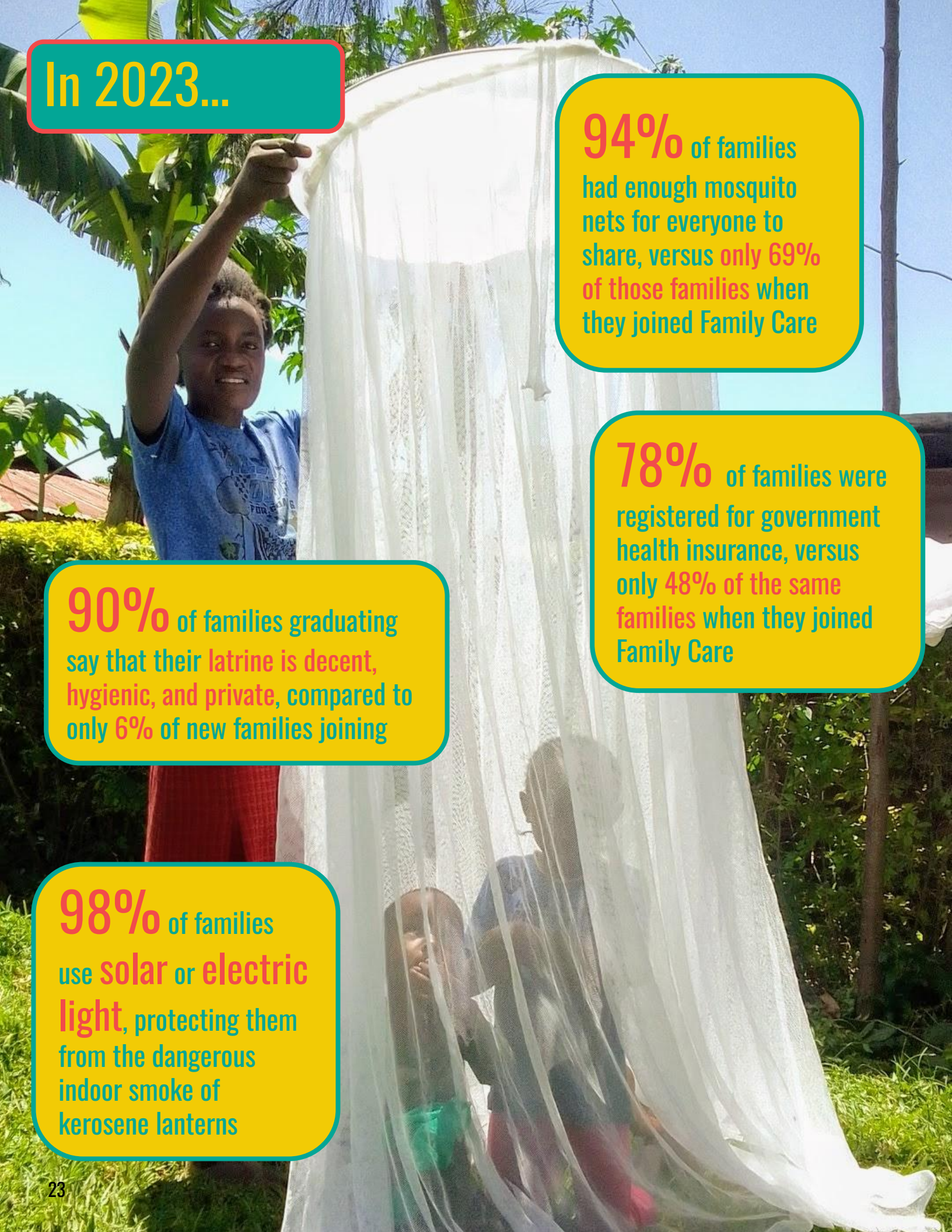
In 2023, we provided

841

pairs of eyeglasses, and helped

1,531 people

access vision care through free community clinics



In 2023...

94% of families had enough mosquito nets for everyone to share, versus **only 69%** of those families when they joined Family Care

78% of families were registered for government health insurance, versus **only 48%** of the same families when they joined Family Care

90% of families graduating say that their latrine is decent, hygienic, and private, compared to **only 6%** of new families joining

98% of families use **solar** or **electric light**, protecting them from the dangerous indoor smoke of kerosene lanterns



Margaret and her two youngest children

Margaret's success story

A road accident as a bus passenger left Margaret, a mother of four, unable to walk. Shortly after, her husband passed on. It was then that her family was enrolled in UKR's Family Care program.

While in our program, Margaret received encouragement and financial help to undergo several surgeries and physical therapy. She regained the ability to walk again, albeit with challenges.

Margaret can now do some lighter tasks on her farm, like feeding her chickens and collecting indigenous vegetable seeds for sale. Friends and family help with heavier work. She can also attend social gatherings, including her children's school meetings and church. Her prior immobility denied her this.

She always has her children and their education in mind, and this is where Margaret offers the most glowing feedback about Family Care. "UKR helped me to find ground once again, especially with the education of my children after my husband's demise. Two of my children graduated from universities as teachers, and one is almost completing high school. I'm forever indebted."



A family tries water purified through their new filter



Happy after successful cataract surgery funded through Family Care



A free community eye clinic



25 Social worker Nancy removing jiggers from a grandmother's feet

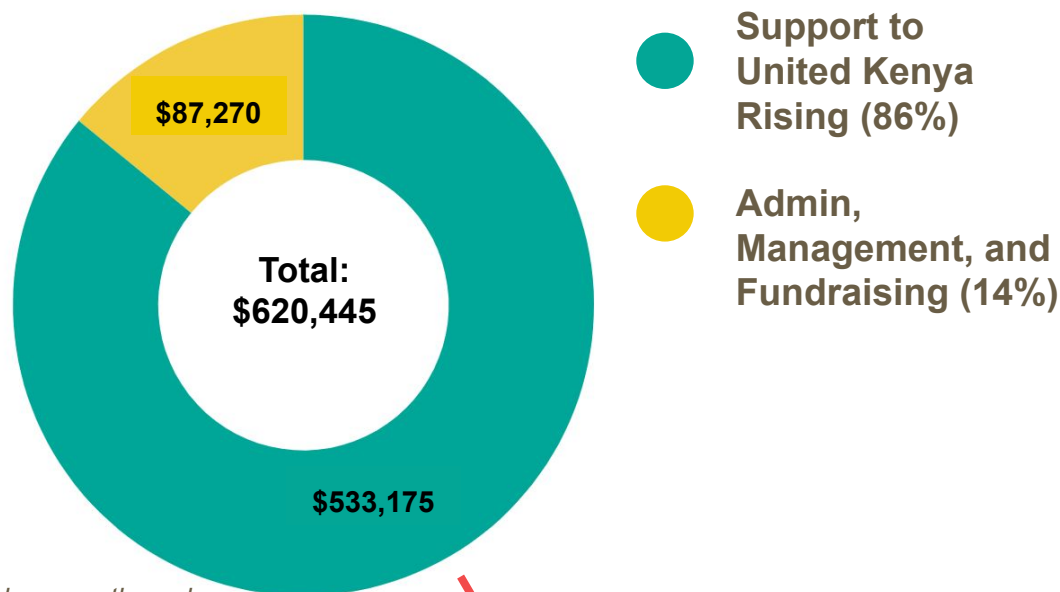


A new client registers at one of our community clinic days



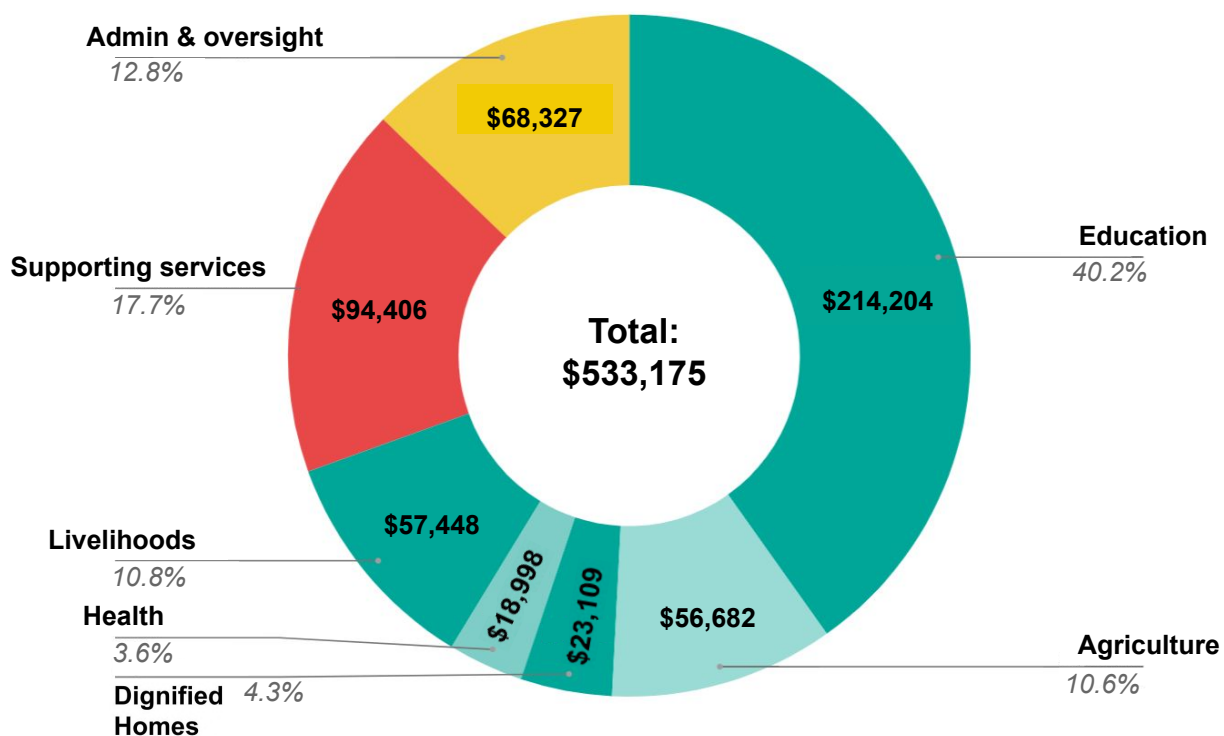
Finances

Friends of Kenya Rising 2023 expenses*



**excludes pass-through expenses we handled for our visitors to Kenya, who paid us back*

United Kenya Rising 2023 expenses





Friends of Kenya Rising

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www.friendsofkenyarising.org