DIABETES AWARENESS TRUST




# DAT NEWSLETTER

## Issue 06: Quarter 3

### Nourishing Health, From Seed to Plate

**September 2026**



# CONTENTS:


**Editor's Note** 2

**Nourishing Every Stage of Life** 3

The First 1,000 Days: World Breastfeeding Week 2026

Taking the Conversation to Mothers 4

Good Food, Every Day, for Everyone

**Addressing NCDs Through Conversation and Action** 4

Walking With Children Living With Type 1 Diabetes

From Conversation to Action 5

One Household at a time 6

**From Seed to Plate** 7

A Demo Farm, Now in Community Hands

Celebrating the Seeds That Feed Us: Mbegu Yetu Festival 2026 8

Linking Farms to Health: 3rd National Agroecology Symposium

**Investing in Kenya's Next Food System Advocates** 9

Mentoring Young Voices for Change

**POLICY & PARTNERSHIPS** 10

At the County Policy Table

Kenya Health Summit 2026 11

**About Diabetes Awareness Trust** 12

**Partners** 13

# Editor's Note

## Dear Reader,

Welcome to Issue 06 of the DAT Newsletter, covering July to September 2026. This quarter, one idea connected all our work: health begins long before the clinic, with the food we grow, choose and eat.

Through our nutrition work, we collaborated in the plans for the national launch of World Breastfeeding Week, engaged with breastfeeding mothers in Muranga and Nairobi and trained consumers on everyday healthy eating. In NCD management, we walked alongside children living with Type 1 diabetes and created space for people living with NCDs to talk openly about their health. In our food systems work, an urban organic demonstration farm was handed over to the community, and we joined farmers and seed custodians at the Mbegu Yetu Festival to celebrate indigenous seeds. We also began mentoring young food systems advocates and brought the case for prevention and how Agroecology plays a role in human health during the 3rd National Agroecology Symposium.

Behind every story are Community Health Promoters, partners and community members who make this work possible. We are especially grateful to our funding partners, Biovision Foundation, Panorama Global and Sustainable Agriculture Foundation (SAF) Africa, for their continued support. Thank you for walking with us.

Happy reading!

**Brenda King'ori,**
*Communications Officer*

# Nourishing Every Stage of Life

From the meal a mother eats while pregnant to a baby's first feed and the plate a family shares each evening, what we eat shapes our health for life. Our nutrition work followed that journey.

## The First 1,000 Days: World Breastfeeding Week 2026

Murang'a County hosted Kenya's national launch of World Breastfeeding Week on 1st August, and DAT was proud to be one of the event's supporting partners.

For DAT, the week was about the mother behind every feed. What she eats and whether she knows the warning signs of conditions like gestational diabetes shape the start her child gets. At our exhibition booth, we showcased our food-as-medicine approach and, together with medical staff from Kigumo Level 4 Hospital, offered free blood sugar and blood pressure screening to 41 visitors, each receiving one-on-one advice linking their results to what is on their plate.

Some of the most powerful moments came from the community itself: mothers supporting other mothers, and fathers stepping forward too. They showed that raising a healthy child is a whole family's work.

> **"Men should help mothers during the breastfeeding process. They should not leave all the responsibility to women but support them in raising their children and sharing household duties."**
>
> **— Community Health Promoter,**
> Murang'a County, at the World Breastfeeding Week launch




*Visitors at DAT's food-as-medicine exhibition booth during the national launch of World Breastfeeding Week 2026 in Murang'a County.*




*Participants march for the World Breastfeeding Week national launch in Murang'a County.*

## Taking the Conversation to Mothers

That same week, we engaged with breastfeeding mothers at Lunga Lunga Health Centre in Viwandani, Nairobi. The session was less a lecture than a conversation about the realities of feeding a family: what is affordable, what is available locally, and what is realistic on a busy day.

The mothers shared the everyday challenges of feeding their families, and left with practical nutrition advice and simple solutions they can use at home.



*Breastfeeding mothers during the session on nutrition and feeding their families.*

## Good Food, Every Day, for Everyone

Nutrition doesn't end after the first 1,000 days. It continues at the market, in the kitchen and at every meal. Through our community trainings, we trained 64 consumers in Viwandani on how to choose, prepare and enjoy food that protects health instead of harming it.



*A nutritionist leads the DAT consumer nutrition training in Viwandani, Nairobi.*



*Community members follow the training on choosing and preparing healthy, affordable meals.*

# Addressing NCDs Through Conversation and Action

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) build quietly, through daily habits and missed check-ups. Our work is to reach people early, listen to them and turn what we hear into action.

## Walking With Children Living With Type 1 Diabetes

For the second year running, DAT joined the Diabetes Management & Information Centre (DMI) in July for its annual “Step Out for Children with Diabetes” walk at Carnivore Grounds, Nairobi.

The grounds were full of children, parents, caregivers and health workers. Many of these children manage their condition every day with finger pricks, insulin and careful meals, yet they showed up full of energy and joy, a reminder that no child should face diabetes alone.

DAT also supported community members, including two young people living with Type 1 diabetes, to join the walk and add their voices to the call for earlier diagnosis and better care.




*The DAT team and community members at the annual walk for children living with Type 1 diabetes, Carnivore Grounds, Nairobi .*



*Walking side by side: a child and caregiver on the walk route.*

## From Conversation to Action

In Viwandani, we held two focus group discussions with community members living with NCDs, reaching 27 people.

Participants came because they are taking charge of their health. They spoke openly about managing their conditions, their daily routines, the food on their tables and the support that makes a difference, giving us insight no survey could capture.

A county government nutritionist joined the discussions and gave practical, personalized dietary advice to the group, drawing on the conditions they share and the foods available to them. Participants left with clear steps for their own plates.



*Community members living with NCDs during the first focus group discussion in Viwandani, Nairobi.*



*Participants during the second focus group discussion in Viwandani, Nairobi.*

## One Household at a Time

Alongside 13 CHPs, the DAT team has walked Viwandani one household at a time, reaching around 160 households across 13 community units through follow-up visits.

At each door, families get practical support to plan meals around what is affordable and available, to recognize the early warning signs of diabetes and hypertension, and to know that support does not end when a training does. Habits change at the household level, not in the seminar hall, and CHPs are the ones who carry prevention to that level.



*A Community Health Promoter and Rahab, Project & Admin Officer DAT during a household follow-up visit in Viwandani, Nairobi.*

# From Seed to Plate

What reaches our plates is decided long before the kitchen: by the seeds we plant and the way our food is grown. Our food systems work goes back to those roots.

## A Demo Farm, Now in Community Hands

What if a small corner of the city could help put fresh food on the table? At the Lunga Lunga Health Centre, Our Urban organic demonstration farm shows how even limited space can be used to grow nutritious food.

The farm grows food organically, with a focus on dark green leafy vegetables: an affordable source of diverse micronutrients that is easy to grow at home. Because the farm sits within a health facility, community members pass it every day. Every visit becomes a chance to see urban farming in action and to leave with an idea that could grow at home.

With the farm complete, we handed it over to Community Health Promoter (CHP) Champions and community representatives, who now own it. Together, we agreed how to keep it thriving: sharing the watering, weeding and planting, finding practical fixes for water shortages and poor soil, and continuing to use the space to train households on organic urban farming, even where space is limited. A farm run by the community will outlast any project timeline.



*Dark green leafy vegetables grown organically in repurposed sacks and tyres at the demonstration farm at Lunga Lunga Health Centre in Nairobi.*

## Mbegu Yetu Festival 2026: Celebrating the Seeds That Feed Us

"Our Seeds. Our Heritage. Our Future." That was the theme of the Mbegu Yetu Festival 2026, hosted by G-BiACK in Thika on 28th August. We joined farmers, seed custodians, researchers, youth and agroecology practitioners to listen, learn and add a nutrition and health voice to conversations on indigenous seeds, biodiversity and food sovereignty.

Indigenous varieties are more than heritage. Red maize, finger millet, sorghum, indigenous vegetables and legumes each carry their own mix of nutrients, many of which common commercial varieties lack. This is where seed diversity meets the dietary diversity we promote in every nutrition session: a varied plate starts with varied seed. Every indigenous variety kept in the field is one more nutritious choice kept on the family table, and one more defense against diet-related disease.



*Farmers, seed custodians and partners gather at the G-BiACK Centre, Thika, for the Mbegu Yetu Festival 2026.*



*Diverse indigenous maize varieties on display at the Mbegu Yetu Festival 2026.*

## Linking Farms to Health: 3rd National Agroecology Symposium

Agroecology is no longer a niche conversation in Kenya; it is a growing movement. That message rang clear at the 3rd National Agroecology Symposium, where DAT Director Hannah Kigamba was a panelist in the opening plenary, "From Vision to Action: Operationalizing One Health and Agroecology for Resilient Food Systems", alongside government, farmer and civil society voices.

The conversation has moved from why agroecology matters to how to scale what already works: regenerative farming, nature-based solutions, value chain innovations and community-led initiatives. On the panel, Hannah brought the health voice, reminding participants that our health is shaped by how we produce, access and consume our food, and that linking agroecology with nutrition is how we restore ecosystems while improving diets and preventing NCDs. It is the same thread that runs through our demo farm and community nutrition trainings: sustainable food systems are preventive healthcare.




*DAT Director Hannah Kigamba (third from right) with fellow panelists at the 3rd National Agroecology Symposium.*

# Investing in Kenya's Next Food System Advocates

Decisions about what we grow, sell and eat are made in county offices, policy forums and community meetings, yet young people are often missing from those rooms. We are making sure they are ready to take their seat.

## Mentoring Young Voices for Change

We marked International Youth Day on 12th August by launching a series of mentorship sessions on food systems advocacy, a space for young people to build their knowledge, confidence and voice.

The first sessions brought together five youth mentees from the Viwandani community and DAT's programme team. Many mentees already see the challenges in their own communities: families unable to afford healthy food, diet-related illness on the rise, and farmers struggling to bring safe produce to market.

The group explored how food systems work from farm to plate, how policy is made and where advocates can influence it, and how to tell stories that move decision-makers to act, practicing framing issues, identifying the right audiences and crafting clear messages.

This was only the beginning. As the series continues, DAT will keep supporting these young advocates as they carry their voices into their communities, their counties and the spaces where decisions about food are made.




*Youth mentees and the DAT programme team during the food systems advocacy mentorship.*

# Policy and Partnerships

## At the County Policy Table

Prevention also needs the right policies. This quarter, DAT continued to take part in the county Agroecology Multi-Stakeholder Platforms in Murang'a and Kiambu, sitting on technical working groups on policy and resource mobilization, and on marketing, consumer awareness and private sector engagement. These platforms bring county departments, farmers, civil society and the private sector to one table, giving us a direct channel to push for policies that make safe, nutritious, agroecologically grown food easier to produce, sell and buy. Our role is to bring the consumer and health lens, so that what the county plans for its farms is also good for the people who eat from them.

# Adding Prevention to Kenya's Health Agenda

## Kenya Health Summit 2026

DAT joined thousands of delegates at the inaugural Kenya Health Summit 2026, held at KICC, Nairobi, in August under the theme "Reforms Delivered, Health as a Right." The two-day summit took stock of Kenya's health reforms, with primary health care at the center of the path to Universal Health Coverage.

For an organization working at household level, the summit confirmed our direction. We were glad to see Community Health Promoters strengthened as a national priority, the same frontline workers who carry our household follow-ups. Yet prevention, especially of diet and lifestyle diseases, still sits at the margins of a system largely built around treatment. Moving it to the center is the work ahead.




*Hannah Kigamba, Director, DAT (left), and Elizabeth Njoka, Programme Officer, Nutrition, DAT, at the Kenya Health Summit 2026, KICC, Nairobi.*

# About Diabetes Awareness Trust (DAT)

Diabetes Awareness Trust (DAT) is a non-profit organization established in March 2017 and formally registered in 2021, founded to enlighten Kenyans on healthy living and strengthen the management and prevention of diabetes and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

## Our Focus Areas

01 Awareness Creation on Diabetes and other (NCDs)

02 Consumer Information and Nutrition Education

03 Psychosocial Support and Knowledge Sharing

04 Campaigns, Advocacy and Networking

05 Research and Monitoring Systems of NCDs

## Implementing Partners:

FEEDBACK TO THE FUTURE

GODAN Global Open Data for Agriculture & Nutrition

MURANG'A COUNTY GOVERNMENT

NAIROBI CITY COUNTY Lets Make Nairobi Work

OACK Organic Agriculture Centre of Kenya

NUTRITION in CITY ECOSYSTEMS

## Strategic Partners:

alliance (K)

Alliance Bioversity & CIAT

NCD Alliance

biba Biodiversity and Biosafety Association Kenya

## Funding Partners:

biovision A future for all, naturally

SAF | AFRICA Sustainable Agriculture Foundation

PANORAMA GLOBAL




Arusha Street, Ngoigwa, Thika |
Elegant Court, Ground Floor, A1,
Kiambu County 01000, Kenya

+254 (0) 795 204 520

info@diabetesawarenesstrust.org

https://diabetesawarenesstrust.org/

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@diabetestrust