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## Paramedicine is my Passion and Photography is my Hobby



Felix Musila  
(Communications and PR Officer)

A word with Samuel Kagumu, an Emergency Medical Paramedic with the Emergency Plus Medical Services (E-Plus)

### 1. What inspired you to be an EMT paramedic?

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## Our Mission

We work with our communities and partners to respond to medical and trauma emergencies through the provision of accessible, responsive and quality...pre-hospital care to save lives. Our patients will receive prompt and appropriate emergency medical pre-hospital care from properly trained and certified professionals.

## Our Vision

A regionally recognised leader for responsive, superior-quality emergency medical and trauma response services.

## Our Core Values (iSPIE)

**Innovation:** E-Plus continues to pursue new ways to improve its' service offering in a socially responsive manner in order to create transformative changes in patient experience.

**Sustainability:** E-Plus provides its services while ensuring long-term financial and social positive outcomes.

**Professional Excellence:** E-Plus provides the highest level of compassionate services at all times. It demonstrates quality and ethical behavior in its work and acts in the best interests of the people its serves. Treating people with dignity and consideration.

**Integrity:** E-Plus is honest and reliable. Its actions and decisions are guided by its professionalism, transparency and respect for others. E-Plus is accountable to the people it serves, the community and each other and to its authorities.

**Empathy:** E-Plus actively seeks to understand how patients, family members, caregivers and its own staff experience the emergencies they respond to, taking into account the emotions they go through and using this knowledge to improve their well being and its service delivery.





## Paramedicine is my Passion and Photography is my Hobby



**Felix Musila**  
(Communications and PR Officer)

**A** word with Samuel Kagumu, an Emergency Medical Paramedic with the Emergency Plus Medical Services (E-Plus)

### 1. What inspired you to be an EMT paramedic?

I am passionate about saving lives, helping people, always wanting to give back to the community and also an adrenaline junkie. This is what inspired me to be a paramedic.

### 2. Briefly describe your journey to being a paramedic

I started my paramedic journey at the Kenya Red Cross Training Institute in Nairobi, emerging top of my class. After my internship, I went to Kenyatta National Hospital where I volunteered for a year. I learnt so much during my volunteer period including specialised courses, BLS, ACLS, High

quality CPR, ETAT+ (Emergency Triage Assessment and Treatment for critically ill), ICS (Incident command system) among other advanced trainings.

I later joined the Emergency Plus Medical services in 2014. My 8-year journey at E-Plus has been great, full of satisfaction, adventurous and very educative. I have had very good and of course very challenging experiences as well but in all, I have learnt to be the 'unsung hero'.

### 3. What motivated you to pursue photography?

Since childhood I have always enjoyed performing arts as a hobby. I was in drama/music/journalism clubs from primary school all the way to the university. Apart from being a paramedic, I also studied Public Relations at the Kenyatta Uni-

versity, where my photography skills were further sharpened.

I also love keeping memories both for fun and future reference. I want to tell amazing stories using photography and film.

### 4. How do you juggle between doing photography and your paramedic duties?

I greatly enjoy both photography and paramedicine.

Paramedicine is my passion and photography is my hobby. When am not on duty as a paramedic, I love doing photography and filming. These two can be a great source of comfort for me. Who knows, maybe one day I will be known as 'the paramedic photographer' just like the clinical photographers in advanced clinical settings. Photography also helps me unwind after a challenging day at work.

## 5. What have been your biggest photography events?

I have several notably...World Rally Championships 2021 (WRC) in Naivasha-Kenya, National launch of Emergency Medical Care Policy 2020-2030 attended by MoH CAS Dr. Rashid Aman, IFRC/ICRC delegates visits to the E-Plus, E-Plus team building events, weddings, parties among others.

I am also one of the directors at MedFox productions where we are telling medical stories through film, documentaries and photography, hoping to have our work premiered on international platforms like Netflix and ShowMax soon.



Sometimes, I get clients who appreciate my work both financially and in kind and this pushes me to do even better.

## 6. Are there any similarities between photography and paramedicine?

Both are adventurous. They require utmost skill and professionalism.

## 7. Does photography pay?

I do photography as a hobby and also for personal satisfaction. Photography helps me unwind, but a little pay doesn't pain right?

## 8. Challenges of photography.

Photography equipment is very expensive, a good camera can cost well over kes200,000. You also need lights and other equipment which is also costly.

It takes time and skills to get a good photo, sometimes you need to edit the photos which is time consuming and some clients can't understand that.



“

I am passionate about saving lives, helping people, always wanting to give back to the community and also an adrenaline junkie. This is what inspired me to be a paramedic.

Samuel Kagumu,  
Emergency Medical Paramedic



# Tanzanian Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Expert Visits E-Plus



**Munir Ahmed**  
(Digital Communications Officer)



**E**-Plus was honoured to host Dr. Christopher Mnzava, Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Expert from Tanzania at its head office on the 7th of February.

Dr. Mnzava visited our state-of-the-art dispatch center, among other facilities and learnt about our operations. Fascinated by what he witnessed, he had this to

say: "I have worked in the emergency medical services (EMS) for more than 20 years. I wanted to see the best practice for EMS in Africa and so I came to E-Plus. What I have found here is amazing. The facilities and equipment being used are of world-class standards. The level of commitment and professionalism by its staff members is at a very high level."

# Norwegian Red Cross President Visits E-Plus



*From Left to Right: E-Plus Managing Director, Susan Ng'ong'a, Suada Ibrahim - Head of Partnerships and Resource Development - Kenya Red Cross, Thor Inge Sveinsvoll, Norwegian Red Cross President and Francis Masika-Kenya Red Cross Governor.*

E-Plus had the pleasure of hosting Mr. Thor Inge Sveinsvoll, Norwegian Red Cross President at its headquarters. Mr. Sveinsvoll, who was on a familiarization tour, was hosted by E-Plus Managing Director Susan Ng'ong'a.

During the visit, Mr. Sveinsvoll was briefed about the day-to-day operations of E-Plus and how emergency responses are coordinated at its state-of-the-art dispatch center. He also had the

opportunity to sit in one of ACLS ambulances- a moving ICU and get a glimpse of patient experience aboard the ambulance.

# Mental Wellness; A Paramedic's Perspective



**Qitma Noor**  
(Communications and Marketing Assistant)

**W**orking on the front lines, healthcare workers are exposed to a variety of psychological stressors that can have long-term consequences on their well-being and mental health, as well as impair the quality and safety of the care they offer. They are particularly prone to a deterioration in their health due to being exposed to harsh working circumstances. Because of these accumulated stress, physical tiredness, stigma, and fear they are at danger of experiencing significant psychological pressure.

Here's a chat with Solomon Nyawade, one of our paramedics on matters mental health:

**Q: Overall how would you rate your mental health right now?**

**A:** Honestly, I'm at a good place right now in terms of my work life so on a scale of 1-10, with one being bad and 10 being amazing, I would say a 7.

**Q: How do your daily duties affect your mental health and to what extent?**

**A:** According to the nature of my work, at times we attend to patients with traumatic incidences, for example road traffic accidents or deaths of patients in the ambulances. For such incidences, I sometimes have flashbacks or sleep disturbances because the incident is still fresh in your mind so it might take some time getting over it. In this line of work, no matter how prepared you think you are to deal with certain incidences, all the experiences are different and feel very real



which may then affect your mental health.

**Q: So in such instances, how do you cope?**

**A:** I normally share with my colleagues and discuss on how to better manage such challenges. I also reach out to my supervisors in the event that the incident has affected me to a point where it affects my duties or how I deliver my services to my patients, to seek advice and guidance from them.

**Q: What can the organization do to better support your mental well-being?**

**A:** I would recommend counselling sessions, preferably once a month. This is because in this nature of work, you get to experience a lot in terms of the calls you attend to. Some people may not have an avenue to get these traumatic events off their chests and in turn ends up affecting

their mental and overall wellness. Therefore, it is very important to have counselling services available to all.

**Q: Do you feel that your job gives you the flexibility to meet the needs of both your work and personal life?**

**A:** Our job demands a lot from us and its time intensive. For example, essentially our work day is supposed to be a 12 hour shift but it may at times extend beyond hours. Therefore, it affects your personal life and a work-life balance is not easily achievable.

**Q: What do you enjoy about your job and if you could go back in time, would you still choose this field?**

**A:** I have a passion and a calling for this line of duty. I get a chance to put into practice what I trained for. I enjoy interacting with my patients and helping others in their time of need. I'm greatly motivated especially when I get positive feedback from my clients and supervisors. If given the chance, I would still choose to be a paramedic.

**Q: What do you do on a personal level to improve your mental well-being?**

**A:** I normally utilize my off days efficiently. I interact with my colleagues in a more casual environment, we share work related challenges and advise each other on how to deal with these challenges.



# Empathy at the Workplace



**Margaret Onyancha**  
(Complaints Handling Assistant)



**E**mpathy is the ability to understand and relate to another person's thoughts, emotions, or experiences. Empathetic people are good at seeing things from another person's point of view and reacting compassionately. Empathy in the workplace simply means that your employees are able to build genuine, empathetic bonds with one another, which improves relationships and productivity.

Compassion and the ability to connect with others are essential skills in both our personal and professional life. Empathy in the workplace, which is a crucial component of emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, improves human connections in general and can lead to more effective communication and beneficial outcomes in both the workplace and at home.

It's crucial to distinguish between sympathy and empathy, as the two are frequently misunderstood.

- Sympathy is characterized by

sentiments of pity for another person, but without fully comprehending what it feels like to be in their shoes.

- Empathy, on the other hand, is the aptitude or skill to envision oneself in another's shoes, experiencing that person's emotions, thoughts, or opinions.

Empathy in the workplace has been shown to improve job performance. In other words, managers who exercise sympathetic leadership toward direct reports as higher-performing employees. Empathetic leadership entails being able to recognize and understand others' needs, as well as their feelings and thoughts. Unfortunately, it's long been regarded as a soft skill rather than a performance indicator.

## How to show empathy

Displaying empathy can take many shapes and forms.

**Watch out for signs of burnout in others.** Workplace burnout is a

serious issue today, and it is more likely to occur during times of high stress and pressure. Many individuals are stressed, working longer hours than ever before, and finding it impossible to divide their work and personal lives. Empathetic people are able to spot indicators of overwork in others before it becomes a problem that leads to disengagement or turnover. This could entail spending a few extra minutes each week checking in with team members to see how they're doing with their present workload and assisting them in recovering from overwork.

**Show sincere interest in the needs, hopes, and dreams of other people.** Working to understand each team member's unique requirements and aspirations, as well as how to best match job assignments to contribute to both performance and employee satisfaction, is part of being empathetic. When team members perceive that their efforts are appreciated, they are more engaged and willing to go above and beyond.

**Show a willingness to assist an employee with personal issues.** The distinctions between work and personal life are blurring. Empathetic people see that their co-workers are dynamic persons who are dealing with personal issues while juggling their professional obligations. They understand that it is part of their job to assist and support those team members who are in need. Maintaining open lines of communication and fostering transparency

are important ways to promote psychological safety and make team members feel comfortable sharing when it's needed.

### **Demonstrate empathy when others share personal tragedies.**

Genuine friendships and connections at work are important, and empathy is a technique that many people may use to form bonds with those with whom they're fortunate to work. Even if we can't relate to the precise loss that our team member is going through, we can act empathetically and let them know they're not alone.

### **How Organizations Can Encourage Empathy in the Workplace**

Some leaders are more empathic by nature than others, giving them an advantage over their peers who struggle to express empathy. Most leaders are in the middle and are empathetic to some extent. Fortunately, it isn't a permanent characteristic. Empathetic leadership is something that may be learned. Leaders can grow and improve their empathy abilities through coaching, training, or developmental opportunities and initiatives if given appropriate time and support.

In a number of basic ways, organizations and HR leaders may support a more empathetic workplace and assist managers in improving their empathy ability

### **Talk about empathy in the workplace to signal its value.**

Make it clear to leaders that empathy is important. Research demonstrates that in today's workforce, knowing, caring, and developing people is just as vital, if not more so. Many believe that



task-oriented abilities like monitoring and planning are more crucial in controlling their team members' performance. Giving others your time and attention builds empathy, which increases your performance and perceived effectiveness.

**Teach listening skills.** Managers must be good listeners, trained in active listening skills, who let others know they're being heard and express awareness of worries and problems in order to understand others and sense what they're feeling. People admire a manager who listens well, and critical trust in the team can increase as a result. Focus on listening to hear the meaning behind what others are saying, not just the words being said, but also the feelings and values being expressed through nonverbal cues such as tone, pace of speech, facial expressions, and gestures, to demonstrate the highest levels of empathy in the workplace.

**Encourage genuine perspective-taking.** Management should always put themselves in the shoes of the others. This includes taking into account their em-

ployees' personal lived experiences or viewpoints. It can also be used to solve problems, manage disagreements, and promote innovation. Understanding the function of social identity in your own and others' lives is extremely beneficial. Empathy is especially important for successful diversity initiatives in organizations.

**Cultivate compassion.** Companies should assist managers who are concerned about other people's feelings and take into account the impact of their decisions on employees, customers, and communities. Allow time for compassionate thinking and reaction in addition to the standard-issue values statement. Remember that your employees are concerned about social responsibility, and your company should be as well. Managers who develop their sympathetic leadership skills raise their efficacy and chances of success on the job. Empathetic leaders are valuable assets to firms, in part because they can effectively create and nurture relationships, which is an important aspect of running a business anywhere in the globe.



# Pictorial



## Classic Safari Rally



Supporting Gogo Boys FC during their maiden match this season at Impala Grounds, Nairobi



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# COVID Pandemic Pages

## Is the COVID-19 Pandemic Showing Signs of Slowing Down?



**Felix Musila**  
(Communications and PR Officer)

**A**fter a six-week surge, Africa's fourth pandemic wave driven primarily by the Omicron variant is flattening, marking the shortest-lived surge to date in the continent where cumulative cases have now exceeded 10 million.

As of January, there have been 10.2 million COVID-19 cases in Africa. Weekly cases plateaued in the seven days to 9 January from the week before. Southern Africa, which saw a huge increase in infections during the pandemic wave, recorded a 14% decline in infections over the past week. South Africa, where Omicron was first reported, saw a 9% fall in weekly infections. East and Central Africa regions also experienced a drop.

However, North and West Africa are witnessing a rise in cases, with North Africa reporting a 121% increase this past week compared with the previous one.

Across the continent, though, deaths rose by 64% in the seven days ending on 9 January compared with the week before mainly due to infections among people at high-risk. Nonetheless, deaths in the fourth wave are lower than in the previous waves. Hospitalizations have remained low. In South Africa, for instance, around 9% of its over 5600 intensive care unit beds are currently occupied by COVID-19 patients.



In countries experiencing a surge in cases, the fast-spreading Omicron variant has become the dominant type. While it took around four weeks for the Delta variant to surpass the previously dominant Beta, Omicron outpaced Delta within two weeks in the worst-hit African countries.

“Early indications suggest that Africa's fourth wave has been steep and brief but no less destabilizing. The crucial pandemic countermeasure badly needed in Africa still stands, and that is rapidly and significantly increasing COVID-19 vaccinations.

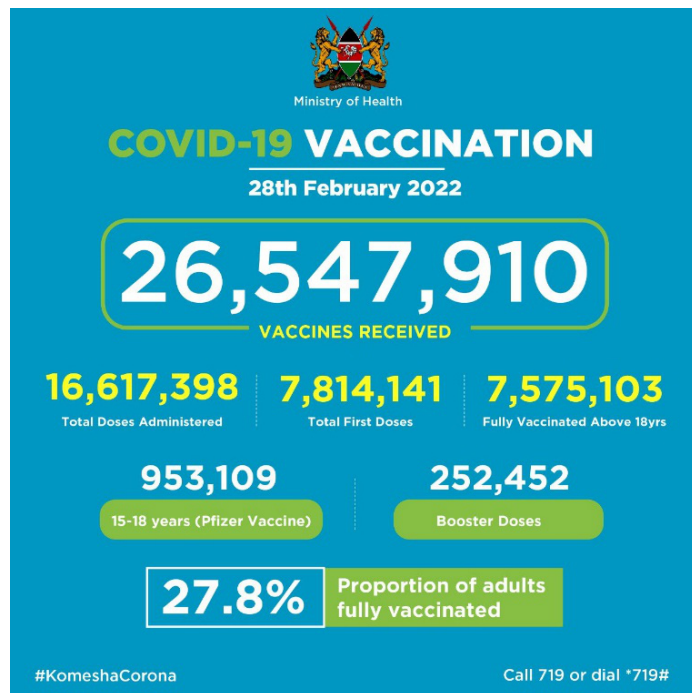
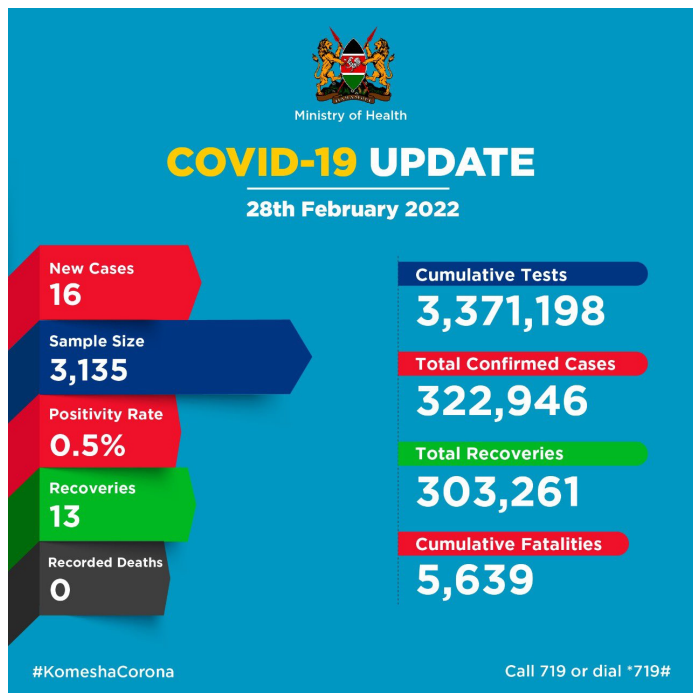
Testing, which is crucial to COVID-19 detection and surveillance—including genomic, rose modestly by 1.6% over the past week with over 90 million—mostly polymerase chain reaction (PCR)—tests carried out across the continent. Twenty-three countries recorded a high positivity rate of over 10% over the past week. Across Africa, WHO is supporting countries to bolster genomic se-

quencing through trainings in key areas such as bioinformatics and specimen handling. The Organization is also helping procure and deliver critical laboratory equipment and supplies to countries.

So far 30 African countries—and at least 142 globally—have detected the Omicron variant. The Delta variant has been reported in 42 countries in Africa. In West Africa where COVID-19 cases are on the rise, the number of Omicron sequences undertaken by countries including Cabo Verde, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal is growing. In Cabo Verde and Nigeria, Omicron is currently the dominant variant.

While the continent appears to be weathering the latest pandemic wave, vaccinations remain low. Just around 10% of Africa's population has been fully vaccinated. Vaccine supplies to the continent have improved recently, and WHO is stepping up its support to countries to effectively deliver the doses to the wider population.





Source: Ministry of Health, Government of Kenya | Data as at 28th February 2022



## Internship Opportunity

### Sales Interns

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