



Resilience in Action

# Resilience in Action:



## How Community-Led Efforts Are Transforming Lives in Mathare

In many informal settlements, resilience is often spoken about as an abstract concept—something communities are expected to have in the face of adversity. But in Mathare, one of the largest informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya, resilience is not just an idea. It is a daily practice, built through collective effort, local leadership, and the determination to create change from within.

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The Mathare Community Anti-Drugs Organization a grass root nonpolitical non-profit organization (MCADO) was born out of this reality. Formed by community members who had witnessed first and the devastating impact of alcohol drug and substance abuse, Our mission is to build a healthier, safer, and more empowered community by preventing Alcohol drug abuse and creating opportunities for vulnerable populations, especially young people.

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MCADO focused on preventing drug abuse and empowering communities through outreach, sports, dialogue, and livelihood programs. Train youth in digital skills link them to online jobs Support young mothers with tailoring by provide sewing machines Create a football program mentorship pathway to employment and savings groups to help them grow their income .

Rather than positioning itself as an external solution provider, MCADO works from within the community—listening, engaging, and co-creating solutions that reflect lived experiences.

Resilience in this context requires more than awareness. It means creating alternatives, restoring hope, and strengthening the systems that support individuals and families.

One powerful story is of three young men who, after struggling with Alcohol and substance abuse and nearly dropping out of school, joined a local football tournament organized by MCADO. Through mentorship and life skills support, they turned their life around. Today, they are back in school and actively supports community outreach efforts.

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MCADO builds resilience through prevention education, youth engagement through sports, community dialogue, and livelihood empowerment initiatives.



# Key

## Achievements

(MCADO) has made significant progress in empowering youth and vulnerable groups within Mathare through community-driven initiatives. The organization has successfully established a safe and inclusive community space that serves multiple purposes. This center is equipped with 4 old laptops to support digital skills training and 2 sewing machines for fashion and design training, enabling young people and young mothers to acquire practical, income-generating skills.

The space also functions as a learning and support center for students from Grade 1 to Form 4, providing a conducive environment for studying and completing homework, particularly during evening hours. This has contributed to improved academic engagement among children in the community.

Currently, the center engages over 19 active youth volunteers who dedicate their time to supporting the community. These youth play a key role in assisting residents with accessing and applying for government services, enhancing digital inclusion and service accessibility.

In addition, MCADO has successfully organized six 16 community dialogue forums across different villages in Mathare Subcounty. These dialogues have brought together community members and duty bearers, creating a platform for engagement, accountability, and collective action on issues related to alcohol, drug, and substance abuse.



Through its programs, MCADO has achieved:

- We have reached out to 523 youths on the dangers of alcohol, drug, and substance misuse
- Strengthened community engagement and participation in prevention initiatives 12 community dialogue in different villages
- Improved collaboration between community members and local leaders (duty bearers)
- We have 17 peer role models who actively advocate for positive behavior change
- Creation of safe spaces where young people can connect, learn, and grow
- We have trained 16 young mothers on fashion and design

# Challenges



Despite the significant progress made, MCADO continues to face several challenges that affect the scale and sustainability of its interventions. Limited resources remain a major constraint, restricting the organization's ability to expand programs and reach more beneficiaries. High levels of poverty within the community also make it difficult for participants to fully transition into stable livelihoods without continued support.

The persistent availability and accessibility of drugs within the community continue to undermine prevention efforts, exposing vulnerable youth to relapse and negative influences. In addition, stigma surrounding drug and substance abuse discourages many individuals from seeking help, limiting the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives.

However, these challenges have provided important learning opportunities. MCADO has recognized the need for:



Despite these constraints, MCADO remains committed to adapting its strategies and strengthening its interventions through collaboration, innovation, and deep community trust.

As MCADO looks ahead, the focus remains on expanding outreach, strengthening partnerships, and increasing opportunities for youth empowerment.

The key lesson learned is that resilience must be nurtured from within. Community ownership and participation are essential for long-term success.

Building resilient communities is a shared responsibility. Supporting grassroots initiatives like MCADO helps create lasting and meaningful change.



Tuition / Safe Space



Counseling Session



Community Dialogue



Youth Open Dialogue



The12Sectors



Life Skills And Positive Engagements



Digital Literacy For Youths



IDADA 2025 Planning Team



School Anti-Drugs Club



For Any meaningful change to take place in our lives we believe that God intervention is the Key first

Thank you and God Bless You.

Our URL: [mcaDOMathare.co.ke](http://mcaDOMathare.co.ke)

N/B For any inquires or clarification feel free to get back

*Your Joseph Arthur MCADO Founder and Director*