

Annual Report 2024



ITALIAN AGENCY
FOR DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION
Nairobi Office

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



13 CLIMATE
ACTION



2 ZERO
HUNGER



1 NO
POVERTY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ABOUT AICS	5
2. THE NAIROBI OFFICE	6
3. AICS NAIROBI IN A SNAPSHOT	8
3.1 KENYA	10
3.2 SOMALIA	12
3.3 TANZANIA	14
3.4 REPUBBLICA DEM. DEL CONGO	15
4. AICS KAMPALA IN A SNAPSHOT	16
4.1 UGANDA	17
4.2 RUANDA	18
4.3 BURUNDI	19



6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



5 GENDER
EQUALITY



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



TABLE OF CONTENTS

5. THE 5 P OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	20
5.1 PEOPLE	21
5.2 PLANET	33
5.3 PROSPERITY	38
5.4 PARTNERSHIPS	43
5.5 PEACE	47



15 LIFE
ON LAND



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH

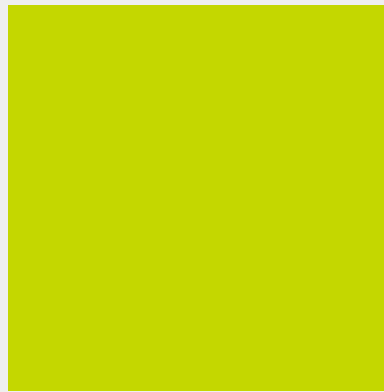


4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES





About AICS

The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation is one of the main innovations introduced by the reform of the cooperation system (Law No. 125/2014). It began operating in January 2016 with the ambition of aligning Italy with major European and international partners in the commitment to development. The Agency follows a model adopted by all leading European countries and responds to the need for a more professional and innovative approach to cooperation, with the necessary degree of flexibility in tools, in a constantly evolving global context.

The Agency has its headquarters in Rome, a branch in Florence, and 19 offices worldwide for the monitoring and implementation of development interventions in partner countries. Its mandate is to carry out technical and operational activities related to the preparation, formulation, financing, management, and oversight of international cooperation initiatives.



The Nairobi Office

The AICS office in Nairobi is responsible for Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania (AICS priority countries), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is a region with great potential, where countries experiencing strong growth and moving toward sustainable development coexist with countries facing economic, environmental, and humanitarian challenges.

Following the model of AICS headquarters in Rome, the Nairobi office is organized into thematic units that operate across all four countries under its mandate, recognizing that the issues addressed often have a regional dimension. The teams are structured around the following thematic areas: infrastructure and urban development, rural development and environment, private sector, women's empowerment and support to civil society, health, and emergency. These work in synergy with the institutional relations and with the communications offices.



With a total of 33 staff members, including both international and local personnel, the Office ensures dialogue and coordination with government and development partners by participating in numerous sectoral and thematic working groups in each country. The main office is located in Nairobi, with a satellite office in Dar es Salaam that oversees projects in Tanzania.

In the course of 2024, a new AICS office was established in Kampala, with responsibility for Uganda, Burundi, and Rwanda. These three countries were under the mandate of AICS Nairobi until December 1st, 2024, so development and emergency initiatives in these countries were managed by the Nairobi Office throughout 2024. For this reason, it was considered appropriate to include the country profiles of Uganda, Burundi, and Rwanda in this report, as well as the main information related with the new office in Uganda.



AICS Nairobi in a snapshot



240.477.503,49 €

Total portfolio*

140.762.886,74 €

Grants

80.285.773,00 €

Loans

19.428.843,75 €

Emergency



33 people

Across 2 Offices, one in Nairobi and one in Dar Es Salaam



4 countries

Of which 3 priority countries: Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania

Total by "P"

108.576.826,61 €

People

48.180.875,87 €

Prosperity

66.427.462,01 €

Planet

3.820.000,00 €

Planet

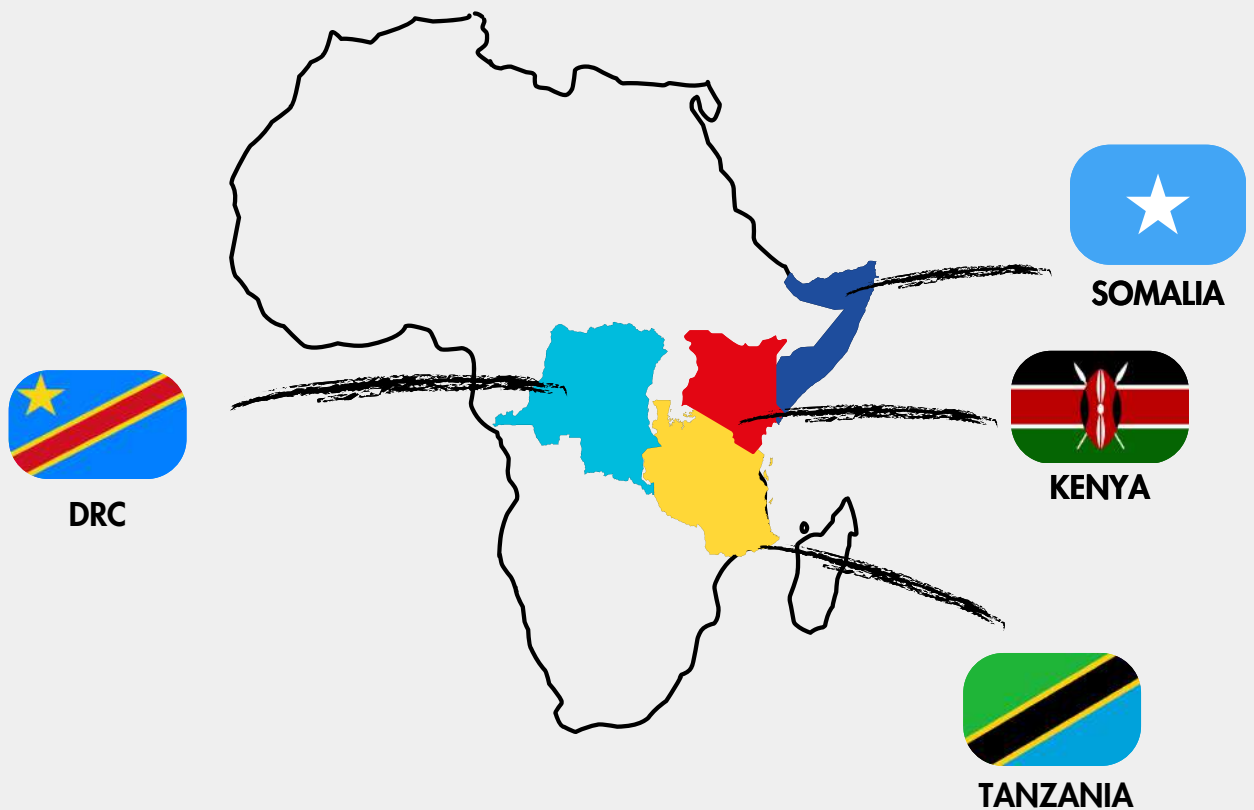
13.472.339,00 €

Partnerships



**Initiatives approved as of December 31, 2024. The data refers to Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.*

Countries of intervention



As of December 1st, 2024, a new AICS office was established in Kampala, with responsibility for Uganda, Burundi, and Rwanda. These countries were previously under the mandate of AICS Nairobi.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



14 LIFE BELOW WATER



Kenya

PORTFOLIO OF APPROVED INITIATIVES



134,905,727.95 €

MAIN AREAS OF INTERVENTION



Environment and agricultural development



Infrastructure and urban development



Job creation and private sector



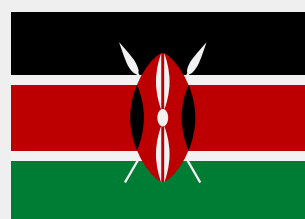
Health



Gender equality and women's empowerment

CHANNELS OF INTERVENTION

- Bilateral (Government, local authorities, CSOs, Universities, Private Sector, Local Authorities, Research Entities)
- Multilateral (UN Agencies)
- Delegated Cooperation (Funded by EU)
- Emergency



The Republic of Kenya remains one of the most dynamic economies on the African continent. However, economic growth slowed in 2024, with GDP growing by 4.0% in the third quarter compared to 6.0% during the same period the previous year.

The country continues to face structural challenges such as poverty, unequal wealth distribution, unemployment, and limited access to essential services. These issues are further exacerbated by the effects of climate change, including droughts and floods, which have a significant impact on the national economy. In 2024, the El Niño climate phenomenon caused exceptionally heavy rains, highlighting the country's vulnerability to extreme weather events.

Additionally, in 2024, Kenya experienced episodes of social unrest triggered by protests against proposed tax increases and rising prices of basic goods, with the youth population taking to the streets in demonstrations that often led to clashes.

The strong ties of friendship and cooperation between Italy and Kenya were formalized with the signing of an Agreement on Economic, Technical and Development Cooperation in 1985. Since then, Kenya has been a priority country for Italian cooperation.

The Italian Cooperation's strategy in the country is outlined in the Kenya-Italy Sustainable Development Partnership (2023–2027), a strategic document launched in 2023 during the state visit of President Mattarella to Kenya. The plan foresees an indicative budget of 100 million euros for the first three years, with initiatives structured around the pillars of Planet, Prosperity, and People.

Under the Planet pillar, AICS currently supports Kenya in its efforts to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change through initiatives aimed at protecting, restoring, and enhancing the resilience of forest and agroforestry ecosystems, promoting ecosystem restoration and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Several agricultural development initiatives are ongoing, aimed at increasing the resilience of vulnerable communities in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs). Under the same pillar, AICS Nairobi also promotes sustainable urban development through strategies that integrate environmental sustainability, climate risk management, and the protection of urban ecosystems. At the same time, administrative decentralization has transferred many responsibilities to local governments, which require technical and financial support. Particular attention is given to secondary cities, which play a crucial role in the territorial balance of the region.

Under the People pillar, special emphasis is placed on the prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV) and on women's empowerment. AICS supports initiatives aimed at combating harmful practices (such as female genital mutilation and early marriages), improving access to justice for GBV survivors, and promoting women's economic inclusion. Notably, in September 2024, the AICS Nairobi office assumed the role of Co-Chair of the Development Partners' Gender Group (DPGG), a forum for strategic dialogue involving donors, international agencies, government authorities, and civil society.

Within the same pillar, AICS also promotes access to quality healthcare services, with a focus on leaving no one behind and improving access to essential health services, including maternal and child healthcare.

Under the Prosperity pillar, AICS Nairobi supports Kenya's entrepreneurial ecosystem, particularly small and medium enterprises and artisan cooperatives. In 2024, in collaboration with the UN agency International Trade Centre, a new initiative was launched in the sustainable fashion sector, aimed at creating a production value chain capable of entering both national and international fashion markets.



Somalia

PORTFOLIO

 71,651,592.31 €

MAIN AREAS OF INTERVENTION

-  Access to basic services
-  Infrastructure and urban development
-  Health
-  Governance

CHANNELS OF INTERVENTION

- Bilateral (Government, local authorities, CSOs, Universities, Private Sector, Local Authorities, Research Entities)
- Multilateral (UN Agencies)
- Emergency



Somalia's history is complex, marked by tribal fragmentation and clan dynamics that continue to influence its political and social life. After gaining independence, a coup in 1969 led by General Siad Barre established a military regime, which collapsed in 1991 and triggered a civil war rooted in clan affiliations. Decades later, after prolonged crisis, the country is attempting to rebuild its socio-economic fabric and establish political stability, although the security situation remains volatile and institutions overall remain fragile.

A major milestone was achieved at the end of 2023 with the completion of the World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which enabled the cancellation of a significant portion of Somalia's external debt and opened new opportunities for economic stabilization and development. However, the country continues to face serious challenges, including the persistent insurgency of the terrorist group Al-Shabaab and the fragile relationship between the federal government and federal member states.

Moreover, 2024 saw an intensification of climate-related crises.

Despite these challenges, Somalia has continued on its path toward state reconstruction, with support from the international community. In 2024, the Federal Government launched the preparation of the National Transformation Plan (NTP) for the period 2025–2029. This strategic framework aims to guide Somalia toward sustainable development, economic stability, and long-term prosperity.

Somalia came under the mandate of AICS Nairobi in 2023. Historically, Italian Cooperation has focused on the health sector, where AICS remains active today, working in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) to support the Somali government's efforts toward achieving universal health coverage. Within the People pillar, particular mention should be made of the long-standing support to the De Martino Hospital in Mogadishu, a key healthcare reference point in the country.

In the field of human development, support to higher education includes the long-standing collaboration with the Somali National University, a strategic partner for capacity building and the training of a new political class. Italy has also played a key role in one of the most critical sectors for the country's reconstruction—infrastructure—under the Planet pillar. Much of the country's infrastructure was destroyed or damaged during years of conflict, and efforts are currently underway to upgrade key infrastructure - such as the Bosaso water supply system.

Under the Peace pillar, support to the Federal Government of Somalia has continued through the programme "Towards Peace and Stability in Somalia" (TPSS), managed by the Office of the Somali Prime Minister (OPM). In 2024, the programme entered a crucial phase focused on conducting needs assessments in areas recently liberated from extremist groups. The initiative represents a pioneering step by Italy in establishing stronger and more direct cooperation with local authorities.

In the Prosperity pillar, AICS supports the Somali economy both through macroeconomic capacity-building programmes (carried out in collaboration with the IMF and the World Bank) and through initiatives supporting Somali MSMEs.

As for the Partnerships pillar, operational challenges on the ground have long required the international community to act through multilateral instruments such as pooled funds. Among these is the Somalia Humanitarian Fund managed by OCHA, where Italy ranks as the fourth largest contributor.

Today, AICS combines emergency interventions with development efforts, engaging a broad range of actors from the Italian system, including civil society organizations (CSOs), universities, and the private sector.



Tanzania

PORTFOLIO



28,920,183.23 €

MAIN AREAS OF INTERVENTION



Environment and Agricultural Development



Access to Basic Services



Governance



Health

CHANNELS OF INTERVENTION

- Bilateral (Government, local authorities, CSOs, Universities, Private Sector, Local Authorities, Research Entities)



Since the independence of Tanganyika in 1961, followed by its union with Zanzibar in 1964, Tanzania has maintained political and social stability, despite its ethnic and religious diversity. In recent years, and particularly in 2024, there has been a rise in internal tensions and a shrinking space for political opposition and civil society, with arrests of political leaders and activists. From a growth perspective, Tanzania has been classified as a lower-middle-income country since 2020 and has enjoyed steady growth rates. With a population of approximately 63 million—mostly young—urbanisation is rapidly accelerating. According to World Bank estimates, Tanzania's population is expected to double by 2050, reaching around 140 million people, and posing major challenges in terms of economic development, employment, and access to essential services in urban centres.

Italy's long-standing development cooperation in Tanzania has played a significant role in the country's development. Over the years, key sectors of intervention have included healthcare, rural development, food security, and essential services, with particular attention to gender issues. In 2024, Tanzania was included among the Priority Countries for Italian Cooperation, reflecting the growing importance of relations with the African continent in Italy's political agenda. During the year, Italy's cooperation mainly focused on the People and Partnerships pillars of sustainable development. Key areas of intervention include:

1. Education and vocational training aimed at strengthening youth skills to improve access to the labour market;
2. Healthcare, by promoting access to quality services with particular attention to maternal and child health and the fight against communicable diseases (tuberculosis, malaria, HIV);
3. Food security, through improved productivity and sustainability in the agricultural sector and efforts to reduce malnutrition.

Italian civil society organisations are particularly active throughout the country, realizing initiatives in health, inclusion of persons with disabilities, human rights, and agricultural development.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

PORTFOLIO



5,000,000.00 €

CHANNELS OF INTERVENTION

- Emergency

MAIN AREAS OF INTERVENTION



Environment and Agricultural Development



Health



The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of Africa's most resource-rich countries in terms of mineral wealth, but its economy remains highly vulnerable due to fluctuations in commodity prices and the economic performance of its key trading partners.

On the social front, the Great Lakes Region is experiencing one of the continent's most severe and protracted humanitarian crises, driven by ongoing armed conflicts in the country's eastern provinces. The M23 rebel group has recently escalated hostilities, seizing strategic cities such as Goma and large parts of the North and South Kivu provinces, causing thousands of deaths and displacing hundreds of thousands of people. The resulting vulnerability of affected communities is compounded by increased exposure to abuse and human rights violations.

The country's security is further jeopardized by the scheduled withdrawal of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), expected to conclude in 2026.

In 2024, the DRC also faced a major outbreak of Mpox, which has further complicated the already dire humanitarian situation.

Italy has been present in the DRC since 2008, implementing initiatives in sectors such as water, health, education, child protection, support for women survivors of violence, and assistance to displaced populations.

Currently, the Italian Cooperation is focusing on the People pillar, responding to the humanitarian crisis through emergency interventions to improve access to essential services and to protect vulnerable groups. The adopted approach integrates Humanitarian Aid, Development, and Peace, in line with the United Nations emergency plans and the European Union's strategy.

In 2024, in response to the escalating conflict in the east of the country, the Italian Government allocated €1 million to UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) and €2.5 million for humanitarian projects implemented by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

AICS Kampala in a snapshot



51.122.315,00 €

Total portfolio*

24.275.857,00 €

Grants

10.000.000,00 €

Loans

2.846.458,00 €

Emergency



11 people

Kampala Office

14.000.000,00 €

Delegated Cooperation
(Funded by the EU)



3 countries

Of which 1 priority
country: Uganda

**Initiatives approved as of 31 December 2024.
Data refers to Uganda, Burundi, and Rwanda.*



Uganda

PORTFOLIO



46,178,127.13 €

CHANNELS OF INTERVENTION

- Bilateral (Government, CSOs)
- Emergency

MAIN AREAS OF INTERVENTION



Environment and Agricultural Development



Health



On 1 December 2024, the new AICS Office in Kampala was officially opened. It operates in Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. However, for most of 2024, these countries were under the responsibility of AICS Nairobi.

Uganda has been governed since 1986 by President Yoweri Museveni, who was re-elected in 2021 amid allegations of political repression and restrictions on press freedom. Despite relatively sustained economic growth over the past two decades, social inequalities remain high. Climate change continues to threaten food security, with droughts and floods undermining crop production. The Karamoja region, in particular, is marked by conflict among communities over access to resources, as well as violence and unrest caused by armed groups. At the regional level, Uganda is also impacted by the ongoing crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the persistent socio-political instability in South Sudan, and more recently, the civil war in Sudan. These conditions contribute to a continuous influx of displaced persons, making Uganda the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa.

Italian Cooperation has historically focused its efforts in Uganda on the health sector, especially in the most vulnerable regions of the country (North and Karamoja), to promote universal access to healthcare. Bilateral relations were formalised in 1993 with the signing of a cooperation framework agreement.

In 2024, the Italian Cooperation focused its activities in three main areas:

- Health, through initiatives aimed at strengthening local and national health systems to ensure universal access to primary care, particularly for the most vulnerable segments of the population, and improving maternal and child health services;
- Environment, through interventions supporting forest conservation and regeneration (within the framework of an EU Delegated Cooperation initiative) and the agroforestry sector;
- Emergency and humanitarian response, with projects supporting Uganda's national refugee policy and the reception of people fleeing conflict and disasters in neighbouring countries.

Italian CSOs remain particularly active in the country, implementing initiatives in agriculture and healthcare, especially in the fight against AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis.

Rwanda

PORTFOLIO



3,600,000.00 €

CHANNELS OF INTERVENTION

- Bilateral (CSOs)

MAIN AREAS OF INTERVENTION



Environment and Agricultural Development



Wash



Rwanda has implemented significant economic and structural reforms that have supported high growth rates over the past decade. This growth has been accompanied by improvements in living standards, including a reduction in child mortality and the achievement of universal primary education. The country aspires to become a middle-income nation by 2035 and a high-income country by 2050, goals pursued through the National Strategies for Transformation (NST1).

In 2024, general elections were held, during which incumbent President Paul Kagame was re-elected for a fourth consecutive term with 99.18% of the votes. The elections were criticised for the exclusion of opposition candidates and alleged irregularities in the electoral process.

Meanwhile, tensions have escalated in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the M23 rebel group intensified its offensive toward the city of Goma. Recently, some international partners have decided to reduce or suspend development aid as a sanction for Rwanda's alleged involvement in the ongoing conflict.

In 2024, AICS supported Italian Civil Society Organisations in Rwanda in the implementation of initiatives in the agricultural sector and in improving access to clean drinking water and sanitation services for rural communities.

Burundi

PORTFOLIO



1,344,188.78 €

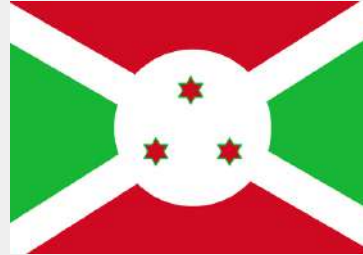
CHANNELS OF INTERVENTION

- Bilateral (Local Entities)

MAIN AREAS OF INTERVENTION



Agricultural Development



The Republic of Burundi is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. The economy remains heavily dependent on agriculture, which employs about 80% of the population, despite the scarcity of arable land and low productivity, which contribute only 40% to the GDP. The country has faced economic difficulties in recent years due to political instability, climate fluctuations, and growing food insecurity. High inflation, driven by the global rise in the prices of essential goods and fertilizers, has worsened the situation.

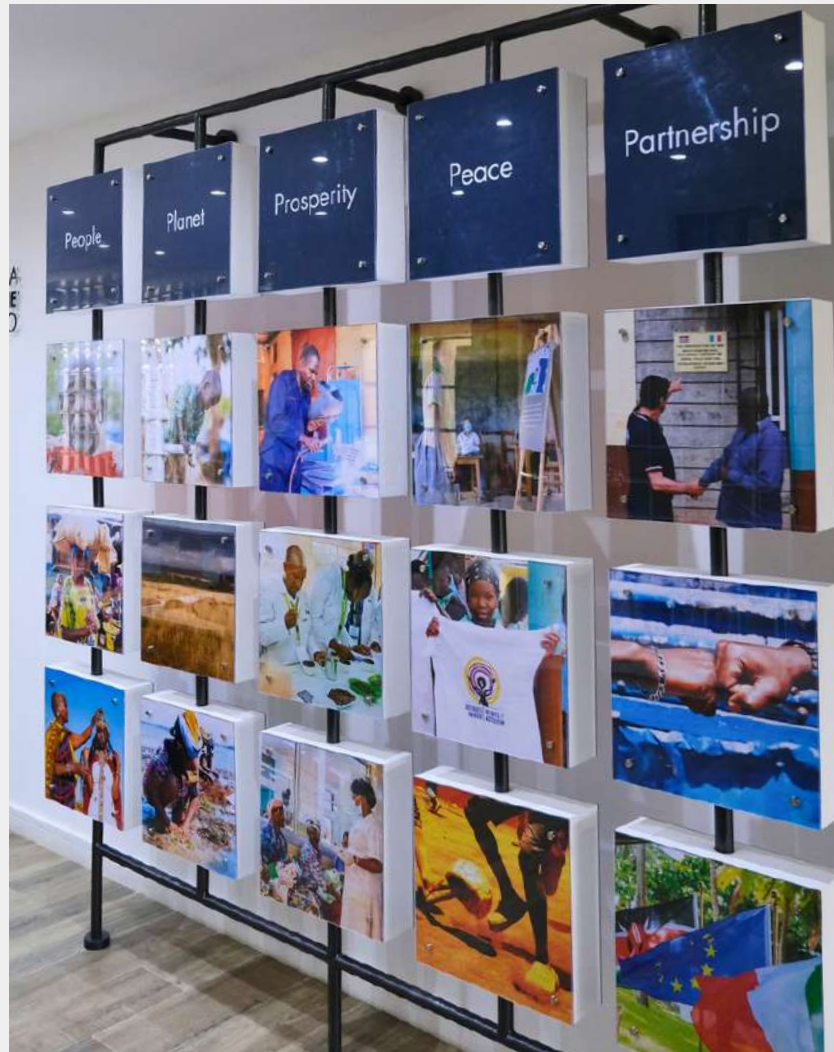
The country continues to face challenges related to widespread poverty, limited access to healthcare, and food security. Climate change has had a significant impact, with extreme weather events such as droughts and floods affecting agricultural production and increasing the vulnerability of rural communities.

On the political and social front, Burundi is preparing for the 2025 local and legislative elections, set against a backdrop of restrictions on press and expression freedoms and social tensions, often leading to clashes and violence between factions.

In Burundi, there is an ongoing initiative managed by AICS Rome and realized by the Municipality of Parma. This initiative aims to foster entrepreneurship and commerce while supporting the development of the tomato supply chain.

THE 5 P OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The structure of this report is based on the "5 Ps of Sustainable Development": People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships, which encompass the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. For each of the 5 Ps, a selection of initiatives managed by the Nairobi Office is presented as examples.



PEOPLE



PROSPERITY



PLANET



PEACE



PARTNERSHIPS



P eople

1 NO
POVERTY



2 ZERO
HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



5 GENDER
EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



The "People" P relates to the promotion of a social dimension that guarantees a dignified life for the entire population, allowing all citizens to realize their potential in a healthy environment. In this context, the elimination of poverty is linked both to the economic and social dimensions, addressing inequalities to promote greater social cohesion, and to the environmental dimension, reducing the population's exposure to environmental and anthropogenic risk factors*.

The projects and initiatives promoted by AICS Nairobi primarily focus on the "People" dimension, touching on various areas, including access to basic services, healthcare, response to humanitarian emergencies, and gender issues. These latter issues, in particular, are addressed transversally across all initiatives, in line with the Agency's guidelines and the OECD-DAC guidelines.

* cfr. "le Scelte Strategiche Nazionali e gli Obiettivi Strategici Nazionali" (mase.gov.it)

Focus: Gender in Kenya

The social and cultural context still presents significant challenges, with harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and early marriages persisting, especially in remote and rural areas known as Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL). However, the fight against gender-based violence spans the entire country. Politically, in 2024, the Government of Kenya demonstrated a commitment to addressing the alarming increase in gender-based violence and femicides, affirming the importance of targeted interventions and an integrated approach to protecting women's rights.

The Nairobi Office is mainly active with three initiatives:

1. "Let it not happen again" (AID 012652), implemented by UN Women in collaboration with OHCHR and other local partners, aims to improve access to justice for survivors of GBV by strengthening institutions and promoting female empowerment. In May 2024, UN Women supported the development of the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Strategy and the Court Practice Directions, contributing to the institutionalization of survivor-centered justice mechanisms and enhancing the operations of 12 specialized GBV courts. Institutional capacity strengthening also included training 169 justice actors on survivor-centered approaches. Additionally, the project promoted community awareness activities, reaching 8,875 people and training 202 survivors on financial education and entrepreneurship to improve their economic resilience.

2. "Women Empowerment and Support to Environment and Health in Kenya" (AID 012835, see factsheet)

In Kenya, the "People" dimension is based on the right, enshrined in the Constitution, to access quality health and social services. The Italian Agency collaborates with the Ministry of Health to implement the Kenya Health Policy and the Kenya Health Sector Strategic Plan, through initiatives that include the digitalization of the health information system and the strengthening of medical personnel training. These interventions aim to reduce inequalities, improve the efficiency of service delivery, and ensure universal health coverage.

In Somalia, where the population is severely affected by crises resulting from both extreme climatic events (such as droughts and floods) and human-induced factors, the Agency has supported emergency interventions in food security, nutrition, water resource management, and social protection, both through bilateral channels and multilateral funds. Among the latter is the UN OCHA Country-Based Pooled Fund (CBPF), which has enabled rapid and life-saving responses during flood emergencies. At the same time, in the health sector, the Agency works with local partners—such as De Martino Hospital—to strengthen infrastructure and ensure universal access to healthcare.

Focus: gender in Kenya

3. "PEACE: "Psychological Empowerment and Career Development": with a funding of 4 million Euros, the initiative aims to strengthen psychological support, access to services, and economic inclusion for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in five target counties (Kisumu, Mombasa, Kilifi, Busia, and Nyeri).

The main objectives of this initiative include improving referral mechanisms for GBV survivors, promoting economic independence, and enhancing the provision of psychological support.

Main achievements and changes in 2024

In September 2024, the AICS Nairobi Office assumed the role of **Co-Chair of the Development Partners' Gender Group (DPGG)**. This group serves as a forum for strategic dialogue on gender issues and women empowerment, bringing together various stakeholders, including donors, international agencies, government authorities, and civil society. The main objective of the meetings is to harmonize the activities of the different actors and promote synergies to advance gender equality in Kenya.

Main partners

Key stakeholders include the State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action, in collaboration with the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF), as well as county gender departments, judicial authorities, and the police. At the multilateral level, partners such as UN Women and OHCHR play a key role, while among civil society organizations, IPSIA, WeWorld – GVC, and other local actors are actively engaged in promoting women's rights and combating gender-based violence.

In Tanzania, the main areas of intervention are education and vocational training, health, and nutrition. In the area of education and training, AICS not only seeks to facilitate young people's access to the labor market, but also focuses on education and inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities. In the health sector, through the regional initiative "Creation of a Healthcare Network in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda", the Agency promotes access to quality basic health services, especially in the areas of maternal and child health and the fight against diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV (see dedicated factsheet).

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Agency focuses on responding to severe humanitarian crises. In particular, a new initiative titled "Regional Response to the Great Lakes Crisis: Uganda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo" was recently approved and is currently in the process of being assigned to civil society organizations.



Focus initiative:
**“Institutional and Academic Strengthening of the Somali National University” – UNS 5
(AID 12327)**

The project aims to strengthen the Somali National University (SNU), a long-standing partner of the Italian Cooperation in Somalia and the recipient of various initiatives focused on rebuilding the country's human capital.

The initiative includes a scholarship programme for outstanding SNU graduates to pursue master's degrees in Agriculture, Economics, Law, Engineering, and Veterinary Science, as well as PhD programmes in Veterinary Science and medical specialization courses. The project also provides a virtual Italian language and culture course and an open online course (MOOC) for SNU lecturers. In addition, it supports the creation of an Observatory, a dedicated structure to guide and support the future development of Italy-Somalia cooperation in the higher education sector.

Direct beneficiaries of the project include recent graduates who participated in the academic programmes, SNU lecturers who joined the online trainings, and both students and faculty who took part in the Italian preparatory language courses offered at SNU. Key results include the successful awarding and completion of 30 scholarships for master's degrees, 2 PhD scholarships, and 12 medical specialization scholarships. A survey conducted among students revealed that over 90% of scholarship recipients would recommend the programme to their peers.



The voices of the protagonists: Studying in Italy to rebuild Somalia: the stories of Naima and Abdisamad

Somalia is a country in transition. Despite ongoing challenges—ranging from political instability to difficulties in accessing basic services—its reconstruction process continues with the support of the international community. A fundamental role in this process is played by the new generations, young people determined to build a better future for themselves and their country.

Abdisamad and Naima are two of them. Thanks to a university cooperation initiative funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and implemented by the Politecnico di Milano in partnership with the Somali National University, both have had the opportunity to specialize in Italy.

Abdisamad Abdidahir is 27 years old and comes from Mogadishu. After completing his undergraduate degree in Somalia, he learned about the scholarship program through advice from senior students and decided to apply. Today, he is about to graduate in Natural Resource Management at the University of Florence, with a thesis on the photosynthetic efficiency of tomato genotypes.

"It has been a dream come true! Studying in Italy has been an extraordinary experience. People are very welcoming, and I made many friends. Of course, the climate was one of the biggest challenges: sometimes too hot, sometimes too cold. But the culture, the food, and the quality of education made me feel at home." His goal is clear: to return to Somalia to contribute to the country's development. *"I want to become a researcher. Research in Somalia is still limited, but thanks to my experience here, I will be able to make an important contribution, especially in the agricultural sector. I want to study crop yields and deepen my knowledge of genetics to help Somali agriculture become more productive."*



Abdisamad



Naima

Naima Yusuf, born in 1997, studied Civil Engineering at the University of Mogadishu. She is now completing her master's degree in Architectural Engineering at the Politecnico di Milano, a milestone that initially seemed almost unattainable.

"At first, I thought it would be too difficult, but then I realized I could do it. The courses are very detailed and rigorous, especially the scientific ones. I have learned a lot and now I feel ready to work as an engineer and contribute to the growth of my country."

Despite initial difficulties, such as adapting to a new educational system and finding accommodation, Naima found a welcoming and stimulating environment. *"I really like the Italian climate, the food, and people's sense of humor. I made many friends, both Italians and international students. Of course, not being able to see my family for two years was hard, but this experience has made me stronger."*

Naima's future remains connected to Somalia. *"I want to return to work as an engineer or a lecturer at the Somali National University. The country is growing fast, and there are many opportunities for those with solid education like mine. I feel truly lucky."*

Abdisamad's message to future Somali students is clear: *"This opportunity can change your life. My advice is not to be afraid: studying in Italy is a fantastic experience and it's worth it."* Naima adds: *"You have to be strong and study hard so you can then help your country grow."*

Focus initiative:

"Women Empowerment and Support to Environment and Health in Kenya" (AID 012835)

The main objective of the initiative is to improve prevention and response to gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices in arid and semi-arid counties, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups such as youth and women. Activities include awareness-raising in schools, strengthening local institutions, and advocacy to improve access to essential services and change social attitudes towards gender-based violence.

Another goal of the initiative is to empower women in land management and climate change adaptation in drought-prone areas, emphasizing sustainable practices and biodiversity through training programs such as permaculture. The initiative is divided into two phases:

Lot 1

Implementing Partner: We World - GVC
Onlus
Area: Narok County

Lot 1 focuses on preventing gender-based violence and harmful practices by raising awareness among students about their sexual and reproductive rights and training local institutions to improve access to essential services. The estimated beneficiaries are approximately 22,000 individuals, of whom about 51% will be women.

Lot 2

Implementing Agency: Istituto Pace Sviluppo
Innovazione ACLI (IPSIA)
Area: Laikipia County

Lot 2 aims to strengthen the decision-making role of women by ensuring their equitable access to the agricultural market and land management. It also develops climate change adaptation plans in areas affected by drought and other adverse phenomena. The direct beneficiaries are approximately 2,900 people, nearly 60% of whom are women.



Focus initiative:

Creation of a Health Network in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda (AID 012519)

The initiative aims to create a network of public and private healthcare facilities recognized by the national health systems of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, and linked to the presence and action of Italy in the region. Its objective is to improve maternal and child health services through the exchange of experiences, training, and the development of shared protocols. The intervention targets 33 healthcare facilities across the three countries.

Planned activities include the construction of a new maternity ward at Malindi Hospital (Kenya), the provision of modern basic medical equipment and devices, training for healthcare staff in the involved facilities, and structural improvements.

The role of the Global Health Center at Meyer Hospital in Florence is of particular relevance, providing technical and scientific oversight for the programme and supporting the CSOs implementing the initiative in the three countries and AICS in monitoring activities.

Below is a description of the three components.

Kenya

Implementing Partner: (Partners: Medicus Mundi Italia, Kilifi County Health Department, Pwani University)

Area of Intervention: Nairobi, Nyandarua, Meru, and Kilifi Counties (in addition to regional activities across the three countries)

The project focuses on improving maternal and child health services through training and on-the-job capacity building for healthcare personnel and Community Health Promoters, procurement and distribution of equipment, supplies, and ambulances, construction of the maternity ward at Malindi Sub-County Hospital, and the establishment of mobile ultrasound services for women in the communities (a regionally managed activity).

Tanzania

Implementing Partner: Centro Mondialità Sviluppo Reciproco (CMSR)

Partners: CUAMM and COPE

Area of Intervention: Dodoma Region and Zanzibar

Improvement of maternal and child health services through training and on-the-job capacity building for healthcare personnel, procurement and distribution of medical equipment and supplies, and the establishment of mobile ultrasound services for women in the communities.

Uganda

Implementing Partner: Fondazione AVSI

Partners: University of Pavia, University of Naples, Corti Foundation, Ambrosoli Foundation, AMREF Health Africa

Area of Intervention: Acholi and Lango Regions

Improvement of maternal and child health services through training, mentorship, and on-the-job capacity building for healthcare personnel; procurement and distribution of medical equipment and supplies; establishment of mobile ultrasound services for women in the communities; and enhancement of data collection and interpretation systems to increase efficiency.

The Voice of the Protagonists: A Life in Service of the Most Vulnerable – Gianfranco Morino

Gianfranco Morino, Regional Coordinator for the organization World Friends, co-directs the Ruaraka Uhai Neema Hospital—an outstanding health facility located on the edge of the northern Nairobi slums—together with a Kenyan colleague. But his story of commitment to African hospitals began nearly 40 years ago.

Originally from Acqui Terme, in Italy, Dr. Morino arrived in Kenya at the age of 28, after completing his degree and internship in Pavia. *"I did two years of International Civil Service; then, after a brief return to Italy and a specialization in surgery in Genoa, I set off again. An Italian NGO was looking for a doctor in Sololo, in northern Kenya, near the Ethiopian border. That was in 1991."*

Sololo is a remote and arid area which, at the time, was plagued by conflict stemming from ethnic tensions, armed raids, and clashes over control of resources, worsened by an influx of Ethiopian refugees. *"In the middle of war, I found myself dealing with everything, from leprosy cases to venomous snake bites to gunshot wounds."*

Later, Morino worked as a mentor to young local surgeons in what he calls *"one of the most stigmatized hospitals in Nairobi,"* the Mbagathi Hospital, located near Kibera slum. *"The facility was originally built as a tuberculosis sanatorium during British colonial rule. In the '80s and '90s, it became the AIDS hospital. There were no other expatriates working there—I was the only one. Then in 2008, the violence broke out, and things got really tough."*

The year 2008 indeed marked one of Kenya's darkest periods, overwhelmed by a post-election crisis following the disputed 2007 presidential elections. Violent clashes between rival communities turned entire towns and villages into scenes of terror.

"I remember seeing people who had been beheaded, their bodies abandoned in the streets. Even the patients who came to us for treatment were afraid to tell us their ethnic group, for fear it would reveal their tribe."



Gianfranco Morino



"They were afraid of being poisoned. It was the first time I ever thought about repatriating my family. Even I—someone who's been a surgeon all my life—had never seen anything like it."

In Kenya, access to healthcare comes at a cost, and in the sprawling slums of the capital, illness fuels a cycle of poverty and social vulnerability. Today, the Neema Hospital is a critical point of reference for the local community. Founded in 2009 by World Friends, the facility welcomes an average of 10,000 patients per month, offering high-quality care at affordable prices—and free services for the most vulnerable patients from the slums.

Thanks in part to funding from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, World Friends has implemented a wide range of initiatives through the hospital: ongoing medical training programs, health rehabilitation projects, anti-malnutrition interventions, and mobile clinics that reach patients in remote or hard-to-access areas, saving thousands of lives.

"It's a model designed to deliver patient-centered healthcare—where health is a right, where training and updates are offered to doctors and paramedics, and where treatment is provided free of charge to those who cannot afford it," Morino concludes.

Focus: Emergency Initiatives

The emergency initiatives of the AICS Nairobi Office are primarily focused on Somalia, which represents one of the most complex and protracted humanitarian crises globally. Decades of poverty, marginalization, armed violence, insecurity, political instability, extreme climate events, and limited access to basic services and livelihood opportunities have had a devastating impact on the well-being and lives of millions of people.

The Somali population has faced the effects and consequences of the worst drought in decades, which struck the country in 2022, followed by severe floodings in 2023 and 2024.

In addition to contributions to the UN OCHA Country-Based Pooled Fund (CBPF), several activities are currently being implemented by various Italian civil society organizations operating in the country.

Experiences in 2024 have highlighted the importance of ensuring a flexible approach capable of adapting to emerging needs, as well as the added value of integrated and complementary multisectoral interventions, in line with efforts carried out by other actors on the ground.

A thorough needs assessment and effective monitoring have proven essential to tailoring interventions to specific contexts and enhancing their impact. Furthermore, the promotion of partnerships and alignment with institutional actors have been key elements in ensuring the achievement of the initiatives' objectives.

Lastly, the integration of emergency initiatives with sustainable resilience-building practices has enabled more effective and lasting responses, with a view of promoting sustainability and development.



P Planet

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



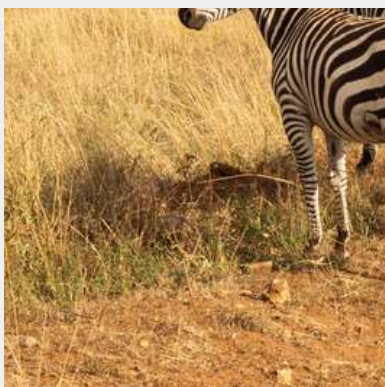
13 CLIMATE
ACTION



14 LIFE
BELOW WATER



15 LIFE
ON LAND



The “P” in “Planet” encompasses the various levels at which the consequences of climate change manifest: from biodiversity loss, resulting in changes to species and habitats, to ecosystem alteration, with the depletion of natural capital and related ecosystem services, and finally to the most significant impacts observed in human environments in terms of livability and population health.*

AICS supports Kenya in its efforts to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change through initiatives focused on the protection, restoration, and resilience of forest and agro-forestry ecosystems. Working closely with institutions and local communities, the Agency promotes ecosystem restoration and the sustainable management of natural resources, integrating these efforts with the development of economic and social services to strengthen adaptive capacity to climate change.

Several rural development initiatives emphasize ensuring access to land and rights related to community lands. There is growing interest among implementing agencies and partners in the possibility of accessing funds linked to carbon credit trading. Among the initiatives led by the Nairobi Office, the ARABIKA project stands out, which focus on revitalizing the coffee value chain in the country (see project factsheet at page 36). In Tanzania, the environmental dimension is also addressed through the development of tools for mitigating climate emergencies: notably, the inauguration of the first “Situation Room” in Dodoma, established in June 2024 in collaboration with UNDRR and theCIMA

* cfr. “le Scelte Strategiche Nazionali e gli Obiettivi Strategici Nazionali” (mase.gov.it)



Foundation, allows for constant monitoring and timely response to crises linked to extreme events, demonstrating how cooperation can integrate environmental and security aspects to ensure sustainable land management.

In Somalia, beyond some initiatives through the multilateral channel with UN agencies, emergency interventions aim to provide assistance to populations affected by extreme climate events such as droughts and floods.

In Uganda, there are two particularly relevant initiatives, which were launched when the country was under the responsibility of the Nairobi Office. These are two complementary initiatives: one realized through the “Delegated Cooperation” channel (i. e. funded by the European Union) and one through the bilateral channel, both aiming to contribute to Uganda’s Third National Development Plan 2021-25 program for reforestation, conservation, and protection of forest heritage, through regenerative use of natural resources focused on economic growth and livelihood generation for families.

The initiatives are implemented respectively in Uganda’s eastern region (Jinja, Mbale, and Soroti) and in the Karamoja region, both particularly exposed to extreme climate change phenomena such as desertification, drought, and irregular rainfall patterns, which further exacerbate poverty and food insecurity characteristic of the region.



Focus:**ARABIKA: Revamping the Gourmet Coffee production in Kenya - AID 11767**

Implementing organizations: CEFA, Fondazione AVSI, E4IMPACT | **Area:** Machakos, Embu, Kiambu, Meru, Bungoma, Migori, Nyeri counties

Coffee is a key value chain for Kenya's economy, serving both as a source of foreign currency and income for over five million Kenyans. The initiative covers the entire coffee value chain, from bean to cup, including the establishment of an adequate product traceability system. The project activities have created a virtuous pathway for transferring knowledge and techniques to improve the quality and quantity of Kenyan coffee — to meet both the domestic and international demand. The realization of this initiative was entrusted by the AICS Nairobi Office to the civil society organization CEFA, which operates together with Fondazione AVSI and Fondazione E4Impact through the project titled "ARABIKA – Action to Relaunch Agriculture and Branding Internationalization of Kenyan Coffee, in and out of Africa."

Overall, 21 cooperatives in seven counties of Kenya have been supported, reaching a total of 30,000 smallholder farmers. The project has conducted training activities aimed at agricultural extension services on sustainable farming techniques, as well as courses for expert tasters for coffee analysis and quality control. Furthermore, the project contributed to training on topics such as sector regulation, transparent management and administration, and improved financial planning of the cooperatives.

A coffee traceability platform based on blockchain technology has also been developed, along with the registration of seven local coffee brands.

The project, which concludes in 2025, will have an immediate continuation through some activities within a regional initiative financed under the Mattei Plan and realized through UNIDO.



Focus:**Reforestation for Communities Prosperity in Eastern Uganda - ReForEst Uganda**

The Delegated Cooperation initiative ReForEst Uganda, funded by the European Union, is part of the broader Partnering for Forest (P4F) program under the EU-Uganda Forest Partnership Compact, signed during COP27 in November 2022. This initiative aims to promote the sustainable development of Uganda's forestry sector.

The intervention is carried out in the three sub-regions of Eastern Uganda: Central-Eastern, Elgon, and Teso, contributing to Uganda's strategies for environmental conservation and climate change adaptation.

Its main objective is to improve the conservation, protection, and regeneration of Uganda's forest resources through the introduction of sustainable practices in the agroforestry production sector.

The project's core strategy is to integrate biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable economic development by enhancing access to green finance and incentive programs that encourage forest conservation/restoration, promote agroforestry and non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and support ecosystem protection and restoration.

The initiative is particularly focused on local economic development and entrepreneurship, aiming to create income opportunities for woodland and tree plantation owners within communities. It emphasizes strong private sector involvement and improved access to investments and financial instruments.

The development of green finance and carbon credit markets will be pursued as incentives for cultivation models that are both eco-sustainable and resilient to climate change.



P rosperity

7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



The 'Prosperity' pillar lays the foundation for the creation of a new circular economic model that ensures the full development of human potential and a more efficient and responsible use of natural resources. To achieve this, it is essential to identify development pathways that minimize negative environmental impacts, promote the closing of material production and consumption cycles, and, more generally, encourage the rational use of resources and the enhancement of human capital*.

The Nairobi Office supports numerous initiatives to support economic recovery in fragile and unstable contexts.

In Somalia, the Agency carries out programs supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises, facilitating access to credit and institutional capacity-building programs in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

In Kenya, where the private sector is a key driver of development, AICS has launched initiatives targeting local startups in ICT, agro-food, and sustainable fashion sectors. These efforts contribute to integrating the large informal sector into the formal economic fabric and strengthening value chains by leveraging Italian excellence across various productive sectors. In particular, AICS is supporting the Ethical Fashion Initiative realized by the International Trade Centre in Geneva, aiming to create a production chain capable of entering both national and international fashion markets (see factsheet at p. 40).

*cfr. "le Scelte Strategiche Nazionali e gli Obiettivi Strategici Nazionali" (mase.gov.it)



Focus:**Designing the Future: a sustainable and inclusive fashion ecosystem for Kenya
(AID 12864)**

The project aims to enhance the experience of the Ethical Fashion Initiative (EFI), an initiative of the International Trade Centre, in managing sustainable fashion value chains in Kenya. The initiative involves 2,500 artisans, micro-producers, and design entrepreneurs—mainly women and young people—from marginalized communities across the country. These participants benefit from specialized training programs that increase their opportunities to collaborate directly with major international fashion supply chains, thereby creating dignified and long-lasting employment opportunities in Kenya.

In 2024, the project supported the training of 2,000 individuals, enhancing their skills in macramé, beadwork, and rubber engraving, and training specialized workers in sewing, engraving, and logistics. The initiative engaged 24 communities, including the Northern Rangelands Trust Trading (NRTT) with over 1,600 members, promoting active participation in the production process. This intervention not only improved technical skills but also strengthened financial independence and managerial capacities within communities, enabling them to manage large-scale orders (e.g., in 2024 artisans produced 105,000 accessories for CONAD Italia) and improve their overall living conditions.



Voices of the Protagonists

Resilience and Triumph: The Story of Lilian and USHINDI

Gilgil is a small town in Kenya's Rift Valley, nestled along the highway connecting Nairobi and Nakuru. It's here that Lilian Mukami Kahiro was born. Lilian is the founder of USHINDI, the social cooperative that has transformed the lives of hundreds of women through sustainable fashion.

"I was born and raised in Gilgil, in a slum where life was a constant struggle for survival. My father died when I was very young, and my mother had to get by selling illegal alcohol to feed me and my five sisters. Watching her fight every day made me want to change things—not just for us, but for all the women in my community."

Lilian had to give up her university studies to support her mother and sisters, beginning to work in the meat trade. The turning point came in 2007, when Kenya was rocked by post-election violence that forced thousands to flee their homes. Gilgil became a refuge for many displaced people, as it was perceived to be a safe place. But the displaced received no assistance—and they needed everything.

"I went to the government-settled camp every day to speak with the women and encourage them, even though I had nothing to offer. One day, a representative from EFI (Ethical Fashion Initiative) came to visit the camp and asked if we would be willing to form a cooperative to carry out craftwork. I immediately said yes, using my meagre savings to register it."

And so USHINDI was born—meaning "victory" in Swahili—a cooperative formed by 120 women determined to rise out of poverty. The opportunity came with a first order from the United Nations for the production of 200,000 canvas bags. EFI then organized training sessions for the cooperative in crochet and screen printing. Despite the initial challenges, the women managed to complete 36,000 pieces in just two months.



Lilian

From that moment on, USHINDI's talent began to gain recognition and appreciation. Thanks to EFI's support, world-renowned designers such as Vivienne Westwood, Stella McCartney, Sandstorm, MIMCO, and Armani started collaborating with the group.

The sustainable fashion project funded by AICS and realized by EFI in Kenya, launched in 2024, played a crucial role in bringing stability to the group. USHINDI recently completed part of a large order for CONAD, one of the largest retail chains in Italy: 105,000 handmade beaded charms for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, produced by USHINDI and other partner cooperatives.

"USHINDI was the best among all the cooperatives involved: not a single piece was rejected—we ranked first in quality. This shows how much we've grown and what we are capable of offering."

But the true success isn't in the numbers alone—it's in the impact on the community.

"When we started, the women in our group lived in slums and struggled to provide even three meals a day for their children. Today, they can send their kids to better schools and have regained their dignity."

Yet Lilian's dream doesn't stop in Gilgil.

"I want to expand our impact throughout Kenya, especially in remote areas. I want to give women opportunities for training and economic independence. When you empower a woman, you empower an entire community."

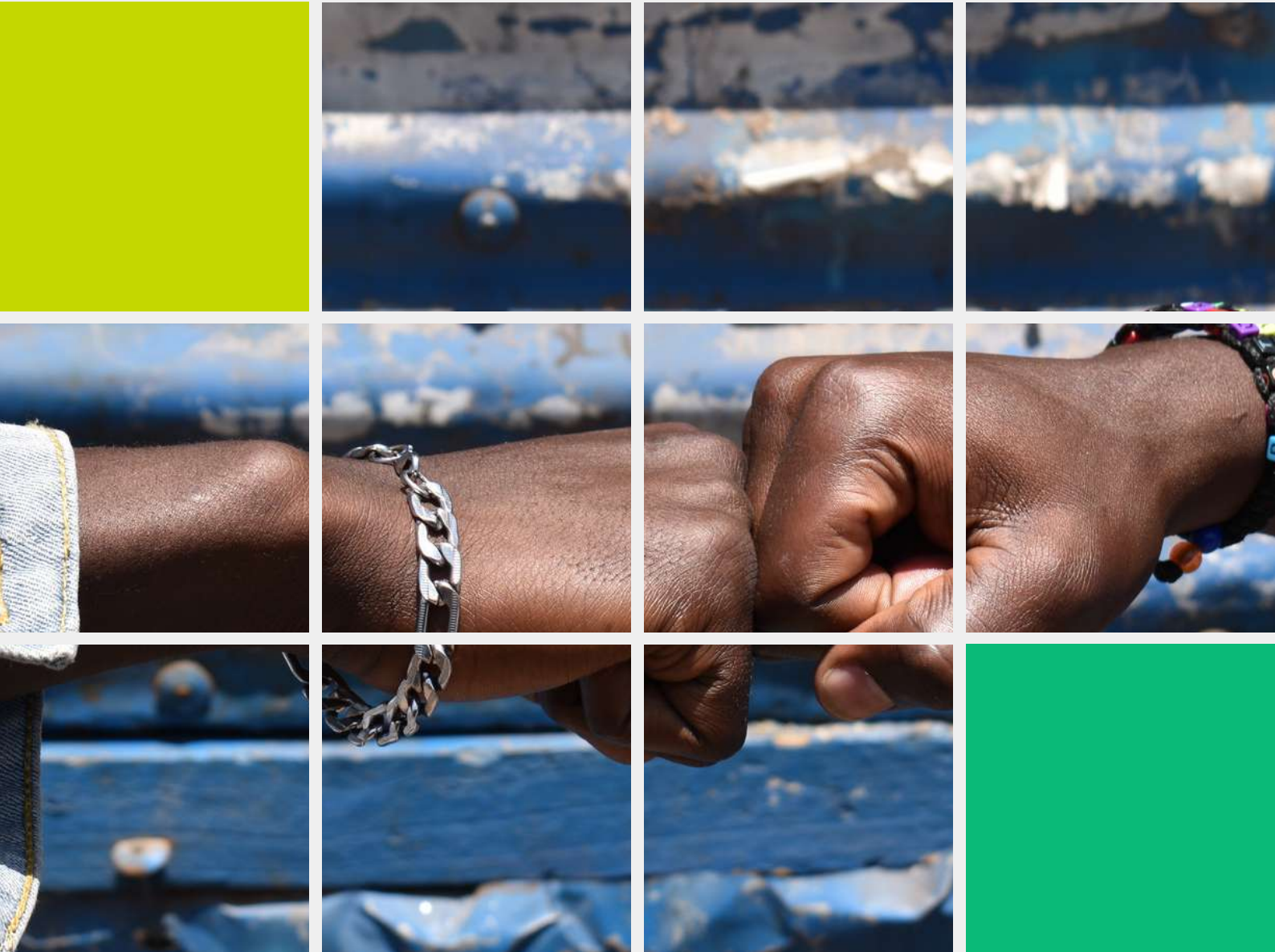
Lilian's dream is for USHINDI to become a production hub for major luxury brands, attracting investments and large-scale orders.

Today, the cooperative's products are sold in shops, lodges, fairs, and local markets. But their greatest victory is having shown that fashion can be a powerful tool for social change.



P artnership

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



The "P" in Partnership refers to the external dimension of the Strategy, the Areas of Intervention, and the goals of development cooperation policy, as outlined in Law 125/2014*. Through successful partnerships, the foundations are laid for the creation of a new, circular economic model that ensures the full development of human potential and a more efficient and responsible use of natural resources. Networking and cooperation among local actors, government institutions, civil society organizations, and international partners are also key to effective and lasting interventions.

Following this approach, the Nairobi Office works in synergy with institutions, multilateral agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector present in the region. In Kenya, for example, the relationship with the national government has led to the development of joint programmes financed through loans, such as the Integrated Programme for the Socio-Health Development of Malindi – Phase II (MISHDP II). This initiative was launched under request of the Kenyan Coast Development Authority, with the aim of improving the socio-economic development conditions in the Malindi and Magarini areas (see project factsheet at p. 45).

In Somalia, the Agency collaborates with several UN agencies, contributing to different multilateral development initiatives. Among them is the SWALIM project (Somalia Water and Land Information Management), an information management programme managed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It serves Somali government institutions, NGOs, development agencies, and UN bodies assisting Somali communities whose lives and livelihoods directly depend on water and land resources. The programme aims to provide high-quality information on water and land, essential for emergency, rehabilitation, and development initiatives, in order to support the sustainable management of these resources.

In Tanzania, the dialogue with government counterparts – including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and the Prime Minister's Office – along with the collaboration with a broad network of Italian CSOs, has strengthened the "Sistema Paese" (Country System approach). Among the key initiatives in 2024 is the inauguration of the country's first national Situation Room for emergency communications and operations. The facility was established by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), with scientific support from Fondazione CIMA and funding from the Italian Cooperation.

*cfr. "le Scelte Strategiche Nazionali e gli Obiettivi Strategici Nazionali" (mase.gov.it)

Focus:

Integrated Programme for the Socio-Health Development of Malindi – Phase II (MISHDP II)

The second phase of the Integrated Socio-Health Development Programme for the Malindi District was launched under the initiative of the Kenyan Coast Development Authority (CDA), which, recognizing the benefits achieved during the first phase, aimed to expand the number of beneficiaries of the programme through the construction of infrastructure to foster more dynamic development of the local economy.

The Programme is integrated and multisectoral, directly benefiting the CDA, a government body established with the specific mandate to develop the coastal area. The programme's goal is to improve the socio-economic development conditions in the provinces of Malindi and Magarini by enhancing the capacity and accessibility of the education system, strengthening the health system in Magarini, improving infrastructure and access in the Malindi and Magarini areas, and building the institutional capacity for managing development programmes.

Project activities began on 28 March 2023, with the construction and/or rehabilitation of infrastructure in selected schools and health facilities, the rehabilitation of the CDA's headquarters, and the construction of a new office for the same organization.

In 2024, regarding educational infrastructure, the programme completed the construction of 18 new classrooms, 3 science laboratories, 8 sanitation blocks, a dormitory, and a dining hall with an attached kitchen, as well as the rehabilitation of 6 classrooms. Additionally, a section of a dispensary was rehabilitated, and the first phase of construction of an intensive care unit at the Malindi Sub-County Hospital was completed.



Completed renovations of classrooms at
Ngomeni Comprehensive School

Focus: Go Blue

In 2021, the first delegated cooperation programme for AICS in Kenya was launched: the Go Blue Programme. The initiative is funded by the European Union and implemented by AICS, with the technical partnership of CIHEAM Bari. "Go Blue" saw Italy collaborate with the development agencies of Germany, Portugal, and France, two UN agencies (UN-Habitat and UNEP), and in partnership with the Jumuiya Ya Kaunti Za Pwani (JKP) Secretariat, the economic bloc of Kenya's coastal counties. The aim of the initiative was to support the Government's efforts to boost the blue economy, recognized as a strategic development sector for the country.

AICS led the economic development component of the Programme, focusing on:

1. Strengthening and providing technical assistance to the local counterpart, the JKP Secretariat, in its coordination and oversight role;
2. Strengthening the cassava and small-scale fisheries value chains, two key sectors for the local economy.

By supporting local agricultural development offices and providing training, production inputs, and equipment to smallholder farmers, the quality of marketable cassava was improved, creating new income opportunities in rural communities. Moreover, three small solar-powered cassava processing plants were built.

As for the enhancement of the fisheries value chain, AICS supported nine Beach Management Units (BMUs). These are community cooperatives that bring together all fisheries stakeholders. Activities, completed in 2024, included:

- Infrastructure interventions to improve the cold chain, including the construction of solar-powered cold storage units
- Distribution of over 30 fishing boats and equipment
- Capacity-building trainings aimed at increasing the value and quality of fish products
- The introduction of a pilot certification system based on traceability, which certifies the origin of products and ensures compliance with appropriate quality standards.



P eace

16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



The “P” of Peace focuses on the implementation of social protection policies and poverty reduction measures, with particular attention to the most vulnerable segments of the population. It addresses the need to promote peaceful, equitable, and inclusive societies by supporting the fight against discrimination (based on age, gender, or race), as well as measures to combat organized crime, corruption, and all forms of violence.

In line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda, the Agency works to prevent conflicts and to support peacebuilding, reconciliation, post-conflict stabilization, and the strengthening of democratic institutions. This is particularly relevant in the context of Somalia, a country marked by political instability and a prolonged crisis. The weakness of institutions is reflected in the limited provision of basic services and persistent insecurity, which is further exacerbated by the presence of extremist groups that hinder the country's stabilization and development.

In Somalia, partnerships with government authorities have been strengthened through the programme “Towards Peace and Stability in Somalia” (see project factsheet at p. 49), under which the Italian Government allocated €3,820,000, managed directly by the Office of the Prime Minister of Somalia. Other key partnerships include those with De Martino Hospital and the Somali National University, where the Agency supports the strengthening of technical capacities and the provision of specialized training.

*cfr. “le Scelte Strategiche Nazionali e gli Obiettivi Strategici Nazionali” (mase.gov.it)



Focus:
Towards Peace and Stability in Somalia (TPSS)

The intervention aims to achieve long-term goals of peace and stability, security, rule of law, and good governance in Somalia, through investments focused on strengthening the resilience of the population and social institutions.

The Fund, managed directly by the Federal Government of Somalia, represents a pioneering initiative by Italy to develop a stronger and more direct collaboration with the Somali authorities—an increasingly strategic country in light of recent geopolitical shifts in the Horn of Africa and globally.

Overall, the programme is structured around two “windows” of activities:

- The first window, currently underway, supports immediate stabilization needs in newly liberated areas within the Federal Member States. It includes initiatives aimed at ensuring the delivery of basic services to the Somali population, including social services, economic development, and humanitarian assistance.
- The second window adopts a medium- to long-term vision, focusing on activities aimed at building the resilience of local communities and promoting social and economic development. The selection of intervention areas and specific projects is entrusted to the Federal Government of Somalia, with ongoing support from AICS Nairobi.



La voce dei protagonisti: Costruire sviluppo, creare impatto nel cuore dell’Africa: Paolo Razzini

Paolo Razzini is 39 years old, and as I interview him, I realize that he has spent about a quarter of his life in Africa. He began working in development cooperation in 2015 through the UNDESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs) Fellowship Programme, which brought him to Kenya, where he worked at the Local Technical Unit (UTL) in Nairobi. At that time, AICS had not yet been established, and the UTL was the section of the Embassy responsible for development cooperation.

Later, in 2017, thanks to the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme of UNDESA, Paolo began working for the United Nations, initially in Nairobi and later in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

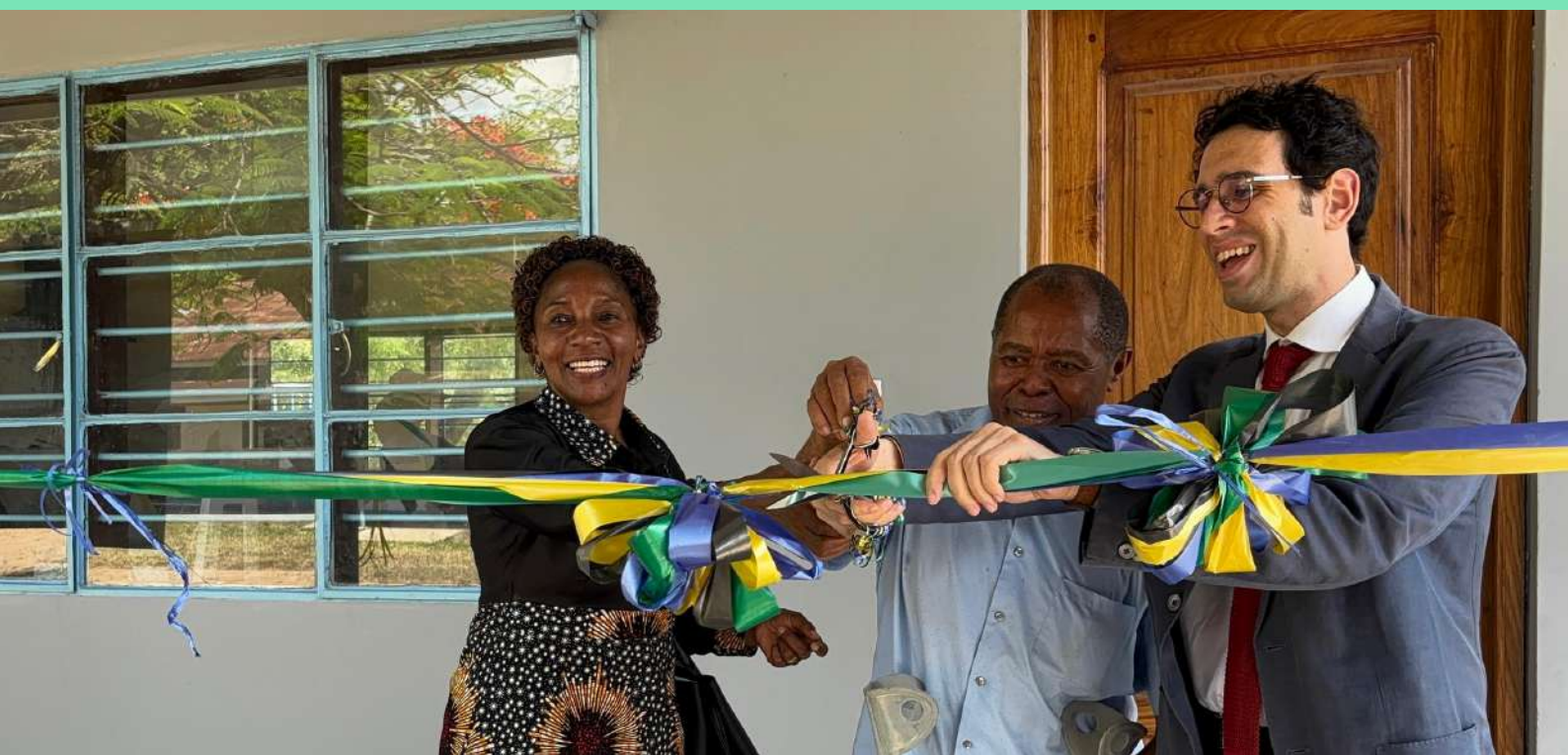
“It was a very difficult period: the COVID-19 pandemic, the political instability, and the conflict that unfolded in the north of the country had a major impact on the local population and on ongoing initiatives. When many expatriates chose to leave the country, I decided to stay—to support my colleagues and see through the work we had started.”

In 2022, he was selected as Team Leader at the AICS Field Office in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania—a role of increasing responsibility in a country that, since 2024, has become a priority for Italian Cooperation and was recently chosen as a pilot country for the “Mattei Plan.”

“It’s been ten intense and exciting years, but they’ve really flown by.”

Today in Tanzania, Paolo covers a wide range of responsibilities, from daily management of the office, including human resources, to maintaining relationships with local and international partners and the Embassy, to designing new initiatives and monitoring ongoing ones.

“We’re a small office, but we manage a sizable and steadily growing portfolio—currently about 29 million euros in active projects, with more on the way in the near future.”



When I ask Paolo to reflect on some key moments from 2024, he recalls with emotion several occasions where he witnessed the tangible impact that development cooperation projects had on people's lives.

"I truly believe we have the best job in the world: working together—government, international partners, communities—to bring about real change, while also being firsthand witnesses of that impact. It's an indescribable feeling, and it's what keeps us going despite the challenges we face along the way."

However, it's also a job that comes with challenges and complexities, especially in today's ever-changing and uncertain international landscape.

"The situation is very fluid," Paolo says. "For instance, the budget cuts announced by the U.S. development agency could trigger funding reductions from other donors as well, and the renewed focus on other global priorities risks diverting resources away from cooperation. Nonetheless, AICS continues to stand at the forefront, supporting Tanzania's development—a country undergoing rapid transformation and demonstrating a strong desire for progress."

Paolo has been living in Dar es Salaam for about three years now, but East Africa feels like home.

"I must admit that I miss Italy—my family, my roots, my friends... and yes, Italian food. But each time I go back, I realize just how profoundly this field experience has changed me." He closes with a reflection on what cooperation means to him.

"For me, cooperation means, above all, working together. It means sharing—not just skills and resources, but humanity. It also means highlighting Italian excellence to help build a more just and sustainable future. The goal? It always remains the same: to end poverty in all its forms, by giving every person the dignity they deserve and the tools to empower themselves."





Thank You



**AGENZIA ITALIANA
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