

## **Nyanam International Widows Day Celebration 2026**

*Strengthening widows' livelihoods for resilient communities*





### **Executive summary:**

International Widows Day celebrations 2026 was a landmark celebration of resilience, leadership, and transformation, bringing together 4,282 Nyanam widows, government leaders, development partners, faith leaders, and community stakeholders under the theme "*Strengthening widows' livelihoods for resilient communities.*" The event celebrated the remarkable progress made by widows while reaffirming Nyanam's commitment to restoring dignity, strengthening livelihoods, and building self-reliant communities.

A major highlight of the day was the graduation of 196 widows who successfully completed Nyanam's three-year preparation phase, alongside the welcoming of 1,800 new widows from 67 Leadership Circles into the organization. The event also recognised and celebrated the dedication of Widow Trainers, Widow Mentors, and Peer Counsellors, whose volunteer leadership continues to drive transformation within communities.

The celebrations delivered tangible impact beyond recognition. Through a partnership with Restoring Vision, 1,300 widows received prescription reading glasses, restoring their vision and improving their quality of life. Additionally, KES 1,534,160 was disbursed to 110 Leadership Circles as seed capital to strengthen livelihoods, financial resilience, and household economic empowerment alongside each widow walking home with 2kg of sugar as a gift. Nyanam also celebrated supporting 390 children of widows with school fees, reaffirming its commitment to strengthening families through education.

Powerful testimonies from widows and inspiring messages from partners, government representatives, faith leaders, and the Nyanam leadership underscored the importance of leadership, land rights, economic empowerment, inclusion, and faith in transforming widows' lives. The event concluded with renewed calls for stronger policies that protect widows' rights while recognizing them as leaders and drivers of sustainable community development.

International Widows Day 2026 reaffirmed that empowered widows are not only rebuilding their own lives but are also transforming families, strengthening communities, and shaping a more inclusive and resilient future.



## Activity overview

**Goal:** To honor and celebrate Nyanam widows by amplifying their voices of resilience and transformation.

**Objectives:**

- To recognize and celebrate the resilience of Nyanam widows and acknowledge their journey toward positive transformation.
- To honor the leadership, resilience, and meaningful contributions of Nyanam widows to their families and communities.
- To provide free eye care and legal aid services to Nyanam widows.
- To strengthen strategic partnerships that advance widow empowerment and holistic development.
- To officially welcome 1800 newly inducted widows into the Nyanam program.
- To celebrate the graduation of 196 Nyanam widows into the Transformation Phase.
- To create a platform for widows to showcase and sell their locally made products.

## Outcomes

- A total of **4282** Nyanam widows attended Nyanam IWD celebrations.
- 49 widows received legal aid support.
- 1331 widows received reading glasses.
- 196 widows graduated and received certificates.
- 9300kgs of sugar gifted to widows.



## Discussion

### Background

Since 2019, Nyanam International has hosted annual International Widows Day (IWD) celebrations, commemorated every year on **23rd June**, to honor and celebrate widowed women. Over the years, these celebrations have continued to grow, providing a powerful platform for advocacy, visibility, healing, and reconnection.

In 2026, we hosted the largest International Widows Day celebration, bringing together **4,282** widows from Kisumu and Siaya counties. The celebration was particularly significant as it marked the organization's second graduation ceremony, recognizing widows who had successfully completed their preparation journey and transitioned into the transformation phase.

### Highlights



## **1. Widows' graduation**

For the second time, we celebrated the graduation of Nyanam widows, marking a significant milestone in their journey of growth and transformation. This graduation ceremony symbolized the successful completion of one phase of the Voice of Change journey and the beginning of another, as the graduated widows transitioned from the preparation phase into the transformation phase.

This year, **196** widows drawn from 9 Leadership Circles graduated and were certified after successfully completing the three years 12-modules of Voice of Change curriculum. The ceremony was a memorable and inspiring occasion, characterized by an overwhelming sense of pride, hope, and accomplishment. As the graduates marched with confidence and radiant smiles, they reflected not only the knowledge and skills they had acquired throughout the program but also their renewed sense of purpose and belief in their ability to influence positive change. It represented the beginning of a new chapter in their lives. It marked their readiness to move beyond personal healing and preparation into active transformation, where they are expected to apply the lessons, values, and leadership skills gained through the Voice of Change curriculum to strengthen their families, support fellow widows, and contribute meaningfully to the development of their communities.

Filled with joy and a deep sense of achievement, the graduates shared testimonies of how the 12 Voice of Change modules had equipped them with practical knowledge, restored their confidence, strengthened their resilience, and renewed their hope for the future. They expressed their preparedness and commitment to becoming agents of transformation, creating lasting and sustainable change within their homes, Leadership Circles, and the wider communities they serve.



## 2. Widows' celebrations, recognition and gifting.

A key highlight of this year's International Widows' Day celebration was recognizing and celebrating the resilience, strength, and achievements of Nyanam widows. The festivities began with a vibrant celebration as widows came together in song and dance, creating an atmosphere filled with joy, reunion, and a deep sense of shared belonging. The smiles, laughter, embraces, and heartfelt conversations reflected the significance of this historic gathering. Young and older widows celebrated side by side, demonstrating the unity, sisterhood, and hope that continue to define the Nyanam community.

As part of the celebrations, Nyanam honored widows who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to supporting and empowering fellow widows throughout the year. Individual awards were presented in recognition of outstanding contributions in the following categories:

- Outstanding Leadership in Voice of Change (VoC) Implementation
- Best Voice of Change Trainers
- Best Widow Peer Counselors



Leadership Circles (LCs) that demonstrated excellence in implementing Nyanam programs were also recognized for their outstanding performance. Awards were presented for:

- Best Leadership Circle in Table Banking – Kogutu Widows
- Best Leadership Circle in Attendance – Her Giri Widows
- Best Leadership Circle in Social Action Implementation – Upendo Widows
- Best Graduating Leadership Circle – Kambekotho widows
- Best Leadership Circle in the Transformation Phase – Mak Bada Widows



These awards served not only as a token of appreciation for the dedication, commitment, and hard work demonstrated by the award recipients but also as an inspiration for other widows and Leadership Circles to continue striving for excellence, embracing servant leadership, and driving sustainable transformation within their communities.

To further mark the occasion, every widow in attendance received a gift package as a symbol of love, appreciation, and solidarity. These gifts reinforced Nyanam's commitment to ensuring that every widow feels seen, valued, and celebrated, while reminding them that they are part of a supportive community walking together toward dignity, hope, and lasting transformation.

### 3. Eye care access

Through a partnership with the Restoring Vision and Livelihood Impact Fund, Nyanam secured **3,300 pairs of reading glasses** in 2025 to improve the readability of the widows who are struggling to read their bibles. During the 2025 International Widows' Day celebration, we dispensed **1,680** reading glasses, addressing a critical but often overlooked barrier to their

participation in learning. This year, we welcomed 1800 new widows during the IWD celebrations. We therefore dispensed **1330** of the remaining glasses to the widows.

The reading glasses have significantly improved widows' ability to read their Bibles and Voice of Change training materials, actively participate in learning sessions, manage table banking records, and engage more effectively in income-generating activities. Beyond improving vision, this intervention has restored confidence, enhanced independence, and equipped widows to participate more fully in both community life and economic opportunities.



#### **4. Legal aid services**

We remain deeply grateful for the continued partnership with Transparency International Kenya (TI Kenya), whose support over the past four years has been instrumental in advancing access to justice for widows through free legal aid clinics.

During this year's celebration we were joined by TI to offer free legal clinic to the Nyanam widows. 49 widows accessed free legal aid services, receiving guidance and support on land rights, inheritance, property ownership, succession, and other legal matters affecting their families. These services help widows navigate complex legal processes, protect their rights, and move closer to securing ownership of land and other productive assets.



### **Tittle deeds**

Land disinheritance remains one of the most pressing challenges facing widows in the communities we serve. Following the loss of a spouse, many widows are unlawfully denied their inheritance by their in-laws, leaving them vulnerable to poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, and emotional distress. Without secure land ownership, widows often struggle to provide for their families, invest in agriculture, or build sustainable livelihoods.

This year marked a significant milestone in Nyanam's journey to advance widows' land rights. During the International Widows' Day celebration, we proudly celebrated and handed over two tittle deeds, making the widows secure full legal ownership of their lands. This achievement is a powerful symbol of hope and justice for thousands of widows facing similar challenges.

This milestone is the result of sustained legal empowerment efforts and strong partnerships that continue to strengthen widows' access to justice.



### **Widows' exhibition booths.**

Nyanam widows continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience by transforming their skills, creativity, and agricultural knowledge into sustainable sources of income. Through various livelihood initiatives, many widows have developed thriving microenterprises, producing high-quality handmade crafts and agricultural products that support their families and strengthen their economic independence.

The International Widows' Day celebration provided a valuable platform for widows to showcase, promote, and sell their products. A dedicated exhibition tent was set up at the event,

creating a vibrant marketplace where widows engaged with visitors, networked with potential customers, and generated income from their sales.

The exhibition featured a wide range of products, including handcrafted beadwork such as necklaces and bangles, woven baskets and hats, clothing, fresh vegetables, honey, mushroom flour, and other locally produced goods. The diversity and quality of the products reflected the entrepreneurial spirit, creativity, and determination of the widows.

Beyond creating immediate income opportunities, the exhibition increased the visibility of widows' enterprises and expanded their potential market reach. It also highlighted the importance of investing in women-led businesses as a pathway to economic empowerment and community development.

Through our Sustainable Livelihoods Program, Nyanam remains committed to strengthening widows' entrepreneurial skills, improving product quality and market access, fostering business growth, and creating more opportunities for widows to achieve long-term financial independence and resilience.





## **Media coverage**

The International Widows' Day celebration attracted significant media attention, amplifying the voices of widows and extending the reach of our advocacy efforts far beyond the event venue. The celebration was covered by leading media outlets, including Radio Nam Lolwe, Radio Maisha, KTN TV, Kala TV, Chuny Onagi TV, and *The Standard* across its social media platforms.

This extensive media coverage provided an important platform to highlight the realities faced by widows, including barriers to land ownership, economic exclusion, and limited access to essential services. It also showcased the resilience of Nyanam widows and the transformative impact of our programs in empowering them to lead dignified and productive lives.

By bringing widows' stories to a wider audience, the media helped raise public awareness, stimulate dialogue on widows' rights, and encourage greater support from government institutions, development partners, the private sector, and the wider community. Such visibility is critical in influencing policies, mobilizing resources, and fostering a more inclusive society where widows are recognized, protected, and empowered to thrive.

## **Performances**

This celebration came alive through vibrant performances that celebrated the strength, resilience, and creativity of Nyanam widows. Filled with song, dance, drama, and storytelling, the performances transformed the event into a powerful platform for advocacy, healing, and celebration.

Widows from different LCs took to the stage to present skits and dramas inspired by their lived experiences. Through these moving performances, they highlighted the challenges many widows face—including discrimination, economic hardship, and social exclusion—while demonstrating the remarkable resilience that has enabled them to overcome these barriers. Watching young and older widows perform side by side was a powerful testament to the unity, solidarity, and shared purpose that defines the Nyanam community.

The smiles, laughter, enthusiastic applause, and unwavering energy throughout the performances were a clear reflection of the joy, pride, and sense of belonging experienced by the widows. More than entertainment, these performances amplified the voices of widows, celebrated their journeys of transformation, and reminded everyone present that every widow has a story worth telling and a future worth investing in.



## **Speeches**

The speeches delivered during the day's celebrations formed one of the most inspiring moments of the event, reinforcing Nyanam's vision of restoring dignity, strengthening leadership, and creating lasting opportunities for widows. Delivered by Nyanam widows, community leaders, the Nyanam Board, the Executive Director, faith leaders, and government representatives, the speeches reflected on the remarkable transformation of widows' lives while calling for greater inclusion, justice, and investment in widows across Kenya.

## **Voices of transformation from Nyanam Widows**

The event featured powerful testimonies from three Nyanam widows whose personal stories demonstrated the transformative impact of Nyanam's integrated approach to empowerment. Their speeches reflected journeys from rejection and hopelessness to confidence, leadership, and self-reliance.



Susan Pauline shared how Nyanam had restored not only her confidence but also her sense of purpose.

*"As widows, we are often labelled and looked down upon. Before joining Nyanam, I lacked the confidence to speak in public or express myself. Through the education, mentorship, and prayers I have received, my life has been transformed. Today, I am confident enough to stand before people and speak with courage. I have become bold in both my words and my actions. I have learned how to farm and now grow vegetables to support my family. I am also able to counsel others and confidently share the Word of God in my church. Nyanam has restored not only my confidence but also my purpose and hope for the future."*

**– Susan Pauline, Nyanam Widow**

Lilian Juma emphasized that Nyanam's holistic model had transformed entire communities by equipping widows with practical skills, self-belief, and leadership values.

*"We are deeply grateful to Nyanam for the incredible transformation it has brought to our lives and communities. Through the organization's teachings, we have learned that self-leadership begins with believing in ourselves before we can lead others. We now understand that the soil is a valuable resource that, when nurtured, can provide sustainable livelihoods, and that cleanliness is essential for good health and the well-being of our families. The knowledge, skills, and encouragement we have received have empowered us to become more confident, self-reliant, and hopeful. Truly, Nyanam has changed our lives and transformed our communities."*

**– Lilian Juma, Nyanam Widow**

The testimonies highlighted how Nyanam's integrated programming continues to restore dignity while enabling widows to become agents of change within their families, churches, and communities.

#### **Remarks by the IWD Secretary**

The IWD Secretary, Jotham, challenged society to reject the misconception that widowhood should result in exclusion, discrimination, or loss of dignity. He emphasized that this year's theme was both timely and relevant, noting that when widows have secure access to land, productive skills, and economic opportunities, they unlock their full potential and contribute meaningfully to community development.

Drawing examples from Nyanam's table banking initiatives and livelihood programmes, he observed that widows have demonstrated tremendous growth when given the freedom and



opportunity to thrive. He commended the establishment of over 800 multi-storey kitchen gardens, noting that food-secure households become centres of leadership, resilience, and economic growth.

Jotham further challenged both national and county governments to intentionally include widows in development programmes. He called for widows to be prioritized in the distribution of seeds, fertilizer, and business licensing opportunities while urging local administrators to safeguard widows' land rights.

He reminded leaders that land ownership remains the foundation of sustainable development.

*"One cannot produce food without land. When widows secure their land rights, they can produce food, generate income, develop their villages, and ultimately contribute to the development of the nation."*

#### **Address by Nyanam Board Chair**

Nyanam board chair encouraged widows to remain steadfast in faith and to believe that widowhood is not the end of life's journey.

Quoting "The joy of the Lord shall be your strength," she reminded the widows that their identity is not defined by loss but by purpose and resilience. She acknowledged that many widows continue to suffer because of discrimination, harmful cultural practices, and inheritance disputes, and affirmed the board's commitment to strengthening policies and advocacy efforts that promote widows' inclusion and equal participation in society.

Looking ahead to Nyanam's Vision 2032, she expressed confidence that the greatest ambassadors of the organization would be the widows themselves.

*"The joy of the Lord shall be your strength. Being a widow is not the end of the world. Together, we will champion policies that promote widows' inclusion and dignity. By 2032, the greatest success story of Nyanam will be the widows themselves, who will influence policy, transform communities, and demonstrate that widowhood is not a limitation but a platform for leadership."*

She challenged widows to continue embracing leadership, supporting one another, and becoming role models for future generations while trusting in God's promises.



## Executive Director's message

The Executive Director reflected on Nyanam's remarkable journey over the past seven years. Beginning with only 80 widows, the organization has grown to serve more than **5,100 widows**, with a bold vision of reaching approximately **30,000 widows** over the next seven years.

He reminded widows that the heart of Nyanam is rooted in the Word of God, noting that over **5,000 Bibles** have been distributed to widows as part of the organization's discipleship programme. Quoting **Psalms 133**, she emphasized that unity remains one of Nyanam's greatest strengths.

She highlighted that Nyanam's distinctive approach combines biblical grounding with practical education and social action. Through the Voice of Change curriculum, widows receive context-specific education before implementing community-led solutions. Graduates were encouraged to initiate social action projects that continue transforming their communities.

The Executive Director also recognized the remarkable contribution of Widow Trainers, Widow Mentors, and Peer Counsellors whose volunteer leadership has strengthened support systems across Leadership Circles. She further celebrated that 390 widows' children had received educational support through school fees assistance during the year.

She called upon widows to reject every label associated with widowhood—including discrimination, denial of inheritance rights, exclusion from opportunities, and harmful stereotypes—and to embrace their identity as leaders.

*"Widows should know that Nyanam loves them, and God loves them even more. They are leaders. The heart of Nyanam is the Word of God, and our greatest investment is education followed by action. Unity is our strength, and the Lord who has faithfully guided us over the past seven years will continue leading us as we expand our mission over the next seven years." - Dr. Jackie Odhiambo*

## Message from Rev. Victoria Mitema

Rev. Victoria Mitema delivered a deeply encouraging and faith-filled message centred on God's unwavering love for widows. Drawing from Psalm 68:5, she reminded widows that God identifies Himself as "a Father to the fatherless and a defender of widows," assuring widows that He understands their pain, carries their burdens, and restores hope. She reminded widows that their current circumstances do not define their future.



*"God has a future for widows and their children. God is not finished with you yet. With God, you are light."*

She described widows as resilient women who possess wisdom, unconditional love for their families, and remarkable strength, while assuring them that every tear shed by a widow is seen and answered by God. She further challenged society and government leaders to move beyond sympathy and instead demonstrate empathy through deliberate policies and action. She called for the establishment of special government structures and legislation that recognize and protect widows' rights, including dedicated widow support funds, county legislation on widow protection, fair administration of land and inheritance disputes, and greater political representation for widows. She also praised Nyanam for creating safe spaces where widows receive emotional, spiritual, and psychosocial support. *"Whoever gives you a Bible gives you life."*

She concluded by thanking Nyanam for restoring hope not only to widows but also to their children through education, mentorship, and holistic support.

### **Guest Speaker message**

The guest speaker, Bishop Perez Owira, encouraged widows to embrace self-reliance by recognizing that widowhood is not a limitation but an opportunity to rebuild their lives with faith, resilience, and determination. Drawing from the event theme, she emphasized that self-reliance is founded on four key pillars: economic empowerment, education and skills development, community networks, and health and well-being. She challenged widows to identify and build on their strengths, start small businesses, invest in education for themselves and their children, work collectively through leadership circles, and prioritize their physical and spiritual well-being. Rooting his message in biblical teachings, he reminded the widows that God cares deeply for them and that through hard work, perseverance, and trust in Him, they can transform their families and communities into thriving, self-reliant societies.

*"Widowhood is not the end of the journey but a season through which God reveals His strength and glory. Every widow has the potential to rise, lead, and transform her family and community. Self-reliance begins with believing in yourself, working hard, investing every opportunity wisely, and embracing knowledge as power. No widow should walk alone; through leadership circles, cooperatives, and mentorship, we become stronger together. A strong widow builds a strong family, and a strong family builds a self-reliant community. Let us always put God first, knowing that He transforms sorrow into testimony and hardship into hope. To governments and communities, create opportunities, remove barriers, protect widows' rights, and honour them*



*with dignity, for when one widow rises, an entire community rises with her. Today, we celebrate widows not because of what they have lost, but because of the hopeful future they are courageously building."*

Collectively, the speeches echoed a common message: widowhood should never define a woman's destiny. Through faith, education, economic empowerment, advocacy, and community solidarity, widows are rising as confident leaders, productive farmers, entrepreneurs, caregivers, and agents of transformation. The speeches affirmed Nyanam's unwavering commitment to ensuring that every widow is treated with dignity, equipped with opportunity, and empowered to thrive.

### **Nyanam community and leadership engagement**

This year's celebration marked a significant milestone as we hosted our largest gathering yet. The event brought together government officials, political leaders, development partners, friends of Nyanam, and members of the wider community, demonstrating the growing commitment to championing the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of widows. Their presence underscored the power of collaboration in creating lasting change and strengthening self-reliant communities.



We extend our sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to the success of this memorable celebration:

- **Our Funding Partners:** Segal Family Foundation, Imago Dei Fund, Restoring Vision, and Livelihood Impact Fund, for their generous support and contribution.
- **Our Implementing Partners:** Transparency International Kenya (TI Kenya) and Onsite ICF, who enriched the event by sharing valuable services and information with participants, alongside offering support.
- **Our Board of Directors:** Represented by Board Chair Pollet Juma, alongside Jay Mwangangi, Rossie Lore, and Agnes Aron, whose leadership, governance, and unwavering commitment continue to guide Nyanam's growth and impact.
- **Government Leadership:** Chief Paul Otieno of Osiri Sub-location, whose presence reflected the importance of local leadership in advancing community development and widow empowerment.
- **Political Leaders:** Hon. Beatrice Odongo (Kisumu County CEC Member for Gender, Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs), Hon. Rosa Buyu (Member of Parliament for Kisumu West Constituency), and Hon. Elisha Oraro (Speaker of the Kisumu County Assembly),

whose participation demonstrated strong public support for the rights and empowerment of widows.

- **Friends of Nyanam:** Equity Bank, IFAGE, and Victoria Ministries, whose continued friendship and partnership strengthen our mission and expand our collective impact.



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to every guest, partner, supporter, and stakeholder who took the time to join us in commemorating this year's International Widows Day. Your presence, encouragement, and commitment made the celebration truly memorable and reaffirmed our shared responsibility to advance the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of widows. Together, we are building stronger partnerships, empowering more women, and creating lasting change in the communities we serve.

## Next steps and recommendations



Overall, the event was well coordinated, and several aspects are worth retaining in future gatherings. However, a few improvements would further strengthen organization and participant experience:

- **Digitize the registration process:** Introduce personalized registration cards with barcodes, QR codes, or other scannable technology to enable faster check-in, reduce congestion at the entrance, and improve the accuracy of attendance records.
- **Strengthen registration capacity:** Increase the number of registration desks and deploy additional volunteers during peak arrival periods to ensure all participants are registered before entering the venue.
- **Maintain designated seating arrangements:** Continue allocating dedicated seating for graduating Leadership Circles, as this greatly improved coordination during certificate presentations. Additionally, position ushers at strategic points to guide participants to their designated sections and enhance crowd movement.
- **Improve accessibility during service delivery:** Future eyeglasses distribution exercises should be conducted in larger, more spacious venues to improve crowd management and participant comfort. Priority service should be provided for elderly and vulnerable widows, alongside adequate seating, enhanced accessibility, beneficiary education on eyeglass care, and appropriate follow-up support to maximize the intervention's long-term impact.

## Voices

*"I am truly impressed by the transformative work Nyanam is doing to improve the lives of widows. The impact is evident, and we are proud to be part of this journey. We remain committed to strengthening our partnership with Nyanam and will continue supporting the construction of decent homes for widows, building on the progress we have achieved together."* – **Ken Munyendo, RD Onsite ICF**

*"As widows, we are often labelled and looked down upon. Before joining Nyanam, I lacked the confidence to speak in public or express myself. Through the education, mentorship, and prayers I have received, my life has been transformed. Today, I am confident enough to stand before people and speak with courage. I have become bold in both my words and my actions. I have learned how to farm and now grow vegetables to support my family. I am also able to counsel others and confidently share the Word of God in my church. Nyanam has restored not only my confidence but also my purpose and hope for the future."*  
– **Susan Pauline, Nyanam Widow**

*We are deeply grateful to Nyanam for the incredible transformation it has brought to our lives and communities. Through the organization's teachings, we have learned that self-leadership begins with*



*believing in ourselves before we can lead others. We now understand that the soil is a valuable resource that, when nurtured, can provide sustainable livelihoods, and that cleanliness is essential for good health and the well-being of our families. The knowledge, skills, and encouragement we have received have empowered us to become more confident, self-reliant, and hopeful. Truly, Nyanam has changed our lives and transformed our communities."* – **Lilian Juma, Nyanam Widow**

*"Nyanam has reminded us that God has a purpose and a future for every widow and her children. No matter the hardships we face, God is not finished with us yet. Through Him, we are called to be a light in our families and communities. We have also come to appreciate the strength and wisdom that widows possess—their unconditional love for their families, their resilience, and their unwavering faith. We are encouraged by the assurance that every tear shed by a widow is seen by God, who hears, responds, and brings hope even in the most difficult moments."* – **Rev. Victoria Mitema**

*"The joy of the Lord shall be your strength. Being a widow is not the end of the world. Together, we will champion policies that promote widows' inclusion and dignity. By 2032, the greatest success story of Nyanam will be the widows themselves, who will influence policy, transform communities, and demonstrate that widowhood is not a limitation but a platform for leadership."* – **Pollet Juma, Nyanam board chair**

*"As a Board, we are committed to advocating for policies that fully integrate widows into society, ensuring they enjoy equal opportunities and dignity. Widowhood is not the end of life, and together we can influence meaningful policy change that protects widows' rights and promotes their inclusion."* – **Agnes, Nyanam board member**

*"At Nyanam, we reject the belief that widowhood should mean exclusion or lack of respect. Widows deserve dignity, equal opportunities, and the freedom to thrive. With access to land, practical skills, and economic opportunities, widows can realise their full potential. A food-secure home can produce leaders, yet widows are often left behind whenever support reaches women. One cannot produce food without land; therefore, protecting widows' land rights is essential because land enables food production, income generation, village development, and ultimately contributes to the development of the entire world."* – **Jotham Oyugi, IWD secretary**

## Conclusion

International Widows Day 2026 marked a defining moment in Nyanam's journey, celebrating the remarkable resilience, courage, and leadership of widows while showcasing the transformative



impact of collective action. We are deeply grateful to our partners, donors, volunteers, and friends whose unwavering support continues to make this work possible.

As we set our sights on International Widows Day 2027, we move forward with renewed hope, purpose, and determination. Together, we will continue creating opportunities for widows to lead with confidence, achieve sustainable livelihoods, and inspire lasting change in their families and communities. The journey continues, and together, we are shaping a future where every widow has the opportunity to thrive.