



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



A woman wearing a purple jacket over a traditional orange and purple striped dress and a matching headwrap is speaking into a microphone. She has a name tag around her neck. The background shows a wooden structure with a corrugated metal roof.

# Table of Contents

**01**

Vision and mission

**02**

Widows' voice

**03**

Impact summary

**04**

Message from ED

**05**

Ending stigma

**06**

Message from Chair

**07**

Program highlights

**08**

Widows' voice

**09-10**

Leadership

**11-12**

Mental health

**13-14**

Livelihoods

**15**

Land justice

**16-17**

Youth education

**18**

Widows' voice

**19**

Challenges

**20**

2023 goals

**21**

Gratitude

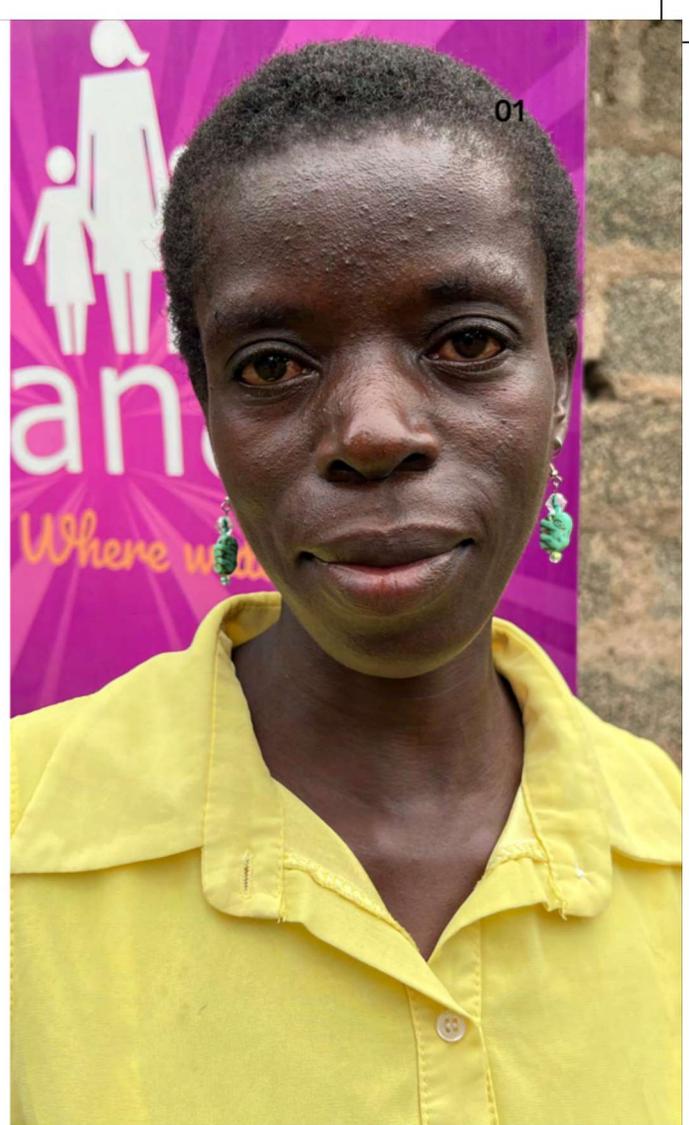
**22**

Team

# Africa where widows thrive

## Our Mission

We are a restorative justice organization, preparing widows to be leaders of positive social transformation in their communities through integrated programs in leadership, health, livelihoods, land justice and youth education. Our work alleviates widowhood poverty, mitigates the impact of HIV/AIDS, and gives widows the tools to tackle oppressive cultural, economic, and social practices that undermine widows' dignity and limit their agency.



**“Since I joined  
Nyanam, I have  
been food  
sufficient and I  
have become an  
agricultural  
teacher in my  
community.”  
Caroline, A  
widow**

## 2022 WAS WOW!

This year's experience with Nyanam has been WOW! As a group of widows, we have been in existence for the past three years. However, since Nyanam came to us in January, we've got a lot of experiences in terms of trainings. We have been trained on how to tackle issues about widowhood which has motivated us a lot. Some of us were very vulnerable and needed a lot of help and support and we have gotten a lot of moral support from Nyanam.

When we come for trainings, we are gifted dresses. These trainings really help us. With multistorey kitchen gardens, we now have fresh vegetables from our own hard work and close home. The multistorey garden has enabled us to plant different types of vegetables and now as a widow you find that you have vegetable, sell the excess and use the money to buy other thing that you may lack. Nyanam has taught us to be self-reliant, so we do not depend on others. Personally, I have been trained on counselling. The knowledge and skills from this training has helped my life a lot. It opened my mind to know a lot of issues in my life and out of that I have trained others not only from my leadership circle but also from the surrounding. Sometimes, I get calls to offer counselling support to other groups. This encourages me because I have seen widows become their better selves through these sessions.

It is interesting how Nyanam invests in widows' leadership. This is because, they emphasize on gaining knowledge and skills and multiplying training to all widows in the organization. I say I have received the microbusiness training even though I didn't attend personally. This is because, the two widows who were trained from my leadership circle came back and trained us. Out of that training, we have come up with liquid soap making business. I really want those widows that haven't joined Nyanam to organize themselves in groups and pursue to be part of us. I want to encourage them that they are missing a lot and I mean a lot. Those of us who have joined Nyanam, let's continue to encourage one another to continue this cause.

Betty, A Nyanam Widow

**2022 Goals****IMPACT  
SUMMARY**

“Nyanam has enabled me to become a trainer even though I never went to school. I never knew I could reach this far.” a widow

**178**

widows joined Nyanam in 2022

**560**

widows connected in Kisumu and Siaya Counties

**168**

widows formally trained in various capacities in mental health, agriculture, leadership and land justice

**74%**

Of widows report improved food security

**70%**

Of widows report improved mental health

**80%**

Of widows report earning additional income from their kitchen gardens

**540**

Kitchen gardens planted for food security

**194**

Group counselling sessions held

**227**

Youths reached with education on puberty and menstrual health

**200**

Multistory gardens planted for food security

**178**

widows received need-based individual counseling

**132**

Community leaders trained on land justice

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is a joy filled work! This is how our team in Kenya felt this year. We cultivated authentic and supportive work relationships to deliver our best to the widows. We were constantly learning from the wisdom of widows. One of our staff said, "working with widows is lifegiving."

This river of life is flowing within the entire organization. As a team leader, it is a privilege to see widows in the organization grow and take leadership roles in serving one another. Most of our 2022 trainings were led by widows. It is also a privilege to see my team grow not only in knowledge and skills, but also in a deeper self-awareness of their individual passions and purpose, curving spaces in the organization to fulfill their dreams, be it seeing widows or their children thrive. I thank all our staff and volunteers for the unmatched dedication and we look forward to growing our team in 2023.

We are grateful for the programmatic achievements like multistorey gardens for food security, our first young widows conference in which the need for family planning services arose, and successfully piloting of our Voice of Change curriculum on Parenting as a widow that we will implement in 2023. For the first time, our staff had a 2-day retreat in which we purposed to be a soulful organization, bringing our authentic selves to our work. We also acquired work equipment, furnished our working space, and participated in branding, communications, and strategy trainings. For a young organization like ours,



having a functional workspace and the institutional strengthening support is not small feat.

To our generous donors and friends around the world who give their resources and time to help Nyanam grow, we are grateful for your shared wisdom, resources, and time. Your partnership with us is changing lives positively every day and we look forward to growing this community that continues to put joy and smiles on widows' faces.

With gratitude,  
Jackie

“Being a young widow is difficult. I got married at an early age of 16 years and when I turned 18 my husband died. I was left with in-laws who caned me as if I was a child. Physical abuse was routine and a way of life for me. One painful incident was when they accused me of stealing their dog. A dog! I mean, even in poverty, where would I take a dog and why would I steal one? This accusation was taken to the chief where I was summoned to say why and where I took the dog. I had no response because I did not know where the dog went. This resulted in naming and shaming in the community something that hurts me to date.”

Stella, A Nyanam widow

**Together, we can end  
widowhood stigma.**

# Message from our<sup>06</sup> Board chair

**We are keen to build Nyanam's internal capacity to serve more widows.**



On behalf of the Nyanam board, I would like to begin by sincerely thanking you for your prayers, donations, referrals, and volunteer time. A little goes a long way, especially for a small organization like ours.

Nyanam has significantly higher demand for its services than we have resources for. The board made strides to grow Nyanam's capacity and grow its resources. We began the process of registering as a charitable entity in the USA with support from Sidley Austin LLP and we hope to complete it this year. We also made strides to formalize the board and will further enhance our governance this year.

We are also keen to build Nyanam's internal capacity to serve more widows. This includes strategic support to Jackline and the team in areas such as communications, story-telling, organization compliance, staffing, among others. A strong organization translates to an empowered widow community. THANK YOU and consider supporting Nyanam in 2023, in whatever capacity possible.

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# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



## Our First Young Widows Conference

Widowhood is a stigmatized social identity in Africa. Young widowhood adds to the layers of vulnerabilities. We met widows aged 35 years and below to listen to their experiences and views on how Nyanam can better support them. In particular, they felt their voices were alienated in their families and their sexual and reproductive health not prioritized. With 5 of the 23 widows joining the conference with their infants, the young widows identified family planning services among their important areas of support.

## Our First Youth Education Strategy

Widows' children experience secondary stigma that impacts their relationship with their mothers and their success at school. After three years, we finally developed our first youth strategy with four specific goals to provide 1) comprehensive health education, 2) technology education, 3) environmental education, 4) secondary school scholarships. We are excited to start implementing this strategy in 2023.

## Our First Multistory gardens

Food security in widows' households is a priority for Nyanam. We distributed 200 multistory gardens that widows have planted. We are excited about multistory gardens as they address so many of the agricultural problems unique to widows and climate change related. Widows have small plots of land they use for subsistence farming. Multistory gardens multiply land productivity ten times, allowing planting of a variety and large number of vegetables in a small area. These gardens don't require weeding, reducing the amount of labour needed in the farm hence are user friendly to elderly widows. They also conserve water and can be maintained with recycling domestic wastewater, hence are more adaptive to effects of climate change like droughts. We hope to distribute more gardens in the futures.



## I LOVE NYANAM SO MUCH!

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In my life, I used to cry a lot. The pain and trauma I went through, I channelled them to crying in isolation. Ever since I joined Nyanam, a lot of things have changed. I have gained confidence, I no longer cry when sharing my story, and have a strong personality. The painful tears are now a strength.

Right now, I can stand in front of people, talk, teach, and engage which is something I never used to do before. Every time I come to the different trainings Nyanam holds, I feel motivated because I know I will go back and share the skills and knowledge I learnt with other widows.

Starting next year (2023), I will be supporting other Nyanam widows as community health volunteer, teaching them on nutrition, hygiene, and other related health talks. All these are because of the opportunity Nyanam has accorded me.

Nyanam has taken me from lowly places and now I am in a higher level in my community as a widow. Surely, I do not have words to explain or be grateful for their support. I just want to let them know how much I love them, and how much I am praying for them to continue impacting the lives of widows.

Rose, A Nyanam Widow

# LEADERSHIP

We view and treat widows as leaders. They are the household heads in their families, a responsibility they shoulder while facing numerous challenges in a patriarchal society.

This year, we connected additional 178 widows leaders in 8 leadership circles in the Nyanam family and gave each a Bible at their request. We use the Bible as a tool for women empowerment. In our Bible studies with widows, we have discovered a strong call for justice for widows in the Bible. In a predominantly Christian setting, we use this as a foundation for challenging oppressive attitudes and mistreatment of widows.

We formally trained 168 widows in various capacities as trainers of trainers, in leadership, sustainable agriculture, trauma healing and microbusiness. These widows led the multiplication of our work to reach 560 widows in 20 leadership circles.



“This project has made us a center of learning within our community. The community comes to us to learn more about agriculture. We will also be gaining additional income by providing some agricultural services to the community. For example, those who may want multistory gardens can come to us and we can charge them for setting up these gardens”

Jane, A Nyanam Widow

“The Bibles we have received has blessed us because the word of God is a blessing. The Bible has answers to everything. Many thanks to Nyanam and her partners/friends for gifting us with the Bibles.” Mary, A Nyanam Widow



**Bible-informed work  
for justice.**

# MENTAL HEALTH

1 in 8 people around the world are living with a mental health disorder.

Widowhood stigma and the social, economic and personal losses it creates worsens widows' mental health.

We held 194 group counseling sessions across 20 leadership circles. During group counseling, we covered topics of self and social perception and trauma healing reaching all the 560 widows in Nyanam. 178 widows also received individual need-based counseling for which property disinheritance was the leading reason for seeking individual counseling.

Through this work, 70% of widows reported improved mental health.

“In a span of two weeks I lost two of my children. This traumatized me and often resulted into being blamed for their death. Socially and health wise, I stagnated. However, after learning and understanding the different steps and levels of mourning and grief by Nyanam counsellors, I was able to sleep, get rest and connect again with members of my family.”

Alice, a Nyanam widow



“I have lived in constant battle with my in-laws ever since my husband died. We have never met eye to eye or sat together and often had misunderstanding. The major cause for this rift was their push to get me inherited, yet for me widow inheritance wasn't something I wanted to be involved in. Through the monthly group counselling sessions with Nyanam, I got to learn more on reconciliation and family restoration. This has helped me restore the relationship between me and mother-in-law. Now we talk, laugh and eat together.”

Roseline, A Nyanam Widow

**We practice  
restorative justice.**

# LIVELIHOODS

We love to see widows' households achieve sustainable food and nutrition security. Food is a basic need without which all other goals in life are unachievable.

In 2022, 74% of Nyanam widows reported achieving food security against our goal of 70% during an end-project survey. We conducted two 3-day training courses on sustainable agriculture with 40 lead farmers as planned. These widows multiplied the training across their 20 leadership circles to reach all the 560 widows at Nyanam. The two training sessions covered land preparation, seedbed preparation, transplanting, field crop management, harvesting, value addition, record keeping, and agribusiness.

This collaborative effort with widows and partners like Kickstart International led to the establishment of 540 ground kitchen gardens (96% of goal), 200 multistorey gardens (80% of goal) and 8 cooperative farms (80% of goal). In addition to purchasing multistorey gardens, we also purchased micro-irrigation pumps for each cooperative farm. Through these gardens, widows get fresh vegetables for their meals at home and sell surplus for additional income. 80% of the widows reported gaining additional income from their vegetable gardens through vegetable selling in their local markets, at the communities and some even receive orders from local schools.



“Since I started to be trained in Nyanam, I have increased my farm productivity and I have a consistent source of income.

Now I am sure of getting between US\$ 10-15 every week.

I am leading the training multiplication not only to my leadership circle but also to my community to bring a difference.”

Anne, a Nyanam widow



# LAND JUSTICE

Property and land disinheritance is the primary reason Nyanam widows seek individual counseling. Disinheritance affects widows' mental health, food and housing security, and the economic future of their children. At Nyanam, 86% of widows do not have land title for their homes in their names.

This year, we trained 132 community leaders on women's land rights and land succession process. During these trainings, 20 widows participated to speak on their behalf on land injustices. One leadership circle created an original skit on land issues and used forum theatre to challenge community attitudes and response to women's land issues. Increasingly, we are seeing more Nyanam widows coming forward to seek our support with land ownership.

"The continuous conflict between my mother-in-law and myself, made my father in-law to offer me a separate land to build on. Despite his kind gesture, the land he gave me did not belong to the family and I was yet again evicted."

Sophia, a Nyanam widow

"Many times, during planting seasons, I am given a small portion of land which still I must fight to keep farming on. The land distribution is also done in secret. I am never allowed to join the family when land is being divided. When I was pregnant, I was completely side-lined from land issues because they believed it would bring bad omen if I was engaged." Eunice, a Nyanam widow



# YOUTH EDUCATION

Our youth program uses mentorship workshops and annual camps to provide comprehensive health education, technology education, environmental education, and need-based secondary school sponsorships to widows children.

We trained 16 widows' children on robotics for three months led by two youth mentors and then sponsored them for their first trip ever to Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, to participate in a robotics competition. We also conducted 2 mentorship workshops on puberty and decision making and health lives and life skills reaching 201 widows' children (100% of our goal) (105 boys and 96 girls). We distributed sanitary pads to all the girls and underwear to all the boys.

We also provided partial scholarship to two needy children and we plan to expand this in 2023.

For realization of our program strategy, we held a 2-day training for 26 widows' children as youth mentors, representing the children of widows in the 20 leadership circles at Nyanam. The youth mentors were selected by widows themselves as role models in their communities. We tasked the youth mentors with a responsibility of organizing widows children from each leadership circle into youth circles and so far 10 youth circles with 227 widows' children have been created. We plan to implement our youth strategy through these circles, empowering the children to lead each





## YOUTH VOICES

“My main lesson from the mentorship training was how everyone’s opinion and ideas were taken with love during the training”

“What strike me the most, was the importance of creating and setting boundaries in my life as a young person”

“I want to thank Nyanam International for giving us sanitary towels and pens. This will enable us to stay in class for longer hours without the fear of staining in class.”

## MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

**Q: How many years have you been with Nyanam?**

A: In my group, we have just been with Nyanam for a year.

**Q: For the one year you've been with nyanam, how have things been in your life so far?**

A: Things have been good. Since we joined Nyanam, my life has changed. I've come to understand some things that I didn't know like the value of having your own kitchen garden. Nowadays, I have vegetables for home consumption, and I am also able to sell the surplus produce to other families in my community.

**Q: Apart from kitchen garden what else do you do with Nyanam?**

A: In our group, we do merry-go-round (Table banking) where we contribute shares every week. This money, we are also able to borrow it and it can help us in other home and business things. We do it on a weekly basis where the collected shares are given to one person every week. This has helped us in developing our businesses so that we can depend on ourselves.

**Q: Here in Nyanam we have counselors who are pastors, and they visit your groups every month. What have you learnt from them in group counseling?**

A: I have learnt a lot from the group counseling. When they first came to our group, I was in bondage somewhere in my life. And from their teachings, I am healing and now I am freer. This group counselling made me to go and ask for forgiveness from those I wronged, and I was forgiven.

**Q: What can you tell other widows?**

A: I can encourage them that they should not be stuck on to what had happened in the past but accept that it has happened and move on. Also, they be people who can forgive others. As the bible say that we should forgive other because that's when God can forgive us.

Rosemary, A Nyanam Widow

# CHALLENGES

## We faced in 2022



### Office equipment / space

While we started the year with limited laptops and workstations, we are grateful for funding from Imago Dei Fund that helped us acquire laptops and furnish our workspace this year. We would like to purchase land to construct Nyanam premises to enable diverse programming that our population needs.



### Vehicle for field travels

We believe in meeting widows where they are so that they incur no additional expenses in accessing Nyanam services. This means we travel to communities, and to widows' homes. However, the lack of organizational vehicle to facilitate these travels costs us both time and staff safety during field travels.



### Inadequate staffing

We are looking for resources to hire additional staff to support monitoring and evaluation, fundraising, and programmatic work such as in land justice. With the growing and service-based work, our staff of 6 full time and 2 volunteers is inadequate.



### Climate change

Widows experienced perennial droughts and flooding that impacted our agricultural program. We have introduced multistory gardens



### Inflation

The cost of living in Kenya doubled in 2022 following the economic effects of the invasion in Ukraine. This affected our purchasing power throughout the year.

# 2023 GOALS

We are privileged to serve 740 widows in 2023. We invite you to join us in empowering widows and their children in the following areas:

- Supporting additional 214 widows joining Nyanam in 2023
- Hosting International Widows Day celebration with over 300 widows at Nyanam
- Formal training of 204 widows in preventative health education, leadership, agriculture, soap making, microbusiness, and paralegal services
- 29 leadership circles receiving monthly group counselling sessions, 200 widows receiving individual counselling
- Distributing 600 multistory gardens
- 200 widows' children receiving group-based mental health counselling
- 50 widows supported in starting their land ownership journey and filing their succession cases with the courts.
- 400 widows children participate in a 2-day youth camp on environmental stewardship and 2-mentorship workshops
- 100 widows children receive partial secondary school scholarships.
- 58 houses constructed for widows needing housing support
- Vehicle obtained to facilitate Nyanam staff in field travels
- Land purchased for Nyanam premises to build a facility for our training and engagement with widows and their communities.

**Join us in making  
these goals a reality!**

**80**

Widows

in 2019

**115**

Widows

in 2020

**356**

widows

in 2021

**560**

widows

in 2022

**740**

widows

in 2023

# DONORS & IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

We acknowledge the contributions of the following organizations and individual friends who are helping widows at Nyanam affirm their dignity and exercise their agency in their families and communities.

- Steve and Elizabeth Nielsen
- James Mathenge and Angie Okhupe
- Andrew and Kelsey Morgosh
- Matt Mascioli
- Sarah and Kevin Storer
- And many more individual donors including Cheryl, Yue-yi, Laurie, Jill, and Haotian



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