

Nyanam Annual Report 2024



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Nyanam
widows rising



Nyanam

Annual Report

2024

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“Nyanam has changed my life”

Our Vision

Africa Where Widows Thrive

Our Business Model



Widows create leadership circles that meet weekly for mutual support.

9 months Establishing connection and trust



Widows receive training and support in 12 capacity areas using Voice of Change approach

3 years Building leadership confidence & competence



Leadership circles join Nyanam widows' network & implement change projects

Timeless Leading change through collective action

Executive Director's message

Friends, "The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. Christ has come so that we may have life in abundance" (John 10:10). This is the inspiration for the vision Nyanam has for widowed women in Africa: that they would thrive - spiritually, socially, economically, and personally. In our mission, preparing widows to lead community transformation, we trust the widowed women to lead the way in creating communities where they thrive.

This year was rocky for our country Kenya. While we experienced floods, violent protests, long drought, and acute inflation that raised the cost of living, our partners came through strongly to deliver hope to widows who were adversely affected. We built six modern and durable houses for widows who lost homes during the floods. We provided 529 widows with climate adaptive multistory gardens to improve household vegetable production. And our community of widows grew, doubling our numbers from 735 to 1480 by the end of the year.

We celebrate all our partners, highlighting new partnerships formed in 2024 with Blood: Water, First Fruit Foundation, Praxis, Muirfield Foundation and Reality SF church in San Francisco. We also celebrate all our staff including Perez, a Nyanam widow now working with us full time as Paralegal, to support fellow widows in accessing their land rights. We celebrate all the 44 widow mentors and 126 widow trainers, who after receiving our trainings, spent 1719 hours training fellow widows in their widow-to-widow support groups we call leadership circles. The widow mentors have become experts of our Voice of Change model, using it to deliver impact. We are excited to pilot test implementing Voice of Change with oth-

er community partners in 2025.

Following our annual household survey, widows reported improved food security from 47% to 54%, reduced severe depression from 15% to 7%, 30 land ownership cases filed with our local courts, and 170 children receiving school fee support.

In this season of massive growth, change is our new constant. We are working hard to improve our efficiency and effectiveness of our organization, deploy digital systems in monitoring and evaluating our work, conduct research in partnership with local and international university students to evaluate the impact of our work. We are also employing more widows in our team and skilling them to carry the work forward and strengthening our board. In other words, there is more ways for more people to be engaged.

2025 will be the seventh-year anniversary of Nyanam. We consider it a moment of celebrating seven years of impact, re-committing ourselves to the mission God has given us, and charting the second season of our work. This second season is a season of scaling. There are 205,832 widows in the Lake Victoria region in Kenya. We seek to deliver impact for 15% of this population, 30,725 widows, by 2030. This is both inspiring and challenging, and we invite you to come do the good work with us.



**JACKIE
ODHIAMBO**

Board Chair Message

Dear Friends of Nyanam,

I am privileged to write to you again this year. It is an especially emotive letter since this is my last letter as the Board's Chairperson.

Path to financial sustainability

When I joined the inaugural board in 2019, my mission was clear – putting Nyanam on a path to financial sustainability, where we didn't have to host numerous fundraisers in a year to support Nyanam's budget.

In 2020, Nyanam was serving 115 widows, had a budget of \$15,812, and one institutional donor who accounted for 47% of the budget. In 2023, Nyanam served 735 widows with a budget of \$173,104 and had seven institutional donors who accounted for 77% of the budget. Individual investors continue to be a steady source of capital, having contributed \$ 7,765 in 2020, and \$34,985 in 2023. By any measure, this is a resounding success!

This growth and shift towards institutional funding has been driven by the continued improvement in Nyanam's operational structure, refinement of the various programs, and the diligent work of the team in

gathering data and generating insights on Nyanam's impact on widows.

This year, 2025, will be special: Nyanam has already pre-qualified 1836 new widows hence the total number of widows in Nyanam will be 3280. Needless to say, this will come with significantly larger human and capital resource requirements. We are counting on you to continue supporting Nyanam in whatever capacity to impact the lives of these widows and their children.

Storytelling: Nyanam's work comes to life on the ground

I have supported Jackie's community projects since our days at Williams College. In 2012, I visited Osiri, her home village, to deliver a suitcase of donated books for the school she had founded (Konyango Mboto Primary School). Seeing the hope in the kids' eyes, and the impact Jackie was having on the village that raised her was inspirational. I got to truly grasp the "why" and this fueled my desire to continue supporting Nyanam's work.

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In December 2023, I spent a day with the Nyanam team, hearing from the various department heads on their achievements, and future plans. It was inspiring to see how Nyanam has grown from three individuals to a team of fifteen with distinct responsibilities and all driven by a shared mission of enabling widows to thrive in their communities.

In December 2024, Angie Okhupe (Board member) and I went to visit Nyanam. In addition to visiting the team and Nyanam's offices, we were lucky to join a widow group which was having its weekly meeting on the same day. Their songs and dances as they welcomed us was endearing. Their stories of how they left the business of brewing illicit alcohol for other economic activities championed by Nyanam was inspiring. Their hope for the future was palpable and their camaraderie enviable. Joyce, whose house we were in, was very proud of her climate-adaptive kitchen garden that Nyanam had trained and funded her to build.

After all these visits, I am certain that no form of written report can give you an accurate picture of the breadth and depth of Nyanam's impact. We are keen to find other ways of bringing this to life for our supporters across the globe since we recognize that not everyone can make the trip to Kenya. Storytelling is going to be an integral part of Nyanam's story going forward.

The road ahead

After 36 months (three years) of training with the Dovetail Impact Scale program, Nyanam arrived at our BHAG: "To holistically support 37,500 widows, 15% of the widows in the Lake Victoria region in Kenya with our proprietary approach called Voice of Change, to overcome stigma and secure their land rights by 2030. As Nyanam continues to scale its impact, the challenges associated with scale are inevitable. Availability of resources, cultural differences, staff challenges, are just but a few of the anticipated challenges.

From a Board perspective, we have been discussing a few things in particular:

- i. How do we "replicate" Jackie? How can we add capacity and grow more leaders who can replicate Nyanam in other regions?;
- ii. How do we ensure that the personal touch Nyanam has with its widows and staff does not fade away?;
- iii. How do we ensure our programming is repeatable and scalable in an organized way while considering the nuances of each region?;
- iv. How do we fund this BHAG? These are challenging questions that will linger for the next few years. By God's grace, we are confident that we shall be able to achieve this BHAG for the benefit of the widows who are constantly knocking on Nyanam's doors.

Conclusion

For the last 6 years of my tenure, we have grown Nyanam's capacity and improved its operational processes. I am leaving an organization that is primed for further success and amplified impact. Going forward, I am looking forward to an organization that has more visibility and catalytic impact for both the Nyanam widows and other widows in general. We are looking forward to more impactful visibility that will leverage our work for greater impact (for example advocacy that will have impact at scale.)

If you can support Nyanam in any way, please reach out to us. My prayer for Nyanam is from Matthew 9:37-38: 37 Then he (Jesus) said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

On behalf of the Board, thank you for supporting Nyanam. God bless you richly.



“
I have confidence to
speak in front of people
”

Our Mission

We are a restorative justice organization preparing widows and their children to lead positive community transformation through holistic programs in leadership, health, livelihoods, justice, and youth education.



A widows' story: Nyanam has been truly life changing

Name: Bishop Perez Anyango Owira | **Leadership Circle:** Kambekotho Widows



This year with Nyanam has been truly life changing. I have had the opportunity to be part of so many Nyanam-led trainings including land rights, trauma healing, and agriculture—each one giving me the strength and knowledge to become a stronger widow. It is also incredible how these training courses have empowered my fellow widows as they have also grown and are more informed.

After my husband passed, I felt lost in grief, especially as I struggled to support our young children through school. I often thought,

“I wish you were here to help pay their school fees.”

But thanks to Nyanam’s school fees program, my grandchildren now get the support they need.

Personally, the biggest change has been healing from my past trauma. I used to feel heavy with sorrow, carrying emotional pain that held me back. Through Nyanam’s Voice of Change Trauma Healing training, I felt like the heavy burden was being lifted. One moment that will stay with me forever was the “Taking our burdens to the Cross” activity. I remember we were invited to write down our burdens and take them to the cross of Christ. After taking them to the cross, they were burnt, and we were led in a session of prayer. That was the moment I finally began to let go of the pain I had been holding onto for far too long.

Reading the story of Biblical widows such as Ruth and Naomi also brought me so much comfort—I saw how they found strength, and it helped me see that I could also do the same.

Today, I am delighted to say that I have gone from zero happiness to a life filled with peace and joy. The land rights training allowed me to understand that my land is my right, and it belongs to me and my children. With Nyanam’s help, I even managed to reclaim a piece of land that had been forcefully taken from me. That victory is a gift to me and my family.

Truly, Nyanam has been a tremendous source of strength and support, helping me go from a place of sorrow to one of resilience, hope, and purpose. I now have the confidence to lead my family forward, with a heart full of joy and peace.



Nyanam's Faith in Action

Nyanam works to equip Kenyan widows to “tackle oppressive cultural, economic and social practices that undermine widows dignity and limit their agency.” In much of Africa, widows are blamed for the deaths of their husbands and considered to have no value as persons in their own right. As a result of this perception, they routinely have their property confiscated by the families of their deceased husbands; they are disregarded, treated as disgraced and persecuted. Their children are mistreated too. Even worse, cultural expectations require them to submit to sexual exploitation and expose them to HIV and to pregnancy. Children born to them as a result are not supported by either the families of the deceased husband, their biological fathers or even the government.

All of these practices are unjust and counterproductive as well. They eat at the health of a community in that the children of widows are often malnourished and uneducated, sexually exploited, and unable to establish stable and healthy homes in adulthood.

Nyanam is dedicated to addressing the injustices and

prejudices that harm widows and their children from the posture of historic Christianity.

1. Nyanam is founded and staffed by Kenyans, who are native to the region in which we work. Our work is fueled and guided by our own Christian convictions which are widespread in our region. We embrace the God of the Bible who made all people in God's image and endowed them with inherent dignity.
2. Biblical Christianity is not captive to any one culture, but as a way of life and faith founded on the revelation of God, calls all cultures to account. It critiques western culture and practices as well as Kenyan. Nyanam calls Luo culture into question in its view of widows because it falls short of God's values.

In basing our work on the values found in the Bible, we equip widows with a foundation for their personal dignity and agency that is both culturally acceptable (in that it comes in the language and traditions of Christianity which is widely respected in Kenya) and challenging to the status quo (in that it speaks quite

directly to widows).

The world of the Bible is familiar and recognizable to rural Kenyans in a way it is not for industrialized communities. Many of the rural widows we serve live in villages in which people walk on dirt footpaths as they did in the villages of Jesus' world. They grow their food in plots tilled by hand as many did in those days. They live among the goats and cows that fill the biblical narratives. They walk to fill water jugs everyday as Judeans did then. They know personally the power one influential person has to either pervert or defend justice.

Because of these similarities between the widows' lives and the world of the Bible, it's narratives and teachings speak profoundly and clearly to the people of rural Kenya. When the Bible calls for the defense of widows and orphans because they are the least secure in the community, Kenyans know the truth of this. And Kenyan widows hear the encouraging and empowering message that they are valued by God.

Our work derives its power and wisdom from the texts of the Bible because it is truly good news for widows.

Bible As The First Gift



The first gift widows asked of Nyanam was a Bible. Since then, the stories of Biblical widows have offered courage, wisdom and hope for Nyanam widows. Each year, we give incoming widows to Nyanam a Bible in their local language. Since 2017, we have distributed 1480 Bibles.



A widows' story: Voice of Change is a true game changer

Name: Elizabeth Odongo **Leadership circle:** Blessed Widows



How has 2024 been like for you in Nyanam?

This year, I attended four trainings with Nyanam, including trauma healing, servant leadership, land rights, and asset management. Each of these trainings has enriched me with new knowledge, strengthening my confidence to not only share the insights with fellow widows but also with my community.

One of the highlights of 2024 was being introduced to Nyanam's Voice of Change (VoC) Curriculum, a true game-changer in how we learn and grow as widows. VoC has made it easier than ever for us to multiply our skills and knowledge within our circles. It's contextualized

approach provides us with holistic, relevant skills that address our real, everyday needs. Because of this, we are better equipped to face challenges, make informed decisions, and support each other with strength and compassion.

As a mentor, I can say with pride that VoC has created a supportive space where we widows connect freely, widow-to-widow.

The curriculum encourages us to open up, to share honestly and deeply, creating bonds and healing that go beyond just the training sessions. This year, with the help of Nyanam, we have been impacted with confidence and resilience.

What major difference has Nyanam made in your life this year?

Becoming a widow mentor with Nyanam in 2024 has changed my life in many ways. Before joining Nyanam, I faced countless challenges, including financial strain that made it difficult to support my family. But through the training program, Nyanam offers a small stipend for mentors, and this has

made a world of difference for me. Every time I return home from a mentoring session, I can buy food for my family, something I struggled to do before.

I am also deeply grateful for the support Nyanam provides for my daughter, who is one of the children they are sponsoring. School fees used to be a huge worry for me, but now, knowing her education is covered, I feel a tremendous weight lifted from my shoulders.

What can you tell other widows outside there?

If you have not yet joined Nyanam, I encourage you firstly to join a group and secondly become part of our family and experience the incredible opportunities Nyanam offers. At Nyanam, we are equipped through learning activities that give us the skills and confidence to become strong leaders in our families, homes, and communities. Together, we learn, grow, and support each other, building a future filled with hope and resilience. Come join us and discover the good things Nyanam has to offer!

OUR UNIQUE MODEL

We have created our own methodology for empowering widows called Voice of Change (VoC).

VoC is a widow-centric Bible-informed widowhood curriculum that unpacks the difficult experiences of widowhood and enables widowed women to devise actions that can bring meaningful change in their lives. VOC is our own unique intervention, created to be delivered by widows for widows through widow-to-widow support groups we call leadership circles. The curriculum is a series of topical issues pertinent to widowhood from parenting, food security, trauma healing to land rights.

The main curriculum has 12 topics. Each topic has eight sessions implemented within three months through one-hour weekly meetings. The 12 topics are completed after three years. Each topic focuses on a story of one widow in the Bible. The stories of these Biblical widows mirror the stories and thematic experiences that widows in the low and middle-income contexts in the modern world grapple with.

“

I live in peace with others

”

Management message: Widow mentors taking charge of Nyanam's work

Rev. Nicodemus Agumba - Widow Program Manager



Our leadership program uses our proprietary Voice of Change methodology to equip widow leaders (mentors and trainers) who implement Nyanam programs with the thousands of widows who continue to join our work. This program seeks to grow the number of widows, and widows' circles reached, as well as the number of widow trainers and mentors adequately trained to implement Voice of Change. The ultimate impact here is growing

widow leaders while improving how widows are seen and treated in their communities.

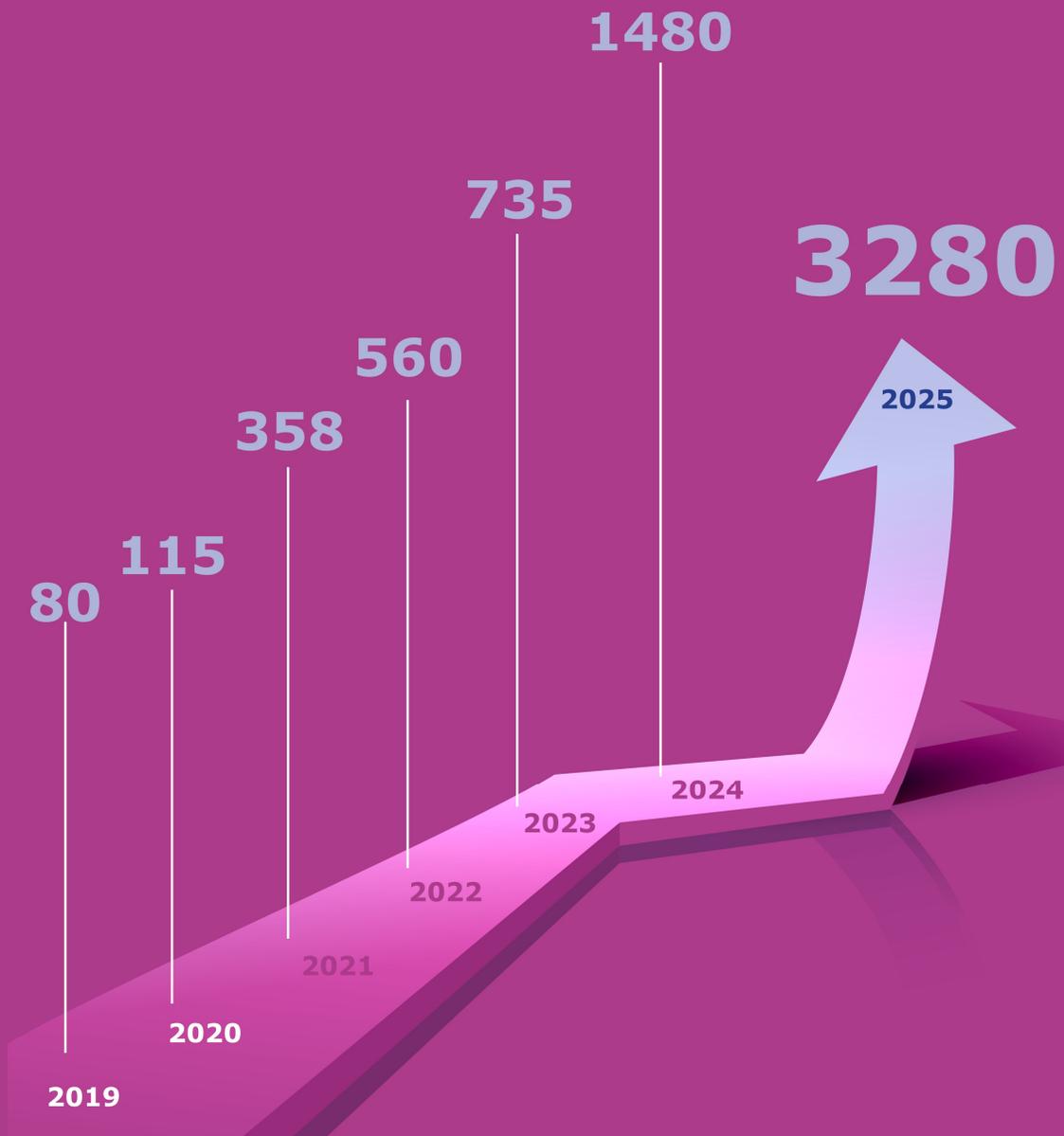
We are proud to have 44 widow mentors who have been extensively trained in the 12 thematic areas of the Voice of Change curriculum. These mentors, having completed Training of Trainers (ToT) training, with a good understanding of the flow of the Voice of Change curriculum. They are pivotal training widow trainers who then implement Voice of Change with widows in their weekly gatherings. In 2024, 70% of fieldwork in Nyanam was done by widow mentors. They led the induction of 740 new widows into the organization, and later trained 1850 widows seeking to joining Nyanam in 2025 in our leadership circles curriculum. The mentors also trained all the 126 widow trainers in Nyanam in four topic areas. They led in organizing events like International Widows Day where 1200 widows were celebrated and over 40 guests and partners were in attendance. They are also managing their own widows' welfare, visiting the sick and contributing for bereavements for their fellow widows.

Some of the mentors are called widow matrons, directly supporting the children of widows in their

groups and the elderly widows among them. The matrons follow up on youths receiving education fee support, ensuring school attendance and progress. They help plan youth events such as our annual youth camp and support implementation of youth safe spaces where 620 young people came together to grow, learn, and thrive. The matrons help mobilize their children for all Nyanam events and accompany young kids as the representative adults to ensure their safety. They host youth events or help identify community venues and help prepare meals during these events.

The work of widow mentors and matrons is improving lives and strengthening communities. By embracing leadership roles, they are not only enhancing the lives of widows but also shape societal perceptions of widowhood. Their commitment, resilience, and impact serve as an inspiration for others to join hands in building stronger, more inclusive communities. It takes one mentor to support six widows' circles with approximately 120 widows. We currently have 44 widow mentors and need to train 257 to have enough mentors to reach our goal of serving 30725 widows by 2030.

GROWTH SINCE 2019



WIDOWS PROGRAM

Leadership: Training Voice of Change Mentors and Trainers



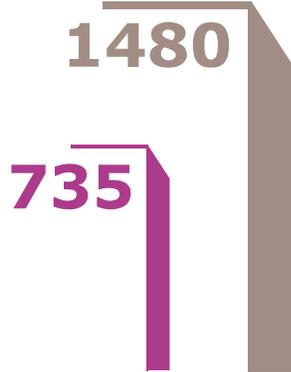
Voice of Change (VoC) equips widows to overcome stigma, and step into their leadership potential to lead positive change at home and in their communities. Nyanam widows, especially the mentors, have been the driving force behind our expansion, forming new groups and mobilizing their peers. Widow mentors are Nyanam widows who have shown both skill and passion in the growth and development of fellow widows. Widow trainers implement VoC in their own circles while the mentors train the widow trainers and provide supervision and mentorship during VoC implementation in the circles.

We are investing our time, skills and resources to ensure a world class cohort of VoC mentors who will be instrumental in the scale of VoC training, ensuring quality and effectiveness.

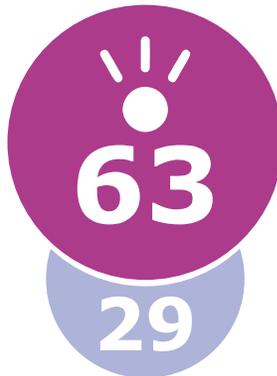
In 2024, the VoC mentors co-led all four trainings for 126 widow trainers, covering four topics of Land rights, Asset management, Trauma healing and Servant leadership. By fostering leadership and collaboration within these circles, VoC Mentors help create a ripple effect of empowerment, enabling widows to overcome challenges and build resilient communities.



We doubled from 735 to 1480 Nyanam in 2024



We doubled leadership circles from 29 to 63



We increased widow trainers from 52 to 126



1719 hours
(215 8-hour working days!)

delivering Voice of Change training to fellow widows in their circles



70% of 1480 widows reached in Nyanam through their training

2025 is a year of doubling again.

A total of 1836 widows in 74 circles are ready to transition to the second phase of our model, preparation. This will bring the total number of widows reached to 3328 widows in 137 circles. This growth is a testament to the trust widows place in our work and the leadership they bring to it. This mentorship-driven approach highlights the power of widows leading for widows, ensuring that Nyanam's mission is not just a vision but a living, thriving reality.



Voice of Change - Servant leadership

In partnership with Women in The Window International, we hosted a 3-day servant leadership training that equipped 25 widow mentors and eight Nyanam staff with essential skills and knowledge in

- ✔ The meaning and understanding of servant leadership,
 - ✔ The power of authentic leadership,
 - ✔ Valuing people through their love languages
 - ✔ Developing people through mentorship
- ✔ Building a community as leadership outcome. This pivotal training aligned with our mission to prepare widows as leaders of positive community transformation. We thank Women In the Window team for joining us in Kenya to lead this training for Nyanam widows.



Health: Voice of Change -Trauma Healing

The goal of our health program this year was a reduction in the proportion of widows experiencing depressive symptoms. We envisioned achieving this through VoC-trauma healing and counseling sessions. At baseline, 1 in 2 of widows report moderate to severe depressive symptoms, a rate that is twice the rate seen in the general population. We even lost one Nyanam widow to depression, a loss that underscored the urgency of improving our timelines and quality of mental health services.



VoC-trauma healing was centered on the Biblical stories of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:1–22), widowed women who struggled with their own heart wounds, allowing Nyanam widows to draw parallels between their personal grief and this narrative that brought their heart wounds to the forefront. Through shared lament, listening, and symbolic acts of healing, widows could face their grief and find comfort in collective understanding. This trauma-healing model has empowered widows to address mental health challenges within their circles, creating a sustainable, community-driven support network that nurtures healing across the entire Nyanam family.

Health Impact In 2024



85% to 87% ✓
Increased widows seeking care when sick.

Mild depression ✗
increased from **10%** in baseline to **21%** in endline

Severe depression ✓
declined from **15%** at baseline to **7%** to endline.

Moderate depression ✗
symptoms increased from **28%** in baseline to **35%** in endline.

“

I want to be part of Nyanam so that I can be trained as a leader and become a leader with a difference in my group, with other groups, and fellow widows, and build family respect.”

“[I have] respect from community”

”

Caring for aging widows

October 1st is International Day of Older Persons; a celebration we joined this year with deep gratitude for the wisdom and presence of the elderly widows in our community. Themed "Aging with Dignity", we gathered with 169 Nyanam widows aged 75 years and above, for week-long meetings in the various communities. In these meetings, we covered critical health and wellness topics, using our Voice of Change-Healthy Aging curriculum, and provided one-on-one counselling to offer a safe and

supportive spaces for open sharing. Each elder went home with a love basket, consisting of a few basic needs of cooking oil, soap, and sugar, and a cash transfer of \$10. Their advice for long, healthy lives included eating well especially vegetables, a community of sisterhood, and dancing. They expressed a desire for this to be an annual re-union. We are strengthening our leadership circles to care for the aging women amidst them, beyond their weekly gatherings. Nyanam is home for every widow, regardless of their age.



Nyanam Widows Aging with Grace and Dignity



Ann – 76 years



Felister – 75 years



Patricia – 76 years



Mary – 74 years



Grace - 80 years



Patrica – 76 years



Mathilda – 70 years



Magdaline – 84 years



Awithi - 84 years

A widows' voice: I am stronger and hopeful

Name: Sarah Ogendo **Leadership circle:** Kisian Railways



The last two years with Nyanam have been a remarkable experience, filled with teachings that continue to transform our lives. The benefits of Nyanam's training go beyond knowledge; they have given us courage, purpose, and the power to stand strong.

In 2024, my journey with Nyanam became even more of a blessing. We learnt so much, but the training on asset management was a breakthrough for me. Before, I never saw my children or my small piece of land as valuable assets. Yet after the training, I realized their potential. Inspired, I went home and put my new skills to work by starting a vegetable garden. I even purchased a water pump, so now, even in the dry season, we can enjoy fresh vegetables from my garden.

The impact of this is far-reaching. I now save a lot of money by growing my own vegetables. The money I used to spend buying vegetables, I can now put into savings and other important needs. I have been able to increase my contributions to our group table banking (savings and lending scheme) and I see the difference

it is making for my family. Before, I did not realize how much I was spending on vegetables. Even at just 20 Kenya shillings daily, by the end of the week, it adds up to 100 Kenya shillings (US\$0.77) which is a lot of money, if you calculate what I would spend in a year (SU\$275).

Another powerful experience has been the trauma healing training. Often, when we face widowhood struggles, it is so easy to feel alone. But in Nyanam, when we came together and shared our stories, I saw that others had similar or even greater challenges. This made me realize my strength and ability to encourage others.

Nyanam has taught me to walk with confidence and to see myself as more than my circumstances. Today, I am no longer that desperate person I once felt I was. I stand strong, with renewed hope and determination. My message to Nyanam widows and other widows is this: all is possible if you set your mind to it. Start with whatever little you have and make the most of it. Nyanam has shown me that when we take these first steps, the path forward becomes full of promise.

Livelihoods: Voice of Change – Asset Management

Ending food insecurity and increasing widows' income are the core goals of our livelihoods program, which we seek to achieve through investing in agriculture, microbusiness, asset management, and seed capital for table banking initiatives. Kisumu County were majority of the widows we serve come from has a food poverty rate of 61%. We measured income that

meets living cost for the first time and will be tracking it in the future.

Our livelihoods training this year focused on VoC-Asset Management. After training for 58 widows as VoC-Asset management trainers, the trainers reached an average of 460 Nyanam widows weekly (63% of Nyanam widows in 29 circles) with the same training, over an eight-week period. This program

was designed to equip widows with the skills needed to create, manage, and grow their wealth, enhancing their economic resilience. Each VoC implementation end with a social action project, that the widows design and implement in response to their 8-week learning. Some widow groups implemented group business projects such as soap making, poultry farming, goat rearing and fruit tree Planting.





54%

of widows reported food security, an increase from 47% in 2023.

33%

of widows reported having income that covers their living costs.



729

multistorey gardens distributed, an increase from 200 in 2022.

49%

growth in seed fund given widows for savings and loaning from \$1143.71 to \$1708.82



— “ Since I joined Nyanam I have never bought vegetables. ” —



Voice of Change – Agriculture with multistorey gardens: With support from First Fruit, we provided refresher training on VoC-agriculture, and distributed 529 gardens to widows who enrolled in Nyanam before 2024. Each multistorey garden can last up to 10 years providing a reliable garden for household vegetable production. In addition, the gardens produce enough for the widows to eat at home and sell the surplus, while saving from the expenses they could have incurred purchasing vegetables. These initiatives support sustainable economic empowerment and contribute to the fight against food insecurity among widows.

Seed capital for microbusinesses

Nyanam provides a revolving seed capital that widows used in their table banking activities. In 2023, the cash growth per widows' leadership circle ranged from 17% to 110%. The productivity of this fund has inspired Nyanam widows to seek a more formal widows self-fund mechanism. In 2025, we are establishing a Nyanam Widows Network Savings and Credit Cooperative Society to formalize this fund. This network is part of our sustainability plan. Widows who complete the three-year Voice of Change training will graduate and join this network as their lifelong ongoing membership and participation in Nyanam. We are having our first widow graduands in 2025. Widows have been able to borrow from the fund to support their children's school fees, start or strengthen their microbusinesses and agricultural ventures, and address personal emergencies.



In 2024, we provided US\$ 3958.26 to 29 leadership circles and are yet to consolidate returns.



Justice: Voice of Change – Land Rights

Our Human Rights and Justice Department has made significant strides in expanding services and deepening impact. Initially focused on education on land rights training, the department now provides comprehensive support, including assisting widows with land succession processes and facilitating the construction of safe, dignified housing. The goal is for more widows to have land titles in their own names, securing both their legal rights and long-term stability. Through these initiatives, we are reinforcing widows' rightful place in the community with resources that honour their dignity and resilience.

Land ownership project is one of our most challenging priorities too. There are many obstacles

along the way, from prohibitive court fees to corruption within local administrations, where bribery often influences cases. Some widows face opposition from family members who resist their claim to property rights. Centering restorative justice approach, we continue to navigate these hurdles through widow paralegals, pro bono advocates and local administration. The widow paralegals help fellow widows in obtaining necessary documentations, advocate with local authorities, and provide moral support as they accompany them through each stage of the legal process.

With support from Project Redwood, we have filed 30 land cases with local courts in Kenya, supporting widows to secure legal ownership

of their land. These cases represent the lives of widows who are seeking to establish land security, a vital step toward stability and independence. Land ownership provides widows with invaluable security, enabling them to improve food security, diversify their farming practices with sustainable methods, and protect intergenerational wealth for their children. We also trained 29 widow trainers as VoC-land rights trainers, who multiplied this training in their circles reaching of 473 widows weekly (63% of Nyanam widows in 29 circles), over an eight-week period. This training equipped widows with essential knowledge on land rights and property ownership, empowering them to take meaningful steps towards land security.



— “ I know my rights ” —



30
out of
50 land inheritance cases filed with Kenyan courts



An increase of widows owning their late husband's death certificate from **67%** in 2023 to **70%** in 2024.



An increase in the proportion of widows experiencing relational conflict with their in-laws from **25%** in 2023 to **30%** in 2024.

Though the journey ahead is long, the impact of land ownership is profound. Currently, only 10% of new Nyanam widows have land titles in their names. Yet, with continued determination and collaboration, we remain committed to making land ownership a reality for many more widows, providing them with the stability, security, and peace they deserve.



Six dignified houses after devastating floods

Dignified housing is essential for the well-being and security of widows, many of whom face precarious living conditions. In partnership with Onsite ICF, we have utilized innovative building technology to construct durable, three-roomed houses, enabling widows to move from temporary shanties into homes that provide stability, joy, and dignity.

In May this year, heavy floods in Kenya affected over 306,000 people, with 293,205 individuals displaced. Within our Nyanam community, the impact was significant: 30 widows' homes were damaged, and 36 widows suffered the loss of domestic animals and crops, all swept away by the floods. In response to this crisis, our partners at Imago Dei Fund, Reality SF, and generous individual donors mobilized support, allowing us to begin rebuilding efforts for the affected widows. Thanks to these emergency contributions, six widows with 24 children now live in safe and secure homes.

Since 2023, we have now built 13 modern and comfortable houses for widows and their children. Our partnership has laid a strong foundation for meeting our housing goals and expanding access to safe, comfortable, and dignified homes. As we look to the future, we are committed to securing additional support to safeguard the housing needs of all Nyanam widows, helping them build a brighter, more secure future.

International Widows Day 2024: Accelerating Gender Equality Through Land Rights For Widows



— “ This is our day; it has to be planned by us. ” —

Betty, A Nyanam Widow

On June 23rd, International Widows Day, we hosted an impactful gathering of over 1,200 widows alongside community leaders, government officials, and development partners in Kisumu. The event, themed “Accelerating Gender Equality Through Land Rights for Widows,” underscored our commitment to advancing widows’ rights and amplifying their voices in society.

This year’s celebration featured influential women leaders in our region, including Bishop Dr. Emily Onyango, the first African woman bishop in the Anglican Church of Kenya; Rosa Buyu, Member of Parliament for Kisumu West; and Beatrice Odongo, County Minister for Sports, Gender, and Youth Affairs for Kisumu County. During the

celebration, we were blessed with Bishop Onyango’s keynote address that highlighted important aspects on widowhood and how widowed women can lead healthy lives while still, inspiring the audience with her words. She encouraged widows to rise above societal barriers and amplify their voices to advocate for change.

“When God wants to do something difficult, he calls men. When God wants to do something impossible, he calls women.” Dr. Emily Onyango, Assistant Bishop, Anglican Church of Kenya

Through strategic partnerships at the event, 106 Nyanam widows received mental health screening and counselling and 65 received legal aid support. This event was led by Nyanam’s Widows’ Committee,

which embodied our organization’s core value of having widows participate meaningfully in all we do. The committee took charge of planning, budgeting, vendor selection, and supported resource mobilization, including contributions from widows themselves amounting to KES 63,000 (US\$ 490). As one widow remarked,

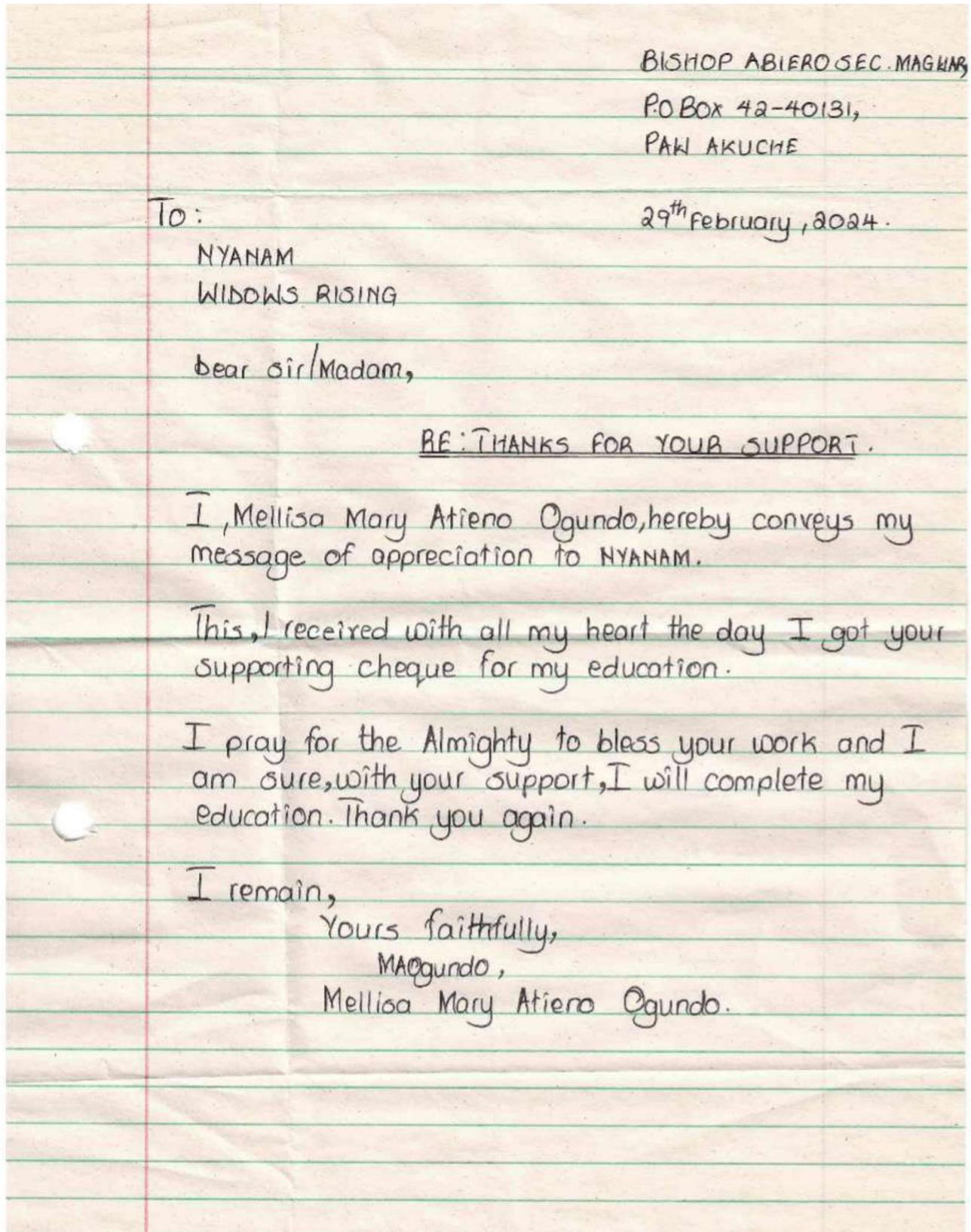
We extend our gratitude to our implementation partners, including Transparency International, the Federation for Women Lawyers in Kenya (FIDA), Kisumu County Department for Health, local administrators including chiefs for embracing this day. We remain committed to supporting widows as they strive for their rights and champion gender equality in their community.



WIDOWS' CHILDREN PROGRAM

Youth Education

Our youth education program improves access to education while training young people in environmental care, comprehensive health and technology education. This is a message from Melissa, a widows' child who received school fee support from Nyanam.



Comprehensive health and SRH

This year, our theme for widows' children education was "comprehensive health education." In partnership with our trained youth mentors and widow matrons, we trained for adolescents and youth. We also provided girls with sanitary pads, allowing them to flow with confidence while reducing school absenteeism related to menstruation. We partnered with the Kisumu County Health Department, and provided 150 youth, ages 15-24, access to sexual and reproductive health services. This included HIV testing for 107 youth and contraceptive services for 16 youth, addressing critical needs and reducing new HIV infections and teen pregnancies.

Improved sense of self-worth
from 49% before the program to 59% after safe spaces.

812 widows' children
(378 boys and 434 girls) in 29 youth mentorship groups trained on comprehensive health

74% widows' children
reporting high knowledge on comprehensive health (physical health, sexual and reproductive health, mental health and **520 sanitary towel** packets to our girls social health)

99% of widows' children supported with school fee retained in secondary school



Improving access to secondary school, vocational training and digital learning

We expanded our education support for widows' children, reaching 172 students, a significant increase from the 100 supported in 2023. Of the 172, 151 students received \$50 each to continue their secondary or post-secondary education, while 21 students received \$3.30 each for internet access to pilot participation in online learning opportunities in partnership with Learning Upgrade.

Through Learning Upgrade, the 21 widows' children accessed online courses in digital literacy, financial literacy, and workplace skills, equipping our youth with essential tools to thrive in an increasingly digital world. We faced challenges such as limited access to internet, difficulty in navigating the online space, language technicalities with digital learning. Given the challenges with this pilot, we decided not to roll it out to our young people, to intensify our support for the learners through our WhatsApp group, and to encourage Learning Upgrade to offer simplified explanations in technical courses.



Improving sense of self-worth

Cultivating positive mindset and resilience among Nyanam widows' children is a key goal in our youth program. We piloted our first safe spaces program focusing on improving sense of self-worth. We hosted 10 youth safe spaces, reaching 637 widows' children. Led by an expert trainer, these workshops nurtured positive mindsets, self-worth, and belonging, equipping our youth with skills and knowledge to love, see, and appreciate their self. Topics included self-awareness, self-worth, positive and negative self-talk, resilience, teamwork, and goal setting.

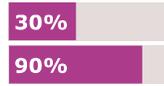
Through this pilot, we learnt that 1) initiative that target the mind and heart of widows' children are crucial in helping them fully develop and desire to experience their full potential, 2) guiding young people on goal setting has a greater potential in helping them realize their goals. This was evident as 84% of the widows children rated the goal setting and action planning part of the training as helpful or very helpful as compared to 76% before the session. 3) Finally, cultivating a sense of leadership among children is a confidence boost as 95% of widows' children viewed themselves as leaders after the session compared to 90% before the session. We are delighted to continue these sessions with over 1500 Nyanam widows' children in 2025 as we advance towards our goal of 80% of widows' children report high sense of self-worth.

Gender equality

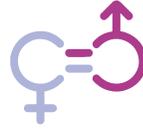
Through our internship program, we piloted our first youth-centric Voice of Change curriculum on gender equality in partnership with Imago Dei Fund and New Hope for Girls. This internship provided our young people the opportunity to learn about existing gender stereotypes and how as young people they could take positive steps to act and foster a more inclusive and respectful gender community. Using the powerful film the Girl Child and Her Long Walk to Freedom, four interns (two from Nyanam and two from New Hope for Girls) developed a discussion guide to shape conversations around gender equality while integrating our VoC gender equality curriculum.

The interns hosted 29 watch parties with all the 29 youth mentorship groups with 574 widows' children participating in the watch parties. The discussions during watch parties revealed deep-seated gender stereotypes that widows' children have been socialized into, limiting their perspectives on achieving a gender-equal community. These included boys playing and reading while girls doing household chores, girls being exchanged for cattle in marriage, and girls not allowed to speak up in church.

The watch party helped in addressing the gender stereotypes comparing pre and post watch party views of the children:



An increase from **73% to 90%** of the children expressed the view that a girl can do what a boy can do



An increase from **66% to 73%** recognized gender discrimination in their communities



An increase from **52% to 90%** emphasized the need to challenge traditional gender roles



73% felt the intervention, specifically a "girl child video," was effective in enhancing understanding of gender issues.

By addressing these stereotypes, we are helping the next generation challenge norms and contribute to a more equal and just society.



Annual youth camp

Youth camp is an annual event that we use to introduce the thematic area widows' children will cover in the following year. This year, we hosted our third youth camp with 1200 Nyanam widows' children on technology and entrepreneurship education. Prior to the camp, we trained 64 youth mentors on technology and robotics. About 30 widow matrons joined the last day of the mentors training, working hand in hand with youth mentors to make wind turbines. The matrons marvelled at the advancements in technology – as children they used clay to model, but their children are using pre-designed robotic kits. This intergenerational learning is an aspect of our youth programming, allowing widows to be involved in the lessons Nyanam provides their children. The youth mentors led the same training at the youth camp reaching 1200 widows' children. Seven widow matrons also joined the camp for four days.

- **15 groups** of children aged 10-14 years made wind turbines
- **9 groups** of children aged 15-17 years made folk lift machines
- **10 groups** of children aged 18-24 developed and presented business proposals
- **64 youth** mentors opened personal email accounts for the first time

We thank St. Marks Obambo Secondary School for offering us the venue for the youth camp. We also thank our partner Coderina from Nigeria for donating the robotics education kits we used in this program, and this will facilitate our trainings next year. We thank Steve and Elizabeth Nielsen for providing the tablets we are using in this program.



LOOKING AHEAD: Vision 2030



Building Partnerships

This year, we held a productive breakfast meeting with 28 civil society organizations, including representatives from NGOs, government agencies, academia, faith-based institutions, and private sector organizations. The meeting provided an opportunity to showcase our work and reinforce trust and credibility with current and potential partners. This event marked a pivotal step in establishing strategic alliances that will amplify our impact and align our efforts with those of key stakeholders. This breakfast meeting was more than an event; it was a crucial investment in building relationships that will underpin the growth and sustainability of our work. The partnerships fostered here will not only bring added value to our organization but also help advance our shared mission for the years to come.



Nyanam partners



Individual donors

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Steve and Elizabeth Nielsen | 9. Paulina Martinez Flores | 20. Chi-Ming Chien | 31. Laban Cliff Onserio |
| 2. Mark, Cheryl, Megan and Hannah Harrison | 10. Nelly Kiboi | 21. Clara Li | 32. Dr. Eunice Otieno |
| 3. Andrew and Kelsey Morgosh | 11. David Seda | 22. Sarah Gioe | 33. Everlyn Nyanchoka |
| 4. Dr. and Mrs. Morris S. Dixon Jr. | 12. Eugene Gimosey | 23. Troy Jackson | 34. Brian Mawala Nduta |
| 5. Sarah and Kevin Storer | 13. Rachel Berntsen | 24. Evelyn Odhiambo | 35. Nelly Lusike |
| 6. James and Ann Angela Okhupe | 14. Shirley Li | 25. Nai Chien Yeat | 36. Juliet Nyangara |
| 7. Bethany Dixon | 15. Guedis Cabrera | 26. Bethany Gauthier | 37. Marvin Ochieng |
| 8. Donna Denelli-Hess | 16. Brian Gitau | 27. Oluwasjibomi Oluwadara | 38. Eunice Nyakerario |
| | 17. Peris Mwangi | 28. Elizabeth Welch | 39. Melvin Omondi |
| | 18. Mary McCormack | 29. Elizabeth Fair | 40. Timothy Kyalo |
| | 19. Debora Gish | 30. Winfred Mwikali | |

Introducing 2025 Book of the year

This year, our book reading focused on self-awareness. We read two books: *Spiritual Rhythms for the Enneagram* by Adele and Dough Calhoun and Claire and Scott Loughrige and *The Road Back to You - Enneagram Journey to Self-Discovery* by Ian Morgan Cron. Through these books, we have become more self-aware of our personalities and their strengths and weaknesses. We have also been drawn more into compassion for one another, learning how to accommodate our differences and support a loving and understanding team culture. One key theme that emerged when we were exploring enneagram number 3, is the concept of love, and whether unconditional love is possible.

To this end, we are excited to introduce our 2025 book of the year, *All About Love* by Bell Hooks. At the beginning of Nyanam, we ask widows what they needed, and love was the first answer. We are excited to go back to this first love, ensuring love continues to be embodied in all that we do, with widows, among us as staff, with our board and all our donors and partners. Love's got to do with it.



Staff of the Year 2024



Daniel Jaoko,
Monitoring & Evaluation
Manager

I joined Nyanam International in September 2023 to lead the newly created department of Monitoring and evaluation. As the lead of this department, I was expected to strengthen and improve our M&E systems and guide the development of data-driven innovative strategies that will move the organization towards achieving our program goals. As a monitoring and evaluation professional, I have had the passion for community development programs and Nyanam Widows Rising was a perfect match for me.

In the last one year I have worked with Nyanam, I endeavored to digitize our monitoring and evaluation systems to help improve the quality of data being collected, reduce the use of paperwork and streamline the process of collecting, managing and analyzing our data. I've witnessed and have been endlessly impressed by the ability of our Voice of Change widow mentors – who are on average 60 years old – to adapt to the use of technology in providing monitoring reports. While there's been great improvement in our M&E systems, there are still more learning opportunities to make our organizations realize a robust M&E system.

I take great honour for being awarded as the Nyanam staff of the year, this has made me learn that the strength of someone's achievement is rooted in the depth of their passion.

Board Members



Teddy Onserio
Board Chair



Bethany Dixon
Member



Claudia Gisemba
Member



Grace Kinda
Secretary



Angie Akhupe
Member



Emily Lipold
Member



Yvonne Bungei
Treasurer



Jackie Odhiambo
Member

Staff

We closed the year as a big family of 14 staff. From the left standing: Daniel Jaoko – Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, Clifford Ochieng - Operations and Administrative Manager, Rev. Nicodemus Agumba – Widows Program Manager, Marvin Ochieng- Finance Coordinator, Teresa Wagumba - Justice Coordinator, Jotham Oyugi–Livelihoods Coordinator, Dr. Eunice Otieno - Spiritual and Mental health Officer. From left sitting we have Fiona – Research Student from Maseno University, Whitney Onserio - Development Associate, Jackie Odhiambo- Executive Director, Brenda Ochieng - Widow Liason and Jacinta Ojil – Youth and Administrative Assistant.



Interns

This year we had the privilege of providing on-job learning opportunities to three amazing young professionals.



Stacy Adhiambo
Nyanam youth mentor



Solomon Ocheche
Nyanam youth council



Nuru Mwegoha
New Hope for Girls
Tanzania

Nyanam

Widows Rising



'24

