



Nyanam International Annual Report 2020



1. Message from our Founder and Director



Figure 1. Jackie, Our founder and director

The year 2020 drew us to suffer with and stand with each other. Many of you reached out to Nyanam and asked, “how are the widows and their children fairing in this pandemic?” You asked to show compassion. In the middle of this COVID-19 pandemic, Nyanam expanded the network of widows we support from 115 to 358. We implemented three COVID-19 response initiatives, from a prevention activity to a food relief initiative, and building this to a sustainable food security intervention called “kitchen gardens”. We established our first Youth Advisory Council that leads a network of more than 200 widows’ children, strengthening their capacity to be role models in the society. We are deeply grateful for the solidarity we experienced with our staff, volunteers, and supporters.

As you stayed with us in the turbulent boat of 2020, we learnt from the widows and their children on how to remain in solidarity with them. We piloted our uniquely curated curriculum, “Voice of Change”, that seeks to address the injustices widows face in their community. We will be launching this curriculum in 2021. Before COVID-19 crisis, widows and their children already suffered loneliness, social isolation, and the negative effects of bereavement. This pandemic intensified these experiences, increasing worry, anxiety and depression. Both widows and their children expressed the need for their mental health support at Nyanam. We seek to deepen this support in 2021 as we grow the widows’ livelihoods and economic wellbeing.

I invite you to read through the rest of the 2020 annual report, to learn more about the values we hold dear at Nyanam, and how we apply these values to our work. Discover what we learnt when we visited 14 elderly widows in their homes, providing companionship, at a time when lockdowns and social distancing minimized their interactions with other members of their community. Learn more about how we celebrated International Widows Day, which happens every June 23rd, and what the widows and the many volunteers we had in 2020 say about Nyanam’s work.

Nyanam believes in the inherent dignity of widows and their children and affirms their agency and freedom in every aspect of our work. For us, widows are the main agents of change in their lives and we offer a shoulder to lean on. Thank you for staying on or joining this boat in 2021 and the years to come.

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2. Organizational Background

2.1 Why Widows

Widowhood remains the most neglected stage of women's life, overlooked in both development practice and academic research. The majority of the 258 million widows globally reside in low- and middle-income countries, where widows battle socio-economic norms and practices that adversely affect their health and wellbeing (1). Perceived as 'invisible' and 'voiceless' women, widows hardly feature in women's rights publication or national government statistics in low- and middle-income settings (1).

In sub-Saharan Africa, health research on widowhood, is limited, rooted in the vulnerability of widowhood, and dominated by the risk for HIV. Indeed, widowhood has been established as a risk factor for HIV in sub-Saharan Africa (2–5). In the Lake Victoria region in Kenya, up to 63% of HIV positive women are widows (4). The economic (property disinheritance, sex for fish trade), cultural (sexual cleansing, sexual widow inheritance), and other emotional and physical violence widows experience heighten their HIV risk (2–5). While Kenya has an estimated 4-8 million widows, little is known about the regional prevalence of widows in the country (1). The effects of these injustices are detrimental to the widows, the widows' children and to the wellbeing of whole communities.

2.2 About Nyanam

Nyanam International is a Kenyan non-governmental organization that helps widows in the Lake Victoria region become visibly connected, confident and competent to lead positive social transformation in their communities. Our journey began in 2012 with the establishment of Mbotto Sunrise Primary School- currently owned by the government, drilling of a community borehole in partnership with a local organization-Kenya Water for Health Organization, training of early childhood teachers, and creation of curriculum enrichment programs to facilitate learning in local schools. Once the school was established, our work evolved to focus on the widows as the most vulnerable women in our context. During this work, we noticed how widows were left behind in community projects-their voices unheard and often treated with disrespect. Whenever conflicts in community projects arose, widows were accused and subjected to unfair treatments without due cause. Many underwent cultural rituals such as wife inheritance which while intended for their socio-economic support, has become a leading cause of their economic deprivation and sexual exploitation.

The purpose of our work is to enhance the dignity and agency of widows in these contexts. We connect widows through leadership circles (support groups). We increase widows' confidence and competence through trainings on voice of change, human rights, micro-enterprise, servant leadership, and health. Widows then lead by implementing self-designed social change projects that address barriers to their freedom and agency. These empowered women lead positive social transformation not only in their communities, but also in their families for future generations to come.

2.3 Mission Statement

We prepare widows to lead positive social transformation in their communities.

2.4 Vision Statement

A society where widows thrive.

2.5 Our values

- **Deep listening** to accurately respond to the needs of widows and their children and engender trust in Nyanam team
- **Deep learning** to be guided by the wisdom, perspectives and experiences of the widows locally and globally
- **Meaningful participation** of widows and their children in our programs as change agents with Nyanam team as facilitators
- **Storytelling** to drive capacity building and community engagement of widows
- **Advancing justice** to correct socio-economic and cultural injustices against widows and their children
- **Promoting unity** to create connected communities of widows and their children and enhance respectful teamwork at Nyanam
- **Bible-based** to affirm the inherent dignity, agency and freedom widows and their children have
- **Evidence-based** to develop scalable interventions and share lessons learnt from our work

2.6 Our Team

The governing structure of Nyanam is composed of:

<p>The Board of Directors comprises five members who help in decision making on matters pertaining to the organization.</p>	<p>The Advisory Board consists of different professionals who offer their professional skillset to Nyanam when need be and volunteer in taking part in leading Nyanam initiatives.</p>	<p>The management team consists of local members who help in the implementation of the activities and the day-to-day running of the organization.</p>
<p>Teddy Onserio – Chairman Grace Kinda – Secretary Haotian Xu – Treasurer Jackline Odhiambo Emmy Lippold Donna Denelli-Hess</p>	<p>Elizabeth Duya – Pro bono Lawyers Coordinator Bethany Dixon – International Engagement Coordinator Elizabeth Nielson</p>	<p>Nicodemus Agumba Beryl Ochieng’ Ochieng Clifford Rebecca Dero Eunice Otieno Jackline Odhiambo</p>

3. Geographical areas

Nyanam currently serves widows in Siaya and Kisumu Counties. We increased the total population of widows reached from 115 in 2019 to 358 in 2020. Nyanam intends to reach more widows in Kisumu and Siaya counties before we expand to Homabay, Migori and Nairobi counties. Based on the population of widows in the villages we have reached, we estimate that 10% of the population in the Lake Victoria region are widows. From our estimations, Nyanam is only reaching a small proportion of widows in these counties. Kenya has an estimated 4-8 million widows. In 2021, we will seek to obtain more accurate data from Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to understand the breadth of the population we seek to reach with our work.

Counties	Kisumu	Siaya	Homabay	Migori	Nairobi
Sub-counties	Kisumu West Seme	Rarieda	Not present here yet	Not present here yet	Not present here yet
Widows we have reached	292	58	0	0	0
Estimated population of widows in the counties assuming 10% of the population	99,318	115,557	113,195	111,643	439,707

4. Nyanam's programs

Our work seeks to:

1. Break the silence on widowhood stigma and plight.
2. Help widows navigate singlehood through community building.
3. Build the capacity of widows to effectively address their basic needs.
4. Promote economic, cultural and health justice for widows.
5. Promote the educational development of widows' children.

To achieve these goals, we implement programs for widows and their children in the following areas. Our programs address the personal and socio-economic needs of widows and their children. The following are the activities we implemented in 2020 under each programmatic area.

Widows programs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership 2. Livelihoods 3. Health and wellbeing 4. Research and advocacy

Youth programs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peer mentorship 2. Youth camps 3. Talent promotion

4.1 Widows programs

4.1.1 Leadership

Leadership involves all our capacity building and community engagement initiatives that are aimed at improving widows' connectedness, confidence and competence in becoming effective leaders of social transformation in their communities.

4.1.1.1 Leadership circles

Leadership circles are widow-to-widow support groups where widows come together weekly to biweekly to offer each other love, encouragement and support. Each leadership circle engages in activities that improve widows' spiritual, economic and psychosocial health. In 2020, we added nine new

leadership circles into Nyanam, one from Siaya County and eight from Kisumu County. These nine leadership circles have membership totaling to 233 widows, each circle having between 15 to 40 widows. This brought the total number of widows at Nyanam from 115 to 358 widows. Nyanam’s family of widows is still expanding based on need and requests we receive from widows to include them in our work. We have prioritized a once-a-year recruitment in the last quarter of the year. In these leadership circles, widows use their connectedness and cumulative experiences to influence each other in leading self and household well. They also use their unified voice in the circles to advocate for change in their communities.



Figure 2. Karwamati Leadership Circle. This is one of the new 15-member group that joined Nyanam in 2020

4.1.1.2 Voice of change

Voice of Change is a widow-centric curriculum that seeks to unpack the difficult experiences of widowhood and enable widowed women to design and implement social change projects that can bring meaningful improvement in their lives. Voice of Change incorporates the narrative Bible study methods that gives women the tools for critical analysis of their Bible and their lived experiences, to enable devise and implement positive changes for their lives and their communities. The curriculum is a series of studies that Nyanam has crafted and seeks to use to build the leadership capacity and amplify the voices of the widows from their communities to their government.



Figure 3. Widows in discussion during a pilot study for the Voice of Change curriculum

In 2020, we piloted the first study of the Voice of Change curriculum in a 2-day training in which we explored the concept of home for widows. Beginning with a thought provocative question, “Where is a widow’s home upon a husband’s death,” the widows discussed the “home options” they have, the advantages and disadvantages they face with each home option they choose, what influences their decisions for home, how their homes are viewed and treated in the community and what can be done to improve their home situations.

Together we learnt how the idea and place of “home” is a significant and life changing experience for many widows. Home might be where widows remain single in their matrimonial home, or opt for widow inheritance, migrate to a new place away from matrimonial home, or officially remarry and find a new husband. Although some researchers and public health professionals object to this idea due to the risk of HIV/AIDS, some widows find widow inheritance preferable to remaining single. Widow inheritance, or *ter*, can contribute to the spread of HIV, but this is not necessarily the fault of the widows themselves, and can be more attributed to “serial widow inheritors,” men who inherit multiple widows, thus having sexual relations with multiple people and increasing the spread of HIV.



Figure 4. A home for one of the widows' at Nyanam

Other studies in this curriculum include remarriage, widow inheritance, safety at work, access to justice, self and social perception, and many others. The curriculum brings to light core issues that widows face and provide the widows with opportunity to change the narrative and experiences surrounding these issues.



Figure 5. Mary, a Nyanam widow leader, who shared her experiences with leadership circles at Nyanam. Her story is in our YouTube Channel

4.1.1.3 International Widows Day (IWD) 2020

We celebrated our second International Widows Day with 115 widows. Our theme for this year's IWD was **transforming perceptions about widows**. Despite unprecedented challenges brought about by COVID-19, we were able to celebrate the widows with our Nyanam family near and far. The crisis opened the opportunity of celebrating the day through social media. Nyanam held a virtual celebration on Saturday, June 20th. 40 guests around the world joined the celebration as we heard from one of the widow leaders, Mary, discussed the significance of leadership circles at Nyanam and the personal transformations she has experienced through this work. You can find [her story on our YouTube Channel](#). We also used this virtual event to raise funds for our second COVID relief response for the widows and their families.



Figure 6. Some of the participants in our 2020 virtual celebrations of International Widows Day

On June 23rd, the Nyanam team gathered with a small group of widows from Kisumu County while following social distancing protocols. As a part of the celebration, Nyanam distributed our second COVID relief kits to the widows to a total of 115 households. The kit included a one-month food supply with 20 kgs of maize, 4 kgs of beans, 4 kgs of sugar and 2 liters of oil. This addressed the eminent hunger that many of the widows were facing during this crisis. As children schools closed and children stayed home, the need for food increased yet the means of provision reduced. During this moment, many widows shared of how the food relief had been timely. Some had come to this event having slept the night before on empty stomachs as they lacked any source of food. We thank everyone who joined us in fundraising for this food relief kit.



Figure 7. Covid relief food kits distributed to 115 widows during International Widows Day 2020. Each widow received 20kgs of maize, 4kgs of beans, 4kgs of sugar, 2 liters of oil

4.1.1.4 Home visits

Home visits are a casual time meant to establish bonds of trust between a widow and Nyanam. The visit is an opportunity for a widow to interact with Nyanam in her own turf and an opportunity for Nyanam to listen and learn from an individual widows' experience and perspective as well as her living context. We chose to visit the elderly widows who felt further isolated and lonely given the requirements of physical distancing and the lockdowns that prevented their family members from traveling from other parts of the country to offer them company.

In the 2020 home visits, we reflected on the social, economic and psychological impact COVID-19 had on the widows. For all the 14 widows we visited aged 71 years to 90 years old, none had lived through a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. Some compared this pandemic to the HIV/AIDS crisis, but felt the social and economic ramifications of the COVID-19 was far greater. "There were no lockdowns, or closure of churches and schools during the HIV/AIDS crisis". Others compared it to Measles outbreak, which affected mostly children and could lead even to the death of three children in one family. We found these elderly widows keen on the prevention measures, encouraging others to wear masks to help reduce the spread of the virus.



Figure 8. Grace, a Nyanam widow leader, standing in front of her house that she shares with her four children. Grace is one of the young widows at Nyanam who accompanied us for the whole day during home visits for elderly widows

These visits also provided a moment for laughter as the widows shared about their teenage years, and their hobbies including dancing. They remembered their favorite songs and some even showed us some of their dance moves. We are grateful that neither the widows at Nyanam nor their family members have been infected by the COVID-19 virus. However, like the rest of the world, many lost their means of livelihood, especially those in micro-businesses. The elderly widows also lost their economic support systems as the family members they depended upon lost their jobs.

4.1.2 Livelihoods

4.1.2.1 Micro-enterprise Training

Before the COVID pandemic limited our gatherings, we had a wonderful opportunity to train 94 widows in micro-enterprise training funded by Women In the Window International (WiW). For the first time, this training was led by six widows who had been trained in 2019 in the same course. During the training, the women studied Biblical women in business, mapped their talents and market opportunities in their communities and developed business plans for varied products/services they wanted to offer. They studied the four legs of marketing (product, price, promotion and place), and the need to invest in every leg to ensure the sustainability of their businesses. They learned how to set the price for their products, accounting for all the production costs and profits, and to keep proper records for their businesses.



Figure 9. Widows during micro-enterprise training

Pamela, one of the widows in the training, marveled at how she had underpriced her groundnuts in her micro-enterprise. She never paid herself in her business, which is a common issue for women in micro-enterprises. She also hardly accounted for other related production costs such as the cost of travel to the market, the cost of communications or meals during purchase of inputs for her nut business. Since she measures the nuts she sells using a teaspoon, she left the training committed to know the number of teaspoons in a 2 kilogram bag of nuts, to appropriately estimate prices.



Figure 10. Elizabeth and Grace, young widows at Nyanam, presenting a map of their village which they created to identify market gaps and locations in their community

4.1.2.2 Kitchen Gardens project

As part of our first COVID-19 response, Nyanam distributed 2 types of vegetable seeds to 115 widow households: African night shade and spider plant. We provided the widows with these traditional vegetables that they could grow in their farms. As we celebrated International Widows Day, we listened to stories of how these vegetables had become the primary source of food for some of the households. The widows also shared stories of the challenges they faced with planting and taking care of these vegetables.



Figure 11. Establishment training led by Jotham, a Youth Advisory Council member

With this feedback, Nyanam worked with one of our youth leaders who is trained in agriculture to design a kitchen gardens project for the widows. We divided the 115 widows into seven groups of a maximum of 20 widows each, with each group selecting a lead farmer who provided a part of her farm to be used as a training and demonstration farm. We gave each widow 10 grams packet of four different types of vegetables, adding slenderleaf and cowpeas to the African night shade and spider plant. We implemented three phases of training with the widows. In establishment training, the widows learnt how to prepare organic manure from goat, chicken and cow dung, the medicinal and nutritional values of each of the four vegetables, and how to prepare their farms, establish vegetable seed nursery. In the maintenance training, the widows learnt how to transplant seedlings, weed their vegetables and control different types of pests using organic methods.



Figure 12. Hellen, a Nyanam widow leader in her kitchen garden

We gave each Nyanam widow two extra packet of seeds to share with other widows in their community who are not part of Nyanam, are facing the food crisis, and would benefit from being part of leadership circle if they created one. While donating these seeds, Nyanam widows shared about their leadership circles and how the widow-to-widow support group had helped them and invited these new widows to also create their own leadership circles. After the establishment training, Nyanam widow leaders trained the another 115 widows in their community on establishment of kitchen gardens and donated two extra packet of seeds to the widows. A total of 225 kitchen gardens were planted across the villages.

We also conducted a value addition training where the widows learnt traditional methods such as sun or shade drying for preservation of the vegetables. Many of the widows took vegetables to the market and earned additional income. They all ensured no vegetable was wasted in the farm as they knew how to preserve the extra vegetables. Many of the widows have harvest seeds from these vegetables preparing for the next season for planting.



Figure 13. Widows sun drying their vegetables to preserve after harvesting.



Figure 14. Grace, 84 year old Nyanam widow leader, showing the African night shade seeds she has harvested from her kitchen garden

4.1.3 Health and wellbeing

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our health and wellbeing support aimed at limiting the spread of the virus and promoting the food security of the widows during this crisis.

4.1.3.1 Mental health

Counselling is a core part of Nyanam's work. Before the pandemic, we had been providing monthly group counselling sessions to each leadership circle, building on the peer-to-peer support that the widows received in their weekly to biweekly meetings at the leadership circles. The crisis halted the regular meetings as well as the group counselling sessions. We provided widows with a Hope Devotional, that we encouraged them to read with their children to facilitate family bonding and share uplifting stories in the crisis. Our counsellors also provided individualized support to emerging conflicts involving widows during the pandemic, including a dispute about widow inheritance. Towards the end of 2020, the widows and their children shared with us the need for mental health support which we aim to prioritize in 2021.



Figure 15. Eunice (left), one of our counselors in conversation with Benta, a Nyanam widow leader, during home visits

4.1.3.2 Health education campaigns

To limit the spread of COVID-19 virus, we promoted health education and prevention behaviors among the widows and their children. We provided each household with soap for hand hygiene. We educated the widows on the spread and prevention of the COVID-19 virus. We also created and distributed health educational leaflets with pictorial messages on how coronavirus spreads and its prevention. We translated all COVID-19 messaging to the local language to increase comprehension and appropriate action for prevention. Many of the widows posted the COVID-19 messaging on their doorposts to increase awareness of the virus.



Figure 16. A widow showing her COVID-19 education leaflet on her doorpost

We also provided both widows and their children with facemasks, distributing 115 facemasks for the widows and at least two more facemasks for her children. One of the widows at Nyanam who a seamstress, made all the facemasks, through which we created an employment opportunity for her. We made reusable face masks following guidelines for home-made facemasks that were published by the Center for Disease Prevention in the USA. We shipped 100 facemasks to our partner in the USA, Women in the Window International, to help raise more funds for our COVID-19 relief initiatives.



Figure 17. Some of the widows' children in their facemasks made by a widow at Nyanam

4.1.4 Research and advocacy

4.1.4.1 Research on the health support systems for widows in Africa

Through the leadership of interns, Nyanam conducted a research project that evaluated health support systems for widows in Africa. Among the lessons learnt from the research project were: 1) HIV/AIDS is the main physical health problems widows suffer in Africa, 2) While widows face many mental health problems, professional mental health support is least available, 3) Widows relied mainly on their individual resilience to overcome adversity indicating a gap in developmental support, 4) Of all different sources of support, government support for widows was the least available type of support and mainly done through health insurance which showed widowhood as the main indicator for needing a free health insurance cover. This research is still under-development and we aim to publish it in 2021.

4.1.4.2 Advocacy for widows at the County Government of Kisumu

Using the evidence from the research above, we are still lobbying the County Government of Kisumu to prioritize widows in a Solidarity Health Insurance Scheme, that the government launched in late 2020. The scheme aims to provide free health insurance to a total of 90,000 indigent households who cannot afford monthly contributions to the National Health Insurance Fund. We requested the County Government to allow Nyanam to nominate 5000 widow-led households who are in dire need of the health insurance cover. We will continue lobbying for this in 2021.



Figure 18. Rebecca, A Nyanam widow leader collecting data with Peninah, another Nyanam widow leader, on the Peninah's socio-economic, health and cultural experiences

We also helped the widows submit a memo to the Kisumu County Budget and Appropriation Committee, requesting for specific budget lines that will facilitate vocational training, business and entrepreneurial training among widows, and facilitate access to capital for business start-ups. These are the beginnings of our efforts in advocacy for widows in the local government, seeking inclusion of widows in the County Development Projects. In 2021, we will implement a project with a Transparency International, one of our partner organizations, on participation of widows in the County Budget Making Processes.

4.2 Youth programs

4.2.1 Workshops for widows' children to brainstorm solutions to their challenges

We held two workshops facilitated by our guest from the Netherlands, Miss Wianne Ter Haar, to identify the needs and interests of the widows' children that would inform our vacation programs. From these workshops, we learned that widows' children care about environmental conservation, improving their knowledge and spiritual development through vacations and learning how to use computers, mend clothes and speak in public.



Figure 19. Widows children pausing for photos, with Wianne, after discussions of things they wanted to do

4.2.2 Youths Advisory Council created

Nyanam held its first planning meeting with nine youth leaders from Siaya and Kisumu to develop a 2021 strategic plan for youth programs at Nyanam that are youth owned and led, bringing the youths' voiced needs into tangible action. The youth leaders created our first youth advisory council responsible for developing and implementing Youth Programs at Nyanam. The council members spoke of their desire to "learn something new" from their peers. They all are experts in various fields, ranging from agriculture to education, and have lived experiences of the challenges and social determinants for

health that the youths face. Their personal experiences have led to commitment towards supporting other children of widows and sharing their stories with one another.



Figure 20. Youth Advisory Council members with Nyanam team

The council discussed the challenges faced by the children of widows on societal, familial, and individual levels, which included relationship problems, lack of employment, an inter-generational gap between youth and their parents, and peer pressure. While the youth programming will center around the children of widows, prioritizing the specific support they require. The youth's openness about their experiences and determination to create networks of support across differences reminds us of the power of vulnerability in bridging the gaps that divide us.

During the meeting, the youth leaders developed the goal of youth programs at Nyanam: **Motivating the youths to be role models in the society.** The youth also came up with three areas of intervention which were:

- Peer mentorship
- Talent promotion
- Youth Camps

Modeled after the widows' leadership circles, the first activity led by the Youth Advisory Council was to organize the widows' children into groups similar to the leadership circles. They helped the youths create groups of different age sets and elect their own leaders in these groups. The council will be designing their programming to cater for the needs of these youth groups. As the youths are all in schools at different levels, their activities will be implemented in a quarterly basis during school vacations.



Figure 21. Widows' children attending a group creation activity led by the Youth Advisory Council

5. The Impact of Nyanam

5.1 What numbers say

Indicator	2019	2020	Total
# of widows in Nyanam	100	+258 added	358
# of leadership circles in Nyanam	3	+9 added	12
# of widows trained in micro-enterprise	30	+94	124
US\$ free interest loans offered	\$300	+\$0	\$300
# of widows trained in property rights	30	+0	30
# of interns mentored	0	6	6
# of kitchen gardens created	0	225	225
# of fruit gardens created	0	15	15
# of home visits conducted	10	+14	24
# of widows celebrating International Widows Day	60	+115	175
# of youths reached	470	+264	734
# of Bibles distributed as requested by widows	92	+0	92
# of houses constructed for widows	1	+0	1
# of counselling sessions held	45	+11	56

5.2 What widows say



Gladys, a 90 year old widow:

“When I heard that an organization working with widows was creating new groups in my community, I had to be there. Widows need capacity-building work that will help them carry themselves with dignity, believe in the things they can accomplish, and rise above attitudes and norms that devalue their lives. I am so happy Nyanam is doing this work.”

Grace, a 32 year old widow:

“I am one kind of a person who could not stand in front of a big congregation to address them because I was shy but today, Nyanam has exposed me in so many ways that I have overcome my fear and shyness. I can stand in front of so many people and address them. Today, widows from my maternal home were marveled to see me stand courageously in front of them and address them boldly. This is all because of Nyanam.”



Agnes, a 52 year old:

“I really longed to join a group of women and I wanted to know what women did in these things done in a group. Having joined the group I am in today; I am now aware of the things happening around me and across the world because the leadership circle acts as a source of information to me.”

5.3 What donors and volunteers say

Wianne Ter Haar, a Nyanam volunteer from Netherlands:

“During my time at Nyanam, I learned so much about community development, the administration and behind-the-scenes of an NGO, Kenyan culture, and teamwork. My heart flows over with thankfulness for all the wonderful people that I met and the dedication of the team.

I left inspired by the way Nyanam genuinely cares for those they aim to strengthen. They don’t come with quick fixes or forcing their own way, instead, they ensure that the widows are in control and are not dependent on the organization. I don’t speak Luo or Swahili, but I could sense a revival of hope as the widows met together, encouraged each other, and stood together to fight against the injustices that have become a part of their lives.



I was humbled by the stories of struggle and hardship that the widows told and encouraged by the hope that Nyanam has brought. I think specifically of when we visited a widow’s house, and she told of how a few months prior to our visit, her house was literally falling apart. She told of the abuse she received from family and neighbours, and her joy and praise when her house was rebuilt. It was amazing to stand in her new house and experience the testimony of the work of her widow support group, the local church, and Nyanam. I am excited to see how Nyanam is going to positively impact even more widows in the coming months and years!”



Elizabeth, a Nyanam intern from Williams College, USA:

“I have been touched and inspired by the global family that is Nyanam. Generosity, resilience, and joy stretches out from the widows’ households to each team member and back, and I have loved being a part of this mutual empowerment. I am so grateful for this opportunity, and I look forward to our future work together!”

Maxwell, a Nyanam intern from Williams College, USA:

“The part of my job that I’ve found the most exciting was planning our event for International Widows Day and being able to provide a gift to the widows when they needed it while also bringing our international community together for a virtual event. I was able to talk to some people I had never seen before and I also got to see some wonderful donors who I had already spoken to again. It was also really fun for me to write out all the thank-you notes and updates on the project because they both allowed me to engage with our Nyanam family more and increase our awareness circle.”



6. Spotlights

6.1 Awards and Media Features

6.1.1 Zuri Award for Public Service

Our founder and Executive Director Jackie Odhiambo was awarded and recognized for her dedication in creating positive social change through the work in the society and inspiring other women through outstanding leadership. She was nominated for this award by one of our local volunteers in Kenya, and emerged the winner in the Public Service category of the Awards. Nyanam's work, which "remembers a forgotten part of our society", as one of the judges described it, was viewed by as extraordinary and scalable.



Figure 22. Jackie showing the trophy she received for during Zuri Awards the work we do at Nyanam

6.1.2 Daily Nation Newspaper Feature

One of our local dailies, The Daily Nation Newspaper also featured Jackie's story, looking into the ways she combines her training in global public health to address issues of widowhood, especially property rights for widows in Kenya. The story traced Jackie's educational path and how she grew to working with widows at Nyanam.

...ing Williams College in Williamstown in the United States in 2009, Jackline helped her rural community in Kisumu West Sub-County to start Mboto Sunrise Primary School. Mboto is currently a government school serving more than 300 pupils and will be sitting its first KCPE exams this year. She also partnered with Kenya Water for Health Organisation to drill a community borehole, a project that opened her eyes to the plight of widows.

"While growing up, I had a great interest in medicine. I scored an A – (minus) in KCSE but I could not pursue medicine locally due to my grades. My family was also not in a financial position to support me through a parallel program.

In 2009, I received a sponsorship to study at Williams College in Boston, US through the Zawadi Africa Education Fund run by Dr. Susan Mboya. I ended up studying chemistry and global health at the university.

Before joining college, I established an early childhood program where I taught nursery children under a tree for six months. The local community later took over the project and supported it all through to what it is right now- Mboto Sunrise Primary School, which later became a public school.

When in my second year of study, I had the chance to intern at the Nairobi Hospital. It is while there that I changed my mind about pursuing medicine after merely three weeks internship. I would sometimes see patients turned away because they could not afford the charges. I found it stressful and quit. I decided to specialise in global health, focusing on the social aspects of health and using research to improve population health.

RURAL WIDOWS

Currently, I run an organisation that works with three women groups in Kisumu and one in Siaya. Over the years, I realised financial constraint isn't the only challenge widows in rural areas grapple with. There is more to widowhood.

I started this project in 2017, while still pursuing my Masters degree in public health at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in the UK, but later returned home to concentrate on it in 2018.

I lost my dad at age 11. I saw how my mother struggle through her widowhood raising us. I developed compassion for widows. I had witnessed many social, economic and cultural challenges they face.

We saw how my mother struggle through her widowhood raising us. I developed compassion for widows. We have partnered with organisations such as Transparency International to train them on property rights and conduct legal clinics. The widows learnt how to handle land succession processes.

We have noticed most rural widows do not have their husbands' death certificates or land title deeds for the plots where they stay. They do not even know the plot number of their farms to help them follow up on title deeds.

Often, land information was kept by their husbands without their knowledge. Some do not know how or where to get this information while others gave up looking for it after several unfruitful attempts.

Widows still face land disputes with strangers and relatives. Some have had their land sold without their knowledge. Others are forced to either share their property with relatives, or be evicted from their homes.



GENDER
Experts Reviewing Sexist Error in P3 Form
(/kenya/gender/experts-reviewing-sexist-error-in-p3-form-1444424)



GENDER
600 Young Mothers From Kilifi Receive Dignity Packs
(/kenya/gender/600-young-mothers-from-kilifi-receive-dignity-packs-1444410)



GENDER
Systemic Gaps Denying Defilement Victims Justice
(/kenya/gender/systemic-gaps-denying-defilement-victims-justice-1390126)



GENDER
Banking On Handshake To Score On Gender Rule
(/kenya/gender/banking-on-handshake-to-score-on-gender-rule-1370584)

6.1.3 Ebru Television Feature

For International Widows Day celebrations in 2020, Jackie was also featured in a local television, Ebru TV, where she discussed the intersections between socio-cultural practices and health outcomes in widowhood. She highlighted complexities in the evolution of cultural practices, and how such evolutions increase the risk of HIV among widowed women. You can find the 12 minute [conversation here](#).



Figure 23. Jackie sharing about the challenges in widowhood during International Widows Day 2020

6.2 Team spotlight

We are grateful for the Nyanam management team, which consisted of 2 staff members, Jackline and Clifford, and five volunteers, Nicodemus, Beryl, Eunice, Rebecca and Moses. This team met on a monthly basis throughout the year, leading on the ground implementation of all the activities in 2020. With only two members on staff, the workload was great for the staff and the volunteers time stretch. We thank each of them for their dedication to the widows and their children. We look to bring some of our volunteers on part time staff in 2021 to avail the capacity needed to serve the 358 widows in Nyanam in 2021.



Figure 24. Nyanam management team with some of the widow leaders

6.3 Partner and donor spotlight

Women in the Window International funded and supported implementation of three training activities: micro-enterprise, kitchen gardens, and piloting of Voice of Change curriculum. They also helped us fundraise through the mask initiatives for COVID relief. Transparency International supported our lobbying activities at the County Government of Kisumu, and helped create a network of pro-bono lawyers who will be supporting widows with property rights issues. Tes Network helped us develop our 3-year strategic plan. Washa Candles, a Kenya enterprise based in the USA and Kenya, sent aromatic candles to our donors to thank them for supporting Nyanam. We thank all our individual donors for providing the financial resources to enable this work!

2020 Community Builders

NYANAM BOARD

- Teddy Onserio - Chair
- Grace Kinda - Secretary
- Haotian Xu - Treasurer
- Emmy Lippold
- Donna Denelli-Hess

PARTNERS

- Women In The Window International
- Transparency International
- Tes Network
- CLiA, Williams College
- Career Center, Williams
- P4CDA
- Washa Candles

DONORS

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- Joy Jing
- Haotian Xu
- Donna Denelli-Hess
- Teddy Onserio
- Rebecca Missonis
- Cheryl Shanks

INTERNS



7. 2021 Outlook

<p>January:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -New leadership circles induction -Internship 2021 	<p>February:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Voice of Change training -Inductive Bible study training -Valentine's day fundraising 	<p>March:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Home visits -Micro-enterprise training -Counselling -Follow-up 	<p>April:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Youth mentorship -Lay counselling training -Counselling -Follow-up
<p>May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Counselling -Follow-up 	<p>June:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -International Widows Day celebrations -Servant leadership training -International Widows Day fundraising -Internship 2021 -Counselling -Follow-up 	<p>July:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Youth mentorship -Internship 2021 -Counselling -Follow-up 	<p>August:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Counselling -Follow-up
<p>September:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Counselling -Follow-up 	<p>October:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Youth camp -Youth talent promotion -Develop 2022 plan -Counselling -Follow-up 	<p>November:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Finalize 2022 Plan -Counselling -Follow-up 	<p>December:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Christmas fundraising -Annual General Meeting -Counselling -Follow-up

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