

PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Introduction

A survey conducted last year (2020) by Prof Shelly Clark, an associate professor of sociology at Canada's McGill University, and Prof Dana Hamplova from Prague's Charles University and Institute of Sociology, found that the Kenyan woman has a **59.5% chance** of being a single mum by the age of 45years. According to this survey, the single mum is synonymous to a female head with no husband, and the cause of singlehood is categorized into: death of spouse, divorce/separation and or choice of being single which is apparently a common phenomenon among the modern career women. **59.5% chance** of a woman being single means that in every 10 of the Kenyan women, 6 will be single at the age of 45years.

The statistics are consistent thus necessitating the need for support of single mums whom the responsibility to cater for the needs of the young, young adults and sometimes the adult children is under them.

Neloshan international continues to support single moms for economic resilience that they are able to mitigate the countless challenges facing them. The objective of the program is to empower the “single mum” so that she can be economically independent, a valuable and confident individual, thus enabling her to succeed and advance financially and in other endeavors. This gives her the power to make and act on her and or her household’s economic decisions.

To succeed and advance economically, single mums need the skills and resources to compete in the job markets, as well as have a fair and equal access to economic opportunities.

Alleviating poverty and inequality by enabling single mums to diversify their incomes and create employment among the female headed households enables moving the highly vulnerable households into sustainable livelihoods for economic stability. Through this “a world where single mums are spiritually, economically, socially and emotionally empowered” is going to be realized.

Neloshan focuses on the improvement of the living standards of the single mums through such initiatives as sustainable livelihood programs that focus on their economic wellbeing which is possible by use of a community based approach. Through strong personal capacity building initiated at the grassroots, single mums are empowered to undertake programs which best suit their local conditions.

Such projects, and or their alternatives create awareness on the need of engaging single mums in gainful economic activities and also have a database of their children.

Progress Indicators

Summary



The recent beneficiaries of the program were supported in the year (Al-Shama Women Group) each beneficiary received a Dorper ewe

The program recorded an increase in the number of its projects following the support of a group of 10 more women with a Dorper ewe each. This comes after two groups were previously supported with chicken and Dorper sheep. This brought the total number of beneficiaries who have received items besides financial support to 34; 14 single mums received 6 chicken and 1 rooster each in August 2020, 10 single mums received a Dorper ewe each in October 2020 while the apparent group of 10 single mums received a Dorper ewe each in May 2021.

Supporting the 34 single mums brought to nearly half of the total women supported as there are 71 single mums enrolled in the program.

The projects have been reported to contribute positively to the stated objective of economic empowerment of single mums. Some Dorpers have given birth a second time since receipt, even as the single mums who received the chickens sell eggs and sometimes chicken raised from the parent stock, earning their households some extra income that is used to cater for the single mums' household needs.

The year was a subsequent difficult year which had its own predicaments including a member contracting the Covid-19 disease.

Despite the challenges and constraints associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, single mums enrolled under the program have continued to support and grow each other in their corresponding groups where they undertake voluntary savings and lending activities, merry-go-rounds and concurrently run their self-initiated group projects.

1. Fund Development

This activity is commonly referred to as Table banking; *Ngumbato*’ in the local dialect. The 7 groups engage in the Voluntary, Saving & Lending activity. The activity is carried out alongside Merry-go-rounds by a number of the said groups and other group projects, both group initiated and program supported projects. The groups are: Nuru, Nguba-Bidii, Sumi-Peto, Upendo-Sisters, Kar-Shama, Al-Shama and Shamaa Women Groups.

Members have been conducting the activity and increasing the value of their monies by paying a 10% monthly interest on the principle. Fines are also charged on lateness, absenteeism and failure to remit the monthly contribution.

Having accumulated a substantial amount over time, affected members from the individual groups have been paying back their loans.

NB: Shamaa and Kar-Shama Women Groups initiated the activity towards the last quarter of the year while the rest of the groups have been running the activity for some time as indicated in the table below.

Group	Membership	Monthly Remittance(Ksh)	No of Cycles	Cumulative Sum (Ksh)
1. Nuru WG	10	Ksh 200	19	43970
2. Nguba-Bidii WG	14	Ksh 100	12	43800
3. Kar-Shama WG	10	Ksh 100	4	4200
4. Upendo-Sisters WG	5	Ksh 500	7	27000
5. Shamaa WG	10	Interest	4	2170
6. Al-Shama WG	10	Ksh 100	11	15000
7. Sumi-Peto WG	11	Ksh 100	12	22325
Total	70	Ksh 1100	69	Ksh 158465

Tabulated outcomes of the VS&L by the groups

5 the groups now focus on repaying the borrowed monies except for Kar-Shama and Shamaa Women Groups who have run the activity for less than 5 cycles.

2. Elevated Social Well-being

The 70 members enrolled and still are active members of their respective groups continue to share, develop and maintain meaning relationships through:

a) Monthly group meetings

The meetings are distributed throughout the month starting the 1st Thursday of the month, 2nd Monday of the month, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 2nd Friday of the month, 3rd Wednesday of the month, around the 20th day of the month and the last Monday of the month.



Nguba-Bidii WG during a group meeting held on 14th February 2022

The meetings are scheduled to happen as dated except for when there are community events interfering with the above schedule, though twice in the year the meetings were cancelled. Having conducted the meetings consistently up to 29TH March 2021, the meetings were cancelled for two months i.e. for April and May 2021, the monthly meetings were not held. The meetings resumed again in the month of June 2021.

The 2nd cancellation came in the month of August 2021 and were resumed in January 2022. The last meeting for the year 2021 was held on 13th August 2021. All this was attributable to the quick spread and high positivity rate of the Covid-19 pandemic whose situation was yet to be contained regardless of the government and individual efforts.

The program had one member contracting the virus but thank God she recovered and is still well to this day. Hers was the only case reported.

b) Respective, Income-Generating Group Activities at the group level

Apparently, all the groups engage in the vs&l activity, where each member remits an agreed amount of money in support of the said activity.

Al-Shama, Sumi-Peto, Kar-Shama, and Upendo-Sisters engage in merry-go-rounds alongside the table banking activity.

Sumi-Peto and Shamaa Women group also engage in group potato farming to diversify the group's sources of income.

In an earlier season, Sumi-Peto WG sold 4 bags of potatoes each at Ksh 1300 earning Ksh 6200.



Members of Sumi-Peto women group during a potato harvesting activity earlier in the year

Shamaa WG took to potato seed farming with the help of an expert. The aim was to affordably acquire the certified potato seeds by all the group members. They harvested 7, 50kg of the crop and 14, 50kg of the potato seeds.



L-R: Mary Njoroge shows of Shamaa women group received a tablet an accolade, two group members during a potato scouting exercise

The harvested crop was sold off at Ksh 2200 per bag; earning the group Ksh 15400. The seed crop was shared among the members while some of it was stored to be replanted on a later season.

Shamaa women group received a tablet for weather prediction updates from individuals affiliated to the ministry of agriculture.

3. The Launching Center

Neloshan in its third year of operation managed to engage an intern certainly as a way of giving back to the society besides giving the student an opportunity to learn and offer valuable skills to the organization. This was between the months of June through August.



Alice, a third year student in Moi University (Main Campus) was then pursuing a Bachelor's degree in social work.

Her internship proved the organization's capacity to work with and highly engage other communities other than the target group/community it has been working with and for.

To the student, it gave her a platform to bring into practice what she was still learning, as well implement her skills in support of the communities she is likely to meet and work with after school should she pursue the same interests.

4. Enhanced Personal Capacities through Measurable Variables

a) Dorper 1 project

Nuru women group is the beneficiary of the project. The group consisted of 9 active members at the time of distribution and receipt of the sheep. The project is 1 ½ years old.



Tabitha Ngugi with her lamb which was lambed by the Dorper ewe she received

8 of the 9 Dorper ewes received by the single mums have lambed so far and thus the women pride in their growing flocks. At least almost all of them have lambed thus an increase in the number of Dorpers in their care now.

Gathoni (a beneficiary) admits to have had her financial burden lifted through the project as at the time of sale of her lamb, “I did not know what to do, thanks to the project,” confessed the mother of 7. This is one of the affirmations that the project is quite beneficial in fulfilling the encompassed vision of economic empowerment among the single moms.

The mums regularly deworm their Dorpers and supply them with mineral salt blocks so as to maintain the animals’ good health.

b) Dorper 2 project

Al-shama women group is the second beneficiary of the named project. Each of the 10 members of the group received a Dorper ewe.

9 months down the fast moving time, the single mums acknowledge with gratitude remarkable growth since they received the ewes. They received the Dorpers at a time they needed them most. Given that the Covid-19 positive cases were still rising at the time of receipt, the mums were glad to receive the Dorpers amid a global crisis. Some had already sold off their locally

reared Merino sheep as well their group owned dairy goats they initially stocked to cater for their basic needs as there was a prevailing drought besides the already challenging economic times.



Jane Mumbi with her Dorper ewe and its 3-months old lamb

The beneficiaries show great interest in the ongoing Dorper project in that they are diligent in taking care of the animals by feeding, deworming and administering drugs when the animals are well. They do this after treating and consulting with the locally available veterinary. Each too has a well-constructed sheepcote to house the animal.

c) Indigenous Chickens

The project is 1 ½ years and reported to have served to empower its 14 beneficiaries by diversifying their incomes and improving their nutritional situation and the overall food security.

The number of chickens owned by the single mums have also risen as the women have hatched new breeds of chicken over the stated period. The improved indigenous chickens received and the newly hatched are reported to be hardy, disease resistant and fast maturing. They fetch higher prices in the market when sold.



L-R: Mary Wairimu and her child at home feeding her chickens, Kinya selling eggs at her shop

In random interviews conducted during the home visits, the single mums with school-going children benefited the most as they then and now can clear small fee balances (mostly up to Ksh 5000) and provide stationery to their children comfortably through sale of eggs, pullets or cockerels.

Name	Parent Flock	Current Flock	Average Income from sale of eggs and or chicken per month
1. Salome Wanjugu	10	29	5000
2. Rebecca Kinya	9	7	3500
3. Gladys Wangu	5	4	1000
4. Joyce Njoki	7	22	4500
5. Monicah Wairimu	1	15	3000
6. Jacinta Njoki	2	18	3500
7. Mary Wairimu	2	18	4000
8. Jane Wanjiru	2	13	3500
9. Faith Njeri	2	7	1000
10. Virginiah Wanjiku	7	21	4000
11. Mary Wanjiru	2	4	900
12. Pauline Murugi	8	15	3500
13. Rebecca Wanjiru	0	12	4000
14. Veronica Njoroge	2	10	1200
Total	60	199	42600

Tabulated analysis of the chicken and its outcomes in 18 months

Parent stock refers to the number of chickens owned by the single mum before she received 7 more from the program. It was a requirement that each of them owned 2 chickens to qualify to be a beneficiary.

d) Grant Highlights

Al-Shama, Upendo-Sisters and Kar-Shama women groups received Ksh 15000 from the program, amount targeted to boost their activity operations.

Al-Shama members used the money to acquire a 10kg bag of fertilizer each. This favored their farming as they received the much needed resource at the planting time. Farmers use DAP or Baraka fertilizers for potato planting.

Upendo-Sisters are situated at an area close to the major town center known as Shamata town. Most of the members in this group engage in small business enterprises in this town. For instance, Elizabeth walks to the town every day to sell charcoal, a business that has been able to sustain her livelihood since she joined the program.

Mums from this group invested their cash in shares business with Tower Sacco where they have opened a group account and expecting to earn dividend at the end of every year.

Kar-Shama put its money to different uses each according to individual member's needs.

5. Economic Implications of the Covid-19 and the Erratic Weather

It's been tough for the single mums especially through the last one year as they inevitably have had to handle a series of uncertain economic times caused by the corona virus pandemic and the unpredictable weather.

For several months during the year, a new normal somewhat disintegrated the mums' support groups. They had to seek other alternatives for their interactions were yet incomparable to the usual monthly meetings. However, the meetings resumed once the situation was declared as stable.

Most of the women keep dairy cows (1-2) each. Usually they feed the cows with green matter. Hay is not locally available. Due to consistent dry months, feeding the animals has become a prevalent challenge. At some point, they have had to buy water. Milk production has gone down by a considerable percentage thus decreased income from the dairy enterprises.

A potato harvesting season has been lost to the drought. This has brought about economic constraints among the single mums households especially those that depend on casual jobs for their livelihoods.

Conclusion

Benefits accruing to the single moms support groups cannot be underrated. Single mums' monthly meetings have been therapeutic thus contributing to their mental wellness and social well-being.

Most of the single moms admit having been able to learn more effective ways to handle difficult situations when they encounter them and gained a better understanding about their own strengths.

Their economic resilience has also been enhanced through the table banking and other economic activities the groups continue to engage in.

Social skills have helped the moms realize that there are other people among them who have had to handle greater challenges than they could even imagine. This comes as the moms share their life stories and events, and focus on the goal of helping each other as a central component of their wellbeing.