

LIFE BLOOM SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



“Women don’t need to find a voice, they have a voice, and they need to feel empowered to use it, and people need to be encouraged to listen.” – Meghan Markle

<http://www.lifebloomservices.org>

Giving women and girls a second chance

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Message from the CEO

Catherine Wanjohi

CEO and Founder, Life Bloom Services International

BACKGROUND

LBSI journeys with women, girls and children who have experienced abuse and sexual exploitation. Most of them, both under age and adults are trafficked to and through Naivasha/ Nairobi as domestic workers, casual workers in the flower farms, hotel industry and often end up in sexual exploitation and sex work. We have been working from the streets, bars, lodges and brothels where the majority of them are trapped. Using our homegrown model of Peer Mentor Model, we follow the women to their homes and families to support them in their transition towards leading positively productive and dignified lives. We are a strength-based transformational program utilizing peer mentoring and healing relationships to invite women, youth (mainly female) and children into movement from victim to whole life health.

The problem we are solving in the community: Life Bloom works towards ending gender inequalities faced by women and breaking the vicious cycles of violation and poverty. We support the marginalized groups living in the society's socio-economic-political margins in pursuit of their legal, economic, reproductive health, education and social rights within Nakuru County. Since 2004 when Life Bloom was registered, we have supported over 10,800 beneficiaries directly and inclusive of indirect beneficiaries who have experienced various forms of GBV to regain their dignity and support them to amplify their voices through advocacy and lobbying.

Vision: Life Bloom sees a world where women, girls and children who are survivors of abuse and exploitation transform to become dignified leaders.

Mission: Life Bloom is a strength-based TRANSFORMATIONAL program utilizing peer mentoring and Healing Relationships to invite women, girls and children into moving from victim to Whole Life Health.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANIZATION

Our Objectives

Life Bloom endeavors toward achieving the following objectives for the benefit of its target groups: 1) Employing poverty reduction strategies for economic development

2) Empowering the stigmatized and marginalized for gender equality

3) Addressing reproductive health issues

4) Providing access to education and vocational training

5) Advocating for democracy and good governance

Enhanced safe spaces for children survivors of abuse and exploitation

"I am an example of what is possible when girls from the very beginning of their lives are loved and nurtured by people around them. I was surrounded by extraordinary women in my life who taught me about quiet strength and dignity." — **Michelle Obama**



We supported 27 beneficiaries' education needs through payment of school fees and career mentorship which is a long term strategy to empower the children to break from cycle/s of exploitation. Education has enabled the beneficiaries to enhance their effective communication, decision making, negotiation and leadership skills which are a necessity for growth and taking control of their growth, relationships and career. 30 children beneficiaries have been capacity built on their rights, building self-confidence and making informed choices to respect their bodies. Jeninah a beneficiary confidently said *"Life Bloom imenisaidia Sana kuweza kujikubali, nilikuwa chini sana na uchungu rohoni lakini saa hii naskia nimepona na ninaamini nitarudi shule"* (Life Bloom has really helped me to accept myself, I was extremely broken and hurt but now I feel I am healed and I believe I will resume my studies)

Besides, 3 role models and 2 peer mentors have been trained on the digital shift on virtual platforms for holding meetings. The role models capacity was assessed and the team was capacity built on use of zoom by the project staff as well as group meeting functions for the pilot blended meeting scheduled.

.30 beneficiaries are more aware of their rights, building self-confidence and making choices to respect their bodies more while pursuing justice.

- i.17 beneficiaries empowered with knowledge and livelihood skills breaking the cycles of vulnerability to sexual violations.
- ii.Silent voices of the survivors raised and amplified locally and globally
- iii.Strengthened girls-led leadership models (including virtual) inviting other girls in similar situations for healing and growth; build a strong survivor network in which peer to peer support and mentoring is encouraged and amplifying the voices of the survivors
- iv.Expanded safe spaces in the community where there has been done before.
- v.Teen mothers balance between living their childhood and parenting.

Improved self-esteem, self-confidence and positive outlook to life by the beneficiaries



As our slogan states “Giving women, girls and children a second chance” we offer training for our beneficiaries based on our home-grown 5-Steps curriculum which comprises (life skills, transformative leadership, financial literacy, entrepreneurship and vocational skills). We have documented testimonies and observed change among the beneficiaries after completing the training sessions.

The United Voluntary Trust Fund for Contemporary Form of Slavery (UNVTF) funded project is being implemented in three areas namely Karagita, Mirera and Kiandegge within Naivasha Sub County. Due to Naivasha being a major tourist attraction majority of the children do not have an opportunity to be present in school either due to their family circumstantial pooled by lack of basic needs and majority of these children end up bonded to various forms of slavery.

The slavery in greater percentage affects girl child (below 18 years of age) compared to boys. Mostly the girl's labour is exploited for someone else's gain, mostly by their

parent/guardian, relative or any other person especially from disadvantaged families as their labour earnings is necessary for their survival.

The boy also suffer silently with a lot of responsibility instilled in then just for the fact he is a boy child. The project is supporting 39 direct beneficiaries (both gender).

- Improved self esteem,self confidence and positive outlook to life by the survivors.
- Increased knowledge on the forms of human trafficking happening in Nakuru by the stakeholders and community members.
- Strengthened partnerships with actors and advocated for better policies implementation to eradicate human trafficking.

Skilled beneficiaries with self-reliance livelihood skills, changed beliefs and attitude thus growing their own income sources and accessing decent employment opportunities.



In most instances more than 80% of the beneficiaries in our program are either out of school or depending on sex work as their only source of income. Our training continues to equip the necessary skills that have seen most women initiate their businesses, others venture in employment opportunities and these beneficiaries are taking up leadership positions at their group levels.

The program was initiated in year 2021 after a discussion between Life Bloom and HANAI CEO's.

The program has been implemented in various rural urban areas within Naivasha Sub- County. The program targets women and youth (18-45) who comes from very vulnerable background and didn't have a chance to join or finish education due to various circumstances. Their major hindrance of lack of basic education is poverty that lead to lack of school fees.

Our women and youths also who showed interest in the course also have business already or are in planning stages to initiate one. They women are also breadwinners in their families and there source of income is either casual jobs and small business like hawking clothes, sweet potatoes or fruits. Since February 2021 European Business University (EBU) through Life bloom and Hanai have supported seven (7 women 1 gentleman) for the 2nd Cohort through their scholarship program who took Business management course. During the first Cohort the program enrolled 5 student and we two (2) who graduated, in the month of April and they were also assigned as an ambassadors of the scholarship program.

Achievements:

1. The program has so far enrolled 47 students through 1st, 2nd and 3rd Cohort between the months of February 2021 – January 2022 learning various like Human Resource, Case in Gender, Business management, Women in leadership, Business and sustainability, Marketing Management.
2. LBSI through Hanai/EBU held orientation session that the students were equipped with skills of how to log into the class using EBU portal, Zoom classes and tackling their assignments.
3. 7 team leader and 1 over leader who monitors and offer assistance to the students at their specific class at 3rd Cohort.
4. 2 student from 1st Cohort have graduated and assigned as ambassador under the EBU scholarship program.
5. Previous student have attended all 20 classes and done all required assignments.
6. EBU students and Life bloom held an evaluation discussion that generated their experiences, challenges and achievements throughout the course. Below are statements that the students aired;

Students Experiences:

- ☐ Majority have learnt how use Zoom app when attending class and also EBU portal to access their course works.
- ☐ One student shared her savings, financial decision and also spending have really improved.
- ☐ Other students have managed to have sessions with the youth mostly girls on the dress-code and they have seen changes.
- ☐ Through women and leadership class she has managed to organize women groups so that they can benefit from government funds like Uwezo Funds, WEF.

“Feminism is not just about women; it’s about letting all people lead fuller lives.” – **Jane Fonda**

Improved access to menstrual products of girls and women in low income areas



We have our brand of locally manufactured sanitary towels

named *Nawiri*; a Swahili name that means “*To Bloom*”. In 2021 we distributed 4700 packets sanitary towels to 215 girls and women. Some packets of dignity were specifically channeled to the very needy pupils to keep them in school during menstruation. The monthly provision of sanitary towels to vulnerable girls in four schools has reduced the risk of sexual exploitation amongst girls from vulnerable backgrounds. The Girls Champions for Change club talks in the four schools has enhanced the girls’ leadership capacity through progressive club talks and mentorship to enable them develop into leaders at their own levels. The role models have been sharing monthly beneficiaries’ progress reports with the project staff as well as referring cases to Life Bloom of vulnerable and sexually exploited survivors for the girls to be supported



“My plea is that don’t wait for a girl to become a woman to empower them. Empower a girl’s life by giving sanitary pads to them. With pads, we give them wings.” — Arunachalam Muruganantham

Strengthened GBV (Gender Based Violence) prevention and response programming in Nakuru County

We participated through the Nakuru County Technical Working Team to develop a county referral tool for gender-based violence cases and have been actively involved in the Naivasha counter GBV cluster as the secretariat since 2017. In 2021, we addressed 12 Gender based violence cases, rescuing the survivors, referring them to the relevant authorities, offering immediate and scheduled counseling and reporting the cases in pursuit of the survivors’ justice.



GENDER BASED VIOLENCE
HEALTH EDUCATION

KAMBI TURKANA
10th DECEMBER 2021
8am - 4pm

PARTNERS



Enhanced sustainable resilience in marginalized and low income communities during Covid 19 pandemic.

Kambi ya Turkana Pad Drive Initiative is a partnership between Life Bloom Services International and Red Cross Naivasha Branch, that is set to run for a period of three years. The project will be ongoing and is envisioned to address not only menstrual hygiene, women empowerment, community resilience and sustainability but also teenage pregnancy/motherhood, Sexual Gender Based Violence and gender equity within the society.

For the 3rd quarter running, Life Bloom and Red Cross joined the community of more than 500 persons are squatters and live on a piece of ranch land that quit operations in the 90s. The community, elderly parents who worked at the ranch and their mainly offspring's, have no school, medical center, water, electricity and even adequate latrines.



The first visit by Life Bloom and Red Cross happened in June 2020, second visit for sanitary hygiene packs distribution was in Oct 2020. The third one with a water tank (to harvest clean rain water), sanitary hygiene packs for 100 girls and young women was on March 8th 2021. It was a great celebration as the water tank arrived, it was placed safely on the raised concrete stand that the community had prepared,

and the water bowzer poured water into the tank, and the community members turned on the tap to draw water! For the first time they had water in the neighborhood. The community members committed to making monetary savings and contributing towards the bowzer (water tank lorry) delivering clean water for the community. After being capacity built by Life Bloom staff, the women have formed and registered two saving groups to initiate businesses, and look forward to accessing affirmative funds for business growth from the government of Kenya, which are only accessed by registered groups.

Progressively improved and increased partnerships locally and globally

I think the best role models for women are people who are fruitfully and confidently themselves, who bring light into the world.” — **Meryl Streep**

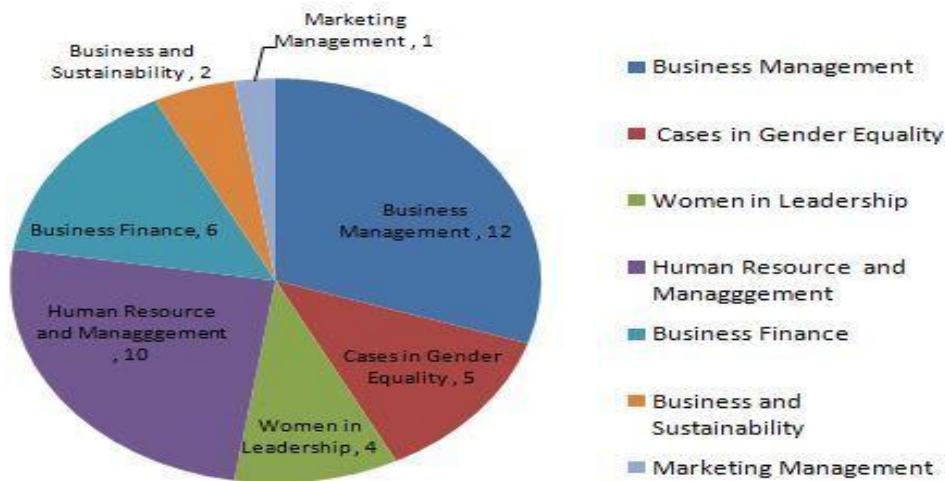


10 new partnerships with local and global institutions were formed since 2017. Life Bloom is now a member of 3 new memberships: Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children (KAACR), Nakuru County Child Rights Network and International Association for Community Development (IACD-Global). We are a member of the Area Advisory Council (AAC) Naivasha Sub County; a body that is mandated to exercise general supervision and control over the planning, financing and coordination of child rights and welfare activities within Naivasha Sub County. We have participated in several key platforms in matters of gender such as the global Generation Equality Forum 2021, making a commitment to end GBV (especially sexual exploitation and

human trafficking) by 2026. In 2019-20, we lobbied for inclusion of marginalized women in the sex work industry during the development of the Nakuru County Gender and Development Policy 2021-2027.



Summary of our Annual Achievements



Despite the diminished resources; in 2020 we reached out to 829 individuals in Nakuru County through different projects/programmes:

- Supported the education needs of 23 beneficiaries in primary and high school levels.
- Improved self-esteem and positive outlook of 18 individuals through counseling.
- 8 peer mentors trained on transformative leadership skills and virtual meetings.
- 42 beneficiaries gained skills in marketable courses and women leadership from the European Business University.
- 4700 packets issued to 215 girls and women in low income areas to improve access to menstrual health.
- Strengthened GBV (Gender Based Violence) prevention and response- supported 12 survivors.
- Rescued and placed 9 children in Charitable Children Institutions.
- Purchased a 10,000 liters water tank in partnership with Kenya Redcross for Kambi Turkana.
- Enhanced partnerships locally and globally-Participated in global Generation Equality Forum 2021
- 39 direct beneficiaries survivors of human trafficking supported through UN funded project

These Significant accomplishments have been made possible by: Equality Now, United Nations Voluntary Trust fund, Kenya Red Cross Nakuru Charitable Children institutions, Government departments, individuals and all of you.



Improving access to menstrual products to girls from low-income areas



Life Bloom Staff and Kenya Red Cross presenting the water tank to community members



Stakeholders meeting for the UN funded project

Looking forward to greater partnership and collaboration in 2022 and beyond...

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APPRECIATION

Life Bloom services international is grateful for the kind support provided in 2021 by:

Equality Now (EN)

United Nations Slavery Fund (UN)

Friends of Life Bloom USA through Umoja Church & Kenya Help

County Government of Nakuru

Naivasha sub county Children Department

Charitable Children Institutions

Kenya Red Cross

Naivasha Counter SGBV Cluster

Individual donors