

LIFE BLOOM SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Life Bloom Services International

"Empowering for a Blooming Life"

http://www.lifebloomservices.org

Giving women and girls a second chance

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BACKGROUND

Life Bloom Services International (LBSI) is a registered Non-Profit Organization operating in Kenya, (2004 September 23rd). LBSI was formed to support women/girls and children survivors or vulnerable to abuses and exploitations and other groups living in the society's socio-economic-political margins in pursuance of their legal, economic, reproductive health, education and social rights within Nakuru county.

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

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

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANISATION

Our Objectives

Life Bloom endeavors towards 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

Our programs

1) Leadership and Economic Empowerment

2) Counter Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and Human Trafficking

3) Health Component

4) Advocacy for Policy Change and Implementation

5) Strengthening Governance

OUR PILLARS

- Values: Inclusiveness and Respect for Humanity: greater participation and ownership by beneficiaries (gender inclusiveness)
- Transformation/change: what we want changed and what should be done to bring that change
- Collaboration/Networking/Partnerships (local, regional, global)
- Holding People to Accountability

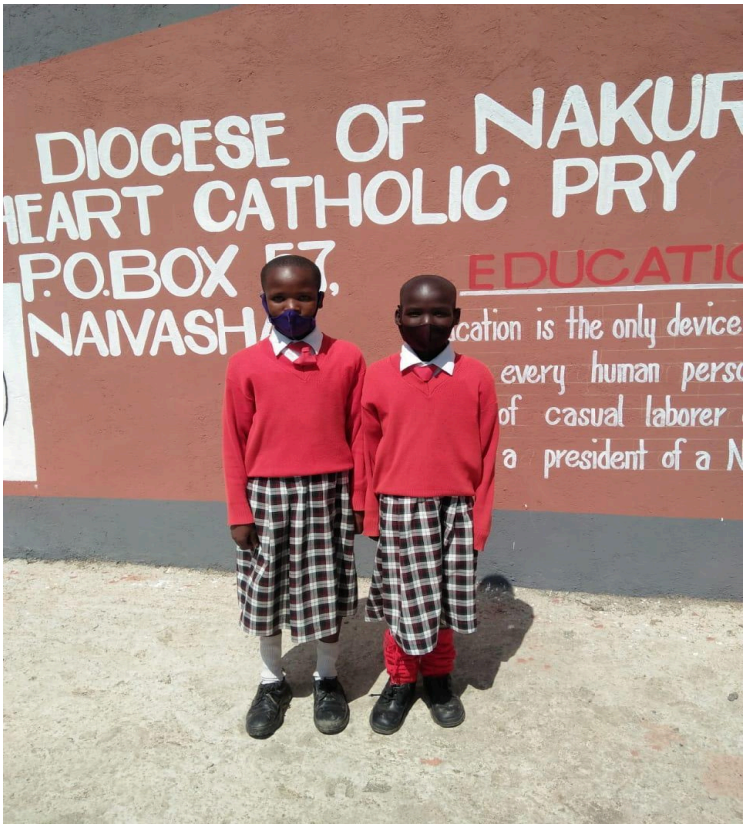
- Sustainability: good governance practices, volunteers, peer mentors/senior mentors/IGAs, local fundraisers.

Enhancing safe spaces for girls survivors of abuse and exploitation

We supported 18 beneficiaries' education needs through payment of school fees and career mentorship which is a long term strategy to empower the girls 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. Through the education and vocational skills training support, majority of the girls have been able to build their confidence, they are able to express themselves freely, share their views, opinions and they are well placed to achieve their future aspirations. Survivors of sexual exploitation and the vulnerable girls in this project have been experiencing healing and transformation gradually whose dreams had been shuttered previously by the prevailing circumstances

Besides, 6 peer mentors were trained on peer leadership and reporting thus taking the lead in various activities such as mobilization of their peers, sanitary pads distribution with the help of the project staff and facilitating training sessions utilizing the training manual The survivor led approach has helped in building and up scaling leadership of the 6 trained peer mentor leaders in taking leadership. Beneficiaries formed a girls' club named "Girls-For-Change" G4C Clubs.

13 households for TGGF Phase III beneficiaries have been cushioned with food support on a monthly basis from August to December 2020. This was a strategy to mitigate the risk of more beneficiaries from the very vulnerable backgrounds becoming sexually exploited in exchange of money to purchase food.



Enhance Sustainable Resilience in Marginalized and Low Income Communities During Covid-19 Pandemic



At the inception of this project, LBSI mapped the project areas as KCC, Kabati and Karagita. In these low-income areas, we identified 12 individuals. Three (3) of them had quit sex work. We trained them in

leadership skills, lobbying and advocacy skills, Psychological first aid, basic financial literacy and use of simple technology. The 12 individuals graduated into community mentors with focus on the sex workers community. They are evenly distributed within the project areas, 4 in each area.

The community mentors have been our focal point persons and been monitoring and updating the project on impact created and personal challenges of their individual mentees. Each month for the 7 months of the project life, update and review in-person meetings have been held by the 12 mentors, besides the online Whats App and group telephone conferences. Skills upgrading and peer to peer learning happens more at the half day meetings.

In the execution of this project drawing of a clear referral pathway that address the cases of abuse like SGBV/GBV, assaults of the sex workers by their clientele and any brutality and torture from duty bearers e.g., security apparatus has been paramount. Establishment of the referral mechanism facilitated easy and effective engagement of our various partners in the sector. The Naivasha level 5 hospital, the police, Kenya Red cross and CCIs and other CSOs were supportive in responsiveness on issues of violence and humanitarian needs of the sex workers who are beneficiaries in this project. To improve the livelihoods of beneficiaries, this project deliberately mobilized sex workers who through their mentors formed 12 small manageable groups. In these groups they carry activities that include merry-go-round, group saving and table banking. 5 of the formed groups have registered with the Sub-county Social Development office while 2 are in the process of registration.

All the community mentors in this project demonstrating leadership and relevant skills during this project implementation have initiated small Income Generating Activities (IGAs) that include: 2 fish business, 2 hawking of clothes, 3 groceries, 1 trading in shoes and 3 are in poultry and 1 rabbit keeping to diversify other income streams.

We provided food packages and 2 packets of sanitary pads to 205 sex workers led households. This cushioned the households during the un expected disruptions of their income streams as COVID-19 pandemic escalated for 7 months with each household receiving a package once per month. The Community Mentors have been the focal point for the food packs distribution: they mobilize their peers from their zones, set dates for the activity, lead in the 30-40 minutes information sharing session, and coordinate on safety and orderliness of the exercise, recording each participant accurately.

Improving access to menstrual products to girls and women in low income areas



Life Bloom in partnership with Redcross initiated Kambi Turkana Pad drive with a vision to help empower women and girls in Naivasha and its environs. The project targets girls and women from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds. We raised funds and provided free dignity kits to females in Naivasha Sub county and Nakuru County at large. The initiative organized training sessions/forums to discuss, teach and empower girls and women on issues related to Menstrual Hygiene, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, capacity building and sustainability. Girls received 12 pads and 4 undergarments while women received 6 pads and 2 undergarments.

In four primary schools we also distributed sanitary towels to 20 girls in each school hence a total of 80 girls for two months. The packets of dignity were specifically channeled to the very needy pupils to keep them in school during menstruation. The schools guidance and counseling departments were very supportive in identifying such cases.

Giving the smile to freedom for children survivor and at risk of trafficking and exploitation



The project was implemented in three areas namely Karagita, Kiandege and mirera in Naivasha Sub –County.40 survivors and victims of child slavery were identified and recruited out of whom 4 beneficiaries were equipped with leadership skills which placed them on a better leadership platform. LBSI offered psychosocial support to 40 beneficiaries. Furthermore, we sensitized and created awareness on trafficking specifically on Sexual Exploitation and Child Labor to 97 individuals in Naivasha Sub County. The individuals consisted of the project stakeholders, parents/guardians to the beneficiaries and forty close friends to the direct beneficiaries.

In partnership with a community health volunteer we rescued one girl who is a teenage mother and was married by a fisherman. She was referred to a safe house within the Sub County where she is still residing with her child. This new environment has been much enabling to break the cycles of exploitation and trafficking for both the beneficiary and her child. Sensitization programs to 40 indirect beneficiaries through the social clubs meeting were implemented on a monthly basis. Children had a platform to meet and discuss the Modern forms of Contemporary Slavery in the society, children rights and other relevant topics. The organization also managed to give the survivors of the project hygiene packs for the boys and sanitary towels for the girls.

Response to Counter Gender Based Violence

Life Bloom staff handled 13 Gender based violence cases, rescuing the survivors, referring them to the relevant authorities, offering counseling and reporting the cases in pursuit of the survivors' justice of which 6 of the cases have attained justice and we are following up on the other cases as we involve the community. Life Bloom is a secretariat organization at the Naivasha counter gender based violence a cluster that sensitizes the community on GBV matters and connects survivors through the referral pathways to access psychosocial and economic services.

Key areas of focus towards amplifying women voices and ending violence against women, girls and children

LBSI responses are basically anchored on the Equality Model. We have been working and seeks to work more with prostituted women/girls mostly who are vulnerable or survivors of sexual and gender exploitation and campaign for recognition of their rights in the following ways:

1) **Advocacy and lobbying for policy implementation and change** for indiscriminate inclusion of women and girls in decision making processes, especially on matters that concern their (and households) well-being like access to economic empowerment, water and health services. This we do alongside **and** on behalf of women in prostitution or sex work and those departing from prostitution. Since 2018, Life Bloom has collaborated with Equality Now and UN-Slavery Fund in an overall campaign in Nakuru County towards the change, adoption and implementation of appropriate legal and social interventions to address sexual exploitation of women and girls in travel and tourism. As part of intervention, Life Bloom is implementing a project on supporting girls (9-17 years) who are survivors of sexual exploitation and trafficking from Naivasha low income areas.

2) Amplifying vulnerable women/girls voices

Life Bloom has supported vulnerable women in formation of inclusive and representative groups which are also registered. Women take up leadership positions in these groups as the majority of them have been trained as Mentors. In our program, we have women and girls groups/clubs (**Girls Champions for Change**-.**GC4C**, and **Women for Community Change-W4CC Clubs).**These too are platforms for our community leadership model.

The group members benefit socially, economically and psychologically. These groups continue to snowball, creating larger groups and few new ones. This has in small ways enabled greater bargaining power, broad-based representation and bringing together voices and collective efforts and action for participatory, accountable and a sustainable improvement of livelihood processes. By building the capacity of the key population and the marginalized, it will enhance civic engagement and participation to lobby for effective and efficient services.

3) **Sensitization and community participation on realization of women and girls' rights** in Naivasha and Gilgil Sub-counties**.** LBSI has been holding sensitization and awareness campaigns through different forums e.g. during every year's 16 days of activism, International women's day, mother's day and also in planned outreaches with key interest in creating awareness on prostituted women who have experienced violence in the past in Nakuru County. Life Bloom is the secretariat to the Naivasha Counter GBV network comprised of NGOs/CBOs and Government departments which works towards ending violence against women within Naivasha Sub County. The organization generally also handles GBV and SGBV cases and follows up through referrals.
4) **Livelihood Strengthening Program:** Supporting through skills building program based on the 5 STEPS MODULE: Entrepreneurship, financial literacy, Vocational skills, Life skills and Transformative Leadership Skills.

5) **Enhanced community leadership through community mentors:** Building capacities for volunteer mentors to geographically scale up the creation and expansion of safe spaces for all, especially women and girls to lead the lives they choose to lead made from informed choices.

Summary of our Annual Achievements



Appreciation

Life Bloom services international is grateful for the kind support provided in 2020 by:

Equality Now (EN)

United Nations (UN)

Friends of Life Bloom USA through Umoja Church (Kenya Help)

The Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa (OSIEA)

County Government of Nakuru

Naivasha sub county Children Department

Charitable Children Institutions

Kenya Red Cross

Individual donors