

The Sophia Foundation



Community Baseline Survey Report

January 2017

Acknowledgement

We wish to express our gratitude to the community members for giving The Sophia Foundation an opportunity to conduct this community baseline survey. We would like to express our sincere thanks to our members and volunteers for participating in the training and working tirelessly in the field to collect data and information.

We would like to record our special appreciation to Maryam Mostajir, the co-founder from Sweden, for her dedication and commitment to this cause, and her active participation in the survey process.

A special dedication to the late Mama Sophia Olilo Ojwando, whose inspiration and desire to see other vulnerable women become self-reliant led to the formation of this foundation.

Final thanks go to community members, for their cooperation and willingness to provide the information we sought.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASA	After School Art
CBO	Community-Based Organization
OGOF	One Goat One Family
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
TSF	The Sophia Foundation

Introduction

The Sophia Foundation (TSF) is a community based organization (CBO) in Kenya, and is registered with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services. TSF is committed to the sustainable development of rural community members consisting of vulnerable children and women in Lower Nyakach Division, Pap Onditi, Kisumu County, Kenya, by implementing development projects in partnership with the local community, government structures, and friends from the international community.

The purpose of the community baseline survey

The purpose of the survey is to assess the education status, livelihood ventures and role of micro-finance credit and corporative groups in alleviating poverty in Lower Nyakach, Kisumu County, Kenya. It is being conducted as an entry point to launching The Sophia Foundation project to support vulnerable children and women.

Survey Methodology

An in-house workshop was facilitated by Nicholas Ojwando (Founder), and covered such topics as understanding surveys, the purpose of the survey, types of data and information required, and where to obtain data and information. During the workshop, the participants were given a chance to scrutinise the questionnaires and advise on how to collect the data. The organisation has developed individual, face-to-face interview questionnaires. The tool was given a dry run and revised in the workshop, before being used to conduct the actual survey.

The findings

Demographic information on the respondents

The respondents interviewed represented 85 households. They consisted of 95% women and 5% men, mostly between the ages of 18-50.

The majority of the respondents were widowed, with children between 2 and 8.

All the respondents interviewed were Christians.

The highest educational qualification reached by 95% of the respondents interviewed was primary level.

The occupation of 90% of the female respondents was running small businesses, which included selling vegetables, fish, maize, paraffin, and foodstuffs, and brewing local alcohol. Other respondents were housewives.

The 95% of the respondents interviewed live in a mud-dwelling house.

Nutritional status of the respondents

The respondents' main source of carbohydrates is "Ugali" made from maize flour, which they consume almost on a daily basis. Maize is the main staple food/crop grown in the target area, and is grown on a very small scale due to the very low and unpredictable rainfall.

The respondents' protein consumption is very poor and sporadic, as protein-based foods are expensive, and the respondents cannot afford them on their low or zero incomes.

In relation to dietary routines, the respondents were asked how many times a day they eat. The majority, over 85%, said they eat only twice a day, while for the remainder, the dietary routine is unpredictable. This is due to economic hardship and financial instability, due to the irregular source of income.

In relation to cooking methods, all the respondents interviewed said they use firewood as fuel for cooking. This has direct negative impact on the environment, as trees and shrubs are cut down as firewood.

Educational Status of Children

The respondents were asked to state some recreational activities that their children engaged in while at home during school holidays or on weekends. Their responses included; fetching water/firewood and doing household chores. During the survey, water was mentioned a major problem in the area, and children spend most of their time fetching water and firewood.

Ninety-five percent (95%) of the respondents mentioned lack of funds to pay school fees as a major reason why children drop out of school. The other reasons mentioned, by 4% of the respondents, were teenage pregnancy and lack of parental guidance.

When asked about the best ways to support children in school, 55% of the respondents said through helping vulnerable parents to pay school fees, while 40% said by providing a school lunch for their children.

On the best ways to support children outside the school program, 98% of the respondents mentioned extracurricular activities, such as art activities, coaching, singing and sporting activities, stating that these will help develop the children's talents, and also keep them busy and engaged, as a means of deterring deviant behaviours in the community. Some also mentioned that the school curriculum places too much emphasis on class work performance, and little attention is given to activities to develop talents.

When asked about the best place to set up an "After School Art (ASA) Project, an overwhelming majority of the respondents, 99%, said the community centre. This, they said, is closer and more accessible to the children.

Recommendations

- Provide accessible water points (boreholes) for clean drinking water, to reduce pressure and burden on children and women in the community.
- Provide school sponsorship program to facilitate access to education, and an opportunity for a better tomorrow for vulnerable children and the community.
- Initiate an After School Art Project" for children to develop their talents, and mentor them.

Rural Microfinance

The respondents were asked where they obtained finance for their various activities during the year 2016. They said from credit loans, wages, and small-scale businesses.

Seventy five people (88.2%) from the 85 households included in the survey reported having credit needs in the 12 months preceding the interview. Of these, only 25.6% had managed to access credit. The merry-go-rounds was reportedly the main source of credit for various activities; 100% for school fees, 40% borrowed to start business. The survey showed that 75% of the female respondents are members of contribution groups.

It was evident that there is a significant unmet need for credit facilities to enable households to finance productive activities.

Nonetheless, there were complaints that the credit terms of the Kenya Women and Cooperative Societies were not attainable by most community members. There were fears that those who sought loans could end up losing whatever property they offered as collateral. There were, however, a few community members who had sought and obtained credit after meeting the requirements. It would appear that community members have yet to come to terms with the requirements and obligations for obtaining loans, in particular, the need to review the viability of the project they wish to engage in. Also, it appears that opportunity to obtain loans through group collateral has not been sufficiently explored, hence the fears among individuals asked to offer their assets as collateral.

The respondents were asked to state the best ways of supporting women to improve their lives. The overwhelming majority, 99%, stated; provision of affordable credit loans, support for business start-ups, and training on business management. They believe these three key areas are the most critical ways of empowering women to become self-reliant.

Recommendations

- Initiate support for business start-ups, such as income-generating activities like the “One Goat One Family project”
- Provide soft credit loans as a revolving fund for women to start up small businesses or expand existing ones.
- Develop women’s skills in key relevant areas, such as business and financial management, leadership, and decision making.

Annexe

1. Questionnaire