



# ELWOFOD

ELDOROT WOMEN FOR DEVELOPMENT

## HISTORY

ELWOFOD is a women-based organization founded by two women ex-convicts in Eldoret- Langas Slum who had been convicted for 6 years for a crime they did not commit with an aim of enhancing reentry of women ex-convicts into their communities through economic skill development. This was due to the neglect and hostility that these ex-inmates faced despite the government attempts to reintegrate them. Many offenders, especially women, intend to become law-abiding citizens when they're released from jail or prison but face an uphill battle to meet their basic needs and those of their families like food. In Eldoret, over 2000 women prisoners are released annually and reenter our communities especially in the slums. Many wish to become law-abiding citizens and have the best intention of living a conventional life yet most have few job skills, lack a formal education, and experience discrimination in housing and job markets because of their felony records. WOES –“Walking on Egg Shells” seeks to break this cycle by providing agribusiness skills and financial literacy training for women ex-prisoners when they are released. Project WOES seeks to build community, not more women prisons.

ELWOFOD started as a women self-help group in the year 2005 with only 10 members, to date it has transformed into a community women-based organization (CBO) and registered with the Ministry of East African Community, Labour and Social Protection since 2007 with currently 52 women ex-prisoners members.

*What we have done Previous projects:*

After women spend nearly 10 years in prison, they become our local statistics—the homeless, the unemployed, the under-educated, the impoverished. Unable to make it in the conventional world, over 60% are rearrested for a new crime within three years causing further victimization and a drain on community resources. ELWOFOD partnered with donors and ministry department as strategic partners in the implementation of the project dubbed “Give women ex-prisoners Economic Skills” GWES. The goal of the project was to provide women ex-prisoners with access to vocational directed skills programmes that would lead to the acquisition of skills needed in the labour market and for self-reliance. This created access to self-employment opportunities and entrepreneurship within various sectors. The project was a huge success for

women in the 2014/15 financial year: • Women ex-prisoners were trained in sports, basic literacy and farming skills • a learner database was created for further support beyond the GWES 2016/17 for which this project seeks to support in its strategic plan 2017- 2021 strategic program plan with Economic empowerment through agribusiness (kitchen gardening); • 95% of those trained were women and • 5% girls benefited. The project director is the brain behind "farming with purpose" which is providing organic land filled sacks where vegetables are grown in sacks with very little water requirement for kitchen gardening to women ex- prisoners.

WOES-"Walking On Egg Shells" is an initiative that seeks to promote progressive reintegration of women ex-prisoners in their communities through agribusiness skill development from the first day they are released from prison in an effort to confront stigma as they feel like they are walking on eggs shells because everyone looks at them suspiciously once they know that they were once offenders. The project will provide farm inputs and training to 50 women ex-prisoners so that women ex-prisoners can grow fresh farm vegetables using organic landfill sacks for household consumption and surplus sale to supplement family income. This organic farming technology uses little space and requires little water. Each sack can support up to 20 vegetable seedlings for a period of 3 years of harvesting before replanting. These farm activities and group meetings will provide them self-employment, encourage healing, allow them to challenge false beliefs about women capabilities and destinies, and allows them to build self-confidence and empower women to take control of their lives and futures. Ultimately, it will enable them to come together, heal, thrive and organize for change.

### **WHY THE PROJECT IS NECESSARY**

The 2007-2008 post -election violence in Kenya pushed many women and their families into the Slums in Eldoret after worst forms of Gender based violence. More than 300 women currently in Eldoret prisons are there for nonviolent offenses. A half of them are there because of drug related crimes, compared with only 17 percent of the male population. The remaining nonviolent crimes include Outlawed Commercial Sex work, illegal illicit alcohol brewing and property related crimes. More hurting is that some are convicted for crimes they did not commit. After release, unable to make it in the conventional world, over 60% of women ex-prisoners are rearrested for a new crime within three years causing further victimization and a drain of resources. In Kenya, a crime conviction carries significant legal restrictions on subsequent employment limitations especially on women.

Many women ex-offenders intend to become law abiding citizens when they're released from jail or prison but face an uphill battle to meet their basic needs and those of their families like food and an income to realize their aspirations. In Eldoret, Over 200 Women prisoners are released annually and reenter our communities especially in the slums. Many wish to become law abiding citizens and have the best intention of living a conventional life yet most have few job skills, lack a formal education, and experience discrimination in housing and job markets because of their felony records. WOES –"Walking on Egg Shells" seeks to break this cycle by providing

agribusiness development skills and financial literacy training for women ex-prisoners when they are released. Project WOES seeks to build community, not more women prisons.

Evidence by ELWOFOD shows that women have a heightened vulnerability to mental and physical abuse during arrest, questioning and in prison. Many women detainees face inhuman and degrading treatment during arrest, interrogation and in custody including stripped naked, threats of rape, touching, "virginity testing", invasive body searches, insults and humiliations of a sexual nature or even rape. Once imprisoned, women may be subjected to several forms of violence such as rape by other inmates and guards, forced into prostitution, touched in a sexual manner during frisks, watched while showering or using toilets and required to wear revealing prison uniforms.

Women are often imprisoned for economic, non-violent offences often linked to their financial situation or experience of violence. Poverty, persisting discriminatory laws, lack of enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and related obstacles in accessing justice, increase the likelihood of women being detained. For instance, women offenders often do not have the financial resources to pay for legal representation or alternatives to custodial sentences such as fines or to obtain bail.

In Kenya especially in the slums, women are disproportionately affected by so-called "moral" offences, such as adultery or extramarital sex, or for violations of dress codes, or witchcraft. Women and girls have also been imprisoned for running away from their homes, often to escape child and forced marriage, forced prostitution, or sexual or physical violence. Kenya imprisons women for obtaining abortions, including in cases of rape. Furthermore, women victims of so called crimes of honour, domestic violence or sex trafficking and sex workers have been administratively detained supposedly for their own protection or rehabilitation.

In this regard , ELWOFOD has proposed this project as this group of women exist in the society but face a lot of myriads and often looked upon and forgotten. 50 Women ex-prisoners that will be a prototype beneficiaries for this project have a small garden around their kitchens or homes where they can grow vegetables through simple organic land fill sacks vegetable farming and also hold meetings to discuss their past incarnation , thrive, heal and organize themselves for change.

## **HOW WE ENGAGE OUR BENEFICIARIES IN THE DESIGN OF PROJECT**

WOES "Walking on Egg Shells" project was developed from community participatory rural appraisal methodology. Community Members identify their problems which are then forwarded before the organization projects management committee. An assessment is then made and the proposed projects prioritized according to the most pressing needs. The decision was then made in a joint planning workshop where the community stakeholders were invited. The project involved the beneficiaries in making the components of the project including; Designing, forming the committee, drawing the work plan, putting up sustainability strategies and monitoring and

evaluation of this project. During the implementation, the beneficiaries are represented and fully involved including the provision of in-kind contribution, monitoring and evaluation for the full benefit of the beneficiaries. ELWOFOD have connections with a group of women ex-prisoners who are struggling to fit in the society after many years in prison. Most of them we met them when they were in the prison even before they were released through a different project. The report shows that women ex-prisoners are excited about the proposed project. Stakeholders expressed their full support and confidence in the project as it is in line with government economic empowerment strategy paper. The project will partner with the relevant government departments like local administration e.g the Local Chiefs, probation, Gender and social Development, agricultural department. Men and boys will be incorporated to support women and girls in their kitchen gardens

## **HOW WE MONITOR AND EVALUATE PROJECT**

The project will be monitored on day to day basis. Weekly discussions shall be held together with the beneficiaries to discuss on challenges and determine best practices that can be documented. The trainer will also give weekly reports on the progress of training. The training shall be monitored through attendance sheets, training report and home visits to see whether beneficiaries are employing the skill learnt. ELWOFOD project Director Mrs. Caroline Mabonga shall send monthly progress report to Comic Relief to inform on project progress and end project report.

ELWOFOD will track, the reduction in re-incarnation by women, whether there is reduction in discrimination against women ex-prisoners by community, level of acceptance by community and its leaders, the impact of income from sales of farm products, measure detention with trial and gaps.

The project will be evaluated through, weekly review meetings held together with beneficiaries. Reports will be prepared by the finance officer. The daily farm and sale records will be kept by beneficiaries. ELWOFOD will conduct a baseline survey during the inception of the project and a community score card at the end to evaluate the progress of the project. The training conducted will be evaluated using participants feedback analysis form. All payment vouchers and receipts will be availed. The report will contain: financial report and narrative reports concerning the project. These reports will be sent to Comic Relief on monthly basis to ensure that goals are met. The project will also be evaluated using both Operational and Performance indicators Data will be collected by measuring outputs, personal interviews with grass root community stakeholders, and recording changes. Analyzed data will be used to address problems, recommend changes and measure progress made towards objectives. The evaluation reports will be presented to ELWOFOD Board and donor for additional inputs and suggestions. The grass root stakeholders, organizations and local leaders will take part in evaluation.

## **FINAL REPORT JUNE 2018**

### **STORY OF NAOMY JEPKOSGEY**

Most community used to look down, stigmatize and negatively profile ex-offenders but this has changed. Naomi one of the ex-offenders narrates during an interview "When i was released after serving my 1 year sentence after being imprisoned for brewing illicit local liquor, the community looked at me as a shame to the other women. I felt a lot of stigma like I was walking on eggs shells because everyone looked at me suspiciously once they knew i was once an offender. I was committed to prove a point and that came when i sold my first bunch of vegetables and onions to the market to the same people who looked down upon me. It was a huge shock to them and majority wondered how that could have happened. I made cash from them and used the same cash from my own farm vegetables to take my 5 year daughter who had dropped out due to lack of school fee when i was imprisoned back to school. Today, i feel free, i feel like a real woman, a woman with economic rights and self-actualization, and with power to influence what a woman is capable of doing. I can now re-write my history positively. Many women flock my kitchen garden ready to buy vegetables and some looking for my attention to teach them how to do kitchen gardens. I feel i am the woman many women now wants to emulate. Thanks to ELWOFOD and VGIF for now i am the woman i have always longed to be".



The photo above shows Naomy harvesting her fresh vegetables and onions just right outside her house in Langas slum



(Photo above shows Naomy's daughter pose for a photo with a fresh *sukuma wiki*- Kale stalk from their farm)

### **SUCCESS STORY FROM IRENE JEMUTAI**

Irene Jemutai one of the participants says " My name is Irene Jemutai 29 years old and a single mother of 2 boys and one girl. I have always longed to have an income from my own skills since being a school dropout, there have been no hopes to secure a job. To make it worse, spending 2 years in prison for a crime i did not commit. I was picked from the street late in the night by police when i was had just gone to meet my sister at the bus stage and because the police wanted a bribe i was hesitant and refused. Well, i was a former twilight lady but reformed when i contracted HIV/AIDS and would not cope up well. With this history and multiple police arrests and release on bails. This time the bail was high and i could not raise it. the court made a verdict that i was a frequent victim of similar arrests and locked me in jail for 2 years. Many times as a women detainee faced inhuman and degrading treatment during arrest, interrogation and in custody including stripped naked, threats of rape, touching, "virginity testing", invasive body searches, insults and humiliations of a sexual nature and even attempted rape by other inmates and guards, touched in a sexual manner during frisks, watched while showering and using toilets and required to wear revealing prison uniforms. My hope was shut and i felt the end of the world.

When i was released, it was upheaval task to start a life, having lost my rented house and my belongings stolen. I could not hold my tears!. Thanks to ELWOFOD-Caroline and the VGIF, when i was enrolled into the kitchen garden program, i have learned a lot and now i have skills and my own kitchen garden even though i reside in a church who took me in through ELWOFOD. I have just sold my fresh vegetables seedlings and have saved Ksh 18,600 (\$186) 4 months since i planted. I used part of the savings and enrolled to beauty school as a hair dresser. I have graduated and i have opened my own saloon here in the slum and many of my customers like it because they are motivated by my detention stories, in fact they say they are motivated. I usually bank my savings with micro finance institution and hopefully in the next 6 months i will expand my business and offer part time training to my fellow women and girls who have the ambition to change their economic status. If it was not for ELWOFODD and VGIF, i

would be nobody as i had contemplated suicide. No i feel relaxed and hopeful though still having many questions as to why i would land in jail by police who would have protected me. I feel bad sometimes when I remember but i am happy i am busy in my garden most of the timeso the memory is fading each day".



The photo above shows Irene Jemutai watering her kales and *Mchicha* the local veges





The photo above shows Irene Jemutai's seedlings which she sells to earn her an income



Some of the veges from the participants kitchen gardens





The Photos above shows Mary harvesting in kitchen garden growing both local highly nutritional veges

### **SUCCESS STORY FOR ESSAU ELLY-ELWOFOD BOARD MEMBER AND LEGAL OFFICER STAFF**

In this first VGIF grant, ELWOFOD has gained highly in working with women ex -prisoners to attain their highest level of economic development and empowerment. As a result, one young man a volunteer with ELWOFOD Essau Elly who is a victim of imprisonment without trial for women activism won honorary invitation and attended a highly contested African young Leaders forum organized by Open Society for Eastern Africa (OSIEA) held in Dar- re-salam , Tanzania where his work in fighting for fair trial for women and re-integration of women ex prisoners was honored. It is our greatest honor and pleasure that VGIF continues to change our community and to re-write our story from WOES to SMILES.





The photos above shows Essau pose for a photo and during the panelist discussion at the YLF in Tanzania

# CONNECTING YOUNG LEADERS NOVEMBER 15-17, 2017 DARES SALAA

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## A STORY FROM ALICE SIFUNA

"My name is Alice Sifuna aged 24 years old and a single mother. I dropped out of school in class 7 due to poverty and after pregnancy when i was 16 years. My family neglected me and so i got married due to shame but my husband disowned me 1 year later after marriage. I got depressed and moved to Langas slum to stay with my uncle. When life became unbearable, my uncle opted to sell me to men for money to earn them an income and buy food. I did it for 2 months, but i left selling sex at night when one of my clients tricked me to her house and gang rapped me. I aborted fearing reporting the matter to police for custodial sentence. I left my uncle and lived alone in a rented makeshift house in deplorable state at the suburb of the slum but life was hard and i could only survive on selling sex and bhang at night to pay rent and feed my son. One fateful night, the police arrested me and locked me up. I was sentenced for 1 year since the Ksh 12,000(\$12) fine i would not afford despite pleading with the court of being a young mother. It was a crime to sell sex and drugs. When i was released, i got wind of ELWOFOD and their project. I applied and was accepted in the programe. I was trained on organic kitchen garden, established my own kitchen garden and with numerous mentorship and support, now make income. I have used the income to feed my son and have gone back to school to continue with my education. At school, i feel safer and contented. I influenced the school head and we now have a school garden where i train my fellow learners on organic gardening every evening. I am happy the teachers have joined my organic kitchen garden classes and they love it. I know education is key to success. That is the perfect way the world will know about my story. Thanks to ELWOFOD,VGIF and the school for enabling me and restoring my dignity and rights".



Photo above shows Alice and her school mate in their flourishing school vegetable farm.



Lilian Anyango one of the beneficiaries watering her kitchen garden. She grows both onions and local vegetable in the same sack.



ELWOFOD program officer together with women ex- prisoners during planting at Mary's kitchen garden



Fresh transplanted vegetable seedlings



Joan Wajiru a mother and a victim of gender based violence in her kitchen garden in the Langas slum. This project has helped her recover and she is happy she is now a farmer with food and income.



Women beneficiaries working on the organization demonstration firm during transplanting.



Vivian cheruiyot harvesting her fresh farm kales for market sales. She has had a booming business this season.