



Strengthening economic and social
support systems for vulnerable rural
women-led households in Western
Kenya through food distribution
Progress report (2021-2024)

Africa Initiative for Rural Development

September 2024

Project 'Nguzo'

A local food distribution initiative, targeting widowed women with food and household supplies in Western Kenya.

Our role

To support their livelihoods by providing food, and household supplies, in order to strengthen the existing economic and social support systems

Services delivered

- Food distribution
- Counseling services



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project *Nguzo*, is an initiative premised on the United Nation Women's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), year 2024 priority theme, 'to improve social protection systems for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls', as well as the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number five. *Nguzo*¹ was birthed out of need in 2021. It was a response to the plight of vulnerable women who could not support themselves for reasons of losing bread winners, or extreme conditions of poverty, rendering it difficult for them to feed themselves and their households. The ultimate goal of the project is to improve the quality of life and social well-being of vulnerable women (widows), through market-vested socio-economic interventions in food security, income generation, and climate resilience.

Food distribution is just but the first step in responding to the immediate need (hunger). The long-term plan is to slowly graduate the support into a life-skills training, enterprise development mentorship (to start/strengthen small enterprises (SMEs), and civic education model, for empowering the women, and turning them into even stronger pillars of their households and communities.

More than half of Africa's women are under-resourced, living in largely agrarian societies. They play a critical role in contributing to the continent's agriculture and rural enterprises, which in turn fuel local and global economies. According to UN Women, (2023)², a majority of women (13.1 million) in Kenya live in rural areas and make up approximately 75% of the agricultural labour force, placing rural women and girls at the heart of Africa's development. According to the Loomba Foundation's World Widows Report, (2024)³, Kenya had an estimated 8 million widows, with the country placed 33rd on a list of countries with the harshest environments for widows.

During the 2021-2024 reporting period, *Nguzo* distributed food packs to 237 women in Busia, Bungoma, and Kakamega counties, Kenya. Key challenges included; limited logistical capacity causing the work to run slowly, economic inflation, leading to reduction in number of women reached, or cuts to the supplied rations, and lack of data and tracking resources. This report provides some key highlights of achievements in the intervening period.

¹ In recognition of the centrality of the women's efforts within their households, the project was code-named 'Nguzo', a Swahili word for pillar, or the archetypical center-pole that holds the traditional African round huts in place.

² <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/commission-on-the-status-of-women/about-the-commission-on-the-status-of-women>

³ <https://www.theloombafoundation.org/world-widow-report/>

HIGHLIGHTS OF IMPACT

Project fact-sheet - 2024



237

Number of widow households reached since inception, 2021



06

Number of sensitization meetings held in build-up to distribution sessions



12

Number of persons living with disability (PLWD) reached.



03

Number of counties covered



01

Number of disseminated publications on Nguzo women program



1.3

Value of collective investment towards the women (KES millions)

STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR VULNERABLE RURAL WOMEN THROUGH FOOD DISTRIBUTION (PROJECT – NGUZO)

Empowering rural widowed women through food distribution for improved social protection systems for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls

Project *Nguzo* is a local food distribution project by Africa Initiative for Rural Development (AiRD), and like-minded partners, targeting widowed households with food and personal effects in Western Kenya.

The delivery model involves targeting the most vulnerable members (widows, economically vulnerable single women-led households, and orphaned children) through various community institutions such as religious, community development, and local government administration systems, in order to reach the needy with food supplies, training and mentorship in life skills, enterprise development services, and civic education.

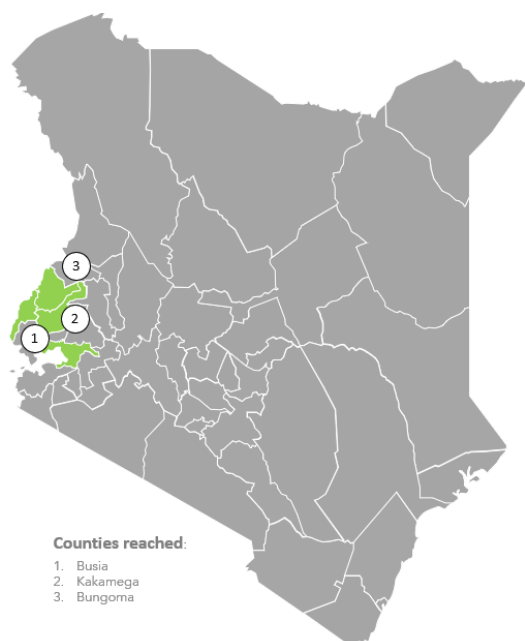
The intervention aims to strengthen the existing economic and social protection systems from which they derive their livelihoods and economic sustenance. In

the first phase, the project aimed at reaching vulnerable widows with food supplies in order to address the most pressing economic needs. Subsequent phases will seek to expand the support by introducing a training and mentorship component for developing small businesses that can cater to the women's most immediate food needs on a sustainable basis. Whereas the first phase was philanthropic, the second will seek to extend capacity strengthening services within a market-context so as to empower women to start and run small businesses that can support their daily requirements sustainably. This will be done in collaboration with other development, private and public sector partners operating in the same target regions.

Counties

The project currently reaches women in Kakamega, Bungoma, and Busia counties in western Kenya.

Figure 1: Counties reached by the project



SDGs supported include:



Selection criteria

The project targeted vulnerable women who showed interest in the project, and who had been seconded to the program by a trusted community agent who knew them, including, but not limited to local chiefs, religious organizations, and other previous or ongoing development programs by different partners. They included;

- Widows
- Economically vulnerable single women-led households
- Elderly women
- Orphaned children
- Women living with disability (PLWD) or chronic diseases (LWCD)

The women were seconded to the project during sensitization meetings held in build-up to the distribution exercises.

ACHIEVEMENTS

During the intervening period (2021-2024), a total 237 vulnerable women were reached with food packs valued at KES 1.3 million, with KES 903,772 (i.e. 68.3% of total support), going directly to the beneficiaries, while the difference covered operational costs (transport, local movements by food trucks and motor-bike deliveries).



237

Number of widowed households reached since inception, 2021

Six sensitization meetings were held in build-up to each distribution exercise across the three counties.



Sensitization meeting held at Tingolo, Busia County, 2024



12

Number of women (widow/girls), living with disability (PLWD), chronic disease, (LWCD, and extremely elderly

Table 1: List of people with disability, disease and/or advanced in age

Abled differently	Tally
People with disability	3
Greatly aged, and/or LWCD	9

Physical deliveries (using motor-bikes were made to PLWD, LWCD, and those greatly advanced in age with no capacity to move.



First round distribution in July 2022, targeting 30 women at Tingolo, Busia County



Bungoma County women, collecting their rations after a distribution exercise in 2021



Jubilant women enjoying their rations after a distribution session at a local meeting point in Kakamega County



The first group of 11 women, who benefited from the program in Tingolo, Busia County, July, 2021

Below are examples of typical food-pack profiles from earlier (Table 2), and more recent (Table 3) consignments. Slight variations in food costs, arose from the influence of external factors, largely, inflation (increased cost of living, and decreased value of the local currency).

Table 2: A typical food-pack from a 2021 distribution consignment.

Food pack composition (July, 2021)			
Item	Q (kg)	Cost/ kg	Cost (KES)
Maize flour	8.0	55	440
Baking flour	6.0	70	420
Sugar	4.0	110	440
Rice	3.0	120	360
Salt	1.0	72	72
Cooking oil	2.0	260	520
Bar soap	1.0	179	179
Skin oil	0.5	1,105	553
Blankets	1.0	1,200	1,200
TOTAL			4,184
Women			10
Value			41,835

Source: AiRD, 2024

Table 3: A typical food-pack from a 2024 distribution consignment.

Food pack composition (Sept, 2024)			
Item	Q (kg)	Cost/ kg	Cost (KES)
Maize flour	8.0	65	520
Baking flour	6.0	80	480
Sugar	4.0	131	524
Rice	4.0	160	640
Salt	1.0	80	80
Cooking oil	3.0	299	897
Bar soap	1.0	200	200
Skin oil	0.5	1,200	600
TOTAL			3,941
Women			107
Value			421,687

Source: AiRD, 2024

According to the Central Bank of Kenya (2024)⁴, the country experienced heightened economic inflation between 2020 and 2024 (Figure 2). During the same period, the shilling weakened against major currencies (Figure 3). The macro-economic factors led to an increase in price of consumables over the period. In order to maintain, improve, or scale the food-packs, the investment needs to grow.

⁴ Central Bank of Kenya 2024; tradingeconomic.com

Figure 2: Kenya's inflation rate variance over the past 5-years (2020-2024)

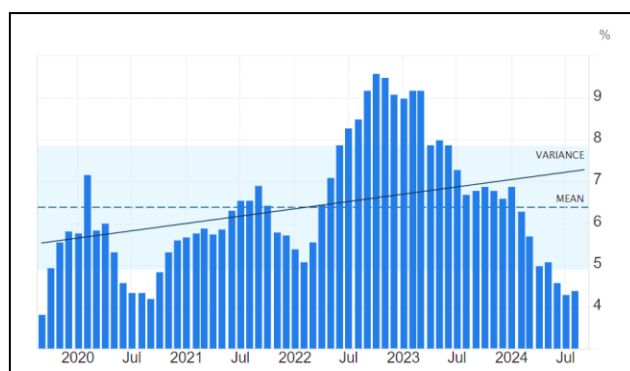
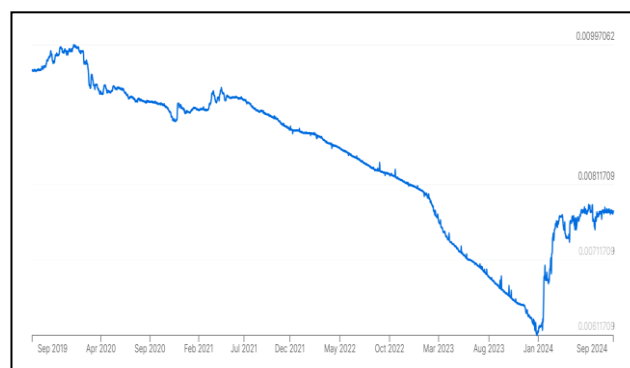


Figure 3: Weakening shilling against the US dollar (2020-2024)



The above results were achieved with the help of partners, through mutual and complementary partnership with local churches, overseas religious ministries (British Isles Prophetic partners, Invictus Kingdom Ministries), and local county government agents. Their partnership enabled the AiRD team to go beyond what had been planned.

Challenges

- Limited scope to leverage progressive development intervention models that empower local communities through commercial enterprise support.
- Cumbersome logistics with limited possibility for scaling.

- Given the African cultural context, women still face an uphill task with access, control, and appropriation of land, capital, entrepreneurial, and household resources, thereby holding back their potential.
- Other extra-spiritual needs and challenges observed during the intervention include; low incomes, lack of quality inputs and other ancillary enterprise support services, poor financial literacy, limited legal safety net or support towards appropriating their societal rights to property (land and other factors of production leading to lack of collateral to access credit), and lack of access to critical civic education, leading to political exploitation.

Lessons learnt, and insights

- Execute both short-term (i.e. continued supply of food gifts/stamps) and long-term (i.e. enterprise support) interventions, to help the vulnerable women achieve their livelihood aspirations, in a respectful environment. We propose a gradual shift from food-pack distribution to a more sustainable model comprising a comprehensive capacity strengthening program to enhance financial literacy, develop small enterprises, initiate linkages to other critical value chain services, and to help them appropriate their civic responsibilities sustainably. The ambition is to move the women from a point of dependence on 'handouts' to one where they are empowered and in charge of their personal, and household affairs.
- Embed the proposed enterprise support approach in market-

systems to achieve sustainability, and reduce logistical encumbrances when scaling across new counties.

- Institute a civic education program to inform women of their civic entitlements, sources of legal support, and to improve relations with local government agencies, who should ideally be their closest allies.
- Leverage other financing mechanisms that can benefit women, including but not limited to; County government women enterprise funds, Central government procurement opportunity quotas reserved for women in business, and UN Women funding opportunities such as the UN Women EntreprenHER programme for empowering women in business.

CONCLUSION

Nguzo is a project for empowering rural widowed women through food distribution, and economic empowerment mentorship, in order to improve social protection systems for gender equality and the empowerment of women and the girl child. The geographical scope covered included Bungoma, Busia, and Kakamega counties in Kenya. During the intervention period, the project reached 237 widowed households with food and personal effect packs valued at KES 903,772.

During the intervening period (2021-2024), a total 237 vulnerable women, among them 12 PLWDs, were reached with food supplies valued at KES 1.3 million, with 68.3% of total support going directly to the beneficiary, while the difference catered for operational expenses such as; transport, and out-of-office expenses for the supporting team.

Rising inflation in the past 5 years resulted in weakening of the local currency, leading to increased cost of living and sky-rocketing food prices. This meant that over time, rations had to be reduced to

maintain all the on-boarded women. An increase in the investment will be required to maintain the existing women, at the very least, and more so, to scale.

Partnership with local organizations, development agencies, and other like-minded collaborators, made it possible for the implementing team to go beyond what was initially planned.

Key challenges included; limited scope to leverage progressive, market-embedded development interventions models which employed commercial enterprise support approaches to growth; logistical limitations; a disempowering cultural context, and lack of access to critical civic education services. It is recommended that the project shifts from food distribution to a more sustainable market-embedded enterprise development support model. Such a model would support scaling, and promote economic sustainability of the interventions.

Annexes

1. Detailed list of beneficiaries

SHIETALA / MADIRA ASSEMBLY		
✓ 1	Lufriida Anyango Sitawa - James Okiya	0712565675
✓ 2	Aloice Nerima Amollo -	
✓ 3	Janet Auma Juma -	
✓ 4	Jane Mukosi Maloba - Jemima Hyala	Id - 22186144 Tel - 0798553708
✓ 5	Beatrice Were Chuma - Paul wechesa	0720319645
✓ 6	Lilian Nyakha Omungu - Wilson Nyakha	Id - 22549347 Tel - 0794926869
✓ 7	Janeta Night Barasa - Jame Okiya	0712565675
✓ 8	ELizabeth Were Asoma -	
✓ 9	Margret Adhiambo Odera -	
✓ 10	Josephine Amamu Obieso - Caleb Were	Id - 11199826 0758735162
✓ 11	Marygoretti Onyango - Lilian Okello	Id - 30182555 - 0717519073

12 Ann Auma Wambafu - Sister - 07882901

SIKARIRA ASSEMBLY

1 ✓ PETRONILA AHABALE ASWAN ID 28608994
- BRIAN MUKABANA
- 0795443722

2 ✓ AGNESS AYOTI OSORE ID 13860178
- FRANCIS AKUCHU
- 0712344438

3 ✓ SELINAE ADIAMBO ODUNGA ID 9756460
- 9756 01102412
- FREDRICK OMANGO
0793665985

4 ✓ KILFRIDAH NTONGESA OMANGO
- 0793665985

✓ THOMAS ORIARO
- 0793665986

5 ✓ GORRET NTONGESA ODURI ID 20713892
- 0721694341

- GABRIEL MULA

0721694341

08.	✓ 6	RUKIA HAWA ABDU	ID 38437203
			- 0757296380
			- THOMAS ORIARO
	✓		- 0793665985
7.		EVERLINE AORI AUMA -	ID 9466195
			- MOURINE AKECHI
			0768232749
8.	✓	ALICE AUMA	- ID 6198912
			0742390108
			LILIAN ACHIENG
1	✓		0717041679
9.		MARGRET AWIND SUMBA	ID 8617902
			0703559673
			ADAM BARASA
	✓		0745691545
10		SABINA ANTANGO SUMBA	ID 2056823
			- 0743289102
			THOMAS ORIARO
	✓		079665985
11.	✓	EVERLINE AKUMU ODORI	ID 34834837
		MARY AORI	0719160456
			0707452699

TINGOLO ASSEMBLY

- 1 ✓ LAWRENCE OKONGO ODUORI - ID 2052117
0700241501
LAVEND AKINHI
0798762806
- 2 ✓ BEATRICE MAJIBA - ID 21089058
0726548762
GEOFFREY MAJIBA
0792747630
- 3 ✓ ANJELINE AWORI ODUORI - ID 20767070
0768624501
JOSEPH YEYO
0113118674
- 4 ✓ MILDRED ANTANGO - ID 22417693
0703242952
HAMATON OTSIENO
0792314169
- 5 ✓ ROSELINE AKELLO MATONI ID 7620124
~~07~~ -
PERIS ADHAMBO
0742823160

6 MAGREI OBUNGE - ID 4780148

0712067546

MICHAEL OBUNGE

0713019767

7 ROSELYNE ANGTANGO OTSIENO ID 9609229

0708010431

PATIENCE HEPHSIBAR

0792083031

8 FLORENCE MAKOKHA TERENCE ID 7621926

0712626472

VENUS MUKOLWE

0720326742

9 MART AMOLLO ID -

0702625915

SAMUEL MAKANDA

PHIDELIS ODOURI

0795227709

10 JULIA MAKANDA - ID 21272132

0702625915

SAMUEL MAKANDA

0793273179

11 ✓
GODLIVER AMBANI

ID -

Tel -

KEXIN ANAKI

0796444661

12 ✓
MARGRET OTWOLU

ID -

0707219891

13 ✓
CONSOLATA OMONDI

ID -

0703489319

LUCAS ORECHI

0741140546

14 ✓
PETRONILA OKWERO

ID -

0708718361

15 ✓
CAROLINE OCHIENG

ID -

0708718361

16 ✓
JULIANA ALELE

- ID -

Tel -

MICHAEL ALELE

0708718361

17 ✓
OWINDE

ESHIRUMBWE

- 1 ✓ ~~1~~ ✓ EVERLINE MTONKESA - 0710982398
Next of Kin EZEKIEL OMONDI OBUNGE
EVERLINE NIGHT 071092598. ~~EZE~~
- 2 ✓ ~~2~~ ✓ EVERLINE NIGHT NUNDU 0758815171
ADHIGHT NUNDU 0701849062
- 3 ✓ JOSEPHINE OCHOKO MIWANZA 0715895860
EUNICE AWINO 0796918200
- 4 ✓ GLADYS ANTANGO
PST. EZEKIEL OMONDI 0710982598
- 5 ✓ SOROFIN MAKOKHA -
TERESA MUTONGA 0758449322
- 6 ✓ FRANCISCA BARASA -
LILIAN ADHIAMBO 0712294319
- 7 ✓ SOROPHINE NAKHUNGU - 0736363562
MARTIN OGOLLA

KINGANDOLE ASSEMBLY

NGOZO MEMBERS

1	KALASINA	OKOME	✓
2	SELINA	NGIRA AYUYA	✓
3	FLORA	AOKO	✓
4	JUSTINE	SIRIMA ADHIAMBO	✓
5	JOAN	ANYANGO	✓
6	MARGRET	ATSIENO	✓
7	PRISCAN	ANYANGO	✓
8	GETRUDE	AKOLA OMONDI	✓
9	MAURINE	MASINDE	✓
10	WILLIMINA	AWINO	✓
11	ANNA	EVERLINE ABONYO	✓
12	MILDRED	MUNGOMA	✓
13	ROSELIDAH	NASHIBE	NEW
✓ 14	PAUSTINA	TAAKA	✓ NEW
15	RUTH	ANYANGO	✓
16	MARY	WESONGA	✓ NEW
17	ROSEMARY	AKOTSI	✓ NEW
18	JANE	AWINO	NEW
19	REHEMA	SHIRAKO	✓
20	CHRISTINE	OWINO	✓ OFUTSO
18	CONSOLATA	ATSIENO	OWINO ✓

ENAKAYWA ASSEMBLY NGUZU MEMBERS

✓ 1	UNICE	OYINGO	
✓ 2	PAUSTINA	AKWIERA	
✓ 3	JANE	MUYODI	
✓ 4	SCOLASTICA	AUMA OISIENO	
✓ 5	MARIA	ATSIENO	OPUNYA
✓ 6	GAUDENZIA GAUDENZIA	MAKOKHA	
✓ 7	UNICE	AORI	AMBOLA
NEW 8	CONSOLATA	ALUOCHI	KWENA
NEW 9	MARGRET	AKINYI	OPONDO
NEW 10	PAUSTINA	ADHIAMBO	MUDOWDO
NEW 11	LYDIA	WANZALA	
NEW 12	ANGELINE	MUDIMBA	
NEW 13	MATHILDA	PETROLA	ATSIENO OJUYA
NEW 14	GETRUDA	MAYERO	
NEW 15	JOSEPHINE	NABISWA	DMUSE

NELAA CHURCH

✓ 1	MARCIMILA	OZENO	
✓ 2	EVERLINE	AWORI	NEW
✓ 3	FLORENCE	AWIWO	NEW
✓ 4	KALASINA	OLWERO	NEW

SHIBALE CHURCH

WBUZO MEMBERS

- | | | | |
|----|-----------|-------|--------------|
| ✓1 | SANE | MIAMA | ✓ |
| ✓2 | ANDOLINA | AKUMO | LUSABETI NEW |
| ✓3 | JACKLINE | AWINO | WALWE NEW |
| ✓4 | FRANCISCA | AUMA | KWEYU NEW |

MASEWDEBALE CHURCH

WBUZOS

- | | | | |
|----|-----------|-----------|-------|
| 1 | EVERLINE | AUMA | ✓ |
| 2 | JULIA | OBULAMUSI | ✓ |
| 3 | ELIZABETH | BARASA | ✓ |
| 4 | GETRUDE | AKUMO | ✓ |
| 5 | BEATRICE | NAMUTECHE | ✓ |
| 6 | FRANCIS | ONTHIENO | ✓ |
| 7 | LEONIDA | MUKHOLA | ✓ NEW |
| 8 | PASKALIA | MAKOKHA | ✓ NEW |
| 9 | FARIDA | OKAMA | ✓ NEW |
| 10 | ANYANGO | BWIRE | ✓ NEW |
| 11 | MAGREI | AKOTH | ✓ NEW |
| 12 | MARY | MAKOKHA | ✓ NEW |
| 13 | ROSELIDA | ATHIENO | ✓ NEW |
| 14 | VIOLET | ADHIMBO | ✓ NEW |

✓
SIS DIFIWA AKECHI NEW

DADIRA-

1 EUNICE OGBUR ✓

2 MAGRET WANSU CHE ✓

*3 JANE WISDWA (M-sende Sale)

2. Food pack and other body effects

Food pack composition (Sept, 2024)			
Item	Quantity (kg)	Cost/kg	Cost (KES)
Maize flour	8.0	65	520
Baking flour	6.0	80	480
Sugar	4.0	131	524
Rice	4.0	160	640
Salt	1.0	80	80
Cooking oil	3.0	299	897
Bar soap	1.0	200	200
Skin oil	0.5	1,200	600
TOTAL			3,941
Women			107
Value			421,687

Food pack composition (July, 2023)			
Item	Quantity (kg)	Cost/kg	Cost (KES)
Maize flour	8.0	60	480
Baking flour	6.0	75	450
Sugar	4.0	125	500
Rice	4.0	142	568
Salt	1.0	80	80
Cooking oil	2.0	299	598
Bar soap	1.0	200	200
Skin oil	0.5	1,200	600
TOTAL			3,476
Women			24
Value			83,424

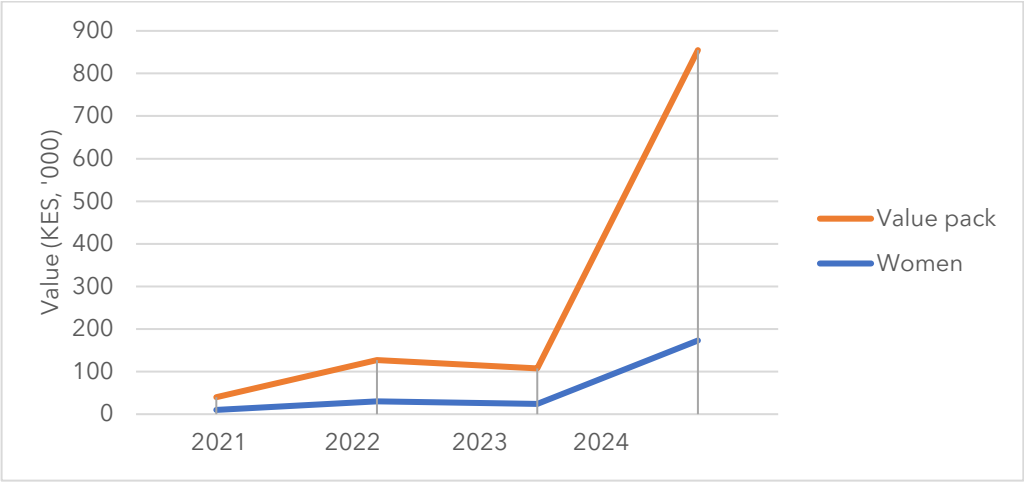
Food pack composition (July, 2024)			
Item	Quantity (kg)	Cost/kg	Cost (KES)
Maize flour	8.0	65	520
Baking flour	6.0	80	480
Sugar	4.0	131	524
Rice	4.0	160	640
Salt	1.0	80	80
Cooking oil	3.0	299	897
Bar soap	1.0	200	200
Skin oil	0.5	1,200	600
TOTAL			3,941
Women			66
Value			260,106

Food pack composition (July, 2022)			
Item	Quantity (kg)	Cost/kg	Cost (KES)
Maize flour	8.0	58	464
Baking flour	6.0	72	432
Sugar	4.0	114	456
Rice	4.0	125	500
Salt	1.0	72	72
Cooking oil	2.0	285	570
Bar soap	1.0	180	180
Skin oil	0.5	1,100	550
TOTAL			3,224
Women			30
Value			96,720

Food pack composition (July, 2021)			
Item	Quantity (kg)	Cost/kg	Cost (KES)
Maize flour	8.0	55	440
Baking flour	6.0	70	420
Sugar	4.0	110	440
Rice	3.0	120	360
Salt	1.0	72	72
Cooking oil	2.0	260	520
Bar soap	1.0	179	179
Skin oil	0.5	1,105	553
Blankets	1.0	1,200	1,200
TOTAL			4,184
Women		10	
Value			41,835

Add cost of movement			
Air-tickets	NBO/KSM return		Amount
	30,000		
Pax	12		360,000
Local movement	1,000	per bike	
	30	bikes	30,000
Local food haulier truck	5,000	round trip	6
			30,000
Accommodation (not costed)			0
Facilitators' food (not costed)			0
Other contingent expenses			420,000

Graph 2: Progress since inception: Number of women against value pack



3. Picture gallery





