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**ERADICATING POVERTY AND IMPROVEMENT OF FOOD SECURITY AMONG THE
FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN NYATIKE SUB COUNTY—MIGORI COUNTY,
KENYA**

EXERCUTIVE SUMMARY

Nyatike Sub County is one of the 8 sub counties of Migori County, Kenya, situated to the east of Great Lake Victoria, Tanzania to the South and Uganda to the East. The region is vast and remote with exposure to a semiarid climatic condition. The region experience little rainy season, may be once a year. The Sub County is well known to be a mining local gold zone. The in habitants of this region are those who came for employment during the colonial period, the Macalder mines is an old and exhausted place which is quite dangerous for the small scale and local artisanal miners.

The Society of St. Vincent De Paul of Uganda Martyrs Macalder Catholic Parish conference, is a community based catholic organization working with and for the poor in the Catholic Diocese of Homa Bay in the Arch Diocese of Kisumu, Kenya. The organization is founded within the spirituality and mission of St. Vincent De Paul and Fredrick O' zanam. The organization was re-established in the year 2019, though had been in existence there before. We are a team of 12 dedicated individuals led by our Spiritual Adviser Rev. Fr. Felix Ochieng- the Parish Priest of the Uganda Martyrs Macalder. The conference had been commissioned and is a member of the SSVP National council of Kenya, the organization is registered as a community based charity organization with the Kenyan government Ministry of Social and gender.



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In our service to the poor, and according to the global research in poverty alleviation in Kenya, Africa, we have launch a campaign to fighting poverty in Nyatike Sub County in Migori County Kenya in a more specific dimension. The target group is the Female headed household both “**a de jure and de facto**” **a “de jure” A “de facto”**

According to Martins (2008), female-headed households can be understood from two perspectives, namely: ‘**de jure**’ and ‘**de facto**’ **households.**

A “de jure” female-headed household exists where the head of the household is an unmarried woman, divorced or separated. On the other hand,

A “de facto” female-headed household is when the head of the household in practice is a female due to the fact that the male head is absent throughout the year or for a longer period. This case the woman becomes the main decision maker and economic provider of the household.

Research has revealed that women are the pillars of every successful economy, the empowerment of female gender in any economical approach is considered relevant in fighting poverty and food insecurity.

Poverty and food insecurity are twin factors that are closely related

Poverty and Food security is achieved when all people in a household, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (FAO, 2001)



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In order to successfully fight poverty and food insecurity to the bottom, the interventions needed to focus at the household level that is where the needs versus assessment will be identified.

If you empower a single woman economically, you have directly changed the life of a whole village. Therefore, we have singled out a program for poverty alleviation and eradication for the poor women of the south western Kenya-Nyatike Sub County. The program is dubbed

“WOMEN LIVING ABOVE POVERTY LINE”.

We have interacted directly to over 600 poor women in our service to the needy, from our long time experience we have realized that given an opportunity, women can do better in the growth of the economy but more preferably through entrepreneurship. We are targeting the first 300 female headed households who are living in extreme poverty in the half year beginning January 2023

Empowering women by giving small funding of (between \$300 -\$500) for business startups and or already operating businesses will give hope to the thriving women headed households. The impact of the micro entrepreneurship in the lives of the poor thriving women has proved successful in many places in the world majorly as a tool to fighting poverty, the same will hopefully work better in Nyatike Sub County, where the women are living in deplorable state.

According to a study conducted by Chinery (2011), in Kenya, women play a pivotal role in poverty eradication and in food production because they produce between 60 and 80 percent of the food produced in developing countries and are responsible for half of the food production in the world.



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The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) survey in Kenya revealed that the majority of the poor are women and that poverty is higher among them at 50 percent and 46 percent in rural and urban areas, respectively. While concerted efforts are being made internationally for alleviating poverty, there is a growing realization that poverty is increasingly taking a feminine form, meaning that globally women are bearing a disproportionately higher and growing burden of poverty.

IMPACT OF THE PROJECT AND HOW IT WILL CHANGE THE LIVES OF THE FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN NYATIKE

We appeal to the rest of the world to join us in fight against extreme poverty in Nyatike. The followings are anticipated the positive impacts of the above campaign; when you empower a household;

- 1) Increased educational standards, Children from a supported female headed Household will attend school regularly, the household will manage to pay school levies/fees and scholastic materials.
- 2) Improved food security in the female headed households.
- 3) Women will be economically empowered hence will become part of the critical decision making team at a family level.
- 4) Homelessness will be a problem of the past.
- 5) Access to health services by the household members.
- 6) Increase in Asset ownership for future sustainability to the family.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- ❖ Climatic changes have not helped in resolving food insecurity either, instead, it has contributed to disrupted weather patterns hence poor agricultural output.
- ❖ Women are the basic unit of a family set up, their absence is a gap in every aspect.



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- ❖ Lack of access to factors of production by poor women in Nyatike sub county is a real threat to positive economic growth for women are the great pillars of development in any set up.
- ❖ A lack of proper education and skills has also been posited as a cause of poverty and food insecurity since when people are not educated, they lack the skills that would have increased agricultural produce or methods of providing other alternatives.
- ❖ Despite the prevalence of HIV/AIDs in Kenya, Lynn (2001) argues that women are the key to food security. Such chronic diseases, therefore, hinder the involvement of women in contributing to gainful chores, which ultimately leaves the family even more vulnerable, since the affected groups are forced to seek sexual favors from other men to deliver the much needed food for the family. The impact of HIV/AIDS has led to the rising dependency ratio currently estimated at more than.



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PROBLEM STATEMENT.

Africa is considered a starving and hopeless continent despite its massive resource endowment.

Poverty and food insecurity are twin factors that are closely related and is a household name in the poor continent of Africa. According to Lynn (2001), poverty is a major cause of food insecurity.

POVERTY STATISTICS IN KENYA

The sub-Saharan Africa accounts for half of the global poor (Lebada, 2016).

Kenya is part of the rising evidence of poverty in the sub-Saharan Africa, notwithstanding that the country is on considerable fair economic growth.

Kenya is one of the most unequal countries in the sub-region and this is exemplified by the number of people living below the poverty lines and are deprived.

Soon after independence in 1965, The Government of Kenya detailed its commitment to alleviate poverty together with ignorance and disease. The economy has since been hit hard by several shocking factors among them including;

- ❖ The rising global cost of living.
- ❖ Lack of access to micro-small and medium enterprise opportunities within the reach of female headed household.
- ❖ Lack of positive supportive interventions in improving educational standards in the remote rural poor and urban slums dwellers.
- ❖ Periodical Political unrest in Kenya.
- ❖ Nonintegrated agricultural methods of farming for both the small and large scale farmers.
- ❖ Rising rate of unemployment cases among the youths.



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- ❖ The socio-economic imbalances among the marginalized communities.
- ❖ The world climate change posing unpreventable threat.

POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY IN NYATIKE SUB COUNTY, MIGORI COUNTY KENYA

About half of the population of Nyatike Sub County, in Migori County, Kenya is not able to meet their basic needs and therefore live in poverty (UNICEF, 2015). According to UNICEF (2015) 56% of Kenya's population live below poverty lines and so for the case of Nyatike. Large segments of the population including the rural poor are vulnerable to climatic, social and economic shocks (Muiruri, 2010), hence, Article 43 (1) (c) of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) outlines that every person has the right to be free from hunger, and have adequate food of acceptable quality.

While poverty is widespread in Kenya, it is truly most concentrated in south western Kenya, in the rural areas of Nyatike Sub County Migori County.

Nyatike Sub County is located to the south western Kenya and borders Tanzania to the south and Uganda to the east it is situated to the eastern shores of Lake Victoria. The sub county has a total population of 176,153, {92,162 FEMALE, 83,989 MALE}. Over 70% of the population across the gender lives below the poverty line.

In this area, the main economic activities is local artisanal mining and partially small scale fishing is also practiced, while the rest are small scale entrepreneurs.

Poverty has been a persistent problem facing Kenya more specifically in the South western Kenya in the sub county of Nyatike, in Migori County since its independence



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when poverty, ignorance and disease were identified as the greatest impediments to national development.

The poverty issue in Nyatike Sub County is increasing more in rural areas and urban slums where almost 70% of the population lives (KIPPRA 2007). According to World Policy Institute report (2013), Kenya's rapid population growth, declining land productivity and low income have caused many people to migrate from the rural areas to urban areas in such of jobs and other opportunities with women making a significant proportion of this urban migration (Mokomane 2014).

POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY IN FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN NYATIKE SUB COUNTY, MIGORI COUNTY, KENYA.

Research has revealed that women are the pillars of every successful economy, the empowerment of female gender in any economical approach is considered relevant in fighting poverty.

Female headed households have become a concern because of the high incidence of poverty and food insecurity in our Country Kenya. There is a growing perception around the globe that poverty increasingly feminized because an increasing proportion of the poor in the world are female with limited access to opportunities including employment and education. Consequently, they have low income and are deprived socially, living in deplorable conditions and experiencing food insecurity.

According to Country meters (2017), women in Nyatike Sub County in Migori County, Kenya constitute slightly more than half of the Sub country's national population at 50.10 % and states that poverty incidence is higher among women than men.



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World economic forum (2015) reports that the income gap between men and women in the country is still rife where a woman is paid Ksh. 62 for every Ksh. 100 paid to men. Female headed households exhibit higher poverty levels (IEA 2008) and are over-represented among the poor of the poorest. Female headed households are on the increase in Kenya.

Women in Nyatike depend mostly either on subsistence farming, local mining or shallow fishing for survival and their over dependence explains why they are vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity.

Women are also disadvantaged by the macro-economic trends (micro credit facilities for micro entrepreneurship) including globalization and trade that fail to take into account women's role in economies.

Gender discrimination is one of the deepest root of impoverishment resulting in a disproportionate burden on women. Both men and women face poverty but discrimination means that women may be involved in time-consuming unpaid domestic work and therefore less opportunity for paid work, less education and resources to cope (UN Women, n.d).

BELOW ARE FACTORS LEADING TO THE FAST GROWING RATE OF POVERTY AMONG THE FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN NYATIKE SUB COUNTY;

- 1) Limited economic diversity (since the economy is largely mining).
- 2) Lack of proper educational background in women resulting to limited exposure to financial/credit facilities to engage women in entrepreneurship.
- 3) This inability of female-headed households to participate and influence critical decisions around household livelihoods negatively influences the ability of women to effectively feed their households, given the traditionally limited roles of women in decision- making processes and laws, which are important for poverty reduction and food security (Daman, 2003).



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- 4) The scourge of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and other diseases continue to impact negatively on the Sub County/country's poverty index. UNICEF (2015) estimates that the National HIV/AIDS prevalence (age 15-49) is 7.8% and has detrimental effect of cyclic poverty among individuals and population in general. HIV/AIDS is a major cause of death in this region, 59 percent of the heads of households died of HIV/AIDs, 35 percent died of malaria and seven percent died of other illnesses such as bilharzia and tuberculosis. The women who were left behind after their husband's death were sickly as they were already infected and thus could not fully support the households.
- 5) Most of the households had many dependents and orphans as a result of the Aids scourge. In this investigation, this factor was cited as a major cause of food insecurity.
- 6) Women continue to suffer substantial economic disadvantages and social exclusion as part of gender imbalance. Individual and cultural stereotypes and discrimination against women and girls continue to prevail in Kenya hence disempower the women.
- 7) Low agricultural production.
- 8) Gender Based Violence and discrimination.
- 9) Corruption continue to amplify poverty levels in Kenya.
- 10) Insecurity in Female Asset ownership.
- 11) Poor Sub County/County governance cost sharing policies.
- 12) Landlessness, lack of right to ownership of land by women.
- 13) Inadequate infrastructure.

**OUR FRAMEWORK FOR FIGHTING POVERTY/FOOD INSECURITY IN FEMALE
HOUSEHOLD IN NYATIKE**

- a) **Provision of funds for business startups or for already established businesses.**



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- b) Training on business management skills.
- c) Provision of agricultural inputs for improved productivity i.e. fertilizers, seeds for planting, oxen, ox plough and land, and offering trainings on the modern ways of agricultural approach.
- d) Access to the acquisition of tangible assets without discrimination to gender.
- e) Subjecting the female headed households to frequent professional mentorship on positive parental skills and psychosocial counselling.
- f) Pastoral/Spiritual mentorship/counselling.

APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

The above case scenario has highlighted the extremeness of the poverty situation in female headed households in Nyatike Sub-County. It is demonstrating the increased



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number of households living in deplorable condition and headed by females and the significant role they play in fighting poverty/food insecurity.

If Nyatike Sub County is to alleviate poverty and improve food security, efforts must be made to deliberately support initiatives geared towards empowering women headed households.

Issues concerning female headed households empowerment must be addressed conclusively to enable them obtain assets which could be used as security for funding businesses as well as a collateral.

In addition, empowering the girl child must be given prominence so as to attach dignity to women from an early age. The position held in this proposal is that empowering the girl child not only supports women, but gives a requisite boost to whole villages.

The ripple effect of such ventures would spread far beyond the confines of a single household. It is, therefore, necessary that deliberate measures are put in place to ensure that the support for women is addressed. This will guarantee a prosperous future where poverty & food insufficiency does not become a weapon that wages war on Kenyan households as a whole.

Finally, as a community based Christian charity organization in the fight against poverty, women must play a deliberate role in micro enterprise and food production.

UN Women (2000) reports that women living in poverty are denied access to critical resources such as land, credit, inheritance, education making it very difficult for them to come out of poverty. In Nyatike Sub County, Kenya, women are the majority of the poor with single mothers or female headed households both in the rural areas and urban slums being the most vulnerable (IEA 2008).



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The manifestations of poverty amongst this group of women are; inadequate access to basic necessities such as education, safe water and sanitation, employment, health facilities, decent housing lack of plenty dietary food hence hunger and starvation. The living conditions of female headed households is more precarious in rural poor and urban slum dwellers.

Therefore, as an instrument of positive change, St. Vincent De Paul Uganda Martyrs Macalder Conference do hereby take this opportunity to appeal for any support geared towards changing the lives of the suffering women in Nyatike.

We view micro crediting as the most commendable means of fighting poverty in this case scenario and we appeal for funding of any magnitude to help us achieve the Lords will in us.

Thanks you very much for your time, corporation as we anticipate for a positive feedback towards our plea.

Yours in St. Vincent de Paul and Fredrick O' zanam

Thomas Abongo

For and on behalf of,

SSVP-Kenya, Uganda Martyrs Macalder Conference

The Catholic Diocese of Homa-Bay

KENYA

END