



LIGHT UP HOPE

Annual Report 2023

OUR MISSION

LIGHT UP HOPE - LIGHTING A PATH OUT OF POVERTY

The Mission

Our mission is to provide education and health interventions which "light a path out of poverty" and bring hope for a brighter future for impoverished students and communities in Kenya.

Our Vision

To establish Light Up Hope as a leader in initiatives that achieve social and economic advancement for individuals and elevate the economic development of Kenya.

OUR BENEFICIARIES

We believe that simply being born into poverty should not dictate the end of an individual's story. Central to our mission is ensuring that women, children and young adults from impoverished communities in Kenya can **embrace hope** for their futures.

We provide **hope for orphans**, children and young adults who were born into under-resourced families and impoverished communities. At the time of selection, our beneficiaries meet the criteria for poverty as defined by the United Nations*:

“Poverty entails more than the lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion, as well as the lack of participation in decision-making.”

We place a special emphasis on **empowering women and girls** to strive for gender equality and boost economic growth, that allows for individuals to break out of the poverty cycle in the communities where we work.



* <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ending-poverty#:~:text=Poverty%20entails%20more%20than%20the,of%20participation%20in%20decision%2Dmaking>

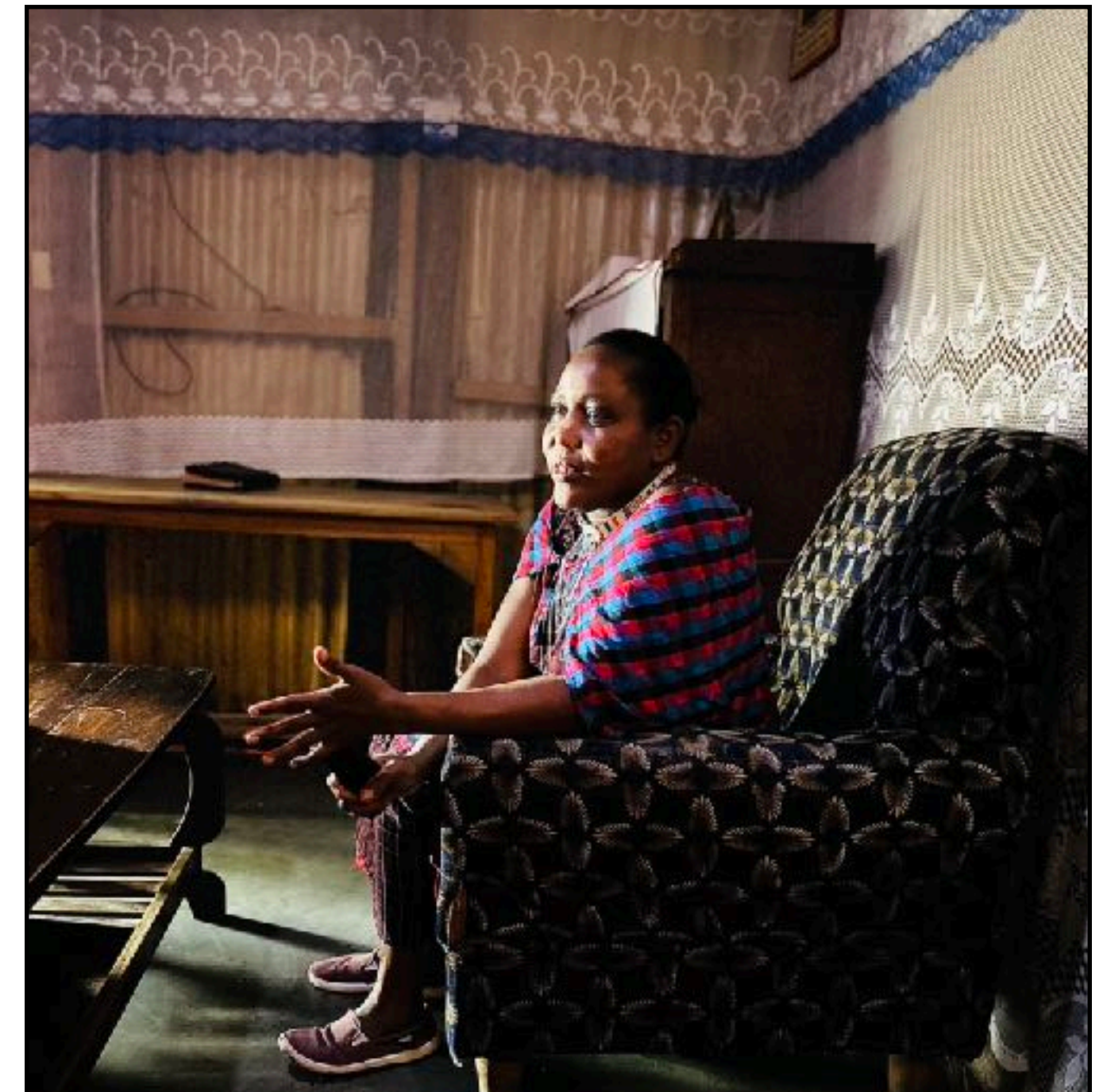
THE PROBLEM

The nation of Kenya is populated by highly motivated, creative and intelligent people. However, with 26% of the population falling under the poverty line, opportunities for the Kenyan people are limited by barriers to education and opportunity. Additionally, historical systems and cultural practices limit the empowerment of impoverished individuals, as well as the aspirations of many girls and women in their communities.

According to the World Bank Global Poverty data*, the percentage of people living under the poverty line in Kenya increases without access to education.

46% percent of adults who have not received a primary school education fall below the poverty line, compared to 14% of high school educated adults and just 3% of adults who have achieved post-secondary education (university and technical training).

* https://databankfiles.worldbank.org/public/ddpext_download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/current/Global_POVEQ_KEN.pdf



OUR SOLUTIONS

Through culturally informed programming, we provide tools that help individuals and communities flourish and break out of the cycle of poverty through the following interventions:

- **Educational Opportunities:** We provide academic sponsorship for primary, secondary, university and vocational education, including distribution of school supplies, books, uniforms and tutoring.
- **Pathways to Employment:** Our pathways to employment increase access to gainful employment through mentorship, professional guidance on workplace readiness, professional networking, income generating activities and life skills training.
- **Emotional Well-Being:** We incorporate individual, group and family mental health counseling, mental health awareness workshops and family unification efforts in our initiatives to encourage mental and emotional well-being.
- **Physical Well-Being:** Our physical well-being interventions provide primary school lunches, access to healthcare, adult transitional support of monetary disbursements, monthly stipends to support student's physical needs and better their educational outcomes.



A new entity and a new look

In 2023 Light Up Hope applied for registration in Kenya as an International Non Governmental Organization (INGO) and received approval. We also have rebranded the organization with a new logo and new website to be consistent across our US Operations and Kenyan Program Implementation



SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP



GOAL

*Lighting a path out of poverty
through access to quality education for
bright students from vulnerable
households who would otherwise be
without opportunity to continue their
education*



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

LUCIA'S STORY - FORM 4



Lucia finished primary school in 2019, and qualified to join one of the best schools in the nation. However, she was not able to join this school due to lack of school fees, and instead ended up in a local day school. Though a low-cost option, she still was inconsistent in school attendance due to being sent home regularly for lack of school fees. She would later drop out in her second year of high school as a result. Light Up Hope added her to the program shortly after and managed to secure her a boarding slot at the local

government school. Lucia is now in her final year of high school and her school performance has remained very commendable. Her overall perspective of life is very positive and she has all hopes of joining university at the end of her high school education. The story of Lucia is a total contrast to the fate that befell her younger sister who was also learning at the same school but eventually completely dropped out of school without access to a scholarship.

“My dream has come true! I never knew I would get an opportunity to join secondary school!”

LUCIA MWALIMU

IMPACT 2023

High School Sponsorship

- 162 students in 96 schools across Kenya
- 33 high performing girls from impoverished backgrounds in form 1 from the Kajiado Maasai community



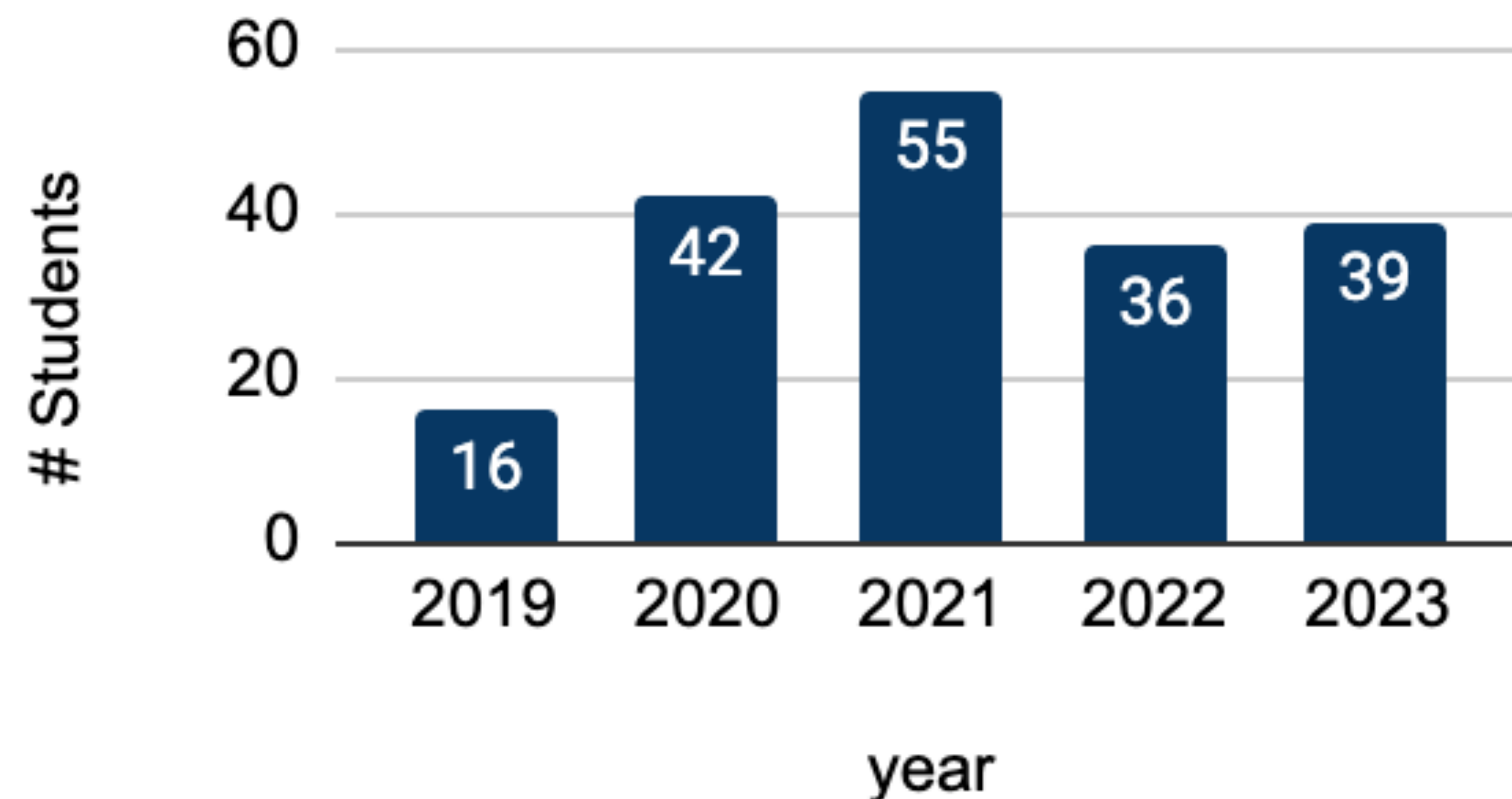
In addition to payment for school needs, In the course of 2023, our students received access to extra tutoring classes and academic counseling. The program team also conducts regular visits to schools to check on the academic progress of the students.

Parents are also engaged during holidays to discuss the performance of their girls, and the possible support they can provide to them while at home, including coaching the parents on how to provide a conducive environment for holiday studies, given the girls in our program often come from homes without access to electricity or separate rooms for study space.

IMPACT 2023

Major Achievements

Students Completing High School vs. year



KCSE: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (Final Examination)

- 23 students have completed primary school education since 2019
- 188 students have completed secondary school education since 2019
- 114 have transitioned to our University and trade college sponsorship since 2019 with high academic performance
- 10 have graduated, 104 are continuing their education
- 91% are currently employed

IMPACT 2023

High School Sponsorship

Achievements 2023

- Two parental holiday outreach meetings were held where staff were able to connect with our students and their parents on mentorship and academic progress.
- An Annual General Meeting for all students was held this year which included guest speakers discussing academic success and female empowerment
- This year, in addition to providing for their physical needs we were able to provide academic coaching and counseling sessions to 73 students who were struggling in school

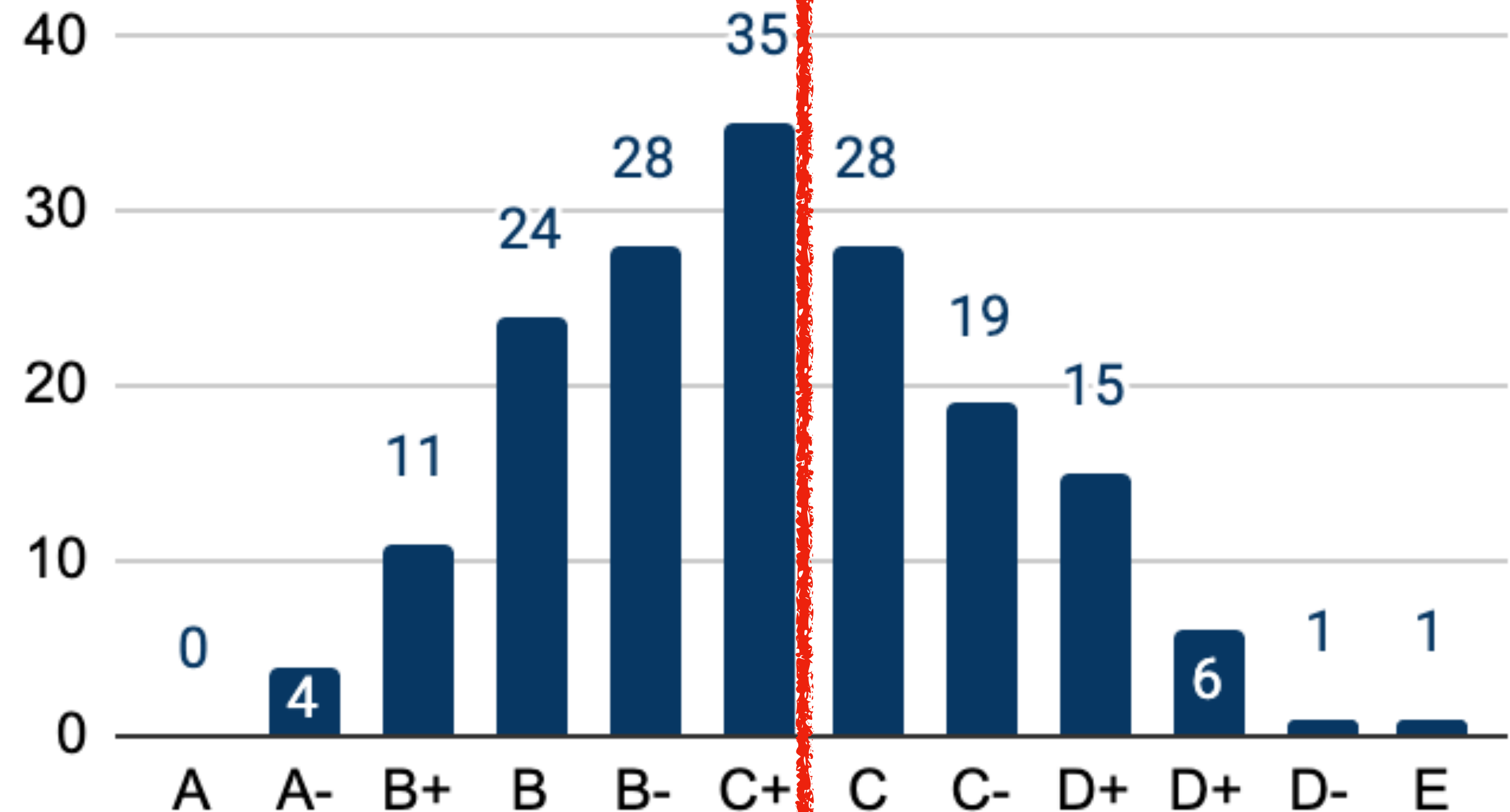


IMPACT 2023

High School Performance over the Years

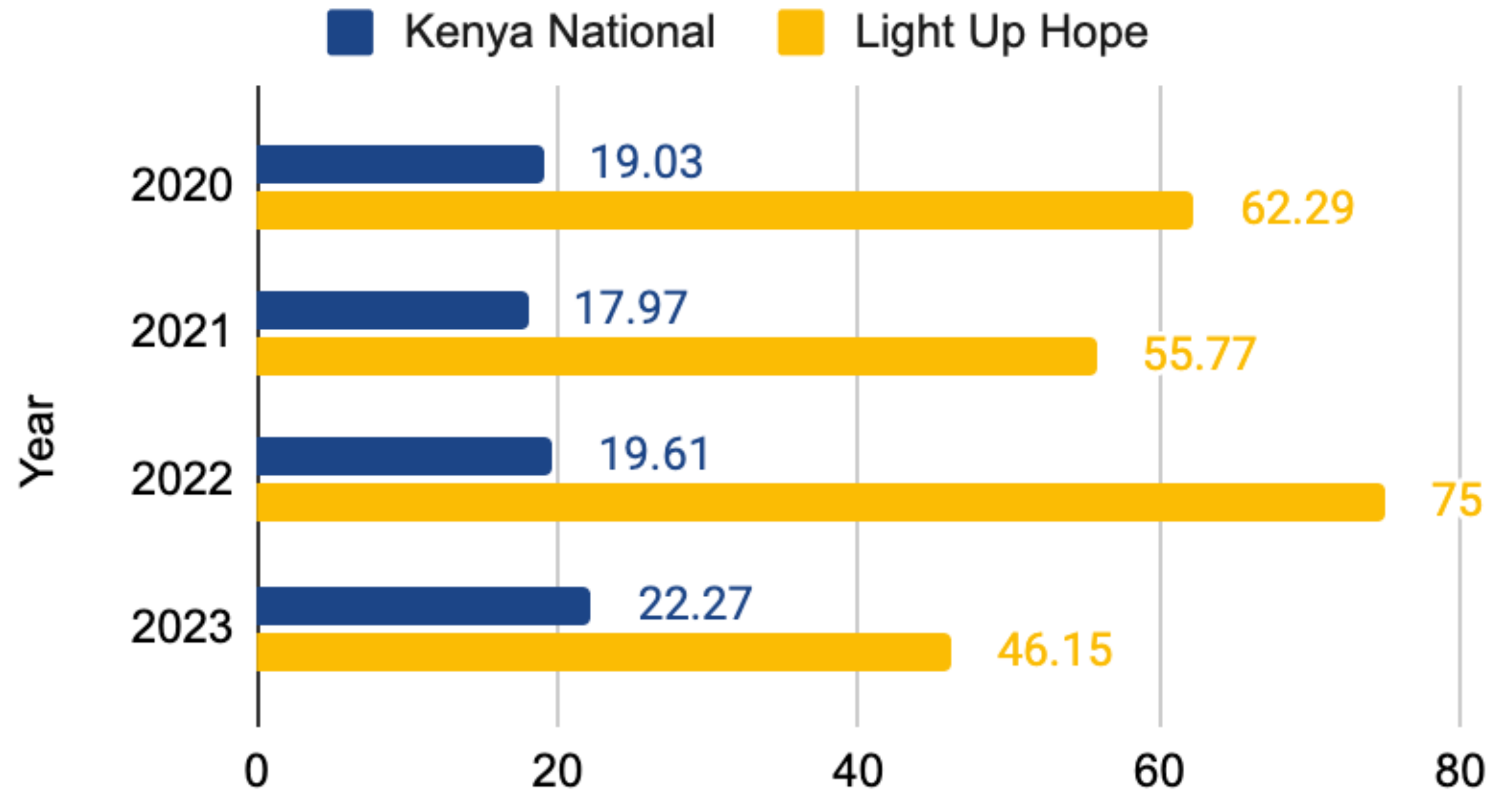
- For admission to university, a student in Kenya must receive a C+ or above on the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Exam (KCSE).
- 102 out of 172 (59.3%) of our students have scored a C+ or above since 2020

Students Final Grade (KCSE) 2020-2023



- The Kenya national average is about 20%. Each year our students are far outperforming the national average for university qualification.
- In 2023 our students outperformed the national average by 23.88 points

% of Students Qualifying for University, Kenyan National Avg vs LUH Avg



COST SHARING

Kajiado Governor's Office

- In November we were able to sign an MOU with the Kajiado County Governor's office. They have committed to provide a high school sponsorship to match each student we sponsor from Kajiado.
- We are hoping to expand our sponsorship to additional students in 2024



**Why is it so
important to help
Maasai girls in
Kajaido?**



According to the European Scientific Journal 84% of Maasai girls do not transition to upper primary grades (6-8) or high school due to pregnancy. In this community not only are girls subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) but also child marriage.

Maasai culture views females value primarily for their ability to reproduce children and as an economic asset - girls are sold for marriage at the time of menstruation. A daughter in the most vulnerable families who we work with may not even be seen as having as much value to a family as a

dairy cow, forcing a girl to undergo female genital mutilation raises their perceived marriage value - so despite this practice being outlawed in Kenya, it persists in the Maasai community. If a girl's value only comes from her ability to marry and bear children, there is little motivation for parents to contribute towards the cost of educating their female children.

Due to these difficult circumstances - as you can imagine - this causes a huge dropout rate amongst the female students



However, with provision of education this changes, as does their ability to bring lasting change to their community.

Education uplifts the economic opportunity of the community, and it has been shown to lower the rate of FGM and early marriage practices - providing overall greater empowerment to Maasai women for generations.

On the previous slide you see one of our students - Milka (in blue). Without education her fate is that of her mother - sold into marriage at a young age and giving birth every year without the resources or empowerment to care for her own children. But Milka - despite her difficult home life - has been given an opportunity for education and has taken full advantage, scoring an A- this year in high school.



Climate Change Impact on Maa Community in Kajiado

Pastoral and nomadic life will not be long term sustainable for this community. The Maasai way of life is under threat due to climate change and current devastation of multi year drought. Torrential rainfall in November of 2023 was causing flash flooding and allowing for the vegetation to regrow. But there are

very few livestock which survived the drought - you can see in homesteads the area where they would keep their animals is completely empty - so despite rain being available for now - there are no animals to graze and no guarantee that another drought will not hit this community just as they are rebuilding.



But by receiving a high school and possibly university education, these girls have the opportunity to create new economic growth and development for their families and their community as doctors, teachers, engineers, businesswomen, scientists government workers, etc. The Maasai community is one of the last communities to embrace education in Kenya - and even slower to embrace girls education. This has left the community perpetually stuck in

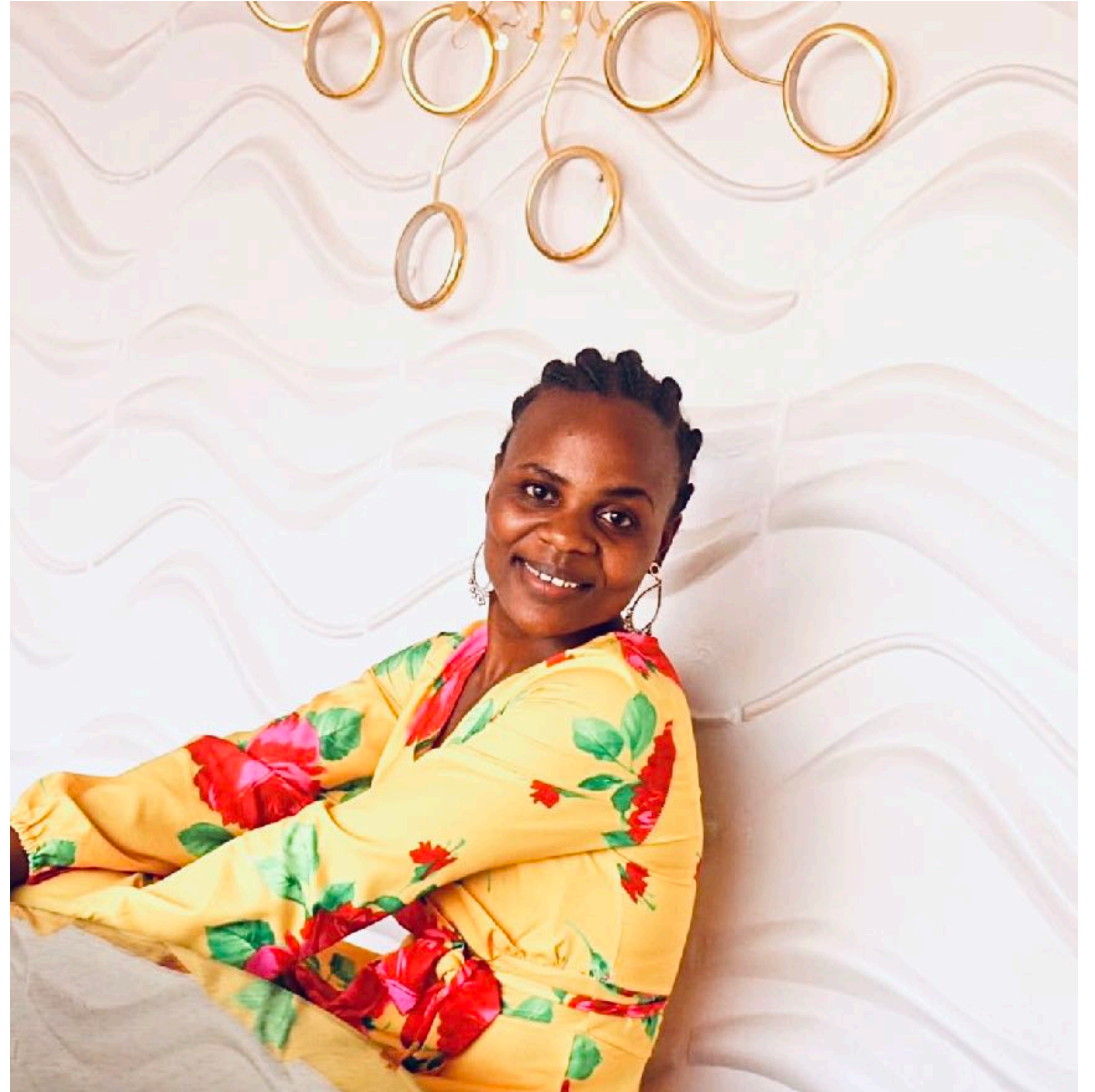
the cycle of poverty with girls and women being some of the least empowered and most oppressed across Kenya. By educating these girls we can break the long term cycle of poverty and help end the traumatic cultural practices of child marriage, culturally accepted rape, teen pregnancy and female genital mutilation.

WOMEN OF VISION EDUCATION INITIATIVE (WOVEN)



GOAL

Lighting a path out of poverty by nurturing future female leaders through university scholarships, mentorship, and coaching programs



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

**Stacy Jahenda, WOVEN
Student**

*University of Nairobi
Agribusiness Management*



In addition to the scholarly support Stacy receives from Light Up Hope through WOVEN, she is part of our mentorship program. Through encouragement and guidance from the WOVEN team Stacy learned she could use the funds availed to her to create an additional source of income for herself and family. Specifically, she wanted to venture into a business which would enable her to attend to her classes as usual while making enough money to complement her monthly support. Furthermore, being passionate about food security and agribusiness, she decided to venture into chicken rearing.

Beginning with three chickens, Stacy commissioned her mother to help her take care of her hens and ensure they

were fed correctly and on time. Over the months, the chickens multiplied and she is currently running a small chicken and eggs business. Her flock has grown to an impressive brood of more than 20 birds which not only compliment her monthly support but ensure her mother has more income to run the family and expand the business.

Stacy's goal is to learn as much as she can about the chicken business through her university education and expand her business before she graduates from college.

"With my small business, I've achieved more than I ever imagined, not only empowering myself but also providing additional income for my dear mother. WOVEN'S mentorship and guidance have shown me the path to pursuing my dreams wholeheartedly. Soon, thousands of chickens will bear witness to my success!"

STACY JAHENDA





WOVEN Class of 2023

As you can see from Stacy's story, Mentorship is a key strategy under the WOVEN Program which was designed to guide and develop the students' personalities, skills, and ambitions towards their professional career paths and individual life goals and aspirations. These interventions provide opportunities and platforms

for the students to seek and get career guidance, counseling, and motivation, which sufficiently prepare them for their professional and personal lives.

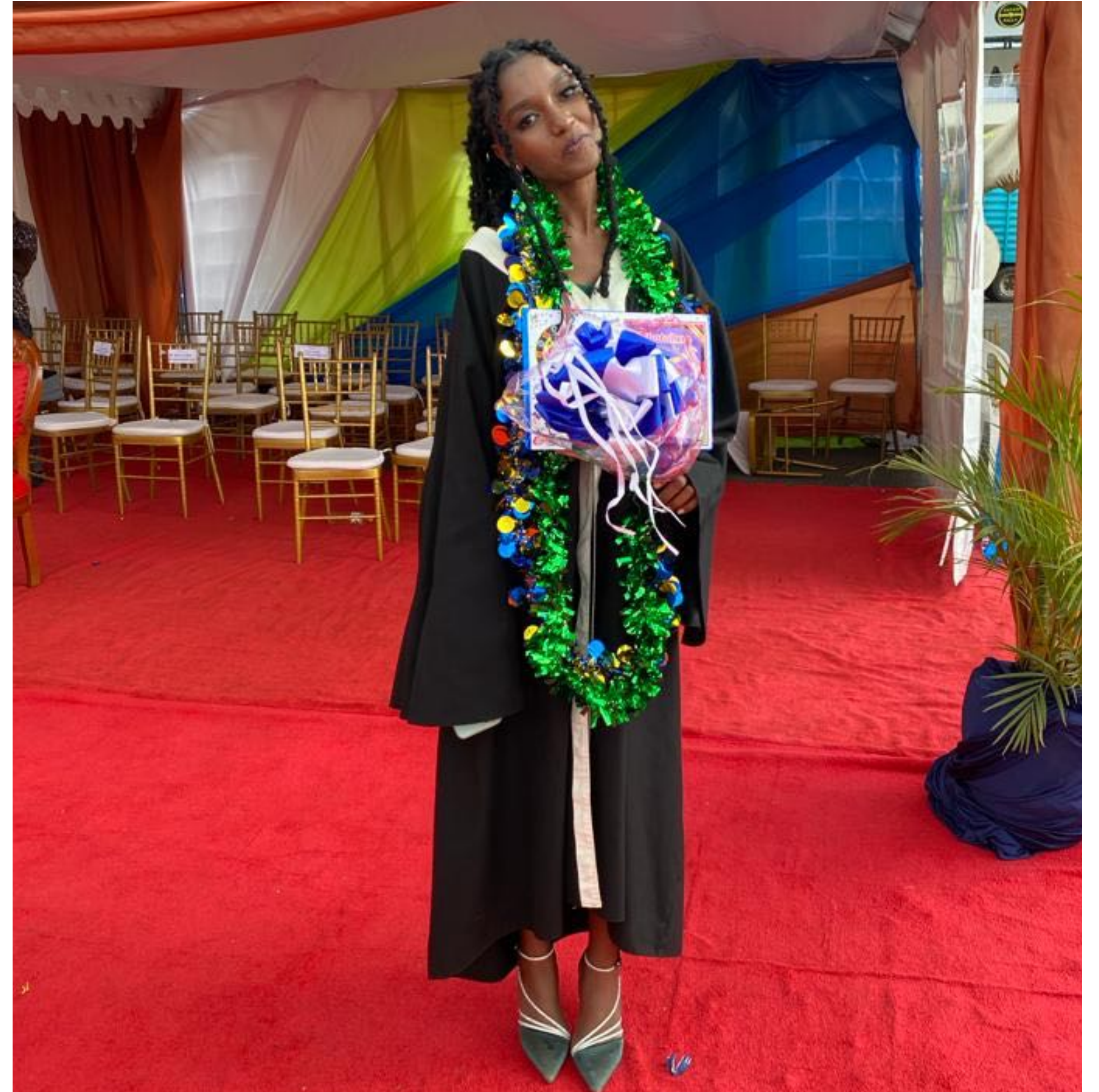
IMPACT 2023

Women of Vision Education iNitiative (WOVEN)

- 100 Students enrolled in 48 universities across Kenya
- The Program aims to achieve its objectives through:
 - Payment of tuition fees, rent costs, monthly support and other related expenses
 - Tracking of students academic progress to ensure they are on track towards successful transition
 - Provision of career coaching, mentorship and mental health resources

HOW IS WOVEN A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY?

Education, life skills, mental health interventions and our new mentor matching program greatly increases the likelihood of our students achieving sustainable employment and breaking the cycle of poverty



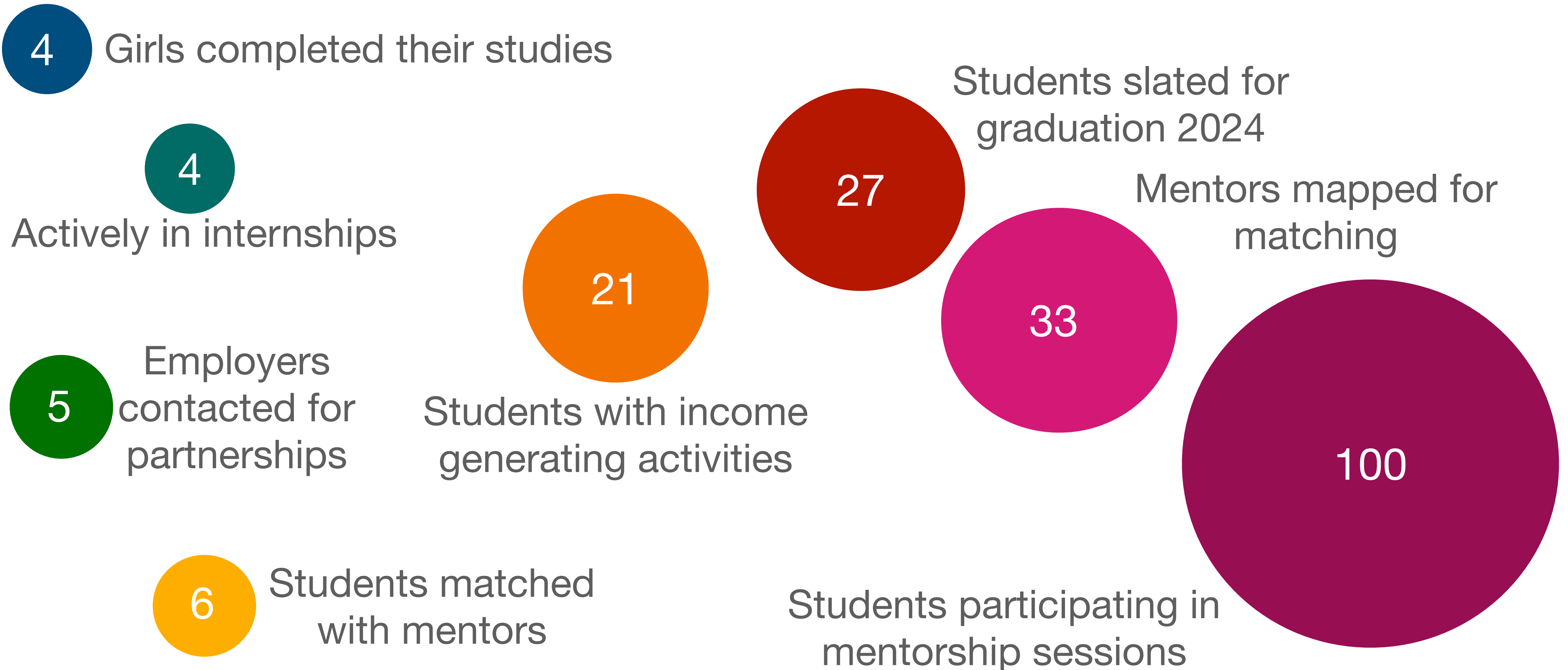
While overall participation in the the Kenyan job market between men and women is almost the same, the gap in opportunity to break the cycle of poverty is significant. According to the Worldbank, 69% of Kenyan women in the job market are employed in vulnerable employment which is defined as temporary or informal work such as house help, day labor, street hawking, etc. That is 16.8% higher than men in the Kenyan job market.

Our program transforms the average low pay opportunities for talented young women into professional career opportunities across the science, business and arts, tourism and civil service industries as well as others in Kenya. Seen on the previous slide is Rhoda Kalumu. In September 2021, Rhoda joined Kenya Wildlife Training Institute to pursue a

Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management through the WOVEN program. She participated fully in our mentorship activities and was assisted with attaining an internship in the hotel management industry. Additionally, she is one of our first students to be matched with a personal mentor in her industry who connected Rhoda with an employment opportunity at Enashipai Spa and Resort at Naivasha. Rhoda graduated this month with a Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management. For the last three months, she has been working at Enashipai Spa and Resort. Despite the current state of affairs in Kenya, where employability is very challenging, with the assistance of our program Rhoda was able to secure a job even before graduating.

IMPACT By the Numbers 2023

Women of Vision Education iNitiative (WOVEN)



IMPACT 2023

WOVEN Mentorship

Topics Covered

1. Personal Development
2. Communication Skills
3. Career Readiness
4. Personal Finance Management
5. Reproductive & Sexual Health
6. Mental Health
7. Leadership
8. Academic management



IMPACT 2023

WOVEN Mentorship

- Five in-person sessions were held (quarterly) for each of our 100 students including our Annual General Meeting
- Additionally, the girls received monthly virtual mentorship sessions on a variety of online platforms.
- Finally, the staff held 156 Individual, group and family counseling sessions to ensure our girls mental health needs were also attended to.

95%

**OF STUDENTS RESPONDED THEY FIND THE MENTORSHIP
PROGRAM VALUABLE**

IMPACT 2023

Transition Program

- Preparing final year students to exit the program
- Networking, including career hub
- 27 student currently participating



IMPACT 2023

WOVEN Transition Program

- The Transition Program is an intervention which was designed in the course of the year with the objective of providing customized support to the final year students towards a smooth and successful transition into the professional world. The main focus of the program is to ensure that the students have the skills which have been proven to increase success in job seeking and retainment,
 - Formal communication skills
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Resume writing and interview skills
 - Familiarity with online job search platforms such as LinkedIn
 - Networking strategies
 - Teamwork and conflict resolution
- In addition, the program is designed to give the participants an opportunity to interact with industry relevant individuals such as HR professionals, managers, career coaches and potential employers through career hubs. Specifically, the program held the first career hub in December 2023 which brought together all the mentioned professionals and students in an interactive session which not only benefited the students in accessing internships, jobs and leadership opportunities but also brought awareness to employers of the talent of our students
- This year we have had 27 girls participating in the transition program as they are set to graduate next year.

SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM



GOAL

Lighting a path out of poverty through provision of school meals to improve enrollment, retention, learning outcomes and transition from primary to secondary school



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*Nicholas Mutinda
Grade 7, Mopei Primary
Kajiado Feeding Program*



While food is an essential need which is encouraging our students to come to school - there are many other expenses involved in sending a child to primary school in Kenya including school fees, school uniform, books, and school supplies which the parents are responsible for. When parents have to choose between food and school fees for the children, they will always choose food. By introducing the school feeding program many parents have been able to divert their small income to pay for the school costs to keep their children in school and the food itself draws the children into their education. Children like Nicholas -

Nicholas comes from a family of five and his three siblings are in the same school as him. The feeding program has been a blessing to the family both in school and at home. At school, they can access quality food unlike before when at home they would sleep hungry, and even go without food for some days. Today, Nicholas and his siblings celebrate because it is a new dawn in their lives and they

can now study well and be in school throughout the week and there are no more cases of their fellow students collapsing in school due to lack of food.

At home, their parents are the lucky ones since they have managed to save something for the family. They managed to save some money to buy food for their livestock and save them from dying due to the drought, though they lost some, the money was used to feed the remaining cattle and pay for their kids' school fees and other basic needs.

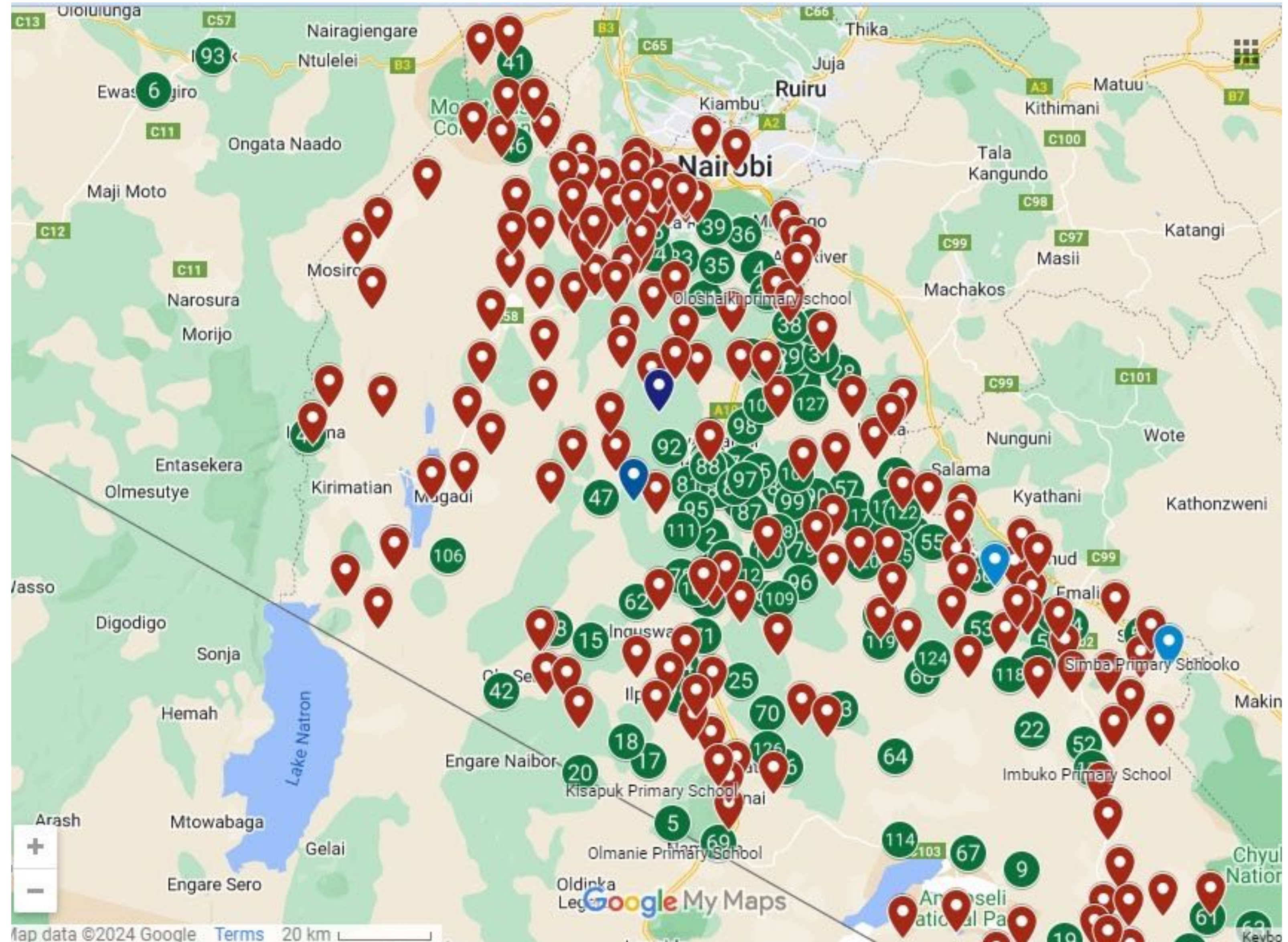
Nicholas shares “My school performance has improved and it is going to improve more since we have the best environment to study and learn, I am hoping to do well in next year's exams and join the best high school in Kenya. Unlike before we could go to the field just to sleep during lunch. I really thank Light Up Hope for providing our school with the feeding program”

“This program has reduced absenteeism, learners are now able to concentrate in class and attend remedial classes. Earlier, before the feeding program, learners could not attend remedial classes in the afternoon because of hunger and the long distance walks from school to home to get lunch. Some of them could not even get anything to eat because of the drought which has led to high levels of poverty.”

Mr. Paul Kisironte, Headteacher of Olperrelongo Primary School, Kajiado Feeding Program

Schools in Green Covered by Light Up Hope, Schools in Red in need of coverage

- Kajiado County



FEEDING PROGRAM

Kajiado County

- In 2023 we worked with 171 schools in the county (green) out of the 260 identified schools urgently in need of intervention (90 additional in red).
- As you can see the county is incredibly vast - approximately 8,700 square miles (or about the size of New Jersey) but with very little development. Most of the roads are dirt roads and the schools and homes are extremely difficult to access. Most students walk 2-6 miles to school each day

IMPACT 2023

School Feeding Program

- Originally budgeted 50,000 students but managed to feed 62,700 due to a favorable exchange rate from US Dollars to the Kenyan Shilling
- 62,700 students in 173 schools
 - 2 in Nairobi
 - 171 in Kajiado
 - 26,000 households impacted
 - approx 91,000 people impacted





Students carrying water to school for the feeding program. Many of our schools are so rural they have no access to water on-site.

IMPACT 2023

School Feeding Program Major Achievements

- Increasing total students fed from 50,000 to 62,700 (23% increase)
- Providing holiday feeding packet to all students for long school break
- Strengthening of UNICEF malnutrition efforts
- Other feeding programs diverted to the community members such as the elderly and adults without children
- Introduction of eggs to culture



- We were able to provide holiday feeding packets which impacted the students - but also the community as a whole - given the entire family can benefit from additional food in the house
- These feeding packs were distributed to support the children with supplemental nutrition while the schools are closed for the long holiday break of 10 weeks.
- UNICEF supplementary program for children under 5, pregnant and nursing mothers, was being diminished due to mother's desire to split the rations with all of their hungry children including their school age children - with the engagement of our program the county health department stated the mothers are now able to focus that intervention on the youngest children who are malnourished
- As shared with us by the deputy governor of Kajiado - the Maasai culture has not traditionally eaten eggs - as a nomadic tribe they never got into the habit of chicken rearing. For most of the children in our schools - this

was the first time they had tasted an egg, and overwhelmingly they have loved them and shared about it with their parents. This increases the awareness of additional sources of income for families to consider in the future as they hope to recover from this drought.

- This is something we have been in talks with agricultural development organizations about - collaborating with them to introduce chicken rearing as an income opportunity to the community by utilizing the schools as learning centers. This aligns with the Kenyan curriculum which encourages all schools to have a agricultural project on site, but which has not been implemented in any of the schools we are currently working with. If successful - not only will our feeding program have provided strong nutrition for our students but also impacted their future opportunities and that of their mothers - as chicken rearing is culturally more likely to be taken up by the women of the community than the men.



Kajiado Deputy Governor Martin Moshisho hands over food items to a student at Saina School in Kajiado town on October 19, 2023. Image: KURGAT MARINDANY.

As the schools’ holiday approaches, the Light Up Hope organisation on Thursday flagged off food pack distribution to 61,700 children and their families in Kajiado.

90%

PERCENT OF STUDENTS BEING RETAINED IN SCHOOL THIS YEAR

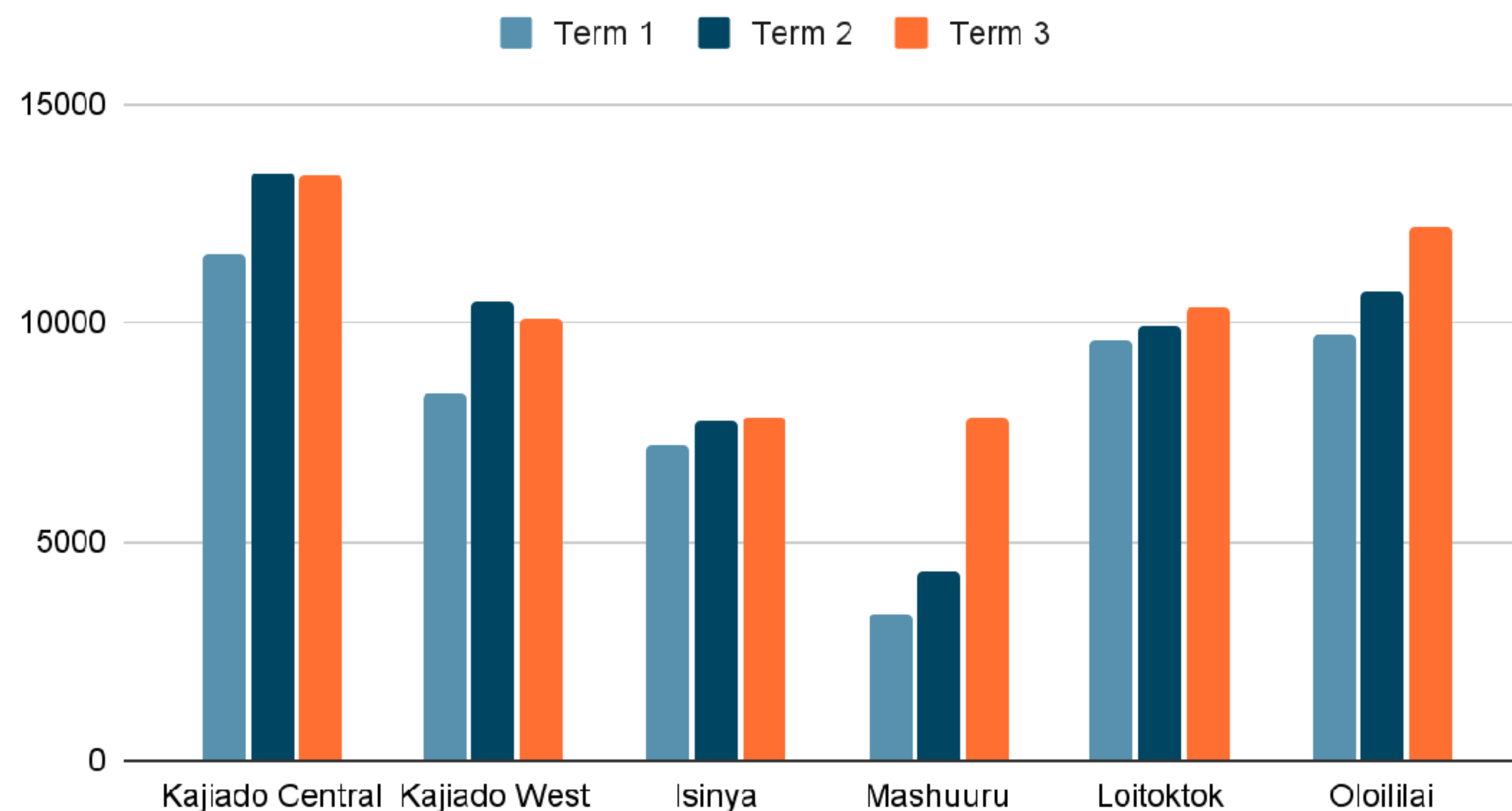
IMPACT 2023

School Feeding Program

- 61,700 learners receiving meals on a daily basis
- School enrollment increased by 11.7% to 88.7%
- 68% of schools in our program saw a marked improvement in performance*
- Dropout rate decreased from 37% to 10%

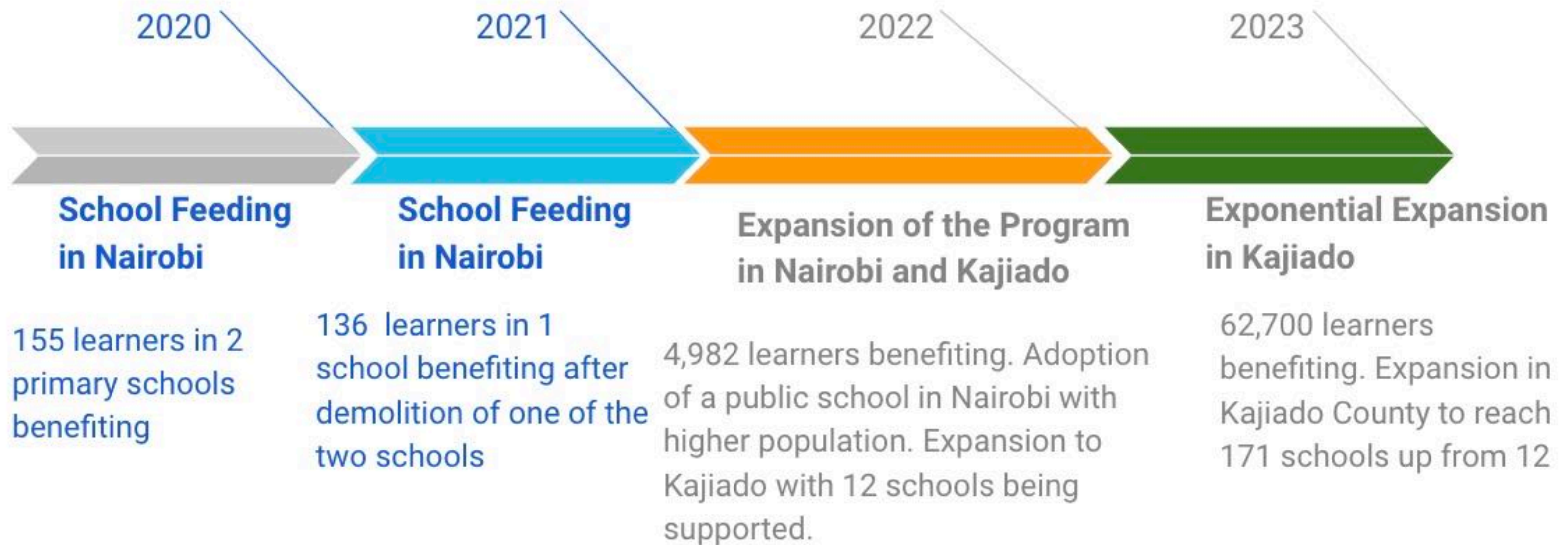
*In survey of 75 out of 173 schools

Kajiado 2023 Enrolment Numbers

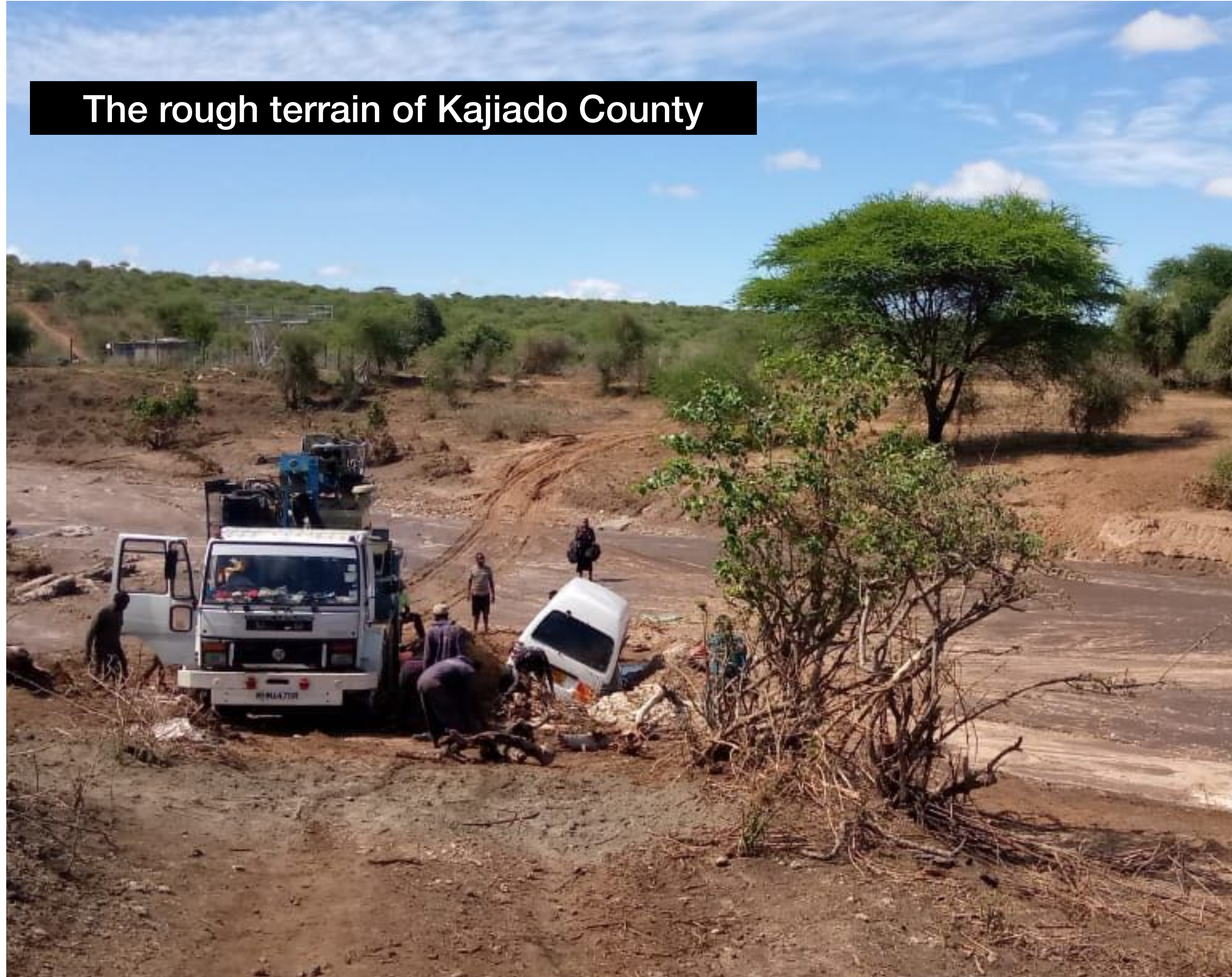


Picture of our feeding program staff monitoring the quantity and quality of food being delivered to the schools





The rough terrain of Kajiado County



COST SHARING

Kajiado Governor's Office

- In addition to matching our high school sponsorships - the county governor signed an MOU to match our feeding program by providing school lunch for the Early Childhood Education students (students ages 4-5 years)
- Up to 50,000 ECE students could be covered under this MOU
- 8,000 will already be covered in our current schools



EMERGENCY AID AND LONG TERM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

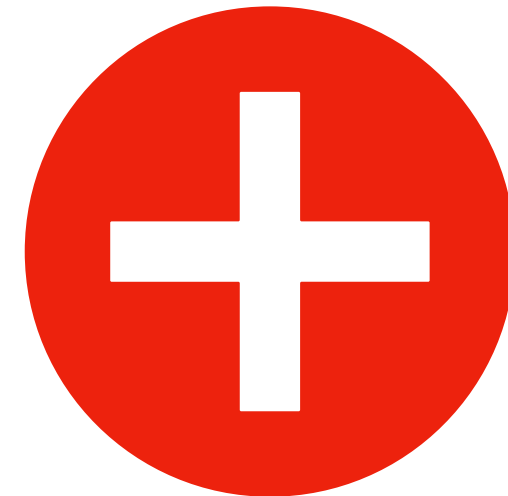
*How Light Up Hope is using a two
tiered approach in Kajiado to increase
resiliency of the community*



KAJIADO EMERGENCY AND LONG TERM ENGAGEMENT

How our programs make an impact

EMERGENCY FOOD AID FOR IMPACT
OF MULTI-YEAR DROUGHT
(SHORT TERM)



EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT
(LONG TERM CHANGE)

According to the United Nations *“The poor also suffer disproportionately from the loss of economic assets during natural disasters...Rural families in drought-stricken regions often sell cattle to purchase food. Because the poor are less able to replace these income-providing assets, they may fall into long-term “poverty traps”, from which they would be unable to emerge.”*
<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/economic-recovery-after-natural-disasters>

This is why it takes longer for a community such as rural Kajiado to recover from the drought than other communities. Additionally, there is no clear end to the drought and no guarantee that a strong rainy season will be a lasting trend. The food aid we are offering is not a long term solution to the challenges this community faces - **but keeping the children in schools is.** The Maasai community is going to be forced to rethink their source of income beyond grazing livestock in an arid

climate. Through education, the community will be exposed to additional opportunities for economic growth.

According to the International Monetary Fund, the economic and social imperative for women’s economic empowerment is clear. Greater gender equality boosts economic growth and leads to better development outcomes...and, in turn, supports economic resilience.
<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/05/31/pp053118pursuing-womens-economic-empowerment>.

Our educational programs - both high school and WOVEN ensure the brightest and most disciplined girls in the county will have a path towards the economic growth of their community through access to education as well as access to career readiness and connections with our mentorship programs.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2024







- While we have made a major impact into the school system in Kajiado - there are still 25,000 students who are going without school lunch. We have seen the effectiveness of this program across the county to greatly increase performance, attendance and retention in school. We hope to cover the remaining schools in 2024.
- It is estimated that 84% of female students in Kajiado county are unable to access secondary and tertiary education. Because we know access to education can transform this community both moving away from cultural practices that negatively impact them, as well as opportunities for economic growth, we

would like to expand our high school program this year to offer scholarships to an additional 40 high performing students in high school as well as 25 additional slots for students who could have attended university but have been sitting at home without access to the finances needed to enroll.

- We currently have received over 215 applications for our 2024 high school program. And as a reminder - for every high school student we add from Kajiado, the governors office has pledged to match and sponsor another girl through their county sponsorship program.

OPPORTUNITIES & GOALS

2024

Food to fight the famine	+25,000 	Increase our feeding program to 100,000
Education not early marriage	+40 	Replace form 4 students with form 1's from Kajaido and add 40 additional slots for student dropouts
Break the cycle of poverty	+25 	Increase our WOVEN admissions to 125 with high achieving student dropouts and teen mothers
Empower Maasai women	+2,000 	Collaborate with agricultural NGOs to introduce chicken farming as a more drought resistant form of agriculture with Kajiado county schools/mothers

FUNDING GOALS 2024

PROGRAM	# Students 2024	Per Student Cost 2024	2024 Funding Needed
University	125	\$4,110.00	\$513,750.00
High School	200	\$2,094.00	\$418,800.00
Feeding	100,000	\$30.46	\$3,046,000.00
Empowerment	2,000	\$50.00	\$100,000.00
GRAND TOTAL	102,325		\$4,078,550.00

EMPOWERMENT PHILOSOPHY

We believe in empowering Kenyan leadership in our organization. We acknowledge that Kenyans know the cultural, political and environmental background of their own country, and we believe they know the best solutions to improve the lives of their community. We act as a partner who provides additional ideas, support and resources to refine ***Kenyan identified solutions to Kenyan identified problems.***

Additionally, we seek ongoing input from program beneficiaries on how to improve the program to better meet the needs of future program participants. We seek their input on what works in our programs, what needs improvement and aspects of the program that may be found ineffective, such that we can constantly learn, evolve, and better serve our beneficiaries.

Finally, we know that the most impactful empowerment of disadvantaged communities comes through ensuring our resources benefit the members of the community who are most in need. Therefore, we work as a team with the communities we serve, ensuring transparency and integrity in our selection process of beneficiaries. We adhere to international child protection policies and abide by strict accounting and financial transparency standards.



2023 FINANCIALS

- Total Funds Raised - \$2,420,585
- Administrative Expenses - \$279,936
 - 11.5% of all donations
- Total # of Students Impacted
 - ★ 177 Primary and Secondary Sponsorship
 - ★ 106 University/Trade College Sponsorship
 - ★ 62,700 Students Receiving School lunch



Thank you to our 2023 supporters:



Individual
Private
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LIGHT UP HOPE

Lighting a path out of poverty

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