



Participants in the Hope for Widows Pilot Program receiving their second grants of \$150 each. These grants gave their businesses a boost this summer.

WATER IS LIFE KENYA >>>

Fall 2023

STAYING CONNECTED

Helping Widows Bloom with Goats, Grants, and Confidence

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

When Hope for Widows participants were awarded their \$150 grants from WILK, it was the most money the women had ever held in their hands. We invested in them, and then they paved their own road to success!

The road was not easy. Women reported in baseline questionnaires at the beginning of the program that, before, their businesses would regularly collapse. Typically, they would buy what they could and sell for a few months. Then an urgent expense, like school fees for their children, would need to be paid, and they'd sell all their stock and be back where they started. We realized that we needed to teach a new behavior to help them move forward in their businesses as well as their lives.

WILK often works this way. We see a problem from afar, then gather information through questionnaires and community meetings to understand the biggest challenges people face. We design lessons to address the challenges by training in relevant skills. Next, we identify the participants and start rolling out in-village training sessions. After training and giving the grant or loan, we provide weekly monitoring and ongoing support to reinforce new habits.

Our model works! It works in both the Livestock as a Business Program and Water Management Committee Training, and it worked again in the Hope for Widows program.



Widows in the second round of the Hope for Widows program at a training session earlier this year.

The participating women have realized it is far better (and less stressful!) to keep their businesses alive than to restart them from nothing over and over. They learned that the key is to choose the right products to sell, put aside the profit, and keep the main capital in the business for stock. This also allows them to keep their customers. They consistently have what their customers need, so they come back.

They had transformed into confident business ladies. **WE ALL** can feel proud that they achieved so much with our investment!

Thank you for believing in these women,

Joyce Tannian
Director & Co-Founder

KILIMANJARO CLUB HONORARY BREAKFAST

On October 4th, we celebrated the inaugural Kilimanjaro Club Honorary Breakfast at White Clay Creek Country Club.

The Kilimanjaro Club is Water is Life Kenya's giving society that gives special recognition to individual donors and institutions who donate \$1,000 or more. The club currently has 90 members—and counting!

On a gorgeous fall morning, Kilimanjaro Club members and their guests enjoyed a hot breakfast while meeting fellow club members. As people took their last sips of coffee, Joyce shared updates about WILK's newest program, Hope for Widows, and how participating widows have been empowered through training and grants. In the pilot program, participants grew their monthly income from an average of \$50 to \$150 per month.

Following this update, we honored the special contributions of several WILK partners whose exceptional involvement in our mission was worth sharing. This year, the number of WILK partnerships has tripled while existing partnerships have deepened. With our close ties to communities in Kenya, working with us enabled our partners to use their skills and expertise to benefit others directly and with lasting impact.



Ladies line up for water at the Nooriro Community Borehole water point.

When interviewing Imurtot parents, they learned that the rainwater has helped keep classrooms clean, meaning parents save water by doing less laundry at home. The cleaner school building also eliminated jiggers, biting insects that used to live in classroom dust.

Our next partner, Paul, is an active member of Lions Club of Pike Creek – Green Hills and pioneered a partnership between WILK, Lions Club International Foundation, and the Lions Club of Nairobi Greater. Paul traveled to Kenya in February to

Each partner shared how working with WILK proved exponentially more impactful than they first thought. The resulting projects have been more effective, more fun, and more rewarding, both for our partners and the communities they've helped.

For example, Kim Teoli of WILK-TEC—formerly Engineers Without Borders – Delaware Professional Chapter—mentioned the unexpected impact their rainwater harvesting project at Imurtot Primary School has had on students and their families.



WILK-TEC team leaders John Cimino & Kim Teoli.

attend the Lions Global Service Week and to witness the drilling of the Nooriro Community Borehole, a project made possible through this partnership.

Paul shared with our guests what it was like to witness the long, dusty drilling process. When he got tired of sitting, he visited women in the nearby village to see what life was like. He asked them what the fence surrounding the village was for, and the ladies quickly told him, “To protect us against lions at night. He also learned that the tanks must be constructed so that they're elephant-proof, since Nooriro is in the middle of an elephant corridor. When beginning this project, Paul hadn't considered what it would be like to live together with wildlife. After visiting Kenya for himself, he is grateful we don't have elephants in New Castle County.

Our partners each bring new approaches, skills, and energy to solving problems. Some even become dedicated volunteers who mobilize their connections to generate funds for specific projects.

Take, for instance, our next partner, Rotarian Jerry Bilton, who shared with our guests the project he, WILK, and Rotary District 7630 have embarked upon. One of Rotary's seven areas of focus is “providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene.” Jerry, who has been a Rotarian for ten years, took it upon himself to expand his district's involvement in inspiring hope, strength, and resilience for Kenyans in need. With a district grant of \$5,000 and the financial support of 10 Rotary clubs, Jerry and his Newark Rotary Club raised \$16,300 to fund a pump and generator at our next borehole in Lositeti. This is perhaps the most clubs that have partnered on a project in district history!

Lastly, Michael Gichura spoke on behalf of his family who undertook an ambitious project this summer: Toilets and Trees: Phase 3 of the Esukuta Community Borehole. Together, Michael, Charity, and their two sons raised



Partner and Delaware Lion, Paul, speaking with beneficiaries, the women of Nooriro, during his trip.



Kilimanjaro Club members listen to the Hope for Widows program update.

LIVESTOCK AS A BUSINESS REBOOT



We have three new livestock farmer groups in this year's reboot of the LAB program. They are Osiligi Kitirua Women, Nasinya Amboseli Women, and Lelem Group. These groups have shown a high level of interest: they always arrive on time, are attentive, and have nearly perfect attendance for the trainings.

To be successful in the livestock business, you have to bring good, healthy animals to the market. Since vets are expensive and far from home, most people treat their own animals. Learning disease prevention and control from Government of Kenya Livestock veterinary officers was a revelation to our farmers. Usually they learn by word of mouth from neighbors, buy the drugs, and go home to treat their animals, often without being able to read the instructions.

They learned so much in the day-long practical with live animals that they didn't want the training to end. The biggest surprise was that each medicine has a correct way of being administered. For example, a medicine for oral use should never be injected, a vaccine should never be giving orally, etc.

Overall, farmers find the LAB training to be extremely helpful in improving the health and quality of their livestock as they prepare for the market.



Photos (clockwise): the Osiligi Kitirua Women Group at their group dynamics training; a LAB member learning to administer vaccinations at the Livestock Disease Practical; a Women's Group creating a business plan at the New Business Seminar.



WILK Partner and District 7630 Rotarian Jerry Bilton (center) with WILK Co-Founder, Joyce Tannian, and WILK Outreach & Operations Manager, Aaron Lemma

\$9,400 with an outpouring of support from family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and classmates. These funds were used to construct toilets and plant trees at Esukuta, where a WILK borehole has been providing clean water to a community and primary school since 2016. The Gichura family travelled to Kenya to plant

the trees alongside students, teachers, and parents from the school. Michael didn't realize the ripple effect this project would have on thousands of people in the Esukuta community. This family was blown away at the power of their donors' generosity.

This partnership highlight was concluded with remarks from New Castle County Executive Matthew Meyer who shared about his own journeys to Kenya as well as the importance of putting others first when they don't have the resources to sustain themselves. We are grateful for Mr. Meyer's support of our work in Kenya.

To see highlights of the breakfast, you can watch the recording at waterislifekenya.org/kilimanjaro. We hope you'll consider taking the climb and be at our next breakfast by joining the Kilimanjaro Club!

DONATION CORNER

4 WAYS TO GIVE

DONATE

1 Send us a check payable to Water is Life Kenya.

3 Give monthly on our online giving platform. Just click "monthly" under donation frequency.

2 Donate online using this QR code or by visiting waterislifekenya.org.

4 Match your gift by exploring your employer's corporate matching program.





INTRODUCING OUR NEW MULTICOLOR CHRISTMAS STARS IN 2 SIZES!

You will quickly see why the response to this product has been overwhelming. They sell out every time we restock! To buy your own star, visit shop.waterislifekenya.org.

There are also more places to purchase our beaded handicrafts! You can now find many of our items for sale at the Delaware Museum of Nature and Science. And when you're in Nairobi you can visit our newest sales outlets: Pink Skink boutiques in Junction Mall, The Hub Mall, and Radisson Blu Hotel.



Come shop in-person at a sale this season! See where we're selling at waterislifekenya.org/sales



314 E Main St., Suite 2 | Newark, DE 19711
(302) 894-7335 | 501(c)3 nonprofit
EIN: 26-3185829
info@waterislifekenya.org
[@waterislifekenya](https://www.instagram.com/waterislifekenya)



waterislifekenya.org



Sign up for WILK Wednesday, our Bimonthly Email Newsletter at waterislifekenya.org/wednesday

TEAM HIGHLIGHT: CATE OLEGEI

Cate Olegei is our Kenyan Hope for Widows (HFW) Program Coordinator, business lady, and bead artisan. As lead teacher in the HFW program, Cate supervises a group of four field assistants who monitor the widows each week. We asked her if any of her team had tried out business for themselves. Cate wasn't sure about them, but she started her own business.

She said, "I heard what we trained the widows in our business skills training and I decided to try for myself."

Now, Cate has a shop in her hometown of Lenkischem where she sells foodstuffs and beading supplies. She even employs a young lady to run the shop when she is out teaching for WILK. She took on this new portfolio last July and rose to the occasion!

Cate is also a very skilled and creative bead artisan. Though she doesn't wear a lot of jewelry herself, she is now producing new designs, like the beaded rings you will see at our pop-up sales.

Our WILK team always tries to practice what we preach. It just so happens we also bloom along the way!

