

Maasai Mara Women Empowerment Guide Organization (MWEGO)
Annual Newsletter 2024

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Dear Supporters, Partners, and Friends,

As we close out 2024, we are filled with immense gratitude for your continued support and the incredible progress we have made together in empowering women, children, and communities across the Maasai Mara region. This year has been one of growth, collaboration, and tangible impact, and we are excited to share our highlights, challenges, and plans for the future.

Our Mission and Vision

At MWEGO, our mission is to empower Maasai women and communities by providing education, health services, and skills training that foster self-reliance, gender equality, and protect children's rights. Our vision is to create a community where women and children are valued, empowered, and live in environments free from harmful cultural practices, poverty, and gender-based violence.

2024 Program Highlights

1. Girls' Mentorship and Leadership Programs

In 2024, we reached over 500 girls through our mentorship and leadership programs. These programs focused on:

- Sexual and reproductive health
- Decision-making and leadership skills
- Career guidance
- Building healthy relationships

These sessions empowered young girls with the tools and knowledge to pursue their dreams and become leaders in their communities.

2. Sanitary Materials Distribution

We distributed sanitary materials to over 500 schoolgirls, particularly those transitioning to secondary school, to ensure they could stay in school during menstruation. This program has

been instrumental in increasing school attendance, as menstruation should never be a barrier to education.

3. Food Security Program

MWEGO's food program provided essential food items to vulnerable students at the beginning of each term. With support from our donors, we distributed maize, beans, cooking oil, and salt to schools such as Losho Primary, Ildungisho Primary, and Kijirjir Primary. The food support helped children from vulnerable families stay in school and improved their overall well-being.

4. Engaging Men for Gender Equality

Our Men's Forum continued to be a significant part of our community outreach. Through dialogues and training, we engaged men and boys in discussions on gender equality and the importance of supporting women and children. These forums took place in schools like Oloolaimutia Primary and Siana Boarding School and helped to challenge harmful cultural practices while encouraging positive change.

5. Story of Art Contest

We introduced the Story of Art Contest, where students from six schools could express their creativity through art. This initiative nurtured artistic talent and inspired students to improve their literacy and reading skills. The contest motivated over 60 learners, and each participant received a certificate of appreciation.

Awards and Recognition

In 2024, our work was recognized by the Kijirjir community, who awarded MWEGO a goat as a symbol of gratitude for the positive impact on school enrollment and student retention. This award is a reminder of the power of community collaboration and the long-term benefits of our programs.

Impact and Achievements

- **Increased School Enrollment:** The food program and sanitary materials distribution directly contributed to an increase in school enrollment at Ildungisho Primary, where student numbers grew from 240 to 312.
- **Improved School Attendance:** Thanks to the food program, absenteeism due to hunger decreased, resulting in improved attendance rates. Over 75% of students attended school regularly.
- **Better Learning Environments:** We donated 30 desks to three schools, which improved classroom comfort and met national educational standards. This change allowed students to learn in a more conducive environment, with safe storage for their books.
- **Empowered Girls:** The mentorship program significantly boosted the confidence and leadership aspirations of over 500 girls. They are now better equipped to navigate challenges and aspire to leadership roles within their communities.

Challenges Faced

While we are proud of our progress, there were challenges along the way:

- **Resource Constraints:** Due to limited resources, we were unable to meet the growing demand for food and sanitary materials from additional schools. We hope to expand these programs with further support in the coming year.
- **Cultural Resistance:** Despite progress, we encountered resistance in some communities regarding gender equality initiatives. Cultural norms still pose challenges, but we continue to work diligently to overcome them through dialogue and education.

Lessons Learned

- **Food Security Drives Retention:** Providing food at the beginning of each school term has proven to be crucial in ensuring that vulnerable children stay in school and focus on their studies.
- **Holistic Girl Empowerment:** Our mentorship programs reinforced the importance of empowering girls through comprehensive education—health, leadership, career development, and life skills.
- **Community Engagement Is Key:** Engaging men and boys in conversations about gender equality has been essential in creating lasting change. They are pivotal in challenging harmful cultural practices and fostering a culture of mutual respect and support.

Looking Forward: Opportunities and Plans for 2025

As we look ahead, we are excited about the opportunities that 2025 holds. Our key focus areas include:

- **Expanding Men's Engagement:** We plan to extend our Men's Forum to more communities, continuing our efforts to challenge harmful gender norms and foster support for women's and children's rights.
- **Strengthening Partnerships:** We will actively seek new partnerships with organizations locally, nationally, and internationally to expand our programs and ensure sustainability.
- **Scaling Our Programs:** With increased funding, we aim to reach more schools and communities, expanding our food program, mentorship initiatives, and sanitary materials distribution.

Thank You for Your Support

We extend our deepest thanks to all our supporters, volunteers, donors, and partners. Your unwavering belief in our mission has allowed us to make a lasting impact in the lives of the women, children, and communities we serve. Together, we are creating positive change and paving the way for a more equitable future.

As we step into 2025, we remain committed to expanding our work and empowering those who need it most. Thank you for being a part of the MWEGO journey.

With heartfelt gratitude,

The MWEGO Team

Empowering Women, Transforming Communities

If you would like to learn more about our programs or get involved, please contact us at mwego.org@gmail.com or call +254(0)724477402.