



Sustainable Livelihoods & Youth Employment

SHOFCO's sustainable livelihoods and youth employment programs enable individuals and families in informal settlements to make the transformation from a mode of 'every-day survival' to one of 'planning for the future.' SHOFCO provides job training and placement for youth, as well as vocational training for sustainable livelihoods for women.

The Income Gap in Kenya

Nearly 80% of Kenyans are less than 35 years old. This represents great economic and social opportunities, but also enormous challenges. At the forefront of these challenges lies the high unemployment rate among young people – 80% of unemployed Kenyans are below 35 years old. This high unemployment is even higher in slums where opportunities are scarce. Additionally, there is a great disparity in income between genders. In Kibera, the average income for women is 42 percent lower than for men.

Our Innovation

Youth Employment: SHOFCO provides training in job skills and computer literacy, preparing youth for job placement opportunities in the formal sector. SHOFCO partners with many private businesses in Kenya for employing youth from the slums, including Safaricom and Java House Coffee. We also conduct entrepreneurship training for youth to enable them to start their own small business. Through enterprise development, financial literacy training, and provision of micro loans and grants, this intervention provides youth the support they needed to start earning income.

Women's Sustainable Livelihoods: SHOFCO's Women's Empowerment Program (SWEP) provides vocational and business training support to women living with HIV and victims of gender based violence in Kibera and Mathare. We provide training in sewing for women to start seamstress business, and handicraft making; and we have helped women to start other small businesses including the "Tender Hearts Cleaning Service" that offers cleaning and janitorial services to the communities.

The Future

SHOFCO plans to dramatically expand its youth employment program with the launch of an informal sector vocational training program, expansion of its entrepreneurship and business start-up program. These initiatives will be based out of a new network of youth hubs in the slums that will give internet access to youth for online training, job placement opportunities, and networking.



IMPACT IN 2020

Despite the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, SHOFCO was able to facilitate job training for more than **400 youth** to be employed in major sectors including financial sales, customer service, private security, retail and small businesses. We connected more than **250 trainees** to targeted skills training in computer programming and technology, construction, telesales, retail, and hair and beauty. Lastly, our entrepreneurship participants have begun small businesses in grocery stores, small shops, clothing stores, hotels, restaurants, and food stands. Nearly **100 small businesses** thrived during COVID-19, and have been a source of hope during the pandemic.

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BENEFICIARY SPOTLIGHT: Joan Adhiambo

Joan's daughter is currently an eighth grader at Kibera School for Girls and is set to sit for her national examinations this year. "She is very responsible. I see a leader in her," Joan says of her.

Several years earlier, Joan joined the SHOFCO Women Empowerment Program (SWEP), a branch of our Sustainable Livelihoods program. "I joined eight other women where we learned tailoring, detergent making and bead making. We also encouraged each other and life became easier," Joan says.

There are good things happening in her life now. "Initially, we could eat one meal a day which was not even of good quality. Now we eat three good meals in a day." With a contagious smile, she continues, "I have no more stress. I can pay school fees for my children. I am now independent." The business picked up well and she started saving some money. Joan used her savings plus a loan from her peers in the SHOFCO economic empowerment program to buy land. She adds: "I am now staying on my land as I build a permanent house. I have no more stress."

