

TUWAJALI WAJANE KWALE INITIATIVE
A REPORT ON SONGESHA MJANE PROJECT
OUTCOMES HARVESTING



Figure 1. The Thamini Funds, (Widows funds) Officer addressing representatives of chapters of the Tuwajali Wajane Kwale Initiative beneficiary widow groups during the outcome harvesting session held on 26th August 2022 at the Jacaranda Hotel in Diani, Kwale County, Kenya.

26TH AUGUST 2022

Introduction:

Tuwajali Wajane Kwale Initiative has been implementing a project called “**Songesha Mjane**” (**uplift a widow**) for the past one year. This project is being implemented with the financial support from the **Fazil Chinoy Fellowship through Ms. Mwanasha Gaserego, who is a fellow**, and managed locally by **SambaSports Youth Agenda**.

“**Songesha Mjane**” is a 3-year community empowerment project that seeks to address the socioeconomic and psychosocial challenges of target widows by mobilizing and supporting their economic base and mental wellbeing to be able to sustain their lives, establishing linkages between widows and development partners in Msambweni wider Kwale County, and Kenya in general. It also aims at recognizing that widows are best placed to identify their own needs and the best way to meet them. Widows are actively involved in planning and implementing locally-defined solutions to the challenges they face.

The project goal is **enhancing widows’ socio-economic empowerment to create resilience against mental illness and social barriers**.

The project has four components which are:

- i. Organizational growth and development
- ii. Enhancing economic empowerment of widows by supporting livelihood initiatives
- iii. Establish strong psychosocial support network among widows to sustain mental health awareness.
- iv. Public awareness on widows’ priorities

1.1 Activity description

Outcome harvesting is the experiential and participatory process of collecting information on the change or effectiveness/impacts of a project. It involves finding out about **what** has changed, which factors mostly contributed to that change, and **how** did that change improve their lives i.e. whether or how have the project interventions contributed to this change. It is a form of qualitative evaluation where stakeholders identify, analyze and verify the results of a project.

On August 26th 2022, SambaSports Youth Agenda facilitated the first annual outcome harvesting activity for the Songesha Mjane project held at Jacaranda Hotel in Diani, Kwale County, Kenya. The activity involved 21 widows drawn from 12 chapters of beneficiary widow groups (**including Mabadiliko, Kumekucha, Mwangaza, Subira, Mwamba, Twang’ara Mavumbani, Gawee, Nyumba Sita and Furaha Bazo women groups**), a representative from Women Enterprise Fund, an officer from the social services department-Msambweni Sub-County, and a representative from the National Police Service, a key security department that has been involved extensively in supporting the welfare of the widows.

1.2 Rationale

After a word of prayer followed a round of introduction led by Mohamed Mwachausa, the interim Executive Director-SambaSports Youth Agenda. Mohamed gave a brief description of the organization, then gave a background of the fellowship and how Tuwajali Wajane Kwale Initiative came to benefit from the fellowship, and lastly highlighted on the activity objectives.

Foremost, the participants being widows, they were given an opportunity for a moment of meditation and self-reflection on a number of parameters including;

- ✓ What they expected from their relatives after being widowed.
- ✓ How the real experience is.
- ✓ What disappointments and sad moments they went through.
- ✓ The journey they have gone through since being part of the program.
- ✓ Their best moments of the engagement through the Songesha Mjane project.
- ✓ How they feel so far since their engagement in the project.
- ✓ What changes they have had since the engagement.

This methodology was basically applied to allow the widows bring their focus to the project and enhance their participation. The participants really enjoyed this session as they took their deep breaths trying to reflect on their experiences towards the project.

1. Most Significant Change (MSC).

In this session, the participants were to identify the most outstanding change they feel the project has brought and contributed to, and also identify the aspect that were very key in attaining the change. This was the most vital part of the activity as the participants were supposed to reflect and compare their wellbeing before and during their engagement to the project.

The participants were each given a piece of paper and independently told to put down the change. Then randomly they stuck them on the wall. To identify the most significant change that occurred to most of the beneficiaries, participants were urged to categorize the outcomes that are related and derive one statement to represent the change. After about 30 minutes of arranging and re-arranging the cards that resembled/related to each other, the widows, as well officers felt satisfied by the results of the session. The strings of cards with the most cards were deemed as the "harvested". The following random outcomes were identified;

- Imparted knowledge on widows' rights and access to justice.
- Economic empowerment.
- Self-reliance.
- Hope revival among the widows

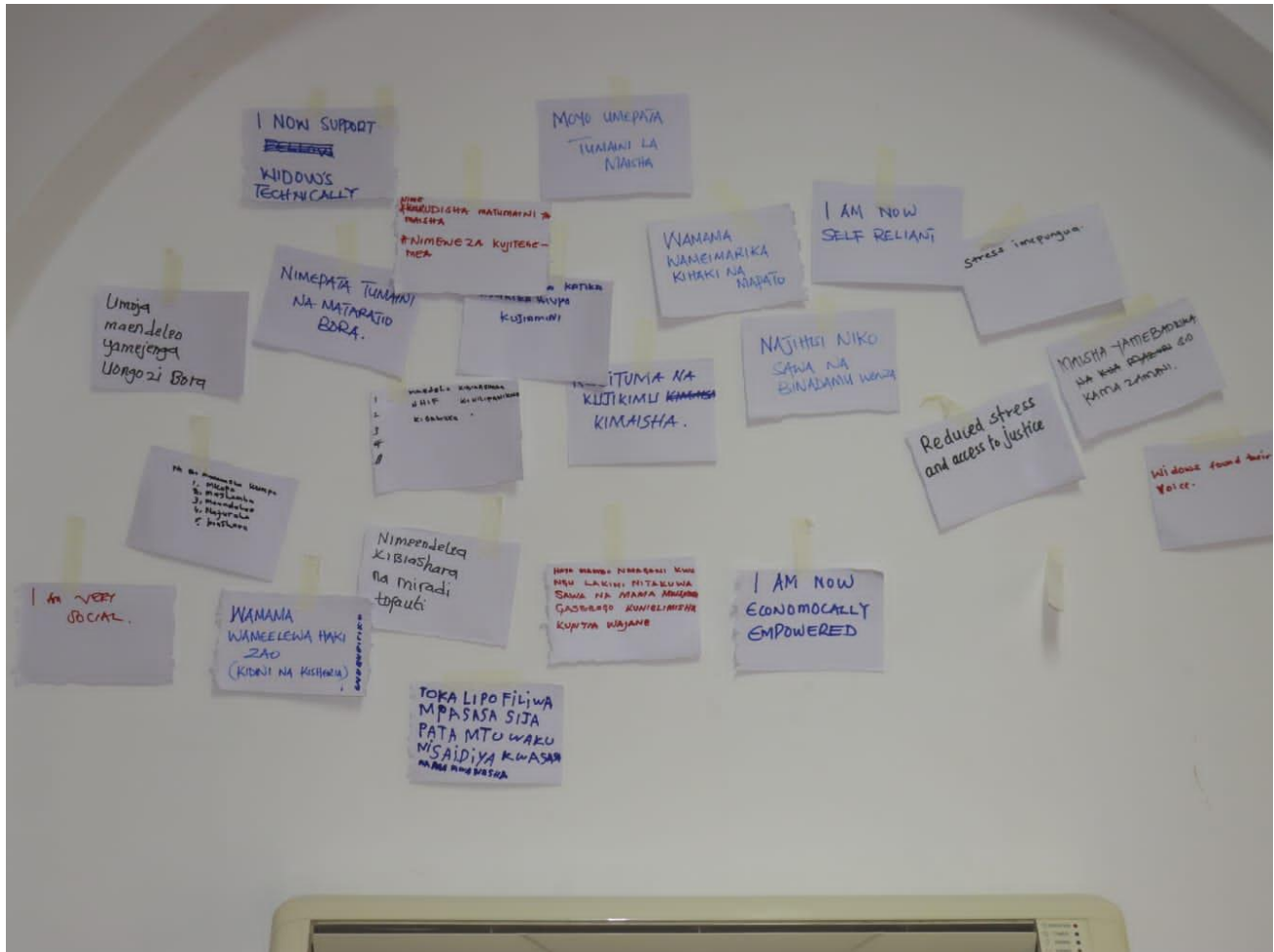


Figure 2. Stuck pieces of papers with the identified outcomes

After an exercise of categorizing the outcomes, three most significant changes were realized to have occurred to the widows, with some beneficiaries falling into all of the three changes, while some falling only into one or two categories. The following are the categorized outstanding outcomes contributed by the project interventions arranged from the top one to the least attained; these are what can be termed as the most significant changes that occurred to the widows in the last one year.

1. The widows had gained a sense of Socio-economic independence.
2. The widows felt a sense of restored hope
3. The widows exhibited a new sense of social well-being.

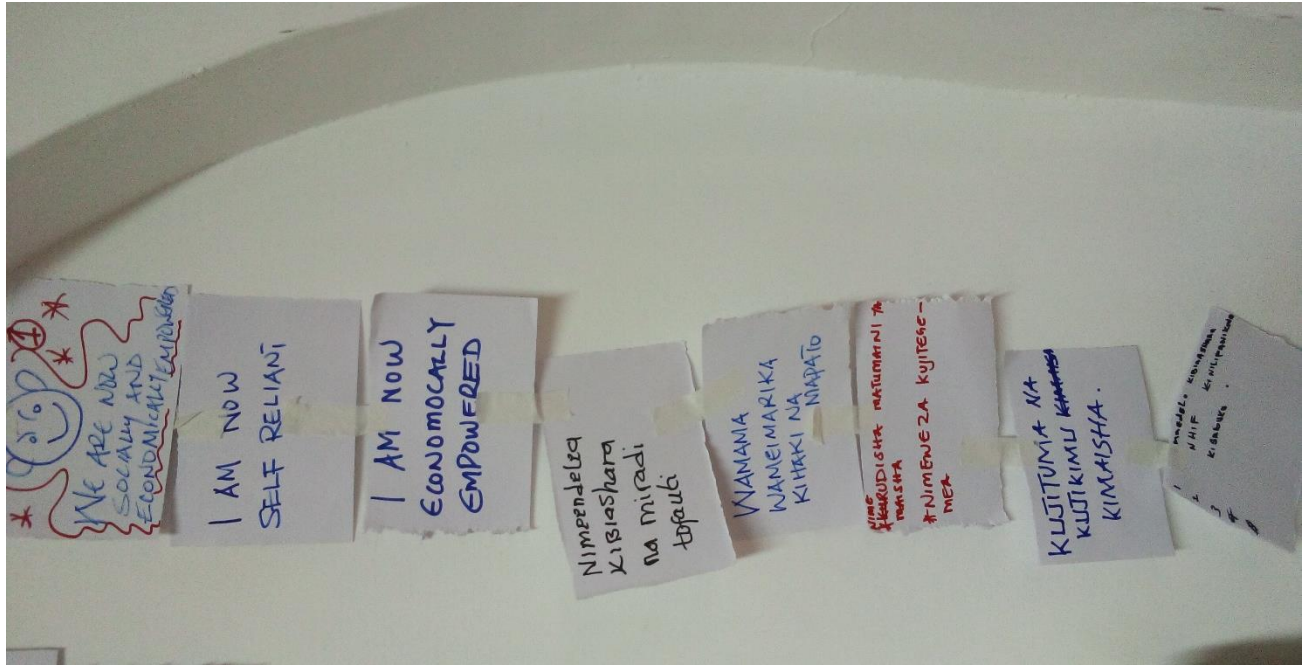


Figure 3. A display of the individual changes that results to the **socio-economic empowerment** change among the widows

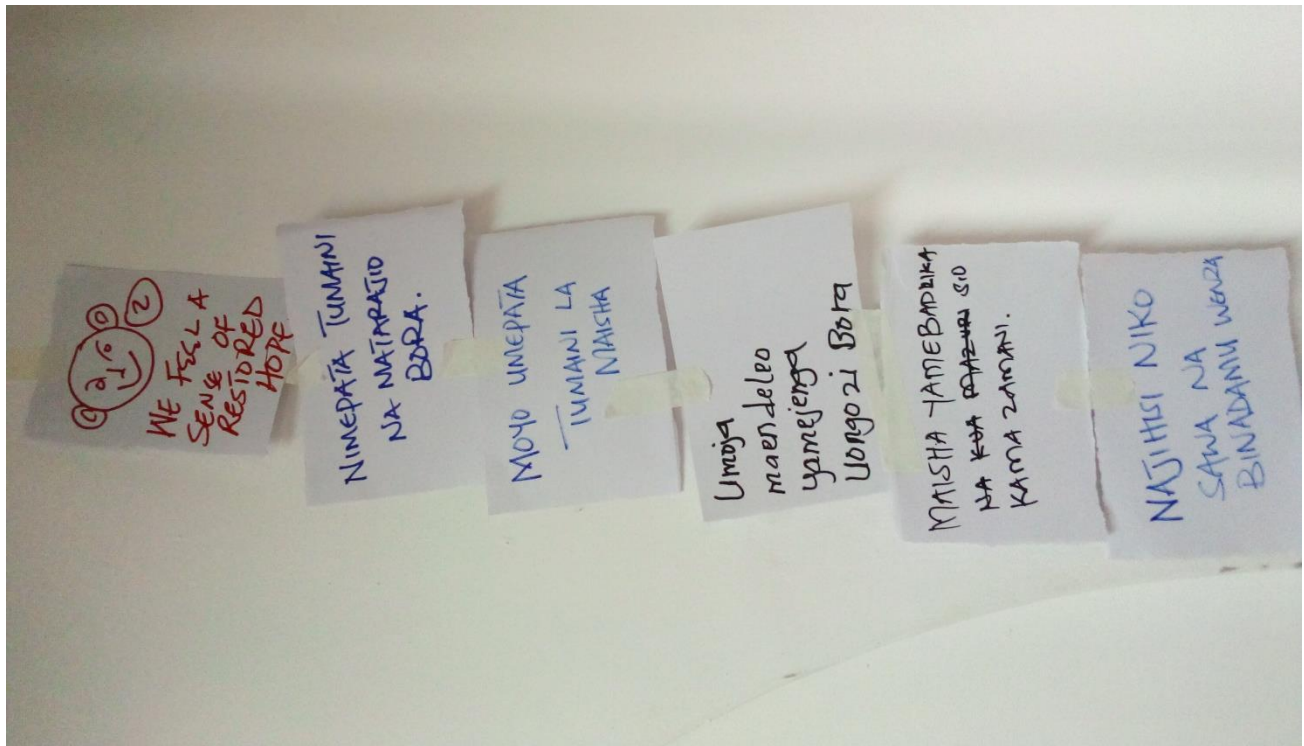


Figure 4. Cards with different individual changes that contribute to the widows "**feeling a sense of restored hope**".

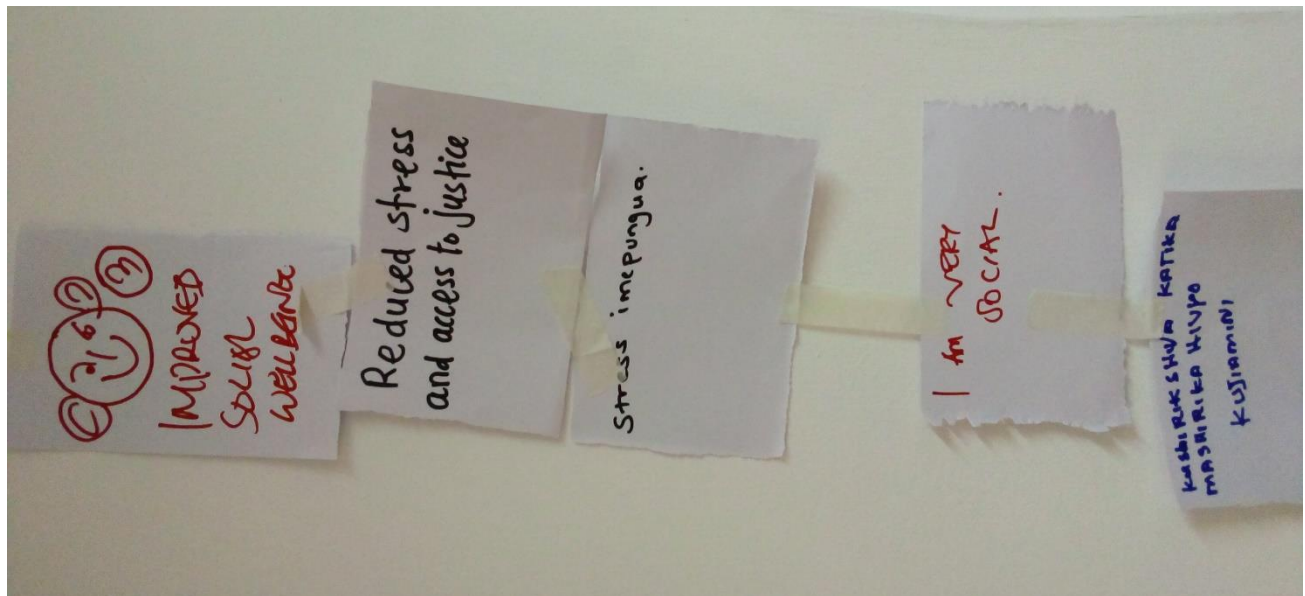


Figure 5. Individual feelings and changes that contributed to the "improved social wellbeing" among the widows.



Figure 6. One of the widows writing their views and feelings.

It was very promising in the way the widows were actively participating during the activity. This was a true tale that the widows' confidence has been significantly improved by the project.

After that, the beneficiaries were divided into three groups for a first group discussion with each group tackling a different question in relation to the three identified outcomes. The questions were as follows per group number;

1. Which factors contributed to the socio-economic independence? Factors could include training sessions, visits, stories, role models, meetings, events etc.
2. Which factors led or contributed to the restoration of hope among the beneficiary widows?
3. Which factors contributed to the improved social wellbeing of the widows.

The activity was aimed at identifying the critical aspects of the project that mostly contributed to the changes, so that emphasis would be put on the key enablers in subsequent years. This would also give an opportunity for the reporting team to derive the positive intended outcomes and the positive unintended outcomes. The following information represents the three identified outcomes and the interventions that mostly contributed to the change;

1. Socio-economic independent

- ✓ Training and skills building on agricultural production and kitchen gardening.
- ✓ Linkages and support to small business start-ups (1000 shillings business initiative)
- ✓ Sensitization, information relaying, and support by the social services officers on available economic opportunities and group certificate acquisition.
- ✓ Provision of loans by the social services department that were used for business purposes.
- ✓ Support from the government on various matters.
- ✓ Project support on the kitchen gardens by purchasing equipment and necessities for the process.
- ✓ Merry go round activities supported by the project.
- ✓ Subsequently most widows started small businesses and farming projects that afford them daily subsistence.
- ✓ A significant number of widows have started paying school fees to their children, without having to beg from relatives.

2. Sense of restored Hope.

- ✓ Support from local leadership through advice, linkages and mediation
- ✓ Recognition from the government and initiation of the Thamini loan specifically for the widows.
- ✓ Sensitization sessions on religious teachings and mental health.
- ✓ Basic business and entrepreneurship trainings.
- ✓ Forging of networking and partnerships with other organizations and institutions.
- ✓ Exposure opportunities that made the widows feel so special and recognized.

3. Sense of Improved social wellbeing.

- ✓ Trauma awareness and practice.
- ✓ Religious teaching sessions on copying mechanisms.
- ✓ Interaction among the widows.
- ✓ Support received from the project.
- ✓ Knowledge acquisition on loans application.
- ✓ Unity among the widows.

These so far are the interventions that led to the attainment of the positive intended outcomes for the project. Since the workshop was learner centered, the participants were the ones contributing to the whole process, hence all the answers came from the beneficiaries themselves without any influence.



Figure7. One of the participants making a presentation for their group after a discussion on the interventions that contributed to the changes the widows feel or experience.

Impacts of the changes

The last bit of the process was to find out from the widows about how the changes experienced have generally impacted their lives. This was an individual activity as the participants were asked to write how their lives have been impacted by the changes brought by the project and again in relation to the 3 significant changes already identified. Here are the responses that came out;

1.1 Outcome one: widows socio-economic independent.

- I. The program has provided an opportunity to majority of the widows to initiate and own businesses. Now the widows are able to support their children's education and cater for domestic responsibilities i.e. the widows have started living economically independent. This was the most significant change amongst majority of the widows.
- II. The program has enhanced engagement into farming activities among the widows for food production.
- III. *"I no longer depend on assistance from my neighbors as I can cater for my own expenses since am running my own business"*, one of the widows was quoted.
- IV. The program has transformed the widows to business women and farmers in the community.

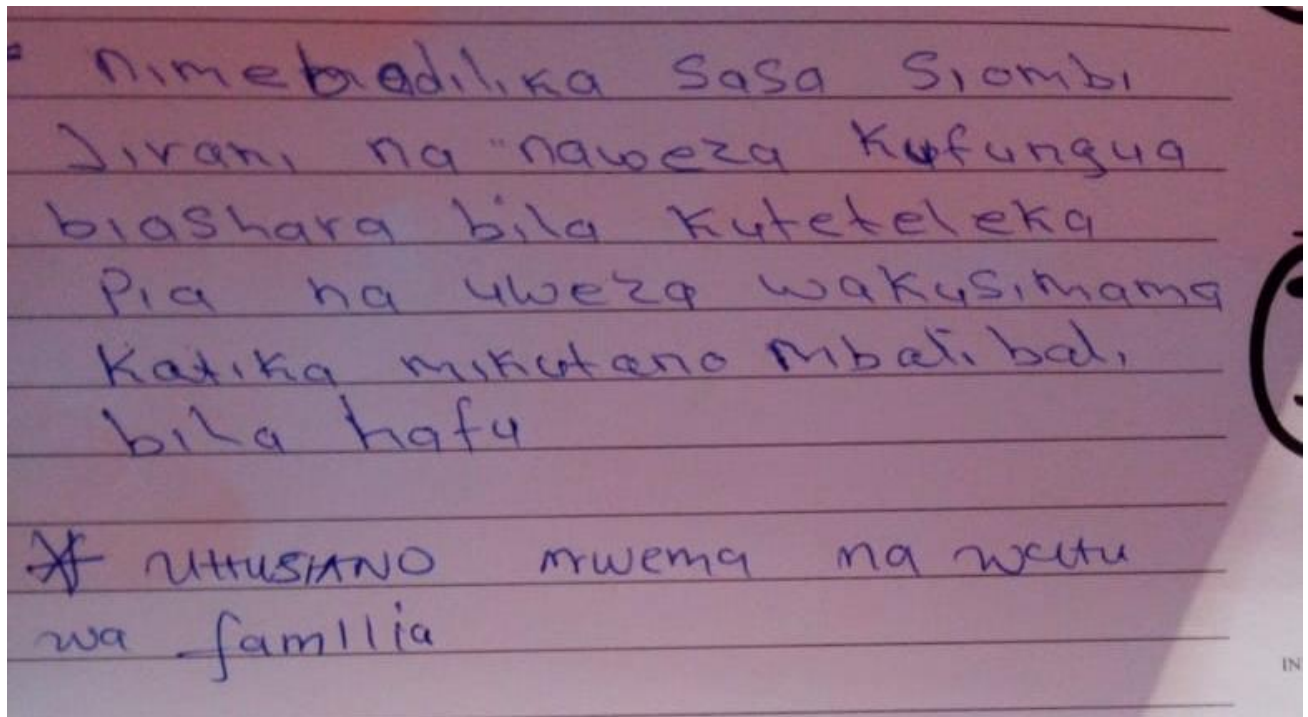


Figure 7. Some of the responses from the widows reflection on the program impacts to their lives

"I have transformed to an economic independent person and my public speaking skills and confidence have been enhanced".

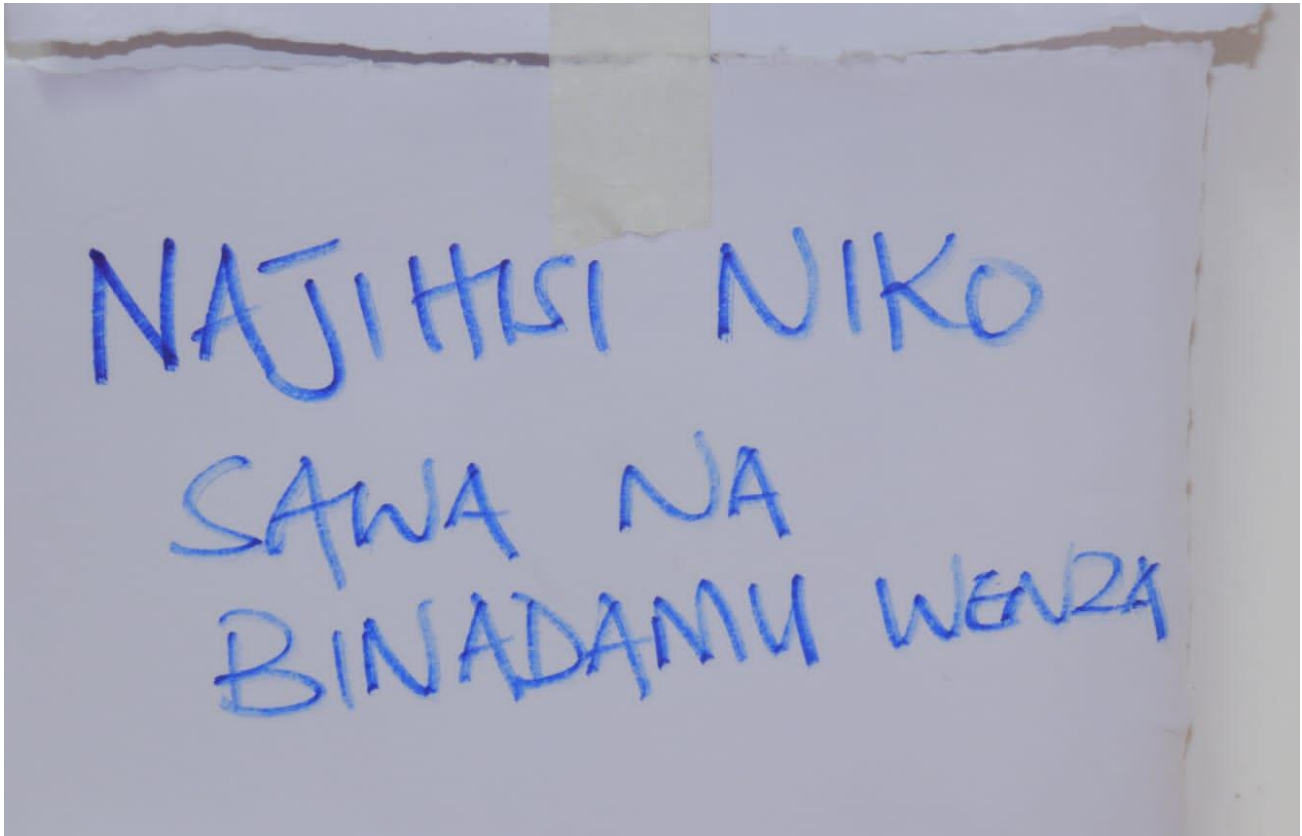


Figure 8. "I now feel equal as any other human being", one of the widows wrote a note during the program impacts identification session

1.2 Outcome two: restored hope among the widows.

- I. Widows can now fully undertake their roles in the society with confidence.
- II. Widows now have developed a sense of hope and are optimistic towards their lives.
- III. Access to food items through the kitchen gardens enhanced by the program.

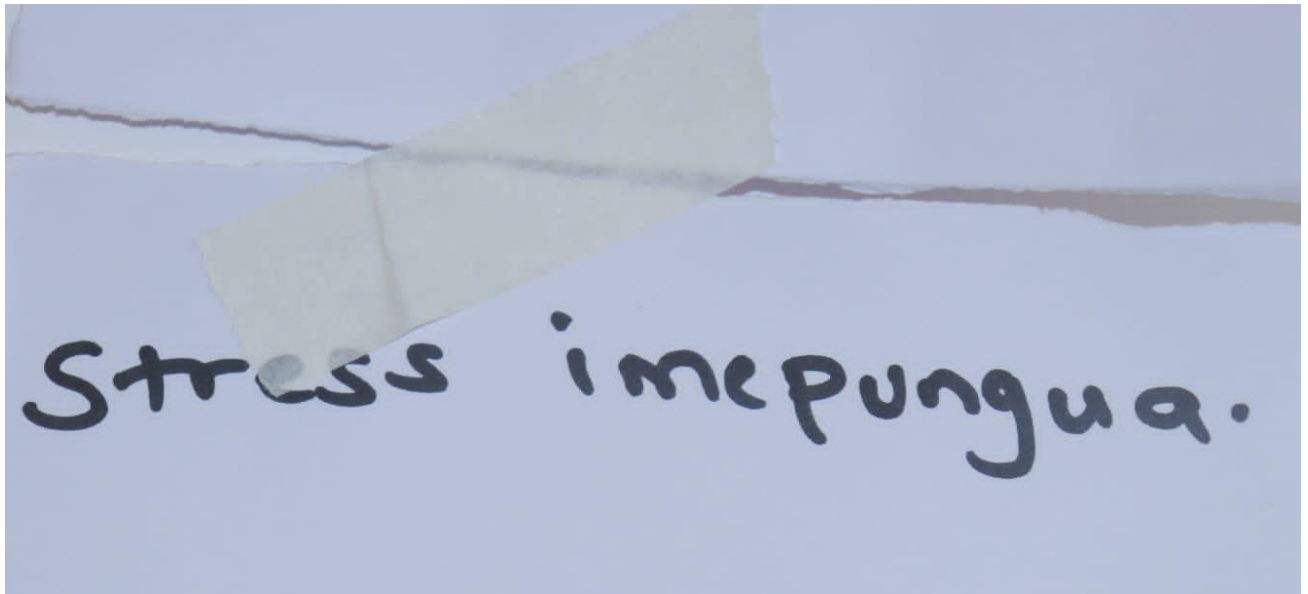


Figure 98. "Reduced Stress", one of the widows wrote on a card about the changes and impacts about the program on their social wellbeing.

1.3 Outcome three: improved social wellbeing among the widows.

- I. The program provided an internship opportunity for one daughter of one of the beneficiary widows at the Tuwajali Wajane Kwale Initiative to support the widows' groups.
- II. The program has contributed to positive attitude and personal development of the widows and they can now interact positively.
- III. Widows have developed positive attitudes towards their lives and have accepted themselves. The widows now concentrate on developing their lives and also supporting their fellow widows with social development.
- IV. The program has improved widow's confidence that they now forward their challenges to different stakeholders and also engage different relevant offices.
- V. Widows now positively engage with families and the society at large and form networks than before.
- VI. The program has also enhanced facilitation skills among the widow's facilitators hence good message delivery skills and quality of information.
- VII. A sense of self-esteem has been enhanced among the widows.
- VIII. Improved ability to learn new things in life. Widows can now accommodate new ideas in their lives.
- IX. The widows can now access sensitizations with a lot of ease.

Activity outputs

- 1) 21 widows engaged in the program impacts identification process.
- 2) A record was done on the program impacts, contributors and the process towards the changes.

- 3) Widows equipped with information and knowledge on meeting the requirement for group registration and successful application of the relevant loan funds.
- 4) Project stakeholders understanding the roles of each party and the overall program outcomes.

Achievements

- 1) Recording of the program outcomes so far.
- 2) Enhanced self-esteem among the widows through exposure to a new environment.
- 3) Instilled sense of belonging and accommodation of the widows by the society.

Challenges

- 1) Inadequate time to learn a lot more about the widows' personal stories on their journey of transformation. In the future the activity should be allocated much time, at least two or three days, as the one full day was hardly enough to capture all stories.

Conclusion.

Despite the program short implementation period, it has greatly and positively impacted the widows' live and has restored much hope in them. The widows feel honored and recognized through this program which has also contributed to their livelihood improvement, and developed their personalities. The program has not only seen an impact on the direct beneficiaries but also some of their affiliates.



Figure 10105. Widows following up on a session during the outcomes harvesting activity.





Figure 11. Widows being assisted in drafting the changes brought by the program during the outcomes harvesting exercise



Figure 12. Widows during a group discussion on how their lives have changed due to the program interventions.

