



Annual Report on the Activities and Achievements of the Rona Foundation:

Period: 2022- 2023

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Message from Roseline Orwa, Founder and Director of Rona Foundation

Dear Partners & Friends of Rona,

2022 was our most hopeful year in our fight for the human rights for widows in Kenya. As a reader of this report, you are part of our impactful change to improved laws and policies that advance widow rights. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

We increased public support to promote widow rights. And made impactful and sustainable progress and formed new partnerships in 2022. Besides the biggest global win – the adoption of the [UN Widowhood Resolution](#). Locally, our greatest achievement was the incorporation of widow matters into County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027 (CIDP) in November 2023 & Annual Development Plan 2023-2024 (ADP) & other county budget processes in Siaya County.

We achieved measurable milestones through targeted advocacy by establishment a widow focused technical working committee – with outlined tasks by the Department of Gender and Social Services (Siaya) to provide technical support for widow aware policy and budgets in Siaya County. We also, formed new widow groups – facilitated by widow leaders, male champions and engaging established channels – an increase of 30% from 61 to 80 groups in 2022.

Lastly, we took an important step into further managing our resources and data collection by establishing Finance & M&E department and employed 2 interns in both departments. We now have 28 member staff, this has enabled us to improve on our program delivery & reporting.

With this momentum, we are looking on 2023 with the goal of achieving even more. We have immediate and long-term needs ranging from continued expansion of health & education, and mainstreaming of widows into climate change. We are counting on your support!

Thank you for standing with me and thousands of widows and for spreading your love and kindness through 2023! Your invaluable support, messages and calls kept on our vision – caring for widows and orphans a lived reality!

We are honored to serve with you and welcome you to us at the growing Rona Centre!

Love and Blessings
Roseline Orwa

Report on the Activities and Achievement of the Rona Foundation 2022-2023

1. Empower Marginalized and Destitute Widows

Objective 1: Achieve widow-empowerment & improve laws and policies that advance widow rights through policy education, widow's theatre and capacity building to widow self-help groups & networks.



Rona empowered & structured 71 widow groups in 2022

- **Nina Haki:** A 2year policy advocacy project funded by AWDF was launched with the goal of improving capacities of widow groups within our network, increasing self & collective agency as well as transforming structures – with improved laws and policies that advance widow rights. It has increased knowledge to **71 groups visited 126 times– a total of 3305 widows impacted.**
- **Widows Caffe:** 197 Widow leaders (ToTs) educated 71 established groups (23 new) – **impacting 1775 widows** - on the use of personal stories as a tool for advocacy to drive their own change. They also shared experiences and widow hood challenges with the aim of building a collective movement with a stronger voice to increase public support to promote widow rights and drive their own change.
- **Round table Discussion Forums:** From a series of roundtable discussions, policy review workshops & joint county/partner activities that became invaluable advocacy platforms i.e World Aids Day, IWD Day, Widows Day 23rd June, Presidential Tree Planting Day to on and offline campaigns – with **158 widow leaders impacting over 9500 participants through 32 on and online platforms.**



Objective 2: Protection and Support to Widows through ROSALO.

- **Trained & increased entrepreneurship knowledge & financial literacy to 30 widow groups:** The training covered entrepreneurship and financial literacy with 19 widow entrepreneurs mapped from them – trained on business management, graduated and awarded a seed capital/grant with 80% success reported for improved businesses, orphan care and livelihoods in 2022.
- **Offered matching fund to 6 widow groups to improve their income generating activities:** Those groups had improved consistency and improved record keeping to increase resources in their ROSALO, namely -Sirakut, Jokinda, Ogwethi, Kinda, Amalo & Rona Welfare group. Also offered seed capital/business grant to 19 widow entrepreneurs dubbed Inua Mjane Project to increase capital to their businesses.



Objective 3: Strengthened Community Action Teams to prevent and respond to SGBVs, including widow sexual Cleansing in Siaya County

- **Widow Leaders Dialogue Forums:** 12 dialogue forums with 115 widow leaders, 73 male champions and 12 duty bearers recording active participation and commitment in GBV response & budget making – including the CIDP & ADP process – that forms a key part of - with **54 cases responded and referred to judicial process** – recording a 80% success rate of cases mediated or taken to court in 2022. With power imbalances & group dynamics – we created a framework of bylaws to guide widow group formations – resulting to streamlining of leadership amongst 21 groups with Gem recording 90% improvement in managing group conflicts.

Table 1

Child Neglect/ Abuse	Succession	Land	GBV	SGBV	Wildlife Attack	Psychosocial/ Humanitarian	Total
5	6	14	15	4	1	9	54

- **Empower Community Action Teams (CAT):** We empowered 159 participants of CAT, 102 women, 55 male champions & 2 PLWD in South Sakwa Ward targeting widow elect – as influencer and her core team. They included potential Ward and Village development committees, teachers, among other gate keepers within the ward to become male champions and key influencers. The activity improved **networks capacities, increased visibility** – and through them – in the established whatsapp platform - **5 orphans have earned scholarships** through the platform & **6 GBV cases** have been reported with timely response. Biggest highlight outcome - **8 memos submitted** – eliciting positive response and actions from duty bearers, including one on a dilapidated health centre for

Nyaguda Dispensary in South Sakwa – whose needs been reflected in the budget processes.

- **23rd June, Widows Day:** The National event brought together over 3000 widows, with Rona’s recognition as a key player in advancement of widow’s rights both at the county and nationally – highlighted by the ministry of State Departments for Public Service; Gender; Social Protection, Senior Citizens Affairs and *Special Programmes*. In attendance were 6 Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies (SAGAs) and over 300 key stakeholders of Siaya County. We used the platform to submit the widows’ charter to the county leadership – and the disbursement of Ksh.30M for the month of July, to the Women Groups in Siaya County, where 24Million was allocated for all Women Groups while the **Widows Groups benefited from 6M Thamini Mjane Special Loan**, a Product for Widows by Women Enterprise Fund.

Objective 4: Increased public support to promote widow rights through awareness and advocacy for Widow Human Rights

Changing community attitudes and behavior around SGBV and widow cleansing!

The highlight outcome of all the campaign activities - especially with duty bearers is the inaugural address at the official opening of the 3rd County Assembly of Siaya county – his 2nd **public pronouncement to initiate the legislation and challenges** of widows in Siaya.

The 3 key successes and/or contributions by/for widows were:-

- Increased formation of new widow groups facilitated, and also widow leaders and engaging established channels for widow's charter adoption & inclusion in budget making processes.
- Increased support by key influencers and duty bearers i.e widow legislators influencing duty bearers and other policy makers (MCAs) – for example – they organised a one on one meeting with the speaker of the assembly – further increasing support for adoption of the widow’s charter.
- Increased number of male champions and male influencers actively advancing advocacy campaign to protect widow and safe guarding OVCs in villages and Social media platforms e.g Jack Mawere has shared more than 5 cases of school fees needs and getting positive feedback in whatsapp platform by February 2023.



Improving laws and policies that advance widow rights in Siaya County

BIG WINS!

Incorporating of widow matters into County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027 (CIDP) in November 2023 & Annual Development Plan 2023-2024 (ADP) & other county budget processes i.e CBEF set up by January 2023 in Siaya County.

- Establishment a 7 member widow focused technical working committee – with outlined tasks by the Department of Gender and Social Services (Siaya) to provide technical support for widow aware policy and budgets in Siaya County in October 2022.
- Increased public support promoting widows and OVCs rights by media outlets, key influencer and duty bearers with a number of GBV cases getting timely response & orphans finding education/scholarship support witnessed by cases, articles/Opeds published and shared in the established Whatsapp platforms.

Protecting & empowering the rural youth from becoming vulnerable!

Education support to children and young women affected by Widowhood.

- We held mentorship sessions during school holidays with 150 girls from Orengo and Uhendo villages to on life skills, critical thinking, reproductive rights and distributed dignity packs to them – that included sanitary towels, tissue paper, and panties.
- **Technical Education:** Increased no. young women and men trained through tvets by 77 % from 5 to 27.
- For safe guarding – we conducted multi-generational dialogues forums with 156 participants – targeting 56 widow leaders, 20 sponsored students, 30 male champions & male youth and 6 key stakeholders in 2022.



Educating key populations on climate justice and possible approaches to bridge the

information gap in Siaya County.

Increase women's, mostly widows participation on climate change actions and discourse in Siaya County.

We piloted a project aimed to mitigate climate change crisis by **educating key populations on climate justice and possible approaches to bridge the information gap** in Siaya County.

- **conducting discourses to raise awareness** on the effect of climate change on livelihoods, agricultural systems and the impact it has on food security.
- promoting sustainable environmentally friendly activities such as establishing tree nurseries (for afforestation purposes), practicing environmental, building and use of **energy-saving stoves**.
- **educating learners** through an intervention dubbed **Plant & Play**, youth and widow groups on the need for environmental protection and establishing environmental clubs in primary schools.
- encouraging our widows and community to adopt environmental friendly economic activities for sustainable livelihoods aimed to **reduce degradation and increase forest cover in Siaya county**.



- **Overall, we established a tree nursery** with over **2000 assorted tree seedlings**, and initiated an intervention of planting a tree every day at the Rona Centre – and so far planted **8450 trees** namely **1800 assorted trees, 400 fruits, 3850 kayabas and 2400 flowers at the Rona Centre** in 2022 with the aim of reaching 10000 trees by December 2024.
- **8 widows and 12 male champions** trained as builders with **45 energy saving stoves** built through the GIZ partnership.

Media outreach: Changing cultural perceptions and raising the female human rights issue

Significant media outreach was achieved in 2021/2022

- We engaged 7 radio stations – 3 national, and 4 community radios with a reach of 3 million listeners per show 6 times. Also 2 podcasts, youtube, facebook and other online platforms were also reached to increase awareness beyond the project geographical reach with about **2500 views and 750 engagements on all platforms**. Our [Facebook](#) has increased page likes 3% from 1726 to 1797 in this Quarter. [Youtube](#) channel has 15 advocacy and 8 capacity building videos posted getting a total of 500 views with 29 subscribers – 51% increase. We published 9 Opeds and 8 blogs in 2022.



- **16 Days of Activism:** We ran a campaign *dubbed ONE Action Campaign*, through our social media platforms and partner networks. Through this campaign, the Rona Foundation was able to build a coalition of support for the Widows Charter and raise awareness about the issues faced by widows. On digital platforms the campaign reaching 6,234 people and 720 post engagements with 6posts on FaceBook, 588 impressions reached 6 times on tweeter and 132 accounts reached IG – 102 followers & 30 non followers in 16 days. Our partners joined the campaign increasing the reach and further increasing our reach beyond the project location. Namely:-



- [Forumciv](#): a Swedish organization that supports civil society in **over 70 countries** shared it all their social media platforms.
- [Widows for Peace through Democracy \(WPD\)](#): a UK widow Charity that empowers widow organisations war-torn and poverty-stricken regions to demand a better life for widows and their children - Highlighted our [One Action Campaign](#) through a blog post on their website – calling on the Kenyan government & duty bearers to take policy action to protect widow rights.
- [Kakenya's Dream](#): An organization that works with girls in rural Kenya through educational, health and leadership initiatives to create agents of change. they documented our story of impact – dubbed [Roseline Orwa – agents of change](#) - though a blog on their website with short clips shared on all their social media platforms.



The constant online and offline media engagement with audiences/listeners remain impactful and has increased awareness beyond our project location.

Links to reports, publications, newsletters, products about Rona Foundation in 2022.

1. It is time political parties protected Kenyan widows [| Nation](#) by Roseline Orwa: [Link](#).
2. Covid-19 pandemic could worsen the orphan crisis in the lake region [- The Standard \(standardmedia.co.ke\)](#) by Roseline Orwa: [Link](#).

3. **Africa: Gender Equality: People Without Reliable Connectivity are Being Left Behind** | [AllAfrica](#) by Roseline Orwa and Dr. TIJANI Salami: [Link](#).
4. Africa: Snakebite - A Public Health Crisis Made Worse by Climate Change | [AllAfrica](#) by Roseline Orwa and Dr. Tijani Salami: [Link](#).
5. **Women's Day: Celebrating Widow Change Makers in Covid-19 Times**, by Roseline Orwa and Valentine Linett. [Link](#).
6. Some call me a dog, says widow aspirant in Siaya. [Link](#).
7. **Invisible Women: The Leadership of Widows in time of Covid19 by Oxfam in People vs Inequality Podcast/Blog**. [Invisible women: a story and podcast of Emergent Agency – FP2P \(oxfamapps.org\)](#)
8. Rosemary Ogutu, (at 2min 47 sec, widow leader championing for her rights for inclusion in political leadership and decision-making spaces. [Link](#).
9. Orenge begins to push for the [enactment of the charter to protect widows](#) from rights violations by Citizen TV.
10. The [NTV's High Tea Event](#) aimed to rally nationwide support for women's empowerment.
11. For 16 Days of Activism, we got featured by [Kenya's Dream](#) as one of the champions for change.
12. During this year's [16 Days of Activism: Include Widows](#), an op-ed published by The Star Newspaper, Radio Africa Group.
13. During this year's 16 Days of Activism; [ONE Action Campaign](#), a campaign blog published on [Widows for Peace for Democracy](#).
14. [Widows Mourn their gambling sons](#): Roseline Orwa's Oped by the Star, Radio Africa Group.
15. [Climate Change – What's gender got to do with it?](#) by the Episcopal of New York during the 16 Days of Activism.
16. [16 days of Activism must Include Widows](#) Roseline Orwa's Oped by The Star, Radio Africa Group.
17. [Champions for Change during 16 Days of Activism](#) by Kenya's Dream.
18. [Widows mourn their gambling sons](#): Roseline Orwa's Oped By the Star, Radio Africa.
19. [One Action Campaign](#): by Widows for Peace through Democracy during 16 days of Activism.



Production and distribution of Wheel covers, T-shirts, reflector jackets, caps, bags & banners

We printed and distributed **673 IEC materials** to the widow leaders and male champions. Disaggregated by type of IEC, 150 T-shirts, 100 caps, 60 branded bags, 150 branded reflector Jackets and 1 banners, 2 roll-up stands, 200 stickers and 10 wheel covers to the project's locations. Through this process we estimated more than 10,000 persons were

reached indirectly due to awareness creation of the project as well as shed light on the challenges of widow cleansing practices, SGBVs and other abuses. The distribution was so successful that it was unique to meet random political aspirants wearing a Nina Haki reflector jacket and campaign vehicles with Nina Haki wheel covers and stickers in Siaya town and local markets.



Partnerships & Networking:

We formed and **signed agreements with 5 new partners**. 1 funder, 1 academic institution and 3 CBOs, namely:-

- [Siaya Muungano Youth Network](#) on mitigating climate change in Siaya,
- [Mwanadada CBO](#) around the empowerment of young women living with HIV,
- **Inuka Pamoja**, a (CBO) based in Kisumu County.
- [AMNESTY International](#) on legal representation, alongside FIDA.
- [IWPG, a Korea peace organization](#) & Heavenly Culture, World Peace Restoration of Light (HPWL) in Marking their 8th anniversary of the World Peace Summit, Goat Foundation on their of sustainability.

The Rona Centre: Providing basic-care to marginalized communities

We developed and employed M&E tools for the Rona Centre. We also have employed a committee approach towards our programming by creating a Project Management Committee (PMC) that offers oversight in each area. While so much has expanded, we are in growth stage and continue to aim for sustainability, with a resource mobilization strategy laid down dependent on collaborations, adaptations, local resource mobilization for future sustainability for both beneficiary impacts, and the organization in 2023, in the following thematic areas: Education, Health, Agriculture and Climate Justice. Our achievements are:

Education

- Provided *care to 32 vulnerable children* through the Rona Centre and over **150 OVCs daily supported** through donations of uniforms, feeding, deworming and providing other basic health needs.
- We also offered 27 scholarships to tvets to needy teen mothers and vulnerable male youth to advance further skills development training.
- We expanded Rona School from class 3 to class 5 with 50% increase of **learners from 47 to 65 learners** with the aim of building a complete primary school in 2023.



Establishment technical skills training at the Rona Centre

Rona tailoring School (ROTAS)

Our partnership with Vitech college has improved our curriculum delivery at ROTAS. 2 tutors been employed, 1 from Vitech supported by one of our own – recruited from Alumni.

- procured 3 more machines to a total of 9 machines, with 9 students admitted, 1 enrolled for examinations in 2022.
- Overall, \$800 was raised in provision of tailoring services in 2022.



Agriculture:

Further, we piloted ornamental birds rearing alongside other agriculture Programs for income generation i.e. animal husbandry, poultry & vegetable farming in 2022.

- **400** assorted fruit trees, papaya, mangoes, oranges, lemons, 120 bananas were planted in the orchard and farming area of the Rona Centre.
- The agriculture program provides food security for **50 elderly widows and over 27 OVCs** at Rona Centre, and over 150 OVCs in the community, many of whom are HIV positive and require special diet.

Eco-tourism:

- We hosted more than **22 mission teams** of different nationals in 2022. With more 10 bookings in 2023.
- We got **recognized by the county government of Siaya** as a community based tourism initiatives for both **local and mission tourism** to host workshops, teams and local partners in 2023.
- We aim to complete our pair of cottages in 2023. These will be used for host groups and mission teams to supplement our incomes for project sustainability in 2023/24.

Rona Clinic expansion plans

Amidst for expansion and equipment, the Rona Clinic continues to provide basic health treatments to the community.

- We treated 240 patients – female 160, men 40, children 40 in 2022.
- **Referred 96 patients** with urgent medical needs to the nearby public health facility.
- We paid a 3 room foundation to expand the Rona health clinic to a full dispensary- to be completed in 2023. Aimed provide comprehensive health services to more than 500 patients monthly to local community, and the surrounding islands as a social enterprise.

Humanitarian support to destitute widows

Building of basic widow houses

- 2 dignity widow houses were built, out of 6 requests received in 2023, making the total 67 widow houses built by 2022, one whose house had burnt down, the other was due to poverty – making her not settle in her husband’s land, to secure land inheritance for her children.
- There is great need to set an **emergency fund** to respond to the widow’s housing needs.

Care: Uniting OVCs to their families/Caregivers (kin)

Safeguarding OVCs by educating and supporting caregivers.

We trained and empowered 36 participants on child safeguarding – who included teachers, widow leaders and key community stakeholders.

- Reunited 6 out of 27 children with their kin/caregivers in 2022.
- Trained 2 program staff, 1 duty bearer and 3 partner schools in child safeguarding measures and risk analysis, with Rona reviewing our safeguarding policy in 2023.



Activities planned for 2023:

- **Climate Justice:** Mainstream widows and widow networks into climate change discourse and actions in Siaya County in 2023/24.
- **Economic Empowerment:-**
 - Train & increase entrepreneurship knowledge & financial literacy to 140 widow widows by November 2022
 - Offer matching fund to improve their income generating activities to 140 widow widows by November 2022.
- **Education – Expand the Scholarship program & Rona Academic Institute and Rona Tailoring School.**

- Increase no. of children joining Junior Secondary School, secondary school & tvets by 30% by November 2023.
- Increase no. of young women trained through tvets by 50% by November 2023
- Procure more land & complete the construction of 1 classroom by November 2023.

▪ **Health - To expand Rona Health Clinic and improve medical services to remote rural communities.**

- Complete the construction of the Rona Health centre by November 2023.

Transforming Structures

- Advocate for improved laws and policies that advance widow rights in Siaya county by 2023/24.
- Conduct a widows walk/climate action in Siaya on International Widows Day on 23rd June 2022.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK

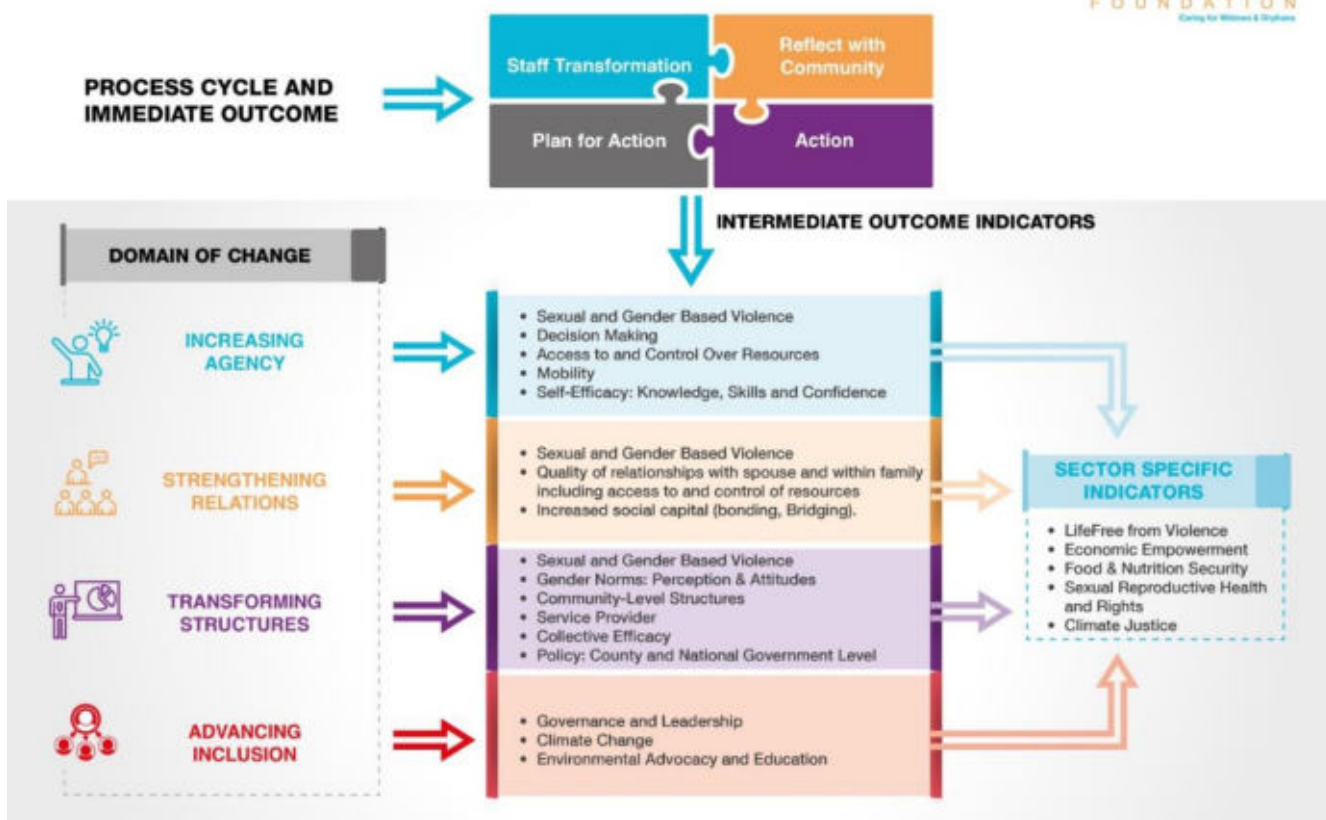


Table 2: Rona’s MEL Framework for 2023-2027

Happy 10th Anniversary! Here's RONA at a glance!



For our work, 90% rely on grants and private donations. We are counting on your continued support to sustain and progress. Share, link us to possible partners within your network. Donate/Paypal: <http://www.ronafoundation.co.ke/donate/>

I am counting on your continued support. Thank you for making 2021 survivable through your emails, phone and social media connections.

God bless you and keep you safe!

Roseline Orwa
Founder | Director, Rona Foundation
www.ronafoundation.co.ke