

Mutethia "Helper" Urru Empowerment Group, Kenya
January 2017 - December 2019
GRADUATION!!



Members of the Mutethia Group wrapped in the shawls they were given at graduation

Your Zoe Empowers group celebrated the amazing accomplishments of its members during their December 2019 graduation ceremony. Their special day was filled with prayer, speeches, testimonies, and thanksgiving. Of course, there was also much dancing and singing. Community and religious leaders were present to provide congratulations for what the Zoe participants had achieved and express confidence that the young people would continue to be role models for their community.

Graduation marks an important milestone for the group, but it is by no means the end of the project. Zoe groups have forged such strong bonds during their three years in the program that they remain committed to each other and, in the great majority of cases, continue their regular weekly meetings. Additionally, they have come to see themselves as the agents of change in their own lives and now no longer need Zoe's interventions.

- Zoe keeps in contact with many graduated members and has observed that the graduates continue to:
- Protect each other from mistreatment and provide a safety net in times of hardship.
- Reach out to others, teaching what they have learned and helping empower the poor and vulnerable.
- Grow businesses and employ others, with an emphasis on hiring orphans and widows.
- Adopt other children into their families.

Your partnership has been a manifestation of God's love for the children. With your support they transformed their lives, discovered hope, and learned of God's love for them. Now they are not only prepared to take care of themselves and their siblings, they are caring for those around them as a way of sharing the blessings they have received. Your commitment may have been limited to three years for a specific group of children, but its effects will last a lifetime and ripple forward to many, many others in need.

How Your Partnership Changed Lives Forever

All members who began with the group in 2017 were still active at the time of graduation. This is a testament to how the children helped each other face the difficult task of overcoming their many challenges. It was their goal that no one should be left behind.

The following pages contain the final report from your group as provided by the Kenya staff to document the results of your financial and prayerful support. It begins with a letter from the group to you:

URRA MUTETHIA
23rd January 2020
URRA MUTETHIA
Thank you Letter

DEAR FRIENDS,
Jim & ~~Breland~~ Lee, Breland Foster

We are humbly writing this letter with a lot of love and appreciation for supporting us for three years you have shown us a lot of love and kindness for the thought our lives were over after losing our parents. You have given us hope and this has helped us overcome most of the challenges in our lives.

Today we own our businesses and we no longer work for people to get food but today we hire people to work for us. We were also trained on farming, childright, lifeskills, health, hygiene and businesses.

Thankyou very much

yours Faithfull
group secretary

URRA MUTETHIA

Group Activities: The Mutethia Group has been participating in different types of group projects. With the support of Zoe funds and seeds, they hired an acre of land for two years and grew corn, beans, and Irish potatoes. Zoe also supported them to start a tree nursery where they germinate trees; currently they are growing macadamia seedlings.



Mutethia Group members on their farm

The group continues to run both their table bank and merry-go-round projects. Through the contributions they have made to the merry-go-round fund they have purchased various household goods.

Members support each other and the community through mutual help and welfare activities. They visit each other regularly and help with tasks such as farm activities, latrine construction, and house renovations. They also visit the local health facility at the beginning of every month to share words of encouragement and pray with the admitted patients.

Income Generation: Through Zoe, all group members were trained on basic business operations: creating a business plan, proper record and bookkeeping, marketing, customer relations, the importance of ploughing back profits for expansion purposes, and various saving plans. After training in the first year, members were supported with grant funds to start individual businesses. Ten members attended vocational training and also received start-up kits. The following is the list of businesses and income activities the youth started and are running:

- 5 shops selling dry grains
- 4 selling second-hand clothes
- 6 convenience shops (one of which was started by sibling)
- 6 grocery shops with fresh vegetables from their gardens
- 4 restaurants selling local food and French fries
- 2 selling boiled eggs
- 3 general grocery shops
- 2 beauty salon
- 2 tailors
- 2 mechanics
- 1 mason
- 1 carpenter
- 2 electricians
- 2 restaurants (started with a table bank loan)
- 1 selling second-hand shoes (started with a table bank loan)

Financial Security: The group was trained on the importance of saving and investing in their future. All families now have dependable sources of income which has made it possible for them to adopt various saving approaches: 20% use mobile banking, 10% use banking institutions, and 70% use village savings plans. They also invest their money in property. For example, 95% of the families keep livestock like cows, goats, sheep and pigs as assets; four members have bought motorcycles which they operate as taxi services; seven have bought pieces of land for farming.

Food Security: Before joining Zoe, only two percent of the families could afford more than one meal a day. Zoe organized trainings on modern farming (seed selection, early land preparation, proper use of fertilizers and pesticides, post-harvest care), land maximization, animal husbandry and agri-business so families can get the most from their farming activities. Not only are all the families now able to eat three meals of good quality and quantity each day, they are also selling the surplus for additional income.

- 99% of the households are actively involved in farming; growing crops like maize, beans, ground nuts, green grams, and cow peas
- 95% of the households have vegetable gardens with kales, cabbage, spinach, onions, carrots, etc.
- 95% rear livestock like poultry, goats, sheep, pigs and cows, which is helping supplement household nutrition and increase wealth through breeding

Health & Hygiene: All 32 households were trained on health and hygiene matters including hand washing basics, disease prevention, nutrition, personal grooming, proper food handling, and reproductive health. After these health trainings, Zoe supported every family with a clean-water tank and blankets to cover themselves when nights are cold. They were also sensitized on the importance of having health coverage or money saved up to address health emergencies and as a result 80% of the households have enrolled for health insurance.

Education: Before Zoe, 95% of the school-aged children had dropped from school due to lack of fees and knowledge on the importance of education. After joining Zoe, 90% of these siblings were re-enrolled. Zoe supported 15 primary school pupils with school uniform and 10 secondary school students with school fees as an early intervention before the businesses of the heads of the households had stabilized. Two heads of households were able to use their own resources to begin working towards a degree from a teaching college.

Housing: At graduation, 98% of the families had a secure place to live. This has been achieved with Zoe providing support to build seven house and do major renovations on two. Ten households renovated their homes using loans from the group's table banking project and profits from their businesses. Eight group members built new latrines and six renovated their pit latrines.

Spiritual Strengthening: Before joining Zoe, the children of this group felt that God's love was not upon them and that there was no future for them because God had taken their parents away when they needed them most. After joining Zoe, and attending several revival meetings organized by Zoe, their attitude towards God and his love for them has changed dramatically. Today 100% of the families attend church regularly and some have taken leadership positions in their different churches.