

**Upendo "Love" Thitha Empowerment Group, Kenya**  
**Partnered with Harvest UMC, January 2026 – December 2028**



28 households and a total of 106 youth and children

**Pascoline (f) 18**  
 Blessing (f) 16  
 Barack (m) 10  
 Cutegirl (f) 5

**Juster (f) 18**  
 Precious (f) 12  
 Gift (m) 8  
 Elwin (f) 8  
 Abigael (f) 10

**Terry (f) 18**  
 Millicent (f) 14  
 Abigael (f) 8  
 Evans (m) 10

**Joy (f) 17**  
 Alex (m) 15  
 Nehema (f) 5  
 Eric (m) 10

**Idah (f) 17**  
 Philip (m) 12  
 Fiber (f) 6  
 Enock (m) 10  
 Peniel (m) 15

**Brenda (f) 16**  
 Justus (m) 12  
 Rauenna (f) 9

**Lesly (f) 17**  
 Lyne (f) 8  
 Remilyne (f) 5  
 Fionah (f) 16

**Brenda (f) 18**  
 Fidelis (f) 5  
 Patience (f) 11  
 Nicholas (m) 14

**Glory (f) 18**  
 Ramsey (m) 15  
 Gift (m) 9

**Kanzey (f) 16**  
 Junior (m) 5  
 Victor (m) 8  
 Idah (f) 14

**Fidelis (f) 16**  
 Blessy (f) 14  
 Emma (f) 8

**Hildah (f) 17**  
 Domien (m) 15  
 Oliver (m) 8  
 Patience (f) 10

**Lenah (f) 18**  
 Tiffany (f) 14  
 Happiness (f) 10  
 Vincent (m) 5

**Joy (f) 18**  
 Blessy (f) 11  
 Jayden (m) 8  
 Frankline (m) 14  
 Limuel (m) 5

**Annjoy (f) 18**  
 Precious (f) 5  
 Perpetual (f) 10  
 Victor (m) 13  
 Hope (f) 8

**Elsy (f) 18**  
 Precious (f) 12  
 Natalia (f) 5  
 Nicholas (m) 15

**Leah (f) 17**  
 Belladonna (f) 8  
 Prince (m) 6

**Fiona (f) 19**  
 Precious (f) 10  
 Nicholas (m) 15  
 Evanna (f) 5

**Purity (f) 18**  
 Princess (f) 5  
 Methizedek (m) 9  
 Faith (f) 12

**Josphine (f) 18**  
 Juster (f) 16  
 Gift (m) 7  
 Nadia (f) 10

**Scholastica (f) 18**  
 Queenpendo (f) 5  
 Nehema (f) 9  
 Praise (f) 12

**Justin (m) 18**  
 Jessie (m) 11

**Julanda (f) 18**  
 Josiah (m) 13  
 Prince (m) 5

**Emily (f) 18**  
 Roxy (m) 15  
 Gavin (m) 10  
 Scalett (f) 3

**Jamaica (f) 19**  
 Angel (f) 9  
 Justin (m) 7  
 Prince (m) 5  
 Precious (f) 3

**Felix (m) 18**  
 Ryan (m) 6  
 Favour (f) 11

**Brian (m) 19**  
 Nicholas (m) 16

**Tonny (m) 19**  
 Serefedha (f) 12  
 Andris (m) 7



**Scan the QR code to learn more about the empowerment model**

The list above includes the youth who are heads of household (in bold) and the children directly impacted by your partnership. There may be others connected to the household - like elderly relatives or adults unable to provide for the family - who during the three-year program also benefit or are reunited with these youth-led families because of the improved circumstances.

## Overview of the Zoe Empowers Model

**How Zoe Empowers addresses the multiple challenges faced by orphaned and vulnerable children and youth living in extreme poverty so that they can become financially, physically, emotionally, and socially secure.**



*The young heads of households from the Upendo "Love" Thitha Group*

### Youth Recruitment and Group Formation

Zoe Empowers begins by engaging local leaders so that they understand and will support the empowerment model. These stakeholders help identify the youth and children suffering most under extreme poverty and invite them to a recruitment meeting. Often, more youth show up than there is funding to support and the Zoe staff are faced with the difficult task of selecting participants based on criteria of vulnerability.

Once groups are formed, the young heads of household elect leaders, make rules to guide their meetings, choose a group name, select a mentor, and decide when and where to hold weekly gatherings. The Zoe program facilitators provide guidance, but the youth take charge of their destiny. During the first three months, Zoe staff make home visits to record information about the youth, their dependents, and caregivers. They assess if any emergency interventions are required to alleviate health issues, abusive conditions, or inadequate shelter. Once confirmed for participation, households rarely drop from the program.

### The Dream

Youth recruited into the Zoe Empowers program face a daily struggle to survive with little hope for a better future. But through Zoe and your partnership, the youth are encouraged to imagine a different life and make plans to achieve it. The first step is to create a "Dream" chart.

On a sheet of paper, they draw or write down the challenges and sadness they face, what brings them joy, what they would like to do or have in the future, and what will be their guiding principles to achieve their Dream. They present their Dream document to the rest of the group members which creates solidarity. At the same time, the program facilitators learn about the lives of these families so that they can better help them and address specific needs or traumas. The family usually



displays their Dream chart in their home or business to provide daily motivation. As they progress through the empowerment program they will often update their Dream.

### **Connections**

Orphaned and vulnerable children/youth are greatly disadvantaged by isolation. Struggling on their own, the youth lack a network of people to support, protect, and help them face challenges. Zoe creates connections.

Peer groups. By participating in group meetings, working together on income projects, and helping each other with home tasks, bonds of friendship form and the group becomes an extended family. The youth learn from each other and from other Zoe participants during exchange visits, regional training sessions, and presentations by experienced/ graduated Zoe. These relationships also provide a business network.

Program facilitators and mentors. Zoe program facilitators usually hold a diploma in social work or related fields and have experience working with youth. They care deeply about the young people and provide guidance, but they do not fill the role of guardian nor do they attend all the group meetings. This is so the youth can develop problem-solving skills and become fully self-reliant. The group-selected mentors are trained by Zoe and volunteer their time to serve as adult advocates, guiding the youth to community resources, helping them overcome local challenges, and resolving conflicts.

Community leaders and government officials. This would include school administrators for school reintegration; local leaders who can address cases of abuse and improperly seized property; government officials who can provide expert advice on business development, agriculture and higher education; and health service providers.

And a powerful connection is you! All Zoe groups know the opportunities they receive are from God, through the love and concern coming from their partners. They are amazed that you care for them without ever having met them. This powerful connection can be further strengthened through in person or virtual visits.

### **Income Generation**

The priority for all the heads of household is to develop reliable sources of income. In addition to business training, Zoe Empowers provides small grants, vocational training, and material resources as needed. Initial income activities start small and often involve buying and reselling food items, small dry goods, clothing, etc. Some youth who are already skilled in a trade immediately receive start-up kits to begin their business. Other youth who have an interest in a trade can attend vocational training and then will receive their start-up kit. The youth are encouraged to increase their wealth and financial security by expanding their business into new markets, diversifying their business activities, and helping younger siblings start income projects. Establishing habits of saving is also emphasized.

### **Food Security**

Children entering the Zoe empowerment program struggle every day to alleviate their hunger. Some will go without eating for a day or more and all suffer from poor nutrition. The youth try to work for food or money, but because they lack status or an adult advocate, they are paid very little or with small amounts of food – sometime they are denied payment completely. They might try growing their own food but have little success. Begging or even taking from a neighbor's field to survive is sometimes an undesirable necessity.

Through Zoe, youth are taught what foods they need to eat to be healthy and explore different ways to attain a stable food source. Youth in rural areas who can access land learn about the best agricultural practices for their region and then are given the seeds, fertilizer, and tools to begin vegetable gardens and/or plant crops. They are

encouraged to keep livestock for food and as savings. In more urban locations, youth will learn about container gardening, but the main emphasis is on developing income projects.

### **Child Rights**

Educating youth about their rights and how to protect themselves and their families is critical for their immediate and long-term success. Young girls are particularly vulnerable to abuse. Training is usually conducted by local officials in charge of enforcing child rights so that families are connected to the proper resources. Through youth and staff presentations, the entire community learns about the harm inherent in all forms of mistreatment, especially child marriage, sex trafficking, and female genital mutilation. Property rights is also a common issue as vulnerable youth are denied inheritance from parents. After training, youth defend each other and vulnerable community members from physical, financial, and emotional abuse.

### **Health and Disease Prevention**

Zoe Empowers addresses immediate health needs, teaches the participants how to live healthy lives, and connects them to medical resources. Topics covered include disease prevention, mental health, the dangers of substance abuse, and the importance of personal and environmental hygiene both for health and social integration. Many children in the program have lost parents to HIV/AIDs and some may be infected but will not discuss their status or seek treatment due to the associated stigma. Zoe provides supportive opportunities for testing, helps them access medication, and educates the community to counter misconceptions.

### **Housing**

At the time of recruitment, the families often live in houses that are in disrepair or they lack a permanent residence. Some work in exchange for a room which leaves them open to abuse and with little time for other activities or to earn money for food. Zoe does not directly provide housing but will give the group funds which they can allocate to members for repairs or to temporarily cover rent. Sometimes, the Zoe program provides basic construction materials like roofing sheets or windows while groupmates support with labor. Usually, the youth save their own money to make renovations, build new homes, or move to better rental properties.

### **Education**

Before Zoe, many children attended school irregularly or were forced to drop out due to chronic illness, hunger, social ostracism, lack of school materials, and inability to pay fees. Once in the program, the heads of household are eager to see their younger siblings back in school. Zoe will often meet with school administrators and assist with some of the expenses such as uniforms, fees, and materials until the youth have sufficient business profits.

### **Spiritual Strengthening**

Because of the hardships and abuse they have experienced, the youth entering the program sometimes believe God has abandoned them, cursed them, or perhaps just does not exist. Others avoid church gatherings because they lack nice clothes and money to contribute. Zoe Empowers eliminates these obstacles so faith can flourish.

While Zoe's approach is religiously non-restrictive, its core is based on Christian love for others. The youth become inspired by what they experience and put their faith into action. They forgive and treat fairly those who have harmed them; feed the vulnerable; and adopt other children into their groups and families. These young people return good for evil and can be examples to all of what it means to live as Christians.

In the Zoe African programs, meetings typically begin with prayer and devotions led by a group member and the staff will facilitate periodic revivals and celebrations.