
DESECE

Booklet – Most Significant Change Stories



Development Education Services for Community Empowerment

“Empowering People”

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Table of Content

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. MSC Stories - Civic Education Program | 3 |
| 1.1 Relieved at last – story of a lady and her police husband | 3 |
| 1.2 Realized dream | 4 |
| 1.3 Knowledge is empowerment | 5 |
| 2. MSC Stories – Gender Program | 6 |
| 2.1 Attitude changed | 6 |
| 2.2 From dictatorship to dialogue | 7 |
| 2.3 Vulnerability not misfit | 8 |
| 3. MSC Stories - Health Program | 9 |
| 3.1 Life indoors since birth | 9 |
| 3.2 Successful family planning method | 10 |
| 3.3 Unsafe to harmonious sexual relationship | 11 |
| 4. MSC Stories - Organic Agriculture Program | 12 |
| 4.1 Unbelievable Change | 12 |
| 4.2 Believe it or not, life has changed! | 13 |
| 4.3 Take a step | 14 |



1. MSC Stories - Civic Education Program

1.1 Relieved at last – story of a lady and her police husband

Pamela came to the office in August 2014, to file a case of family neglect and mistreatment from her legal husband and the in laws. The client had been denied any access to their matrimonial property even to the extent of her household goods being taken away at her sight without any fear.

The case had been filed in several offices including at the Deputy County Commissioners office but it had been dropped several times because those who put their hands on it would suffer threats and consequences of messing up with a senior police officer. The client was so frustrated that she got used to the situation and did not trust any other office because senior offices shunned her away.

After a summon to the husband and in-laws and a review on the bill of rights from the constitution of Kenya and mediation sessions with the family, the husband accepted that he has been violating his wife's rights and resolved to grant access and use to the wife to some of the family property and restricted the in-laws against harming his family.

Recently again something significant happened to this family. The husband who is on leave noticed that Pamela in association with another man whom we cannot mention his name, were planning to dispose-off some of the family property given to her. The husband decided to rescue this property from being destroyed. This was a milestone in Pamela's life. She had been struggling alone in the home while the husband cohabitated with other wives.

A disparate woman full of tears was just ready for anything from her husband. Looking at her situation the husband was so touched and changed his mind. In the first place he was going to retire soon. He reflected on his life in the village. Living separately with his legal wife as a retiree and as senior public officer back at home needed to be honoured and to lead a good example within the neighbourhood.

A fresh summon from our office for mediation and counseling session was issued. The two could not bear each other. With formed mind, Pamela thought that their separation warranted subsequent divorce. This final session with them changed their mind-set for a better future. The husband needed his wife for future dignity.

Humbled man and woman, promised to forgive each other and stay in harmony for their own prosperity. Sisters in- law were amazed about their reunion and promised to respect their brothers marriage. Neighbours too are happy to see a long struggling marriage have peace at last."

Narrates a lady from Bungoma County



1.2 Realized dream

“I’m Martin Masibo from Bungoma central. It was not until I met DESECE that I interacted with life changing initiatives from a dear friend who works with the organization. I was privileged to be invited for leadership training in Mabanga A.T.C.

DELTA is a wonderful and powerful training. This training is divided into three phases. Each phase builds on the other in terms of content. Back at home I was asking myself why people were languishing in poverty. I did not find any answer to this persisting problem within my community. I was really puzzled for a couple of years without understanding why this was happening to us. When I was in this workshop, I expected to be told something about solving this problem in my community. Since it was a participatory approach no answer was given instead we were given some assignment to carry home.

First, I was asked to do listening survey then social economic survey. These two assignments answered my puzzle. The listening survey revealed to me that people have different issues affecting them and at the same time have answers to them when properly mobilized. Yes, I got it right. There are many youths at home. During the research, it was clear to me that they are not home by choice but because of the circumstances. Some parents are not able to raise school fees for their children coupled with high rate of unemployment in the area.

These findings motivated me to go ahead and organize for a community forum with different stakeholders. To end the menace of school dropouts, members suggested having a vocational training centre. Here youths will get skills for self-employment and this will reduce levels of poverty in this community. I cannot boast of this noble idea derived from the members but am happy that my dream has been realized. There is a youth polytechnic with more than fifty trainees.

DELTA as the word goes is a live spring that responds to the needs of the less fortunate in the community.”

Narrates a man from Bungoma County



1.3 Knowledge is empowerment

My name is Frida Nangendo from Cheptais sub county, Kopsiro division, Kapkateny location. I'm a farmer (organic farmer). I am 60 years old and a mother to seven children (two boys, five girls)

As a second wife, life was not that easy. Every time my co-wife reminded me of stealing her husband. Our husband passed away and as a widow without inheritance, I could not do any farming. All the land belonged to my co-wife and her children. I didn't have a say over the use of this land. Unaware of my rights, I took everything for granted and maintained the status quo. I always blamed myself for this situation.

It was not until 2014 that I started seeing some light. Something happened that opened my eyes. A field officer for Cheptais Elizabeth Wafula invited me to a workshop organized by DESECE organization. I did not know what to do at this particular time. I reflected about my life and said I'm not even worth to associate with others. After along meditation I decided to give it a trial.

In the workshop human rights issues were discussed. It's at this point that I realized that my rights were being violated. That as any other person I have to enjoy fully all the fundamental human rights as stipulated in the constitution. My right to property ownership had been infringed on by my co-wife for so long. This realization prompted me to take an action to change my life. One I needed land for cultivation. I also needed to own land legally.

Immediately I went to the area chief to begin a legal land ownership process. By good luck the chief took an initiative to assist me get my share of my husband's property. We did succession and I was apportioned my share of the property left behind by our husband. This was the turning point in my life. I earned respect from my co-wife and my neighbours as they come for consultations on matters related to land. Traditionally widows suffered mistreatment especially from their in-laws. They were denied access to their own land. This made them even unable to take their children to school.

In the community the chief appointed me as a village elder and in this capacity I assist many with similar problem. Land related issues have reduced and people are happy because of the valuable information I give to them. I'm a proud organic farmer. I'm able to feed my family and able to take them to school. "

Narrates a lady from Bungoma County



2. MSC Stories - Gender Program

2.1 Attitude changed

“Before I knew DESECE, life was very difficult and very different for me. I used to be dormant and never participated in anything because I depended on my husband to provide everything for me and the children. Also, I never saw the need of living with the neighbours because everyone worked for themselves. We were always in argument with my family and neighbours because I was quick to judge and react to people without listening to them. I even fought with some of my neighbours on other occasions when we could not agree on an issue.

I trained with DESECE in Women in National Development of Women (WINDOW) training for three phases which I completed and was awarded a certificate. We were trained in gender development, participation and the role of women in development. The training was very important and informative to me. Since then, I have learned to appreciate the importance of staying with people especially my neighbours. I have joined a group called Wamono youth group where we work together on activities in tree planting, horticultural e.g. tomatoes, vegetables and development programs and empowerment of the youth. From then, I no longer fight with opinions of others but I have to accommodate them. I can initiate dialogue when my friends are in disagreements and can solve conflicts both in my family and in the neighbourhood. I can stay with my children well, and talk to them to behave well unlike before when I could punish them unnecessarily.

My husband has learned to respect me because since I was trained in gender participation, I take part in providing for my family.”

Narrates a lady from Bungoma County



2.2 From dictatorship to dialogue

Joseph and Judith Nasurutia hails from Masindet “B” village in Chemses sub-location in Mt.Elgon sub-county. The family has been languishing in poverty due to unresolved family differences. The husband, Mr. Joseph used to harass his wife like a beast. Any time he comes in from the village the entire family becomes afraid of what might happen next. He could raise his voice, bang doors, chase the children away and even beat his wife for no reason. A typical stereotype man, did not value the position of a woman in the society and her contribution to the well-being of the family.

Joseph, a father to four children overlooked his responsibility as a parent. He left it all to Judith his wife to fend for the children and even himself. Furthermore, he took what his wife has produced to sell and drink alcohol with. This kind of life affected his entire family’s income. A don’t care Joseph celebrated this kind of situation sharing with other likeminded men in the village who nicknamed him the “okusimba” (the lion) of the village because of his brutality. His children never had time to integrate with other village children to play. They were confined just in their home doing manual work always.

DESECE through the field officer for Mt. Elgon, Mr. Robert identified and invited him for an awareness creation on human rights in the village. Joseph got inspired from the message gotten from this training. In this case he was enlightened on the respect for the human rights and gender roles. He reflected on his own life situation and got interested in knowing more from DESECE. In one of our training called Development Education Leadership Teams in Action (DELTA), he was taken through training for transformation. This was a turning point for him. He was challenged to the level that he was remorseful for what he had been doing to his wife. He vowed to treat his wife with love and care. He went as far as proposing her wife for next training with similar content as a way of healing.

The couple now shares with us that they have resolved their differences and are sharing roles within the family for sustainable livelihood. From the leaking house with grass thatched roof, to a semi-permanent one. With this transformation, the family enjoys peaceful moments where there is mutual understanding, planning and implementing activities together. Their family income has improved through farming. They have a dairy animal and they plant and keep sufficient food for their family.

The couple has become a role model in the community where the husband is on the “nyumba kumi” committee, while the wife is on advisory committee in their church. The children are fully attending school. On the other hand he helps DESECE with community mobilization in Mt. Elgon as a volunteer. Currently he is charged with the responsibility of clan elder resolving community disputes through counseling and mediation. Children enjoy their parental love and care and are proud of their parents.

Narrates a couple from Bungoma County



2.3 Vulnerability not misfit

“My name is Irene Wanyonyi from Misikhu, Munyali village in Bungoma East Sub-county. I’m 51 years old and widowed since 2003. I’m a mother to six orphans and two grandchildren. I stay in a rental house at Misikhu.

Immediately my husband passed on due to HIV/AIDS, I lived a pitiful life coupled with low self-esteem, stigmatization and cultural norms surrounding widows in the community. I hated myself and I lost hope.

I was invited to attend a gender and development workshop in Mabanga A.T.C. In the first place I was reluctant but recollected myself and decided to go. The content of the workshop inspired me very much and was touched when I reflected on my own life situation back at home. I could not imagine that these suffering were due to socialization process put in place by patriarchal society. This realization energized me to extend that I planned to break the silence. In addition the reflection of the bible (Genesis, Chapter 2, Verse 27-28) made me to take up a position in the community. That we are all equal before the eyes of God and all of us can make a difference.

My attitude has greatly transformed and my esteem improved. My mentality of “cannot do” changed to “all is possible” The moment I started initiating in a small way what I had learned in this gender workshop, I was identified and given a role to play in the public interest. I’m a motivated village elder in my area where they have nicknamed me as madam D.O. sometimes I represent the chief in his absentia. I’m a happy woman and in terms of giving back to the community, I serve as a trusted treasurer of HEQUEENDO C.B.O with 4000 beneficiaries. Finally I do train members on gender related issues and leadership as a volunteer of DESECE especially in Luchendi Sacco. Widows around me have emulated my life style and cope with life challenging situations courageously. Life must continue under all circumstances.”

Narrates a lady from Bungoma County



3. MSC Stories - Health Program

3.1 Life indoors since birth

Centrine is a crippled girl from birth. Her nature is not welcomed by her parents as she is seen as a bad omen to the family. This is why her parents don't let her outside the house for fear of being seen by neighbours. She was totally denied her right to movement and association.

On 14/09/2015 DESECE organized for one day workshop in Sikinga village, Bumula sub-county on children's rights facilitated by human rights officer. Among the participants was Centrine's elder brother. He was touched and began reflecting on how they have been treating their young sister. He realized that it was not business as usual but something wrong had happened. He struggled with the revelation for quite some time before opening up to the gathering. After sharing silently with his neighbours, he was encouraged to speak out. When he finished sharing this, many people were shocked about the situation of this young girl. They got concerned and probed to know more about her conditions. This prompted the field officer for Bumula to take up the issue and make a family visit to ascertain the situation. On his arrival he discovered that the girl had been staying indoors all through. She needed someone to be taking her out to meet other people to socialize with.

DESECE as an organization has no capacity to help people with disability but creates awareness on the issues affecting them so that they find able partners to assist them. Fortunately, DESECE collaborates with Lions club of Kitale in the field of humanitarian work. This charitable and humanitarian organization donates a variety of things to vulnerable people in the country. Among the items donated include but not limited to, wheelchairs, sanitary towels, eye clinics etc." Centrine could be one the beneficiaries?" thought the field officer. Immediately he conducted DESECE Director who is also a member of the lions club of Kitale. He informed her about Centrine, and lucky enough this was the week that lions club was committed in offering their service to the disadvantaged group in the community.

A day was set for donating equipment to the physically challenged and Centrine was among the group of beneficiaries. Mr. Godfrey Wafula the field officer for Bumula was informed about the event and was tasked to bring the girl to Kitale to be given the wheelchair. Still the parents were reluctant to release the girl but the brother to Centrine intervened and the girl was brought out. She was accompanied by a volunteer from the family because the parents had refused to bring her to the event.

At the event the volunteer was surprised to learn that it was not only Centrine, there were other children with more complicated cases than that of Centrine. She acknowledged the assistance given to her relative by lion's club members. Poor Centrine, full of tears of joy, occupied the wheelchair for the first time and was moved around and realized that God is great. He can make things change for the better. On realizing that she has been undergoing mistreatment from her real parents Madam Director DESECE organization donated KES 5.000 through Lions Club District 411A Governor to present to the girl. This support has helped her to associate with other community members especially in the church.

Narrates a lady from Bungoma County



3.2 Successful family planning method

Mildred Nafula's health has been deteriorating because of using family planning methods without doctor's directives. This has made Mildred get more worried.

Mildred is a 29 year old lady blessed with one child; her occupation is buying and selling of cereals. On 3rd of December 2015 she happened to participate in a one-day workshop facilitated by DESECE rain worker Mr. Jackson Wanjala. He facilitated on methods of family planning (hormonal and non-hormonal), their advantages and disadvantages.

After the session Mildred became more aware of her health. This made her open up to share out her experience. She started by stating how she was introduced to family planning methods and the effects it has caused on her health. Mildred has bled for 3 years non-stop before the training, this made her health worse.

She therefore wanted to know what to do to restore her health. It was very clear from her explanation she used pills without doctor's directives and she was developing a negative attitude on family planning methods.

The Rain Worker linked her first to the doctor who called her, diagnosed her and did the counselling sessions. The doctor gave his recommendations that assisted her. Recently the follow up revealed that Mildred is now doing so well and her health is becoming better and better, and her bleeding has fully stopped.

Mildred is now a change agent advising her fellow ladies never to use any contraceptives without getting the proper information from the doctors.

Narrates a lady from Bungoma County



3.3 Unsafe to harmonious sexual relationship

I have had eight dramatic months in facilitation of an unknown theory in my local community in Sikhendu, Kiminini Sub-county, Trans-Nzoia County on family planning and reproductive health. When I look back now, I see positive health changes where 20 students and six spouses have been influenced to have healthy sexual relationships. One of the most interesting tools in this theory is the baby neckless which consists of different colours: red for menstruation, yellow for safe days and blue for fertile days, which was an eye-opener!

6 spouses could not control unwanted pregnancies, share their health status and had fear to talk about family planning, especially condom use. They could not talk about sexual transmitted infections (STI's), especially HIV and Aids. The spouses were very negative about use of contraceptives and were not willing at first to listen to trainers. They were deeply rooted into cultural practices of having as much as many children as possible. There was a strong believe that with condom use there will be no sexual pleasure.

Students only understood pregnancy prevention without other side effects to their bodies, especially frequent use of emergency pills and the improper use of norplants. This led to a high infertility rate. Generally the two groups never had a sustainable solution to their health problems. Thank God after meeting more than 350 women, 8 spouses have positively accepted the use of condoms, they can share information with one another and they have affection within their families. They can plan when to conceive and how many children they want to have.

Health is quite good in their families. 6 spouses and 20 students are good role models now in the community. They are change agents and are now converting other community members. They are able to talk to church members and boda-boda riders about improved health.

20 students are able to prevent early pregnancies and infections, have reduced stress and they are reaching out to more youths to limit the number of school dropouts. To change behaviour in local communities about their sexual life is not an easy task, but now there are ways and means. We now need more time through barasas, churches, institutions and groups, to spread this knowledge about health. God bless Aktion Regen.

Narrates a lady from Bungoma County



4. MSC Stories - Organic Agriculture Program

4.1 Unbelievable Change

“I’m Joseck Simiyu from Bungoma west sub-county. I’m a father of six children, three girls and three boys. I was introduced to DESECE through Elizabeth Wafula, field officer in sustainable agriculture. She identified our group and started working with us since 2014. She did an introduction to organic agriculture where she trained us on composting, diversification, and soil and water management, poultry keeping dairy farming and horticulture.

Luckily enough I was invited to attend a residential workshop at Mabanga agriculture training centre. In the workshop I realized that there was a very big gap in my farming activities. The use of synthetic fertilizers was the norm of the day in my community. I opted to try to go organic on my field. I prepared compost manure for my farm and the end results that year were wonderful and unbelievable compared to what was earlier. The yield increased from ten bags in two acres, to twenty bags of maize and five bags of beans. My life has really changed. People looked down upon me because of the kind of life I was leading. Now people around me started appreciating what I do and come for advice in organic farming.

I am a trusted organic farmer advisor in my village and I have helped many to see the need to go organic because of the benefits. These benefits range from health to economic. People are adapting to this system and they are living healthier and happy lives. I learned that organic agriculture is labour intensive but very friendly in terms of finance and yields.”

Narrates a man from Bungoma County



4.2 Believe it or not, life has changed!

Mary Namaswa is a proud farmer of three dairy goats. She lives in Bungoma central Mbalayi village. She was trained in sustainable agriculture

Before the training she was a housewife and depended on the husband to provide for everything in the family. The family income was very low and they could not meet their basic needs. They used to buy milk from their neighbour and it was not enough. Quarrels in the family were endless because of too much pressure in terms of finance and family needs.

When she attended the workshop she learned many different things which were very relevant to her life and family. She learned how to make compost manure and use on the farm, enterprise selection and diversification. Apart from this she was also among those people who went to Meru herbs for an exchange program facilitated by DESECE. She took keen interest on goat production and acquired enough skills in rearing goats.

She shared the knowledge acquired during the training with her husband and children who were interested to know how the project will be. Her husband was impressed and opted to sell the local flock for hybrid Toggenburg for milk.

During her implementation period she was consulting DESECE field officer for Bungoma central Mrs. Irene Simiyu on the management of her goats. Since then she has increased her stock to five goats with a production of one litre per day per goat. She has enough for her domestic use and surplus for sell. Their income has improved. She is able to pay school fees for her children, clothe and feed them without any problem. Her husband has embraced the project and attributes the success to his intelligent wife. “I’m very happy and have realized that quarrels in the family arise because of poverty and that for anything you do, do it jointly for its success” said the husband. The wife appreciates DESECE for the knowledge and she said “were it not for DESECE, I could have not gained any knowledge and I could still be struggling in meeting the family daily needs. For now am healthy self-employed and have dedicated my time to look after these animals. My relationship with my husband has improved and is motivated to the extent that I train other farmers around. Goats need very small land and are easy to keep.”

Narrates a lady from Bungoma County



4.3 Take a step

I am Hellen Masika, married to Joshua Masika and we have 6 children, who are all alive. We have been practising farming ever since we got married over 20 years now and it seemed to be expensive and non-profitable, our life style remained unchanged.

However, a turning point was experienced when we met Gladys Mukhwana while training farmers of Ambana Sirendi self-help group on compost manure making, value addition and use of alternative pesticides for controlling crop pests. We invited her to our group (Sao CBO) and made a program for training. We were trained on compost manure making, enterprise selection and proper record keeping. After the training as a group we chose to plant kales during dry spell on a leased 2 acres piece of land at Misikhu, where there was a nearby water source. We also influenced the person that leased the farm to us who also planted vegetables on his remaining piece of land and he provided security while we offered him a market for his vegetables.

With the knowledge in record keeping we managed to properly keep all our records from planting to harvesting and even selling our vegetables. We emerged to be the core suppliers of vegetables in Lugulu hospital, St. Joseph and Misikhu friend's school. These changed our life styles as we earned income from the vegetables which enabled us to cater for our families and take our children to school. Currently our first born child is at St. Brenda Girls school form 3 and we also managed to expand our house which was small. Our motivation was also elevated by the visit of students from Holland, who appreciated the work that we were doing and made us even work harder.

Our children also ventured in rearing rabbits, pigeons and turkeys. Currently I teach in a nursery school at Misikhu and as a result of popularity in supply of vegetables to schools my husband is appointed on the finance committee on development committee in Webuye west. Thanks for the empowerment that has enabled us excel, long live DESECE.

Narrates a lady from Bungoma County