

LET'S SHARE OUR SPARK TO EMPOWER 100 TEENAGE DISADVANTAGED ORPHANED GIRLS FROM KENYA FOR ONE YEAR



MEET JULIET

The Story

I met her while I worked at the University where she studied. She was intelligent and full of Grace, a true reflection of the strength of a woman. She has overcome extreme odds to be where she is today. She is a mother, a wife, and most of all a transformed person with a dream to change her world. Yes, today she is the beacon of hope to a few children. This is the story of Juliet, the last born in a family of 10 children. Born in a small village along the slopes of Mt. Kenya, Juliet spent her early days helping in the farm when out of school. Her mother gave birth to her in her early 50's and the father in his 60s. Upon graduating primary school her then, aged father did not have money to send her to high school and the only resource he had was a piece of land that he sold. This put Juliet in school for two years and thereafter, she dropped out. While Juliet studied, personal basic needs were met by her local Church and well-wishers. Her overriding desire to excel in life and change the status quo pushed her to accept a job as a house girl. Juliet was lucky to be employed by Mrs. Luke who understood and empathized with the plight of Juliet. She worked as a house girl for another three years saving and

	<p>helping her parents. Through her savings she managed to enroll back in a day secondary school where she matriculated. Upon passing her final exams, JULIET was awarded a scholarship to pursue university education... where she graduated with her bachelor's degree at the age of 31. Her life has since changed for the better, she is happily married with three children. Besides, she has put up a house for her parents and educates her nieces. She works for a big local bank in Kenya. Juliet turnaround story was made possible. thanks to the empowerment afforded by Mrs. Luke. Through her empowerment, light finally shone on Juliet's seemingly very dark tunnel.</p> <p><i>Empower a girl, empower her world... join me as we pass on the spark to light a girl's candle.....</i></p>	
<p>A TYPICAL KENYAN EMPLOYER</p>	<p>A typical Kenyan employer herein refers to this person who offers informal work to the house girl. Mostly on non-contractual basis. They can fire and hire any time and as they wish. This type of employer attends to either office work or business and obliged by circumstances to engage someone to take care of their home and/or children when they</p>	

are away. This employer has been stereotyped to believe that girls are desperate, illiterate and most unfortunately, thieves. Majority view girls as suspects and the bond between them is the services they receive and the money they give for the work done. They are hardly motivated to encourage or empathize with this girl —little do they realize that the difference between them and the girl may be nothing but the opportunity that fell on their laps - either to be born in a family that can afford the basics of life or have their parents living to support them. In their utter ignorance or arrogance, the un- schooled girl deserves nothing better. Often, she is looked upon as one who wines or complains about the low salary. They expect the girls to prepare the children for school, cook, clean including laundry for the entire family that is basically hand-washed and anything else that needs to be done in the house. The girl must explain why this and that is not done while she has a whole day to herself....The tension between the girls and the employer is real but the two must work together. This portends a deleterious relationship.

**A TYPICAL
HOUSE GIRL**

A house girl in this context refers to a young girl mainly hired to work in a home. 80% are hired as live-in's and do not have high school qualification. Their job description is largely generic. Their day usually begins at 4.00 a.m. and stretches beyond 11.00 p.m. They are short of technical or professional qualification hence they have also believed that the only jobs available for them is the house work. Majority of them are mainly orphaned and school drop outs working to support their siblings or grandparents and often shoulder heavy burdens in the families.

Although there is the government minimum wage, the girls are highly exploited by their employers. Their average salary is \$50 a month with no other benefits other than a day off on Sunday. Because of the strenuous relationship with their employers, they rarely work in a single home for a whole year and instead keep hopping from house to house. This being a common practice with them they fail to realize the time factor and before long the girls are old enough with nothing to show for their years of toil. They themselves cannot tell where time has gone. They get frustrated and the next thing they want is to get married. By who? They are restricted and confined to their employer's homesteads prohibited

	<p>from bringing a boyfriend home or dating while they work. Frustration leads them to the nearest catch within the hood....a security guard, a handyman in a construction site or anyone available to offer the three words. "I love you". A security guard comes from deep remote areas of Kenya that this girl has no idea of of..... Here they get involved romantically. The girl gets pregnant and the employer kicks her out of her house. The long walk to darkness begins. She has no home to go to, no one to turn to. Very frustrated she may end up in the streets or entangled in an abusive relationship as a young wife or back to their rural homes. However, very few of them survives the house girls' memes.</p>	
<p>THE CHALLENGE</p>	<p>While many lobby groups have come up in Kenya fighting for the rights of house girls, all they have succeeded in is organizing for mass protests in different parts across the country. Until there is strict and tight regulations guarding the dignity and rights of house girls, they remain exposed to abuse and exploitation. Considering their lack of technical and professional qualifications and the pressing need to cater for basic needs, the girls have to contend with the abuse and undignified working conditions for a meager pay come month end. On the other hand, the</p>	

so-called employers have no choice but to employ the same girls or else they quit their jobs and stay at home. This means that the two desperately need each other. . The girl needs a means of survival while the employer needs a helper. How can the two work together? How do we understand this girl's context and handle her from a deep understanding? How do we help this girl from an understanding perspective and empower her?

This is where Umoja Skills Development comes in.

- To improve the relationship between the house girl and the employer through mentorship. Good relationship will accord the girl a dignified work environment envisioning an outcome where the two benefit from each other and happily co-exist.
- Empower the girl with technical skills that will help them start their own startups.
- To help the girl work and save towards achieving her dreams for economic empowerment.

UMOJA SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	<p>Founded to empower both men and women through impacting skills. Umoja skills is currently operating in South Africa and wishes to carry out this project in Kenya as we spread our wings in empowering girls.</p>	
	THE BLUE PRINT	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	<p>The project aims at empowering teenage orphaned house girls between 12 to 20 years achieve their dreams. The project will be piloted in Ongata Rongai in Nairobi Kenya. Ongata Rongai is in Kajjado County and a home to a huge diverse culture. Maasai community originally lived in this area and because of their cultural practices, most girls have not been educated and are married off early in exchange for cows. Those who are lucky to escape seek employment as house girls hence risking being disowned for going against the culture by the community. Their culture has also led to the spread of HIV and numerous contagious diseases. Girls will be identified with the help of community chiefs, religious mentors and community mobilizers. Only girls who are extremely disadvantaged will be given first preference. We envision to have empowered 500 girls</p>	<p>Launch in June 16 2019 (International Domestic Workers' Day)</p>

	<p>in the next five years. We have short term and long-term goals as follows:-</p>	
Short Term	<p>1. Recruitment and Placement of Girls</p> <p>Umoja Skills Development Kenyan project aims at addressing three core areas initially with the girls-</p> <p>1. Empowerment by providing technical skills to help them work as a house girl. These are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic first Aid • Home and Personal Hygiene • Cookery • Laundry • Basic Etiquette • Financial Management and Budgeting 	<p>Within one year after launch June 2019</p>

2. Enriching their life skills

3. Helping them understand matters pertaining to their health.

4. Empowerment through entrepreneurial skills such as , catering, hairdressing, sewing, beading and weaving amongst others.

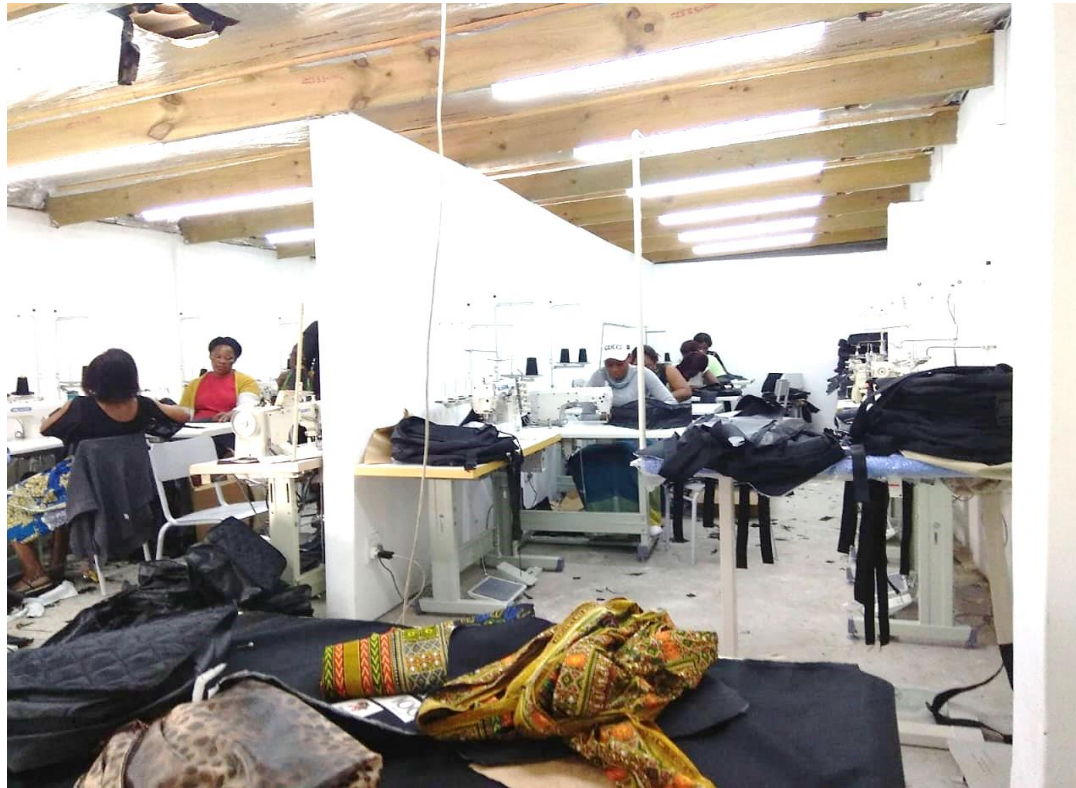
Once our girls have been trained and certified, we will place them to work in homes on signed contract between us, the employer and the girls. The minimum wage for that job category according to the Ministry of Labor should apply. This way, we will protect the girl from abuse and exploitation but at the same time constantly mentor the house girl into diligence towards her work and her relationship with the employer. Our role will be defined as that of empowering house girls and should not be treated as an activist role. We encourage a cordial and mutual relationship between the house girl and the employer. The house girl should view the employer as the bridge towards achieving her desired end and strive to keep pushing until she crosses to the other side.

	Employers should look at house girls as sisters, daughters or most of all as friends.	
	<p>2. Savings Cooperative Society Launch</p> <p>Once we get fifty house girls registered with us, we will approach the ministry of cooperatives to register us as a cooperative society for savings. one KEY component to helping the girls achieve their dreams is helping them visualize their dream opportunity and start with an end in mind. We will implore on them to dare to dream on what they would be passionate at for economic empowerment had an opportunity knocked on their doors.. Dare them dream of ways they can economically get themselves out of the poverty and support others who are economically under resourced with the same ideas An example... a girl dreaming of being an hair dresser will one day want to open a saloon...To achieve this, we will work with what we have. We will have every girl keep half of their cash and save the other half but we will also consider their needs and advise accordingly. Savings will be consistent for a period not less than three years.</p>	June 2020

3. Purchase of Land to build a resource center

Long
ng Term

2023



Umoja Skills Development Resource Center, South Africa

The Resource center will be used for training our house girls instead of sending them to other training institutions. Here we will equip the center with sewing machines (Mostly school uniforms) weaving machines (for carpets, floor mats and table runners) welding machines, hair dressing equipment..... We will have both production and training areas within the center. The center is going to be a home away from home for the girls. This is envisioned to be the heart of our income generation to sustain the center. House girls trained here will be given a chance to open their own businesses using their savings or be employed by the center. Products produced at the center will be sold locally and internationally. We will seek partnerships locally and internationally with schools, supermarkets and tour companies. We envision schools both primary and secondary to be our biggest target. School uniforms will be made at our centers and depending on the location of the schools that will have subscribed with us... we will give our girls a chance to open some retail uniform outlet for certain schools within their proximity.

Kenya does not have organized baby day care centers hence the reason why almost every home has a house girl. Once the center is up and

	running we envision starting a state-of-the-art day care where parents can drop their children and pick them any time. As time goes and finances grow, we will look at having a center transport that can be used for running errands here and there. As the center grows, we envision other pop needs that will be dealt with as they arise. In a nutshell, we envision changing the story of a house girl.....in totality.	
Ways of Donating	We are raising \$ 10,000 – \$15,000 for our short term projects and partially long term.	
\$10 – 49	This will help in buying training tools like cooking stoves, dishes and pots	
\$50	This will support training one girl	
\$50 – \$100	This will support in hiring the office	
\$100 – \$150	This will support in furnishing the office and paying the trainers	
\$200	Support in training 4 girls	
\$500 - \$1000	Support buying office machines	

Over \$1000	Support in buying resource center equipment like sewing machines, hair dressing facilities etc.	
-------------	--	--

Ahsante Sana..... Karibu Kenya, hakuna matata