

## **Strengthening the resilience of child-headed households to COVID19 pandemic, Kenya**

In Shikhambi area - located at the peri-urban of Kakamega Town in Kenya - lives Alice a fifteen-year-old orphan girl with her two siblings aged eleven and eight years old. Together they live in a house which their parents left behind. After being orphaned just over a year ago, Alice had to discontinue her education in order to take care of her two (2) siblings. The fifteen-year-old bread winner wishes to put food on the table for her two siblings during these trying times of the COVID19 pandemic. Alice was working at a local eatery, this was before the lockdown and restrictions were imposed by the Kenyan government that forced the eatery and other social amenities to be closed down. Alice lost her only livelihood to support her siblings. Alice used to buy water from vendors for use in their small house. She can no longer afford to buy clean water for her siblings. Alice's family is struggling to survive during this SAR-Cov-2 times (coronavirus pandemic). Access to foodstuff for Alice's family is her priority; however, it is a daily challenge she faces. There are days they have had to go without a meal. Alice's family used to access clean water from a handpump, which is thirty (30) meters from her home. In 2018, the only handpump, which she would have accessed water from, stopped functioning. This handpump needs rehabilitation. Alice's income at the eatery amounted to KES 70 (USD 0.7) per day. It has been about two (2) months now since Alice's last payday and she still has to keep her family fed and cared for. SAWASHI heard Alice's story and paid her a visit. These children are in dire need of not only food but also clean bedbug free bedding. Shikhambi area where Alice and her siblings live is known for prostitution and it is a fear that such vulnerable children would be drawn to such a vice and even petty theft. Being an orphan in western Kenya is sometimes considered a curse, therefore, it causes stigma. Early and child marriages are still practiced in Kenya; there are fears of Alice opting for child marriage, which might lead to her siblings joining street families.

We have all hit hard times during this pandemic but it takes a gesture of goodwill to bring hope to Alice, her little brother and sister.

It is SAWASHI's Appeal that you help feed and access to clean water for Alice's family. Together we can bring back lost smiles by giving Alice an olive branch.