



## GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT: Eldoret Women for Development Langas Slum, Eldoret, Kenya

Women First launched the Key Moments Fund on April 24th of 2021 to support our grantees, their families, and their communities as they cope with the incredible hurdles of the pandemic. Just two days after launching the fund, Women First grantee partner ELWOFOD in the Langas slum of Eldoret, Kenya reached out to us for urgent help.



ELWOFOD came to Women First requesting assistance to get COVID-19 tests, food, water, healthcare, and childcare. ELWOFOD works with formerly incarcerated women in the Langas Slum, to reintegrate the women into the community, overcome stigma, and train them with skills needed to become financially independent. One of the women engaged in ELWOFOD's program was hospitalized after contracting COVID-19. Due to potential exposure, 20 other members of the group were ordered into state-run quarantine isolation centers. They all needed testing, which was only offered at a cost of 80-100 USD per person – a month's worth of income for each. The isolation centers did not provide food, water, or healthcare and many of the women's children were left at home without proper care.

Women First responded immediately, granting them 4,000 USD – in just three days. All the funds were used for COVID-19 tests, essential items, PPE, medicine, food, and childcare. These women are now home and spreading awareness about prevention measures as cases continue to rise in the overcrowded Langas slum.

Women First receives requests like this daily. We are responding quickly and effectively to provide the direct support our grantee partners desperately need during this time. Women First is proud of the partnership we have with local, grassroots organizations – and we are even more proud that we can be there when they need us most.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It can be easy to lose sight of the things we are thankful for during a global crisis. I'd like to take this space to express my gratitude for the strength, tenacity and unending passion I have seen from our grantee partners, board, committees, and staff members.

Throughout this crisis, Women First helped redistribute resources and amplify power for the women who are closest to the problems we seek to solve. We remained resilient during these challenging times, prioritizing a well-functioning executive team, frequent and transparent communications with staff, and evolving good governance practices. As we become a stronger and more adaptive organization, we are better positioned to help our grantee partners, assisting them as they become lifelines of community support.

Women First welcomed four new board members this April – each volunteering their professional expertise and personal eagerness to empower women, girls, and trans people. These individuals will help us reach our goals and add diverse perspectives to our already highly qualified board of directors.

I am also incredibly thankful for you, Women First's loyal donors. Without your support we would not be able to partner with some of the hardest to reach groups of marginalized women, girls, and trans people in the world. Never in our lifetime has there been an event that touches every corner of our world the way that the pandemic has. As global citizens, we face an uncertain future, but I will continue to put my gratitude at the forefront as Women First reaffirms our commitment to our mission of creating a world where gender equity prevails and in which every woman and girl has the power to thrive.

## GENERATION EQUALITY FORUM

From June 30 – July 2 nearly 50,000 women's rights activists from around the globe engaged, in a mostly virtual format, at the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) held in Paris. The Paris Forum, convened as part of the GEF by UN Women and co-chaired by France and Mexico, is the culmination of the kick-off event held in Mexico City from 29 to 31 March. The Paris Forum launched a Global Acceleration Plan and committed to a 5-year journey, culminating in 2026, to accelerate equality, leadership, and opportunity for women and girls worldwide shaped by the 6 Action Coalitions of the GEF. Governments, donors, and corporations pledged over \$40 billion to accelerate progress toward gender equality and, many organizations, including 440 civil society organizations and 94 youth-led organizations made strong programmatic and policy commitments. A detailed report from Women First delegates can be found on our website.

## BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: DR. ELEANOR NWADINOBİ

Dr. Eleanor Nwadinobi was first introduced to Women First (then VGIF) over 20 years ago while attending the UN's Commission on the Status of Women where she was advocating for the rights of widows in Nigeria.

Eleanor is a woman of perseverance, persistence, and resilience. Having witnessed the civil war in Nigeria, Eleanor and her family narrowly escaped the violence as refugees and resettled in the United Kingdom. Eleanor returned to Nigeria years later to complete secondary school and went on to study medicine. It was after becoming a medical doctor that Eleanor learned of the unthinkable injustices that Nigerian widows endured.

She then became an advocate for widows rights – researching, speaking, and pursuing a masters in Human Rights & Democratization. She helped found the Widow Development Organisation (WiDO), a group that tirelessly advocated for years and participated in Enugu State's passing of a bill to protect the rights of widows. Years later, with Eleanor's contribution, a more comprehensive bill (Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act) was passed at national level to protect women from violence. Eleanor credits her proposal writing training from Women First for helping her secure the grant support needed for WiDO to impact widows - including providing free legal aid and shelters.

Eleanor went on to consult for UN Women and other UN Agencies in the area of health and gender. She also served as the manager for women and girls under the United Kingdom's DFID - funded Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), a peace building program operating in Nigeria, including the states affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. Both roles put Eleanor on the frontlines in the efforts to protect women and girls from violence, abductions, forced marriage, and other challenges of violent conflict.

Eleanor's life's work is to end violence against women and girls and she is co-founder of coalition calling for The Every Woman treaty. She believes Women First's strategy enables true empowerment and real impact. "There is a collective movement that begins with the women and girls with whom Women First partners with, they then go on to influence the lives of those around them... this is what leads to sustainable community change." Eleanor believes that Women First's flexibility and adaptability – and our 6 years of support – distinguishes us from other funders.

Eleanor shared that "no one woman does it alone... we have to encourage each other to keep going." Eleanor is the personification of perseverance and Women First is honored to have Eleanor's voice of knowledge and expertise counted among our board of directors.



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Women First grantee partners live and work in some of the most difficult environments on earth — communities where COVID-19 is only one of many life-threatening issues. And yet, less than 2% of donor funding reaches the grassroots groups we partner with, despite evidence showing that the mobilization of these groups has a more direct influence on positive change to society than almost any other factor.

Learn more about how you can help Women First continue to support our grantee partners and the women, girls, and trans people they serve:

[www.womenfirstfund.org/donate](http://www.womenfirstfund.org/donate)

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