

# Living Conditions of Grandmothers: Their stories

We made home visits to a few homes of Nyaka grandmothers in the Sub counties of Kanungu Town council, Kanyantorogo, Kihiki, Kirima, and Kihiki town council to assess the conditions under which they live in together with their grandchildren.

## **Mrs. Paullina Rugoote - 80 Years:**

A widow of Runyinya village, Kishenyi Parish, Kanyantorogo Sub county. She is a very old, sickly Nyaka Grandmother looking after ten (10) grand children. Paullina had produced six (6) children but only two (2) are still alive. The first five (5) orphans came into her house after the death of her two daughters in mid 90's. They were not legally married. A few years later, Paullina's son, an army veteran, died after a long illness leaving behind five orphans with her. The veteran's wife had also died a few years back. This increased the number of orphans in her house to ten. The eldest is a boy aged 17 while the youngest is a girl aged about five years and all are in school. Paullina has no source of income and lacks all domestic necessities. The orphans attend to their gardens in the evening and weekends. By the time we visited Paullina, it was by God's mercy that she was still alive with her orphans. They were using a poor, old, overflowing pit latrine. She is now a bit relieved because Nyaka has constructed for her a pit latrine.

## **Mrs. Eleanor Kyayangwa - 82 years:**

A widow of Rumba village, western ward, and Kanungu town council is another grand mother who was living in misery until recently when Nyaka rescued her. She lives in a very old house with her four grandchildren, three boys and one girl. The eldest is fourteen years while the youngest, Isabella, is six years. Eleanor was left with these young orphans when AIDS struck her home six years ago killing her beloved son together with his wife in the same year leaving behind a seven month old baby girl to care for. Eleanor lacks all domestic utensils but her immediate threat was lack of a pit latrine and scholastic needs for the orphans. For six months, she had stayed without a pit latrine. Early this year, Nyaka come to her rescue and constructed a good pit latrine for her. At the same time, another sympathetic Nyaka grandmother Canon Milicah Ziine volunteered to pay school fees for all Eleanor's orphans. Fortunately Eleanor's orphans are very brilliant in class and the eldest has earned himself admission to Kigezi High School where he scored a very good first grade last year. Now Eleanor is a bit relieved.

## **Mrs. Jailence Zehireyo - 78 years:**

A widow of Rutoma village, Rutugunda Parish, Kirima is another Nyaka Granny with a sad story. She had produced six children but only two are still alive and are also widowers. The first two sons of Jailence were highly educated with good jobs in Kampala. She was then living a very happy life until the 90's when AIDS struck her home killing both sons and wives and leaving behind eight orphans to Jailence. A few years later, Jailence's two remaining sons also lost their wives due to AIDS leaving behind six more orphans to Jailence. Fortunately these two other sons have since then re-married, otherwise the poor old woman would not manage to feed all the fourteen orphans. Currently, she looks after six orphans while the rest have been taken over by distant relatives. Her major problem is school fees, and clothes. The eldest is eighteen years while the youngest is five years old.

**Mrs. Mary Munubi - 68 years:**

Mary, of Kayembe village, Kabuga Parish, Kihhi sub-county looks after five orphans. Two of these orphans came into Mary's house after the death of her two daughters. A few years later, Mary's relative also died leaving three children to her. These were two year-old twins and a seven-month old named Kiiza. The twins are now five while Kiiza is three years old. The eldest of Mary's orphans is a girl aged fifteen years. Mary's biggest problems are finding appropriate beddings, uniforms, and clothes.

**Mrs. Oliver Barugwa - 80 years:**

A widow of Kiruruma village, in Kabuga parish Kihhi Sub County is another Nyaka Granny with miseries. She had produced ten children but only four are still alive, the rest having been claimed by AIDS. Currently, she has ten orphans in her house. The eldest is seventeen years while the youngest is three years. The first six orphans came into her house after the death of her son, and two daughters. A few years later, Oliver's only employed son, a primary head teacher died after a long illness leaving behind a sickly, unemployed widow with four children. These four orphans have also joined others in Oliver's house making a total of ten. They live in miserable conditions with no domestic necessities like blankets, plates, clothes, uniform, etc...

**Mrs. Edinas Baramwende - 78 years:**

A widow of Bushere I, Kabuga parish Kihhi Sub County is another miserable Nyaka Granny. She has four orphans in her house. There are three girls and one boy aged between sixteen and six years. The first two orphans came to Edina's house when she lost her daughter five years ago; her husband had earlier died after a long illness. Recently, Oliver's granddaughter together with her husband succumbed to AIDS leaving behind a four year old girl-Asimwe to Edinas. This one is a great-grandchild to Edinas. Edinas together with her four orphans live in real poverty with no domestic utensils, blankets, clothes, and scholastic materials.

**Mrs. Georinah Kijabuzima - 68 years:**

A widow of Kinyashohera village, Nyakatunguru ward, Kihhi town council is another helpless Nyaka Granny, who looks after four orphans. These are three girls and one boy aged between thirteen and eight years. The first three orphans, all girls, came to her house six years ago when her son died after a long illness. The wife had died a few years back. As if that was not enough for her, recently, her daughter whose husband had earlier died succumbed to death after a long illness leaving behind a twelve year old boy. The grandmother is sickly and has no source of income hence there is a lack of domestic necessities like clothes, beddings, uniform etc...

After the training and sensitizing about HIV/AIDS and the value of disclosure, some grannies have taken their orphans for HIV/AIDS tests. Those who were found positive have started taking ARV's. However most of the grannies are reluctant to go for the HIV/AIDS tests themselves.