Theme: Taking Stock
As we come to the end of the second year of our first three-year strategic plan: 2020 – 2023, we are shining a light on the privilege and unique opportunity that we have at the Clean Start platform to rectify the criminalization of poverty, as we continue to seek decent, equitable and sustainable means of livelihoods for the impacted, women, girls and their children.

It is in these two years of the global pandemic, 2020 and 2021, that we have managed to offer our constituents decent income generating opportunities, grown our Governance Board, developed our own curriculum – the six weeks Ufunuo Program and Tables of Support, got funding channels in the USA and the UK through the King Boudin Foundation, collaborated with other key stakeholders to develop the Kenya Prisons Childcare Policy and carried out an in-depth research project titled ‘A Study on Divergences in Access to Justice & Human Rights Protection’ which will be published in quarter one of 2022.

Thanks to you, we have spread our programs and services to reach 23 women prisons out of the 44, established 87 individual small businesses, set up two business hubs, a Charcoal Briquettes making business hub and a boiled eggs cafeteria for the women in Thika and Nyeri counties respectively. We have enrolled formerly imprisoned women from 17 counties as members of the Coalition of Formerly Imprisoned Women – COFIW and held two Beyond the Bars Conferences in 2021.

The "magic" that results when the Coalition of Formerly Imprisoned Women community comes together was very evident at the conferences. It’s always such a thrill to see the women who served time with each other meet on the outside, beyond the bars, having made it, while meeting the new ones who have been recently released and been through our programs, listening to the inspirational speakers and panels led by the women as they share their ideas.

The women who gathered together were mostly the chapter leaders who had traveled from different parts of the country, each of whom is using her power to empower those around her and drive real, sustainable change in her community. The December conference theme was ‘Decriminalizing Poverty and Declassifying Petty Offences’, which is at the heart of Clean Start’s work and the second strategic plan.
objective.

“When you face the uncertainty of what might be, you can create the certainty of what will be.”

This is one of the reasons we support these formerly imprisoned women leaders to use their power to build a better and more just world - step by step, shifting the narrative towards hope and self-determination. As we empower them construct networks and lay strong foundations for positive change.

We had an incredible opportunity to share our experiences and reform expectations with Magistrates and Judges at the Judicial Training Institute program recently held in Nakuru, where we advocated for non-custodial sentencing and custodial sentences be a last option especially for the petty offences. We also participated in the Judiciary National Service week launch held at the Kamukunji Police Station, which was graced by the Hon. Chief Justice, Lady Martha Koome, where we advocated and voiced the needs of children of imprisoned mothers.

The Clean Start Center continues to gain momentum, having received the second tranche of funding from the Safe House Network and A new Way of Life in California. This Center will be the epicenter for our women’s voices, a place where women can collaborate, gather, and ignite social change to transform the criminal justice system in Kenya. Most importantly, it will be an inclusive space for all impacted women to be empowered.

These and many more achievements that you will get to learn of, through this end of 2021 Newsletter, and the lessons and challenges we encounter along our journey, cannot be managed by our team alone – your support is what enables us to keep going. Please continue to assist us in supporting more formerly imprisoned women who are paving the way for their children, families and community at large to Re-imagine the Future and Reclaim Destinies.

Honor the effort of our community of these inspiring formerly imprisoned women leaders and other changemakers by donating towards our programs and the income generating opportunities, through our Bank accounts, or paypal: cleanstartkenya@gmail.com or Mpesa Paybill – 543268 Account your Name.

Now we’re taking the next step in scaling this impact in 2022. Going all in. All the time. For our constituents. Let’s tackle these inequalities together, as justice begins where inequality ends.

Enjoy your Holidays!

Teresa Njoroge
As we wind up the year, I want to thank all of you, our partners, team members, and clients, for being part of Clean Start Solutions. We can truly say that despite all the upheavals, we have had quite an exceptional year of growth and discovery that would have been almost impossible without our believing in ourselves and in our purpose of advocating for our women, children and girls, and relying on each other, and our passion to fight for a brighter tomorrow for the entire society.

"Power isn’t control at all—power is strength, and giving that strength to others. A leader isn’t someone who forces others to make him stronger; a leader is someone willing to give his strength to others that they may have the strength to stand on their own."—Beth Revis.

This quote is a great summary of what we can look back as our achievement throughout the year, and what we have planned to achieve going forth. The expectations we have placed on ourselves to continue to take substantial steps towards empowering imprisoned, and formerly imprisoned women, and giving them back what they may have lost in terms of belief in themselves, not only gives them their strength to power on, but also powers us on as we see more success stories with the projects we have, and continue to undertake.

We can collectively boast of having helped set up business hubs that support women in enhancing their livelihood outcomes. Providing livelihoods for our women is a top priority, but looking at the sustainability of how we achieve this has also been at the heart of our agenda. This touches on the longevity of the project and the numbers, as well as how we impact future generations in terms of environmental preservation, as the briquettes project looks at both proving livelihoods for our women and ensuring that conservation is achieved. Such is the thinking and idea surrounding the development of our Thika briquettes production hub.

Apart from that, our other brain child, whose launch was graced by the local administrator, whose commitment to work with Clean Start is bound by the dedication to alleviate poverty in the community, is the Nyeri Business Hub that comprises of an egg centre and an eatery.

Looking ahead towards what awaits us in 2022, is working on clarity in measuring and communicating our impact; for elevation, create partnerships as we build the capacity of our team and beneficiaries in a sustainable manner.

Finally, I have to mention how proud I am of the entire Clean Start Team who have learned to work well together to implement our strategies, and skilfully build a strong
work ethic while navigating the loopholes that sometimes still blindside us. I look forward to the year ahead.

To you & your families, have a wonderful holiday season.

Susan Kihara-Nguu

Circles of Healing

For the first time since we rolled out the Ufunuo Program, we were finally able to train the women on the outside.

This is a self-awareness and self-discovery program held in safe, peer-led spaces, that equips the imprisoned and the formerly imprisoned women with soft-skills so that upon their release they can successfully reintegrate back into society.

It’s an attitudinal mind-shift change program that builds the ability in the women to see things differently and turn her pain into purpose.

After a 5-day intense session, we were proud to have the first cohort of 14 women on the outside graduating.

At the end of the program, the women had grown their confidence and were able to own their stories and experiences. They were also able to keener in setting and evaluating their goals.

The women also volunteered their time to offer coaching and mentorship sessions with the women still in prison.
Mentorship

The Ufunuo Program has proved not only beneficial but life-changing for the trainees. One of the needs we noted was that even upon completion of the program, was a need for continued mentorship. Upon the graduation of Cohort One of the Ufunuo Program in the prisons, Apostle Angie Murenga picked three women whom she has been mentoring: Evelyne, Fridah and Diana.

With the help of Apostle Angie and her book ‘Real You’, the three have been able to unpack themselves and therefore get to know themselves better.

New releases

As part of our mandate, upon their release, imprisoned women are received by at least the area Circle Leader and are presented with a dignity pack to help them start life on the outside.

Fridah Ruguru was released from Thika Women Prison and was received at the prison gates by Thika Circle Leader Jane Ngugi, Clean Start Founder and CEO Teresa Njoroge, Clean Start Coach Milkah Njau and her mentor and Clean Start friend and partner Apostle Angie Murenga.

Fridah also received a dignity pack before Apostle Angie escorted her back home to Murang’a where her father, brother and sister were excited to be reunited with her.
On October 15, 2021, the premiere Clean Start business hub was opened. The hub, located in Nyeri, was conceived by the formerly imprisoned women Nyeri Chapter.

First, the 12 women formed a self-help group and had it registered. They also identified the type of project they wanted to start – buying and selling, and distributing of boiled eggs within their local community.

One of the group members offered up her piece of land from where the project would be based. She had been running a small eatery there but the shack was in shambles.

With the help of Clean Start and a partner the place was given a facelift. The old shack was torn down and a new one put up in its place. This one is bigger and will accommodate more customers and up to eight women at any given time.

It took two weeks to rebuild and furnish the place.

On the day of its opening, the formerly imprisoned women, local authority, prison authority, partners and the local community were all present to witness the milestone of empowering the formerly imprisoned women.

Being the pioneer business hub, this project has set the pace for other business hubs that Clean Start plans to open in the other counties as a means of ensuring that formerly imprisoned women have a means of getting sustainable means of livelihood.

By registering as a self-help group, the women have now received recognition as legitimate business owners. They can now do business within their local community without being stigmatized by anyone. The women can transact and access bigger loans from the bank with ease. They have the goodwill from the local government and can carry out their businesses without harassment.

The business will allow them to gain more business development skills and experience.
Clean Start’s mission of Dignified Re-entry is closer to being achieved. Funds from the project will be used to start another project to empower all the remaining women within the Nyeri chapter.

Opening of Business Hubs: Thika Chapter

Like their Nyeri counterparts, the Thika Chapter too registered a self-help group known as The Thika FIW Group.

The group of 12 women identified the making of briquettes as a project they wanted to take part in. They picked a secure working space located in Juja. Clean Start bought them the briquette-making machine, and all the materials and tools used in the production of briquettes. This was on condition that the funds provided will be a revolving fund that the women will pay back so as to fund other group projects.

On November 3, 2011, the project was launched. The machine can produce 500 briquettes per day and with a ready market that the group has identified, they are optimistic about growing their customer-base in the coming months.
As they start working on producing the briquettes, the women are also learning about product value addition and branding.

Cottage Industry Expo

Kenya cottage industry expo aims at addressing the challenges that home based businesses face, by providing insights and creating opportunities for them to thrive. Clean Start facilitated FIWs to attend the expo on the 29th to 31st of October 2021, where they displayed a wide range of products ranging from African fabric and Ankara outfits, honey, spices, T-shirts, table mats and liquid soap. This was the second time the FIWs participated in the expo.

It was also a great opportunity for them to learn from the plenary sessions. Josephine Chelel was one of the formerly imprisoned women to take part in the expo and she had this to say:
“The plenary session was very informative.

They talked about intellectual property, protecting your goods and services through registration or putting a water-mark. If you are a content creator then you should protect your content and get paid by whoever uses it. There are some bodies or organization that helps in providing protection e.g the Music Copyright Society of Kenya (MCSK).

We talked about how to get your products in the supermarket a discussion which was steered by the new CEO of Uchumi Supermarket:

1. Your products must be certified by KEBS
2. Your products must have a long expiry date
3. Your products must be harmless to the consumers, etc

We also discussed why it is hard for Kenyans to export their products to other countries especially Tanzania whilst it’s easy for those countries to import to Kenya. Instead of the products being taxed once they are doubly taxed. This means that you pay tax twice and this discourages traders.

Mr. Reuben Kosgei explained that they were in the process of making things easier for traders. He said that hey have come up with AFSTA market for SMEs and people will benefit from this type of market if they tailor make their products inline with the policies for AFSTA market.

He also talked about why e-commerce is not doing so well despite the fact that many people are connected online. He explained that this is because of lack of trust. You receive what you had not ordered.

He advised that when you are marketing your products online post them frequently and consistently.

Strategy is very important, do analysis of your target audience then choose the appropriate social media to advertise, respond timely and respectfully to the questions asked by the prospective buyers.”

Thanks to the cottage industry expo, the FIWs were able to meet and connect with potential clients and network with other business owners.
**Children and Girls**

We celebrated the day of the girl through our continued social media campaigns highlighting the vulnerability of girls who exit institutions of juvenile justice.

**Keep a girl in school** campaign is aimed at plugging in to provide basic personal effects that the girls lack while at school.

Studies have shown that the lack of basic personal effects like toiletries and sanitary pads have led to girls dropping out of school.

We hope to increase retention in school for these girls and urge well-wishers to **Keep a Girl in School.**

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**Fourth National ECD Stakeholders Conference**

Clean Start was part of the Fourth National ECD Stakeholders Conference in Siaya County. The Conference brought together over 300 ECD practitioners, researchers, policy makers and leaders from national and county government as well as research institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, donors and media.

The conference provided an opportunity for participants to discuss and share insights on the status of ECD programs in Kenya, innovation, challenges and create resolutions to establish a holistic/multi sectoral approach towards ECD in Kenya, which will enhance policy and practice on implementation of the nurturing care framework.
1. Create awareness on the need for integration of nurturing care practices in ECD service delivery

2. Advocate for systemic change through policy, at national and county levels.

3. Push for increased sustainable nurturing care investments in Kenya

4. Interrogate the social fabric and its impact on holistic child development.

Our team from the children and Girls team were part of the scientific committee of the conference planning.

KPA Visit

We received representatives from Kenya Pediatric Association, American academy of Pediatrics and Pediatrics Association of Tanzania in a courtesy call visit at our offices.

They were in the country to hold an advocacy workshop that aimed at strengthening the pediatrician’s capacity to effectively advocate for ECD programs and policies in their practices, counties, regions and Nationally.

The objective of the visit was to get a better understanding of our ECD work with the children accompanying their mothers to prison and see how we could all work together.

COFIW-Africa
(Coalition of Formerly Imprisoned Women-Africa)

It has been a fruitful quarter for COFIW-Africa as we continue to build a movement towards raising our voices to the gaps in the criminal justice system while empowering formerly imprisoned women.

We culminated the year with the second Beyond The Bars Conference held on the 10th December along Thika Road. The theme was Decriminalising Petty Offences. In Kenya, petty offences were used by the British colonialists to limit and control the movement of the indigenous Africans in white settlers’ areas.

These offences according to a KNHCR report tend to target the status of the person rather than the behavior. They include hawking and vending, disturbing peace, spitting on footpath, common nuisance, using public toilet without paying, loitering, touting, idling and begging.

A 2015 audit by NCAJ found that 70% of cases being processed in the judiciary are petty offences with many of them ending up with punitive sentencing and fines.

Emmah is one of the victims of the criminalization of petty offences.

Emmah Atieno Odhiambo was arrested and charged with hawking without a license. The married mother of two had headed into town hoping to sell a few of her wares so as to provide for her family. Little did she know that this particular day wouldn’t turn out as she had hoped.
Caught up in her business, Emmah wasn’t aware that day would change her life and that of her family forever. The County Council askaris landed in town, and, in the mayhem that ensued, Emma found herself in the back of a county council van headed to Nairobi County Hall. Her phone broke and she would never see her wares again.

“We were taken to City Hall. Nobody explained anything to us and they wouldn’t listen to anything we had to say,” she explained. They spent the first night in the cell before being taken to court where her charge was read.

“I was sentenced to three months in prison or a cash bail of KSh10,000 for hawking without a license and you know how expensive that license is.” From there they went back to the cell for a second night before being taken to Langata Women’s Maximum Prison. “That first night was tough. The cell was crowded. Five people had to sleep on one mattress.”

“When we got to Langata, we were tasked with cleaning the whole day since some very important guests were due to arrive the following day. Then, they cut off our hair. I had braids.”

Although Emmah laughs as she narrates her story, you get a sense of how unfortunate the whole situation is. Her children slept hungry that first night after her arrest. Luckily, a friend picked them up and stayed with them until their mother’s release.

“My husband was attacked by thugs at the same time I was arrested so he couldn’t stay with the children,” she remembers. “We call it a double tragedy.”

Emmah was released after three days when another friend paid her bail. The same friend received her at the prison gates and took her to her children. “I’m back at home now, reunited with my family,” she explains.

Post-imprisonment, Emmah hasn’t managed to get gainful employment and her husband doesn’t work either. She was left in a worse position than she was before the arrest.

“We survive by the grace of well-wishers,” she says.

When asked what she wishes could be done differently, she says, “Even if one has been arrested, they should be treated with dignity and not harassed. Their wrongdoing should be explained to them and they in turn given a chance to explain themselves.”

Panel Discussion at the BTB conference
In the conference we had Angela Gachui of The James & Anne Gachui Foundation donating amazing outfits to the women in attendance to boost their confidence.

Leila of Mending Minds offered 22 scholarships to the women worth Ksh96,000 with only Ksh2,600 for the women to pay. Pastor Angie Murenga offered to pay the Ksh2,600 for the women. Therefore 22 women will be on a full ride scholarship in a business management course at the European Business University. Amazing strides in empowering these women to grow themselves and improve their livelihoods.

Watch the entire conference here
https://web.facebook.com/Cleanstartkenya/videos/617202046159959
Did you know that 70% of the cases handled in our justice system are petty offences? That most of these cases are skewed towards the poor people in our society?

Did you know that petty offences trace their origin to British laws and the colonization period? These offences were designed to restrict the movement of African labourers, force them to work for a few masters in the name of curtailling crime, punish idleness, and empower the whites to make arrests without proof of actual commission of a crime.

In response to the many women who have been incarcerated for petty offences because they cannot pay their fines, we are currently running the ‘Hug a Mom’ campaign to raise funds for these women to pay their fines so that they can be released.

With just KSh5,000 a woman with a pending fine can receive her freedom and be with her family this Christmas. Spread the joy this holiday season by hugging a mom.

M-Pesa Paybill: 543268
Account: Your Name
Paypal: cleanstartkenya@gmail.com
Gender Equality Training

Gender equality plays an important role in fostering peace within the community, it hinges on equal participation of women and men in the home and community at large. In addition, it addresses the important role that women play in the community.

16 formerly imprisoned women took part in a one-day workshop on ‘Achieving Gender Equality and Fostering Dispute Resolution’. The session, held in Ruaka, Kiambu County, was run by Best Link Consultancy Services in partnership with GIZ and Home Range Poultry Farmers.

The formerly imprisoned women who attended this workshop got a better understanding of what gender equality truly is, areas of inequality in the home, workplace and even in leadership.

They were sensitized on some of the laws/Acts that have been put in place to protect women against any forms of gender-based violence (GBV) such as the Protection Against Domestic Violence ACT of 2015, the Sexual Offences ACT Number 3 of 2006 and what the Penal Code No. 63 says about gender-based violence. The women also understood the process of dispute resolution, the different types of GBV, community mediation and dispute resolution.

The women were sensitized on some of the things they can do in the community so that we can achieve gender equality. Disseminating this information and being ambassadors in the community through civic education, training and creating awareness in social gatherings.

“I am very happy to know that I can get a protection order that I can use to protect my family and I. Someone has been threatening me and my family because my husband owed him some money, yet my husband died a few months ago and I did not know about this debt. I am very happy to know that I can get a protection order that can protect my family and I against this injustice.”
Following the successful completion of the Ufunuo Program and the graduation of the trainees, we conducted follow-up sessions with the institutions where the program ran. These were Machakos, Nyeri, Thika and Murang’a women prisons.

We wanted to capture the impact of Ufunuo Program on the trainees as well as those around them in terms of changes in behavior, knowledge and skills.

Feedback from the prison wardens indicated that after going through the program, the trainees found it easy to forgive, had an increase in self-awareness, self-esteem, had improved communication skills and a more positive attitude.

The women were now more goal-oriented, able to identify and follow better coping pathways.

The duty bearers also noted that the women had better anger management and conflict resolution skills, spiritual wellness and were better able to share their stories.
The aim of this research is to highlight the differences in access to justice among the poor and the rich in Kenya. The majority of the imprisoned are the poor and those in the marginalized communities who are charged with and sentenced for petty offenses. Due to the imbalance in the socio-economic status, most of those who are arrested are women who are sole providers of their families.

Further, they are often arrested for petty offenses that involve them fending for their children. They are often arrested for petty offenses that involve them fending for their children.

Results: Divergence in Access to Justice and Human Rights Violation

We found that 70% of the FIWs had been able to start businesses thanks to Clean Start’s support. Further, they are able to buy and deliver their goods on time, pay off pending business bills, increase their stock to business, stabilize their businesses, and buy more equipment to keep the business running.

With their businesses now running smoothly, the women are able to afford their basic needs, pay pending business bills, school fees for their children, and grow their savings. They are now financially independent.

“At least I have something that am doing, a source of income, my children are able to go school. Am able to pay my rent. Am also able to put food on the table for my family.”

The results will inform the research report; the study will enable us to access accurate data which we will use to speak authentically on this issue. We’ll be able to organize our constituents to hold the government to account, increase accountability of local authorities and uphold the citizen’s human rights and dignity.

Research: Divergence in Access to Justice and Human Rights Violation

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The M&E and Children and Girls teams took part in a two-month training offered by IDEX Accelerator Training Hub. The fellowship training aims at assisting those in the social sector with hands-on experience, group and one-on-one mentoring.

IDEX offered a specialized training and curated a Logic Model that will be used by Clean Start in carrying out its different programs’ activities.

Key informant interviews were also conducted with the police, judges, magistrates, lawyers and human rights defenders and activists.

IDEX Training:

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Partnerships

**Segal Family partnership**

We are now a partner of Segal Family Foundation (SFF). SFF works building an equitable community of visionary organizations—both doers and donors—across Sub-Saharan Africa so that together we can improve the lives of millions.

**Incubator Nest**

Incubator Nest supports budding entrepreneurs to set up businesses through immersive programs that champion the human element of entrepreneurship, they transform high-potential start-up leaders into value creators.

Incubator Nest will support us to build the capacity of the formerly imprisoned women in business.

**Weza Care Solutions**

Weza Care exist to support charities by providing innovative solutions to care for and protect vulnerable children and families.

We are partnering with Weza Care to strengthen our child reintegration program and family reconciliation.

**For the Love of Girls**

Their mission is to build a community where we can overcome period poverty. We are partnering to distribute reusable pads to girls in the Juvenile Justice Systems.
We are proud to announce the establishment of Clean Start’s own podcast ‘The Heart of the Circle’. This is aimed at telling our own stories our own way, and choose the areas of focus we feel need to be spotlighted. So far we have 4 podcasts out and working on more.

The Heart of The Circle Podcast: Sarah Odima

The Heart of The Circle Podcast: Nancy Ngige

We also partnered with our Chair of our Board, Dr Patricia Murugami’s podcast who interviewed a few of our team members.

Your Next Best Self Podcast: Teresa Njoroge
https://soundcloud.com/patriciamurugami/podcast-58-turn-your-pain-into-purpose?si=8dea6490587f464786882d63e0b62669

Your Next Best Self Podcast: Sarah Odima
https://soundcloud.com/patriciamurugami/podcast-59-if-trauma-is-not-transformed-it-will-be-transferred

Your Next Best Self Podcast: Cyprine Omollo
https://soundcloud.com/patriciamurugami/podcast-60-your-mind-can-only-be-imprisoned-if-you-allow-it-to-be?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing
Thank you for walking the journey with us this 2021. Wishing you love and light.
With Love, Clean Start Team

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
How You Can Help

- Advocacy
- Influencers
- Radical Collaboration
- Sponsorship
- Women capacity building
- Team capacity building

How professional associations can help

- Counselling and psycho-social support of women and their families
- Legal aid
- Apprenticeships / mentorships
- Sponsor a girl/child
- Team capacity building

How corporates can help

- Sponsor events: Conferences, expo, training programs
- Donate: laptops, foodstuffs, dignity packs for women, girls and children
- Provide financial training and mentorship for women
- Sponsor the building of Clean Start Center
- Sponsor a child/girl
- Team capacity building
Support a woman in the circle of healing KSH 12,000
Support a child living in prison with the mother at KSH 1,200 for three months
Support a girl through school at KSH 50,000 per year
M-Pesa Paybill - Business No. 53268 A/C No: Put Your Name / Cause you are supporting i.e Children or women
Paypal: cleanstartkenya@gmail.com

Bank Account Details
Bank Name: ABSA | Branch: Karen
Kshs. A/C Number - 2037885455
GBP A/C Number - 2040015399
USD Account Number - 2041690421
GET INTOUCH

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