

# Strengthening families in Eldoret, Kenya



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## Family Strengthening Program Eldoret

# Participants in the Family Strengthening Program

By the end of 2022, 144 households with a total of 618 children and 96 youths who were at risk of losing parental and family care were enrolled in the program.



In a three-year partnership 2021 - 2023, Xellia Pharmaceuticals is providing funding to the local SOS Family Strengthening Program in Eldoret. Xellia began funding the program in 2018 after supporting the SOS Medical Center for three years.

With the annual donation made by Xellia in 2022, the program provides access to essential healthcare and education to families with children. As many of the families are living in hardship, they are also assisted with vital everyday needs. This can include materials for their shelter, daily living, healthcare support and schooling, while the most vulnerable families receive supplementary rations of the necessary food types.

The program constantly seeks sustainable and innovative ways to prevent family separation and help children who are at risk of losing the care of their biological family. This approach to supporting children at risk focuses on two actions: **family empowerment** and **community empowerment**.



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## Family Strengthening Program Eldoret

# Family empowerment

The Family Strengthening Program in Eldoret supports families in need, ensuring that parents can provide their children with proper care. The support includes everything from basic needs such as food to helping parents understand the importance of children's legal documents. Here is a summary of the activities during this reporting period.

### Farm support

During the reporting period, the Family Strengthening Program supported 21 caregivers with fertilizers to boost their maize yields. This support was especially important as the price of fertilizers has risen significantly due to the delay of the rainy season.

### Kitchen garden support

Many caregivers still struggle with reduced income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This affects their capacity to provide basic needs for the household, especially food. In the past year, 30 caregivers were supported with various vegetable seeds, such as kale, spinach, and carrot seeds. The vegetables resulting from this support can help families have a more balanced diet and improve their health.

### National Health Insurance

The Family Strengthening Program contributes to the country's efforts to achieve universal health coverage. Throughout the year, the program continued to sensitize the caregivers to the importance of National Health

Insurance. The program supported 50 families with the National Health Insurance Fund registration fee for three months. These caregivers and children will be able to access quality health services in hospitals. To ensure that the caregivers keep their commitment to maintaining an active coverage, the program conducts field visits to assess the payment of the premium.

### Birth certificate support

In this reporting period, the Family Strengthening Program continued to support children who do not have birth certificates. Without a legal identity, children have no or difficult access to healthcare, education, protection, and inheritance rights. In 2022, 12 boys and 7 girls were supported with registration fees. In the meantime, 11 children lacked the required documentation to complete the registration, but they will be supported once their families provide the documents.

### Provision of sanitary pads

In September and October, 600 adolescent girls in the program and

the community were provided with sanitary towels. This was initiated after a menstrual hygiene and reproductive health talk with girls conducted with the help of Lay Volunteer Counsellors. Girls with limited access to sanitary towels often seek alternatives that might not always be hygienic. In addition, lack of sanitary towels can force girls to skip classes during menstruation or even leave school permanently. The purpose of the support is to help minimize girls missing school due to menstruation and ensure that periods do not get in the girls' way of acquiring proper education.

### Parenting training

During the year, the program supported caregivers in taking good care of their children. 81 participants were trained on positive parenting, including 45 caregivers in the Family Strengthening Program and 15 Lay Volunteer Counsellors. The training aims at providing parents with strategies to help them develop and maintain a healthy relationship with their children and influencing their behaviour at an early age.





Caregiver supported with fertilizer.



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Parenting skills training for caregivers.

## Family Strengthening Program Eldoret

# Community empowerment

Through national and local partnerships, SOS Children's Villages can reach more children. The Family Strengthening Program in Eldoret works with community-based organizations, volunteers, and local authorities to build effective support systems for struggling families. Here is a summary of the activities during this reporting period.

### Court-users committee meeting

The program facilitated a court-users committee meeting in partnership with the judiciary to sensitize members on child protection. The meeting shed light on the many challenges that child rights practitioners face in their line of duty. It brought together the Law society of Kenya, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution, the judiciary, the Department of Children's Services, the civil service organizations, and other stakeholders who handle children's issues in the county and have a wealth of knowledge and information important for improving their work.

### Supporting street families

The program works with Beruhum, an organization based in Eldoret supporting street children. A common goal for SOS Children's Villages and Beruhum is to support children in school whose mothers live on the streets. Together, we empower these mothers to become self-reliant and to ultimately leave the streets. During 2022, SOS

Children's Villages supported Beruhum with a briquette-making machine, hair salon equipment and mat-making items. By providing necessary equipment, caregivers are encouraged to learn trade skills that can help them gain an income.

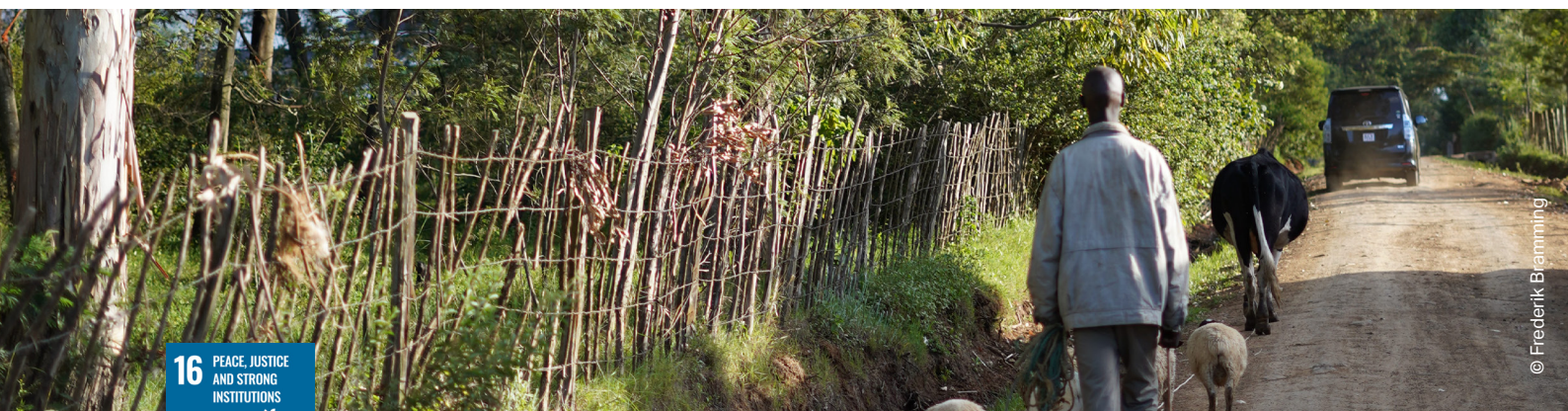
### Improving community structures

The Family Strengthening Program is working with the Ministry's Department of Social Development to build the capacity of Lay Volunteers to monitor and report on family strengthening and social protection initiatives in the community implemented by the program and other stakeholders. During the reporting period, 11 meetings were held with Lay Volunteer Counsellors (LVC's) and the Department each month. During these meetings, participants presented field reports, provided feedback and shared their experiences. 16 LVC's were trained in monitoring using a mobile app called KoboCollect and tasked with presenting 20 reports each month. These reports included visits to

families in the Family Strengthening Program, and the issues highlighted include a lack of birth registration documents, a lack of balanced diet, inadequate accommodation for the children, a burden of health costs for the elderly caregivers, low income, and irregular or no school attendance. As some LVC's were unable to report using the mobile app due to not having a smart phone, the program has now gone back to manual reporting.

### Protection of children

Ensuring that children's rights are upheld during and after the recent election period required a multi-faceted approach by various stakeholders. In partnership with the national government and the Uasin Gishu County Commissioner, the program held four meetings across three sub counties in an effort to discuss how to emphasize the importance of peace and the protection of children's rights to the community.



## Family Strengthening Program Eldoret

# School support

The program is committed to ensuring that no child misses out on education because of poverty, discrimination, violence, family illness or exploitation. The program works with families, communities and other partners to ensure that each child has access to education and training that address individual needs and circumstances and help children develop their potential. Here is a summary of the activities during this reporting period.

### School fees

The program supported 99 children (50 boys and 49 girls) from the Family Strengthening Program with school fees.

### School uniforms

188 children (100 boys and 88 girls) from the Family Strengthening Program have so far been supported with school uniforms to ensure that they do not miss school or feel uncomfortable wearing torn and worn-out uniforms.

### Secondary School Bursary

1100 people from the Family Strengthening Program and the surrounding communities were educated about the government's Presidential Secondary School Bursary for Orphans and Vulnerable Children scheme. This scheme offers financial support to orphans and vulnerable children from poor families in secondary schools.

With the help from the Family Strengthening Program, four young children from the program received scholarships.

### Support to return to school

12 young people (8 young women and 4 young men) who had dropped out of school received supplementary education and other support to return to school. Among the identified youth, the main reason for leaving school was a lack of means to pay for school fees, while teenage pregnancies were also a prevalent reason among the girls.

### Preparing for college

College can be a big change from what students experience in high school. To help with adjusting, 17 soon-to-be college students (8 from the Family Strengthening Program) were invited to a discussion session to give them an overview of what to expect. A guest speaker spoke

about the primary aim of the Technical & Vocational Education Training and 8 youths shared their experiences of life in college. Among the areas discussed were budgeting and personal finance management, talent and skill development, selecting courses, participation in class and extracurricular activities, and making friends.

### College fees

The program supported 10 young people (7 young women and 3 young men) from the Family Strengthening Program with college fees to help them continue their education and build their future careers.

### Career talk

The program had a career talk with 8 young people from the Family Strengthening Program who passed their final exams of their secondary education this year.



# Employee-driven initiatives throughout the year

In addition to Xellia's corporate partnership funding, Xellians from all over the world are initiating fundraising activities at their respective sites to raise funds for supplementary needs and projects at the SOS Children's Villages in Eldoret, Kenya & Ukraine.

## Emergency response in Ukraine

Since the start of the war, SOS Children's Villages has helped more than 275,000 children and adults in Ukraine and its neighboring countries. Xellians' donations of 140,220 DKK (approx. 20,227 USD) aided in providing psychosocial assistance, ensuring access to food and clean water, providing health support and hygiene kits, and providing other basic non-food items like blankets and clothes.

## Improving Early Childhood Development Centers

Healthcare, play, and learning in early childhood is crucial to children's opportunities later in life. However, many centers in the local schools of Eldoret lack proper facilities

for supporting the wellbeing and development of children. Thanks to Xellians' donations, the Family Strengthening Program has been able to improve the conditions of some of the local daycare centers. Xellians raised 48,137 DKK (approx. 6,943 USD) for this project. During 2022, two local primary schools received 50 tables and 100 chairs. In November, the construction of eco-toilets at three primary schools has commenced. The contractor has mobilized materials and personnel on site and has begun excavation and concreting.

## Jigger treatment and prevention

The Family Strengthening Program helps people in Eldoret infected by jiggers. Jiggers are tiny sand fleas

that dig into the skin and lay eggs. The consequences are great pain and – if not treated in time – even loss of body parts. Xellia employees have raised 14,985 DKK (approx. 2,161 USD) to support both the prevention of new attacks and the treatment of affected children and adults. Through the jiggers eradication program, 45 houses were fumigated with lethal gas and 246 people were treated for jiggers. The treatment consists of cutting jiggers and their eggs out of the skin with scalpels and tweezers and disinfecting the wounds. The Program also includes handing out shoes to protect against new jigger attacks.



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# Xellia's Annual Fundraising Event

For the 8th year in a row, Xellia Pharmaceuticals held its Annual Fundraising Event. In 2022, the fundraiser secured means for providing start-up capital to boost families' income generating activities and providing solar support to families without sufficient light and electricity in their homes.

Thank you to all who participated in the fundraiser. In total, Xellians were able to raise a record high of 246,525 DKK (approx. 35,561 USD). Through these donations, the Family Strengthening Program will be able to provide at least 23 caregivers with supplies and business plans needed to support and/or kick-off their small businesses, and 78 households will receive solar panels and/or solar lamp systems.



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# Xellians visit Kenya

In September 2022, the lucky draw winners of the last couple of Annual Fundraising Events went on a trip to Eldoret in Kenya. Among other things, they met the Kenyan SOS social workers, the families living in the SOS compound, and families enrolled in the Family Strengthening Program. They visited local schools, capacity building trainings, and outreach activities of the program. Further, the winners had the opportunity to talk to the local SOS team in Eldoret about where the funds for the 2022 Annual Fundraising Event could be allocated to ensure the greatest impact in the community.







**Family care for every child.** In the SOS village compound in Eldoret, SOS families provide stable, secure, and loving care in a family setting for children who have lost their parents or cannot live with their biological family. It is also where the Family Strengthening Program has its offices and organizes their activities.



**Opening doors to education.** Through the annual donations made by Xellia, the Annual Fundraising Event 2021, and employee collections through 2022, Xellians have supported Early Childhood Development Centers in local primary schools of Eldoret. In September 2022, Xellia employees visited a few of the local schools.







### **Preventing family breakdown.**

Every child needs someone to support and protect them as they grow, but many parents in Eldoret face hardships that prevent them from providing proper care. The Family Strengthening Program offers tailored support to strengthen families in need, helping them stay together. From counselling to skills development, parents are empowered with the resources they need to overcome their difficulties. With strong families, children and young people can receive the care and support they need to thrive.

During the trip in September, Xellians met families at different stages of the Family Strengthening Program. Some families had just entered the program and were in dire need of help, some families have been in the program for some time, and other families were about to exit as they are now self-reliant and able to take care of their children without further support.



