



(/Home)

[Donate \(/donate/mission-giving\)](#) [General Conference 2020 \(/gc2020\)](#) [Maps \(/maps\)](#)

[RESPONSE: OCTOBER 2017 ISSUE](#)

[Members & Leaders \(/members-leaders\)](#) [News \(/news\)](#) [Shop \(/shop\)](#)

[What We Do \(/what-we-do\)](#) [What We Fund \(/what-we-fund\)](#)

Giving Hope

United Methodist Women members' Mission Giving spreads courage and opportunity to women in Kenya through Operation Hope.

by Carol Van Gorp



Regional Missionary Elmira Sellu, left, and members of Operation Hope, a support group of HIV-positive widows in Nairobi, make detergent.

United Methodist Women members impact lives everywhere and in multiple ways. The World Thank Offering is one of those ways, as the gift given in thanks to God is used to spread courage and offer the opportunity for transformation. United Methodist Women international mission partner Operation Hope in Nairobi, Kenya, is such a courageous place and such a transformative program.

Operation Hope is a community-based organization started in 2005 by women whose husbands had succumbed to complications of HIV and AIDS. Initially started as a support group, the organization has grown to work with 48

families in which the woman of the family, a widow, is HIV positive. A total of 75 others are dependent on these women, including 45 children. All help is offered for their lives, from counseling and therapy to food and educational support for the children. The 48 women also enter into small business entrepreneurship through skills training in simple but marketable production of artisan or home supplies. United Methodist Women support this program, best described as social action for positive strengthening of widow's economic equality. Ending economic inequality is a priority issue for United Methodist Women.

Widows living with HIV in Kenya encounter myriad challenges, ranging from stigma, denial, failing health and discrimination. This reduces the prospect of economic self-reliance and increases stress and uncertainty about the future. The widows' dependents suffer the same and find their prospects for the future shrinking due to poverty as well as social and economic segregation. Women in this circumstance feel they cannot disclose their HIV status, which compromises a start in effective treatment through early diagnosis. It is important that the women make early changes in how they live to reduce transmission and enhance the impact of the treatments. Advocating for an end to stigma and discrimination is one of the many roles Operation Hope has taken on.

Mutuality in mission

Flory L. Atieno, program coordinator for Operation Hope, leads with knowledge and hope and the perseverance to get everyone to greater self-esteem and a thriving livelihood for these women raising children and caring for elderly relatives. Atieno was once a widow with a family of young children to raise and no job skills to do it with. She eventually found a cleaning position in a facility that Methodists and United Methodists used for offices in Nairobi. It was there in 1998 she encountered United Methodist Women Regional Missionary Elmira Sellu and her husband, the late Abraham Sellu, also a United Methodist missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries. It was the Sellus who saw the potential in Atieno for greater opportunities and faith expression. Through their efforts, Atieno got a scholarship to study and then began to reach out to other widows in similar circumstances, eventually establishing Operation Hope.



(/response)

Single Issues Available

 **Digital: \$2.50**

(<https://www.cambeywest.com/subscribe2/?p=RSP&f=sngd>)  **Print: \$2.75**

(https://www.umwmisionresources.org/shopping_product.php?id=53366) + Shipping

► **Subscribers: Click to Log in.**
(/response/digital-library)

► **Subscription services for new & existing customers**

(/response/subscribe)

► **response** home page (/response)

► all **response** articles

(/response/articles)

► **response** audio (/audio)

► 한국어 자료 (/response/korean)

► en español (/response/spanish)

► Responsively Yours (/response/ry)

► Subscription and Contact Information

(/response/subscribe)

Contact response:

► **Tara Barnes: Editor**

(mailto:TBarnes@unitedmethodistwomen.org)

As you put money into your World Thank Offering container, remember Flory Atieno of Operation Hope and also remember the impact of the United Methodist Women regional missionaries like Elmria Sellu. Your gifts have distinctly impacted women's lives with an ever-growing ripple effect on more and more women and families' lives. Sellu and Atieno's encounter changed the course of each of their lives in ways that United Methodist Women members' Mission Giving supported.

Posted or updated: 10/9/2017 12:00:00 AM

Site Map (/other/site-map)

© 2020 United Methodist Women

(<http://www.facebook.com/share.php?>

u=javascript:window.location.href)

(<https://twitter.com/share>)

▶ **Treasurers' Online Remittance Login**

(<https://remittance.unitedmethodistwomen.org/RemittancesManagement/>)

Give Now

(/donate/umwprojects/mission/www.printfriendly.com)

giving)

(<http://www.printfriendly.com>)