

## The Natalie Andre Women Entrepreneurship Program Stories

In early 2024, **Geoffrey Kashdan** contacted **Natalie Andre**, asking if she knew any feminist activists who might assist **Kenas Odongo** (a friend of his wife **Deborah Ullian Kashdan**) with the local charity, Children and Widows Protection and Fellowship Group (CWPFPG), headed by **Vivian Auwor**. It had programs to assist local girls and women, but very little funds. Natalie stepped in and jump-started fundraising and publicity for its programs; Kenas matched her with well structured and focused programs. The Natalie Andre Women Entrepreneurship Program was a natural development, awarding 50% loan/50% grants to local women to start or expand their businesses, with larger loan/grants as an incentive to follow sensible business practices. As a high school business teacher, Kenas is well prepared for this role.

The following pages describe the experiences of several women recipients of loan/grants.



Kenas Odongo, the comedian **Eric Andre** and his mother, Natalie Andre, December 2024, on a visit to Migori County to meet recipients.

Below is a message from one of our 50/50 loan/grant recipients, **Lucy Kepher**, with some explanations by us. Below that is a set of “before and after” photos—one, from April 2024 when she first received a loan/grant, and one from February 2025, after receiving her third one; note the difference in expression! She says:

Left with a lot of depression after the death of my husband 3 years ago, I was stranded. How I would begin life since I never wanted to risk being inherited. (Wife inheritance is a practice in Africa where once your husband is dead, you are given to another man (often an in-law) to marry you. The practice has contributed a lot to the rise of HIV/AIDS infection in Africa.)

In April 2024 I applied to the Natalie Andre Women Entrepreneurship Program for a loan/grant (50/50) to do business. I succeeded by getting ksh 5000 (\$39); for the subsequent loan/grant in August I got ksh 9000 (\$70) and by December my limit was increased to ksh 12,000 (\$93).

With these, I am doing business. Out of the proceeds I make, I can take care of my basic needs and those of my children.

Personally this is one of the brilliant ideas by the co-managers for this community; thanks to Kenas, Vivian and Natalie, you have actually revived hopes for many hopeless women like me. — Lucy Kepher





I am **Eunice Awino**, a mother of 5 children. I used to depend on my husband's small income to feed my family which was not enough. My husband works as a casual laborer in the building industry with a pay of \$1.50 per day and due to this we often went hungry by either missing lunch or supper since the money is not able to cover two meals in a day.



My hope was to get a small capital to enable me to start a small business so that I could support my family. Early this year (2024) I applied for a small loan/grant from the Natalie Women Entrepreneurship Program under CWPFPG and I was given ksh 5000 (\$39). Later this year I reapplied, and I got ksh 8000 (\$62).

I have to testify that through these grants, I have changed my life. I invested the money in a fish business and now my family gets enough meals and we don't go hungry anymore.



**Esther Nyapala**, a mother of 7 children and a widow for more than a decade, has been struggling to raise her children; life has not been easy on her.

She applied for a Natalie Andre Entrepreneurship loan/grant given by CWPFPG and she qualified for a \$39 loan/grant to start her small business. She is currently selling vegetables and out of her proceeds she can take care of her family. On a good day she can make \$2 to keep her going. She thanks CWPFPG for the small loan/grant.

**Veroline Akinyi** is 32 years old. She says: “Life had been very hard on my side. I had actually lost hope in life and became too desperate; my husband died some 10 years ago and I was left with three children to raise. I had been struggling in different ways to survive including doing casual labor such as weeding for people to earn a living, but all this did not bring any hope in my life.

Just this year when CWPFG came to support women I was a beneficiary. I got my first grant/loan and again by August I got the second grant/loan of ksh 8000 (\$62).

This grant has positively impacted on my life; I am selling fish and as of now I am able to take care of my children.

Thanks a lot to CWPFG. I would just appeal for more help to CWPFG so that many women can get help, kindly spare a penny and donate to CWPFG. Your little generous donation is able to save lives.





I am **Caroline Akinyi Okoth**. Gender-based violence was very rampant in this area, and this was attributed to the fact that our husbands never wanted to take responsibilities at home. This constantly brought fights into many households.

Since April 2024, many women are engaging in small business through the Natalie Andre Women Entrepreneurship Program which gives loan/grants so that the women are able to support themselves. The F.W. Reproductive Health and Sexual Education Program helps

them access contraceptives for free and get free sanitary towels from CWPFPG. These campaigns conducted by CWPFPG have generally reduced gender-based violence through awareness.

CWPFPG is a blessing to this entire community; we are requesting funds for continued support for the programs.



I am **Jane Adhiambo**, a 60 years old woman. I am one of the beneficiaries of CWPFPG's loan/grant for women from the Natalie Andre Women Entrepreneurship Program. I got my first grant in August 2024, and I was given ksh 5000 (\$38). From this amount I am doing my small business and hopeful that I will be able to get a higher amount in the near future, to expand my business.



From the business I am able to feed my family.

I am appealing to those who are willing to support CWPFPG. Your donation is our strength.



I am **Eunice Adhiambo**, beneficiary of the Natalie Andre Women Entrepreneurship Program.

I got the first loan grant on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 which was ksh 5000 (\$39) for my business. After paying back the 50% required,

the amount I got as the second loan grant increased to ksh 8000 (\$62), This enabled me to expand my business.

Thanks for donors who are supporting this program. It is bringing transformative change amongst women and girls in this remote area.



I am **Nancy Akinyi Oyao**, a mother of eight children. Currently I am 48 years and I was married at a tender age of 14 years.

I am doing a small scale cereal business which is the source of my livelihood.

I have received a loan grant (50/50) twice from CWPFPG, which I have managed to use to expand my business.

From the little proceeds of my cereal business, I am at least able to feed my children.

Thanks a lot for CWPFPG.





I am **Millicent Akinyi**, 21 years old and a mother of one child. I did my high school exams in the year 2022, but after completing my secondary education my parents could not afford to send me to college for further studies.

Back in the village, I joined CWPFG and became a member in 2023. Beginning this year, I applied to the Natalie Andre Women Entrepreneurship Program and I was given ksh 5,000 (\$39) to start a business. In

August this year I was lucky to get an additional loan/grant of ksh 10,000 (\$78). I can testify that through this loan/grant I do have a changed life; with hope that from a small savings I make I will join college. Besides the loan/grant, I am a beneficiary of free sanitary towels and free contraceptives given every three months.



**Russanael Charles** has been a widow for over 20 years and this is her testimony:

I joined CWPFG in April 2024 and since then, through the Natalie Andre Women Entrepreneurship Program, I have witnessed a lot of transformations in my life. As a beneficiary, I am now doing my business which I can rely on for my basic needs.



I am **Nelly Osumo**, a member of CWPFG. I have benefitted from a loan/grant from the Natalie Andre Women Entrepreneurship Program twice. In April 2024 I was started with ksh 5,000 (\$39); after successfully returning my loan portion, in August I got ksh 10,000 (\$78), on 28th Dec I applied to be given ksh 15,000 (\$117).

During Natalie's visit in December 2024 we requested to be given a higher value so that we can expand our business. This program is very good for us since it economically empowers women and this helps make life easier to survive.

I am appealing for more people to kindly join Natalie's effort to support more women.



**Milka Onyango** has been a widow for more than ten years. During all these years she has been struggling to raise her children and take them to school.

She manages a small business to survive, and Milka is grateful to CWPFG; she has benefited from a Natalie Andre Women Entrepreneurship grant twice and the program has been wonderfully helpful.





I am **Scholar Akoth**, a business woman running a small kiosk business. I joined CWPFG's loan/grant program under the Natalie Andre Woman Entrepreneurship Program.

When I first heard about the program—how it is transforming the lives of many women in the society—I was not sure that this was true. But since I took the initiative to join this wonderful program in April of 2024, I can now testify that is the best program ever to help in transforming women lives in this remote area economically.

For our donors, I would just appeal to you to continue supporting this wonderful initiative for more women to benefit.

Natalie, thanks a lot for your visit; kindly continue supporting CWPFG.  
--Scholar

Some of our volunteers and workers in Kenya: CWPFG Director **Vivian Awuor**, Counselor **Dominic Okongo**, and Mentor **Sophy Collins**.

