

## "Groupe d'Appui aux Messages" (GAM asbl)

### Karalia, the story of a very young widow from Nonkek

Karalia Lempe is one of the women attending training classes in Nonkek, Kenya, as part of the "Samburu Village Women's Literacy Programme", supported by GAM, which is currently in its second phase (2020-2022).



Karalia is 30 years old and has 5 children: Simon (12 years old), Lemon (10 years old), Francis (8 years old), Nelson (6 years old) and Julia (2 years old). Her husband died shortly after the birth of their fifth child.

In Samburu culture, the traditional marriage establishes such a strong bond between the two parties that even death does not break it, so much so that if she were to have another child, it would be considered the child of the deceased husband, as she still "belongs" to him.

As a widow she is totally unprotected. However, as her children now belong to her husband's family, she is allowed to live in his "manyatta" (the "manyatta" is the hut in which the children of a family live with their wives).

The future of widows is very uncertain in these cultures and places, as they married very young, never went to school, their life is pastoralist and depends on raising goats and cows, so these women are generally left to live alone in high levels of exclusion.

Karalia, like all the local women, fetches water every day, carrying a "pimpina" of water and firewood for several kilometres. She herds the herd with her children and, despite her many daily chores, she makes time to take part in the training sessions given by teacher Anne as part of the GAM asbl literacy programme.

Karalia was the first woman in Nonkek to learn to write and read syllables and has always shown great interest in the courses. She is one of the most committed women in the GAM project.

**Amílcar Ferro Becerra**  
**Presidente de GAM**



*Karalia, with her daughter Julia and teacher Anne*