



INVESTING IN MAASAI WOMEN FOR IMPROVING RURAL COMMUNITY WELL BEING

The lives of Maasai people in Northern Tanzania revolve around livestock: a source of food and a sign of wealth. Maasai women are the pillar of the household and play multiple roles for the wellbeing of the family and the community. Nevertheless they still lack formal education, basic human rights, have no political representation and have to employ unsustainable practices such as deforestation for charcoal production.

Over 4 years (2015 - 2019) Oikos East Africa wants to support 5,000 Maasai women in a process of empowerment, emancipation and awareness in order to improve their livelihood through training, small income generating activities and improvement of social services.

BUILDING A CHANGE OF COURSE IN 4 KEY ACTIONS:

ENHANCE SKILLS TO INCREASE EMPLOYABILITY AND INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES

Tools toward empowerment

Educational programs and trainings will be carried out to develop women's new competences, increase their employability and work opportunities. After one year around **1,000 women** have already been trained, thus changing their approach to purchase and selling. Moreover, women will acquire skills to produce and market leather handicrafts, honey and dried meat.

STRENGTHEN 31 EXISTING TRADITIONAL WOMEN GROUPS

Women help women

Women still suffer from a great deal of discrimination in the Maasai culture. By strengthening the capacity of **31 Traditional Women Groups** (TWG), the project encourages public recognition of women role as key contributors for the community well-being. Women will help other women to gain consciousness about their legal rights and to advocate for them at institutional level.

GUARANTEE ACCESS TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC SERVICES

Breaking the circle of poverty

Vulnerable women will be supported by training new VICOBAs (Village Community Bank Groups), local entities that offer social services such as social funds and informal saving, and by strengthening the existing ones. After one year **100 groups** have already been established, involving around **2,500 women**, who are already implementing saving and loan activities together.

8 Information Points will be set up, with the aim to enhance women's access to social services and reduce their vulnerability.

INCREASE AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE ON CIVIL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

Societies can change

Cultural taboos, inequality and customary laws often prevent Maasai women from owning land, deny them freedom of speech and mobility and reduce their access to business opportunities. Moreover, physical and verbal abuses are generally accepted within the pastoralist community. Through **campaigns** and **community engagement** the project boosts women and men to activate a process of change toward gender equality.



PARTNERS

Istituto Oikos – Italian non-profit organization that operates in Europe and developing countries to safeguard biodiversity, promote a responsible management of natural resources and a widespread adoption of more-sustainable lifestyles as tools for social and economic development and for fighting poverty.

TRIAS – Belgian NGO that supports more than one million family farmers and small entrepreneurs in fourteen countries, by reinforcing dozens of upcoming producer organisations and organisations supporting micro-entrepreneurs.

Marketplace Literacy Community Trust – Indian non-profit organization with the mission of enabling marketplace literacy among low-literate, low-income individuals through educational programs to improve the practices of businesses, governments, not-for-profit organizations and educators.

Maasai Pastoralist Foundation – Tanzanian NGO engaged in empowering Maasai communities through traditional knowledge, cultural creativity and social investment with the aim of providing cultural, socio-economic opportunities and income diversity for sustainable livelihoods.

OIKOS EAST AFRICA

Tanzanian NGO based in Arusha operating since 1999 to promote the protection of biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources as tools to fight against poverty and boost socio-economic development.

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