

**INVESTING IN MAASAI WOMEN:
TOWARDS THE EMPOWERMENT
OF PASTORALIST COMMUNITIES
IN NORTHERN TANZANIA**

2015-2019

THIS DOCUMENT PRESENTS THE APPROACHES, INTERVENTIONS, LESSONS LEARNT AND RESULTS FROM THE PROJECT “INVESTING IN MAASAI WOMEN FOR IMPROVING RURAL COMMUNITIES WELLBEING” (FED/2014/341-127). THE AIM OF THE PROJECT WAS TO IMPROVE THE LIVELIHOODS OF AT LEAST 5,000 MAASAI WOMEN IN NORTHERN TANZANIA THROUGH SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION. THE PROJECT OFFERED INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS WITH A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH AND A RANGE OF SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES, AIMED AT INCREASING THE PRODUCTIVITY OF VULNERABLE WOMEN DEPENDENT ON INFORMAL ECONOMY AND LIVING IN HARSH ENVIRONMENTS.

THIS FINAL PROJECT PUBLICATION IS BASED ON END LINE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS AND ENRICHED WITH TESTIMONIES FROM BENEFICIARIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES TO REFLECT ON PROJECT DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT.



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Marketplace

5,400+
WOMEN have finalized
Marketplace Literacy
programme

4 TRAINERS
travelled to India

6 TRAINERS
from India travelled
to Tanzania

Leather Processing

2,100+
LEATHER PRODUCTS
sold

3 GROUPS
constituted
and functioning

125 PEOPLE trained
(77% women)

approx.
GROSS INCOME
of
23,500€
(60+ million Tanzanian Shillings)

720+
TANNED SKINS
produced

Beekeeping

900+ kg
of **HONEY** harvested

198 MAASAI PEOPLE
(80% women) trained

approx.
GROSS INCOME
of
1,955€
(5+ million Tanzanian Shillings)

VICOBA

121

VICOBA GROUPS

with a total of
3,826 members
(more than 90% women)

44 GROUPS

were given small grants
(a total of approx.
26,400 Euros/67,5 million
Tanzanian Shillings)
and started a business

1,160

PEOPLE trained on business opportunities
and entrepreneurship, through
9 trainers from the community

Human rights, gender equality

657

WOMEN TRAINED

500,000

PEOPLE

reached through 2 radio networks

27

STREET THEATRE
PERFORMANCES

with a total of 10,200
community members
(60% women) attending

1,600+

community
members

VISITORS

8 ADVISORS

Information Points

8

INFORMATION
POINTS

to advocate on human
and women's rights
established

Project Factsheet

Sector: Gender, social inclusion

Lead Partner: Oikos East Africa

Other Partners: Istituto Oikos, Maasai Pastoralists Foundation (MPF), Marketplace Literacy Communities Trust (MLCT), TRIAS VZW

Budget: 2,130,862.20 Euros

Duration: 2015 – 2019

The project aimed at improving the livelihood of 5,000 Maasai women from Northern Tanzania through a process of empowerment, emancipation and awareness. By training women in new technical skills, improving social services in the villages and supporting the start-up of small income generating activities, poverty was reduced.

The specific objective was to promote the social and economic inclusion of Maasai women groups in pastoralist communities in the districts of Arusha, Monduli and Longido.

The target groups were:

- **5,000 unskilled, poorly educated, underemployed Maasai women** trained in Consumer and Marketplace Literacy, 350 of which attended vocational trainings;
- **80 women**, belonging to 3 Members-Based Organizations, trained in business management;
- **8 Village Community Banks (VICOBA);**
- **31 Traditional Women Groups;**
- **8 Ward administrative office representatives**

The action empowered women, reducing marginalization and discrimination and contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7.

The project improved the livelihoods of Maasai women by:

- 1) investing in capacity building;
- 2) supporting culturally acceptable economies and social funds linked to local savings initiatives;
- 3) boosting indigenous knowledge.



1. Marketplace Literacy: an innovative approach tailored for Maasai women to become conscious and active players

HOW DOES MARKETPLACE LITERACY SUPPORT WOMEN?

Most pastoralist women living in remote communities are excluded from formal economies and structured income generating activities, due to several factors including lack of opportunities, adequate skills, and knowledge of the market dynamics. The project tackled women's low literacy and the scarce Marketplace access through **an innovative approach**, increasing their skills and confidence.

The **Marketplace Literacy Training programme**, originally designed for poor women in India, was rebuilt around the culture and the needs of Maasai culture, which includes widespread low literacy rates. Through the bottom-up approach that characterizes subsistence marketplaces research, Oikos has studied how to **customize content, role plays, examples and exercises**, tailoring an *ad hoc* training programme for the project target group.

This activity was developed through 3 stages:

1. Preparation of the training manuals and of the 5 teaching modules which are the basis upon which the Marketplace Literacy course is articulated;
2. Training of 65 women trainers on exchange, value chain and entrepreneurial literacy;
3. Support the trainers providing practical training to thousands of women living in their communities.

In 4 years the project finalized the training of 5,400+ women who completed the course attending the 5 classes.

The impact of Marketplace Literacy¹ has been significant:

- most of the trained **women (80%) have improved the efficiency of the purchasing process**, giving more attention to the quality of the purchased product, its pricing, expiry date, competition, money change, and are better able to calculate expenses considering the limited resources available.
- **41% of the women** who have finalized the Marketplace Literacy Training sessions **have started a new business** and 36% of the trained women have expanded their existing business; this means that the majority of women have improved their income and consequently their livelihood, increasing their resilience and receiving a more recognized role in their community.

The project included a **South-South women's networking activity** with the direct participation of 4 Maasai women travelling to Chennai (India) and 2 women and 4 men travelling from India to Tanzania with the aim of enhancing horizontal communication among rural women from different countries but similar contexts who are open to building and reinforcing their self-confidence and capacities.

¹ Analysed using a sample of 254 women respondents



“Before the project, I was just a wife and a mother who was staying at home every day waiting for my husband to come home with food, but after attending the Marketplace training I sat down with my husband and he agreed I could start my business, selling tomatoes and carrots at the market. Now I am a businesswoman and I also joined the village community bank (VICOBA); my life has become so easy and our family is now happy”.

Namayani Lesikar from Oldongowas village, MPL beneficiary



"I am a businesswoman and I'm famous to so many villages around me because of the opportunity I got through the project of traveling to India with Oikos. I learnt a lot and also my mindset has changed; it has been a great experience to fly with the plane. I felt so good! It's a dream that I have never even dreamt, I am very grateful to the project and it really change the lives of many women in my village through Marketplace training".

Flora Joel, a 43 year old woman from Lemong'o village, and an MPL TRAINER who travelled to India

2. Women's social inclusion through income-generating activities and access to financial services

The **lack of alternative income generating activities** for livestock keepers exacerbates the state of poverty and contributes to the rapid increase of unsustainable practices such as deforestation for charcoal production, and the consequent rangeland health degradation.

In the targeted communities, livestock-related products (mainly leather and meat), non-wood forest products (such as honey and artisanal products), have great potential to generate alternative economic benefits.

I. TECHNICAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

The main technical skills delivered under the project were related to leather processing and honey production, that are explained in detail below.

In addition, the project introduced skills and equipment for the **start-up of small-scale meat processing and drying schemes** involving 25 people from Engutukoit (Arusha DC), which favour post-harvesting preservation, reduce losses due to a lack of refrigeration and represent a low cost, environmentally sound and effective climate change adaptation activity.

The project also delivered a **20 hour English language course** that gave 20 Maasai women and young men the chance to improve their English and literacy skills, mainly in terms of learning a new skill and building self-confidence.

Leather processing

During extreme weather events, the health of livestock deteriorates, and many animals do not survive. Pastoralists do not usually slaughter their livestock since they do not have access to preservation processes and the carcasses would be of no value. Therefore, adding value to the carcass is a winning strategy in an acute crisis.

The majority of pastoralists are familiar with the process of sun-drying skins and hides, thus curing leather is a culturally acceptable process. Uncured leather was traditionally used to produce clothing, bedding, saddles for donkeys and shields; today, its use is limited to the production of ornaments. **Curing leather increases the value of skins by 1000%** and hides and artisanal **vegetable tanning** does not require the use of toxic chrome, complex machineries or large amounts of water; the environmental impacts are minimal, although it is a labour-intensive technique. Leather tanning is also a low-risk economic activity as it requires minimal capital. The creation of leather commodities (belts, sandals, bags) does not require a complex laboratory and can be performed at household level, meeting the needs of women who cannot leave younger family members for several hours a day, or who live in very remote areas and do not have access to water for tanning.

Investing in the Maasai Women project led to the **start-up of 3 pilot micro leather enterprises** in Oldonyowas (Arusha), in Baraka (Monduli) and in Kitumbeine (Longido), **training 125 people** in total in leather tanning and manufacturing (77% women).

Together, over three years, the groups have managed to produce 720+ tanned skins and sold 2,100+ leather products, with an indicative gross income of approx. 23,500 Euros (60,000,000+ Tanzanian Shillings).



“This project through leather activity has changed my life completely, I couldn’t imagine that a person like me who didn’t go to school could become so creative and produce good and quality products as I am doing now. I pay school fees for my kids, I take care of my family with the money I get in this activity, and the good thing is my husband also likes what I am doing”.

Nai Mathayo, 37 years old, from Orkejuloongishu village, Kitumbeine, Leather group chairperson

Beekeeping

The practice of beekeeping is well known among the communities living in the project area. Honey harvesting is usually a low profit activity unless it is associated with bee keeping. Harvesting of wild honey is in fact only a very marginal non-wood-forest product for the pastoralists and farmers.

The ecosystem has high beekeeping potential. Despite the favourable conditions, the **lack of loan opportunities, technical skills and knowledge** have always held back the production of honey.

Beekeeping increases honey accessibility at local level, improves the energy and micronutrient intake among the consumers and protects wildlife. Open woodlands and savannahs in general are highly suitable for honey production. Beekeeping increases the value of the trees and apiary zone with bee colonies, which are generally spared from tree cutting for their important financial contribution, increasing the environmentally positive benefits of the beekeeping economy.

The project trained 198 Maasai people (80% women) to turn the beekeeping practice into a mechanism that can generate a sustainable extra income and to support the nutritional needs of rural families. Activities were designed to improve the quantity and quality of honey production in the targeted area, addressing the basic food needs of vulnerable communities.

The villages involved are Lemanda and Oldonyowas in Arusha DC, Esilalei in Monduli DC and Alaililai, Merugoi and Kiserian in Longido DC.

In three years, the groups have harvested in total **900+ kg of honey**, selling approximately 50% of it, with an indicative gross income of 1,900+ Euros (5,000,000+ Tanzanian Shillings). The remaining part of the harvested honey was consumed in the family, hence increasing their food security, sold directly to buyers in the village, or used in traditional ceremonies.

At the end of the project, trained beneficiaries were still engaged in beekeeping and honey production. The overwhelming majority (99%, 196 members) declared that this has helped to increase their income. This has been mainly spent to buy food and medicines, to pay school fees or saved in VICOBA groups. All respondents also consume the honey that they produce, diversifying diets.



Photo: Felipe Rodriguez

“The beekeeping project has given me the courage to deal with bees, which was not easy before getting the training. Through the bee project I have been able to find honey that we use as food and medicine at home. We have a loan fund as a group as well, through the sale of honey”.

Ruth Loserian, beekeeping beneficiary, Lemanda village

II. FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS SKILLS

VICOBA

Few financial institutions support the poorest and most marginalized Maasai women living in remote areas. **Lack of access to financial services** limits the possibility to start or expand a business. Consequently, in the pastoralist villages of the project area, the economy is largely dependent on livestock-related businesses, which are increasingly affected by climate change. For women, the lack of business opportunities has another implication: dependency on their husbands for basic needs such as food or money for health care or education.

Through the **formation and strengthening of Village Community Banks** (informal saving groups abbreviated as “VICOBAs”), the project has increased financial inclusion of poor community members, particularly women. With the help of 36 village-based trainers (47% women), **121 VICOBA groups**, with a total of 3,826 members, (90% women), have been formed and managed by the programme in the target areas. Among the strongest of these groups, the project has also improved their business skills.

The VICOBA methodology is based on **weekly savings deposited by each member into a loan basket** to give rotational loans to the women in need. Being members of VICOBA enables women to start and diversify their activities and thus become more resilient to external shocks.

As members of the VICOBAs, women in the target areas are now running various businesses, such as retail shops, selling tourist products, small catering operations and engaging in new economic activities. The increased income has a multiplier effect as now the women can save more, thus access bigger credits from the VICOBAs, allowing them to meet their household’s needs. The money currently circulating within the groups as their total value of savings is approximately 105,000 Euros (270+ million Tanzanian Shillings).

The % of women in VICOBA groups accessing micro loans is more than 50% of the total number of VICOBA members.

Just like the saving and loan component, the **social fund is one of the keystones of the VICOBAs**. Group members contribute weekly to the social fund which is given to one or more group members when they are experiencing a shock such as an illness or a death in the family. The social fund functions as a sort of insurance mechanism for the women in the VICOBAs.

An online management information system called “SAVIX MIS” has been used to monitor VICOBAs’ progress.

Introducing VICOBAs in the target villages has improved access to financial services in an area which mainstream financial institutions shy away from and has empowered women not only financially but also socially. The fact that the VICOBA trainers are from the actual target villages guarantees the sustainability of the groups. As such, the VICOBAs are **a major step forward towards a more diversified, robust, equal and sustainable society**.



“Since I joined this VICOBA, I can now easily access money to deal with difficulties I come across. The income I am generating to help my household has improved the relationship with my husband. He now involves me in making decisions about issues regarding our family”.

Nalari Sambeke from Armanie village

“Before the programme, I used to just stay idle. After I got a training and joined a VICOBA group, I now work to get money for saving, repaying my loan and for buying food for my household. I now opened a small retail shop which last year generated enough capital to build a house where I now live together with my children. I am now an active member of the society”.

Marria Orkiitoi from Baraka village

Advanced business trainings

Together with the strengthening of financial skills, the project also developed and adopted **2 business development support packages** – a set of different methodologies ranging from trainings for subsistence entrepreneurs to growth-oriented entrepreneurs. These packages are **SPM** (Start, Plan and Manage your Business) and **BDS Cycle** (Business Development Cycle). The packages are easy to learn and understand, making use of visuals and other didactical approaches adjusted to the literacy level of the communities.

A total of **1,160 people were trained** in entrepreneurship and given an understanding of business opportunities, through 9 trainers from the community, trained in the methodology.

Business coaching and mentoring was done with two leather groups (in Baraka and Kitumbeine) and **44 groups** which were given small grants from the programme (a total of approx. 26,400 Euros/67,5 million Tanzanian Shillings) and business plans for group businesses.

The programme has awakened an **entrepreneurial mindset in the community and strengthened women to work together**, start, plan and manage their own or group businesses. It has supported income-generating activities such as livestock fattening, retail shops, buying and selling of maize. This has helped women to become more market-oriented and ensured that they capture the benefits of economic empowerment.

“The project has changed my life. Thanks to the programme, I have learnt how to run my business of farming and selling products for the house and diversify my income. The rest of the group trusts me, and I am now seen as an example and real encouragement through the success in my business. Besides that, I’ve learnt to be a good teacher, I am just following what I have been taught and spread this knowledge among the ones who could not attend the trainings”.

Ana Johanna, from Lerangwa

“I think this project has been a great opportunity to learn and conduct businesses better, selling sugar, soda and wines. I would recommend it for the rest of the community at large. The rest of the women who are still not engaging in businesses do not have a clear idea on how to manage a business successfully”.

Nemburi Lengidanya, from Esilalei

“I have learnt how to assess quality and the corresponding benefit I can obtain from a certain quality standard. I also feel capacitated to manage my business properly more specifically on how to determine the market and distribute the money from my business”.

Bahaa Lucas, from Mto wa Mbu

3. Improved awareness on human rights, issues related to gender equality, land ownership and labour rights

Women still suffer a great deal of discrimination in the Maasai culture. Cultural taboos prevent women from owning land and abuse, both physical, verbal and emotional, is generally accepted within the pastoralist community; female genital mutilation, child marriage and poorer diets are not considered abusive. Women have **rarely been exposed to formal education** in the past, and today they still undermine the importance of girls' education, seeing it as a more profitable investment for young males. Women are generally excluded from issues such as land rights, ownership rights, labour opportunities and labour rights.

The project advocated for these rights through trainings among the formal and informal Traditional Women Groups (TWG) in each village and through media.

The topics raised are very sensitive and there is not always an enabling environment to views on these rights. Maasai men are sometimes too conservative in traditional practices that go against these rights and trainers sometimes felt only partially confident to deliver this training in their communities.

The project attempted to bridge this gap arranging a series of **meetings with the TWGs involved and local authorities** at different levels (District, Ward and Village). Through stakeholder meetings, the project invested in networking to raise awareness about these sensitive topics, strengthening the link between the trainers, women in the villages and influential people, paralegals, police officers and local authorities.

I. TRAINING ON HUMAN RIGHTS FOR THE TWGS

The training delivered under the project targeted existing formal and informal Traditional Women Groups (TWG), and through **the support of 31 village-based trainers, reached 772 women**, who attended at least one training session, out of which **657 completed the course** (85%).

The content of the training boosted trainees' capacity to increase and disseminate awareness on human rights, gender equality, land and customary rights, and to advocate their needs and interests at institutional levels. Human rights awareness can have a positive impact on **reduction of maternal mortality** through increased general knowledge regarding the effects of nutrition on health, human rights including gender issues and violence and property rights which can guarantee subsistence for female headed households.

Half of the women interviewed at the end of the project stated that there has been a positive change regarding gender equality in their villages, and this can be attributed to the increased awareness of women and children's rights.

Around half of the women respondents are now actively participating in local government meetings and in decision making processes, mainly related to community development and education activities.

"After I got skills and knowledge through the training on human rights, we had a family meeting over resources' ownership and management and now whenever there is a need of selling any family property, there must be a consent and approval from the father, mother and children. The family leaders agreed".

Esupat Alais, from Olkejuloongishu village

“The skills and knowledge received has built my confidence. I will always stand firmly from violation of my rights and defend the rights of other women and the community at large, especially on resources or property ownership and management”.

Natajewoki Kashu, Lumbwa

II. ADVOCACY

Gender-based violence, discrimination against girls’ education, land and financial resources access and ownership are very critical issues. Although widespread and unacceptable, human rights violations and gender discrimination is a very difficult topic to discuss openly in conservative communities. Driven by women’s needs, the project helped to raise awareness and facilitate dialogue around sensitive topics through a set of tools including radio campaigns, interactive street theatre and posters.

Radio campaigns advocated for equal human, land and customary rights and gender issues, **reaching more than 500,000 people** through local and national stations. The **street theatre performances** were a chance for women to realise that they can voice their ideas and needs in decision making for the benefit of the community. The scripts of the shows were factual, exposing domestic physical abuse, raising the benefits of having educated women in the family, and in the communities and showing how men are integral to initiating and backing positive social change for gender equality in society.

The theatre was a particularly powerful advocacy tool, attracting an active audience. A total of **27 performances** took place in Longido, Monduli and Arusha attended by approximately **10,200 community members** including women (60%), men and children.

2,500 posters, displaying short and clear messages to raise awareness among community members, were placed in the 8 Information Points, delivered to local authority offices, to trainers of trainers (ToTs) and project beneficiaries. The community members who visited the Information Points were particularly appreciative of posters related to land rights and gender-based violence.



1. The Information Points

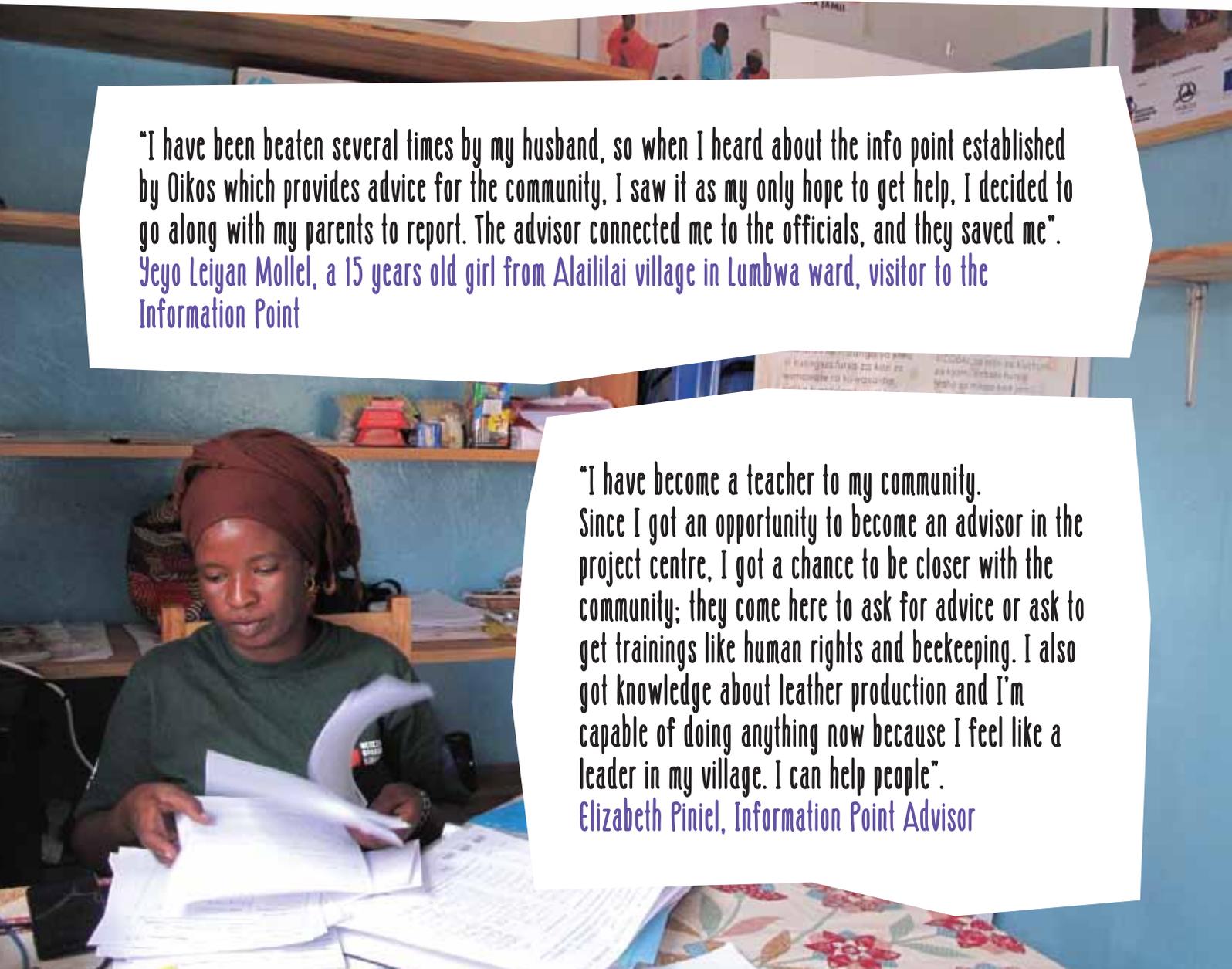
The project has set up **8 Information Points**, one in each ward, in the villages of Oldonyowas (Arusha DC), Makuyuni, Esilalei (Monduli DC), Engikaret, Gelai Lumbwa, Gelai Merugoi, Kitumbeine, Olmolog (Longido DC).

Local leaders at Ward level have been formally involved in the activity, to guarantee the sustainability of the action and to reduce the gap of communication between community members (primarily women) and LGAs. The activity has created a **climate of mutual trust and collaboration**.

The main objective of each Information Point is to provide information and consulting services to the population of the area. The Information Point is run by an 'Advisor' trained by the project who is available, on a part-time basis, to provide basic advice on social, health, and legal issues; she assists visitors in networking with other grassroots organizations/services, specialized to provide ad hoc assistance or more specific advice.

More specifically, the activities of the Information Points range from **delivering knowledge on human rights and gender equality, to networking with "violence against women" services** and existing social services (hospitals, schools, legal entities), to connect with the project activities or get basic entrepreneurial advice.

A total of 1,600+ community members visited the 8 Information Points in one year.



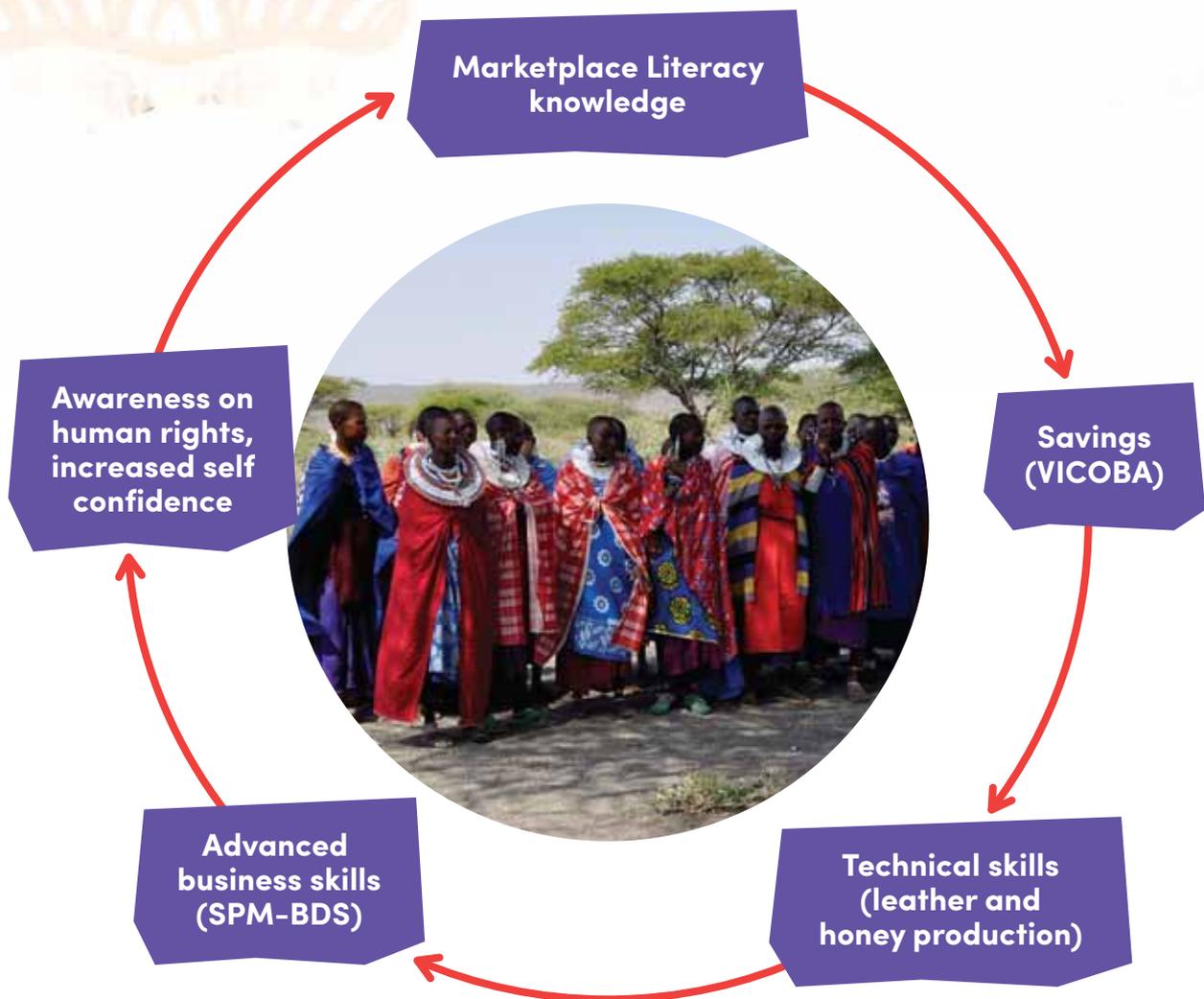
"I have been beaten several times by my husband, so when I heard about the info point established by Oikos which provides advice for the community, I saw it as my only hope to get help. I decided to go along with my parents to report. The advisor connected me to the officials, and they saved me".
Yeyo Leiyen Mollél, a 15 years old girl from Alaililai village in Lumbwa ward, visitor to the Information Point

"I have become a teacher to my community. Since I got an opportunity to become an advisor in the project centre, I got a chance to be closer with the community; they come here to ask for advice or ask to get trainings like human rights and beekeeping. I also got knowledge about leather production and I'm capable of doing anything now because I feel like a leader in my village. I can help people".
Elizabeth Piniel, Information Point Advisor

5. Relevance of the “Empowerment cycle” - a holistic vision

The project experience revealed that investing resources in different elements at the same time **allows vulnerable women to be empowered**, bringing a significant, tangible benefit, to the individual, the family, and the community.

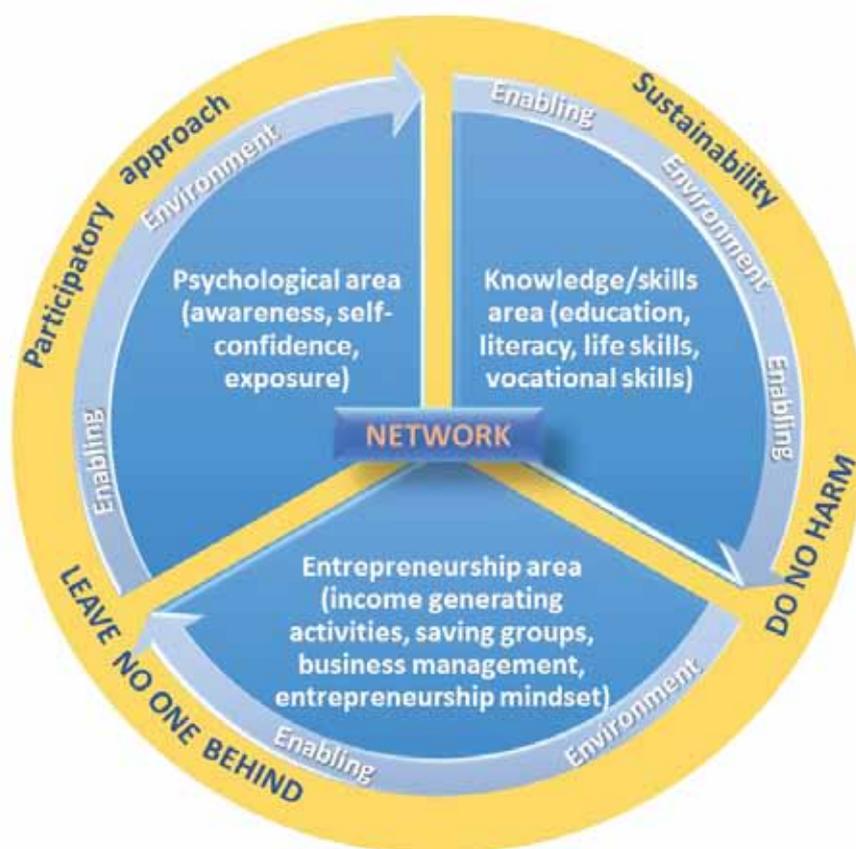
With Oikos East Africa, under this project, this idea has been successfully implemented on a sample of 273 trainees, selected from the vocational training beneficiaries (75 from leather processing groups and 198 from honey production groups). They have been trained not only in the production of leather and honey but also in business skills and the marketplace. They joined saving groups and were able to learn more about their rights, which increases self-confidence.



The idea of the **Empowerment cycle** overtakes the limits of an intervention with restricted “boundaries”, developing a series of combined actions, at different levels, addressing vulnerable women’s needs, in an empowerment cycle, with a holistic vision, to fill relevant resources’ gaps. **Different issues can be addressed at the same time**, in a combined set of interventions.

The empowerment cycle is composed of 3 macro-areas: **the psychological area** (investing in increasing awareness, self-confidence, exposure), **the knowledge/skills area** (investing in education, literacy, life skills, vocational skills) and **the entrepreneurship area** (developing income generating activities, establishing saving groups, increasing business skills and an entrepreneurial mind-set).

The empowerment cycle – a holistic vision



Any intervention in the cycle must also take into consideration its social, environmental and ethical sustainability. The empowerment cycle can reach its maximum effectiveness through **networking and relations**, which are an essential way of reducing vulnerability and boosting defenceless people through social rights and economic empowerment (“Unity is strength!”). Furthermore, the society and the political and economic context must represent a favourable milieu to the empowerment cycle.

The impacts of the empowerment cycle are numerous and positive, reducing vulnerability and increasing the level of resilience of the targeted people.

6. Lessons from the field and recommendations

LGAs AND INSTITUTIONS

Collaboration with LGA, their involvement and participation. The Investing in Maasai Women project would not have succeeded without strong collaboration with Local Government Authorities (LGAs) technicians and officers. **Promoting ownership at each stage** was strategic to increase future dissemination of successful initiatives, thus increasing the project's impact.

The presence of LGA members during the activities' implementation has also **strengthened the trust between a traditionally government-sceptical culture and the formal institutions**, increasing the long-term sustainability of the interventions.

Local authorities have been duly involved in all methodological and implementation steps, adopting a participatory approach.

Involvement of traditional/community leaders. When conducting trainings on human rights issues, gender equality and women's rights, **the involvement of traditional/community leaders** was strategic, increasing the confidence of trainers while delivering sensitive content and increasing trust and credibility in front of community members.

METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Customization of the methodology to beneficiaries' profile and local culture. The project customized the materials of all trainings to the Maasai culture, in terms of methodologies, images, exercises and practical examples. Most of this work was done locally in Tanzania requiring the dedicated involvement of project staff. The intervention also adapted all training manual content to the low level of literacy among the targeted women. Maasai culture is mainly verbal, so **visualization of images is more effective**. The outcome was a series of customized visual manuals which displayed clear and understandable messages.

Set selection criteria and interview tools for trainers and trainees. In the first year the project staff selected all the **trainers** and beneficiaries for specific activities with the support of local authorities, **following a specific selection criteria and using a customized interview tool**, including pre-conditions for participation and questions on the candidate's interest and experience in the sector.

A thoughtful selection process increases the probability to involve motivated trainees, guaranteeing a higher sustainability of the action, mostly when educational activities are involved, beyond an immediate financial or tangible benefit.

Set an incentive system for trainers and trainees. The drop out % of Marketplace Literacy training sessions was high: 60% of beneficiaries did not finalize the planned sessions. Since the benefits are not tangible and immediate for them, it was necessary to establish some incentives during the first phase of the learning process. To face this issue, the project has studied **a new system to deliver the MPL trainings** in a more efficient way, improving the learning experience with some incentives for trainers and some benefits for the trainees to compensate for their invested time. After introducing this incentive system, 95% of trainees finalized the training.

Advocacy through different tools, according to conditions. The project staff employed different communication and advocacy tools to advocate for human and women's rights, according to the geographical area and the target of listeners involved.

Radio broadcasting has been a very effective tool to advocate at national level and in Arusha and Monduli DC. **Street theatre** and dance/pantomime performances have been more effective to sponsor the same important concepts in very remote areas, where the radio network coverage is scarce, and the socio-psychographic profile of listeners is lower, hence a visual means is more suitable.

Networking. During the implementation of the whole project, networking was highly valued, among several stakeholders including LGAs, community members, organizations with the same objectives, trainers of different components, and trainees of different activities. If the general aim of different groups or stakeholders is comparable, then networking gives an opportunity to **strengthen the Action and increase its effectiveness and sustainability.**

The project has successfully managed to find synergies with other projects implemented by Oikos East Africa (i.e. Eco-boma, EENT, TERRA) and with other organizations implementing complimentary activities in the same geographical areas (i.e. PWC, World Vision) or with organizations benefiting from the collaboration of our network of trainers (i.e. Kakute).

Exchange visits. The project has arranged numerous exchange visits, at different levels: more structured groups hosted less empowered ones, groups established in remote areas visited successful case studies in Arusha, Maasai beneficiaries of the Marketplace Literacy Training Programme visiting beneficiaries following the same programme in Chennai, India and vice versa.

The exchange is a powerful tool whereby participants increase their self-confidence, are better able to compare themselves with one another, are involved in knowledge and skills sharing and **they motivate each other to engage in more pro-active roles.**

Follow up of established vocational groups. The project invested more time and resources than initially estimated for a constant follow up of the established vocational training groups (leather processing and honey production) to ensure the improvement of technical skills and group management skills.

The original training designs (including only a few training days) were adapted **to prolong the learning experience** to guarantee regular follow up and to increase sustainability.

The Empowerment cycle, a holistic vision. The investment of resources on different elements at the same time and on the same people allows vulnerable women to be empowered in a broader sense, bringing a tangible significant benefit, to the individual, the family and the community. With Oikos East Africa behind this project the idea was successfully implemented on a sample of **273 beneficiaries.** The impacts of the empowerment cycle are numerous and positive, reducing vulnerability and increasing the resilience of the targeted people community.

PROJECT DESIGN

Monitoring system. This complex project, to be implemented in 4 years and to target thousands of beneficiaries, required the accurate design and implementation of a detailed Monitoring&Evaluation (M&E) plan, an activity that was not originally planned and that requested time and resources.

The M&E plan was designed at the beginning and monitoring tools were set up to carry out a continuous exercise. With the support of an M&E Expert, **advanced e-tools have been included in the monitoring system** to standardize the procedures and minimize data entry efforts, as well as reliance on an advanced database to connect the information gathered on each component and even beyond, at organizational level.

Set an exit strategy to guarantee sustainability. The project invested resources to increase the social and financial sustainability of the activities' implemented, to ensure the improvement of the target groups' livelihoods in the mid-term and long-term period. This has been possible by actively **involving trainers, VICOBA groups, vocational training groups** (leather processing and honey production) **and Information Point Advisors.**

Impact measurement. The project has also conducted a baseline and an end-line survey on a statistically representative sample of beneficiaries. The design of **ad hoc questionnaires and data collection sessions** together with a clear definition of samples and methods are critical factors considered toward the understanding of the impact of all implemented activities. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been included. A correct analysis of the baseline with the End-line data for impact measurement was performed only in case of comparable information.



Photo: Felipe Rodriguez

7. The future: Local Government Authorities lead women empowerment

The phasing out of the Investing in Maasai Women project included a **thorough process, handing over activities to the LGAs and to community members.**

A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Oikos, Arusha, Monduli and Longido Districts defined the commitment of the three Districts to the long-term sustainability of the activities initiated by the project and the framework for further cooperation between the parties involved.

The LGAs had the opportunity, through the project, to gain a greater insight into the lives of Maasai women, the challenges they face and their potential. When actively involved in the economic and political scenario, women became aware of the positive contributions they were making and could make in their communities. The contribution of LGAs in facilitating the pro-active role of women in different scenarios has been essential.

“This programme has been useful in our community in women rights, micro credit and marketing. All this has built self-confidence among women that were reached compared to before the programme where women did not have the confidence to participate in village meetings”.

Lekishoni Kaika, a village chairman in Olkejuloongishu

“Prior to this project, women were dependent and living a difficult life. After the project women know their rights, they know where to go to report whenever they face any kind of abuses, they have been able to leverage their economy and they know the importance of savings”.

Fauzia Omary, Monduli, Focal Person for the project

EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORT

INFORMAL ECONOMY SUPPORT FACILITY (IESF) EU PLATFORM

In the framework of the “Investing in people” EU programme, the project has been **one of the seventeen initiatives selected worldwide** under the call “Investing in people” to be part of the “Informal Economy Support Facility (IESF) EU Platform”, as a knowledge sharing tool to enhance the livelihoods of people dependent on informal economy.

The platform was established in 2015 and for four years it has been a channel **to share the challenges, opportunities, lessons learnt and results** of the different initiatives, to increase the effectiveness of these initiatives and ensure the sustainability of the actions.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS PUBLICATION DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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