

GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Oikos - East Africa, Tanzania

Project: investing in Maasai women for improving rural community wellbeing

Good Practice: The empowerment cycle

1. Key Areas of Good Practice:

- Advocacy Methods (1.2)
- Awareness raising among informal economy operators/workers and other stakeholders (4.3)
- Organising informal economy workers into associations, cooperatives or other officially registered groups (1.9)
- Community based savings and credit schemes (3.5)
- Providing support to informal economy operators/workers to access services (social protection services, business registration, access to formal savings and credit schemes, training, etc.) (3.1)
- Entrepreneurship and business management training (3.2)
- Leadership training, empowerment training (3.4)
- Vocational and/or skills training (3.6)
- Enabling especially vulnerable groups on economic empowerment (women, people with disabilities, affected by HIV, youth, refugees, migrants, minority groups, etc.) (4.6 – 4.7 – 4.8 – 4.9 – 4.11)

2. Context - Brief description

Where the good practice was implemented:

The geographical target area is rural communities in Arusha, Monduli and Longido Districts, in Northern Tanzania.

Why it was implemented:

The context where Maasai women come from causes some fundamental vulnerabilities in their everyday life:

- Socio-economic barriers
- Low representation, informal economy, poor access to social services
- No voice in strategic economic and political processes
- Low capacity of women to identify, create and run small-scale businesses
- Lack of formal skills, no property, often deprived of basic rights of speech and choice, deteriorated conditions due to climate change

The project activities aim at empowering women through the combined reinforcement of different components (education, self-confidence, technical skills, business trainings, financial empowerment) increasing their resilience and self-confidence, so as to increase their representation and recognition of their role in their community.

Who was involved:

Project Staff in collaboration with local authorities' facilitation.

The activities are targeting Maasai women living in rural communities in Northern Tanzania. These women are personally benefiting from the activities of the project, but as a result, their family and the whole community where the women come from, are indirectly benefiting as well.

When the activity was implemented:

It is an ongoing process, which started in 2016, and is continuing throughout project implementation; the project is phasing out in March 2019.

3. Level and type of innovation of the good practice

The practice is innovative as the project is combining all the different components of the project in a unique network of activities, while more often NGOs implement one single activity at the time or different activities on different targets.

4. Description: processes and steps involved

The connection of different components of the project to be implemented on the same target beneficiaries provides an added value to increase their empowerment.

The empowerment cycle can bring a tangible significant benefit for the whole family/community.

Whenever an individual...

...feels self-confident and aware of his/her rights, in a condition of gender equality and in respect of the basic human rights

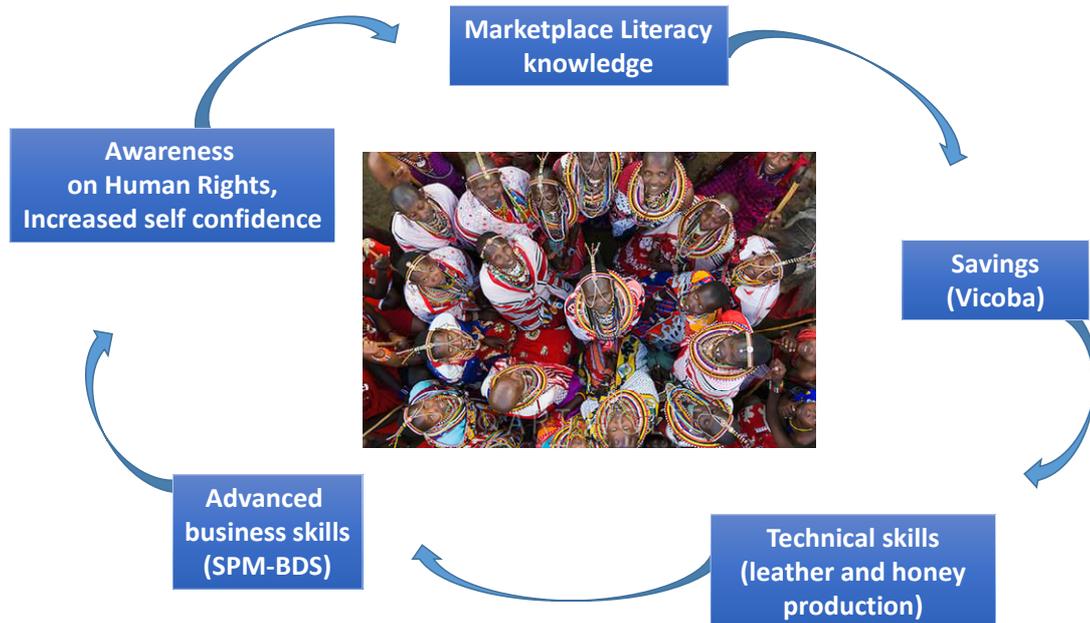
...gets knowledge on the purchasing/selling process

...is financially empowered

...gets technical skills

...gets specific business know how

the empowerment cycle is accomplished and the benefits are tangible.



The project is connecting the following components, through the support of Trainers of some of the activities, targeting trainees of some other activities (i.e. the Trainer of Marketplace Literacy Training delivering training sessions to a Saving group):

Marketplace Literacy Training:

In pastoralist communities, Marketplace Literacy represents the most challenging bottleneck among production and trade of traditional goods.

The development of new skills in the field of market literacy allows women to increase their social skills, awareness of rights, self-confidence and better deal with the “marketplace” environment as

conscious and active players and to get a basic education to successfully run sustainable small business activities.

The Marketplace literacy (with financing and market access) is a key element to participate both as consumers and entrepreneurs.

The training sessions are delivered with the support of a network of 65 Trainers spread in 31 villages.

Saving groups:

In order to improve the access to socio-economic services, through which people can improve their living conditions, the project implements two main activities: the establishment and strengthening of Village Community Bank Groups (VICOBAs), and business trainings.

Many people from the target group have no or limited access to financial resources. In order to provide access to micro-credit for up scaling of small businesses, the project established VICOBAs through the Training of Trainers (ToT) method.

Once the group is established, all group members buy shares weekly, and these savings are added to the loan fund of the group which is used to distribute loans to each other.

For each loan a member receives, she has to pay a service charge. The idea is that the value of the shares will rise, meaning people will receive profit by the end of the loan cycle.

Apart from the loan fund, VICOBAs have a social fund to which members contribute weekly. This fund functions as an informal insurance that group members can use when they are confronted with specific risks (which are defined in the constitution of the VICOBA).

The activity of the saving group is customized depending on the needs of the groups (i.e. if the saving group is funded by a leather processing group, they will add an activity of savings for the business activity specific purpose).

Vocational trainings (technical skills):

The Project is developing skills, so as to improve employability and income-generation activities among rural women.

In pastoralist communities, like the Maasai of Tanzania, livestock-related products, non-wood forest products such as honey and artisanal products, have together a great potential to generate alternative economic benefits.

The project is implementing a vocational training on leather processing (tanning and manufacturing) and also on honey production.

A pilot on dried meat production is also taking place.

BDS-SPM:

Trias offers two different types of business trainings: Start, plan and manage your business (SPM) training and the business development support (BDS) cycle.

The SPM training uses a participatory method and employs demonstrations, storytelling and role plays.

There are three main sessions in this three-day training:

- Business opportunities and entrepreneurship
- Defining costs associated with businesses (starting and operating costs) and profit calculation
- Business management

Human Rights Training:

The action aims to boost the capacity of the Targets to increase and disseminate awareness on human rights, land and customary rights, legislation among the members, and to advocate their needs and interests at institutional levels.



'Traditional Women Groups' TWGs are used as entry points to raise and disseminate awareness on their rights and to promote women's representation at institutional levels.

5. Resources and skills needed to carry out the good practice

The constant involvement of the Community Facilitator in the field, for the coordination of Trainers and groups of trainees and local authorities (to facilitate the process) is essential.

6. Sustainability of the Good Practice

Every step in the definition of the methodology and components' connection design has been structured to increase the sustainability of the actions.