



Green Waters Foundation
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PROJECT “MIKITA” – MITINDO YA KIMATAIFA TANZANIA 2012

Project MIKITA was first implemented in Tanzania in 2009. The main goal of MIKITA is to support marginalized groups, specifically women who are in vulnerable social-economically positions, to learn vocational skills such as tailoring, making tie & dye materials, making fashion accessories and other related crafts.

The first MIKITA courses in Dar es Salaam suburbs were completed in 2009 under VETA vocational training college. In 2010 MIKITA was successfully implemented in Moshi under Mkombozi Vocational training college.

Between 2009 and 2010, 35 women received diplomas in different vocational skills that certified them as professionals. The skills include tailoring of women and men clothes, making of fashion accessories, making tie and dye materials and various entrepreneurship skills.

By 2010, the Short term goals for project MIKITA were realized. The women who attended the courses both in Dar es Salaam and in Moshi were able to gain new and improve their existing knowledge. This has had a positive impact on their household income and health. Some of the skills learnt by the group have helped them to create different products and expand their businesses. i.e. entrepreneurship.

In the past, the women mostly focused on making products that are already on the market. They could not negotiate prices with their customers because they had no comparative advantage. Through the entrepreneurship course, they have received a business knowledge that is necessary for sustainability. We were pleased with the willingness shown by our group in helping others in the community to learn some of the skills they have learnt.

From 2011, Mama Rukia and Sophia Issa had previously completed MIKITA courses under VETA Dar Es Salaam have been working with a group of women in Singida that specializes in making grass products such as baskets, table mats and others. They were able to transfer the knowledge they have learnt from VETA to the women group and improved the existing product. This reflected in the increased value of the product. Furthermore, new products such as wine gift baskets and glass holders have been innovated.



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Climate change challenges:

Due to global warming, one of the climate change impacts in 2011 – 2012 is that the rainfalls were very late. This hindered the growth of the grass that is normally used for production of the commercial products which are the main livelihood of the community. Green Waters foundation was able to support the women by pre-ordering the products and paying beforehand, however it took a whole year before the women could be able to produce.

The impacts of climate change are not only a hindrance to production as a result of reduced precipitation and increased dryness leading to land degradation and soil erosion, they have a direct impact on maternal diet as well as the diets of growing children. There is increased urbanisation due to lack of employment opportunities in Singida region as well as other rural regions in Tanzania.

The exponential population growth and congestion in the capital city of Dar es salaam is a direct outcome of climate change impacts as well as lack of alternative means to earn a living within rural areas. Congestions has led to increased air, water and land pollution with varying impacts on health. The remaining rural population can barely survive from the land and many able bodied individuals have turned to begging.

Being that the UN millennium development goals aim to end poverty by 2015, it is important to direct funding towards climate change adaptation projects, and to give incentives for investing in rural areas in order to create alternative income generating activities for rural populations.



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Meeting with MIKITA group - Dar es salaam Tanzania 21/11/2012:

Since 2009 MIKITA project coordinator in Dar es salaam, Mrs Wardah Yazidy (Mama Rukia), who is also a widow with three daughters has been advocating capacity building for women from low income groups, raising awareness about the situation of women in small income groups, working with Green Waters Netherlands to address the needs of the various women, encouraging community involvement, coordinating information between Green Waters Netherlands, training college, the marginalized women in Dar es salaam and Singida, sending progress reports, trainings, identifying potential leaders with training skills and following up on production.



Mama Rukia reading a speech during a small meeting for MIKITA women held at her residence in Dar es salaam, states that the biggest challenges facing the women is finding a market for their skills and their products. Without a market it is very difficult to support themselves and their dependants.

E.g. The women have been able to learn enough tailoring skills, however the demand for their products in Tanzania is still low because there are many similar products. What the women need is a steady market for the various products that they make. They are also willing to listen to new ideas from designers within the Netherlands.



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Currently the women are working individually from home. This is a big challenge for some of them because of their financial situation, some cannot afford to buy prepaid electricity and therefore if a customer doesn't pay in advance, it is impossible to make the ordered product. The long term of MIKITA project is to establish a production house whereby women can work together, receive trainings from professionals both national and international as well as give trainings to others.





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Mama Rukia as well as Ms Sophia Issa are experts in Knitting. I was very impressed to receive a blanket knitted by Sophia Issa which took her 2 and a half months. The value Green Waters foundation agreed to pay for the product is 130 Euro based on expertise, quality and the hours spent on this unique handcraft. The thread used is thick and colorful and the blanket is perfect for winter. The blanket will be sold on our Webshop for a slightly higher price in order to finance capacity building other marginalized women.





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More good news is that Ms Praxeda Tibendelana from Bukoba Kagera has joined MIKITA group in Dar es salaam. Ms Praxeda is an expert in using different types of grass to make household products and fashion accessories. One of her skills that I was able to observe is the making of products by using a banana tree bark. Personally I bought a skirt, a top, a wallet, a hat, earrings and a hat that she made for me by using the banana tree bark.



This personal 'collection' took her 1 week to make and she completed the final products (a tie) just when I was preparing to leave for the airport ready for my trip back to Netherlands.



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Other products made by banana tree bark by Ms Praxeda Tibendelana include fruit baskets, serving trays, bowls, curtail clutches, handbags and purses as seen below.





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The little bowls as shown below are part of the products which were ordered by Green Waters Foundation in 2011 but due to draught the products were completed in November 2012 and transported from Tanzania to the Netherlands in December.





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Project MIKITA Evaluation 2012

- S** - The products made are sustainable in quality and usefulness, they were made without causing environmental impact.
- M** - Social and environmental impacts can be monitored throughout the supply chain.
- A** - Analysis of skills and time used for production match the price we give.
- R** - Resources used are local.
- T** - Technology used is from the local people.

Follow up and sustainability

We continuously try to build partnerships and create a market for the products made by MIKITA target groups. We involve our network of friends on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Project MIKITA lightens the financial burdens for women who are involved in Tanzania and it has the potential to reach more women in marginalised areas. In many of our African cultures women are treated as an inferior gender which reflects in traditional practices such as customary wife beatings, genital mutilation, and child marriages. Rural women have few opportunities to attend formal education. With capacity building women are empowered to gain financial independence and be able to say no to the negative.

MIKITA project is for women. The project intention is to continue to raise the position of the women in societies where they live in. This can eventually help improve communication and equal participation in decision making leading to sustainable development for all – development that does not discriminate.



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To support Green Waters, you may buy some of the products made under MIKITA from our Webshop: <http://www.freewebstore.org/greenwaters>

A direct donation can also be made via paypal (see www.green-waters.org) or directly into our bank account:

ING Bank Rotterdam
Groeninx van Zoelenlaan 125
3078 AW Rotterdam
The Netherlands

Account Name: GREEN WATERS Foundation
Account No. 3458111

IBAN: NL57 INGB 0003458111
BIC: INGBNL2A

We hope to have established a sustainable working relationship and we can continue to work together and enable more women to receive trainings through project MIKITA – *Mitindo ya Kimataifa Tanzania*.

Green Waters management team Ms Stella Evelyne Tesha & Ms Bianka Wettin would like to thank all those who have assisted us in our efforts for empowerment.

Project MIKITA 2012 was made possible by the hard work of MIKITA women in Tanzania and the Green Waters Team in the Netherlands.