

FAWCO TARGET PROGRAM 2016 - 2019

Education: Empowering Women and Girls through Knowledge and Skills.



Shortlisted Target Project Proposal

Threading the Future, a project of the Stahili Foundation

Highlights:

Who: Female heads-of-households in rural Muranga County, Kenya

What and How:

- 62 women will receive vocational training in tailoring and business skills
- A community center for women and girls will be established
- 600 school uniforms will be made or repaired for vulnerable children, particularly girls
- Graduates will form a Women's Committee to support new students and engage the community

Budget: \$110,900

100% of funds will be invested at the project level and will finance the entirety of the project: capital investment in equipment; materials; vocational and business skills training; support services.

The Organization

Founded in 2012 by three women who witnessed child abuse and exploitation and the misappropriation of donor money at an orphanage in Kenya, Stahili's mission is to see a world where every child can fulfill his or her potential through family, community, and education.



STAHILI FOUNDATION

Stahili works to empower women and children to eradicate poverty and child exploitation through sustainable and community-based solutions. Its efforts are focused on vulnerable communities, with an emphasis on family and education rights, child trafficking, and children in armed conflict. Having children live in a family environment and not in orphanages is part of the mission. Stahili has grown into a respected children's rights advocacy group with a global reach. While their advocacy campaigns and research work address children's rights issues around the world, its direct service child protection and development programs are run in Kenya.

Education is central to Stahili's mission and is embodied in the backpack on its logo. All of the children Stahili works with receive full-time education, and retention rates have been 100%. The children are also given the opportunity to continue their studies in vocational programs, college, or university. Stahili plans for these costs, and has chosen to focus on quality over quantity.

The Project

FAWCO support is sought for Threading the Future, a project to educate and empower female-led households and young mothers in Muranga County. This is one of the poorest counties in Kenya. Unemployment rates are high, and average households, 90% of which are headed by women, consist of four to eight people. Small scale farming is the major activity for

women there, but it is insufficient to meet the demands of families. In addition, many women lack basic life-skills, education, and vocational capabilities. Limited opportunity to provide for their families is a key factor that leads women in the community to place their children in orphanages.

Threading the Future was designed by Stahili, the local village Chief, and community members to help uplift women who have been reunited with their children who once lived in orphanages due to poverty. It will also target young mothers who risk suffering a similar fate. This project is based on needs of women and designed by them.

Threading the Future will help 62 women (and their families) by teaching them tailoring and other skills to become economically independent and empowered. Among other things it will: Establish a Leadership Center equipped with the tools necessary for the women to learn tailoring and to use post-graduation to continue producing goods; Teach the women important life and business skills and provide mentorship on things like building client relationships; Develop leadership capacity by forming a Women's Committee for graduates of the training program to pass on newly acquired skills and serve as role models in the community; Offer childcare and subsistence support for the women and their families. As the project targets single mothers and women with family responsibilities, the last point is to encourage attendance and participation, and came about as a result of concerns raised during consultations with women and the community.

Girls' education will benefit from this community-based project. Not having a mandatory school uniform is one of the rarely acknowledged reasons why girls (and boys) drop out of or fail to attend school in Kenya. First, the Center will provide a community space for schoolgirls to meet and study, as well as learn basic sewing and other life-skills; and second, the women's training in tailoring will be initially focused on making and repairing school uniforms, providing 600 free uniforms to vulnerable children, particularly girls. The project therefore reaches both women and girls and promotes both sustainable economic development and education opportunities.

Threading the Future is designed to give women ownership of the project, in collaboration with Stahili. When women complete the training, they will receive micro-financing loans to purchase their own materials to make textile products that they can sell. Micro-financing will be funded through the sale of a signature My Sister's Threads Tote Bag, produced at the center by the women. Also, Stahili's team will assist them with market access by developing relationships with schools that the women can sell uniforms to.

FAWCO funds will finance the entirety of the project, which will consist of four annual three-month training cycles with eight women participating in each cycle over the project period of two years. Funds will be used to purchase high quality equipment for intensive training (such as sewing, knitting and embroidery machines, and necessary accessories), rent space for the Leadership Center, hire trained staff and teachers, and support women and their children with food and hygiene support so that they can attend the training.

This two-year project is intended to be the start of an ongoing program. Stahili has long-term plans to build a community center. As Stahili grows and develops, Threading the Future will move to a permanent home and serve as one of its flagship programs. It will have a significant long-term impact on the community far beyond the lifespan of the project.

Threading the Future will give participants a chance to build a future for themselves and for children; it will equip them with the skills necessary to generate their own income as tailors, and provide the life, business and other skills necessary to empower them to play an active role in their community.

You are invited to learn more about the organization by visiting their website, www.stahili.org. Please be aware the Threading the Future project is not presented on their website as this is a project specifically designed for FAWCO. You may request a copy of the application by contacting Tricia R. Saur, Target Chair at target@fawco.org.