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Women's Economic Empowerment — Msomera Beadwork Initiative

Pilot Phase Project Report | January 2026 | Msomera Village, Handeni District

Beneficiaries	Duration	Location
10 women artisans	1-week intensive training, January 2026	Msomera Village, Handeni District, Tanga Region

1. Background & Objectives

The Msomera Beadwork Initiative is REMO's first pilot under its Women's Economic Empowerment programme. Maasai women relocated to Msomera from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area face compounded challenges: loss of traditional livelihoods, limited income opportunities, and difficulty supporting their children's education. This pilot leverages existing cultural heritage — traditional Maasai beadwork — as a foundation for building sustainable economic independence.

Objective	Detail
Economic empowerment	Equip 10 women with advanced bead design skills to generate sustainable income
Reduce dependency	Build self-reliance through entrepreneurship and cooperative business management
Business literacy	Provide financial management and market awareness training
Educational support	Enable women to better support their children's schooling through improved household income
Cultural preservation	Document and promote traditional beadwork designs of the Msomera community



Women during the one-week intensive beadwork training, Msomera Village, January 2026

2. Implementation Activities

Training Phase (January 2026)

- Selection and registration of 10 beneficiary women through community consultation
- One-week intensive training in contemporary bead design techniques, colour theory, and pattern development
- Quality control and product finishing
- Documentation of traditional design patterns for cultural preservation
- Business skills workshops: pricing, record-keeping, and cooperative governance

Production Establishment (May 2026)

- Formation of the 'Msomera Beadwork Cooperative'
- Distribution of startup kits: beads, threads, needles, and storage containers
- Establishment of communal workspace in a donated village building
- Development of initial product lines: jewellery, keychains, and decorative items
- Creation of cooperative governance structure with elected leadership

3. Challenges Encountered

Challenge	Detail
Working capital	Insufficient funds for bulk material purchases, limiting product volume in the pilot phase
Transport & logistics	Women's homes are spread across the village — individual collection was required for each participant
Time management	Balancing intensive training with existing domestic responsibilities required flexibility in scheduling
High demand	Significantly more women wanted to participate than the pilot could accommodate — a positive signal for Phase 2

4. Recommendations for Phase 2

Area	Recommendation
Programme expansion	Include an additional 10 women, with current participants serving as peer mentors
Advanced training	Introduce more complex techniques and diversify product lines beyond current range
Market access	Explore tourist markets in Tanga city, gallery partnerships, and digital sales platforms
Branding	Develop packaging and branding for premium market positioning
Finance	Link with microfinance institutions to address working capital gap
Cultural documentation	Create a pattern book of traditional Msomera designs for cultural preservation and product differentiation



Msomera Beadwork Cooperative participants, January 2026

5. Conclusion

The pilot has demonstrated that targeted investment in women's traditional skills can effectively address interconnected challenges of poverty, dependency, and limited educational support. The 10 women of Msomera Village have moved from economically vulnerable individuals to active artisans and emerging entrepreneurs — shaping their families' futures while preserving Maasai cultural heritage.

The dual focus on skills and cooperative business structure has created a foundation with clear potential for replication. High demand from women who could not be included in the pilot is the strongest validation of the model. REMO is committed to supporting the Msomera Beadwork Cooperative's growth and expanding this approach to other communities in Phase 2.

Together for a Bright Future

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