



United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change

The BOMA Project | Kenya

The BOMA Project helps women living in extreme poverty in Kenya's arid lands adapt to climate change by diversifying their livelihoods by starting small businesses in their villages. Its Rural Entrepreneur Access Project (REAP) targets the poorest and most vulnerable women in each community. REAP builds resilience to climate change because it enables women to own productive assets, which generate income and are not tied to the drought-threatened livestock industry.

The problem

REAP targets poor women in rural villages across Northern Kenya, a region where climate change has devastated the traditional livestock industry. Women and children are most vulnerable: as the men travel in search of grazing terrain, their families are left in the villages, typically without food or income. BOMA benefits the enterprising poor - marginalized women who are willing to work hard to change their lives - by giving them the skills and resources they need to start a business.

Diversified income allows them to pay for food, education, household assets and medical care, while savings allow them to respond to shocks. This two-pronged approach addresses the root cause of extreme poverty in Northern Kenya - drought - while paving the way for a generation of change.

The solution

REAP is a two-year poverty graduation program that provides a cash grant, sustained training in business skills and savings, and hands-on coaching by BOMA Village Mentors to business groups of three women. When the businesses are established and generating profits, at six months, Mentors work with REAP groups to form BOMA savings associations. As a result of being lifted out of extreme poverty, the women become more resilient to climate change.

Since January 2009, BOMA has established 1,681 REAP businesses and 208 savings associations in 20 settled villages and 250 nomadic settlements across Northern Kenya. BOMA has lifted 32,000 women and children out of extreme poverty; its goal is to reach 100,000 within five years.

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