

IMPACT ASSESSMENT KAREN WALKER, SS15, KENYA

The Ethical Fashion Initiative carried out an Impact Assessment during the production of Karen Walker Spring/Summer 2015 order in Kenya. Impact Assessment enables the Ethical Fashion Initiative to monitor, evaluate and provide feedback on compliance with fair labour standards and the impact the order had on workers and the communities they live in.

CORE FINDINGS

The impact of the Karen Walker SS15 order on the participants was tangible: artisans earned a higher wage with which they could contribute directly to their household and/or save for the future use. In addition to increased earnings, the Karen Walker SS15 order provided artisans with the opportunity to improve their skills in order to meet the quality demands of the international fashion market.

GENERAL FEATURE OF THE GROUP

The order was produced between January and February 2015, providing work and income to artisans from poor and marginalised areas.

- The order was produced through a Kenyan Social Enterprise, Ethical Fashion Artisans EPZ (*Export Processing Zone*) Ltd., headquartered in Nairobi.
- The order was produced by 95 artisans.
- The order engaged three skill levels:
 - Skilled artisans – Quality Control, Supervisory and Stitching.
 - Semi-skilled artisans – Screen Printing.
 - Manual artisans – Preparation, Finishing, Labelling and Packing.
- 97% of the participants in the order were women.
- 85% of the artisans were under 35 years old.

IMPACT: INCOME



- Income was dependent on the skill level engaged, the speed and productivity of artisans in a day.
- The order allowed the income of artisans to increase by 1.4 to 4.6 times.
- 72% of the surveyed artisans admitted that their income was higher than what they would have earned otherwise.

IMPACT: TRAINING RECEIVED



- 100% of artisans received training during the production of the order.
- 43% of artisans were trained in Tailoring, 36% in Preparation, 11% in Quality Control and 5% in Screen Printing.
- 100% of artisans gained social skills, such as production planning and public speaking.
- 100% of trainees reported they were able to pass on their knowledge to others.

IMPACT: WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



- 41% of women were able to save money from the income received.
- The majority of the participants working on the order were single mothers.

IMPACT: HEALTH AND NUTRITION



- Among the 20% of respondents that experienced sickness in their household, 10% were able to receive treatment in private medical facilities and 6% in public facilities.
- 95% of artisans said that they would not have sought the same treatment without the income from the order.
- 31% of artisans reported that the money from the order enabled them to provide healthier meals for their families.

IMPACT: BANKING AND CAPACITY TO SAVE



- 64% of artisans (41% women) were able to save money from the income received from the order.
- On average artisans were able to save 25% of their earnings during the period of the order.
- 18% of participants (13% women) were able to invest their earnings.

IMPACT: ACCESS TO EDUCATION



- 39% of respondents contributed to all or part of the school fees during the order.

IMPACT: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY








- 59% of artisans re-used or recycled leftover materials to make other goods for economic gain.
- 64% of those surveyed contributed to reducing environmental degradation by deliberately participating in activities such as collecting garbage, planting trees or draining open sewers.

IMPACT: SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING



- 75% of participants said that the money they earned during the order was enough to cover all or at least their basic needs.
- 46% of respondents were satisfied with the way the money helped them to support their family and dependents.
- 100% of artisans were confident and proud of their work.
- 95% of respondents were satisfied with their work.

ARTISAN TESTIMONIES

Testimonials	
<p>Peter Sejero</p> 	<p><i>I am 30 years old. I worked on the Karen Walker order in the screen printing section. The order was quite challenging. Despite being a supervisor and a very skilled printer I was not able to print with 6 different colours. Finally, I could print in 6 and 4 colours but only after a very intensive technical training with an expert. I used to think that multicolour printouts were only done by machines but now I know that skilled and well-trained artisans can do it manually. In addition to good income I was able to earn, this order also improved my skills in screen printing.</i></p>
<p>Irene Olweny</p> 	<p><i>I am 23 years old and living with my parents. I participated in the Karen Walker SS 2015 order at the final quality control and finishing section. From this order I discovered that I could also supervise and lead my team to perform. The income from this order also helped me to save and to cover my tuition fee.</i></p>
<p>Ann Mbithe</p> 	<p><i>I am 24 years old. Not yet married but taking care of my mother. During the Karen Walker order I worked as a supervisor for tailors. The order made me appreciate teamwork and supporting colleagues. The income from the order was helpful to pay our family bills and have healthy meals.</i></p>
<p>Regina Syokau</p> 	<p><i>I am a single mother of one. I am happy when I am able to meet my bills and offer the best to my child as a mother. With the income from the Karen Walker order I was able to raise money for school fees and saved some part of it to use for starting a business.</i></p>
<p>Winnie Wangare</p> 	<p><i>I am 28 years old and living with my parents. My father is sick with cancer. The Karen Walker order assisted me to offer healthy meals and good care to my father. I was a supervisor during the order. I can testify that the order was really useful to the artisans involved in terms of income and skill development.</i></p>

CONCLUSION:

The Karen Walker order assisted artisans to develop better skills which allowed them to sustain their competitive edge in the domestic market. Having benefited from technical skill training offered them a viable advantage over other artisans in the same sector who did not participate in the Karen Walker order.

The findings further indicate that the majority of artisans were glad to have work and income especially in the period of January and February. In 2015, these two months were characterised by dry spell which pushed up prices for most items especially food. News was everywhere showing people already stricken by hunger or under an acute threat of starvation.

In addition, the two months marked the start of term one for school children. This meant spending on tuition fees and other secondary needs such as uniforms, shoes, books etc for parents. These payments can be a heavy burden meaning the majority of the artisan appreciated even more the income from the Karen Walker SS15 order. The order offered them the opportunity to enjoy sufficient disposable income with which they used to address the many needs associated with the months of January and February.

ABOUT THE ETHICAL FASHION INITIATIVE

The Ethical Fashion Initiative is a flagship programme of the International Trade Centre, a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. The Ethical Fashion Initiative reduces global poverty by linking micro-producers to the international supply chain of fashion. The Ethical Fashion Initiative is not a charity but facilitates dignified work at a fair wage. This is achieved by connecting some of the world's most marginalised artisans in Africa and Haiti with the fashion industry's top talents, for mutual benefit. The Ethical Fashion Initiative also works with upcoming designers in West Africa to promote African creativity and encourage local manufacturing.

In everything it does, the Ethical Fashion Initiative develops local creativity, fosters predominantly female employment and empowerment, promotes gender equality to reduce extreme poverty and increase the export capacities of the regions in which it operate.

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