



**MIMCO**



ARTISAN  
FASHION  
from ethical fashion artisans

**MIMCO**

Constellation 2017

Impact Assessment

ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative: Artisan.Fashion EPZ Ltd

January-March, 2017



This order was monitored using the RISE framework – an innovative scheme developed by the International Trade Centre’s Ethical Fashion Initiative (EFI) allowing clear and objective monitoring through data analysis. Benefits of the order were recognised in terms of income and saving, education, health and nutrition, overall strengthening local enterprises and improving the standards of living for those involved and their families.



Ethical  
Fashion  
Initiative

**International Trade Centre’s Ethical Fashion Initiative Impact Assessment**

**Mimco Constellation 2017 order summary.**

Mimco produced 1,724 totes, pouches and purses in Kenya as part of their Constellation 2017 collection. This order included 10,480 beaded components and 1,224 accompanying dust bags.

A total of 134 artisans were involved in producing the order, part of eight different community groups: Agape Hope Centre, Bega Kwa Bega, Dynasty, Mahali pa Watoto, Namaiyana women, Oldanyatti women, Olonana women, and Sanata Women Self- Help Groups. 89% of the artisans working on the order were women and 84% of the artisans were under the age of 40.

Different skills required to produce the order were: beading, cutting, preparation, screen printing, embroidery, supervision and quality control. Nearly all artisans received some form of training to help with the production of the order.

72% of the artisans used income received to fund the education of their children, dependents or their own.

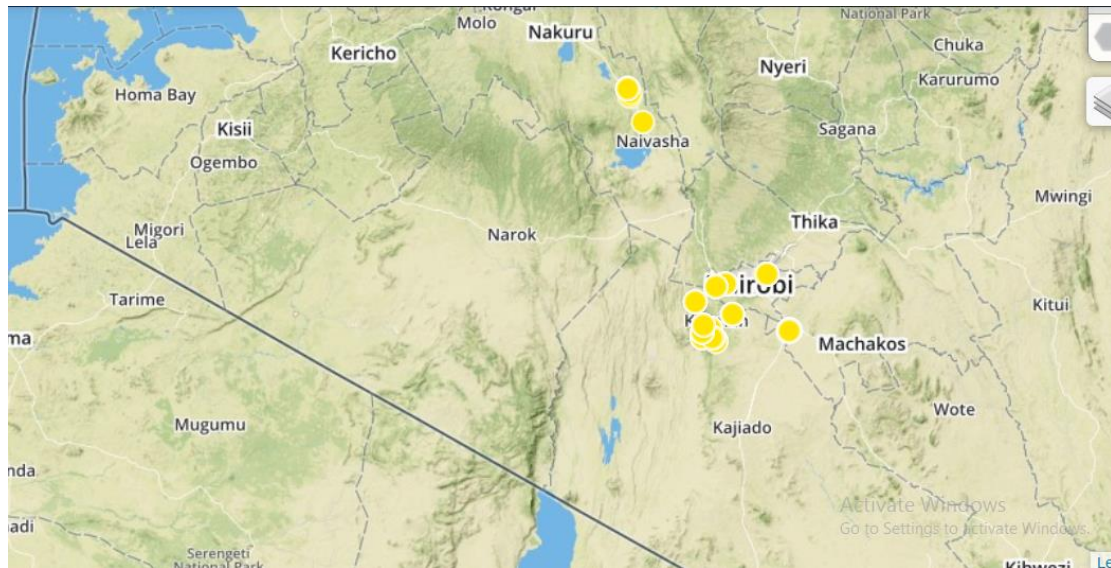
Style	Photo	Quantity	Groups involved in production
Tote		500	Artisan.Fashion EPZ Ltd.
Pouch		724	Artisan.Fashion EPZ Ltd.

Purse		500	Artisan.Fashion EPZ Ltd.
Purse Circles		7450	Artisan.Fashion EPZ Ltd, Dynasty, Olonana Oldanyatti, and Namaiyana SHGs.
Pouch Circles		3030	Artisan.Fashion EPZ Ltd, Sanata, Dynasty, Mahali pa Watoto, and Agape Women.
Dust Bags		1224	
<b>Total</b>		<b>13,428</b>	

**Community groups participated in the order**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Main skills used in the order</b>	<b># of the participants in the order</b>	<b># of women</b>	<b>Trainings received</b>
Artisan.Fashion EPZ-LTD	Final quality control, packing	24	14	No
Agape Hope Centre	Beading purse circles	18	18	Yes
Dynasty Self-Help Group	Beading purse circles and Beading Pouch Circle	5	4	No
Oldanyatti Women Self-Help Group	Beading Pouch Circle	20	20	Yes
Olonana Women group	Beading Pouch Circle	20	20	Yes
Sanata Women Group	Beading Purse circles	25	25	Yes
Namaiyana Women group	Beading Pouch Circle	7	7	Yes
Mahali Pa Watoto	Beading Purse circles	12	12	Yes
Bega Kwa Bega	Beading Purse circles	3	3	Yes
<b>Total</b>		134	123	

### Map of communities involved / production location



### Challenges

- ❖ The Mimco Constellation 2017 order was received during a period of severe drought and water scarcity. The drought was declared a national disaster on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2017<sup>1</sup> and had contributed to deaths of both people and animals in arid and semi-arid parts of the country. The situation was also felt in slums, where a lack of water threatened the health of many inhabitants including many of the artisans who worked on the order. The drought had a direct influence on the performance of the order; for example, beading in community groups was delayed by artisans needing to walk long distances in search of water.
- ❖ The ongoing voter registration in the month of January and February also affected production of the order. Some artisans especially among the Maasai community groups walked long distances to their centres to register as voters which also contributed to delaying production.

### Income, saving and investment



The workers received a fair and decent wage throughout the order. Many of the artisans were able to **save and invest their earnings into education, health, housing and various other commodities**, increasing their opportunities and contributing towards poverty alleviation.



- ❖ As a result of the order, artisan income increased by 27%;
- ❖ 83% of participants stated their income was higher than what they would have otherwise earned from the domestic market;

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38934847>

- ❖ 36% were able to save and invest their income. 37% of these earnings were primarily invested in small businesses, education and training, livestock and housing;
- ❖ 72% of workers were able to pay all or most of the tuition fees for children.

### Skill development



To complete the order, the artisans improved and expanded their **skillsets** and received trainings. This contributes to their **income-generating prospects**.

- ❖ 83% of artisans received training and learnt new skills to complete the Mimco Constellation 2017 order;
- ❖ 16% said that they invested in training and skill development with the proceeds from the order.

### Health and nutrition



Receiving a regular income enabled artisans to **maintain their health** due to a **regular meal** and **improved medical care access**, subsequently enhancing their **quality of life**.

- ❖ 100% of participants were able to provide a regular and healthy meal for their household. 85% of workers stated that they never or rarely skipped a meal, while 15% sometimes or often skipped meals owing to the ravaging drought experienced in most parts of the country;
- ❖ 11% of the participants experienced sickness during the order;
- ❖ 89% of these artisans were able to access health care. The other 11% especially from the pastoralist communities consulted traditional healers for herbs to cure their ailments;
- ❖ 100% of the artisans who experienced sickness said they would not have sought the same medical treatment without the income received from the order.

### Social well-being



For most artisans, working on the order provided them with a sense of **social well-being** and improved their **life satisfaction**. Not only did the artisans work together to complete the order, but they **worked as a community** to discuss their **daily needs** and **solve pressing social issues**. This **empowered women** and **improved development**, consistent with the aims of EFI.

- ❖ 100% of artisans said they felt more confident in their daily tasks and activities as a result of the order;
- ❖ 100% of artisans felt proud of the work they had produced;
- ❖ 100% of artisans were able to provide for their immediate families with the income from the order;
- ❖ The Mimco Constellation 2017 order had an overall satisfaction rate of 100%.

## Meet the artisans

**Jane Njeri, 35 years old**



*I am a mother of five. I participated on the Mimco Constellation 2017 order as a beader. I received a good income which I used to pay primary school fees for all of five of my children. I also bought new uniforms and improved my family's nutritional intake.*

**Mary Joseph, 35 years old**



*I am a single mother of four. I did not get the opportunity to go to school and would not want my children to have the same experience as me. I work hard to keep them in school and was happy to receive work on the Mimco Constellation 2017 order. The income I received contributed towards meeting my desire of educating my children.*

**Elisabeth Silantoi, 25 years old**



*I am a college student pursuing a diploma course in education. The order came when lecturers were on strike and so I used the opportunity to work. I worked on the Mimco Constellation 2017 order as a beader. I received a good income which I saved in order to pay my tuition fees for next semester.*

**Miriam Mwangangi, 29 years' old**



*I am a mother of one. Working on the Mimco Constellation 2017 order gave me a lot of joy. The month of January and February were very dry which led to scarcity of food and water. The order gave me enough disposable income which I used to feed my family and to pay rent.*

**Mini / 'fun facts' about the order**

The order presented some challenges especially in beadwork, cutting and printing.

The challenges were addressed through on-the-job training which assisted artisans to improve on their skills.

Working with wire was a new technique especially to non-Maasai artisans.

**Mini / 'fun facts' about the order**

83% of artisans improved their skills through on the job training.

It took 90 minutes for five artisans (a beader, cutter, hand screen printer, preparation tailor and finishing tailor) to produce one complete tote bag.

The order used locally sourced materials such as cotton kitenge, cotton canvas, polycotton, leather and embroidery threads.

**Conclusion**

Mimco's Constellation 2017 order was produced in a period of harsh economic times caused by severe drought. Though experiencing such difficult conditions, the artisans demonstrated a high level of resilience in performing the order. The findings indicate that the order was not only a source of much needed income, but also an opportunity for some artisans to learn new skills and techniques.

The Mimco Constellation 2017 order demonstrates that an order with many different components is beneficial for artisanal engagement. With 1224 major units ordered, the order still provided work to 134 artisans for two months thanks to the multiple components the bags required. Many artisans, the majority of whom are women from marginalised community groups, got the opportunity to work and receive regular income which they used to address pressing needs such as school fees and food.

**More about the Ethical Fashion Initiative:**

The Ethical Fashion Initiative (EFI) is a flagship programme of the International Trade Centre, a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. EFI reduces global poverty by linking micro-producers and artisans to the international supply chain of fashion, facilitating dignified work at a fair wage. By collaborating with social enterprises, the EFI supports local creativity, female employment and empowerment and gender equality. Ultimately, this aims to reduce extreme poverty and increase the export capacities of the region in which it operates.

**About: ARTISAN.FASHION EPZ Ltd**

**ARTISAN.FASHION** is a social enterprise that was established in 2005 to connect Africa's artisans to esteemed luxury brands all over the world. They are the first African production company to successfully combine artisan creativity and production capability with a careful consideration for traceable social impact. Acting both as a production hub and a disseminator of work, they employ Kenyan artisans in their hub and collaborate with 17 artisan communities across Kenya to produce hand crafted materials and artefacts made with traditional skills.