

**Project Title**

Women Empowerment Through Skills Training  
Towards Economic Support and Self Reliance.

**Project Location**

Bualle District, Middle Juba Region, Somalia

**Project Budget**

	Amount US\$
Total Project Cost	27,030
Mrlo's Contribution	7,080
Requested Amount	19,950

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#### 1.4 Executive Summary

The proposed project by MRLO is aimed at promotion of women empowerment through gender mainstreaming. This will be done through promotion of women participation through capacity building and skills trainings to be independent among five selected villages in Bualle district, Middle Juba region, Somalia.

MRLO is a registered Local Non-Governmental Organization, Non-Political, non-religious working in partnership with both local and international Partners tackling poverty cases, responding to emergencies and disasters of any kind, Promoting peace and justice and transforming conflict into opportunities for peace and development and human rights advocacy.

The organization goal is to 'Create access to social and economic opportunities towards empowering Women and Children.' To achieve this goal, MRLO works by mobilizing and recruiting women into self-help groups through which the women engage in various socio-economic activities. As an organization, MRLO believes that in order to reach the child, the woman as the custodian of the child has to be accessed first.

The proposed project by MRLO is championing for the empowerment of women by building their capacities and competencies. This will be achieved by conducting a three month period skills and entrepreneurship trainings which will equip them with the necessary skills and experience to manage their own businesses.

The project will empower them to be able to position themselves in strategic decision making processes that take place at varying levels in social, economic and political issues of the region and country as large.

The project's specific objectives are:-

- (i) To Increase the financial abilities of women to enable them purchase food for their families, Educate their children (girl child focus), Afford better health, clothing and shelter for their children and Reduce poverty and attain improved standards of living.
- (ii) Advance gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women, ensuring elimination of all kinds of violence against women and children through Full participation in social, economic and political spectra at all levels and bringing women into the main stream of development.

Targeted primary beneficiaries to this project shall include 30 women who shall be mobilized from different communities within Bualle District, Middle Juba, Somalia.

Proposed duration of the project is 6 months.

The total project cost is projected at US\$ 27,030 comprising the Mrlo's own contribution of US\$ 7,080 and requested funding contribution of US\$ 19,950.

### 1.5. Proposed Project Objectives

The main goal of the project is promotion of women empowerment through gender mainstreaming. This will be done through promotion of women participation through capacity building and skills trainings to be independent.

However, other objectives of the project shall include the following:-

Objective – 1 - To Increase the financial abilities of women to enable them purchase food for their families, Educate their children(girl child focus), Afford better health, clothing and shelter for their children and Reduce poverty and attain improved standards of living.

Objective – 2 – Advance gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women, ensuring elimination of all kinds of violence against women and children through Full participation in social, economic and political spectra at all levels and bringing women into the main stream of development.

### 1.6. Relevance of the project

The conflict in Somalia is largely driven by poverty and inter-clan contests in a society that is founded on a deep clan-based culture with a strong pastoral tradition. Lack of a functioning centralized government for the whole country remains a major challenge. The entire country is burdened by the ravages of conflict and entrenched poverty.

Women and girls make up about 50% of the Somali population and the gross inequalities and inhuman conditions they endure both as a result of the conflict, and in general, is a key factor contributing to Somalia's extremely poor human development index. The situation of Somali women is particularly dire and presents real concerns for their fair treatment, access to justice and overall human rights protection. Of the 1.5 million people that are currently displaced, 600,000 are women of reproductive age and more than 80% of them have no access to safe maternal delivery (ICRC 2009). Many of the displaced women are widows and heads of households with hardly any access to property, health care and education. Somalia's maternal mortality rates are amongst the highest in the world, at 1,400 per 100,000 live births. Early marriages and teenage pregnancies are common; 45% of women now aged 20- 24 were married by the age of 18 or younger (ICRC 2009). Girls who get married or give birth at a young age have a greater vulnerability to violence and health risks. 65% of women between the ages of 15-64 participate in the domestic hard labor force. Somalia was recently ranked the fifth most dangerous country in the world for a woman.

Women bear unequal brunt of the hardships occasioned by poverty, conflict, natural disaster and a deeply clan-based culture which promotes strict male hierarchy and authority. A critical element of hardship emanates from the women's increasing roles as providers of basic needs or amenities to the members of their households – which are extracted from the natural resources, i.e. land, water, vegetation etc. In these circumstances, women come under extreme pressures and violence under stressful conditions that exist in Somalia. This is further exacerbated by religious and cultural limitations on the role and status of women in Somali society. As a result, deeply rooted gender inequality prevails; Somali women are either excluded from decision making and asset ownership or operate through a patriarchal filter. They suffer cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment including Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), a general lack of access to formal justice mechanisms and extreme marginalization and repression under the traditional justice system or harsh implementation of Shari'a law. The practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) remains widespread in its severest form (infibulation) with a prevalence of 98% among Somali women and girls. In December 2011, the state of Puntland adopted legislation which legalizes certain forms of FGM; a retrogressive step in the protection of women's rights. Similar provisions are contained in the Somali version of the Consultation Draft

Constitution outlawing pharonic circumcision whereas the English version contains an outright prohibition of female genital mutilation. It is hoped that the final draft constitution (with which Puntland's constitution must ultimately be harmonized) will also prohibit this practice in no uncertain terms. Somalia remains one of the few countries worldwide that has not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) although the Cabinet has approved it subject to ratification by parliament. The continued insecurity in most of the South Central region further aggravates the dire situation of women as this presents threats to aid workers and humanitarian organizations thus limiting their capacity to provide full assistance to Somali citizens in critical need.

To address the manifest gender imbalances and respond to the acute challenges faced by Somali women today, the agency reaffirms the understanding of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-11 and the Gender Equality Strategy (GES) that gender equality is 'an irreducible condition for inclusive, democratic, violence-free and sustainable development' and thereby intends to make women's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes in the political, economic and social spheres of life in Somalia.

Our proposed project is a result of wide and inclusive consultative meetings with all the stakeholders within the area who identified the needs for any possible action.

Women's gender roles have been stretched beyond traditional limits to meet the new domestic, social and economic needs of the family and local community. Many women are now taking the main role in domestic decision-making and working in whatever way they can to provide an income for their families, even where men are present in the household. Women have been at the forefront of emergency care and social recovery efforts at community level, often playing active public roles to influence and mobilise support.

Women's organisations and women-lead organisations women have mushroomed since 1991 (as have non-state actor organisations of all kinds). Individually and collectively women have, with some notable successes, fulfilled their customary peace-building role, using their multiple relationships within the clan system of social organisation to influence the traditional power structures, militia and course of certain conflicts in the war.

There is a great need for this project owing to the fact that Somalia has been without a proper government in place for a long period of time. This has led to lack of existence for human rights and democratic space for its citizens especially women. Women are the most vulnerable groups among the Somalia communities. This group is vulnerable to all aspects of violations from the armed groups and deep rooted cultural practices in Somalia. Ignorance among the group also continues to be another plague that dogs the society further jeopardizing any hopes of them knowing their rights.

Women have remained unrepresented in social, economic and political arenas due to weaknesses associated with Somalia or complete lack of non-gender sensitive policies, lack of economic capacity, cultural limitations and domestic burdens and clan-based representation system.

Due to weaknesses associated with Somalia or complete lack of non-gender sensitive policies, women have remained victims of serious neglect and abuse within societies and families that are charged with the responsibility of providing care and protection. As their rights get violated the women are further forced into harmful cultural practices.

Ignorance among community members and law enforcement agents is a major setback to the realization of women rights. Most of the local administrators do not understand that Harmful Cultural Practices such as female genital mutilation is a gross violation of the women's human rights and that there exists legal implications to the abuse of the same. There is therefore every need for them to be sensitized on the existing legal documents that are meant to protect the women and girl-child for instance the UNCRC that acknowledges the rights of children in a full international human rights treaty; rights to survival, protection,

participation and development, the ACRWC that complements the UNCRC in that it directs parental responsibility to care and protection of their children.

#### 1.7. Description of the project and its effectiveness

The project is focusing on capacity building of the women who are socially and economically disadvantaged. The critical failure in leadership, governance and management and infighting in Somalia have created gross poverty and unemployment levels among the women both in urban and rural communities.

These challenges among other issues of underdevelopment have precipitated a vicious cycle of poverty and hopelessness from which many women and families find impossible to overcome. MRLO project seeks to assist these women and other vulnerable Somalis to improve their livelihood through offering tailor-made vocational trainings opportunities and enhancement of local opportunities for wholistic development.

MRLO proposes to work with women members to economically empower them by building their competencies and capacities to participate constructively in development and policy processes through provision of vocational training courses.

The project targets the young women who will be recruited at different levels of intervention depending on prevailing needs and role in the community. Objectively, the project prioritizes the most vulnerable women (the organization targets poor illiterate, marginalized and displaced members of the society. Priority is given to the completely illiterate poor women, who are accorded basic literacy skills at the MRLO Centre). These are determined through recruitment evaluation procedures with the assistance of local authorities and religious leaders.

The proposed project shall be women focused and steered. The project is designed to be all inclusive, with the ability to create a viable platform for intergenerational dialogue; objectively, the project shall by design, showcase the women's abilities which are hardly noticed in various communities. Due to weaknesses associated with Somalia or lack of non-gender sensitive policies access to information on women rights is lacking. As a women empowerment advocacy organization, MRLO proposes to use the support sought to empower the selected women through skills and entrepreneurship training to economically empower them through capacity building.

We seeks to offer vocational trainings to the 30selected women within communities in Bualle District, Middle Juba region Somalia for a period of six months.

#### Proposed Project Activities

We will implement among others the following activities:-

Preliminary planning and sensitization meeting with all project stakeholders.
Recruitment and Selection of the beneficiaries.
Conducting a needs assessment for the selected beneficiaries.
Acquisition of Training and Equipment
Identification and Engagement of a Trainer
Conducting a three month period vocational trainings to the beneficiaries.

#### Project Results

Specifically, the organization hopes to offer vocational trainings to the selected beneficiaries in Cookery, Entrepreneurship skills and Bakery. These will equip them with relevant necessary skills to enable them be self-reliantand increase their chances to access job opportunities hence improve their livelihood conditions by

being able to meet their basic household needs. The graduates on satisfactorily completion of their course will be able to start their own businesses thereby creating job opportunities for themselves and other community members as well. The community will easily access the products and services resulting from the project at affordable rates. The project will be able to train more people from the community at different intervals since it will be able to sustain itself from the products sales.

#### **1.8. Methodology**

The preparatory phase will include available support mechanism and joint planning with all relevant stakeholders. The project is envisaged to be highly participatory with all the stakeholders involved. Mrloproposes to work with all relevant stakeholders to promote women's empowerment projects and disseminate information and skills to advocate against gender based violence and discrimination against women.

We seek to offer vocational trainings to the 30 selected women within the Buale District, Middle Juba in various skills depending on the identified needs for a period of three months. The organization targets poor, illiterate, marginalized and displaced members. The general criteria for beneficiary selection to be employed by Mrlo includes:- Priority to female-headed households, including widows, Families with children at high risk of malnutrition, Families supporting elderly and/or disabled, Families without income earning members.

We operates in partnership with several community based organization and international NGO's in empowering grass root communities for enhanced socio-economic development. The organization goal is to *'Create access to social and economic opportunities towards empowering women and youth. To achieve this goal, Mrlo works by mobilizing and recruiting women and youth into self-help groups through which the youth and women engage in various socio-economic activities.'*

#### **Management arrangements**

The Organizations' management is based on a participatory approach, which promotes collaboration with other stakeholders such as the Government, Non-governmental Organizations and other Community Based Organizations.

#### **Management of funds**

The organizations' applies a strong recognized Financial Management Principle to manage their financial resources. A strong system has been instituted to safeguard utilization of the organizations' resources and ensure appropriate Internal Controls over the financial function which includes Management Information Systems; Custody of assets, Segregation of duties, Approval and Authorization of transactions at different levels of responsibility. With a strong inbuilt Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting procedures the system facilitates provisions of timely regular reports for all the stakeholders.

The financial and accounting policies and procedures are based on International Accounting Standards and maintain a distinct disclosure of Capital, Recurrent, Partners' Designated and Other Funds. Annual external audits are undertaken by an internationally recognized firm of Certified Public Accountants, who issue certified reports to development partners, donors and members.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

In close corporation with funding Partner, MRLO will regularly monitor the project in order to verify the proper implementation and the needs. Reports of activities will be regularly provided in accordance with the Partner's guidelines.

Monitoring will be a continuous process assessing whether the project is progressing towards the achievement of specific objectives. Implementation of plans will be the subject of monitoring and the results of monitoring will be fed-back into the re-planning process for subsequent periods. The purpose of monitoring will be to compare the progress of activities and their outputs with the plans as developed in the projects.

A final internal evaluation will be carried out in order to draw lessons for future. The results coming up from the evaluation will be integral part of the narrative final report. The evaluation will be carried on during the final stage of the project.

### 1.9. Duration and indicative action plan for implementing the project

#### Proposed Project Work plan / Timeline

MRLO proposes to implement the proposed project activities in a duration of twelve months as illustrated in the below work plan.

Proposed Project Activities	Implementation Period (Month)					
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
Preliminary planning and sensitization meeting with all project stakeholders.						
Recruitment and Selection of the beneficiaries.						
Conducting a needs assessment for the selected beneficiaries.						
Acquisition of Training Materials and Equipment						
Identification and Engagement of Trainers						
Conducting a three month vocational trainings to the beneficiaries.						
Project monthly monitoring						
Project Evaluation						

### 1.10. Sustainability

This project is built from grass-roots and is formulated to benefit the community from women who form the majority of the marginalized population in the region. The empowerment of a core group will ensure that the entire community owns the project. This intervention has a self-protecting mechanism in dealing with conflict situations. Apart from the agencies' presence in the project area and the goodwill of communities it works with, our project will seek the endorsement of religious leaders and relevant government authorities.

MRLO shall facilitate the registration of the beneficiary women into a Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to steer the project. They will then be fully charged with the management of the CBO to be located at the Mrlo centre. This will create a sense of ownership and sustainability of all the activities conducted at the centre. The CBO members will generate their own resources through offering their services and products to continue sustaining itself.

**Promotion of Women Empowerment and Rights (POWER) Project Proposal by Mutual Relief and Liberty Organization**

**Project Financial Budget**

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Unit cost US\$</b>	<b>Total cost US\$</b>
<b>1. Human Resources</b>			
1.1 Project Coordinator	1 x6 months	300	1,800
1.2 Project officers	2 x 6 months	200	2,400
1.3 Security officer	1 x6 months	200	1,200
<i>Sub total</i>			<b>5,400</b>
<b>2. Overhead costs</b>			
2.1 Utilities (Electricity and water, etc.)	6 months	80	480
2.2 Documentation and Reporting	6 months	100	600
2.3 Coordination and Communication costs	6months	100	600
<i>Sub total</i>			<b>1,680</b>
<b>3. Direct Activity cost</b>			
3.1 Hold a 1 day Planning and sensitization meeting with 15 representatives of stakeholders.			
- Transport reimbursements	1 day x 15pple	10	150
- Stationery	1 day	-	100
- Refreshments	1 day x 15pple	10	150
			<b>400</b>
3.2 Conducting a three month period Vocational Trainings for 30 Beneficiaries			
- Needs Assessment for Beneficiaries	1	1,000	1,000
- Training materials (Assortment)	N/A	-	8,000
- Trainers / Training Facilitators	3 for 3 months	250	2,250
- Transport refunds to participants	30pple x 60 days	2	3,600
- Tea and Snacks for participants	30 pple x 60 days	2	3,600
			<b>18,450</b>
3.3 Project Monitoring costs	6 months	100	600
3.4 Project Evaluation	1	500	500
<i>Sub total</i>			<b>1,100</b>
<b>4. Total Project Cost (A)</b>			<b>27,030</b>
<b>5. MRLO'S Contribution (B)</b>			<b>7,080</b>
<b>6. REQUESTED AMOUNT (A-B)</b>			<b>19,950</b>



**Hygiene Promotion Training Conducted by MRLO during WASH Kits Supplies to affected households in  
Bualle supported by Unicef.**







**Hygiene Conditions in the area as a result of poverty, illiteracy resulting into malnutrition of children and other related diseases such as cholera. MRLO is initiating women and youth empowerment projects to reduce and eradicate these problems.**



