



CONCEPT NOTE

1. COVER PAGE - CONTACT DETAILS

TITLE OF THE PROJECT: IMPROVING ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL SKILLS FOR YOUNG MOTHERS AND YOUTH AT UMALA VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE IN SIAYA, KENYA

Concept Note Submitted to We One Action Network (WOAN)

Name of the Organization:	Siaya Muungano Network
Year of Registration:	12 th July 2013
Legal Status:	Registered as a Community Based Organization (CBO)
Registration No:	SC/SYA/TW/CBO/0012
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2. PROFILE OF APPLICANT

Established in 2013, Siaya Muungano Network (SIMUN) is a non-profit, non-partisan, community-based youth led women rights and youth development organization. We invest in empowering women, adolescent girls and the youth to realize their full potential, worth and strength politically, socially and economically through advocating for their human and social justice rights, providing trainings, mentorship and coaching opportunities. SIMUN recognizes that the survival of women, adolescent girls, the youth and their communities is increasingly challenged by economic dependency, illiteracy, limited skills for job creation, gender inequalities & marginalization, Sexual & Gender Based Violence (SGBV), conflict, insensitive laws and policies. The organisation works rural communities in Siaya County, Kenya. SIMUN envisions a society where women and youth live in dignity, enjoy equal rights and influence decisions on the change they desire in their lives and those of their community.

3. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Siaya County is one of the devolved units established under the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 with six sub counties namely Alego Usonga, Gem, Ugunja, Ugenya, Bondo and Rarieda and a total of thirty wards. According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics data 2019, the population of Siaya county was 993,183 consisting of 471,669 (47.5%) males and 521,496 (52.5%) females. This was projected to increase to 1,040,616 consisting of 525,833 males and 514,782 females in 2022. It is further projected to rise to 1,097,141 comprising 552,387 males and 544,755 females and 1,136,553 comprising 571,351 males and 565,202 females in 2025 and 2027 respectively. Generally, the population size, structure and distribution determine how resources are allocated towards basic infrastructure as well as utilities.¹

The population in age bracket 15-29 years old (reproductive age) was projected to be 335,309 consisting of 172,461 males and 162,848 females in 2022. This is expected to rise to 351,015 comprising 178,803 males and 172,212 females in 2025 while in 2027 it will be 358,226 with 181,279 males and 176,947 females.² This group accounts for more than half of the labor force and faces a number of challenges including unemployment, drug and substance abuse, gender-based violence, skills gap, school drop-out, unintended pregnancies, and high risks associated with HIV/AIDS.

Siaya County performs below the national average on most socio-economic indicators. The county's Human Development Index is 0.46, which is below the national average of 0.56.³ Poverty is prevalent in the county and manifests itself in other socio-economic outcomes such as poor nutrition, health,

¹ Siaya County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027

² Siaya County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027

³ Siaya County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027

and education as well as a lack of access to basic services. The impacts of poverty also contribute to high percentages of Gender based violence (GBV), school dropouts and unintended pregnancy especially in Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW's) that contributes to rise in the number of young mothers. Siaya has a Monetary Poverty Rate of 33.1% which is slightly lower than the National rate of 35.7% of the people living below poverty.⁴ Multidimensional Poverty Rate among the Youth (18-34 years) in Siaya County is 70.1% higher than the National rate of 48.8% of youth living below poverty.⁵ The main economic activity is agriculture comprising crop and livestock production as well as fishing. Crop and livestock production in the area is largely subsistence. Other economic activities include micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) such as boda-boda, Jua kali, groceries, hairdressing, tailoring, transport and retail stores. However, unemployment rate is a major challenge in the county, especially among the youth since there are limited job opportunities.

4. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

Despite the existing efforts by Government at the national and county level to support adolescent girls and young women through education and providing sexual reproductive health information, Siaya county still grapples with high rate of unintended pregnancies. Teenage pregnancy rate in Siaya stands at 21% higher than the national rate which is 15%.⁶ This demonstrates the high number of young mothers in Siaya County. Young mothers are therefore, faced by discrimination in school, at the household and in the community; they drop out schools; they lack hands-on and entrepreneurship skills to earn income to support themselves and their children; and limited integrated programs in existing learning institutions to keep them in school. The young mothers further are faced by significant obstacles in pursuing vocational training due to the added responsibilities of childcare, social stigma, lack of family support, and limited resources. Additionally, inadequate nutrition support through effective feeding programme negatively impacts their physical and mental well-being, hindering their ability to fully engage in training programs especially for those that have made efforts and enrolled in existing vocational training centres to pursue skills-based short courses such tailoring and hairdressing. Therefore, some end up dropping from the vocational training centres.

The proposed project therefore, seeks to address these challenges by piloting feeding programme at Umala Vocational Training Centre in North Alego ward which therefore will provide for a dual-focused approach, combining vocational training with nutritional support. This will mean supporting feeding programme for all the young mothers enrolled at Umala Vocational Training Centre for nutrition and improved retention rate in the school. The feeding programme will not only target the

⁴ KNBS Poverty Report 2020

⁵ KNBS Poverty Report 2020

⁶ KDHS 2022

young mothers but also their children to reduce the challenge of going out to look for food for their children while in school which limits their concentration and percent attendance of learning sessions. Other youth in the vocational training centre will also benefit from the feeding programme to boost their retention to access the trainings. By recognizing the critical intersection of education, skill development, and nutrition, this project seeks to enhance their well-being, educational outcomes, and overall success in the training program as the young mothers and other youth present in the vocational training centre are empowered to break from the vicious cycle of poverty and build sustainable futures for themselves and their children.

5. OTHER PROPOSED PROJECT COMPONENT

Psychosocial Support: The project will also integrate psychosocial support sessions for the young mothers and youth in Umala Vocational Training Centre. Recognizing the importance of mental health, the project will provide counselling services and peer support groups to create a safe space for youth and young mothers to share experiences, seek guidance, and build a sense of community, fostering emotional resilience and overall well-being. The counselling sessions would offer one-on-one counselling sessions to address the psychological and emotional needs, providing support and guidance on balancing education and parenthood especially for young mothers and also organize life skills sessions focusing on parenting skills, time management, and other life skills information essential for youth and the young mothers.

As a community-based organization, we have recognized that the path to empowerment includes more than just economic vulnerability. To help beneficiaries navigate social and emotional challenges, the on-site counselling will help them build self-confidence and provide space to share their struggles and support one another.

6. BRIEF ABOUT UMALA VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

Umala Vocational Training Centre is a government registered public institution located in North Alego Ward in Siaya County. It was established in the year 2020 to provide vocational training to youth who wished to acquire technical and practical skills to improve their employability and self-reliance within and outside the local community. It has a student enrolment of 61 students composed of 36 girls mostly young mothers and 25 Boys participating in various learning activities in the Institution. The number are significantly lower than the projected enrolment of above 100 students per year, which can be attributed to several factors, including lack of fee, sufficient tools to train a larger population of students, and retention challenge among students due to upkeep challenges majorly linked to high poverty rates.

The centre offers programs in various fields, including Computer Operator, Hairdressing and Beauty therapy, Dressmaking, electrical installation and Welding and Masonry. The programs are designed

to provide youth with practical and technical skills to improve their employability, and also offer short-term courses in Information Communication technology to school leavers to help them understand the emerging technological advancements and skills that are requisite for the current world engagement

7. PROJECT OVERALL GOAL

- a. To improve the overall enrolment and retention rate of young mothers and the youth in Umala Vocational Training Centre to access vocational skills while providing comprehensive support on their journey to economic independence.

8. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- a. Enhance inclusive overall health and well-being of the youth, young mothers and their infants at Umala Vocational Training Centre
- b. Increase the retention rates of the youth and vulnerable young mothers' trainees pursuing hands-on skills programs at Umala Vocational Training Centre.

9. PROJECT TARGET BENEFICIARIES

The primary beneficiaries of this project are young mothers aged between 16 and 26 years attending the Vocational Training at Umala Vocational Training Centre. Additionally, their children and other youth in the vocational centre will also benefit from the feeding programme.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A monitoring and evaluation plan will be implemented to track the progress and milestone made by the project initiative. Key performance indicators will include the number of young mothers and youth attending all the training sessions weekly and monthly. Other indicators will include the performance of the young mothers and other youth present in the vocational centre. Feedback mechanism will be established to gather information from the beneficiaries on the initiative introduced in the vocational training centre to inform basis for continuous support and mobilization of more resources and partnership to scale the project.

11. FINANCIAL REPORTING

Siaya Muungano Network has a well system for financial reporting to all partners supporting its interventions. This will be applied in this project to ensure transparency and accountability in all expenses made. Reporting to WOAN will be done monthly and will include expenditure analysis (cash book), bank reconciliation, support documents for all expenses and the bank statement. Narrative Reports with photo evidence of the initiative supported will also be shared with WOAN monthly.

12. PHOTOS OF UMALA VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

