



Stanbic Foundation

STANBIC FOUNDATION
IMPACT NEWSLETTER
Q3 2026



**BUILDING SUSTAINABLE
LIVELIHOODS THROUGH ENTERPRISE,
SKILLS AND PARTNERSHIP**

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Mercy Githanji

Head of Stanbic Foundation

Editor's Note:

Building Sustainable Livelihoods, Together

Across Kenya, thousands of women and young people wake up each day with the same goal: to build a better future for themselves and their families.

For some, that future begins with a small business. For others, it starts with learning a new skill, accessing technology, joining a savings group, or finding the confidence to pursue an opportunity that once felt out of reach. While their circumstances may differ, they share a common aspiration: the chance to earn a dignified living, grow their income, and create a more secure future.

At Stanbic Kenya Foundation, we believe sustainable livelihoods are built through more than a single intervention. Real change happens when skills, finance, technology, markets, networks, and opportunity come together to help people move from where they are today to where they want to be tomorrow.

This quarter, that belief came to life across our programmes. Through the Women Employment for the Green Transformation (WE4D) programme, 351 women-led enterprises across ten counties strengthened their businesses through training, coaching, and support designed to build resilience and unlock growth opportunities. Through DADA Mashinani, women entrepreneurs gained practical financial skills that can help them save, manage their businesses more effectively, and prepare for future growth.

We also continued expanding digital opportunity through partnerships with county governments and technology partners, bringing digital skills, infrastructure, and access closer to young people and communities across the country.

Our commitment to climate resilience remained equally strong. In Kilifi County, we planted 55,000 mangrove seedlings, helping restore ecosystems that protect coastlines, support biodiversity, sustain fishing livelihoods, and capture significant amounts of carbon from the atmosphere. Beyond tree planting, we also supported the development of an eco-lodge facility through the Sabaki Mangrove and Hippo Camp (SAMACHO). Once completed, we hope it will create sustainable income through eco-tourism, generate local economic opportunities, and strengthen community ownership of the ecosystem. When communities benefit from conservation, they become its strongest custodians.

None of this happens in isolation. These achievements reflect the power of partnership, and we are grateful to the Gates Foundation, GIZ, Kenya Industrial Estates, KIRDI, Nature Kenya, Palmhouse Foundation, American Tower Corporation, county governments, and many other partners working alongside us to create pathways to opportunity.

As you read this edition, I invite you to look beyond the numbers and see the people behind them: the entrepreneur growing her business, the young person discovering new possibilities, and the community protecting the natural resources on which its future depends. Their stories remind us that lasting impact is not measured only by what we deliver today, but by the opportunities that continue to grow long after an intervention ends.

Women-Led Green Enterprises Build Resilience Through WE4D

Across western Kenya, women entrepreneurs are developing solutions that respond to local needs while contributing to a greener economy. Through the Women Employment for the Green Transformation (WE4D) programme, Stanbic Kenya Foundation and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) are helping these entrepreneurs strengthen their businesses, build resilience and pursue new opportunities.

The programme operates in Homa Bay, Kisii, Kisumu, Nyamira, Kakamega, Vihiga, Busia, Bungoma, Kericho and Uasin Gishu. It supports women-led enterprises in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste management, eco-tourism and circular manufacturing.

Between January and August 2026, 351 women-led small and medium enterprises completed practical training and one-to-one coaching through the SME Loop methodology, delivered with Kenya Industrial Estates. The approach helps each entrepreneur assess her business, act on identified gaps and build a stronger foundation for growth.

Innovation grounded in local opportunity

Participants are turning locally available materials and ideas into products with commercial potential, including:

- Eco-friendly bags, home mats, sanitary towels, and hair braids crafted from recycled banana fibre.
- Handcrafted pure leather footwear and sustainable clothing line options.
- Green construction and eco-building materials.
- Value-added Agri-processing items, including organic banana wine, banana cookies, peanut butter, and natural preserves.

IMPACT AT A GLANCE:

351 women-led green enterprises across 10 counties completed SME Loop business training and one-to-one coaching, strengthening their business models for Kenya's green transition.

Support beyond the training room

Foundation and branch teams are working with Kenya Industrial Estates and the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute to connect participating businesses with technical expertise and appropriate financial solutions. Stanbic Bank teams in Busia and Kisumu have also engaged entrepreneurs directly to better understand their needs.

As participants prepare for graduation in October 2026, the next phase will focus on access to growth capital, markets and tailored financial services, helping enterprises expand production and create green jobs in their communities.



DADA Mashinani Brings Financial Skills Closer to Women Entrepreneurs

For many micro and small business owners, the most useful support is support that meets them where trade happens. Through DADA Mashinani, Stanbic Kenya Foundation brings practical financial literacy to open-air markets, transport hubs and community centres, enabling women entrepreneurs to build skills without stepping away from their businesses for lengthy periods.

The programme combines face-to-face learning with mobile-based modules, extending practical guidance to women entrepreneurs across Kenya.

Active across Busia, Kakamega, Kisumu, Kericho, Kisii, Uasin Gishu, Nairobi and neighbouring counties, the programme focuses on four practical capabilities:

1. Separating personal and business finances to improve visibility and decision-making.
2. Keeping simple records and budgets suited to micro-enterprises.
3. Understanding credit reports and managing debt responsibly.
4. Building savings habits before taking on credit.

DADA MASHINANI REACH AT A GLANCE

269,000

Total Women Entrepreneurs Reached Nationwide.

135,000

Women Trained via Face-to-Face Market Workshops

140,000

Women Currently Targeted via Blended Physical & SMS Modules



“DADA Mashinani is helping women entrepreneurs build a saving habit before borrowing, and the financial confidence to plan for long-term growth.”

Digitising group savings

A central element of the programme is driving adoption of the Stanbic Chama App. By transitioning traditional investment groups (chamas) onto digital management platforms, women entrepreneurs build verifiable financial track records, maintain transparent group records, and cultivate consistent savings habits. This digital record serves as a bridge, helping grassroots enterprises graduate from informal borrowing to investment-ready commercial credit.



Women Market Traders are taken through a Chama Financial Literacy Session.



Partnership in Action: County Government Engagement

As the National Skilling initiative rolled out across Kwale, Kilifi, Mombasa and Taita Taveta, Stanbic Foundation engaged county government teams to explore practical areas of collaboration.

The discussions focused on how the Foundation can work with counties to unlock meaningful opportunities for SMEs, youth and women, while continuing to advance the Future Ni Digital programme.

These partnerships are central to the Foundation's community-led approach. By working with county governments, the Foundation is better able to align its programmes with local priorities, address immediate financial and educational needs, and build long-term capacity for growth and innovation.

This approach also strengthens MSME development by connecting entrepreneurs with the skills, solutions and support they need to grow more resilient and sustainable businesses.



County partnerships are helping bring digital skilling closer to the communities, entrepreneurs and young people who need it most.



Advancing Digital Inclusion: Strategic County Partnerships in Embu and Baringo

While Economic Empowerment anchored Q3, Stanbic Kenya Foundation maintained steady momentum under its Digital Inclusion pillar through the flagship Future Ni Digital programme.

To deepen county-level reach, the Foundation formally executed strategic Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the County Government of Embu and the County Government of Baringo, bringing the total number of county MOUs signed between 2024 and date to 11 counties; Embu, Baringo, Vihiga, Homa Bay, Busia, Kakamega, Kisii, Kisumu, Kwale, Kilifi, and Taita Taveta.

Embu MoU & ACK Kiamuringa Computer Lab Launch

In Embu County, the Foundation launched a state-of-the-art Digital Learning Centre and ICT laboratory at ACK Kiamuringa School, equipping the institution with 30 desktop computers. The lab will directly serve over 200 students and 23 teachers, while doubling as a community digital access hub for local youth.

Embu MoU Signatories & Dignitaries: Monica Nguti (CECM Education), Emy Ruria (County Secretary - Legal), Nicholas Barare (Legal), Maisie Nzive (Project Manager - Tech, SKF), and Diana Omondi (Legal Representative, American Tower Corporation).

Baringo County Partnership Launch

In Baringo County, the Foundation established a strategic framework focused on youth employability, ICT infrastructure development, and SME digital enablement.

Baringo MoU Signatories & Dignitaries: H.E. Governor Benjamin Chesire Cheboi, Patricia Tororei (Head of Legal, Baringo County), Maisie Nzive (Project Manager - Tech, SKF), and Jackline Chomba (Sustainability Manager, American Tower Corporation).

Partner Highlight: American Tower Corporation (ATC)

Jackline Chomba - Project Manager Sustainability at American Tower Company (ATC), continues to serve as a key infrastructure partner for 'Future Ni Digital,' providing computer hardware, lab refurbishments, and 12 months of high-speed internet connectivity across partner centres.

DIGITAL INCLUSION MILESTONES (Q3)

11

Total County MoUs Signed (2024 – Date)

30

Desktop Computers Donated to ACK Kiamuringa ICT Lab

223+

Students (200+) & Teachers (23) Benefiting in Embu Hub

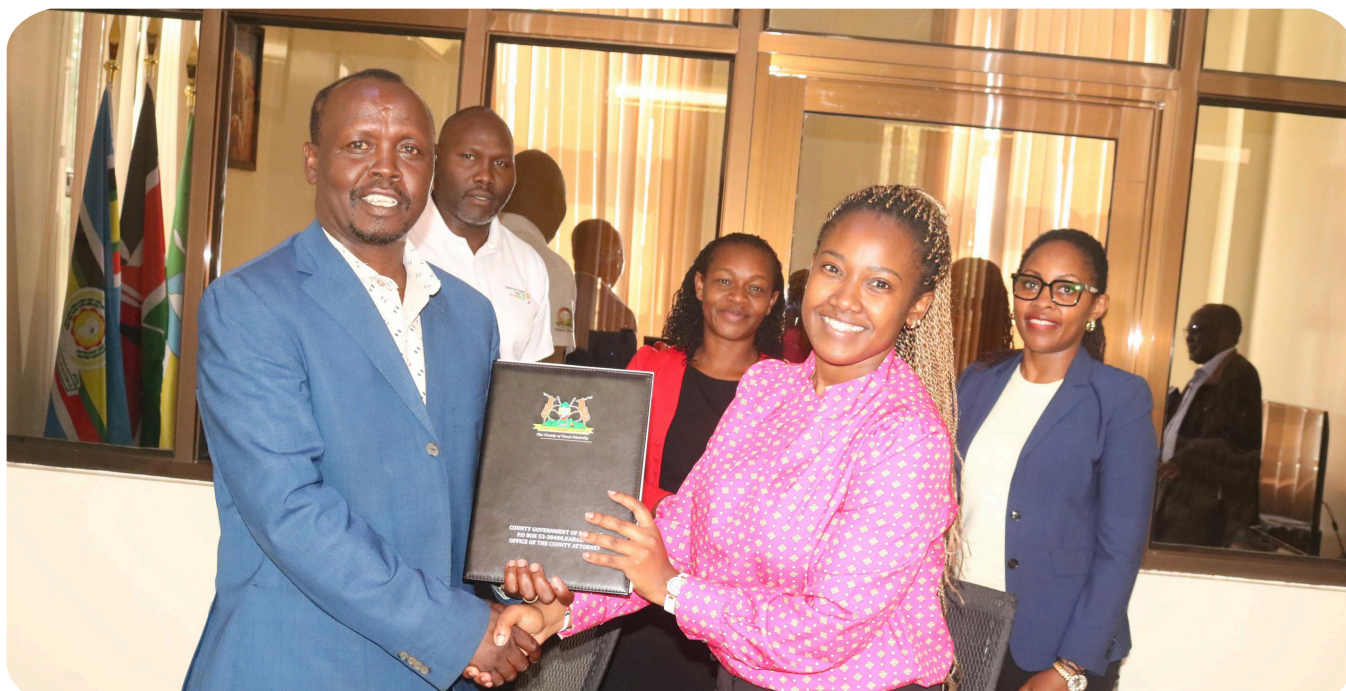
250,000+

Kenyans Upskilled via Future Ni Digital Platform Since 2019



MOU signing County Government of Embu





MOU signing County Government of Baringo



Partner Perspective: Driving MSME Growth & Industrialization in Kenya:

Kenya Industrial Estates & Stanbic Foundation: Driving MSME Growth and Economic Empowerment

1. How did Kenya Industrial Estates partner with Stanbic Foundation to drive economic empowerment in Kenya?

Kenya Industrial Estates has partnered with Stanbic Kenya Foundation since 2022, by bringing together two complementary strengths that have been improved on to co-create SME solutions since then. The Stanbic Group, through Stanbic Kenya Foundation has provided programme financing, digital platforms and access to its wider enterprise-support network that brought development partners such as GIZ and the Gates Foundation.

KIE has also contributed access to its national branch network and reach across all counties, experienced business development officers and extensive knowledge of the challenges facing enterprises at the county level.

The partnership has supported several related interventions. These include first, the inaugural project referred to as Build Back SME Loop in Uasin Gishu and Kisumu Counties supporting businesses to develop circular, resilient and financially sustainable recovery models following COVID-19 using SME Loop, an elaborate methodology prescribed by GIZ that combines diagnostics, tailored training and coaching over a period of 6 months.

SKF also supported the graduating cohort of 80 businesses from both counties to take part in a successful industrial tour in Nairobi as an add-on intervention to support peer to peer learning.

Second, under BMGF program for Women Economic Empowerment, later branded as Dada Mashinani, SKF and KIE entered into another partnership running from 2024 to 2027, to deliver a lengthy outreach project offering entrepreneurship and financial-management training to a target of 411,000 women traders across the country. A modification of the project in 10 western counties brought in access to finance element through digital onboarding with financial services that benefited women traders in the select counties. By first quarter of 2026, the project had reached out to over 120,000 beneficiaries, before the project was put on hold.

Third, the partnership between SKF, GIZ and KIE activated the WE4D SME Loop programme for green women-led and women-owned enterprises in ten select Western Counties targeting 353 SMEs using Gender Transformative Approach version of SME Loop. The project has had 11 cohorts, and 352 SMEs are scheduled for graduation on 14th of October 2026.

The partnership is also expanding into institutional capacity development through the approved ILO Start and Improve Your Business Training of Trainers programme, which will benefit staff from both institutions. This combination has enabled the partners to take practical business support closer to entrepreneurs rather than expecting them to travel to Nairobi or other major towns to access such services.



2. What is the KIE–Stanbic Foundation Economic Empowerment Initiative in Kenya?

The initiative is a practical enterprise-development partnership designed to strengthen the capacity of women entrepreneurs and other underserved MSMEs. It combines mobilization, entrepreneurship training, financial literacy, business diagnostics, coaching, digital registration, linkages to markets and access to women-friendly financial services.

One of its major interventions is Dada Mashinani, which takes women's economic empowerment services directly to communities. Another is the WE4D SME Loop programme, which provides more intensive support to selected women-led and women-owned enterprises. Under SME Loop, entrepreneurs move through a structured process involving selection, needs assessment, training, individual coaching, peer learning, performance monitoring and graduation.

The initiative is therefore broader than a conventional training programme. It creates a pathway through which an entrepreneur can strengthen her knowledge, examine weaknesses in her business, develop an improvement plan and receive continued coaching while being linked to other support services.

3. How is the program tailored to Kenya's local and county-level economic needs?

The training content was developed KIE team and co-validated with SKF team, keenly incorporating county realities as informed by enterprise needs assessments done prior to the project implementation. Depending on the circumstances of each cohort, attention is given to training expectations done prior to the event

and can range from record keeping, financial management, customer relations, digital marketing, online sales, business strategy, operational control, supply-chain management to growth planning.

The programme is delivered through KIE's branch and regional network, which allows Stanbic Group staff to bring additive solutions that enables both institutions to create synergies in service delivery. This allows activities to be designed around the realities of particular counties, markets and enterprise clusters. KIE officers work with Stanbic Foundation teams, county officials and local organizations to identify participants, determine suitable venues, support interventions delivery logistics and adapt activity schedules to local trading patterns.

Implementation and stakeholder engagement in counties typically has activities organized around markets, wards, community groups, church halls and local business networks. This approach makes it easier to reach entrepreneurs who might otherwise be excluded by transport costs, limited information or family and business responsibilities.

4. What does the initiative deliver in practice?

The initiative delivers a connected package of enterprise support services. These include community mobilization and awareness creation through business networks, basic business sensitization, entrepreneurship and financial-management training, business needs assessment, digital registration and individual one on one engagements.

Under the SME Loop approach, participating enterprises receive structured two workshops of three-days training each, followed by thirteen coaching sessions delivered between both training workshops as prescribed by SME Loop methodology.

The coaching process helps each entrepreneur apply what has been learned to the actual business with the support of a business coach. Participants work on areas such as business strategy, financial records, customer relationships, digital marketing, service delivery and operational efficiency. Peer-learning sessions also allow entrepreneurs to exchange experiences and learn from one another and subject to resources availability, a real factory tour can be organized to complete learning practicals.

The programme includes intense monitoring, evaluation and evidence collection through six different kobocollect surveys that feed into a digital dashboard of PowerBi visualizations for ease of impact tracing. This is supported through attendance records, coaching reports, and impact stories. A graduation process recognizes enterprises that complete the required training and coaching stages.

The partnership is also investing in institutional capacity with an approved ILO Start and Improve Your Business Training of Trainers programme to train 13 Foundation and KIE personnel.

5. Who participates in the program?

The principal beneficiaries are women entrepreneurs, particularly owners and managers of micro and small enterprises operating in counties and communities where access to formal business-development services remains limited. The WE4D SME Loop component is specifically directed towards women-led and women-owned small enterprises. Participants are selected through mobilization, validation and business needs-assessment processes. They

represent different sectors and levels of business maturity.

The wider partnership also involves KIE business development officers, Stanbic Foundation programme teams, accredited SME Loop trainers and coaches, county government officials and other technical partners. The planned ILO training will further strengthen the capabilities of Foundation personnel involved in enterprise development.

6. What impact has the KIE–Stanbic Foundation partnership achieved?

The partnership has demonstrated substantial reach, with over 120,000 SMEs reached under the Stanbic Foundation-funded Dada Mashinani programme by the end of the first quarter of 2026. These figures show that the partnership succeeded in taking enterprise-support services to a large number of women across several counties. The programme also helped KIE deepen its engagement with women-led enterprises, expand its use of digital registration and strengthen collaboration between its branch network and Stanbic Foundation teams. The access to finance component also brought in a crucial aspect to women entrepreneurs, who struggle to find suitable financing in the market due to a mix of disadvantages that the project intended to cure.

The partnership has gone beyond short sensitization sessions. Through the complementary WE4D, the selected 353 businesses received intensive training, coaching, peer learning and support to prepare enterprise development plans. Impact-story collection has also been undertaken to document changes in participating businesses and the experiences of individual entrepreneurs.

7. How is the public sector integrated into the initiative?

KIE provides the crucial public-sector anchor for the partnership, primarily as a national development financial institution that brings an established county presence, public accountability and a mandate to promote the development and competitiveness of micro, small and medium enterprises.

KIE's branch officers lead or support mobilization, training, coaching, reporting and follow-up with enterprises. County governments through their local trade officials are engaged where their participation can improve mobilization, provide local economic information or connect entrepreneurs to county services and opportunities.

The partnership has also used joint county workshops and courtesy engagements with county trade teams to improve coordination. This helps ensure that the intervention complements existing public programmes instead of operating separately from them. It also creates an avenue through which the experiences of local entrepreneurs can inform broader policy and programme decisions.

8. What is KIE's long-term goal under MD Nelson M. Kwamini's leadership?

Under the leadership of Managing Director Nelson M. Kwamini, KIE's long-term goal is to build a stronger national enterprise-development ecosystem of partnerships in which entrepreneurs can access finance, business advisory services, industrial workspace, technology and markets through a coordinated support structure. The Stanbic Foundation partnership supports this ambition by demonstrating how public institutions and private foundations can combine resources and expertise to reach enterprises at scale. KIE intends to strengthen this model by improving data quality, professionalizing its training and coaching services and

expanding the linkages between capacity building, finance and market access.

The longer-term objective is to help viable enterprises become more productive, sustainable and competitive. This includes building the capacity of KIE staff, institutionalizing proven methodologies such as SME Loop and ILO SIYB and using evidence from the counties to design programmes that respond to the actual needs of Kenyan enterprises.

9. What insights have emerged from county and community engagements?

County engagements have shown that demand for enterprise support is strong. Entrepreneurs are prepared to attend training and follow programme teams to neighbouring markets when they believe the intervention will improve their businesses or enable them to access financial services.

The engagements have also shown that training works best when it is taken closer to the entrepreneur. Local mobilization, accessible venues and schedules that recognize business and family responsibilities improve participation, especially among women.

At the same time, county implementation has exposed practical challenges that hinder growth of entrepreneurship including difficult mobilization environment in certain areas, internet interruptions and low repayment of digital financial services among beneficiaries. Some entrepreneurs had to attend more than one session because they were still waiting for onboarding or wanted clarification on financing opportunities. The huge demand for access to finance component overshadowed the benefit of attending the training attentively in some areas.

These experiences have reinforced the need for better programming and coordination between training and financial onboarding for traders. They also demonstrate the importance of real-time beneficiary validation and screening, reliable offline data-capture tools and a single beneficiary-management system.

The strongest lesson is that economic empowerment requires continuity. Entrepreneurs value training, but they also need coaching, market connections, suitable finance and reliable follow-up. The future of the partnership should therefore preserve the community-level approach while strengthening its data systems, enterprise tracking and pathways from training to tangible business growth.

- **Nelson M. Kwamini is the MD of Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE)**



Stanbic Kenya Foundation Plants 55,000 Mangroves to Strengthen Coastal Climate Resilience

Recognizing that environmental sustainability is linked to community economic resilience, Stanbic Kenya Foundation led a major coastal restoration drive in the Garithe area of Kilifi County, near Malindi. Marking the Foundation's third major mangrove restoration intervention in the region, the exercise resulted in the planting of 55,000 mangrove seedlings.

Mangrove forests serve as vital ecological and economic infrastructure along Kenya's coastline: protecting shores against severe wave erosion, acting as high-capacity carbon sinks, and sheltering marine fish hatcheries that sustain local fishing communities.

CLIMATE ACTION IMPACT NUMBERS

55,000

Mangrove Trees Planted in Garithe, Kilifi County

KES 425,000

Community Support Grant Disbursed for Eco-Banda Facility

3RD

Major Coastal Restoration Intervention Completed in Region



Restoring coastal ecosystems preserves biodiversity while unlocking sustainable eco-tourism and fishing livelihoods for future generations.

Supporting Community Eco-Tourism

425,000 to the Sabaki Mangrove and Hippo Camp (SAMACHO) for the construction of an eco-Banda facility, creating sustainable eco-tourism revenue for local conservancy members. Embu MoU Signatories & Dignitaries: Monica Nguti (CECM Education), Emy Ruria (County Secretary - Legal), Nicholas Barare (Legal), Maisie Nzive (Project Manager - Tech, SKF), and Diana Omondi (Legal Representative, American Tower Corporation).

The exercise was led by Head of Stanbic Foundation, alongside distinguished leadership from Stanbic Holdings PLC, Stanbic Bank Kenya, government officials, and conservation partners.

County Government & Partners: Hon. Omar Said (CECM Environment, Water & Natural Resources, Kilifi County), Francis Kagama (Regional Coordinator Coast, Nature Kenya), representatives from the Kenya Forest Association (KFA), and local community conservancy groups.

Closing Reflection

As we look toward the final quarter of 2026, Stanbic Foundation remains dedicated to driving measurable impact that goes far beyond numbers on a page. By integrating Economic Empowerment, Climate Action, Quality Education, and Digital Access, we are building an inclusive ecosystem where every Kenyan - whether a market vendor in Busia, a green entrepreneur in Kisumu, a scholar in Nairobi, or a student in Embu has the tools and opportunity to thrive.





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