



Progress Report

ZAF-HAD-EMP-D02, South Africa
Reporting Period: February to October 2016

Economic Empowerment – Women of South Africa

Budget: \$15,000 – fully funded!

Update:

This project targets poor women with entrepreneurial spirit and a business idea. Through self-help groups of five women per group, the women are given a series of revolving micro-loans. The women usually have drive and determination to pull themselves out of poverty, but lack the capital to start or grow their business.

Each self help group belongs to a wider group of groups, called a Centre. The Centre meets once a month and the women receive training on health and business topics and have an opportunity to network.

The project supported 500 women through a first time loan, with the repaid loans being recycled into further loans for others. Repayment rates are at 98.4%. Indirectly, 4, 375 people are supported through these loans. When Natasha was in South Africa she visited this project and met a number of loan recipients who had multiple children and often (but not always) no husbands or husbands who could not find work. In one house, there were 12 people, and only 2 people bringing in any income! So the small businesses are crucial for survival for these families.



One of the loan recipients in front of her small 'shop'

Two of the loan recipients Natasha was particularly struck by were Olga and Celeste. They were grandmothers who had started businesses in July, because none of their adult children or grandchildren were earning a living. Their goals were to be able to send their grandchildren to school and to keep a roof over their children's heads.



Natasha with Olga and Celeste

Our partner rigorously monitors the effects of the loans on the clients, and most are making definite progress towards moving out of poverty. They can afford more food, and to send their children to school. They can often afford to make repairs to their houses. The loan recipients are not getting rich (this is not the aim of the program!), but there is far less stress in their lives, and they are less prone to falling back into poverty when a crisis occurs. The women report that they are treated with respect, and that the interest rate is low. The program is returning solid results!

On behalf of the women and their dependents, thank you for helping to reduce their stress and assist them to climb out of poverty.