

## Widows Empowerment Project

IND-ENA-WEP-P03



Uttarakhand, Northern India



Economic Empowerment

Total Budget \$46,500

Project Timeline

FULLY FUNDED

JUL 18

JUN 21



### Overview

This project provided economic empowerment for 20 new widows each year in remote villages in northern India. They were given agricultural equipment and seeds, and taught how to increase their outputs. They were also given a pair of goats and taught how to breed and take care of them. Business training and selling networks were provided, enabling the women to maximise returns and avoid being taken advantage of. As their financial situation improves, they hope to be able to send their children to school. During COVID-19 lockdowns, the women were unable to meet for their monthly meetings and training. One-on-one visits and trouble-shooting phone consultations occurred instead.

### Objectives

### Impact



Widows empowerment program

20 widows are selected to join the program each year. They receive a pair of goats and are taught how to raise, multiply and sell them for profit. They are provided with seasonal crop seeds and taught to grow them in market gardens.



Self-help groups

All 90 widows are now members of a SHG (Self Help Group) This group meets monthly for encouragement where the women can share their business experiences and their personal burdens plus training in agricultural practises.



Savings and Loans

The project deposits Rp500 (\$9) for each widow when she joins a SHG. She is encouraged to start saving Rp50/mth for emergencies or necessities like education and home improvements and is able to borrow from her community.



COVID-19 response

The widows have not been able to leave their villages for meetings or to get their yields to market. They have been sharing their surplus crops with their neighbours and with the family members who treated them so badly in the past.



### Life change

- Many widows are now living independent lives and speak and walk with pride in their community, empowered emotionally and economically. They have gained a sense of worth and self-respect.
- They were told that they were responsible for their husband's death, excluded from community events and treated badly but now their status has changed dramatically; they are respected and included, they are even asked for advice.



## Meena's Story

When her husband died, Meena had no support from her relatives and was in a dire financial situation. Meena joined the program in 2019. She learnt to grow vegetables from a small kitchen garden instead of buying them from the market and took really good care of her goats. So far, she has been able to sell four young goats for a good price. In her SHG, she has learned many things and gets to share her problems with women in similar situations. She has also learnt how to save her money and put it to good use. She was recently shown how to grow mushrooms for her family which she is excited about!



## Shobha's Story

Shobha had recently been widowed when she joined the program. She was 25 years old and had a 6mth old daughter. She was being treated very badly by her late husband's family, bullied into working in their fields without food or water. Every month she would share more of her troubles and eventually her SHG encouraged her to stand up and fight for her rights. With the support of the program and her new community, she has started to learn to read and write and now has a job as a daycare helper. She is growing her own vegetables and managing her family life well. She is a much happier person now that she can see a future for herself and her daughter.

