

# Tanzania - Arusha

## MICRO-FINANCE





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## Summary of Current Developments

### **General Developments**

January has seen an influx of volunteers so we have begun a major clean-up of files and systems. Having five volunteers by mid-January meant we could split the groups amongst us and each focus on what needed to be done for their files while also initiating and researching the information and training the ladies have requested. Hopefully with this system we will be able to ensure that future hand overs are easier on the new volunteers and the program can continue to flourish within the next few weeks.

We have also had the task of reviewing many of the loans which are coming to an end, with a few groups already on their 5<sup>th</sup> loan. This traditionally would be their final loan, however we are reviewing whether some of the groups still need our help and would benefit from further loans.

### **Group Meetings**

We have continued to attend the weekly meetings with each group with a public holiday on the 11<sup>th</sup> only affecting 1 group. With the help of new volunteers we have been able to chat with the groups, so we could all get to know them and their businesses as well as find out how they are doing.

As it is a new year the groups are coming up with their yearly plans. There are a lot of great ideas and we are researching how to help implement them. Finding sustainable and inexpensive solutions for the groups is key and with a good group of volunteers we are having a great time brainstorming these.

### **Training**

The arrival of more volunteers meant we could restart training. Our focus has been on bookkeeping – specifically practicing adding and subtracting and where the women get their starting figures from. We have also given some one-on-one time to Anjelina in our Amani group who has had trouble with numerical literacy.

We are in the process of consolidating and expanding the training worksheets and presentations left by previous volunteers and hopefully next month we will be able to give some more bookkeeping training, with a focus on why they need to keep their books, as well as marketing training.

We have had some requests for English training also so we are working on games and vocabulary tools that they will find useful in their businesses. At the moment we have them introduce themselves and their business each week in English so we will be introducing a few more phrases to help them become confident.

## **Business Visits**

We have conducted a few business visits each week to see how the shops or stalls are going and where they are situated. This is useful in understanding what they need, as well as what kind of expansion they can expect considering their location and the people in the area. We recently did a business visit to the Ikusura Farm, which is self-sustainable and quite amazing. It has been partially created with the help of USAID, and contains many different types of plants as well as many different methods for growing these plants. Elinuru was a great tour guide, as she was able to communicate to us in English and was very knowledgeable about each plant and their various uses. She was also able to explain the bio-gas process they currently use, which allows them to take cow manure and turn it into electricity for her house. The leftover manure is then dried out and used as chicken feed or fertiliser for the rest of the garden. Elinuru also showed us many other things she does on the farm, like drying out sweet potatoes and turning them into flour. After we got the tour, she made us some delicious tea with the lemon grass from the garden and some fried bananas. Elinuru and the Ikusura group also currently offer tours for people who wish to visit, and we are trying to organise an excursion for Projects Abroad volunteers.

## Volunteer Information

The beginning of the year marked the arrival of four new volunteers to the Microfinance Project. Marianne (Norway) will be spending 6 weeks on the project, Ainsley (Australia) will be spending 12 weeks, Danielle (Canada) will be staying 8 weeks, and Erin (Canada) will be here for 4. Narimon (USA) recently joined our group in the last week of January, and will be here working on the project for 12 weeks.

Rachel has continued to do a great job at organising the Microfinance files which has helped the new volunteers ensure the continuity of the project. As a group, we have continued to improve these files so that they are all consistent and easy to navigate. With the arrival of new volunteers, we have also been able to do a lot of brainstorming on ways to improve the project. We have each taken responsibility for one day of the week, so that we are able to optimize our meeting time with each of the groups of women. This also allows us to focus on the unique needs of each group and to come up with more specific feedback for each of the women. Danielle has also started to take over the bookkeeping training, and has conducted some very successful sessions with our groups of women using fake money and real life scenarios. We have also started to play a new English vocabulary game with some of the groups, which has been fun and interesting for both the volunteers and women.

## Loan Portfolio

Group	No. Women	Issue Date	Total Loan Value (TSH)	Repayment 31.01.2015	Defaults	Outstanding Balance @ 01.02.2015
Chemchem	9	9 loans, 26 <sup>th</sup> January	1,800,000	0	0	1,800,000
Tupendane	7	7 loans, 21 <sup>th</sup> October	2,700,000	1,638,000	0	1,062,000
Ikusura	8	8 loans, 21 <sup>th</sup> October	4,000,000	2,800,000	0	1,200,000
CHE	9	6 loans, 20 <sup>th</sup> August 3 loans, 23 July	3,600,000	2,709,500	0	890,500
Tunaweza	9	8 loans 27 <sup>th</sup> November	1,600,000	120,000		1,480,000
Amani	7	5 loans, 15 <sup>th</sup> August 2 loan 5 <sup>th</sup> September	3,200,000	2,950,000	0	250,000
Mshikamano	8	3 loans, 17 October	700,000	550,000	0	150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>51 Active Loans</b>	<b>17,600,000</b>	<b>10,767,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,832,500</b>
<b>Available Cash</b>						
<b>Next Capital Required</b>						0

## Monthly Achievements

### Loans

Once again all loan payments were made by all women with no defaults.

The Tunaweza group's first loan (TSH 100,000 each) matured this month. The loan was repaid over a period of 5 weeks as the women were eager to repay it quickly in order to receive bigger loans. This group is strong, motivated to learn and develop new ideas. A second loan (TSH 200,000 each) was therefore issued. By request it will be repaid over 13 weeks rather than the standard 16.

The Chemchem group commenced their second loan with us this month. The group has just started playing *kibati*, and with a newly elected chairwoman we believe they will have a group business running soon. For the group business we are in the process of developing a cake mix. The idea is that only eggs, oil and water are added to the mix to make a cake. As most of the women already sell other types of goods we believe they will be able to sell the cake mix to their existing customers without it taking away from their personal sales. The group is excited about the idea and seem eager to get started.

### Training

With new volunteers entering the project we have been able to increase focus on training. Although bookkeeping training has been the focus of previous months we see that several women still struggle to do their books correctly. To give them some practical training we have played a game where the women are given fake money and a blank bookkeeping sheet, and then we provide them with events that happen over a given period of time. Their task is to handle the money and record the corresponding transactions to the events. The exercise is great for teaching simple maths and categorizing transactions, and it also shows how "real life" is reflected on the books. We have received very good feedback on the exercise and will continue to use it going forward.

In addition to bookkeeping training, the women requested training in English. This month we have focused on vocabulary building aiming to teach the women words and phrases related to their businesses. The women seemed to enjoy the sessions and have requested more grammar going forward. Next on the agenda is to teach simple grammar enabling them to use the past, present and future tenses.

### Online store

It has previously been suggested to set up an online store connected to the Projects Abroad Tanzania website where we can sell our women's products to volunteers. Although there are some formalities that must be cleared before such a page can be set up we have made an initial draft for what the page may look like: <http://sokonitanzania.weebly.com/> Before a page can be launched we need approval from the head office and also a plan on how the website will be administered and maintained.

### **Volunteer support**

One of our ladies received direct support from two volunteers on the project this month. The lady's family was unable to pay the fees for their daughter's first year of high school, and knowing the importance of education, Rachel offered to cover them. She also supplied the clothing and stationary needed for school. The lady sells vegetables for a living and as her husband is very sick, this is the family's only source of income. Erin made the suggestion that a water filter would enable the family to have clean, safe drinking water that can also be sold at the market. She has therefore bought the family a ceramic water filter and we are anxious to see if selling bags of water will improve her income.



## Future Developments

With the arrival of new volunteers this month, there has been an injection of a lot of new ideas for both now and the future.

We continue to pursue our idea of creating an increased market for our women's products through selling them online or by making it easier for Projects Abroad volunteers to buy directly from the Microfinance team or purchase from the office. Erin is in the process of developing a website, building on the progress from the end of last year. The project is still in the planning phase but shows great potential.

This month we gathered together the yearly plans for each women's group. A common request from all groups was the desire for workshops such as human rights, family planning and health. We will work with Projects Abroad staff to coordinate these workshops which we will spread throughout the year. In addition, networking events also need to feature – possibly one every two months, hosted by a different group each time.

Ideally, we would like to create a calendar of events for the Microfinance team which will help to plan out our year and also help to maintain the continuity of the project even with the changing of volunteers.

### *Group Specific Future Developments*

**Chemchem** – We have encouraged them to create a viable group business to help consolidate the cohesion of the group. We have proposed to them a packet cake mixture business which they seem receptive to. We will continue to work on this idea with them.

**Tupendane** – This group are also interested in pursuing a more profitable group business and the suggestion of raising quail has been put forward, but further research is needed.

**Ikusura** – We would like this group to host a Projects Abroad volunteer excursion to their demonstration eco-farm, which would contribute to the group's profits which go toward supporting orphans. We are in the process of planning this with the group and with Projects Abroad staff.

**CHE** – This group has many ideas for training and workshops they'd like to do for the year. A family planning workshop seems to be an immediate need. Another interesting project is the development of a sanitary pad that the women can make themselves. We are in the process of researching and experimenting with natural fibres to create this.

**Amani & Mshikamano** – We would like to run a medical workshop with women from both of these groups which would target specific women's health issues. Projects Abroad staff is assisting in planning this.