



Women of South Africa

Budget: \$20,000 for 2017 (final year of a two-year \$55,000 project). \$10,000 needed.

Update:

This project targets entrepreneurial poor women, creating self-help trust groups with five women per group. These women have the desire to help themselves break the cycle of poverty but lack the start-up capital to run their own small business. This is made possible through an initial, small loan. It enables the women to work, earn a constant income, provide for the needs of their household, establish savings and brings hope for entire families. This is our third year of funding the project and we are seeing impressive results.



The creation of local micro-enterprise initiatives is a business tool that promotes fair trade, income provision and economic empowerment. The in-country implementing partners have established strong relationships on the ground within the communities in which they operate. Group rather than individual loans develops a support network for beginning businesses and improves the rate of return. Economic empowerment is a proven tool in community development that supports not only the individual but those in her community and family. The budget covers adequate selection, training, follow up and management of 1,167 loans. Loans are repaid and then made available to a new lender over the course of the project or are given out as a second loan.

During this period Entrust funds created 125 groups and the opportunity for 600 loans to be distributed across three branches. With each woman representing a household with an average five dependents, these 600 loans have helped 3,000 lives. Our partners report that the overall repayment rate across the three branches was an outstanding 98.3%, well above their goal of 95%. First-time loans supported businesses such as baking, catering, selling clothes, cosmetics and fruit and vegetables.

By growing rapidly to achieve economy of scale, year on year our partners are improving their overall ability to sustain their operations. Their current sustainability is at 66% based on income versus expenses. Their shortfall in operating costs is covered by groups such as Entrust. In the field our partners are trialing a new mobile platform to bring efficiencies, save time in reporting and allow data to be accessed quickly and easily.

Linah (above) sells chillies, scones, flowers and clothing. She hopes to sell hot chips to meet an increasing demand. She says, *"Thanks to the loan I have bought necessary items for my home and for my three dependents. My business has grown with the support and training I have received."*



Gertrude (below) supports eleven people with the money she generates. She owns a shop and the loan has enabled her to buy more stock to sell. *"I am so grateful that my business has grown. I have saved for the children's health and education costs and put some money away for a rainy day,"* she reports. She hopes to move her business into a more permanent structure one day.

Good training, strong selection procedures and implementing methodology combined with a micro-loan enables sustainable business opportunities, builds dignity and hope and breaks dependence on aid and handouts. We thank you for helping to make this possible!