



The “Finish” Line: Reaching Self-Sustainability

One of the key goals of the Walking with Africans Foundation’s mission is the sustainability of the microfinance program. After a trip to Kibwezi in April earlier this year, we know that our Kenyan implementing partner, Efforts of the Poor in Development in Kenya (EPID-Kenya), is now set on a path to become self-supporting. We were able to affirm that EPID is successfully working towards paying their expenses from an internally generated income. During the trip, WAF representatives Ed Parker and James Munthali, attended the 2013/2014 audit presentation. Key highlights from the external auditor, Mike Kiswili and Company, Certified Public Accountants – Kenya include:

- ❖ A total amount of 1.9 million shillings (or about \$22,200 USD) was disbursed in loans in 2014, earning about 300,000 shillings (or about \$3,500 USD) in interest income. It is important to note that all income was reinvested to boost the revolving loan facility.
- ❖ The auditor estimated that the program will require an additional \$21,800 (USD) of new capital for EPID operations to be self-supporting in the medium-term.
- ❖ At the current annual budget level (~\$12,000 USD); it is projected to take another 3 to 4 years to bring EPID to a self-supporting point. However, if funding were to be increased the attainment of sustainability could be accelerated to as soon as two years!

Therefore, to our donors we say thank you for your tremendous support and generosity in building a robust

a path out of poverty

program that is inching closer to self-sustainability! You are truly helping to transform lives and communities. You are integral to the success of the microfinance program and together we can make it to the finish line!

Run this Race with Us!

Please stay with us as we “run this race” towards meeting the remainder of our 2015 goal to raise an additional \$6,000 (USD), which will be used to add three additional peer groups. We are also looking ahead to 2016, in the hopes of raising \$12,000 (USD), which will bring on another six peer groups. Training and building more groups of loan recipients helps to grow the program to a self-supporting size.

With your support, the WAF is able to cover the growth and expansion of the microfinance program and the operating expenses. These include approximately \$475 per month for compensation for the Program Manager/Coordinator, Linus Muyaga, at about \$300 a month; and the Accountant/Loans Officer, Theophilus Wambua, at about \$175 per month. This compares favorably to a similar organization, such as the Women’s Microfinance program in Uganda that was paying its coordinator over \$500 per month. The two EPID employees organize, support and nurture the peer groups, attend group meetings and support member/group transactions, especially when members repay loans and/or deposit money in their savings accounts.

The Walking with Africans Foundation (WAF) is proud to report that all donations are utilized in Kenya to implement the program. Our own administrative expenses, including travel to Kenya,

the transmission of funds, maintenance of the website and all fundraising costs, are borne by our team of dedicated core volunteers. It is a commitment like no other and we appreciate your support!

News from the Field

Ed and James visited almost all the new groups that have joined our program. Four of the groups were still in training to receive the small loans under the guidelines laid down by EPID-Kenya. Ed and James were able to participate in some of these sessions. At one point of the trip, the two of them visited three groups in a single day, which meant sharing three hearty meals from our generous clients!



Kamina Thina Kiange peer group.

Sadly, in the past year, three of our groups have experienced the death of a member. The WAF team was able to pay our condolences to one of the recently bereaved families. Each group faced different challenges with the loss of a member. One of the deceased members had no outstanding loans, while another group agreed to assume the responsibility to repay the remaining small balance. However, the deceased member of a third group left a relatively large balance. EPID is working with the group to allow the cosigner to assume responsibility. Additionally, EPID is working to develop policies and procedures to ensure that future cases are addressed more timely and systematically. Already, an internal insurance provision has been agreed upon and is being put into practice.

Spotlight Story: Agnes Muindi and Sustainable Agriculture

Our loan recipients are rural entrepreneurs working hard to break the cycle of poverty in their homes and for their community. Friends, meet Agnes Muindi!



The Kibwezi district was experiencing yet another drought during our spring visit. This is a very common occurrence for the district. Further crop failure was anticipated across the region. Even so, we found a heart-warming story of one of the clients at the Kamina Thina Kiange peer group. Some of its members have adopted the dryland farming technology commonly known as Zai Pit technology. Zai Pit is a low cost, sustainable agriculture and food security technology which can be applied by farmers of all walks of life, and it involves harvesting and conservation of rain runoff and soil fertility restoration. Agnes Muindi has constructed about 500 Zai Pits and planted maize (corn). Her plants looked much healthier and larger than those in adjacent fields where this technology has not yet been adopted. Agnes was optimistic that she would harvest some maize with just a little more rains. In order to further strengthen and diversify her income base, Agnes also raises chickens for sale, a trade she has learned from her peer group's projects which have garnered the attention and a level of sponsorship from World Vision, Kenya. Agnes is resourceful and energetic! Her story reflects that of many of our loan recipients working hard to transform their lives! Thank you for continuing to be a part of our journey! Asante Sana!