

Press Release

24th May 2010

BBC Lifeline and Sandi Toksvig appeal on behalf of 'Five Talents' in Tanzania.

This May, the BBC *Lifeline* appeal was made on behalf of Five Talents. *Lifeline* is the BBC's monthly television charity appeal programme, which has helped raise over £6million and raise the profile of hundreds of charities across the UK and abroad. The Five Talents appeal was broadcast on BBC1 on 23rd May and on BBC2 on 26th May 2010. You can watch the 10 minute film here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ua3fR8WGZvY>

“By offering people a hand up rather than a hand out Five Talents are helping to tackle poverty in a very real and practical way” explains celebrity presenter and comedienne Sandi Toksvig, during her visit to the Five Talents project in Tanzania.

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world, where over a third of the population live on less than \$1 a day, with no education, no support and very few opportunities. It is customary here for women to be responsible for the family so Five Talents have been operating a women-focused programme known as the Mama Bahati Foundation in Iringa since July 2007. On average each woman supports five dependents, including children, elderly parents and the extended family where siblings have died.

Five Talents microfinance model provides unique opportunities for people to save and borrow safely and affordably and encourages the community to become financially self-sufficient. Women are encouraged to start or expand small businesses as a means to develop an income and independence both at home and within their local community. The initial £25 loan is coupled with financial training and support. Rachel Millward, Development Director of Five Talents explains that “where Five Talents distinguishes itself from other microcredit enterprises is through our additional role as mentor. We provide business development training and on-going one-to-one business counselling, increasing the likely success of the business and repayment of the loan”. Sandi Toksvig calls the entrepreneurial women the “Alan Sugars of Tanzania!”

Five Talents provides loans as a practical response to poverty, in poorer countries where people would typically not have access to credit. In Tanzania loans are repaid after 4 – 6 months with a 92% repayment rate. As individuals repay loans they are able to borrow larger amounts. The loans are repaid with a small amount of interest which covers the salaries and running costs of the programme. In association with Mama Bahati Foundation, Five Talents is currently supporting over 1,000 women with business training and small loans.

The recipients work hard to earn a profit and repay their loans with pride, building their businesses so that they can give their children better food and send them to school. It empowers women to improve their own lives through their own hard work. As each loan is repaid, the money is loaned out again. Five Talents aim to provide credit and training to nearly 3,000 clients and for the programme to reach operational self-sufficiency by 2012.

“Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.” (Matt. 25:20)

Five Talents is also supporting microfinance programmes in 10 other countries, namely: Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, Burundi, Peru, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, India, Indonesia and the Philippines.

The charity is an initiative of the worldwide Anglican Church to help the economically active poor, irrespective of race, religion or tribe.

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