

Press Release

24th October 2008

Deborah Meaden speaks for Five Talents at the House of Lords

Deborah Meaden, star of BBC TV's *Dragons' Den*, spoke passionately last night about giving people the opportunity to start their own businesses and the way in which Five Talents helps people in Africa to do just that.

Speaking to over 100 business people and opinion leaders in the Peers Dining Room, Mrs Meaden spoke about her first ever business – started with a £3,000 credit card loan. “I lived in a country which enabled me to borrow money to start my first business” she said – “... people are not short of ideas: people in Africa are thinking *if only* – and the magic of microfinance is that it doesn't take much. Microfinance makes such a huge difference and a small amount of money in our terms makes a huge difference in the terms of Five Talents.”

The evening reception was hosted by Lord Griffiths of Forrestfach and was a fundraising event to raise £100,000 for Five Talents' microfinance programmes in East Africa. The pledges on the evening will be collected during the coming days, but it is hoped that £100,000 can be invested in – not just one entrepreneur, as in the *Dragons' Den* model – but in 1,000 entrepreneurs in Africa, each with a loan of £100 which will be repaid and reloaned many times over.

Earlier in the evening Martha Kearney, journalist from the BBC, interviewed Valentine Gitoho – A Board member of Five Talents and Kenyan citizen. Valentine spoke about the power of microfinance to build businesses, families and communities, often starting with small loans to poor women.

Tom Sanderson, UK Director of Five Talents, said the evening had “brought together a new group of supporters who – despite the current economic circumstances – were determined to help Five Talents to fight poverty, create jobs and transform lives through Five Talents' microfinance programmes”.

The audio recording of the evening's speeches can be found here: <http://www.fivetalents.org.uk/page-audio-clips.html>

A slideshow of photographs from the evening can be found here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/fivetalentsuk/>



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

Notes to Editors:

Photos: we are grateful to Neale Atkinson for use of the photographs:
(www.pr-photographer.com)

Five Talents UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (No. 1113969) which currently supports four microfinance partners in E.Africa namely Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. In addition Five Talents has programme partners in the following countries:

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| 1. Dominican Republic | 4. Indonesia |
| 2. Philippines (2 partners) | 5. Peru |
| 3. India (3 partners) | 6. Bolivia |

Five Talents' International Patron is the Archbishop of Canterbury. The charity aims to help the poor in developing countries to fight poverty, create jobs and transform lives through provision of microfinance services – business training, savings schemes and small loan programmes. Five Talents' partners provide services to local communities irrespective of religion or tribe, based on need not creed. . The UK charity, along with its US counterpart Five Talents USA, together support over 20,000 clients worldwide.

Five Talents' Development Director, Rachel Millward, will be visiting the microfinance programmes in Indonesia and Philippines and returns with firsthand news on 1st December 2008.

For more information contact:

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