

FIVE TALENTS IN TANZANIA

£4 can change everything!

Judy Kuhle, from St John the Baptist church in Burley, recently joined a team from Five Talents, UK when they visited their newest microfinance project in Tanzania.

Judy was part of a team of four visiting the Mama Bahati Foundation in Iringa, central Tanzania. The project takes its name from “Mama Bahati” - a lady who used to sell bananas on the pavement in Iringa. The Most Rev. Donald Mtetemela, Archbishop of Tanzania, told the team the story:

“I used to pass Mama Bahati on my daily walk to work. She was selling bananas on the roadside. She was very poor and one day I decided to stop and talk to her. She explained that her husband did not support her and she was left to look after herself and her seven children. Each day she would sell a few bananas, but the small profit was barely enough to feed her family. It was a hopeless situation. I asked her what she needed to improve her lot and she replied that she wanted £4 to be able to buy more fruit at the beginning of the day to increase her sales and profits. I decided to give her the £4 and to monitor her progress. Sure enough this small injection of cash gave her the step up she needed. She is now selling a large variety of fruit and vegetables and her whole family is benefiting from the small business.”

Archbishop Donald has teamed up with Five Talents to start the Mama Bahati Foundation to provide basic business training and small loans to women like Mama Bahati. The microfinance project started in early 2007 and is already making small loans to 156 women.

Judy and the team spent their short time in Iringa meeting the project staff and some of the loan clients. “*It’s amazing the variety of businesses they are doing. I was thrilled to meet Francis who is working in his niece’s “kanga” store.*” (See picture). The group also gave some business training sessions to over 100 women.

Judy reflects on the trip:

“My over-riding feelings are the friendliness and smiles of the clients with whom we worked who welcomed us into their lives and homes. Their sheer exuberance of life made them burst into song and dance at the slightest encouragement.

I found the visits to their homes and the pride with which they asked us in, very humbling and really very moving when I know how little they have in the material sense and yet how rich they are in every other way compared to the way of life in UK. They are so content, and the loan scheme enabling them to run their own businesses, gives them such self esteem and confidence.”



If you would like to find out more about Five Talents and their work in Tanzania, or their projects in other countries you can see their website www.fivetalents.org.uk, or contact them on info@fivetalents.org.uk or 0845 054 7525.