

# CHURCH TIMES

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## Tiny loans promise big results

by Pat Ashworth

A NEW Christian charity, Five Talents UK is to be launched in London today, to support micro-finance in developing countries. The idea was born out of the Lambeth Conference, and was set up first in the US as a practical initiative to address world poverty.

Small loans are made to a group of five or more people, and the whole group is responsible for paying it back. A loan can be as small as \$70 (£40), as in the case of a woman in Nagpur, India. Having attended an entrepreneur workshop hosted by a Five Talents partner, she used the loan to open a vegetable shop, which now earns \$120 a month for the family.

The loan is repaid and the same money is loaned again and again to further clients. "This is a really effective use of funds, and a powerful recipe to help the poor," said Tom Sanderson, director of Five Talents UK, and a former church-development officer with CMS in Uganda. Women in particular made a success of the scheme, he said on Wednesday.

"Women are really good at repaying loans - that's very common across other microfinance initiatives - and they're good at working in groups together," he said. Anglican churches in 12 developing coun-

tries identify suitable partner organisations with good leadership and accountability. Clients can be from any religious background. There is a project in Indonesia, and the Bishop of Rochester, Dr Michael

Nazir-Ali, is encouraging Five Talents to do more with projects in Muslim countries.

Five talents UK is starting with two new projects in Kenya - one in Maranga, in partnership with Mothers' Union, and an-

other in Thika, where local people have set up the Thika Development Trust.

[www.fivetalents.org.uk](http://www.fivetalents.org.uk)



Paid off: Alice borrowed £50 to buy bulk stock for a shop in Kabale, Uganda, and repaid it in six months