



A Progress Report for Cordula Kirchgessner



Project Name:	Supporting the Development of Women Enterprise (SUDEWE)
Project Location:	Zaka District, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe
Project Duration:	One Year
Reporting Period:	January - June 2016
Grant Amount:	\$160,000
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Introduction

With generous support from Cordula Kirchgessner, CARE has been able to expand on our extensive work in small enterprise development with women in Zimbabwe. The *Supporting the Development of Women Enterprise* (SUDEWE) project is an offshoot of CARE's *Youth Empowerment Project* (YEP), which provides technical occupational skills to young women. Additionally, the *Enhancing Nutrition, Scaling up Resilience and Enterprise* (ENSURE) project is building the capacity of women in village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) to increase food security. SUDEWE seeks to leverage upon these two existing projects to provide business management and financial literacy training to 1,000 women. CARE's

objective is to expose women to the wider business world, position them for business growth and facilitate their increased access to financial support.

Project Goals, Activities and Results

The project strategy focuses on developing knowledge, attitudes and skills in business management, including financial literacy and interpersonal skills. CARE is delivering training through Empretec¹, a business development organization focused on fostering entrepreneurship, to address identified knowledge and skills gaps and engage with financial institutions to provide financial support to women. After initial trainings, participants will be targeted for leadership training and mentorship by linking with Empretec's network of women entrepreneurs and other women's business networks.

There are no major changes in the project strategies initially presented in the proposal. However, due to some delays, the project has only just entered its rollout phase. CARE is confident the activities will now move forward in earnest and with great momentum and enthusiasm from the training partner as well as the communities.

The project's goal is improved business growth in women-led informal enterprises. Its specific **objective** is for women to realize business growth as a result of improved business management, exposure and financial literacy.

Activities

To date the project has completed the pre-training assessment process with approximately 515 women. Of these, 84 young women have received business management and financial literacy training. During these trainings, baseline data was collected that will be used for tracking changes in women-led enterprises over the life of the project.

The following sub-activities provide further detail of progress achieved to date.

Sub-Activity 1: Program set-up

After the project implementation agreement was signed in March, CARE established a team of existing staff to oversee the implementation of SUDEWE. The team is comprised of CARE's project managers for both the ENSURE and YEP projects, a monitoring officer, a VSLA specialist and a district field supervisor. CARE also recruited and hired a project field assistant to be focused on the SUDEWE project 100 percent of her time. The project field assistant is responsible for community mobilization and orientation of targeted women for the project, as well as following up on the training received and the associated impact.

CARE also entered into a contract with our training partner, Empretec, and agreed on joint work planning and logistics for the training.

Sub-Activity 2: Community orientations

CARE worked to raise awareness among local government authorities about the SUDEWE project in February 2016, and the concept of building on existing projects and providing business training to more

¹ Empretec has been instrumental in the development of some of the most successful entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe. More than 15,000 people have been trained and more than 20,000 jobs created nationwide since its inception. Empretec plays a pivotal role in developing entrepreneurs, not only in Zimbabwe but in other African countries.

women was well received. The district supervisor informed the district administrator and other crucial stakeholders about the project.

At the same time, CARE's project field assistant carried on with the community mobilization and orientation activities. We completed orientations in wards where both the ENSURE and YEP programs are running. Both women and men were oriented at this stage, mainly to get full support from the whole community on the addition of the new project to the already existing projects being implemented by CARE.

Sub-Activity 3: Pre-training assessments

The project conducted assessments during June to establish the level of training and awareness already present among participants. A total of 515 women were assessed in different wards. Of the 515 women, 145 of them were previous participants in the YEP project and 370 in the ENSURE project.

Sub-Activity 4: Business management and financial literacy training

To date, 84 young women have attended business management skills training, facilitated in partnership with Empretec. The participants completed a three-day course on microenterprise development, covering the following topics:

- Opportunity seeking
- Business planning
- Goal setting
- Finance and record keeping
- Pricing and costing
- Stock and credit control
- Communication
- Self-confidence
- Trustworthiness

Sub-Activity 5: Post-training monitoring and support

From the 84 participants trained, a random sampling of 10 percent was selected for post-training monitoring and support. The project used an enterprise tracking tool with a group of questions to monitor their businesses. This was to assess the current status of their operations before the implementation of newly acquired business management skills. Since the training was only recently completed, it is too early to draw conclusions on the impact of the training. However, the next report will detail the monitoring and evaluation findings.

Successes and Challenges

Successes/key results

- The SUDEWE project is playing a key role in the community: it has managed to keep the community active by supporting the development of women. Most women are vulnerable and there is a high rate of broken marriages. Many women are widowed, while other women's husbands have fled to urban areas and foreign countries in search of opportunities.
- SUDEWE managed to bridge the gap by providing business management skills training to women who were mostly disadvantaged due to lack of education in their early childhood years. These women have achieved a solid groundwork through their earlier participation in CARE's YEP and ENSURE projects.

- Due to a high unemployment rate, women have learned that they can survive not only by working for someone else, but also by starting their own businesses and earning a living, thus empowering themselves to fight food insecurity.

Challenges/lessons learned

- The project experienced a delay in start-up due to peak implementation periods in the YEP and ENSURE programs, who are sharing their staff with SUDEWE. We further invested substantial time in negotiating a sound contract with the training partner, Empretec. This caused the project to be behind schedule in terms of our initial work plan, but we are confident we will reach the target number of participants within the project timeframe.
- Young people tend to be highly mobile. We were limited in how many we could meet with during the reporting period, which coincided with an off season in agricultural work, when people tend to travel to urban areas in search of jobs. This can be solved by following up on recent trainings done by YEP, while participants are still reachable.

Next Steps

The main activities planned for August are broken down as follows:

- Post-training monitoring and support;
- Data capturing of the attendance and assessment registers to prepare for Empretec payments;
- Mobilizations for upcoming trainings;
- Community mobilizations for pre-training assessments; and
- Empretec trainings and post-training monitoring.

Human Interest Story



Suzen Rugede, from Ward 34 in Zaka district, started a sewing business after receiving technical skills training under the Youth Empowerment Project. Suzen has now received business management skills training by Empretec under the SUDEWE project. Suzen reports that before she was trained, she was not able to differentiate business and personal money. She hopes to find opportunities in the neighboring community and is looking for a possible market for her skills – for example, to sew uniforms and supply them to nearby schools.

Photos



A group of women in a VSLA cheering and dancing for the arrival of the SUDEWE project.



Women expressing respect to the community during assessments for the training program.



Women participating in the training class

Conclusion

As Zimbabwe struggles to recover from years of economic decline, jobs are scarce and the majority of the population relies on the informal economy. For many women, especially in rural areas, the main source of income is from small-scale entrepreneurship. Developing their business management and financial literacy skills is a crucial means of helping these women achieve more self-sufficiency in their business ventures and their lives. Thanks to the support of Cordula Kirchgessner, CARE is able to reach 1,000 more women with skills training, bringing them a step closer to a brighter future. On their behalf we offer our sincere thanks for your generosity.

August 2016