



BRIEFING NOTE FOR SKILLING FOR CHANGE PROJECT

PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CARE International in partnership with AEE, EAR Byumba and Chamber for Women Entrepreneurs are implementing the Skilling for Change Project. The project implementation started on 1st April 2014 and will end 31st March 2016. SFC is funded by the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women with total project fund of USD 495,323. The project goal is to promote the long-term economic independence of 15,000 women entrepreneurs in CARE Rwanda's VSLAs by developing the key skills they need to grow their businesses. The goal is achieved by building capacities of women on investor readiness (enterprise development) and business incubation/ mentorship for high potential women entrepreneurs and financial Literacy & Linkage through a mobile loan solution. The project is piloted in two districts Rulindo and Gicumbi in the Northern Province; the project has three major objectives below:

Objective 1: 15,000 women will be trained in financial education and enterprise development (investor readiness) and mobile loan training of which at least **70% (10,500)** will demonstrate significantly enhanced business skills¹ as a result of accessing the training.

Objective 2: 150 women identified as high potential entrepreneurs will receive further intensive business training.

Objective 3: 75 of the 150 women with the strongest businesses will receive further intensive, targeted **business incubation over twelve months**, which includes one-to-one business coaching, marketing and face-to-face mentoring to enable them to advance their businesses. It is expected that at least **60% of these 75 women (45)** will go onto to grow their businesses

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The project is implemented through CARE's VSL groups as an entry point for trainings on Investor readiness(enterprise development) as well as financial education; It is worth noting that only mature groups are targeted for instance groups that have existed for more than 2 years. Additionally the project targets groups with high numbers of women and entrepreneurs; In addition to the mentioned trainings; high potential women are identified and selected following a set criteria to receive intensive business skills training in specific areas of business management; Further more to this over 75 women have been selected to receive business coaching and mentorship by successful business women in the Chamber for Women. Due to the need for financial services by Groups and Women and barriers to access formal financial services; the project is piloting the Mobile loan solution with KCB Rwanda in the two districts.

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS TODATE

Groups have gained confidence to work with formal financial institutions and as a result over 63 groups with a total 1,091VSLG members have been linked for both savings and credit with SACCOs.

Currently training targets are at 178% (target; 5,000, trained 8,897), and 138% (target: 5,000, trained 6,944) for investor readiness and financial literacy and linkage against year one targets. The Intensive business skills training have been delivered and all the 159 women are being followed up to ensure they are supported in areas where they find difficulties as well as tracking progress as a result of training. Furthermore a group of 75 women are starting the mentorship program with CWE.

In addition to the above; Training on Mobile banking has been delivered with KCB Rwanda to the Village Agents and VSLG committee members; Mobilization is being done for groups that are ready for linkage to open accounts with the bank.

Through the SfC interventions; major changes have been reported by beneficiaries especially in areas of business management (book keeping, customer care etc) and financial education. These changes have been reported at both group level and household level for instance MUKAGATARE Susanne of TUZAMURANE No 91 in Kaniga Gicumbi proudly speaks of her achievements; *"My husband planned to build a house to live in but shortly he was in need of money for finishing and furniture, because I have managed well my business and started making profits, I helped him to purchase doors, windows and furniture from my savings, this happened because I have been trained on Financial Education"*

"I operated my business in a disorganized way I never kept records and had no idea if I was making profits or losses from my business; didn't see the need to pay taxes; was scared of taking loans and I didn't feel confident to meet and speak to people; didn't know the need of having an address/ stable location as a business owner" says Akimanizanye Veneranda-

Twitezimbere VSLG however after the business training “I decided to start another business “I borrowed 30,000 (appr. \$42) opened a small retail shop in March 2015 selling household items as well as banana juice; Currently i employ 3 staff and 1 of them is permanent”

PROFILE OF THE VSLG TO BE VISITED

The VSL group that will be visited is called EJOHAZAZA HEZA, meaning bright future. The group has 30 members comprised by 27 women and 3 men. The basic share was one hundred Rwandan francs which the increased to currently two hundred Rwandan francs. The social contribution was initially 20 RWF but presently is 50 RWF. Current savings are 838,250 RWF, amount in the bank on the group account: 609,760 RWF, Loans: 105,100 RWF, caisse: 123,390 RWF. The group started by 30/6/2013 and the next share out was planned to take place by 29/6/2015. The group is located in Kiziranyenzi village, Bugaragara cell, sector of Shyorongi and district of Rulindo. One of women entrepreneurs member of the group will also be visited.

