



Mary



Mona

Entrepreneur: Mary Gama, 56

An administrative assistant with three sons including two at college, Mary retired early from her job as an executive assistant at a bank to set up her business. She invested part of her retirement package to set up Middle Trading, initially buying and selling animal feed to farmers. She later invested in a mill and begun to manufacture the produce. Not having any previous business experience, she registered for training at a women's entrepreneurship support organisation in Malawi where she heard about the Grow Movement.

Consultant: Mona Smith, 45

Mona is HR Consultant for SMEs with 20+ years' experience working in a number of large multinational organisations across a variety of sectors including automotive, manufacturing, pharmaceutical and high tech. Given her work with small and medium businesses in the UK, Mona found Grow to be a great way for her make her skills available to small business owners in Africa.

Business challenges and objectives of the project

Mary wanted help working on a business plan to enable her apply for a loan to expand her business operations to be able her supply more customers. She and Mona also worked on a marketing plan aimed at building a strong customer base to ensure the new capacity would be fully utilised.

The results

Mary successfully applied for a loan and is now able to supply up to 15 customers a month, up from 6. She has implemented several marketing initiatives including fliers, posters, newspaper advertising and mobile marketing. She says posters at the stores she supplies and newspaper adverts have been the most effective.

She says taking part in the programme has given her confidence to look for more business opportunities and she now has plans to go into wheat processing and flour production.

The Impact on Mary

"This experience was an eye opener and it boosted my confidence. Mona was very patient and she took me step by step. I really appreciated that. I always looked forward to our sessions."

The Impact on Mona

"This was my second Grow project and I get a lot of satisfaction from providing help and support to others. It's wonderful to see how their business has developed and grown."

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