



Gloria



Jack

Entrepreneur: Gloria Fiwa, 40

A communications graduate, Gloria decided to become an entrepreneur because she wanted a different work life from that which employment offered. To capitalise on her background in communications, she set up a magazine targeting corporate clients, later expanding into managing corporate events.

Consultant: Jack Thompson

A banking consultant with 25+ years' experience including in various banking roles in Africa and with development organisations such as DFID and USAID. He joined Grow because it provided a good opportunity to share the skills and knowledge he obtained over the years of working in Africa.

Business challenges and objectives of the project

The unstable economic climate in Malawi affected Gloria's advertising business as it forced her corporate clients to cut down their expenditure on advertising and events. She joined the Grow programme at a time when she was looking to diversify into other areas of communication and considering getting into the production of calling cards. She needed the help of a grow consultant to develop a business plan for this new idea.

Gloria and Jack worked together to develop a business plan for the calling card business idea with particular emphasis on the financial projections. They also discussed her current magazine business with a focus on finding ways to lower her costs and improve quality.

The results

Gloria says the knowledge she gained from her interaction with Jack has helped her in her current magazine business. He made her look into getting her printing done in South Africa and found that she could get it at a reasonable cost with much better printing quality. "Before this I never considered printing in South Africa. I thought it would be too expensive. Now I have a much better product. I look at my accounts and I see there is some progress."

The calling card business is still awaiting a license from the communications commission and Gloria is confident she will be able to get a loan when it comes through.

The Impact on Gloria

"I become emotional talking about Grow because it has really helped me. At the start of a business many times you don't have a clear picture. Grow is a way to get a different view of your business. I was really comfortable talking to Jack. He took me like his daughter. He had lived in Malawi before so he could empathise and he knew where I was coming from."

The Impact on Jack

This experience made me want to do more, give more. My advice to volunteers is to speak to people who have worked in developing countries. It is important to understand the context in which these entrepreneurs are working.

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