Project Description:
The project focuses on poor working mothers because of evidence indicating that mothers have greater impact on children’s welfare and education than fathers. Also, some forms of women’s employment lead to child labour or provide poor examples for daughters to follow. Moreover, poor working mothers are capable of contributing savings, receiving loans, investing productively, and repaying loans once their capacities are enhanced and effective structures are put in place to monitoring working-group activities.

“Before joining the project I was surviving on less than one dollar a day with my six children. My husband abandoned us in the early ’80s. I started doing horticulture on a small piece of land, without skills, pesticides, fertilizer or quality seeds. With an earning of 500 TShs per day, I could not pay school fees for all the children so some had to drop out. For those who completed primary education, I could no pay for their secondary education or vocational training. My poor living and working conditions were exacerbated by my husband’s return, invalid and paralyzed and without a single penny. Relatives refused to take care of him because he had children who should look after him. I continued to produce for the children and care for my sick husband until his death in 1992.

I only started to see changes in my life and that of my children after joining the project in November 2001. The project assisted me and colleagues to organize and form KIWAMBOMA women group. I was elected the chairperson of the group and received extensive training in leadership skills, group management, business management, vocational skills and savings and credit. We were encouraged to start savings, as a strategy to work out of poverty. I started with initial loan of TShs 50,000 in January 2003, which helped me in expanding my horticulture activities. I used the loan to hire men who cultivated larger fields with a variety of products. My savings and loan size have been growing, contributing to high productivity and increased income. ....Using the knowledge and skills gained from the project, I have used part of my loan to construct a mushroom farm and I started growing mushrooms in November 2004. With increased sales and profit, I am able to pay for education requirements for my younger children, I have improved our housing, and we are able to eat quality meals.

Two of my daughters have directly benefited from the project. Also, now I know what to do when I attend and chair a meeting. In the past, I honestly did not know how to run meetings and reach effective and democratic decisions. Through the confidence I gained in the project, I contested and won a seat in the Regional Executive Committee of a political party. I am also the chairperson of the Project Monitoring Committee in Tanga Municipality.” ---Salma Harub Abdala, a member of KIWAMBOMA Women Group

“We did not know that as poor women we could borrow and repay loans....With training...we invest the loans productively....There has been tremendous improvement in business growth, increased income, ability to pay for children's education, housing, and visibility in the household and community.” ---Member of KIWAMBOMA Women’s Group, Tanga, Tanzania.

Contact Details:
Flora Nyambo-Minja
National Project Manager
255 22 2126821
minjaf@ilo.org