

**Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs
Community Development Fund**

Status Update Report

Carenage Empowerment Group

PROJECT TITLE: ESTABLISHING A PVC FURNITURE MICROBUSINESS	
APPROVAL DATE DECEMBER 01,2003	PROJECT START DATE: FEBRUARY 2004
PLANNED END DATE	PROJECTED END DATE: JANUARY 2005
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS: \$72,627	CDF FUNDING: \$59,187
ACTUAL EXPENDITURE TO DATE: \$58,460	BALANCE ON ALLOCATION:\$727
DATE OF VISIT : MAY 02,06	
PERSONS INTERVIEWED: Ms Claudine Henry, Sherma Henry, Cheryl Ann Williams, Arlene Patrick, Lee Andrea Smith-John	
CDF PERSONNEL ON VISIT: Nerle Robertson, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	

Reason for Project Visit

The group has requested assistance and the CDF has agreed to provide training to build the capacity of the group to establish and operate the micro-business. The visit was done to assess the group's status and determine the group's activities since the training in PVC furniture making and whether there was still interest in establishing the business.

Project Objectives

- To train 40 economically disadvantaged women and young adults between the ages of 18 and 45 years in PVC furniture construction and life skills
- To establish a PVC furniture business that provides jobs for poor residents of the community.

Current Status of Project:

The training concluded in November 2005. Of the 40 persons trained in two cycles, 25 completed the training. At the graduation held in December 15, 2005 the graduands exhibited their work displaying a high level of knowledge and skill in the PVC furniture making.

This gave the group the confidence to discuss with the CDF the PVC business. Based on the discussions it was agreed that the group could benefit from training in the development of a business. The CDF has not yet been able to accommodate the group but they have been invited to apply to attend the course Starting and Managing a Successful Micro enterprise which is being conducted in the St George West region in the period May 24-26.

Four members of the group continue to be interested and are actively involved in making items either for themselves or members of their families and friends. Items made by each of the persons are as follows

4 chairs and centre table

2 chairs and reading lamp

Corner table

Laundry basket and bookshelf

Since the setting up of the business is still a priority this visit was used to try to motivate the group and galvanize them into action. It was decided that an exhibition would be used as a marketing tool and this is scheduled for October 27, 2006. The group would plan the event to be held on the Brian Lara Promenade.

Constraints

The project has not been able to train the 40 persons targeted because of the difficulty experienced in keeping the attention of the women when no stipend was paid in the second cycle. In fact, only 7 persons graduated in the second cycle.

The group claims that they are unable to start the business because of lack of funds.

Inventory of Items

Small tools including 4hammer drills, 20 rubber mallets, measuring tapes, hacksaw blades.

Other information:

While some persons have bought their own tools those bought by the CDF are stored at the Centre and are available to the group.

The Coordinator stated that the CDF should provide the group with financial assistance in order to set up the business.

Comments

In planning for the exhibition it became clear that the four women who are involved benefitted immensely from the training which gave them the opportunity to uncover a wealth of talent. They are therefore excited about the prospects of setting up the PVC business and producing innovative items.

The other benefits the women stated are as follows

- They are now able to do plumbing e.g. repair broken pipes
- They are able to outfit their homes and so effect savings
- They have learnt to work together

A market survey as well as the exhibition would provide some of the data regarding the market and demand for the PVC products. The group would require assistance in this aspect. They had decided to solicit help from the CDF in doing a preliminary market survey. That is, making calls to potential buyers and users of the products.

The group has been earmarked for institutional strengthening training and these issues and others critical for the success of a business would be dealt with.

Recommendation

Given the intention of the group to stage the exhibition of products the CDF may decide to assist with the purchase of material required for items to be made as well as the market survey and advertising of the event.

The training through the Institutional Strengthening Programme already recommended would assist the group as follows

- in developing the business plan. This is critical in order to determine the potential of the business.
- In the setting up of the business

It is also recommended that a Followup/mentoring component be included

Signature and Date of Report