

New Matching Funds Will Help Tanzanian Families Improve Lives

One of the most effective ways to help Tanzanian families improve their lives has just gotten better. The Western Iowa Synod recently received two grants that will match gifts made to support the creation of new community-based micro-financing groups in southern Tanzania. For every \$2 contributed another \$1 will be added. A total of \$15,000 in matching funds is available!

Faith Lutheran Church in Odebolt has given \$5000 in matching funds for SACCOS. The remaining match comes from an anonymous congregant with long-time service to the Center for Agricultural Development and the SACCOS (Savings And Credit Co-Operative Societies) project.

“SACCO membership, as a form of microfinance, is an avenue to hope for those with limited economic opportunity,” says Western Iowa Synod Bishop Rodger Prois. “All across the developing world, and now in the Southern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, access to credit in a well controlled and accountable system has provided the financial leverage needed for individuals, mostly women, to improve their lifestyles and provide for their families. The gifts that make these matching grants possible are blessed offerings to join in partnership living out the Gospel. In our area, we would call it ‘seed money.’”

Most Tanzanians have little access to credit that would make it possible for them to adopt improved agricultural practices or begin or expand a small business. A SACCOS can provide a small, short-term loan that enables Tanzanians to invest in new opportunities.

The SACCOS groups have been successful because they require their members to have ‘skin in the game’ by investing their own savings to help provide capital for loans. SACCOS members are often able to collectively purchase quality inputs at a reduced cost. Most importantly, the loans give families the dignity of making their own decisions on how to use the loans and resulting the profits.

The funds raised by WIS will finance the creation of new SACCOS groups in villages across southern Tanzania. The SACCOS that have already been organized have greatly proven their effectiveness! These loans enable individuals and families to increase their income, often tripling what they can earn and dramatically improving their standard of living. Profits most typically enhance family housing and nutrition, children’s education, community development and church tithing.

The WIS Companion Synod Network seeks to start at least 8 new SACCOS groups. Each group requires an initial investment of \$8000 to register and supply the SACCOS, ongoing training for SACCOS leaders and to increase the amount of capital available for loans. Since the loans are repaid within three to six months, the pool of capital grows to make new loans on an ongoing basis—it is a WIN-WIN for everyone!

Individuals, church groups and congregations can all participate in the effort to create new SACCOS groups. Contributions to help can be made in several ways:

- 1) Send a contribution to WIS, 218 E 5th Street, Storm Lake, IA 50588 with “SACCOS Matching Gift” in the memo.
- 2) Use the online SACCOS website to make a donation. Use this [link](#) to go to the WIS fundraising page and click on the “Donate Now” Button
- 3) Or use the same [link](#) to become a peer-to-peer fundraiser in order to increase the impact of your effort. Just click on the “Become A Fundraiser” and follow the easy steps to enable others you know to join in the effort to help Tanzanian families.

By making your gift you can help make a tremendous difference in the lives of our sisters and brothers in Tanzania. Your gift will give glory to God!