

BizAIDS success stories

Case Study – BizAIDS training brings hope of a more prosperous future to very small business owners

This case study looks at the impact of a BizAIDS training program conducted by the Swaziland National Business Coalition (SWABCHA) with funding received by Pact South Africa for this purpose through a sub-award made under the authority provided to Pact South Africa under a cooperative agreement with USAID.

Interviews were conducted with participants who had attended the BizAIDS program to assess the impact of the training.

Interviews with Rose Tsikati and Sbon'sile Gwebu, fruit and vegetable vendors, and Thobile Mkhatjwa, a market trader, revealed what value they had gained from attending the BizAIDS program.

Rose and Sbons'ile found the style and methodology of the training to be very flexible. They liked the fact that they were able to ask questions and hold discussions during the training. They thought the course material was well written and easy to follow. For Thobile the important thing was that it was an easy to understand program and as a result participants understand the implications of doing business in a world of HIV and AIDS. She said it answered the 'What to do?', 'How to do it?' and 'Why to do it?' for her.

Changes they made after attending the BizAIDS training:

Record keeping

Neither Rose nor Sbon'sile had kept records before. Sbon'sile now diligently keeps financial records and said she can now easily tell where she is losing money and can do something about it if an expenditure is not justified. She was glad that she now understands what profit is and can do things differently if she finds she is not making a profit from an item she is selling. Rose said keeping records meant she could track her business more easily. She also knows that credit is not good for business and no longer gives credit. As a result she is no longer losing money. Previously she had a lot of trouble trying to collect money from people she had given credit. Thobile said she can now trace where the money is being lost and how not to make the same mistake again. Record keeping also helps her plan.

Succession planning

Sbon'sile had already trained one of her children to help in the business. She told the interviewers that she had taught her daughter how to keep records, not to give credit and how to buy stock and negotiate good prices.

Insurance/wills

Wills and insurance were difficult issues, but the women now understood the need for them. Rose and her husband were still debating issues regarding insurance and wills. She said she believed this was because he had not attended the training and did not yet understand the need for both.

Saving

Both Rose and Sbons'ile were savers before the training. Rose belongs to a savings and credit scheme for her personal savings. After the BizAIDS training she has started saving separately for the business.

Health

Sbons'ile was encouraged to learn that the success of her business is linked to her health. After the training she decided to check her HIV status and also spoke to her husband about it. Rose said that in the past she had not paid much attention to programs about health. Before attending the BizAIDS

training she thought HIV was not her concern. Now she knows her status and how to use condoms constantly and to discuss issues with her husband whenever they face an issue that needs discussion.

BizAIDS in general

The women would like to have follow-up BizAIDS training, because they believe it would keep them on track, especially with bookkeeping and saving. They felt that BizAIDS is unique because it opens the eyes of the most illiterate of people, is user friendly and easy to implement, as long as they are organized enough to do what they need to do.

Thobile uses her workbook as a reference tool and has completed some of the action plans in this workbook.

Conclusions drawn

From the interviews with these three women and others who attended the BizAIDS training in Swaziland it was clear that the knowledge they gained from the BizAIDS training increased their ability to protect their families and their businesses from the impact of health emergencies. It also increased their chances of running successful businesses that would allow their families to prosper and provide employment for others.



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