



**Local Handicrafts
for Women's Empowerment**

'Food on their table, roof over their heads, education for their kids'

Project Location: Regions of Armenia

Project Duration: ongoing

Implementing Agency: Homeland Development Initiative Foundation

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Total requested amount: XXX USD

DESCRIPTION

Background

The Homeland Development Initiative Foundation (founded on March 25, 2013) is the brainchild of the Finnish and Norwegian Honorary Consul in Armenia, Timothy Straight.

Homeland Development Initiative Foundation ("HDIF") aims to initiate, facilitate, and nurture sustainable development initiatives in Armenian communities. It is a grassroots, non-profit organisation dedicated to the creation of jobs for women in the regions of Armenia, using traditional techniques and materials.

HDIF has grown to reach hundreds of women across Armenia. These hard working women have contributed to growth in HDIF every year since it was founded. Their fine handmade products are today exported to the USA, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, New Zealand, Lebanon and others. They are also sold through a retail space in Yerevan.

The Local Handicrafts for Women's Empowerment project aims to address the challenges that HDIF has experienced since its foundation. All of these are related to issues of education.

The empowerment of women is largely dependent on their ability to participate in the economic life of their community and country. With this participation, women will be able to have what has become the HDIF mantra: **food on the table, a roof over their heads and an education for their children.**

Generally in Armenia the issue of Supply Chain Management(SCM) remains unaddressed. This prevents effective growth. HDIF wants its producer partners to learn these skills. This is what this project will do. The women will learn better understanding and application of basic SCM principles:

- Sourcing of materials so they have what they need to produce
- Price calculation, so they don't either under price or over price their goods
- Production planning, so orders are received on time..and the next order comes
- Clear communication. If delivery will be late, it is much better to say it than hide it
- Critical thinking. Does this make sense? How can we do it better?
- Registration and taxation. HDIF works within the legal framework and so should they
- Invoicing. Correct electronic invoice on time so the goods can be sold
- Quality control. Deliver poor quality once, and the client is lost
- Delivery. Most cost effective way of delivering goods

These might seem straight forward to many, but lack of training and practice in these skills means problems with each of the topics listed above. This must be learned so that things run

smoother, so that sales increase, so that more money comes in. So, yes, better food on the table, better roof over their heads, and better education for the kids.

The need is for a classroom type of trainings on each topic and then regular field visits to each of the producers in order to reinforce what was discussed in the classroom, through on site coaching. A big chunk of what will make this exercise successful will be an open and honest relationship between HDIF and each producer partner. Learning goes faster when the trust is present. HDIF has worked with some of these producer partners up to 9 years already. This means we have an experience base, a basic trust. This can make this project particularly useful for both HDIF and the producer partners.

Justification

One of the strategic objectives of HDIF is the development of women-lead production units in the regions of Armenia, thus promoting job creation.

The gender structure of unemployment in Armenia demonstrates a disproportionate distribution of unemployment among women and men. The decline of women economic activism continues. Women constitute 17.3% of the officially registered unemployed over the age of 25. Women of the ages 50-54 are especially vulnerable to the risk of unemployment and poverty. Most women with traditional skills are also within this last age category.

Women spend five times as much time performing unpaid housework than men.

Representation of women and men in managerial positions of the economic management sphere is imbalanced both at high government and community levels, as well as in business. Women are represented heavily in the lower grades of the economic grading system and are practically deprived of participation in the decision making process concerning major governance and economic issues, and consequently, from the opportunity of voicing their interests.

The unequal position of women and men in the economic sphere increases the risk of discrimination with regard to the enjoyment of rights and opportunities, and the traditional division of gender roles becomes a strong factor for gender inequality.

Government policy to promote rural women's entrepreneurship is only beginning in Armenia. HDIF has been a pioneer in this respect for many years already. International NGOs are also just starting to focus on this. Limited efforts have yet to have been made to offer training, retraining or vocational education to rural women to equip them with adequate skills and competence and to match those with the existing challenges and opportunities. Tax policies do not contain breaks for rural women that start small agricultural production or other small businesses. No expert consultancy and legal support are provided to such women. There are a limited number of projects in Armenia implemented by non-governmental organisations which

concentrate on providing education to women on business establishment and management. Nevertheless, there is much of a need still.

HDIF wants to fill this gap.

Goals and Objectives

Overall goal:

Invest in the empowerment of women living in small communities of Armenia by enhancing their business skill set.

-Objective 1: Educate artisan women across Armenia in sustainable business creation

-Objective 2: Assist artisan women in the regions of Armenia to market their product.

Detailed description of activities:

- A. Supply Chain Management module training of women in the regions of Armenia.
 - a. Four trainings will be organised in the regions. The initial plan is to have these in Gyumri, Idjevan, Vardenis and Goris. This will allow coverage of all of the HDIF partners. Having the training in these regional centers is more cost effective than bring all the artisans to Yerevan.
 - b. Topics covered will be Sourcing of materials, price calculation, production planning, effective communication, critical thinking, registration and taxation, invoicing, quality control and delivery.
 - c. Experts will be brought in to deliver the training with active participation of HDIF staff.
- B. Ongoing coaching and reinforcement of the principles introduced in the training so that these 'sit' and are practiced in their daily activities.
 - a. HDIF staff will visit each of the producer partners on at least a quarterly basis.
 - b. Regular telephone contact will be had, as much as required by the producer partner, or by HDIF, in order to make the production of orders go as smoothly as possible based on the SCM skills gained.
- C. Develop new, market oriented products and the market for them.
 - a. HDIF has been very successful at developing products that the international market wants. These are mostly crocheted, but also sewn and hand painted. This work will continue unabated in order to create an ever increasing demand for the products. HDIF staff will be used for this purpose.
 - b. This product development work will require regular visits to the producer partners.

Methodology

Methods of implementation:

Preparation:

- A. During the first 30 days of the project, the project team will be defined and contracts will be signed with the project team and the HDIF producer partners. The office will be prepared for operation, and the public informed through social media. A detailed activity plan will be created with identifies the roles and responsibilities of each participating member.

Action:

- A. During the action phase, the project proposal will be implemented according to the designed guidelines and activity plan. It will be monitored and evaluated. Revisions will be made if needed to assure efficiency.

Termination:

- A. The project will be terminated after the completion of the project narrative and financial reports will be made available to the donors. An evaluation will be carried out which will create the foundation for the next project. This is an ongoing and intensive project, not fully completed in one project cycle. (See more in 1.5.2 paragraph).

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Monitoring of project activities:

Overall monitoring plans, formats and schedules will be developed during the initial four months. The monitoring will track implementation schedule, periodic reporting requirements as well as qualitative information such as indicators of mind set change, values adoption and group effectiveness.

The Program Manager will ensure day to day and overall monitoring of the program. A Monitoring Action Plan will be drawn up based on project objectives and action plans. The monitoring will be carried out on a regular basis and it will be impact-oriented. It will assess the following:

- whether this project is producing the intended effects,
- whether the ongoing activities are relevant to project objectives.

The monitoring will help

- to identify the problems of ongoing activities,
- to propose corrective action and alternatives and prevent negative effects on the target group.

Project Evaluation:

At the end of project implementation an internal evaluations will be realized. In general, the evaluation will be focused on measuring:

- relevance of the project to the local needs and contexts
- implementation efficiency, achievement of the objectives and comparison of ongoing activities with the intended ones
- cost-effectiveness, comparison between the achievement of objectives and used resources
- impact: changes of situation for target groups, presence of expected outcomes

Expected Impact and Results

Expected impact on target groups/beneficiaries:

The economic empowerment of the women will directly impact on their economic independence, and will make them more active society members. It is proven that the economic sustainability creates balance in the family and the respect level and approaches of both partners changes towards their shared life, thus promoting more equality. More equality may result in less violence towards women.

Concrete Results and Outcomes:

The following concrete results and outcomes are foreseen:

Result 1: 50 artisan women in administrative positions are educated in establishing and running a successful production unit.

Outcomes to the result 1-

- 50 women received at least two different trainings on SCM principles and their practical application.
- 50 women received on going coaching relevant to their business operations.
- 150 women are economically empowered and are more independent.

Result 2: 150 artisan women have sustainable income from the sales of their products.

Outcome to the result 2 -

- 150 women are economically sustainable and more active in their communities.
- 150 women have sustainable marketing opportunities within and out of Armenia

Sustainability

Economic independence is the initial and most important step for women empowerment. Income-generating activities are seen as “entry points for channels of communication and vehicles by which women can meet their needs” (Rogers and Youssef, 1988). They provide effective ways to address inequalities in the areas of health, education and poverty alleviation. Many researchers have recognized that improvements in health care, nutrition and education can only be sustained with an increase in household income and greater control by women over financial resources (Hashemi, 2004).

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals(SDGS) are also in focus in this project. This education project aims at economic empowerment of women, thus directly addressing the following of the SDGs:

#1 No Poverty. More money in women’s pockets reduces poverty.

#2 Zero Hunger. More money in women’s pockets means more and better food for the family.

#3 Good Health and Well Being. More and better food means better health and well being.

#4 Quality Education. The project will provide quality training that can be used practically.

#5 Gender Equality. More money in women’s pockets promotes more participation in society.

#8 Decent Work and Economic Growth. More skills in women means more consistent work and economic growth.

#10 Reduced Inequality. More money in women’s pockets evens the playing field.

Several others of the 17 can be indirectly addressed, but these are directly so.

Educational projects are the most sustainable ones especially when those are implemented using the participatory approach. The project may end but the skills will remain with those who acquired it. Investing in education is the most sustainable solution.

PROJECT BUDGET

Post name	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Cost	Comment
PROJECT STAFF					
Project coordinator 100%	month	12	\$850	\$10,200	Full time position
Project assistant 50%	month	12	\$374	\$4,488	Half time position
Project accountant 50%	month	12	\$160	\$1,920	Half time position
Project driver 50%	month	12	\$140	\$1,680	Half time position
TRAINING AND CONSULTING					
Business Consultant	day	100	\$80	\$8,000	for development of training modules
Training Expert	day	48	\$21	\$1,008	3 for each 2 day seminar for 4 seminars
Training Materials	seminar	4	\$80	\$320	one set of materials for each seminar
Coffee breaks(2/day,4 places,2 days)	time	16	\$42	\$672	2 for each 2 day seminar for 4 seminars
COMMUNICATION					
Telephone	month	12	\$25	\$300	Mobile phone subscription
Publications, posters, banners, social media	time	4	\$165	\$660	Visibility for the project
Website expansion to include modules	month	12	\$58	\$696	Modules to be made open source
OFFICE SPACE					
Rent and maintenance 50%	month	12	\$220	\$2,640	Half of HDIF office rent for project period
Heat, water, electricity, cleaning	month	12	\$63	\$756	Half of HDIF expenses for project period
MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRANSPORT					

Fuel	trip	48	\$64	\$3,072	4 trips pr. month
Maintenance	time	4	\$350	\$1,400	tires, minor repairs
EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE					
Lap top	item	1	\$988	\$988	Dedicated to the project during project period
Overhead projector	item	1	\$1,235	\$1,235	Dedicated to the project during project period
COST OF FINANCING					
Banking fees	month	12	\$48	\$576	International and national bank transfers
TOTAL EXPENSES				\$40,611	
ADMINISTRATIVE OVERHEAD					
5% Administrative fee				\$2,031	
GRANT PROJECT TOTAL				\$42,642	