

Renewing

Understanding the context of mission today

REACH
Renewing, Engaging
and Advocating Churches

Session 1

Working Together to Save: A Story from Haiti

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Stepping back from the edge sounds easy doesn't it? Not for the desperately poor in Haiti who find it very difficult, if not impossible, to cope with crisis financial needs. This is the analogy I use when I present micro-savings to groups of individuals. I explain that the more savings they accumulate, the farther back from the edge of disaster they stand and unexpected needs will not force them into desperate situations.

Since coming to Haiti, I have presented numerous micro-savings programs to various age levels of people. One group of young adults has formed a collective savings group and contributes weekly to achieve their dream of opening a hardware store. After nearly two years these young people are still focused on their dream.

A pastor asked me to help a group of women from his church start a Rotating Savings and Credit Association (ROSCA) program some two years ago. Since then twelve ladies have saved \$1.25 each week, allowing one woman to receive a lump sum of money each month. Their collective saving continues until each woman gets her monthly amount of money in a year-long savings cycle. They are now in their second cycle.

Over the summer, a gathering of young men and women from this same church organized and are now saving together. Even more exciting is the group of 16 youth from the church who have recently united and are creating necessary organizational rules before they begin saving in



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the next two weeks. As we work together, an important sense of ownership has developed in each of the groups as they have formed their own guidelines and self-governing standards.

Perhaps the best affirmation of their efforts is when their pastor came to me and said, “These micro-saving programs have helped to change this congregation. People are making donations to construct a church building (they meet in a tent), they are more confident and they are forming closer bonds.”

The community is our river into the ocean of new possibilities!