



MICROFINANCESOLUTIONS

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR THE WORKING POOR

Microloans, Bible lessons, and a way forward

—Susan Fisher, CAM staff member in Nicaragua

My husband and I recently accompanied the SALT team to a microloan disbursement meeting in a poor neighborhood of Tipitapa, Nicaragua. This microloan group started when Juan, a man from this area, asked CAM for money for woodworking tools. Our staff told him why we don't just hand out money and informed him about the SALT program. Inspired, Juan then helped to get a microloan group started.

Prior to the loan disbursement meeting, Juan and twenty-nine of his neighbors convened every other week for two months for an introductory course. They learned about the commitment and criteria involved in getting a SALT microloan.

During the introductory course, Juan became impatient for his loan and almost dropped out. But he decided to stick with it. At the end of two months, only eight individuals out of the original thirty were willing to commit!

The day of the meeting was a happy day because the loan money was going to be disbursed. But first, the group needed to decide on a fee for tardiness or absence at meetings. The proposed fees ranged from thirty cents to one dollar; one dollar is a very steep fine for such a poor village! The final decision was thirty cents for tardiness and forty-five cents for absence.

Juan and the other members then received their loans. The members of this group aspire to use their loans for various enterprises: selling hygiene products or buying corn to make tortillas. Juan plans to buy cheese in bulk and resell it. He hopes to save his profits to buy woodworking equipment.

Every other week, this microloan group has an accountability meeting where the SALT team conducts a Bible study and



the members make the required payments on their loans. The goal is for the loans to be paid off in six months.

If clients continue for three more six-month loan cycles, they will have studied fifty-two Bible lessons while also learning about finances. After that, they should be able to go forward independently, implementing the practical principles they learned.

What is SALT? SALT is an acronym for Shared Accountability, Lending, and Teaching. This CAM program reaches out to people in material poverty through microloans, savings groups, agricultural programs, vocational training, and Christ-centered teaching. Our goal is to walk alongside clients, helping them use the resources God has placed in their care and teaching them the importance of following Jesus in everyday life.



95.7%

Loan repayment rate

(3 year average)



30,780

SALT clients

2018 in review



SALT started in the African countries of Namibia and Mozambique.



\$74.15 was the average accumulated savings per savings group member (January - November).



30,780 savings group members and microloan clients benefited from the program. There were 27,038 clients at the end of 2017.



The Salt & Light program was launched to provide Bible-based financial teaching here in the U.S.



Over 234,000 hours of Biblical teaching at SALT meetings. We commit the spiritual harvest to God, who has promised that His Word will accomplish its purpose.

Save the date! Salt & Light orientation seminar

Do you have a burden for your neighbor's soul? Is your congregation looking for ways to reach out? Salt & Light, a new aspect of SALT Microfinance Solutions, is a Bible-based financial teaching tool for Anabaptist communities in the U.S. to use in reaching out to their neighbors. We are planning orientation seminars for 2019 for those interested in using this tool.

April 25, 26, and 27, 2019 | Ephrata Business Center, Ephrata, PA. Registration deadline: March 31
September 2019 (exact date to be announced) | Tentative location: Plain City, OH

For more information or to register, visit www.christianaidministries.org/salt-light, call 330.893.2428, or email saltandlight@camoh.org.

Would you like **to be involved?**

Financial contributions

If you wish to help provide sustainable solutions for those living in poverty, see the enclosed response coupon to give a one-time donation.

Prayer

Ask God to direct national facilitators as they provide Biblical teaching at SALT meetings.

Pray for SALT clients as they receive Bible-based teaching, that they fully commit to following Jesus.

Pray for the churches here in the U.S. who are starting their first Salt & Light groups.

Non-cash asset donations

You can donate grain, cattle, real estate and other non-cash assets to help support SALT Microfinance Solutions. Contact CAM Foundation at 330.893.4915 to find out how this works.

Monthly sponsorships

Teach-A-Farmer: Each monthly donation of \$50 will enable five farmers to receive agricultural and Bible-based teaching through the SALT Agri-Plus program.

Adopt-A-Savings-Group: \$50 per month will pay the in-country costs for a group of 20-25 savings group members.

To start a monthly sponsorship, see the enclosed response coupon.



Agri-Plus client profile

Before Elijah became a SALT Agri-Plus member, he found it difficult to provide for his family. He did not have a good way to store his grain. Insects and mice raided his food supply. "To feed my family, I had to go into debt," he said.

Elijah's Agri-Plus group saved enough money to construct small metal silos to protect their crops from insects and mice. Now Elijah has food for most of the dry season. He has even been able to sell some grain to pay medical expenses.



MICROFINANCE DASHBOARD

SAVINGS GROUP STATISTICS[†]

	June 2018 - Nov. 2018	June 2017 - Nov. 2017
Number of members in savings groups	23,043	20,017
Number of members in youth savings groups	3,736	3,218
Average loan size from group savings	\$117	\$100
Average savings per week per member	\$1.34	\$1.45
Total savings in time period shown	\$1,034,849	\$783,469

Dollar amounts listed on this page are in USD.

[†]Savings groups operate in Haiti, Ghana, Honduras, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Uganda, Namibia, Nigeria, Nicaragua, Ukraine, Tanzania, Mozambique, Myanmar, and India.

MICROLOAN PROGRAM STATISTICS

	June 2018 - Nov. 2018	June 2017 - Nov. 2017	3 Yr. Avg.
Repayment rate	96.0%	94.9	95.7%
Average loan size	\$165	\$176	\$177
Average savings per client	\$115.58	\$82.16	\$89.79
Number of clients	4,001	5,045	4,530

SPOTLIGHT | SAVINGS GROUPS IN MYANMAR

Program started in Myanmar in August 2017	June 2018 - Nov. 2018	Aug. 2017 - Nov. 2017
Number of savings group members	108	12
Members who abandoned SALT	0	0
Average savings per week per member	\$1.49	\$.15
Total savings in time period shown	\$3,264	\$29
Average loan size from group savings	\$72	no loans

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SALT savings groups expand in Myanmar

SALT savings group members in Myanmar are excited about the gradual change they are experiencing. **“Before the savings group started, I was borrowing money with 30 percent interest,”** said Ma Pi, a widow with five children. She said saving money has helped meet her family’s daily needs and she no longer needs to borrow from others at high interest. **“I have many reasons to save in this group,”** continued Ma Pi. **“For example, for health problems or personal difficulties.”**

The SALT program continues to expand as funding is available and opportunities arise. In Myanmar, SALT savings groups continue to grow. This impoverished country in southeast Asia is rich in natural resources, but it is one of the most economically depressed countries in Asia. As one of the world’s most disaster-prone countries, Myanmar often faces floods, cyclones, earthquakes, landslides, and droughts.

Why are SALT savings groups needed in Myanmar?

- **Bible-based teaching is greatly needed.** Approximately 87 percent of Myanmar’s population is Buddhist, while a mere 6.2 percent profess to be Christian. SALT savings

groups create a platform to provide members with a steady diet of Christ-centered teaching.

- **Savings groups teach responsibility and accountability.** Our goal for SALT savings groups is to provide a setting where people can learn to responsibly manage their resources. High levels of accountability and frequent meetings help build this trait.
- **Many people depend on high-interest loans and have not learned to save.** Loans from other sources have exorbitant interest rates. Many bank loans are hard to get and have interest rates of over 6 percent. Some people even resort to “loan sharks” and pay as much as 20 to 30 percent interest monthly!

Ten SALT savings groups are operating in Myanmar. Group members are learning Bible truths as well as ways to improve their businesses. **“Because of the lessons, my business is better than before and I am selling more,”** says Khin Ma Ma (pictured below). **“I didn’t understand much about business before. Even if I can’t read the lessons, I can listen as others read them. The lessons are the best thing for me.”**

To give a one-time contribution or start a monthly sponsorship to help support the SALT Microfinance Solutions program, see the enclosed response coupon.



Savings group member in Myanmar.

Facts about Myanmar

- Myanmar was once known as the “rice bowl of Asia.” But now, nearly 30 percent of the children are stunted from undernourishment.
- 25 percent of the population is illiterate.
- Most children in Myanmar go to school in Buddhist monasteries.



Shared
Accountability,
Lending, and
Teaching



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