

## “The Tapestry Newsletter Volume # 2”



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## Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in SADC



We introduced the tapestry project last year in August and the programme went viral with thousands of women showing interest. Initially our target was Zimbabwe but when few showed interest then we advertised in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia and South Africa and the response was amazing. We did set the region ablaze and this resulted in our organisation getting extra busy traversing the breath and length of SADC.

If a business fails locally should you fold your hands and discard it? Not really, go global and try it and you will be surprised. Interestingly locals later on showed interest after realising the scramble for our trainings by regional countries.

### Our business model

There was no way we could empower millions of women with a limited budget and so we had to invite a few trainees to come to Harare so that we could train them and then help to cascade the programme to millions of interested women in their home countries.

### The result

We worked hand in glove with our champions to train more than a thousand entrepreneurs directly and tens of thousands indirectly. Whilst we have slowed down as we introduce another interesting project, the tapestry project continues especially in RSA, Lesotho, Malawi and Botswana.

### Tapestry Basics



Tapestry involves the weaving of various products such as carpets, hats, bags and interior deco using hands. If you have done knitting before then tapestry is an easy project.

**The tools:** In the case of carpets, doormats and bathroom sets, you need a carpet underlay, knitting wool (chunky wool), a crochet and a latch hook. Most of these

materials are available locally except for chunky wool which is available in RSA and Malawi.

### The costing model

For a 3x4 metre carpet, one may need 30 balls of wool which is roughly \$30 but sell the carpet for prices above \$80-\$150. A crochet which you use once costs \$1 or less. A latch hook costs \$2 and carpet underlay can be substituted with hessian mats available locally at a price of \$1 per metre.

So basically one would have created a job for herself by making carpets for sale...industry created!

### Carpets and themes

Unlike the imported carpets, with hand woven carpets, one can create themes such as:

**Sports:** Carpets for sporting teams, Kaizer Chiefs, Orlando Pirates, Dynamos, Highlanders, Chelsea, Bafana Bafana, Malawi Flames...the list is endless.



**Culture:** Wedding gifts, family names, national flags, totems etc

**Religion:** Prayer mats, Bible verses, church logos etc

**Corporate Branding:** Company names, logos and products.

### Most popular products with our trainees

- Centre piece mats
- Side bed mats
- Car covers
- Bathroom sets
- Interior deco



Shylet Goredema is one of our successful trainees based in East London. She attended our training in October 2017 in EL and keeps raising the flag high in empowering women in the Eastern Cape. She makes carpets for sale and also trains others. Her recent successful project was training Methodist Church members in Port Elizabeth.



One of our best students in Durban Nozipho followed our sports theme and produced Kaizer Chiefs carpets which were all sold out. She also helped in training various women and youths in the KZN province.

### Botswana Success Story

Ntesang Seepamore and Tshepiso Dikeme were the first Botswana nationals to be trained in Harare. Their motivation came from the more than 10.000 likes and responses to our adverts in their country. They were the first to arrive in Harare and helped to train hundreds of people in Gaborone, Francis Town, Phikwe and Maun.

Ntesang holds a degree in economics and Tshepiso is a nurse at a hospital in Gaborone.

### Lesotho Success Stories

Our training in Lesotho should be ranked amongst the best. Two friends Libuseng Ramalohlanye and Mpolokeng Pontshy Challa helped to organise our training in Maseru and it was well organized.

Follow up activities for the group included holding market fairs and partnering with local companies and government departments. The partnership with Redcross helped to empower tens of women in rural and urban areas



Training funded by Redcross in Lesotho

### Masvingo's first hand knitted rug

[Mavis Chihera Kazingizi](#) made this carpet and used the following costs

1. Carpet underlay -\$3
  2. Wool x 26 balls- \$26
- Total costs \$29 (excludes labour)

The total selling price was \$80 not bad but although the major challenge is labour for the 2,5 x 1.5. metres carpet





Getting better with each carpet, Mavis Kazingizi is now fully employed by tapestry taking orders from as far as Bulawayo and Mutare.



**Sinekesamanguni Mzimela**

We would not have done much without the assistance of Sis Sinekesamanguni. May the Almighty bless with super talented lady. She helped with our training logistics in Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Joburg, East London and Lesotho. She is the Granny of Tapestry and very talented!



Where is the money in tapestry? Partnering with local companies in branding them is where the money is. One of our trainees Nono Angel Makelve has been branding companies with carpets and has recently clinched a big contract with a local financial institution. The contract will help her empower other women in making carpets to be supplied to the financial institution with branches across the country...employment created through partnerships.



We trained 3 women from Malawi, Suzan, Monica and Fransica. The ladies helped to spread the tapestry viral in their country where more than 15.000 women had shown interest. The attention did not escape the Malawi Government which adopted the programme through its TEVEZ programme and Monica helped to coordinate trainings.



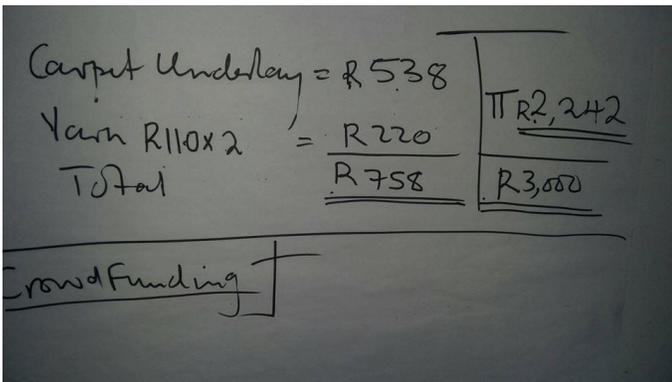
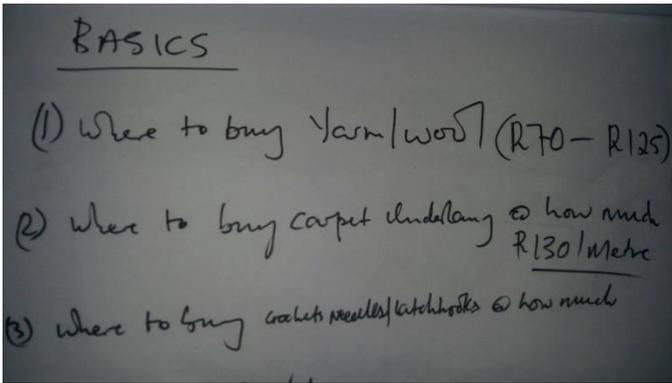
One of our biggest success story is the Mpumalanga Real Queens in Action. We helped to form the organization which is headed by Thandazile P Mokoena and based in Nelspruit. Formed and registered in December 2017, the organization has partnered with the Ministry of Education and helped train teachers working with disabled students in Limpopo Province.

The organization has empowered thousands of women across the Rainbow Nation and has received donor support to establish an entrepreneurship college that helps millions of women across the country. They have been asked to expand beyond the Mpumalanga Province and set up satellite offices in various provinces. Ms Mokoena has appeared on various radio and tv programmes talking about the programme.



Tapestry in the news: Thandazile got coverage in the popular South African newspaper: The Sun

## Why we include business training as part of tapestry



The number one problem facing many entrepreneurs is Access to Markets. If there is no market then there is no business! We therefore design our programmes with access to markets in mind.

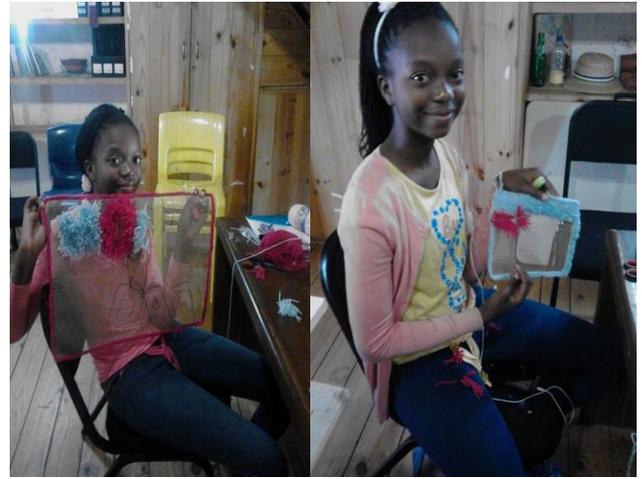
Trainees should be empowered to use digital marketing which is the most cost effective way to market products. Use of digital marketing platforms such as Websites, Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram and Adwords is covered so that at the end of the training no one struggles with access to markets. Branding is also part of the marketing training so that trainees project a professional outlook and help create a long lasting brand for their business ventures.

The second problem entrepreneurs face is access to funding. We cover various models of seeking funding such as partnerships, crowd funding and sourcing funds from NGOs, government departments and the corporate sector. Our success stories of partnerships by various companies, Namibia Agribank, Redcross and The Malawi government shows that trainees are grasping the business concepts and successfully implementing them.

The business skills enable entrepreneurs to use them not only in tapestry but other projects. We cover sourcing of materials, costing and investing back into the business for growth.

## Interesting stuff from tapestry

Did you know that you can also teach your kids tapestry? Yes they can also get life skills which they can refer back to later on in life. We always encourage women entrepreneurs to bring their kids for free training.



**Is it a woman thing?** Of course knitting is traditionally for women but we have also trained several men in Harare, Durban and Pietermaritzburg.



Why is tapestry popular? It is because it involves hands on training, women have the freedom to design own carpets and proudly display them in their homes as own creations. There is no limit to what they can design as this also includes interior decor, hats, bags and hats.

**Are we the first Zimbabweans to promote tapestry in SADC?** Not really as we have just modified the *doilies* that our mothers made popular in the 90s. They made them and exported them to regional countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Botswana. We have simply brought a better model and added business training to it and marketed it well using digital platforms. We look forward to more researches and better models coming in future. We help on building the reputation built in the 90s and this helps to explain the acceptance across the region.

**Do we use machinery in training?** There is no machinery required...strictly your own hands and your imagination. It is easy to learn and in 2 days, one would have mastered the techniques and each participant is expected to take home a completed product.

**Are carpets developed strong enough?** The carpet underlay is strong enough and they compare favorably with imported carpets.



Why is the program popular? Most homes in Southern Africa are getting ceramic tiles and ceramic tiles require shaggy rugs, bedside rugs and centre pieces for furnishings. So the demand is always going to be high.

**Pricing of carpets?** Pricing of hand woven carpets is higher than normal carpets as one can design tailor made carpets and a client can choose colours, sizes and shapes they need-something they cannot do with imported carpets.

**Left handers?** We encountered one left hander in East London called Fanyiswa, we thought she was going to struggle but were surprised when she managed to quickly learn and design her own carpet.

**Can you finish a carpet during the 2 day training?** For us to certify you a tapestry graduate, you need to complete a small carpet and also start work on a big piece of the carpet. Our trainees must take home a

completed small carpet and must have started work on a big carpet piece which they will complete at home.



**Impact on people with learning challenges?** In Polokwane one of the teachers whom we trained gave us inspirational feedback. A student with speaking challenges got so excited with the training and spoke his first sentence! So the programme is also recommended for disabled students or those with learning challenges.

**Who else can learn tapestry?** We have trained various professionals. A medical doctor named Dr Jojozi based in Mtata, various police officers in South Africa and Zimbabwe, University students in South Africa, correctional services officers in Zimbabwe(Kadoma) and Lesotho (Mafeteng) and many more.

**What do you do when a participant goes into labour?**



Mafiri Mapho Motsepe scared us when we thought she was going into labour right during our training at the Lakeside Hotel in Maseru!

Luckily we had nurses within the class and they quickly attended to her. Mafiri didn't want to miss the class due to pregnancy. She later on delivered a

bouncing baby a few days later and we nicknamed the baby Tapestry!

## Tapestry Tips

Where do you source materials in RSA and Malawi?

We have partnered with the Wool and Textile Shop along Albertina Sisulu Avenue near the Plaza in Joburg, South Africa. You will find all the tapestry material from wool, latch hooks and carpet underlay. Contact numbers 0118392600, 0118371222 and 0828685060

In Malawi Blantyre, you can get wool from the Wool Shop based in Limbe Industrial Sites.



## Upcoming Events



Our team will be covering Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia in the coming weeks as we build on the momentum from tapestry. With groups already created, we are looking forward to empowering more entrepreneurs across SADC and beyond.

For Inquiries, do contact us on +263774081808, +263339454 or +263773055063. Our offices are based at No 34 Quendon Road, Monavale Harare.(Situating next to Maranatha Preschool or opposite Veritas Sports Club)

Kea leboga

