

# Somalia

# Microfinance

## Inventive Village Savings and Loans Approach Empowers Women

### THE CHALLENGE

Somalia has a dubious record of fourth among all countries for highest gender inequalities. Rural Somali women have no voice, no power, no formal education, no recognizable sources of income, and no opportunities. Traditional cultural practices restrict their social and economic well-being.

### THE SOLUTION

Self-Help Groups enable women to accumulate savings. World Concern targets the very poorest, who save as little as a US nickel each week. They loan at 0% interest, restricting loans to financial capital for income-generating activities. Women are empowered and gain a voice. Men gain new respect for women's capacities to produce wealth and to improve their livelihoods.



### THE IMPACT

"Before, we did not know who among us needed help. We organized for unity, to help each other. For example, some of the children of group members went on illegal migrations. That problem was solved by earning our own incomes after getting loans from the box of the group. Before, we did not know how to read and write. Literacy also helped us to use funds for business activities."