

## Lucky's Star Shines

*Determined not to give in to poverty. Driven to care for her children. Desperate not to find herself enslaved. A woman named Lucky never gave up hope...*

Married at 16. Illiterate. Enduring a daily grind of absolute poverty while trying desperately to care for her children. "Lucky" might have better been named anything else. But one day, someone trusted Lucky with a loan of \$80. It was more money than she had ever held in her hand at one time. And she was determined to make the most of it.

Lucky Oghuvwe grew-up in the rural poverty of West Africa's Nigerian Delta where most people live on a \$1/day or less. Her father didn't believe in educating girls so Lucky stayed home and waited to be married. She didn't wait long.

Although her husband gave her food and shelter, Lucky knew dependence on him was dangerous. Remembering her mother's life, she said, "Dependence on the husband is slavery." But it seemed she was headed for the same fate. Three children came along quickly and Lucky found that she didn't have enough money to pay for food as well as medicine, clothes as well as school fees. But she wouldn't give up. "I did not want my children to suffer in poverty the way I did," she said.

Lucky set her sights on a home-based business so she could provide for herself and her children. She planned to sell food and basic kitchen supplies from a corner of her tiny house, but she needed capital to get started. Without collateral, a credit history, or even the ability to read, Lucky's prospects looked bleak.

But the answer was just around the corner. MicroCredit Enterprises' Permanent Fund to Alleviate Extreme Poverty places its trust in women like Lucky. By loaning cash to women who want to start businesses, the Fund proves that no one is more trustworthy than a woman determined to beat poverty.

Lucky's \$80 loan immediately turned her life around. She became an entrepreneur, attentive to the customers who regularly bought flour, sugar and matches from her. She asked them what they would like to see on the shelves of her tiny store and made plans to expand. Quickly repaying her first loan, she took out a second for \$96, and then a third for \$160. Each time she added new items to her stock, bought in greater quantities, and made more money. She started setting aside money for emergencies, made plans to move her business to a market stall, hired workers to build a better house for her family, and suddenly realized she could afford the fees to send her children to school.



With a loan to start a business and their own determination, women like Lucky can lift themselves and their families out of poverty...but only if you help.

Never missing a payment, she took pride in paying the interest on her loans. For Lucky, there would be no handouts, no gifts, and no dependence. Every penny she earned was a source of pride. And on the first day of school, Lucky's daughter walked through the gates.

MicroCredit Enterprises Permanent Fund to Alleviate Extreme Poverty gives donors the chance to put their support directly into the hands of women like Lucky. The Fund works with strong local, nonprofit partners to ensure funds are well-managed and that, as each loan is repaid, another is loaned.

Through a special commitment made by Microcredit Enterprises executives, every penny donated to the Permanent Fund to Alleviate Extreme Poverty goes to loans for women and not a penny to administrative overhead. As women repay their loans, the Fund recycles the money into new loans—and larger loans—empowering more and more women to become entrepreneurs.

"I tell other women to try this, too," says Lucky. "We help each other." And for Lucky, her story of triumph has just begun. "The sky is my limit," she says. "I am self-fulfilled. I have what I need now and all my children will go to the university level. Without these loans, this would be impossible."

Can every woman in poverty be "Lucky?" Only if you help. MicroCredit Enterprises Permanent Fund to Alleviate Extreme Poverty turns every penny you donate into a loan. Each loan changes a life. And like Lucky, each woman can have her chance to become a shining example of success.