

## **Flock ladies of the Karoo**

I am thankful for the opportunity to talk briefly today about my community project on our farm and also in the town of Petrusville. The project is called Flock ladies of the Karoo. We specialise in making felt, felt products and hand knitted products. We have been doing this for 7 years and have proved that this is a sustainable project. I made sure that everything was in place: a Section 21 Company, separate bank account, financial statements.

This project changed the lives of both myself and the Ladies of the Flock. It took me out of my comfort zone and for the Ladies of the Flock it gave a sense of pride. I believe that if we don't change, we don't grow and if we don't grow, we are not really living.

Barak Obama said the following about change: 'Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek'.

We started with the felting of the wool of the Merino sheep, which my husband farms with. That soon branched out to hand kitting as well. The fact that I can use a natural fibre of this area is very important for our products and an excellent selling point. The people who buy from us love the idea that we have a natural product and that everything is hand made.

I have two groups of woman in the production line, 16 in total. One group is on the farm and they clean the wool, comb and dye it. They make the felt sheets and also felt products. In town another group use the felt sheets to make other felt products. They also make hand knitted items for which we use only natural fibre, e.g. mohair and cotton.

We meet twice a week. During that time I hand out the material and at the same time collect their finished products. During these times we do quality control, pack orders, drink tea and in fact spend wonderful times together. They take the wool and whatever they need home, and their articles are made at home.