

# Loans help businesses around world

Bucknell group collecting money for Asia, Africa and Latin America

By Jaime North  
The Daily Item

LEWISBURG — A group of Bucknell University stu-

dents are trying to connect the campus with the Lewisburg community in an effort to launch small businesses in poverty stricken countries in Asia,

Africa and Latin America.

For the price of a full tank of gas, the students are enabling low income entrepreneurs to get their feet on the ground.

In fact, they have done it twice already.

Through Kiva — a person-to-person micro-lending

Web site that enables people to lend directly to entrepreneurs in developing countries — the Microfinance Initiative at Bucknell has helped an entrepreneur in Ghana purchase sewing materials for her business and an entrepreneur group in Honduras stock up on

products for its street vending business.

Each loan was a mere \$25, according to Jessica Sturzenegger, a Bucknell junior and Microfinance Initiative president. In total, Sturzenegger said the

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## Bucknell group helps world's entrepreneurs

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group has raised more than \$1,600 and made than \$700 in loans.

"Our initiative is trying to promote an awareness of an effective method to poverty reduction and introducing an innovation approach to banking and finance," Sturzenegger said. "Through KIVA, we loan money to low-income entrepreneurs in order to help them start small businesses and generate a sustainable income. We're currently trying to increase interest on campus and begin collecting donations from faculty, alumni, students, the surrounding community in order to make more loans."

Sturzenegger said the group is focusing on one region at a time for the micro-loans.

"These areas (Asia, Africa and Latin America) were just three regions the group selected out of all the possible areas KIVA loans to," Sturzenegger said. "Since we're also trying to

raise awareness on campus, we thought it would be easier to target one region a semester (Latin American this semester). This way, the people that decide to donate to our group have a better idea of where their money is going."

According to Sturzenegger, there are plenty of opportunities to help the group.

"The great thing about microfinance is that we're not asking for large amounts of money, and every little bit can make a difference," Sturzenegger said. "We just recently printed pledge cards and brochures to distribute across the Bucknell community. We're also currently brainstorming another event that would bring attention to microfinance — a panel has been mentioned.

"Meanwhile, we'll be continuing to raise money and make loans."

For more information on the Microfinance Initiative at Bucknell, contact [mib@bucknell.edu](mailto:mib@bucknell.edu) or visit [www.orgs.bucknell.edu/mib](http://www.orgs.bucknell.edu/mib).

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