DCED Conference
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Market Development Facility

Using WEE data to design innovative WEE business models

Fruit and vegetable processing, Maqere, Fiji
Women’s Economic Empowerment – vastly different contexts

Tourism, Balibo House Trust, Timor-Leste
“A woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically…

…and the power to make and act on economic decisions.”

This contributes to gender equality.
The Monday morning test

‘mainstream gender…’

‘build empowerment…’

‘design WEE focused interventions…’

At worst…

‘don’t forget about WEE’

fractured, opportunistic partnerships
Deepening strategy – where to work

(Range of impact depth, potential to reach scale)

Focus on ‘mainstreaming’ women’s economic empowerment

Focus on female led entrepreneurship, female leadership and formal workplace improvements

Predominantly men-led and dominated sectors, women not present

Predominantly men-led sectors

Jointly-led sectors

Predominantly women-led and dominated sectors

(Deep impact and, but scale often limited)
We sometimes assume…

So we often engage like this…

But often we need to better understand (and design like this)…
- **Economic Advancement**: Skills training offered
  - Women better trained
  - Business more productive
  - More jobs and more income

- **Workload**: Women are paid into their own bank accounts on a monthly basis, and the business offers a suitable savings scheme and financial advice for women

- **Decision making**: Businesses see the benefits of providing skills training and value the employees’ growth, and provide additional support services if needed

- **Access to opportunities and skills**: Women have marketable skills suitable for the wider sector. They are aware of their marketability (they go for promotions and negotiate pay, etc.)

- **Access to assets and services**: Women are trained in an environment that best suits their learning needs and promotes them to take up opportunities
How aware is the partner of the business incentives of engaging with women? How capable is the partner of making the most of this potential?

How do these women interact with the business? What specific requirements (payment, work hours, support services) do these specific women need?
Partner recognises the need for daycare but does not understand it as a commercial model.

MDF demand survey and business model with women’s constraints translated into commercial losses.

More and different types of businesses now interested in the model.
Understanding women as a customer base
Efficient cook stoves, Concrete Product Business, Timor-Leste

- Partner unaware of women’s demand and satisfaction level of their product
- MDF validation of the product as a safer and faster cooking method, which then encourages the business the further upscale production
- MDF working to sensitise more businesses on the benefits of understanding women as consumers
Partner facing poor sourcing performance from its women producers

- MDF analysis of workloads being underestimated and income sources badly understood by business - identifies the need to diversify sourcing base

- MDF looking closely to help new entrepreneurs in Fiji build business models that can engage more effectively with producer communities
Partner (a new business) develops a strong network of women producers but wants to develop product quality

(ongoing) MDF takes lessons from Things & Stories partnership in Timor-Leste to explain product supply practice – to be followed by further research of the women as producers
Main takeaways

WEE data is commercially valuable and influential – in the success of current business models, in initial negotiations and long-term buy-in, in new model development.

WEE data collection must be as strategic and periodic as all other results chain indicators.

WEE data collection is not always as intangible or ‘difficult’ as we think – but does require rigorous analysis, creativity, and commitment.

Women’s contribution to farm labour is well known to be undervalued – their contribution to farm management (decisions) is even less valued – we must understand this and take care not to design based on their ‘visible’ labour inputs alone.
THANK YOU