



WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT (WED) IN SOUTH AFRICA The Abafazi Incubator Project

Women in South Africa continue to face gender-based barriers to starting and expanding their businesses. These barriers include: discriminatory cultural practices; limited mobility, voice and representation; a disproportionate share of family and household responsibilities; and a lack of maternity protection.

These discriminatory factors, combined with social exclusion based on sex, contribute to women entrepreneurs'

difficulty in accessing key resources, such as: commercial credit from formal financial service providers; lucrative markets, rather than traditional local markets; technology and information to establish and grow businesses; national incentives in small enterprise development (gender-blind private sector development, fiscal policies, and legislation); and training and education for small enterprise development.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Partners:

Coca-Cola
Fortune (CCF);
Businesswomen's
Association of South
Africa: Port Eliza-
beth, Bloemfontein
and Polokwane
Chapters (BWSAA);
Tradelane Training
and Development &
Associates (TTD);
The Norwegian
Agency for Develop-
ment Cooperation
(NORAD)

Beneficiary country:
South Africa

Timeframe:
January 2009 –
May 2012

Budget:
USD 386,000

THE RESPONSE

The ILO Women's Entrepreneurship Development Programme (ILO-WED) focuses on establishing an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship initiatives by increasing their access to service providers – while improving income-generation, productivity and competitiveness. This is achieved by building the capacity of governments, employers' organizations, trade unions, and civil society organizations to support women entrepreneurs at growth stages.

ILO-WED considers that the fostering of thoughtful partnerships is a prerequisite for developing women's entrepreneurship through their unique ability to mobilize funds, ensure the sustainability and use of ILO tools and approaches, and generate new opportunities to collaborate.

In cooperation with the ILO-WED project in South Africa, three local stakeholders in the

form of a business association (BWASA), a foundation (Coca-Cola Fortune), and a business development service provider (Tradelane Training & Development) forged a partnership that has successfully continued even after the closure of the ILO-WED project and its direct support.

The resulting Abafazi Incubator Project, launched in 2011, helps to ensure women continue to access ILO tools and approaches.

Over a 9-12 month support period, it trains women to utilize a variety of these tools including "Expand your Business", "Action my Business. Growth", "Women Entrepreneurs' Associations Capacity Building" and "Improve your Advocacy Skills". The development of viable growth plans through coaching and mentorship is also supported.



"As a business we realized that with all of the other CSR initiatives we had at the time, there was an opportunity in the entrepreneurship category and to have it as one of our anchor projects. We are very heartened by the work done by the BWA and the phenomenal women they have as part of their regional business achievers and we thought it would be an ideal opportunity to partner with them and the ILO who came very credibly and highly recommended with their scope of programmes that they've got."

Amber Anderson,
Coca-Cola Fortune.

RESULTS

Within South Africa and under the scope of this partnership, the following results have been achieved:

- The successful completion of two rounds of the Abafazi Incubator, leading to the launching of a third round in 2013, demonstrating its sustainability;
- Twenty-four women entrepreneurs completed the 9-12 month journey, which equipped them with a skills set while developing viable growth plans with the support of ongoing coaching and mentorship;
- In addition to the identification of the initial 24 women entrepreneurs, the BWASA has been able to identify a further 20 potential women entrepreneurs through its annual Regional Achievers' Award;
- The Incubator has successfully grown with each round: six women entrepreneurs participated in round one; 18 in round two; and 20 in round three;
- The development of women entrepreneur ambassadors who can trumpet the possibilities for other aspirational women entrepreneurs. This multiplier effect is possibly one of the most significant contributions made by the project.

More widely, the ILO-WED programme has been active in over 25 countries in five world regions (Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia and the Caucasus, and Latin America), and so far the programme has supported hundreds of thousands of women entrepreneurs and assisted dozens of governments and stakeholders.



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BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

The ILO has access to a network of local, national and regional women's groups and business associations, as well as to a network of local, national and regional business trainers and partners accredited in ILO tools and approaches for sustainability.

In addition to all this is the fact that the ILO has access to a vast knowledge base, a wide range of tools, and technical expertise in women's entrepreneurship development, which is provided by its enterprise and gender experts.

In this partnership, a suite of entrepreneurship tools, training packages, and capacity-building guides – adapted to the local context and the needs of women, youth and marginalized groups – were made available. For example, the TTD became certified in ILO tools such as "Expand your Business", "Action my Business Growth", "Women Entrepreneurs' Associations Capacity Building" and "Improve your Advocacy Skills", thus becoming equipped with even more capacity as a business development service provider.

Furthermore, as a result of the partnership, the BWASA was able, through its selection process and Regional Achievers' Award, to offer additional relevant opportunities to women entrepreneurs, thus helping the organization further its objectives.