

# Gender Learning Day 2021 - Group 3 Swisscontact - Gender, Covid-19 and WEE

ADVISORY SERVICES NOV 15, 2021 11:57AM

## WHAT: the main aim of your intervention?

Increase income and employment for women and youth

Finding new sales channels and making businesses more competitive

social media for more resilient and prosperous women-owned businesses

## WHY: the main issue/ core problem addressed?

Family businesses with poor market penetration, mostly ad hoc sales

Mostly owned by women, around 45 aged, not using social media for business. Low awareness on the benefits of using social media professionally

limited awareness on the usefulness of social media and little know how how to use for sales marketing

low visibility of women businesses in the market and limited customer outreach

## HOW: main strategies/actions taken?

Based on market system analysis, sectors were chosen

Social media experts chose the businesses along clear criteria: 50% have to be women owned businesses, (women anyways involved in the other 50%)

Assessing women's actual profiling and marketing strategies and offer training, coaching to women to improve

For example, providing access to suitable platforms, helping to open accounts, fill content, develop strategies....

## WHICH: structural barriers needed to be overcome?

low visibility of women in the market

limited knowhow to use social media

Limited mobility for rural women to access markets and fewer availability of adequate social media services in these areas

## **WHAT: opportunities and/or challenges did COVID present?**

---

Opportunity that women jump more quickly to digital services

Challenges: social media platforms are very dynamic; requires continuous update

Opportunity for more professional profiling of products (fresh, natural....). "I sold 6x more in few months than during years before"

Challenges: In some contexts (not everywhere) women do not have access to ICT devices (e.g. mobile phones, etc.), and hence have limited literacy in using them . Needs particular measures

Challenge: Negative social attitudes of people towards women-owned businesses. Awareness raising required

From many experiences, small women businesses do not yield much profit, despite their huge engagement. Positive impact is not a given, needs to be embedded in larger set of support measures, looking at different issues, aiming at sustainable empowerment

How do we measure success? Need to broaden the notion of success, beyond quick income win (change in their wellbeing, security, safety, conflict issues, necessary literacy...), anticipating negative effects.

Risk of disruptive impact, if not well embedded in a community, when competition among these small businesses has disruptive impacts on social and political cohesion.

Risks of data protection but also of cyber harrassment and violence. Many people are not even aware. Needs space for public debate and awareness raising, besides protection measures

## **WHICH are some key good practices and lessons learnt?**

---

strengthened missing linkages between the available service providers and small and rural (remote) women owned businesses (raising demand, more direct and tailored offer, service provides aware of this client base

capacity building was also a lot of building soft skills, like communication, creating business relations, develop confidence as business women....

blended ways of communicating with clients?

Tiger strategy: Using closed borders to help companies to grow stronger (online training). Led to employment, and prevented retention

Using female IT experts for training for role modelling

Support women businesses to move from informal to formal businesses, associations: having better access to state support packages, to bank accounts etc. But this can also lead to higher taxation, detriment to businesses, so they prefer to remain unregistered, illegal. Needs more steps in between.

Many skills training for small businesses, are skills that can also be used for growing enterprises

Context matters a lot, conditions are not the same everywhere

TA: Importance to link individual empowerment to structural empowerment (policy change)

TA: Women sensitive indicators

TA: Also promote political empowerment of trained women, using their digital knowledge in other spheres

TA: Building self confidence via offering opportunities for learning, also including soft skills, finding new innovative ways of doing business, Covid as an opportunity

## **Any other reflections?**

\*\*\*\*\*