Creating business solutions to poverty

Strengthening Small Business Value Chains (SSBVC) in Tanzania

Did you know...that women-owned businesses tend to be smaller and grow more slowly than businesses started by men? Did you know that women close businesses at a higher rate than men?

With your support, conditions for women entrepreneurs in Tanzania are changing. Entrepreneurs are seeing their businesses grow and thrive. They are generating an income and providing for their families while also enriching their communities. Here is a snapshot of how your support is changing the lives of women entrepreneurs in Tanzania.
The Strengthening Small Business Value Chains (SSBVC) project was created to strengthen supply chains by first reinforcing larger businesses, with them in turn supporting the farmers and small entrepreneurs that supply them. The project has partnered with local businesses in the manufacturing, agriculture, and construction sectors to leverage impact and expertise that not only facilitates growth, but also strengthens the whole supply chain.

Women’s Economic Empowerment: Small Entrepreneurs

Women have the ability to build strong, resilient businesses, but they often lack the resources and training. In Tanzania, women small entrepreneurs often don’t have access to the loans, credit, and financial services necessary to grow their business and financial institutions in Tanzania generally do not have women-friendly services.

With your support, MEDA is opening the door for women small entrepreneurs to grow their income, increase their revenue, and drive sales by upgrading farming and processing equipment. MEDA also partners with banks to extend their financial services, in addition to working with larger businesses to provide budgeting training to women in rural communities. Over the past year, 64.4% of women small entrepreneurs reported increased access to appropriate financial services. This includes access to banking services and farming inputs.

Business Success Example:
Halisi Products, Maize

- Sourced 10,740 tons of grain from small entrepreneurs which was a result of the installation of a project-funded grain solar dryer. Since the installation, Halisi Products has increased the utilization of processing equipment by 21%. Drying of grains has also improved the quality of the final products and therefore improving customer satisfaction.
- Halisi Products increased revenue by 20% compared to the same period last year.

22,500 women and men small entrepreneurs and small growing businesses are seeing remarkable business growth. These small entrepreneurs sell their produce to 30 larger businesses, or Lead Firms. By connecting small entrepreneurs to larger businesses, all parties grow their profits and increase their contribution to building strong local economies.

With your support, 255 women and men small entrepreneurs and 22,500 small growing businesses are seeing remarkable business growth. These small entrepreneurs sell their produce to 30 larger businesses, or Lead Firms. By connecting small entrepreneurs to larger businesses, all parties grow their profits and increase their contribution to building strong local economies.
Income
- 42% of women small entrepreneurs surveyed stated that their income has increased. This is due to improved production as a result of training and access to agricultural tools and materials.
- 39% of women surveyed said that their income has increased because they are connected to buyers who pay better for their products and services.

Revenue
- Revenue for all small entrepreneurs increased by 10%. However, women small entrepreneur revenue increased by 36%.
- 81% of small and large businesses saw an increase in revenues for the small entrepreneurs they partner with. This was attributed to a variety of reasons: good agricultural practices training, good prices offered, diversity of production, and the good weather conditions prevailing in 2019.

Sales
- This year, 66% of women entrepreneurs saw a significant increase in their sales due to the increase of products sold over the past 12 months. This increase is pronounced among the women who sold their produce or services to a SSBVC-supported large business.

Business Performance
- Of the small entrepreneurs surveyed, 64% of women reported improved business performance.

Why have women seen success in income and sales?
The steady improvement of small entrepreneurs is in part due to increased business acumen, as a result of the project’s business development services, a ready market to purchase their produce, and the mobilization of women alliance groups to advocate for their needs, share tools, and gain access to credit.

Women’s Economic Empowerment: Small and Medium-Sized Businesses
- 100% of female-led businesses saw an increase in their market knowledge, business network, better business management, more financial resources, and better financial management.
- Since joining the SSBVC project, 100% of female-led companies have been able to expand to new market locations and new customers.
- 94% of all lead firms perceived that their suppliers were benefiting indirectly from the project through income increases.
Sharifa’s Story

Sharifa is part of an alliance of rice farmers in rural Tanzania. According to social norms in the area, men play a critical role in everything and women voices are often not heard.

Sharifa was familiar with rice farming, but she was held back by the traditional practices and lack of market.

She was eventually connected to Mamboleo, a MEDA private sector partner through her alliance group. Mamboleo’s desire was to see farmers adopt modern rice farming practices. Converting from rainfed agriculture to irrigation. Mamboleo and MEDA partnered together to develop a 30-acre irrigation scheme and allocated land to six alliances, including hers.

With Mamboleo she had access to training in good agricultural practices, gender equality, and entrepreneurship.

Thanks to this partnership, her productivity has grown, and she now shares her expertise in rice farming with fellow farmers – both men and women.

“I live far away from where irrigation schemes located, but my colleagues always want my presence and they pay for transport and my services.”

Sharifa applying fertilizer in the 5-acre irrigated land allocated to her group. The field is leveled, thanks to the GAP training provided by MEDA and partners.