SAFE WORKPLACES ARE SUCCESSFUL WORKPLACES:
PROMOTING SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACES THROUGH OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH BEST PRACTICES

Strengthening Small Business Value Chains Learning Series
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SSBVC Project Overview

Around the world, MEDA combines innovative private sector solutions with a commitment to the advancement of systemically marginalized communities, including women and youth. MEDA’s expertise includes market systems development, environment and climate change, inclusive and green finance, impact investing, and gender equality and social inclusion. In Tanzania, MEDA’s Strengthening Small Business Value Chains (SSBVC) project aims to contribute to Tanzania’s economic growth and increase job creation by sustainably improving the business performance of Lead Firms (LFs) and the Small and Growing Businesses (SGBs) and women and men Small Entrepreneurs (SEs) in their value chains. The project develops industry and private sector partnerships, linking LFs to SGBs and SEs and the end market by taking promising businesses to the next level with e-voucher purchase incentives, matching grants and access to financial services backed by guarantees. Through the project, MEDA works with local partners to provide business development services and support market development in the extractives, agri-food, logistics, construction, and manufacturing sectors.

The SSBVC Learning Series

The SSBVC Project aligns with MEDA’s organizational theory of change. The goal of the project is aligned with MEDA’s mission to facilitate inclusive market systems where MEDA, with its partners, helps to provide farmers and small businesses with access to finance, business skills, and productive resources. In particular, the SSBVC project supports lead firms to provide decent work for small entrepreneurs in their supply chains, and adopt environmentally sustainable technologies and improved business practices while promoting human rights in the value chain.

The SSBVC Learning Series is an initiative to share lessons learned with project stakeholders and the wider global development sector. Topics include private sector engagement in Tanzania, client experiences with business performance and drivers of success, effective strategies for sustainable enterprise development and advancing and measuring women’s economic empowerment.
Introduction

“Health and the Environment” is one of the core pillars within MEDA’s Environment and Climate Change (ECC) framework, which provides organizational wide guidance on environmental best practice. The Strengthening Small Business Value Chains (SSBVC) project is a textbook example of how to incorporate health and environment as a component to enhance the performance of small and growing businesses (SGBs) and protect the customers and employees that are behind that success.

MEDA’s recognizes the relationships between communities and their environment and how environmental issues affect human health. We, therefore, support environmentally friendly practices that promote proper use of natural resources, agricultural inputs and safe use of equipment and tools.

The SSBVC has contributed to Tanzania’s economic growth, creating jobs by sustainably improving the business performance of women and men led SGBs, and women and men small entrepreneurs (SEs) that partnered through the project. An important aspect of the SSBVC project was supporting businesses to become more environmentally sustainable and to create safe and healthy workplaces that meet not only MEDA and donor requirements but well established national regulatory standards. We would like to share some of the key findings and recommendations from the SSBVC experience.

The SSBVC project in Tanzania supported businesses to meet compliance with occupational health and safety requirements in several approaches:

1. Ensuring Partners/lead firms (LFs) comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA) through providing support in attaining Certificates of Compliance.
3. Provision of Occupational, Safety and Health Training for staff.
4. Providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to LFs and SEs.
5. Ensuring proper waste management.
6. Improving the health and safety of workers at the working place.
7. Providing suggestion boxes to garner anonymous feedback for further improvement.

The following will expand on these key areas of support.
Occupational Safety and Health Authority Compliance

An Occupational Safety and Health certification of compliance demonstrates a workplace is free from occupational hazards that may cause injuries or illness to employees. In Tanzania, this is governed by the Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA). OSHA is a Regulatory Authority in Tanzania that ensures safe and healthful working conditions for workers by setting and enforcing protective workplace standards and health standards and also provides information, training and assistance to employers and workers. Companies must register with OSHA and then undergo a process of compliance to achieve certification. The SSBVC project provided funding and advisory support for LFs to meet the requirements to attain the OSHA Certificate of Compliance.

Lead Firms, particularly those with production, processing, transportation and/or warehousing facilities were encouraged to attain OSHA certification. Through SSBVC project, 28 LFs registered with OSHA and received OSHA Registration Certificate and six achieved compliance to date, and twenty three are still in the process of meeting compliance certificate.
Support the Development of Occupational Health and Safety Policy

An organization’s occupational health and safety policy is a statement of principles and general rules that serve as a guide for action. Senior management must be committed to ensuring that the policy is carried out with no exceptions. The policy statement covers important information such as:

- management’s commitment to protect the safety and health of employees,
- the objectives of the program,
- the organization’s basic health and safety philosophy,
- who is accountable for occupational health and safety programs,
- the general responsibilities for all employees, and
- the unacceptable health and safety practices that will not be tolerated etc.

Within SSBVC, 28 LFs developed health and safety policies and their staff have been trained on the implementation of the policy. They include:

- Tanfeeds, Muzomo, Glory, Chamwino, KSR, Jackma, Ruaha, GBRI, PCT, Khebhandza, & Kyela Rice Processors in Morogoro Corridor; HomeVeg, MEDO, NEI, Halisi, Union Services Store, Marenga Millers, Manuu, Tanga Fresh Limited, Mwenge & Yaza in Arusha Corridor and Mamboleo Farms Limited, Tomoni, Profate, Woiso, Temnar, Bhavik & Serc in Mtwara Corridor.

- Woiso developed health and safety policies, educated staff, and posted instructional sign boards throughout the company’s facility to remind workers of their role and responsibilities to keep a safe workplace.
Provision of Occupational, Safety and Health Training

Through the SSBVC project, MEDA supported partners with OSHA training targeted towards workers and small entrepreneurs supplying lead firms. Some examples include:

- Bhavik construction company in Mtwara corridor trained 128 (116 F) Small Entrepreneurs (SEs) on safety, health, and regulatory requirements within the construction value chain. As a result of this training, SEs are now considering safety, health, and welfare conditions have improved in their workplace and implement workable solutions to problems they have encountered. The improvement of healthy working conditions has increased the ability of SEs to work together with governments, employers, or workers as safety and health standards has been the requirements from the government and other private organizations who provide tenders. For example, MYODEG Alliance who has been working with Bhavik are now able to win most of the government and private tenders of supplying gravels since they meet most of OSHA standards and other requirements after received the training.

- Serc, a company within the Mtwara corridor, trained 174 SEs (98 F) on safety, health, and regulatory requirements. As a result of the training, the SEs have started considering safety, health, and welfare conditions on construction in the workplace. SEs now are applying safety management which involves the functions of planning, identifying problem areas, coordinating, controlling, and directing the safety activities at the work site, all aimed at the prevention of accidents and ill health.

- Two staff (1 Male & 1 Female) from Halisi, a company in Arusha corridor, attended OSHA training (First Aid training & SHE (Safety and Health) Representative training) and received certificates.

Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to LFs and SEs

MEDA, through SSBVC project, supported the provision of PPE, such as rubberized boots, gloves, glass protector/googles, helmets, overalls, masks, to LF employees.

Below are examples of PPEs provided to project partners.

- Bhavik construction company in Mtwara corridor procured safety gear (glasses, gum boots, and gloves) and provided them to 100 SEs working in the processing of sand, stone, and gravel. Most of the SEs engaging with stone crushing, gravel and sand making are women.
• MIYODEG Alliance, a gravel supplier to Bhavik, benefited from the PPE and now operate a rock crusher.

• Manuu, a construction company in the Arusha corridor, through the direct delivery program area purchased PPE including gum boots, gloves, glass protector/googles, helmet, overall and umbrellas; and distributed these to 250 SEs.

• Temnar, a company in Mtwara corridor, procured PPE for the operational staff. The staff were provided with helmets, gloves, masks, overalls/coat, and rubberized boots to ensure safety and health at the workplace are maintained. Also, Temnar selected one staff to ensure that others are wearing their PPE and are maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.
Operation staff at Temnar company wearing PPE provided

- Kyela rice processors in Morogoro corridor purchased PPE such as mask, rubberized boots, and coats for staff to wear during operational activities.
Ensure Proper Waste Management

Farmers were trained on the proper disposal of empty chemical bottle containers after spraying of chemicals at their farms to ensure no harm (pollution) to the environment but also to the workers themselves. LFs were trained on sorting waste which helps to ensure proper waste management at the factory.

- Serc managed to purchase five dust bins to ensure proper waste management at the company and enable staff to separate waste. For example, garbage and food wastes are stored separately from plastic wastes, paper wastes, as well as scrapers. Proper waste management helps protect the environment.
The Halisi Products Limited in Arusha corridor managed to provide trainings to 919 SEs who were taught topics such as proper waste management at the farm, proper use of pesticides, Post-Harvest Handling (PHH), GAP which ensures protection of the environment, and advised not to conduct farming activities along water sources.

Improve Health and Safety of Workers at the Working Place

The SSBVC project supported lead firms with the development of an Environmental Action Plan (EAPs) which incorporated health and safety issues to ensure health and safety standards is maintained in their businesses. This was very important, as it reminds LFs on the proper implementation of health and safety standards to ensure safety and health of workers is maintained at their workplace. Some of activities incorporated in EAP includes: to ensure the company has first aid kit and well equipped with important equipments and medication, ensure one staff receive first aid training from OSHA and disseminate that training to other colleagues, ensure the company has purchased enough fire extinguishers and staff trained on the use of fire extinguishers, allocate fire assembly point, place warning signs and signals in all areas of potential hazards, purchase enough PPEs and distribute to staff to wear during operational activities.

One example of improving health and safety at workplace was supporting the LFs with the purchase of First Aid kits. Proper First Aid training from OSHA was provided.

- Temnar, in Mtwara corridor, purchased a first aid kit and are in the final process of procuring two more first-aid kit composed of equipment and medications (antiseptics, bandages, gauze, cotton, sterile dressings, latex gloves, plasters, cotton wool, scissors, gauze, safety pins and basic medications) necessary to provide immediate treatment to an injured worker at the factory.

- Temnar also purchased fire extinguishers and trained staff on how to properly use them in case of a fire.
• Serc purchased eight fire extinguishers, which were placed at production area, office building, workshop area, kitchen and at the guard house. All staff were trained on the use of fire extinguishers from fire service providers.

![Fire extinguishers placed at SERC factory](image)

• Fire assembly points are locations where staff and visitors can gather in the event of fire/leak/explosion and other emergency to ensure everyone is in a designated safe area. It helps to make sure people knows where to gather following an emergency evacuation.

![Fire assembly point placed at Temnar compound](image)  ![Fire assembly point placed at Temnar](image)
Symbols and signs are yet another useful way to highlight potential hazards within a building and factory.

All LFs were required to appoint a focal point person to oversee and address occupational, health and safety issues within the organization. The focal person meets with staff in regular intervals and provides update on any relevant issues related to environment, health and safety of workers at the workplace.

This focal person also encourages other employees to form a safety and health committee within the organization. This committee is a useful way of establishing a permanent forum for communication between workers and management on broad health and safety issues.

### Provision of Suggestion Box

To reduce psychosocial hazards such as workplace aggression and abuse, MEDA advised LFs to purchase a suggestion box to encourages employees to speak out/or write their suggestions and place it in the box. Workplace aggression and abuse can have serious effects on someone’s mental and physical health, resulting in symptoms such as stress, anxiety, and sleep deprivation.

- Serc purchased a suggestion box and installed at the company after the environment training provided by MEDA environment staff.
Conclusion

The SSBVC project has shown that it is possible to successfully incorporate “Health, safety and the Environment” within a project. The benefit of incorporating are obvious: improve health of workers, ensure safety for not only the employer but also the employee, and finally ensuring the end customers receive the best and highest quality product.

The SSBVC project has ended but the imprint it has left within MEDA and other environment focused projects are clearly visible. The project showcased the importance of the “Health, safety and the Environment” pillar, MEDA has taken notice and are seeking to properly integrate this pillar in other projects both that are ongoing and also projects that are just starting up.
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