Gateway to Economic Development through Women Empowerment and Entrepreneurship

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The research project “Gateway to Economic Development through Women Empowerment and Entrepreneurship” of the World Bank was commissioned by the InfoDev program.

The Project covers the five InfoDev regions: Africa, Asia, Europe & Central Asia (ECA), Latin America and Caribbean (LAC), Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) regions.
Justification

• There are over 6,000 business incubators around the world. But very few are focused on women.

• There is little knowledge about women business incubation and women entrepreneurs at large.
Objectives of the project

• Overall goal: provide information on women business incubation around the world

• Specific objectives:
  – Enhance the role of women entrepreneurs through business incubation
  – Generate knowledge outputs that help to build the capacity of existing business incubators targeting women entrepreneurs.
  – Promote the sharing of knowledge about Women Incubation.
Specific objectives....

- Summarize region specific challenges for Women Incubation

- Establish a foundation for strengthening cooperation and network building between women incubators globally.

- Learn about global project organization and network building
Methodology

- Methodology to collect information: Questionnaires: E-Mailed Survey in English-speaking countries, and translated for non-English speaking countries (French, Korean, Spanish)
- Direct face-to-face interviews or telephone interviews
- Internet: websites, reports, publication for information on Incubators
Geographic areas

– Africa: Sub Sahara:
  • Countries: 8
  • Institutions: 17 of whom 4 business incubators and 2 focused on women

– Middle East and North Africa:
  • Countries: 4
  • Institutions: 6, 1 science Park and 1 business incubator.
Geographic areas

• Asia
  • Countries: 24
  • Institutions: 20 women focused business incubators and 7 countries answered the questionnaire

• Eastern and central Europe (ECA)
  – Countries: 10
  – Institutions: 8 among them 2 Women business incubators

• Latin America and Caribbean
  – Countries: 4
  – Institutions: 4, with no women business incubator
Sampling

• Not a scientific survey, regional coordinators relied on institutions who answered the questionnaire
Women business incubators statistics are not well known and well represented.

The Asia region with more than 2,339 business incubators has more incubators than all four InfoDev regions together (compared to 1,100 in European Union, 1,200 in North America).

Asia has more than 20 women Business incubators (1%)
- Malaysia: 106 Business Incubators 1 is focused on women
- South Korea: More than 270 and 14 Women Business Incubators (5%) – Japan: 73 women university and no WBI
• The ECA region has 111 business incubators: the research found only 2 women business incubators.

• The MENA region has 90 business incubators (about half of them in Iran). The project identified only 1 WBI in Morocco.

• The LAC region has 1,003 business incubators (about half of them in Brazil) and 3 institutions supporting women entrepreneurs, no women business incubator identified.

• The Africa region (Sub Sahara) has ca. 45 business incubators, but only 2 focused on women.
Gender analysis of national policies

• Method: Scale 1 to 4
• Limitation ECA participants did not answer the section

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<th>National strategies</th>
<th>National programs</th>
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<td>LAC</td>
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Gender analysis of national policies

• Overall, policies to support entrepreneurship are generally gender neutral
• International organizations provide more support focus on women entrepreneurs than national governments
• Data show more government support for women in LAC region and less government support in ECA region
Challenges

• Gender inequality: inequality of rights, resources related to social status
• Entrepreneurship perceived to be a male domain
• Lack of financing: 59% (Africa), 100% ECA
• Lack of self confidence: 24% (Africa), 50% ECA
• Lack of information: 41% (Africa), 25% (ECA)
• Lack of role models: 24% (Africa), not mentioned in ECA
Challenges

• Lack of knowledge: 38% (Africa), 75% (ECA)

• Gendering of professions and entrepreneurship: women are in sector related to social roles (sewing, food): 17 out of 33 organizations surveyed are in agriculture. Efforts to include ICT (16/33) use ICT as a lever.

• “Women entrepreneurs do the same things: “4 C”: couture, coiffure, cuisine, commerce (Senegal)
Challenges

• Low social status and social norms: religious and cultural obstacles

• Competing demand on time: triple work burden, between the office, the house, and the family

• Access to network: Few organizations that promote women entrepreneurship

• Cumbersome State taxes: Niger, Senegal
Challenges

• Limited access to credit: lack of proprieties and collateral due to their social status
• Ensure government and international partners support for women entrepreneurs: 80%
• Enterprise organization: Lack of business culture - importance a social activities
Findings: Good practices

• Incubation as a model for women with low level of education: feeling at ease and learn better
• Incubation to secure loan and make business profitable (Micro credit for women)
• Close relationship among women: support
• Mentoring by women
• Use of Internet: for women who have never had access to computers
Effective Business models

• Women Business Incubator that target women graduates as potential entrepreneurs
• Integrated kindergarten within the incubator
• Using crafts skills traditions and culture to create business opportunity for women ECA and Africa
• Overcoming war negative impact through business incubation for displaced women
Findings: Tools

• The tools are not themselves gender specific (training material, baseline questionnaires, etc.)

• There is women specific needs: mentoring provided by women (women more confident)
Recommendations

• Develop training package that help better understand and support women entrepreneurs
• Promote initiative to better support women business incubators: deepen, widen (low number of WBI)
• Raise awareness in the political arena for the need to promote women business incubators: e.g. Case studies
• Improve marketing strategies to attract more women in business incubators
Recommendations

• Widen the scope of research and networking for women business incubator activities to developed countries

• Promote networking among women business incubators: web portal and workshops (training of trainers)
Recommendations

• Produce publications on Women Incubators and Entrepreneurship across The globe, (Policies, programs, facts, locations, programs, challenges, problems, needs, etc.)

• Produce a guide for Starting and Managing a Women-focused business Incubator
Gateway to Economic Development through Women Empowerment and Entrepreneurship

The end
Thank you

The International Working Group
Women Business Incubation