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Reaching sustainable economic development requires to strengthen women economic empowerment. Yet women face numerous obstacles at every level when launching their business.

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH BY PROMOTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP



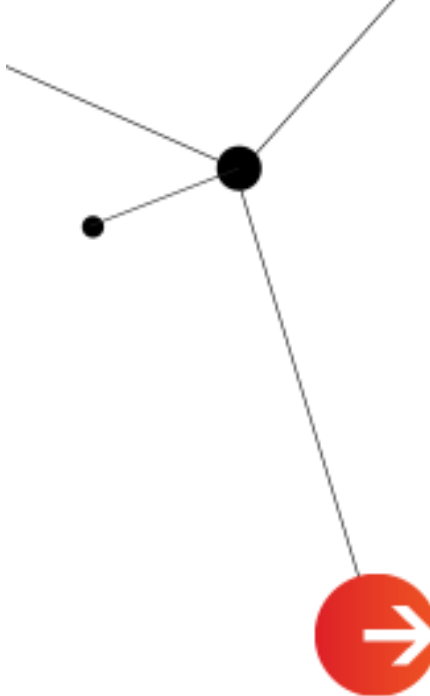
Nowadays, women run a third of all companies of the formal economy worldwide. On a global scale, they create twice as many enterprises as men; they represent 51% of the global wealth and control 70% of the household expenses. The NGOs consider them as **the most important development lever in developing countries**¹. In Africa, most of the newly created enterprises are run by women, who **strongly contribute to the economic growth of the continent**².

However, most women entrepreneurs in developing countries run **very small or micro enterprises with limited growth potential**. This entrepreneurship is mainly a **survival** one: it completes the husband's income, who, in collective representations, is the one who assumes the family's financial security.

¹ Source : « Les femmes entrepreneures, le premier marché émergent du monde », France 24 Economie, July 7, 2015

² Source : « Les femmes dynamisent l'économie africaine », *New York Times*, October 22, 2012, based on the datas of the World Bank





Many obstacles are indeed making women's full participation in the economy very difficult. Their gender brings many constraints when they want to create or develop their business: property legislation; marriage and legacy regulations; discriminatory cultural practices; difficult access to financing mechanisms (loan, micro loan); reduced mobility; limited access to information and to professional networks; unequal share of familial responsibilities and household tasks.

The removal of those barriers would offer great growth opportunities to enterprises run by women.

Madagascar Entreprises Développement (MED) encourages women participation at every level. MED first sets an example in its internal organization: gender balance is almost reached within the association, with 4 women out of 9 employees. Trainers' positioning also shows this approach: during the trainings, they conduct interviews with women entrepreneurs in a way that ensures that women feel respected, supported and understood.

66% of the beneficiaries trained by Madagascar Entreprises Développement are women. The president of the Club of Entrepreneurs of 67HA Management and Training Center is a woman. She actively promotes the role of women in the handicraft sector.

Tutorial classes during the customized training organized in partnership with the association Avotra



Partnerships with local actors promoting women empowerment is key to such participation. MED regularly invites its partner associations to its public events, such as the Entrepreneur Fair that took place last April: there, MED's partner associations broadcasted awareness messages about maternal health.

MED is engaged in a global approach of women, considering all aspects of their lives, and is looking to work in complementarity with organizations involved in the matter.

MED's collaborations led to the organization of a training dedicated to women victims of human trafficking abroad. A complementary work with partner association "Avotra" enabled the creation of a **customized training** based on those women's specific needs. The balance between family life and professional life was for instance specifically considered. The concerted action of Avotra (psychosocial support) and MED (technical trainings) convinced the local program of the European Union, which will allocate subsidies to help those women starting-up their businesses. MED is currently delivering another customized training to women victims of domestic violence, in partnership with associations Enda OI and Maheri. ■

Training session for beneficiaries victims of domestic violence (customized training organized in partnership with the associations Enda OI and Maheri)



LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT...



Ivory Coast In Ivory Coast, women are highly involved in the entrepreneurship sector despite cultural constraints that tend to limit them to household tasks. Their true dynamism contrasts with their under-representation in CIED's trainings. To rectify this, CIED has implemented since 2014 training sessions dedicated to women in each Management and Training Centers, where class hours are adapted to women's schedule.



Cameroon In order to avoid being excluded, women have often no other choice but to start a small income-generating activity. But most of them are limited to food purchase and resale activities. To help women create their enterprise, CED will work more specifically in 2017 with women associations in order to organize targeted awareness campaigns.



DRC Most of the services that benefit women entrepreneurs and help them develop their businesses are short-lived and inadequate to really lead to a sustainable growth of women's enterprises. In order to offer them a long-term support, RDCED adapted its services to their schedule and geographical constraints: in September 2016, a training session was dedicated to women. To ensure their participation, RDCED let them choose the class hours and location.

66% of the entrepreneurs trained by MED are **women**.

266 ENTREPRENEURS

TOOK PART IN A BASIC MANAGEMENT TRAINING IN THE TWO MTC OF ANTANANARIVO.

88 entrepreneurs

have graduated from a **Specialized Training**.

TESTIMONY PORTRAIT

Bodo is the manager and owner of the France volontaires « hut » (living quarters and crossing point for short mission volunteers) in Antananarivo



I have worked at the hut of France volontaires for ten years. I started as a cook, then I was the housekeeper and I finally reached the manager position and I will soon be autonomous in my activity. I did not have the chance to pursue my studies beyond 10th grade, but I learned by doing and I took part in several trainings linked to my activity.

I'm a single mother with an 8 years old boy, and I'm also supporting my father and my brother. This is quite a challenge for me to combine my personal life with my professional activity. During peak periods, my family can't be my first priority. I can't rely on anyone in my family to babysit my son so I hired a nanny to help me! The most difficult part of my job is undoubtedly time management, I'm always running! Right now, finding time for myself is not an option.

The major obstacles I met when launching and managing my business are psychological obstacles. I was afraid not to keep up with my job requirements or not to be skilled enough to become entrepreneur. **Women tend to self-censor themselves or to lack self-esteem.** The training with MED allowed me to boost my self-confidence and to have a clear understanding of my objectives in the medium and long-term. The foreigners that I welcomed in my institution always encouraged me to become independent. In my opinion, **Malagasy women are used to handle the family budget, and have the capabilities to become entrepreneurs.** Unfortunately, very few take the leap. Personally I did not have a choice but in the end I am proud to be an entrepreneur!" ■



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