



# Catalyzing Small Business Development for Youth and Women in Africa

Reporting Period: January 2015-March 2016



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# Acronyms

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AWESAM	Accelerating Urban Women and Youth Entrepreneurship in South African Metros
GAP	Girls Apprenticeship Program
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGN	Nigerian Naira
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
TNS	TechnoServe
UGX	Ugandan Shilling
USD	United States Dollars
XOF	West African Franc
ZAR	South African Rands

## Executive Summary

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TechnoServe works in 29 countries across Africa, Latin America, and Asia to assist enterprising people to build competitive farms, businesses and industries. As part of its efforts, TechnoServe partnered with Citi Foundation to implement four pilot projects that aim to address unemployment among women and youth in Africa. This report analyzes the four projects, detailing the lessons learned from each:

In Uganda, the Girls Apprenticeship Program (GAP) aimed to provide highly vulnerable girls a rare opportunity to increase their employability. The project has exceeded all major expected results. Notably, 83% of the girls were able to become workforce entrants immediately after the end of the project. The project showed that mentorship, together with specific training sessions, is an effective way to transfer basic skills in a quick and efficient manner to vulnerable girls. Mentorship was also a valuable tool to empower young women by building a support system with an older role model. The project also showed the value of teaching easily marketable and easily adopted skills as a means to build empowerment and financial independence.

In Nigeria, the Cashew Byproducts Project created a model for rural entrepreneurship in the cashew value chain. It successfully guided women to produce cashew byproducts, using innovative practices to create products from the cashew apple, a part of the cashew plant that for generations had been tossed aside as waste. The project then supported women to bring the products to market and to re-invest profits in off-season businesses. The project demonstrated the value of innovating with a low-cost, easily accessible product to generate new business and inspire entrepreneurial thinking. Going forward, next steps include building cooperatives to make an even more significant contribution to household incomes diversification and women's economic empowerment.



Apprentices with their mentor Juliet, Uganda



In Cote d'Ivoire, the MiniPrix Project, in alliance with Prosuma, the largest retailer in the country, applied the relatively new approach of microfranchising to promoting entrepreneurship among vulnerable populations. The project has provided evidence of lessons learned that can create the foundation for future successful versions of the project using a microfranchise model. These include selection of participants based on attitude and minimum required math skills, a new curriculum with a clearer pathway to autonomy for the businesses managers, offering opportunities for on-the-job training in successful stores and a fully integrated monitoring system that ensures communication and coordination between partners. By capitalizing on this knowledge, the project has potential to continue supporting participants as they embark on what is a very new process of becoming workforce entrants, making a significant contribution to women's empowerment and economic independence.

In South Africa, the second cycle of the Accelerating Women in South African Metros (AWESAM) project provided valuable lessons about how to implement an incubator project that seeks to build competitive businesses. The project enabled a change in the perspective of entrepreneurs to a more professional growth-oriented attitude. The Business Model Canvas was a useful tool to validate business opportunities and make changes to business models. The project team has also identified some areas for improvement that can contribute to fine tuning the incubation methodology, such as working with established businesses rather than start-ups, balancing individual and group training approaches, and improving capacity building methodologies and measurement of knowledge and capacity transfer. These lessons constitute valuable learnings for practitioners in the incubation industry that can help to develop competitive businesses and



Project participant in her store, Côte d'Ivoire

close employability gaps in South Africa as well as in other parts of the world.

The Catalyzing Small Business Development for Youth and Women in Africa Program has resulted in new insights into ways of improving employment and self-employment outcomes. By making an analysis of the four approaches in terms of lessons learned, a group of recommendations emerge. These constitute transcendent themes that are useful to enterprise development projects in general. They are related to the content (what), the form (how) and the purpose (why) in which the four projects were implemented.

### **What approaches point to a sustainable small business development for youth and women?**

- **Enthusiastic Participants:** It is important to ensure that projects select participants with the energy and attitude necessary to take advantage of the opportunity presented.
- **Validated Market Opportunity:** Enabling participants to capture a validated market opportunity provided by the project is an effective way to open new possibilities to people in vulnerable situations, as long as participants simultaneously develop the ability to identify and validate other market opportunities.
- **Easily accessible resources:** Ensure that capturing the market opportunity is accessible by the project participants with current or easily accessible resources.

### **How should a project that is effective in catalyzing small business development for youth and women be implemented?**

- Set clear expectations in order to bring out ideal changes in participants
- Expected behavior changes should be achievable, challenging, transparently communicated, and measured
- Combining group training and one-on-one follow up resulted in effective and efficient skills transfer
- Build capacity to ensure that skills can be sustained
- Understanding the context and needs of the project's target group is essential for project design and interpretation of results
- Monitoring and Evaluation can make significant contributions to evidence-based decision-making and lead to efficient and effective programs
- Multiple program cycles allow staff to learn and improve, but they need the room to make adjustments

### **Why is it relevant to catalyze small business development among youth and women?**

- **Empowerment** was consistently seen as the most significant change resulting from the project. Participants saw improved self-perceived agency resulting from the development of new skills that allowed them to gain financial independence. This in turn increased the amount of respect they received from their family and community.

The lessons learned as a result of the implementation of each of these four pilot projects should create a foundation for better design of programs that reduce unemployment among women and youth.



Project participants at their business, South Africa

# Introduction

## Analyzing employment prospects and progress for women and youth in Africa

There are nearly 200 million people between the ages of 15 and 24 in Africa. Youth account for 60% of all unemployed people in Africa, and young women consistently face the greatest employment challenges. In Sub-Saharan Africa the youth labor force participation rate among women is 52.1%, compared to 56.6% of their male peers<sup>1</sup>, however numbers vary significantly by country. In Nigeria and Uganda for example, women participate in the labor force at a rate of 15 and 10 percent lower than their male counterparts, respectively<sup>2</sup>. The World Bank notes that “women are more likely to work in less productive sectors and less profitable areas,” contributing to their high rates of un- and under-employment and poverty. Further, they regularly lack influence over resources, restricting what jobs and crops they have access to producing, which limits their earning potential<sup>3</sup>. With Africa’s youth population expected to double by 2045<sup>4</sup>, the region’s youth, and particularly its young women, pose both a challenge and an opportunity. Improving the prospects for African women and youth will require creative and multi-faceted interventions by all stakeholders that focus on job creation, skills development for the new economy, and sustainable development in both urban and rural areas.



Project beneficiary prepares cashew honey,  
Nigeria

TechnoServe aims to address these issues and transform not just individual enterprises but entire market systems in order to release the potential of small growing businesses and create jobs at a large scale. With support from Citi Foundation, TechnoServe has implemented the Catalyzing Small Business Development for Youth in Africa program. Broadly, the pilot projects aim to:

- Decrease unemployment in Africa through self-employment and job creation by small

<sup>1</sup> ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Human Development Reports, UNDP, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> The World Bank, “2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development.” 2012

<sup>4</sup> African Economic Outlook, 2013



businesses

- Increase the participation of disadvantaged and underrepresented individuals in the economy
- Expand the production possibilities/ opportunities of marginalized communities
- Establish a portfolio of best practice programs addressing unemployment among youth and women in Africa

The project implemented four different approaches to catalyze small business development among youth and women.

- **Uganda: The Girls Apprenticeship Program** aimed to guide vulnerable girls through their transition into employment, by engaging them in apprenticeships with successful local business women.
- **Nigeria: The Cashew Byproducts Project** seeks to increase and diversify women's income by training women to process the cashew apple that they would otherwise waste, into products including honey, juice and dried snacks.
- **Côte d'Ivoire: The MiniPrix Project** aims to build a series of microfranchised storefronts that offer women the opportunity to become self-employed as “MiniPrix” managers.
- **South Africa: The Accelerating Urban Women and Youth Entrepreneurship in South African Metros (AWESAM) Project** aims to increase the economic participation of urban women and youth in the South African economy by converting subsistence-based businesses into high-growth and competitive ventures.

## About the Study

This study was conducted from January to May 2016 to assess the relative merits of the four approaches, identify lessons learned, provide recommendations for practitioners and assess the potential for scaling up. In order to deepen the understanding of each approach, the study put a focus on qualitative methods, while it took advantage of secondary sources of quantitative information provided by project teams. In sum, the following research techniques were used:

Objectives	Techniques
Measure results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Log Frames analysis</li> <li>Quantitative data collected by country teams as part of their regular M&amp;E processes</li> </ul>
Identify lessons learned, opportunities for improvement and answer specific questions for learning identified by program managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interview               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Managers</li> <li>Project Staff</li> <li>Project Participants</li> <li>Project Stakeholders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Recommendations on best practices for future programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus Group               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Participants</li> <li>Mentors (Uganda)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Project materials and documents analysis</li> </ul>
Success stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On site interviews               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project participants</li> <li>Mentors (Uganda)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Potential for scale up by local ecosystem players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interview               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Managers</li> <li>Key stakeholders referred by project teams</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The following table summarizes the field work conducted.

Summary of field work	Côte d'Ivoire	South Africa	Uganda	Nigeria
Period in which the field study was conducted	15th-19th Feb. 2016	22nd-26th Feb. 2016	29th Feb-4th March 2016	7th-11th March 2016
Interviewed project participants	5	3	5	1
Interviewed mentors	-	-	2	-
Interviewed TNS staff members	3	5	6	6
Interviewed stakeholders	4	1	2	8
Participants in Focus group sessions (project participants)	17	6	5	17
Participants in Focus Group sessions (mentors)	-	-	7	-
Type of quantitative data source	Financial Statements	Self-reported financial data via telephone and in person	Baseline Endline survey	+ Production and financial reports

Quantitative data sample size (valid data only)	10	25	52	53
Date or period in which the quantitative data was collected	Jan 2014 - Dec 2015	Varied by business	Dec 2015	April-May 2015 March 2016

Progress on each of the four projects was analyzed against established indicators as well as from the perspective of the entrepreneurship triangle adapted by TechnoServe from the Timmons Model of the Entrepreneurial Process<sup>5</sup>, which states that three questions need to be answered in assessing any new venture. The analysis reviewed to what extent the program took care of incorporating these elements into the program, either in the selection or in the capacity building processes, to finally graduate participants that could have all these elements for a successful venture:

- What is the opportunity? Distinguishing between good ideas and validated business opportunities based on market demand, market size and margins.
- How good is the entrepreneurial team? The lead entrepreneurial person is a critical ingredient for success, including its attitudes, passion, skills and ability to learn.
- Does the venture have access to the necessary resources? This includes financial resources but also other assets, networks and people. The model suggests to think about cash last.

## Report Structure

This report analyzes each project individually, detailing the following:

- **The need** for the project
- **Theory of Change:** Description and illustration of how the intervention was expected to lead to desired goals
- **Program Implementation** approach and activities
- **Results** measured against indicators included in the project's proposal, in addition to objectives that factored significantly into the theory of change as implemented. Results are categorized as follows:
  - **Green:** Achieved or likely to be achieved (for ongoing projects)
  - **Yellow:** Uncertain if result will be achieved
  - **Red:** Not achieved

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<sup>5</sup> Jeffry Timmons, "New venture creation", The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2015

- **Grey:** Not sufficient evidence to evaluate the achievement of the result

This section includes also an analysis of the most significant change and financial results.

- **Lessons learned** during project's implementation
- **Areas for improvement** suggested for future versions of the project or in similar projects
- **Next Steps and Opportunities for Scale-Up**
- **Success stories** of project participants

Finally, this report aims to provide clarity by consolidating the learnings provided by the four approaches presenting:

- **Comparing across projects: lessons learned**

It is the hope of the researchers that this report can constitute a constructive and helpful step for projects that work towards catalyzing small business development for youth and women.



# Uganda: the Girls Apprenticeship Program (GAP)

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## The Need

Ugandan youth ages 18-30 make up three quarters of the country's population and as a group constitute 64% of all unemployed persons. Women constitute three out of every five unemployed persons, a figure that is higher (70%) in urban than in rural areas (42%).<sup>6</sup> A key cause of unemployment among young women in Uganda is a lack of opportunities to develop the skills needed to become workforce entrants. Vulnerable girls face many challenges as they attempt



to make a life for themselves, including social issues within families such as HIV, drugs, adolescent pregnancy, and absent parents, they usually cannot afford vocational schools and other options to develop skills are not available to them. Frequently, their strategy to survive is to get married. All stakeholders interviewed for this study recognize a great need for effective support to address the challenges of overwhelming unemployment among girls.

## Theory of Change

Building on previous learning from several employability and entrepreneurship projects implemented by TechnoServe, including Women Mean Business and Stryde, the Girls Apprenticeship Program (GAP) aims to provide a solution to the employability issues faced by vulnerable young women in the sub-urban Kampala area.

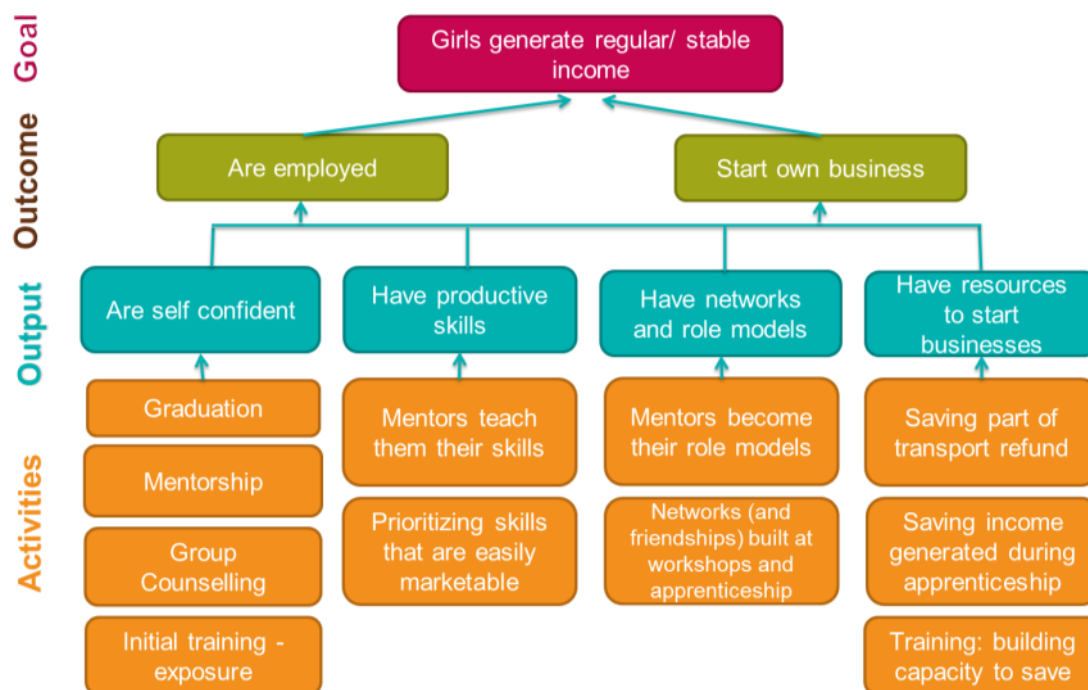
Specifically, GAP aimed to support 60 girls to generate regular and stable incomes, engaging them in 3-5 month long apprenticeships with successful local business women, guiding them through their transition into employment.

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<sup>6</sup> The National Labor Force and Child Activities Survey 2011/2012. Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

GAP's theory of change follows that girls are able to generate regular and stable incomes through employment or by starting new businesses. To accomplish this, girls need to develop their confidence, productive skills, basic skills, and to be provided networks and role models.

**FIGURE 1: THEORY OF CHANGE, GAP**



A key element to the GAP project is building self-confidence and a sense of self-worth within participants. The GAP did this by providing mentors, recruited from the Women Mean Business program and trained by a seasoned mentor of mentors. Staff and mentors knew going into the program that the selection of mentors was a key determinant of success. As one mentor expressed in the focus group “you should have a teacher in you”, and also “you have to be like a parent”.

Another important focus is to enable quick and efficient productive skills transfer. By learning from previous projects, staff understood that young vulnerable women encounter two key barriers to entering the labor market. First, they face a mismatch between the jobs available and the skills, if any, that they possess. Second, they do not have the resources to acquire necessary skills, as vocational training is expensive and time consuming. To address this, staff implemented the apprenticeship model, where participants obtained skills as they work with their mentors, thereby gaining work experience as well as skills in a short time period, aligned with market demand. Skills such as hairdressing, tailoring, crafts, and baking were selected as they are easily practiced at home with minimal investment and no need to rent premises.



Hope Kalungi works in her own tailoring shop.

In addition to mentorship, the GAP program involved three group training sessions focused on skills such as personal effectiveness, finance, and basic entrepreneurship, which based on previous experiences, were recognized as priorities to succeed as employees or self-employed women. Finally, to address the fact that the girls participating in the program come from extremely vulnerable backgrounds, the GAP program provided group counselling sessions.

Networks and role models are also recognized as very important to help girls find a job or start a business of their own. Mentors serve as role models and networking agents, introducing their apprentices into other business people of their networks who can provide job opportunities to them, and also they help girls to start their own businesses by introducing them to clients or guiding them during the initial phase of starting up. Even further, other girls and coworkers are essential part of sometimes the first networks of girls outside their homes.

Financial resources are also a fundamental element of the Theory of Change. GAP provided the girls a small amount of funding for transportation purposes (UGX150,000; \$45) which participants were highly encouraged to save in the event of leftover funds. The financial training provided through the program included a plan to use the transport stipend wisely. Mentors also received a stipend of (UGX150,000; \$45) to cover the resources necessary to train the girls (materials, etc.). During GAP II, staff and trainers highly encouraged participants to save the money that they did not use for transportation as start-up capital, emphasizing that it was likely to be the only avenue from which to get funding to start a business.

Finally, it is very important to emphasize that putting this Theory of Change into action was made possible due to the dedication of a wide range of stakeholders aligned to the project's mission, including project staff, mentors (who were previous beneficiaries of the Women Mean Business

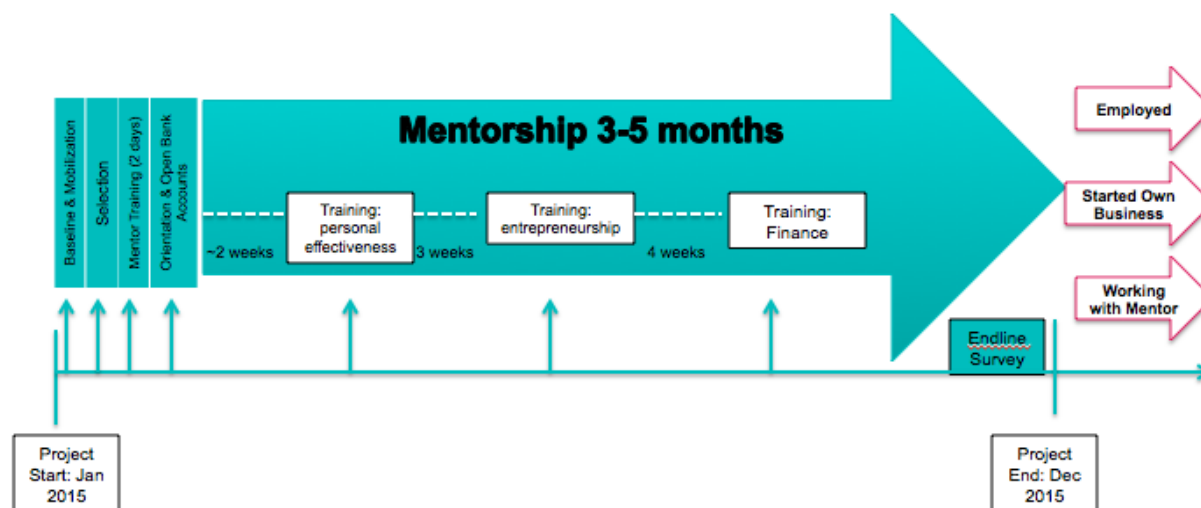
Program), trainers from both the Women Mean Business program and Stryde, counselors, Citi stakeholders, and the participants themselves.

## Program Implementation

The GAP program finished its second round of implementation (GAP II) at the end of 2015. GAP II, financed by the Citi Foundation, ran from January-December, 2015.

The mobilization and selection processes were done through interviews and referrals from the community, executed by university interns hired by the program. This process also included baseline measurement. With over 500 applicants, the final group consisted of 60 vulnerable young women 18-24 from the sub-urban Kampala area. The program selected participants who could read and write, demonstrated a passion to learn, and possessed an interest in learning the skills taught by the program. 50% of the selected participants were young mothers and all were unemployed or employed only in petty activities.

**FIGURE 2: TIMELINE, GIRLS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**



Other activities at the beginning of the program include a 2-day mentors training, mentor-mentee matching and initial orientation, and opening of bank accounts for transport refund deposit. None of the participants had bank accounts prior to the project, making this intervention a valuable learning tool to teach about savings and investment.

The main project activity was the mentorship program that lasted between 3 to 5 months according to the skills to be transferred: baking, tailoring, crafts and hairdressing. Girls had to attend each day to work with their mentors. Along the mentorship program, the project provides group trainings developed by TechnoServe with its adult learning methodology CREATE. A group training about personal finance and savings was provided by Citibank Uganda CFO Simon Peter Kavuma.



At the end of the program, there was a graduation event and finally the endline was measured.

## Results

The project has exceeded all major expected results thanks to an effective implementation of the Theory of Change of the project. It is important to note that 83% of the girls were able to become workforce entrants immediately after the end of the project. From the 60 girls participating in the program, 35% achieved the goal of finding paid employment and 48% started their own business. At the end of the project, at least 41 of the 60 graduates were receiving incomes as a result of their new productive activity. Additionally, at least 78% of the girls are saving, which constituted their first formal savings as none of the girls had a bank account going into the project. Qualitative evidence based on interviews and focus groups indicates participants had learned new skills, valued the new skills that they had learned, and felt an increased sense of self-confidence and self-worth.

Results Summary (As of November 2015) <sup>7</sup>	
Direct Participants	60
Dropouts	6 (all replaced)
Drop-out rate	10%
Beneficiaries (better off)	41-45
Total Grant Amount	\$100,000
Cost per Participant	\$1,667
Cost per Beneficiary	\$2,222 - \$2,439
Total Annualized Incomes (Benefit)	\$15,842 - \$23,599 <sup>8</sup>
Average Annualized Incomes per Beneficiary	\$310 - \$462

### Most Significant Change

As a result of participating in the project, girls mention that the most significant change was a newfound sense of confidence and self-esteem, both at a personal and professional level:

- *"I have developed self-esteem, I feel that I am worthy. I can engage with people, I can speak to people. That was not there before,"* participant, focus group interview.
- *[Without GAP] "I would have gotten married. Now I will wait,"* Jaliah Nabakawa, 24.
- *"If I get a salon I would make a living. I could stop depending on my husband. Because if my husband leaves me I could look after my child."* Justine Nansubuga, 23
- *"I can talk to people: 'welcome, what do you want, this is the price'... if a customer comes in and wants something I can make it for them"* Jaliah Nabakawa, 24
- *"Before, I was there... I couldn't make an independent decision. Now I can say, I want to do that and I do it. If someone comes and says, I want you to wash my clothes, I say, I don't do*

<sup>7</sup> Results ranges refer to participants that reported incomes during the endline survey. Incomes were reported as average income per month or as revenues for the month of November. The difference between 41 and 45 is people that reported 0 in either category. Exchange rate to USD based on official exchange rate of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016: 1 USD = 3332,1 UGX

<sup>8</sup> Benefit assumes that monthly incomes reported endline will be sustained. The calculation therefore multiplied reported incomes by 12 months to obtain an annual figure.

*that. I do hairdressing. I used to earn 10.000 in a week washing clothes. Now I earn that in one costumer. And, I can say no to a man, I have no reason to.” Ruth Nakibirango, 24*

Mentors and Citi stakeholders also noted similar results:

- *“TechnoServe helped these children to behave well. Now they know exactly what they want, and they cannot be easily taken by a man. By the time they come here they are admired. Other children even learned form their behaviors. Even parents come to say thank you.” Juliet Tusiime, mentor*
- *“The program gives them the opportunity to see the outside world. They go to workshops and relate to others. They come with different visions, of how am I going to survive. They start thinking, maybe I can start my own business. There are more answers after the program,” Joanita Najuka, mentor.*
- *“As Citi we are very appreciative of what this project is doing in Uganda for these youth. It was very humbling to watch someone come in and not be able to do anything and see them after a few months able to bake a cake or with their sewing machine and be so happy.” – Claire Bagorogoza Jjombwe, Citibank Uganda*

## Results Chart

The following chart details the achievements of the project, based on evidence gathered during the study. Results are measured against indicators submitted to Citi Foundation at the beginning of the project, as well as some indicators that were developed during the implementation of the project, and against objectives related to the Theory of Change.



Emily Ahebwa sells home-made cookies at a local store as part of her baking business.

Level	Objective	Indicator	Achievement, based on evidence	
Goal	Girls generate stable/regular income	60 vulnerable girls will learn artisanal skills, basic business skills, and personal finance skills	60 girls enrolled in program, of which 6 dropped out in the first month (between selection and the start of mentorship) primarily due to moving or lack of interest and motivation. All 6 were replaced by the start of mentorship, for a final total of 60 participants, from which all graduated the program.	
Outcome	Start own business	30% will start a small home based business	29 girls (48%) have started their own business (endline survey).	
	Are employed	10% will find paid employment.	21 girls (35%) are working in paid employment (endline survey).	
Output	Are self confident	90% of the participants will realize their self worth, their potential and build confidence	While no quantitative evidence is available, qualitative evidence based on interviews and focus groups indicates increased self-confidence and sense of self-worth. <i>"I have developed self-esteem, I feel that I am worthy." "Now I have confidence, I can make my own products." "Now I can cater to my children." "If I get a salon, I can earn a living and stop depending on my husband. If he leaves me, I can look after my child"</i>	
	Have productive skills	There was no indicator defined in the initial design of the project, but the study found that it was a key aspect of the theory of change as implemented	Interviews with participants revealed that learning productive skills was the most important takeaway for participants.	
	Have networks and role models	There was no indicator defined in the initial design of the project, but the study found that it was a key aspect of the theory of change as implemented	Qualitative evidence based on interviews and focus groups indicates that participants felt they had acquired an increased network of peers and role models as a result of their mentors. <i>"I have friends now" "Before I was fearing to talk to customers, now I can talk to them freely. I learned that from my mentor." "I'm not working with my mentor now, but she recommended me to other hairdresser. I work there and they pay me."</i>	
	Have resources to start business	30% will make their first savings	The project opened bank accounts for all participants and 47 girls (78% of graduates) reported saving. This constituted their first formal savings as none of the girls had a bank account going into the project. Interviews support this: <i>"I learned how to plan for my money and how to save. I have bought a plastic head to learn, and towels for my business with my savings." "I want to have my own salon. The little money I get, I can save for the salon."</i>	

## Lessons Learned

Lessons learned were extracted by comparing the project's results with its design and implementation. These were also considered from the perspective of the entrepreneurship model that states that successful businesses require a combination of an entrepreneur, an opportunity and resources. These are summarized in the chart below and then detailed further in the remainder of the section.

Problem/Opportunity	Actions taken
Skills need to be effectively and efficiently transferred for vulnerable girls to become workforce entrants.	Combining mentorship together with group trainings that apply TechnoServe's CREATE Methodology.
Basic requirements for participation were prohibitively expensive for some girls.	Providing resources to each girl and mentor
Girls have no access to resources to start their own business.	Developing capacity and awareness about saving as a project's priority.
There are scarce employment opportunities for girls.	Developing skills with a validated demand in the local economy.

### Combining mentorship together with group trainings that apply TechnoServe's CREATE Methodology.

The study provides qualitative evidence of an attitude shift and personal empowerment in the girls after participating in the program. The program was short but effective. Mentorship was important to support girls in developing marketable skills, gaining confidence and building a personal network with help of the mentor. Group trainings applied TechnoServe's CREATE model, which demonstrated to be useful to engage girls in training sessions and help them find their own answers to self-awareness questions that are new to them, such as *"What are my strengths?"*, *"What goals do I have?"*, *"What can I do about it?"*. Group trainings also created a sense of community and a network among the girls. Qualitative interviews with individual participants and in focus groups showed that some girls also developed a business sense during the project, which was taught as part of the group trainings and reinforced daily during work with mentors. For example, one girl mentioned that she wants to *"make school uniforms because they are simple and easy to make and there is a good market because there are many schools nearby."* The positive results of the program indicate that combining mixed teaching methods through mentorship with group trainings seems to be an effective approach to develop the skills and confidence required for vulnerable girls to become workforce entrants.



### Providing resources to each girl and mentor: enabling the program's effectiveness

The target group of beneficiaries as defined by the project's goals was extremely vulnerable girls. These girls had no financial resources, and basic tasks such as acquiring transportation to their mentors' premises were prohibitively expensive for some. To enable the participation of all selected girls, staff provided a travel stipend of \$40 to each girl and, also to the mentor, to cover the costs of supporting an apprentice, conditioned to the permanence of the girl in the mentorship program. The stipend also constituted an opportunity to save, as in some cases girls chose to find alternative means of transportation to attend the program. The choice to save the stipend or spend it on transportation was up to each individual, but staff developed a plan with each girl to determine the best use of the funds. Participants, mentors and project staff agree that providing resources in the form of stipends was an important success factor and that without it, many girls and mentors would not have been able to participate. Going forward, project staff are exploring the potential to co-fund these stipends together with parents or community members, which would increase their commitment with the project, and contribute to the project's cost-effectiveness.

### Developing capacity and awareness about saving as a project's priority: enabling girls to start their own businesses during the project

Interviews with participants and staff revealed that prior to the GAP project, participants did not have the resources or knowledge of investment needed to start their own business. Staff learned from GAP I that the stipend money constituted a rare chance to save for the girls, and therefore



Justine Nansubuga works with her mentor, Nassuma Hanifa

made a concerted effort to emphasize importance of saving. While some girls used the transportation stipend for purely transportation purposes, others chose to find alternative ways to attend (such as by walking) and saved their stipend. Staff worked with each girl to develop a plan for how to use their money, as for many participants, the transportation stipend, together with some income generated from working at the mentor's premises, constituted seed capital to start small business.

Participants reported saving for business activities such as purchasing a sewing machine,

purchasing fabric, and renting workspace. Participants mentioned that one of the biggest lessons at the end of the project was the ability to save and manage their own resources.

### Jaliah's Story

Jaliah (*with mentor, Joanita, left*) had always dreamed of running her own business, but her plans were put on hold when her mother passed away and she was forced to drop out of secondary school because she did not have enough money to pay school fees. So, when TechnoServe rolled out the GAP program, Jaliah jumped at the chance and enrolled.

For Jaliah, having someone successful to look up to has helped her grow as an aspiring businesswoman. "My mentor is someone who you can talk to when you have a problem, and she helps you solve it... she's like a mom. And I call her that. I call her auntie!" she said.

Jaliah notes that the biggest change she feels in herself after participating in the program is her confidence, which she attributes to Joanita's support. "When a customer comes, I know how to handle them because of my mentor. I ask him what he wants. I give the price. If we need to bargain, I bargain. Before I didn't bother, I didn't ever look at them or talk to them."

Armed with a money-making skill, Jaliah is much more capable of determining the course



The emphasis on saving translated into an increase in girls starting their own business during GAP II as compared to GAP I. This appears to have worked, as the endline survey found that 78% of participants reported saving. Mentors and staff alike emphasized that saving is the only way to start a new business: *"I say to girls, you HAVE to save money to grow your business. I asked the girls how much they have saved in a day"* (Julliet Tusiime, mentor).

### Developing skills with a validated demand in the local economy was an effective way to boost employment

The results of the program prove the effectiveness of the Theory of Change that pre-selects skills that have proven demand. The program determines if there is a validated demand by specifically selecting skills that are easy to learn and to market, as understood by TechnoServe staff. Because the skills taught were skills that had a demand in the local economy, some mentors were able to support girls to find employment even after the mentorship period ended. In some cases, mentors helped girls find jobs within their networks or in their own shops while in other cases, mentors helped girls start their own businesses.

### Areas for improvement

The following are actionable suggestions for improvement that were gathered from mentors and participants as well as from direct observation in the field. Although these are actions that were not implemented, project

teams agree that they would incorporate them in future version of the project to increase effectiveness and efficiency.

Problem/Opportunity	Actions suggested
Highly vulnerable girls face a variety of challenges that limit their ability to take full advantage of the training	Integrate more counseling sessions to help vulnerable girls be ready to be mentored
Some mentors are not comfortable with matching criteria and/or are frustrated with girls performance	Fine tune mentor-mentee matching and expectation setting: add matching criteria based on mentor's expectations, ensure that mentors understand girl's background, and place at least two girls per mentor.
Mentors want to improve their mentorship skills	Provide more support to mentors including mentorship plans, follow-up meetings with other mentors, and feedback with the mentor of mentors
Some girls and mentors performed better than others	Share good practices implemented by best performing participants and mentors

### **Integrate more counseling sessions to help vulnerable girls be ready to be mentored**

The project targets highly vulnerable girls who come to their mentors with a variety of challenges. To address this, project staff included group counseling sessions into the training methodology in order to prepare the girls to be “ready to be mentored.” Interviews with mentors and participants revealed that this was very effective, and that it could even be increased in the number of sessions as well as individualized in one-on-one sessions in order to even better help participants address personal and emotional challenges and be ready and able to focus and be mentored.

### **Fine tune mentor-mentee matching and expectation setting**



Mentors from the GAP II project

Interviews with all stakeholders revealed that the mentor-mentee relationship was a critical factor of success for the project. Mentors and mentees that were matched well thrived and learned from each other, while those that were not well-matched experienced frustration and even attrition. Additionally, some mentors struggled with girls who came from extremely vulnerable

backgrounds, and they had to handle difficult situations they did not expect. During GAP II matching criteria was focused on matching girls to mentors that worked close to their homes in order to minimize cost of transport. Girls were matched with mentors based on an interest in a particular skill that the mentor could teach them. Mentors suggested in interviews that project implementers also include some matching criteria based on *their* interests and abilities, for example, asking mentors if they would accept a girl that comes to work with a baby. Mentors also suggested to include at least two girls per business as apprentices, as they found that girls benefitted from learning together and creating a bond.

### **Provide more support to mentors including mentorship plans, follow-up meetings with other mentors, and feedback with the mentor of mentors**

Although mentors received some training in how to plan their lessons, interviews found that they would appreciate additional support to improve their mentorship skills during the program. Mentors suggested that this could take the form of best practices in mentorship plans, group meetings with other mentors, and feedback with the mentor of mentors.

### **Share good practices implemented by best performing girls and mentors**

Mentors suggest including some best practices in the induction of mentors in future versions of the project. Some of the suggestions mentioned were:

- Instate deadlines and incentives to encourage best performance: Mentors found it very important to set clear deadlines and expectations for the girls. They found that short term achievable challenges (e.g. to cut fabric for a skirt) help girls understand the path towards a finished product and teach them to recognize the steps required to achieve it.



- Paying girls during their mentorship: Mentors found that paying girls during their mentorship period was an effective incentive to promote good work, and that it taught the value of work, that essentially "what you are learning can be turned into money."

## Next steps: Plan for Scale Up

According to all interviewed stakeholders, scale up is a welcome next step. The project would need to see several key changes if it were to be scaled up to hundreds or thousands of participants. In particular, the skills offered would have to be diversified to offer more variety and lower the risk of saturating the market by training more people than were needed in a particular sector or field. New sectors or skills could include cookery (chefs), baristas, welding and metal fabrication, carpentry, and catering (in addition to bakery). The costs per participant would likely vary depending on the sector/skill, but they should be lower than the pilot costs, based on other TNS programs that operate at a large scale.

The starting point for scaling up to thousands would need to be a comprehensive market survey to establish the gaps in the labor market or opportunities for the various skills. Once the gaps or demand or opportunities have been identified the next step would be to determine whether the gaps can be filled through apprenticeship. New mentors would need to be mobilized and trained, and training would need to be altered for those not previously involved in TechnoServe programs.

Also, there is the key dimension of the program that the skill sets were chosen because they could easily be practiced at home with minimal investment. This suits the needs of vulnerable girls very well. If one wanted to open up the program to other skill sets, this flexibility issue would need to be considered.

Going forward, it's very important to recognize the assets in place to run a new cycle of the project and scale it up. They include the teams experience, the mentor's commitment and experience, together with their increased capacity to allocate girls, community networks and relationships created through the two previous cycles of the project. Finally, there is strong support from stakeholders for the continuation of the program because from their perspective there is a great necessity for effective support to address the challenges of overwhelming unemployment among girls.

## Conclusion

The Girls Apprenticeship Program aimed to fill a critical need and provide highly vulnerable girls a rare opportunity to increase their employability. The project achieved all targets, both financial and outcomes-based. It showed that mentorship, together with specific training sessions, is an effective way to transfer basic skills in a quick and efficient manner to vulnerable girls in urban

areas of Uganda. It also showed the value of teaching easily marketable and easily adopted skills as a means to build empowerment and financial independence among vulnerable girls. Mentorship was also a valuable tool to empower young women by building a support system with an older role model. The project's success is a valuable answer to the challenge of youth unemployment and provides important lessons for how to tackle the economic challenges facing Uganda's urban youth today. Furthermore, TechnoServe has the human capacity – in staff, knowledge, and proven techniques – to replicate and scale the project, and as such the research team recommends the continuation of GAP methodology as a tool for employability for young vulnerable women.

## Jaliah's Story

### A JOB FOR JALIAH

Jaliah sits behind a sewing machine in her mentor's tailoring shop, beaming with the confidence of someone with both the personal and technical skills to handle whatever customers may ask of her. "I am comfortable with customers," she says with a laugh, "when a customer comes and wants anything I can make it." Jaliah's belief in her abilities marks a dramatic change from her circumstances a year ago.

Jaliah lives in sub-urban Kampala, Uganda, in a zone where the majority of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture. She had always dreamed of running her own business. But her plans were put on hold when her mother passed away and she was forced to drop out of secondary school because she did not have enough money to pay school fees. Jaliah went to live with her older sister and together they washed clothes for their community as a way to raise a little money to meet their basic needs. Jaliah hoped to learn how to sew and start her own tailoring shop, but vocational training was prohibitively expensive and took far too long to complete. Still, she held on to her dream of achieving financial independence, and when TechnoServe Uganda piloted the Girls Apprenticeship Program (GAP), she seized the opportunity to enroll in tailoring.

A pilot sponsored by the Citi Foundation, the GAP program worked with 60 vulnerable young women ages 18 to 24 over the course of 2015 to build the necessary skills and resources to start their own businesses or obtain paid employment. As part of the program, each young woman was linked to a successful businesswoman who mentored and trained them in practical, easily learned, easily marketed, and easily implemented vocational skills including hairdressing, tailoring, crafts and baking. In addition to mentorship, each participant received 3 group trainings that taught personal effectiveness, finance, and basic entrepreneurship as well as group counseling sessions.



ABOVE: Jaliah works in her mentor's shop.



Jaliah, like all of the other girls in the GAP program, comes from an extremely vulnerable background. Half of Jaliah's peers are young mothers, and all were unemployed or engaged only in petty trading when they began the program. Many, like Jaliah, had experienced the death of one or both parents. In Uganda, youth ages 18-30 make up three quarters of the country's population and as a group constitute 64% of all unemployed persons. Women make up three out of every five unemployed persons, a figure that is higher (70%) in urban areas than in rural areas (42%). Vocational schools, which provide an opportunity for youth to learn skills, are far too costly for youth with few resources like Jaliah

Luckily for Jaliah, her mentor Joanita has dutifully coached her through her journey out of unemployment. Joanita sees a tremendous need for projects like the GAP. "We have so many girls who come here [to my shop] because they know that we are doing this project. And they come to me saying 'help us also.' That is a challenge. We have so many girls drop out of school and they don't have any work to do, and they want to be trained." The GAP program is particularly important because in addition to skills training, it provides girls with pathways to employment. And this approach has proven to be successful: at the end of the program, 98% of participants were either employed or had started their own business. This, in a country where youth are overwhelmingly unemployed, is no small feat.



Jaliah and Joanita in front of Joanita's tailoring shop.

For Jaliah, having someone successful to look up to has helped her grow as an aspiring businesswoman. "My mentor is someone who you can talk to when you have a problem and she helps you solve it... she's like a mom. And I can call her that. I call her auntie," she said.

Jaliah is not alone in feeling nurtured by her mentor Joanita. Before becoming a tailor, Joanita worked with young people at Makerere University, where every year she watched students struggle to find employment after graduating. Joanita decided that she needed to do something that would both help local youth gain skills and employment and generate an income for herself. She bought two sewing machines: one for herself, and one to teach local girls to sew. But starting a business was not without its challenges, and when Joanita's business faced financial and operational problems several years ago, she enrolled in TechnoServe's Women Mean Business program, where she received the coaching and support she needed to turn things around.

As Joanita's business began to thrive, she didn't lose sight of her initial aim of helping local girls to become business women. When TechnoServe began rolling out the GAP program, she happily agreed to be a mentor to Jaliah and four other girls, making her the mentor with the most mentees.

"When a customer comes, I know how to handle them because of my mentor. I give the price. If we need to bargain, I bargain. Before, I didn't bother. I didn't even look at them or talk to them."

Through mentorship, the GAP program provides work, role models to girls who often do not have strong support systems, skills, and job experience. Among all of her mentor's traits, Jaliah most admires Joanita's flexible approach to life. "She takes things easy. Even if something is very hard, she makes it easy. Like when someone makes a mistake she can't judge you before giving the right direction to make it. I want to be like her in those behaviors," she said.

Jaliah notes that the biggest change she feels in herself after participating in the program is her confidence, which she attributes to Joanita's support. "When a customer comes, I know how to handle them because of my mentor. I ask him what he wants. I give the price. If we need to bargain, I bargain. Before I didn't bother, I didn't ever look at them or talk to them."

For Joanita, being a mentor has been a very rewarding experience. "When you interact with the girls you get a lot of knowledge. And you feel good because we are helping to build our young people. You feel like you have done something for society." Joanita values Jaliah's support from a business standpoint as well and has opened a job position for her mentee, "She can do bookkeeping and go buy things when we need them. I rely on her", she said.

In addition to providing hard skills, GAP has also given the girls the more intangible, but essential tool of a broader perspective that will hopefully create a foundation for the big thinking required of entrepreneurs. "The program gives the girls an opportunity to really see the outside world," says, Joanita, "and then they start thinking: 'even now I can start my own business. Maybe in the next two years I can be somewhere.'"

Armed with a money-making skill, Jaliah is much more capable of determining the course of her life. Thanks to the GAP program, Jaliah has been able to purchase a sewing machine, open a bank account, and begin actively saving in her bank account. Indeed, Jaliah believes that without the GAP, her life would have turned out very differently. "Without my mentor, I would have gotten married," she said, "now I will wait." Looking to the future, Jaliah dreams of one day becoming a fashion designer. "I want to use my skills," she said.





## Nigeria: Cashew Byproducts Project

### The Need



Participants selling cashew honey

Over 60% of Nigeria's population lives in poverty,<sup>9</sup> a figure that has risen from just over 54% a decade ago.<sup>10</sup> Women suffer the greatest effects of these challenges, and consistently earn less, are less educated, and less likely to participate in the labor force.<sup>11</sup> Agriculture is recognized as a significant source of employment and area for growth in Nigeria, and currently accounts for 20.2% of the country's GDP<sup>12</sup>. Cashew is an important part of this sector, accounting for 10% of all agricultural exports in 2013, however, like in the Nigerian economy more broadly, there is a gender gap within the cashew farming industry, and women account for only 15% of Nigeria's cashew farming population. At the same time, research has shown that women are more involved in the cashew processing sub-sector more than in any other crop in the nation<sup>13</sup>. Stakeholders in the cashew industry acknowledge that Nigeria needs to add value to their products. Processing the cashew apple has enormous potential: it has for generations been tossed aside as waste, but can be

processed into many byproducts such as honey, oil, snacks, kernels, and cake. Processing cashew byproducts poses a unique opportunity for women's inclusive economic diversification.

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<sup>9</sup> World Bank. 2014. Nigeria economic report. Nigeria economic report; no. 2. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

<sup>10</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Global Gender Gap Report 2015. World Economic Forum.

<sup>12</sup> World Bank, 2015

<sup>13</sup> Adeigbe, et al. "A review on cashew research and production in Nigeria in the last four decades." 2015.

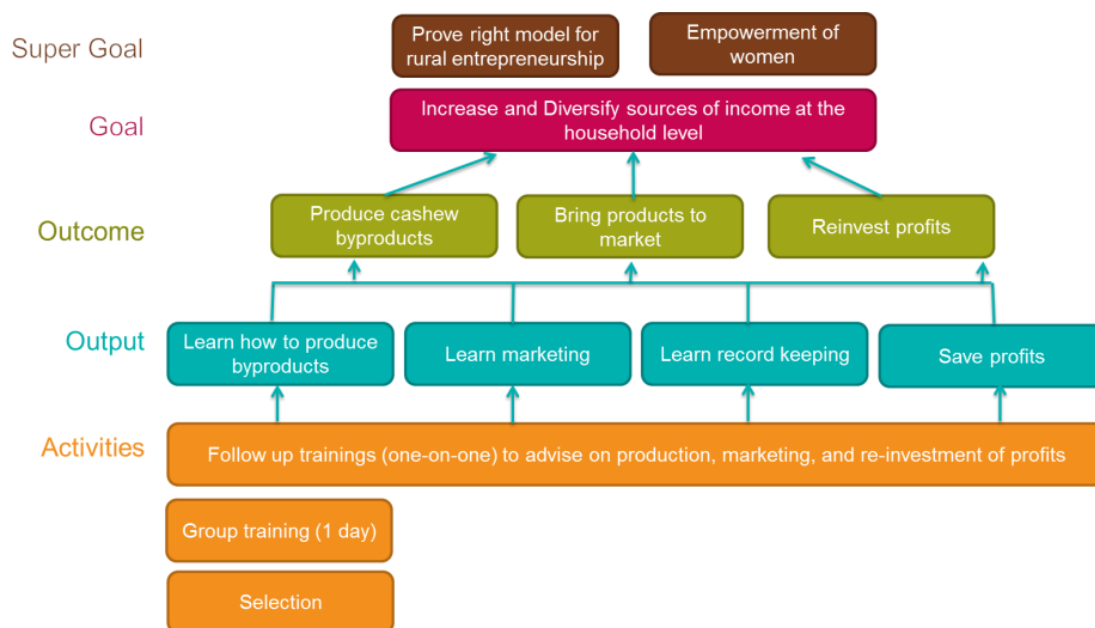
## Theory of change

The Cashew Byproducts project, currently being implemented by TechnoServe in Kogi and Kwara states, Nigeria, aims to increase and diversify women's income through the use of the cashew apple. Specifically, the project is training women to process the cashew apple into products including honey, juice and dried snacks. Because cashew apples have for generations been tossed aside as waste, the ability to transform them into marketable products constitutes an innovation in the cashew value chain and in the country's culture and human capital. The project builds on TechnoServe's experience including multiple successful projects that involve cashew byproducts in countries including India and Benin.



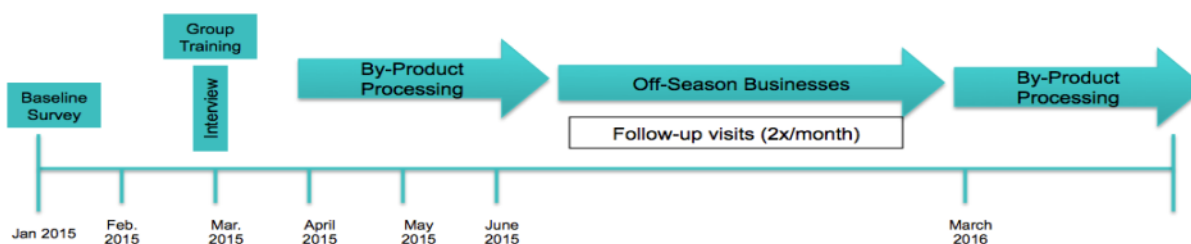
Cashew apples and nuts ready to be processed

Aiming to increase and diversify sources of income at the household level, the project implemented a strategy based on 3 outcomes: first to produce cashew byproducts, second to bring the products to the market, and third to re-invest participants' profits in off-season businesses. The project activities were focused on providing group training about cashew byproducts processing, and follow-up meetings to advise on the production, marketing, and reinvestment of profits. This project aimed to both test a model for rural entrepreneurship support and to increase women's empowerment.

**FIGURE 3: THEORY OF CHANGE, CASHEW BYPRODUCTS PROJECT**

## Project Implementation

The Cashew Byproducts project began in the states of Kogi and Kwara during January of 2015 and in 2016 is in its second season. The project is ongoing and is planned to finish in September 2016. The main characteristics of program implementation are described in the following section.

**FIGURE 4: TIMELINE, CASHEW BYPRODUCTS PROJECT**

## Baseline Survey and Pre-Selection

The project set out with a goal of recruiting 60 women and youth. To select participants, staff conducted a baseline survey of 180 people (100 in Kogi and 80 in Kwara) in January 2015, where

project staff the 180 pre-selected participants based on criteria including basic literacy and numeracy, innovative and creative thinking, diligence and passion, business acumen, and production tools and technical skills. Another criteria that was considered was possession of a farm, which, though not required, would facilitate access to cashew apples. After the baseline analysis project, staff came to understand that women, who are typically excluded or somewhat excluded from participating in the traditional cashew harvest, were more willing and able to learn how to produce cashew byproducts than their male counterparts. As a result, staff decided to focus 100% on women of all ages.

### Group Training and Selection

Pre-selected participants were invited to a day-long training in late March of 2015 to learn cashew by-product processing. Additional interested community members also arrived and the training reached approximately 120. The training included marketing, food safety and the specifics of processing cashew juice, cashew plum (dried fruit snacks), cashew honey, and roasted cashews. After the training, staff conducted interviews with participants to further understand their interest in and potential for the project, selecting those most interested in using their new skills in processing cashew byproducts to generate income. This allowed the team to select 60 women (20 from Kwara State and 40 from Kogi State) to participate as direct participants and receive follow up support.

### Production

Throughout the remaining cashew season in 2015 (April-May) and beginning once more in March 2016, participants produced cashew byproducts. Project staff provided bi-monthly follow up sessions during which time they provided support in production and marketing. In addition to the original 60 participants, 25 additional women were trained by friends or neighbors and began producing cashew by-products, also attending follow up meetings. These women were considered indirect participants during the 2015 season. In all, those who received some sort of attention from the project ultimately numbered 85.

During project implementation the team decided to focus on the easiest produced and marketed products. Staff noted early on that cashew juice posed serious quality control risks, making it ill-suited for the project at this stage. Project staff therefore pivoted to focus on the other products that posed fewer risks such as honey and plum. On the other hand, cashew cake (kuli kuli) was integrated into the project after it was clear that it was popular with producers.

### Marketing

Cashew byproducts were able to compete with traditional products such as bee honey and dried fruit. Over the course of the first season, the price of cashew byproducts such as honey rose, indicating a growing public acceptance of and demand for the products. By the end of the season, cashew honey sold for N250 a

bottle, or a little over \$1.25.<sup>15</sup>

In some cases, TechnoServe helped participants connect with points of sale in larger urban areas.

### Follow-up and Off-season activities

When the cashew season ended in May 2015 and all products were sold, project staff began to support participants to use the profits to invest in business activities during the off-season. Participants engaged in a variety of activities: buying assets for production such as tailoring or corner stores, while others purchased materials (oil, nuts, etc.) to store and then resell. In supporting participants to grow off-season activities, the project sought to provide a steadier income for the women and their families.

## Results

The project has achieved all major expected results. Additionally, interviews with individual participants and focus groups indicated an overall sense of satisfaction with the project. Activities for the 2016 season are ongoing.

### Financial Results

The financial results show a sustained production capacity over time. However, both seasons are not comparable, because of the variable availability of cashew apples and kernels. The financial benefits captured by the project through cashew byproducts until March 2016 are \$8,597. We expect a trend increase in the future months, since the project will continue producing results and will also have the chance to capture the effect of reinvestment in off-seasonal businesses.

Results Summary (Until March 2016) <sup>14</sup>	
Direct participants, 2015	60
Drop-outs, 2015	7
Dropout rate	12%
Indirect Participants, 2015	25
Total Grant Amount	\$200,537
Total Sales of Cashew Byproducts (Benefit), April and May 2015	\$3,276
Total Sales of Cashew Byproducts (Benefit), March 2016	\$5,321
Average Sales per Participant, April and May 2015	\$62
Average Sales per Participant, March 2016	\$72
Average Profit per Participant, April and May 2015	\$37
Average Profit per Participant, March 2016	\$60

### Most Significant Change

<sup>14</sup> Results are calculated based on financial information tracked by program staff. Financial information includes cost of production, sales, and profit per product type, per participant, per month during the months the project was operating (April and May, 2015 and March 2016).

<sup>15</sup> 2015 Monthly Production Report. TechnoServe, Nigeria.



Beyond the achievement of the expected results, the most significant change after participating in the project according to the participants has been the feeling of empowerment within their family and communities:

**Empowerment in the family:**

- *“My role changed. Before, I had to request money from my husband. Now I’m able to do lots of small things by myself.”*
- *“I am able to make simple things by myself. Now there is no more fighting in my house.”*
- *“There is no more fighting in my family and I can cater to my children.”*

**Empowerment in the community:**

- *“Before, nobody knew I existed. Now people know me.”*
- *“So many people have looked down on me for being a widow, but now I can contribute and they are not looking down on me anymore. And I can be called a business woman.”*
- *“I’ve been able to teach. People look at me as an innovator. I got respect in the area.”*

**Results Chart**

The following chart details the achievements of the project, based on evidence gathered during the study. Results are measured against indicators submitted to Citi Foundation at the beginning of the project, as well as some indicators that were developed during the implementation of the project, and against objectives related to the Theory of Change.

Level	Objective	Indicator, from proposal	Achievement, based on evidence	
Super Goal	Prove right model for rural entrepreneurship	Model for rural entrepreneurship support tested and results fed into World Bank project	The project design is a model for rural entrepreneurship. There is evidence of an increased interest, as evidenced by indirect beneficiaries, who learned to produce cashew byproducts through project participants. <i>"This is something that is very new in Nigeria...it showed success because people trained others in their communities [after learning skills from the project]." (Stakeholder)</i>	
	Empowerment of women	There was no indicator defined.	This is recognized as the most significant change after participating in the program. <i>"Before, nobody knew I existed. Now people know me."</i> <i>"So many people have looked down on me for being a widow, but now I can contribute and they are not looking down on me anymore. And I can be called a business woman."</i>	
Goal	Increase and diversify sources of income at the household level	Income generated ~\$350-\$400 per person in year 1	It was not possible to train people before late March 2015, as a result participants could not take advantage of the whole 2015 season that began in February. Average income per person during the 2015 cycle, including April and part of May, was \$62. The project has no complete records of the income generated by reinvesting incomes in off-seasonal businesses for the full year so far.	
		Likely 60% increase on that in following year	As of April 29, 2016, production is ongoing for the 2016 season and therefore year-on-year comparisons cannot yet be made. During March 2016 sales amounted to \$72 on average per person.	
Outcome	Produce Cashew Byproducts	60 young people put entrepreneurial skills into action	During 2015 there were 60 direct participants, of which 53 (88%) produced and sold cashew byproducts. An additional 25 indirect participants were involved during the 2015 season and integrated into the 2016 season as direct participants. As of March, 2016, 74 participants produced and sold cashew byproducts.	
		The entrepreneurs will adopt practical skills – food processing, packaging, food safety	Interviews found that participants worked in groups to process and package their products, and many were transferring skills to other community members: <i>"Now I train other people. Through cashew by products I earned profits but also I used it to assist others"</i>	
	Bring products to market	Adoption of business skills such as market assessment, product management, marketing, sales and bookkeeping	Qualitative evidence of bookkeeping skills, ability to assess re-investment opportunities, and of entrepreneurial skills such as pricing and marketing.	
	Reinvest Profits	Personal budgeting, money management, planning deepened	Participants kept records of sales in booklets. Interviews and focus groups show that participants were utilizing new skills: <i>"This is the first time that most of us are having records and saving."</i> <i>"I bought a sewing machine"</i> <i>"Before, if I went to the market, I used the profit anyhow. Now I save my profits and re-invest."</i>	
	<i>This indicator was not integrated into the theory of change</i>	They will be supported to access formal finance	It was not possible to achieve this outcome, and it was taken out from the theory of change of this version of the project, since the majority of participants do not have bank accounts or live near a bank. Also, as individuals, the chances of obtaining bank credit is recognized as very scarce from the perspective of all stakeholders. Future versions of the project will incorporate cooperatives to serve as a village savings group.	



Mr. and Mrs. Abdulrafiiu display finished bottles of cashew honey

## Lessons Learned

Lessons learned were extracted by comparing the project's results with its design and implementation. These were also considered from the perspective of the entrepreneurship model that states that successful businesses require a combination of an entrepreneur, an opportunity and resources. These are summarized in the chart below and then detailed further in the remainder of the section.

Problem/Opportunity	Actions Taken
There is a need in Nigeria for value creation and economic diversification	<p>A model for rural entrepreneurship development was identified, combining the elements of the Timmons model: entrepreneur, opportunity and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select the participants with the most enthusiastic attitude to learn, produce and profit (women in the cashew value chain with direct access to farms)</li> <li>• Show the business opportunity (cashew byproducts, easy to produce and to bring to market)</li> <li>• Point to easily accessible, low-cost resources (cashew apples)</li> </ul>
Risk of community rejection particularly important in the context of a women-focused project	Involving the local community in project activities enables support for the project and ensures sustainable skills transfer
Efficiency and effectiveness could be higher	Include group meetings, while maintaining individual follow up sessions to ensure production and marketing is on track

**A model for rural entrepreneurship development was identified, combining the elements of the Timmons model: entrepreneur, opportunity and resources**

The project aimed to test a model for rural entrepreneurship development and achieved its goal, enabling value creation and economic diversification in highly vulnerable rural communities. This was possible after combining the right elements of the Timmons Model of the Entrepreneurial Process:

**Entrepreneur**

- Selection criteria proved to be successful to identify lead entrepreneurial people. The attendance of an initial training proved to be a good filter, attracting people with the right attitude and willingness to learn. Assessing the intention of the attendants to apply the learnings and start producing at the end of the training was also an effective selection tool.

**Opportunity**

- There is demand in the local market for similar products to the cashew byproducts, for example, sweeteners such as bee honey. The program was successful in capitalizing on this established need by offering a new substitute. The program also based its approach off of the fact that in other countries similar initiatives had some level of success. The team assumed that if the product had specific taste and characteristics then it could find its place in market.
- Products such as cashew honey and plum were easy to produce, easy to market, and very profitable, as demonstrated by the many neighbors and friends that started to produce and sell after learning directly from project participants.

**Access to the necessary resources**

- Participants used an input (cashew apples) that would otherwise have been waste. Because all women had direct access to farms, the resources required to create their products were accessible for free or for a very low-cost, generating higher return.
- As a result, the project facilitated quick and significant gains in earnings that were re-invested in off-season businesses, providing resources for additional economic activity year-round.



Jemila Musa (right) and her apprentices with their products in Jemila's tailoring workshop. Jemila used profits from the cashew byproducts project to build her tailoring business.

### **Involving the local community in project activities enables support for the project and ensures sustainable skills transfer**

Project staff noted that an important factor in the project's success was that they made an intentional effort to reach out to the local community and build support for the project. Engaging entrepreneur's spouses and understanding their perspectives and opinions was particularly important in the context of a women-focused project in rural communities. Also, the project learned the importance of liaising with community leaders and carrying them along in project planning. After a year, interviewed local leaders expressed support to the project as a significant contribution for women's economic empowerment, and saw huge potential for cashew processing as a way to economic diversification.

In addition to building support for the project from the external community, staff intentionally created ownership of the project among participants. Staff made sure to identify and promote the emergence of role models among program beneficiaries and to trust them with responsibilities. In so doing, staff trained leaders among the program participants, who were empowered to teach others in their community. As a result, staff were able to extend the skills training initiative beyond the direct participants and ensure that leadership skills and training capacity will remain far beyond the project's activities.

**Include group meetings, while maintaining individual follow up sessions to ensure production and marketing is on track**



The project focused on the transfer of practical skills that were taught in one group training session. This session was designed under TechnoServe's CREATE methodology to train adults and proved to be effective to teach how to process the cashew byproducts. Afterwards, the program offered individual follow-up sessions twice a month. Individual sessions proved to be very effective for the adoption of the best practices, and to ensure that production is on track. However, efficiency could be increased. The project team observed that women naturally started to build production groups. In response, individual follow up sessions were maintained, but turned gradually to group meetings. These were useful to share best practices, build peer support, and build motivation, for example by setting group targets, encouraging higher production and profits.



Local children eat cashew snacks

## Areas for Improvement

The following are actionable suggestions for improvement that were gathered from project participants as well as from discussions with project's team. Although these are actions that were not implemented, project team agrees that they would incorporate them in future version of the project to further increase effectiveness and efficiency.

Problem/Opportunity	Actions Suggested
While all the results are attributable to the project, some are still dependent of TNS intervention	Make sure to facilitate independence throughout project implementation

As individuals, capturing business opportunities beyond local market is not cost effective	Promote production groups that are able to capture business opportunities beyond the local market
The model is proven, but the experience is still not systematized to be replicated	Document project processes and best practices



Beneficiaries extract cashew oil

### **Make sure to facilitate independence throughout project implementation**

TechnoServe supported participants to access more profitable markets beyond the villages. To test the model, TechnoServe paved the way for buyer/seller relationship, by making connections to urban markets. TechnoServe served as an intermediary, purchasing

250 bottles for cashew honey in bulk in order to reduce the cost of production for participants. While these actions were

very helpful to test the model for entrepreneurship development, the team is aware of the importance of building the capacity to sustain the results of the project. TechnoServe is working to facilitate full independence by the end of the project, involving participants in negotiations, and in particular, by planning to instate a cooperative system.

### **Promote production groups that are able to capture business opportunities beyond the local market**

Capturing more profitable business opportunities makes more sense if women build formal cooperatives or production groups. While women worried about being recognized as legitimate buyers by factory contacts, or as competent suppliers for urban buyers, they agreed that forming groups could be a solution. They also recognize by forming a group, access to finance would become a possibility, which could help them to buy tools and machinery to increase their production capacity and improve facilities.

### **Document project processes and best practices**

Given its success in terms of proving a model for rural entrepreneurship development within the cashew value chain, the project experience and best practices should be documented and

shared for replication and scale up. As an example, future implementers would benefit from a document explaining in more detail the selection process, including questions and criteria for evaluating answers, training materials, best practices in production and useful follow up tools for business advisors and managers.

## Next Steps: Opportunities for Scale Up

After proving the model, there is general agreement among TNS staff and the project's stakeholders<sup>16</sup> that there is potential to scale up. The next step will be to invest in the businesses to ensure quality and uniformity. Cashew byproducts processing could then be developed in all cashew-growing areas as all of these geographies have the same sort of consumption behaviors according to stakeholders familiar with the market. Demand for products indicates that the market can grow, and ensuring quality and packaging as well as acquiring new geographic locations, especially in urban centers, is a key to scaling. An important step in a future iteration of the project would be piloting a cooperative system. Cooperatives can help foster independence and reduce the cost of production by supporting easier access to expensive product inputs such as packaging, market access (travel to urban points of sale), access to finance and quality control.

## Conclusion

The project created a model for rural entrepreneurship through innovation with new products in the cashew value chain. It successfully guided women to produce cashew byproducts, to bring the products to market, and to re-invest profits in off-season businesses. Finally, the project demonstrated the value of innovating with a low-cost, easily accessible product to generate new business and inspire entrepreneurial thinking. Going forward, there is room to expand project activities, particularly with the integration of cooperatives and the replication of the model in other cashew growing areas, making a significant contribution to household incomes diversification and women's economic empowerment.

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<sup>16</sup> The project's stakeholders include representatives from Citi Nigeria as well as community members and government officials involved in the cashew industry.



## Jemila's Story

### Turning Trash into Treasure in Nigeria

Jemila's tailoring workshop bustles with the sounds of many women at work together. This workshop, the physical manifestation of Jemila's dream of starting her own business, was made possible by an unlikely resource: trash.

Together with 60 other women, Jemila has been participating in TechnoServe's Cashew Byproducts Project, an initiative funded by the Citi Foundation. Through the project, low-income Nigerian women in Kogi and Kwara states are learning how to produce edible products out of cashew apples, the fruit of the cashew tree that for generations has been tossed aside and considered waste. After training the women in apple processing, the project supports them to market and sell their products, as well as to re-invest their profits in off-season businesses. Now in their second year as participants, these women are literally turning trash into treasure.

For Jemila, working with cashew products is more than just a new source of income: it has been her pathway to set up her own business and support her family. Jemila learned tailoring from her aunt, and after graduating from secondary school decided to start a small tailoring business of her own but soon found that she lacked the money to buy a sewing machine. Undeterred, she decided to enroll in the Cashew Byproduct Project to see if it could help her make the capital needed to achieve her dreams.

During a training session in February of 2015, Jemila learned how to produce honey, dried fruit snacks, kernels, and cake out of cashew apples. With the help of TechnoServe business advisors, she then marketed and sold her products, making a total profit of nearly \$40 in sales during the 2015 season. She then used this money to buy a sewing machine, which she uses in her tailoring workshop. Excited by her results, Jemila began to train other women in her community in cashew apple processing so that they too could benefit from the new miracle product.

Today, Jemila runs the only tailoring business in her community. She has continued training friends and neighbors in cashew apple processing, and also trains eight apprentices in her



tailoring workshop. This year, Jemila has continued to make cashew apple products, and has produced 30 bottles of cashew honey during March 2016 alone, almost all of which sold out immediately.

Jemila, together with her family and community, is very happy with the project. Through this project she has become a leader in her community and a respected figure in her home. "Producing the cashew honey and snacks makes people know me," she said. Her father agreed. "I cannot see going back to before TechnoServe at all. It is progress, a lot of progress," he said.





# Côte d'Ivoire: The MiniPrix Project

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## The Need

Finding employment in Côte d'Ivoire is a considerable challenge for many women. Unemployment has increased following recent political crises and the breakdown of economic, and women have suffered most from the reduction of business and job opportunities, while still supporting the economic burden of their families. To address these issues, president Alassane Ouattara has set the employment objective of generating one million new jobs by 2016.

According to international studies<sup>17</sup>, microfranchising represents a viable and creative answer to unemployment. It increases young women's chances to become self-employed entrepreneurs by lowering the barriers of entry into the market, in particular, by providing a business plan and initial finance for women to get started.

## Theory of Change

In 2013, and responding to the presidential challenge to create jobs, Prosuma, the country's leading distribution network, decided to leverage its established networks, systems, and resources to start a series of microfranchised storefronts "MiniPrix" as part of its corporate responsibility activities. The project offers women the opportunity to become self-employed as "MiniPrix" managers. Prosuma hopes to ultimately install 1,000 microfranchise shops in low-income neighborhoods in Abidjan, creating 3,000 new jobs for women.

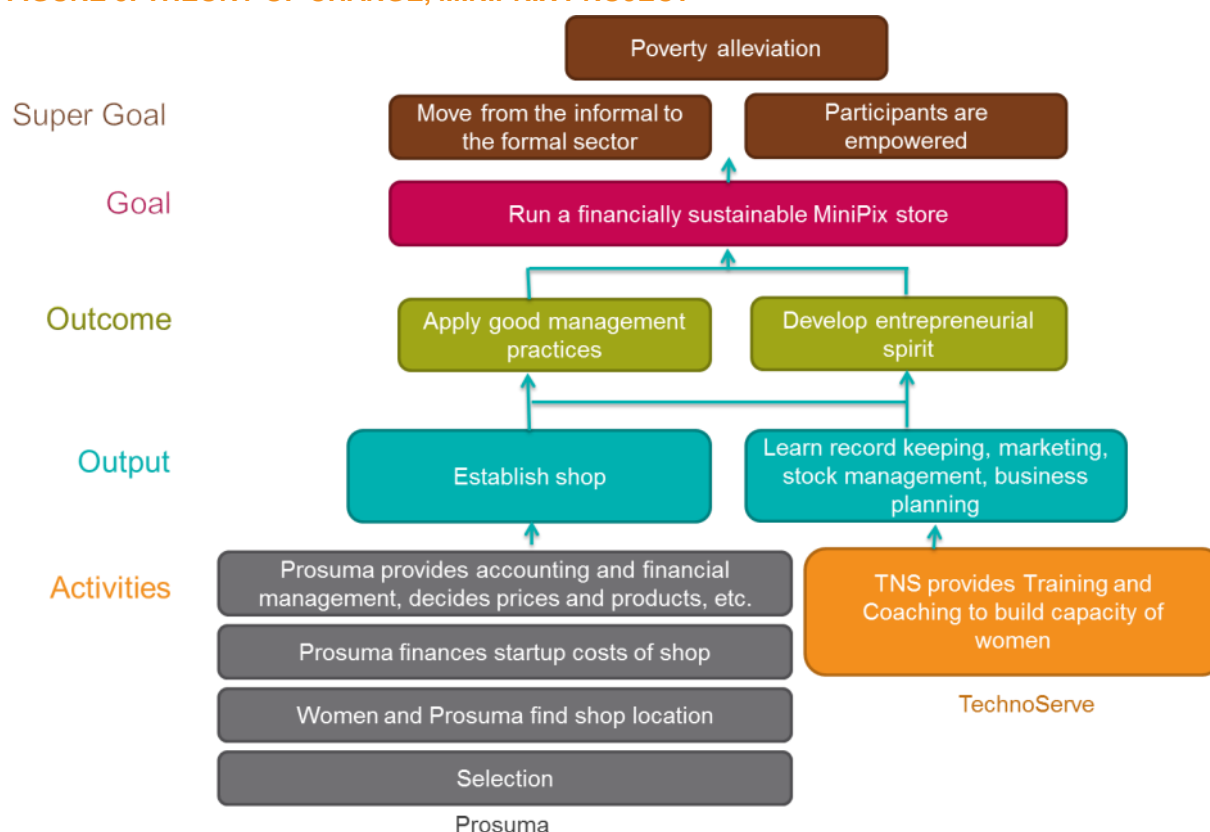
In January 2015, Prosuma brought TechnoServe onto the project as a partner to take over training and coaching of project participants. TechnoServe's role as the training partner in the project capitalizes on its skills and experience in business development and builds on lessons learnt in its three year pilot "Youth entrepreneurship promotion and Job creation" program which assisted 260 young educated Ivoirians to start and develop their businesses.

The project aims to provide self-employment opportunities to unemployed vulnerable women who possess little or no work experience. The ultimate goal is to move participants from the informal to the formal sector and to empower them, and in so doing to alleviate poverty. To accomplish this, TechnoServe and Prosuma work towards achieving financially sustainable stores run by the women, which is a result of applying good management practices and developing an entrepreneurial spirit among the participants.

The initial project aimed to involve 120 girls, in 2 cohorts of 60 girls each over a total of two years. Citi Foundation financed TechnoServe's intervention in the first cohort as a pilot, and that is what this report focuses on.

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<sup>17</sup> IPA, World Bank and the Population Council, 2010; Beck, Deelder and Miller, 2010; Burand, Koch, 2010

**FIGURE 5: THEORY OF CHANGE, MINIPRIX PROJECT**

TechnoServe and Prosuma perform different activities of the project, with different outcomes.

### Prosuma

**Selection:** Participants are recruited in low-income districts in Abidjan. Ideally, groups of three women form a partnership and then join the project. Applicants are selected by Prosuma based on a demonstrated capacity for basic school math, literacy, and personal traits for business. This screening is done using an external test applied by the Agency for Studies and Employment Promotion (AGEPE).

**Shop location and startup:** Selected participants form societies<sup>18</sup> in groups of three, and Prosuma signs a microfranchise contract with that entity. If a woman leaves, she is replaced by a new partner, ideally selected by the other two participants. Afterwards, the groups of women are expected to secure the location of their shop with help of Prosuma. The company also provides assistance with legal requirements for starting the store and an initial loan to finance startup costs including the

<sup>18</sup> This society would take the form of a Société en Non Collectif (SNC), which is, according to Côte d'Ivoire's law, a society constituted among persons (as opposed to capitals) in order to perform a common activity with a spirit of collaboration; in particular, this legal format is characterized by the unlimited and solidary responsibility on financial obligations; the lack of separation between business and personal patrimonies; the lack of a minimum initial working capital; and the lower cost and complexity for the constitution.

guarantee needed for the lease and the initial stock. All subsequent charges are the responsibility of the stores and their managers, as would be the gains. Overtime, the shop would start to make profits and the managers would be able to refund the initial loan (interest-free) to Prosuma, thus acquiring the complete ownership of their shops.

**Store management:** While the managers are required to maintain inventory and bookkeeping at all times, all financial and accounting management is undertaken by Prosuma, which also means that the company maintains records of the financial results of the project.

As store managers, participants are expected to:

- Produce receipts to customers
- Maintain paper records
- Manage the product rotation, including checking expiration dates, inventory management and orders
- Take care of tax declarations and payment
- Apply prices and promotions decided by Prosuma, with no “credit”, and sell only the products included within the MiniPrix range
- Deposit to Prosuma’s account at most every 2 days all the income resulting from sales, except a small cash amount they could use for cash management with customers.
- Respect the opening hours decided by Prosuma (from 7am to 10pm, 7 days a week); within that, they can decide how to divide such working hours among themselves, but at least 2 managers should be present when the deliveries arrive.
- Take care about the security of their store, prevent theft both within the stores and when making the deposits to Prosuma, and warn Prosuma about any security issue.
- Be the only ones working in the shops
- Do not apply any change to the shop or its furniture without the previous approval of Prosuma’s

Stores are not required to pay upfront for their orders and instead receive a revolving credit line open for all purchases. Additionally, no distribution expenses are charged to the stores.

Prosuma receives all the shops’ revenues, does the actual accounting in excel, accepts their orders based on the available credit line, and computes the manager’s profits, if any.

Given the high instance of vulnerability among the women participating to the program, Prosuma allowed store managers to receive a salary in advance on their profits (literally called “avance sur bénéfices”), which would be reconciled against the shops actual gains at the end of each month. If the gains from the stores do not over the cost of the advance, Prosuma works with store managers to evaluate options to improve their results. In some cases this involves decreasing the advance on benefits for a short time, although the final decision for how to manage finances lies with the managers.

Finally, shops are established as a direct output of Prosuma’s activities. This means that TechnoServe is dependent on Prosuma’s success in establishing shops to achieve results at an outcome level (applying good management techniques and developing an entrepreneurial spirit) and also at a goal level (running financially sustainable shops).

## TechnoServe

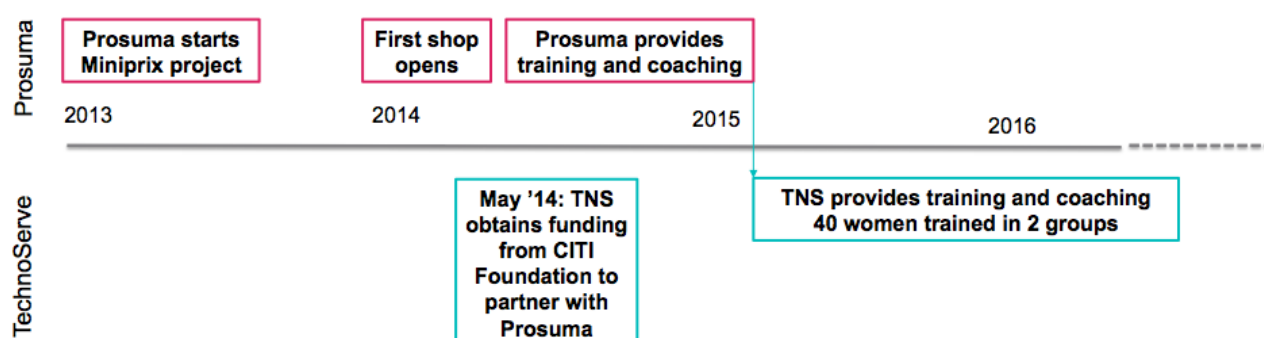
**Training and coaching:** TechnoServe provides women participants with training and coaching to develop their entrepreneurial attitude and their business and management skills such as record keeping, stock management and business planning. Women need to develop their customer base and apply good management practices to make their businesses financially sustainable. TechnoServe's measurement system collects data on training outputs, coaching hours, and themes and issues covered during coaching sessions.

As a direct outcome of TechnoServe's activities, women are expected to have learned management techniques such as record keeping, marketing, stock management and business planning.

## Project Implementation

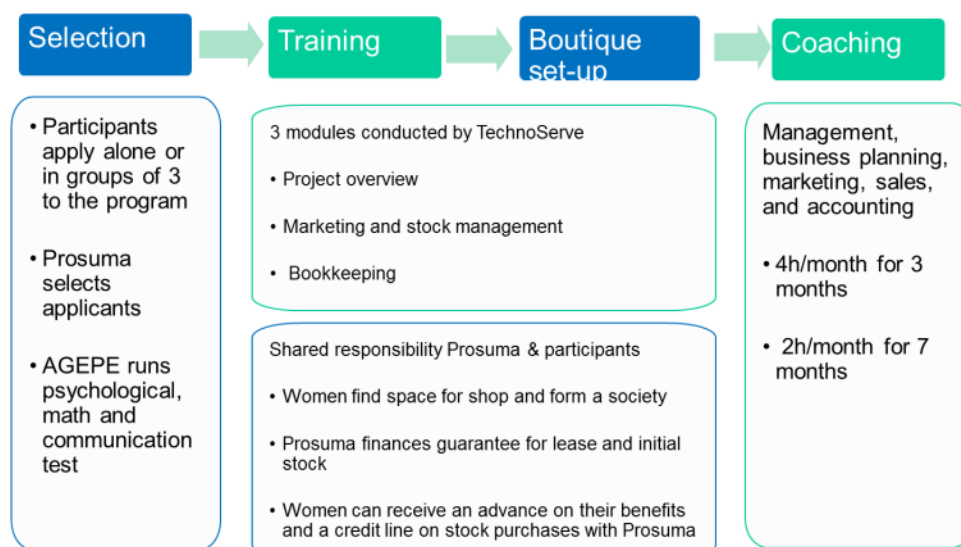
TechnoServe joined the project in January 2015 as a partner to strengthen training and coaching provided to participants<sup>19</sup>. The project is ongoing and is planned to finish in September 2016. The next figure shows the timeline of the main milestones of the project.

**FIGURE 6: TIMELINE, MINIPRIX PROJECT**



The project has several stages that are executed by TechnoServe or Prosuma. Participants are selected by Prosuma and then trained by TechnoServe. Once the boutiques are open, TechnoServe supports the women with coaching in business development. The following section explains the main activities executed by TechnoServe.

<sup>19</sup> There were shops that were provided with training and coaching by Prosuma and were not trained or coached by TechnoServe.

**FIGURE 7: ACTIVITIES TIMELINE, MINIPRIX PROJECT**

## Training

Each training consisted of three modules that were delivered during 6 consecutive sessions of one half-day each for a total of 24 teaching hours. The topics covered are:

- Structure and contractual agreements of a MiniPrix boutique, what it means to be an entrepreneur, personal development required of entrepreneurs
- Basics of marketing and stock management
- Overview of the MiniPrix distribution system, introduction to the use of the cash machine, and introduction to general bookkeeping, inventory, and financial management



Participants attend a training run by TechnoServe

Group trainings were conducted in May 2015 and September 2015 with 20 women each. In total, 40 women have been trained by TechnoServe. Prosuma faced challenges with selection and opening boutiques due to lack of affordable locations, which delayed TechnoServe's goal of training 60 women.

Due to an upward trend in the real estate market, costs involved in the startup and maintenance of the stores<sup>20</sup> exceeded the initial projections, leading to difficulties in finding and opening affordable stores. As a

<sup>20</sup> The guarantee necessary to receive a lease and monthly rent were particularly costly



consequence, the project has reached fewer participants than expected at this time. The target is expected to be achieved by TechnoServe in August 2016.

Since 2013, 18 stores have opened, and 5 stores have closed (all closures happened before TechnoServe joined the project). With currently 13 shops, there are plans to open the remaining 7 boutiques during 2016, of the 20 originally committed, employing 21 additional women, that will be selected by TechnoServe with support from Prosuma. However, this will depend primarily on Prosuma's ability to negotiate a solution for shop availability and affordability with local authorities and landlords.

## Coaching

As of March 2016, 48 women have received coaching from TechnoServe. The TechnoServe coach made periodic visits to established boutiques in Abidjan's low-income districts of Marcory and Koumassi. The district of Treichville was also initially included in the project, and some women from there were trained, but Prosuma decided ultimately not to open MiniPrix shops there because of logistical issues.

The business advisor spent approximately 4 hours per month at each boutique for the first 3 months and reducing their presence to approximately 2 hours per month for the following 7 months.

Coaching sessions concentrated on the individual needs of each store, but came to include mainly strategic management, business planning, marketing and sales, stock management, accounting and financial management. Coaching also provided an opportunity to work one-on-one with participants to develop their personal capacities as entrepreneurs and support their empowerment.

## Results

TechnoServe is achieving most of the expected results that are under its control.

**Financial results:** Annual margins per Mini Prix are \$70,214, against a target of annual sales of \$72K. Given that margins are larger than sales, the project has met and will likely exceed the target. The goal of creating 60 jobs is likely to be achieved by September 2016.

Results Summary (Data from January 2015 through December 2015)	
Direct participants	40
Drop outs	0
Drop out rate	0%
Beneficiaries (better off)	30 – 39
Total Grant Amount	\$ 100,077
Total margins (benefits), 2015	\$70,214
Total wages, 2015	\$ 32,436

Some comments to the results:

- **Beneficiaries:** TechnoServe defines beneficiaries as the participants that are better off as a result of the project. The number of beneficiaries appears as a range because financial data is only available for the 10 shops (30 women) that opened before December 2015 and that stayed open. 3 additional shops (9 women) have opened after December 2015 but there was no financial data available at the time of the writing of this report. Some of these shops were provided with training and coaching by Prosuma and were not trained or coached by TechnoServe.

- Total margins: Accounting is handled by Prosuma, they calculate and track margins, not incremental revenue.
- Total wages: Annual self-paid salaries were calculated based on monthly financial reports provided to Prosuma by the store managers through December 2015. Wages are reported by the businesses as per-business, not per-person. Calculations refer to the 10 shops that were opened before December 2015 and that stayed opened. Shops that closed are not included. Of these 10 shops, only 7 have been open for 12 months. 3 shops were opened during 2015, in March, November and December. Three additional shops have opened staffed by 9 additional women since December 2015 but no financial data was available as of April 2016.
- Cost per participant and cost per beneficiary: These ratios can only be calculated when the project is completed, and has a final number of participants (expected 60) and beneficiaries.
- Exchange rate as of 31st March 2016: 1 USD = 575,6281 XOF

**Adoption of business management practices:** Qualitative evidence from interviews with participants suggests that those who have been in the program for at least two years had a higher understanding of skills required to manage a store and demonstrated higher levels of entrepreneurial traits such as an ability to plan for the future and think creatively. This, together with the higher salaries paid by older shops, seems to point to the hypothesis that micro franchise projects need a timeframe of at least one year to adopt good practices.

**Most significant Change:** Beyond the achievement of the expected results, the most significant change after participating in the project, according to the women that have been interviewed, has been the feeling of empowerment, especially as a consequence of earning a salary and having a productive activity.

- **Increased financial independence:**

*"I don't have to wait for my husband to come back home to go out, or to buy something for my child. Now I make my own money and can pay for it."* (MiniPrix manager).

- **Respect from others:**

*"Now that I have something to do, people in my family and community respect me; because now I'm doing something useful."* (MiniPrix manager)

*"Now I contribute to my family's income. My husband sometimes comes and asks me for money, so now I have more power, he has to respect me if he wants my money."* (MiniPrix manager)

- **Enhanced self-perceived agency:**

*"I'm thinking of expanding the store, we already got the approval of the landlord, now we're preparing a financial plan to present to Prosuma."* (Adjoua, MiniPrix manager).

**FIGURE 8: WOMEN GO THROUGH DIFFERENT STAGES WHILE DEVELOPING THEIR**

## EMPOWERMENT.



## Results Chart

The following chart details the achievements of the project, based on evidence gathered during the study. Results are measured against indicators submitted to Citi Foundation at the beginning of the project, as well as some indicators that were developed during the implementation of the project, and against objectives related to the Theory of Change.

	Objective	Indicator	Achievement, based on evidence	
Super goal	Move from the informal to formal sector	Through Prosuma they will access job references and professional experience.	There is qualitative evidence that women who had been in the project the longest feel they have benefitted from professional experience. They noted that the new skills they possess are “something that will remain” far beyond the MiniPrix project. Interviews showed that participants recognized the project for providing the opportunity to prove themselves in new roles – from salesperson to cashier to administrator to buyer to strategist. As a result of the tangible work experience provided by the project, they noted that they can now demonstrate actual job experience and tangible skills to future employers. Some women advised that Prosuma or TechnoServe delivered some kind of certificate formalizing such experience.	
	Participants are empowered	*	Qualitative evidence suggested that the most significant change that resulted from the project was the feeling of empowerment that came as a result of earning money and having a productive activity. <i>"I don't have to wait for my husband to come back home to go out, or to buy something for my child. Now I make my own money and can pay for it."</i> <i>"People in my family and community respect me; because now I'm doing something useful."</i> <i>"My husband sometimes comes and asks me for money, so now I have more power, he has to respect me if he wants my money."</i>	
Goal	Run financially sustainable MiniPrix store <sup>a</sup>	Projected annual sales of \$72K per Mini Prix.	Based on the margins information that was accessible to TechnoServe, and considering that sales are higher than margins, the result was achieved.  The total margins of the 10 stores operational in 2015 when TechnoServe was actively training participants is \$70,214 between January and December 2015.	^
		60 jobs created.	54 women have been employed in a MiniPrix boutique since the project began. After the closures of 5 boutiques, 39 are currently employed. Jobs for 21 additional women are likely to be achieved before the end of the project.	^
Outcome	Apply good management practices	Participants adopt skills such as sales, marketing, business planning, stock management and bookkeeping.	There is qualitative evidence that among those women that have participated in the project for the longest time there is an increased knowledge of sales, marketing, business management, stock management, and/or bookkeeping. <i>"When you work for a shop they usually only have you do one specific task, while as a MiniPrix manager I really had to get the hand of a whole enterprise; now I'm sure I would be able to run a shop totally of my own, if I can get to save enough money for that."</i> (Louise, MiniPrix manager). However, project partners evaluate that adoption of skills is below expected. However, there was no quantitative evidence available to evaluate skills adoption.	
		\$ 86.4K in annual salaries paid to 60 vulnerable women.	Although usually a goal indicator, in this project salaries are part of the management practices, since they are self-paid as an advance, independent from the profits. The project has achieved the internal target of salary per woman, but overall salaries are low because of the low number of participants, affected by Prosuma's delay in opening shops. Until December 2015, \$32,436 were paid as salaries to 30 women. It's uncertain if the project will reach the original target during the time remaining until the official end of the project (September 2016).	^
	Develop entrepreneurial spirit	*	Qualitative evidence from interviews with individuals and focus groups showed that participants active in the program for at least a year were developing an increased entrepreneurial attitude. This output was not measured among all participants, however, making results inconclusive.	
Output	Establish shop	20 Mini Prix set up and operational.	18 boutiques have been opened, 5 of which later closed. 13 are operational in March 2016. It is unclear if the project will open all 20 shops by the time the project ends.	^



	Learn record keeping, marketing, and stock management	*	After the training on business management, staff conducted an assessment to evaluate participants' level of comprehension of new concepts. 100% received a 10/20 or higher. Interviews with participants found qualitative evidence to indicate that participants have learned record keeping, marketing, and stock management effectively enough to implement these skills in practice.	
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\* There was no indicator defined in the initial design of the project for this result, but the study found that it was a key aspect of the theory of change as implemented

^These results are at least partially beyond TechnoServe's control.



## Lessons Learned and Areas for Improvement

The following are actionable suggestions for improvement that were gathered from participants, TNS staff and Prosuma, as well as from direct observation in the field. These were also considered from the perspective of the entrepreneurship model that states that successful businesses require a combination of an entrepreneur, an opportunity and resources. These are summarized in the chart below and then detailed further in the remainder of the section.

These actions were not formally implemented so far, but the project team is negotiating with Prosuma to incorporate them in future cycles of the project. It is important to note that in the case of this specific project, improvements need to be coordinated with Prosuma.

Problem/Opportunity	Actions
Entrepreneurial attitude is a key to achieve profitable businesses, and Prosuma indicated that it was hard to develop it.	Select participants based on attitude and further develop attitude through training and coaching.
Some participants lack the minimum skills necessary to benefit from the training.	Develop a new test to prequalify candidates and select after an initial training. Select participants after an initial training that will screen for minimum skills and attitude necessary to succeed in the project.
Participants did not feel full ownership of their stores, affecting their competitiveness and motivation.	Consider a pathway to autonomy for the businesses managers in the new curriculum: increase autonomy while improving management abilities.
Most relevant skills to be transferred were not necessarily clear from the beginning of the project.	After the first cycle of the pilot, the most relevant skills to be transferred are clearer, and they will be included in the new curriculum
If participants have to wait several months after being trained to apply the skills in their shops, they forget what they learned.	Include a trainee stage: offer opportunities for on-the-job training in successful MiniPrix stores prior to opening own shops.
M&E managed in silos between TNS and Prosuma made it challenging for staff to make informed, data-driven decisions.	Build a fully integrated monitoring system that ensures communication and coordination between partners.



Participants stand outside of their MiniPrix store

**Select participants based on attitude and further develop attitude through training and coaching.**

Interviews indicated that one of the biggest challenges in implementing the project successfully is the development of an entrepreneurial attitude among project participants. To address this the project must take a multi-tiered approach. First, staff and partners are discussing ways to better select participants based on their attitude. A key aspect of this going forward will be to implement an initial training that will serve as a point at which to screen for women with the right attitude to succeed in the project. Another important related aspect is that project staff have noted that women are most successful when they are able to form their own groups of three, rather than be placed in a group. During the project, staff are supporting the development of an entrepreneurial attitude through coaching sessions. Finally, it is important to note that, interviews with participants who had been involved in the MiniPrix the longest revealed a higher incidence of entrepreneurial thinking, indicating

that a change in perspective to more entrepreneurial thinking is something that comes with time and experience.

**Develop a new test to prequalify candidates and select after an initial training. Select participants after an initial training that will screen for minimum skills and attitude necessary to succeed in the project.**

Stakeholders agree that the test used during the selection process to measure basic school math skills is not adequate. School math is very different from the kind of business math needed to succeed in the project, and the ability to interpret basic math in a business context is essential to success in the project but was not tested for during the selection process. A new test that measures the right math ability would contribute to pre-select candidates with the minimum skills to benefit from the training. Going forward, since changing the test is not under the control of TechnoServe, the team plans to move away from testing and instead include an initial training that works as a selection stage, identifying during the session which the participants have the minimum required skills.

**Consider a pathway to autonomy for the businesses managers in the new curriculum: increase autonomy while improving management abilities.**

During the selection process, women were motivated to become self-employed shop owners. However, many participants indicated in interviews that they did not feel full ownership of their stores. Currently, Prosuma maintains control over key business decisions such as price points and product ranges in order to maintain the Prosuma brand and expectations of customers, and also about key processes such as financial statements. In some cases, this has had the unintended consequence of making it difficult for MiniPrix shops to respond to the local market, making shops less competitive than other stores their immediate vicinity. Also, this structure did not meet the expectations that the project created among participants.



Adjoua, a participant in the project, stands behind the cash register in her store

To address this, a new project curriculum that TechnoServe is developing considers a pathway to autonomy for the businesses managers that would increase as they improve their management abilities. Staff are discussing the implementation of an initial training component that introduces to applicants to what it means to run a boutique and sets clear expectations about the challenges that will likely come with the project. Also, the new curriculum will allow them to make better management decisions that today are not under their control. As an example, TNS team believes that the participants should be able to take over the accounting from

Prosuma. Staff hope that through this process, as participants are given the opportunity to take more ownership of their businesses along the project, they will increase their chances of becoming economically independent and increasingly better off. Ultimately, this would support the project's goal of supporting participants to run a financially sustainable MiniPrix store.

## Louise's Story

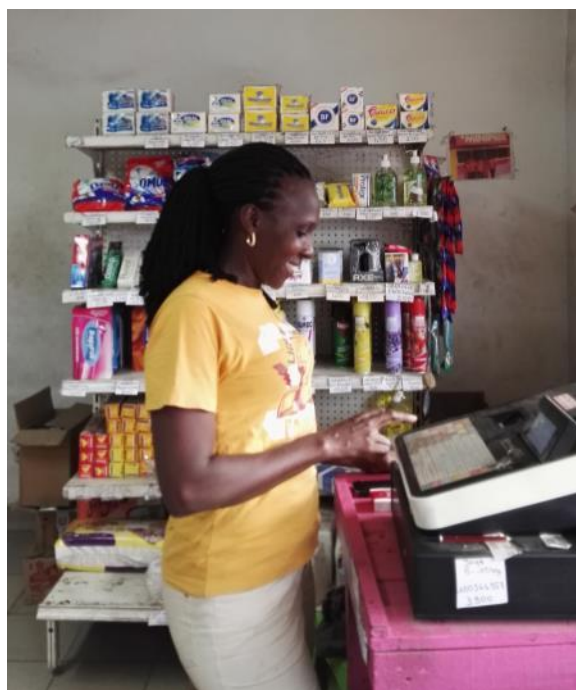
Louise smiles from behind the cash register in her MiniPrix store. This is a very different picture from her life two years ago before the MiniPrix project.

Louise enjoys learning by doing, and appreciates the fact that managing a shop allows her to wear a number of hats. "This is not an opportunity that you always get, even if you can go and work for a shop they usually only have you do one specific task, while as a MiniPrix manager I really get to get the hand of a whole enterprise," she said.

Louise and her partners have demonstrated their capacity to run a business. Their boutique is the most profitable store in the MiniPrix program, with margins of almost \$15000 a year and final profits high enough that last July Louise and her two co-managers were able to pay themselves their own salaries. The three women make \$130 each per month, more than twice the minimum wage. They were the first of all the MiniPrix shops to be able to pay themselves a salary and are therefore an important example to their fellow participants.

Above all, managing her store gives her something valuable to do, which has made Louise feel empowered and respected in her community.

See full story at the end of this chapter



**After the first cycle of the pilot, the most relevant skills to be transferred are clearer, and they will be included in the new curriculum**

Because the project was piloting a new approach to employment development, and because it involved a new partnership between TechnoServe and Prosuma, the specific skills needed to achieve project

goals were not necessarily clear from the beginning. Despite this, the project has made progress with skills transfer, particularly among those who had been in the project the longest. Additionally, due to lessons learned from the first year of the pilot, the project team gained a clearer picture of the skills that are more effective to develop successful shops. Specifically, the team has come to understand that the skills taught in training and coaching should be practical and directly applicable to what participants need to run their stores. These skills include business math, stock management, bookkeeping and cash management in accordance with Prosuma's systems. The team is working on a plan to combine the MiniPrix experience with other successful projects in TechnoServe and develop a new curriculum and set of tools for business advisory.

**Include a trainee stage: offer opportunities for on-the-job training in successful MiniPrix stores prior to opening own shops.**

Some participants have had to wait several months after being trained to apply the skills in their own shops due to the time it has taken to find a space to rent. This created a challenge, since they frequently forgot what they learned several months prior. To address this, some participants have begun to work as trainees in MiniPrix stores run by other members of the project, providing an on-the-job training opportunity, prior to opening their own shop. Interviews with staff indicate that this has been a successful solution and allows new participants to put new skills into practice, learn from more experienced peers, and have the chance to interact with women who have been successful in the project. This formula of receiving group training plus on-the-job training is supported by past experience in TechnoServe projects as an effective way to transfer skills and reduce the learning curve.

Additionally, the project might split the group training in several stages, gradually building skills as participants build experience in other's stores or their own. By actively engaging in business before receiving training in more complex skills such as bookkeeping, participants would have a better idea of how to apply the skills they learn and the purpose the skills serve.

**Build a fully integrated monitoring system that ensures communication and coordination between partners**

Currently, results are measured in separate silos: Prosuma measures financial results while TechnoServe measures training results. Interviews with staff and with Prosuma indicated that this makes it challenging to monitor all aspects of the project, reducing the capacity for staff to make informed, data-driven decisions about the project. Going forward, ownership of information needs to be clearly identified, and then shared with the other partner. Following best practices in TechnoServe, the project would also benefit from measuring incremental revenues, adoption of skills and best practices quantitatively. This will facilitate evidence-based decisions to achieve operational and sustainable boutiques.

## Next Steps

TechnoServe is holding conversations with Prosuma to include the learnings that both organizations experienced during the first pilot cycle, and are negotiating the continuity and eventual scale-up of the partnership. In the event that TechnoServe and Prosuma decide to scale up the project, the project's theory of change and logical framework should be reviewed. With more ambitious goals and objectives, the market and business environment should be analyzed at a macro level. Specific activities can then be adjusted to feed into these goals, considering cultural and market constraints that come with a higher scale.



## Conclusion

Microfranchising is a relatively new approach to promoting entrepreneurship among vulnerable populations in the developing world. This pilot of the MiniPrix project has provided evidence of success and lessons learned that can create the foundation for future successful versions of the project using a microfranchise model. Prosuma has an ambitious goal of scaling the project significantly in the future to thousands of microfranchise storefronts across Cote d'Ivoire. After incorporating some adjustments that the pilot and study suggest, the project has potential to continue supporting participants as they embark on what is a very new process of becoming workforce entrants, making a significant contribution to women's empowerment and economic independence.

## Louise's story



A competitor shop has opened just opened next door to Louise's corner store, but Louise is not in the least worried about it, because she understands her customers and her market. "I make cheap prices, that's why they come to me," she said with a grin.

This is a very different picture from her life two years ago. Together with 48 other vulnerable girls from poor districts around Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, Louise was offered the chance to make a job for herself from the MiniPrix project, a joint initiative between Prosuma,

Cote d'Ivoire's largest distributor, and TechnoServe. The program supports young women like Louise to become entrepreneurs by providing groups of three women with a furnished microfranchised boutique as well as a loan to get started. Participants also receive training in the basics of shopkeeping, including stock management, marketing, and bookkeeping.

Louise and her partners have demonstrated their capacity to run a business. Their boutique is the most profitable store in the MiniPrix program, with margins of almost \$15000 a year and final profits high enough that last July Louise and her two co-managers were able to pay themselves their own salaries. The three women make \$130 each per month, more than twice the minimum wage. They were the first of all the MiniPrix shops to be able to pay themselves a salary and are therefore an important example to their fellow participants.

Louise has grown considerably as an entrepreneur from the practical experience of managing a shop and from the periodic coaching she has received from TechnoServe. Louise enjoys learning by doing, and appreciates the fact that managing a shop allows her to wear a number of hats. "This is not an opportunity that you always get, even if you can go and work for a shop they usually only have you do one specific task, while as a MiniPrix manager I really get to get the hand of a whole enterprise," she said. Above all, managing her store gives her something valuable to do, which, for a woman in the poorest district in Abidjan, means stepping up from being "no one" to being a respected member of the community.



**TECHNOSERVE**

## Adjoua's story

### A STORE OF THEIR OWN IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Adjoua runs her shop like an expert. She helps customers purchase what they need, re-stocks and maintains order, and keeps track of her business expenses with precision. This image of professionalism is a far cry from where she was two years ago, when she had no idea how to check the expiration date on a can of fruit, let how to use a cash register. Coming from a poor neighborhood in country where 46% of the population lives in poverty, Adjoua did not entertain many hopes for her future. The MiniPrix project has changed that.



Finding employment in Côte d'Ivoire is a considerable challenge for young women like Adjoua. The country's economy – though improving slowly – still does not provide enough jobs. Additionally, many women lack formal training and skills, have low levels of education, and must contend with responsibilities at home. Entrepreneurship is one viable solution to these issues as it provides both an alternative route to employment as well as a means to learn new skills and gain experience.

However, entrepreneurship can be challenging under the best circumstances, and much more so for individuals like Adjoua who lack the knowledge and abilities to identify, assess, and capture market opportunities. To address this, TechnoServe, with funding from Citi Foundation, together with Prosuma, Côte d'Ivoire's largest distributor, is implementing the MiniPrix project, a microfranchise program that aims to provide young, low-income women with opportunities for self-employment. Like her fellow participants in the MiniPrix project, Adjoua came to the program with no previous formal work experience. The program supplied her with a furnished boutique as well as a loan to get started. She also received training from TechnoServe in the basics of shopkeeping, including stock management, marketing, and bookkeeping.



**TECHNOSERVE**

Adjoua manages her shop with two other women who are also participants in the MiniPrix project. Together, the three women have developed a successful business that produces margins of roughly \$1,000 per month, which allows each of them to receive a monthly salary of more than \$130, more than two times the minimum wage for the country. Their salaries have grown steadily since they began their shop, almost doubling from the previous year.

While Adjoua's shop is doing well now, her journey to success has not been easy. Like most girls in the MiniPrix program, she and her co-managers experienced financial and operational challenges at the beginning of the project. But for Adjoua the experience has been mostly positive. She is always busy, constantly tending to new customers who come to her store to buy anything from a few small items to entire boxes full of goods. She addresses each customer with kindness and attentiveness and demonstrates an understanding of her customer's various contexts, traits that have helped her to build a loyal customer base. Adjoua has been sure to integrate her training in financial record keeping into her management practices. After each purchase, she diligently records everything in her cash register and keeps everything ordered and clean. Her bookkeeping has become increasingly more precise and she has been able to reduce stock loss.

While Adjoua is happy about the success her shop has experienced, she's not content. She realizes that her shop needs more space to grow, and together with her business partners she already has plans for expansion. The three women are currently devising a financial plan to present to Prosuma for expansion, and they have already received the enthusiastic approval of their landlord.

Outside, the district is still poor and almost forgotten in a city striving for development but plagued with social unrest, economic instability, and long-term unemployment. But inside the MiniPrix, Adjoua and her business partners feel that they now have a place of their own and hope for a better future.





# South Africa: Accelerating Women and Youth Enterprises in South African Metros (AWESAM)

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## The Need



Tumi Mphele, who started a cosmetics company, in her workshop

Finding a job in South Africa can be a considerable challenge. At the end of 2015, a quarter of the country's 36 million people of working age were unemployed<sup>21</sup>. Women and young people are more likely than men to suffer from unemployment, and black women and young people fare worst of all. Increasingly, many people faced with unemployment are taking control of their situation by starting their own businesses. Unemployment levels have declined each year since 2009, in part because people are becoming more entrepreneurial. In 2013, 1.5 million people ran a small business in South Africa, an increase from 1.1 million in 2009<sup>1</sup>. Many of these new business grew out of necessity and were started informally. Business owners, particularly those from low-income segments of the population and those with no previous business training, face major challenges professionalizing, growing, and sustaining their businesses. Typical roadblocks include underdeveloped business processes such as accounting and record keeping, lack of managerial capabilities and difficulty accessing capital and markets.

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<sup>21</sup> Statistics South Africa



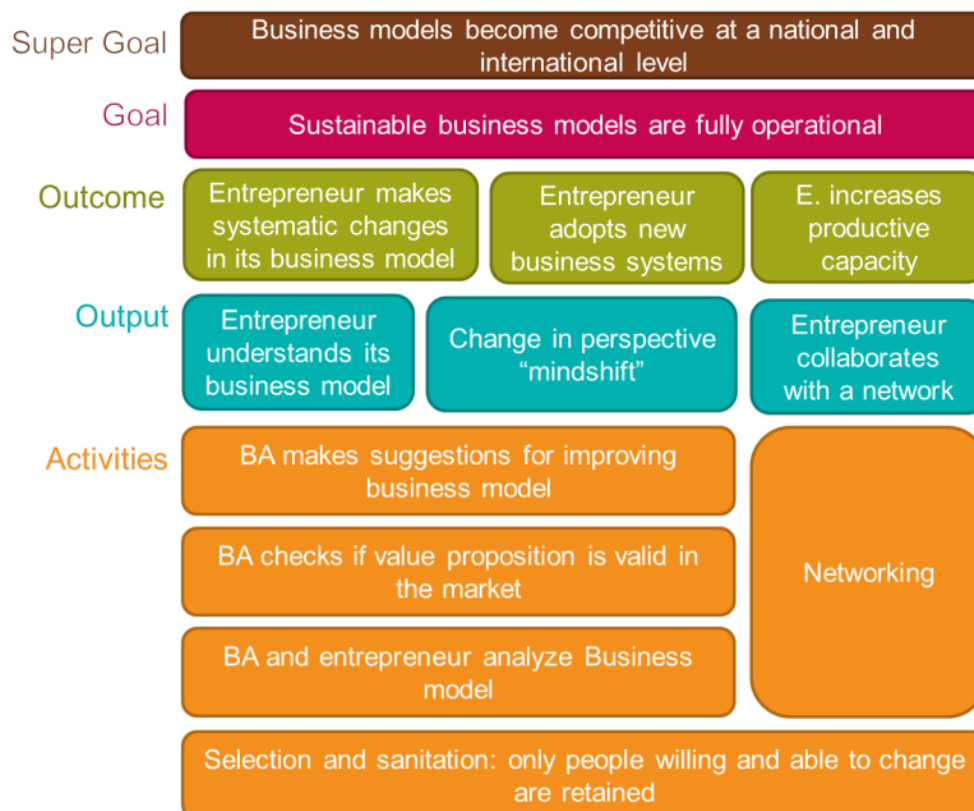
## Theory of Change

Aiming to increase the economic participation of urban women and youth in the South African economy, and particularly to increase the incidence of high-growth businesses, TechnoServe began implementing the Accelerating Urban Women and Youth Entrepreneurship in South African Metros (AWESAM) project in 2013. This report focuses on the results and lessons learned from the second cycle of the project, called AWESAM II, implemented in 2015.

The project's goal is to develop enterprises run by women and youth into fully operational sustainable business models, and ultimately, enable them to compete on a national and international level.

The project's theory of change, as implemented, is synthesized as follows:

**FIGURE 9: THEORY OF CHANGE, AWESAM**



Selection criteria evolved along with the program, but came to include certain basic requirements necessary to take advantage of the training:

- Women (of any age) and men under 35
- Knowledge of basic business math and literacy, capacity for critical thinking

- An entrepreneurial attitude and the motivation to start and grow a business.
- The business must be registered and operational for at least 6 months, with monthly sales between 2.000 USD and 10.000 USD.
- Sector: Although this was not a key criteria in the initial stages, it became a factor over the course of the program as later phases (AWESAM III: the BoxShop) focused on specific industries including clothing & fashion, accessories, cosmetics, furniture and food.

To seek out businesses that fit the desired profile, staff performed headhunting through the use of external databases and peers.

AWESAM II employs a “fail fast and fail early” approach. After a first selection of participants, the project maintains only those that demonstrate the commitment and capacity to implement changes required to run competitive businesses. The project refers to this practice as “forced attrition” and designed it into its approach as a way to focus on supporting entrepreneurs who genuinely want advisory. Those entrepreneurs that repeatedly fail to comply with scheduled meetings, tasks, and commitments, are dropped from the program.

The core of the program is executed through customized business advisory sessions, employing a strong partnership approach. TechnoServe staff use the business model canvas – an approach that aims to describe, challenge, re-design, and pivot a business model – to analyze each business and provide the entrepreneur with a deeper understanding of their enterprise as well as with areas in need of improvement. As a team of former entrepreneurs, the business advisors cover a range of areas of expertise including marketing, accounting, business planning, information technology, and relationship-building. These skills are leveraged to complement each other in order to find holistic solutions to issues presented by beneficiaries.

After understanding their business model and its potential, entrepreneurs are expected to gain a change in perspective, or “mindshift” after the experience. These new skills and mindset should enable them to make systematic changes to their business model, adopt new business systems and increase their productive capacity. In parallel, participating businesses are also able to collaborate with a broader network. In some cases, AWESAM connected entrepreneurs with other entrepreneurs, and with incubators to provide support such as workspace, resources, and collaborative opportunities. AWESAM also provided access to resources internally and tools to access resources externally.

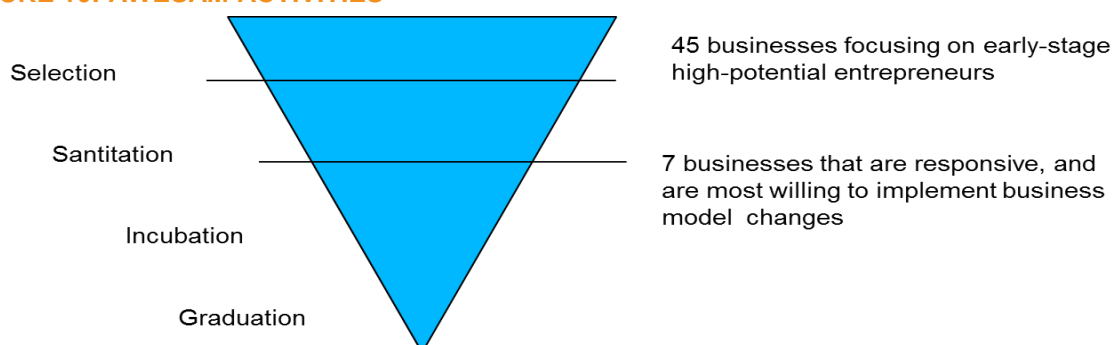


Cavin, a participant in the AWESAM program, works in his metal casting studio

## Project Implementation

AWESAM II was implemented between August 2014 and September 2015. The main activities executed by the project's team include selection, sanitation (or due diligence) and incubation, and their main characteristics are described in the following section.

**FIGURE 10: AWESAM ACTIVITIES**



**Selection and sanitation:** After selecting the initial group of 45 participants, the project started the process of validating business plans. Advisors then worked one-on-one with participating businesses for an average 8 hours per week to address issues that were identified through the business model canvas. After four months, 7 candidates who implemented recommendations

derived from the business model canvas and demonstrated appropriate characteristics advanced to the incubation process. The remaining 38 candidates were removed from the program.



An entrepreneur who received business advisory from the AWESAM program for his youth magazine business

**Incubation:** During the incubation phase, 7 entrepreneurs continued to receive approximately 8 hours of individualized business advisory. The TechnoServe team met frequently to discuss and compare problems and solutions. Additionally, staff helped participants improve business presentations for accessing to finance. Four of the seven final participants received access to finance in the form of small grants from TechnoServe, to a total of \$2,714 (R 39,500), used mainly for inventory or stock acquisition and marketing.

During AWESAM II, the incubation stage also involved efforts to professionalize businesses through bookkeeping support. This was conducted by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA). SAICA managed bookkeeping through an online system and required that entrepreneurs provide all bank balance sheets, sales receipts and other financial documents. This partnership proved to be a challenge due to the informal nature of many participating businesses: entrepreneurs struggled to provide the necessary documents in the format and time period required by SAICA, and SAICA did not account for inventory, which resulted in a mismatch in statements.

## Results

The qualitative approach of this study provided evidence to the achievement of some of the expected results among the group of 7 entrepreneurs that were incubated. However, there was not enough information to measure results quantitatively against most indicators that had been proposed at the start of the project.

The program experienced challenges documenting financial figures from participants and other expected business metrics.

Regarding financial information, many participants were not responsive to requests for data submission, which in the majority of cases resulted in their being dropped from the program.

Others submitted only sporadic information. As a result, revenues are available as monthly averages before and after the project, multiplied by 12 to convert to annual figures.

#### Financial

benefit data corresponds to the six individuals who completed the entirety of AWESAM II and submitted financial information. All 6 businesses that reported data had an increase in their revenues: increased annual sales are estimated in \$ 125,620.39 in total.

Regarding the adoption of new business practices, interviewed participants had used the business model canvas and advice of their business advisor to improve practices in finance, operations and or marketing.

Results Summary <sup>22</sup>	
Direct participants	45
Drop outs or removed from the program	38
Final participants (graduates)	7
Drop-out rate	84%
Total beneficiaries (with increased financial benefits)	6
Total Grant Amount	\$199,500
Cost per participant	\$ 4,433.33
Cost per beneficiary	\$ 33,250.00
Increased Sales during the project (benefit)	\$ 125,620.39
Average Sales Increase per beneficiary	\$ 20,936.73
Benefit/Cost	0.6

- *"[They helped me with] managing finances, I used to spend like crazy (on the business), now I'm more careful...I grew my business, and reached new markets... they helped with that, it's given me a broader perspective." (Participant, focus group)*

However, there is some evidence of reliance on TNS for some financial practices.

- *"I have a reasonable knowledge of what has to be done. I know the financial planning, but the other stuff like bookkeeping I can't do myself so if they have to stop I wouldn't be able to do myself. I do worry about that." (Participant, focus group)*

Beyond expected results, the most significant change after participating in the project, according to incubated participants when interviewed both individually and in focus groups, was a change in mindset towards more entrepreneurial and broader business thinking.

- *"Before I thought only about how much can I make today, now it is where do I want the business to be, what do I want to achieve." (Participant, focus group)*

## Results Chart

The following chart details the achievements of the project, based on evidence gathered during the study. Results are measured against indicators submitted to Citi Foundation at the beginning

<sup>22</sup> Exchange rate of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016: 1 USD = 14,91 RAND



of the project, as well as some indicators that were developed during the implementation of the project, and against objectives related to the Theory of Change.

	Objective	Indicator	Achieved Results, based on evidence	
<b>Super Goal</b>	Business models become competitive at a national and international level	There was no indicator defined in the initial design of the project, but the study found that it was a key aspect of the theory of change as implemented	Not expected to be achieved at this time.	
<b>Goal</b>	Sustainable business models are fully operational	15 Businesses will improve their revenues	There are records of 6 of the 7 businesses that were maintained through the duration of AWESAM II; all of them reported an increase in their revenues. The information was self-reported as a monthly income average before and after the project, and then converted to a yearly average. The project has no process in place to verify reported figures.	
		15 Businesses will improve their gross margins	The team did not collect any information on margins because of challenges in obtaining reliable and complete cost data from the entrepreneurs	
<b>Outcome</b>	Entrepreneurs make systematic changes in their business model	30 Businesses will develop at least one new business element (Product/Service offering, Distribution or client acquisition channel, customers)	Focus groups of project participants revealed qualitative evidence of skills transfer related to their business models. Interviewed participants had used the business model canvas and advice of their business advisor to either develop new products, new ways of manufacturing, and/or new marketing campaigns to reach new customer segments. However, there is no quantitative evidence of all project participants, and it was not possible to interview attrited participants during the study.	
	Entrepreneur adopts new business systems	30 Businesses will adopt at least one new and relevant business practice (Operations, Finance, Customer Development)	Focus groups of project participants revealed some qualitative evidence of the adoption of new business systems. However, they also showed evidence of reliance on TechnoServe for bookkeeping support. <i>"[They helped me with] managing finances, I used to spend like crazy (on the business), now I'm more careful...I grew my business, and reached new markets... they helped with that, it's given me a broader perspective."</i> <i>"I have a reasonable knowledge of what has to be done. I know the financial planning, but the other stuff like bookkeeping I can't do myself so if they have to stop I wouldn't be able to do myself. I do worry about that."</i> <i>"My worry is not about the money stuff but about having the understanding when it comes to finances. What it means when I'm looking at a financial statement."</i> However, there is no quantitative evidence of all project participants, and it was not possible to interview attrited participants during the study.	
	Entrepreneur increases productive capacity	8 Businesses will increase their productive capacity.	Increasing productive capacity is part of the changes expected during incubation, where 7 businesses participated. Some businesses visited during the study might have increased their capacity because of the project. However, there are no quantitative measures of it.	

Output	Entrepreneur collaborates with a broader network	20 Business will find new partners (e.g. Product distribution partners, Customer acquisition partners, Stock supply partners, or Production partners)	While quantitative records of this output are not available, individual interviews and focus groups with project participants provide qualitative evidence of relationships created among participants and of new partnerships with external partners such as incubators, suppliers, and manufacturing partners: <i>"The project opened up businesses to new areas, new markets, collaborate with other artists."</i> ; <i>"We came up with an idea that was just out of the box and we never thought it was going to be implemented but sitting around here we talked about doing packages for cosmetics and we ended up meeting collaborating."</i> However, there is no quantitative evidence of all project participants, and it was not possible to interview attrited participants during the study.	
	Entrepreneur understands business model	45 Businesses will have a better understanding of their business systems (Operations, Finance, Customer Development, Compliance and Legal)	While quantitative data measuring this output was not available, interviews and focus groups with graduated participants show some qualitative evidence of understanding of some business systems: <i>"They help you understand yourself as a Brand, not just a company, to redefine a logo to make sure it's in line with what you're trying to sell"</i> ; However, there is no quantitative evidence of all project participants, and it was not possible to interview attrited participants during the study.	
	Change in perspective ("mindshift"); entrepreneur is more aware and responsive to opportunities	There was no indicator defined in the initial design of the project, but the study found that it was a key aspect of the theory of change as implemented	There is qualitative evidence of a change in perspective. The research found that this was a major accomplishment of the program. <i>"Before I thought only about how much can I make today, now it is where do I want the business to be, what do I want to achieve."</i> <i>"For me one thing I've learned is that it is taking these things and implementing them on a practical daily basis. I always thought that to reach those goals you had to have huge sums of money but now I'm finding the cheapest and least expensive way to reach those goals. It's about management of time and funds."</i>	



## Lessons Learned

Lessons learned were extracted by comparing the results of the project with the project's design and implementation. These were also considered from the perspective of the entrepreneurship model that states that successful businesses require a combination of an entrepreneur, an opportunity and resources. These are summarized in the chart below and then detailed further in the remainder of the section.

Problem/Opportunity	Actions Taken
In order to grow, early stage entrepreneurs need to pursue a validated business opportunity	Using Business Model Canvas: a useful tool to validate demand and make changes to the model.
Subsistence-based attitude is a barrier to competitiveness	Change the perspective of entrepreneurs to a professional growth-oriented attitude

### Using Business Model Canvas: a useful tool to validate demand and make changes to the model

Interviews with program staff found that a key problem that AWESAM aimed to address was the need for early stage entrepreneurs to systematically pursue a validated demand. To address this, advisory focused in large part on validating business models using the business model canvas, which has been used successfully by multiple previous



AWESAM II participants meet for a focus group interview

TechnoServe programs. Beneficiaries indicated in interviews that the business model canvas was useful to them, allowing them to better understand their own business, assess their market, and validate opportunities. The adoption of this framework for making systematic changes to the business model has proven to be effective, to the point that even an entrepreneur

pinned the business model canvas to his wall and he frequently uses it to understand its business and to make changes to it.

### Change the perspective of entrepreneurs to a professional growth-oriented attitude

One of the main elements of the theory of change of the project is that early-stage entrepreneurs in South Africa need a change in perspective, or “mindshift” from subsistence-based to professional growth-oriented attitude, in order to be competitive. Participants indicated in interviews that the advisory they received through AWESAM changed their perspective in two key areas. First, they became able to see new opportunities, and second they came to understand the value of professionalizing their business.

For Josef Moahale, a 33-year-old entrepreneur who works in the cosmetics and fragrance industry, this means being forced to leave the “*comfort zone*”. While this is difficult at times, he said, it also means that he can grow more than before, which is ultimately what it means to be an entrepreneur. For Ann, a fashion designer the program helped diversify her client base and be seen as a professional by partners. “*They gave me a professional perspective. I understand that if I sell my clothing in many ways and to many shops people get familiar with it*”, she said. For Kevin, an entrepreneur involved in metal casting, the change in perspective has been an essential part of the program: “*If you want to expand you need to look at the big picture and other markets. Otherwise you would just realize when you’re sixty than you’d never get there*”, he said. The staff firmly believes that this change in perspective is essential for participants if they are to get “*to the next level*”, which means to become competitive at a national and international level.

## Areas for Improvement

The following are actionable suggestions for improvement that were gathered from project participants as well as from discussions with project’s team. Although these are actions that were not implemented, project team agrees that they would incorporate them in future version of the project to further increase effectiveness and efficiency.

Problem/Opportunity	Actions Suggested
The program was more effective with established businesses than with startups	Work with existing businesses rather than start-ups
Entrepreneurs lack a peer support system while facing the many challenges of business growth	Providing group sessions as opportunities for collaboration between entrepreneurs, in addition to personalized business advisory, enables a peer-to-peer support system



Entrepreneurs express reliance on their business advisor to make changes to business models	Build capacity to ensure that skills are transferred and can be sustained
In order to improve the incubation methodology, data about behavior changes and skills development is needed	Improve monitoring of behavior changes and skills development, including achievable targets in the timeframe of the project

### **Working with existing businesses rather than start-ups**

The number of businesses that actually graduate is higher among existing businesses rather than start-up businesses. While 48% of the businesses that were recruited were start-ups, only 14% of the businesses that graduated were start-ups. From the project team's perspective, this may have been the result of three issues:

- Existing entrepreneurs had higher entrepreneurial stamina than start-up entrepreneurs, and tended to be more resourceful, solution driven, street savvy, and innovative. As such they had more staying power.
- The businesses ideas of existing businesses tended to be more realistic and evolved than start-up entrepreneurs. The validation changes need by these businesses were fewer.
- Start-up entrepreneurs seemed more preoccupied with their resource scarcity than established businesses. Accordingly, the existing businesses worked with their existing resources while the start-ups were paralysed by they failure to find resources for their ventures.

The project team therefore plans to focus future cycles on existing businesses rather than start-ups.

### **Providing group sessions as opportunities for collaboration between entrepreneurs, in addition to personalized business advisory, enables a peer-to-peer support system**

A key of the value added to entrepreneurs during AWESAM was the customized one-on-one support provided by the business advisor, not only because of the business development services, but also because of the personal relationship that it implies: entrepreneurs need a support system while facing the many challenges of business growth. Beyond that, AWESAM II connected entrepreneurs among them. Participants report that relationships with others going through similar experiences provided opportunities to share knowledge and experiences that prove critical to business development.

Because of the value in peer-to-peer knowledge sharing among entrepreneurs, project staff have decided that in future versions of the project they will specialize in certain specific sectors, in order to provide entrepreneurs with even more specialized cohorts. Staff are also planning to implement group advisory sessions so that entrepreneurs had more opportunities to connect with each other and receive feedback from an adviser knowledgeable in their sector.

### **Build capacity to ensure that skills are transferred and can be sustained**

Interviews with participants revealed that in some cases, participants felt that they lacked the skills to be able to sustain some of the changes made to their business models or to make decisions independently in the future. From this perspective, reliance on their business advisor poses challenges to the project's long-term impacts.

As an example, while the program has taught participants how to prepare and file financial documents, the use of financial statements is seen as a challenge by most incubated entrepreneurs. The decision to put a focus on the end result of having financial statements prepared by a company hired by the project was made as part of the effort to professionalize the businesses, as the majority going in did not have accounting systems and therefore were not prepared to apply for external funding, partner with large organizations, or grow at the desired pace. It was recognized through the research and by the project team that it is important for the entrepreneurs to have a plan for how to have accounting done for them without the support of AWESAM once the project is over. After discussions with staff and beneficiaries, capacity building methodologies need to be



improved to ensure that the good work implemented by the project can be sustained long after the project is done.

### **Improve monitoring of behavior changes and skills development, including achievable targets in the timeframe of the project**

The project faced challenges in measuring outcomes. In order to improve the incubation methodology, it is important to measure indicators of the increased ability to apply new skills. AWESAM II monitored advisory sessions using CommCare, an Android application, where each advisor submitted the number of hours of advisory per entrepreneur, topics discussed during their meetings, as well as the proposed solution. While this information was considered useful, additional data about behavior changes and skills development is needed.

The project team could define a timeframe for achieving results in terms of behavior changes and skills acquisition, set achievable targets, and monitor changes during the project. This information would help project manager and staff to make informed decisions about course correction if needed, and contribute to fine tuning the theory of change, and in so doing increase the project's effectiveness.

## **Next Steps**

Project staff sees potential for scale-up and have already begun to implement the next stage of AWESAM. One key aspect to consider in activities that scale the project up to more beneficiaries is cost per participant, which under AWESAM II was \$4,333. Incorporating the above recommendations can help to reduce this figure, and other activities can be integrated, such as group trainings paired with one-on-one coaching.

For the next stage of the project, the project is making a shift in its approach. The team's diagnosis is that AWESAM is operating in a heavily saturated market where training opportunities are numerous but rarely sufficient to unlock the real needs of small businesses. Additionally, many entrepreneurs expressed fatigue from excessive training options. Rather than another training, what they really wanted was support to access the major industry players. To address this, the program shifted its focus in 2016 to AWESAM III, or the "Boxshop", an incubator that has as its core a chain of stores. The shop will sell clothing, accessories, cosmetics, furniture, and food products from local entrepreneurs active in the Boxshop program. The products to be sold in the store are selected or, in some cases, designed, with the support of program staff. Program staff also assist entrepreneurs with supply chain logistics in order for them to produce at the scale required of the shop.

The aim of the Boxshop is to both grow the customer base of participating businesses and to demonstrate their brand potential and ability to meet the market demand. Ultimately,

the Boxshop seeks to make local producers visible and demonstrate to retailers that they are viable businesses to work with. TechnoServe supported the 7 remaining participants of AWESAM II and recruited other 15 businesses with the potential for considerable scale-up to participate in AWESAM III.

The first Boxshop storefront opened in April 2016 in Soweto, a hugely important neighborhood that symbolizes the growth of lower-income and disenfranchised South Africans. The plan is to take a portion of sales from products sold in the stores and use it to hire bookkeepers and other staff to sustain the project. The ultimate goal of the program is to scale it up to 10 shops in the next 3-4 years. The program has received interest and from the government and has met with government officials to discuss the project. Citi officials attended the opening of the Boxshop together with the United States ambassador and indicated interest in continuing to support the project.

## Conclusion

AWESAM II provided valuable lessons about how to implement an incubator project that seeks to build competitive businesses. Business model canvas was useful to validate demand and make changes to the model of graduate businesses. Also, the project enabled a change in the perspective of entrepreneurs to a more professional growth-oriented attitude. Based on the evidence, validating business models could open up new ways to increase employability through business development. The team identified also some areas for improvement that can contribute to fine tune the incubation methodology, such as the target group, balancing individual and group approaches, improving capacity building methodologies and measuring knowledge and capacity transfer. To conclude, AWESAM II provides lessons that can be recommended for practitioners in the incubation industry to develop competitive businesses that can contribute to close employability gaps.

## Tumi's Story



When Tumi Mphahlele's couldn't find lotions to use on her own highly sensitive skin, she decided to use her passion for biochemistry, honed in high school, to develop a product herself. Tumi was so thrilled with the product she developed that she continued at full speed to launch and market Ardhi Cosmetics, a line of all natural skincare products, in 2013. But Tumi soon found that starting and scaling a business is no easy task.

In South Africa, there are 1.5 million people running small businesses, figure that has steadily risen over the past decade. Like Tumi, many of these people start their businesses out of necessity. Of the 36 million people of working age in South

Africa today, nearly a quarter are unemployed. But Tumi and her fellow South Africans are turning things around. Unemployment levels have declined each year since 2009, in large part because people are becoming more entrepreneurial and starting their own businesses.

As Tumi has found, starting your own business isn't always easy. New business owners face a number of challenges including difficulty accessing capital, challenges accessing markets, a underdeveloped business skills such as accounting.

To address this issue, Tumi enrolled in TechnoServe South Africa's AWESAM program, and was matched with a business advisor. Together, Tumi and her advisor mapped her challenges using the business model canvas. What emerged were two key roadblocks: professionalization and compliance with local laws and marketing and branding. With patience and commitment, the two developed a complete rebranding campaign for her company. Having noticed that "in South Africa a lot of the premium products are international; we don't have our local premium products," Tumi saw an opportunity to position one of her brands, Modish I, as a premium, locally owned and created product.



At this point, Tumi was ready for more.

Ready to market her product to the masses, she applied for and received support from Egolibio, a Life Science Incubator which, among other services, provided her access to research facilities necessary to test her products for market.

For Tumi, the support and individualized attention she receives from AWESAM has been invaluable. As an entrepreneur you go through a lot of challenges and disappointments, it's nice to have someone holding your hand throughout the process, to have somebody to talk to, and help you create the strategy and the systems. That helps you looking at it as a business and not just as a passion," she said.

While Tumi already feels the difference in her business as a result of AWESAM, her advisors continue to support her. Sometimes a purchase of raw materials will give her trouble, or alliances with providers pose challenges. Whatever the case may be, her business advisor is there to help. "They're quite involved" she said with a laugh.

Tumi's next step is to get her products into mass and high-end retailers. This is a tall order, but one that she is ready for. "In South Africa it's very difficult to get to distributors; they only want big suppliers, they want to know your track record, where you're supplying, and even if you don't have a very big turnover they want to see your numbers." With this in mind, TechnoServe launched the Boxshop project in April 2016. The Boxshop is a storefront that will sell Tumi's and other entrepreneurs' products in order to build brand awareness and bridge their transition from small entrepreneur to national or international business.

Tumi is excited about the future and has high hopes that the Boxshop will give her the competitive edge she's missing, the standing to tell the retailers "I'm credible, I'm supplying the Boxshop, this is my turnover per month", and to finally get her business to the next level.



# Comparing Across Projects: Lessons Learned

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Over the course of its implementation, the Catalyzing Small Business Development for Youth and Women in Africa program has demonstrated a number of effective approaches that have resulted in new insights into ways of improving employment and self-employment outcomes for women and youth in Africa. This section highlights overarching lessons learned from all four approaches. They are separated into two categories, related to the content (what), the form (how) and the purpose (why) in which the four projects were implemented.

## **What approaches were found to be most successful for sustainable small business development for youth and women?**

- **Enthusiastic Participants:** It is important to ensure that projects select participants with the energy and attitude necessary to take advantage of the opportunity presented.
- **Validated Market Opportunity:** Enabling participants to capture a validated market opportunity provided by the project is an effective way to open new possibilities to people in vulnerable situations, as long as participants simultaneously develop the ability to identify and validate other market opportunities.
- **Easily accessible resources:** Ensure that capturing the market opportunity is accessible by the project participants with current or easily accessible resources.

## **How should a project that is effective in catalyzing small business development for youth and women be implemented?**

- Set **clear expectations** in order to bring out ideal changes in participants
- Expected **behavior changes** should be achievable, challenging, transparently communicated, and measured
- Combining **group training and one-on-one follow up** resulted in effective and efficient skills transfer
- Build capacity to ensure that **skills** can be **sustained**
- Understanding **the context and needs of the project's target group** is essential for project design and interpretation of results

- Monitoring and Evaluation can make significant contributions to **evidence-based decision-making** and lead to efficient and effective programs
- **Multiple program cycles** allow staff to learn and improve, but they need the room to make adjustments

### **Why is it relevant to catalyze small business development among youth and women?**

- **Empowerment** was consistently seen as the most significant change resulting from the project. Participants saw improved self-perceived agency resulting from the development of new skills that allowed them to gain financial independence. This in turn increased the amount of respect they received from their family and community.

The following section explains each of these lessons learned in the context of this project.

## **What approaches point to a sustainable small business development for youth and women?**

Despite the differences between the four approaches, some shared lessons learned emerge. The following aspects of the projects are relevant towards catalyzing small business development, in a way that is sustainable.

### **Enthusiastic Participants**

It is important to ensure that projects select participants with the energy and attitude necessary to take advantage of the opportunity presented.

Each of the four projects found that selecting for those with an entrepreneurial attitude – an eagerness and willingness to go the extra mile in order to capture opportunities once they are presented to them and the resilience to persist in the face of setbacks – was a critical factor for success during the project.

In Cote d'Ivoire, participants are provided with a unique opportunity to run a corner store, an opportunity presents participants with both exciting potential and significant challenges. As store managers, participants experience the typical ups and downs of an entrepreneur. Program staff learned that in order to best prepare participants for the problems they will inevitably face as business managers, it is important to select individuals based on attitude and eagerness to capture the opportunity that the project presents.

Nigeria's cashew by-products project also showed the importance of selecting the participants with the most enthusiastic attitude to learn, produce and profit. After trying to

engage young men and women, project staff decided to focus only on women, because they displayed a more enthusiastic and eager attitude towards the project. Staff selected the most entrepreneurial women through a multi-stage test. After a preliminary screening and recruitment, staff invited all potential participants to a group training where they were provided with the tools to capture the opportunity at hand by learning the skills necessary to process cashew apples. Staff then re-screened the participants in order to select those who were the most interested in implementing their new skills. By testing attitude at multiple levels, staff were able to gain an informed understanding of a candidate's entrepreneurial attitude in a context directly related to the project activities, thereby providing a higher likelihood that the candidate will be willing and able to capture the opportunity presented to them, and sustain the change long after the project is over.

Going forward, selecting participants with an entrepreneurial attitude should be considered among the critical success factors of a small business development project. It should also contribute to the sustainability of the results, since the energy to implement the changes comes from the participants, while the project team acts as a facilitator.



### Validated Market Opportunity

This research found that enabling participants to capture a validated market opportunity provided by the project could make a substantial impact on their lives, as long as they



simultaneously develop the ability to identify and validate other market opportunities. This is especially true in communities with high vulnerability, where people may be unable to capture certain opportunities without the support of an outside organization, since market opportunities may otherwise not be available, attainable, or clear.

Uganda's mentor of mentors was very emphatic about this issue, stating that projects should widen the spectrum of opportunities, but "[project participants] have to define their own life journey, not rely on others' life journey." This means that while suggesting business opportunities to participants, it is very important to build their capacity to identify, validate and capture other possible business opportunities. Staff in Uganda did this by purposely selecting skills to teach girls that were easily learned, marketable, and implementable.

Teaching participants how to identify opportunities was also part of the lessons learned in South Africa, where the Business Model Canvas was proved useful for validating business model and opportunity.

In Nigeria, showing rural women a business opportunity related to cashew by-products, which was easy to produce and to bring to market, enabled value creation and economic diversification in a vulnerable context.

In sum, a proven and validated opportunity is an effective way to open new possibilities to people in vulnerable situations, but they must bring the energy to make the changes needed and capture the opportunities, and ideally during the project, develop their capacity to identify and validate other opportunities.

### **Easily accessible resources**

It's important that the project participants are able to capture the market opportunities with their current resources or with resources that are easily accessible.

In Uganda, prior to the project, participants did not have the resources to start their own business. Staff worked with each girl to develop a plan for how to use their money, as for many participants, the transportation stipend, together with some income generated from working at the mentors premises, constituted a unique opportunity to have the seed capital to start their small business. Participants mentioned that one of the biggest lessons at the end of the project was the ability to save and manage their own resources. The emphasis on saving





translated into an increase in girls starting their own business during GAP II as compared to GAP I. Also, the project chose to teach those skills that were easy to transform into a business with scarce resources and that can be done from home (tailoring, baking, hairdressing and crafts).

In Nigeria, the project promoted the production of cashew by-products with an input - cashew apples- that would otherwise have been waste. Because all women had direct access to farms, the resources required to create their products were accessible for free or for a very low-cost, generating higher return. As a result, the project facilitated quick and significant gains in earnings that were re-invested in off-season businesses, providing resources for additional economic activity year-round.

Capturing market opportunities is only possible if the entrepreneur has access to the resources needed. Going forward, projects that aim to catalyze small business development should teach participants to take advantage of their current resources at first, then mobilize easily accessible resources, and only afterwards consider other options, such as loans in the case of these projects. By doing this, the project will contribute to the sustainability of the results.

## How should a project that is effective in catalyzing small business development for youth and women be implemented?

The analysis of the lessons learned of the four approaches results in the following recommendations for the design and implementation of small business development projects.

### **Set clear expectations in order to bring out ideal changes in participants**

Setting expectations ensures that participants understand 1) what the program will provide them and for how long, and 2) the level of commitment required of them in order to succeed in the program. Best practices across the four projects involved selecting participants who understood the goals of the project and what would be expected of them from the beginning.

Expectation-setting during selection is particularly important for projects that provide financial resources to participants. While often an effective tool to bring about a result, financial resources also pose the risk of creating a conflict of interest. The research found that projects that successfully integrate the distribution of financial resources into their programs have developed ways to identify if potential participants are aligned to the expectations of the project, or if they are engaged mainly because of the financial incentive. In the Girls Apprenticeship Program (GAP) in Uganda, project staff learned that



money transfer should only be used in situations when it is the only available alternative. During GAP, a few participants entered the project motivated by the prospect of financial support and dropped out within a month due to a lack of motivation. Project staff recognized the risk posed by financial resources and combatted it by ensuring that dropouts were replaced by participants who demonstrated a clear interest in learning and implementing a new skill.

In MiniPrix in Côte d'Ivoire, during the selection process, women were motivated to become self-employed shop owners. However, many participants indicated in interviews that they did not feel full ownership of their stores. As part of the actions to improve, staff are discussing the implementation of an initial training component that introduces to applicants to what it means to run a boutique and sets clear expectations about the challenges that will likely come with the project. Going forward, the research found that projects find success when expectations are set from the beginning of program implementation as part of the selection process.

**Expected behavior changes should be achievable, challenging, transparently communicated, and measured**



The research found that expected changes are most effectively brought about when achievable, time bound, and clearly communicated to the beneficiaries. In Uganda, staff wanted to increase the number of girls who started their own businesses. In order to reach this goal, the team recognized that the girls needed startup capital, and in order to

generate startup capital, they needed to save. After learning the value of savings from GAP I, staff in GAP II helped facilitate this outcome by opening bank accounts for the girls, transferring their transportation stipend to their bank accounts, training girls in financial planning, and communicating more clearly the importance of saving as a necessary step towards self-employment. This increased the results of self-employed girls significantly, from 19% to 55%.

Saying that outcomes should be achievable is not to say that they cannot be ambitious, but rather that extremely challenging outcomes are best achieved through several project stages. In the Cashew Byproducts Project in Nigeria, the project began its activities teaching basic cashew byproduct processing skills and succeeded in making a strong case for the value of such activities among the local community. Now, as the project looks to future cycles, staff are planning to achieve more ambitious goals through the implementation of cooperatives. By using a methodical approach that first focused on achievable activities (skills transfer), project staff created the foundation for the realization of a larger goal.

In Cote d'Ivoire, project staff are discussing a similar approach. The MiniPrix project aims to transform unemployed women into business owners. Interviews with project staff concluded that this one way that this goal can be achieved is by including an intermediary phase that focuses on skills transfer through on-the-job training. This approach is already being put into practice, and new project entrants are beginning to work first with an experienced and successful business owner, with the eventual plan to open their own shop. This approach aligns with TechnoServe's CREATE training methodology, which suggests that training approaches start small and easy with what participants already know, and gradually move, step by step, to more difficult and unknown challenges.

Finally, changes of behavior need to be measured to provide project manager and team information to make evidence based course correction decisions if needed. Also, measuring skills transfer and adoption can provide valuable lessons about how to fine tune the theory of change and contribute to increase project's effectiveness.



### Combining group training and one-on-one follow up resulted in effective and efficient skills transfer

The research found that in each the four project contexts the most successful means of skills transfer was through a combination of group and individual approaches. While group training generated a sense of support, an opportunity for knowledge-sharing among peers, and opportunities for networking and collaboration, an individual training approach provided solutions for the specific needs of each person. By combining the two approaches, project staff were able to transfer skills in a holistic manner that addressed the multi-dimensional needs of participants.

In South Africa the AWESAM program specifically designed its project to provide one-on-one advisory in an effort to give tailored support to each participant, but later incorporated group training into their methodology when it became clear that it could address needs that were not easily addressed one-on-one. While individual advisory proved effective and was maintained throughout the project, the team realized that group training could provide an opportunity to learn from peers and advisors in the same business sector. Group training also provided an opportunity for networking, and collaboration. A similar situation occurred in Nigeria, where the team decided to introduce group sessions during follow up training after realizing that individuals with similar needs could learn skills together in an environment that supported collaboration and networking.

The research found that group training was most successful when based on TechnoServe's CREATE model, which provides an effective framework to train adults, and when provided just prior to an opportunity to apply new skills, as was the case in GAP and Cashew Byproducts project. The MiniPrix project plans to take advantage of this learning and develop a new curriculum of the project, offering also on-the-job traineeships in successful stores.

Going forward, a combined approach to training and

coaching is generally more effective than a single-methodological approach. Further, there are appropriate times to integrate each approach into program implementation, and projects are most successful when skills are taught using the CREATE adults training methodology, then providing opportunities to immediately apply, and then support skills transfer with individual follow-up sessions.

**C**onnect  
**R**eflect  
**E**ngage  
**A**ctivate  
**T**est/Try out  
**E**ncourage



### **Build capacity to ensure that skills can be sustained**

Ensuring that key skills are transferred during the project is essential to build independence; otherwise results might be lost after the project is over. Experience across all four projects showed the value of building in effective mechanisms to transfer skills.

Experience across multiple countries under the program reveals that individuals are able to capture opportunities best when they own the related linkages to markets, partners, and finance. In Nigeria, project staff recognized that participants were accessing urban markets and packaging suppliers with help of the business advisors, which was a benefit in the short term, but independence was not ensured so far. Program staff learned that in order to be fully independent, participants needed to control the supply chain linkages associated with cashew byproducts such as the connections to packaging suppliers and to points of sale in urban areas. As soon as the issue was identified, project staff started building the capacity of participants to be independent from the help of the Business Advisor.

The MiniPrix project in Cote d'Ivoire also showed the value of building the idea of independence into the structure of the program. Interviews with staff and participants found that some participants reported frustration with the rigid structure of the project that did not allow them to implement all of the changes they wanted to improve their businesses based on the local needs and business context: Prosuma controls e.g. prices, promotions, products and hours of operation. This led them to feel, in some cases, like employees rather than business owners, closing them off to opportunities. Going forward, staff have already begun developing a plan that incorporates a clearer path to autonomy while building the skills of the business owners to become fully independent.

Ensuring that key skills are transferred will ensure the progress made during a project can be sustained in the long term.



### **Understanding the context and needs of the project's target group is essential for project design and interpretation of results**

This study saw a range of projects aimed at different target groups including girls, women, young people. In each country, participants had different backgrounds and vulnerability levels. This variation in the context of target beneficiaries influenced the way projects selected participants and designed the activities. Program design was impacted by the specific needs of each target group, for example, in Uganda staff included counseling to address issues of vulnerability in order to facilitate skill transfer. In South Africa, although the project worked with necessity-based entrepreneurs, potential to grow, rather than vulnerability, was the key focus of the project's target group. As a result, the program designed forced attrition into its approach to ensure that participants had the potential to grow as a result of the program.



The decision to focus on vulnerable populations also had an effect on the financial results of the project: in Uganda, the financial results are lower; however the mission of supporting vulnerable populations was completed, while in South Africa the financial results were much higher as the project focused on entrepreneurs with the potential, background, and attitude necessary to succeed.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation can make significant contributions to evidence-based decision-making and lead to efficient and effective programs**

M&E should be considered a tool for project management that can support staff to make sensible decisions before, during and after a project cycle. Those with experience in M&E can be valuable assets during program design as they are able to provide feedback on what targets are achievable during the project's timeframe. Although projects, and

especially pilots, often experience changes during their implementation, it is better to promise only what is likely to be achieved, and to leave more challenging indicators without a target.

As the experience of South Africa's AWESAM shows, collecting information can be challenging. However, the data that was gathered was considered useful, and additional data about behavior changes and skills development can provide more opportunities for fine tuning the incubation model.

The research found that projects that do monitoring of key indicators are more easily able to make evidence-based course-corrections during the project. The research also found that M&E can contribute to learning based on the project's experience. This is best done when combined with documenting project processes, lessons learned, and useful project materials. As an example, GAP took advantage of the systematized experience of Stryde, such as training materials and lessons learned. These previously documented processes and lessons helped reduce the cost of implementation for GAP by reducing its learning curve.

### **Multiple program cycles allow staff to learn and improve, but they need the room to make adjustments.**

The research found that multiple program cycles allowed projects to make changes based on lessons learned. In Uganda, staff took two key lessons from GAP I to improve it in GAP II: first, they tailored the careers provided in GAP II to fit specifically with the local market, providing a validated opportunity to the participants, and second, they emphasized the importance of saving as a way to start a new business, improving the overall employment outcomes from one cycle to the next by increasing the number of small businesses started as a result of the project. Similar processes occurred in South Africa's AWESAM II, which integrates lessons learned of AWESAM I about the profile of successful participants of entrepreneurs, and in Nigeria's Cashew Byproducts project, which uses lessons learned related to effective training by integrating group follow up sessions to increase the programs reach among the local community. Acknowledging the lessons learned from previous programs and recognizing the necessary improvements that result is



the first step towards making a change – the second is having the flexibility to implement necessary changes. In all these situations, teams were able to introduce adjustments because they had the flexibility to adapt the original project design. In Cote d'Ivoire's MiniPrix project, although the team has been able to recognize areas for improvement, an inflexible program structure has made the implementation of changes to the project a challenge. By comparing the experiences across countries, the research has been able to conclude that enabling projects to run a second cycle, together with allowing to them integrate changes helps to achieve desired outcomes.

## Why is it relevant to catalyze small business development among youth and women?

### Empowerment as the most significant change after the project

As a result of participating in the project, the most significant change from the perspective of the participant was a feeling of empowerment, a newfound sense of confidence and self-esteem. This improved self-perceived agency is a result of the development of new skills that allow them to gain financial independence, which has an effect on the respect from family and community and on their own sense of empowerment. The figure below details the progression towards empowerment seen Cote d'Ivoire. While specific to the MiniPrix project, it is a process that also applies to the gradual increase in empowerment experienced by participants in the other projects as well.



The following quotes from project participants show the significance of gaining skills and ability to have a profitable economic activity for their lives:

- “Before, I was there... I couldn't make an independent decision. Now I can say, I want to do that and I do it. If someone comes and says, I want you to wash my

clothes, I say, I don't do that. I do hairdressing. I used to earn 10.000 in a week washing clothes. Now I earn that in one customer. And, I can say no to a man, I have no reason to." Interviewed participant, Uganda

- "So many people have looked down on me for being a widow, but now I can contribute and they are not looking down on me anymore. And I can be called a business woman." Focus group participant, Kogi State, Nigeria.
- "Now I contribute to my family's income. My husband sometimes comes and asks me for money, so now I have more power, he has to respect me if he wants my money." Focus group participant, Côte d'Ivoire
- "Before I thought only about how much can I make today, now it is where do I want the business to be, what do I want to achieve." Focus group participant, South Africa

## Final Conclusion

The Catalyzing Small Business Development for Youth and Women in Africa Program has resulted in new insights into ways of improving employment and self-employment outcomes.

By making an analysis and comparison of the four approaches in terms of lessons learned this research found cross cutting and transcendent themes that are useful to further enterprise development projects in general, as well as youth and women's unemployment interventions more specifically. Each of the four pilot projects showed a different approach to tackling the complex problems associated with economic prospects for women and youth in Africa. They provide many examples of exciting successes that give hope and provide answers to the complex questions of employment opportunities for women and youth in Africa. At the same time, each of the projects experienced challenges and had areas that could be improved. This research – and the process of piloting new approaches – set out to capitalize on the successes and challenges experienced by these projects in an effort to forge a path forward for practitioners. Going forward, TechnoServe, together with the broader development community, will seek to harness the learnings of this report to bring about positive change for women and youth in the developing world.

# Acknowledgments

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## Nigeria

### Participants Interviewed Individually

Jemila Musa

### Participants Interviewed in Focus Groups

#### Ilorin, Kwara State

Alice Ogunsola  
Oyeniyo Ngozi  
Lateefata Abdurafi  
Ahmed Adegbite  
Adunni Akimwumi  
Olasehinde Bola  
Adekeye Adekeye  
Mary Omolayo Oduoye

#### Anyigba, Kogi State

Julietu Haruna  
Ramed Abdul  
Rekiyat Yakubu  
Julietu Abdullahi  
Lawal Juratu  
Mayha Emmanuel  
Oioma Abubakar  
Sadetu Mohammed  
Alu-Shogo Mositood

Rekiya Adama

### TNS Staff

Larry Umunna  
Shakti Pal  
Onyeka Igwebuike  
Oloruntoyin Olorunfemi  
Adam Momo  
Adedotun Adedoyin

### Stakeholders

Alhaji Shogo Moshoud, National Secretary for Cashew Association of Nigeria  
Ichapi Mohammed Agala, National 1st Vicepresident National Cashew Association of Nigeria  
Stephen Ahiaba  
Sule Ochala, Chairman of Igala Bassa Cashew Farming Multiventure  
Sogo Mohammed, Cashew Buying Agent  
Samuel Ogundeji  
Julius Adebayo Onietan, Former Executive Director of the Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute  
Samuel Lanre Ogundeji  
Anthony Kayode Towoju, Former Commissioner for Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Nigeria

## Uganda

### Participants Interviewed Individually

Ruth Makibirango  
Molly Nabuuma  
Jaliah Nanteza

Zakia Naigaga  
Hope Kalungi





**Participants Interviewed in Focus Group**

Emily Ahebwa  
Irene Akankwasa  
Hope Kalungi  
Justine Nansubuga  
Maureen Zalwango

**Mentors Interviewed Individually**

Hanifa Nassuna  
Juliet Tusiime

**Mentors Interviewed in Focus Group**

Lucie Kazibwe Bemomujumi  
Pheibe Kindagaire  
Barbara Luff  
Gladys Joanita Majjuka  
Hauwa Mohammad-Muta  
Leilah Nankya

Nellie Ssali

**TNS Staff**

Herbert Kirunda  
Meralyn Mungereza  
William Mugerwa  
Grace Afire  
Buluhan Muyinda  
Hajjat Sebyala Kawaase, Mentor of Mentors

**Stakeholders**

Clare Bagorogoza Jjombwe, Personal Assistant To The Managing Director & Public Affairs Officer, Citibank Uganda Limited  
Simon Peter Kavuma, CFO, Citibank Uganda Limited

## Cote d'Ivoire

**Participants Interviewed Individually**

Odine N'Guessan  
Patricia Bosse  
Louise Bletch  
Simone Kidana Houessou  
Ockoun Joelle Djo

**Participants Interviewed in Focus Group**

Hillary Epse Bamba  
Adjoua Ange-Joëlle Kouame  
Danielle Prisca Kouassi  
Généviève Anoh Kouassi  
Nicaise Koffi  
Adèle Atheba  
Sidibé Ténéké Bamba  
Ange Evelyne Boussou  
Emeline Brega  
Awoh Dinman  
Affoue Marie-Paule Koffi  
Généviève Kouadio  
Marcelle Kouassi  
Christelle Nouane

Isabelle Bah Seka  
Yélihan Toure  
Tao Nina Youzan

**TNS Staff**

Sarah Crawford  
Joël Aboa  
Luc Goore

**Stakeholders**

Caroline Daymon  
Marina Koffi  
Mme Houra  
Yannick Gnaman



## South Africa

### **Participants Interviewed Individually**

Beitumelo “Tumi” Mphahlele

Bonga Mpungose

Cavin Ramulongo

### **Participants Interviewed in Focus Group**

Njabuliso Grippiths

Anthrony Kobane

Tsinela Matshiha

Josef Mohale

Siyabulela Myelu

Cavin Ramulongo (Interviewed in both individual and focus group)

### **TNS Staff**

Shungu Kanyemba

Nomsa Gabela

Mohau Mailula

Zukko Mashigo

Sifso Moyo

Lydia Banda

Linda Maganganene

Lydia Banda

Mbuso Radebe

### **Stakeholders**

Jenny Retief