



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Women Empowerment for Inclusive Businesses
Learnings from Ecosystem Projects and Partnerships




DANONE
ÉCOSYSTÈME

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

This book is a humble attempt to contribute to the subject of Women Empowerment by presenting to you our learnings. We have throughout this book, ensured that we bring you these learnings with key insights from our experts and project partners. Chapter two of the book is dedicated to the same. Chapter one will give you a context of Danone, The Ecosystem Fund and also the reason why this topic is integral to our philosophy and success.

I sincerely hope that you will find this book eye opening, inspirational and most importantly, useful.

Sama Taneja

Regional Manager Asia &
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GENDER

EQUALITY

Gender equality is the concept that all people – men and women – are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices.

Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It doesn't mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

THE GLASS CEILING : IS IT OUTSIDE OR WITHIN ?

OVERCOMING BARRIERS
IMPOSED BY OTHERS AND BY WOMEN THEMSELVES

Women are winning ground in the labour markets and occupying positions that used to be unimaginable a few years ago. But gender equality is not generally supported and being a woman can still be a barrier in certain economic, social and political contexts. Barriers imposed by others and as well as by women themselves. Women often pressurize themselves to meet the social roles they are expected to endorse. It prevents them from making decisions or taking risks in the professional environment. To avoid discrimination and other prejudices related to social gender conception, some women settle for what is socially acceptable and less risky instead of what really fills their hearts.

In the few lines below, I would like to share with you not only my experience but also the teaching and legacy of my parents. I hope it will inspire those who want to overcome these barriers.

I was born in a small town in the north of Mexico where it is common for women, to study if they decide to, or to learn a trade to pass time, while waiting to get married. On the contrary, men are forced to study a 'profitable' profession to provide for their households. This pattern ends up causing two different scenarios for a woman whose marriage does not work: she can either hold on to her marriage to keep the family together, or choose to face life on her own, with little preparation to take care of her family as a single mother.

Fortunately my destiny was different. In my family we were only daughters, so my father never took for granted that a man was going to provide for our needs. He empowered us since we were little girls and gave us the best advice: "Devote yourself to something that makes you happy, because you'll have to work a lifetime to earn your living, and if you do not like what you do, your work will be a burden."

When I was old enough to appreciate it, I realized that this freedom to choose a path that would make me happy was the most valuable thing my parents gave me. I never had to worry about anything beyond this pursuit of happiness.



I WAS BORN IN A SMALL TOWN IN THE NORTH OF MEXICO WHERE IT IS COMMON FOR WOMEN, IF THEY DECIDE TO STUDY, TO LEARN A TRADE TO PASS THE TIME, WAITING TO GET MARRIED. ON THE CONTRARY, MEN ARE FORCED TO STUDY A 'PROFITABLE' PROFESSION TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR HOUSEHOLD.

I always had the freedom to make mistakes or successes without the fear that my parents or anyone else would blame me for my decisions or my actions. I had the freedom to choose the path of my own life.

Being happy to serve others since childhood, I chose to dedicate myself to the formulation and implementation of social development projects in poor and marginalized communities. This choice of career required effort and commitment to live new experiences and learn from them, professionally and also personally.

Contributing to positive changes through my job gave me happiness and peace of mind despite my original doubts and fears.

I invite you to live life and make decisions regardless of your social status or gender, but with your heart, with the freedom and the confidence that the future depends on much more essential and deeper things than money and material goods.

*Georgine Mendoza de la Garza
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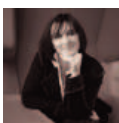
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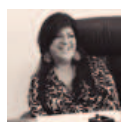
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Julie and I started this journey more than a year ago and deep diving into the topic of women empowerment has been both humbling and enriching. My sincere gratitude to all of you – our experts, project partners, project managers, project beneficiaries and the Ecosystem team. Each conversation was unfinishing in its commitment to help us get our arms around this complex subject and I cannot thank you enough for the spirit of sharing you brought to our conversations. Your experiences and insights have been invaluable and of course this book would not have happened without you.

Thank you

Sama Taneja, Danone Ecosystem Fund

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CONCLUSION DARE TO ASK DARE TO SPEAK DARE TO LEAD

WOMEN

KEY FACTS WITH EXPERT'S COMMENTS



WOMEN
REPRESENT
50%
OF THE
WORLD'S
POPULATION

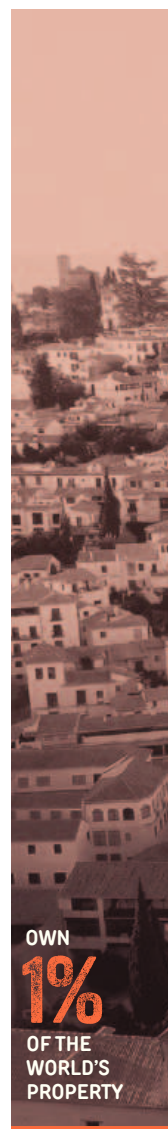
SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS STATISTIC DIVISION, DEC 2012



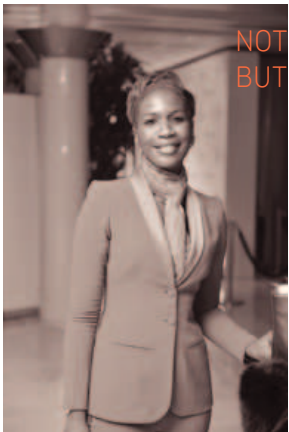
ACCOUNT FOR
67%
OF THE
WORLD'S
WORKING
HOURS



EARN
10%
OF THE
WORLD'S
INCOME



OWN
1%
OF THE
WORLD'S
PROPERTY



NOT ONLY WOMEN ISSUES BUT HUMAN ISSUES

I believe that these women issues are not women issues, these are pure human issues, pure development issues. We can't develop this world if half of the population does not have a seat at the table.

Noyé Bathily



GIVING WOMEN OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW MICRO- ACTIVITIES

Micro-credit is suited for financing small business activities – whether commercial, agricultural, craft or any other. And in many countries, these small businesses are managed largely by women. Micro-credit therefore gives them access to capital, not because they are women but because these businesses need money. For me, lend to a man or a woman, it's the same thing. But it's a fact that in many countries it is women who run small home businesses and most importantly they repay their loans well and so micro-credit is often directed to them.

Maria Nowak

A TIGHT LINK BETWEEN EMPOWERING WOMEN AND REDUCING POVERTY

We have observed that programs that empowered women were the most efficient at reducing poverty. Since women are the most discriminated against and the poorest, there is a direct causal link. Poverty is deeply gendered. Its main cause could very well be a power imbalance between the role of men and women. As Nelson Mandela said, 'overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice.' Development has to work for women and they have a role to play. However, we must not forget that women empowerment is not just a tool for overcoming poverty; it is an end in itself and should be above all about women's dignity, status and well-being.

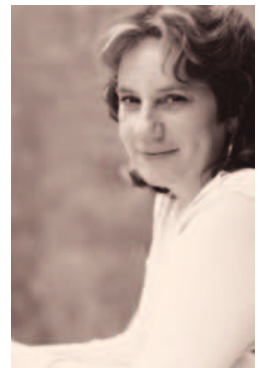
Sofia Sprechmann



WOMEN'S COMMUNITY ANCHORAGE

Women have a much more direct stake in contributing to their direct environment because they know that it is more likely for them than for men to be there in the years to come. As men are more mobile, they feel less concerned. They know they may leave for the city and never come back.

Valeria Budinich





70%

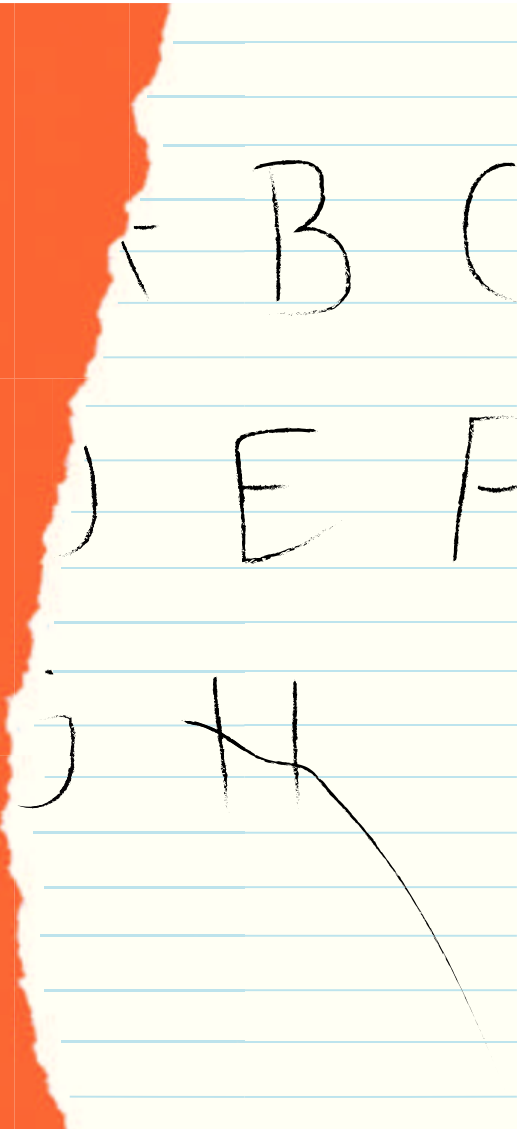
OF THE WORLD'S POOR
ARE WOMEN AND GIRLS

SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM) WOMEN, POVERTY, ECONOMICS



**62 MILLION
GIRLS** ARE DENIED
EDUCATION
ALL OVER
THE WORLD

SOURCE: UN FOUNDATION



EACH EXTRA YEAR OF EDUCATION ADDS **10 TO 30%** TO A WOMAN'S EARNINGS

SOURCE: VAN DER GAGG, J. AND J.P. TAN. THE BENEFITS OF EARLY CHILD
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS



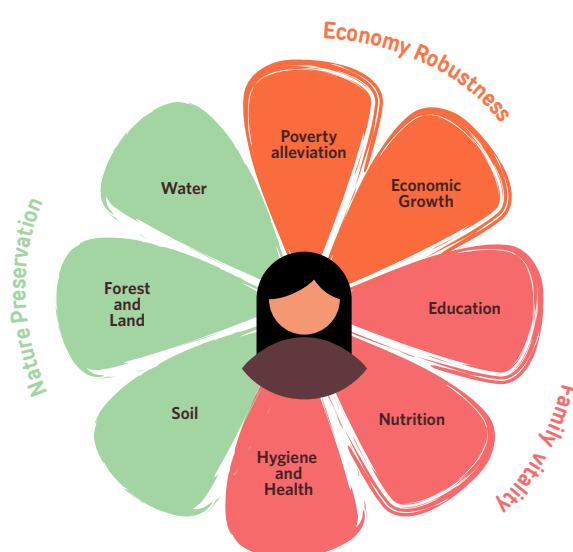


WOMEN – KEY ACTORS FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Women are key actors for sustainability and development as they stand at the center of critical issues concerning communities and environment as a whole. Thus empowering women has a snowball effect on families, communities, economies and environment.

For the Ecosystem Fund, Women Empowerment has been a priority since its inception. And it's true that the challenge of gender inequality exists in all cultures, geographies and societies even though the shape and form of the discrimination differs. It is a myth that this is a problem of the developing world alone. This is our learning across 58 projects in 25 countries.

INVESTING IN WOMEN IS KEY FOR INCLUSIVE AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIES



NATURE PRESERVATION

In most developing countries, women are in charge of food supply, water and wood collection. According to the World Bank in 1991, "Women play an essential role in the management of natural resources, including soil, water, forests and energy and often have a profound traditional and contemporary knowledge of the natural world around them." Women tend to have a closer relationship with land and other natural resources such as soil and water which promotes a new culture of respectful use and preservation of natural resources and the environment.

ECONOMY ROBUSTNESS

It is estimated by WWF that 70% of the world's poor are women and that they are often responsible for providing for their families. By creating inclusive business models with women inside, women and families benefit. Besides this, the economy gets an immense boost by enhancing their capabilities and formalizing their contribution.

FAMILY VITALITY

Women are the repository of all the knowledge about nutrition and health. Their awareness on health and nutrition directly impacts their family. Also, they are in-charge of their children's education. Studies show that there is a clear connection between the level of education of the mother and that of her children.

INVESTING IN WOMEN'S
WELL-BEING IS THE
BEST INVESTMENT FOR
DEVELOPMENT



If women are more educated, they will have greater hygiene and care for children, and they will want their children to go to school. The more educated they are, the more they will be able to participate in everything, economically and socially.



"In the eighties, the development community and international organizations finally realized that issues related to women and development were very important. By analyzing statistics and surveys, they discovered overwhelming evidence that investing in women's education creates a virtuous circle of development. The more educated women are, the more they will want to their children to go to school, and the more they will want to participate in improving their lives and those of their communities. Women create the mood in the family and the cultural atmosphere which is needed for learning. A woman who has learnt to read and write will make her children read and write. And as women take on new economic activities or help to protect other women, the mind-set of the whole community changes.

Women are often subject to a quadruple labor (wage labour, unremunerated domestic work, care of children, elderly persons and the chronically ill, as well as managing the social life of their communities) especially when social

services by the state are reduced. This downgrades their own health and that of their families and communities. Investing in women's well-being is thus the best investment for development. In this light, the new initiative of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations, of giving priority to women's health issues in development is very welcome. As women's capabilities are enhanced, they are able to think about their families and also about social cohesion in the society. They see themselves as taking part in a larger process of transformation, and thus act as social ambassadors to foster change and ensure that development benefits the whole society."

Lourdes Arizpe
Honorary Doctorate in Anthropology, Chair of the Board of the UN Research Institute for Social Development, Member of the UN Committee for Development Policy, Member of the Guidance Committee of the Danone Ecosystem Fund.



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?



As women are key for local development, women empowerment is a lever for change that needs to be activated. But what is the definition of women empowerment? To give a generic definition is difficult as it is highly dependent on women's personal, economic and social situation within their community. But in its guidelines for women empowerment, the United Nations has provided the following overall definition:

Women's empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Connected to each of these five components, is an interesting perspective brought by Ecosystem experts, beneficiaries and project managers.

01

Women's sense of self worth

"There are many definitions of empowerment because it is linked to the culture/ nation /state of development/ structure women live in. But for me, empowerment for women means that they are able to have a conscience of their own about how to lead their life. This is the first step. The second step is to have a society and a community that allows them to pursue the way they want to live their life. Empowering a woman is giving her the instrument that enables her to decide what she would prefer. This is the key notion of selfhood. There are some cultures where women are not allowed to think of themselves in terms of selfhood and to be a person who has right to think, to feel, to choose and to participate politically, economically." *Lourdes Arizpe*

02

Right to have and to determine choices

"Providing empowerment tools is the only way to develop rights, abilities and to achieve freedom of choice." *Iman Bibars*

03

Right to have access to opportunities and resources

"You have to look at resources on the one hand and agency on the other hand. A good combination and balance between the two allows you to have practical outcomes. Degree of agency can be defined as possibility of making free choice. Resources are material conditions around. Women's empowerment is about the development of different kind of capabilities, and the process of transforming them into functioning. The questions should be: what are the resources brought by a project that could enable women to have access to different kind of outcomes in their day-to-day life?" *Cécile Renouard*

04

Right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home

Women empowerment means giving more responsibilities to women. It is a way of furthering economic and social democracy to enable everyone, men and women, to participate in decisions that affect them directly, benefiting from a legal framework that does not prevent them from undertaking activities of their choice.

Maria Nowak

05

Ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally

"Livelihoods seeks to empower women through our ecosystem restoration projects. Our beneficiaries live in very difficult natural environments where they often feel helpless in the face of climate change and environmental degradation. Empowerment to me is about taking charge of your life and having the ability to make choices to improve your well-being. Empowerment is having the means to fight back. Livelihoods allows women to break the vicious cycle of poverty linked to environmental degradation and improve their living conditions and those of their families by providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills and resources." *Leona Liu*

Empowerment has multiple facets, some more complex than the others, but each action contributing in its unique way to the robustness of families, economies and our environment.

WOMEN: AN INTEGRAL PART OF DANONE'S SOCIETAL MISSION

Danone's mission is to "bring health through food to as many people as possible." The company applies this societal mission to the four businesses it operates in: Dairy products, Water, Early Life Nutrition and Medical nutrition. In each of them it focuses on providing healthy and high quality products.

Danone's mission and core business connects it at a global level to a set of major societal stakes linked to hunger alleviation, global improvement in health and nutrition awareness. Due to the specificity of its production processes and value chain, Danone also deals on the upstream, with critical issues related to agriculture and on the downstream with waste management. As women play a key role in each of these domains, in addition to being the ones responsible for buying food in most families, their condition and Danone's activities and societal mission are closely linked.



Danone's mission is to bring health through food to as many people as possible. The company applies this societal mission to the four businesses it operates in: Dairy products, Waters, Early life nutrition & Medical nutrition. In each of them it focuses on providing healthy and high quality products.



AGRICULTURE

Women represent 43% of the agricultural workforce in developing nations (FAO). They play a key role on farms, with a great diversity of situations according to geographic and sociocultural background. They contribute fully to the production process and are often in charge of difficult tasks such as milking, collecting, feeding, cleaning, etc. Some of them also run complementary activities to bring additional income, are in charge of administrative management tasks or even run and lead their farms. Despite their important contribution, in many cases, women are invisible workers whose labour is neither recognized, nor valued, which would help them become real agents of change for more sustainable and efficient agricultural practices.

"A critical thing that women bring is the bridge between the commercial function of the farm and the use of income for the family. Women make most of the decisions around family, nutrition and household."

Stéphanie Daniels

HUNGER & NUTRITION

Women are central pillars in the family and are often responsible for meals and cooking, influencing the entire family's diet and nutrition quality. They tend to allocate more financial resources to food than men would. Their contribution is thus seen as one of the most promising means to alleviate hunger in the world and promote overall well-being.

"Women are key for Danone's business stakes. They are responsible for buying food, and we are a food company! It is usually not the man who buys our products, it is the woman. Women have distinct behaviour, feelings and emotions and have a different approach to spending money, and I don't think we crystalize this enough in our business understanding and in our consumer research."

Florence Jeantet

HEALTH

All over the world, an overwhelming majority of caregivers responsible for societal health are women. Moreover, mothers definitely play a key role in ensuring the health of their children. For example, in Indonesia 68% of children whose mothers have attended secondary school are immunized as compared with 19% of children whose mothers have no primary schooling. Women's contribution, and especially educated women, represents an enormous potential for real progress in health.

As per WHO, 800 women and 8000 children die every day due to largely preventable complications during pregnancy, childbirth and immediate post-natal period. Many of these could be saved with the presence of a trained midwife.

"Midwives and mothers both have a key role to play in child health and nutrition. As mothers, their knowledge of health and nutrition is crucial and they have an important role to play in reducing infant and child mortality rate. In Indonesia, the majority of midwives are women and they help deliver 65% of babies. They are thus key stakeholders to reduce maternal mortality as well as infant and child mortality. By educating women of their community, they could become real agents of change." Ahmad Yama

With proper training women could also play a crucial role in providing critical support to help save lives during pregnancy, childbirth and in the post-natal period.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

In developing countries, waste picking is often an unorganized and an unregulated industry, falling between the cracks. Many women work for this informal sector, with very little social and physical protection, raising serious issues about their safety and dignity.

Organizing this sector into small yet efficient recycling business units managed by the waste pickers themselves is a powerful way to organize and uplift this profession and the communities associated with it. Furthermore, most of these recycling units are small scale industries. They offer excellent opportunities for women to be involved in sorting and processing plastics which creates employment opportunities and a stable environment for children of waste picking families.

There is a large population of children and women in waste picking communities. They have to deal with health problems, early marriages, an infant deaths caused by unhealthy and unhygienic environments.

"By setting up a Recycling Business Unit close to these communities, the women get a safer and healthier working environment, generate additional revenues for their family and even get access to a proper toilet and health care service. Their additional revenue is mostly used to buy healthy food for their family, and most importantly for their children." Annie Wahyuni



DANONE ECOSYSTEM'S

JOURNEY

TOWARDS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

It is common sense observation that no living organism can grow and develop in a deprived environment or a desert. "It is in a company's best interests to take good care of its economic and social environment, in a word its 'ecosystem'." This statement from Franck Riboud defined Danone's philosophy of social innovation based on which the Danone Ecosystem Fund was founded in 2009.

Danone's dual economic and social project states that economic performance must go hand in hand with care for people and respect for the environment. Through the development of inclusive business models, which consist of creating financially profitable business projects that benefit local communities by including them at all levels of the company value chain, the Fund intends to expand this dual mission.

Always co-created with civil society organizations in the territories where Danone's subsidiaries operate, these projects aim at strengthening the activities of the partners who make up Danone's ecosystem: farmers, suppliers and subcontractors, transport and logistics operators, distributors, territories and local authorities. Women are an integral part of this strong ecosystem. Their empowerment is decisive for the success of the Fund's projects.



IT IS OFTEN ASSUMED THAT WOMEN HAVE A MUCH KEENER SENSE OF PUBLIC INTEREST WHILST BUSINESS ACUMEN IS MORE DEVELOPED IN MEN. SO THE QUESTION BEFORE US IS – WHAT DO WE DO WHEN BOTH OF THESE – BUSINESS SENSE AND THE SENSE OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST ARE QUALITIES ESSENTIAL TO THE SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW BUSINESS MODELS? THE ANSWER PERHAPS LIES IN SHEDDING DEEPLY ROOTED STEREOTYPES AND ENCOURAGING LEADERSHIP FUELLED BY AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT OR A SPIRIT WHERE THESE SEEMINGLY OPPOSITE SENSIBILITIES CONVERGE.

Getting rid of stereotypes

Is it so surprising that women play a key role in the success of inclusive economy projects supported by the Danone Ecosystem Fund? It is often assumed that women have a much keener sense of public interest whilst business acumen is more developed in men. So the question before us is – What do we do when both of these – business sense and the sense of the public interest are qualities essential to the sustainability and development of new business models? The answer perhaps lies in shedding deeply rooted stereotypes and encouraging leadership fuelled by an entrepreneurial spirit or a spirit where these seemingly opposite sensibilities converge. But our experience with projects shows that debilitating stereotypes about women's place in the economy are everywhere. Therefore, we decided, in collaboration with all the partners of the Fund, to support the professional empowerment (development) of women.

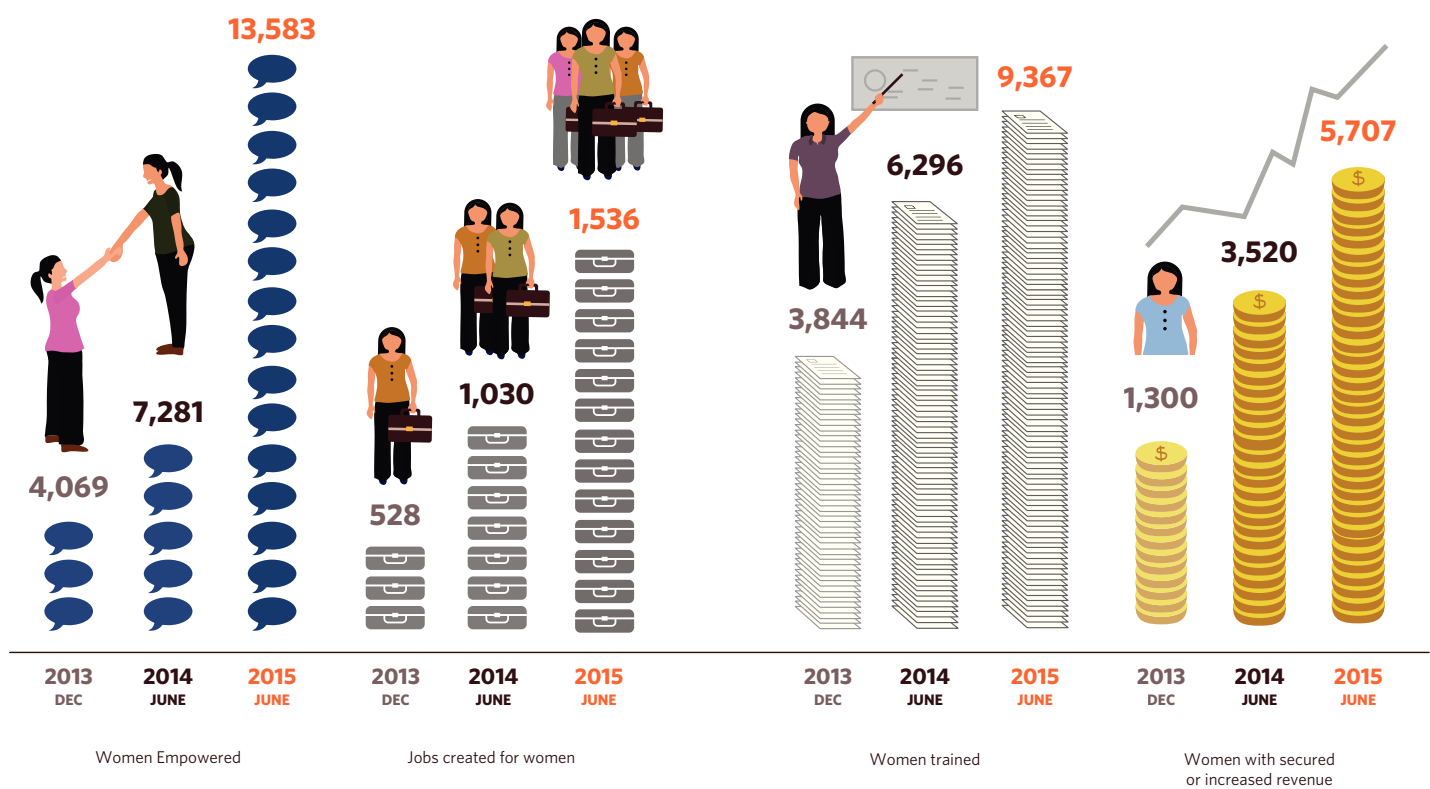
After the publication of our guide for co-creation and sustainable sourcing through agricultural practices, I am happy to release our third publication on the role of women in creating inclusive business models and economies. Like the first two guides, this one too is built from testimonials and concrete learning. Our ambition in publishing this guide is twofold – helping Ecosystem project leaders to fine tune their approach, and to encourage and inspire, by sharing what we call “our small victories,” each and every one who is engaged on this topic. This is critical to the proper execution of the mission of the Fund as well as the robustness of our projects.

Finally I wish to thank all the women, the entrepreneurs of Ecosystem for their relentless work and I also thank those who support them every day, to build together a more balanced and fair economy.

Jean-Christophe Laugée
Social Innovation & Ecosystem
Director, Danone Ecosystem Fund

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS SO FAR

Globally, we have now 58 projects launched in partnership with local non-profit organizations, giving us real field experience. These have been launched primarily to create inclusive business models. Women empowerment is never our primary goal. Yet, as our stakes are closely linked with women's situation, women are in fact the main actors or the main beneficiaries of more than 30 of these projects. While we now foster women empowerment in majority of our projects, we have a long way to go to meet our ambitions for women empowerment. But some results are already tangible.



QUALITATIVE RESULTS SO FAR

We are very proud to share with you a few testimonies of women who are the heroes of our projects; women whose lives we have touched and who in turn have inspired us.



"My work isn't easy. I spend all day separating the trash for recycling and working under that sun is just like being in an oven. And before, we didn't have toilets or water. I really got happy when Bonafont decided to support us with a recycling plant and we realized they were also worried about the environment. They have made our life much lighter. We can now recycle and separate more bottles in Mexico in a clean and safe place"

Graciela
Project Pepenadores Employee,
Recycling Business unit
Mexico

"I feel very happy, because this is a dream I've been hoping to accomplish for a long time. My children are proud of me. Earlier, I worked as a cleaning lady and this is a completely different job. This is much better, you interact with people, inform them about the products and you give the customers the 'human warmth' we all need. For me, it is invaluable."

Maria Gracia Prada
Beneficiary of the Project Social School
for Women Empowerment
Brazil

"Before joining WAS I used to sell chicken porridge until 10 am in the morning. With the WAS kiosk I can sell until 4 in the afternoon and it contributes significantly to my family's income. In addition to income, it also impacts my children's food habits, they began to consume milk and they love milk now, I'm very happy" (A lot of Indonesian children don't like milk, because some of us are not used to consume milk).

Ibu Sania
Project Warung Anak Sehat
Micro Entrepreneur
Indonesia



I FOLLOWED A TRAINING PROGRAM
AT ALIANÇA EMPREENDEDORA
AND STARTED SELLING DANONE'S
PRODUCTS DOOR-TO-DOOR.
DANONE IS ESSENTIAL TO ME.

"I used to sell catalogues from other brands. Once, I attended an event at Danone and I immediately realized it was a good company. I followed a training program at Aliança Empreendedora and started selling Danone's products door-to-door. Danone is essential to me. I have worked with other brands before, but it wasn't as successful as I expected.

It's great to know that you can help each woman in a small way. The feeling is great you know? I feel satisfied, rewarded and valued. This project gave me the chance of growing."

Gislene F. de Figueiredo
Beneficiary, Project Kiteiras
Brazil

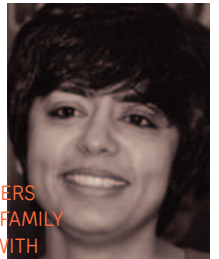


There is no tool for
development more
effective than the
empowerment
of women – Kofi Annan



THE ROLE OF WOMEN IS INVISIBLE BUT NONETHELESS CENTRAL

WOMEN IN THEIR ROLES AS MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS AND WIVES ARE AT THE CENTER OF ALL SOCIAL FAMILY ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE VERY CLOSELY LINKED WITH CULTURE, RELIGION AND TRADITIONS, MAKING IT A COMPLEX WEB. GENERALIZATIONS ARE NOT ONLY IMPOSSIBLE BUT DANGEROUS. THERE IS NO PANACEA SOLUTION, NO MAGIC RECIPE.



"I have now spent almost three years in Danone Ecosystem, working on various projects in multiple countries and have spent the last two years trying to understand the very complex topic of women empowerment. And I must admit I have just begun to scratch the surface.

Since its creation, the Danone Ecosystem Fund has had the aspiration of empowering women and, even though it's always easier said than done, we have made steady progress. At Ecosystem, our purpose is to create inclusive business models within Danone's Ecosystem. We never design our projects with a singular purpose of gender equality or women empowerment. Yet we have discovered that in all economies, and especially in the informal, small scale ones, the role of women is invisible but nonetheless central. And therein lies our biggest opportunity for launching and sustaining inclusive business models. Including the invisible yet omnipresent women makes perfect business sense!

Family agriculture, unorganized small scale retail and niche caring services are all activities where women invest time and energy in, most often, with little visibility and compensation or remuneration for the work they are engaged in. Women are everywhere, working and contributing, but they need support to realize their full potential. Yet most projects don't take women and their specificities into account. To address this reality, we need to use a gender lens at all times. This lens allows people in the field to ask the right questions and thus discover the 'invisible' women and the opportunity that can be unlocked. To give you a simple example, we often use the term 'farmers' in our projects with dairy producers. One of our key learnings is to qualify this term. There are men farmers and women farmers. Designing any project to enhance productivity and efficiency will need a set of interventions that will include both men and women farmers. Using a

gender lens has helped us in pinpointing specific women challenges and thus designing much more relevant and therefore effective interventions.

Working on the field with our partners has taught us that what seems like a simple path of enhancing capabilities, providing the right support and creating adequate infrastructure needs a more careful treading. Women in their roles as mothers, daughters and wives are at the center of all social family activities which are very closely linked with culture, religion and traditions, making it a complex web. Generalizations are not only impossible but dangerous. What works in one setting will most often not work in another. There is no panacea solution, no magic recipe. The most important first step is to take the time to deep dive into the local context.

To create this book, we interviewed experts, our partners and the Ecosystem's team to understand how they address the topic of women empowerment in their projects. They were kind enough to take time to share their rich experience with us. This chapter captures our collective experiences and learning in five sections, each section structured in two parts: "Expert's perspective" and "Project manager's experience" to give you a well-rounded perspective. We have interspersed these chapters with a few of our project infographics. The objective is to give you a peek into a few of our projects where we have been able to support women and impact them in meaningful ways.

I sincerely hope that the next few pages will give you some interesting and useful insights from our women empowerment experience.

*Sama Taneja
Danone Ecosystem Fund
Regional Manager Asia & Lead Women Empowerment*



UNDERSTANDING

WOMEN

IN RELATION TO
THEIR CONTEXT
AND CULTURE

To activate women empowerment, one of the first steps is to understand the role and life of women in their specific context and culture. We have learnt through our projects that no action can and should be taken without a deep and thorough understanding of their role, their perception of themselves, the aspirations and frustrations they have and most importantly the relationships between men and women and the interplay of these relationships in the community. Reaching a real local understanding without projecting our own preconceived notions is difficult to do, but very necessary. A preliminary social study at the beginning of the project is often indispensable to understand the ground reality and to take into account all aspects of a specific context. To this end, a local expert eye is crucial to avoid any cultural bias that can creep in inadvertently and cause more damage than do any good. This process of understanding must be continuous and all along the project through a constant dialogue with the women and the community. Their perception of their role and identity is likely to change during the project and requires an ongoing listening and analysis to enable continuous adjustment if necessary.

ASK WOMEN

ABOUT THEIR PERCEPTION OF THEMSELVES

Most women are very aware of their own situation and just having a conversation with them will help you to understand what they think about themselves and what are the barriers to their empowerment.

As *Valeria Budinich*, points out, "You are never humble enough and should always ask the women what is their own definition of empowerment. How do they want to be empowered? How do they want to improve their own conditions? What help do they need? We should never superimpose our own pre designed initiatives and views."

For *Lourdes Arizpe*, "In countries where there is very limited freedom, the women know their margin for action and you have to respect that because you can't know the pressure that they have." As an illustration, *Nayé Bathily* confirms that "In many cases, the woman will actually be the bread winner in the household, but would still pretend that it is the man who earns, just to save appearances. Otherwise, she would be threatened because we are in such a male dominated society."

In some communities, as *Marleen New* underlines, "Women have been raised believing that they are not as worthy as the men, and they have accepted it. It is not only men oppressing women; it is also societal beliefs and women accepting it for themselves. Women are afraid to have a voice because they are afraid of punishment by others in the community or in the family."

"Thinking and choosing for themselves might go against their education. It is linked to the local culture and religion as well as their economic and social situation. Women facing deep poverty are so focused on surviving and making money for the family, that they don't have time to think of other possibilities that may appear frightening" adds *Lourdes Arizpe*.

It is really important to understand that one cannot enunciate general morals and norms and concepts like women rights without understanding how they can first be integrated in the cultural context and environment. Empowering women deals a lot with the question of how to bring change in the community while respecting cultural backgrounds." concludes *Cécile Renouard*.

EXPERT'S PERSPECTIVE

052

CONDUCT

A PRELIMINARY SOCIAL STUDY

A preliminary study can be conducted after or in parallel to your meetings and interactions with the community to better understand the ground reality. This is echoed by two of our experts: *Valeria Budinich* and *Lourdes Arizpe*.

"Preliminary investigation is key, for at least a duration of six months. The study should answer the following questions: what are the roles played by men and women, what are the daily challenges faced individually and as a couple, and what does affordability mean to them," attests *Valeria Budinich*.

"It is crucial to investigate what might be the problems faced by the women and what are the things that interest them, and to take the time to understand these. When you arrive, you must ask questions: How is your work? What problems are you facing and so on. Starting a discourse, will not help them and they won't understand it. Always refer to concrete problems and how they can be solved by doing things differently. Once you have understood their problems, you can explore options and suggest ideas for change. And then you take things up to a point where you can no longer do it, and then you stop and you wait. Never push," completes *Lourdes Arizpe*.

Pak Mahmudi adds that "This preliminary investigation can be the first step to women initiatives and for them to become aware that they want changes. The first approach should be to meet women and talk to them about their daily lives. If you ask about their worries, they will tell you about the lack of money. If you ask what they do with the money, they will list the things they buy. Very frequently, you would be able to make them realize that a certain number of things could be done at home, like growing vegetables or using natural detergent. If you make them realize the cumulated sum of money that they spend on these unnecessary expenses, they are usually very willing to get the knowledge and organization to produce them at home and save money."

"The ability to have these discussions is an art, not something that should be improvised. There is a lot of learning to be accumulated, explains *Valeria Budinich*. You should ensure to have an ongoing conversation with both the men and the women of the community. Many times you will have to separate the conversation between men and women because different topics might surface. As soon as the project manager doesn't exchange and have this conversation, you have a crisis." If project directors and their teams do not have these conversations with both, the men and women in the community, the probability of a crisis or a conflict may emerge.

A CONTINUOUS

DISCUSSION

WITH MEN, WOMEN AND THE COMMUNITY

"After the social study, you have to keep the conversation with the community alive at all times. It needs to be an ongoing process of discussion, exchanges and sharing with the community, with both men and women. Don't assume that there is a historic model and that a model initially defined will work as the perfect model all along the project phases. You might discover through these conversations, that not only are adjustments needed but you may also realize that you might have been dis-empowering people instead of empowering them" points out, *Valeria Budinich*.



ECOSYSTEM'S NUGGET OF EXPERIENCE

Norms can be hidden, formal or informal and ideologies can be hard to understand! A good solution to avoid risks of misunderstanding or worse, disturbing the local context, is to identify and select a credible partner to conduct the social study on the ground, assess the current situation and test your hypothesis. It is possible that your current partner has some experience of conducting a social study specific to women empowerment but if it is not the case, we have learnt that it is well worth the investment to pull in an expert partner who understands this domain. It is not only the intellectual framework that is important, it is also critical that the methodology of the study is well suited for the context.



IN A NUTSHELL

Ask women about their own definition of empowerment; they know their space of action better than anyone else.

Make sure the project and its communication are well integrated into the cultural and political context.

Conduct a preliminary study with an expert to help understand the ground reality. It's not something that should be improvised.

Set up an ongoing process of discussion, exchanges and sharing with both men and women.

053



PROJECT MANAGER'S EXPERIENCE

Co-created with Aliança empreendedora and World Vision Brazil, the project Kiteiras in Brazil develops a micro distribution network of door-to-door vendors, the "kiteiras", managed by "madrinhas" – women responsible for equipment and stock management. The project provides dignified employment opportunities, training in entrepreneurship, nutrition knowledge and skills for life to empower women.

The detailed infographic of this project is coming up on the next page



THE MAIN BARRIERS IS OUR OWN PRE-ESTABLISHED NOTION. EVERYONE WHO STARTS WORKING ON THE KITEIRAS PROJECT HAS SOME BELIEFS IN THEIR MIND REGARDING WOMEN AND THEIR REALITIES

"The main barriers is our own pre-established notion. Everyone who starts working on the Kiteiras project has some beliefs in their mind regarding women and their realities. Of course they have quite a similar profile. They are mostly from poor communities with poor education, but there are still a lot of things to learn from them.

To give an example, it was very difficult to understand why the women were not present at the training sessions.

We wondered "Why don't these women show up when we are offering an extraordinary opportunity to learn and to acquire knowledge on sales, nutrition, etc.?" After some disappointments, we learnt that the

academic approach, with someone showing a Power Point presentation like a teacher, wouldn't work because formal education is not a part of their real lives. To address this issue, we needed to design a more practical and concrete format and adopt a more innovative approach to attract them to these sessions.

There are many other aspects about their lives, their habits, their beliefs that we still don't know. That is why the social impact study from our partner is so important. It gives us many insights about what influences the decision of women.

*Renata Ferrera
Former Kiteiras Project Manager*

KITEIRAS

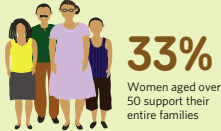
To improve the living conditions for women in low-income communities in the city of Salvador, the "Kiteiras" project promotes an inclusive business model by providing jobs as door-to-door vendors to some of these women.

This project is co-created by Danone Ecosystem Fund, Danone Brazil and its local partners Aliança Empreendedora and World vision Brazil.



SOCIAL CONTEXT

Brazilian Northeast is a region with strong inequity between its inhabitants. Majority have to accept underpaid and informal jobs.



BUSINESS CONTEXT

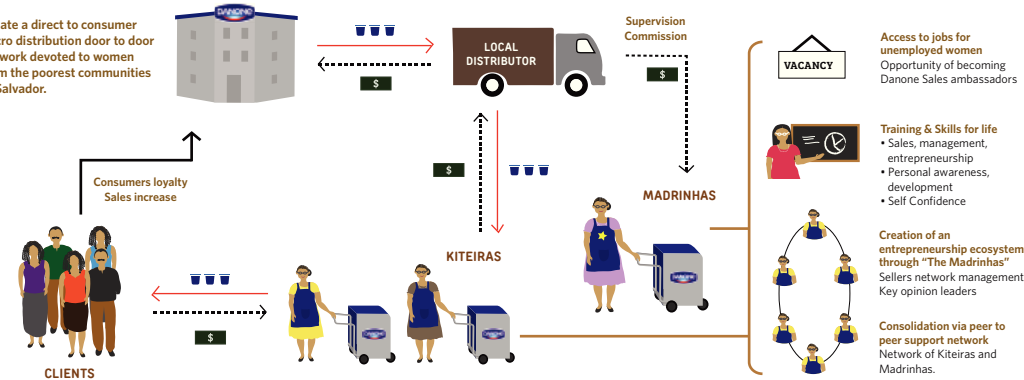


Marketing difficulty in reaching households. Need to develop new model for micro-distribution.



PROJECT ANSWER

Create a direct to consumer micro distribution door to door network devoted to women from the poorest communities of Salvador.



IMPACTS



631

Women working as Kiteiras.

100

Micro-distributors with social program coverage & minimum wages.

300

Women empowered- Training on skills for life.

180%

Incremental income increase.

WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR THE WOMEN



Economic Empowerment
via Access to job Opportunities and formalization as individual micro entrepreneurs.



Opportunities for Growth and Leadership
Women with leadership capabilities become "godmothers". They manage a network of door to door vendors, and are in-charge of recruiting managing and training them.



Caring for their families
A way of working that enables them to take care of their families and make an additional US\$98 per month.



CLAUDIA RODRIGUES DA SILVA

"When I got the first pay from Danone, I ran straight to a hardware store and I asked for cement and block. I was so thrilled because I could buy the material to build my house. I hope all women who have the same problems can have their cry freedom and reach their independence."



MAKING SURE WOMEN
ARE ACTORS OF THEIR OWN

EMPOWERMENT

We often deal with women empowerment in projects with a misplaced sense of responsibility: the responsibility to empower women. It is a very presumptuous approach. In reality women empowerment is really about women empowering themselves. Our role is to support them, speak with them, challenge them and equip them. But they are the true actors of their story, not us. The initiative and will to change must come from the women themselves. That is the strength underpinning the whole process of women emerging from a passive condition to an active one. The principle should always be: by the women, for the women.

EXPERT'S PERSPECTIVE



GETTING RID OF THE PATRONIZING IDEA THAT WE CAN EMPOWER WOMEN

In the process of designing projects, we often asked ourselves how we can empower women. But as *Ana Bella Estevez* points out, "The question itself is the wrong one to ask. We ask – How to empower women but the right question should be – How will women empower themselves? That is the shift of paradigm. We need to let women decide by themselves and create tools for them to become leaders of their own lives and change makers in their communities." Likewise, *Cécile Renouard* attests that "you can't rely only on external critics and analysis, the critic has to come from within the society. The community has to decide for itself." "We must accept that there is great diversity in different cultural and geographical contexts. For example in Bangladesh divorce is common as it allows the husband to change his wife whilst keeping the dowry. It is justified to lend primarily to women, who are often left without resources. This is not the case everywhere. As outsiders, we must not impose rigid principles, but allow people to participate in the development of a system tailored to their needs. Similarly, we must give women the means of their independence, leaving them the choice of income generating activities they want to develop according to their interests, skills and market" concludes *Maria Nowak*.

BY THE WOMEN, FOR THE WOMEN

Women should be integrated in all phases of the process and they can also be the ones driving the program! To engage them, a solution can be to identify, with the help of your local partner, the key women in the community (wives of influential men, business women, etc.) and to make them ambassadors of your project. They can be your entry point into the community.

Indeed, "You must as much as possible, ask women to do the training for women" points out *Pierre Bou. Yasser Balawi* approves "The first major step in Egypt is to have access to women.

To meet with them, to talk to them and understand their concerns and their aspirations: It's a big step. There are already many stereotypes, such as – a woman does not leave her home, a woman does not understand business and that her job is to take care of children and home. That's a big challenge and we had to adapt: we asked women to talk to women and that worked."

If supporting women to empower themselves is crucial, it is not easy to change deep-rooted mindsets. "In Indian communities in Mexico, women haven't been raised to think of themselves as individuals who can have needs and can make their own choices. At first, it is very difficult for them to understand that they can make choices for themselves; it frightens them. They have been educated to depend on others and to expect others to give them what they need. This is their mindset. But if the idea of greater agency keeps coming back, if it is constantly repeated, then slowly women begin to accept it, and once they have accepted it, they break the boundaries, and they begin to participate actively," describes *Lourdes Arizpe*.

But "When women become empowered, it changes the social and economic balance of a community. When they begin to participate actively, there is immediate reaction from the older leaders, the gate-keepers," warns *Lourdes Arizpe*. Therefore, while you inspire women to empower themselves, don't forget to prepare women for the changes their empowerment could bring.



ECOSYSTEM'S NUGGET OF EXPERIENCE

Interacting with only women in a family can be counterproductive. Sometimes the whole family needs to be involved. When you reach out to women in their homes, don't hesitate to include their husbands, children or other family members in the discussion. You can use a mix of women and men to speak to families. As secrecy breeds mistrust, openness is a tool to be used. You also need to make sure that you meet women when they are available. Meet them in their free time not in yours.

After this first meeting, gather women together to talk with them. Discussions don't need to be centered on gender and equality. You can use challenges of their lives or current issues facing the community as a starting point to raise awareness and develop critical thinking. These group discussions will allow you to make them analyze their situation, to challenge them and finally to engage them. Don't forget to give them arguments not only to convince them but also to help them convince their husbands, families and other women around them. Even so, be aware that it will take time and many sessions to get a meaningful conversation going. Multiple interactions over a period of time need to be planned.



IN A NUTSHELL

Remember that it's not your role to empower women, it's theirs. The desire to change has to come from within them and your job is to provide women with the means and tools that will help them achieve independence.

It's best to ask women to engage other women.

As a starting point, centre these discussions on the challenges she faces and give her arguments to raise awareness and build conviction around these day to day issues.

It's not easy to change deep-rooted mindsets, but if you keep encouraging the idea of greater agency, women will accept it and embrace it over a period of time.

Prepare women for the changes their empowerment could bring in their lives. Empowerment has a long lasting impact on the community's social and economic balance and women need to be ready for this change.



PROJECT MANAGER'S EXPERIENCE

With the support of the Danone Ecosystem Fund, Danone Egypt and CARE International have co-created the project MCC Egypt, setting-up new milk collection centers and renovating existing ones according to new quality standards. To do so, a team was trained to be in charge of the quality control and the management of these centers. Small farmers, including women, also have the opportunity to receive trainings in hygiene, milking, veterinary services, governance and organization.

The detailed infographic of one of our other projects in Egypt, the OMDA Sahteen is coming up, followed by the infographic of our project in Spain- Social School of Women Empowerment.

"In every community system, women play a major role. In Egypt, Tunisia, or Algeria, some of the dairy farming activities are done by women and we have seen that some projects are more successful than others precisely because women are involved, they are committed and apply the methods they are given. Located in rural areas, the Egypt Milk Communities project has set up a collection center run in part by women: the project coordinator is a woman and the people who are responsible for milk quality control are women. And it is by far the best collection center in Egypt as part of the Ecosystem initiative!"

Yasser Balawi



EVERY SMALL ACTION IS A PIECE CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE



"Anything that gives women a space of their own, an activity of their own, knowledge of their own, even if only for a short period and disappears afterwards, has an impact and brings change in the minds of the women. Perhaps there would be an immediate reaction from the men, or from the religious leader but underneath women have changed. Every small action is a piece contributing to change."

Lourdes Arizpe

DANONE ECOSYSTEM FUND OMDA SAHTEEN

To improve quality of life in rural Egyptian communities through health and nutrition awareness, the "OMDA Sahteen" project is creating a micro-distribution network and "health & nutrition ambassadors" network, leading to new job opportunities in rural areas.

This project is co-created with the support of the Danone Ecosystem Fund, Danone Egypt and Ashoka Arab World.



Egypt



SOCIAL CONTEXT



25%

YOUTH UNEMPLOYED

In Egypt, 57% of the population lives in poor rural areas where unemployment rate reaches up to 60% of the labour force.



13 MN

WITH POOR ACCESS TO NUTRITIONAL FOOD

11 million people in remote rural areas are hard to reach and suffer from nutrition problems.



HIGH RATE OF ANEMIA IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN

30% of pregnant women & 50% children suffer from anaemia in rural areas.

BUSINESS CONTEXT

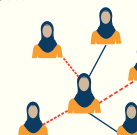
EGYPT HAS THE LOWEST CONSUMPTION OF YOGURT



Danone Egypt aims to raise awareness on balanced nutrition to improve health and nutritional status in rural Egypt



Danone needs to set up an innovative micro-distribution model to support Danone's mission in Egypt



Reaching rural Egypt with affordable nutrition products is a challenge

- Low per capita income
- Lack of cold chain
- Poor roads and infrastructure

PROJECT ANSWER

OMDA – SAHTEEN PROJECT

is creating a micro distribution network and a 'health and nutrition ambassadors' network, leading to new job opportunities in rural Egypt and increased nutritional awareness



OMDA

An existing local entrepreneur (OMDA) is identified.

Micro Distribution

OMDA are local entrepreneurs who hire sales representatives for distribution of nutritious products- Danone yogurt and other products. Each sales representative will cover 120 local retailers in his/her area.



The OMDA get access to micro-credit which helps them buy vehicles and coolers so that they can have a sustainable income.



SAHTEEN NETWORK

Women are recruited to be health ambassadors with a support of selected local retailers.

Health and Nutrition

The role of the Sahteen is to advise & train the rural communities and families on quality nutrition, hygiene, food safety and children's diet. They are given a job and thus an income.



Training of the Sahteen on health nutrition & leadership skills.

IMPACTS



290 JOBS FOR WOMEN

335 jobs created of which 90% jobs created for women.

65,400



People sensitized to nutrition information & health awareness programs through the Sahteen network.

WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR THE WOMEN

Financial Independence

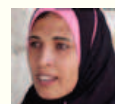
290 women have jobs and a steady income.

Leadership & community Contribution

Sahteen Champions lead a team of 10 promoters. This gives them and opportunity to develop their own potential as leaders of a network.

Increased social status

The project enhances their social status in the community and they feel respected for their work on health and hygiene



"My commitment is 36 family, 6 households per day. We take from 30 minute to 1 hour and we talk a lot with the family. It creates a lot of social contact and valorize our social status in the community."

Amal Abdal Azzem

SOCIAL SCHOOL FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

To help women who have been survivors of domestic violence re-build their lives and enter the job market, the Social School for Women Empowerment provides professional training and confidence-building, offering women job opportunities as brand ambassadors in Danone Spain.

This project is co-created by Danone Ecosystem Fund, Danone Spain and its partner Fundación Ana Bella.



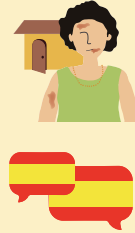
Spain



SOCIAL CONTEXT



High unemployment rate among women over 40 years.



Domestic Violence is an increasing social challenge. 1,917,000 women in Spain claim to have been victims of Gender violence.

*Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (2011)

Spanish government is focusing on raising awareness on domestic violence. Ministry of Gender Equality created in 2008.

BUSINESS CONTEXT



Increase sales through improvement of Point of Sales ambassadors' profile
Higher knowledge, higher commitment and lower rotation to 3% and lower absenteeism to 1%.

Inclusion of Women in the age group of 40-50 who are closer to the consumer profile and are therefore better able to connect with the shopper and influence their choices.

PROJECT ANSWER

Create a dedicated Social School for Women Empowerment which provides training in product and sales, and coaching to build self-esteem and confidence with the aim to integrate survivors into the labour market.

Coaching to regain self-esteem



Training to develop professional skills

Access to women network



124

Women who are at social risk are working as Danone ambassadors.

FROM VICTIMS TO SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ana Bella Foundation employs multiple strategies and interventions to address the issue of domestic violence



Society awareness
Create awareness among men and women through TV, radio and press appearances and among youth through talks at school.



Laws to protect women
Work with the government to change and develop laws on domestic violence.

IMPACTS

550

Women empowered

148

Jobs created for women

WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR THE WOMEN



New life of dignity and self - confidence

Victims become survivors supported by legal protection and counseling.



Financial independence to live their lives

Jobs and income to live without fear.



Give and take social support

Being part of a community through a women's network to take support and help other women.



"I worked as a cleaning lady. This job is very different. You interact with people, informing them about products and you give customers the warmth we all need. For me, it is memorable and my children are proud of me."

MARIA GRACIA PRADA
Ambassador at point of sales in Spain



"You ask how to empower women, but the proper question should be: how women empower themselves? That's the shift of paradigm."

ANA BELLA ESTEVEZ
Survivor of domestic violence
Founder of Social School for Empowerment, Spain

WORKING WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

"Working with stakeholders of the community is an important and sensitive phase of activation. It can also be one of the longest phases of the project as it takes time and perseverance to know, understand, interact and convince communities to adopt new ways of thinking and living. For successful activation of women empowerment, three groups are critical, women themselves, as we saw in the previous part, men, of course, but also various sub groups and other influential stakeholders within the community." In this section, we share our field experiences as to how these interactions can be made productive for the project's societal impact.

Also it's important to think about our partners as well when we plan stakeholder management. As Muriel Penicaud rightly explains "We often assume that all the social partners we work with and other stakeholders like the government authorities and local social institutions must already understand women issues. But our learning was that this is not the case. Like all other stakeholders, we must work with our partners as well to sensitize them to the issues of gender equality, especially helping them understand how empowering women leads to economic growth, social development, and sustainability of initiatives for all."



EXPERT'S PERSPECTIVE



ENGAGING MEN THROUGH THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

"In some women empowerment projects we experience very severe reactions from some of the men: jealousy and brutality against women who now have more responsibility and importance than before. You must be careful because unwittingly a project can cause a lot of harm and generate friction against women. Men don't want women's status to change. But if they see that there is a benefit for their households, they are more open to this change" explains *Safia Sprechmann*. Men are key stakeholders to engage. In most societies and especially in conservative cultures, they are the decision makers and even decide the woman's role. They often fear that if women have more economic and social power, they will spend less time at home taking care of the house and children, earn more money, take a superior position or leave. They are also worried that the women will be less disposed to listen to them and that they might lose respect for their husband's authority. Some of these beliefs have deep roots in religious teachings or cultural traditions,

which they have seen and been accustomed to. It is thus critical to be aware of men's fears and anxieties which is crucial to craft communication accordingly. The point is to reduce these anxieties not stoke them.

"If men see women emancipation as a danger, they will immediately take action to block it and stop you from talking to women, attests *Lourdes Arizpe*. Therefore, instead of creating direct confrontation, we should develop arguments that matter to them. You have to find good arguments illustrating why women empowerment will be better for the whole community. It takes time and there is a lot of resistance (from men) but very slowly people understand, and this critical mass will gradually make a difference."

As *Marleen New* illustrates, "In a traditional framework, women are responsible for caring and feeding the dairy cows. When other inputs are introduced, as well as capital investment, men start paying a little more attention. Before, they didn't consider the value of the animal because it was seen as a woman's job. But once they see the capital investment, they realize that this is actually a real

business!" *Anatoliy Shatkovskyy* confirms: "In our project area, women are usually responsible for animal farming in their households. They take care of the cows and milk them. But today things are changing. As men begin to realize the potential of dairy farming and when they understand that it makes economic sense, they begin expanding the work of their family farms. Sometimes empowerment can simply be balancing the workload within the family while simultaneously increasing the income for the household."

Engaging men and women are complimentary actions and should be undertaken simultaneously. To engage men as partners, we suggest two approaches. *Lourdes Arizpe* summarizes the first one very well: "Working with men is not your role... It is the woman's! We have to convince men but I'm not sure that the person who does this should come from outside. This role has to be played by women themselves and you have to give them very strong arguments as to why greater participation will benefit the whole family and community, including men.

Don't push women but if the preliminary work of raising critical thinking has been activated, women will

spontaneously try to convince the men by explaining to them that their greater participation makes economic sense.

The second approach is to work directly with men. Present the project to them and reassure them about their social and economic position: "If men have a feeling that there is a threat to their own power, then you are losing them. The economic win-win is the most convincing argument. You have to explain to them in very simple ways and pragmatic terms and take examples of other communities when the empowerment of women brought wealth and economic growth" explains *Nayé Bathily*. As *Maria Nowak* confirms, Give women the means to independence, never appeal to men! However, greater participation will be better accepted if the economic argument is put forward.

"The most important thing to remember is to never pitch men against women. It's not women against men. It is women for communities." concludes *Iman Bibars*. Always remember that men are your key allies in the journey towards greater gender equality. This battle cannot be won without them.

IDENTIFYING AND ENGAGING THE KEY LEADERS OF THE COMMUNITY

"When you enter a community, it is very important to understand its structure. Once you do, you identify those who are holding the power" attests *Naye Bathily*. "Never start by working with poor people at the bottom, because you will encounter immediate hostility from the leaders. It is crucial to work with people at the top. It provides a broader picture of the situation. You must be aware of the different forces that are in place. You have to know the big picture by understanding who is politically and economically powerful," confirms *Lourdes Arizpe*. The community is generally represented by various bodies and institutions (cultural, political, religious, governmental, etc.) but also by the elders or well respected men. These people and institutions have a big influence on the day to day lives of the community and working with your local partner to identify and map them effectively is essential for the purpose of the project. They are key groups to discuss with, in order to "make sure that they are not suspicious and don't feel disrespected. You must also talk to the influential women, the spouses of these powerful men," adds *Lourdes Arizpe*. They can indeed be wives of the community leaders but also women who run their own businesses or women who are outspoken and easy to access.

Don't forget to include religious groups in this mapping. "We have to tackle religion. In some of our projects we have written booklets about famous women in Islam (judges, doctors and even the Prophet's wife) to show that it is not against Islam to empower women. Also, we don't talk about women's rights; we talk about 'protection and survival' you have to adapt and use phrases and words that makes sense in the context" explains *Iman Bibars*. Indeed, religious groups

are very influential in societies, especially in close-knit communities and many of the norms that challenge women empowerment are perceived to be religious. Therefore, understanding the point of view of these groups is critical for the success of your project.

Roozje Kusuma Rachmania, Srikandi Project Manager also advises, "Work actively with the local government and institutions. Most of them have related policies or programs and it makes perfect sense to harmonize and collaborate." You can organize local community meetings and meet the elected representatives or the elected body of the village or district. For example, for the project Stand by Mums *Ana Maita* explains, "We are working with the part of the government which is in charge of training midwives and nurses. We need to have the official support of this professional regulatory body in order to become legitimate in our efforts."

As *Lourdes Arizpe* highlights, "You must be on good terms with the influential stakeholders. Seek them out and explain to them what you intend to do. Also you must listen to what they say and respect them. The objective is not to convince them. It is only about informing them on what you plan to do and listening to them." Indeed, these bodies and groups are often a treasure trove of information and ideas. Make sure that you understand the agenda of these groups and are not in conflict with them. Also evaluate whether there is space for you to partner with them or if you need to maintain a healthy distance.

We can conclude with *Valeria Budinich*, "It is also very important for people like you and me, to be very humble when dealing with such situations because there is a possibility of messing with people lives if we don't do it right. In such initiatives where we are playing with power in a community, we can either empower or disempower, and it can go in either of the two directions. You could do a lot of harm."



MAINTAINING A CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE

It is crucial to prepare the community to support, accept and integrate the change brought by the increasing social and economic participation of women. It is an important step to help your project gain greater legitimacy amongst groups and the community as a whole. However, engaging women, men and community leaders is a long drawn process requiring continued effort and regular touch points.

As *Naye Bathily* explains, "You must engage in a really constructive dialogue, explaining, with examples, that through women empowerment some communities really manage to increase their well-being. If you do that, you'll realize that there are many communities where men are open. Nobody wants to be left behind and this is usually very convincing." After having listed and mapped the various stakeholders with trusted and progressive locals, the project team should prepare a longer term plan for talking to them, listening to them and giving them information about the project and taking their advice wherever necessary.

Of course, the impact of men and community leaders on women empowerment projects is tightly linked to the social and cultural context of the community and will vary according to regions. But in the majority of cases, involving the society at large and engaging with them on a sustained basis will bring real change.



ECOSYSTEM'S NUGGET OF EXPERIENCE

Progressive men who are willing to open their minds to new possibilities for the greater good of women and societies are always present in communities and efforts have to be made to find them, talk to them and secure them as partners for your project.

"To make sure that emphasis on women is not seen negatively by men, a training/discussion group on more generally accepted 'neutral topics' like health, household or hygiene are good entry points for other topics such as sustainable agriculture." Explains Pierre Bou.

You can also ask men about their ambitions for the community. It forces them to realize that women can be a resource. When they see that women can contribute to the house income, they understand what they have to gain, and they will usually support them.



One efficient way to secure the support of the community is to link women empowerment to the community's progress. If women are responsible for activities crucial for the community's sustainability, such as water, wood or waste collection, empowering them will directly benefit the entire community. In such situations, women will receive quick support from the key leaders, men included.

As Ibu Sukiye confirms from her own experience: "Earlier, I used to stay at home, taking care of the house and children. When I learnt about the Self Help Group (SHG) created at Merapi by Danone Ecosystem and Temali, I asked for permission to join. My husband was reluctant at the beginning but accepted on certain conditions. After seeing the quick income that I brought home, he started to support me in working more and participating more in the SHG. Today, he feels proud of me and even participates in the SHG meetings."



There will always be groups and sections that will not agree with your objectives or your approach, or will stay neutral. Convincing everyone at the start is not the objective, but co-opting groups as allies will help balance any negativity in the community. It is thus critical to map these groups and understand how they work, their dynamics and their relationships with the community.

Once you have identified the supporter groups, organize regular meetings with them to make sure that they are aware of the program, its achievements and challenges at all stages of the project. One-on-one meetings are a good way to engage these people and institutions. Don't hesitate to ask them for advice to enable an open flow of exchanges. They can also be leveraged for funds, material or land, resources they often have but struggle to put to good use.

The process of engaging the 'non-supporter' group must



be gradual and it is good to leverage influential people in favor of the project. It is sometimes more effective when men from the community who support the cause engage other men from the community. And this can be done both in groups or through individual meetings.



You should be able to leverage these different stakeholders and institutions to carry your messages and ideas to their followers. The scope and influence of these groups usually helps in increasing the reach and impact of your project.

One successful way to engage powerful and influential heads of groups is to ensure that every major event and milestone of the project is celebrated with all of them.



IN A NUTSHELL

Engage men and women simultaneously. Women empowerment is not about men versus women. Men are your key allies in the journey toward women empowerment.

Be aware of men's fears regarding women empowerment and craft your communication accordingly. To engage them, ask women to talk to them or do it directly, highlighting the economic win-win.

Start the discussion with men by talking about their ambition for the community or generally accepted neutral topics. It's a good entry point to open discussions on other topics.

Work with your local partner to identify and map the key stakeholders of the community

Be sure to work top down with community leaders: go to them with humbleness, explain the project, listen to them and respect them.

Co-opt groups as allies and organize regular meetings with them to enable an open flow of communication. Leverage them to gradually engage their followers and the non-supporter groups.

Maintain a continuous conversation with the key stakeholders and celebrate every major event and milestone of the project with them



PROJECT MANAGER'S EXPERIENCE

The objective of the project Ukraine Milk communities, co-created with Heifer Ukraine, is to develop medium scale farming in Ukraine. To support the development of milk cooperatives, the project creates new farms, renovates and equips existing ones and creates an economic network around the new farming structures to sustain their activities.

The infographic of this great project is coming up, followed by our project infographic on Stand by Mums, Romania.

THE VALUES-BASED TRAINING THAT HEIFER PROVIDES HELPS COMMUNITIES REALIZE THAT WOMEN ARE A VALUABLE RESOURCE TO REACH THEIR GOALS



"We ask communities - the men and the women - where they want to be in five years and what their dreams and ambitions are for the future of their family and their community. The values-based training that Heifer provides helps communities realize that women are a valuable resource to reach their goals. When they become aware of that, they are much more inclined to support the activities of the project. When men start seeing the benefit

for themselves personally, it becomes easier, even if it takes a lot of time. Also we establish a rule that a woman should have a leadership or governance role in the dairy farm. The challenge is that in some cases women are there in name only and don't really have a voice. It is a façade. It is therefore important that everybody understands the importance of involving women."

Marleen New

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO HOLD ALL MEETINGS WITH THE FAMILY FARMERS ALL TOGETHER AND NEVER SEPARATELY. THIS ENSURES THAT IT BECOMES TRULY A 'FAMILY FARM'.

"We had to overcome the stigma that some men had in the countryside, that women should only milk the cows and not take part in the decision-making process. Therefore, when we choose candidates we ensure that women are equally involved in the family farm creation process and all the agreements between our project and the farmers are now signed by both the man and the woman of the household. I think it is very important to hold all meetings with

the family farmers all together and never separately. This ensures that it becomes truly a 'family farm' and that everyone will take part in the decision-making process. Now men seem very grateful for the work that women do and they quite often elect them for leadership positions in the cooperatives."

*Anatoliy Shatkovskyy
MCC Ukraine Project Manager*



MILK COMMUNITIES UKRAINE

To support the development of family farming and improve milk quality, the "Ukraine Milk Communities" project ensures the development of milk cooperatives by renovating and upgrading existing farms to turn them into professional family farms and creating an economic network around them to support their sustainable development.

This project is co-created Danone Ecosystem Fund, Danone Ukraine and its local partner Heifer Ukraine.



SOCIAL CONTEXT



SMALL HOLDERS PRODUCE 78% OF MILK
Smallholders produce more than 80% of Ukrainian milk, but mainly for personal use.



FARMERS LACK EXPERTISE
This sector is made up of subsistence farmers lacking expertise.



DECLINING MILK PRODUCTION EFFECTING INCOME
• Milk production is declining for small holder farmers
• Income from milk is low.

BUSINESS CONTEXT



DANONE WANTS TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY DAIRY FARMING
To diversify its milk supply.



DECLINING MILK PRODUCTION
Danone distributes a large range of products (yogurt, milk, cream etc). Declining milk production is a cause of concern.

PROJECT ANSWER

ESTABLISHING COOPERATIVES TO PROFESSIONALISE AND MONETIZE THE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLY OF MILK FROM SMALL FARMS



RECEIVED MICRO-CREDIT & DONATIONS
For equipment



CAPACITY BUILDING ON MODERN TECHNIQUES OF DAIRY FARMING
• Renovated and equip existing farms and create new farms
• Increase in quality and quantity improvement



CREATING 24 NEW MILK CO-OPERATIVES
Including 34 family farmers and subsistence farmers



RECEIVE IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL SERVICES
• Capacity building through training
• Artificial insemination
• Animal health and veterinary

{ A cooperative is a common point of collection (cooling tank, automatic, mobile milking equipment) with agriculture services including training, feeding, veterinary. }

IMPACTS



14 OF 24 CO-OP LEADERS ARE WOMEN
These women are elected by communities for their contribution to dairy farming in the region.



1959 WOMEN FARMERS
Received training on dairy farming practices.



MAJORITY OF JOBS HELD BY WOMEN
72% of jobs created by the project are held by women.



13% MILK
Danone collects 13% of its milk from these co-operatives.

WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR THE WOMEN



Antonina Kurilenko, Cooperative "Dobrobut Andriivky"

"Firstly I was afraid to take responsibility and become a leader of a cooperative because I had just opened my own family farm not so long before that. It was scary for me to have two businesses at the same time. But I was chosen as a leader of the cooperative through the secret ballot voting procedure. I am very happy to be leading the cooperative, after all women are more involved on the farm than men in Ukraine."



SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT
Women farmers have become a driving force for change in the professionalization and expansion of small holder dairy farming in Ukraine.



WOMEN AS LEADERS
With 14 of Co-ops being led by women, women have gained respect and recognition in their communities.

STAND BY MUMS

To support motherhood in Romania, the "Stand by Mums" project develops a network of Perinatal Educators in order to enable mothers to make educated choices about nutritional and perinatal care for her and her baby from conception to toddler age-the first 1000 days.

This project is co-created with the support of Danone Ecosystem Fund, Early Life Nutrition Romania and partners Crucea Rosie and Crucea Alba.

NUTRICIA
Early Life Nutrition
Foundation

CRUCEA ALBA
Serviciu de Sănătate Maternă

CRUCEA ROȘIE
SECTOR 6

DANONE
ECOSYSTEME

Romania



SOCIAL & WOMEN CONTEXT



ONE OF THE POOREST EU MEMBER STATE

- Stringent budget cuts in healthcare has resulted in a lack of doctors per inhabitant and has led to poor healthcare indicators
- Classified by World Health Organization as a High Risk Country with poor healthcare indicators vs the EU average



Weak healthcare system

3 TIMES

less doctors compared to EU average.



10,000

Doctors left Romania between 2007 & 2011



There are few "birth assistants" and Health Care Professionals (HCP) and women have very little access to information about pregnancy, birth and baby nutrition

C-section rate

36.9%

Higher than that of EU average*

8.5/1000

*Child Mortality rate twice as much as EU average

* Data Source: World Health Organization

BUSINESS CONTEXT



Nutricia Early Life Nutrition (ELN) Romania mission; to stand by mums and to bring the right nutrition in the first 1000 days and beyond.

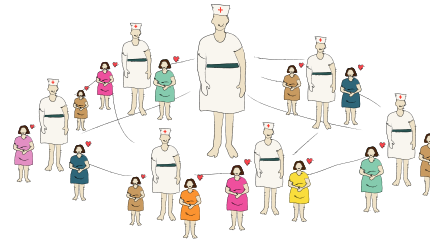
To achieve this mission ELN Romania aims build awareness among mothers and professionals of specific needs of babies during the first 1000 days.



Danone's strategy is to regain credibility by answering the actual needs of mom beyond products and partnering with responsible stakeholders.

PROJECT ANSWER

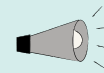
Empower perinatal educators and enroll them in a professional network to help mums make educated choices in the first 1000 days



SAMAS is a HCP network which aims to reach moms on a pan Romanian scale. This will gain further endorsement from Health Authorities and make a visible, significant and sustainable contribution in the critical first 1,000 days window.



SAMAS accredited nutritional perinatal care training.



Support from SAMAS for promotion of the services offered to mums.



Access to SAMAS Centre & Facilities.



Training in entrepreneurial and professional skills.



Access to Mums request for care through the SAMAS IT Platform.

IMPACTS



Perinatal educators trained and are now part of SAMAS Network

321 REACHED 583 TARGET



Mums reached through the SAMAS platform

2300 REACHED 3500 TARGET

WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR THE WOMEN



Professional Respect
Increased respect as a perinatal educator.



Empowerment of Mums
Easy access to the SAMAS perinatal educators. This helps mothers make informed choices.



"I instantly fell in love with the project. Today, through my counseling services on pregnancy, breastfeeding, nutrition and baby care, I reached more than 200 mothers. I'm happy to help mothers make the right choices and thus influencing the health of mothers and babies. Some time ago, I met the chief of the local municipal Hospital who told me 'I will not allow admittance of any women in this department without a prenatal course you deliver!' It was very powerful!"

Monica Ungur,
Perinatal Educator



TAKING INTO ACCOUNT

ALL ASPECTS OF WOMEN'S LIVES

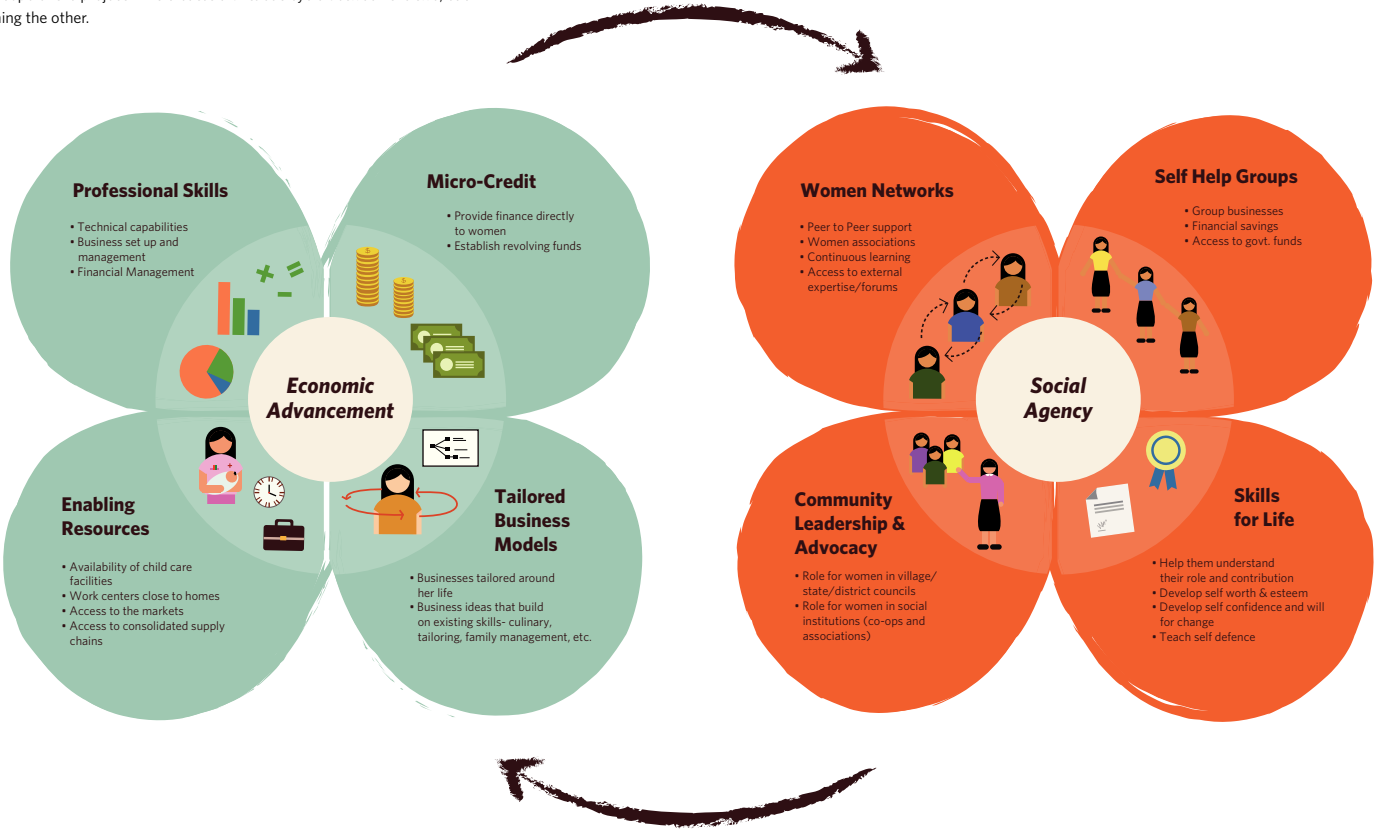
Isolated initiatives don't bring long lasting change. All spheres of a woman's life, economic as well as her social role and standing, are linked to each other and must be taken into account. To this end, through our field experiences and learnings we have arrived at a simple model for women empowerment. We are sharing the components of this model as we see them even though it's something we will continue to improve upon.



OUR EXPERIENTIAL MODEL FOR CREATING INCLUSIVE BUSINESSES WITH WOMEN

A virtuous circle between economic advancement and social agency

Our model for women empowerment combines both economic advancement and social agency. Our usual approach is to initiate at-least one action related to each in the scope of the project. This creates a virtuous cycle between the two, each sustaining the other.



Economic Advancement

Enabling easier access to resources

As we have experienced in our projects, women are at the heart of communities and are responsible for the children, the elders and the family as a whole. They hardly ever have time or energy to manage any additional occupation. It is thus critical to make their involvement in economic activities easier and compatible with their duties. Here are some examples of enablers that ease their burden and support them in realizing their potential without having to give up their provider role and without creating friction in families:

- Child care centers and work centers close to homes
- Support in getting access to raw materials they may need through a system of cooperatives or consolidated supply chains. There are many models to make this happen but it is important to realize that it is difficult for women to leave their homes to look for goods. Organizing these activities is key to a successful economic activity.

Valeria Budinich explains "Women's work places must be close to their homes, because these women are mothers and they can't just go to faraway places and cities to find a new job." She adds that to provide women with an enabling environment, "Giving them access to child care is very essential. When women are concentrated in one area, it is very critical to provide them with a place where they can leave their kids, work at the same time, and pick them up at the end of the day, knowing that they have been taken good care of. It is an economic win-win practice since it increases productivity and professional availability."

To ensure the sustainability of projects and thus, the sustainability of women's empowerment, it is important that the jobs offered to women are compatible with their daily workload at home: proximity and flexibility are key

Alexia Penet D'Izarn.

Providing Professional Skills

We have to remember that women's dropout rates are usually higher than men and thus their education level, lower. Capability building is thus essential to allow women's empowerment. Basic business management and technical education are important for self-sufficiency and the success of their economic activities. Among these skills, the ability to manage finances and calculate simple profit and loss is essential.

Tailoring Business Models suited with their skills.

Learning new skills is time consuming and can be very intimidating while building on existing competencies is easier and allows faster results. Even if they are not the most profitable, don't hesitate to look for business opportunities that are accessible, such as jobs around food, clothes, family management, nutrition, animal husbandry or other low hanging fruits. Of course starting an activity on existing skills doesn't mean that women cannot do new things but a confidence building first step is essential.

"The definition that we usually give of entrepreneurship is about 'building one company'. But very often the most successful women entrepreneurs in the communities have multiple types of businesses: they are involved in a restaurant, food production and they produce furniture at the same time. The insight is that they seize business opportunities that allow them to easily monitor what is going on while they also care of their families. Their setups must therefore be close to their homes, because more often than not these women are mothers and they can't just go to the nearby cities to find a new job. Only men can do that, women usually stay back at home in the villages."

Facilitating Access to Micro-Credit

The idea is to provide finance directly to the women and to establish revolving funds. Women usually use funds very judiciously and wisely and they also tend to return them on time. They are known to spend more on education and health than on individual needs, resulting in long term benefits for their children and families. Revolving funds, that allow money returned by one woman to be lent to another for her business, works very well with women, as they have a strong sense of group bonding and camaraderie to their teams.

Social Agency

Providing Skills for life

As we said earlier, due to their social conditioning, limited exposure and education, some women doubt themselves and their abilities. The starting point is therefore to help them develop self-esteem and self-confidence that will influence their will for change. It involves aiding them in appreciating their own contribution to their family and community which is of great value to them. It adds meaning to their life and enables them to be fully aware that they have an essential and powerful role to play.

Organizing Women in Self Help Groups

In our projects, we often start by bringing women together by organizing self-help groups and it has proven to be very efficient. It gives them the security of group work. In addition, in many countries, forming and running registered self-help groups gives access to government funds, bank accounts and government funded micro-credit schemes. Of course forming these groups takes a lot of work as it requires group composition, capability building for leadership, group governance and group finances management.

Forming and Formalizing Women Networks

Creating networks and associations which aid peer-to-peer support, continuous learning and ongoing sharing proves to be the most important lever for project's sustainability and development. It cultivates solidarity and nurtures collective commitment which are essential for continuing a meaningful yet challenging journey.

Enabling Community Leadership & Advocacy

This component is often undertaken at a later stage. Once the women have a voice in their families and begin to contribute economically, they can and should be encouraged to take a larger role in social and political institutions such as cooperatives, associations, village, district or state councils. As broader level changes require evolution in policies, this engagement is essential to bring long term impactful change.

As Cécile Renouard explains, "Human life is connected to different spheres and we cannot only focus on the economic aspect. Development is not only a matter of growth, it is linked to capabilities. Of course economic empowerment is a key element, but if you don't consider the political and social aspects, you may be short-term focused."

Indeed, economic advancement and social agency are tightly interconnected. The actions taken in one sphere influences the actions taken in the other. It is only when a virtuous cycle is created between the two, it leads to real change. For example, project initiatives which give women access to resources or micro-credit should also provide them with a social infrastructure to operate in. Progress in one realm without complimentary gains in another could lead to fragile and reversible gains.

ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AS A STARTING POINT

Inclusive business models and economic inclusion are at the heart of Danone Ecosystem's objective. For us including women in business activity and thereby helping them augment the household income is always the starting point.

Additional income for families is usually a win-win and often allows the project to be accepted by immediate family and endorsed by the community. Indeed, in addition to being the most visible and understandable argument, economic advancement of women contributes to the standard of living of families and to the well-being of communities.

Additional income for women is thus an easy way to connect women empowerment and community sustainability. We think that it is the first step paving the way for increased gender equality socially and politically as access to money is effective in gradually helping women increase their presence in homes, communities and societies. For empowerment to become sustainable for generations to come, it is critical that social and political empowerment follow economic advancement.



IN A NUTSHELL

Take into account all spheres of women's lives, economic as well as social and political, while designing your project.

Undertake at least one action related to economic advancement and one related to social agency to create a virtuous circle that will lead to real and lasting change.

Enabling the woman to begin an activity that provides income is most often a good starting point. This is the best win-win and will allow your project to be accepted and endorsed by the community quickly. But don't forget that social and political empowerment must follow close behind.



PROJECT MANAGER'S EXPERIENCE

The project Warung Anak Sehat, co-created with Dompot Dhuafa, provides trainings to women on healthy nutrition and entrepreneurship. With micro-credit they can open small cart shops where they sell nutritious products for kids outside schools in Indonesia and deliver health and nutritional advice to help mothers to put together balanced daily meals for their children.

The infographics for two of our projects in Indonesia – Srikandi and Merapi are coming up.

"Danone Ecosystem projects give us a chance to explore innovative ways to reach inclusive growth. Indeed, business as usual leaves too many people behind, especially women who don't have the opportunity to develop their potential fully. It is a sad waste of talent. Women with better access to the market can be drivers for growth and can help reduce poverty. Through the program Warung Anak Sehat, women are empowered as micro-entrepreneurs and as community leaders, to communicate the impact of food on health. Reliable, flexible, creative and hard working, they support household income and gain a better control over it. A larger part of this income is invested in education of their own children.

As a woman working in Indonesia, I have been sensitive to the gender inequality issue and know the challenges women face every day to live a life of dignity. It is a women's right to live free of fear and to be able to regain self-confidence and self-esteem. By giving them access to credit, capacity building programs and markets we have an impact on the health of the household, productivity of the family and of the community and most importantly on the lives of the women themselves – creating new opportunities for them."

*Jehanne Fabre
Warung Anak Sehat Project Manager*

AS A WOMAN WORKING IN INDONESIA, I HAVE BEEN SENSITIVE TO THE GENDER INEQUALITY ISSUE AND KNOW THE CHALLENGES WOMEN FACE EVERY DAY TO LIVE A LIFE OF DIGNITY



IT IS VERY KEY TO BE FULLY AWARE OF THE CULTURAL CONTEXT AND ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WOMEN OPERATE.

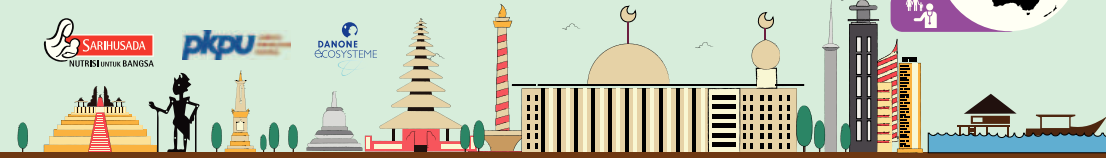
"For me, Women's Empowerment was mainly about equal access, about involving women and enabling them to start businesses. Then, through project evaluation, I realized that women needed an enabling environment that allows them to raise their children and at the same time gives them the freedom to choose and work in a sustainable way in the long term. It is very important to be fully aware of the cultural context and environment in which women operate.

My message will be basic awareness that it is not just access to jobs, incomes or the ability of being a micro or small entrepreneur for women. It is about all of that, but it is also about how a company like Danone can contribute to an enabling environment for women in which women and men are able to transform their lives and relationships together in a way that contribute to women's empowerment without backfiring."

Valeria Budinich

DANONE ECOSYSTEM FUND SRIKANDI ACADEMY

To reduce infant and child mortality and support mums in nurturing new lives in Indonesia, the "The Srikandi Academy" project delivers a recognized certification program to enhance skills among midwives. This is achieved through partnership with key professional associations and the Healthcare Ministry. This project is co- created with the support of the Danone Ecosystem Fund, Danone early life Nutrition Indonesia and its local partner, national humanitarian agency PKPU.



SOCIAL & WOMEN CONTEXT

4.6 MN
Births per year

60%
of births are assisted by midwives, even though quality of training to midwives is inconsistent.

Shortage of
65,000
Midwives in rural areas

High Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)*
359 \approx **100K**

High Birth Mortality Rate (BMR)*
32 \approx **1000**

* Data Source: Indonesian Ministry of Health 2012

BUSINESS CONTEXT



PT Sari Husada, Danone's Early Life Nutrition Business in Indonesia was founded in 1954 by the Indonesian Government together with UNICEF to improve children's nutrition for a brighter future.



Every year
80,000 MIDWIVES
are contacted by Sari Husada through seminars and symposiums, which are aimed at supporting midwives through systematic, continuous education - technical & professional.



Danone commits to stand by mums of Indonesia to help them receive professional advise and care through their motherhood journey, especially during the first

1,000 DAYS

PROJECT ANSWER

The Srikandi Academy aims to co-design a Ministry of Health endorsed, 1,000 days curriculum and toolkits in collaboration with recognized professional associations, to enhance skills among midwives and health workers (managers).



Curriculum created with recognized Professional associations such as IBI, RSHS, POGI, IDAI.



6 MONTH
Internship with experienced midwives to build confidence and practical knowledge.



Micro-credit and medical equipment to set up practice in rural areas.



200 HOURS
200 hours (2 months) of additional training delivered by experienced HCP (O&G, senior midwives, pediatricians, etc).



Receive coaching on business and accounting skills.

IMPACTS

43



Midwives opened clinics in rural areas with modern medical equipment.

228



Health care cadres trained to support midwives & to spread awareness on nutrition and health to mums in rural areas.

47,893



People in rural areas sensitized about health and nutrition.

WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR THE WOMEN



Professional confidence

The rigorous classroom learning and internship gives them the necessary confidence to start their own practice.



Community Change makers

With professional clinics and a trained cadre to support mums, midwives have gained social status and are seen as drivers of change.



"I learnt a lot of new knowledge that we didn't get in college. During my internship, I gained practical experience to deal with cases I had learnt at school."

RESTU MAYAND SAFRIT
PRACTICING MIDWIFE

DANONE ECOSYSTEM FUND THE MERAPI PROJECT

To support milk producers and other farmers in the aftermath of Mount Merapi's eruption in Indonesia, the "Merapi" project creates a new communal model of dairy farming and also establishes a bottom-up approach to identify and support sustainable alternate livelihood business models.

This project is co-created with the support of Danone Ecosystem Fund, Danone Indonesia (Sari Husada) and its local NGO partner Lembaga Pengembangan Teknologi Pedesaan (LPTP).



Indonesia



SOCIAL CONTEXT

Eruption of Mount Merapi - October 2010



2000

Dairy cows perished



2526

Farmers impacted and lost their livelihood



Fields destroyed and homes razed

BUSINESS CONTEXT



Sari Husada is a Danone subsidiary and has 2 factories located near Mount Merapi



Lost 20% supply = 12 TONS of milk everyday



Sari Husada enjoys a reputation of being a credible and responsible company and was therefore requested by the Sultan of the province to help support the rehabilitation of dairy farmers in the region.

PROJECT ANSWER

MERAPI PROJECT HAS CREATED A COMMUNAL BARN TO SOLVE THE ISSUE OF LANDLESS DAIRY FARMERS TOGETHER WITH CREATING BUSINESS INCUBATION PILOTS FOR REHABILITATION OF AGRICULTURAL FARMERS

12 Created 12 new Self Help Groups (SHGs)

3 SHGs for

43 Dairy farmers



9 SHGs for

149 Other agricultural business incubation



Through the creation of 12 Self Help Groups, the project aims to create on one hand - a communal barn for dairy farmers - and on the other, sustainable business pilots for agricultural farmers.



SUMBER REJEKI

One of the Self Help Groups with all women members

An SHG founded in 2012 with 12 very motivated and passionate women who decided to start a business of processing & selling flavoured milk and yogurts to the nearby town of Yogyakarta.

'Sumber Rejeki' in the local language, means a source of fortune.

THE GROUP RECEIVES



COACHING IN BUSINESS SKILLS

6 month training in Finance, Accounting, Distribution & Marketing.



COACHING IN LIFE SKILLS

6 months coaching on honesty, solidarity, integrity & openness.



MICRO CREDIT

Access to start up finance & equipment.

A typical business day of Sumber Rejeki women



5 AM Milk collection



6 AM Milk processing



7 AM Milk packaging



7.30 AM Milk & Yogurt Delivery



8.30 AM Products sold in Marts and Universities

IMPACTS

WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR THE WOMEN



"Before, I was staying at home, taking care of children and the house. When I learnt about the SHG created at Merapi by Danone Ecosystem and their partner, asked the permission to join. My husband was reluctant at the beginning but after seeing the quick income that I brought home, he started to support me in working more and participating more in the SHG. Today, he feels proud of me and even participate in the SHG meetings."

IBU SUKIYEM
MEMBER, SUMBER REJEKI

Income



Sumber Rejeki now has turnover of €700 per month.

Self Confidence & Respect



Women take important family decisions - on education and nutrition for their kids and have earned respect of husbands, family and the village community.

Professional Empowerment



6 months rigorous business skills training makes them confident to grow their business and profits.



ENSURING THE CHANGE **SUSTAINABILITY**

Only meaningful long-term empowerment of women will actually lead to gender equality, lasting change and sustained benefits for families and societies. To ensure this continuous process of empowerment, different aspects must be taken into account. They are mostly extensions of the milestones we described in the previous parts, but we are convinced that they also need to be considered from a sustainability perspective.

One of the key levers is to help women get organized into strong solidarity networks. Another critical condition is to secure the economic robustness of the project, mainly through trainings and rigorous support in the initial phases of the project especially on financial management of businesses. Last but not least, the projects should be monitored through the right KPIs to stimulate change, understand barriers and to overcome them through readjustments. If all these parameters are put in place, it would be more likely that the changes brought in the lives of women and the communities would be sustainable.

CREATING A SPACE FOR WOMEN SOLIDARITY

"Women's solidarity is an amazing web that is not visible to us and that we need to leverage! You have to engage women, to present them the economic challenge and push them to find solutions. It is amazing to see how they begin to organize themselves, and come up with solutions that makes sense. They will develop their own solutions which is much better than us thinking for them." attests **Valeria Budinich, Pierre Bou** confirms "In some areas, women create informal networks where they support each other and share knowledge and experiences. It's very powerful because it allows them to take ownership of the initiative and organize themselves collectively to implement changes. This can really become a strong lever when it comes to sustainability."

Bringing women together allows them to create strong bonds that help them in creating and managing economic activities. Women network can also be a way to find help when needed, to get psychologically stronger, be supported and to share ideas and experiences. It gives them strength and courage to move forward.

As **Carmen Reina Pedrosa**, sums up, "We are creating a natural network of women survivors. Allowing them to help each other has a multiplier effect on women empowerment."

Sometimes, these networks are formed spontaneously, as **Alexia Penent D'Izarn** describes: "There is a solidarity between women essentially because there is a community's destiny at stake. Women play a key role in fostering links and boosting transmission within their families and communities. All of this contributes to the creation of women's networks - whether natural or organized - and this helps immensely in consolidating empowerment. In this way, networks most of the time naturally emerge and strengthen within an existing project. This often starts with something as informal as a meeting over lunch or tea, for example, during which a link is created and an exchange is made. Very quickly the network organizes and structures itself, and is thus reinforced. There are often two levels of networks - one that is organized within the network - a network of natural mentors, who coach and guide the younger women of the group and the other, a second level in which women share their experiences and knowledge individually and within the community through community events. Therefore, there is an educational role played by women within their communities and within their own networks as well."

EXPERT'S PERSPECTIVE

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ENSURING ECONOMIC ROBUSTNESS OF THE PROJECT

"The sustainability of empowerment nevertheless calls for the sustainability of the action, that is to say, the job, the income and the supporting network" explains **Alexia Penent D'Izarn**. Therefore it is crucial to make sure that you put in place a robust financial business model which increases women's income and agency thus ensuring that the activities started will last even when the project has completed and the funding has stopped.

One way to ensure this is to secure the ownership of assets by both men and women through a contract as described by **Maria Nowak**: "In agriculture most farms are family managed where men and women both contribute. And it's particularly difficult to sign a micro -credit contract with only women, especially as the man is usually in charge of the assets and investments. The best solution would be to sign with both, without excluding the man of the house, which could create an unnecessary antagonism."

"The animals provided by Heifer are owned by women or by both women and men together. We have agreements that the women also sign, and everybody can see and acknowledge their involvement. We implemented this many years ago when we realized that when the animals were only owned by men, they were sold off very easily. The loss of the animal as an asset was a lot greater when we didn't ensure that the women had ownership." adds **Marleen New**.

To ensure economic robustness of the project, you should also equip the beneficiaries with business knowledge. Teaching the fundamentals of financial management such as calculating profit and loss is critical as **Stéphanie Daniel** underlines, "Building financial literacy, mainly, the skill of handling, saving and investing money should be a priority for women." But it is essential to go beyond and teach them about the various sources of funds, equipment available to them and how to interact with agencies that provide these funds or equipment. In addition, if women become entrepreneurs through the project, they must learn to understand their markets, how to access them and the solutions to increase their reach. For example, selling directly over the internet or developing partnership with e-commerce companies can be an aspect of their training. Essential skills of searching, negotiating and securing their supply of raw material can also be taught to them.

Organizing continuous training for women either through networks, peer-to-peer support systems or technological platforms is crucial for the business sustainability. It will also benefit the project's social acceptability by developing women's skills for life and helping them become agents of lasting social change. As **Florence Jeantet** concludes, "Via education you give freedom which in turn triggers initiatives that give a chance for a better living. Education is sustainability."

CLOSELY MONITORING KPIS ALL ALONG THE PROJECT

"We have a project monitoring system wherein we take baseline measurement at the beginning of the project. Each project is designed with this baseline which includes the participation of women, their control over the assets, their education and labour and their freedom of movement. We measure that all along the project's life-span." describes **Marleen New**.

Indicators measuring women empowerment must be carefully designed and closely related to the situation of the women in the project. Try to design gender specific KPIs. For general indicators that also apply to men, a comparison must be done to see the gender balance in the project.

To be meaningful and really reflect the gender context of a particular region, country or community, indicators should be constructed through consultations with the local population. Use participatory approaches whenever possible to define 'gender responsive' or 'gender sensitive' indicators which can help you measure gender-related changes over time.

Once constructed, these KPIs are best measured through social impact measurement studies which should be undertaken in partnership with credible and unbiased partners. These studies are essential because they provide objective assessments of a situation and thus of the project's real impact. And most importantly they are powerful tools for continued advocacy of the project.

"Equal access is not only about theoretical equal access to material or financial devices. You have to monitor that there is real equal access!" emphasizes **Valeria Budinich**.

Monitoring gender KPIs enables better planning and actions. Gender indicators can be used to evaluate the outcomes of gender-focused and mainstream interventions and help reveal if change is happening and what are the barriers to achieve success. "There are some very pragmatic and easy to find indicators to know if women empowerment is really happening or not. It is not because women are working that it is necessarily happening. You need to look inside the house, if you see that the man has a new scooter, it may not be a good sign. If you see a new fridge and more nutritious meals you can assume that the woman is autonomous and is making decisions." points out **Iman Bibars**. The monitoring of such indicators can thus provide vital information to readjust programs without adverse impacts on women and men.

ECOSYSTEM'S NUGGET OF EXPERIENCE

While designing and building the project, be aware of the opportunity to create and nurture networks. Sometimes women stay at home, owing to household routines and have limited opportunities to meet other women, thus hindering the creation of a network. To overcome this obstacle, offer women a place dedicated to them where they can meet, talk freely, share and learn.

In a broader perspective, it is not only critical for legislative and political change but also for public awareness, that women are represented by a strong association. Hence, once you have observed or fostered the creation of an organization for women, make sure it is structured. It will give credibility and social recognition to the network and to the emancipation of the women who form it.

Beyond giving access to critical information, the entire exercise of conducting a baseline study with a gender cursor can stimulate change through the data collection process. For instance, discussions in focus groups or in individual interviews, can help raise awareness on particular issues related to women. Therefore don't hesitate to use the indicators for advocacy, as people will often listen more carefully to issues backed by data. "Being pragmatic and leveraging statistics and data is the best way to convince and engage people on the need for and benefits of women empowerment." concludes Florence Jeantet.

IN A NUTSHELL

Leverage women's natural preference for group work, solidarity and networks by offering them a dedicated place where they can learn, exchange and support each other.

Make sure that you invest enough resources in structuring the networks for sustainability.

Ensure the sustainability of the project's business model by securing the ownership of assets by both men and women through contracts and equipping the beneficiaries with business and financial knowledge.

Organize continuous training for women through networks, peer-to-peer support systems and technological platforms.

Construct indicators measuring women empowerment by discussing with the local population and adapting them with women's situation in the project.

Monitor these KPIs all along the project life-span and ensure that there is real change. Don't hesitate to use these indicators for advocacy.

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METHODOLOGY FOCUS

Quantitative methodologies of data collection produce quantifiable results. They focus on issues that can be counted, such as the percentage of women and men in parliament, wage rates for men and women, or the rate of enrollment in schools for girls and boys. Quantitative data is particularly useful to compare the situation of men and women to show changes in gender equality over time.

Qualitative methodologies of data collection capture people's experiences, opinions, attitudes and feelings. For example you can use them to collect women's experiences of constraints or advantages of working in the informal sector or the views of men and women on the causes and consequences of domestic violence. Qualitative data is often collected through participatory methodologies such as focus group discussions and social mapping tools or through surveys measuring perceptions and opinions.

EXAMPLES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT KPI'S USED BY ECOSYSTEM

The Danone Ecosystem Fund follows a half yearly reporting cycle and for the purpose of this reporting, the following KPIs are measured in relation to women empowerment.



Women with better working conditions



Jobs created with social benefits for women



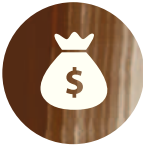
Women who received external expertise



Women trained (technical skills and skills for life)



Jobs created for women



Women who benefited from micro-credit services



Women with increased or secured revenue



Women with access to social benefits



Women who benefited from a social or professional insertion program



Men who support the project and are committed to women empowerment

PROJECT MANAGER'S EXPERIENCE

The case for sustainability



THIS IS SOMETHING I OBSERVED KEENLY ON THE FIELD, WHERE I SEE HOW WOMEN TEND TO BEHAVE COLLECTIVELY, ALIGN THROUGH NETWORKS AND PUSH THEIR DECISION AS A GROUP

"Women play a key role in the agriculture and in particular in the transformation toward sustainable practices. In most countries, in the dairy sector, they do the milking and care taking of the animals. Through this contact, they develop a very good knowledge of herd management. Likewise, for instance, in the fruit sector, work is traditionally performed by women, the picking and the sorting.

Besides this technical knowledge in agriculture, women are key in the transformation for two reasons. Firstly, most of the time they are managing the budget of the family, allocating the resources to food, kids clothing, etc. Secondly, they are responsible for the nutrition and education of their children.

Furthermore, in some communities, for example in North Africa, women create informal organizations. This is something I observed keenly on the field, where I saw how women tend to behave collectively, align through networks and push their decision as a

group. As a man, I observed a specific bonding between them. For example, in focus groups on a sourcing project in Egypt, when I asked a question, there were always intense discussions between the women and then a clear alignment on the answer. They were going through this process very naturally with no intervention on our part. It was very powerful!

Women tend to be hands on, concrete, result oriented, organized, and as a consequence key actors of the change towards sustainable agriculture. For those reasons, they are key stakeholders in our Ecosystem projects. We need to focus some of our actions (like training or networking) towards women and help them play a greater role in the communities, for a greater and more sustainable impact."

*Pierre Bou
Ecosystem Development Manager,
Sourcing*







DARE. DARE TO ASK DARE TO SPEAK AND DARE TO LEAD

Women Empowerment in societies in general but especially in the corporate world is a topic on the stands today. It's no longer just fashionable to talk about. It is a necessity. Across the ecosystem of our lives we cannot hope to develop and transform societies, work spaces and families without the unencumbered contribution and involvement of 50% of us: women.

Danone is in the midst of a transformation and we are working hard to define the kind of company we want to be in the years to come; we have called this DANONE 2020. To achieve our transformation we need to embark every single talent. The challenge of women empowerment is a new reality as it requires teamwork and a coming together of diverse sensibilities and sensitivities.

I remember the time when I was working on perhaps the most arduous assignment of my career – closing a factory. As you can imagine it was stressful and it was lonely. These situations can become embittered very easily and people, even your own team mates, can get distant and feel disconnected. I was in the midst of this when one of my female colleagues asked me how I was doing and without a moment's thought my instinctive yet unusual response was, 'I am anxious, fearful and afraid'. I could see that my colleague was taken by surprise. She complimented me on expressing myself truthfully and authentically and said she trusted me for the first time. Fifteen years back I would never have said what I did that day. Expressing ourselves emotionally as men is taboo. I have to admit that I have learnt this from working with numerous talented and competent women. Ever since, I have made conscious efforts to express my emotions at work whenever the situation so demands and it has helped me feel part of the team and connected and it lends the much-needed authenticity to our leadership personas. And this is something that women excel in and we want to bring this diversity in our teams. I have personally nurtured feminine aspects of my diverse being and I must confess it is both gratifying and liberating.

Diversity does not mean having one woman out of ten board members. It means having five. That's the only way diversity will talk, be heard and be respected. And make no mistake,

it's not a favor to women; it's an opportunity for us, for men and for society. It's an opportunity because it brings balance. Diversity of beliefs, thoughts, styles, values is essential for a company's performance and health. Companies with sustained high representation of women on their boards significantly outperformed those with sustained low representation by 84% on return on sales and 60% return on invested capital.

So what do we do to make this happen? I think both men and women have a role to play. For men, the key is to understand and embrace differences and the first step towards that is to know oneself. We need to accept, appreciate the differences and understand that women bring essential complementary skills and traits. And to go a step further we need to cultivate some of these behaviours to connect better with our own selves, our employees and consumers and we also need to nurture a space where women can be themselves. Men are the majority today and we must commit ourselves to being the 'enablers'.

Women on the other hand need to dare to be themselves. We need 'real' women. Not women disguised as men. That will happen when women embrace their own style and take pride in them. And this is one of the reasons behind launching the very successful EVE platform. Don't expect anybody else to take the lead on this topic, be the leaders yourselves. Dare. Dare to ask. Dare to speak and dare to lead.

In Conclusion I would like to reiterate that diversity and empowerment are not about numbers alone. The spirit behind those numbers matters and keeping that spirit intact is very important. Often when diversity is a minority it apes the majority and that's not what we want. We don't want good numbers on diversity charts; we want authentic personalities in the market and in our offices. We need to cultivate and nurture an environment that gives respect and space to women, to their styles of working and to who they fundamentally are and this is what Danone aims to achieve: a conducive environment for diversity to thrive and flourish.

*Marc Benoit
Executive Vice President, Human Resources
Danone*

DANONE ENGAGEMENT TO LEVERAGE WOMEN LEADERSHIP INSIDE LARGE COMPANIES



IF THE GLASS CEILING IS STILL
STRONG, IT IS BECAUSE IT
EXISTS BOTH IN OUR CULTURE
AND IN OUR MINDS

Under the guidance of Franck Riboud, the President of Danone, we have created the EVE Program dedicated to women leadership and open to "enlightened" men, as it is all together that we will achieve!

If the glass ceiling is still strong, it is because it stands both in our culture and in our minds. The aim of the EVE Program is to make us think, experiment and exchange... to make us aware of this situation (men especially) and to help us gain confidence (women especially)!

We, as women, don't know enough what we want and how to express it. Thus, the main theme of the seminar is "Be yourself and Unleash your potential". We work a lot on self-development as it has been proved that the more aligned with your values you are, the more centered, and efficient you are!

Actually women are both part of the problem and part of the solution! After six editions of the EVE program international edition and two of EVE Asia Pacific we are now able to

announce with great pride and delight that waves are really being made with regards to the role of women in business. People who have attended EVE are becoming more actively involved in their professional and personal lives.

Beyond a three days seminar, the Program aims to foster new links, to encourage sharing and to bring change all year long.

EVE is a powerful journey for achieving individual well-being and collective performance.

Here is the goal of EVE Program whose name evokes the first actress of change as well as Evian, in France, where it takes place and Evolution!

Anne Thevenet-Abitbol
Programme EVE Editorial and Art Director



The EVE Program – It was created in 2010, it is an original idea from Danone, in partnership with Cr dit Agricole S.A., KPMG, L'Or al, SNCF, Orange and Caisse des D p ts Group. In 2014, Danone & L'Or al decided to design a specific edition for Asia Pacific sponsored by Cr dit Agricole S.A. (CA-CIB & Amundi). The Program is open to any company concerned by the topic and interested in the approach. More and More companies are taking on the issue and participants confirmed the trend, people who have attended EVE are becoming more actively involved in their professional and personal lives.

The glass ceiling still exists because it is apparent both in our cultures and in women's minds. This is the whole purpose of the EVE Program, bringing together women and "enlightened" men to understand our mutual responsibilities and identify how we work differently, raising awareness and boosting confidence. "Be yourself and unleash your potential" has been our motto from the beginning, and has now become a powerful driver which strengthens us individually and bolsters our commitment to collective performance.

The EVE Program works on two levers: the individual and the organization. It aims to shape strong and inspiring individuals in order to bring change in the organization. It follows a rhythm of alternate sessions of inspiration (plenary sessions) and respiration (workshops) around three themes:

- Daring to be yourself: obtaining the means to center and replenish yourself, and bring out your talents.
- Understand and experiment how to optimize your relationships with others, in both professional and personal contexts.
- Be stimulated: discover experiences of alternative leadership.

After the second edition of EVE Asia-Pacific in Shanghai and the sixth edition of the international EVE Program in Evian, over 2000 people have attended the programme and have become players for change.

THE IMPACT OF POSITIVE ATTITUDE, AND HOW TO GET THERE


The tangible ways to be better at conceptual subjects such as meaning, trust, empathy, the power of women in leadership. Such a positive, impactful, energized community to be in leadership!

The testimony of an 'EVE' Participant



To know more:
EVE programme internet site : www.eveprogramme.com
Blog EVE programme : www.eveblog.com/categorie/blog-in-english
And on social networks: facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube





**A WOMAN IS THE
FULL CIRCLE.
WITHIN HER IS
THE POWER TO
CREATE, NURTURE
AND TRANSFORM.**

Diane Mariechild

SO WHAT DO
YOU THINK?



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