Making the Business Case: Women’s Empowerment in the Apparel Industry

SEEP is a Collaborative Learning Network

Markets that provide opportunities for all people to engage and prosper.

www.seepnetwork.org
Making the Business Case: Women's Empowerment in the Apparel Industry

May 21, 2019 | 8:30 – 9:30 am EDT

Nayeem Kashem
Arab Women’s Enterprise Fund

Maryam Piracha
Market Development Facility

Suniya Taimour
Market Development Facility

Rania Attia
Arab Women’s Enterprise Fund

Hayat Abdul Malik
Private Enterprise Program Ethiopia (PEPE)
Maryam Piracha
Market Development Facility
Maryam.Piracha-MDF@thepalladiumgroup.com

Suniya Taimour
Market Development Facility
Suniya.Taimour-MDF@thepalladiumgroup.com
Market Development Facility

• Australian Government funded multi-country private sector development program

• Operating since 2011

• Stimulates business innovation, investment and regulatory reform to create additional jobs and income for poor women and men in rural and urban sectors in the Indo-Pacific region
## The Six WEE Domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Influence on Social Norms</th>
<th>Economic Advancement</th>
<th>Decision-making</th>
<th>Functions and Workloads</th>
<th>Access to Opportunities</th>
<th>Access to Assets, Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Changing perceptions of what women can and cannot do</td>
<td>Increased incomes</td>
<td>Do women have freedom and authority over household income, workload, and access?</td>
<td>Can women take up new economic functions or improve existing ones; can they reconcile this with their existing workload; can their workload be reduced?</td>
<td>Do women have access to jobs and skills?</td>
<td>Do women have access to assets, services, and other supports?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Women? Why Servis?

- Largest shoe manufacturer and exporter.
- Location- the Muridke facility is in a small town making it ideal for women to come and work with Servis from neighbouring areas.
- Strong growth potential. Increase in footwear exports by 32% (2011-2015). Export share of Servis increased from 20% to 40%.
Design Process: Challenges

Management Challenges

• Reputational risks for businesses.
• Willingness and ability to cater to cultural barriers.
• Perceived Investment in a conducive environment for women.

Community Challenges

• Perception against women working outside the household space.
• Women don’t feel comfortable working alongside men.
• Lack of access to opportunities to acquire new skills.
• Lack of support infrastructure.
Design Process and Intervention Logic

- Started with satellite production facilities for women
- Work managed by contractors
- Moved women in-house
- Separate production facility converted to women only unit
- Day care centre established
- Opportunity for lateral and upward mobility
Beyond Income: Agency

“I am brave and I want to achieve more for my daughter. I do not want my weakness to stop me achieving my goals. I will spend my energy and strength to work and earn more for my daughter. I can do everything with the support of my mother.”

said Bahawal.

“It is easier for me to keep my money safe in the bank account and draw it from the ATM facility at the factory. I save money and buy new clothes for myself.”

said Fauzia.
Engaging and employing women through community networks.

Incentivizing women through giving payments at flat rates, minimum wage benchmarks and a three step incentive process.

Providing a conducive environment for women- Day care, logistics, food, segregated facilities, female supervisors.

The facility provided with opportunities for upward and lateral mobility.

Conducting family days at the facility.

“With MDF’s support, Servis took ownership in bringing women into the mainstream at the stitching unit. We took it as a challenge and now we could see a change. Now men of the household themselves bring their women to join us after seeing other women in their neighborhood working at the women-only unit,” said Qadeer, General Manager Servis.
Rania Attia
Arab Women’s Enterprise Fund
Rania_Attia@dai.com
SECTOR OVERVIEW

- RMG is a strategic sector for the national economy contributing **2.25% of GDP**.
- **Women’s workforce participation** in the sector stands only at 45% as compared to the global benchmark of 80%.

KEY CONSTRAINTS

- Low productivity (assessed at average 52% of potential) is a leading constraint and barrier to Egyptian RMG sector expanding its global share.
- The under-representation of women in the Egyptian RMG workforce is one of the leading causes of this low productivity.
- Despite ongoing efforts by large RMG firms to hire more women, discriminatory social norms, informal recruitment practices, working environment & management issues hinder women from accessing and remaining RMG jobs.
- Poor treatment at work is the number one reason women leave RMG jobs.
Create new formal gender-sensitive recruitment channels for blue collar women workers to access jobs in the RMG sector

Improve treatment of workers & worker retention by providing supervisory skills training to RMG firms.
INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

- Worked with GIZ LMAP to build the capacity of SST providers & trainers.
- Facilitated market linkages between SST providers (FEDA) and RMG firms (Arafa).
- Supported training of 25 line supervisors (4.5% of all supervisors at Arafa RMG factories), directly managing 1,585 blue collar, 758 of them poor women.
- Pilot relevant supervisory skills training with Arafa Group.
- Validate and promote the ‘business case’ for RMG to increase women’s workforce participation and retention via the SST solution piloted by AWEF.
- Disseminate to other RMG actors to ensure sustainability of AWEF’s solutions.
AWEF Egypt RMG Supervisor Skills Training (SST) Intervention

RETURN ON INVESTMENT for ARAFA

Improved perception of the supervisors:
(Better respect and treatment of workers, improved leadership, communication, problem solving, confidence)

Improved production completion time and improved productivity due to reduced time spent in conflict resolution

Improved performance in audits/inspections from buyers, is more likely to maintain contracts or increase sales

Improved level of workers' satisfaction & motivation
(communication, meeting production targets, improved ability to voice opinion, efficient work)

100% of the trained supervisors are able to contain routine and non-routine problems faster.
Improvement in the supervision time required to solve routine problems by 32%. Improvement in the supervision time required to solve non-routine problems by 41.5%

Less Turnover saved
1,388,487 LE

Less Absenteeism saved
521,515 LE

Product quality improvement for 42% of the trained supervisors

Increasing trend of referral based recruitment:
Present the total number 1,720 workers

1,922,057 LE

sgc etc
arafa saved

1,388,487 LE
521,515 LE

27x499
27x466
32x404
40x245
50x192
50x192
62x183
62x183
85x167
85x167

AWEF Egypt RMG Supervisor Skills Training (SST) Intervention

IMPACT ON SUPERVISORS
✓ 50%+ improvement in capacity of supervisors to solve routine or non-routine problems
✓ Better tolerance to explain tasks, increasing productivity
✓ Less shouting and bad language use, total number of disputes / complaints between the trained supervisors and all female workers under their supervision was reduced by around 68%.

IMPACT ON FEMALE WORKERS

Improved access to jobs and income:
- Increased voice, choice & control at home due to financial independence

Improved agency of female workers:
- Increased voice in the workplace as women are able to voice concerns & requests to supervisors
  - Increase in performance and attendance based incentives
  - Easier for women to manage household care responsibilities/emergencies & request time off
- Increased choice regarding work as women are interested in retaining the job for longer
  - Increased income due to women’s willingness to remain at work for longer, better stability.
Labour in Industrial Parks

Hayat Abdul Malik
Private Enterprise Program Ethiopia (PEPE)
Hayat_Abdulmalik@enterprisepartners.org
Labour Market SNAPSHOT

Total Population
104.9 Million

Unemployment Rate
Unemployment Rate = 17.5%

Total Labour Force
Total Labour Force = 50 mill

Hours Spent on Care

Labour Market SNAPSHOT: Female Education Attainment


**Male**
- Litrates: 36%
- Illiterate: 64%

**Female**
- Attend Primary School: 72%
- Attend Secondary School: 18%
- Illiterate: 52%
- Litrates: 48%

**Urban vs. Rural**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Apparel Industry: Industrial Parks in Ethiopia

Current and up-coming government built IPs

❖ Total employment in IPs: 70k (80% female).
Labour Market Program: An Innovative Public-Private Partnership

Process

1. SOURCING AND SCREENING
2. GRADING
3. RECRUITMENT AND ALLOCATION
4. WEAR
5. WORKER’S WELFARE SERVICE

OUTCOME
- Effective labour management
- Factories are able to integrate workers quicker
- Jobs seekers are more inclined to work in IPs
- Workers inclined to stay at the factory/IPs

REGIONAL GOV’T
ETIDI
IA & EIC

GOVERNMENT/DONOR/FACTORY PROGRAMS

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

- 25 screening centers across 10 catchment area
- 1 grading center
- 1 Investor Association with 20 factories
- 14772 trained, 602 peer educators

Worker Support Services
BSR: 11 factories

Worker’s Welfare
Service

SOURCING AND SCREENING
GRADING
RECRUITMENT AND ALLOCATION
WEAR
WORKER’S WELFARE SERVICE

LMIS

Job seeker

59,640 sourced
31,936 graded
26,132 recruited
7,260 trained

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

1 Investor Association with 20 factories
31,936 graded
Labour Market Interventions

- Creating disability inclusive labor market by engaging government and the private sector.
- Employment of 200 jobseekers with disability.
- Workers with disability get access to jobs, skills training and have increased self-esteem and decision making.

- Create awareness on general and reproductive health issues, nutrition and sexual harassment and skills on confidence building; and creating positive gender relations amongst operators, supervisors and management.
- Reach over 11K workers in HIP.
- Empowered workers with enhanced communication & grievance handling skills, well informed decision making on family formation and shape their sexual behaviours and choices.

- Identifying knowledge, attitude and practices of female workers on MHM and sanitary product preferences.
- IP wide
- Female workers manage menstruations better and decreased number of work days missed due to MHM.
Labour Market Interventions

- Improved knowledge and usage of better HR system which will create a healthy employer-employee relationship.
- Standardizing guideline for all IPs
- Better working condition increase workers engagement and satisfaction.

- Creates a platform to address HR related gaps in IPs and capacity building of HR personnel.
- Potentially in most IPs.
- Better working condition increase workers engagement and satisfaction.

- Workers will be able to establish their own SMEs using the skills acquired in HIP.
- 6K accounts to be opened (85% women).
- Access to financial service, improvement on their saving culture, opportunity to own and run SMEs, skills and behavioural trainings will ultimately results in economic empowerment of the women.
"I was unemployed for 2 years, and I heard a call for registration from the Kebele for unemployed jobseekers from Hawassa IP. Then I registered and got hired."

"We chose to get registered for IP jobs but Kebele officials refused to send us to HIP."

"The soft skills training mentally prepares us to work in the Industrial Park...it makes us hopeful. It has also taught us how to save money."
Q & A

Nayeem Kashem
Arab Women’s Enterprise Fund

Maryam Piracha
Market Development Facility

Suniya Taimour
Market Development Facility

Rania Attia
Arab Women’s Enterprise Fund

Hayat Abdul Malik
Private Enterprise Program Ethiopia (PEPE)
Thank You!

Nayeem Kashem  
Arab Women’s Enterprise Fund  
nayeem@devlearn.co.uk

Maryam Piracha  
Market Development Facility  
Maryam.Piracha-MDF@thepalladiumgroup.com

Suniya Taimour  
Market Development Facility  
Suniya.Taimour-MDF@thepalladiumgroup.com

Rania Attia  
Arab Women’s Enterprise Fund  
Rania_Attia@awef.co

Hayat Abdul Malik  
Private Enterprise Program Ethiopia (PEPE)  
Hayat_Abdulmalik@enterprisepartners.org

For more information about the AWEF Learning Series, contact Julia Hakspiel: jhakspiel@marketshareassociates.com
www.seepnetwork.org
RSVP for SEEP at Women Deliver!

SEEP is delighted to host a partner side event on *Shifting Social Norms for Women’s Economic Empowerment*, featuring member-led focus discussions.

**When?** June 6, 5-7 pm PDT  
**Where?** Vancouver Convention Centre, Room 213

---

**2019 SEEP Annual Conference**

Calling all SEEP members! Submit a proposal for the technical track on *Gender Equality as a Resilience Strategy* by the **May 31** deadline.

Learn more at:  
[www.seepannualconference.org](http://www.seepannualconference.org)

---

**Resource Spotlight**

- **Women’s Empowerment and Savings Groups: What Do We Know?**