WOMEN'S ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP IN AGRICULTURAL MARKETS

Talking to the private sector on women and gender equality

Thalia Kidder
tkidder@oxfam.org.uk
How to engage with the Private Sector

(Trading)  Enterprise Dvt.  Campaigns (G/PS)  Advocacy (+Research)  Philanthropy  Facilitation  Joint Project  Partnership

GROW.SELL.THRIVE.
GENDERED ENTERPRISE AND MARKETS PROGRAMME
Types of Private Sector actors

• Market Information
• Technology provider
• Inputs Supplier
• Buyer - Market
• Business Development Services
• Finance or Investor
• Researcher...

• ... and the PO
TIPS on WORKING with businesses

Your advice - Think 1 minute - Share

- Understand their 'drivers' (philanthropy, commercial,...)
- RESEARCH background / interests
- Set clear objectives/meet commitments
- Keep them informed of progress
- Acknowledge their contribution
- Be ready for continuous change of people
- Avoid jargon
- Respect 'business culture’ & time
- Be well prepared, have clear agenda
- Establish/take responsibility for continuous communication
The Purpose of the conversation with a company official? Is it...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence gathering?</th>
<th>Building a relationship?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set questions</td>
<td>Open questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers, steps, products</td>
<td>Exploring issues… less facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More focus on our own interests</td>
<td>Priorities, motivations of their business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less concern about ‘next time’</td>
<td>Leave some for next time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common problems in talks on ‘women’ and gender equality…

• Responses may be…
  • Be superficial or general
  • Telling us what they think we want to hear
  • Anecdotes that ‘tick the gender-equality box’
  • ‘Not me’ – other actors should answer, others have responsibility for women’s involvement
  • The question isn’t understood or considered disconnected from business model
A Different Approach on talks about ‘women’?…

New content?
New way of asking?

Don’t ‘jump in’ with the ‘women question’…

Don’t ‘put them in the hot seat’!
‘Developing a Relationship’ approach may get us better evidence...

• Do’s:
  - Understand the business operation
  - Understand their priorities and concerns… profits, and quality or scale, assured supply, environment or sustainability etc
  - Ask questions on ‘women’ in the context of their priorities
  - Locate ‘changes for women’ in the logic of addressing a business, markets problem together…

• Even in an hour’s meeting…
Arguments based on a) Women’s Rights & b) Efficiency

- Rationale for making changes that will benefit and promote women in the market

- Women’s rights & gender justice – “it’s right”, “it’s fair”

- Efficiency –
  - gender roles are economically INefficient!
  - Argue on their terms
  - A compelling, business case: women’s current and potential contribution to improved market functioning, quality etc
World Bank studies found that giving women farmers in Kenya the same inputs and education as men could increase yields by more than 20 percent. In Zambia, if women had the same overall degree of capital investment in agricultural inputs, including land, as their men counterparts, output in Zambia could increase by up to 15 percent. Additionally, a survey across 20 countries found that women’s engagement in community organizations led to higher levels of collaboration, solidarity, and conflict resolution. Some evidence has demonstrated women’s agricultural organizations can outperform men’s organizations.
A few more Tips…

It’s a process of change:
Propose ONE change at a time

...What will be successful to start with?... Success builds trust and energy for change
Tips…talking with mixed POs

Develop a series of QUESTIONS ... help (male) officials come up with their own answers

...Informal settings allow (male) leaders to explore new ideas
Role Play in 3s

- One NGO,
  - one (business) official,
  - one observer

- Based on: programme / business / gov’t official you know

- Observers comment; what works best on content and ways of asking questions?
Roleplay in 3s – NGO Questioner

- Questions to **understand the business operation**, market requirements and opportunities

- Questions about **women and gender equality**:
  - make it clear that **your question is linked** to their interests

- **Approach**: What business opportunities or **efficiencies** is the company **missing** by not recognizing …
  - women’s current role and contribution to production and value chain
  - the barriers women face to engage in markets
  - How new practices/policies potentially facilitate women’s engagement (and improve business)
What might WE need to do?

- Talks may clarify to us that WE don’t know how to make the ‘business case’ for new policies & practices to promote women’s econ leadership

- What evidence are WE missing & need to gather to make the ‘efficiency argument’?

- Who do we need to have in the room to demonstrate that current (PS, govt) policies are inefficient or missing potential growth opportunities
For more information, contact Thalia tkidder@oxfam.org.uk +44 1865 47 2323

Sign up for the Grow. Sell. Thrive community at growsellthrive.org