



International
Trade
Centre

EXPORT IMPACT
FOR GOOD

AFRICAN WOMEN GET *ACCESS!* TO CRACK EXPORT MARKETS



A DEDICATED PROGRAMME FOR BUSINESSWOMEN IN AFRICA



ACCESS! means solutions for hundreds of women entrepreneurs in Africa. True to its name, the programme has empowered women in sectors from coffee, leather and horticulture to textiles, handicrafts and services by giving them access to regional and global markets as well as the tools to ensure their success.



Linda Holtes, ACCESS! regional lead trainer delivering information on the new INCOTERMS © 2010



Katherine Ichoya (center) from FEMCOM during the Regional Training of Trainers event in Lusaka, Oct. 2010



ACCESS! team from UWEAL and Dorothy Tuma (right) regional lead trainer



Mr Monie R. Captan, Chairman of the Liberia Chamber of Commerce at exhibition stand of handicraft products

This innovative regional gender initiative helped **Sara Katerbalirwe** build her traditional bark cloth business into the largest and most innovative company of its kind in Uganda. She praises her ACCESS! training in 2007-2008 for helping her professionalise Marie-Sar Agencies Ltd., which creates home furnishings, office decorations and fashion accessories. Her sales, production capacity and workforce have more than doubled since then, and Sara Katerbalirwe now has full-time employees as well as 90 women working part time.

"I was relatively new to exporting and I was struggling with aspects like export documentation and getting paid on time. I have benefitted so much from programmes like ACCESS! and the support of organizations like ITC. These people gave me their time so even though I am very busy with the business, I make sure I take time to give back."

Sara Katerbalirwe does that by coaching other businesswomen who want to expand into regional and foreign markets. She is not alone: many participants in the ACCESS! Export Training for Women Entrepreneurs become mentors themselves, passing on the skills and knowledge they acquired about export-market requirements such as packaging and labelling to their peers and contributing to the programme's sustainability. The mentoring programme also provides a means of keeping ACCESS! graduates linked to the national ACCESS! Focal Point Institutions (AFP).

Sustainability is one of the cornerstones of ACCESS!, sponsored by the Canadian-funded Programme for building African Capacity for Trade (PACT II). Through export training, mentorship, counselling, trade intelligence, and product and market development, ACCESS! gives businesswomen the proficiency, networks and confidence to improve trade-support services and ultimately increase their export readiness and enjoy success regionally and internationally. Funding for ACCESS! II is scheduled to end in February 2013.

"We have to make sure we leave a strong legacy so that activities will continue beyond the lifespan of the programme. It's there, it's working and it's country-driven."

Sébastien Turrel, Senior Trade Promotion Officer, Office for Africa, ITC

TRANSLATING THEORY INTO ACTION

Measurable results show how the programme has played a vital role for women exporters in 20 African countries: Benin, Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia. With more than a third of companies worldwide having women participation in ownership, women entrepreneurs are a growing economic force — and nowhere more so than in Africa.

An *ACCESS!* workshop by ITC-trained and certified experts helped **Pauilly Appiah Kubi** expand fruit and vegetable dryer Ebenut Ghana Ltd. from a small, local workshop with a single dryer that handled 20 pieces at a time into a company that processes, packages and sells three tonnes of dried produce a month and exports to West Africa, Europe and the U.S.

Tanzanian **Joyce William Mbwete** of Foot Loose (T) Ltd. Handicrafts has been selling her handicraft products to African countries including Uganda and Kenya since her first *ACCESS!* workshop in 2007. She wants to pass on her skills and knowledge to other basket producers and has helped create 1,000 jobs as she acts on her company's philosophy of trading with other small producers for the socio-economic and environmental wellbeing of marginalized producers in developing nations.

South African medical supply company BMZ Import and Export Agencies's sales were largely domestic until owner **Bernadette Zeiler** participated in an *ACCESS!* workshop and went on a trade mission through the programme and the national AFP, the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Today, most of BMZ's sales are to export markets and the company is the top sourcing and consolidating agency in South Africa for medical, laboratory, orthopaedic and dental equipment, with annual revenue of \$500,000.

Rwandan **Kalisa Umutoni** secured several contracts in Burundi and her company G-Mut recently began exporting school chalk made from local raw materials after her one-week *ACCESS!* training in 2011 as well as marketing support through the national AFP, the Rwanda Development Board.

After participating in an *ACCESS!* workshop along with 45 other Nigerian women, House of Treasures Comics owner **Ronke Adeyemo** was selected to go to a large South African international Trade Fair. The 2011 course by ITC and the national partner Enterprise Development Centre of the Pan African University was an 'awesome opportunity', Adeyemo said.

ACCESS! training left Nigeria's Kaltume Jafaru of Stamina Foods 'enlightened' about the requirements of an exporter. 'My hope towards accessing markets which I was initially sceptical about has been rekindled,' she said, adding that the workshop has prepared her to face 'whatever challenge that may come my way as far as exporting is concerned'.



Liberian businesswomen at the launch of the *ACCESS!* national training workshops in Monrovia, July 2011



Team building exercise at a national training workshop by the Export Promotion Council (EPC) in Nairobi, Kenya



Namsifu Nyagabona (left) *ACCESS!* trainer in Tanzania with Happiness Mchomvu, national focal point



Rebecca Mpaayei-Saruni, *ACCESS!* focal point Kenya working on the national implementation strategy



Désirée Biboum Altante, *ACCESS!* regional lead trainer during the national training workshop in DRC



Enterprise Development Center, Pan-Africa university, Lagos is leading the *ACCESS!* implementation in Nigeria



The ACCESS! network in the COMESA and SADC regions ready to deliver export services to women entrepreneurs

The programme has also inspired many African women to form their own partnerships as a means of stepping up production and enhancing export potential. After training and a briefing on mentorship by the Zambia Chamber of Small and Medium Business Associations in June 2011, 10 female entrepreneurs agreed to join forces. The AFP offered to provide brokering services to ensure that the consortium's business proposals are given due consideration for possible funding and will also offer business and export planning assistance.

MORE ACCESS! WITH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

In line with PACT II's regional network approach, ACCESS! seeks to develop institutional links at the regional level and has formed strategic partnerships with national AFPs in all 20 participating African countries. The ACCESS! Web Portal, in English and French, builds export visibility for women in Africa and strengthens the team spirit and business networks. Some AFPs, such as Ethiopia's Center for African Women Economic Empowerment, have created their own website to disseminate information on ACCESS! results and its growing influence.

ITC, in close collaboration with public and private partners in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), is now working to expand the ACCESS! programme to new African markets.

In addition to building on the experiences and successes of the programme's outreach into African countries, ITC is now hard at work adapting ACCESS! to meet the needs of women entrepreneurs in other regions of the world, such as in Latin America, the Caribbean region and Asia. Exciting pilot projects are also envisaged as a first step into the Arab world and aim to underpin the evolution of ACCESS! into a recognized programme for women exporters in North Africa and beyond.

For more information on the programme and a complete list of ACCESS! focal point institutions, please visit our web portal: www.womenexporters.com



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