



**Kenyatta University
Women's Economic
Empowerment Hub**

POLICY BRIEF: EFFECTIVENESS OF WOMEN-IN-MANUFACTURING PROGRAM IN PROMOTING WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN KENYA

Executive Summary

This policy paper emanates from a pilot study conducted prior to a full evaluation of the effectiveness of the Women-in-Manufacturing program (WIM) in promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in Kenya. The Pilot evaluation sought to test the applicability of the theory of change in which the program is domained. The WIM program holds that through its four modules on (i) networking and mentorship, (ii) market linkages, (iii) advocacy, and (iv) entrepreneurship development, it would be able to impact positively on the ability of the women participating in the manufacturing sector in Kenya to succeed and advance economically and enhance their power to make and act on economic decisions, and thus contribute to promoting their economic empowerment. Additionally, given that manufacturing is included in the government's prioritized development agenda, the study sought to explore how the WIM program could contribute to the attainment of National Industrialization Policy objectives. During the study, the efficacy of the data collection tool was tested.

Key Findings

- ❖ participation in KAM/WIM program impacted on women's power, voice and agency to varying extents, and thus provided an early lead to the general applicability of the theory of change.
- ❖ There is an unclear correlation between the WIM program and women's access to and control over resources, and decision making at the household level
- ❖ Taxation featured as a key concern affecting the enterprises' performance.

Moving forward

1. KAM to enhance their reach to their members to join the WIM program
2. KAM to assess and review the WIM program to target better voice and agency in household decision making
3. Further assessment be conducted to explore the best approaches to addressing the taxation systems so as to create a conducive environment for women-owned enterprises to thrive

Introduction

There is increasing recognition of the economic case for having more women in manufacturing. The general arguments for increased levels of participation are clear – manufacturing is a key driver of economic growth which, if sustained, could increase the country’s competitiveness, generate employment and enhance efficiency in utilization of resources. In an equal measure, Women’s empowerment can be well a paying strategy for overall economic and social development throughout the Globe. Empowerment of women means making women to be economically independent, self-reliant, and have a positive self- confidence to face any difficult situation. Women’s engagement in manufacturing is an activity that promises encouraging results.

Kenya’s manufacturing sector has been the main conduit for the country’s integration into regional and world markets, and is a major source of employment in the economy. However, studies show that the manufacturing sector in Kenya has, over the years, been male dominated as in many other African countries. While women have gained entrance into the manufacturing sector, they face various hurdles emanating from gender socialization, cultural norms and stereotypes. Additionally, women have limited access to and control over productive resources, inadequate business knowledge and skills which affect their economic advancement.

Research overview

Pre-piloting phase consisted of a WIM regional conference which sensitized women manufacturers on bankability, mentorship

The earnestness to close the gender gap in a male dominated manufacturing sector was the key reason for Kenya Association Manufacturers (KAM) to introduce Women in Manufacturing (WIM), a program that aims to increase participation of women in the manufacturing sector through mentorship, networking, advocacy, business, and market development support. Since its inception in 2017, the program’s effectiveness in translating into women economic empowerment has not been evaluated.

The Kenyatta University Women’s Economic Empowerment (KU-WEE) Hub under the sponsorship of Bill and Melinda Gates foundation sought to assess effectiveness of WIM program in promoting WEE and subsequent participation of women in the manufacturing sector in Kenya.

This policy brief reflects on a pilot study evaluating the effectiveness of WIM program in promoting women’s economic empowerment. Specifically, the pilot study sought to evaluate how the WIM program has impacted on women’s industrial entrepreneurship; business skills of women; productivity of women-owned enterprises; women’s access to resources; women’s economic decision-making within households; and explore how the WIM program can contribute to the attainment of National Industrialization Policy objectives

and product development and a visit to Kiambu County Governor’s office whose purpose was to share information about the

projects being undertaken by the KU-WEE Hub with an emphasis on the research on WIM. The Piloting commenced on 23rd of November 2021 where a survey was conducted, featuring 19 women-owned or managed manufacturing firms in Kiambu County. Selection of firms was purposive and was drawn from a list of members belonging

to KAM with reference to whether the firms were members of the WIM programme or not. Data collection exercise was conducted in the following areas: Limuru, Kabete, Kiambu, Ruiru, Juja, and Thika. The questionnaire consisted of quantitative section, qualitative section and focus group discussion.

Key Findings

- ❖ WIM program improved the leadership skills of the women participants, and facilitated utilization of voice and agency and generally enhanced their business skills.
- ❖ Women reported limited control over household productive assets and could not make exclusive decisions about business and household income. Spousal dominance and control over Women's personal, resources and business life is a major problem that hinders business development among women.
- ❖ Focus group discussion report established that society does not relate informal business as part of manufacturing sector.
- ❖ Most women have power in time agency, but with significant variations between those engaged in domestic work and those income generating activities. Most women are flexible to change their schedule or routine if responding to an emergency but not equally likely if what they are responding to lacks urgency; more so especially when respondents are engaged in income generating activities.

KAM/WIM Participation

Women generally participated at various levels in manufacturing- from fully registered companies to sole proprietorship, and over a wide sectoral range in cosmetics, chemical and allied, to clothing.

Most entrepreneurs were KAM members, but only a dismal number are WIM members. A number of those who are not members of WIM were not aware of WIM, but expressed willingness to join if informed. A significant number of WIM members had participated in networking activities, and others in training and mentorship. Majority agreed/strongly agreed that KAM/WIM activities empower them and their businesses, and also expand their networks. Meanwhile, a significant

number believe that it would be better if KAM/WIM had a package specifically for micro and small entrepreneurs.

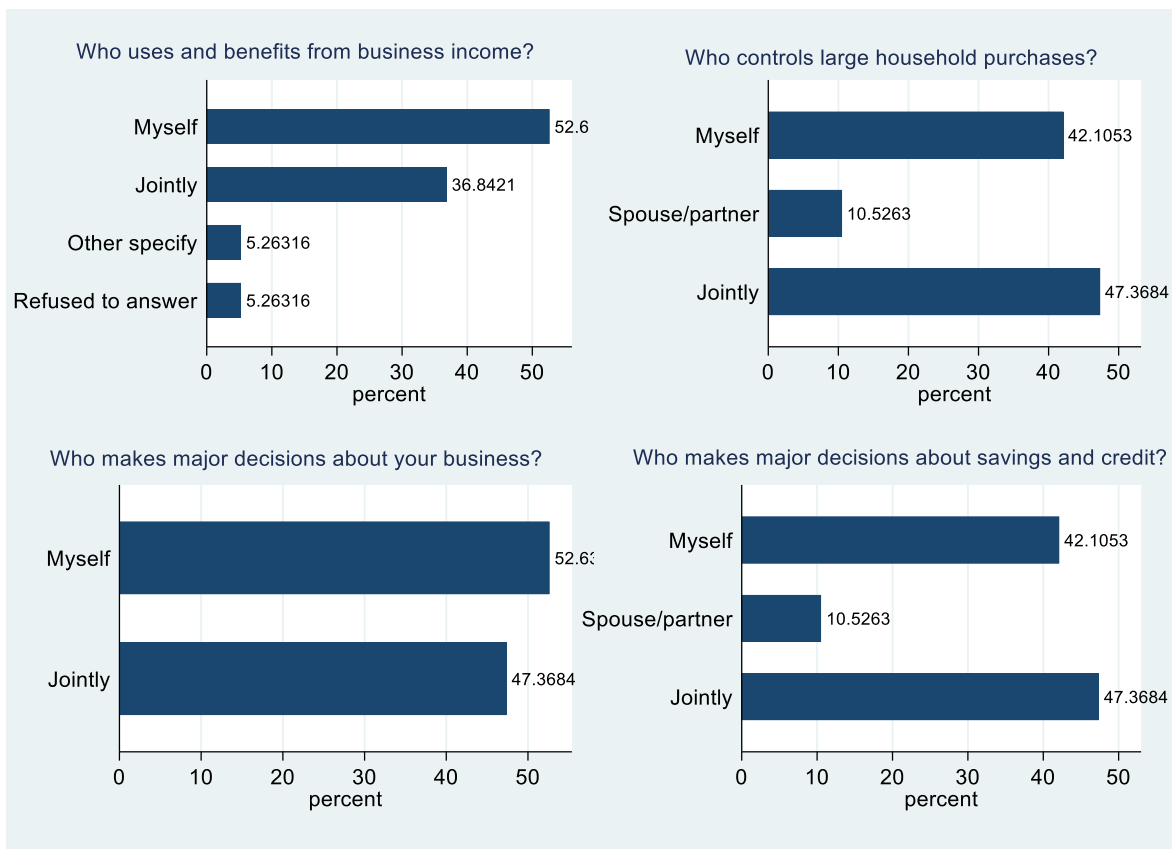
- ✓ Women entrepreneurs are KAM members, but few are WIM; non-WIM members express willingness to join WIM
- ✓ KAM/WIM activities empower women and their businesses, and also expand their networks.
- ✓ Desirable if KAM/WIM had a package specifically for micro and small entrepreneurs
- ✗ Participants unsure about the extent to which WIM program enhanced their access and control of resources
- ✗ WIM members strongly disagreed with the proportion that WIM program improved their decision making at the household level.

Decision making, access and control of productive resources

Access to resources and input into decision making are both key components of women's empowerment. On one hand, they will influence productivity directly; on the other, they may influence intra-household distribution and resource allocation, which in turn will also affect productivity. Productivity, in turn, affects total income of the household, which has a great influence on the overall household wellbeing. But intra-household distribution and resource allocation also has a direct impact on the wellbeing of individual members, such as women and children.

From the pilot assessment, most respondents indicated having control over their own earning, with some sharing jointly the decision making over their earnings. Responses on the control over large household purchases showed a close balance between sole and joint decision-making authority. A similar pattern was observed for the decision making on savings and credit, and business investment. In terms of benefits, slightly more than half of the respondents reported benefiting the most from their business income. Majority of respondents reported that households owned productive assets but only a small proportion had land title.

Notably, half of the respondents believe that they are more independent in making decision since they joined WIM/KAM; a significant number disagreed, and a few were unsure.



Time Agency

Time-use agency considers the confidence and ability that women have to make and act upon strategic choices about how to allocate one's time. It is a particularly relevant concept for interventions that aim to increase women's empowerment by promoting women's involvement in remunerated activities.

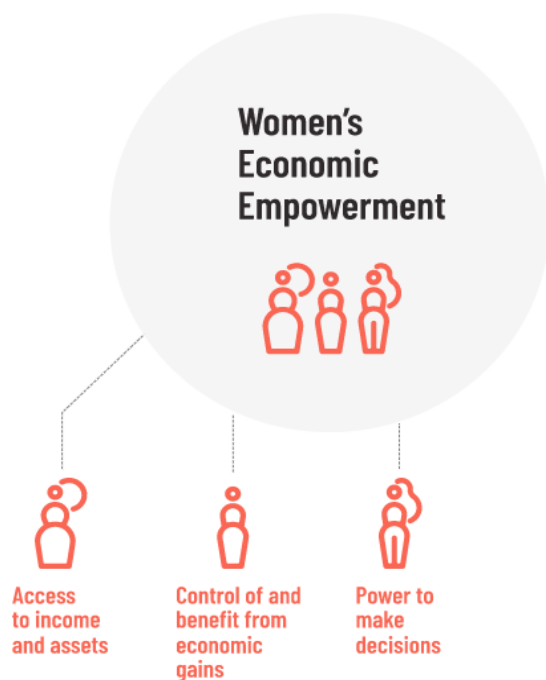
#1. Most women are flexible to change their schedule or routine if responding to an emergency but not equally likely if what they are responding to lacks urgency, more so especially when respondents are engaged in income generating activities.

#2. All of the respondents agreed that they can change their daily schedule if an emergency comes up. However, only a few could be flexible where the situation is not an emergency.

#3. Women engaged in domestic work expressed higher flexibilities to delegate work if emergencies arose, compared to women engaged in income generating activities.

Analysis of research findings

This policy brief builds on the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Framework for advancing Women's Economic Empowerment, which considers three key outcomes for women economic empowerment.



- ❖ **Access to income and assets:** When women have a source of income, they are on the path to becoming a healthy, empowered economic actor.
- ❖ **Control of and benefit from economic gains:** Women who are able to decide where, when, and how to spend their income see improvements in their social and economic status and the level of resources devoted to their children.
- ❖ **Power to make decisions:** Decision-making is a core expression of agency and refers to the capacity of women and girls to take purposeful action and pursue goals free from the threat of violence or retribution.

Figure 1: Outcomes of Women Economic Empowerment

Source: Adopted from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Framework for advancing Women's Economic Empowerment

Despite the anecdotal sample size, the results show that a significant number of WIM members held the view that the program had benefited them in terms of improved leadership skills, utilization of voice and agency and generally enhancement of their business skills. Therefore, it does make a difference to join WIM/KAM.

However, it was unclear as to the extent to which WIM enhanced women's access and control of resources, and more so, the women disagreed with the proposition that WIM program improved their decision making within the household.

The women in manufacturing program is designed to play an advancing part in championing women's empowerment, mainly as a sponsorship source for women's rights, as a means of socially and economically capacitating women, and as a way of implementing training and creating employment data.

Despite the limited scope of the pilot study, the results were indicative of an early lead that the collective manufacturing entrepreneurship framework could give rise to economic and social empowerment of its fellows.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This policy paper emanates from a pilot study conducted prior to a full evaluation of the effectiveness of the Women-in-Manufacturing program in promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in Kenya. Despite the methodological concerns noted during data collection, the study was able to conclude that participation in KAM/WIM program impacted on women's power, voice and agency to varying extents, and thus provided an early lead to the general applicability of the theory of change. Therefore, with the necessary amendments to the tools and refining of the methodology, the full study is viable. The study noted the ambiguity in the correlation between the WIM program and women's access to and control over resources, and decision making at the household level, which, in part, could be related to the men's opinion that they are not prepared to handle the empowered woman at home. This could be explored further during the full study to determine if the same findings will hold, and establish reasons for that.

Taxation featured as a key concern affecting the enterprises' performance. The women suggested the need to restructure the tax system, provide tax relief and review the Income Tax Act, so as to improve the productivity of the women owned enterprises

Moving forward

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