

In 2016-17, Root Capital and Value for Women joined forces to pilot tailored strategies for gender inclusion in investments in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Kenya. Gender Equity Grants (GEGs) were created to support businesses in implementing gender inclusion strategies that advance women's participation, skills and/or leadership. They also add to the growing evidence that investing in women is not only fair, but makes good business sense.

GENDER EQUITY GRANTS



3 Kenyan SMEs



USD 20,000 each



One year to test

STRATEGIES FOR GENDER INCLUSION



Workplace savings, credit cooperatives and financial literacy trainings to employees and farmers

Daycare center to support working parents with young children



Agricultural support like crop insurance and skills trainings to improve yields and opportunities to generate off-season income

Crop collection centers to reduce distance to markets and risks of theft, violence, exploitation and crop losses



OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Social



- Increased savings and incomes
- Greater financial independence and decision making of women
- Reduced care burden, and cost and time savings associated with childcare
- Improved child health
- Cost and time savings by aggregating produce at collection centers; reduced stress due to assured buyer and prices
- Greater physical safety and security
- Enhanced skills leading to increased productivity, crop diversification, family nutrition, confidence, and respect
- Strengthened relationships within the family
- Changes to traditional gender roles through employment of women in alternative jobs like brick making

Business Performance



- Decrease absenteeism and tardiness with related gains in productivity
- Increased worker satisfaction
- Mutual loyalty between employee and company
- Cost-savings and reduced post-harvest losses
- Enhanced visibility and reputation of company in community
- More consistent supply base

CONCLUSION: The piloted activities and strategies found gender inclusion can enhance rural livelihoods and family dynamics, help close gender gaps, and improve business performance for agricultural SMEs by unlocking women's potential.