

LESSONS LEARNED
& FINAL REPORT
from the
STRYDE PROGRAM

2011 – 2019



Empowering Youth in East Africa

Gender



Introduction

Harnessing Africa's growth potential is dependent on full inclusion of women across the social and economic spheres.

Women are a force for growth in Africa. In fact, Africa is the only region in the world where women make up the majority of those who are entrepreneurs (World Bank, 2019). Despite a high labor force participation, women are typically concentrated in unpaid or vulnerable employment. Unemployment rates for women - especially young women - are also higher than rates faced by men (ILO, 2018).

The specific constraints facing young women stem from their differential access to assets, skills, business services, and underlying cultural norms and institutions. According to the Global Financial Inclusion Database (2017), men in the region are 11 percentage points more likely than women to have an account with a financial institution or mobile money provider, and this gender gap has widened over time. Loans received by women are typically of smaller amounts while they have a greater need to present collateral (World Bank, 2019).

Though women dominate African agriculture, their lower access to finance severely curbs their ability to invest in farm productivity and business (Wachira, 2018). In addition, Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest gender gap in the education of boys and girls in the world, limiting the region's available talent pool and furthering gender disparities among men and women later in life (World Economic Forum, 2017). Expanding women's economic opportunities in the region requires not only building individual capacity of women but also changing mindsets of communities and families, and forging inclusive networks.



Gendered Program Design of STRYDE



STRYDE committed to gender equality by setting ambitious targets and designing an inclusive program.

After exceeding TechnoServe's female participant target of 40% in STRYDE 1.0, STRYDE 2.0 set a target of 50% for women's participation in training, and then exceeded the target. 52% of STRYDE beneficiaries were women. The target was extremely important in placing gender equality at the center of the project. The target meant that staff were responsible for ensuring that women were being included in training. In particular, the STRYDE business counsellors, half of whom were females, played a crucial role in identifying and implementing context-specific strategies for mobilizing women. This led to important lessons about how to reach women effectively, for example, door-to-door mobilization worked better in some cases than sharing the information about the program at a village meeting that mostly men attended. Some business counsellors engaged a helper to assist women with babies in the classroom. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system captured sex-disaggregated data to track progress and ensure accountability.

STRYDE built staff capacity and adopted a variety of approaches to encourage young women's participation in the program. STRYDE began with a gender analysis to understand the needs of the project's targeted youth populations. This provided direction on how best to create a learning environment to catalyze equitable behavior change using skilled trainers and a gender-responsive curriculum. As a result of this analysis, women were specifically targeted for recruitment during mobilization; the training format was adjusted to consider gender roles and women's domestic responsibilities; and a gender-focused module "Together We Can Fly" was introduced to help participants explore the existing gender norms that lead to gender inequalities and envision the benefits of equitable gender relations. Trainers were taught how to provide a gender-responsive learning environment and lead conversations on how to challenge harmful gender roles and power relations. Staff also received training on how to identify and address gender inequalities in the local context and were supported by TechnoServe's Global Gender Director.

Key strategies that encouraged women's participation in training included:

- Flexible schedule, convenient location and catch-up classes to encourage women's regular participation;
- Supporting women to bring babies to the classroom, if needed;
- Raising awareness and sensitizing field staff to overcome their own biases and incorporate gender-integrated strategies in mobilization and training;
- Engaging community leaders during mobilization to influence local gender norms that prevent women's participation;
- Direct and early engagement with husbands and parents; and
- Hiring equal numbers of male and female business counselors to deliver the training



Together We Can Fly and Gender Safe Spaces

Together We Can Fly

During a two-hour training module — “Together we Can Fly” — participants explored the impact of gender norms on men’s and women’s lives. Young men and women reflected on their roles and responsibilities, how to make decisions together, and the actions that enable men and women to reach their full potential.

Gender Safe Spaces

While, men and women agreed that the mixed-sex environment of STRYDE enabled greater learning, they did not always feel comfortable sharing their challenges and experiences in front of each other. STRYDE facilitated safe single-sex discussions facilitated by Business Counsellors trained on how to conduct these Safe Space sessions. Two Gender Safe Space sessions, less than an hour each, took place in each three-month training phase. Sessions explored questions such as ‘Why are women not taking up more leadership positions in Group Businesses?’ or ‘What hinders men/women from saving, and what are the possible solutions?’ which helped youth hold sensitive discussions in an open and non-judgmental environment.

Figure 1: Participants were encouraged to question existing gender relations and practices through activities

Source: Excerpt from STRYDE “Together We Can Fly” module

Biology or Society



Does this woman have cooking duties because of:

Biology _____

Society _____

(tick one)



Are these men discussing and making decisions because of:

Biology _____

Society _____

(tick one)



Is this woman carrying her unborn child because of:

Biology _____

Society _____

(tick one)

Key Outcomes

Both men and women increased their participation in economic activities after STRYDE. Men and women increased their participation in income-generating activities by 18% and 20% respectively within one year of attending STRYDE.

While STRYDE youth engaged in multiple income-earning activities, agriculture was the most important sector for both men and women. About 70% of men and 66% of women report engaging in some kind of agriculture activity for their livelihood. Microbusiness was relatively more important to women than to men. Around 46% of women

compared to 34% of men engaged in microbusinesses.

Young women see profitable businesses as a chance to improve their lives yet their circumstances often lead them to low-margin sectors. Often, women’s businesses are either an extension of their existing agricultural activity, like selling horticulture produce, or they are activities that can be started without much capital and travel away from their homes, like baking or hairdressing. Women’s limited networks also make it difficult for them to enter higher-growth and male-dominated sectors like plumbing,

mechanics, or electrician jobs. Due to social pressures, safety issues, and lack of access to assets, credit or insurance, women perceive risk differently from men, such as the risk of traveling far to urban markets, risk of not being able to take care of a sick family member if needed, or risk of not being able to repay a loan. This results in women's economic activities being concentrated in sectors that are typically low-margin or those considered appropriate for women. For example, typically female-owned businesses like vegetable selling are less profitable than typically male-owned businesses like carpentry. Many men believe that hotel or vegetable businesses are appropriate for women, which may contribute to the high presence of women-owned businesses in these sectors.

These gender-specific constraints prevented women from achieving similar income gains as men. Women participated in STRYDE and graduated at higher rates than men. In the first year after the STRYDE program, women and men increased their economic engagement at similar rates. Despite this, 2-3 years after STRYDE, men's income growth has outpaced women's growth by 29%, creating a gender income gap.

This likely reflects women's lower levels of initial endowments of education, networks, information, and capital assets compared to men. For example, even though female participants grew their asset holdings of land much more than male participants

after completion of training, the average value of their land holdings remained lower. The lower initial endowments could lead to lower business investments and lower profits for women.

Contextual and external factors like social norms, beliefs and perceptions, and legal rights further limit their participation in economic activities. For example, women who traveled to sell their produce to a distant marketplace were seen as bad wives or told to stay at home. Generally, women would need permission from their spouse to attend a training while men did not. Customary laws that determine land and inheritance rights would often limit women's access to land.

TechnoServe envisions several ways to tackle this income gap in future programs.

- Accelerating women toward microbusiness, where they have achieved success
- Identifying and celebrating role model women who are breaking through cultural barriers and succeeding in typically male-dominated activities
- Encourage and track couples participation in training, to improve economic cooperation in households and drive total household income growth.



Successful STRYDE women typically engage in agriculture and microbusiness.

Most STRYDE youth built their livelihoods around several different income-generating activities, which TechnoServe categorized as agriculture, microbusiness, and employment. An analysis of income gains by gender shows that specific combinations of income-generating activities lead to benefits for men and women. Men appear to have an advantage in 'employment' activities, which includes formal and informal employment as well as seasonal and part-time employment. Women who combined agriculture with microbusiness increased their income by \$93/month or 60% more than men.

STRYDE women show a clear comparative advantage in carrying out microbusinesses.

Interestingly, women's income gain was not affected by other factors, including age, marital status, and saving habits.

CASE STUDY

Amida, 21, from Rungwe District in Tanzania, successfully runs multiple businesses. Amida won the Business Plan Competition for her soap-making business idea in 2016. Using the profits from her soap business, she expanded into poultry and horticulture, and started a small restaurant. Amida believes that multiple economic activities add to her income and protect her from risks if one business fails. She currently farms on her parents' land but hopes to buy her own land someday.



Average increase in income after STRYDE by sector for men and women (in USD per month)



Source: STRYDE Survey in Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania (2019)



Most STRYDE participants in northern Uganda witnessed the decades-long guerilla war first-hand as children or teenagers and know all too well the pain of loss. The majority of those around Gulu had been forced to flee to camps for internally displaced people (IDPs), and some had even been kidnapped by the guerrillas. Behind their cheerful laughter lies wounds, bitterness, and suffering. However, each day is a new opportunity to overcome the tragedies that they have faced and make the best out of their lives.

“STRYDE recognizes the critical role of youth in creating lasting stability and offering protection from future conflicts. Thus at the onset of our implementation in this area, all the trainers underwent an intense psychosocial training to help them identify, counsel, and/or refer victims of the conflict,” says Anthony Kerwegi, STRYDE’s Program Manager for Uganda.

“I was only a child when the war broke out, and nothing prepares you for such an experience,” says 25-year-old Polly Achola. “I stared death in the face multiple times. We used bodies of people we knew — our friends — as shields against the guerilla’s bullets.”

Polly and her husband, Jimmy, attended STRYDE training as a couple, and are now reaping the benefits. “STRYDE taught me that I can start small, and so I started cultivating a small patch of land that used to lie fallow in the swamp. Now I have rented all the neighboring farms for my rice farming,” says Jimmy.

The two also grow maize and vegetables and keep pigs. With sales from their farm, Polly and Jimmy now live a comfortable life and are able to save some money for the future. “Before STRYDE, I was a typical housewife with no engagement. I spent my days sitting under the tree. Thoughts of my rough childhood were always lingering in my mind. Now I have so much to do on the farm that the only thought in my mind is how to make the most out of the training that I received and make more money,” says an enthusiastic Polly.

STRYDE's model catered to women's needs and changed attitudes toward women.

While young women and girls face discriminatory social and cultural norms, young men also face gendered challenges and pressures. For example, men may feel the burden of earning more than their wife and not ask for help. The gender-focused modules “Together We Can fly” and “Gender Safe Spaces” discussions provided men and women an opportunity for introspection and reflection of their own socialization process. The gender-focused modules combined with a mixed-gender learning environment resulted in young men showing openness and perception change after the completion of training.

Engaging couples in training was transformational both within and outside the household. STRYDE was successful in mobilizing married couples, i.e. both husband and wife, in the training. Typically, if only one person in a household can attend the training, it is usually the man. By opening up multiple training cohorts in an area and actively inviting women, STRYDE provided wives, who often worked alongside their husbands in various economic activities, with a greater opportunity to access training. Men who attended STRYDE often became champions for their wives and female household members, encouraging them to attend training. STRYDE couples reported higher marital satisfaction as a result of better communication, increased trust and positive behavior (like sharing information) with their spouse.

STRYDE was particularly impactful for vulnerable subgroups of the population like single mothers and women living in remote areas. Young single mothers are an important group for achieving poverty reduction. Single mothers are particularly disadvantaged; they report less mobility to look for jobs, greater time-poverty, lower assets, and higher school-dropout rates than their married counterparts. Our field research revealed that most skills-development training takes place in town centers or market areas, making it difficult for young mothers living in remote areas to attend. STRYDE made training accessible to these disadvantaged single mothers and provided them with improved economic opportunities by bringing training to their locations and making the schedule work for them.

Programs like STRYDE can facilitate women's economic opportunity by tracking sex-disaggregated data and couples' participation, assessing the gaps between men and women participants, and learning what works to translate women's participation into increased value. Certain subgroups of women (e.g. women engaged in non-traditional sectors and vulnerable women like young mothers) should get extra attention to strengthen their ability to make strategic life choices and put those in action. A deeper understanding of women's income trajectory will help with the development and implementation of constructive and sustainable strategies to support them in their livelihood journeys.



Why men do not want women to attend the training

“A working wife becomes big-headed. She will not care for her family and respect her in-laws.”

“If she goes out of home to work, she will run away with another man.”

“I will need to see if the training is worthwhile, before letting her attend. She needs to ask for my permission first. She will just waste her time.”



Perception change after attending STRYDE

“If we learn and work together, we can share information and make our business grow.”

“After seeing the importance of (STRYDE) training, I would like my wife also to gain skills.”

“A woman can do the tasks that a man can. My wife now contributes to the household income by trading simsim (sesame).”

Source: TechnoServe Research, Uganda and Tanzania (2019)



“Do not be afraid to start something to earn your living and make sure that you have the skills to do it.”

ELMA

Elma, 25, is a single mother running a successful beauty salon in Northern Uganda. When she joined STRYDE in 2015, she knew she was good at braiding hair but was not sure how to develop her skills into a profitable business. “Before the training I did not even know how to use simple marketing tools.” she points to the sign-post outside her buzzing salon. Elma’s business plan won her 500,000 Ugandan Schillings (\$135) to buy necessary equipment for her salon. Her growing business has attracted other young men and women to come to her for training. Elma has already trained several budding hairdressers in the area and employs three women in her salon. She recollects the resistance she faced when she established her business, “If you do well in a business, you will never find a husband.” she was told by her neighbors. However, she emphasizes the importance of her livelihood to send her son to school. Her advice to young girls who she mentors, “Do not be afraid to start something to earn your living and make sure that you have the skills to do it.”



Methodology

TechnoServe and Mastercard Foundation pursued this study to better understand the branching pathways that youth take in search of fulfilling and dignified work. The report relied on quantitative and qualitative data, collected through STRYDE's daily operations and separate data collection specific to this study. For the Gender and Partnerships sections, the researchers executed customized surveys with beneficiaries and vocational institution partners. Indicators relating to youth income growth are drawn from Status Tracking Tool (STT) surveys completed across the course of the program. At baseline, STRYDE participants shared demographic and economic details when they enrolled in the program. Approximately two years later, TechnoServe conducted follow-up surveys with a sample of 10-15% of those youth. Where possible, additional surveys took place 3-4 years after baseline. This data was analyzed to produce most quantitative measures in this report. To validate quantitative findings, the research team also conducted key informant interviews and focus group discussions with STRYDE beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders.

Partners

In 2011, TechnoServe and the Mastercard Foundation partnered to help rural youth in East Africa transition to economic independence through the STRYDE program. The first phase of STRYDE equipped 15,000 rural youth in Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda with the skills and knowledge necessary to capitalize on new economic opportunities through skills training, aftercare, and mentoring. The second phase of the program, STRYDE 2.0, was based upon the successes and lessons from the first phase. An additional 53,000 youth took part in training, including new geographies in Tanzania and northern Uganda. A key component of STRYDE 2.0 was the program's focus on sustainability and engagement with local partners and training institutions. The program sought to align incentives of system actors, such as Vocational Training Institutions (VTIs), to build capacity and enable critical functions of the STRYDE model to continue indefinitely. Launched in August 2014, STRYDE 2.0 continues to provide training, with nearly 40% of the program's participants trained by partner organizations.



Mastercard Foundation seeks a world where everyone has the opportunity to learn and prosper. Through its Young Africa Works strategy and Canadian EleV program, the Foundation works with partners to ensure that millions of young people, especially young women, access quality education, financial services, and dignified work.

Developed in consultation with young people, policymakers, educators, and entrepreneurs, Young Africa Works aims to enable 30 million young people in Africa over the next 10 years by:

- Improving the quality of education and vocational training so youth are equipped with the skills employers need;
- Leveraging technology to connect employers and job seekers and drive growth; and
- Enabling entrepreneurs and small businesses to expand through access to financial services

For more information and to sign up for the Foundation's newsletter, please visit <http://www.mastercardfdn.org/> Follow the Foundation on Twitter at @MastercardFdn



TechnoServe's approach to international development is based on systemic change rather than quick fixes to address the symptoms of poverty. It is an international nonprofit organization that promotes business solutions to poverty in the developing world. TechnoServe operates in 29 countries worldwide and works with enterprising people to build competitive farms, businesses, and industries by linking people to information, capital, and markets. Since 1968, the organization's work is rooted in the idea that given the opportunity, hard-working men and women from all backgrounds can generate income, jobs, and wealth for their families and communities.

TechnoServe has been a catalyst for youth enterprise in both rural and urban East African settings through its flagship programs: Young Women in Enterprise (YWE), Girls on the Move, Smart Dukas and Strengthening Rural Youth Development through Enterprise (STRYDE). These experiences have given TechnoServe deep expertise in designing and implementing youth empowerment training programs, in addition to an awareness of the need for facilitative models that work through long-term local actors to achieve significant scale and local system change.



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