Women entrepreneurship: why so special?

Karina Ufert, SPARK Myanmar

UNESCO-APEID Education in Entrepreneurship Meeting
13th October
Bangkok, Thailand
Outline of the workshop

- General introduction: 5’
- World café: creating common understanding 40’
- Presentations: 15’
- Coffee break: 20’
- Presentation about SPARK on women entrepreneurship, Q&A: 20’
- Exercise on Supportive ecosystem for women entrepreneurship: 40’
- Presentations and wrap-up: 20’
Minglabar!

- Karina Ufert, Country Manager at SPARK Myanmar (since August 2013), liaison person for EE-Net
- Consultant at British Council
- Originally from Lithuania, now Myanmar

Previously:
- UNESCO HQ (Higher education unit)
- Asia-Pacific Quality Network
- Council of Europe
- European Students’ Union (President)
- Own (retail) business in Lithuania
World café exercise:

- To share experiences and network
- To contribute creating common understanding about women entrepreneurship (and why it needs special attention)
World café exercise: 5 key questions

1. What is entrepreneurship (in Asia-Pacific context)?
2. Who are the key actors to promote/ support entrepreneurship?
3. Why women entrepreneurship is important?
4. What are specific the barriers for women entrepreneurship?
5. What is a portrait of a women entrepreneur in Asia-Pacific?
World café exercise:

- Everyone has an opportunity to answer each question
- Participants rotate in groups
- One person per table remains as a rapporteur to brief the incoming group about the discussion and present the outcomes of each group
- Please share your own experiences with the group: not only successes, but also lessons learned!
World café exercise
(and a little bit of Myanmar promotion)
About SPARK:

- Dutch non-profit, non-governmental organization
- Active in 17 fragile, post-conflict countries (including Myanmar)
- Focus on job creation (through entrepreneurship development)
- Focus on youth and women (at least 50% women entrepreneurs)
Strategies for job creation:

- Business incubation (through Business Centers)
- Business development (coaching, B2B, access to markets)
- Loan guarantees and impact investment
- Value chain development
- Lobby and advocacy work on removing barriers for business
- Support for modernizing tertiary education (own business colleges in Kosovo and Turkey), integrating entrepreneurship in curriculum (MSc in Entrepreneurship in Macedonia)
# SPARK in 2014

## OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SMEs started (MFSII)</td>
<td>266</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMEs grown (MFSII)</td>
<td>505</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jobs created (all projects)</td>
<td>1448</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor diplomas awarded at IBCM</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academy Profession degrees awarded at IBCM</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start-ups supported from Summer Schools in Gaziantep (Syrian refugees) &amp; Ségou</td>
<td>20</td>
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SPARK in Myanmar:
SPARK in Myanmar:

- Value chain development (agri-food)
- Capacity building for the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Cooperatives and the Union Board of Civil Service
- Developing a Resource Platform on Gender-related policies and initiatives (with UNDP)
- Preparing and disseminating paper on SME Access to Finance
- Establishing ICT hub at Thanlyin Cooperative University, curriculum design and teacher training, ICT Refurbishment programme with Microsoft, academic book donation through International Book Bank, business incubator (2016)
- Modernizing agricultural education (with private partner)
Lessons learned (globally):

- Context matters (legislative framework, government support, viability of private sector, cultural traits, etc...)
- Fit-for-purpose approach – business plan competition, B2B matching, etc.
- Start-ups survive if next to training assistance there is access to finance, markets
- Access to finance is vital! (women face specific challenges, as may fail to present collateral – no property ownership)
- Women are tend to employ more women
- Telling stories, showing examples – inspires
- Importance of partnerships across all the sectors
- Tracking entrepreneurs helps to estimate the impact

→ Spillover effect: higher income → better position in the society → gender mainstreaming in policy making and corporate world (pre-findings from the impact study)
Women tend to employ other women (SPARK, 2014)
More entrepreneurial stories:

http://www.spark-online.org/entrepreneurs/
SPARK Sink or Swim reality show:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6z4kY-FoYo
Any questions, suggestions?
Group exercise:

Supportive ecosystem for women entrepreneurship
Practical recommendations to improve women entrepreneurship for:

1. Formal education institutions (colleges, universities)
2. Public sector
3. Private sector (including financial institutions)
4. UNESCO Asia-Pacific
5. EE-NET Chapters
6. Business associations (chambers of commerce, etc.)
7. Other relevant actors
Thank you

And keep in touch!

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