Women in WASH Enterprises: Reflections on doing gender-related research in Cambodia and Indonesia

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From the literature: summary of barriers to female entrepreneurship


www.enterpriseinwash.info/research-outputs/
Empirical research (December 2017-January 2018)
Reflections on research process

• Importance of partnership-based research
• Questioning with sufficient space for participants’ values to be understood
• Safe spaces for honest views
• Women’s perspectives and others’ views
• Careful analysis to look beyond the surface of what is said (and what is not said!)
Preliminary findings: Thematic challenges faced by women in Cambodian piped water enterprises

**Financial issues**
- lack of financing options for enterprises or customers
- high interest rates
- customers not paying on time
- challenges to reach economies of scale especially in remote areas

**Government and regulation issues**
- includes government requirements to pay fees or taxes
- policies that make it hard to run a water enterprise
- lack of government support, inconsistent approaches to subsidies

**Operational issues**
- includes high expenses such as electricity, rental etc.
- insufficient or irregular access to water resources all year round
- equipment that breaks down
Preliminary findings: Enablers and motivators reported by female water entrepreneurs in Cambodia

- Support and encouragement from family (brothers, husbands and family in general) and friends (n=7)
- Family and friends already having a water business – so supporting by example and encouragement (n=3)
- Witnessing another female water business owner working in this field inspired her to start her own business (n=1)
- Motivator: Profit and a desire to earn income (n=3)
- Motivator: supporting the community to access clean and reliable water sources (n=6)
- Motivator: needing a good water source for other business needs (ice and soy sauce) (n=2)
Preliminary findings: How would Cambodian female piped water entrepreneurs like to be supported?

1. **Technical support** - including training and support related to water management and water quality (n=11 of 15)

2. **Financial support** (n=10 of 15)

3. **Dissemination of information to the community** on the importance of clean water (n=2 of 15)

4. **Support for water entrepreneurs to share experiences** and understanding related to water businesses (n=2 of 15)
Preliminary findings: Female-led enterprises in Indonesia - Motivations and pathways

Individual

Family

Supports and constraints

Institutional

Societal
Reflections on research findings (to date)

1. **Do no harm**: Potential issues arising from an instrumentalist approach to involving women in enterprises:
   - Household duties may not be reduced
   - Social, altruistic motivations were present (potentially putting women at risk of added work without financial benefit)
   - Deeper understanding of economic empowerment required

2. **Diversity**: Female entrepreneurs were of diverse backgrounds (single, widowed etc.) and may need tailored support

3. **Family**: Support from husbands and family support was very important

4. **Replication**: Examples of other female entrepreneurs motivates other women to also join in such activity
THANK YOU

Further findings to be shared in April/May 2018
Let us know if you’d like to receive them!