

Research, Network and Support Facility (RNSF)

“Support to enhance livelihoods per people dependent on informal economy
and improve social inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable persons”

Volume 4.1: Good Practices and Lessons Learned

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| RESEARCH QUESTION | 2- Decent work and enterprise growth |
| SUB-TOPICS (Research matrix) | <u>Occupational safety and health (OSH) implementation in IE (2.3)</u> |
| REGION – COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION | Africa - Ghana |
| GOOD PRACTICE | Occupational safety and health (OSH) procedures applied to persons who gather natural products such as shea nuts (Ghana). |
| PROJECT NAME | <i>Market Access through Cooperative Action in Ghana - Empowering Rural Women Informal Workers using Microfinance, Education, and ICT</i> |
| YEAR | 2011 - 2014 |
| FUNDING AGENCY | European Commission |
| IMPLEMENTING AGENCY | Association Planet Finance |
| KEY TARGET GROUPS | Rural women |

SUMMARY OF THE ACTION

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is not only an issue in large factories or worksites, it is also an issue in traditional rural agricultural and other informal economy activities.

Among its multi-pronged strategies for climbing up the Value Chain of shea nut and butter, the project implemented by PlanetFinance in Ghana aimed to better protect women producers in their task of gathering nuts from the shea trees and of processing the nuts.

Through their community groups and with the support of micro-credit, women received suitable equipment and training on safety and protection that has resulted in a dramatic reduction of the incidence of life-threatening events in their work practices. The use of protective clothing, especially boots and gloves, considerably reduced snake bites during nut-picking. Similarly the use of energy-efficient stoves for nut- and butter-processing had an impact on reducing burns resulting from open fires and exposure to heat and smoke thus improving working conditions and health status. Energy-efficient stoves also had a positive environmental impact through the reduction of firewood consumption.

While OSH was an indirect effect of an environmental action in the case of stoves, the use of protective clothing for nut-picking have had an indirect environmental and social impact also. Women pickers can now safely clean

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| <p>and cut the grass around the trees before picking, thus maintaining the trees and the soils in better production conditions and initiating recognition of their property rights with respect to the trees. Women felt empowered. This virtuous circle has a further positive environmental impact because it prevents the cutting down of trees by charcoal manufacturers as they see the tree is actively maintained.</p> | |
| <p>LESSONS LEARNED</p> | <p>Including OSH when planning actions to enhance the livelihoods of vulnerable populations can have positive impact beyond improving the health of informal economy workers. In agriculture and other areas it can also have a positive impact on environmental sustainability.</p> |
| <p>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</p> | <p>Include attention to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) when planning actions to enhance the livelihoods of vulnerable populations. This area is frequently ignored when planning actions on livelihoods and needs greater emphasis.</p> |
| <p>SOURCE</p> | <p>RNSF Research Volume 4.1: https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/iesf/document/rnsf-research-volume-41-gp-and-ll-33-projects-funded-european-union</p> |
| <p>RESOURCE(s)</p> | <p>Project page on EuropeAid: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/market-access-through-cooperative-action-ghana-empowering-rural-women-informal-workers_en</p> |