

Futuremakers Forum

Scalability, sustainability and participation in value chains

SPEAKERS

- **Deniz Harut**, Founder of Gender Score and Executive Director, Sustainable Finance, Standard Chartered
- **Gary Xia**, CTO, Shanghai Binary Food Tech Co. and beneficiary of ENACTUS China
- **Jean Chawapiwa**, Country Director, South Africa, WEConnect International

- **Maria Bobenrieth**, Executive Director, Women Win and co-founder of Win-Win Strategies
- **Susan Tew**, Strategic Sourcing, Diversity and Inclusion, Standard Chartered

DATE: 8 JULY 2020
THEME: INCLUSIVE VALUE CHAINS
FORMAT: ONLINE EVENT

Moderators: Kariuki Ngari, Chief Executive Officer, Kenya and East Africa, Standard Chartered; Natasha Kwakwa, Director, Global Impact, Group Sustainability, Standard Chartered.



KEY INSIGHTS

REVIEW SUPPLY CHAIN PRACTICES

The supply chains of large corporates can appear impenetrable to youth-led SMEs. Kariuki Ngari stressed that large companies need to **take a proactive approach**, to reassure young – and particularly women entrepreneurs that their product is valued and that they will receive support to participate. Large corporates can **engage with organisations with expertise** in integrating young people into value chains. Maria Bobenrieth suggested three immediate steps that companies can take: develop a **youth responsive procurement strategy** with defined goals; **ask all suppliers to adopt similar policies**; and **require that suppliers include young people, and especially young women, on their pitching team** to help them gain experience.

The event was part of the Futuremakers Forum, a series of events bringing stakeholders together to build partnerships and create opportunities focused on young people.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

During the discussion, there was a particular focus on the challenges faced by young women. “Women-owned businesses don’t just want to be told about opportunities. They need **a chance to interact with large corporates** and really understand how those organisations work,” explained Jean Chawapiwa. For example, procurement processes could include **training and coaching programmes** delivered by key people from within the sales, legal and procurement teams of the business. **Work experience programmes** for young people help to build their life skills and entrepreneurial ability while growing relationships and providing practical insight into how large companies operate. Deniz Harut advised, “**Technology can be leveraged** as a force for good and to accelerate the good work that has already been done.”

INTRODUCTION

This event considered how large corporates, both domestic and multinational, can use their supply chains to make a dramatic difference to the success and impact of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) led by young people and by women. It brought together large companies and potential participants in value chains to discuss how to deliver meaningful actions and commitments. Discussions explored how youth-led enterprises can prepare for and identify opportunities in domestic or global value chains, and how companies can support them to manage the immediate impacts of COVID-19 and grow back stronger.



COLLABORATE WITHIN AND ACROSS SECTORS

Denis Harut highlighted the need for action within industries to **simplify and align procurement policies**, to **improve transparency** and **share compliance data**. This would reduce the costly burden of complex procurement processes and eliminate the need for SMEs to comply with numerous certifications and standards. Maria Bobenrieth suggested that large corporates **leverage their partnerships with larger NGOs**, which also procure goods and services, and Gary Xia highlighted that **SMEs already operating within value chains can offer peer support** to those looking for entry opportunities. Jean Chawapiwa encouraged SMEs and corporates to **engage with government initiatives** such as that of the Northwest Province in South Africa which created training programmes and networking opportunities to boost the involvement of women entrepreneurs in the biodiversity sector.

HOLISTIC APPROACH, PARTICULARLY TO ENGAGING WOMEN

Holistic approaches address the complex barriers often faced by young entrepreneurs and women in particular. Maria Bobenrieth recommended that companies **engage girls from an early age, working with community organisations** to help **develop financial literacy, life skills and entrepreneurial skills**. Early

“Entrepreneurship is not just an act of starting a business; it’s actually a mindset that teaches you flexibility, perseverance, resourcefulness. These are important skills”

Nida Athar

engagement is needed to **help those living in refugee populations and fragile states to thrive**. “More programmes like this will help plant the seeds for what is, I think, potentially a really critical way for young companies to become more stable and enter the value chains.”

MEASURE AND REPORT PROGRESS

Deniz Harut highlighted the lack of measurement and reporting on action to diversify supply chains. “We need to encourage organisations to report on the results of their investment, on behavioural shifts and the things that generate this change, in the culture and support that exists in the broader ecosystem.”

Measurement can reveal the scale of the problem: Jean Chawapiwa cited WeConnect’s research showing that only one per cent of corporate global spend goes to women-owned businesses.^[1] A clear first step for large corporates is to **assess baseline spend** on youth- and women-led businesses in order to **track progress**, and **report publicly to increase accountability**.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

Share case studies explaining how youth-led and female businesses have accessed the supply chain of large corporates. With the aim to educate and inform both large corporates and entrepreneurs on successful access routes.

BENEFICIARY CASE STUDY: GARY XIA, CTO, SHANGHAI BINARY FOOD TECH CO.

Shanghai Binary Food Tech Co. (SBFT) is a Chinese supply chain venture, operating for more than five years. The business works with both SMEs and multinationals, particularly in the agricultural sector, to increase efficiency, reduce costs and cut waste through the innovative application of new and misunderstood technologies.

In response to COVID-19, SBFT used antimicrobial nano-technology, first developed for food packaging, to treat wood and stainless steel furniture. The virus is unable to survive on the coated surface, reducing the transmission of COVID-19. The first products will be used by hospitals in China.

Gary identifies supply chain problems and approaches large companies directly to explain how SBFT can solve them. “When we as youth-led enterprises approach you with solutions, we might just have the power to solve your problems. Larger mature businesses need to review their value chain to better integrate us and give us the chance to actually try and make a difference. I think that’s how your business can thrive in the future.”

