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Helen Loftin
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Integrating Women into Value Chains: Lessons From Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Ghana





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Helen Loftin

MEDA

Helen Loftin is the Director of Women's Economic Development (WED) with Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). She leads a portfolio of projects that include value chain, food security, SME development, and livelihoods recovery projects that target women clients and boost their participation in vibrant market systems. Loftin has developed and launched several women's economic development projects in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Haiti, Libya, and Ghana—currently reaching over 100,000 women. Before joining MEDA, Helen co-managed her family's general contracting business.



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Ariane Ryan

MEDA

Ariane Ryan is the Project Manager/Consultant for the Women's Economic Development with Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). In this position, she has managed projects which seek to promote women's active participation in the economy in countries including Pakistan, Libya, and Haiti. She works closely with field teams to implement and monitor market-based interventions which foster the integration of women in their local economies. Ryan has also carried out consultancies and project designs in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ghana, Mali, Tajikistan and Haiti.

Welcome

Integrating Women Into Value Chains

Lessons from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Ghana

60 years of global innovation
1953-2013



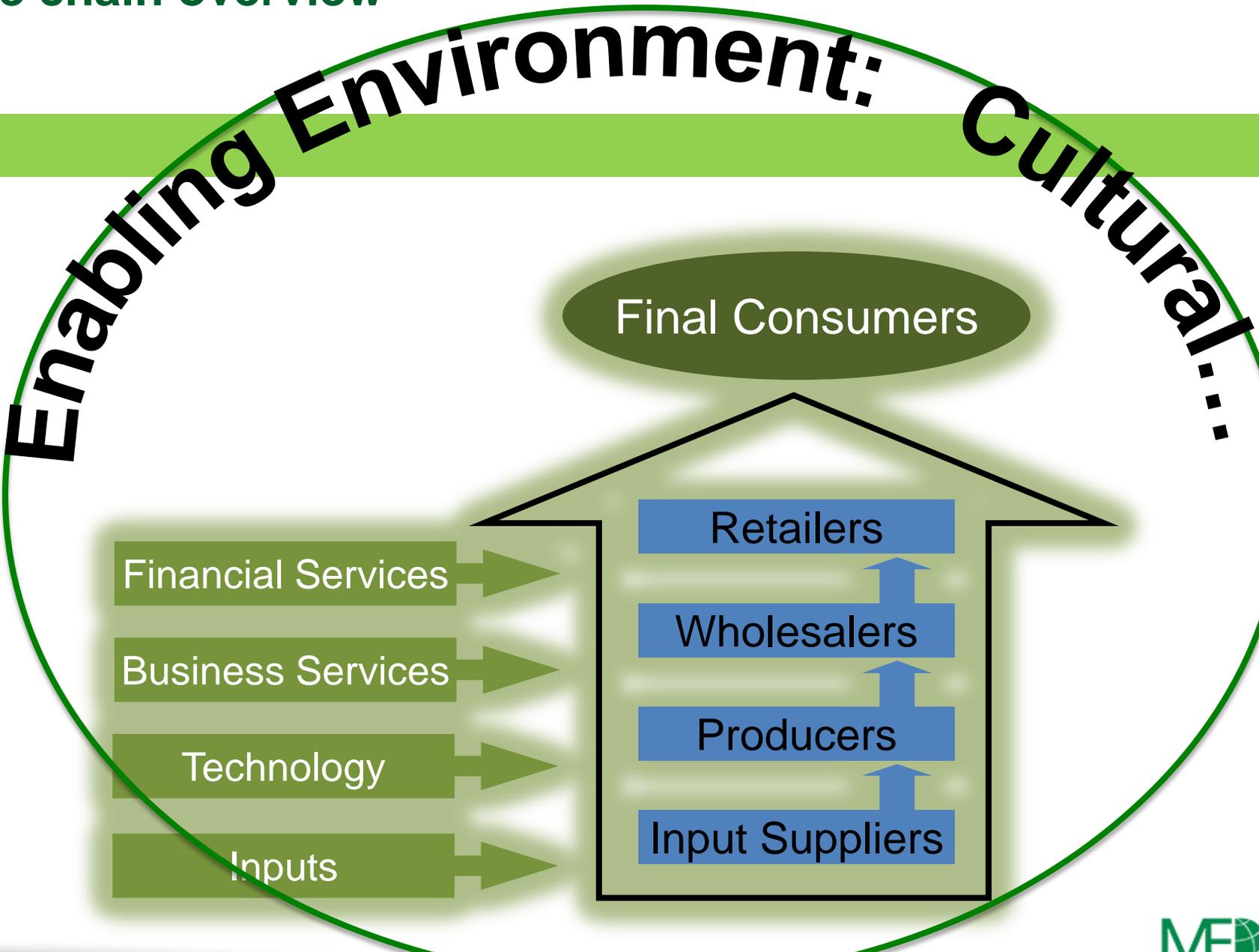
Creating business solutions to poverty.

Mennonite Economic Development Associates

Agenda

1. Value chain overview
2. Gender and value chains
3. MEDA's approach: the model
4. MEDA's approach: rationale
5. Adapting the model
6. Women's Economic Empowerment
7. Lessons Learned
8. Implications for future VC programming

Value chain overview



Gender and Value Chains

Macro – Gender equality and competitiveness

“ *The correlation among competitiveness, income and development and gender gaps is evident* ”

- World Economic Forum

Micro – Household impacts and poverty reduction

“ *Women typically invest a higher proportion of their earnings in their families and communities than men* ”

- OECD 

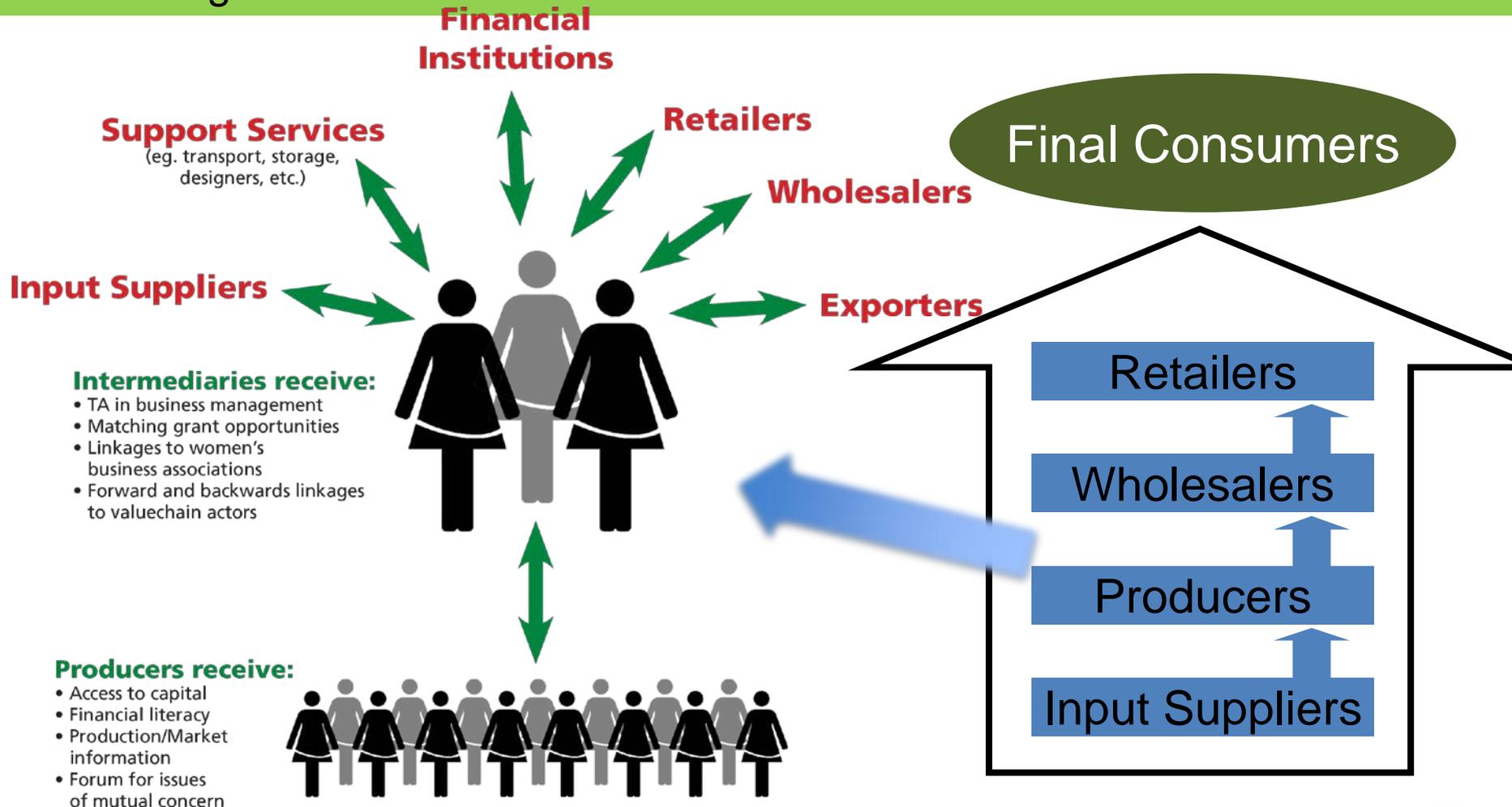
Gender and Value Chains



- Hidden women – value chain efficiency gains; profit incentives
- Equity – closing the gaps
- Focusing on women – MEDA's approach

MEDA's approach: the model

Sales agent model



MEDA's approach: rationale

Integrating women into growing value chains

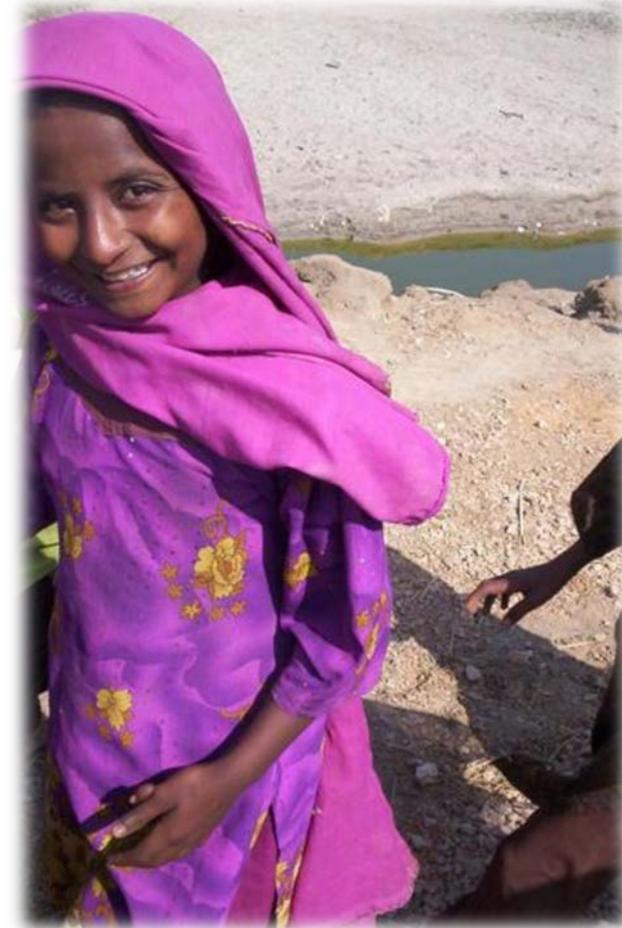


- Intro to MSMEs
- Profit incentive/
Sustainability
- Multiplier / Scale
- ROI
- Local partners

Adapting the model

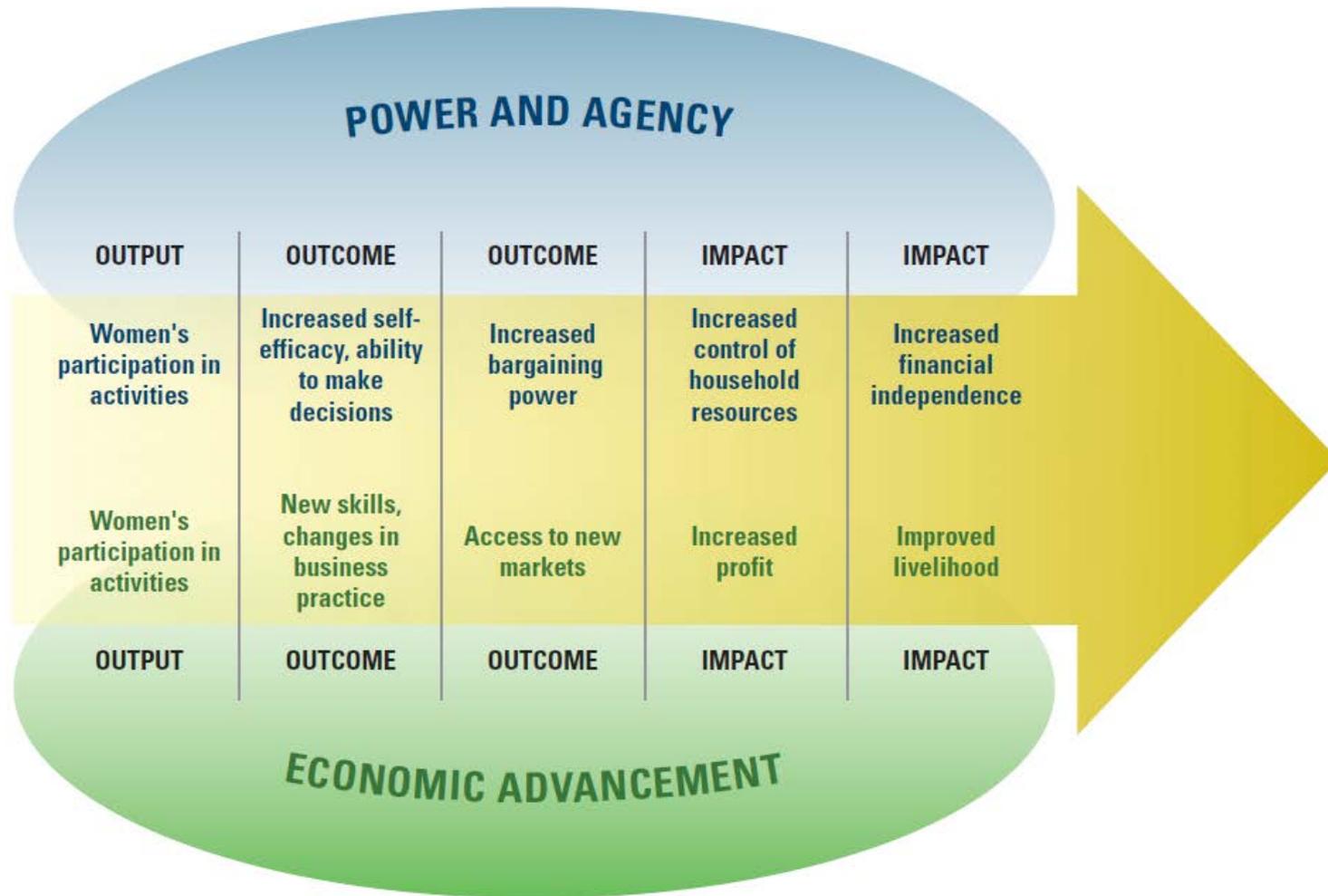
Examples from Afghanistan, Ghana and Pakistan

- Demands of
 - Culture (and Gender)
 - Purdah – model's utility in Af & Pak
 - Taboos – VC selection in Ghana
 - Geography
 - Hills of KPK vs urban Pakistan
 - Economics
 - Strata within any community
 - Industry
 - Commodity vs 'fashion'
- Heterogeneity within countries



Women's Economic Empowerment

Our preferred definition



Women's Economic Empowerment

Power and Agency in Value Chain development

147% income increase

Control over income 35%-76%

HH decision making 39%-67%

Comm. decision making 59%-68%

ex: Pakistan project

- Pathways and Pursestrings
- 20,000 women
- 4 value chains
- 5 year project

Women's Economic Empowerment

Income increase \$0 to \$323/yr- farmers
\$101-\$866/yr - intermediaries

Control over income – assets,
nutrition, school, charity

HH decision making – 82%
participation

Political influence - district &
provincial councils

Social stabilization - peace &
security

ex. Afghanistan project

- Through the Garden Gate
- 2,349 women
- horticulture value chain (5 crops)
- 4 year project

Lessons Learned



- Male engagement
- Local partners
- Managing expectations...
 - Donor, community, partners, staff, int'l dev't industry, MEDA

Implications for future VC programming



MEDA & 'the industry':

- Sales agent model → SME development
- Enabling environment: policy level
- Scale
- Behaviour change
- Quick wins and sustainable measures
- Data

Discussion



Thank you for your
participation!



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