



EMWOSE
Women from ethnic minorities in social enterprise

Interview form

Overview

Name: Betty Sinyan

Company: Fighting Infectious
Diseases in The Gambia

Website: <http://fidgambia.org/>



Betty Sinyan founded the Social Enterprise 'Fighting infectious Diseases in The Gambia' after observing the inadequate health and education facilities there.

We actually started as a charitable organisation and then as time went on because we were having a lot of problems trying to get funding because if you're a small organisation it is always difficult to get the funding so we decided to start, to add on, to be a social enterprise so we can do stuff on the side to help the women to become economically viable. The first project we did was soap making for women. So they make soap, go off to the market, sell it. We gather the money. The women will get some of the money and some of it we'll use to run another, a smaller project, maybe a health project or a project in the schools.

When developing the social enterprise, Betty encountered a number of barriers and obstacles.

First of all being a small social enterprise is a problem in itself because you have bigger ones that say if funding comes up if you apply there's a better chance for them, for the bigger organisations than smaller ones like ourselves so that's a barrier. Another one is the fact that because we work in Africa mainly, there's that problem of creditability because obviously a lot of the time, obviously, they cannot go there to see exactly what you're doing so you just have to convince them this is what I do. Time is a big problem for women because as mothers, as wives it's always difficult to manage that time. Our level of education especially as a black migrant woman it's always... that's another barrier. We haven't progressed as much as we want due to family commitments.

Betty then talks about skills that are important when developing a social enterprise.

We are lacking in our own, developing our own selves. I would like to work with other African women on that just knowing that we are worth a lot more.

Interview transcript

Keywords: The Gambia, education, health, funding, economically viable, soapmaking, credibility, time management, level of education, family commitments, persevere, collaboration, collectiveness, empower, progress.

Betty then outlines how she measures the success of the social enterprise.

Going back and seeing them doing so well and progressing. They're so much happier. The kids are doing so well because the mothers are doing well so that's really rewarding in itself.

Betty also offers advice for women who want to develop or work in a social enterprise.

You have to persevere. Like you will come across a lot of blocks on the way but you cannot give up. Because I think as women especially as ethnic minorities our problem is we fall once and we're like ah no I can't do this no more. If you push yourself it can be done. I did it. So many other women did it. Working together. Working in collaboration. I think its fantastic. Because a lot of the time if you want to do things on your own it's always more difficult to achieve stuff, but there's power in collectiveness. If we work together I think its about time that African women especially we look at other women and see how we can empower each other instead of working in isolation. An emigrant woman look for another woman that you can work with. Empower each other. Uplift each other. I think that's really vital and unless and until we change that it will be difficult to progress so in order to progress we have to embrace each other, work with each other.

Full video [here](#)

