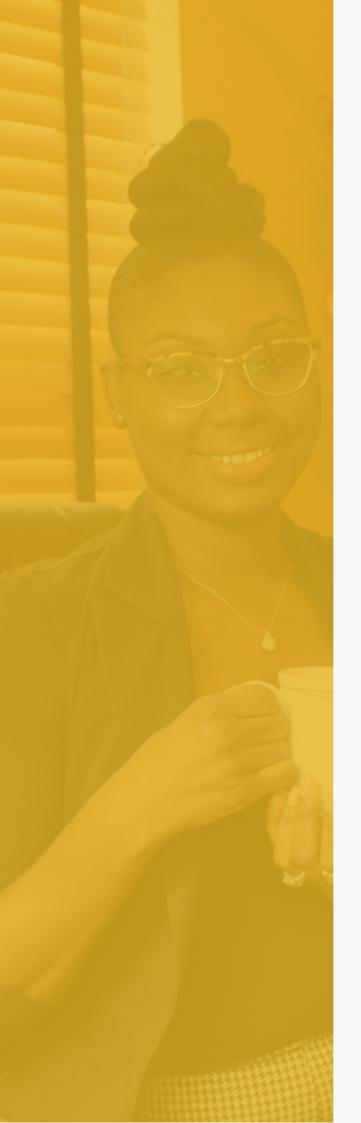


PUTTING YOUTH AND WOMEN AT THE CENTRE OF INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH.









BACKGROUND

Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) is a Southern African non-profit organization focused on democracy development in the region. With headquarters in South Africa, DWF works through its country offices in Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia to provide tools to develop resilient and inclusive democracies. The Federation of Women's Lawyers of Lesotho (FIDA – Lesotho) is a leading organisation for women's and children's rights in Lesotho.

Its main mandates are to educate, advocate for government, provide legal advice to individuals and empower women to be self-reliant and to act for themselves.

DWF, in partnership with FIDA, is implementing the project called "Putting Youth and Women at the Centre of Inclusive Economic Growth (PYWEIG)", supported financially by the European Union Delegation in Lesotho.

The programme is implemented in the Butha Buthe, Leribe and Maseru districts. The project is designed and benchmarked on the two priority areas mainly; 'Supporting Civil Society Organisations in initiatives that promote youth participation and empowerment at district and national level' 'Strengthening Women CSOs capacities and engagements for participation in decision-making processes.

The programme's goal is to increase Youth and Women-led participation in Lesotho's Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) ecosystem.

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVE

The policy focus of Lesotho, through the National Strategic Development II is anchored on the pillars of promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, Strengthening Human Capital, and Strengthening National Governance and Accountability Systems (NSDP II), yet women and youth remain marginalized from this developmental and decision-making processes. Within a generally high unemployment rate, women and youth in Lesotho experience the highest levels of unemployment (35% and 30%). The exclusion of women and youth from economic activity divorce the principles of good governance and resilient democracy and render business development service providers unresponsive and non-functioning institutions with financial and fiscal policies which cannot contribute to economic growth and sustainable development. Participation and inclusion remain concrete pillars for promoting sustainable development and economic growth for inclusive economic growth.

In order to facilitate the political and economic ecosystem in which women and youth-led enterprises are represented in government decision-making, it is imperative that initiatives that bolster and support participation are initiated. As part of the inception phase of the PYWIEG project, DWF and FIDA conducted a Participatory Action Research (PAR) in the three districts targeting Enterprise Support CSOs, BDS service providers, women and youth-led enterprises, Local Authorities and women and youth-led CSOs/CBOs to identify the priorities, needs and bottlenecks in enterprise support services they receive, gender and legal barriers hindering participation and participatory models in planning of the District and Community Action Plans. The study was conducted to inform the design of evidenced-based advocacy and interventions in the country.

The study has since been completed, and the report is now ready. It is against this background that DWF, in partnership with FIDA, has organized a symposium to launch the PAR study report and present the study's findings targeting relevant stakeholders operating in the sector. The launch will also aim to raise awareness of the barriers, needs and challenges hindering women and youth-led enterprises in local and district economic activities to participate more meaningfully in policy decision-making processes.

DWF and FIDA will use this platform to identify further areas of coordination among stakeholders for their input and reflections on enterprise regulation, advice on best business development support services, gender mainstreaming and governance components to augment participation and inclusion in the enterprise ecosystem. Thus, the second half of the symposium will include a dialogue session that will feature a panel discussion on the challenges and opportunities to re-energize the collective efforts of putting women and young people at the Centre of inclusive economic growth and to find locally appropriate solutions informed and inspired by the findings of the PAR study.



TARGET GROUP

The Study launch and dialogue targets women and youth led enterprises, Enterprise development-focused CSOs, Women and youth-led CSOs/CBOs, Business Development Support service providers, Government Ministries and Parastatals, Local Authorities, Private Sector and development partners.

EVENT DETAILS

AVANI MASERU HOTEL AND CASINO LESOTHO

2ND SEPTEMBER 2022