



WESTERWELLE  
STARTUP HAUS  
ARUSHA



WESTERWELLE  
FOUNDATION  
FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

# AFROGREEN PLAYBOOK

*A guide to supporting female  
entrepreneurs in sustainable  
emerging economies*

*The programme is supported by EIT Climate-KIC (co-funded by European Union) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland to develop sustainable solutions and accelerate growth through capacity building, market linkages, and networking*



Co-funded by the  
European Union



**Irish Aid**  
Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# CONTRIBUTORS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The AfroGreen ClimAccelerator Program was made possible by a well-systematized Westerwelle Startup Haus Arusha team, with support from EIT Climate-KIC co-funded by the European Union.

## Many Thanks To:

- ▶ Collins Kimaro, Advisor, responsible for overall program advisory
- ▶ Isaack Shayo, Country Director, responsible for team management
- ▶ Christine Gimonge, Program Coordinator, responsible for day-to-day execution of the program and first point of contact for participants
- ▶ Rehema Laizer, Operations and Finance Manager, responsible for financial controlling & reporting
- ▶ John Mushi, Community Coordinator, responsible for marketing related activities
- ▶ Judith Li, Director of Programs, responsible for ensuring the project quality, monitoring and evaluation, and curriculum design



“ We provide special gratitude to the female participants who made the execution of the program possible, and other supporters who offered their experience, advice, and time to the program and ultimately the publication of this playbook.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The AfroGreen Playbook aims to tackle various hurdles that leads to gender bias in various program. Using the AfroGreen ClimAccelerator program 2022-2023 as a pilot, this playbook highlights learnings from the challenges, successes, and knowledge points in designing and running the program.

We decided to create this open-source guide to enable other emerging economy hubs and entrepreneurship support organizations to replicate this program enhancing female entrepreneurship and SDG start-up growth, one entrepreneur at a time. Likewise, to show way to measurably increase the representation of women in various programs.

The AfroGreen ClimAccelerator program is classified in three (3) phases which will unfold in the playbook. In each phase it is shown how the program pivoted through various stages to navigate gender related obstacle by insuring the program carters for female entrepreneurs.

The playbook includes a list of actionable steps to help organizations build diverse companies and industries over time. We believe the steps elaborated can assist 3 cooperating gender inclusion into various program in one's organization. By adopting this playbook, you are showing through actions that you take the matter of gender seriously.

Finally, it is imperative and highly recommended working with expert organization on gender or persons to identify the proper methodology to build capacities in the organization and deliver gender mainstreaming programs.

# OUR BACKGROUND

Climate change and digital technology continue to be an engine of change throughout all sectors of the global economy and it has redefined how various industries, individuals and institutions operate.

Moreover, the world is still facing challenges when it comes to the global gender gap. According to the World Economic Forum, it will take close to 136 years to close the gender gap. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, progress on gender has been reversing and it is estimated to now take 286 years to reach gender parity.

As an agent of change, Westerwelle Startup Haus Arusha (WSHA) saw an urgent need for specialized support of female founders in the SDG-space with a gender-mainstreaming approach.



In partnership with EIT Climate-KIC, the AfroGreen ClimAccelerator program was initiated as a response. This program focused on closing the gender gap through a 9-month program for 10 women-led startups in the green sector to develop sustainable solutions and grow their markets through capacity building, market linkage, and networking. Given the gap in late-stage accelerators and female-focused climate programs, we provided the first late-stage accelerator focusing on female perspectives.

The program piloted a gender mainstreaming approach developed through the WeClim Equal Gender Mainstreaming Handbook. The program addressed challenges facing female-led climate entrepreneurs in Tanzania, who often do not engage in climate-focused programs and are less likely still to move to later stages of the investment funnel, such as Series A.

Furthermore, given the country's innovation-based focus on agriculture and digital models, many Tanzanian companies have potential or inadvertent adaptation and resilience components which they could further untap. This is demonstrated in female-led startups, which often have a focus on community and social challenges, and can be enhanced through awareness, skills, and tools for them to implement climate action.

## Who Is This For?

The playbook is designed for non-governmental organizations, financial institutions, educational institutions, or individuals who consider running a program to grow and support female talent in your community, region, or country.

More importantly, this playbook is for those who work in an emerging market context in which female founders remain underrepresented and face many hurdles in upscaling their businesses in most cases. This goes hand in hand with limited entrepreneurship and business skills.

# Why Is Integrating Gender Mainstreaming Into The Programs Important?

Gender issues cut across social, political, and economic matters, from the individual to global level. Consequently, the purpose behind creating the AfroGreen ClimAccelerator is to grow and support female-led businesses that have a tangible sustainability impact, whether that be social sustainability or climate mitigation. Our focus is hereby on emerging economies with a clear gap in entrepreneurial education, especially for women.

The playbook lists essential prerequisites to consider before moving towards implementation of the AfroGreen program. The playbook intends to be a living document that evolves with experience, as we recognize that more efforts are needed when comes to closing the gender gap. This publication will serve as a stepping stone for similar future programs.

We recognize that organizations may be in various stages of growth when committing to implement this playbook. We encourage you to choose those actions that are appropriate to help you take significant steps forward in gender inclusion. Some of these steps can be actioned today, while others will take more time to implement or will be more fitting to adopt in later stages in your organization's growth

**To promote gender inclusiveness the program was be implemented in 3 main working phases:**

- ▶ Sensitization and Communication Strategy
- ▶ Tailoring and Implementing the Training Model
- ▶ Reporting and Integration of Learnings

*Below is an outline diagram to help you easily and effectively navigate the Playbook. Feel free to pick the most relevant starting point for you*

- 1 Sensitization And Communication Strategy**  
Sensitization on gender related matters and communication strategies for program visibility, call for application and recruitment of female participants
- 2 Tailoring and Implementing the Training Model**  
Tailored training techniques and activities to promote gender mainstreaming in the program
- 3 Reporting and Integration of Learnings**  
Recording and learning lessons from the program in order to improve gender inclusiveness in the future



*“ This overall process is typical for incubation programs, and other factors like team experience, results-oriented implementation, and industry knowledge are highly determinate of the quality of a program. While running the AfroGreen program as a pilot, we have learned several important lessons as shared below. The program activities were implemented over 9 months*

# Important Principles And Approaches

The AfroGreen program used the following approaches to ensure that the program is gender inclusive.



## Cohort-based Approach

The AfroGreen program had a specific start and end period. The program organized participants into cohorts, so that they get to know and support each other. We recommend a program duration of 10 months; if several program activities are offered in parallel, you might implement it in as little as 3 months. We recommend a cohort size between 10 to 15 participants per cohort to create a safe space for women to work together and build community.



## On-site or Blended delivery

While the program could have worked online delivery elements, it is designed in an on-site format. The physical aspect of the program leveraged community and collaboration between program participants and local partners.



## Business and Entrepreneurship Training

Like most incubation programs, the AfroGreen program included business training on topics such as sales, marketing, and finance to empower women in these specific areas.



## Training in SDG/climate specializations

In addition to business training, it's important for the program to address global sustainable goals, AfroGreen focused on SDG/climate knowledge building. This could be offered in one or several tracks. The training is delivered by experts in their respective fields, and the level and depth should be adjusted to participants' needs.



## Individual support to Advance Professional Goals

In parallel and after completion of training, additional support should be provided to individual program participants. This can include classic incubation services such as hosting, coaching, and market linkages, but also targeted support to reach specific professional goals. Typical professional goals to work on include for example business registration, customer acquisition, personal branding, and access to finance.

# SENSITIZATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

One of the greatest challenges to gender mainstreaming in climate change programs is to increase number of girls or women interested in programs and ways to support them as they choose to participate. This was the first step to ensure gender mainstreaming by identifying ecosystem partners, conducting sensitization training and building a strong communication strategy which increase the program's visibility



## STEP 1:

### Identifying And Launching With Ecosystem Partners:

To ensure the success of the program, we invited ecosystem partners and climate stakeholders from the local and international community to a launch event for collaboration on the activities in the program. The launch also served to raise awareness about the program and visibility for the impact that will be created. The launch was a great setting to hold a discussion with startups and corporate organizations regarding how they can help to tackle and adapt to climate change, with entrepreneur support organizations on how gender mainstreaming can be applied to acceleration and incubation programs, and with other ecosystem collaborators on how to raise awareness and visibility on these challenges.

#### List of Partner Organization Types and Examples:

- ▶ Corporates with a sustainability focus (i.e. ENGIE, )
- ▶ Entrepreneurship support organizations (i.e. Twende Hub, Anza, TAHA, )
- ▶ Training institutions (i.e. MSTCDC, NM-AIST, IUBSC)



## STEP 2:

### Team workshop on gender mainstreaming:

To ensure that the program is centered on gender mainstreaming, it important to start with the in-house training, making sure that the team is well equipped on gender matters. We therefore hosted a gender mainstreaming workshop for the team, coaches, and mentors of the program to raise awareness about gender biases that occur in acceleration programs. The workshop also acted to ensure that the team is equipped to handle gender issues when they arise and accommodate the women participants in the program.

#### List of Topics Covered in the Gender Mainstreaming Workshop:

- ▶ Typical gender biases in incubation programs and in society
- ▶ Scenario-based gender bias identification
- ▶ Practical approaches to combat gender bias and accommodate female entrepreneurs in incubation programs



## STEP 3:

### Program Marketing And Visibility

We launched a call for applications and established a strong communication strategy to ensure that the program could reach as many women as possible.

#### Our Visibility Activities:

- ▶ We launched a 2-month online/offline campaign to sensitize people in Tanzania to the problems of climate change and how they can act.
- ▶ We branded WSHA as a gender-diverse and inclusive workspace on social media and the physical space itself (banners promoting female entrepreneurs) to attract female applicants.
- ▶ We posted application calls in a variety of media (i.e. influencer marketing, trade fairs) to reach more diverse audiences.
- ▶ The Westerwelle Foundation social media platforms leveraged a combined reach of more than 130,000 followers and a Slack community of about 900 entrepreneurs
- ▶ In addition to our communication online, we will focus on engaging with green organizations and associations.



## STEP 4:

### Recruitment and the Selection Criteria

Throughout the recruitment process, we revised the application ads to be gender-transformative, removing any unconscious bias and thus encouraging female founders to apply.

#### Our Gender-Transformative Visibility Strategy:

- ▶ We included pictures and videos of women in the promotional material.
- ▶ The messaging used gender-neutral language, focusing on collaborative and encouraging tone of voice instead of competitive, discouraging criteria.
- ▶ We visited exhibitions and trade fairs where female entrepreneurs frequented, in order to sensitize and convince them to apply to the program. This was especially helpful in reaching members of our target group who did not have time to be online.

“

*We then evaluated the applications and selected 10 of the most promising teams to join the program. Selection focused on women-led startups that have proven market traction, with existing or high potential of contributions to climate action. Marketing activities continued over the remaining period of the program.*

## Key Takeaways

- ✔ Identify and engage with key partners for the program
- ✔ Sensitize your team on all related gender-issue
- ✔ Open applications for the program, ensure it is gender-transformative and leverage on your online/offline community for a wider outreach



# TAILORING AND IMPLEMENTING THE TRAINING MODE

The second phase into ensuring gender mainstreaming is having a tailor-made training model and activities for the program. Capacity building was the centerpiece for the AfroGreen ClimAccelerator. Here are the steps used in tailoring the training model and activities to ensure gender mainstreaming in the program



## STEP 1:

### Capacity Building

The 10 women-led startups were provided with monthly customized workshops to run their green projects with revenue generating business models to create sustainable impact. We provided online options for those outside of Arusha or participants who could not make it due to professional or personal engagements.

#### Key Training Topics:

- ▶ Capacity building on basic venture building
- ▶ Sales & marketing
- ▶ Communication & corporate negotiation
- ▶ Leadership and team management
- ▶ Climate change impact through business
- ▶ Fundraising through grants
- ▶ Accounting & finance
- ▶ Proposal writing and pitch deck preparation
- ▶ Social media bootcamp
- ▶ Post-program sustainability and growth plan



## STEP 2:

### Indoor incubation at the Westerwelle Startup Haus Arusha

The selected 10 women-led startups had access to a dedicated workspace for a duration of 6 months. The amenities include 24/7 access to the workspace, fast speed internet, access to meeting rooms, complimentary tea & water, cleaning services, as well as other in-house services.



### STEP 3:

## Peer-Networking Events

In promoting gender mainstreaming, we supported the female founders in growing their professional networks by introducing them to fellow green innovators, investors, supporters, and enablers. We thereby aimed to broaden their educational opportunities and leverage the expertise and available resources in the ecosystem.

### Peer Networking Activities:

- ▶ Online exchanges with green startups from Rwanda, Tunisia, and other emerging markets
- ▶ Field trips to environmentally friendly organizations and industries
- ▶ Green sector meetups with the community
- ▶ Women-only meetup to share learning with other female industry leaders on
- ▶ International Women's Day
- ▶ Nature-based trip for team-building and environmental connection
- ▶ Yoga for de-stressing and work-life balance



### STEP 4:

## Individual Mentoring

We provided expert review sessions between each female founder and selected experts in finance, digital marketing and legal topics. The mentoring sessions were booked on-demand once every other month to address the participants' practical questions and challenges. We had the pleasure of welcoming Leonie Stadler, as Mentor-In-Residence for the AfroGreen ClimAccelerator, who provided daily in-house advisory to the participants.



### STEP 5:

## Demo Day

At the end of the program, we facilitated a Demo Day to showcase the growth and solutions of the participants. We gathered partners from different industries within the startup ecosystem (i.e. development partners, entrepreneurship support organizations, donors, private sector) and enabled each startup to pitch for 5 minutes. As a result, some of the audience became interested in investing in, buying or otherwise supporting the founder's products and services.



### STEP 6:

## Marketing And Communication Support

The selected 10 women-led startups were assisted through online promotion of their products/services. We created content and showcase their work via our social media platforms and online marketing.

### Key Activities:

- ▶ Startup solutions video introduction
- ▶ Online marketing
- ▶ Content creation
- ▶ Program activity highlight



## Key Takeaways

- ✔ Create a tailor-made training model and activities for the program to promote gender inclusiveness.
- ✔ Offer all-round support for the female participants, such as network, opportunities, and market access for their products.
- ✔ Get to know the startups personally and adjust your program components to best support them.
- ✔ Be flexible to change your curriculum and plan according to the participants' needs.
- ✔ Ensure post-program success for the participants by creating growth plans in a workshop, helping them apply to other acceleration programs, or giving them access to your/partner communities.

# REPORTING AND INTEGRATION OF LEARNINGS

The final phase is to ensure that the progress throughout the program was well documented and to identify the gaps and learning opportunities. This will ensure that gender mainstreaming is improved in the future.

We compiled all the reports, materials, videos, and learnings from the pilot program, which will be shared with the ecosystem partners. We also used the final month of the program to integrate the learnings from the program into our organization's processes and our programs in Tanzania and across our other WSH locations.

## Approaches to Obtain Feedback from the Program:

▶ A survey and feedback request was sent out after each training session to further improve our offering and identify potential knowledge gaps to further tailor the curriculum.

▶ We sent a detailed final survey to collect feedback from the participants in terms of their suggestions for program improvement and business growth throughout the cohort.



## Lessons Learned

The WSHA team compiled the following lessons learned regarding the gender mainstreaming approaches of the AfroGreen ClimAccelerator.



Gender Mainstreaming Area	What Worked Well	Lessons Learned & Future Aims
Building and growing your team towards diversity	All core team members and trainers participated in a gender bias training.	The program participants had not yet participated in a gender bias training. As a lesson learned, we would try to provide gender bias training to the participants as well. It will be done at an earlier time point within the program to ensure maximum benefit from the knowledge gain.
Promoting your program to the right entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ We had marketing campaign materials that were in Swahili and visuals that are gender inclusive.</li> <li>✔ We used flyers to distribute during exhibitions and trade fairs where the right entrepreneurs will be</li> <li>We used influencers whose audience include our target entrepreneurs to promote the programme call for applications</li> </ul>	We learnt early on that our target entrepreneurs for the program (women), do not use social media as much as compared to other groups. Hence, we learnt the best way to reach and promote the programme to the audience was through unconventional ways such as using flyers and visiting exhibitions/trade fairs that most of them attend. In the future, we also aim to use more storytelling methods to showcase success stories of women who have attended similar programs before to raise awareness and advocate for more women to join the program.
Supporting climate entrepreneurs in a gender-smart way	The program implementing team attended a gender mainstreaming workshop to understand and avoid the common bias that happens when delivering incubation programs	From the gender mainstreaming workshop, we learned the importance of having a team onboarding session with the team that focuses on brainstorming ways to support entrepreneurs in a gender-smart way prior to the start of the program. This will help us in being more intentional about how we deliver the program
Selecting the most promising climate innovations in an inclusive manner	We created an application form that collected all the necessary info from the entrepreneurs	Even though this helped us find the most promising applicants from the applications, we also learned that we could go a step further and have a call with the top applicants to understand better about their climate innovations, their level of interest and commitment to the program before onboarding them to the program.

## Key Takeaways

- ✔ Create a reflection table for gender mainstreaming in the program.
- ✔ Map out the areas that worked well during the program and the areas of weakness.
- ✔ Set future goals and plans to improve aforementioned areas of weakness.

# CASE STUDIES

The following case studies share the stories of two female entrepreneurs who participated in the AfroGreen program and their experience being in gender inclusive program. The case studies how these participants have benefited from this program, and how it has impacted their business

	
<b>Name Of The Participant</b>	: Eliwilima Buberwa
<b>Name Of The Business</b>	: Mawimbi
<b>Year Founded</b>	: 2022.
<b>Sector</b>	: Waste Management
<b>Operation</b>	: Tanzania
<b>About The Business</b>	: Mawimbi is a social enterprise that deals with creating sustainable menstrual solutions through producing reusable sanitary pads.
<b>How Was It Before Afrogreen</b>	: Before Afrogreen, our team had limited knowledge and understanding of essential aspects such as marketing, fundraising, and team. We were primarily operating with a charitable mindset, focusing on the idea itself without a clear strategy to make it financially sustainable.  Through the Afrogreen program, we gained crucial knowledge in all these areas, and we transformed our charity-based idea into a sustainable business model for our reusable pads. Currently, we can effectively promote our products, secure funding, and manage our project towards long-term success
<b>How Did The Program Centered On Gender Mainstreaming Benefit You?</b>	The program being made for women only has provided us a supportive and empowering environment, where I could openly discuss challenges specific to women entrepreneurs. It also facilitated networking opportunities with like-minded women in the industry, fostering collaboration and shared experiences
<b>Future Prospects</b>	: Our current and future for the Mawimbi Project after the Afrogreen program includes scaling up production, expanding our market reach, investing in research and development, and focusing on sustainability of the project while conserving the environment



<b>Name Of The Participant</b>	<b>: Caudence Ayoti</b>
<b>Name Of The Business</b>	<b>: DeMi Tours &amp; Travel LTD</b>
<b>Year Founded</b>	<b>: Jan 2020</b>
<b>Sector</b>	<b>: Tourism &amp; Hospitality</b>
<b>Operation</b>	<b>: Tanzania</b>
<b>About The Business</b>	: A female-led eco-tourism, offering sustainable adventures for a positive impact on the world.
<b>How Was It Before AfroGreen</b>	: Before joining the AfroGreen program, my business was not in a good place, vision wise and financially. The business needed a new outlook, especially operating in eco-tourism space which is relatively minimum in Tanzania. This is due to challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient marketing, and promotional campaigns. Therefore, I highly needed the training offered in the program.
<b>How Did The Program Centered On Gender Mainstreaming Benefit You?</b>	A woman only environment gave us more flexibility to handle women related challenges. We amended schedules left, right and centre to accommodate especially moms who at times had to look after their babies. We had the opportunity to share stories that otherwise we could not have shared, this program ended up being our 'safe space'. The end of this program doesn't mean the end of our relationship with each other
<b>Future Prospects</b>	: I am more AfroGreen than when I joined. My business has a brighter future thanks to the network and training that I have received from WSHA. I will forever be grateful for this opportunity.

# CONCLUSION

If you have suggestions on how we can improve this playbook, or if you would like to share your own challenges and successes from the program process, please get in touch



“

We look forward to seeing tremendous growth of sustainability businesses across Tanzania and other emerging economies.

## CONTACT US

+255 767 731 319

[www.westerwelle-foundation.com](http://www.westerwelle-foundation.com)

[wsha@westerwelle.haus](mailto:wsha@westerwelle.haus)

7th Floor Mega Complex, Market Street, P.O. Box 16759, Arusha, Tanzania

[f](#) [in](#) [@](#) [t](#) @WSH\_Arusha

**THANK YOU TO THE TEAM,**  
OUR SUPPORTERS, AND ALL PARTICIPANTS.