



Fund for Innovation and Transformation

Fonds pour l'innovation et la transformation

UNION FOR PROGRESS INC.

Women for Innovation and Transformation



Context

The Democratic Republic of Congo is one of Africa's most populous countries, with the majority of its population surviving on a very low minimum income. Women are the most vulnerable, with incomes below the average of 1 US dollar a day. Most jobs are in the informal sector, where women account for 83% of the workforce primarily in low-skilled, low-income economic activities, including part-time and casual work. This creates a significant gap between the quality of men's and women's employment.

The Innovative Solution

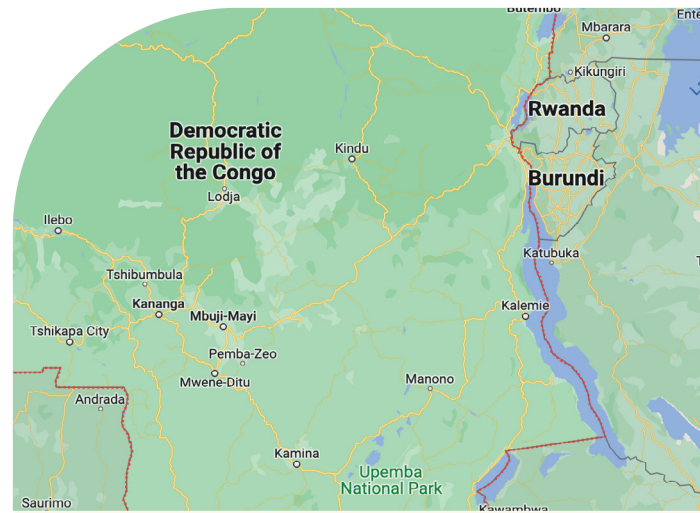
Supported by FIT, Union for Progress Inc. with local partner Umoja ni Ngyu (UnN) tested a gender-transformative solution to empower women by integrating them into traditionally male occupations while guaranteeing their urban safety and access to the formal sector. The innovation solicited support from spouses, community leaders and men already working in the public transport sector. Additionally, women benefited from a series of training courses, including basic mechanics for machine maintenance, basic financial knowledge and gender equality.

Advancing Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Strategy focused on increasing women's income and autonomy and enabling them to access male-dominated employment sectors. The subsequent increase in income among women beneficiaries led to increased perceptions of self-fulfilment as they now had financial decision-making power within the home without having to depend on others.

Testing Framework

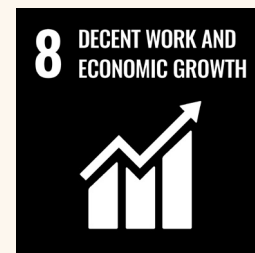
The innovation testing methodology utilized a quasi-experimental method called double differences and regression with discontinuity which is appropriate in the field of econometrics. This included the longitudinal measurement between two groups, the intervention group of 40 women, and the control group of 40 women, to measure the effects specific to the intervention.



COUNTRY
Democratic Republic of Congo

AMOUNT
\$214,454

TESTING PERIOD
10 months
Ended December 2022



GENDER RESPONSIVE (GE2)

THEME: ECONOMY AND FINANCE

Results and Impact

- A total of 80 women, 50% under 36 years of age and 35% from vulnerable groups, gained access the knowledge and skills of riding electric tricycles, enabling them to earn a decent living.
- On average, over 96% of participants declared that they had earned a sufficient income as a result of the innovation.
- Women's decision-making power improved significantly. At baseline, 15% felt empowered and by ending 91% of women felt empowered, exceeding the target of 70%.
- All participating women (80/80) confirmed that the innovation had contributed to their empowerment at the family and community level. Public attitudes to gender equality had also changed. For example, survey results indicated that an average of 91% of women and 83% of men claimed to have improved their attitude towards gender equality.

Key Lessons

1. Using well-known community structures, such as women's groups and volunteers, as well as traditional chiefs to disseminate messages and run awareness campaigns, proved to be an effective strategy.
2. The flexibility and capacity building provided by FIT was one of the keys to success. Unlike other funding programs, FIT accompanies the innovations so that experience is gained while learning during testing.
3. Capacity-building to combat harmful traditional practices and social norms detrimental to gender equality was also effective in achieving the best gender equality results.

“When the project started, I was optimistic, but my husband discouraged me by saying that I’m wasting my time with these learnings and the story of gender equality... now, thanks to this project, I’ve become the one who makes a major contribution to improving my family’s quality of life in terms of food, healthcare and children’s schooling. I’m very proud of this achievement.”

- Ms. Zawadi, a participant, saw her gross monthly income rise from US \$73 to US \$364

PARTNER ORGANIZATION

Umoja ni Nguyu (UnN)

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

80 women

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ABOUT FIT

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South.

