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ACTIVITIES OF THE SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (SIDA)
RELATING TO THE ROLE OF WOMEN
IN THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES *

prepared by

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id.79-920

1

Swedish Assistance to the industry sector

Demand for Swedish assistance in the industrial sector has steadily risen. Whereas during its first years SIDA received very few requests for industrial assistance, requests for support in this sector are today an increasingly common feature of the dialogue maintained between SIDA and the recipient countries. Disbursements for the industrial sector have risen from the level of 2 per cent at the beginning of this decade to 24 per cent today.

The Swedish parliament has said that the aim of the industrial assistance must be to provide additional employment in the recipient countries and to reduce regional differences of employment and earnings. The application of more labour-intensive production and technology will make it possible for industrialization to be more evenly distributed throughout a country. The industrial assistance should give the developing countries a chance to increase their own influence on industrial capital formation, production and siting. The products manufactured should cater for the elementary needs of the population.

The Swedish bilateral assistance to the industrial sector in the developing countries amounted to 550 million Swedish Kronor (US \$ 125 million) in 1977/78. Activities supported are for example:

- Small scale industries
- Development banks and other industrial institutions
- Big industrial projects (such as a paper mill at Bai Bang in Vietnam)
- Appropriate industrial technology
- Training
- Import and export.

Countries receiving substantial Swedish assistance to the industrial sector are Vietnam, Tanzania and India.

Assistance to the industrial sector has not been addressed directly to women. Women may at times profit indirectly from this assistance. For instance industrial projects might give employment to women and women might produce what is exported through export promotion programmes.

2

Woman entrepreneurs in small scale industry

SIDA supports small scale industry programmes in Botswana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Tanzania and Swaziland.

Examples from two countries will illustrate how women have benefitted though the assistance has not been addressed directly to women.

Botswana

The Government of Botswana launched a small scale industry programme in 1973. The aim of the programme is the establishment and encouragement of local industries owned and managed by Botswana entrepreneurs. The programme aims to provide a complete service to carefully selected entrepreneurs. The services include:

- small workshops rented to the entrepreneur
- technical and managerial advice and training
- credit facilities
- bulk buying of materials
- equipment leasing
- marketing advice.

This programme is administered by the Botswana Enterprises Development Unit (BEDU) within the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

SIDA's contribution to the programme since 1974 (grants and personnel) amounts to US \$ 2 million.

BEDU has built industrial estates in five places in Botswana and established about 60 small enterprises. The entrepreneurs are working in the following areas: construction, garment, textile, metal, wood and leather. About 900 employments have been created.

Out of the 60 entrepreneurs 22 are women (37 per cent). The first entrepreneurs to move in to the industrial estates were women who had been home dressmakers. The garment and textile estates are dominated by women entrepreneurs - 10 out of 13. Most of the companies making leather goods are also led by women.

Swaziland

In Swaziland SIDA supports the Small Enterprises Development Company, SEDCO, which has been working since 1970. SEDCO runs 8 industrial estates in the country. The organization comprises about 130 enterprises giving jobs to 800 employees. Out of these 130 entrepreneurs 30 are women (23 per cent).

Most of the applicants to SEDCO are women. "The men usually feel that for them to engage in business they must start in a very big way whilst women are happy with a very small start to supplement family income". (Extract from a SEDCO-report).

Comments

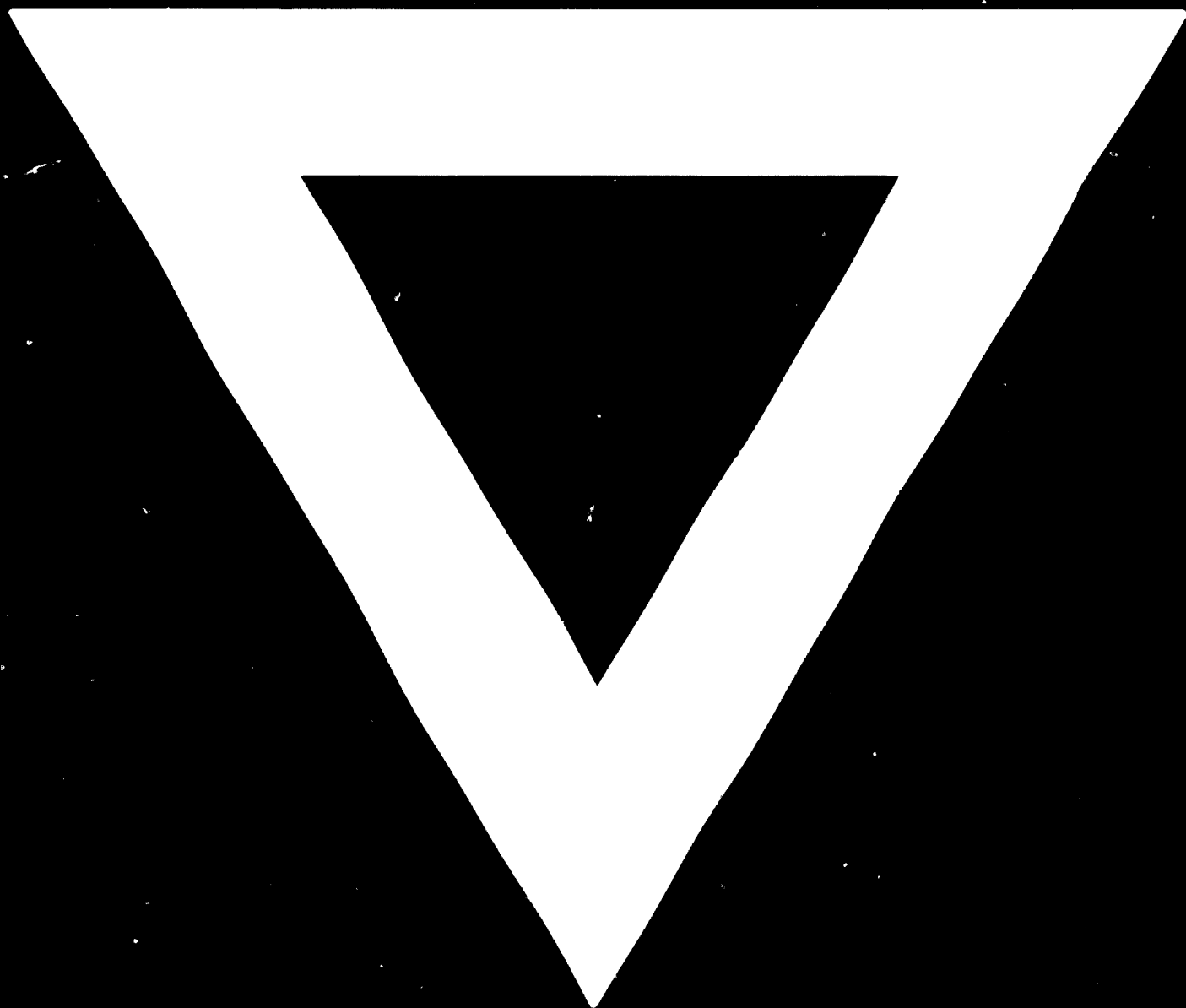
Why has assistance to small scale industries not in greater extent been destined directly to women? One

reason might be the lack of knowledge of woman entrepreneurship in the countries in question. Studies on the division of labour between the sexes are essential for the planning of the projects. Another reason might be that donors tend to carry over prejudices from their home countries. Would perhaps the number of woman entrepreneurs at BEDU and SEDCO have been much higher if the organizations had been built up with the help of less expatriate technical assistance personnel?

Many women in developing countries work in handicraft and domestic craft production. Such cottage industries may have to be given more consideration and support. In order to give women with their lack of education and vocational training a real opportunity to be integrated in the industrial sector and also be able to develop skills and to take part in planning and decision making, they must be able to start from where they are situated in the development process, that is in the subsistence economy, and in handicraft and domestic production. Otherwise they will only be exploited in big industrial plants where they are in demand because they have suitable finger capacity and are satisfied by far lesser wages than men.



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