BUSINESS SUPPORT TRAJECTORY

To help sanitation businesses flourish, it is not enough to conduct a single business workshop. It is needed to provide ongoing support directed towards improving the business management skills of the entrepreneur as well. To this end, WASTE developed a three-phased business support trajectory:

Phase 1: Business accounting
In the first phase, we make an inventory of the businesses involved in sanitation activities identifying the businesses with potential to grow in their sanitation activities. These businesses could include caretakers, mausers, plumbers, divers, pit emptiers, waste pickers and recovery companies. The result of the business assessment is a ranking of their potential by WASTE partners. By using specific performance indicators, we are able to monitor progress into the future.

Phase 2: Business Coaching workshop
The results from the business assessment are used to design a two-day Business Coaching workshop. The objective of the workshop is to strengthen the business management and leadership skills and to kick off the ongoing support trajectory focused on capacity development.

Phase 3: Business Coaching trajectory
Based on their specific growth opportunities and needs, we customise a Business Coaching trajectory for the participating businesses. Activities in this trajectory may include:

- Construction of household toilets or latrines
- Sanitation service related to these activities. Think about: recycling, composting, turn waste into a product or in starting a business making use of such waste as a resource. Faecal sludge and faecal sludge are treated as resources, which can provide an income to many entrepreneurs. For example, when faecal sludge is used as a resource, the Dutch WASH Alliance make use of WASTE’s Business Trajectory developed in the WASH Alliance. The approach is part of WASTE’s Business Diamond Approach.

SIX IMPORTANT INSIGHTS IN STARTING A BUSINESS IN SANITATION

#1 There is business in sanitation
Sanitation can provide an attractive source of income to many entrepreneurs. For example, when waste and faecal sludge are treated as resources, interesting opportunities exist in the conversion of such waste into a product or in starting a business service related to these activities. Think about:

- Construction of household toilets or latrines
- Maintenance or management of public toilets
- Collection and transportation of faecal sludge (manually and mechanically)
- Production of compost, bio-energy or nutrients

#2 The specific skills of a sanitation entrepreneur
All people have their own personal characteristics and use certain skills in their day-to-day working life. Some of these characteristics and skills are very useful to start a viable sanitation business. In addition to skills such as carpentry, plumbing or masonry, useful business skills include problem-solving skills and communication skills. Important characteristics are perseverance, confidence and reliability. A combination of personal qualities and technical knowhow will help entrepreneurs to start their business. Of course nobody is a perfect entrepreneur with all necessary characteristics and skills. An entrepreneur without certain personal qualities can compensate by partnering with partners with those specific characteristics. And lack of certain skills can be acquired from training or courses.

#3 The importance of a business plan
A business plan is a written document that helps you to work out your business idea. It details a proposed concept in a way that others understand. It helps the entrepreneur to present the business idea to work out your business idea. It details a proposed concept in a way that others understand. It helps the entrepreneur to present the business idea.

- It helps the entrepreneur to have a clear picture of the business objectives and goals.
- It helps the entrepreneur to present the business concept in a way that others understand.
- It shows the potential strengths and weaknesses of the business.
- It serves as basis for discussion with third parties.

#4 Don't underestimate the power of marketing
Very often ‘marketing’ can be mistaken for ‘selling’. ‘Selling’ is the process of making your customer buy your products. Marketing however is the process of finding out what customers really want. Based on these insights, entrepreneurs can develop, produce, promote and distribute their products. Marketing is about satisfying customers by:

- Providing the products or services they need
- Setting prices that they are willing to pay
- Getting products or services to them via the right channels
- Informing and attracting them to buy the products and services

Marketing is an important part of starting and running a successful business. Extensive market research helps entrepreneurs to understand their customers’ needs and expectations, and learn about the competitors in the market. Market research includes talking to potential customers, suppliers and business friends and studying competitors.
A marketing plan is an important part of the business plan. One way of organizing the marketing plan is to follow the four Ps of marketing:

- **Product:** what product or service will be sold
- **Price:** what will be the price charged
- **Place:** where will the business be located
- **Promotion:** how to tell potential customers about the product, price or place. How to attract customers to buy the product or service

Promotion of a product or service is vital to business success. Especially in the start-up phase it is important to inform future clients about the existence of the products and services offered. Developing promotion materials like leaflets, catalogues, brochures, stickers or radio advertisements is advisable. The message must be clear and understandable. And even more important: deliver what you promise. The best promotion is a satisfied client.

An entrepreneur needs business capital to start the business to finance equipment, inventory, running costs etc. Funds for launching a business may be obtained from a microfinance organization or a bank. One of the objectives of the WASTE business support is facilitating entrepreneurs in developing bankable business plans that can be used to apply for a loan. A viable business plan needs to provide at least the following financial details:

- The total investment needed
- The amount to be provided by the owners and amount needed from the bank
- A repayment structure
- Projections of sales, income statement, cash flow and balance sheet

WASTE is successfully using the business support trajectory in several countries in Africa. Do you think your programme could use some business coaching? And do you want to learn more about this approach? Please contact WASTE: office@waste.nl