

Tool 1

BUSINESS
INNOVATION
VISIONING



Contents

Linda Mayoux	1 Business Innovation brainstorming	3
with		
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and		
RWEE Champions	3 Group visioning	5
	4 Plenary sharing	6



Women's businesses are often concentrated in a few low income activities with little market. Business innovation is necessary to increase incomes and enter profitable activities. It is also necessary to be self-reliant and flexible. Groups and associations need to be based on individual responsibility and self-reliance or they are unlikely to succeed.

The aim of BALI is to enable women and men to:

- ***identify new types of business or new products in existing businesses that can be viable on an individual or household level.***
- ***share ideas and experiences on how the businesses can be more profitable***
- ***how markets can be developed and financial resources can be accessed***
- ***develop networks to access necessary information***

The second phase then identifies potential roles of groups and associations to support this.



1 *Business Innovation brainstorming*

Looking back at the visions from GALS and the types of business you have been involved in or seen - particularly businesses you know to be profitable - think of 10 ideas for new businesses you might consider or 10 new products you could produce from an existing business. At this stage think freely - what would you like to do? The following tools and discussions with other people will then help to focus things and make your plans more realistic.

On an A4 sheet of paper draw a vision circle with rays as before and draw each of your ideas - still think freely. Are any of your ideas related to each other? Can they be included in one business? Or are they separate businesses? Will you be doing it alone, with family members, friends, maybe other participants? Indicate this in your drawing.

Looking at what you have drawn, which ideas do you think are things that you could implement now - put a green circle around these.

Which do you think might be longer term ideas? These can be considered later. Which ideas, on reflection, do you now think are not really for you - put a blue circle around these - these will be rejected at least for now.



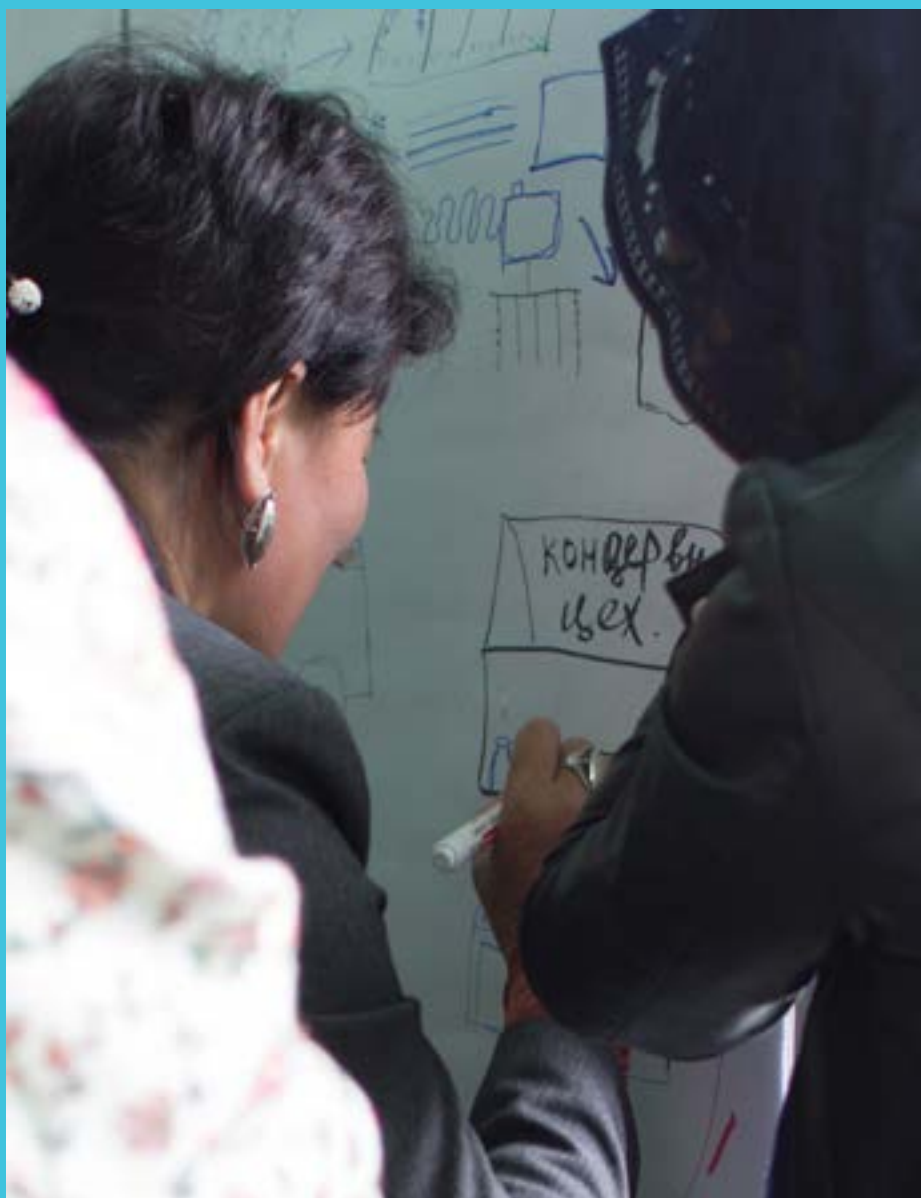
2 *Finding soulmates: mingling and sharing*

When you have finished identifying and prioritising 10 ideas (the facilitator will check you have 10), get up and share your drawings with other participants to find other ‘soulmates’ who have similar plans to yours. Share all your ideas, then explain why you prioritised the particular ideas you have.

Through sharing with other people you may get some new ideas of your own, or change what you thought. But think independently - other people can be wrong. What is right for them may not be right for you. And too many people doing the same thing may lead all to fail through producing too much of one thing in the same markets.

Share with everyone or you may miss new people on the other side of the room who can really help in future. Do not just stay with friends or people you already know - you can talk with them later.

When you have discussed with everyone, start to form a group with those with the most similar plans. Some people may not find others with similar ideas - these ‘independent people’ should form a group together to help each other. Do not feel you have to ‘follow the crowd’.



3 *Group visioning*

In your groups, each person comes up in turn to explain and draw their own vision for the business:

- what different ideas did they have, why they choose and prioritise what they did?
- do they see this as a short or long term plan? a stand-alone business, one that may diversify over time?
- will they be doing the business on their own? with other family members? with friends? with other participants?

Before each person draws, they think whether their vision for the activity is close to any of the ones that have gone before. If so they should draw their own vision next to that one. If their vision is different they should draw it further away. The aim is to see all the different approaches to the same business activity and different pros and cons.

At the end people vote on what they think are the most viable/profitable approaches - bearing in mind that the same approach may not suit everyone. People have 5 votes to allocate as they please.

Each group appoints a presenter - preferably the person who has spoken least so everyone has a chance to develop their confidence at speaking.



4 Plenary sharing

The presenter introduces the group. Then summarises the discussion, starting with the approaches that got the most votes.

Other participants can ask questions or give suggestions at the end. If people have already tried the approaches suggested, then they can contribute their experience of opportunities and challenges.

At this point people are still free to change their business ideas and approaches, depending on what they hear from others.

But the biggest applause should go to the most innovative ideas, not just the same old activities.

The homework from this session is to finalise the business idea and approach that people will take, and sit with the relevant group over dinner.