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Readiness, resilience and the ripple effect: women-owned enterprise in Kenya and the promise of global inclusion

Préparation, résilience et l'effet de ricochet : entreprise appartenant à des femmes au Kenya et la Promesse de l'inclusion mondiale

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Transnational corporations are recasting themselves as midwives of women's empowerment rather than vehicles of exploitation, pledging their supply chains as platforms of inclusive capitalism rather than conduits of adverse incorporation. In this contribution we interrogate that corporate promise of inclusion empirically, examining both the corporate apparatus of gender empowerment and the experiences of women entrepreneurs they claim to empower. Through a case study of a small women-owned enterprise in Nairobi, on its journey to inclusion in one of the world's largest corporate supply chains, we chronicle the efforts of women entrepreneurs to be made 'ready' for the rewards of inclusion in the global marketplace. While TNCs invoke the shibboleth of inclusive markets – seeking to capture the moral currency it nets them – we reveal how the conversion to global supplier leaves small enterprises in Africa leveraged and dependent rather than secure and autonomous. In the end, we argue, the inclusive market becomes a vehicle of failed hopes and corporate control.

Keywords: Markets; bottom of the pyramid development; entrepreneurship; corporate social responsibility; empowerment; gender; supply chains; Kenya

Les entreprises transnationales se présentent comme des sages-femmes de l'autonomisation des femmes plutôt que comme des véhicules d'exploitation, promettant que leurs chaînes d'approvisionnement sont des plateformes de capitalisme inclusif plutôt que des conduits d'incorporation négative. Dans cette contribution, nous interrogeons cette promesse d'inclusion des entreprises de manière empirique, en examinant à la fois l'appareil d'autonomisation du genre des entreprises et les expériences des femmes entrepreneurs qu'elles prétendent autonomiser. À travers l'étude de cas d'une petite entreprise appartenant à des femmes à Nairobi, sur son chemin vers l'inclusion dans l'une des plus grandes chaînes d'approvisionnement du monde, nous décrivons les efforts des femmes entrepreneurs pour être "prêtes" à recevoir les récompenses de l'inclusion sur le marché mondial. Alors que les sociétés transnationales invoquent le shibboleth des marchés inclusifs - cherchant à s'appropriier la monnaie morale qu'il leur rapporte - nous révélons comment la conversion en fournisseur mondial laisse les petites entreprises africaines dans une situation d'endettement et

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de dépendance plutôt que dans une situation de sécurité et d'autonomie. En fin de compte, nous affirmons que le marché inclusif devient un véhicule d'espoirs déçus et de contrôle des entreprises.

Mots clés: Marchés; développement de la base de la pyramide; esprit d'entreprise; responsabilité sociale des entreprises; autonomisation; égalité des sexes; chaînes d'approvisionnement; Kenya

Introduction

Since the early 2000s, entrepreneurship has gained favour as a way for corporations to penetrate untapped markets under the banner of development, by embracing CK Prahalad's exhortation 'to do good while doing well'. Across sub-Saharan Africa, corporations have seized upon Prahalad's bottom of the pyramid (BoP) business model (Chmielewski, Dembek, and Beckett 2020; Hart and London 2005; Kolk, Rivera-Santos, and Ruffin 2014; Mason, Chakrabarti, and Singh 2017; Prahalad 2005; Seelos and Mair 2007), claiming to marry corporate logics of profit maximisation with development aspirations for poverty reduction through a double value proposition: on the one hand selling much-needed products and services to poor consumers, and on the other providing income opportunities for micro-entrepreneurs to sell them (Prahalad 2005). In a bid to expand their networks of consumers and producers while boosting their social responsibility credentials, TNCs are competing to roll out entrepreneurship programmes that promise to empower local enterprise and generate income for an army of BoP entrepreneurs.

At the forefront of their campaigns are women – celebrated as development's greatest asset and capitalism's ultimate frontier.¹ Novel coalitions of transnational corporations (TNCs), donors and social enterprises have converged on this figure of the female entrepreneur-come-social multiplier, hoping to set in motion (and claim credit for) a ripple effect of global female empowerment (Moeller 2018; Roberts 2015). At the centre of this vision, we find a new rendition of the entrepreneur who embodies self-interest *and* self-sacrifice to become the very personification of the inclusive market ideology. As UN Women exclaims, 'empowering young women to become not only wage-earners but also job-creators is imperative ... for eradicating poverty!'.² 'Take the risk', exhorted the UN Empower Champion at the launch of the Global Coalition of Women Entrepreneurs in July 2016,³ 'invest your money, invest your time, invest your passion, *in order to empower other people!*'

The BoP's claims to empower women through pro-poor consumption have been richly critiqued (for example Arora and Romijn 2012; Faria and Hemais 2017; Karnani 2007).⁴ Yet its entrepreneurial promise has received less scrutiny, particularly in Africa. The figure of the entrepreneur, as both agent and subject of inclusive market ideology, remains elusive. A handful of anthropologists have examined the making of entrepreneurial subjectivity *empirically*,⁵ but even fewer have delved into the relationship between TNCs and the women entrepreneurs they seek to engage (Dolan 2012; Dolan and Rajak 2018; Freeman 2014; Huang 2017; Masi De Casanova 2011; Pfeilstetter 2022; Roy 2012; Schwittay 2012). Similarly, feminist scholars have critically interrogated the ideological power of 'transnational business feminism' (to borrow Roberts' 2015 term), to coopt feminist politics as a corporate resource in order to capitalise on the vast energies of women in the global South (Bexell 2012; Eisenstein 2010; Gregoratti, Roberts, and Tornhill 2018; Grosser and McCarthy 2019; Hickel 2014; Roberts 2014; Tornhill 2019). But few have explored the material effects of this corporate agenda.

In this article we examine the corporate promise of women's empowerment through enterprise through a qualitative study⁶ of Magasin, one the world's top ten retailers, and its bid to empower small women-owned enterprise (SWoE) in the Global South. In March 2013, Magasin⁷ launched Le Réseau de Femmes Entrepreneurs (RFE), a network which aims to harness 'the vast reach of its supply chain and the immense scale of its customer base as a

means of empowering enterprising women across the globe' (Director of RFE, Magasin HQ, Lille France). RFE's architects stress that with an ambition 'to source billions of dollars of their supply chain "from women owned businesses" and "train 1 million women" (Magasin Executive⁸), the initiative is about more than "just sourcing from women" or expanding Magasin's vast base of low-cost producers'. Rather, RFE's mission is 'to give market access to the base of the pyramid, to artisans, to small women-owned business', offering them a much sought after opportunity to access one of the world's most profitable supply chains.

To explore the RFE opportunity we follow one small enterprise based in Nairobi, Kenya – Mkiwa Designs – on its journey to inclusion in Magasin's global marketplace through RFE. We describe how the micro relations of power and subordination play out between Magasin, RFE and Mkiwa, as the TNC seeks to capitalise on the 'local authenticity', moral caché and actual labour of small enterprises like Mkiwa. Despite claims of reciprocity we find that Mkiwa must risk all on the corporate promise of inclusion in the global market. As the article reveals, Mkiwa confronts exacting, if not insurmountable, demands to meet the quality, quantity, cost, and ethical standards of Magasin's global supply chain. Yet, despite the considerable energies Mkiwa invests in this perilous journey to inclusion (along with those shouldered by the third parties mediating the process) the corporate promise of empowerment through enterprise comes with no assurance of 'inclusion' even on their terms. We reflect, as Mkiwa has, on the emotional and material costs of conversion to be made 'ready' for long-awaited rewards of the 'inclusive' global market.

We then turn to interrogate the actual outcomes of this reincarnated trickle-down, demonstrating how Mkiwa, its employees, and its outsourced weavers become casualties rather than benefactors of Magasin's vision of inclusion, which elides the social, spatial and temporal rhythms of women's lives and raises questions about the merits of scaling up for global supply chains as a vehicle of integration and empowerment for third world women (Bexell 2012; Dolan and Humphrey 2000; Phillips 2011; Riisgaard 2009). In particular, we find that the lure of global markets overshadows, if not displaces, the important role of domestic markets, allowing for the rich resources (material and social) that circulate within them to be extracted from Africa's local economies and piped up the global value chain to corporations.

We conclude that the conversion required for the global marketplace, and its anticipated rewards, leaves small enterprises like Mkiwa, constrained rather than free; leveraged and dependent rather than secure and autonomous. The inclusive market, we suggest, becomes a vehicle of unfulfilled aspiration and opportunity foreclosed, a space of precarious dependency that falls short of its inclusionary ideals.

Enterprising women reimagined: corporate capitalism and the entrepreneurial promise

Women have animated development imaginaries since the paradigmatic enterprising peasant of the 60s, the market seller of the 70s or the micro-creditee of the 90s (Amadiume 2000; Clark 1994; Gatwiri and McLaren 2016; Kabeer 2005; Morduch 1999; Rankin 2001; Roy 2010; Tiffen 1976). In the current orthodoxy of inclusive growth we find older concepts of gender empowerment incorporated within new paradigms of enterprise development, as TNCs repurpose the 'enterprising woman' – perennial icon of development discourse – for a new era of millennial capitalism (Cornwall 2018; Niethammer 2013; Schuster 2015). Endowed with a new market appeal, the enterprising woman comes to embody not only global visions of development, but corporate aspirations, upgraded from beneficiary of development to 'ally of economic success' (Bexell 2012, 389; see also Calkin 2016; Elias 2013). Tethering women's empowerment to corporate profit is far more than clever rhetorics. The fusion of feminism with corporate capitalism has proved rich moral currency for corporates looking to invest (or cash in) on 'gender

equality as smart economics’,⁹ so the Nike slogan goes (Eisenstein 2017, 39; Moeller 2018). As Chant and Sweetman (2012) point out, the appeal to ‘smart economics’ recalls the logic, and authority, of its 1980s Washington Consensus precursor, burdening women with both the social costs of structural adjustment and responsibility for recovery from its socio-economic fallout. And, like its precursor, the millennial discourse of ‘smart economics’ trades in essentialised female virtues, celebrating survivalism as resilience, while reincarnating the trickle down as ‘the ripple effect’ (horizontal rather than vertical).

But where there is continuity, there is also change. The new orthodoxy of inclusive markets claims a marked departure from reigning development paradigms of the 80s and 90s that advocated women’s economic integration through employment in global value chains (GVCs), but delivered adverse incorporation and a trickle-down that never came (Barrientos 2019; Barrientos, Gereffi, and Rossi 2011; Dolan and Humphrey 2000; Phillips 2011; Ponte and Ewert 2009; Riisgaard 2009; Tallontire et al. 2005).

What distinguishes current paradigms of ‘inclusive pro-poor markets’ from the classic GVC – and a key concern of this contribution – is the central role cast for both corporations *and* entrepreneurs as individual catalysts¹⁰ of the anticipated ripple effect cascading from corporate giants to small enterprise, and on to women workers at the so-called ‘base of the pyramid’ (BoP). Women’s ‘female efficiency’ (a bedrock of WID discourse), has been rebranded as ‘entrepreneurialism’ shifting the emphasis from community to individual. And women have been rescripted not as workers in the global economy, but as drivers of inclusive markets, simultaneously celebrated as authors of their own upliftment, and delegated as the drivers of broader social transformation (see Government of Kenya 2012; Kamau 2017; Sindani 2022). In the sections that follow, we examine how global corporate retailer, Magasin, seeks to remake its supply chain as a vehicle of women’s empowerment through entrepreneurial inclusion in Kenya.

Global corporation, local enterprise: making the inclusive marketplace

Le Réseau de Femmes Entrepreneurs (RFE) was the brainchild of a small cadre of senior women executives at Magasin HQ in Lille, France, who set out to mobilise the company’s vast reach and resources to empower women entrepreneurs across the globe. They hoped RFE would provide a platform which could harness both ends of the value chain: at one end the buying power of millions of customers; at the other women-owned enterprises striving to scale up to global markets. In order to make this inclusive marketplace (or make the marketplace inclusive), RFE coordinators at Magasin partnered with Global Bazaar, a social enterprise specialising in talent-sourcing female artisans in the global south. Together, they scouted promising women-owned small enterprises embedded in local markets, hoping to recruit them to the network, re-orientate them to global markets, scale them up and incorporate them into Magasin’s supply chain. But RFE claims a broader moral mission of upliftment which promises not only to make them ready for Magasin, but fit for global business, or as Sophie, director of RFE at Magasin HQ put it, ‘[to] help them globally become a more marketable company’, adding, ‘hopefully we’re not only benefitting ourselves from getting more sales’.¹¹

Termed in RFE jargon as ‘social multipliers’, Magasin’s partners such as Global Bazaar, a UK-based social enterprise, play a fundamental role throughout the process: in identifying and mediating the relationship between the corporate giant and the small enterprises it seeks to empower; in facilitating the transformation of small enterprises to global supplier and in helping them to cater for a distant clientele, i.e. in the development and branding of products ‘suitable’ for Magasin customers. For their part, Global Bazaar saw the opportunity of partnership with Magasin’s RFE to further their aims: working with small enterprises in South and

Southeast Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, to '[develop] market-based means to lift women and their community above poverty'.¹² As such, Global Bazaar's mission seems to fit squarely with that of RFE, quite simply, according to Nina Larson, co-founder of Global Bazaar, 'to alleviate poverty through ... entrepreneurial action'. Yet the promise of transformation that accompanies this mission is much loftier:

So the essence is ... the vehicle is a market-based approach ... We are a social brand ... then what happens is we create not only irreversible change, we create a new mindset and a new imagination of the dignity of the individual, the dignity of the poor.¹³

For Magasin, Kenya provides a fertile market to trial their empowerment efforts. The striking gender gaps in relation to access to education and formal employment leaves the majority of women with little option but to make a living through some form of enterprise, mostly in the informal or semi-formal sector (Kinyanjui 2014; Osoro and Areba 2013).¹⁴ Women's entrepreneurial activity is thus already seen as a defining feature of social and economic life, central to both social reproduction and economic development (Ossome 2021). At the same time, in Mkiwa Designs, Magasin found an entrepreneur committed to growing a business that could provide sustainable employment and 'empower others'. Established by Tessa Kandie and her cousin, Sonia Maiyo, over a decade ago, Mkiwa developed a healthy local market for artisan crafts, building and training a workforce of over 20 women in Nairobi and sourcing more widely from several women's rural collectives. Recounting their journey to Mkiwa, Tessa and Sonia stressed that their artistic and entrepreneurial motivations were underpinned by an ethic of social responsibility: 'I was just looking at trying to help somebody change their life', Tessa explained.¹⁵

With RFE, Magasin ticks three (or more) boxes in the repertoire of corporate responsibility, which, as we will see are not necessarily compatible. First and foremost, RFE taps into the discursive currency of BoP enterprise and gender empowerment as the latest innovations in corporate-sponsored development. It proposes to do so by using Magasin's mighty supply chain as the vehicle of inclusion and empowerment for women entrepreneurs excluded from global markets such as Tessa of Mkiwa Designs. A second older dimension of CSR is engaged – ethical supply chain governance enacted through codes of conduct and the corporation's ethical audit. The RFE ethical marketplace seeks to capitalise on consumer appetites for artisanal crafts while earning the company moral capital, as the architect of women's empowerment through enterprise.

However, making these two cohere – translating Magasin's low-cost production model into social mission – turns out to be far from seamless. What emerges is a compelling vision of global womanhood united through enterprise, behind which we find mixed messages and internal conflicts of interests and values between the various actors and institutions implicated in RFE. As a long term Magasin executive, Sophie for example, wants to empower women, but she also wants to create more compliant, efficient, and low-cost suppliers for Magasin, blurring the lines between charity and cheap labour. Among almost a million products sold in Magasin's shops around the world, just over 400 products (produced by around 30 women-owned small enterprises in Africa, South and South-East Asia and South America), have made it into the store's 'sustainability marketplace': coasters, cushion covers, beaded barrettes and baskets. Indeed, as emerged through our research, the process of selection and incorporation into the inclusive marketplace (for both entrepreneurs and their products), is exclusionary and fraught with obstacles. This exposes the tensions between conflicting aims of Magasin's CSR win-win proposition: on the one hand the prescriptions of ethical sourcing, on the other RFE's promotion of home-grown entrepreneurial empowerment in sub-Saharan Africa.

At stake in this process is the survival and security of Mkiwa, and the livelihoods of those who work in it. Beyond these material imperatives, struggles over control and agency, dependence and autonomy emerge as unforeseen yet inescapable dynamics in Mkiwa's bid for global inclusion. In the sections that follow, we track the process of Mkiwa's transformation: piece-rate workers are made permanent employees, the workshop is relocated to a purpose-built facility near the airport, production is reoriented to export and must meet new expectations of assembly line-consistency, all of which requires significant credit. With the promise of reward comes ever-greater risk for small businesses like Mkiwa, which become increasingly leveraged as they strive to ready themselves for 'inclusion' into Magasin's global supply chain.

Readiness

RFE sets out to create a seismic shift in institutional 'mindset' and operating logic that will render women-owned small businesses 'fit' for global markets. SWoEs, just like individuals, must be made *ready* for inclusion. And readiness requires training and ethical disciplining, dispensed by Magasin and their UK partner, the social enterprise Global Bazaar, who mediate access to European markets through RFE. This must be matched by a steep investment of capital, energy, and resources from Mkiwa and other SWoE recruits to RFE, who must, on the one hand, demonstrate their capacity for patient resilience *and* compliance on the one hand, and bold risk-taking and ambition on the other.

Magasin's efforts to make Mkiwa 'ready' for inclusion centred on its capacity to 'scale up'. The corporation's goal is to 'double the supplier base' within RFE by the end of the year [2014], driven by the imperative of making the programme 'scalable'.¹⁶ As it permeates down through the production network, the preoccupation with scalability comes to define relations at every point in this new supply chain. Nina Larson at Global Bazaar, the social enterprise shepherding Mkiwa's conversion and brokering its inclusion in the global market, explained how this governed their own strategy as a social enterprise:

In the social enterprise space, where do you go to raise five to seven million dollars of equity capital that's not going to be directly related to a purchase order, that is not going to be directly related to a programme-related expense, that you need for growth capital if you're going to create scale in a way that's going to create the most meaningful impact on the ground ... how do we create that piece where we can go to Foundations and say we don't need a five hundred thousand grant for these repositions, we need growth capital Because if you want to scale this from being in twenty-seven hundred [Magasin] stores to being in fifty thousand stores around the country ... other mass retailers, the financing implications are one piece in terms of lenders, the growth capital piece is another piece and if you don't get that growth capital ... it will take significantly longer to grow because it you won't have the growth to sustain it.¹⁷

Growth in itself becomes the goal; showing one's mettle to enter the global market, the mark of the true entrepreneur. The rewards (both material and immaterial) of joining RFE are enticing for a small enterprise like Mkiwa which is looking to grow: lines of credit, design mentoring, and the hope that producing for Magasin affords them credentials that will appeal to other global retailers. RFE's vision of empowerment through enterprise also incorporates the current orthodoxy of financial inclusion: micro-credit reimaged in a marketised model for a corporate-sponsored development agenda (Mader 2015). For Mkiwa, joining Magasin's fold opens access to credit required to scale-up, which female entrepreneurs in Kenya face much greater obstacles accessing (Dupas et al. 2012; Mariita 2018; Mbiti et al. 2015; Mwobobia 2012), and to support offered to RFE enterprises through the mentorship of Magasin's partner, Global Bazaar. But for small firms it's a perilous path. The costs of reorienting Mkiwa's business for the global market meant

relinquishing their solid position in the local market, and the popular made-to-measure service they offered. As Sonia, co-founder of Mkiwa recalled:

we didn't have the manpower, we didn't have the capital to do all that [produce for local and global market], until after we did the business plan that we actually saw it and realised like we're doing too much ... And not actually cementing ourselves as a plan within the local market.¹⁸

In exchange for the benefits of inclusion – credit, market access, mentorship – SWoEs must be prepared to make sacrifices. First and foremost for Mkiwa, this meant relinquishing a significant degree of their profit margin to Magasin, accepting a margin of just 10% as compared to the 20% or more they get from local trade. Although their deal with RFE affords them 50% payment for goods on order (extended by Global Bazaar) and 50% on delivery, in order to give them working capital, it also requires that they sacrifice a degree of autonomy and security.

Mkiwa strained under Magasin's efforts to ramp up pace while driving down prices, or as one Magasin executive at HQ put it: 'to figure out how to do it cheaper and faster'. At the same time, the dependence on credit of this new capital-intensive production regime means accepting (and coping with) a new level of precariousness that comes with indebtedness. The costs of conversion for a small enterprise are considerable. First came Magasin's ethical audit, rolled out from corporate to supplier, along with the cost of conducting the audit no matter how small. Upgrading their production processes to ensure compliance to the audit incurs much greater costs. At the same time, the system of ethical audit brought with it the disciplinary arm of Magasin's managerialism, implicitly undermining the broader ethic of empowerment which motivates the whole RFE programme. The new routinised structure of the day mandated by Magasin did not fit well with family and childcare duties (rigid 8 h shifts with little flexibility). Neither did the directives governing the production of rural artisans who found the spatial prescriptions of the ethical audit, requiring that they adopt ergonomic positions deemed suitable for a healthy workplace, uncomfortable and inefficient.

The ethical mandate against 'homeworking' also compelled artisans to shift their weaving to a community centre, which for weavers was counter-productive. Weaving is something they do while taking care of children, livestock, and small-holdings or engaging in other livelihood activities such as making soap, selling coal or subsistence farming (Mboya et al. 2015). This was one of the few advantages of weaving, the weavers said, despite the small income it netted these days i.e. it is efficient only if done in tandem with other work, and not as a sole activity in a community centre, particularly because children were not allowed to accompany them there. The spatial and temporal imperatives imposed by the RFE production regime were equally unremitting and blind to the seasonal rhythms of women workers' diversified livelihoods, requiring flexibility rather than regularity on a daily and seasonal basis. These tensions expose a critical incompatibility between the temporal and spatial prescriptions of ethical audits and the broader social needs of women workers, between the managerial demand for routinisation and workers' need for flexibility.

Time and again RFE's chosen enterprises (whether those in the front line of Magasin's supply chain e.g. Mkiwa, or those to whom Mkiwa outsourced some components, such as Kufuma Kenya, a rural women's cooperative of over 1000 weavers subcontracted by Mkiwa) reiterated the same thing. Magasin paid less for the baskets, cushion covers, and so on; and required that women prioritise weaving despite the low profit it netted them and the shorter timeframes it demanded for completion, without regard for other orders that producers might be juggling, without regard for the fluctuating costs of raw materials such as sisal, without regard for seasonal disruptions to delivery brought by the rains or acknowledgement that order fulfilment often meant weaving through the night by kerosene lamp. Despite RFE's social mission, Magasin

displaces responsibility for the material and social costs of empowerment down the chain, to be absorbed variously by Global Bazaar, Mkiwa and the workers themselves.

Mkiwa's experience highlights the contradictory expectations of RFE's triple value proposition, seeking to commodify an ethic of empowerment within the artisanal aesthetics of the product itself, to be turned out in volume with the standardised production values of the assembly line. The quest for cultural authenticity clashes with Magasin's demand for mass appeal items produced with assembly line consistency. From Magasin's perspective however, this was not so much a clash of values, reflecting the incompatibility of their social/moral claims with their commercial agendas, but the result of Mkiwa's failure to understand (and conform to) the tastes of Magasin's market. Delphine, Magasin marketing executive and RFE champion, explained thus:

entrepreneurs that are Europe-based have a better sensibility to what European consumers are looking for. You know, they live, they understand that culture a bit better, so I think it's, you know, we kind of recognise that's it, you know, it just is different, you know.¹⁹

Entrepreneurs become subject to the conflicting aims of Magasin's supply chain and RFE's social mission. They must seek the all-important 'high velocity item' that will fly off the shelves, while at the same time retaining the cache of an artisanal item hand-made from a natural material (such as animal horn or jute which may not be amenable to such an ideal of standardisation).

Catering to the desires of distant customers mediated through Global Bazaar's tutelage was both frustrating and alienating for Tessa and Sonia. Readiness becomes about embracing wholeheartedly the rigid aesthetic demands of the buyer, and the apparently unviable tastes of the 'European consumer' as Sonia explains, learning to 'understand the European market, the European consumer'. This effectively turns a small local enterprise focused on design and craftsmanship, into an assembly line producer. As Sonia continued: 'for us basketry was not much of our business idea ... not the kind of basketry that Magasin wants ... Magasin asked for the really low-end baskets', describing Mkiwa's own designs as 'too traditional' for Western customers.²⁰

Mikwa's readiness was challenged not only by Magasin's aesthetic imperatives. As a shipment of items for a previous order sat finished and packaged, ready for export to France, Tessa hit a 'roadblock' in her efforts to get her products to Magasin's market: the export bond levied on goods destined for global markets, another unforeseen cost of inclusion in RFE's global network. The bond must be paid before products can be shipped. Once they have left the country the bond is repaid, but with Mkiwa already cash-strapped, Tessa struggled to cover this additional outlay, further straining the business, and Tessa's resolve as she waited suspended at the edges of Magasin's supply chain. Unable to overcome these structural impediments on her own and get her products to the global market, Tessa expressed a sense of both guilt and impotence. She was reluctant to ask Global Bazaar for more help/credit to cover the bond so she could get the items out of the incubator and through customs:

No, I haven't [asked for help] because I'm tired of telling them stories, I'm so tired ... I'm trying to sort it out and I'm like, I need to sort this out before I go back to them because I'm feeling so frustrated ... I feel sometimes like sort yourself out ... stop giving people stories ... You know how your government works is your problem, it's your government issues ... I feel upset. I know it's wrong not to tell them but trust me, it's just ... guilt in my head ... I feel really bad about it because they've really been patient and tolerant with us but our systems just don't work.

Meanwhile Magasin limits its risk by giving lucrative shelf space – physical inclusion – only to tried-and-tested products guaranteed to sell in numbers that far exceed the capacity of a small

enterprise in Kenya, Ghana, or Nepal. At Magasin's bidding, Mkiwa had to relocate and radically reorient to be 'ready' for the inclusive global marketplace.

Resilience

Despite these setbacks, Tessa tried to remain resiliently optimistic. But as she became increasingly leveraged, taking on more risk in the process of readying Mkiwa for high-volume production, she became less able to withstand the setbacks. When Magasin promised a new order of woven headbands for its summer 2015 collection, Tessa was wary. Her faith in the perceived wisdom of global enterprise with its mantra of growth and trust in (bulk) numbers had begun to wane. She recounted how Magasin's previous orders had failed to materialise. A promised order for candle holders never came, without any explanation from Global Bazaar or Magasin. 'Actually they never got back to us on anything they'd given us hopes for, to say no, that won't happen'.²¹ Neither did the order for leather sandals which Tessa had hoped would come on the back of the samples they'd developed in response to an idea touted by RFE's directors: 'Because we were so like excited, we did all these sandals, we sent all these samples, it takes a lot of time and energy and then they go quiet'. The directors questioned whether Mkiwa would be able to produce sandals across the range of sizes, in sufficient numbers with the required consistency. Unwilling to take the risk, RFE decided not to go ahead with the order, but no one had informed Tessa, who was still waiting to hear: 'we didn't know, we just waited, caught in the process ... stupid us'. In fact, Tessa noted, 'nothing came through until this year'. The financial ramifications of expected orders failing to come to fruition are stark. As Tessa put it, 'I almost closed my business without hope of those [greeting] cards ... I'm not taking up any business because I had it'.

And so, when it came to the headbands, Sonia and Tessa were more circumspect and told Global Bazaar that the order would have to be larger and the profit margin higher to buffer the potential unexpected costs which she had now come to expect. Global Bazaar relayed this to Magasin, but Magasin refused, unwilling to shoulder the risk of a large order themselves, even under the auspices of RFE, its Prahalian platform that celebrated women's inclusion.

Rather than a finite process leading to inclusion and its anticipated rewards, readiness is ongoing, never quite coming to fruition. The effort and resources invested in transformation gives way to more months, even years, of uncertainties: waiting for orders, the outcomes of samples sent months previously and the unpredictability of whether it will ultimately yield the big order that they have been striving for and that would make all of this worthwhile. It is no wonder then that long-term thinking and patience becomes one of the key virtues such enterprise programmes celebrate and claim to foster. Tessa's sense of suspension is all the more visceral as it is juxtaposed with the speedy pace of 'now now'²² production that is the hallmark of global production regimes, despite the fact that it is these very regimes that have left Tessa and Mkiwa suspended, waiting for the big order to come in, but unable to move forward, unsure whether they can take on work for the local market lest the big order should arrive at any given time and they are not ready to fulfil it given the short deadlines:

I even prepared my women ... we actually put things in place like prepared when needed, we need to do this, we have to do it ... We even went out of our way and bought fabric, did a sample and asked them if that's what they were talking about, and they say yes, that's the right thing ... so we waited – they never came back to us. And all along we are not taking any new orders because we do not want not to deliver.²³

This position is both financially perilous for the business, and enhances Tessa's sense of paralysis and diminishing control over her business. In the end, curbing their own expectations, Tessa and Sonia wanted only clarity on whether 'this order ... is coming or not. Then we can do other stuff

for another market ... we need to move on, we can't keep waiting for an order that we don't know when it's coming'.²⁴

While a key component of entrepreneurial readiness is the capacity to wait, to show resilience in the face of setbacks, and perseverance despite delays, patience is a virtue never expected of their corporate partners, TNCs such as Magasin whose short term horizons demand obedience to an ethic of immediacy. Consequently Tessa felt unable to explain to Magasin the difficulties she faced. 'They would not have that tolerance', she told us, 'or even the patience'.²⁵ Finally, after the last setback, Tessa's impressive resolve began to show cracks. Mkiwa completed the headband order but there were not enough funds left in the business to ship them. Tessa felt ashamed about asking for more credit or patience from either Global Bazaar or Magasin (whose expectations and deadlines loom large), fearing she would appear, in their eyes, to have failed to make the grade.

Meanwhile, though the boxes sat ready to ship in Mkiwa's workshop, at Magasin's HQ a rather different narrative circulated:

A week before we're expecting it, [Global Bazaar] says you're not getting the order ... We extended it like a month because, because [Global Bazaar] just kept extending it and saying "Well, we haven't heard from her", and 'oh well, she can do it but she can't do all of them'. And then, I guess, finally, they were like "They're not coming" (ibid).

When asked why she thought Mkiwa had failed to complete the order, Sophie, one of RFE's executives, commented, 'I think someone died in the village – this is again what I was told – someone died in the village, the whole town went into mourning and she was incommunicado for like a month'.

It is not only the financial resilience of the business that is at stake here, but the emotional resilience of the entrepreneur (and employees) to withstand the series of setbacks. No matter how much she endeavours to take each setback as a learning experience, each new order brought with it disappointment and deferment. Expectations of resilience come hand in hand with the promise of inclusion as if the true entrepreneur must be tested to show their worthiness. Implicit within this is a 'no pain no gain proposition'. Here Mkiwa are expected to weather the inevitable 'burn out' and 'exhaustion' (as Magasin's own executives in charge of RFE referred to it) of ramping up the scale and pace of production:

They just kind of disappeared from us, like they just stopped kind of engaging us. And I, and we basically got nothing from them for Fall holiday, from any of the suppliers because Global Bazaar, everything was like it's too hard, it's we can't, they can't do the price, they're exhausted, they're burned out, you know, because the launch was tough.²⁶

While emotional stamina and optimism are the mettle demanded of the entrepreneur to show their readiness for empowerment, the converse feelings of humiliation, shame, or failure when reversals mount up, are not tolerated. Ironically, Tessa's desire to handle the situation on her own, to be independent rather than fall back on the subvention of the broker, ended up counting against her. Her refusal to accept the role of beneficiary became the mark of her failure in RFE's eyes – 'why didn't she just ask for help?' – both Global Bazaar and Magasin personnel asked.²⁷ The entrepreneurs walk a tightrope between demonstrating their self-sufficiency and accepting their status as mere suppliers to the beneficent corporation, the self-styled architect of their empowerment.

As corporate ventures in small enterprise development proliferate across the continent these contradictions are inevitable. The corporate will to empower invariably clashes with its

unremitting expectations (unforgiving price points and relentless deadlines) and frustration at entrepreneurs' failure to meet them, as encapsulated by Sophie:

They just kept like they were always late on delivery and oh man, *they screwed up so bad on one order* The first time we ordered them, we did get a reorder because the first time we ordered them they were one price and the next time the price went up, and it was like a month later. And we were told that like she had miscalculated the margin.²⁸

An underlying sense of disappointment at Magasin HQ surfaced to temper the zeal of RFE's champions that their efforts, as they saw it, should be met time and time again with the same response from the entrepreneurs they sought to empower: 'it was always your costs are too low, your minimums are too low, the women can't do it, it's burning them out'.²⁹ Mkiwa was not alone among RFE's enterprises in disappointing Magasin's champions of empowerment. RFE had enjoined its targets to 'Think Big!', but were frustrated by the entrepreneurs' apparent failure to live up to the 'dreams of grandeur' as one RFE lead put it, that the initiative had stoked.³⁰ 'I was challenged by feeling like there's all this opportunity and then there was like nothing', Sophie commented,³¹ echoing a sentiment shared by her colleagues at Magasin that the ambition they saw in their chosen entrepreneurs remained unrealised and the opportunities RFE offered bore no fruit. Just as with risk, this sense of disappointment and failure cascades down the pyramid to the African entrepreneurs Magasin seeks to empower. 'I'm just so disappointed, very disappointed', Tessa said. Most keenly of all she felt the loss of control – the unforeseen and invisible cost of inclusion in RFE.³² The sense of paralysis and suspension created by waiting and the deferral of returns on the huge material and emotional investment that Mkiwa had made in this process, brought home this sense of diminished agency most starkly. While such schemes proffer a vision of cascading empowerment for Africa's entrepreneurs, the inclusive supply chain acts as a conduit of risk, control, and unrealised aspirations. In the final section we unpack the relations of brokerage and dependency that sustain this BoP trickle-down, from RFE's architects at the top, to women workers at the bottom, and the gatekeepers in the middle who broker and buffer the promise of entrepreneurial opportunity.

The ripple effect

Critical to setting this ripple effect in motion (and enabling Magasin to harness the entrepreneurial energies of those such as Tessa further down the pyramid) is a business-to-business mentorship model. The idea is that in helping the entrepreneur (in this case Tessa and Sonia) to grow, they in turn become brokers of empowerment as it flows down to the so-called base. At the same time, the appeal for Magasin of charismatic entrepreneurs such as Tessa, embedded in local markets and social networks is evident. Setting their sights on the wealth of social capital that reside among women at the BoP, Magasin seeks to enlist the service of actors who, like Tessa, emerge as critical gatekeepers *for* the corporation (rather than vice versa), enabling their access to local labour markets and producers. Tessa's own quest to empower other women around her becomes a moral resource on which Magasin seeks to capitalise. This raises the question, is RFE a vehicle for Magasin's corporate social investment in Mkiwa, or Mkiwa's investment in Magasin?

Once brought under the RFE infrastructure, Tessa's own role as empowerment broker became as much buffer as catalyst: brokering the disciplinary effects of Magasin's supply chain management while absorbing its costs in order to protect her employees and sub-contractors. Caught midway in the chain between Magasin, Global Bazaar, her own employees and the collectives/small enterprises she sources from, Tessa's role became fraught with its own frustrations. And yet, spurred on by her own personal will to improve the lives of her employees and

suppliers, Tessa took on this task in expectation of returns yet to come. As she does, we see in this section how Tessa embodies the hopes and defeats, possibilities and perils of the entrepreneurial promise.

Buoyed by RFE's promise of inclusion, Tessa sought to infuse the entrepreneurial spirit in both her own workers, and those in the rural women's weaving collectives that supply Mkiwa. Iris, a stitcher with three children credited Mkiwa with giving her the skills and know-how (if not the capital) to set out in business selling second-hand clothing on her own:

This is a business, right? When I leave this place you can go and open your business. You can be able to sell anything if you have to open a business because you know how it should be run ... The other day I was saying if I leave this job I will open my own business because I can't see myself going back to work at somebody's house. I would rather go and open a business because there is so much I have learnt here regarding handling a business. A business can make you be wealthy or poor. If you only know how to run it, it will make you wealthy. I like this job because of that ... I have so much experience from this place ... I have learnt so many things.³³

While Tessa had inspired entrepreneurial drive and desire in employees like Iris, her capacity to parlay their entrepreneurial hopes into concrete opportunities was constrained; there was little wiggle room in the RFE supply chain to provide workers the wages needed to seed their entrepreneurial dreams. Celeste, an in-house beader, sought to start her own business, 'like to sell clothes where I travel from here and take them to my rural home in western'.³⁴ However, with school fees for five children, rent and food, Celeste found there was little left at the end of the month to save towards her business goals. Celeste's enterprising dreams remained on hold. Her co-worker Iris made the gap between such hopes and the material reality plain:

You know, if you have money, *that* is when you can say this money is enough and I can use it to go and open my own place. And then you can go and open it. But if you still have nothing that you would say it is capital to use for opening a business then it can never cross your mind that you will leave work to go and start a business.³⁵

At the same time, Tessa knew that empowering rural women entailed more than simply buying their products. When Magasin asked for baskets, Tessa saw an opportunity to realise her entrepreneurial goals which combined a mission to empower Kenyan women with her own ambitions for business expansion. Why, she asked, didn't women in Kufuma Kenya, the rural women's collective she sourced from, consider producing the sisal they need for basket-weaving on the small plots they all cultivate, and thereby insulate themselves against fluctuations in the price of sisal and save a great deal on the costs of material about which they complained:

And one woman was actually looking for somebody to buy sisal from her farm. And I sat there and I thought to myself so why don't you get, hire someone, it's cheaper, hire somebody to come and do the sisal for you ... You know, and twist the, to do the sisal to make it, prepare it for basketry, and with that person you'll save more than going to buy it ... They'd make much more money if they did that ... But they need somebody to teach them more business ... acumen.³⁶

In fact, long before Magasin set its sights on Mkiwa, and through them, Kufuma Kenya, the weaving collective had experience of trading to international buyers going back 20 years. Far from being the midwife to Kufuma Kenya's entry into the global market, by 1998, just 2 years after they were established, Kufuma Kenya had produced wares for several international buyers from the US, Germany, Japan, and the UK. Satellite groups were soon started in other areas. Yet, within RFE narrative, none of Kufuma Kenya's earlier development and rapid growth was recognised as 'entrepreneurial' until 2012, when it was brought into the extended

reaches of RFE's marketplace through Mkiwa, becoming subject to Magasin's mission to commercialise women's artisanal collectives within a framework of BoP business. Eve, a weaver for Kufuma Kenya, spoke of her early entrepreneurial ambitions for the group in order, as she puts it, 'to catch the modern market' (long before Mkiwa brought them into the extended reaches of RFE's empowerment platform). Notably, these looked to the state rather than transnational corporations:

But meanwhile we are looking at the business growth ... that is our plan ... We had discussed writing proposal to the governor to our county government, yes because now the groups they have heard that there are funds that will help the women groups just to boost their businesses. We had said that we would like the money to boost the treasury. Boosting the treasury is a way of having the capital to continue the business. The other thing we had said in the proposal is to ... if we can be given the money we can modify some of the stock that we have, we can modify some of the baskets and whenever we are taking to the exhibitions when we are invited to exhibitions then we catch the *modern market*.³⁷

For Florence, another weaver, her entrepreneurial aspirations lay elsewhere: 'if we would start other business projects we will develop ... We could put up houses here and rent them out'.³⁸

But the vision championed by Magasin conflicts with the reality recounted by almost all the weavers at the so-called base of the pyramid (and bottom of the supply chain) – those the company strove to empower, those for whom inclusion in Magasin's GVC has brought precariousness rather than fulfilment of their personal aspirations. In the past, weavers said, weaving paid for school fees and clothes for their children. As Bernice, a Kufuma Kenya weaver put it, 'my children have been educated from ... weaving here'.³⁹ But these days, they get far less per basket on Mkiwa orders, those destined for Magasin's inclusive marketplace, and their labour is less valued. A basket takes 2 days to make, explained Kufuma Kenya weavers; Magasin paid 'as if it takes one'.⁴⁰ Other weavers said they would rather take casual labouring work on local farms when the opportunity occurred as it paid more than weaving. None lived on weaving alone:

If I weave during the day without weaving at night I take a day and half and I do it fast enough because the money is little so that I can see the profit of the work. But if I don't want to tire much I can weave for two days.⁴¹

In order to make any margins within the cost structure imposed by Magasin, Tessa offered Kufuma Kenya less per basket than they make on smaller orders for other customers. In the domestic market, the baskets net a 50–100% margin (depending on whether they are destined for more limited high-end collections). In contrast, 'for Magasin', Tessa told us, 'we make like a dollar' per product, which amounts to a 10% margin.⁴² True to their low-cost retail model Magasin will pay no more than €7.50 (\$10) per basket, even though each one cost Mkiwa nine dollars (six dollars goes to the weavers; three dollars goes to shipping, transportation, finishing). Even if big orders mean more business, smaller margins make the whole enterprise unsustainable for weavers. Far from sparking new ventures on the back of their earnings from the RFE line – driving the anticipated ripple effect of empowerment through enterprise – weavers struggled to make ends meet while they waited for payments often delayed by a couple of months by baskets stuck in transit on their way to Magasin's marketplace. Meanwhile, many rely on buying basic foodstuffs on credit and servicing the debt until payment arrives from their transnational corporate client/patron none of them have ever seen.

Despite RFE's stated mission to empower women at the margins of global markets, their bottom line – keep wholesale costs down and their own margins high – remains non-negotiable (even when it conflicts directly with that mission). Guy Andrews, co-founder of Global Bazaar,

spelled this out: ‘products *have* to make money for the companies that we partner with and that money has to trickle down to the employees of that company’.⁴³ Of course, if products don’t sell, nothing trickles down. And, if an item does make it onto Magasin’s shelves, but doesn’t sell within a month or two, the price is marked down further, making it even harder for the SWoE to recoup its costs let alone break even.

Ultimately, the pressure to drive down prices is constantly in conflict with the corporation’s claim to empower. No matter how much RFE directors enthused about the saleability and trendiness of Mkiwa products, and their eagerness to help them get to market, the bottom line was always reasserted: ‘[they’re] too expensive – our customers won’t buy a printed scarf/earrings/set of bangles for ... €25’. In a surprise inversion, it becomes the global corporation that ‘cannot afford’ the prices asked of them by the women-owned enterprises they seek to empower: ‘we can’t afford their pricing’, Sophie added.⁴⁴

In keeping with the inclusive markets paradigm, RFE is premised on an aggregating model which sees entrepreneurialism cascading down the pyramid, enabling its targets to move upwards both in terms of social mobility and market upgrading. The hope was to spark a ripple effect enabling the enterprising ambitions of Mkiwa’s owners, *and* stoking the entrepreneurial dreams of its employees and sub-contractors below them. This vision was set out by Guy Andrews, speaking about another RFE enterprise in Brazil:

I include in that poverty alleviation space, factories that are women-owned that empower women. So, take [Adriana in Brazil] ... She’s a successful businesswoman. [She] has a factory, she employs two to three hundred poor women. Many of those poor women have become supervisors, they’re no longer poor women. They have kids that have gone to college ... That’s the concept.⁴⁵

As the discourse of empowerment through enterprise trickles down the supply chain, stirring enterprising dreams at each point, so it becomes ever more unrealisable. The lower down in the pyramid, the greater the pressure, the slimmer the margins, and the more it starts to look like a trickle-up.

Conclusion: from trickle-down to ripple effect

According to Magasin, the rewards of RFE lie not in the orders Mikwa or other African enterprises receive (which may or may not materialise), but in the process of readiness: converting a small enterprise to the status of global supplier. But for small women owned enterprises like Mkiwa, the appeal of entrepreneurial inclusion lies not in the readying, but in the rewards that will ensue, flowing down the supply chain from European markets to Kenyan workers and weavers. Evidently for Mkiwa, inclusion brought new degrees of indebtedness and a multi-fold increase in risk that are not limited to the business. Tessa now finds herself personally responsible (and liable) for a staff of fully contracted permanent workers for whom she must find enough work or face bankruptcy. While Tessa strove to live up to Magasin’s vision of successful entrepreneurship, both she and her business were depleted by its material and emotional costs. Constantly mindful of the multiple livelihoods dependent on Mkiwa’s survival, Tessa had no choice but to absorb the losses (personally) and weather the blows to keep the business afloat.

The discourse of entrepreneurialism expounded by RFE celebrates this capacity to cope as resilient agency (the test of the ideal type entrepreneur). By rescripting survivalism as resilience, Magasin abdicates responsibility for the survival of Mkiwa, of Tessa, and of the workers and weavers who rely on her. What is more, this discursive coup absolves the corporation of accountability for pushing the very enterprises which it targeted for ‘empowerment’ almost to breaking point.

Tessa's own expectations of economic empowerment (stoked by Magasin) unfulfilled while her domestic business – a casualty of their participation in RFE – crumbles, fostering new forms of dispossession through inclusion. Two years into their retail partnership with RFE, Tessa and Sonia were left with a sense of failure: 'we failed them a hundred percent, we take responsibility, we failed them We just can't get it right'.⁴⁶ This stands in stark contrast to the sense of entrepreneurial confidence and autonomy with which they had embarked on the process (the very ideals that Magasin hoped to nurture and capitalise on with RFE).

What does this mean for those further down the supply chain? In place of a ripple effect of empowerment from Magasin, through Global Bazaar, to Mkiwa and onto workers, weavers and beaders at the base of the pyramid, we find a trickle-down of disempowerment combined with scant rewards in return for the toil of trying to fulfil demands from above. The trifold relations created by RFE between Magasin and the SWoEs, and Magasin and social enterprises such as Global Bazaar as brokers, enable Magasin to devolve risk down the chain. The Portion of risk increases the further down the pyramid one goes. Within BoP production networks such as RFE, relative power (and financial might) thus stand in opposite correlation to the level of risk. And though risk is held up as intrinsic to the entrepreneurial promise, it also leverages those lower down into increasingly precarious positions.

This reveals the frailty or fraudulence of the ripple effect promising a corporate-fuelled revolution in women's enterprise across the continent. But more than unrealised aspirations, the case of Mkiwa chronicled here underlines the harm of a corporate discourse that delivers precarity under the banner of inclusion, glosses survivalism as resilience, and chalks up economic and emotional loss as the cost of the much-feted, long-awaited ripple effect.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Statement of Ethics

The research in this article was approved by Oxford University.

Notes

1. Calkin (2016); Moeller (2018).
2. Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Director of UN Women, Opening Remarks, World Youth Skills Day, 15 July 2016, UN Women HQ, New York. Accessed May 06, 2017. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/7/lakshmi-puri-speech-on-young-womens-entrepreneurship>.
3. Pilar Diaz Garavito, Founder of the Millennials Movement, Opening Remarks, World Youth Skills Day, 15 July 2016, UN Women HQ, New York. Accessed May 06, 2020. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/7/promoting-innovation-skills-and-young-womens-entrepreneurship>.
4. More generally, scholars have critically examined both the discursive power and empirical outcomes of this millennial movement towards so-called ethical or inclusive capitalism driven by global corporations (Blowfield and Dolan 2014; Bruton, Ahlstrom, and Obloj 2008; Calas, Smircich, and Bourne 2009; Dolan and Rajak 2016; Dolan and Roll 2013; Rajak 2011; Tornhill 2019; Webb et al. 2010).
5. Notable exceptions are Allison, Gregoratti, and Tornhill (2019), Dolan and Johnstone-Louis (2011), Dolan and Scott (2009), Hengeveld (2022), Moeller (2018), Tornhill (2016).
6. The study took place from 2013 to 2014 at four nodes in Magasin's global supply chain: Magasin's corporate headquarters in France; Magasin's partner, Global Bazaar, in the UK; Mkiwa Designs in Machakos, Kenya; and Mkiwa's subcontracted women's weaving collective, Kufuma Kenya, in Central Kenya. Methods included semi-structured interviews with staff at Magasin's headquarters (3), RFE (6) and Global Bazaar (3), and open-ended interviews with Mkiwa management (5), artisans (beaders and tailors) at its Machakos production facility (10), and members of the women's weaving

collective (16). Two focus group discussions were also conducted with the weaving collective. Interviews with weavers were conducted in Kiswahili or a local language and interviews with staff at Magasin and Global Bazaar were conducted in English. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded thematically. Additional interviews were carried out with key managers and participants in Magasin's RFE programmes in other African countries, to identify how its corporate visions and expectations were enacted and experienced in other contexts. In addition to interviews, we engaged in lengthy informal conversations with the staff of Mkiwa and observed the daily production process of artisans at the Machakos production facility and of rural weavers in Kufuma Kenya. Taken together, these diverse perspectives and methods allowed for a well-rounded understanding of the programme in practice.

7. To maintain confidentiality, the name of the corporation, as well as all enterprises and actors in its inclusive supply chain are pseudonyms.
8. Interview, Magasin Senior Executive, 07.10.2013.
9. Here Nike are riffing off the World Bank's (2006) paper 'gender equality is smart economics' (Moeller 2018).
10. As Meagher et al. point out, this focus on brokers or 'intermediaries' (both individual brokers and institutional) is vital if we want to better understand the processes through which African entrepreneurs and workers are not only 'included in global circuits of capital', but the extent to which such inclusion benefits them (Meagher, Mann, and Bolt 2016, 477).
11. Interview with Sophie, RFE Director, Magasin HQ, 07.10.2013.
12. Interview with Global Bazaar CEO, 23.02.2014.
13. Interview with Nina Larson, Global Bazaar Co-founder, 28.02.2014.
14. Only 25.3% (a quarter) of women have a high school diploma, half as many as their male counterparts (UNESCO, n.d., Institute for Statistics, Data Centre. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/Pages/BrowseEducation.aspx>.)
15. Interview with Tessa Kandie, Co-founder Mkiwa Designs, 05.06.2013.
16. Interview with Magasin Marketing Manager, 29.05.2014.
17. Interview with Nina Larson, Global Bazaar CEO, 23.02.2014.
18. Interview with Sonia Maiyo, Co-founder Mkiwa Designs, 07.06.2013.
19. Interview with Delphine, Magasin Executive, 08.10.2013.
20. Informal conversation with Sonia Maiyo and Tessa Kandie, 05.12.2013.
21. Informal conversation with Tessa Kandie and Sonia Maiyo, Co-founders Mkiwa Designs, 03.12.2013.
22. This local phrase corresponds surprisingly closely with the Trinidadian term 'now for now' used by workers in Trinidad's garment supply chains described by Rebecca Prentice (2015), as does the urgent temporal mandate it conveys.
23. Interview with Tessa Kandie, Co-founder Mkiwa Designs, 19.07.2014.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Interview with Sophie, RFE Director, Magasin HQ, 07.10.2013.
27. Ibid.
28. Interview with Sophie, RFE Director, Magasin HQ, 07.10.2013.
29. Ibid.
30. Interview with Magasin RFE Executive, 14.10.2013.
31. Interview with Sophie, RFE Director, 07.10.2013.
32. Interview with Tessa Kandie, Co-founder Mkiwa Designs, 19.07.2014.
33. Interview with Iris, Mkiwa Employee, 02.12.2013.
34. Interview with Celeste, Mkiwa Employee, 02.12.2013.
35. Ibid.
36. Informal conversation with Tessa Kandie and Sonia Maiyo, Co-founders Mkiwa Designs, 03.12.2013.
37. Interview with Eve, Weaver Kufuma Kenya, 03.12.2013.
38. Interview with Florence, Weaver Kufuma Kenya, 03.12.2013.
39. Interview with Bernice, Weaver Kufuma Kenya, 05.12.2013.
40. Interview with Hamisi, Weaver Kufuma Kenya, 05.12.2013.
41. Ibid.
42. Informal conversation with Sonia Maiyo and Tessa Kandie, 05.12.2013.
43. Interview with Guy Andrews, Global Bazaar Co-founder, 28.02.2013.

44. Interview with Sophie, RFE Director, Magasin HQ, 07.10.2013.
45. Interview with Guy Andrews, Global Bazaar Co-founder, 28.02.2013.
46. Interview with Sonia Maiyo, Co-founder Mkiwa Designs, 07.06.2013.

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