

TIPS ON

SUSTAINABILITY FOR FEMINIST SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

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Many feminist entrepreneurs start social purpose enterprises that are responsive to their communities and seek to advance gender justice and equality. Starting and operating a sustainable social enterprise requires purpose, drive, and the ability to recognize opportunities and generate profit for good!

1 Listen to your community

Starting an enterprise that is responsive to the community strengthens its relevance and longevity. By focusing your attention on your community, your customers will feel heard and valued. You will be better equipped to offer products or services that meet their needs. Let their input guide your business decisions.

2 Know your purpose

Reflect on why you were drawn to entrepreneurship. Why does your enterprise matter in your world, community, and society? Let your “why” be your guiding light as you build, grow, and sustain your business.

3 Consider the “when” and the “where”

Are you rolling out or delivering products and services when your customers need them? Is the geographical or virtual space your business occupies welcoming, inclusive, and accessible to your customer base? Lining up the “when” and the “where” are critical for a social enterprise’s longevity.

4 Be intentional about the “how”

How are you making your products? Are they environmentally sustainable? Are your suppliers committed to fair labour practices and wages? Are you? Is sustaining your business coming at too great a social cost? If the answers to these questions bother you, you may want to pause and refocus your approach on feminist values like equity, inclusion, solidarity, fairness, and transparency.

5 Be true to your feminist business model

Stay steadfast in your commitment to running a sustainable feminist enterprise that generates profit in tandem with gender justice and equality outcomes. Look for inspiration from your customers, community, and team, and seek support from feminist founders who have tried, failed, and succeeded before you.

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