

# Professional Empowerment – Concept and Methodology



**« Empowerment is a process to enable people to develop and strengthen their employability and their social & economic inclusion »**

This is the operating definition of professional empowerment that the Danone Ecosystem Fund has developed to guide its efforts in creating positive social impact through its projects. In the following guide, we provide the background for Danone Ecosystem's use of empowerment, select resources consulted to establish its understanding of the concept, and some high-level description of the professional empowerment metrics assessed for its projects.

## Context:

- The Danone Ecosystem Fund tracks several social KPIs to monitor its impact: the number of people professionally empowered thanks to the projects, the number of jobs created, and the number of indirect beneficiaries of the projects.
- The concept of professional empowerment is central to the Fund's vision and unique model. It is key to its goal of strengthening and developing the activities of the fragile partners who make up Danone's ecosystem.
- Specific measurement criteria have been established in order to be applied to very diverse projects.

## Defining the concept of Professional Empowerment:

Danone Ecosystem Fund drew upon various definitions of professional empowerment in order to develop their definition and concept. Here is a selection of definitions used by development agencies that Danone Ecosystem consulted:

- The United Nations:

Empowerment is an iterative process with key components including an enabling environment that encourages popular participation in decision-making that affects the achievement of goals like poverty eradication, social integration and decent work for all as well as sustainable development.

- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Empowerment is the ability of people, in particular the least privileged, to: have access to productive resources that enable them to increase their earnings and obtain the goods and services they need to participate in the development process and the decisions that affect them.

- International Finance Corporation (IFC):

Economic empowerment focuses on three different levels: fair employment and working conditions for employees, equal access to opportunities for professional advancement, investment opportunities for entrepreneurs

- United Nations Development Program (UNDP):

Empowerment refers to increasing the political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves people developing confidence in their own capacities, and with self-confidence, power and knowledge starting a change process in their lives and in their communities.



## The Danone Ecosystem Fund's Criteria

Danone Ecosystem Fund's projects currently gather data for 7 different key performance indicators (KPIs) related to professional empowerment. For each of these KPIs, the counts of people professionally empowered are tabulated overall, as well as specifically the number of women empowered in each way.

### 1. Increased or secured revenue

Number of people paid more or secured (i.e., paid regularly by reliable party—Danone or project partners)

### 2. Trained

Trained in technical or leadership skills. Either in-the-field training with follow-up monitoring or formal training of 21+ hours

### 3. Social benefits access

Access to social benefits through public welfare system or through health insurance provision

### 4. Micro-credit access

Benefit from formalized micro-credit service

### 5. Better working conditions

Investments in building, equipment, rules or training that: lower average work time without lowering revenue, decrease commute, increase security and safety of workplace

### 6. Social or professional insertion program

Provided support for social inclusion programs such as professional project support, health or financial topic support, self-confidence program, or drug addiction rehabilitation

### 7. Donation for equipment

Received durable goods (including animals) that support professional activity

## References:

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations Secretariat (2012). *Empowerment: What does it mean to you?*

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International Finance Corporation (2011). *Fostering Women's Economic Empowerment Through Special Economic Zones*.

UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, Communication for Social Change Consortium and UNDEF (2008). *Communication for Empowerment in Madagascar*.