

# Breaking the metal ceiling: Female entrepreneurs who succeed in male dominated industries

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Financial & Private Sector Development

AFRICA  
region  
GENDER PRACTICE



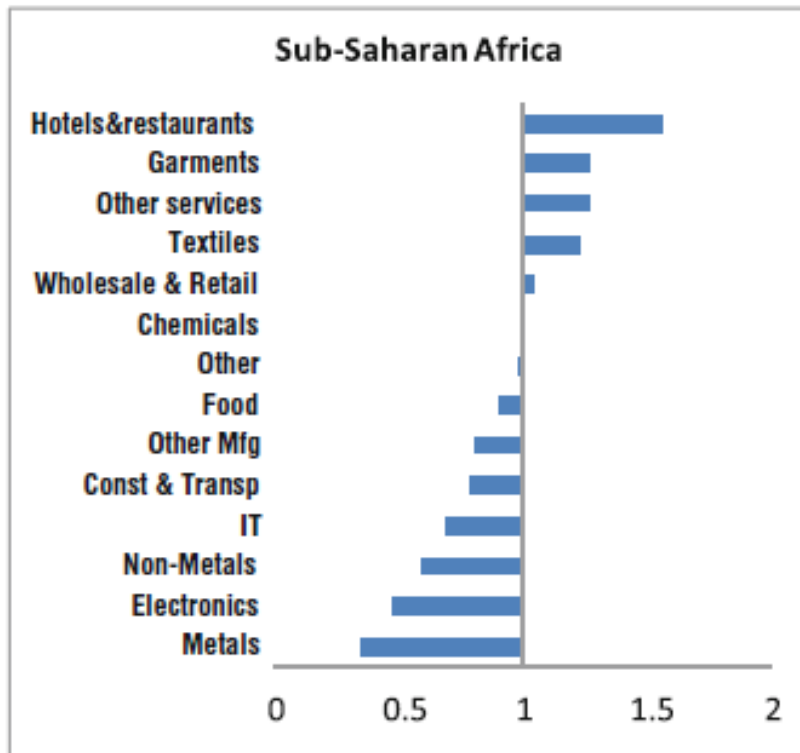
# Can we break the gender sector divide?

Current WBG programs do not include a focus on **switching women-owned businesses to male dominated sectors.**

Going forward, should we **design programs that influence sector choice or crossing over?**

# Evidence from various countries indicate sector largely explains the gender gaps in performance

## Index of concentration of female entrepreneurs by industry



In Bardasi et al.(2011): firms operating in sectors that are female-dominated are significantly smaller than those that operate in male-dominated sectors (-56% in Africa)

## In our study in Uganda...

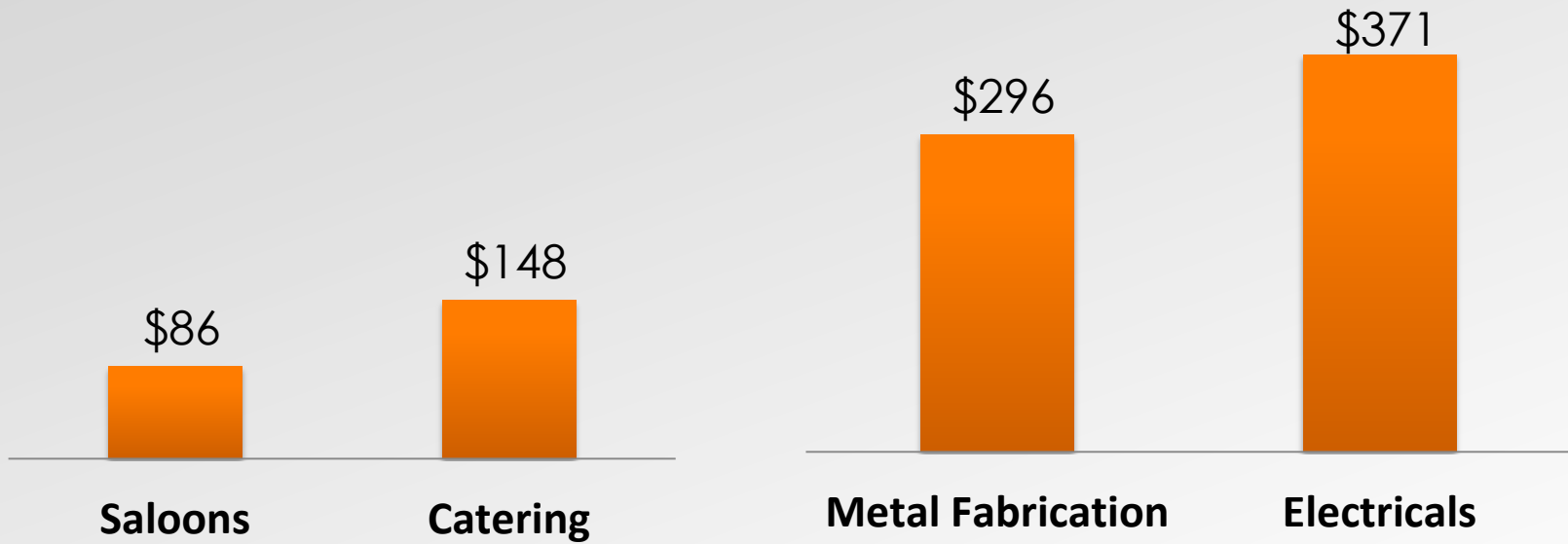
- **Analyzed enablers and constraints** for women to participate in high productivity male dominated sectors
- **Interviews and focus group discussions with women entrepreneurs** in both male and female dominated sectors
- **Suppliers, creditors, customers and (male) workers** also interviewed



**Eliminating bias in sector selection  
reduces the gender earnings gap**

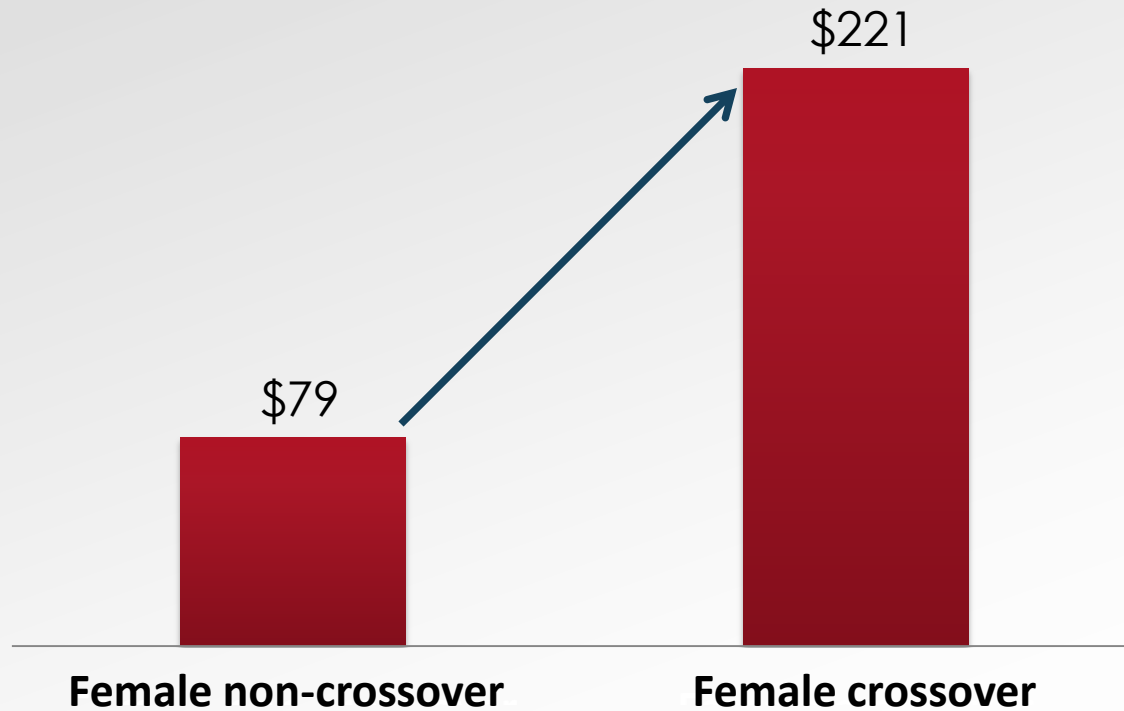
Average earnings in a male-dominated sector  
**are 3 times higher** than in a female one

### Monthly Profit by sector - businesses in Uganda



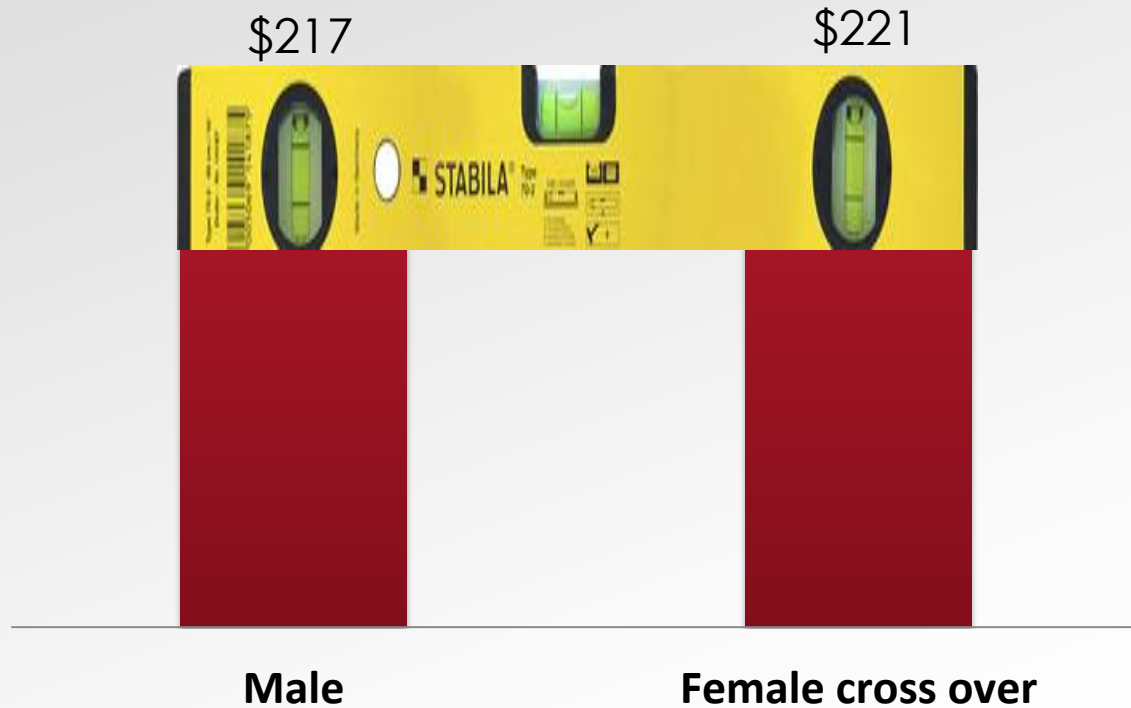
# Women in male dominated sectors make more....

## Women's monthly Profits: male dominated sectors vs female dominated sectors



# Women in male dominated sectors make as much as men in those sectors....

## Monthly Profits in male dominated sectors: Males vs females





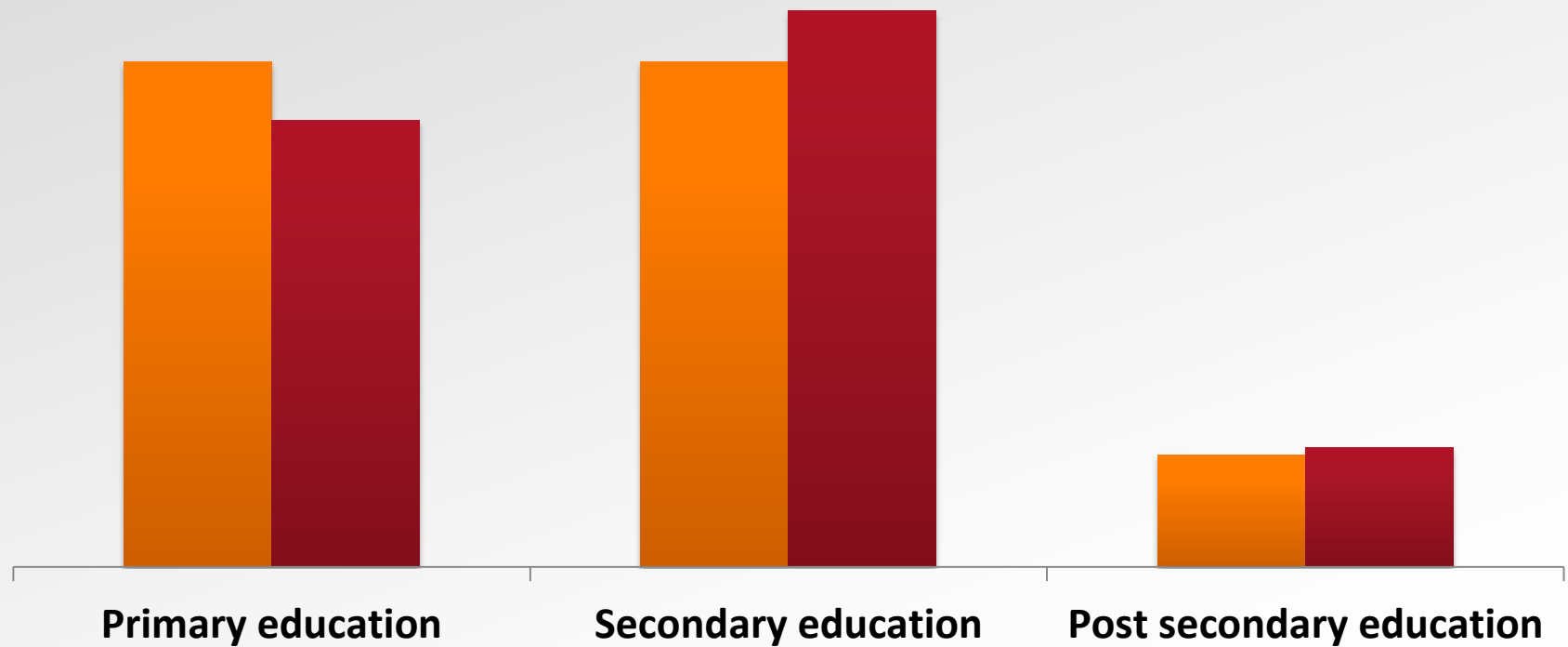


**Enabling factors to crossover:  
it's not about the usual factors...**

# It's not about the level of formal education..

Female crossovers have similar level of education as non-crossovers

■ Crossovers ■ Non-Crossovers



# Finance not a constraint in sector selection

- Capital requirements does not deter crossovers
- But could delay start of a business





**...but about getting the right  
information and exposure on time**

# Information and psychosocial factors MATTER...

- Information matters: it's sunnier on the other side
  - 75% of non-crossovers that make less, think they make more or same than crossovers
- There is path dependence, women's first job matters
- Having the right type of mentorship and exposure matters

## Compared to non-crossovers, Crossovers are...

- **3.5 times more** likely to have been introduced to their sector by a **male family member**
- **50% less** likely to have been introduced to their sector by **female family member**
- **80% more** likely to have had a **male role model**
- **93% less** likely to be influenced by their **teacher**

# What might policies look like?



# What might policies to cross over look like?

- **Is Information (at home and school) enough?**
  - Information Campaigns, Career guidance in school that doesn't reinforce gender norms
- **Would direct labor market interventions work?**
  - Mentorship programs to Youth embedded in Entrepreneurship programs
  - Apprenticeship schemes in male dominated sectors
- **What other alternatives can work?**