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PROBLEMS FACING THE SMALL ENTREPRENEUR IN BELIZE!

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Dorla Bowman in an article of Oct. 31st, 1999 in the REPORTER, Page 21, describes women entrepreneurs and some of the problems they are facing getting home businesses off the ground in a bootstrap operation.

Dorla, is a person who writes articles presenting women problems in politics, government and as business entrepreneurs in the Belize District, one of six districts of the nation of Belize. She doesn't cover problems facing women in the hill country of the Toledo District, nor in the Stann Creek District, or even in the Corozal District. Mostly, she identifies with town women in the old capital of the nation from long ago. That said, the comments in this article probably reverberate through many rural areas of some of the other districts too.

She points out that there are shortcomings in government sponsored help programs for economic entrepreneurial development, particularly regarding an entrepreneurial homemaker. Often a single mother, or widow.


Dorla Bowman points out that there is failure to address the problems with the incubation start up stage of development, in regards to what is initially self employment. Dorla says, the government in Belmopan and the programs that it supports for entrepreneurs, needs to support women enterprises that may be small and in a society that has no real social welfare systems, or unlikely to ever have any; basically start off as home businesses giving a small income in what is regarded as self- employment, or starve.

The example given, is a small old lady that produces wine from hand picked fruit and has successfully exported some small amounts internationally, as well as selling locally. The lady in question points out that the container costs more than the wine. This is typical of any product. Any package container in a local supermarket that is imported is mostly the retailers markup and the colored printing and attractive package that encloses the stuff being sold. In the case of the local wine producer, it is finding quart bottles that is the problem. You cannot import them, they cost too much. She has to use recycled bottles. This bottle source, or container source in general, stops a lot of small businesses.

Dorla points out, that duty exemptions on key production equipment and product containers are facets of helping small entrepreneurs. There are of course the TAX FREE CONCESSIONS. But these programs are more geared to large enterprises, not the small home entrepreneur start up bootstrap phase. There is a missing area here in development legal strategies by the government that need to be faced. The

paper work for bureaucrats can often be overwhelming and kill any small startup, before it can get off the ground. So, you bureaucrats and politicians in Belmopan, how will you solve these problems?

 [Back to Main Belize Development Trust Page](#)

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