

Entrepreneurship Development: 5 Challenges Women Entrepreneurs Face In Africa

Entrepreneurship was once thought of as a man's domain. Things have changed especially in the US with more than 9 million firms owned by women. According to 2015 data from the [National Association of Women Business Owners](#), these firms owned by women have employed about 8 million people.

Across the world today, women have taken on great roles in setting up new businesses. Inequality and discrimination against women in Africa especially has made it more difficult for women to gain access to specific skills, finance, education and networks. Even with the growing number of female startup entrepreneurs, they usually face specific challenges that are not the same as their male counterparts. Some of the key challenges women face include:

Limited Funding Access

Startup founders, even though not all usually get help from investors in order to start their business. Pitching your business in front of investors is not that easy. It is even more difficult for female-owned firms. According to a report from [Babson College](#) in 2014, it was found out that less than 3% of companies that were funded by venture capitalists had female CEOs.

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In Africa, women are rarely property owners and so it is difficult for them to provide the collateral usually demanded by banks. This limits their access to external sources of finance.

Culture and Family Ties

Most cultures in Africa believe a woman's duty is to take care of the children and the household. In this situation, a woman will have to go between her family and business. This let them to have limited time or energy to devote to their business. At times, they will have to ask for permission from their husbands before they engage in any business. This is a limiting factor for women entrepreneurship in case the man doesn't accept.

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Education

Illiteracy brings about a lot of socio-economic problems. Statistics in most countries in Africa in particular show that the illiteracy rate is higher in women than in men. Due to lack of quality education for women, they lack the business, technology and market knowledge to carry on business ventures. This also brings about low achievement motivation among the women.

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The Fear of Taking Risks

With the high level of illiteracy amongst women in Africa, this lead them to be economically dependent on their families or husbands. Their dependence make them have a reduced ability to bear the risk of running a business. It should be noted that entrepreneurship is all about risk bearing.

Male Chauvinism

In Africa, women are seen as a weaker sex even though most African countries speak of equality between men and women. In this situation, women suffer a lot because of how the society has placed them. In such male dominated societies, women are discriminated upon and this serves as a big barrier for them to enter into business.

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