

Why we need more women in entrepreneurship

By [Linda McClure](#)

22 Apr 2022

Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo (You strike the women, you strike the rock). These words have always resonated with me. They are drawn from the famous resistance song sung by South African women during the 1956 march against the pass laws. In my opinion, they are a true reflection of the innate strength and courage of women, particularly black African women.



Source: [Pexels](#)

Male entrepreneurs start businesses for any number of reasons while women often start informal businesses because they have no choice. It is survivalist trading in its truest sense. Traditionally cast in the role of mothers and wives, South African women display enormous resilience coupled with tenacious drive, particularly if they are single parents.

Even in two-parent homes, there is usually a subtle even subconscious belief that the women will look after the children. In many households, the oldest daughter often has the role of childminder and quasi-mother thrust upon her at a sometimes very young age, particularly in more remote regions.



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It is my belief that the role of household manager equips would-be female entrepreneurs with a range of useful skills such as managing budgets, facilities, logistics, time, calendars and even staff. In fact, managing a household is like managing a small business.

Despite this potential, research shows that only 38% of South African entrepreneurs are female which is deeply concerning. According to the 2018 GEM report, our close neighbours Angola and Madagascar have a roughly equal entrepreneurship rate between men and women so we are really lagging behind.

SMEs key to curbing unemployment

Small businesses hold the key to turning around South Africa's economy and unemployment. We need to encourage more women to take the leap and start their own businesses.

Equally important is the need to provide entrepreneurial education so that small business owners are equipped with the business knowledge needed to run and grow sustainable and profitable businesses which can also create employment. Even highly educated people with degrees and diplomas have never been exposed to business fundamentals and therefore lack the knowledge and skills needed to create a viable business.



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As committed educators of entrepreneurs, Raizcorp is extremely proud of some of the inspiring female success stories to have come out of our programmes over the years, including our Engen Pitch & Polish workshop and competition initiative.

These impressive women are making their mark in a challenging economic landscape, providing jobs, livelihoods to more and more people. I salute each and every one of them for their drive, determination and dedication.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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