

# Entrepreneurship Education on Women Entrepreneurs at Pre-Primary and Primary Level in Kenya

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## Abstract

Women entrepreneurs have been designated as the new engines for growth and a rising stars of the economies in developing countries to bring prosperity and welfare. This study was designed to investigate entrepreneurship education on women entrepreneurs at pre-primary and primary level in women-owned micro and small enterprises in Kenya. Entrepreneurship education support graduates, existing and potential entrepreneurs to create and run their own business rather than expecting employment from government, private or NGOs. It helps provide knowledge and skills for running a business, example business law, accounting and bookkeeping, credit and finance and marketing. The study hypothesis that, lack of adequate entrepreneurship education on women entrepreneurs at pre-primary and primary level is the major cause of high failure rate of micro and small enterprises owned by women. In Kenya, for example the MSEs contributed over 50 percent of new jobs created in 2005 but despite their significance, MSEs are faced with the threat of failure with past statistics indicating that three out of five fail within the first few months. The study used descriptive survey design. A sample of 120 women entrepreneurs was taken from Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, using stratified and simple random sampling. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using semi-structured self administered questionnaire and face to face interview. The research found that there is no entrepreneurship education in pre-primary and primary school levels in Kenya.

**Keywords:** Women Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, micro and small enterprises

## 1. Background Information

Entrepreneurship education should not be confused with general business or economic studies, as its goal is to promote creativity, innovation and self-employment. This research will investigate Entrepreneurship Education on women entrepreneurs at pre-primary and primary level in women-owned Micro and Small enterprises in Kenya. Women are becoming increasingly important in the socioeconomic development of both developed and developing economies as they account for significant percentage of the operators of MSEs (Kjreldsen and Nielson, 2000). The Government of Kenya has recognized the potential of micro and small enterprises to support the job growth requirements of the country by establishing an inter-ministerial unit on Small Enterprise Development (SED) within the ministry of Planning and National Development (King, 1990). The Government through Kenya Vision 2030 envisages the strengthening of MSEs to become the key industries of tomorrow by improving their productivity and innovation (Ministry of Planning, National Development and Vision 2030 [MPNDV 2030], 2007). In a report developed collaboratively with the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) and the International Labor Organization (ILO), Kenya was encouraged to develop a training capacity in entrepreneurship that could lead to the creation of an “enterprise culture” in the country (Republic of Kenya, 1990). Within the same time frame, a new Ministry of Research, Technical Training and Technology was established; one of its goals was to harness and develop the entrepreneurial efforts in the country.

The significance of Kenya’s micro and small enterprises (MSE) activity has continued to grow since the sector was first brought to limelight in 1972. In Kenya, it is now widely recognized that the promotion of the MSE sector is a viable and dynamic strategy for achieving national goals, including employment creation, poverty alleviation and balanced development between sectors and sub-sectors. The findings of 1993 MSE Baseline Survey underscored the importance role that MSEs play in Kenya’s development process, particularly in the context of generating employment and income opportunities for majority of poor people throughout the country. Indeed, the MSE sector provides employment for substantially more people than does the formal sector. Together, all these form the foundation of a strong national industrial base and domestic production structure that are central to the government’s vision of achieving a newly industrialized country by the year 2020 (Sessional paper No. 2 of 1996).

One of the most important challenges facing Kenya today is creation of sufficient employment opportunities. The MSE sector is expected to generate significant employment opportunities given the decline in the agricultural sector’s capacity to absorb new labor force and the shrinking public sector. GOK (2008), Economic Survey (2008) employment in the public sector declined by three point four per cent in 2007. While MSEs have tended to absorb large numbers of unemployment people, they themselves are not able to generate reasonable

remunerated long-term jobs. However, given a well-targeted entrepreneurship education, the MSE sector can play a critical role in providing opportunities likely to stimulate sustainable economic growth. Douglas L. M., (2010). Thesis (MA) "Factors influencing growth of micro and small business enterprises owned by women: the case of Mwimbi Division, Maara District, Kenya"; the project showed some important facts. First, MSEs were of overwhelming importance in the Division as they accounted for more than 90% of all firms outside the agricultural sector. Second, the contribution of women entrepreneurs was still relatively low in MSEs. This could be contributed to factors such as complexity in business registration, low level of education, inadequate women entrepreneurship promotions, inadequate entrepreneurship education and training, and there were no MSE development programs especially towards female entrepreneurs in the Division. It concluded that women in micro and small business enterprises face multiple gender related barriers which need to be addressed at all levels, from the legal system to the domestic system. Entrepreneurship education and Training was identified as the single most obstacles in development of women-owned business enterprises hence prompting this research.

Despite MSEs being recognized, the mortality rate in Africa remains high. In Kenya, for example MSE sector contributed over 50 percent of new jobs created in 2005 but despite their significance, MSEs, "are faced with the threat of failure with past statistics indicating that three out of five fail within the first few months" Bowen, et al., (2009). Over sixty percent of small businesses are estimated to fail each year (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2007). The baseline survey of 1999 estimated that 80% of micro and small businesses failed within the first three years after starting up (GOK, 2001). This failure rate of women enterprises suggests that there are some fundamental factors that influence it. Motivated by the poor performance and high mortality rate among South Africa's micro and small enterprises Kunene, T.R. (2008) undertook a PhD study of a critical analysis of entrepreneurial and business skills in micro and small enterprises of South Africa. Her results indicate that there is a need to impart key entrepreneurial skills to MSE operators. Motivated by such un-investigated scenario on the impetus leading to this failure, this research study aims at investigating the entrepreneurship education at pre-primary and primary school levels as a major contributor to high failure rate.

This study is different from those researchers discussed in the reviewed literature in that their focus areas were in all entrepreneurs in micro and small enterprises regardless of their sex. Their studies did not address entrepreneurship education on women entrepreneurs. But this study specifically emphasis entrepreneurship education on women in women-owned micro and small enterprises in Kenya.

## **2 Statement of the Problem**

In spite of the importance of entrepreneurship education on women entrepreneurs in start-up, growth and development of micro and small enterprises, and high failure rate in Kenya, little research has been conducted on it as a factor that constraint their growth and development in Kenya. This study seeks to fill this gap.

## **3 Purpose of the Study**

Based on the above problem statement, the purpose of this research is to investigate entrepreneurship education on women entrepreneurs as a factor that constraint growth and development of women- owned micro and small enterprises in Kenya.

## **4 Objective of the Study**

To investigate Entrepreneurship Education on women Entrepreneurs at Pre-Primary and Primary school levels in women-owned Micro and Small Enterprises in Kenya.

## **5 Women Entrepreneurship in Kenya**

Most studies done on women entrepreneurship show that women owned enterprises are traditionally found in the service sectors which tend to have a slower growth rate and are more labor intensive rather than in knowledge based businesses with high growth, innovative and export potent (Buttner and Moore, 1997; Henry et al., 2004; Alyward, 2007; Coleman, 2007 Ong, 2008; Fitzsimons et al., 2004). However research has shown that over the last few decades, the types of businesses women tend to own are changing. Brush et al., (2006) argue there is a new generation of women entrepreneurs emerging who see business ownership as viable career option. Women entrepreneurship is changing from the traditional female dominated sectors to a more modern type of entrepreneurship, seeking new forms which are typical of male entrepreneurship; high profile, growth oriented and export based. Many studies have confirmed that women are entering male dominated sectors such as manufacturing, construction, engineering and transportation McClelland et al., 2005). It has also been suggested that women are in fact setting up "new economy" companies in high technology professional services and construction. A research carried out by the centre for Women's Business Research in the USA established that though majority of women still operate in the service (69%) and retail (14.4%) sectors, there was an increase in

the number of women entrepreneurs entering the professional scientific and technical service sectors (Centre of Women Business Research, 2006). The changes in women educational and career attainment may have led to women increasing their enrolment in colleges to pursue disciplines previously viewed as male dominated such as Engineering Medical and Computer Science and then start enterprises in these sectors.

Women-owned businesses are one of the fastest growing entrepreneurial populations in the world. They make significant contributions to innovation, employment and wealth creation in all economies (Brush et al., 2006). Minnite and Aurenium, (2003) argued that women are a readily available resource that countries at different stages of economic development may use to achieve economic progress. To support this argument, Verheul et al., 2009 in his study found a positive correlation between women share in entrepreneurship and economic performance at both country and regional levels. Kjeldsen and Nielson, (2000) revealed that women are becoming increasingly important in the Socio-economic development of both developed and developing economies as they account for significant percentage of the operators of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) and they make a substantial contribution to national economies through their participation in starting successful MSEs United Nations, (2005).

Women contribute more than half of the population of Kenya and make a significant contribution to the economy. Not only are Kenyan women competing with their male counterparts for typically male positions in the corporate arena, they are also starting businesses in previously male dominated sectors of the economy. Women-owned businesses are making a significant contribution to the Kenyan economy. Their businesses account for about one-half (48%) of all micro and small sized enterprises (MSEs), which contribute around 20 percent to Kenya's GDP. of the 462, 000 jobs created annually. Since the year 2000, in Kenya, 445,000 jobs have come from the informal sector, where 85% of women's businesses are found (IFC, 2010). The study further states that while being in a male-dominated industry can be challenging, Kenyan women are increasingly breaking barriers and excelling in arenas traditionally occupied by men.

The above situation suggests that for Kenya to attain economic growth and development women entrepreneurship is core and it must be addressed. Women entrepreneurs must be encouraged to start enterprises in the male dominated sectors of the economy that are characterized by high growth rates, high income, high technology, high employment and high survival rates. The above scenario also suggests that there must be fundamental and practical factors that influence some women entrepreneurs' start enterprises in the male dominated sectors as opposed to starting enterprises in the female dominated sectors as would be the norm. This study will attempt to address women entrepreneurs in micro and small enterprises failure rate by investigating entrepreneurship education on women at pre-primary and primary levels in Kenya.

## **6 Entrepreneurship Educations**

Entrepreneurship education can be defined as the purposeful intervention by an educator in the life of the learner to impart entrepreneurial qualities and skills to enable the learner to survive in the world of business. Albert, Sciascia and poli (2004) defined entrepreneurship education as the structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurial competencies, which in return refers to the concepts, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth-oriented ventures. Sexton and Smilor (1997) define entrepreneurship education as a formal structured instruction that conveys entrepreneurial knowledge and develops in students, focused awareness relating to opportunity, recognition and the creation of new ventures. Mauchi et al., (2011) sited in Jones and English (2004) the definition of entrepreneurship education as a process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the knowledge, skills and attitudes to act on them. Therefore, entrepreneurship education can be seen as process of imparting learners with entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes through a formal structured instruction. A formal structured instruction is usually guided by well defined aims, goals and objectives of a specific program. Entrepreneurship education and training programmers are aimed directly at stimulating entrepreneurship which may be defined as independent small business ownership or the development of opportunity-seeking managers within companies Colton (1990).

Entrepreneurship education is more than just learning about business management. It is a human capital investment to prepare a student to start a new venture through the integration of experience, skills and knowledge to develop and expand business (Hynes and Richardson, 2007; Nabi and Holden, 2008). The expectation that more and better entrepreneurship education would result in more and better entrepreneurs Matlay, (2008) has driven the proliferation of entrepreneurship courses in institutions of higher learning. Several researchers have recognized the fact that entrepreneurship can foster entrepreneurial culture (Harsh and Ranjan, 2005; Burn, 2007; and Kuratko, 2005) among the learners.

Entrepreneurship education could be viewed from two broad perspectives Kent (1990). The first is the creation of awareness and the second is inclusion of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge. Thrust should be directed to both areas so as to produce a complete entrepreneur. Further the general agreement by researchers is that education for self awareness takes two forms. First is where the youth become aware of the past, present, and future roles that entrepreneurship play in society. The second awareness comes by allowing the youth to appreciate that entrepreneurship can be a career possibility for them to exploit. However, Bwisa (2004) argues that in Kenya, it is rare that youth trainers and counselors have an idea of how to present entrepreneurship as a possible vocation. Curran and Stanworth (1989) termed entrepreneurship education as education with the purpose of changing the existing situation and by doing so create a new product or serve and thus create a higher economic value. Further, Gibb (1992) pointed out that the task of entrepreneurship education is to develop enterprising behaviors, skills, attitudes and stimulate the student's insight into knowledge of doing business. He particularly singled out the following behavioral aspects: opportunity seeking; initiative taking; making things happen independently; problem solving and risk taking; commitment to work and tasks; ability to cope with or enjoy uncertainty and ambiguity; self awareness; self confidence; credibility; perseverance; persuasiveness; resourcefulness; negotiating skills; motivation and commitment to achieve. Learning plays a crucial role in the acquisition of knowledge, skills and development of values. Thus awareness of the opportunities of entrepreneurship may prompt some people who may not show initial signs of enterprise venture to realize their potential. Learning is therefore seen as a significant ingredient of the transition from awareness and interest to desire and action.

Entrepreneurship education is about promoting change in attitudes to "increase the number of women who view 'business start-up' as a viable career option' Black, (2003). To succeed in this, entrepreneurship education must be concerned with learning and facilitating for entrepreneurship, not about it (Laukkanen, 2000, Cooper et al., 2004). The entrepreneurship educational system has to be oriented towards "doing" more than "thinking". Knowledge has to be converted into solutions that benefit customers in the market place (Formica, 1997; Fayolle, 2001; Rae and Carswell, 2001; Bird, 2002-2003). Entrepreneurship education is a constructivist based education Ehrste'n and Kjeliman, 2001). It can be defined as the purposeful intervention by an educator in the life of the learner to impart entrepreneurial qualities and skills to enable the learner to survive in the world of business. This research assumes that with proper entrepreneurship education on women entrepreneurs at pre-primary and primary school levels micro and small enterprises would grow and develop.

### **7 Entrepreneurship Education at pre-school and at Primary School Level**

According to Bwisa (2004), there is no entrepreneurship education at pre-school and primary school levels in Kenya yet this level pump into the labor force 243,000 youth annually. This accounts for 33 percent of unemployment in Kenya. Allowing learners to experience positive entrepreneurial role models both by class contact or curriculum material is the first step in entrepreneurship education and this should begin at pre-school and primary school level. At this stage, entrepreneurship learnt could be termed as "basic". Entrepreneurship education at this level should not necessarily be geared towards providing something new but rather on removing any barriers that may erode the potential of motivation towards business ideas (Van de Kuip and Verheul, 2003). Psychology views personality as not only influenced by heredity but also by the environment. The environmental factors that put thrust on the process of personality formation are culture in which we are raised. Specifically, the norms, attitudes, and values of our friends, family, and social groups (Robbins, 1997). Since children's personalities are still malleable in early childhood, initial education can play a significant role in the development of personality entrepreneurial traits. Therefore, entrepreneurial qualities should be taught in the early schooling years of primary education level (Van de Kuip et al., 2003). Furthermore, entrepreneurial qualities tend to correspond more with personality characteristics developed during the upbringing. It would be very difficult to develop entrepreneurial qualities with adults, hence this research.

Learning activities that could be used to foster entrepreneurship qualities in the children may include: Simple songs containing aspects of selling and buying; songs reinforced by dances that depict business ideas; games and plays where children pretend to go to the shop and purchase some commodities; and reciting of poems on business ideas. When the children get to primary schools, they should be given further practice on the activities they encountered at preschool level. Specific areas are: monopoly games to demonstrate investment; scrabble to improve on communication skills; brainstorming session on business ideas; risk taking games; translating goods made from handcrafts into sales to encourage innovations; and visits to successful entrepreneurial firms. Observable and measurable success indicators at this stage would include the following: children coming up with innovative products from the modeling exercises; ability to recite poems confidently; ability to repeat the simple skills taught and active participation in the activities taught. This study will investigate whether women entrepreneurs had entrepreneurship education at pre-primary and primary school levels and the extent of the

same.

## 8 Findings

Entrepreneurship education is not taught in pre-primary and primary school levels in Kenya. This is similar to Bwisa (2004) findings. It is evident from the reviewed literature that entrepreneurship education exposed to the learners in school creates entrepreneurship awareness and encourages students to include self-employment in their career intentions and aspirations' options as well as inculcating a positive attitude towards business start-up. Children's personalities are still malleable in early childhood, so initial entrepreneurship education can play a significant role in the development of personality entrepreneurial traits.

## 9 Conclusions

In conclusion, there is definitely a need for entrepreneurship education to be taught at pre-primary and primary school levels in Kenya, if micro and small enterprises owned by women are to grow and develop. The educational system influences the knowledge base, the achievement of skills, competencies and attitudes on which future career choices are based. Since these decisions are essential to the future of the individual, School has the responsibility to inform and expose students to a wider range of career options, including entrepreneurship.

## 10 Recommendations

- a) To inculcate enough entrepreneurial culture, entrepreneurship education should start early at pre-primary and primary school levels as at this stage the child's entrepreneurial personality is malleable
- b) An independent review of the quality improvement aspects of pre-primary and primary education development should be done to introduce entrepreneurship education to take care of over 250,000 pupils who drop out at this level.
- c) Teachers of entrepreneurship education should be trained in innovative methodologies that will enable them to effectively equip the learners with entrepreneurial skills
- d) Women enterprise centre should be set up to provide business advice, mentorship and other practical support towards realization of the self employment aspirations of the women. In addition, the centre could help expose and link women to funding sourcing institutions such as women enterprise fund in Kenya
- e) Entrepreneurship workshops and conferences should be encouraged specifically for women entrepreneurs already working in micro and small enterprises
- f) A needs analysis research should be carried out to determine the exact educational requirements useful in the women-owned micro and small enterprises
- g) An analysis should be conducted on the role of educators and the role of nuclear family. they are really fundamental to influence a child become an entrepreneur

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