

# TechnoServe helps Ugandan female entrepreneurs grow their businesses

TechnoServe launched its “Women Mean Business” program in Uganda last week, to expand the range of economic opportunities available to women.



The program will equip high-potential entrepreneurs with the skills, information, and financial and market links they need to start and grow successful businesses in sectors such as agriculture, trade, services, transportation and education.

As in many parts of the world, women in Uganda often struggle to overcome entrenched social and economic gender inequalities that serve as barriers to acquiring education and finance, making it difficult for women-owned businesses to succeed. “Women Mean Business” will help women overcome these obstacles. This will enable them to earn incomes and grow businesses that spur growth in the Ugandan economy, improving the lives of their families and communities.

After a one-year pilot phase, it is expected that an expanded and longer-term version of the program will be rolled out in Uganda as well as in other countries where TechnoServe works.

During the pilot phase, 20 female entrepreneurs in and around Kampala will be selected and supported. The women, to be chosen based on criteria such as age, experience and education, will receive training in basic business management skills and business plan development. They will also be paired with business coaches and mentors who will serve as role models.

TechnoServe recognises the immense potential that entrepreneur-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs) present to the Ugandan economy, making up approximately 90% of Uganda's private sector, and also the vital role that women play in these enterprises and the larger economy as a whole. Bringing women into the labour force is linked to improved maternal and child health, and better education for children. Investing in women's entrepreneurship creates the foundation for expanded benefits of economic growth to be shared across communities and countries.

“There is so much untapped potential for women around the world to help drive economic and social development,” says TechnoServe CEO and President Bruce McNamer. “TechnoServe is committed to helping female entrepreneurs realise that potential. In addition to working with individual female entrepreneurs in Latin America and Africa, we also have broader initiatives such as our ‘Young Women in Enterprise’ program in Kenya and now the ‘Women Mean Business’ program in

Uganda. They are an integral part of our ongoing efforts to help entrepreneurial people harness the power of private enterprise to create jobs and incomes that break the cycle of poverty.”

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