
The three winners of the 2014 UNCTAD’s Empretec Women in Business Award (E-WBA) have been announced during the UNCTAD’s World Investment Forum held on 16-19 October 2014. The spirited awards ceremony took place at the United Nations premises in Geneva and highlighted the key role that women entrepreneurs have in contributing to sustainable development through job creation, innovation and strengthening local supply capacity. In line with this year’s Forum theme, "Investing in Sustainable Development," two additional recognitions have been awarded to social and green entrepreneurs.

Overwhelmed by the positive effect of their recognition, all participants coincided in saying the E-WBA is a life changing event, inspiring new and higher goals. The outstanding winners shared with us, the early gains of the WBA recognition:
Upon her return to Amman (Jordan), Lina Khalifeh has concentrated her efforts on expanding her business into other countries in the Middle East Region. "Allowing more women to learn about self-defense is my personal goal and the prize was an eye opener in this sense". Such expansion requires the global registration of the SheFighter brand; an important step for which Lina will receive joint support from UNCTAD and WIPO. Finally, as a leading entrepreneur, Lina is very active in social media. She keeps interacting with her followers and responding to the many greetings about her Gold Prize at the WBA.

Divine’s speech during the WBA awards ceremony was definitely one of the highlights and more telling of the award’s spirit. When asked by the presenter about the challenges of employing women in the security sector in which "big muscles are required"; Divine very gently explained: "Security is no longer about the muscles, but about the brains…the moment for women has come"! Divine, drew our attention to her persistence and charisma: "From a very young age I knew I wanted to be an entrepreneur…my Empretec training in 1995, was a turning point. She dedicated her silver prize to her loyal 900 women employees. Once back to her duties in Harare (Zimbabwe), Divine has attended invitations for interviews on the radio, and also, she has been very active in supporting local initiatives for youth entrepreneurship.

After receiving the WBA Bronze award in Geneva, Lorena Picasso returned to her hometown in Santa Fe (Argentina), to attend an overwhelming number of invitations to feature her business SOMNO on TV, Internet, Radio and Printed Press. "Many doors that were closed to us before, have suddenly opened, it’s a challenge, but I’m sure that we'll walk through it successfully". A delegation of 35 government officials presided by Mr. Jose Corral, the major of Santa Fe -a town with a population of 900,000 - visited Lorena in her workshop. The visit resulted in an agreement to replenish local daycares in the region with SOMNOS toys. The Empretec Center in Argentina has also been very active in showcasing the success of her former "pupil".
Proud of her recognition and mindful of the importance of using the memento, Pabla Torres and her team are concentrating efforts on securing a private-public partnership with the local university in Mendoza (Argentina) for further research on specific biological pesticides for wineries. In the context of the current economy’s difficulties in Argentina, the international recognition of Pabla’s start-up has been largely featured in local press and through the Empretec Center in Argentina to encourage more entrepreneurs to follow through their business ideas or expansion plans. Pabla is definitely aware of the challenges: “I knew that I was onto something but to hear it from outside people was incredibly important for me. It forced me to come back and tell my team that we were onto something pretty amazing and that we should grow in that direction.”

As a Chemical Engineer, Leena Irshaid co-founded her Women Cooperative Association in 2008 with the purpose of bringing agricultural products to the market while using the high-skilled and underutilized capabilities of unemployed women in the region. The dimension of her initiative has gone far beyond all her expectations and receiving the recognition at the E-WBA only confirmed the gains of incorporating a strong social approach into business ventures. “I feel extremely grateful and motivated to expand our Association, many ideas are now turning in my head”. For her recognition, Leena has been invited as a speaker in various recent events among them the 11th Arab Congress of plant protection resulting in a personal meeting in Jordan with the Royal Highness Prince El Hasan Bin Talal. Her team’s efforts are focusing on acquiring Best Practices certifications for their portfolio.

Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director UNWOMEN supported the UNCTAD’s EMPRETEC WBA initiative, considering it a landmark for future cooperation. Her message to the finalists was very encouraging: "These inspiring entrepreneurs are agents of change. Their success is essential for sustainable development and for a more prosperous and inclusive world".

The Empretec Women in Business Awards (E-WBA) are granted to three women-owned businesses that have benefited from the business development services of their Empretec national programme, a pioneering UNCTAD initiative for the promotion of entrepreneurship that operates in 36 countries. From an applicant pool of over a 100 “Empretecas”, the 10 visiting finalists came from Africa, Latin America and the Middle East and their businesses operate in a variety of sectors. They all shared a contagious passion for their work and are using their role as businesswomen to give back to their communities.
The 2014 Finalists:

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<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>FINALIST</th>
<th>COMPANY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Lorena Maria Eugenia Picasso</td>
<td>SOMNO</td>
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<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Kelly Dantas de Vasconcelos</td>
<td>UCRI Universidad Da Criancan</td>
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<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Tracy Antoinette Green Douglas</td>
<td>Pandama Retreat</td>
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<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Lina Jalil Khalifeh</td>
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<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Maya Sewnath</td>
<td>SSS Furniture Co Ltd</td>
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<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Lara Cookey</td>
<td>Contextplay (Context Matrix Ltd)</td>
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<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Thiane Diagne</td>
<td>JOUR J Couture</td>
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<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Renay van der Berg</td>
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<td>Zambia</td>
<td>Angelica M Rumsey</td>
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<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Divine Ndhlukula</td>
<td>SECURICO Security Services</td>
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The Ceremony

Undoubtedly, the Women in Business Awards ceremony was one of the most spirited and inspiring events during the WIF, showing on the impact of women on development. Participants joined in celebrating these flourishing women who in turn, delighted the crowd with samples of their activities through the Empretec booth located at the WIF’s Investment Village.

The ceremony featured an outstanding performance by Dr. Rama Mani who dedicated the poem ”Entrepreneurs of the Human Spirit” to the finalists. Furthermore, her storytelling about remarkable women around the world was both entertaining and engaging. Two exceptional hosts created the right suspense and dialogue with the participants: Ms. Bisila Bokoko, Executive Chair of the E-WBA, business woman and philanthropist and Mr. Olivier Dominique, a well-known Swiss-TV anchorman. UNCTAD’s Empretec team is grateful to all the sponsors: Emerald Publishing, Symbiotics, SECO, GIZ, and Otsuka who made this memorable event possible!

From the World Investment Forum 2014: "Top leaders in Governments and TNCs called to take action for women empowerment"

Participants at the World Investment Forum 2014 debated the key role of women in investing for sustainable development. Indeed during the Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality Session policy makers, executives and international experts concluded that there is a clear role for top leaders in TNCs and Governments to lead change in their contexts in order to achieve gender equality.

"It is clear that corporations that operate globally have tremendous capacity to influence women empowerment and gender equality in emerging and developing countries." expressed Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UNWOMEN. Participants identified avenues for future research including the impact on women in different segments of a multinational's value/supply chain, and between value chains in different industries.

Beatrice Ayuru from Uganda: an Empreteca featured at the United Nations' TEDx

On the occasion of the TEDx organized by the United Nations, Beatriz Ayuru, an empreteca from Uganda, was selected along with other high-profiled figures to tell her story and engage in a lively debate webcasted live in 15 countries!

Beatrice founded the Lira Integrated School located in the Northern Region of Uganda in 2000. As the first female University graduate from her region Beatrice had a strong vision of building a school on her own to combat illiteracy, eradicate poverty, and fight for girl child rights. So she began to grow and sell cassava. She then used the profits to buy and rent out wheelbarrows to local workers, reinvested her profits in a canteen, and then used those profits as collateral to build the Lira Integrated Nursery, Primary and Secondary School now providing nursery, primary, secondary, vocational, and agricultural educations to over 1,500 students.
In 2010, Beatrice won UNCTAD’s Empretec Women in Business Award. In 2011, the U.S. awarded her Ugandan Woman of Courage in Education, and the Federation of Uganda Employers awarded her Employer of the Year.

TEDx was created in the spirit of TED’s mission, "ideas worth spreading." It supports independent organizers who want to create a TED-like event in their own community.

Increasing participation of Women in Business in the Middle East

Attendees at the 5th Qatar International Business Women Forum (Doha, 16-17 December 2014) witnessed the increasing participation of women in business. The three winners from the EMPRETEC WBA 2014 along with staff members of UNCTAD Empretec participated at this event where over 1000 participants from more than 40 countries gathered to discuss on the topic of women and business.

During the session entitled "Businesswomen as Innovators and Entrepreneurs", Ms. Fiorina Mugione, on behalf of UNCTAD, highlighted the propagating dynamics of women in business: "No matter how, when or where they have started, women entrepreneurs always develop what I call the 5 I's: income, independence, innovation, impact and inspiration". In fact, for every woman entrepreneur, there is a powerful multiplier effect. They are agents of change, role models and a development trigger for their families, communities and countries".

For more info visit: http://qibwf.org/index.html

First ETW for females in Saudi Arabia

The 1st ETW for females was held at Holiday-Inn premises in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 22 – 27 November 2014, with 25 participants. It was the first workshop in the series of seven workshops to be conducted in 2014 for Saudi females in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was delivered by the team of two Jordanian Master Trainers and two trainees from Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The atmosphere of the 1st ETW for females was positively influenced by the selection of participants. They were mostly registered business owners who have been running their businesses. It is to be noted that five participants were recommended to become trainees, they were chosen because
they displayed the essential qualities required for an Empretec trainer: a positive attitude, responsibility, hard work, involvement with participants and solid business experience.

**EMPRETEC and Impact Investment Funds explore avenues for collaboration**

During the launch of Inclusive Business Action Network (IBN, 18-20 Nov in Berlin), Ms. Fiorina Mugione speaking on behalf of UNCTAD, highlighted the importance of encompassing a holistic approach in implementing entrepreneurship policy. "Because of their nature, and if the entrepreneurship ecosystem is conducive, all SMEs have the potential to be inclusive," affirmed Ms. Mugione while addressing an audience of entrepreneurs, policy makers, development agencies and private funds.

GIZ, leading this initiative, invited three winners of the WBA 2014 - Pabla Torres (Argentina), Lina Jalil Khalifeh and Leena Irshaid from Jordan, to participate at the event. During the two-day event, representatives of impact investment funds, approached the Empretec booth installed at the Market Place, to explore avenues collaboration's.

**From our Global Network: Leadership on High-heels!**

Leadership on High-Heels (Liderazgo en Tacones, in Spanish) is an initiative started last year in Dominican Republic by Xiomara Frías, Master Empretec Instructor and Executive Director of Inspire, aiming at generating networking and empowerment space for women. For its second edition in November 2014, Leadership on High Heels took place in the context of the Global Entrepreneurship Week and the SME sector and was supported by the Ministry of Commerce.

During the conference, the keynote speaker, Ms. Bisila Bokoko, highlighted the importance of international partnerships for women entrepreneurs. Participants particularly enjoyed the talk given by Mr. José Ayala, on the topic of the “female leadership under from the male perspective”. The organizers were pleased to announce that new partnerships for capacity building and women empowerment emerged from this event.
Upcoming Events


The Global Entrepreneurship Congress (GEC) Milan, Italy 16-19 March 2015. Entrepreneurs will share experiences and will form a variety of options for mutually beneficial cooperation. For more info visit: http://www.gec.co/

The Global Empretec Summit II will take place in parallel to the Global Entrepreneurship Congress in Milan, Italy 16-19 March 2015, to facilitate business links among empretecos and other entrepreneurs attending the GEC. The Empretec Directors meeting XXII will take place in Milan, Italy, 20 March 2015.

The 3rd session on Multi-Year Expert Meeting (MYEM) on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity Building and Sustainable Development is scheduled for 30 - 31 March 2015 in Geneva.

The seventh session of the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission organized by UNCTAD will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, 20 - 24 April 2015.

The 2016 NESTLE Creating Shared Value Prize (CSV) is awarded every two years to help scale up or replicate business-oriented initiatives that address challenges in nutrition, water or rural development. Nominations are open 28 February 2016. More info: http://www.nestle.com/csv/what-is-csv/nestleprize/about-csv-prize

EMPRETEC NEWS

The first EMPRETEC training workshop in Cameroon, took place on 5 January 2015.

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