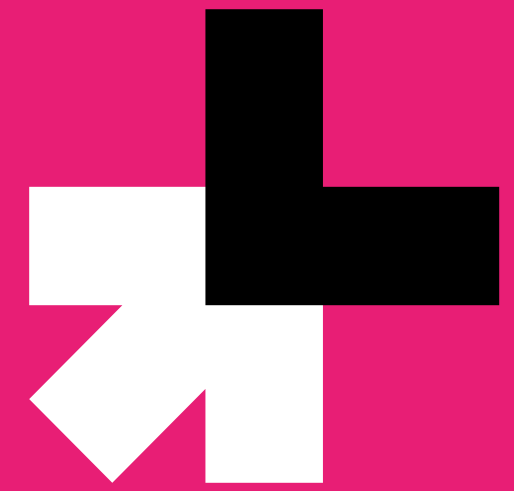


**Proven  
Solution**

Economic Justice



**HeForShe**

# **De Beers Group** **Accelerating female** **entrepreneurship**



## Global Context

**In 2016 the UN Secretary General's High-Level panel on women's economic empowerment stated that expanding women's economic opportunities is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A central challenge is how to accelerate economic equality, which enables not only inclusive development for communities, but also a path for women to achieve greater control over their own lives.**

Women lag behind men in entrepreneurship. Women are less likely to own small or medium sized enterprises—only 20 percent of firms in the poorest countries have female owners. Where women own businesses these tend to be smaller, are more likely to be home-based, and are often disadvantaged in their access to credit, resources and assets. Over 80% of women employed in southern Africa are within the informal economy.

Investing in women supports households, promotes the principle to leave no one behind and accelerating businesses supports jobs for all.

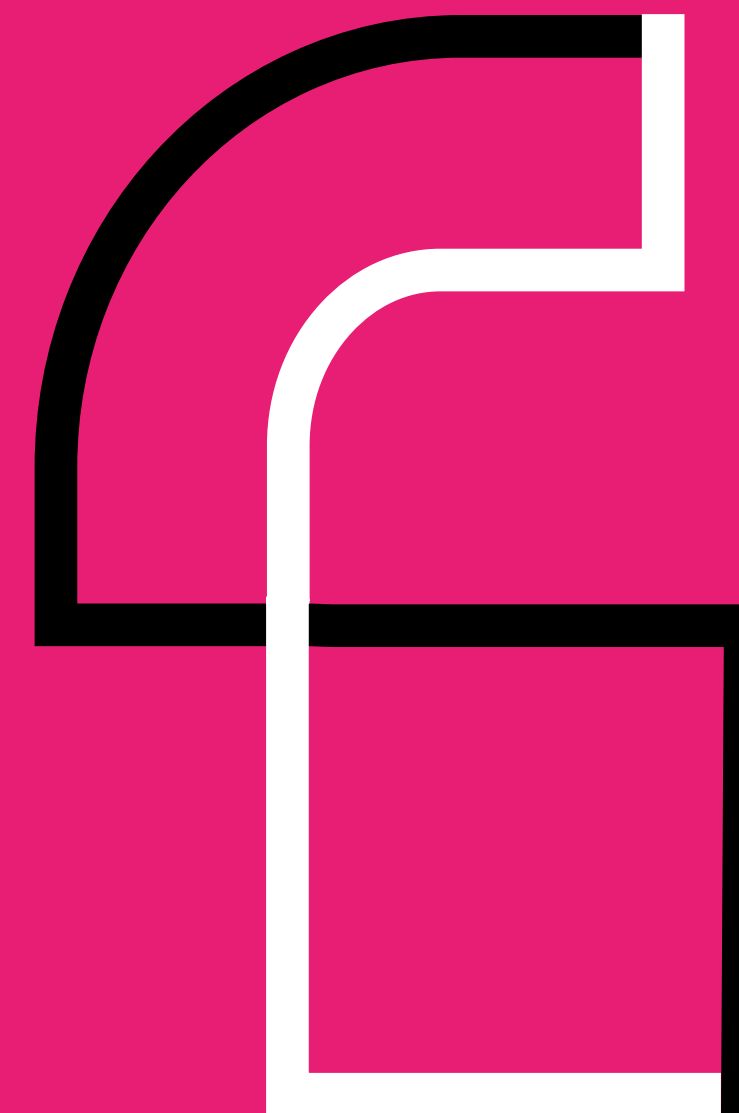
“Launching our Accelerating Women Owned Micro-Enterprises programme has taken commitment and dedication from many; yet the key to its success has been simple: local ownership. Be it through working with local partners, training people locally to be mentors, or tailoring training materials, it has resulted in a programme that has been sustainably rooted. I am tremendously proud of the impact that we're seeing as a result. And, while the changes we see in individuals are amazing in their own right, we are just starting to glimpse how such changes in wider society can be truly profound.”

**Bruce Cleaver, CEO, De Beers Group**

### Sources

[unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/women-in-informal-economy](http://unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/women-in-informal-economy)

Leave No One Behind A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel On Women's Economic Empowerment (2016)



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## Key Stages of Implementation

The De Beers Group – UN Women Accelerating Women-Owned Micro Enterprises (AWOME) Programme supports women micro-entrepreneurs in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana. The programme enables women to hone skills to secure value from their businesses and thereby increase access to assets, including finance, to grow. It provides a stepping stone to scale and formalisation if and when businesses are ready.

### Step 1 Securing stakeholder engagement

Design the programme collaboratively to make it relevant to the context and key stakeholders such as government. This ensures alignment with government priorities and builds goodwill, increasing the potential for scaling up and sustaining results. Establish mechanisms for ongoing and regular stakeholder input into the programme.

As implementation of AWOME progressed, local steering committees, reflecting different stakeholder groups, were established. The committees share learnings, address implementation challenges and agree on changes to the implementation approach whilst maintaining alignment between stakeholders.

### Step 2 Creating relevant training materials

Do not re-invent the wheel. Build on what exists but customize the implementation approach and training materials. AWOME leveraged enterprise development training manuals from the ILO and tailored material with input from stakeholders, entrepreneurs and findings from baseline studies.

Building on internationally recognized material gives confidence to stakeholders and entrepreneurs as to the quality of the training and is efficient in terms of resourcing. The tailoring ensures that what is covered in the training is relevant for the demographic and addresses practical needs. Confidence in the training materials increases likelihood of use by other actors which enables scale.

### Step 3 Training local trainers

Use a train-the-trainer approach, recruiting from a local area so expertise stays where the programme is being implemented rather than flying in and flying out. AWOME recruits individuals, with relevant enterprise development experience, from a local area and trains them to deliver AWOME training, and provide follow-up support to a consistent and high-standard.

The training of trainers (ToT) is a four-week process, delivered by an accredited master trainer covering training materials, interactive training methods and putting trainers in the shoes of entrepreneurs so they build their understanding of the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

**The programme enables women to hone skills to secure value from their businesses and thereby increase access to assets, including finance, to grow.**

We have learned that the trainers also need post ToT support through technical mentorship by the Master trainer and facilitated peer learning.

Training trainers in a local area is part of the capacity building outcome of the programme. It provides job opportunities, increases skills and experience in the area and ensures trainers are available to provide post-training support. Inclusion of government officials in the ToT increases government capacity to implement the approach beyond the De Beers Group – UN Women programme.





### Step 4 Building capacity of entrepreneurs through experiential training and post training support

How training is delivered is as important as the content. Making the training approach engaging and relevant maximises learning outcomes. Training covers business skills but is delivered in a way to build life skills that are an enabler for business growth, and confidence to manage the myriad challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

AWOME's capacity building approach tackles business skills and life skills through the following steps:

- Baseline data collection and analysis at a community level to understand local needs
- Tailoring of training content to address local nuances and regulations
- Collection of baseline data on individual entrepreneurs to understand their needs and tailor the training to match
- Experiential business games and facilitating entrepreneurs to reflect on their current

practices, what they have learned, and develop action plans to address challenges

- Post-training support to review implementation of actions and update as necessary. Retraining may be recommended for individuals struggling to translate skills into tangible action
- Analysis of learnings from monitoring, and feedback from the implementation team and stakeholders to improve the approach.

### Step 5 Celebrating to strengthen peer networks

Celebrate success! Celebration recognizes the value of the experience and makes other stakeholders and community members aware the programme exists and works.

Graduation ceremonies have shown that publicly celebrating the achievement of the entrepreneurs in successfully completing the training recognizes their effort, strengthens peer networks and brings profile to the programme.



### Step 6 Learning and adapting

Monitoring, evaluation and continuous learning and adaptation should be built into the programme so it stays relevant. A number of different mechanisms may be needed to evaluate and adapt the programme at different levels.

Stakeholder engagement and local steering committees enable part of AWOME's adaptive approach. In addition, a central management team pulls together learnings from multiple locations on a quarterly and annual basis to identify necessary changes to the programme overall. In the next phase AWOME will strengthen linkages to social, health, financial and other relevant services to address the range of challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. In addition, it will work with past cohorts to strengthen women's agency through networking and peer learning and establish platforms to engage government constructively on specific development issues.

## Resources

Links to videos with more information about AWOME:

[Irene's Story - Celebrating De Beers Group's two-year partnership with UN Women](#)

[Unlocking the Power of Women Micro-Entrepreneurs in Namibia - AWOME](#)

Technical guidance is available upon request and subject to availability of the team.

Use of the AWOME training materials is controlled and guided by set standards. Anyone using the materials is required to subscribe to and adhere to the set monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

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