

TITLE: Women Eco-entrepreneurs Across The World: Strengths and Challenges

CONCEPT NOTE: and CFP

Entrepreneurs capitalize on unique opportunities arising out of constant threats in the environment. They embrace change, create new solutions to unmet needs and also create needs in innovative ways, mostly small incremental ways, for the purpose of generating income and developing sustainable businesses.

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report, “women are nearly one-third more likely to start businesses out of necessity than men.”(GEM 2016)

This necessity has two perspectives, one reflected in higher income countries where women with skills and education take up the opportunities in the ecosystem to satisfy their entrepreneurial pursuits.

On the other hand, in the lower to middle income developing countries, women engage in small business to support their family income. Since their business activities become integral part of their household activities, their business is mostly based on traditional crafts with nature based products, most of which are environmentally responsible. Some of them take up uniquely different ways of promoting their nature based heritage handicrafts.

While the environmental challenges facing the world today can seem daunting, they present tremendous opportunities for eco-entrepreneurs who might foster fair

trade relationships (promoting economic justice and equity), generate more energy from renewable energy sources than it uses (severing our addiction to fossil fuels), and even deal in local, seasonal, and organic production and marketing (reducing carbon footprint), or use their traditional training as social and family lineage to use the local natural products, that significantly support their livelihoods.

Eco-entrepreneurs are symbolically representative of nature: they form innovative partnerships or creative interdependencies with fellow eco-entrepreneurs — just as in nature.

Women engaged in these income generating activities, besides their family responsibilities, are most often not recognized as economic agents and such unpaid labour leads to further marginalization of the women.

This conference will consider the dynamics of women's unique internal strengths, knowledge of traditional crafts and innovative ideas in preserving and leveraging the natural resources to convert their need based entrepreneurship into significant vehicles of supporting the family income. At the same time such debate shall capture the challenges that the women face from their family, local community, and the entire ecosystem of business.

We invite research papers, work in progress or case studies, from scholars, practitioners and eco-entrepreneurs whose vision will shape newer thinking.

Papers should have the following structure: introduction, literature review and conceptualization, methodology, results, and conclusion.

Some suggested topics include:

- ♣ Forging partnerships & effective collaborative dynamics
- ♣ Social entrepreneurship and innovation in eco-entrepreneurship
- ♣ Cross-cultural comparative studies in eco-entrepreneurship

Motivational drivers of eco-entrepreneurship

- ♣ Survival and growth strategies of ecoentrepreneurs
- ♣ Social impact measurement; performance assessment; success interpretations
- ♣ Beyond the local – Internationalization and scaling of innovation and enterprises
- ♣ Effective public policies to facilitate social enterprise and social innovation
- ♣ Ecopreneurship and green entrepreneurship perspectives
- ♣ Innovation in corporate social responsibility related areas such as environmental responsibility, sustainability
- ♣ Social innovation in health and housing
- ♣ Case studies of social innovations/eco-entrepreneurs and/or social enterprises