

Foreword

'It takes a village to raise a child' is an African proverb that means that it takes an entire community of people to let children develop and flourish. In the entrepreneurship literature it is increasingly recognized that it takes an entrepreneurial ecosystem to let entrepreneurs, female or male, and their ventures develop and flourish.

Flourishing goes beyond the traditional standards of entrepreneurial success, such as growth in profitability, sales, or number of employees. These can be important means but are unlikely to be ultimate ends. Human flourishing, of entrepreneurs, their private and business partners, their employees, their family, and even their entire community, are ends worth striving for. Women entrepreneurs around the world know all this, perhaps even better than male entrepreneurs.

This fascinating book brings together insights from no fewer than 49 distinguished scholars in the field of women in entrepreneurship who provide valuable and timely insights into the causes and effects of the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs around the globe.

Why focus on women entrepreneurs? Because half of the world's population are women? That is an impressive quantity, but not a sufficient reason. We are not interested in the quantity of women entrepreneurship per se, but in their quality of life: do women have the same capabilities as men to lead the life they value and to enable others to develop these capabilities? There are at least two important reasons to focus on women entrepreneurship from a quality of life point of view. First, in many societies women still do not have the same access to (entrepreneurial) opportunities as men. Second, women entrepreneurs more often strive for social goals than men. In short, in order to make this world a better place, more attention for women in entrepreneurship is a necessity, both in thinking and acting.

It takes an entrepreneurial ecosystem to let women entrepreneurs and their communities flourish!

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