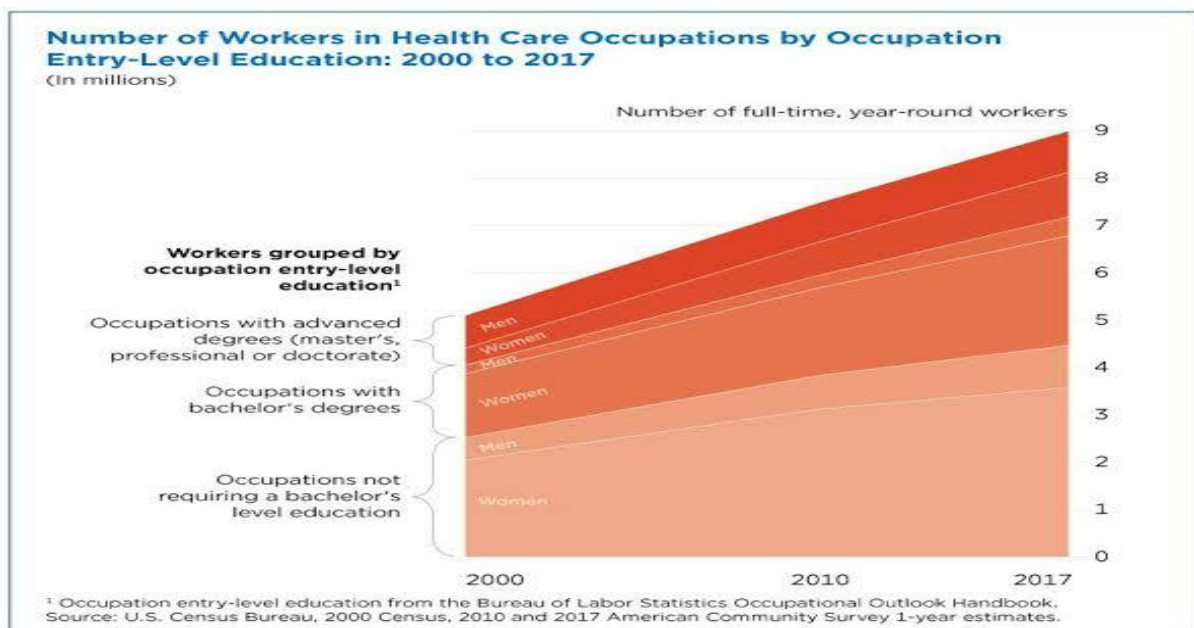


The Vital Role of Women in Africa's Development

Women play a pivotal role in Africa's development, contributing significantly in healthcare, and entrepreneurship. Their involvement is vital in driving economic growth, fostering social stability, and promoting sustainable development across the continent.

Healthcare

In healthcare, women are often the primary caregivers, and their roles are indispensable. Female healthcare workers, including nurses, midwives, and community health workers, provide essential services, particularly in rural areas where medical resources are scarce. Their efforts are fundamental in improving maternal and child health, reducing mortality rates, and addressing public health challenges. For example, the presence of skilled birth attendants has been linked to significant reductions in maternal and infant mortality rates. In some African countries, women make up more than 50% of the health workforce, highlighting their critical role in healthcare delivery. Since 2013, 22.4 million women and girls in AFE have gained access to improved health services.

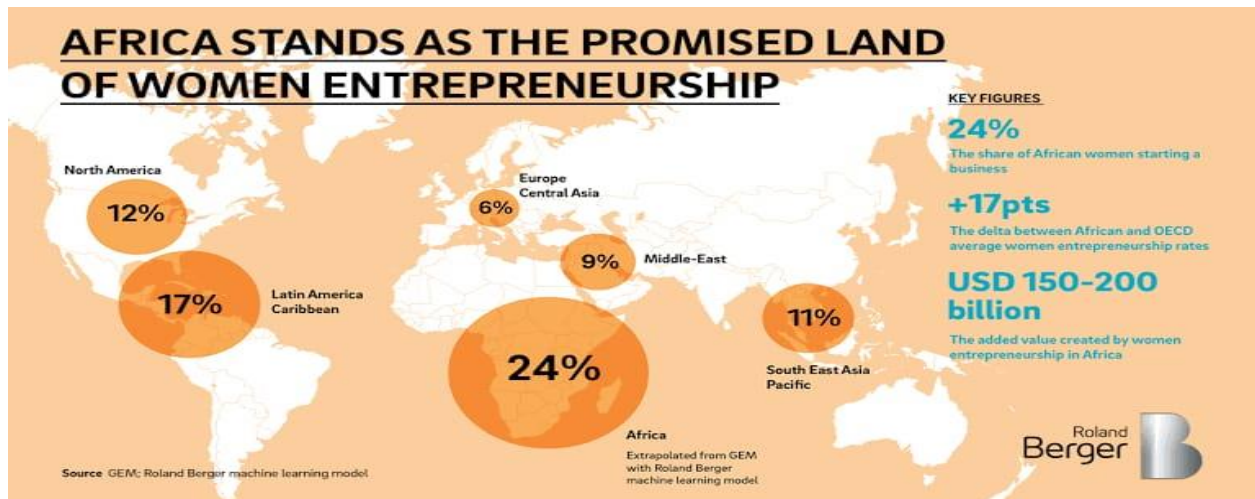


Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship among African women is also on the rise. Women-led businesses contribute to economic diversification and innovation. Despite facing challenges such as limited access to finance and markets, female entrepreneurs demonstrate resilience and ingenuity, driving economic development and job creation. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rate of female entrepreneurship globally, with women making up 26% of the entrepreneurial population. Initiatives like microfinance programs and

women’s business networks have been instrumental in supporting female entrepreneurs, enabling them to overcome financial barriers and access training and resources.

Women in the high-tech sector are increasingly engaging in start-ups, but their influence is often limited to small local businesses.



Leadership

African women are increasingly present in national institutions and international organizations, including the World Trade Organization, African Union, and United Nations. They are also contributing to regional and international efforts to address issues such as peace and security, gender justice, climate change, and economic development.

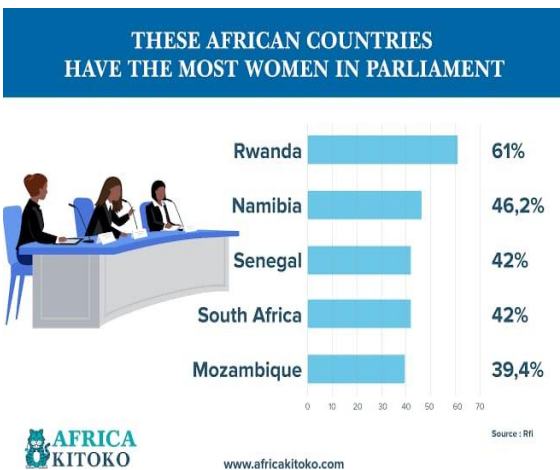


FIGURE 3.3. WOMEN IN AFRICA ARE INCREASINGLY REPRESENTED ON CORPORATE BOARDS
While corporate boards in Africa continue to add more women, representation remains below the world average.



NOTE: Data for sub-Saharan Africa includes 132 companies in Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa.
SOURCE: Deloitte "Data-driven change: Women in the boardroom - A global perspective," Sixth edition, 2018

BROOKINGS

Conclusion

To maximize the impact of women in Africa’s development, it is crucial to address gender disparities and empower women through education, legal reforms, and access to resources. Policies that ensure equal land rights, financial inclusion, and educational opportunities are essential. By fostering an inclusive environment that recognises and supports the contributions of women, Africa can achieve more sustainable and equitable development, benefiting society as a whole. Investments in women's health, education, and economic opportunities are not just moral imperatives but strategic moves for the continent’s growth and stability.

Women's empowerment is not just a matter of social justice; it is a key driver of economic and social progress. As Africa continues to develop, the full inclusion and participation of women will be essential to realizing the continent's vast potential.

***Views are personal**



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