

EVENTS

FEATURED: I&M Bank trains 60 women entrepreneurs in access to finance



Rica Rwigamba, the country representative of MasterCard Foundation, speaks during the launch of the four-day workshop for 60 women entrepreneurs as Robin Bairstow, I&M Bank Rwanda Chief Executive, and Alice Nkurikiyinka, BPN Country Director look on in Kigali on Monday, December 13. / Photo: Craish Bahizi.

Bertrand Byishimo

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I&M Bank Rwanda in partnership with Business Professionals Network (BPN) and MasterCard Foundation have officially started a four-day training that will see 60 female entrepreneurs tipped on access to finance.

The workshop was launched on Monday, December 13 at Kigali Marriott Hotel and it is expected to be held in two cohorts; two days for each group.

Having been conducted in line with [Ganza na I&M business banking campaign](#), the workshop aims at equipping entrepreneurs with deep insights on getting access to finances, financial information and markets among other aspects.

Speaking at the opening of the training, the Chief Executive of I&M Bank Rwanda, Robin Bairstow, said that this workshop aims to address challenges encountered by entrepreneurs when working with the banking sector.

“One of the areas that impedes business growth is how they are going to deal with the banking sector, so that is why we want to break down some of the challenges they face, by educating them on running bank accounts and building up track records,” he noted.

Bairstow added that the workshop also aims at educating the women entrepreneurs on creating a financial footprint within the country so that they can at some stage access finance and funding.

“So we will focus on financing and banking solutions that suit each of the micro, small and medium enterprises”.

Rica Rwigamba, the country representative of MasterCard Foundation which is supporting the initiative through its *Hanga Ahazaza* programme, indicated that this initiative comes to fill the gap in the private sector, where women remain underrepresented.

“Some women entrepreneurs have ideas, but implementation becomes a challenge, others do implement, but acquiring finances hinders them, so that is why we are proud to be part of this solution by boosting access to information and finances at large,” she said.

Asked why [women were prioritised in this year’s workshop](#), Alice Nkurikiyinka, the Country Director of BPN said that they showed more interest to increase their access to finance skills.

“When we started the workshops, women weren’t interested at all. They only needed funding to work, but as these trainings were being conducted, they kept getting interested on how they can work with financial institutions and getting trained on incorporating banking services in their daily operations,” she cited.

Nkurikiyinka also added that women have obtained other range of skills related to human resource and management among others.

Miriam Ayanone, one of the beneficiaries of the workshop said that these trainings were long overdue especially for women.

“Most women are not aware of the financial opportunities out there, so these trainings are a key. I think that women are set to benefit a lot from this, and acquiring information that will help them in their workplaces,” she said.

Research shows that 7 out of 10 jobs are created by MSMEs on the Rwandan job market and I&M Bank Rwanda registered an MSME growth of 64 per cent last year.