

Africa's women entrepreneurs honoured at AWIEF Awards

The Africa women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum annual AWIEF Awards took place this weekend honouring and celebrating the achievements of women entrepreneurs and innovators across the African continent.



Basetsana Kumalo, Executive Chairman & CEO, Basetsana Woman Investment Holdings, South Africa, with the winner of the AWIEF Awards 2018 Creative Industries Award, Nana Akua Opong-Birmeh, CEO of Archxenus, an architectural design company based in Accra, Ghana.

The 2018 AWIEF Awards showcase a diverse representation of finalist entrepreneurs from across the continent, including from Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

The awards have grown exponentially from entries of just under 300 last year when the AWIEF Awards were launched, to 1200 this year. Judges are drawn from thought leaders, decision makers and specialists in the various sectors of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.



'Women of Africa are our most valuable, untapped resource'

Louise Marsland 9 Nov 2018



“AWIEF remains Africa’s number one voice in driving the agenda for women’s leadership in business. The AWIEF brand has grown tremendously over these few years through the sustained support of our trusted partners, local and international, underscoring the great values of AWIEF programmes and projects in accelerating women entrepreneurship as a catalyst of inclusive economic growth,” said Irene Ochem, Founder and CEO of AWIEF.

“Our finalists were rigorously assessed in terms of the sustainability of their businesses, as well as the documented or prospective impact on community development and the economy. Thereafter, our judges decided on five finalists in each category and one winner,” explained Ochem.

“It is with great pleasure, immense honour and a deep admiration, that we salute our 2018 AWIEF Awards finalists and winners who have sailed through AWIEF rigorous scrutiny to meet the prescribed criteria and, most importantly, for being a beacon of hope and inspiration in their communities and organisations.”

Finalists from across Africa

Forty women founders and entrepreneurs were selected as finalists from 12 different African countries, across eight categories. The #AWIEFAwards took place at The Westin Hotel on Friday, 9 November 2018, at the conclusion of the two-day AWIEF conference at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), this year themed, ‘Unleashing ideas: Innovation, sustainability and enterprise growth’.

South African celebrity Bonang Matheba was the Master of Ceremonies at the gala awards dinner, while entertainment was provided by R&B songbird, Bucie.

Winner of the AWIEF Awards Young Entrepreneur Award, Nomso Faith Kana, said Africa was enabling the Fourth Industrial Revolution and with its very young population, this is how the continent would thrive. Her startup, Sun n Shield 84 Technologies is a fibre optic cable manufacturing company.

Jane Maigua, the MD of Exotic EPZ Ltd in Kenya, and the winner of the Agri Entrepreneur Award, said her AWIEF Award was a symbol of “bravery and unity of purpose”, in working in a challenging field. Her agri-processing business is one-year-old and has already created 152 jobs, 90% of whom are young women. It is also a sustainable social enterprise, buying from small holder farmers.

All the winners

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

Winner: Nomso Faith Kana: Sun n Shield 84 Tech, South Africa

Runners-up: Jane Kagiri: CreativeEdge Solutions, Kenya; Juliet Namujju: Kimuli Fashionability, Uganda

TECH ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

Winner: Beth Koigi - Majik Water, Kenya

Runners-up: Juliana Rotich - Brck.Org, Kenya; Benji Coetzee - Empty Trips, South Africa

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

Winner: Lorna Rutto - EcoPost, Kenya

Runners-up: Essma Ben Hamida - Enda Inter-Arabe, Tunisia; Amina Slaoui – Groupe AMH, Morocco

GLOBAL BRAND AWARD

Winner: Bethlehem Tilahun-Alemu – SoleRebels, Ethiopia

Runners-up: Sarah Collins – Wonderbag, South Africa; Rencia Droganis – Africology, South Africa

AGRI ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

Winner: Jane Maigua – Exotic EPZ Ltd, Kenya

Runners-up: Jeanne Groenewald – Elgin Free Range Chickens, South Africa; Elorm Goh – Agrisolve, Ghana

EMPOWERMENT AWARD

Winner: Kate Ekanem – Kate Tales Foundation, Nigeria

Runners-up: Emma Dicks – CodeSpace, South Africa; Chiedza Daneek Nobuhle Kambasha – Hemmingworth Cartwright, Zimbabwe

CREATIVE INDUSTRY AWARD

Winner: Nana Akua Oppong-Birmeh – Archxenus, Ghana

Runners-up: Soraya Piedade – Soraya da Piedade Ltd, Angola; Winnifred Selby – Ghana Bamboo Bikes Initiative, Ghana

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Winner: Wendy Luhabe – Women Private Equity Fund, South Africa

Runners-up: Margaret Hirsch – Hirsch's Homestores, South Africa; Jennifer Riria – Echo Network Africa/Kenya Women Holding, Kenya

AWIEF Awards' sponsors included: The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA); Nedbank; British American Tobacco; and the Embassy of Switzerland in South Africa.

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