

THE GLOBAL WOMEN'S NETWORK FOR THE ENERGY TRANSITION  
PRESENTS

# Energy Transition Role Models



**Inspiring the Next Generation of  
Women Entrepreneurs**



**GWNET**

Global Women's Network  
for the Energy Transition

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### **Our interviewers**

- Alejandra Campos, Coordinator - International Relations, REDMEREEE, Mexico
- Bruna Ventura Hoffmann, Researcher, Lactec, Brazil
- Emily Marsay, PhD student, University of Exeter, UK
- Mirana Njakatiana Andriarisoa, Energy Policy Student, Pan African University for Water and Energy Sciences, Algeria
- Davina Ngei, GWNET Communications Manager
- Irina Gaubinger, GWNET Project Manager

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- Worldwide initiatives, contact points and information
- Regional initiatives, contact points and information
- Country initiatives, contact points and information

### **4) About GWNET**

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GWNET would like to especially thank all interviewees for sharing their experiences and insights for the purpose of providing young women with an encompassing perspective of what it is like to be a women entrepreneur in sustainable energy. GWNET would also like to thank the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) for supporting this initiative.

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This initiative was led by Irina Gaubinger, GWNET Project Manager with inputs from GWNET Executive Director Christine Lins, GWNET Communications Manager Davina Ngei and GWNET Project Assistant Eva Hauser. GWNET would like to specially thank all interviewees and interviewers for their contribution to this initiative.

This brochure is 'work in progress' and will be continuously updated. Should you be aware of any additional information for our resources section, please get in touch at [info@globalwomennet.org](mailto:info@globalwomennet.org).

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# 1. Sustainable Energy Entrepreneurship and the Role of Women

The energy transition and the favourable outlook of the renewable energy sector offer plenty of opportunities in a broad variety of professional occupations in general and, more specifically, for a more balanced representation of women and men. However, women's increased participation in sustainable energy has not yet become a reality. Despite an increased presence of women in the energy sector in the past years - especially in the energy access context [1] - and female founders on the rise, the percentage of women-led enterprises in off- and on-grid sustainable energy solutions that go beyond basic energy access is still lacking behind. This is unsurprising when looking at the percentage of women in STEM studies (35% globally [2]) and the ratio of female-led companies (20% of companies globally [3]).

There are a number of initiatives that try to overcome the underrepresentation of women in STEM studies from teenage age onwards. But then still very few female students and graduates find their way into the sustainable energy field.

The lack of female role models together with unconscious bias about the image of what leadership looks like have been cited as some of the main hindrances to women's engagement in general; and they are especially relevant for male-dominated industries such as energy. [4]



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GWNET in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for the Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) works towards changing this picture and aims to inspire girls and women around the world to overcome these hurdles, to confront the challenges women encounter when setting up or managing a venture in the sustainable energy sphere and to put their business ideas into practice. With women entrepreneurs allegedly being 5% more likely than men to come up with innovation, the energy transition can only benefit from an increasingly equal engagement of women. [1]

With this in mind we are showcasing portraits of remarkable women entrepreneurs in sustainable energy. To balance the picture of the still predominant image of male leadership – and also male entrepreneurship, our portraits show a wide array of what is possible for female entrepreneurs in the sphere of sustainable energy, including – but not limited to – innovative block-chain based solutions, financing and legal services.

The Energy Transition Role Models have lent their stories, image and words for all interested women to move from “You can’t be what you can’t see” [2] to the exact opposite: giving female leadership visibility and thereby inspiring and encouraging others – especially young female students and graduates – to follow suit.

Apart from sharing individual personal experiences and insights into their entrepreneurial journeys, we identified quite a few commonalities among our interviewees, such as

- the desire to have an impact as a driver for founding one’s own business;
- the desire for factual and intellectual independence;
- the ability to flexibly manage one’s time and to use time efficiently;
- the need for a good business partner;
- the eagerness to learn as a prerequisite to continued success;
- the acceptance of mistakes and/or failures and to incorporate the lessons learned; or
- the importance of equitable parental leave, appropriate childcare, and having suitable support systems in place for families.

Throughout the conversations we also observed a high level of awareness of the interviewees about the status of women in the sector and in leadership positions and that many of the Energy Transition Role Models are already actively engaged in supporting women in their field.

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This brochure is intended to provide snapshots about the Energy Transition Role models career pathways, the main characteristic of their ventures, the most memorable quotes from the interviews and a few personal recommendations. We hope that the viewers and readers of the portraits and this brochure will experience the same as we did when creating them: a strong sense of encouragement and inspiration and a feeling of pride on behalf of the women featured by GWNET as Energy Transition Role Models.

[1] see ENERGIA (2019), "Supporting last-mile women energy entrepreneurs: What works and what does not"

[2] UNESCO (2017), "Cracking the code: Girls' and women's education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)" (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000253479>)

[3] <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/how-many-companies-are-run-women-and-why-does-it-matter-0>

[4] See GWNET (2019), "Women for Sustainable Energy – Strategies to Foster Women's Talent for Transformational Change".

[5] According to the "Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2016/2017 Report on Women's Entrepreneurship"

[6] See GWNET (2019), "Women for Sustainable Energy – Strategies to Foster Women's Talent for Transformational Change".



## 2. Energy Transition Role Models:

### Inspiring the Next Generation of Women Entrepreneurs



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# Catherine Adelmann

**CEO AND FOUNDER  
FOSERA  
GERMANY**



## **Offgrid Solar | Manufacturing**

### **Bio**

Catherine founded Fosera in 2011. The company manufactures solar home systems for off-grid electrification. Catherine set the course for her career as an entrepreneur already during her time as a student - without being aware of it. She developed a solar island system and a business plan for a university project and her professor encouraged her to turn it into a business model. Since then the product range of Fosera has expanded quickly following a "modular system design" that allows a tailored approach depending on the energy needs and purchasing power of the customer. Catherine works passionately to pursue her long-term goal: providing solar energy to developing countries to a level that is similar to the one in Germany.

### **Education**

- Master's degree (MSc) in Advanced Management, Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences, Germany
- Bachelor's degree (BEng) in Industrial Engineering, Ulm University of Applied Sciences / Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences, Germany

### **Company Profile**

Fosera is a manufacturer of high-quality Solar-Home-Systems for Off-Grid Electrification, founded in 2011 in Ulm, Germany. To date, Fosera has sold about 300,000 solar systems. The product offering systems starts from entry level lighting systems to larger solar systems for TV or cooling.

Fosera has its factory based in Pathumthani, Bangkok, which is also certified to ISO9001, quality, ISO:14001 (environment) and ISO:45001 (health and safety). Fosera has positioned itself as a pure system manufacturer and works with distribution partners in Africa, Asia and Latin-America.

More information is available at: <http://fosera.com/>



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## Selected Interview Quotes

About career pathways

*"Don't be afraid that you don't have the proper education. Anyway, no university will be able to teach you everything. So just do it...try it out!"*

Message

*"If you have considered becoming an entrepreneur, do it! Don't be afraid of failing. It will be intense, it will be sometimes very difficult, but it will be also extremely rewarding."*

## Catherine's personal recommendations

Entrepreneurship support in Germany

- Funding support in the Baden Wuerttemberg region  
<https://www.startupbw.de/finanzierung-foerderung/finance/pre-seed/>
- Funding support for students: <https://www.exist.de/DE/Programm/Exist-Gruenderstipendium/inhalt.html>

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# Maysoon Al-Khuraissat

**GENERAL MANAGER AND FOUNDER  
ADAA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
CONSULTING  
JORDAN**



## **Energy Efficiency in Buildings**

### **Bio**

Maysoon is the founder of 'adaa Sustainable Development Consultants'. She is an Accredited Professional Architect with a specialty in Sustainability and Green Building Design. She has over 18 years of international experience in sustainability, Green Building, and Architecture. Her work focuses on providing Green Designs and assessments for buildings in the Energy Efficiency, Performance Optimization, and Sustainability areas.

Maysoon is a leader in the Green movement in Jordan and part of a group working hard to create a more sustainable and energy-independent Jordan. She was involved in many international design projects in the US and the Middle East with a focus on energy efficient buildings, environmental design, and construction technology and community advocacy in sustainability issues. As a trained instructor she conducted many Green Building workshops and developed sustainability courses and research in the subject area.

Maysoon is a LEED Professional, USGBC Faculty, EDGE Expert and EDGE Auditor and EDGE Regional Trainer with GBCI. She is also the winner of the "Women Innovators in Charge" Award 2016.

### **Education**

- Bachelor's degree in Architecture, Engineering and Technology, University of Jordan, Jordan
- Master's degree in Architecture, University of Illinois at Chicago, United States

### **Company Profile**

adaa is an independent innovative consultancy that works with architects in Jordan in the area of optimising building design performance. adaa facilitates the sustainable development of buildings across the MENA region, helping architects to design more efficient buildings that use less energy, water, and resources while being comfortable for occupants.

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SBy applying top of the art simulations throughout the design process, and best practice approaches in evaluating the potential performance of the design, adaa guides designers on selecting the best form, layout, massing, material, system and overall best performing building and design.

adaa focuses on Sustainable Environmental Design, linking architectural relations to environmental sciences, building physics and performance simulation. adaa was established in 2017 with a great passion for making sustainable change in the local and the regional built environment.

More information is available at: [www.adaaconsultants.com](http://www.adaaconsultants.com)

### **Selected Interview Quotes**

#### Messages

*"Build experience first, don't rush... but during that start planning for your own (ad)venture."*

*"Don't be afraid to express your ideas, but make sure that your idea is mature."*

*"If you are spreading knowledge you are building demand for what you are doing."*

*"Keep learning, don't waste your time, dream big and work hard for it."*

### **Maysoon's personal recommendations**

- The Islamic Development Bank, for example, supports female empowerment in many aspects, they provide funding, prizes and even partnerships for innovative projects and ideas (not only limited to Energy but to the SDGs). More information is available at: [www.isdb.org/get-involved/female-empowerment](http://www.isdb.org/get-involved/female-empowerment)

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# Damilola Asaleye

**COO AND CO-FOUNDER  
ASHDAM SOLAR LTD  
NIGERIA**

**Offgrid Solar**



## **Bio**

Damilola is the Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder of Ashdam Solar Company Limited. As a young girl, having experienced the loss of a family member due to petrol explosion, Damilola dreamt of eradicating the dependence of Nigeria on fossil fuel and became passionate about alternative energy. Today, Damilola is also the lead instructor of the Ashdam Solar Academy, which to date trained more than 500 practitioners.

She founded the Ashdam Solar Initiative, conveys the Green Tech Girls summer bootcamp and initiated the Solar Queen Technical Scholarship program. Through her initiatives, she has empowered more than 1,500 girls and women in the area of green technologies. Damilola is currently concluding her doctoral research in Energy Engineering with specialty in renewable energy microgrids and demand side management. She is a Robert Bosch Alumni, an Ashoka Change Maker Xchange fellow, and was recognized as one of the foremost women in Renewable Energy Nigeria by the Environment Magazine in the year 2017. She was awarded the Energy Professional of the year 2018 by the Nigeria Energy Awards.

## **Education**

- BSc in Physics and Solar Energy, Bowen University Iwo, Nigeria
- MSc in Physics, Atmospheric Physics and Meteorology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

## **Company Profile**

Ashdam Solar Co. Ltd is a renewable energy company in Nigeria, providing clean, affordable and uninterrupted smart energy solutions. Ashdam Solar got incorporated in 2007 and over the years, has built its reputation by providing quality alternative energy solutions to the Nigerian community. Ashdam Solar is dedicated to analysing clients' energy requirements and coming up with appropriate customized energy solutions.

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Ashdam Solar's training arm, the Ashdam Solar Academy is raising an army of skilled entrepreneurs that will expand the market for solar energy and make uninterrupted power possible across Africa and beyond with an element of gender inclusion in the renewable energy industry.

More information is available at: <https://ashdamsolar.com/>

### **Selected Interview Quotes**

#### Messages

*"When you start (an enterprise) you cannot have all the skills at once... build your capacity... you have to continue learning."*

*"Don't start a day without a good plan."*

*"Don't limit yourself! Don't let the society determine what you want to be. You can be whatever you want to be!"*

### **Damilola's personal recommendations**

#### Programmes and opportunities

- ChangemakerXchange platform by Ashoka and the Robert Bosch Stiftung: <https://changemakerxchange.com/>
- Open Africa Power by Enel Foundation <https://www.enelfoundation.org/news/a/2019/10/open-africa-power-2020--call-for-applications>
- Nigeria Off-Grid Energy Challenge by USADF and All On: <https://www.all-on.com/the-all-on-hub/usadf-all-on-nigeria-off-grid-energy-challenge.html>

#### Books

- "Becoming" by Michelle Obama
- "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen R. Covey



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# Dr Linda Davis

**CEO AND FOUNDER  
GIRAFFE BIOENERGY LTD  
KENYA**



## **Bioenergy | Ethanol**

### **Bio**

Dr Linda Davis is Founder and CEO of Giraffe Bioenergy, a developer of large-scale cassava bioeconomies in Kenya producing both food and fuel to secure livelihoods. Linda has over 15 years' experience in senior-level positions within the renewable energy sector, including conventional and cellulosic ethanol technologies and algae-based biofuels.

### **Education**

- BSc in Food Science and Technology, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya
- MSc and PhD in Microbiology and Biotechnology, University of Western Sydney, Australia
- Certificates in Petroleum Refining, Project Management, Finance and Accounting, Stanford University, United States

### **Company Profile**

Giraffe Bioenergy is a developer of large-scale fuel ethanol biorefineries in Kenya. Its cassava-to-fuel ethanol systems reduce the reliance on charcoal and firewood for cooking while improving health, reducing deforestation, improving livelihoods and addressing climate change. Giraffe Bioenergy's aim is to establish local production of ethanol to foster rural development, economic opportunities for small-scale farmers and create a steady market for their crops; specifically the cassava plant.

More information is available at: <https://giraffebioenergy.com/>

### **Selected Interview Quotes**

Message

*"Start where you are. If you have got a passion there is a problem that you want to solve, just start. Take it one day at a time, on step at a time. Just definitely start. We need a lot more entrepreneurs in this area. Let more women look at this as a career that they can pursue and let us create a critical mass."*

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# Audrey Desiderato

**CCO AND CO-FOUNDER  
SUNFUNDER  
KENYA**



**Debt-financing | Solar**

## **Bio**

Audrey is Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer for SunFunder. She has been working in East Africa since launching the company in 2013 and is currently based in Nairobi, where she is responsible for the company's commercial strategy and team growth. Today, SunFunder has unlocked \$135 million in debt financing for solar in emerging markets, financed 46 solar companies and impacted more than 7 million people with improved access to clean energy. Prior to SunFunder, Audrey worked in the U.S. energy efficiency space and for energy access impact investor E+Co. She was also a founding member of GOOD magazine.

## **Education**

- Bachelor's degrees in Economics and Political Sciences, UCLA
- Master's degree in International Energy Management & Policy, Columbia University's School of International Affairs
- Master's degree in Environment and Sustainable Development, Sciences Po Paris

## **Company Profile**

SunFunder provides innovative debt financing for solar enterprises working in emerging and frontier markets. SunFunder collaborates with major debt fund investors around the world to unlock capital for solar energy projects. Scaling up solar in the places that need it the most requires debt financing led by a deep understanding of the market. SunFunder provides that capital and expertise, acting as a financing bridge between those who want to invest in this rapidly emerging sector, and those who need funding to scale solar and storage solutions.

In a sector that still faces a lack of commercially-oriented financing, SunFunder has developed a successful model for unlocking investor capital and providing the financing required to power lasting change.

More information is available at: <https://www.sunfunder.com/>

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## Selected Interview Quotes

### Do's and Don'ts

*"Do find the right partner, build the right team. Set the right goals, track them and constantly learn from them. Do take care of yourself. Do learn by doing...small mistakes are important."*

*"Don't work with ass\*\*\*\*. Don't ignore your intuition when making decisions."*

### Message

*"Do not be afraid to fail. Failures are an inevitable part of success. We should not let failures affect our confidence. They are necessary risks in our learning journey and they will make us better for next time."*

## Audrey's personal recommendations

- African Management Initiative (AMI): <https://www.africanmanagers.org/>
- Harvard Business Review: <https://hbr.org/>

### Books

- "Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't" by Jim Collins
- "Measure What Matters: OKRs: The Simple Idea that Drives 10x Growth" by John Doerr

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# Dr Jemma Green

**EXECUTIVE CHAIRWOMAN AND CO-FOUNDER  
POWER LEDGER  
AUSTRALIA**



## **Blockchain | Energy Trading**

### **Bio**

Dr Jemma Green is Co-Founder and Executive Chairman of Power Ledger, a technology company that uses the blockchain to facilitate energy trading, energy asset financing and carbon markets. Setting her career trajectory early on, Dr Green became the voice of sustainability and corporate social responsibility in the business of big money lending while at J.P. Morgan in London.

She then went on to become a research fellow at Curtin University, was Deputy Lord Mayor of Perth, set up the first fossil fuel free pension fund and has sat on numerous boards championing sustainable business such as Carbon Tracker and Climate-KIC Australia. In 2016 Jemma cofounded Power Ledger and in 2018 Jemma was named EY Australian Fintech Entrepreneur of the Year.

### **Education**

- Bachelor of Commerce, Murdoch University, Australia
- MSt in Sustainability Leadership, University of Cambridge, UK
- PhD, Sustainability Policy Institute, Curtin University, Australia

### **Company Profile**

Power Ledger is an Australian technology company that has developed a blockchain-enabled renewable energy trading platform. In 2018, Power Ledger's technology won Sir Richard Branson's global Extreme Tech Challenge award. The company has built a series of products to enable energy trading, renewable asset financing and renewable energy credit markets. Power Ledger has active projects across Australia, Asia, Europe and the United States.

More information is available at: <https://www.powerledger.io/>

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## Selected Interview Quotes

### Do's and Don'ts

*"Do allow yourself to fail. Give yourself permission to make mistakes. Be generous with yourself, like to set big goals. Stretch and extend yourself, so that you can actually see what's possible."*

*"Don't neglect your health and well-being. Don't neglect the other areas of life that are important to you, your friends and your family."*

### Message

*"If you are not making any mistakes, the game you are playing is too small."*

*"Your playing small does not serve anyone. You are powerful beyond measure, you just need to give it a go and find a thing that really aligns with what you want to do. Invest the time to develop mastery around it."*

## Jemma's personal recommendations

- <https://mastersofscale.com/>
- <https://grangernetwork.com/resources/podcast/>



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# Margaret M. Groff

**FORMER CFO  
ITAIPU BINACIONAL  
BRAZIL**



## **Hydropower**

### **Bio**

Since 1987, Margaret has been a Senior Executive of Itaipu Binacional; she retired in 2017. Margaret has held various management positions in the company. She was the first employee to obtain a position in the executive board of the entity. As CFO, Margaret was responsible for the management of finance, procurement, logistics, budgeting and accounting. She coordinated the Itaipu / Border Health Group, which seeks to align public health policies in the tri-border area (Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina), the Electric Vehicle Program and other Itaipu social projects.

Margaret is on the Boards of Directors of several businesses and social entities in Brazil. She is Founder and Advisor of the “Espaço das Mulheres Executivas do Paraná” and leader of the Women of Brazil Group, in Parana. Since 2011 Margaret has participated in the Women’s Empowerment Principles Leadership Group (WEPs LG) of UN Women and the UN Global Compact. She has lectured at national and international conferences on energy, finance, sustainability and gender equity and contributed her experience in editing the book “Women, They Do History” published in March 2012, which reflects on women's leadership in the corporate world.

Margaret gained recognition as one of Brazil's most influential women in the category of ‘Economy and Finance’, receive the award of the newspaper Gazeta Mercantil in 2007, and was awarded the Oslo Business for Peace Award in 2013. Margaret implements and coordinates the WEP Brazil - Empowering Women Award, with the aim of disseminating the culture of gender equity in Brazilian companies.

### **Education**

- Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Brazil
- Graduate and MBA in Finance from UNIFAE, IBMEC Brasil and ESADE Barcelona

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## Company Profile

Located at the border between Brazil and Paraguay, Itaipu is the world's largest plant in power generation, with more than 2.6 billion MWh produced since 1984. With 14,000 megawatts of installed capacity, the plant holds the world record of annual energy production: 103.1 million MWh in 2016. It is responsible for 15% of the Brazilian market and 90% of the Paraguayan. In both countries, Itaipu acts on several initiatives on environmental conservation and sustainable development.

More information is available at: <https://www.itaipu.gov.br/en>

## Selected Interview Quotes

### Messages

*"...the good scenario is 50/50, all of us working together, women and men, for a better world, for more justice and for more sustainability on the planet."*

*"Having the technical knowledge is very important, being well informed, studying and all that is very important! But most important, besides that, is determination and being ahead of the opportunities."*

*"There is always a challenge. Search for what you want to do, plan and pursue your dreams. But if you find an obstacle, don't give up on your dream! Look for a new way... As water seeks its ways in the river, you may also seek a new path. Never give up on your dream, go ahead!"*

## Margaret's personal recommendations

Initiatives focused on women in the technological area

- Women's Empowerment Principles - <https://www.weps.org/>
- He For She, GLOBAL MOVEMENT- <https://www.heforshe.org/>
- Unstereotype Alliance - <https://www.unstereotypealliance.org/en>
- Leadership Network of Brazilian Women in Sustainability

### Women's Groups

- Brazilian Women Group - <http://www.grupomulheresdobrasil.org.br/>
- Mex Brasil - Business Women - <https://www.espacomulheresexecutivas.com/>
- International Federation of Business and Professional Women - <https://www.bpw-international.org/>
- Women Forum - <http://www.womens-forum.com/>

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## Books

- Business As Unusual / "Meu jeito de Fazer Negócios" by Anita Roddick
- Living, Loving and Learning / "Vivendo, Amando e Aprendendo" by Leo Buscaglia
- The Little Prince / "O pequeno Príncipe" by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
- Becoming / "Minha Historia" by Michelle Obama
- Mulheres, Elas Fazem Historia / "Women, they make history" by Mayla Di Martino
- The Sexual Paradox / "Paradoxo Sexual" by Susan Pinker
- Principio da Igualdade - Investigação na Perspectiva de Gênero / "The Principle of Equality - A Gender Perspective Investigation" by Leda de Oliveira Pinho
- Lições de Liderança de CEO Portuguesas / "Leadership Lessons from Portuguese CEO " by Isabel Canha e Maria Serina
- Hidden Figures / "Estrelas Além do Tempo" by Margot Lee Shetterly

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# Yisha He

**CHAIRWOMAN OF THE BOARD AND  
CO-FOUNDER  
UNISUN, UPER AND OPTIM ENERGY  
CHINA**



**Distributed Solar PV Investor | Renewable  
Asset Management | Energy Storage**

## **Bio**

Yisha He currently serves as Chairwoman of the Board of Unisun Energy Group (UNISUN), Uper Energy (UPER), as well as Optim Energy (OPTIM). UNISUN is one of China's largest investors in distributed solar PV projects; UPER is a renewable asset management leader in China, while OPTIM is a global provider of energy storage products and solutions.

In 2018, Ms. He co-founded Women in Renewables Asia (WiRA, <https://www.womeninrenewables.org/>), the first NGO empowering women in the renewable energy sector in Asia, and was elected as Chairwoman of the Board. Ms. He has participated in many corporate social responsibility events to encourage more women to enter the sector and raise public awareness of the importance of clean energy.

In recognition of her contributions to the development of renewable energy and her charity work, Ms. He received the Social Eco Game Changer Award at the Global Green Economic Forum, the Women in Renewables of the Year Award at the Global Solar + Energy Storage Congress & Expo 2018, the Woman of the Year Award at the Clean Energy Expo China 2019, and the Woman of the Year Award at China Charity Festival 2019.

## **Education**

- BSc in Mathematics, University of Oxford, UK
- Master's degree in Finance, Cass Business School, UK

## **Company Profile**

About Unisun Energy Group

Unisun Energy Group (UNISUN) is a global clean energy solutions provider offering solutions and investment for solar and wind power plants, energy storage products, as well as micro-grid systems.

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Headquartered in Shanghai, China, UNISUN has offices in many countries, including Hungary, India, Japan, the Netherlands, South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines. UNISUN has branches in 28 provinces and municipalities across China, with projects in more than 100 cities nationwide. UNISUN is now one of China's largest investors in distributed solar PV projects. So far, UNISUN has more than 1.4 GW installed capacity of power projects worldwide.

More information is available at: <http://www.unisun-energy.com/> (Chinese),  
<https://www.unisun-energy.nl/> (Dutch/English)

#### About Uper Energy

Uper Energy (UPER) is one of China's largest renewable asset managers providing operations and maintenance (O&M) support for solar power plants, wind farms and energy storage systems. Operating in more than 200 cities worldwide, UPER manages power plants with more than 3 GW of installed capacity.

More information is available at: <http://uper-energy.com/en/>

#### **Selected Interview Quotes**

##### Required skills

*"Leadership. Leadership is about confidence, encouragement, and strategic vision."*

##### Do's and Don'ts

*"Stay focused and don't give up!"*

##### Messages

*"Renewable energy needs more women to join. Sustainability needs more women to fight together. That's why I established WiRA...to encourage more women to enter this industry, to make this industry more balanced."*

*"Let's work together to bring renewable energy to this world to make a better environment for our living planet. Being an entrepreneur in China is just the best experience in my life. There will always be hard days, but the times that we hold up, the times that we face them bravely, those will finally shape you and determine who you are."*

#### **Yisha's personal recommendation**

##### Book

- "The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin" by Benjamin Franklin



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# Tania Laden

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CO-  
FOUNDER  
LIVELYHOODS  
KENYA**



**Social Enterprise | Offgrid Solar and  
Clean Cooking**

## **Bio**

Tania Laden is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of LivelyHoods, a not-for-profit social enterprise that distributes life-changing products in Kenyan slums through a nationwide sales network of unemployed youth and women. Under Laden's leadership, LivelyHoods has distributed over 50,000 clean energy products, such as clean cookstoves and solar lamps, while also training more than 4,500 clean energy entrepreneurs. These products have saved slum households an estimated \$22.7 million in reduced fuel costs and saved three quarters of a million trees from being used for fuel.

Tania helped found LivelyHoods at the end of 2010, bringing her global business acumen and experience to the organization. Prior to her current position, she worked as a financial advisor with Morgan Stanley and as a business and technology analyst at EZLearn, an educational technology startup in Brazil. After serving as an adviser and volunteer for two years with KITO International, a Nairobi-based youth employment non-profit, she moved to Kenya to build and manage the first sales agent network created by LivelyHoods.

Tania is recognized as a 2011 Mara Foundation Entrepreneur Fellow, one of PBS Newshour's Agents of Change, a Global Social Benefit Fellowship Fellow, and a Women in Energy and C3E award winner in 2018.

## **Education**

- BS in Science, Technology and Society, Stanford University, United States

## **Company Profile**

LivelyHoods is a registered 501c3 non-profit whose mission is to create livelihoods for youth in urban slums. We train unemployed youth and women to sell life-changing products, like solar lamps and clean burning cookstoves, in slum communities so they can earn an honest living.

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Not only do they earn a living, but they also gain valuable skills, such as professionalism, team work, sales, and customer service, for a lifetime of employment. Through a daily consignment model, we provide a risk-free opportunity to gain professional skills and work experience.

More information is available at: <https://www.livelyhoods.org/>

### **Selected Interview Quotes**

#### **Do's and Don'ts**

*"Do have mentors and have someone to hold you accountable at least on a weekly basis. Take time away from your business. It gives your team time to step up in different ways and it gives yourself perspective. Be honest with yourself. If you are not happy with something, if you are feeling overwhelmed or if are having a hard time with something you have to tell (selected) people. You can't have it all on your shoulders. You can't do everything."*

*"Do not panic (if things do not go well). All lot of things that seem like the end of the world – and they definitely could be the end of the world for your organisation – often represent big opportunities or underlying issues that you have just not been addressing. So you have an opportunity to finally address them. Be OK with failure. Say I'll figure it out; we'll get through it."*

#### **Message**

*"Don't wait for the perfect time. Don't wait for the perfect opportunity. Don't wait until you have all of the funding (might not be great advice ;-)). Start with what you can. Start with supporting other people's businesses. Start with learning from other people. That may not look like you are starting a business, but that's the foundation of it. Don't feel like... oh, I don't have the money raised and I'm not running a team in an office... that's not what starting a business looks like. So, start somewhere and don't wait until you feel like everything is in place."*

### **Tania's personal recommendation**

The Coaching Fellowship- <https://www.tcfs.org/>

#### **Podcasts**

- How I Built This by Guy Raz
- How's Work by Esther Perel

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# Katherine Lucey

**CEO AND FOUNDER  
SOLAR SISTER  
NIGERIA, TANZANIA, UGANDA**



**Social Enterprise | Offgrid Solar**

## **Bio**

Katherine Lucey is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Solar Sister. Katherine is a Schwab Foundation Entrepreneur of the Year, an Ashoka Fellow, and a Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation Entrepreneur. She has received recognition and awards for her work with Solar Sister including Clinton Global Initiative, Social Venture Network, C3E, and International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) Champion of Change Award. Prior to becoming a social entrepreneur, Katherine spent over 20 years as an investment banker on Wall Street providing structured finance solutions to the energy sector.

## **Education**

- Bachelor's degree in Journalism, University of Georgia, United States
- MBA in Finance, Georgia State University, United States

## **Company Profile**

Solar Sister envisions a brighter world powered by women entrepreneurs. Solar Sister trains and supports women to deliver clean energy directly to homes in rural African communities. Solar Sister provides essential services and training that enable women entrepreneurs to build sustainable businesses in their own communities. Solar Sister believes women are a key part of the solution to the clean energy challenge. This is why Solar Sister invests in women's enterprise in off-grid communities.

Solar Sister see the opportunity to empower women and to reach those who aren't reached by business-as-usual energy models. Centering local women in a rapidly growing clean energy sector is essential to eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable solutions to climate change and a host of development issues.

More information is available at: <https://solarsister.org/>

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## Selected Interview Quotes

### Messages

*Stay curious and committed and persistent."*

*"Better every day. There is always more to learn. We can always be better today than we were yesterday. Having the humility to know that we are not perfect, we are not going to be perfect, but we can be better. This self-forgiveness sometimes is important to keep things moving forward."*

*"Trust in yourself. The voice that you have inside of you is the most important one. Learn how to listen to it...and learn how to nurture that voice, because it is quiet."*

*"You already have everything that you need to be a success, because what you have inside of you is what it takes. All the rest of it is just part of your journey, of learning how to be better and learning how to grow. But you have already got what it takes."*

## Katherine's personal recommendation

### Book

- "Reboot: Leadership and the Art of Growing Up" by Jerry Colonna

### Podcast

- <https://www.reboot.io/podcast/>

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# Majd Mashharawi

**CEO AND FOUNDER  
SUNBOX  
GAZA/PALESTINE**



**Social Enterprise | Offgrid Solar**

## **Bio**

Majd is a social entrepreneur, who has used her engineering background to create innovative solutions for modern-day problems. She is the Founder and CEO of two social enterprises, one of which is SunBox. SunBox provides solar systems and solutions to families suffering from the electricity crisis in Gaza where access to electricity has been severely restricted, sometimes to less than three hours a day.

With SunBox, she has so far provided clean and affordable electricity and clean water powered by solar to more than 5,000 people. In 2018, Majd was selected as one of the most creative people in business by Fast Company and SunBox won the MIT Pan Arab competition, competing against 6,000 entries. In September 2019, Majd and SunBox have been awarded the Muhammed Ali Humanitarian Award in Louisville Kentucky by the Muhammad Ali Center.

## **Education**

- BSc in Civil Engineering, Islamic University of Gaza, Palestine

## **Company Profile**

SunBox customizes and imports solar systems according to people's electricity needs and their financial limitations. SunBox uses local vendors and technicians to sell, install and provide customer service for the solar system, offering greater value for the customer and strengthening the local economy.

More information is available at: <https://sunbox.ps/english>

## **Selected Interview Quotes**

Messages

*"It is about us, it is time for us to stand up and say "hey, we can do something!". It is not only you who can do it. We are capable of doing it. I trust ourselves so much. I trust we can go farther steps, if we stand together and support each other. And that is part of our mission. It is not only installing solar systems, but also empowering more women to go into this field."*

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*"I believe women can be successful if they believe in themselves and if men stand by their side."*

*"The sky is not the limit. We should keep our eyes on the stars not on the ground. So we can grow up and go anyplace we want to if we believe in the things we are doing."*

### **Majd's personal recommendation**

*"My first piece of advice for entrepreneurs is to read about their ideas enough so they won't repeat what others already did. My second piece of advice is to watch TED talks. I used to watch 2 TED talks a day and it was my source of inspiration. For the books, I love to read Biography of the world leaders."*

#### **Books**

- The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley by Malcolm X, Alex Haley and Attallah Shabazz
- Yasir Arafat: A Political Biography by Barry M. Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin
- The Soul of a Butterfly: Reflections on Life & Journey by Muhammad Ali and Hana Yasmeen Ali

*"For opportunities, there are many great programs/fellowships/trainings/competitions and courses that they can join to learn from and also create a great network (Which is actually my asset). I recommend the following:"*

- <https://www.oneyoungworld.com/>
- <https://www.symposium.org>
- <http://emiratesenergyaward.com>
- <https://www.mitarabcompetition.com/>
- <https://si.se/en/apply/leadership-programmes/she-entrepreneurs/>
- <https://www.weforum.org/>
- <https://www.globalshapers.org/>

*"I also recommend to take courses related to the business online. There are many great platforms that teach you for free like EDX and Coursera."*

*"Very important advice is to learn how to tell a story. The good CEO is not only the one who knows how to run the company but also how to deliver the message of the company. Watching videos in this regard is also important."*

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# Dr Margarete von Oppen

**PARTNER**  
**ARNECKE SIBETH DABELSTEIN**  
**GERMANY**



## **Renewable Energy Law**

### **Bio**

Margarete von Oppen is specialized in energy law, especially in the law of renewable energy (EEG, EEWärmeG), as well as in public planning law including European and constitutional law issues. Within this legal context she is focused on legal advice and contract design concerning all stages of project development and transactions. She advises project developers, investors, energy-intensive companies, financial institutions and sometimes the government on questions concerning the development of renewable energy installations, sustainable real estate projects and energy trading.

For many years Margarete von Oppen was a lecturer in energy law for engineering students as well as a lecturer of public planning law for students of real estate management. She is a popular speaker, co-author of diverse commentaries on the renewable energy act and publishes regularly in specialized journals.

Before she joined Arnecke Sibeth Dabelstein as a partner in 2016, Margarete von Oppen ran her own law firm specialized in renewable energy-law and public planning law for 16 years. Before that she was an in-house counsel of a real estate developer and worked as an associate lawyer for a mid-size law firm in the field of real estate development and the development of infrastructure like railways and road systems.

### **Education**

- Law faculty of Würzburg, Germany
- Law faculty of Heidelberg, Germany: Research associate at the Institute of German and European Public Law
- Law faculty of Strasbourg, France: Post graduate studies of European law, especially European constitutional and antitrust law



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## Company Profile

Arnecke Sibeth Dabelstein is a law firm with 150 Lawyers, branch offices in Munich, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Berlin, Dresden, Leer, focused in 12 areas of competences amongst others in the energy sector.

More information is available at: <https://asd-law.com/>

## Selected Interview Quotes

### Messages

*"Learn to run a business (i.e. managerial skills)."*

*"Don't wait for other people to fulfill your wishes. Do it yourself and by the help of a very good network of service providers."*

*"Trust yourself."*

## Margarete's personal recommendation

### Book

- "The Element" by Ken Robinson

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# Amira Rachid

**CEO AND FOUNDER  
ARSOLAIRE INGÉNIERIE  
TUNISIA**



**Solar**

## **Bio**

Amira Rachid was born in Tunis where she did her primary and secondary education. Then, she moved to Strasbourg for her Master's degree in Commercial Law at the University of Law and European Studies. Amira was actively engaged in various associations, e.g. as General Secretary of T.VERT at the origin of the agreement between the Universities of Manar and Strasbourg.

After receiving her degree, she worked as a consultant with Ernst & Young. In 2010, she came back to Tunis where she held the position of Commercial manager for various renewable energy companies such as Team Loukile, also as a General Manager for Hélios. She also has worked with SOTECA Electric.

In 2014, Amira created her own photovoltaic company, the ArSolaire Ingénierie, which in 2015 entered into a partnership with the Italian company SERI Engineering to open the subsidiary SERI MAG in Casablanca, Morocco. In 2019, ArSolaire concluded a partnership with the German company SOLEA, to establish ArSolaire Ingénierie World Wide.

## **Education**

- Master's degree in Law, University of Strasbourg, France

## **Company Profile**

ArSolaire is a Tunisian-Italian Company founded in Palme, Italy, specializing in the study and installation of photo-voltaic (PV) systems. It covers the entire Tunisian territory.

More information is available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/arsolaire/>

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## Selected Interview Quotes

### Messages

*"I always surround myself by better people than me and I am happy when I find them."*

*"I do not play too much with the fact of being a lady. At work I am in a black blazer and black trousers, I present myself first as a competence, I try to forget my woman status.... A woman can be everywhere. When I started my experience with my enterprise, I did absolutely everything including being on field, with the heat, the burning sun, that was my first years and I am really proud of them because it taught me many things."*

### Amira's personal recommendation

- Any books by the businessman, investor, and philanthropist, Warren Buffet

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# Morwesi Ramonyai

**MANAGING DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER  
BORENA ENERGY  
SOUTH AFRICA**



**Renewable Energy | PV Solar Project  
Developer**

## **Bio**

Morwesi Ramonyai is an impact entrepreneur with a passion for advancing access-to-energy as a solution to the energy poverty problem. She is Founder and Managing Director of Borena Energy, a company that develops Solar PV projects and solutions on a turnkey basis. Borena Energy operates in the Commercial & Industrial sector as well as rural, remote and off-grid communities.

The business operates in South Africa and Zimbabwe. Morwesi was founding team member and Chief Commercial Officer of The Sun Exchange, an award winning Blockchain-based alternative funding company that finances Solar Energy Projects in Sub Saharan Africa.

Through her social impact project called Watt-A-Woman, she aspires to realise the inclusion of women in the solar eco-system. The project offers energy services while generating an income for rural women.

Morwesi was competitively selected as a 2016 Mandela Washington Fellow of the U.S. Government's Young African Leaders Initiative, and a YALI grant winner, part of the U.S. African Development Foundation's off-grid energy portfolio. She was also awarded a research grant by the UK's Royal Academy of Engineering and through this in partnership with the University of Exeter she co-developed a unique Socio-Technical Assessment of Risk tool for application in rural based renewable energy projects, aptly named STAR.

## **Education**

- Executive MBA, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Higher Diploma in Computer Auditing, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
- Bachelor of Commerce in Information Systems, Rhodes University, South Africa

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## Company Profile

Borena Energy Solutions is a 100% Woman Owned Renewable Energy Solutions Company that develops renewable energy projects using Solar Photovoltaic (PV) technology.

Borena was established in 2007 and develops Solar based grid-tied, off-grid and hybrid solar PV projects in the C&I as well as the off-grid residential market. We have also implemented access to energy projects such as solar street lighting and innovative portable lighting solutions for disconnected communities.

Borena's vision is to be acknowledged as a leading Renewable Energy Provider in Africa and its mission is to provide locally relevant and technologically advanced renewable energy solutions that are reliable, efficient and cost effective. Borena is based in Johannesburg, Gauteng Province and operates throughout South Africa and Zimbabwe.

More information is available at: <http://www.borena.co.za/>

## Selected Interview Quotes

Do's and Don'ts

*"Do look for a fair deal for yourself (when partnering up with someone for a business). Work at your profile, build your network, keep up-to-date with trends, with information, with organisations in the field. Stay on top of information around opportunities. Put your hand up for opportunities to speak, to write, to attend events or conferences. That's where the network grows. You meet like-minded people and like-minded people are the ones that are going to be your scaffold when you need it most."*

*"Don't be quick to partner."*

## Message

*"We all have to put our hands on deck and make sure that we can solve the access to energy problem, because when we do that, we solve so many other problems and the world will be a better place for all."*

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### **Morwesi's personal recommendation**

There is significant and targeted support and scope for women-led and women-operated projects globally. I would recommend that women invest in a good network and database of funding opportunities. Subscribe to local and international directories, join professional women energy groups on LinkedIn etc., and be involved in your country's professional energy associations.

There is so much movement in the sector, keeping abreast of news and developments through social media, conferences and organisations. Follow foundations and organisations that support, promote & fund renewable energy.

Some examples:

- <https://www.irena.org>.
- <https://www.africanpowerplatform.org/financing/grants.html>
- <https://eepafrica.org>.
- <https://www.usaid.gov>
- <https://www.giz.de>

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# Dr Ana Trbovich

**COO AND CO-FOUNDER  
GRID SINGULARITY  
GERMANY**



**Blockchain | Energy Trading**

## **Bio**

Dr. Ana Trbovich is Co-Founder and COO of Grid Singularity, an energy blockchain innovator pronounced World Economic Forum Tech Pioneer. Ana serves as Vice-Chair of the Energy Web Foundation and is Managing Board Member of the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT).

Ana teaches Entrepreneurship at FEFA, a leading business school in Belgrade, Serbia, and has consulted on competitiveness and innovation policy for international organizations, including the EU and the World Bank.

Ana has been actively engaged in Serbia's economic reforms and the EU accession process both as a political, high government official and senior advisor. Ana speaks several languages and is currently based in Berlin.

## **Education**

- PhD and Master of Art in Law and Diplomacy, Fletcher School, United States
- Master in Public Administration, Harvard Kennedy School of Government, United States

## **Company Profile**

Grid Singularity is a green technology company, placing the individual and the environment at the center of the energy market by building the global energy blockchain platform (Energy Web Foundation - EWF), and developing the D3A - open source software enabling local energy marketplaces, interconnected to form a smart, transactive grid of the future.

More information is available at:

- <https://gridsingularity.com/>
- <https://www.energyweb.org/>
- <https://www.d3a.io/>



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## Selected Interview Quotes

### Messages

*"It is no longer enough today to have just one single study background."*

*"STEM today is so closely linked to innovation that, if you want to make a difference... you need to have those skills."*

*"Get the skills that you don't have."*

*"It is important to have men promote gender equality and [equal] gender participation."*

*"It is OK to fail, because you learn from failing. The most successful entrepreneurs are those who did not succeed the first time around. It is OK to make mistakes, if you learn from them and then get up and try again."*

*"Persistence is important...and it's also important to accept that your lifestyle will not be so comfortable at the beginning in terms of the time that you spend at work, if you are an entrepreneur. This is why you have to be really passionate about your goal."*

## Ana's personal recommendation

### Articles

- Forbes (2017), [5 Ways 'Humility' Is Keeping Women Stuck And Afraid](#)
- Harvard Business Review (2010): [Why Men Still Get More Promotions Than Women](#)

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# Katarina Uherova Hasbani

**FOUNDER  
ENRUPT  
SINGAPORE, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**



Network for energy start-up innovation

## **Bio**

Katarina Uherova Hasbani is Founder of EnRupt, a network for energy innovation with the vision to build energy companies of the future based on clean, decentralised and digital solutions. Katarina works today on transformations shaping the energy systems of tomorrow. The future of energy will be closer to the customer, using cleaner, renewable sources and leveraging digital technologies. Katarina is supporting this transformation by building partnerships between young, innovative start-ups and corporations.

Katarina has 17 years of professional experience in energy from government & consulting in Europe, Middle East & South-East Asia. She is on the Board and Vice President of the Alliance for Rural Electrification.

## **Education**

- Global Executive MBA, INSEAD Visiting scholar, Stanford University, United States in 2011
- Master's degree in Political Science and Government, Institute of Political Studies in Paris (Sciences Po), France
- Master's degree in International Relations and Diplomacy, Matej Bel University, Slovakia

## **Company Profile**

EnRupt is a network for energy innovation with the vision to build energy companies of the future based on clean, decentralised and digital solutions. EnRupt is on the mission to create partnerships between start-ups and corporations where new ideas thrive and get executed. EnRupt has rapidly become a dynamic builder of energy-focused start up innovation from Singapore and expanded to Dubai in late 2018. Enrupt features start-ups innovating for energy transition and inspiring women in energy.

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More information is available at:

- <https://www.wedisruptenergy.com/>
- <https://www.wedisruptenergy.com/women-in-energy>

## **Selected Interview Quotes**

### Messages

*"Get yourself a proper communication training as soon as possible."*

*"It is always good to know the business/financial side of things."*

*"Have a presence in meetings and in everything that you do. Have an opinion and share it."*

*"Don't waste time. Don't give up on opportunities."*

*"Being in touch with younger women that enter the industry and try to find their way is important for me to support and make sure there are more of us. I am tired of going to meetings where I am the only woman."*

*"Have no doubt, everything is possible. Go for it!"*

## **Katarina's personal recommendations**

### Books

- All the Brains in the Business. The Engendered Brain in the 21st Century Organisation" by Kate Lanz and Dr Paul Brown
- "We Should All Be Feminists" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- "Act Like a Leader, Think Like a Leader" by Herminia Ibarra
- "The Hard Thing About Hard Things: Building a Business When There Are No Easy Answers" by Ben Horowitz

Katarina's go to blog

- <https://www.reboot.io/category/blog/>

And when in doubt, trust your gut instinct.

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# Itzel Martínez Velasco

**CO-FOUNDER  
ENERGETEC  
MEXICO**



## **Solar**

### **Bio**

Itzel is co-founder of Energetec a company dedicated to the design, sale, installation, and commissioning of solar energy projects in Oaxaca, Mexico. Through her professional career she has been promote renewable energy within her state, designing environmental education programs and opening spaces for young women in energy, being an active member of networks such as REDMEREE,

DAMARH and the Rotary Club. Proudly oaxaqueña, her leadership and activism led her to be awarded with the Youth State Prize of 2019.

### **Education**

- Bachelor in Renewable Energy Engineering, Universidad de los Valles Centrales de Oaxaca, Mexico

### **Company Profile**

Energetec is a Mexican company, specialised in photovoltaic and solarthermal projects with the mission of improving lives through intelligent energy strategies and solutions. Innovation, quality and excellence have been its key assets to generate energy savings and to reduce negative environmental effects. Energetec has become a leader company, in only two years of operation in Oaxaca, Mexico.

More information is available at: <https://www.energetec.com.mx/>

### **Itzel's personal recommendation**

#### Books

- Feminism for beginners by Nuria Varela
- Inclusive prosperity: women talent as a business strategy by Karla Cuilty Esquivel

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## Podcast

- Se regalan dudas [doubts for free] by Ashley Frangie y Lety Sahágún

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# Laurie Wiegand-Jackson

**PRESIDENT, CEO AND FOUNDER  
UTILITY ADVANTAGE  
UNITED STATES**



## **Energy Services Consulting**

### **Bio**

Laurie Wiegand-Jackson is a successful entrepreneur with over thirty years of experience in the energy industry. She is the President and founder of Utility Advantage, an energy services consulting firm focused on effectively improving energy efficiency and reducing GHG emissions to promote a more sustainable world with clean, affordable and reliable energy. She brings a broad range of energy industry experience including wholesale and retail energy markets, demand response, utility rates and regulation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy and storage project development.

Laurie regularly speaks at industry and public sector events on the importance of sound energy policy, energy management strategies and the benefits of energy programs. She has been recognized for her contributions to the energy industry, where she served as the President of the International Association of Energy Engineers (AEE) in 2007. Laurie received the Distinguished Service Award from AEE and she was also honored in 2008 by the Executive Women of New Jersey as a leading Policy Maker.

Laurie was inducted into the AEE Energy Manager Hall of Fame in 2016. Laurie is very active in promoting the professional advancement of women in the energy industry. She is the founder and chair of the Board of the Council for Women in Energy and Environmental Leadership ([www.CWEEL.org](http://www.CWEEL.org)). She also serves as chair of the energy focus group of SMART, a US Congressional Initiative.

### **Education**

- AEE Certified Energy Procurement Professional
- BS in Chemical Engineering, West Virginia University, United States



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## Company Profile

Utility Advantage is an independent, majority woman-owned consulting and services company that focuses on developing and implementing sound policy and programs to promote the efficient utilization of energy resources throughout the world. Working with utility companies, businesses, governmental and institutional entities to implement energy efficiency and utility cost management programs that reduce expenses, increase efficiency and improve the carbon footprint, Utility Advantage is an innovator in the energy solutions sector. Formed in 2003 by Laurie Wiegand-Jackson, a nationally recognized energy expert and entrepreneur, Utility Advantage is headquartered in New Jersey, and provides services to customers locally and globally.

Utility Advantage's in-house expertise spans a broad range of knowledge and experience in the areas of energy policy, utility rates, energy purchasing, renewable energy project development, energy efficiency audits, energy project management, load management programs, energy and sustainability master planning, energy management training, and onsite generation alternatives. The company has developed and implemented cost-reducing, effective utility management programs and multi-million dollar projects that have saved its clients millions of dollars.

More information is available at: <https://www.utilityadvantage.com/>

## Selected Interview Quotes

### Messages

*"The energy industry is a fantastic place to have a career. The opportunities are endless. You can really feel passionate about the value of what you are doing in terms of its impact on the environment. So you have a great career opportunity and can feel really great about what you do every single day."*

*"Align yourself with other entrepreneurs. Reach out to women like myself and many others. We are more than willing to spend time and have conversations with you to help you and encourage you along the way. And then really listen and implement the things that you are hearing."*

### Laurie's personal recommendation

- *When you start a business, don't be afraid to dream and think big.*
- *Write down your vision. Develop a formal business plan to achieve your vision and divide it into phases with metrics to track performance. Have a senior level professional and/or successful entrepreneur with experience in the industry review your plan and listen to their recommendations.*
- *Remember that your employees and customers are your two most important assets. Treat them well - with honesty, transparency, care and fairness - and they will be loyal to you.*

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- *Invest in sales and remember that you are always selling your business. If you don't have sales experience, invest in your own sales training so that you can be more comfortable in your most important role as the face of the company. If you can't yet afford to hire a sales team, create a commission, partner or agent program. Pay well to support growth.*
  - *Surround yourself with smart people that share your values.*
  - *Hire a lawyer to draft your corporate charter, operating agreement, etc. and be especially careful in choosing any business partners.*
  - *Whenever possible (and by that I mean do whatever you can to) maintain ownership control of your business. Women are naturally gifted to create but are also natural givers. Be very protective of your business and don't give away any more than you need to.*
  - *Have fun! 'Find something you love to do and you'll never have to work a day in your life.' When your business is your passion, your days will be interesting, exciting, productive, challenging, and rewarding.*
  - *Consider Work-Life balance as an ebb and flow. There are days or even weeks when work requires more attention and other times when your family and personal life require more time. Accepting this reality will allow you to spend time where it is needed and not feel guilty. That being said, you should try to make as many family events as possible - you will not get a second chance to see your child graduate from Kindergarten or perform in her class play or sports event. Your family - spouse or partner and your children are your greatest fans and supporters.*
  - *When you have failures (and it happens to every entrepreneur) - regroup, pivot, and continue moving ahead. There are external factors that you have no control over that will impact your plans and you will not always make the best decision. Don't spend time lamenting - learn from it and get your head back into the game quickly.*
  - *You will have supporters who want to help you succeed. Besides your employees, there will be friends, family, customers, partners, suppliers - many will be your advocates in the marketplace. Acknowledge and nurture those relationships. They will be critical to your success. On the other hand, not everyone will be your greatest fan. That's OK. No need to try to win over anyone who isn't willing to give you a chance - move on quickly and invest your time finding your next "win-win" relationship.*

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# Kaikai Yang

**CEO  
DIPOLE  
CHINA**



## **Blockchain | Energy Trading**

### **Bio**

Kaikai Yang is CEO of Dipole Tech, a company dedicated to helping users trade distributed electricity with ease in any scenario using blockchain technology and Internet of Things. Kaikai was also COO and Co-Founder of Energo Labs, which became the first blockchain-based distributed energy project in Asia, winning the championship of the United Nations-sponsored Asia-Pacific Low Carbon Lifestyles Challenge, and was included in the "2018 China Blockchain Industry White Paper".

Kaikai led the Energo team to explore markets in 10 countries including but not limited to Singapore, the Philippines, India, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, and the Netherlands. As Co-chair of the Energy Blockchain Leadership Committee, Kaikai founded the Asian Cleantech Entrepreneurs Community (ACTEC), an organization devoted to building a network of entrepreneurs focusing on sustainable development and the environment. Kaikai is also an early bitcoin investor and a jazz drummer.

### **Education**

- BA in English Language and Literature, Shanghai Ocean University, China

### **Company Profile**

Founded in 2018, Dipole is one of the pioneers in the field of New Energy + Blockchain. Dipole aims to build a reliable and efficient platform to trade distributed energy. Dipole allows users to trade distributed electricity with ease in any scenario using blockchain technology and Internet of Things. For energy providers, Dipole will be the energy platform of smart cities in the future, providing energy and information effectively for trillions of devices on the demand side. Dipole's passionate, cohesive and experienced team consists of hard-working young entrepreneurs in the field of blockchain and energy. Dipole focuses on both, technology and products, a rare appearance in the blockchain industry.

More information is available at: <https://dipole.tech/>

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## Selected Interview Quotes

### Messages

*"Make sure you can survive. To have a company means you have the responsibility for other people. Be well prepared financially for this company."*

*"Persistence is always very important to every entrepreneur in clean tech, because the market is very big and the existing challenge for the market is not the technology or policy. It's about the existing big players. So you need to be persistent."*

### Kaikai's personal recommendation

*"I do recommend BLOCKCHAIN for young people; it will be the next generation internet (Web 3.0) and backbone technology behind money. It unlocks a new, alternative way to store and move value."*

### Books

*"My favourite book is "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" by Douglas Adams, which motivated me to dedicate myself to sustainability, innovation and to learn more about the universe."*

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# Our Interviewers

## ALEJANDRA CAMPOS



Alejandra is co-founder and coordinator of International Relations of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Women's Network (REDMEREE), an organization in which she has developed and coordinated various initiatives to train and make women visible in the energy sector with strategic international allies. She holds a Bachelor's degree in International Relations and has been a gender and energy consultant for the German Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Mexico (GIZ), and other international organisations. She has advised women in energy at a regional level for the articulation of women movements and networks in Latin America. In her free time she is an enthusiast of reading, dancing and travelling.

See Alejandra's full profile at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/alejandra-campos-torres-986780a8/>

## BRUNA VENTURA HOFFMANN



Bruna is a researcher at Lactec, a Brazilian research institute in the area of Electrical Power Systems. She is pursuing a Master's degree in Energy Systems with focus on Protection of Electric Power Systems at the Federal Technological University of Parana (UTFPR) and is a Electrical Engineering graduate of the Federal University of Parana (UFPR), Brazil. She is constantly looking for knowledge, innovation and technology to achieve a better world. In addition, she dedicates part of her time reading and participating in groups and events that discuss gender equality. In her free time, she is a big fan of sports, dance, gastronomy and travel.

See Bruna's full profile at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bruna-ventura-hoffmann-13b8a3107/>

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### EMILY MARSAY



Emily is a PhD student at the University of Exeter in England. She teaches politics on their Cornwall campus and is also working freelance for the research incubator 'Includovate'. Her PhD research evaluates the approaches of different organisations that seek to empower women through the clean energy transition in Eastern Africa. She's interested in the nexus of Sustainable Development Goal 5: 'Gender equality and the empowerment of women' and 7: 'Access to clean and Affordable Energy'. Emily will spend June 2020-June 2021 in Tanzania and Kenya working together with organisations that aim for women's empowerment through clean energy entrepreneurship. She is happy to be contacted by such organisations, so please get in touch if you would like to be involved in her research project.

See Emily's full profile at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/emily-marsay-3657a395/>

### MIRANA NJAKATIANA ANDRIARISOA



Mirana is a student from Madagascar, currently enrolled in a Master in Energy Policy at the Pan African University for Water and Energy Sciences (PAUWES) in Algeria where she is also the current leader of the Pan African University Climate Change and Gender Club. She is an ambassador of the African Youth Climate Hub. Mirana has a background in Economics and she is passionate about Energy Economics and the Climate Change Nexus.

See Mirana's full profile at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mirana-njakatiana-andriarisoa-41585814a/>



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**DAVINA NGEI, GWNED  
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER**



Davina is the Communications Manager at GWNED where she works closely with the management to support advocacy, networking, and mentorship projects. Prior to joining GWNED, Davina worked as the Communications Specialist at the Partnership on Women's Entrepreneurship in Renewables (wPOWER Hub), where she led the development of several key publications focused on the nexus of gender and renewable energy. She is currently exploring design thinking and how a human-centred approach can effectively identify problems and create innovative solutions.

See Davina's full profile at:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/davinangei/>

**IRINA GAUBINGER, GWNED  
PROJECT MANAGER (PROJECT  
LEAD)**



Irina is the project manager at GWNED and is responsible for implementing its various projects in close collaboration with GWNED's Executive Director. Irina takes care of GWNED's current research activities on energy and women empowerment and supports GWNED's communication activities and events. Irina has been working as a freelance consultant, researching and advising on energy, infrastructure and financial sector themes since 2012. Between 2010 and 2012 she was project manager with the EU Energy Initiative – Partnership Dialogue Facility hosted by GIZ. Irina holds a Master's degree in Economics from Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration and has 10 years of experience with energy in the international development cooperation context.

See Irina's full profile at:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/irina-gaubinger-b95104103/>

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## 3. Resources



**This section contains links to reference organisations, programmes and initiatives globally, regionally and in a country context, which will hopefully prove useful to prospective women entrepreneurs in the sustainable energy field.**

**This section will be continuously updated. Should you be aware of any additional information to be included please get in touch at [info@globalwomennet.org](mailto:info@globalwomennet.org). Thank you!**

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## 1. Worldwide initiatives, contact points and information

**2X Challenge: Financing for Women.** Invest in women. Invest in the world. The G7 Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) propose a bold commitment to inspire other DFIs to take the 2X Challenge: Financing for Women and invest in the world's women.

<https://www.2xchallenge.org/>

**International Federation of Business and Professional Women**

<https://www.bpw-international.org/>

The **Cartier Women's Initiative** is an annual international entrepreneurship program that aims to drive change by empowering women impact entrepreneurs. Founded in 2006, the program is open to women-run and women-owned businesses from any country and sector that aim to have a strong and sustainable social and/or environmental impact

<https://www.cartierwomensinitiative.com/>

**Change Catalyst** builds inclusive tech ecosystems through strategic advising, startup programs and resources, and a series of events around the globe. Using culture and behavior change strategies, we convene and advise the tech ecosystem to drive solutions to diversity and inclusion together: across education, workplace, entrepreneurship, policy, media/entertainment and ecosystem builders.

<http://changepcatalyst.co/>

The **ChangemakerXChange** aims to maximise the social impact of young changemakers, who take part in impact retreats and become part of a global community of social innovators that learn from each other and co-create projects together.

<https://changemakerxchange.com/>

**Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO)**

<https://www.eonetnetwork.org/>

The **Global Entrepreneurship Network** operates a platform of projects and programs in 170 countries aimed at making it easier for anyone, anywhere to start and scale a business. By fostering deeper cross border collaboration and initiatives between entrepreneurs, investors, researchers, policymakers and entrepreneurial support organizations, GEN works to fuel healthier start and scale ecosystems that create more jobs, educate individuals, accelerate innovation and strengthen economic growth.

<https://www.genglobal.org/>

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**Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women** is a global initiative that fosters economic growth by providing women entrepreneurs around the world with a business and management education, mentoring and networking, and access to capital.  
<https://www.goldmansachs.com/citizenship/10000women/index.html>

**Seedstars World** is a global startup competition in emerging markets with the mission to educate, promote and financially support the most promising seed-stage ventures with up to USD 500,000 investment in 75+ countries.  
<https://www.seedstarsworld.com/>

**WEConnect International** is a global network that connects women-owned businesses to qualified buyers around the world.  
<https://weconnectinternational.org/en/>

**Women in Business Programme** - at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, we work with women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to help promote women's participation in business. From accessing finance to business advice, we can help you gain the skills, knowledge and resources you need to take the next step.  
<http://www.ebrdwomeninbusiness.com/?s=home>

**The Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi)** supports women entrepreneurs by scaling up access to financial products and services, building capacity, expanding networks, offering mentors, and providing opportunities to link with domestic and global markets. We-Fi is a collaborative partnership among 14 governments, eight multilateral development banks (MDBs), and other public and private sector stakeholders, hosted by the World Bank Group.  
<https://we-fi.org/>

**Women's Forum for the Economy & Society.**  
<http://www.womens-forum.com/>

**Women's Startup Lab** We are a leading Silicon Valley based startup and leadership accelerator for women entrepreneurs globally who have the bold vision to lead the wave of innovation and change that is required for growth and competitiveness in today's economy.  
<https://www.womenstartuplab.com/>

**World Association of Women Entrepreneurs (FCEM)** is the pioneer association uniting women business owners from the world over. Founded in France in 1945 at the end of World War II by Yvonne Foinant, and months before the United Nations, the Association quickly spread into other European countries and the 5 continents. FCEM brings together in solidarity and friendship, like-minded women who share a common interest: that of entrepreneurship.  
<https://fcem.org/en/>

**Youth business international**  
<https://www.youthbusiness.org/>

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## 2. Regional initiatives, contact points and information

### AFRICA

**StartUp Africa's** vision is for an Africa resplendent with big, bold business ideas. We are here to create and support Africa's inventors, entrepreneurs, and future business leaders.

<https://startupafrica.org/>

**African Entrepreneur Collective** works with local entrepreneurs so that they can grow their businesses and create jobs.

<https://africanentrepreneurcollective.org/>

African Development Bank Group - **Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA)** is a pan-African initiative to bridge the \$42 billion financing gap facing women in Africa.

<https://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/afawa-affirmative-finance-action-women-africa>

**Acumen** is a non-profit impact investment fund whose vision is a world based on dignity, where every human being has the same opportunity. Rather than giving philanthropy away, they invest it in companies and change makers.

<https://acumen.org/>

**Africa Women Innovation & Entrepreneurship Forum AWIEF** is a pan-African women economic empowerment organisation which nurtures and actively promotes women innovation and entrepreneurship through its development programmes, accelerators, and networking events, including the annual AWIEF conference, exhibition and awards. AWIEF's mission is to foster the economic inclusion, advancement and empowerment of women in Africa through entrepreneurship support and development.

<https://www.awieforum.org/>

The **African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)** is a Pan-African grant making organisation that supports the realisation and fulfillment of African women's rights through funding of autonomous women's organisations on the continent. Since its inception in the year 2000, AWDF has awarded grants of US\$41.7 million to over 1,300 women's organisations in 46 countries in Africa and the Middle East.

<https://awdf.org/>

**GrowthAfrica** is a leading acceleration and growth partner for African entrepreneurs and companies scaling their business in and across Africa. They provide business growth programmes for high-potential entrepreneurs as well as design and deliver activities for partners and clients in support of entrepreneurs.

<https://growthafrica.com/>

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**GroFin** is a pioneering private development finance institution specialising in the finance and support of small and growing businesses (SGBs).

<http://www.grofin.com/language/en/home/>

For Gender Lens investing, see

[http://www.grofin.com/language/en/investors/#section3\\_GLI](http://www.grofin.com/language/en/investors/#section3_GLI)

**NASIRA** by the Dutch Development Bank FMO is an innovative financial program that supports young, female, and migrant entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa and countries neighbouring Europe.

<http://www.nasira.info/>

**SheInvest** - new initiative to mobilise EUR 1 billion for women across Africa. The European Investment Bank (EIB) has launched SheInvest, a new initiative to boost gender equality and female economic empowerment.

<https://www.eib.org/en/press/all/2019-306-sheinvest-new-initiative-to-mobilise-eur-1-billion-for-women-across-africa>

**The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI)** is the U.S. government's signature effort to invest in the next generation of African leaders. YALI Entrepreneurs is an initiative to help you take your business venture from an idea to a reality. If you're determined to create, innovate, and prosper, then get started with the YALI Entrepreneurs resources below...

<https://yali.state.gov/entrepreneurs/>

**The Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Forum.** The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) is an African private-sector-led philanthropy focused on empowering African entrepreneurs. The Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme is the \$100million commitment by the Elumelu family to empower 10,000 African entrepreneurs over a 10-year period. The goal is to create at least 1million jobs and contribute over \$10billion in revenue to the African economy. Through its flagship Entrepreneurship Programme, the Foundation empowers African entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurship ecosystem across 54 African countries. The Foundation has empowered 9,631 entrepreneurs thus far. The Programme is built on a 7-pillar model, a unique holistic system of effective and intensive support to the African entrepreneurs, consisting of startup enterprise toolkit, online mentoring, online resource library, meet-ups, TEF Entrepreneurship Forum, seed capital and alumni network. In 2018, the Foundation launched TEFConnect, Africa's digital entrepreneurship hub last year to connect the entrepreneurship ecosystem and facilitate businesses beyond physical borders. The platform currently hosts 800,000 users.

<https://www.tonyelumelufoundation.org/>

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## ASIA

**AWIF - ASIA WOMEN IMPACT FUND** – supporting women entrepreneurs  
<https://www.spf.org/awif/our-work/supporting-women-entrepreneurs.html>

**The EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women™** Asia-Pacific program is an executive leadership program that identifies a select group of high-potential women entrepreneurs whose businesses show real potential to scale – and then helps them do it. This year-long program is designed for women with established businesses who are ready to scale operations and grow to become global market leaders.

<https://www.ey.com/cn/en/services/strategic-growth-markets/ey-asia-pacific-entrepreneurial-winning-women>

The **Asia Foundation** is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Our projects expand opportunities for women through education, entrepreneurship, and vocational training.

<https://asiafoundation.org/what-we-do/empower-women/>



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## EUROPE

**Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs** is a cross-border exchange programme which gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other Participating Countries.  
<https://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/index.php?lan=en>

**Female Founders** was born in 2016 as an initiative to support ambitious women during their rollercoaster ride of entrepreneurship through networking, mentoring and mutual exchange. Our three-month program aims to kickstart highly innovative and scalable female-led ventures. This accelerator program focuses on startup development, founder development and one-on-one support.  
<https://www.femalefounders.global/>

**European Gateway for Women's entrepreneurship WEgate**. A growing and diverse number of stakeholders are engaging to support women entrepreneurs across Europe. The European Gateway for Women's entrepreneurship WEgate is an e-platform launched by the European Commission to support this network. WEgate is not an organisation as such. It does not provide support services or advice, nor has commercial purposes. It is an online gateway to useful and inspiring information, mostly presented through a short description text and useful web links.  
<https://wagate.eu/>

**European Young Inovators Forum - EYIF** is the leading organisation for youth innovation and entrepreneurship in Europe, reaching over 500,000 people across the continent.  
<http://eyif.eu/>

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## LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

### IDB - Inter-American Development Bank - Social Entrepreneurship Program

The Social Entrepreneurship Program (SEP) provides financing through local partner organizations to individuals and groups that generally do not have access to commercial or development loans on regular market terms.  
<https://www.iadb.org/en/about-us/about-us-14>

### LAVCA - Latin American Start-Up Directory

<https://lavca.org/vc/startup-directory/>

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## MENA

**GroFin** is a pioneering private development finance institution specialising in the finance and support of small and growing businesses (SGBs).

<http://www.grofin.com/language/en/home/>

For Gender Lens investing, see

[http://www.grofin.com/language/en/investors/#section3\\_GLI](http://www.grofin.com/language/en/investors/#section3_GLI)

**Islamic Development Bank – Female Empowerment.** IDB has launched a number of high profile and competitive projects designed to promote women and women's empowerment, such as the IDB Prize for Women's Contribution to Development and the OIC-BIN Network to strengthen economic cooperation among businesswomen in member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

<https://www.isdb.org/get-involved/female-empowerment>

**NASIRA** by the Dutch Development Bank FMO is an innovative financial program that supports young, female, and migrant entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa and countries neighbouring Europe.

<http://www.nasira.info/>

The **We Initiative** is a holistic program dedicated to the economic empowerment of women in the MENA region. It is the only initiative to provide you with an exhaustive solution giving you equal banking rights and opportunities in order to finance and grow your personal or business projects; in addition to a host of tools and services to grow your expertise such as business power sessions, workshops, articles and studies, and success stories to inspire you.

<https://www.we-initiative.com/>

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### 3. Country initiatives, contact points and information

#### AUSTRALIA

**Women Chiefs of Enterprises International WCEI** (Australia) is a national organisation with international links and has a proud history of bringing entrepreneurial women together in a supportive environment. Our vision is to share our experiences as leaders in business and to support, promote and inspire entrepreneurial women.

<https://www.wcei.com.au/>

**SheStarts** is Australia's only venture-backed startup program designed to help women entrepreneurs build big tech businesses.

<https://www.shestarts.com/>

**Australian Government - Entrepreneurs' Programme.** Access expert advice, funding and incentives to help your business innovate, compete and grow. The Entrepreneurs' Programme can help to improve your growth capabilities and networks, engage with researchers, foster innovation and encourage commercialisation of novel products, processes or services. Learn how the Programme can help your business.

<https://www.business.gov.au/Grants-and-Programs/Entrepreneurs-Programme>

**Australian Government - CSIRO Kick-Start** provides matched funding for start-ups and small to medium enterprises to help access CSIRO's research expertise and capabilities to help grow your business. (CSIRO - Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation)

<https://www.business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/csiro-kickstart>

**Australian Government - The Research and Development Tax Incentive (R&D Tax Incentive or R&DTI)** helps to offset some of the costs you put into eligible R&D, which benefits the wider Australian economy.

<https://www.business.gov.au/Grants-and-Programs/Research-and-Development-Tax-Incentive>

**Australian Government - Landing Pads** help market-ready scaleups take their business global. Landing Pads are part of Austrade's global service offer for Australian scaleups. The program provides market-ready scaleups with an operational base and customised support for their overseas expansion goals. Scaleups participate in an immersive programme in one of Austrade's five Landing Pad cities: Singapore, San Francisco, Tel Aviv, Berlin and Shanghai.

<https://www.austrade.gov.au/LandingPads>

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**Australian Government - Starting a business guide.** Setting up your own business is exciting, but can also be challenging if you are not prepared. This guide will take you through each step of starting a business and help you understand what's ahead.

<https://www.business.gov.au/Guide/Starting>.

**STARTUP WA** is a not-for-profit, representative organisation which promotes the growing technology startup sector in Western Australia. StartupWA aims to accelerate and promote the technology startup "ecosystem" that includes investors, technology hubs, accelerator programs and early stage technology startup businesses.

<https://www.startupwa.org/>

## **BRAZIL**

**Brazilian Women Group**

<http://www.grupomulheresdobrasil.org.br/>

**StartOut Brasil** is a non-profit program, sponsored by public and private Brazilian organizations, which supports the immersion of Brazilian startups in some of the world's most promising innovation ecosystems.

<https://www.startoutbrasil.com.br/english/>

**Rede Mulher Empreendedora RME** - The first and largest support network for female entrepreneurship in Brazil. We prioritize integration, training and knowledge exchange among women who own or seek their own business, spread throughout the country.

<https://rme.net.br/>

**SEED - Startups and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development** is a program created by the Minas Gerais State Government (Brazil) to support national and international entrepreneurs to develop technological-based projects. Since 2013, SEED develops the entrepreneurial culture and the startups ecosystem in the state.

<http://seed.mg.gov.br/>

**Startup Farm** was created on the 11th of August 2011 in São Paulo and has already produced 29 editions of our acceleration program in 6 cities of this gigantic nation. ... In 2016 we launched a new format of our acceleration program, which was renamed Ahead\*, offering a better structure over a 6-month period with even more support to make the startups even more awesome! In 2017 we were awarded the Best Accelerator prize at the Startup Awards, granted by Brazil's Startup Association

<https://startup.farm/en/>

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**Startup Rio** - Public-private initiative of the State of Rio de Janeiro and partners to foster the culture of entrepreneurship, turning the state into an international reference center in digital technology.

<http://www.startuprio.rj.gov.br/>

## CANADA

We are BDC, the **Business Development Bank of Canada** and the only financial institution devoted exclusively to entrepreneurs. We help create and develop strong Canadian businesses through financing, advisory services and capital, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises.

<https://www.bdc.ca/en/pages/home.aspx>

**Women's Enterprise Centre** is a non-profit organization devoted to helping BC women start, lead and grow their own business.

<https://www.womensenterprise.ca/>

**Government of Canada - Women Entrepreneurship Strategy**

<https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/107.nsf/eng/home>

## CHINA/HONG KONG

**Gov.hk** - Support for Local & Foreign Enterprises

<https://www.gov.hk/en/business/supportenterprises/localenterprises/index.htm>

## CHILE

**Start-Up Chile (SUP)** is a public startup accelerator created by the Chilean Government for high-potential entrepreneurs to bootstrap their startups and use Chile as a foundation.

<https://www.startupchile.org/>

## INDIA

**Start-Up Wave** - A Unique Virtual Incubator, Seed-funded by GIZ and DFID - will provide services in two distinct phases - pre-incubation and incubation. Pre-incubation services are designed for idea to pilot stage startups and are designed to help them get accepted into incubators. Anyone with a business idea can access these services for free.

<https://www.startupwave.co/>

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## GERMANY

German Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) business start-up portal:  
<https://www.existenzgruender.de/EN/Home/inhalt.html>

Investitionsbank Berlin: 2019/2020 Business Support Guide. The guide for businesses and start-ups:  
[https://www.ibb.de/media/dokumente/publikationen/in-english/ibb\\_business\\_support\\_guide\\_2019-2020.pdf](https://www.ibb.de/media/dokumente/publikationen/in-english/ibb_business_support_guide_2019-2020.pdf)

Funding support overview: <https://www.existenzgruender.de/EN/Die-ersten-Schritte/Finanzierung/inhalt.html> and  
<https://www.ibb.de/en/business-development/customer-groups/founders/founders.html>

KfW Entrepreneurship Monitor 2019:  
<https://www.kfw.de/KfW-Group/KfW-Research/KfW-Gr%C3%BCndungsmonitor.html>

National Agency for Women Start-ups Activities and Services (bga):  
[https://www.existenzgruenderinnen.de/EN/Home/home\\_node.html](https://www.existenzgruenderinnen.de/EN/Home/home_node.html)  
More information is available on the German version of the website:  
[https://www.existenzgruenderinnen.de/DE/Home/home\\_node.html](https://www.existenzgruenderinnen.de/DE/Home/home_node.html)

Association of German Women Entrepreneurs:  
<https://www.vdu.de/home.html> (available only in German)

Germany Trade & Invest:  
<https://www.gtai.de/gtai-en#>

Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises, Business Support:  
<https://www.berlin.de/sen/wirtschaft/en/business-support/>

The German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK) Finder:  
<https://www.ihk.de/#ihk-finder>. Each regional Chamber offers founding advice.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Berlin: Business in Berlin:  
<https://www.ihk-berlin.de/english/en/s-987416>

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Frankfurt am Main, Startup Support and Business Development:  
<https://www.frankfurt-main.ihk.de/english/business/>



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Business Startup Network Berlin:

<https://www.gruenden-in-berlin.de/welcome-to-the-business-startup-network-berlin.html>

Gründungswerkstatt support for business and financial plan development:

<https://www.gruendungswerkstatt-deutschland.de/businessplan-erstellen>

German Accelerator, support for German startups to scale globally:

<https://www.germanaccelerator.com/>

Support programme for start-ups and companies who need professional business administration coaching:

<https://www.coachingbonus.de/en/>

Berlin's startup ecosystem at a glance:

<https://www.eu-startups.com/2018/12/berlins-startup-ecosystem-at-a-glance/>

European Commission, EACEA information: Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs:

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/39-start-funding-young-entrepreneurs-germany>

## JORDAN

**Sanadcom** for business finance is one of Jordan's top lending companies specializing in financing small and medium enterprises working in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. On the basis of our persistent keenness to support the small and medium enterprises sector, Sanadcom has designed specialized financial and non-financial products dedicated to providing accessible, transparent and competitive financing for small and medium enterprises in Jordan to help alleviate poverty; empower entrepreneurs, and to foster employment creation in Jordan.

<https://sanadcomjo.com/homeEn.aspx>

**Oasis 500.** We invest in promising local startups and guide them on their paths to success. ... We invest in driven entrepreneurs with scalable innovative ideas and startups, launching from Jordan, within the technology and product design sectors.

<https://oasis500.com/en/>

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**The Innovative Startups and SMEs Fund ("ISSF")** is a private sector managed fund making investments in innovative startups and early stage SMEs. The World Bank has invested USD 50 million in the Fund... The ISSF will promote entrepreneurship and contribute to job creation in Jordan by increasing private, early stage equity finance for innovative small and medium enterprises (SMEs). In addition to early stage financing, the ISSF will encourage entrepreneurship across Jordan with outreach programs to entrepreneurs from lagging regions, underserved sectors and underserved groups such as youth and women entrepreneurs.  
<https://issfjo.com/>

**The Queen Rania Center for Entrepreneurship (QRCE)** is a Non-Profit organization established in 2004 to help develop Technology Entrepreneurship in Jordan focusing on four key areas: Networking Track; Recognition & Awareness Track; Capacity building & Support Track; Funding Track; The Center is part of Princess Sumaya University for Technology.  
<https://www.qrce.org/index.php?lang=en>

## KENYA

The **East Africa Chapter of the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE)** brings together ANDE members who support small and growing businesses (SGBs) in East Africa. The chapters works with members to identify common challenges that can be addressed collectively. This has led to a variety of programs, including developing a legal toolkit for enterprises in Kenya. The ANDE Chapter in East Africa operates in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Ethiopia.  
<https://www.andeglobal.org/page/EastAfrica>

**Her Business** is a magazine for young and savvy women entrepreneurs in Kenya to Launch, Grow and Expand their businesses.  
<http://www.herbusiness.co.ke/>

The **Women Enterprise Fund** has a mission to mobilize resources for sustainable access to affordable financial and business support services to empower Kenyan women.  
<http://www.wef.co.ke/>

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The Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Associations (FEWA) is the apex body of all women entrepreneur associations working to ensure the realization of an enabling business environment for ALL women entrepreneurs. The Federation is an effective channel through which joint programs and initiatives for women in business are channelled. FEWA has ensured harmonization of cross sectoral issues and direct impact at policy making levels through fostering sustainable partnerships. FEWA has maintained a membership with over 250,000 individual business women active in all aspects of enterprise including, but not limited to trade, services, agribusiness, building and construction, art and craft, manufacturing, research, development and engineering.  
<https://fewa.or.ke/>

The **ygap accelerator** is made up of programs that aim to back impact entrepreneurs – ‘local leaders’ – who have solutions to local problems in some of the world’s toughest communities.  
<https://ygap.org/kenya/>

## MEXICO

**AMEXME - Asociación Mexicana de Mujeres Empresarias** - We are an organization that brings together women entrepreneurs, owners or shareholders involved in the operation of micro, small, medium and large companies  
<http://www.amexme.org/>

**Crea Comunidades de Emprendedores Sociales A.C.** To help women entrepreneurs and businesswomen from socially and economically marginalized areas to have access to better development opportunities through the success of their businesses and their economic and personal empowerment, offering services of proven impact, in an articulated and transparent way and pushing our capacity of execution to the limit.  
<http://crea.org.mx/>

**Mex Brasil - Business Women.**  
<https://www.espacomulheresexecutivas.com/>

**REDMEREEE. Red Mujeres en Energía Renovable y Eficiencia Energética**  
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/redmeree-red-de-mujeres-en-energ%C3%ADa-renovable-y-eficiencia-energ%C3%A9tica/>

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## NETHERLANDS

**Government of the Netherlands** – The government supports entrepreneurs  
<https://www.government.nl/topics/enterprise-and-innovation/the-government-supports-entrepreneurs>

**Business.gov.nl** - Financing your business  
<https://business.gov.nl/financing-your-business/>

**Netherlands Enterprise Agency** – Subsidies and programmes  
<https://english.rvo.nl/subsidies-programmes>

## NIGERIA

**Startup Nigeria** is a 3-Month Incubation Program designed to support innovative idea-staged companies across Nigeria with funding, mentorship and trainings. The curriculum is specifically designed to move companies from ideas to viable products/services. (training; mentorship; equity free funding)  
<https://www.startupnigeria.ng/>

## PAKISTAN

**The Financial Alliance for Women** is managed by a Governing Board made up of representatives from our member institutions and other individuals experienced in and committed to increasing women's economic empowerment.  
<https://financialallianceforwomen.org/members/hbl/>

## SOUTH AFRICA

**Funding And Financial Assistance For SA Women Entrepreneurs:**  
<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/327558>

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## SERBIA

**WE FOUNDERS** is a community where startup teams, founders, leaders, and strategic business developers share their successes and fuckups and connect with the goal of improving their businesses. Because when we contribute to better growth of other funders, we also improve ourselves and accelerate the development of our own business and startup. (funded by USAID)  
<https://belgrade.impacthub.net/we-founders/?lang=en>

## SINGAPORE

**Women Entrepreneur Awards (WEA)** started with a singular mission to celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit of women in Singapore. Today, this award has extended to a host of Women Entrepreneurs' initiatives to drive the development and growth of women entrepreneurs, from mentoring, education, networking to capital raising opportunities. Inaugurated in Singapore in 2016, WEA network is built with a vision to empower women owners in Asia.  
<https://wea-sg.com/>

**The Action Community for Entrepreneurship (ACE)** is a national private sector-led organisation to drive entrepreneurship and innovation in Singapore. ACE takes on three main thrusts to focus on strengthening the entrepreneurial scene: Access Hub for Connected Ecosystems; Avenue for Company Expansion; Accelerated Co-innovation Enabler  
<https://ace.org.sg/>

**Startup SG Equity.** As part of the Startup SG Equity scheme, the government will co-invest with independent, qualified 3rd party investors into eligible startups. This scheme aims to stimulate private-sector investments into innovative, Singapore-based technology startups with intellectual property and global market potential.  
<https://www.startupsg.net/programmes/4895/startup-sg-equity>

Singapore government funding & grants for entrepreneurs  
<https://sleek.sg/2019/02/19/singapore-government-funding-grants-for-entrepreneurs/>

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## TUNISIA

**Mubadirat** is a media project that empowers existing and aspiring women entrepreneurs through inspiring content, models for success and resources for women looking to open a business or launch a project. Mubadirat profiles successful women entrepreneurs in North Africa working in various different industries from a wide variety of backgrounds. Through its online platform, Mubadirat targets women entrepreneurs in Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, and Libya.  
<http://mubadirat.com/>

## UAE

**Dubai Startup Hub** is a semi-government initiative rooted in Dubai Chamber; our main purpose is to<sup>34</sup> provide clarity and direction in the journey of a startup entrepreneur. To listen, to reflect and guide them along the way. We collaborate with the most experienced & trusted partners to exchange essential and up-to-date information that answers all essential entrepreneurial questions.  
<http://www.dubaichamber.com/dubaistartuphub/>

**hub71**. We are a community of founders, investors and business enablers that form a unique technology ecosystem strategically located in Abu Dhabi. We provide: Access to capital by attracting top VC funds and investors to increase the pool of capital available to startups and VCs in Abu Dhabi. Access to a favorable business environment through our partner, Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM), which is best placed to improve the ease of doing business for startups. Access to global markets through Mubadala Investment Company's network of more than 60 global assets under management in 15 sectors.  
<https://www.hub71.com/>

The **Mohammed bin Rashid Innovation Fund** is a federally-sponsored initiative conceived and sponsored by the Ministry of Finance to support local innovators in accessing affordable finance through the provision of a government-backed guarantee. The Fund of AED 2 billion was announced in November 2015 during the UAE's inaugural Innovation Week which sought to showcase a variety of innovative initiatives across federal and local levels of government and within the private sector.  
<https://www.mbrinnovationfund.ae/en/>

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Established in 2002, **Dubai SME** was created as an integrated division of the Department of Economic Development (DED). It was developed as a resource for support, information and outreach for the growing small and medium enterprise sector. At Dubai SME, we know that the hardest part of building your own company from the ground up is knowing where and how to start. As one of the main pillars of Dubai's economic success, we aim to support entrepreneurs in all phases of their development.

<http://www.sme.ae/English/Pages/default.aspx>

**Dtec** is an integrated entrepreneurial ecosystem that provides everything you need to set up a new business in Dubai. Find a great coworking space, get help with company formation in Dubai and register it within a Dubai free zone, or join our events to learn and meet with other entrepreneurs. Dtec is the best place to get UAE startups on their feet.

<https://dtec.ae/>

**TAKAMUL**. Our Mission: Building a base of innovators and emerging technology companies through innovative grants, incentives and services that support Abu Dhabi's economic vision by building a knowledge economy. Our Vision: The Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the UAE to become a pioneering platform for innovation and destination for innovators.

<https://takamul.gov.ae/Site/index.html>

## UK

**Gov.uk** - Press release: Support for young entrepreneurs. Top 5 things we are doing to support young entrepreneurs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-for-young-entrepreneurs>

**accelerateHER**. Addressing the underrepresentation of women in technology.

<https://accelerateher.co/#/>

**Cherie Blair Foundation for Women** helps release the potential of women entrepreneurs, so they can redefine the future. With our support, women and girls start and grow successful businesses – and reclaim the rights and freedoms they are too often denied. As a result, they earn a better living – but that's only the beginning. Families flourish. Communities prosper. Attitudes shift. Economies grow. And women move the world in a whole new direction.

<https://cherieblairfoundation.org/>

**Code First: Girls** is a multi-award winning social enterprise. We help increase diversity in tech by doing three things: Training; Community; Corporate Activities

<https://www.codefirstgirls.org.uk/>



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**EVERYWOMAN NETWORK.** From personal development, to leadership, events and awards programmes, inspiring success and fulfilling potential is the backbone of what we do.

<https://www.everywoman.com/>

**TLA WOMENINTECH** is a 700 strong working group within Tech London Advocates dedicated to increasing gender balance and equality in tech through a range of #SheCanDoTech initiatives that champion fairness and inclusivity for a sustainable tech future.

<http://tlawomenintech.org/>

**Prowess** is the online hub for women-friendly business support, inspiration and information. Our vision is an environment where women in business can flourish.

<https://www.prowess.org.uk/>

Government UK. **Global Entrepreneur Programme (GEP)**

<https://www.great.gov.uk/international/content/invest/how-to-setup-in-the-uk/global-entrepreneur-program/>

## USA

**The Babson Center for Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership.**

<https://www.babson.edu/academics/centers-and-institutes/center-for-womens-entrepreneurial-leadership/>

The **U.S. Small Business Administration** helps Americans start, build, and grow businesses.

<https://www.sba.gov/>

**Women You Should Fund** sets entrepreneurial ideas into motion by helping women and women-led teams make their products, projects, and business ventures a reality.

<https://www.womenyoushouldfund.com/>

**Y Combinator** created a new model for funding early stage startups and provides seed funding for startups.

<https://www.ycombinator.com/>

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# About GWNET

The Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition (GWNET) aims to advance the global energy transition by empowering women in energy through interdisciplinary networking, advocacy, training, coaching and mentoring.

GWNET seeks to address the current gender imbalances in the energy sector and to promote gender-sensitive action around the energy transition in all parts of the world.

GWNET's work focuses on:

- **Networking:** facilitating connections among women working in the fields of renewable energy and energy efficiency to advance the energy transition, through events and the [Women in Energy Expert Platform](https://www.globalwomennet.org/).
- **Advocacy:** generating and disseminating information on the role of women in the energy transition as well as organising conferences, seminars, and workshops which foster discussions and promote gender-sensitive action around the energy transition.
- **Mentoring:** leading the development of several regional and global women mentoring programmes as well as the matchmaking of mentors and mentees within the sustainable energy sector

<https://www.globalwomennet.org/>  
[info@globalwomennet.org](mailto:info@globalwomennet.org)



**GWNET**  
Global Women's Network  
for the Energy Transition