

# Meeting Migrant Women Entrepreneurs Where They Are: Alternatives to Formal Interventions

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## Abstract

This paper presents the findings of an empirical study conducted on internally displaced women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia and internally migrant women entrepreneurs in Zambia. The study elucidates the challenges faced by these women in accessing support and interventions aimed at fostering entrepreneurship. It unveils a critical issue: the failure of formalised interventions in meeting the unique circumstances and needs of these marginalised groups. Historically, governments and organisations have implemented formal interventions to support women entrepreneurs, often requiring participants to conform to rigid formalisation requirements. This paper reveals that such formalised structures inadvertently exclude a significant number of internally displaced and migrant women entrepreneurs who operate in informal sectors due to circumstances beyond their control. We underscore the necessity of reevaluating intervention strategies to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness. We advocate for alternative approaches that embrace the informal nature of these women's businesses and tailor support systems accordingly. These alternatives could include flexible financing options, skill-building initiatives tailored to the informal sector, and mentorship programs that accommodate the unique challenges faced by internally displaced and migrant women entrepreneurs. By highlighting the limitations of formalised interventions and proposing alternative strategies, this paper contributes to the ongoing discourse on empowering marginalised women in entrepreneurship. It emphasises the importance of meeting these women where they are, acknowledging the resilience and resourcefulness they exhibit within their informal businesses, and creating interventions that empower them. Ultimately, this paper calls for a more inclusive and nuanced approach to supporting the entrepreneurial aspirations of internally displaced and migrant women.

**Keywords:** Marginalised Women; Empowerment Strategies; Informal Business Sector; Inclusive Interventions; Resilience in Entrepreneurship