



EMWOSE
Women from ethnic minorities in social enterprise

Interview form

Overview

Name: Toluwanimi Akaehomen

Company: HerGenuityAfrika

Website: www.hergenuityafrika.org



...redefining the Afrikan woman

Toluwani is the founder of the Social Enterprise, HerGenuity Afrika, which supports female migrant entrepreneurs of African descent to start and grow successful businesses. It is born out of her own experience.

The challenges of, for example, being a migrant with no support in terms of family and all of that. The linguistic challenges, the legal challenges. Trying to navigate through unfamiliar terrains in terms of regulations and all of that but also saying it as it is, discrimination because you're African, you're black.

One of the key failings that I have noticed is that stakeholders, policy makers they want a one size fits all for ethnic minorities in terms of supporting them to become economically and socially independent. It doesn't work that way. Ethnic minorities are a very diverse, heterogenous group but we're treated as if we're homogenous and so programmes or interventions are rolled out. The programmes are developed without our buy-in, without our involvement. We're looking for co-creation. Get us involved. Help us to say what we want to say. Give us the opportunity help us to know that whatever we're saying in terms of what we need is valued and it is actually part of what goes into creating the final product.

When you talk about integration it's a 2-way street. Integration is opportunity to draw from other communities the strengths, the opportunities that are there so everybody's sitting at the table and nobody is better than the other, bigger than the other, or wiser than the other or more civilised than the other.

Interview transcript

Keywords:

migrant, challenges, discrimination, one size fits all policy, co-creation, involvement, integration, opportunities, indigenous markets, funding, lack of collateral, triple disadvantage, developing nation, self-confidence, communication, interpersonal play.

Tulowani then speaks about other barriers she has experienced.

It's hard to break into an indigenous market so you're kind of creating and selling around your community. You can never grow that way because we are not enough to create a business out of. And then other barriers that I've mentioned would be of course would be regulations that I had to navigate sometimes. Access to funding and access to funding because most of us have no collateral they're looking for. Research talks about the triple disadvantage that you are a migrant, you are a female and then you are a migrant from a developing nation especially if a black nation. It's you being able to navigate through all of that in spite of. Actually not in spite of – because of. So when I walk into a room my self-confidence is very high not in spite of but because of who I am. So my finest point, my biggest point anywhere I go is the fact I'm African, I'm female and I'm African developing nation and black

Tulowani offers advice to women who want to develop SE

The woman should be very clear about why she's going into it because there are a lot of the things that will stop you. Be open to working with teams, people sharing your ideas with people who know what to do. But at the end of the day it's about serving the needs of people. Be clear about who I'm serving, what I'm serving, what I'm offering to them and being clear about how I do it. Communication is key really and It's not about me and its not about how, what suits me to communicate. It's how that person gets it. Do they get me. There's a lot of interpersonal play there really, so essentially you are a people person, a leader, you're a shaper, a supporter, a motivator, you're an inspirer. Sometimes you are advocate. So many things to many people because you want them to get what you're doing

Full video [here](#)

