

BEYOND RECOGNITION: WHY CELEBRATING WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS IS AN INVESTMENT IN SOCIETY



By: Mujahid Umar Balarabe

For generations, women have quietly shaped the course of history. They have taught in classrooms, healed in hospitals, pioneered scientific discoveries, led businesses, transformed communities, nurtured families and driven economic growth. Yet, despite these remarkable contributions, many of their stories remain untold, undocumented and largely invisible to the wider world.

It was against this backdrop that entrepreneurs, professionals and development stakeholders gathered on Thursday, 6 August 2026, for WRITE4HER 2026, a workshop organised by the Kaduna State Enterprise Development Agency (KADEDA). The event provided a platform for conversations on women's empowerment, entrepreneurship and the importance of documenting women's achievements as catalysts for social and economic development.

Delivering the keynote presentation, Dr. Jamila Muhammed, Head of the Department of Business Administration and Director of the Entrepreneurship Research and Development Centre (ERDC) at Kaduna State University, challenged participants to move beyond symbolic celebrations of women's accomplishments and embrace deliberate actions that promote professional excellence, entrepreneurial success and career advancement while ensuring that the stories of accomplished women are properly documented for future generations.

According to Dr. Muhammed, women continue to redefine excellence across virtually every sector of society. Whether in education, healthcare, governance, science, technology, agriculture, media or entrepreneurship, their contributions have become indispensable to sustainable development. Yet recognition has not always matched impact.

Even more concerning, she observed, is that countless accomplishments by African women remain absent from books, archives and digital knowledge platforms where the world increasingly turns towards for information. As history migrates online, failing to document these achievements risks allowing generations of excellence to disappear from public memory.

The conversation at WRITE4HER 2026 extended beyond historical recognition. At its heart lay the question of opportunity.

Research continues to demonstrate that organizations embracing diversity outperform many of their peers. Women contribute significantly to innovation, economic growth and social transformation, yet access to leadership positions and decision-making spaces remains uneven. While remarkable progress has been recorded in education, governance, enterprise and science, much work remains to ensure that opportunity grows at the same pace as talent.



Professional excellence, Dr. Muhammed argued, provides the strongest foundation for changing this narrative.

Excellence is not merely about occupying prestigious positions; it is reflected in competence, integrity, accountability, innovation and an unwavering commitment to continuous improvement. Women who consistently demonstrate these qualities have continued to excel despite facing discrimination, cultural expectations, unequal opportunities and limited access to leadership roles.

Across medicine, engineering, law, journalism, academia and public service, women continue to challenge stereotypes by producing exceptional results while raising standards within their professions. Their stories serve as compelling reminders that talent flourishes wherever opportunity exists. Leadership itself is evolving, and women are increasingly helping to redefine what effective leadership looks like. Rather than relying solely on authority, many women leaders are driving transformation through collaboration, strategic thinking and inclusive decision-making. Such leadership not only strengthens institutions but also builds organizational cultures where innovation and people can thrive together.

Perhaps nowhere is women's impact more visible today than in entrepreneurship.

Speaking directly to the entrepreneurs participating in WRITE4HER 2026, Dr. Muhammed described entrepreneurship as one of the most powerful instruments for women's economic empowerment. Across Africa, women-owned businesses are creating employment, generating income and solving community problems in increasingly innovative ways. Today's women entrepreneurs are establishing technology startups, agribusinesses, digital enterprises, consulting firms, online educational platforms and creative businesses that compete in both local and international markets.

Success, however, demands more than ambition. Entrepreneurs, she noted, must cultivate vision, understand their markets, create genuine customer value, strengthen financial literacy and embrace digital technologies capable of transforming small enterprises into scalable businesses.

Equally important is the recognition that careers are built, not inherited.

In an economy shaped by rapid technological advancement, continuous learning has become indispensable. Professional certifications, mentorship, networking, leadership development and digital skills are no longer optional advantages but essential tools for career progression.

For women, mentorship carries particular significance. Experienced professionals possess the ability to guide younger women through challenges, expand their professional networks and prepare them for leadership responsibilities. Such relationships often become the bridge between potential and achievement.

Yet celebration alone cannot erase persistent barriers.

Many women still struggle with limited access to finance, fewer leadership opportunities, restricted professional networks, work-life integration challenges and enduring societal expectations. Nevertheless, Dr. Muhammed maintained that the digital age presents unprecedented opportunities. Technology has expanded access to global markets, enabled flexible work arrangements and created entirely new industries where innovation often matters more than traditional barriers. The defining question, she suggested, is no longer whether opportunities exist but whether women are sufficiently prepared to seize them.



She therefore urged institutions, development agencies and the private sector to strengthen mentorship programmes, expand digital literacy initiatives, support women-owned businesses, recognise outstanding female professionals and invest in documenting the achievements of women through platforms such as Wikimedia, ensuring that their stories become part of freely accessible global knowledge.



As WRITE4HER 2026 drew to a close, one message stood above all others: celebrating women's achievements is not merely about acknowledging past successes. More than that, it is about creating the conditions for future generations of women to excel.

By investing in women's professional growth, entrepreneurial success and career development, societies build stronger economies, more inclusive institutions and richer knowledge systems. And by documenting those achievements, they ensure that the stories of today's trailblazers continue to inspire tomorrow's innovators, leaders and changemakers.

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