

About the Women & Enterprise Working Papers

Canada is a global leader in women's entrepreneurship. In a multi-nation study of enterprise start-up and new firm creation, Canadian women are cited as among the most entrepreneurial among the OECD developed nations.¹ However, while the rates of business start-up are indeed impressive, on average, majority women-owned Canadian firms are significantly smaller, less profitable and less likely to grow compared to those firms owned by men. Within corporate Canada, women are under-represented in senior management. A key challenge for business owners, executives, educators and policy makers, therefore, is to proactively address the obstacles that stymie enterprise growth and the advancement of women into leadership roles.

Canadian Women Entrepreneurs, Research and Public Policy: A Literature Review is one of a series of information resources that examine gender differences in enterprise creation, management practices and firm performance. Each report in the *Women and Enterprise Working Papers* presents analysis of Canadian issues and challenges associated with creating and managing high-performance enterprises.

The foundation of the working papers follows several Canadian initiatives: the 2003 Prime Minister's Task Force on Women Entrepreneurs; the 2004 Sustaining the Momentum: An Economic Forum on Women Entrepreneurs;² and a 2006 *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship* special issue about gender, training and entrepreneurship.³ Four primary themes emerge from these important initiatives: the significant and increasing contribution of women business owners to the Canadian and global economy; the ongoing absence of data about the participation rates and impact of women business owners in local, provincial and federal programs; the need to undertake and communicate research about women entrepreneurs; and a desire for better coordinated services, research and policy to support women entrepreneurs. It is anticipated that these working papers will inform management practices, training initiatives, research and policy targeted at supporting Canadian enterprises.

Readers are encouraged to share this report with other stakeholders. We are also pleased to add readers to the working paper mailing list. To receive future reports, please forward contact details to orser@telfer.uottawa.ca.

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¹ GEM [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor] 2006 Report on Women and Entrepreneurship and GEM 2007 High-Growth Entrepreneurship at: <http://www.gemconsortium.org/default.aspx>.

² See <http://www.ic.gc.ca/epic/site/sbrp-tppe.nsf/en/rd01308e.html> and <http://sprott.carleton.ca/forum/>.

³ See <http://www.ccsbe.org/jsbe/special.htm>.