



Pan African  
Business Hub

## Why we Invest In women

*A Gender-Lens Investment & Trade Facilitation Strategy for  
Inclusive Growth in Africa*

### Foreword from the Managing Director

Africa's economic future depends on how effectively capital aligns with existing sources of value.

Across the continent, women play a central role in consumption, enterprise formation, and community resilience, yet their contribution remains systematically undercapitalized within formal investment and trade systems.

Women influence the majority of household purchasing decisions, dominate informal and micro-enterprise activity, and establish businesses at rates that exceed global averages. Despite this, women led enterprises continue to face structural barriers to finance, market access, and investment visibility. This imbalance is not a question of capability or ambition, but a persistent capital allocation gap that constrains economic growth.

At Pan African Business Hub, we view this gap as a strategic opportunity. Evidence consistently shows that when capital aligns with women's leadership and participation, markets expand, productivity strengthens, and economic systems become more resilient. Through our Gender Lens Investment & Trade Facilitation Strategy, we are committed to redirecting capital toward high performing yet overlooked segments of Africa's economy, unlocking scalable growth that delivers both financial returns and measurable impact.

### Siah Margareth Paul

Founding Partner & Managing Director  
Pan African Business Hub  
*Where Women Lead, Africa Grows*

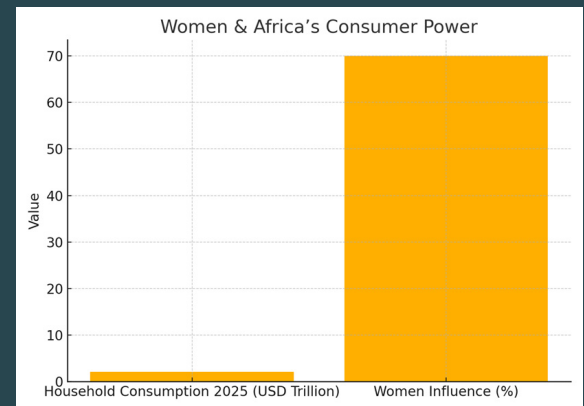


## Why Women are Africa's Growth Catalyst

### Women Drive Consumer Demand

Women influence over 70% of household purchasing decisions across Africa, shaping demand in food, healthcare, education, housing, and energy. With household consumption projected to exceed USD 2.1 trillion, women represent the continent's most stable and scalable consumer market.

*McKinsey Global Institute (2019), Lions on the Move II*



### Women Anchor Productive Economies

Women dominate Africa's USD 1 trillion informal economy, leading agriculture, micro-retailing, and cross-border trade. Formalizing and financing these enterprises offers one of the largest opportunities to unlock productivity and inclusive growth.

*Boston Consulting Group (2020), Winning with Women Consumers*

### A Powerful Multiplier Effect

Women reinvest up to 90% of income into families and communities, strengthening human capital, labor productivity, and economic resilience. The impact of investing in women compounds well beyond individual enterprise.

*UN Women (2023), Progress of the World's Women*

## Executive Summary

Women are among the most powerful economic actors in Africa today, yet they remain one of the most underfunded.

They influence over 70% of household consumption decisions, drive more than USD 1 trillion in informal economic activity, and lead enterprises at rates significantly higher than global averages. At the same time, women led businesses receive less than 1% of venture capital across the continent. This disparity is not a reflection of risk or capability; it is a structural capital allocation gap.

Global evidence from McKinsey, BCG, IFC, ILO, and UN Women consistently demonstrates that women led and gender diverse enterprises outperform on revenue generation, capital efficiency, profitability, and long term resilience. Gender lens investing is therefore not a social concession, it is a proven strategy for superior returns and sustainable growth.

Tanzania exemplifies both the scale of this opportunity and the cost of inaction. Women represent over 51% of the population, dominate agriculture and informal trade, and sustain the majority of micro and small enterprises. Yet fewer than 15% of women owned MSMEs have access to formal credit or investment capital. The resulting financing gap represents a significant drag on national productivity and a clear entry point for high-impact, inclusive investment.

Pan African Business Hub's Gender Lens Investment & Trade Facilitation Strategy is designed to address this gap directly. Our approach integrates:

1. Capital pathways for women-led enterprises
2. Regional and Pan African trade facilitation
3. Policy advocacy for gender responsive investment frameworks
4. Impact measurement aligned with UN SDGs 5, 8, 9, and 10

Through this framework, PABH positions women not as beneficiaries of growth, but as its primary drivers, strengthening portfolios, expanding markets, and building resilient economies.

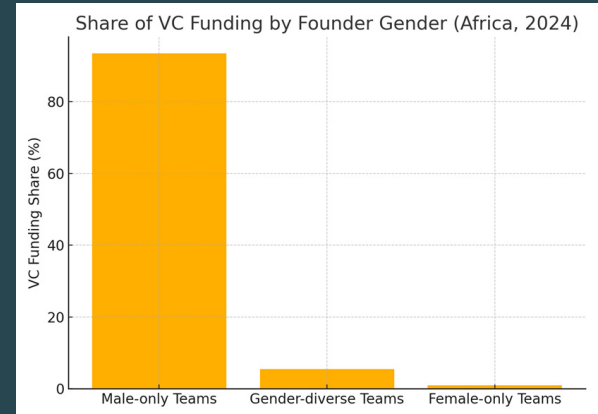
Our objective is clear:

*"To catalyze Africa's next trillion dollar growth wave by investing where women lead."*

## High Entrepreneurship, Low Capital

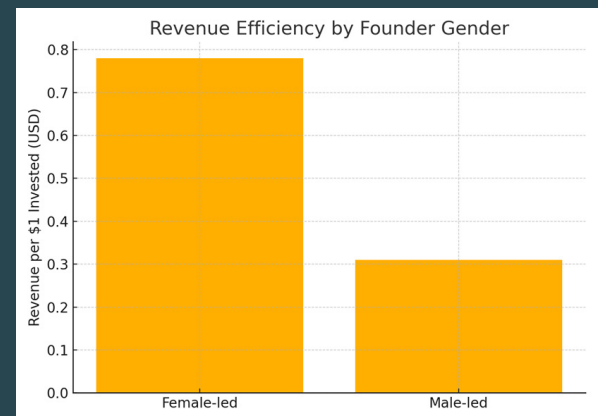
African women are among the world's most active entrepreneurs, yet receive less than 1% of venture capital. This is not a talent gap, but a structural capital misallocation with clear upside for investors.

*International Labour Organization (2022), Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*



## Stronger Returns Through Gender Diversity

Research from BCG, McKinsey, and IFC shows women-led and gender-diverse enterprises outperform on revenue, capital efficiency, and resilience. Gender inclusion is a proven investment advantage, not a social concession.





**“We carry an innate power to create, multiply, and sustain. We have the natural ability to turn little into enough, to build something out of nothing, and to make it thrive. Our resilience is unmatched, our drive rooted in purpose, and our impact reaches far beyond ourselves. Investing in women is not an act of charity, it is the unlocking of Africa’s most powerful engine for innovation, leadership, and sustainable growth.”**

**Grace Mhina**  
Country/Impact Manager, Apex Agribusiness Academy , [www.aa-academy.org](http://www.aa-academy.org)

## **Women: Africa’s Economic Powerhouse** *Where Women Lead, Africa Grows*

### **Household Consumption Dynamics**

As outlined earlier, women sit at the center of Africa’s household consumption and resource allocation. Their influence over purchasing decisions in food, healthcare, education, housing, and energy positions them as key market shapers rather than passive consumers. This role extends beyond spending power; women direct investments within households, sustain local supply chains, and reinforce economic stability at the community level. For investors, this translates into a demand base that is both resilient and structurally embedded in essential sectors.

### **Global Context**

Globally, women’s economic influence is well established. However, in Africa, sectors most closely aligned with women’s roles, particularly healthcare, education, clean energy, and nutrition, remain materially underserved. This mismatch between demand influence and market provision represents a clear market inefficiency. At Pan African Business Hub (PABH), we view this gap as an opportunity to build scalable, women centered business models that convert existing demand into sustained commercial growth and long term value creation.

### **The Power of Gender Diverse Investments**

Evidence from BCG, McKinsey, and IFC shows that gender-diverse leadership consistently delivers stronger financial performance, higher capital efficiency, and greater resilience. For PABH, gender inclusion is not a social overlay, but a disciplined investment lens that strengthens portfolios and aligns capital with long-term economic fundamentals.

### **The powerhouse of Africa’s informal economy**

Women form the backbone of Africa’s informal economy, representing over 70% of participants and contributing more than USD 1 trillion to GDP. They’re the backbone of agriculture, micro-retailing, healthcare, and cross-border trade. PABH fuels this evolution by boosting trade finance, fostering digital platforms, and enhancing regional partnerships, empowering women led businesses to thrive and scale.

### **The Capital Allocation Gap**

Despite a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, women founders in Africa grapple with significant underfunding. In 2024, female only teams secured a mere 1% of venture capital, while their male counterparts dominated the scene. With Sub-Saharan Africa leading in female entrepreneurship, it’s clear that barriers to finance, mentorship, and visibility persist. Bridging this gap isn’t just fair, it’s a smart economic move that can unleash untapped potential.

| <b>Data Point</b>   | <b>Citation</b>  |
|---|--|
| Africa’s household consumption to reach \$2.1T by 2025      | McKinsey Global Institute (2019), *Lions on the Move II*   |
| 70% of household spending influenced by women               | Boston Consulting Group (2020), *Winning with Women Consumers*   |
| Informal economy valued at \$1T+ with 70% women             | International Labour Organization (2022), *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture* |
| Only 1% of VC funding goes to female-founded teams          | Africa: The Big Deal (2024)  |
| 2.5x more revenue per dollar invested in women-led startups | Boston Consulting Group (2018), *Why Women-Owned Startups Are a Better Bet*                              |
| Women reinvest up to 90% of income into families            | UN Women (2023), *Progress of the World’s Women*   |
| Gender-diverse leadership increases profitability by 21%    | McKinsey & Company (2020), *Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters*                                       |



**“Investing in women is investing in the world’s future. They are the drivers of enterprise, the stewards of households, the guardians of culture, the architects of tomorrow’s prosperity. Progress accelerates wherever women are empowered.”**

**Rosemary Moshi**  
Founder & CEO, Bright Beginning Learning Centre

## Relevance to the Tanzanian Market

Tanzania illustrates how women’s economic participation directly drives national growth, they represent over 51% of the population and form the majority of the informal workforce, playing a central role in agriculture, and production and commerce. Their contribution is foundational to the economy, representing a critical but undercapitalized engine of productivity and growth. yet systemic barriers to finance, asset ownership, and market visibility persist (Bank of Tanzania, 2023; ILO, 2022).

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), women own or manage nearly 30% of MSMEs, most operating informally. Despite this, fewer than 15% of women entrepreneurs access formal credit or investment capital, creating a financing gap equivalent to approximately 4% of GDP (IFC & Bank of Tanzania, 2022). This disconnect between economic contribution and capital access positions Tanzania as a compelling proof of concept market for scalable gender-lens investment models

We view Tanzania not merely as a participant in Africa’s gender inclusive growth story but as a testing ground for innovation and capital transformation. By bridging finance, trade facilitation, and policy advocacy, PABH connects women entrepreneurs to regional investment flows, ensuring they move from the informal margins to the center of economic transformation.

## Opportunities for Gender Focused Investing in Tanzania

Tanzania offers high impact investment opportunities where women’s leadership directly drives productivity, trade expansion, and innovation.

Climate smart and digital financing can modernize women led agribusinesses, strengthening efficiency and resilience across value chains. Regional trade frameworks under the EAC and AfCFTA provide clear pathways for women owned enterprises to scale into manufacturing and export markets. At the same time, women’s strong adoption of mobile finance, clean energy, and decentralized distribution models positions the green and digital economy as a compelling platform for blended finance and inclusion driven growth.

| Indicator                        | Statistic                   | Source                  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Women in population              | 51%                         | NBS, 2023               |
| Women-led MSMEs                  | 28–30% of total MSMEs       | NBS, SME Survey         |
| Access to formal credit          | <15% of women entrepreneurs | BoT & IFC, 2022         |
| Women in agriculture workforce   | 65–70%                      | FAO, 2022               |
| Contribution to informal economy | 70%+                        | ILO, 2022               |
| Mobile money usage among women   | 55% of adult women          | Finscope Tanzania, 2023 |



**“Every jar we produce tells a story of Tanzanian soil, women’s hands, and resilience. We don’t just need funding , we need partners who believe that when local women led businesses grow, communities move forward with us.”**

**Emima Urio**  
**Managing Director, Nana Natural Products**

### **PABH’s Gender Lens Investment Strategy**

At Pan African Business Hub (PABH), gender inclusion is not a checkbox , it is a core investment principle embedded in every decision we make. We believe that sustainable growth emerges when capital aligns with women’s leadership, economic participation, and community impact.. Our Gender Lens Investment (GLI) framework ensures that women are integrated throughout the value chain , as founders, leaders, suppliers, distributors, and consumers; driving both financial and social returns.

Our strategy is built on four key pillars:

- 1. Access to Finance :** We connect women led MSMEs with investors and capital partners, bridging financing gaps that hinder scale and competitiveness.
- 2. Trade Facilitation:** We expand regional and Pan African trade networks that open new markets for women-owned enterprises in agriculture, manufacturing, and services.
- 3. Policy Advocacy:** We promote gender-responsive investment and procurement frameworks to foster a more inclusive business environment.
- 4. Impact Measurement:** We track outcomes against UN SDGs 5, 8, 9, and 10, ensuring accountability and alignment with global sustainability standards.

Through this integrated approach, PABH is building a circular and inclusive growth model, one where women’s full participation fuels productivity, innovation, and shared prosperity across Africa.

### **Expected Outcomes (2025–2030)**

Over the next five years, Pan African Business Hub (PABH) aims to translate its Gender lens investment strategy into measurable, continent wide impact.. Our targets focus on financing, job creation, and capital mobilization, ensuring that women are positioned not only as beneficiaries of growth but as its primary architects.

| Outcome Area                  | Target   | Indicator   |
|-------------------------------|----------|---|
| Women led businesses financed | 500+     | Direct GLI investments supporting scalable enterprises                  |
| Jobs created for women        | 100,000+ | Across trade and MSME value chains through inclusive growth initiatives |
| Women owned export businesses | 200+     | Enabled through PABH and regional trade corridors                       |
| Capital mobilized             | USD 100M | Through public private co-investments and blended finance vehicles      |
| Portfolio with gender balance | ≥50%     | Women led or co-led enterprises across the PABH portfolio               |

These targets reflect PABH’s commitment to building a gender balanced investment ecosystem. By combining capital facilitation, trade access, and policy advocacy, we are laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and competitive African economy, where women’s participation drives productivity, resilience, and sustainable growth.

## Our Commitment

Women are central to Africa's economic landscape, they are its driving force. From households to boardrooms, from informal markets to high growth enterprises, women represent the continent's most under leveraged engine of inclusive prosperity and sustainable transformation.

At Pan African Business Hub (PABH), we turn this understanding into action by creating capital flows for women entrepreneurs, promoting trade for women led SMEs, and aligning investments with quantifiable gender and development results.

Our purpose is defined: "To ignite Africa's forthcoming trillion dollar growth surge, spearheaded by women, founded on inclusivity, and upheld by creativity."



**Siah Margareth Paul**

Founding Partner & Managing Director

## Our Partners

