

# „Powered by women“: economic participation promotes growth

Women in developing and emerging countries play an important and often underestimated role in care-giving and securing their family's income. They work in the farming industry, in processing and in sales. But still it is generally women who have little access to education, land ownership and bank loans. The economic potential of women remains untapped. Equitable participation in economic life would not only improve women's rights but also promote economic growth in these countries.

To mark International Women's Day, Import Promotion Desk (IPD) presents three female entrepreneurs from Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and Colombia, who illustrate the enormous potential of women's participation in economic life. IPD is active in 14 developing and emerging countries, supporting small and medium-sized companies with exports to the European market. The initiative is implemented by the globally active development organisation of German industry, sequa gGmbH, in close cooperation with the Federation of German Wholesale, Foreign Trade and Services (BGA). IPD is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)



## **A SUCCESSFUL TEAM OF WOMEN**

“Founded by women and powered by women” – that is what the Brundo Spice Company from Modjo in Ethiopia is most proud of. 85 percent of its 47-strong team are women. One of these is Fettelework Tefferi, founder and CEO of the Brundo Spice Company. This born entrepreneur opened an Ethiopian restaurant in the United States around 30 years ago. But she soon realised that obtaining typically Ethiopian ingredients and spices was difficult, not least because of a lack of reliable supply chains. So Tefferi decided to produce the Ethiopian spices herself and take control of the supply chain.

She founded Brundo Spice in Modjo and very soon the company was supplying herbs, spices and spice mixes from Ethiopia not only to her restaurant, but also to other traders. IPD is now assisting in bringing the aromatic portfolio of Brundo Spice to the European market.



The team in Modjo grows the plants and ingredients for the spice mixes itself and also works with small farmers in the region. In addition to growing, harvesting and processing, the team is also responsible for producing typical Ethiopian spice blends. So the product range includes not only dried fenugreek seeds, white and black cumin, black cardamom and Ethiopian basil, to name but a few, but also various blends of chilli peppers, such as berbere and mitmita.



### WELL-PAID SPECIALISTS

Savour Route is an enterprise from Sri Lanka specialising in the production of high-quality Ceylon cinnamon. Founded in 2020 during the corona pandemic, the company had a difficult start-up phase. It has been in the IPD programme since 2021 and IPD experts have already been able to establish initial contacts to European importers. Senuri Gamage, the founder of Savour Route, is convinced that the fine and aromatic Ceylon cinnamon she and her team produce will be a sought-after commodity on the international market. It is a little known fact that the production of Ceylon cinnamon is a combination of art and expertise that is unique to Sri Lanka and has been passed from generation to generation for hundreds of years. It requires a great deal of experience and skilled craftsmanship, because Ceylon cinnamon sticks consist of several sheets of extremely finely shaved bark of the cinnamon tree.



The team from Savour Route – 90 percent of which are women – are experts in handling the tree trunks and in the delicate shaving of their inner bark. Many of the employees have worked in the cinnamon industry for a number of years and have honed their skills over time. As specialists in the production of Ceylon cinnamon, they are very well paid. According to Gamage, most are the main breadwinners in their families and also pay for their children's education. For others, Savour Route provides an opportunity to learn a skill and attain additional qualifications. For founder Gamage it was important to create job opportunities for women, thus giving them more financial independence.



### ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND A CHANCE OF PROMOTION

Natalia Moranth founded Montana Fruits in 2018. After spending some time working abroad, her main motivation was to achieve more international recognition for her homeland of Colombia and promote the Colombian farming industry. IPD has been supporting her in this since 2019 and presented the company at international trade fairs like Fruit Logistica. Together with like-minded partners, Montana Fruits specialises in the production of fresh avocados and passion fruit. The company sets high quality standards and works closely with small farmers in the region to support them in the farming process and guarantee standards.



Today, Montana Fruits has around 100 employees and 65 percent of the Montana team are women. It is important to Moranth to not only offer women a job and a chance to earn money, but also to provide support and further training and help in planning their professional development. For this reason, financial support is also offered for external training courses. Natalia Moranth is proud that a number of women at Montana Fruits have already used these opportunities and achieved promotion. Many of the management positions in production and administration at Montana Fruits are held by women.

### IMPORT PROMOTION DESK (IPD) IS AN INITIATIVE FOR IMPORT PROMOTION IN GERMANY.

IPD is currently active in 14 countries: Egypt, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Indonesia, Colombia, Morocco, Nepal, Peru, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

The objective is to integrate the partner countries into global trade, thereby contributing towards sustainable economic development in these countries.

IPD focusses on specific product groups: fresh produce, natural ingredients for foods, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, sustainable wood products, cut flowers and sustainable tourism.

IPD introduces exporters from its partner countries to the EU market and assists them in setting up trading relations.

For European importers, the IPD opens up new supply sources in the partner countries and assists them in the procurement process for specific products.

Further Information: [www.importpromotiondesk.de](http://www.importpromotiondesk.de)

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