



World Assembly for Women: WAW!2022 Concept Note

(Reference) Current Situation and Challenges Concerning Women and Startups

One of the driving forces for growth in times of uncertainty is entrepreneurship. Every year, more and more women are starting their own businesses, and it is said that one out of every three entrepreneurs in the world is a woman. However, most of the entrepreneurship by women is in small businesses, mainly in the retail and service sectors, and women are rarely seen in larger industries such as construction and energy. Many structural or cultural barriers exist in the background.

For example, women's access to capital and know-how is relatively limited. In addition, there is a sociocultural lack of understanding about women's entrepreneurship, which makes it difficult for them to build networks of connection and access information about business opportunities and the industry ^(Note1).

Amidst many challenges, efforts have been made to address the issue of financing, which is a hurdle for many female entrepreneurs. At the G20 Summit in 2017, the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) was launched in order to help women entrepreneurs in developing countries overcome challenges they face, such as access to finance and legal systems that are disadvantaged to women.

In Japan, a support program is being implemented to facilitate information exchange and networking between women who want to start their own businesses and their potential supporters. The frameworks of support are also expanding nationwide, as some local governments have held basic entrepreneurship courses for those interested, consultations on start-up loans, and workshops on marketing and other topics. Financial institutions are also

increasingly providing support for the brushing up of business plans ^(Note2).

Entrepreneurship is one of the working style options for women's economic activities that enables them to turn their interests into a profession and balance work and life events such as marriage and childbirth, as they can make their own decisions. It is also a way for women to achieve professional self-fulfillment and economic independence, leading to the revitalization of the economy ^(Note3). With population outflow from rural areas to cities becoming a challenge in many countries, women's entrepreneurship may become a possible solution.

At the WAW! 2022, we will share the current situation of entrepreneurship by women in various countries and efforts to promote it, while deepening discussions on more robust support measures.

(Note1) [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, “2020/21 Women’s Entrepreneurship Report: Thriving through Crisis”](#)

(Note2) [経済産業省, “女性起業家支援ノウハウ集”](#) (Japanese)

(Note3) [Ibid.](#) (Japanese)