

There are thousands of incredible women business owners in Eastern Africa and elsewhere; each with a unique story.

Episode 1: Santa Joyce Laker – Ecclesiastes Uganda Limited

In our first episode we focus on Santa Joyce Laker of Ecclesiastes Uganda Limited. Ecclesiastes is based in Northern Uganda.

Santa Joyce left public service in 1991. She began her business in Northern Uganda (her home) in 1996. Santa's driving force was the desire to be her own boss. Success not being guaranteed in the first attempt, she tried many businesses and failed. However, she settled on businesses based on two of her passions; love for art and craft, and sesame (also called simsim in Uganda). Sesame / simsim is a traditional agricultural product in Northern Uganda and so Santa Joyce was naturally drawn to it. Her art and craft product lines are recycled paper beads, basketry, and clay pots. She has successfully helped thousands of other women in Northern Uganda (many who previously resided in Internally Displaced People Camps) build businesses out of these traditional activities.

What you'll hear in this episode:

- Santa Joyce's journey to starting a business.
- The products in her two businesses - art and crafts and sesame / simsim.
- How her businesses are connected to her community.
- The benefits of, increasing interest in and growing demand for sesame / simsim.
- Her source of business funding.
- The value of processing equipment.
- Santa Joyce's 2020 and 2025 sesame / simsim dreams.
- Santa Joyce's participation in the development of an East African sesame / simsim standard (<https://bit.ly/2FLwG9e>); as part of a TradeMark East Africa (www.trademarka.com) and SEATINI (<http://www.seatiniuganda.org/>) project.
- The importance of proper sesame / simsim handling.
- The value of product certification by Uganda National Bureau of Standards (<https://www.unbs.go.ug/>).
- A business lesson Santa Joyce has learned over the years.
- Santa Joyce's advice to anyone thinking of starting a business.

We would love to hear from you:

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