

MARCH 2021 ISSUE

Females on the frontline

As we celebrate International Women's Day, we share the words of some inspiring female ACCA members showcased in AB in recent months

SHARE 





Busola Doregos FCCA, FD, Uganda Breweries

‘As I progressed through school, I became increasingly intrigued by the few women who had become professional accountants in Nigeria at the time.

‘I was very good at mathematics and at school they once asked us to write an essay on what we wanted to become in the future. I remember reading about Olutoyin Olakunri, the first female chartered accountant in Nigeria, and wondering why there were few females in the field at the time. The profession seemed to be male dominated. When things seem difficult, that’s when I’m always more interested.’

Read the full interview

Katarzyna Matuszczyk FCCA, central Europe finance director, The Walt Disney Company

'My biggest achievement so far is being a working mum. I had the good example of my own mother. I deeply believe that women who decide to have both children and career are more organised, motivated and efficient, but at the same time far more empathetic and people-oriented, so perfect material for managers and employees.'

Read the full interview





Lynda Redman FCCA, FD of the Dart Marina Hotel

'Family life intervened during my first year of ACCA study, in the early 1990s. My husband was in the Royal Navy and we were posted to Yorkshire. When we were moved to Cornwall a few years later, with two small children, I struggled to find work. I was getting turned down for roles, so I booked an appointment as a potential client with an accountancy firm and asked why they wouldn't employ me. They said I was too much of a risk as a mother with young children.

'So I took a job as a playgroup supervisor, started my AAT studies and then moved into industry. I found I was being asked questions I didn't know the answer to, so I started training with ACCA. The ACCA studies were so relevant to my role, and I developed skills I use every day.'

Cecilia Zimba FCCA, president of Zambia Institute of Chartered Accountants

'We have plans to promote financial literacy among our female parliamentarians and to run programmes that will help them interpret financial information, such as the budgets and public accounts that are presented to them.

'Given that the ZICA's membership is largely male, my appointment as president was an endorsement from my male counterparts, and it demonstrates that the people are progressive. They are not looking at your gender; they are looking at what you are able to deliver. That really warms my heart.'

Read the full interview



READING: **Females on the frontline**



Becky Glover ACCA, co-founder of start-up Elizabeth Rose Wines and FD of VNC Automotive

'People ask me how I deal with it all, but actually I get a lot of help. With my partner being a busy CFO, we use a housekeeper to manage the chores and have a dog-walker, and delegate wherever we can. We genuinely believe in focus. Other stuff is noise.'

'I'm driven by something you absolutely must have in the wine trade: passion. If you really enjoy something, it doesn't feel like work.'

Read the full interview

'There used to be very few women in the profession here in Zambia, but recently more and more are picking up the ACCA banner. When young women training as accountants hear about me and where I have got to, and that I am an ACCA member and advocate, it's very motivating for them. I want to be an inspiration for that girl who decides she wants to be the next commissioner finance of the ZRA.'

Read the full interview



READING: **Females on the frontline**



Bano Sheikh FCCA, audit partner, KPMG

'Even though I had been studying accountancy and business studies, I had been told that "girls don't do accountancy". But after discussions with my father and uncle, and amid warnings about how male-dominated the profession was, I simply said: "Let me try". I could either fail and learn from the experience or fly and be more successful.

'I was one of three out of a class of 50 who passed the foundation accountancy exam and, in fact, was one of the very first people – male or female – to study for the ACCA Qualification in Pakistan.

'When I returned to Dubai where I joined KPMG, I said to myself that I didn't want to be unhappy. I didn't know the expression "breaking ceilings", but I knew I needed to take a leap of

'There is still much to do to improve diversity within the accountancy profession. Change does not happen overnight. But I want to do my best to encourage people to live their dreams. Even if you fail, you will learn, so grab them and hold on to them.'

Read the full interview

Mildred Mutesa FCCA, CEO, Zambia National Building Society

'I grew up in small town in eastern Zambia, the daughter of a widowed single mother of four, with no formal job. My mother's resolve to educate her children despite many challenges ignited in me a passion to excel and a determination that my future would not be limited by my early circumstances.

Man or woman, if you want something badly enough and are willing to work for it, you can achieve. I hope to raise my two girls, and indeed my son, to know that their gender and current circumstances are just a statement of fact and not a limiting factor.'

Read Mutesa's AB interview



READING: **Females on the frontline**



Karen Malone FCCA, founding partner of global specialist fund administrator Centaur

'If you look at the best teams, they'll always be more successful the more diverse they are. We have over 20 nationalities working in Centaur and a 54% to 46% male/female ratio. That happened without us making any interventions. If you have an open mind you hire right.'

Read the full interview

Maryam Adefarati FCCA, co-founder, Babalola Adefarati Foundation, ACCA Council member

READING: **Females on the frontline**

get opportunities despite being female and not being a member of the “boys club”. However, there is a need for more flexibility – more opportunities to work from home, job sharing, senior part-time roles, etc.

‘A lot of women like me enjoy being an accountant, but we also love to spend quality time with family, which becomes more difficult as you occupy senior positions. Limited flexibility, especially at the reporting periods, requires accountants to spend long hours at the office. I have missed important moments in my children’s lives because of work commitments.

‘For a long time I didn’t have female mentors I could have “real” discussions with about challenges I was having at work. Most of the time I would be the most senior female in finance at the companies with which I was working. Providing a platform for female mentorship would help a great deal.’

Read more about Maryam Adefarati



READING: **Females on the frontline**



Caroline McLuckie FCCA, CFO of Basketball New South Wales

'In New South Wales, basketball is a strongly growing sport. Gender-wise we are getting closer to parity each year, currently with 29% girls, 71% boys, which is encouraging. The community we have is full of people bringing great ideas and fresh enthusiasm, and the Women's Basketball World Cup being held in Sydney in 2022 will be a huge boost for the sport.'

[Read the full interview](#)

Sim Siew Shan FCCA, CFO at AirAsia

READING: **Females on the frontline**

and that they had to be able to manage their schedule, do their homework, get themselves in bed on time. As a result my daughter has become more independent.'

Read the full interview



Further information

Join ACCA's **webinar** on 8 March, celebrating International Women's Day 2021 with Ainslie Van Onselen, chief executive of CA ANZ, and Helen Brand, chief executive of ACCA.

They'll be talking to host Poorna Bell about their journeys to CEO and sharing their

RECOMMENDED READING



IN BUSINESS

The case for equality

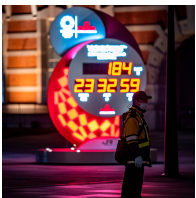
READ



ACCA NEWS

Experiences of female CEOs

READ



IN BUSINESS

Can Olympics cross finishing line?

READ



IN PRACTICE

New hub for small practitioners

READ

ADVERTISEMENT



READING: **Females on the frontline**

Related topics

Work and wellbeing
.....

IN THIS ISSUE

NEXT ARTICLE



MARCH 2021 ISSUE

Advocate winners

[READ](#)

PREVIOUS ARTICLE



MARCH 2021 ISSUE

Experiences of female CEOs

[READ](#)

Contact ACCA
Help & Support
Legal & Copyright

ACCA Think Ahead