

Developing Women's Creativity: A Key to Change the Future



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— **HAN Mi-Young** I would like to introduce examples of how creativity empowers women economically. The process in which creative ideas lead to economic empowerment deserves attention.

— **LEE Ga-yeon** Wooshin NTI operates businesses, leveraging cooking oil refining technologies. The company has won the Presidential Prize for the development of anti-oxidation equipment. The invention is significant in that it reduces energy consumption and mitigates environmental pollution resulting from an increase in deep-fried food in today's diet. Notably, one of its inventions, the Air Belt, is regarded as an industry-grade technology, which can collect and use the heat generated by fryers. From an economical perspective, Wooshin NTI's technologies help reduce imports of cooking oil and process used cooking oil in a more cost-effective way.

An invention usually begins from an idea of how to solve an inconvenience and improve everyday life. Inconveniences that I had experienced using cooking oil prompted me to come up with new ideas. Translating these ideas into inventions was not without difficulties. In particular, my inventions at first did not receive much attention until trans-

fats, or trans-unsaturated fatty acids, emerged as a major health issue. Even so, technology R&D and product improvements were a time-consuming and capital-intensive process. Despite these difficulties, it was the support from related organizations that sustained and expanded our business. I believe the tenacity of a woman has also played a significant role in weathering rough seas.

— **LEE Jung-mi** The key driver for success was creativity. Despite various challenges, focusing on enhancing creativity and developing ideas led to economic empowerment. An invention does not have to start big, but rather begins with thinking about how to change our everyday life for better. Inventions introduced today are the result of inspiration found in everyday life. In the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, I felt the need to take action economically and determined that having good business ideas was the way to go. As it takes time and investment to turn ideas into economic benefits, it was quite burdensome in the beginning. However, I was able to make incremental achievements thanks to the support from organizations for women inventors.

— **NA Kyungja** I saw the need for at-home healthcare

equipment and came to learn about a special carbon heater and developed a product using this technology. As a female entrepreneur, I hit a wall in funding and marketing during our post-development stage. Then, I came across the Korea Women Inventors Association and the World Women Inventors and Entrepreneurs Association. I learned that there are programs to support female entrepreneurs. Afterwards, I contacted various organizations such as the Korea International Trade Association, the Small Business Distribution Center and the Small & Medium Business Corporation, and thanks to their support, my company has expanded beyond Korea to Japan, the U.K. and the U.S. I would like to highlight that support from such organizations is instrumental for women inventors and entrepreneurs.

[Q & A]

Q. Please share with fledgling female entrepreneurs the difficulties, trials and mistakes that you experienced running a business.

A. LEE Jung-mi Support from related organizations and associations are of great help. As initial capital investments alone are not sufficient to address all the issues that may arise, it is important to contact related organizations for professional consultations and assistance.

Keywords

women, creativity, idea, invention, entrepreneurs



Policy Implications

- With the arrival of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, creativity will likely increase in importance in the future.
- It is not just scientists and technical experts who can be inventors, but also ordinary people, not to mention women, who can invent products which begin with small ideas.
- When the perceptiveness, attention to detail and creativity of women are backed by government support, this magnifies women's economic empowerment.
- Women's economic empowerment is critical in the context of gender equality and as a driving force in the future of society as driven by a knowledge economy.
- Going forward, it is essential to systematically establish and implement policies to support women to develop their creativity and pursue entrepreneurial activities.