

# Gender

## Empowering women in blockchain: A journey of inclusion, innovation across Africa

By Yaliwe Mlambo

**T**HE blockchain and cryptocurrency industry has undergone significant changes over the past few years, particularly in terms of gender diversity. What was once a male-dominated space is gradually becoming more inclusive, with an increasing number of women stepping into roles that drive innovation and growth.

Reflecting on my own experience in this industry, I have witnessed firsthand the evolution from scepticism to acceptance, as more women have joined the blockchain revolution and proven their capabilities.

### Breaking barriers: A personal reflection

When I first entered the blockchain industry, there were very few women, and a lack of confidence was prevalent—not just among women, but also in how others perceived our abilities. Early on, I encountered situations where my competence was questioned, but as I began to take on more responsibilities and grow within the space, these doubts began to fade. Today, it is encouraging to see many more women actively participating and contributing to the industry, bringing fresh perspectives and innovative solutions.

### Venturing into blockchain: No formula, just courage

For women looking to venture into crypto and blockchain, there's no one-size-fits-all approach. The beauty of this industry lies in its openness and accessibility. Whether through educational initiatives, trading on exchanges or simply exploring technology, there are countless entry points. The key is not to be intimidated. This is a space where anyone can thrive, regardless of background or experience.

Women have made significant contributions to the fintech and blockchain industries, often through the creation of educational initiatives, the forming of women's groups and the development of products tailored to local markets. In Africa, for example, several women have launched local exchanges and other blockchain-based products, demonstrating that women are not only participating but are also leading innovation in this field. Organisations have been instrumental in this progress.

Their active presence across Africa has provided women with crucial resources, including educational programmes, workshops and equity-free grants. These initiatives empower women to create, innovate and scale products that address both local and global challenges. By offering such support, Binance, for instance, helps to build a more inclusive and diverse fintech ecosystem, ensuring that women have the tools and confidence needed to succeed in this space.

### Blockchain's societal impact: Empowering communities

Blockchain and cryptocurrency have brought about empowerment in ways that are both profound and far-reaching. This technology has created job opportunities, connected people across continents and provided a platform for financial inclusion. In many cases, individuals in Africa can now access global opportunities in the blockchain space, which would have been unimaginable just a few years ago. This empowerment is especially significant for women, who can leverage blockchain and decentralised finance (DeFi) to gain economic independence.

### Economic empowerment through blockchain and DeFi

Blockchain offers numerous opportunities for women to take control of their financial futures. Many blockchain organisations offer equity-free

grants that women can apply for to develop products, grow ecosystems and build communities. The decentralised nature of blockchain provides a sense of sovereignty and ownership, allowing women to pursue their goals without being tethered to traditional financial systems.

### Use cases: Blockchain for social good

In Zambia, for example, I have worked on projects that use blockchain for social good. One initiative involved educating local communities about blockchain and using the technology to empower youth. We took children off the streets, encouraged positive behaviour and rewarded their participation with cryptocurrency. This not only provided immediate incentives but also showcased the long-term potential of blockchain to create positive social change.

### Bridging gaps across the continent

One of the leading forces in driving blockchain adoption and innovation across Africa is Binance Africa. Binance has been instrumental in providing access to cryptocurrency and blockchain technology to millions of people across the continent, including women. Through various initiatives, Binance Africa has not only introduced people to the world of digital finance but has created opportunities for education, entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.

Binance Africa's efforts in promoting financial inclusion and literacy are particularly noteworthy. The organisation has hosted numerous educational programmes and webinars focused on blockchain technology, specifically targeting women and underrepresented groups. By offering free resources, tutorials and access to trading platforms, Binance has empowered women across Africa to take control of their financial futures and actively participate in the global digital economy.

Furthermore, Binance Africa's commitment to supporting women in blockchain is evident in its partnerships with local organisations and its sponsorship of events that celebrate women's achievements in the industry. These initiatives have helped create a supportive community where women can network, share knowledge and collaborate on projects that drive innovation in the blockchain space.

One of the biggest challenges women face in blockchain is the initial lack of

confidence from others. I experienced this firsthand when people were sceptical of my expertise, simply because I was a woman. However, as more women demonstrate their knowledge and capabilities, these attitudes are shifting. Today, women are being embraced in the space, and it's becoming an increasingly supportive environment.

### Networks and communities supporting women in blockchain

Organisations like the United Africa Blockchain Association and a leading player on the continent have taken up the mantle and are in charge. There are now more networks and communities that support women in blockchain than ever before. Initiatives such as Women in Blockchain and AI, hosted by the United Africa Blockchain Association, are dedicated to educating and empowering women in this space. These communities provide valuable resources, mentorship and opportunities for women to thrive in blockchain.

### Collaboration for greater impact

Educational institutions and companies can collaborate to promote blockchain education among women by developing targeted courses, content and events that resonate with women's experiences and aspirations. Providing financial assistance to programmes that focus on women in blockchain can further create awareness and bring more women to the table.

### Advice for young women

For young women interested in pursuing a career in blockchain and cryptocurrencies, my advice is simple: go for it. There are no experts; we are all learning as we go. The blockchain space is full of opportunities, and with the right mindset and determination, there's no limit to what you can achieve.

### Policy changes for inclusion

Government initiatives and policy changes can play a crucial role in supporting the inclusion of more women in blockchain. By legitimising the space and creating awareness, governments can help people overcome scepticism and fear, encouraging more women to participate in this transformative industry.

In conclusion, the blockchain industry is evolving and women are playing a pivotal role in this transformation. With the support of organisations such as the United Africa Blockchain Association, more women are stepping into the blockchain world, driving innovation and creating a more inclusive digital future for all.

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• Young ladies after a training in blockchain