



**Global
Entrepreneurship
Monitor**

GEM Brazil Impact Story

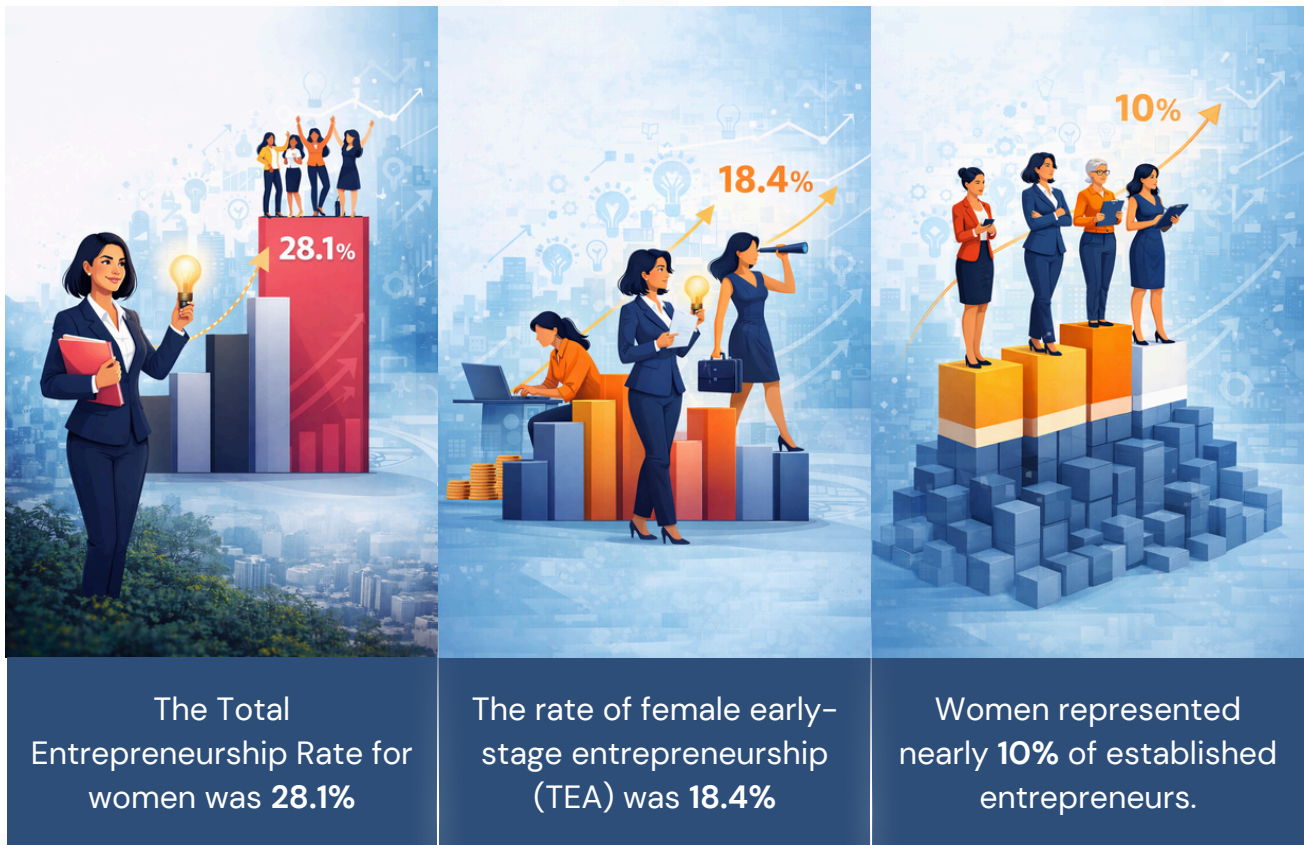
**Empowering Underrepresented Entrepreneurs
through Segmented Policy Action**



Empowering Underrepresented Entrepreneurs through Segmented Policy Action

For decades, Brazil has faced a significant gender gap in entrepreneurship. In 2022, women made up 52% of the Brazilian population according to the [IBGE](#) (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics). However, they accounted for only 34% of business owners, according to IBGE and [SEBRAE](#) (Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service).

The [GEM 2024 Brazil National Report](#) data on women's entrepreneurship showed that:



SEBRAE¹ is a private organisation that promotes the competitiveness and sustainable development of micro and small enterprises. While it does not create public policy, it plays an important role in advocating for SMEs before the federal government and other political bodies. SEBRAE has been the main sponsor of GEM Brazil since 2000.

Based on GEM data and broader IBGE statistics, SEBRAE sought to raise the profile of women's entrepreneurship and address the persistent underrepresentation of Brazilian women business owners by launching the [SEBRAE Delas Programme](#) and the [SEBRAE Business Woman Award in 2019](#). GEM reports on female entrepreneurship were instrumental in highlighting the need for tailored support for women, directly influencing the creation of both initiatives.

¹ The organisation dates back to 1972 when the Brazilian Center for Managerial Assistance to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises - Cebrae - was created, as an entity linked to the Federal Government. In October 1990, it was transformed into Sebrae (Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service), detaching itself from the public administration and becoming an autonomous, non-profit social service.

The nationwide SEBRAE Delas Programme aims to promote and strengthen female entrepreneurship. The programme was designed to bridge the entrepreneurial gender gap by empowering women with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to start and grow their own businesses. It is structured around three core pillars aimed at providing a comprehensive approach to entrepreneurial success:



ME (personal development)



MY (business and project development)



WE (networking and collective support)

The participant journey typically begins with registration through a local SEBRAE office or online. From there, the participants engage in a series of workshops, courses, and coaching sessions tailored to their entrepreneurial stage, whether they are exploring an idea or managing an existing business. The programme helps them develop key business skills such as financial literacy, marketing strategy, and digital tools while also addressing mindset and leadership development. Participants may also connect with consultants or mentors for individualised guidance.

Participation in SEBRAE Delas is generally open and inclusive. There is not a highly selective application process, making the programme accessible to women from all backgrounds. SEBRAE's goal is to foster a culture of entrepreneurship among women by reducing structural barriers and encouraging long-term growth.

The SEBRAE Women in Business Award honors women in five categories. Between 2019 and 2024, more than 400,000 women participated in the programme. One such individual is Noanny Guimarães Maia. She was selected as one of the 2024 winners for her life story and entrepreneurial success.

In 2018, she founded Canoa Marketing, an agency focused on supporting businesses that rely on forest resources. In 2020, after her father passed away from COVID-19, she returned to her hometown to be with her family. While there, together with her mother and sister, she opened a second business – Cacauaré Amazônia – rooted in the family’s long tradition of cacao cultivation and specialising in products made from native Amazonian cacao.

She received the award because her business links the cultural heritage of cacao with modern bioeconomy and sustainability practices. Led by women and benefiting historically vulnerable communities, it stands as an example of inclusive and transformative entrepreneurship. The company promotes forest preservation, celebrates Amazonian culture, and generates income for local communities – exactly the type of impact recognised by the SEBRAE Business Woman Award.

These initiatives have generated significant impact on increasing the visibility, confidence, and capabilities of women-led businesses throughout Brazil. More than 100,000 women have participated in the awards programme, more than 200 women have been honoured with the SEBRAE Business Woman Award, and more than 500,000 women were assisted by SEBRAE Delas.

BRAZIL – Women Assisted by ‘Sebrae Delas’ (Cumulative)

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 <small>(estimate)</small>
589	4,855	9,887	24,832	302,466	500,000

In addition, the GEM Brazil team has produced detailed reports over the past decade, segmented by sex, race/color, and age group. This analysis has consistently revealed persistent gaps in entrepreneurship participation among underrepresented groups – particularly women, black entrepreneurs, low-income individuals, and LGBTQI+ individuals – and showed the barriers they face, such as necessity driven entrepreneurship, lower income levels and limited business ownership.

In 2023, SEBRAE created a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Entrepreneurship Unit (DIEU), to support such underrepresented groups.



Margarete Coelho (on the left) is the director in charge of Sebrae-NA's Women's Entrepreneurship Program

GEM insights validated the need for this tailored support and informed SEBRAE's strategy to create specific programmes. The data is contributing to shaping inclusive policy and programming (actions are still being developed). The data helps serve as both a diagnostic tool and a benchmark for tracking progress and evaluating the impact of SEBRAE's efforts.



DELAS Summit 2024 — Florianópolis (SC): 8,000 women gathered in person for 16 hours of programming, featuring 100+ speakers and 300 exhibitors

The GEM Brazil team has cultivated a long-standing relationship with SEBRAE, particularly through its Strategy and Transformation Unit (STU). To ensure visibility and engagement, GEM Brazil hosts an annual open seminar featuring discussions with academics, programme managers, and opinionleaders. Collaborating with partners such as ANEGEPE (the National Association for Studies in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management) and SEBRAE also amplifies GEM findings through national media, ensuring broad awareness and impact.



Website of Sebrae-NA's Women's Entrepreneurship Program

Marco Aurélio Bedê is a representative of GEM Brazil's sponsor – SEBRAE. Rose Mary A. Lopes is President of ANEGEPE and a member of the GEM Brazil Team.