

Jumia Food promotes gender diversity through female rider recruitment

According to Jumia Food Kenya's new MD, Shreenal Ruparelia, there is a need for gender diversity as well as the creation of equal opportunities in the growing e-commerce industry. To address this, the online food delivery company has launched an initiative aimed at recruiting more female riders; who act as the link between their partner restaurants and customers.



Quoting a 2016 report by McKinsey which places women at 25% share in male-dominated fields, celebrating female riders, whom the MD terms as heroes, she noted that the gender gap in the workforce is quite prevalent throughout all levels, citing what she refers to as “societal beliefs” as a major cause.

Mitchelle Khaemba, the company's first female rider reiterates on the MD's comments as she narrates her experience as “economically uplifting for women and a gateway for women to create a foundation for talent exploration to greater heights”. Michelle, who works alongside her husband Thomas Khaemba, says the decision to join the Jumia Food fleet was well supported by her husband, even though her neighbours and extended family still act surprised by her otherwise “manly” occupation.

“Although a lot has been achieved in creating equal opportunities, women are still particularly vulnerable to masculine stereotypes, which can range from seemingly passive gestures to extremely suggestive verbal intonations; being affirmative and bearing your family's support is quite essential in order to excel,” states Michelle.



Shreenal Ruparelia appointed new MD of Jumia Food

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Currently, Jumia Food employs over sixty riders, with an expansion plan keen on recruiting more female riders. Such is welcome news for Michelle, who says her tenure so far has served as a reassurance to women that it is possible to excel and attain growth on and off the road. Her peers, as she explains view her more as a colleague as opposed to a woman; which has been instrumental in creating great teamwork and synergy needed to attain set goals.

Logistics and delivery is an integral part of the e-commerce chain, the riders, therefore, are trained to complete the processes by overcoming challenges such as weather changes, traffic and other human factors.

Michelle expresses her desire to see more women take active roles in traditionally-masculine pursuits and welcomes the move by her employer to recruit more women riders to serve the online food ordering app. “It’s not just about being fair or correct, it’s about creating grounds where women feel well accommodated and safe as they pursue economic activities.”

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