



# Where are the female accountants?

By CPA Sophia Mbiti

**W**hat's rather odd in career pursuit is that most girls hate mathematics and this is unjustified statement that can not be proved and should not make women consider professions like accounting not theirs.

As the society and technologies change, more women are choosing to be accountants and find themselves managing it with excellence just like their male counterparts.

In quick analysis, women need to have both careers and families balanced and in the course, motivate others to pursue accounting, for instance, because it involves financial transactions right from the households to the businesses they run including salaried jobs.

It is easier for young women to find confidence and start pursuing careers in areas traditionally dominated by men, because what is considered is merit, not otherwise, so that they become role models and mentor young female accountants.

Although a lot of women are enrolling in accounting and professionally become competent and represent their institutions, their numbers are declining as they ascend in hier-

archy in the positions.

This brings the question-why are women accountants not found in many high positions? I have been talking with different women in accounting industry and managed to gather some reasons, which come as:

- **Work-life balance:** High positions in accounting can be so demanding and posing a challenge for women to maintain in terms of balancing between work and health

- **Family:** In a way, it becomes hard for a woman to run a family and advance in a career in comparison to men, who are protected by cultures in the society.

- **Gender roles:** Women also face challenges in progressing into leadership roles in organizations, which rigidly subscribe to certain gender norm. Many organizations believe men are capable more than women without proving findings.

To counter these, it is high time for women to take positions in top managements and accounting sectors to challenge these stereotype ideas, because no research and data can justify that women should be in the periphery or remain as observers in the management of institutions. For that matter, I would

suggest the following:

- **Women should take part in acquiring knowledge of accounting tools and technologies;** this includes essential business tools, computer programmes and specialized accounting technologies which will help to ease the accounting tasks ahead of them.

- **Time management:** As an accountant, a woman with such career must have multiple upcoming deadlines, meetings, tasks and be responsible in balancing work and family issues. This will help in cultivating a health by work-life balance.

- **Communication:** Communication is vital for every employee in every industry and accounting is no exception. Women must be able to communicate well verbally and in written form as expected. Women must have good communication skills to communicate with clients, coworkers and employers across several different mediums. A female accountant should be comfortable in translating figures and explaining complex financial concepts to people who do not understand accounting in a simple language.

- **Problem solving and critical thinking abilities:** Women in accounting you must be strong problem solvers and also critical thinkers with skills which show competence. It is not a must that they must have all the answers ready for problems to be addressed, but they must be capable to think outside the box and bring sensible solutions to circumstances.

For that matter, I encourage my fellow female accountants to take high-level positions in the accounting field without fear.

Position such as a partner in firms, financial controllers, financial managers, finance directors and other big post are not preserves of a particular sex. This will create a culture of leadership and inspire the next generation of female accountants to continue striving toward their own career advancement.

In Tanzania we have the Tanzania Society of Women Certified Accountants (TAWCA) and I encourage female accountants to join it, because it provides a supportive environment and valuable resources for its members to achieve their professional, personal and economic goals through networking and various programs.

The association also promotes those aspiring to become certified accountants and young girls to enroll in the accountancy profession and encourages them to explore their personal and professional ambitions. TAWCA members are inspiring to show in many ways that professionals, leaders, rising leaders and influencers are making a difference for women in the accounting profession.

– The author CPA Sophia Mbiti is Assistant Manager Finance at the Alliance Insurance Corporation LTD.