



## **Women Entrepreneurs in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

**By**

**Dr. Dorothy Minkus-McKenna**

**Professor, Department of Business & Executive Programs**

**University of Maryland University College (UMUC)**

**mimkusmck@aol.com**

January 2009

### **Abstract**

Although women entrepreneurs around the world suffer from numerous disadvantages such as discrimination, lack of business experience and limited access to financing, the challenges for women entrepreneurs may be more severe in Islamic countries where religion, cultural factors and lack of an entrepreneurial environment are additional deterrents. Despite this, a small but growing segment of women entrepreneurs exists, however the extent of women's endeavors is virtually unknown due to concerns about privacy and lack of rigorous academic research.

This report develops a sense of women entrepreneurs and their context is one of the first to focus on women entrepreneurship in an Islamic country. Hypotheses development proceeded by focusing on a leader within Islamic states ( Saudi Arabia), analysis of vehicles of mass culture such as news media, and assessment of factors through personal interviews.

The findings confirm that Islamic countries are nascent cultures for women entrepreneurs, but that they are present. Islamic women entrepreneurs attribute success and failure in different terms than do their western counterparts, and identify a wider set of obstacles and unique strategies to function well. This study serves as the foundation for further academic research into the topic of women's entrepreneurship in Islamic cultures. Given the exploratory nature of this study, it is recommended that this research be expanded to a statistically valid base within Saudi Arabia, and then to expand the study to additional countries.