

Each year, tons of aspiring entrepreneurs around the world struggle to get their start-ups off the ground. In fact, according to a *Forbes* magazine article, nine out of ten startups will fail. That's ninety percent of businesses with the odds set against them from the very conception of an idea. Not to mention where the crossroads of women's representation in the business world intersect with this long-standing problem. Studies show that 75% of businesses are male-owned - a stark statistic that shows just how much women's representation is lacking. And that's where Dr. Lilian Ajayi-Ore comes in. She is a women's rights activist who devotes her life to teaching and leveling the playing field for women who strive to succeed in the business world. I believe the efforts made by Dr. Lilian and those who help to keep the organization thriving are making a positive impact far beyond the immediate returns the establishment may observe.

Dr. Lilian earned her Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts from Harvard and her Master's and Doctorate in education from the University of Pennsylvania. She is currently a professor at NYU and an admissions counselor at Columbia all while growing and running a non-profit advocacy organization she founded about ten years ago. Her daily life alone is one of the many reasons she is so admirable, not to mention her tireless work for women's rights causes and making efforts to level the playing field for women in business. I had the luxury of taking one of her courses at NYU throughout the beginning of the spring in addition to interning at her organization, Global Connections for Women, or GC4W for short, which works to provide resources for women who need the support to start their own businesses, advance in their jobs, and more. She has

amassed a large following via the efforts made by the organization and has been able to positively influence the lives of thousands of people.

This large viewership totals upwards of five hundred thousand viewers on the site each year. That's one million eyes seeking business advice annually. The GC4W team focuses their efforts of appeasing this growing audience by consistently posting articles on their website while also posting regularly across all social media platforms. By providing their readers information to succeed in the business world, the organization is able to steadily increase its viewership over time. The articles, information, and advice are all entirely targeted toward women to encourage them to excel in this ever-changing industry. And while hardship is inevitable, having an organization that advocates for you during this difficult journey makes it all the more possible to attain success. Their messaging is entirely effective because they spread only positive ideas to their readers, shining light on the good things these aspiring entrepreneurs have to look forward to. We as teenagers, at the cusp of major social change in the country, should absorb this positive messaging Dr. Lilian and those a part of the organization spread and endeavor to build a better future where women have the same opportunities as men. In our current political state where women are being denied their basic reproductive rights, it's easy to be discouraged and feel like society is not progressing forward, but something that Dr. Lilian said in the interview I conducted with her stood out to me and I thought it was important to mention. "The good news is that there is some progress, and with progress comes a little bit of restitution in the sense that we are realizing that there are other things that are unbalanced. As you gain balance, there is going to be some rebalancement that needs to

happen and that's why you see that despite the tremendous progress that has already been made.”

In an opinion piece from *The New York Times*, the author states, “the power of our feminine character -- whatever we choose it to be” in reference to the boundless opportunities the feminist movement yields. And that's the key point I'm trying to make with this. Organizations such as GC4W and people like Dr. Lilian dedicate their time to bettering the current conditions of women's opportunities in the business world. Following the path they are on now, I have full confidence that the organization will rise to be one of the most widely recognized advocacy groups.

As we conclude our trip around GC4W's everlasting effects on society, it's important to give credit to Dr. Lilian and the team for the immense undertaking of work that goes into this organization each and every day. Dr. Lilian and those at GC4W are building a platform that is unmatched in viewership, retention, and outreach as a result of their relentless efforts of spreading their messages to the masses. As I mentioned earlier, the statistics show that nine out of every ten businesses fail, but with the power this organization holds now and forever, not only will our future contain more successful businesses, but more successful female-owned businesses. Thank you.