



Originally from Nigeria, I am a graduate in Food Science and business management. I grew a business from catering at home to developing a range of sauces and now opening a restaurant. Currently employing 7 people as well as myself and my husband.



Zeabahs Food

Name
Funke Egberongbe

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Ireland

Find out more
www.zeabahsfoods.ie

Motivation

It had always been a dream, but I was scared, having a job seemed an easier route, but my husband said owning your own business has always been your dream, so chase it. I had the training and my husband a boys were a huge support, and encouraged me

Your Story

I came to Ireland as a refugee and began cooking in the hostel where I was staying. I developed a love of cooking and then did a Bachelors Degree in Food Science and Business, followed by some Start Your Own Business courses. Nine years ago I started cooking at home for friends and then registered the business which grew from providing takeaway food from my home kitchen to developing a range of bottled sauces and now opening my own restaurant.



Challenges

No Business Background: I didn't have a business background in Nigeria, So I first did a 6 week start your own business course with the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) but that was not enough, so I went to college to do the four-year degree while still working part-time.

Finding a Premises: We had some savings and I thought funding the restaurant would be the biggest challenge but actually finding a premises proved to be the biggest challenge. The business had grown too big to be able to continue to operate from home. It took two years and I thought we would never find it so in that time I joined the Supervalu Food Academy and developed the bottled sauce business before finding the premises for the restaurant.



Acomplishments

Well I know the food I am cooking, it is from my home, my culture and community so people can trust they are getting an authentic product.

What interventions/ support did you receive?



The LEO supported me in the early days with courses, and taught me how to prepare a business plan, then supported me with mentorship sessions to help me prepare to seek funding. Sligo LEADER gave me support to fund an accountant who helped me prepare the application to the bank for funding. The bank was a huge surprise, I prepared the application, not expecting a positive response, but within an hour and a half, my application was fully approved. Also, I got huge support to study for my degree and a job at the college afterward which provided an income I could save from to put toward my business.

Were interventions specifically for underrepresented entrepreneurs?



Not really, the LEO and LEADER supports are available to everyone, and some additional supports if you are on a lower income, and the college support is available to everyone below a certain income.

Describe the impact of these interventions?



My degree gave me credibility, and the support in writing the business plan secured the bank funding that really allowed us to grow the business and open the restaurant.

What interventions or supports would help you achieve those plans and visions?



Nothing new, just the continued support of the customers and the bank, that they keep believing in us. Maybe my new consultancy business could be something to help others, a specific training or mentoring for immigrants

Future Plans

To really make the restaurant successful, expand the sauce business and I am thinking of starting a consultancy business to support people like me. people new to Ireland, who want to open a business but need to understand how that works in Ireland.



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