

"In some countries, the business environment for success is right, but female entrepreneurship is still low," the report said. "This is often due to social and cultural norms."

For example, in relatively prosperous countries like Japan or Turkey, social pressures make it harder for women to start or succeed in entrepreneurship. But social norms have been changing in Turkey.

"My father didn't discriminate. I was chosen (over male relatives) from childhood to be the head of the family's business," said Ahu Serter, an impressive Turkish female entrepreneur.

Serter easily could serve as the face of the "new" Turkey. Born into a small family business, her father forced her to earn her way through college and pay for a business education on her own.

When she entered the family auto-supply business, it was generating about \$10 million a year. She has helped grow it into a \$160 million enterprise today.

Independently, she acquired Mata Automotive, which under her ownership now supplies Aston Martin, Jaguar, Tesla and other high-end cars with luxury wood-grain interiors. Ambitious, she has also launched a hotel chain and an art business.

"Meet the new Turks," Serter said. "And the new Turk is a woman."

Serter herself is helping to "pay it forward." She founded a fund — the Arya Women Investment Network, named after her youngest daughter — to invest in women-owned businesses and innovations that help women's lives.