



Peer-Learning Activities in Entrepreneurship Education and in Women's Entrepreneurship

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More information: <http://www.ee-we.eu>

Background

Peer-Learning Activities in Entrepreneurship Education and in Women's Entrepreneurship is funded by the European Commission's Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME) under the COSME programme.

It is a joint activity undertaken by empirica, JA Europe, EY, the University of Wuppertal, European Schoolnet, and the European Centre for Women and Technology.

The project will run until June 2021. It will organise six peer-learning workshops in major European cities – three for entrepreneurship education and three for women's entrepreneurship.

The outcomes will feed into new European policy agendas for entrepreneurship education and women's entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is considered to be important for innovation, job creation and economic wellbeing. It can also tackle societal challenges. Additionally, women's entrepreneurship contributes to gender mainstreaming.

Eight concrete actions for promoting women's entrepreneurship in Europe

The second Peer-Learning Workshop in Women's Entrepreneurship (WE) took place from 17 to 19 November 2020 – fully online and moderated from Prague. The event convened 37 experts and practitioners from 22 European countries. They developed concrete activities for fostering women's entrepreneurship.

The participants proposed eight actions for advancing women's entrepreneurship in four areas:

Entrepreneurial education: (1) Promote entrepreneurship as a career path for women and (2) Ensure entrepreneurial experience early at school, adopting a gender-sensitive approach.

Finance: (3) Create a European fund or programme focused on female entrepreneurs and (4) Implement educational programmes on financial management.

Role models and awareness: (5) Run an EU-driven media campaign and (6) Establish regulations for inclusiveness and gender equality.

Umbrella organisation and networks: (7) Enhance the role of WEgate (<https://wegate.eu>), the European platform for women's entrepreneurship, and (8) Advance the dialogue between all stakeholders towards creating common goals.

The project's final workshop will head towards a new European Policy Agenda for Women's Entrepreneurship. The event will take place on 9 March 2021. Facilitated by EY, participants will work in an action canvas using the Mural application. Interested in supporting women's entrepreneurship in the EU? Get in touch – contact juraj.hostak@cz.ey.com and join us.



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Overall insights from the workshop



Activities related to the four themes are interlinked

- During the workshop it became clear that many activities in the four targeted themes – entrepreneurial education, role models, finance, and an umbrella organisation – are interlinked.
- For example, promoting entrepreneurship as a career path requires role models, sufficient funding and networks. A new funding platform for women's entrepreneurship would require a sound base in the education system to bring out competent, motivated and ambitious female entrepreneurs.



Collect more empirical data on women's entrepreneurship

- Workshop participants identified the collection of data on women's entrepreneurship as being necessary for basing activities on empirical evidence.
- For example, there may be a need for regular data collection on the drivers and barriers for women's entrepreneurship in European countries. It would be helpful to have an overview of which initiatives and measures have a positive impact or are successful in supporting women's entrepreneurship.
- Another example is data for benchmarking and ranking countries on how their legislation supports women's entrepreneurship. This could include data on the regulation of inclusiveness and gender equality.



Collaborate with diverse stakeholders

- The workshop brought new perspectives and suggested concrete steps for topics that have been discussed on the international level for some time. There is a need to establish and intensify collaboration between a diversity of stakeholders, and to adopt a more proactive approach.
- For example, in order to run an EU-wide media campaign for female entrepreneurs, it would be important to coordinate and involve governments, non-governmental organisations, businesses and academia on the EU, national and regional levels.



Take a look what was said and done at the workshop:

Promotional [video](#)

Messenger chat: [Lilit Asatryan](#)

Messenger chat: [Patricia Zeegers](#)

Messenger chat: [Linda Štucbartová](#)

Survey findings: women's entrepreneurship not yet well established – but networking on a high level

25 participants from the event responded to a pre-workshop survey. 14 responded to a survey after the workshop. The findings show a strong need to further strengthen women's entrepreneurship in Europe and at the same time notable activities towards this aim:

State of affairs: a lack of support, strategy, and funding

23%

of respondents, only, agreed that "women's entrepreneurship is well established in my country". The share of respondents who say that "there is generally sufficient support for women's entrepreneurship" is even lower at 13%.

59%

disagreed that their government has a well-established strategy for women's entrepreneurship. Most respondents also considered governmental funding for female entrepreneurs (73%) and cooperation of public institutions (45%) to be insufficient in their country.

Key challenges: finance and skills

100%

of respondents said that finding finance for female entrepreneurs is a challenge – 83% considered it a key challenge, the other 17% found it to be a moderate challenge.

91%

said that the ICT skills needed for founding technologically advanced businesses is a key or moderate challenge. Realising opportunities for entrepreneurship training that meet women's needs is a challenge for 87%.

Awareness not yet high, role-models not yet clearly visible

32%

agreed that "we are good at creating visibility for and raising awareness of the importance of women's entrepreneurship". However, the share of those who disagreed (41%) was higher.

43%

a relative majority, disagreed that women's entrepreneurship ambassadors and role-models are clearly visible. Only 19% agreed.

More data and research are needed

62%

stated that statistical data on women's entrepreneurship is insufficient. The same share felt that scientific research on women's entrepreneurship is not sufficient, for example on the challenges it faces and ways in which to promote it.

The WE community is active – locally and internationally

67%

said that they actively use or are involved in a European platform to support women's entrepreneurship, such as WEgate. This corresponds with a high share of 75% who find European cooperation and support important for their work.

88%

of respondents stated that the workshop helped them develop new strategies and actions for improving women's entrepreneurship in their own country or region. Examples of these included media campaigns, a mentoring project, and new international partnerships.

Preliminary recommendations for policy makers

The workshop participants proposed the following as the most promising actions for advancing women's entrepreneurship in Europe and beyond. Activities under "Role models and awareness" can be considered as a focus of the work of WEgate, the pan-European platform for women's entrepreneurship:



Entrepreneurial education

Priority actions: "promoting entrepreneurship as a career path" and ensuring "entrepreneurial experience at school". This should encompass creating an education path for young women starting from elementary school that would connect an entrepreneurial career with higher education.

Students should have opportunities within curricular and extra-curricular activities to become familiar with entrepreneurship. Proven frameworks such as [EntreComp](#) and [DigComp](#) may guide competence development.



Role models and awareness

Priority actions: running an "EU-driven media campaign" and implementing the "regulation of inclusiveness and gender equality". The aim would be to present realistic role models and share best practice case studies along with the relevant gender data – from local to EU level.

A task force of female entrepreneur champions could guide such a campaign, formed by representatives from all European countries.

Next steps could start with research on legislation that supports women's entrepreneurship, in particular identification of good practice in regulation.



Funds for female entrepreneurs

Priority actions: "Set up a funding platform dedicated to female entrepreneurs" and "establish educational programmes on financial management". Specifically, this should imply starting a discussion on the national and EU levels to create a long-term sustainable strategy for the WE finance platform.

The funding platform could introduce investment schemes combined with technical assistance ("smart money concept"). The platform could be an automated marketplace that uses artificial intelligence to match female entrepreneurs with investors and service providers.



Umbrella organisation and networks

Priority actions: "enhancing the role of WEgate (<https://wegate.eu/>) as a European umbrella organisation", seeing it as a link between the various stakeholders, and "advancing the dialogue between all stakeholders in women's entrepreneurship towards creating a common goal".

The most important next steps could be to appoint dedicated representatives on regional, national and EU levels, as well as producing guidance materials for local associations. Grass root organisations could support these steps bottom-up.

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