



Innovative, Managerial, Entrepreneurial,
Women in Europe

THE EUROPEAN UNION



The European Social Fund



égalité professionnelle
& développement territorial

I ME WE
Partnership

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Introduction

Under the Community Initiative EQUAL the transnational partnership 'I ME WE' was established. In this partnership we aimed to empower and support women in reaching their individual goals in entrepreneurship and leadership. This aim is supported by sharing knowledge about promoting female entrepreneurship, leadership, training, advising and supporting potential entrepreneurs and managers.

One of the common products from this partnership is a collection of Best Practices on the promotion of female entrepreneurship (Activity 1). These best examples of good practises were gathered in the projects in this partnership. To give a broader perspective on possibilities to facilitate female entrepreneurship other 'good examples' were included: originating from one of the partner countries but not necessarily from the project in the I ME WE partnership.

This collection of Best Practices will provide an added value not only to the projects and activities in the respective countries when it comes to sharing information and experiences, but also on a deeper level by ensuring that the Best Practices are shared across Europe.

The partners in the partnership I ME WE

Eight partners from six countries constituted the transnational partnership. The partners:

Country/Project

- Belgium
 - Empowering Female Entrepreneurs
 - Réseau Diane
- Denmark
 - Management with a Personal Style – Future Leaders
 - PROFILE – PROMoting Female Innovation Learning and Entrepreneurship
- Finland
 - Reaktioketju (Chain Reaction)
- France
 - Egalité Professionnelle et Développement Territorial en Côtes d'Armor
- Italy
 - Il Valore Della Differenza
- Spain
 - Proyecto DIME (Desarrollo Integral de la Mujer Emprendedora)

Summary of partner projects

EFE (Empowering Female Entrepreneurs) - Belgium

Duration: 1/5/2005 – 30/4/2008

With this project markant aims to promote female entrepreneurship and as such try to increase the number of female entrepreneurs in Belgium.

A previous study (Diane, 2002-2004) indicated that women face specific barriers to undertake entrepreneurship: an inadequate social statute for entrepreneurs, a lack of positive image, an underestimation of the importance of networking, a problematic combination of work and private life. We see two major consequences of these obstacles: women are reluctant to start up a business and when they do, their business are small and stay small.

By focusing on the need of constant training, working on a better visibility of female entrepreneurs, making women acquainted with support structures, learning them that networking is imperial to a successful business and lobbying for better social regulations for entrepreneurs, markant wants to help women start up their enterprise and develop their business.

During the project three studies were undertaken:

- a visibility study in the media resulting in a checklist for journalists on how to ensure a positive image of entrepreneurs in magazines, newspapers and television;
- an inquiry on support structures resulting in an ample guide acquainting them with the existing networks for entrepreneurs, financial support structures, training centre
- an inquiry on the social statute of entrepreneurs aimed to reveal the impediments entrepreneurs, and more specifically female entrepreneurs, face such as lower pension allowances, less maternity leave, no parental leave. These results formed the basis of our policy advice for the new federal government.

In addition to these three studies markant tailored made a mentoring- and coaching programme for the entrepreneurs in our network and introduced them in mixed and transnational networks.

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Reaktioketju (Chain Reaction) - Finland

Women entrepreneurs of the north Savo region as a development resource

The project Reaktioketju has offered over 450 woman entrepreneurs and women thinking of becoming entrepreneurs a possibility of developing their professional and business skills, building up networks for their own sectors and exploring internationalisation.

Project aims and objectives

The aim was to achieve a positive chain of reactions that leads to an increase of female entrepreneurs, also in fields that are traditionally non-feminine, updating professional skills and know-how of women entrepreneurs and finding new business concepts and networks. In addition, the project aimed to help women find a solution to combining their family-life and their work and focused on psychological and physical well-being.

Activities

Development circle activities

In this project, 16 development circles of various business sectors have been set up in the region of Northern Savo. Each circle consisted of active or potential entrepreneurs. The circles could receive training and consultancy services and activities included also study visits, benchmarking trips or participation in events in the relevant sector. The objective was to develop networks in the sector, to reinforce professional skills and know-how specific to the sector, to pass on silent information from experienced enterprisers to those who are starting up and to find new business models.

Resource centres

The two female entrepreneur resource centres in Iisalmi and Kuopio help, encourage and support women in establishing and developing their enterprises. They produce enterprise services that take the special needs of women into account and encourage woman enterprisers to take part in the development of the business activities in the region.

Training

The objective of the training provided by the project was to alleviate the skills shortages of active and potential enterprisers. Central aspects of this training included the development of business and managerial skills. Training courses were tailored based on the needs of participating enterprisers.

Research

The research activities have produced information on woman enterprisers and central factors promoting women's enterprising activities, including start up and work motivation. The research activities have also produced regional information on the status of women's enterprising activities in Northern Savo.

Results

- 454 female entrepreneurs have improved and updated their business and professional skills
- 32 new women owned companies started
- 2 resource centres for female entrepreneurs
- 15 new professional networks

Research reports on female entrepreneurship and leadership

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**The PROFILE project
(PROmoting Female Innovation Learning and Entrepreneurship) - Denmark**

This project focuses on entrepreneurship among female students and highly educated women (defined as women with a degree on bachelor, master or PhD level). The overall aim is to increase the number of knowledge-based female entrepreneurs in the Aarhus area, in Denmark and the rest of Europe.

The reason for this project was that Centre for Entrepreneurship, University of Aarhus had noticed that female students and highly educated women were interested in entrepreneurship (half of the participants at the training courses at CFE in the year 2003 were women). However the percentage of women among all entrepreneurs dropped from 33% to 25% from 2002 to 2004. At the same time women made up a greater and greater percentage of the overall number of students at the Danish universities. This could be a dangerous cocktail leading to a drop in the number of knowledge-based entrepreneurs – those that Denmark needs so badly in a globalize world.

The main activities of the project aiming at the participants have been:

- A sense of entrepreneurship – a brief introductory training course for female students
- Introductory entrepreneurship training course for female graduates – a more comprehensive training course targeted towards female graduates
- Middagsværk – network dinners open for potential participants in the above mentioned courses and women who had all ready established their company

The two training programmes have been tested three times each and have been revised through continuous assessment. In total they have had nearly 100 participants. The network dinners have had an even greater number of participants.

Main results

It turned out that the graduates were very interested in participating in the training courses and even came from other parts of Denmark to participate. It was harder to attract students, probably because they wanted to concentrate on credit courses. We tried to have the training course accepted as a credit course in some study boards, but it probably had too many hands-on elements. The most important distinction between participants seemed not to be student/graduate, but: Do you have a clear business idea or not? Because of that the participants proposed to offer different training courses for potential female entrepreneurs in the different phases of the process.

It was hard to create training programmes that satisfy all the participants' needs. Maybe the solution is to offer some basic training modules and then the facilities for group work on the themes that some of the participants want to dig deeper into (maybe together with an expert on the field).

Also a close contact with real female entrepreneurs is essential for the upcoming entrepreneurs.

The project showed how hard it is to assess the result of an entrepreneurship training course, because many of the participants (especially the students) won't start up their business right after the training course. On top of that many of the participants (especially the young ones) moved or changed their phone number and/or e-mail throughout the project period. Based on these experiences we would recommend that participation in a follow-up study is made a condition for participating in such training programmes, or at least that participants are told that they will be asked to participate in follow-up-studies at the beginning of the training course.

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However based on the participants' expectations the training programmes have had a higher success rate than the average for entrepreneurship training courses.

All participants agreed that it is important with women-only entrepreneurship training courses. However they also wanted training courses aiming at both sexes, especially when they are relatively clear about their business idea, because they thought that men tend to be more sceptical and ask the unpleasant questions, which they needed before meeting with customers, investors, banks etc.

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Future Leader (former project title Management with a personal style) - Denmark

The project is planned by the trade union HK Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark the Service sector of the Copenhagen branch. This summary of the project includes a short introduction to our programme and the fruitful outcome of the project and some results from the evaluation of Future leaders. The project comes under the heading “Reducing gender gaps”

The project have taken the point of departure in the fact that few women are managers and that women in general are not pushing very hard to become in charge. Everyone is familiar with management courses but we did not create a new one. We wanted to focus on leadership believing to be a leader is not the same as having a management title. We want to create a training program where women had the opportunity to develop the inner leadership potentials by focusing on self-esteem and self-confidence. If you want to develop leadership you can do it, but you need to dare! One of the most important believes is that women need to develop their individual skills and one of the methods is the understanding of the quality of leadership.

The aims were to increase the number of women managers and to have 75 women apply for the course more than 125 women applying. In total 82 women signed up and we had a very low drop out rate. The managers the project was focusing on were primarily middle level managers and women without management positions who want to become leaders. And other aim was to create a method for training the women managers. This method formed the basis for a new concept and a tool kit for leaders and future leaders.

The project did not aim to break the glass ceilings at the very top managerial level but one of our beneficiaries did break the glass ceilings she is now a part of the directors’ board in an IT company.

The training program consists of five modules

1. Value based leadership and personal leadership
2. New learning, new thinking
3. A leader’s personal qualifications
4. If I can think it, I can do it
5. Curriculum Futurum™: A future CV

These are selected course topics:

Become acquainted with a model for analyzing identity beliefs, visions, and values at a personal level as well as in the workplace, the company and else where. Recognize the role of the leader understanding how competencies influence on peoples behavior. How to implement values and visions implemented into the company; introduction to and support of personal plans, values and goals; The coaching model GROW (Goal, Reality, Opportunity, Will); coaching as a leadership style and a daily tool to strengthen others; practicing communication; development interviews (employer vs. employee).

The training course methods are as follows: Coaching, Curriculum Futurum™ a future CV and a personal long-term plan and network groups. Coaching the participants has had a personal coach and they have been taught and trained in coaching. Coaching has functioned both as a new leadership tool and as a part of the clarification process through the entire training program. Curriculum Futurum™ and the long-term plan is a tool that helps the participants become aware of and describe their future desires in regard to the personal values and helps sets up a plan for the future career goals. Each participant has worked out an operational plan of the competencies that must be obtained to reach the desired target, and the specific initiatives the participant will need to

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take. The plan includes the targets and goals the participant wishes to reach and how to reach it within a period of up to ten years.

Another method was creation of network groups retained the participants' interest in the course in the periods between the various modules and also ensured the practical implementation of what has been taught thereby turning it into real competencies.

The training program aims at bringing more women into managerial jobs. A major challenge is to encourage women to become proactive. A modern leader needs to beware of how much motivation means.

Our aims were that the beneficiaries had gained awareness of her own qualities and strengths, get a clear idea of her own values and goals and find her unique way of being a leader.

Results during the time when the training program went on

- All participants gained a realistic view of possibilities and position and more personal authority and communication skills

Results for leaders

- 82% gained more knowledge, insight and tools
- 25% have been given increased leadership responsibilities during the time when the training program went on

Future Leaders

- 45% of the future leaders either obtained a leadership position or leadership responsibilities

More participants achieved their goals much quicker than we could have dreamed of – They said laud what their goal were. They were empowered; they dared and they were pro-active.

Future Leader is a 17 day well-tested training course and from 2008 the training course will be offered and we have trained 15 trainers to make more courses. More women will in the future be offered courses like 'Future Leader' to become future leaders. We hope the success will go on and on.

Duration: 20 September 2004 – 30 April 2008

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The Value of Difference - Italy

Project description

The project entitled The Value of Difference – The female resource in business creation in the Marche Region is the fruit of an Equal community initiative that aims at promoting and encouraging female entrepreneurship in the Region, modifying the gender typification of the entrepreneurial profession and favouring action to extend awareness of female entrepreneurship and bring it to the public eye in greater evidence.

The following actions have been launched:

1. Institution of a Regional Female Entrepreneurship Observatory, by means of which the complete picture of female entrepreneurship at the regional level can be constructed applying the same methodologies and statistical sources for the various provincial areas
2. Survey finalised to completion of the cognitive picture of female entrepreneurship as a phenomenon in the Provinces of Pesaro-Urbino and Ascoli Piceno, with fuller details regarding certain productive sectors
3. Constitution of Permanent Territorial Networks between the various agencies responsible for measures and actions in support of female entrepreneurship and people directly involved in the economic activity (women entrepreneurs)
4. Experimentation of an innovative line in Orientation for Professions for students, able to call into question the features of gender typification in work and the professions
5. Launch of a Mentoring Service in the Region to enhance the professionalism and confidence of the younger, less expert women entrepreneurs.

One of most instruments for the promotion and visibility for female entrepreneurs will consist in the “International Fair on Female Entrepreneurship” which is a great opportunity for local, national and international women entrepreneurs to meet and exchange views. At the same time it is a promotion and awareness raising opportunity for Institutions, the business sector and the public, focussing on female entrepreneurship.

The Equal plan establishes that the national project should have a transnational dimension through the project known as “I Me We - Innovative, Managerial, Entrepreneurial Women in Europe”, which sees the involvement of public and private figures in various European countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy and Spain. The project fosters exchange of good practices, launch of a transnational network between women entrepreneurs and managers, development of training methodologies for workers in the services supporting women entrepreneurs and the constitution of transnational networks of key actors engaged in local policy-making.

National Partnership:

University of Camerino- Promoter
Fondazione G. Brodolini- Scientific and Technical Coordination
Unioncamere - Union of Chambers of Commerce
ISTVAS- High school “Vanvitelli Stracca-Angelini”
University of Urbino- Faculty of Economics

Client: EQUAL Programme- Regione Marche for European Commission- DG Employment, Social affairs and Equal Opportunities

Duration: November 2004 to December 2007.

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Other: Address Viale di Villa Massimo 21 00161 ROMA

DIME - project. The Development Partnership of L'Horta Sud - Spain

The EQUAL – DIME project is promoted by the Horta Sud Development Partnership. Its aim is the fostering of the economic and social development of *L'Horta Sud*, a region including 20 municipalities that count for more than 400.000 inhabitants, located at the south metropolitan area of Valencia, capital of the Valencian Autonomous Community, in Spain.

The Development Partnership is formed by:

- The L'Horta Sud County Council, that includes the 20 municipalities
- The two main trade unions (CCOO and UGT)
- The two main employers' organizations (ACE and Club de Gerents)
- The Federation of Progressive Women
- IDEES SLL
- Florida University Center
- The Entrepreneur Women Association

Brief summary of the project EQUAL – DIME

The general objective of this project is to remove those barriers that hinder enterprising and businesswomen from achieving a complete professional development. With this aim in mind, and depending on a previous diagnosis, 8 different Action Lines have been established in response to a concrete aspect of an enterprising and business woman itinerary of development.

In action line 1, some measures are drawn to remove those personal barriers that make women's enterprising spirit difficult; some of these measures would be:

- a program aimed at making target groups sensible and motivated by means of a spreading campaign directed to gaining potential beneficiaries
- A self-diagnosis and guidance program so that beneficiaries may find out their main enterprising lacks and potentials
- A program to develop beneficiaries enterprising skills
- A program to diversify and reveal business opportunities.

The main objective of the action line 2 is to remove family barriers that prevent women from leading a business initiative by means of a program that tries to find a balance between professional and family life.

The aim of action line 3 is to tackle those social barriers that hinder women from creating their own company by means of three different sensitising programs: one aimed at sensitising the social context, the second one at getting a compromise from business organisations and the last one at raising local politicians' awareness.

Action line 4 is set out to overcome the initial handicaps that women may find when they are to develop their own business initiatives by means of an assessing program to define the project, a training program on basic company management and finally a program of specialised technical assessment.

The goal of action 5 is to promote company establishment by means of a program to support both funding and the use of information new technologies as well as the creation of a centre of services to support enterprising women.

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Action line 6 is aimed to promoting the consolidation and development of the businesswoman through a program of didactic shared management, a program to create both cooperation nets and a virtual supporting platform, as well as through life-long training.

Action lines 7 and 8 are devoted to the spreading of the project results in the local, regional, and national context through the spreading of the project activities, the change of the current Regional Agreement for Employment into a Regional Pact for Equal Opportunities in Employment and a program to take part in the thematic nets supported by UAFSE.

Contact:

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Torrent (València)
www.idees.es

Egalité Professionnelle et Développement Territorial - France

Reinforcing the attractiveness of territories by consolidating women's activity

In 2005, economic and social stakeholders of the Côtes d'Armor department, of the Pays de Guingamp, of the Centre Ouest Bretagne, of Dinan and of the Lamballe Community territory have decided to work together on an EQUAL program entitled: "Equality at work and Territorial development". Through this project, they wish to avoid partitioning between economic and social approaches and to promote the emergence of a common culture based on men/ women equality at work. Partners for Development intend, for a period of 30 months, to contribute to the creation of an environment which facilitates the maintenance and development of qualified employment and a better articulation of daily life.

Partners for Development:

Conseil général des Côtes d'Armor.

The general council intervenes on a number of social economic and educational domains in order to improve the daily life of people living in the Côtes d'Armor department. It coordinates the Equality at Work and Territorial Development project ("projet EFDT"), thus fulfilling its mission which consists in federating stakeholders and infusing a territorial dimension to all of its actions. 9, place du Général de Gaulle – 22000 Saint-Brieuc Sandra Le Nouvel, EPDT Coordinator Mission Europe et International 00 33 -2 96 62 61 77.

Conseil de Développement du Pays de Guingamp

It brings social and professional stakeholders and the Pays de Guingamp citizens together, represented by the elected members of the territory. It constitutes a force of proposal and generates investigation and experiments requirements which, seems to contribute to the development of the territory.

15, rue de la Trinité – 22200 Guingamp
Contact 00 33 -2 96 40 05 20.

Comité de Service aux Personnes

An inter-district non-profit making organisation (governed by the 1901 Law). Created in 1978, it runs the services of life auxiliaries in nursing care intended for old people, whether autonomous or not, who wish to continue living at home.

44, rue Maréchal Foch – 22200 Guingamp
Contact 00 33 -2 96 44 16 03.

A.D.I.E. (or Association pour le Droit à l'Initiative Economique)

The A.D.I.E. finances and provides assistance to project carriers who did not manage to obtain any loan from a bank. It can be found in all the French departments and through micro-credit, every year it helps about 8,500 people to start a company.

Pépinière d'Entreprises – ZI des Châtelets - 22400 Ploufragan
Contact 00 33 -2 96 76 83 78.

Lamballe Communauté

It is made up of 17 districts and comprises about 25,000 inhabitants who are working together within a solidarity space, thus offering services that contribute to the attractiveness of quite an already dynamic a territory for the last few years.

50, rue d'Armor - 22400 Lamballe

Contact: Maison de l'Enfance : 00 33 -2 96 50 70 11.

La Boutique de Gestion des Côtes d'Armor

This association is part of the National Network of Management Boutiques, which aims at welcoming, advising and training people who wish to start or take over Very Small Companies, from their initial project to its final achievement and development.

16, place du Champ au Roy – 22200 Guingamp

Contact 00 33 -2 96 21 17 75

C.I.D.F. (Centre d'Information sur le Droit des Femmes)

The Centre of Information of Women's Rights is a non-profit making organisation governed by the 1901 Law, with a general interest mission and the role of which is to foster and promote equal rights for men and women.

Lawyers, employment and health consultants welcome inform and guide the public in legal and professional matters and the starting of companies, as well as in health, sexuality and relational issues.

10, Bd Charner – 22000 Saint-Brieuc

Contact 00 33 -2 96 78 47 82.

Chambres des Métiers et de l'Artisanat de Dinan (C.M.A.)

A public entity run by arts and crafts company managers, the C.M.A. places at the disposal of people a Directory of Trades which constitutes a "civil status" register of companies. Its mission is to help companies achieve their projects (creation/taking-over, development, investment, standardisation ...) It also works with economic and institutional local stakeholders for economic and social development and runs a Training Centre for Apprentices (700 young people each year).

La Croix Fresche Blanc – 22100 Aucaleuc

Contact 00 33 -2 96 39 03 38.

Le Pays du Centre Ouest Bretagne

A rural territory covering three departments, the Pays comprises 10 District Communities of the Côtes d'Armor, Finistère and Morbihan departments. It intends to develop its territory through the involvement of all the local stakeholders by initiating, relaying and handling projects.

6, rue J. Pennec – 22110 Rostrenen

Contact 02 96 29 26 69.

UNA 22

This federation supplies information, counselling and assistance in the services meant to help people in their homes, by implementing actions allowing old people or disabled to continue living at home. It develops tools for the harmonisation of management and organisation methods regarding services and human resources (further education, skills and employment management ...)

Îlot de la Poste – 22120 Yffiniac

Contact: 00 33 -2 96 72 63 21.

Best Practices

This Division of Best Practices was divided into four categories:

1. Best Practices from the I ME WE partnership
2. Shared Practices in the I ME WE Partnership
3. Learning experiences in the I ME WE Partnership
4. Good practices from the partner countries

In the first category the Best Practices from the national projects in this partnership were collected. Each country chose a few 'examples' from their national project that proved to be very successful and therefore worthwhile to recommend to the other partners in I ME WE.

For the second category we gathered the shared practices: common services, seminars or activities during this partnership.

In the third division we summarise those practices that were tried out (or permanently established) by other partners. During the Steering Committees and Study visits, the partners got acquainted with activities, policies or services that they wanted to try out 'at home'.

In the last group you will find other examples of good practices: not only from the projects in partnership, but also in other projects in the partner countries. This section was created to give a broader look at the good examples existing in the partner countries and not only those created within the national projects.

Best practices from the transnational partnership

This division consists of the best practices that were found in the national projects of the partner countries. This first division is created for the sole purpose of giving visibility to the actions, (training) programs, activities that found their origin in the different national projects.

Best Practices were collected on the following themes:

- Promotion and visibility of female entrepreneurs
- Networking
- Mentoring
- Training
- Policy development
- Social regulations
- Entrepreneurial Support
- Management Skills

DESCRIPTION OF EXCHANGES ON PROMOTION AND VISIBILITY

Introduction

In order to promote female entrepreneurship- and leadership, it is important to create a positive attitude in the society. Female entrepreneurs and leaders are often invisible and that is one of the reasons, why their achievements in the economic and social development escape the public notice. When women in business become visible, it is empowering to others who are considering the same route. The visibility of successful female role models motivates other women in setting up their own.

Objectives

The general objective of this action was to contribute to the public attitude and awareness of the economic importance of the female entrepreneurs and leaders. The aim was also to motivate and empower women, who are thinking of becoming entrepreneurs or leaders or beginning to develop their businesses

Methodology

The following actions have been carried out:

- Shopping routes and Idea Hunts
- Womed Award for Female Entrepreneurs
- Convention of female entrepreneurs in craft industry
- Regional Observatory on female entrepreneurship

Lessons learned

The main lessons learned are:

- Networks can encourage and support women to choose an entrepreneurial career or become managers.
- Publicity, formal meetings and informal get-togethers help female entrepreneurs to confirm their position in the economical life of the region and to develop their customer co-nections.
- The regional development authorities need updated data and information of the female entrepreneurs in their area in order to be able to provide support to them.
- Awarded women entrepreneurs act as good role models. They can create a higher awareness of the role the female entrepreneurs play in the society and their success inspires other women.

Policies recommendations

The policies we recommend are:

- Continuing support to the creation and maintenance of women's networks
- Support to women's inclusion in mixed networks
- Enough resources to the compilation of statistics on female entrepreneurship
- Women entrepreneurs should be encouraged to participate in regional development processes and the events of their own business sector
- Awards to successful female entrepreneurs should be given regularly

DESCRIPTION OF EXCHANGES ON NETWORKING

Introduction

Women do underestimate the value of networking and do not often attend regular entrepreneur's network meetings. If they are willing to improve their business, it is important they learn to network.

Objective

This activity aims at promoting different kinds of networking activities between female entrepreneurs and help women to build their network.

Methodology

The following actions have been carried out:

- Study of best practices on female networking activities
- Exchange of information among the partners and creation of a best practices booklet
- Study trips for female entrepreneurs to other DP regions
- Organisation of an international fair for female entrepreneurs

Lessons learned

The main lessons are:

- women have experienced the empowering feeling of being part of a network
- women have learned a lot from each other in the networking activities
- the different study trips have brought friendship and exchange of knowledge between the female entrepreneurs of the different partnerships but especially between the entrepreneurs from the same partnership who spent different days together and really had the time to get to know each other in a fine way
- networking activities organised in one partnership have been successfully repeated in other partnerships
- female entrepreneurs attending the network activities have had the chance to build their network on a local and international level
- female entrepreneurs who had the opportunity to participate in the international network activities have become better European citizens

Policy recommendations

Our recommendations are:

- encourage the participation of women in networks, study trips and fairs
- give incentives and subsidies for small businesses to help them participate in international fairs

DESCRIPTION OF EXCHANGES ON MENTORING

The point of departure of the I Me We project was to exchange experiences and to make reflection on different methods, practicability and potentials. We wanted to investigate if the methods used in the partnership can be complemented and add new qualities to each other. We also wanted to investigate the possibilities of creating a new praxis.

Two conferences were held, one in Denmark (20-21 June 2006) and one in France (10-12 December 2006). At both conferences the main focus was on the innovative elements of the individual projects. For instance new ideas, new methods, new learning processes, educational methods, and new activities that are used or supposed to be used in the effort of creating more women leaders and entrepreneurs in the EU.

This report is based on the results of the discussions and the investigations of these two conferences.

The objective was to enable the different transnational partners to benefit from each others projects, and furthermore to represent a possibility for them to create a variety of new methods. These methods can support women in realizing their personal potential, visions, and objectives with a view to becoming leaders and entrepreneurs.

Based on the presentations from the transnational partners, we discussed how the different newly developed and the traditional learning methods can complement and supplement each other. In the conferences we attempted to combine these methods with a view to creating new practical processes and methods. In that way the skills and qualifications that potential women leaders and entrepreneurs must possess in a globalized world would be optimized and clarified.

Participants

At the first conference the 25 participants were from:

- Finland (Chain Reaction)
- France (Egalité Profession)
- Spain (Projecto Dime)
- Denmark (the Profile and the Management with a Personal Style projects)

Participants at the second conference also included

- Italy (Valeria Differencia) and
- Belgium (EFE).

The total number of participants was 29. It was important that the participants from the first conference also attended the second conference. Unfortunately a few participants did not attend both conferences.

The facilities

Each partner uses different methods to facilitate the beneficiaries to acquire new skills and competences. These methods approach different goals.

The actors are different from each project and the facilitating methods give different results.

- The mentor is mentoring
- The coach is coaching
- The instructor gives Instruction
- The teacher teaches

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- The trainer trains
- The adviser and the guidance gives advice

The first conference revealed great differences between the different projects for instance in the facilitating of the beneficiaries.

The discussion between the participants showed that there are many motivations. The headlines of the discussion were:

- Remove barriers which stop women accessing and developing business
- Establish women in the business world
- Help change the old male business model
- Add flexibility in the work environment to adapt to new changes
- Awareness on personal qualities and strengths
- Define personal leader profile and leadership
- Clarify values
- Set long term goals –and achieve them
- Focus on your own path, ignore expectations of others
- Develop basic professional and technical skills – among them the ability to communicate excellent and to have a coaching leader style
- Create a plan for personal development and business future – a vision plan - Curriculum Futurum
- Identify and work with gender barriers in the working place
- Strengthen self-esteem
- Coach individuals and teams
- Do self-coaching
- Take responsibility in a proactive way
- Do business marketing
- Do self-marketing
- Be able to negotiate better

To get started the women were to establish self development and set their potentials free – either as a leader or as a self employed woman, entrepreneur. It went like a red tread through the projects.

Methods and training activities

The methods and training activities discussed at the conferences were:

- Training
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Facilitating
- Face to face training
- Discussions and documentation
- Training at the workplace
- Training in growth and internationalisation; how to be a “business card” of your company
- Developing new teaching methods
- Giving trainers/tutors new teaching skills
- Creating a good female business role model who can past it on to the new generation

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- Introducing the structure for coaching support
- Working in close partnerships with business organizations to help put this model into action (AME, ACE and Management Club)
- The innovative process
- Networking and learning processes
- Training in communications skills
- Coaching of individuals and team
- Learn how to work with Values and visions
- Optimize your self-esteem
- Creating congruence and alignment in their life, especially working life
- Team development
- Presentation techniques
- Creativity- idea tools
- Role playing
- Networking
- Building self-esteem
- Empathy skills
- Communication and negotiation skills
- The art of persuasion
- Social skills
- Self control
- Time management

Changing processes

- Analysis and practical understanding of the business administration course
- To go from the academic world to the business world supported by training, coaching and networking
- Training in growth and internationalization how to be a “business card” of your company
- Developing new teaching methods
- Giving trainers/tutors new teaching skills
- Creating a good female business role model who can pass it on to the new generation
- Introducing the structure for coaching support
- Working in close partnership with business organizations to help to put this model in action (AME, ACE and Management Club)

Training and coaching between the modules

Between each module each participant must try to implement a number of the issues learned from the session and transfer it into the workplace

They will get support from their training team (some of their fellow participants) and a coach. The coach has trained for the purpose. We work with fixed task and task they have chosen themselves.

The coaching session will take point of departure in the participant desired state going to Curriculum Futurum and they try to reach their desired state as fast as possible. For example establish their leader role, get a new leader role, lead a new way, raise their self-esteem, communicate better, get a new carrier, change their department into a team, and so on.

Removing barriers

- Personal issues, family and social context.
- Difficulties encountered starting up and developing new business ideas.
- Business consolidation and surviving in the commercial world.

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Ways to overcome these barriers

- Personal issues, family and social context
- Media campaigns (radio, television and written press) raising awareness of the social differences and the discriminations women encounter in their daily life and the need for this to change.
- “Family Co-responsibility” workshops for female Entrepreneurial and their partners.
- “Generating New Business Ideas” workshop for women looking to start their own businesses.
- “Time management” workshops.
- Financial help for those women with family dependant (young and elderly people under their care), specifically to get the time off needed to pursuer a new business under this project.
- Special help and support for Entrepreneurial women immigrants (whom they have the added cultural barrier).
- In partnership with established companies in the area, developing together common objectives and Equal opportunity policies.
- 120 Entrepreneurial women are receiving a self diagnose test helping them to look at their own barriers. Allowing us the planning of individual steps and actions we could help them to follow.

Lessons learned

The two conferences did not have any conclusion but a lot of learned experiences. In the future it is important when facilitating women that the awareness of the facilitators role. The role as a mentor is not the same as a coach. The mentor teaches what s/he has as experienced. The coach is asking questions and do not have any opinion in favour of the coachee’s goal and desired state. The coach controls a tool to realize others’ potential The trainer/teacher is conducting, teaching, instructing and training. The trainer/teacher will teach knowledge learned. The facilitator is the supporter of the development process the person or a team is going.

To understand the leadership role and communication roles are the awareness of your role that makes it easier for you to communicate, to get results and to become a success as a facilitator but also the beneficiaries’ benefits from the awareness.

DESCRIPTION OF EXCHANGES ON TRAINING

Objective

To exchange experiences on training programmes, methods and policies in order to help women start and develop successful business and to reach for leading/managerial positions in their career.

Methodology

The following actions have been carried out:

- Design of a format for the collection of good practices
- Good practices collection on training programmes for entrepreneurs in each country.
- Selection of the best practices among those developed by project partner
- Contact with the selected best practices leading organisations in order to get a thorough knowledge on their development.
- Sending information on the selected best practices to the members of transnational Steering Committee.
- Analysis of practices selected
- Presentation of the selected best practices.
- Discussion and partners' opinions on the definitive best practices.
- Definition and design of the layout for the best practices guideline (general).
- Guideline edition (general)
- Diffusion of the best practices guideline on female entrepreneurs' training programmes in the framework of the general guideline

Lessons Learned

The main lessons learned are:

- The need to involve local actors and policy makers in the project activities in order to mainstream project's results.
- The importance of exchanging knowledge and practices to promote innovative approaches encouraging gender equality in the labour market.
- The importance of building networks to get more visibility on gender issues and enhance public awareness.
- The importance to reinforce the use of NTIC for training
- The importance of develop materials and tools adapted to the gender perspective, from the beginning. To break down the main barriers that women find when try to start up an enterprise.

Policies Recommendations

The policies we recommend favouring equal opportunities are:

- Encouraging presence of women in networks and networks supporting women in the labour market
- Training course for women
- Information points for women
- Regional Observatory on gender equality
- Training/work experience contracts
- Promote actions aimed at improving public awareness on gender equality issues
- To make visible the lessons learned and their results

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- To give common recourses to the actors involved in the project
- Training the experts and the policy makers that work on the project in the same methodology, skills, tools, give and use the same recourses
- To develop recourses as information points, both web and classroom.

DESCRIPTION OF EXCHANGES ON POLICY DEVELOPMENT ON GENDER EQUALITY

Objective:

The activity 5 of the TCA aims at creating a new space through a wide ranging partnership that would link competent local actors for carrying out information exchange, research work, actions of common interest and local policies in the field of gender equality in order to strengthening and building on this information.

One of the most important action to encourage women to start a business is overturn gender discrimination and stereotypes mainly helping women in balancing professional and family life.

Local policies addressing gender equality issues play a key role in facing barriers that women usually meet in their professional carries.

To build a network of local actors involved in the decision making processes in each country's areas of the I Me We project is a great opportunity to exchange among partners knowledge and experiences in the field of gender mainstreaming in local government.

Methodology

The following actions have been carried out:

- Study of best practises on integration of gender in local policies in the DP regions
- Exchange of information among partners. Best practises guide/ booklet
- Field trips for local policy makers to other DP regions in order to acquire knowledge about their policies on gender
- Workshop and seminar on gender integration in local policies to underline the importance of networking in order to give more visibility to women entrepreneurs and support female entrepreneurship

Lessons Learned

The main lessons learned are:

- The need to involve local actors and policy makers in the project activities in order to mainstream project's results.
- The importance of exchanging knowledge and practices to promote innovative approaches encouraging gender equality in the labour market.
- The importance of building networks to get more visibility on gender issues and enhance public awareness.

Policies Recommendations

The policies we recommend favouring equal opportunities are:

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- Encouraging presence of women in networks and networks supporting women in the labour market
- Training course for women
- Information points for women
- Regional Observatory on gender equality
- Training/work experience contracts
- Promote actions aimed at improving public awareness on gender equality issues

DESCRIPTION OF EXCHANGES IN SOCIAL REGULATIONS

Introduction

Social regulations for entrepreneurs are often perceived as giving poor support in comparison to the social regulations for employees and therefore are barriers to become an entrepreneur.

Objective

This activity aims at getting to know the social regulations in the different DP regions in order to compare them and give advices to the policymakers to build better European social regulations for entrepreneurs.

Methodology

The following actions have been carried out:

- Study on social regulations in the different DP
- Exchange of information among partners.

Lessons learned

- Social regulations differ a lot from one country to another and it is very difficult to compare them.
- Nevertheless we have learned that some countries are far ahead in social protection for entrepreneurs
- This knowledge can help the partners to give policy recommendations to their national authorities

Policy recommendations

Our recommendations are:

- social regulations should provide comparable social protection for entrepreneurs and employees
- social regulations should be build on a European level
- policy makers should be aware of the differences between the European social regulations systems
- policy makers should base their work to improve the national social regulations on European best practices.

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Every partner country could submit services, activities, networks or other that they considered as Best Practices from their national project in the I ME WE partnership.

Country	Theme	Best Practice
Belgium	Promotion & Visibility	Womed Award
	Shopping Route	Promotion & Visibility
	Mentoring	CEMENTO
Denmark	Networking	Networking Dinners
	Training Programme	A sense of entrepreneurship
	Training Programme	Fod under eget bord
Finland	Networking	Development Circles
	Entrepreneurial Support	Resource Centres REAKTORI
	Promotion & Visibility	Idea Hunts
France	Entrepreneurial Support	Boutique de gestion
	Network	AILES Network
	Mentoring	Entreprendre au féminin
Italy	Promotion & Visibility	International Fair for Female Entrepreneurs
	Networking	Constitution of permanent territorial networks
	Entrepreneurial Support	ORIF Regional Observatory on female entrepreneurship
	Mentoring	Il Valore della Differenza Mentoring
Spain	Networking	Entrepreneurs Network Co-operation
	Policy Development	Oio Dime

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
PROMOTION & VISIBILITY: BELGIUM**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

Womed Award

B. Territorial Scope

Local
 Regional: Flanders
National

C. Leading organisation

markant vzw, Spastraat 8/2, 1000 Brussel
The Centre of Female Entrepreneurship, same address

D. Contact Data

Name: Christine Van Nuffel
Phone Number: +32 2 286 93 42
E-mail: Christine.vannuffel@markantvzw.be
Webpage: <http://www.markantvzw.be/~cezov/viewobj.jsp?id=76578>
Other: /

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

The Centre of Female Entrepreneurs elects an exquisite female entrepreneur. She receives the Womed Award. The price consists of a statue in bronze "the entrepreneur is a woman", a course at a famous Management School, flowers and her pictures in the offices of a national bank sponsoring the Award Ceremony. The partners of the Award are :

- a bank
- a business magazine
- a management school
- a union of entrepreneurs
- a champagne label

B. Objectives

The promotion of female entrepreneurship by means of visibility for the winner of the election. Apart from the price the winner gets an enormous visibility on national TV, in national and regional newspapers and she also gets her picture in the offices of a national bank that sponsors the event.

C. Methodology

There are 3 criteria to be able to win the Award:

- the women must be owner of a flourishing business since 3 years
- she must have found a balance between her professional and private life

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- she must show concern about the community she's living in and help people or community programs by voluntary work

3. RESULTS

A. Main difficulties

B. Most successful issues

Every issue has been very successful. We have about 300 people attending the Award Ceremony each year. The visibility grew enormously since our Royal Highness Princess Mathilde came to an Award ceremony and gave authorisation to put the Award under her Royal Protection.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
PROMOTION & VISIBILITY : BELGIUM**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

Shopping route (markante winkelroute)

B. Territorial Scope

X Local
Regional
National

C. Leading organisation

Markant, Spastraat 8/2, 1000 Brussel

D. Profile of Female Entrepreneur

Female entrepreneurs who own their own shop

E. Contact Data

Name: Christine Van Nuffel
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Web page: /
Other: /

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

An extraordinary, exclusive "open door" formula in which several shop owners collaborate to create an extra dimension to shopping for their costumers and members of markant.

B. Objectives

Knowledge of the businesses in your region, to create a bond between the participants of the route and potential costumers or consumers.

C. Methodology

The participants can receive a view behind the scenes of the shop, workshops, fun gifts and nice prizes.

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D. Most relevant actions/activities

In 2006 there were 31 shopping routes. In 2007 there are already 20 shopping routes planned throughout Flanders.

E. Results of Networking

The participants learn something about the different shops and get to know the women behind the shop. This is the best commercial bond you can make with your costumers.

3. TRANSFERABILITY

A. Reproducibility

Easily reproducible

B. Conditions for transferability

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
MENTORING: BELGIUM**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

CEMENTO

Mentoring for self employed women – EFE project (Empowering Female Entrepreneurs)

B. Leading organisation

markant vzw, Spastraat 8/2, 1000 Brussel

C. Partners

Sein (Institute for Behavioural Science) at the University of Hasselt

D. Profile of Female Entrepreneur

Any female entrepreneur who wants/needs advice on any subject relating to her professional life, be it marketing strategies, growth opportunities, personnel issues, etc.

Every female entrepreneur who feels she isn't progressing anymore or feels like her current job doesn't offer the right opportunities anymore. She's thinking about a carrier change but doesn't know in which direction.

E. Contact Data

Name: Christine Van Nuffel

Phone Number: + 32 2 286 93 40

E-mail: Christine.vannuffel@markantvzw.be

Webpage: /

Other: /

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

In the EFE mentoring project we offer first of all training for the mentors. Once they are formed, they start working one on one with their mentee.

The joined sessions took place in this order:

- formation mentors
- formation mentees
- formation of the pairs
- individual meetings mentor-mentee
- an interim evaluation
- rest of the individual meetings
- closing moment – overall evaluation

B. Objectives

- to help female entrepreneurs in critical situations in their businesses

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- to entice women to become entrepreneur
- to advise them on various subjects

C. Methodology

Via a direct mailing to our members we found 10 established entrepreneurs willing to take on a new entrepreneur as a mentee. The mentors received a short formation to let them get acquainted with the concept of mentoring and learn what is expected from them during the mentoring programme.

The mentoring programme consists of one on one meeting, alternated with common evaluation meetings.

D. Most relevant actions/activities

The programme is at the starting point. There hasn't been an evaluation yet.

E. Results

By way of a first direct mailing 10 mentors and 15 mentees showed interest. By means of a second direct mailing we tried to find extra mentors for the remaining mentees.
Further results once evaluated.

3.RESULTS

A. Main difficulties

Making the match between mentor and mentee.
Especially difficult if you have more mentees than mentors.

B. Most successful issues

Answer once evaluated

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
NETWORKING: DENMARK**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

Middagsværk

B. Territorial Scope

Local
 Regional
National

C. Leading organisation

Centre for Entrepreneurship

D. Profile of Female Entrepreneur

- female students with interest in entrepreneurship
- women in bachelor-, master- or ph.d.-degree and a business idea
- established female entrepreneurs with a bachelor-, master- or ph.d.-degree

E. Contact Data

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Other: <http://www.profile.socialfonden.net/> (only Danish)

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

At the Centre for Entrepreneurship we usually support and offer meeting rooms for network activities for the participants on long-term courses. However we often see the enthusiasm among the participants disappear after one or two network meetings after the training courses have finished. When we planned the training courses in the PROFILE-project we wanted to promote entrepreneurship and the training courses by letting potential entrepreneurs and well-established female entrepreneurs meet in an informal atmosphere.

B. Methodology

The maximum number of participants is approximately 25 women, preferably a little less than half of them have already started up their business. The evening begins with a speed-dating-process, where the participants get the chance to talk 2x2 minutes with half of the participants. They spend 2 minutes presenting themselves and get a presentation of the other participant also lasting two minutes. After that the dinner is served (a delicious dinner consisting of three courses). The dinner is interrupted by small exercises where the participants for instance stand up and present themselves from an objective that symbolizes their business or their business idea. When the dinner finishes we hand out contact

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information on all the participants if everyone agrees. The individual is only allowed to participate in one dinner (because of limited resources). This means that the long term network process is up to the participants themselves and mostly happens in small groups. Price is 70€, free for the participants.

C. Most relevant actions/activities

-

D. Results of Networking

During the autumn 2005 we have had two entrepreneurship dinners and are planning a couple more in the winter and spring 2006. After the first dinner where the schedule was a little tight it seems that we have found the right way to do things: 95% of the participants was "very satisfied" with the evening, whereas 5% was only "satisfied". We are relatively used to happy participants in the centre, but I think this one beats everything.

3. TRANSFERABILITY

A. Reproducibility

B. Conditions for transferability

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
TRAINING PROGRAMMES : DENMARK AND FINLAND**

1.- BEST PRACTICE DATA:

1.1 Best practice name:

A sense of entrepreneurship

1.2 Leading organisation/s:

Centre for Entrepreneurship, University of Aarhus

1.2 Female entrepreneur profile:

Female university or college students considering a carrier as entrepreneur.

1.4 Scope:

Local
X Regional
National
X International

1.5 Key agents involved

Centre for Entrepreneurship, University of Aarhus
The Upper-Savo Vocational Institute
Kuopio University

1.6 Timing for the development of best practices

2005-2006

1.7 Best practice description

The training programme was developed as a core part of the PROFILE project in order to increase the number of female entrepreneurs with a master or bachelor degree. Working closely together with the Chain reaction-project from Finland we realized that the Finnish project needed training programme for students with quite similar objectives and contents. That's why the training programme was adopted by Chain Reaction and became an international best practice.

The training programme originally aimed at female students on institutions for higher education, meaning students from all schools and universities from where you can graduate with a bachelor- or master degree. The Finnish project expanded a bit on the target group by admitting students from vocational institutes.

2.- TRAINING PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

2.1 Type of training

As stressed in the name of the training programme the training programme offers an introduction to entrepreneurship. This means that the student does not need to have a well-defined business idea, but only to be curious on a career as entrepreneur. The overall goal is to motivate more female students to become entrepreneurs and thereby increase the overall number of knowledge based entrepreneurs.

We have found it very important to limit the scope of the training programme so that even students who have only a very vague idea of becoming an entrepreneur will find it worthwhile participating in the training course. Because of that it only consists of 8 modules.

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The training programme focuses on the more soft and practical aspects of entrepreneurship.

2.2 Training programme objectives

The objectives of the training programme is that the participant:

- gains insight in different ways of being an entrepreneur
- gains knowledge about which competences that are central in order to become a successful entrepreneur
- clarifies if she really wants a career as entrepreneur
- gets a chance to build up a network with other female students with the same interest
- gain knowledge and tools that are relevant both during her studies and afterwards no matter if the student chooses the entrepreneurial career path or a more traditional job
- knows where to go when she wants to carry out her entrepreneurship or entrepreneurship plans

2.3 Training programme contents

The training programme covers the following subjects:

Introduction to entrepreneurship with focus on female entrepreneurs

Business visits

Idea development

Business plans and project plans

The courage to entrepreneurship

Market analysis

Marketing

Where to go if you want to carry on with your business plan

On top of the 8 modules the students are offered 5 hours of free coaching.

2.4 Brief description of the practical activities carried out in training programme.

The introduction to entrepreneurship was done by the project manager herself and included a little statistics on female entrepreneurs in Denmark (where we tried to focus on all the possibilities).

We spend a whole day visiting 4-5 companies all owned by one or more women. All of the owners had a bachelor- or master degree and used their educational background somehow.

The idea development workshop lasted 5 hours and the students were given a short theoretical introduction to opportunity recognition and evaluation of generated ideas, creative processes and small group dynamics. After that they worked in groups with their own business ideas (based on their personal and academic competences).

The students were introduced to the most important parts of a business plan and how to go through the process of writing one.

The student worked with their courage to entrepreneurship in different ways: Group discussions about: What is scary about entrepreneurship, and how can we build up our courage to overcome the challenges? Also they got a change to get aware of their own limits and push them a bit through drama exercises.

The students had lectures on marketing research and marketing with a lot group work included.

At the last lesson the students made oral presentations of their business plans, and the project manager gave tips and advice about where to go, when the students had decided on setting up their own business.

2.5 Differences (success indicators) of your best practices in respect of other experiences or training programmes with similar objectives:

Centre for entrepreneurship had never organized training programmes exclusively targeted at female students before (usually we offer training courses for both female and male students and graduates). It created a very safe and secure atmosphere, but some of the students noted that at some point of the process of launching a company they would need a more critical view on their business ideas which they meant they would probably easier get from men than women.

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Also it was a new to have so many different coaches, teachers and trainers involved in the same training programme. It meant that the students met a lot of very competent persons (nearly all entrepreneurs themselves). In total nearly all the students were very satisfied with the training course, but it is rather difficult to measure how many of them really is going to start of a business, because many of them wanted to get their degree and maybe gain some practical experience through a regular job, before setting up their business.

2.6 Methodology used in the training programme:

The business visits have been organized by an external consultant with an enormous network to small entrepreneurs in the Aarhus area, because she has specialised in teaching and coaching upcoming and well-established entrepreneurs. The students get to visit 4-5 female entrepreneurs that have established their company in different ways:

- Some companies owned by one woman, some companies own by two or more women.
 - Some entrepreneurs having rented or bought their own office, some entrepreneurs based in a business hotel
 - Some newly founded companies, some well-established companies
- Etc.

This way the students see with their own eyes what a career as entrepreneur can be like. Also they meet some new role models – we tend to choose mostly young female entrepreneurs. The students have commented that this field trip also gave them the possibility to network in an informal way.

One module is focusing on the courage to entrepreneurship. It is facilitated by an external consultant with a theoretical background in dramaturgy and a lot of practical experience with acting. The module consists of

- group discussion about what the students fear the most about entrepreneurship and how to overcome their fear
- practical exercises from the world of acting, where the students try to find their own limits
- “role play” of some of the situations that the students fear the most
- short inputs on how you can overcome your fear step by step and how the facilitator personally has coped with her fear related to entrepreneurship

As written above the students are offered 5 hours of free coaching. We have chosen 3 coaches with different profiles: A coach focusing on the “soft” issues: Clarification of personal and academic qualifications and how do they match the business idea the student might have

A coach specialised in market analysis and marketing

The permanent all round coach on Centre for Entrepreneurship. His core competences are economy, framing of the business idea and sales.

The students decide for themselves how they want to spend their 5 hours of coaching. They can either decide to spend all the time with one coach or use several coaches.

2.7 Training programme evaluation systems:

To evaluate the training programme an external evaluator has been carrying out an evaluation about what the participants thought about the training through questionnaires and focus groups. This has been done after each training course so that the training programme could be revised. This description describes the training programme after the 2nd revision in spring 2006. Also the external evaluator has been trying to follow up on the participants, but it is difficult to get a clear picture of how many of the students that become entrepreneurs, because the process of establishing a company can take a lot of time. Also many of the students wanted to finish their studies and maybe gather a little bit of experience from a regular job before establishing their company. Apart from that the project manager, the trainers and the national steering committee have been doing self evaluation.

2.8 Results achieved in the training programme concerning initial objectives.

As written above it is very difficult to measure if the overall goal of increasing the number of female entrepreneurs has been fulfilled. The students found the business visits very interesting, but would have liked to visit more companies with some sort of production. Nearly all the students got clarified if they wanted a career as entrepreneur, and most of them didn't get scared away from a career as entrepreneur. The students were very interested in talking and networking with each other. However the network doesn't seem to be as long-lasting as the ones on our other training course (Introductory entrepreneurship training course for female graduates). It is probably because a lot of things are happening in the students' life: They are moving to other countries/other parts of Denmark, are getting boy friends, are getting jobs, are writing their final thesis's etc. We introduced the participants to a lot of different organizations offering

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office space, coaching etc. To upcoming entrepreneurs and haven't heard that they were in need of additional knowledge about where to go after the training course.

2.9 Weak aspects found / aspects to improve:

The greatest weaknesses of the training programme had to do with the composition of the participants and the type of business that we focused on: Some of the participants were about to start up their business during or right after the training course, others had a clear or a vague business idea, and some of them were just considering entrepreneurship as a career path. One would have expected the students that were about to start up their business to be disappointed with the other students lacking behind. Some of them were asking for more time to share experiences with some other students struggling with the same challenges as themselves. However the students with virtually no business idea were more frustrated feeling that they couldn't contribute with a lot and having difficulties doing a few of the exercises.

Also some of the students were considering to starting up a business with some sort of production involved, where the training programme was focusing more on consultancies, because we assumed that most highly educated persons start up these kinds of businesses or develop high tech products that are produced in foreign countries or by someone else. It turned out that quite a few of the female students were considering to starting up businesses such as publishing companies, restaurants, import companies (specialities) and clothing companies.

3.- BEST PRACTICE TRANSFERABILITY

3.1 Situations, organizations, groups or training programmes to which your best practices can be transferred to.

The training programme can relatively easy be reproduced in universities and colleges with entrepreneurship programmes all around Europe.

3.2 Necessary conditions for best practice transferability

It is very important that the female students that the training course is aiming at is more or less at the same stage, when it comes to entrepreneurship: They are curious about it and considering it as a possible career path, but haven't written a business plan or gone even further. Also it is essential that female students from many different faculties and departments have the possibility to participate in the training course, because it gives the best conditions for the students to contribute to each other's ideas.

3.3 Resources or tools necessary in order to implement your best practice:

Of course it takes some funding to carry out such a training programme. Apart from that the success is very much depending on the right trainers, teachers, coaches etc. and the right participants. Also it is necessary with a network of new and experienced female entrepreneurs that the students can visit.

4.- CONTACT DATA

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- 4.8 Other:

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
TRAINING PROGRAMMES : DENMARK AND FINLAND**

1.- BEST PRACTICE DATA:

1.1. Best practice name:

Introductory entrepreneurship training course for female graduates

1.2 Leading organisation/s:

Centre for Entrepreneurship, University of Aarhus

1.3 Female entrepreneur profile:

Women with a master or bachelor degree seriously considering or planning a career as entrepreneur

1.4 Scope:

Local
X Regional
National
International

1.5 Key agents involved

Centre for Entrepreneurship, University of Aarhus

1.6 Timing for the development of best practices

2005-2006

1.7 Best practice description

The training programme was developed as a core part of the PROFILE-project in order to increase the number of female entrepreneurs with a master or bachelor degree.

The training programme originally aimed at women who had earned their master- or bachelor degree recently. However a lot of older women with degrees earned 5, 10 or 20 years ago were very eager to participate in our first training course. We decided to accept these participants in order to find out if it was possible to create a supportive and profitable learning setting with such a wide age span. The experiment turned out very well, so we decided to open up the following training courses to more experienced women with a master or bachelor degree. Also it turned out that women from many different parts of Denmark wanted to participate, where we had only expected women from the Aarhus-area to apply. That wasn't a problem – it just showed how much need there was for a training course like this.

The training programme was a thorough introduction to entrepreneurship with the intent to make the participants decide for themselves if they wanted to become entrepreneurs/intrapreneurs etc. or not. If they decided to carry on with their plans they should ideally develop their business plan during the training course.

2.-TRAINING PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

2.1 Type of training

As stressed in the previous the training programme offers a thorough introduction to entrepreneurship. This means that the participant does not need to have a well-defined business idea, but needs to consider a career as entrepreneur/intrapreneur seriously. The overall goal is to make more women seriously consider a career as entrepreneur: Is it really what they want? Is their business idea profitable? If the answer turns out to be a yes then the next step is to make the women actually start writing and carrying out their business plans. In the very end the goal is to increase the overall number of knowledge based entrepreneurs.

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When planning the training course we were aiming at women who had received their degree recently. Because of that we assumed that most of the participants would be unemployed (at that time the unemployment rate among graduates was rather high). Focus groups with female-entrepreneurs-to-be showed that the target group preferred a longer training course instead of a two week long very intensive training course. Based on these data an intensive training course consisting of app. 70 hours of teaching was developed. The training course lasted app. 2 months, and most weeks the participants had one full day of teaching. In the very beginning and very end of the training course we had one week with 2 or 3 days of full teaching to accelerate the process. This programme meant that it was possible to follow the course with at least a part time job. However we also had few participants with fulltime jobs. It worked out well with a little bit of flexibility from the project manager (who was also course responsible) and hard work from the participant. However it is of course possible to carry out the training course with a different timetable. Due to the trainers' other obligations the layout changed a bit from course to course without any major problems.

The training programme focuses on the more soft and practical aspects of entrepreneurship.

2.2 Training programme objectives

The objectives of the training programme is that the participant:

- meets new and experienced female entrepreneurs
- gains knowledge about which competences that are central in order to become a successful entrepreneur
- clarifies if she really wants a career as entrepreneur
- gets the courage to take the first steps into an entrepreneurial lifestyle
- gains basic competences in several relevant disciplines such as idea development, network, market analysis, marketing, sales, PR and economics.
- develops a plan for how to carry out the dreams and hopes
- takes the first steps to carry out the plan
- builds a network with other highly educated women with entrepreneurial plans.

2.3 Training programme contents

The training programme covers the following subjects:

Introduction to female entrepreneurship in general and the training course in particular
Motivation and "job satisfaction"
Courage to entrepreneurship
Idea development
Business visits
Network
Presentational skills
Budgeting and financing
Forms of ownership, taxes and auditing
Rules about unemployment benefit and entrepreneurship
Market analysis
Marketing
Business plans & project plans
PR
Sales
The visual image of the business
Negotiations and pricing

On top of the training modules the students were offered 5 hours of free coaching.

2.4 Brief description of the practical activities carried out in training programme.

The introduction to entrepreneurship was done by the project manager herself and included a little statistics on female entrepreneurs in Denmark (where we tried to focus on all the possibilities).

The participants were asked to discuss in groups what they were motivated by. Also they tried a few laughing exercises.

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The participants worked with their courage to entrepreneurship in different ways: Group discussions about: What is scary about entrepreneurship, and how can we build up our courage to overcome the challenges? Also they got a change to get aware of their own limits and push them a bit through drama exercises. Last but not least the participants experimented with their courage and limits in the real world by an assignment, where they had to do something courageous related to entrepreneurship in the “real” world.

The idea development workshop lasted 1½ day and the participants were given a theoretical introduction to opportunity recognition, evaluation of generated ideas, creative processes and small group dynamics. After that they worked in groups with their own business ideas for a whole day.

We spend a whole day visiting 4-5 companies all owned by one or more women. All of the owners had a bachelor- or master degree and used their educational background somehow.

Through inputs from the trainer and group work the participants were introduced to networking as a skill: Why is networking so important? How do you build and enlarge a professional network? What tools can help you in this process? What does your network look like for the moment?

The participants were given a theoretical input on oral presentations, and at the very large day of the training course the participants were asked to present their business plan.

Assuming that the participants were able to find and digest factual information by themselves the training programme didn't focus so much on the economical issues. However it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the central concepts such as: budgeting, liquidity, expenses, earnings, profit etc. This was obtained mainly through a “pizza exercise”, where the participants had to calculate how expensive their pizzas had to be taking raw material, salaries, rent and investments in oven etc. in to account.

We had an accountant to explain about all the options when it comes to ownership, payment of taxes and auditing. Though he was a little “dry” the participants were very interested in this topic, probably because they knew that they didn't know enough about it and needed to. Also the participants were very worried about this area, but the accountant was good at calming them a bit down – not giving too complicated explanations.

Because many of the participants were unemployed they were receiving unemployment benefits. That's why we had an employee of a private unemployment fund (who is also a member of the steering committee) to explain about the very complex rules about what you are allowed to do while receiving unemployment benefits.

Market analysis and marketing were taught by the same trainer: He had the participants work very much with their own ideas, and that was at the same time a strength and a weakness, because some of the participants' ideas were very vague, in some cases because they had skipped their original business idea. It meant that they had some problems with analysing their market and planning the marketing initiatives. It made them a bit frustrated, but on the other hand it worked as an eye opener: The participants with the vague business ideas found out that they needed to elaborate on their business ideas.

The participants were introduced to business plans and project plans. Also we touched upon the process of writing one.

A trainer with a background in journalism introduced the participants to PR: They were taught how to write a press release and how to keep in touch with the news media in general. The participants were given the chance to write a press release and handle it in to the trainer. They received individual feedback on the press releases. However some of the participants didn't hand in a press release and it might be worth considering making it compulsory.

One of the development consultants in the Centre for Entrepreneurship has worked a salesman, sales manager and sales trainer for many years, so he was of course doing the sales training. The participants were introduced to the basic principles of sales by an E-learning programme (with figures and sound-material). Afterwards we did some role-play on the class, where the participants prepared a phone call together and then tested it on a teacher acting the customer. At the very first training course we tried to have the participants call customers in real life, but it was a very big challenge of the participants so they spent so much time to prepare themselves to call so that many of the didn't get to call at all. If you allow more time to this topic it might be a good idea to include a real-life exercise.

The participants were introduced to design of the visual image of the company by a photographer. They did an exercise on choosing colours for the other participants' companies. Also they were discussing logos, business cards and WebPages. However some of the participants stated in the evaluation that they would had preferred a graphic designer as trainer on this session. The project management doesn't disagree totally with this point of view. However this trainer

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had a level of enthusiasm about the subject and entrepreneurship in general which was very difficult to find with other potential teachers.

The participants were given a short but very intensive introduction to negotiations and pricing by a very experienced trainer. We hadn't reserved a full session (one morning from 9-12 AM or one afternoon from 1-4 PM) for this topic, but after evaluating the first training course we chose to allow more time for it.

2.5 Differences (success indicators) of your best practices in respect of other experiences or training programmes with similar objectives:

Centre for entrepreneurship had never organized training programmes exclusively targeted at women with bachelor or master degrees before (usually we offer training courses for both female and male students and graduates). It created a very safe and secure atmosphere, but some of the students noted that at some point of the process of launching a company they would need a more critical view on their business ideas which they meant they would probably easier get from men than women.

Also it was new to have so many different coaches, teachers and trainers involved in the same training programme. It meant that the students met a lot of very competent persons (nearly all entrepreneurs themselves). Also the project manager put a great deal of effort in to creating a network between the teachers which was of course a great advantage for the training courses, but also the teachers appreciated it very much.

In total nearly all the participants were very satisfied with the training course, but it is rather difficult to measure how many of them really are going to start of a business, because starting up a business can be a long process. However the evaluation consultancy contacted the participants at the first training after half a year and made telephone interviews about their situation. The result was that more participants had started up their business than one could expect (based on the results of comparable entrepreneurship training programs). However a clear majority still hadn't started up a business, but most of them were still planning to do so.

One major difference from many of our other training courses on entrepreneurship was that the participants really showed some enterprising behaviour by organizing extra modules, discussion groups etc. for them selves.

2.6 Methodology used in the training programme:

In general the classes/sessions/modules/lessons have had a very practical approach with a lot of exercises where the students in most cases were working with their own business idea. We definitely want to promote this approach, but it might be appropriate only to accept participants with a relatively clear business idea. Also we found it really important to have trainers that were entrepreneurs themselves – the only exception from this rule was that a couple of the modules were taught by the employees at the centre for entrepreneurship. This meant that the trainers functioned as role models and that they had a lot practical tips for the participants.

The business visits have been organized by an external consultant with an enormous network to small entrepreneurs in the Aarhus-area, because she has specialised in teaching and coaching upcoming and well-established entrepreneurs. The students get to visit 4-5 female entrepreneurs that have established their company in different ways:

- Some companies owned by one woman, some companies own by two or more women.
 - Some entrepreneurs having rented or bought their own office, some entrepreneurs based in a business hotel
 - Some newly founded companies, some well-established companies
- Etc.

This way the participants see with their own eyes what a career as entrepreneur can be like. Also they meet some new role. The participants have commented that this field trip also gave them the possibility to network in an informal way.

Three modules are focusing on the courage to entrepreneurship. It is facilitated by an external consultant with a theoretical background in dramaturgy and a lot of practical experience with acting. The modules consist of

- group discussion about what the students fear the most about entrepreneurship and how to overcome their fear
- practical exercises from the world of acting, where the students try to find their own limits
- "role play" of some of the situations that the students fear the most
- short inputs on how you can overcome your fear step by step and how the facilitator personally has coped with her fear related to entrepreneurship

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- assignments to be performed in real-life situations, where the participants are asked to do something that they are afraid of, related to their entrepreneurial/intrepreneurial plans.

As written above the participants are offered 5 hours of free coaching. We have chosen 3 coaches with different profiles:

A coach focusing on the “soft” issues: Clarification of personal and academic qualifications and how do they match the business idea the student might have

A coach specialised in market analysis and marketing

The permanent all round coach at the Centre for Entrepreneurship. His core competences are economy, framing of the business idea and sales.

The participants decide for themselves how they want to spend their 5 hours of coaching. They can either decide to spend all the time with one coach or use several coaches.

2.7 Training programme evaluation systems:

To evaluate the training programme an external evaluator has been carrying out an evaluation about what the participants thought about the training through questionnaires and focus groups. This has been done after each training course so that the training programme could be revised. This description describes the training programme after the 1st revision in the winter 2006. Also the external evaluator has been trying to follow up on the participants, but it is difficult to get a clear picture of how many of the participants that become entrepreneurs, because the process of establishing a company can take a lot of time. Apart from that the project manager, the trainers and the national steering committee have been doing self evaluation.

2.8 Results achieved in the training programme concerning initial objectives.

As written above it is very difficult to measure if the overall goal of increasing the number of female entrepreneurs has been fulfilled. But looking at the other objectives we can definitely say that the participants have met a lot of new and experienced female entrepreneurs among the trainers and at the business visits. Most of the participants got clarified if she wanted a careers as entrepreneur, but a few were still in the process of clarification by the end of the training course, probably because it is a very big decision, when you have an apartment/a house, a husband, children and/or a decent job. We experienced that a lot of the participants gained more courage and energy through the training course. Also many of the participants were very active through the training programme phoning potential customers, partners etc. However quite a few of the participants hesitated to take the essential last steps. To ensure these step were taken it might have been useful with more coaching and mentoring earlier in the training period. The participants have found the topics that the training course focused on were very relevant and interesting. However they would have liked to go deeper into some of them. It will turn into a very intensive or very long training course, but the participants proposed that the trainers could provide some extra literature references and/or organize some working groups focusing on different topics so that the participant can choose for herself what she wants to specialise in. That would make the different modules work as an introduction as intended. Most of the participants made a preliminary business or project plan – we assume that the fact that we asked them to handle it in at some point of the training course was a good way of making things happening though it should not be necessary. At all three actual training courses the participants were very enthusiastic about building up a network with one another, probably stimulated by the module on networking and several supporting factors such as “long” days with relative many and long breaks. Quite many of the participants still meet with each other – either for social or professional purposes.

2.9 Weak aspects found / aspects to improve:

The greatest weaknesses of the training programme had to do with the composition of the participants: The participants with no or a very vague business idea were quite frustrated through the training course, because they were asked to work with their business idea in many of the exercises and assignments. You can't entirely avoid this problem, because some of the participants gave up on their business idea, because they found out that it wasn't feasible or profitable (enough) through the training course, and that is one of the objectives of the training course. However it might be useful to ask the potential participants to describe their idea more thoroughly than we did. Also the participants wanted more women with an educational background in science or business to attend the training courses, but it is quite difficult to achieve in Denmark, because very few women tend to choose these subjects at the universities and colleges. And these few are quite attractive at the labour market, meaning that they are well-paid and have a lot of jobs to choose between.

3.- BEST PRACTICE TRANSFERABILITY

3.1 Situations, organizations, groups or training programmes to which your best practices can be transferred to.

The training programme can relatively easy be reproduced in universities, colleges, unemployment funds, unions, private and public organizations offering training to HIGHLY EDUCATED women all around Europe.

3.2 Necessary conditions for best practice transferability

It is very important that the women that the training course is aiming at have more or less the same challenges: Danish women with a bachelor or master degree are very good at planning, acquiring new knowledge, analyzing and communicating. When it comes to action and risk taking they hesitate very much. Many of them have “soft” educational backgrounds (humanities, psychology, theology etc.), and have a hard time finding relevant jobs. Because of that they have to create their own job either in an existing organization or in their own company. Of course women who want to start up a fast-growing company can also benefit from the training programme.

3.3 Resources or tools necessary in order to implement your best practice:

Of course it takes some funding to carry out such a comprehensive training programme. Apart from that the success is very much depending on the right trainers, teachers, coaches etc. and the right participants. On top of that it is very important to have a project manager/course manager whom coordinates the learning processes and adjust the training programme to the actual participants.

3.4 Are your best practices included in any diffusion framework?

4.- CONTACT DATA

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**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT: FINLAND**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Name:

REAKTORI Resource centres for female entrepreneurs

B. Territorial Scope

X Local
X Regional
National

C. Leading organisation

Ylä-Savon Koulutuskuntayhtymä

D. Contact Data

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2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

Reaktioketju (Chain Reaction)-project has started 2 resource centres for female entrepreneurs in the cities of Iisalmi and Kuopio. The name of the resource centre is "Reaktori".

Reaktori- Resource Centre is an advisory and meeting place for women wishing to start as an entrepreneur or develop their existing enterprises. The aim is to strengthen women entrepreneurs' position and increase women's influence in regional development and economic life. An important task for a Resource Centre is to co-operate with authorities, organizations and media, locally and regionally.

The aim of REAKTORI resource centres is :

- To strengthen and increase women's enterprises
- To enhance empowerment of women
- To take care of, use and develop women's competence
- To increase women's engagement in local development
- To form a meeting place for female entrepreneurs networks

Our target groups are female entrepreneurs, women planning to start new business and students, who are interested in entrepreneurship.

B. Methodology

Business advisory services and individual support.
Training, networking and lobbying.

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C. Most relevant actions/activities

Business advisory services tailored to the need of start ups and those female entrepreneurs, who wish to develop their companies.
Individual training and help in IT and marketing
Networking and building up new networks of entrepreneurs
Development projects for female entrepreneurs
Training and information of replacements (substitutes) for entrepreneurs
Office services for start up.

3. TRANSFERABILITY

A. Reproducibility

A resource centre can be started almost anywhere, where there is need for special support for encouraging women towards entrepreneurship .

B. Conditions for transferability

Financing , experienced business advisor(s) with good connections in business life, and premises (in the city centre or nearby).

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
NETWORKING : FINLAND**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

Reaktioketju (Chain Reaction) Development Circles

B. Leading organisation

Ylä-Savon koulutus kuntayhtymä

C. Partners

Kuopio University
Pro Agria Pohjois-Savo

D. Contact Data

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Other:

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

Women entrepreneurs' development circle activities

Female entrepreneurs involved in the Reaktioketju (Reaction Chain) project and women planning to start a business were invited to form development circles dedicated to a specific field of activity, region or endeavour. The participants in the development circles are actively involved in the operations and define their own development needs independently, preparing a circle action plan approximately twice a year. The planned activities are related to developing the business activities, improving the entrepreneurs' skills and enhancing cooperation between entrepreneurs. The activities may also include measures designed to promote the entrepreneurs' working ability and wellness at work. Involving minimum bureaucracy, the development circle scheme provides a framework for uncomplicated cooperation.

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Involving minimum bureaucracy, the development circle scheme provides a framework for uncomplicated cooperation.

Those participating in the circles are either individual entrepreneurs or women planning to start a business, and occasionally teachers providing instruction in the field involved. Preferably, they should be experts in the type or line of business they are engaged in. Additionally, the project staff may be involved in the activities.

B. Objectives

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Objectives of the development circle activities

- Creating networks of professionals
- Enhancing the skills and competence of entrepreneurs
- Promoting the growth and financial performance of firms
- Transfer of tacit knowledge from more experienced entrepreneurs to those starting a business, and provision of peer support
- Finding successors to entrepreneurs who are giving up their businesses.

C. Methodology

The participants are actively involved in the process, planning and organising their own training in order to achieve a higher level of empowerment. Outside experts are relied upon when necessary.

The circle members can also provide training for one another, and if an individual member of the circle takes part in some training in another locality, he or she can convey the new knowledge to the other members. In this way, it is possible to make savings in the training and travel costs, and it also makes sense in terms of time.

D. Most relevant actions/activities

1. Establishment of a development circle

Entrepreneurs operating in the same field of activity get together to discuss the possibility of establishing a circle. At the same time, they try and find an enthusiastic leader from among the prospective members of the circle. Preferably, the leader should know other entrepreneurs and actors. Each circle includes 10 to 15 members. The first common task for the members is to find out a good name for their own development circle.

2. Preparation of the development or action plan

The meetings of the circle are called by the leader. The participants identify their own development needs and prepare a joint development and action plan for six months ahead. Not being a mere discussion club, the circle seeks to achieve predefined objectives.

3. Activities

The activities may consist of various types of training, field trips, visits to fairs and seminars, company tours, group consultation sessions and network meetings. Members of the circle pay mutual visits to their respective firms while seeking to identify best practices in companies operating in other fields of activity as well.

The training provided as part of the development circle is precision training addressing the fields of activity in which the individual members are engaged in. The instructors are normally experts in their respective fields. Usually the training is of short duration lasting one evening or a couple of days.

The development circles keep records of their meetings and activities. The circle should convene approximately once a month. The frequency of the meeting depends on the needs of the participants and is also affected by the potentially seasonal nature of business, long distances and the individual pursuits of the circle members.

4. Funding

While the Reaktioketju project has provided some of the funding for the circle activities, the entrepreneurs have themselves contributed towards the financing of their activities. Upon completion of the project, the objective is that the activities will be fully self-financed.

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3. RESULTS

A. Main difficulties

Room for improvement

The level of activity in individual development circles often depends on the circle leader. To ensure a high level of efficiency, it would be advisable to agree right at the outset that the circle members will alternate as leaders. Another possibility is to establish a development circle to work on a specific issue for a predefined period of time.

B. Most successful issues

Outcomes

The emergence of new professional networks is a proven fact. The entrepreneurs' professional skills and business acumen have improved. Networking has helped entrepreneurs cope with daily challenges. Steps have also been taken to promote entrepreneurship among young women.

Initially, there were concerns that competing firms would be unwilling or unable to work within the same circle. Experience shows, however, that as entrepreneurs get to know one another, new business based on mutual trust is generated between competitors. Cooperation is no longer perceived as an obstacle; instead, it has been found to add value.

There has also been a degree of cooperation between circles representing different fields of activity. For example, entrepreneurs in the accounting circle have provided training for other entrepreneurs in bookkeeping and taxation, thereby creating a name for their expert services.

Savings have been made in training, development, travel and marketing costs because entrepreneurs operating in the same field have been able to do certain things together. Additionally, the entrepreneurs have been in a position to rely on the same temping staff and save in payroll costs.

Women entrepreneurs often lack professional networks that support business development and help cope with daily chores. As a result of the development circle activities, women's professional networks have been reinforced, generating genuine cooperation. Concerns over whether entrepreneurs engaged in the same line of business are able to cooperate in the first place have been dispelled and proved to be unfounded. While competition has not gone away by any means, entrepreneurs have realised that it is possible to achieve things through joint efforts that could not be accomplished when working on your own. In the best of cases entrepreneurs have succeeded in finding new joint services and operational models.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
PROMOTION & VISIBILITY : FINLAND**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

IDEA HUNTS (Ideakierros)

B. Territorial Scope

X Local

Regional : North Savo : Lisalmi, Kuopio and Varkaus

National

C. Leading organisation

Ylä-Savon Ammattiopisto (Ylä-Savo Vocational Institute)

PL 30

FI-74101 Lisalmi

E. Contact Data

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2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

To make women entrepreneurs and their businesses known and to "hunt" for ideas, the Reaction Chain (Reaktioketju) project has been arranging Idea Hunts in and around Northern Savo (Pohjois-Savo). The model for these Idea Hunts was taken from the Belgian partner project EFE's Markante Winkelroute.

The Hunts make it easier for customers to come in and have a look at small specialist shops. Small specialist shops as well as other service businesses owned by women have been participating in Idea Hunts.

B. Objectives

- to make women entrepreneurs and their businesses known,
- to promote the marketing of businesses and the marketing know-how of the entrepreneurs
- to enhance networking

C. Methodology

For each Idea Hunt, about 5 businesses are selected, and a discussion about planning the event is arranged with the owners. A general brochure of the entrepreneurs is compiled and sent to potential customers. The brochure is also distributed by the businesses participating in the Idea Hunt. The Idea Hunt will also be advertised in the local newspaper.

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The participating entrepreneurs and employees prepare for the Idea Hunt by trying to think of some special thing connected with or produced by the company which customers may not be aware of yet. The entrepreneurs also describe their business concepts and careers. Idea Hunts are carried out in the evening after business hours.

Participants (customers) should register for the Idea Hunt in advance. Registrations are received by one of the participating companies. The participants will be divided into groups of about 10 persons, and during the Hunt, each group will be guided by a person who has been appointed in advance. While registering, each participant will be informed of the business company and group to join. At the start of the Hunt, the participant will receive a passport which will be stamped by each company visited. The passport should be provided with the person's contact information and returned to the arrangers of the event at the end of the evening. The passport will be used in a draw at the end of the evening. In this way, the entrepreneurs will have the participants' contact information for marketing purposes.

Each group will stay in one enterprise for about 30 minutes after which the group will be guided to the next place. During the visit, group members may also buy something, but there is no obligation to buy during the Hunt. Finally the groups will meet somewhere to have a little meal offered by the entrepreneurs, discuss the outcome of the evening and the drawing will take place. The meeting place could be a café or restaurant which could also be one of the enterprises to be presented during the Hunt. The entrepreneurs might also give the Idea Hunt participants a little present and, naturally, their own brochures as remembrances of the evening.

Idea Hunts are usually carried out on foot. In regions where enterprises are far apart, bus transport has also been used.

3. RESULTS

A. Main difficulties

The best practice can be transferred to all places where there is a need to promote entrepreneurship. The Idea hunts can be organized by e.g. by entrepreneurs associations cities or any other groups or organisations interested in promoting the marketing of small enterprises.

Necessary is:

- a group of entrepreneurs situated quite near by each other
- some money for advertising the event
- a group of entrepreneurs willing to improve their marketing

B. Most successful issues

According to feedback from customers, this model of operation is a very good way to get information about local businesses and entrepreneurs. After such an Idea Hunt, and getting acquainted with the owner and the activity of the business, it is much easier to become a customer. It is also a great advantage for business owners to get new customers in this way.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT: FRANCE**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

Boutique de gestion
Training for those involved in assisting women to set up or acquire businesses

B. Project leader:

'Boutique de gestion' in Guingamp (Management boutiques aiming to welcome, advise and train people who wish to set up or acquire very small companies)

C. Partners

General Council in the Côtes d'Armor

D. Contact details

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2. DESCRIPTION

A. General Description

Measures in favour of women have to be put in place to promote their commitment as future entrepreneurs. However, for these measures to be more efficient it is important to involve social economic stakeholders in this project.

Therefore, the stakeholders who are involved in assisting women in their project of setting or acquiring a business have to be trained.

B. Objectives

To involve as many partners as possible to the economic and social implications of women setting up or acquiring businesses:

- Networks of assistance structures for business set ups and acquisition
- Financial bodies (banking network, ADIE, BDI,..)
- Employment and professional integration services
- Local elected representatives
- Economic stakeholders of area authorities
- Development agencies
- Other

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C. Methodology

Conception and presentation of an 'awareness' unit: the objective is to better comprehend the situation in which female entrepreneurs find themselves and the economic implications of their greater involvement.

Conception and presentation of a 'deepening' unit: the objective is to implement a methodology of approach to favour the assistance given to female entrepreneurs.

D. Most relevant actions and activities

The approach of these units is innovative: not only do the future female entrepreneurs have to be trained, but so do those involved in the structures assisting business set ups and acquisitions.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
NETWORKING: FRANCE**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

AILES networks (Aide à l'Initiative Locale des Entrepreneurs)

B. Territorial Scope

X Locale
Régionale
Nationale

C. Leading organisation

Boutique de gestion , Chambre des métiers et de l'artisanat, pays Centre Ouest Bretagne

D. Profile of Female Entrepreneur

E. Contact Data

Name:
Phone Number:
E-mail:
Webpage:
Other:

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

The 'AILES' network provides help and support in the planning and development of new businesses. It allows women to take an active part in activities regarding entrepreneurship.

B. Methodology

- The organising of conferences/debates, on themes linked with entrepreneurship, in order to promote the business culture and dialogue.
- The organising of workshops for group work, in small groups and on subjects which set favourable conditions for project development.
- Taking part in the network is free of charge.

C. Most relevant actions/activities

I ME WE Partnership

D. Results of Networking

- Sharing experiences
- Widening of the professional network
- Projects made in common

3. TRANSFERABILITY

A. Reproducibility

Good reproducibility: in a specific area, networking of women in the process of starting up a business.

B. Conditions for transferability

- Manage and invigorate the network so that it becomes autonomous after a few months
- Need to call on business experts

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
MENTORING: FRANCE**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

Set up a business the female way (Entreprendre au féminin)

B. Project leader

CFPPA (a vocational training centre for adults) at Kerliver in Finistère
Information Centre on Women's rights in the Côtes d'Armor

C. Partners

General Council of Finistère
General Council of the Côtes d'Armor

D. Profile of a female Entrepreneur

Gaëlle Micout set up her visual communication business 'Gédéz'ailes' in 2006, in Quimper. Taught at the 'Ecole Supérieure de Graphisme Publicitaire Pivaut' (High School of advertisement styling), in Nantes; Gaëlle Micout is now developing her activity in the conception and making of different types of printed documents, the creation of visual identity and also illustration. She works for local and area authorities, PME (small and medium size firms), independent shop keepers, craftsmen, etc...

Her own experience of professional networks convinced her of how beneficial they can be and Gaëlle has become integrated into the network of female entrepreneurs in Finistère, 'Entreprendre au féminin,' which offers innovative and personalised solutions for women to train or be assisted in the setting up of their business: *"There, I meet women who are motivated and show solidarity, and are aware of the stakes in the development of creation/acquisition of businesses by women in Finistère"*

E. Contact Details

Name: Micout Gaëlle – GÉDÉZ'ailes Créations
Tel: 02.98.53.06.22
E-mail: gaelle.micout@gedezailles.com
Web Page : www.entreprendre-au-feminin.net
Other:

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General Description

The internet site 'www.entreprendre-au-feminin.net' can be used by all, and in particular:

- New or experienced female business managers
- Women who have a business project
- People involved in the economic development, elected representatives, unions, organisations which help business set ups, people involved in implementing equality

I ME WE Partnership

B. Objectives

- Promote social, economic and public female initiatives in the area.
- Enhance the value of decisions made in favour of women by area authorities
- Help exchanges and sharing of resources
- Communicate all events linked to female entrepreneurship

C. Methodology

The web site can be used to:

- Search specific information by key word or headings
- Obtain up to date information – training, assistance, financial aids, news regarding female entrepreneurship
- Become a writer and offer articles in relation to the theme
- Becoming aware of the experience of the business world through the presentation of female entrepreneurs' portraits and accounts, etc.
- Getting to know web sites presenting innovative activities made by women

D. Most relevant actions and activities

- Portraits that bring female entrepreneurs' success to light
- A directory of the female business managers by geographical area or branch of industry
- Practical information for the website visitors

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
PROMOTION & VISIBILITY : ITALY**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

Il Valore Della Differenza- The Value of Difference

B. Territorial Scope

Local
 Regional
National

C. Leading organisation

University of Camerino and Fondazione Brodolini

D. Contact Data

Name: Manuelita Mancini
Phone Number: 06.44249625
E-mail: equal@fondazionebrodolini.it
Webpage: <http://www.ilvaloredelladifferenza.it> www.fondazionebrodolini.it
Other: Address Viale di Villa Massimo 21 00161 ROMA

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

The ORIF, Regional Observatory on female entrepreneurship, intends to construct a regional monitoring system that can provide complete and up to date information analyses and data on female companies in the Region, through the production of new information, the collection of data, and a networking activity.

B. Objectives

To create a coherent system and linking of knowledge relative to female employment/entrepreneurship, in order to implement an information system that can constantly guarantee updated data and information over time.

1. monitoring laws, initiatives, and programs aiming to creation and development of enterprises in order to verify equal opportunity respect
2. to facilitate the women access to information about the creation and development of enterprises
3. to give value to the female entrepreneurship skills
4. provide policy suggestion based
5. collection of data and analyses of female entrepreneurship in the Marche regional labour market situation

C. Methodology

1. Collection of secondary data
2. Qualitative and Quantitative surveys
3. Focus groups and interviews

3. RESULTS

A. Main difficulties

The main difficulty was to manage to smoothly manage the adoption of the ORIF and of its implementation in the institutional activity of Union of Chambers of Commerce

B. Most successful issues

Key achievements were

- the huge distribution achieved by the hard copy of the ORIF Bulletin
- the spread use made by experts, association of categories and policymakers to data and analyses provided for by the hard copy and full electronic version of the Bulletin

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
PROMOTION AND VISIBILITY: ITALY**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

Il Valore Della Differenza- The Value of Difference

B. Territorial Scope

Local
 Regional
National

C. Leading organisation

University of Camerino and Fondazione Brodolini

D. Contact Data

Name: Manuelita Mancini
Phone Number: 06.44249625
E-mail: equal@fondazionebrodolini.it
Webpage: <http://www.ilvaloredelladifferenza.it> www.fondazionebrodolini.it
Other: Address Viale di Villa Massimo 21 00161 ROMA

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

The International Fair on female entrepreneurship, final event of the project “The Value of Difference” is an opportunity for women entrepreneurs to meet, exchange views and experiences, establish links and looking for opportunities. The Fair is also open to all local, national and international public and private actors (such as association of categories and public authorities) dealing and competent in the field of female entrepreneurship.

B. Objectives

The main objectives are twofold:
- Highlighting the results reached by the project and promote the female business in the Marche Region.
- Create an opportunity for cooperation and exchange between public and private actors

C. Methodology

The First two days of the Fair are dedicated to the
- **Exhibition**, with more than 100 Italian and European women-owned businesses participating.
- **4 Workshops** for discussion and interaction between women entrepreneurs and Public Institutions. On the first day, four Workshops will take place, dealing with 4 different economic and manufacturing sectors (agriculture and agro-tourism, tourism and services, fashion, furniture and design).

I ME WE Partnership

- During the Fair will be grant the **Women Entrepreneurs of the Marche Region Abroad**” Award to women entrepreneurs of the Marche with a successful story in a foreign country by the Women Entrepreneurship Committee of the Province of Pesaro-Urbino.

3. RESULTS

A. Main difficulties

To reach interested actors and entrepreneurs in the EU outside the country involved in the project “Il valore della differenza” that are Italy, Finland, France, Spain, Denmark, Belgium.

B. Most successful issues

The active involvement and role played by the association of categories and by the female committee of entrepreneurs at regional level for the Fair organisation and management.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
NETWORKING : ITALY**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

Il Valore Della Differenza- The Value of Difference

B. Territorial Scope

Local
 Regional
National - Transnational

C. Leading organisation

University of Camerino and Fondazione Brodolini

D. Profile of Female Entrepreneur

E. Contact Data

Name: Manuelita Mancini
Phone Number: 06.44249625
E-mail: equal@fondazionebrodolini.it
Webpage: <http://www.ilvaloredelladifferenza.it> www.fondazionebrodolini.it
Other: Address Viale di Villa Massimo 21 00161 ROMA

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

The aim is the **Constitution of Permanent Territorial Networks** between the various actors in the Region responsible for measures and actions in support of female entrepreneurship and people directly involved in the economic activity (women entrepreneurs).

To act on the context that generates occupational discrimination and segregation making men and women, institutions and companies aware that giving importance and using "gender competences" is advantageous for the quality of work and the new abilities required today.

B. Methodology

Meetings, focus groups, media supported activities among the actors and the institutions involved in the project. Specifically the Committees for the female entrepreneurship in the 4 provinces, institutions, policy makers, stakeholders

C. Most relevant actions/activities

The most relevant actions to create and support local networks are:

- Internet site (www.unicam.it/ilvaloredelladifferenza)
- Fortnightly newsletter
- Production of fortnightly telecast on a local TV
- Organisation of information and discussion meetings
- Participation at study-visits (in Italy and abroad)

D. Results of Networking

1. instruments to provide knowledge and statistics about female entrepreneurship
2. tools for monitoring the phenomenon of female entrepreneurship
3. networking activities for promoting visibility
4. lobbying, on key actors for sustain and promoting female entrepreneurship (on institutions, banking system, public opinion).

3. TRANSFERABILITY

A. Reproducibility

The overall strategic goals of the development of NETWORKING are:

- relationship between local authorities, Chambers of commerce, professional unions, associations (**to implement territorial networks**)
- relationship between female entrepreneurs operating in the same sector in order to implement **productive networks** (wine women association, olive oil association..)

So the good practice may be reproduced in a situation in which the objective is based on the growth of quality of the economic and productive contest of the provincial and indirectly of the regional system; on the growth of competitiveness and awareness of the territorial regional system as a resource of attraction and on an international opening of the territorial system as a whole.

B. Conditions for transferability

Creation of a partnership.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
MENTORING: ITALY**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

Il Valore Della Differenza- The Value of Difference

B. Leading organisation

University of Camerino and Fondazione Brodolini

C. Partners

University of Urbino
ISTVAS- High School Institute
Unioncamere- Union of Chambers of Commerce

D. Profile of Female Entrepreneur

Women-led businesses active in Marche Region

E. Contact Data

Name: Manuelita Mancini
Phone Number: 06.44249625
E-mail: equal@fondazionebrodolini.it
Webpage: <http://www.ilvaloredelladifferenza.it> www.fondazionebrodolini.it
Other: Address Viale di Villa Massimo 21 00161 ROMA

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

The set up of a Mentoring service in each of the four Chambers of Commerce of the Marche Region aims to enhance the professionalism and the confidence of the younger, less expert women entrepreneurs.

B. Objectives

The objective is to define a model of counselling, tutoring and guidance that may help women willing to set up a company by taking advantage of tutor female managers too.

C. Methodology

The Project represents a significant example of the guidance and tutoring services that may encourage women to become entrepreneurs and improve their knowledge about the problems and challenges other female entrepreneurs have already faced in their careers.
The mentoring service provides to new and “young” entrepreneurs the technical assistance of a senior entrepreneur and of a tutor responsible for facilitating the mentoring relationship.

I ME WE Partnership

D. Most relevant actions/activities

Objective of this project is to foster the birth and the development of enterprises with female ownership. In practice, the project, has launched a model of advice and tutoring for women to start business experience, in order to facilitate the transfer of competencies and skills between female entrepreneurs expert and neo- entrepreneurs.

E. Results

A project characterized by a strong propension to the concreteness through the testimony of the Neo and future entrepreneurs, and the entrepreneurs who have carried on activities of tutoring.

3. RESULTS

A. Main difficulties

The training of tutors for mentee and mentors

B. Most successful issues

Strengthening the regional network between junior and senior women entrepreneurs.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
NETWORKING: SPAIN**

1. BASIC DATA

A. Project name:

Promotion of Cooperation among Female Entrepreneurs - AME 2000

B. Territorial Scope

Local
x Regional
National

C. Leading organisation

Association of Female Entrepreneurs of the Valencian Land – AME CV

D. Profile of Female Entrepreneur

Female enterprises with or without a legally established business

E. Contact Data

Name: Mar Osma
Phone Number: 003496 150 0547
E-mail: administracion@amecv.org
Website: www.amecv.org
Other:

2. DESCRIPTION

A. General description

AME CV is a network of women which have set up or have the aim of setting up a business. It is constituted as an Association legally registered. It was created by a NOW II project (so, ESF funded) but afterwards it has continued working with little help from authorities.
AME has implemented the a Cooperation Programme for set up of a common promotion service using internet. It is based on a web page, with public zone (introduction, list of associated entrepreneurs...)
The Co-operation zone is available only for entrepreneurs and members of association.

B. Methodology

Entrepreneurs receive training on internet use skills and seminars on networking and face to face cooperation
They get their business' web page done too by the project.

I ME WE Partnership

C. Most relevant actions/activities

- Training of entrepreneurs on TICs
- Design of web pages for their business
- Study on co-operation possibilities
- Design of a co-operation zone with an exchange area, forum and so on
- Pilot projects on “face to face” co-operation

D. Results of networking

- Improvement of technological skills and use of tools
- Introduction of co-operation culture among entrepreneurs
- Mutual support

3. TRANSFERABILITY

A. Reproducibility

The co-operation possibilities are limited. Thus, to reproduce the project it would be necessary to change the target group or the territorial scope.

B. Conditions for transferability

Previous co-operation experiences would be of great help, as it would be previous activities on technological training.

It is very important that an association gives confidence to individual entrepreneurs so that the change “competition” for “co-operation”

**BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
LOCAL POLICIES: SPAIN**

A. BASIC DATA

A.1. Project name: Observatori per a la Igualtat d'Oportunitats OIO DIME Observatory for Equal Opportunities

A.2. Territorial scope: **Local** Regional National

Location (Country, region, municipality): County of l'Horta Sud (supra-municipal entity) Valencia (Spain)

A.3. Leading organisation/s: Manco Horta Sud

A.4. Year/s: 2005-2006

A.5. Contact data:

Phone number: 0034961566055

Web page: www.mancohortasud.es

Other: maria@mancohortasud.es

A.6. Target public:

Statistics and indicators on women in local public and private areas.

A.7. Type of Policy

Employment policy

Training policy

Gender equality policy

Social Policy

A.8. Brief description of the project / environment where B.P is found

The best practice is in the frame of an EQUAL project (DIME: Desarrollo Integral de la Mujer Empresaria). The main objective is obtaining a database about the women from the public and private life, in the context of 20 municipalities from the county of l'Hort Sud, all of them at the metropolitan area of Valencia. The database includes statistics and indicators in eight topics or areas of study: Women and Population Analysis, Women and Family, Women and Labour Market, Women in the Economic Activity and Entrepreneurship, Women and Education, Women in the Participation and Decision Makers, Gender Violence and Equality Gender Politics.

B. BEST PRACTICE DESCRIPTION

B.1. Main Objective

To improve the supra-municipal policies in the area of equal opportunities, with the analysis of the statistics and indicators of gender, obtaining a view of the supra-municipal context with the participation of the most important stakeholders in l'Horta Sud.

B.2. Most relevant actions and activities

The Observatory (OIO) includes two main actions. One of them focused in recollecting the most important woman statistics and indicators (a model of gender database) from official and unofficial sources (at the local level). In addition, the second action, focused in obtains documentation analysis in each topic in order to encourage the design and implementation of the gender and social policies.

B.3. Expected results or products

The best value is obtaining the model of gender data and indicators at local level, standard document for evaluating the impact and progress of the policies.

I ME WE Partnership

Another one of the results will be the publication of the database in Internet, allowing that is accessible to the public in general. The information includes data tables and graphics.

The analysis documents about the woman situation. The OIO will annually report several documents in each study.

The OIO will complement with statistics from other social groups and territorial topics, forming a territorial observatory at local level.

B.4. Key agents involved and rolls played

The OIO includes statistics and key information from the supra-municipal stakeholders: regional and local governments, public administration staff, labour unions, entrepreneurs associations, statistics offices, etc..

B.5. Innovation aspects detected

An official unknown of many statistics exists on female, and often the proposals of gender indicators are exclusive in state and regional scales. The OIO proposes a model of female data and indicators supporting the design and attainment of the equality gender policies. With OIO the information is available on local scale, useful and accessible publicly.

B.6. Reproducibility.

An important aspect is the reproducibility of the database and indicators. Along the project, the OIO were been in contact with other public observatories; the objective has been to put in common the database and to adopt a reproducible model in other territories.

B.7. Transferability.

The methodology of the OIO can be used for the creation of a future system of indicators on the territory.

B.8. Mainstreaming.

The most part of the agents can improve the treatment of their own statistics on female.

C. PROJECT RESULTS

C.1. Have project objectives been achieved?

The evaluation of the results has been positive as far as the collection of information and the possibilities in the analysis of the statistics. On the other hand, it is hoped to evaluate the publicity of the data base by means of the number of accesses in internet, as well as through the evaluation from the agents.

C.2. Main difficulties found

The main difficulties found in collect official information on local scale. The official information structure has focused on regional scale.

The stakeholders hardly release the own information between men and women. The female information is invisible in the most of cases.

C.3. Most successful issues

The database is an instrument for analysing the female situation in l'Horta Sud. The additional documents allow the monitoring of the policies.

Shared experiences in the partnership

Not only did the partners try to learn from experiences and knowledge acquired by other partner countries, the I ME WE partnership also intended to organise shared experiences, where some/all partners countries participated.

During the international exchanges participants were invited to visit the other projects and get acquainted with the actions and activities developed and organised in the partner projects.

Arranging entrepreneur exchanges, study trips, student camps, benchmarking, international seminars and networking were very popular activities in the I ME WE-partnership. For instance the participating female entrepreneurs have given very positive comments after their study trips:

“We had a splendid group of entrepreneurs! I got many new business contacts and had a real possibility for networking.”

“The study trip was also a great language course. I had not been using English in business in years and I dreaded speaking a foreign language. Anyway, on the first study trip day, I was together with entrepreneurs from other countries and there was no other alternative. I had to open my mouth and speak and I noticed that my language skills were not so rusty after all.”

“The study trip offered golden opportunities to become acquainted with foreign cultures and way of life. I got plenty of new ideas for developing my company, fine contacts with people from different countries and lots of great experiences. Starting to export our goods is now an option in our future business strategy.”

“You can not count the value of this study trip in euros. It was a motivating experience!”

Study trips

The study visits highlighted a different sector each time. The transnational partners chose the themes of the study trips based on the strengths on their regions business life. Depending on the theme, female entrepreneurs from partner areas were invited to participate in the study trip. That gave entrepreneurs of the same business sector a good opportunity to meet, network and benchmark.

Overview of the study trips:

- Belgium, November 2005: visit to shopping route and network for Business Women (B.WiN)
Participating entrepreneurs: Finnish delegation (12)
- Italy, March 2006: Agro tourism and Food
Participating entrepreneurs: Finland (15), Spain (2), France (2)
- Finland, June 2006: Healthcare and Wellness
Participating entrepreneurs: Belgium (4), Italy (6), Spain (8), Finland (6)
- France, December 2006: Rural Trade
Participating entrepreneurs:
- France, March 2007: Arts and Crafts
Participating entrepreneurs:
- Belgium, May 2007: Retail and City marketing
Participating entrepreneurs: Finland (12), Italy (3), Spain (7)
- Finland, June 2007: Rural Entrepreneurship
Participating entrepreneurs: Italy (11), France (6), Spain (4), Finland (7)

I ME WE Partnership

- Italy, September 2007: International Fair for Female Entrepreneurs – Artistic and hand-craft sector
Participating entrepreneurs: Belgium (10), Finland (11)
- Spain, November 2007: Furniture and Furniture design
Participating entrepreneurs: Italy (2), Belgium (3), Finland (5)

Facilitators Conferences (more information p21 - mentoring)

At the facilitators conferences the focus was on mentoring and coaching

- Denmark, 21-23 June 2006
- France, 10-12 December 2006

International Female Entrepreneurship and Equality Seminar:

- Finland, 11 June 2007

Exchanges on Local Policy:

- 23-24 October 2006, Spain (Valencia)
- 8-9 March 2007: « Les femmes qui entreprennent sur leur territoire », France
- 27-31 March 2007, Italy, 12 Spanish participants.

International Entrepreneurship Camps for Female Students.

As a part of Activity 4b the two projects CHAIN REACTION (Finland) and PROFILE (Denmark) organised two International Students Camps for female entrepreneurs considering a carrier as entrepreneurs. As these two projects were the only projects in the partnership working with students only Finnish and Danish students participated.

- 24-27 January 2006, Finland : 6 Finnish and 12 Danish participants
- 24-27 October 2006, Denmark : 13 Finnish and 8 Danish participants

Programme

The camps had some common ingredients: business visits with local entrepreneurs, a presentation on networking in a global perspective and some sort of social activity. On top of that both camps included one or several learning activities that the hosting project had some kind of experience with on beforehand. Reaktioketju planned a business simulator game and a presentation on entrepreneurship in the past, for the moment and in the future by a researcher. The PROFILE-project planned a forum theatre workshop. That way we made use of the strengths of the organizations behind each project. Also the manager and the staff on both project had an outstanding chance to experience new learning methods in use – not only exchanging thoughts, ideas, methods etc. Another important ingredient in both camps was at least one international trainer/speaker (from a third country) to create an even more international atmosphere and add another perspective on entrepreneurship.

Results and lessons learned

Generally the students were very happy with the international student camps and also assessed their benefit of the camps as satisfactory. Of course there are still possibilities for improvement: The students (as well as the project managers) would have liked to have students from more countries participating and a little more free time for resting and informal networking.

The project managers were very happy about the camps: it gave the students a chance to truly network internationally, acquire new knowledge and perspectives on entrepreneurship and some competences that they couldn't have had through the national projects.

I ME WE Partnership

On top of that the projects had a chance to exchange thoughts, ideas, methods etc. in a deeper way than possible at steering committee meetings, seminars etc. When planning the camps we had some very interesting dialogues and we get to see how we are actually promoting female entrepreneurship.

One lesson learned was that it is difficult to make students participate in a camp in their home country. One could consider having the camps in a country from where you weren't expecting any students anyway. However it has also been essential to exploit our knowledge about the local business community when planning business visits etc.

In the case of the I ME WE-partnership it might had been a possibility to arrange the camps in one of the other partner countries (not working explicit with students) and had their assistance with knowledge about and contact to the local business world.

The evaluation shows that the majority of both Finnish and Danish students found that an International Student Camp was both exiting and a useful way to learn to understand the possibilities and requirements of entrepreneurship. The exchange of knowledge, methods and experiences provides a basis for combining and developing new entrepreneurship training methods for women in the future.

Learning experiences in the partnership

In this category the practices were collected that exist in one partner project and were transferred to another partner country.

Flying Entrepreneur in Belgium and Substitutes for Entrepreneurs in Finland

During the period 2002-2006 the Belgian partner worked on 2 projects within the European Social Funds program to create a service of 'replacement entrepreneurs' in the Flemish part of Belgium. This service subsisted of an interactive website where flying entrepreneurs could enrol themselves in a database of entrepreneurs. On the other hand entrepreneurs in need of substitutes could access this database and find a flying entrepreneur to match their needs.

Finland adhered to the idea of a substitute services for entrepreneurs but organized it differently. In the project 25 experienced professionals from various fields have been trained to work as substitutes. The emphasis in this first phase was on the training (both theoretical as practical) of the substitute entrepreneurs.

Shopping Route (Belgium and Finland)

One of the most successful activities held among members of the Belgian partner are the Shopping Routes. In 2006 they were organised on about 100 different locations with a participation rate of around 40 to 50 people. During these 'Markante Winkelroutes' costumers get acquainted with the shop owners and their business activity or products. It is a very easy and rentable way to promote your business and female entrepreneurship in general.

After a visit of one of the Belgian shopping routes the Reaktioketju project organised these in the region of Northern Savo: Idea Hunts. Finnish participants already admitted that by getting acquainted with the owner makes it easier to become a costumer.

This practice can be transferred to any other region: you have to find a few (5 to 10) shop owners willing to invest some time (and money) in the promotion of the shopping route and in making it somewhat worthwhile for both participants and shop owners.

Mentoring Program (Denmark en Belgium)

Belgium took a lot of notes during the facilitator conference in Paris. After an introduction in which the difference between coaching and mentoring was pointed out, the Belgian partners introduced a mentoring as well as a coaching program in its national project.

Good Practices

In the appendix a catalogue of good practices was put together. It covers good practices that can be found in the participating countries (but aren't integrated part of the national EQUAL-projects).

The purpose of this section is to give an idea of the possibilities that exist to enhance female entrepreneurship through different angles: awards to optimise the visibility of female entrepreneurs, training programmes to help women start up or enlarge their businesses, different types of networks for women, policy measures to facilitate female entrepreneurship, resource centres that provide guidance and support, mentoring programmes etc. The scope is very wide and the possibilities numerous.

The evaluation

During the last Steering Committee the partnership insisted on performing a self-evaluation of the work performed over the last year.

Aspect	Question	Results					Results explanation	Lessons for the future
		NA	--	-	+	++		
Planning	Objectives of transnational co-operation have been clearly defined					X		
	Objectives of partnership are realistic and relevant enough				X			
	Products and results have been defined and have clear link with partnership objectives					X		
	Activities for the fulfilment of objectives have been planned					X		
	Activities have been given a responsible and timing					X		

Aspect	Question	Results					Results explanation	Lessons for the future
		NA	--	-	+	++		
Effectiveness and efficiency	So long, partial objectives have been met					X		
	Activities planned have been effectively developed					X		
	Agreements of the Committee are taken into actions				X			
	Means, resources and efforts invested so long meets the planning				X			
	Means, resources and efforts put in place have shown proportional results					X		

Aspect	Question	Results					Results explanation	Lessons for the future
		NA	--	-	+	++		
Co-ordination	Committee sessions have been effective				X			
	Secretary have played a significant role in co-ordination between committees			X				
	Partners have information needed when they need it				X			
	Task distribution among partners fits with its capacities and means				X			
	The monitoring system gives relevant information for co-ordination	X						
	Partners take part in discussion and decision making process					X		

Aspect	Question	Results					Results explanation	Lessons for the future
		NA	--	-	+	++		
Transference and Mainstreaming	Partnership has enabled to learn from each other new methodologies and ways of thinking					X		
	It is likely that methodologies learned will be implemented in other territories					X		
	Partnership has an strategy to transfer its results to general policies		X					
	There is a fluid and permanent exchange of ideas among partners				X			
	Partners have defined how will they use the products and results of partnership				X			

Aspect	Question	Results					Results explanation	Lessons for the future
		NA	--	-	+	++		
Impact	The transnational project has strengthen national projects objectives				X			
	National DP organizations take part in transnational activities				X			
	Transnational activities / products will increase staff capacities					X		
	Target public of national projects takes advantage of transnational activities / results					X		
	A system to evaluate the impact of transnational project has been implemented			X				

Aspect	Question	Results					Results explanation	Lessons for the future
		NA	--	-	+	++		
Communication and visibility	Partnership has a communication strategy			X				
	Transnational activities are spread at national level				X			
	Partnership has developed communication common products (web, leaflets, seminars, etc)				X			
	Organizations and individuals in partners' territories are aware of transnational project				X			

Aspect	Question	Results					Results explanation	Lessons for the future
		NA	--	-	+	++		
Means and resources	The budget allocated in transnationality is adequate to meet partnership goals				X			
	Human resources involved in transnational work is adequate to partnership goals					X		
	Seminars are held with adequate facilities and services					X		
	Partners have allocated means enough to assure success					X		

Aspect	Question	Results					Results explanation	Lessons for the future
		NA	--	-	+	++		
ESF priorities	Partnership takes advantage of new communication technologies				X			
	Partnership has considered environmental issues in activities planning and development			X				
	An Equal Opportunity perspective has been adopted by partnership					X		
	Partnership products / results and methodologies are oriented to innovation				X			