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ladybizIT



Women Entrepreneurship on the verge of ICT

# FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION



PROJECT LEADER & COORDINATOR



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## **ladybizIT: Women Entrepreneurship on the verge of ICT**

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[www.gender-it.eu](http://www.gender-it.eu)

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04

**FOREWORD**

05

**THE EUROPEAN PROJECT 'ladybizIT'**

Women Entrepreneurship on the verge of ICT project

07

**BACKGROUND**

The horizontal dimension -Integrating a gender perspective **page 08**

09

**THEMATIC FOCI AND CONFERENCE OUTCOMES**

13

**TEN TIPS FROM AND FOR 'ladybizIT'**

14

**EXPLOITATION ROUNDTABLE DEBRIEF**

Introduction

Taking account of women entrepreneurship

What's in a word? **page 15**

Women, work, entrepreneurship, family, culture, ICT **page 15**

Women and their work ethic **page 15**

Family and career **page 15**

Cultural barriers in the digital era **page 15**

Think Tank Recommendations **page 15**

Integrating the concept of entrepreneurship

in lower and upper secondary education **page 15**

Observatories for women entrepreneurship **page 16**

Special registers for women-led enterprises **page 16**

Consulting agencies **page 16**

17

**EPILOGUE**

19

**RELATED INFORMATIVE MATERIAL**

20

**CITED SOURCES**

21

**12 EUROPEAN PROJECTS**

# FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION



Integrating a gender perspective to eliminate gender devaluation, the subtle processes by which women's contributions are minimized, undervalued or devalued is vital today. It means eliminating the wastage of talent- utilizing the entire talent pool, all human resources- and as a result boosting innovation which is a prerequisite for economic growth and sustainable development. This also requires addressing gender fatigue, mostly observed in younger women today, who assume that gender no longer matters, that gender discrimination issues have long been solved!

**Dr. Irene Kamberidou**

**Executive Group of the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT)  
Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Athens**



We are in a new era, that of a new technological revolution in which women can play a key role. The life cycle of such a revolution has a 40-60 year duration, and we are only in the beginning!

**Eva Fabry**

**Director of the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT)**



We cannot have change unless we have men in the room. Female entrepreneurship is not a gender issue but an economic issue and that is why it needs supporting!"

**Madi Sharma**

**UK Member Employers Group of European Economic and Social Committee**



Entrepreneurship does not have a gender, an age, a race or an ethnic background. It is always current and contemporary, especially during periods of crisis where innovative and successful entrepreneurial activities surface and appear on the scene.

**Olga Stavropoulou**

**Managing Director of Militos Emerging Technologies & Services**



## Women Entrepreneurship on the verge of ICT project encourages women to launch their own sustainable businesses through the use of available ready-to-use ICT tools!

It is a fact, that women constitute only 34% of entrepreneurs in the European Union, often facing greater difficulties than men in starting up a business and accessing finance and training, while it is estimated that women entrepreneurship could be a major source for increasing European level economic growth and competitiveness. One of the major obstacles for women to take the option of European entrepreneurship is the limited access and use of ICT tools. Encouragement of female entrepreneurship growth is thus a high European priority. The European Commission, in the frame of the Small Business Act urging to "Create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded", has already initiated concrete actions aiming to promote women entrepreneurship such as the European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs (see Greek part [www.businessmentors.gr](http://www.businessmentors.gr)), the European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors and the European Network to Promote Women's Entrepreneurship (WES).

The European project 'ladybizIT' addresses the aforementioned needs by promoting European projects, representing a great variety of European countries / transnational consortia that could facilitate women entrepreneurship growth and development at European level. 'ladybizIT' recommends existing EU solutions and means, that foster women entrepreneurship; it identifies markets; provides spotlight trends on the role of women in sustainable economic recovery; informs on recent experiences and know-how; and, raises awareness among women on the dynamic process of entrepreneurship in an emerging knowledge-based society. The ultimate goal is to have more informed women on the existing EU

tools and projects, as well as on the current status of women entrepreneurial growth at European level and the opportunities offered, that will facilitate them to start up their own business. It is envisaged that women will gain the advantage of the opportunities provided by ICT tools to pursue entrepreneurship and increase their entrepreneurship participation rate in the European economy. Thus, 'ladybizIT' motivates European women, regardless of age and origin, to learn what the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme can do for them, by offering them a personal development advantage and a new career path, through the access and use of available Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). In brief, 'ladybizIT' encourages women to launch their own sustainable businesses through the use of available ready-to-use ICT tools!

More specifically, 'ladybizIT' presents 12 European co-funded projects, already identified and evaluated to meet the quality criteria established by the project expert partnership, that focus on women entrepreneurship and how ICT facilitates and possibly fosters women entrepreneurship (see video on the 12 European projects at [www.gender-it.eu](http://www.gender-it.eu)).

### Thus, the project:

- ★ Promotes Lifelong Learning interventions amongst current and future women entrepreneurs through specific project outputs;
- ★ Encourages and motivates women, regardless of age and origin, to learn what Lifelong Learning Programmes (LLP) can do for them, by offering them a personal development advantage and a new career path, through the access and use of available ICT;

- ★ Focuses on solutions and means, such as the use of ICT, that foster women entrepreneurship;
- ★ Encourages women to launch their own businesses, identifies markets, provides spotlight trends on the role of women in sustainable economic recovery;
- ★ Disseminates and informs on recent experiences and know-how and raises awareness among women on the dynamic process of entrepreneurship in an emerging knowledge-based society;
- ★ Builds an informal sustainable network between all the presented projects and the events' participants of 'ladybizIT'.

ladybizIT' built up a dialogue through a set of inter-linked and complementary dissemination actions that culminated into the European Conference and Show Case **"More technologies? More women entrepreneurs!"**<sup>1</sup> (6/11/2012 - Athens, Greece) where 12 European projects, mostly under the umbrella of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013, were presented, in order to transfer knowledge with a strong innovative character, that upgrades the level and quality of Vocational Education and Training (VET) at large to other countries around Europe. The presentation of best practices could set the grounds for future innovative practices to be developed, that will build on previous results with a potential to be replicated in different VET systems.

# Background

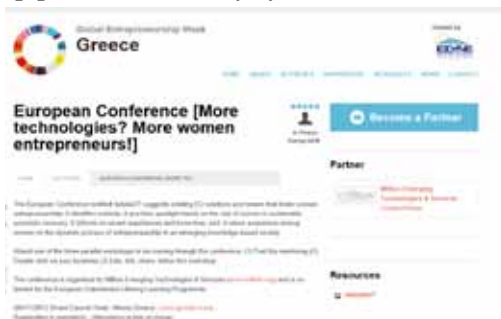
Women entrepreneurs stimulate the job market and bring a different streak to business issues such as management and organization and the way in which entrepreneurial opportunities are utilized. However, in an environment in which entrepreneurship is stereotypically masculine-assertive, achievement-oriented, risk-taking (Baron, 1999), female entrepreneurs constitute a minority and need to be promoted and encouraged. Women are still a particularly constrained group in the field of entrepreneurship due to reasons such as lack of encouragement, mentoring, experience, or professional networks. Specifically, women constitute on average only 30% of entrepreneurs in the EU and often face greater difficulties than men in starting up a business and accessing finance and training (EC COM, A Roadmap for equality between women and men, 2006-2010, SEC(2006) 275). Moreover, in Europe only 8.3% of patents awarded by the European Patent Office are for women, and only 1 in 5 of business started with venture capital belong to female entrepreneurs. In turn, women score less than men when assessing the level of innovation of their own business (Promotion of Women Innovators & Entrepreneurship, Final Report, DG Enterprise).

One important enabler to achieving a higher rate of women entrepreneurs is the access and use of ICT. In everyday business life, ICT tools are an indispensable instrument that enables and supports women to start and maintain their business—whether they are mothers working from home or have a small business in a rural area. As N. Kroes (Information Society Commissioner) stated “One of the great things about setting a Digital Agenda for Europe is the chance to really transform lives for the better. That is the role I see ICTs playing in the lives of millions of women across Europe” (Women and ICT Status Report 2009).

The promotion and support of female entrepreneurship and how Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can facilitate, promote and support it was the theme of the successful European conference “**More technologies? More women entrepreneurs!**” held in Athens, November 6th, 2012.

The event was the final conference of the ladybizIT project ([www.gender-it.eu](http://www.gender-it.eu)) and was organized by Militos Emerging Technologies and Services and its partners i.e. the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT), the Hellenic Professionals Informatics Society (HePIS), ITEC Training & IT Services and OLN Learning.

**The conference was also supported by the Hellenic Association of Young Entrepreneurs ([www.esyne.gr](http://www.esyne.gr)) which is the Host organization of the Global Entrepreneurship Week in Greece and was the first event incorporated in the national GEW activities to take place in Greece.** Global Entrepreneurship Week is the world's largest celebration of the innovators and job creators, who launch start-ups that bring ideas to life, drive economic growth and expand human welfare. During one week each November, GEW inspires people everywhere through local, national and global activities designed to help them explore their potential as self-starters and innovators. These activities, from large-scale competitions and events to intimate networking gatherings, connect participants to potential collaborators, mentors and even investors—introducing them to new possibilities and exciting opportunities. The initiative kicked off in 2008, launched by former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Carl Schramm, the president and CEO of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. Since then, it has grown to **115 countries—with nearly 24,000 partner organizations planning more than 37,000 activities that directly engage more than 7 million people<sup>2</sup>.**



**The noteworthy success of the event is further justified by the feedback received from the Evaluation Questionnaires** completed by the participants, where: 97% evaluated positively the organization of the conference (63% Excellent and 35% Very Good), 88% found the 12 European Projects that were presented to be interesting and 96% wishes to find out more about the existing European Projects related to the topics addressed in the conference. Moreover, 83% of the participants feel that they are now at least familiar with the topics of the conference and 92% feels that the conference speakers were either Excellent or Very Good. Concerning the parallel workshops, 76% say the workshops were Very Good and 86% describe the workshop moderators as Excellent or Very Good. This positive feedback shows a fruitful conference that managed to have a positive effect on the participants.

**In her report to the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Madi Sharma**, keynote speaker of the conference and Member of the Employers Group congratulates the organizers and points out that the conference on female entrepreneurship was extremely valuable in terms of information provided, plus networks and knowl-

edge. Additionally she observes: "For me this was an especially valuable event because of the high attendance of participants, men and women, despite the strike in Greece that day and because this was a European funded project. Despite the topic being female entrepreneurship (DG Enterprise) and women in IT (DG CONNECT) the fund for the project was from DG Education and Culture as part of the Lifelong Learning promotion. This demonstrates the cohesive and coordinated approach that needs to continue to take place at European level if we are to deliver results on growth, jobs and entrepreneurship."

There was a consensus on the issue of obstacles confronted by women entrepreneurs. One of the major obstacles for women to take the option of European entrepreneurship is the limited access and use of ICT tools.

In highlighting and showing women -and men- the advantages and opportunities that ICTs can offer them for the development of their business initiatives and activities, the conference target was achieved, namely it succeeded in inspiring and encouraging future and aspiring women entrepreneurs.

## THE HORIZONTAL DIMENSION

# Integrating a gender perspective

Indeed as Madi Sharma argued during her presentation "we cannot have change unless we have men in the room." The main goal of integrating a gender perspective is that of gender equity/social equality for both women and men. Gender integration refers to the process of assessing and reassessing the implications for both women and men of any program and action plan at all levels: social, economic and political. This requires gender-specific interventions, policies and practices that may target exclusively women or interventions that target men exclusively, or even men and women together.

For example, male migrant groups or ethnic minority entrepreneurs, another important pool of entrepreneurs in Europe, also confront exclusionary practices and obsta-

cles: discrimination, language barriers, and limited access to funding, support services, as well as inadequate business, management and marketing skills.

In fact, the goal of mainstreaming gender equality is to transform exclusionary or unequal social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for both women and men. It entails ensuring a gender balance, increasing the talent pool and enabling everyone to realize their full potential. We already have all the necessary research and analyses. Gaining a thorough understanding of the waste of talent, including the talent shortages—trends, rates and differences—is essential in order to set realistic targets and integrate the gender dimension into the equation.

# THEMATIC FOCI AND CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

The Conference Moderator Dr. Irene Kamberidou, speaking at the European conference "More Technologies? More Women!" pointed out that **gender issues do not only concern women, as men have a gender as well**. Men also confront social inequalities and discrimination, such as the migrant pool of male entrepreneurs. We need to work together to achieve economic growth and sustainable development. Dr. Kamberidou also pointed out that many men attended the conference, and among the speakers many men are members of the European Network of Women Entrepreneurs!

Dr. Kamberidou also commented on the concept of Social Media, stressing that the new media and digital culture has become an important part of our daily activities. The social media—for many a new and stimulating environment and for others a social space that evokes feelings of frustration or fear of losing touch with the real world—is at the top of the agenda of many male and female entrepreneurs, business executives and decision makers today. However, despite this interest, there seems to be very limited understanding of what the term "Social Media" exactly means. Are women and men equipped to thrive in this digital age and especially in this virtual environment? It seems that for many using social media provides opportunities to reach and connect with a diverse range of people from all around the globe. Undeniably, the power of social media has a tremendous impact in modern society—not only with regard to female and male entrepreneurship activities—since it can mobilize mass audiences towards a specific purpose, ignite revolts against oppressive regimes, etc. For example social media played a major role during the "Arab Spring": the Arabic rebellions, uprisings and revolutions. According to a Cairo activist, "We use Facebook to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to tell the world" (Kassem Chebib & Minatullah Sohail 2011: 139). The combination of different social media channels under a coherent and concrete strategy can mobilize not only political changes but also every aspect of our lives.

In summarizing the conference Eva Fabry, Director of the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT) stressed that women's increased participation **in the labour markets has been and continues to be one of the key sources of sustained economic growth and SMART GROWTH**. Globally, women control nearly \$12 trillion of the \$18 trillion total overall consumer spending, a figure predicted to rise to \$15 trillion by 2014. **According to Harvard professors: 'As a market, women represent a bigger opportunity than China and India combined'.**

Empowering women is not just good for women, it's good for the entire society, for the wellbeing of both current and future generations as women are more likely to share their incomes with their families and communities at large. Today community building, sharing and leveraging good examples needs to be in the focus and the ICT tools are there — we have no excuse as stressed by the project YouTube video! Outlining in detail the implications of the ongoing paradigm shift — which the director of ECWT stressed is a new technological revolution — it is vital for all women to be aware of the fact that **being a woman is the USP of Women in the Digital Age!**

When it comes to ECWT's own priorities for supporting women entrepreneurs: ECWT has until now focused on building a strong network of women representing excellence in their field and thereby serving as role models and many ready to act as mentors. In the future **ECWT will prioritize** — together with eminent partners like Militos Emerging Technologies & Services and other members - **development of business incubation e-services, raising of early stage ICT business startup capital and innovation financing facilities and will continue lobbying for support of these priorities by the European Commission.**

Speaking about EU priorities the **Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Greece, Dr. Panos Carvounis**, stressed in his opening speech of the

conference that gender equality is a fundamental right and a vital source for future economic development and competitiveness and that female entrepreneurship constitutes a dynamic and essential source for development. He pointed out that the new EU programme Equality pays off! Launched by Vice President Viviane Reding, in August 2012 will also help countries achieve a gender balance. He added that a gender balance is also being promoted with regard to women's participation on the board of directors. The European Commission approved a Directive on Gender Quotas on the Boards of Directors for companies listed on the stock-exchange soon after the conference, on the 14th of November.

**"We do not have a culture of collaboration in Greece, consequently we do not have a culture of entrepreneurship" said Dr. Theodore Skylakakis, Member of the European Parliament.** He argued that "there is a wastage of talent of a significant part of society, that of women [...] modern societies have 50% of their talent in women, but use only a small percentage of it." He also pointed out that although business success rates are higher when we have more women on board, there are still extreme inequalities observed throughout Europe.

**"We cannot have change unless we have men in the room», said the next speaker Madi Sharma,** an entrepreneur running the Madi Group, a group of private sector and not for profit companies with a philosophy to create innovative ideas tailored to local action which can achieve global impacts beneficial to society. Madi Sharma told participants that she began her business in her kitchen as a single mother and is today working in India and across Europe with diverse businesses and governments. "We should not be afraid of the economic crisis [...] I have a global business but I do not have an office and my largest client is based in the US. I have used technology to grow my companies [...] My skills are me, what I believe in what I know I can do [...] Female entrepreneurship is not a gender issue but an economic issue and that is why it needs supporting!" Madi Sharma argued. Additionally she pointed out that women are undercapitalized because they take reduced risks, however they still fail less than men. Women also care about communities; they do social-corporate responsibility which is not recognized. "So women are not ideal targets to be backed by policy makers that do not

recognize us. Policy makers are male and sadly so are the Bankers, and this is why we need change. We need a representative who understands female entrepreneurship. We need a **Business Ministry for Women!**"

**"Entrepreneurship is all weather, meaning that it does not have a gender, an age, a race or an ethnic background" argued Olga Stavropoulou,** Managing Director of Militos Emerging Technologies & Services as well as a the Coordinator of the Greek part of the European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs. It is always current and contemporary, especially during periods of crisis where innovative and successful entrepreneurial activities surface and appear on the scene, adding **"We need to get rid of the stereotypes, because they are out of fashion"**. Olga Stavropoulou also described how she began her business and expanded it with the use of new technologies, and how after giving birth to her child continued to multi-task, namely simultaneously breastfeeding and conducting e-business, i.e. e-calls, skype meetings, etc.

**With regard to the social media Olga Stavropoulou advises:** (see slide from her conference presentation)

- 1 GET RID OF STEREOTYPES AND MOTTOS, THEY ARE SO OUT OF FASHION!
- 2 IS THERE REALLY A GLASS CEILING? OR MIGHT BE A GLASS FEELING?
- 3 INSIST ON GETTING ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS
- 4 NO REASON TO BE SCARED
- 5 INVEST ON A GOOD INTERNET CONNECTION
- 6 GET CONNECTED - SEND EMAIL - SEEK ADVICE
- 7 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EU PROJECTS AVAILABLE AND READY TO USE
- 8 MAKE WEAKNESSES IRRELEVANT AND EMERGE YOUR STRENGTHS
- 9 TURN NEED INTO AN OPPORTUNITY
- 10 BE WISE AND STAY ACTIVE!

**“Entrepreneurship is the effort to transform an initiative into a result and from this process to reach an economic profit. You have to be the boss, the marketer, the secretary, the customer service person, the shipper and the list goes on!”** said Angelina Michailidis, President of TOGME Sector of Women Managers and Entrepreneurs of the Hellenic Management Association (EEDE) & ICT Strategy Consultant. Angelina Michailidis also argued that the steps that entrepreneurship requires are Innovation, Leadership, Management, and Development of the initiative.

**“New technologies are providing new opportunities for women entrepreneurs”** argued George Flessas, President and CEO of CIVITAS S.A., the largest strategy, communications and public affairs Company in Greece today. George Flessas presented examples and case studies of successful female entrepreneurship, which have reached the global market due to the social media and new technologies. Mr. Flessas pointed out that “social media has been developing with rapid speed, the world has changed as well as the way we shop and communicate. There is a **new culture that is leading to a new consumer-citizen**, who is thirsty for something new and tires of it quickly.”

**«There is no Victory without a Team! You begin by dreaming, the dream becomes a business and the planet is your neighbourhood»**, said Anastasia Manou, Member of the European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs, who began her business activities in 2005—with documentary productions and film distribution—and today is a shareholder and C.E.O of White Fox S.A.

**“Entrepreneurship requires self-efficacy! It has to do with what we think about ourselves, how we feel, act, move, behave and recognize opportunities. Specifically motivation, a belief in your abilities, a downgrading of the possible risks, the decision to take on an attractive or appealing idea, as well as increased efforts after failures, and not feeling discouraged or disappointed. A successful entrepreneur learns from his/her mistakes!”** argued Dr. Ioannis Salamouris, Assistant Professor of Finance at the Hellenic American University and President of know! Social Enterprise for Education and Lifelong Learning.

**“By the end of this decade 400,000,000 people in India and China alone, will have achieved graduate degrees through the internet, use of new technologies...”** said Nikos Stathopoulos, CEO and co-owner of ISON Psychometirca and Member of the European Network of Women Entrepreneurs. In examining the human factor and technologies he referred to studies such as “IQ Tests: women score higher than me” (the Telegraph, July 15, 2012), including women’s entrepreneurship and how the social media allows women, and especially working moms to balance their professional and family lives.

**“Bad practices”, the “don’ts”** such as, **unclear targets and priorities, aggressive dissemination, gabbing or talking too much and not listening, lack of coordination between social media platforms**, among others, were examined by Emmanouel Stamiris, representing a new generation of female entrepreneurs.

**“In your e-business journey you need to overcome your resistance to change. Follow your future, own the challenges, get over it, communicate change, involve people to change, and leave your footprint behind in the new digital era”** said Roula Bachtalia, Division Manager, Sales-Group e-Business Sector Eurobank and Board Member of TOGME Sector of Women Managers and Entrepreneurs of the Hellenic Management Association (EEDE).

**“Team work, communication, community building, social networking, problem solving, leadership, decision making”** are needed skills to achieve your visions, argued Magda Papadopoulou, 19 year old student at the Faculty of Veterinary Studies of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. In 2010 Magda participated with a group of fellow students in the educational program “Company Program” organized by the NGO SEN/Junior Achievement Greece. The team created a virtual company which developed innovative software (CD-DVD) to help young children with dyscalculia (a learning disability). Their company won first place in the Greek competition and represented Greece in the pan-European completion in Sardinia, Italy July 2012 where they won 7th place among 40 teams throughout Europe.



Indeed the social media, the digital culture, for many a new and stimulating environment have become a significant part of our daily activities. Yet we have hardly begun to understand to what extent the new media has changed our daily lives, practices, habits and culture.

There was a consensus among the participants that the number of female-run business has been increasing due to the social media. Many speakers, and especially women entrepreneurs, demystified the world of new technologies through the lens of their own experiences, focusing on how the social media supported the development and success of their business. Aspiring women entrepreneurs have been relying on this flexibility to achieve the so valued career-family balance.

It is worth pointing out that entrepreneurship provides flexible working conditions for both women and men and as published in the frames of the conference (Reflections on women entrepreneurship /a reader<sup>3</sup>), a number of recent studies show that many men today are using tech-

nology, digital tools to work independently, market their brands or ideas, monitor results instead of hours and in particular to balance their personal/career lives. Numerous studies show that women enjoy a slight edge over their male counterparts when it comes to social media and group communication skills. Women seem to possess stronger communication skills and social intelligence than men and are also better listeners. They not only excel in communication skills, but studies find that the collective intelligence of a group rises when the group includes more women (Kamberidou & Fabry 2012, Stavropoulou & Protoppa 2012, Kamberidou & Labovas 2012, Cowley 2011, SheSpeaks 2011, Woolley & Malone 2011, Karacostas 2012, Woolley & Malone 2011, Akalp 2010 ).

**In today's digital economy which requires such skills, these so-called "feminine" skills and leadership qualities that promote and reproduce a culture of collaboration—whether the result of biology or social conditioning—are more significant now than ever!**

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3. See e-booklet published online at [www.gender-it.eu](http://www.gender-it.eu)



## 10 tips from & for ladybizIT

- 1 Find your passion, think BIG biz and use ICT as a way to scale up your ideas!
- 2 Focus on scale and venture capital! Be practical and set realistic goals. Seek synergies and work on common ideas.
- 3 Take advantage of the available European projects with ready to use online educational and training material, at no cost.
- 4 Get to know successful women entrepreneurs and learn from their experience (storytelling).
- 5 Find online groups, fora and social networking sites that are created by women, for women since these usually offer support, connections, information, marketing opportunities, and more.
- 6 Use social media as an integrated part of your business marketing approach. Decide on your 'framework' or 'brand' in the social media outlets: some social media are more relevant to certain aspects of your business development than others.
- 7 Create a circular flow of communication through your use of social media that ultimately and always brings your clients back to your website.
- 8 Stay Specific: Target customers and focus on information that builds customer trust. This means that your social media is interested in your customer and not just on making a sales pitch. And learn to use the analytical tools that help you determine the impact your social media networking is having on your business.
- 9 Social media compliments marketing efforts, for example Twitter is great for 'trial and error' in the social media world. Whatever you put up there only lasts about 15 minutes, so you can test things out and not worry about it hanging out in cyberspace to haunt you. Practice makes perfect: navigate, explore, tweet new ideas and products.
- 10 Whatever you post on social media should add value to the reader's experience and encourage them to come back to you for more. Once you or your business has been 'recognized' in the social media, they will be more apt to respond to traditional outreaches through e-mail.

# Introduction

## Exploitation Roundtable Debrief

A special Exploitation Roundtable was organized by the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT) and the Hellenic Professionals Informatics Society (HePIS) on November 15, 2012 in Athens, Greece during which, the 'ladybizIT' project exploitation options, as well as the conference results and outcomes were discussed and epitomized.

This Roundtable had been set up in order to explore the issue of women entrepreneurship in the European Union, utilizing as a point of departure the aftermath of the condensed but yet rich insights gathered at the European Conference "More technologies? More women entrepreneurs!" a few days ago.

With a clear intention to blend special expertise with layman's point of view and practices, the discussion followed the path of resuming the issues raised thus far with respect to women entrepreneurship, while adding new ones, and eventually, providing specific suggestions and possible routes to be taken by certain administrative and policy making levels towards fully integrating women entrepreneurship in diverse socioeconomic milieus within the European Union.

On this background, what follows is a sum up of corollaries, facts and opinion as they came up during the course of open discussion with the aim to provide a comprehensive set of suggestions on the plane of policy interventions with respect to women's entrepreneurship.

## Taking account of women entrepreneurship

The main challenge in figuring out ways, practices, measures and policies that will substantially support women entrepreneurship and that are at the same time doable or achievable, considering the dire economic conditions we face, seems to be lying at the way we should reason about women entrepreneurship. What is needed here, is to examine women entrepreneurship firstly as an **economic and human resources utilization issue** when it comes to the **identification of the right actors** at policy level to support it, while keeping an eye on underlying dimensions, such as **gender, equality and social justice issues** when it comes to the **design and formulation** of certain **policies** and practices.

This means that the policy actors involved in this endeavor should come from decision making centers assigned to deal with economic development rather than gender mainstreaming, while the latter should play a modifying role, providing the ways and attitude enabling strategic moves, well informed about gender equality. This would eventually result in a **'cross-departmental' set of actions and roles**, which are better suited in addressing women entrepreneurship issues, overriding restrictions in scope and impact. Channeling interventions this way would serve the whole issue much better, **tackling pri-**

**marily the undoubted fact that not everybody starts on an equal footing, namely having equal opportunities** with respect to entrepreneurship in general, while **staying in tune with, and thus being able to fight against, gender stereotyping** in women entrepreneurship in particular.

The next challenge to be dealt with is the fact that policies cannot be easily translated from one country, region, local setting or even sector to another, especially considering the different levels and impact of the economic crisis in each case. This makes the aforementioned approach even more relative, meaning that in any case, the already **available and accustomed infrastructures** in different Member-states should be exploited in order to **identify cost-effective ways** to further utilize them towards the desired goals, rather than establish new ones which will take substantial financial toll.

Before delving into how women entrepreneurship could best be supported, discussions should turn to what it really is all about. Hopefully, this could do the whole issue some justice preventing us from – one – taking things for granted and consequently – two – trying to apply possible solutions and practices to unclear or misconstrued patterns.

# What's in a word?

## Women, work, entrepreneurship, family, culture, ICT

### Women and their work ethic

Women tend to work in groups, as a team – and to good effect. By doing so they have created strong collaborative attitudes despite, or maybe, in spite of social stereotyping and socialization, which have created strong barriers with regard to women's initiatives or readiness to embark on an entrepreneurial career or to set up their own business. Building upon this fact, production and work models (male, individualistic, over the top pragmatic) should altogether be revisited and remodeled, as they are becoming more and more sterile and non-gratifying. To this effect, we should turn to the exploration of social and biological reproduction models moderating the worlds of family and labor, closely related to the issue of balancing family and professional life.

### Family and career

Difficulties in balancing family and professional life/career are prevalent, especially in more traditional societies and cultures, such as Greece, where the Sandwich generation or the Sandwich woman are still observed. Namely women's multi-tasking, includes taking care of children and parents/in-laws simultaneously. The sandwich generation describe themselves as being pulled in two directions, facing emotional difficulties as well as problems in allocating time and money.

Thinking against the grain, family and professional life or career in this case, should be considered as commons, rather than borderlands, with people having equal rights over them. Moreover, while these barriers are epiphenomena of deeply rooted cultural assumptions, we should really ask ourselves about their relevance and their real power in ruling social and economic life in our post-industrial societies.

### Cultural barriers in the digital era

It has been assumed that cultural barriers will drop, begin to change or even prove to be a 'chimera' due to Information and Computer Technologies, social media, access to knowledge or information, echoing the motto of the ladybizIT conference "We have the technologies, we have no

excuse!" However, sorting out the abundance of information in our modern infoscapes needs particular attention to the conjunction of the flow of knowledge and productivity, especially when the globe has entered a crisis mode. It is about new opportunities amidst new combinations of interests that we should focus on in a – hopefully – brilliant move to circumvent inflexibilities whatever their origin, nature or persistence. In this direction we have to explore the ways in which the connected world as a consistent rather than an erratic, incongruous, conflicting whole (be it on the grounds of gender, class, cultural discrepancies and misconceptions) will be collaborating and working, taking full advantage of the emerging trends in order to turn them into a competitive advantage not towards one past or even against each other, but towards progress and efficiency.

On these grounds, while taking under consideration all the diverse aspects that surfaced during a fruitful discussion and exchange of views, a set of suggested recommendations has been formulated addressing both structural and microscale dimensions towards supporting women entrepreneurship.

### Think Tank Recommendations

#### Integrating the concept of entrepreneurship in lower and upper secondary education

Entrepreneurship - considering theoretical knowledge and practical skills alike - should be included in school curricula. This is not meant to simply provide just another school subject to be taught, but to facilitate the construction of vivid representations of how economic actors function within modern economic systems. For example, educational content could focus on questioning deep-rooted cultural assumptions about work/life patterns, utilising hands-on activities through a self-discovery path leading to the comprehension of such concepts as self-reliance and responsibility. Especially so, such an endeavour should not be about transforming young people to future entrepreneurs, but clearly to identify similarities and differences

es of entrepreneurial action versus other forms of employment e.g. employee in public or private sector, catching up with dormant or hidden attitudes and economic thinking of the younger generations.

Direct involvement at a cross-departmental and cross-sectoral level (public bodies and organisations responsible for education, economic development and gender mainstreaming in close collaboration with private sector organisations active in the field of entrepreneurship) should be a prerequisite to effectively cover both theoretical and practical issues.

The implementation of Unschooling (learning through life experience and social interaction), which is an educational methodology practiced in the USA, could be an alternative way to the same ends.

**Recommendation:** Designed by ministries of economic development and enacted by ministries and bodies of education and gender mainstreaming. Implementation could also utilize existing structures of the private sector (mentoring schemes, social economy actors in the field of education etc.)

### Observatories for women entrepreneurship

How can women entrepreneurship be supported if not properly monitored and assessed? Women entrepreneurship observatories with cross-departmental roles able to have an overview of all administrative bodies and organisations at all levels involved in entrepreneurship policies and legal frameworks are by and large absent. Built upon the assumption that a single pattern for monitoring entrepreneurial activity cannot answer to a wide range of specific attitudes and practices – including the gender perspective – such observatories should collect relevant data, provide statistics, suggest policies on the grounds of an interdisciplinary approach, supported by research, sharing across borders within the European Union and beyond, as well as by strong partnerships among all relevant organisations and parties.

Observatories for women entrepreneurship will serve as a point of reference for active and future women entrepreneurship.

**Recommendation:** Implemented by ministries of economic development and designed with input and support of gender mainstreaming authorities with the active involvement of entrepreneurship bodies and actors of the public and private sector.

### Special registers for women-led enterprises

The development of a register for women enterprises is invaluable with respect to its contribution to provide the state-of-the-art regarding entrepreneurial activity, output per sector and geographical region, dynamics, forecasts, financial figures etc.

**Suggestion:** Designed and implemented by ministries of economic development.

### Consulting agencies

Existing structures (e.g. The European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs and the European network for policy makers to promote women's entrepreneurship [WES]) could serve as the blueprint for all-encompassing consulting agencies to provide comprehensive information on women entrepreneurship issues, policies, funding schemes, available networks, tax and insurance issues, as well as access to diverse mentoring services.

A main activity of the consulting agencies should be the on-going monitoring and evaluation of newly established businesses by women entrepreneurs by a body of experienced mentors, following and regularly observing the course of women entrepreneurs upon a common evaluation system.

**Recommendation:** Designed by ministries of economic development and implemented by entrepreneurship bodies/organisations of the public and private sector. Ongoing mentoring and support could be financed through existing registration fees to local, regional or sectoral entrepreneurship bodies and chambers.

# Epilogue

Women entrepreneurship is supported and facilitated by the availability, familiarity and daily use of ICT. Moreover, these tools enable and empower women to pursue a successful career as entrepreneurs while minimizing the barriers that usually limit equal entrepreneurial participation in an open market.

Encouragement of female entrepreneurship growth is a high European priority. And the EC puts great effort to support women's entrepreneurship by creating the appropriate conditions to improve the circumstances and daily lives of women entrepreneurs, such as balancing family and professional life and flexible working hours.

Especially during the current economic crisis, women must be encouraged to launch their own businesses, identify markets, access industry information and spotlight trends on women's role in sustainable economic recovery. "The Global Gender Gap Report shows a strong correlation between gender equality and a country's prosperity and economic competitiveness. It should be an indispensable reference for anyone who wants to advance economic, social and political progress worldwide or understand one of the critical reasons why some countries progress and others do not" - Ms. Verveer, Global Women's Issues US Ambassador.

**What distinguished the ladybizIT project and its final conference and made it stand out was the fact that it spoke the language of today's and the future's female entrepreneur!**

In other words, the project was implemented in a manner that took into consideration the target group's gender-specific needs. Similarly, the conference not only gave the participants the opportunity to leave the event with new knowledge, but it provided practical and useful workshops, focusing on mentoring, on office implementations as well as the application of social media.

Altogether around 500 women and men participated in the European conference "More technologies? More women entrepreneurs!" out of which -despite the severe difficulties caused by the wave of strikes in Athens, including the strike of all the mass means of transportation- almost 300 participants attended the conference physically, and 195 participated through live web streaming.

ladybizIT is the 'best practice' result of the LLP-LdV Network project "genderIT – Fostering gender mainstreaming in the ICT sector" ([www.gender-it.org](http://www.gender-it.org)) and the project has been developed by five, experienced partners from Greece and Norway specifically active in women entrepreneurship.

## Meet the ladybizIT consortium and stay in touch with us as we strive to increase the number of female entrepreneurs in Europe:

- ★ **Militos Emerging Technologies & Services** ([www.militos.org](http://www.militos.org)) offers an integrated range of innovative consultancy services in a wide spectrum of fields, such as Entrepreneurship, Employment, VET, Agriculture, Culture, Media, R&D, etc. Its expertise includes in particular, business development, communication, dissemination, media relations, event management and information campaigns. The company has an outstanding track record of over 20 EU-funded projects and actions as Leader or partner in related fields. Since 2001, the company acts as the National Editor of the EC Standard Eurobarometer public opinion. Since 2009, Militos acts as the exclusive media consultant of the EC Representation in Greece services mostly for events and awareness raising. In 2011 Militos was selected by the EC DG Enterprise and Industry to set up and operate the National Network for Business Mentors, as the local representative of the European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs (see Business Mentors at [www.businessmentors.gr](http://www.businessmentors.gr)).
- ★ **The European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT)** ([www.womenandtechnology.eu](http://www.womenandtechnology.eu)) was set up end of 2008 by 16 founders and is operated today by around 130 key multi-stakeholder actors representing high-level expertise in women and technology development from business, the government, the academia and non-profit sector, with the goal to measurably and significantly increase the number of girls and women in ICT and technology and involved in the Digital Economy. The ECWT carries out its activities based on a global framework through five instruments: Policy and actions, Research and impact metrics, Resources and services development, Dissemination and communication, and Context and culture in four thematic focus areas: Education, Workforce, Entrepreneurship and Leadership. National Point of Contacts of the ECWT operate in 18 countries. The ECWT plays a key role in safeguarding the gender dimension of the e-skills agenda (e.g. European 'e-skills Week 2010 and 2012' and the inGenious FP7 Research program project 2012-2015).
- ★ **ITEC INC. Company Continuous Vocational Training Centre** ([www.itec.edu/](http://www.itec.edu/)) offers hands-on training courses for the ICT sector and consulting services for ICT and project management. It has now 23 years of experience in providing initial and continuous training to ICT professionals such as developers and administrators. It also provides user-level training for businesses and individuals and regularly receives national funding to offer IT courses to disadvantaged groups (women, unemployed). Since 2001, ITEC closely cooperates with Unisystems S.A., one of the biggest IT companies in Greece, offering, designing and implementing integrated high standard IT Solutions.
- ★ **The Hellenic Professionals Informatics Society** ([www.hepis.gr](http://www.hepis.gr)) is the network, that connects all the ICT Professionals in Greece and which aims at meeting the expectations of both professionals and scientists in the field of Information & Communications Technologies (ICT). HePIS' objective is the promotion of the development of its Members' professional and scientific interests, as well as the free exchange of their professional and scientific views within the context of a continual dialogue and the representation and defense of the interests of those professionals and scientists who are active in the fields of Informatics, Communications and New Technologies in Greece. HePIS is the only member of CEPIS (Council of European Professionals Informatics Societies) and IFIP (International Federation for Information Processing) in Greece, representing the country's ICT professionals and promoting their interests at a Global level. HePIS is the Greek National Point of Contact of the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT) in Greece and a member of European Alliance for Innovation (EAI).
- ★ **OLN Learning** ([www.oln.gr](http://www.oln.gr)) offers specialist training design services for face-to-face and online synchronous events (webinars/ e-clinics) for flexible learning anytime, anywhere. Its main target groups include teachers and trainers for whom it designs and delivers train-the-trainer courses; entrepreneurs for whom it designs skills and mentoring training; and working individuals who need to develop new skills and competencies required on the job. Basic advantages are personal contact, comfort and flexibility, as well as time saving during learning. OLN Learning participates in several EU co-funded projects as a vocational education and training expert.

# related informative material

**A Reader / Reflections and Papers on Women in Entrepreneurship and ICT** addressing distinct focus areas:

- 1 The worlds of labour and entrepreneurship: The gender perspective
- 2 Passing the torch: Mentoring and learning in women entrepreneurship
- 3 Behavioral aspects in entrepreneurial reasoning
- 4 Women entrepreneurs and ICT
- 5 Women in the fields of Sciences and Technology

The booklet was edited by Militos Emerging Technologies and produced with the contribution from the ladybizIT project partners. Feedback and constructive input was provided by knowl Social Enterprise for Education and Lifelong Learning as well as the Coordinating Team of Business Mentors which is the Greek part of the European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs. The booklet (hardcopy) was disseminated during two European conferences (1) in Athens (06/11/2012) focusing on female entrepreneurship and (2) in Milano (22/11/2012) focusing on unemployed and migrant women and ICT. It is also available in electronic version (downloadable format).

**A video running on Youtube: “We have the technology – we have no excuse”** presenting the 12 European projects of women’s entrepreneurship. This is a production prepared by Militos Emerging Technologies & Services in collaboration with knowl – Social enterprise for education and Life Long Learning. Click and view.



This is a video production of Militos Emerging Technologies & Services ([www.militos.org](http://www.militos.org)) and knowl Social Enterprise for Education and Lifelong Learning ([www.knowl.gr](http://www.knowl.gr)) presenting 12 European projects that could help European women, regardless of age and origin, to pursue entrepreneurship, to increase their entrepreneurship participation rate in the European economy and to discover what EU programmes, such as the EU Lifelong Learning Programme can do for them.

**we strive to increase the number  
of female entrepreneurs in Europe**

Conference follow up such as conference debrief, photos, speakers’ CVs and presentations as well as video recorded presentations as the conference was broadcast LIVE over the Internet and Plenary Presentations are available (video recorded) to view. Watch the video from the Conference.

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# 12 EUROPEAN PROJECTS

**women@business**  
fostering women entrepreneurship through learning, doing and reflecting  
[www.womenatbusiness.eu](http://www.womenatbusiness.eu)

**e-commerce**  
for traditional products - women 50+  
[www.e50plus.eu](http://www.e50plus.eu)

**SHE in Europe**  
combating and balancing out economic disadvantages for women in the EU due to lack of training tools for business and entrepreneurship  
[www.she-in-europe.eu](http://www.she-in-europe.eu)

**OWLE50+**  
older women in learning and enterprise 50+  
[www.owle50plus.eu](http://www.owle50plus.eu)

**EU women:**  
starting up a business?  
[www.euwomen.org](http://www.euwomen.org)

**DIG+Em**  
DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT  
stop being scared of computers and get to know them better  
[www.digem.eu](http://www.digem.eu)

**we have the technology  
we have no excuse**

**ladybizIT**

**USEREC**  
upgrading self-reflecting competencies in SMEs  
[//userec.iacm.forth.gr/project.php](http://userec.iacm.forth.gr/project.php)

**more technologies  
more women entrepreneurs**  
check out existing EU tools and solutions and find out what the EU Lifelong Learning Programme can do for you!

**fe:maLe**  
female entrepreneurs mentoring & lifelong learning across Europe  
[www.femaleproject.eu](http://www.femaleproject.eu)

**gender equality in ICT**  
[www.gender-it.eu](http://www.gender-it.eu)

**more technologies  
more women entrepreneurs**  
check out existing EU tools and solutions and find out what the EU Lifelong Learning Programme can do for you!

**EUROPEAN UNION**  
European Union  
Lifelong Learning Programme

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission within the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the Education and Culture Directorate General. This publication reflects only the views of the authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

**www.gender-it.eu**

**ECWT**  
HOPIS



# gender-IT

promoting gender equality in Information Communication Technologies

gender-IT is a European sustainable multistakeholder network which actively fosters gender mainstreaming in VET for the ICT sector, in order to cover the existing gender gap with women accounting for less than 20% of computer systems designers, analysts and programmers in the EU27.

gender-IT looks deep into Vocational Education and Training in Europe

- to highlight the situation of women in the ICT sector
- to spot needs for future skills for trainers in the ICT sector
- to eliminate gaps in available knowledge
- to keep gender high on the ICT agenda

gender-IT

**builds** a European network for gender mainstreaming in Vocational Education and Training

**creates** a virtual resource center for main trends and practices in Vocational Education and Training for the ICT sector

**supports** gender equality and equal opportunities

*“Women miss important employment opportunities in a sector that is driving European economic growth.”*

Join now the **gender-IT network** (sign up for free, no commitment) and follow the latest news relating to the encouragement of women to pursue a career in the ICT sector.

**www.gender-it.org**



The gender-IT project was a two-year (2008-2010) initiative co-funded by the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme, under the Leonardo da Vinci Action. It was implemented by seven partners from Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

learning, doing, reflecting

women@business

fostering women entrepreneurship

women@business provides direction and guidance to young female graduates and young women from an ethnic minority or immigrant background, with the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge so as to pursue entrepreneurship and make it more appealing. It actually encourages the active participation of young women in enterprises, working alongside successful female entrepreneurs, for the attainment of valuable first-hand experience.

*“Women entrepreneurs stimulate the job market and bring a different streak to business issues such as management and organization, and the way in which entrepreneurial opportunities are utilized.”*

Reading about the experiences of female entrepreneurs can be very helpful if you are thinking about starting up a business. People starting up often face similar issues and the start up stories of female entrepreneurs can especially provide a good insight into what you might expect during your journey into entrepreneurship.

**Read** the biz stories of inspirational women entrepreneurs

**Get to know** some young women who worked alongside successful women entrepreneurs

**Find out** European policies promoting women entrepreneurs and young women's needs to start their business

Get inspired! It could be you!

**www.womenatbusiness.eu**



The women@business project (2009-2011) was co-funded by the European Commission's Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme 2007-2013. It was implemented by partners from Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Italy and the UK.



E-commerce  
for traditional products - women 50+

## e-commerce for traditional products - women 50+

e50plus supports women 50+ to take part in training activities in order to keep producing their products in the same way, but according to EU legislation and to promote them to a wider market through e-commerce.

### looks into

Traditional production of local products in the European Union  
Women producers over 50

### provides

#### Basic PC training

Training on how **economic activities in the EU** work

Training in **e-commerce**

e50plus

*“In certain regions within the EU-countries where living standards remain quite low, the rate of unemployment among older people and especially women is quite high. Working opportunities for women over 50 years old in these areas are limited to the production of local, traditional products and the offer of these products only to the region's visitors. The production is based on traditional recipes that are passed from mother to daughter, using almost exclusively local materials.”*

Are you a woman over 50? Well this is good news!

Make use of the educational material that is available and ready to use, both for individual and collective use of institutions, and other educational organizations.

**www.e50plus.eu**



The e50plus project (2009-2012) is co-funded by the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme, under the Leonardo da Vinci Action. It was implemented by eight partners from Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Germany and Turkey.



## Digital Empowerment

**DiGEm** is an innovative digital empowering project that uses a creative approach to teaching basic ICT skills and provides an effective entry route for learners, who are disengaged with the learning process, or who are unconfident with new technologies.

**"STOP BEING SCARED OF COMPUTERS"** and get to know them better

- Tell them about yourself
- Show them some photographs
- Make a small video about you and your life
- Make your own digital material
- Share your experiences through the digital world

*“It places the learner at the centre of the teaching method, and draws upon personal experiences to engage them e.g. on developing a 2min. film about their lives, for publication on the internet.”*

## Digital Empowerment, in brief, is

- **a way into the computer world** for those feeling not confident enough or disenchanted with new technologies
- **an approach to teaching computer** skills for learners disengaged from the learning process
- **a solution for learners** with little or no computer skills using creative techniques focusing on people's own lives
- **a valuable tool** for trainers

**DigEM**

**www.digem.eu**



## Promoting women entrepreneurship utilizing web 2.0 applications

**e-Chance 2.0** promotes women entrepreneurship utilizing web 2.0 applications, wikis, blogs, social-networking, open-source, open-content, file-sharing, peer production, to counterbalance the low rates of women participation in self-employment, due to the lack of information on and access to relating networking facilities. e-chance 2.0 offers a training platform combining elements of formal and informal training, providing women entrepreneurs with a set of basic skills and capacities regarding web 2.0 technology.

### What e-chance does?

- fosters entrepreneurial mindsets
- improves women's skills and qualifications on web 2.0 technologies
- unleashes woman creativity
- supports self-employability for women

*“The pool of female entrepreneurial talent is still underexploited in the EU. Let's get more women entrepreneurs into the knowledge society. We can do it!”*

## e-chance 2.0

### grab YOUR e-chance and get advantage of

- **training** in key entrepreneurship areas (starting up, management, communication, marketing, networking) and how to use Web 2.0 tools to improve your outcome
- **practical exercises** and direct resources to exploit Web 2.0 tools
- **discussion** fora to interact with other participants and learners
- an **inspirational handbook** including case studies, practical examples and successful stories

Wait no more! Try the “e-chance 2.0 for Women Entrepreneurship” training tool now!

**www.e-chance2.eu**



## SHE IN EUROPE



Combating and balancing out economic disadvantages for women in the EU due to lack of training tools for business and entrepreneurship

"Self-employed woman: From Dream to Reality" is a software developed which serves as a self-test that helps interested women to assess their aptitude for self-employment. The software has been developed with regards to contents and didactics for the needs and interests of women and has been tried in test groups. It is designed as an e-learning instrument, but should be preferably used in the context of blended learning courses, combining online private study with face-to-face teaching.

Target groups for the software are mainly career service and start-up centres as well as potential foundresses.

*“ In large parts of Europe women are strongly underrepresented among company founders. Self-employment, however, offers women an important alternative to engage in the labor market. ”*

### SHE IN EUROPE

#### offers blended and distance learning through

- The **"Self-employed woman: From Dream to Reality"** training software
- **Information packages** including business glossaries and useful downloads
- **Interactive** material
- The **'Web 2.0 for Foundresses'** e-course (visit at: [elearning.she-in-europe.eu](http://elearning.she-in-europe.eu))

This is the right place for potential company foundresses!  
About to start? **START!**

**[elearning.she-in-europe.eu/project](http://elearning.she-in-europe.eu/project)**



The She-in-Europe project (2009-2009) was co-funded by the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme, under the Leonardo da Vinci Action. It was implemented by eight partners in Austria, Bulgaria, Czech republic, France, Hungary, Germany and Slovakia.

# fe:maLe



Female entrepreneurs

female entrepreneurs mentoring  
& lifelong learning across europe

mentoring and lifelong learning across Europe

Fe:maLe supports potential women entrepreneurs across Europe, particularly those facing extra challenges such as being from a BAME background (Black, Asian & Minority ethnic), over 50, a lone parent or long-term unemployed. The fe:maLe network will help women increase self-confidence and life skills in order to develop their business ideas and become successful entrepreneurs.

a network

**linking** current and future female entrepreneurs across Europe  
**supporting** the exchange of ideas and experiences  
**bringing** like-minded women in contact  
**developing** business skills  
**supporting** women facing extra challenges

*“ Research undertaken showed that women were extremely under-represented in the field of entrepreneurship and suffering more than men from the economic downturn seen in recent years. They decided to address this through a project that would encourage women to realise their entrepreneurial ideas through providing, not only practical know-how, but the inspiration, encouragement and life skills that can only be passed on through connections with successful women who have lived through similar experiences! ”*

join and...

**Meet** other women across Europe  
**Find** new markets  
**Find** mentors  
**Expand** your business  
**Find** about training opportunities

Realize your entrepreneurial ideas  
Get the skills  
Start up your business today

**www.femaleproject.eu**



The Female project (2010-running) is co-funded by the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme, under the Leonardo da Vinci Action. It is implemented by five partners in Greece, Italy, Malta, Netherlands and the UK.



## Promoting equality in digital literacy

### The Questions?

- Why do women score low in the take up of 'new technologies' related careers?
- What's the connection with the imbalance in the take up of Information and Computer Technologies (ICT) by boys and girls at school level?
- How can females be attracted to ICT in the learning process and thereafter pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics?
- Are teaching and learning methods which use new technologies in the classroom gender sensitive?

**“The take up of ICT-related careers by women is very small; this has two important consequences. First is the loss to the economy of the talents of a significant part of the potential workforce; second is the direct economic implications for women, many of whom are excluded from very well paid jobs.”**

### What can be done? “Let’s get digEqual”

On the bases that gender is multiple, dynamic and gender practices change faster than gender stereotypes, PREDIL's long term impact is on the equitable access of girls to the acquisition of competencies for living and working in the digital age.

#### Target groups

Secondary level education teachers that use technology in their classroom practices, pupils of upper secondary education levels that use currently technology for learning in the frame of school curricula.

#### Show me the tangible output!

Easy! Get the set of guidelines by which teachers can reflect on girls' instructional needs and personal attributions with respect to use of ICT in the learning/teaching process.

**<http://predil.iacm.forth.gr>**





## STARTING UP A BUSINESS? CONNECT, LEARN AND BE INSPIRED!

The EU WOMEN project developed online training modules for women interested in starting a business, aiming to increase the number of women who consider self-employment as a **realistic and viable option** for themselves.

If you are a woman and you're interested in starting up your own business, EU WOMEN will show you all the necessary steps through a smart, easy-to-use e-learning environment, **available in eight EU languages**.

**Starting up a business:** It's all about posing the right questions and providing the right answers!

## EU WOMEN e-learning course does it both!

- What is an **entrepreneur**?
- What about a **business idea**?
- What does a **marketing research** do?
- What is **financial planning**?
- **Starting it up!** What does it take?

### Adapted to your own lifestyle!

- choose when to start and stop
- select the training modules that suit you
- watch it as many times as you like
- access valuable information
- get inspired!

YOU CAN

*“The e-learning course is available in English, Bulgarian, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Lithuanian, Romanian and Czech.”*

## Interested in starting up your own business?

EU Women is just a click away

**www.euwomen.org**



The EU WOMEN project (2009-2010) was co-funded by the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme, under the Leonardo da Vinci Action. It was implemented by eight partners in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the UK.

## Older women in learning and enterprise

OWLE50+ project supports women of 50+ years of age to play a more active role in the community for the rest of their lives. Considering that older people, and especially women, are still disadvantaged in the EU labor market, OWLE50+ responds to each woman's needs through learner-centred upskilling so as to be able to contribute to the society and the economy by ageing wisely.

### So, be wise and check out

- Examples of programmes and training ideas
- Case studies with profiles and challenges of women 50+, making life-changing decisions

OWLE50+

- Supports employability and life skills
- Enhances older women's enterprise competencies and micro business start up
- ICT for social and business growth
- Helps women 50+ to be more active in their community
- Promotes effective senior citizenship in the EU and own country

“The number of older women is growing but many lack skills to manage their changing circumstances and they may not engage with adult learning unless encouraged. let's encourage them”

Be wise : stay active!

[www.owle50plus.eu](http://www.owle50plus.eu)



## CAPITALIZE ON NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND BE COMPETITIVE!

**USEREC** is upgrading the competences of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) through enterprise solutions, based on Self Reflective Competencies in SMEs. It is introducing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for a more effective management and decision making in Small and Medium Enterprises.

### "Better management through new technologies"

**USEREC**

- A gender-sensitive learning model suited to the needs of women managers of SMEs
- An on-line course to demonstrate what new technologies can bring to your businesses, what problems they can solve and what opportunities they offer
- A virtual tour on user-friendly familiarization tools in the application of New Technologies in three different entrepreneurial activities
- Valuable information about New Technologies and EU Small Enterprises

### supports

- Information and Communication Technologies solutions for SMEs
- New Technologies as an important management tool for SMEs

**[userec.iacm.forth.gr/project.php](http://userec.iacm.forth.gr/project.php)**





## Mentoring for Girls and Women

**WOMENTOR** provides guidelines for setting up and running mentoring programmes with special focus on the mentoring of girls and young women.

### “Breaking the barriers: Gender equality through mentoring”

#### the Vision

Live in a world where girls and women can make their career decisions based on their interests and abilities rather than having their choices limited by their gender. We want women to be able to follow a career and be supported in that decision with no resistance based on gender.

#### the Action

- Provides guidelines for setting up and running mentoring programmes focusing on girls and young women
- Inspires women and girls and helps them break the barriers keeping them down regardless of qualifications and achievements
- Reduces gender gaps in employment and payment
- Fights gender segregation
- Supports equal work and career opportunities
- Balances private, working and family life

### This is your program, IF ...

- you seek for mentoring support from another woman
- you want to get in touch with mentors, mentees, trainers and coaches
- you are a woman studying crafts and engineering or working in these sectors
- you want to be informed about various mentoring approaches

**[www.womentor.eu](http://www.womentor.eu)**



we have the technology we have no excuse



[www.gender-it.eu](http://www.gender-it.eu)



[www.businessmentors.gr](http://www.businessmentors.gr)



[www.knowl.gr](http://www.knowl.gr)



[www.esyne.gr](http://www.esyne.gr)