

Research Innovation Staff Exchange Programme (RISE)
H2020-MSCA-RISE-2014

Project carried out with a financial grant of the
European Commission



Midterm Report no. 1

Technical Report | Public

Transforming European Women's Entrepreneurship: The Education and Training for Success Programme

Project acronym: *women entrepreneurs*

Grant Agreement Number: **655441**
Date of Issue: **01/03/2016**
Period of Reference: **01/06/2015 to 01/03/2016**

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Commencement Date: 01/03/2015
Completion Date: 01/04/2019



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1. Introduction

The EU Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan recognises entrepreneurship and self-employment as key for achieving economic growth and for job creation. The under-representation of early stage women entrepreneurs in the business-driven economies of Europe is a complex phenomenon that is determined by various factors, such as socio-cultural, economic, and educational factors. To support women entrepreneurship there is a need for increasing the number of women entrepreneurs and for raising the performance and growth potential. Training and education play an important role in this regard. Relatively little research has been conducted to assess the impact of entrepreneurial education and training programmes. Training programmes today mainly address entrepreneurial behaviours. However, an understanding of the fundamental competences is critical in the face of the varying challenges and contexts confronting young women entrepreneurs. It is the aim of this proposal to get a better understanding of the fundamental entrepreneurial competences of early stage women entrepreneurs and to develop an educational and training programme that enables early stage women entrepreneurs in Germany and Ireland to develop the fundamental competences to facilitate their entrepreneurial success. We believe we can significantly contribute to the EU Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, with the proposed activities strengthening the sharing of knowledge in Europe.

The purpose of this project is to set up and strengthen international and inter-sector collaboration in the research field of entrepreneurial competence development. The main objective is to get a better understanding of the fundamental entrepreneurial competences of early stage women entrepreneurs and to develop an educational and training programme to enhance the ratio of young successful women entrepreneurs across Europe.

The first Midterm Report will provide information regarding the selection of the research methods, the methods of analysing the competency needs and the target population for the sample. Due to unexpected problems there was a delay in the completion of the questionnaires within the required time frame making it impossible to complete the analysis by the end of February.

Additionally, the report will comment on the administrative project management and the coordination of the starting phase.

Finally, the report will pay particular attention to the exploitation, dissemination and outreach activities performed during the period.



2. Identification and Assessment of Fundamental Entrepreneurial Competences and Development of a Competence Matrix and Policy Goals

Description of Work

Task 2.1: Contextualize entrepreneurial success of early stage women and education for Europe, Germany and Ireland (D2.1)

The entrepreneurial success of early stage women and education for Europe, Germany and Ireland, was contextualized mainly on the basis of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) with its National Experts Survey and based on the Ease of Doing Business Index - World Bank. This contextualization is presented in the Interim report no. 1 and in the Policy Statement (written by Juliane Möhring and Adriana Abarca M).

Task 2.2: Develop the theoretical framework of the fundamental competences and the entrepreneurial success of women entrepreneurs in Germany and Ireland and operationalize the constructs (D2.1)

A paper with the title “*A Complex Learning Model for the Development of Fundamental Entrepreneurial Competencies*” was written by Kaethe Schneider and Carlos Albornoz and it was submitted to the journal “*New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*”. In addition, the research framework of the fundamental competences and of the entrepreneurial success of women entrepreneurs in Germany and Ireland are presented in Interim report no.1 and no. 2.

Task 2.3: Select the research methods including pre-tests for testing the model of entrepreneurial success (D2.1)

The instruments for measuring the fundamental competences and the entrepreneurial success of women entrepreneurs in Germany and Ireland were presented in Interim report no.1 and no. 2. A questionnaire was used in order to measure the:

- self-assessed managerial and entrepreneurial skills,
- entrepreneurial experience,
- organizational effectiveness,



- overall performance,
- firm characteristics,
- environmental factors and
- meaning making (ego development)
- identity centrality and complexity.

The survey instruments were translated in German or English respectively, pre-tested and revised.

Task 2.4: Select the methods for analyzing the competency needs including pre-tests (D2.1)

Adapted from the EU Project: *Entrepreneurial learning Training Needs Analysis for SMEs. South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning, 2013, Croatia*, a list of managerial skills has to be evaluated in the dimensions of the relevance for the actual business and of the self-assessed ability to carry out these activities properly. The learning needs survey instrument for analysing the competency needs was translated in German or English respectively, pre-tested and revised.

Task 2.5: Design and draw a random sample from the entrepreneurial associations (D2.2)

The sample of the first survey consists of women entrepreneurs at the early/initial stages, and also established women entrepreneurs with a minimum of one employee. In order to recruit the needed sample, we have worked together with different associations of women entrepreneurs, such as Enterprise Ireland (Ireland) and VdU (Germany), as two associated partners in our network. Besides of collaborating with the other partners we have identified women entrepreneurs from Germany and Ireland in the web, attended a conference and tasked an organization to support us for recruiting the sample.

The sample

The target population for the survey consists of women entrepreneurs in Ireland and Germany who own enterprises with at least one employee. At the end of this reporting period the sample size for this study is 305, of which 201 are valid for the quantitative part and 194 for the Sentence Completion Test analysis.



Due to encountered technical problems and delays in the completion of the required number of questionnaires by participants within the time frame, it was not feasible to collect the necessary data on time in order to finish the analysis by the end of February. The questionnaire completions is expected to be completed by mid-March.



3. Project Management and Coordination

Description of Work

Task 3.1: Administrative project management

The project coordinator is the single point of contact between the participants and the EC. She is responsible for the overall financial reporting of the project and for leading the consortium to ensure a successful overall result. The project coordinator has been supervising all contractual agreements (D1.1) and legal issues, all financial issues (payments, cost statements, audits and financial plan). and all organizational issues (reporting, meetings, deadlines, project monitoring and reviews).

Task 3.2: Coordinating the starting phase / Task 1.6: Organization of the workshops

The project coordinator invited all partners to the kick-off meeting and workshop of the project *Women Entrepreneurs..* Both were hosted by Universidad del Desarrollo (UDD) in Santiago de Chile, Chile. The kick-off meeting took place from the 23rd to the 25th March 2015 and the workshop from the 27th to the 30th March 2015.

The project coordinator and the project manager have organized along with UDD the kick-off meeting and the workshop for the Consortium of the project. The topics of the summer school ranged from content related questions such as environmental factors and individual entrepreneurship over operationalization and measurement of entrepreneurial success to methodological questions such as configurationally methods and fuzzy-set qualitative comparative Analysis (QCA), sampling and multivariate models, longitudinal research designs and control groups, and structural equation models (SEM).

Kick-off meeting (D1.2); Organization of the workshop (D1.8)

Task 3.3: Organizing periodic meetings assemblies

The project coordinator will organize the General Project Meetings once a year and will invite the EC to discuss about the progress of the project. The project coordinator invited the EC and the partners to the General Project Meeting including a ECB meeting that will take place from the 28th to the 30th of March 2016 at University del Norte (UN), Barranquilla, Colombia (D1.3) (months 13).



Task 3.4: Organizing periodic tele-conferences

The project coordinator organizes monthly tele-conference (D1.4) and invites the project leaders to participate and discuss the progress of the project.

Task 3.5: Periodic reporting to different entities

The project coordinator and the project manager document the project phase continuously to ensure a transparent and traceable execution in the mid-term reports. In order to fulfill these obligations all participants are in charge to provide the required information and reports from their field of activity. This is our first mid-term report (D1.5).



4. Exploitation, Dissemination and Outreach Activities

Description of work

Task 4.1: Project website

The project has established a web-site for dissemination purposes (D5.1). During the Kick-off Meeting it was decided that instead of a confidential part of the website a Google Drive Working Space will be created as this will allow project partners to exchange about the project, to share project documents and to use 'hangouts' for virtual exchange between project partners. The Google Drive was created and it is used by the members.

The web-site uses modern Web2.0-techniques with a coupling to common used social networks, in order to encourage high public perception of the project efforts and results. Below is the link to the project's website:

<http://womenentrepreneurs.info/>

Task 4.2: Dissemination activities

The dissemination activities are carefully described in the developed dissemination plan (D 5.2). Based on the dissemination plan the internal and external communication of the project is coordinated. It should increase the public awareness about the benefits of efforts and propagates research results to all involved sectors through publications and other dissemination activities.

The dissemination plan focuses on the following activities:

- Identifying stakeholders and networks for exploitation of results.
- Knowledge transfer to research and innovation community.
- Coordinating dissemination activities between the partners.

The dissemination plan will be lead by 3s Unternehmensberatung GmbH and the UDD.

Target group based approach of the dissemination activities

The dissemination activities of the Women Entrepreneurship project follows a target group approach. Three target groups were defined and dissemination activities were planned in order



to meet the target group's interests in the project. The target groups include the scientific research and innovation community, the women entrepreneurs including stakeholders and networks and the public audience and policy makers.

The dissemination plan lists activities to be planned and delivered in one, several or all project countries.

Scientific research and innovation community

Overview table: scientific research and innovation community	
Group	Researchers in the field of entrepreneurship and/or education, social sciences.
Messages	Project outcomes, methodology, theoretical background.
Media	Presentations at conferences, journals, newsletters, podcasts
Resources needed	General folder, posters, presentations.

Completed Activities

Podcast 1: General background of the project

Professor's Käthe Schneider interview that communicated to the general scientific community includes specific information about the project, its development, its possible scope, the specific work of the team, motivations, personal aspirations and key findings of the project development. This interview was published on Facebook and the project's website.

Brochure for the academic world: The project's brochure was designed in such a way in order to explain the principal objectives and the main phases of the project. The brochure was printed and is used during dissemination activities.

Women Entrepreneurs Programme at the 9th Iberoamerican Academy of Management Conference: The 9th Iberoamerican Academy of Management Conference took place between the 3rd and 5th of December 2015 in Santiago, Chile. The topic of the conference was "The future of entrepreneurship and innovation in Iberoamerica". During this event, project member



Adriana Abarca (UDD) had the opportunity to deliver participants with information regarding the project.

Women Entrepreneurs Programme at the “Unternehmerinnen Kongress”: The private-funded networking event “Unternehmerinnen Kongress” took place in Dresden (Germany) on the 27th of February. This event is exclusively for regional Women Entrepreneurs. In 2016, the women congress counted more than 120 participants. Amongst the participants were local politicians. Female entrepreneurs of various industry fields used the chance to discuss business related problems and educate themselves through business-themed presentations. During this event, project member Henning Menzer had the opportunity to present the “Women Entrepreneurs Programme” to the participants during a short presentation, and encouraged potential women entrepreneurs to participate in the project survey. Many of them showed interest in the programme and acknowledged the importance of it. The “Unternehmerinnen Kongress” was a great success for all participating entrepreneurs but also for the Women Entrepreneurs Programme.

Thüringer Zentrum für Existenzgründungen und Unternehmertum (TheX): Kaethe Schneider was invited to present the *women entrepreneurs’* project to TheX, in Erfurt, Germany. TheX is a center in Thuringia supporting (emerging) women entrepreneurs in Thuringia. An additional meeting is scheduled in order to establish a form of collaboration.

Women Entrepreneurs Programme at the Thematic Business University Forum in Vienna: Established by the European Commission as a platform to promote good practice exchange, mutual learning and networking and to inspire further activities across the Member States, the University-Business Forums serve as a catalyst for creating partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses. The 2016 Vienna Thematic Forum that took place on the 25th and 26th of February, focused on university-business cooperation from the perspective of fostering innovation through collaborative effort and joint activities. The event was a joint effort of the European Commission, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy. During this event, project members Andria Iapona (3s – Secondment from CUT) and Janine Wulz (3s) had the opportunity through networking sessions to hand over project flyers and inform other participants about the project and its aims. Participants were very interested to learn about “Women Entrepreneurs Programme” and how it will contribute to social and economic development by increasing the number of female entrepreneurs and their performance potent



Established partnerships: We are glad that *Enterprise Ireland* and *VdU* have become associated partners of *women entrepreneurs*. Enterprise Ireland is the government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises. The Association of German Businesswomen (VdU) represents the interests of businesswomen across different sectors in manufacturing, craft trades, retail and the service industries and is one of the largest associations in Germany.

Other activities: Kaethe Schneider presented the *women entrepreneurs'* project via mailing actions or telephone calls to several organisations in Ireland and Germany such as Local Enterprise Offices and Local Chambers in Ireland. Organisations or associations such as BUW Germany (Federation of Entrepreneurs' Association Germany), bundesweite gründerinnenagentur (bga), Nationale Koordinierungsstelle Frauen unternehmen, Pinkties, social entrepreneurs Ireland, Unternehmerinnen.org, Enterprise Europe Network, Thuringia, Schöne Aussichten - Verband selbständiger Frauen e.V.m NeUn e.V. Neusser Unternehmerinnen and Gründerinnenzentrum gig7, supported us in disseminating the project information to their members and in recruiting the sample.

Peer-reviewed publications: A paper titled "*A Complex Learning Model for the Development of Fundamental Entrepreneurial Competencies*" was written by Kaethe Schneider and Carlos Albornoz and was submitted to the open-access peer-reviewed journal *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*.

Women entrepreneurs, including stakeholders and networks:

Overview table: women entrepreneurs including stakeholders and networks	
Group	Women entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship organisations, stakeholder groups.
Messages	Project outcomes, learning programme.
Media	Presentations at meetings and conferences, website, social media (Facebook, Twitter), blog.
Resources needed	General folder, posters.

Completed Activities



Facebook account: The account was created in order to present various project activities, news and outcomes to a broader public.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/mwomenentrepreneursproject/?ref=hl>

Campaign Because Your Experience Matters: A photographic campaign was launched in order to achieve expansion of the participation of women entrepreneurs and make it further visible in Germany and Ireland through Facebook Ads.

Target Group Reached by country:

Germany: 10.503 women reached
Ireland: 8.110 women reached

Video interviews: We have already filmed seven interviews conducted with women entrepreneurs of various work fields in Germany, with the purpose of making a short video documentary about their experiences in their business in order to further investigate in the future. The video documentary will be presented at the “Girls Day” in April 2016 in Jena and it will also be uploaded in social media and the project’s website.

Policy brief: A policy statement was written by Juliane Möhring and Adriana Abarca M. The policy report’s main objective is to describe each of the two countries, Ireland and Germany, and suggest recommendations on how to improve their entrepreneurial ecosystem.

(Interested) Public audience

Overview table: Public Audience	
Group	Interested individuals, women interested in entrepreneurship.
Messages	Project outcomes, awareness on entrepreneurship in general, how to become a female entrepreneur.
Media	Presentations at public events, Social media.
Resources needed	General Folder, Flyers, Posters, Giveaways.



Completed Activities

Logo design: We have designed a logo for the project that will be used for all dissemination activities, social media and any project publications. The design was based according to the characteristics of our target group of study.

Press Releases:

1. A press release by the communication department of Friedrich-Schiller-University (FSU) of Jena was included in Uni Journal Jena in order to introduce the project to the public.
2. The communication department of the FSU informed us about the Start of the online survey on women entrepreneurship in Ireland (October 2015) and Germany (December 2015).
3. A press release of the project was sent to the Association of Colombian Schools of Communication and Journalism by UN. The Association included it to their Newsletter which reaches about 60 schools of Communication in Colombia. The press release was used to introduce the project, its purpose and stages and the overall framework.

Web entries

- **Blog:** entries regarding project description, status and news / womenentrepreneursproject.wordpress.com
- **Website:** entry about the project in 3s website in Austria / <http://3s.co.at/en/node/1463>

Newsletter:

The Consortium decided to launch Newsletters addressed to the entire team, in order to keep them informed and motivated. The Newsletters are expected to be a very helpful tool in maintaining the team's morale throughout the project and especially with new secondments introduction to the project.