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WELCOME



Welcome to the sixth issue of the WEED newsletter.

In this issue we focus on Local Action Plans and bring you an update on the Local Action Plans which are being developed by the WEED partners. Local Action Plans are the foundation of all URBACT projects and are perhaps more vital than ever at the current time, when the challenges of the global recession and tightening public expenditure threaten to impact particularly heavily on women. The WEED Local Action Plans offer at least a local framework for ensuring that women's enterprise and employment are supported in the face of these challenges.

This newsletter also brings you more interviews with women who are supporting women in business and employment. We interviewed Maggie O'Carroll from Train2000 in the UK, Eva Lopez from Woman Emprende in Spain, and Belinda Decamps from OA2F in France. These interviews

show that the barriers faced by women entrepreneurs and employees are remarkably similar across Europe. They also show that local actions to support women into business or employment make a major difference.

The theme of local actions which make a major impact is picked up in our story about Generation Orchestra, the Local Action Plan project developed in Amadora, Portugal through the URBACT II pilot network, MILE. The Local Action Plan helped Generation Orchestra grow from a local initiative to a national programme which is now spreading internationally. This inspiring story shows what can be achieved through the Local Action Plan approach and how sharing ideas and experiences through networks like WEED can achieve major impacts for cities.

As always, you can find out more about the WEED project by visiting our website www.urbact.eu/weed.

Professor Gill Scott
Lead Expert for the WEED project

LOCAL ACTION PLANS

Gill Scott, Lead Expert for the WEED network, discusses the value and challenges of producing Local Action Plans, and presents an update on the Local Action Plans of the WEED partners.

Since the baseline mapping of women, entrepreneurship and employment was carried out in the Development phase of the WEED project, all cities have been faced with an economic context that has changed. It is now more important than ever to ensure that

women are not the long term losers during times of economic crisis, that the pursuit of gender equality at local level continues, and women's contribution as workers and entrepreneurs is fully utilized as part of economic recovery strategies.

An important part of this is the development of actions and strategies at local level. Local Action Plans are an important dimension to the URBACT program. Drawing on the URBACT I experience, they are intended to improve the impact of transnational exchange and learning on local policies, and give a concrete form to the outputs from networking activities carried out by each partner. They can be a valuable way of exploring solutions to problems faced by partner cities.

The URBACT programme stresses that Local Action Plans should:

- Concretely address challenges in the city related to network theme;
- Be produced by the Local Support Group and identify opportunities for funding through the operational programmes be maximized;
- Show how the plan builds on existing actions/ strategies and how

it fits into future city plans;

- Show the benefit of any transnational exchange that has contributed to LAP.

All the cities involved in WEED have active Local Support Groups that have been developing such Local Action Plans. These Local Action Plans are summarised below. Their content shows the varied context and issues faced in different cities. Some are prioritizing actions to help women start up and develop enterprises, others to reduce gender segregation across the world of work and business. Whatever their approach, partners feel that the chance to bring together stakeholders at local level, to learn from models being adopted in cities across Europe and to take time to plan actions has been a valuable dimension of the URBACT programme.

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Objective: To increase women-led enterprise in the knowledge economy.

Planned actions: Develop mentor net; support innovatory enterprise; develop subsidy programme for women leading and employing other women.

Intended impacts: Increased uptake by women of business support e.g.20% increase in support for women setting up business through Women Empreende.

UMEA LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Objective: To reduce gender segregation in employment so men and women have equal access to jobs and positions.

Planned actions: Additional actions to change the norms and structures in the labour market that favour men; Range of proposed actions.

Intended impacts: Increased confidence for women workers; A joint strategic plan; Raised awareness; Database of good practice.

CELJE LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Objective: To extend women's capacity to work in or develop businesses supporting vulnerable families and older people.

Planned actions: Develop funding application for support and training services.

Intended impacts: Project funding for new employment and training in the sector.

AMIENS LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Objective: To reduce barriers to women entering work or setting up business.

Planned actions: Survey of local needs and ideas; review programmes such as OAFF (CIDFF); extend and secure resources.

Intended impacts: Raised profile and impact of municipal equal opportunities department; Plan of actions necessary to increase rates of women completing 'entry to work' training courses.

ALZIRA LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Objective: To increase the number of female entrepreneurs, particularly amongst the young.

Planned actions: Micro finance initiative; establish Erasmus programme for young women entrepreneurs.

Intended impacts: Improved contribution to review of Alzira's Equality Plan 2008-10; Two funded projects.

ENNA LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Objectives: To improve an entrepreneurial culture among students, from secondary schools to university; To create a Help Desk providing information and support from stakeholder agencies; To create permanent support instruments such as microcredit to foster and encourage women entrepreneurs.

Planned actions: Four or more meetings among students; Events; Creation of database of good practice and resources; Meetings to find the right and sustainable instruments about microcredit for Enna territory.

Intended impacts: Increased confidence in entrepreneurial culture among young women; Database of information and good practices for the Help Desk; Microcredit Instruments built into the Action Plan as a permanent part of the budget.

KARVINA LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Objective: To increase the proportion of unemployed women completing retraining or business start up programmes.

Planned actions: Analysis of statistical data and survey of business women and unemployed women's situation in Karviná.

Intended impacts: Clearer targets and action plans incorporated into return to work and start up training programmes.

FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL

How local action planning through an URBACT network took a successful local initiative worldwide

The local action plans which WEED partners are currently developing could have an enormous impact in shaping local initiatives and sharing good practice with network partners. The MILE project is a good example of how this can work.

MILE was a fast track URBACT II pilot project which ran from April 2007 to June 2009. MILE established a network of nine cities to share knowledge and experience on the theme of 'managing migration and integration at local level'. The City Council of Amadora, a municipality in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area in Portugal, was one of the MILE partners. Amadora had identified a particular issue with high levels of early school leaving among second generation migrants of African origin. The City Council's challenge was to find ways of empowering these young people to see school as a positive option. In the hunt to find innovative ways to engage young people in education, and through a chance meeting with the Director of the Lisbon National Conservatory, the idea of adapting Venezuela's El Sistema method emerged. With close involvement of young people and their families, the Venezuelan approach was adapted to meet the needs of the local community. And as a result, Generation Orchestra was born.

Generation Orchestra met with initial scepticism. Not all partners were convinced that a classical orchestra could be an effective vehicle for engaging disaffected young people, increasing their participation in formal education, and building social cohesion within the local community. It took time for the vision to become a widely shared one.

Amadora City Council wrote the Generation Orchestra initiative into their MILE local action plan. The initiative had already been piloted using EU EQUAL funding, but the local action plan and the URBACT network helped to rapidly scale up the project. The European Commission was very interested and this helped to fast track the initiative into the Operational Programme which, in turn, helped finance the project's roll out across the region. Portugal's Minister of Education became interested and has committed to mainstreaming the project nationally. The Ministry has set up a task force to look at how the Generation Orchestra model can be delivered in all areas of Portugal.

The City of Vantaa, Finland, was a member of the MILE network. Vantaa was inspired by the Amadora local action plan. They organised two visits to Lisbon, taking city council officials and music teachers to learn about Generation Orchestra. This led to the formation of the Tempo orchestra in Vantaa. Like Generation Orchestra, Tempo has gone from strength to strength and played for the Finnish president Tarja Halonen in April 2010. Hannele Lautiola, Vantaa's lead partner in the MILE project says 'For us the orchestra has been one of our success stories and it all happened thanks to MILE.....MILE gave us the space and possibilities to share ideas and learning together.'



Generation Orchestra, Portugal



Tempo, Finland

Thank you to Jorge Miranda former lead partner for Amadora in the MILE project, and Hannele Lautiola, former lead partner for Vantaa for their help in preparing this article.

CITY PROFILE: KARVINA

We continue our series of features on the WEED partner cities with a closer look at Karviná in the Czech Republic.



Karviná is a town of about 62,000 inhabitants, located in the former coal-region of Moravia-Silesia, at the far East of the Czech Republic on the border with Poland.

The town has a rich history. For decades the town of Karviná and its surroundings was an area with a high concentration of coal mining and related industries. More recently, the town has become a commercial and tourist center. The Karviná Darkov Spa has a worldwide reputation for treatment of locomotive organs. By establishing the School of Business Administration of the Silesian University, Karviná has become a

university town. A new era has brought new developments in construction and commercial activities. Karviná is becoming a town with dynamic development offering good opportunities for a comfortable life.

Karviná is taking many steps to help women balance work and family life. One example is through the delivery of crèche services operated by the Karviná Social Service organization (the statutory social service provider for Karviná). The crèche service is focused primarily on small children up to the age of three, whose mothers are returning early to the labour market, for various reasons. These are women who do not want to lose continuity in

their jobs or are from underprivileged families, where the return of mother to the work is very important for economic reasons.

The crèche has its own website, where parents can find necessary information about the operation of the crèche facility. The demand for crèche places continues to be high, but because parents are allowed to use this facility for as little as five days in a month, it is possible to fill the day-to-day vacancies with short-term stays by children. Currently there are 65 children registered for a capacity of 30



children (not all of them are attending daily).

Services provided by the

crèche include day-long care for

children by trainee personnel (nurses), babysitting, feeding (providing healthy food), walks, health exercises, acupuncture, and other health activities.

Investing in good crèche facilities brings many economic and social benefits to Karviná. These include a reduced unemployment rate among women with small children due to their return to the labour market; utilization of the facility also for leisure time activities for parents with children; improved safety of children in the facility and improved satisfaction of spending time in a new, pleasant and aesthetically pleasing environment.



SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE IN NORTH WEST ENGLAND



Maggie O'Carroll is the Chief Executive Officer of Train 2000, a social enterprise providing business training and business advice to women in the north west of England. We asked Maggie for her views on the barriers facing women entrepreneurs and what practical and policy measures can be taken to help overcome these.

What are the main difficulties facing women who want to start their own business?

Starting a business is a difficult endeavour for anyone but there are

particular challenges for women. The overarching issue for women is the balance between parenting and entrepreneurship. Although men are taking a bigger parenting role, it is still women who are usually the primary

parent and this role acts as a break on entrepreneurial activity. Another challenge is the lack of high profile, realistic, positive role models of women business owners. The high profile entrepreneurs tend to be male, white and middle aged. When you do get female role models, they are generally presenting a traditionally masculine model of business. This leaves women thinking that they have to 'do it all' to succeed, which is unrealistic.

The recession has brought new challenges for entrepreneurs, particularly around accessing finance. There is a widespread view that women are more risk averse and so less likely to seek financing for business start up or growth. But our research suggests that rather than being risk averse, women assess risk differently from men. Women are often more likely to consider that they have more to lose if they cannot repay borrowings, and will seldom put assets like their family house at risk. So access to finance has always been more difficult for women than for men, and this is made worse in the current financial climate where banks are reluctant to lend to anyone.

The business support infrastructure has not been particularly helpful for women entrepreneurs. Publicly funded business support programmes have mostly failed to recognise that women's education, roles and routes into entrepreneurship are different to men's, and different from each other; the support needs of a highly educated woman who has been working at a senior level in industry are very different to those of a woman with few qualifications who has been caring for children at home since leaving school.

How does Train2000 help overcome these problems?

Train2000 is a social enterprise, run as a business by people with business backgrounds. Our business support programmes are similar to mainstream support; they include training, advice, networking, mentoring and coaching, and we are opening a business incubation centre very soon. The crucial difference is that all our programmes are gender proofed. We have considered, and continue to consider, what women need from business support, and we ensure that our programmes are responsive to their needs in areas such as timing and additional support measures.

For the future, what additional policy measures would you like to see at local, national or European level to help women set up and grow their own businesses?

The European Commission has done a very good job in helping to raise awareness of women's entrepreneurship. Structural Fund support has helped to deliver a lot of work in this area. But women's entrepreneurship is still sitting under the 'equalities' banner within EU policy. I would like to see this moved to sit under the 'enterprise and industry' banner, so that women's entrepreneurship is viewed as an economic and not just a social issue. The creation of a unit for female entrepreneurship within the Directorate General Enterprise and Industry would be a good step forward.

At national level, there has been very little policy emphasis on women's enterprise. This is in contrast to the United States, for example, which has instituted a series of policy measures aimed at stimulating and supporting

women's enterprise in order to reach the untapped entrepreneurial market. I would like to see a similar proactive policy drive in the UK. There is also an important issue around procurement policy for public sector agencies. The public sector spends a lot of money buying goods and services, but how much of this is going

to women's businesses? This is an area which needs looking at more closely, and where local policies could make a difference.

For more information about their work, visit the Train2000 website:
<http://www.train2000.org.uk/>

HELPING WOMEN INTO BUSINESS IN SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA



Eva Lopez is a member of the WEED Local Support Group for Santiago de Compostela and the Manager of Woman Emprende. In this interview, Eva explains how Woman Emprende supports women's entrepreneurship, and sets out what additional policy and programme support is needed to help women overcome the challenges they face in setting up their own enterprises.

Woman Emprende works with women in universities who have the potential to create their own company, including students, graduates and researchers. Many of them consider the idea of creating their own jobs or even setting up their own company with their own skills and knowledge. Establishing this simple thought is a step forward itself.

Once the decision to set up a company has been taken, they come to us to help them to carry out studies on costs, marketing and financial feasibility. They also need assistance to draw up reports they may present to potential investors, business angels or risk capital. The financial issue is very important and they often feel this is a major difficulty. Their main concerns are the paperwork required to register a company, establishing the company's legal status, and how to

access financial help to initially run the business.

Woman Emprende spreads the message in the university that women can create their own jobs with their own knowledge and skills, and has recently published a report showing about twenty examples of women who created their own companies from such diverse areas as medicine, chemistry, history and biology.

Woman Emprende gives advice and assists in the process of creating the business plan. We study each of the projects to evaluate their feasibility and help them to find its place in the market. We also offer our services as counsellors and business incubators during the first years of the new business. We have our own risk capital

fund, so we can also provide some financial support.

For the future, in terms of “Women and Science”, greater emphasis on research and development is needed. We would like to see more support on issues such as supporting the research careers of excellent women, greater acceptance that women need to balance maternity and working life, and greater acknowledgement that setting up a spin-off company should be seen as an asset on their CV.

In terms of “Women and Business”, we would like to see that both women

and men who set up their own businesses have no trouble when balancing their professional and private lives, in this sense companies should offer crèches as part of their premises. Tax benefits during the first years of the set-up, and specific projects to help consolidation or the internationalization of the new businesses are also needed.

Finally, we would like to see the creation of a specific fund of risk capital which can be used for solid business projects backed up by women.

SUPPORT FOR WOMEN LABOUR MARKET RETURNERS IN PICARDY

Belinda Descamps is the Director of OA2F, an organization supporting women who want to return to work. She is also a member of the WEED Local Support Group for Amiens. We asked Belinda to tell us more about the challenges facing women returners in the Picardy region of France and what OA2F does to help them.

What are the challenges for women in Picardy who are trying to enter the labour market, or return to the labour market?

Women in Picardy can face several barriers in their return to the labour market, including:

- Lack of independent information and advice;
- Childcare responsibilities;
- Lack of transport or mobility,
- Having no qualifications, or outdated qualifications which are no longer suited to the labour market.

This last issue is a priority for us. The level of training of the population of the entire Picardy region is low. Women who leave school without a diploma can face great difficulties in their search for employment. Other women, who take time out of the labour market to raise children, can find that their qualifications or professional experience have become obsolete. These women have a real need of continuing education to update their qualifications.

How does OA2F help women to overcome these challenges?

We help women to meet the costs of training to update their qualifications

and facilitate their return to employment. This can include the costs of the training, plus transport, food, accommodation, childcare and learning materials. Our aim is to complement other sources of support, and all other support should already have been mobilised. In the Somme département, between 2005 and 2009, we supported 147 women. Of these women, 99 per cent completed their training and 76 per cent found a job, of which 83 per cent remain in stable and sustainable employment. In general, employment is a precondition for women to have financial independence. The empowerment of women is also part of the objective of the network of the France CIDFF for equal rights and equal opportunities between men and women.

For the future, what additional policies at national or European level measures could contribute to improving employment opportunities for women?

Regional and national policies already consider that training is accessible to all. But what is true in theory is not always reflected in the reality of the daily lives of many women. Even if the costs of training are supported, many women also have to consider the additional expenses that they will incur through their training. These considerations can weigh heavily and force some women to abandon their

pursuit of a qualification. It is not enough to just rely on women's willingness to re-qualify and return to the labour market, there must also be an environment which facilitates and supports this.

To improve job opportunities for women it is necessary to identify how out of date their qualifications are and to assess what training is needed to help them catch up with the needs of the local job market. This process involves:

- preparation of an annual plan of qualifications in demand by employers;
- engagement with employers about recruiting newly qualified women;
- individualised support for the women who are studying for qualifications;
- support towards autonomy.

It is important to remember that women who face difficulties here are not just those who are 'social minimas' (that is, living on the highest level of welfare support from the government). An unmarried mother, benefitting from Return to Work benefits is not counted in the 'social minimas' category and yet she can often face major difficulties.

WEED ON-LINE

Running from September to November 2010, a series of on-line events for WEED partners brought new perspectives and expertise on key issues for women's enterprise. Here we present a summary of the on-line events which focused on the themes of microfinance, enterprise support, and local action plans.

In September, the on-line session addressed the issue of **Microfinance for micro-enterprises**. Daniel Sorrosal from the European Microfinance Network gave a presentation on trends and issues relating to the availability and accessibility of micro-finance in EU member states. His presentation covered the history of micro-financing in Europe and the reasons why this form of loan financing is a critical tool in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Daniel highlighted the growing use of microfinance in the EU, with 170,000 active clients in 2009, each receiving an average loan of €9,600. Of all the microfinance loans disbursed in 2009, by far the greatest number was in France (28,863), followed by Poland (16,655) and Hungary (10,402). Microfinance providers are themselves fairly small scale; a survey by the European Microfinance Network identified that 67 per cent of micro-finance providers give fewer than 100 loans per year.

Currently, only 27 per cent of micro-finance clients are women. This form of small scale financing is often very suitable for women's enterprises and there is clearly scope to increase the number of women who benefit.

Daniel Sorrosal's presentation is available from the WEED website <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/human-capital-entrepreneurship/weed/event/?eventid=339>

In October, the on-line session focused on enterprise support with a presentation from

EntreprenörCentrum, a successful enterprise support centre in Sweden. EntreprenörCentrum supports enterprise development from pre-start up to business growth through a range of support services which include advice, coaching, mentoring and start up grants. EntreprenörCentrum integrates gender equality into all aspects of its work, including the provision of support services designed to meet the specific needs of women entrepreneurs, with the result that 44 per cent of the new businesses it supports are women-led (compared with 33 per cent nationally).

For more information about EntreprenörCentrum visit their website at www.entreprenorcentrum.se. The EntreprenörCentrum on-line presentation and video are also available on the WEED website <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/human-capital-entrepreneurship/weed/event/?eventid=349>

In November, Gill Scott, lead expert for the WEED network, facilitated an on-line seminar on **Local Action Plans**. Gill was joined by partners in Celje (Slovenia) and Umea (Sweden) for an in depth discussion about the process of developing Local Action Plans, the challenges involved, and ways in which partners can maximise the value of the Local Action Plan approach. Details from this on-line session are available on the WEED website. <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/human-capital-entrepreneurship/weed/event/?eventid=364>

EU NEWS

The future of cohesion policy



The European Commission's Fifth Cohesion Report was published in November 2010, opening the debate on the future of cohesion policy and funding programmes from 2014. The Fifth Cohesion Report

presents detailed evidence of the disparities which remain between EU regions on a range of economic and social indicators, and sets out a series of conclusions on ways cohesion policy can be developed to address these more effectively.

A key theme within the report, and prominent in the conclusions, is the need to align cohesion policy with the Europe 2020 agenda and priorities.

While this closer alignment will be welcomed for many reasons, all those with a particular interest in or concern for gender equality will be aware that there are no gender equality targets within Europe 2020. Even the Europe 2020 headline target for employment (to raise the EU employment rate to 75 per cent by 2020) makes no reference to women's employment, despite the fact that the employment rate for women in the EU27 lags far behind the employment rate for men (58.6 per cent in 2009, compared with 70.7 per cent for men).

The European Commission's consultation on the Fifth Cohesion Report ends on 31 January 2011. Click here to visit the consultation website:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/5cr/index_en.cfm

EU conference on closing the EU gender pay gap

A conference organized by the Belgian Presidency of the EU took place on 26 and 27 October 2010 to look into the reasons for the continuing gender pay gap and what can be done to reduce it. The average hourly pay gap between women and men remains at 18 per cent within the EU, and 24 per cent based on annual earnings. The event brought together representatives from EU Member States, the EU institutions, gender equality bodies, social partner organisations, civil society and the academic world.

Concluding the conference, Belgium's Minister for Employment and Equal Opportunities, Joelle Milquet stressed

that increasing the employment rate for women, reducing the pay gap and strengthening the qualifications of women should be overriding aims. She also called for a strengthening of the Barcelona targets, pointing out that these remain topical and represent a key way to help women access jobs.

The Barcelona targets were agreed by the European Council in 2002. The targets are for the provision of childcare for at least 33 per cent of children under the age of three, and 90 per cent of children between the age of three and mandatory school age, to be achieved by 2010. Figures from Eurostat show that in 2009, 44

per cent of children in the three years to minimum school leaving age range

were in formal childcare, and 13 per cent of children under the age of three.

European Parliament favours 20 weeks paid maternity leave

In 2008, the European Commission proposed updates to existing legislation including the extension of the minimum maternity leave period. On 20 October 2010, the European Parliament voted with a large majority in favour of giving women workers the right to at least 20 weeks of maternity leave on full pay. The draft legislation

will now be considered by the Council of Ministers. However, it is very likely that some of the 27 Member States will oppose the European Parliament's position on this issue. The UK, Denmark and Germany have already said that the increase to paid maternity leave is too costly in the current economic climate.

No change in the gender gap in the EU's richest region

A recent report on women in the London economy shows that despite policies to improve the proportion of women in the workforce and reduce the gender pay gap, the position of women in the workforce has not changed over the last decade. Inner London has the highest per capita GDP of all regions in Europe making it, on this measure, Europe's richest region. However, London has a higher gender pay gap than the rest of the UK, with a 23 percentage point difference between female and male median earnings, rising to 31 percentage points for the top 10 per cent of earners. Women are greatly under-represented in senior business

roles; only 5.5 percent of all FTSE 100 company executive directors are women, and 21 of these companies have no female directors at all.

The report was produced by the London Mayor's economic team. It suggests that a 'radical re-thinking' is needed if women are to improve their position in the economy, but does not present any proposals for new policy approaches to address this. For more information go to: <http://www.london.gov.uk/publication/working-paper-45-women-london%E2%80%99s-economy-update-2010>

New WEED publications

Two new WEED publications have been published on the URBACT website. Both reports are by Gill Scott, Lead Expert for WEED. *City strategies for empowering women in economic development* draws on the experience of the WEED partner cities to highlight ways in which municipal authorities can encourage women's economic

development. *Steps towards inclusive growth: lessons for the recovery* argues for inclusion as the key to successful economic strategies and highlights lessons from the WEED project. Both reports are available on the home page of the URBACT website <http://urbact.eu/>.

For more information about the WEED project, including our newsletters, workshop reports and presentations and information about all the WEED partners, please visit the WEED website at

www.urbact.eu/weed

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