



Women, Enterprise and Employment in Local Development

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Welcome

by **Bojan ŠROT**, Mayor of Celje



I am very pleased that our city is the lead partner of the URBACT network “Women, Enterprise and Employment in Local Development” (WEED). This network will involve 9 cities from 7 EU Member States which will be examining a programme of action to redress women’s underdeveloped role in economic development within small

to medium sized cities and to consider how to apply and extend good practices that could do so.

As such our network addresses a key theme of the EU Strategy for Growth and Jobs (Lisbon Strategy) by improving the effectiveness of sustainable integrated urban development policies. The Lisbon Strategy stresses the need for actions in Europe to achieve strong competitiveness in combination with other features such as social stability, integration and cohesion. Balancing a commitment to gender equality alongside a commitment to competitiveness and economic growth is part of this agenda and the full integration of women and men into the economy at the local level is a topic of significant interest for EU Member States. In fact it has been recognised that gender equality in particular as regards employment affairs and entrepreneurship can make a significant contribution to the economic growth and competitiveness in our cities.

In Celje, the third largest city in Slovenia with a population of about 50 000 inhabitants, women play a significant part in the labour market and make up around 45 % of the employment rate of our city. However among the biggest 50 private companies in Celje only 8 are officially led by women. Within the framework of the WEED

project we would like to address this issue and explore with our partners how the level of women owned and run businesses can be enhanced and how women can be encouraged to take higher risks in running their own businesses.

As concerns the different type of employment sectors in our city, we depend quite heavily on the industrial sector and around 68% of our active population is employed by local industries. In recent years however there has been a rapid development in technological and educational field and with the opening of a local university as well as higher education and research facilities the knowledge economy is beginning to play an increasingly important part in our local economy. We hope that the WEED project will provide us with a good mechanism to explore possibilities on how to best promote women’s interest and involvement in new technologies and/or science and thus getting them into work in this newly developing sector.

I am sure that the challenges we are facing in Celje are similar to the ones faced by many other cities and local authorities in Europe. Through participation in this network we hope to share and learn from each others experiences and to develop solutions that can be adapted to our local context.

I am therefore particularly glad that we are leading this network and I will be following with great interest the work that will be carried out by our Local Support Group and Management Team. I wish all the participants of this network the best of luck and a fruitful cooperation.

BOJAN ŠROT
Mayor
Municipality of Celje

WEED at a glance

The WEED project is a thematic network of nine committed local authorities which aims to capitalize knowledge and practice around the participation of women on the labour market and entrepreneurship development.

There are three common areas of interest and priorities for work:

- Improving women's work
- Promoting/supporting entrepreneurial activities
- Promoting/ supporting women in use of new technology and position in science and knowledge

Local Support Groups (LSG)

The network will establish a Local Support Group in each partner city. These will consist of 9-12 people actively connected to the themes plus a wider local network. The LSG's are the "drivers" of the project and will seek to maximise the "local" impact of the transnational exchange and to ensure that the lessons learnt lead to change at a local level. Each LSG will produce a Local Action Plan which will be linked, wherever possible, to specific project proposal to secure ERDF/ESF or other EU or National Funds.

Planned activities

In order to realise this overall goal of the WEED project the following activities will be undertaken:

A **transnational exchange programme** for over 90 key actors. This will bring together 3 Action Learning Sets (ALS's) from each city focusing on three priorities identified in the beginning of the project. The aim will be to ensure close involvement and co-operation

in the learning exchange between practitioners, policy makers and, where possible, programme managers.

Creation of a web site resource which would include: case studies, sub-theme reports, links to relevant websites, publications/reports, contacts with regional/city/national/European actors and an interactive space.

Development of Local Action Plans within each partner city which are linked to good practice project proposals for possible funding from ERDF, ESF or other EU or National sources of funding.

Project partners

- Celje (Slovenia) Lead Partner
- Enna, Italy
- Karvina, Czech Republic
- Umeå, Sweden
- Crotona, Italy
- Medway, United Kingdom
- Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- Alzira, Spain
- Amiens, France

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Gender equality for promoting good urban development

Interview with Gill Scott



Gill Scott is the lead expert of the WEED network. She will be working together with the 9 partner cities to examine whether a programme of action to redress women's underdeveloped role in economic development within small to medium sized cities is possible and to consider how to develop and extend good practice that could do so.

“Gill, what is your professional background?”

I am an Emeritus professor of Social Inclusion and Equalities at the Glasgow Caledonian University as well as honorary director at the Scottish Poverty Information Unit. For over thirty years I have been involved in research and policy development in the area of urban regeneration and equalities

and my experience in advising community projects and government policy has given me a strong basis in which to help this network.

“What has attracted you to this particular project?”

The WEED project combines two areas of interest to me: gender equality and urban regeneration. Unfortunately, it is quite common that on a local level the agenda for urban regeneration does not consider an equalities agenda and vice versa. This project provides the opportunity to integrate these very two important issues within the EU context.

Promoting gender equality has been central to European policy and legislation for at least four decades: it is one of the defining features of the EU commitment to cohesion and integration and policy has been much refined during that time. As concerns urban regeneration, there have been policies aimed at addressing the issue of poverty but so far there has been a lack of policies directed towards the issue of women as a potential force for change in urban development.

“What will be your role in the project?”

I have been involved in the project since its very beginning, in particular with the preparation of the Baseline Study which was aimed at reviewing existing knowledge, policy and networks working on issue of cities, women, enterprise and employment and at establishing the areas in which the WEED project could build on. Carrying out the Baseline Study was fascinating and highlighted how much the partners wanted to learn from each other and contribute their ideas and experience to other partners of the network.

In more practical terms, I will assist with the coordination of the transnational exchange workshops that we are going to organise within the framework of the project as well as the Action Learning Sets and providing some support for Local Support Groups. Our first workshop will take place in Celje (Slovenia) on 3-4 September 2009. The topic will be

on “women and enterprise”, and more specifically the economic crisis and promoting entrepreneurial culture amongst women for economic recovery. At the workshop I will present the policy context, drawing from the case studies that I will have researched prior to the event (for more details please see article below). The second transnational exchange workshop will be on the theme of “women, work and cities” next May in Spain and the third workshop on “urban development, knowledge industries and gender” will be in Umea in Sweden.

My role will also be to listen to the partners, help them to share their experiences and develop their Local Action Plans and see whether their experiences can be capitalised by other cities.

“What do you see as the main challenges ahead?”

When URBACT was first established there was a positive trend towards seriously engaging women in local development. Since the economic crisis cities have been hit hard and the challenge that lies ahead of us is to ensure that women do not lose out.

Another challenge concerns the process of our project. We have to make sure that we really catch the activities of the Local Support Groups and link them with the transnational work and vice versa.

can make a contribution: the International Labour Organization (ILO) reports that the economic crisis could increase the number of unemployed women by up to 22 million in 2009-2010. It is more important than ever to avoid creating a climate that could disadvantage women as entrepreneurs or workers.

This workshop will explore how policies, tools and mechanisms within the URBACT communities and other cities across Europe can be extended to strengthen the capacity of cities to use gender sensitive entrepreneurial support as a way of becoming more dynamic and competitive environments.

Policy and innovation within the EU have much to offer in terms of lessons to promote gender equality and despite the fact that entrepreneurial activity remains a challenge there is considerable practice that could be drawn on to combat the effects of recession and lay the basis for more attractive cities of the future.

A workshop report and presentations made during the event will be available on our website.

Mobilizing the potential of female entrepreneurship at a time of economic crisis

The first transnational exchange workshop of the WEED project will take place from 3-4 September 2009 in Celje.

There is increasing recognition that the success of the European Strategy for Growth and Jobs depends on the involvement and contribution of both men and women across the Union. There is also increasing evidence that women entrepreneurship can be a key factor in the economic development of modern cities: numerous successes in mobilising female entrepreneurship underline this view and suggest that supporting female-headed business more rigorously is worth exploring by municipalities and their partners in economic development.

The current economic crisis may, however, be threatening the capacity of female entrepreneurs to develop the sectors where they have proved they

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City Profile: Karvina

In this section we are going to introduce each of the network partners. For this issue we will be taking a closer look at the partner city Karvina.

Karvina has a population of 63.000 and is the administrative centre of Karviná District in the region of Cieszyn Silesia, North East of the Czech Republic.

The traditional economy of the city was based on the coal mines, and Karvina was one of the most important coal mining centres in the Czech Republic, this has been reconverted into an industrial area where many new work places have been created. In addition Karvina has a university and has also recently developed several wellness centres.

Women constitute around 37 per cent of the employed labour force in the area. Since 2005, the number of unemployed women in Karvina has grown due to the lower number of job vacancies available for women. Most job vacancies are available in traditional men's jobs (e.g. masonry, mining, sales, engineering, and security). Almost 60% of women in Karvina are users of the local employment centre for more than 1 year.

Over 39 % of women are self employed and tend to work in the food and clothing/retail sector, the service industries, restaurants, craft and care. They are either part of a small company or sole traders. Often the reason for starting a private business is to continue existing family businesses, seen as an alternative to unemployment.

Recently there is a growing interest in private business in Karvina due to an increase of investors and the growing potential of the Darkov baths. Additionally, the increasing number of women in small businesses is attracting the interest of other women to set up businesses. Extending entrepreneurial activity, however, is limited because of low level of education amongst women, insufficient capacity of nurseries, difficulties in reconciling work and family life and stereotyping of women's capabilities.

As concerns the knowledge economy women are not well represented. There are a number of organisations offering courses to address this but the majority of women think that jobs in IT are more suitable for men. In order to increase the interest of women to work in the IT sector our main challenge will be to raise awareness of the variety of work available in IT and to make it more attractive and accessible.

The problems identified here suggest an underutilisation of women generally in the city's economy. Entrepreneurial activity remains underdeveloped and women's capacity to see IT, science and technology as a source of employment and development is limited. By participating in this network we hope to address these issues in our city and to improve the situation of women in the employment market.



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The European Commission has launched an EU-wide campaign to help tackle the gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is the average difference between men's and women's hourly earnings within the economy as a whole. Across Europe women earn on average around 17% less than men and in some countries the gender pay gap is widening.

The gender pay gap also has an important impact on lifetime earnings and on women's pensions. Earning lower pay means having a lower pension and it causes a higher risk of poverty for older women. The gender pay gap is the consequence of ongoing discrimination and inequalities in the labour market which, in practice, mainly affects women. The pay gap is linked to a number of legal, social and economic factors which go far beyond the single issue of equal pay for equal work.

The simple concept of 'equal pay for work of equal value' was at the heart of the campaign being launched in the context of International Women's Day on 8 March to raise awareness of the pay gap, its causes, and how to tackle it.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of the pay gap and how it can be tackled. To reach out to citizens, employers and workers, the campaign will promote good practices on the pay gap from around Europe and distribute a campaign toolbox for employers and trade unions at European and at national level. Other activities include the campaign website, advertising in European press and a poster campaign.

[Go to website>>](#)

Break gender stereotypes, give talent a chance!

This new EU initiative aims to assist SMEs in Europe to increase their productivity and boost their competitiveness by breaking down the invisible barriers created by gender stereotypes, thereby maximizing the potential of their employees.

The initiative aims to show that gender equality action can improve business performance and success through :

- a "toolkit" for full and better use of individual talents within a company;
- training workshops on how to gain competitiveness through gender equality action;
- consultancy and information;
- opportunities to boost your company's visibility.

Activities target staff of Chambers of Commerce; business and professional associations; training bodies; businessmen and businesswomen; managers within small and medium sized enterprises; human resource managers; and all those who work to improve quality and competitiveness within SMEs.

[Read more>>](#)

Commission calls for "Equality between women and men in a time of change"

On 15 and 16 June 2009, the European Commission hosted an event in Brussels to discuss current challenges and to map future strategies for gender equality in Europe.

The conference on “Equality between women and men in a time of change” was an opportunity to take stock of the achievements of the current EU Roadmap on equality between women and men, coming to an end next year, and to discuss future priorities.

With overall unemployment rising and no immediate solution to the current recession, the debate also focused on the repercussions of the economic crisis on gender equality. This two-day event featured speeches by ministers from the Czech Republic, Spain, Austria and the United Kingdom, Commissioner Spidla and Commissioner Wallström, EU representatives, European social partners, experts as well as NGOs.

[More info>>](#)

6th European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education

Stockholm University welcomes researchers, university teachers, administrators, gender equality practitioners and student union representatives to the 6th European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education which will take place from the 5-8 August 2009 at Stockholm University. The theme will be on “Changing the Gender Order”. - How should we use our knowledge and experience of open and hidden inequality in academia? This conference will focus on various ways of promoting democracy and the full and equal participation of women in science and higher education.

[More info>>](#)

1st European Conference on Gender and Diversity in Engineering and Science

This conference will take place from 11- 13 September 2009 in Düsseldorf, Germany. The conference aims to bring the gender and diversity arguments from the gender sciences to industry and to those people who can make a change: HR managers, employers, scientists and managers in engineering; both male and female.

With this aim in view, there will be presentations of best practice all over the world, results of studies showing the benefits of diversity and gender conscious management, and information on worldwide work-life balance concepts in sciences and engineering.

[More info>>](#)

Publications

Making the strongest links: A practical guide to mainstreaming gender analysis in value chain development

Coming out in July 2009 is a new publication from the ILO that provides groundbreaking methods for incorporating gender concerns into the different stages of value chain analysis and strengthening the links essential for gender equality and promoting sustainable pro-poor growth and development strategies. The Guide provides practical, user-friendly methodologies to help value chain practitioners, gender consultants, researchers and policy-makers involved in value chain analysis, answer a number of key questions

that should be asked in any value chain development process. The guide draws from the extensive fieldwork undertaken by the ILO's Women's Entrepreneurship and Gender Equality team (WEDGE).

[More info>>](#)

Women managers and hierarchical structures in working life- 2009

To better understand the progress women have made thus far in the European Union, this report analyses the current situation and the obstacles women face on the way to top managerial positions in more detail. It first examines what the literature tells us about the careers of female managers; then reviews the existing European data on women in managerial positions in the EU, using information from the European Working Conditions Surveys.

[Read more>>](#)

Women at work: Paths to equality - Background paper 2008

This brief report summarises reflections on the very broad theme of women and employment from a group of researchers in the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions ('Eurofound') with an interest in gender and labour market issues. Its occasion is a request received from the French Presidency of the EU for a contribution from Eurofound to a conference on professional equality for men and women held in Lille on 13–14 November 2008. The aim of this paper was to set out some interesting, new findings that helped to stimulate the debate at the Lille conference.

[Read more>>](#)

Mind the gap – Women's and men's quality of work and employment - Background paper 2008

Gender mainstreaming is an integral part of the research conducted by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. When labour market participation, working conditions and the resulting labour market outcomes are analysed, the difference in the situation of women and men is evident. This report highlights the main issues concerning women's situation in the labour market and indicate where the principal barriers to women's labour market participation lie.

[Download report>>](#)

Useful weblinks

Please click on the relevant weblink for more information:

[The WIDE network](#)

[Eurochambres: Women in Business and in decision-making](#)

[Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Business women \(afaemme\)](#)

[Centre of Excellence and Women \(mostly in German\)](#)

[Universities debate - female start-ups](#)

[Women Innovators for Europe WENETT](#)

[Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship: ProWomEn](#)

[European Women's Lobby](#)

[Women entrepreneurs and co-entrepreneurs - DG Enterprise](#)

[Women Entrepreneurship Portal](#)