



WEED

Women, Enterprise and Employment
in local Development

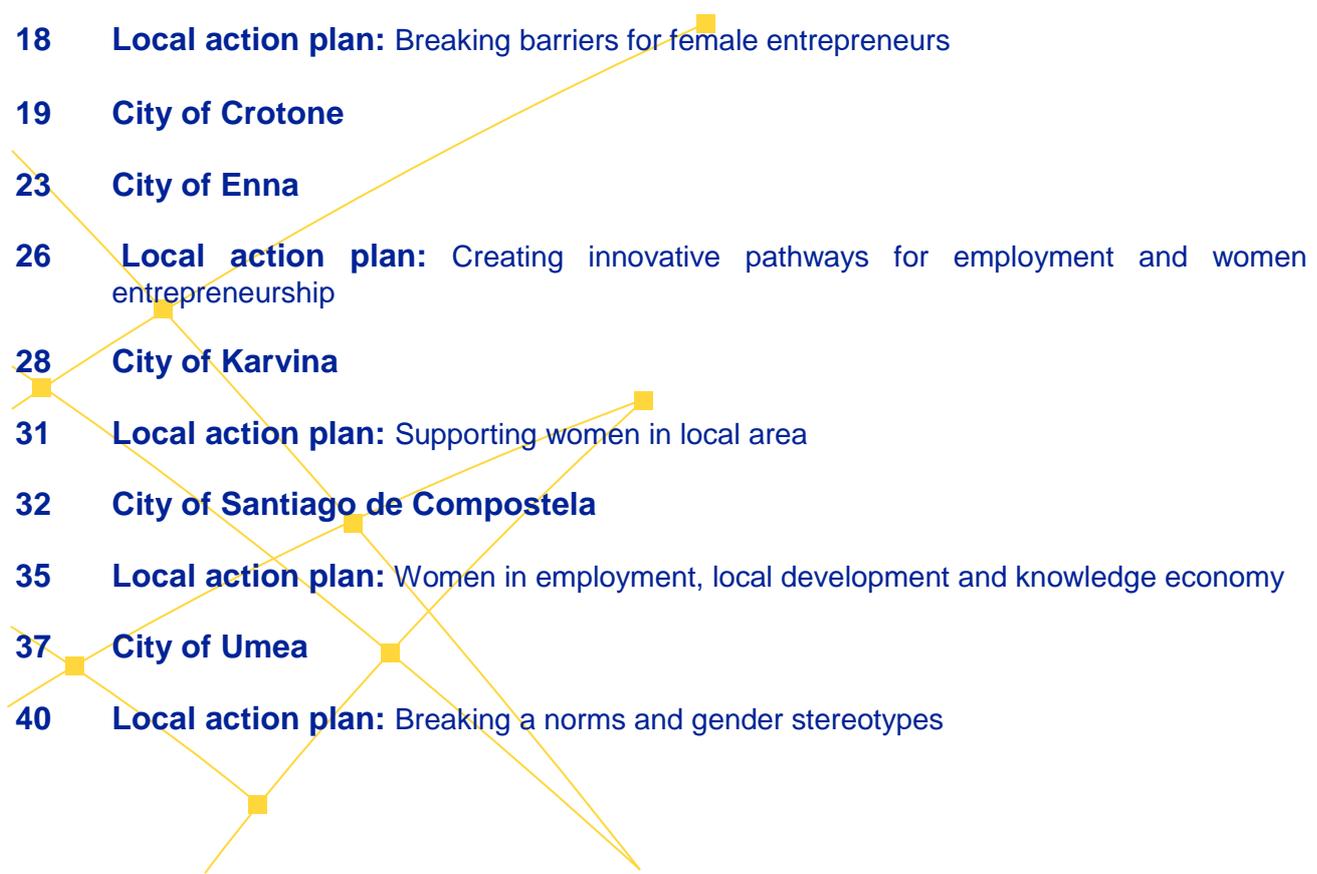


Connecting cities
Building successes



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The position of women in Slovenia and in Celje is based on more than 50 years of lifestyle tradition. Women play an important role in Celje and also take up important positions in the public sector.

The European Strategy for Growth and Employment (The Lisbon Strategy) is based on improving the efficiency and constant development of urban policies, which have been the priority of the City of Celje, as well as the WEED project. The need for developing activities to increase competitiveness, such as social stability and integration and cohesion, has been even more important now in the times of economic crisis. Regulating the implementation of equal opportunity policies and the implementation of policies leading to greater competitiveness and economic growth, form part of a plan for higher quality integration of both, women and men, in the economy and local development.

The Municipality of Celje is proud to have coordinated and implemented the WEED project for almost three years and to have successfully cooperated with a leading expert, professor Gill Scott, who has guided us, helping us reach the best results.

We are glad that the WEED project is successfully coming to its end and that some of its partners have already taken part in new projects, which have resulted from the WEED project. We are also pleased to have gained new experience and seen some good practices, which we will be able to apply in Celje, with some minor changes.

I am pleased that, through this project, both business connections and friendship ties have been intertwined.



Bojan Šrot,
Mayor of Celje City



The WEED Thematic Network comprises nine cities: Celje (Leading Partner), Alzira, Amiens, Crotona, Enna, Karvina, Santiago de Compostela and Umea. For over two and a half years, they have focused on creating opportunities for cities to exchange policies and practice in relation to women and employment, entrepreneurship, and the knowledge economy. At a time when women across Europe are increasingly more involved in the economy, and as a result are being more directly exposed to the impact of economic change than ever before, the European Commission's Strategy for Equality between men and women 2010-2015 is particularly welcome as it aims to "use the potential and the talent of women more extensively and efficiently, so that economic and business benefits can be gained". It demands, however, commitment from local stakeholders as well as innovative ways of thinking about how to increase women's involvement in enterprise creation and growth and the development of sustainable, quality jobs for women. The lessons learnt from the WEED project provide some ideas of how this can be achieved.

Key issues

The partner cities of WEED, all of which wanted to develop concrete actions to improve the position of women in the economy, have highlighted not only how trends and challenges at European Union level are experienced but also how they can be addressed at a local level. All partner cities have acknowledged and identified specific challenges. These were:

- to reduce the barriers for women's entrepreneurship, at start up and growth phases;
- to address the inequality in the nature and quality of work available for men and women;
- to alter the under-utilisation of women's knowledge and skills in innovation and the knowledge economy.

Key results

Each of these challenges has been experienced and addressed in a variety of ways by the partner cities of WEED. Sometimes the challenges have been addressed in particularly successful and transferable ways by partner cities. This experience has been used to realise network activities as well as to look for best practices elsewhere in order to increase the partners' knowledge of how to design policies and practices, and also to provide a base to draw upon when planning future actions.

As a consequence, the two key results of WEED Network activities have been to:

- identify best policies and practice that improve women's position regarding employment, enterprise and the knowledge economy;
- improve the policy development process at local levels.

Lessons learnt: practice

1. Municipalities can increase women's involvement in entrepreneurship by:
 - breaking ingrained attitudes of boys and girls towards men and women roles during their schooling;
 - making micro-finance more accessible for women;
 - developing more integrated and innovative support for new businesses and business growth.

EntreprenorCentrum, Sweden, is a successful enterprise support centre in the region of Vasterbotten and is used by residents of Umea. It supports enterprise development from pre-start up to business growth through a range of services including advice, coaching, mentoring and start up grants. The Centre integrates gender equality into all aspects of its work, including the provision of support services designed to meet the specific needs of women entrepreneurs, resulting in 44 % of the new businesses it supports being women-led, compared with 33 % nationally.

2. Quality employment for women at local level can be achieved:
 - if employers provide more family friendly employment practices;
 - if flexible training initiatives open up new and less gendered career pathways ;
 - if enterprises responding to social welfare can be encouraged as a way to open up new areas of growth.

OA2F in Amiens, France, is an example of a municipal level initiative aimed at empowering women as they seek to return to the labour market. OA2F helps women to meet the costs of training, to update their qualifications and to facilitate their return to employment. This can include the costs of training, transport, food, accommodation, childcare and learning materials needed to successfully complete a training programme. The programme resulted in far fewer women abandoning their training courses and improved their position on the labour market.

3. Gender inequalities in the knowledge economy can be addressed:
 - through better focused and more interesting training,
 - by making the environment more women and family friendly,
 - through effective locally based partnerships between municipalities and universities.

The “Woman Emprende” Programme of the University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain, was created with some support from the municipality at the end of 2006, with the aim of locating, stimulating, and providing relevant advice and support for the creation of enterprises promoted by women of the university community of Santiago de Compostela. They work with students, graduates and researchers, stimulating the idea that setting up a business is possible, and providing mentoring, financial and business planning advice.

Lessons learnt: local planning for change

1. Partnership at local level brought about focus and trust. Developing a dialogue between stakeholders at a local level, as a possible solution, allows for a stronger understanding of how agencies and organizations fit together and therefore reduces competition between agencies and opens up possibilities of engaging new stakeholders and potential beneficiaries of the changed policies. Furthermore, focusing on the development of a local action plan contributes to existing approaches, as it is very specifically focused on the topic and so becomes a joint strategic agenda for all local partners.
2. Transnational work can play an important role in giving the engaging parties a chance to exchange ideas and learn from each other. Study visits, online presentations, newsletters with information about partner activities and funding opportunities, all helped to inspire partners to see their own work from another perspective and reduce the fear of new and innovative ways of doing things.

Local Action Plans

Local Action Plans are an important dimension of the URBACT program. They are aimed at improving the impact of transnational exchange and learning from local policies, and present the concrete result of the outputs of the networking activities carried out by each partner. All the partnership cities of the WEED project were actively supported by Local Support Groups involved in developing such Local Action Plans. Their content shows the varied context and issues faced in different cities. Some prioritize actions helping women to start up and develop enterprise; others help to reduce gender discrimination in the world of work and business. Whatever their approach, all the partners feel that the chance to bring together stakeholders at local levels, 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.

During the time the WEED network has been active, each city has developed concrete objectives for the city's local action plans. They are listed below.

Objective 1: To reduce barriers for women's entrepreneurship (Alzira, Enna, Crotone)

- To extend mentor support for women entrepreneurs
- To increase interest in entrepreneurship from school age to older age
- To extend micro credit support for start-ups and for growth

Objective 2: To address the inequalities in the nature and quality of work available for men and women (Umea, Karvina, Amiens)

- To reduce gender discrimination on the labour market
- To increase women's take up of employment training

- To extend subsidies to companies employing women

Objective 3: To reduce the under-utilization of women’s knowledge and skills in innovation and the knowledge economy (Santiago de Compostela, Celje)

- To change attitudes to science and IT amongst the young
- To increase the uptake of enterprise career paths by women in the knowledge economy
- To extend opportunities in new employment sectors (care)

Specific actions can be found in each city’s LAP in this catalogue. In at least four cities, proposals for action have been refined and funding attracted in order to implement these actions.

Professor Gill Scott, lead expert WEED

Success

Feedback from Mayors in the cities shows a positive evaluation of the experience.



Tomáš Hanzel, the Mayor of Karvina, for example says:
 “By means of the WEED project we have managed to establish a partnership, not only with the project partner towns, but also with other towns in the Czech Republic. I can say that our participation in the project was very positive for the town.”



Salvatore Notararigo, Mayor’s deputy of Enna, similarly reports that:
 “The implementation of best practices and the exchange of experiences between local areas and other European countries is essential in order to increase the level of awareness and responsibility for women in the world of work and to start up new enterprises for women.”



Elena Maria Bastidas Bono, Mayor of City of Alzira
 One of the pending tasks of our society is to promote employment for women. For this reason, it is of fundamental importance that women’s entrepreneurship and their inclusion in the labour market be encouraged by public administration institutions.

The WEED (Women, Enterprise and Employment in local development) Project, which is about to finish, has opened up an alternative road for us to keep in contact with Europe and approach the promotion of women’s employment and entrepreneurship in a direct and more adequate way for a civic and modern society, pursuing equal opportunities for both men and women.



Xosé A. Sánchez Bugallo, Mayor of Santiago de Compostela said:
 There are three most important tasks defined by city Santiago de Compostela:

- cooperation between all the stakeholders
- promote awareness about gender equality and
- to develop a framework for supporting policies for gender equality.

Santiago de Compostela is working on strategies to promote the full participation and equality of opportunities for women in all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life and reinforce women’s possibilities and ability and those of their organizations to knock down the obstacles which women still find today in society in general, and particularly in science.



CITY OF CELJE

CELJE IS A CITY OF IN SLOVENIA WITH A POPULATION OF 49 039 (2008). IT IS SITUATED IN THE LOWER STYRIA REGION, IN THE NORTH-EAST OF THE COUNTRY. IT IS THE COUNTRY'S THIRD LARGEST CITY AND IS THE ADMINISTRATIVE, BUSINESS, ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL, CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL, MEDICAL, SPORTS, AND MARKET CENTRE OF THE REGION.

The city has a long tradition of manufacturing and trade. In the 18th and 19th centuries it had a well-developed tourist industry, but then lost its importance to neighbouring tourist wellness and spa locations. After the independence of Slovenia from the former Republic of Yugoslavia, Celje was the first city in Slovenia whose economy collapsed. From 1990 - 2000 the unemployment rate was very high. However, the socio-economic situation has greatly improved in recent years, resulting in a decrease of the unemployment rate from 11 % to 6 % over the past 6 years.

Women have played a significant part in the labour market of the city for more than 50 years, and they still do. The employment rate for women, just as for Slovenia as a whole, is higher than the European average. As public sector employers are obliged to implement equal opportunity policies, women hold high level managerial positions in this sector. In the private sector, however, their position is not so strong: women have fewer opportunities for both training and promotion. The unemployment rate for women is generally higher than for men: 6.3 % for women against 5.7 % for men in 2002, where women stand for 55 % of the total number of unemployed and men the remaining 45 %. Even though this rate is relatively low compared to other accession countries, many highly qualified women (and men) have to leave the city in order to find and get qualified jobs in Ljubljana and Maribor. Nevertheless, the existence of highly educated women in the city does indicate the capacity for the city to develop a more skilled based economy.

Improving women's performance in the labour market

Slovenia has a long tradition of public services (childcare, health care, care for the elderly) and a strong traditional lifestyle (assistance from grandparents), which helps women to be employed full time. Balancing work and family through working part time is not really an option, as part time jobs are hard to find. Most women work for the public sector: in education, healthcare, childcare and the Administration, where possibilities for both employment and promotion are higher. Due to legal regulations and the established system, there has been a move towards a balanced gender participation in the public sector, strengthened by the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2005 to 2013. Two particular employment and equality issues deserve special attention.

Firstly, strong gender stereotypes exist regarding male and female occupations in both the public and the private sector, leading to high levels of horizontal occupational segregation. Secondly, some sectors, where women predominate, are changing and becoming far more privatised. Since 2005, care for the elderly has been privatised resulting in more private owned centres for the elderly and new employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for women.

Developing a knowledge based economy

Despite the traditional division into "male and female occupations" in Celje, the proportion between men and women is slowly changing due to a national funding programme which helps to build stronger links between the economy and the knowledge industry. Unfortunately, it has not been fast enough to address the growing shortages of qualified workers in the technology, engineering and ICT industries, so the city is currently examining a variety of means in order to increase the interest of women and young women for these sectors. Some companies offer students practical experience, and national policies are

being drawn on to improve the parity between men and women in the field of ICT and engineering. The Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, for example, allows "positive measures to be adopted by state authorities in accordance with their structure and procedures, other bodies in the public sector, economic operators, political parties and civil society organisations".

Utilising women's skills for Entrepreneurial activity

In 2003 the OECD reported that Slovenia was playing a leading role in the issue of women and entrepreneurship, undertaking actions at national, municipal and NGO levels. Government support has been developed in partnership with women's business associations and other partners, and innovative ways to improve women's access to financing have been developed by municipalities and local governments. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of women in entrepreneurship, which the city wishes to address. In Celje, there is no strong tradition of female entrepreneurs and women tend to run only small businesses, take few business risks and have difficulty getting bank loans for starting up new ventures.

Integrating equality and regeneration policies

Promoting equality has been a significant issue of the Municipal Authority in Celje. The city has been implementing gender policies through positive actions indicated by national and community guidelines. This might be the reason why women are reported to be actively participating in local development, particularly in the public sector. Fourteen (42.42%) out of the 33 members of the City Council are women. This rate is higher than the national rate. Women mostly lead public companies. Women also have an important role in the public voluntary services (associations, societies) mostly working for free and for a social benefit.

Priorities for change

Priorities for change were discussed at the beginning of the WEED project and refined during the local and transnational exchange activities. These priorities are based on what problems the LSG felt needed addressing, where the capacity for change existed and where there interest in change was expressed. The LSG also benefited from the abundant knowledge of how to design policies, and the best practices gained from other members of the LSG and the WEED partnership.

The LSG brought together employer representatives, training organisations, NGOs, The Trade Union, The City Authority and a private company. Representatives from the training organisation, the city authority and the trade union felt they had a reasonably high capacity to support women in work and training. They were less convinced that they could effectively help to support women in setting up a business. Representatives from employers and the private company felt they could offer knowledge and show understanding for women in business, as well as provide experience in order to motivate women to take risks and grow professionally.

This diversity of different interests and knowledge has given rise to a Local Action Plan that focuses on promoting greater opportunities for women in the growing care sector and supporting new entrepreneurs in this sector.





LOCAL ACTION PLAN: Developing women's role in local services for family well being

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City of Celje has been working on strategies to support women's involvement in enterprises, quality employment and innovation. The city has developed a local action plan for the development of quality services for older people and families through the training and employment of women for family support services, either within the public sector or in private welfare enterprises.

Problems to be addressed

The Local Support Group in Celje is comprised by members of the local Social Services, The Employment Department, The Chamber of Commerce and NGOs. It considers greater gender equality in employment and entrepreneurship as well as the improvement in the quality of the lives of families, which are living in times of demographic and economic change, as two of the most important priorities of the city, capable of making a contribution to both the economic growth and social inclusion. It was for this reason that the city became the leading partner in the URBACT II WEED project and is producing, within this framework, a Local Action Plan to meet the gap between the needs of families and the public sector capacity to meet these needs: a gap that has been growing with the economic crisis and with wide ranging changes in traditional family structures. Based on an initial analysis of families, unemployed women in the city and local social services, training and employability resources, the LSG is currently working on a project proposal for a Centre for Information, Consultancy and Education.

Aims and Objectives

The proposed project has three main objectives:

- ✓ To promote family well-being and the well-being of the elderly by planning and promoting quality services at a reasonable cost;
- ✓ To develop a training centre and curriculum for those wishing to work in home based elderly support, family crisis support and financial inclusion i.e. areas essential for well-being ;
- ✓ To equip trainees to work in the public sector services or to develop an entrepreneurial structure coherent with the 'public' purpose of such services.

Timeliness of the proposal

In 2005 the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs in Slovenia agreed on 'The Strategy for care for the elderly till 2010—Solidarity, good inter-

generational relations and quality ageing of the population'. It called for greater cooperation between state and civil society to meet the needs of an ageing society and to respond to the European demands for new solidarity between the generations. The proposal from the LSG is valuable for the country insofar, as it will develop a new type of an integrated model of development, which will demonstrate how local responses to local problems can be generated.

Actions Proposed

The proposal is complex and consists of several elements to be developed over a period of two years. They are to:

1. Develop an analysis of the quality and quantity of existing social service for the elderly, families in crisis and financial exclusion ;
2. Establish a new Centre for Information, Consultancy and Education alongside the existing Intergenerational Centre;
3. Prepare and implement educational programmes for support for the elderly, families in crisis and financial exclusion;
4. Strengthen the quality of work and workers in the sector by recruiting and implementing education of unemployed women (target groups);
5. Register trainees as part of a bank of quality workers that employers will prefer;
6. Develop and deliver education/ training for self-employment in social services in cooperation with ZRSZ and including financial management, management support, vocational training and financial tools;
7. Capitalise on the learning of the project through two meetings with line ministry, two transnational meetings, one expert excursion in Slovenia and a conference for Slovenian municipalities as a transfer of good practice.

Stakeholders involved

The project will be implemented in close partnership with the following stakeholders:

- The Social service division of the Municipality of Celje.
- The Centre for Social Work – training agency
- JZ Socio - municipal company responsible for supporting women and families need
- The Home for elderly people Celje
- The Multigenerational centre Hudinja, Celje
- The Employment Department – Republic of Slovenia
- The Municipality of Celje- Department for Social Affairs.

Next steps

1. Submitting an application for resources to The Ministry for Work, Family and Social Matters for funding of ESF in 100% of eligible costs, for the value of 300.000 EUR.
2. If successful, the project will start in 2011 and run till January 2013.
3. Developing and implementing indicators of success. These include:
 - 45 women recruited, 70% under 25
 - The creation of 4 workplaces
 - The creation and implementation of 3 main educational programmes
 - The creation and implementation of 1 self-employment programme
 - The development of an Information, advisory and education centre for family support.

How has transnational work contributed to the

ideas for local action plan?

The local action plan has been prepared on the basis of local analyses of needs and issues during the economic crisis. Transnational work on different projects has contributed through indirect influence; it helped us to see new opportunities during the exchange of good practices and knowledge.

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Despite the fact that women in Celje play an important part at all levels of social life and are successfully balancing this role with their family life and career paths, new opportunities for further improvement of their work and life conditions have arisen. One of the most important ones is the creation of good quality conditions integrating women into entrepreneurship, for example in the area of social care, and providing access to information and knowledge as well as to quality training and public services. All these services are available in Celje, although the needs of its citizens rapidly change, together with the fast economic development. The Municipality of Celje is able to identify and meet these needs.

Bojan Šrot, Mayor of Celje City



CITY OF ALZIRA

ALZIRA IS A TOWN AND MUNICIPALITY WITH A POPULATION OF 43,038 (2008) IN THE PROVINCE OF VALENCIA IN EASTERN SPAIN. AS CAPITAL OF THE RIBERA ALTA REGION, IT IS THE CENTRE OF NUMEROUS PUBLIC SERVICES. DURING THE 20TH CENTURY ALZIRA CHANGED FROM AN AGRICULTURAL BASED ECONOMY TO A DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRY-ORIENTATED CITY WITH AN IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES.

Women have become an increasingly important part of the labour force, as the basis of the local economy has changed. They constitute around 41 % of the employed labour force in the area. The employment gap between men and women in Alzira is still greater than in many other parts of Europe, but the gap has decreased. This is largely due to the stagnation of the construction sector, where men are employed, and a modest increase in the female dominated sectors of retail and services. Nevertheless, the LSG report shows a concern that women in Alzira have a higher unemployment rate than in other parts of Spain, particularly young, unskilled women. Furthermore, when women do work, it tends to be as part-time workers (78 % of women workers are employed part time, compared to 20 % of men).

Women are not only more and more likely to get employed, but they have also shown an increasing tendency to start up new businesses in the city: 53% of new businesses, for which grants were applied for in 2005, were started up by women. Women's businesses tend to be small and are all in the service sector: mostly hairdressers', restaurants/ bars and clothes shops. The report states two problems relating to women's entrepreneurial activity. Firstly, numbers of women interested in setting up an SME have been declining, as recession is provoking a decrease in subventions for opening a new business. Secondly, there is a significant lack of knowledge regarding the setting up of businesses amongst small entrepreneurs, due to a non-friendly business environment, which does not simplify the process of creating a new company.

Improving women's performance in the labour market

The Town Council's main priorities concern the provision of information about job opportunities. The council itself, through its job development agency (IDEA), has an established and reportedly strong system of managing direct grants, which support programmes that develop local job creation including work experience. These are not specifically aimed at women, but at times, unemployed women are given priority. They are based on strong connections between employers and the local council. The two most important programmes are 'La Casa de Oficios', directed at 16 to 25 year-olds wanting to enter the building, carpentry, electricity, gardening and plumbing trades, and 'Los Talleres de empleo', directed at those over 25 wanting to enter home care and child care services. There is a drastic gender division between the two programmes. Only 12 per cent of participants in 'La Casa de Oficios' are women and only 8 per cent of participants in 'Los Talleres' are men. However, the distinct advantage of IDEA programmes is that they include training and job experience, which means that on many occasions participants have the opportunity to learn the job and experience the employer-employee relationship. All this depends strongly on contacts being developed between IDEA and the employers.

Developing a knowledge based economy

There are regional programmes offering advice for individuals about information technology, but the new industries created in the city are not familiarised with the use of new technologies nor knowledge economy. Two problems have been identified.

Firstly, it is difficult for small businesses to obtain clear and complete information about all the resources at their disposal. Secondly, funding from the public sector to provide essential training in new technologies is limited. This means that generally only low level training is provided for, so the city cannot

develop neither new technologies nor science programmes.

Women have access to some "women only" courses, but they are at a low level and limited in number.

Utilising women's skills for Entrepreneurial activity

This represented the strongest focus of the LSG and draws on the national commitment at all levels to support business activity, dedicating special attention to business women.

At local level, there are three organisations that support enterprises: Servicio Infodona (a service providing business advice exclusively for women), the Chamber of Commerce of Valencia and IDEA.

IDEA is the local development agency of The Town Council, responsible for promoting economic development of the town of Alzira. It provides information and advice on setting up a business, as well as support for work orientation and training. It was rewarded in 2007 as the best entrepreneurial entity of The Valencia Community – for its support to entrepreneurs.

Integrating equalities and regeneration policies

The Council of Alzira accomplished its first Plan of Equality (2005 – 2007) and during the WEED project it was involved in the Second Plan of Equality (2008 -2010).

The objective of this plan is to introduce equality of opportunities between women and men in the municipality. It attempts to involve the whole population and reduce gender inequality. It mainly focused on the employees of the Town Council, but also included educational centres and private businesses through the Business Association of Alzira, mostly by conducting information campaigns.

Priorities for change

Following the initial local mapping identification of the current situation and problems regarding the utilisation of women for a Jobs and Growth agenda in their local area members of the LSG discussed what they might prioritise for work with the WEED project. This was based on where they felt they had capacity for change and interest in doing so. In the case of Alzira the LSG comprised members from the CCOO Union, SERVEF, Foundation Bancaxia, Women Entrepreneurs, Asociacion Empresaria, Director of the local Technical College, women researchers and CEEI.



There was general agreement that they had a medium level of ability to support women into enterprise, to promote women's interests and involvement in new technologies and to get women into work. There was little difference in perceived capacity in any of these areas although most members felt they had less capacity or ability to get women into work than to support female entrepreneurs. When members considered what expertise they had to offer other WEED partners specific areas of capacity became clearer: they included a level of knowledge and experience in supporting women into self employment, in developing policies with private companies, and in running programmes for improving IT usage amongst women rural communities.



This provided the background from which a Local Action Plan was developed, with the aim of increasing the number of women entrepreneurs as well as improving the skills of unemployed women in the municipality. The LSG thus benefited from sharing knowledge of how to design policies and best practice from other members of the LSG, and gained further knowledge through the WEED partnership.

The Town Council of Alzira has recognized the need to provide employment support for this part of the population, which has been most afflicted in this matter, through participating in the initiative aimed at exchanging practice and experiences with other European cities and sharing the common objective of inserting women onto the labour market and promoting their self-employment.

Elena Maria Bastidas Bono, Mayor of Alzira City

Increasing number of female entrepreneurs and better access for

Ensuring that the URBACT projects have a real impact on urban development policies at local level is one of the main objectives of the URBACT programme. City of Alzira has been working on increasing participation of female entrepreneurs and increasing skills of unemployed women with the objective of better access to labour market.

Aims and Objectives

- **To Increase the number of female entrepreneurs**
- **To increase the skills of unemployed women with the objective to having a better access to the labour market**

Timeliness of the proposal

The proposal occurs at a time of growing uncertainty for women within the Spanish economy, but also during a period when regional and national action plans are still being supported. The specific action plan is to start at the end of 2011.

Actions Proposed

The objective is to give more opportunities to entrepreneurs by joining the “Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Programme”, financed by the European Commission. This programme started in February 2011.

We are working on the development of a “Mentor Programme” at a local level, in which well-experienced entrepreneurs can teach and support new entrepreneurs.

Our aim is to develop a training tool for entrepreneurs, who were not trained in the business area, with the objective to provide them with basic knowledge to develop their own business.

A training course for unemployed women will be prepared in order to increment their skills and consequently have better access to the labour market.

We will also increase the standards of the ICT training courses available at local level.

Stakeholders involved

1. Municipality of Alzira
2. Local Association of Entrepreneurs
3. SERVEF – Valencian Regional Employment Service.
4. Regional Government – Generalitat Valenciana.

How has transnational work contributed to the ideas for local action plan?

Participation in the transnational workshop has provide us with different Ideas obtained from the other partners and has strengthen some ideas that we had at the beginning. Seeing other partners implementing these ideas, gave us the final impulse to develop them.

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CITY OF AMIENS

AMIENS IS A TOWN AND MUNICIPALITY OF 163 000 PEOPLE (2008) IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOMME IN NORTHEAST FRANCE. IT IS STRATEGICALLY SITUATED AT THE CROSSROADS OF EUROPEAN COMMUNICATION ROUTES, TWO HOURS FROM LONDON AND AMSTERDAM- AND LESS THAN ONE HOUR AND A HALF FROM PARIS. IT IS IN THE HEART OF ONE OF THE MOST DYNAMIC AREA OF THE EUROPEAN UNION.

The city and its surroundings have important agriculture activities and manufacturing industry. Amiens has six business parks that have attracted many small to medium sized companies and industries. Areas include pharmaceutical packaging (e.g. Unither), food processing, environmental engineering and the cultural industry (e.g. jazz label Bleu).

The local economy has been influenced by massive closures since 1975. Between 1998 and 2003, the Gross Domestic Product of the city did increase by 1.1 per cent per annum but this was lower than all the others cities in France where the average was 2.3 per cent per annum.

Improving women's performance in the labour market

There is a national plan that takes different actions in support of the women employment. Also the region, the department and the city are proposing new actions. The national plan, with each prefecture of the country, is developing a culture and a practice of equality between men and women. Also they propose actions to fight against gender-based violence (training and gender analysis, information guides), information tools and awareness to equality of opportunity between girls and boys, explain to the teachers the importance of letting the girls choose what they want to study and to support their choices.

The government and some NGO propose professional formations for the women for a better insertion in the labour market, such as a first job after 40 years old, or a job after a long time of inactivity taking care of children. The city's strengths in supporting women into work include:

- Facilitating childcare for women who want to work
- Communicating to companies to promote equality between men and women
- Communicating at high schools the possibilities for the young students to choose what they really want to do without giving attention to the usual stereotypes (women have to work with children, or have to be nurses, secretaries...)
- Facilitating meetings between women looking for a job and companies offering a job.

Developing a knowledge based economy

Guiding young girls to let them know all the different possibilities of studies so they can have a greater vision of their future access to employment and not only the stay with the traditional feminine jobs is a feature of the city's approach to the underutilisation of women in the science and technology fields.

At present the vast majority of girls in school are concentrated in sectors where the value of their professional qualifications is lower than in sectors with low scientific and technological potential. The consequences for girls are that they take longer to enter the labour market than boys.

Utilising women's skills for Entrepreneurial activity

There are many non profit organisations that care about helping people with modest resources to

access bank credits. Also these organisations provide specific advice to manage their own business. But there are still many stereotypes about women and managing a business, like "women are less able than men to take important decisions", or "women are less capable to support the stress", or "women have to care their children when they are sick"... Whilst some women can take the risk to access a lot of responsibilities, many others think they are not capable. This may explain the Municipality's interest in school-based programmes to change attitudes. Part of this also integrates with regional policies to set up meetings in high schools for students to meet women who have chosen a male job and who are very happy with it.

Integrating equalities and regeneration policies

Amiens strengthened the machinery to encourage equality of political representation was in 2007. This reflects the 2007 Act, which increased the financial penalties on parties that do not honour the parity principle for the election candidates, and brings in compulsory parity for municipal and regional councils. Since May 2008, there has been a new mayor and a new working team developing greater parity for women. In the past actions included a campaign against domestic violence, conferences and public advertising and teen age violence prevention with a special program. Measures to develop the equalities policies in relation to urban regeneration and the Jobs and Growth agenda have included a city forum to help women to find a job in 2007. This included activities such as helping writing a professional resume, how to prepare for an interview, giving advice and tips on where to search for jobs.

The new team is continuing the process: beginning with new actions for helping women caring their children when they are working, meetings between companies and women looking for a job.



Priorities for change

Women are an important part of the labour force. They constituted 43 per cent of the employed labour force in Amiens in 2006, a slightly lower rate than the 47 per cent in France as a whole. Contracts for men and women do differ: in 1999 7 per cent of men compared to 10 per cent of women were on part time contracts but this rate is low in comparison to the rest of Europe. Women's unemployment is more pronounced than men, including persons with the same characteristics.

Among the reasons that make it more difficult for women to access employment are that the service sector accounts for only 66 per cent of paid work in Amiens compared with the national average of 72 per cent of jobs. The relatively dispersed nature of habitat also disadvantages women's employment, caused by constraints in terms of home-duties. Young women are particularly affected. Women with more than two children and young people are the most exposed to the vagaries of the economy in the city.

Since 2002, women are more involved in setting up a business with the rise of tertiary sector (services sector) where they are more represented. For example, the women are creating 33% of the companies in Amiens when there are only 29% in France. 90% of the companies are in the tertiary sector. 60% of the women are between 30 and 49 years old. Companies created by women with a higher education are the most frequent to be always present three years later. During the last five years there was an important expansion of the new companies. The technological and science sector is not yet major employer of women in the city, due perhaps to early conditioning away from this sector of education.

The Local Support Group identified a range of policies, services and agencies that are involved in one way or another in addressing the problems. Two areas of activity were proposed at the start of the WEED project: employment and entrepreneurial activity.





LOCAL ACTION PLAN:

Breaking barriers for female entrepreneurship

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Ensuring that the URBACT projects have a real impact on urban development policies at local level is one of the main objectives of the URBACT programme. City of Amiens has developed a plan how to support women starting with own business.

Problems to be addressed

Our local action plan was designed after a series of meetings with a network of non profit associations and the national employment department composing the local support group. This local support group was managed by the City of Amiens (department equality) and by a Consultant. This action plan mainly focuses on the difficulties encountered by women while creating their company and looking for a job.

We first went through a survey to point out the specific difficulties they encounter and to propose some practical solutions to solve them.

The main difficulty we now have is to make our decision makers accept and carry out these solutions we suggest; in other terms, our action depends upon political decisions.

Aims and Objectives

The issue we are going to address is the one of:

- time conciliation,
- mentalities

The current barrier to addressing the problem is the one of child baring (difficulties for women when they lack resources to pay a baby-sitter or a kinder garden, difficulties when they work with specific timetables), of auto-censorship, transportation, a service to sustain unemployed women or new entrepreneurs which is not gender specific.

Stakeholders involved

The partners involved at a first step are the ones composing the local support group; the local action plan will then be transferred to the adapted other departments of the City of Amiens (education and economic development departments) and to other concerned collectives.

We decided to focus on the most urgent and easy to solve problems encountered by women. We also decided according to the political willing of the City of Amiens.

Actions Proposed

This action plan is founded on a survey carried out specifically for the purpose of the WEED project.

All the members of the local support group are currently working on these topics and they highly contributed to select the good solutions, the ones that haven't been experienced yet in our region.

This is some actions we propose to set up in our LAP :

- to create a platform to identify and pool the child minders still or partly available in Amiens and to create a website to facilitate access for parents. The idea is also to provide a training session for these child minders who will have to work for several families in shared time.
- to create a system of child minding for women who work with specific timetables,
- to organize information meetings in school (age 9-10) to propose children games focusing on prejudices and gender stereotypes,
- to carry out a communication plan to promote car pooling. A website already exists to facilitate the contact between people in this field,
- To inform the national employment services, the structures helping company creations and banks about the specific difficulties encountered by women,
- To set up a specific action to help women to create their activity,
- To organize a network of European tutorship for women entrepreneurs.

All the activities will be evaluated in terms of:

- public concerned,
- funding obtained,

results in terms of creations carried out by women as compared with the survey we carried out at the beginning of the project.

How has transnational work contributed to the ideas for local action plan?

By comparing our difficulties and possible solutions with other European cities, we could better realize what are our strengths and gaps.

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CITY OF CROTONE

CROTONE 60,517 IS A CITY OF PEOPLE IN THE REGION OF CALABRIA IN THE SOUTH OF ITALY. IN THE 19TH CENTURY, THE LARGE NUMBER OF FACTORIES, FOLLOWED BY MAJOR INDUSTRIES, TURNED CROTONE INTO A WORKING CITY, UNIQUE ON THE LANDSCAPE OF SOUTHERN ITALIAN CITIES.

Crotone (pop 60.500) is a city in the Calabria region of Southern Italy. After the end of the industrial era and the downturn of the eighties, Crotona noticed a need for measures for “resurgence and urban change”. It is in this context that a fresh strategic approach, based on environmental, cultural and economic resources, is being adopted. There are numerous programmes and projects which converge in such objectives as: recovering a strong cultural identity, combining development and progress through prestigious schemes, providing new functions for the port by promoting waterborne leisure activities and passenger transport and moving towards the much desired “motorways of the sea”.

The family and catholic values, upon which the society is based, have slowed down the women’s emancipation movement during the 20th century. Women’s employment rates are still very low especially, for single parents or women with low qualifications.

Improving women's performance in the labour market

A range of policies and practices exist to address the issue of women's low representation in the world of paid work:

- A new law approved on March 8, 2000 by the Italian Parliament concerning parental leaves which stimulates the use of leave for both parents to take care of children or other relatives, and which supports entities providing favourable contracts for the carrying out of family responsibilities.
- The European Structural Fund's (ESF) (2000-2006) introduction of innovative criteria to ensure both, equal opportunities for men and women and transparency in the selection process has obliged to adopt measures in the programmes funded by the ESF. Both, the Italian National Operational Plans and Calabria's Regional Operational Plans also cover a percentage of the funds for the achievement of targets and specific actions in the field of equal opportunities.

At the beginning of the WEED project, the LSG believed more could be done to improve the position of women, i.e.:

- Making employment rates for women rise.
- Fighting against structural inequalities, such as segregation in work sectors.
- Eliminating the difficulties that women meet in accessing finance and training.
- Reducing the risk of poverty for women by strengthening the social protection system to adequate it to individual pension rights.
- Reducing greater health risks faced by women.
- Combating multiple discrimination of women immigrants and women members of an ethnic minority
- Balancing private and professional life.
- Improving women's training so that they can look for advice from experts in their field and be better at communicating and building relationships.

Developing a knowledge base

A high level of segregation still persists in educational paths taken, where more women can be found in the field of humanities, medicine and biology. Even though women's participation increased in the scientific sector during the '90s, this trend seems to have stopped in the last 5 years. Low participation in the academic staff of universities (11.5% of women professors) and in research organisations, is also an important issue to be addressed in Crotona. Measures have been adopted to promote the role of women in scientific

research by a number of agencies. The LSG considered that more could be done. More specifically:

- Stakeholders in Crotona should support the broad and active participation of women in the media, in information networks and the development of information and communication technologies. They should specially support the development and use of ICTs as a resource for the empowerment of women and girls.

Utilising women's skills for Entrepreneurial activity

Women entrepreneurs are commonly segregated to agriculture, commerce and manufacturing and have only recently reached the new sectors of construction and transportation. Although women starting up their own business in the past 5 years have more managerial experience, and their education has been more growth oriented, women-owned businesses are still not financially strong. Moreover, women entrepreneurs suffer a lack of self-confidence and appropriate skills. An innovative approach to accelerating entrepreneurship through educational programmes and research is still needed.

Integrating equalities and regeneration policies

There have been attempts to address some of the equality and economic issues in the city. For example, a Network created by the Provincial Counsellors has formed The Permanent Observatory on Work Issues. It is made up of representatives from almost all municipalities of The Crotona Province and from organizations, unions and associations. The city offers courses for the successful development of women's entrepreneurial activities in small business, particularly in the service and retail sectors. It is making progress in changing the common division of housework and also in providing public childcare services, an area known for its low level.



Priorities for change

The key priority for Crotona is to incorporate gender mainstreaming into the city's employment range, and to start up programmes which would turn women into a real source of economic dynamism; for example by learning how to reach entrepreneurial success in the cultural heritage sector, which the city wants to develop.

From this perspective, the capacity to build effective partnerships between men and women in order to expand businesses has to be developed, as well as the equal representation in decision making in the civil society and in an economic context.





CITY OF ENNA

ENNA IS A TOWN OF 28.917 PEOPLE (2008) IN THE PROVINCE OF ENNA (20 MUNICIPALITIES). IN 70'S AND 80'S A DECREASE IN POPULATION WAS RECORDED DUE TO THE CLOSING OF SULPHUR MINES AND PUBLIC OFFICES THAT PRODUCED AN ECONOMIC RECESSION AND MIGRATION.

Factors currently affecting the city's pattern of growth and jobs include on the negative side the geographical isolation of Sicily from the rest of Italy, the isolation of internal areas of Sicily, (Enna is the only province with no access to coasts, producing a lower development of tourism). On the positive side the establishment of the University in 2004 caused the start-up of new commercial activities. The economy is also affected by migration flow towards north Italy and by the long dependence of regional economy on public financial support/assistance/allowances that hold back the entrepreneurial culture.

According to ISTAT data in 2007 the unemployment rate in the province of Enna was 16,3% (a decrease of 0,4% compared to 2006),. That is still very high especially if compared with national Italian rate (6,1%). The economic situation of the province of Enna in 2007, did not substantially improve due to the historical backwardness of internal areas of Sicily, characterized by a lack of development pre-conditions worsened by the strong rise in price of oil. However it cannot be said that the province growth totally stops, but rather it shows considerable signs of vitality especially in the field of agriculture and in the establishment of a considerable numbers of new small business. In the last few years the institutions, especially the Province, has given financial support to young entrepreneurs for the start-up of new and entrepreneurial activity.

The average annual income for woman workers is about € 6.197,48, which is exactly half the male average annual income. Women workers are mainly employed in the so-called "poor jobs", to which lower wages are paid and consequently lower rent contribution for future rent. Type of contracts: mostly temporary, short-term, part-time. This situation exists in the private sector, in the public sector there is no difference in wage between men and women. Statistics from Almalaurea underline that strong difficulties to enter the labour market concern both men and women graduates, but for women the situation is worse: one year after the degree (at Sicilian Universities) 42,2% of men, against 35% of women, find a job. (In Italy: men 57,4% against women 50,1%). Gaps between man and woman graduates in Sicily have been found also in the wages: the average monthly net wage for woman graduates is 848,5 EUR against 1.172 for man graduates.

Improving women's performance in the labour market

Italy and Sicily have many legislative instruments, some of them quite updated and complete, which follows the indications of EU policies. However the real context shows many gaps and difficulties. In 2006 Regional province of Enna in cooperation with Soroptimist, an international organization of women involved in business, professionals and research, conducted a research on the factors affecting the participation of women in economic development in the province. The conclusions of the research are very interesting and can be summarised as follows:

“Women's expectations have been considered in a global view, connected with their hopes and real possibility to meet a positive way in the job search. But not always the results satisfy their expectations so disappointment and discouragement reach high level with consequent renouncement to pursuit a more stimulating life project”.

Although institutions show awareness of the need to foster the inclusion of women in the labour market there are still many obstacles that affect the adoption of real policies.

Developing a knowledge based economy

From the study of the Chamber of Commerce of Enna, it appears clear that women cannot be included in all the economic sectors, in professional sectors and in jobs adequate to their expectations, potential and education level. This situation is directly connected also to the family life that affects their job choices and the time they can dedicate to their career. From one point of view the family load underlines the gender inequality in and the social organization worsen the difficulties to enter the labour market. The access to autonomous and entrepreneurial activity is a real problem for the complex of economical, political, cultural, social and individual processes.

Utilising women's skills for Entrepreneurial activity

A survey conducted by the Chambers of Commerce in 2007 on a sample of women business in the Province of Enna shows that the most frequent difficulties that women meet in the start-up of entrepreneurial activity are the length of administrative-bureaucratic processes and then the difficulties in getting resources, information or shareholders. The survey also showed that for 60%

to be a woman does not represent an obstacle in the start-up of an entrepreneurial activity. For 32% it is an obstacle. Family load represents an obstacle for 31% of interviewed women.

Even if the statistics show that in the last few years women entrepreneurs increased a lot and even more than man's, there are some aspects that should be improved. The LSG concluded that measures to support women's entrepreneurship should be directed more towards the enhancement of local resources, development of tourism, and the development of traditional handicrafts. Moreover, the structures and services that can help women to reconcile private life and work should be improved, developed and increased in order to improve the quality of life, and to attenuate their traditional burden. Financial support is not enough to support women entrepreneurs, but the different authorities and institutions should cooperate together, each for their specific role, in order to create and develop an integrated system of information, training and services, which could support women for the whole life cycle and work life.

Integrating equalities and regeneration policies

New city policies focusing on gender equalities have been adopted and some actions have been developed: carrying out of a pilot project for the creation of and strengthening of women enterprises in the province of Enna, strengthening of economic support for single mothers, improvement of services for children, activation of service for abused women. However much needs to be done, there is the willingness to exploit support measures for women entrepreneurs, to adopt actions for the promotion and activation of Gender Equalities Committees within public bodies, and to define and adopt local action plan in order :

- To highlight the “gender mainstreaming” through cultural renewal and specific actions
- To stimulate communication and cooperation between public and private services providers
- To create more useful synergies able to bring together different subjects with common objectives in term of gender equalities and social inclusion of women on all levels: family, school, workplace, politics, associations, etc.

Region Sicily implements gender policies through positive actions as provided by national and community indications. In particular, in the Programming of Structural Funds, a better declination of the gender mainstreaming has been included in all the Axis and Measures.

Priorities for change

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Following the initial local mapping identification of the current situation and problems members of the LSG discussed what they might prioritise for work with the WEED project. This was based on where they felt they had capacity for change, expertise and interest in doing so.

Three key priorities emerged from the process. Firstly adopting of an integrated economic and social approach, secondly the use of an holistic approach to improving women's position in the local economy and thirdly an evidence based approach to the promotion of women's enterprise.

LSG members were most interested in improving information and financial support for women entrepreneurs, improving information and guidance for women about job opportunities and services that would help them manage the work life balance and promoting greater awareness of opportunities amongst school age girls.





LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Creating innovative pathways for employment and women entrepreneurship

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City of Enna has worked on developing an action plan for creating innovative pathways for training of women, creation of virtual desk support for women and better access for women to micro-credits.

Problems to be addressed

In the city of Enna the female labour force recorded a significantly lower level than the rest of the country and away from the same values of the South and the region. The unemployment rate for women continues to be too high and the underground economy is populated by largely illegal workers. In order for the local labour market to be more productive a skilled and adaptable labour force is needed. The difficulties encountered and the gender gap in participation in the labour market, access to career, pay, political representation, as well as the economic and social development of the Municipality of Enna, are also due to a culture that does not recognise the value women's paid labour can add to the economy. In our society there are still elements, sometimes mixed with traditional aspects of late modernity. So on the one hand, woman's right to work and to lead a life like that of men is recognised, but on the other hand there is a belief that "it is the woman who is available when there is a problem of family or any case related to the management and organization at home. Of course, many strides have been made, but much remains to be done and even if there are long-term improvements, these are related to general policies, such as schooling, and specific policies of mainstreaming.

It is clear that in this scenario if you want to promote gender equality a close bond must be established between policies on employment and enterprise, social policies and policies for the promotion of personal services. Integration is needed for the purpose of economic development and improvement of living conditions in their entirety. In this sense, the role of the City of Enna may be essential to help change the scenario and to determine active policies for women to improve the quality of life in general and contribute, in agreement with the EU, national and regional authorities to facilitate this change.

Aims and Objectives

The Plan is built from three analytical conditions that were strongly shared during the consultation with the stakeholders

1. to create effective policies for employment and entrepreneurship of women they must be integrated with political economic and social development for the municipal and provincial levels;
2. to create a plan of action and development and employment of female workers must be based on integrated interventions, economic and social;
3. policies for women's employment and entrepreneurship should be multidimensional, including in particular:
 - The conditions, the difficulties and the reasons for the supply and demand for labour;
 - The links between activities and constraints to production and social reproduction;
 - The development of social welfare policies;
 - The identification of strategies of empowerment;
 - The promotion and support of the female subject to the development of local social capital.

The priority areas of action identified are:

1. Political support for the development of women in productive activities (micro and small enterprise)
2. Policy guidance and information services (multi-stop shop)
3. Training policies (information and training at the local school system).

Actions Proposed

Consistent with the objectives previously established the Local Action Plan envisages the creation of three actions of the system. And in particular:

- A) Enhancing public awareness and education at the university and local school system with the organization of an annual program of informative workshops, courses and career guidance for

business creation and an annual conference on women in the city of Enna;

B) Creation of a virtual desk support to women in employment and entrepreneurial action through networking between the various public and private agencies engaged in economic development (unions and employers' associations, chamber of commerce, economic institutions);

C) Exploring how to start a micro-credit service for the emergence of women-owned businesses in collaboration with the banking and financial system, focusing on a revolving fund that would finance micro-projects for single and married women to set up independent businesses.

Stakeholders involved

- University Kore
- Associations (Artisans and Merchants)
- employer organizations
- Trade Unions
- Chamber of Commerce
- Banking and Financial
- Third Sector Organizations in the Province of Enna
- Press and other local media
- Cultural Associations
- Enterprise

Next steps

The implementation of the Local Action Plan during the three years 2011-2013 is expected to achieve the following results:

- Promoting a culture of equal opportunities between public institutions and private associations and individuals and between social workers and unorganized also enhancing awareness of the role of women in economic development and entrepreneurship;
- Creating innovative pathways to employment for female entrepreneurship and self employment consolidating the participation of women in the world of work and enterprise;
- The emergence of new women-owned businesses through the use of tools and proposed actions;
- The implementation of best practices and exchange of experiences between local area and other European countries in order to increase the level of awareness and responsibility of women in the world of work and starting new projects for women;
- Changes in generational and gender roles in traditional sectors, linked to rural and small-scale

system measures to increase awareness of gender equality;

- Dissemination of a culture of equal opportunity in education and culture than in that of 'entrepreneurship together with the implementation of proposals for reconciling family and working life.

How has transnational work contributed to the ideas for local action plan?

In a context that specifically requires and will require more interventions and actions of high strategic value, innovative, effective at a time of economic downturn and declining financial resources, it is important not to lose and capitalize on any good experience that is successful and has led to appropriate contributions in terms of knowledge and / or achievement of results. This is important not only to avoid losing a wealth of experience that can be imported and where known and applied, but also to contribute to the ongoing process of reflection, study and development of procedures and practices appropriate to the new needs.. The community project WEED (Women Enterprise and Employment in Local Development part of the Community Programme URBACT II) sought to establish a thematic network of European cities and was based on a program of exchanges of experience and know-how integrated and capacity building related to the theme "women in business and employment." All this has contributed to the empowerment of internal resources and project stakeholders and enabled the Municipality of Enna to participate in an European networking today even more important.

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CITY OF KARVINA

KARVINA IS A CITY OF 65 000 PEOPLE AND IS THE ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER OF KARVINÁ DISTRICT. KARVINÁ LIES IN THE REGION OF CIESZYN SILESIA, NORTH EAST OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT COAL MINING CENTERS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC. TYPICALLY THERE WAS HIGH EMPLOYMENT RATE OF MEN. MOST WOMEN WERE HOUSEWIVES, OFTEN WITH NO USEABLE EDUCATION.

Karvina's economy has suffered a gradual coal mining loss but benefits from being an important health, cultural and educational center. It is close to Lazne Darkov, which is considered as a health spa, focused on the treatment of locomotive organs, neurological sickness, circulatory organs and after burn treatment. It is also a university town: Slezska University offers studies of economic policy and administration, economics, management, system engineering and informatics.

Karvina is a city with over 65.000 inhabitants. There are in total 1.855 persons making business on their account. 727 of them are women. Women making business tend to be in food and clothing retail, services, restaurants, craft and care. All of them are small companies or sole traders. Often reasons to start private business are to continue in family business, as alternative to unemployment or as a reflection of high personal characteristics and qualification. There is a growing interest in private business in Karvina due to incoming of new investors and the growing potential. In addition the increasing number of "prosperous businesswomen" is increasing the interest of other women in setting up businesses. Extending entrepreneurial activity, however, is limited by the lower entrepreneurial activity of women, lower levels of education amongst women in Karvina (it tends to be the more educated who establish businesses), insufficient capacity of nurseries and difficulties of balancing work and family, and stereotyping of women's capabilities.

Improving women's performance in the labour market

Getting women into work is more difficult than for men. The big problem is mainly returning from maternity leave. Women's self confidence is usually lower and the couple of year's absence disadvantages them in labour market. They're losing their professional knowledge and working skills. Women are more disadvantaged than men because employers prefer men for their higher territorial mobility and because they believe them to be affected by keeping house. Factors addressing this include the growth of new working places, the extension of foreign contacts, structural funds of EU producing change and the re-qualification of the labour force that is widening opportunities for women. This will take some time to make an impact because employers are not creating part time working places and continue to give priority for multi-shift work and because the rebalancing of industry towards more female dominated sectors is slow and there is insufficient support from small and middle business for change. The LSG reported that for women really to have greater opportunities in the labour market it is necessary to increase the possibility of flexitime, balance men and women's pay, increase the possibility of partial work for 4 or 6 hours a day and change of opening times of nurseries and preschool facilities.

Developing a knowledge based economy

Women are not well represented in the knowledge economy in the city. Although there is evidence that those women who work in the sector find it flexible, interesting and financially rewarding the general view of the sector is that IT worker is programmer of network administrator and technical abilities and reasoning are necessary. There are a number of organisations offering courses to address this but the majority of women think that this job is more suitable for men than for women. To increase the interest of women to work in IT it will be necessary to increase of knowledge of diversity of work in IT - show that there are also other jobs than work of programmers or net administrators.

There are city programmes offering advice and courses to individuals on information technology. The Bureau of Labour in Karvina provides courses and lessons in IT. For example during 1st half of 2008, there were provided 29 courses of Working on PC, Basic of working on PC, where participate 346 expecters, 163 women of them. In addition the Municipal authority has provided in years 2005 to

2007 for their employees courses „European Computer Driving Licence“ on which participate 309 employees, 257 women of total number.

Kofoed's school –department in Karvina is periodically providing computer courses – Basic of working on PC and Ms-Word, Basic of work with Internet, Basic of work with Ms-Excel, PC course for renters, Presentation in Ms-PowerPoint, Course of Ten-fingers writing on PC. In 2007 was in total 22 courses, on which participate 119 students, the 89 women of them (74,79%). In first half of 2008 were organized 7 courses with 35 participants, 32 women of them (91,43%). Training generally though is at only low levels.

Utilising women's skills for Entrepreneurial activity

This appears to be the strongest focus of support to develop and utilise women's skills. There are specific support services. The local office of RPIC – ViP Ltd Company is implementing education courses and advisory activity for beginning entrepreneur, the Chamber of Commerce of district Karvina provides advisory services in business activities and the Trades Licensing Office and Tax Office as departments of Municipal Authority of town of Karvina supports new businesses.

There is also a functional network of services necessary for women-mothers providing good working care of their adolescents at time when women are in work. The key organizations are municipal organizations and private non-profit making organisations supported by town's authority. Agenture Sedmkraska in Karvina providing baby-sitting services in clients' homes, providing accompanying of children on their way from home to schools, nurseries, free-time facilities.

The LSG report, however that support for beginning entrepreneurs from government agencies is very low. Recently the program START – granting interest-free credits for beginning entrepreneurs has stopped yet the target of programme was to help to beginning entrepreneurs to start their business. The report also identifies a lack of interest of job seekers at the Bureau of Labour in continuing or improving their skills or education.

The LSG considers that it is important to help beginning entrepreneurs to start their business with soft loans and find ways of paying the cost of re-

qualification courses to start private business and education.

30 Integrating equalities and regeneration policies

The problems identified here suggest an underutilisation of women generally in the city's economy. They are only now being seen as key workers, entrepreneurial activity remains underdeveloped and women's capacity to see IT, science and technology as a source of employment and development is limited. The LSG went on to examine policies, services and agencies that are involved in one way or another in addressing these problems.

Priorities for change

LSG discussed what they might prioritise for work with the WEED project after carrying out their local mapping the agencies involved were the Bureau of Labour, two training organisations, the city authority and the Chamber of Commerce.

There was general agreement that they had a medium to high level of ability to support women into enterprise, and to get women into work but less ability to promote women's interest in new technology or science. These were also the areas where there was most interest in change.

The key priorities that the LSG has worked on have been how to decrease the number of unemployed women, increase their level of education and skills and increase the number of businesswomen.



Mayor's deputy – Dalibor Závacký

I am very delighted that the statutory town of Karviná had the possibility to take part in the project WEED within the operation programme URBACT II. We had a unique opportunity to exchange experience and good practice examples with other partner towns. Since I am also a member of LSG and I directly took part in the project implementation I can say that our participation in the project was very positive for the town. I would also like to express here my thankfulness to the project lead partner and to Mrs. Gill Scott for their collaboration.

Problems to be addressed

The work group kept meetings during the whole project duration and defined the basic output and topics which LAP should focus at. LSG members defined the high rate of unemployment in the town of Karviná as the main problem (approximately 17% out of which there are more unemployed women than men). Continuous unemployment is a very serious issue. The problem emerges when continuously unemployed women lose hope and give up, they get used to other daily routine and they are not willing to adapt for example to a new time schedule of the day. A relatively small number of businesswomen and lack of women in knowledge economy are other troubles areas.

After a thorough analysis of the business environment in Karviná and also in the Czech Republic due to the necessity of comparing some of the data with the national average the LSG members came to a conclusion that the best way to reduce the unemployment of women is to motivate them to start a business activity, to educate themselves, and to go through retraining programmes.

Aims and Objectives

There is also a gap in the area of combining the family life with the professional career. In the town of Karviná there is a very good background for families with children, there are nurseries, kindergartens and various free time activities for school children. The only imperfection is the shortage of employment which would enable women to have a part-time job.

The aim of LAP is to decrease the number of unemployed women by means of measures which are not specifically defined, to increase their level of education and to raise the number of businesswomen. It was not easy to find appropriate measures and suggestions, nevertheless LSG seized the initiative in this task responsibly and defined LAP on the basis of analysis, professional knowledge and experience, and first of all on the basis of good practice examples of other project partner towns.

Actions proposed

Increase in positive actions that promote women's access to quality employment e.g. lobbying to create awareness of the general and specific rights of working women bearing on the fight against work precariousness.

- Develop labour activation policies to favour women's insertion in the job market, to strengthen equality of opportunities in working environment e.g. special measures for women with added difficulties.
- Draw up of studies and conferences from a gender perspective in different activity sectors. Stimulate and reinforce positive actions that promote access to management positions in the public and private sectors under equal conditions.
- Support the creations of companies set up by women and stimulate Business Networks.

Stakeholders involved

LSG was founded within the project WEED and its members are the Authority of Karviná employees, the statutory town of Karviná Mayor's deputy, and the representatives of the Employment Office in Karviná, representatives of the District Chamber of Commerce in Karviná and the organisation RPIC-ViP, s.r.o.

Next steps

It is supposed that the final wording of LAP will be presented to the Authority of Karviná approval.

In general we can say that LAP tries to find a solution to women's high rate of unemployment, harmonization of women's family and professional life and insufficient motivation of women to conduct business. There are suggested measures which could be put into effect immediately with the financial support, but some of the proposed measures are more of a long-term character and their implementation is conditioned by a statute modification.

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CITY OF SANTIAGO

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA, A CITY IN THE GALICIA REGION IN NORTH-WESTERN SPAIN, HAS A POPULATION OF CLOSE TO 93 000 INHABITANTS. IT IS THE CAPITAL OF THE GALICIAN COMMUNITY. THE CITY'S ECONOMY DEPENDS MOSTLY ON THE SECTOR OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS WELL AS THE HEALTH, CULTURE AND TOURISM SECTORS.

The population actively involved in the economy in Santiago was increasing from 2000 by 18.5 per cent, till 2008, when it started to slow down as recession hit. Santiago is the main city where the population has increased in the region of Galicia, and women are more effectively integrated into the labour market than in the past. Most of women are employed in the service sector; 73% of women work in this sector and make up for 70 per cent of employees in the sector.

Problems analysis, carried out by the Santiago Local Support Group, identified the following problems relevant to the WEED problematic:

- Economic slow- down affecting the labour market and increase of precarious working conditions, especially for women.
- Low level of involvement of women in the new economy. There is still a predominance of jobs traditionally performed by women (health, education, retail)
- Low level of business development services for women: there is a need for specific programmes aimed at creating women entrepreneurship.

Improving women's performance in the labour market

There has been a marked increase in unemployment, irregular employment and underemployed in the city. The rise in short term and precarious employment is particularly marked amongst young women. 35 per cent of contracts in the city are short term. The municipality is especially concerned with the high levels of unemployment among young women and those above 45. This is partly due to inadequate levels of education and training, but also to the persistence of gender stereotypes and lack of facilities and services allowing family and work-life conciliation. In 2010, the region of Galicia, where Santiago de Compostela is located, devoted over 750.000 EUR to support the implementation of equality plans within businesses, to eliminate the low representation of women in sectors where men predominate, and to increase resources for the conciliation of work and family.

Developing a knowledge based economy

Women are relatively well represented in IT companies as well as amongst intellectuals, technical and professional scientists. However, women's occupancy is 50 % lower than men's, their wages are 30 % lower and women's unemployment rate is slightly higher in this sector. Female graduates in science and engineering have increased markedly: the presence of women in different study courses of the University is higher than in other universities of Spain. The University of Santiago has a strong programme of support for entrepreneurship for faculty members and students. However, out of the total number of new companies supported by the University, 77 % are led by men and only 23 % by women.

Utilising women's skills for Entrepreneurial activity

In terms of entrepreneurial activity only 2.7 per cent of working people are self-employed in the region, which is lower than the European average. The retail trade is the sector with a higher level of self-employment, although there are opportunities in the area of communications and IT.

Women's entrepreneurial activity is mainly in the field of agriculture and services, especially in the retail sector. Most women-run enterprises are small

and they work autonomously. Self-employment and enterprise are important ways of increasing women's participation in local development, regardless of their age, socio-economic background and origin. There is local interest in promoting change in this area.

Integrating equalities and regeneration policies

At national, regional and local levels, there have been a number of Equality Plans developed during the last five years. In Galicia, Decree 33/2009 regulates the promotion of equality at the workplace and the integration of the principle of equality in employment policies. With this, the regional government aimed to promote real equality between women and men. The achievement of equality at the workplace is seen as a key to implementing the principle of equality in treatment and opportunities between women and men, as this is an area where, until now, inequality has been more obvious. In 2010, the Municipality of Santiago, together with eight other organizations signed an agreement to work towards a future where the reconciliation of family life and work will become a reality.



Priorities for change

The Local Support Group of the city includes representatives from the Municipality of Santiago, University of Santiago, Syndicates, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Association of Industrial Area of the Tambre, Federation of Rural Associations, and The Official Association of Psychologists.

Two strategic priorities for change have been the focus of the local action planning process:

- Addressing the under-representation of women in employment and local development and
- Increasing the participation of women in the economy of knowledge and innovation.





LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Increasing the representation of women in employment and local development and their participation in the knowledge based economy

The City of Santiago de Compostela has been working on strategies to promote the full participation and equality of opportunities for women in all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life and reinforce women's possibilities and abilities, as well as those of their organizations to knock down the obstacles which women still find today in society in general, and in science, in particular.

Aims and Objectives

- To promote equality of treatment and opportunities from a gender perspective to the access and permanence in employment, and its quality.
- To increase the participation of women in the knowledge economy and innovation.

Timeliness of the proposal

The proposal occurs at a time of growing uncertainty for women in the Spanish economy, and the pool of skilled workers for achieving recovery is restricted by the low level of involvement of women in the knowledge based economy and enterprise.

Actions Proposed

A range of actions have been proposed to achieve the objectives. They include:

- Increasing positive actions that promote women's access to quality employment e.g. lobbying to create awareness of the general and specific rights of working women, bearing on the fight against work precariousness.
- Developing labour activation policies to favour women's insertion into the job market and to strengthen equality of opportunities in the working environment e.g. special measures for women with added difficulties.
- Drawing up of studies and conferences from a gender perspective in different activity sectors.
- Stimulating and reinforcing positive actions that promote access to management positions in the public and private sectors under equal conditions.
- Supporting the creation of companies set up by women and stimulating Business Networks.
- Articulating measures for gender training in collaboration with trade unions, to

foment a balanced presence in Collective Negotiation tables.

- Setting up joint actions among different women's associations locally.
- Providing technical and economic support to women, women's associations and enterprises to favour access and use of new technologies.
- Carrying out actions to promote those university degrees in which women are under -represented and sensitizing professional orientation to gender issues.
- Creating a committee to analyse women's contribution to science and technology and a lobby to increase the influence of women in future science projects.

Stakeholders involved

Municipality of Santiago, University of Santiago, Syndicates, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Association of Industrial Area of the Tambre, Federation of rural associations, The Official Association of Psychologists.

How has transnational work contributed to the ideas for local action plan?

The WEED project has been the baseline of the structure of the Santiago Local Action Plan.

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CITY OF UMEÅ

UMEÅ IS LOCATED IN THE NORTHERN PART OF SWEDEN, NEAR THE SEA AND HAS A POPULATION OF 110,000. IT LIES IN THE REGION OF VÄSTERBOTTEN. IT IS A CITY OF CIVIL SERVANTS AND FAIRLY WELL EDUCATED WOMEN AND MEN. THE STRONGEST SECTORS IN UMEÅ'S ECONOMY INCLUDE IT, MODERN FORESTRY, ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES AND RESEARCH-BASED BIOTECHNOLOGY.

Women are an important part of the labour force in the city. Compared to other European regions and cities, Umea has a good record in terms of women's participation in the labour market and in the entrepreneurial field. As in Sweden as a whole, in Umea women have been present in the labour market for a long time. The employment rate is higher among men than among women, but it has increased equally for men as for women in the recent years. In 2004 – 62.9 % of women and 85.9 % of men worked fulltime. The main problems now are not to get the women into the market, but to create full-time jobs and abolish the pay-gap that is due to gender and sexual harassment at workplaces.

Umeå is a city of steady growth with 115.000 inhabitants and with the expectation of reaching 200.000 by 2050. It is one of the few northern cities that have continually expanded over the last 40 years. The founding of Umeå University in 1965 has been a crucial catalyst in this process. Today there are 35.000 students at the university. Umeå is the capital of Västerbotten, which covers 8% of the area of Sweden. It is one of the 10 largest cities in Sweden. Umeå aims at the sustainable development of three dimensions; the social, the ecological and the economical. Horizontal objectives, such as equality, accessibility and public health are integrated in all development work. Umeå has signed the Aalberg commitment, and has a strategic action plan for gender equality.

Umeå has participated in several national and international evaluations and has received the highest number of awards from all Swedish cities. In 2009, Umeå won both the European Public Sector Award and the United Nations Public Service Award. Visitors from Sweden and abroad come to Umeå to study the town and its innovative solutions, for example, for construction, gender policies and culture Umeå will be the 2014 European Capital of Culture.

Improving women's performance in the labour market

Sweden has a long tradition of a strong public sector, which has been the reason why so many women can join the labour market, as childcare and care for the elderly has been provided for by this sector. The sector has created many job opportunities and today most women in the region work for the public sector, primarily in healthcare, schools, childcare and administration. At the same time, this means that there are few different employees to choose from, and the labour market is narrowed. This is also and foremost due to extreme gender segregation in the labour market in Umeå, as well as in Sweden. Furthermore, there are strong gender stereotypes regarding what men and women "should" be doing. Today the public sector is being privatised, creating new challenges for gender equality work in Sweden. In Umeå, the public sector has stayed public, but staff can, for instance, run their own kindergarten. Private sector business companies run about 20 % of elderly care in Umeå, but they are nationwide companies.

The Umeå municipality has a political goal that "Full-time job is a right and part-time job is a possibility." This goal has not been carried out yet, and many people, mostly women, still work part-time because they do not get offered more hours. It is very hard today to live on one part-time wage, so this is a big problem as it results in low retirement pensions, since many people working part-time do this for a long period of time.

Developing a knowledge base

There are regional programmes offering advice to individuals on information technology, but the new industries that have been created in the city are not characterized by the use of new technologies or the knowledge economy. The LSG identified this area as one where all members were interested in change. A national programme of loans exists for the acquisition of computer equipment and access to the Internet for small businesses, but it is limited in its capacity to increase the use of technologies by new industries in the city, and to develop the base for attracting businesses that do. Two problems have been identified. Firstly, it is difficult for small businesses to obtain clear and complete information about all the resources they can get and, secondly, funding for the public sector to provide essential training in new technologies is limited. This means that training is generally provided for only at low levels and the city cannot develop new technologies

and science programmes. Women have access to some "women-only" courses, but they are at a low level and limited in number.

Utilising women's skills for Entrepreneurial activity

The government of Sweden has a strong focus on increasing women's entrepreneurial activity, so at the moment, there are several national programmes that can be applied for in order to help to finance the start up of a business, for example The Ambassadors for women's entrepreneurship programme.

There are special loans for setting up smaller businesses, typically considered to be women's businesses. They are useful, but at the same time – Why should women always run small businesses? This is one of the questions one of the members of the LSG said was very common. It is a fact that women do not dare borrow a lot of money, take fewer risks and, in this way do not expand their businesses – creating more job opportunities etc.

But nothing specific in the municipality is focusing on these problems, and the LSG is interested in exploring ideas on these issues. One important aspect, for example, is the attitudes and self-image of "The BusinessMAN", which is so hard to change.

Integrating equalities and regeneration policies

Gender Equality is an aim of the city authority. The goal of Umeå's gender policy is that men and women should have the same power to shape society, as well as their own lives. Gender equality should, in a concrete way, be included and applied at all stages of the decision-making process, and in all official documents the Umeå municipality is responsible for. (Gender mainstreaming)

The Umeå municipality has an overall equality plan, which the City Manager Office Personnel dept. is responsible for. The action plan is to create activity and has a broader perspective than the Equality plan, which is developed with the support of The Equality Officer. The two complement each other, but should not be confused. The action plan provides the opportunity to bring gender equality into different activities. The desire to work with these questions grows together with the level of knowledge obtained. Individuals and organizations become more developed when both men's and women's knowledge and experience, as well as living conditions, are promoted.

Priorities for change

In Umea the LSG members comprised representatives from NGOs, The City authority, The County administrative body, a regional committee and ALMI Business Partner.

The city authority reported the greatest capacity in supporting women into work; the regional committee and business partner felt they had most to contribute in the areas of enterprise development and promotion of IT and science. There was, nevertheless, a strong commitment to change in all areas by the partners.

Members considered that the expertise they had to offer to other WEED partners in specific areas was evident: they included a level of knowledge and experience in providing leadership programmes promoting women's self-esteem and taking part in their local society, providing financial support systems, developing Gender mainstreaming projects and the implementation of overall equality goals at local and regional level as well as providing projects on attitudes regarding gender stereotypes/gender roles.

Key priorities that the LSG have identified are the need to break norms and gender stereotypes by promoting change through the exchange of best practices. The aims have been chosen based on discussions among the local partners and on significant research into gender equality in the labour market.

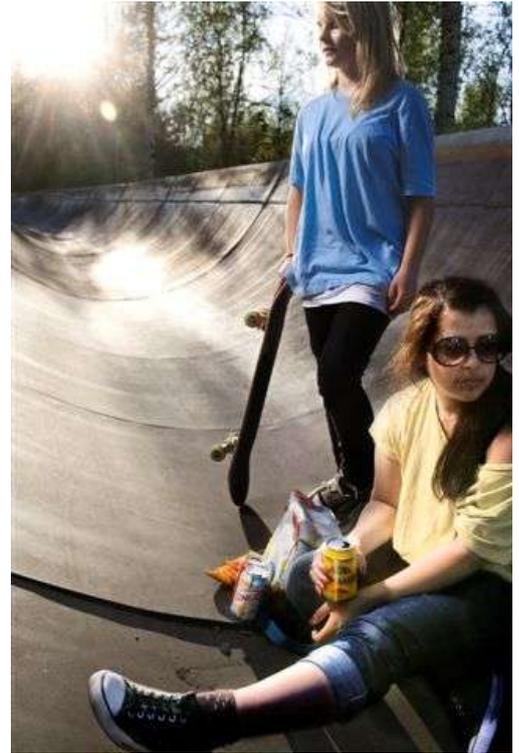


Foto: Andreas Nilsson





LOCAL ACTION PLAN:

Breaking a norms and gender stereotypes

City of Umeå develops a local plan for breaking norms and gender stereotypes by promoting a change through best practice.

Problems to be addressed

Research shows that gender segregation on the labour market cannot be explained by biological differences between the sexes or by individual preferences. It is a consequence of gender discriminating and the segregating structure of the labour market that have resulted in gender stereotype patterns that limit both, women's and men's options and opportunities.

The LAP of Umeå will address the issue of gender segregation in the labour market. A gender segregated labour market means that women and men, to a great extent, work in different sectors, have different professions and different positions. Men generally have jobs which are better paid and a higher status than women. Men are also overrepresented in most professions, and having influential positions such as CEO, manager or executive director.

Aims and Objectives

The key aims of the plan are to break norms and gender stereotypes by promoting change through the exchange of best practices. The aims have been chosen based on discussions among the local partners and on significant research into gender equality in the labour market.

The overall objective is a gender equal labour market where both women and men have equal access to all jobs and positions, including the entrepreneurial world.

Timeliness of the proposal

The first action is a project called Norm which, according to plans, will start in November 2010. Remaining actions are evenly spread out between 2010 and 2014.

Actions Proposed

The aim of the actions is to work towards changing the core issue of gender segregation, i.e. the norms and structures in the labour market that favours men. The following actions proposed deal with

different angles of the problem. (They are still work-in-progress.)

Project: Norm Storm

Breaking norms and gender stereotype patterns in the labour market.

Campaign: Gender boundaries

Breaking gender stereotype patterns in education and the labour market by raising awareness about the problem and encouraging women and men, girls and boys to dare to break the norm.

Analysis: Gender equal growth?

Gender analysis of the regional plans for development and economic growth.

Campaign: The invisible female entrepreneur

Changing attitudes and breaking prejudice towards female entrepreneurs

Campaign: Mutual responsibility

Promoting gender equal parental leave and encouraging men to take their share of responsibility for the family and the household

Campaign: Men for gender equality

Creating a network where men in leading positions, who work for gender equality, can exchange experiences and inspire others.

Project: Recruit gender equal

Creating a folder with strategic advice on how enterprises and employers can recruit in a gender equal manner. Promoting and demonstrating good examples.

Follow-up to action plan

Create a database/website where the action plan is presented along with contact information of all local partners and information about good and bad experiences and outcomes of the activities. On the website, there should also be an evaluation of the results of the actions.

Stakeholders involved

The solutions have been based on experiences from our local partners:

- The Umeå municipality
- The Västerbotten County administrative board
- The Västerbotten Region

- The Ambassadors for women's entrepreneurship
- The Leia accelerator (for gender equal enterprises)
- Swedish Business (Interest organization)
- The Employment office
- The Västerbotten Chamber of Commerce
- The Sami association in Umeå
- The Almi Business partner (advice and coaching)
- The University of Umeå

Next steps

The key aims of the plan are to break norms and gender stereotypes by promoting change through the exchange of best practices. The aims have been chosen based on discussions among the local partners and on significant research into gender equality in the labour market.

How has transnational work contributed to the ideas for local action plan?

TNW has played an important role in giving us a chance to exchange ideas and learn from each other. For instance, the "one stop shop" and the study visit at TNW2 inspired us to see our own work from another perspective and demonstrated new innovative ways of using incubators.

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"Despite that women have different degree of freedom and possibilities in the labour market and the political arena, we can still see that the limited rights due to similar patriarchal structures need reform and change, no matter if we are in Sweden or Spain or elsewhere. We are trying to make a change here in Umeå and the WEED-project is part of this work. Our overall goal for the municipality regarding gender equality is the following:

*Women and men shall have equal power to shape the society and their own lives.
Gender equality shall be part of the decision-making process and be implemented throughout the organisation."*

Tamara Spiric, Mayor of City of Umea

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