



## LOCAL ACTION PLAN: ENNA

### Creating innovative pathways for employment and women entrepreneurship

*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;



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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;



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- 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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