

Scaling Women-led Businesses: Generating opportunities to Grow

Program: Erasmus+ KA2 Capacity Building in the Field of Youth

Deadline for partnerships: 20.07.2017

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) has announced a new Call for Proposals for Capacity Building projects under the Education, Training and Youth Programme Erasmus+. Capacity Building projects are transnational cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organisations active in the field of youth.

Motivation behind the project:

Entrepreneurs are critical to economic growth and prosperity of any community across the world. The recent boost of entrepreneurship in Europe and Asia has led to launch of new enterprises and currently more and more young adults view entrepreneurship as a viable livelihood option. Yet most startups are run by men and often women are held back from launching or growing up their companies due to wide range of obstacles e.g lack of entrepreneurial education, societal discrimination and stereotypes, lack of confidence and personal ability as well as access to finance and a nurturing support system.

Despite the mentioned obstacles preventing women to launch businesses, the past decade shows an increasing interest among women to take up entrepreneurship as a viable livelihood option. More than 126 million women entrepreneurs have started a new business in 67 economies in 2012, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Women's Report.

The EU has had various actions to boost female startups since 2004, e.g. *European Network of Female Entrepreneurship* and other initiatives foreseen in the Commission's 2008 Small Business Act, that has helped to encourage women launch businesses **but it is critical to not only provide support and encourage women to become entrepreneurs, but more importantly the focus should be put on ensuring sustainability of the businesses run by women.**

Considering gender diversity and women in business, Indian women mark the top of the list with having 12.9% women CEOs better than the average of European region which is around 7.8% according to the IRC Global Executive Search Partners' study "The DNA of CEOs ." Although the world has achieved progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment under Millennium Development Goals, women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and inequality in the world of business across the world. The project works to contribute in achieving SDG5 - to achieve gender equality and empower women, with focus on women micro-entrepreneurs.

The project consortium consists of leading organizations working to ensure sustainability and scaling of women-led businesses. The project aims at creating a nurturing, supportive

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environment for women micro-entrepreneurs, build capacities as well as transform societal understanding of women entrepreneurs.

Innovations/Interventions to be developed during the project:

Organizational model to enhance the management, governance and innovation capacity of the organizations working in the field of sustainability and scaling of women-led businesses:

1. Generate easy-access to entrepreneurial development opportunities for women on a single platform micro-entrepreneurs;
2. Create new entrepreneurial development opportunities for women micro-entrepreneurs;
3. Establish and strengthen a strategic civil-society-public authority partnership in nurturing entrepreneurial development opportunities for women micro-entrepreneurs;
4. Identify and gather currently existing financial resources available for women micro-entrepreneurs;
5. Encourage and strengthen new financial mechanism development to support women micro-entrepreneurs

New form of practical training scheme - Building skills and innovation capacity:

1. Create an easily accessible ICT platform aimed at building individually-targeted entrepreneurial skills/capacities;
2. Establish and nurture network of women micro-entrepreneurs to encourage collaboration, mutual support and exchange of practices

Transforming societal understanding of women micro-entrepreneurs through stories of success:

1. Contributing in breaking the existing stereotypical view of woman's position in society;
2. Encouraging women to take up entrepreneurship as a viable livelihood option

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Action Agenda for Change 2020

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