



# GOOD PRACTICES REPORT

Prepared by **AUAS, MUAS** and **MTU** on behalf of the Women Entrepreneurs in Regional Inclusive Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (WeRin) Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance

# Project information

## OVERVIEW

Project Title: Women Entrepreneurs in Regional Inclusive Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (WeRin)

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# OVERVIEW OF THE WeRin PROJECT

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The Erasmus+ project called Women Entrepreneurs in Regional Inclusive Ecosystems (WeRin) seeks to enhance inclusivity of entrepreneurship education and support programmes. Greater gender inclusivity will increase the share of female graduate entrepreneurs and enhance their level of embeddedness in regional entrepreneurial ecosystems across Europe.

Despite a rise in of the number of female students in entrepreneurship education (EE) at Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), they still lag in participation compared to their male counterparts. Even when they have participated in EE, they are less likely to move towards actual entrepreneurial careers after they graduate. And when they do, these graduate female entrepreneurs tend to be less embedded in their regional entrepreneurial ecosystems: fewer of them participate in local incubation and acceleration programs, move into science parks, seek, and receive funding and or are active members in regional networks.

Many women simply do not feel sufficiently invited. Given that female students now make up over 60% of the student population in Europe, this signifies a considerable loss of potential entrepreneurial talent and capacity.

The question that drives WeRin is:

How can we enhance the inclusivity of regional entrepreneurial ecosystems and improve the embeddedness of women entrepreneurs through the design of more inclusive academic and non-academic entrepreneurship education and support programmes?

**WeRin takes a two-dimensional approach to the concept of inclusion within entrepreneurship education and support programmes:**

1. A gender approach and
2. A structural approach. Being (gender) inclusive involves making women feel invited to the entrepreneurship scene, while being structurally inclusive requires transcending the boundaries of HE into the wider entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region, ensuring that women entrepreneurs can become truly embedded in entrepreneurial ecosystems. The notion of embeddedness entails having access to and being involved in regional networks and benefiting from the resources available therein. We believe that for embedding, it is of critical importance that HEIs and other entrepreneurship support organizations in the ecosystem collaborate more closely and align their efforts at inclusion of women entrepreneurs and students. These dimensions constitute the main constructs that guide our research and actions in fostering more inclusive regional entrepreneurial ecosystems.

## PROJECT AIMS AND OUTPUTS

- Equipping HEIs with innovative educators who are aware of the need for more inclusive entrepreneurship education, who understand the need to enhance their own programs and who can recognize and build on existing best practices in their own and other future programs.
- Equipping entrepreneurship support program managers with an understanding of the importance of inclusivity within entrepreneurial ecosystems as a means to truly benefit from the entire talent pool available in their regions, as well as increasing their awareness of their role in fostering more inclusive ecosystems.
- Equipping both HEI educators and entrepreneurship support program managers with tools and materials developed and included in the WeRin approach to assist in the redesign of their own more-inclusive programs.
- Providing (both female and male) students with a better understanding of how inclusivity (or a lack thereof) affects their entrepreneurial potential and may hinder their processes of embedding.
- Designing, delivering, and implementing programs that remedy current non-inclusive practices and actively improve and build on the lessons from current best practices in across programs and regions.
- Promoting inclusive education in Europe that ensures that both male and female students can fully benefit from entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship support programs within their regions, with these regions flourishing as a result of better influx of women entrepreneurs.
- Ensuring the sustainability of the WeRin project results and impacts through peer sharing and learning, enabled by development of an online community to co-create new knowledge and increasing the efficacy implementable program changes

The **WeRin** project development activities have and will produce results including outcomes such as:

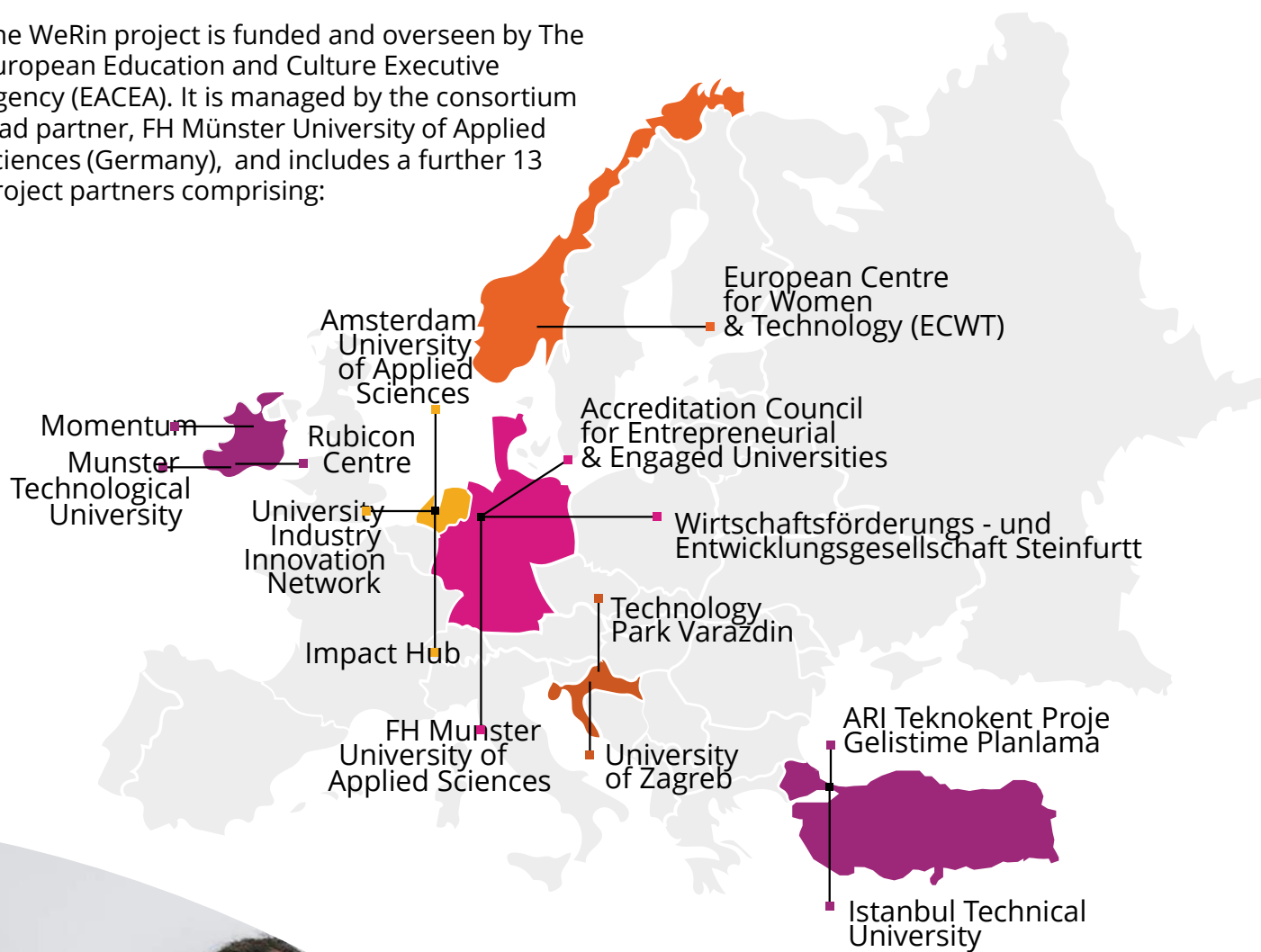
- Extensively reviewing current entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship support programs using a diverse set of indicators of inclusiveness, thus taking a holistic approach.
- Learning from best practice from across Europe.
- Redesigning programs through the implementation of the lessons learned and by actively involving the target group of women entrepreneurs and aspiring women entrepreneurs; and
- Increasing the share of women entrepreneurs graduating from HEIs and becoming embedded in the (regional) entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Want to read more on the WeRin Project?  
[www.werinproject.eu/about](http://www.werinproject.eu/about)

# IMPLEMENTATION

The WeRin project is funded and overseen by The European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). It is managed by the consortium lead partner, FH Münster University of Applied Sciences (Germany), and includes a further 13 project partners comprising:



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE GOOD PRACTICES

# 01

This report provides a cross-practice analysis of 9 good practices that foster an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem in Europe. The analysis is based upon input from five different regions in Europe: namely Germany, Turkey, Ireland, Croatia, and the Netherlands.

Good practices were identified that match women entrepreneurs' needs at different stages within their entrepreneurial journey, from educational empowerment to systemic changes. On the one hand, these good practices provide insights into good practices already applied by various ecosystem stakeholders and networks.

On the other hand, it provides insights into the need to improve the regional ecosystem. Want to read more on the current state of gender-inclusivity in the academic and non-academic entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship support programmes?

Discover the current state of gender inclusivity across these five regions (Germany, Turkey, Ireland, Croatia, and the Netherlands): <http://www.werinproject.eu/resources>



# 02



## STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR'S EMPOWERMENT

- 01** Project Fearless, the Netherlands (women-only program)

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- 02** A Small School of Entrepreneurship for Women (ASEW), Croatia (women-only program)

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- 03** European Creative Futures (ECF), Ireland (mixed-gender program)

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- 04** Reach to Empower, Germany (women-only program)

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- 05** Student Inc, Ireland (mixed-gender program)



# 01

## Project Fearless, the Netherlands (women-only program)

Bridging the gap between educational and community spaces, Project Fearless addresses the needs of young people between the ages of 9-14 years. Participants identify with the program's mission and values to join a variety of programs and include gender fluid, polygender and gender non-conforming people, as well as those who are currently discovering their identity.

Project Fearless offers outcome-based after-school programs (8 weeks) designed to get girls to create impact in their community and share experiences where participants can step out of her comfort zone and find her voice. Surrounded by a group of dynamic women role models, Project Fearless creates a space where girls can stand tall and discover their true self. The programs include a focus on personal leadership (with the help of role models), inclusive activities to understand the need to support and help one another, and courses on design for impact.

### Lesson Learned



It offers a platform to discover passions and personal voices on the girls' own terms. It appears a great way to find your voice and increased self-confidence since the program has a high return rate (33%) of girl attending different programs within the project.

[www.projectfearless.org](http://www.projectfearless.org)



*"Project Fearless gave my daughter a space to experience new things, get out of her comfort zone and go beyond her limits and get more confidence."*

Parent



# 02

## A Small School of Entrepreneurship for Women (ASEW), Croatia (women-only program)



A Small School of Entrepreneurship for Women (**ASEW**) introduced two women-only entrepreneurship modules: at basic and advanced level targeting women aged between 18-55 years. The intention is to give women essential knowledge about entrepreneurship.

For example, the basic module includes how to establish a company, what to do for business marketing and sales, how to make a financial plan, a basic overview of business financing, digital marketing, sales techniques, introduction to the business model canvas, how to define a price for your goods and services among others.

The Advanced module provides more in-depth knowledge into sales, negotiations, financials, digital marketing. In addition, ASEW conduct workshops for public speaking, presentation, business communication, online sales.



**Incomparable with all previous training programs and education for entrepreneurs.**

*" Little School for women entrepreneurs " provided me with deeper insights into entrepreneurship, a different perception of myself, and examples from the environment in interaction with the challenging tax policy of the Republic of Croatia. "*

**Snježana (participant)**

### Lesson Learned



The female participants love education in small groups, cooperate reasonably with each other, exchange experiences and lessons, and education has helped them gain confidence in running a business.

# STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR'S EMPOWERMENT

# 02

From an educational perspective, research undertaken within the last decade reveals that entrepreneurship education is gendered. This research illuminates the disparity in perspectives and experiences of female and male students within entrepreneurship education. Furthermore, the impacts and outcomes of entrepreneurial education differ between male and female students.

Fältholm et al. (2010) present a novel perspective of gender mainstreaming approaches without recreating stereotypes in the ecosystem. Stereotypes may present a challenge to nascent women entrepreneurs. Inclusive education is a powerful way to prepare people to deal with gender bias and/or gender stereotypes and to prepare them for the (gendered) barriers and obstacles in their career path.

This should be done from a young age, challenging the bias and stereotypes that teens encounter before they reach higher education where entrepreneurial intentions are instilled, with female students' entrepreneurial intentions often lagging their male colleagues. Inclusive education offers an environment where all students can thrive.

The selected good practices provide inspiration as to what could be done, with examples of women-only programs and mixed-gender programs. The student-focused good practices are reported as those that (a) challenge bias and stereotypes, increase women's entrepreneurial intentions, and support student entrepreneurs through role modelling and visibility.



About (Gender inclusive) entrepreneurship education in our **Literature Review**, p.21 -22

## European Creative Futures (ECF), Ireland (mixed-gender program)



# “

*For me participation in ECF it was a life changing experience, you can divide my life Before and After. I learn a lot from how the people from different cultural and educational background can come up together and create a business model. Thank to ECF, I become more confident and started my own business.it gave us an entire new world and great environment, where you can learn from each other. It reminds me a metaphor " if you put a fresh cucumber into a jar of pickles, with time the cucumber became a pickle"*

**Vitaliy Makhnanov**

The European Creative Futures (ECF) is an intensive entrepreneurship and innovation program aimed at bringing together graduates from diverse backgrounds in art, design, IT, music, theatre, business, and communications. Participants share experiences and with a creative focus to the program they learn about entrepreneurship through creativity. Entrepreneurship education is delivered through inter-disciplinary, multi-cultural, gender-balanced collaboration, learning by doing, group discussions, themed workshops, brainstorming sessions, interactive lectures, mentoring by sector experts, use of social networking tools and eLearning tools. The participants seek to envisage future challenges, identify novel solutions to problems and build their abilities to create new products, processes, and services.

A unique online environment devised for the European Creative Futures program provides participants with access to the online portal where all the programme's activities take place. The program requires attendance at the online lectures and the Intensive Project lectures and group work sessions. Students must prepare and submit presentation material for distribution before the Intensive Project begins. An initial individual artistic/academic presentation of the participant's portfolio is required. This portfolio typically includes the presentation material developed for the Intensive Project within the program, documentation from the group work project (such as sound/images/examples of finished products) and a written reflection about the project.

Assessment is based on the identified learning objectives and is presented as a pass/fail mark as determined by the course leader and this assessment is determined based on the participant's level of achievement throughout the course period. Final assessment is possible when all course requirements are met and approved. Reassessment requires the participants to retake the course. In recent years, this program attracts a higher percentage of female participants compared with males.

### Lesson Learned



Both students and educators identified it as an excellent program that is supportive of both staff development as well as student entrepreneurial engagement.



## REACH to EMPOWER, Germany (women-only program)



REACH to EMPOWER is an interactive educational program to promote gender-equal opportunities in the foundation sector. Their goal is to inspire students, researchers and employees of the WWU and Münster University of Applied Sciences to start their own businesses. One of their inspirational programs is “New Founding”, where entrepreneurial engagement and bringing real-world start-up experiences to the lecture hall are honored.

REACH's overall goal is to increase the share of female founders by making both the female founders and their ideas visible. Simultaneously, build a common network. The initiative is lead by the scouts Barbara von Goote-Gotzes and Lea Kipper.

The Universities of Münster and Twente awarded the REACH EUREGIO CHAIR for the first time in October 2021 as part of their cross-border cooperation. The University of Münster chose Dr. Kati Ernst (founder of OOIA), while the University of Twente selected Corinne Vigreux (founder of TomTom) as the first holder of the symbolic chair. Thanks to their entrepreneurial spirit and outstanding professional success, both chair holders serve as role models of female empowerment.

I think that's maybe the main difference between other networking events, it's such a feel secure atmosphere. So you can open to the other participants and get together and start talking different things.

**Alina Hemmer,**  
participant since 2022  
and co-founder of  
colloc.AI

The practice is sponsored by Excellence Start-up Center NRW, which is funded by the Ministry for Economic Affairs, Innovation, Digitalisation and Energy of North Rhine-Westphalia for five years.

### Lesson Learned



One of the success factors is authenticity. Since the runners of the program are entrepreneurs themselves; put the importance and effort into the women, taking care of the network (not controlling it); building a bridge with education and listening to women's needs.

# 05 Student Inc, Ireland (mixed-gender program)

Student Inc is a student incubator training program (13 weeks) supported and organized by 3 student enterprise interns. Graduated Alumni from this program regularly attend and speak at the information sessions – effectively providing role models that are age appropriate and gender balanced. The program also includes experienced entrepreneurs as mentors and matches participants with advisors who have experience in their sector where possible.

The program effectively links all aspects of the on-campus entrepreneurial ecosystem for the benefit of the participating students. Furthermore, no equity is taken from the Student Inc businesses although students are asked to volunteer their time to promote the program to the following year's applicants and to support Student Inc through their recognition

of the program. Students receive a stipend during the summer months while they develop their business idea and can avail of an option to get academic credit for their learning.

The key need that this program meets is for student business ideas to be given credibility and support while also building the skills and knowledge for entrepreneurship and introducing students to the entrepreneurial ecosystem in a supportive environment. Many of the students and alumni interviewed for WeRin spoke highly about their experiences in Student Inc and about being an on-campus enterprise intern. This program also develops excellent female role models who then encourage greater female participation in subsequent years.

### Lesson Learned



Diversity has been key in the success of this program. Gender balance numbers are improving, and the program now attracts students from an increasing number of different discipline areas (21 in 2019 and 27 in 2020) leading to diversity in the business ideas and business sectors.

[www.studentinc.ie](http://www.studentinc.ie)



*"Winning a place on the Student Inc. program was the beginning of my journey as an entrepreneur. I started the program knowing absolutely nothing about setting up or running a business and by the end of it I had a business plan written and the wheels were set in motion for Bia Beauty which went on to be acquired by Codex Beauty. I can't recommend Student Inc. and CIT highly enough; it really is a supportive and friendly environment!"*



**Tracey Ryan, CODEX Beauty**

# 03



## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' EMPOWERMENT

**06** The Kickstart Academy, Germany (mixed-gender program)

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**07** The Business Model Challenge, the Netherlands (mixed-gender program)

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**08** Academy for Entrepreneurship, Croatia (mixed-gender program)

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**09** Rising Brands Project, Turkey (women-only program)





## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' EMPOWERMENT

# 03

The effects of gender roles on entrepreneurship are considered a distinguishing factor for both men and women (Yetim, 2008). An additional, insight from the research conducted by Yetim (2008) is that women are excluded from the male-dominated work networks and are limited to gendered work relations. In addition, women entrepreneurs risk receiving significantly less venture capital (Malmström et al., 2018) with women-founded start-ups 25-35% less likely to raise external equity, including venture capital.

To strengthen women entrepreneurs throughout their entrepreneurial journey, it is important to contribute to strengthening the position of women entrepreneurs. The good practices in this section contribute to that aim by assisting women entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurial journey while developing a rich network at the same time.

These next three good practices are aimed at all entrepreneurs and show excellent outcomes for women entrepreneurs and some focus on the benefits of women-only programs. The first three programs (5,6,7) all take place in business incubators or hubs, program 8 has a focus on branding and program 9 targets societal change.

### Read More



About Gender bias and Stereotypes in Entrepreneurship in our [Literature Review](#), pp.19-20:

# 06

## The Kickstart Academy, Germany (mixed-gender program)



[www.kickstart-academy.de](http://www.kickstart-academy.de)

The Kickstart Academy is a program offered by the Venture Club Münster e.V, which is a start-up initiative focused on students and people with entrepreneurial ambitions or with a general interest in entrepreneurship. Throughout the past three years, the Kickstart Academy have built a network of approximately 300 members.

The program is financed by sponsorships and industry partners, while all the organizers volunteer their time and expertise. Most of the applicants have a higher education degree, with some still enrolled at the university and some recently graduated. In addition, the program is open to participants outside of the University of Münster or the FH Münster University of Applied Sciences and even to those outside of the Münster region.

The application process inquires whether the applicants already have a founding idea for a business or whether their interest is more general. The recruitment process focusses on diversity with people from different backgrounds and study programs providing great founding teams with diverse backgrounds and knowledge. Currently students with an economic background apply more often, and the recruitment of more students with an engineering background is under focus to broaden organization teams and include more diverse knowledge groups.

“

Through the Kickstart Academy I met very inspiring people, gained innovative ideas and received valuable input as well as honest feedback for my own entrepreneurial journey.” –

**Lena (Participant, 2020)**

### Lesson Learned



Diversity has been key in the success of this program. Not only gender diversity, but the study background and skillset of the participants. A founding team, which consists out of three students with an economic background but needs to develop an app as their product/service is a very bad constitution.



07

## The Business Model Challenge, the Netherlands (mixed-gender program)

“

*Doing the program with like-minded people and the modules were just really good and also the teachers and mentors were great*

**Participant (F)**

[Link 1](#)

The Business Model Challenge (BMC) is a dynamic 3- month incubator program for impact entrepreneurs to professionalize their sustainable businesses. Throughout the previous year, the Source & Match team of the incubator builds a pipeline of potential applications. Approximately two months before the program starts, scouting becomes more active, and a marketing campaign (social media/newsletter) is added. Based on the number of applications, the scouting and program team get together to make a final selection.

The cohort of participants meet each other at the kickoff and stay together throughout the program. As a group, they work on the online modules and can attend training days and Q&A sessions. As there is a big focus on peer learning, communication between the participants and the program manager is done via WhatsApp or Slack. This is also the place where they share insights & learnings or ask questions. Every participant is also assigned a mentor, someone from the Impact Hub incubator network. The matching between mentor and mentee is made by the program manager and based on his/her experience and the needs of the mentee. The mentoring consists of 4-6 hours during the program.

### Lesson Learned



it is a nice first step for aspiring entrepreneurs to learn more about starting a business as well as how to create a positive impact. The participant selection is targeted on the impact (milestones) of the business, not specifically on the participants background or gender.

## Academy for Entrepreneurship, Croatia (mixed program)



“I think that education has a key role for success in every business, and that this kind of academy should be a must-have training before opening a company, crafts, etc. You get everything that your business needs at the Academy, and a little more. Assistance and support from the Academy is unquestionable.”

**Snježana Anić**

**Participant (F)**

The program of the Academy of Entrepreneurship contains different modules focused on the entrepreneurial knowledge and skills that are useful for starting and managing the business venture. The aim of the programme is to encourage the entrepreneurs in the City of Varaždin and Varaždin County to start their ventures and to strengthen their sustainability on the market.

The content of the programme is formulated only after the selection of all students and defining their individual needs (the Tailor-Made principle). The methodology is based on a practical approach and interaction, individual and group work, drafting project tasks and final work. The final task is defined through the Design Sprint 2.0 workshop, and at the end of all lectures, each student exhibits their task in front of a professional committee made up of several lecturers, which give reviews and instructions to improve the project idea. The presentation of the final work is held in secret, not in front of all students or lecturers, to protect the business secrets and project ideas of the students.

All lecturers are successful local entrepreneurs, but the team of local lecturers are joined by guest lecturers - successful entrepreneurs from other regions. The local entrepreneurs-lecturers represent great role-models which serve as an exemplary of success in spite of starting their business in a smaller environment like Varaždin. This further motivates the program participants.

Even though the Academy of Entrepreneurship is aimed at all people, the majority of participants were women who recognized the need for additional education to better cope with the everyday challenges of running a business.

### Lesson Learned



Academy of Entrepreneurship has been implemented now for five years, and the City of Varaždin has a goal that as many of our fellow citizens as possible, get additional knowledge and skills to be as good on the market and truly succeed in their business.



# 09 Rising Brands Project, Turkey (women-only program)

The “Rising Brands” Project aims to contribute to the design, display, and marketing of products with cultural elements produced by women entrepreneurs and to assist them to create well-known global brands and to export high value-added products. Online application for the “Rising Brands Project” was between August 20th and September 14th, 2020; with 655 project proposals received. Applicants without any sales record were eliminated from the selection. The remaining 416 project owners were invited to participate in the project webinars.

The Rising Brands project targeted women entrepreneurs who produced their goods and had demonstrated sales and were a company partner with at least 25% shares or ownership. Throughout the project, participants interacted with 74 trainers across 71 live webinars and 15 workshops.

These training sessions and mentorships supported significant improvements with regard to growth in product and market size. Furthermore, successful applicants were encouraged with specialised supports according to their business sector, with all-inclusive supports (accommodation/transportation) to enable them to attend foreign Exhibition Shows.

## Lesson Learned



The project was successfully organized to increase the female entrepreneurs’ sales in local brands and take place in foreign markets regarding becoming a global brand.



*It was a quite productive and much-needed project. At the end of it, this project encouraged me to understand what I did right and what I did wrong, to think and positively reinforce my motivation. I hope it will be repeated often and you will be a strength to such women who have established their businesses and have their feet on the ground on their own*



**Reha Doğan /Feyz Contemporary Rugs & Home**

# 04



## CHANGING THE ECOSYSTEM

**10** Women Inc., the Netherlands (women-only program)

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**11** Arya Women Investment Platform, Turkey (women-only program)

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**12** Female Entrepreneurship Week, Germany (women-only program)

The socially constructed role of women is the primary challenge faced by women entrepreneurs (Kalemci Tuzun & Araz Takay, 2017). This means that changing the status quo is one of the first needs within an inclusive society. Increasing entrepreneurial intentions is central to improving participation of both student and women entrepreneurs. In order to successfully include women in entrepreneurial activity, a gender egalitarian culture is advised. This inclusive ecosystem requires some effective mechanisms for work-life balance, including supported provision of parental leave and childcare, as these clearly have the potential to encourage more women to participate in employment and engage in entrepreneurial activity (Karatas-Ozkan et al., 2010).

Programs aiming at supporting and promoting women's entrepreneurship should influence policies directed at transforming women's status within the society (Özar, 2016). One keyway of targeting change in society and societal norms and roles is to start with policy makers and media changes. These changes should promote a non-stereotyped inclusive image of entrepreneurship and foster this as a career option for all, particularly among women (Laguía et al., 2019). The final good practice presented is precisely trying to transform women's status within society by influencing national policy and creating awareness of structural bias.



## Read More

About Gender-inclusive Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in our **Literature Review**, p.14



## 10

## Women Inc., the Netherlands (women-only program)



[www.womeninc.nl](http://www.womeninc.nl)

WOMEN Inc. is an independent platform that strives for mentality changes across society with respect to the role and participation of women across multiple themes, including those of work, health, media, money, education, and government. Their goal is that by 2030 girls and women can count on equal opportunities on the labor market, customized healthcare with respect for gender differences, representative media and education (stereotype free). And finally, a gender-sensitive government that adjusts its policy to create equal opportunities for everyone. Through campaigns, publications, podcasts, training and many other methods, Women Inc. aims to create a world with equal opportunities regardless of gender. This is a practice based on the specifics of the Dutch political landscape, however, learnings and some of the materials collected could be valuable in other areas of the world.

An example of their campaigns is *when* WOMEN Inc. (together with Branded U) asked all women to change their first name to Peter on LinkedIn between January 24 and January 28 2022, to draw attention to the unequal gender distribution in the workplace. Women are strongly underrepresented in decision-making positions: of the 94 CEOs in the Netherlands, 5 are women. *This means that there are more CEOs named Peter than female CEOs.* Only 12% of the board of directors of listed companies is female. Less than a quarter of professors in universities are women. Only 37% of the Dutch parliament consists of women. In the 100 largest companies in the Netherlands, only 14% of the general managers are women. The mid-management of large companies consists of 28% of women. In conclusion, women have much less influence than men.



For more visuals and videos on this campaign “My name is Peter”, visit the [website](http://www.womeninc.nl)

### Lesson Learned



Structural change is necessary on three levels: macro, meso and micro. Especially change at macro levels (policy) is condition for change at meso and micro levels. To be able to create change on a macro level, working together with strategic partners allows top-bottom and bottom-top impact.

11

## Arya Women Investment Platform, Turkey (women-only program)



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*I've made my first investment with Arya WIP. I may easily say that it has contributed to my entrepreneurship and personal brand.*

**Aslı Şarman-Founder  
Wicasa, Arya Investor**

Arya WIP is a social venture with a vision of transforming the world through female leadership. It aims to take a key role in catalyzing women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment in the central region of Turkey. Based in Istanbul, it provides mentorship, training, acceleration programs, as well as access to capital and stakeholder networks for female entrepreneurs. It further supports women to become investors, providing a collaborative learning and investing environment.

An ecosystem of Arya Challenge Club members (consisting of senior executive and businesswomen, women entrepreneurs, and women opinion leaders), Arya Startups, Arya Entrepreneurs, Arya Youth Club, Arya Investment Committee, along with corporate partners, sponsors, and support organizations interact, collaborate, and invest in each other. Arya WIP ecosystem is large with hundreds of members at the center level, thousands at the stakeholder level, including women, men, ventures, institutions, and organizations. Various events and intermediary activities take place every year for members and the wider stakeholder network.

Arya WIP aims to become a significant hub for women's empowerment and a source for women to raise business capital in the region. Arya have already initiated relationships with regional and global ventures, with stakeholder organizations, and with other relevant institutions to increase the program impact; and to drive investment in each other. the Arya ecosystem will empower more women to become leaders who will design a better version of an inclusive future. With Arya's catalyzer role, women entrepreneurs are supported to access more and better resources including capital, to initiate and grow their ventures, and to build relationships and partnerships.

### Lesson Learned



360 degrees empowerment plays a critical role in entrepreneurship and investing.

**Accredited Angel Group –  
Arya Women Investment  
Platform - Gust**

12

## Female Entrepreneurship Week, Germany

The Female Entrepreneurship Week is an event connecting women interested in founding a company with established founders, supporting services, and the regional ecosystem. The Female Entrepreneurship Week consolidates regional inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems and addresses the barriers that women entrepreneurs face in their entrepreneurial pathways.

Nine universities set a common agenda for promoting women's entrepreneurship in the region. This initiative aims at addressing the lack of visibility for women role models and networking opportunities for female founders.

The Female Entrepreneurship Week offers inspiration (role models and good practices), training (workshops), content (keynotes and seminars), networking (lunches, online and on-site games and match-making), and support (mentors, funding opportunities, and start-up support). The three pillars of the event are:

- Inspire: through interactions with local entrepreneurs and role models
- Empower: by providing information on how to deal with barriers inhibiting women's entrepreneurship and motivational testimonies.
- Connect: interacting with regional stakeholders promoting and supporting entrepreneurship.

### Lesson Learned

1. It brings together the ecosystem's stakeholders to work on promoting women's entrepreneurship.
2. It consolidates and enhances the regional network of women entrepreneurs.
3. It makes local role models visible and connects them with aspiring women entrepreneurs.
4. It uses diverse educational methodologies from a gender-sensitive perspective to impact aspiring entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial intent and self-efficacy.



“The Female Entrepreneurship Week is our answer to the lack of role models and networking opportunities for female founders. Together with the Hamburg startup associations, we initiated an inspiring week with over 15 formats, 19 speakers and over 200 registrations from women and founders interested in founding a company. We are already looking forward to FEW 2023!”

**Dr. Bianca Kauff, Project coordinator in the HAW Hamburg start-up service, co-organizer of the FEW 2022.**

The initiative comes from nine universities from the states of Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, under the coordination of the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW Hamburg), Startup Port and Beyour pilot.

Even though women have struggled over the last decade to break the "glass ceiling" to launch their businesses or expand their involvement in leadership roles, these assembled good practices show that diverse programs are unleashing nascent and existing women's entrepreneurial potential.

The student focused programs featured appropriate, real, and relatable role models, that break the stereotypical view of the entrepreneur. Some programs invite inspiring alumni back as role models for the following year. The programs increased confidence and extended the comfort zones of women aspiring entrepreneurs, extending women's view of where their limits for entrepreneurship lie. Programs were either women only or mixed gender and one program specifically included a diverse range of gender identities. Programs also target increasing entrepreneurial intentions

through specific entrepreneurial training, at beginner and advanced levels, giving knowledge and confidence to 'set the wheels in motion'.

The good practices for existing women entrepreneurs were largely focused on incubator and hub programs, again featuring both mixed gender and women-only offerings. There was a mix of general entrepreneurship education and specific focus programs, for investment or for branding, for example. The real and honest feedback were instrumental supports, and the network of 'like-minded' people was also a key factor. Two programs reported an ecosystem or structural perspective, with a network of stakeholders to generate a supportive investment environment and with an independent platform to promote respect for women entrepreneurs and promote positive policy changes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Awareness of women's entrepreneurship potential should be increased by media role models, which would have different degrees of effects on women's cognitive processes. Additionally, the WeRin literature review has shown that role model selection requires the selection of relatable role models, who depict desirable results and feasible and achievable career goals. In this way, educators should consider how close the role models are in terms of age, educational background, and gender when selecting role models for use in educational programs.

Educators must take the gender balance of role models seriously, reflecting on the predominance of positive models, and with further investigation needed to determine the learning significance of negative models (Laviolette et al., 2012). A diverse selection of women entrepreneurs from various backgrounds should be highlighted.







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