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WELCOME



Welcome to the fourth newsletter of the WEED project. In this issue we focus on empowering women in local economies.

Drawing on my report of the second WEED thematic workshop and the presentations from Maria Angeles, Angela O'Hagan and Dorotea Daniele at that workshop, we look at why empowering women's economic participation is more important now than ever before. Also in this issue, we continue our regular 'city profile' feature with a look at Amiens in northern France. We bring you news from the WEED partners, notably from Santiago de Compostela which has held a number of women in enterprise events. We end the newsletter with a round up of EU news, including an up date on funding programmes which will be of interest to all those working in gender equality or local economic development.

For those of you who are new to WEED, the project brings together local authorities from nine EU cities to share knowledge and practice on women's participation in the labour market and in entrepreneurship. WEED is supported through URBACT, a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. The WEED project is led by Celje (Slovenia) working in partnership with the local authorities for Enna (Italy), Karvina (Czech Republic), Umeå (Sweden), Crotone (Italy),

Medway (United Kingdom), Santiago de Compostela (Spain), Alzira (Spain) and Amiens (France).

We launched the WEED network in March 2009 and have now completed two of the three transnational thematic exchange workshops which form a core element of our project approach. The first thematic workshop, held in September 2009, focused on 'mobilising the potential of female entrepreneurship at a time of economic crisis'. We reported on this workshop in the [first WEED newsletter](#) and the workshop reports are also available on the [WEED website](#). The second thematic workshop took place in Santiago de Compostela in May 2010 and focused on 'promoting better work and social enterprise for women'. In this newsletter we draw on the workshop presentations and findings to share knowledge and practice on empowering women in local economies. The workshop reports and presentations are available on the [WEED website](#).

I am delighted to share with you the progress and successes of WEED's work. A great deal more information about WEED is available on our website. Do visit the website at <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/human-capital-entrepreneurship/weed/homepage/> or you can click on the hyperlinks throughout the newsletter to take you to the relevant part of the website.

Professor Gill Scott
Lead Expert for the WEED project

Empowering women in local economies

As Europe struggles to recover from the global recession, there has never been a more urgent time to tackle the gender disparities in employment and enterprise. Drawing on the work of Professor Gill Scott, Lead Expert for the WEED project, we look at why economic empowerment for women matters and how local authorities can integrate gender equality with local economic development to help develop new models for sustainable economies.

Although gender equality has always been high on the EU policy agenda, women continue to have lower employment rates than men and to receive significantly lower pay; the gender pay gap has narrowed only slightly since 2003 to 18 per cent for the EU as a whole in 2007, and has even widened in nine Member States over that period. There has never been a more urgent time to tackle the gender disparities in employment and enterprise. As Europe struggles to recover from the impacts of the global recession, stimulating economic growth is the key priority for national, regional and local authorities in all Member States. Women's spending power and potential for enterprise development represent critically important resources for economic development which can be used as a route out of recession.

Failure to address women's poor position in the labour market represents not only a lost opportunity for stimulating economic growth but leaves women at significantly greater risk of poverty than men. Women will be harder hit by this recession than in previous economic downturns and may be disproportionately affected by the deep cuts in public spending now being implemented by national governments; a higher proportion of women than men are employed in public service jobs and cuts here will result in rising numbers of

women losing their jobs. With 2010 designated the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, and with social inclusion a headline target in the Europe 2020 agenda, the time is right to give greater focus to the higher risks of poverty faced by women as a result of the gender pay gap, inequality in employment opportunities, the current threats of higher unemployment, widespread inequalities in pension provision and other factors.

The challenge facing policy makers and practitioners is how to increase women's power in the labour market. More specifically;

- How to encourage public and private employers to alter highly gendered environments;
- How to encourage employees to consider and prepare for new sectors of employment;
- How to encourage more family friendly practices and greater reconciliation of home and work.

While these represent considerable challenges for national and regional policy makers, the specific challenge for WEED partners is to identify and implement what works at the local level. This is no easy task for local authorities

that are working within a context of legislation and policy determined at EU or national level and of funding programmes operating to national or regional priorities. The WEED workshop examined what local authorities can do to support women's economic empowerment, drawing on examples of successful initiatives from across the EU.

Maria Angeles from the Enred consultancy in Madrid argued that prioritising equal opportunities between men and women is essential from a social justice perspective and vital for creating new models of economic growth which avoid the economic recessions precipitated by the old economic model. Reflecting the workshop view that 'now is the time'; Maria argued that a key moment currently exists to use the knowledge of what works to promote equality, including essential changes to increase:

- Women's representation in management;
- Measures to support enterprises led by women;
- Women's access to finance;
- Willingness to take risk amongst women;
- Awareness of the contribution of the domestic economy;
- The development of tools for women to cross the digital divide.

Angela O'Hagan from Glasgow Caledonian University provided further ideas on why achieving gender equality will make a major contribution to economic change. Both Angela and Maria reminded the workshop participants that achieving change is not easy. Actions at local level often need wider political support to achieve

success, for example through national equalities legislation, which has helped to change attitudes towards gender equality amongst companies in Spain.

Gender mainstreaming is also key. EU policy gives strong support to gender mainstreaming, which the European Commission describes as *'not about adding a "women's component" or even a "gender equality component" into an existing activity. It goes beyond increasing women's participation; it means bringing the experience, knowledge and interests of women and men to bear on the development agenda....The goal of mainstreaming gender equality is thus the transformation of unequal social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for both men and women'*. During the WEED thematic workshop, ways of implementing such an approach were explored in some detail. While the importance of wider, regional or national, support was acknowledged as important to the success of local actions, the emphasis was on identifying local approaches. Amongst the tools available to local authorities, gender proofing public procurement was highlighted as an important way of integrating gender equality with local economic development.

Workshop contributors examined whether social enterprise is an area of economic activity which offers greater opportunities for women's economic participation or entrepreneurship. Dorotea Daniele from DIESIS, an international network for the social economy sector, argued that social enterprise can play a vital role in local development through the creation of

new jobs that are socially useful and economically sustainable, and through supporting disadvantaged groups to enter the labour market. Dorotea gave examples of social enterprises that enhance local development, such as the co-operative development agencies in Sweden and the business and employment co-operatives in France, highlighting how they provide a supportive route for people making the transition from inactivity to self employment.

The WEED workshop highlighted the challenges facing Europe when it comes to gender equality at work and promoting new ways of working towards it that bring economic and social justice benefits to local economies. The workshop also showed the diverse and innovative ways in which WEED partners are responding to the challenges of empowering women's economic participation. It is clear that no 'one size fits all' but it is also clear that commitment to gender equality and the reduction of poverty through smaller city based approaches can establish the

basis for improved income and earnings for women.



Participants from Karvina take part in the second thematic workshop

[Click here](#) for the reports and presentations to the WEED workshop on 'promoting better work and social enterprise for women'.

CITY PROFILE: AMIENS

The earliest references to the city that was to become Amiens are found in the writings of Julius Caesar. Caesar mentions not only the people, but also their city, known as *Samarobriva*, a crossing point over the river Somme. This was a regional center for the Belgae, and it formed a natural strategic base for the Romans in their pacification of this volatile area and in the eventual conquest of Britain. The eleventh and

twelfth centuries brought a period of extraordinary population growth to Amiens and to Picardy in general. Thus, the period of the construction of the Gothic





cathedral was generally a time of plenty in Picardy.

The city of Amiens (Communauté d'Agglomération Amiens Métropole) is located in the

département of Somme, part of the Picardie region. It has a population of 171,240. The economy of Amiens is dominated by 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). All kinds of associated industries are represented in these areas of work. The 'Communauté d'Agglomération Amiens Métropole' is composed of twenty communes and its objective is to encourage cooperation

between the local authorities especially in terms of economic development, planning, transport and tourism. The mayors of the communes elect a President who heads the public organisation.



In 2001, the unemployment rate for women was one per cent higher than for men in our city; 18 per cent against 17 per cent for the male population.

Promoting equal opportunities for women: interview with Maryse Lion-Lec, Deputy Mayor of the municipality of Amiens



Maryse Lion-Lec is one of the Deputy-Mayors of the municipality of Amiens. She is in charge of discrimination and equality; the department she created two years ago in the municipality employs five people. This department is responsible for equal opportunities for women. When Maryse Lion-Lec was contacted to be a partner in the WEED project she was immediately interested in participating to exchange good practice and improve or suggest new initiatives in Amiens in the field of equal access for women to jobs and enterprise creation.

In your experience of work here in Amiens, what are the main difficulties facing women who are looking for work or creating their own enterprises?

First of all, I must admit that our participation in the WEED project pushed us to get further into these difficulties. As no survey had been recently carried out in the field of women and enterprise creation, we had to go through it. This survey confirmed that the first difficulty they face is their self-censorship; it is not so frequent in our culture that a woman becomes the manager of a company. The image people generally have of a company is also completely wrong; they never imagine a very small company with only one employee. In our subconscious, a company is big, complicated to manage and headed by a man. The second difficulty women face is time conciliation.

What do you think can be done to improve this situation?

I want to highlight three very interesting initiatives which, I think, can contribute to improving women's access to jobs and supporting women to start their own businesses.

Last year, the municipality of Amiens organised an employment fair for women. Because of the difficulties women experience with childcare, we decided to organise a day nursery system inside the forum. This allowed the participants to be completely dedicated to their job search during a few hours.

The second initiative I would like to highlight is a training session the municipality has just organised for association managers to make them aware of the difficulties women face or think they will face while starting their own business. These associations dedicated to women's equal access to job need to know that some of the women they receive can maybe create their activity after being convinced they are able to. The role of those people in contact with them is to detect whether there is a potential project and what are the real or imaginary restraints to this project.

The third initiative I would like to promote is the national network of Centres for Women Information and Rights (CIDFF). This network is the kingpin of the local authorities and government policies in terms of women's equality. The Optimizing Access to Training for Women activity carried out by the CIDFF in Amiens and presented to the WEED partners in Santiago de Compostela a few weeks ago, is one very good example of the kind of activities we need to develop.

The presentation from Amiens about the Optimizing Access to Training for Women project is available from the [WEED website](#).

WEED PARTNERS' NEWS

Women in Science & Technology

The Santiago Local Support Group of the WEED project organised a conference on “Women in the path of knowledge and innovation”. The conference took place on 6 May 2010, with María Ángeles Sallé Alonso as the main speaker. Around 40 people took part in the event.

Ángeles Salle, President of Fundación Directa and Director of EnRed, is an expert in gender equality. A graduate in Politics and Sociology from the University of Madrid, Ángeles Salle has worked extensively as an adviser to public and private sector institutions on issues of employment, local development and gender equality.

The conference addressed a number of important questions, including:

- Do we need more women in science?
- How can we more successfully promote knowledge exchange between the academic and the business world?
- How can we interest more women in taking up science?

The conference participants identified a range of economic and technical reasons why it is important to have more women working in science. They concluded that the main reason is that science and technology lose other perspectives, other views on nature and the world when women are excluded.

Compostela Activa

The Compostela Activa programme supports enterprise development in Santiago de Compostela through subsidies to help entrepreneurs start up new businesses. To promote gender equality, projects promoted by women entrepreneurs receive higher priority and can be awarded a higher subsidy. Last year, Compostela Activa supported the creation of 25 new companies, of which 12 were led by women.

The Compostela Activa programme also organises a contest for new business ideas, which includes a category for business projects promoted by women. Last year, two woman entrepreneurs received awards of €4,000 for their businesses from this programme; O Pazo das Musas, a music store in the old part of the city, and Cultureka, a company specialising in events organization, exclusive gifts and creative solutions for companies and individuals (www.cultureka.es).



O Pazo das Musas receives an award

The Compostela Activa programme supported the Conference for Entrepreneurs which took place in Santiago in May 2010. The conference was attended by more than 300 people who heard from experts in business competitiveness and entrepreneurship. The event was followed by a networking lunch, attended by more than 100

entrepreneurs, business people, and public officials. The event was a highly successful way of supporting competitiveness and innovation of companies through promoting collaboration between the business sector, public sector and the academic world.

We welcome news from WEED partners on any items of interest to our newsletter readers. If you have news of any events, research, policy developments or other initiatives to support gender equality in employment or enterprise, please send these to Gill Scott, Lead Expert for WEED, for inclusion in the next WEED newsletter.

EU NEWS

Policy

European Council adopts Europe 2020

European leaders meeting in Brussels on 17 June adopted Europe 2020, the new 10 year strategy for jobs and growth in Europe. The five headline targets, to be achieved by 2020, include raising the employment rate for women and men to 75 per cent across the EU (up from the current EU27 average of 71 per cent for men and 59 per cent for women) and lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion. Each Member State is now expected to translate the Europe 2020 targets into appropriate national targets for their National Reform Programmes by autumn 2010. [Click here](#) to read the European Council conclusions.

Research

Good practice in promoting gender equality in the workplace

In May 2010, the results of a European study commissioned by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities were published. The study investigated initiatives such as prizes, awards, labels, charters and rankings aimed at promoting gender quality in businesses and other organisations. The study aimed to analyse and compare the various types of initiative to understand their results, effectiveness, advantages, disadvantages and the benefits for companies. The study also aimed to identify and highlight good practices in promoting gender equality. The study findings are available in the *Synthesis Report*. [Click here](#) to go to the download page on the DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities website.

New survey reveals social impacts of the economic crisis

Results from a new Eurobarometer survey show that one in six Europeans is struggling to pay household bills. The survey shows that the recession has left many Europeans feeling worried and insecure. Sixty per cent of survey respondents believe that poverty has increased in their local area in the past year, and 75 per cent think that poverty has increased in their country. One in six survey respondents reported that they were not confident of keeping their job, while almost half said that they would be unlikely to find a new job within six months if they were laid off from their current position. [Click here](#) to download the survey findings report.

Events

Fourth Equality Summit

The fourth Equality Summit will take place in Brussels on 15 and 16 November 2010. The summit is co-organised by the Belgian Presidency of the European Union and the European Commission with the objectives of promoting equal rights and equal opportunities for all in the EU, and sharing knowledge and experiences to develop more effective ways of counteracting all forms of discrimination. The Summit invites high-level delegates from EU Member States, EEA and candidate countries, international organisations, NGOs, social partners, business sector, media and academia. The Summits help to maintain a high profile for equalities issues within EU policy making. More information is available on the [DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities website](#).

FUNDING

PROGRESS

The European commission is currently calling for proposals under the PROGRESS programme for social experimentation actions. The deadline for proposals is 31 August 2010. The Commission is seeking proposals which will test innovative approaches to meeting social needs in the EU policy areas of active inclusion, housing exclusion and homelessness, child poverty and social inclusion of migrants. Applicant organisations must involve partners from at least one other PROGRESS participating country. More information is available from the DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities [website](#).

Lifelong Learning

The 'policy co-operation and innovation in lifelong learning' programme supports policy development and cooperation in lifelong learning at EU level. The 'accompanying measures' strand of this programme supports study visits for education and vocational training specialists and has a second application round which closes on 15 October 2010. For more information [click here](#).

Youth in Action

The next deadline for Youth in Action applications is 1 September 2010. Youth in Action supports young people's active citizenship through a range of initiatives including youth exchanges, youth initiatives and youth democracy projects. There is no explicit gender equality dimension within the Youth in Action programme, but the programme may still be of interest to NGOs, local authorities and other partners supporting young people's engagement in local economic

development. Applications are made to the national agencies for the Youth in Action programme. [Click here](#) for a list of the national agencies.

Journalist Award “For Diversity Against Discrimination”

This award honours journalists whose work contributes to a better public

understanding of diversity and the fight against discrimination in employment. The deadline for entries is 17 September 2010. Entries must have been published between September 2009 and September 2010. [Click here](#) for more information on how to enter or nominate someone for this award.



CONTACTS

For more information about the WEED project, including our newsletters, workshop reports and presentations and information about all the WEED partners, please visit the [WEED website](#).

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