Training tools to increase the skills of the staff of the structures to train and support women social entrepreneurs

**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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SUMMARY

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WHAT IS THE FOWOSE METHODOLOGY?

FoWoSE stands for Fostering Women's Social Entrepreneurship through the gender mainstreaming of support structures. It is a project led by PULSE together with Women on Top (Greece), Empow'Her (France), Reach for Change (Bulgaria) and Synthesis (Cyprus).

Its objective is to **boost the integration of gender** at **operational** and at **program level** for entrepreneurial ecosystem support structures. To do so, the project will develop methodological and training contents, like this one, which fit women's needs and that will allow supporting organisations to run tailored programs and initiatives for the needs of women social entrepreneurs.

The project will run from November 2021 and will last until December 2023. It will be organised in three different phases:

1. The "**creation phase**" aims to create different tools. First a methodology for organisations to integrate gender equality issues at the structural level -i.e. the manual that you are now reading. Then training tools to increase the skills of staff of the structures and enable them to better train and support women social entrepreneurs. Last, a manual of good practices for gender integration at the structural and program level, designed to help ecosystem structures to be more inclusive towards women social entrepreneurs.

2. The "**testing phase**" which will allow each operational partner to test the methodology and the various trainings tools intended for women social entrepreneurs, in order to give feedback and improve the material before deploying it more widely;

3. The "**dissemination phase**" to spread the training tools with an open-source approach and to raise awareness among the ecosystem support structures.

PHASE 1: Creation phase → **PHASE 2:** Testing phase → **PHASE 3:** Dissemination phase
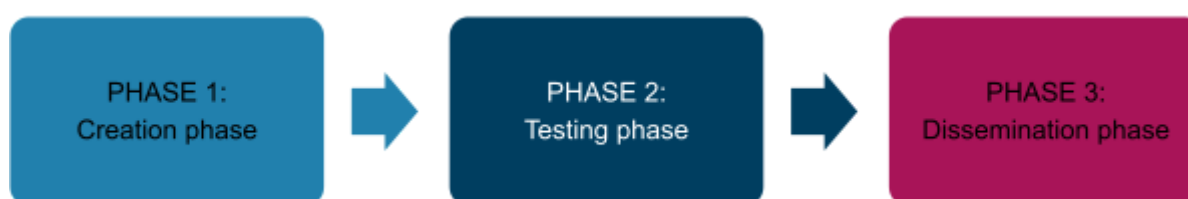
Through this methodological tool we aim to empower each and every entrepreneurial support structure to begin their journey towards gender mainstreaming their policies, practices and operations and support a more and more equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem in the process.

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We are looking forward to receiving your impressions, comments and adaptations of this material in order to make it even more effective and inclusive for all.

This publication has received financial support from the European Union's Erasmus+ programme. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the author and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

FoWoSE is funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union.

ABOUT THE TRAINING TOOLS

The Fowose partners created a **toolkit designed for entrepreneurship support organisations** that offer training, incubation and acceleration programs for entrepreneurs, and especially social entrepreneurs, but need to improve their gender strategy to better meet the women entrepreneurs' needs and run tailored inclusive support programs and activities. It can also target organisations which do not provide support schemes to entrepreneurs yet but are willing to contribute to a more inclusive entrepreneurial sector.

This toolkit **gives you access to turnkey content and teaching tools for your operational teams as well as external professionals, such as** :

- Program managers : to help them identify the key areas of improvement in their programs and ensure that they are not gender-blind.
- Trainers, mentors and coaches : to give them tools and resources to support women entrepreneurs, meet their needs, and deconstruct their own gender biases and stereotypes.

Specifically, the toolkit aims at:

- **Raising awareness on gender inequalities** to better understand the issues faced by women in the entrepreneurial sector in Europe, with the gender expertise of Empow'Her and Women on Top.
- **Acquiring a posture of change agent** to impulse strategic actions within your organisations and to promote the good practices brought forth by this project.
- **Providing methods, tools and resources** that can be adapted and tailored to include and support women entrepreneurs in all partners' programs.

The toolkit is composed of 3 training modules. Click on the links below to access to the full contents:

Module 1. Train the trainers: integrating gender mainstreaming in entrepreneurial support programs: Using training tools and hands on methodology, this module aims at helping program managers and internal / external trainers to deconstruct their own gender biases and integrate gender mainstreaming when supporting women entrepreneurs.

Module 2. Manage gender-inclusive communities of entrepreneurs: Learn more about the key aspects of community building and discover hands-on tools and practices to support your communities of entrepreneurs and engage women.

Module 3. Attract and select women entrepreneurs by using a gender-sensitive communication as well as reviewing your organization's selection processes and criteria: Target more women applicants, through gender-sensitive communication, adapted selection criteria and a long-term investment in developing your pipeline of entrepreneurs.

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MODULE 1: Train the trainers: better take into account women's needs

Summary

We are pleased to present to you the training curriculum, which gathers the framework and the pedagogical contents developed by the teams of Empow'Her, based on the technical experience of practitioners who train women entrepreneurs.

This curriculum is addressed directly to you, programs managers, to help you facilitate the implementation of a gender and leadership training session internally with your service providers and trainers in order to transmit clear and applicable advice for all women wishing to develop or strengthen a sustainable enterprise.

What is this 'training of trainers' about?

The objective of the training of trainers is to strengthen the skills of your teams to integrate women entrepreneurs' needs through your entrepreneurship support programs. As a support structure, your role is to convey more gender inclusive values internally, and to your ecosystem. To do this, you need to train your service providers and staff to transmit these values in their daily support.

Main objectives through this 2-hour course:
- Raise awareness on existing gender biases targeting mentors, coach, experts;
- Identify the right attitude to adopt as a coach / trainer / mentor;
- Give tools to strengthen the leadership of women entrepreneurs.

Key tools included in the training content:
- Activity on identifying our own gender biases and how it affects our role as trainers;
- Activity on deconstructing the gender biases that women inflict upon themselves (tools on building women's leadership);
- Resources on the trainer's posture;
- Tools to increase women's leadership.

This training will enable you to support the recognition of the crucial role that women entrepreneurs play in the sector within your ecosystem - and thus foster the necessary development they need to be successful entrepreneurs.

This synopsis is related to a Powerpoint presentation ➕ [Training of trainers support](#)

Your role as a project/program manager?

As a program manager, your role is to facilitate this 2-hour course session to other internal and external professionals as trainers, coaches, mentors or experts, in order to foster your team's competencies on gender inclusiveness.

Please take ownership of this content and its tools as much as you can and as you wish!

- **Suggested number of participants**: 15 persons.
- **Total duration of the training**: 2 hours including opening, closing and break tim

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CURRICULUM

Course : Train the trainers: better take into account women's needs			
Sequences	**Time**	**Themes**	**Methods and tools**
Opening	10'	· Getting to know each other and building confidence. . Presentation of the course and conditions of the training.	· **Common time:** a quick ice-breaker and dynamic round table discussion!
I. Raise awareness on existing gender biases in the entrepreneurial sector in Europe.	60'	**Key facts about gender biases for women entrepreneurs** . What are the potential barriers for women entrepreneurs to achieve their full potential? European key figures on gender inequalities in the entrepreneurial sector. . What is a gender stereotype? How are gender stereotypes constructed? Learning how to identify and deconstruct gender stereotypes.	· **Active debate** to test individual and collective knowledge and raise awareness about gender biases for women entrepreneurs in Europe. · **Role play** to identify and deconstruct gender stereotypes at play in their entrepreneurs' cohorts. · **Common time** to synthetize key findings. · **Theory** based on experiences and studies.
BREAK	5'		
II. Training tools and resources to strengthen women's leadership.	30'	**Support women entrepreneurs to develop and strengthen their own leadership** . What is a self-limiting belief? What are the sources of limiting beliefs? . Transforming limiting beliefs to strengthen self-confidence. . Tools to help trainers develop and increase leadership styles amongst entrepreneurs.	· **Workshop in subgroups** to identify origins of women's self-limiting beliefs in your support programs. · **Workshop in subgroups** to define and increase leadership. · **Common time** to synthetize key findings. · **Theory** based on experiences and studies.
III. What posture should I take as a supportive professional towards women entrepreneurs?	20'	**The ideal posture as a supportive professional towards women entrepreneurs** . Adopting a 'process consultant' approach: key tools to develop active listening and humble guidance, working alongside women to co-find solutions to their needs.	· **Workshop in duo** to test active listening. · **Common time** to synthetize key findings. · **Theory**.
Closing	10'	Wrap-up of key learnings and ensuring that the training has met participant's expectations.	· **Common time:** a closing dynamic round table discussion!

OPENING OF THE TRAINING: LET'S START!

00:05 **INTRODUCTION**

Opening welcome:

- Welcome everybody and present yourself in a few words.
- About the project: Support actors can play a major role in enabling women to have the same opportunities and conditions for entrepreneurship as men. The objective of this training is to strengthen your competencies to integrate women entrepreneurs' needs through your entrepreneurship support programs. As a trainer, you need to be sensitive to gender inequalities for a better understanding of the issues facing women entrepreneurs. You need to acquire a posture of change agent and propose activities and tools adapted to women's specific constraints.
- About the training rules: Before starting, let's define together the few rules to ensure the environment required for the training is met : free speech, active participation and sharing, no judgments, constructive feedback, confidentiality and cell phones off.

00:10 **ICEBREAKER**

Objectives:
· Getting to know each other and building confidence.
. Presenting the course and conditions of the training.

Guidelines:

- <u>Say:</u> Let's start this training with a fun game that will allow us to warm up and meet each other!
- Divide the group of 15 people in 5 sub-groups of 3 people (to adapt regarding the size of your group).
- <u>Ask (10')</u>: Each group has 10 minutes to find 10 things they have in common, excluding factors related to physical appearance and discouraging elements relating to work. Then, one person from each group will read the list to the whole room.

Additional info:

This allows the groups to get to know each other as they will inevitably reveal things about themselves. This may require a time limit as once everyone gets talking they're bound to find lots in common or be intrigued about how they are so different.

MODULE 1: Raise awareness on existing gender biases in the entrepreneurial sector in Europe

I. What are the potential barriers for women entrepreneurs to achieve their full potential?

00:15 ACTIVE DEBATE

Objectives:

· Testing knowledge on gender biases in the Entrepreneurial sector.

. Raising awareness about gender biases for women entrepreneurs in Europe.

Guidelines:

- **Step 1 :** Based on the [Training of trainers support](#) - slides x to x, you choose one statement in the list and you ask the whole group to position themselves in the room according to their answer to the statements that will be made. Divide the room in two by an imaginary line. On one side, the part of the room corresponds to a "yes", on the other, to a "no". Below, there is a list of entrepreneurial gendered statements, and you can also create your own.
  Step 2 : Once people have agreed on their position, ask them to argue their position. To do this, give the floor to one person at a time - alternating from one side of the line to the other in turn. Only one argument is made at a time.
  Step 3 : Stop the discussion when time is up or when the arguments have been exhausted. After the debate you can wrap-up and complete with the proposed answer tracks depending on the statement you choose.

- <u>Say (30 sec)</u>: One side of the room corresponds to "agree", the other one" disagree". You have 10 seconds to position yourself in the room according to the following statement:

  . Statement #1: Funders can perpetuate gender biases and will tend to fund more male-led initiatives ;
  . Statement #2: Women entrepreneurs are more kind to create a sustainable impact when starting a business ;
  . Statement #3: Specific entrepreneurial methods and tools are needed as a leverage to increase women competencies ;
  . Statement #4: Lack of self-confidence is the first obstacle for women entrepreneurs to develop their business ;
  . Statement #5: Most of women are willing to join in a program dedicated to women entrepreneurs only ;
- <u>Say (10'):</u> One by one, you can say one sentence to defend your opinion on the topic.
- <u>Conclude with the answer tracks (5').</u>

. Some highlights of women social entrepreneurial sector in Europe:

. Although women make up 52% of the total European population, only 34% of the European Union self-employed and 30% of start-up entrepreneurs are female.

. Providing women with equal opportunities could create $160 trillion in wealth from better use of human skills.

. Only 1% of venture capital investment in 2021 was pulled in by female entrepreneurs.

. 76% of female entrepreneurs bring societal attitudes and cultural norms influence to the core of their business strategy.

. 63% of the respondents identified the lack of self-confidence as one of the most important obstacles for women to develop their entrepreneurial activity.

. 87% of the participants are willing to join in a programme dedicated to women only.

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. Statement #1: → *Answer track: Women have the capacity to improve their own economic status and make valuable contributions to society – if they are given equal opportunities. According to The European Investment Bank, providing women with equal opportunities could create $160 trillion in wealth from better use of human skills. Women are particularly underrepresented in venture capital. Even when they do create a startup, women have trouble getting funding. Female entrepreneurs pulled in only a tiny fraction – 1% – of venture capital investment in 2021. WHY ? On the one hand because 92% of these venture capital firms are represented by men, making the economic and financial system predominantly run by and for men. In addition, some studies show that men have more social connections that allow them to access business opportunities, information and contacts than women. HOWEVER, despite receiving less than half of the investment capital of their male peers, female-founded companies deliver twice as much revenue per dollar invested! <u>Read more.</u>*

. Statement #2: → *Answer track: According to the <u>2020 BNB Paribas Global Entrepreneur Report</u>, 76% of female entrepreneurs bring societal attitudes and cultural norms influence to the core of their business strategy. Women are not necessarily the guarantors of sustainable development (-as it should be a human concern), but they are generally more aware of it, and their businesses are mostly oriented towards education, social welfare and employment because, as well as they are ver-represented in these professions. This ecological and social awareness is not innate. It is linked to the gendered roles that our society attributes to them (cf. gender stereotypes part of this training). For instance, with the COVID crisis - we have seen how women play a major role in the "Care" sector. Nevertheless, female social entrepreneurs remains low (around 30% as in classical entrepreneurship): i.e. women when they start entrepreneurship will be more likely to consider the impact they can generate, but few of them really concretise their business idea/project.*

. Statement #3: → *Answer track: It is noted that often the support offered to entrepreneurs is not optimal for women entrepreneurs because these activities are not adapted to their specific constraints. Women entrepreneurs will sometimes be prevented from participating in business development programs for a range of reasons that support structures don't always anticipate. For example,*

- Women are likely not to enter a competition if they are competing with men.

- They may drop out of a training program if the schedule prevents them from fulfilling family obligations or requires them to travel long distances.

- The difficulty may also lie with support structures that do not have a good analysis of the constraints of women entrepreneurs.

. Statement #4: → *Answer track: According to a survey led by Empow'Her in 2019 in Europe, towards 1000 women social entrepreneurs, 63% of the respondents identified the lack of self-confidence as one of the most important obstacles for women to develop their entrepreneurial activity. As seen in the previous exercises, women entrepreneurs can strongly suffer from self-confidence because it prevents them from*

valuing themselves, moving forward, projecting and creating positive change for themselves. The lack of self-confidence is rooted in a patriarchal society that tends to constantly minimise and question women's voices, invisibilise them, and demean them. Women have come to accept this lack of legitimacy and self-esteem, and many of them censor themselves, thus limiting their power to think and act.

. Statement #5: → *Answer track: Women are demanding specific training on entrepreneurship and soft skills to run their business. According to a study conducted by EH on 1000 women social entrepreneurs in 2019, 87% of the participants are*

willing to join in a programme dedicated to women only. A programme dedicated to women only provides a privileged space for listening, sharing and sisterhood where common difficulties can be addressed and levers found to counter them. Moreover, more and more donors are paying attention to the gender dimension, and are funding activities and training programmes dedicated to women. At the same time, it's also important that there is not only single-gender support (reflecting the reality of the sector) but that mixed-gender support can take into account the gender biases that they may implement in their functioning. Read more.

II. Learning how to identify and deconstruct gender stereotypes.

`00:45` `ROLEPLAY`

Objectives:
· Identifying and deconstructing gender stereotypes at play in your entrepreneurs' cohorts, and broadly in the entrepreneurial sector.

Guidelines:
- Say: In the previous part, we have seen some gender stereotypes that women entrepreneurs face, as the entrepreneurial sector is not free of gender biases, women are restrained to reach their full potential because they have limited access to financial support, economic opportunities, networking, information, time, and some of them are still suffering from cultural and religious barriers.
- Open discussion (10'): Do you observe similar gender stereotypes taking place in your entrepreneur's cohorts, or even broadly in the entrepreneurial sector? Give specific examples you observed in your daily life.
- Then, divide the group of 15 people in 3 sub-groups of 5 people (to adapt regarding the size of your group).

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- Roleplay in sub-groups (5'): (Based on the [Training of trainers support](#) - slides x to x) Each group picks one of the 5 scripts. Each script represents a gender issue. 1 person plays the first protagonist, 1 person plays the second protagonist, the others are witnesses. Everyone chooses a role. The scene is played out by the 2 protagonists during 3 minutes.
- Sub-group feedback (5'): The witnesses and the 2 protagonists have 5 minutes to analyze the situation as a group reflection. Ask them to identify 3 difficulties and 3 good practices that they are going to share with the whole group.
- Plenary feedback (25'): Each group has 5 minutes to present their reflection and to discuss with the whole class, including your inputs.

Additional tips to facilitate the conclusion: Here it is important to structure the discussion and control the time available to each group by focusing on the issue(s) raised by the group and trying to answer them using the answer tracks.

. Script #1 "Women's credibility and visibility": You are in a master class with women and men entrepreneurs, as a trainer you lead a group reflection. A woman makes a good point that's unacknowledged, but a man makes the same comment and it is singled out. What should you do?
→ 2 protagonists: a woman, a trainer, and witnesses: other entrepreneurs in the class.
→ *Answer track: it's important to call it out, graciously. As a trainer you can ask the woman to reformulate/repeat her point and ask her more details about it. As a woman, you could say: "as I pointed out and Brian agreed, we should do (…)". Try to not be apologetic and use a collaborative, not accusing, tone. As a witness, you can say, "Jane's idea was fantastic, and I'm glad we're considering it," or, "I'm glad you've suggested an additional idea." Be gracious and low-key, not defensive, because most people are not aware they are discounting your female colleague.*

. Script #2 "Women are not just mothers!" : You are part of a selection jury for an entrepreneurship award. The jury members are all men. A woman entrepreneur presents an ambitious and brilliant idea of business. One of the members asks her: how will she reconcile her business with her family life/kids? As another jury member, how do you react?
→ 2 protagonists: a woman, a trainer/jury member, and witnesses: other jury members.
→ *Answer track: As another member of the jury you can intervene by reframing the scope of the questions and asking your collaborator to make them more project-related. As an entrepreneur you do not have to explain yourself and you are not obliged to answer this private question. You could also say to him that you do not appreciate these remarks.*

. Script #3 "Gender generalities out of context": You are facilitating a training about access to finance. One entrepreneur mentions that "women entrepreneurs are not ready to take risks and always ask for smaller amounts than men". As trainer and participants, how could you

13

react?
→ 2 protagonists: a woman, a trainer, and witnesses: other entrepreneurs in the class.
→ *Answer track: As a trainer it is important that you question the generality of the statement said and provide contextualisation. For example, you could say "not all women are overexposed to this phenomenon, only some. And does this have anything to do with the fact that they have been brought up to be wiser and more shy?"*

. Script #4 "The diversity of role models": You run a leadership training course for your men and women entrepreneurs. To help them define their leadership, you ask them to choose an inspirational person. They all choose known white men as Steve Jobs, Henry Ford and Mark Zuckerberg as examples. As a trainer, how could you react?
→ 2 protagonists: an entrepreneur, a trainer, and witnesses: entrepreneurs in the class.
→ *Answer track: As a trainer, you could first say that it's also possible to choose women leaders as inspirational persons and that there exists a diversity of leaders. A leader is a person who has found its own ability to inspire, influence, motivate and unite around a common goal - no matter what gender they are!*

. Script #5 "Because you are a woman": During a one-to-one coaching session for a female entrepreneur with a coach and a trainer, the coach told your entrepreneur that: "It's not going to be easy with all these competitors in your sector, but you will be successful in your business because of your looks and youth". As a trainer, how could you react?
→ 2 protagonists: a woman, a coach, a trainer and witnesses.
→ *Answer track: The coach thought he was paying her a compliment and didn't realise that it was discrediting her. This injunction of women's appearance is still very present in entrepreneurship and discredits female charisma and leadership. As a trainer, you can tell him confidently and firmly that she should not rely on her looks to succeed, or you can ask him to repeat and elaborate on his thoughts.*

Additional tips to :

+ According to the United Nations, a gender stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by, or performed by, women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and/or make choices about their lives.

+ The fight against sexism is a societal issue, which concerns both women and men. Remaining silent during an attack or not reacting to sexist comments does not minimize the seriousness of the incident and/or the responsibility of the perpetrator.

Victims of sexist situations or gender-based violence often have a built-in sense of guilt and are therefore less likely to confide in others about what they have experienced. Your role is therefore also to show empathy. It is essential not to judge a person who comes forward to confide in you about the sexism and/or aggression they have experienced. It is essential to reassure them and to be a good listener. If the situation is particularly severe and outside your field of competence, refer them to authorized organizations such as associations that could assist them in their procedures - like the AVFT.

| 00:05 | BREAK |

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MODULE 2: Training tools and resources to strengthen women's leadership

I. Understand, identify and transform self-limiting beliefs to strengthen women's self-confidence.

00:20 GROUP WORKSHOP

Objectives:
· Understanding what are self-limiting beliefs, especially in the entrepreneurial sector.
. Identifying origins of women's self-limiting beliefs.
. Helping women transform their limiting beliefs into positive beliefs to gain self-confidence.

Guidelines:
- Say: Previously, we have seen external obstacles that women entrepreneurs face to develop their entrepreneurial activity - due to a patriarchal society that tends to constantly minimise and question women's voices, invisibilise them, and demean them. Women have come to accept this lack of legitimacy and self-esteem, and many of them censor themselves, thus limiting their full potential to thinking and acting. This phenomenon of self-censorship is called the impostor syndrome[1] - which can be translated into limiting beliefs that are repeated to women so that they repeat themselves.

[1] "Imposter syndrome" is the name two psychologists - Pauline Clance and Susanne Imes give to this phenomenon, which have been revealed in 1978 by studying 150 women with degrees who worked in prestigious professions and were recognised for their skills.

- <u>Ask</u>: What is a self limiting belief? Do you have specific examples you observed as a trainer with women entrepreneurs you support?
- <u>Pursue with a definition of limiting beliefs:</u> Often unconscious and false, a limiting belief is a thought that is constructed through our bad life experiences and which influence our emotions, induce our behaviours and determine our judgements about ourselves and others. These are thoughts that we repeat to ourselves so often that we end up taking them as general truths... but which only limit us! For example, saying "I'm not flexible enough to dance" - meaning that I assume that I'll never be able to do it and so I give myself an excuse not to try. Limiting beliefs can come from external (society's opinions) or internal judgements (self-censorship).

- <u>Group exercise (20')</u>: (Based on the [Training of trainers support](#) - slides x to x) Let's help women to uncover their limiting beliefs and transform them into positive ones!
- Divide the group of 15 people in 3 sub-groups of 5 people (to adapt regarding the size of your group).
- Prepare a table with limiting beliefs on one side and positive beliefs on the left.
- <u>Say</u>: As a whole group, list 8 limiting beliefs that women entrepreneurs can have towards themselves. Write them down in the chart in the left-hand column of the table. Then, think on how to deconstruct those beliefs into positive ones. For instance, you could think about counter-examples that prove the opposite of limiting beliefs or lever of action to overcome this limiting belief. Write them down in the chart in the right-hand column of the table.
  <u>Give an example</u>: *Limited-belief : women can be afraid of making a fool of themselves and not being taken seriously when they talk about their business project ⇒ Counter-example: As founders, no one knows their subject better and is better able to talk about your project.*

II. Help women entrepreneurs find and develop their leadership skills.

00:15   LEADERSHIP TOOLS

Objectives:
· Tools to help trainers develop and increase leadership styles amongst entrepreneurs.

Guidelines:

- Group exercise to define and increase leadership (10'): (Based on the Training of trainers support - slides x to x) and ask the whole group:

  1. Identify 15 qualities, strengths, talents you associate with leadership (e.g. by making a list on a flipchart) ;

  2. Identify if any of these are more likely associated with feminine/male attributes (e.g. by marking W for "women" or M for "men" to each line of the list).

- Conclude with leadership's learnings:

  . Gender perception of leadership: Our society recognises men as leaders more than women. This is directly linked to our gendered education and socialisation, which induces the construction of masculine and feminine in childhood and thus arbitrarily assigns character traits to men and women. In fact, the qualities appreciated in a leader are often qualities that we attribute to men: courage, boldness, perseverance, strength, determination, etc.

  . Authentic leadership: There is not just one type of leader, but as many leaders as there are personalities. A leader is a person who has found its own ability to inspire, influence, motivate and unite around a common goal.
  It's essential to call out a diversity of leaders in your inspirational programs and events as role models, mentors,... to enable all women entrepreneurs to identify themselves as leaders.

  . Leadership styles: Leader can be directive, visionary, collaborative, participative, coach, or all of the above. As a leader, it is more a question of knowing how to navigate through these different postures and adapt your leadership style to the context and the people you are dealing with. A leader must call upon different qualities: active listening, empathy, authenticity, generosity, vision, flexibility, inspiration, agility, boldness, etc.

MODULE 3: What posture should I take as a supportive professional towards women entrepreneurs?

Adopting a 'process consultant' approach: key tools to develop active listening and humble guidance, working alongside women to co-find solutions to their needs.

00:20   ROLE PLAY

Objectives:

· Understanding what could be the right posture and approach to support women entrepreneurs.

. Developing active listening.

Guideline:

- Say (5'): According to Edgar Schein[2], there are 3 forms of helping interaction that involve different behaviours depending on whether you adopt an expert, doctor or process consultant posture.
  .The Doctor is diagnosing and prescribing ;

  . The expert is providing information or services ;
  . The consultant is building an equitable relationship.

  As a support actor, you must adopt a Consultant approach which is based on a communication process, by clarifying what kind of help is needed. The content of the client/beneficiary's request cannot be ignored, but the helper can focus primarily on how the interaction is

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[2] 'Helping' book by Edgar Schein

occurring by paying attention to demeanor, tone of voice, setting, body language, and any other cues that would signal a degree of anxiety and/or trust. To do so, it's important to pay attention to active listening, asking humble questions, not imposing a method or a bias but rather helping to reformulate. A Consultant should have some required qualities such as:

→ Availability: if you are here for a reason, stay focused and show that you're fully available.
→ Humility: get out of the posture of the condescending 'knower' and try to not create more injunctions with sentences starting with "you should do…"
→ Empathy: put yourself in the other person's shoes in order to understand their needs and constraints, and be able to respond to them.
→ Non-judgment: don't impose your opinions or solutions. The other person is not me and she has the right to be another person.

- Roleplay in sub-groups and say (5'): (Based on the Training of trainers support - slides x to x) As well as being an active-listener, which is one of the most important qualities required to address women entrepreneurs's needs. Are you a good listener? Let's practise it!
- Ask the groups to pair up.
- One person will play the interlocutor, the other the receiver. The interlocutor has 3 minutes to express a need/to talk about a random topic by putting herself in the shoes of a woman entrepreneur. The receiver must not react to respect the principle of active listening.
  → *You can pick a theme for your 3-minute talk at the list of women's needs from the previous matching game.*

- Conclude with: An active-listener is:

→ Facing the speaker and making eye contact and having an open posture (don't cross your arms which can make you look 'closed' or defensive.
→ "Listening" to non-verbal cues too: being aware of body language (voice, tone, gesture).
→ Don't interrupt or show frustration towards the other person, don't give the impression that you think you're more important, or that you don't have time for what they have to say.
→ Listening without judging, or jumping to conclusions but showing you're listening by nodding your head, smiling and making small noises like "yes" and "uh huh", to show that you're encouraging the speaker to continue.
→ Don't impose your opinions or solutions: a supportive ear can be much more rewarding than telling someone what they should do.
→ Asking questions, paraphrasing and summarising like repeating what has been said to show that you understand it.

DON'T : an active-listener should avoid dysfunctional attitudes, such as pseudo-listening, projective listening or either selective listening.

Closing the training!

00:10 WRAP-UP

Closing speech:

- Thanks to the group for its participation!
- Ask for a round of table : one thing you keep with you and start implementing during your training?

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Questions to ask yourself before starting this module:

- **Evaluate where you stand** in terms of community building : do you have a community-building strategy ? Who takes part in your communities ? What do you offer ?
- **Adopt a gender lens** when analyzing your community-building strategy : do women take part in this community-building process ? Are you able to measure their contribution ? Do women in your programs express a need for community-building or for building their own community ? Do you include gender and women's needs in the general management of your community?

Who is this module for ?

The module targets project managers and officers who work alongside entrepreneurs to help them thrive. Some organizations also hire community managers, who can also benefit from this module.

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

✅ Understand the importance of community building and peer-support to promote women in entrepreneurship (part I) ;

✅ Strengthen your knowledge on how to create a gender-inclusive community (part I) ;

✅ Learn how to set up turnkey events showcasing women entrepreneurs (part II).

Objectives of this module:

- Understand the key aspects of community building while adopting a gender lens
- Acquire tools and good practices to develop, engage and sustain an entrepreneurial community by taking into account women entrepreneurs' needs ;
- Strengthen the bonds between women entrepreneurs of your programs by creating and managing sustainable communities as well as offering networking opportunities ;
- Acquire online and offline packaged resources to run events which bring forward women entrepreneurs.

I. Creating a more gender-inclusive community of entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurial communities allow entrepreneurs to grow their businesses. According to the WeBarometer in 2021, "networking programs and mentoring programs" are the top two types of enterprise support required for women entrepreneurs, as it provides access to economic and financial opportunities, tips and advice based on shared experiences, as well as useful connections for future collaboration or sale.

In the same way, members who belong to a community can contribute to and become actors in the dynamics of the community. For entrepreneurs, it results in strengthening their sense of belonging, accessing new opportunities and diminishing the feeling of loneliness.

Having a gender lens in your community allows women to contribute more and access new business opportunities useful to their entrepreneurial initiatives.

1. Why is it important to encourage women's participation within your community?

Women entrepreneurs tend to have smaller and more informal networks than their male counterparts, because as research shows - women are often excluded from influential '*old boy's networks*', historically built by and for men (Aldrich, 1989; Blisson and Rana, 2001; Hamouda et al., 2003; Manolova et al., 2006). The main obstacles are :

- Lack of time due to family responsibilities ;
- Lack of credibility ;
- Financial cost ;
- Geographical distance and ;
- Lack of information on existing networks.

Meetings are often informal at times and in places that women are not very comfortable with. Moreover, men's behavior can sometimes stigmatize women's entrepreneurs. Consequently, women are less likely to interact with individuals who control key resources (Brush et al., 2004), and they are also less inclined to join business associations, special interest groups and other formal large networks (Klyver, 2011).

The feeling of loneliness is particularly strong among women entrepreneurs and is an impediment for women to take action. A French study entrusted by Adie to the Egæ group in 2022 shows that 1 of the 5 major obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs is the lack of support from their relatives. Sometimes, it may be a simple injunction from the spouse not to encroach on the time devoted to the family, or a doubt expressed by a relative about their skills and their chances of success. A project supported by family and friends is more likely to succeed.

Among the barriers for women to participate in your community is the lack of female role models in the entrepreneurial sector and its networks, making women's contribution much less visible than male ones.

As a support structure, you play a crucial role to ensure the contribution of women entrepreneurs in your community, by providing equal ressources, opportunities, connections and information, and by ensuring that you promote their success stories to the same extent as their male counterparts.

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2. Ensure your community is a safe space for women

Making a community more inclusive begins with paying attention to the gender discrimination that can occur among community members. It is important to create a safe space where women feel heard, considered and legitimate. A safe space where the needs and constraints of women entrepreneurs are known to all. To do so, here are some tips and good practices you can implement:

A. **Ensuring a strict parity among entrepreneurs of your community** (*def. means that men and women are represented equally*) allows an equal representation of men and women within your community and a clear voice given to women entrepreneurs.

B. **Developing a community charter**, which incorporates gender equality principles and ensure that all members respect it. For example, this charter can contain:
   - Equal speaking time between men and women during meetings.
   - Paying attention to highlight both male and female role models.
   - Recall the founding principles of the community such as : mutual aid and inclusiveness, empowerment, etc.
   - Ensure that all members commit to some key gender equality principles, such as not engaging in discriminatory or sexist behavior, fighting against gender stereotypes, ensuring an equal representation of men and women, raising their voice against sexist and sexual harassment, etc.

C. **Implementing gender-sensitive internal policies and training,** which allow all staff to be gender aware and sensitive in order to provide a caring framework, aligned with your organisation's values. It could be done by asking your trainers to fulfil the first module of the toolbox or to follow a specific training on gender biases. It is also advisable to identify "gender focal points" among the entrepreneurs in your community who will be responsible for ensuring that the main values mentioned in the charter are respected.

D. **Setting up a hotline to deal with harassment issues or gender-based violence** open to all entrepreneurs, with clear information and communication on how to seize this mechanism.

3. Levers to make your community inclusive

Creating a more "gender-inclusive" community means reaching out for different profiles of entrepreneurs and making sure that their needs are taken into account. Your community must be able to welcome all!

There are a number of parameters to consider to ensure gender-inclusiveness in your community of entrepreneurs - and to maximise your chances of fostering equality values and practices. To do so, here are some tips and good practices you can implement :

A. **Offering inclusive events to your community :** reach out to the entire entrepreneurial community by identifying topics which will resonate for everyone, and answer to women's needs and constraints without stigmatizing them through "women's topics". **Furthermore, inclusion is not just a matter of gender, but must also take into account other intersectional criteria to cover the different needs that women may encounter.** To do so:
- Choose an inclusive topic -*such as: → "Overcome the impostor syndrome to launch an entrepreneurial venture." → "Surround yourself with the right people and unite around your project." → "Investing personally in your company: a false good idea?"*
- Invite systematically women experts/entrepreneurs - especially in fields where women are less visible (such as fundraising strategies for example). Ensure that you respect the rule of having at least 50% of women speakers in every panel you organize. NB: time preparation with your panelists is important to avoid any gender bias prior to the event.
- Dedicate time on the agenda for networking activities and make sure that it has been announced early enough, and that you take into account time constraints to suit most of the entrepreneurs. For example, attending evening events can sometimes be more difficult for women, who are still mostly in charge of child care duties.

B. Fostering peer to peer support : value mutual aid between your entrepreneurs, through dedicated [peer-to-peer support sessions](), sharing resources, creating mentorship and 1o1 exchanges between entrepreneurs who previously took part in your programs and new ones

C. Adopting gender-sensitive communication : choose the right canal and tone, use inclusive writing in your social media posts and disseminate your information on both mixed and women-only networks.

D. Provide child care facilities and make sure the timing of your events fit women's availability - as women are still mostly in charge of childcare duties, evening slots are for example not generally the best times for women to engage in networking activities.

4. Set-up some non-mixed events when required

Women-only business networks have emerged to provide solutions to the problems raised earlier. Their number has exploded in the last ten years because there is a real demand from women. These networks make it possible to address issues that would not be addressed in mixed environments. It provides a caring, supportive and sorore environment. Women can talk about their specific constraints, the obstacles they encounter in the sector and share tips. To do so, some tips and good practices you can implement:

A. **Create a women-only group** within your mixed gender cohort. For instance, it could be done by creating a professional Whatsapp or Slack group - where women of your cohort can share day-to-day issues, needs, opportunities, ambitions, etc. You can

also open a women-only mentoring activity in which past classes can accompany current participants.

B. **Create meeting opportunities dedicated solely to women** of your program/community - such as:
→ *A conference that invites women experts only.*
→ *A networking event with investment groups that offer a women-only fund.*
→ *A co-development workshop" to encourage mutual support between women.*
→ *A co-development workshop" to encourage mutual support between women.*
→ *A women circle with a certified coach so that women can confide in her about their professional difficulties as women, find comfort and leave with applicable advice.*

As seen previously, you can also ensure women's contribution to mixed events if you have taken into account their needs and expectations. It is advised to not stigmatize women by opening the events targeting supposedly "women's issues" only to them, as male entrepreneurs can also face the same difficulties and challenges.

However, non-mixed events can sometimes be needed for women to connect with a network of peers and share some difficulties they might not address in a mixed group of entrepreneurs.

Find more examples to implement in the next part of the module.

II. Examples of gender-sensitive events you can organise

You will find below a co-development workshop designed, tested and implemented by Empow'Her to encourage mutual support between women, that you could replicate in your own organisation.

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Objectives

1. Strengthen the bonds between women entrepreneurs through co-development techniques;

2. Help women entrepreneurs find solutions to their entrepreneurial issues drawing upon collective knowledge and experience

3. Allow women entrepreneurs to envision their projects from a different perspective

At the end of the training, you will be able to

☑ Run a 2-hour workshop, for 6 to 20 women entrepreneurs, with the objective of connecting, challenging each other and getting their projects off the ground

☑ Discover an innovative format, which combines sisterhood and collective intelligence

☑ Access this ready-to-use, transferable and replicable workshop that you can run

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Before you start

- This methodology is a tool that can be used to **nurture your community and help the women entrepreneurs of your program.**

- In order to best grasp the concept of co-development and best facilitate a session, **please take the time to read the following slides regarding the framework of a co-development session and the different roles and responsibility of each party.**

4

Understanding the co-development methodology

Co-development is a **methodology of collective intelligence** that allows each person to solve his or her challenges and problems by benefiting from the views and experience of others.

The objective of co-development is to **create learning communities** in order to improve one's practices by relying on real situations, and by taking advantage of the multiplicity of views and a structured reflection process.

LEARN to be more effective by finding new ways of thinking and acting, learning to help and being helped

RELY on knowledge acquired through experience and practice, which cannot be formalised or taught

CONSIDER your peers as experienced and committed people, to be part of a group where there is trust and solidarity

REFLECT on the action, by forcing oneself to take a step back, to see differently with the insight of one's peers

What co-developpement is not

Entrepreneurship training

The idea is not to train on a topic or to share theoretical notions, it is a moment of **sharing practices and feedback**. **There is no trainer,** but a facilitator!

Individual coaching

This is not the coaching of a woman or an entrepreneur, it is a moment of collective step back that allows a sense of belonging and a dynamic of mutual support to emerge.

A networking meeting

The aim here is not to "network" but to collectively address the problems encountered by each participant and to identify solutions to meet their challenges.

6

Step by step instructions to a Sisters Act gathering

- ## For a group of 6 to 20 women

- ## For 90 minutes to 120 minutes

You can adapt the timing depending on the size of the group :
90 minutes for small groups under 10 women and 120 minutes for larger groups.

7

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Before you start : Set a framework

Privacy   **Kindness**   **Sharing**   **Commitment**

Essential rules

- Participants must be convinced that **they can learn from each other**
- **Caring and mutual support** are the basis for a well-functioning co-development group
- Participants must be **committed to the proces**s: it is based on solidarity and mutual support.

Get to know the roles in each session

The problem bearer

- Introduces a problem she is facing
- Listens to the consultants' suggestions
- Commits to an action

The consultants

- Listen to the issues
- Provide a fresh perspective and feedback
- Suggest avenues of action by adopting a supportive posture

The facilitator

- Guarantees the methodology
- Frame the exchanges
- Keeps track on time
- Focuses on the process and not on the content

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Focus on the facilitator 🧢

31

DO'S

- Ensures participants understand the objectives of co-development

- Maintains the framework of trust, sharing and benevolence

- Keeps track of time and methodology, indicates when to move on to the next step, reminds the instructions if necessary

DON'T

- Does not intervene on the content of the exchanges, does not make judgments on the problem or on the solutions provided

- Ensures that the floor can circulate among participants

Focus on the consultants 🤼

DO'S

- Adopts an active listener's posture.

- Ask humble questions.

- Make eye contact.

DON'T

- Judge or jump to conclusions.

- Impose your opinions or solutions.

- Show frustration.

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Focus on the problem bearer

DO'S

- Adopt an active listener's posture when it is the consultant's time to speak.

- Be transparent and as expensive as possible when presenting your issue and answering questions regarding it.

DON'T

- Do not ask technical questions.

- Do not ask for questions that require a certain extent of expertise.

Examples of questions
"Do I have to choose between my two current targets?"
"What do you think of the organization of my department?"
"How do you anticipate customer demands?"
"What process should I put in place to improve this aspect of my project?"
"How do I manage my priorities?"
"How can I motivate my employees?"
…

Summary of the session

This session is for a group of 6 women for a timing of 120 minutes

| PART 1 | Ice breaker | 15' |
PART 2	Setting the framework and defining the issues in a big group	30'
PART 3	Finding solutions to the problem bearer's challenges in smaller groups	45'
PART 4	Last reflections, summaries and wrap-up in a big group	25'

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ICE BREAKER

15'

Always start with an ice-breaker that will energize the participants and promote a climate of trust.

Ask people to stand one in front of the other. They have to find similarities in their entrepreneurial journey with one another, only once you have found that similarity can you move to the next person.

The goal is to find as many similarities as possible with the most people.

At the end everyone shares with the group the similarity that most surprised them.

14
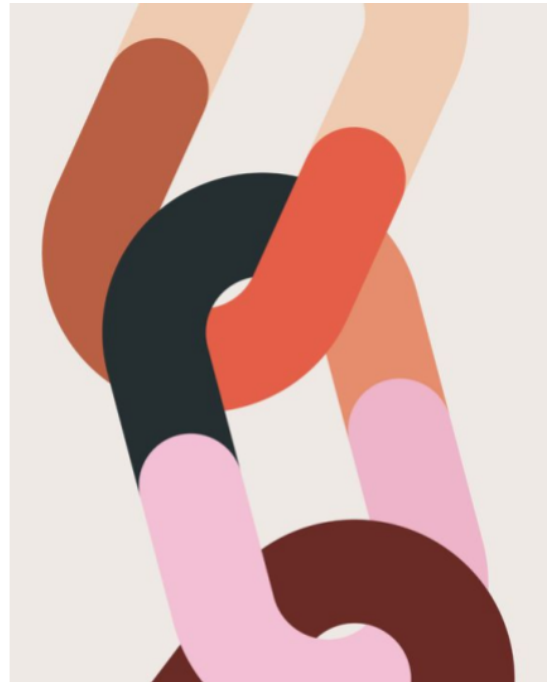
CO-DEVELOPMENT

Step 1 : setting the frame and finding the issues

30'

> The whole group sitting **in a circle.**

- The facilitator **sets the framework of the activity and clarifies the roles** (the problem bearer, the facilitator, the consultants), the steps to follow, and the topics that can be discussed.

- Individually, each woman entrepreneur takes the time to **reflect on her issues** or topics she would like to discuss. Write one (or two if its a small group) down on a post-it and sticks it on the board.

- The **facilitator reads out each problem** on the board.

- Each entrepreneur presents her issue for 2 minutes.

- As a group, **a collective decision** through a vote is made on the topics that will be addressed during the session. The facilitator can also group together issues that are similar with the approval of the problem bearers.

15

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Step 2 : Present and clarify the challenge

15' 🕐

Groups are divided into **smaller groups**
Each group is composed of **a problem bear** and between **two to four consultant.**
For a group of 6 women : subgroups can be divided into 2 for a group of 6 women with 1 problem bearer and 2 consultants per group.
The number of problem bearers can go up to 5 for subgroups of 4 people including 1 problem bearer and 3 consultants.

The Problem bearer presents uninterrupted. • **Current situation**: What key challenges are you up against? • **Intention**: What future are you trying to create? • **Question**: Where do you need input or help?	5'
• Consultants address gaps in understanding by **asking clarifying questions**, no discussion yet.	10'

Step 3 : Introspection, Reactions and Feedback

30' 🕐

Within the **smaller groups.**

• **The consultants share feedback**, ideas and actions to address the issue. The problem bearer does not intervene and takes notes	20'
• The problem bearer **summarizes** what she has heard and in relation to the consultants feedback, **commits to first actions to be launched**.	10'

WRAP-UP

Step 4 : Summaries and wrap up
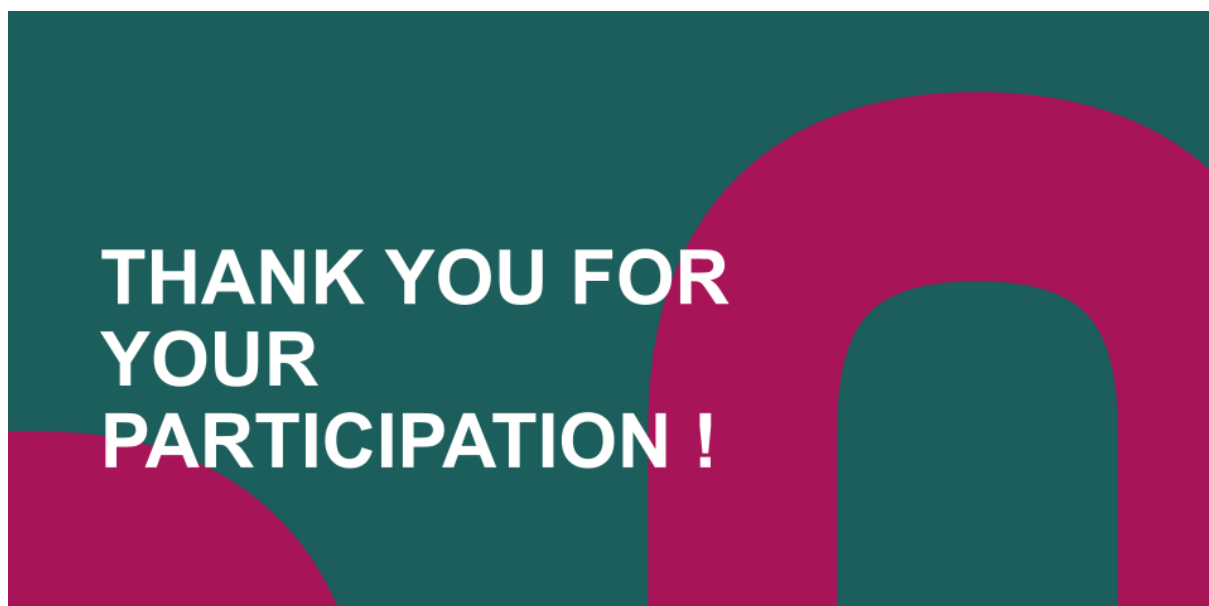
25'

Everyone in a big group **sitting in a circle.**

• Each problem bearer gives **a quick summary** of what was said and her first actions.	10'
• Go around the circle and **everyone says what they will keep from the session**.	10'
• **Closing remarks** by the facilitator: Thanks and acknowledgment.	5'

18

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION !

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Questions to ask yourself before starting this module

- What are your key selection criteria ?
- Do you collect data on the ratio of men/women applicants and the final % of women vs men in your programs ?
- Does your communication strategy target both men and women entrepreneurs or is it gender-blind ?
- Do you run specific actions to develop your pipe of entrepreneurs all year long ?

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

✅ Identify what might refrain women from participating in your programs (or on the contrary why they meet their needs) ;

✅ Deconstruct some selection biases that could be disadvantageous towards women (parts II and III);

✅ Understand how to better take into account women's needs in your support programs (part IV).

Who is this module for ?

This module targets project managers and directors, or any person in a leadership position in the organization, who can influence and change the processes in place. How we target entrepreneurs and who we target is a very strategic position for support organizations, and to change them, it might require the approval of the top management team as well as the governing body.

Objectives of this module:

- Strengthen your communication strategy to make it more gender inclusive ;
- Build selection processes which deconstruct gender biases ;
- Design a support program that fits women's needs.

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I. Adopt an attractive and suitable communication strategy towards women entrepreneurs.

1. Communication parameters to ensure that you do not reinforce the gender gap, but rather promote the participation of women in the sector.

According to the WeBarometer, women have generally less access than men to information because they are often excluded from mixed-networks. Furthermore, 'poor support systems' from their families and relatives is highlighted as a critical issue preventing women from starting a business, as well as 'unwillingness to take risk' and 'low self-confidence'. Even though women tend to resort more to support schemes when they become entrepreneurs, they find it more difficult to take the leap.

For these reasons, and to encourage more women to engage in an entrepreneurial journey, it is essential that communication strategies target them in an attractive and non-stigmatizing way.

How to do so ? There are general parameters to consider in developing inclusive communication that enables you to attract women entrepreneurs.

NB : in the following paragraphs, the objective is not to install communication tools which target only women and exclude men, but rather to adapt your communication strategy to include all entrepreneurs.

- ● **What is gender-responsive communication?**

Gender responsive communication: is addressing the different needs, perspectives and representations of all genders. In order to be responsive, activities and actions need to go beyond increasing awareness and take action to reduce inequalities and promote gender equality. Gender responsive communications include Gender-sensitive and gender-neutral languages in its practices.

Gender-neutral language: is not being associated with any particular gender, such as using the same terminology when referring to all genders. *Ex: Say "Welcome, everyone" instead of "Welcome, ladies and gentlemen."*

- ● **How to adopt a gender-responsive communication?**

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality's toolkit, adopting a gender-sensitive communication:

- Make it easier to see important differences between the needs of women and men;
- Challenge unconscious assumptions people have about gender roles in society;
- Lay the foundation for greater gender equality throughout society;
- Raise awareness on how language affects our behaviour;
- Make people more comfortable with expressing themselves and behaving in ways that were once not considered 'typical' of their gender.

To get concrete examples on how to implement those tips, see the communication kit below.

A checklist to ensure gender-responsiveness was applied in your communication plan:

- Gender-sensitive language is applied and gender-neutral terms are used.
- Women and men are portrayed in non-stereotypical roles.
- Diverse stories of different gender groups are included.
- Informed consent has been obtained and recorded.
- Barriers to accessing information have been identified and addressed for all gender groups.
- Communication activities have been participatory and gender-balanced.

2. Communication kit

The communication kit is a guide that gives you some concrete examples of impactful visuals or posts that you can publish on social networks, in order to enrich your pipeline of female entrepreneurs through your selection process.

It contains:

- Some key wording elements to target all entrepreneurs ;
- Examples of visuals that take into account a diversity of entrepreneurs ;
- Standard posts to share through social media.

The communication kit is an inspirational template. To use it, modify the program text, the date of submission, integrate photos of your own alumnae, and adapt the format to your graphic charter.

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TEXT PROPOSAL FOR SOCIAL NETWORK POST

[✊ LIKE ALIX, BECOME AN IMPACTFUL LEADER!]

" When I joined the Boost Incub program I came with the strong conviction of transforming the construction industry to make it more respectful of the environment and people. These 6 months of coaching enabled me to achieve this dream and to launch GreenTech! With my associate Farhad we launched in 2022 an enterprise which provided recycled material to the building sector and works with more that 20 partners today."

If like Alix and Farhad, you wish to build a sustainable response to major European social or environmental issues, be part of the next cohort of inclusive makers !

During 6 months of support, you will participate and benefit from a pool of experts specialized in entrepreneurship, which will provide you with concrete tools and personal coaching techniques.

👉 Selection criteria:
✦ Minimum 2 years running your social business ;
✦ Proofs of generate of a positive impact (social/environmental);
✦ Realistic financial forecasts and confirmed customer needs;
✦ The project must takes into account gender in its internal functioning, and/or in its mission towards beneficiaries / clients.

You share our vision? Apply **HERE** before **20th January 2023 midnight.**

More info about our program. @*the support structure*

✳ *Underrepresented entrepreneurs' applications are highly encouraged.*

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CALL FOR APPLICATION

If your will is to create a sustainable response to major European social or environmental issues, we are awaiting your applications !

Why this program aims at crafting inclusive entrepreneurship policies?

✦ If underrepresented entrepreneurs have the same opportunities than men, there would be **+ 35 million entrepreneurs**, 75% of whom are women*.

✦ Access to **finance is the 1st barrier** for entrepreneurs, particularly strong for women.

PROGRAM "BOOST INCUB"

Boost Incub' provides support to any early-stage social entrepreneur in Europe, regardless their gender, origin, race, disability, etc - in the start-up phase who wish to test and validate their offer with their target audience.

During the 6 months of the support, they participate in **masterclasses, individual coaching and networking events!**

FOR MORE INFO

APPLICATION PROCESS

Who? You are a creative and entrepreneurial spirit, who wants to bring social impact and contribute to a more equal and inclusive society.

✳ *underrepresented entrepreneurs' applications are highly encouraged.*

How? Reply to the form before **20TH JANUARY 2023.**

APPLY HERE

* "The Missing Entrepreneurs 2021 - Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment" study by OECD

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HELP US TO SPREAD THE WORD!

Participate in the visibility of our program support, by sharing our call for applications to your network of entrepreneurs and partners. Here are some elements to talk about it around you:

#1 POSITIVE FEEDBACK

" Thanks to Boost Incub' I learnt to recognize my value and gain self-confidence. As a leader, my responsibility is to practice the behavior I want others to follow. "

#2 ATTRACTIVE VISUAL

Example of a visual to download here

#3 CATCHY WORDING

Text proposal for posts on social network to download here

MEET US ON SOCIAL NETWORK
YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE
YOUR INSTAGRAM PAGE
YOUR LINKEDIN PAGE

SOME HASHTAGS
#socialentrepreneurship
#inclusiveentrepreneurship
#entrepreneurshipprogram #callforapplication

YOUR WEBSITE

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II. Build you pipe of entrepreneurs all year long

1. Go fishing for talents!

Beyond your recruitment process, it is essential to build your pipe of entrepreneurs all year long. As mentioned above, women have less access to information than men - and therefore it might be necessary to go and look for them.

Take a look at Euclid Network's initiative "Top 100 women in social entreprise" to find inspiring profiles of women entrepreneurs !

Here is a mapping of stakeholders/support groups/entrepreneurs' entry points : FoWoSe ecosystem mapping sheet - Google Sheets

Tip 1: Monitor the media, the networks of pre-incubation actors, LinkedIn and other platforms dedicated to entrepreneurs to discover new entrepreneur profiles.

Tip 2: Share a database of entrepreneurs with other support actors (and with the approval of the entrepreneurs) to identify the profiles that could most benefit from your support.

Tip 3: Carry out actions "outside the walls" to promote your programs outside the classic entrepreneurship support networks (kiosks, universities, job fairs etc.).

Tip 4: Establish a simple user pathway so that interested women can contact your teams throughout the year to obtain information on upcoming selections (subscription to a mailing list to receive information on the upcoming call for applications or to the organisations' newsletter, access to a contact form on the website, redirection to the upcoming events organised to meet the support teams etc).

2. Setting-up solid partnerships with support structures

Ask for the help of other stakeholders who encompass large communities of women entrepreneurs in order to strengthen the visibility of your call for applications.

Tip 1: Encourage them to share your call for applications - by sending a communication kit with key visuals and wording.

Tip 2: Refer respectively to some candidates who do not match your selection criteria.

Tip 3: Organise inter-community meetings, involve them in your support programmes to strengthen the links.

3. Organise or participate in public events to spread the word

Organise or participate in entrepreneurial public events, such as festivals, summits, etc. Some of the participants may be interested in joining one of your programs.

Tip 1: Participate in large entrepreneurial gatherings to hold an exhibition stall, lead a conference, participate in a speed-meeting with entrepreneurs, etc.

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Tip 2: Organise your own events, if possible in partnership with other organisations, to promote your entrepreneurs and highlight their diversity.

Tip 3: Organise presentation sessions of your programs at the time of the launch of the call for applications, which allow interested entrepreneurs to ask you all their questions.

III. Design a gender inclusive selection process

1. Good practices to take into account gender through the selection process.

NB: Here, we focus on gender inclusion but to promote diversity among entrepreneurial profiles it is important to have a cross-cutting approach and to take into account criteria of social and cultural origin, disability, sexual orientation, etc.

Make sure your gender approach is clear and understandable to participants and partners:

Tip 1: Organize a preparation session with your assessors beforehand to give more information about your selection criteria and the profiles of entrepreneurs you wish to target.

Tip 2: Make your selection criteria clear to participants and partners. For instance, you can create a Q&A document attached to the call for applications, which includes questions about gender sensitivity in your selection process.

Reinforce the diversity of your pipe of entrepreneurs with specific actions:

Tip 3: Offer a free pitch preparation session prior to the selection panel (if any) open to all entrepreneurs who wish to attend

Tip 4: Plan to revive the applicants who have started to fill in their application but have not finished it - or those who have applied but do not dare to come to the oral. Some of them may have become discouraged even though they want to participate in the program (keep a specific attention to women candidates who might have a high drop out rate at this stage of the selection process).

Give priority to collective applications:

Tip 1: Allow all associates (and even teams) to apply to the support programs. Indeed, women founders will tend to privilege collective support for their project rather than individual support targeting them as entrepreneurs.

2. Design gender inclusive selection criteria

The selection process to join a support scheme can be influenced by gender stereotypes at the expense of women applicants. Due to persisting gender norms:

- Women might appear less self-confident and assertive than their male counterparts and might have a tendency to undermine the impact of their projects.

According to a survey led by IntoTheMinds over 840 entrepreneurs in Europe, the motivations to start a business depend on the gender of the entrepreneur:

- The 1st motivation of women is the search for autonomy and flexibility.
- Women business creation is less opportunistic since only 20.1% of them declare to have identified an opportunity on the market (against 32.7% for men).

Men and women do not prepare for the launch of their business in the same way.

- Women tend to do more specific training before starting their business (43.3% compared to 31.8% for men), unlike men who go straight to prospecting potential customers and drawing up a business plan (42.5% compared to 34.6% for women).

In the following paragraph, we suggest different selection criteria that will not be gender-blind. However, these criteria apply to all applicants and we do not advise to have different ones between men and women, as this would further stigmatise them:

- Add gender criteria to assess the impact of the projects presented.
- Value the diversity of motivations to launch a project
- The feasibility of projects must be assessed more strictly.
- Value authentic and inclusive leadership that respects the leadership expression of some women.

Download the full gender-inclusive selecting grid here!

3. Ensure the assessors are aware of their gender biases.

Assessors who are in charge of selecting entrepreneurial profiles may also be subject to gender biases - that is why it is essential to implement gender-responsive selection criteria, and to train assessors in this method.

To ensure that the selection process is gender-inclusive, it is important to raise the assessors' awareness on gender biases and gender equality practices. To do this, you can offer them:

Tip 1: Provide them with a presentation including the content of your program, the profiles of entrepreneurs you are looking for, the selection criteria, the posture to adopt, the questions to ask and not to ask.

Tip 2: Ask the assessors to adopt an empathic and supportive posture to the entrepreneurs, by putting them at ease from the beginning of the interview, listening to them with intention and being open-minded and interested about their background and ambitions.

Tip 3: Define some standard questions that the assessors can ask to explore certain criteria that are important to you - such as: *"What is the composition of your team?" ; " If you measure your impact, do you have a differentiated impact on women and men?" ; "What do you want to bring to the programme? And how do you think the program will meet your needs ?", etc.*

IV. Take into account women's needs in your programs

1. Estimate the needs of women entrepreneurs

In order to be able to respond to the specific needs of women through your training activities, you need to be able to assess them first. It is therefore necessary to give them a space to express themselves, whether online or in person. To do so, you can:

1. **Add questions to the application questionnaire**, to better identify their specific needs of support, including hard and soft skills.
2. **Ask feedback from women entrepreneurs alumnae** to determine what needs to be improved, strengthened, set aside.
3. **Organise a workshop** with a group of potential women entrepreneurs and experts to define their main obstacles and needs.

2. Integrating women's constraints as parameters for ensuring their participation

The primary burden of family responsibilities remains with women. As a result, for ¼ of them, the articulation between personal and professional time represents a major difficulty for the realisation of their project, so that women are twice as likely to give it up as men for this reason. According to Adie study, in 2022 in France 15% of women will stop their project because of a change in their personal situation, compared to 8% of men.

Some tips to integrate women's constraints to design a support pathway that attract them:

Tip 1: Prefer a "modular program" which allows women to choose a course they are interested about and which is matching with their calendar.

Tip 2: If it's operationally possible for your team of trainers, give at least two time slots for the most important classes.

Tip 3: Propose individualised support in addition to group support on specific topics.

Tip 5: Give access to the agenda as soon as the call for applications is communicated, be clear about the time needed to participate in the program.

Tip 6: Emphasise the aspects of networking, mutual aid, access to a support community - and related activities.

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Tip 7: If relevant, propose a focus on supporting the search for finance (one of the main barriers for entrepreneurs, especially women) - or encourage connection to business opportunities.

Tip 8: Develop both face-to-face and online content.