

BEST PRACTICES OF FINNISH GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

SECOND UNECE FORUM OF WOMEN
ENTREPRENEURS

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Background to Promoting Women Entrepreneurship

- A programme of the Finnish Government to promote the equality of genders (adopted by the Council of State on 29 April 1980) during the latter half of the UN's Womens' Decade 1980 -1985
 - ⇒ each ministry was to draw up equality programmes for their own administrative branch and to monitor their implementation
- Entry into force at the beginning of 1987 of an Equality Act, which required efforts to achieve equality between genders both in working life and in society as a whole
- In autumn 1985, the MTI set up a working group called Women and Business Activity
 - ⇒ to ensure consideration of equality aspects in promoting entrepreneurial activity
 - ⇒ to examine how the possibilities of women could be improved and enhanced in entrepreneurial activity

Background to Promoting Women Entrepreneurship

- The report recommended e.g.:
 - organising a national special theme day on establishment of a business of one's own for would-be women entrepreneurs
- The report was completed in spring 1986
 - organising a national theme day on development of a business for women working as entrepreneurs
 - conducting an inquiry in connection with the special theme days in order to collect information on further measures that would be possibly needed
- The special theme days were organised in Tampere on 15 February 1986
 - nearly 800 women participated in the special theme days from all over Finland

Background to Promoting Women Entrepreneurship

- About the results of the inquiry:
 - training was considered the most important means to promote women entrepreneurship
 - management training organised **specifically for women** was especially called for (c. 50% of all respondents)
 - the MTI initiated planning of management training intended for women entrepreneurs and women executives
 - the programme was named as “Ladies’ Business School (LBS)”
 - the first training programme was launched in March 1987
 - more than 20 LBS programmes have so far been implemented; around 600 women entrepreneurs have participated
- On 8 December 1997, the women entrepreneurs that had participated in an LBS programme established the LBS Business Ladies’ Association as a bond between the course participants

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

- obtaining financing
 - reasons:
 - small size of the enterprise
 - lack of suitable public and private modes of financing
 - scarcity of own initial equity capital
 - varied nature of the sectors
 - insufficient knowledge of sources of financing

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

- deficient know-how
 - management, sales and marketing
- lack of experience
- lack of information
 - on regulations, statutes, as well as on public subsidies and loans
- problems of market access
- use of new technology
- lack of networks

Services by T&E Centres Promoting Women Entrepreneurship

1. Financing services

- investment and development aid
- product development loan and aid (TEKES)
- Finnvera plc's women entrepreneur loan
 - to start-up or already operating companies
 - to firms employing 5 persons at most
 - to both manufacturing and service companies (excl. those engaged in agriculture and forestry)

Services by T&E Centres Promoting Women Entrepreneurship

2. Advisory services

- Counsellors for women entrepreneurs

- assist would-be and operating women entrepreneurs in enterprise-specific matters
- support women in starting and expanding business activity
- activate the networking of women entrepreneurs
- promote development of new operating methods that promote women entrepreneurship

Services by T&E Centres Promoting Women Entrepreneurship

- Business Service Points

- advice for start-up and operating companies
 - on evaluation of the business idea, establishment of an enterprise, financing, training and employer obligations
- services by the National Board of Patents and Registration
 - Trade Register notifications, Trade Register excerpts, advice concerning copyright of design, trademarks, utility models and patents
- services provided by an invention adviser
- counselling related to the other services provided by the T&E Centre



Services by T&E Centres Promoting Women Entrepreneurship

- Internationalisation services
 - counselling regarding internationalisation and start-up of exports
 - analyses of internationalisation facilities (“Globaali” Programme)
 - background studies, internationalisation plans and strategies
 - conveying information, sources of information and experts



Services by T&E Centres Promoting Women Entrepreneurship

3. Training and development services

- training programmes for the executives and key persons of SMEs
 - The Ladies Business School Programme
 - launched in spring 1987
 - women executives of SMEs as the target group
 - over 20 programmes with more than 600 female participants
- training of start-up companies
- enterprise-specific training
- branded expert services

Services by T&E Centres Promoting Women Entrepreneurship

- Projects promoting women entrepreneurship
 - ESF-co-funded projects of T&E Centres
 - besides special courses intended for women, **women often represent the majority** in service-sector training programmes (e.g. the tourist industry, the social and health care sector, arts and crafts)

Entrepreneurship Project/Promoting Women Entrepreneurship

1. Statistics on women's entrepreneurial activity to be developed
2. A network of advisers for women entrepreneurs to be established at the T&E Centres
3. Mentor activity related to women entrepreneurship to be expanded
4. A pilot programme of the women entrepreneur network to be launched
5. A brochure on the services available to women entrepreneurs or would-be women entrepreneurs to be drawn up