



GOOD PRACTICE HANDBOOK

YOU CAN DO IT! – NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR WOMEN TO HAVE OWN BUSINESSES

The mission of the project partners was to support disadvantaged women in finding new ways for self-expression through self-entrepreneurship. This happened through exchange of experiences in start-up and management practices offered by women and men, who already set up their creative business. Furthermore targeted women get enriched in creative work methods in crafts & trade at a transnational level.



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme
Grundtvig

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FOREWORD

It is a pleasure for us to present our Good Practice Handbook. The stories and descriptions within the Good Practice Handbook reflect the work of the *You can do it!* project team during the two years project partnership.

In the last 24 months one hundred project partners and learners from eight European countries had the opportunity to travel to six different countries. Each international meeting was a great experience to get to know the culture and people of the particular country, their habits and of course their handcraft techniques and business culture. The study visits on the spot and the personal exchange of experiences between the different learners and project partners allowed us to look beyond the boundaries, to widen our view on cultural diversity and to strengthen our personal and institutional values towards Europe – entirely in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Grundtvig Learning Partnership programme of the European Union.

On the following pages we firstly provide you the aims and objectives of the *You can do it!* project. Then we offer you information on the Grundtvig Learning Partnership of the European Union, without which this project would not have been possible. We also share our experiences with you, which we made during the two years project partnership. The stories in this Good Practice Handbook should inspire and support you by your decision making to create your own business. As you will read in the success stories in the particular chapter, the success precede many challenges. But as you see, the effort pays off. *You can do it!*

We wish all future self-entrepreneur good luck for your start-up!

Your *You can do it!* project team

ABOUT THE *YOU CAN DO IT!* PROJECT

Since the 1970's the number of economically active women increased step by step. Also the ratio of female self-entrepreneurs rose. However women still set up businesses rarely than their male counterpart.

Female entrepreneurs have other occasions to set up businesses. This results from different women-related biographies and personal living conditions. It leads furthermore to the presumption that women set up businesses in another way than men. These businesses have different characters than "male created companies". Female business start-up is conducive to further differentiation of economic culture because the aim to set up micro-businesses covers mostly vacant niche or new markets.

Self-entrepreneurship allows women to work part-time which contributes to a better work-life balance and still provides additional earnings. This way is also seen as a way from unemployment or a resumption of work after long parental leave. Through input of creativity and individuality in female micro-businesses working as self-entrepreneur gives possibilities for self-fulfillment and realization of own personal ideas.

The *You can do it!* Grundtvig Learning Partnership focused closely on different innovative ways how to convert creative competences and skills into monetary outcome and in the same time, balance work and life.

All project meetings organized within the project had three focal points. The first one was study visits and exchange of experiences about handcraft techniques, creative businesses and start ups. The second point was to organize seminars about legal, administrative and management requirements about "how to start up"? The third focus was on organizing practical workshops for the international learners to offer them possibilities to learn new handcraft techniques. The preference by the selection of the techniques for the creative workshops was on the country specific technique of the particular hosting country.

As highlight of the project the *Market of Cultures*, an international public market was organized during the final meeting. The aim of the Market of Cultures was to give all learners from each partner country the opportunity to exhibit their handmade products and get reputation on the international level in an multicultural atmosphere.

ABOUT THE GRUNDTVIG LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

The Grundtvig Programme should contribute to a better understanding of areas of common interest in adult learning, as well as helping to increase awareness of the varied cultural, social and economic situations across Europe.

Launched in 2000, Grundtvig aims to provide adults with more ways to improve their knowledge and skills facilitate their personal development and boost their employment prospects. It also helps to tackle problems associated with Europe's ageing population.

It covers not only teachers, trainers, staff and organisations working in the sector, but also learners in adult education. These include relevant associations, counselling organisations, information services, policy-making bodies and others such as NGOs, enterprises, voluntary groups and research centres.

The programme funds a range of activities, including particularly those supporting adult learning staff to travel abroad for learning experiences, through exchanges and various other professional experiences. Other larger scale initiatives involve, for instance, networking and partnerships between organisations in different countries.

The main objectives of the Grundtvig Programme are to develop innovative adult education and management practices, and encourage widespread implementation. Furthermore the Grundtvig Programme aims to ensure that people on the margins of society have access to adult education, especially older people and those who left education without basic qualifications. To support innovative ICT-based educational content, services and practices are further aims of the programme.

For more information on the Grundtvig Learning Partnership please visit the website of the European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/grundtvig_en.htm

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT PARTNERS

Wisamar Bildungsgesellschaft gemeinnützige GmbH



Wisamar is located in Leipzig, Germany. It provides consultancy, coordination of educational projects, mainly on a European level. It is accredited by the German Institute for Adult Education for carrying out competence analysis in combination with orientation, further education consultancy and job application training. Wisamar cooperates with schools, training centres and different companies. Wisamar is founding member of the European association CO.N.E.CT and was awarded in 2009 for social engagement in the rural surrounding of Leipzig. Wisamar took the role of the coordinators in the *Yo can do it!* Grundtvig partnership. www.wisamar.de

Agentura GAIA o.s.



Agentura GAIA is a civic association, founded in 1997. It seeks ways to cultivate new attitudes toward the environment, equal rights, alternatives to consumption life style. The main programmes of Agentura GAIA are “Green Means Life” – putting the trees back on the streets of towns and village communities; “Women and the Environment” – promoting the feminine principle; “Environment-friendly Conduct Pays” – searching for ways to solve the world-wide environmental crisis. Agentura GAIA offers furthermore coaching and training of management skills, public speaking, facilitation, organisation management and leadership. www.quovadisfemina.cz

Milli Eğitim Sağlık Eğitimi Vakfı - MESEV



MESEV was founded in 1995 and has been executing some important local, regional, national and international project since its establishment. MESEV takes an active role in the vocational education and training but it offers also management seminars and consulting for adults. The working areas of of MESEV are: health care, disability, psychology, ICT for disabled people, trainings for handicapped persons, social integration and elderly care projects. www.mesev.org

Notars Közhasznú Alapítvány



Notars (Womanmate) Foundation was established in 2004. It has a high reputation in Hungary among the women non-governmental organisations. Notars goal is to make the women's equality come about in the societal and economic practice by self-conscious, well-informed, gender-dimensioned women and men. Its mission is to strengthen and continually develop women's enterprises by cooperating with non-governmental organisations, firms and volunteers by means of trainings, programmes, publications, partnerships, consultancy, running networks and through the publicity for entrepreneur and civil women in Hungary and the European Union, together with participating in the establishment and development of self-conscious women's networks, who are capable of validating themselves. www.notars.hu

Eurogems Associazione di Promozione Sociale



Eurogems is a non-profit organisation born in 2005 from Treviso, north-east Italy. It is member of Anna Lindh Foundation and Council of Europe (CoE). Its aims are to manage activities in which youngsters and adults can meet themselves, get to know each other and socialize for civil society empowerment. Key activities of Eurogems are: vocational training, integration of immigrants, consultancies, active integration of people with different abilities and social inclusion and human promotion. It also promote ICT and Multimedia seminars. Eurogems is very active in the frame of integration of disadvantaged groups involving the main stakeholders of the local community for valorisation and dissemination of European best practices through visits, seminars, forum, conferences and newsletters. It manages socio-cultural international projects as Youth in Action, Lifelong Learning, EUROMED and Leonardo da Vinci Mobilities. www.eurogems.eu

Women's Activity Club of Sakiai – Šakių moterų veiklos klubas



Women's Activity Club of Sakiai aims to solve women's occupation, qualification and social problems, develop women's self-expression, encourage self-sufficiency and creativity. It organises seminars, trainings, various cultural events, exhibitions, meetings for local people. Handcraft trainings takes places every year, during which women taught

to make miscellaneous handwork items which are later sold for charitable purposes. Women's Activity Club contributes furthermore to the reduction of social and geographical disjuncture.

Legal Protection Public Benefit Association



Legal Protection Public Benefit Association is registered under the Bulgarian non-profit legal entities Act in October 2007. The seven members of the association are experts with extensive knowledge and expertise in the fields of managements, economics and law, determined to assist the sustainable social, economic, technical, cultural and educational development of citizens and civil society. The goals of the association are: protection of human and civil rights, study and dissemination of European and Euro-Atlantic ideas and values, socialization and economic adaptation of the marginal groups, social and economic integration of young people. The association focuses on taking part in educational projects, creating opportunities to people in unequal status.

Mittetulundusühing Euro Kalliskvid



Euro Kalliskvid is a non-profit organisation from Tallinn. It operates in a socially and geographically disadvantaged rural area. Staff and beneficiaries aim to strength an international and European cooperation in order to share knowledge, ideas and expertises to better develop their activities in the frame of social development with special regards to inclusion, participative democracy and rural development. It favours educational activities and vocational training involving the local community and the people who come from local rural areas. Euro Kalliskvid is acting to develop European project in order to involve young adults, students, and socio-disadvantaged people. For this aim it is establishing partnerships with other European countries and promoting lifelong learning cooperation.

EXPRESSIONS OF PROJECT MANAGERS AND LEARNERS



“Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine and at last you create what you will.”

Eszter Csépe

wisamar Bildungsgesellschaft gGmbH,
Germany

These words of the famous Irish literary George Bernard Shaw expresses the best our outcomes of the European project “You can do it –new perspectives for women to have own business”. At the beginning of the project in 2010 we all imagine a great cooperation with interesting exchange with eight European partners, fascinating handmade products and impressing life stories of women, who created their business.

Then thanks to the curiosity and openness of the project partners our imagination started to take a shape: informative meetings, exciting conversations with creative women, unique business ideas, colourful handmade products, intercultural enrichment and much more experiences made our project successful.

At the beginning of the project I was only one of those who admired and only bought handmade products. But after the creative workshops in the partner countries I get motivated to do also some creative work. My creative side was awakened and now I already painted my first wooden bench with flower motives from Hungary and Lithuania. 😊

This Grundtvig project fostered not only my professional development but enriched also my personal life. The partners and learners from eight European countries offered a great diversity and cultural enrichment which will accompany my future way.

Thank you for this marvellous experience!



What the project „You can do it“ gave to me?

Marie Haisová, Agentura GAIA o.s.
Czech Republic

I firstly have to say that the project gave me money for the chance to learn new abilities, to meet and to know new people, their way of thinking and acting. The project was about women's creativity and women's ability to do their own business. I have to say that each meeting was unique. I learned a lot in Leipzig- Germany about microcredit and community building by doing handcrafts; I liked very much idea from Samokov-Bulgaria where older women teach children the abilities that probably would be forgotten when these nice women wan't do it; I appreciated enthusiastic women's club in Sakiai-Lithuania that creates community of women who work together; I presented handcrafts that is used in psychotherapy and ergo therapy in Prague-Czech Republic; I could see good practices of the Municipality in Ankara-Turkey that supports women to do different kind of handcrafts and during the last meeting in Budapest-Hungary I could learned how to do successful handcraft's business online.

In our project there was a lot of work being done between 09/2010-06/2012, as we say in Czech: „ A lot of music for little money.” Mobility supported by Grundvig Partnership served not only for learning about creative handcrafts, but also taught us tolerance, empathy, cultural integrations. With eight partners there also was chance to face arrogance and ignorance and to learn how to treat it.

I would like to finish with one of the added value of the project. During Prague meeting we had chance to visit the psychiatry clinic and to learn about zoo therapy also. We saw among other shelter for lonely cats. When my guest left back home to their countries I came back and took one of these cats to my home taking care of her since that time ☺.



“We build up new cooperation within the project but in the same time we also strengthen bond between our club members.”

Aurelija Grinkevičienė

Prezident of Women's Activity Club of
Šakiai, Lithuania

The Project „You can do it“ has been the first project I participated in. The project, first of all, was a great experience which provided me with project management skills and strengthened my organisation and coordination abilities. I considerably improved my English language skills that I had neglected before the start of the project.

It was not only me who benefited from the project since it gave the unique opportunity for 12 women of Women's Activity Club of Šakiai to attend English courses and improve their language skills. Moreover, women from our club had a chance to meet a lot of pro-active women from other countries and see plenty of good business examples that gave an inspiration and new ideas how to apply good practices in our own routines. We got to know various handicrafts' techniques used in different countries; we acquainted ourselves with immeasurable women's talent and patience while creating the art manually.

Over these couple of years that flashed by so fast, the club members and I we all met not only many women with common interests, but also we found a lot of good friends that we would like to keep in touch in the future. While participating in the project, the members of Women's Activity Club had a possibility to visit several different countries and, in addition to seeing good entrepreneurship practices, they got familiar with different cultures. In addition to that, this project was a great encouragement for our women to be even more enterprising, active and courageous in their lives. The last, but not the least thing that the project gave to us was the strengthened bond between our club members. We got to know each other better, we enhanced trust among each other and, most importantly, there emerged a willingness to participate in the future projects.

All in all, participation in the “You Can Do It” project was an amazing experience that my women and I vastly appreciated and will treasure for all our lives. *“The project was very interesting. I learned a lot. It was very inspirational too. We explored in details the femininity, the creativity and success of women's point of view.”*



“We explored in details the femininity, the creativity and success of women’s point of view.”

Irena Ignatova-Koen
Legal Protection Public Benefit
Association, Bulgaria

The *You can do it!* project offered me the opportunity to meet interesting people and motivated women who driven most of us to do similar things as they do. Because, if you put all your convictions into your work, you can just succeed. The most important thing I have learnt was that everybody can become successful. You have just to try it and do it what you think you like to do. You should try it if it inspires you, you should do things you know to be good at this work and to do it with heart and soul. And do things which make you happy. I think this is the formula for success.

The project gave me and our learners many opportunities to share experiences about small creative businesses. We also have learnt the possible ways for the online and offline distribution of products.

At the beginning of the project I started to be motivated to try some creative work. I have learnt to knit, which I never tried before. I attended a course to learn handwork which I never would have done before the project. After the two years project partnership I am still knitting in my free time. I knitted a dress for my daughter, a pullover for my husband and for me some tops. I like to select the wool, the colours and think about the final product. This is really a creative work; it is very relaxing and gives me much positive energy. So I enjoy it although I do not make any business of it.

My family likes my handwork and they encourage me to continue this creative work. Until now I just know only few basic techniques of knitting but you never know: maybe once I will start my own small business. Of course, thanks to the project I already know how to implement ideas into business, how to start up and how to distribute products.



Hasan Er
Milli Eğitim Sağlık Eğitimi Vakfı, Turkey



„During these two years I realized there's a whole world of small artists and ...all the people with the same dream: to be free and independent.”

Chiara Scuddo
Eurogems, Italy

Honestly, at the beginning, I didn't know exactly what to expect by a Grundtvig project, but, during these two years, I gained a lot of new friends, I mean real ones, and a big amount of knowledge; various knowledge from the practical handcraft to the different kind of marketing. I think every meeting of the *You can do it!* project had been wonderful, really well organized, full of ideas and inspirations, each one in a different way. When we visited the “women centres” in Ankara, for example, I realized how wrong our stereotype is regarding gender equality in that country. In fact those women are helped in finding their attitude with courses, also of computer and languages, and they are followed in all the process of learning methodologies and techniques. This kind of centre is open for every woman, also foreign ones, and it's promoted by the government. The answer is very good, and the centres are constantly more and more crowded.

In Prague, instead, we saw a different background, not maybe strictly turned into women's activities, but witness of a new awareness in society. We went to a huge park with several villas as dormitory, laboratories of wood, painting, and gardening, designated to people with mental illness. It has been fascinating and touching to have the chance to admire their works, so meaningful and conscious even though the sickness... The team during the meeting was always well combined, with a good energy, (and about it I must mention the Lithuanian group), so also during meals, walks, evenings, we spent such great times together, and getting' immediately a bond of affection and friendship.

Personally I'm not really into technology, so I appreciate a lot the workshop in Budapest about the building of a cooperative-web site, in which every small producer can sell his works, and the buyer can easily choose and find what he's looking for. During these two years I realized there's a whole world of small artists below the most known big companies. I noticed that every day someone starts to find out his/her value and talent, and that should become a real job. So we experienced a mix of handcrafts, applied arts,

marketing, learning process, every country with his goals and peculiarity, but all the people with the same dream: to be free and independent, to have the chance to at least try to express themselves in the best way they can do.

I want to thank Wisamar association for gave us the opportunity to join the project, and I truly hope there will be a next one...



“Each time it was much fun when we came together. I am very grateful for this experience because it truly added European value to my life.”

Jana Goldberg

Wisamar Bildungsgesellschaft gGmbH, Germany

During the study visits within the *You can do it!* project I learned a lot about different European cultures. It was much fun and very interesting to visit different countries and get to know their culture not from a tourist point of view but from a folklore point of view related to traditional handwork. Especially the ladies from the social club in Sakiai impressed me very much with their enthusiasm and dedication to their handcraft traditions.

Likewise impressing was the persistence with which the women in Samokov try to preserve and save the traditional lace patterns and techniques of their region. They make an important contribution to their national heritage by passing on the traditions to the next generation and at the same time try to discover new ways of economic sustainability and self-employment within the very active business incubator.

Each time it was much fun when we came together and everyone brought examples of typical national food, drinks and handcraft with them. We sang typical folk songs together, danced, laughed and had the chance to get to know each other. I am very grateful for this experience because it truly added European value to my life.

Before the project, I had no clue about the different countries nor its people. Now I know that everywhere engaged people with great ideas can be found who inspire and encourage to also come up with fresh ideas or to try out their ideas in one's own country.

Also it is nice to see how rich our European culture is and how similar often the ideas within folkloristic handcraft are.



“We have same feelings and same problems. When we share it we can learn more from each other.”

Anna Dotsenko
Estonia

I have been really impressed how different people from different countries with different languages can understand each other and communicate easily. During this project the main thing that I've learned is what we are all* the one* we have same feelings and same problems and interests and when we share we can learn more from each other and inspire more and more people around us. As a result I was really impressed by many successful and active women that I've met. And it makes me stronger and braver to do the things that I love, to create more beautiful things gratefully and make people happy. I'm so thankful for opportunity to participate in this project!



“We experienced that internet and online distribution of products is essential for a modern business.”

Ani Yoveva, Bulgaria

The *You can do it!* project was very helpful for all of us. I have got very interesting ideas about how to make my products better, and how to sell them successfully. Especially the different possibilities of selling products online were new for me. Until now we did not use the internet for online distribution. But now, we will work with different women together and we will try to establish a web shop where we will offer our products in a consortium.

On other hand, I met interesting people, and I believe that we will be friends in the future and stay in touch.



“The combination of *creating something* and *teaching it to someone* in the same time make me happy and satisfied.”

Christine Brückner, Germany

For the first time I heard about the project from the director of the Existenzgründerzentrum (start-up centre) in Leipzig. He told me, there is an organisation working in a very interesting and creative project and they look for self-entrepreneurs who would like to attend one of the international meetings within the project. I immediately called the organisation to get to know more about the project and to apply for the trip.

My application was successful. I was very excited before the journey because I never attend such European projects. And to know that I will meet creative women and exchange about our experiences made me more excited. I wanted to see something new, learn something new and meet creative people. And the project allowed me this.

I was very lucky to experience, that for many people from the project group my life and my work was interesting. I do basketry. But I not only do colourful baskets from natural products as willow and wicker but I also teach how to make it. I offer courses mostly for pupils and young people in family hotels and in schools.

During the meeting in Budapest, I heard different options for the online distribution of creative products. I was very surprised about these new web shops. I have to say, that to create my own website makes me difficulties. But it was good to hear that there are already some online shops where sellers can just upload their products and sell it. This helps to bridge the time without having own website.

My best experience within the project was, when during the Market of Cultures in Hungary people come to me and ask me whether they could try to do some baskets. “Of course” – I answered. “I not only sell my products, but I also teach to people how to do it.” ... and I could practice a little bit also my dusted English knowledge. 😊



“When I was asking to attend such a big partnership, to see foreign country, foreign city, and also faces a foreign language for the English, I wanted to escape. But finally I met the challenges.”

Ivana Baloušková, Czech Republic

About a year and a half I got from Marie Haisová offer to attend the meeting, held in Lithuania, in the project You can do it! - New perspectives for women to have own businesses. I admit that my visit to this country too tempted. Moreover, I kind of person who is concerned about the unknown, unfamiliar people and all this certain language barrier have all contributed to the rejection of this offer. After about half a year, I again received a similar proposal, but this time related to the participation at the meeting in the same project in Ankara. Given that Turkey is a matter of my heart, extra hand work on the project is aimed, among other things, I deal with since childhood, and I enjoy, I began to think seriously about the offer. And because I was probably enough to know the fear of the unknown, offers came straight two to one for me and one for my mom. It was therefore not addressed and what we have already begun to enjoy.

Three months has quickly passed and we sat at the welcome meeting in Ankara, where we are acquainted with the program a three-day meeting. I confess that at that moment I thought: "Oh my God, what are we doing here?" - A foreign country, foreign city, and also faces a foreign language for the English. I wanted to escape.

After discussing organizational matters very varied program of meetings started. We first visited Women Handcraft Center, where women can spend their free time to devote to teaching English, a fitness course and hand work - sewing, embroidery, painting, etc. The second day we took part in visits Cankaya Halk Egitimi Merkezi (Public Training Center). The center provides educational services to the general public from learning foreign languages (English, German, Spanish, etc.), through dance, soft skills, IT technology, cosmetics, hairdressing, gardening, cooking, to various handicrafts, such as painting, embroidery, sewing, knitting, jewelry making, candle making, etc. Since I have work

experience of educational agencies and continue to move in education was for me very interesting and useful comparison of options for further education in the Czech Republic and Turkey.



“When we return from Ankara to the Czech Republic we began to learn ebru.”

Agáta Baloušková, Czech Republic

We also had the opportunity to see how women can offer their products and sell. The last day we visited another Women Handcraft Center, where women can pursue their hobbies, mainly various hand work such as painting, embroidery, sewing, jewelry making, puppets and more. Especially interesting activity was the technique ebru (marbled paper), which could be in place to try. This technology has taken us so that we return to the Czech Republic surveyed more information and began to learn ebru.

Attendance at this meeting has many benefits for us. Whether the above-mentioned learning a new technique ebru, so as to get acquainted with examples of good practice in hand-formed products and their sales. In the past we have considered in the educational agency to implement a project for women on maternity leave, focusing on hand (specifically, jewelry) and start their business in the manufacture and sale. Given our lack of practical experience in this area, we dropped from its implementation. However, based on experience and thanks to the mentioned examples of good practice can be thought of the project in order to restore the case.

During our stay we also had the opportunity to get to know Ankara, the capital of Turkey, as a city with many interesting historical and cultural monuments. View and modern buildings and monuments related to the era of reign of the first Turkish President Atatürk.

Similarly, taste delicious Turkish cuisine and meet the Turks as a kind and very hospitable people.

Meeting in Ankara was much fun and interesting with lots of new experiences and knowledge. Definitely we do not regret that we did not escape from the initial meetings already. Foreign city soon became known, the foreign faces were very nice and even the English finally showed up as not a big problem. When people want to talk together, they find a way.

We are very happy that we have in the project *You can do it!* - New perspectives for women to own businesses have to get involved and we would love for this opportunity to thank Marie Haisová. Thank you.



“To exchange about practices in how to set up creative business is a very important topic for women in Europe”

Ria Rhode, Germany

I attended the *You can do it!* meeting in Budapest in June 2012 which was a rich and remarkable experience for me. I enjoyed the meeting with women from eight different countries, talking about business, exchanging experiences and to gain input and inspiration. To meet people from other nations than my own was very exciting. The setting, agenda and sight-seeing in Budapest was amazing. It was a pleasure for me to offer a creative workshop in felting. It was unbelievable how many women wanted to learn how to make felted roses and flowers! I enjoy it to teach them and it makes much fun!

The *You can do it!* project was a very well planned project with an important topic for women in Europe, who want to start their own business. All in all, the meeting was worth the trip and I am glad, that I have had the opportunity to join this European group.



“We gained insights into an important part of European culture which is worth to treasure.”

Anne Berger, Germany

In April 2012 I had the opportunity to visit Ankara in Turkey together with participants from various other European countries within the *You can do it!* project. Here we had the chance to see different workshops and bazars as well as to talk to other woman about their hand made products, the techniques and materials they use as well as about opportunities of turning them into a business.

For me it was fascinating to see the variety of traditional handcraft still kept alive through all these gifted women. And how this traditional crafts are handed down to coming generations which again will make them their own by slightly modifying them through new materials or new interpretations. But what struck me the most was the enthusiasm and energy of the participating women not only for their own craft but also for each single new piece of work we got to see from other women we met over the days. In these moments language barriers or cultural differences were pushed aside by the interest and joy for one common thing. This way we all could learn from each other not only about the hand made products everyone produces but beyond that we could practice our language skills as well as our understanding for different cultures. Last but not least we gained insights into an important part of European culture which is worth to treasure.

The *You can do it!* project for me was a very fruitful and interesting experience and provided me with unique insights and inspired me in many ways.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES



During the kick-off meeting upon others we introduced micro credits as one of the features of our region to our project partners. Because all of European partner appreciated this way of financing women start ups we decided to select this as a good practice example from Germany.

Are you creative? Do you have a good idea? Do you want to start your own small business but you do not have the necessary wherewithal for the start up?

We know the solution: Start up with micro financing Leipzig!

Almost 90 per cent of the enterprises in Leipzig belong to small enterprises. Therefore development and growth in this field are a matter of great concern of the business development in Leipzig.

The pilot project “micro financing” of the City of Leipzig was launched in 2010. It should help small enterprises to realize their business activities also in the case, if they are rejected by banks due to its rating systems or for lack of safety. Micro financing is a complement to the existing “traditional financing” made by credit institutions. By offering loans the decision maker are focused on the person of the debtor, on his/her business idea as well as on his/her business model. The first loan is limited to 5.000 EUR. In the case if the loan is repaid on time there is another possibility to get further credits up to 20.000 EUR. The current rate of the micro credit totals of 7.5 % p.a. with a maximum repayment rate of 36 months. By the early repayment no fees are attached. Normally two warrantors have to secure 50 % of the credit. The rest of the risk is assumed by the micro financing Leipzig (State November 2010).

Within the pilot project “micro financing” the debtor gets an additional support not only by imparting of supplementary knowledge about entrepreneurial and business administration skills but also by the searching for common problem solving in case of payment problems.

The micro credits are financed by City of Leipzig, Department for Business Support and by the Sparkasse Leipzig in the cooperation with the Bundesprojekt Mikrokreditsfonds Deutschland and with the ESF (European Social Fund).

How to receive the micro credit Leipzig?

1. Step: Download the application form and fill it out
2. Step: Submit the application, the business plan and the notice from the SCHUFA (info credit investigation company)
3. Arrange an appointment for a personal consultation
4. Present your business and investment concept and share your ideas with the procurement committee

The application procedure for the micro credit Leipzig is free of charge. In the case of payment problems the Department of Business Support offers an individual consultation for 90 EUR plus VAT/hour.

For more information please contact:

Unternehmensgründerbüro Leipzig (ugb)

Karl-Heine-Strasse 99

04229 Leipzig

Tel.: + 49 (0) 341 4912-110

www.mikrokredit-leipzig.de

Interview with Ms. Elena Herold

You can do it! (Yocait): ***What is your business about?***

Elena Herold (E.H.): Itinerant sale of handmade ceramics of my family from the Ukraine.

Yocait: ***What was the reason for your self-employment?***

E.H.: My parents have a small business since 30 years. I grow up with this. ..I though however I also have to do it.

Yocait: ***Where did you get information about self-entrepreneurship? Did you use particular sources; did you visit special events or consultancy to get more informed about "how to set up a small business"?***

E.H.: I come to Germany 1995. I worked as cleaning lady at the beginning, to be able to finance my education in German language at the Volkshochschule. I always knew that I should offer the ceramics of my parents in Germany for sale, but I did not know anything about business making. Then, my second daughter was born and I did not have time anymore.

2001 I decided to make a vocational education as businesswoman for wholesale and foreign trade. I wrote about 70 applications to get a training place in the company. Of course, there are only fewer training companies who are willing to accept single mothers with two children. Mr. Steiner from Lotter Metall believed in me and made the vocational training possible for me. I am sincerely thankful to him. Although I travelled 2,5 years to Borna... but then I had a goal.

Yocait: ***Who is your target group?***

E.H.: I have for everybody something. ...but more for women.

Yocait: ***What was your biggest challenge at the beginning of your start up?***

E.H.: There was no special big challenge expect of paying bills and stay up to date.

Yocait: ***Which bigger or smaller successes would you like to share with us?***

E.H.: Thanks to micro credit I got the opportunity to rent a place at the Leipzig Christmas market. I had to wait seven years for this opportunity.

Yocait: ***What do you think about online selling (use different platforms in the internet) and about offline selling (to have own shop)?***

E.H.: I travel a lot. To have own offline shop is too dangerous. I go to my costumers personally- to pottery market and to city festival. You have to love this kind of “market life”...

Yocait: ***If you would have three wishes what would you wish?***

E.H.: Concerning my business: better health, my parents by myself (also regarding my children), more time and more stability to be able to start a new vocational education and training. To have a place at the Leipzig Christmas market was also my former wish.

Yocait: ***How did the micro credit help you by your start up?***

E.H.: It had helped me a lot. When I attend such markets I have to pay in advance for many things and also the rental fee for diverse events. Micro credit did help me to start to sell at the Leipzig Christmas market.

Yocait: ***What would be your message for creative women who think about self-entrepreneurship?***

E.H.: You should start only under one condition: You have to have somebody on your side who gives you emotional support and combined effort – for example a reliable husband or parents. Do not expect help from friends because friendships can get lost during this hard work. You should not have an offline shop at the beginning -also not in the case, if you have the money for it. Open your shop only if you already have a large customer base... and it takes time. Last but not least you should also have some business knowledge.



The focus of the meeting in Prague was on people with psychical and physical disabilities, who suffered from social exclusion. When we read the programme of the meeting we did not know, what a wide variety of creative people we will meet. During the meeting it was clear for all of us that handmade products do not stop at borders and creative work is not only restricted to healthy women or men. So we decided to present you the work started by Olga Havlová, the wife of the president of the Czech Republic and by Emilie Strejčková.

Motto: "Sdílení vědomostí, praktické zručnosti vytváření drobné krásy prostřednictvím ručních prací je cílem projektu "You can do it!" programu Grundvig Partnership. Je příležitostí ke komunikaci, vzájemnému sebezpoznávání, respektu a úctě ke kulturním odlišnostem."

Teachers of handcrafts

Handcrafts are one of the most important activities for people who are ill, either mentally or physically. Hand works give meaning to their lives. People are led and taught by teachers, mainly women who are experts in the fields. We could see their work during Prague meeting, in September 2011.

Teaching handcrafts mentally ill

Therapeutic activity of sheltered workshops in the Psychiatric Hospital Bohnice is fundamental and integral part of the healing process of a psychiatric's patients. Activities take place on the individual patient's pavilions and at remote sites within the hospital. The hospital offers these workshops: ceramic, textile, jewelry, woodworking, timber, book, candle, weaving, basketry, glass, paper, art atelier and therapeutic tea. It is a loosely controlled operations, that means that patients can freely go into individual workshops, but confirmation of attendance is given only when patient run workshop fully and actively participate as long as necessary; possibly for a period specified by the treating physician and lead and managed by handcraft's teacher. Workshops are used in rehabilitation as well as facilities where patients can learn new crafts and art techniques that they can subsequently facilitate the release of the labor market.

Teaching handcrafts handicapped Jedlička Institute is an organization operating since 1913 that provides education and social services to young people with disabilities throughout their schooling and preparation for future careers. Emphasis is placed on

appropriate education of comprehensive skills, development and overall rehabilitation. The goal is to integrate the best graduates into everyday life and the natural social environment. The services provide approximately two hundred children and young people who attend school for handicapped. The organization consists of: Kindergarten, Elementary School, High School, Workplace health rehabilitation, Youth Home, Special education center, Recreational facilities Beech...Teachers at Jedlička Institute are very creative. Women teaching handicrafts established their own club called Fir tree Ladies (Jedlové dámy) and they create together common handwork.

Women teaching others by giving examples

Two successful Czech Women-Teachers who created conditions for people's creativity and Self-realization via hand-crafts and other activities:

Olga Havlová (1933-1996), the first wife of the president of the Czech Republic, established the Committee of Good Will on 12 April 1990 - www.vdv.cz in the spirit of the Charter 77 Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted. Its main aim is to defend the rights of people with physical disabilities and people who due to their long-term unfavorable health and social difficulties are not fully self-sufficient. Committee of Good Will gives them chance to self-realize also via hand drafts. The products of handicapped people are sold in the shop at Gold Street at Prague Castle that team of "You can do it!" had chance to visit during our common meeting in Prague.



Emilie Strejčková (1919-2009), decided to renovate devstated huge estate in Prague 10 and founded in 1994 Center for Environmental Education Toulcův Court where many holistic activities are happening since that time - www.toulcuvdvor.cz. You can do there what you would like to do: Handcrafts, riding horses, take care of home animals... programs are organized for small children, teenagers, adults, seniors... Women are there as subjects who teach or object who learn something new and funny. There is also

beautiful small shop with hand-crafts. Team of You can do it! Project visited Toulcův Court during Harvest festival in September 2011.



When the You can do it! Grundtvig project started our Turkish project manager Hasan as the only man in the project consortium favored the business side of the project, less the creative one. Before the meeting in Ankara we were already prepared that in Ankara we will learn more about how to do businesses than how to sew tablecloths or do some other hand made products. But during our study visits to different adult educational centres we were very impressed by the work of the Aydinlikevler Woman Educational and Cultural Centre. The work of this center is exemplary not only in Turkey, but also in all partner countries. Therefore we decided to present the work and mission of the Aydinlikevler Woman Educational and Cultural Centre in Ankara.

Aydinlikevler Women Educational and Cultural Centre of Altındağ

“Being born in Altındağ is very difficult. But being a women in Altındağ is much more difficult. Only people lives here can understand the situation. After I moved here, my life has completely changed. Before I heard the activities of this organization by the municipality I was sitting at home, listening music, drinking tea and doing daily chores such as preparing meals and ironing. Sometimes I was trying to chat with family members. This was our daily routine, each day was the same.” – The story of Canan Ozdinar (Age 42) explains in the best way the situation of many women in Turkey and the need for the Centre.

The Women Educational and Cultural Centre was established in 2005 as an initiative of the Mayor Veysel Tiryaki. In the last six years (status 2011) 22 Women Educational and Cultural Centres were opened in the neighbourhoods. The Centre offer English courses; literacy courses; computer courses; dancing, singing, painting and sewing courses; women can learn instruments or attend a course on child and healthcare. 5521 women have learned reading and writing in 5 years in the courses, which was opened in the Altındağ municipality. 1157 women have attended dictation course, 1360 women have attended English course and the life of 17000 women has changed thanks to the 500 seminars held in 5 years in the Centre (Status 2010). Women are now dancing, doing sports, they performing theatre plays, singing, writing poems and short stories and playing instruments.

Women attend also business courses and vocational courses as sewer, hairdresser or aesthetician. 15,250 women have attended hobby courses in 5 years. Thanks to these courses, 100 women have opened their OWN business in the last 5 years. Women who are not able to open a business, they can make their products in the Centre and sell it at the Handcraft Markets which is organized by the municipality of Altındağ.

Women who have never made any money during their entire life and who do not know nothing about spending money ones earned by herself now these women are producing, selling and earning money.

“Women learn creating wonders in all works of life.”





If you do know, where Šakiai is, it is recommended to have a look on the map because it's worth it. This small village is located in west Kaunas. But as people saying: "not the size that counts". It is also true in the case of Šakiai, because this village offers a wide variety of creativity and warm-hearted people. Thanks to our partner Women Club of Šakiai we got a great opportunity to work, sing and dance with the always smiling ladies of the Club and get to know their culture through music, traditional dancing, singing, self made culinary tasting and costumes. The united power and creativity of the ladies of the Club brought us unforgettable experiences during the meeting in Šakiai. The good practice which was chosen for this handbook report on the work of a lady who seduce her guests with culinary delicacies.

The story of individual enterprise Rugelis (Rye)

Rugelis is a confectionery enterprise owned and founded by **Birute Drevininkaitienė**. Various types of confectionary products are produced here: from biscuits to very sophisticated cakes.

The story of Rugelis dates back to 1987 when it was established as the first cooperative in Šakiai region. Birute was the initiator of the foundation of cooperative where she worked together with her two sons and daughter. When Lithuania became independent, B. Drevininkaitienė decided to make Rugelis her own enterprise. In December, 1990, the cooperative Rugelis became an individual enterprise, entirely belonging to B. Drevininkaitienė.

At the beginning, this enterprise was baking only bread. Every month, Rugelis was able to bake around 800-1000 kilograms of black rye bread. Rye bread was and still is one of the oldest and most fundamental Lithuanian food products. At that moment, the cooperative was very famous, stories about it were shown on television and written in newspapers.

In 1993, Rugelis supplemented its assortment with zwiebacks and long-staying confectionary products. Later, the enterprise started baking various biscuits, different cakes, pies, sweet mushrooms, branched cakes (šakotis) and other sweets. Birutė tries to do her very best to be creative and to pamper the customers tastes. The enterprise has

National Heritage Certificate, so, it means that all confectionery is made according ancient traditions and technology.

Nowadays this is a family enterprise. The whole family is working there. The enterprise has seven employees. The production workshop is equipped in a house basement. Rooms in the basement are adapted for the production, but there is not a lot of space.

Fortunately, this year, Rugelis has received 25 thousand Euros loan from a micro credit program. The owners decided to spend the money for acquisition of new, more spacious premises. However, it was also essential to renovate old premises. Business Development Fund agreed to cover the loan interest.





When the “You can do it” project team met in Samokov it was February. The weather was very cold, snow covered the mountains. Tourists and local people went for skiing in the Borovets resort which is between the mountains Rila and Vitosha. But our project team had a different travel purpose in Samokov at this time. We wanted to talk to creative women and get to know and practice some country specific handcraft techniques. The visit of the Business Center Samokov which was established at initiative of the Ministry of Labour Market and Social Policy and supported by the United Nations Development Programme showed us the high intensity and cooperation between women, how to keep alive the old traditional handcrafts in the region especially at the time of cheap imported fake products. For our good practice handbook we selected the following story:

Sedianka workshop

Nearly a year and a half ago the Workshop “Sedianka” was created spontaneously in the social media Facebook by women who care about traditions and traditional needlework. Most of them are practicing, searching and recreating the old, traditional ways and techniques for making clothes, decorating home and making accessories. The idea of Workshop “Sedianka” is to pass all these old, traditional ways and women’s skills to the young generation and to preserve them for the future. Not so long ago these skills were passed by mother to the daughter, but in our hi-tech era this connection is broken. Now we are working and doing our best on a national level turning again to our heritage – making “sedianka”. In old times, during the winter days, young women gathered together to do their needlework, learn from each other, sing and to have an interesting, quality time.

The first “Sedianka” workshop opened in Sofia, although some small groups of women gathered independent in other towns and villages, for example in the town of Samokov, for making traditional lace and embroidery, in the town of Smolian, for doing a traditional beadwork and many others.

The very first public appearance was in the ancient capital of Bulgaria, the city of Veliko Tarnovo, during the event “Cultural Tourism – 2011”, where Sedianka received the First Prize for “Preserving the cultural heritage” personally from the town’s mayor.

After that the events in the old architectural district of Arbanasi, the Christmas Sedianka in the Museum of Earth and People in Sofia followed. In addition in March 2012 there was an exhibition in the National Library in the city of Plovdiv, in April 2012 again in the city of Veliko Tarnovo. In May 2012 there were demonstrations of traditional needlework techniques during the Night of Museums in the National Historical Museum in Sofia. For this year, there are three more forthcoming events:


- in the History Museum in the town of Smolian in June;
- during the Days of Culture in the town of Samokov in August; and,
- in the National Library in the town of Blagoevgrad in September.

At the beginning, the group was small, but gradually it caught the attention and interest of many women and even men. Now days there are more than 1000 members, each with different skills – traditional embroidery, knitting, knotted lace, felting, beading, weaving, tablet weaving, tatting, bobbin lace, and etc. Also, we are not foreign to new and interesting hand crafts and techniques, as our members are always eager to learn. The lessons are for free and will continue this way, as it's the tradition. The women gather together once a week to work and learn from each other, as well as from the Internet.

Those who've already achieved mastership, create teaching videos supplemented with thorough written lessons and here lays our big difference and advantage from the already established Guilds. Side-by-side with the old time gatherings in Sofia, Samokov and Smolian, new gatherings opened do developed in other towns – in Veliko Tarnovo, in Plovdiv, in Varna, in Elena, in the villages of Pisarevo, Raduil, Gorna Malina.

We are happy that we caught the attention and interest of the younger generation and we believe we will be able to pass our skills and knowledge on to them. The museums, libraries and other culture institutions also show big interest and are very supportive and cooperative in our striving to preserve the traditional skills of our grandmothers. We are very encouraged that this will be the beginning of new trends and schools, such as those already created in the other countries, which continue the traditions and preserve crafts for all future generations. Visit: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/154793951245128/>





Unfortunately we did not have project meeting in Estonia. But the creative women from Tallinn brought us always inspiration and passion for a creative work to each of the international meetings. Annas and Marinas passion for their work was clear for us from the beginning. But especially during the meeting in Ankara when all the partners met after the long day on the 3rd floor of the hotel was clear: these women live for their hobby. It was like in the good old teenage-time when girlfriends met at home and talked excited about the newest fashion and hairstyle. Anna and Marina spread their products on the carpet of the floor and started to give away the colourful jewellery and silk hand painted scarf they prepared at home. By explaining the way of doing jewellery and painting silk scarf the rest of the ladies already brought some country specific sweets and liqueur. The 3rd floor of the hotel changed to a cheerful and busy place. We are sure that the 3rd floor of the hotel never heard so many stories of woman as at this night.

We selected a good practice from Estonia which also shows the closeness of the artist and creative women to their customers as we may experience it by Anna and Marina on the 3rd floor of the hotel.

Doing handcraft for customers and with costumers

It would be enough just to walk through the old city of Tallinn and admire the historical buildings and feel the spirit of the city. We could be happy to having a great time in the capital. But the city offers more than history and spirit. The tradition of handcraft and art can be also discovered in the fairytale Balkan city. The shop of creative women and man are housed in the small, 15th- to 17th-century rooms on the south side of Katherine's Lane. The shops are set up in an open-studio fashion so visitors can watch the artists at work, be it glass-blowing, weaving or pottery making. Katherine's Lane, named for the adjoining St. Katherine's church, was rediscovered and given new life in the summer of 1995. This short street houses the open studios of artisans who daily practice their craft. Visitors can find here the collection of craft workshops where artists use traditional methods to create and sell glassware, hats, quilts, ceramics, jewellery, hand-painted silk and other wares.

The artists are organized as the Katariina Guild, an appellation not found in the annals of the city, and which, in its uniqueness, thus becomes a symbolic bridge between ancient and modern. The guild on association of seven studios and thirteen women artists, employing, as is customary to guilds, masters, apprentices and students. Introduction to the manufacture of products combined with exhibitions, fairs, trainings and the ability to buy the manual work of masters. St. Catherine's Passage is more about ambience than anything else. No other place in Tallinn combines creativity with a Medieval atmosphere quite like it.

If you already visited all the sights in Tallinn and you have still time to spend there is a possibility to participate in different workshops as: jewelry making, felting, knitting, ceramic, batik, scrapbooking and other crafts techniques. The workshops go for 2-3 hours. During this time you will do some small piece of jewelry for your own use. All materials are including in the price of workshop and a lot of shops offer supplies, that you can buy for you new project by special price.

The most popular workshops are the ceramic workshops. In these workshops people can have a small course in the evening in a group of people or take a personal lesson with a teacher. Those lessons are located in artisan studio. After the workshop teacher will fire and glaze your production and after some days you can come and take it.





We would like to share with you also our European Good Practice which would not have been possible without our learners from Germany, Czech Republic, Turkey, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Estonia. We thank all participants for their contribution to the Market of Cultures!

The international event **Market of Cultures** took place during the final meeting in Budapest, Hungary. The aim of this Market was to bring female self-entrepreneurs from eight countries together to exhibit their products as well as to had the opportunity to exchange experiences about start up and creative business.

All project managers invited learners from their country to this event and ask them to bring own handmade products to the Market. This event was planned not only to show the country specific traditional handmade products and share the techniques, but this market offered also a place to exchange experiences about challenges and successes of the creative business. The Market of Cultures was a public event and was visited frequently. The interest of the visitors in the different products gave more reputation and motivation to the creative sellers.

The most popular products were jewellerys and depending on the different raw materials (wood, steal, plastic, and wool), the style varied country to country. The second popular products were crochet and embroidered table clothes with country specific motives. Colourful buttons, panniers and book covers belonged to the unique products.

During the Market of Cultures visitors could also attend a felting and basketry workshop on the spot.





Expression of thanks

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