

POLICY BRIEF 3

WHAT IS THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP? - case study in five pilot-municipalities



PROJECT:

"CREATING A FAVOURABLE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND PROVIDING BETTER SYSTEMATIC SUPPORT TO ENTERPRISES OWNED BY WOMEN"

WOMEN ARE STILL FACING NUMEROUS CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES THAT OBSTRUCT THE PATH OF MANAGING THEIR OWN BUSINESSES. BASED ON THE DATA AND THE CONDUCTED ANALYSIS, IT WAS IDENTIFIED THAT WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS STILL DO NOT HAVE THE NEEDED SUPPORT FROM THE INSTITUTIONS AND ALL OTHER STAKEHOLDERS FOR STARTING THEIR OWN BUSINESS OR IN THE PROCESS OF RUNNING THEIR BUSINESS.



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INTRODUCTION

There are several strategic documents that support and encourage entrepreneurship in various aspects, such as the strategies for small and medium-sized enterprises, for entrepreneurial learning, innovation and industrial policy, etc. In 2018, the Strategy for the Development of Women Entrepreneurship 2018-2022 was created, and the Association of Business Women was actively involved in the process of its creation.

Support of women entrepreneurship at a local level is either only formal or completely lacking. For this reason, the project targeted five municipalities that cover multiple planning regions and provide an opportunity for more complex insight in the analysis of local support to women in business. The experiences from these pilot municipalities provide guidance on how to support the implementation of the Strategy for Development of Women Entrepreneurship in other municipalities in the country.

The goal of the implemented project is to contribute to the improvement of the business environment and the systematic support for the development of women entrepreneurship, and to observe the adoption of the Strategy for Development of Women Entrepreneurship 2018-2022, in particular through: 1) greater involvement of the civil sector in the process of development and implementation of policies, and 2) the networking of women entrepreneurs.

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THE PRIVATE SECTOR, ESPECIALLY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ARE INSUFFICIENTLY AWARE THAT THEY TOO CAN BE PART OF, AND CREATE EXISTING POLICIES AND MEASURES AS WELL AS BE CREATORS OF NEW ADEQUATE REQUESTS FOR POLICIES THAT WILL STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION.

Participants included in training/working groups

Municipality/ Gender	F	M
Gjorce Petrov	45	4
Veles	52	7
Kumanovo	31	6
Kichevo	46	2
Bitola	51	5
Total:	225	24

APPROACH AND CONCLUSIONS

A number of activities were implemented in cooperation with the municipalities as part of the project implemented in five pilot municipalities: Gjorce Petrov from Skopje, Bitola, Kumanovo, Veles and Kichevo.

- The project started with gender sensitivity training in budgeting, policies and entrepreneurship, which was held in all five cities.

Prior to the commencement of the activities, in coordination with the involved local self-governments, memoranda of cooperation were prepared between the municipalities and the Association of Business Women.

The trainings were attended by representatives of the municipalities, employment centres, local civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

ALTHOUGH ALL CURRENT WORLD DOCUMENTS TALK ABOUT THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN, THERE IS STILL A GENDER DISBALANCE AFFECTING WOMEN, ESPECIALLY IN REGARDS TO THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STARTING A BUSINESS.

- Subsequently, five initial meetings were held with inter-sectorial working groups, where women entrepreneurship support was discussed, including the inter-institutional cooperation in the support process.
- As part of the project activities, working meetings were also held with local women entrepreneurs in order to collect information on local situations and discuss the obstacles that they face.

Main challenges

- The main problems that women are facing refer to the existence of stereotypes concerning women and their capacity to be entrepreneurs and undertake business ventures.
- Regarding the municipalities, their progress has been noticed in terms of taking initial steps to support women entrepreneurship and implement gender budgeting activities within the Equal Opportunities Commissions, yet a lot still needs to be done to strengthen women entrepreneurship.
- Another big problem is the prevalence of grey economy, that is, women often decide to work "off the books" or unreported and there is also the fear of losing their welfare, if they are recipients of such assistance.

CONCLUSIONS

WOMEN, TO A LARGE EXTENT, ARE UNAWARE THAT THEY CAN BE POLICY MAKERS, WHICH WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING THEIR STATUS IN THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY WORK.

THERE IS A LOT OF UNFAIR COMPETITION, AND CONCRETE ACTIONS HAVE NOT YET BEEN TAKEN TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM.

IN ADDITION TO ALL STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES, BEING LIMITED IN ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND FINANCE, WOMEN EASILY GIVE UP ON THE IDEA OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

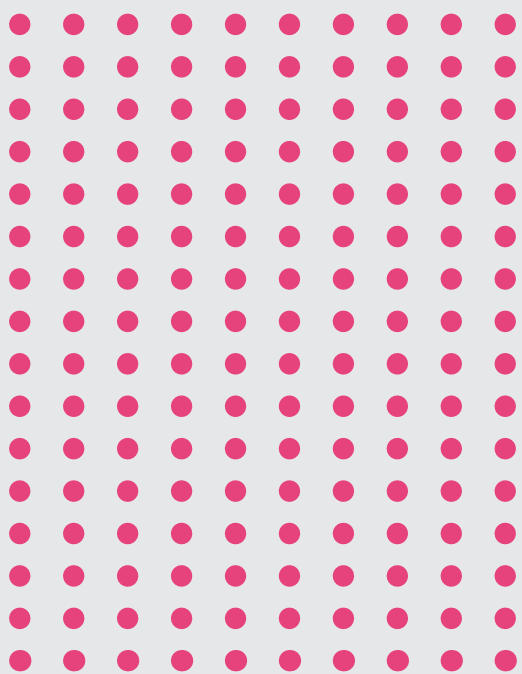
IN GENERAL, THERE IS ESTABLISHED COOPERATION BETWEEN THE MUNICIPALITIES, THE EMPLOYMENT CENTRES AND THE CENTRES FOR SOCIAL WORK.

1. A major problem in all five project pilot municipalities is the existence of a grey economy and the huge number of people working "off the books".
2. The majority of women still face prejudices and gender stereotypes that imply that business is a man's job, and for these reasons women does not receive the necessary support, both from the family and the environment. All these circumstances contribute to women not being able to establish a balance between family and professional life.
3. Women entrepreneurs do not get enough information from institutions and organizations about the support they offer for women entrepreneurship.
4. According to discussions held at meetings, women entrepreneurs own little or no property in their own name, and this is an obstacle to accessing finance - credits and loans for developing their business.

5. Regarding employment centres in all five municipalities, it can be said that they are well functioning and that they provide training for women in foreign languages, computers, entrepreneurship and preparation of business plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

- 1 An updated database of women-entrepreneurs should be established, so that women can be informed about all activities related to women entrepreneurship.
- 2 Statistical monitoring of women's entrepreneurial activities should be introduced, in order to get the right picture for the conditions in women entrepreneurship.
- 3 Quality access to information on starting and doing business should be provided, which will inform women about all aspects of starting a business venture.
- 4 Coordination and cooperation should be established between all stakeholders in order to increase the contribution to the development of women entrepreneurship, with a full cross-cutting approach for better coordination of policies and measures.
- 5 The number of kindergartens and housing facilities for the elderly should be increased or the capacity of the existing ones should be expanded, so that women who want to start their own business can have easier access to education programs and networking events.
- 6 Access to finance should be facilitated, using alternative forms, and new forms of financing and use of grants from EU Funds, etc. should be developed.
- 7 Promoting women entrepreneurship through various programmes, projects and campaigns should be continued, in order to overcome gender stereotypes and traditionalist opinions.
- 8 Women entrepreneurs should be encouraged to innovate and to work innovatively, thus strengthening and developing their businesses.
- 9 The importance of networking should be emphasized through collaboration and networking in associations, hubs and accelerators, clubs, platforms, clusters and organized efforts for exporting.



КРАТКА АНАЛИЗА 3

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