



E-CHANCE 2.0
for women entrepreneurship

**ANALYSIS OF WOMEN NEEDS ON THE USE OF
WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGIES REGARDING TO THE
IMPROVEMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Final Report 2010

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The present report has been prepared within the framework of the E-chance 2.0 for Women Entrepreneurship project (ES/09/LLP-LdV/TOI/149049) in collaboration with:



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I. INTRODUCTION

The dissemination of information and communication technologies over the last decades is accelerating the economic and social change processes to such an extent that the new environment where we live, work, relate to each other and spend our leisure time is now being considered as the Information Society (*henceforth IS*). But the access to technologies and the benefits that derive from their use are not accessible under equal conditions for all the population, which poses exclusion problems and a digital gap. Women have more difficulties for this access and less benefits in the IS. A democratic society must not only aim at equality in the IS but also has to fight for the IS contributing to gender equality. Within this change in direction, women need to be present and be the protagonist not only because they are entitled to and because they have to take use of the emerging opportunities on equal foot, but also because this shift requires to fully use their contributions and talents. This situation is very relevant for women entrepreneurs as the innovation highways mean the incorporation to the Information Society. If the ICT abilities are not known it is not possible to participate in the advantages provided by the economy and the businesses for women.

Women's entrepreneurship is a key policy agenda for the European Commission. The European Commission Communication "Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme modern SME Policy for Growth and Employment" states the following: "*The Commission is working closely with national authorities to address those areas where the needs of women entrepreneurs are still not being sufficiently met, notably in access to finance and entrepreneurial networks*"¹. Female specific training as particularly important in learning new skills, such as technology - is one of the highlighted recommendations by the report "Young entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs, ethnic minority entrepreneurs and co-entrepreneurs in the European Union and Central and Eastern Europe" (CEEDR: 2000, p. 123). The access to technology was pointed out as one of the main problems facing women entrepreneurs, while new technology training was indicated among the priorities of specialist agencies for policies that will benefit women entrepreneurs.

Considering the current situation and challenges women entrepreneurs facing, the E-chance 2.0 project aims at the inclusion of the women entrepreneurs into knowledge society: attending new ICT

¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Implementing the community Lisbon programme - Modern SME policy for growth and employment (2005):
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52005DC0551:EN:NOT>



developments and practices and current entrepreneur needs. The present report aims at exploring the training needs of women entrepreneurs on web 2.0 technologies and introducing the key elements to consider related to the transference process. The final report consists of 4 national study cases that will be presented consequently: Czech Republic, Italy, Latvia, Romania and Spain. The national case studies and the present report have been carried out under the work package 2 "Analysis of good practices in training on Web 2.0".



II. NATIONAL COUNTRY REPORTS: MAIN FINDINGS

In the following section we will introduce with the main findings from the national country reports carried out by project partners during the months of February – May 2010. Following the established methodological guidelines² each country report consists of 3 major parts: desk research findings, qualitative research findings and good practices in training on Web 2.0.

1. Country Report: Czech Republic

Authors: Athena and Institut pro zeny (CZ)

INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY REPORT

The research was done by two Czech partners of the project e-Chance 2.0 for Women Entrepreneurship: ATHENA – Association for Education and Development of Women and Institute for Women (IPZ). The research took place in the region of North Moravia and Silesia. It consisted of several processes:

1. Research on women and new technologies in the Czech Republic. The research was done by means of studying internet sources and statistics. The results of the research were presented at the first meeting of the project, which took place 14 – 15 January in Ostrava, Czech Republic. The detailed analysis of the findings constitutes the first part of this Report.
2. Interviews with experts:
 - business consultants (2x),
 - female consultants (1x),
 - representative of public authority department (1x),
 - IT specialist (1x).

The experts were chosen on basis on long-term collaboration of the Czech partners with other educational organisations and local authorities in a regional network. All of the interviewees have had

² Methodological guidelines were elaborated by the work package coordinator – Asimag (ES). To analyse and explore the women training needs and good practices in training on Web 2.0, the guidelines provided a mix – based methodology to follow: qualitative methodology and desk research. Concerning the qualitative methodology, a combination of 2 qualitative methods has been chosen: expert interviews and focus groups with women entrepreneurs.

long term experience in work with the project target group: women entrepreneurs and “wanabee” entrepreneurs.

Special part of this document is devoted to “conclusions” derived from the interviews.

3. Focus group with women: entrepreneurs and “wanabee” entrepreneurs (6 women)

The focus group participants were chosen mainly from the former clients of ATHENA and IPZ who started their own business. Furthermore, trainees of the course of entrepreneurship run by “Institute for Business Development” participated in the session. Women of various age groups and fields of activity were chosen intentionally.

4. Best practice examples research

The research was done via internet. As there were no examples of IT training in the field of web 2.0 for women, neither for entrepreneurs in the Czech Republic, just general IT and web 2.0 courses were explored.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

2.1 Country overview: Women and new technologies (desk research)

Description of the current situation in the Czech Republic is based primarily on investigations of the Czech Statistical Office (CSO).

Access to ICT in Czech Republic is following (2009):

- **Personal computers (i.e. desk top PC, laptop, hand held) and households:**

- 54 % of all households

- **Personal computers and individuals:**

- 59 % of the population
- division by gender (62 % of men, 56 % of women)

- **Internet and households:**

- 44 % of all households have a Broadband connection
- 5 % of all households have a modem (dial-up) or narrowband mobile connection

- **Internet and individuals:**

- 62 % of the population have used the internet
- division by gender (59 % of male internet users, 53 % of female internet users)
- 50 % of the population uses internet regularly (at least once a week)

- **Office-use of the internet in communication with government offices:**

- one quarter of the population
- 44 % internet users

- more pensioners (34 %) than students (25 %)
- most internet users between 35 and 44 years

- Purchases over the internet (goods and services ordered over the internet):

- 22 %, that is almost 2 000 000 people
- 25 % of men
- 19 % of women
- 33 % of people are between 25 – 34 years old

The following tables compare the use of information technology between men and women.

Table 1: Percentage of individuals using personal computer

	2005		2006		2007		2008		
	ženy Women	muži Men	ženy Women	muži Men	ženy Women	muži Men	ženy Women	muži Men	
Celkem (16+)	39,5	44,6	45,5	50,6	47,4	54,6	54,7	62,8	Total (16+)
16-24 let	78,2	75,0	82,9	84,8	88,5	87,3	91,2	93,2	16 - 24 years
25-34 let	53,4	54,4	62,0	63,2	65,1	68,9	79,0	81,4	25 - 34 years
35-44 let	53,7	56,4	67,1	62,4	65,7	65,8	74,9	77,1	35 - 44 years
45-54 let	40,7	39,2	51,9	46,0	54,6	54,4	62,2	62,8	45 - 54 years
55-64 let	19,7	25,9	22,2	31,1	25,2	33,9	33,5	40,4	55 - 64 years
65-74 let	.	.	3,9	11,1	4,1	12,7	8,9	17,9	65 - 74 years
75+	.	.	.	3,2	1,2	2,3	.	3,3	75+
podle vzdělání (25+)									by education (aged 25+)
základní	3,1	8,6	5,4	9,5	5,4	14,6	11,3	20,4	Basic
střední bez maturity	17,1	23,6	22,4	29,0	25,5	32,3	36,6	45,1	Secondary without maturity examination
střední s maturitou	56,5	56,6	64,5	65,4	64,5	68,4	70,6	73,3	Secondary with maturity examination
vysokoškolské	77,3	79,7	82,4	83,3	82,6	82,7	88,2	87,3	University
specifické skupiny populace									by specific groups of population
zaměstnaní	56,4	51,3	66,4	58,8	66,4	63,6	75,1	73,9	employed
nezaměstnaní	21,6	26,4	30,8	37,3	31,2	33,8	51,0	26,8	unemployed
studenti	92,7	90,5	96,6	96,6	97,7	97,0	98,8	99,3	students
na mateřské či rodičovské dovolené	42,1	x	50,7	x	59,5	x	77,5	x	maternity or parental leave
starobní důchodci	4,5	6,1	6,0	10,7	5,8	11,4	10,6	14,8	retired persons

ČSÚ [online]. [Url: <http://www.czso.cz/csu/redakce.nsf/i/domacnosti_a_jednotlivci>](http://www.czso.cz/csu/redakce.nsf/i/domacnosti_a_jednotlivci)

Table 2: Percentage of individuals using internet

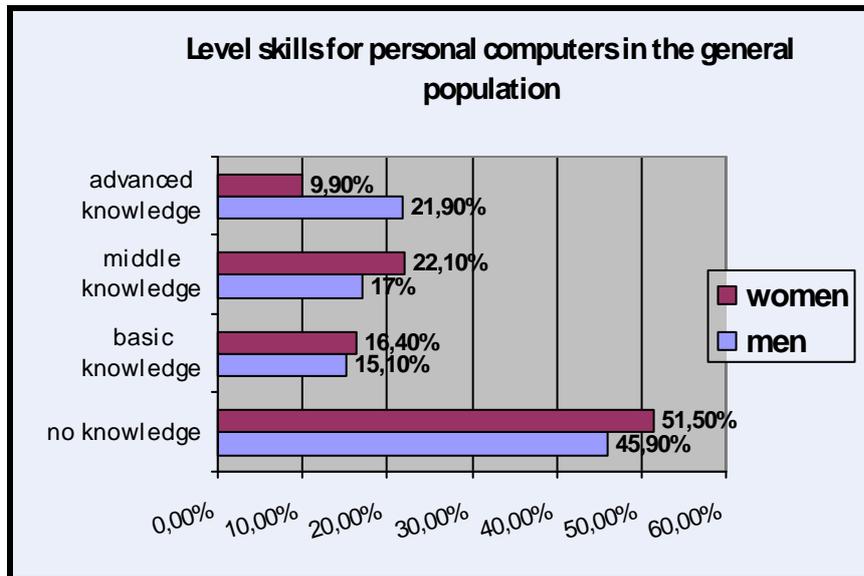
	2005		2006		2007		2008		
	ženy <i>Women</i>	muži <i>Men</i>	ženy <i>Women</i>	muži <i>Men</i>	ženy <i>Women</i>	muži <i>Men</i>	ženy <i>Women</i>	muži <i>Men</i>	
Celkem (16+)	29,1	35,3	38,1	44,1	41,5	48,8	50,3	58,0	Total (16+)
16-24 let	64,9	62,6	76,2	79,0	82,6	81,5	89,0	91,6	16 - 24 years
25-34 let	38,0	43,0	51,7	56,1	57,0	62,3	72,2	75,4	25 - 34 years
35-44 let	38,4	43,8	55,0	52,5	56,3	56,5	69,2	69,6	35 - 44 years
45-54 let	27,8	30,8	41,4	38,7	46,0	47,8	56,0	56,5	45 - 54 years
55-64 let	12,8	17,9	16,6	25,3	20,6	29,7	29,1	36,4	55 - 64 years
65-74 let	.	.	3,2	7,9	3,4	11,4	6,1	14,3	65 - 74 years
75+	.	.	.	2,7	.	.	.	2,8	75+
podle vzdělání (25+)									by education (aged 25+)
základní	1,0	5,3	3,4	7,5	3,4	10,4	9,1	14,7	Basic
střední bez maturity	8,2	15,0	14,3	21,2	18,1	25,5	31,3	38,8	Secondary without maturity examination
střední s maturitou	39,8	44,3	54,2	57,6	57,1	62,4	64,2	67,9	Secondary with maturity examination
vysokoškolské	68,9	74,5	75,5	80,3	78,2	80,2	85,9	85,1	University
specifické skupiny populace									by specific groups of population
zaměstnaní	40,7	40,0	54,3	50,3	56,8	56,1	68,8	68,0	employed
nezaměstnaní	13,7	19,0	24,3	28,8	24,1	29,7	46,4	21,0	unemployed
studenti	77,5	77,6	91,5	93,5	92,6	93,7	97,5	97,6	students
na mateřské či rodičovské dovolené	27,3	x	40,1	x	54,9	x	70,5	x	maternity or parental leave
starobní důchodci	2,8	4,6	4,5	8,0	4,8	9,6	8,7	11,9	retired persons

ČSÚ [online]. [Url:<http://www.czso.cz/csu/redakce.nsf/i/domacnosti_a_jednotlivci>](http://www.czso.cz/csu/redakce.nsf/i/domacnosti_a_jednotlivci)

From the tables above, it is obvious that men are prevailing in using of IT as well as in using internet among all age groups; while the smallest differences appears among the middle-aged groups of men and women (35 – 54 years of age). It is also visible that the percentage of IT and internet users is rapidly decreasing with growing age. There is evident age segregation among IT users. (E.g. while 89 % of women in the age of 18 – 24 are using internet, only 29 % of those in the age of 55 – 64 do use it and this percentage goes further on to zero in the age of 75+). This applies to female users as well as to male ones, even if men users still prevail in all age categories.

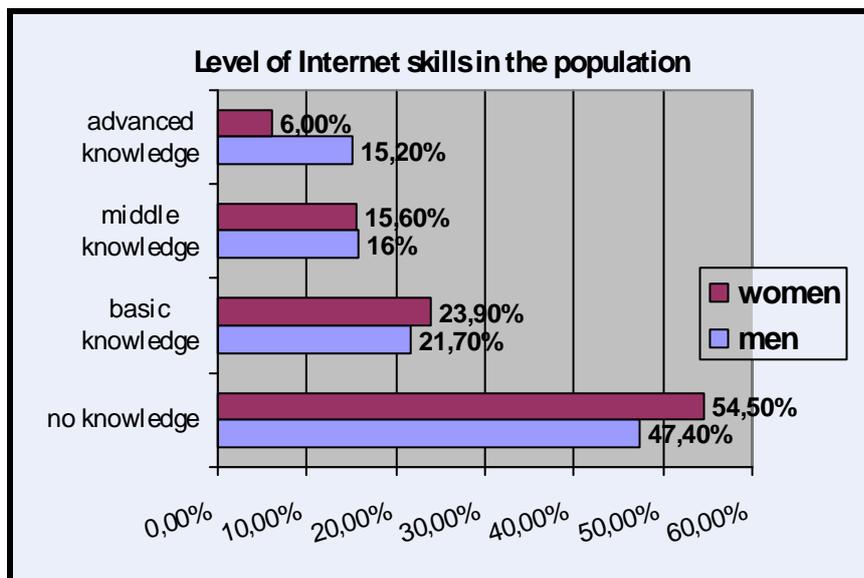
Differences in ICT use between men and women in the Czech Republic can be seen also in the graphs below (the Eurostat data for the Czech Republic in 2007). The graphs show the degree of user-level computer skills and Internet skills. The overall predominance of men in this context can be seen quite clearly too. Differences are seen especially at the advanced level. Women prevail among the users with basic, middle and no knowledge while men dominate the category of advanced knowledge.

Figure 1: Level skills for personal computers in the general population



Source: own processing, from source ČSÚ (Czech statistical office)

Figure 2: Level of Internet skills in the population



Source: own processing, from source ČSÚ (Czech statistical office)

Researches and studies on gender stereotypes have shown that the "expectation of failure" of women in the field of learning ICT can lead to unfavourable outcomes. Girls logically opt out the area of ICT education. Gender stereotypes can actually influence our choice of profession, even in spite of real interests, priorities, focus and talent. Women, on the basis of their gender roles, are not able to fully develop their personalities and then the utilization of all the opportunities that ICT offers: from drawing on sources of information, despite the possibility of influence "a new public space" and all of

the Communication Channels.

These stereotypes also limit the choice of education and career subsequently. Insufficient ICT skills then influence the competitive ability on the labour market and in business.

2.2 Analysis of the carried out interviews

2.21 Expert Interview Analysis:

2.22 Business consultants/specialists, female consultants/specialists and representative of public authority department

1. Mr. Rene Prochazka (RP) – business consultant/specialist

He is a director and legal representative of Institute for Business Development providing consultation and training services for future entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs – beginners, to existing SMEs and corporations, municipalities, regional institutions, and to international institutions supporting business development. IBD provides equal services to women and men entrepreneurs and wanabee entrepreneurs – consultations and training especially in the field of business launch and development. Further on the trainings concern financial, administrative and management issues.

RP: The Company has long term experience at work with women entrepreneurs. Women constitute 70 % of its clients.

The most frequent forms of business created by women are:

- Retail
- Hotel trade and accommodation
- Other services
- Services for enterprises
- Health and veterinary services
- Recreational, cultural and spor activities
- Wholesale
- Food production
- Clothing industry

2. Mrs. Hana Danihelkova (HD) – business consultant/ specialist + female consultant/specialist

Hana Danihelkova is a president of ATHENA – Association for Education and Development of Women. She works as a consultant mainly for unemployed women and for women starting their business. She works also as a trainer and has got wide experience from the field international educational activities.

3. Mr. Jiri Jezersky (JJ) – representative of public authority department

Mr. Jezersky is a member of the board of local municipality of the town district Ostrava – Mariánské Hory and Hulváky. He is active in the field of social affairs and is responsible for business development in the district.

Below, there is the overview of the answers to individual questions by the above-mentioned experts. Their answers are followed by analysis and further comments by the project team.

2.2.a.b. IT/Web 2.0 consultants/experts

Roman Simecek (RS) – IT specialist

He has been working in the field of IT – Web 2.0 for four years. His focus is an ASP.NET - mainly e-shops, CMS information systems.

2.21 Conclusions:

1. Women and the usage of the new technologies/web 2.0

Women need to participate in ICT training courses to be able to succeed on the contemporary labour market. It is necessary to close the age and gender gap among PC users. It was found out that women, especially middle aged women, have lack of experience with use of IT as they have not learnt it at school, neither in further training courses. The same applies to women with lower level of education. Women's self-confidence must be increased; then it is possible to use typically female qualities to make IT training more efficient (emotional intelligence and sensitivity).

- Age and gender segregation is still present in using of IT
- Rather „conventional“ IT tools are used for business among women (e.g. MS Office + internet as a source of information)
- The term Web 2.0 is quite new, is not well known among general public, is not widely used
- Individual Web 2.0 tools are used unconsciously and more by younger people in informal context

IT knowledge is highly individual matter. However, it is necessary to keep on training in IT continuously as it is a quickly changing field. It would be good to create a modular course enabling training of various elements of IT/Web 2.0 tools (possibly also for users on different levels). E.g. while Skype using is a matter of course for some users, for some other ones, it can be revolutionary knowledge.

2. Difficulties and barriers of the usage of the new technologies/web 2.0 (for women entrepreneurs)

Different barriers can be present in IT learning. These are of different kinds: personal (time limitations, educational level), psychological (low self-confidence, fear etc.) and technological (user-unfriendliness of some technologies). All of these barriers should be considered when designing the IT training. It should be modular, enabling time flexible participation and it should contain some pre-training part, dealing mainly with psychological barriers. Furthermore, user-friendly methods of learning should be applied and user-friendly web 2.0 tools should be chosen for learning (e.g. some easy redaction system of web creation should be taught instead of creation of websites using html programming).

It is necessary to keep in mind limited time possibilities women have due to family duties. Business can help them to be more flexible. On the other hand, it is necessary to be aware of the time limits while organising the training courses. From this point of view, a tutored e-learning might be an ideal solution.

3. Women training needs: specific skills and competencies to be reinforced

Women need to develop their IT skills, also in the field of Web 2.0 tools. Website creation was mentioned as useful knowledge that is often missing among women entrepreneurs. One of the training modules of e-Chance training might be devoted to website creation (e.g. with using some redaction system). Language knowledge was mentioned among educational needs, too; however, it is not possible to reflect this need in scope of the project e-Chance.

Women's interests can vary significantly; however, in course of development process, we should keep in mind that women are interested in practical matters (i.e. tools that can help them in their daily professional as well as private life; not so much in "gadgets"). Women value internet as a source of information and communication. They should be able to use various tools it can offer to them.

4. The relevance of web 2.0 for women entrepreneurship

IT knowledge is seen as very important for business development. It allows improvement of flexibility, communication, collaboration (also with public sector), networking, and marketing. It encourages creativity and increase the quality level of business. Relevance and potential of web 2.0 applications is huge. Its benefit lies in interactivity, which makes it attractive and practical.

5. Gender perspective on the use and training on web 2.0 technologies

There are different opinions on gender perspective of training. Gender perspective in training on the new technologies lies in the appropriate application of specific educational approach, known as method of gender. It is a process in which all conceptual, decision making and evaluation processes at all stages of their preparation and implementation of the subordinate aspect of equality of

opportunity between men and women. It is one of the most effective tools to eliminate inequalities between the sexes. It's a way to achieve the so-called gender equality or gender equality.

6. Selection of web 2.0 features and applications

Web 2.0 tools for practical use in daily business were recommended to be included into the training course. The user-friendliness of the training and especially practical orientation and interactive elements were underlined as positive features.

Web 2.0 features to be considered and areas/examples how and where can be applied (in order to improve entrepreneurship):

Web application/ feature	Application and importance	Practical examples
Google Docs	Online repository for documents of all kinds (mostly MS Office)	http://docs.google.com
Any email account	Electronic communication with customers, with offices ...	https://mail.google.com
Online tax returns	Completing tax returns online with the assistance and with real-world examples	http://www.epriznani.cz/
Online forms	Forms of communication with authorities online to download with description	http://finexpert.cz
Any Internet Banking	All banking transactions without having to go to the counter	http://www.csob.cz
Online Accounting	Online bookkeeping, taxes, wages	http://www.sucto.cz

7. Other topics to be considered (included in the training for women)

It is good to keep in mind women needs when designing and organising the course. Pre-training (e.g. in the form of mentoring) braking down the psychological barriers and raising self-confidence might be good, too.

8. Other observations

It is better to speak about concrete web 2.0 applications than about web 2.0 as a general term. Furthermore, it was found that age factor is very important. Older women are receiving and processing information in ITC technology slower. It is necessary to adjust the training to their needs.

2.22 Focus group analysis:

1. Introduction to the project and the topic

The project was presented by Hana Danihelkova. The presentation was followed by explanation and discussion on Web 2.0 as it is the term that was not known by

2. The knowledge and use of the new technologies:

- At work or home:

- at work as well as at home: 4x
- more at work: 1x
- mostly at home: 1x

4 of the women claimed that they have been using FaceBook and YouTube.

- The frequency of use:

- daily – 4x
- 5 times a week – 1x
- time to time – 1x

- Interests in the new technologies

Just one participant mentioned that she was interested in IT tools for language learning, what is her working field, in fact.

Five other participants claimed that they had no special interest in IT. They use it mainly for practical activities.

None of the participants could imagine using of web 2.0 technologies in their fields of business. After some discussions, we came to some ideas:

- having own websites with discussion forums
- having e-shops
- marketing and communication with customers
- exchange of experience at some expert discussion forums

3. Competencies: experience with new technologies

- Benefits that can be gained

- translations, preparation for lessons
- gaining of information + communication: 6x
- Graphical design, communication with clients.

- Difficulties and barriers faced

Most of the women have faced problems with spam and viruses and general insecurity and unreliability of IT systems.

Some of them claimed the complexity of installation and of some SW and hardware in general.

4. Training needs: specific skills and competencies to be reinforced

- What exactly would you be interested in? What skills and knowledge would you like to improve?
 - Creation of own websites – 3x
 - Using of public photo-galleries
 - E-shop creation
 - Communication using headphones and web camera (authors' notice: Skype, ICQ).

5. Training courses attended

Basics of PC – training course offered by Labour Office: 2x

Basics of IT at school: 3x

Self-learner: 1x

6. Possible suggestions / initiatives to be taken in order to improve the use of the new technologies

- Easier way to gain new SW. Easier installation and especially maintenance of HW and SW. One can hardly exist without help of an IT specialist nowadays. It thus requires lots of financial sources.
- Cheaper SW (and HW) – 3x
- Easier installation (the necessity of installing programme actualisations often is not very comfortable)
- More user-friendly applications (more transparent, easy-to-use)

7. Closing comments

The participants represented an average sample of small entrepreneurs from the region of North Moravia and Silesia in the Czech Republic. It was shown that these women are not much interested in using of PC due to other obligations (both profession and family related). It was surprising (not positively) that the women themselves felt no needs for further IT training. It will be absolutely necessary to bring them very attractive and above all very practical course whose benefits for their businesses (and/or private lives) can be seen instantly. We would recommend further consultations with the representatives of the TG during the development of the products.

Needs that should be considered when designing IT course:

- To explain and to spread the term Web 2.0 among the TG (or to omit its using)
- To present the tools in practical business or other context
- To use informal and approach of training of the TG
- To count with barriers that might occur

3. Best practice examples

BEST PRACTICE (Nr.) 1	COUNTRY: Czech Republic
Name of the training programme/project: e-Chance for Women	
General information about the programme/project: The project deals with IT education for women – beginners. Gender methodology is used for the training. This project has formed basis for ECW Web 2.0	
Promoter	University of Ostrava, Czech Republic
Duration and timing	2002 – 2004
Place of implementation	Czech Republic, France, Slovakia, Germany, Greece, Spain, Finland
Participants	Older Women with no knowledge of IT
Teaching methodology	Gender methodology – training of TG and of trainers
Learning contents	Pre-training for IT courses, basics of PC
Financing	LLP – Leonardo da Vinci – Pilot Project
Results and acknowledgements	This very successful projects has created basis for e-Chance Web 2.0

Other information	It is used by women before their learning in ICT courses and by Employment offices for activities in job-centres.
Bibliography and/or web site	http://www1.osu.cz/leonardo/main.htm

BEST PRACTICE (Nr.) 2	COUNTRY: Czech Republic
Name of the training programme/project: SHE in Europe	
General information about the programme/project: An online training course for “wannabee” women entrepreneurs was developed (transferred) in scope of the project. An international online tutored e-learning course on Web 2.0 tools was held within the project.	
Promoter	ibis acam Bildung GmbH, Austria
Duration and timing	2007 – 2009
Place of implementation	Austria, Czech Republic, France, Slovakia, Germany, Bulgaria
Participants	Women wannabee entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs – beginners (foudresses).
Teaching methodology	Online interactive course (e-learning for self-study). Online tutored e-learning course (the tutor gave tasks, provide assistance and evaluate results).
Learning contents	Using of photo –galleries (Picassa), making a video and sharing it, creation of own blog etc.

Financing	LLP – Leonardo da Vinci – Transfer of Innovation
Results and acknowledgements	Excellent source on web 2.0 run internationally
Other information	It is used by women from CZ as one of sources of information form starting business.
Bibliography and/or web site	http://www.she-in-europe.eu http://elearning.she-in-europe.eu/

3.1 Other best practice examples



Czech Tax Administration

On the website <http://cds.mfcr.cz/cps/rde/xchg/cds/xsl/index.html?year=0>, women entrepreneurs will find very practical and useful information. The site contains all information on taxes and the tax system in the Czech Republic. Also, it deals with accounting, accounting standards and the necessary legislation. All valid Czech laws and some information on European Law are presented there. The positive benefit is that users will find clear instructions on how to pay taxes on these pages.

Furthermore, women entrepreneurs can make all tax returns online. Server allows automatic checking of tax returns which provide maximum comfort to women entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs will learn the necessary legislation and procedures necessary to conduct business here.



Association of small and middle companies and businessmen CR

Women entrepreneurs can register on the website. Association of small and middle companies and businessmen of Czech republic (<http://www.amsp.cz/online-start>) into the program „Online Start!“. Small and middle companies or entrepreneurs can access free online courses there. Online courses are focused on Internet Opportunities for small and middle companies or entrepreneurs. The course

teaches clients to use the Internet for business. This course provides useful information and practical tips on why and how to promote our business on the Internet. It gives us advice on how we can promote own company. It will help us to create and maintain own website and promote it properly. Course advises us how we save money through smart web applications. Course participants will have the opportunity to try everything in practice.



Institut pro ženy (Institute for Women)

There is an example of how a company or a woman entrepreneur can use Web 2.0 in practice. We proceed from our own experience. The Institute uses the website for contacting and informing new and current clients. Women can register online for all courses there. Information about courses is well arranged on the website. Women can express their opinions through forums. Website is updated regularly and it has a news section. Distribution of informative e-mail works there, too. These websites are being maintained by the Institute itself through editorial system.

The Institute also uses the web application Facebook. It communicates and discusses with its customers. It searches new clients actively. Of course, it uses a cheap advertising and promotion in this way.

4. CONCLUSION REMARKS

There is obvious need of continuing education in the field of IT, while special attention should be paid to women as there are still quite big gender inequalities in this field.

Many of women entrepreneurs do have only basic knowledge of IT, what can negatively influence their businesses.

Not much has been done in the field of IT education designed for women and/or women entrepreneurs. Web 2.0 tools are not in the curricula of educational organisation in the Czech Republic yet at all. Thus, there is a gap in the market that can be filled by the project products.

When designing the course, it is necessary to keep in mind women's motivation, practical orientation and outcomes of the training course, and application of user-friendly methods.

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2. Country Report: Italy

Authors: Equilibrio (IT)

INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY REPORT

To list some analysis and observation elements to support the choices done for this report, we need to start from the Italian specific situation about female entrepreneurship.

Italy –as many European Countries- went and goes through a deep economic crisis. In this situation, female entrepreneurship distinguished itself for its dynamism, growing –compared with the male one- from June, 2008, to June, 2009, of 1,5 %³, against a total entrepreneurship drop of 0,2%. The amount of the female businesses enrolled on the Chambers of Commerce’s system corresponds to 1.446.543 units, that is the 24% of the total number of active businesses. Female businesses’ growth is under the entrepreneurial maturity sign: indeed, considering the 12 analysed months, against a loss of almost 7.500 individual businesses, it’s possible to find almost 29.000 new firms that, practically alone, have more than granted the period’s positive balance.

Also the working sector-based profile chosen by female entrepreneurs is evolving: against the continuing –since several years- reduction of activities in the agricultural field (over 4.000 less between June, 2008, and June, 2009), corresponds an equally consistent growth in the services for the business’ sector (as real estate services, professional activities, IT): 15.000 businesses more in a period of twelve months. To reach this positive result the contribution of immigrant entrepreneurship was significant: Almost 15% of the total is represented by individual businesses run by women coming from extra-European Countries (3.173 more in the considered time interval).

To supply with significant elements the context’s study and to analyse female entrepreneurship’s macro-area needs, a multiple-skills criteria was used in choosing experts for the interviews. As “multiple-skills” we intend a specific skill’s developed inside a career path addressed to the knowledge and consultancy of female work context under several points of view. In a context of continuous and fast change, as the data we collected described this one, this widens and contextualized view on female work can supply long range observations.

³ Source: UNIONCAMERE, <http://www.unioncamere.it>

Considering the focus group, the choice was to select different entrepreneurship's activities already carried out or in a starting phase and an age bracket of persons with –in sociologic terms- four undergenerations (from age 24 to age 40), as this bracket is representative of the major sample connection relating to the female entrepreneurship of the Country.

Instead, the bibliographic and web researches evidenced some difficult elements due to the combination of items not developed in an homogeneous way in our Country.

Web 2.0 technologies in Italy, indeed, were considered as an autonomous subject instead of a training methodology, even less if related to the female entrepreneurship development. It's rather impossible (as the report will subsequently show) to find these relations in sector-based terms: Women, professional development and new technologies, regarded not as a training tool but as a professional element (women working on new technologies). This shows a sort of an elite context, not transversal and surely not mature, in the web 2.0 use for training purposes.

In such framework, the research material needs to be divided in annexed fields which can become a useful hint to describe the current state of the art in the Country (appendix 1).

1. IT training field.
2. ITC and University research.
3. IT and work support.
4. Web 2.0.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

2.1: A Country's overview: Women and new technologies (desk research)

Regarding the new technologies' use, providing an updated photography of the Country could be helpful. It shows particularly interesting factors. The presence of women connected to the internet is still growing. During the years 2003-2005 we assisted to a slowdown, but in the last two years a new increase is visible. At the end of 2003, women were the 41% of the net-connected persons in Italy. Two years later, this percentage appeared unchanged, while in the precedent periods there was a constant growth. In 2007 the percentage was 43%. In 2006-2007, the 55% of the "newcomers" on-line persons were women. The equality is not reached yet, but the growth is remarkable compared to the past. In the frequent use (last seven days) the female presence was smaller (33% during 2000, 39% in 2003), but now it's increased (42%) also by this criteria.

Seven or eight years ago, Italy was the Country with the higher percentage of women connecting to the internet from work; the use of the internet from home later raised up and now the situation

seems close to the balance. The equality is reached in the use from school (50% of it is female)⁴.

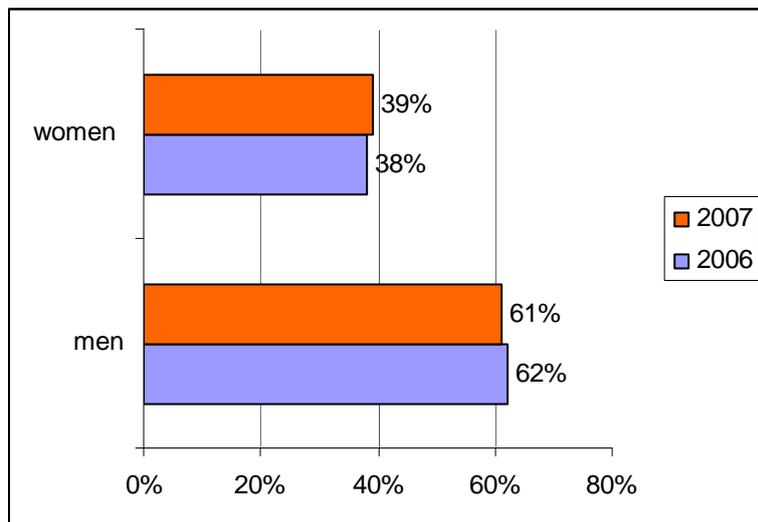
Moreover, with regard to the ability of using advanced technologies at work, women appear to be already advantaged. According to a Federcomin survey, about the 30,3% of women can be defined as "Power users", while only 25% of men are. This ability comes from several factors. First, an increased frequency of training courses. Second, the presence of children and teenagers who use new technologies.

The use of Web 2.0 technologies needs different remarks. From the only quantitative survey completed (Nielsen// Netratings 2007)⁵, the following results came out:

During January, the 56% of the Italian internet's users, equal to 11.380.000 persons, visited Web 2.0 websites at least once, while "only" the 44% of users can be qualified as not-Web 2.0. The first kind of users show higher internet use's data compared to the average (27 hours and 50 minutes against the average of 18 hours and 36 minutes), in virtue of a frantic need to frequently connect to the internet (44 monthly connections against the average of 29). Probably this is because Web 2.0 applications ease the contents' distribution and socializing, so users are incited to connect with continuity to get updates, verify if someone answered them or share information, ideas, experiences.

A substantial gender difference between users is visible:

Table 1: Internet use- gender



Source: Osservatorio Multicanalit ⁶

⁴ <http://www.gandalf.it/dati/dati3.htm>

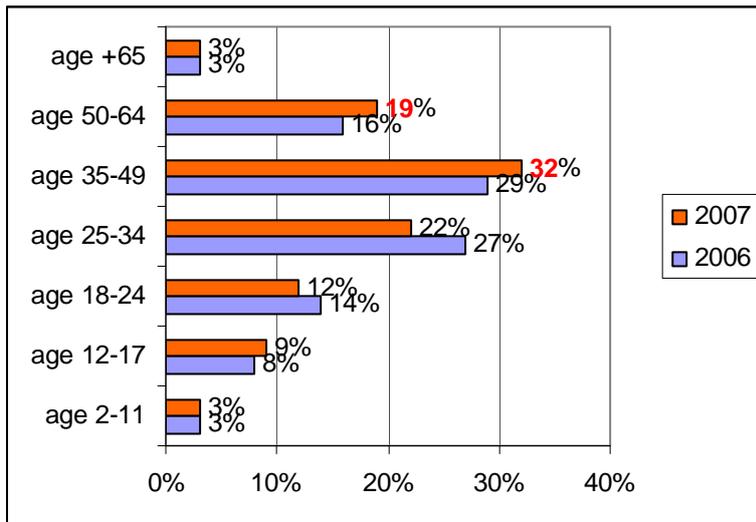
⁵ http://www.web-20.it/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/pr_040407_it.pdf

http://www.nielsen-online.com/downloads/preso/it/Search%20Engine%20Sommavilla%202007%2029_05_07.pdf

⁶ http://www.multicanalita.it/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Osservatorio_Multicanalita_2009_Cristina_Papini.pdf

It can be noticed that women are increasing, while men are decreasing. This, jointly with the generic data on the internet's use, can let us foresee that in 2009 there will be a strong female increase. Another interesting element for this report regards the Web 2.0 users' age. It's possible to highlight that the use is (statistically) substantially increasing even by persons belonging to not-usual ages

Table 2: Internet use-age



Source: Osservatorio Multicanalità

2.2: ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS:

2.2: ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS:

a. Experts' Interview Analysis:

The interviewed experts showed different points of view on the proposed questions. What emerges is an interesting 360° picture about the female entrepreneurship world and on IT. Every expert has a “double expertise”. They are women who come from different work contexts (see annex I). To simplify the elaboration, the interview conducted with the IT expert is separated from the rest.

Questions were elaborated; The results' presentation follows:

1. Experience with women entrepreneurs:

a. Specific needs of the target group

With regard to the first question, “Specific needs of the target group”, different elements were found. The prevalent need that was noticed is to promote self-efficacy sense and to provide technical and relational supports that could reinforce it. Through personal and group success experience, self-esteem and the team’s and relations’ valorisation ability could be strengthened to optimize the human resources use.

Above all, small female enterprises (the majority on the territory and in Italy’s economy), the fundamental needs are linked to concrete problems as: Fiscal, legal and tax aspects, marketing, company’s plan compilation. These needs mainly belong to women because of the less time at their disposal and lower investment budgets. The need is to get practical answers to single problems; Answers must be not only accurate, but fast too.

b. Main difficulties/barriers women entrepreneurs facing

Considering the “Main difficulties/barriers women entrepreneurs are facing”, the three interviewed experts highlighted how the central factor is time, which corresponds to the main criticality. Another common element consists in relational elements, connected both to efficiency sense and to a relational net that could help with the continuing practical exigencies that must be faced.

Often, into a highly bureaucratic and regulated context as the Italian one is, managing practical and specific problems becomes an insurmountable obstacle. It becomes almost mandatory to turn to a consultant, hoping to collect correct indications, since getting another advice could become too expansive in terms of time and money. The informal net, from this point of view, advantages men, that on average can easier access to strategic information. It mainly happens in a context with a developed male entrepreneurship and a developing female’s one.

Women entrepreneurs training needs: specific skills and competencies to be reinforced

With regard to the training needs, the central element concerns the specificity and individuality of every single female entrepreneur and the differences in needs expressed by everyone of them.

Transverse competencies are also highlighted and, among them, self-efficiency and self-esteem reinforcement, negotiation competencies, internal and external conflicts management, assertive communication.

The needs’ generalization risks to lead to a too long, expansive and time-wasting training pack. The ideal would be to develop modular courses to focus on concrete problems; Courses

that could also be flexible enough to grant to every entrepreneur the “proper-building” of the training event.

Women and the new technologies: current situation: Technologies use.

With regard to the new technologies’ use, the interviewed entrepreneurs highlighted opposite points of view. Some underlined a substantial use’s similarity, some a female superiority, some other maintained, quoting some surveys, the existence of a gender-caused distance that favours men.

However, what is strongly repeated is that computer approach’s difficulties for women are not connected to gender but to cultural instruments that they have as to their social context’s ability to provide concrete and efficient tools to access new technologies.

With regard to “**Basic knowledge and interests**”, a different kind of technologies use was highlighted, more pragmatic and aimed to problems resolution and time management. This is caused by elements related to socialization.

Women use technology not only to work faster, but also to stay connected with people that cannot be frequently met, to get information, to trade, etc.

For adult and young women, interest and curiosity are strong but determined by different reasons because different are age and roles: While the younger women consider computer and the internet as a useful tool to communicate or complete their training, adult ones perceive the potentialities that new technologies can offer in terms of working and living conditions’ improvement as of professional refreshment training

The internet’s use increases, but what above all counts is the use’s quality and the opportunities the use can offer, for example with regard to time saving in collecting information and use services, or to develop new professionalisms, or to give more visibility to female creativity.

Difficulties and barriers are caused by a sort of mistrust: It comes from the fact that, until only few years ago, technologic studies suffered of a gender predominance. To be useful for the real needs, the current training events must be open to concrete problems resolution, to help women without forcing them to long, boring and often redundant training.

How relevant are the new technologies for women entrepreneurship? Why?

To the interviewed experts, technology is definitely relevant for female entrepreneurship because it allows an efficient management, regardless of the business’ size. For example, a shop can use e-commerce to sell its unsold stock through the internet: It increases the profit with a very modest investment. The economic start-up is a typically female problem, not all

the women are able to afford the creation of a new business. But today, thanks to the new technologies, they can create a virtual shop to sell their products, they don't need to invest thousands Euros to rent some rooms.

New technologies permit to create a decisive variable to enter more easily in the labour market and realize new life models: More flexible and closer to appeasement exigencies. Women are good in taking up and win challenges: In the blogs' age it's possible to have an interesting trip through the internet and meet many positive experiences that can encourage and give some ideas about how to become an entrepreneur and to create a tailor-made job, built on actual professionalism, needs and desires.

An example to explain how new technologies can be relevant to female entrepreneurs: Maybe because of the customers' reduction in their physical shops, women jump in the virtual world. Female managers of eBay shops are increasing, with almost 5.000 female e-shops on the popular on-line auctions' website. With regard to “**Gender perspective in training on the new technologies**”, two elements were highlighted:

The main gender difference is connected to the scarce time availability and to the bond elements concerning management, linked to time availability, can create in the daily business management. From this point of view, the ability to use the internet, creating packs usable with flexibility during the daytime, can surely bring some added value.

The second element concerns the cultural aspect: Easily usable, but at the same time interesting, platforms are needed to gradually take female entrepreneurs to tools' appropriation, allowing a certain flexibility also granted by individual resources.

Among the **suggestions**, stands out the request for a specific training concerning not only software's functions, but even connections' rates, commercial packs (so many, and not so transparent in Italy) and the kind of hardware needed to correctly support the expressed exigencies.

No relevant recommendations emerged about best practices, just quotations of single cases of female entrepreneurs (in different sectors) who, thanks to Web 2.0 (Facebook, MySpace, etc.), started almost without any cost a new activity or created constructive work relationships.

a.bis Expert interview analysis – web 2.0

Interviewee expert has a double competence, as she is in charge of a cultural association (COMUNICATTIVA) and the founder of a business exclusively composed by women

and aimed to working women. She is specialized in communication and events' organization with a gender point of view with regard to the association, in communication and events' organization with regard to the business. Among the association's and the business' activities emerge websites creation and web 2.0 elements use for communication campaigns in social fields or marketing and for audio/video production.

Experience with women entrepreneurs

a. Specific needs of the target group

The first question regarded the experience the expert has with women entrepreneurs. Specifically, we asked her which are in her opinion the specific needs of the target group. She answered that main needs belong to a person who wants to start an enterprise. After the explanation of the kind of structure that has to be created (the kind of business in relation to the objectives), elements connected to legal issues (what to do?) and business plan, market positioning, incomes and costs analysis related, and so on, need a specific consultancy. Expert sais that also the administrative side is important and strategic, at the beginning above all.

b. Main/difficulties women entrepreneurs facing

The interview went on asking the expert which are, in her opinion, the main difficulties women entrepreneurs are facing. She answered that a competences related difference doesn't exist, because women and men aren't different in competencies: The problem is the mistrust met, she pointed out, because women spent long time to be credible for men's eyes, who probably didn't suffer this element. In her opinion, women had to conquer credibility also towards banks, essential for a business' work and growth.

2. Women entrepreneurs and the new technologies: current situation

Regarding this point, the interviewed expert doesn't perceive a gender difference. In her opinion, it surely depends on the age. Considering the cultural level, and relating to expectations, in expert's opinion is more normal that a woman can't do certain things, and with repetition of the concept "You can't do this" it's possible to believe it. To her, the real gender difference is perceived at technicians level: For example, IT technicians working on hardware, mixing and editing technicians or light engineers are still decidedly male figures.

3. Web 2.0 technologies:

a. How relevant is Web 2.0 for entrepreneurship (the potential and relevance)?

Expert answered this question pointing out that it's extremely relevant for different reasons: For information, for commercialization and for marketing (obviously, as far as the kind of business is related to a communication dimension). In her opinion, we need to point out that at the beginning of the path, above all, it's almost impossible to leave aside a consultant, able to lead you through bureaucracy and to advise you in the proper way.

b. Gender perspective/relevance on the use and training on Web 2.0 technologies

In expert's opinion, it depends on several factors. Web 2.0 means, for her, many concepts. Mostly with regard to networking websites, there is a plenty of them and it's complex to know all of them, even for persons who use it for work. Some social networks are useful for a certain kind of product, some for other kinds. She pointed out that a big amount of time must be dedicated to every social network...in her opinion, three days without connection are, for example, a lot! The expert highlighted that losing time in situations without a sufficient income is really easy without the right guide.

c. Web 2.0 features to be considered and areas/examples how and where can be applied (in order to improve entrepreneurship):

Web application/ feature	Application and importance	Practical examples
Blog	We have the possibility to create a blog without economic costs and easily. We don't need to know website creation's architectures and structures. Blog is more simple to create and manage. The only problem is the need for a constant update, differently for a website. The only thing to buy is a hosting service that supports php language. Some	Blog is an updated page about who we are, what we think and what we produce. All arguments can be discussed and, with a bit of malice, some information could seem not commercial, to gain a great advertising. For example, if I sell

	<p>sites where a guide can be found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * WordPress * Blogger * Live Journal * My Space * Freewordpress 	<p>flowers, to create a blog where I discuss about flowers can demonstrate my competence and lets others to know my personality, my passion but also to discuss and learn.</p>
Facebook	<p>The most famous social network. A public profile page must be created.</p>	<p>The complex part consists in selecting persons interested in what we do: For example, if I sell clothes I need to search for and collect as friends people who subscribed to certain groups or public profiles that share the same interest, otherwise I risk to lose resources. The most complex phase is to find channels that can lead me to (probably) interested people.</p>
Youtube	<p>http://www.youtube.com</p>	<p>To upload and publish videos and use the tutorial.</p>
Friendfeed	<p>http://friendfeed.com/</p>	<p>It helps in synchronizing the social networks used and in creating thematic groups, sharing videos and files.</p>
anobii	<p>http://www.anobii.com/</p>	<p>Social network concerning books.</p>

Bloomap	http://bloomap.org/	Social network concerning artists and showbusiness' workers.
Myspace	http://www.myspace.com	Social network essential for musicians. It's possible to listen to music and get in touch with new musicians.

d. Difficulties and barriers in Web 2.0 use

In the expert's opinion, difficulties relate to starting competence, technology starting ownership and to spare time to dedicate to it.

e. Techniques/ways to teach on the Web 2.0

Answering this question, the expert pointed out that you can learn many things by doing them. She said that having an expert's consultancy would be better. To her, it's clear that a starting competence is needed, as the time to deepen arguments. She can't imagine a lesson using web 2.0 technologies for a not-expert person. She recognized that for experts, for example, Youtube is very used for tutorials, but also in this case a research ability is needed and not always results are satisfactory.

4. What kind of topics should be included in the training on Web 2.0 technologies apart from the technological features of the web?

The expert answered basic knowledge on blog construction and a social network's world guide. Regarding other programs, the expert said that everything relates on the kind of activity. The important, for her, would be to have a guide able to lead persons. She said that, for example, graphic or video programs could be extremely complex to be used and sometimes, in economic terms, getting help from a consultant would be more convenient than to invest in learning by ourselves, because technologies rapidly change and evolve and require particular hardware.

5. Suggestions: how to promote and improve female entrepreneurs' knowledge on Web 2.0 technologies? (What initiatives can be taken?)

The best, in the expert's opinion, would be to create usable and appealing tools that can lead to a gradual and flexible learning. It's also essential, for her, to show the tools' practical uses, so people could immediately understand if a tool can be useful for them. The expert pointed out that if target belongs to a certain age, an initial mistrust could emerge against technological tools. This mistrust is connected to culture, not to gender, in the expert's opinion.

6. Good practices – examples in training on Web 2.0 technologies

The expert referred about a website, <http://donnepensanti.wordpress.com/> , which, in her opinion, is a very good blog where women meet to discuss on current events.

The expert had no more observations.

b. Focus Group Analysis

The focus group was realized with 5 women with age between 25 and 42; As facilitator and expert, Dr. Raffaella Luzzi was present. Three of them are entrepreneurs in different sectors (commerce, marketing, culture), while the other two are going to start their entrepreneurial activity (bed & breakfast and real estate).

With regard to new technologies use, focus group analysis highlighted a prevalent home rather than work use. However, what emerges is a scarce Web 2.0 tools knowledge but the social networks as Facebook, anyhow not so used and not for work.

A different interest in new technologies stands out: The range is from a big to a scarce interest, connected to convenience rather than to tools' pleasantness.

About the benefits deriving from second generation's new technology use, the entire focus group clearly expressed its utility in the entrepreneurial area, listing many possible ways to use it: Market surveys' compilation during the start-up of a new business, marketing, advertising, new contacts considered as information nets and exchange, new ideas detection, transversal commercial agreements, new services creation, etc.

An interesting, emerging element is a certain mistrust about Web 2.0 after the abuse of tools such as Facebook. It confirms the fact that in Italy some cultural digital elements are not mature yet. However, the focus group pointed out, during the discussion, some concrete and creative experiences in terms of new products' creation and ideas' development abroad. It demonstrates that web navigation meant as news and experiences research about non-work concerned issues is very common.

Highlighted obstacles are cultural and attributable to scholastic training. Another very important element pointed out by the focus group, which had a general consensus on, is the aesthetic aspect. The majority of platforms are considered as ugly, complex and poorly functional and man-sized, so not much desirable, even if useful.

It doesn't exist –except rare cases (like Skype)- a smart platform at the same time friendly and aesthetically pleasant. Moreover, an initial time investment is needed to learn how to use these tools, and time isn't always available.

Regarding the kind of technologies considered to be the more desirables for training, a high interest is expressed about websites creation, e-commerce, audio and video editing. The interest increases above all on websites' creation, because a technician does it and it feels like your website becomes his, similar to other 1000 already created by him.

IT training is different for every woman taking part in the focus group. Someone started by playing and became then a computer fan, someone else started with free Office's start packs courses (institutional or not). All the focus group's entrepreneurs had to learn mostly by self-training. It was the need to work with computer fundamental as motivation, so it's very important the tool's utility comprehension. As secondary element, not common for the entire focus group, emerged that some specific advice is appreciated: Many tips to work faster were taught by friends or by colleagues by chance. IT handbooks are considered as useless as not clear, strong and boring, so these tools are abandoned.

Suggestions to improve the new technologies' use by women concern the tools' attraction, so the opportunity to be able to do things thanks to technology for free or saving money.

The IT part is considered as intermediate, that's to say subsequent to the information about the potentialities of its use in terms of quantity and quality's increase and time-saving, a factor often quoted as fundamental.

Another motivational element emerged relates to the chance of using technology in the daily life (from shopping to home banking).

Surely the most common situation is of a desultory use of technology, while not every female entrepreneur interviewed agrees with the need to have common targets to reach. For this reason, a high flexibility is needed for the training-dedicated platform. Just one participant highlighted the need to identify targets on different levels (to separate, for example, commerce from services).

Female entrepreneurs expressed also the need to have, into the same training platform, the possibility to easily learn the laws that rule the market. In Italy the situation is ultra-regulated and not always simple to understand. Everything must be simple and sober, immediate but not poor compared to men's tools, must be able to create a contact with abroad's realities to create a stimulating training network. It must be done without emulating the current Italian female portals, built on stereotypes (considering colours, female arguments and banal presentations). It's moreover appropriate, for the focus group's women, to have a platform that doesn't consider them IT disabled users.

3. Best Practices Examples

It wasn't so simple to find out best practices. Projects with a certain visibility are often linked to public or government structures, as to large businesses. It doesn't mean that other doesn't exist, but surely are less visible so are known by persons primarily belonging to the same group. The "emargination" risk's possibility is real even with the new technologies' use. The common element for the quoted best practices is the difficulty to know the fall backs, that's to say the number of involved persons, the positive effects, etc. Some elements that are useful to highlight exist in the chosen practices. Considering the best practice n. 1, the creation of a virtual space is particularly interesting, as the possibility to freely download a cd (after a registration), the interactive use of Web 2.0 (thanks also to a term's use not so expected) and the presence of products specifically dedicated to female entrepreneurship (as competencies for the business' creation).

The second best practice develops an interesting synergy between distance and direct support, between physical and virtual spaces. Considering the activity's period, many Web 2.0 elements were surely scarcely used and known.

The best practice n. 3 consists, as it's possible to analyze, in a platform frozen since the beginning of 2010, a sort of a catalogue, useful indicator for who's facing a not clear offer, simple to decline.

The fourth best practice is particularly important because, starting from lucid elements, connected to social networks as Facebook, it helps as an easy entrance in the virtual platforms' world, offering the possibility of a learning by doing that doesn't escape, but uses the lucid element (a strong motivation element for its characteristics).

BEST PRACTICE (Nr.) 1	COUNTRY: Italy
Name of the training programme/project: futuro@lfemminile	
General information about the programme/project: <p>futuro@lfemminile, is realized by Microsoft, leader IT business, and is dedicated to women. It involves also private and institutional partners.</p> <p>The Activity plan, supported by the Equal Opportunities Department (Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità), follows 4 development lines: Women and work, Women and study, Women and daily life, Women in business. For each line, Microsoft realizes projects that can communicate to the female universe the technologies' potentialities, offering staff, tools and meeting occasions to deepen the knowledge.</p>	
Promoter	Microsoft In collaboration with Accenture, Hewlett Packard, Intel, and with the Equal Opportunities Department (Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità) and the Innovation and Technology Ministry (Ministero dell'Innovazione e Tecnologia).
Duration and timing	Triennial plan, started in 2005, actually in action
Place of implementation	Entire Country's territory
Participants	
Teaching methodology	4 sections are provided on the site:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women and work 2. Women and study 3. Women and daily life 4. Women in business <p>A CD ROM was realized by futuro@femminile and by the Equal Opportunities Department (Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità) and the Government's Presidency, to offer women who want to start an entrepreneurial activity useful tools to accomplish it. By going through a "digital city", that helps future entrepreneurs in building the basis for their own business, it's possible to access service information.</p> <p>This initiative permits women to follow a virtual path to increase their knowledge but also to do self-evaluation, from the start-up to the management, to evaluate the real possibilities to become good entrepreneurs. The registration is free of charge, visiting the link http://faf.imginternet.it/spazio_Impresa/115/237.kl</p>
Learning contents	<p>The project's contents are about law, contracts, management and culture.</p> <p>WEBSITE http://www.futuroalfemminile.it</p>
Financing	<p>Private</p>
Results and acknowledgements	<p>Information, training about new technologies (web 2.0 included) and business' creation.</p>
Other information	

BEST PRACTICE (Nr.) 2	COUNTRY: Italy
Name of the training programme/project:	
Progetto Portico	
General information about the programme/project:	

<http://www.donneinformazione.ecipar.it/Docs/Scheda%20progetto%20PORTICO.pdf>

Portico is a physical and virtual space that provides information, training and orientation to reduce inequalities in the access to work and grant female ICT's empowerment.

Progetto Portico, Equal Opportunities-Technologies Information/Communication for the Occupation, financed by the European project Equal and active from June, 2002, to June, 2004, in Emilia Romagna Region, is a reaction to new tensions and transformations of the market, favouring training courses and professional (re)inclusion, multimedia informational fluxes and observation system on occupation with a gender view.

Promoter	<p>Progetto Portico:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associazione Orlando • Visioner Multimedia Network • Comitato Impresa Donna • Amitiè Centro di Ricerche e Servizi Avanzati per la Formazione • Università degli Studi di Bologna, Facoltà di Economia • Università degli Studi di Bologna, Dipartimento Discipline della Comunicazione • En.A.I.P. Emilia Romagna • Dipartimento di Scienze Statistiche dell'Università di Bologna
Duration and timing	active from June, 2002, to June, 2004, in Emilia Romagna Region
Place of implementation	Emilia Romagna Region
Participants	<p>Portico concerns women that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new technologies experts, who want to increase their

	<p>competencies;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • novices, who want to get new professionalism; • entrepreneurs, who use new technologies to promote their business; • women with age 45/50, who want to re-approach the work market; • immigrants; • students/teaching fellows interested in gender studies..
Teaching methodology	Realization of a permanent infrastructure, the Centro Risorse Multimediale (CRM), technologic, informational and relational laboratory that facilitates the women access and permanence in the labour market and encourages social and entrepreneurial activities.
Learning contents	<p>Portico's activities develop in three main lines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. information research and circulation, to modify the gender's representation and its impact on hi-tech professions through magazine, web-radio and web-tv of the website; 2. consultancy and orientation through an information front office about local work, tendencies, legislation and economic supports. The territory is constituted by the Province of Bologna (particularly Castiglione De' Pepoli), Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena and Rimini; 3. training courses' creation for emergent professional profiles – on-line editors and systems engineers – to reinforce users' skills in their resources' valorization, transforming them in professional and life opportunities.
Financing	Supported by the European project Equal
Results and acknowledgements	Consultancy and orientation about ITC female entrepreneurship
Other information	

BEST PRACTICE (Nr.) 3	COUNTRY: Italy
<p>Name of the training programme/project:</p> <p>Spf on line</p>	
<p>General information about the programme/project:</p> <p>Spf online was created to help the reform processes of the labour market and the Italian training system. The aim is to improve human resources' skills through e-learning contents and services. It's addressed to Public and Private entities' operators that work in training, schol and labour market. It is a public platform which offers about 200 on-line courses and collaborative learning environments, conceived to promote the creation of virtual professional communities. A helpdesk for learning is also part of the tool, that provides didactic support through tutors, trainers and experts, and increases the knowledge and experiences Exchange between users tank to forums, chat, communities, mailboxes.</p>	
Promoter	<p>www.xformare.it is the "Sistema permanente di formazione online" (Spf online)'s website, a National project for the continuino learning based on new technologies and promoted by the Ministero del lavoro e della previdenza sociale – Direzione generale per le politiche per l'orientamento e la formazione, with the tecnica assistance of Isfol and Italia Lavoro.</p>
Duration and timing	Until January, 2010
Place of implementation	Italian territory
Participants	
Teaching methodology	E learning and web 2.0

Learning contents	<p>It offers e-learning courses</p> <p>Documental database on training and labour services</p> <p>Best practices database on training and labour services</p> <p>Multimedia database on training and labour services</p>
Financing	Public
Results and acknowledgements	E-learning
Other information	

BEST PRACTICE (Nr.) 4	COUNTRY: Italy
Name of the training programme/project:	
3_is	
General information about the programme/project:	
<p>http://www.saul.unisi.it/ple/</p> <p>It is a virtual space for students, who can build their profile, insert photos, read news, manage a blog, discussion groups, study groups, hobby groups. The virtual space can be easily customized, with the opportunity to create a dashboard, a sort of personal shop window. The space is at students' disposal also through University. It is so possible to include papers, curriculum and other personal information.</p>	
Promoter	Università di Siena

Duration and timing	Active
Place of implementation	
Participants	Students of the Faculty of Lettere and Filosofia
Teaching methodology	web 2.0
Learning contents	To learn how to use web 2.0 technologies for socialization, with a possible professional use.
Financing	University
Results and acknowledgements	
Other information	

4. CONCLUSION REMARKS

The diffusion of Web 2.0 and of the linked interaction tools (blogs, forums, wikis, etc) revolutionized training methodologies and distance learning (from one to many, from many to one). Italy, considering elements'analyses, shows lights and shadows, elements that cannot be easily interpreted.

There're surely opportunities and risks, connected to didactic but also to didactic methodology and to the use of web 2.0 platforms. It's necessarily to be didactically efficient, appetizing and easy to be reached. It becomes very complex to activate efficient behaviours for the entire target.

The difference in ITC's use (in terms of skills and motivation) –that contains a generational factor – can bring two risks: to create a simple product, so simple to become not appetizing for women with normal ITC skills; to fall in the opposite problem, if the product becomes too complex.

If training is fundamental for the essential knowledge to be competitive and if this is more evident for female entrepreneurs (or women who want to become entrepreneurs), a web-based training has the risk to exclude someone from the life-long learning process because of a scarce familiarity with new technologies. It's necessarily to intervene in two ways, at least:

- involvement (clarifying pros and opportunities concretely offered, appropriate platforms in form and contents)
- continuing support during the entire learning process.

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Websites:

IT training field

- <http://www.formare.erickson.it> (training newsletter)
- <http://monfortic.invalsi.it> (National Monitoring on Information Technology and Communication)
- <http://www.cittadellascienza.it/weest/it/main.htm> (WEEST Project Website)
- <http://atene.provincia.parma.it/scientiaemunus/links/donne.htm> Scientiae Munus (Women and Science)
- <http://www.url.it/speciali/leonardo/formaz.htm> (Women and ITC)

ITC and University research:

- <http://www.cybercultura.it> (a site of resources dedicated to the analysis of the Net from anthropological and sociological perspective)
- http://www.unito.it/strutture/centri/ce_ric.htm (Interdepartmental Centre for Research and Studies of Women CIRSDe)
- <http://www.cordis.lu/improving/women/home.htm> (Women and Science)
- www.linda.it (Free University of Women)

IT and work support:

<http://www.domanidonna.it>

<http://www.enaip.it/attivita/aree/pariopp.html>

<http://www.webalfemminile.it>

<http://www.womentech.info/>

<http://www.futuroalfemminile.it>

WEB 2.0:

http://web20.blogosfere.it/web_20/

<http://www.comune.torino.it/web20/>

<http://web20cafe.blogspot.com/>

<http://saperi.forumpa.it/relazione/l-innovazione-di-internet-il-web-20>

<http://20taskforceitaly.ning.com/>

3. Country Report: Latvia⁷

Author: ISMA (LV)

⁷ There are several pending modifications and corrections to be introduced by ISMA in order to finalise the national report and introduce in the present report.

4. Country Report: Romania

Authors: INSCMPS (RO)

INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY REPORT

Methodology, as proposed by guidelines received implied two methods: desk research on the bases of available literature (statistical data, previous studies, etc.) and a qualitative component consisting in semi-structured interviews and 1 focus-group.

Literature review was carried out on the following main topics:

- women entrepreneurship in Romania,
- women and the use of new technologies (computers),
- informational society in Romania,
- e-businesses and SMEs in Romania (it was identified 1 bibliographic source, dated 2002 and it was considered obsolete) ,
- web 2.0 technologies applied in business.

First application of questionnaire revealed the need to adapt it to national context and detail as much as possible the proposed issues to be address. Interview guidelines proposed were detailed and completed.

Key respondents were identified via internet sources or from Institute database with representatives of institutions, employers' organizations and associations.

7 interviews were carried out as follows:

- 1 business consultant with previous working experience with entrepreneurs,
- 2 female consultants, representatives of women entrepreneurs' networks and association,
- 2 IT specialist with knowledge on web 2.0 technologies (we did not succeed to find at least one with experience in working with/for entrepreneurs),
- 1 representative, woman leading an entrepreneurs' organization,
- 1 entrepreneur skilled in using web 2.0.

Focus group was carried out with 6 women entrepreneurs and self employed. In selecting them we wanted to cover businesses in different economic activities, and, on the other hand, businesses of different sizes. 2 women participating to focus group were self employed.

Women entrepreneurs have businesses developed in typographic activities, translations, civil society, retail sale of food and beverage, media and textile and clothing. Findings from literature review were used to channel the focus group debate. The guideless for focus groups were not applied completely, as women entrepreneurs were not familiar with most of the web 2.0 technologies proposed. So, we aimed at identifying their problems and needs, as well as how web 2.0 technologies can alleviate them.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

Women entrepreneurs and self-employed are a heterogenic group, with specific differences between age groups, economic activity under which they operate, level of education, previous working experience, area of residence, business' size, etc. Most important barriers in starting up and development of their businesses were and still are related with financial resources, identifying contracts, mentalities, and low opportunities to acquire new technologies. Knowledge on web 2.0 technologies are pretty scarce, so, their most important need is to have more information on these technologies as well as how they can meet their specific needs. Networking, rapidly access to information relevant to businesses, developing online marketing campaigns, lobby, on time interaction with (potential) users/consumers and online courses on management's issues were identified as specific needs of the target group that could be met by employing different web 2.0 technologies.

2.1 Country overview

Social beliefs and gender stereotypes

Beliefs and stereotypes with respect to women and men that are shared at the level of collective consciousness are in fact strongly linked with the deep gender roles segmentation that still characterize the Romanian society. A national representation survey carried out in 2007 found out that 40% of investigated persons agreed that *"men manage businesses better than women"*. Moreover, 53.2% of surveyed men agreed with this belief, but only 35% of surveyed women. On the other hand 33.2% of respondents declared themselves as supporting the statement *"a woman cannot have in the same time a successful carrier and a family"*. But, with respect to this statement, there are no significant differences between men and women that respond to the questionnaire. In other words, Romanians tend to place women in the private sphere and to associate men with the public sphere. Also, in a traditional, patriarchal society, may be really difficult for women to have in the

same time carrier and family, as the use of policies to reconcile work and family life is low and there is low accessibility to child care services.

But, it has to be underlined that entrepreneurs benefit of a good social prestige in Romania, as studies on occupational prestige evidenced, so this could be an asset for the Romanian societal model.

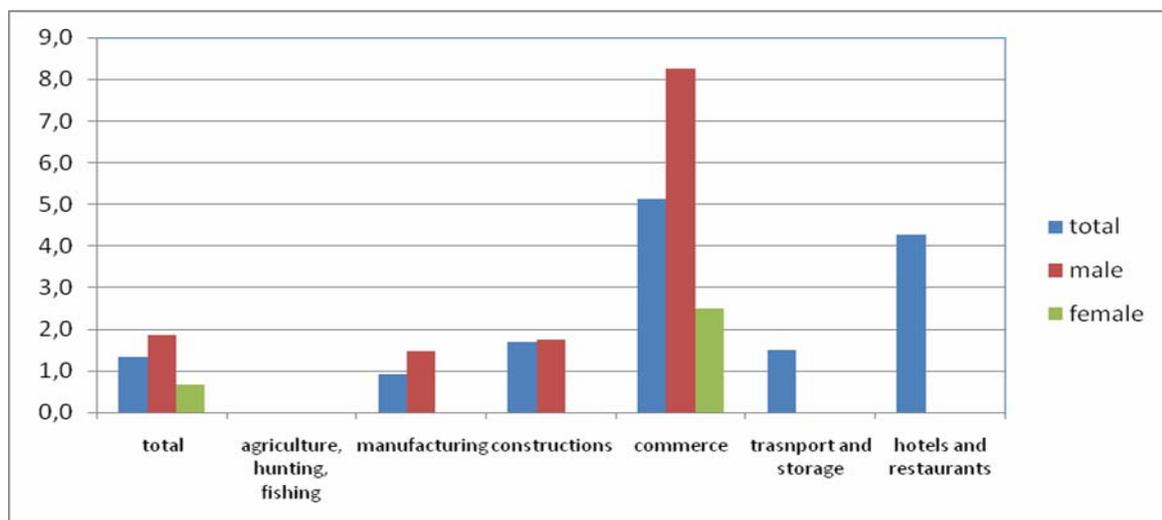
Women position on the Romanian labour market

Activity rate in Romania was in 2008 of 54.5%, with significant differences between men and women. Activity rate for men was up to 62.8%, while activity rate for women was significantly lower, reaching the value of 46.8%. Similarly, employment rate for men was up to 58.6%, while employment rate for women was only of 44.6%. Social beliefs and mentalities explain the low activity and employment rate for women, with values under 50%, women being seen as a complementary labour force resource on the labour market, and their primary role is to take care of families and children.

Women entrepreneurs on the Romanian labour market.

In 2008, total number of employers in LFS was estimated to be up to 124 675, and they represented 1.3% of total employment in Romania. Men employers represent 1.9% of total male employment, while, women represent only 0.7% of total feminine employment. In fact, women represent only 22.96% of total number of employers. Most of women employers are practically in commerce sector, while men employers covers both industry and services sectors. Women and men are a majority as employers in those sectors that in fact are female and respectively male dominated.

Table 1: % employers in total employment, % men employers in total masculine employment, % women employers in total feminine employment

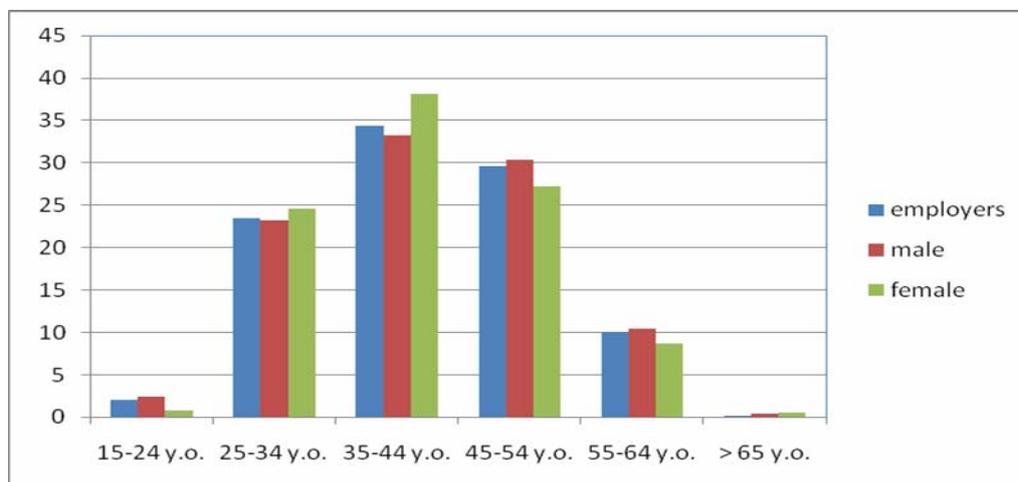


Source: LFS 2008, National Institute for Statistics, authors' calculations

Distribution of employers by gender and age groups (%) reveals the fact that there are no significant differences by age between men and women entrepreneurs. Most of women entrepreneurs are in the age group of 35-44 years old.

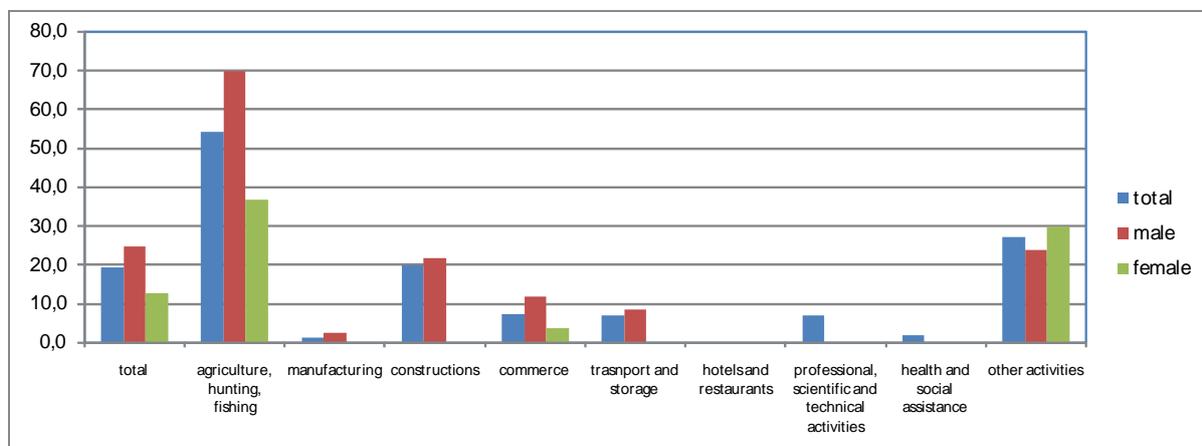
In 2008, total number of self-employed was 15 fold higher than the number of employers and they represented 19.4% of total employment. Only 2.94% of total number of self-employed were women. Most of self-employed are in agriculture in so-called „force self-employed“, as they did not make an option to be self-employed, if fact they have no other options. Women self-employed are to be found in commerce and other economic activities. Most of women self-employed are aged 50 years and more (cca. 52% of total number of women self-employed).

Table 2: Distribution of employers by gender and age groups (%)



Source: LFS 2008, National Institute for Statistics, authors' calculations

Table 3: % self-employers in total employment, % male self-employers in total masculine employment, % female self-employers in total feminine employment



Source: LFS 2008, National Institute for Statistics, authors' calculations

Doing the same analyse by occupational groups we found out that, as expected, women employers are to be found in the OG of legislators and managers. On the other hand, women self employed are to be found in the OG of scientific and intellectual occupations, OG of craft and related trade workers, in the OG of service workers and shop and market sell workers, as well as in other occupational categories.

In 2007 Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Research made public the results of their survey on Female Entrepreneurship in Romania. They emphasized the women entrepreneurs as companies managed by women witnessed a growth rate of 39% as against the growth rate of 31% that characterized the companies managed by men. They analysed the women entrepreneurs using three dimensions: (1) potential entrepreneurs, (2) new entrepreneurs and (3) employers of SMEs. They considered as potential entrepreneurs those persons that do not own a business yet but are involved in one or more activities preceding the start-up (such as creating a business plan, fund rising. New entrepreneurs were defined as entrepreneurs that stated up a business in the last two years and SMEs owners were those that started a business more than 2 years ago and still operates on the market.

Figure 1: Characteristics of potential and new entrepreneurs by gender

	Potential entrepreneurs			New entrepreneurs		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Age (years)	35,13	35,68	35,39	33,86	33,50	33,65
Training in management (%)	62,30	69,81	65,79	51,04	50,74	50,86
Work experience (years)	8,16	8,65	8,39	7,86	7,79	7,82

Source: Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Research, 2007

Women potential and new entrepreneurs are women aged 35, with a previous work experience of cca. 8 years and most of them acquired skills and knowledge in the field of management and business administration. Women entrepreneurs managing a company with an age more than 2 years are on average aged 37 (so they started up their business around 35 years old), have a previous working experience of 11 years, most of them have higher education (78%) and they have acquired training in management topics.

Also, the same study evidenced that there are not significant differences in the profile of men and women entrepreneurs with respect to age, previous working experience, education, etc. The only one difference is that most of women entrepreneurs are in the region Bucharest-Ilfov, while men have a

more balanced distribution along the 8 development region of Romania. Bucharest Ilfov is the most developed region of Romania, so it seems that access to financial resources and opportunities associated with economic development is a key issue in reducing the gender gaps with respect to entrepreneurial behaviour of men and women. Also, lesser developed the region, higher the incidence of traditional models with respect to gender roles. Also, another gender difference with respect to entrepreneurial behaviour is that women tend to set up smaller business than men.

Figure 2: Characteristics of entrepreneurs by gender

	Women	Men	Total
Age (year)	36,76	37,66	37,37
Higher education (%)	78,85	74,75	75,75
Training in management (%)	57,44	52,97	54,41
Work experience (year)	10,79	11,66	11,22

Source: Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Research, 2007

Informational society in Romania at a glance

The autumn 2008 Flash Eurobarometer on *Information Society as seen by EU citizens* provides some interesting features of the ICT use in Romania (it was carried out on adult population above 15 years old). Romania displays the lowest frequency of personal Internet use of EU-27 countries. Also, 37% of Romanians have no access to Internet and others 22% never or almost never used the Internet. The share of Romanians that use the Internet for daily work is pretty close to the EU-27 average, but, we are the last ones in buying products and/or services through the internet, in online banking as well as in filling out and sending documents to public administrations. We are above the EU-27 average in transferring files from the Internet to other devices, in uploading files to websites and in following online courses with the purpose of learning. But, we are under the EU-27 average in creating a profile ore sending messages in social networking websites.

2.2. Analysis of the carried out interviews

Barriers that women entrepreneurs face on the labour market

There are gender neutral obstacles in starting up and developing a business and also gender specific barriers.

Problems that both men and women have to face when starting up a business are:

- Financial problems. Large shares of both men and women entrepreneurs started their business on the basis of their own financial resources and savings. The access to loans and credits is still low, irrespective of gender or type of affairs.

"the start up of my business had to cope with a major challenge: it was impossible for me to find financial resources to by new technologies"

"at the beginning, I had no money to rent a space for my business"

- Other difficulties refer to identifying contracts for business, and the problem is bigger since the financial crises began.

- Also there are no or too less information and consultancy on how to develop a business.

"there is so poor information on how a business have to be administrated. Also, there are scarce information on how a specific market is developing or not."

- Another very important obstacle is the lack of modern technology, including computers.

- Also problems like taxation, bureaucracy, un-loyal competition were mentioned.

Gender related obstacles that women have to cope with when developing a business are as follows:

- Gender stereotypes according to which women are not "adequate", "appropriate", "efficient" in managerial positions. Mass media is a very important agent in reproducing and aggravating these stereotypes.

"women entrepreneurs have an important deficit of image: men see women as weaker and think that behind a woman entrepreneur is in fact a man, and do not give too much credibility to women as business partners. Gender discrimination is more obvious when big businesses are managed by men"

"due to mentality that is the main enemy of a woman entrepreneur leads to problems and dissensions, so a woman has to work harder to obtain the same results as a man"

"at the beginning a woman entrepreneur is seen with prudence. People tend to consider their presence in the business world as a way to spend their free time"

- Family responsibilities, taking care of dependents and the difficulty to balance work and family life, as they have less free time. Developing skills on how to start up and manage an e-business is in the same time a way to reconcile work and family life for women entrepreneurs, especially for youth women entrepreneurs with children under 6 years. But in economies like the Romanian one, still developed in low value added economic activities and with small market niches for online services the potential of development of such businesses is limited.

"the most important obstacle that a business women have to cope with is time managements. Even if it is not impossible, it is very difficult to be both successful business women and good wife and mother"

- The lack of successful women in business. Even when they are successful, business women are not so much valued and promoted as best practices. The "Emma Hart" model of women that "sacrificed" her marriage and family to have success in business is still present and undervalue in the collective consciousness but also at the level of social partners leaders. All women entrepreneurs interviewed had family members/friends/acquaintances that were entrepreneurs. All women entrepreneurs that were interviewed underlined the fact that they invested so much in their business but they always took care of their families and children.

"you have to have the family support and understanding in order to succeed"

"if your business fails, this is that you are a woman, if you succeed, your success is put under silence"

- Women entrepreneurs have to work much harder to reach the same success than men, they have to prove that they are "serious", "competent", "a true professional" etc.

"the business world is quite close, so you have to have a lot of ambition, knowledge and creativity to succeed"

"gender stereotypes vary across different economic activities. In textile for instance, that is a female dominates sector, women entrepreneurs are advantaged"

- The lack of public policies to encourage and support entrepreneurship.
- The lack of business women networks and business women associations, that plays an important role in supporting women entrepreneurship. If Bucharest can be considered an exception, the reaching out of women business associations is pretty low in other development regions.

"the networking is very important, as it allows you to find easily the needed information or efficient solutions for most urgent problems. The easiest is to ask somebody that was in the same situation what was done and how."

"in business learning lessons from other experiences is a key success factor. By collaborating I bring diversity to our business, I keep myself informed and I learn new surviving methods, as well as pathways to development"

Women and the use of new technologies

"women are too prudent and conservative in business, as well as in using new technologies. Men make decisions easier with respect to credits, investments development directions, etc."

The use of new technologies depends on the business characteristics:

- for a large business subcontracting to specialists everything is related with web technologies, websites, portals, databases, advertising and marketing is the practice. But, the degree of complexity of all activities mentioned above depends on the knowledge of employer with respect to new technologies, their use, etc. So, it is very important for them to know how these new technologies can be used, what are their potential benefits, what can be done and with what costs,
- for small businesses, and these are in fact the large majority of entrepreneurs and self-employed, the importance of new technologies depends on complexity of product/services that is provided, the characteristics of the market niche and consumers and the area where the products/services are distributed. If you have as main consumers older persons, persons from rural areas or disadvantaged communities, then you need some basic applications of new technologies at the most. Also, it has to be underlined that small family businesses sometimes do not have computers or access to internet,

But women are one step behind when it comes to the use of new technologies. There are also mentalities and stereotypes with respect to women' lack of skills in using computers, internet and new web technologies.

The term "web 2.0" does not mean to much to most of women entrepreneurs. Most of them heard about html, websites, portals, forums, and a lot of them used Skype, Youtube or Facebook. But they do not associate them with the term of "web 2.0 technology".

Also, for some of them the availability of technology in mother tongue (i.e. Romanian) is a must.

Some of them use applications like online banking, submitting reports to financial institutions via internet applications.

With respect to training needs, they are strongly linked with the target group of the project. Who are the women entrepreneurs that we would like to train? Even if they are a small group of persons and with a lot of similar characteristics, they are in the same time a very diverse group, as the businesses they developed are very diverse. They heterogeneity depends on businesses' size, economic activity, their consumers' profile, their area of residence (as rural areas have poor access to Internet), etc.

Most of women entrepreneurs and self-employed in urban areas are highly educated and have knowledge on how to use the Internet. But most of them have only basic skills in how to use Internet

and interactive technologies. For learning how to use more advanced applications, some of them will need at least to acquire some basic programming skills.

Is web 2.0 relevant for women entrepreneurs?

All women entrepreneurs would like to have more knowledge on web 2.0 technologies in order to know understand what can be done and asked for specialist.

Also, as Internet becomes more and more important, knowledge on how web 2.0 technologies could be use in developing online marketing campaigns are of interest. Self employed women working in social care emphasized that online interactive applications can be used to sign petitions, organize lobby activities, inform population with respect to their campaigns, manifestations, meetings, etc.

As interviews pointed out one of the most important need of women entrepreneurs is the networking. Thus, web 2.0 technologies allowing them to develop platforms for social networking, online forums of debate (specialized on business), online groups of debate could be an asset. Also, this type of applications can facilitate communication and exchange of information between members of existing associations.

Applications allowing online interaction with users/consumers of services/products could be also of interest for women entrepreneurs. *"receiving feedback and suggestions from costumers with respect to our planned events is be very useful for us"*.

Minimal knowledge on how to design a basic HTML pages or blogs is relevant mainly for small businesses and especially to self employed.

Women entrepreneurs tend to invest a lot in developing their management skills, thus developing online courses on such topics could be of increasing interest for entrepreneurs associations, local chambers of industry and commerce. But, on the other hand, women entrepreneurs tend to take advantage of the opportunities to meet other women entrepreneurs in order to change experience or setting down possible collaborations.

3. Good practices on the training in Web. 2.0 technologies for women entrepreneurs

BEST PRACTICE no.1	COUNTRY: ROMANIA
Name of the training programme/project: INTRODUCTION TO E-BUSINESS	
General information about the programme/project: The course addresses to those who want to start up a business on the Internet, as well as to those who want to	

learn more about online businesses. It consists in four modules: models of online businesses, online payments, e-marketing and how to start up an online business.	
Promoter	www.ecursuri.ro
Duration and timing	It consists in 25 online lessons
Participants	NA, is a new initiative
Teaching methodology	e-learning
Learning content:	models of online businesses (B2B, B2C, etc.), online payments e-marketing (e-marketing, direct mailing, banners, searching engines, link exchange, write on web folders, etc.) how to start up an online business (hosting, advertising, administration, etc)
Financing	Free, the website is financed through online advertising
Results and acknowledgement	too soon, it is a new course available online
Other information	

BEST PRACTICE no.2	COUNTRY: ROMANIA
Name of the training programme/project: HTML and CSS (Programator Web 1)	
General information about the programme/project: It is addressed to those that want to learn how to realize and webpage and have no knowledge in this field. The theoretic part covers languages HTML/XHTML, CSS, JavaScript	
Promoter	Crystal Mind Academy
Duration and timing	Up to 9 months from registration
Participants	
Teaching methodology	e-learning , theoretical lessons and practical applications, video tutorials, homework/tasks, interactive communication with the teacher it is finalized with an online exam
Learning content:	About Internet Web, HTML, web graphics, CSS, JavaScript, designing a site
Financing	Cca. 40 € for individuals and 50 € for business entities
Results and acknowledgement	
Other information	

BEST PRACTICE no.3	COUNTRY: ROMANIA
Name of the training programme/project: PHP and MySql (Programator Web 2)	
General information about the programme/project: It is addressed to those that have or not basic knowledge of HTML/CSS. It aims to train applicants in how to develop web applications using PHP and MySql	
Promoter	Crystal Mind Academy
Duration and timing	Up to 9 months from registration
Participants	
Teaching methodology	e-learning , theoretical lessons and practical applications, video tutorials, homework/tasks, interactive communication with the teacher it is finalized with an online exam
Learning content:	Basis of PHP language, arrays, strings, processing forms \$_GET and \$_POST, Databases MySQL, how to work with PHP files, cookies, sessions, classes and objects, designing a virtual online shop
Financing	Cca. 50 € for individuals and 70 € for business entities
Results and acknowledgement	
Other information	

4. CONCLUSION REMARKS

The share of entrepreneurs in total employment is up to 1.3%, while the share of women entrepreneurs in total women employment barely reach the value of 0.7%. Women entrepreneurs are concentrated mainly in small commerce activities, their in other economic activities being practically almost invisible.

But, women entrepreneurs and self-employed are a heterogenic group, with specific differences between age groups, economic activity under which they operate, level of education, previous working experience, area of residence, business' size, etc.

Most important barriers in starting up and development of their businesses were and still are related with financial resources, identifying contracts, mentalities, and low opportunities to acquire new technologies. Their knowledge on web 2.0 technologies are pretty scarce, so, their most important need is to have more information on these technologies as well as how they can meet their specific needs.

Thus, networking, rapidly access to information relevant to businesses, developing online marketing campaigns, lobby, on time interaction with (potential) users/consumers and online courses on



management's issues were identified as specific needs of the target group that could be met by employing different web 2.0 technologies.

Most of women entrepreneurs need basic information on those web 2.0 technologies that are easy to access and learn and preferably in mother tongue.

A potential target group of online trainings on web 2.0 technologies can be sketched as in the table below: women around 35 years old, with higher education and basic skills on how to use Internet applications from Bucharest, South East and North East regions.

REFERENCES:

LFS Survey 2008, Annual Data, National Institute for statistics,

female Entrepreneurship in Romania 2007, Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Research,

Flash Eurobarometer on *Information Society as seen by EU citizens*, Gallup Organization, 2008,

Multiple Discrimination in Romania 2007, INCSMPS & AnAlize

Young entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs, ethnic minority entrepreneurs and co-entrepreneurs in the EU and CEE, 2000, European Commission, DG Enterprise

Net resources in order to identify national local providers of online courses on web technologies.

5. Country Report: SPAIN⁸

Authors: Amesal and Asimag (ES)

INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY REPORT

The present research report as the main outcome/product of the WP2 – “Analysis of good practices in training on Web 2.0 technologies” aims at exploring women entrepreneur needs concerning the web 2.0 technologies in the context of Spain. The conclusions of this report (together with reports undertaken by our Czech, Italian, Latvian and Romanian partners) will be of crucial importance as the main reference for the WP3 and creating the contents of the training programme. Project promoter – Amesal and project coordinator – Asimag have established a close working relationship to optimize the outcomes of the research.

The structure of the report follows the established guidelines and is organized as follows: the section 2 will present the main findings undertaken from the desk research while in the section 3 we will introduce the main findings from the expert interviews and focus group with women entrepreneurs carried out.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

2.1 Country overview: Women and new technologies (desk research)

Background

First of all, it has to be highlighted that the use of web 2.0 technologies by women entrepreneurs as a research field is little explored so far. Thus, our desk research has been combined of the related investigations⁹ carried out focusing on the women use of the new technologies and the digital gap. To get closer to our target group and to explore the needs of women entrepreneurs while situating them within the context - a special attention has also been driven on the use of web 2.0 in Spanish companies.

⁸ Special thanks Naiara Perez de Villarreal and Diana Franco from Innobasque, Raquel Rayo and Lorena Fernandez from Univeristy of Deusto, Susana Bilbao from Lan Ekintza and Angustias Bartomeu for kind collaboration and contributions during the field work research.

⁹ The main references used for the desk research are the following: 1. Women entrepreneurship in Spain: gender balance (GEM report), 2. Gender gap: women and e-inclusion (E-equality observatory), 3. Self –employed women and the new technologies (ATA, 2008), 4. Within a broader perspective: web 2.0 technologies in a Spanish company (Orange 2009).

According to the GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor) Spanish executive report 2008, in 2008 there were an estimated 5.97% of entrepreneurship initiatives among the women population of 18-64 years old, while the percentage of male entrepreneurship initiatives was 8.08% pointing at a significant difference between the amount of entrepreneurship activities led by men and women¹⁰. Concerning the characteristics of entrepreneurial initiatives undertaken by women and men, it is underlined, that the female initiatives in 2008 tended to be more innovative in product or service, though the difference is very slight.

The socio – demographic profile of Spanish female entrepreneur can be summarized as follows: the average age of 39.4 years female entrepreneur is one year older than the average male entrepreneur. There are no significant differences regarding education level, however the social class: female entrepreneurs more typically belong to middle and lower social classes. Regarding the side of household, female entrepreneurs are used to live in a household formed by 3 persons (GEM: 2008).

"Diagnóstico sobre la presencia, los usos y demandas de las trabajadoras autónomas en relación con las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación" (2008) presented by ATA reveals that almost 73% of self –employed¹¹ women are not familiar with the ICTs. Noteworthy the conclusions of the above mentioned report highlighted: only 4.4% of the Spanish self employed sell their products in Internet; 32.3% of the entrepreneurs consider the electronic commerce as an opportunity; 6.8% of women and 11.5% of men, who have the website of their companies, do not know to use them.

Digital gap within gender perspective:

Furthermore, focusing on the digital gap¹², as revealed in the research conducted by the E-Igualdad Centre¹³, through its Observatory¹⁴, the indicators in matter of innovation and technology show important gender gaps related to the participation of women in these fields either as leaders, creators or as users. All data show, from the gender gaps in relation to the use of ICTs that are made visible as e-access, e-experience, e-skills or e-intensity, passing through the under representation of women in training specialities of a technical or scientific nature, until their scarce participation in the decision-making spaces of the world of technology, that it is necessary to act so that women are not left aside and so that the contributions women can provide with are not unused. This situation is very relevant for women entrepreneurs as the innovation highways mean the incorporation to the Information

¹⁰ According to the Labour Force Survey (EPA) for the last quarter of 2008, women represents over 32% of entrepreneurs, in 2007 they represented 31% that shows a very slight and slow improvement.

¹¹ In general, 52.7 % of the Spanish companies do not have hired any employee (DIRE)

¹² The further discussion about the digital gap concerns women situation, in general, not precisely on women entrepreneurs.

¹³ E-Igualdad Centre. www.e-igualdad.net. It is made up by the E-Mujeres Association (A. Bartomeu), the Directa Foundation (Angeles Sallé) and the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM) (Cecilia Castaño)

¹⁴ E-Igualdad Observatory of the Complutense University of Madrid. Report: 'La brecha digital de género: Amantes y distantes' (The digital gender gap: loving and distant) corresponding to the 2007-2009 research phase.

Society. If the ICT abilities are not known it is not possible to participate in the advantages provided by the economy and the businesses for women.

Analysing the situation of the incorporation to ICTs from a gender perspective entails the need to differentiating difference between the existence of several digital gaps that have a different nature and a different scope.

- The first gender digital gap¹⁵ appears in the access to technology (quantitative character).
- The second one appears¹⁶ in the use people do of it and it marks the degree of effective incorporation to technology (with a broader scope and of a qualitative character).
- Lastly, all indicates that there would be a third gender digital gap, which is restricted to the use of the most advanced ICTs services (also of a qualitative character and of great importance for the evolution of the two latter).

Regarding the first gender digital gap, in 2008 in Spain we had 54% of men aged 16 to 74 accessed to the Internet at least once per week, compared to 45% of women, which shows a gender gap digital gap of almost 17% (26% in 2004)¹⁷. Focusing on the second digital gap, in the Spanish context, the difference is still of 13 points between the two sexes: 48% of men compared to only 35 % of women have indicated a high skill level in ITCs. Yet, the *E-Igualdad Centre*, through its *Observatory*, has verified that in the case of Spain, the level of studies does not reduce the size or the intensity of the gender gap but rather deepens it. If in relation to simpler frequent abilities (copying, cutting and pasting files) the differences between the two sexes are small, in connexion to the most advanced ones (like installing new devices or writing software) women with superior education (university degree or vocation training diplomas) are 20 to 30 points behind men with the same study levels. Considering what we do when we connect to the Internet we can refer to three thematic areas of basic uses: communication and searching information; banking and electronic commerce; and online training. The two most frequent activities on the Net (with use percentages of over 80 % among male and female surfers) are found precisely in it: e-mailing and searching information about goods and services (a generic notion that can be assimilated to the term 'navigate'), the differences between men and women in both cases being very small. A similar situation occurs in relation to the third most spread use (roughly 60 %): travel and accommodation services. We can see some interesting differences in the specific uses of men and women. Data show that male users of the Net tend to use it more for leisure, consumption or entertainment purposes whereas women opt rather

¹⁵ Normally, the connexion to the Net registrations are used as a wealth rate of a country, but it is necessary to add the quality of contents and their contextualisation as an added qualitative value, not only access and the IT stock.

¹⁶ It is the one that separates occasional users from the regular ones, it analysis the ICT abilities. We can see that for the whole European Union, in all the age groups the proportion of women with high IT skill levels and navigating levels is lowered compared to that of men.

¹⁷ EUROSTAT data

for a more functional use as, for example, employment, health and training. The third gap is relevant for the use of 2.0 web services, while it requires knowledge and uses linked to the deficit detected in this kind of uses and, therefore, it affects female entrepreneurs and their possibilities to enjoy the advantages of the social networks, acting as one of the potential barriers. The differences in the most advanced communication uses are especially acute in the case of sending messages to chat rooms, news groups, or discussion forums (-31%), calling through the Internet (-28%), reading blogs (-21%) or video-calls (-14%). The gap is even acuter in advanced leisure services: women are really lagging behind in all the cases, with an average difference of roughly -30%. The gap is especially acute regarding games, both in their online use (-58%) and in downloading (-42%). (See Table 1 and Table 2 for more details).

Table 1: Advanced communication uses by gender

	Men	Women	Gender Digital Gap
ADVANCED COMMUNICATION USES			
Making a phone call over the Internet	10.8	7.8	-27.8
Video-calls (using Webcams) over the Internet	19.7	16.9	-14.2
Sending messages to chat rooms, news groups or discussion forums online	29.9	20.7	-30.8
Using instant messages (for example, Messenger)	53.2	54.4	2.3
Reading blogs	34.4	27.1	-21.2
Creating or maintaining a personal blog	9.1	9.7	6.6
Other communication activities	9.0	7.1	-21.1

Table 2: Leisure advanced uses by gender

	Men	Women	Gender digital gap
LEISURE ADVANCED USES			
Listening to radios on the Internet and/or watching television on the Internet	46.3	35.0	-24.4
Downloading and/or listening to music on different radio sites on the Internet	55.5	48.8	-12.1
Downloading and/or watching films, short films or video files (on sites different from television sites on the Internet)	46.2	36.4	-21.2
Using applications to share peer-to-peer files (for example eMule)	38.5	29.6	-23.1
Using podcast services to receive automatically audio or video files	10.3	6.7	-35.0

Downloading computer games or videogames (including updates)	16.3	9.5	-41.7
Playing on the Internet with other people	16.4	6.9	-57.9
Uploading personal contents (tests, photos, music...) on a site to share them	15.7	12.9	-17.8
Using an updated news based search engine (for example RSS) to read new contents on the website.	22.8	15.9	-30.3
Other audiovisual services	7.2	5.1	-29.2

Training needs:

Focusing on the women entrepreneurs training needs, in order to overcome barriers and to attain the best incorporation levels for women in professional social networks there is a need to address training processes that have to take into account some methodological and pedagogical principles linked to their needs. The following Decalogue for ICTs training of women could be proposed based on the experience of good practices that was conducted in different national and international spheres (*can be consulted at www.e-mujeres.net*).

Principally, the training actions should envisage the following aspects:

- A methodology adjusted to the personal and professional needs of women taking into account their attitude, needs and knowledge as a starting point;
- Fostering independent learning pathways;
- Planned training according to the use of the time of women;
- Using their social skills, like, for example, communication skills and networking;
- Material elaborated according to teaching and facilitating criteria, with a non sexist, inclusive, non technical orientated language and in the corresponding communication language;
- Training given by teachers with a gender perspective, preferably women;
- To value the way women use the Internet;
- Structured training using social mediators (associations); there is a need to train social agents in gender and in ICTs;
- Contents that need to be linked to proximity services and to the women interests. Adding contents to the network includes culture and the women's patrimony, making local women visible, and rejecting the idea of having also in the network a male-centred vision of the world;
- Favourable symbolic spaces. The rooms in telephone centres and cybercafés tend to respond to male and young models, which mean a stop for those women that are not so young.

At the same time, the need to developing new contents and tools is foreseen to contribute to enhancing the entrepreneurial profile of women and their small enterprises, in connexion with the training for competitive development, which means to foster a solid online training offer for female entrepreneurs (in entrepreneurial, commercial and human resource management, and also in reinforcing their personal abilities) in which issues like the means and the channels to recruit beneficiaries are foreseen, and also tutoring done by people with a "gender sensitivity", the use of inclusive languages and images, making support materials (guides, CDs...) with a gender approach, availability issues, etc. The creation of a service network to support the trading of their products and services, as well as the internationalisation of their businesses: to offer tools and personal advice for setting up and promoting their websites in search engines and demand sites, online information systems per sector and adapted to the reality of women's SMEs, regarding markets and suppliers, access to the keys and opportunities to internationalisation for smaller companies that are managed by women, availability and active management of notices and ads, implementation of sector portals (gender and small enterprise oriented), offer of cyber-tutoring specialised in these fields, etc.

Lastly, these encouraging actions for the incorporation of women to the IS should be put in relation to employment support measures so that the new relationship flows do not go loose and the incorporation efforts are reinforced with the new abilities for the new tasks. Thus, a whole range of new opportunities is offered for e-economy in the new local development spaces.

2.2 EXPERT INTERVIEWS ANALYSIS:

During the field work research, 5 expert interviews¹⁸ have been carried out in Bilbao from April to May (2010). As follows, the main findings will be discussed focusing on the 5 main aspects:

- **Women and the usage of the new technologies/web 2.0**

First of all, concerning the current situation of women entrepreneurs and generally speaking about the situation of women, it has been observed and highlighted that the situation is rather historical: *"the problem is cultural rather than a question of competences"* (exp. 3).

The interviewed experts agreed on that there are no big differences in competences within the gender perspective when it comes to entrepreneurship; however the differences are intrinsic in cultural and social context that provoke negative connotations and stereotyping, especially in technological fields. On the other hand, *"we also have cultural barriers that are reflected in education and the values we transmit to children"* (exp. 5). In this manner, within the gender perspective marked by our social circumstances, we will have women entrepreneurs more prudent and less self –

¹⁸ It has to be noted that all the interviewed experts are female.

confident. On the other hand, when it comes to the financial help and special programmes, there is a little improvement in facilitating the process of entrepreneurship as well as, a number of programmes and advantages for women entrepreneurs. A couple of them, mentioned by our experts: INEM, BBK, Lanekitza etc. Thus, it was confirmed that *"there exist small structures for developing and ensuring a more equal situation"* (exp. 5).

What is more, it was also observed by one of our experts that due to the "historical" situation (women tending to stay more at home), they have fewer possibilities to develop networks and spaces to share, if comparing with male situation within the gender perspective. Furthermore, it was also observed some reluctance. *"Due to the mentioned historical situation, on the one hand, women are less "risky" and less conscious about their capacities and thus, they are worse in vending themselves"* (exp.2). The later approach is transmitted to the facilitators that are managing the assistance programmes who do have a filter. *"For example, you receive a project with the same characteristics, above all when related with the technologies, undertaken by a woman and a man, the agents I do believe have a filter and will think that is more probable for a man to implement the project"* (exp. 2).

Finally, speaking about the general differences between female and male entrepreneurs, we meet the issue of visibility: *"There is a lack of references, women entrepreneurs are less visible"* (exp. 5). Here, the potential of web 2.0 can play an important role in order to enforce the visibility, as well as creating and developing synergies among the women collective and networks to share.

- **Difficulties and barriers of the usage of the new technologies/web 2.0 (for women entrepreneurs)**

As have been discussed above, it is not an issue about the competences and knowledge of using particular applications, if speaking about the usage of the new technologies, but rather a general digital gap and participation/time dedication. What is more, it has been noticed that the usage of internet by women tend to be more practical. More over, it has also been outlined that *"a man might learn quicker how to use a particular technology, however when it comes to the very use by attaching creativity, women have more capacities, tend to be more precise"* (exp. 1).

Concerning other barriers and fears, a general lack of confidence is transmitted also to the usage of the web 2.0, as well as management of the huge information flows might create additional obstacles for women.

- **Women training needs: specific skills and competencies to be reinforced**

Within the gender perspective, both, female and male entrepreneurs have to develop specific and the same abilities in order to manage a business. As highlighted by one of our experts, *"the 90% of the exit of entrepreneurial project depends on abilities"* (exp. 5). Nevertheless, coming back to the

cultural background and social circumstances, encouraging self –confidence of women entrepreneurs and networking should be considered as one of the main competences for reinforcement.

- **The relevance of web 2.0 for women entrepreneurship**

The relevance of web 2.0 for women entrepreneurship is unquestionable. According to one of the experts, *"web 2.0 is based on fundamental tools that provide with possibilities to demonstrate the capacities, it's a perfect platform"* (exp. 1).

Creating and generating networks is an important added value for any entrepreneur. Besides the networking, visibility is another significant feature (of fundamental importance concerning female entrepreneurship, as detected before). Thus, *"web 2.0 stands as a medium"* (exp. 3), creating identity and opening endless possibilities for networking and visibility.

- **Gender perspective on the use and training on web 2.0 technologies**

Regarding the gender perspective on the design of the training tool, a list of recommendations expressed by our experts can summarized as follows:

- Didactic and explicatory contents;
- Fostering confidence and raising awareness about the web 2.0;
- Bringing to a practical usage;
- Identification: developing a diverse picture of women entrepreneurs;
- Creating synergies and networking (involving and encouraging direct participation);
- Teaching how to pass from visible to exploitable;
- To understand the technologies ("why": according to the necessities, to show the benefits);
- To approach and speak from the experience;
- *"Should be clearly indicated that the training is designed specially for women entrepreneurs to make them feel identified"* (exp. 4).

- **Selection of web 2.0 features and applications**

The interviewed experts have been asked about particular web 2.0 applications and tools that should be included into the training platform. First of all, it was observed, that the technologies are changing too fast, thus the training course should be approached to teach in values and demonstrating/showing the usefulness and utility. Thus, it was outlined that it is not necessarily indeed to enter in all the sites and applications, of a crucial importance would be to teach how to optimize the use and time dedication.

A list of highlighted features and observations for consideration:

- To teach and explain "how" and "why" (basic benefits);
- *"To demonstrate successful examples of usage"* (exp. 3);

- Using web 2.0 applications and tools for exercises ("*Learning by doing and experimenting without fears*"(exp. 1));
- Training how to use and apply analytics (applications for monitoring);
- Copy rights and data protection;
- Visual, graphic and dynamic e-learning platform;

The following table summarizes a list of recommended applications:

Web application/ feature	Application and importance
Google apps	Online applications for business
Blogger: http://blogger.com	Blogger is a free blog publishing tool from Google for easily sharing your thoughts with the world
Bebo: www.bebo.com	Recognised social network focused on users sharing music, ways of thinking, messages, photos, among other things
MySpace: www.es.myspace.com	A website for social interaction made by personal profiles of users including networks of friends, groups, blogs
Gaiaonline: www.gaiaonline.com	Gaia on line is a Japanese animation website in English, social networks and forums based on the web. Users of the site create an avatar and a virtual house that are personalised in order to acquire items through what they call gold
Ning: www.ning.com	Ning is an online platform for users that allow creating social websites and social networks launched in October 2005, it is a platform for the creation of networks
Twitter: www.twitter.com	Twitter (<i>warble, chatter, sing</i>) is a free of charge microblogging service that allow users to send based on text micro entries of a maximum length of 140 characters. They are shown in user profile page and are immediately sent to other users that accepted to receive them
Facebook: www.es-es.facebook.com	Facebook is a social tool that connects people with their friends and other people working, studying and living in their environment. It is used to be in touch, uploading an unlimited number of photos, sharing links and videos and to know more about the people you know
Friendfeed: www.friendfeed.com	Friendfeed allow users leaving not only general comments about any question but also giving an opinion about any other element shared by a user (photo, video, post,...).
Flickr: www.flickr.com	Flickr is a website allowing people to store, order, search and share photos and videos online
Parahi5: www.parahi5.com	H5 is a website that is famous for its interactivity as it can make a sort of a virtual visit card out a simple user account; it is available in 23 languages

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com	LinkedIn is a business oriented website comparable to a social network service used mainly as a professional network. In June 2009 it had over 42 million registered users in over 200 countries and it encompasses 170 companies
Youtube: www.youtube.com	YouTube is a website in which users can upload and share videos
Deviantart: www.deviantart.com	DeviantART is a website that gathers an international community of artists on the network. It is a virtual space in which anyone can show his or her art pieces and use the possibilities of the network to submit it to the comments of the others and especially of other artists
Delicious: www.delicious.com	Delicious is a management service of social markers on the web. It allows to aggregate the markers that were traditionally saved in the navigators and categorise them and share them with other del.icio.us users and determine how many of them have a specific link saved in their markers
Digg: www.digg.com	Digg is a science and technology news website. It combines social markers, blogging and syndication with a non hierarchy organisation, with a democratic editorial control which allows articles to be published in a wide range of genres. News drafting and recommendations of websites are sent and are made available to the community who judge them and whose valuating system is measured according to the classification done by the users

Another suggested recommendation proposes an example how to develop a project idea in the web and make it visible in 4 steps:

1. Idea (brainstorming) – a draft in Mental maps
2. Transference and open knowledge – Blog
3. Searching for contacts – LinkedIn
4. Socialization – Facebook

As explained by our expert, following the life cycle of the project idea, once passing the 4 steps, as a main result we will have the defined brand/identity as well as a network of people who will be familiarized and already supporting the idea.

Coming back to the previous expressed recommendation to teach in values and attitudes, rather focusing on a number of application and technical features, an entrepreneurial dimension should be of the main focus once structuring the course.

- **Other topics to be considered (included in the training for women)**

- Adding entertainment features;
- An introductory module (from gender perspective) introducing web 2.0;
- Training how to manage different profiles – different identities in different applications and platforms.

- **Other observations**

Once asked about how to motivate women entrepreneurs and for suggestions to make the training as much attractive, the expert seem to agree about the time saving aspect as well as networking and creating synergies are among the most important impulses that could attract women¹⁹.

Several interesting links recommended by our experts:

- 10 Tips on self empowerment/ personal development with web 2.0: <http://webstudio13.com/2009/09/06/10-tips-on-self-empowerment-personal-development-with-web-2-0-tools/>
- Top 10 Google tools for entrepreneurs: <http://crenk.com/top-10-google-tools-for-entrepreneurs/>
- 10 of the Best Social Media Tools for Entrepreneurs: <http://mashable.com/2009/10/26/social-media-entrepreneurs/>
- 10 Online Productivity Tools for Your Business <http://mashable.com/2010/01/17/online-productivity-tools-business/>

FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS:

The focus group was organized on the 14th of April, in Madrid, at the premises of Amesal. To summarize shortly the main observations and conclusions **undertaken**, as follows it will be discussed the use of the web 2.0 by women entrepreneurs, benefits that could be gained, difficulties and obstacles and training needs.

¹⁹ *Several interesting links recommended by our experts:* 1. 10 Tips on self empowerment/ personal development with web 2.0: <http://webstudio13.com/2009/09/06/10-tips-on-self-empowerment-personal-development-with-web-2-0-tools/>; 2. Top 10 Google tools for entrepreneurs: <http://crenk.com/top-10-google-tools-for-entrepreneurs/>; 3. 10 of the Best Social Media Tools for Entrepreneurs: <http://mashable.com/2009/10/26/social-media-entrepreneurs/>; 4. Online Productivity Tools for Your Business <http://mashable.com/2010/01/17/online-productivity-tools-business/>

a. The use of web 2.0 technologies

Among the main highlights, as far as the use of the web 2.0 technologies is concerned, Spanish women entrepreneurs tend to use the technologies more randomly at work, rather than at home. Nevertheless, it was also stressed, that the particular use is very closely linked to a type of work. Coming back to the analysed expert interviews, it confirms the comments made about the lack of time on behalf of women and household responsibilities that women take care of.

b. Benefits and difficulties of the usage of web 2.0

Once discussing about the benefits using web 2.0 technologies, women entrepreneurs has emphasized the following: *communication networks, publicity, information, sell – buy facilitation, a possibility to introduce the vending product to the major public, flexibility of time (possibility to access whenever we want and can) and ultimately, the communication is quicker in the case of business.*

On the other hand, several difficulties and obstacles have also been highlighted. First of all, it was observed poor or inadequate equipment for that kind of new technologies, as well as the lack of training and usage and thus, a lack of confidence concerning the functioning and privacy. Therefore not all the characteristics and alternatives offered by the web 2.0 technologies are taken advantage of. What is more, the difficulty to filter the huge amount of information flows has also been pointed out among the major obstacles.

c. Training needs

As far as the training needs are concerned, two main conclusions can be extracted: a need to gain more confidence about the web 2.0, as well as getting to know the multiple possibilities offered by the web 2.0 (the very basics are already learnt).

To put it a nutshell, women are likely have “fears” (psychological obstacles) when it comes to use of web 2.0 technologies that has to be taken into account once developing training contents and pedagogical criteria. Nevertheless, the expressed lack of confidence, women are seeking for learning multiple possibilities concerning the technologies based on web 2.0.

3. GOOD PRACTICES

The selection of good practices was based on the desk research, as well as recommendations/suggestions from our interviewed experts. Online platforms for women entrepreneurs encouraging participation in social web and application of web 2.0 technologies were taken for the main selection criteria.

BEST PRACTICE (Nr. 1)	COUNTRY: Spain
Name of the training programme/project: E-emprendedoras	
General information about the programme/project: Aware of the importance of incorporating the use of new technologies in the field of women's cooperatives, as well as the potential for them in the promotion and encouragement of the entrepreneurial skills of women, Amecoop has raised the need for develop a powerful new platform that brings together a number of tools specifically designed to identify, promote, train, monitor and support the entrepreneurial skills of women, promote entrepreneurship and improve the conditions and possibilities for them in the context of cooperatives associated work.	
Promoter	ESFL: Asociación de mujeres empresarias de cooperativas (Amecoop)
Duration and timing	Flexible online platform, due to own time management
Place of implementation	Online
Participants	Women entrepreneurs
Teaching methodology	The project e-emprendedoras aims to promote self –employment and entrepreneurship among women through the creation of a Virtual Incubator of entrepreneurship that in the context of social economy would accompany and enhance the entrepreneurial initiatives and simultaneously incorporate the use of new technologies as a strategic tool for the enterprise. The created virtual tutored environment cares, promotes and develops entrepreneurial skills of women for the future creation of enterprises.
Learning contents	Practical materials for learning and self-assessment test, simulation games, case studies, useful information for financing the company, exchange are of concerns and with other entrepreneurs, a plan to incorporate the new technologies in the company, brainstorming are etc are the main elements provided in the platform.
Financing	Avanza Plan
Results and acknowledgements	

Other information	
Bibliography and/or web site	http://www.e-emprededoras.es/

BEST PRACTICE (Nr. 2)	COUNTRY: Spain
Name of the training programme/project: Emakumeak Sarean 2.0 - Mujeres en Red 2.0	
<p>General information about the programme/project: The project is designed for women associations and collectives who seek to improve the processes of information, communication and relationship through the ITCs. The main idea of the project focuses on developing a space for reflection and for action, a space for promoting a meeting point and shared learning experiences about opportunities that ITC bring to the women groups and associations.</p> <p>The project KzEmakumeezkoElk@rteekin aims to value the opportunities offered by Social Web and facilitate the exchange in training and good practices through a Blog. The project involves the implication of different agents: PESI are responsible for dynamizing and coordinating various activities, Emakunde – Basque Institute for Women favors the introduction of the project to women associations and groups while Red KZgunea will offer specific training actions. Besides the Blog, the project introduces a Wiki, as well as a Facebook group.</p>	
Promoter	Agenda Digital de Euskadi – Plan Euskadi en la Sociedad de Información, Emakunde (Basque Institute for Women) and Kzgunea (Network of access centres and e-training)
Duration and timing	Online, due to own time management (flexible)
Place of implementation	Online participation Seminars and workshops, punctual events
Participants	Women associations and groups, the Blog, Facebook group and Wiki are open for any interested person.
Teaching methodology	<p>The methodology is based on the 6 principle working lines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Detection of expectations and needs of major groups / associations of women in matters of Social Web 2. Design of a training plan according to those needs 3. Presentation of good practices developed by groups / associations of women in Social Web 4. Training in gender people providing training

	<p>5. Implementation of planned training actions for groups / associations of women through the Telecentre Network KZgunea</p> <p>6. Evaluation of the impact of motivation and training process carried out</p>
Learning contents	<p>Social web and gender methodology</p> <p>Main events and training actions can be followed at:</p> <p>Facebook: Grupo Emakumeak Sarean 2.0 - Mujeres en Red 2.0: http://www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=home#!/group.php?gid=104211166279821</p> <p>Blog: http://emakumeaksarean.wordpress.com/</p> <p>Wiki: http://emakumeaksarean.wikispaces.com/2.+Presentaci%C3%B3n</p> <p>Twitter: con la etiqueta #emakumeak. Para ver todo lo relacionado con #emakumeak: http://twubs.com/emakumeak</p>
Financing	Basque government
Results and acknowledgements	
Other information	
Bibliography and/or web site	http://emakumeaksarean.wordpress.com/

BEST PRACTICE (Nr. 3)	COUNTRY: Spain
Name of the training programme/project: Ellas 2.0	
General information about the programme/project: Ellas 2.0 is a virtual community project that was born with the objective to promote the creation of technology – based business. The project aims at being the catalysts for social change, mobilizing, providing visibility and providing support and resources for the powerful network of women entrepreneurs who take for granted the economic independence and technology (especially, social media) as fundamental tools for achieving personal and professional realization.	
Promoter	By a group 5 women entrepreneurs

Duration and timing	Flexible
Place of implementation	Online and punctual events
Participants	Open to anyone interested
Teaching methodology	Learning methodology is based on direct participation of women applying web 2.0 technologies (learning by doing)
Learning contents	ELLAS VAN: is an initiative promoting special meetings with Ellas 2.0 group before particular events for entrepreneurs aiming at networking and balancing the dominating male audience. ESCAPARATE: Visibility for entrepreneurs TRIBUNA: Collaborative contents RECURSOS: Useful information and other networks CALENDARIO
Financing	
Results and acknowledgements	Around 800 followers in Facebook group
Other information	
Bibliography and/or web site	http://www.ellas2.org

4. CONCLUSION REMARKS

The existence of networks in the female entrepreneurs' environments is a sustainability aliment as they provide with the support and growth values that have a direct impact on small enterprises:

- They are relevant to foster women's productive activities in material and affective aspects;
- The emotional momentum can be a determining element for their sustainability;
- The networks can be a guarantee to accessing the markets, to dissemination and to advice;
- The networks are a support and the fabric that is used as a basis for the sustainability and the development of female entrepreneurs.

So far, women used the network structure in their social and work relationships; thanks to the development of 2.0 environments a leap forward has to be fostered for them to relate also in digital networks; the incorporation to ICTs increases the entrepreneurial productivity, improving the communication and implementation on the market relationships, as well as the commercial and human relationships in companies.

The creation of technological environments and virtual communities lead by women of local specific environment has the following advantages:

- Facilitating communication: it relates all the useful resources for women (associations, female entrepreneurs, and employment, culture and leisure resources) linked to the environment;
- This positive flow is twofold as it fosters the relationship of the administration with the people and the networks in its environment and also, women get in this way a very relevant resource for the dissemination of activities and the participation in calls for proposals, calls for tenders, activities;
- Facilitating networking of the virtual community resources in order to carry out activities within and outside the network. This job can be useful to go out of the territory concerned (municipality or region) when it comes to carry out extraterritorial activities that require links to resources and people that are outside the local territory, etc;
- The existence of well managed virtual communities strengthens the social and economic fabric of a territory.

However, as seen in the research conducted by the *E-Igualdad Centre*, through its *Observatory*, the indicators in matter of innovation and technology show important gender gaps related to the participation of women in these fields either as leaders, creators or as users. This situation is very relevant for women entrepreneurs as the innovation highways mean the incorporation to the Information Society. If the ICTs abilities are not known it is not possible to participate in the advantages provided by the economy and the businesses for women.

Today, in Spain women are the protagonists of the entrepreneurial growth. There are already 923,400 female entrepreneurs and cooperative members, which accounts for 12 % of the women

occupation and 30 % of the entrepreneurship in Spain²⁰.

In spite of the advantages, it is also true that Spanish female entrepreneurs have to face some obstacles linked to gender inequalities (little diversified activity, small size of business, lower turnover levels, lost internationalisation rates, less identification to the role of the female entrepreneurs, difficulties to manage time, scarce participation and acknowledgment in the organisations that represent the entrepreneurs, etc.).

Among these obstacles, there is precisely the access to ICTs. In fact, recent surveys show how the computerisation level of women owned companies is clearly insufficient. The percentages are: 44.1% in the area of production, 51.5% in the area of management, 37.3% in the area of sales and 28.6% in the area of marketing. However, most women entrepreneurs are interested in getting information about new technologies although only 2.5 % use the Internet as an information way.

From this perspective, full access of women entrepreneurs to ICTs can be a very important way to achieving a more active, and competitive, presence of women in the economy and the development, as well as being a factor for the creation of female employment, given that female entrepreneurs create not only employment for themselves but also for other women.

Facing the barriers to growth and strengthening of the female businesses, ICTs allow to: improve at a low cost, enlarge the market and reaching out to more people and efficiently manage time. Facing the lack of equality models or of models that are an alternative to the established ones, ICTs allow to exchange information and coordinate energies, create common spaces and making equality examples and achievements visible.

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²⁰ Source: INE. EPA, 4th Quarter of 2008.



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III. CONCLUSION REMARKS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WP3

Today's web (or web 2.0 technologies) is creating new opportunities for various companies, large and small, enhancing their competitive advantage. Web 2.0 takes a fundamentally different view of how business, customers and partners interact and in doing so, it opens up a range of new business models" (Musser: 2006, p.1). Freeing of data, to allow it to be manipulated in ways unconnected to the purpose for which it was gathered, the building of virtual application that draw information and functionality from different sources and the growing importance of user participation are among the intrinsic qualities of the Web 2.0. Web 2.0 has the advantage of adaptability to the business environment, and responsiveness to changing business needs. "For dynamic, fast changing business environments, where information plays a vital role and there exists a high rate of change in the competitive environment, and a very high degree of innovation, Web 2.0 technologies may offer real benefits" (Tredinnick: 2006, p.234). Interactive online advertising, web analytics, pay – per – click advertising and targeted or behavioural online advertising are some of opportunities of the Web 2.0. Amy Shuen in the book "Web 2.0– a strategy guide: Business thinking and strategies behind successful Web 2.0 implementations" highlights the powering feature: "Web 2.0 is powering up the knowledge and network economy, starting with users, consumers and digital natives, and accelerating as it transforms knowledge workers and business globally" (Shuen: 2008, p. xiii). By adding the Web 2.0 technologies we deliver value back to the business in increased sales, improved customer services or lowering the cost of doing business.

Summarizing the country reports and aiming to extract the most relevant points to be considered for transference, noteworthy the following highlights:

1. Women entrepreneurs as a target group — is very diverse and heterogeneous one in terms of education, age, undertaken business sector, previous experience etc (leaving apart cultural differences). Despite the highlighted diverse profile of women entrepreneurs, it could be observed an improving situation for entrepreneurship, however halted by economic crisis.

2. Concerning the knowledge about web 2.0, in all the national reports it was pointed at the gender digital gap. Women tend to be less familiar with ITCs and spend less time connected in Internet. Access to strategic information and huge information flows that are hard to control is one of the main associated fears concerning Web 2.0.

3. When it comes to the usage of particular applications and technologies, as expressed by women entrepreneurs in focus groups, as well as observed by interviewed experts, women rather opt rather for more functional and practical usage and application of technologies.

4. Among the identified specific needs of women entrepreneurs, a lack of networking and contacts, time management, a lack of confidence and self – esteem were emphasized among Spanish, Italian, Latvian, Rumanian and Czech entrepreneurs.

5. While technologies are changing too fast, it was particularly suggested by various experts to focus on training in values and general application and philosophy of the technologies.

6. Gender perspective on technologies, practical examples and success stories, “learning by doing”, direct involvement of women entrepreneurs are examples of recommendations reflected in national reports for the inclusion into the training programme.