



WOMEN EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Support Manual for Trainers, Tutors Concerning
Women Employment Issues



Women Integration in Business Creation





Lifelong
Learning
Programm

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Project Co-ordinator:

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Inova Consultancy Ltd -UNITED KINGDOM

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Pendik Local Education Authority -TURKEY

Pendik Industrialists and Businessmen's Association -TURKEY

Istanbul, TURKEY, 2011

FOREWORD

“Whilst Europe does not have enough entrepreneurs following through on their ideas to set up in business, there are, disproportionately, even fewer women than men entrepreneurs. Europe’s economy needs more entrepreneurs to take the plunge. The Commission is working with Member States to find ways to overcome the factors which particularly discourage women from taking up the option of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurs - people willing to take the risks and make significant commitments to get a new business off the ground or build on an existing one - are not common enough in Europe. For many reasons, not enough Europeans see running a small business as sufficiently more attractive than working as an employee of a firm, large or small, or in a public organisation. These reasons apply as much to women as to men, but there are certain additional factors which make entrepreneurship an even less attractive or viable option for women (in addition to those factors which count against women in all sections of the labour market).

Although there has been an encouraging upturn in women running businesses in the past decade or so, much more needs to be done to overcome the specific factors which discourage women in particular from starting or taking over small firms. Today women entrepreneurs in Europe are only 30% of all entrepreneurs. And even more importantly, we have to create an environment in which those women who do run a small business can more easily grow their firms.”

The website then focuses on the point of promoting opportunities, underlining the fact that

“... A key problem is access to finance. All entrepreneurs find it difficult to find the investors they need to secure their business, and specific measures are needed to make it easier for women to obtain the funding required for business ventures. And whilst legislative action is appropriate in some areas, in others the main need is to enable women to gain better information. One of the main initiatives the Commission is undertaking is to support networking amongst women entrepreneurs, amongst potential women entrepreneurs, and amongst government agencies and other support organisations which can play a role in encouraging women entrepreneurs”.

Turkey has made considerable progress in improving the quality of life of its citizens over the last two decades. Notwithstanding, Turkey ranks low in a large number of topics relative to most other countries in the Better Life Index.

Money, while it cannot buy happiness, is an important means to achieving higher living standards. In Turkey, **the average person earns less than the OECD average of 22 387 USD a year.** There is a considerable gap between the richest and poorest – **the top 20% of the population earn eight times as much as the bottom 20%.** In terms of employment, **46% of people aged 15 to 64 in Turkey have a paid job,** lower than the OECD employment average of 66%. Some 67% of men are in paid work, compared with 26% of women. People in Turkey work 1877 hours a year, more than most people in the OECD who work 1749 hours. 43% of employees work very long hours, much higher than the OECD average of 9%, with 49% of men working very long hours compared with 34% for women.

Having a good education is an important requisite for finding a job. In Turkey, **33% of adults aged 25-64 have earned the equivalent of a high-school degree,** much lower than the OECD average of 74%. This is truer of men than women, as 35% of men have successfully completed high-school compared with 26% of women. This difference is higher than the OECD average and suggests women's participation in higher education could be strengthened. In terms of the quality of the educational system, the average student scored 455 in reading literacy, maths and science in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), lower than the OECD average of 497. On average in Turkey, girls outperformed boys by 15 points, more than the average OECD gap of 9 points.

In terms of health, **life expectancy at birth in Turkey is 74 years,** six years lower than the OECD average of 80 years. Life expectancy for women is 77 years, compared with 72 for men. **The level of atmospheric PM10** – tiny air pollutant particles small enough to enter and cause damage to the lungs – **is 37 micrograms per cubic meter,** considerably higher than the OECD average of 22 micrograms per cubic meter. Turkey also performs below the OECD average in terms of water quality, as 65% of people say they are satisfied with the quality of their water, below the OECD average of 85%.

Concerning the public sphere, there is a moderate sense of community and high levels of civic participation in Turkey, where **69% of people believe that they know someone they could rely on in time of need,** less than the OECD average of 91%. **Voter turnout,** a measure of public trust in government and of citizens' participation in the political process, was 83% during recent elections; this figure is higher than the OECD average of 73%.

In general, Turks are less satisfied with their lives than the OECD average, with **56% of people saying they have more positive experiences in an average day** (feelings of rest, pride in accomplishment, enjoyment, etc) **than negative ones** (pain, worry, sadness, boredom, etc). This figure is much lower than the OECD average of 72%.

Beginning from 1980's unemployment became a very crucial issue all over the world as a result of with globalization, privatization, weakening of trade unions, multinational corporations looking for cheap labor and etc. As like other European countries Turkey was faced with unemployment problem at the beginning of 80's and it is still one of the major problem in the country.

When the needs of individuals and families' started to increase women get started to find job opportunities with the men. Women started to work both in houses and out of houses as professional workers. The term "women's work" may indicate a role with children as defined by nature in that only women are biologically capable of

performing them: pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding. It may also refer to professions that involve these functions: midwife and wet nurse. "Women's work" may also refer to roles in raising children particularly within the home: diaper changing and related hygiene, toilet training, bathing, clothing, feeding, monitoring, and education with regard to personal care. It may also refer to professions that include these functions such as that of: teacher (up to the age of puberty), governess, nanny, day care worker, and au pair. "Women's work" may also refer to roles related to housekeeping such as: cooking, sewing, ironing, and cleaning. It may also refer to professions that include these functions such as: maid and cook. Though much of "women's work" is indoors, some is outdoors such as: fetching water, grocery shopping or foodforaging, and gardening.

By contrast, "men's work" stereotypically involves the usage of strength or work outdoors; mechanical, electrical or electronic knowledge and skill; employment ("bread-winning", "bringing home the bacon"); most dealings with money; or higher reasoning to perform tasks. Among some people, men's work is considered to be the opposite of "women's work" and thus does not include activities within the home or with children, though "men's work" traditionally includes work that involves both (such as repairing appliances and disciplining children).

Even in more traditional times and societies, few families and households adhere strictly to these roles. For example, it is reasonably common for a man to do most of the cooking or grocery shopping or for a woman to handle the finances of the home or to have an income.

According to ILO data it is mentioned that low women's labour force participation and employment rates are among the most important issues in the field of employment in Turkey. Compared to EU, Turkey's female employment rates are extremely lower. While the EU Member States set quantitative targets within the context of the Lisbon Agenda for achieving gender equality in economic life, such as that of raising women's employment rate up to 60 per cent by 2010, women's employment rate in Turkey is around 21.3 per cent as of December 2008, meaning that only one in four women are employed. This figure which falls far behind targets of the Lisbon Agenda shows the fact that women employment should be at the heart of the employment policies in Turkey.

Turkey has ratified ILO Conventions on improvement of gender equality and women employment such as 100, 111, 122 and 142. Moreover, Turkey has signed on 10 February 2009 a Memorandum of Understanding on the Decent Work Country Priorities through which improvement of gender equality and women employment has become one of the priority areas in Turkey.

In line with ILO's prevailing policy on improvement of women employment and given the fact that women are poorly employed in Turkey, the ILO Ankara Office in cooperation with the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) has launched Pilot Project on Active Labour Market Policies for Advancing Gender Equality through Decent Employment for Women in Turkey in January 2009 on enhancing women employment in Turkey.

Increasing the number of women who are actively employed in Turkey would reduce poverty, increase national economic output, and lead to improvements in social indicators like health and children's education outcomes, according to a new report from the Turkey's State Planning Organization (SPO) and the World Bank.

"This joint report investigates the reasons why a lower share of women participates in the labor force in Turkey than in the EU and OECD on average, and why that share has been decreasing. The report intends to inform policies promoting more and better jobs for women in Turkey," **explained Kemal Madenoğlu, Undersecretary of State Planning Organization.**

While the share of women participating in the labor force has risen since the 1980s in countries with a similar starting point, it has fallen considerably in Turkey – from 34.3 percent in 1988 to 21.6 percent in 2008. By 2006, Turkey had fewer women participating in its economy than any other country in the OECD or the Europe and Central Asia region.

“All of Turkey stands to benefit from greater involvement of women in the workforce. More and better jobs for women will mean higher incomes and better lives not only for them, but also for their families—including better education and health for children,” **said Ulrich Zachau, World Bank Country Director for Turkey.** “If, for example, six or seven percent more of Turkish women start full-time jobs, which means Turkey reaches the Government’s 9th Development Plan target for women’s participation in the labor force, this will reduce poverty by around 15 percent.”

The report suggests that the government can encourage more women to work by removing barriers to businesses hiring women, by increasing education levels among women, and by making it easier for women to get out of the home and seek employment.

“In the same way that you wouldn’t play football without a full team, countries can’t compete globally if they don’t use the full potential of all their citizens,” said Diego Angel-Urdinola, from the World Bank, one of the authors of the report entitled ‘Female Labor Force Participation in Turkey: Trends Determinants and Policy Framework’. “Together with our World Bank colleagues, we found that there are significant barriers for urban women with poor levels of education to get jobs. Available jobs are often in the informal economy, pay little, and working conditions are harsh,” added İlyas Çelikoğlu, State Planning Organization Department Head for Social Policy.

The Government of Turkey recently introduced a program that subsidizes employers’ social security contributions for newly hired women for up to 5 years. Programs like this will likely help increase the rate of employment for women, especially in times of healthy economic performance. One are barriers to businesses hiring women. Studies show that investing in education and vocational training, along with skills development and entrepreneurial education, are the ‘building blocks’ of creating gender equality. Vocational training in particular spurs equality in wages and in labor market opportunities.

Lastly, the high cost of hiring someone else to help working women with childcare and domestic work is an important barrier for women to seek jobs in Turkey. Women in Istanbul stated that they would have to pay between 500 and 600 TL per month just for childcare if they decided to work, and more for other extra costs of additional household help. These costs would use up most of their additional earnings. More Early Childhood Education programs can help dramatically improve children’s learning, school, and life opportunities – and help break the cycle of poverty being passed on from parents to children through generations. In addition, children have a safe and caring place to go, so more women can work, increase their skills and incomes, and improve the lives of their families.

“I want to work to provide a better future for my kids. To send to extra courses for the examinations and help their school” **said one housewife interviewed for the study,** “to gain my economic independence, in order to help my family and my husband. I want my kids have education as higher as possible. So, I would like to use the money I earn for their school needs...”

According to the above the women employment rates are lower than expected and the main reasons of this results are;

- The size of agricultural sector shared in total employment
- Women are assumed to be unpaid family workers
- Unadequate Urbanisation and its effects to women employment
- Their marital status,
- Cultural habits and customs
- Their own children to be cared.

In the process of pre-accessing to EU, many institutions established and increase their activities in Turkey in order to develop women employment rates.

There are many small, medium and large sized institutions/organisations and governmental supports for this specific issue. In below, you can find most affective institutions in Turkey about women employment concerning issues.

1.TR. Ministry of Labor and Social Security

This is the biggest institution in Turkey and it includes many other big support organisations for all employment issues.

The aims of Ministry are;

- To organize labor and working environment
- To ensure labor peace
- To improve occupational health and safety in all sectors,
- To increase employment rates and quality of working environment
- To protect Turkish workers' rights and ensure sustainability
- To create new employment sectors

The Ministry of Labor and Security supplies working areas for women and it supports self-employment of women labor.

Web: www.csgeb.gov.tr

Phone:+90 312 296 60 00

Contact details for regional offices can be found in website.

2.Turkish Employment Agency (İSKUR)

Turkish Employment Agency aims to meet unemployers with employers, increase sustainability in the labor market, to help people during their work seeking process, develop workers quality and help them to get a job during its courses and training programs, support self-employment and to provide temporary income support to those who lost their job for a while.

Contact Information:

Web: www.iskur.gov.tr

Phone:

Contact details for regional offices can be found in website.

3. Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization KOSGEB

KOSGEB aims to increase SME's share in economical and social development by offering quality service and support towards developing SME's power of competition and spreading culture of entrepreneurship.

KOSGEB has also special funds only for women to increase their self-employmentWome

Contact Information:

Web: www.kosgeb.gov.tr

Phone: Free Call Center: 444 1 567

Contact details for regional offices can be found in website.

4. Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD)

TÜSIAD works to achieve the realization of the main objectives stated above based on the belief that businessmen, working in line with the targets and principles of Turkey's reaching and surpassing the norms of contemporary civilization and holding to the equality of men and women in politics, the economy and education, comprise a pioneering and enterprising group in society.

As the representative organization of the Turkish business world working for public interest, TÜSIAD strives to support entrepreneurial activities in conformity with the universal principles of business ethics; TÜSIAD constantly aims for progress and enhancement based upon continuous improvements in Turkey's competitiveness, social welfare, employment and productivity, as well as the country's capacity for renewal and the scope and quality of education and training during the globalization process.

Contact Information:

Web: www.tusiad.org

Phone: +90 212 249 19 29

E-mail: tusiad@tusiad.org

TUSIAD has its headquarters in Istanbul, Turkey, and has 6 representative offices around the world: Ankara, Brussels, Washington, D.C., Paris, Berlin, and Beijing.

5. Active Women Studies Association (AKÇADER)

The aims of the association are ;

- To help women to improve their self-skills in order to move them beyond the century,
- To support the women to bring them to the first places in the society taking into account their historical and cultural background,
- To ensure healthy, peaceful and happy living conditions to women
- To ensure healthy working environment to women
- To support their self-employment adventure
- To research on women issued problems and studies
- To solve problems about women and women employment

Contact information:

Web: www.aktifkadin.org

E-mail: iletisim@aktifkadin.org

Women employment in Slovakia

Economic transformation during the last 20 years were accompanying by fundamental changes in employment area. Women's working staff according to new social-economic impact acquire qualitative new form.

Women in Slovakia are substantial segment of the active working people. Relating to results of our Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic was in 1999 average number of economic active population 2 573 000, from this 45 % women, it is 1 159 000.

Number of working women was increase from 1996 of 54 000 persons. In the first period 2000 were registered 234 000 unemployed women, and measure of unemployed women evidence is 18,38 %. Women proportion on the all unemployed people in Slovakia is 45,0 %.

From the point of view family conditions the most unemployed women is in category (June 2000) married women (54,7 % from the total number of unemployed women).

In spite of all this reality in Slovakia is very high degree of women participation in the work market. The most important and relevant components are:

- very high value of the work in value womens system
- economic necessary – existence of the two incomes in the family
- access to the work as social contacts environment
- selfrealisation

Institutions

1. ASPEKT

ASPEKT is a feminist educational and publishing organisation. It was founded in 1993 (the official registration July 26, 1993) as an interest association of women, who agreed it was time to take the discourse on equality and democracy seriously and apply it to the lived realities of the people of feminine gender in Slovakia. Already second decade Aspekt does so by means of its (subversive and pioneering) publishing and educational activities.

In the period 1993-2004 there were 21 issues of the feminist cultural journal ASPEKT published (in A4 format, ranging from 92 to 334 pages). The journal opened new topics in the Slovak and Czech discourses; the translations of the most substantial texts of feminist movement, women's and gender studies were published; journal's editors also initiated writing of many original studies, which were applying the feminist view. Both metaphorically and literally it built the vocabulary of emerging feminists and feminisms. The anthological character of the journal preserves it as an always-actual studying material.

Aspect takes part in

- civic association Pro Choice Slovakia
- Initiative Fifth Woman against violence against women
- regional program of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung "Women's Politics and Empowerment in Central Europe"
- Slovak Women's Lobby
- Developmental Partnership "ruzovymodrysvet.sk" within the framework of the Community Initiative EQUAL project
- another changing coalitions and antinomies

Contact information:

Mýtňa 38
811 07 Bratislava, Slovak Republic
www.aspekt.sk
Phone: + 421 2 5249 1639

2. Womens lobby of the Slovakia.

We are the biggest web portal for women organisations in Slovakia.

Our main goals are:

- support of the disturbing of the gender stereotypes in all private a public areas with

forcing to education and harmonisation of the working a private life
-support of the balanced women and men representation on all levels in economic, social and political life in Slovakia
-to fight for remove of the all forms of the violence on women and for effective a professional protection violence victim
-promote gender equality principle a other principles focusing on improving for women status in all life areas, mainly by inciation and approving laws

-support womens rights in reproduction area relating to the Action plan of UNO Conference about population a development (ICPD 1994) and resolution of the European parliament about reproduction rights and health

-support for setting up of the mainstreaming principle and gender practice and analysys to the practice

-support for the needs and perspectives various group of women, which are discriminated from the reason of age, race, ethnic group membership, religious persuasion, sexual orientation, health problems, women living in Slovakia with status of immigrant and women immigrants

Contact information:
www.zenskaloby.szm.com

3. Alliance of Women in Slovakia

The Alliance of Women in Slovakia is a citizens' movement. We have begun in January 1993 as an initiative of a small group of women who had already been actively engaged in public life. These women gave rise to a network of women across the whole of Slovakia who felt a need to provide and to obtain information and experience about life in other communities, and were committed to actively support the development of civic awareness and civic culture in their own community.

We have also published the following brochures:

Women in NGOs, information about the situation of women and their motivation for work in the non – governmental sector, and

Women for a Healthy Planet, a WEDO Slovak version of a small guide for citizens to raise their awareness in public life.

We organised a conference on WOMEN NGOs in Bratislava in June 1997. This marked the first meeting ever and due to its great success it has now become a tradition. The conference will run this year for the third time. In 1995 we were the only organisation to translate Platform of Action which was then given to participants of the Women NGOs Conference. There have been no activities on the Platform of Action or any other results of the Beijing 95 World Conference since!

We have prepared a shadow report (to the official Slovak Government Report) for the CEDAW Committee to the UNO (Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) on the situation of women in Slovakia.

In 1998 we have launched activities to stop domestic violence (there was not even a reference term for domestic violence in legislation in Slovakia). In order to change the situation of the constant lack of law experts on women's issues, the Alliance has established a program of training for women lawyers called AdvoCats, together with ProFem - Prague and Amnesty for Women -Hamburg.

Currently we are preparing a series of training in raising awareness of women

according to their professions – such as judges, members of parliament, high ranking political party members and others.

Contact information:
Nábělkova 2, 841 05 Bratislava
tel+fax 00421 2 5245 0346
alianciazien@alianciazien.sk
www.alianciazien.sk

4. Pro choice

NGO Pro choice was founded in May 2001 with a main goal – to assist in the coordination and co-operation of various projects of several human rights institutions, feminists and women NGO's.

Our main goals are:

- Observance of the human rights of women and children
- Elimination of all forms of discrimination of women, forcing equal opportunities
- Gender equality and implementation of gender mainstreaming
- Protection of reproductive rights through the education towards the planned parenthood
- Elimination and prevention of violence against women

Our main activities:

•Campaign against deliberalisation of abortion law in Slovakia. Pro choice released a proclamation, which was published in many news. The proclamation was signed by 1320 organizations, women and men and it has been handed over to chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic as a protest note against the effort to change the abortion law in Slovakia. Some expressions of the signatures have been published and are released on our home page.

•Campaign Fifth Woman combating violence against women. The first nationwide campaign on the violence against women has had deep impact on the public opinion. The message "Every fifth woman is abused" has become to a fact often repeated in media and news. The campaign prepared public opinion and political situation for necessary legislative changes for more effective protection of victims of domestic violence

•Campaign Women Voices – non-partisan pre-election campaign to increase women voters' participation in the 2002 elections, formulate the most acute women's issues as the women's agenda and analyze political parties election programs from the women issues point of view in order to explain their intentions and real possibilities to women and to explain the importance of the EU membership for women.

•Protection of reproductive and sexual rights of women in Slovakia including opposition to proposed Treaty with the Holy See on the Right to exercise Objection of Conscience.

•Elaboration of Shadow report on 2nd and 3rd Periodical report of Slovak Government to CEDAW.

Contact information:

Medená 5, 811 02 Bratislava
Phone: 00421 2 5443 0889
mail: mail@moznostvolby.sk
www.moznostvolby.sk

5. Gender studies centre.

Gender Studies Centre is a university based research and educational institution at the Faculty of Philosophy at Comenius University in Bratislava.

Established in June 2001, as the first institution in Slovakia of its kind, it focuses on research and teaching activities in the field of feminist theory and gender studies. The subject of its interest are especially the issues of gender identity, gender-specific differences and symbols which structure the relationships between women and men in a fundamental way and cause inequality between them as well as topics on feminist epistemology, methodology of feminist research and 'women in science'. The Centre is to provide important knowledge, theoretical conceptions and reflection of problems tackling gender studies, support gender sensitivity for the existing structural inequalities between genders, which will lead to cultivation of critical thinking and ability of gender argumentation. The activities of the Centre are oriented towards the gender analysis of various socio-political problems. This interdisciplinary program concentrates on relations between genders in different areas of life and theory, like philosophy and science. It follows up a ten years tradition of similarly oriented educational and research activities which had been accomplished in cooperation with professionals from various disciplines from the Faculty of Philosophy and experts from NGO's.

The objectives of the Centre are also:

- promotion of scientific research activities thematically focused on gender issues and starting from methodological approaches created in feminist theories

- integration of the gender perspective into social sciences and their enrichment by new issues, approaches and results

- opening up the space for interdisciplinary discussions on gender issues from a historical perspective and also the perspective of women and men in contemporary society

The most important fields of activities of the Gender Studies Centre are the following:

- educational – courses for all students at the Faculty as well as for public at large

- coordination – creating a team of lectors and organization of special seminars for GSC members

- research – doing its own research in this field and initiating interdisciplinary gender research

- tutorial – providing consultations for students and the others involved

- expert-consulting – analysis of conceptional material from the gender perspective for government- and non-government institutions

- publishing – publishing its own studies, translations and study materials

- organizational – organizing lectures of foreign and home lecturers as well as the cooperation with partner institutions

- medialisational– cooperation with media in introducing gender issues to the public at large

- documentational – archiving term papers, theses and documentation of all activities connected with GSC

Contact information:

FFUK, Šafárikovo nám. 6, 81801 Bratislava

e-mail: genderstudies@fphil.uniba.sk

Phone: 004212 59244146

<http://www.genderstudies.sk>

Women in employment and self-employment – State of the situation in the UK.

Women in Employment:

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics in July 2011 show that:

- 65.5% of women in the UK are in employment

- The 'inactivity' (i.e. not in employment) rate for women stood at 29.4%. The main reason stated by women for this was because of looking after the family or home.

- Women seeking Job Seekers Allowance was at its highest rate since 1999 at 3.3%.

- Of the 13,566 women in employment during March – May 2011, 5,907 of these were in part-time work. This is significantly higher than the number of men which was only 2,817.

More recent figures (from November 2011) show that unemployment has risen dramatically in the UK over the year.

They show that the number of women in the UK who are now out of work increased from 43,000 to 1.90 million over the three months to September. This is the highest level since February 1988.

A large contributing factor to this is that a large percentage of women are employed in public sector jobs which have seen large cuts over the last two years.

Women in Self-Employment:

- There are around 680,000 majority women-owned businesses in the UK generating £45 billion to the UK economy.

- Of the 4.7 million UK enterprises, only 15% are led by women (BERR, 2009). (http://www.gew.org.uk/about/days_of_the_week/womens_enterprise_day)

- There are approximately 1,013,00 self-employed women (7.6% of women in employment) and 2,706, 000 self-employed men (17.4% of men in employment) in the UK.

- Women comprise 17.5% of full-time self-employment and 59.1% of part-time self-employment.

- Survey evidence indicates that businesses that are wholly or majority female-owned account for between 12.3%-16.5% of UK business stock. However, this figure increases to between 34.1%-41.2% when including businesses co-owned by men and women.

•Three main socio-economic issues influence women's abilities and prospects as business owners:

•The continuing pay gap between male and female workers that restricts the financial resources available for the creation and growth of women-owned business.

•Women's employment opportunities and experiences continue to provide them with lower levels of human and social capital necessary to establish and sustain a successful business.

•Pregnancy, childcare and caring responsibilities have been shown to present particular challenges for women business owners.

5 UK organisations

Inova Consultancy Ltd

Inova Consultancy provides a flexible consultancy service that responds to the needs of organisations and individuals internationally in the area of diversity, equal opportunities and entrepreneurship. Inova has extensive experience in the development and delivery of mentoring and personal development programmes particularly aimed at supporting women through career and enterprise development, both in the UK and on an international level. Inova has developed the Mentoring Circles™ methodology, supporting different target groups in their career and enterprise development across Europe.

Web: www.inovaconsult.com

Email: office@inovaconsult.com

Phone: +44 (0) 114 279 9091

Job Centre Plus

Job Centre Plus is a Government run agency which helps all UK citizens to find work. Although not aimed specifically at women they run a number of services which can support you in setting up a business including Enterprise clubs which provide help and advice on becoming self-employed and run the New Enterprise Allowance fund which can provide business support to the long term unemployed.

Web: <http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/>

Contact details: Each area has its own Job Centre offices. To contact the Job Centre in your area visit <http://los.direct.gov.uk/default.aspx?type=1&lang=en>

Action for Employment (A4E)

A4E was started in Sheffield over 20 years ago when large numbers of Sheffield steelworkers began losing their jobs as the industry started to decline. A4e was set up in order to provide the redundant workers with the training they needed to find work in other industries. The organization now support people in finding new work or moving into self-employment after redundancy by providing:

•Training, work skills and gaining self-confidence

•Job search support and preparing CVs

•Benefits information

•Help with managing a health condition

Web: www.mya4e.com
Phone: +44 (0) 800 345666

Prospects

Prospects are a leading supplier of education, employment and training services. Their expertise includes careers advice for young people and adults, helping people find employment through the Work Programme, supporting schools and colleges, inspection services, independent education, event management, educational resources, recruitment and much more. This includes supporting individuals to explore the option of self-employment.

Web: www.prospects.co.uk
Phone: +44 (0) 20 8315 1500 (National office).
Contact details for regional offices can also be found on the website.

First Point for Business (Sheffield City Council)

A service provided by Sheffield City Council, First Point for Business provides practical support for business at all levels. They provide a range of services and specialist advice for start ups including providing information on planning, licensing and building standards and rates. They can also put you in touch with training providers to brush up your skills in a number of areas, including business planning, marketing or workforce training.

Web: <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/business-economy/development/first-point-business>
Email: firstpointforbusiness@sheffield.gov.uk
Phone: +44 (0)114 224 5000

The gap between male and female employment in the 25–45 year age group has risen, according to findings of the latest report by the Institute of Political, Economic and Social Studies on childhood and adolescence in Italy, published at the end of 2006. One of the main reasons why women are leaving the workplace is childbirth. Moreover, the level of female employment declines with the birth of the first child and falls considerably after the birth of the second child.

Eurispes report

Each year, the Institute of Political, Economic and Social Studies (Istituto di Studi Politici, Economici e Sociali, Eurispes), in cooperation with Telefono Azzurro, an association offering support to children and young people in distress, publish a report on childhood and adolescence in Italy.

The report is based on sectoral and sample research and aims to produce an analysis of young people aged from seven to 11 years and from 12 to 19 years. With an emphasis on maternity rights, the latest Eurispes report 'Italy 2007' warrants particular attention, as 2007 has been designated the European year of equal opportunities for all.

Occupational gender gap

At present, the rate of female employment in Italy stands at just over 45%. This reflects an occupational gender gap of 25 percentage points, reaching up to 30 percentage points in southern Italy and on the islands.

The Eurispes report analyses these differentials in terms of age, and reveals that the gap rises considerably among people aged 35–54 years.

Female employment reaches 67.5% among 25–34 year olds, but decreases to 66.5% among those aged 35–44 years and then falls to 55.9% among the 45–54 year age group. This profile is quite distinct from that of male employment which increases by over 10 percentage points among those aged 25–44 years.

The researchers' conclusion is that, in the mid-life phase, when major lifestyle decisions are being made (for example, living with a partner, marrying or having children) and when there is a more pressing need to find a balance between personal and professional life, women have particular difficulties in gaining access to and retaining their place in employment.

Balancing childcare and employment

The previous Eurispes report, 'Italy 2006', had already described the profile of working mothers, defining them as 'acrobats' leaping between their working, family and caring duties.

The difficult situation faced by working mothers derives partly from objective factors and is partly due to traditional roles. For example, the provision of services for young children in Italy is still insufficient, with 32.7% of childcare requests remaining unfulfilled. In addition, there is a deep-rooted belief among Italians that family care is exclusively a woman's role. Thus, the decision to continue working while raising a child is often wrought with difficulties for parents.

As a result, Italian women often make the lifestyle decision to relinquish childbearing in order to retain their job. In light of this, the birth rate in Italy is one of the lowest in the world, averaging at just over one child per woman.

Gender gap and marital status

The presence of children is not the sole factor affecting female employment. In fact, the report also reveals marital status as a determining factor.

It appears that marrying or moving in with a partner often results in women leaving their job, which is not the case for men. The report reveals that the employment rate among married or cohabiting men is 17 percentage points higher than that of single men (81.4% compared with 64.2% of men). On the other hand, women who are married or cohabiting have a lower employment rate than that of single people (49.4% compared with 51.9% of women).

A steep rise is therefore evident in the occupational gender gap between single people (12.3%) and those who are married or cohabiting (32%).

Impact of childbearing on employment decisions

Having children has a profound effect on women's employment decisions. However, marital status also appears to have some influence in this respect. The employment rate among married or cohabiting women falls from 78% to 65.7% with the arrival of the first child, whereas it rises from 78.1% to 81% among single people. It is only with the birth of the second child that a significant drop in the employment rate of those who are single (to 71.8%) also becomes evident, although it remains higher than for married or cohabiting women, for whom it drops further to 52.6%. The arrival of a third child accentuates the difference, with employment rates falling to 59.8% for single women and to 37.5% among married or cohabiting women.

Geographical differences

The women who are most penalised in relation to employment opportunities are those from the south of Italy, where there is the significant lack of childcare services

and also a serious shortage of jobs. As a result, women in this part of the country often do not work. Consequently, it is in the central and northern parts of the country, where women have a greater presence in the workplace, that the lack of continuity in employment and career breaks following childbirth represent the most apparent issues facing women: in the north of Italy, 15.6% of women leave work after the birth of their first child along with 12.9% of women living in central Italy, compared with 9.3% of women in the south.

Commentary

The data provided by Eurispes have generated public debate, raising considerable concerns among those active in social fields; the latter have requested that the Italian authorities make greater efforts to assist women's access to the labour market and to allow mothers to keep their jobs for longer.

The President of Eurispes, Gian Maria Fara, lays the responsibility for the situation firmly in the hands of management. He contends that 'Italy must square up to its sickness, to its delays, to its structural weaknesses but, most of all, to its managerial class'.

Entry rates for higher education increased after Italy introduced a new degree structure in the early 2000s. While university-level attainment still remains below the OECD average, the gap for younger generations of Italians is expected to narrow over the next decade.

- Women have made notable progress in higher education in Italy.
- More than one in five 15-29 year-olds in Italy are neither in education nor employed, and many children of parents with low levels of education are caught in a low-education trap.
- Italy allocates a large share of educational expenditures to support pre-primary and primary students.
- Private expenditure on education increased more than public expenditure in recent years.

1. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Italy (LPS)

The aims of the Ministry are;

- To ensure the sustainability of labour market in Italy,
- To create new employment sectors
- To coordinate communication between labour market and citizens
- To protect Italian citizens rights in their working environment
- To develop the quality of working environment

Contact Information:

Web: www.lavoro.gov.it

Phone: Free Call Center: 800196 196

The Ministry has Regional offices in different regions.

2. Centro Ligure Produttività (CLP)

CLP is located in Genoa where the trade base in general Liguria Region.

Its aims can be listed as below;

- To spread the culture of enterprise creation as a possible choice for a wider range of people

- To accompany aspiring entrepreneurs access to services designed to enable an assessment of the opportunity to start business
- To support new entrepreneurs in accessing services designed to help the company in the delicate phase of start-up
- To implement a continuous monitoring system that may help to trigger actions for improvement in progress and enabling Funding to arrive at the definition of a model tested and evaluated with respect to effectiveness and efficiency.

3.Italian Union of Commerce

The MISSION of Union Commerce can be summarized in the following points:

- To represent economic sectors and business entities and professional recognize themselves in it, to the institutions and administrations, political, social, economic and trade unions;
- To enhance the economic and social interests of farmers and associated subjects and the social role of the same;
- To promote, in agreement with political institutions, economic organizations, social and cultural forms of cooperation aimed at achieving more complex and wider scope for progress and development of the subjects represented.
- To develop self-employment in Italy

Contact Information:

Web: www.uci-italia.org

Phone: Free Call Center: 800 182 313

E-mail: info@uci-italia.org

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