



## REPORT

### TP Winnet BSR WORKSHOP

# STARTING WOMEN RESOURCE CENTRES

September 24, 2014, Vilnius



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# **TP Winnet BSR workshop STARTING WOMEN RESOURCE CENTRES**

**Date:** September 24, 2014

**Time:** Registration start at 9 am, workshop start at 9.30, workshop end at 4.30 pm.

**Venue:** Ministry of Economy, Gedimino pr. 38, LT-01104 Vilnius. Room 212

**Aim:** The workshop will provide information and training on how to run Women Resource Centre (WRC) Successfully in Baltic Sea Region states within the TP Winnet BSR partnership project.

## **Participants:**

- TP Winnet BSR project partners from Lithuania, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Sweden,
- Invited participants - politicians and decision makers, public authorities, researchers, representatives of NGOs and other related organisations and other relevant actors who could enable development of Women Resource Centres in Lithuania

## **Welcome**

***Jolita Van Otterlo, Director of Business Environment Improvement Department at the Ministry of Economy:***

-It's important to achieve that business had as little constraints as possible. Women are active in service sector (70 percent of this type of product in Europe is created by women). There is a big difference between women and men in management of companies. I understand that scope of this project is wide and ambitious. It would be interesting to talk about this after few years. Still there is a wide space for involving women into business.

***Bitt-Marie Torstensson, President of Winnet Sweden:***

- Our first task is to develop women resource centres, to introduce training of trainers programme learning how to connect policy and practice while implementing gender issues in sustainable regional development. I am president of Winnet Sweden and Winnet Europe and coordinator of this project, which is financed by Swedish Institute. The project is involving women from Baltic Sea region.

***Laima Dockeyvičienė, Director of Rietavas Business Information Centre:***

-In the morning many people asked me why we are here and how we got involved into the project. Rietavas since Oginski times was considered as centre for innovations. Rietavas Business Information Centre continues this mission. And a good choice is to go cross border. First cross border projects started in 2011. During projects we carried out different activities, among them tested Success Teams method, developed e-platform "Veik.Rietave", which include crowd-funding tool, map, events calendar. South Baltic programme is the one that we are very much involved in and we consider it to be a unique tool to connect science, business, community. The way how we got involved into our Winnet BSR project was a meeting with Britt-Marie in Vaxjo during Going Abroad project conference.

Rietavas is in a very convenient geographical position. Low density of population, active business – there are over 200 companies operating in Rietavas. Women are active in services sector and trading. There is much of enlightened people due to Zemaitija college operating in Rietavas.

## **Implementation of gender equality in Lithuania: promoting economical independence of women**

***Vanda Juršėnienė, Head of Equality Between Women And Men Division, Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour:***

Those presentations encourage. It is very important that we, women are sharing experience. Movement for women rights have started in 16<sup>th</sup> century, Women rights statute (de jure) was originated. It was stating that men cannot beat women. This was protection from violence. First women organisation was established in 1905, first women congress took part in 1907, in 1920 women took part in the election for the first time.

Even today equal opportunities “de facto” are not the same as “de jure”. We still see unequal situation. Only 30 percent of women are present in small and medium business. Only 8 percent of women are the managers of big companies. (Only 5 percent in EU, in 11 EU countries there are no women managers of big companies). Lithuania is considering a priority to ensure women rights “de jure” as “de facto”. Equal rights look good from legislation point of view, but it is not good with equal opportunities. The main aspect of our national programme is women employment.

## **Winnet Centre of Excellence in BSR region: Facts, Figures and Research Agenda**

***Karina Tomaszewska, West Pomeranian University of Technology:***

Winnet Centre of Excellence is international network of researchers in Baltic Sea region. All Baltic countries are included. Main activities are: research oriented towards policy, documents, monographs, publications, promotion of attitudes towards gender equality.

Labour markets in all countries prefer men than women, women are paid less, they have less free time. In IT sector there are more men and less independently working women. It is important to establish a network of researchers. It is important to involve EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality). The other important step – organisation of training seminars. Also women resource centres analysis will be carried out, factors, enhancing women participation in SME and economical growth, are studied. Further research is in the ideas development level.

In Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania there is only few research carried out about gender equality and women innovations. The task is to concentrate on tourism and ITC.

## **Women participation in ITC sector. Using potential of young women**

***Dr. Lilija Kublickienė. Institute of Sociology, researcher:***

Information communication technologies is very innovative area: 40 percent of productivity growth and 25 percent of GDP growth arise because of usage of ICT. ICT sector comprise bigger part of EU economy. 3,7 percents of EU labour force (over 8 mln. Employees) are ICT specialists. In 2012 in Lithuania there were 22,9 percent of ICT specialists (24,5 thousand employees). Lack of ICT specialists is a problem. It is forecast that in EU there may be lack of ICT specialists: 700 thousand in 2015 and about 900 thousand by 2020. In Lithuania there may be lack of 17,5 thousand ICT specialists in 2016.

Among too few ICT students only 1 percent is women. ICT is not popular also among pupils: only 3 percents of them choose ICT as final exam.

If we succeed to engage women participating in ICT and increase their number to be the same as men, then European GDP could increase by 9 milliard litas.

Problems that prevent women to get engaged in ICT – it's internal and external barriers, cultural traditions.

It is essential to strengthen ICT image, to improve working conditions for women in this sector and to increase number of women in ICT.

## **Success teams method for promoting women entrepreneurs**

*Rasa Baliulevičienė, , Rietavas Business Information Centre, project administrator:*

One of target groups of Rietavas Business Information Centre is women. It is essential to provide them support while starting their business. This was done during "Going Abroad" project together with partners from Sweden, Germany, Poland. Method of Success Teams was an effective tool. A group of women meet every 3-4 weeks, support each other, develop objectives, and receive impulses to start and develop their businesses. In the start each participant define the aim of her business development. Later during the meetings each participant report on what she achieved during 3-4 weeks, the next step is support phase when participants share experience how to solve difficulties, and finally concrete personal tasks are set by each participant until the next meeting. Women in Success Teams achieve their aims faster and improve their self-discipline and management thanks to the regular meetings and the motivational impact of the group dynamics. Important factors include group pressure on members, the interactive structure of the team-work and the development of common strategies applied to achieve aims. The communicative interchange and social support from others, and celebrating achievements together with like-minded people are other positive success factors. Women got to know each other better. Also women recognized how important to invest into self development. Capability to communicate, moderate a meeting increase, they became more brave and positive

## **Women Resource centres in Greece**

*Popi Sourmaidou, Vice President at Winnet Europe, and Managing Director at WRC; Ergani Center, Sykies, Thessaloniki, Greece:*

The main goal of our women resource centre is to promote women entrepreneurship and employment. This is primary goal. All other goals are secondary goals, which help to implement the main ones. We work with young people on gender issues, help people from vulnerable groups, provide consultations and training. We implement projects and provide information about financing opportunities. Financing of our organisation is through projects – we are dependant on national or EU money. Every year we work with

200-250 women. During last two years we came to conclusion that it's important to develop social cooperatives and established a new service on supporting of establishment of social cooperatives. We have organisations in other regions of Greece. We prepare a new space for women initiatives.

During years we learned how important it is to spread information. Important that researchers, politicians, society representatives should meet, it's important to have in mind women perspective.

## **Women Resource Centres**

***Britt-Marie Torstensson, WINNET SWEDEN:***

We use women resource centres as a main tool in order to engage them into economical growth. The train the trainers handbook is published. While using it it's important to consider differences of Baltic Sea countries.

Winnet Sweden operates since 1999, in the beginning it was established as non-profit organisation in order to assure that knowledge gained during implementation of Swedish national project "Swedish national resource centre" should be employed. There was a need of people working on those questions. Later it turned into WINNET. We were involved into formation of Swedish policies regarding regional development and regional growth. It's important to have non-formal network, involve politicians and those, who have power to make changes. Important to have regional network and that our work was visible to others. Important to have dialogue and to foresee the next steps. It is important that we can develop this WINNET Baltic Sea Region platform and influence Baltic Sea strategy and actions.

It is important that women are present in labour market, that entrepreneurs use innovations, that family and work time is balanced. And it's very important to learn how to spread this message in whole Europe. If we manage to mobilise women and to talk with politicians – then we achieve it. This is possible, Simply do that.

## **Conclusion.**

WINNET network unite participants for solving similar problems. We should share decisions that are useful to all. Equal opportunities for women, is one of the most important themes in Lithuania and Europe.

There is a high potential for economical growth and innovations by engaging women: understanding the needs of women, identifying the environment of women, involvement of unemployed women into economical and social activities, promoting their creativity, supporting their ideas. Finally, utilisation of better education capacities of women would help to significantly increase economical growth and competitiveness of all EU countries. In order to increase women engagement there is a need of systematic political changes: evaluation of women influence for macroeconomics and recognition that economy is not neutral regarding gender. It is important to increase number of women managers and decisions makers, accept decisions promoting women engagement into economical activities, entrepreneurship and innovations, to create favourable working environment for women, reduce stereotypes on women and men roles.

There are few women organisations and networks in Lithuania, but they do not cooperate. Lithuania has to find own way regarding establishment of Women Resource Centres.

The next workshop is in Szczecin, Poland November 20-21, 2014.

## **Presentations of the Workshop**

- 1. Winnet BSR, Thematic Partnership projects, *Bitt-Marie Torstensson, President of Winnet Sweden***
- 2. Winnet Centre of Excellence in BSR region: Facts, Figures and Research Agenda, *Karina Tomaszewska, West Pomeranian University of Technology***
- 3. Women participation in ITC sector. Using potential of young women, *Lilija Kublickiene, Institute of Sociology, Researcher***
- 4. Success teams method for promoting women entrepreneurs, *Rasa Baliuleviciene, Rietavas Business Information Centre, Project Administrator***
- 5. Women Resource Centre in Greece, *Popi Sourmaidou, Vice President at Winnet Europe and Managing Director at WRC; Ergani Center, Sykies, Thessaloniki, Greece***