

Empower. Network. Grow.

Empowering women entrepreneurs in sparsely populated communities

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Empowering women entrepreneurs in sparsely populated Northern communities

W-Power works with women entrepreneurs in sparsely populated areas across Northern and Arctic communities, encouraging them to set-up, develop and grow their businesses. The project will achieve this through capacity building and providing opportunities for transnational learning as well as creating and piloting a gender-aware business support concept.

W-Power project Kick-Off days on November 27th-29th, 2018 were full of interesting and memorable events, encounters, business stories and people in winter wonderland of Rovaniemi, Finland. All project partners from seven countries (Scotland, Shetland, Ireland, Iceland, Sweden and Finland) got the opportunity to meet and discuss the genuine issues of W-Power project.

W-Power project Kick-Off grand finale took place at the International Networking Seminar at University of Lapland. The seminar was coorganized with ARCTISEN project from University of Lapland Tourism Research. Interesting topics such as culturally sensitive tourism in the Arctic as well as many interesting business stories of women entrepreneurs in the North inspired the audience to discuss and wonder.

Sini Yli-Suvanto

Communications Officer

Lapland University of Applied Sciences



The project is well underway

Following a great “kick-off” meeting in Rovaniemi the project is gathering pace. We have set up regional networks of women entrepreneurs and stakeholders so we are already talking to those who will benefit from and help shape the project. Each region has developed an action plan setting out what we will do throughout the project, including how the regional stakeholder groups can continue to benefit after the project has been completed.

We have drafted an overview of what we already know about the challenges faced particularly by women entrepreneurs—for example we know that women are less likely to than men to start a business and, when they do, often operate in different sectors and earn less on average than men. Women typically start businesses later in life than men and for different reasons, often valuing the flexibility which self-employment offers when balancing career aspirations with caring responsibilities. So, although men and women often face many of the same challenges they can have very different experiences of starting and growing their business.

In Work Package 1 we are also mapping the support which is already available to women entrepreneurs so that we can identify the extent to which this meets their particular needs. For example, in some regions business support is developed so that it specifically addresses the different needs of men and women entrepreneurs, such as access to finance. This can help overcome the challenges entrepreneurs sometimes face when accessing “one size fits all” support service, which does not, in reality, meet everyone’s needs.

All of this will help us develop a gender sensitive model of business support which will help address the particular challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the sparsely populated regions covered by the project— by sharing our experiences across Finland, Scotland, Sweden, Ireland and Iceland.

Liz Scott

Equalities manager

Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scotland

Transnational learning and capacity building of women entrepreneurs

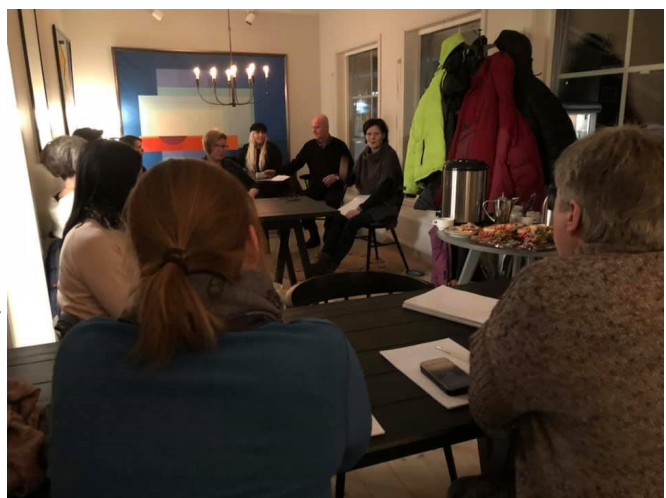
The first step of the work in Work Package 2 has been to develop a pre-survey aimed at woman entrepreneurs. The pre-survey includes questions about challenges and opportunities when starting and running a company as a woman in sparsely populated communities. Other important questions aim at pinpointing which specific needs entrepreneurial women have in terms of skills and support. The answers will then be used as input to the regional and transnational upskilling program that will be developed by the project. We hope many entrepreneurial women will take the opportunity to answer the pre-survey, as it will work as the basis for the development of future capacity building programmes.



Please find links to surveys in different countries in pdf. attachment:
[Scotland](#) [Ireland](#) [Sweden](#) [Iceland](#) [Finland](#)

First workshop in Jokkmokk, Sweden

Strukturum, the business support organisation in Jokkmokk, Sweden, one of the W-Power project partners, invited entrepreneurial women and those interested in entrepreneurship for an evening workshop at Hotel Akerlund. The agenda was: information about the project and its possibilities, presentation of women entrepreneurs, discussions about being a woman entrepreneur and certain needs of support and upskilling. Of course there was also time for some coffee and inspirational networking. Even if Jokkmokk is a small community, it soon became obvious that some of the participants did not know each other.



At the end of the workshop the pre-survey was introduced and the entrepreneurs were asked to fill out the questionnaire. As the upcoming capacity building programme is highly dependent on the number and quality of questionnaires filled out, project partners will now in parallel, invite woman entrepreneurs in all partner countries to take part in the pre-survey process. Hopefully we will receive a high number of respondents!



All in all it was a successful workshop with many participants who came to listen, discuss and share their experiences. We look forward to the next step – the start of the first network of women entrepreneurs in Jokkmokk!

Petra Holmbom

W-Power project Project Manager

Strukturum, Sweden

W-Power project in social media!

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