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Northern Periphery and  
Arctic Programme  
2014-2020



EUROPEAN UNION

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# Empower. Network. Grow.

Empowering women entrepreneurs in sparsely populated communities

## **W-Power - 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 business idea competitions have started again!**

Following last year's international innovation competition, W-Power is organizing regional innovation competitions for women entrepreneurs or those considering entrepreneurship. The purpose of these competitions is to bring out new business ideas. Participation also provides an opportunity to further develop existing business ideas!

Business idea competitions in Finnish Lapland & North Karelia and Jokkmokk Sweden started on 28th of August 2020. We are looking forward to receive YOUR application by the 28th October 2020.

To learn more of the local competitions, terms of applying etc. please visit our website: [W-Power NEWS](#)



### W-Power Highlights from different regions:



- In July 2020 we were excited to launch the new W-Power podcast series `Inspiring Women in Business`. The first season of podcasts featured five women from across the Argyll and the Islands region of Scotland who have set up and grown their businesses in this remote part of Scotland. From woolly hats to health and safety, a boutique travel agency to whisky expertise, the women interviewed are truly diverse and entrepreneurial bunch! A second season showcasing businesses from across the NPA project region will be released through September and October 2020.
- The success of the digital community of business learning and support has been a highlight of the W-Power project in Argyll, and has proved even more important since the advent of Covid-19. Around 50 women from across the region are members of the community, gathering digitally several times a week to network and share learning and ideas, as well as to offer one another mutual support, which makes so much difference when you're running a business on your own in a remote location. A tailored programme of webinars and Q&A sessions has added to the value women get from the group.
- HIE is delighted to have been able to promote the W-Power project through the addition of a new page to its website: <https://www.hie.co.uk/support/browe-all-support-services/w-power/> in July 2020. The new page gives an overview of the project, including links to the new podcast series and a registration form for the digital community of business support. We also issued two press releases in May and June, showcasing first the ways W-Power has been supporting women during Covid-19; and also how the innovation platform helped one new entrepreneur launch her first product.

Text and photo: Cathy Higginson, HIE, Scotland

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Sisters and business partners Sanna Jeskanen and Päivi Heinilä

#### **Business Idea Competition Offers Funds for the Development of Your Business Idea.**

The Draft Business idea [competition](#) was originally developed at Karelia University of Applied Sciences. It was piloted in all the countries in the [W-Power project](#) area last year. The competition was aimed specifically at women entrepreneurs and ideas promoting female entrepreneurship. A total of 24 business ideas were received for the business idea competition, of which 15 teams were selected to present their ideas at the pitching event. In November 2019, the international Jury selected five winning teams, one from Finland, one from Sweden, two from Scotland and one from Shetland. The winning teams were allowed to work on their ideas over the next few months with the project funding. In total, the amount of allocated funding was 10 000 Euros.

#### **Finnish winner Juuriska Oy**

In July, we interviewed members of the Finnish winning team, entrepreneur Sanna Jeskanen and Päivi Heinilä, the founders of [Juuriska Ltd.](#) The business was started in December 2019. According to them, participation in the Draft business idea competition helped to speed up the start-up of the company. Short competition timetable set the targets for the measures to bring the company to action. The sour dough bakery started its production in January 2020. Sisters Sanna and Päivi said that they decided to apply for microfinance program because they understood that it was an opportunity to receive support and advice on how to start a business. Päivi has already worked as an entrepreneurs in the past, but Sanna had no previous experience from entrepreneurship. She continues to work as a designer of international affairs at Karelia University of Applied Sciences. Participation in Draft, helped them in drafting a business plan, presenting their business idea and marketing.

Juuriska entrepreneurs have their products for sale at a couple of local grocery stores in the city of Joensuu. In the

summertime, they have their small outlet in the town Market Square. Products can be ordered in advance to be picked up at their point of sale. In Kuopio, a larger city quite near to Joensuu has a popular Market Hall where their pieces of bread and pies can be bought frozen at Topi's Farm Shop. Both Sanna and Päivi encourage entrepreneurs and those with interest towards being an entrepreneur in taking part in the next Draft application round, which starts on August 28th 2020. "In addition to experience and networking, participation offers a great opportunity to receive financial and spiritual support," the ladies mention.



In the Joensuu Market place, you may find Juuriska's lovely entrepreneurs with their delicious products.

Although the exemption period in spring 2020 slowed down and made the business of many small businesses difficult, fortunately, it did not slow down the development of Juuriska's business as loyal customers continued to buy Juuriska's products during the spring. A couple of the K-food stores in Joensuu wanted to support small businesses by taking products for sale.

### **The future is open and full of possibilities**

Future for Juuriska will be considered in more detail during this Autumn. The women are very likely to see expansion to meet the high demand. About those unique products: imagine delicious bread and traditional rice pastries made of a sour dough, without additives and industrial yeast. All products are gluten-free and vegan, so the spirit of the time is quite suitable for their business.



Baked in the early morning, fresh buckwheat loaf tasted heavenly good.

**We wish good luck and succes for Sanna and Päivi and Juuriska!**

Text and photos by Satu Mustonen, Karelia University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Sources:

Jeskanen, S. 2020.Sanna Jeskanen´s interview via email 2.7.2020. Satu Mustonen

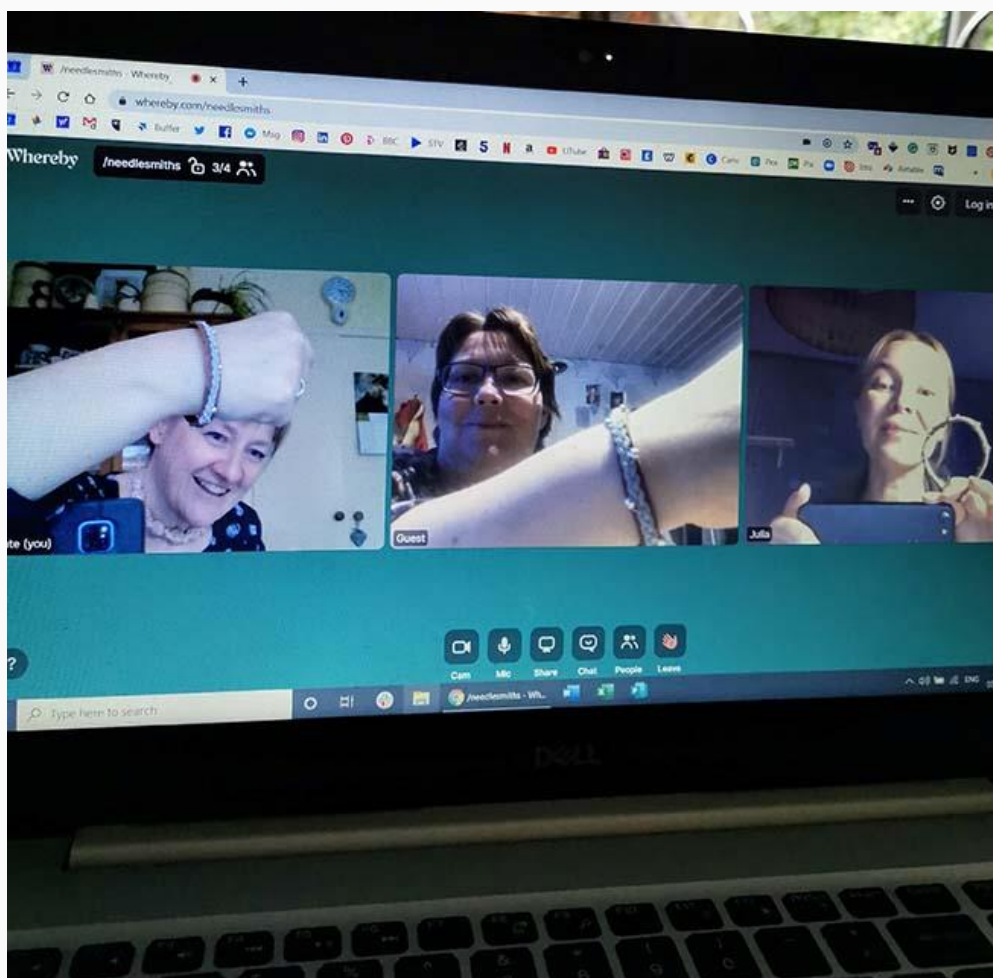
Puhakka-Tarvainen, H., Saarinen, S. & Vartiainen, H. 2019. W-POWER -hanke tarttuu naisyrittäjyiden haasteisiin.

<https://karelia.fi/vasu/2019/06/06/w-power/>

Puhakka-Tarvainen, H & Leminen M. 2019. Naisyrittäjyys nousuun kansainvälisellä yhteistyöllä.

<https://www.karelia.fi/vasu/2019/02/07/wpower/>

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Kate, Katarina and Julia at a joint craft workshop in April 2020. Photo by Julia Allemann.

### Peer to peer meetings have been switched to online

As travelling became impossible in the spring, W-Power Transnational learning programme for women entrepreneurs adapted its activities. Our vigorous entrepreneurs continued to communicate online and found new opportunities to network and develop their operations.

Julia Allemann, one of the owners of [LAURI Guest House](#), was chosen from Lapland for the mentoring program. LAURI serves as a craft shop and workshop, as well as accommodation where guests can enjoy cozy and historic buildings. Julia runs craft courses and workshops where you can learn how to make stunning traditional Sámi jewellery.

Julia was matched with Kate from Scotland and Katarina from Sweden because they had similar business goals. Textile artist Kate MacDonald organizes creative workshops, sewing classes, produces a lifestyle journal and is actively developing her business [The Needlesmith](#). Katarina Spik Skum, the owner of [Duodje by KSS](#), has a long experience in

Sámi crafts and art. She is selling products, courses and lectures about Sámi culture and wants to focus more on refining her business.

They found a common tone right from the next video meeting, Julia says excitedly. Arrangements for their meeting in Finland were already well under way but then Covid changed plans and the meeting had to be cancelled. Nevertheless, the cooperation of these resourceful entrepreneurs did not break.

Communication online continued and ideas began to emerge. By their joint decision, they agreed to try an online craft workshop run by Julia, because they all already had similar ideas for creating online craft workshops. Julia sent the materials and tools to Kate and Katarina in advance.

The workshop was a great success, giving new ideas for its development. According to Julia, implementing the workshop online still requires a bit of refinement so that it could also be implemented for customers. The concept is being developed and the next joint meeting related to making crafts is already planned, according to Julia.

This peer mentoring group is looking forward to meeting each other physically. The cancellation of visits due to the corona was a disappointment, but the meetings of these inventive and skilled women entrepreneurs through the network continue. For them, getting peer support, exchanging experiences and sharing ideas has been important, and laughter has not been avoided either. "From my side Kate and Katarina will get for sure Christmas cards over the next many years," says Julia.

Text: Reeta Sipola, Lapland University of Applied Sciences, Finland

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**W-Power podcast series "Inspiring Women in Business" goes transnational!!**

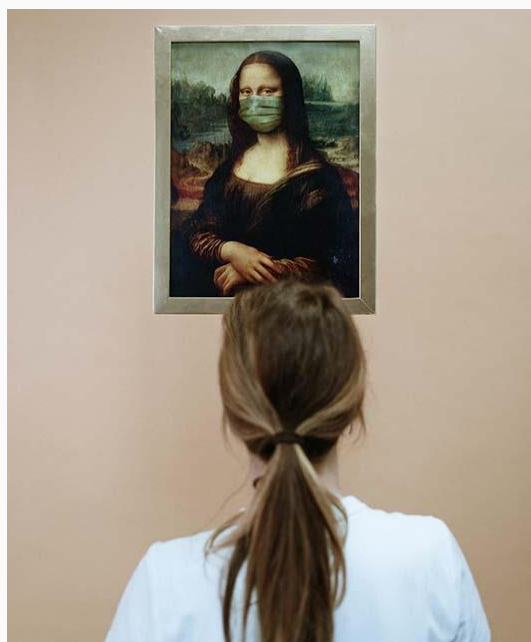
HIE/Scotland were excited to launch the new W-Power podcast series in July 2020. The first season of podcasts features five women from across the Argyll and the Islands region of Scotland. Listen to the first production season [here](#)

**The second season showcasing businesses across the NPA project region will be released through September and October 2020!!**

**So, stay tuned!**

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**Corona Spring 2020 complicated many business operations and brought fully unexpected challenges for businesses around the world.**



**Would you like to share your own experiences about the past spring and write your story briefly?**

We welcome short writings of up to 150 words describing the challenges as a female entrepreneur- what kind of issues has your business encountered and how you either have overcome or are overcoming them?

Kindly note, that we would like to hear the stories where the challenges were insurmountable too.

In addition to your story, we hope you could provide a photo as the images will color and personalize your story. When submitting an image, please pay attention to the copyright. This means that if the image was not taken by you, please let us know who took it and make sure the photographer has given you the permission to use the image in connection with your story.

We reserve the right to shorten and edit your text. You might want to add a link to your own business website your story so that those interested can learn more about your business.

Please send your text and picture by e-mail no later than 30th September 2020 to [satu.mustonen@karelia.fi](mailto:satu.mustonen@karelia.fi)

We publish our selected stories on [W-Power Facebook](#)

and / or in the LinkedIn group <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8725639/>.

You are warmly welcome to join our international social media groups where you can network with women entrepreneurs in other sparsely populated areas!

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**Networking:**

Join in our international [LinkedIn community](#)

Also find us on:

internet [w-powerproject.eu](http://w-powerproject.eu)

Facebook [facebook.com/wpowerproject](https://www.facebook.com/wpowerproject)

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/wpowerproject/>



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W-Power project videopresentation

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