

iFEMPOWER - Interactive and mentorship based FEMale emPOWERment in the field of entrepreneurship

iFEMPOWER aims to empower female students to get engaged in entrepreneurship by reinforcing their high-level & transversal skills needed for self-employment. The project addresses the lack of entrepreneurial motivation & attitude among the young & the gender gap in entrepreneurship. There are further challenges faced by female entrepreneurs, i.e. the lack of equal access to capital & to training, access to networks for business purposes, the need of reconciling business & family. The lack of supportive environment & financial background, & the specific social & cultural attitudes towards women entrepreneurs negatively affect the entrepreneurial spirit too. Due to various reasons (lack of cooperation between HEIs & businesses) students often do not receive competitive knowledge valuable at the labour market. Creative & innovative learning environments are also missing.

Thus, the objectives are:

- 1) empowering potential female entrepreneurs among HEI students from any fields to acquire the necessary knowledge & skills (both soft & hard) to launch their successful enterprises,
- 2) developing innovative tools, educational & training methods for the empowerment of female entrepreneurs in HEIs,
- 3) promoting entrep. mindset, making entrep. attractive for youth & raising awareness on the importance of improving conditions of female entrep. by building a strong network among HEI & business.

iFEMPOWER gathers important organizations from the knowledge triangle: 4 HEIs, 3 business actors, 1 business support org. & the Coordinator being a private research organization building a bridge between the academy & business sector. The partnership represents a good geographical coverage of countries with different scientific & entrepreneurial background. Activities will be carried out in strong cooperation implemented by online & 7 personal meetings to ensure the quality & relevance of outputs.

During its 3 years, iFEMPOWER will realize interlinked activities.

- First a research will be carried out on female entrepreneurs & females in SMEs throughout Europe through interviews with stakeholders & survey.
- A curriculum & teaching material of an international module will be developed & tested at HEIs which can be accomplished by students from any fields. It will focus on the development of entrepreneurial skills to address market labour needs & to provide strategies, critical thinking & problem solving skills once students will face challenges as female entrepreneurs.
- The courses will be backed by a tailor-made mentorship programme: entrepreneurs will be involved in coaching students to get background knowledge on the usual hindrances of being female entrepreneur & their potential solutions.
- Students with best business idea after each semester will have the opportunity to take part at intensive study programmes where their idea will be further developed to attract investors.
- Each PP will set up female entrepreneurship support points to provide personal counselling for anyone interested in women entrepreneurship.

- iFEMPOWER will develop an online toolkit to provide specific suggestions to visitors' problems. Lastly iFEMPOWER will monitor & assess all activities & prepare a final study, highlighting the transferable practices & formulating policy recommendations.
- Through multiplier events in PT, ES, DE, RO & HU this will support that outcomes will be channelled into the relevant stakeholders.

All activities & outputs will be publicly available at www.ifempower.eu & Erasmus+ pages & built in the organization's general responsibilities thus sustained after the project's lifetime. Outputs will be able to be introduced by other countries & organizations. These actions will enable that appr. 120 students will get familiarized with female entrepreneurship & get high-level, transversal & case solving skills to launch their own entrepreneurship. HEIs will get into an intensive cooperation with partners from the business sphere helping them to develop an international curriculum & teaching material which includes non-formal education, interactive work, mentorship & brings them closer to answer the needs of labour market. Min. 12 teachers will be trained to teach the iFEMPOWER module by raising their skills too. 40 SMEs & entrepreneurs involved in the mentorship will get in touch with students by establishing long-term cooperation with them. Students will work with mentors & start to build up the necessary network for their businesses. The online toolkit & the support points will address a broaden number of persons by giving counselling.

On the long-run iFEMPOWER will contribute to grow the number of female entrepreneurs, esp. supporting women to overcome challenges they face. Findings summarized in policy recommendations channelled to stakeholders (70 from business, 50 from governance) will enable the improvement of business&educational environment for female entrepreneurs & policy changes in HEI, entrepreneurship, business support fields.