

ERASMUS+ Programme 2015 – KA2 Adult Education

Project n°: 2015-1-ES01-KA204-015937

Document name: **O3.- Study and analysis of the professional skills of business women, applicable to housewives - Macedonia**

Partner: Alliance for Development of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Macedonia

Author: Jelena Peroska

**Employment and Women on the 21st century in Europe: From Household economy to SME economy (Small and Medium enterprises) – MUPYME Project**

**O3.- Study and analysis of the professional skills of business women, applicable to housewives - Macedonia**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. The 5 enterprising women are coming from several communities from the north-western part of Macedonia. They are all different and have different experience. They all gravitate in Tetovo even if they don't live in Tetovo. Tetovo is the political, social and economic centre of the Polog region so there is a big village-city migration.
2. Some of the women are active in the communities, they participate in initiatives and project, but the others have no experience or interest in something other than their business.
3. One of the women is a member of a business association of women in the North-Western Chamber of Commerce in Macedonia and she is very active in the business field. Two of the women are very active in the NGO sector and have experience in working on different projects, especially on gender rights.
4. All 5 women have children and they have always worked besides their work in the household. Since they started their businesses they continued to work in the household but they had more support from the family.
5. The women interviewed are with different ages. The youngest one is 28 years old and the oldest is 69. Some of them have just started with their business and the others have years of experience.
6. Some of the women have started the business with support and help from their husbands but one of them stated that her husband was trying to convince her to let go of her idea to start the business.
7. The main motivation for all of them to start the business was to contribute for the family and to be their own bosses.
8. All of the women participated in different kinds of projects. Two of them participated in the project for support of small businesses in rural areas and got support for their

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businesses. Two of them are involved in gender rights and gender mainstreaming projects.

9. Most of the women are with higher education. 3 of them finished university and two of them graduated from high school.
10. The interviewer was Jelena Peroska and the interviews were held in the workplaces of the businesswomen. The interviews lasted for 1.5 to 2 hours. Most of the women were interested to participate in further activities.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE BUSINESS

The decision for starting a business was different for the women. Three of them were self-initiated, driven by ambition or by the unfavourable situation in the community. Two of them were supported by their families, their parents, their husbands or their children.

They did not involve their children in the work they were doing. The children were helping in some extent but they were not involved in the business as employees or managers.

They have different kind of support, mainly from foreign donor organizations and projects. The support was both financial and educational.

The problems in the businesses that were emerging in the beginning were mostly connected with the finances and equipment. They did not have adequate space to operate or they did not have enough finances to equip the workplace. That is why most of them were looking for alternative resources for funding, like funds from the Employment Agency or foreign donor organizations and projects.

All of the women, except one, had full support from their families and their families helped them in organizing their work in and outside the household. One of the women stated that her family members were persuading her to give up the idea and to continue working on her previous job. But, most of the women were independent and decided for themselves. The business was theirs and the participation of the family members was in small tasks around the office or in the household.

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## THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE BUSINESS

When asked about the consolidation process of the business, the women had similar answers to the questions asked. Their answers on what helped them to maintain the business can be categorized in the following list:

- Support from their family members
- Adapting to the needs of the market
- Identification of problems
- Quick response to problems
- Having alternative solutions
- Personal qualities
- Training outside the business
- Learning by doing
- Determination to change something in the community
- Offer variety of product choices
- Be aware of the opportunities that are offered from the institutions
- Awareness of the surroundings and the community
- Maintaining good relations with the clients
- Show initiative and be active
- Building a network of contacts
- Using new technologies
- Marketing products on social media

## THE FUTURE OF THE BUSINESS

When asked about the future of their business, almost all women expressed their wish to expand the business. They all were stating that at the moment they cannot invest in expansion but they hope that the business will go well and will be able to do that in the future. They noted that the future of the company will depend on the following reasons:

- The profit that the business will realize
- The development of new products
- The flexibility of the production
- The ongoing development of capacities of human resources

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- The will of the employees to work hard
- The motivation of the personnel
- The community and the context in which the business is developed
- The support from the institutions
- Opportunities for financial support from projects

## **ENTERPRISING WOMEN**

Women are getting more and more into entrepreneurship and they are willing to work and also provide for the family. Maybe the reason behind that is the ongoing need of the families for more sources of family income. It is not possible to support the whole family with just one salary. Women can't afford anymore to stay at home. That is why it is normal that women are employed and even have their own business. The situation is still not very favourable for women entrepreneurs and they are considered as less capable to manage a business than men but it is definitely getting better.

The society also sees the need for fostering women's entrepreneurship, so there are a lot of projects which offer financial and educational support to women. In this way, women's entrepreneurship is promoted and women are motivated to start their own companies.

The women that were interviewed were all independent women that accepted their roles in the family household and also their roles as entrepreneurs and provider for the family. The duality of their role is considered to be normal and that they have to behave in that way.

## **QUALITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS WOMAN**

According to these women, a good businesswoman has to possess a lot of qualities. Some of them are listed below:

- To be detailed in the work
- To be observant and to pay attention to details
- To be able to take initiatives
- To be able to take risks
- To have strong leadership skills
- To be a good manager

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- To have strong determination
- To be persistent in the work
- To have courage
- To believe in the work that she is doing
- To be proactive
- To get involved in community initiatives and projects
- To be stable
- To be sensitive about the surroundings and about other people
- To be responsible
- To know how to make decisions
- To follow the new trends on the market
- To be able to use technologies
- To be able to use social media
- To know how to market the products
- To be able to establish a good network of connections

The expected qualities that a businesswoman should have are various. Some of them are the same as businessmen should possess but the emphasis here is more on the personal nature of women. They need to be caring, to be sensitive and to be aware for other people's feelings. Even in the business world it is expected of women to behave like mothers.

### **SKILLS-COMPETENCES-KNOWLEDGE-ABILITIES LEARNED AT HOUSEHOLD WHICH CONTRIBUTE IN RUNNING THE BUSINESS**

The businesswomen could find similarities between the skills and knowledge that are obtained in the household and needed in the enterprise. There are similar situations that can be resolved through execution of tasks that can be found both in the household and the enterprise. Some of the skills and knowledge from the household that can be transferred into the enterprise are the following:

- Time management of different tasks
- Planning the family budget
- Planning the family activities
- Managing the resources (human and material)
- Maintenance of the household
- Accounting (paying bills, taxes, tracking the family income and expenses)
- Organization of tasks

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- Mediation, conflict resolution
- Making decision and involving members of the family
- Delegation of tasks
- Event management

## SUGGESTIONS

In general, the women interviewed stated that all you have to do to be an entrepreneur is to know what you want and to be determinate. The persistence in their actions is highly valued and also needed in order to succeed in the business. If a woman believes that she can accomplish something. So most of all, women have to work on their perception of themselves. The motivation and the persistence is a strong asset and it can be trained. Women should be ready to realize their qualities and build their capacities in order to achieve their goals.

But there is also the financial issue. It is a crucial issue, not only for women, but for men also. It is very hard to start and maintain a business in Macedonia. You have to invest in the business, go through a lot of procedures and after establishing the company there is a huge risk that it will be closed after the first year. People do not have enough profit to pay their debts and that is way so many businesses fail. It is harder for women actually, because traditionally, women do not have their own possessions. The owners of the land or real-estate are usually their husbands, brother, fathers so they cannot invest as much as men can. In the recent years, the institutions are becoming aware of the issue and they are taking measures and they offer mechanisms through which women entrepreneurship will be fostered and women will be more motivated to start their businesses. These measures are needed more in the country in order to provide the same start position for women in entrepreneurship.

Training is also needed for women that have no experience in running a business. From the organized projects that included trainings of some sort for women, we can learn that there are a lot of women that used the knowledge obtained to start a company. This is important because it shows that the finances are not the only asset they need to maintain a business. Almost all of the women stated that they would participate in a training to upgrade their knowledge in their respective professions. They consider that if they develop their knowledge in the field they work in, they will be more capable to develop the business. Also, when it comes to training they listed several areas where they would like to improve and learn more:

- Social media marketing, targeted marketing

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- ICT skills
- Identification of market needs
- Motivation of human resources
- Fundraising
- Planning and predicting development technics
- Proactive instead of passive approach
- Languages of the local communities