



ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Direction de l'emploi, du travail et des affaires sociales  
 Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs

Programme de développement économique et de création d'emplois au niveau local  
 Local Economic and Employment Development Programme  
 L E E D

**Women Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation  
 Exchange of experiences between OECD and CEI countries**

**9-10 December 2003, Ljubljana, Slovenia**

**What we do for women entrepreneurs**

The OECD's LEED Committee has been working for 20 years on the close relationship between entrepreneurship and local development, and it has played a pioneering role in the issue of women's entrepreneurship. The LEED Programme supports women entrepreneurship as a key for creating economic wealth, jobs, social change and territorial value. It proposes a systematic approach to assessing and enforcing the role of women entrepreneurs in local development policies.

**Dina Ionescu**, LEED Administrator is responsible for this activity since 1998 and **Antonella Noya**, LEED Administrator will be in charge starting with 2004.

*Women Entrepreneurship and Local Development*

The aims of the activity "The dynamic role of women entrepreneurs in local development" are to propose to national and sub-national authorities a comprehensive assessment of women entrepreneurship in their country or region, to propose concrete recommendations for adapted policies maximising the growth potential of women-owned businesses and offer international expertise and experience exchange.

Women entrepreneurship is key in local development policies because it means empowering women, creating new job opportunities, establishing local partnerships among public, private and non-governmental actors, introducing innovative financing schemes, supporting education and training schemes as well as networks that add value to the territory. Cities and regions increasingly adopt and implement policies supporting women entrepreneurship.

*The topics of Women Entrepreneurship*

The topics analysed within the framework of the study of the dynamic role of women entrepreneurs in local development are:

- quantitative and qualitative statistics at sub national level;
- gender mainstreaming in territorial development schemes;
- links between female employment and female entrepreneurship in a given area;
- availability of proximity education, training, mentoring schemes;
- availability of structures supporting women entrepreneurs such as professional networks, female
- business incubators, housing, child care and elderly care structures;



- proximity financing programmes from traditional banks, micro-credits organizations, public funds
- community and social development (socially innovative activities and funding sources, partnerships)
- women entrepreneurs needs in specific areas (rural areas, difficult urban neighbourhoods, regeneration or old industrial areas)
- specific groups of women facing particular problems in given areas (minorities, indigenous populations, migrants, young and elderly women)
- specific country needs: transition economies, Northern Africa

### **LEED's work on Women entrepreneurship over the 13 past years**

- In 1990, LEED released a publication entitled *Enterprising Women*. This was the starting point of a series of international events and activities undertaken by LEED on this issue. In 1994, the conference on "Women and the City" that was held in Paris benefited from LEED's input.
- From 1999, the theme of women's entrepreneurship was subsequently raised regularly at annual **CEI forums** and numerous conferences, which also enabled the constitution of an international network of experts and qualified institutions on the subject.
- The Conference on "**Women's Entrepreneurship: East-West Co-operation**" in **Brijuni**, Croatia was held in 1999. This major event was co-organised by LEED, along with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Central European Initiative (CEI). In parallel, from 1997 to 2000 the Working Party on SMEs and Entrepreneurship held a first Conference on Women Entrepreneurs in SMEs in 1997, followed by a second one in December 2000 to promote women's entrepreneurship. The LEED Programme was actively involved in those events, which yielded a set of recommendations for policymakers.
- In 2002, the conference "Maillage" organised by the "Dirigeantes" Association in co-operation with the OECD and UNESCO was held in Paris.
- 2003 and onwards: Work at the OECD is continuing in preparation for the Ministerial conference on SMEs to be held in June 2004 in Istanbul, with the co-operation of LEED.

### **2003: LEED deepened the co-operation on women entrepreneurship**

This is a list of the main events organised in 2003 by the LEED Programme.

17-18 March 2003, UNECE Conference Geneva. LEED programme intervention on women entrepreneurship in OECD countries and focus on financing issues.

28 March 2003, EU Conference on Women entrepreneurship. Presentation of the EU publication on best practices in women entrepreneurship.

26-27 June 2003, Presentation of the methodology "Women entrepreneurship and local development" in Cuernavaca Mexico at the LEED Directing Committee.



8-9 September 2003, Budapest Hungary workshop on Entrepreneurship and one session on "Women Entrepreneurship" in preparation of the Istanbul Ministerial Conference in June 2004, in partnership with Working Group on SMEs and entrepreneurship of the OECD

13-17 October Midlands Local Review on Entrepreneurship UK, one focus theme: "Local Women entrepreneurship"

14-17 October 2003, Seoul South Korea, World Knowledge Forum one session on "Innovative banking programmes for women entrepreneurs and innovative policies at the municipal level".

November 2003, CEI Summit, Warsaw Poland workshops on 1. Local development advisors network; 2. Romania and CEI countries on local development and SME; 3. Women entrepreneurship.

December 2003 Slovenia international Workshop with the municipality of Ljubljana "Women entrepreneurs and social innovation"

## **Forthcoming events in 2004**

### *Studies on Women Entrepreneurship carried out by LEED*

- Release of the proceeding of the "**Women Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation**" seminar, Slovenia 2003
- A study on local development starting with the **Flanders region**, Belgium will be carried out

### *International events*

- **A study Tour** for French practitioners to the USA to visit innovative women entrepreneurs initiatives is planned in 2004 (to be confirmed)
- 3-5 June 2004 the Second **OECD Ministerial Conference on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)** will be held in Istanbul, Turkey. In the framework of the Bologna Process, the Working Party on SMEs & Entrepreneurship, in close co-operation with the LEED Programme and other OECD bodies, is developing 4 themes and 2 cross-cutting issues, which will constitute the core agenda for the Second OECD Ministerial Conference on SMEs in Istanbul. The seminar in Slovenia is a concrete input to this Process.

Other follow ups for the Slovenian seminar will be discussed during the event.

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