Women entrepreneurship
Key findings: Portugal

Who wants to be an entrepreneur?

Entrepreneurship is crucial to economic development, promoting social integration and reducing inequalities. *OECD Entrepreneurship at a Glance* presents an original collection of indicators that measure the state of entrepreneurship, providing an important reference for policy insights and policy making.

*Perceived risks are higher for women...*

One important determinant of entrepreneurship relates to the relative risk involved, or rather assessment of risk. This is to a large extent determined by risk of failure but also reflects other factors, such as social security safety nets, access to finance, access to child-care, and indeed potential rewards; which helps to explain the significant differences across countries on how entrepreneurial risk is perceived. One pattern however, is remarkably consistent: women, the world over, are less prone to taking the entrepreneurial plunge.

Portugal is no exception to this pattern (Figure 1), with 51% of men and 38% of women declaring that they would rather take the risk and start up their own business than work for someone else. These shares are very close to the OECD average.

![Figure 1. How is the entrepreneurial risk perceived?](image)

*Source: OECD based on Gallup data.*

*...reflecting perceived gaps in opportunities for: training...*

Most countries in the OECD area exhibit a gender gap with regards to access to training to create and grow a start-up. This gap is observed also in Portugal, where 54% of men and 50% of women declare to have access to such training (Figure 2).
Figure 2. Is it possible to access training on how to start or grow a business? 
Percentage of individuals who consider they have access to formal or informal training on how to start or grow a business, 2013

Source: OECD based on Gallup data.

...and finance

Similar gender gaps exist across the world regarding access to finance. The share of Portuguese women declaring that access to money is not a barrier to starting a business (20%) is lower than the equivalent share for men (25%), and both share are below the corresponding OECD averages.

Figure 3. Is it possible to access money to start a business? 
Percentage of individuals who consider they have access to money (own savings or any other source) they would need if they wanted to start or grow a business, 2013

Source: OECD based on Gallup data.

...as well as lower rewards from entrepreneurship

Potential rewards are also an important determinant of risk assessment and in most countries earnings from self-employment are typically lower for women than for men. Portuguese women entrepreneurs earned almost 60% less than their male counterparts in 2011-12 (Figure 4). Following Poland, this was the second largest earnings gap in the OECD area. Between 2006 and 2012 it decreased only slightly, by 2.4 percentage points.
Figure 4. Gender gap in self-employment earnings

Difference between male and female earnings as a percentage of male earnings

Source: OECD based on Labour Force Surveys and EU SILC.

But perceptions towards entrepreneurship show little gender bias

An interesting supplement to the above findings is the extent to which entrepreneurship is perceived as virtuous in a country. In Portugal, the majority of both men and women (69%) consider entrepreneurs as good role models (Figure 5). These shares, while being similar to the OECD average, are however considerably lower than those of the countries with the highest values in this measure, for example Canada, where about 90% of both women and men have a positive image of the entrepreneurs.

Figure 5. In my country, people who run their own business are considered good role models for youth

Percentage, 2013

Source: OECD based on Gallup data.

Current trends in women entrepreneurship

Self-employment rates are often used as an important indicator of entrepreneurialism. The share of Portuguese women who are self-employed with employees (3%) is among the highest shares in the OECD area. The share of Portuguese women who are own-account workers (8.7%) also lies above the OECD average.

March 2016
Differences across countries partly reflect ‘push’, notably limited paid employment opportunities, as well as ‘pull’ factors. In most OECD countries, however the gap between the proportions of male and female entrepreneurs with employees (3.5 percentage points on average) (Figure 6) is similar to the gender gap between the shares of own-account workers (4.1 percentage points on average, (Figure 7), most of which might likely be “necessity entrepreneurs”. In Portugal, the difference between genders is higher among employers (4 percentage points) than among own-account workers (3.5 percentage points).

A majority of Portuguese women entrepreneurs (61%) work in the services sector, as is the case in most of the OECD area, although the share in Portugal is lower than the OECD average (Figure 8).

**Figure 6. Share of employed women and men who are self-employed with employees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage, 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Figure 7. Share of employed women and men who are own-account workers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage, 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Self-employed whose activity is in services
Percentage, 2014

Source: OECD Gender Data Portal.

Further reading
