WEstart

Mapping Women's Social Entrepreneurship in Europe

Synthesis report

EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

25 YEARS

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This research falls under the European Women's Lobby work on women's economic independence.

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1.1 Why Social Entrepreneurship?

In 2008, the world experienced an unprecedented global economic crisis. The market-based, financial, capitalist economic system began to crumble, first in the United States, and then in Europe. Governments and citizens alike were left struggling to pick up the pieces of their broken communities and deal with not only the economic and social aftermath of the crisis, but the underlying problems inherent in the dominant system.

It's undeniable that market-based economic models had, in many ways, been successful in allowing some nations to rapidly develop. However, the global economic crisis underscored the widening economic inequality, social injustice and environmental damage – profoundly destructive and systemic problems of capitalist models that are unsustainable in the long-term.

In the wake of the crisis, it has become clear that new economic and social solutions are necessary. The austerity measures implemented by many European governments in an attempt to hold fast to neoliberal principles have, in many cases, led to a drastic reduction in social services, leaving people through Europe struggling to meet their everyday needs. Those people and groups who were in situations of vulnerability and marginalisation prior to the crisis have been some of the hardest hit. Yet despite this unprecedented situation, communities, individuals and groups of like-minded people are coming together to envision and experiment with new economic and social models.

It is within this context that the recent interest in social entrepreneurship and social enterprise has become especially relevant. Social enterprises are companies that combine the functionality and efficiency of market exchange, with a specific focus on solving social issues and collaborative governance. They are of particular interest as Europe navigates uncharted post-crisis territory, as they seem to encompass the best qualities of two distinct economic systems, capitalist and socialist. As such, they respond to what some scholars argue as capitalism's myopic, profit-driven motive by producing capital with the purpose of furthering a social cause, rather than solely accumulating wealth. As Europe hungers for solutions to its social ills, the social enterprise model holds potential to lead society towards a new way of approaching the economy.

1.2 What is a Social Enterprise?

A social enterprise is a company that sells products or services on the market. However, unlike a traditional business, a social enterprise has a specific social mission, and a portion of its revenue is reinvested in its mission. The purpose of a social enterprise is thus not to gain a return on capital, but to produce a social impact. Social enterprises are often characterised by high levels of innovation and by participatory, transparent and collaborative governance based on solidarity and reciprocity (Borzaga et al. 2013).

1.3 The Problem

While social and solidarity-based organisations have existed in Europe since the early 19th century, social enterprises specifically, with their focus on market-based exchange, only entered public discourse in the late 1980s and early 1990s (ICF Consulting 2014).

In the seven years following the crisis, individuals, communities and governments throughout Europe have increasingly turned to social enterprise as a possible solution to growing social issues such as discrimination, marginalisation and poverty. Research has indicated that social enterprises are effective at creating crisis-resistant employment opportunities and economic growth, as well as growing "social wealth" or "social capital" (Blanchflower and Oswald, 1998; Mair and Marti, 2006; Zahra et al., 2009).

However, due to the fact that legal definitions of social enterprise vary from country to country, it has been very difficult to get a comprehensive picture of the overall situation of social entrepreneurship in Europe. There is relatively little comparative research on the topic. Additionally, as the field is prone to rapid change and development, such research is logistically difficult.

One distinctive element of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise on which research has been all but non-existent is gender. This is surprising, as the higher participation of women than men in non-profit sector employment is well documented (Themudo 2009). The scant research which has been done has indicated that women are more highly represented in social enterprise than traditional enterprise (Teriesma & Bosman 2012). Additionally, the few studies that have collected sex-disaggregated data on the subject at international level have shown that women social entrepreneurs even outnumber men in some European countries (Huysentruyt 2014). Furthermore, data from these studies seems to indicate that women social entrepreneurs are more innovative than male social entrepreneurs, while spending less on innovation (Huysentruyt 2014).

Within the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, entrepreneurship is seen as a means of boosting employment and in particular to reaching the European employment target of 75% for women and men throughout the EU by 2020. However, little focus is given to social entrepreneurship as a means of binding Europe's social fabric to build sustainable communities and a means of also reaching another European target to lift 20 million people out of poverty by 2020[1].

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1 In 2012, 124.5 million people, or 24.8% of the population in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 24.3% in 2011 and 23.7% in 2008 – see Eurostat press release STAT/13/184, 5 December 2013. 26.9 % of women are poor and excluded, compared to 24.8% of men – European Commission, Report on progress on equality between women and men, 2013 SWD(2014) 142 final, 14/4/2014.

Additionally, while many initiatives to foster women's entrepreneurship have been developed at the European level with the support of the European Commission, it remains difficult to obtain an overall picture of women's entrepreneurship in general and **women's social entrepreneurship** in particular. As such, we asked ourselves the following questions:

With social transformation at its heart, and more women leading social enterprise than traditional enterprise, does this sector have the potential to introduce a new way of approaching business that shifts the current growth-focused, masculine-dominated paradigm? Can social enterprise provide a more gender-equal and inclusive way of creating jobs, inspiring innovation and tackling social issues?

1.4 The Project

The core aim of **WEstart** is to gain a better understanding of the situation and state of play of women's social entrepreneurship in Europe. This pilot project, which focuses on ten European countries, is the first step in a longer term strategy to help foster women's social entrepreneurship by connecting social entrepreneurs and advocating for policy change that supports women's leadership in this growing sector.

The current project therefore proposes to bridge the gap in gathering evidence and knowledge with regard to women's social entrepreneurship in Europe. The project will subsequently support opportunities to further develop mutual learning, transnational partnerships, mentoring, knowledge and skills transfer and best practices with the aim of generating new employment and business opportunities for women across Europe.

The project consists of surveying what currently exists, where women's social entrepreneurship is located and its breadth in terms of 10 Member States of the EU: France and Germany; Bulgaria and Hungary; Italy and Spain; Sweden and Lithuania; Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK). These countries were chosen in order to have a diverse representation of East/West, small/large, newly developed social enterprise ecosystems/well-developed ecosystems.

1.5 The European Women's Lobby

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union (EU), working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men. Founded in 1990 with 12 national member organisations, the European Women's Lobby is one of the oldest and best established European-level civil society NGOs. Over the last 20 years, EWL membership has grown steadily to reach more than 2,500 organisations across 31 European countries.

The EWL works towards a vision of a peaceful, social and democratic European Union built on a culture of respect for human rights, equality, peace and solidarity, in Europe and globally, where women and men have equal rights, full enjoyment of their personal integrity and choice, an equal share of social, cultural and economic resources, caring and family roles, and are equally represented in decision making.

The mission of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) is to work to achieve equality between women and men, to promote women's rights in all spheres of public and private life, to work towards economic and social justice for all women in their diversity, and to eliminate all forms of male violence against women. The EWL works through democratic processes with its members for the mainstreaming and monitoring of gender equality and women's rights perspective in all areas of European Union policy and for the achievement of parity democracy at all levels and in all areas.

Considering the potential of social enterprise to contribute to inclusive economic growth and alleviate social ills in Europe, the European Women's Lobby is interested in investigating and making visible the situation of women's social entrepreneurship in Europe. As a women's lobbying group, our political justification for this research is grounded in our commitment to furthering women's rights and gender equality throughout Europe, especially women's economic independence.

Having undertaken the first-ever research study on this subject, we hope that our firm commitment to feminist principles, and to amplifying the voices of diverse women from a wide range of backgrounds will set an example of how a gender lens can and should be applied to all research on social enterprise and social entrepreneurship.

2.1 Project Methodology

The WEstart project was overseen by a Steering Committee led by the EWL Secretary-General, with the input of EWL members with an expertise in the area, EWL staff and our external funder. We began the WEstart project by confirming our Goals, Objectives and Outputs with the Steering Committee in order to clarify the role that research and data collection would play in the overall life cycle of the project. The following Goals and Objectives were identified:

2.1.1 Project Goals:

1) Undertake new, rigorous research on women-led social enterprise ecosystems and women's social entrepreneurship in 10 EU member states, in order to increase the visibility of women's social entrepreneurship within national and EU-level policy making arenas.

2) Provide women social entrepreneurs with findings of research and facilitate connection between them in order to stimulate information sharing, networking and collaboration

WEstart proposes to achieve the goals with three objectives 1) synthesising and analysing existing data on women-led social enterprise ecosystems within a national context, 2) producing new, reliable data on women's social entrepreneurship in 10 countries in Europe and 3) facilitating connections between women social entrepreneurs throughout Europe, with a specific focus on the 10 studied countries.

2.1.2 Project Outputs:

It was decided that our final outputs would include:

- 10 National Mini-Reports
- A Final Synthesis Report
- A Final Conference, at which the results of the research would be presented
- An Electronic Database of women social entrepreneurs in the 10 studied countries
- A Communications Strategy to disseminate the results of the project throughout the EU

We also developed a "Values Framework" for the project, to ensure that every step of the project would be conducted in a way that is in line with the European Women Lobby's feminist principles. We came up with the IMPACT Principles as a guide, and made a strong effort to follow these principles throughout the project life cycle.

2.1.3 IMPACT Principles:

Inclusive - Special effort is made to identify social enterprises led by women from diverse groups including different classes, races, ethnicities, immigration statuses, ability levels, sexuality and gender presentation. Outputs are careful not to

generalise experience, and to specifically draw attention to the intersections of privilege and marginalisation that different individuals and groups face; consultants understand how race, class, sexuality, ability level and other factors intersect to shape the experience of individuals and groups and pay attention to how this affects women interviewed.

Measurable - All research processes are able to be monitored and evaluated. Consultants are provided with and evaluated against clear criteria. Quantitative and qualitative data are collected using rigorous and replicable methodology. Project is closely monitored and evaluated.

Participatory - Research methodologies are conducted in empowering and participatory ways that privilege the lived experience of women; consultants have experience in undertaking participatory methodologies.

Accessible - Outputs are available in braille and all web work is accessible to visually impaired persons; research processes make special efforts to include people of different abilities, reading levels and intellectual capacities in focus groups and questionnaires.

Collaborative - Outputs are shared and disseminated via strategic collaboration; consultants conduct research in a collaborative way; overall project seeks to include and value the input of members, partners, experts and entrepreneurs, allowing all groups space to work towards a common goal.

Transformative - Outputs and research projects keep the empowerment of women and the structural transformation of gender inequalities at their heart and use efficiency arguments in support but not in lieu of transformational justifications.

2.1.4 Advisory Group

After confirming the **IMPACT** principles, we began our research process by bringing together a high-level group of experts in social enterprise and gender to serve as an Advisory Group. We looked for diverse experts from a range of related fields, who could provide us with guidance throughout the project.

Our Advisory Group included the following members:

- Servane Mouazan, CEO of Ogunte Women's Social Entrepreneurship Network
- Monica Grau Sarabia, Director of the European Commission-funded WISE project (Women Innovators in Social Business)
- Dr. Anne Laure Humbert, PhD, Gender Expert at EIGE and Cranfield University
- Charu Wilkinson, IFC International, Lead consultant for the European Commission Social Enterprise Ecosystem Mapping Study
- Dr. Josette Dijikuizen, PhD, Author of The Start-up Manual and social entrepreneur

- Agnes Hubert, Bureau of European Policy Advisers, Social innovation, enterprise and economy expert
- Madi Sharma, CEO of the Madi Group, member of the European Economic and Social Committee
- Ariane Roderte, Vice President, Group III of the European Economic and Social Committee

Over the course of the project period, we held four virtual meetings with the Advisory Group and communicated with various members throughout the duration of the project via email, telephone and in-person meetings. The Advisory Group allowed us to tap into the knowledge and expertise of diverse professionals with deep subject knowledge, while giving the leadership of the project a collaborative element.

2.2 Research Methodology

With the support of the Advisory Group, we then devised the research question and methodology for the project.

2.2.1 Research Question

Our primary research question began as: *What is the social impact that women are having/seeking to have though their involvement in social entrepreneurship? How does it relate to women's empowerment and gender equality?*

This question evolved over the course of the research, ultimately moving away from a focus on social impact, to a more in-depth exploration of the relationship between social entrepreneurship, women's empowerment and gender equality. As we undertook the research, we kept in mind the guiding question of the overall project:

Does this sector have the potential to introduce a new way of approaching business that shifts the current growth-focused, masculine-dominated paradigm? Can social enterprise provide a more gender-equal and inclusive way of creating jobs, inspiring innovation and tackling social issues?

2.2.2   Consultant Recruitment

To undertake the research, we recruited a team of 10 national social entrepreneurship experts, seeking researchers who were deeply familiar with the women-led social enterprise ecosystem in their country.

We looked specifically for people who had connections with women social entrepreneurs themselves, whether through their direct involvement with social enterprise or through professional or academic connections to the community. Our recruitment criteria included:

- Demonstrated expertise in and understanding of social entrepreneurship within their national context

- Extensive experience with and knowledge of women's rights activism and advocacy on a national and European level
- Strong knowledge of and experience with social science research methodologies
- Detail-oriented, focused and efficient with very good time management and organisational skills
- Understanding of and ability to undertake work according to feminist/inclusive principles (as exemplified by the IMPACT principles)
- Language skills: Fluent in national language. Fluency in English.
- Other necessary skills: Computer skills; familiarity with Microsoft Excel
- Desired: Experience working with or running a women's focused social enterprise, and/or experience with and knowledge of specifically women-focused social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship networks would be a plus

We recruited a diverse and knowledgeable team of experts, comprised of academics, sector specialists, and active women social entrepreneurs. The team included:
- Bulgaria - Nadezhda Savova-Grigorova
- France - Melanie Marcel
- Germany - Val Racheeva
- Hungary - Anna Horvath
- Ireland - Clare Mulvaney
- Italy - Valentina Pattetta
- Lithuania- Raminta Pučėtaitė
- Spain - Elena Blanco
- Sweden - Emelie Aho Faltskag
- UK - Servane Mouazan

2.2.3   Methodology and Tools

We set up a cloud-based research management system to allow the consultants and Project Manager to communicate and decided on the following methodology and corresponding research tools:

- Synthesis and Analysis of existing data **Tool:** desk research used to answer a list of specific questions about the ecosystem
- Identification of collection of representational sample of women-led social enterprises according to specified definition, as well as women social entrepreneurs more generally **Tool:** Desk research and the mining of existing social enterprise networks used to fill out a short excel spreadsheet
- Collection of quantitative data on women's social entrepreneurship **Tool:** An electronic survey sent to women, including women-led social enterprise heads and those who do not meet definition
- Collection of qualitative data on women's social entrepreneurship **Tool:** 10-15 telephone or skype interviews with women social entrepreneurs, including women-led social enterprise heads and those who do not meet definition
- Analysis of Interviews **Tool:** Content Coding Framework

2.2.4 Definitions

In order to ensure that the research would be comparable between countries, we established the following common definitions, to be used throughout the research process.

Women-led Social Enterprise - An organisation that meets the following criteria

1) Decision-making and leadership by a woman,
2) Organisation with a social mission,
3) A portion of revenue coming from the market, and
4) Portion of profit or surplus reinvested in the entity.

Women-led Social Enterprise Ecosystem - The collection of organisations within a country that meet the above criteria.

Women Social Entrepreneurs - Women who self-define as social entrepreneurs including women who lead social enterprises that meet the set of criteria outlined for women-led social enterprise, as well as women who are more generally undertaking activities related to the leadership of social enterprises or social businesses which do not necessarily meet of all of the above specified criteria.

Women's Social Entrepreneurship - Entrepreneurial activities with a social focus led and undertaken by women social entrepreneurs

Social Impact - The net effect of an activity on a community and the well-being of individuals and families.

Women's Empowerment - The personal, social and/or economic growth of women and/or girls towards an increased state of independence and well-being.

Gender Equality - A state in which access to rights or opportunities within a community, nation or society is unaffected by gender or discrimination, particularly against women and girls.

Our definition of what counts as a social enterprise is based on the Social Business Initiative (2011) definition, although we opted for a less restrictive definition in order to accommodate the diversity of kinds of social enterprises we would be examining. We did not make participatory governance a requirement and kept the percentage of revenue from the market and percentage of revenue reinvested non-specific. The approach made it easier for our researchers to gather information.

2.3 Research Phases

2.3.1 Literature Review - Synthesis and Analysis of existing data

For this element of the research, we asked the consultants to undertake desk research to answer a list of specific questions about the ecosystem. This research tool can be seen below.

Research Tool #1: Synthesis of Existing Data

Main question: What does the social enterprise ecosystem look like in X country?

• In what sectors are social enterprises located?

• Do any specific sectors dominate?

• What are the legal statuses in the country for social enterprise?

• Is there an average size for social enterprises in the country with regard to number of employees?

• Is there an average number of years the majority of social enterprises in the country have been in operation? For example, are most fairly new? Is there a long history of social enterprise?

• What are the important pieces of national policy relating to and affecting social enterprise?

• What are the significant trends in the sector with the country?

• What is the percentage of women undertaking social enterprise versus men in X country?

• What kinds of social enterprises are women undertaking in X country? What determines this?

• How has the field of social enterprise grown over the past x number of year in x country?

• What are the differences men and women face in starting social enterprise?

• What are the difference men and women face in growing social enterprise?

• Why do women start social enterprises?

• Why do women start social enterprises versus traditional enterprises?

• What are the motivations behind starting a social enterprise?

• What are the steps that women take to start a social enterprise?

• Who do women turn to for support in starting a social enterprise?

2.3.2 Sampling of Women-Led Enterprises

For this research phase, we asked the consultants to use snowball sampling and tap into their own networks to put together a list of 100 women-led social enterprises. We indicated that we were interested in a diverse mix of women and types of enterprises.

With limited available time and resources, we did not ask for more than 100 women social entrepreneurs. For some countries, there were less than this number; for other countries, this represented only a fraction of the total number of women social entrepreneurs.
As this database's primary purpose was to allow us to gather email addresses to distribute our survey and identify a wider group from which the consultants could choose 10 women to interview, the overall number was not statistically relevant.

Ultimately, we took this information and created a searchable electronic database which allows users to find information and contact information for the 100 women social entrepreneurs in each of the 10 studied countries. This database, one of our project outputs, is primarily for the purpose of allowing us to connect women social entrepreneurs to each other, something we hope to continue doing and expand upon in subsequent phases of the project.

2.3.3 Collection of Quantitative Data

For this phase of the research, we worked with research experts in our Advisory Group to design an electronic survey that would allow us to undertake cross-country quantitative research. We created many versions of the survey and received feedback and input from a number of stakeholders in order to make the final survey as easy-to-use and effective as possible.

We then sent this survey to be translated into the national languages of the 10 countries we studied. We were able to successfully create separate, comparable surveys in all of the national languages except for German. We wanted to ensure that the survey would not privilege English speakers.

We disseminated the survey via our social media (we have access to over 20,000 people on Facebook and an additional 6,000 on Twitter). We also asked our membership organisations throughout Europe to send it to their lists, and reached out to our European network of gender and social enterprise stakeholders, asking them to further disseminate it. Furthermore, we sent personalised e-mails to the 100 women social entrepreneurs identified by each of the 10 consultants, asking them to take the survey. In order to encourage survey uptake, we offered respondents a chance to win a paid trip to the final WEstart conference in Brussels via participation in a raffle upon survey completion.

The survey was taken by a total of 377 women from the 10 studied countries. In reality, more than 500 people completed the survey. However one drawback of the survey design was that it was not immediately clear

that if a person took the survey and represented a social enterprise located in a European country outside of the 10 studied countries, the results would not be included in the final calculations.

The responses from each country differed dramatically, with the greatest number of responses coming from the UK, and the fewest from Lithuania and Bulgaria. In order to analyse the data at EU level, the results were reweighted according to the actual population size in each of the 10 countries considered in the study.

2.3.4 Collection of Qualitative Data

To collect qualitative data, we asked consultants to choose a diverse sample of 10 women social entrepreneurs from the 100 they identified. The consultants discussed their selection with the Project Manager, who asked follow-up questions to ensure that each country had a sample of women-led social enterprises that included different sizes, industries and focuses.

The Project Manager then led the consultant team in two virtual trainings, the first on feminist research methodology and the second on content coding and analysis. While the majority of the consultants had social science research training, the feminist research webinar introduced the research team to concepts of feminist research, including standpoint theory, self-location, research privilege, power dynamics, etc. The consultants were provided with information on dealing with triggering and sensitive issues and given interview and photo consent forms to give to the interviewees. Consultants were asked to interview subjects using Skype and to record the interviews using free online software, paying special attention to direct quotes from the entrepreneurs. After the interviews, they were asked to write up detailed notes. They were also asked to obtain photos of the entrepreneurs to use in the Mini Reports.

The following interview guide, developed with the collaborative effort of the Project Manager and Advisory Group was utilised, with consultants conducting the interviews in their national language.

Interview Guide:

1) **What made you decide to start a social enterprise?** Can you tell me about your journey? What was happening in your personal life at the time? What was happening in your community? What was happening in your national context?

2) Do you think being a woman has had an effect on our journey? What about being a woman in your national context? Do you have a sense of gender equality or women's rights issues in your country? **Did addressing gender equality play into your journey at all?** What do you think about the social enterprise field in your country from a gender perspective? Do you feel like you are contributing to gender equality?

3) When you started your social enterprise, **what were you looking to achieve?** On a community level, on a personal level, on a national level, on a societal level?

4) **How do you define success?** Do you feel like you have been successful in achieving your goals? What is the impact that you are most proud of?

5) Do you know other organisations or people in your community undertaking similar projects? In your nation? **What makes you different?**

6) **How have you been affected by or changed on a personal level** since starting the project? How has your financial situation changed or been affected? How do you feel like the way you interact with others and with the community has changed?

2.3.5 Analysis of Interviews and Mini Report

After compiling their notes, consultants were asked to code the interviews using standard qualitative coding methods, and given a number of examples of how to establish codes. They were also asked to upload their notes and codes to the cloud, so that they could use and build off of each other's codes.

The consultants were then given the results of their country's electronic survey. Together with the results and the coded interview data, they compiled all of the previous research into a six page mini-report, following a template provided by the European Women's Lobby.

2.3.6 Analysis of Pan-European Data

The comparative analysis of the data from all ten countries began by first compiling all of the raw data onto one database, and hand-translating the national language surveys into English. Once an English-language master data list was created, Advisory Group member and data specialist Dr. Anne Laure Humbert manipulated the data to weight it according to the population of each country, and analysed the data using statistical software (SPSS).

3.1 History

3.1.1 Social Economy

The social economy is a core element of the European social model. As a concept, social economy refers to a specific part of the economy which is neither the State, represented by public institutions, nor the Market, represented by private corporations, but which nevertheless produces goods and services (Borzaga et al. 2013).

The term first appeared in economics literature around 1830 (Borzaga et al. 2013) to describe a new type of organisation and subsection of the economy which emerged in the late 18th century. These so called "self-help" organisations were started by industrial workers in Britain and France during the Industrial Revolution, in response to their increasingly poor working and living conditions.

The Industrial Revolution's new workforce included both men and women, with many city-dwelling women working full-time outside the home in factories. A study of the labour market in London during this time found that "72% of women in 1700 were doing full or part-time paid work outside the home" (Wiesner 2000 p. 134). As such, women played an essential part in the emergence of social economy from the very beginning. Despite women's role in Europe's burgeoning social economy, industrial capitalism created a system in which power became associated with monetary wealth gained by working outside of home. Men came to increasingly dominate the industrial workforce, while women were relegated to the home. As such, the Industrial Revolution also marked the birth of a new separation of working life and family, and the production of gendered structures dictating that women should tend to family life in the domestic private sphere, while men should be responsible for undertaking work outside of the home (Crompton et al. 2007).

This gendered division of labour has persisted in the European societal imagination to the present day, and has huge implications for how we as a society understand and perceive work, including entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship (Lewis & Humbert 2012). Historically, social economy organisations—or organisations which pursued social goals and organised and governed themselves in a participatory and collective way—fell into one of four categories: associations, mutuals, co-operatives or foundations (Borzaga et al. 2013). The first consumer co-operative in Europe, Fenwick's Weaver Society, was founded in the UK in 1769 to provide discounted food to members of the weaver community (McDonnell and Donnelly 2013).

3.1.2 Social Enterprises

In Europe in the 1980s and early 1990s, social economy organisations began to be known more generally as "social enterprises". The term was first used in 1978 by Freer Spreckly of Beechwood College near Leeds, England, to describe community and worker co-operatives (which were using a "social accounting and audit system" system that Beechwood had developed) (Ridley-Duff & Bull 2011). It rose to popularity in the 1980s with the establishment of the US-Based ASHOKA foundation, the brain-child of Bill Drayton, who wanted to encourage and develop what he called "social entrepreneurship" (Bornstein 2007).

As the concept of "social enterprise" gained more recognition, certain European countries with particularly strong histories of activity in the social economy such as Italy, France and the UK began to adopt specific legal forms for social enterprises.

Today, a social enterprise is defined by the European Commission as: An operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities. (Social Business Initiative, October 2011).

3.1.3 Women's Social Entrepreneurship

From the Industrial Revolution onwards, women were involved in the creation of social economy organisations. In 1883, for example, Alice Acland, editor of a section of the popular UK Co-Operative News newspaper entitled "Women's Corner" and a schoolteacher named Mary Lawrence began organising a "Woman's League for the Spread of Co-operation".

Together, Acland and Lawrence brought together a group of 50 women to join the League, which held its initial meeting during the Co-operative Congress in Edinburgh of 1883. A year later, the League had over 195 members and six branches. It was later named the Women's Co-operative Guild (Shaffer 1999) and organised around the issues of working women. The organisation is still in existence today and is known as the Co-operative Women's Guild (Shaffer 1999).

Examples of early women social entrepreneurs include:

- **Jane Addams** and **Helen Gates Starr** (United States, 1884) established the Jane Addams Hull House in Chicago, which offered a night school for adults, kindergarten classes, clubs for older children, a public kitchen (selling soups and stews), an art gallery, a coffeehouse, a gymnasium, a coal co-operative, a girls club, a swimming pool, a book bindery, a music school, a drama group and a library.

- **Florence Nightingale** (United Kingdom, 1865) founder of the first nursing school and developer

of modern nursing practices.

- **Dr. Maria Montessori** (Italy, 1900) developed the Montessori approach to early childhood education.

- **Margaret Sanger** (United States, 1916) founder of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, she led the movement for family planning efforts around the world.

In spite of the fact that women have been deeply involved in social economy organisations and led social enterprises throughout the entire history of this sector, there is a troubling dearth of research on women social entrepreneurs, women-led social enterprises and gender dimensions of social economy and social enterprises more generally (Teasdale et al. 2001; Humbert 2012). While data indicates that there are 11.6 million (mainstream) women entrepreneurs in Europe, making up 29% of total entrepreneurs (European Commission 2014) there is no gender disaggregated data available for Europe with regard to the number of women social entrepreneurs specifically.

However two recent studies (one global, one focused on Europe) have indicated that there is a higher representation of women in social enterprise than mainstream enterprise (ICF Consulting 2014). Additionally, "the Social Enterprise Coalition's State of Social Enterprise Survey (Social Enterprise Coalition, 2009) show that the social enterprise sector provides a more egalitarian environment for women, as can be seen in terms of presence on boards; 41% of social enterprise board members in the SEC Survey 2009 are women" (Humbert 2011 p.11).

3.1.4 Potential of Women's Social Entrepreneurship

The few scholars who have disaggregated global and EU-level social enterprise data by gender have drawn some fascinating conclusions that point to the enormous untapped potential of women's social enterprise. As will be discussed later in the report, among (overwhelmingly male) scholars of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, there is a widely held belief that women-led organisations have lower revenues and smaller numbers of employees than male social enterprises. Additionally, there are perceptions that women are more risk-averse, and thus less innovative than men when it comes to entrepreneurship.

However, in a recent paper for the OECD, scholar Marieke Huysentruyt looked at gender disaggregated data from the SELUSI study, and came to the following conclusions:
• Based on regression analyses of social enterprise revenue, gender has no effect on total revenue of social enterprises
• There is no evidence that women prefer to stay "small" when men and women-led social enterprises are compared within the same sectors

• Women social entrepreneurs are significantly more likely to engage in participatory management practices
• When it comes to new market creation, women social entrepreneurs are more innovative than male social entrepreneurs.

Huysentruyt explains:
"When it comes to new market creation – entering/ pioneering new markets, women seem to be taking the lead over male social entrepreneurs. More specifically, 62% of social ventures run by women were the first to provide this kind of service or product in their region, country or worldwide. This share is significantly lower for those ventures run by men (54%). Interestingly, this discrepancy remains even after we control for observable venture type characteristics and allow for systematic differences along this dimension across countries" (Huysentruyt 2014, p. 11).

• Women social entrepreneurs spend less money than male social entrepreneurs on process innovation

Huysentruyt concludes:
"The promotion of social entrepreneurship can act as a powerful lever towards promoting female entrepreneurship and female labour market participation more generally ... women entrepreneurs, social and mainstream alike, seem capable of playing a key role leading us towards more societal change.
This link between female entrepreneurship, in particular female social entrepreneurship on the one hand and transformative change that fosters more inclusive, green and smart growth, on the other has so far been widely underappreciated" (Huysentruyt 2014 p. 21).

Persisting Stereotypes
However, data has also revealed some troubling issues with social enterprise as it pertains to gender equality. Firstly, discourse on social enterprise tends to portray women stereotypically. As Dr. Anne Laure Humbert notes, "Women are portrayed as doing different types of jobs, in different types of organisations, at a lower level and for less money. The rhetoric of difference prevails. Moreover, women are portrayed as not motivated by pecuniary reasons but more by a desire to act as what can only be described as mothers of the community: women are there to help, to build, for others but never for themselves, and are seldom valued or rewarded for their work" (Humbert 2012 p. 10). Women social entrepreneurs may themselves internalise and thus perpetuate these stereotypes, including within their practice of leadership. They are then penalised for being "feminine" (or vilified if they adopt a masculine style), leading to what is called "the double bind".

Gender Pay Gap
Additionally, research based in the UK has indicated that there is a pay gap of almost 23% among women social entrepreneurs, meaning that women pay themselves 23% less than men (Estrin, Vujic, & Stephan 2014). At the same time, female social entrepreneurs report that they are "more satisfied with their job as a

CEO of a social enterprise than their male counterparts" (Estrin, Vujic, & Stephan 2014, p. 23). This research has thus identified the paradox of the "contented female (social) business owner", whereby female social enterprise owners are willing to trade-off pay for job satisfaction (Powell and Eddleston, 2008). As such, although social enterprise may be a "highly satisfying occupational choice, it also perpetuates gender pay inequalities" (Estrin, Vujic, & Stephan 2014, p. 23). The fact that it is women themselves who are doing the underpaying provides further evidence of how dangerous internalised gender stereotypes can be.

3.1.5 Added Value of Social Enterprise

Economically speaking, the case for investing in the development of ecosystems which support social enterprise is strong.

Growth
Data suggest that the social economy in Europe "engages over 14.5 million paid employees, equivalent to about 6.5% of the working population of the EU-27 and about 7.4% in EU-15 countries. These figures also include the vast majority of social enterprises, as they include all social enterprises using social economy legal forms, such as social co-operatives and entrepreneurial associations" (Borzaga et al. 2013 p. 45). In Europe and around the world, the social economy has increased "more than proportionately between 2002-03 and 2009-10", in Europe "increasing from 6% to 6.5% of total European paid employment and from 11 million to 14.5 million jobs" (Borzaga et al. 2013 p. 45).

Employment
Additionally, the experience of numerous European countries, as well as global data, indicates that co-operative business models are especially resistant to crisis situations (Birchall & Ketilson 2009). For example, in France, Italy and Spain, employment in the social economy actually grew during the crisis, while it declined in all other areas of the economy (Roelants et al. 2012). Additionally, data from the SELUSI study has indicated that over three-quarters of European social enterprises operate in areas relevant to the EU2020 growth strategy.

Innovation
Data have also shown that social enterprises are prone to high levels of innovation. SELUSI data indicated that "88% of social ventures interviewed stated they had introduced at least one new or significantly improved process, service and/or product in the past 12 months" (Huysentruyt 2014 p. 13). Additionally on average, 60% of social enterprises in the SELUSI study had "introduced a radical innovation or innovation that is new-to-the-market in the past 12 months" at the time of the study (Huysentruyt 2014 p. 13).

3.2 Global and Europe-focused Social Enterprise Research Projects

Comparative Studies

There are relatively few comparative studies that have been conducted on social enterprise, as "the diversity of economic structures, cultural traditions and legal frameworks across the world makes measuring social entrepreneurship difficult, particularly for the purposes of making international comparisons" (Noya and Clarence 2013 p. 5).

The following are some of the main studies which have been undertaken, or are currently in the process of being conducted, which have produced or are producing comparative data on social enterprise (ICF Consulting 2014).

The Emergence of Social Enterprise in Europe (EMES)
EMES, or "The emergence of social enterprise in Europe" was the first European research project on social enterprise and was carried out from 1996 to 1999, as part of the EU's Fourth Framework Programme (FP4) for research and technological development.
The Socio-Economic Performance of Social Enterprises in the Field of Integration by Work (PERSE)
PERSE was an EU-funded research project on "The Socio-Economic Performance of Social Enterprises in the Field of Integration by Work" undertaken from 2001 to 2004. It was the first comparative analysis of work integration social enterprises (WISE), and involved 11 European countries.

GEM Study
In 2009, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) built a dataset on social entrepreneurial activities in 49 countries. A household survey, which identified social enterprises through questions about the enterprises' social mission, innovativeness and revenue model, was used to gather the data, some of which was disaggregated by sex.

SELUSI Study
SELUSI (Social Entrepreneurs as Lead Users for Service Innovation) was a research project (funded through the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission 2009-2011) that studied the market behaviours and organisational design decisions of over 600 social enterprises in five European countries (Hungary, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom).

The Theoretical, Empirical and Policy Foundations for Social Innovation in Europe (TEPSIE)
Undertaken from 2012 to 2013, TEPSIE investigated barriers to innovation and various support structures and resources for European-level social innovation. The objective was to build the theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for developing the field of social innovation in Europe, and identify what works in terms of measuring and scaling innovation, engaging citizens and using online networks.

A Map of Social Enterprises and their Eco-Systems in Europe
The European Commission launched a Mapping Study in April 2013 as a follow-up to Action 5 of the Social

Business Initiative (SBI)2 to help fill the knowledge gap with regards to social enterprise in the EU. This Study mapped the broad contours of social enterprise activity and eco-systems in 29 European countries (EU 28 and Switzerland) using a common 'operational definition' and research methodology.

Social Enterprise as Force for more Inclusive and Innovative Societies (SEFORÏS)
A research project which began in 2014 and which will continue until 2017, the "seforïs" project "seeks to understand the potential of social enterprise in the EU and beyond to improve social inclusiveness of society through greater stakeholder engagement, promotion of civic capitalism and changes to social service provision. This will occur through a) investigation of key processes within social enterprises for delivering inclusion and innovation, including organisation and governance, financing, innovation and behavioural change and b) investigation of formal and informal institutional context, including political, cultural and economic environments and institutions directly and indirectly support social enterprises" (SEFORIS, 2014).

Enabling the Flourishing and Evolution of Social Entrepreneurship for Innovative and Inclusive Societies (EFESEIIS)
Started in 2013 and continuing into 2016, the objective of the EFESEIIS project is to provide advice to stakeholders on how to foster Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation; to draft an Evolutionary Theory of Social Entrepreneurship to explain the different evolutionary paths of Social Entrepreneurship in Europe and how Social Entrepreneurship and institutions co-evolved during time; to identify the features of an enabling eco-system for Social Entrepreneurship; and to identify the New Generation of Social Entrepreneurs, its features, needs and constraints as well as their contribution to Social Innovation.

3.3 European Political Support

On the level of European politics, the European Commission and European Parliament both have specific initiatives and polices focused on the promotion of social economy and social enterprise. Additionally, there are also (albeit fewer) EU-level initiatives focused on women's entrepreneurship. However, to date, there are no EU-level policies, initiatives, or pieces of legislation that focus specifically on women social entrepreneurs. Below, we briefly outline the political support available at the level of the European Commission and European Parliament for social economy, social enterprise, and women's entrepreneurship.

3.3.1 European Commission

The European Commission's official position on social economy and social enterprise states that: "The Commission aims for a level playing field in which social economy enterprises can compete effectively and fairly, without regulatory discrimination and in respect of their particular needs. To promote a highly competitive social market economy, the Commission has addressed the issue in:

• Social Business Initiative;
• Single Market Act 1 and 2;
• Small Business Act;
• The flagship initiative, The Innovation Union;
• Communication, "Business in the social economy sector: Europe's frontier-free market" (1989).

The Commission submitted the following proposals to the Council of the European Union:
• Proposal for a Council Regulation on the Statute for a European Cooperative Society (1992)
• Proposal for a Council Regulation on the Statute for a European Mutual (social security and insurance society) (1992)
• Proposal for a Council Regulation on the Statute for a European Association (1992)
• Proposal for a Council Regulation on the Statute for a European Foundation (2012)

In 2003, the Statute for a European Co-operative was adopted. The other two proposals of 1992 were withdrawn in 2006 by the Commission due to lack of legislative progress, while the last one on the European Foundation was withdrawn by the Commission due to lack of progress within the Council (December 2014). -European Commission website 2015

3.3.2 What is the Social Business Initiative?

With specific regard to social enterprises, the Commission notes that the Social Business Initiative of 2011 is the main piece of policy aimed at supporting social enterprises. Proposed in 2011, the Social Business Initiative is a collection of actions aimed at supporting the development of social enterprises. It "proposes ways to improve social businesses' access to funding (including EU funding through the Structural Funds and the future setting-up of a financial instrument to provide social investment funds and financial intermediaries with equity, debt, and risk-sharing instruments), measures to improve their visibility and a simplified regulatory environment (including a future proposal for a European Foundation Statute, forthcoming revision of the public procurement rules and state aid measures for social and local services)" (Social Business Initiative 2011).

The Social Business Initiative consists of **11 priority measures** which are as follows:

1. Developing a European regulatory framework for social investment funds (December 2011).
2. Favouring the development of microcredit in Europe, in particular its legal and institutional environment (from 2014).
3. Setting up a European financial instrument of €90 million to improve social businesses' access to funding (operational from 2014).

4. Introducing an investment priority for social enterprises in the regulations ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) and ESF (European Social Fund), as proposed in the regulatory package on the Structural Funds 2014-2020.
5. Developing a comprehensive map of social enterprises in Europe in order to identify good practices and models which can be reproduced (from 2012).
6. Creating a public database of labels and certifications applicable to social businesses in Europe in order to improve visibility and comparison between them (from 2012).
7. Promoting mutual learning and capacity building of national and regional administrations for putting in place integrated strategies to support social enterprises, especially via the Structural Funds, by means of analysis, sharing of good practice, awareness raising, networking and dissemination (from 2012).
8. Creating a single, multilingual electronic data and exchange platform for social entrepreneurs, incubators and clusters, social investors in order to better advertise and improve access to EU programmes which can support social entrepreneurs (from 2012).
9. Proposing to simplify the regulation on the Statute for a European Co-operative Society; as well as a European Foundation Statute. A study on the situation of mutual societies is also envisaged (from 2012).
10. Further enhancing the element of quality in awarding contracts in the context of public procurement reform especially in the case of social and health services. Another key element in here would be to ensure that the working conditions for people involved in the production of goods and services can be taken into account, provided that the Treaty principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and transparency are fully complied with (from 2012).
11. Simplifying the implementation of rules concerning state aid to social and local services that would directly benefit a number of social businesses (from 2012).

There is no mention of women or gender anywhere in the Social Business Initiative, nor is there any evidence that in any of the 11 subsections, there have been, or will be efforts to focus specifically on women, to apply a gender lens, or to disaggregate any data by sex.
Indeed, the actions that the initiative has put forth to date are completely devoid of any kind of gender lens.

3.3.3 Women's Entrepreneurship

With regard to traditional entrepreneurship, the Commission promotes and supports female entrepreneurship through the Small Business Act and Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan. The Commission supports several tools such as networks and an e-platform helping women become entrepreneurs and run successful businesses including:

• The European network to promote women's entrepreneurship (WES)
• The European network of female entrepreneurship ambassadors
• The European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs
• E-platform: One-stop-shop for women entrepreneurship

Despite the tools, there is only one person in the entire European Commission dedicated to women's entrepreneurship. Additionally, despite the fact that both Social Enterprise and Women's Entrepreneurship are housed within the same Policy Unit within DG GROW, there is no overlap evident between the two subjects within the Unit. There is no gender lens being applied to Social Enterprise, nor is there any examination of Social Enterprise within work on Women's Entrepreneurship. There is a great deal of potential for rich collaboration within the Entrepreneurship Unit of DG GROW, with both subjects standing to benefit from an inclusion of the other within their work.

3.3.4 European Parliament

The European Parliament tackles issues of Social Economy and Social Enterprise via an informal forum called the Social Economy Intergroup, which was disbanded for some time before being recently re-established. The Social Economy Intergroup is comprised of over 80 MEPs from 6 political parties.

The objectives of the Intergroup are:
• to promote exchanges of views on EU policies and legislation linked to social economy issues,
• to provide regular opportunities for dialogue between MEPs, social economy experts, European Commission officials, civil society representatives and other relevant stakeholders,
• to bring together MEPs from all political parties and all member states,
• to ensure that the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of Ministers take into account the social economy and its actors whilst developing their policies.

With regard to women's social entrepreneurship, the European Parliament has a FEMM Committee which is specifically focused on women's rights and gender equality. The FEMM Committee has put forth a number of Opinions and Reports on both women's entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, with their most recent analysis Women's Entrepreneurship: Closing the Gender Gap in Access to Financial and Other Services and in Social Entrepreneurship touching briefly upon the intersection of the two themes.
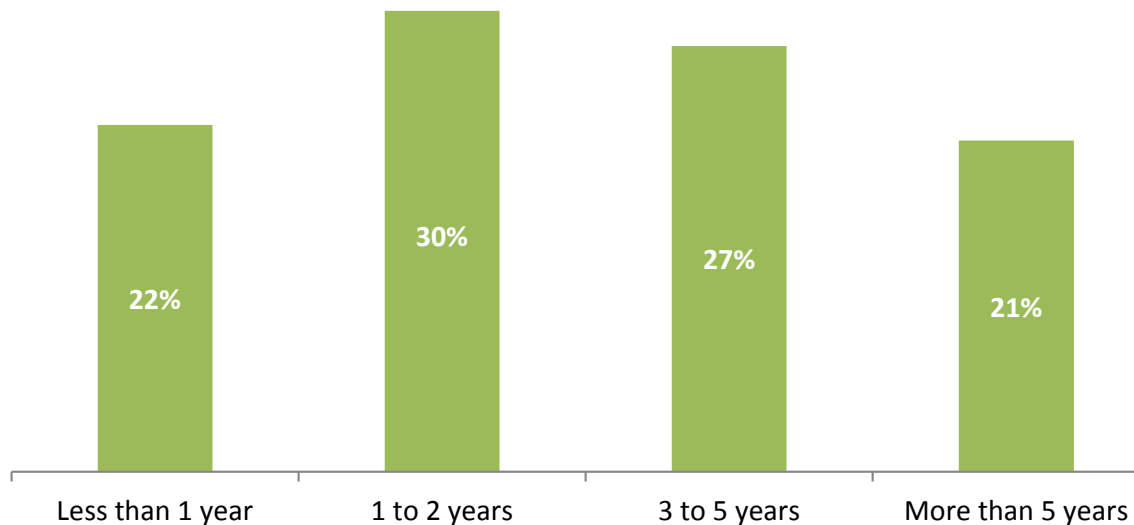
4.1 Descriptive Data

4.1.1. Age of Social Enterprises

In Europe, the concept of "social economy" has been present in many countries since the early 19th century. However both within Europe, as well as globally, it was not until the 1990s that the specific label of 'social enterprise' began to gain recognition and legal status (ICF Consulting 2014).

As such, according to the 2009 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) study, which produced data on social entrepreneurship in 49 countries, most social enterprises are less than 3.5 years old (Bosma & Levie 2010).

The WEstart data follows this pattern with 22% of women reporting their social enterprise had been in existence less than one year, and 30% reporting that their enterprise had been in existence 1-2 years. An additional 27% reported their enterprise had been in existence 3-5 years, meaning **that more than three out of four surveyed women were running a social enterprise that was less than 5 years old.**

Figure 4.1.1. Age of social enterprises

be seen that "the average age of the ventures run by women is also marginally below that of male run ventures". However, "this difference is in effect driven by the gender difference in age of the social enterprise among the oldest ventures – those that were founded at least 20 years ago. Within this organisational age group, we observe a significantly higher proportion of men at the helm with 70% of the social enterprises over 20 years old are male run" (Huysentruyt 2014 p. 10).

4.1.2 Legal Format

There are many different legal forms that social enterprises can take, and they differ greatly between countries. These forms include but are not limited to co-operatives, social co-operatives, community interest companies, collective interest co-operatives, solidarity enterprises, associations, mutuals, foundations, and for-profit-companies. Often a social enterprise can adopt an existing legal form, such as a foundation or association, and in certain countries, there are new legal forms, or adaptations of existing legal forms specifically for social enterprises (ICF Consulting, 2014).

Of the countries studied, France, Italy, Spain, the UK, Hungary and Lithuania have specific legal forms for social enterprises.

| Less than 1 year | 1 to 2 years | 3 to 5 years | More than 5 years |
| 22% | 30% | 27% | 21% |

The small percentage (14%) that reported running social enterprises that were ten or more years old were often representative of NGOs or State-operated institutions that transitioned to using the terminology or legal status of a social enterprise as it gained popularity within their particular country. In particular, Ireland, Bulgaria and Lithuania were three countries in which older, larger organisations providing social services for the State were considered to be social enterprises.

When the GEM data is taken along with the SELUSI data, and examined through a gender lens, it can

Common issues addressed by these laws include "the definition of social enterprise; asset allocation; stakeholder and governance systems; and, accountability and responsibility towards internal and external stakeholders" (Noya & Clarence, 2013 p. 3).

The majority of surveyed women (80%) reported that their social enterprise was legally registered, and 6% reported that legal registration was in progress. Survey respondents reported diverse legal forms, encompassing all of the aforementioned legal statuses, depending on which country their enterprise was registered in.

Figure 4.1.2 Legal Forms of Social Enterprises throughout Europe. From "A map of social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe, Report for the European Commission 2014".   (ICF Consulting 2014)
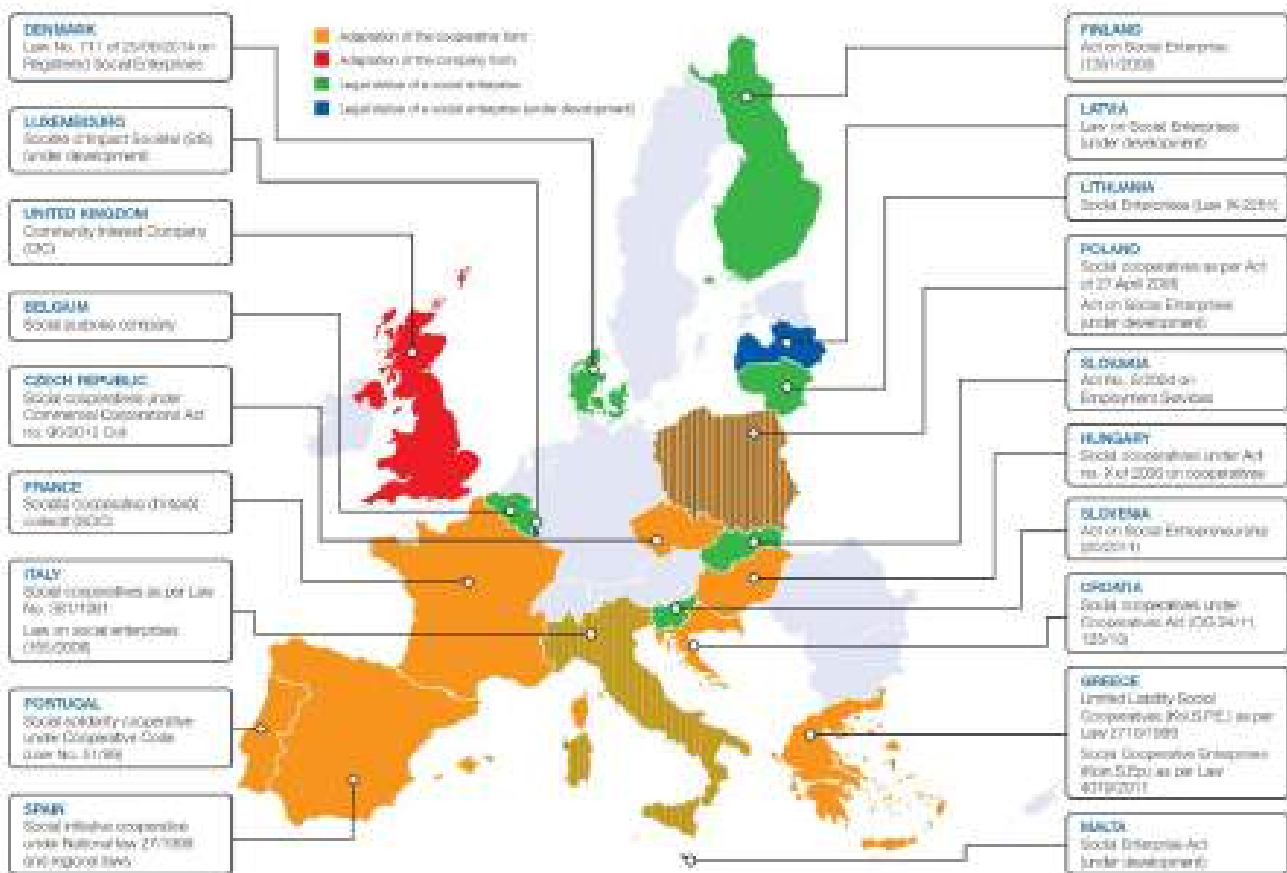
4.1.3 Policy Frameworks

Just as different European countries have different legal forms for social enterprises, so to do they have different levels of development regarding policy framework for social enterprises, and for social economy more generally.

Of the countries studied, France, Bulgaria, Lithuania, the UK and Italy have a national policy framework in place that focuses on social enterprise. Experience has shown that the development of a national policy framework plays a key role in the growth of social enterprise ecosystems. France, Italy and the UK in particular are strong examples of how national policy creates sectoral growth. Research has demonstrated that the co-construction of public policies by both governments and social enterprises themselves results in the most efficient and effective policies (Mendell, 2010).

Bulgaria's policy framework is set out in the National Social Economy Concept and the Action Plan for the Social Economy of 2014-2015. Despite its recent implementation, the plan is already drawing a great deal of attention to the country as a new "social enterprise hotspot" (ICF Consulting 2014).

Lithuania's policy framework is the newest of the

studied countries; the first Social Entrepreneurship Summit was held in 2014 by the Ministry of Economy. The summit involved diverse stakeholders and sparked a discussion of the new concept of social entrepreneurship.

As a result, a new concept of social entrepreneurship was approved by the Minister of Economy on 3 April 2015. It defines a social enterprise as an entity that is oriented to profit and social welfare, reinvests a part of its profits into business development, and contributes to the wellbeing of the community or certain social groups by serving their needs or addressing social and/or environmental issues within business models. The call for social enterprises meeting the criteria of the broader concept of a social enterprise will be announced in 2017 (Gaušas & Balčiūnė 2014).

Ireland has a policy framework plan in development, but it is not currently active; a number of recommendations and policy recommendation have been made through Forfás (previously Ireland's advisory board for enterprise, innovation and jobs). A Task Force for Social Enterprise was also initiated by Clan Credo, one of the social investment funds and social finance lenders. The organisation made recommendations to government, however there have been no legislative outcomes as of yet (Prizeman and Crossan 2011).

Sweden has a policy framework relating specifically to one kind of social enterprise (work-integration enterprise), but the framework does not address any other kind of social enterprise (Braunerhjelm et al. 2014).

4.1.4 Sectors

Social enterprises in Europe are active in all sectors of the labour market. The SELUSI study, which focused on five European countries, found that "approximately 75% of the social enterprises surveyed were concentrated in five sectors: social services; employment and training; environment; education; and, economic, social and community development. Some 15% of these social enterprises aimed to employ people from disadvantaged groups and increase social inclusion" (Noya & Clarence 2013 p. 3).

In a paper on innovation and women's social entrepreneurship which analysed both the SELUSI and the GEM data from a gender perspective, author Marieke Huysentruyt found that "women-led social enterprises are relatively more prevalent in the domains of social services (32% of female-run ventures versus 18% of male-run ventures) and health (15% versus 8%)" (Huysentruyt, 2014 p. 10).

For all the other social sector types (which include, listed in the order of frequency, development and housing, education and research, environment, and culture and recreation), no gender differences were found" (Huysentruyt, 2014 p. 10).

WEstart data are in line with these findings. Our survey asked women to choose from a standard list of EU labour market sectors and found that **the largest percentage (26%) of women-led social enterprises reported being located in Human Health and Social Work Activities.**

However, **the second highest percentage (19%) was located in Education, followed by Accommodation and Food Services (9%) and Information and Communications (9%).** The fact that our study found significantly more women reporting they were located in Education, than Accommodation and Food Services and other labour market sectors, may warrant further attention. The finding may indicate that with additional sex-disaggregated data, there may be more distinct gender differences within social enterprises in the Education sector.

4.1.5 Missions and Issues

WEstart survey respondents were asked to pick the social issues that were most relevant to their social enterprise's mission from a comprehensive list, with no limit as to the number of social issues they could select. **Inclusion of socially marginalised people and groups was the most common issue,** followed closely by **diversity inclusion**. Figure 4.1.5 provides an overview of the main social issues relevant to the social enterprises included in the study.

In many of the countries studied, the concept of social enterprise emerged as a way to integrate socially excluded people into the labour market. The majority of the countries have at least one form of social enterprise (sometimes legally recognised, other times a more informal concept), which is dedicated specifically to helping marginalised people enter the labour market. Indeed, social enterprise, which requires interaction with the market is specifically suited to missions of social inclusion.

Figure 4.1.5 Social issues most relevant to social enterprises (multiple selections)

Social issue	Value
Legal Services	9
Drugs, Alcohol, Mental Illness	29
Aid to Developing Countries	33
Anti-Poverty	40
Producing a Product	43
Workforce Integration	62
Disabilities	62
Economic Independence	75
Gender Equality	76
Health	76
Children and Youth	84
Environment and Sustainable Development	85
Women's Empowerment	92
Skills Training	99
Education	105
Diversity inclusion	117
Inclusion of socially marginalised people and groups	119

However, it is interesting to observe that while 'Workforce Integration' was an available option, many more women chose the more general category of 'Inclusion of Socially Marginalised groups.' Many interviewed women-run enterprises that do not specifically, or exclusively, train marginalised people to have jobs. Rather, their activities also include public awareness campaigns and attempt to educate the public at large about the benefits of social and diversity inclusion. In Bulgaria, workforce inclusion and job training was the main way that women sought to fight for social inclusion of groups such as ex drug addicts, people with disabilities and the Roma community. However in the UK, Ireland and Italy, social and diversity inclusion also focused on campaigns to raise awareness about autism, about hearing-loss, about the transgendered community and other issues with had no specific focus on workforce integration.

4.1.6 Economic Indicators

The European Commission Social Business Initiative (2011) definition of a social enterprise specifies that for an organisation to qualify as a social enterprise, it must receive a portion of its revenue from selling goods and services in the market.

Among those countries which have legal forms for social enterprises, different percentages of market-based revenue are required for an organisation to meet the definition of social enterprise.

The majority of social enterprises employ a hybrid business model and are financed through a combination of governmental or private grants, loans, and in-kind donations such as volunteer work and market activity. Generally speaking, the more highly developed a country's social enterprise ecosystem is, the more likely its social enterprises are to receive a larger amount of revenue from the market. Newer social enterprises usually rely very heavily on grants, and over time, seek to become entirely self-sustainable through market-based revenue.

The recent EU Commission Mapping of Social Enterprise Ecosystems Synthesis Report found that "public sector funding dominates the revenue streams of social enterprises, reflecting in large part their missions and activity focus such as work integration, and provision of social and welfare services.

For example, an estimated 45% of social enterprises in Italy have public bodies as their main clients. In the UK, 52% of social enterprises derive some income from the public sector and 23% describe it is as their main or only source of income" (ICF Consulting 2014 p. 7).

4.1.6.i Percentage of revenue coming from the market

Over half of WEstart respondents reported that 50-100% of their annual revenue comes from the market. Considering the mix of countries, including both newer social enterprise ecosystems such as Bulgaria, Hungary and Lithuania, and more developed ones, such as Italy, France and the UK, this is quite high, and indicates that overall, women's social enterprises are financially self-sufficient. In contrast, only **21% of respondents reported that less than 10% of their revenue comes from the market.** This finding likely corresponds to the fact that many women-led enterprises are still in the start-up stage.

4.1.6 ii Amount of surplus reinvested back into the organisation or a social cause

Another element of the Social Business Initiative definition of social enterprise is the requirement that a percentage of surplus revenue be invested back into the organisation or into a social cause. Like with market-based revenue, different countries have different requirements for how much should be reinvested to qualify for certain legal forms, tax exemptions and other benefits.

Our survey found that **over half of women social entrepreneurs reinvested over 90% of their surplus back into their organisation or into a social cause,** and over **two-thirds reinvested between 61% and 100%** back into their organisation or into a social cause. This is extremely high, and corresponds to data, which we will present later, indicating that women are not motivated to start social enterprises for profit-seeking reasons.

Figure 4.1.6.ii Percentage of surplus reinvested back in the organisation or into a social cause

None — 5%
Less than 10% — 10%
11% to 40% — 13%
41% to 60% — 9%
61% to 90% — 9%
Over 90% — 54%
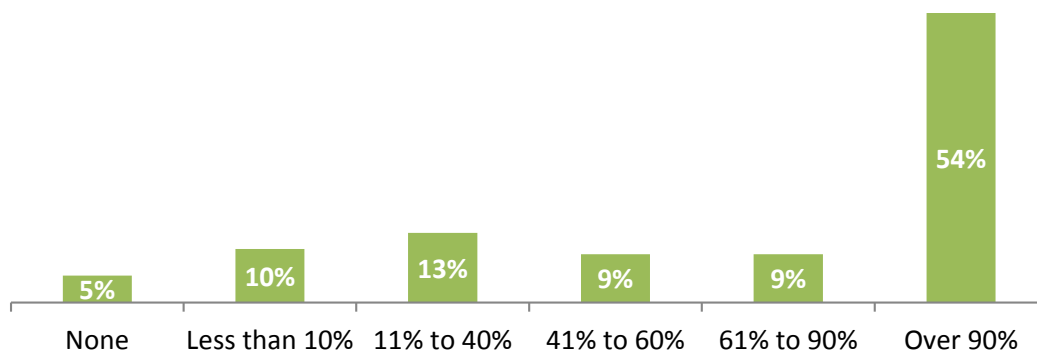
4.1.6. iii Annual Revenue

The annual revenue of social enterprises varies widely from country to country, and depends on myriad factors, including the development of the country's social enterprise ecosystem, the amount of financial support available, the overall state of the country's economy, the age of the social enterprise, the social enterprise's sector or other factors.

Among scholars of social entrepreneurship, there is a widely held belief that women-led organisations have lower revenues and smaller numbers of employees than men-led social enterprises. However, in a recent paper for the OECD, Marieke Huysentruyt looked at sex disaggregated data from the SELUSI study, and observed the following:

*Once we move beyond simple comparisons of means across gender groups, the picture becomes a bit more nuanced. In fact, when we control for the director's age and level of education, organisation's age; organisation's sector or industry type, operational model, and include country fixed effects and interaction terms country fixed effects and gender, **the main effect of gender disappears.** In those regression analyses where we so try to explain between-firm variation in the log of revenues, we find no overall main effect of gender." A similar picture emerges when we regress the log of FTE on director and organisation-specific characteristics. Additionally, **we find no clear evidence that women have a preference to stay 'small'** when we compare men and women-led ventures in a same social sector domain* (Huysentruyt, 2014 p. 11).

Our survey indicates that overall, **31% of women-led social enterprises in surveyed countries make less than 10,000 euros annually,** and **32% make over 100,000 euros annually.**

The actual breakdown is as follows:

• 31% have an annual revenue of less than 10,000 euros

• 14% have an annual revenue of 10,000 to 24,999 euros

• 12% have an annual revenue of 25,000 to 49,999 euros

• 5% have an annual revenue of 50,000 to 74,999 euros

• 6% have an annual revenue of 75,000 to 99,999 euros

• 16% have an annual revenue of 100,000 to 249,999 euros

• 6% have an annual revenue of 250,000 to 499,999 euros

• 10% have an annual revenue of 500,000 or more euros

Because of the range of factors that affect a social enterprise's total revenue, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from this data. The cluster around a very low rate of revenue and a very high rate of revenue corresponds to a clustering that can be seen in much

of the data, which is likely a result of the fact that our studied countries include several very new ecosystems and several well developed ecosystems.

Considering that over half of survey respondents indicated that their social enterprise was less than two years old, the fact that that **57% have a revenue of less than 50,000 euros annually** makes sense, indicating that a significant portion of survey respondents have small, new companies, with small annual revenues.

Around **10% of the social enterprises interviewed reported revenues of 500,000 euros or more per year,** with a total of **32% bringing in an annual revenue of over 100,000 euros a year,** which indicates that overall, there are a number of high-profit women-led social enterprises among the studied countries. This is extremely promising, and offers evidence against the (mis)perception that women business-owners prefer to "stay small".

Social enterprises play an important role in European job creation and economic growth (Blanchflower and Oswald, 1998; OECD, 1999; Noya and Clarence, 2007). Additionally, the kinds of jobs created by social enterprises have unique positive features: "They usually stay in the local community, as social enterprises rarely delocalise; they support vulnerable individuals – for those social enterprises which pursue this statutory mission (e.g. social co-operatives in Italy or in Poland); and they contribute to local economic development, such as by creating opportunities in distressed urban areas or in remote rural areas where there is usually little creation of wealth" (Noya & Clarence 2013 p. 12).

In many countries, the social economy sector not only remained unaffected by the 2009 financial crisis, but actually grew, producing more employment opportunities in the wake of the crisis. The 2012 CIRIEC study indicated that "the number of jobs in the social economy sector increased from 11 million in 2002-03 to more than 14 million in 2009-10, corresponding respectively to 6% and 6.5% of the total paid workforce in the EU" (Noya & Clarence 2013 p. 12).

4.1.6. iv. Paid Employees

According to the results of our survey, **38% of women-led social enterprises have no full-time paid employees** and a further **39% have between 1 and 3 full-time paid employees**, suggesting that the majority of women-led enterprises are very small enterprises.

Figure 4.1.6.iv Number of full-time employees

None	1 to 3	4 to 6	7 to 10	11 to 25	26 to 49	50 or more
38%	39%	8%	5%	4%	4%	2%
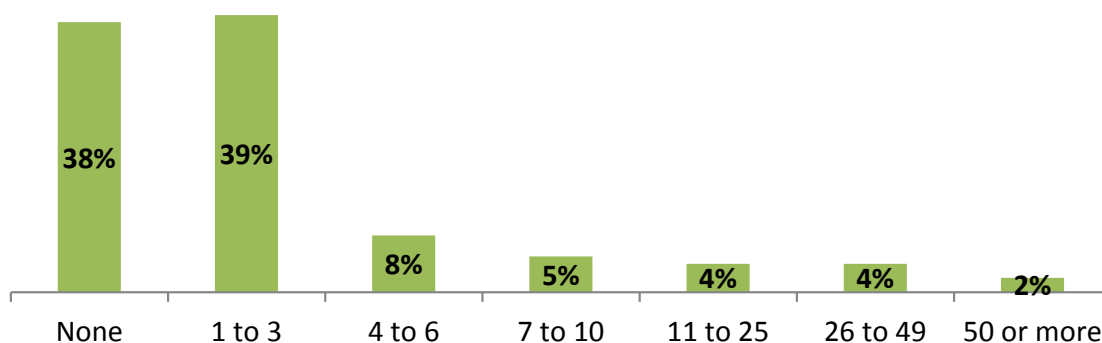
4.1.6. v Part-time Paid Employees

What about part time employees? Our survey indicated that the numbers are more or less the same as with full-time employees, with the majority having **zero to three part-time employees.**

Figure 4.1.6. v Number of part-time employees

None	1 to 3	4 to 6	7 to 10	11 to 25	26 to 49	50 or more
33%	37%	10%	9%	7%	2%	2%
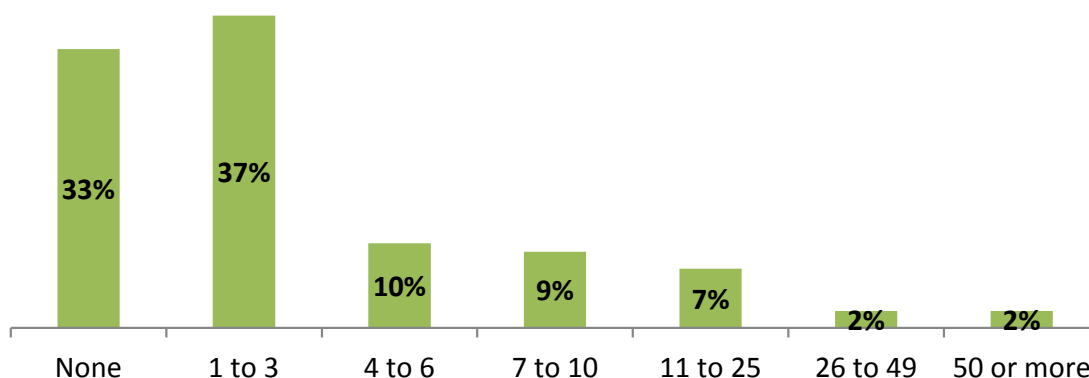
4.1.6. vi Household Income

While many women run fully self-sustaining social enterprises, we were interested to know whether they were sustaining their household entirely on the income they produced from their enterprise, or whether there was a mix of resources coming into the household.

Among women surveyed, the number of people currently living in their household is on average 2.55, with an average of 1.8 people contributing income. Only **32% of women surveyed are producing a salary from their social enterprise which makes up more than**

50% of their household income, and **71% receive additional income for their household outside of the salary they earn in their social enterprise.** This finding corresponds with data, discussed later, indicating that women are more motivated by the idea of contributing a second income to their household than they are of being a sole breadwinner.

However, this differs widely between countries; women from Lithuania, for example, were much more motivated by the idea of producing a primary income for their families, and, consequently, reinvest the lowest

percentage of surplus revenue in the social mission of the organisation than any other country studied.

This quantitative data reaffirms what we observed in our qualitative data; in most cases, women are less motivated by financial need and profit-seeking than by their desire to create social change. When profit-seeking is a motivation, it is usually to contribute additional or secondary income to the family, except in particular cases of economic hardship, which vary from country to country.

4.2 Motivations

Data have shown that women are more likely to start a social enterprise than a traditional enterprise. Nevertheless, there are still more men than women leading social enterprises in of Europe, with the exception of a few countries (Lepoutre, Justo & Bosma 2012).

What motivates women to start a social enterprise? Our research overwhelmingly indicates that it is the social element.

As one survey respondent observed, *"Social entrepreneurship lets you take on a concrete project in which you can realise your social aspirations, and your desire to create something positive in your environment"*.

Among women surveyed, responding to an unmet need in the community, seeking to make a specific social impact, an innovative idea for a new product, service or market, and a personal connection to a particular issue or group were the top motivations for starting a social enterprise.

4.2.1 Unmet Needs, Social Impact

The overwhelming majority of women surveyed (95%) indicated that responding to an unmet need in the community was a strong or very strong motivating factor in their decision to start a social enterprise. Similarly, for **93% of women, seeking to make a specific social impact** was a strong or very strong motivating factor.

In most societies around the world women are usually much closer than men to social issues (such as caring for children, elderly people or disabled persons; education; or the provision of food or care products for a community) both in their private and professional life, largely as a consequence of gender roles inscribed in societies around the world and how they are organised. This is no different in Europe, even among countries such as Sweden which are arguably among the most advanced in terms of gender equality and legal and political rights for women.

In the countries studied, women described personally experiencing and witnessing unmet needs in their community and looking for innovative solutions that will bring about a specific social impact. They also describe feeling a personal calling towards social issues and a desire to make the world a better place with their work.

Michelle O'Donnell Keating, who founded Women for Election—a highly successful Irish social enterprise that supports women in Ireland to run for political office—had always been politically active, and was frustrated with the lack of women in politics in Ireland. While campaigning around the country on a volunteer basis, she noticed the disproportionately small number of women running for election, which sparked the idea for her social enterprise.

Similarly, Rachel Moore, founder of Express Your Gender, an Irish social enterprise that caters to the transgendered community, founded her organisation after working part-time as clinical psychologist with transgendered patients and understanding the extreme financial barriers that prevented her patients from getting the care they needed. At the time, Moore was employed in the corporate world and realised there was a huge gap concerning transgender issues when it came to corporate diversity policies and programmes. Observing these two unmet needs was what motivated Express Your Gender.

Swedish Social Entrepreneur Elin Wernquist, founder of Barnrättsbyrån (Children's Rights Agency), was involved with various organisations and projects in the UK and in Sweden when she experienced the lack of support for vulnerable children. Motivated by what she had witnessed, she developed an idea for a children's rights organisation based on existing models and best practices. With two friends, she started Barnrättsbyrån, an organisation and place where all children and young people, especially vulnerable children, can come to get help and support including legal help, counselling and contact with authorities. The social mission has been the same from the start: to strengthen individual children's rights in Sweden. *"One of the reasons why we started to fight for this was that we had a lot of experience working with a vulnerable groups and have experienced the shortcoming and flaws of the society"*, she says.

Women are also driven by a general desire to make a positive impact and change the world for the better, which many report having been present their entire lives. Maxie Matthiessen, Co-Founder of Ruby Cup, a Swedish social enterprise that provides menstrual cups to girls in Africa recalls: *"I always dreamed of how I could change the world for the better"*. Marilyn Heib, Co-Founder of bettervest, a platform for investment in sustainable energy, echoes this sentiment: *"Ever since I could think about it, I always felt that I wanted to make the world a better place, even as a child. [...] So I decided early that I wanted to do something to achieve this"*. Anne Riechert, Founder of Kids Have a Dream, a global art and education project , elaborates on how her mission is connected to her desire for social change: *"From an idealistic perspective, to make the*

world a better place we need to start with education and we need to start with young people".

This is in line with other data that indicate that, at least at the level of discourse (Hechavarria et al., 2012), women are more oriented towards social goals. As Marieke Huysentruyt points out in her paper, *"we know that women's participation rate in the non-profit sector (including paid employment) is higher than men's (Themudo, 2009). And even as commercial entrepreneurs, women seem to emphasise social goals more and economic goals less (when pursuing entrepreneurial activity) relative their male counterparts"* (Huysentruyt, 2014 p. 10).

4.2.2 Personal Connection and Experience

Both 'responding to an unmet need' and 'the desire to make a specific social impact' are strongly linked another major motivating factor: a personal connection to a particular issue or group, which 82% of women surveyed noted was a strong or very strong motivating factor. The majority of women interviewed for the WEstart project made reference to having had a personal or first-hand experience that motivated them to start their social enterprise; this factor continually rose to the forefront of interviews in all 10 countries.

Tzetzka Radeva is the founder of Maria's World Foundation which is a Bulgarian social enterprise for people with mental disabilities located in Sofia. Radeva shares: *"Maria is the sister of my husband and she has a light degree of intellectual disability. Searching for a place that would help Maria acquire skills towards her independence, inspired the idea for Maria's World - for me this is a personal cause! Ultimately, even if we help just one person with a disability and improve his or her life, then it's all worth it!"*

"The link between my personal story and the company is deeply intimate," says Sarah Da Silva, founder of French social enterprise Constant et Zoé, a company that designs and sells practical clothes for disabled people. It was Da Silva's personal experiences around the difficulty of dressing her disabled brother that led her to launch her social enterprise. She chose the deeply personal name "Constant" for her company, in reference to him.

In a similar vein, Mélanie Perron, founder of L'Effet Papillon, a French social enterprise that offers women diagnosed with cancer non-medical support services, explained her motivation, noting, *"I had a personal experience that shocked me".* When a close relative got very ill, Perron realised that there was very little support available for patients. *"I did not think anything was going to change",* she recalled, *"so in 2011 I thought to myself: 'I have to do it'".*

For Caroline Carswell, founder of Sound Advice, an Irish social enterprise that helps parents of children with hearing loss connect with hearing technologies and digital tools, her own experience with deafness was a major motivating factor. As Carswell recalls, *"I was aware of issues that people (with hearing loss) were facing; they could not access hearing services or speech services".*

For another social entrepreneur who runs a social enterprise that provides alternative mental health services, the experience of having a daughter with mental illness sparked her desire to launch a social enterprise. *"I watched her change from a happy teenager, to being withdrawn",* the woman explained. *"It was soul destroying".*

4.2.3 Social Innovation

For 88% of women leading a social enterprise, an innovative idea for a new product, process, market or service was a strong or very strong motivating factor. Yet, interviews revealed that this innovative idea usually came after having personal experience with a particular social issue or observing a specific social need. For many women social entrepreneurs, it seems that the personal connection and observation of a social need are the motivations for undertaking a social endeavour; however, it is the innovative nature of the solution they come up with that leads them to pursue the specific business model/organisational form of a social enterprise.

Marine Couteau, founder of Leka, a Swedish social enterprise that creates robotic toys to help autistic children, observed, *"It's the feedback of educators and parents at the beginning of the project that made me want to continue".* This example illustrates the intertwined nature of the "innovative idea" element of women social entrepreneurs' motivation, with the personal. It wasn't simply the technological innovation that motivated Marine; it was crucial for her to personally experience the interest of her future beneficiaries and see with her own eyes how much they needed support. That need for support turned her project into an enterprise.

Similarly, British Social Entrepreneur Erika Brodnok, founder of Karizma Kids, an app that teaches children emotional intelligence, started her company after observing how challenging it was for parents to teach their children skills to manage their feelings. Having grown up in a large family and as a mother herself, she noticed that the emotional and stress-management skills that she relied upon as an adult were something that parents found both time-consuming and complicated to pass on to their children. There were many successful apps to help busy parents teach children academic skills, but there was nothing on the market for emotional skills. Today, her revolutionary software comes pre-downloaded in many name-brand children's e-learning tools and reaches thousands of beneficiaries.

4.2.4 Ethical and Sustainable Way of Doing Business

For **80% of women, seeking to create a more ethical way of doing business** was a strong or very strong

motivating factor, and for **78% of women seeking to create a more sustainable model of doing business** was a strong or very strong motivating factor.

As Fruzsina Benkő, founder of the InDaHouse Programme—a social enterprise whose mission is to support the Roma community in a small village in Northern Hungary—observed: *"I dreamed of establishing missing social services in Hungary in a sustainable way"*. Another Hungarian social entrepreneur Erika Kármán, founder of Szatyor Association which makes healthy, local, organic food available for people living in the city explained, *"The issue is that environmentally friendly and conscious solutions and ideas must be available to everyone in the society."*

After a long career in the private sector, Italian social entrepreneur Laura Orestano—founder of SocialFare, whose mission is to catalyse, generate and innovate solutions for the common good—decided to find a way to balance financial sustainability and social impact. The social enterprise structure was perfectly aligned to her mission. Similarly, Luciana Delle Donne - founder of Italian social enterprise Made in Carcere (Eco-fashion handmade and designed by women prisoners), is a former bank manager who is currently engaged in building an innovative business model starting from people, spaces and objects which are forgotten or marginalised. Delle Donne's ultimate goal is to *"build a new inclusive system"*.

4.2.5 Career Freedom

The majority of survey respondents and women interviewed indicated that they were motivated to start a social enterprise primarily by their desire to provide a solution for a social ill in their communities. However, many also noted that on a personal and professional level, the opportunities for growth provided by running a social business were very appealing to them. **Over half of the women cited "seeking to have greater decision-making and leadership power in my job/career"** as a strong or very strong motivating factor, and almost **80% indicated that "seeking to try something new and learn new skills"** was a strong or very strong motivating factor.

Many women interviewed indicated that they were seeking to feel purposeful in their work. They recognised that their private sector experience had given them transferable skills, such as finance and management, which they could apply to the social sector via social enterprise.

"The experience in the private sector was good in terms of professionalism and the training you get in those places", noted Irish social entrepreneur Edel Moloney, who is on the management team of SpeedPak, a social enterprise that produces customised prizes and ribbons and provides work to unemployed people. Caroline Carswell, founder of Sound Advice, recalls, *"15 years ago, I had a good job… it paid well, had perks.*

Then about 6 years ago, I realised I need more."

Additionally, some women social entrepreneurs become entrepreneurs to grow as professionals with their own schedules and in order to accommodate a family life, as they felt the system of work-life balance in their country was unsuitable for their personal needs. Often this depended on the maternity leave policies and work-life balance issues of the country in question. For example, accommodating family life was more important to women in Spain; interviewees noted that Spanish working hours in particular are extremely unaccommodating for work-life balance as they range from 9:00-14:00 and 16:00-20:00. In Bulgaria, which provides generous maternity leave for up to two years to all women, the question of work-life balance was less of an issue. (These issues, including the role of caring, will be discussed later in the report).

4.2.6 Accidental Social Entrepreneurs

Interestingly, the interviews revealed that women entrepreneurs are not always aware of the fact that what they are planning or operating is a social enterprise. Many start a social venture with a market-based element without having a strong understanding of the social enterprise ecosystem, and it is only later in the process that they realised their endeavour fits the criteria of a "social enterprise".

As Hungarian social entrepreneur Fruzsina Benkő related, *"I did not even know that the category social enterprise existed. A friend told me that what I was planning was actually called social enterprise"*. Likewise British social entrepreneur Abi Billinghurt who works with young women and girls affected by gangs noted, *"I didn't set out with the intention to be a social entrepreneur. I discovered that term through the journey of setting up in business"*.

4.2.7 Seeking Profit- Not a Motivating Factor

One very interesting finding regarding women's motivations for starting a social enterprise is that overall, they are not based on economic grounds. That is, the women surveyed and interviewed, as a majority, did not report becoming a social entrepreneur out of economic need, either as a result of unemployment or underemployment. They were not usually seeking to provide a sole income for their household, and making a profit was generally not a motivating factor or a relatively small motivating factor.

At the individual level, for **31% of women, seeking to make a profit was not a motivating factor.** In relation to their household situation, the same applied with **47% of women reporting that "seeking to support myself or my family as a primary earner" was not a motivating factor.** Finally, leading a social enterprise appears to be out of choice, since **for the majority of women (68%) unemployment or underemployment was not a motivating factor.**
With the average number of household members

contributing income at 1.8, it could be that the majority of surveyed women did not need, economically speaking, to be thinking purely about profit, as they were members of households where another person was contributing financially. If the financial sustainability of a woman's household does not depend entirely upon the profit of her social enterprise, our research suggests that she has more freedom to put the social goals of her organisation above profit.

As Swedish social entrepreneur Nina Forsberg, co-founder of Barista Cafes (a social enterprise that offers fair-trade coffee and supports a UN programme for children's education) noted, *"To work for something you know is making a difference is so much bigger than becoming a millionaire"*. However, as is indicated by the fact that 32% of women-led social enterprises surveyed are making annual revenues of over 100,000 euros a year, producing a sustainable profit, while perhaps not a main motivating factor, is still clearly a high priority for many women social entrepreneurs.

Not every woman social entrepreneur is part of a two-income household as described above however. For the small percentage who are motivated by unemployment, the desire to sustain their household and stay afloat is as important as their social goal. Lithuania and Ireland were two countries where women noted economic necessity as a major motivating factor for starting their social enterprise on more than one occasion.

It is important to note that even when personal economic survival motivated their social enterprise, women were keenly aware of the suffering among the social cause. Therefore, their organisation was just as much about bettering the socioeconomic situation, as it was about allowing them to survive economically.

Lithuanian entrepreneur Rasa Bulvičienė, chairperson of Karalkrėslis Community which began operating a bakery as a social enterprise in 2015 recalled, *"I could not find a job with my profession [primary school teacher] and as I have a disabled son and money was needed, we [active people in the community] decided that it's not a solution to walk and ask for money with an outreaching hand, we need to earn the money"*.

Additionally in Lithuania in the past several years, new funding opportunities have opened up for social enterprises. This funding motivated women to take advantage of this available money and start an enterprise. The fact that in Lithuania, the majority of surveyed and interviewed women reinvested only a small portion of their surplus back into the social mission of the organisation is perhaps indicative of the higher level of personal economic necessity among the country's social entrepreneurs, who are often part of the marginalised communities their enterprises serve. Similarly, in Ireland, the economic downturn resulted in high levels of unemployment and continues to be a strong motivating factor for women to pursue social enterprises. Seeking their own employment and creating employment for others, women social entrepreneurs are motivated to create hubs or develop an ecosystem for training, learning and enhancing the prospect of employment. In doing so they create an opportunity to remain in Ireland rather than facing emigration.

"I wanted to tease out collaborative opportunity", commented Irish social entrepreneur George Boyle, who established the Fumbally Exchange, a collective workings space, in response to the economic downturn and the need to find a collective response to the problem, adding, *"Good ideas, with integrity that help people will find wheels if you believe in them and approach humbly"*.

4.3 Barriers

4.3.1 Finance

Access to finance is one of the largest barriers for traditional women entrepreneurs (EU Commission 2014). The results of the WEstart project indicate that this is also the case for women social entrepreneurs. When asked to choose from a list of barriers which stood in the way of their success (with the option to choose as many as applied) **41% of women surveyed chose "not enough funding available",** and **37% chose "lack of access to funding",** making finance-related barriers the top cited obstacles to success.

Figure 4.3.1 Finance-related barriers

Lack of access to funding — 37%

Not enough funding available — 41%
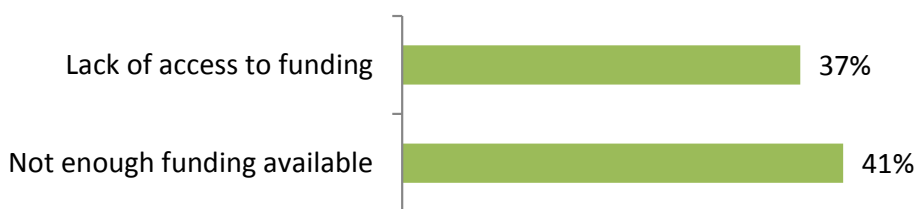
"It was not always easy to believe, that we would have the necessary resources to build a professional business from a hobby enterprise", observed Hungarian social entrepreneur Rozi Váczi, founder of matyodesign, a social enterprise that saves the famous matyó embroidery culture and provides a dignified income opportunity for women living in a small and isolated village.

Indeed, the difficulty of accessing finance and the lack of available funding opportunities came up time and time again in interviews across all ten countries.

Erika Varga of Bulgarian social enterprise Romani Design (a social enterprise that works against racism with the tools of fashion) concurred, noting *"It was difficult to get donors. And even if we got financial sources, they did not cover important elements, like the preparatory work with long-term unemployed people".*

Marilyn Heib, Co-founder of German social enterprise bettervest, concurred, emphasising *"There must be more subsidies for social entrepreneurs. When I became an entrepreneur, there was no financial support for entrepreneurs in Germany".*

Reda Sutkuvienė, manager of the Lithuanian public entity Socialinės paramos projektai which runs a salad bar Mano Guru that aims to integrate former substance addicts into labour market explains, *"We need finance to make our rehabilitation programme complete: to create a safe closed environment because some of our clients after work here return to their environment where alcohol and drugs may be used and the stakes of relapsing are very high."*

When it comes to traditional entrepreneurship, men entrepreneurs are significantly better financed than women entrepreneurs in many countries throughout the EU (Verheul and Thurik 2001; Orphan 2003). Numerous research studies have indicated that women face gender-specific barriers to accessing finance when starting and growing a traditional enterprise (Greene 2000; Brush et al. 2001; Orser et al. 2006; Harrison and Mason 2007). Such barriers include discrimination at the hands of lenders and investors (Orphan 2003).

On the European Commission webpage dedicated to Microfinance, a Frequently Asked Questions sections displays the following:

Question: Can I access Progress microfinance?

Answer: Yes if you:
• want to become self-employed or set up/develop a microenterprise (fewer than ten employees), particularly a social enterprise
• are unemployed
• have taken time out of the labour market
• have difficulty getting conventional credit (because you're: **female**, considered too young or too old, a member of a minority group, or you have a disability, etc.) (European Commission Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Webpage, 2015).

For the European Commission, being a woman is automatically assumed to strongly affect one's ability to get credit, to the extent that being female instantly qualifies you for microfinance.

Our research has found that this difficulty is also experienced by women social entrepreneurs. Juliane Zielonka, Co-Founder of LARAcompanion, reflected: *"In my experience, it is quite tough to be a woman in social entrepreneurship business. Also in terms of financing, I personally think it is a challenge as a woman to get funded. I think there is a bias. Well, men tend to invest in men".* Maya Doneva, co-founder of the Social Tea House with the mission to employ abandoned youth in Varna, shared: *"We fought so long to not be called 'the girls', and we are in our 30s! Also, seeing me at work with my kids makes people distrust that I can manage a successful business".*

However, it is not just men lenders that perpetuate gender bias. As one social entrepreneur shared: *"Once I was questioned whether I should be raising capital and running a high growth business given I had a young son. [The investor who posed the question was a woman]".*

The unique dual focus of a social enterprise makes access to finance for women even more of a challenge, as research has shown that traditional lenders and investors struggle to understand the social element of social enterprise business models and feel more comfortable lending to traditional companies. There are very few specific lending and investment programmes available to social entrepreneurs of either sex available in Europe and few, if any, which cater specifically to women social entrepreneurs.

As Lithuanian social entrepreneur Tímea Kádár, founder of Szállás Másképp (a social enterprise focused on rural tourism) noted, *"Sometimes I felt – especially within the classic, men-dominated start-up world –, that having other viewpoints beyond profit is a kind of shame".*

Anna Yukiko Bickenbach, Co-Founder at German social enterprise Ecotastic, explains, *"In order to scale [...] you need [...] investment. Well, there are not many investors out there that focus on social as well as monetary profit. I think investors sometimes shy away from the social because there is a stigma in what it means to be also a social entrepreneur. It usually means that maybe you are not as business focused, because it is not of course the number one priority in the business. [...] There is a small pool of investors that focus on social entrepreneurs".*

4.3.2 Politics and Legislation

After financial barriers, politics and legislation-related obstacles were the second most prominent among women interviewed, with **28% indicating that "national level politics and legislation"** represented a barrier, and **20% stating that "community level politics and legislation"** was a barrier.

Figure 4.3.2 Political and Legislative Barriers

Community level politics and legislation	20%
National level politics and legislation	28%

The WEstart interviews indicate that women in many of countries we studied, specifically those without strong legislative frameworks and specific policies to bolster social enterprise, felt frustrated by the challenge of working in an underdeveloped ecosystem with little government support. However, the majority of interviewed women communicated that this was a problem that was experienced by both women and men. In the case of certain countries such as Hungary, where women social entrepreneurs outnumber men social entrepreneurs, it does, however, become a gender issue by default.

The recent European Commission Social Enterprise Ecosystem Mapping Synthesis Report indicates that among the women and mensocial entrepreneurs interviewed and surveyed in the 28 countries studied by this project, lack of supportive legislative frameworks, including the lack of legal recognition of social enterprise in many countries was seen as a major obstacle to social enterprise development (ICF Consulting 2014).

Cumbersome bureaucracy is also a problem for many women in social entrepreneurship, specifically in those countries with less well developed ecosystems that lack specific legislation and government policy to support social enterprise development.

Lithuanian social entrepreneur Jurga Banienė is the founder of a small company community Žalia Pupa that produces green smoothies and sells them in the centre of the city. She has been in business since 2011. Jurga speaks about challenges that she faces as a small business owner, specifically regarding cumbersome bureaucracy:

"One official told me that the more successful I become the more inspections I'll get. When I started my activities I thought that every institution wanted to help me. At the end of the last year I got tired of visiting state institutions. My website's title was not proper, my language was not correct, this and that ... I work so much just so that institutions could show the world that they work. For example, I needed permission from the municipality to bring two armchairs outside. First, this has to be approved by the cultural heritage chapter [the bar operates in the area of cultural heritage]. Therefore, I had to order a plan at the architect's to position the armchairs in two square metres.

Next, I had to make a design at a marketing agency, bring the draft to the municipality, then it goes to the National Language Commission which came here to check my signboard ... and all the visits are filled with threats – if you violate this regulation, the fine will be of that size and so on. And after all the arrangements and visits I get a call from the municipality, that my plan for the two armchairs was approved. So I had to come to the municipality and take my documents from desk 6 to 9. These officials sit next to each other, but I had to come, push a registration button and queue to hand in my documents."

High levels of accountability and bureaucracy associated with even small grants were also seen as challenges. For many social entrepreneurs trying to keep funders happy while meeting needs of beneficiaries places a high demand on their time, energy and abilities to effectively and efficiently deliver on their missions. *"The level of bureaucracy can get in the way of innovation"*, explained Edel Moloney, *"I learned that it is harder to bring good idea to fruition then you think"*.

4.3.3 Time

Research on women entrepreneursin general has revealed that women have less time to devote to entrepreneurship activities as a result of the unpaid caring roles they are expected to fulfil within their household and community (Lewis, Gatewood, & Watson, 2014).

While we will discuss more about unpaid care later in the report it is worth noting that the majority of survey respondents and women interviewed had care responsibilities (either for children, a family member, or someone else) when they started their social enterprise, and the majority continue to have care responsibilities today. To our knowledge, there is no comparable data for men social entrepreneurs; however, given the deeply entrenched societal history of women undertaking unpaid care, it seems highly unlikely that men social entrepreneurs have the same high percentage of care responsibilities.

Gabriele Schwarz, Founder of bonergie, a German social enterprise observes *"It is more difficult to take dramatic steps, because you are still taking care – of your family, your children, you friends. The family or the parents train men to be independent, to go out into*

the world and find their life. And subconsciously women may feel that should stay and take care of the family".

As a result of this lack of time, studies have found that women entrepreneurs find the logistics of running a business, such as obtaining and maintaining finance more burdensome than men in their position (Lewis, Gatewood, & Watson, 2014). Our research finds that this is also the case with **27% of women indicating that "not enough time to devote to social enterprise activities" is a barrier to success.**

As one entrepreneur noted, *"The (financial application) process is too long! I don't have time to fill in a 15-page grant application when I have had two businesses to run!"* She continued, *"My ideas are greater than the energy or time I have available. When that happens it makes you frustrated with yourself".*

Another social entrepreneur commented, *"The journey … takes longer than people think. It takes time, but you just need to get going."*

However, not all women social entrepreneurs were as optimistic. One Spanish entrepreneur, who had just run out of funding and was looking for another job to support herself, commented that she might never have started her social enterprise if she had known the time, energy and money required to be successful from the beginning.

Additionally, the emotional energy and time that is required to successfully deliver the kind of "social" services that many social enterprises focus on, such as the integration of people with disabilities or former drug addicts back into the labour force is extremely wearing. After fulfilling the social mission of their organisation, women must then run and manage the business aspect of their organisation, while also potentially having to fulfil gender roles such as taking care of their children and family members.

Indeed, many women social entrepreneurs reported feeling exhausted and burnt out by the process of running a social enterprise, and wished there were more support services, such as child care, or self-care training programmes available to them.

4.3.4 Visibility

According to the 2014 European Commission Social Enterprise Ecosystem Mapping Synthesis Report, "poor understanding of the concept of a 'social enterprise' was cited as a key barrier by the majority of stakeholders across Europe", with "recognition of the term 'social enterprise' by policy makers, public servants, the general public, investors, partners and prospective customers seen as low" (ICF Consulting 2014 p. 93). Additionally, the report indicated that in certain countries there is a negative perception of social enterprises because often "the public associates the term 'social enterprise' with the activities of charities or work integration of disadvantaged and disabled

people, and not entrepreneurship" (ICF Consulting 2014 p.93).

In some countries, this led to a feeling of mistrust among the general public, who do not understand why a "social" organisation should be making money and interpret the market-based element as a sign of corruption. Additionally, potential consumers of social enterprise products may also have negative stereotypes about the marginalised populations who are producing the goods and services and may be disinclined to utilise a social enterprise for this reason (ICF Consulting 2014).

AmongIn the WEstart project, **21% of women cited "lack of visibility nationally"** as a barrier, and **20% stated that "lack of visibility within the community"** was an obstacle to success. Of the 10 countries studied, this problem was noted most frequently in Bulgaria.

Bulgarian social entrepreneur Darina Gadzhurova of HOPESOAP social enterprise noted, *"It is hard for people to understand that if they buy from us, they support a social cause. Also when we try to distribute our soaps through standard businesses they do not take us seriously and are prejudiced, because they see Roma boys making the soap – and this is regardless of the fact that we work professionally, with high-quality materials, our brand and packaging are good, and our prices are competitive."*

Rositza Nikolova, from the Bulgarian branch of CONCORDIA Foundation (Austria), who runs a hairdressing salon and candle workshop for street youth, pointed out that, *"No matter the quality of our products, to sell well we need a wide network of partners to recognise, promote and sell the products."*

Spaska Mihailova, from the PCHELA/BEE honey-producing social enterprise, related, *"I still have not seen a store with a special stand dedicated to social enterprise products, and this is needed, people should be educated to specifically look for social enterprise products!"*

4.3.5 Lack of Skills and Preparation

Among the surveyed women, **13% indicated that a "flawed business plan or lack of business plan"** was a barrier, while **12% indicated that "lack of skills and training"** was an obstacle to success.

In the literature on mainstream women entrepreneurs, lack of business experience is cited as a major obstacle for women, and studies show that starting as early as primary school, girls and women are steered away from educational and career training in business (as well as science, math and technology). They are encouraged to pursue traditionally feminine educational and careers paths in the humanities and communication sectors (Lewis, Gatewood, & Watson, 2014). This phenomenon puts women at a distinct disadvantage when starting an enterprise, be it traditional or social, as research

has shown that "banks and equity funders are less attracted to businesses that are run by individuals with a lower level of business experience" (McCracken et al. 2014 p. 8).

Regardless, while some of the women interviewed may not have had backgrounds in business (although many did), they often sought out business training in order to be more competitive. Some women social entrepreneurs used the opportunity to apply for accelerator programmes, as it helped them gain access to high profile networks and receive competent feedback on their business ideas. Jeanine Glöyer, Founder of Jyoti-Fair Works, noted that: *"It helped me in the sense that I didn't feel alone any more. And there were lots of people doing similar things and who experienced similar problems. And we had mentors, people that we could always talk to who had experience in the social entrepreneurship sphere. We were supported by lawyers and all kinds of different experts."*

This may explain why relatively few women indicated that lack of skills and training or a proper business plan was a barrier to their success. However, although it may have been an obstacle that they personally overcame, women continually stressed the importance of making training available to future social entrepreneurs. Women who participated in accelerator programmes noted that they would like to see the social entrepreneurship community become more business-oriented and include people from the corporate world who can share their skills in business model development. Juliane Zielonka, Co-Founder of LARAcompanion said: *"Teach them business! And let them be taught by entrepreneurs, serial entrepreneurs, and not by theoretical academics. What most people were lacking in these programmes, me included was a lack of a business model."*

4.2.6 Lack of Confidence

Literature on traditional women entrepreneurs often cites lack of confidence as a major obstacle for women (Lewis, Gatewood, & Watson, 2014). This is often tied to the lack of women role models within the field of entrepreneurship. However, our research shows that only **9% of surveyed women indicated that lack of self-confidence** as a barrier, and only **10% indicated that lack of role models** was an issue.

Many women did bring up these topics during the interview, but interestingly, it was usually when speaking hypothetically about women social entrepreneurs, rather than their own personal experience.

For example, several interviewees noted that women tend to wait until they have a product or service perfected before they set up their venture and are less risk averse than men, especially in relation to fundraising. But they spoke more generally, without reference to their own experience.

Michelle O'Donnell Keating, founder of Irish social

enterprise Women for Election noted, *"Women feel they need to be far more prepared than the same male. Men are happy to give it a lash, where women need another study".*

Additionally, women were hesitant to describe their manner of approaching business as lacking in self-confidence. For them, too much confidence (often associated with a masculine approach) was not always an admirable quality. As one entrepreneur noted: *"I don't go around shouting about what we do, it's maybe a female thing. If you don't stand up and say, accept the compliment, men don't have the same issues in telling the world how great they are. We tend to be shier, more resistant and more reserved, but then you don't always shine the way you could shine".*

These data bring to light the potentially problematic way in which we talk about and approach entrepreneurship, continuing to privilege aggressive, showy "masculine" business styles as the norm or ideal, while speaking about women's way of working as somehow "less than"; lacking confidence, lacking assertiveness and so on. The fact that women may be more careful and thoughtful when considering risk, or less likely to self-promote is not inherently negative; it may actually be a better, more conscientious approach to business. Such an approach only becomes a hindrance in a market that is dominated entirely by one particular style of doing business.

As one social entrepreneur observed, *"The challenge for women entrepreneurs is often met by connecting to each other, but we need to do slightly more than that. There is a role for women to mentor other women and also to articulate things and to open doors to younger women, and model how that translates to business. The natural inclination to collaborate is often overwhelmed by the business instinct to compete. Women have to help shape that debate".*

4.4 - Social Impact

4.4.1 Social Impact Measurement

Measuring and demonstrating social impact is a common challenge faced by social enterprises. Few countries have adequate systems and methodologies to measure and report impact, and where they do exist, they are not mandatory (ICF Consulting 2014). As a result, there is very little information available on a large scale about the social impact of social enterprises. The lack of data is problematic, since this element is the main point of added value for these kinds of companies. There is little, if any sex-disaggregated data relating to social impact, and as such it is impossible to draw conclusions about the differences between women and men in this area.

Our research found that **64% of women social entrepreneurs do not measure social impact.** Of the 36% that do, a wide range of tools and methodologies

are reported. These include but are not limited to social auditing and peer-to-peer follow-up, case studies, pre and post self-reported questionnaires, evaluation by academics in collaboration with universities, annual surveys, numerical data, focus groups, cost-benefit analyses, SROI (Social Return on Investment), theory of change models and many others. One woman explained: *"We take the qualitative feedback received from female participants and then code them into numerical data to assess the nature of change they experience as a consequence of the programme"*.

Countries with better developed social enterprise ecosystems tend to show a higher percentage of women who measure social impact. In the UK and France for example, our research showed that the majority of women DO measure social impact.

4.4.2 Level of Social Impact

Our research demonstrates that the social impact of women-led social enterprises tends to be focused on societal, community and individual levels. Women seek to change the mind-set of the society that they live in with regard to the specific issue they are work on, as well as to achieve tangible results that improve the lives of those around them. Women were asked to choose the level of social impact they seek to have with their social enterprise with the option of choosing as many levels as they felt applied.

The most common level of social impact women reported aiming to achieve was societal (changing the way people view certain issues or groups of people; changing attitudes and behaviours of society at large) with **62% of women reporting that they sought impact at this level.** This ties in to the fact that the most common missions of interviewed and surveyed women focused on inclusion of marginalised and diverse people within the society.

These data may demonstrate that women experience a particular sensitivity to marginalisation and discrimination, and that women social entrepreneurs may be uniquely successful at tackling large-scale social exclusion issues.

Also prevalent were community and individual-level social impact. Approximately 57% of women reported they were seeking impact on a community level and **56% indicated they sought a social impact on the individual level.** Considering the fact that many women's motivation to start a social enterprise is grounded in a personal experience or seeks to respond to an unmet need in the community, such a finding is logical.

After societal, community and individual-level impact, **44% of women stated that they sought social impact on the level of a specific social unit or group,** for example impacting a family, the students at one particular school, the residents of a particular homeless shelter, etc. Around **33% of women-led social enterprises focus on regional impact** (tackling an issue within a specific larger geographic region), such as homeless people in a particular city. Then, **34% of women-led social enterprises focus on national impact.** Finally, **26% of women-led social enterprises focus on international impact.** The scope of social impact ambition often varied from country to country, with the majority of women from France, for example, seeking national-level impact, and many women in Sweden seeking international impact.

4.4.3 Level of Success

When asked if they have been successful in achieving their goals, the majority of women stated that they felt they had been successful but that they wanted to do more. This finding was common to women in all 10 countries and seems to indicate that the personality type of the female social entrepreneur is highly ambitious and never fully satisfied with success. British social entrepreneur Kate Welch articulated this tension, expressed by many women, when she spoke about her own experience, noting: *"Ultimately I would have liked to create more employment for more people for longer, but we achieved some employment for some people for a period of time. I have learned how to create sustainable models. I have more realism now, as I get older. Some things will come and go. Running a business for six years is much longer than many business lives anyway"*.

More than half of women indicated that they felt they had been somewhat successful, with 40% stating they felt they had been very successful.

Figure 4.4.3 Perceptions of Success
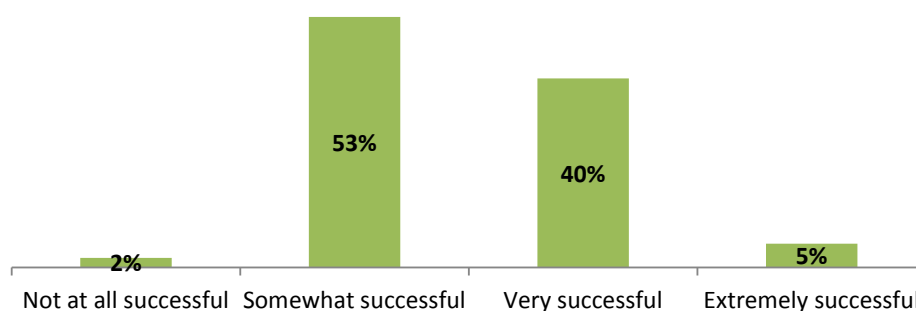
At the end of the day, women do recognise the great social impacts they have made. As one social entrepreneur playfully observed: "What I am doing is brilliant! I don't mean I am doing it brilliantly. But I mean what I am doing … is a brilliant thing".

4.4.4 Examples of Social Impact

WOMEN FOR ELECTION: IRELAND

Women for Election is a non-partisan organisation with the vision to have equal representation of men and women in political life in Ireland. They aim to inspire and equip women to succeed in politics. Set up in 2012, they saw a need for tailored training and mentoring to support, encourage and prepare women to run for office. Their approach is to offer accessible, affordable learning programmes which provide the practical skills required for running for a political position. The nationwide training programmes also serve as connectors for women, developing a network of female leaders across Ireland while also helping to boost the confidence of women running for election. To date 50% of all women counsellors in Ireland have come through a Women for Election programme.

BREAD HOUSES NETWORK: BULGARIA

The Bread Houses Network (BHN), www. breadhousesnetwork.org, offers an example of a simple but innovative idea that started in a small Bulgarian town, grew quickly as a model and then expanded into a network in more than 18 countries on five continents. Since 2009, currently there are seven Bread Houses in Bulgaria, two of which operate as bakeries – social enterprises that sustain themselves, thus forming a "social franchise" model. The Bread Houses are a mixture of socio-cultural community centres and bakeries, and their key characteristic is that they offer people with various disabilities a free session of an innovative therapy method called "bread therapy" (www.breadtherapy.net). The co-creative activities around bread-making are not only therapeutic but also have the goal to unite and mix people of all walks of life who come for the regular weekly community-baking events.

The method was invented by Dr. Nadezhda Savova-Grigorova, founder of the Bread Houses Network, during her PhD in Cultural Anthropology at Princeton University in the United States. Nadezhda shared how it began: *"While I was doing my doctorate research on the topic 'community building through the arts', I found that food was a big part of community building; people loved cooking together in improvised spaces. I imagined that bread-making could be the best, easiest and most creative way of sharing food together – also, a great universal symbol of peace! I had never seen such a space for collective bread-making, and decided to try to create it in Bulgaria, where I had an old unused house from my great-grandmother."*

In 2009, Nadezhda started to test her idea for her organisation using volunteers to participate in community workshops and bread therapy with local disadvantaged children and people with disabilities. A few years later, three youths from the local orphanage (who had been coming to the Bread House since children) expressed to Nadezhda their desire to work professionally as bakers. Realising that the social enterprise model could create jobs for the youth while sustaining the Bread House activities, Nadezhda opened the first Bread House bakery social enterprise in 2013 in Gabrovo, Bulgaria.

While the purchase of the machines, initial rent, and salaries were covered by a grant from the Trust for Social Achievement, the bakery is now self-sufficient and makes enough to keep the youth at work. The second bakery opened in 2014 in Sofia and works with the same shared mission and model. As such, the two bakeries proved to be the first successful model of a "social franchise" in Bulgaria, and in 2015 the network had its first foreign social franchisee visit from the UK to train others with the plan of opening Bread Houses in the UK and South Africa.

L'EFFET PAPILLON: FRANCE

In 2007 one of Mélanie Perron's relatives was diagnosed with a serious illness. With little first-hand experience with the issue, she was shocked to witness how profoundly such a diagnosis affects every aspect of one's life. *"Everything just stops",* she explained. She began researching support services for people with serious illnesses, but was unsatisfied with the kind of care and types of services available. After meeting with various groups and associations, she was left feeling that *"nothing was going to change".* So she took matters into her own hands and decided to create her own solution. In 2011 she launched her social enterprise L'Effet Papillon, offering non-medical services to women who had been diagnosed with serious illnesses.

The first action of the organisation was to support 14 women who had been recently diagnosed with cancer through a non-medical programme over the course of six months. During this time, their quality of life and social economy were checked and measured by oncologists and economists. The initial results proved extremely promising: patients felt less alone and more relaxed and some side effects of the treatment were easier to endure.

Additionally, oncologists were impressed by the changes in relationships they had with their patients and patient's relatives. *"Oncologists are amazed",* Perron revealed. *"They are now thinking about how to broadly rethink patients care".*

By diminishing depression, and thus helping preventing patient relapse, this innovative programme has the potential to not only improve lives, but also produce significant cost-savings for the state.

RUBY CUP: GERMANY

Ruby Cup is a social business based in Berlin and Kenya. It produces and sells the menstrual cup Ruby Cup,

made from 100% medical grade silicone. Ruby Cup is reusable for up to 10 years, which saves approximately 12,000 tampons per woman; it is truly a long-term solution. The menstrual cups are based on the "Buy One, Give One" concept. Every Ruby Cup purchased in industrial countries cross-subsidises the price of a Ruby Cup for a girl in Africa.

In many parts of the world, girls do not attend school when on their period. They cannot afford menstrual products, and in many regions, myths and taboos prevent them from attending daily activities, such as church, cooking and sports. Many girls use unsafe materials, such as bark, mud, newspaper or cloth to stop the blood flow. This is undignified and dangerous because it can lead to infection. Menstruation is an overlooked barrier to development as it has a significant negative impact on education, gender equality and basic human dignity. When given a Ruby Cup, girls can go all the way through primary school, secondary school and college without having to worry about their menstruation.

In 2014, Ruby Cup was distributed to 5,000 girls in Kenya.

4.5 Gender

4.5.1 Context

Before we discuss the gender-related data that emerged from this research study, it is worth framing this data within the context of a larger conversation about gender roles, unpaid care and labour roles.

As mentioned in the Background section of this report, the way in which today's society conceptualises the gendered division of labour has its origins in the same period that social economy was born: the Industrial Revolution. In a farm-based economic system, both men and women contributed labour to the homestead, with both genders undertaking a mix of hard labour (ploughing, planting, harvesting) and caring (child rearing, animal raising). Men usually undertook the majority of the manual labour, however, both forms of labour were valued because they were both intrinsic to the success of the farm. Public and private life blended, as both men and women worked at the home (the farm), and travelled to markets to sell and trade their crops (Wiesner 2000; Burnette 2008).

However, the industrial revolution played a strong role in changing the concept of work and created a distinct separation between public and private. The factory, rather than the farm, or (local craft workshop) became the place of work, and value was created by the production and sale of goods for capital, rather than through small-scale production of food and crafts. Both men and women flooded into the city to work, which created a crisis of the family, as this new system did not have a way to incorporate children and families into its model like the farm-based family economy

(Wiesner 2000; Burnette 2008).

As industrial capitalism turned old livelihood models and power systems upside down, women were increasingly charged with responsibility for family life and domestic production and were relegated to the private sphere. Meanwhile, men began to dominate economic production, and thus had control over capital, within the public sphere (Rapoport et al. 2002; Bailyn, 2006; Haas and Hwang, 2007). Despite the fact that today both men and women are fully active in domestic and public life, this discursive and conceptual model is still retained, upheld and reproduced intentionally and unintentionally, by individuals, government policy and society as a whole (Crompton et al., 2007).

Since this time, throughout Europe, society has retained a "male model of the ideal worker", which positions the ideal worker as someone who can work as though they have no social or caring obligations outside work (Acker, 1990; Lewis, 1997, 2001; Kugelberg, 2006). As a result, "the concept of 'a job' is implicitly a gendered concept" and "there is often an assumption that idealised masculine characteristics are necessary to be effective in the workplace" (Lewis & Humbert 2010, p. 4). This phenomenon has had the effect of continually pushing women into a secondary position in the labour market.

Additionally, it has made it more socially acceptable for women to undertake paid work which replicates and reproduces their "traditional" gendered labour roles, that of caring-related tasks such as working with children and youth, education, provision of health services, provision of social services and work within the community. Furthermore, surrounded by discourse indicating that women should be responsible for feminised tasks in caring and social fields, girls and women may internalise these gendered labour roles and self-select educational and career paths which correspond to this gendered division of labour. This is extremely problematic, as there is no reason, physically, biologically or socially, why both men and women cannot carry out jobs that have previously been "gendered" as either masculine or feminine.

Nevertheless, societal depictions of the gendered division of labour, as well as portrayals of women in research and literature on work and the labour market continue to be very stereotypical. Women in business, for example, are portrayed as "lacking" the necessary masculine traits of aggression or competitiveness; there is no discussion of the fact that the reason these traits dominate the current business model is because women have been traditionally marginalised and excluded from participation in this sector. Entrepreneurship is perhaps even more gendered than corporate work in general because it requires a person to independently assert both financial and management skills, which inherently give individuals a level of power and control that is not immediately accessible to the general corporate worker.

Newspaper articles and blog pieces on women social enterprises, and women social entrepreneurs themselves, often indicate that entrepreneurship is particularly well suited to women. This assertion is linked to the notion that women are more caring or generally have more in experience in social, education and health sectors (E.g. Elizabeth Shaffer Brown in Forbes.com, 2013, Charlotte Seager in the Guardian.com, 2014). However neither the history of the gender labour divide, nor the reasons for which women have gravitated towards social fields—which is explicit exclusion from public and thus power-laden sectors—is ever discussed.

As such, we approach the responses of women social entrepreneurs both with the aim of sharing their authentic voices, while simultaneously keeping in mind the many societal factors—including internalised stereotypes—which shape their responses.

4.5.2 On Being a Woman

When asked to reflect on how being a woman affects their experience with social entrepreneurship, women offered diverse responses.

Many women think they are more persistent than male entrepreneurs. *"I think, coming up with a creative answer for the economic crisis and being persistent in the implementation is connected to the fact, that I am a woman"*, stated Füsun Ipek, founder of Balkántangó, a Hungarian social enterprise dedicated to environmental issues, especially upcycling. Rozi Váczi of Hungarian social enterprise matyodesign concurred: *"I have three brothers, and I am sure, if they had established matyodesign, the business would not have achieved so much"*.

It is interesting to note how these entrepreneurs associate perseverance with being a woman. Women have often indicated anecdotally that when working in traditionally masculine fields such as entrepreneurship, they have to work twice as hard as men to prove their competence. It could be that perseverance is a response that has developed as the results of coming up against more obstacles than men.

Another social entrepreneur from Bulgaria observed, *"We are mainly women in this sector in Bulgaria, somehow men do not see it as a socially-respectable job to be in the social services. I am a lawyer by profession, and when I dedicated my life to people with disabilities everyone thought I was crazy to work for so little money and such a hard job. But I feel so fulfilled! Men, however, usually do not want to work in this field for these reasons"*.

In Bulgaria, some women entrepreneurs report that they feel more sensitive and empathetic compared to men, and that these qualities are an added benefit within the field of social entrepreneurship. However, they often experience prejudices by institutions and businesses, usually run by men or by older women who do not take younger women seriously.

This observation reaffirms our early observations about the clear gendered labour role divisions. As work in the social realm is connected to the feminine sphere, (and as a result, less valued economically), men (in the Bulgarian context) do not find it "socially-acceptable"; it threatens their masculinity to step outside this gendered division of labour. However in traditionally masculine spheres such as financial institutions, men may impose their internalised gender stereotypes on women by not taking them as seriously as men when discussing financial matters.

Many women repeated common stereotypes about women being more empathetic, communicative or caring than men. There was little questioning of whether this was biological or socialised, and if it was socialised, why this was this case.

Among women interviewed in France there was a strong sense that the entrepreneurs' relationships (with collaborators, partners, providers, beneficiaries) were and are being affected by the fact that they are women. Marine Couteau, founder of Leka, noted that *"being a woman can make things simpler when you want to start working in this field ... I mean, women are well represented in educational professions and mothers are usually the ones who directly deal with the autistic children"*.

Some social entrepreneurs mentioned that women tend to have more honest exchanges of ideas and partake in a different kind of communication style. One entrepreneur observed that: *"Acting is much more present in male interactions and exchanges. As for me, a more honest and straight-forward manner of communication is more valued"*.

In Lithuania, a general characteristic of women-owned or led social enterprises is that they undertake activities which capitalise on occupations traditionally ascribed to women (cf. Acker, 1992), such as preparing food, caring for dependents and the household and making clothing. Lithuanian social entrepreneurs note that personal characteristics that are traditionally related to women help them to be more effective as managers. They considered communication competences, empathy and care as very helpful, in particular, when dealing with disabled employees who require special attention.

As Renata Umbrasienė, the owner of "Molio Motiejukas" noted, *"You need much patience to train new employees. A woman has more motherly characteristics perhaps and can be more patient"*.

These anecdotes reveal a shared attitude among the interviewed women social entrepreneurs that the way they have been born or socialised as women—to be caring, motherly, and undertake tasks related to the social and domestic sphere are relevant and useful to their social entrepreneurship careers. It is

perhaps worrying that very few women questioned or problematised the fact that these kinds of characteristics and associated tasks are gendered as feminine.

According to Nicole Rehnström, founder of Swedish social enterprise Idékoll, women social entrepreneurs in Sweden sometimes experience what she called the "Cinderella syndrome", which is related to the deep internalisation of gender stereotypes. *"Women grow up watching Disney movies like Cinderella featuring women who are hardworking and kind to everyone, but it always ends with a prince saving her from the situation",* she said. She explains that in her opinion, women often strive to be the exemplary hardworking and all-giving social entrepreneur in the public sphere, demonstrating that they have achieved gender equality. However, they still have an expectation that the male should be the main economic provide for their household.

Prevailing gender roles for women were explicitly noted by social entrepreneurs in Ireland, with more women in care positions and men in leadership positions, especially on boards and at senior management levels. *"In Ireland we have a lot of catching up to do",* commented George Boyle from The Fumbally Exchange. *"I am trying to envision a place where being a woman is never as issue. That it is just another part of the rainbow of qualities. I think we have a long way to go to get to that".*

4.5.3 Societal Attitudes, Discrimination

The societal attitudes that cast entrepreneurship and business as a masculine activity present a large obstacle for traditional women entrepreneurs, who must often struggle to be taken seriously (Lewis, Gatewood, & Watson, 2014). Our research shows that this is also the case for women social entrepreneurs who often face the additional burden of having to explain and defend the value social element of their enterprise.

However, our survey indicated that women feel that "societal attitudes" more generally pose a barrier to their success, rather than "discrimination" specifically. 25% of respondents cited the former, and only 8% of respondents stated that discrimination is a barrier to success. Additionally, only 3% of respondents indicated that "opposition from friends, family or community" was a barrier, which again indicates that women feel the problem is on a larger scale.

Figure 4.5.3 Discrimination vs. Social attitudes as Barriers to Success

Discrimination 8%
Societal attitudes 25%
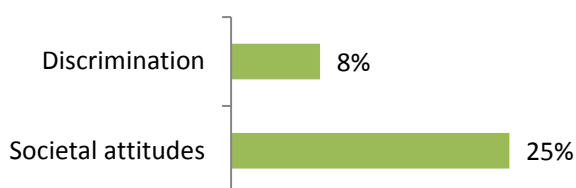
Interestingly, the anecdotes that arose throughout interviews with women in all 10 countries point to evidence that societal attitudes and gender discrimination are perhaps more linked than women realise or are willing to admit. Often, the interviewed women stated that they did not experience gender discrimination, but then later on in the interview, gave several examples of times and situations in which they had been treated differently in a negative way because they were women.

As one woman noted, *"I feel it is important to point out that most of the current projects I have come into contact with are led by men, a fact which, to me, confirms the declining support for women, and the gender biases present within the collective imagination of the society … all the way from the education system to the state. This results in far more social and psychological barriers for women when it comes to undertaking a social enterprise."*

For Jeanine Glöyer, Founder of Jyoti-Fair Works, a German-Indian social enterprise that empowers Indian women by producing fair fashion, being a woman strongly influenced her venture into social enterprise. She said: *"I would say definitely it had an effect on that, especially because of the kind of project we are doing. I would have never done this project as I am doing it now, if I would not have been a woman. At the same time, I feel that in Berlin it might have had some negative effects also being a woman, and being a young woman especially, because I think people sometimes don't take you really seriously".*

Another social entrepreneur, who wanted to remain anonymous related a particularly striking example of gender discrimination.

"It's not that I am not empowered but the higher I go, the more barriers I meet and I find that actually more disempowering as the real extent of the "glass ceiling" becomes clear […] I was informed of the exiting CEO's resignation after coming back from a holiday and the appointment of his replacement as a fait accompli with no process, no consultation and no opposition from the Board which had several high profile women on it. Overall three more experienced women were passed over for the role. I feel that this situation is an accurate reflection of the "state of play" in Ireland where women lead the sector but men still hold much of the power, particularly where corporate investment is concerned."

British social entrepreneur Amna Abdul related: *"Men tried to shut me down. They try to shut you down all the time. They take more notice of the man who has said exactly the same things you have said! As a woman, I have to tell myself, "It doesn't matter". This is why I am doing things. They have to change. It fuels me up! Often men talk about things that they don't have much experience in … I don't think why they couldn't find women to speak about these issues. Men don't see that as an issue. They need to be aware that it is happening. To be able to change the system as well."*

While only **3% of respondents indicated that opposition from friends, family or community was a barrier**, many women interviewed had anecdotes that revealed they had faced backlash.

Ági Vida, founder of Gazdagmami, a Lithuanian social enterprise supporting women to start their own business explained: *"Mothers are still often discouraged by their families regarding establishing their own businesses"*.

Another entrepreneur noted, *"My father and brothers were/are entrepreneurs but when I wanted to become one none took me seriously in my family context. Now my company is paying my expenses so I feel able to do anything!"*

The experiences of women social entrepreneurs overwhelmingly point to the need to fight gender discrimination, and break down gender stereotypes on a societal level.

4.5.4 Care

As we have discussed, "traditional" gendered division of labour, which dictates that the ideal worker is male, also portrays the ideal head of household as female. This has a strong impact on the way in which parenthood is viewed within the workplace, with women viewed as "bad mothers" if they work while raising children.

Additionally, regardless of the paid work a woman is undertaking, societally she is expected to perform unpaid care on both the family and community level. Care of the elderly, disabled and ill is relegated to the domestic sphere, and thus to women. Work maintaining the health and safety of the environment and the community is also considered a feminine task. Whether it is unpaid because it is devalued as feminine work, or devalued as feminine work because it is unpaid is not always clear; what is clear, is that there is a relationship between this kind of work and lack of monetary compensation. As Anne Humbert notes, "Volunteering has been theorised as an extension of women's family work, reinforcing separate spheres of ideology where men's work is defined and rewarded, as a public contribution but women's work, even though done in the community, is defined essentially as an extension of their private responsibilities to family" (Neysmith and Reitsma-Street, 2000 p. 342) (Humbert 2012 p.9)".

As previously mentioned, mainstream women entrepreneurs have less time to devote to entrepreneurship as a result of having to undertake unpaid caring responsibilities. Our research has shown this to be the case for women social entrepreneurs as well.

Our survey indicates that **55% of women had care responsibilities when they first started their social enterprise.** Among them, 28% indicated they were taking care of children, 17% stated they were taking

care of family members and 5% noted they were taking care of someone else. The rest chose the "Other" option, with several women indicating that they had to take care of themselves, as the result of having a debilitating illness or disability.

Additionally, *60% of women report that they currently have care responsibilities:* 31% indicated that they are taking care of children, 17% stated that they are taking care of family members, and 4% indicated that they are taking care of someone else.

As previously mentioned, we are not aware of comparable data for male social entrepreneurs. However, given the deeply entrenched societal history of women undertaking unpaid care, we hypothesise it is unlikely that men social entrepreneurs have the same high percentage of care responsibilities. This hypothesis warrants further research and has implications for how governments and the private sector can better support and encourage the economic valuing of care work, which would be a huge step forward for gender equality.

In previous sections, we explored how having caring responsibilities can often be a burden to women social entrepreneurs, who find themselves exhausted and without enough time to devote to their enterprise.

However many women interviewed also mentioned positive elements that came with their socially dictated caring and family-responsibility roles. A woman's family can serve to support the entrepreneur, and the family can also be an area for learning or fostering personal developmental skills that can ultimately benefit the company.

Ingrid Sem, founder Com'3elle, a socially-conscious communication agency, stated: *"Whereas many men place their company before their personal lives, we value our family balance as much as our professional balance. I know very few entrepreneurs who can say: 'I changed my working hours to get my children to school on time'—we are able to do so"*.

Additionally the positive influence can work the other way as well; several women noted that motherhood and family are positively affected by social enterprise activity. Italian social entrepreneur Serena Baldari noted, *"My personal life has been affected by my activity. I work more now than in the past, I have less free time for myself. However, I can better manage my work-life balance"*.

Because domestic work and family rearing are not economically valued, it is often not emphasised how fulfilling and emotionally rewarding such work is. Gendered labour roles often rob men of the experience of caring work, which, as the women stated in the interviews, can be extremely pleasurable and is inherently valuable.

Whether societally imposed caring responsibilities

are burdensome or beneficial often depends on how much government support women are given. A benefit to being a woman entrepreneur within Bulgaria, for example, is that the country has one of the longest parental leave regulations in the EU (one full publically paid year, with monthly support of 90% of the woman's previous wage and a second year at a reduced payment, even if the woman is employed by her own business): thus women can more easily have children and work. In the UK and Ireland, on the other hand, women report that caring responsibilities are burdensome, and they find it particularly difficult to balance their social enterprise with their care responsibilities.

4.5.5 Intersectionality

For women who are part of other marginalised groups, such as ethnic minorities or people with disabilities, the discrimination is exacerbated exponentially by these intersecting identities. The feminist theory of intersectionality, which reveals how multiple marginalised identity categories insect to create oppression that is larger and more profound than that of only one identity category (Crenshaw 1991) was experienced by the women social entrepreneurs who came from such marginalised backgrounds.

British social entrepreneur Caroline Carswell of Sound Advice, who is also deaf, observed *"I think I have a double challenge being a female social entrepreneur who has a perceived disability"*.

Erika Brodnock, founder of the UK social enterprise Karizma Kids, noted *"I am a woman of colour and on many occasions I am the only woman of colour in the room. It's the big white elephant that no one speaks about. There should be more representation among social entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurship in general, and I'd like to be part of that change"*.

Another entrepreneur noted, *"I was always the only Muslim women in a room or a conference, it always felt awkward, I can imagine how uncomfortable (other minority) women might feel (in a similar situation)"*.

In both literature and policy on women's entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurs and minority entrepreneurs are treated as two separate categories with no discussion of how these identity categories intersect.

Our interviews reveal that women social entrepreneurs from minority, Roma, LGBT and disability backgrounds live with a sense of discomfort that their separate identities are not acknowledged. Just as men may dismiss or ignore women social entrepreneurs, so too may women social entrepreneurs from "privileged" backgrounds dismiss or ignore women social entrepreneurs from minority backgrounds.

Intersectionality theory indicates that by empowering the most intersectionally marginalised groups, it is possible to create a trickle-up effect, whereby other marginalised groups are also empowered. It is imperative that more research is undertaken on the most marginalised of women social entrepreneurs in Europe so that their voices are also heard.

4.5.6 Management Style and Innovation

There is some evidence that women entrepreneurs have a more participatory and collaborative way of managing their businesses (Kyro & Sundin 2008). The WEstart research demonstrates that this is true for female social entrepreneurs as well.

While this finding sounds positive and participatory management practices have been positively associated with social enterprises' rates of innovation[2], such management styles might also be a double edged sword.

As we have already shown, women may internalise gender stereotypes and societal gender expectations. Women managers and leaders, in particular are faced with an extremely challenging dilemma in this sense. As research has shown, "because they are often evaluated against a 'masculine' standard of leadership, women are left with limited and unfavourable options, no matter how they behave and perform as leaders. In particular, three predicaments put women in a double bind and can potentially undermine their leadership as well as their own advancement options:

1) "Extreme Perceptions: Women are perceived as too soft or too tough but never just right.

2) The High Competence Threshold: Women leaders face higher standards and lower rewards than men leaders.

3) Competent but Disliked: Women leaders are perceived as competent or liked, but rarely both." (Catalyst 2006, Executive Summary)

Women social entrepreneurs involved in our research felt that being a woman affects the way they manage their enterprise, but whether their tendency towards a participatory style is a result of a 'natural' inclination, a desire to push back against a traditionally masculine top-down approach or an internalised sense that women are more communicative and group-oriented than men, is unclear.

Indeed, **75% of women surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Being a woman has affected the way I manage my social enterprise",** with **88% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, "I manage my social enterprise in a participatory and collaborative, rather than a top-down way".** As one woman social entrepreneur noted, *"I have hard work expectations of everybody ... everyone (regardless of the level of their position) is as important as anyone else in senior position"*.

2 Using SELUSI data, Stephan, Huysentruyt and Vujic 2011, find that participatory management practices are positively associated with social enterprises' rates of innovation.

Ultimately, regardless of the motivations behind their behaviour, the women interviewed take systemic, holistic approaches to their work. They see the big picture and work within the old system to create new paths to solutions and opportunities. Women tend to focus not only on the end goal but also the process, building relationships and networks as they go. Priority is often given to collaborative methods of decision making.

Many women interviewed displayed a set of characteristics and capacities which notably supported the development of their social enterprise. These included:

• **Resilience**: The women demonstrated tenacity and sticking power to their missions, often working through complex family issues and or personal health challenges.
• **Tending to relationships**: The women tend to focus on developing a wide network of support and focus on people and communication skills.
• **Process orientation**: The women tend to focus not only on the end goal but also the process, building relationships and networks as they go. Priority is often given to collaborative methods of decision making.
• **Empathy**: The women displayed strong empathic responses to those in need.
• **Adaptability and flexibility**: The women seek creative ways to solve problems, often deferring or forgoing personal recognition to get to the best outcome.

These qualities make them successful social entrepreneurs, regardless of their gender. As such, a lesson to be learned is that it is these qualities should be emphasised and taught in entrepreneurship education for both sexes. Additionally, these qualities should be given a higher economic value.

4.5.7 Women's Empowerment

One of the most interesting and exciting findings of the WEstart study is the extent to which women-led social enterprise contribute to women's empowerment, both for the women social entrepreneurs themselves, as well as for the people they serve, and members of their community, society, and nation. Among surveyed women, **85% reported that they feel like they are empowering women with their social entrepreneurship activity.** An additional **90% feel that their experience with social entrepreneurship has empowered them or is empowering them as a woman.**

One social entrepreneur explained, *"If women can make money through running a business, that gives them a position of power and influence that they wouldn't have if you were just shouting outside the gates"*.

In this example, the relationship between economic power and personal power is made very clear. For many women interviewed, the element of entering the masculine public working space led to their feeling of empowerment. Many of them also consider that they are role models to other women and explain that they try to encourage other women to be more active and search for ways to realise themselves via paid work.

Rasa Besekirskienė, manager of private limited liability company Metras, explained *"I sing in the choir. I am its president and I am visible there. I inspire other women, telling them that they can do it. One girl was depressed, could not find a job, was taking medicine. I spoke to her and tried to lift her up and succeeded. She attended stomatology courses, started working as an assistant, her life is better now"*.

Considering that entrepreneurship, which requires individually putting oneself out into the public working sphere—not as a hired worker, but as the boss—is particularly gendered as masculine, role modelling also allows women to demonstrate that it is possible to break free from rigid gendered labour roles.

Juliane Zielonka, co-founder of LARAcompanion, said: *"Well I am a role model myself. The more I work on myself, the more I can also be a role model for other women who still have not understood that they don't have to ask for permission – they just have to do it"*. Marilyn Heib, Co-Founder of bettervest, feels the same way and noted: *"Yes, (I feel like) a role model"*.

Another social entrepreneur noted, *"Hopefully the next generation will do this as a possible career option. I guess I am a part of that, just to show it can be done."* *"We are a living example"* said another woman entrepreneur. *"I think all the young women who work in social entrepreneurship inspire other women to work in entrepreneurship, to dare a little more"*.

Social entrepreneurs who focus on women within their entrepreneurial activities greatly contribute to women's empowerment in different spheres of life, for example though job creation, education, providing hygiene products and providing access to the relevant medical information regarding women's health.

The impact on women beneficiaries of women-led social enterprises can be very strong. Mélanie Perron, founder of French social enterprise L'Effet Papillon, spoke about the women that benefited from her enterprise's services proclaiming: *"After a workshop, they leave as different people: they come to life"*.

German social entrepreneur Jeanine Glöyer who is a founder of German-Indian social enterprise Jyoti-Fair Works sees the work that women social entrepreneurs do as multidimensional. She says: *"I see [it] as being the platform where those women [in India] can gain strength and power, because of having more stable income in the first place and escape those exploitative working conditions they have been in before. [We also] try to raise awareness in Germany through using the project of Jyoti as an example to show also how the*

international division of labour badly affects women".

The women acknowledged that a social enterprise was a way to discover their own talents, but more importantly they develop their leadership competences by dealing with people and different public institutions, including foreign partners. All women interviewed noted that their entrepreneurial project changed them in some way.

Céline Laporte, founder of Tipkin, an online platform facilitating the collaborative economy, noted *"It completely helped me grow as a person".* She is not the only one that perceived positive changes: self-confidence often grows as a result of entrepreneurship. Emilie Schmitt, founder of Activ'Action elaborated on this: *"It revealed my competences, it taught me how much I could achieve and how much I could learn".*

When we consider the fact that women's empowerment and gender equality are not among the top three missions of women-led social enterprises, these numbers are even more powerful. They indicate that even when a social enterprise is focused on an issue that is unrelated to women's empowerment, empowerment is still a by-product. Furthermore, the fact that the vast majority of women social entrepreneurs felt empowered by starting a social enterprise indicates that promoting social entrepreneurship can be a powerful tactic for national policy makers working on issues of women's empowerment and gender equality.

4.5.8 Gender Equality

For the purpose of the WEstart Project, we are defining gender equality as a state in which within a community, nation or society, access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender or discrimination, particularly against women and girls.

Amongst surveyed women, **88% feel like they contributing to gender equality with their social entrepreneurship activity.**

Women social entrepreneurs take different paths towards working for gender equality. Directly addressing gender equality plays a part in the initial involvement of some social entrepreneurs. This is especially the case when their business activities are connected with creating better opportunities for other women. Abi Bilinhurst, a British social entrepreneur who works with gang-affected girls observed, *"Social entrepreneurship feels like a useful concept when working around gender equality. There is something around flexibility, it can be whatever you want it to be, it's up to you to make it work. There's scope to bring in women who have inequality, or challenges because they are women. It fits around women's lives rather than the reverse".*

The founder of Hungarian social enterprise Hellóanyu! explained the mission of her organisation and its relation stating, *"We would like to make it possible, that*

mothers keep or even update their labour market related skills". Rozi Váczi of matyodesign also highlighted the impact her work has on gender equality, noting that *"27 women get income in my social enterprise",* while Erika Varga of Romani Design states that *"empowering Roma women is especially important for me."*

In some countries, this focus on women and gender equality is not always understood or welcome, however. Szilvia Varró, founder of X Communication Centre which is the first and only communication agency in Hungary whose main mission is to generate social change observed: *"Gender equality has always been a core issue of my social communication agency. Our youth project, Hello90! also works against gender stereotypes. It is not a popular mission among our clients and donors, though. In most of the cases we carry out such campaigns pro bono."*

Some female business owners, whose businesses were not primarily focused on gender equality, became more aware of gender equality issues with the development of their companies. Owners realise that their mission has a positive impact on women's lives even if the direct goal is not gender-related. Women's lives will be easier if disabled youth are able to lead independent lives, if there are healthy options instead of chemical-based personal and home care products for families and if there is income-generation opportunity locally, even in a small village.

As Erika Schenk from Esőemberekért Association noted, *"We realised we support not only the young people with autism within the families, but also their mothers."* Responding to the question of whether gender equality was a focus of her organisation's mission, Deza Nguembock, founder of EHLab, noted, *"At first no, that [gender equality] was not a concern. But, today yes, today it is an important topic. [...] Our mission is to try to restore the balance wherever there are differences".*

How women understand the concept of gender equality varies greatly between countries. Even within countries, perceptions of gender equality can be divided across rural and urban lines. Among Spanish women social entrepreneurs, for example, the topic of gender equality is experienced in drastically different ways depending on whether the women came from rural or urban areas. Women from rural realities have strong inherited cultural beliefs on what the life of women should look like: "sacrifice" is understood as being a cornerstone of womanhood. Women seem to "compete" for who sacrifices more and are sometimes judged for not "sacrificing enough". Meanwhile women from urban environments perceive that they have much more gender equality. In fact, most mentioned that gender, or more specifically gender discrimination, is a factor they rarely took into account or which they did not perceive as hindering their activity. Most women from urban areas considered themselves equal to men in terms of opportunities and achieving success in their social enterprise.

Interestingly, **62% of women revealed that their experience with social entrepreneurship had NOT changed their perception of gender relations in their country.** When given the opportunity to comment on this response, several women noted that they were aware of gender discrimination and inequality before they started their enterprise, however the experience of being an entrepreneur confirmed their general feeling about the state of affairs for women. As one entrepreneur revealed, *"It is worse than I thought"*.

4.5.9 Connection to other women social entrepreneurs

Previous research indicates that traditional women entrepreneurs have less access to networks than their male counterparts. With little data available on who is undertaking social enterprise in Europe and where, we were interested to see whether or not women social entrepreneurs have their own ecosystem, that is, whether or not they are connecting to or connected to other women social entrepreneurs. Our survey found that the majority are indeed connected, with **79% reporting that they are connected to other women social entrepreneurs in their community**, and **79% reporting that they are connected to other women social entrepreneurs in their country.**

However, as British social entrepreneur Kate Welch of Social Enterprise Acumen noted, *"A lot of the power of what I have been able to achieve is because of the way I connect to other people. And a lot of women I know sometimes tell me they haven't connected. I get to know people because I have gone out to meet them. I go out of my way a lot to make sure I get these opportunities. We need to see people making connections with people they wouldn't usually connect with."*

More research is needed to better understand what networks women social entrepreneurs are connecting with outside of each other and how national and community-level female social enterprise ecosystems can be strengthened given the persistent gender inequalities still present in our society.

5 CONCLUSIONS

What does the WEstart research tell us about women's social entrepreneurship in Europe?

While there has been substantial research on and support for both women's entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship (separately) at the European level, there is very little data on the topic and no European support for women's social entrepreneurship specifically. Considering that women are more likely to start social enterprises than traditional enterprises and considering the proven potential that social enterprise has to contribute to economic growth and alleviate social ills in Europe, the European Women's Lobby was interested in investigating the topic to understand the scope, potential and possible pitfalls of women's social entrepreneurship in Europe.

The WEstart project sought to gain a better understanding of the situation and state of play of women's social entrepreneurship in Europe by mapping women-led social enterprises in 10 Member States of the EU: Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. Ten experts in women's social entrepreneurship carried out desk research on the social enterprise ecosystems within their countries, gathered data on approximately 1,000 women-led social enterprises and conducted in-depth interviews using feminist methods with nearly 100 women social entrepreneurs. Additionally, 377 women social entrepreneurs from all 10 countries participated in a comprehensive electronic survey.

Through this research, we aimed to understand the national contexts in which women social entrepreneurs were operating. We were interested in the details of their social enterprise in terms of revenue, legal status, job creation and sector, but we were also interested in their journey with social entrepreneurship. We asked them about their motivations for starting a social enterprise, the barriers they faced and the social impact they had created. We invited them to tell us about their care responsibilities and grapple with notions of women's empowerment and gender equality. From this information, we pieced together a rich and diverse portrait of women's social entrepreneurship in Europe, characterised by ambition to create societal change, sensitivity to social needs and persistence in the face of discrimination.

We found that the many of women social entrepreneurs involved in our research were in the start-up phase, with relatively modest revenues and few employees. However, an equally large number were producing high levels of revenue, with 32% of women-led social enterprises making over 100,000 euros a year. A large portion were sustaining their enterprise primarily on market-based revenue, and the majority invested between half and all of their surplus back into the social mission of their organisation.

Women social entrepreneurs were mostly situated within the sectors of Health and Social Services and tended to focus on issues of social marginalisation and exclusion. Most often they were motivated to start a social enterprise in response to personally experiencing an unmet need in their community, which they sought to meet via an innovative idea for how to achieve a specific social impact. The most common barrier to success was finance—either lack of available funding or difficulty accessing finance. They also noted a lack of time to devote to their social enterprise as a significant obstacle. The majority of women had care responsibilities both when starting their social enterprise, as well as when interviewed or surveyed, responsible for either the care of children, family members or other individuals.

Women had a wide range of perspectives about what it meant to be a woman and a social entrepreneur. Many felt that the fact of being a woman enriched them with benefits and advantages, related either to the feminised nature of the social sector in which they operated or to biological or social traits they associated as characteristic of women, such as passion, persistence, empathy and collaboration, which made them uniquely successful.

Others related stories of persistent discrimination from multiple actors, including investors, other social entrepreneurs, their families and even other women. As women, and as social entrepreneurs, they described having to work hard to be taken seriously and being passed up for leadership positions for which they were better qualified than their male counterparts. In their interviews, they thought deeply about stereotypes and gender roles, occasionally repeating commonly held views about gender, while other times acknowledging and challenging the problematic nature and origin of these views.

Overall, the vast majority of women feel that starting and running a social enterprise was empowering, both for themselves as well as for other women. Regardless of their different perceptions of and views on gender, the overwhelming majority felt they were contributing to gender equality with their social enterprise. And finally, the majority of women social entrepreneurs felt that they had been successful in realising the social impact they were aiming to achieve.

We thus come to our original question: *Does this sector have the potential to introduce a new way of approaching business that shifts the current growth-focused, masculine-dominated paradigm? Can social enterprise provide a more gender-equal and inclusive way of creating jobs, inspiring innovation and tackling social issues?*

Ultimately, the answer is complicated. At the individual level social enterprise continues to appear as a highly feminised practice, which many of the respondents enact and reproduce. However, the WEstart project provides evidence that social entrepreneurship and social enterprise provides women a context in which they are able to rescript and claim a space of action. They can take on the traditionally "masculine" act of

starting a business and give it a new meaning. The act of starting a business is highly empowering for them as individuals and also for the women around them. Additionally, they create revenue, jobs and strong social impact, using management practices that are less top-down and more participatory and collaborative.

WEstart clearly demonstrates the enormous potential of women's social entrepreneurship to contribute to socially impactful, sustainable revenue as well as job creation. These activities and their success are inherently empowering for women and contribute to gender equality on a societal level. However, harnessing this potential cannot come without addressing deeper ingrained forms of gender inequalities that take place both within society, as well as within the space of social enterprise. Social entrepreneurship has a promising place in the future landscape of the EU and could make a significant contribution to many of the Europe 2020 targets. Yet, the devaluation of the "feminised" social values that underlie this sector seriously hinders this process. As a society, we must address the deeply ingrained inequality mechanisms that hold both women and social enterprise back.

☑ More and Better Data on Social Enterprise with a Gender Lens

Given the extreme lack of research on women's social entrepreneurship, European institutions should invest in the collection of sex- disaggregated data on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise in order to make comparisons between male and female-led social enterprises.

A more robust gender lens should also be applied to any research on social entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship in general. Any research undertaken on entrepreneurship, social economy or social enterprise should have gender mainstreamed into the research methodology by a gender expert.

Research methodologies should pay special attention to how multiple marginalised identities, such as disability, minority ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation/identity may intersect to shape the experience of women social entrepreneurs.

European institutions should produce annual policy and research updates on women's social enterprise across European regions and increase the access to sex-disaggregated data across government departments and agencies.

An expert group on women's social entrepreneurship and women-led social enterprise should be established in order to provide guidance on the mainstreaming of gender into current and future social enterprise research.

☑ Demonstrate a firm commitment to social enterprise via concrete political action at the EU level

Subsequent revisions of or additions to the Social Business Initiative should make explicit mention of women and gender issues.

Any and all future policy coming out of the European institutions should be gender mainstreamed and make explicit mention of women and gender issues.

An office of European Women's Business Ownership should be created within the European Commission and in competent ministries at Member State level.

Collaboration between policy officers working on social economy and women's entrepreneurship within the European Commission should be an explicit objective.
DG Grow should establish a policy officer position specifically focused on women-led social enterprise.

A Women's Enterprise Director or High Level Representative within the European Commission and Member States' enterprise ministries should be appointed with a cross-departmental role in raising awareness about the economic benefits of encouraging more women to start and grow businesses, including social businesses.

☑ Demonstrate a firm commitment to gender equality via concrete political action at the EU level

Current legislation in areas of gender equality should be enforced. This should include a focus on ensuring that the allocation of resources and funds is analysed by gender to deliver transparency, accountability and due diligence in terms of proof of genuine gender equality compliance and outcomes.

☑ Acknowledge women's unpaid caring responsibilities

European Institutions should encourage and provide concrete incentives for Member States to invest in affordable childcare as well as care services for dependent persons, as a necessary condition for women entrepreneurs to run their businesses and to have a family at the same time.

European Institutions should invest in gender disaggregated research on care responsibilities of mainstream and social entrepreneurs.

☑ Make more finance opportunities available, and increase accessibility to funding

Specific and substantial funding for women social entrepreneurs should be allocated by European Institutions. This funding should include grants for promising projects (following the ASHOKA model), start-up loans which come

with business training and social innovation prizes.

EU-level funding for social economy organisations should have a 50% female-led social enterprise quota.
Funding applications should include questions about care responsibilities and include stipends, vouchers or additional funding to help entrepreneurs (both mainstream and social, male and female) manage unpaid care responsibilities.

All funding opportunities for women entrepreneurs and women social entrepreneurs should be streamlined so that they can be applied for as quickly and easily as possible to help women save time. Institutions should invest in human resources specifically to help women access funding (such as a telephone or e-help portal).
European institutions should invest in a multilingual e-platform specifically focused on aggregating and publicising public and private funding opportunities for women social entrepreneurs. The platform should streamline the financial application process and guide women through it.

European schemes are needed to encourage banks to lend money to female-led businesses, social businesses and specifically to female-led social businesses. The European institutions should undertake communication campaigns aimed at publicising the social impact and return-on-investment of women-led social enterprise.

☑ Politics and visibility

Member States should be strongly encouraged to promote a legal, regulatory and fiscal framework that ensures the development of social enterprises.

European institution departments and sections responsible for gender equality should liaise with relevant policy makers in Member States to emphasise the relationship between women-led social enterprise and women's economic and personal empowerment.
An EU label for social enterprises should be created to help promote the visibility of social enterprises.

☑ Social Impact Measurement

Social Impact Tools should be developed on an EU level, in collaboration with (women) social entrepreneurs themselves. These tools should have a component which measures gender equality and women's empowerment as elements of social impact. Such a framework would encourage all social entrepreneurs to think about the effect of their social enterprise from a gender perspective.

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Interviews with the following social entrepreneurs:

Bulgaria:
o Darina Gadzhurova (FSCI Foundation and HOPESOAP social enterprise)
o Diana Remesal (Betel Bulgaria)
o Maria Shishkova (NAVA and sewing atelier
social enterprise)
o Maya Doneva (Social Tea House, Varna)
o Milena Neyova (Pregarni me)
o Nadezhda Savova-Grigorova (Bread Houses Network) – interview conducted by E. Usher
o Rositza Nikolova (CONCORDIA Foundation – Bulgaria)
o Spaska Mihailova (New Way Association and PCHELA/BEE social enterprise)
o Tzetzka Radeva (Maria's World Foundation & Day Center "Worlds" with Protected Coffee Shop & art ateliers social enterprises)
o Vessela Cankova ("Civic Initiatives-city of Lovech" and Day center with social enterprises)

France:
o Aline Herbinet (V@si)
o Céline Laporte (Tipkin)
o Chiara Condi (Led by Her)
o Deza Nguembook (EHlab)
o Emilie Schmitt (Activ'Action)
o Ingrid Sem (com'3elle)
o Marine Couteau (Leka)
o Mélaniem Perron (L'effet Papillion)
o Sarah Da Silva (Constant et Zoe)

Germany:
o Anna Yukio Bickenback- Ecotastic
o Anne Richert- Kids Have a Dream
o Annika Busse- Beliya
o Elisabeth Raitha-Paula- MFM-Projekt
o Gabriele Schwarz- bonergie
o Jeanine Gloyer-Jyoti-Fair Works
o Juliane Zielonka- LARAcompanion
o Marie-Lene Armington-Sofaconcerts
o Marilyn Heib- bettervest
o Maxie Matthiessen- Ruby Cup

Hungary :
o Benkő Fruzsina (InDaHouse)
o Füsun Ipek (Balkán Tangó)
o Kádár Tímea (Szállás Másképp)
o Kármán Erika (Szatyor Community)
o Lipták Orsolya (HellóAnyu!)
o Mészáros Andrea (Ízlelő Restaurant)
o Schenk Erika (Esőemberekért)
o Varga Erika (Romani Design)
o Varró Szilvia (X Communication Centre)
o Váczi Rozi (matyodesign)
oVida Ágnes (Gazdagmami

Ireland :
o Caroline Carswell, Sound Advice
o Colette Ryan, CareBrite
o Edel Moloney, Speedpak
o George Boyle, Fumbally Exchange
o Joan Hamilton, Sli Eile Farm
o Michelle O' Donnell Keating, Women for Election
o Rachel Moore, Express Your Gender
o Shelia Gallagher, Green Sod

Italy:
o Barbara Imbriani (Pariqual)
o Emanuela Donetti (Urbano Creativo)
o Francesca Fedeli (Fight the Stroke)
o Laura Orestano (SocialFare)
o Luana Stramaglia (Fork in Progress)
o Luciana Delle Donne (Made in Carcere)
o Monica Mereddu (Saridina Innovation)
o Rossella Palma (Babysitter Creative)
o Serena Baldari (La città delle Mamme, L'Alveare)
o Simona Palese (Due erticale;StaiSinergico)

Lithuania:
o Reda Sutkuvienė- "Socialinės paramos projektai"
o Sniegė Naku-"Upės kultūra"
o Renata Umbrasienė- "Molio Motiejukas"
o Jovita Ratkevičienė- "Vitaresta projektai"

o Rasa Bulvičienė-"Karalkrėslio bendruomenė"
o Vanda Stonienė- "Smalininkų bendruomenės centras"
o Jolanta Bertašienė- "Smalininkų bendruomenės centras"
o Vitalija Stankevičienė- "Saimeta"
o Deimantė Bublytė-Samuolienė— "Neįgaliųjų paslaugų centras"
o Rasa Besekirskienė- "Metras"
o Irena Bulotienė-"I.Bulotienė's company"
o Violeta Masteikienė- "GMM projektai"
o Milnora Pšibišauskienė- "Milnoros Pšibišauskienės"
o Neringa Budreikienė- "Sauteka"
o Jurga Budreikienė- "Žalia pupa"

Spain:
o Alice Fauveau
o Alicia Carpo
o Aurelie Salvaire
o Fiona Capdevila
o Isabella Raymond
o Maite Canton
o Mari Cruz
o Marta Fernandez
o Veronica Recanati

Sweden:
o Evelina Lundqvist- The Good Tribe
o Elin Wernquist- Barnrattsbyran
o Nathalie Aldana- Nathalie's Direct Trade
o Nina Forsberg- Barista Coffee Shop
o Renee Danielsson- ABIS
o Nicole Rehnstrom- Idekoll

United Kingdom :
o Helen Farmer-Voice by Volume
o June O' Sullivan- London Early Years
Foundation
o Kate Welch- Social Enterprise Acumen
o Rebecca Harrison African Management Initiative
o Susan Aktemel- Homes for Good
o Zoe Peden- Insane Logic
o Erika Brodnock- Karizma Kids
o Amna Abdul- Modest Fashion
o Elisicia Moore- Petit Miracles
o Abi Billinghurst- Abianda

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