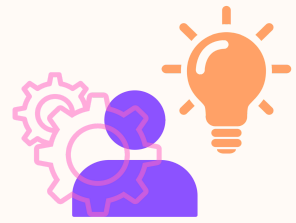




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Youngpreneurs

FINAL REPORT

WORK PACKAGE 2 - ACTIVITY 1

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1. PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Youngpreneurs project is based on the commitment to empower young women to upgrade their professional and entrepreneurial skills in the labor market, as a result of collaborative innovation of four EU countries: Sweden, Ireland, Italy and Greece. The Youngpreneurs initiative aims to establish a comprehensive program focused on personal branding, digital marketing, intercultural management and leadership talent.

The emphasis on personal branding aims to equip participants with the tools necessary to establish a unique and compelling professional identity. At the same time, the focus on digital marketing underscores the importance of leveraging online platforms for effective communication and visibility in the contemporary business settings. In addition, the incorporation of cross-cultural management skills recognizes the globalized nature of the workplace, fostering an inclusive understanding of diverse cultures. Finally, the emphasis on leadership talent development reflects the initiative's commitment to nurturing the next generation of innovative leaders.

The project is implemented under a diversity approach among target groups and recognizes the varied educational backgrounds of young women between the ages of 20 to 29, especially those from more vulnerable populations or with an immigrant background. The project also aims to provide a range of options and opportunities essential to navigating the changing employment landscape, with the goal of instilling resilience and adaptability, recognizing the transformative potential of flexible and remote work structures and the evolving dynamics of professional entrepreneurship. Moreover, the partners consortium seeks to engage stakeholders across the public, private, and third sectors of the economy, including local and regional government authorities. It involves collaboration with training organizations, professional development trainers, and entities dedicated to advancing women's employability, entrepreneurship, and leadership roles.





The initiative recognizes the prevalence of barriers and biases that reinforce gender inequalities, especially in the business environment. It also identifies key barriers to women's advancement, including lack of customized training, self-confidence, motivation, government initiatives and professional networking opportunities.

Youngpreneurs actively engage with local communities and establish direct communication channels, the project is committed to raising the business aspirations and self-employment goals of young women. This involves offering personalized guidance to navigate their unique career paths, tailored skill-building and reinforcing accessibility. Through all the activities, the project envisioned young women equipped with innovative abilities, confident in their competencies and prepared to navigate the constantly shifting entrepreneurial scene.





2. WORK PACKAGE 2 – ACTIVITY 1

WORK PACKAGE 2 aims to elaborate a framework for the delivery of the training curriculum, beginning with the conduct of a comprehensive research into the current practices of young women and youth institutions in the different areas of entrepreneurship.

The Activity 1 employs a quantitative and qualitative research methodology that involve 40 in-depth interviews and the collection of 60 questionnaires, with each partner contributing to the overall dataset. This approach aims to provide a holistic understanding of the challenges, preferred methodology and needs faced by young women in incorporating these skills into their professional activities.

The results of this document include a detailed review of the systemic findings of each country's findings, supported by an analysis of the target groups that participated in the research. This report provides a key deliverable for the project, as it will provide information on the gaps and needs identified throughout the field research activities. The research will contribute to the overall objectives of empowering young women to integrate and excel in the labor market.

The information gathered will not only inform subsequent phases of the project, but will also provide the baseline for the developing the framework for the delivery of the training curriculum (WP2). Therefore, the research questions were designed and implemented considering the narrow areas of the project objectives with a specific focus on personal branding and digital marketing, cross-cultural management and leadership skills for young women. Through this strategic approach, the project is prepared to respond to the identified barriers and requirements. Ultimately, through the current analysis of young women's competencies, the project aims to meet the demands of the labor market, fostering an environment conducive to innovation, inclusion and active participation of young people.





3. COUNTRY ANALYSIS

3.1 SWEDEN

Respondents were young women aged 20-29 residing in Stockholm County, representing diverse cultural backgrounds, along with two youth organizations. The survey encompassed ten women aspiring to start a business and five business owners. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with two young women interested in entrepreneurship, six business owners, and two youth organizations.

The survey revealed that among young women interested in starting a business in Sweden, certain trends or findings were observed. First, the most common challenges are access to finance (60 %), time constraints (50 %), and navigating the initial steps (40%). Second, the most common fears for starting their own business are fear of failure (60 %) and financial risks (50 %). In the third place, the main resources and support that young women need to overcome these challenges are training, skill-building programs (70 %) and access to finance (50 %).

Moreover, the in-depth interviews conducted to young women aspiring to start businesses in Sweden, provided similar results. Underlining the need for mentoring and having access to a mentorship program, as well as the crucial role of receiving appropriate support and guidance to foster the development of their companies.

On the other hand, the results of the second target group, business owners, indicated that prevalent concerns following starting a business include fear of failure (80%) and financial risks (80%). Effectively addressing these challenges requires essential resources and support, particularly mentorship and guidance from industry experts (80%) especially for access to funds and grants

The respondents also addressed challenges and requirements within the four primary themes of this project:

- **Leadership:** The survey highlights that young women face gender bias and stereotypes (60%) as the main obstacles to pursuing leadership roles to foster leadership potential, mentorship (40%) and networking opportunities (40%) are crucial. In addition, in-depth interviews highlight the importance of avoiding micromanagement and to delegate responsibilities in order to successfully lead a team.





COUNTRY ANALYSIS

3.1 SWEDEN

- **Personal branding:** All respondents (100%) reported actively engaging in personal branding efforts. The main challenges encountered by participants in building their brand include limited resources (80%) and a competitive market (60%). The in-depth interviews highlighted challenges in including and maintaining personal values in the brand and maintaining work-life balance while consistently promoting the brand.
- **Intercultural management:** Respondents perceive stereotyping and bias as the most prevalent challenges, with 60% of the participants highlighting these issues. In the in-depth interviews, the challenge of facing discrimination due to wearing a veil was brought up, along with the lack of representation of diverse cultures in management.
- **Digital media:** All survey respondents (100%) utilize digital media in their businesses. Among them, 60% identified Instagram as the most effective marketing tool for attracting new clients, while 40% favored TikTok. The in-depth interviews showed that main barriers related to digital media include staying consistent on social media platforms and difficulties reaching the desired target groups.

Challenges faced by youth organizations include securing long-term financing to keep supporting young women entrepreneurs. It was highlighted that starting a business is often preceded by the young women developing smaller initiatives, such as smaller events or projects. Consequently, these organizations strive to create opportunities for young women to cultivate these early stages. Respondents underscored the importance of actively engaging, recruiting, and investing in young leaders and emerging entrepreneurs.





COUNTRY ANALYSIS

3.2 IRELAND

The survey encompassed six women aspiring to start a business and nine business owners, all identifying with Irish cultures and being based in different areas around Ireland. Moreover, in-depth interviews were conducted with four young women interested in becoming entrepreneurs, five business owners, as well as two youth organizations.

The survey exposed distinct trends and findings within the demographic of young aspiring female entrepreneurs in Ireland. First, the most common challenges are access to finance in the initial stages (83,3 %), market competition in the chosen industry (66,7 %), and navigating the initial steps (50%). Second, the most common fears for starting their own business are fear of failure (100 %), lack of peer support (66,67%) and lack of knowledge of how to start a business (66,7%). In the third place, the main resources and support that young women need to overcome these challenges are training and skill-building programs (83 %), access to finance (67,7%) and peer support to build a network of fellow entrepreneurs for shared insights (67,7%).

Moreover, the in-depth interviews demonstrated that the largest challenge for young people starting up a company is access to finance and start-up capital. One reason brought up was the high cost of living in Ireland, making it difficult for an individual to set aside a decent sum of money to pursue self-employment. Market competition was also brought up as a challenge. Support and resources needed for young female entrepreneurs are financial support, such as grants and loans, as well as accessible mentoring and coaching, providing possibilities to learn from already successful entrepreneurs sharing their stories.

On the other hand, the results of business owners in the survey indicated that the main personal or professional fear after starting a business are fear of failure (88,9 %). The main resources or supports needed to tackle these challenges effectively are training and skill-building programs (66,7%).

The business owners also discussed challenges and requirements encompassed by the four main themes of this project:





COUNTRY ANALYSIS

3.2 IRELAND

- **Leadership:** the survey highlights that primary barriers that young women face when pursuing leadership roles are lack of confidence and self-doubt (44,4%) and gender bias and stereotypes (33,3%). The most crucial support or resources needed for nurturing leadership potential in young people are mentorship (33,3%) and education and training (33,3%). Similarly, the in-depth interviews highlighted the need for appropriate role models and mentors, learning for the experiences of others, networks, as well as formal training and online courses. There were also suggestions to address the issues of self doubt by providing practical support that encourages the person to move forward, believing in the person and supporting their vision and having more confidence-building workshops specifically for women.
- **Personal branding:** 77,8 % of the respondents reported actively engaging in personal branding efforts. All of the respondents answered that the main challenge in building their brand is imposter syndrome. The in-depth interviews highlighted the importance of having messaging consistent with your values, adding personality to the company and representing yourself authentically. Some of the main challenges brought up included standing out from the crowd, which requires time, investment, know-how and resources that are not always available to start-ups. Moreover, other important challenges were the need for consistency and lack of self-esteem and belief in yourself.
- **Digital media:** All survey respondents (100%) utilize digital media in their businesses. Among them, 44,4% identified Instagram as the most effective marketing tool for attracting new clients, while 33,3% favored Facebook. In the in-depth interviews, it was stressed that digital marketing is essential in today's world, allowing you to tell your story and build a brand, making a personal connection and the importance of business values was highlighted. The main barriers related to digital media include needing to dedicate substantial time to it, having financial resources for professional support and advertising, and know-how to understand terms, jargons, analytics, customer information and similar aspects.





COUNTRY ANALYSIS

3.2 IRELAND

- **Intercultural management:** Respondents perceived stereotyping and bias (55,6%) and building trust and support (55,6%) as the most common challenges. In the in-depth interviews, a common understanding of intercultural management was to improve cultural intelligence and learning more about people from different backgrounds or cultures, and leveraging this to achieve the best outcomes for the company, staff, and the clients. However, two respondents did not view it as a relevant topic for their businesses. Improving intercultural management skills could be achieved by having training and workshops, as well as including it in a course for starting your own business.

The youth organizations worked with leadership skills through mentoring programmes which allowed more experienced business owners to share their experiences with new entrepreneurs, as well as group and team activities encouraging young people to become more active, creative, and global citizens. However, the interviewees were interested in new resources on this topic as they are lacking from their formal training programmes.

The organizations offered training and workshops on communication and social media marketing for young people, which touched on personal branding. These included courses on understanding insights on Facebook and Instagram, beginner social media for business marketing, and a visual storytelling workshop. Intercultural management was not formally supported by either of the two organizations interviewed, Although the organizations recognised the intercultural nature of their work and client base, they did not offer any particular training in this area.





COUNTRY ANALYSIS

3.3 ITALY

Respondents were young women aged 20-29 residing in vulnerable areas primarily in the areas of South of Italy, all with the Italian mediterranean culture, along with two youth organizations. The survey encompassed ten women aspiring to start a business and five business owners. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with five young women interested in entrepreneurship, two business owners, and three youth organizations.

According to the survey, for young women interested in starting a business the most common challenges are access to finance: securing funding in the initial stages (83 %) and a solid business idea (Ensuring an innovative business concept can be difficult. Second, the most common fears for starting their own business are fear of failure (90 %), financial risks (90%) and uncertain future (80%) In the third place, the main resources and support that young women need to overcome these challenges are training and skill-building programs (70 %), access to finance (70%) and networking opportunities (60%).

Moreover, the in-depth interviews also showed that the main challenges in starting a company are the economic and financial risks. They also highlighted the legal and bureaucratic aspects, not knowing the right procedures to follow. The resources needed to address these challenges are financial support, coupled with mentoring training in how to find funding.

The results of the second target group, business owners, indicated that the main personal or professional fears after starting a business are financial risks (60%) and lack of know-how (60%). To address these fears effectively the main resources or supports to tackle these challenges effectively are mentorship (60%) and access to finance (60%). The respondents also addressed challenges and requirements within the four primary themes of this project:

- **Leadership:** The survey highlights that primary barriers faced by young women pursuing leadership roles are gender bias and stereotypes (80%) and lack of confidence or self-doubt (20%). The most crucial support or resources needed for nurturing leadership potential in young people are education and training (60%). In addition, in-depth interviews highlight the importance of having a mentor or a personal trainer who helps you with risks and being passionate about the process and business (intangible resource).





COUNTRY ANALYSIS

3.3 ITALY

- **Personal branding:** 60 % of the respondents reported actively engaging in personal branding efforts. All of the respondents answered that the main challenges in building their brand are a competitive market (60%) and imposter syndrome (40%). The in-depth interviews also highlighted challenges in not having the skills to build a personal brand.
- **Digital media:** 80% of the respondents utilize digital media in their businesses. Among them, 40 % identified LinkedIn and Instagram as the most effective marketing tools for attracting new clients. The in-depth interviews showed that high market competition is the main barrier and obstacles when trying to implement marketing strategies.
- **Intercultural management:** Respondents perceive different communication styles as the prevalent challenge, with 80% of the participants highlighting these issues. The in-depth interviews highlighted the importance of clear and transparent communication.

Challenges faced by youth organizations and the municipalities are connected to the demographics. The youth organizations find it challenging to find the young target audience. Since many young people have moved away to bigger cities and are not living in the local areas anymore.

Another challenge for the local government has also been how to communicate and reach young people who live in the local area. One solution has been to create youth organizations whose purpose is to work as a bridge between young people and local institutions. Organizations are not directly teaching digital marketing. They do, however, provide soft skills training in a general way. The organizations do not currently face challenges related to intercultural communication.





COUNTRY ANALYSIS

3.4 GREECE

The study targeted young individuals from various regions of Greece, representing diverse cultural backgrounds. It included surveys and interviews with four women aspiring to launch their own businesses, two established business owners, and two youth organizations.

The research uncovered unique insights into the challenges and aspirations of young Greek women looking to venture into entrepreneurship. Foremost among their challenges were securing initial financing (55%), facing market competition (45%), and navigating the early stages of business development (35%). Their primary fears centered around the prospect of failure (60%), financial risks (50%), and time constraints (40%). To overcome these hurdles, they expressed a need for training programs (60%), financial support (45%), and peer networks for shared experiences (35%).

Moreover, the in-depth interviews demonstrated that the largest challenge for young people starting up a company in Greece is access to finance and start-up capital. One reason brought up was the high cost of living in Greece, making it difficult for an individual to set aside a decent sum of money to pursue self-employment. Market competition was also brought up as a challenge. Support and resources needed for young female entrepreneurs are financial support, such as grants and loans, as well as accessible mentoring and coaching, providing possibilities to learn from already successful entrepreneurs sharing their stories.

On the other hand, the results of business owners in the survey indicated that the main personal or professional fear after starting a business are fear of failure (88,9 %). The main resources or supports needed to tackle these challenges effectively are training and skill-building programs (66,7 %).

The participants also discussed key themes:

- **Leadership:** Young women identified lack of confidence (44.4%) and gender bias (33.3%) as significant barriers to assuming leadership roles. They underscored the value of mentorship (33.3%) and educational resources (33.3%) to cultivate leadership potential. Suggestions included providing practical support, fostering belief in oneself, and organizing confidence-building workshops tailored to women.





COUNTRY ANALYSIS

3.4 GREECE

- **Personal Branding:** While 77.8% of respondents actively engaged in personal branding, many grappled with imposter syndrome. Challenges included standing out in a crowded market, maintaining consistency, and bolstering self-esteem. Participants stressed the importance of aligning brand messaging with personal values and projecting authenticity.
- **Digital Media:** All participants utilized digital media for business purposes, with Instagram (44.4%) and Facebook (33.3%) being popular platforms. They emphasized the need for a robust digital presence to convey brand stories, build connections, and uphold business values. Challenges included time constraints, financial resources, and understanding digital analytics.
- **Intercultural Management:** Participants identified stereotyping (55.6%) and building trust (55.6%) as key challenges. They advocated for cultural intelligence training to foster understanding and collaboration across diverse backgrounds. While some participants deemed it less relevant, others emphasized its importance in global business contexts.

The two respondents representing professionals from organizations dedicated to supporting youth activities, in terms of leadership skills, emphasized the importance of providing support to nurture leadership potential in youth and highlighted strategies such as offering a flexible structure and promoting collaboration. They identified resources needed to enhance organizational work, including financial support, sponsorship, and opportunities for learning from mistakes. Additionally, mentoring opportunities were highlighted as crucial for developing leadership skills.

Regarding personal branding, the organizations currently do not offer teachings on professional branding but recognize the significance of good branding and visibility for organizational success. They expressed a need for resources such as accessible websites and advertisements to support personal branding efforts, acknowledging the importance of personal branding for organizational success. In the realm of intercultural management, inclusivity and diversity are emphasized within the organizations' approach.

Active listening is identified as a crucial skill for effective intercultural management, and challenges such as language barriers are recognized. The respondents advocate for a mentorship-based approach to foster effective intercultural communication and encourage the involvement of individuals from diverse cultures in organizational activities.





4. ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS EU LEVEL

TARGET GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS DATA:

In Activity 1 of Work Package 2 within the Youngpreneuers project, all partner countries conducted a survey and comprehensive interviews with three distinct target groups: young women aspiring to become entrepreneurs, young women business owners, and youth organizations. These diverse target groups contributed varying perspectives on the challenges faced by young women in initiating and advancing their entrepreneurial endeavors, as well as their needs for support. The aim was to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of the essential elements to include in the training curriculum, thereby ensuring its efficacy in addressing the multifaceted needs of aspiring young female entrepreneurs.

4.1 YOUNG WOMEN SEEKING TO BECOME ENTREPRENEURS/BUSINESS OWNERS

In interviews and surveys, young women expressing interest in entrepreneurship have delineated various challenges that they perceived in starting a business, alongside their support requirements. The findings yield insights into primary barriers hindering young women's entrepreneurial pursuits and suggest support activities to address these barriers.

Firstly, the respondents highlighted that there are challenging financial aspects entailed in starting a business. Accessing finance and securing funding during the initial phases of starting a business emerged as a critical challenge, resonating across respondents in all three countries. Correspondingly, there was a shared concern over financial risks among aspiring entrepreneurs across these countries, with the high living costs, particularly highlighted in the Irish interviews, worsening financial insecurities.

“The biggest hurdle in the Irish context, I think, is start-up capital. As the cost of living is so high, it can be difficult for an individual to set aside a decent sum of money to pursue self-employment.”

“Yes, of course many. For example, money is a large barrier when it comes to starting my own business, the right people who support me is also one challenge, patience. But the biggest obstacle is probably money.”

Respondent from Sweden





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“Yes, I have considered starting my own business, particularly in the field of sustainable fashion. I am passionate about environmental conservation and social responsibility, and I see an opportunity to create a brand that aligns with these values. Concerns are financial risks and uncertainty about where to start.”

Respondent from Greece

These financial concerns indicate a lack of knowledge regarding available financing options for young entrepreneurs, a gap that could be bridged through targeted training sessions. Moreover, across all countries, women cited access to finance, such as grants and loans, as one of the main resources and support needed to overcome these obstacles.

“I think for me I was scared of the financial aspects, yes, but I was also scared that a good idea to me may not be as good or intriguing to others, so I guess the uncertainty of this is what put me off.”

Respondent from Ireland

Secondly, aspiring young female entrepreneurs experience difficulties knowing where to start and ensuring the viability of their business ideas. In Sweden, Greece and Ireland, challenges to navigate the initial steps of starting a business were highlighted as one of the main concerns. Similarly, in Italy, the difficulty to ensure a solid and innovative business idea was stressed as a primary barrier. This shows that there is a need for providing knowledge to practical aspects of starting a business as well as support to develop their business ideas, potentially by developing training sessions about these topics.

Thirdly, young women aspiring to entrepreneurship tend to fear failure and experience self-doubt. Across all countries, respondents articulated that fear of failure is one of the most prevalent concerns surrounding becoming an entrepreneur, often intertwined with self-doubt. Thereby, strengthening self-confidence and self-esteem among these women emerges as a pressing need, empowering them to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations.





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“Leadership abilities can be effectively nurtured and developed among young individuals through experiential learning opportunities, mentorship programs, and leadership development workshops. Providing opportunities for hands-on experience and constructive feedback can help them build confidence and competence as leaders.”

Respondent from Greece

Fourthly, it is important to ensure that young women have access to training programs and skill development. Across all countries, the results demonstrate that the main resources and support necessary for young women to overcome the challenges to start a business are training and skill-building programs. Considering the different challenges highlighted by the respondents, these training and skill-building initiatives should ideally encompass a spectrum of essential components, including education on financing options, practical guidance on business initiation, workshops for idea development, and sessions focused on fostering confidence.

“I think a mentor or a training program on how to practically start a business could help me to overcome my fears of starting a business.”

Respondent from Sweden

“Leadership abilities can be effectively nurtured and developed among young individuals through experiential learning opportunities, mentorship programs, and leadership development workshops. Providing opportunities for hands-on experience and constructive feedback can help them build confidence and competence as leaders.”

Respondent from Greece

Fifthly, young women express a desire for support encompassing mentoring, coaching, and networking opportunities. Particularly notable was the emphasis placed on mentorship and the importance of role models for encouraging entrepreneurial aspirations, as underscored by participants in Sweden





ANALYSIS

“To have someone who believes in you. You can go far! You have to have people who believe in you with all their hearts that you can go far!”

Respondent from Sweden

Encountering role models holds significance due to various factors. The act of successful entrepreneurs sharing their stories, not only provides insights into the practical steps required but also addresses self-doubt by allowing young women to envision themselves as entrepreneurs, providing relatable examples of women that have already succeeded in their entrepreneurial journeys.

Furthermore, providing mentorship or coaching that makes young women feel supported serves as a means to decrease their self-doubt. Likewise, acquiring relevant knowledge related to entrepreneurship could diminish their self doubt and fear of failure, by empowering them with the understanding of the necessary steps to foster business development.

“Mentoring sessions are very useful because they can include legal aspects, how to raise funds, how to manage the team (HR), how to manage finances. Then it depends on the specific problem and obstacle. Financial support or HR management support may be needed.”

Respondent from Italy

In essence, these findings underscore the multifaceted challenges confronting young women aspiring to become entrepreneurs and underscore the need for robust support mechanisms to encourage their pursuits.





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4.2 YOUNG WOMEN BUSINESS-OWNERS

Leadership:

The young women business-owners had similar responses to the aspiring entrepreneurs. Business-owners in all the three countries empathized that the main challenges faced by women pursuing leadership roles are gender bias and stereotypes. In Ireland and Italy, it was also highlighted that a major barrier for women are the lack of confidence and self-doubt. The main fears for the participant starting their business was even for business-owners fear of failure. This indicates that these issues persist for women after they have started their business there is a need for support in this area also for this target group.

The results from Italy and Sweden showed that the crucial support or resources needed for nurturing leadership potential in young people are education and training, as well as mentorship.

Gender bias and stereotypes could be a result of a lack of female role models in leadership positions. The result shows even more how important it is to empower women so that they dare to pursue leadership positions in their career or starting their own company.

In Ireland, suggested strategies to alleviate self-doubt in individuals involved the provision of practical support, encouraging the person to move forward on their ideas. This involves cultivating belief in and supporting the individual's vision, along with providing confidence-building workshops tailored specifically for women.

Furthermore, the young women business owners in Greece emphasized effective communication, adaptability, and motivation as fundamental qualities for success in leadership roles. Despite not having held formal leadership positions, they encountered challenges in decision-making and team management within their businesses. They believe that leadership abilities can be nurtured through mentorship, development programs, and hands-on experience, underscoring the importance of continuous learning and skill development in their entrepreneurial journey.

This result also aligns with the answers for the young women interested in starting a company. They also highlighted the importance of empowerment and having someone who believes in you (mentors and role-models).





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Personal branding:

The majority of the interview participants in each country mentioned the importance of having a strong personal brand. Nevertheless, a challenge for many of the young women is the lack of knowledge and skills on how to build a strong personal brand.

Respondents in each country also highlighted the importance of being authentic in your personal brand and when communicating the brand the importance of telling how your company is reaching the environmental standards. This is a new phenomenon. This result indicates that this generation, often referred to as generation Z, are more aware of the social aspects and the importance of being authentic and following your values in the brand than other generations have been before, as demonstrated by the following statements:

“It is important for me to represent myself authentically, and that people sense this authenticity from me and my company.”

Respondent from Ireland

“It is important to communicate that the product has been produced applying all occupational safety and also environmental standards. Clarifying all production steps to certify transparent work on the label creates loyalty”.

Respondent from Italy

Additionally, participants from Greece emphasize the challenges of managing online reputation and differentiating themselves in a competitive market.

Another challenge for the participants in all the countries was limited resources and imposter syndrome. A majority of participants in each country felt that they did not have enough knowledge on how to build a brand, nor enough time to create the personal brand content. They also expressed that consistency is a challenge. Many participants, especially in Ireland, struggled with imposter syndrome. Imposter syndrome is probably an effect of not feeling like you are enough, lacking self confidence and not believing in what you do.





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It is clear from these results that most young female entrepreneurs struggle with feelings of imposter syndrome, therefore, the Youngpreneurs project resources should focus heavily on this challenge, to help young females overcome these feelings, and achieve success.

Digital marketing:

The majority of the participants in each country use digital marketing in their business. Social media and influencer marketing were stated as the most effective digital marketing strategies. The opinions about what platform is the most popular differed to some extent between the countries. Instagram and Tik tok were the most popular among Sweden's survey participants. On the other hand, in Italy and Ireland, the most important digital marketing strategies are marketing on Instagram and Facebook, according to the respondents. In Greece, business owners emphasize finding partnerships with influencers effective in reaching a younger audience. In the in-depth interviews, many of the Swedish entrepreneurs also highlighted physical meetings as a very important marketing strategy. The majority of the participants rate a number 3-4 of a scale of 5 when estimating the effectiveness of their current digital marketing strategies.

Respondents from Greece emphasized the difficulties of staying abreast of trends and measuring return on investment (ROI) in digital marketing efforts. They also highlighted the potential for educational programs to integrate digital marketing skills through practical workshops, case studies, and internships with digital agencies. This suggests an opportunity to strengthen digital marketing capabilities through structured educational initiatives.

"Educational programs can integrate digital marketing skills through practical workshops, case studies, and internships with digital agencies."

Respondent from Greece

From this, it can be concluded that digital marketing is an essential tool for the young women's success in their businesses. Some of the participants were confident with their marketing strategies. However it is evident that many participants also need further support in developing their social media strategies.





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Intercultural management:

The majority of the participants in each country rated a number 4-5 of a scale of 5 in the survey, on how important intercultural management skills are for young individuals in today's global environment. Although, in the in-depth interviews in Ireland it was mentioned that there is other areas in the business they would prioritize:

“It is relevant because we work and live in such an interconnected world; but for my business I am not sure I would rate it that highly. There are other areas that I would prioritise like supply chain management, recruiting the right skills and how to grow my business.”

Respondent from Ireland

Several respondents in Sweden emphasized the organic integration of cultural management within their businesses. Intercultural management is ingrained in their values and defines the essence of their company. Consequently, they do not actively pursue improvement in this aspect, as it is an inherent and integral part of their organizational identity.

The most common challenges in intercultural management faced by the respondents in each country varied. The respondents in Italy and Greece answered communication styles. In response to this challenge, the respondents from Greece emphasized the significance of fostering open communication and promoting cultural awareness. They also suggested implementing university training programs, multicultural events, and cultural exchange opportunities to enhance intercultural competencies. The respondents from Ireland answered building trust and support in diverse groups, and stereotyping and bias. The respondents from Sweden answered stereotyping and bias and misunderstanding for cultural norms. On the question how frequently do you engage in intercultural management activities in your current role the most respondents answered frequently.





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4.3 ORGANIZATIONS POINT OF VIEW

In Sweden, Ireland and Greece, two interviews were conducted with representatives from two youth organizations, while in Italy, three representatives from three youth organizations were interviewed.

Across all organizations in each country, the representatives highlighted demographic challenges faced by young individuals who are relocating from rural and socioeconomically disadvantaged areas to larger cities. Ireland specifically noted that young people were even migrating abroad.

“We are looking to make Cavan an attractive place to start a business, and that is important for young people as often there is a pull towards Dublin and larger towns or in the last year abroad to the US and Australia.”

Representant from youth organization Ireland

“The territory is concerned, the problem is finding a young target audience. There is a problem at demographic level because the people are not there, it's not that they are not interested.”

Respondent from youth organization Italy

Therefore institutions and the public sector are struggling to identify and connect with the specific target demographic of youths. Young people are also using other communication channels than the government and municipal institutions are using. This core problem was one of the main reasons why two of the Italian and Swedish youth organizations were established. Changers Hub in Sweden was started in 2015 in Botkyrka south of Stockholm with the aim to democratize success and provide knowledge, network and support focusing on entrepreneurship to young people in Sweden growing up in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. The youth organization in Italy and one in Greece had similar objectives.

“The idea and objective of the organisation is to create a link, to act as a bridge between the municipal institutions and young people to create new activities throughout the summer and winter and to avoid the dispersion of young people.”

Respondent from youth organization Italy





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“We are like a group of young people; we are building up a nonprofit center kind of for youth. And we are interested in youth that reside in rural areas. Mainly, and we want to kind of bridge a bit the community and the activities of young people in the general way, these are main objectives.”

Respondent from youth organization Greece

In Ireland and Sweden, the support for youth entrepreneurship is centered on schools. In Sweden they run the program UF, Ung företagsamhet (youth business), in upper secondary school for young people aged 16-19 years who want to try to start a business during a semester. Many of the interviewed business-owners in Sweden started their entrepreneurial journey through the UF-program. In Ireland, a number of programmes are offered to encourage and inspire the next generation and support their ideas through a social impact fund.

The youth organizations interviewed in Italy did not primarily emphasize entrepreneurship; rather, their focus centered on youth empowerment and leadership development. The organization actively involves young individuals in establishing their own youth groups, allowing them to practice and enhance their leadership skills. These youth groups, in turn, organize various activities for the improvement of their local society.

Regarding the organizations in Greece, they primarily provide comprehensive support for youth, with a significant focus on entrepreneurship. These organizations strive to connect rural youth with community activities, emphasizing inclusivity and community involvement. Moreover, they conduct mentoring sessions and workshops to foster the development of soft and entrepreneurial skills among young individuals, firmly believing in the transformative influence of mentorship in unlocking the leadership potential of youth.





ANALYSIS

The organizations in Ireland and Sweden emphasized the importance of distinct training and mentoring programs tailored for young individuals aspiring to launch their own businesses. Their emphasis lies in empowering these young individuals to harness their talents, insights, passion, and creativity to devise innovative solutions, often addressing social challenges. Both in Ireland and Sweden, it was noted that initiating a business journey often begins with young women developing smaller initiatives, such as organizing events or undertaking projects. These initiatives often act as building blocks for the young individuals to kickstart their own businesses.

All the countries mentioned, direct instruction on digital marketing and personal branding not being widespread (in Ireland one organization offered a few courses and in Greece one organization used to expose young entrepreneurs to this topic through workshops and guest speakers). In most of the countries, there are only a few courses related to social media management and soft skills development. Representatives from organizations in Sweden and Ireland emphasized the link to leadership, recognizing the need to incorporate new resources on this topic into their formal training programs due to the current lack of relevant content.

Lastly, the organizations in Greece emphasized their priority on inclusivity and diversity, striving to foster a culture of diversity within its operations. They recognize and address challenges such as societal issues and language barriers, implementing strategies like active listening and mentorship to facilitate effective intercultural communication and collaboration.

Well, we do have people that they have reached and want to be part of the forum, and that they are from other cultures. So...and this is something that we always like to enhance. Sometimes there might be some societal issues in but in general we don't have much challenge on that. Something that it's a part of our work in a way.

Respondent from youth organization Greece





5. CONCLUSIONS FINAL REPORT

ACTIVITY 1

In conclusion, in Activity 1 of Work Package 2, the partner countries conducted a survey and in-depth interviews with three target groups: young women seeking to become entrepreneurs, young women business owners, and youth organizations. The results presented diverse perspectives, emphasizing the multifaceted challenges and requirements for young female entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the results offer insight into key elements that should be taken into account when developing a comprehensive training curriculum tailored to this demographic.

The interviews and surveys with young women aspiring to entrepreneurship demonstrated significant challenges in starting a business, notably difficulties in accessing finance. Furthermore, the complexities of navigating the business initiation process and business idea development underscore the need for practical knowledge and support in these areas. The prevalence of fear of failure and self-doubt among aspiring female entrepreneurs underscores the critical importance of bolstering self-confidence. Additional forms of support required include access to comprehensive training and skill-building programs, including education on financing options, as well as guidance to promote business development. Moreover, mentorship, coaching, and networking opportunities are essential, with role models playing a significant role in nurturing entrepreneurial aspirations.

These insights shed light on the multifaceted challenges facing young women in entrepreneurship, underscoring the imperative for robust support mechanisms to facilitate their path to success. The Youngpreneurs consortium will take these challenges into account when developing the project resources in the next stage of the project.





The findings from interviews and surveys with young women business-owners reveal common challenges and support needs across different countries. The results from this target group were similar to the findings of the young woman aspiring to start a business. Moreover, this target group addressed how they perceived the four themes: leadership, personal branding, digital marketing and intercultural management. For leadership, gender bias and stereotypes, as well as self-doubt persist as significant barriers for women pursuing leadership roles, emphasizing the importance of empowerment initiatives to foster leadership aspirations. Support such as mentorship and confidence-building initiatives are therefore vital in nurturing leadership potential, also for business owners. Personal branding was highlighted as an important area to be working with for business-owners, with a focus on authenticity and environmental consciousness.

Challenges included limited resources, imposter syndrome, and the need for more knowledge and time to build a strong personal brand. Digital marketing plays a crucial role in business success for the female entrepreneurs, with social media and influencer marketing identified as key strategies. However, many participants require further support to enhance their digital marketing skills and strategies, highlighting the importance of tailored assistance in this area. Intercultural management skills are considered highly valued in today's global environment, although some respondents thought that other business areas are more prioritized. Perceived challenges in intercultural management vary, from communication styles to building trust and addressing stereotypes and bias.





The perspectives gathered from youth organizations in Sweden, Greece, Ireland, and Italy demonstrates the demographic challenges faced by young individuals, particularly concerning migration from rural to urban areas and even abroad. These organizations can serve as bridges between municipal institutions and youths. They aim to democratize success and provide support, knowledge, and networks, particularly focusing on entrepreneurship in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. While Ireland and Sweden prioritize youth entrepreneurship programs within schools, Italy's organizations focus more on youth empowerment and leadership development. However, all emphasize the need for tailored training and mentoring programs to empower young individuals to pursue entrepreneurial efforts. There is also a noted lack of education on digital marketing and personal branding, highlighting the necessity for new resources in these areas to be incorporated into existing training programs, especially to address the current gaps in content related to leadership development.

In conclusion, there are multifaceted challenges for young female entrepreneurs, especially related to lack of knowledge and self-doubt. The Youngpreneurs project should prioritize addressing the gaps in knowledge in areas such as financing, business initiation, and branding through targeted training and skill-building initiatives, as well as providing opportunities to practice entrepreneurship skills. Additionally, it is crucial for Youngpreneurs to focus on enhancing young women's self-confidence and empowering them to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations, which can be achieved through support mechanisms such as mentoring, coaching, and providing relatable role models.

