

Newsletter #5 - July 2011

Welcome to Winnet8

Britt- Marie Torstensson, Winnet Sweden, is responsible for the Winnet 8, Communication and dissemination activities and also for the round table meetings both regional as well as for the 4 European round tables that will be done in July and will form the four policy recommendations that will be the result of Winnet 8. The Winnet 8 task is focused on: Regional growth by improving women's participation in the labour market focusing on the gender segregated labour market, innovation, ICT and entrepreneurship is the task for Winnet 8's partners and to present 4 policy recommendations for the Cohesion policy and EU 2020 strategy and for the next Regional Operational Program period connected to regional action plans, in East, South, North and West zones of Europe. As chair of Winnet Sweden as well as Winnet Europe, I do know the importance to secure and increase women's participation on the labour market, in innovation, ICT and entrepreneurship for Europe's Regional and Economical Development for future Growth, which will be the result of Winnet 8 and directly give to the DG Regio, at the European Commission.

I am excited about leading this work to improve women's opportunities on the labour market. In many of the member countries in European Union women is an untapped resource. The project especially focuses on the lack of women in innovation, technology and entrepreneurship and the goal is to contribute to regional growth through gender equal companies and organizations.

Several Swedish reviews show that companies with both men and women, at management level, grow faster with higher revenues and have more satisfied employees than companies with none or very few women at decision level.

Our challenge is to produce Regional Action Plans for the next programme period in order to contribute to gender equality and our most important tools are the regional Multi-Actor Groups, MAGs. They consist of people that represent all the quadruple helix groups; politicians, administrators, entrepreneurs and researchers, NGO – Non Profit organisations and most of all Women Resource Centres, WRCs, which is really what Winnet 8 is focusing on as actor to secure the gender perspective into labour market, innovation, ICT and Entrepreneurship.



Britt- Marie Torstensson, Winnet Sweden, is responsible for the Winnet 8, Communication and dissemination activities and also for the round table meetings.



The project Winnet8 - what are the goals with the project?

The overall objective with the project Winnet 8 is to contribute to regional growth by improving women's participation in the labour market focusing on:

- Horizontally segregated labour markets
- The lack of women in innovation and technology
- The lack of women in entrepreneurship

The project aims to shape regional, national and EU-level policies and development programmes that relate to women's status in the labour market and ensure these policies are integrated into mainstream provision.

What have happened in the Winnet-8 project May-July 2011?

In this Newsletter we will publish a short summary of the bigger events during the period March-July.

Winnet 8 at the European Commission in March 2011.

A summary about when Winnet 8 was invited as guest speaker of Ms Danuta Hübner. We will also publish a few short articles from the regional Round Tables.

For more information www.winnet8.eu

Winnet 8 at the European Commission

Interreg IVC Capitalisation project Winnet 8 was invited to DG Regio, at the European Commission's EU 27 member states high level group meeting for gender equality March 18, 2011, to present the Winnet 8 project. The presentation was given 10 minutes and Britt-Marie S Torstensson, represent the Winnet 8 partners. The theme was focused on WRCs – Women's Resource Centres Promoting Innovation in Gender Equality across Europe. With a special request on presentation of Women Resource Centre's role, function and finance and how WRCs has been transferred to other European Member states. The Swedish as well as Greek good example was presented. For further information and to read the presentation, please, visit www.winnet8.eu.



The gender perspective in to the cohesion policy and ROP

Interreg IVC Capitalisation project Winnet 8 was invited as guest speaker of Ms Danuta Hübner, Chair of the Committee on Regional Development, to the mini hearing of the programme on Gender Mainstreaming in the Cohesion Policy, at the European Parliament, Brussels, 12th of April 2011. Winnet 8 was represented by of Carin Nises, Project Coordinator, Lead Partner, Sweden, Marta Hozer Kocmiel, Poland, Hazel Smith, Scotland and Britt-Marie S Torstensson, Sweden. The Winnet 8 project was asked to present recommendations for how to secure the gender perspective into the Cohesion policy and ROP next program period. Recommendations. Establish a European Platform of actors for Gender Equality in Cohesion Policy and EU 2020 strategy to promote (both within the EU & across Member States): Gender specific actions, priority and budget allocations, to secure women's participation in the labour market, ICT, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Gender mainstreaming to secure shared knowledge/expertise on ensuring a gendered perspective in all decisions i.e. ESF, ERDF, Interregional programmes across all EU member states. Clear result indicators and measures for gender equality must be established and followed upon. The Winnet 8 network of gender researchers/experts/practitioners could provide that Centre of Excellence/Forum-working together to ensure a sustained impact on policies and actions leading to increase Growth and Competitiveness. Gender Equality Makes Economic Sense. WINNET8 have been established in member states where a combined commitment to the principles of gender mainstreaming & finance/resources for effective positive action has been invested (i.e. Initiatives addressing occupational segregation & promoting entrepreneurship, Innovation and ICT). The results and impacts are effecting real change and strengthening those regions' growth and competitiveness. DG Regio is working directly with WINNET8 to promote the concept that investing in gender equality makes sound economic sense. Gender Inequality is costing the EU billions each year. For further information and to read the whole presentation please, visit www.winnet8.eu



The Regional Round Table in Łęborg

On 18th of April in Town Hall in Łęborg took place the Round Table, Winnet8 consultation and dissemination event. Participants in the meeting was representatives of Łęborg Municipality, the County of Łęborg, Regional Centre for Public Policy Office of the Marshal of Pomeranian Region, the Jobcentre in Łęborg, Municipal Centre of Social Assistance, the Guild of Various Craft and Entrepreneurship, members of Town Council and journalists. The participants had an opportunity to watch a film which was a result of FEM project - one of the good practices of Winnet8. There also performed 2 women who benefited from FEM. We discussed current policy of EU in gender matters, the questions from Winnet8 consultation questionnaire and final draft of our regional Action Plan.



The regional Round Table in Venice

The Regional Round Table has been an excellent opportunity to share the work our MAG has done in these months with a wider number of stakeholders and the Veneto Region MA. Winnet8 has been presented, together with the policy recommendations produced by the MAG. The most remarkable points have resulted to be cultural change, balancing work and family times, gender violence and the role of media. A number of interesting proposals sprang up: from the adoption of a "gender equality label" for businesses to the opportunity to provide the regional media coordinating institution with specific criteria to evaluate media gender respecting behaviour; from the inclusion of a specific gender issue axis in the social planning instruments to the collection and diffusion of local best practices from territorial actors; from specific training activities on gender issues for businesses, academia, decision makers to the need to carry on the MAG activity after the project's conclusion. Several Local Authorities and gender sensitive associations have joined in the afternoon. The purpose of the meeting being - besides presenting Winnet8 and its recommendations, and a statistic profile of women condition in Italy - to launch the "Gender organizations network" that the Provincial Commission for Gender Equality will coordinate from now on. The participants agree with the need to work as a network if we want to promote a new gender culture at all levels, especially in difficult economic times. This has also been the opportunity for each actor to testify its own experiences and good practices and share them with others. Following, the reading of "Libere", a piece about women by the Italian director Cristina Comencini.



The Regional Round Table in Portugal

The Roundtable in Portugal took place on 19th April 2011, in the CCDR Alentejo (Évora), between 9:00 and 17:30, with the main objective to discuss and collect inputs about the implementation of policies of gender equality in areas that integrate the project, in order to present proposals to the Community authorities that are elaborating the next Community Framework, to prevail after 2013.

Framed this round table was, also, organized a Dissemination Seminar which included presentations of the Vice-President of the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG), Dr. Manuel Albano, representing the Secretary of State for Equality, Dr.^a Elza Pais, and the Portuguese National Gender Experts, Professor Fernanda Henriques and Professor Domingos Braga.

Were present at the Round table, beyond the regional partners (CCDR Alentejo and University of Evora), the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality - CIG, the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment - CITE, the Office of Employment and Vocational Training - IEFP, the Association of Local Development Monte, representatives of the Municipalities of the Region, the Regional Development Agency of Alentejo - ADRAL, and the Portuguese Association of Women Entrepreneurs - APME.

The Roundtable was opened by Dr.^a Lina Jan, Vice-President of CCDR Alentejo.

Dr. Manuel Albano, vice president of the CIG, reported to the national vision in the IV National Plan for Equality, Gender, Citizenship and Non-Discrimination, the IV National Plan Against Domestic Violence and, also, to the II National Plan Against Trafficking of Human Beings.



The Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment - CITE, through its President, Dr.^a Sandra Ribeiro, revealed to be available for protocol with the future centre, an extension of the services that the Commission provides in Lisbon. Dr.^a Sandra Ribeiro sees in these protocols and opportunity to bring out of the capital a number of support services, which otherwise would be confined only to Lisbon.

The Office of Employment and Vocational Training - IEFP, in the Person of the Director of Services, Dr. Jose Costa, gave account of the Protocols that have come to be signed with different regional partners.

The APME, in the words of its Vice-president, Dr.^a Gabriela Paiva, referred to the enormous difficulty of mobilizing women in the region for training and other initiatives involving this public-target. This is a problem of enterprise culture and attitude that matters try to change, in addition to the difficulty of reconciling work and family life. Dr.^a Gabriela Paiva mentioned the project's interest and the availability of APME to collaborate with the future Resource Centre.

The main conclusions of the National Round Table are presented below:

- The Women Resource Centre should constitute itself as an integrated centre. Should be created a network of partnerships in order to create services that address the needs diagnosed by women and other local and national actors, with experience in gender equality, in issues such as access to the labour market, conciliation of professional and personal life, schooling, among other matters;
- The importance of developing awareness activities among young people, aiming to provide them with direct contact with the realities of other countries in order to expand their horizons about gender equality and instil them another vision of the business world;
- The formative offers (either at the level of higher education or at the level of vocational education), need to be in articulation with the needs of the labour market, with particular emphasis on the issue of entrepreneurship;
- In areas of low density with development problems, associativism can be a catalyst for the development of female entrepreneurship activities (similar to what happens in other regions partners in this project);
- The certification of local products, associated with an incisive Territorial Marketing, can be a factor of empowerment of entrepreneurship in Alentejo;
- The exchange of experiences among entrepreneurs in the region, but also involving other stakeholders, which may be from other national territories or even Spain, can be a good practice for the consolidation of existing businesses as well as awareness of other women in creating their self-employment;
- Voluntary service, especially in initiatives such as the "Bank of Time", may be of particular relevance in the necessary conciliation of family and professional life;
- The importance of the contact with good practices in other countries in various fields of economic and social activity, so that they can be implemented in the region.

The balance was globally positive, particularly in regard to organizations outside the project we got involved and also, to their very active participation and pertinent contributions.

The regional Round Table in South-Ostrobothnia

The Regional Round Table organized in Seinäjoki in April 2011 gathered 11 representatives from South-Ostrobothnian public administrations, educational institutions, business life and NGOs to discuss about gender equality in the labour market. Even though the Round Table was only one afternoon long, all the three themes - occupational segregation, women's entrepreneurship and women's participation in innovation and technology - were covered in an in-depth manner, and in an open and motivated atmosphere. There was a consensus that while we have many things well, a lot is still to be done and we should be careful not to become gender blind but see where we can improve further.



Also, it was acknowledged that the three themes at focus at the Round Table are not only questions of equality, but of wise regional policy and essential for building long-term welfare in the region. The participants saw the problem of occupational segregation as something that runs deep in our culture, and we need to find ways to change our thinking and stop seeing jobs as female and male jobs. One good example to do this is modification training, which can bring short term relief for difficult labour market situations but also have a long-term effect via change of thinking. In the discussion on women's entrepreneurship, the participants voiced the need for more information on the characteristics of female entrepreneurship in our region. Also, it was pointed out that while it is important to boost entrepreneurship as a whole, we should also offer tailored support for women entrepreneurs. It was agreed that when it comes to reaching gender balance in innovation, we need to rethink the whole concept: Innovation is often linked only to technology and to the male dominated sectors, while they actually happen everywhere. Innovations in female dominated sectors should be brought more to the focus, not only in words and recognition but also in innovation funding policies. / Project Coordinator Sanna Alaranta, Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia, Finland.

The Regional Round Tables in Scotland

'A diverse workforce offers more initiative, wider perspectives and increased competitiveness'.

While most people were focused on the outcome of the Scottish Elections on 5th May, ESEP the IAB in Scotland, WINNET8 and Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce hosted a Round Table Policy Event which focused very specifically on acknowledging the value of equality and promoting women's contribution to economic growth, prosperity and competitiveness. Research has long since made us aware that the under representation of women in segregated sectors and industries, in innovation and as entrepreneurs is costing the UK billions in lost productivity and revenue each year. A select group of experts from academia, economic development, business development, NGOs, government and other non departmental public bodies focused on key areas and questions in relation to influencing policy and promoting action. The group explored how the EU Cohesion policy could be made more results-oriented in terms of gender equality and how we might strengthen opportunities for gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the work of Regional Development and Structural Funds. The group also examined what the best approach for Scotland in strengthening growth and competitiveness might be and have developed a range of priorities and actions for the way ahead.

This policy group resolved that key to all of this is promoting the business and economic argument for gender equality at all levels. Scotland needs a multi-pronged approach which includes an effective economic development strategy which takes account of the potential of 50% of the prospective workforce and ensures that they can fully contribute their skills, experience and talents in our labour market and in business and positive action initiatives which ensure women's full economic participation. So as the wind of political change sweeps across the Scottish landscape an opportunity awaits us for changing perceptions and transforming culture and action around the value of women's role in economic growth.

The Regional Round Table in Szczecin

That is 5 Steps on the Path to Equality in the Region" accepted!! Polish Regional Round Table was titled: „WINNET8 – Good practices that improve gender equality in the labour market in the region". The debate was divided into two parts. The first part focused on the idea and achievements of the project WINNET8, as well as presented the set of good practices collected in the project. The second part introduced a draft version of Action Plan - 5 Steps on the Path to Equality in the Region and recommendations on how the introduce gender perspective into regional policy. A brainstorming discussion among participants took place after each presentation. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Quadruple Helix, that is a university-business-government and NGOs, in detail, by representatives of: the Marshal Office of West Pomeranian Province- the managing authority for the Regional Operation Programmes, the West Pomeranian Regional Parliament, District Employment Office in Gryfice, West Pomeranian Agency for Regional Development, Institute of Analysis, Diagnosis and Economic Forecast, University of Szczecin, and Women for Szczecin and the Region Association. Regional entrepreneurs were also present at the debate.



All participants agreed that the West Pomeranian region of Poland cannot afford losing the economic potential of women in the development and innovation, when Europe is suffering from the effects of the crisis and economic depression. It was emphasized that due to the increase of women's participation in the labour market more women in the region will be prosperous, happy and fulfilled in the professional sphere. A joint postulate was formulated for the need of inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the economic policy together with gender specific actions in the policy- a dual method to reach the gender equality in the West Pomeranian Voivodship.

The regional Round Table in North Mid-Sweden

The North Mid-Sweden Round Table Dialogue was held the 18th of April 18, 2011 with Inger Danilda as moderator and with participants from the Swedish Winnet 8 partners.

The target group was the members of the Structural Fund partnership. The Round Table session was included in the partnership meeting instead of having a separate agenda. This meant less time than planned, but on the other hand the Round Table reached all the committee members (elected politicians) in the North Mid-Sweden programme area.

The 2,5 hours WINNET 8 had at its disposal was planned as follows:

- Presentation of the project; background, aims & goals etc.
- Presentation of Women's Resource Centres
- Presentation of work in the regional (Multi-Actor Group and in the regions of the other partners.
- The 9 Regional Action Plans.
- Challenges in North Mid-Sweden.
- Presentation of the WINNET 8 open call for consultation
- Discussion and questions.

The Structural Fund Partnership, consisting of elected politicians from the County of Gävleborg, the County of Dalarna and the County of Värmland, had several questions during the presentation. They asked about the project and its ownership and they asked who had initiated the project. They were very interested in the result and how it could be implemented in the ROP for North Mid-Sweden in the next program period. Of course also how the result should have an impact on the policy and how to get input from other ROP (NUTS 2) regions in Sweden (8 regions in total).

The role of The Structural Fund Partnership should be to participate in the dissemination of results for the implementation in the next program period.

Since meeting time was limited and WINNET 8 had much information to give, the Structural Fund Partnership did not have time to, in small groups; discuss neither the issues that were a part of the presentation nor the decision for policy recommendations nor the action plan which take place at the next MAG-meeting.

During the Round Table Dialogue, the WINNET 8 project had the opportunity to present the project and its results. The project also had the opportunity to talk about the importance that officials and politicians in the regions takes on the result and that they are a part of the implementation and the dissemination.



Agenda summer and autumn 2011

- Round Table meetings in East and South Zone in July
- Round Table meeting in West Zone in August
- Steering Group meeting, Greece
- Final Conference and Partnership meeting, Greece
- Disseminationseminar in September, Falun Sweden
- European Dissemination seminar in September, Brussels