



European Region Entrepreneurship Connection EFEB Network

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POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN GERMANY

Policy makers in Germany have treated entrepreneurship as a gender-neutral phenomenon for many of the past decades but launched several targeted policies and programmes in the late 1990s. Much of the current support is guided by the **National Agency for Women Start-up Activities and Services (bga)**. It acts as the central women's entrepreneurship network by promoting and directing women entrepreneurs to national and state-level support programmes.

bga is active at the national policy level, regional policy level and in engaging and working with many social partners at the local level. The head office is in Stuttgart. It has national responsibilities, including information bundling, agency and advisory services. Regional offices exist in all federal states and are located within different institutions, which are selected within a public tender procedure.

The responsibilities of regional offices include development and coordination of support programmes and to link regional activities into national actions. In addition, bga works with more than 2 000 local partners, including professional business consultants, women's entrepreneurship network organisations, women's business centres, and public and private business development agencies. Support for women entrepreneurs is provided through these partnership networks whereas the regional and national offices primarily coordinate communication (i.e. media) and political activities.

bga's head office has been funded by the federal state Baden-Württemberg since 2010. The federal ministries for Education and Research, for Economic Affairs and Energy and for Families, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth cover specific programmes and initiatives, which are bundled by the head office.

The National Agency for Women Start-up Activities and Services (bga) was established in 2004. It bundles programmes, information and services regarding female entrepreneurship provided by different initiatives at the state or federal levels. bga targets potential women entrepreneurs and women business starters and support is offered to women operating in all industry sectors and at all phases of business development. It also supports academic research and promotes women's entrepreneurship in the media.

bga's purpose and mission is to encourage women to become entrepreneurs by:

- Offering female-specific support services at all stages of business development;
- Developing women's entrepreneurship networks;
- Promoting women's entrepreneurship role models; and
- Promoting an entrepreneurial culture among women and society, more generally.

Ministries' involvement in bga's strategic process also ensures bga's involvement in political lobbying activities related to women's entrepreneurship.

Support for women entrepreneurs includes a wide range of activities, services and initiatives, including signposting information, business counselling, entrepreneurship training, coaching and mentoring, networking support, facilitating access to financing and political lobbying.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN GERMANY



“Inclusive Entrepreneurship in Europe” is a joint project conducted by the Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission.

The project aims to identify and analyse barriers for entrepreneurial activities faced by groups that are under-represented or disadvantaged in self-employment or the labour market, i.e. youth, seniors, the disabled, women, ethnic minorities, the unemployed. Based on this diagnosis, this work provides policy guidance to help policy makers design and implement policies and programmes to address these barriers and promote entrepreneurship within these groups (OECD/EC, 2013).

Example of mentoring and role model initiatives for women entrepreneurs in Germany

“Push up” was established by Weiberwirtschaft eG, a women’s co-operative, as part of the suite of support offerings available at a drop-in self-employment service center for women. The initiative is located in Berlin and the center can be used by all women with a business idea or plan, or with a business less than two years old. However, “Push up” has a limited number of opportunities for women seeking a business mentor so a jury selects the mentees based on evaluation of their business idea.

In the case of Germany, the assessment focuses on women’s entrepreneurship. It provides an overview and assessment of current support of women’s entrepreneurship in Germany in the areas of entrepreneurship skills, access to finance and the regulatory and institutional environment (e.g. business regulations, culture).



Examples of entrepreneurship networks for women in Germany

WeiberWirtschaft eG, was established 1992 as a network for female entrepreneurship centers. Currently the network consists of 15 centers in nine federal states in Germany.

The goals of the network are to:

- Facilitate the establishment of more female entrepreneurship centers.
- Offer subsidized office space and meeting rooms for women entrepreneurs.
- Assess gender mainstreaming in German fiscal policy.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN GERMANY

BARBARA BUDRICH – *a successful example of a German female entrepreneur*



Barbara Budrich is a popular German publisher, translator and publicist.

Since 2004, Barbara Budrich is the owner of her company "Verlag Barbara Budrich", which is a familiar publishing company in Germany with international distribution partners all over the world. Apart from Austria and Switzerland, for example, further co-operation partners of the publisher are located in Spain, England, USA and Singapore for South East Asia and India.

After completing her education in a publishing company in 1985, Barbara Budrich completed a publishing internship at Harper & Row in Sydney. In 1987-1993 she studied English, geography and sociology in Cologne, Berlin and St. Andrews, and finished her studies with the M.A. degree in 1993.

In the same year, she began working as a lecturer in the Leske + Budrich publishing house, founded by her father, Edmund Budrich, in Leverkusen-Opladen. In 2004, after the sale of Leske + Budrich to BertelsmannSpringer, Barbara Budrich founded her own company. In 2007, Budrich joined the UniPress. In 2008, she and Claudia Kühne founded the text-university and since 2012 budrich training.

Barbara organizes seminars, lectures and workshops on scientific presentation, publishing and writing and is an established female entrepreneur in Germany and beyond the borders.