

European Region Entrepreneurship Connection EFEB Network

NEWSLETTER

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SUPPORT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN UK

Examples of good practice in the UK

This section identifies an example of good practice in terms of support for women at the business start-up phase.

Women in the Network (WIN)

WIN is a networking project that aims to facilitate the development of women's enterprise.

The project provides both specific services for women entrepreneurs and helps them become aware of mainstream business support services and networks. The concept of WIN was first started in Scotland in 1994 when the then Lanarkshire Development Agency established a programme for women starting and developing their own businesses. That programme of workshops, exhibitions, training sessions, counselling and mentoring services regularly attracts over 100 women to its events and is now in its 7th year.

In 1998 the concept of WIN was adopted in the North East of England, based at The Foundation for Small and Medium Enterprise Development (FSMED), University of Durham.

WIN in the North East comprises a number of different public and private sector business support partners and delivers a similar range of programmes and events to its predecessor in Scotland.

However, it has further developed the WIN concept and used its European (ERDF) funding to be technology based. It uses its website with on-line business directories, newsletters, business guides and role models as a mechanism for directly assisting and signposting its members to support services throughout the UK and beyond.



Economic gender gap has widened - and will last until 2186

Women will not reach global parity with men for 170 years, the World Economic Forum has said.

In its tenth Global Gender Gap Report, it calculated that the world will not eliminate the gender gap until 2186, a rise of 63 years from their 2015 estimate.

According to the report, the gap between men and women in terms of economic participation and opportunity is now larger than at any time since 2008 — women have just 59 pc of the opportunities and access available to men in this sector.

Another is a stagnant labour force participation, with the global average for women standing at 54pc, compared to 81pc for men.

The amount of women in senior positions also remains low, with only four countries in the world — Barbados, Jamaica, Colombia and Ghana— having equal numbers of male and female legislators, senior officials and managers.

The education gap has also narrowed driven by the increasing number of women pursuing degrees — 95 countries now have as many, if not more, women educated at university.

While the UK appears in line with the average, which stand at 59pc and 23pc, it ranks just 53rd and 24th respectively on the global index.

Jemima Olchawski, head of policy and insight at the Fawcett Society, the UK's leading gender equality charity, said of the findings:

"This report busts the myth that gender inequality is somehow natural or inevitable and highlights how varied performance on closing gender gaps is, across the world, but also within Western Europe .

"It's unacceptable that Britain is languishing at 53rd in the world for economic participation, is only 24th for political empowerment and performs below average overall compared to our region.

"The moral case for gender equality should be enough alone to motivate us to speed up the pace of change, but with evidence suggesting that improving gender equality could add £150 billion to our GDP it's also clear that we simply can't afford to wait."

The study examines 144 countries across four standards of health, education, economic opportunity and political empowerment. It found that, respectively, women have 96pc, 95pc, 59pc and 23pc of the opportunities and access that are available to men in those categories.

Behind this decline are a number of factors, the report said. One is salary, with women around the world earning, on average, slightly more than half of what men earn, despite working longer hours.



The UK remains in the top twenty most gender equal countries by a pinch, ranking 20th. It falls two places from 18th. In 2006, it came 9th.

British women have 58pc of the economic opportunity available to men and 23pc of the political empowerment.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN UK

ALICE HALL

27 year-old Alice Hall has referred to herself as an "accidental entrepreneur". After struggling to pay her bills, in 2012 she decided to use £90 to buy a pack of dresses to sell online. When they sold, she bought two more packs of dresses, and when they sold, she bought four more packs - and the rest, as they say is history.

From her 30,000 sq. fit site in Newcastle, Hall's online fashion brand Pink Boutique now sells over 2,000 dresses a day, exporting to 59 countries, and has achieved turnover of over £7m while bringing in profits.



With a team of 50 staff and over 1.5 million fans on Facebook and Twitter alone, it's not surprising that Hall has won a stream of awards. In 2015, *The Sunday Times* Fast Track 100 listed Pink Boutique in 13th place; having achieved 224% growth in two years, and in the same year the UK Private Business Awards crowned Hall 'Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year'.

CLAIRE VERO

Gave up her six-figure salary job to start a naturally-formulated probiotic cosmetics brand back in 2013 and, looking at her early business success, this was a risk worth taking. Vero's range - Aurelia Probiotic Skincare - uses all-natural ingredients and has a strict free-from policy; two features which have seen it become a hit with beauty fans.

Known as Liberty's fastest growing skincare brand, Vero's products are also stocked in Net-A-Porter (worldwide), Space NK, and various other stores in Europe and America. Said to have achieved turnover in excess of £1.2m for year-end 2015, Vero was named one to watch in the elite Young Guns Class of 2015 and has already won coverage in *Management Today's* 35 under 35. Like its founder, Aurelia has also received a lot of praise, winning over 24 awards in the past three years including commendation from *Tatler* and *Stylist* magazine.



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