

## MUPYME Project - Employment and Women in the 21st century in Europe: From Household economy to SME economy (Small and Medium enterprises)

### DISCUSSION GROUP: Bringing Business World and Household Together

#### BUSINESSWOMEN – HOUSEWIVES

**Date:** July 4<sup>th</sup> 2016

**Place:** Popular University of Lorca

**Time:** 19:00pm - 21:00h

**N. of Attendants:** 10

**Organized by:** Eva María, Paco Martínez

Ten people took part in the Discussion Group, four businesswomen and six housewives.

The workshop took place in the Popular University in Lorca.

The participants came from different helmets in Lorca, such as Tercia, La Torrecilla, El Campillo and Lorca Centro.

The foundation for the discussion group organization was building a connection between Housewives and Businesswomen.

The resulting information allows for an analysis of their perceptions, opinions, and motivations, as well as their social background and how it has an impact in some aspects we have considered significant.

We hold a special interest in doing a comprehensive analysis of the following aspects:

- Information exchange regarding Business Project management and the relationships developed as a result.
- Identification of the activities associated with a Business Project, making a distinction between those closely related to it and those less significant, taking the businesswomen's experiences as a benchmark and classifying them based on the territory, economic activity and social background associated with each enterprise.
- Establishing the benefits and limitations found by the participants and what their thoughts about Business Project are.

The discussion group, comprised by Businesswomen and Housewives, was organized in order to meet these goals.

A script was designed to conduct the group dialogue towards the specific goals we were trying to pursue:

- When and why did you decide to embark in this business experience?
- Did you have any preliminary experiences on the field?
- What were the main problems you had to face at the beginning?
- Did you receive enough support at the beginning?
- How did you manage to overcome the initial difficulties?
- What was the most important decision you had to make at the first stage of your project?
- What was the most important decision you had to make at the consolidation stage?

- What is your reaction when facing insecurity or detecting a mistake?
- Which aspects associated with the household has been useful to you whilst developing your project?
- What is your advice for those facing entrepreneurship?
- Which aspects should we focus on as women with household experience?

### **FINDINGS REGARDING THE DISCUSSION GROUP:**

The insecurity generated by the current financial crises was discussed in the Group and it contributes to the idealization of Business Projects. The possibility to consider the implementation of a sensible social measure reinforces the idea of insecurity instead of being associated with opportunity.

Four of the businesswomen involved spoke about their experiences and circumstances: one of them owns a butchery, Rosa owns a hair-saloon, another one has become an businesswoman in the adult education field, another one in the food sector... The Housewives are all unemployed, but they are ready for entrepreneurship: one of them is considering creating her own dressmaking workshop. They fret about it, but those who have already overcome that fear state that “enthusiasm for working and fulfilling one’s dreams is always stronger.”

Within the discussion group, there was an exchange of experiences, ideas and advice about how to get visibility in the market, whether or not their projects are realistic, and the available support mechanisms for entrepreneurship.

The most important thing for Businesswomen when it comes to start a new project is self-esteem: being confident, boosting enthusiasm, having an idea and developing it. After that comes training and, lastly carrying it out. It's not about starting by taking big steps, but progressing little by little, establishing short and medium-term targets.

Housewives reported their fears regarding failure, besides starting a Business Project that is not realistic. Businesswomen reported the difficulties they had to face at the first stage and how they have maintained their Business Project by learning from their mistakes along their careers.

The most remarkable thing about the meeting was seeing how the Businesswomen encouraged the Housewives and analysed their skills that would make it possible for them to start a new business project.

They have exposed some facts about the actual situation: there are not many job opportunities for women in Lorca, excepting some in agriculture, and the crucial work carried out by housewives regarding household economy is not acknowledged, although it is quite similar to being a businesswoman (budget planning, organizing housework and household logistics, etc.).

## FINAL FINDINGS

The following proposals focus on three main aspects: firstly, the conceptual matters; secondly, those matters linked to designing the project; and, thirdly, those related to its implementation.

This experience works sets an innovative example in Lorca when it comes to prolonging the research project we have worked on. We have to keep in mind that the ultimate goal of this project is female employability – “employability” understood as “transferable skills and qualification that improve people’s ability to seize opportunities regarding training to find and keep a decent job, progress within an enterprise and adapting to technological advances and the circumstances on the labour market.”

Said definition involves the idea that, in order to make the labour market more accessible for women, it is crucial to consider their ability to adapt to different circumstances, and not exclusively the knowledge and technical skills. This implies training regarding labour rights and other elements related to personal growth.

In a business and organization context, it involves starting a new institutional approach that takes into account the need to incorporate new learning programmes for workers. Furthermore, (especially in the case of women) it should be sensitive to their role as promoters to overcome inequalities in working opportunities, apart from valuing women’s abilities and potential. By this point, it would be important to develop specific spaces to reflect and receive training at both local and national level. Business actors and

representatives for workers should have a place in them to progress in work on solutions to the borders obstructing access to labour market for housewives, with a special consideration on cultural and organizational aspects.

Continuing on that line, it is important to identify inequalities in relationships between men and women and, especially, those present at work. This would allow us to explain the conditions linking Housewives and the potential obstacles they are susceptible to face in Entrepreneurship.

In order to support Housewives and their Business Projects, it is important to design and implement training programs.

We need to bear in mind, that the aim is building structured goals that include technical-unbiased targets –including but not limited to acquiring sector-oriented knowledge, attending the whole program, enforcing internships, etc. The same applies to building qualitative indicators involving subjective factors, such as improving self-esteem or broadening support networks. A broad employability concept should include the development of “soft” skills, which have a significant impact on the emotional relationship the users have with the job itself, as well as on overcoming subjective hurdles linked to traditional standards that associate women with the private side of life (home).

It would be relevant to design a supervising proposal involving support from the Lorca City Council to ensure the quality of the training programmes. This supervising activity should take into account those aspects related to the evaluation, making appreciations and suggestions to promote constant improvement.

It is also important to develop a periodical and comprehensive approach to the production situation in Lorca in order to be aware of the new circumstances within the local markets, as well as to establish connections that provide access to training for Housewives.

Strengthening the development of internships and technical assistance is also significant. Such thing calls for the identification of potential hurdles Housewives are susceptible to experience and the examination of the qualification process when some of these stages is missing (e.g. we could explore the different results when a course includes internships and technical assistance and when it does not). However, it is also important to restrict or suppress the option to implement courses that do not include internships or technical assistance, since these training stages promote the addition and strengthening of the knowledge and skills acquired by the users.

On the other hand, we shall bear in mind that childcare is a key factor, since it can have direct repercussions on the actual chances some women have regarding both gaining access to training courses and becoming entrepreneurs. There should be a balance between their responsibilities as parents and their immersion in a productive area.

Social and family awareness seem crucial aspects when it comes to female entrepreneurship. It would be highly important to include gender equality courses even in primary school education plans.



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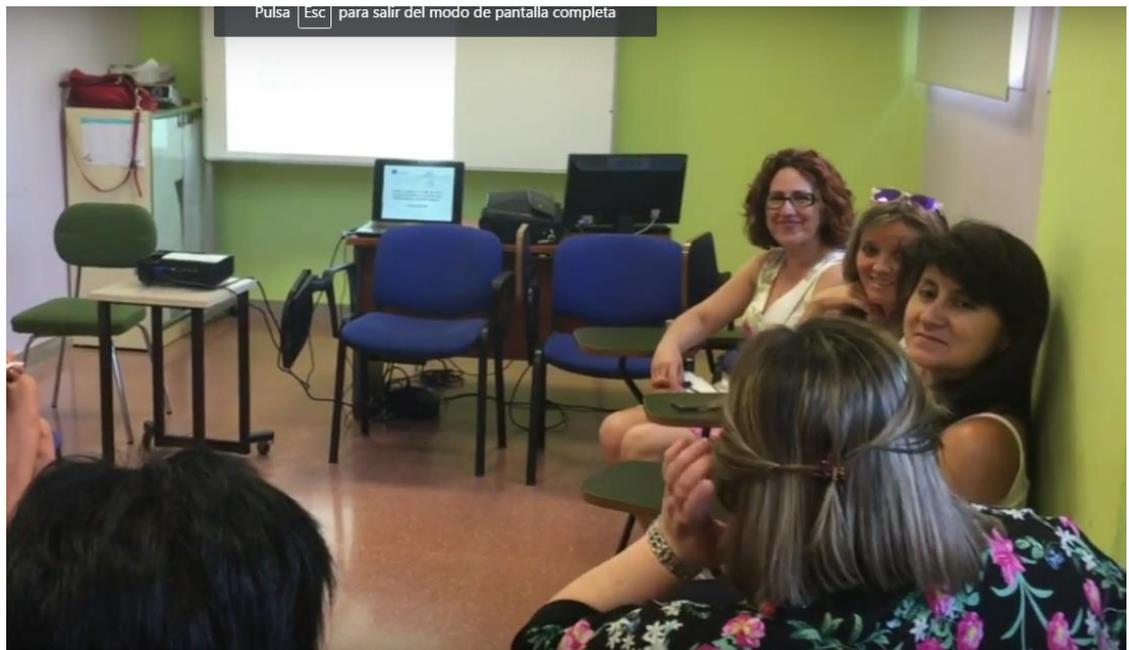


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MUPYME  
Emprendimiento femenino

ERASMUS+ Programme 2015 – KA2 Adult Education  
Project n°: 2015-1-ES01-KA204-015937  
Document name: Observation Report Guidelines  
Partner: FEUP  
Author: Emilio Jurado



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