

You can do it! – new perspectives for women to have own businesses
Grundtvig Learning Partnership

Report

Leipzig, 04.10.2010 – 06.10.2010



The kick-off meeting started on 4th of October 2010 with the introduction of the partners, their activities, and their incentive to work on the YOCAIT project. There have been ten partners representing six organizations from a total of nine approved ones, who attended the meeting; wisamar Educational Institute as a coordinator of the project, Agentura GAIA from Czech Republic, MESEV from Turkey, Eurogems from Italy, Women's Activity Club of Sakiai from Lithuania and NOTARS from Hungary.

The content of the kick-off meeting was organized according to the three project aims, defined in the application form as following:

A) support of women by self-entrepreneurship training with information given by experts

I. Part: information about management, financial and legal requirements

II. Part: show a good practice example of a successful self-entrepreneur

B) Offer workshop for women in disadvantaged positions

Aim of the workshop: exchange of creative competences and skills of women in the field of crafts&trade → photography, embroidery, glass painting, work with textile, design, etc.

C) study visits to different women organizations and associations



In the afternoon of the first day a visit to the “Keramikwerkstatt andrea doria e.V.” (URL: <http://www.andrea-doria-ev.de/home.html>) was scheduled (*Project Aim C*). The association is led by Ms. Antje Linnert and Ms. Anke Siegert, who are offering different ceramic workshops for children and adults, as RAKU-workshop a special burning technique originating from Japan or workshops offered

for laymen to experimentalise with clay and glaze. While Ms. Linnert talked about the diversity of work in the creative field she also underlined the financial difficulties and the very limited public grand offers for creative associations. The YOCAIT project partners had also the opportunity to exchange about challenges and experiences in the creative sector.

After the study visit at the Keramikwerkstatt andrea doria e.V. the project partners walked through the historical area of the former Cotton mill, where upon the visited workshop and other handcraft and art shops as well as galleries are located (<http://www.spinnerei.de/artists.html>) giving the deserted industrial area a new creative face.

The second day, 5th October, was opened with the presentation of Ms. Eszter Csepe. She started the day with the introduction of the project aims and objectives. Afterwards Ms. **Siegrid Müller**, the owner of the online shop “Stoffkreationen” (URL: <http://www.shop-014.de/shop-landtraum.html>) was invited (*Project aim A.II.*) to talk about her challenges and experiences creating her small online shop.



Since 2006 Ms. Müller carries on her business which was set up because she had to give up her profession as accountant due to the negative impact of the computer workplace on her eye sight. The way to unemployment was the reason to rethink her qualifications and interests and to create her online shop. Her startup was financed on her own; there was no financial support neither from public nor private body. As a success story she mentioned the endless possibilities of online shops to reach people from all over the world as she even has regular customers from Japan or Finland. Also positive feedback by customers is an incentive to Ms. Müller.



Following our project aims defined under A.I. in this report, we invited Mr. **Wennemar de Weldige from the City of Leipzig**, Department of business development to inform us about the financial possibilities for individuals and requirements for startups (micro-businesses). The information given about micro-credits by Mr. Weldige offered new inputs not only for our international partners, but also for the learners

in our region as micro-credits are not well known by individuals, since the programme was launched by the city of Leipzig in May 2010. After his presentation Mr. Weldige provided his support to network creative people not only in Saxony, but also in other European countries.

To exemplify the efforts by offering workshops for women in disadvantaged positions (*Project aim B.*) the YOCAIT project partners visited the **Naomi e.V.** – association, an information centre for migrants, refugees and other groups in disadvantaged positions (women with psychological disease, people with alcohol problems, etc.). Sister Gudrun the leader of the association introduced the activities of Naomi



e.V. as well as the handcraft courses, which are offered for disadvantaged groups. Aim of these courses is to support their social integration in the society, to engage them to work creatively and to foster them to use their time meaningful. The so called “Kreativstube” (creative room) was implemented with the aim to give a place for meeting people, exchanging their life experiences, share their knowledge but also their doubts and problems while being creative in the workshops. The workshops are focused mostly on work with felt using different techniques. The outcomes of the workshops such as bags, carpets, flowers, animals, brooches, caps made from felt are collected and offered for sale at handcraft fairs or other creative markets each year. The small revenue is used to keep the creative room alive and to support the continuity of the workshops (the revenue is mostly for buying materials for the workshop). But as Sister Gudrun explained to the YOCAIT group, they have great interest in different opportunities how to sell their products. Because higher revenues would allow to support disadvantage groups also financially and not only their integration and creativity.



The last day, 6th October, started with a workshop at the Naomi e.V. “Kreativstube” with the YOCAIT project team and women who regularly attend courses and also teach others. The composition of the group allowed to share knowledge in the handcraft field but also to exchange life experiences. The products made during the workshops will be an integral part of the “Market of cultures”-fair, organized during

the final meeting in Hungary as well as part of the online market of cultures, where all people/shops involved during the two years project will be able to upload their products and share it with others (networking).

Afterwards the YOCAIT project team visited the “**Werkstatt des Lichts**”, a small shop, making candles, to get to know more about set up of small businesses in the field of handcraft. Mr. Wolf operates also an additional online-shop where interested people can buy different kinds of candles (URL: <http://shop.werkstatt-des-lichts.de/>). Mr. Wolf talked about his experiences by setting up his small business.



His initial occupation is social worker but after many years of work in this field, he looked for new challenges. The decision for self-entrepreneurship was made during his unemployment. He took advantage of the foundation grant given by the German Federal Employment Office which aims at people who are interested in creating a new (small) business from their redundancy. After his report of experiences he demonstrated how to make candles and gave detailed information about the production with the aim to support maybe others in the partners’ countries, to set up similar businesses with making candles.

The summary of the three days, the evaluation of the meeting as well as the planning of the next meeting, website and newsletter rounded up the first international meeting in Leipzig.